
2.0 PUBLIC MEETING COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT REPORT

This section contains a summary of the oral comments received at the nine public meetings held for the LCA Study regarding the DPEIS for the Louisiana Coastal Area (LCA), Louisiana - Ecosystem Restoration Study. Meetings were held at the following nine locations: Chalmette, LA; Cameron, LA; Beaumont, TX; Larose, LA; Iberia, LA; Mandeville, LA; Alexandria, LA; Bay St. Louis, MS; and Memphis, TN. The meeting format included an open house, overview of the LCA Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP), question and answer session, and the formal public comments period. The hearings provided a forum for public expression of verbal statements regarding the proposed action and the content and the findings of the DPEIS. Provisions were also made so that comments could be written on comment cards and provided to the USACE at the meeting. A total of 83 meeting attendees provided verbal comments.

2.1 PUBLIC MEETING #1: CHALMETTE, LOUISIANA (JULY 27, 2004)

2.1.1 Introduction

The meeting began at 6:30 P.M. Mr. Junior Rodriquez, President, St. Bernard Parish, recognized the following people and organizations:

- Senator Craig Romero
- Mr. Lynn Dean, Councilman at Large, East St. Bernard
- Mr. Craig De Faro, Councilman
- Mr. Rick Pellerin, Councilman for District E
- NOAA Fisheries
- Department of Interior
- Dr. Len Bahr, Governor's Office
- Mr. Justin Stephens, Congressman Tauzin's office

Colonel Peter Rowan kicked off the meeting by giving a presentation accompanied by slides. He stated that the purpose of the meeting was to: 1) provide an overview of the study findings, 2) answer questions, and 3) receive official public comments. The comment period extended through August 23, 2004. There were nine public meetings, including one in Texas, one in Mississippi, and one in Tennessee (see **table 2**).

Mr. Jon Porthouse, a manager of the planning section at LDNR, spoke next. He stated that the study team was here not just because it was Federally required, but because it was necessary to interact with the public.

2.1.2 Attendees

In addition to members of the LCA PDT, approximately 100 people attended the meeting. Names of those who signed in are below:

Oakland Adams	Cathy Forstall	Becky Livaudais	Elwood “Woody” Riche
Doug Arceneaux	Byron Fortier	John Lopez	Michael Rivere
Dan Arceneaux	S.M. Gagliano	Sue Ellen Lyons	Henry J. Rodriguez
Bruce L. Badon	Albert P. “Rusty” Gaude III	Andrew MacInnes	Craig Romero
Len Bahr	David Gegenheimer	Mark Madary	Benny Rousselle
Michael Barbier	Heather Gordon	Oneil Malbrough	G.F. Santos
Don Blancher	Steve Gorin	Sam Maniscalco	Charles Pete Savoye
Allen Bolotte	Abbye Gorin	Shannon Marretta	Mark Schexnayder
Roger C. Boucille, Jr.	Garret Graves	Jill Mastrototuro	Mark Schleifstein
Loland Broussard	Catherine Grouchy	Jerry L. Mayeux	Peter Smith
Rex Caffey	Bren Haase	Dinah Maygarden	Justin Stephens
Emily Campbell	Steven G. Hall, Ph.D.	Julio Mayorgo	Heather Szapary
Matthew Campbell	Jim Hasik	D.J. McClain	Craig Taffaro
Amus Cormier	Ralph Herrmann	Ricky Melerine	John Troutman
Pamela Dashiell	Joseph F. Horse	Keith Meyer	Kenny Tucker
Mark Davis	David Jefferson Dye	Brad Miller	Oscar Vera
Lynn Dean	Alvin L. Jones	Guy Montana	Jay Vincent
Craig De Faro	Bill Kappel	Vicki Murillo	Al Waller
Tim Doody	John Koeferl	Frank & Linda Newell	Kim Warner
M. Patricia Doody	John P. Laguens	Michael Nicoladis	Kathleen Wendel
Edwin J. Doody	Greg Laiche	Ken Odinet	Toni Wendel
Jeff Dott	Larry J. Landry	Rick Pellerin	Marnie Winter
Carlton Dufrechou	Joan Lanier	Shea Penland	Amy Wold
Joey Englert	John Lehrter	Sean Phillips	
Stephen V. Estopinal	Mike Liffmann	Charles Reppel	
Yarrow Etheredge	Gatien Livaudais	Bruce Richards	

2.1.3 Public Comments

The floor was opened to comments. Mr. Axtman facilitated the session and Colonel Rowan and Mr. Porthouse received the comments.

Comment: **Mr. Dan Arceneaux** – Mr. Dan Arceneaux, Coastal Zone Management Advisory Committee for St. Bernard Parish, said he read an article that said that there is a \$300 million floodgate going into Barataria Waterway. In 2001, the USACE had 10 million dollars for this restoration, Lake Borgne, and Shell Beach. In 2002, the USACE had \$12 million for the restoration of Bayou Dupre. All he has seen are studies. Chris Williams said the projects cannot be done for 9 years because of oyster reefs. He has a geotechnical survey of Shell Beach and Dupre that shows that they cannot support rocks anywhere in the lake so now Chris Williams is attempting to put rocks on the shoreline. They will sink there also. How will rocks hold on MRGO?

Response: Please see General Response #1 regarding the proposed MRGO Restoration Feature.

Comment: **Mr. Dan Arceneaux** – Mr. Dan Arceneaux, Coastal Zone Management Advisory Committee for St. Bernard Parish, said that the Shell Beach project includes rocks on the shoreline. The USACE would have to dig a 6–8 foot channel, 30 feet wide. The rocks will fall into the canal.

Response: Please see General Response #1 regarding the proposed MRGO Restoration Feature.

Comment: **Ms. Pamela Dashell** – Ms. Pamela Dashell, Holy Cross Neighborhood Association, said that the MRGO should be closed immediately. The lower ninth ward is at risk from a hurricane and it could cost lives and disrupt livelihood. The threat from contaminated sediments is also important. The rehabilitation of wetlands and the coast is also important. Businesses along the MRGO and Industrial Canal can be relocated to the Mississippi River. The \$700 million allocated for the industrial canal crossing that nobody needs or wants, could be used to mitigate for some of the damages. The MRGO needs to be closed as soon as possible. Some people seem to feel that people who live in the lower Ninth Ward, lower Orleans Parish and St. Bernard Parish are expendable.

Response: Please see General Response #1 regarding the proposed MRGO Restoration Feature.

Comment: **Mr. Mark Davis** – Mr. Mark Davis, Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, said that they understand the constraints that the USACE is working under. The report does a good job dissecting the problems in coastal Louisiana. It does not, however, describe adequately the first steps. The MRGO requires more than a rip-rap solution. It needs emergency shoreline protection. A Bayou La Loutre weir should be looked at. The MRGO study stops at the Parish line. There is not any discussion about the effects of salinity in the Pontchartrain Basin. The Hope Canal project, which is to benefit the Maurepas Swamp, is too narrow in its focus. One or two thousand cfs may be the most realistic to pursue now but the USACE should seek authorization to develop a structure that has more flexible guidelines. There is no mention of the CCMP (Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan), which was developed by the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation in conjunction with the EPA. They look forward to working with the USACE. There is language in the Senate bill that goes further in directing the USACE to develop a closure plan for the MRGO.

Response: Please see General Response # 1 regarding the proposed MRGO Restoration Feature, General Response #3 regarding the LCA Study Area, and General Response #5 regarding the 10-year planning horizon.

Comment: **Mr. Lynn Dean** – Mr. Lynn Dean, St. Bernard Parish Council Government, said that there needs to be a study of the interaction between wind, waves, tides and erosion.

Response: There are numerous studies and documents addressing the effects of wind, waves, tides, and erosion, both individually and in combination. The recommendation for a S&T Program is intended to provide a mechanism for the compilation and review of this information, as well as provide recommendations for any additional studies that may be needed.

Comment: **Mr. Edwin Doody** – Mr. Edwin Doody, Coalition to Close the MRGO, said that the part of the plan for MRGO does not restore anything and should not be characterized as a restoration project. A hurricane would expose them to storm surge. He agrees with Mr. Gagliano that barrier islands make more sense than rocks because the rocks will sink. The MRGO should be closed to traffic since vessel waves cause erosion. Placing rip-rap on the north bank of the channel is another waste of money; the destruction on the south bank will continue. The MRGO must be closed. Forth-six thousand acres in St. Bernard Parish wetlands have already been destroyed by the MRGO. The dredging of MRGO needs to end. Many fisherman and trappers have been put out of business because of the damage caused by the MRGO. Also, the MRGO continues to pose a threat to the lives of 50 thousand people who live in Orleans, Plaquemines and St. Bernard Parishes. There are no funds to fix deteriorated levees and residents of Orleans Parish are exposed to flooding danger. The \$178 billion dollars should be spent on MRGO restoration, building barrier islands in Lake Borgne, and building a structure to stop the flooding at Bayou LaLoutre.

Response: Please see General Response #1 regarding the proposed MRGO Restoration Feature.

Comment: **Mr. Edwin Doody** – Mr. Edwin Doody, read a statement on behalf of Representative Ken Odinet. Rep. Odinet wrote that the closure of MRGO is of major importance to his constituents. However, the USACE's plans contain no mention of the MRGO closing at any present or future date. \$107 million has been allocated for maintenance of the seldom used channel. The stone proposed for protection will be rendered useless. This approach is not in the best interest of the residents and taxpayers. The \$107 million should be allocated to move industries from the MRGO to the banks of the Mississippi River. Prior studies have indicated that the money should adequately allow immediate closure to vessels in excess of 16-foot draft. A cost-benefit study would reveal that the safety, life, health and happiness of the entire community would win if the \$107 million was used for the closure of the MRGO.

Response: Please see General Response #1 regarding the proposed MRGO Restoration Feature.

Comment: **Mr. Tim Doody.** Tim Doody, said that the project is budgeted for about \$100 million and Louisiana will fund 35 to 40 percent. The State adopted a resolution

calling for closure of MRGO. These seem to be inconsistent with each other. Putting rip-rap on the channel is a maintenance issue and should be at Federal government expense.

Response: Please see General Response #1 regarding the proposed MRGO Restoration Feature.

Comment: **Mr. Carlton Dufrechou** – Mr. Carlton Dufrechou, Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, said that they give the USACE an “A” on Hope Canal because it could potentially mimic the natural overflow to the river. The USACE also gets an A+ on problem identification on MRGO. However, the rock dikes on the north bank of MRGO and rock dikes and beneficial use of dredged material on the banks for Lake Borgne will not work. Rocks have a history of failure. This is mitigation and not restoration. The Lake Pontchartrain Citizens overwhelmingly support closure of MRGO. They are disappointed with the USACE’s recommendation. Closure is defined as elimination of channel maintenance dredging, relocation of three remaining facilities that are serviced by deep dredge vessels in the ship channel, and construction of the navigational structure to restore the integrity of Bayou LaLoutre. The Lake Pontchartrain Basin citizens are very disappointed by the report’s recommendation and frustrated by the disregard agencies have for public input for the MRGO closure. They believe that the USACE’s recommendation wrongly proposes the use of coastal restoration funding to perpetuate deep draft navigation projects. The MRGO is doing significant environmental damage to Louisiana coast. They request the opportunity to meet with the USACE to discuss advising the LCA on the MRGO closure. The Pontchartrain Basin Foundation of 1992–93 underwent a comprehensive management plan process for the entire coast. It included many personnel from the USACE as well as agencies. Closure of MRGO was in that plan.

Response: Please see General Response #1 regarding the proposed MRGO Restoration Feature.

Comment: **Dr. Sherwood Gagliano** – Dr. Sherwood Gagliano, St. Bernard Parish Consultant, said that he has served the Parish for over 30 years, particularly regarding the MRGO. He is part of the Coastal Resources Group that advises the Parish. He had five main points regarding the closure of MRGO. First, public safety from the storm threat. Second, hydrologic restoration — mainly the breaking up of the tidal exchange that occurs through the MRGO channel. This affects a number of hydrologic basins including Lake Pontchartrain. Third, management and advancement of neighboring estuarine habitats. Fourth, public use for waterways and activities — conservation management, public participation, job opportunities, education, etc. (He did not offer a fifth point.) The study flags the MRGO as a significant major high priority project that needs to be addressed. However, placing rocks along the banks is not enough. A closure gate at Bayou LaLoutre large enough to accommodate large vessels is needed. The \$80 million earmarked for rock placement would be better spent on a closure gate. He complimented the USACE on the meeting and would like to keep moving in a positive direction.

Response: Please see General Response #1 regarding the proposed MRGO Restoration Feature.

Comment: **Mr. Garret Graves** – Mr. Garret Graves, staff for Congressman Billy Tauzin, said he wanted to be clear that these are his personal comments and not those of Rep. Billy Tauzin. He said that the plan is just a proposed plan and that nothing had been finalized. Whatever Congress passes will address concerns of the community. The way that Congress is going to authorize the program is not entirely consistent with the report. On three occasions, the House of Representatives passed language that would give billions of dollars of *mandatory* funding to Louisiana for coastal restoration but so far the bills have died in the Senate. *Mandatory* funding means that once that bill is voted on and signed by the President it is done and the money is available. *Authorization* means that members of the delegations can go back to the Appropriation Committee each year and ask for the money. MRGO has been studied repeatedly. The USACE has authority to address the problems with MRGO. Louisiana has received through the Coastal Wetlands, Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act (CWPPRA) and other programs more than \$500 million for restoration of coastal Louisiana. This plan was originally 15 billion dollars. Congress is aware of the needs of coastal Louisiana. They understand the energy impact, the hurricane impact, the economic impact, and the devastation to agencies.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: **Mr. Jim Hassett** – Mr. Jim Hassett declined to comment.

Response: No response required.

Comment: **Ralph Herman** – Ralph Herman, St. Bernard Parish resident, said that the USACE must close MRGO. Port Sulfur needs diversion or restoration more urgently than Myrtle Grove. Land is disappearing.

Response: Comment noted. Please see General Response #1 regarding the proposed MRGO Restoration Feature.

Comment: **Mr. David Gegenheimer** – Mr. David Gegenheimer, St. Bernard Sportsmen's League, stated three purposes of the LCA Study. First, is to identify the most critical and natural ecological needs of the coastal areas. That means protection from storm surges and returning some of the natural hydrology of the pre-MRGO days. Second, is to present and evaluate conceptual alternatives for meeting the most critical needs including a gate somewhere below Bayou La Loutre to stop storm surge. Third, identify the kinds of restoration features that can be implemented in the near term, identify the 10 years but address the most critical needs and propose to address these needs with features that provide the highest return in net benefits per dollar of cost. MRGO must be closed. This will save \$12 million per year in dredging costs. However, the USACE does not want to close

MRGO. The USACE commissioned Dr. Tim Ryan to perform an economic study. However the numbers are outdated and the study is fraudulent.

Response: Please see General Response #1 regarding the proposed MRGO Restoration Feature and General Response #8 regarding project implementation protocols and the need for immediate action and General Response #5 regarding the 10-year planning horizon.

Comment: **Mr. John Koefel** – Mr. John Koefel, Holy Cross Neighborhood Association, said that Senator Landrieu recently said that the MRGO should be kept open as long as it takes to build the new locks in the Inner Harbor Navigational Channel. The USACE should look more in-depth at closing MRGO. It was a politically driven project back in the 1950s and the baseline science was not done to support it. That is why it has so many troubles including using rocks to keep Lake Borgne from merging. Also Lake Pontchartrain could come in the deep end. The Inner Harbor project is not just a name change. It was always the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet New Lock and Connecting Channels program and a name change does produce the science needed to propose it as a solution to closing the MRGO. The USACE should be less tied down by the current laws.

Response: Comments noted.

Comment: **Mr. John Laguens** – Mr. John Laguens said that the rock on the north bank of MRGO is not restoration but rather facilitates the navigation project. He would like to have MRGO closed. The \$107 million for rocks should be used for restoration (i.e., water control structures, barrier island restoration, and sediment diversions). The state government and the St. Bernard Parish Council have called for the closure of MRGO. Money is being wasted on dredging and should rather be used to relocate businesses. The MRGO is not the only place those businesses can operate. The money should be spent on restoration of the MRGO. The USACE needs to change the way they do business.

Response: Please see General Response #1 regarding the proposed MRGO Restoration Feature.

Comment: **Gatien Livaudais** – Gatien Livaudais, St. Bernard Wetlands Foundation, thanked the USACE and the other agencies for the study. MRGO must be closed and restoration for damages be implemented. Losing wetlands means losing part of their heritage. The coastal resources component of the restoration plan should be strengthened. They are interested in the science and technology associated with the restoration, however, the area has been studied enough.

Response: Comment noted. Please see General Response #1 regarding the proposed MRGO Restoration Feature and General Response #8 regarding project implementation protocols and the need for immediate action.

Comment: **Mr. Andrew MacInnes** – Mr. Andrew MacInnes, Plaquemines Parish Coastal Development Restoration, said that the projects seem to be randomly distributed

and do not complement each other. Money could be better spent holistically by combining freshwater diversions with sediment delivery. He commended the team for including Shell Island in the study. However, Shell Island is being addressed along with the Chalant Headland at a cost of \$200 million. The other projects supported by the locals in the area behind the islands (especially Boothville, nearest Fort Jackson) got filtered out in the selection process. The USACE is spending a lot of money to seal the door along the Gulf of Mexico but one has to go all the way up to Myrtle Grove to get anything coming in from the back side. It is important to consider other ways of putting sediment behind these island projects. The Empire, Buras, Boothville area has some of the highest locks in the State and is gone. He would like to see some of these larger scale sediment delivery projects addressed in the southern end of the Parish because otherwise the islands are being fortified but are allowed to fend for themselves and are susceptible to overwash or tidal surge. The locals would like to see sediment delivery in the southern end of Plaquemines Parish as a long-term, large scale project.

Response: The LCA Plan includes near-term critical features, demonstration projects, and long-term large-scale projects that address sediment delivery issues, as well as barrier island restoration and enhancement issues. Please also see General Response #9 regarding sediment transport via pipeline.

Comment: **Mr. Jerry Mayeux** – Jerry Mayeux was called but had left.

Response: No response required.

Comment: **Ms. Vicki Murillo** – Ms. Vicki Murillo, Program Director for Gulf Restoration Network, said that during the LCA scoping period they said that appropriate testing and monitoring of water and sediment quality must be completed prior to construction and implementation of projects. That does not show up in the report. This should be in there especially since beneficial uses of dredged material is part of the LCA Plan. Her second comment was that she was pleased to see that there is a whole section on consistency and this was also an issue addressed in the environmental stakeholder position. This is an issue of great concern to her group, especially in reference to the consistency between the regulatory branch and coastal restoration efforts. However, the provisions are too weak. The inconsistencies are so great that more significant actions must taken other than just those suggestions made in the programmatic EIS.

Response: Please see response to Comments GRN 04, GRN 07. Please also see General Response #12 regarding hazardous substances in Beneficial Use materials and General Response #4 regarding the coordination roles for agencies and local governments in the LCA Study.

Comment: **Junior Rodriguez** – Junior Rodriguez, St. Bernard Parish President, said that MRGO is very emotional issue for the people of the Parish. A lot of people probably did not come to the meeting because they are frustrated; those who did show up are the hard core. The people in Congress want to get their hands in the

pot. He hopes he does not have to say “I told you so” if a hurricane hits. He thanked everyone for coming.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: **Senator Greg Romero** – Senator Greg Romero, Chair of Senate Natural Resources Committee, said that since the beginning of the Breaux Act 14 years ago there has been study after study. The current plan does nothing to address the MRGO. There is nothing left out there as can be seen from the air. It is time to quit studying it and to do something.

Response: Comment noted. Please see General Response #1 regarding the proposed MRGO Restoration Feature.

Comment: **Mr. Charles Savoye** – Charles Savoye, CZAB, said that he is tired of all the meetings. The USACE has no common sense. He mentioned the floodgates in the area and wondered why it could not be done here. The USACE is concerned with economics but not about human life. A hurricane could cost 500–1,000 lives. He has taken three boatloads of decision makers to Bayou LaLoutre. The decision makers do not know much about Bayou La Loutre. Protecting human life is the most important thing.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: **Charles Savoye** – Charles Savoye, CZAB, said that the protection levee, which is supposed to be 17 feet above sea level sank so badly that in many places sheet piles were driven down the center of it. The main supports for the bridge over MRGO on Tide Road is now 200 feet out in the water; they used to be 150 feet on shore. There is 35 feet of water at the base of these main supports making them vulnerable to ship strikes. The bridge authority will not place fenders around the supports because the original plans did not call for them. That bridge, which is part of the evacuation route, is vulnerable to being hit. The MRGO is causing all of the problems and must go.

Response: Please see General Response #1 regarding the proposed MRGO Restoration Feature.

Comment: **Councilman Craig Toffard** – Councilman Craig Toffard, St. Bernard Parish Council, said that the Council passed a resolution that recognized the intent of using the rock structures to avoid the erosion of Lake Borgne, but questioned the sustainability of that project. Economic development, economic impact, wetland restoration, coastal restoration are all important issues but human life is the most important. He then read a prepared statement that said that the Parish government appreciates the public hearings in Chalmette and the diligent effort of those who worked on the study. They are concerned about the loss of wetlands, environmental deterioration and storm surge threat related to the MRGO. Closure of the MRGO and restoration of its damages remains their number one issue. The draft LCA report does not address the MRGO closure directly and specifically.

This deficiency should be remedied and a timetable for the closure and restoration process presented. They are also interested in restoring the marshes, bays, reefs, and barrier islands. St. Bernard Parish wants to have an active role and a voice in the decision making process. This pathway should be clearly defined in the program documents. The process should also include provisions for arbitration of issues. The people of St. Bernard have suffered losses as a result of the environmental damages and changes, much of which is a direct result of the MRGO. They hope for economic benefits of the program. They remain supportive of the objectives of the LCA Plan.

Response: Please see General Response #1 regarding the proposed MRGO Restoration Feature and General Response #8 regarding project implementation protocols and the need for immediate action and General Response #4 regarding the coordination roles for agencies and local governments in the LCA Study.

Comment: **Mr. Kenny Tucker** – Mr. Kenny Tucker, legislative assistant to Senator Walter Boasso, read Senator Boasso’s comments. Senator Boasso gave his generalized support to the LCA Plan. However, he wrote that the MRGO should be promptly closed to deep draft vessels.

Response: Please see General Response #1 regarding the proposed MRGO Restoration Feature.

Comment: **Ms. Marnie Winter** – Ms. Marnie Winter, Director of Jefferson Parish Environmental Department, said that she was attending on behalf of Parish President, Aaron Broussard. The plan represents an important first step. The Bush administration’s support of the \$1.9 billion plan is an indication that there is national awareness of the significance of Louisiana’s wetlands to the national energy supply, fisheries, the economy and general well being. The Myrtle Grove Diversion has been the Parish’s number one project since 1992. They also support the Barataria Basin Barrier Shoreline Restoration project. Also, the MRGO needs to be included in the LCA Plan.

Response: Please see General Response #1 regarding the proposed MRGO Restoration Feature.

2.2 PUBLIC MEETING #2: CAMERON, LOUISIANA (JULY 28, 2004)

2.2.1 Introduction

The meeting began at 6:30 P.M. Ms. Tina Horn, Cameron Parish Police Jury, asked everyone to introduce themselves (see below).

Mr. Troy Constance kicked off the meeting by giving a presentation accompanied by slides. He stated that the purpose of the meeting was to: 1) provide an overview of the study findings, 2) answer questions, and 3) receive official public comments. He then presented the meeting agenda. During the comment period the USACE would listen and not respond. The comments are incorporated into the final report. There were nine meetings held, including three outside the state (see **table 2**).

2.2.2 Attendees

In addition to members of the LCA PDT, approximately 30 people attended the meeting. The names of those who signed in and/or introduced themselves are:

Rodney Gilbeaux
Michael Harbison, LDWF
Jim Robinson, Port of Lake Charles
Charlie Athurton
Peggy Sullivan, Clean
Dennis Arnold, Vice President of Cameron Communications
Michael Tritico, RESTORE
Jacob Johnson, staff, Louisiana First District Congressman David Vitter
Ron Johnson, Chief Deputy, Cameron Sheriff's Department
Tom Jackson, Jefferson County Navigation District
Sam McGee, Cameron Parish Police Jury
Frank Garcia, USACE, Galveston District
Mr. Joe and Madelyn Gaspar, citizens, Rutherford Beach
Franklin Price, Cameron Parish
Bill Herke, retired biologist
Guthrie Perry, LDWF, Rockefeller Refuge
Ronnie Harper, Cameron Parish resident
Billy Dolan, Grand Chenier, District 5
David Richard, Stream Companies
Jim Robinson, Port of Lake Charles
Tom Hess, LDWF, Rockefeller Refuge
Rusty Wells, Cameron Parish citizen and independent biologist

Steve Reagan, USFWS
Jeremy Harper, American Wetlands
Myles Hebert, Cameron Parish Coastal Zone Administrator
Joy Merino, NMFS
Heather Warner-Finley, LDWF
Elizabeth Richard
Leslie Welch, Gravity Drainage #3
Dan Llewellyn, LDNR

2.2.3 Public Comments

The floor was opened to comments. Mr. Axtman facilitated the session and received the comments.

Comment: **Mr. Charlie Athurton** – Mr. Charlie Athurton said that there are no projects in Sub-Province 4. He has seen much loss of coast including the washing away of the beach highway. A large storm (Category 4 or 5) would be devastating to lives and the economy. The coast will never recover. An airplane ride will reveal all the open water. This project should beef up the Cameron coast. A hazardous waste storage facility (CWMI) could be affected. The USACE should do whatever is necessary to include projects that would prevent the Cameron coast from being breached in a category four or five storm.

Response: Comments noted. Please see General Response #11 regarding the number of proposed features in Subprovince 4.

Comment: **Mr. Charlie Athurton** – Mr. Charlie Athurton reiterated the need to build up the Cameron coast. The report does not discuss sustainment. There is a need for barrier islands. The Cameron coast is the barrier island for Calcasieu Parish.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: **Mr. Billy Doland** – Mr. Billy Doland, Chairman of Cameron District Number Five, said that they are in dire need to fund the Calcasieu lock. The worst enemy is a project from the north on Mermentau Basin. They have historically increased water levels from 1.5 to 2.3–2.4 feet. There is a push to increase the water levels even more to satisfy the rice, crawfishing, and navigation interests. Lowering the water levels would alleviate a lot of the erosion problems in the Mermentau Basin.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: **Mr. Allan Ensminger** – Mr. Allan Ensminger, resident of DeRidder, said that landowners are concerned with the amount of money in the science and technology program. He does not want this to turn into a WPA program for Ph.D. Twenty years ago, he worked on a diversion structure study for the Bonnet Carre spillway but it is still not on the drawing board. The diversion projects selected (Hope Canal

and Blind River) are insignificant. A meaningful structure in the Bonne Carre would help preserve the remaining habitat in the LeBranche Wetlands by alleviating some of the salinity encroachment through the MRGO. Land owners have lost almost a half a mile of the front side of Point Au Fer Island. It is good that consideration is being given to looking at more protection to Point Au Fer Island. There is a CWPPRA hydrologic restoration project there as well as the consideration of a small dredging project.

Response: Comment noted. Please see General Response #2 regarding the Science and Technology Program and see General Response #8 regarding project implementation protocols and the need for immediate action.

Comment: **Ms. Madelyn Gaspar** – Ms. Madelyn Gaspar, resident of Rutherford Beach, said that their beach is disappearing daily. Is this the result of the ship channel located about 15 miles away? Can a study be made? Can it be curbed? Can it be extended out so that the currents do not remove sand?

Response: The land loss experienced by Ms. Gaspar could be caused by a number of natural causes or human activities. Determining the exact cause of loss at this particular location is not within the scope of this effort. A discussion of the causes of coastal land loss and ecosystem degradation can be found in section 2.1 of the Main Report.

Comment: **Mr. Rodney Guilbeaux, Jr.** – Mr. Rodney Guilbeaux, Jr., resident of Constance Beach, agrees with David Richard, Mike Tritico, Charlie Athurton, and Billy Doland. Cameron Parish needs all the help it can get. He is enthused about the breakwater and sand management projects. The USACE should not leave them with an empty tray. He also asked Mr. Jacob Johnson to have the Washington people realize that this is the most important part of the state. The areas that need the most help are Rockefeller, Rutherford Beach, Cameron, Sabine, Calcasieu, and Oyster Bayou.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: **Mr. Lonnie Harper** – Mr. Lonnie Harper thanked the USACE for coming and said he would provide written comments.

Response: No response required.

Comment: **Mr. Tom Hess** – Mr. Tom Hess, Louisiana Department Wildlife and Fisheries, Rockefeller Refuge, said that he is encouraged by the Rockefeller Refuge demonstration project. The shoreline at the Refuge has an erosion rate of 37 feet per year while the shoreline area east of the Mermentau River has retreated at a rate of 28.5 feet per year for over 100 years. Approximately 110,000 acres of wetlands from Rollover Bayou west of the Mermentau River and north to State Highway 82 will be negatively impacted without some form of shoreline protection. The Gulf of Mexico shoreline has eroded in recent years damaging State Highway 82 from the west end of Holly Beach to Johnson's Bayou. The present rock breakwaters

and the recent sand refurbishment project are protecting the highway. Loss of the highway would be a socioeconomic loss to Cameron Parish, as well as cause damage to approximately 320,000 acres of wetlands north of Highway 82 to the Intracoastal Canal and the west of Highway 27 to the Sabine River.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: **Dr. Bill Herke** – Dr. Bill Herke, an American Fisheries Society Certified Fishery Scientist, said that the USACE report had misrepresented him by saying that he proposed the use of water and salinity control structures to reduce the marsh deterioration as well as to provide fish access. He then read a letter addressed to Mr. Bill Klein. In this letter Dr. Herke said that Mr. Klein had misinterpreted another letter dated 3 May 2004 in which Dr. Herke had commented on the structures proposed by the USACE. He pointed out that the use of such structures is controversial and that other scientists have shown that they may actually cause marsh loss if not designed properly. He did say if they are designed to mimic the natural hydrology they might help reduce marsh deterioration. Although he did not say so in that letter, this would be a long-term fisheries benefit. But the near term result would be a reduction in fisheries production. He would never say such structures would “provide fish access;” such structures almost always reduce fish access. He pointed out the complexity of designing structures so that fish access would be interfered with as little as possible. He further pointed out that it would be necessary to allow access 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and at all levels in the water column. He further pointed out that rock weirs would need to be designed so that the spaces between the rocks did not become plugged or they would eventually have the same negative effects on fisheries as a conventional fixed crest weir. He concluded by saying that if salinity control structures did not provide adequate fish ingress and egress, they could decimate fisheries production in the subprovince.

Response: The summary of Dr. Herke’s scoping comments has been revised to better reflect the intent of his scoping comment letter. “The use of water and salinity control structures are controversial and, if not properly designed, could cause marsh loss. If such structures were designed to mimic natural hydrology, they might help reduce marsh deterioration.” However, there is a complexity of designing structures so that fish access would be interfered with as little as possible. Dr. Herke believes it is necessary to allow fish access 24 hours a day, 365 days a year at all levels in the water column so that important species are not deprived access. Further, rock weirs need to be designed so that spaces between rocks do not become plugged or these structures would have the same deleterious effects on fisheries as a conventional fixed weir.

Comment: **Ms. Tina Horn** – Ms. Tina Horn, Cameron Parish Police Jury, said that they are losing large amounts of coast every year. During the last 2 years Rutherford Beach and the west side of Constance Beach have lost 40 feet. Since they are on the Chenier Plain, they should be treated special. Once the Chenier ridges are gone, there will be no Cameron Parish. The eastern end of the state has large projects. The 15 projects are not workable projects. This area has doable projects,

particularly since the soils will support the projects. Much can be done without studies. She has worked with CWPPRA, Coast 2050 and LCA and feels that they are going in reverse. Cameron Parish has less than 10,000 people and cannot compete politically. She is insulted by the LCA restoration plan

Response: Comment noted. Please see General Response #11 regarding the number of proposed features in Subprovince 4.

Comment: **Mr. Jacob Johnson** – Mr. Jacob Johnson, staff member for Rep. David Vitter, said that he is from Cameron Parish. He believes that Rep. Vitter will fight for Louisiana’s coastal protection. He then presented a letter from Rep. Vitter that demonstrated Rep. Vitter’s support for protecting the coast. In the letter, Rep. Vitter said that vital transportation routes, the nation’s busiest port system, and infrastructure important to the national energy supply are becoming vulnerable to the elements without protection of the wetlands. Also, millions of people are becoming more and more at risk from serious damage from hurricanes as the natural barriers to the storms disappear. As Louisiana’s only member on the House of Representatives Appropriation Committee, he vowed to steer Federal dollars to Louisiana to protect the coast. Work will begin in 2006 rather than 2008.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: **Mr. Guthrie Perry** – Mr. Guthrie Perry, Program Manager with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries at Rockefeller Refuge, said that he is happy that shoreline stabilization is getting attention. They lose 100 acres a year (or 1.5 football fields per week). He hopes the matching funds will be there. At the LCA meeting in Lake Charles, the USACE never mentioned the locks, Oyster Bayou, or the people just past the rocks at Holly Beach losing land.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: **Mr. David Richard** – Mr. David Richard, Stream Co, said that the USACE cannot say that there are no projects in western Louisiana that cannot be engineered and designed in 5 to 10 years. LCA took money from the planning project of Calcasieu lock and the replacement has been delayed again. It needs to move forward as part of the water management plan (navigation and flooding). There are three basins: the Mermantau, Calcasieu and Sabine. The upper Mermentau Basin needs to be studied. It will be hard to get political support in this district when none of the 15 projects are in Area 4. A number of projects along Sabine Lake need to be implemented through CWPPRA and LCA. Some small, important projects should be done: sediment transport across Calcasieu jetty, Mermentau jetty, Oyster Bayou (crucial to the perimeter plan for Calcasieu Lake), Kelso Bayou, Salt Ditch and Brannon Ditch, and the movement of water between the Calcasieu and Sabine Basin. Also needed is rock jettying along the intracoastal canal and major ship channels; there are a number of them on the intracoastal canal in regard to the Clear Marais project, the Perry Ridge project, the Perry Ridge West project, the Cameron Prairie project, and the rock work that has been done on the Calcasieu ship channel itself. It is a proven method that decreases the amount of dredging and erosion.

The East Sabine Lake CWPPRA project needs to be implemented. Lighthouse Bayou needs to be addressed. Black Bayou could be implemented with almost no engineering and design charge.

Response: As outlined in section 3 of the Main Report, the list of originally considered project features was subjected to a rigorous selection process to attain the final 15 projects that were selected for the TSP. Please also see General Response #5 regarding the 10-year planning horizon and General Response #11 regarding the number of proposed features in Subprovince 4.

Comment: **Ms. Peggy Sullivan** – Ms. Peggy Sullivan, Sulfur citizen, said that they cannot stand 10 more years of nothing being done for this section of coast.

Response: Please see General Response #5 regarding the 10-year planning horizon and General Response #8 regarding project implementation protocols and the need for immediate action.

Comment: **Mr. Michael Tritico** – Mr. Michael Tritico, RESTORE (Restore Explicit Symmetry To Our Ravished Earth), said that his organization would like to restore the coast to the way the Creator had it. He is glad to finally see a holistic approach. The USACE will not get much support from the residents unless the USACE does things beyond what was presented. It is good that there is one project near Rockefeller Refuge. There should be a reinstatement of the lock at Calcasieu Pass. The jetties at the mouth of the Calcasieu are causing the problems at Constance Beach and Long Beach. Building a breakwater and putting sand behind it simply moves the problem a little to the west towards Long Beach. New problems should not be created. The science and technology budget should include modeling of the reconfiguration of the Calcasieu Pass jetties to determine whether or not there would be a way to modify them to reduce erosion. The USACE should model the navigation, fishing and coastal habitat interests. A Category 4 or 5 storm would make all the projects moot. Sea level change is part of the problem. The relative rise in sea level is greater than the global average because of oil and gas withdrawals and faulting. That is going to make most of these projects unworkable even in the absence of a hurricane. The USACE should not throw away money in an area that sea level is going to wipe out anyway in the 25 years.

Response: Comments noted.

Comment: **Ms. Carolyn Woosley** – Ms. Carolyn Woosley, Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, said that they care about southeastern Louisiana. The LCA Plan seems to be based on doable scientifically proven projects. Are they getting any weighting commensurate with their loss? They have both coastal erosion and inland marsh loss. The salinity intrusion is causing the marsh loss. The area has the Strategic National Petroleum Reserves and LNG plants. There is also dredging of Sabine Pass and Calcasieu Ship Channel. They would like update meetings often. They need to go to Baton Rouge. Locks should be considered at Sabine and Calcasieu Passes. Texas should be considered, especially their water demand. The Galveston USACE should be involved.

Response: Please see General Response #11 regarding the number of proposed features in Subprovince 4 and General Response #3 regarding the LCA Study Area.

2.3 PUBLIC MEETING #3: BEAUMONT, TEXAS (JULY 29, 2004)

2.3.1 Introduction

The meeting began at 6:30 P.M.

Mr. Tim Axtman thanked everyone for coming. He introduced Mr. Dan Llewellyn, Louisiana Department of Natural Resources.

Mr. Axtman gave an introductory presentation accompanied by slides. He stated that the purpose of the meeting was to: 1) provide an overview of the study findings, 2) answer questions, and 3) receive official public comments. He then presented the meeting agenda. During the comment period the USACE would listen and not respond. The comments are incorporated into the final report. There were nine meetings, including three outside the state (see **table 2**).

2.3.2 Attendees

In addition to members of the LCA PDT, eight people attended the meeting:

Terry Stelly, TPWD

John Whittle, National Audubon Society

Wayne Stupka, Gulf Coast Rod and Reel and Gun Club

Paula Wise, USACE, Galveston District

John Sparks, Malcolm Pirnie

Bill Hughes, Sabine River Authority of Texas

Jim Brown, Sabine River Authority of Texas

Cynthia Mercer, teacher

Dan Llewellyn, LDNR

2.3.3 Public Comments

The floor was opened to comments. Mr. Axtman facilitated the session and received the comments.

Comment: **John Whittle** – John Whittle, Board of Directors of National Audubon Society, said that channelization and alternation of historic flows have caused Louisiana coasts and coastal wetlands to erode at an alarming rate. The coastal wetlands support birds and the seafood industry, and provide flood protection. It is practical to allow freshwater and sediment flows into the coastal systems such as the Atchafalaya. They support four of the five USACE early action projects:

- Bayou Lafourche Reintroduction

-
- Hope Canal Diversion to Maurepas Swamp
 - Myrtle Grove Diversion
 - Barataria Barrier Shoreline Restoration

They do not support the restoration of MRGO because it does not address the real problem. The MRGO canal is little used, is eroded well beyond its original dimensions, and causes saltwater intrusion into wetlands east of the river. The canal should be permanently closed.

They support the beneficial uses of dredged material. However, the sediments must be chemically tested for possible contaminants before being beneficially used.

All USACE projects should be reviewed and modified so that they do not conflict with coastal restoration. The USACE should develop a Science and Technology Program, reviewed and evaluated by an independent science board, to assess the benefits of different restoration methods and technologies

Response: Comments noted. Please see General Response #1 regarding the proposed MRGO Restoration Feature, General Response #12 regarding hazardous substances in Beneficial Use materials, General Response #4 regarding the coordination roles for agencies and local governments in the LCA Study, and General Response #2 regarding the Science and Technology Program.

2.4 PUBLIC MEETING #4: LAROSE, LOUISIANA (AUGUST 3, 2004)

2.4.1 Introduction

The meeting began at 6:30 pm. Mr. Kerry St. Pé, Director of the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program, welcomed everyone and recognized the following people in attendance:

State Senator Reggie Dupre

State Senator Craig Romero

Dr. Len Bahr, Governor's Office of Coastal Activities

Ms. Vanessa Abbott, representing State Representative Damon Baldone

Ms. Charlotte Randolph, Lafourche Parish President

Mr. Daniel Lorraine, Lafourche Parish Councilman

Mr. Brent Callais, Lafourche Parish Councilman

Colonel Peter Rowan kicked off the meeting by giving a presentation accompanied by slides. He stated that the purpose of the meeting was to: 1) provide an overview of the study findings, 2) answer questions, and 3) receive official public comments. This was the fourth of nine meetings including one in Texas, one in Mississippi, and one in Tennessee (see **table 2**).

Mr. Jon Porthouse, LDNR, conveyed the regrets of LDNR Secretary Scott Angelle, who was unable to attend the meeting. He thanked everyone for participating and encouraged everyone to not give up in the coastal restoration effort.

2.4.2 Attendees

In addition to members of the LCA PDT, approximately 40 people attended the meeting. Names of those who signed in are below:

Vanessa Abbott	E.J. Daigle	Charlotte Randolph
Jennifer Armand	Jerome Daigle	Ray Rhymes
Steve Arms	Brent Duet	Michael Rivere
Keith Bergeron	Reggie Dupre	Bobbie Rogers
Keith C. Bonvillain	Louise Dykes	Craig Romero
Reggie Bourg	Robert Gorman	Manuel Ruiz
Brent Callais	Richard P. "Dick" Guidry	Mark Schleifstein
Norby Chabert	Jonathan Hird	Kerry M. St. Pé
Kevin D. Chaisson, M.D.	Adele King	Neil Suard
Cally Chauvin	Perry LeBlanc	Billy Tauzin, III
Harry Cheramie	Daniel Lorraine	Eddie Tyler
Kirk Cheramie	Wayne Martin	Wendell E. Usie

Windell Curole
Doug Daigle

Randy Moertle
Alex Plaisance, Jr.

Troy Voisin
Cecil C. Watt, Jr.

2.4.3 Public Comments

The floor was opened to comments. Mr. Axtman facilitated the session. Colonel Rowan and Mr. Porthouse received the comments.

Comment: **Ms. Vanessa Abbott** – Ms. Vanessa Abbott, Legislative Assistant to Representative Damon J. Baldone – District 53, read a statement on his behalf. The recent expression of support by the President is greatly appreciated. The President’s budget acknowledged the national need of Louisiana’s coastal restoration and committed to supporting the USACE with a funding of \$1.9 billion through Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) authorization. While the recognition is appreciated, a much larger comprehensive program is needed to take immediate and aggressive action to implement large-scale restoration projects and provide continued dedicated funding from offshore oil and gas revenues. Louisiana is 20 years too late in implementing a comprehensive restoration program, and a near-term plan is not enough. The LCA near-term plan will not ensure the long-term survival of south Louisiana and will use valuable time, money, and resources that are necessary for a long-term comprehensive approach. Offshore oil and gas revenues must be reinvested in south Louisiana in order to continuously maintain the coast and protect nationally significant infrastructure.

Response: Comment noted. Please see General Response #5 regarding the 10-year planning horizon and see General Response #8 regarding project implementation protocols and the need for immediate action.

Comment: **Ms. Jennifer Armand** – Ms. Jennifer Armand, Interning Director of Restore & Retreat, advocates comprehensive restoration for the area experiencing the highest rate of land loss, the Barataria-Terrebonne Basin. On behalf of Restore & Retreat, she thanked the USACE and LDNR for compiling the Draft LCA Report and conducting the series of public meetings. She also thanked President Bush and his Administration for supporting the authorization of the \$1.9 billion plan in WRDA 2004. Restore & Retreat believes that Louisiana’s coastal restoration needs far exceed the near-term plan. Immediate and aggressive long-term action is required. The organization is pleased to see the inclusion of a feasibility study for the Third Delta Project in the near-term plan. The Barataria and Terrebonne Basins represent 60 percent of the entire state’s land loss, and the Third Delta Project will help build land in these areas. Funding for the feasibility study must be expedited through the USACE’s budget process. Restore & Retreat also supports the Bayou Lafourche Reintroduction project, modification of the Davis Pond project, barrier island restoration projects, pipeline sediment diversion demonstrations, and redistribution of Atchafalaya River water to northern Terrebonne marshes. All of these projects combined offer the Barataria and Terrebonne Basins an opportunity to maintain existing coastal resources and establish a natural systemic process for sustaining the

coast in the long term. A comprehensive coastal restoration plan and funding is needed now to match the magnitude of the coastal land loss problems.

Response: Comment noted. The Third Delta Study is a component of the TSP as a study on long-term, large-scale restoration concepts. It will undergo standard authorization. Please see General Response #8 regarding project implementation protocols and the need for immediate action and General Response #10 regarding proposed LCA funding.

Comment: **Mr. Reggie Bourg** – Mr. Reggie Bourg thanked the USACE for coming to Larose and allowing residents to make comments. He looks at the concept of coastal restoration as offensive and defensive. The most important thing for the community is hurricane protection and preserving the property, culture, and heritage. He recommends taking a defensive move to protect what we have and dedicate resources for hurricane protection for the short-term. If a freshwater diversion project is chosen for the area, a more detailed environmental impact study should be conducted to address the environment and economics in the area. The sections in the LCA report dealing with commercial fishing are not in-depth enough. If the whole project cannot be funded and moved forward then the project should not be funded at all, and alternative theories should be developed to provide protection.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: **Mr. Chad Bourgeois** – Mr. Chad Bourgeois said that 5 to 10 years is too long and that a timeline of 18 months or faster is needed. He understands that the process involved is complex, but there are people's lives, houses, and land at stake. It is critical to get moving on this and stop dumping silt off the Continental Shelf. It is time to stop studying and start doing something.

Response: Comment noted. Please see General Response #8 regarding project implementation protocols and the need for immediate action and General Response #2 regarding the Science and Technology Program.

Comment: **Mr. Brent Callais** – Mr. Brent Callais was called but left the meeting before making official comments.

Response: No response required.

Comment: **Dr. Kevin Chaisson** – Dr. Kevin Chaisson thanked the USACE for the grand overview presentation but prefers more specifics as far as the nature and cause of the situation as well as the realistic expectations in the future. It will probably take 15 years before anything will produce a significant change from what is seen today and another 30 to 40 years before there are any significant accomplishments in this region. Any restoration program for the Lafourche Basin should include consideration of the bottleneaking problems that exist in the northern and middle sections of the parish.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: **Ms. Cally Chauvin** – Ms. Cally Chauvin, teacher for the Lafourche Parish School Board, is working on the Lafourche Parish Coastal Zone Resource Education booklet. She said that the use of maps in the plan is excellent, but that some of the terminology and writing is very hard to understand. She is helping to educate children in Lafourche Parish, and the children are very concerned about what is going on. Ten years is a long time; something needs to be done immediately. There are a lot of people willing to help.

Response: Comment noted. Please see General Response #8 regarding project implementation protocols and the need for immediate action.

Comment: **Mr. Windell Curole** – Mr. Windell Curole said that this is not a future problem, it is happening now. He showed a picture of Leeville on the cover of the telephone book and said that it was disheartening to see open water on the side of LA 1. In 2001, residents drank saltwater from their faucets and tasted the coastal problem. Storm surges are moving further north and causing problems that had not occurred before. A floodgate designed for closure only during hurricanes has to be closed 2 to 3 times a month. While the projects are supported, they will not help people in southern parts of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Lafourche, and Terrebonne Parishes. The communities of Golden Meadow and Galliano would not exist if it were not for the hurricane protection system. If communities are to exist in south Louisiana in the future, a decision must be made concerning which communities can be economically protected by levees and which ones cannot. Plans are needed for the futures or lack of futures for communities in south Louisiana.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: **Mr. Doug Daigle** – Mr. Doug Daigle, Mississippi River Basin Alliance, said his organization strongly supports the restoration of the coast and delta. He said that written comments from his organization published in the Draft LCA Report incorrectly stated that his organization wanted to see the Inner Harbor Navigational Canal Locks completed before the year 2013. The Mississippi River Basin Alliance actually said that it was unacceptable to postpone dealing with the MRGO before the projected date of 2013. The people of Louisiana need to understand that the WRDA bill is large and complex and contains many issues of national interest that do not have anything to do with Louisiana's coast but will determine whether or not the bill passes. The WRDA bill contains the proposed expansion of the lock and dam system on the upper Mississippi, which is opposed by some environmental and taxpayer organizations. The fate of the bill rests on things that do not have anything to do with Louisiana's coast but do have to do with the Mississippi River Basin. The upper Mississippi River Basin requested \$8.4 billion for ecological restoration, while Louisiana requested \$14 billion for restoration. Louisiana's problem is a crisis. Negotiations with the upper basin need to begin, and if WRDA does not pass, then a stand-alone bill for the basin is needed. The only sizable sum of money Louisiana will get at the Federal level is from offshore oil revenues.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: **Mr. Jerome Daigle** – Mr. Jerome Daigle was called but left the meeting before making official comments.

Response: No response required.

Comment: **Senator Reggie Dupre** – Senator Reggie Dupre, State Senator, District 20, said that the authorization and ultimate appropriations for LCA will depend on the long-term survival of roughly 80 percent of his legislative district. He represents about 120,000 residents of south Louisiana, and more than half of the coastal land loss occurs in his district. He believes that \$1.9 billion is not sufficient for Louisiana's restoration needs, but recognizes the need to start somewhere. The LCA Plan is the largest authorization considered in the current WRDA. Coastal restoration is the new kid on block, as WRDA is generally done for flood protection and navigation interests. The \$90 million proposed for coastal diversion projects is critical. In November 2000, Lafourche Parish residents were drinking saltwater for three weeks. He supports use of a bypass channel around Donaldsonville and increasing the scope of the Bayou Lafourche project to include Bayou Terrebonne. The worst area is between Bayou Lafourche and Bayou Petite Calliou in Terrebonne Parish. This area is the most starved for freshwater sediments. He is concerned that several of the near-term critical restoration features are to be submitted to Congress for standard authorization in future WRDA bills. He suggested having an alternative in the event that a WRDA is not passed in the future. Normal permitting procedures should be allowed for big projects such as the barrier islands and other projects could be done as in CWPPRA. He is pleased the USACE is now thinking outside the box and looking at using other projects for beneficial environmental uses, in particular the Houma Navigational Canal Locks and Morganza to the Gulf. Another possibility is the use of the Larose floodgate as a feature to divert water east and west to the wetlands. He fully supports the Third Delta Conveyance Channel project, and there is a practical need to consider reserving right-of-ways. Other projects such as Donaldsonville to the Gulf, the north/south hurricane evacuation corridor highway, and Morganza to the Gulf need to be included in the planning component. It is ironic that the LCA Plan of \$14 billion is going to ultimately be the second largest public works project undertaken by the USACE. The largest was the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet (MRGO), which has caused most of the problems discussed at this meeting. A cost-share of 85/15 sounds better than 65/35.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: **Mr. Richard Guidry** – Mr. Richard Guidry was called but left the meeting before making official comments.

Response: No response required.

Comment: **Mr. Daniel Lorraine** – Mr. Daniel Lorraine was called but left the meeting before making official comments.

Response: No response required.

Comment: **Mr. Randy Moertle** – Mr. Randy Moertle, on behalf of Biloxi Marshlands Corporation and Lake Eugene Development Company in St. Bernard Parish, fully supports the construction of rock breakwaters along the entire north bank of the MRGO. Speaking on behalf of Avery Island, Inc., McIlhenny Resources, Miller Estate and the Vermilion Parish Police Jury, he is concerned that the 15 critical restoration features do not include the western part of Louisiana. Projects such as Southwest Pass and Vermilion Bay would have worked well with the LCA Plan. His clients represent 600,000 acres of coastal wetlands, and the landowners need to be actively included in the planning process. Most of the coastal wetlands are privately owned.

Response: Comment noted. Please see General Response #11 regarding the number of proposed features in Subprovince 4.

Comment: **Mr. Alex Plaisance** – Mr. Alex Plaisance echoed comments made by Senator Dupre, Senator Romero, and President Randolph. He said that Coast 2050 scientists predict that by 2050, Grand Isle and Leeville will be 2 feet underwater. This means that within the next 5 to 15 years, Grand Isle and Leeville will likely be 2 inches underwater. Both places will be lost. There have been CWPPRA projects that are faster than the near-term projects. He commended the USACE for taking these meetings out of state because it is necessary to get the rest of the country to realize the predicament in Louisiana. He believes the Federal government should pay 90 percent and the State pay 10 percent of the cost-share.

Response: Comment noted. Please see General Response #5 regarding the 10-year planning horizon and see General Response #8 regarding project implementation protocols and the need for immediate action.

Comment: **Ms. Charlotte Randolph** – Ms. Charlotte Randolph, Lafourche Parish President, thanked the USACE for hosting the meeting. The most important project to Lafourche Parish is the reintroduction of freshwater from the Mississippi River into Bayou Lafourche. Use of a bypass channel would be more economically beneficial to the project. Since the project is an offshoot of CWPPRA, much has already been studied and this should expedite the process. In the long-term, the Bayou Lafourche project could become part of the Third Delta Conveyance Channel. Saltwater intrusion into Bayou Lafourche is a concern, and sediment build-up is crucial to the lower end of Lafourche Parish, where the basis of the economy is located. The oil and gas infrastructure must be protected. She would like to see the fast track become 18 months to 3 years instead of 5 to 10 years. Lafourche Parish belongs to a 19-parish organization called Parishes Against Coastal Erosion (PACE). The Congressional leaders understand Louisiana's problem; the rest of the country does not. All it takes is one large storm to hit the area, and there will be no need for studies because there will be nothing left and 45,000 to 100,000 people will be homeless. It is necessary to get the projects off the ground and funded as quickly as possible.

Response: Comment noted. Please see General Response #5 regarding the 10-year planning horizon and see General Response #8 regarding project implementation protocols and the need for immediate action.

Comment: **Mr. Michael Rivere** – Mr. Michael Rivere was called but left the meeting before making official comments.

Response: No response required.

Comment: **Mr. Bobbie Rogers** – Mr. Bobbie Rogers was called but left the meeting before making official comments.

Response: No response required.

Comment: **Senator Craig Romero** – Senator Craig Romero, representing Iberia and St. Martin Parishes and Chairman of the Center for Natural Resources Committee, said that 14 years ago when CWPPRA came into being, the State of Louisiana was not happy with the proposal and requested a blueprint. Then several years later, a white paper was developed followed by the Coast 2050 plan. After all those plans, blueprints, and white papers, how much time and money has been spent on studying the coast of Louisiana? Why are no projects of any significance being built? He was told that money would need to be appropriated for a study in order to determine the answers to these questions. Senator Reggie Dupre helped pass a bill in the Louisiana legislature that will expedite the process of getting control of land to protect and preserve the coast. Rights-of-way can take more time than actual construction. He urged the USACE and LDNR to build some projects; its been studied long enough.

Response: Comment noted. Please see General Response #8 regarding project implementation protocols and the need for immediate action and General Response #6 regarding the relationship of CWPPRA and LCA.

Comment: **Mr. Kerry St. Pé** – Mr. Kerry St. Pé, Director of the Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary Program (BTEP), submitted comments on behalf of the BTEP. The BTEP has been frustrated by the studies and additional plans. A restoration plan should contain ecological and human components. The BTEP recognizes that changes must occur but question the magnitude of those changes. The human component is often overlooked. Success is built upon engineering and science, and it is imperative that communities and culture be considered. Large-scale, uncontrolled water diversions or any restoration tool that would completely eradicate the way of life for a significant sector of the population is not in agreement with the BTEP plan, specifically the Myrtle Grove Diversion. The BTEP supports diversions, but believes they are protective strategies with minimal land building capacity. The BTEP agrees that preventing future land loss is important, but this strategy emphasizes protection rather than actual restoration. The national estuary is in desperate need of sediments. Delivery of river sediments via pipeline is a viable restoration tool that is important to restoring the system. The BTEP strongly

advocates the use of newly constructed pipelines to deliver sediment from the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers and believe this technique should be at the top of the restoration tool chest. Dedicated dredging would be publicly acceptable and is done in Port Fourchon at a cost of 93 cents per cubic yard. The essential and critical difference between sediment delivery and water diversion is that the pipeline sediment system actually restores the system and addresses the question of sustainability. The BTEP understands that there are limited funds and believes that incorporated pipeline sediment delivery in this restoration effort is realistically the only way that the system can be restored in the near-term. It is a start, but the level of effort proposed in this plan is not enough to ensure sustainability of communities.

Response: Comment noted. Socioeconomic and cultural resources are discussed in section 2.2.3 of the Main Report and sections 3 and 4 of the FPEIS. The rigorous process used to develop the TSP included sorting potential restoration features based on timing of construction, scientific and engineering understanding, and independence of the project. Critical needs criteria were that the feature prevent or potentially restore land loss, restore impaired deltaic function through river reintroductions, restore or preserve critical geomorphic structure, and protect vital socioeconomic resources. Please see General Response #9 regarding sediment transport via pipeline.

Comment: **Mr. Billy Tauzin, III** – Mr. Billy Tauzin, III, said that it was significant that this meeting is held in an evacuation shelter and emphasizes the fact that citizens are susceptible to hurricanes. He encouraged the USACE to listen to local residents who know the area and can provide valuable input. The USACE should continue to look at solutions that have multi-purpose outcomes, such as beneficial dredging and diversion projects.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: **Mr. Wendell Usie** – Mr. Wendell Usie, representing a group of Terrebonne Parish citizens, said that the USACE helped out Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes by constructing levees after the floods in 1927. No one knew it would cause land loss. Then the oil companies came in, cut canals, and left, and this caused erosion in the marsh areas. The Houma Navigation Canal introduced saltwater into freshwater ponds and bayous. He commended the USACE for doing their best to restore what has happened after the levees were installed. The oil companies, barge, and shipping industries must be held accountable and take part in the restoration effort. The USACE needs to do a better job of selling the plan to citizens. He found out about the meeting last week and did not think many people knew about it. The meetings should have been better publicized. The idea of trying to stop saltwater intrusion from the south by introducing freshwater from the north sounds ridiculous, but is one of the ideas the USACE has to sell to everyone.

Response: Comment noted. Notifications of the availability of the DPEIS were published in the *Federal Register* and a 45-day comment period was provided. The Notice of Availability was mailed to over 3,000 interested parties, including libraries,

Federal, state, and local agencies, radio, television, and newsprint media. Nine public meetings covering 3 states were conducted having previously been announced in local newspapers, radio and television in multiple states.

Comment: **Mr. Troy Voisin** – Mr. Troy Voisin said that one source reported that it took 7,000 years to build the deltas while another source said that it took 200 million years to create the deltas. He feels that all of the \$1.9 billion should be put into the barrier islands to stop saltwater intrusion and let nature take care of the freshwater diversion.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: **Mr. Cecil Watt** – Mr. Cecil Watt, Jr., said that there are sand pits along LA 1. This has been going on for years by State permits. He added that people are willing to do anything, even little insignificant things like dumping a bucket of rocks in certain places every time they travel up and down the bayou. People are not exactly frustrated; they are just ready to do something.

Response: Comment noted.

2.5 NEW IBERIA, LOUISIANA PUBLIC MEETING (AUGUST 4, 2004)

2.5.1 Introduction

The meeting began at 6:40 P.M. Mr. Judge Edwards, President of Vermilion Corporation and Chairman of the Vermilion Parish Coastal Restoration Advisory Committee, and Mr. William Kyle, Chairman of the Iberia Parish Coastal Restoration Advisory Committee, welcomed everyone in attendance.

Colonel Peter Rowan thanked everyone for coming out and kicked off the meeting by giving a presentation accompanied by slides. He stated that the purpose of the meeting was to: 1) provide an overview of the study findings, 2) answer questions, and 3) receive official public comments. The comment period extended through August 23, 2004. This was the fifth of nine meetings. Three of the meetings were held out of state (see **table 2**).

Secretary Scott Angelle, LDNR, thanked Colonel Rowan for the fantastic job he has done. Secretary Angelle complimented everyone for attending. There is starting to be an appreciation of the efforts by people in Louisiana. Poll numbers are starting to show that coastal restoration is a major issue and is comparable with healthcare and education. He complimented Congressman Billy Tauzin, State Senator Craig Romero, Senator John Breaux, Congressman David Vitter, and Senator Mary Landrieu for working very hard on the coastal erosion problem. The near-term plan is a down payment to a long-term deal. He thanked the Governor's Advisory Committee for doing a magnificent job. While testifying in Washington, D.C., before the Senate, he heard other senators saying that something special needs to be done for Louisiana. Louisiana is starting to marshal efforts and speak with a clear voice to let everyone know that this is of national importance. Thirty percent of the energy that is consumed in this country passes through Louisiana's wetlands. On behalf of Governor Blanco, he thanked everyone for attending.

2.5.2 Attendees

In addition to members of the LCA PDT, approximately 40 people attended the meeting. Names of those who signed in are below:

Scott Angelle	Jean Cowan	Dale Palmer	Sherrill Sagrera
Len Bahr	Bob Dew	Acaroc Parsons	E.R. "Smitty" Smith
Ted Beaulieu	Daniel Edgar	Donald A. Pavyoed	Jacques Soileau
Shelley Beville	Judge Edwards	Steven Peyronnin	Billy Tauzin, III
Brit Busch	Monique Edwards	Cynthia Poland	Gayle C. Tauzin
Ron Boustany	Pat Forbes	Jon Porthouse	Glen Thomas
Norby Chabert	Chad Hardy	Gina Prince	Barry Wilson

Archie Chaisson, Jr.
Darryl Clark
Chad Courville

Paul Kemp
William Kyle
Joy Merino

Terrell Rabalais
Stanley Richardson
Craig Romero

Scott Wilson

2.5.3 Public Comments

The floor was opened to comments. Mr. Axtman facilitated the session. Colonel Rowan and Secretary Angelle received the comments.

Comment: **Mr. Ted Beaulieu** – Mr. Ted Beaulieu, Acadiana Bay Association, is very happy that an Acadiana Bay estuarine restoration study made the cut. On behalf of the Governor’s Advisory Committee, he thanked everyone who traveled to Washington, D.C. to attend and present testimonies at the Senate hearings. He said that the proper use of the Mississippi River water is the answer to Louisiana’s problems. The Mississippi River has inhabited seven different courses in the last 100 years in building Louisiana’s coastal zone. The oldest Mississippi River bed occupied a course from the Cypremort-Bayou Salle area directly into Vermilion Bay. The sixth riverbed occupied a course known as the Lafourche/Mississippi course, and this channel occupation had a tremendous effect on the coastline west of the river mouth. He is disappointed that more emphasis was not placed on Louisiana fisheries in the LCA report. The Mississippi River waters present a double-edged sword. The land building that is occurring in the Atchafalaya Delta is desperately needed in the Terrebonne and Barataria marshes. However, there are problems caused by diverting river waters for land building, which has caused devastation to the estuaries and fisheries in the 475,512 acres in the Vermilion/Atchafalaya Bay complex. Restoration of Point Chevreuil Reef as a near-term project would prove that land building and Louisiana’s valuable fisheries can coexist in rebuilding Louisiana’s coast.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: **Mr. Brit Busch** – Mr. Brit Busch, representing Acadiana Bay, is a camp holder at Cypremort Point. Over the past 12 years, he has witnessed some bad things that are a direct result of the Wax Lake Outlet. In 1988, rocks were placed in the Wax Lake Outlet. Even though the rocks only stayed there for 4 years, it was four of the best years for fisherman. He agrees with Mr. Daniel Edgar that this plan does not address the economic effect of camp owners, recreational fisherman, sports fisherman, and all other commercial people. The economic effect should be higher on the priority list.

Response: Comment noted. Section 2 in the Main Report and section 3 and 4 in the FPEIS address socioeconomic issues on a broad scale. Socioeconomic issues will be considered on a project-by-project basis as each feature is implemented.

Comment: **Mr. Daniel Edgar** – Mr. Daniel Edgar, Owner of St Mary Seafood and member of the Acadiana Bay Association, said that he supports doing something to stop the land loss. There is economic damage to the commercial and recreational south

central Louisiana. In the western part of the state, 45–50 charter boats are lined up to buy bait shrimp because the salinity is decent and there are a lot of fish. There is also a thriving charter boat industry in the eastern part of the state. In the central part of state, there are two charter boat fishermen. His business usually buys 1–1.5 million pounds of crabs a year. In 2000 when there was a drought and not a lot of river water, he purchased 5.8 million pounds. He believes that the colors on the land loss map should represent loss of money instead of loss of land. He asked that economic impacts be considered when studies are done in the future and money is appropriated. He knows that the Atchafalaya Spillway had to be built, but is caused economic damage to the Acadiana Bay system. When the Caernarvon project was opened at New Orleans, oyster fisherman went to court because some oysters were killed. All of the water that is being sent into the Acadiana Bay system is causing an economic problem.

Response: Comment noted. Socioeconomic issues will be considered on a project-by-project basis as each feature is implemented.

Comment: **Mr. Judge Edwards** – Mr. Judge Edwards, with the Governor’s Coastal Restoration Advisory Committee, said that this is a complex and passionate issue with many people and is not an easy problem. Twenty years ago, 35 square miles of coast was lost each year. Now, that number has slowed to 25 square miles a year. LCA is a dream and is suppose to be the ideas and extension of the CWPPRA. A lot of the larger and more far reaching projects deal with reintroducing the river to marshes on the eastern side of the State. The government should empower the private sector to do what cannot be done through LCA because of budgetary constraints. He encouraged the State and the USACE to consider general permits to allow the general public to implement projects that fit with the strategy of the LCA Plan, such as small diversions, shoreline restoration, bayou reintroduction, dedicated dredging, maintaining land bridges, and stabilizing the gulf shoreline. Beneficial uses of dredge material includes creating new marsh and protecting existing marsh through maintaining spoil banks. A typical USACE project takes 20 years from design to completion depending on the size and scope of the project. We need to begin the smaller stuff today. We are all trying to grapple with what is the best use of our natural resource.

Response: Please see General Response #8 regarding project implementation protocols and the need for immediate action.

Comment: **Dr. Donald Pavyoed** – Dr. Donald Pavyoed was called but had to leave the meeting early. His comments from the Question and Answer period will be considered as official comments and are summarized as follows.

Dr. Donald Pavyoed talked about Weeks Bay, which is not specifically in the LCA near-term plan. The shell industry business took all of the coast away. It was hard to convince anybody, including the USACE, that this was bad business and bad ecology. The Weeks Bay project is not part of the near-term plan and has been kicked around between the different agencies. Dr. Pavyoed is very disappointed in what Senator Craig Romero has done with Weeks Bay. When will something be

done about the deterioration in Weeks Bay? The Goodrich family owns the property that is being lost, and they wanted to spend money to fix the problem but the LDNR did not allow them. The State of Louisiana was at fault for not letting the Goodrich family repair the erosion. Why can we not fix something as simple as Weeks Bay be?

Response: Weeks Bay is currently being considered under CWPPRA program and may ultimately be considered under the Large-Scale and Long-Term Acadiana Bay Estuarine Restoration Study.

Comment: **Senator Craig Romero** – Senator Craig Romero was elected Iberia Parish President in 1984. Iberia Parish is the biggest sugar-producing parish in the state bringing in \$90 million per year, while St. Martin Parish sugar farmers produce \$70 million per year. In 1984, the USACE was asked to dredge Bayou Teche to aid in the transport of raw sugar to refineries. The bayou did not get dredged until last year and only because Senator John Breaux got involved. The Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet (MRGO) is destroying Plaquemines and St. Bernard Parishes in term of coastal restoration. The USACE is refusing to listen to the people to do something and slow down the erosion. In Lafourche Parish, saltwater is getting into the public water system. On Pecan Island, 40 cattle died from saltwater ingestion. A set of rocks were put in Morgan City, but the USACE ripped the rocks out and this is why there are ecological problems in Acadiana Bay estuary system today. Now most of the problems in Acadiana Bay are because of the USACE.

Response: Comment noted. Please see General Response #1 regarding the proposed MRGO Restoration Feature.

Comment: **Mr. Sherrill Segrera** – Mr. Sherrill Segrera said that agriculture is a very important economic benefit to the central part of the state, and high salinity is a detriment to that industry. He wanted to point out an alternative in the western side of Southwest Pass, but it was not shown on the maps. Mr. Constance replied that some alternatives that were discussed previously were not able to be included in the near-term plan. These projects will hopefully be resurrected in the future in some longer-termed studies.

Response: Please see General Response #11 regarding the number of proposed features in Subprovince 4.

Comment: **Mr. Smitty Smith** – Mr. Smitty Smith, President of Louisiana Wildlife Federation, commended the USACE on the scientific program. He hopes that there will be safeguards so scientists can work without political pressure. He is glad to see this getting started. It is time to quit talking and start making things happen.

Response: Comment Noted.

Comment: **Mr. Billy Tauzin, III** – Mr. Billy Tauzin, III thanked the USACE and other agencies for coming together to make the LCA Report possible. He also thanked everyone for coming out to support LCA. The comprehensive LCA Plan will be

the first round in a long fight to save our coast. Right-of-ways of private landowners whose property will be affected by projects must be addressed immediately. Also, the first fund allocations must be used effectively and efficiently. He applauds the authorization to modify the Davis Pond project to optimize marsh creation and supports future multi-purpose operations of the Houma Navigation Canal Lock. The beneficial use of dredge material has the potential to reclaim lost land immediately and has been successful in the private sector for years. Every cubic yard of dredge material that comes from construction of the deepwater access channel to the Port of Iberia is needed to protect and restore the coast. The beneficial use of dredge material should be one of the highest priorities. The time for crisis is now, and the time for study is over. There is still a long way to go in trying to save the wetlands.

Response: Please see General Response #5 regarding the 10-year planning horizon and General Response #8 regarding project implementation protocols and the need for immediate action and General Response #2 regarding the Science and Technology Program.

2.6 MANDEVILLE, LOUISIANA PUBLIC MEETING (AUGUST 5, 2004)

2.6.1 Introduction

The meeting began at 6:30 P.M. Mandeville Mayor Eddie Price welcomed the USACE to Mandeville. In his welcome, Mayor Price said that eight years ago, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) told the City of Mandeville that there were bad emissions from the City's sewage treatment plant into Lake Pontchartrain. In response to this, the City put together a \$2 million plan to utilize wetlands designed to treat the sewage rather than build a \$15 million mechanical treatment plant. After discussing this solution, Mayor Price noted that the wetlands plan has saved the City \$600,000 a year in energy costs and brought emission levels down. The mayor also noted that the USACE assisted in the process because the City was contemplating a wetlands assimilation program for 1,200 acres to the west that had been badly depleted by saltwater intrusion. By working together, he said that the marsh has grown ten times to be what it is today. In closing, Mayor Price thanked the USACE and everyone for attending.

Colonel Peter Rowan, District Engineer for the USACE New Orleans District, set the stage for the format of the meeting and gave a presentation accompanied by slides. The purpose of the meeting was to: 1) provide an overview of the study findings, 2) answer any questions regarding the report, and 3) receive official public comments. The comment period extended through August 23, 2004. This is the sixth of nine meetings. Three of the meetings were held out of state so that people outside of the Louisiana coastal zone could become aware of the problem (see **table 2**).

Mr. Dan Llewellyn, Coastal Restoration Division of the LDNR, welcomed everyone for attending and participating. This is the first step down a long road to restore coastal Louisiana.

2.6.2 Attendees

In addition to members of the LCA PDT, approximately 40 people attended the meeting. Names of those who signed in are below:

Gary Allen, UNO

Ruth Allen

Len Bahr, Governor's Office

Thoma Bjerstedt, USMMS

Richard Boyd, *Times-Picayune*

Peggy Breland, Vitter for Senate

Barry Brupbacher, DMJM & Harris

Deborah D. Caraway

Doug Daigle, Mississippi River Basin Alliance
Barbara Dodds, League of Women Voters, St. Tammany
Beverly Etheridge, USEPA
Kelly Fitzmaurice, Advocates for Smart Growth
Charles Floca
Priscilla Floca, Earthworks
Pat Forbes, GOCA
Mark Ford, Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana
Heather Gordon, Pontchartrain Inst. (UNO)
Catherine Grouchy, USFWS
Lynn Haase
Dennis Jones
Maurice Jordan, Tangipahoa Parish Council
Joan Lanier, USACE
John D. Zach Lea
Michael P. Lockwood, Jordan, Jones & Gaulding
John Lopez, LPBF
Jens Lorenz, SELF
Edward “Bubby” Lyons
Jill Mastrototuro, Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation
Loretto O’Reilly, Jr., Abita Springs Landscape Commission and Advocates for Smart Growth
Jeanene Peckham, USEPA
Ann Pettit, LWVNO
R. Barry Pierce, PBQD
Manuel Ruiz, LDWF
Ron Sanders, Levitron
Hazel Sinclair
James Sinclair, USMMS
Cindy S. Steyer, USDA-NRCS
William C. Sullivan
Randy Waesche
Linda Walker, League of Women Voters
Rick Wilke

2.6.3 Public Comments

The floor was opened to comments. Mr. Axtman facilitated the session. Colonel Rowan and Mr. Llewellyn received the comments.

Comment: **Ms. Peggy Breland** – Ms. Peggy Breland, Vitter for Senate, read a statement from State Congressman David Vitter. Restoring Louisiana’s coastal wetlands is vital to the State, not only because of the massive amounts of land being lost, but because of transportation routes and infrastructure important to the nation’s energy supply that are becoming vulnerable to the elements without the protection of the wetlands. More people are becoming at risk from hurricanes because of the disappearing natural barriers. It will take a strong commitment from the entire state to combat this problem. The near-term approach is only the beginning of efforts to save Louisiana’s coast.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: **Mr. Doug Daigle** – Mr. Doug Daigle, Mississippi River Basin Alliance, said that comments made by his organization during the scoping process were incorrectly recorded in the draft report. The Mississippi River Basin Alliance did not state that they wanted the Inner Harbor Navigation Lock completed by 2013. He commended the USACE and the LCA team for their work in putting together the near-term plan. The WRDA is large and complex. There are provisions in WRDA that do not have anything to do with coastal Louisiana but will affect whether the bill passes or not. The WRDA bill includes the proposed expansion of the lock and dam system on the upper Mississippi River basin, which will cost billions. The WRDA bill also includes provisions for how the USACE operates in terms of accountability measures and an ambitious ecological restoration of the upper Mississippi River basin. It is important for the public to understand that some of these other issues may determine the fate of the WRDA bill. Louisiana Senators need to work towards a compromise to get the bill passed.

Response: Comment noted. The summary of Mr. Daigle’s scoping comments has been revised to better reflect the intent of his comment.

Comment: **Mr. Mark Ford** – Mr. Mark Ford was called but did not wish to make any comments.

Response: No response required.

Comment: **Mr. Dennis Jones** – Mr. Dennis Jones, Archaeologist, talked about the environmental impact on cultural resources and referred to the picture on page 5 of an overview that showed an eroding cemetery. Whatever happens with coastal erosion, prehistoric and historic sites will be impacted. There needs to be a comprehensive effort made to document the cultural resources that are within the entire coastal zone.

Response: Comment noted. Please see Historic and Cultural Resources in the final EIS, chapter 3.16. Furthermore, additional information will be obtained related to cultural resources during the implementation portion of each restoration feature.

Comment: **Ms. Jill Mastrototuro** – Ms. Jill Mastrototuro, Environmental Coordinator with the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, thanked all of the agencies for all the

work and effort they have done. This plan is very good in identifying and describing the problem that is occurring in the Pontchartrain Basin. The Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation supports the small diversion at Hope Canal, which suffers from subsidence as well as saltwater intrusion due to the MRGO. She acknowledged that while rock dikes are needed to prevent the breakthrough of Lake Borgne with the MRGO, this actual feature is mitigation and not restoration. The public has worked tirelessly in their effort to close the MRGO. Closure of the MRGO is defined as the elimination of the channel maintenance dredging, relocation of the three remaining MRGO facilities serviced by deep draft ships, and the construction of a navigation structure. The LCA Plan must include public input and support to close the MRGO. She agreed with Ms. Linda Walker that there is a need to balance environmental permitting of wetlands. In St. Tammany Parish, 48,000 acres of wetlands have been paved over in the last 18 years due to development.

Response: Comment noted. Please see General Response #1 regarding the proposed MRGO Restoration Feature.

Comment: **Mr. Loretto O'Reilly, Jr.** – Mr. Loretto O'Reilly, Jr., was called but declined to give comments.

Response: No response required.

Comment: **Ms. Hazel Sinclair** – Ms. Hazel Sinclair commended the effort that everyone has made to bring the nation's attention to the wetland loss. Wetlands are a valuable natural resource in this state. The wetlands are important for recreational and aesthetic value as well as providing flood control and water quality. Louisiana is asking the country to support our effort for wetland restoration while at the same time development is filling in the wetlands in our backyards at an alarming rate and changing the hydrology of the area.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: **Ms. Linda Walker** – Ms. Linda Walker, Water Resources Chair for the League of Women Voters of Louisiana, would like to see the draft report include more detail about what it will cost the State for operation, maintenance, and property acquisitions. She feels that the USACE needs to outline some of the things the Science and Technology Committee need to address. For example, at the American Association of Science Conference in June, it was estimated that the sea level would rise 88 centimeters in the next 100 years due to global warming. This must be taken into consideration when talking about sustainability of anything that is built. The Science and Technology Program should also address the impact and contribution of subsidence by oil and gas production. In the overall management, there needs to be integration with permitting actions done by the USACE and a need to look at easements and restricting uses on the front end. Cooperation from other agencies is also needed. There is a concern that there needs to be better coordination with the USACE, Galveston District, particularly pertaining to plans to channelize the Sabine River.

Response: Please see General Response #4 regarding the coordination roles for agencies and local governments in the LCA Study and General Response #10 regarding proposed LCA funding.

Comment: **Mr. Rick Wilke** – Mr. Rick Wilke has seen the loss of cypress trees from saltwater intrusion in Lake Maurepas. He is happy to see that three projects are in the plan to get freshwater in this area and help restore the habitats. The diversion in Myrtle Grove will also be beneficial as well as reauthorization of the Caernarvon. The idea of keeping the MRGO open and dredged for the large ships is only prolonging the saltwater intrusion problem. The rock banks are needed to prevent Lake Borgne and the MRGO from joining. There is a huge expense to maintain the MRGO. Some of the money that has been used for dredging should be given to the few vessels that use the MRGO as compensation for taking alternate, longer routes. In the long-term, it makes sense to start the immediate shut down of the MRGO.

Response: Please see General Response #1 regarding the proposed MRGO Restoration Feature.

2.7 ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA PUBLIC MEETING (AUGUST 9, 2004)

2.7.1 Introduction

Mr. John Jurgensen, U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service, began the meeting at 6:30 P.M. by welcoming everyone to the Louisiana Coastal Area (LCA) public meeting. He explained that central and northern Louisiana are affected by the loss of wetlands through the impact of tropical storms and hurricanes. For every mile of wetland present, the storm surge is reduced by a foot. Also, the Louisiana economy is affected by the loss of the coastal zone; five of the nation’s 15 largest ports are in this region. In addition, 1,900 square miles of coastal marsh, equivalent to the size of Delaware, has been lost in the past decade. Therefore, it is only a matter of time before the storms cause a greater impact on the areas north of the coastal zone.

Mr. Jurgensen noted that part of the study presented at this public meeting is an ongoing effort to address coastal loss. The CWPPRA has more of a small-scale defensive strategy in which 13 years of work and 126 projects has created, restored, and protected 134,000 acres of wetlands. Based on the projected land loss over the next 50 years, this effort is not enough. LCA was developed to address larger-scale projects. This is the seventh public meeting in a series of nine meetings to present the LCA strategy to the public to receive comments and concerns from the entire State of Louisiana.

Colonel Peter Rowan kicked off the meeting by giving a presentation accompanied by slides. He stated that the purpose of the meeting was to: 1) provide an overview of the study findings, 2) answer questions, and 3) receive official public comments.

Dan Llewellyn, LDNR, welcomed everyone and noted that this is an important first step toward restoring the Louisiana coastline. The LCA team welcomes the presence and support of the audience.

2.7.2 Attendees

In addition to members of the LCA PDT, approximately 19 people attended the meeting. The members of the public were asked to stand up and introduce themselves. Names of those who signed in are below:

Rick Bryan, Louisiana Audubon Council	Paul Medica, Jr.
David Byrd	David Michiels, CCA
Marty Floyd, USDA-NRCS	Tim Morrison, LDWF
Wia. David Harris, Louisiana Hydroelectric	Dutch Velta
Michael Johnson	Congressman Dave Vitter

Cherie Jurgensen, Local Educator
John Jurgensen, USDA-NRCS
Nathan Krig, CCA
Ralph L. Lauvihuff, Louisiana Hydroelectric
Cathy Medica

Gus Voltz, Jr.
Paul Wallace, USDA-NRCS
Paul Whitehead, LDWF
Ann Wilson, City of Alexandria

2.7.3 Public Comments

The floor was opened to comments. Mr. Axtman facilitated the session. Colonel Rowan and Mr. Llewellyn received the comments.

Comment: **Mr. Rick Bryan** – Mr. Rick Bryan, a resident of Pineville, appreciated the opportunity to comment on the Coastal Restoration Plan on behalf of the Forest and Water Issues Committee of the Audubon Council. He has worked on many projects including stopping the proposal to build a lake on Kisatchie Bayou, preventing channelization of a bayou in Concordia Parish and along the Bouge Chitto River in the Florida Parishes, and protecting Catahoula Lake from the Ouachita Black River Navigation Channel. Mr. Bryan notes that he mentions these things to let the USACE know that he is aware of the activities within the agency. Mr. Bryan has served on the Governor’s Advisory Counsel on Coastal Forest Conservation and Use. The impact of subsidence, particularly on the Bald Cypress Forest, is the leading cause to the loss of timber. Mr. Bryan acknowledges that boundaries must be established, but feels that no coastal restoration plan can be valid unless it encompasses entire watersheds or ecoregions including the Atchafalaya Basin, all the way up to the Old River Control Structure. To not include the Atchafalaya Basin is sheer biological folly. In the 1970s, the old State Planning Office identified some 50 critical areas in the coastal zone that needed to be protected. He wonders if the USACE is aware of this study, and if not, would they be interested in receiving a copy. Mr. Bryan is strongly in favor of closing the MRGO. He is not convinced of the economic justification for enlarging the locks on the Industrial Canal, particularly if this project will increase contaminants in Lake Pontchartrain. Has the USACE fully explored environmental justice since one of the places which will be impacted is the ethnic Holy Cross community in New Orleans? Finally, Mr. Bryan is appalled at the plan to deposit fill from the dredging of the Sabine/Natchez Navigation Channel on the coastal beaches of Texas and Louisiana. Much of the loss of our coastal marsh can be tied to the flood control and navigation channel activities of the USACE and the canals of the oil industry. Mr. Bryan believes that the USACE has the ability to do a good job of restoring our coastal zone; however, the job of the Audubon Council is to make certain that they do.

Response: Please see General Response #1 regarding the proposed MRGO Restoration Feature and General Response #12 regarding hazardous substances in Beneficial Use materials, and General Response #3 regarding the LCA Study Area.

Comment: **Ms. Cathy Medica** – Ms. Cathy Medica was called to give her comment, but had already left the meeting.

Response: No response required.

Comment: **Mr. Paul Medica** – Mr. Paul Medica was called to give his comment, but had already left the meeting.

Response: No response required.

Comment: **Ms. Ann Wilson** – Ms. Ann Wilson, City of Alexandria, thanked the USACE for the opportunity to hold the meeting in central Louisiana and giving more of the public a chance to respond. Ms. Wilson’s interest in coastal restoration is mainly due to her parents, from Cameron Parish, who have a great love for the beach. When looking at the coastal problems, most of the problems are self-inflicted. The dunes and other protective measures on the beaches are destroyed by 4-wheelers, motor vehicles, and parish work including bulldozing the dunes to make the beach smooth and pretty for the next holiday. We need to enforce the laws (specifically State Law 544) in the coastal areas. The old ways of doing things needs to be limited/restricted and laws need to be enforced. Parishes must enforce existing laws before additional Federal and state funds are granted. Ms. Wilson then thanked the USACE for allowing her the chance to express her views.

Response: Comment noted.

2.8 BAY ST. LOUIS, MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC MEETING (AUGUST 10, 2004)

2.8.1 Introduction

Mr. Ellis Cuevas, Sea Coast Echo/Hancock Chamber, began the meeting at 6:30 P.M. He welcomed the USACE to the Mississippi gulf coast on behalf of the City of Bay St. Louis and other communities. This meeting is for the USACE to bring the local citizens up to date on the loss of coastal wetlands in Louisiana. The USACE, the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, and the State of Louisiana have undertaken a coastal ecosystem restoration study that covers 20,000 miles of Louisiana coast from Texas to Mississippi. The interdisciplinary team members include the National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The study is available for review and is open for comments until August 23, 2004.

Mr. Cuevas noted that humans have never been the best caretakers of the environment. The Louisiana coastal plain remains the largest coastal wetland system in the entire United States. Many of the residents in Mississippi rely on the Louisiana coastlands for recreation and commercial purposes. Mr. Cuevas mentioned that we have to take care of the environment for the future and recently have not done a very good job.

Colonel Peter Rowan, District Engineer for the New Orleans District, kicked off the meeting by giving a presentation accompanied by slides. He stated that the purpose of the meeting was to: 1) provide an overview of the study findings, 2) answer questions, and 3) receive official public comments. Other meeting locations outside of Louisiana included Texas and Tennessee (see **table 2**).

Mr. Dan Llewellyn, LDNR, welcomed everyone to the meeting. In spirit of being good neighbors, he welcomed the local citizens participating in this effort. Mr. Llewellyn noted that this is just the first few steps in the restoration of the coastal wetlands and looks forward to the continued participation in this long process.

2.8.2 Attendees

In addition to members of the LCA PDT, approximately 25 people attended the meeting. Names of those who signed in are below:

Ellis C. Cuevas, Sea Coast Echo/Hancock Chamber	Joan Lanier, USACE
Brent Duet, HNTB Corporation	Tommy Longo, City of Waveland
Cynthia Duet, Governors Office Coastal	Tim Morrison, LDWF
Ben Goodwin, Lockheed Martin	Warren Myers, HNTB Corporation

Catherine Grouchy, USFWS	Ronald Ruth, LDWF
Charles Hartzog	Mark Schleitstein, <i>Times-Picayune</i>
Philip Hollis, USACE, Vicksburg	Bernie Shallbetter, Sea Coast Echo
David Hylender, Department of Marine Resources	Hilary Snow
Bob Ivarsen, HNTB Corporation	Neil Wagoner, HTNB Corp
Bill Johnson, Compton Eng/County Eng	Les Waguespack
E. Burton Kemp, CEI	Stuart Williamson, Hancock County Resident
Kathleen Kemp	

2.8.3 Public Comments

The floor was opened to comments. Mr. Axtman facilitated the session. Colonel Rowan and Mr. Llewellyn received the comments.

Comment: **Mr. Cuevas** – Mr. Cuevas appreciates the concerns of everyone present at the meeting. He noted that attention needs to be given to things that have been done, but were not necessarily in the best interest of the environment. The USACE, State of Louisiana, and everyone else involved in this project needs to be commended on their efforts. Mr. Cuevas acknowledged that this project is a big task, but it means so much to everyone. He then thanked everyone for being present at the meeting.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: **Mr. Bob Iverson** – Mr. Bob Iverson was called to give his comment but had no comment at this time.

Response: No response required.

Comment: **Mr. Burton Kemp** – Mr. Burton Kemp, retiree of the USACE and currently working for Coastal Environments, had two comments. Generally speaking, Mr. Kemp thought the program was well thought out, well presented, and the USACE should be complimented along with the help they have had. Both of his comments had to do with the MRGO. The first comment is for the management programs and the \$80 million to be spent on rock dikes on the left bank of the MRGO and in Lake Borgne. He appreciates the fact that there is a serious erosion problem, but there is no mention in the plan to seriously modify the MRGO to add a control structure that would limit the saltwater intrusion and depth of the channel. The second comment is for the long-term projects in the Mississippi River Delta area; a lot of projects are mentioned, but there are no specifics with respect to the MRGO. These are just constructive comments Mr. Kemp felt he needed to make. He then thanked the USACE for their time.

Response: Please see General Response #1 regarding the proposed MRGO Restoration Feature.

2.9 MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE PUBLIC MEETING (AUGUST 12, 2004)

2.9.1 Introduction

The meeting began at 6:30 P.M.

Mr. Ross Melinchuk, Director of Public Policy, Ducks Unlimited, kicked off the meeting. He pointed out that although Memphis was far from the coast, the Mississippi River provides a vital link. He then gave an overview of the value of the Louisiana wetlands to waterfowl, the oil and gas industry, and the seafood industry. He emphasized that the loss of wetlands must be halted.

Colonel Peter Rowan gave an introductory presentation accompanied by slides. He stated that the purpose of the meeting was to: 1) provide an overview of the study findings, 2) answer questions, and 3) receive official public comments. The comment period extended through August 23, 2004. This was the last of nine public meetings.

Ms. Jean Cowan, Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, thanked the audience for their interest in Louisiana's coastal problems. She emphasized the connection between Louisiana's coastal resources and the needs of the Nation. She asked for the support of the audience.

2.9.2 Attendees

In addition to members of the LCA PDT, twenty-one people attended the meeting:

Robert Bosenberg, USACE, New Orleans District	Hite McLean, Lawyer
Rosanna Cappellato, Rhodes College	Richard Mochow, Sierra Club
Todd Christian, University of Memphis	Tom Poer, HNTB
Brent Duet, HNTB	Dave Reece, USACE, Memphis District
Cynthia Duet, Louisiana Governor's office	Jim Reeder, USACE, Memphis District
Charles Earnest, Elk Chute Drainage District	Philip Rodgers, APAC Tennessee, Inc.
Terry Flanagan, HNTB	Clyde Southern, Drainage District, No. 1 in Missouri
Karla Gage, University of Memphis	Sam Testa, USDA
Emily Greer, University of Memphis	Gary Rauber USACE, New Orleans District
Catherine Grouchy, USFWS	Don Richardson, Sierra Club
Nick Haynes, APCA Tennessee, Inc.	Rodney Thomas, City of Memphis
Joan Lanier, USACE, New Orleans District	Mike Thron, USACE, Memphis District
Tom Lawrence, Resident of Memphis	Sue Williams
Melissa Lee, University of Memphis	Les Waguespack, USACE, Mississippi Valley Division
Ross Melinchuk, Ducks Unlimited	

2.9.3 Public Comments

The floor was opened to comments. Mr. Axtman facilitated the session. Colonel Rowan and Ms. Cowan received the comments.

Comment: **Mr. Charles Earnest** – Mr. Charles Earnest, President of Elk Chute Drainage District and Missouri farmer, said that he agreed with the comments of Mr. Southern. During the mussel example cited by Mr. Southern, the USACE took 3 years to perform basic maintenance of a vital channel and caused at least a year’s delay. During 2 of the 3 years there was flooding that caused damage to homes and crop loss. The mussels are everywhere and thrive in drainage ditches.

His drainage district is concerned with potential economic, business, and regulatory impacts of this project. The project has implications well beyond southern Louisiana.

He asked what restrictions, regulations, or taxes would be placed on his region for fertilizer use; farm herbicide/insecticide use; urban and suburban pesticide runoff; cattle, hog, or poultry operations; city development; industrial development; river ports; or navigation. Is there a restoration plan-related funding mechanism? Would there be taxes on particular products like gasoline, chemicals, nitrogen, and fertilizer? Would there be taxes or use fees on city runoff, sewage projects, or utility bills?

To the extent that hypoxia preceded industrialization, what could be the standard of success: No hypoxia at all, or a no-target effort controlling nonpoint sources? Land and sediment loss on the Gulf coast is due partly to the success of erosion control in agricultural in the entire Mississippi Basin.

Defending their property, businesses, communities, and families at the earliest possible opportunity is their best strategy. Local and elected community leaders understand this viewpoint, while out-of-area NGOs remain bewildered.

Should the environmental, regulatory, and economic costs spread up the Mississippi Basin, the USACE will hear from every member of Congress, every state legislator, and county commissioner from North Carolina to South Dakota.

Response: Comments noted. It is not within the scope of the LCA Study or within the authority of the USACE to recommend a funding mechanism for LCA implementation. The LCA Plan will be authorized by Congress, who will in turn determine the appropriate funding mechanism for this effort.

Comment: **Mr. Ross Melinchuk** – Mr. Ross Melinchuk, thanked everyone. The nation depends on the resources of coastal Louisiana for their livelihood, whether that is on gas production, national security, commerce, fish and wildlife habitat. This is not Louisiana’s problem to deal with alone but a national crisis with nation-wide implications that is going to draw attention from more sectors of the community around this country. It will take the input of all Americans.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: **Mr. Clyde Southern** – Mr. Clyde Southern, Drainage District, No. 1, Steele, Missouri, had comments on Volumes 1 and 2. He has 50 years of experience in Missouri. The Flood Control Act of 1928 helped his family and friends prosper in the former swampland. He supports a plan that will achieve and sustain a coastal ecosystem that can support and protect the environment, the economy, and culture of Southern Louisiana and thus contribute to the economy and well-being of the nation. However, there is more to be considered than just southern Louisiana. Actions such as changing the level of the water in the upper Mississippi might significantly change the minimum required navigation draft.

Hypoxia – this is a significant environmental problem affecting the northern Gulf as well as a problem of national importance. Is there a hidden agenda to tax nitrogen fertilizers to finance the plan? Will navigation and the transportation of cargoes be required to pay additional taxes on fuels, the use of locks, and the control structures? Is agriculture the principal culprit in the dissemination of nitrates? What about industry, sewage treatment plants, urban runoff, and even the atmosphere? They have used independent labs and testing centers to see if their region contributes to pesticide contamination or nitrates in the water. All tests have come up negative. The dead zone may be a media term or it may be a product of Mother Nature from thousands of years of runoff. They have been subjected to lawsuits by environmental groups. The Environmental Impact Statement states that the Tentatively Selected Plan of restoration would result in a relatively small reduction in nutrients discharged into the northern gulf from the Mississippi River. Such a reduction would have a minor positive effect on hypoxia. The EIS says the plan would reduce Mississippi River nutrient delivery to the outer Gulf shelf to reduce hypoxia. The report does not say how much nutrients would be reduced and just how much hypoxia would be reduced.

Navigation and Commerce – Changes from the levees, flood control structures, cutoffs, and floodways that have been inaugurated by the USACE cast doubt upon the solutions that are offered by the Louisiana Coastal Area study. When the study report mentions impediments to navigation and proposes rerouting of the Mississippi River and the Atchafalaya River navigation channels, it raises a red flag to every port authority in the Mississippi River Basin. Delays or restricted access that would interrupt the transport of goods to ports in the Louisiana Coastal Area is a serious concern. Any use of river water or the diversion of flows and channels anywhere on the river system are a cause for concern. Scientific studies may be in order.

Levees and Flood Control – The EIS says that the construction and management of levees and control structures alter sediment supply and limit the building of new lands. The National Environmental Policy Act has resulted in numerous delays in critical flood control projects. Flood control projects along the Arkansas-Missouri border were delayed 2 or more years because of the fat pocketbook pearly mussel in the St. Francis River. Thousands of these mussels are present in all drainage

ditches in the St. Francis Basin and should not have been on the endangered list. However, the USACE stopped the dredging process and moved the mussels.

Balance – The report lacks balance. Final public hearings, actions from higher levels of the Federal government, and the oversight of Congress could provide this balance. Farmers in the southeast lowlands and Missouri and northeast Arkansas are good stewards of natural resources and believe in the protection of the environment. It is frustrating to see well-financed environmental organizations dominate the preparation of endless environmental documents.

Planning and Implementation – Environmental organizations seem to have dominated the study and evaluation process. The plan calls for program management at the USACE division level with program execution at the district level. It would be very interesting to see comments or opinions from the districts at Vicksburg, Memphis, and St. Louis, which are part of the Mississippi River and Tributaries with oversight from the Mississippi River Commission.

Mississippi River Commission – They are known to be stern but fair in their observations and activities. It will be interesting to see how they view this plan.

Response: Comments noted. It is not within the scope of the LCA Study or within the authority of the USACE to recommend a funding mechanism for LCA implementation. The LCA Plan will be authorized by Congress, who will in turn determine the appropriate funding mechanism for this effort.

Furthermore, the LCA Study does not have a specific goal with respect to reducing hypoxia. Rather, it has an objective of helping to address the problem by reducing the amount of nutrients discharged from the Mississippi River into the northern Gulf of Mexico. For a discussion of Federal efforts to address Gulf hypoxia, see the “Action Plan for Reducing, Mitigating, and Controlling Hypoxia in the Northern Gulf of Mexico.” The Plan can be located via the Internet at: <http://www.epa.gov/msbasin/actionplan.htm>.

The direct anthropogenic cause of the reduction in sediment input to the deltaic plain of coastal Louisiana is the construction of levees on the Mississippi River, not changes in sediment loads in the river due to upstream agricultural practices and other actions. While changes in the sediment load in the Mississippi River could affect the performance of restoration measures, such changes would only be relevant in cases where riverine inputs to deltaic wetlands have been restored.

Comment: **Ms. Sue Williams** – Ms. Sue Williams said that she approved of the concept but not the specific details of the plan. She has visited Coodrie and LUMCON and loves the seafood and bird life in the area. She recommended the book Bayou Farwell for some of the detail and politics.

Response: Comment noted.

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