

**MINUTES OF THE  
SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA FLOOD PROTECTION AUTHORITY – EAST AND WEST  
SPECIAL JOINT BOARD MEETING  
THURSDAY, MARCH 23, 2007**

A Special Joint Board Meeting of the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority - East (SLFPA-E) and Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority - West (SLFPA-W) was held on Friday, March 23, 2007, in the Second Floor Hall, Lake Vista Community Center, 6500 Spanish Fort Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana, after due legal notice of the meeting was sent to each member and the news media and posted.

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 p.m. by President Jackson and President Bindewald, who then led in the pledge of allegiance. The roll was called and a quorum of the Boards was present.

Present (SLFPA-E):  
Thomas L. Jackson, President  
John M. Barry  
Timothy P. Doody  
David P. Barnes, Jr.  
Stradford A. Goins  
George Losonsky, Ph.D.  
Larry A. McKee  
Abril B. Sutherland  
Sara Lee St. Vincent  
Louis E. Wittie

Present (SLFPA-W):  
David J. Bindewald, Sr., President  
Robert E. Howson  
Kerwin E. Julien, Sr.  
Susan H. Maclay  
Michael L. Merritt  
Mark L. Morgan  
Joannes J. Westerink, Ph.D.

Absent:  
Ricardo S. Pineda

**OPENING COMMENTS:**

President Bindewald commented on all the talents of the two Boards which have been brought together at this time with one focus; i.e., public safety, which should send a good feeling to the public and demonstrate the Authorities are working on issues regionally, and on the anticipated outcome of the meeting being that these talented individuals would come together with the synergy to jointly solve problems.

President Jackson agreed with President Bindewald's comments and encouraged the members of the two Boards to get to know one another, adding there were many things the two Boards could work on and accomplish together.

Motions were offered, seconded and unanimously adopted by members of both Boards to adopt the agenda.

**CONSIDER DRAFT MASTER PLAN FOR A SUSTAINABLE COAST:**

Mr. Jon Porthouse with the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) Integrated Planning Team provided a presentation on the draft of the State's Master Plan. He began by detailing the timeline of events to date, commencing with Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and describing the responses at the Federal, State and local levels not only to the effects of the hurricane, but what needed to be done to make the situation in coastal Louisiana better in terms of restoration and protection. In September, 2005, Congress directed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for the first time to prepare an integrated comprehensive plan for protection and restoration and the Governor established the Louisiana Recovery Authority. By act of legislation in November, 2005, the CPRA was created to move beyond the existing structure for management of the coastal zone, with an expanded membership that also included levee boards and parish representatives. In January, 2006, an independent group of distinguished scientists came together as a working group for post hurricane planning for the Louisiana coast and provided advice to both the federal and state governments on how to move forward with planning an integrated system in Louisiana's Coastal Zone.

The USACE's Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration (LaCPR) initiative held a plan formulation workshop in February, 2006, bringing stakeholders together and gathering ideas, and at the same time the CPRA established its Integrated Planning Team (IPT) to begin moving the State's master plan forward. Mr. Porthouse detailed the various meetings held by both entities in putting their plans together, and the processes, procedures, principles and rationales used by the CPRA in the formulation of its plan. The CPRA held nearly three dozen stakeholder meetings.

The Envisioning the Future of the Gulf Coast symposium was held in June, 2006, with approximately 35 scientists from around the world looking at what needed to be done long term, strictly from a restoration perspective, to reestablish the sustainability of the coastal zone, and the consensus opinion was to look to the river as the first priority for sustaining the coastal zone.

The USACE submitted its preliminary technical report to the Congress in July, 2006, and at the same time another independent review of the performance of the flood protection system was issued.

The methodology used in putting together the evaluation framework for the plan was explained.

The CPRA held another plan formulation workshop in October, 2006, and the information and materials gathered to this point, including input from stakeholders, were reviewed and resulted in the preliminary draft plan. Mr. Porthouse advised nine public meetings and various other meetings were held on the preliminary draft plan. The Louisiana Coastal Area Science Board reviewed the plan for the adequacy of its science basis and for possible improvements, and the CPRA's Science and Engineering Review Team, providing a local perspective, previewed the plan and offered extensive comments.

The CPRA released a subsequent version of the draft master plan in February, 2007, that was twice the size of the previous version, and provided additional clarifications and information. The main report is about 100 pages in length and has several thousand pages of appendices, technical information and analytical data, which is available on the internet.

A joint meeting of the Louisiana Coastal Area Science Board and the CPRA's Science and Engineering Review Team was held in March, 2007, to look at the draft plan, and their comments are currently being compiled so that the plan can be modified one last time. Also, another engineering review of the performance of the New Orleans flood protection system will be available soon. Mr. Porthouse explained over time as more materials and reports become available they are incorporated into the planning process.

The master plan represents a strategic framework containing project concepts. Some project concepts are specific and details are provided because the engineering and design are completed or close to completion; however, many projects and concepts need more evaluation, and, Mr. Porthouse explained, this plan tries to bring all that to the table and provide the strategic framework for moving forward. It is an integrated approach, containing flood protection and restoration aspects, and meant to be a starting point.

Mr. Porthouse outlined the objectives of the plan; i.e., reducing risks to coastal communities, restoring sustainability to the coastal eco-system, maintaining a diverse array of fish and wildlife habitats, and sustaining Louisiana's unique heritage and culture, and provided comments on each of the objectives. He explained some of the reasons protection and restoration expectations may not always be achievable.

A chapter was added in the report on technical challenges and specifically climatic changes. Mr. Porthouse felt, at this point, the plan could be implemented with what could be projected for the near future; however, climate changes and associated

expectations would have to be monitored, and in the future if troubled spots are found, the plan would have to be adapted. Some of the hydrology issues in connection with the design and placement of protection structures and restoration actions, including marsh creation, were explained.

Mr. Porthouse briefly covered reducing risks to communities, including elevating and appropriating constructing homes and buildings, evacuations, land use controls, implementing hazard and mitigation plans, and insurance, along with levees and floodgates.

A map showing currently existing levees and planned future levees was exhibited. The various options for design of an outer barrier for protecting the east bank area of New Orleans were described, along with the single option for the west bank. Mr. Porthouse emphasized this map has been misconstrued as a final decision on some of the levee alignments and explained the reasons why alternatives may be considered.

Mr. Porthouse identified some of the outstanding issues, such as federal funding, working through the regulatory process, land use regulations, obtaining surface rights for construction of projects, management of the coastal forests, program management, a process for identifying priority actions, and developing the overall State structure for master plan implementation.

Mr. Porthouse concluded the presentation by advising the public meetings have been held, the public comment period ends April 2<sup>nd</sup>, the CPRA will act on the final master plan on April 12<sup>th</sup>, and the plan will be submitted to the Legislature by April 30<sup>th</sup>. He reiterated most of the concepts in the master plan will require additional planning, environmental evaluation and design before going to construction, and flood protection performance reviews will come into play when the projects are designed. He stressed the need to continue the engagement of the scientific and technical community, the public and stakeholders for discussion of issues.

Ms. Denise Reed, Professor in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences at the University of New Orleans, who has been working on coastal restoration in Louisiana since 1991, pointed out some of the important areas of the plan, such as principles and objectives, and provided examples and further comments on those areas, adding that it was important that advice had been received from various groups. She stressed the message from one group of 35 scientists and engineers from around the world, who were brought together and asked what they thought should be done, was that there is a sustainable future for coastal Louisiana; however, there is only a sustainable future for coastal Louisiana if bold action is taken now and the resources of the Mississippi River are harnessed. She spoke on harnessing sediment resources and future challenges, and commented on the lack of analytical tools to support decision making within the planning framework and on some of the questions that remain, such as where ideas are being generated, who will assure principles are adhered to, and how would it be decided when this vision needs to be revised.

Mr. Paul Kemp with the National Audubon Society indicated what he felt was missing most was leadership, which could be provided by the Authorities through providing policies and direction to the technical groups. He commented on some of the important lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina. In terms of life cycle and in view of reliability, environmental and maintenance issues, he asked that creative thought be given to what the lines on the map may be relative to use of earthen levees vs. a long term solution such as pile supported structures that will not sink and potentially do not disrupt hydrology except when they are needed. Another important issue was depoliticizing the technical discussions between local and federal sponsors, and the use of forums for such discussions where federal design people can solicit people to trouble shoot designs. He was impressed with what the State had done on the master plan and felt it was a great step in the right direction; however, it lacks real leadership as to where they are going with it. He felt one of the State's main objectives was to influence the USACE to put restoration more into its thinking for the future; however, how to integrate restoration and protection is not well understood.

Mr. John Lopez, Director of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation (LPBF) Coastal Sustainability Program, explained a concept was developed through the LPBF before Hurricane Katrina called multiple lines of defense. The State plan uses some of the projects that are proposed by the LPBF and has some of the same concerns. He commented on the historic way the Louisiana landscape was developed (e.g., building on ridges) versus more recent development (e.g., building in wetlands). The multiple lines of defense concept emphasized this aspect, using the historic ridges as economic corridors and as barriers for flood protection, and suggests that going against that grain is probably not good, such as building large levees across open wetlands. He further discussed the historical conditions of the coastal areas, the loss of wetlands and restoration of the coastal system. He felt the part of the plan that has been a little slow to come is reestablishing habitat goals that reestablish hydrology, along with quantifiable levels of restoration.

Mr. Barry thanked everyone for coming. He commented on the example provided by the Dutch, who in 1953 in response to an event much like Katrina, focused all its attention on flood control, and cited some of the problems that resulted. The Dutch have now realized that many of the things they have done will have to be redone, which demonstrates that a broad perspective is needed. He mentioned the apparent consensus among scientists thus far in terms of what is good and what is bad about the plan, and seemingly those working with the State had more trust in the process going forward than those not working so closely.

A brief open panel discussion was then held regarding the proposed plan.

President Jackson thanked everyone for coming and encouraged future participation in the process.

#### **CONSIDERATION OF THE FORMATION OF VARIOUS EAST/WEST TEAMS FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEVELOPING AREAS OF COOPERATION IN THE FOLLOWING TOPICS: TECHNICAL, LEGAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROJECT DELIVERY**

President Bindewald spoke on the opportunity to combine the talents on both Boards to address specific issues, such as determining how the Authorities can fold its plans, projects and hurricane protection efforts into the CPRA's plan, as well as on a daily basis, such as addressing specific USACE and DOTD projects. President Jackson suggested this could be accomplished through the committees established by the two Boards working together.

The Boards discussed the West Authority's Operations and Maintenance Committee working with the East Authority's Routine and Emergency Operations Committee.

President Bindewald advised the West Authority has a Project Group consisting of Mr. Morgan and Dr. Westerink for review of USACE and DOTD plans and specifications. He discussed the West Authority's efforts with the USACE regarding a program management plan, and the development of a specific set of procedures for project delivery for which Mr. Morgan is working on projects and President Bindewald on procedures. He further recommended the Boards' hydrologists Dr. Losonsky and Dr. Westerink work together in the area of project compliance with the CPRA.

The Chairpersons of the Legal Committees of the two Boards indicated that they had already been in communication relative to legal issues and advised their intention to work together on those issues.

Because of insurance issues and the amount of time that would be required, President Jackson cautioned the Board members against getting too detailed in the specific plan review process and felt they could do more by looking in a general basis, providing direction and assuring key parameters are included in the design process.

President Bindewald explained review sessions on future projects could include looking at projects from standpoints of constructability and suitability and assuring that

value engineering is done. He suggested the Authorities formalize an on-going process with the USACE and DOTD for planning which jobs should progress, where dollars should be invested and the best impact for the limited available funds.

President Jackson commented on the issue of reviewing projects for constructability, pointing out the insurance obtained by the East Authority covers duties and responsibilities as public officials.

The Boards discussed working together on criteria for regional directors and legislative issues. Dr. Losonsky and Dr. Westerink were designated as coordinators for their respective Boards to coordinate the appropriate experts to attend USACE conceptual planning meetings, etc., and Ms. St. Vincent was designated to look into an on-line calendar to assist in the coordination of the two Boards.

President Bindewald mentioned the efforts of the Joint Communication Advisory Council regarding communication of information from various entities to the public during emergencies.

President Jackson requested that the committee chairs of the East Authority coordinate with their counterparts for the West Authority.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.