

# **Louisiana Artificial Reef Council**

**December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

## **Summary Minutes**

1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Louisiana Room  
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries  
2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808

## **Council Members Present:**

Mr. Randall Pausina, Assistant Secretary, LDWF  
Dr. Chuck Wilson, Executive Director- LA Sea Grant College Program  
Dr. Rick Shaw, Interim Dean- School of the Coast & Environment, LSU

## **Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries Staff Present:**

Doug Peter, Artificial Reef Coordinator, LDWF  
Karen Foote, Administrator, Marine Fisheries Division, LDWF  
Harry Blanchet, Stock Assessment Program Manager, LDWF  
Martin Bourgeois, Shrimp Program Manager, LDWF  
Michael McDonough, LDWF  
Christine Ruggiero, LDWF

## **Attendees:**

A.J. Fabre, LSA  
Allen J. Verret, OOC  
Andy Landy, McMoran  
Annalisa Taylor, SPN  
Beau Martin, B&J Martin  
Bill Hendrick, Rowan  
Blaine Dinger, Mariner Energy  
Bobby Bond, GSI  
CDR John Arenstam, USCG  
Cheryl Powell, Apache Corp.  
Chuck Schoenwacer, OT Compliance  
Clinton Guidry, LSA  
Darrel & Cher Walker, Blue Star Marine  
Esau Velazquez, Proserv  
Gary Northington, Chevron  
Herb Leedy, MMS  
Jerel C. Gilmore, Proserv

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Jim Kiesler, ERT  
Jimmy Martin, B&J Martin  
Kate Winters, MMS  
Madeleine McNamara, USCG  
Monica Howard, Sea Robin  
Paul Pollet, EDG  
Ray Coe, Anglo-Suisse  
Rian Riche, Shell  
Richard Reggio, PCS  
Stephen Henry, Fugro Chance

### **Introduction and Welcome**

The Louisiana Artificial Reef Council was convened at 1:10 PM. Randy Pausina welcomed the attendees.

### **Approval of Minutes & Agenda**

R. Pausina moved to approve the agenda and the minutes of the previous Artificial Reef Council meeting.

Chuck Wilson first wanted to ask MMS what their actual position was on the reefing of decks, as he had seen mention of it in the previous meeting's minutes.

Herb Leedy from MMS stated that MMS did not yet have a written policy regarding the reefing of decks, but that they had looked at the EPA guidelines on the reefing of vessels. He pointed out that some of the decks that are currently on bottom had been producing at the time of toppling—they were not cleaned or prepared for reefing. MMS wants third-party confirmation that the decks are clean; they have consulted with cleaning contractors, and the conclusion is that it's virtually impossible to clean a deck that was not cleaned topside before deployment.

Rick Shaw moved to accept minutes from the previous meeting. Motion carried.

C. Wilson moved to accept the agenda for the current meeting. Motion carried.

### **Special Artificial Reef Sites**

R Pausina: there are 2 SARS applications before the council that are at the point of further consideration. He asked if the applying companies had anything to add to their previous presentations.

Cheryl Powell, Apache: nothing to add

R. Pausina asked Doug Peter to give a synopsis of the two recent public meetings.

D. Peter explained that the Artificial Reef Program recently held two public meetings to gather public input on the two proposed SARS. These meetings were held in Larose, LA on November

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18<sup>th</sup> and in Abbeville, LA on November 19<sup>th</sup>. The shrimpers raised concerns about the SARS process being a one-way street, did not understand why the two SARS could be moving forward with a moratorium in effect, wondered if the development of artificial reefs is the same as a marine monument, pointed out that all 6 SARS presented at the last council meeting were trawled areas, want no more Gulf dumping, and believe the public meetings are not being advertised effectively. A charter fisherman wanted to know when additional structures for WD-133 would be reefed. And the oil and gas industry, in the form of a representative from Mariner, gave a written statement in support of the SARS program and the council's consideration of Mariner's proposed EI-314 SARS.

C. Wilson noted that some public meetings are not well attended, especially by representatives from the shrimping and charter industries and asked R. Pausina if there might be a better way to gather public input.

R. Pausina said that other options can be explored such as gathering comments via phone or e-mail.

C. Wilson asked if the low participation is due to complacency or poor communication.

R. Pausina replied that there is a proposed SARS amendment which would change the process for SARS applications and may create an ad-hoc SARS advisory committee.

### **SARS Amendment**

Per the council's previous direction the following was provided:

D. Peter asked the Council and audience to look at the flowchart handout and consider it as a starting point for a new SARS procedure. He pointed out that there are several stages where public comment can be gathered.

Bill Hendrick, from Rowen, asked about who would be on this new SARS committee.

D. Peter answered that the committee would have representatives from oil and gas, commercial and recreational fisheries and federal and state agencies. The user groups of artificial reefs would be the targets to find persons to serve on the committee.

B. Hendrick praised the great efforts of the Council. He then asked if there might be any change to the standard Act of Donation.

D. Peter said that no change to the AOD is planned at this time but that the donation agreement may have to be altered slightly in certain cases to reflect the structure or structures being reefed.

R. Pausina pointed out that this flowchart does not represent a finalized procedure. This afternoon is the Council's first look at the flowchart.

### **Other Business**

R. Pausina asked if there was any other business to be discussed.

D. Peter pointed out the correspondence with the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources and both the New Orleans and Mobile district branches of the US Army Corps of Engineers. Both the LA and MS artificial reef programs have been given permits to reef structures in the Main Pass area of the Gulf of Mexico for example and the LARP is concerned that LA user groups may not have information or opportunity for input about MS reefs. The Mobile district will continue to permit structures for MS and the New Orleans district will continue to permit for LA. The LA and MS programs will communicate with each other about projects in bordering waters.

### **Public Comment**

R. Pausina asked the audience if there was any public comment.

No members of the audience approached the microphone.

### **Council Action**

C. Wilson noted that the two current proposed SARS [Eugene Island 314 and West Delta 133] seemed okay before the public meetings. He asked D. Peter if there was any new information gathered about these sites at the public meetings.

D. Peter confirmed that there was no new information.

Rick Shaw asked D. Peter if the proposed additions to the WD-133 site had been confirmed.

D. Peter replied that at this time the Program has commitments for the other structures, but that if things changed, the proposal would have to be reconsidered.

C. Wilson asked if the catch data gathered by LGL could be applied to the program. Specifically, could better decisions be made about bottom given back from the planning areas when SARS are reefed. Dr. Wilson said ideally the bottom given up should be as productive as or more so than the area of the SARS.

R. Pausina moved to accept the two SARS [Eugene Island 314 and West Delta 133].

Seconded by C. Wilson.

C. Wilson asked about the next step in re-evaluating SARS. Is there a timeline for the next stage?

R. Pausina suggested that the next meeting of the ARC should be early in the New Year and focus on a new SARS procedure.

B. Hendricks asked the council if interest groups could submit their comments to the Council in advance of the meeting.

R. Pausina encouraged groups to submit their comments. He also explained there would be a news release and contact information for people not in attendance so their comments could be gathered.

### **Adjourn**

R. Pausina moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:35 PM.

Motion seconded.

Meeting adjourned.