



Coastal Protection & Restoration Authority Board Meeting

Wednesday, May 14, 2025 at 9:30 AM

LSU Center for River Studies

100 Terrace Ave.

Baton Rouge, LA 70802

The following constitute minutes of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Board Meeting and are not a verbatim transcript of the proceedings. Audio and video recordings of the meetings are available for viewing and kept at the Office of the Governor-Coastal Activities Office in Baton Rouge, LA.

I. Call to Order - Pledge of Allegiance

II. Roll Call

Chairman Gordon Dove	Present
Mr. Dustin Davidson for Sec. Tyler Gray, DENR	Present
Mr. Matt Weigel for Acting Sec. Tyler Bosworth LDWF	Present
Mr. Kevin Borne for Sec. Burdette, DEQ	Present
Mr. Brandon Burris for Lt. Gov. Billy Nungesser	Absent
Tony Alford, Gov's Advisory Comm	Present
Pres. Matthew Jewell, Barataria Basin	Present
Cong. Joseph Cao, Pontchartrain Basin	Absent
Chad Courville Teche/Vermillion	Present
Dwayne Bourgeois, Terrebonne Basin	Present
Bill Hidalgo, Atchafalaya Basin	Present
Robert Jordan Teche/Vermillion Parish	Absent
John Lane, Breton Sound Basin	Present
Calcasieu/Sabine Basin	Vacant
Rep. Zeringue, Ex-officio, Designee of the Speaker of the House	Absent
Sen. Hensgens, Ex-officio, Designee of the President of the Senate	Absent

III. Approval of Agenda

Motion by: Mr. Bourgeois
Seconded by: Pres. Jewell
Unanimously Approved

IV. Approval of Minutes

Motion by: Mr. Alford
Second by: Mr. Jewell
Unanimously Approved

V. Old Business / Announcements

VI. Welcome and LSU Coastal Program Overview – Clint Willson, Dean LSU College of Coast & Environment (video: 0:07:29)

Mr. Willson provided the board with an overview of the LSU Coastal program starting with Scholarship First which is LSU's fierce drive for excellence rooted in their mission to impact and serve Louisiana—providing pathways to higher learning, addressing critical problems through ground-breaking research and discovery, and bettering the lives of citizens in every parish. Mr. Willson stated that for seven decades, CSI researchers have been advancing knowledge about coastal areas. From leading significant coastal projects (like sediment diversion, marsh creation, barrier island restoration, and submarine landslides) to creating coupled land-ocean-atmosphere numerical models, CSI Fellows have been developing solutions to complex coastal water and sediment challenges. Mr. Willson also highlighted that LSU and Tulane were awarded \$22 Million for a plan to save lower Mississippi River Delta (The Mississippi River Delta Transition Initiative, or MissDelta, will include a team of 38 investigators working with the National Academies' Gulf Research Program. The group will engage stakeholders as they work to project the evolution of the disappearing delta through the year 2100 should nothing be done to forestall its



Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority



erosion or counter threats from increasingly intense hurricanes, rising seas, ground subsidence, diminishing river sediment, coastal dead zones, navigation channel changes and growing maintenance costs). He also mentioned that LSU was the first university in the U.S. to host a direct broadcast satellite system and image processing lab, Earth Scan Lab (ESL). Receiving data from six satellites, ESL monitors the Gulf of Mexico's Loop Current and eddies to forecast and predict environmental changes. In closing, Mr. Willson also highlighted Flood Insurance Research and Tools; LA-SEER Center; and Climate to Weather to Ocean/Coast/Land.

VII. Implementation Update – Glenn Ledet, Jr., CPRA (video 00:57:44)

Mr. Ledet updated the Board on the latest progress of various projects around the coast. CPRA has 106 active projects with 39 are in construction, 63 in engineering and design, with 4 more in the planning stage. Of the projects now being constructed 16 are hurricane protection projects and Marsh creation leads the way in E&D with 26 projects moving toward the construction phase. Mr. Ledet updated on changes from last month:

- Reach L Levee – Substantially Completed 4/29/25
- Bayou Cane Marsh Creation – Construction Bid Advertisement scheduled for 5/28/25
- Morganza to the Gulf Reach H3/H2 – TLCD has awarded the base bid for Reach H3 contract work to Rigid
- South Grand Chenier Marsh Creation–Baker Tract–Project removed from Hotlist; possible ME-20 maintenance lift and NRCS internal
- St. Mary Back Lakeside Flood Protection – Construction started 3/3/25

Mr. Ledet also provided updates on a few projects: **Ludevine Pump Station:** This project was developed out of the poor condition of the existing station to provide flood damage risk reduction measures that benefit communities in North Lafourche. Estimated Substantial Completion: July 14, 2025 with an estimated project cost of \$7,887,531 with CPRA via GOMESA Funding-\$6,720,00 and NLLD Funding \$1,167,537. This pump station will be capable of 450 CFS Capacity (3-48" Pumps). **Bayou Chene Floodgate:** The \$80 million floodgate, which was completed in April 2022, was first used in fall 2024 during Hurricane Francine. Mr. Ledet stated that last week, the permanent gate that blocks backwater flooding from affecting 30,000 people in six parishes was recently closed ahead of expected high water on the Atchafalaya River. The closure of the 405-foot-long Bayou Chene floodgate is the first time the three-year-old structure has been used due to high water in the Atchafalaya. The gate and its levees can hold back a rise of about 6.5ft, based on current water levels in the bayou. The floodgate protects St. Mary, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Martin, Assumption and Iberville parishes from backwater flooding in the basin. Mr. Ledet also provided information on the Parish Matching Program, **Tchefuncte Habitat Restoration:** This project was selected as part of the 2025 Parish Matching Program Awards. The Tchefuncte River Lighthouse is the last remaining original functional lighthouse in the Lake Pontchartrain Basin (constructed in 1868 and is registered on the National Park service historic preservation list). It still functions today as an active aid to navigation serving as the Tchefuncte River Range Rear Light. The Tchefuncte Habitat Restoration Project consists of a 425-foot-long bulkhead capped by rip rap and a 310-foot-long wooden pier and breakwater for additional protection. Mr. Ledet highlighted **Additional CPRA Updates:** The FY 2026 Annual Plan has been reported favorably by unanimous vote in both the House Transportation, Highways and Public Works Committee and Senate Committee on Natural Resources. He also stated on Friday, May 2, CPRA staff joined Col. Jones of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New Orleans District (USACE) to assess progress on this season's work at the Permanent Canal Closures & Pumps (PCCP) ahead of the 2025 hurricane season. This visit reflects the ongoing partnership between CPRA and USACE to enhance the resilience of Louisiana's storm protection system. On May 12th, Coastal Day at the Legislator took place starting the day at the LSU CRS with a Business Networking & Matchmaking event, connecting coastal-related companies and organizations from across the state. From there, a coastal briefing was held in the Governor's Press Room, followed by engaging conversations in Memorial Hall with legislators and visitors about the urgent issues facing our coast and the work CPRA is leading to address them. In closing, Mr. Ledet gave a brief overview of the Chandeleur Islands. Recently, the total number of species included on the Species of Greatest Conservation Need list that have been observed on the islands increased from 76 to 80. Mr. Ledet also reminded members and the public that the State of the Coast will be held May 20-22, 2025 at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center.



Mr. Parker provided the board with a couple of engagement updates with the Federal agencies as well as updates from some of CPRA's partner agencies. His first update was on the **WRDA Resources Development Act of 2024 (WRDA)**. Mr. Parker stated that the Corps asked CPRA to provide comments on implementation guidance in which they submitted on April 30th. *Commitment to Partnership*: CPRA reiterated their deep commitment to partnering with USACE and also stresses that implementation of WRDA 2024 provisions is essential to accelerating coastal protection and restoration efforts. *Strong Endorsement of Section 1104 – Minimum Real Estate Interest*: Mr. Parker stated that one of our main sections of CPRA's comments referred to minimum real estate interest in which we increased or supported increased flexibility in determining minimum interest in property necessary for real estate transactions. Essentially giving CPRA the flexibility to determine what they will need in real estate going forward, emphasizing that mandatory fee title acquisitions or perpetual easements are often unnecessary and may add significant costs to a project. So, they are working with the Corps on that and are awaiting a response. He also stated that CPRA supported the extension of non-federal implementation pilot program and expressed readiness to partner with the Corps on that project. *Use of Non-Federal Implementation Pilot Program (Sections 1150 and 1303)*: CPRA also emphasized the importance of credit review timelines and proposed a 12-month goal for package approvals. On April 23rd, they submitted comments to the EPA and the Corps for Waters of the United States (WOTUS). The EPA and the Corps are beginning the process of clarifying the definition of WOTUS after the Sackett decision. **CPRA's Wotus Comments**: Urgent need for Clarity (CPRA urges EPA and USACE to provide clear, durable definitions of "water of the U.S."; Support for Sackett Framework (CPRA supports the Supreme Court's Sackett ruling); Differentiate Flood Protection Systems (CPRA calls on agencies to distinguish between enclosed flood protection systems and open systems when determining jurisdiction); Permit & Cost Impacts (Lack of clarity has caused project delays and inflated costs); Definition of "Relatively Permanent" (CPRA recommends applying a common-sense, ordinary parlance standard that excludes ephemeral, intermittent, and artificially constrained waters, aligning with the Rapanos decision); Avoid Regulatory Overreach (CPRA recommends using flow duration, seasonality, and surface connectivity as objective criteria); Collaborative Approach: CPRA appreciates the opportunity to provide input and encourages continued dialogue to protect LA's coast while ensuring regulatory balance and efficiency. Mr. Parker also stated that in regards to the HSDRRS Payback Clarification, CPRA supports the clarified statutory language affirming Louisiana's compliance with cost-share terms for the HSDRRS project. And also welcomes flexibility to apply existing credit balances to ongoing or future projects. In closing, Mr. Parker highlighted that CPRA has been working with LDWF on their Port Wonder project in Lake Charles. It's now open, and he encouraged any interested to take your families to check out that project. One more additional update was that DENR has been tracking bills through the legislative session (SB 97), the coordinated use of resources for recreation economy navigation and transportation or current intended to be counterpart for us outside the coast area, that bill was amended and reported to Senate Natural Resources unanimously on May 5th.

VIII. Mississippi River –

- **Update on MS River Navigation Challenges and Improvements – Sean Duffy, Big River Coalition (video: 01:29:38)**

Mr. Duffy provided an update on river navigation challenges (deficient Pilotown Anchorage Hazard to safe navigation; crevasses Eastern Side of the MS River Channel Below to New Orleans; Critical Sensors and Aids for Navigation and the improvements. He spoke on the challenges and dramatic changes that are having major impacts on the Mississippi River Ship Channel highlighting that unimaginable increases for impacts of high and low water levels and additional impacts from climate variability and/or vulnerability (unprecedented: Historic operation of the Bonnet Carre Spillway-almost 8 times in 2025; saltwater sill constructed four times in a 3yr period; anchorage closures or restrictions related to impacts from CPRA restoration beneficial use projects; dredging above Venice and Neptune Pass; along with extreme weather events. In closing Mr. Duffy stated, "The costs of closing the river are not factored into state restoration or pipeline removal projects," Duffy said. "The cost to industry has to be part of the economic equation for projects. The cheapest option may not cost the collective navigation industry more than adjustments that are often preferred by navigation interests."

- **MS River Dredging/Restoration Efforts and Bird's Foot Delta Restoration – Rudy Simoneaux & Todd Baker, CPRA**

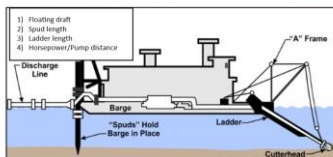


Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority



(video: 0:1:53:40) Mr. Simoneaux provided a Mississippi River specific dredging update to the board starting with hydraulic projects: 18 Barrier Islands/Headland Projects; 38 Marsh Creation Projects; and nearly 30,000 acres marsh/beach/dune/ridge habitat created with a total investment= \$2.6 Billion (15 Restoration Projects with MS River Dredging). The Miss. River Long Distance Sediment Pipeline in Plaquemines Parish and the Bayou DeCade Ridge and Marsh Creation in Terrebonne Parish were done with a Hydraulic Dredging-Cutter Suction. The Cameron Parish Shoreline Restoration project was done with a Trailing Suction Hopper. Mr. Simoneaux pointed out that there are not many contractors that are owning the type of equipment in the U.S. that forth on these projects and credited Moffatt & Nichol for doing a lot of the design work on some of the river dredging projects. He explained that it's a bit different when you're dealing with river sand in this environment because you're dredging heavy sand and placing it in soft solves. In closing, Mr. Simoneaux updated on the Upper Barataria Marsh Creation (BA-0207), he stated that just about a year after completion, you can see vegetation already taking over pretty good. There was a 1,300-acre component of that 2700 acres that were completed with NOAA for the Upper Barataria project.

Hydraulic Dredging – Equipment Limitations



Hydraulic Dredging – Mississippi River



Marsh Creation – Mississippi River Sediment



Upper Barataria Marsh Creation (BA-0207)



Upper Barataria Marsh Creation (BA-0207)



Restoration Efforts and Bird's Foot Delta Restoration –Todd Baker, CPRA (video:2:05:06)

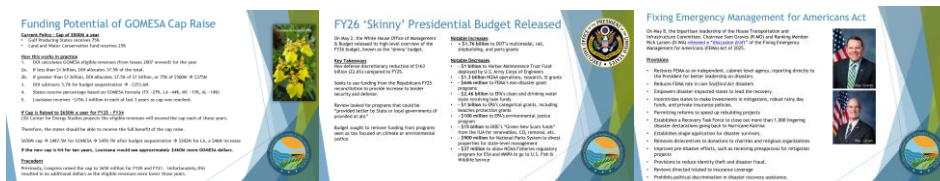
Mr. Baker updated the board on the Bird's Foot Delta, the project is led by CPRA in coordination with the federal partner the US Fish and Wildlife Service (also working closing with LDWF). Mr. Baker stated in order to get to the project area, it is about an 11mi boat ride; and it is a very unique habitat in Louisiana/the country (this is the only place where you have a freshwater riverine system that's coming down and meeting with the pelagic continental shelf and all the species that you find there). He indicated that most of the delta is publicly managed for recreational hunters and fishermen. Delta Refuge is managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, it's about 70,000 acres, Pass a Loutre WMA is 115,000 acres managed by LDWF and is actually the oldest wildlife management area in the state of LA. Mr. Baker stated the reason we need to build this project is because we're losing a lot of these wetlands at a rapid rate. In 40 years, we've lost over 26,000 acres on Pass a Loutre wildlife management area alone. But that's not the end of the story, on the same landscape you have land gain. You have about 4,500 acres of gain going on west of South Pass a Loutre. He stated, what's happening on this landscape is why we're losing so much on one side and gaining it on another. The reason has everything to do with riverine flows and river influence on those marshes. SW Pass and South Pass are federally maintained navigation channels, so the river continues to flow through it. The Corps maintains the SW Pass well and South Pass on irregular basis so there, the river is allowed to flow to those marshes that are adjacent to it relatively healthy and growing. Mr. Baker stated, LA TIG set aside \$6 million to engineer and design the project to restore for the impacts on the Bird Foot Delta, so they are currently working with that \$6M to design a project to effectively restore for the impacts to the delta. In conclusion, CPRA is exploring ways to enhance riverine flows to nourish marshes that have suffered from sediment deprivation. The proposed dredging of Pass Loop and South Pass is expected to facilitate this process, allowing for the reintroduction of freshwater and sediment to the eastern delta.





IX. Federal and Congressional Update – Neal McMillin, DENR (video:2:23:43)

Mr. McMillin highlighted specifically to GOMESA, the cap is raised by \$15FY34, before reverting back. The bill also establishes revenue sharing for onshore renewables (25% states, 25% counties) and for Alaska's Cook Inlet activity (90% state). He stated that the next steps being three more House Committees will need to mark up their legislation to fulfil the reconciliation instructions. Mr. McMillin also pointed out funding potential of GOMESA Cap Raise: Current Policy- Cap of \$500M a year (Gulf producing States receive 75%; Land and Water Conservation fund receives 25%). Mr. McMillin said how this works in practice is, DOI calculates GOMESA eligible revenues (from leases 2007 onward) for the year (if less than \$1B, DOI allocates 37.5% of the total. If greater than \$1B, DOI allocates 37.5% of \$1B, or 75% of \$500M → \$375M). In regard to the America Beautiful Act being introduced, Mr. McMillin updated the board that legislation proposes continuation of using federal revenues from energy, including offshore oil & gas produced in the Gulf of America, to fund deferred maintenance in national parks and public lands. The Act, would reauthorize the National Parks and Public Land Restoration Fund, known as the Legacy Restoration Fund (reauthorizing the Legacy Restoration Fund for 8 years at **\$2 billion** a year, a **\$100 million increase** from the previous 5 years. Allows all U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service land to be eligible). Mr. McMillin also provided brief updates on H.R. 276 (introduced by Congresswoman Greene, the Gulf of America Act which passed the House 211-206, now moving on to the Senate); May 2nd, the White House Office of Management & Budget released its high-level overview of the FY26 'Skinny' Presidential Budget (seeks to use funding from the Republicans FY25 reconciliation to provide increase to border security and defense); FEMA update: On January 24, President Trump issued Executive Order 14180, establishing a Council to Assess FEMA to conduct a full-scale review of the agency. The Council is to advise the President on changes related to FEMA to best serve the national interest, including the existing ability on FEMA to capably and impartially address disasters within the United States.



X. Public Comment

XI. Adjourn

Motion by: Mr. Bourgeois
Seconded by: unanimous