

Action Summary

Acadiana Watershed District Board Meeting Minutes



10am-12pm, Thursday, May 21st, 2026
Rosa Parks Transportation Center
101 Jefferson St.
Lafayette, LA 70501



AGENDA, NOTES AND DECISIONS

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION
CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME	The meeting was called to order at 10:08am by Rachel Godeaux, Vice Chair of the Acadiana Watershed District. Opening Statement: <i>" Welcome to public meeting of the Acadiana Watershed District's Technical Advisory Committee Meeting. I am Rachel Godeaux, Vice Chair of the District.</i> <i>Agendas are available at the room's entrance and were made available through the AWD email distribution list and online at planacadiana.org. For our records to reflect your attendance, please sign-in at the table and any Board or TAC members online, please add your name to the chat box.</i> <i>The purpose of this public meeting is to consider items established by the agenda. Public input is welcome on these matters. For those wishing to speak in-person, please complete a speaker card and present it to the APC staff. Comments/questions will be read aloud during the public comment period. To ensure an orderly meeting, members of the public will speak at the time designated. Each organization may be permitted one representative to speak for 3 minutes on its behalf and individual public members are permitted 3 minutes. This will be strictly enforced. Thank you."</i>
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE	Rachel Godeaux led the Pledge of Allegiance. All stood and recited the pledge.
ROLL CALL	Roll call was taken by Kelia Bingham. The required quorum was not present.

ACTION SUMMARIES APPROVAL	Meeting minutes approval on the following: • Board Meeting – February 26th • TAC Meeting – April 30th Because a quorum was not present, the Board decided to defer this action for the next meeting, August 27th.
GUESTS – CPRA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MICHAEL HARE & DOTD SECRETARY GLENN LEDET	The Board welcomed Michael Hare and Ed Knight (Deputy Assistant Secretary for DOTD as Glenn Ledet was unable to attend). Michael Hare, Executive Director of CPRA, presented an overview of CPRA's 2025 accomplishments, funding sources, and ongoing coastal restoration and protection projects across Louisiana, particularly in Southwest Louisiana and the Atchafalaya Basin. DOTD representatives (Neil McMillan and Ed Knight) introduced the newly established CURRENT Authority, designed to mirror CPRA's structure for inland/upland water resource management, with its first board meeting held in May 2026. Action items because of Board member discussion from CPRA: ○ Consider revising CPRA master plan public meeting structure to align with hydrologic basin boundaries rather than current regional divisions (per board member request) ○ Explore basin-level planning meetings for future master plan and annual plan cycles ○ Continuing coordination with Colonel Autin (Army Corps) to elevate Atchafalaya Basin to national program-of-record status ○ Support effort to place CPRA Executive Director on Current Authority board Action items because of Board member discussion from DOTD: ○ Issue RFQ for Current Authority master planning by end of Q2 2026 ○ Integrate LWI regional steering committee watershed plans into Current Authority statewide master plan ○ Engage Acadiana Watershed District as active regional partner in Current Authority planning process ○ Follow up with Ben Langlinais (Iberia Parish board member) regarding Iberia Parish master plan cross-parish modeling coordination with Lafayette, St. Martin, and Vermilion parishes

REGIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT FUNDS	The board discussed how to allocate approximately \$50,000–\$55,000 in remaining RCVG grant funds toward modeling projects before the grant deadline. Kelia Bingham stated that three projects were proposed at the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting: (1) a Water Quality/Flood Mitigation Study benefiting the Teche-Vermilion Freshwater District, and St. Martin Parish; (2) the Bayou Blue Gravity Drainage District Retention Project (Oberlin/Lake Arthur area); and (3) Vermilion Flood Gate & Pump Project (already partially modeled by Dr. Emad Habib with UL Louisiana Watershed Flood Center). With only \$50,000–\$55,000 remaining, the TAC recommended proceeding with limited-scope modeling of two or potentially all three projects to obtain at least some technical data. Board Member, Keith Roy, clarified that his project has already been modeled and does not necessarily need additional LWI modeling funds; suggested the remaining funds be prioritized for the other two projects that have not yet been modeled. The Board reached consensus (without a formal vote, as quorum was not confirmed) to proceed with modeling the Bayou Amy and Bayou Blue projects first, with the Vermilion project deprioritized for modeling given existing work, but kept at the top of the funding priority list.
BREAKOUT LWI REGION 5 MODELS	OCD has tentatively approved use of ~\$250,000 in remaining LWI contract funds for breakout models. The locations will be determined by OCD based on population; the region does not select the locations. All breakout modeling must be completed by June 30, 2026. The board will be updated on selected locations as information becomes available.
REGIONAL WATERSHED PLAN UPDATE	Kelia Bingham stated that she is the sole staff member working on the plan, which covers 16 parishes and approximately 75+ municipal profiles; the plan requires modeling results, gap analyses, lessons learned, prioritized actions, funding discussions, project inventories, and flood risk profiles. The state requires ground-truthing survey data from parishes; many parishes have not yet completed their surveys despite outreach and offers of in-person assistance.

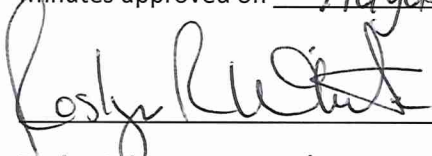
	Other regions (LWI Region 6 & Region 3) had consultants to develop their plans; Region 5 does not have that resource. The plan will not be completed by June 30, 2026, but will be submitted as soon as possible.
REGIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE	Kelia Bingham stated that the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (funded through LWI/Hurricane Ida funds, ~\$1 million) has been submitted to GOHSEP/FEMA; approval is pending due to FEMA backlogs caused by government shutdowns.
REGIONAL GAUGE NETWORK UPDATE	Sean Reed, APC Project Manager reported that the Acadiana Regional Gauge Network originally planned for 100 gauges, has been reduced to 82 gauges due to parish withdrawals (Acadia Parish, St. Mary Parish, Evangeline Parish and St. Landry Parish have decided not to participate in the Regional Gauge Project). Sara Gary, APC CEO, stated that a budget amendment is pending with FEMA to potentially redirect funds from retracted parish projects to cover cost increases for the remaining 82 gauges. The bid package for the gauge network is 100% complete and ready to go; the project is waiting solely on FEMA funding authorization. Congressman Higgins' office is assisting in pushing the gauge network through FEMA.
DISTRICT FUNDING DISCUSSION	Kelia Bingham stated that the district's current grant funding expires December 31, 2026; without new funding, the board cannot continue to meet or operate. A basic operating budget of approximately \$250,000 per year (mirroring LWI funding levels) has been proposed, with contributions allocated by parish population. Board member Rachel Godeaux noted that the board voted at the previous meeting to pursue population-based funding; some parishes have verbally committed. The Board expressed that state recognition, and financial participation would be valuable, but acknowledged parishes may need to self-fund if state support is not forthcoming. Ed Knight and Neil McMillan (DOTD) acknowledged the importance of the regional entity but noted that formal state funding commitments must come through legislative and executive channels; encouraged the board to advocate directly. Kelia Bingham confirmed that the August 27th board meeting will serve as the deadline for parish funding commitments; parishes that have not confirmed by then will be considered non-participating.

MISCELLANEOUS UPDATES	Kelia Bingham provided the following updates: LWI Region 6 is in public comment on their watershed plan; a potential project (Bayou Sorrell pump station) in their plan could pump water into Region 5/Atchafalaya Basin, and Region 6 proactively reached out to Region 5 to flag potential impacts. The Nature-Based Solutions Explorer Tool Training was held May 5, the public launch is July 1, 2026, with additional workshops planned. Kelia: The Nature Conservancy submitted a pre-proposal to NFWF for a Scaling Up Nature-Based Solutions (SUNS) grant within the Acadiana Watershed District; results on whether a full proposal is invited are expected in July 2026. Kelia: A grant application was submitted to LDEQ under the Clean Water Act (pass-through funds for planning districts) for water quality modeling training (La QUAL); this would fund approximately six training sessions in 2027–2028 for technical staff. The American Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) shared a summary of the President's Council on FEMA Reform, which proposes tightening criteria for federal disaster assistance and empowering state and local governments; the board was encouraged to review the document. A report by Dr. Ivor Van Heerden, prepared for the Atchafalaya Basin Keeper, assesses the Mississippi River Flood Control System and concludes the basin can no longer protect against major Mississippi River floods; the full report is available at basinkeeper.org.
PUBLIC COMMENT	Dave Dixon with Dredge the Vermilion stated that during a recent flood emergency, he requested assistance from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In response to the request, the Corps agreed to lower the Bayou Courtableau Control Structure by two feet over two days to help relieve flood conditions while minimizing erosion risks. Board members emphasized that outdated operating policies and changing watershed conditions have made flooding worse over time and expressed strong support for establishing a formal, multi-parish coordination process to enable faster, real-time decisions on gate and pump operations during major flood events. Dave Dixon submitted the demand letter dated May 20th and supporting documentation to the board record (via Kelia Bingham) regarding the request to open the Bayou Courtableau control structure in connection with an anticipated storm. He will continue advocating with federal legislators for updates to the Army Corps operational manual and for a formal multi-entity real-time flood coordination protocol.

NEXT MEETING DATES	Technical Advisory Committee – July 30 th at 10am Board - August 27 th at 10am
ADJOURNMENT	Meeting was adjourned at 12:10pm
MEETING DETAILS	
CONTACT	Kelia Bingham, LWI Region 5 Watershed Coordinator kbingham@planacadiana.org or (337) 446-0807
ADA/TITLE VI NOTICE	The Acadiana Planning Commission (APC) convenes public meetings in accessible locations. Meeting materials can be provided in accessible formats and in languages other than English upon request. If you would like accessibility or language accommodation, please contact the ADA/Title VI Coordinator via email at amoran@planacadiana.org or by phone at 337-806-9364. If you wish to attend an APC function and require special accommodation, please provide at least 72 hours advanced notice.
ATTENDANCE RECORD	
ATTENDEES	<u>Delegates Present:</u> Acadia Parish – Earl Garber Allen Parish – Tyler Tullier Calcasieu Parish – Terry Frelot Evangeline Parish – Jody Snoddy (Virtual) Iberia Parish – Ben Langlinais Iberville Parish – Brittany Dupont Lafayette – Rachel Godeaux St. Landry – Van Reed St. Martin – Chris Tauzin Vermilion – Keith Roy <u>Others Present</u> DOTD – Ed Knight DOTD – Neal McMillin CPRA – Michael Hare Teche-Vermilion Freshwater District & TAC Member – Donald Sagrera Atchafalaya Basinkeeper - Kimberly Culotta DOTD & TAC Member – Brent Domingue Bayou Vermilion District – Karen Hail Dredge the Vermilion – Patrick Harrington Dredge the Vermilion & Bayou Vermilion District – Dave Dixon

ABSENTEES	Dredge the Vermilion - Jeremiah Supple Whitney Broussard – Freese & Nichols Arcadis – Seth Magden CPRA - Ivy Thibodeaux CPRA - Phillip Parker Fenstermaker - Carly Phillips Lafayette Consolidated Government – Chad P. Sonnier McBade Engineering – Lucas Hudspeth APC – Sara Gary APC – Kelia Bingham APC – Kade Jones APC – Sean Reed <u>Delegates Absent:</u> Avoyelles Parish – Jacob Coco Cameron Parish – Kara Bonsall Jefferson Davis – Kori Myers Pointe Coupee – Nathan Cobb St. Marty Parish – Sam Jones House Committee Natl Resources & Env – Rep. Jacob Landry Senate Committee Natl Resources – Mayor Roslyn White
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Minutes approved on August 27, 2026 by the Acadiana Watershed District Board.



Roslyn White, Secretary/Treasurer
Acadiana Watershed District