

Action Summary

Acadiana Watershed District Board Meeting Minutes



10am-12pm, Thursday, February 27th, 2025
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 10:15am Chair Jacob Landry. Opening Statement: " Welcome to this public meeting of the Acadiana Watershed District. I am Jacob Landry, Chair of the Acadiana Watershed District. Agendas are available at the room's entrance and were made available through the AWD email distribution list and online at planacadiana.org. The purpose of this public meeting is to consider items established by the agenda. For our records to reflect your attendance, please sign-in at the table or drop a message in the chat box listing your name and affiliation. The purpose of this public meeting is to consider items established by the agenda. Public input is welcome on these matters. However, to ensure an orderly meeting, members of the public shall speak at the time designated. Each organization is allowed one representative to speak for 3 minutes on its behalf and individual public members are permitted 3 minutes. For those wishing to speak in-person, complete a speaker card and present it to the APC staff. For members of the public participating online, please submit your comments and questions in the chat box. Comments/questions will be read aloud during the public comment period. Thank you."
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE	Chair Jacob Landry led the Pledge of Allegiance, and all stood and recited the pledge.
ROLL CALL	Roll call was taken by Kelia Bingham, Watershed Coordinator, to establish a quorum. A quorum was present with 10 Board members in attendance.

VOTE TO AMEND AGENDA	A motion was made by Roslyn White to move up agenda item VIII to VI to discuss sustainable funding earlier in the meeting. The motion was seconded by Earl Garber and all were in favor. VOTE: 10-0-8 YEA – 10 NAY – 0 ABSENT - 8
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT OUT	At the January 16th meeting, the TAC further discussed and drafted a Vision and Mission Statement for AWD. These were presented to the Board and sent via email. A formal vote will occur at the next Board meeting. Regarding a project priority matrix, it was agreed that a project would need to be run through a watershed model before looking at a list of criteria to score the project. The criteria will be further discussed at the next TAC meeting. An advisory member did inform the group of a new Base Level Engineering (BLE) tool now available. The committee continued to discuss regional flood coordination and identified important entities to involve as well as monitoring local weather conditions during hurricane season and sharing water level data via graphs among parishes.
VOTE TO APPROVE NOMINATED AT- LARGE MEMBERS OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)	There were two nominations for At-Large members for the TAC representing a municipality with a population of less than 30,000 people. Mayor Roslyn White of Abbeville nominated Richard Greig and Mayor Neil Arsement of Maurice nominated Cassidy Lejeune. The nominations were accepted by the Board. Mayor White motioned to approve both nominations and Kara Bonsall seconded that motion and all were in favor. VOTE: 10-0-8 YEA – 10 NAY – 0 ABSENT - 8
VOTE TO APPROVE ACTION SUMMARIES (MINUTES)	Board meeting minutes for September 26, 2024 and November 7, 2024 as well as TAC meeting minutes for October 28, 2024 and January 16, 2025 were presented to the Board. Earl Garber made a motion to approve both Board meeting minutes and Mayor White seconded this motion. All were in favor. Mayor White then made a motion to approve both TAC meeting minutes and Vice Chair Rachel Godeaux seconded that motion. All were in favor. VOTE: 10-0-8 YEA – 10 NAY – 0 ABSENT - 8
SUSTAINABLE FUNDING	Sara Gary and Kelia Bingham asked to begin the first of many conversations about sustainable funding for AWD. If there is no sustainable funding after December

	31st, then the AWD cannot continue to operate. Various optional funding sources were discussed including a stormwater management fee or utility fee, membership dues, and a millage that is baked into the actual legislation for AWD. The board members were asked to consider these options and provide feedback at the next meeting. APC also introduced the idea of a smaller group to continue the funding discussion. Five Board members volunteered for the funding group. A meeting will soon be scheduled.
TVFWD HURRICANE BARRY MODEL PRESENTATION	Donald Sagrera with TVFWD discussed the boundaries and water flow management of the Bayou Courtableau and Bayou Darbonne watershed. The watershed is divided into a northern and southern part, with the northern part containing about 1 million acres. The structures are managed by the TVFWD, which was set up in the late 1960s and funded by a tax approved by the voters every 10 years. The district's mission is to improve water quality in Bayou Darbonne and the Vermilion River by supplying a flow of freshwater throughout the watershed. The district uses a pump station to supplement flow when there is not sufficient runoff from the northern part of the watershed. The meeting also discussed various structures in the watershed, including the Keystone Lock, the Bayou Courtableau Weirs, the Bayou Darbonne drainage structure, and the pump station. These structures help manage water flow and prevent flooding in the watershed. The meeting discussed the operations and impacts of the flood control system in the watershed. Dr. Emad Habib with UL shared modeling results which showed the effects of the district's operations on the watershed. Dr. Habib highlighted the diversion of water during non-storm conditions and the shutdown of pumps during storms. The team also discussed the potential effects of different scenarios, such as not shutting down the pumps or not closing the gates. The conversation ended with a presentation of an example output of the model, showing the profile of the Vermillion River. The impact of a 2-year rainfall storm on the river and the benefits of the district's strategy to manage it were discussed. It was explained that the river's behavior is influenced by both the Gulf and inland rainwater. The district's actions, such as shutting down pumps and closing gates, were found to reduce flood elevations in the watershed by about 2 feet during a storm. However, the benefits were not as pronounced downstream. The role of the swamp in managing floodwater was addressed. The conversation ended with a discussion on the potential for further projects to maximize natural flow from the watershed.
LWI REGION 5 WATERSHED MODELS UPDATE	Dr. Garland Pennison with HDR Engineering (contracted by DOTD for LWI) discussed the development and benefits of watershed models for the region. The models, developed to simulate various storm events over the past few years, are available for download. These models are 2D, showing the entire terrain and path imagery. They are complex due to coastal transition zones, flat slopes, levees,

	pumps, and diversions. The models are not designed to simulate local small pump systems or changing topography. Dr. Pennison highlighted the models' accuracy, with observed data matched in 2016 and 2012. The models also include hydraulic structures for the entire region and have been tested for various complexities. It was also mentioned the models' ability to show nuances like currents and eddies. The models were developed to simulate various storm events over the past few years. Dr. Pennison discussed the challenges faced in managing water levels and drainage in the Vermillion River watershed, particularly in relation to the swamp and the impact of coastal models. The need for adaptation and teamwork was highlighted to address these challenges. Dr. Pennison discussed the evolving risk of saltwater intrusion and sedimentation due to Gulfstream loops and inland development. Proof of concept for extending the Grimmer Canal was presented as a potential solution to manage water levels and improve water quality.
CONSIDERATION OF BYLAWS AMENDMENT	Kelia Bingham discussed amending the bylaws at the next meeting. The bylaws can address meeting attendance, consequences of not attending a certain number of meetings, and appointing alternates.
TIER 2.1 ANNUAL FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE	Financial disclosure is due on May 15 th . Kelia Bingham will send out reminders and links to the document.
UPCOMING MEETINGS	• Next TAC Meeting – April 17th, 2025 • Next Board Meeting – May 15th, 2025
MISCELLANEOUS UPDATES	A RFI was received from FEMA/GOHSEP regarding the application for a regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. APC is working on filling out these forms. Upcoming conferences: • State of the Coast in New Orleans – May 20 thru May 22 • Association of State Floodplain Managers (National Conference) New Orleans – May 18 thru May 22
PUBLIC COMMENT	Dave Dixon with the non-profit group, Dredge the Vermilion (DTV), commented and submitted a report by DTV titled, “Updated – A Body of Evidence – The Biggest Flood Risk to Lafayette, Maurice and Cypress Island Communities.” His statement included the uncontrolled flows from Coulee Ile Des Cannes that affect the Vermilion River and how this impacts several communities and needs to be addressed urgently.

ADJOURNMENT	The meeting was adjourned at 12:05pm.
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 – Earl Garber Calcasieu – Terry Frelot Cameron – Kara Bonsall Evangeline – Dirk Deville Lafayette – Rachel Godeaux St. Martin – Chris Tauzin Vermilion – Keith Roy House Committee on Natural Resources & Environment – Rep Jacob Landry Senate Committee on Natural Resources – Mayor Roslyn White of Abbeville Jody White – CPRA Brent Domingue – DOTD Jessica Cornay – Lafayette Consolidated Government Donald Sagrera – TVFWD Emad Habib – UL Watershed Flood Center Nathan Cobb – Pointe Coupee

ABSENTEES	<u>Others Present</u> Sara Gary - APC Kelia Bingham - APC Sean Reed – APC Amanda Blanchard – Sides and Associates Karen Hail – Bayou Vermilion District Robert Bixenman – Dredge the Vermilion Dave Dixon – Dredge the Vermilion Jake Benoit – Sen Kennedy’s Office Ivy Thibodeaux – CPRA Kevin Veillon – Evangeline Parish Police Jury Sen Brach Myers Kyle East – Garland Pennison – HDR Engineering Whitney Broussard – Freese & Nichols Brent Logan – DTV Ken Marks – St. Landry Parish Council Isaac Mudge – USACE <u>Delegates Absent:</u> Allen – Tyler Tullier Avoyelles -Jacob Coco Iberia – Ben Langlinais Jefferson Davis – Kori Myers Iberville – John Clark Rapides – Matt Johns St. Landry -Van Reed St. Mary – President Sam Jones
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Minutes approved on **August 28, 2025,** by the Acadiana Watershed District Board.

Roslyn R White

**Mayor Roslyn White, Secretary/Treasurer
Acadiana Watershed District**