

LOUISIANA WATERSHED INITIATIVE
REGION 4 REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
REGULAR MEETING

March 24, 2021

1:30 PM

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Mr. Alberto Galan called the meeting to order 1:45 pm

2. Roll Call

Members Present: Mr. Alberto Galan, Mr. Matt Johns, Mr. Jacob Dillehay, Ms. Kara Bonsall, Myles Hebert (via Zoom), Mr. Thomas Fontcuberta (via Zoom), Mr. Carl Thompson (via Zoom)

Not Present: Mr. Jason Hebert, Mr. William Ruffin, Mr. Bill Sabine

Others Present: Mr. Mike Hollier (IMCAL), Ms. Jennifer Cobian (Calcasieu Parish), Mr. Terry Frelot (Calcasieu Parish), Ms. Natasha Willis (Calcasieu Parish), Ms. Amber Downs (Calcasieu Parish), Mr. Bradley Spiegel (LA OCD), Nicolette Jones (LA OCD), Ms. Stephanie Boh (LWI Watershed Coordinator), Mr. Edward Anthony (LWI Watershed Coordinator), Kelli Van Norman (City of Lake Charles), Ms. Ann Guissing (LA OCD), Ms. Allison Haertling (UNO-CHART)

3. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Matt Johns led the Invocation.

Mr. Matt Johns led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Meeting Minutes Approval

Take appropriate action to approve the minutes of January 27, 2021, Regional 4 Region Steering Committee meeting.

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Matt Johns and seconded by Ms. Kara Bonsall, and the motion result was Passed.

5. LWI Region 4 – Website & Parish Support Survey, QES

Watershed Coordinators presented the LWI R4 website, detailing layout, and the site's ability to serve as a central reference point. A Parish Support survey is included on the website and serves as a project tool to support Outreach & Engagement activities, determine Parish needs, and build a contact database of those persons interested in LWI.

6. Overview of the 2021-2022 Regional Communications Plan, QES/OCD

The RSC received updates on the Regional Communication Plan, the strategy to inform and obtain feedback from stakeholders across the region of the Provisional Governance Recommendation.

Potential Groups for Outreach:

- Municipal and parish floodplain managers
- Gravity Drainage Districts and Boards
- NFIP/CRS participating communities- NFIP stands for National Flood Insurance Program
- Soil and waters conservation districts- Natural Resource Conservation contacts
- Ag. and Forestry contacts

The potential involvement of Henry Consulting in Outreach and Engagement efforts was discussed and supported. RSC members had no issue utilizing Henry Consulting as much as possible.

- Matt Johns made a note when doing outreach to consider the balance of “how are you going to pitch vs. education”

7. LWI Region 4 – Projects Program Timeline & Project Selection Criteria, QES/OCD

The purpose of the exercise was to recap the Round 1 project selection timeline and activities, clarify the state scoring criteria, and discuss LWI regional processes necessary in place to fairly select a project for LWI R4. As a point of reference, there was an overview of Region 5 selection criteria with assistance from Matt Johns, and the applicability was determined for Region 4. Various options for project selection criteria and priorities were discussed in detail by the RSC members.

Michael Hollier from IMCAL gave updates on IMCAL's developing potential and provided helpful feedback for establishing project selection criteria in the comment period.

Highlights of Project Selection Discussion

Matt Johns – The State has employed some smart people who have taken the time to come up with these project criteria. We may want to have some local priorities to ensure that the regional interests are being taken into consideration. Would advise a streamlined/simplified approach.

Edward Anthony – Provided feedback on LWI rules/requirements in establishing a unique scoring criterion. Noted there are additional complications.

Jennifer Cobian: In the state scoring criteria one consideration to think about: 51% of moderately to low-income people affected (7 pts all or nothing); Total benefit area, what percentage was low to moderate-income. Maybe a scaled approach, not all or nothing can be considered as regional priorities.

Matt Johns – Requested a copy of the scoring criteria to digest and then get back

Alberto Galan – In this decision, we must consider the risk placed on the LWI R4 - RSC

In closing:

- Watershed Coordinators prompted RSC members to freely share the website, survey, and project selection criteria with stakeholders
- Alberto Galan requested a copy of the options from the presentation and suggested RSC members forward the Project Selection Criteria to those with the respective Parish with technical specialties to receive feedback before the April meeting

8. Receive any additional updates from OCD

- UNO-CHART- going to reach out to Region 4 about putting CRS (Community Rating System) resources on their new website because it creates easy CRS points for participating communities meaning homeowners could get flood insurance premium reductions.
- State Identified Projects – state agencies had to apply with projects; Gov. announced \$163 M worth of projects and drainage improvements (Region 4 – Adecco in Brehan parish – 14.3 M enhancements and Bunton Lake – Beauregard, 12.8M dollars); can help you align your projects with the state projects.
- Promotion – next Wednesday at the same time – 1:30 -3 pm – webinar with Florida Watershed Company (RSC) to talk about their watershed initiatives in FL, their process, best practices, lessons learned, etc.
- Nature-based solution webinar series starting in the summer, how to design and build natural functions projects to enhance flood plain management and watershed management.

9. Receive any additional updates from IMCAL

Mike Hollier - Working on a comprehensive plan on transportation and economic development. Recently completed a regional survey on strategies, initiatives. The process is being identified for infrastructure projects. Advises taking more control of the project selection as a committee. Be sure you can defend your decisions to those you are representing because you will be held responsible as those locally doing the work.

10. Update on LWI statewide modeling effort - Fenstermaker

No update

11. General discussion or update from each parish and tribe, if any, regarding this initiative and project, infrastructure, modeling, or other identified needs that exist within each Parish to begin goal and priority setting for Region 4.

Allen Parish – Not update

Beauregard Parish – No update

Calcasieu Parish – No update

Cameron Parish – No update

Coushatta Tribe – No update

DeSoto Parish – No update

Jeff Davis Parish – No update

Rapides Parish – LWI Region 4 – Calcasieu Parish did a great job on the front end to keep us on track. The Watershed Coordinators have stepped in and stepped up to the task

Sabine Parish – No update

Vernon Parish – No update

12. Adjournment.

Mr. Matt Johns motioned, and Mr. Jacob Dillehay seconded to adjourn the meeting.