

LOUISIANA WATERSHED INITIATIVE
REGION 4 REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
REGULAR MEETING

August 25, 2021

1:30 PM

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Mr. Alberto Galan called the meeting to order 1:34 pm

2. Roll Call

Members Present: Mr. Alberto Galan, Mr. Jacob Marceaux, Mr. Matt Johns, Ms. Kara Bonsall, Mr. Gardner Rose, Mr. Tom Fontcuberta, Mr. Carl Thompson

Not Present: Mr. Jacob Marceaux, Mr. Jason Hebert, Mr. Myles Hebert, Mr. Michael McCormic

Others Present: Ms. Jennifer Cobian (Calcasieu Parish), Mr. Mike Hollier (IMCAL), Ms. Natasha Willis (Calcasieu Parish), Ms. Nicolette Jones (LA OCD), Mr. Bradley Spiegel (LA OCD), Ms. Stephanie Boh (LWI Watershed Coordinator), Mr. Edward Anthony (LWI Watershed Coordinator), Ms. Tara Ross (CPPJ), Ms. Kelli VanNorman, Ms. Alyce Therist, Ms. Anita Tillman, 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 July 28, 2021, Regional 4 Region Steering Committee meeting.

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Matt Johns and seconded by Mr. Carl Thompson, and the motion result was Passed.

5. Update on the 2021-2022 Regional Communications Plan and Report Out, QES/OCD

2021-2022 Regional Communications Plan, QES:

The Region 4 - Outreach & Engagement campaign utilized existing monthly meetings to gather feedback on the Provisional Governance Recommendation. Scheduling was accomplished through a series of communications with parish officials with the support of each respective RSC member. Using the O&E toolkit for guidance, Regional Watershed Coordinators presented an overview of LWI, program objectives, challenges & opportunities, and the components of the Provisional Governance Recommendations. At the presentation midpoint and conclusion, a facilitated Q&A session was held on the floor to determine if the recommendation needed modifications.

Watershed Coordinators provided updates on meetings and causes for rescheduling following the July meeting updates. In person meetings were held with the following:

1. Allen Parish Police Jury/Coushatta Tribe – Outreach Video Option, 7/7 In-Person Meeting
2. Beauregard Parish Police Jury – 5/11
3. Calcasieu Parish Police Jury – (Rescheduled from 5/20 due to flooding event) Outreach Video Option
4. Cameron Parish Police Jury – 5/11
5. DeSoto Parish Police Jury – Outreach Video Option, 6/14 Police Jury Meeting
6. Jefferson Davis Parish Police Jury – 5/5
7. Rapides Parish Police Jury – 5/3
8. Sabine Parish Police Jury – 5/19
9. Vernon Parish Police Jury – 5/17
10. Chenier Plains Coastal Restoration & Protection Authority - 7/20

Watershed Coordinators found stakeholders to be mostly supportive with reservations. There are concerns of information flow from the state and allocation of proper resources across the entirety of Region 4. In addition to long-term sustainability of the program, implementing substantial and necessary changes. A belief that taxes may be raised and not go toward or fix the problems.

Ms. Jeanne Hornsby recommended visiting the Port of Lake Charles, Cameron Port and Sabine River Authority for engagement and the future Coalition. It was decided through a series of communications it would be best to coordinate meetings with the Port Authorities and McNeese State University following the sharing of the State Model Use Program presentation.

Ms. Stephanie Boh request RSC members to forward any communication to WSC that should be forwarded as part of a monthly communication

6. LWI Region 4 – Update on the Watershed Council Meeting – August 5th, QES/OCD

RSC members reviewed the slide presented at the Watershed Council Meeting Data:

Data and Modeling

- Coordinate data management with local stakeholders and create regional data repository
- Store watershed models locally with entity in charge of day-to-day operation

- At the July RSC meeting the Governance Recommendation language was updated on the floor.

Mr. Bradley Spiegel gave three main take aways following on the Watershed Council Meeting.

- Phase 2 of Regional Capacity Program is moving forward – \$800,000 will be available to continue to help establish Watershed Coalitions and support planning efforts. Policies and procedures are under development and in final reviews. Hoping that information will be published soon. Next steps will be outlined in the coming weeks
- Council approved Round 2 opening – The pilot program that will focus on ineligible projects from Round 1 and will fund \$100 M of projects that needed more technical assistance. The program will consider geographic and high risk areas
- Starting on Friday, there is a 60 day public comment period opening for the Model Use Storage and Maintenance (MUSM) plan, which provides recommendations for long term sustainable watershed modeling. OCD is encouraging public comments from stakeholders or RSC members.
- What does a local partnership with McNeese University look like for a MUSM project. Blended approaches are possible and the state can focus their work on IT, but the regions can have more say on the storage and use of their regional models. There will be 2 webinars: Aug 31 at 1 PM and Sept 24 at 11 AM.
- Major based solutions webinar – Sept 15 – 9 part webinar of development and design for Regional Watershed plans for different scales, flood risk solutions, implementation, and positioning for future funding in future rounds of LWI.

7. LWI Region 4 – Parish Support Activities, QES

Mr. Edward Anthony lead a quick review of upcoming activities and discussed the coming technical assistance from OCD for Round 1 projects.

- WSCs are continuing efforts to engage entities to remain involved and determining capabilities for MUSM, such as McNeese University

Ms. Jennifer Cobian stated we are in a pause right now, but we still have a capacity building grant remaining. Can we reach out and see if parishes need assistance or technical help? CRS assistance, flood plain management, outreach?

- An example of this is we were able to provide assistance and information to Beauregard Parish to help out. We would like to develop long-term relationship building with this group regardless of the LWI RSC format. Trying to removing the parish lines and help each other in a regional approach.
- We're a little over half with QES contract; for Phase 2 (separate procurement) would need to have a conversation with IMCAL on how they proceed. Hope is to have Phase 1 and 2 overlap: IMCAL and QES to work together.

Ms. Nicolette Jones stated we haven't published policies and procedures but we're looking for an application proposal for each entity to work together, but the RSC will review and approve before submitting to OCD.

8. Receive any additional updates from OCD

No additional updates

9. Receive any additional updates from IMCAL

Mr. Mike Hollier is working on a comprehensive plan that will provide an approach to the entire watershed. IMCAL will be establishing meetings with local authorities individually to go over prospects and what they can provide to give concrete suggestions on how we proceed. Currently working on a 5-objective approach in regards LWI. He briefed the IMCAL Board and steering committee about investigating specialists on all 5 objectives. How to get projects funded. He will have an update in October.

Five-objective approach includes:

1. Recreational district - Nine parish water quality to whole watershed.
2. Economic development is a major objective
3. Funding - a critical piece (not dependent on taxes and grants) looking for economic viability.
4. Flood management
5. Coastal restoration/housing - Defining repeat flooding and housing issues.

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 – No update

Sabine Parish – No update

Vernon Parish – No update

Public Comment – No comments

12. Adjournment.

Mr. Carl Thompson motioned, and Mr. Matt Johns seconded to adjourn the meeting at 2:16 PM