



Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, DeSoto, Jefferson Davis, Rapides, Sabine and Vernon Parishes and Coushatta Tribe.

**TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT NOON MONDAY, AUGUST 07, 2023
Beauregard Parish Police Jury Office
DeRidder, Louisiana**

MEETING MINUTES

- 1. Call to Order** Chair
Chair called meeting to order. Michael Hollier

- 2. Chair requested introductions and a calling of the roll:** Chair

Michael Hollier called the Roll:
Allen Parish – Responded Present
Beauregard Parish – Responded Present
Calcasieu Parish – No Response
Cameron Parish – No Response
DeSoto Parish – No Response
Jefferson Davis Parish – No Response
Rapides Parish – Responded Present
Sabine Parish – Responded Present
Vernon Parish – Responded Present
Calcasieu Parish Police Jury - Responded Present
City of Alexandria – No Response
City of Jennings – No Response
City of DeRidder – No Response
City of Westlake- Responded Present
City of Lake Charles – No Response
LA Wildlife & Fisheries – Responded Present

The Watershed Coordinator reported eight of the sixteen Technical Advisory Committee members were present for a Quorum.

- 3. Chair reviewed round 2 project submissions and agenda items:** Chair

The Chair shared that the primary topic of the meeting is to review, critique, and rank the projects for round 2 funding. Five of the eleven projects from Region 4 were identified as eligible to proceed with their applications and no further questions or qualifications are necessary currently. These five projects were placed in “group A.” However, three of the eleven projects submitted were identified as needing further questions, qualifications, or technical needs. These three projects were placed in “group B.” There is a mistake on the agenda concerning the three projects that were identified as needing further clarification. The agenda lists four projects, but only three were identified as needing clarification.

The evaluation today will ultimately lead to a recommendation to the Coalition Policy Council (CPC) which is meeting on Monday, August 14, 2023. That meeting will take place in the same space as this meeting. At the same time as this meeting, noon. After the conclusion of the Coalition Policy Council meeting, those recommendations will be forwarded to the Louisiana Watershed Initiative (LWI) as part of their evaluation process.

The Chair then discussed the remaining agenda items. This included introducing the increase in funding available for the 2023 Region 4 Disaster Grant Application and options for the project. The Chair introduced Oyd Craddock who will help discuss the application and who is attending virtually through Zoom. Next, the chair then briefly described developing further strategies for the Seven Spokes of the Wheel strategy that has been adopted. Finally, the Chair quickly explained the need to develop a Watershed Region 4 Toolbox using existing and expected data to benefit the watershed region. The Chair described a presentation they had seen from Louisiana Tech University on permeable concrete. Oyd Craddock followed up by emphasizing the importance of the low-to-moderate income criteria for Louisiana Watershed Initiative projects, and particularly during Round 2 funding. The Chair shared that the funding limit for each project is \$15,000,000 for this round.

4. Critiquing Round 2 funding projects:

Watershed Coordinator I
Andre' Boudreaux

Andre' Boudreaux began giving a brief overview of each project for the committee to discuss and consider:

- Greinwich Terrace Stormwater Management project is the first to be considered. This project is a part of group A. Meaning that this project did meet the criteria for LWI low-to-moderate income consideration and does not require further consideration. The project is in Calcasieu Parish and is a major buyout program for repetitive structures. Approximately 6,216 people and 2,400 residential structures will benefit from the project. Additionally, an estimated 125 commercial structures will benefit. The Chair asked if there is any comment on the project. Jennifer Cobian from Calcasieu Parish shared a map on the approximate area of the project. Dianna Nichols commented that the project is already funded and is currently in the process of buying out residential structures. Ms. Cobian stated that 72 of the 115 structures have been acquired and demolished. The remaining structures are going through the buyout process now. The Chair noted that there is a large amount of public infrastructure that exists on the site today. This includes roads, sidewalks, utilities, etc. The chair expressed that to their understanding the buyout area must be returned to its "natural state" after the process is complete. The Chair asked Ms. Cobian to elaborate on what "natural state" entails. Ms. Cobian stated that the area cannot be repurposed or redeveloped but can be used for drainage improvement projects. Ms. Cobian stated that this area or neighborhood is in flood zone X that does not require flood insurance and that the repetitive flood issue in this circumstance is more manmade due to the higher elevation interstate system that runs around the area. When the area was initially developed, repetitive flooding was not an issue. The total estimated cost of

the project is \$11,850,000.

- 6th Street Drainage Improvements is the second project to be considered. This project is part of group A. This project is located within the City of Lake Charles. The project consists of upgrading and improving the storm drainage system for 6th street by providing additional drainage inlets and installing new, larger diameter drainage pipes to better convey stormwater and reduce flooding that is occurring on 6th Street within this corridor. An estimated 140 residential and 6 commercial structures will benefit from this project. The commercial structures that will benefit include one school, one church, one government building, and three privately owned businesses. This project is estimated to cost approximately \$3,500,000. The Chair asked if there were any questions pertaining to this project. There were no questions asked and the Chair requested to move to the next project.
- The Iowa Regional Detention Pond (Version 2) is the third project discussed during the meeting. This project is in group B. This project is primarily to construct and develop a 70–90 acre regional detention structure. The project plans to use the excavated embankment for various development projects locally, including site grading for a new municipal complex. The total estimated costs for the project are \$14,993,685. Diana Nichols noted that this project's funding request is close to the limit of \$15,000,000 and asked what the process is if a project were to exceed its allocated funding or budget. The Chair stated he is familiar with municipalities stepping in to provide funding for overages, but it is extremely dependent on the financial strength and health of a particular municipality. Jennifer Cobian reiterated the statement of the Chair is in her knowledge of the process for funding project overages. Oyd Craddock added that he believes the Louisiana Office of Community Development would not be unable to commit any funding to projects for overages over the \$15,000,000 limit. There were no further questions.
- The Wright Road Detention Pond is the next project to be considered. The project is a part of group A and is in Calcasieu Parish. Particularly, in the Sulphur Watershed is just south of Interstate 10. The project has a round 2 funding request of \$15,000,000. Ms. Jennifer Cobian started the conversation addressing the \$15,000,000 funding request, which is the project budget limit for round 2. She stated that any overages with the project would be covered by Calcasieu Parish. She continued that the project would mainly alleviate flood risks in the immediate surrounding area that includes substantial residential, commercial, and public investments. Mr. Hollier asked if Ms. Cobian knew who the owner of the property was. She replied that she did not know currently. She stated that she believes there have been discussions with the property owner to potentially acquire the property. Mr. Jacob Dillehay asked if Ms. Cobian knew the size of the property. She replied she believed it is around 40 acres. Mr. Dillehay also noted the cost of the project for the size but also noted the 15-foot depth that is proposed.

- Dolet Hills Area Reservoirs and San Patricio Bayou Relief is the fifth project to be considered. It is part of group B that did not meet the LWI LMI assessment. The project is in Desoto Parish and the project fact sheet states that the funding amount requested for this round has not been determined yet. The approximate project area is 250 acres, and the proposed site is the location of a previous lignite mine. There were no questions or comments on the proposed project.
- Bayou San Patricio Area Drainage Improvements project was the next project to be considered. The project is part of group A that did meet the LWI LMI criteria. The project will provide drainage improvements in neighborhoods located near the Bayou and create a small reservoir that will capture and detain stormwater to alleviate overflowing of Bayou San Patricio. The project does not have a funding request listed and there is no estimate for the number of people that would benefit. There were no questions or comments on the proposed project.
- Mill Creek Stormwater Storage is the next project up for consideration. This project is part of group B that did not meet the LWI LMI assessment criteria. The estimated funding amount for the project is \$14,987,000 and the project is in Allen Parish. The project will construct a berm and control structure across Mill Creek with a built-in spillway to naturally retain stormwater and attenuate a 100-year storm event. The proposed project area is approximately 3,700 acres and an estimated 50,000+ people will benefit from the project. As estimated 16,000+ residential structures will benefit from the proposed plan. Mr. Michael Hollier started the discussion by saying that this project accomplishes and addresses multiple aspects of the LWI objectives. The first is the recharging of the Chicot Aquifer. The recharging cannot take place in just any area in the watershed. The second aspect is the project will provide an alternative to the local rice and crawfish industries from drawing from the Chicot Aquifer. Mr. Hollier stated that Ms. Jennifer Cobian expressed the same sentiment towards the project. The project is positioned upstream from the City of Lake Charles and allows for an opportunity to stop and control the water before it enters populated areas. It also allows for other uses of the water commodity. He stated the estimated number of people that will benefit from the project is over 50,000 and 16,000 residential structures will benefit. Mr. Hollier asked Mr. Oyd Craddock a question regarding the drawing of the polygons for the benefited area. He asked that since projects do not have to be in an LMI area, it must benefit an LMI area, how far do you extend the polygon down- or up-stream to capture the benefited area. Mr. Oyd stated that he believes the polygons should include the entire benefited area, or as much as the tool can capture on a map. He said he does not believe there should be a geographical limit. He stated if the area can be technically justified as meeting the criteria, then LWI would ultimately have to accept those results. He believes the way the polygons were drawn in specific projects is what could have made them ineligible.

- Flat Creek Storm Storage is the final project up for consideration. The project is part of group A and is in Beauregard Parish. This project will construct a berm and control structure across Flat Creek adjacent to an abandoned railroad embankment with a built-in spillway to naturally retain stormwater and attenuate a 100-year storm event. \$12,000,000 is the estimated cost of the project. An estimated 5,080 residents and 1,700 residential structures will benefit from the proposed project. Mr. Jacob Dillehay began by asking if the project was located within the city limits of DeRidder, LA. Ms. Dianna Nichols stated that the project is not within city limits. Mr. Justin Habetz from the RPC GIS team stepped in and explained that the project is located Northeast of DeRidder, and the impact comes from multiple creeks. The water is planned to eventually flow into Bundick Lake. However, the main purpose is to alleviate flooding pressure for the City of DeRidder and other surrounding areas. Mr. Dillehay asked if there were any water quality issues with Bundick Lake. Mr. Sean Kinney responded that Bundick Lake is an extremely active site. He added that one of the connecting legs of Bundick Lake is a superfund site.

5. Ranking of Round 2 Projects:

Chair
Committee

The Committee voted to rank the Round 2 funding projects in the following order:

- Group A - Project submissions that did meet the LWI low-to-moderate income Criteria:
 1. Greinwich Terrace Stormwater Management Project
 2. Flat Creek Storm Storage
 3. 6th Street Drainage Improvements
 4. Wright Road Detention Pond
 5. Bayou San Patricio Area Drainage Improvements
- Group B - Project submissions that did not meet the LWI low-to-moderate income criteria:
 1. Mill Creek Stormwater Storage
 2. Iowa Regional Detention Pond (Version 2)
 3. Dolet Hills Area Reservoirs & San Patricio Bayou Relief

6. 2023 Region 4 Disaster Grant Application Drainage Project Options

Chair

The chair presented the different options for use of the funds if obtained:

- a. Swamp Brain – an artificial intelligence system that monitors all aspects of the watershed region. Including downed trees and other items or structures blocking waterways.
- b. String of Pearls Demonstration Project
- c. LIDAR Demonstration Project
- d. Field Inventory of Region 4 Repeat Flooding/Potential Flooding Structures

e. Regional Waterway Gauge/Rainfall Gauges Installations

Mr. Sean Kinney from Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries noted that his department has submitted around 60 to 80 applications for the installation of waterway and rainfall gauges in the watershed region. He said he does not believe that any funding organization would be willing to install more if those gauges are installed. He also noted that Calcasieu Parish has their own gauge system that the parish monitors and maintains. Ms. Jennifer Cobian from Calcasieu Parish noted that the parish had around 150 gauges installed. She stated that the gauges were installed around 2015 and have been extremely beneficial when completing cost-benefit analysis and applying for grants. Ms. Cobian stated that her only concern with the region wide gauge system would be who or what entity would be responsible for maintaining the system. Mr. Kinney stated that he believes The United States Geological Survey would be responsible for the system. Ms. Cobain stated that there is a transitional area that experiences both coastal and river flooding located in South Calcasieu Parish, near Cameron Parish, that does not have a river gauge system. She stated this was the next area for Calcasieu and Cameron Parish to cover. Ms. Jamie Gained mentioned that the submission deadline was September 23rd, 2023 and asked if the committee would be interested in pursuing the gauge or Swamp Brains program.

7. Public Comment:

Chair

The chair opened the floor to any public comments.

Jamie Gaines noted that the meeting was running close to the time it is scheduled to end and recommend tabling the remaining agenda items for the next meeting. Mr. Damien Hardest seconded the recommendation to table the remaining agenda items.

The Chair called for a MOTION to delay addressing the remaining agenda items. Mr. Carl Thompson seconded the MOTION. The Chair called for a vote on the MOTION. The MOTION was passed unanimously.

8. Next Meeting

Jamie Gaines

Ms. Gaines will send out a poll for the following meeting.

9. Adjournment:

Chair

There being no additional agenda items to discuss the Chair called for a MOTION to Adjourn the meeting.

A MOTION was made by Damien Hardesty to adjourn the meeting. The MOTION was seconded by Carl Thompson. The Chair called for a vote on the MOTION. The MOTION was passed unanimously.

Michael Hollier, Chair
Chair, Watershed Coordinator

ATTEST:

Jamie Gaines
Special Projects Coordinator

Andre' Boudreaux
Watershed Coordinator I