



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

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, March 27, 2024
Beauregard Parish Police Jury Office, DeRidder, Louisiana

MEETING MINUTES

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

- 2. Chair requested introductions and a calling of the roll / welcome** Jamie Gaines
Special Projects Manager

Allen Parish – Joel Johnson - Responded Present
Beauregard Parish – Dianna Nichols - Responded Present
Calcasieu Parish – Dana Watkins – Responded Present
Cameron Parish – Myles Hebert – No Response
DeSoto Parish – Brittany Mahall – No Response
Jefferson Davis Parish – Darla Beardmore – No Response
Rapides Parish – Melissa Becker – Responded Present
Sabine Parish – Jim Freeland – Responded Present
Vernon Parish – Carl Thompson – Responded Present
City of Alexandria – David Gill – No Response
City of Jennings – Phillip Deshotel – No Response
City of DeRidder – Martin Scott – No Response
City of Westlake – Damon Hardesty – No Response
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) – Kik Garber – No Response
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries – Sean Kinney – Responded Present
City of Lake Charles – Terry Magnon – Responded Present
Coushatta Tribe – Gardner Rose - No Response

- 3. Seven Spokes of the Wheel Initiative** Mike Hollier
Coordinator

Mr. Mike Hollier explained the importance of the Seven Spokes of the Wheel strategy. By emphasizing the need for the series reservoirs to not only manage floodwaters, but also the vital role they will play in economic development, transportation, recreation, and housing. The main focus on the reservoirs is the growing need for and awareness of fresh water, its maintenance, distribution, management, and funding.

- 4. Advancing Region 4 Series Reservoirs** Mike Hollier
Coordinator

A. Defining Footprints for Each Proposed Reservoir (Existing and Proposed)
According to Mr. Mike Hollier, defining the footprints for both existing and proposed reservoirs is crucial for understanding the spatial requirements and environmental

considerations necessary for the development and management of the infrastructure. By establishing clear footprints, Region 4 can ensure the efficient use of land, water resources, and minimize environmental impact.

B. Identifying Costs for Each Reservoir

Mr. Hollier reported that the financial planning for the series of reservoirs in Region 4 is a monumental task, given the scale and significance of the projects. Identifying the costs associated with each reservoir is fundamental to securing funding, allocating resources, and ensuring the project's feasibility. This process involves estimating expenses related to land acquisition, construction, maintenance, and environmental protection measures.

C. Establishing a "Task Force of Stakeholders" for Each Reservoir

Mr. Hollier introduced the concept of establishing a task force of stakeholders for each reservoir as a strategic move to involve community members, experts, and local authorities in the project's planning and implementation phases. These task forces are envisioned to be small, focused groups comprising individuals with vested interests or specialized knowledge relevant to each reservoir. Their role will include providing insights on local environmental concerns, land use, and water management strategies, thereby fostering a collaborative approach to watershed management.

D. Initial Earmark Funding Request

Mr. Hollier said that an initial earmark funding request of \$100 million lays the groundwork for the extensive planning and development required for the Region 4 series reservoirs. This funding is aimed at covering the costs associated with land acquisition, preliminary studies, and the initiation of construction activities.

5. Watershed Region 4 Needs

Melissa Tambling
Planning Specialist

Ms. Melissa Tambling will work on compiling the comprehensive needs of Region 4, a unified collection of the knowledge and resources of local stakeholders and a comprehensive inventory for flood-prone areas. She said sustainable water management strategies, including maintaining and distributing water resources, leveraging technological solutions for flood protection, and enhancing community awareness on freshwater issues will be an important component.

6. Aquifer Protection and Recharge

Mike Hollier
Coordinator

Mr. Mike Hollier stated that the demand on aquifers outpaces their natural recharge rate. In Vermilion Parish, the historical reliance on canal systems for irrigating rice fields illustrates the deep-seated need for accessible freshwater, a need now compromised by pollution and depletion. The pressing challenge lies in developing strategies to efficiently recharge aquifers and ensure sustainable water management.

7. Official and Unofficial Flood Risk Areas

Melissa Tambling
Planning Specialist

Ms. Melissa Tambling said collaborating with floodplain managers to compile a current inventory and enhance data collection across flood-impacted regions is necessary.

Mr. Mike Hollier emphasized the critical need to pinpoint both officially designated flood zones and those unofficial areas experiencing systemic challenges not directly associated with recognized flood-prone locations, often due to underlying drainage problems.

8. Watershed Region 4 Comprehensive Plan Preparation

Mike Hollier
Coordinator

Mr. Mike Hollier stated that the preparation of the comprehensive plan for Watershed Region 4 aims to outline the essential elements and components that will form the foundation of regional water management strategies. This plan seeks to address both immediate and long-term objectives, mindful of the four-year election cycles of officials who are keen on understanding the developments expected in the near term, such as the next six months to a year. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of collaboration among the multitude of local jurisdictions to ensure cohesive action and consensus building within the communities surrounding the lakes. Central to this effort is the integration of advanced modeling in water hydraulics, underscoring the significance of accurate data collection as a cornerstone of effective planning and implementation. The insights from on-the-ground experiences, such as those shared by Joel Johnson of Allen Parish, highlight the necessity of considering the wide-reaching impacts of water management decisions, particularly how interventions like reservoirs affect downstream communities..

9. General Comments/Recommendations

Chair

- **Diana Nichols**, a Senior Operations Specialist and Floodplain Manager, along with **Jim Freeland**, Sabine Parish Building Official/Floodplain Manager, highlighted the practical aspects of floodplain management, underscoring the critical role of accurate data and local knowledge in developing effective water management strategies.
- **Sean Kenny**, Biologist Manager for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, stressed the importance of considering aquatic life and environmental impacts in waterway maintenance and the design of water infrastructure projects.
- **Joel Johnson**, Floodplain Administrator and Road Superintendent, pointed out the necessity for understanding available freshwater resources and devising methods to find, hold, and keep water, which is crucial for supporting agricultural industry and community needs.
- **Ed Knight**, Department of Transportation Development and Office of Public Works and Water Resources, and **Sean Kenny** again, brought attention to the design and operation of reservoirs and dams, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive understanding of water level management, environmental impact, and community involvement in reservoir development and management.
- **Dr. Frank Tsai** of Louisiana State University offered crucial insights into aquifer management, emphasizing the role of conjunctive use of surface and groundwater in addressing Region 4's challenges related to climate change, aquifer depletion, and water intrusion. Highlighting his institute's work, particularly on the Sparta Aquifer in northern Louisiana, Dr. Tsai suggested this approach could be adapted for Region 4 to enhance flood control and water resource management. His discussion shed light on the complexity of the region's aquifer systems and the success of projects like the Sabine River diversion Canal in effective groundwater management. Dr. Tsai's contribution underscores the importance of

collaborative, informed planning and the potential of LSU's research to aid in understanding and sustaining Region 4's groundwater resources.

10. New Business

Jamie Gaines

Ms. Jamie Gaines requested a MOTION to amend the agenda to add two pieces of new business:

A MOTION to amend the agenda was made by Carl Thompson and seconded by Melissa Becker. Hearing no objections, the MOTION carried.

Ms. Gaines requested a MOTION to defer the minutes.

A MOTION to defer the reading of the minutes was made by Mr. Jim Freeland and seconded by Mr. Joel Johnson. Hearing no objections, the MOTION carried.

Ms. Gaines requested a MOTION to amend the agenda to nominate a Vice Chair of the Louisiana Watershed Initiative Technical Advisory Committee at the following meeting. Hearing no MOTION, the request was not carried.

11. Adjournment

Jamie Gaines

A MOTION to adjourn was made Mr. Carl Thompson and seconded by Jim Freeland. Hearing no objections, the meeting was adjourned.

Michael Hollier, Chair
Chair, Watershed Coordinator

ATTEST:

Jamie Gaines
Special Projects Coordinator

Melissa Tambling
Planning Coordinator