

CHAPTER 5 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND COORDINATION

This chapter documents details of the LCA Comprehensive Study's public involvement and coordination efforts, including description of the Public Involvement Program; results of Scoping; the Public Outreach Program; public meetings; and the study's coordination efforts with Federal, state, local agencies and entities, parishes and other interested parties such as Indian Tribes and Nations.

5.1 SCOPING AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

5.1.1 Scoping

The NEPA provides for an early and open public process—scoping—for determining the range of issues, resources, impacts, and alternatives to be addressed in the draft PEIS. A Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a draft PEIS for the LCA Comprehensive Study was published in the *Federal Register* (Volume 67, No. 65) on Thursday, April 4, 2002. The NOI informed the public that the USACE would hold a series of initial public scoping meetings throughout the LCA Comprehensive Study area in early spring 2002.

5.1.1.1 Scoping Process

The scoping process is designed to provide an early and open means of determining the scope of issues (problems, needs, and opportunities) to be identified and addressed in the draft PEIS. Scoping is the process used to: a) identify the affected public and agency concerns; b) facilitate an efficient PEIS preparation process; c) define the issues and alternatives that will be examined in detail in the PEIS; and d) save time in the overall process by helping to ensure that relevant issues are adequately addressed. Scoping is a process, not an event or a meeting; it continues throughout the PEIS process and may involve meetings, telephone conversations, and/or written comments. Scoping is a critical component of the overall public involvement program to solicit input from affected Federal, state, local agencies, Indian tribes, and interested stakeholders. A series of public scoping meetings regarding the LCA Comprehensive Study were held at 7:00 PM on the following dates and at the designated locations:

April 15, 2002: at the LSU Agriculture Center Extension Office, 1105 West Port Street, Abbeville, Louisiana 70510.

April 16, 2002: at McNeese State University, Hardtner Hall, Stokes Auditorium, 550 Sale Road, Lake Charles, Louisiana 70609.

April 17, 2002: at the Belle Chasse Auditorium, 8398 Highway 23, Belle Chasse, Louisiana 70037.

April 18, 2002: at Southeastern Louisiana University, Room 133, University Center, 700 West University Avenue, Hammond, Louisiana 70402.

April 22, 2002: at Peltier Park, 151 Peltier Park Drive, Thibodeaux, Louisiana, 70301.

April 24, 2002: at the Morgan City Municipal Auditorium, 928 Myrtle Street, Morgan City, Louisiana 70380.

Representatives of the agencies participating in the LCA Comprehensive Study took part in the initial public scoping process, development of study goals and objectives, development of potential project measures, development of alternative modeling protocols, development of benefit assessment protocols, the application of established protocols for the evaluation of the individual measures, alternative plans and their outputs, the evaluation of the alternative plans relative to one another, and the simultaneous interagency review of all study activities.

A Scoping Report was prepared that presents and summarizes the scoping comments expressed at the public scoping meetings, as well as written comments, scoping comment letters, and email comments received during the comment period ending May 9, 2002. The scoping comments document the public's concerns about the scope of the LCA Comprehensive Study and also identify strategies suggested as "keystone" to restoration efforts. This information was considered both in the study process and in preparation of the draft PEIS. A total of 301 comments were received during the comment period; 287 comments were expressed at the six scoping meetings, and 14 written (letter, fax, and email) and verbal (telephone) comments were received during the comment period. All registered scoping meeting participants, as well as those providing written or verbal comments, were included on the study mailing list of interested parties and received copies of the Scoping Report. The study mailing list will also be used for informing interested parties of the availability of the draft PEIS for their review and comment. In addition, the Scoping Report was posted on the study web site located at <http://www.coast2050.gov>.

Scoping comments were characterized by PEIS subject matter headings and include: Purpose and Need for Action, Alternatives, Affected Environment, and Environmental Consequences. Scoping comments also included specific concerns regarding Consultation and Coordination with the public and other agencies. Compliance with Regulations (Federal, state, and local environmental laws and regulations) is included in this category.

5.1.2 Summary Of Scoping Comments

The 287 comments expressed at the six public scoping meetings and the 14 written or verbal comments are summarized below. A brief description of those comments most often expressed is described. Generally, the most numerous comments and concerns were expressed regarding project alternatives, followed by environmental consequences, consultation and coordination, affected environment, and purpose and need for action.

5.1.2.1 Scoping Comments Regarding Purpose And Need For Action.

This section of the draft PEIS identifies the proposed action, the need for the proposed action, the study authority, major public concerns, and planning objectives. Of the 301 total scoping comments, 87 comments relate to the purpose and need for the proposed action. Typical comments related to the purpose and needs included: protection of infrastructure, revamping the state and Federal laws that hinder restoration efforts, and suggestions regarding the need to restore specific areas, such as the Barataria-Terrebonne estuary system, barrier islands, and land bridges.

5.1.2.2 Scoping Comments Regarding The Alternatives

This section of the draft PEIS identifies and describes plans eliminated from further study, the no-action or without-project conditions, the final array of alternatives, the preferred alternative (to be chosen after public review of the PDEIS), and the comparative impacts of the final array of alternatives. Consideration of the "No Action" alternative is required, and includes a description of the consequences of no action being taken. Of the 301 total scoping comments, 207 comments regarding project alternatives and strategies were expressed. Reestablishment of wooded barrier islands and barrier headlands was an alternative mentioned repeatedly at each scoping meeting. In addition, the use of the Third Delta Conveyance Channels alternative to divert fresh water was mentioned repeatedly and was considered an alternative applicable to two basins. One strategy common throughout the Lake Charles, Thibodaux, and Belle Chasse areas is beneficial use of dredged material and dedicated dredging.

5.1.2.3 Scoping Comments Regarding The Affected Environment

This section of the draft PEIS identifies and describes the natural and human resources including physical, biological, social and economic, and cultural resources likely to be impacted in and surrounding the vicinity of the proposed action area and alternative areas. This section also includes a description of the locations, quantities, and qualities of significant resources and why they are significant. Of the 301 total comments expressed at the scoping meeting, 113 comments related to the affected environment. In general, the most often presented scoping comment related to the need to do something for the widespread coastal land loss and saltwater intrusion across the Louisiana coastal zone. Other comments common across all scoping meetings include: the problem of saltwater intrusion adversely impacting existing fresh, intermediate, and brackish marshes; and the deterioration and loss of inland marshes. Another comment regarding the affected environment common across all scoping meetings was the loss of barrier islands and headlands.

5.1.2.4 Scoping Comments Regarding The Environmental Consequences

In this section of the draft PEIS, the environmental effects of each alternative in the final array on significant resources are described and compared among alternatives. For each alternative in the final array, the direct, secondary, and cumulative impacts to each significant resource would be compared. Potential mitigation measures for adverse environmental impacts are also expressed. For each alternative in the final array, current and predicted future conditions would be used as the basis for determining mitigation (preferably in-kind and in-basin), insuring compliance with all rules, regulations, and guidelines. Of the 301 total comments and concerns expressed at the scoping meeting, 116 comments related to the environmental consequences. One concern common to all areas is the restoration of barrier islands and headlands because these areas protect inland areas and serve as habitats for neotropical, migrating birds. Another shared concern is the effect of freshwater diversion (reintroduction) on oyster populations. For example, at the Belle Chasse scoping meeting, one comment considered the maintenance of target salinities in order to sustain oysters and marine fisheries.

5.1.2.5 Scoping Comments Regarding Consultation And Coordination

This section of the draft PEIS deals with consultation and coordination with the public and Federal, state, and local agencies, including compliance with various laws and regulations. References to compliance with specific regulations are presented in various sections and appendices throughout the draft PEIS. A notice will be placed in the Federal Register that identifies the draft PEIS, the agency, and the manner in which copies may be obtained. A date is given for the receipt of comments on the draft, usually 45 days after issuance of the draft PEIS. The draft PEIS will contain a table describing the status of compliance with applicable Federal, state, and other laws and regulations. Separate sections are presented in the draft PEIS describing compliance with the Clean Air Act Applicability Determination, the Coastal Zone Management Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, Prime and Unique Farmlands, 1980 CEQ Memorandum, Section 404(b)(1) evaluation, and coordination with the State Historic Preservation Officer. Other scoping comments and concerns, less easily categorized, will be appropriately described and addressed in the draft PEIS. Of the 301 total comments concerns expressed at the scoping meeting, 113 comments related to coordination and consultation. Typical comments relating to consultation and coordination included the importance of simplistic public notification procedures explaining projects and involvement of public special interest organizations and public figures.

5.1.2.6 Scoping Comments-Conclusions

The scoping comments and concerns identify the significant issues, range of alternatives, and mitigation the public and other interested parties request to be addressed in the USACE study process and in the draft PEIS. Scoping comments and concerns were considered in the development of alternatives.

5.1.3 Public Outreach Program

5.1.3.1 Public Involvement

The purpose of public involvement in the LCA Comprehensive Study effort is to help inform the public and help shape the creation and implementation of a comprehensive program to re-establish an ecologically functional and sustainable coast that supports the communities, cultures, economies and natural heritage of the region. Each phase of the LCA Comprehensive Study effort will carry with it special public participation needs and opportunities.

For the LCA Comprehensive Study, the PDT developed a multi-tiered plan for public involvement:

5.1.3.1.1 Coalition Of Coastal Parishes

The first tier is for interaction with local governments. This group represents an opportunity to discuss issues related to the study with all affected local governments. Special meetings of the group are called at key points during the study, essentially prior to decision points.

5.1.3.1.2 *Public Meetings*

The second tier is public meetings. This is the general forum for soliciting input for consideration on the study from stakeholders, Federal, state, and local governments, special interests, academia, and the general public. While recognizing that the Coalition of Coastal Parishes represents the views of local government, it is impossible for them to represent the concerns of every citizen in their constituency. Public input to the planning process is of paramount importance, so it is necessary to hold public meetings at a time amenable to the average citizen who wishes to attend. Therefore, these meetings take place after typical daytime work hours.

These first two tiers are designed to function together, with scheduling determined by the study milestones. For example, the PDT would meet with the Coalition of Coastal Parishes before a key milestone is reached, followed shortly thereafter by the public meeting.

5.1.3.1.3 *Internet Web Site Interaction*

The third tier of the PEIS is a web-based information system. This is updated as new information becomes available, as sections of the study are completed, and as new meetings are announced. Distribution is essentially free and unlimited, and information on the web site can be repackaged into brochures and fact sheets, if necessary. Effective use of this tier facilitates the first two. In addition, advanced distribution of meeting materials improves the quality of meeting input. Periodic web page updates provide timely and up-to-date communication, while serving as a project reference guide. The transparency this method lends to the study is essential. Credibility is increased if all interested parties are kept informed and problems are identified while there is still time to address them.

5.1.3.1.4 *Executive Briefings*

Experience has shown that the heads of large corporations and national interest groups do not typically participate in NEPA scoping meetings or public meetings. It is extremely important, however, to engage these groups in the planning process so they are familiar with the issues and can provide input to the plan formulation. Therefore, the executive committee invites these groups to briefings at key points during the study. The executive committee was formed to provide executive-level guidance and support for the LCA Comprehensive Study and may make recommendations that it deems warranted to the USACE-MVN District Engineer on matters it oversees, including suggestions to avoid potential sources of dispute.

5.1.3.1.5 *Request For Written Public Input*

Written public input (physical and electronic) is solicited for consideration during the study.

5.1.3.2 Public Meetings

In addition to scoping meetings, public meetings were also held for plan formulation and the presentation of alternative measures (**table 5-1**). Meeting notification was accomplished via

mailed announcements, newspaper ads, and media contacts. Meeting participants included Federal and state agency representatives, landowners, leaseholders, other stakeholders, and concerned citizens. Additionally, the announcements included information about the web site, which presented the same material as presented in the meetings and solicited input from those who were unable to attend the public meetings.

DATE	LOCATION	PURPOSE
2/04/2003	Belle Chase, LA	Plan Formulation
2/06/2003	Larose, LA	Plan Formulation
2/10/2003	Morgan City, LA	Plan Formulation
2/12/2003	Lake Charles, LA	Plan Formulation
5/27/2003	Houma, LA	Presentation of 32 Subprovince Alternatives
5/28/2003	Lafayette, LA	Presentation of 32 Subprovince Alternatives
5/29/2003	Lake Charles, LA	Presentation of 32 Subprovince Alternatives
6/02/2003	New Orleans, LA	Presentation of 32 Subprovince Alternatives
8/04/2003	Belle Chase, LA	Presentation of Final Array
8/05/2003	Larose, LA	Presentation of Final Array
8/06/2003	Morgan City, LA	Presentation of Final Array
8/07/2003	Cameron, LA	Presentation of Final Array
November/December 2003	To Be Determined	Draft PEIS Comments

5.1.3.3 Summary Of February 2003 Public Meetings

Four meetings were held in February 2003 to present the status, objectives, and process of the LCA Comprehensive Study to the public.

The Belle Chasse meeting, held on February 4, was attended by 129 people. Some of the major concerns expressed were: the need for public involvement, the concern for oyster lease lawsuits, the need for shoreline protection before freshwater diversion, the urgency of the situation, and representatives of St. Bernard Parish and numerous residents expressed the need to close the MRGO.

The Larose meeting was held on February 6 and 99 people attended it. Some of the major concerns expressed were: the urgency of the situation and the need to get on with restoration, the need to make the nation aware of the problem, the need to restore barrier islands and protect Grand Isles, and the need for consistency between restoration efforts and navigation projects.

The Morgan City meeting was held on February 10 and was attended by 61. Some of the major concerns expressed were: the ability of the state to pay its share and the need to make the public aware of the problem, the urgent need to start implementing projects, the need to rebuild the

historic reef at Point Chevreuil toward Marsh Island, the need for shore protection at Point Au Fer Island, the need to look into the cost share formula, the need for consistency with the Atchafalaya navigation project, the importance of congressional authorization, a Vermilion Parish spokesman worried whether the smaller projects in Subprovince 3 would be excluded from the LCA Comprehensive Study and have to continue to seek funding under CWPPRA, a spokesman for Restore and Retreat expressed support for the Third Delta Conveyance Channel Project and the need for consistency with Federal flood control projects, the need for public outreach, and the need to consider the Cypress Tupelo Swamps in the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway in any plan to redistribute the flows at the ORCS.

A meeting was held on February 12 in Lake Charles, attended by 57 people. The major comments involved the need for consistency between the various agencies, the need for public awareness, the need to expedite implementation of restoration projects, the need to consider upstream drainage, the need for the many user groups to come together, the need to address saltwater problems in Sabine Lake, Calcasieu River, Oyster Bayou, Mud Lake, and Second Bayou, the need for national awareness of the problem, concern that Texas not be brought into the discussions to address the effects of several of their proposed water projects, concern as to whether the smaller projects in Subprovince 4 would be excluded from the LCA Comprehensive Study and have to continue to seek funding under CWPPRA and the need for more input from landowners since most of the wetlands are owned privately.

5.1.3.4 Summary Of May And June 2003 Public Meetings

Four meetings were held in May and June 2003 to present to the public the 32 subprovince alternatives that were considered in the LCA Comprehensive Study and the process that was to be used to evaluate them.

The Houma meeting was held on May 27, 2003, with 84 people attending. Comments generally addressed project implementation. This included coordination with landowners, funding, and permitting. Comments were also made regarding project measures, such as barrier island restoration. From a system-wide standpoint, people commented on tradeoffs between various possible endpoints and user groups, and suggestions were made regarding funding and coordination with other efforts and stakeholders, such as the navigation industry.

The Lafayette meeting was held on May 28, 2003, with 52 people attending. Many of the comments offered related to measures. Some comments addressed concerns regarding environmental consequences of potential measures, including impacts to agriculture, salt-water movement, and sediment transport. Attendees also commented on programmatic issues, including funding and the need for action, as well as coordination and implementation, especially as they relate to permitting.

The Lake Charles meeting was held on May 29, 2003, with 106 people attending. Some of the comments expressed the need to communicate and coordinate with Washington officials, and to coordinate with the Galveston District of the USACE. Many comments addressed issues related to measures, including environmental consequences, and concern was noted regarding the change in sea level.

A meeting was held on June 2, 2003, in New Orleans, with 57 people attending. The major comments involved closing the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet. Other comments included the need for consistency with flood control, navigation, and regulatory issues, the need to include shoreline protection and restoration, interest in the targeted stakeholder meetings, and general concern about the schedule of implementation.

5.1.3.5 Summary Of August 2003 Public Meetings

Four meetings were held in August 2003 to present the final array of plans to the public.

The Belle Chasse meeting, held on August 4, 2003, was attended by 89 people. Many comments were expressed regarding closing the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet. Other comments related to specific measures, such as the placement of diversions, and a comment was noted regarding contaminated sediments.

The Larose meeting was held on Aug 5, 2003, with 71 people attending. The major comments related to the inclusion of the Third Delta Conveyance Channel. The importance of reauthorization of CWPPRA was stressed, and comments were made regarding specific measures. Also, implementation was a concern, especially as it related to compensation for shrimpers.

The Morgan City meeting was attended by 47 people and held on August 6, 2003. Several comments were related to specific measures, such as selection of the Third Delta Conveyance Channel and the Pt. Chevreuil Reef. A representative from the State Legislature discussed the importance of the three Constitutional Amendments to be voted on this fall that will further coastal restoration.

A meeting was held on August 7, 2003, in Cameron, with 44 people attending. Many comments involved the need for more small projects in their area, and some comments were noted regarding larger measures.

5.1.4 Stakeholder Involvement And Outreach

Executive Stakeholder Roundtable discussions were held to initiate a continuing dialogue with key decision makers of each sector of coastal stakeholders, including regional and national interests. Co-sponsored by the State of Louisiana and the USACE-MVN, the meetings were designed to be small, comfortable working sessions that elicited concerns and questions various stakeholder group leaders had regarding the LCA Comprehensive Study. The stakeholder groups to be targeted included: (1) natural resources (fisheries), (2) business and industry, (3) agriculture and forestry, (4) energy, (5) navigation and transportation, (6) flood control, (7) environmental, (8) recreation and tourism, (9) state and local government, (10) landowners, and (11) finance, banking and insurance. Meetings began at 10 am and ended at 3 pm each day during a mid-July through August schedule. Stakeholder concerns were identified and have been addressed in the LCA Comprehensive Study.

5.1.4.1 Summary Of Stakeholder Comments

The meeting format for the stakeholder meetings began with a welcome from the meeting host (a representative of that stakeholder's group who is also a member of the Governor's Commission) and self-introductions. A brief description of the problems associated with coastal land loss and an overview of current efforts was followed by specific concerns from that stakeholder group. A large portion of each meeting was devoted to identifying key issues, opportunities and challenges associated with coastal restoration specific to that stakeholder's interests. The meeting was adjourned after a brief discussion on continued/future stakeholder involvement in the process. A court reporter recorded the minutes and flip charts were used to capture the opportunities, key issues and challenges expressed by the stakeholder groups.

Several concerns were common to the majority of the stakeholders groups, i.e., a sense of urgency that restoration must begin soon; the importance of education and awareness both locally and nationally; the prioritization of projects; the need to determine compensation methods (legal issues) early in the process; and that consistency and coordination be present within government agencies, between government agencies, and between government agencies and other organizations regarding regulations and permitting. Also prevalent throughout most of the meetings were the issues of money—when will it be received, who will control it and how will it be spent; the awareness that experience and knowledge gathered from Coast 2050, CWPPRA, locals, the older coastal residents and the Everglades be incorporated into the process; and lastly, that the next governing administration for the State of Louisiana be onboard with restoration efforts.

The following is information and respective comments pertinent to each of the stakeholder groups.

5.1.4.1.1 *29 July 2003 Stakeholder Meeting: Natural Resources*

Location: Whitney National Bank.

There were 18 stakeholders in attendance with representation from oyster farmers, shrimpers, wholesale fish houses, Mississippi Department of Natural Resources, Sea Grant, Ducks Unlimited, St. Mary Seafood, Acadiana Bay Association, Viet-American Fisheries Union, LSU Agricultural Center, Terrebonne Fisherman's Organization and Delta Commercial Fisherman's Association. **Opportunities:** Flexibility of process, river diversion to build land, rebuilding historic reef complexes. **Key Issues:** Pollution from diversions, small diversions needed, the importance of fish and wildlife resources, outdoor recreation/ecotourism, coordination of water allocation, hard structures considered for shoreline protection, oil and gas should pay for damages, Bayou Lafourche Conveyance Channel too large and will compound problem, and the Bayou Lafourche Conveyance Channel compared to MRGO. **Challenges:** Economic impacts from river water diversions, getting the USACE to listen, costs associated with dredging policy/placement, integration of restoration programmatic issues with flood control/protection, availability of sediments and water rights.

5.1.4.1.2 *31 July 2003 Stakeholder Meeting: Business And Industry*

Location: Whitney National Bank.

Seven stakeholders attended representing South Central Industrial Association, Council for a Better Louisiana, Atchafalaya River Coalition, LSU, La. Association of Business and Industry and Conrad Industries. **Opportunities:** Refute inevitability of loss with positive results, use visual tools such as super Doppler radar, use weather reports nightly as outreach tool; use oil and gas companies to educate, America's Wetlands campaign can be used by businesses to promote awareness, and build projects that benefit flood control, navigation and restoration. **Key Issues:** Flood control needs to be linked with restoration, La. supplies nation's energy, hurricane/storm protection, brown marsh, long term funding, hypoxia, integration of industries (shipping with coastal restoration), economic growth potential, homeowner rates/insurance, prioritization of projects, and infrastructure. **Challenges:** Awareness ("ice melting" problem), fatalistic view (nothing can be done), linking restoration with oil and gas to rest of nation, bringing together the environmental and business communities, merging flood control with restoration and navigation, small storms have major impacts to communities, and inertia.

5.1.4.1.3 *6 August 2003 Stakeholder Meeting: Agriculture And Forestry*

Location: Lindy Boggs Conference Center.

Six stakeholders attended representing the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program, La. Farm Bureau, La. Cattlemen's Association and the Vermilion Parish Police Jury. **Opportunities:** Salinity barrier on west side of Freshwater Bayou, use Red River to bring fresh water to Mermentau Basin, native vegetation, make restoration "private landowner friendly," and introduce America's Wetland tools into the classroom. **Key Issues:** Water quality, saltwater intrusion, impacts to agriculture, property rights, invasive species, cypress logging, barrier islands, displacement, move meetings to growers, forum with regulatory agencies, total maximum daily loads, and 404 permits. **Challenges:** Salinity, mechanism to recognize and implement small projects, sense of exclusion by Subprovinces 3 and 4, meeting stream standards, beneficial amount of fresh water into Mermentau Basin, compensation, coordination of harvesting renewable resources with restoration, and protection of Houma area.

5.1.4.1.4 *7 August 2003 Stakeholder Meeting: Energy*

Location: Lindy Boggs Conference Center.

There were 13 Energy stakeholders present representing BP America, Shell, Burlington Resources, Louisiana Independent Oil and Gas Association, ATMOS Energy, Mid-Continent Oil & Gas and Continental Land and Fur Co., Inc. **Opportunities:** Structural measures to stabilize coast, sell program on relationship with National Security, matching funds from environmental lobby, elevate science as basis for justification, use partners upstream to facilitate sale of project, and achieve balance between industry, environment and economy. **Key Issues:** Feasibility of LCA Comprehensive Study, funding responsibility "on the backs" of oil and gas industry, skepticism of getting the money and not using it to restore the coast, Louisiana's credibility (in

Washington, D.C.), national security, and overburdening of regulations on the industry.

Challenges: State matching federal funds, media “blame game,” overcoming skepticism, Louisiana’s poor communication with other states, incentives and policies related to water quality, achieving balance between economy/ecology/citizenry and business with restoration plan, providing proof that restoration works, and independent financier for managing funds.

5.1.4.1.5 *12 August 2003 Stakeholder Meeting: Navigation And Transportation*

Location: USACE-MVN.

Twelve stakeholders attended representing bar pilots, Mississippi Valley Trade and Transport Council, U.S. Maritime Administration, La. Department of Transportation and Development, Port Fourchon, Steamship Association of Louisiana, USACE, and the Port of New Orleans.

Opportunities: Support from deep draft industry, ability to compromise with environmentalists, new dredging technology, beneficial use of dredged material, maritime industry to help with barrier island restoration, tap bed load, and maintain shipping without a lock. **Key Issues:** Impacts on transportation and infrastructure, maintenance and improvement of deep draft navigation, timing of loss of MRGO for deep draft navigation, clarify definitions of Jones Act vessels/issues, security i.e. Southwest Pass, how to handle spoil areas, upriver environment and impact, U.S. transportation system versus the world, can we be competitive while restoring the coast, and locks on Mississippi River will not work. **Challenges:** Loss of MRGO for deep draft navigation, making MRGO work with environmental challenges—navigation wants water, environment wants mud—need to compromise, more disposal areas needed, width of Southwest Pass, and maintain #1 port.

5.1.4.1.6 *13 August 2003 Stakeholder Meeting: Flood Control*

Location: USACE-MVN.

Eleven stakeholders were present representing Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, Teche Vermilion Freshwater District, Lake Borgne Levee District, South Lafourche Levee District, Atchafalaya Basin Levee District, USACE, Plaquemines Parish and the Orleans Levee Board. **Opportunities:** Compatibility with on-going flood protection projects, publicly owned access would help in project implementation, local experience in planning, integrate local projects that have been designed for flood protection, look at existing systems i.e. Atchafalaya sedimentation processes. **Key Issues:** Integrate academic with real life, emphasize this is a “working wetland, perception that flood control is bad for the environment, realistic expectation of efforts, speed of implementation should be a factor in prioritization, consider large diversions in publicly controlled impact areas, potential impacts farther north, drinking water supplies linked to coastal loss, use features of ongoing projects (Morganza/Donaldson to Gulf) for multiple purposes, need to have all components for effort’s success, impacts of changes in system, flood control/hurricane protection/coastal restoration must work together, need to expand on cost of doing nothing, quantify how little Louisiana receives of benefits, impacts on out-of-state consumers, we’ll deal with this one way or another, commitment to proceed, and solution will be “inflicted” on locals. **Challenges:** To communicate and sell the LCA Comprehensive Study to the average citizen; getting rid of flood

control's negative image; realistic perception of results; speaking with one voice; lack of understanding from Washington, D.C.; convincing Washington, D.C. of the problem; getting past bureaucracy and bias; misunderstandings and calculating costs.

5.1.4.1.7 *14 August 2003 Stakeholder Meeting: Environmental*

Location: Lindy Boggs Conference Center.

There were 18 stakeholders present representing the Sierra Club, Nature Conservancy, Louisiana Audubon Council, Gulf Restoration Network, Mississippi River Basin Alliance, Pontchartrain Institute, Coastal Conservation Association, Louisiana Wildlife Federation, Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation and the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana. **Opportunities:** Stress natural processes of the Mississippi River, prioritize river re-introductions, integrate regulatory into the LCA Comprehensive Study, re-evaluate USACE projects for consistency with the LCA Comprehensive, integrate current science with management, coordinate projects upstream and downstream of the Mississippi River, role of stakeholders in management, nationwide coordination, create consistency review board, sediment use from Missouri River, think out of the box, address societal impacts, and process for land purchasing. **Key Issues:** Coordinate permitting and restoration, national processes of Mississippi River in plan, diversions in first tier, consistency with the LCA Comprehensive Study, re-evaluation of public works and consistency with restoration, Minerals Management Service needs to be at the table, public trust, stewardship/sustainability with state after restoration achieved, ignorance/apathy, set interim goals to keep process on track, real sustainability and functioning ecosystem, and need solution to problem of conserving and controlling growth. **Challenges:** Permits/restoration, 404 permitting exemptions, MRGO, coordinating programs upstream and downstream, management capacity to carry out program, "coastal" development, money, security, gap between science and public understanding and trust, state saying "no" to political constituents' permits, apathy, mistrust, ignorance, political fallout because of consistency or lack of, political pressure, clarity of commitment, and consensus on philosophy of plan.

5.1.4.1.8 *19 August 2003 Stakeholder Meeting: Recreation And Tourism*

Location: USACE-MVN.

Eleven representatives from Acadiana Bay Association, Cypremort Point, Inc., Restore or Retreat, Louisiana Office of Tourism, N.O. City Council, Louisiana State University-Sea Grant, University of New Orleans, La. Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and Office of State Parks attended the meeting. **Opportunities:** Preemptive action/legislation to prevent future lawsuits, reconstruction of historic reef complex, create structure to prevent fresh water from entering western bays, need formula for coordinating development with restoration, readjusting and training for possible career change opportunities, adding facilities in wetlands to accommodate tourism, all data should be made available to public, negotiate trade-offs among users, science-based implementation, and show success as project progresses. **Key Issues:** Not convinced restoration will work, need methodology described and access to the plan for input, consider unintended consequences i.e. oysters, over-freshening of bays, development challenged, maintaining culture of south Louisiana, accessibility of wetlands to tourists, reduction of wildlife

habitat, coordination/state parks' master plan and provide data/science/information to citizens.

Challenges: Overcoming negative legal issues and misinformation, prevent over-freshening of western bay system, loss of culture and heritage, coordination challenge, what are consequences of letting river run its course, gaining trust of citizenry, consequences must be recognized on front end, and user groups in conflict.

5.1.4.1.9 **20 August 2003 Stakeholder Meeting: State And Local Government**

Location: Lindy Boggs Conference Center.

Twelve stakeholders attended the meeting representing Louisiana State University, Vermilion Parish, Department of Natural Resources, Louisiana Governor's Office, U.S. Maritime Administration, Restore or Retreat, U.S. Dept of Transportation, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana House of Representatives, Vermilion Parish and the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program. **Opportunities:** Projects may have choice of funding streams, protecting public/fisheries/economy, utilizing "coastal brain trust" that exist in Louisiana, targeted education to specific users, pipeline slurry sediment transport for moving materials long distances, utilize nationally supported groups or mimic successful initiatives of such groups, discuss wildlife issues, professional lobbyist, must implement certain types of projects quickly, use Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to contact out of state sportsmen for support, and combine environmental with economic benefits. **Key Issues:** Coordination between programs, citizens/economy affected due to wetland loss, high population growth in areas of high concentration of wetlands, threat of inundation in areas with infrastructure and businesses, time limitations, operational challenges of diversion projects, public acceptance of restoration program, sediment transport, "ideal" plan/what is right, invasive species, reassurance to be included in the LCA Comprehensive Study and future programs, competition for sediment, mimicking natural conditions by pulsing diversions, specificity/level of plan detail, and habitat destruction. **Challenges:** Coordinating the LCA Comprehensive Study with CWPPRA, halting wetland loss, getting science into the process, public acceptance, moving sediments long distances, re-establishment of natural processes, prioritization of resources, competition for funds, and complexity of issues/establishing a balance.

5.1.4.1.10 **27 August 2003 Stakeholder Meeting: Landowners**

Location: USACE-MVN.

Twenty-one stakeholders representing the Atchafalaya Basin Alliance; Harry Bourg Corp; Community of Cypremort Point; Randy Moertle & Associates/Biloxi Marsh Lands, Inc.; Pointe au Fer/St. Charles Land; Louisiana State University Agriculture Center; Lake Eugenie Land and Development; Madison Land; Miami Corp.; M.O. Miller; Avery Island McIllhenny Company; Continental Land and Fur Company, Inc.; Lafourche Realty, Inc.; Williams, Inc.; Stream; and Vermilion Corporation attended the meeting. **Opportunities:** Continue small-scale projects, Farm Bill involved south of Interstate-10, utilize expertise of landowners, allow landowners to retain mineral rights on restored lands, legal planning to restructure co-ownership policies, sediment diversions, separate appropriation for MRGO closure/rehabilitation, MRGO in prominent place in LCA, MRGO as a conduit for diversions, utilize DNR Small Dredge Program

in gap closure efforts, restore historic reef complex, consider recreational development, operation of Bonnet Carre spillway on a continual basis, spoil available for MRGO rehabilitation or closure, Calcasieu Locks in R4, landowner funding/efforts and related resource data can be used to beef up state of Louisiana cost share for the LCA Comprehensive Study, continue CWPPRA, include Atchafalaya Basin in LCA boundary/scope, devise water and sediment budget from Old River south, modify regulations regarding disposal of dredge material, stabilize Avoca Cutoff channel, flexibility in use of dredge types (beneficially) according to landowner preference, get involved, weirs structures to manage tidal fluctuation, Governor's Commission/state send message of urgency to policy makers, and form a powerful stakeholder commission. **Key Issues:** Regulatory restraints for private landowners, are stakeholders really listened to, landowners as experts, retain mineral rights on eroded land in exchange for cooperation with the state, co-ownership legal issues, land building should be first priority, lack of meaningful involvement in process, lack of time for action, need stop-gap measures immediately, permitting system not in step with landowners, Chenier Plain not separated from Mississippi River-not being heard as part of Louisiana coast, expand boundaries of LCA Comprehensive Study, lack of input from Galveston District on effects of Sabine River on Chenier Plain, need accurate figures on non-market value for matching fund credits, decrease in private lands, liability insurance rates triple and going up, tax relief incentives for landowners, mechanism needed for pro-active involvement by stakeholders, acceleration of Orphan Well program, assess damage to bottomland, hardwood forests north of LCA Comprehensive Study boundaries, plan must contain flexible language, fear of being left out of program, and how is science developed and applied in program. **Challenges:** Loss of smaller projects, difference between system and unit, lack of laws on books to do what is right on property, essential fish habitat a major stumbling block to restoration projects, balancing near and long-term access, use freshwater diversion to build land, meaningful involvement in process, sedimentation in bays, development in wetlands i.e. recreation, regulatory support for landowners, Chenier Plain inadequately addressed, miss a meeting and you may lose your project, agency-dominated system, and what happens to our comments and concerns.

5.1.4.1.11 28 August 2003 Stakeholder Meeting: Finance, Banking And Insurance.

Location: USACE-MVN.

There were six representatives from Professional Insurance Agents Association of Louisiana, Gray Insurance Co, Weston Solutions, Charles Theriot-CPA, Louisiana Bankers Association and Whitney Bank. Stakeholders at this meeting decided to change the format of the meeting, doing away with Opportunities and Challenges and focusing on key issues and methods of obtaining stakeholder involvement. **Key Issues:** Need to coordinate lobby for restoration, coordinate between programs, specific information pertaining to special interests, socioeconomic problems difficult to get past, restoration should/must transcend administrations, and absence of Federal Emergency Management Administration in Louisiana restoration. **Stakeholder Involvement:** Upgrade involvement-call/visit or write to inform, coordinate bankers on local level with project restoration, identify forums available for the LCA Comprehensive Study to tap national insurance commission meetings, American Insurers Association regional meeting, Certified Public Accountants national meeting, trade journals, LA supplies line bureaus, target legislators

to “lead charge” with certain groups, use initial stakeholders to spread message, specific impacts to industry built into invites/information and keep message simple.

5.2 COORDINATION

This section describes the coordination between Federal, state, local agencies and entities, parishes, Indian Tribes and Nations, and other interested parties.

For this study effort, the LDNR is the 50-50 cost-share partner with the USACE-MVN. They have provided half of their share as in-kind services, such as in project management, contract management, engineering, real estate support (including access and indemnification for state-owned lands), and report preparation. Coordination was achieved through various meetings with the Vertical Team, the Framework Development Team, and the Project Delivery Team. Functional Team Leaders (FTLs) headed the functional units of research (e.g., Engineering Division, Real Estate Division, Project Management, etc.). Additional meetings and conference calls were arranged as necessary.

5.2.1 Federal Agencies

The following Federal agencies were coordinated with during the course of this study:

- Environmental Protection Agency *
- Gulf of Mexico Program
- U.S. Coast Guard
- U.S. Department of Transportation and Energy
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
 - Natural Resources Conservation Service *
 - Forest Service
- U.S. Department of the Interior
 - Fish and Wildlife Service *
 - U.S. Geological Survey *
 - Minerals Management Service
 - National Park Service
 - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
 - NOAA Fisheries Service *

** Representatives of these agencies were collocated at USACE MVN and helped formulate alternatives and prepare the report.*

5.2.2 State Agencies

The following state agencies were coordinated with during the course of this study:

- Governor’s Office *
- Governor’s Task Force Advisory Committee on Coastal Restoration
- Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
- Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development

Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
 Louisiana Department of Natural Resources *
 Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officer

** Representatives of these agencies were collocated at USACE MVN and helped formulate alternatives and prepare the report.*

5.2.3 Parishes

The following parishes were coordinated with during the course of this study:

Ascension	Livingston	St. John the Baptist	Terrebonne
Calcasieu	Plaquemines	St. Martin	Vermilion
Cameron	St. Bernard	St. Mary	
Jefferson	St. Charles	St. Tammany	
Lafourche	St. James	Tangipahoa	

5.2.4 Indian Tribes And Nations

The following federally recognized Indian Tribes and Nations will be coordinated with during the course of this study: The Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana, The Alabama Choushatta Tribe of Texas, Choushatta Tribe of Louisiana, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, and the Tunica-Biloxi Indians of Louisiana. In addition the state-recognized United Houma Nation will be contacted and notified of projects that may be selected to move forward under the LCA Comprehensive Study. Given the Programmatic nature of these actions, full consultation will be conducted as the project progresses. Joey Strickland, the Director of the Governors Office of Indian Affairs and the Inter-Tribal Council of Louisiana, Inc. will be sent copies of the study. This document serves as an initial coordination document.

5.2.5 Various Groups

The following were coordinated with during the course of this study:

Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP)
 Environmental Defense Fund
 Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana
 Restore or Retreat