

**LOUISIANA COASTAL AREA (LCA), LA – ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION
COMPREHENSIVE COASTWIDE
ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION STUDY**

APPENDIX J

Public Involvement

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**LOUISIANA COASTAL AREA, LA – ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION:
COMPREHENSIVE COASTWIDE ECOSYSTEM
RESTORATION STUDY**

APPENDIX J

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Due to the intense public, political, and media interest in restoration of Louisiana’s coastal wetlands, public involvement is a critical component of the Louisiana Coastal Area (LCA), Louisiana Comprehensive Coastwide Ecosystem Restoration Study (LCA Comprehensive Study). This section describes the public involvement and coordination activities associated with the study.

Public Involvement Program

Public involvement is a process by which interested and affected individuals, organizations, agencies, and governmental entities are consulted with and participate in a decision-making process. Public involvement in the LCA Comprehensive Study has two main functions: to inform the public about the study and to generate their input on key issues and concerns. This dialogue will guide the study making it inclusive, balanced and comprehensive. Public involvement activities also facilitate open discussions that enhance efforts to develop consensus on important issues. Supporting an exchange of ideas and information among interested individuals and groups is critical to resolving the challenges involved in performing the study.

The geographic area of the study is large, issues complex and diversity varied. In recognition of these factors, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and State of Louisiana, as the non-Federal sponsor, agreed on public involvement activities during the LCA Comprehensive Study. A public involvement program was developed that was inclusive of all interests and concerns and balanced the sometimes-competing interests of this diverse region. The program is based upon communication and collaborative problem-solving with the goal of reaching better, more informed decisions. Public involvement activities ranged from workshops, focus group meetings, educational and technical briefings, presentations to interested parties, public meetings, fact sheets and newsletters.

Public involvement and coordination were identified as critical components of the study effort. A public participation / public outreach plan was formulated to 1) inform the public, 2) gather information, 3) identify public concerns, 4) develop consensus, and 5) develop and maintain credibility. The overall objective of all public and outreach activities is to ensure that Louisiana and the nation are informed about the study and that the LCA Comprehensive Plan is reflective of the input received from stakeholders and the public.

Three additional objectives for public involvement have been identified:

- Gather input from the diverse groups outside of the Project Delivery Team (PDT) to assist in problem identification and the formulation and evaluation of alternative plans;
- Develop relationships critical to the success of the study and the implementation of the recommendations of the study; and
- Promote realistic expectations within an atmosphere where there is widespread public interest about the health of Louisiana's coastal wetlands, but a lack of awareness about the LCA Comprehensive Study.

Further, it is the obligation of the PDT to:

- Keep the public informed so that they can make educated choices,
- Provide ways to participate in the process, and
- Provide equal access to information and decision-makers regardless of viewpoint.

CWPPRA (Breux Act) – A Contract with the Public

Coastal restoration planning efforts in Louisiana began in earnest in the mid-1970s. Since then, technical experts, citizens' groups, and Federal and state agencies have developed many plans and studies.

Primary efforts to prevent land loss have been implemented under the Federal Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act (CWPPRA), also known as the Breux Act, in partnership with Louisiana's efforts through Act 6 (LA. R.S. 49:213 *et seq.*). Between 1990 and 2003, almost \$478 million was allocated, through the CWPPRA (Public Law 101-646), toward 141 projects expected to benefit 126,414 acres of wetlands. Two larger projects built by the USACE under the Mississippi Delta Region authority, the Caernarvon and Davis Pond Freshwater Diversions, divert freshwater from the Mississippi River into adjacent coastal basins for salinity control and to improve conditions within the coastal marshes. These projects, combined with CWPPRA efforts, should prevent up to 22 percent of the loss projected to occur by the year 2050. The CWPPRA projects and the two large diversions demonstrate that it is possible to prevent ecosystem collapse, and show that larger projects can be very effective.

Section 303(a)(1) of the CWPPRA directs the Secretary of the Army, as delegated to the USACE Mississippi Valley New Orleans District (MVN), to convene the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Task Force, to consist of the following members:

- Secretary of the Army (Chairperson)
- Secretary of Agriculture
- Secretary of Commerce
- Secretary of the Interior
- Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency
- Governor, State of Louisiana

The CWPPRA program has been a very public program since its initiation, and the Task Force convenes quarterly in open public meetings. All of the programs and policies of CWPPRA have been established with participation by the public. Additionally, the projects are developed with the full participation of the public. Each year CWPPRA agency personnel hold a series of public meetings, generally chaired by a representative of the USACE, to solicit project ideas and recommendations. Various sub-committees of the Task Force then develop these ideas and recommendations into projects.

The Task Force also established a Citizen's Participation Group (CPG) to provide general input from the diverse interests across the coastal zone: local officials, landowners, farmers, sportsmen, commercial fishermen, oil and gas developers, navigation interests and environmental organizations. The CPG was formed to promote citizen participation and involvement in formulating Priority Project Lists (PPLs) and the restoration plan, and to assist and participate in the public involvement program.

After years of developing relatively small projects, it became apparent that the approximate \$50 million annual CWPPRA budget was not sufficient to reverse coastal wetland loss. The Task Force set about to inform the public that larger projects would be necessary to address Louisiana's coastal ecosystem. In fact, the problem was much bigger than initial estimates had indicated. It became necessary to reach out to an even broader segment of the public to make them aware of the magnitude and urgency of the wetland loss problem.

The Task Force established a Public Outreach Committee (POC). The POC is comprised of members from the participating Federal agencies, the State of Louisiana, other coastal programs, private landowners, and non-profit organizations. The committee has identified four key target audiences – executive, industry, national, and local – that are critical to promoting coastal restoration in Louisiana. Key audiences in central and north Louisiana are also targeted. General audiences include coastal zone environmental managers and civic leaders, Louisiana's educators, state legislators, statewide and national media, Louisiana's national congressional delegation, CWPPRA committees, Federal agencies at a regional level, national environmental managers and scientists, and oil and gas, navigation, agriculture and tourism leaders.

The committee is currently responsible for formulating information strategies and public education initiatives; maintaining a web site of complex technical and educational materials; developing audio-visual presentations, exhibits, publications and news releases; and conducting special events, project dedications, and groundbreakings. Additionally, the committee represents the Task Force at expositions and workshops to promote coastal wetlands restoration.

Additionally, the CWPPRA public outreach efforts have provided major vehicles for disseminating information about the LCA Comprehensive Study and promoting awareness of the problem and the need for public involvement in a solution. The "CWPPRA (Breaux Act) News Flash," a widely distributed e-mail newsletter, provides regular updates on LCA meetings and activities. The interactive www.coast2050.gov/lca web site is maintained by the CWPPRA. The chairperson of the committee serves as an

advisor to the LCA public involvement group and provides many outreach services at the request of the LCA public involvement group. Most of the CWPPRA public outreach activities now include information about or references to the LCA.

The above history of CWPPRA public involvement and the formation of a POC are particularly germane to this report. As the Task Force came to the realization that the CWPPRA funding stream was not adequate to address the magnitude of the state's land loss problem, they began to explore other options for funding the large projects necessary to halt and perhaps reverse wetland losses. They embarked on an effort with the state, local parish governments, and the public at large to define what those projects would look like. That effort became Coast 2050: Toward a Sustainable Coastal Louisiana (Coast 2050), which would later form the basis of a USACE reconnaissance study.

The Task Force concluded that only an authorization from a Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) would allow Congress to appropriate the type of funding needed to do the job. Since the USACE reconnaissance study conducted under the LCA Authority was approved, every CWPPRA project development or selection meeting has considered whether projects should seek funding under CWPPRA or WRDA through the LCA. Thus, the Task Force began a dialogue with the public suggesting that large-scale restoration efforts would be investigated and pursued through LCA funding while continuing to pursue smaller projects with CWPPRA.

The Beginning of the Coast 2050 Initiative

Coast 2050 was a planning effort inspired by the severity of the problems facing south Louisiana, as well as an increased level of confidence in our ability to understand the ecosystem and to implement effective restoration projects. The plan combined elements of all previous efforts, along with new initiatives from private citizens, local governments, Federal and state agency personnel, and the scientific community.

For the first time, as explicitly called for by the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana in 1997, diverse groups came together to develop a shared vision for the coast expressed in the overarching goal: to sustain a coastal ecosystem that supports and protects the environment, economy and culture of southern Louisiana, and that contributes greatly to the economy and well-being of the nation.

The organizational structure employed in the Coast 2050 planning effort is indicative of the philosophy of this effort. The structure reflects an interactive planning network -- a Strategic Working Group to develop scientific and technical matters, and a Coastal Zone Management Working Group to promote public acceptability and coastal resource objectives. The CWPPRA Task Force and the State Wetlands Authority jointly constituted these two groups. Coast 2050 was the first coastal restoration plan for Louisiana to receive the support of all 20 coastal parish governments.

Moving from Coast 2050 to LCA

The Coast 2050 Plan was developed over 18 months and literally involved hundreds of people. Public involvement in Coast 2050 was based on the expectation that

a difference can be made in protecting and restoring Louisiana's coastal landscape before it is too late. Lessons learned in this process were used to make future planning and implementation efforts more effective.

Implementing the conceptual solutions described in general terms in Coast 2050 required further action. At the least, it was necessary to refine the scope of the restoration effort, bolster its science and technical components, and secure a programmatic commitment from the Federal and state governments. The Coast 2050 Plan, completed in 1998, served as a basis for the reconnaissance level 905(b) (WRDA 86) analysis conducted by the USACE-MVN, which in turn, served as the basis for the LCA Comprehensive Study.

Summary of Participants, Coordination, and Public Involvement

Participants

The following were involved in the LCA Comprehensive Study process through interactions with the Vertical Team (VT), the Framework Development Team (FDT), and Project Delivery Team (PDT), which is also known as the Coastal Restoration Team (CRT):

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Headquarters
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Mississippi Valley Division
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Mississippi Valley, New Orleans District
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Jacksonville District
- Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
- Office of Management and Budget
- Office of the Chief Engineers Study Team (OVEST)
- Louisiana Department of Natural Resources
- Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program
- Louisiana Governor's Office for Coastal Activities
- Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries (NOAA Fisheries)
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
- Representatives of CWPPRA
- Representatives of the *Coast 2050 Plan*
- Representatives of Academia

Implementation and management of the LCA Comprehensive Study is a joint responsibility of the study partners – the USACE- MVN and the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (LDNR). However, the complexity and breadth of the issues to be addressed during the study process requires the active participation of and close coordination among other Federal agencies at the local, regional, and national levels. The scope of the planning effort also requires the technical expertise and assistance of

university researchers and contractors working collaboratively within various interdisciplinary teams. Given the number of agencies and individuals involved in the LCA Comprehensive Study, a well-defined management structure is necessary. The various teams generally fall into one of three categories: coordination teams, project execution teams, and special teams. Team representation is in itself a natural progression of public outreach, with members interacting within the study parameters as well as attending interagency and/or public meetings as subject matter experts. The purpose and roles of each are described briefly below:

Coordination Teams

Federal Principals Group - A Federal Principals Group (FPG) was established to provide Washington, D.C. level collaboration among Federal agencies for the LCA Comprehensive Study. The FPG duties include: (1) exchanging information regarding the status and progress of the study and the study activities of agencies represented on the Principals Group; (2) providing guidance and recommendations to the USACE and the State of Louisiana on the conduct of the study and formulation of a comprehensive plan; (3) assisting in the establishment and effective functioning of a regional Federal agencies working group for the study; and (4) facilitating the resolution of interagency issues that may surface in the conduct of the study and formulation of a comprehensive plan for the LCA. The FPGs role is advisory and the group has no management responsibility for the study. The participation of the Federal agencies in the Principals Group does not in any way limit the prerogatives of the participating agencies in exercising their statutory authorities and responsibilities. The FPG will be expanded for the LCA Comprehensive Study to include representatives from the Department of Commerce National Marine Fisheries Service, the Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Department of Energy, and the Department of Interior Mineral Management Service. It is recognized that there is interest in legislation to establish a Coastal Louisiana Ecosystem Protection and Restoration Task Force consisting of Federal agencies represented at the Assistant Secretary or equivalent level and to include high-level representatives of the State of Louisiana. The FPG could facilitate the formation of the Secretarial level task force and easily transition into the role of a working level group under the task force.

Governor's Advisory Commission on Coastal Restoration and Conservation - By statute, the State of Louisiana recently established a Governor's Advisory Commission on Coastal Restoration and Conservation. The primary purpose of the Advisory Commission is to advise the governor and state legislature on the overall status and direction of the state's coastal restoration program.

Framework Development Team - A Framework Development Team (FDT) was formed to provide a forum for individual members to discuss LCA Comprehensive Study activities and technical issues and to provide comments to the Senior Management Committee.

Regional Working Group - A Regional Working Group (RWG) was formed to support the Washington-level Federal Principal's Group and facilitate regional level collaboration and coordination on the LCA Comprehensive Study. The RWG will: (1)

facilitate the exchange of information regarding the status and progress of the study and the study activities of agencies represented on the RWG; (2) provide guidance and recommendations to the USACE and the State of Louisiana on the conduct of the study and formulation of a comprehensive plan and subsequent detailed plans; (3) facilitate interagency teamwork and resolution of interagency issues that may surface in the conduct of the study and formulation of a comprehensive plan and more detailed subsequent plans for the LCA, and (4) facilitate a public information/involvement program to include regional meetings to facilitate understanding and acceptance of the LCA Comprehensive Study in the regional context.

The RWG role is advisory and the group has no management responsibility for the study. The participation of the Federal agencies in the RWG does not in any way limit the prerogatives of the participating agencies in exercising their statutory authorities and responsibilities. The RWG will mirror the FPG for the LCA Comprehensive Study, will be chaired by the Commander of the USACE-MVN, and will include regional representatives from the following:

- United States Environmental Protection Agency (Region-6) (USEPA),
- Department of Interior - US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS),
- Department of Interior - Mineral Management Service (MMS),
- Department of Commerce NOAA Fisheries (NOAA),
- Department of Interior- US Geological Survey (USGS),
- Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS),
- Department of Energy (DOE),
- Department of Transportation – Maritime Administration
- Department of Homeland Defense – FEMA
- State of Louisiana

Project Execution Teams

Vertical Team - The Vertical Team (VT) was formed for the purpose of ensuring communication and coordinating activities within the USACE at the district, division, and headquarters levels. The VT has also provided guidance regarding the level of detail and overall approach for completing the LCA Comprehensive Study.

Executive Committee - An Executive Committee has been 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.

Senior Management Committee - A Senior Management Committee, composed of senior management personnel from the USACE-MVN, LDNR, and the Louisiana Governor's Office, has been formed to advise the Executive Committee and to provide direction to the Project Management Team with regard to the schedule, funding, and performance objectives of the LCA Comprehensive Study.

Project Management Team - The Project Management Team (PMT) is responsible for day-to-day coordination and direction of the LCA Comprehensive Study.

The PMT has the authority to allocate resources and secure contractor support within the bounds of the agreed upon scope of work for the planning process.

Independent Technical Review Team - In coordination with the USACE Office of the Chief of Engineers Value Engineering Study Team (USACE-OVEST) and the Mississippi Valley Division, a Value Engineering / Independent Technical Review (VE/ITR) Team was established. Members of the ITR Team represent USACE-OVEST and USACE Jacksonville District.

Project Delivery Team (also known as the Coastal Restoration Team) - Execution of the LCA Comprehensive Study and Programmatic EIS (PEIS) rests primarily with the Project Delivery Team (PDT). The PDT consists of professional personnel representing several Federal and state agencies, many of whom are “collocated” at the USACE-MVN office. They include:

- USACE-MVN
- LDNR
- USEPA
- NRCS
- USGS
- USFWS
- NOAA

The PDT also includes researchers affiliated with Louisiana State University (LSU), the University of New Orleans (UNO), Southern Louisiana University (SLU), and the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (ULL), as well as various contractors.

The PDT is organized into various teams to support key elements of the planning process. The teams and their functions are:

- Public Outreach Work Group – Develop and implement public information, outreach, and involvement strategies for the LCA Comprehensive Study.
- Goals and Objectives Work Group – Define restoration targets (i.e., goals) for each subprovince and formulate the alternatives to be evaluated.
- Numerical Modeling Work Group – Develop and apply numerical models for each subprovince and perform modeling evaluations of the land building, hydrodynamic, water quality, and ecological effects of alternatives.
- Desktop Modeling and Verification Work Group – Develop and apply desktop models for each subprovince and perform evaluations of land building, habitat use, habitat switching, and water quality effects of alternatives.
- Benefits Protocol Work Group – Develop and apply a Benefits Assessment Protocol that is consistent with numerical and desktop modeling assumptions and procedures and with established goals and endpoints for each subprovince.
- Environmental Impact Statement Work Group – Completion and preliminary internal review of all work products associated with the preparation of the PEIS and related NEPA compliance activities.
- Institute of Water Resources (IWR) Plan Assessment Work Group – Conduct the IWR assessment process for comparative evaluation of alternatives.

- Economics Work Group – Execute the economic linkages study, the funding sources and cost sharing study, and other economic analyses.
- Real Estate Work Group – Prepare the real estate chart of accounts for conceptual study plans and prepare a programmatic real estate plan for inclusion in the feasibility study report.
- Engineering Work Group – Hydrodynamic evaluation of alternatives and engineering review of design and cost estimates for selected alternatives.
- Cultural/Recreational Work Group – Prepare a paper describing the popular history of the Louisiana coastal area, conduct land use assessment to identify potential hazardous, toxic, or radioactive waste (HTRW) sites within the LCA Comprehensive Study area, and conduct a recreational survey.

Special Teams

National Technical Review Team - USACE-MVN has formed a National Technical Review Committee (NTRC) to provide external, independent technical review of the LCA Comprehensive Study. The purpose of the NTRC is to ensure quality and credibility of the results of the planning process using value analysis.

National Academies of Science Review Committee - The National Academies of Science has also established a committee for review of the Coast 2050: Toward A Sustainable Louisiana. The Review Committee is composed of leading national experts in a range of scientific disciplines.

River Management Team - The USACE-MVN, working jointly with representatives from the Louisiana Governor’s Office of Coastal Activities, has formed a River Management Team to examine our current understanding of river processes and to identify existing data needs to effectively utilize water and sediment resources within the Mississippi River for coastal restoration.

Coordination

Recognition of the magnitude of the Louisiana coastal land loss problem has engendered an unprecedented interagency cooperation and coordination between Federal and state natural resource agencies. Each of the major agencies has provided subject matter experts to serve as members on the LCA Comprehensive Study PDT. The interagency team members play a critical role in the LCA Comprehensive Study process, utilizing their subject matter expertise in the detailed preparation of this programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) and the LCA Comprehensive Study. Since the beginning of the study, each agency expert has directly participated in gathering information, plan formulation, alternative analysis, assessment of potential impacts, assessment of future with conditions, and potential impacts to the resources under their respective jurisdictions. The lead agency and subject matter areas addressed include: USEPA-hypoxia, and aspects of regulatory permits input; NRCS-soils and vegetation and habitat resources; NOAA-aquatic resources such as plankton and macroinvertebrates, benthos, shell reefs, fisheries, shellfish, invertebrates, essential fish habitat, threatened and endangered species; USFWS-wildlife resources, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, threatened and endangered species; LDNR-local cost sponsor and cost-sharer

for project management, contract management, engineering, real estate support (including access and indemnification for state-owned lands) and report preparation; LDWF-assessment of impacts on aquatic and wildlife resources; USGS-geospatial coordination, GIS/RS support, website, data and map product management, digital library support, ecological support, and water quality resources. In addition, the LCA Comprehensive Study PDT includes members of the academic community that have provided support and input for hydrologic and habitat modeling. 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 non-Federal cost share partner with the USACE-MVN. Half of their share was provided 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 and conferences with the VT, the FDT, and the PDT. USACE Functional Team Leaders (FTLs) headed the functional units within the district (e.g., Engineering Division, Real Estate Division, Project Management, etc.).

Public Involvement

As part of the preparation of the PEIS for the LCA Comprehensive Study, six public scoping meetings were held to solicit input and to review comments from interested parties. In addition, public meetings were also held for plan formulation and the presentation of alternative measures (**Table J-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 contains the same material presented in the meetings as well as solicited input from those who were unable to attend the public meetings.

**Table J-1
Public meeting dates and locations for LCA Comprehensive Study**

DATE	LOCATION	PURPOSE
4/15/2002	Abbeville	Scoping Meeting
4/16/2002	Lake Charles	Scoping Meeting
4/17/2002	Belle Chase	Scoping Meeting
4/18/2002	Hammond	Scoping Meeting
4/22/2002	Thibodeaux	Scoping Meeting
4/24/2002	Morgan City	Scoping Meeting
2/04/2003	Belle Chasse	Plan Formulation
2/06/2003	Larose	Plan Formulation
2/10/2003	Morgan City	Plan Formulation
2/12/2003	Lake Charles	Plan Formulation
5/27/2003	Houma	Presentation of 32 Subprovince Alternatives
5/28/2003	Lafayette	Presentation of 32 Subprovince Alternatives
5/29/2003	Lake Charles	Presentation of 32 Subprovince Alternatives
6/02/2003	New Orleans	Presentation of 32 Subprovince Alternatives
8/04/2003	Belle Chasse	Presentation of Final Array
8/05/2003	Larose	Presentation of Final Array
8/06/2003	Morgan City	Presentation of Final Array
8/07/2003	Cameron	Presentation of Final Array
October 2003	To Be Determined	Draft PEIS Comments

Representatives of the participating agencies took part in: the initial public scoping process; development of study goals and objectives, potential project measures, alternative modeling protocols and 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.

Purpose of the LCA Comprehensive Study Public Involvement Plan

In order to reestablish a sustainable coast, there will need to be a societal and financial investment never before seen in the State of Louisiana. The public involvement strategy envisioned for coastal rehabilitation is a multi-prong approach that builds on existing organizational activities and creative collaboration. Each phase of the LCA Comprehensive Study effort will carry with it special public participation needs and opportunities.

Key government and non-governmental agencies support various public involvement activities. The specific focus and strategies of each effort vary, but all contribute to fostering acceptance and support for coastal rehabilitation. The purpose of this draft of the plan is to identify the efforts that are underway so that

- activities may be coordinated and build upon each other as appropriate
- gaps may be identified and decisions made to address them

Goal of the LCA Comprehensive Study Public Involvement Plan

The goal of the Comprehensive Public Involvement Plan is to obtain feedback and foster buy-in from local, state, and National constituencies for an expanded coastal restoration program to rehabilitate Louisiana's coast. The public involvement goal has three components:

- Awareness and understanding
- Involvement and participation
- Endorsement of coastal rehabilitation

This goal is supported by various programs and organizations engaged in public involvement activities. The role each organization plays is uniquely directed to assist the Nation and State of Louisiana to recognize and address the loss of coastal wetlands. Specifically, the Comprehensive Public Involvement Plan will:

- Ensure that the general public, both at the National and regional level, has a clear understanding of the problems and potential solutions as well as how the LCA Comprehensive Study serves as a blueprint for all ecosystem protection and restoration programs in the Louisiana coastal area
- Ensure the public understands the distinct roles of the USACE and the LDNR as equal partners and executors of the study
- Clearly define the role of the public and various stakeholders, as well as Federal, State, and local governmental resource agencies in the study process
- Explain project implementation processes being employed in this specific study effort, as well as define how that differs from the objectives of investigations of other water resources problems and needs
- Actively solicit and consider the opinions of interested parties about problems, concerns, issues, objectives, and preferences regarding alternative resources use, ecosystem restoration strategies, and their thoughts on plans that have been formulated and evaluated
- Establish and implement the communication process of the study hierarchy, as well as that with the general public

Awareness and Understanding

The first step toward involvement in addressing the problem is awareness that a problem exists and understanding what the problem is and the impacts it may have at a personal, local, state, and National level. Awareness is needed among residents of Louisiana, key constituencies such as Congress and other decision makers in the Federal administration, and the American public. Outreach and education activities will increase local, state, and National awareness and understanding of the land loss problem for coastal Louisiana and its ecological and socioeconomic impacts. Outreach and education will increase awareness and understanding of the options for addressing the problem technically, socially and economically.

Awareness is the primary focus of the America's Wetland Campaign, described below, and a significant part of the work of most other efforts included in this plan. The CWPPRA Public Outreach Program, already described, has a large public awareness

component. For the LCA Comprehensive Study, objectives, key messages, and methods to increase awareness and understanding focus specifically on the LCA Comprehensive Study itself.

Involvement and Participation

With a base of awareness, the programs and entities included in this plan will involve the public in designing and selecting solutions to restore the coast and address ecological and socioeconomic impacts. Various activities will involve a range of individuals and groups affected by coastal erosion and resulting actions taken to rehabilitate the coastal area.

Involvement and participation are a key focus of the Governor's Advisory Commission, described below.

Endorsement of Coastal Rehabilitation

Public awareness and involvement will build toward endorsement of coastal rehabilitation. General endorsement is sought for focusing public resources on rehabilitating Louisiana's coastal area and institutionalizing and implementing rehabilitation mechanisms. Support will also be sought for specific programs, activities, and proposals.

The level of public involvement varies for the different programs and entities included in this plan. For example, the activities of the USACE focus on public involvement to provide information and gather feedback on the LCA Comprehensive Study rather than on seeking public endorsement for any course of action. In contrast, ultimately achieving endorsement of coastal rehabilitation is a primary focus of the Governor's Advisory Commission.

Other Activities and Programs

America's Wetland: Campaign to Save Coastal Louisiana (Themes, Goal, and Strategies)

The "America's Wetland: Campaign to Save Coastal Louisiana" was launched by Governor Mike Foster in August of 2002 at the Southern Governor's Association meeting. The initial three-year campaign serves as the broad umbrella that will help raise awareness of the vast area of coastal wetlands in Louisiana, their tremendous benefits to the nation, the land loss that is occurring, and the ecological and economic impacts of that loss.

Themes and Messages

America's Wetland, located along the coast of Louisiana, is of "world ecological significance" and strategic importance to the energy independence and economic security of the nation.

The following core themes are central to the campaign:

- Louisiana has world ecological significance
- Conservation legacy
- Economic recovery and energy security
- To establish pride, respect, balance and stewardship within Louisiana

The following core messages are central to the campaign:

- Speak with one voice on coastal restoration issues
- Build excitement, momentum, and pride within the state
- Emphasize Louisiana as the lifeline between the Gulf of Mexico and the United States
- Build partnerships

Goal

To raise public awareness of the impact Louisiana's coastal wetland loss has on the state, nation, and world and to gain support for efforts to save coastal Louisiana.

Strategies

- *Media Stories* - Take advantage of media opportunities, such as hurricane news coverage; to connect the issue of wetland loss with exacerbated damage caused by storm surge, showing potential population and cultural loss, economic disruption, loss of infrastructure, and environmental impacts.

Build on the theme of America's Wetland being a "lifeline to the nation", focusing on oil and gas production, flood control and navigation, transportation of vital commodities, commercial fisheries, etc.

Build on theme of "world ecological significance", focusing on habitat loss, important and endangered species, waterfowl and the flyways, neotropical migratory birds, fishing and hunting, conservation and eco-tourism.

- *Media Partners* - Special Section Inserts in publications like Forbes and Business Week that highlight the economic importance of this area to the rest of the nation because of the number one port system in the world, fisheries, world exports and imports, oil and gas exploration and production, strategic petroleum reserves, petrochemical corridor, and national implications.

Education Media Partners, such as Time for Kids, a subsidiary of Time Magazine and a student magazine that reaches 2.2 million fourth through sixth graders in America and provides 88,000 fourth-through-sixth-grade teachers with Teacher's Guides and posters for the classroom. It also provides a mini web site that receives 12 million page views a month.

Documentary Specials are being negotiated with media partners like Discovery Channel, as well as with ESPN through our partnership with Bassmasters.

- *Public Service Announcements, Billboards, and Paid Advertising* - Public service announcements, billboards, and paid advertising in the form of print ads in magazines and newspapers will be created and distributed by both the campaign and corporate and NGO sponsors alike.
- *Programs for Youth*- The Estuarians are Disney-created characters that express the notion that their habitat is being threatened by the coastal land loss in Louisiana. They each take on certain aspects of the coastal area, such as Shelly the Starfish and Salty the Shrimp. There are nine characters in all and will be used in various educational programs and marketing strategies throughout the campaign.
- *Exposure and Promotional Exhibits* - “America’s Wetland” Informational Video: Produced to enhance the public’s understanding of the coastal land loss problem with emphasis placed on the specific themes and messages created within the “America’s Wetland” campaign. A goal of the video is to focus public attention on the impact Louisiana’s wetland loss has on the state, Nation and world.

Conference exhibits, print materials and brochures, identity guides, specialty items like T-shirts, jackets and umbrellas, video resources, and PowerPoint presentations.

- *Web site* - The America’s Wetland web site is now online and includes a newsroom with current media clips, info central, how to get involved by becoming a community partner or a cooperating organization, and a list of our current partners in the campaign.
- *Campaign Sponsors* - Sponsorship of the continuing education campaign is through private, corporate donations and each sponsorship is tailored to the individual sponsor. Shell Oil Foundation gave the lead gift of \$3 million to seed the campaign to create the campaign’s spine. Other sponsors include Exxon/Mobil, Tabasco, Whitney National Bank, Shaw Industries, Ducks Unlimited, Eatel, Cox Cable, Lamar Advertising, New Orleans Hornets, New Orleans Saints, Associated Grocers, and many others.
- *Cooperating Organizations* - Federal and state agencies, foundations and nongovernmental organizations and associations are coming on board as cooperating organizations. These are proving to be vital to the campaign in getting our message to their broader constituent bases.
- *Community Partners* - Communities throughout Louisiana’s coastal zone are joining the effort as Community Partners, complete with flags, banners, and signage that identifies them as America’s Wetland Communities with resource centers available to the public providing information on Louisiana’s coastal land loss and how to get involved.

- *America's Wetland Trail* - Through the Community Partners, the campaign is creating a trail through the coastal zone from east to west that connects nature preserves, wildlife refuges, birding trails, historic and cultural sites, events, fairs and festivals, recreation areas and research centers. This will help create a sense of place for visitors and support an eco-tourism industry in Louisiana.
- *Major Events* - Leadership Tours are being sponsored that will bring in state and national leaders to see, first-hand, the loss occurring on Louisiana's coast.

A series of America's Wetland Summits will be held during this first year of the campaign that will highlight educational, scientific, and recreational aspects of the issue, bringing in national and state experts to address this critical problem and to cooperatively discuss solutions.

America's Wetland Survival Tour is being planned in the third year of the campaign, much like the Farm Aid concerts, taking Louisiana performing artists to strategic American cities to help raise awareness of this issue.

Governor's Advisory Commission

The Governor's Advisory Commission on Coastal Restoration and Conservation provides a venue for input from the broad range of persons and groups who must participate in and assist the efforts to preserve, restore, and enhance the coast of Louisiana. The commission consists of 16 representatives from various stakeholder groups and six at large members, all appointed by the governor (**Table J-2**). The speaker of the House and the president of the Senate or their designee will also be members. The commission is responsible for the following: advises the governor and the executive assistant for coastal activities relative to the status and direction of the coastal restoration program; provides a forum for coordinating coastal activities and the exchange of information regarding coastal preservation and restoration; fosters cooperation on coastal preservation and restoration issues among Federal, state, and local governmental agencies, conservation organizations, and the private sector; identifies and resolves conflicts among agencies and stakeholders; reviews and evaluates programs, conditions, trends, and scientific and engineering findings in order to provide guidance and improvements to the state's coastal restoration and conservation efforts; recommends review, studies and analyses of coastal restoration and conservation programs to ensure that funds are spent effectively; and reports by March 1 each year to the governor and the legislature relative to the progress, challenges, and recommendations concerning the coastal restoration and conservation program.

**Table J-2
Members of the Governor’s Advisory Commission**

Advisory Commission Member	Affiliation
Representative Damon Baldone	Louisiana House of Representatives
Charles “Ted” Beaulieu	CEO, Beaulieu & Associates, Inc.
Dr. James Coleman	National Academy of Engineering Member
Dr. Paul Coreil	Vice-Chancellor and Director of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service
Windell Curole	Director, South Lafourche Levee District
Mark Davis	Executive Director, Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana
Stephanie Desselle	Senior Vice President, Council for a Better Louisiana
Merlin Dupre	At-large Member
C. Berwick Duval, II	Partner, Duval Funderbunk Sundbery Lovell & Watkins
William P. Edwards, III	Property Manager, Vermilion Land Corporation
Ted Falgout	Executive Director, Port Fourchon Commission
R. Montgomery Fischer	Policy Director for Water Resources, National Wildlife Federation
Senator John J. Hainkel, Jr.	Louisiana State Senator
Dr. William Jenkins	Chancellor, Louisiana State University System
Gary LaGrange	Executive Director, Port of New Orleans
Lori LeBlanc	Executive Director, Restore or Retreat
Wayne Leonard	CEO, Entergy Corporation
Paul McIlhenny	President and CEO, Tabasco, Inc.
Stacy Methvin	President, Shell Pipeline Company LP
R. King Milling	President, Whitney National Bank
Ryan Montegut	At-large Member
Representative Wilfred Pierre	Louisiana House of Representatives
Representative Loulan Pitre	Louisiana House of Representatives
Randall Roach	Mayor, Lake Charles
Senator Craig Romero	Louisiana State Senator
James Tripp	Executive Counsel, Environmental Defense
Newman Trowbridge, Jr.	Coastal Landowner
Wilson Voisin, Jr.	Louisiana Oyster Task Force
William Wallace	Commercial Fisher
Joseph Wiley	At-large Member
Linda Zaunbrecher	Farm Bureau Member

Governor's Advisory Commission Plan

Charge - The charge of the Governor's Advisory Commission on Coastal Restoration and Conservation is to advise the State of Louisiana in the development and implementation of a holistic engineering plan to achieve a sustainable coastal ecosystem, encompassing the entirety of Louisiana's fragile coastal region from the Pearl River to the Sabine River, all predicated upon sound engineering, scientific, ecological, and socioeconomic principles.

Public Involvement Goals - In fulfilling its charge, the commission seeks to increase awareness of Louisiana's coastal region, gather input from the public and key stakeholders, and foster endorsement of efforts to achieve a sustainable coastal ecosystem.

Strategies - Commission Member Outreach to Interest Groups and Constituencies. Members of the commission represent and have ties to a broad range of interests. Members will increase awareness, receive feedback, and foster endorsement of already established interest groups and constituencies through individual contacts, participation in meetings, commentary in newsletters and on websites, etc.

Governor's Advisory Commission Committees

The commission has formed four committees: Applied Science and Engineering; Business, Energy, Infrastructure, and Environmentalists; Habitat and Landowners; and Local Government. Each committee has the following general responsibilities to assist in:

- Identification of leaders/members of their constituencies who should be encouraged to participate in the coastal program
- Development of strategies for sharing information/establishing a dialog/educating the members of their constituencies on relevant issues
- Identification of issues of concern among their constituencies that could impact successful program implementation and development of mechanisms to address those concerns
- Assisting in developing methods or providing information relative to current or projected resource impacts from coastal wetlands loss and potential benefits anticipated from a comprehensive program, including consideration of socioeconomic factors

As of April 2003, the committees have begun to identify specific strategies to fulfill these responsibilities, but more will be developed as their work progresses.

SCOPING

The scoping process, as described in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in USACE Restoration Activities, 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: 1) identify the affected public and agency concerns; 2) facilitate an efficient PEIS preparation process; 3) define the issues and alternatives that will be examined in detail in the PEIS; and 4) 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, and local agencies, Indian tribes, and interested stakeholders.

The Scoping Report

A Scoping Report was prepared presenting and summarizing 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 will be 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, will be included on the study mailing list of interested parties and will receive copies of this 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>.

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.

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.

Scoping Comments Regarding the Alternatives Including the Proposed Action

This section of the draft PEIS identifies and describes plans eliminated from further study, the no-action or without-project conditions, alternatives considered in detail, the preferred alternative, and the comparative impacts 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 several different basins. One strategy common throughout the Lake Charles, Thibodaux, and Belle Chasse areas is the process of dredging and use of sediment.

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.

Scoping Comments Regarding the Environmental Consequences

In this section of the draft PEIS, the environmental effects of each alternative on significant resources are described and compared among alternatives. For each alternative considered in detail, 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 considered in detail, 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 migratory birds. Another shared concern is the effect of freshwater diversion 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.

Scoping Comments Regarding the 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, EO #13186, 1980 CEQ Memorandum, Section 404(b)(1) evaluation, and coordination 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.

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 final array of plans. 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.

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. The State of Louisiana and USACE-MVN will each create a web page to specifically address executive stakeholder concerns to aid in the continuing dialogue expected as a result of the meetings.

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.

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

29 July 2003. Stakeholder: 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 AgCenter, 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, conveyance channel too large and will compound problem, and 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.

31 July 2003. Stakeholder: Business and Industry. Location: Whitney National Bank. Seven stakeholders attended representing SCIA, CABL, Atchafalaya River Coalition, LSU, LABI 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 Wetland 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), complex issue, 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.

6 August 2003. Stakeholder: Agriculture and Forestry. Location: Lindy Boggs Conference Center. Six stakeholders attended representing BTNEP, LFBBF, 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, TMDLs, and 404 permits. **Challenges:** Salinity, mechanism to recognize and implement small projects, sense of exclusion by subprovinces 3 & 4, meeting stream standards (TMDL regulations), beneficial amount of fresh water into Mermentau Basin, compensation, coordination of harvesting renewable resources with restoration, and protection of Houma area.

7 August 2003. Stakeholder: Energy. Location: Lindy Boggs Conference Center. There were 13 Energy stakeholders present representing BP America, Shell, Burlington Resources, LIOGA, ATMOS Energy, Mid-Continent Oil & Gas and CL&F. **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 Wash, 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.

12 August 2003. Stakeholder: Navigation and Transportation. Location: USACE-MVN. Twelve stakeholders attended representing bar pilots, MVTTTC, MARAD, La. DOTD, Port Fourchon, Steamship Assoc. of La., 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 dredged material areas, upriver environment and impact, U.S. transportation system vs. world, can we be competitive while restoring 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 status as #1 port.

13 August 2003. Stakeholder: Flood Control. Location: USACE-MVN. Eleven stakeholders were present representing La. DOTD, 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 (LNG facilities), 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 D.C. of the problem, getting past bureaucracy and bias, misunderstandings and calculating costs.

14 August 2003. Stakeholder: 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, CCA, La. 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 Study, 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 LCA Comprehensive Study, re-evaluation of public works and consistency with restoration, MMS 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:** Deal killer (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.

19 August 2003. Stakeholder: Recreation and Tourism. Location: USACE-MVN. Eleven representatives from Acadiana Bay Association, Cypremont Point, Inc., Restore or Retreat, Louisiana Office of Tourism, N.O. City Council, LSU-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 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 with La. Office of State Parks’ master plan, provide data/science/information to citizens. **Challenges:** Overcoming negative legal issues and misinformation, prevent over-freshening 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.

20 August 2003. Stakeholder: State and Local Government. Location: Lindy Boggs Conference Center. Twelve stakeholders attended the meeting representing Louisiana State University, Vermilion Parish, LDNR, La. Governor’s Office, MARAD, Restore or Retreat, U.S. Dept of Transportation, La. Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries, Jefferson Parish, La. House of Representatives, and the Barataria Terrebonne National Estuary Program. **Opportunities:** Projects may have choice of funding streams, protecting public/fisheries/economy, utilizing “coastal brain trust” that exists 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 La. Dept. 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.

27 August 2003. Stakeholder: Landowners. Location: USACE-MVN. Twenty-one stakeholders representing the Atchafalaya Basin Alliance, Harry Bourg Corp, Community of Cyremort Point, Randy Moertle & Associates/Biloxi Marsh Lands, Inc., Pointe au Fer/St. Charles Land, LSU Agriculture Center, Lake Eugenie Land and Development, Madison Land, Miami Corp., M.O. Miller, Avery Island McIllhenny Co., CL&F, Lafourche Realty, Inc., Williams, Inc., Stream, and Vermilion Corporation attended the meeting. **Opportunities:** Continue small-scale projects, Farm Bill involved south of I-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 LDNR Small Dredge Program in gap closure efforts, restore historic reef complex, consider recreational development, operation of Bonnet Carre spillway on a continual basis, dredged material 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 the LCA Comprehensive Study 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 the 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 the 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.

28 August 2003. Stakeholder: Finance, Banking and Insurance. Location: USACE-MVN. There were six representatives from Professional Insurance Agents Assoc. of Louisiana, Gray Insurance Co, Weston Solutions, CRA, La. 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 FEMA 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, AIA regional, CPA 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.

Workshops

National Technical and Scientific Workshop

This workshop engaged a national technical and scientific audience to develop preliminary recommendations for the development and enhancement of science-based decision support systems (DSS) for adaptive management. A study overview of the LCA Comprehensive Study was given at this workshop.

Coastal Engineering Research Board (CERB)

The USACE-MVD and USACE-MVN hosted the meeting in Lafayette on June 17-18, 2003, which was open to the public. The topic of discussion centered on the LCA Comprehensive Study and provided an update on needs for saving Louisiana’s coast by experts from USACE, LDNR, universities, U.S. Geological Survey and National Academy of Sciences. Most of the afternoon sessions were devoted to interaction between these experts and Coastal Engineering Research Board members. CERB members consist of four USACE generals and three civilian engineers/scientists who are experts on coastal engineering. A press conference was held midway through the meeting. The following press were in attendance: Baton Rouge Advocate; Lafayette Daily Advertiser; KVHP-Fox 3, Lake Charles; KATC-3, Lafayette; and KLFY-10, Lafayette.

Informational Requests

As the LCA Comprehensive Study progressed, more people became aware of the effort and requested more information. The study team was contacted on several occasions to give an overview of the study and what this study would mean for coastal Louisiana. Requests came from members of the White House and local governments.

Staff Briefings

Several staff briefings were held throughout the study to keep all USACE Headquarters officials and USACE-MVN staff informed of the progress of the study. These staff briefings also proved to be useful in generating discussion that helped advise the study team on a regular basis.

The Vertical Team, previously defined, was one of the many staff briefings done. The team was formed for the purpose of ensuring communication and coordinating activities within the USACE at the MVN, MVD, and headquarters levels. The Vertical Team has also provided guidance regarding the level of detail and overall approach for completing the LCA Comprehensive Study.

In addition to the Vertical Team meetings, the Project Review Board (PRB) meetings also gave additional information to Executive members of the MVN concerning the progress of the LCA Comprehensive Study.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND OUTREACH

Public Involvement

Public Involvement is an important aspect of the LCA Comprehensive Plan. Throughout the LCA Comprehensive Study, open channels of communication with the public have remained a significant part of the process. Web sites, public meetings, news articles, and radio interviews were just some of the methods used to keep the public informed about the process and study alternatives. Stakeholders also played a hand in helping to keep their groups abreast of changes or new developments.

The public also had the opportunity to become participants at the public meetings during the breakout sessions. At each session, members of the public assembled in smaller groups where each person had the opportunity to express their concerns on a more individual level with members of the study team.

Materials to assist with various activities included:

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Fact sheet/brochure on LCA Comprehensive Study and Coast 2050
- LCA Comprehensive Study Public Involvement Fact Sheet
- Fact sheet on roles of various agencies/organizations
- Fact sheet on timeline, milestones, key decision points
- Fact sheet on sources of additional information (website addresses, agency contacts, document titles, etc.)
- PowerPoint presentations
- Calendar of events/meetings
- Comment cards

Phased Public Participation Meetings

The LCA Comprehensive Study included three sets of public participation meetings in addition to the scoping meetings. Public meetings will be held to receive comments on the PEIS. The time frame and focus of the meetings were as follows:

- Phase I: Scoping – April 2002
- Phase II: Update on Status – February 2003
- Phase III: Alternatives – May / June 2003
- Phase IV: Final Array of Plans – August 2003
- Phase V: Comments on the PEIS – Planned for October 2003

The public meetings were 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 was of paramount importance, so it was therefore necessary to hold public meetings at a time amenable to the average citizen that wished to attend. Therefore, these meetings were held after typical daytime work hours.

Summary of Public Comments

Throughout the public meetings, the study team received hundreds of comments. Dozens of comments were received either electronically through the website, or through paper mail. These concerns and questions were then addressed in the study.

Common issues that developed throughout the meetings concerned funding and timeline concerns with the LCA Comprehensive Study. Several people expressed hesitation that the LCA Comprehensive Study would be held up because of a funding crisis, similar to Davis Pond. The overall input from the public meetings showed a significant amount of importance placed on the idea that something must be done immediately to stop coastal land loss. In fact, many were concerned that the amount of time that it would take for the LCA Comprehensive Study alternatives to build land would not be fast enough to save their property.

Some other comments addressed the idea that public involvement should be more involved upstream along the Mississippi River. Many felt that if the Nation understood the importance of Louisiana, then more people outside of the state would be concerned about Louisiana's welfare and would be more willing to put the money into the study. There was a strong push to show that Louisiana is of strategic interest to the Nation. Meetings are currently being planned for Cincinnati, OH; St. Louis, MO; and Omaha, NE to address that concern.

Regarding public involvement, many stated that they wanted to be kept informed about any changes that were to happen during the study. Also, comments were brought up about trying to reach members of the public who have not been involved with CWPPRA or Coast 2050. Many members of the public wanted to be assured that they

would have the opportunity to give their input in the process of developing the LCA Comprehensive Plan.

Major Comments From the Phase II 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 was held on February 4, 2003, and 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, 2003, 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 Isle, and the need for consistency between restoration efforts and navigation projects.

The Morgan City meeting was held on February 10, 2003, and was attended by 61 people. 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, and the need to coordinate with other projects in the region. Comments related to specific measures, such as the Third Delta Conveyance Channel, were also noted, as were comments related to environmental consequences.

A meeting was held on February 12, 2003, in Lake Charles, with 57 people attending. 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, and the need for national awareness of the problem.

Major Comments From the Phase III 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 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.

Major Comments From the Phase IV 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 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 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 implementation of larger measures.

Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs)

Increasing Awareness

NGOs are prime target audiences that can be addressed easily and effectively due to their preexisting organizational structure. NGOs typically represent citizens who are already engaged in volunteer activities and other forms of civic participation. Many NGOs also provide access to important audiences at the national level. Once awareness is raised among NGOs, the organizations can in turn conduct and support awareness activities. They can help identify and expand target audiences, conduct grassroots activities, arrange meetings, and provide avenues for awareness activities of other programs included in this plan.

Providing Information

NGOs can play a role in delivering more specific information to those audiences who become interested as a result of the awareness-raising activities. State and Federal agencies will be the primary formulators and disseminators of information about historical perspective, technical proposals and specific projects, planning efforts, and legislative action. NGOs can support this work in several ways. NGOs can:

- review materials or serve as a “test audience” before delivery to the broader public
- disseminate information to their members and interested constituencies
- identify additional channels for disseminating information
- answer frequently asked questions.
- with training and coordination, help guide interested parties through the volumes of information that exist in a multitude of websites, newsletters, reports, etc.
- provide person to person assistance to citizens looking for information and amplify the limited resources and staff available at the agency level

Facilitating Action

To maximize the effect of awareness and information, public involvement efforts should provide clear courses of action or vehicles for participation.

NGOs can:

- help disseminate the call to action
- effectively communicate the specific implications of coastal land loss as it relates to the unique interest of their members and constituencies and frame the larger campaign message in the context of a specific area of interest
- conduct phone banks, email petitions, letter writing and signature campaigns
- provide opportunities for individuals to take action
- help develop projects that provide opportunities for hands-on involvement, such as planting programs designed for bank stabilization and Christmas tree recycling for wetland reinforcement
- directly provide opportunities for volunteers to help conduct public involvement activities

- help expand or redesign existing public involvement programs to better incorporate active audiences
- serve as vehicles for connecting constituents with involvement opportunities in existing programs that are appropriate for their capabilities and interests
- propose mechanisms to implement restoration awareness or action in their school, workplace, community, social organization, or civic organization
- provide an excellent network of resources and an infrastructure already experienced in mobilization and action through local, state and national affiliations
- fill gaps in program implementation where state and Federal agencies lack the resources or flexibility to connect the public with appropriate opportunities

NGOs have been included throughout the LCA Comprehensive Study public meetings, and, in addition to attending the meetings, NGOs have facilitated discussion between parish officials and the public at the meetings. Some NGOs have also served on the LCA Comprehensive Study Public Involvement Team.

INTERNET WEB SITES

Throughout the study, several web sites have been maintained to ensure that different areas of the public could be reached. The sites are continually updated as new information became available, as sections of the study are completed, and as new meetings are announced. Distribution is essentially free and unlimited. Periodic web page updates provide timely, up-to-date communication and serve as a project reference guide. Quick access to available information, as provided on the Internet, is essential to the study. Credibility is enhanced if all interested parties are kept informed, and problems are identified while there is still time to address them.

www.coast2050.gov

During the four years of the Coast 2050 Study, the public became increasingly familiar with the www.coast2050.gov web site and saw it as a vehicle to convey their comments to the study team. The site contains study overview information, an event calendar, maps, press releases, points of contact, and a link to request more information. In the overview, the site addresses the history of coastal restoration in Louisiana, and discusses the future of restoration within the Coast 2050 strategies.

When the LCA Comprehensive Study began, the study team continued to use the Coast 2050 site because of the familiarity of the web site to the public. In order to begin distribution of information and to introduce the public to the new study, it had to be done quickly and effectively through a tool the public was already familiar and comfortable with. Also, a link to the LCA Comprehensive Study page is provided on this web site.

The LCA Comprehensive Study page contains such pertinent information as meeting dates and details, public information fact sheets, ecosystem strategies for Regions 1-4, maps, contact information, answers to frequently asked questions, and the ability to submit public comments electronically.

The Coast 2050 site also maintained a technical section for those involved in the study to share information to the other Federal and state agencies that were able to access the site.

www.lca.gov

In the future, the study information will be moved to www.lca.gov and a campaign will be initiated to begin familiarizing the public with the new site address. Also, a link to the new LCA Comprehensive Study address will be placed on the Coast 2050 web site. The site address, www.lca.gov, is currently owned by the USACE and will begin to serve as the main LCA Comprehensive Study web site in the upcoming months of operation.

The new address will contain LCA Comprehensive Study information exclusively and will continue to give up-to-date information on the study.

www.mvn.usace.army.mil/prj/lca

The www.mvn.usace.army.mil/prj/lca web site enabled members of the public interested in the LCA Comprehensive Study and the USACE to view current information on the study's progress. The site was maintained and updated as new information was released on the study.

Several PowerPoint presentations were placed on the site to give a general overview of the study and history of coastal land loss and restoration in Louisiana. The site also included links to several other organizations involved in coastal Louisiana such as the CWPPRA-run www.lacoast.gov site, the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program, the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, and the state of Louisiana's Office of Coastal Restoration and Management. The page also contains study fact sheet information, study background, answers to frequently asked questions, links to coordinating Federal and state agencies, a photo gallery, news releases, and an introduction to the subprovince alternatives.

COORDINATION

The LCA Comprehensive Study was undertaken with the coordination of six different agencies, both Federal and state. The following agencies coordinated several different aspects of the Public Involvement Plan for the LCA Comprehensive Study. Coordination with these agencies allowed for quick and effective access to materials and input needed for public involvement, such as the Coast 2050 web site maintenance, land loss maps and data. These agencies also assisted in the development of materials distributed to the public in the form of handouts, posters, and booklets.

State and Federal Agencies

Coordination with each Federal and state agency has been extremely beneficial to the LCA Comprehensive Study public involvement effort. During the public meetings, each agency not only provided materials for the meetings (i.e., maps, booklets, posters) but also assisted with coordination of the meetings and volunteering to answer questions during the meetings.

The following Federal and state agencies have greatly contributed to the LCA Comprehensive Study Public Involvement Plan:

- Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (LDNR)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- NOAA Fisheries (NOAA)
- United State Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- United States Geological Survey (USGS)

Collocation Team

In December 2001, employees from six different Federal and state agencies relocated to the USACE-MVN within the Coastal Restoration Branch Office. The “collocated team” consists of 39 employees. The majority of those employees are collocated full-time while others are scheduled for 2-3 day weekly shifts to update other team members with new information about the LCA Comprehensive Study. As the project grows, the team will expand. As it moves into new phases, new skills will be added.

Collocation Plan

Collocation is the act of physically moving core team members to the same physical site. The main benefit of collocation is the improvement of informal multidisciplinary communication and cooperation amongst team members. When key personnel are located together, response time to problems is minimal, any not-invented-here biases evaporate, and closer working relationships build mutual trust. Collocation promotes and fosters “Team Synergy,” and soon after a cross-functional team is collocated, it becomes obvious that the whole of the team is greater than the sum of its parts. Overall, collocating cross-functional project-based teams are important for the success of mainstream project development.

Collocation minimizes fragmentation of resources among unrelated projects and increases efficiency. Collocation also increases the accountability for getting the project completed per schedule, cost, and quality targets (i.e., “the other project” excuses disappear). Clearly, there will be certain roles or positions that cannot be committed solely to the team, such as special technical expertise resident in only one or two people. Collocation helps to tie individual performance to team and product performance. It is important to modify individual performance evaluations from being based primarily on functional skills and expertise to including contributions to team effectiveness and

product success. Clearly, though, the extent of tie-in to team and product performance will vary by each team member's respective role and degree of control.

The composition of the cross-functional product-development team not only increases the odds of success, but also sends a clear signal company wide as to the seriousness of the intent. The team's core members are people who do real work, have autonomous decision-making authority within their functional areas, are known to be open to new ideas, and are biased toward a cross-functional systems approach to problem solving.

Migrating from a functional product-development model to a project-specific team is a major change in an organization's program. Once launched, the pilot team can become the bedrock of learning and experience. Once key team members rotate into other teams, this wealth of experience can be shared more broadly throughout the organization. The collocated LCA Comprehensive Study team was also collocated with the USACE CWPPRA team to take advantage of the wealth of wetlands restoration experience residing in the CWPPRA team and also to create a synergy between the efforts, which broadly overlap.

Authorization for the LCA Comprehensive Study was granted in May 1999 by HQUSACE, based on the Louisiana Coastal Area Authority of 1967. The LCA Comprehensive Study/ Coast 2050 Program represents the largest study and construction program ever for the USACE-MVN.

From the MVN's standpoint, co-location for the LA Coastal Area/Coast 2050 Program stressed the importance that the MVN has placed on the program. Additionally, it allowed the MVN to create awareness for the program throughout the MVN and USACE, without adversely impacting other MVN priorities. The overall vision of the MVN's collocation program is to have Federal agencies, non-Federal agencies, and A/E contractors working alongside each other to achieve/complete study and design efforts in a more effective and efficient manner.

Resource Agencies played a vital role in the successful operation of the co-located cross-functional team. The Resource Agency Representatives are available to support all MVN projects. Thus, they will serve a dual role by supporting the LCA Comprehensive Study/Coast 2050 Program, specifically, along with the other MVN projects.

FUTURE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

The efforts to refine, authorize, and ultimately implement the LCA Comprehensive Study will not be confined to the Federal and state agencies. Indeed, it is recognized that public participation will be a vital part of that effort just as it has been at every step in the history of the endeavor to secure a sustainable future for coastal Louisiana.

Because of the scale and unprecedented nature of this undertaking the formulation of a public participation plan must be characterized by a sense of urgency, purpose, and

flexibility. In the context of the LCA Comprehensive Study, public participation must be understood to be more than a public information program or a public comment vehicle, though surely it includes those aspects. Rather, public participation is an integral part of plan formulation, project development, program implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

Also new is the extent to which the planning process has involved the affected public at the local level. Indeed, many of the ecosystem restoration strategies included in this plan are not new, but recently they have received far wider understanding and endorsement. The participation of local governments and private citizens in plan development has made an essential contribution to the plan.

The LCA Comprehensive Study is based upon the best available, albeit imperfect, understanding of both the causes of loss and the effectiveness of restoration measures. There is a recognized need to continue the study of the system, to learn from those measures that have already been implemented, and to learn from the successes and failures of other major coastal ecosystem restoration programs. This plan should be the start of coastal restoration in Louisiana at the ecosystem scale, and the restoration effort must grow and adapt through time.

Those responsible for restoration decisions expect and welcome the fact that the plan will be revised in the future as new knowledge becomes available, as new opportunities arise, as new restoration technology develops, and perhaps as new landscape problems occur. Addressing the collapse of Louisiana's coastal ecosystem, however, must move forward in the face of such uncertainty or it will be too late for the marshes, the swamps, the industries, the people, and ultimately, the Nation.

As previously mentioned, the National Environmental Policy Act in USACE Restoration Activities provides for an early and open public process – scoping – for determining the scope of issues, resources, impacts, and alternatives to be addressed in the draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. NEPA requirements will be addressed in all future planning and study efforts relative to the programmatic aspects of the LCA Comprehensive Study for the next 30 years. Specific measures associated with each LCA Comprehensive Study project will include an EIS and release of each study for public review and comments and public involvement and coordination will comply with NEPA. The study will go above and beyond those requirements when and where appropriate.

Furthermore, future public involvement initiatives include forming proactive partnerships with communities, providing information and interactive CDs to schools, teacher workshops and local libraries, and creating interpretive exhibits for local festivals, museums and visitor centers. The LCA team is currently funding a contract to produce a popular booklet, traveling exhibit, brochure and a PowerPoint presentation geared to a popular audience. Outreach tools targeted for specific audiences are planned in the future.

The following are additional objectives for the future Public Involvement Plan for the LCA Comprehensive Study:

Embedded Media - Major state newspaper reporters will be invited to spend two weeks each working and reporting from the collocated PDT office.

WaterMarks Magazine - The WaterMarks magazine, published quarterly by the CWPPRA Task Force, will continue to serve as the primary publication vehicle for reporting on LCA Comprehensive Study progress to key stakeholders. See WaterMarks at: www.lacoast.gov/watermarks/index.htm.

Exhibits - Portable exhibits are available, and others are planned, for use at numerous exhibit opportunities around the state. These are frequently coordinated with the CWPPRA Outreach Committee and conjunction with its communications program.

Speakers Bureau - LCA Comprehensive Study team members will be scheduled to participate in an active Speakers Bureau program.

Outreach Coordinator - The district will recruit and fill a Public Outreach Coordinator position at the GS-12 grade. The duties of the position will include managing this Communications Plan, updating and planning future strategic communications plans, and coordinating the Comprehensive Public Involvement Plan in cooperation with the state partner, LDNR, with the goal to inform the public and advance the project.

Outreach Strategies (updated material and new informational tools):

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Fact sheet/brochure on LCA Comprehensive Study and Coast 2050
- Fact sheet on roles of various agencies/organizations
- Fact sheet on timeline, milestones, key decision points
- Fact sheet on sources of additional information
- PowerPoint presentations geared toward multiple target audiences
- Calendar of events/meetings
- Newsletter – provide quarterly updates on study and construction
- Comment cards
- Contract with Public Relations firm to develop a media campaign

EVALUATING THE SUCCESS OF THE LCA COMPREHENSIVE STUDY PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

The following objectives incorporate evaluation methods to determine the success of outreach methods and public understanding:

- Create and distribute surveys (pre and post) and evaluate responses
- Quantify the number of articles, radio and news broadcasts published and/or aired about the LCA, coastal land loss awareness, and “America’s Wetland” campaign

- Measure the number of people exposed to newspaper articles and local and national news broadcasts
- Track the number of hits to the LCA Comprehensive Study web sites
- Quantify public meeting attendance.

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