

**\*MINUTES\***  
**Region 1 (Bi-Monthly Meeting)**  
**REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, March 10, 2020**

The Region 1 Steering Committee Meeting was held at the DeSoto Chamber of Commerce, Mansfield, LA at 2:00 p.m., on Tuesday, March 10, 2020, pursuant to notice duly mailed.

Welcome

- Call to Order
  - The Meeting was called to order by Mr. Jack Skaggs, CEO of The Coordinating and Development Corporation (CDC) at 2:05 p.m., who welcomed the attendees.
- Roll Call: At the request of Mr. Jack Skaggs, Ms. Robin Ramagos, CDC, called the roll of Members present in person.
  - Steering Committee Members present were: Mr. Rodney Warren (Bienville Parish), Mr. Butch Ford (Bossier Parish), Mr. Steve Brown (DeSoto Parish), Mr. Matt Johns (Rapides Parish), Mr. William Ruffin (Sabine Parish), Mr. Mike Carpenter (Winn Parish), and Ms. Lindsey Gouedy (Member At Large).
  - Not Present: Mr. Ali Mustapha (Caddo Parish), Mr. Dennis Butcher (Claiborne Parish), Mr. Morgan Briggs (Grant Parish), Mr. Rick Nowlin (Natchitoches Parish), Mr. Shane Hubbard (Red River Parish), Mr. Nick Cox (Webster Parish), and Mr. John Michael Moore (Member at Large).
  - Others in attendance were: Mr. Tom Fontcuberta (DeSoto Parish) and Mr. John Richmond (Natchitoches Parish)
- Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance
  - Mrs. Randel Elliott led the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Regional Steering Committee Introductions

- Identify Watershed staff and their roles (Facilitator, Floodplain Manager, Watershed Planner, Administrator)
  - Ms. Robin Ramagos – CDC – Facilitator
  - Ms. Jenae Arceneaux CDC – Watershed Planner
  - Ms. Heidi Stewart – NLCOG – Floodplain Manager
  - Ms. Randel Elliott – CDC – Grant Administrator
  - Mr. Kent Rogers – NLCOG – Executive Director
  - Mr. Austin Vaughn – CDC – Chief Operations Officer
- Introduction of LWI staff: William “Ben” Wicker and Nicolette Jones
  - Mr. William “Ben” Wicker – Resilience Planning Analyst for the Louisiana Office of Community Development.
  - Ms. Nicolette Jones – Resilience Planning Analyst for the Louisiana Office of Community Development.
  - Mr. Pat Forbes – Executive Director for the Louisiana Office of Community Development.
  - Ms. Miriam Belblidia – Floodplain Manager and Resilience Planner for Arcadis, Inc.
  - Mr. Jonathan Hill – Project Manager for Franklin Associates

- Introduction by each committee member on their background, the organization they represent, and their goals for the committee.
  - Mr. Steve Brown – DeSoto Parish Police Jury Administrator and Parish Engineer. He stated that he also sits on the Region 4 Regional Steering Committee. He has 40 years in engineering and consulting and 11 years of experience in public safety.
  - Mr. Tom Fontcuberta, who will serve as the proxy for Steve Brown, works for DeSoto Public Works and is a licensed surveyor and has had his own practice for 21 years.
  - Mr. William Ruffin has served on the Sabine Parish Police Jury for 30 years. He also serves on Region 4 Regional Steering Committee.
  - Mr. Matt Johns works with the Rapides Area Planning Commission
  - Ms. Lindsey Gouedy – is the Executive Director for Sparta Ground Water Commission, which covers 16 different parishes.
  - Ms. Rodney Warren – Secretary Treasurer for the Bienville Police Jury and is also the GOHSEP Director.
  - Mr. Butch Ford – Parish Engineer for Bossier Parish
  - Mr. Mike Carpenter – Serves on the Sparta Ground Water Commission

Ms. Ramagos also introduced Mr. John Richmond, the new Natchitoches Parish Government President.

#### Steering Committee Orientation

- Ms. Robin Ramagos reviewed the Expectation for The Watershed Coordinators:
  - Ensure notice requirements are followed for RSC meetings.
  - Reserve venues and coordinate meetings for RSC members.
  - Documents decisions of the RSC.
  - Provide ongoing resources and education for RSC members
  - Coordinate with parish and municipal governments in the region.

Robin told the committee about the meeting the Council on Watershed was going to have in Baton Rouge on March 11, 2020. She also stated that the meeting would be “live-streamed” and that she would forward meeting notes to all the Committee Members.

- Ms. Ramagos reviewed the Regional Steering Committee Primary Tasks, which were:
  1. Adopt a work plan.
  2. Compile a prioritized project list.
  3. Submit Round 1 award recommendations to OCD
  4. Select a governance model for Regional Watershed Coalition & consider watershed boundaries.

Mr. Pat Forbes stated that the OCD was going to score and rank all the projects that they received. OCD would fund \$60 million for projects and would forward the list of unfunded projects to each region. From this list the Regional Steering Committee would pick which projects they wanted to spend the Region’s \$5 million.

- Ms. Ramagos reviewed the Expectations for the RSC members and they were:
  - Represent values, contribute expertise, and express short and long-term concerns of stakeholder groups represented
  - Attend bi-monthly meetings

- Meeting “readiness”
- Understand the challenges in their region and/or parish/jurisdiction
- Ms. Ramagos reviewed the Louisiana Open Meetings requirements for the RSC meetings:
  - Observable to the public.
  - Provide opportunity for public comments
  - Opportunity to increase public’s trust and awareness of the work of the RSC.
  - Important of transparency and decision-tracking.
  - Law states a 24-hour advance notice of the meeting must be given, but OCD requires 5-day prior notice of all meeting
  - Allow for recording of the meeting by the audience
  - Record minutes of the proceedings for public record

Mr. Pat Forbes reviewed the meeting guidelines and the statute C 42:11 – 42:28 and stated that the RSC Meetings must follow the Public Open Meeting Laws. Mr. Forbes also stated that the committee members could not conduct or discuss any business via email or text between one another and that it was critical to be transparent to the public.

- Ms. Ramagos reviewed the Program’s Background which included:
  - Response to Great Floods of 2016
  - Louisiana Senate Resolution 172 (2017)
  - CDBG-MIT allocation
  - Executive Order JBE 18-16 (May 29, 2018)
  - Governor created Council on Watershed Management
  - The Council tasked with “creating watershed-bounded entities across the state”
  - In order to effectively reduce flood risk, decisions should be made at a watershed-level
- Ms. Ramagos reviewed the RCBG Program Goals which were:
  - Primary: Establish Watershed Coalitions
    - Form steering committees (first year)
    - Choose management framework for coalition (first year)
    - Establish coalitions (second and third years)
    - Maintain long-term support for coalitions
  - SECONDARY: Cultivate staff capacity in the region to enhance the impact of outreach and floodplain management activities
- Ms. Ramagos reviewed the details of the RCBG Deliverables for Year 1:
  - Work Plan which should outline the following:
    - Major activities of the RSC
    - Key decision-making deadlines
    - Meeting dates
  - Project Inventory
    - Should be like a capital improvement plan/program
    - Review all projects (of all development stages) proposal in the region
    - Can include physical projects as well as studies/plans
- Ms. Ramagos reviewed the preview for RCBG for year two and year three:
  - Coalition stand-up
  - Coalition work plan

- Draft Regional Watershed Plan
- Begin engagement with models
- Long-term capacity check-ins

Mr. Pat Forbes stated that the CDC works for the RSC Members. The CDC's role is to facilitate the work of the RSC Committee. Mr. Forbes also stated that the RSC are the decision makers and they are there to represent their areas and fields and that the CDC is there to help make their decisions successful.

- Q & A and discussion on the overall goals, roles, and responsibilities of the RSC
  - Mr. Kent Rogers asked where all the fiscal agent must post the meetings and agendas?
    - Mr. Pat Forbes stated that he would have to look in the regulations and would let the committee know what the regulations exactly state but that he was pretty sure that the meeting announcement only had to be posted in one journal of record.
    - Nicolette Jones also asked that it go on the CDC website and stated that the State would post the meetings on the Watershed website.
    - Mr. Richmond also stated that there must be a posted flyer on the door of the place where the meeting would be held at least twenty-four hours before the meeting.

#### Overview of Timeline & Closeout

- Ms. Ramagos asked the committee members what their thoughts were on the best date and time would be to meet on the months that the bi-monthly meetings would be held.
- The committee members all agreed that on the months of the regular bi-monthly meetings it would be best to meet on the second Tuesday of that month at 10:00am and will be held at a decided location.
- Ms. Ramagos also stated that a Chairman would need to be selected amongst the members at the next meeting and asked the committee to think about who they would like to select.
- Ms. Ramagos also stated that a fifteen (15<sup>th</sup>) member was needed and this member would preferably, due to grant demographics, need to be a woman. She asked the committees members to think about that as well and that suggestions would be taken, and the member would be decided on at the next meeting.
- Mrs. Heidi Steward stated that the state was taking suggestions on where rain gauges were needed throughout the state of Louisiana. She stated that our region was well covered but always looking to increase the number of rain gauges placed.
- Mr. Ben Wicker stated that the webinar to explain the need for these rain gauges was up on the Louisiana Watershed Initiative website.
- Mr. Jack Skaggs asked the board to email the Fiscal Agent staff if they had any suggestions on the Chairperson or the fifteen Steering Committee member.
- Mr. Skaggs also reminded the committee that their jobs were to represent their home parishes on projects to be taken into consideration and use their expertise and knowledge to decide on what projects would be best for the Region and ultimately the State of Louisiana.
- Mr. Skaggs stated that eventually the committee and region would start working with other regions to eventually get the entire state unified, as that is the long-term goal.
- Mr. Skaggs stated that the CDC staff would try and streamline anything that needed to be decided on, that the CDC staff would create documents, such as by-laws, and email them out to the members to review, and then the document would be voted on at the following meeting.


- Ms. Ramagos asked everyone to make sure and sign the sign-in sheet and asked all the committee members to complete the legal, demographic form, and return it to her before leaving.
- Mr. Skaggs explained that the Fiscal Agent must report demographics as part of the grant process and that is the reason for asking for the demographic form to be completed by each committee member.
- Mr. Kent Rogers then asked how this Region's meeting was in comparison to other regions' meetings.
- Mr. Matt Johns stated that he had attended the Steering Committee meetings for both Region 4 and Region 5 and they had done the following things differently so far.
  - Mr. Johns stated that Region 5 has created sub-committees that would meet during the months between the bi-monthly meetings.
  - Mr. Johns also stated that Region 4 is having full Steering Committee Meetings every month instead of bi-monthly so there was no need to create sub-committees.
  - Mr. Johns also stated that Region 4 also created binders for all committee members for them to bring to each meeting to keep all their information together.
- Mr. Pat Forbes stated that any sub-committees formed would still need to adhere to the LA Open Meet Laws but any groups of non-committee members that meet would not have to adhere to the Open Meeting Laws. He gave the example being, if all of the Floodplain Managers from each parish were to meet then they would not have to follow the LA Open Meeting Laws.
- Ms. Nicolette Jones stated that she wanted to reiterate how important each member of the Steering Committee is and that if anything is needed, the staff at The Louisiana Watershed Initiative and the Louisiana Office of Community Development was there to help.
- There were no public comment(s) at the meeting on March 10, 2020.

Adjourn: Next Steering Committee Meeting: May 12, 2020

- Mr. Jack Skaggs asked if there was any further business to come before the Committee, and with there being none, the March 10, 2020 meeting was adjourned.

**CERTIFICATE**

The undersigned, Secretary to the Corporation, certifies that the above and foregoing are the true and correct minutes of the meeting of the Members of the Region 1 Regional Steering Committee held on March 10, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Jack "Bump" Skaggs, Secretary