

MINUTES
Region 1
REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, April 13, 2021

The Region 1 Regional Steering Committee (RSC) Meeting was held at the Warrior Network in Bossier City, LA at 10:00 a.m., on Tuesday April 13, 2021, pursuant to notice duly mailed.

Welcome/Call to Order/ Invocation/ Pledge

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Matt Johns at 10:01 a.m., who welcomed the attendees. Mr. Austin Vaughn held the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

At the Chairman's request, Ms. Christina Freeman called the roll of members present or by proxy. Those present were: Chairman Matt Johns, Vice Chairman Butch Ford, Mr. John Michael Moore, Mr. Ali Mustapha, Mr. Nick Cox, Ms. Zazell Dudley, Rodney Warren, and Mr. Kenneth Ebarb.

Proxies held were: Mr. Tom Fontcuberta for Mr. Steve Brown and Mr. Nick Verret for Mr. Rick Nowlins.

Others in attendance were: Mr. Jack Skaggs, Mr. Kent Rogers, Mrs. Heidi Stewart, Mrs. Randel Elliott, Ms. Christina Freeman, Mr. Austin Vaughn, Mr. Pearson Harbour, Mr. Ben Wicker, Mrs. Nicolette Jones, Mr. Robert Tomasek, Mr. Jamarquis Torrance, Mr. Marvin McGraw, and Mr. Steve Picou.

A quorum was present.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Chairman Johns called for the adoption of the official minutes for the February 9, 2021 meeting. Vice Chairman Butch Ford motioned with a second by Mr. Ali Mustapha. With no further discussion, the meeting minutes for February 9, 2021, were unanimously adopted as presented.

Chairman Johns called for the adoption of the informal meeting summary for the March 9, 2021 meeting. Mr. Ali Mustapha motioned, with a second by Vice Chairman Butch Ford. With no further discussion, the informal meeting summary for March 9, 2021, were unanimously adopted as presented.

Round 1 Project Selection Discussion

- Chairman Johns asked Mrs. Stewart to review the Round 1 project selection criteria.
- Mrs. Stewart stated that they recently announced the state projects that were funded and stated that it was completely different than round 1.
- Mrs. Stewart stated that Round 1 projects had not been awarded or funded yet.

- Vice Chairman Ford asked what projects were funded.
- Mrs. Stewart stated that both State Projects that were funded were from the DOTD Dam and Spillway Resilience Program.
- Mrs. Stewart stated that there was one in Caddo Parish for the Black Bayou structure and one in Grant Parish for the Lake Iatt drawdown.
- Mrs. Stewart reminded the committee members to complete their conflict-of-interest questionnaire.
- Mrs. Stewart reminded the committee that before they received the money for projects, the committee had to decide on the process they would use to select which projects were funded.
- Mrs. Stewart stated that at the end of April, the State would provide a list of projects and a scoring breakdown for each project.
- Mrs. Stewart reminded the committee that they had two options to choose from when they decided on which selection process they wanted to follow.
- Mrs. Stewart stated that option A was that the region could select the projects that scored the highest under the State's scoring process.
- Mrs. Stewart stated that option B was Region 1 could create their own scoring process, but written justification must be provided.
- Mrs. Stewart stated that the staff sent out a draft that was based off the discussion that took place at a previous meeting.
- Mrs. Stewart reminded the committee that the consensus last time was to use the State's score and if projects were asking for more money than what the region was awarded, that the committee would select to skip that project and fund the next one.
- Mr. Tomasek stated that at the last meeting Vice Chairman Ford had brought up the idea of just using the State's scores so there would not be any push back.
- Chairman Johns stated that he shared the idea of having political cover to Region 4, and they liked it, and the only caveat was if they wanted to change any of the weighting.
- Mrs. Stewart reviewed the Round 1 Project Selection Criteria.
- Mrs. Stewart stated that the first step after receiving the list would be that staff would remove any projects requesting more than \$5 million from the list because Region 1 could not award more than \$5 million, and they could not award partial projects unless the project has another source of funding.
- Mr. Wicker stated that only fully funded projects would be funded in round 1.
- Vice Chairman Ford asked if the Town of Haughton, who applied with LWI for help on their match money for a project, was still eligible to receive some of the \$5 million.
- Mr. Wicker stated that the Town of Haughton was eligible to receive the money if selected.
- Mr. Wicker gave an example of a project that needs \$8 million to build some sort of flood control structure and they only applied for \$3 million because they had the other \$5 million funded through another source, that project would still be eligible.
- Mr. Vaughn asked Mr. Wicker if the State was going to send the full application for each eligible project before the RSC awards their \$5 million?
- Mr. Wicker stated that the State was going to send the application but that they still had to decide on the process and the priorities prior to seeing the projects.

- Mrs. Stewart stated that it was still unclear if the whole application would be sent out to the regions or not.
- Mr. Wicker stated that the regions would be receiving the whole applications to review if it was an eligible project.
- Mrs. Stewart stated that the next step was for the staff to give the scores with the projects and the highest score gets funded to the RSC.
- Mrs. Stewart stated that the next project that could be funded would be funded, and if a project needed more money than was left, that project would be skipped.
- Mrs. Stewart stated that this way would fund the most projects possible while still using the State's scores.
- Vice Chairman Ford stated that in his opinion the way to score the project would be based on the "benefit cost analysis."
- Chairman Johns stated that Region 1 wanted the flexibility.
- Chairman Johns stated that Region 1 wanted to award multiple projects, if possible, but also take into consideration the benefit cost analysis for each of the projects.
- Chairman Johns stated that Region 1 wanted the flexibility to select the \$5 million project, even though it is one entity but would help a larger number of people, over the other five \$1 million projects.
- Vice Chairman Ford stated that he wanted to base the RSC's decision on the State's score so the RSCs were not the ones liable to explain to municipalities that did not get funded and could state that the State was the one who scored the projects.
- Chairman Matt Johns offered a motion that the Region 1 RSC offer an additional criterion that is a balance between maximizing the amount of funding Region 1 has and selecting potentially multiple projects while also balancing the consideration of the benefit cost analysis.
- Nicolette stated that a cost-effective test was also being used by the State, making everyone aware.
- Chairman Johns stated that if no one seconded then the motion on the table would be ended and if there was a second, then there would be a roll call for the vote. There was not a second.
- Chairman Johns stated that since no one seconded the motion then the motion was closed.
- Vice Chairman Butch Ford offered a motion to select the projects that score the highest under the State's scoring process, Ms. Zazell Dudley seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the Project Selection Criteria for Region 1, was unanimously adopted.

Funding Strategies White Paper Presentation

- Chairman Johns introduced Mr. Steve Picou to give the Funding Strategies White Paper presentation.
- Mr. Steve Picou stated that he was the co-founder of the Louisiana Water Economy Network which was inspired by the work of Mr. David Wagner and the Dutch Dialogues, developed right after Hurricane Katrina.
- Mr. Picou stated that the group held over 75 meetings over the past nine years and were talking about integrated water management as a key to the economic, environmental, and social future of Louisiana.
- Mr. Picou stated that over the past 6 years, his team has been part of the EPA and attended the Water Cluster meetings at the annual West Tech Conference.

- Mr. Picou stated that these meetings have helped his team be connected to an international cluster of water leaders who all were trying to address the same problems that Louisiana was trying to address today.
- Mr. Picou stated that his most recent job was working for the LSU Ag Center and his focus was on building science and ways to be hurricane ready and storm ready.
- Mr. Picou stated that water is one of the oldest resources on the planet and has been here for over four billion years, and it has not grown or shrunk in those four billion years.
- Mr. Picou stated that water connected people on the Earth to everything that has ever been on Earth, even the dinosaurs that were on Earth four billion years ago.
- Mr. Picou stated that everyone needed to build a better relationship with water and not fight against it because everyone would lose.
- Mr. Picou stated that everyone needed to recognize, understand, and appreciate the power of water.
- Mr. Picou stated the one of the biggest gaps is that humans do not value water, and they do not measure its extraction and use enough.
- Mr. Picou stated that it really got down to understanding water because when the state is “flood ready” then that also meant that they were “fund ready.”
- Mr. Picou stated that his team really focused on Louisiana Water Economy for the past decade.
- Mr. Picou stated a goal was to help people recognize that water was the future and acknowledge and respect the role that water played in the economic, environmental, and social well-being of Louisiana.
- Mr. Picou stated that this would create new economic and recreational opportunities in integrated water management.
- Mr. Picou stated that his team was tasked to identify best practices and build a real toolkit, so they created key questions to be considered, and they were as follow:
 - What is the genesis of a given funding source?
 - What is the key legislation at play?
 - What are the characteristics of the funding source?
 - Is the funding source recurring, and sustainable in the long-term?
 - Do fees or taxes require authorization and/or regular reauthorization by legislative bodies or popular vote?
 - Does the funding source require that a given percentage of allocation be directed to social equity issues?
 - Is there an effective website and/or funding guide or portal?
 - Is the funding source applicable of Louisiana? If so, how?
- Mr. Picou stated that one strategy to develop funding source was instilling user fees to withdraw water because most water was withdrawn at no cost.
- Mr. Picou stated that user fees had the potential to generate between \$30 million and \$60 million in annual revenue.
- Mr. Picou stated that roughly about 8 million gallons a day was used in Louisiana.
- Mr. Picou stated that one of the most popular mechanisms they found to be instrumental was storm water fees.
- Mr. Picou stated that in 2017, Nashville, TN instituted a stormwater fee in response to the floods in 2010, and they collect six dollars per month for a typical residential property, and it generates \$34 million annually.

- Mr. Picou stated that Nashville, NC, who has a smaller population, collects two dollars and fifty cents per month for a typical residential property, and that generated \$140,000 annually to support their new stormwater division.
- Mr. Picou stated that a not well know tool was the use of an infrastructure bank, and in Rhode Island it supported and financed infrastructure improvements that included water and wastewater, road and bridges, energy efficiency, renewable energy, and brownfield remediation.
- Mr. Picou stated that one of the fastest growing vectors was the green and environmental impact bonds.
- Mr. Picou stated that in 2018, Massachusetts passed a \$2.4 billion environmental bond bill to fund a comprehensive approach to climate adaptation.
- Mr. Picou stated that the legislation funded the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program, which required local governments to participate in training to develop integrated hazard mitigation plans that aligned language, data, and goals throughout the state.
- Mr. Picou stated that in 2018, Louisiana Community Development Authority assisted in issuing the state's first green bonds using the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act funds.
- Mr. Picou stated that \$12 million in revenue would be dedicated for environmental infrastructure work.
- Mr. Picou stated that in 2020, Virginia joined a multi-state Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.
- Mr. Picou stated that the first year was projected to have a revenue of \$50 million to \$100 million with 45% of the proceeds to fund flood, sea-level rise, and severe weather event costs.
- Mr. Picou stated that Virginia ranked 17th nationally for annual greenhouse gas emission of 98 million metric tons.
- Mr. Picou stated that Louisiana ranks fourth nationally with annual greenhouse gas emissions of 226 million metric tons, so Louisiana far out ranks Virginia.
- Mr. Picou stated that President Biden signed and fixed a price for federal agencies to determine their carbon footprints and the impacts of their activities based on the price of carbon, and it has gone way up since the prices he set for them to follow.
- Mr. Picou stated another public funding mechanism that supported water management was property and sales taxes.
- Mr. Picou stated that in 2017, voters in Bayou Vermilion District renewed a millage and it generated \$2.1 million in 2019.
- Mr. Picou stated that funds would supplement tax revenue with tourism revenue and leverage educational outreach that would build awareness and support for water quality improvement projects, economic development, and watershed management.
- Mr. Picou stated that the Bayou Vermilion District would use funds to build the Louisiana Environmental Laboratory Accreditation, which would be a certified water quality lab and education center.
- Mr. Picou stated that community-based public-private partnerships were a huge issue and that they were heard about a lot but not always seen because most of the time it was a contractor hired to fix something for the city.
- Mr. Picou stated that the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) contracted with Corvias, a private company, to design and install green infrastructure stormwater capture projects.

- Mr. Picou stated that Corvias financed the projects and MMSD paid Corvias based on the number of gallons captured in a performance-based contract.
- Mr. Picou stated that the partnership accelerated implementation beyond standard publicly funded processes.
- Mr. Picou stated that every region needed to know where the mitigation banks were and who the land trusts were in the region because they could be great partners.
- Mr. Picou stated that St. Tammany Parish's market-based initiative leveraged mitigation credits purchased at a lower price and used funds generated from selling at a higher price.
- Mr. Picou stated that the initiative will restore and protect 1,169 acres near the headwaters of Cane Bayou Mitigation Bank and would help offset nearby development impacts.
- Mr. Picou stated that land trusts for Louisiana managed 20 projects, conserving 7,000 acres.
- Mr. Picou stated the Brownfield program was not often thought of as a watershed management program but that it needed to be looked at and thought of in that way.
- Mr. Picou stated that Minnesota built Minnesota's Stormwater Park and Learning Center and it removed 16,330 metric tons of contaminated soil.
- Mr. Picou stated that the project restored a riverbank that connected to a new public access point and won the 2019 Brownfield ReScape Award.
- Mr. Picou stated that working with the DOTD and getting to the projects at the earliest stages would help weave in principles that are innovative.
- Mr. Picou stated that finding non-profits or creating a non-profit to coordinate and work with on state and local levels was another key component to water management.
- Mr. Picou stated that in 2019, New Jersey authorized counties and municipalities to establish stormwater utilities.
- Mr. Picou stated that New Jersey Future partnered with Flood Defense New Jersey to establish the New Jersey Stormwater Utility Resource Center.
- Mr. Picou stated that The Global Water Center, located in Milwaukee, WI, was the world headquarters of The Water Council.
- Mr. Picou stated that it was recognized as a global leader in nurturing water technology innovation, business development and international relations.
- Mr. Picou stated that a huge issue that has been fought with since Hurricane Katrina was getting hazard-resistant building and development codes up to a level that really would be make Louisiana resilient.
- Mr. Picou stated that those codes would protect people and investments.
- Mr. Picou stated that the codes should be tailored to address local and regional natural hazards, reduce loss of life, property, and tax base.
- Mr. Picou stated that the codes would strengthen community resilience and expedite recovery.
- Mr. Picou stated that hazard-resilient buildings would more likely appreciate in value.
- Mr. Picou stated that natural capital was a way of looking at all the natural world around as an asset.
- Mr. Picou stated that natural capital used strategies outlined in resources such as the 2020 FEMA report called Building Community Resilience with Nature-Based Solutions.
- Mr. Picou stated that natural capital used new cost-benefit analysis tools that measured the value of natural features and assets and were available to planners.

- Mr. Picou stated that it was best to use widely adopted language for describing disasters, response and recovery, restoration projects, and climate change adaptation plans.
- Mr. Picou suggested to align projects with key terms, data, and metrics that can help connect projects and needs to global support systems and philanthropy.
- Mr. Picou stated it was critical to adopt new metrics for cost-benefit accounting that encompass a broad range of natural, social, and economic factors.
- Mr. Picou stated that it all was part of The Circular Economy that was a systemic approach to economic development.
- Mr. Picou stated that the circular economy moves away from linear “take-make-waste” economic model to one that operates more like nature.
- Mr. Picou stated that the circular economy provided opportunities for a sustainable economy that would be less dependent on destructive practices and would be built upon activities that restore and regenerate natural capital.
- Mr. Picou stated that the circular economy started with a focus on eliminating waste and toxicity and was exemplified by the water cycle as one of nature’s circular systems.
- Mr. Picou stated that the Strategies for Funding Watershed Management and Flood Risk Reduction in Louisiana:
 - Outlaid best practices for long term funding from multiple sources, public support, and a mix of mechanisms and organizations to receive and manage funds.
 - Provided additional information, including more than 140 links to specific programs, strategies, resources, suggested reading, as well as a table highlighting 13 localities.
- Mr. Picou asked if there were any questions and there were none.

Program Updates

- Chairman Johns asked if the local staff had any program updates and there were none.
- Chairman Johns asked OCD if they had any program updates and there were none.

Adjourn

Chairman Johns asked if there was any further business, any questions and answers, or any public comment to come before the Committee, and with there being none, Vice Chairman Ford motioned, with a second by Mr. Tom Fontcuberta, for adjournment of the April 13, 2021 meeting. With no further discussion, the April 13, 2021 meeting adjourned at 11:14 a.m.

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 April 13, 2021, at 10:00 a.m.

Jack “Bump” Skaggs, Secretary