

INFORMAL MEETING SUMMARY
Region 1
REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, October 13, 2020

The Region 1 Regional Steering Committee (RSC) Meeting was held at the Natchitoches City Council Chamber at 10:00 a.m., on Tuesday, October 13, 2020, pursuant to notice duly mailed.

Welcome/Call to Order/ Invocation/ Pledge

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Matt Johns at 10:02 a.m., who welcomed the attendees, held the invocation, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

At the Chairman's request, Ms. Robin Ramagos called the roll of members present in person, present by Zoom, or by proxy. Those present in person were: Chairman Matt Johns and Mr. Rick Nowlin. Those present on Zoom were: Mr. Ali Mustapha, Mr. Morgan Briggs, Mr. Nick Cox, and Mrs. Lindsay Gouedy. Proxies held were: Mr. Tom Fontcuberta for Mr. Steve Brown. Others in attendance were: Mr. Ben Wicker, Mr. Austin Vaughn, Ms. Jenae Arceneaux, Mrs. Randel Elliott, Ms. Robin Ramagos, Mrs. Heidi Stewart, Mrs. Alexandra Carter, Ms. Evelyn Campo, Mrs. Nicolette Johns, Ms. Shelley Barrett, Ms. Annie Landry, Mr. Kent Rogers, Ms. Nyka Scott, Mr. Mark Goodson, and Mr. Clinton Patrick. A quorum was not present.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Because a quorum was not present, the adoption of the minutes from the September 25, 2020 meeting did not take place.

Existing Governance Entities & Roles Presentation plus Discussion Part 2

- Mrs. Alexandra Carter asked the Chairman how many more members were needed for a quorum.
- Ms. Ramagos answered stating five more members were needed to have a quorum.
- Ms. Ramagos asked everyone on Zoom to type their name in the chat box.
- Mrs. Carter introduced herself again and explained the presentation was for information and review purpose only and the end of the exercise would be changed since there was no quorum present.
- Mrs. Carter stated all decision making would be extended to the entire group at a later decided on date.
- Mrs. Carter reviewed the Governance Exercises Overview.
- Mrs. Carter explained that the Governance Exercise No. 1 was the exercise completed at the last meeting, where "what work was needed to reduce flood risk" was discussed.
- Mrs. Carter stated the exercise included, conducting root cause analysis, identifying the need for regional roles, responsibilities, and authorizes.
- Mrs. Carter stated that Governance Exercise No. 2 was the "who could do the work?" exercise, where what would be discussed was, what entities were available in Region 1, along with what authorities those entities had and also, building a consensus around solutions.

- Mrs. Carter explained that the final exercise was the Governance Outcome, and I would include recommendation for coalition structure and providing action items for implementation.
- Mrs. Carter explained that the Provisional Recommendation period would be between November 2020 and January 2021, the Outreach and Engagement period would be between January 2021 and April 2021, and the period to refine the recommendations would be between May 2021 and June 2021.
- Mrs. Carter reviewed the root causes and potential solutions that were discussed at the September 25, 2020 RSC Meeting.
- Mrs. Carter stated the first flood risk concern was, flood-controlled projects being insufficiently maintained along with a lack of funding for Operations and Maintenance (O&M).
- Mrs. Carter stated the main root causes of this first flood risk were a lack of federal grant funds for O&M and insufficient revenues to make local investments in O&M.
- Mrs. Carter stated the secondary root causes of this flood risk were some projects required significant O&M to function; a lack of public education on flood risks as well as cost of flood control systems; and a lack of public and political willingness to pass millages.
- Mrs. Carter stated some potential tools and solutions discussed were; development of passive projects or projects with lower O&M costs; increased public outreach and education on flood risk and the values of flood control projects; and increased education for decision-makers and for the public.
- Mrs. Carter stated the second flood risk concern was drainage networks were unable to discharge due to high-water surface elevations, region was experiencing a rise in increased flooding during modest rainfall events, the region needed significant infrastructure invested to improve flood risk and improve drainage throughout the region.
- Mrs. Carter stated the main root causes of that flood risk were the water failing to drain, receiving water bodies being too high, land scape was flat, conveyance systems were holding silt or were backed up.
- Mrs. Carter stated the secondary root causes of that flood risk were homes located in places where river overflow could happen, water flowed outside of its channels, and conveyance system were unstable or receiving sediment from upstream.
- Mrs. Carter stated some potential tools and solutions discussed were development of standards and land use plans that would reduce the number of homes built in high risk areas, use of natural floodplain functions to hold and retain water in a more organized way (not in homes), coordinate with upstream states to improve channel health before it gets to Louisiana, and use natural channel design to prevent further silting and allow for natural channel meanders and retention areas.
- Mrs. Carter stated the third flood risk concern was homes were being built to the standards of the current flood maps but were still flooding.
- Mrs. Carter stated the main root causes of this flood risk were flood maps were not accurate because they had not been updated in decades and they under-represented the risk.
- Mrs. Carter stated the secondary root causes of this flood risk were data and methods of FIRMS were old because landscapes had changed, and flood maps and land use plan did not account for cumulative development impact.

- Mrs. Carter stated some potential tools and solutions discussed were new data and models to be developed and use that new data and models to preserve some areas to retain water and have homes built to the new higher standards.
- Mrs. Carter stated some examples of work Region 1 could do as a region was, the region could provide project funding as well as operations and maintenance, the region could create consistency in higher standards, the region could manage project planning, where questions were asked about the O&M and how the cost for the O&M cost was budgeted, the region could develop and execute a watershed plan, or the region could provide data and support.
- Mrs. Carter explained some of those tasks required authority and some of those tasks did not require authority.
- Mrs. Carter stated authority would be needed to generate revenue or borrow money, adopt and enforce development codes, and development and adopt plans and regulate development.
- Mrs. Carter stated authority would not be needed to manage project planning and provide data and support.
- Mrs. Carter reviewed the Summary of Potential Solutions and encouraged the RSC to think about the following points:
 - A. Who would be the best in development of passive projects or projects with lower O&M costs?
 - B. Who would be best to increase public outreach and education on flood risk and the values of flood control projects?
 - C. Who would be best to increase education for decision-makers and the public?
 - D. Who would be best to use new data and models that address future risk; potentially updated NFIP maps and building standards?
 - E. Who would be best to use new data and models to conduct regional planning to preserve some areas, retain water, and coordinate and prioritize O&M of river systems in the region?
 - F. Who would be best coordinate with upstream states to improve channel health before it gets to Louisiana?
 - G. Who would be best to promote or require natural channel design to prevent further silting processes and allow for natural channel meanders and retention areas?
 - H. Who would be best to work with The Core and states upstream on behalf of the region and really work to isolate the problems?
- Mrs. Carter explained the next exercise would focus on thinking about who could do the work.
- Mrs. Carter asked if there were any question.
- Chairman Johns stated it would be better to go through the presentation and the committee would be able to see what all entities with authorities were available in Region 1.
- Mrs. Carter stated the next step was to discuss what entities existed in the region, who had the authority to do the work, and where the gaps were.
- Mrs. Carter stated the Guidebook was all the research on Regional Watershed Management in Louisiana and it listed local and regional entities, along with their authorities and functions
- Mrs. Carter stated the guidebook was broken down by region, so members were able to zero into any specific region.
- Mrs. Carter stated the guidebook listed entities with water management authorities within the state, so if the entity did not have any water functions, then that entity would not be listed.

- Mrs. Carter stated that if there was an entity in the region that could perform any job function discussed then that entity could be added to the guidebook because it was a living document.
- Mrs. Carter stated in the guidebook was a list of the different types of entities in the region, where they are enabled in state law, and the different categories of what they do.
- Mrs. Carter stated the map showed the LA Watershed Initiative boundaries with the solid, bold, black lines as well as all the parishes, interstates systems, and waterbodies.
- Mrs. Carter stated that Region 1 was a difficult space to work in because of how water naturally moved in the region, so the main question was how to manage activities within the new watershed boundaries that were created within the LA Watershed Initiative.
- Mrs. Carter stated the best way to start the discuss was to review all the entities listed within the region, and asked the committee to keep in mind that Region 1 RSC did not have the ability to perform any duty discussed.
- Mrs. Carter stated the main goal for the Regional Capacity Grant was to make recommendations for a long-term coalition.
- Mrs. Carter stated an analysis was completed by the State's legal team, and it took the entities in Region 1 and categorized them to show which entities were most widely spread along with the authorities and functions the entity could perform.
- Mrs. Carter stated most items were limited to the Parish Government and no one was looking at local plans.
- Mrs. Carter stated there was another gap in the category of boundary delineation and updating the floodplain maps there is another gap
- Mrs. Carter stated the Louisiana levee district was distributed to the south and overlapped between Regions 1 and 2.
- Mrs. Carter stated that with the Red River, Region 1 had some big waterway navigation districts that extended all the way into Region 2 as well.
- Mrs. Carter stated that the Cane River Waterway District overlapped, so Region 1 had two waterway districts on top of each other.
- Mrs. Carter stated the planning development district was well focused, but traditionally they dealt more with transportation funded projects, but they did have some water planning responsibilities in terms of coordinating as part of a comprehensive plan.
- Mrs. Carter stated The CDC was in blue and the North Regional Delta District was just to the East, and the Ketachie Delta District was just to the South.
- Mrs. Carter reminded the RSC to keep in mind that there were many more entities in Region 1 not captured on the maps and the only entities captured on the maps were the entities that could cover more area than just a parish.
- Mrs. Carter stated there was a huge opportunity to leverage funding access to the parishes, so the best thing was to look for a way to work with all these entities across the region.
- Mrs. Carter stated there was no one that was working on the upper water systems which would involve a higher degree of coordination to investigate.
- Chairman Johns asked if the state was going through the entities and looking at who was still active?
- Mrs. Carter turned the question over to the legal team to answer.

- Mr. Mark Goodson stated part of the bases of the study was to find out who had the authority on paper but from the research it was not known who was still active or not.
- Mr. Goodson stated that part of the study was to find out who was still active and who was not.
- Mrs. Carter stated there should be a discussion about all the entities and if there was an entity that was not on the list and could perform the duty then they needed to be added or if there was an entity listed and did not have all the resources needed to be effective or would need more authority to be effective, that needed to be noted as well.
- Mrs. Carter stated that if an existing entity was not active, that the best action to take was to not take them off of the list, but to discuss what was needed to help them be more effective to perform the work discussed.
- Ms. Nyka Scott confirmed that they were not able to find out what entities were still active but, in some cases, there was a notation that there had been a meeting.
- Mr. Kent Rogers stated in the Shreveport/Bossier area and in the Alexandria area, there were two unique situations in which the MPO and the planning district were not the same offices so NLCOG and Matt Johns' office, in Alexandria need to be noted in the guidebook because those offices do have some of those capacities.
- Mr. Rogers stated both organizations had some unique characteristics because they had technical committees and policy committees in which represented multiple jurisdictions and multiple areas within the region.
- Mr. Rogers stated the entities that needed to be listed in the guidebook were the Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments (NLCOG) and the Rapides Area Planning Commission (RAPC).
- Mr. Wicker stated the RAPC was very involved in Region 2's Watershed RSC.
- Chairman Johns stated that both organizations had different planning boundaries than the planning development districts they were associated with.
- Chairman Johns stated NLCOG was larger than two parishes and RAPC covered a weird shape of parishes that could be found on the DOTD website.
- Mrs. Stewart stated NLCOG covered Caddo, Bossier, Webster and DeSoto parishes.
- Mr. Wicker stated RAPC was mentioned in the guidebook, but not on the entity list.
- Mr. Rogers stated NLCOG and The Coordinating and Development Corporation, who was the current PDD were in a process of merging.
- Mrs. Carter asked if there were any other comments or questions and there were none.
- Mrs. Carter stated that after looking at all the entities in Region 1, the OCD tried to highlight the important pieces of information.
- Mrs. Carter stated that local governments and water districts had the broadest authority with limited jurisdiction, so they could do most things but had the smallest area that they could work in.
- Mrs. Carter also stated that The CDC had the largest geographic area to work in but was limited on the authorities for regional watershed management.
- Mrs. Carter stated that slide 16 showed which entities could do the work, along with where there were gaps if there was not an entity listed under that need.
- Mr. Rogers asked if The CDC and NLCOG merged, could the new legislature body be one that was written to include these authorities?

- Mrs. Carter stated suggestions on any merging bodies that could perform duties discussed were the type of suggestions the OCD hoped to receive from the RSCs.
- Mrs. Carter asked if anyone else had any feedback or suggestions and there were none.
- Mr. Nowlin stated that within local and parish governments, the existing legislation allowed parishes and local governments to create joint projects or commissions with the neighboring parishes for purposes of flood control and development.
- Mr. Nowlin stated that some legislation may need to be created or amended but this long-standing authority allowed parishes to work together.
- Mrs. Carter confirmed what Mr. Nowlin said was correct.
- Mrs. Carter stated that parish authorities often used ADHOC on an as needed basis to develop a singular project with a neighboring parish and once the project finished, the agreement ended.
- Mrs. Carter stated that the LA Watershed Initiative was looking for a long term, sustainable, institutionalized capacity to manage flood risk across the region.
- Mrs. Carter stated the guidebook needed to highlight the fact that there was nothing preventing multiple parishes from working together to execute a project or an initiative.
- Mr. Nowlin stated that most of the parishes in Region 1 had a similar structure in which they participated in where they jointly funded the Correctional Facility in Bossier Parish.
- Mrs. Carter asked if she could see that agreement to see how it is written?
- Mr. Nowlin stated that basically it required a preparation of an ordinance that created whatever the goal was and then all the parishes would adopt it.
- Mrs. Carter stated the main concern was how easy it was to have an administration decide not to participate anymore and opted out.
- Mrs. Carter stated that with regional flood risk, figuring out how to work with neighboring parishes who dumped water into another region and was not will to enter into an agreement was a main challenge that would require an entity with some kind of authority.
- Mr. Nowlin stated that if all the parties involved did not unanimously agree then the issue would need to be addressed on a state level.
- Chairman Johns stated that he felt once the merge between CDC and NLCOG happened, that the newly formed entity would be a great fit to house the entire program from housing and running the model to helping with enforcement and planning.
- Chairman Johns stated that between both entities, CDC and NLCOG covered most of the region and they also had modeling capability already, so it looked like a good fit.
- Mrs. Carter asked if there were any more comments and there were none.
- Mrs. Carter suggested waiting to move forward with the poll questions since there was not a quorum present at the meeting.
- Mr. Wicker agreed with not doing a poll but suggested going ahead and having a discussion on each poll slide.
- Mrs. Carter stated that even a discussion could impact the way the members voted, so caution needed to be taken when discussing them.
- Mrs. Carter stated she would read through the poll the slides with the questions and if anyone had questions then she would get them at the end and then after the meeting Mr. Wicker would send the poll questions out in an email through Survey Monkey and the RSC could give their feedback.

- Mrs. Carter reviewed the possible suggestions, on slide 18, that would best address the issue with inadequate and poorly maintained flood control infrastructure.
- Mrs. Carter stated the choices were one of the following:
 - A. Select, construct, operate and maintain flood control projects.
 - B. Serve as a conduit for grant funds to support local flood control projects.
 - C. Review major projects for regional upstream and downstream impacts.
 - D. All the above.
 - E. Other
- Mrs. Carter reviewed the possible suggestions, on slide 19, that would best address the issue with uncoordinated planning.
- Mrs. Carter stated the choices were one of the following:
 - A. Develop and adopt regional watershed plans that coordinate maintenance of waterways, long term regional investments in flood control projects and encourage higher standards.
 - B. Develop, adopt, and enforce regional watershed plans that coordinate maintenance of waterways, long term regional investments in flood control projects and encourage higher standards.
 - C. Provide technical assistance to local entities to develop floodplain management plans.
 - D. Both A and C
 - E. Other
- Mrs. Carter reviewed the possible suggestions, on slide 20, that would best address the issue with inadequate data collection and availability.
- Mrs. Carter stated the choices were one of the following:
 - A. Use LWI models to review flood control projects for upstream and downstream impacts.
 - B. Review and recommend higher standards for the region based on model outputs.
 - C. Serve as hub or clearinghouse for other entities to submit and use collected data and modeling.
 - D. Use LWI models to support emergency response and preparedness efforts and advise local leaders and stakeholders with flood control responsibility.
 - E. All the above
 - F. Other
- Mrs. Carter stated the next part of the exercise was the discussion of what entities were a best fit for the root causes and solutions discussed but it would be best to wait until there was a quorum to have that discussion.
- Mrs. Carter asked Chairman Johns what his opinion was on if deliberation should wait for the entire committee or not.
- Chairman Johns agreed it would be best to wait for the entire committee to deliberate.
- Mrs. Carter said her office would send the poll slides out as a worksheet to each committee member.
- Chairman Johns asked if the RSC needed to choose specific entities names or was it ok if the RSC listed if the entity was a MPO or PDD?
- Mrs. Carter stated that whichever way the RSC member was comfortable with was good.


- Mrs. Carter stated if the members were more comfortable listing a general make up of what type of entity should be selected over listing a specific named entity or vice versa that would be ok.
- Mrs. Carter stated the next step would be Mr. Wicker would send the survey and the worksheets and the OCD would work with the Region 1 Watershed Coordinator on a best time to deliberate the answers with the entire RSC.
- Chairman Johns asked if there were any questions and there were none.
- Chairman Johns asked if there were any public comments and there were none.

Adjourn: Next Steering Committee Meeting: November 17, 2020

Chairman Johns asked if there was any further business to come before the Board, and with there being none, the October 13, 2020 meeting was adjourned at 11:29 p.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 October 13, 2020, at 10:00 a.m.



Jack "Bump" Skaggs, Secretary