

MINUTES
Region 1
REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
FRIDAY, September 25, 2020

The Region 1 Regional Steering Committee (RSC) Meeting was held at the Natchitoches City Council Chamber at 10:00 a.m., on Friday, September 25, 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 and held the invocation. Mr. Jack Skaggs 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 Ms. Zazell Dudley. Those present on Zoom were: Mr. Ali Mustapha, Mr. Morgan Briggs, Mr. Nick Cox, and Mrs. Lindsay Gouedy. Proxies held were: Mr. Eric Hudson for, Vice-Chairman Butch Ford; Mr. Tom Fontcuberta for Mr. Steve Brown, and Mr. Kenneth Ebarb for Mr. William Ruffin. Others in attendance were: Mr. Brad Spiegel, Mr. Austin Vaughn, Mr. Jack Skaggs, Ms. Jenae Arceneaux, Ms. Robin Ramagos, Ms. Heidi Stewart, Ms. Alexandra Carter, Mr. Kent Rogers, Mr. Ben Wicker, Mr. Clinton Patrick, Dr. Emad Habib, Ms. Helen Waller, and Ms. Anne Landry. A quorum was present.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Chairman Johns called for the adoption of the June 9, 2020, July 25, 2020, and August 11, 2020 RSC meeting minutes. Mr. Ali Mustapha motioned with a second by Mr. Eric Hudson (proxy for Vice-Chairman Butch Ford). With no further discussion, the meeting minutes for June, July, and August, were unanimously adopted as presented.

Update form Modeling Team

- Chairman Johns turned the floor over to the Model Data Management Team for their presentation.
- Dr. Emad Habib explained that their team was tasked with looking at developing recommendations and working with the Louisiana Watershed Initiative (LWI) on how to score and update the models.
- Dr. Habib stated that the recommendations would be the best strategies on plans to use, update, and store the data.
- Dr. Habib explained that his team was made up of individuals from UL Lafayette and Tulane University.
- Dr. Habib stated that his team would be reaching out to members of the Region 1 fiscal agent and members from the RSC, to arrange a time for additional meetings to create focus groups to come up with those recommendations.
- Dr. Habib stated that he was happy to be part of the modeling team for Region 1 and asked if there were any questions.

- Chairman Johns asked Dr. Habib if he could tell the committee if the recommendations that would be formed would go to the RSC first or straight to the Louisiana Watershed Council?
- Dr. Habib answered that recommendations would be formed by future conversations with the RSC and focus groups created, and there would be many layers of discussion before it would be sent to the council.
- Chairman Johns asked if there were any questions from anyone in the room or anyone online and there were none.

Existing Governance Entities & Roles

- Ms. Alexandra Carter explained that the governance exercises were going to happen in parallel with the Modeling Team gathering their information to develop their recommendations.
- Ms. Carter emphasized that the work done on governance was about action and was about creating a better coordination among entities.
- Ms. Carter explained what the committee would be doing during this exercise, which was agreeing on common goals and using that science to make informed decisions.
- Ms. Carter stated that the main question the committee should continuously ask is if the work could be done within an existing entity or should a new entity be created.
- Ms. Carter explained that the Regional Watershed Management Governance Exercise Briefing Book is something for the RSC to refer to because it contained a set of resolutions and a phase 1 report that preceded this work.
- Ms. Carter explained that the goals of the Regional Capacity Building Grant Program were to build staff capacity in each region, provide recommendations for regional governance structures for watershed management, and to establish watershed coalitions.
- Ms. Carter stated that when Governance is talked about, what it means is accountability, processes, and making sure people are informed and empowered to make the difficult decisions, which would ultimately be the coalition.
- Ms. Carter stated that to make sure there was consistency in reaching the final goal, there were questions that needed to be answered.
- Ms. Carter explained that the first question that needed to be asked at a regional level, was what work needed to be done that was not getting done.
- Ms. Carter stated that was the main goal and it was important to see all the problems and prioritize them and would be what the coalition would need to address.
- Ms. Carter stated that once it was known what work needed to be done, then the RSC would switch to who does the work.
- Ms. Carter explained that this meant understanding who, in the region, already had the authorizations to do the work or who in the region was in the best position to obtain the authorizations.
- Ms. Carter stated that the last question to be asked was how the work could be done.
- Ms. Carter stated the answer to that question would come from the RSC's recommendations on the coalition and development of action items.
- Ms. Carter asked if there were any questions at that point and there were none.
- Ms. Carter stated to unpack the "why," her team would host an optional governance webinar on October 14, 2020.

- Ms. Carter explained that during that webinar case studies would be reviewed and discussion of pros and cons of regional approaches to watershed management would take place.
- Ms. Carter stated that the program timeline to make the recommendations, had been adjusted due to different concerns of different regions in the Watershed Initiative.
- Ms. Carter stated that the provisional recommendations will be made between November and January and should be made based on best available data, practices, expertise, and information.
- Ms. Carter stated that January 2021 through April 2021 should be the time used to engage with parish leadership, stakeholders, and the public to gather feedback.
- Ms. Carter stated that during May 2021 and June 2021 the region should consider the feedback from the outreach and engagement that was done and refine the recommendations.
- Ms. Carter asked if there were any questions and there were none.
- Ms. Carter stated the region could possibly have 10 problems with the same one root cause and once that was identified and fixed, that could trickle down and fix multiple issues.
- Ms. Carter stated that during the meeting the committee needed to identify and prioritize the key concerns using the updated Regional Flood Risk Survey.
- Ms. Carter stated that the overarching themes for Region 1 were:
 - A. FEMA flood hazard maps and other resources such as NOAA tend to underrepresent risks, which complicated local decision-making.
 - B. Drainage networks were unable to discharge due to high-water surface elevations in receiving water bodies.
 - C. The Region needs significant infrastructure investments to reduce flood risks and improve drainage through the region.
 - D. The Region was experiencing a rise in increased flooding during modest rainfall events.
- Ms. Carter asked how the committee would prioritize these concerns and/or others on importance to change?
- Chairman Johns stated that maintenance was just as important as anything else and that money coming in should be used for maintenance of what was built a long time ago and not just for new projects.
- Mr. Brad Spiegel asked Chairman Johns how many years into the future the maintenance should account for?
- Chairman Johns stated that the maintenance should be perpetual and there should be some long-term planning that would go along with all plans for restructure of old projects and for any new projects.
- Mr. Skaggs stated that he agreed with Chairman Johns and that maybe the solution was to put a five to ten-year maintenance plan as a requirement.
- Chairman Johns stated that he wanted to hear what the committee's thoughts were on the FEMA maps because his opinion was that there needed to be more public education and risk communication because people are currently making decisions on what they can afford right now but if there was a disaster then they would be even more in a bind.
- Chairman Johns asked the committee if they also saw an issue with FEMA flood maps, were they causing problems in their area, and did the committee also feel that public education was important when it came to flood areas and maps?
- Mr. Eric Hudson stated that the Bossier Parish area used the FEMA flood maps, they do not issue building permits in areas that flood, and they had ordinances in place that prevent people from

building in areas that flood and so the only education needed was to inform people why they were turned down from building in that area.

- Mr. Skaggs stated that in Bossier Parish, houses must be built a foot above the BFE and that was the unquantifiable data because if 1,000 houses build three feet above the BFE, what would that do to the next parish over.
- Mr. Skaggs stated that it might be best to look at what ordinance each parish had on building above the BFE.
- Mr. Ali Mustapha stated that the FEMA's flood maps biggest problem was they were based on data that was 40 to 50 years old and they were not accurate but everyone has been relying on them and that is why people had been building in areas that flood.
- Mr. Kent Rogers agreed with Mr. Mustapha stating that the data was too old to be reliable.
- Mr. Hudson stated that he agreed as well.
- Mr. Rogers stated that the state had been working on LiDAR data for Region 1 and that data had been requested but it continued to be put off.
- Mr. Skaggs asked everyone to state their name before they spoke.
- Mr. Tom Fontcuberta stated that his parish had panels that had not been updated for 17 years and that most of their Flood Zone A was without BFEs.
- Mr. Fontcuberta stated that this was a concern when someone would come in to apply for a flood permit.
- Mr. Fontcuberta stated that most of the panels were relevant to NGVD 29 whereas some panels were relevant to NAVD 88 so most of the time there were conversions that needed to take place.
- Ms. Carter asked the Bossier Parish representatives why they thought their ordinance of building the house one foot above the BFE would impact the neighboring parishes.
- Mr. Skaggs stated that currently there were 4,000 to 5,000 platted neighborhoods for house and if those were put on top of businesses, what would be the long-term effect that was not quantified on the FEMA map?
- Mr. Hudson stated that in a large watershed there would not be much impact but in the smaller watersheds it would have an impact.
- Mr. Mustapha stated that kind of requirement was very common and started in the mid 2000's with the CRS program.
- Mr. Mustapha stated that normally that requirement went hand in hand with the planning for detention of development and should have zero impact on the area if done correctly.
- Chairman Johns stated that the zero impact was based off of data that was outdated because in Rapids Parish their standard was 10 years, but over the past several years, they received more than the quoted 10 year storms and that was where the error was with using 80 year old data to try and plan 1,000 year projection.
- Ms. Zazell Dudley asked what the reason was for the data not being updated.
- Mr. Rogers stated that over the past 15 years his team had requested updated LiDAR data for Region 1 and the state would tell them that they were getting to them next, but they never did.
- Ms. Carter stated that OCD was working hard to expedite the collection and input of that LiDAR data to be used in the modeling efforts, and that Region 1 would be one of the first regions to be completed.

- Mr. Rogers stated that his main concern was since it had taken them so long to input the data, how old was that data now?
- Ms. Carter stated that Region 1 was flown in 2018 but she would double check to make sure it was correct.
- Chairman Johns stated that he spoke with Kurt Johnson from DOTD and they had their own planes that they were flying and collecting the data themselves.
- Chairman Johns stated that Rapids Parish was expected to receive their data sometime in the early part of 2021.
- Mr. Skaggs asked about the recent years of flooding and if the RSC looks back and reestablishes what those events were or does the RSC, with their data, recommend to the parishes, that when there is a project that a 25 year standard would normally be used to use the 100 year standard?
- Chairman Johns stated that local regulations could work with whatever is dictated from FEMA, but he believed FEMA was getting away from using years and moving toward using percentages.
- Mr. Hudson stated Bossier Parish normally used the 25-year detention and if they knew that an area was prone to flooding then they would put a requirement on that area to use the 100-year detention.
- Mr. Skaggs suggested that maybe the RSC could recommend that parishes using the 25-year standard, should start using the 50-year standard.
- Mr. Mustapha stated that after the flood of 1991, Shreveport took matters into their own hands and did a quick mapping and determined which areas needed to be stricter on detention requirements.
- Mr. Mustapha stated the cause of most of the run-off problem was due to some of those areas being developed into commercial areas with big buildings and parking lots, so those areas were given a 25-year detention requirement, residential areas were given a 10-year detention requirement, and flood sensitive areas were given a 100-year detention requirement with zero impact.
- Mr. Spiegel stated the LWI was investing in a rain gage network with at least 100 additional rain gages to be installed that would be able to collect data in real time.
- Mr. Rogers stated he thought there was some way to make the FEMA maps living maps but that might have to be done through the Federal Government.
- Ms. Carter confirmed that the problem with the standards not being updated was projects would be engineered on the assumption that the final project would be able to handle the future storm events.
- Ms. Carter stated that there were expectations on how regions are engineering and if the 25-year standard were not current then the project would basically underestimate the infrastructure and underestimate the storms that were coming.
- Ms. Carter stated that one of the things that the LWI was looking into was the source data and if it needed to be updated because if they found that the rainfall data being used was old then they are under engineering the infrastructure.
- Ms. Carter asked when data was talked about if that included rainfall data also?
- Mr. Mustapha stated the rainfall data had nothing wrong with it because it was data based off rainfalls from the last 100 years and that it was updated constantly.
- Mr. Mustapha stated the main problem was the actual design of areas that had not seen any development until recently.

- Dr. Habib stated that there seemed to be two separate issues being discussed and those were; the data that was being used for engineering and even if rainfall data was not the issue there were other concerns with how to develop the undeveloped areas.
- Dr. Habib stated what Ms. Carter was referring to, was the design storms for the 50-year and 100-year storm that were produced by NOAA and parishes adopted these curves and used them to design projects.
- Dr. Habib stated that the way NOAA developed that data was they took historical data and they analyzed it to come up with a probability frame of 50% or 10%.
- Dr. Habib stated that the problem was the last time that was done was in 2013 and that was based off data from 2010.
- Dr. Habib stated that in the past decade there had been a lot of extreme storms that NOAA had not used data from in defining what a 100-year or 25-year standard should be.
- Dr. Habib stated Texas just went through something similar where they updated their Atlas because it did not include any of the information from Hurricane Harvey.
- Dr. Habib explained that the LWI was going to invest in updating this data for Louisiana.
- Dr. Habib stated when Texas updated their Atlas their design storm for 100 years became 12 inches instead of the original 10 inches and that was just an example on the number of inches because he was not sure about the exact number.
- Dr. Habib stated Texas's detention ponds had to be bigger than before to accommodate the new 100-year standard.
- Ms. Evelyn Campo stated once Texas adjusted for the real conditions their new 100-year standards were close to the old 500-year standards.
- Mr. Mustapha stated the storm that Shreveport received in 1991 was classified as a 100-year storm and the storm in 2015, even though it was two feet higher, was classified as less than a 100-year storm.
- Mr. Mustapha stated that was not due to wrong data, but it was due to the Red River having changed in the last 25 years dynamically, geographically, and with locks and dams being added.
- Mr. Mustapha stated the Red River was known to have lots of deposits come from Arkansas and Oklahoma that end up just sitting in Louisiana which made the water elevation for the Red River very tricky.
- Dr. Habib agreed and stated that was a resource question people kept asking which was, was the flooding in the area from extreme rainfall or was it due to changes in the landscape and river, and sometimes it can be hard to determine one from the other.
- Ms. Carter asked if the committee wanted to talk more about the river system and get to the root cause of that problem?
- Mr. Mustapha stated he could speak more on that issue and that one of the main causes of the problem of localized flooding, was all of the tributaries and draining into the Red River, because the water had nowhere to go.
- Mr. Rogers stated the problem with the Red River was the base level had rose two or three feet because of siltation.
- Ms. Carter asked if it was accurate to say that siltation was reducing the storage capacity of the Red River?
- Dr. Habib asked if the Red River was constantly being dredged or if it had not been dredged in several years?

- Mr. Mustapha stated the Red River was continuously dredged within the channels for navigation only and nothing was being removed so the sand just stayed in the river.
- Mr. Rogers stated there was a need to remove the siltation and not just push it to the side.
- Mr. Spiegel stated there was a note on Flood Risk assessment about the Red River, stating upstream impacts from extreme rain events could cause severe impact from other states.
- Mr. Spiegel asked if anyone wanted to speak more about a need for interstate planning?
- Mr. Mustapha stated there were about 16 reservoirs on the Red River from Oklahoma to Louisiana, and all those reservoirs had limited storage capacity, so when the rainfall amounts exceed the storage capacity it was just straight runoff into Louisiana.
- Mr. Mustapha stated there was a need to investigate some methods to regulate discharge from those reservoirs.
- Ms. Carter asked if it was accurate to state that there was a need for interstate coordination to regulate upstream storage?
- Mr. Mustapha stated that there was a need because the Red River was dealing with Little Rock, Tulsa, Fort Wood, and Vicksburg.
- Mr. Rogers stated that there was an Interstate Multi-Water Red River Compact, but he was not sure how active it was or who was the Louisiana representative but that Mr. Rocky Rockett could speak better on that.
- Mr. Rogers stated the biggest concern with the compact was that Texas had an overwhelming majority verses everyone else in the compact.
- Mr. Mustapha stated the compact mostly dealt with issues regarding water usage and rights to water.
- Ms. Carter stated the thing that seemed to be missing was comprehensive river management and what needed to be done first was prioritize solutions for maintenance and siltation.
- Ms. Campo asked if some of the siltation was coming from riverbank instability upriver.
- Mr. Mustapha answered the siltation was all mostly from the riverbanks caving in upstream.
- Ms. Campo stated it sounded like that was not happening in Louisiana and might be happening far enough upstream that it would not be under Louisiana's control.
- Mr. Mustapha stated that Arkansas and Oklahoma were where most of the caving of the riverbanks was happening.
- Mr. Hudson asked if an additional lock would clean some of those problems.
- Mr. Mustapha stated that additional locks in that area and additional reservoirs would help control those problems but that was a long shot.
- Ms. Carter agreed and stated she was pretty sure the neighboring states were willing to work with Louisiana, but it was up to Louisiana to quantify what all was coming in.
- Mr. Mustapha stated Arkansas was willing to work with Louisiana and that Arkansas had a study that was 50% funded by The Corps and 50% funded by locals, to investigate constructing another lock and dam between Shreveport and Texarkana.
- Mr. Mustapha stated Arkansas was also interested in extending the navigation and reservoir project from the Port of Shreveport to Texarkana.
- Ms. Carter asked if there was any other discussion to be had on those parishes adopting higher standards and if the RSC felt like the BFE plus one foot was enough?

- Mr. Mustapha stated all the cities in the same watershed needed to work together and implement the same rules and regulations.
- Mr. Clinton Patrick stated that he was the assistant city engineer for Bossier City and that work was being done to try and come up with ways to form some sort of design standard to assist in that situation.
- Ms. Carter stated that by everyone getting on the same page and working together, it would help reduce those risks in a consistent way and there would not be one community doing everything they could to stop flooding but receiving water from neighboring communities.
- Mr. Rogers stated that there was a need for true comprehensive planning.
- Ms. Carter explained that LWI was going to take all the issues discussed and stake them down into different levels and would be reporting that data back to the committee during the next exercise.
- Ms. Carter stated the next step for the group was to think about how they could connect those root causes with potential solutions.
- Ms. Carter reviewed the different categories of potential solutions and explained all that lead up to “the work.”
- Ms. Carter stated examples of what the region could do during “the work,” which were:
 - A. Provide project funding, operations, and maintenance.
 - B. Create consistency in higher standards.
 - C. Manage project planning.
 - D. Develop and execute a watershed plan.
 - E. Provide data and support.
- Ms. Carter stated some regions were looking to have the coalition feel the need of providing data and operating the models.
- Ms. Carter explained that some of the categories required authorization and those were:
 - A. Provide project funding, operations, and maintenance.
 - B. Create consistency in higher standards.
 - C. Develop and execute a watershed plan.
- Ms. Carter stated the next step was to think through the solution slide and that the LWI would send more information to the RSC before the next exercise.
- 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: October 13, 2020

Chairman Johns asked if there was any further business to come before the Board, and with there being none, on a motion by Ms. Zazell Dudley and a second by Mr. Eric Hudson, and being put to a vote, the September 25, 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 September 25, 2020, at 10:00 a.m.



Jack "Bump" Skaggs, Secretary