

**Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council
Public Meeting for Draft Initial Funded Priorities List**

New Orleans, LA – Sept. 15, 2015

Principals:

Chris Barnes, State of Louisiana
Justin Ehrenwerth, RESTORE Council
Teresa Christopher, Department of Commerce
Mark Wingate, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District
Homer Wilkes, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Ebonye Allen, Environmental Protection Agency
Darrell Echols, Department of the Interior National Park Service

Additional Support:

Kendra Parson, RESTORE Council
Alyssa Dausman, RESTORE Council
David Elliott, RESTORE Council
Jessica Kondel, Department of Commerce
Vasilios Manthos, State of Louisiana
Jenny Kurz, State of Louisiana
Brad Inman, U.S. Army corps of Engineers
Britt Paul, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Greg Steyer, U.S. Geological Survey
John Bowie, Environmental Protection Agency

The meeting started at 6:00 p.m. and lasted approximately 1 hour 15 minutes. There were approximately 85 people in attendance, not including Council representatives, staff and support.

Introductory remarks:

Ms. Chris Barnes: Thank you for coming this evening. We look forward to hearing from you tonight. Vietnamese translation services are available, if needed.

The public comment began at 6:30 p.m. and lasted about 35 minutes.

Public comments (12 speakers):

- Ms. Jeanne Nathan, CANO: Does not think the Council should use funds to plug abandoned oil well. Feels there is a need to educate the public and elected officials on erosion issues.
- Mr. Sean Duffy, Big River Coalition: Disappointed that projects that were oiled following the spill, were left out of the draft FPL. Feels navigation projects are very important. Would like to see Bird's Foot Delta project added to the draft FPL. Would like to see who will represent navigation for the Lowermost Mississippi River Management project.

- Mr. Barney Callahan, Louisiana Wildlife Federation: Appreciates the USDA's assistance with the Bayou Dularge project. Appreciates the diversion projects in the draft FPL. Does not think the Council should fund the plugging of abandoned oil wells in Texas.
- Mr. Charles Williams, Self: Supports the Maurepas Swamp project, and would like to see it prioritized even more, if possible. Would like to see all of the projects move forward as quickly as possible.
- Mr. David Muth, National Wildlife Federation: Supportive of all the proposed projects, and especially happy with the Jean Lafitte project. Would like to see the Council submit projects without state and/or agency boundaries, and with a focus on leveraging funds. Pleased to see that two of the projects begin to deal with connecting the Mississippi River to its Delta. Supportive of the Maurepas Swamp project planning, and hopes to see the implementation funded in the future. Encourages the Council to look at the management of the Delta.
- Mr. Steve Cochran, Restore the Mississippi River Delta: The Mississippi River is an asset, and should be used to build the Delta. Encourages the Council to continue maximizing the assets the Mississippi River can bring to the Gulf. Encourages the Council to continue leveraging funds moving forward and focus on the next version of the Comprehensive Plan-utilizing it to be the connective tissue among the different investments being made towards Gulf restoration.
- Mr. Jason Smith, Jefferson Parish: Supportive of the West Grand Terre project, and the Jean Lafitte project.
- Mr. Patrick Barnes, Limitless Vistas and BFA Environmental: Appreciates the Council's work in developing the draft FPL. Supportive of the Conservation Corps project.
- Mr. George Pivach, VPC: Would like to see projects south of the Venice area. Supportive of dredging projects and beneficial use projects.
- Bob Tannen, AECOM: Supportive of land acquisition projects.
- Mr. Ryan Brumfield, Limitless Vistas: Supportive of the Conservation Corps project. Excited to be a part of the restoration process.
- Ms. Daisy Pate, Self: Overall happy with the formation of the Council. Would like to see alternative energy sources built into all of the planning projects. Would like to see more action for the Louisiana projects.

Summary:

The meeting attendees expressed the following comments throughout the meeting:

- The comments were mostly positive.
- Appreciate the Council leveraging funds; appreciates the Conservation Corps project and outreach and education efforts.

- Supportive of the Maurepas Swamp and Jean Lafitte projects.
- Would like to see more implementation projects.
- Would like additional land conservation and land management projects in future FPLs.
- Would like the Council to focus on the next iteration of the Comprehensive Plan.