

COUNCIL ON WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

MEETING NO. 13: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2020

Time: 10:00 am

LA DOTD Auditorium

1201 Capitol Access Road

Baton Rouge, LA 70802

I. Call to Order

Led by Council Chairman – Pat Forbes, OCD

II. Roll Call

Led by Council Secretary – Lori Dupont, OCD
Pat Forbes (OCD)
Kyle Balkum (LDWF)
James Waskom (GOHSEP)
Chris Knotts (DOTD)
Bren Haase (CPRA)

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Led by Chris Knotts, DOTD

IV. Public Comment

No public comment at this time.

V. Consent Agenda Items

Council Chairman Pat Forbes asked to approve minutes in globo or individually.

Motion: James Waskom motions to review the Sept. 25, Nov. 21, and Dec. 16 minutes in globo.

Second: Chris Knotts

Yeas: 5

Nays: 0

Absent: N/A

Council Chairman Pat Forbes asked for concurrence on the Sept. 25, Nov. 21 and Dec. 16 council meeting minutes.

Approved in globo with no objections.

VI. Opening Remarks

Council Chairman, Pat Forbes, OCD



Thanked everyone for attending the meeting of the **Council on Watershed Management**. Provided a brief overview of the Louisiana Watershed Initiative.

At this meeting, we will:

- Provide updates on various **programs underway and in development**.
- Be presented with progress related to the **2020 state agency alignment** work to advance interagency coordination.

VII. Updates

A. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Action Plan for Mitigation Activities

Alexandra Carter, OCD

Provided an overview of the state's action plan, which HUD approved on February 20, and a rough timeline of expected events once access to funding is gained. HUD has not approved the state's certifications, once received, the process of executing a grant agreement with HUD and having a line of credit established. Stated that we remain on track to enter into a grant agreement in the spring/summer of this year. During this time it is important to recognize that many programs are underway. For example, the application process for the first round of local and regional watershed projects is currently underway and will be discussed today. Other activities underway include State Projects and Programs; Non-Federal Cost Share Assistance; Watershed Monitoring, Mapping and Modeling; and Watershed Policy, Planning and Local Capacity Assistance. Quick reminder that although HUD approved the state's action plan, we have not received access to funds.

B. Regional Capacity Building Grant Program

Evelyn Campo, OCD

Provided an update on the Regional Capacity Building Grant Program with the following highlights:

1. Fiscal Agents submitted their full applications in December and all were approved in early January.
2. Award letters have been issued to all fiscal agents and OCD has sent all of the regions their CEAs.
3. In early February, OCD LWI staff hosted an orientation for regional watershed staff to orient them on program goals and expected deliverables and outcomes.
4. Fiscal agents have hired their watershed coordinator staff and most regions have held their first steering committee meeting. Regions are following open meetings standards to ensure that these meetings are transparent and open to the public, and to encourage participation.
5. Upcoming steering committee meetings will be published on the LWI website. Many regions have also created their own websites to post meeting notices as well as other information.



Provided past and upcoming timelines for Steering Committee meetings.

C. Watershed Mapping, Monitoring and Modeling Program

Ed Knight, DOTD

Provided an update on where the Modeling Program is currently. Working on executing contracts for H&H modeling services within the 7 contracting regions and beginning to incorporate a review of modeling guidance. All modeling contracts have been awarded to the following:

Region 1: Atkins

Region 2: Freese and Nichols

Region 3: Wood Environmental and Infrastructure

Region 4: CH Fenstermaker and Associates

Region 5: HDR Engineering

Region 6: Michael Baker International

Region 7: Dewberry

River and Rain Gage Network

Bradley Spiegel, OCD

Overview on the progress of the program and detailed the work with DEQ and USGS to determine costs and timelines for the two phases of the network framework. Webinar that was hosted on March 6 has been posted to the LWI website and Facebook for those who were unable to join. Feedback can be provided on the LWI's interactive web apps or by email.

Alexandra Carter, OCD

Explained that in coordination of the modeling and river and rain gage activities, the LWI is engaging more directly with federal partners to ensure work is coordinated, uses best national practices, and is positioned to produce multiple and cascading benefits to both the LWI and its partners. FEMA has agreed to review modeling guidance and remain involved in consulting on LWI model creation; the Corps will share existing models and lend expertise on modeling methodology, costs and data collection; USGS will work with LWI & DEQ to build out and integrate gauge networks, manage installation, operations and maintenance, and data collection networks.

D. Watershed Local and Regional Projects and Programs - Round 1

Evelyn Campo, OCD



Provided a summary of the program, including number of pre-applications received and that the most common project types include drainage improvements, flood storage projects, channel clearing, dredging, or canal hardening projects. Described the terms of progress and next steps for the program. For more information on procurement and compliance related to Round 1, refer to FAQs and NOFA available at watershed.la.gov.

Alexandra Carter, OCD

Explained that shovel-ready projects or projects that are ready to implement are the goal. They must reduce risk while posing little or no negative impact to surrounding areas. Projects that require further H&H study may be appropriate for another funding stream. LWI will ensure applicants have adequate time to submit full applications by allowing three months for submission; this also will ensure regional steering committees are prepared to select projects to recommend for funding.

Evelyn Campo, OCD

Reminder that applicants are reminded to attend the mandatory webinar on March 18.

E. Non-Federal Cost Share Program

Jeffrey Giering, GOHSEP

Provided an overview of the Non-Federal Cost Share Program. Goal is to simplify the program by using CDBG funds to fully fund some projects, while using FEMA funds to fully fund some other projects, which should ideally reduce program timelines. Program will take time to administer and does require alignment among HUD and FEMA processes and requirements. Discussed number of projects that can be funded.

F. Statewide Watershed Development Plan

Michael Donahue, Project Manager, AECOM

Provided an overview of the development of the Statewide Watershed Development Plan and agency alignment. Discussed the Plan outline, approach and timeline, and how Working Groups and TAG comments have been incorporated, and next steps. Research on best practices and lessons learned from multiple states and regions were examined. Monitoring and Plan updating are key aspects of the development process; Accountability and adaptability are essential to success; Partnership between Working Groups, TAGS, Council and Contractor are necessary to achieve success. Expect to complete at least half of the research by end of 2020 and the majority by end of 2021, with a draft Plan and Technical Report available in mid-2022. Ambitious, yet realistic, timeline.

VIII. Closing Remarks

Led by Council Chairman- Pat Forbes, OCD

Accepted public comments:

R. George Ray, Sr.

Houma Terrebonne Airport

504-908-8784



rgeoray@me.com

Question: I did not hear this question.

Beryl Gomez

Pierre Part Belle River Citizens in Action Group

225-921-1873

alle@atvci.net

Question: Can the public see all 325 full applications that are submitted?

Alexandra Carter, OCD: Yes.

Matt Johns

Rapides (Region 1, 2, 4, 5)

318-471-8460

matt@rapc.info

Question: As a member of multiple working groups, can a council member be added to the Watershed Council from the Louisiana Department of Agriculture?

Pat Forbes, OCD: I welcome any input from the working groups, so definitely it would be taken into consideration.

IX. Adjournment

Council Chairman- Pat Forbes, OCD

Do I have a motion to adjourn?

Motion: James Waskom, GOHSEP

Second: Kyle Balkum, LDWF

Yeas: 5 Nays: 0 Absent: N/A

Council meeting adjourned at 10:51 a.m.