



## **THE ADAPTATION GENERATION: A CHOICE TO CHANGE OR RETREAT**

*Findings from proceedings:*

**COASTAL WETLAND COMMUNITIES ADAPTATION LEADERSHIP FORUM**

**August 29, 2018**

**Nicholls State University**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The age-old saying, “nothing remains constant except change itself,” has never been more appropriate than now as America’s coastal communities face the stark reality that adapting to a different climate and the rising seas it brings has become essential to living near edges of the coast - today in Louisiana and tomorrow in countless communities confronting a rising tide.

“In 2018, we face revised land loss maps that greatly expand the probability of risk from sea level rise and storm surge by focusing far beyond the Mississippi Delta to Miami, Norfolk, Baltimore, Houston, New York, the New Jersey coast, Boston, San Francisco and Seattle, and many other coastal communities,” King Milling, chairman of America’s WETLAND Foundation, said.

Drawing from many years past by noted author of War and Peace, Leo Tolstoy, “Everyone thinks of changing the world but no one thinks of changing himself.”

Such thinking suggests that individual actions can make a difference and indeed the culmination of a day’s dialogue with coastal leaders gathered by the America’s WETLAND Foundation (AWF), meeting in a first Coastal Wetland Communities Adaptation Leadership Forum at Nicholls State University, follows this assumption.

This event was a return engagement to Terrebonne Parish that in 2011 hosted the first of a series of Gulf Coast AWF Blue Ribbon Resilient Communities forums. The earlier focus on “resiliency” or the ability of a system to absorb, withstand and bounce back after an adverse event, takes into account Louisiana’s efforts over the past two decades to plan solutions for unrivaled challenges to restoring its coast. Anticipating these benefits and coastal investments, it becomes essential that the region moves toward “adaptation,” as people come to treat new situations as the norm and act to preserve existing resources. Adaptation is more likely to evoke individual actions, while resiliency is often considered as broad actions taken, possibly by the government.

Within this context, a panel of seasoned and salty coastal stakeholders presented their views of adaptation and the only logical choice for the million residents of the region’s coastal zone. The site at Nicholls State University was obvious to focus on a new generation who will ultimately design the “new normal” and manage life’s daily arrangements for living and working in and contiguous to Louisiana dynamic coastline and its disappearing wetlands.



## **What's New?**

### **From resiliency to adaptation**

Most coastal communities have now heard the term, resiliency, and many have taken measures to absorb the change with plans that take into account sea level rise. This was not the case ten years ago when AWF released the results of a multi-million dollar study co-sponsored with Entergy and conducted by SwissRE and McKinsey and Company. The study raised warnings that sustaining built infrastructure to support the community and the economy of the region will come with a serious financial burden on the region. Voters in Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes levied taxes to build the protective Morganza-to-the-Gulf, a system of levees, locks and flood structures that was controversial and required a decade-long political battle at the local, state and national levels to be built. Most concerning and often debated was the impact that a series of structures might have on the South Terrebonne environment. Today, ecosystem benefits are present within levee structures where saltwater intrusion has been abated and a refreshed discussion among parish leaders and coastal scientists has emerged and led to adaptation strategies made possible with the new system in place. Because of structural resiliency, adaptation is now possible in the coastal zone.

### **Recognition of ecosystem values and assets with large-scale floodplain management system.**

The scope of the Morganza-to-the Gulf system created positive benefits and new floodplain assets in the Terrebonne Basin. While the initial plan was Federally authorized in 1992, no federal dollars were appropriated, leaving the onus for protection on local governments. Former state representative and levee district president, Reggie Dupre, said, "People think all levees are bad but because of the riverine levee system, we need coastal levees because we've lost our natural barriers. In New Orleans East we saw a program where all of the wetlands were pumped out. The Morganza system learned from this and is not a pump and drainage system. In fact, we are seeing some of the wetlands making an amazing comeback. What the lock system will do is give us the ability to prevent saltwater from moving north with damaging impact to freshwater marshes. The system is designed to also provide safety for navigation to come inland during storms." The discussion compared the closed MRGO and Houma Navigation Canal with the later, touted as being designed as part of an economic and environmental system that includes a \$40 million lock that changes the game and allows for adaptation.

### **Advancement of science supporting re-introduction of native species to sustain an ecosystem and support biodiversity.**

The prospect of new local science initiatives between a research university and commercial ecosystem companies to re-introduce native plants highlighted a positive adaptation strategy. Converting the Nicholls State University farm property into acreage to support native species experimentation and seed development, in partnership with companies such as Restoration Environmental Solutions (RES) with operations in South Louisiana, suggests the emergence of new industries for localized solutions. It did not go unnoticed that upwards of \$10 billion will be spent in the Louisiana coastal zone and that an important adaptation measure is the reformatting of offerings by educational and trade institutions to match the skill and research needs of the region.



**Louisiana Coastal Exchange advisory panel and incentives for private sector restoration sciences and projects.**

A new way for the private sector to opt-in and invest in coastal restoration is seen as key to adaptation. With private sector support, two new projects in Terrebonne Parish and one recently completed in Lafourche Parish were cited. The projects help define the emergence of the Louisiana Coastal Exchange (LCX). The exchange is designed to advance private investment in transitional coastal projects, as well as research that will sustain vulnerable wetlands as larger public projects come on line as part of Louisiana's coastal master plan. An case example is the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway shoreline restoration project; AWF raised one-million dollars from the private sector to restore one mile of embankment that had been compromised by saltwater intrusion and threatened inland freshwater marshes near Lake Salvador, featuring innovative technology that utilized a recycled plastics mesh and native plant species. Two additional projects in Terrebonne Parish through a partnership with AWF, RES, and global energy leader, BHP, will plant 35,000 bald cypress trees that have been grown in a controlled environment to mimic saltwater conditions. As an adaptation measure, the cypress will be planted on top of terracing ridges to provide stronger survival success and better pest protection through improved methods. The LCX will emerge with a call for additional projects supported by the private sector and delivering information via a dedicated web resource on projects completed, underway, and those planned and available for private support.

**For coastal Louisiana, generational timelines will create the benchmarks for adaptation or retreat.**

While there is evidence of adaptation moves underway in the region, the scale of the challenges faced will require a new understanding of what it means to live in a modern-day coastal zone. To that end, the concept of generational timelines becomes important in a region where cultural and family unity are hallmarks. The success of local strides toward adaptation will determine if long-standing trades and skills for earlier times can transition into a coastal economy, where ecosystem management, engineering, eco-tourism, hook and bullet recreation, and energy and navigation are prime movers in the job market. Indigenous occupations in commercial seafood, agriculture, trapping, and trading face both environmental and commercial challenges. The good news is that the changes forecast for the region come with financing for jobs with new skills and the area's education centers are gearing up for the adaptation generation. Mapping for jobs of the future allows children to see that future generations can look toward to staying and growing here with economic development. What is missing is for us to embrace who we are so that all are working in a synergistic way in how to define Louisiana's "water economy" - coastal environmental management, tourism, fisheries, navigation, law and policy.

**Bouncing forward and not back should be the adaption hallmark for future generations.**

The future must envision reorganization of resiliency based on events and not just the repair of the built infrastructure. Reorganization of the ecosystem should be in tandem with projects, as built infrastructure impacts ecosystem infrastructure. Louisiana Sea Grant head, Dr. Robert Twilley, described, "bouncing forward" as a deeper consideration of coastal and environmental design. Helping to advance this design globally requires the adaptation generation to coordinate with coastal America to provide for an insurable future. Such insurability comes through pro-active local investments and residents willing to tax themselves to provide protection to benefit local, state and national assets. Congress must recognize that such local investments deserve a funding match to achieve nationally beneficial outcomes. Finally, while public agencies are



moving ahead with large-scale initiatives, a lane for the private sector needs to open up for transitional projects that help the ecosystem bounce forward.

It did not go unnoticed that the embrace of change during this forum was a constant refrain. This is not to say that all understand the exact path to adaptation, but as CPRA chair, Chip Kline, said, “The amount of money coming to Louisiana for restoration and protection in the next 15 years is definitely something to be excited about. Proactive investments here will make the difference and we need to engage the private sector in the process.” Kline went on to note that the next master plan will have some prominent changes and that adaptation will be a part of a new round of discussions designed for locations like the Terrebonne Basin. “The state will be doing things a little differently with the 2023 master plan, like looking at where the gaps exist in our plan.”

The ideas and recommendations emerging from this forum are the first in a new series of programs to be sponsored by AWF to address important actions for adaptation. The Foundation will continue to co-host summits with the Louisiana CPRA to follow the progress of the state’s coastal master plan and new emerging opportunities and innovations to effectively and efficiently adapt to coastal land loss.

A Chinese proverb applies well to today’s situation, “A wise man adapts himself to circumstances as water shapes itself to the vessel that contains it.”

(Continued on the next page)



**AMERICA'S WETLAND FOUNDATION  
COASTAL WETLAND COMMUNITIES ADAPTATION LEADERSHIP FORUM  
Nicholls State University  
Plantation Suite  
August 29, 2018  
9:30 am – 3:30 pm**

**FORUM HOSTS**

Dr. Jay Clune, President, Nicholls State University  
The Honorable Gordon "Gordy" Dove, President, Terrebonne Parish  
R. King Milling, Chairman, America's WETLAND Foundation  
Rachel Archer, General Manager of Gulf of Mexico, BHP  
Elliott Bouillion, President and CEO, RES  
The Honorable Walter "Walt" Leger III, Speaker Pro Tem, Louisiana State, Louisiana State  
Representative, District 91 and Co-Chair of the Louisiana Coastal Exchange  
The Honorable Jerome "Zee" Zeringue, Louisiana State Representative, District 52 and Co-  
Chair of the Louisiana Coastal Exchange

**SUMMARY REPORT EXCERPTS**

**OPENING STATEMENTS**

*Opening remarks*

**R. King Milling, Chairman, America's WETLAND Foundation (AWF)**

Today, we once again commence a conversation focusing upon the challenges facing our coastal communities, as they confront the fundamental question of how they are to adapt to coastal land loss in an ever more threatening environment.

In 2011 and 2012, with the support of Entergy, AWF sponsored a series of meetings entitled Blue Ribbon Resilient Communities Leadership Forums. It was a curious title for, at the time, the word resiliency within the context of the pending tragedy facing south Louisiana was little understood. The forums were supported by analysis derived from a study by Swiss RE and McKinsey and Company to establish by zip code the vulnerability of communities along the Gulf Coast from what was then considered the limits of sea level rise. That baseline data provided a foundation for AWF to conduct detailed interviews and focus groups with community leaders in more than a dozen Gulf Coast communities, creating a self-assessment of their resiliency and to focus on their strengths and vulnerabilities.

During the past eight years, the Foundation held world delta dialogues in New Orleans and Vietnam, bringing in coastal leaders from countries also coping with the challenges facing their great deltas. Through these dialogues, we confirmed much of what we've learned in how to address the resiliency issues our coastal communities are grappling with here in Louisiana.



Five years after the Ho Chi Minh City summit, the Terrebonne/Lafourche region is again a center of attention, where the understanding of “resiliency” or the ability of a system to absorb, withstand and bounce back after an adverse event, is coupled with “adaptation,” where people come to treat new situations as the norm and act to preserve existing resources.

In 2018, we confront revised land loss maps that greatly expand the probability of risk from sea level rise and storm surge by focusing far beyond the Mississippi Delta to Miami, Norfolk, Baltimore, Houston, New York, the New Jersey coast, Boston, San Francisco and Seattle, as well as many smaller coastal communities.

AWF gathered leaders from the private sector including, landowners, business and industry, foundations, NGOs, restoration firms, elected officials, educators and scientists - as all of us embark on projects that can add value to the solutions sought by Louisiana’s coastal master plan now and in the future. Even as projects are in the process of being constructed, reality can change and the need for innovation must provide solutions.

For the Southeast Louisiana regions and the Terrebonne Basin, the value of the project known as “Morganza-to-the-Gulf as a protective device to avoid flooding was clear from the onset. What wasn’t clear and often a concern was whether the project would also provide ecosystem services or damage the fragile wetlands that the structures traversed. The remarkable reduction in saltwater intrusion into the depths of impacted parishes by the construction of complex floodgates and locks not only has enhanced the freshwater vegetation but also facilitated large-scale terracing and other mitigation projects. Similarly, as barrier islands are re-envisioned and reconstructed, techniques change as new sources of sands are employed and ideas evolve as to methods by which the damage from future storms can and will be diminished and quickly repaired.

Adding to future biodiversity, global corporation BHP and Resource Environmental Solutions (RES), partnered with AWF on two projects in Terrebonne Parish - the first will add to the stability of the recently completed levee system, enhance the vegetation and further protect the citizens of lower Terrebonne Parish in Chauvin and other local communities by planting 5000 restorative Bald Cypress trees and 35,000 marsh grass plugs near Pointe-aux-Chenes.

In another instance by planting 30,000 restorative Bald Cypress trees and conducting invasive species treatment to stabilize and rehabilitate the marsh, Bayou Terrebonne’s capacity to overcome forces of storm surge will be significantly enhanced.

These instances and others add to the stated value of activities adopted in the master plan as well as projects adopted by parishes, thereby strengthening the overall system as employed to offset much of the potential damage that our state faces.

America’s Wetland Foundation continues its long association with coastal leaders from diverse backgrounds to begin the process of adding substance to its history of wetlands advocacy. The Foundation and its partners encourage advanced dialogue with a focus on urgency as stated in a letter to state agencies by Gov. John Bel Edwards where he correctly advised that all should build knowledge and understanding of our comprehensive plans in order to create a more resilient future. Mitigation and deterring the consequences of coastal



land loss by executing plans set forth in our present master plan is essential as is private sector initiatives for ancillary activities to augment the intended results of the large-scale solutions with localized restoration projects.

Future implementation of projects utilizing a cooperative partnership spirit from every resource will add value in the end. As always some projects selected in our present master plan and those to be adopted in future iterations may not be able to totally impede the threat faced by the state as originally designed. This underlies a call for strong private sector participation in coastal restoration. We don't need a crystal ball to know that our communities like Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes, will be called on to support measures or be forced to retreat from the rising tide.

It is also obvious that enhancements and innovation will depend upon the quality, experience and capacity of those programs conceived and resurrected through science envisioned and tested in prior years. We need the very best minds to analyze such activities from the practical to the most complex. Louisiana is in a unique position as we almost lead the world in knowledge concerning the pending threats. We have a responsibility to ourselves and to others to maintain and enhance that position. By incorporating the distinct knowledge and diversity of our citizens in every sector, we can and must accept the challenge of excellence.

*Remarks Highlights:*

**Honorable Gordon “Gordy” Dove, President, Terrebonne Parish**

- Adapting to the changes in our landscape is something we have no choice but to do. With the Morganza-to-the-Gulf protection projects coming on line, our parish is winning the fight and that is not something I could say six years ago.
- Our current priority and critical to our program is the lock system that allows our fishermen a way out of the protective zone to do their jobs.
- We are currently building 19 pump systems for the parish to protect against captured storm surge or waters collected during a storm.
- Terrebonne projects paid for by our residents are supporting our protection, which is critical to our efforts. These actions demonstrate adaptation to change, which our voters recognized and willed as protection for their future and for future generations.

*Remarks Highlights:*

**Rachel Archer, General Manager of Gulf of Mexico, BHP**

- BHP has an active presence in the Gulf of Mexico, and we consider the region one of our heartlands.
- We care for its future, but that is not without the recognition that challenges to a healthy and bio-diverse ecosystem - must be addressed by all stakeholders.
- At BHP, supporting conservation efforts of the highest quality upholds Our Charter Value of Sustainability.
- We believe that the maintenance of biodiversity and ecosystems for future generations is paramount in the way we think about the environment.
- At every operation, regardless of location, it's a core business requirement to implement controls to prevent, minimize, rehabilitate and offset, as appropriate, impacts to biodiversity.



- We have set public targets in these areas that encourage us to consider and collaboratively work with others to address these challenges.
- We value the places where we have business operations and will be a partner in adapting to any changes that may impact this region.
- We value the places where we have business operations and will be a partner in adapting to any changes that may negatively impact this region.

*Remarks Highlights:*

**The Honorable Walter “Walt” Leger III, Speaker Pro Tem, Louisiana State, Louisiana State Representative, District 91 and Co-Chair of the Louisiana Coastal Exchange**

- Over the past decade, we have made the case about the importance of Louisiana’s wetlands, not only to ourselves but also to the nation.
- This meeting illustrates a glaring need for private sector involvement, as the state cannot fully fund our master plan and it has never been more important to have private companies involved in restoration.
- Business and industry have invested billions of dollars in doing business on our coast and it makes good business sense to protect the coast and its natural and economic assets.

*Forum Moderator Remarks Highlights:*

**Valsin Marmillion, Managing Director, America’s WETLAND Foundation**

- As a foundation, we do not believe in retreat. We believe in adapting to the changes we see across the vast landscape of America’s Wetland.
- AWF efforts such as convening these forums on trending topics often precede the broad application of concepts. Such was the case with groundbreaking forums on resiliency seven years ago and today with a focus on adaptation.
- Resilience & Adaptation – **Resilience** includes the ability of a system to absorb, withstand and bounce back after an adverse event by acquiring new capabilities, perhaps emerging stronger from the struggle. **Adaptation** is the action individuals can take to accept change as normal.
- A better appreciation of the relationship between the concepts of adaptation and resilience will provide more effective tools to plan for and respond to current and future change.
- If the definition of resilience is the ability to recover from a negative event, like in the case of sea level rise, then talking about preparations beforehand and strategies for recovery (aka adaptations), as well as populations more capable of developing and implementing a resiliency strategy (aka vulnerable populations) are essential. [Wikipedia: Science resilience]

**TERREBONNE PARISH PERSPECTIVE:  
BLUE RIBBON RESILIENT COMMUNITY – 7 YEARS LATER**

*Remarks highlights:*

**Craig McClain, Ph.D., Executive Director, LUMCON**

- My focus is on the water that is in the middle of the wetland.
- There was an amazing opportunity to return to the Louisiana coast where my research first started. When I came back – in seven years – more and more water. From our vantage point, we have witnessed dramatic change.



- The diagnosis of wetlands around Terrebonne Basin is that we don't expect the wetlands will hold at the same loss rate as now.
- The efforts we are making are helping but need to ramp up our efforts.
- Today, there are only three voters in the area found outside of the levee. Hard to talk about future scenarios when the migration has already occurred. We see half of the houses elevated and half that are not.
- In Dulac, Chauvin, Point aux Chenes, extremely resilient people want to stay and are ready to adapt.
- We need better control of the narrative going out to Congress and the rest of the nation who don't know or understand about the coastal restoration successes. There isn't broad knowledge that the voters here taxed themselves or about the success of building wetlands inside levees – those success stories don't make it out. We need to spin the narrative of success better.

*Remarks highlights:*

**Reggie Dupre Jr., Executive Director, Terrebonne Levee & Conservation District**

- After a series of storms and ten years later, zero Federal dollars have moved to sustain the important communities and economy of Terrebonne Parish.
- Citizens have raised \$400 million dollars to fund a multiple-lines-of-defense strategy with the Houma Lock complex - the state's largest - and Houma Navigation Canal - the second largest. Two smaller locks also underway to help complete an entire system of water management structures.
- The state has demonstrated confidence in us to build such a massive project, based on our performance and the support of voters in the area.
- We have witnessed our community begin to disappear and have taken action by elevating 1,500 homes, restoring our barrier island, building mitigation south and north, and adding redundant levees and when added up are making the difference in supporting our population's desire to adapt to a changing landscape without having to retreat.

*Remarks highlights:*

**Berwick Duval, Esq., America's WETLAND Foundation Board Member, Partner, Duval, Funderburk, Sundberry, Richard & Watkins**

- AWF's previous forum in this region was about resiliency and the focus on the discussion today is about adaptation. There are more signs today that the people of this region are adapting. One concern is that the population may become complacent as they witness millions of dollars invested in defensive projects.
- Flood insurance is key. The question is if the Biggart-Waters federal legislation goes away and we lose flood insurance, how do we make the case politically to survive?
- Mother nature is not a Republican or a Democrat. This is not about politics. Flood insurance rates are so high, people can't buy a home unless they have the cash and banks won't lend the money. This limits your market and property values drop if you're in a floodplain. There are winners and losers. The national flood insurance program expires this year and I caution that there are those who want to do away with it.
- Louisiana is a "small business" state and as those businesses die, the state's economy will die. If the flood insurance football becomes partisan, we are doomed. If we don't have national flood insurance, we need to look for another place to do business. Adaptation requires strong and secure and affordable insurance products in place.



## A GENERATIONAL APPROACH TO ADAPTATION

### *Remarks Highlights:*

#### **Dr. Robert Twilley, Executive Director LSU Sea Grant College Program**

- Louisiana is gaining a greater capacity to adapt out of vulnerability. When systems reorganize after events, the infrastructure also has to reorganize to adapt to change. We are discussing a built shift during reorganization and a reorganization of the wetlands as well.
- Morganza-to-the-Gulf has given us a vision of how big the scale is that we must think about. Similarly, one has to rethink moving water from the Atchafalaya into the Terrebonne Basin, as the Terrebonne migration rate of the Gulf inland toward Houma is two football fields a year. Designing Morganza in a way to hold the wetlands is critical and we are seeing signs of success in this regard.
- When monetizing risk, we need to ensure that all the features of our landscape that capture flooding are assessed. Science that predicts storm surge and flood risk needs to be added.
- The idea is being able to stand up for ourselves but, if the flood risk is not being measured at a landscape scale, we will not know what our true risk is.
- The concept of bouncing forward is important to this discussion, rather than bouncing back.
- Increase private participation and investment to keep the federal flood insurance program intact. If insurance invests in restoration, individual premiums could count toward such investment.

### *Remarks highlights:*

#### **Simone Maloz, Executive Director, Restore or Retreat**

- Twenty-seven years old when hired to lead Restore or Retreat, I never thought would have a career in restoration. We were founded in 2000 and our mission is exactly the same today – to implement aggressive projects in these two basins, to support the state’s master plan, and implement the Morganza-to-the-Gulf project. Our rallying cry then and now has been “restore or retreat”.
- We used a lot of studies and plans that had been around to move from the business of building a project to now looking at solving problems of land loss. We can move to the next generation of projects, knowing that Morganza is there now and working to ensure that a science-based process will take us to the next solutions.
- The “restoration economy” is an important topic to add to the generational discussion; the future working culture in the Lafourche and Terrebonne parishes can take advantage of the jobs for a \$10 billion restoration economy. For example, there is now a coastal communications class at Nicholls State University. That is all about how much we’ve evolved.

### *Remarks highlights:*

#### **Dirk Guidry, Councilmember, District 8, Terrebonne Parish**

- People feel safer in southern reaches of Terrebonne Parish but it is a very fragile community, often relying on fishing to survive. If you give people a chance, they will survive.
- The biggest cause for the population moving is insurance. “I told my daughter not to build a house in our community – you can’t afford the insurance.”
- Growing up in Chauvin when Hurricane Betsy came through, it was Cocodrie getting flooded. A few years later, another community was flooded, and now the water is lapping at



the city of Houma. The people know that without the protective levee system, we are doomed.

*Remarks highlights:*

**Sidney Coffee, Senior Advisor, America's WETLAND Foundation**

- We have to think in terms of people – real people and families and their lives and businesses – and the decisions they make – so they will be able to adapt. One generation can be involved in decisions about college – moving or staying – starting a business – and our restoration and protection efforts have to take this into consideration from a very human point of view. The larger efforts speak to the generational needs.
- AWF has taken a new approach to describing how we view timelines for restoring the coast, rather than in years, in generations. This is an important distinction because it takes into account how families plan for their future.
- Philanthropy is becoming a greater part of the picture and the generational need to focus on big projects that can sustain economic engines for the long term can work together. But there the smaller transitional projects are prime for private sector support. A company, foundation, or NGO can make a big difference in the lives of people today.
- Just as the state reorganized government to comprehensively address coastal restoration with all the coordination of all the key agencies, we need to stand with a unified approach to restoring the values of this region, without turf considerations or competition among advocates. The bigger picture is what is required to adapt to the massive change that lies ahead.

## **EDUCATING FOR THE ADAPTATION GENERATION**

*Remarks highlights:*

**John P. Doucet, Ph.d., Dean College of Arts and Sciences, Nicholls State University**

- Present generations of students at Nicholls are not as equipped to deal with hurricanes and maintaining resiliency as their parents and grandparents were so it is up to us to teach them how to adapt to a changing landscape and to plan for the future.
- Nicholls State University will be an incubator for jobs and living the future in this region.
- The culture in this area is very resilient and oriented to survival and we will teach tomorrow's residents, not only how to survive, but also how to succeed.

## **SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES: THE MASTER PLAN AND BEYOND**

*Remarks highlights:*

**Chip Kline, Chair, Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority**

- Since Hurricane Katrina hit thirteen years ago today, it is important to understand how far we have come as a state in dealing with these issues and we have a lot of reasons to be optimistic about the future.
- The amount of money coming to Louisiana for restoration and protection in the next 15 years is definitely something to be excited about. Proactive investments here will make the difference and we need to engage the private sector in the process. Economic opportunities associated with restoration – based upon an \$800 million a year plan and close to 10,000 jobs will result.



- Natural resource banking program will allow a private firm to build a project without the state of LA financing the up-front funds. The company receives credits and is eventually paid back in an effort to incentivize the private sector.
- When we talk about the economic opportunities, we are starting an incubator at Nicholls State.
- It's important to gauge the impact of restoration on different communities, so we are setting up a seafood working group to offset their impacts to the extent we can.
- What are the measures we can put in place to make the Terrebonne Basin more resilient? Morganza-to-the-Gulf is another case in point. The people have taxed themselves and the state has spent millions of dollars on the project and the federal government continues to sit on its hands and has not contributed a dime to the effort and this is unacceptable.
- The state will be doing things a little differently with the 2023 master plan, like looking at where the gaps exist in our plan. The state will be creating regional focus groups and Terrebonne/Lafourche will be one of them. The South Central Louisiana group of St. Mary, Iberia, and St. Martin Parishes will be another focus group looking at what is needed to sustain that area and how to apply to design to solutions. All will have an increased focus on the 2023 master plan after these groups will generate project concepts.”
- The state can't do this alone and I still feel there is a lane the private sector can move into to fund smaller projects. The Louisiana Coastal Exchange being launched in a few months by the America's Wetland Foundation can be a facilitator in putting projects on the ground. This is a moment in time for our state to truly be a leader in the world on these efforts.
- Performance-based contracting is another new opportunity, where the private sector fronts the money consistent with the master plan and pays the investment back.

## **TOWARD A NEW ERA OF PRIVATE SECTOR SUSTAINABILITY: THE TERREBONNE BIODIVERSITY AND RESILIENCY PROJECTS**

### *Remarks highlights:*

#### **Rachel Archer, General Manager of Gulf of Mexico, BHP**

- For BHP to have a future here, we want to be part of the stewardship of this region.
- Sustainability is part of who we are; we want to leave things in better condition than we found it. We need to be able to demonstrate that we're responsible.
- BHP is the beneficiary of these resources and we take that seriously.

### *Remarks highlights:*

#### **Elliott Bouillion, President and CEO, RES**

- The role of corporations in the community is changing and the unique thing about corporate social responsibility is that we have a large group of young people who really care and wish to steer companies to meaningful activities.
- As the private sector takes a bigger role in restoration, we will be able to do things that are compatible with public funds.
- Private business understands risk and long term operating costs. The government takes care of people but private industry knows how to get things done in an efficient way. This model can be important as funding remains a challenge based on the size of the problems we face along the coast.



- For our own company, we are joining forces with scientists like here at Nicholls State University to partner on innovations that will return native species to their original environments.
- New private sector initiatives can marry corporate social responsibility with NGO restoration programs, along with private ecosystem research and development in ways that can build a three-legged stool to complement public large-scale initiatives.

*Remarks Highlights:*

**The Honorable Jerome “Zee” Zeringue, Louisiana State Representative, District 52 and Co-Chair of the Louisiana Coastal Exchange**

- It makes sense for the state to incentivize the private sector to do important restoration projects. It is far cheaper to do them now rather than later.
- Public/private partnerships can be applied now to coastal restoration and we have to improve the process of getting these projects on the ground quicker by attracting privately sponsored projects.
- Without a national insurance program, coastal communities cannot survive. And it goes along with protecting government assets and the U.S. economy. Allowing private investment to participate is to our advantage. There are things we can do to help keep the program solvent.
- Native plants promoted for landscaping is another way to create incentives for native species to be used in public projects.
- This great ecosystem will always be changing and we’re never going to have a silver bullet to fix it all but discussions like these continue to move the ball forward. We need to keep selling how important this issue is until it becomes part of the national psyche.

**THE LOUISIANA COASTAL EXCHANGE – A COOPERATIVE VENTURE TO RECOGNIZE PRIVATE SECTOR CONSERVATION & RESTORATION INITIATIVES OF THE GULF COAST**

*Remarks highlights:*

**Tim Allen, General Manager, Apache**

- Rainey Conservation Alliance has big projects to add to the exchange. NAWCA grants require permits in hand and 100K cash to get \$1million.
- The concept of putting all these projects on a list had not occurred to me but I’ve never seen these projects all put in one database. It’s a way to show what’s been done and where the projects are and then to build on it further. It has the potential for private projects to go in the ground right away.
- The AWF poll showing that the majority of voters in the Gulf region feel the energy sector is participating in conservation and restoration but don’t really know what exactly the energy sector is doing seems like a very good reason for the Exchange.

*Remarks highlights:*

**Laura Bowie, Executive Director, Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA)**

- The Gulf of Mexico Alliance has created a database with all the projects that have been built with the monies resulting from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The Louisiana Coastal Exchange would be a wonderful complement to this.
- The Alliance Deepwater Tracker project inventory of projects arising out of the BP Oil Spill aligns with the Exchange inventory of private sector initiatives.



*Remarks highlights:*

**Karen Gautreaux, Director, Government Relations, Louisiana Chapter, The Nature Conservancy**

- The exchange would be a great opportunity to share information on these projects and to identify innovative techniques used.
- Permitting never considered restoration and we are trying to get permits based on old regulations.

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