

**DWH Trustee Council
4/5/21 Conference Call Summary**

Attendees:

TX	AL	DOI	USDA
Robin Riechers	Chris Blankenship	Mary Josie Blanchard	Ron Howard
Angela Sunley	Amy Hunter	Michelle Eversen	Craig Johnson
	Emily Seale	Debora McClain	Tanya Culbert
LA	Kelly Swindle	Ashley Mills	
Maury Chatellier	Jane Calamusa	Ann Hijuelos	EPA
	Bethany Kraft		Mary Kay Lynch
	Seth Newton	NOAA	Gale Bonanno
MS		Chris Doley	Tim Landers
Chris Wells	FL	Rachel Sweeney	
Valerie Alley	Gareth Leonard	Laurie Rounds	
Bradley Ennis	Amy Raker	Aileen Smith	LAT
	Nadia Martin	Craig O'Connor	Holly Herod
	James Reynolds	Natalie Gardner	Nanciann Regalado
		Stephen Heverly	

Discussion Item 1: Report Outs

- a. **TX TIG:** The TX TIG provided updates on several ongoing restoration projects.
 - o McFaddin project: The project is located on the upper coast of Texas near the Louisiana border. It's one of the TIG's largest projects and combines RESTORE Act, Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund (GEBF), and NRDA funds as well as state funds. The cost of the project is close to \$90 million total and is currently out for bid. There will be dredging, planting, and other activities in the final project.
 - o Bahia Grande: This is a large estuary on the southern TX coast on the border with Mexico. When the Port of Brownsville ship channel was built, it cut off water flow to Bahia Grande. The goal is to re-open a channel to Bahia Grande. A pilot project was successful, and this project will widen the pilot channel from 50 feet to 120 feet. The project will benefit birds; wetlands, coastal and nearshore habitats; and other resources. There are a number of project partners and this is one of the largest re-connections of a bay in the country. There is some drone footage available online if you are interested in learning more.
 - o Cold stun event: The recent cold stun event was one of the country's largest ever. NRDA funds were used to support the rescue of 8,000 to 10,000 live turtles that were harmed during the cold stun event. The turtles were collected and held at centers

along the coast. Some turtles are still being rehabilitated and released. For most of the project partners the funds supplied heaters, blankets, pools, and other equipment.

- TX will follow up on a request from LA TIG on dredging details.
- b. OO TIG: The OO TIG has a number of updates:
 - The TIG is continuing to implement projects from Restoration Plan 1 and Restoration Plan 2. Much of the work for RP2 projects is in the planning and contracting stage.
 - The TIG is implementing its monitoring and adaptive management priorities so they have started efforts to identify restoration objectives as well as indicators. One area where that work is underway is the Fish and Water Column restoration type. The fish team has been conducting outreach with stakeholders and will continue to do that via roundtables and webinars in the coming months.
 - The OO TIG will be holding a public webinar on April 29 around noon. The web story will be posted soon. The webinar will include updates on TIG activities as well as requesting feedback on what activities attendees are interested in via in-webinar polls.
 - The OO TIG also started planning for Restoration Plan 3. The request for project ideas was opened on March 25 and will close on May 10. They are focusing on birds and sturgeon for this plan. For birds the goal is to address injury to bird species that is unlikely to be addressed by other TIGs (seabirds in particular) while sturgeon is an open call for projects.

The Cross TIG-MAM and MS TIG will give their report outs on the next TC call.

Discussion Item 2: Cross TIG-MAM Update

- a. Discussion: The Cross-TIG MAM circulated their work plan for next year (July 2021 - June 2022). The group is requesting approval of the task list. Once approved, the budget will be developed and the funding request will be circulated to the RW TIG (since they would fund it) and to the TC as an FYI.
- b. Decision: The task list is approved by TX, LA, AL, MS, FL, DOI, NOAA, EPA, USDA.

Discussion Item 3: LAT Items

a. Discussion:

- Annual Public Meeting – The communications team is proposing that the TC hold an open house for approximately 30-45 minutes in advance of the annual public meeting. The TIG leads would represent each TIG. When the notice is circulated it will include a note that questions may be submitted in advance. If there are no questions submitted (or not enough), then we will develop talking points to cover common subjects. The open house will be moderated by Perry Franklin. Each TIG lead would say hello, provide a few words about TIG activities, and then the TIG leads would answer the previously submitted questions. There will not be any live verbal questions from the public. Florida cannot use Google docs to collaborate, so we will need to adjust that to another system.
- Decision: TX, LA, AL, MS, FL, DOI, NOAA, USDA, and EPA approve of a pre-webinar open house with the understanding that a collaboration method that all Trustees can access will be established.
- Action Item: The communications team will continue planning efforts.
- DIVER upgrades – During the February TC call, the group discussed internal findings from the 5-year programmatic review process. Two items that were identified are related to DIVER programming. As part of the project information review, the Cross-TIG MAM found a few places where updates will help with data review and analysis, and consistency. The recommendation for the DIVER programming team only applies to project information that has yet to be entered. No retroactive changes are requested. The recommendations are to update the monitoring parameter picklist and swap out several of the options in the monitoring activity section. The programmers will make these changes in the coming months, and they will be included for next year's annual reports.
- Decision: The Trustees agree to these updates in DIVER.
- SOP – The small group completed its review of the updated SOP. There is one item that is pending related to language around audits and AUPs. That last item is nearly resolved and then the revised document will be circulated to the TC.
- Joint resolution - Thanks to everybody for their signatures on the joint resolution. The deposit was received by DOJ and the funds will be transferred to the DOI restoration fund shortly.

Other Business

- a. The next regularly scheduled TC call is Monday, May 3.

**DWH Trustee Council
5/3/21 Conference Call Summary**

Attendees:

TX	AL	DOI	USDA
Robin Riechers	Chris Blankenship	Mary Josie Blanchard	Ron Howard
James Murphy	Amy Hunter	Debora McClain	
	Emily Seale	Ann Hijuelos	
LA	Kelly Swindle		
Bren Haase	Jane Calamusa		EPA
	Bethany Kraft		Mary Kay Lynch
	Seth Newton	NOAA	Gale Bonanno
MS		Chris Doley	Tim Landers
Chris Wells	FL	Laurie Rounds	Treda Grayson
Valerie Alley	Gareth Leonard	Natalie Gardner	
Bradley Ennis	Rachel Schmalfuss	Stephen Heverly	LAT
Chris Barnes	Nadia Martin		Holly Herod
	James Reynolds		Nanciann Regalado

Discussion Item 1: Report Outs

- a. **MS TIG:** The MS TIG provided updates on several ongoing restoration projects. They are continuing to work on Restoration Plan III. A request for project ideas was posted last year and the team is working on project screening. They anticipate the reasonable range will be determined later this week. There will be at least four restoration types (habitat on federally managed lands, marine mammals, birds, recreational use, and perhaps sea turtles). The MS TIG overlapped with the Regionwide TIG’s planning intentionally to keep an eye out for leveraging opportunities. The draft plan is expected to be out for public comment later this fall. The MDEQ Restoration Summit will be held on November 9 and will include the MS TIG annual meeting. Several early restoration projects, including the Hancock County Living Shoreline, are in their final phase. Phase 4 restoring living shorelines has two components under construction.

- b. **Cross-TIG MAM:** The Cross-TIG MAM has a number of updates. A one-page update was circulated with today’s agenda. The group has been focusing on the programmatic review. They are coordinating with the LAT and the planning team that is helping facilitate the development of the report as well as with the 5-year small group. The Cross-TIG MAM is focusing on developing and refining text for the report. Coordination with the data management team for DIVER updates is ongoing.

The LA and RW TIGs will give their report outs on the next TC call.

Discussion Item 2: LAT Items

a. Discussion:

- Annual Public Meeting – The communications team is working on the details for the annual meeting.
 1. The draft “save the date” web story was circulated last week. The story will be translated into Vietnamese and then posted on the Trustee website.
 2. On May 10, the TC will receive a batch of products for review. The registration web story will have a 10-day review. The post-webinar web story, the TC factsheet, the TC presentation and script will have a 14-day review period.
 3. Later in May the TC will receive the MAM and Data Management Factsheets for review.

- Decision: The save the date story is approved.
- Action Item: The communications team will translate the web story into Vietnamese and then post it on the Trustee website.

- 5-Year Programmatic Review Update – The small group is preparing a draft package for high-level review. It will be sent to the TC around mid-May. This second package will be a collection of all the text that the group has ready so far. The intent is to get feedback on scope, intent and, “so what” topics. Note that the content will be updated through 2020 so if you see any 2019 references, please note those will be updated. It will include the cover, TOC, acronyms list, introduction, administrative oversight section, restoration planning process, around seven restoration types, and the previously drafted FL TIG example.
- Action Item: TC thoughts on the partial draft can be discussed on the next TC call or an ad hoc call.

- SOP – The revised document was circulated to the TC. Comments on the spreadsheet were requested by Friday, April 30. EPA, DOI, and MS provided comments already. The group discussed several of the comments related to a table of LAT duties, Trustee contacts, and federal register notifications among others. The next steps will include the SOP small group working through the TC comments by mid-May. A final clean copy for the TC to review will likely be ready by the June TC call.
- Action Items:

1. NOAA may want to submit comments. If anybody else would like to submit comments please reach out to Holly via email by EOD tomorrow.
 2. The small group will reconvene to work through a few of the comments.
 3. The contacts will be updated on the website and pulled out of the SOP.
- NOAA is working on transitioning Sharepoint from a server-based system to a cloud-based system. The update will have better security, record management, security, and usability. NOAA will let the TIGs know about the migration plan that is expected to happen in late summer and is expected to be a big improvement.

Other Business

- a. The next regularly scheduled TC call is Monday, June 7.

**DWH Trustee Council
6/7/21 Conference Call Summary**

Attendees:

TX	AL	DOI	USDA
Robin Riechers	Chris Blankenship	Mary Josie Blanchard	Jon Morton
James Murphy	Jane Calamusa		
		NOAA	EPA
LA	FL	Chris Doley	Gale Bonanno
Beth Golden	Gareth Leonard	Natalie Gardner	Mary Kay Lynch
Maury Chatellier	Rachel Schmalfuss	Stephen Heverly	
	James Reynolds	Rachel Sweeney	LAT
MS	Lisa Robertson	Melissa Carle	Holly Herod
Chris Wells			
Valerie Alley			
Bradley Ennis			

Discussion Item 1: Report Outs

- a. LA TIG: The LA TIG has been focusing on final RP 3.2, the Mid Barataria Sediment Diversion. This is the proposed diversion in Plaquemines Parish that would allow for freshwater and nutrients back into Barataria Basin. The Restoration Plan was released for public comment this spring and the public comment period was extended until June 3. They received over 40,000 comments and the majority of which are form letters. There are about 600 individual unique correspondences. The LA TIG is working on binning and responses to the comments.

Restoration Plan 8 is in the initial process. They hope to have the OPA screening done in the next few weeks and then drafting on the plan will start.

The LA TIG also has a number of projects in construction:

- Rabbit Island (RP1.3) is a pelican rookery that completed construction in March 2021.
- Spanish Pass and Lake Borgne (RP 1.2) are currently out for bid.
- Three projects from RP 6 have had construction contracts awarded or are out for bid including the West Grand Terre project, which is well under construction and will be highlighted during the annual meeting.

- From RP 3.3 there is a large-scale marsh project that is out for bid. The Trustees approved a Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan to assess lower trophic levels in the lower estuary food web.
- b. RW TIG: The RW TIG has made significant progress with Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessment 1 since the last update. The draft was released for public comment on March 22, 2021 and two public meetings were held via webinar in April. The RW TIG is expecting to release the final RP/EA in fall 2021.

They have an ongoing MAM activity involving colonial waterbirds. This effort is looking at population trends, aerial surveys, ongoing restoration projects, and other indicators on a region-wide scale. Several surveys are either complete or starting soon.

The AL and FL TIGs will give their report outs on the next TC call.

Discussion Item 2: LAT Items

- a. Topic: Standing Cross TIG MAM update
- b. Discussion: No updates at this time.

Discussion Item 3: LAT Items

- c. Discussion:
- Annual Public Meeting – The communications team is working on the details for the annual meeting.
 1. The materials circulated for review with a deadline of June 9. Please mark your initials on Sharepoint or send an email to TIG support.
 2. “Dress Rehearsal” is set for June 9 from 3-4 central
 3. Updated Run of Show is attached.
 4. Open house preparations
 - Action Item: Review the materials on Sharepoint and attend the dress rehearsal.
 - 5-Year Programmatic Review Update – Thank you for the comments on the partial draft that have been received so far. In general, the responses so far to level of detail, tone, and style are positive. Nobody identified any content that was missing or any content that was deemed unnecessary.

There is variability across chapters which is expected. That variability does not concern the Trustees at this time, but there is a suggestion to discuss that variability in the process chapter. All of the 2020 numbers will be updated shortly, and the Unknown Conditions language will be updated as noted. The

Trustees also requested a common use of terms and acronyms. The group discussed the timeline for further development. The small group will have their full draft to review in mid-June to mid-July for a full line by line edit.

- Action Item: The small group members will continue to review draft content and address the comments the Trustees provided. Request for email updates as needed to the TC.
- SOP – The small group discussed the edits received from the TC review. There are a few small wording changes to work through and then a final revised draft will be sent to the TC. It will likely be circulated in mid-month with approval requested along with the July meeting.
- Annual Reporting follow up – Thank you to the Trustees and their staff members for updating the information. The administrative record is also updated and aligns closely with the project updates. Please encourage your team members to attend the post-annual reporting review meeting. This will help the team refine their processes for annual reporting going forward.

Other Business

- a. The next regularly scheduled TC call is on Monday, July 5 which is a federal holiday. The call will be rescheduled for the same time on July 12.