STATE OF LOUISIANA

MISSISSIPPI RIVER HYDRODYNAMIC AND DELTA
MANAGEMENT STUDY

The Public Scoping Meeting conducted by the Louisiana Coastal Committee taken at Boothville-Venice Elementary School, Boothville, Louisiana on Thursday, April 19, 2012 at 6:05 p.m.

Reported by:

Tara Torres-Blank
Certified Court Reporter
INTRODUCTION

MS. MUELLER:

Good evening. Thank you very much. My name is Lee Mueller.

So, as you can see, this is our fourth of six public scoping meetings. Please share this with your friends if you feel they'd be interested in attending any of the meetings in Waveland or St. Bernard.

All right. So to go over what we'll be discussing this evening, first, we'll start with an overview of Louisiana Coastal Area Ecosystem Restoration Program (LCA). Some of you guys may be familiar with that.

And then we'll move into some details about the Mississippi River Hydrodynamic and Delta Management Study. And then Sandy Stiles will
come up and go over the National Environmental Policy Act, Public Scoping Process, which is really why we're here this evening, to gather your input on the study.

Now, we understand sometimes our presentations can be really heavy on the science and engineering, so we will have a question and answer session. Sara will have a walk around mic. Just go ahead and raise your hand and then we'll come on over.

Now, if you don't have a question, but you do have a comment, a complaint maybe or maybe even a compliment, we will have the formal scoping comment session. This is your opportunity to get your comment included in the official record.

We do have a Court Reporter here with us this evening and she will capture your comment.

Just to reiterate, we are here tonight to get your input on the initiation of the Louisiana Coastal Area and Mississippi River Hydrodynamic and Delta Management Study.

With that, I'd like to present Rene Sanders from CPRA to start our presentation.

**MS. SANDERS:**

Hi! Good evening! My name is Rene
Sanders. I'm the Study Manager for CPRA on the project and I'd like to go over some of the basics for LCA.

The LCA stands for Louisiana Coastal Area. It was a project -- a report that was completed at the end of 2004, beginning of 2005. It outlined some of the 5 to 10-year near-term projects and it also talked about some longer term large-scale projects and those were ones -- there were six of them that were listed in the report. This study combines two of those six projects.

This map is a -- it shows the projects that were listed in the LCA report, the 15-year term projects. Most of these have not been built. Two of them have and that's Caenarvon and Davis Pond.

The rest of the projects that are shown on there are in various stages of completion. Some are still in design, some are still in feasible, meaning we're still evaluating the benefits and the impacts to some of the projects.

Myrtle Grove is one. White Ditch is another. Both of those are still being studied.
Some of the other projects, the modification to Caenarvon and modification to Davis Pond, those are also being analyzed under the LCA Project.

This map shows the proposed study area. It begins somewhere around the Gulf of Mexico in the Bird's Foot area and extends north to Vicksburg, and that's to include some of the modeling domain that's needed to capture some of the intricacies at the Old River Control Structure.

There's a little area to the southwest, along the Gulf of Mexico and that's to capture the longshore drifts, some of the sediment and nutrients that are going along the Gulf of Mexico towards Texas.

The project area will be defined in more -- refined once we get further in the process. When we actually pick projects or areas that we're going to have projects, the study area will become smaller, it will be studied more intensely, we'll do some soil conditions, cultural analysis, HTRW, which is your hazardous waste analysis.

So there's more analysis that's going to go into the report once it's further defined.
So some quick facts about the study. We're going to say it repeatedly. We're so excited about this. This is the first kill, long scale, long-term project. So I'm just going to reiterate that as well.

The project was authorized under WRDA, the Water Resources Development Act of 2007. The end product for this is going to be an environmental impact assessment. It's going to be more or less a tiered off version from the original 2004 report.

It's going to be a more in-depth analysis for the two portions of the study that we're going to be looking at, which is the Hydrodynamic Study, primarily focusing on end river modeling.

And then the Delta Management Study, which is going to look at particular study areas in the basin where we can input sediment and nutrients into the basins.

The cost-share agreement was signed in August of 2011. It's a 50/50 cost-share, so that means the $25.3 million will be divided equally between the Corps of Engineers paying and the State of Louisiana paying for it.
The study is expected to take about five years. It's going to build on existing information. We're not going to start from scratch. The models that are being used are existing models that we will tweak for this particular study's analysis.

So as I mentioned before, this study is a combination of two individual projects that were the long-term, large-scale projects. The hydrodynamic portion, we're going to evaluate the Mississippi River.

So what that means is that we're going to quantify how much and where the sediment resources are available in the river.

We're going to develop tools to analyze those resources over time, as well as spatially, and then we're going to develop or determine the best implementation strategies to maximize the use of the sediment and the water that's available in the Mississippi River for coastal restoration projects.

Traditionally, the river has been managed for two services and that's flood protection and navigation. This study has an opportunity to elevate the importance of coastal restoration and put that on the same level.
playing field as flood protection and navigation.

So the second component of the study is the Delta management component. In the 2004 report, it mentioned that the study would look at diversions that were greater than 50,000 cfs.

This study will look at all ranges of diversions. Anything below 50,000, as well as anything above 50,000.

It's also going to look at alternative channel realignments, and understanding that that's a difficult topic, there's a lot of things that will go into that analysis, but that is still an option.

The third thing that I'd like to point out with this slide is that there are other measures that we can consider. It's not just diversions, it's not just channel realignment.

It could be some kind of outfall management measure, it could be marsh creation, it could be dedicated dredging.

So what we plan to do is look at the 2012 Master Plan and take what they have learned and the projects that they have analyzed and look at them a little bit more detailed.
Do some additional modeling with the models that will be built for this report, and really look at placement of the restoration features.

Whether it'd be a diversion or marsh creation, look at the timing of those restoration projects, where in the river do those projects need to originate.

So the Master Plan is going to better inform the placement and operations of diversions. It'll define the measurements, what analysis needed to occur to actually build those projects, and it'll provide the information that is needed for congressional authorization for the projects.

With that, I'd like to turn it over to Cherie, and she's going to go into some of the specifics as well.

**MS. PRICE:**

Thank you, Rene. Hello everyone! I thank you for coming out this evening. My name is Cherie Price. I am the Planner on the study with the Corps of Engineer and along with Danny Reagan, who's not here tonight.

So as part of the Corps planning process on our studies, we develop problems,
opportunities, goals and objectives that outline what we're trying to achieve with the study.

And I'm going to step through those with you this evening over the next few slides.

So the first problem we have Rene touched on a little bit is that historically, there have been two primary focus areas on the Mississippi River, navigation and flood control.

With this study, we're looking at adding an additional layer of use for the river, which is coastal restoration and trying to tap into the river's resources for that purpose.

We're all familiar with the issues we face in coastal Louisiana, subside and land loss, the erosional processes, disruption of natural deltaic processes in the basin surrounding the river.

We currently -- we have a lack of understanding of those delta building processes. Any time you're looking at artificial means to create land, you're dealing with some really complex issues, and as part of this study, we really want to get to the bottom of that.
Once we obtain the river resources and distribute those into the delta, we need to figure out how to keep those resources there for sustainable restoration.

The encroachment of the Gulf of Mexico, we're increasing our flood risk in our coastal communities. As subsidence has occurs and sea level rise occurs, the Gulf of Mexico is getting closer and closer to our communities and into people's backyards.

And that's something that we're hoping to offset through the study. So this is a really extensive effort. We're looking at systemwide comprehensive modeling that's never been done before on the Mississippi River and the data collection that goes along with that.

Harper's Landing is the closest long-term sediment record that we have and that's over 300 miles away from the study area. So we have a real need here to go in and collect more suspended sediment data and bedwell data to support the study and support the models that we're taking on.

And we're also going to be evaluating the basin side impacts to modeling as well.
We want to more effectively manage the river resources in order to support those three functions simultaneously, reconnect the Mississippi River resources to the deltaic plan, nourish and sustain.

We're not just looking at building marsh that's going to be out there today, we're looking at sustainable marsh that's going to be out there over the 50-year period of analysis and beyond that point.

Increase elevations, this is going to be a big objective that I'll touch on a little bit later. That study is keeping up with sea level rise and subsidence.

Adjusting bayside hydrology is really referring to basin widths and depths that support land building. How do we slow the water down? How do we slow the -- keep the fine grade sediments, the silt in the system, and build land?

It's going to be a big challenge part of the study.

So our broad overarching goal for the study is basically just to reconnect the river, to get those resources back out into the deltaic plane where it's needed and to do that in balance
with our current missions of navigation and flood control.

The study objectives get down to business. These are the real specific targets that we're trying to achieve through the study.

The first one is to figure out how much of the resource is there. What's available for restoration?

How much of that resource can we remove from the river without negatively impacting navigation and flood control?

How much can we dredge? How much water and sediment can we remove effectively with diversions?

We want to provide a decision making framework. All of those models and the data and the tools that I just spoke to you earlier, we need to put all of that together and help us make informed decisions in a positive way.

This is probably the most importance objective and it's part of the delta management component of the study, which is to increase -- to achieve a sustainable net positive elevation relative to sea level rise and subsidence.

That's it. With that, I'll hand it over
to Sandy Stiles.

**MS. STILES:**

Good evening! I appreciate you guys taking time out of your business schedules to come here tonight to hear what we have to say. And, more importantly, provide your input. So we're really appreciative of that.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 was basically enacted to allow the public and the agencies to have an input into our planning process prior to us making decisions and to provide input on how those studies would be carried out.

So part of that process is the requirement that there will be an early and open process called scoping, which is the reason why we're here tonight, so that we can get you involved from the very get go of the study and hear what you have to say to help guide the report and the study and the manner that it needs to go.

The NEPA requires that whenever there's a major federal action that the federal agency prepare an environmental impact document. It can be an environmental assessment or an E.I.S., which in this case, that's what we're preparing is an E.I.S. that would disclose the
impacts of the action and that includes natural, human biological impacts.

It's not just purely on a biological. So the schedule for the E.I.S., the Notice of Intent was published March 23rd of this year. We're going through the scoping process right now.

This is the fourth of six scheduled and we would need your comments, if to get it into a scoping report, within 30 days.

The actual scoping period really lasts throughout the study, all the way, you know, until we get to a final E.I.S.

But if you'd like to see your comments and stuff incorporated into the scoping report, we would need you to submit those within 30 days.

The draft E.I.S. is expected in November of 2015 and the final is January 2016.

As I said, the scoping was initiated with a publication in the federal register. We're inviting -- the whole reason why we're here tonight is we want to hear from you.

To guide the study, we need to know what's important to you, what you think is not important. We don't want to waste a lot of
time on issues or in resources that you don't think are important and it'll help us to produce a better study and have a better report.

As I said, there's going to be a scoping report. It's an opportunity. We're going to pull all of the information and the comments received during these scoping meetings and pull them into a document.

And if you're interested in receiving a copy of that report, just let us know and we'll make sure that when it's completed that we'll send it to you.

Now, we're going to start the Q and A session.

MS. MUELLER:

So we recognize that our presentation can be very technical, so the team is going to come on up to the panel, which is your guy's opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

They can respond to your questions. This is different from scoping. During scoping, they cannot respond to your statement or questions. So if you have anything, this would be the time for that.

Sara is behind you. She has a cordless
mic, so just go ahead and raise your hand.

MR. MARIJOVICH:

I'm Byron Marijovich. I'm from Buras. First of all, I'd like to thank you-all.
(Inaudible.)

MS. PRICE:

As part of the hydrodynamic component of the study and the focus on the river. I don't actually have the specifics on which we're collecting information, but beyond that, we will be taking a look at it. Tim, do you have anything to add to that?

MR. TIM:

(Inaudible.)

THE COURT REPORTER:

I can't hear.

MS. PRICE:

Speak louder, Tim.

MR. TIM:

Well, what I'm just trying to say basically is that, as you-all well know, we have worked close to the west side of the river and also some on the east side and I would ask you-all, if you're looking at you know, subsidence.

It's something you-all may want to look
at, and I know it is something that affects our areas and something you may want to look at.

MR. RAGAS:

My name is Ken Ragas. I'm from Buras. How will the dredging that is used affect the saltwater fishing industry?

MS. PRICE:

Was the question how will freshwater become a danger to saltwater fishing? Is that what your question was? I had a little bit of a hard time hearing you.

MR. RAGAS:

Yeah. I'm very familiar with the area in Buras. I've been involved in CWPPRA for 20 years and I am in favor of using pipeline dredge material for restoration and opposed to river diversions.

There are many river diversions on the east bay. That whole area has saltwater estuary to the freshwater estuary. They shut down a million dollar oyster industry.

MS. MUELLER:

Sir?

COURT REPORTER:

Actually, can he come up here? I'm having
a very difficult time in hearing them.

THE COURT REPORTER:

Could you-all hear what he was saying?

BOARD MEMBER:

No.

THE COURT REPORTER:

Okay.

MS. MUELLER:

So we do have a formal scoping session after this where you can -- she can collect for the scoping report, but it’s questions right now?

LCPRA:

Did you-all hear his initial first question?

BOARD MEMBER:

No.

LCPRA:

He's saying the west side of the Mississippi River currently has a thriving saltwater fishery. He wanted to know if our diversions are going to completely divert that to a freshwater fishery?

And he also stated that he would prefer that we use dedicated dredging instead of converting a saltwater fishery to a freshwater
habitat.

THE COURT REPORTER:

How about what?

LCPRA:

He wants to know the cost comparison between dedicated dredging and building a diversion.

BOARD MEMBER:

Mr. Ragas, thank you very much for your comments. We've certainly seen you at a number of these meetings and appreciate your dedication for what we're all talking about here today.

Certainly, I believe what you were probably referring to was some of the larger diversions listed in the state's Master Plan. And, you know, they're some big ones, and absolutely, do those sizes and types of diversions would effect some change.

But I think that if, -- I guess, Number One, we have to weigh that it is the change that might occur if we don't do anything and we know if we don't do anything, we're going to continue to lose lands in Southwest Louisiana.

And we are going to continue to be at risk
for decreasing in storm surges and, you know, ultimately, we'll have another flood. As you said, there's not much wetlands between the barrier islands and river now.

A large part of that is because those wetlands are isolated from the river and I think that, you know, one of the things we want to do with this is refine and investigate further, you know, the things that we're talking about doing with the large diversions in the Master Plan.

So this study, I would say, you know, we're not starting from scratch. I don't think that we're doing anything over, but we're going to start from what we know, the things we proposed and further refine the information related to those diversions to make sure that we're moving ahead appropriately and accurately.

I can tell you that, again, at least in the Master Plan analysis, you know, you had talked about the cost between marsh creation and diversions.

And I don't know those figures off the top of my head, but I do know that out of the $50 million dollars that was estimated and spent
to accomplish everything that's listed in the Master Plan, about $20 million of that was strictly marsh creation.

The number of diversions that you saw listed on the Master Plan, I think were at the cost of about $4 million dollars.

So we're talking five times as much for marsh creation as we are for freshwater and sediment diversion, primarily sediment diversions listed in the Master Plan, and I can get you the information on agencies versus cost and so forth.

I don't know that off the top of my head. All that is listed in the Master Plan. Thank you.

PUBLIC MEMBER:

My name is Fred Toups. I want to know is there any plan on rebuilding the beach at Shell Island?

BOARD MEMBER:

I'm sorry? I couldn't hear your question.

LCPRA:

Rebuilding the beach at Shell Island.

THE COURT REPORTER:

A what?

LCPRA:
Rebuilding the beach at Shell Island.

BOARD MEMBER:

Will we rebuild the beach? Yeah. At this point, nothing's been finalized and determined at this point.

BOARD MEMBER:

Yeah. So; yes. There are plans to rebuild Shell Island. Shell Island is one of them on the Shoreline Project, which is one of the near-term projects identified for -- within this program. So, yes.

BOARD MEMBER:

There's currently -- We're designing a Shell Island restoration project. So yeah, that is in the works. We just have to wait for that funding to go through. Yes, sir. So that's currently under design right now.

THE COURT REPORTER:

I'm having a hard time even hearing you on the mic up there.

MS. MUELLER:

Really?

THE COURT REPORTER:

All -- yeah. Yeah, it's very difficult.

PUBLIC MEMBER:

Also, you-all need to think about is
setting up a diversion the locks.

MS. MUELLER:

Can you hear?

THE COURT REPORTER:

No. He's saying --

PUBLIC MEMBER:

I brought that up at the meeting before Katrina. I brought that up.

THE COURT REPORTER:

Actually, let me move my table.

MS. MUELLER:

Can I quickly intercept? Is this maybe more appropriate to capture in the scoping comment?

BOARD MEMBER:

Yeah. I was going to interject that, you know, we really have, for the past several minutes, been more comments than question, which is kind of -- we've been doing a Q & A session. If you want your comments to get captured, we -

PUBLIC MEMBER:

Before you do it, I have one more question here. All right. Now, this study is not going to change anything in the Master Plan; correct? Even though the Master Plan has not been
adopted yet by the legislature, I know it's an up or down vote.

BOARD MEMBER:

No; correct.

PUBLIC MEMBER:

For what the Master Plan stands for now? So there's no consideration of even studying smaller diversions? Just the larger diversions; correct?

BOARD MEMBER:

No, there's the consideration for both.

PUBLIC MEMBER:

There is a consideration for both?

BOARD MEMBER:

Yes, but this study is not, and then I could be out of turn, but this --

PUBLIC MEMBER:

It was one of the slides, is studying large scale diversions?

BOARD MEMBER:

This study is not going to change the 2012 Master Plan; right.

PUBLIC MEMBER:

Okay.

BOARD MEMBER:
The update in probably about five years from now.

PUBLIC MEMBER:

But the study will look at it, the effects of the smaller diversions, not just the larger diversions?

MS. SANDERS:

Yes. And that's what I meant -- the 50,000 cfs that's stated in the 2004 report, we're going to look above and below the 50,000.

PUBLIC MEMBER:

Okay. All right. Great.

MS. SANDERS:

It was just a target. Yeah.

PUBLIC MEMBER:

Somebody help me here remember. When was Caenarvon opened?

MS. SANDERS:

'91.

PUBLIC MEMBER:

Okay. A lot of the slides we looked at in the beginning, you were reading the slides at that time, the lack of information and we need more information on this. Are we not just going back over doing the same studies? Surely, these studies were done
before Caenarvon was constructed?

**MS. SANDERS:**

Well, I think we've learned a lot since Caenarvon was built. Now, there have been some specific pulping scenarios that have been done at Caenarvon and information was collected there.

But so far, it's shown a disproportionate effect of the freshwater on the marsh health there, like the freshwater and the effect on salinities and how that's affected the marsh.

So we have more work to do to understand those processes more.

We're understanding the importance of that as time has passed and as that diversion in Davis Pond has been operating, we're seeing that we have more work to do.

**BOARD MEMBER:**

And I believe we've never done a comprehensive look before. You know, all the other time we've done something, it's been right in the vicinity of wherever the project went.

And I think this project is going to build that hydraulic model that's going to be able to look at all of the diversions on the river
everywhere and see where the best place to get the sediment from and that's how can do that.

**BOARD MEMBER:**

I'm sorry. I was just going to add to what Darrell said. That's from sort of a riverside impact perspective.

So we have done a lot of work and we've learned a lot from a bay side perspective, but we don't know very much about is what's going on in the river, what's available to us and what happens, you know, to the river if we build a bunch of the large diversions that we've talked about in the Master Plan.

**PUBLIC MEMBER:**

And unfortunately, we've learned a lot of the ineffectiveness of Carnarvon and Davis Pond. It's not doing what it was proposed to have done. Just like the freshwater diversions at West Point a la Hache.

**BOARD MEMBER:**

Well, those were designed to maintain certain salinity radiance for wildlife fishery.

**PUBLIC MEMBER:**

We're actually looking at diversions now to help build land, when these other costs for
sediment diversions.

We've got a Myrtle Grove Project that's actually looking at a dedicated dredging component that's going to be with it.

PUBLIC MEMBER:

How can we use the river better than what we have? The larger diversions are actually going to help us.

BOARD MEMBER:

But then the large scale, long-term things that we can't dredge our way out of where we are right now, but these long-term projects of how we can use the river is what we're trying to capture.

BOARD MEMBER:

If I could interrupt you one second. She's got to have it down there. We're not going to have it captured.

PUBLIC MEMBER:


BOARD MEMBER:

It's not going to count as a public meeting if she can't hear it and record it, so we're going to need to speak up so she's got it down there or we're going to have to move you to the middle or something.
Since we decided to change format.

BOARD MEMBER:

Loudly and clearly and one at a time, please.

MS. MUELLER:

What we can do is capture the formal scoping comments that's right now with the microphone and then we can all talk about questions.

BOARD MEMBER:

We'll stay as long as you guys want us to. Absolutely!
So do we want to pass the mic down and you guys can state --

Just ask your questions in blank order or your comments. And state your name.

MR. THOMAS:

My name is Robert Thomas. I'm from Buras, Louisiana. My statement is that I'm scared to death of these large-scale diversions.

If you come into Myrtle Grove, the Bonnet Carre Spillway and you especially the fisheries on the west side of Plaquemines Parish and unfortunately, there's nothing in the Master Plan that addresses compensating residents, oyster fishermen, seafood dealers.
There's nothing in here about that.
I don't know if it's not scientific yet, I don’t know if a small diversion would work.
And what is the Bonnet Carre Spillway it's been there for 60 years. But you can get where I'm going with that.

MS. STILES:
Thank you.

MR. MARIJOVICH:
My name is Byron Marijovich. I'm from Buras also. I would encourage you-all to listen to some of the feedback from some of the citizens. We’ve gone through a lot of study sessions and we ain’t got no where.

I would encourage you-all to look into some of the parish we made as far as low lined dredging and I’ve given most of you my card and some of the information for the parish as far as some of the proposals.

I also encourage you again to look at the smaller natural diversions as far as like meeting across the river that you might want to look at and see what their cause or what their human thoughts are.

I feel like something like that.
MS. STILES:

Okay. Any other statements or questions?

PUBLIC MEMBER:

Is there any time line on Shell Island or it's still in the talk stages?

This is off the Record. I just wanted to get an idea of what's going on.

MS. MUELLER:

You can ask your questions after the formal scoping session is finished.

PUBLIC MEMBER:

I appreciate it.

MS. MUELLER:

Did anyone else have any questions or comments? Oh, comments period. Sorry.

MR. THOMAS:

I wanted to clear something up that was said before. Well, this is reverting back to your question and answer period, if that's okay.

When Ken asked you the cost analysis between the diversions and the direct sediment costs. I'm not sure if you-all connected on exactly what he was saying.

The cost of a yard of material through diversion versus the cost of a yard of material
through the pipeline. I don't know if you-all were together, but I would love to see that figure also.

**MS. STILES:**

Maybe we can address that in the future.

**MR. THOMAS:**

Sure. Absolutely.

**MS. MUELLER:**

If you have comments and would like to submit comments, verbal or written comments are accepted tonight and by the following means: Email, [LCA-MRHDM@usace.army.mil](mailto:LCA-MRHDM@usace.army.mil), or letters postmarked no later than May 4, 2012.

(The Meeting was concluded at 7:33 p.m.)
I, Tara Torres, Certified Court Reporter, in and for the State of Louisiana, the officer, as defined in Rule 28 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and/or Article 1434(b) of the Louisiana Code of Civil Procedure, before whom this sworn testimony was taken, do hereby state on the Record:

That due to the interaction in the spontaneous discourse of this proceeding, dashes (--) have been used to indicate pauses, changes in thought, and/or talkovers; that same is the proper method for a Court Reporter's transcription of proceeding, and that the dashes (--) do not indicate that words or phrases have been left out of this transcript;

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Tara Torres, CCR  
Certified Court Reporter

CERTIFICATE

This certification is valid only for a transcript accompanied by my original signature and original raised seal on this page.

That this testimony was reported by me in the Stenomask method (voice-writing), was prepared and transcribed by me or under my personal direction and supervision, and is a true and correct transcript to the best of my ability and understanding;
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Tara Torres (#22012)
Certified Court Reporter