

**DWH Trustee Council
10/4/21 Conference Call Summary**

Attendees:

TX	AL	DOI	USDA
Robin Riechers	Chris Blankenship	Mary Josie Blanchard	Ron Howard
James Murphy	Bethany Kraft	Nanciann Regalado	Tanya Culbert
	Jane Calamusa	Kelly Guilbeau	
	Emily Seale		
LA	Seth Newton		EPA
Beth Golden	Kelly Swindle	NOAA	Mary Kay Lynch
Maury Chatellier	Amy Hunter	Chris Doley	Treda Grayson
Jon Wiebe		Rachel Sweeney	Gale Bonnano
	FL	Stephen Heverly	Tim Landers
MS	Gareth Leonard	Aileen Smith	
Bradley Ennis	Amy Raker	Natalie Mathews	LAT
Chris Wells	Nadia Martin		Holly Herod

Discussion Item 1: Report Outs

- a. **LA TIG:** The LA TIG is still working on the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion Plan. The TIG is reviewing and responding to public comments and anticipates releasing a final plan in December. Work on Restoration Plan 8 is in progress and the reasonable range of alternatives has been determined. The LA TIG anticipates releasing a draft plan for public comment in November. Hurricane Ida caused significant impacts to Louisiana, including several restoration projects that were in progress. The West Grand Terre Beach Nourishment and Stabilization project (from Restoration Plan 6) had significant adverse impacts. The project team will be doing surveys to see how much material is remaining and will work on getting the dredge back into place. Fortunately, project costs were lower than anticipated so the Trustees are optimistic that there is enough left in the construction budget to re-do much of the work. The LA Trustees also recently finalized the LA TIG Monitoring and Adaptive Management strategy document. The document is an overarching document outlining how to select, scope, and fund MAM activities. The LA TIG annual meeting was postponed due to Hurricane. Ida, and is now scheduled for October 27 at 6 central.

- b. **RW TIG:** The RW TIG released their first restoration plan on September 27. The TIG is currently in the process of mapping out implementation plans and funding resolutions. Due to time sensitivities the TIG is working on a separate implementation and funding plan for the Pilot Town component of the Conservation and Enhancement of Nesting and Foraging Habitat for Birds project. The remaining implementation plans and funding resolutions are being drafted and then will be circulated for review and signature. There is an ongoing Monitoring and Adaptive Management activity tied to colonial waterbird

nesting surveys. Actions include analyzing previously completed aerial surveys and completing new surveys. Several deliverables on that project are already in.

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

Discussion Item 2: Updates

- a. Cross-TIG MAM: On the last call it was announced that the Monitoring and Adaptive Management Manual is wrapping up its updates. The Cross-TIG MAM is finalizing edits based on Trustee review. They anticipate providing an updated manual to the TC for review and approval ahead of the November TC call. On that call they anticipate discussions and initial feedback. The Cross-TIG MAM will ask for approval of the updated manual on the December call. There will also be a draft web story for review/approval.
- b. SharePoint Update: NOAA is in the process of migrating the current SharePoint site into the cloud. This will bring more stability and features to the platform. Coordination with the LAT and the TIGs regarding schedule, timing, and needs is ongoing. More information and details will be circulated in the coming weeks. The target is to complete the migration by the end of the calendar year.

Discussion Item 3: LAT Items

- a. Discussion:
 - 5-Year Programmatic Review – The fatal flaw draft was circulated on August 30 and comments were requested by October 1. The group discussed initial comments with the draft. There were several substantial edits that the group is working on updating including funding numbers for the Wetlands, Coastal, Nearshore Habitats and Federal Lands Restoration Types and the development of more detailed strategic frameworks and MAM sections for the Regionwide TIG pages. The group discussed the existing style guide including the decision to not use the PDARP acronym and other phrases. Those style decisions are in line with the current style on the Trustees’ website. There was a demonstration of the draft storymap interactive factsheet.
 - Action Items: The heavily revised sections will be circulated to the commentors to make sure the edits address their comments. The full set of collated comments will be circulated to the TC.

- Annual Reporting for 2021 – Emails with training dates and other milestones will be out in the next few weeks. The LAT encourages Trustees to close out as many projects as possible before the end of the calendar year. DIVER is open now for any routine updates that staff would like to enter. Key dates include:
 - January 2, 2022: The official reporting period opens
 - April 15, 2022: Deadline to complete Trustee review
 - April 20, 2022: Deadline to complete TIG review
 - May 31, 2022: Release to the public
- Admin Funding Request – The consent decree requires that the Trustees develop and adopt a budget for the administrative costs for the upcoming calendar year. This request will be distributed via email.
- Action Item: The LAT will circulate the administrative funding request via email this month. Approval of the budget will be requested on the November TC call.

Other Business

- a. Vice Chair Rotation – Mary Josie Blanchard (DOI) took over the vice chair position starting on October 1.
- b. Please review the call notes from this year.
- c. The next regularly scheduled TC call is on Monday, November 1.

**DWH Trustee Council
11/1/21 Conference Call Summary**

Attendees:

TX	AL	DOI	USDA
James Murphy	Chris Blankenship	Mary Josie Blanchard	Ron Howard
	Amy Hunter		Tanya Culbert
LA	Kelly Swindle	NOAA	
Maury Chatellier	Emily Seale	Chris Doley	EPA
	Bethany Kraft	Rachel Sweeney	Mary Kay Lynch
MS	Jane Calamusa	Mike Peccini	Gale Bonanno
Bradley Ennis		Melissa Carle	Tim Landers
	FL	Stephen Heverly	Treda Grayson
	Gareth Leonard		
	Emily Mazur		
	Rachel Schmalfuss		LAT
			Holly Herod

Discussion Item 1: Report Outs

- a. AL TIG: The AL TIG has updates on a number of projects that are currently in implementation.
 - o The AL TIG is working on a supplemental environmental assessment for the AL TIG RPII/EA. The Weeks Bay Land Acquisition (Harrod Tract) project will be canceled and the funding would be reallocated for the acquisition of the nearby Lloyd Tract.
 - o The TIG is also working on acquiring the Pilot Town property on Fort Morgan for inclusion in Bon Secour wildlife refuge via transferring the deed to DOI. The 99-acre parcel includes several habitat types.
 - o The Lower Perdido Islands Restoration Phase I project to complete E&D for three islands in the lower Perdido Bay is underway. The 30% design plans and a management plan are currently being drafted.

The AL TIG worked with NOAA and ADCNR to finalize the coastal Alabama Coastal Oyster Restoration Plan. The document describes the existing oyster resources and presents a comprehensive long-term plan to guide future oyster restoration efforts. This will serve as a guidance document for future oyster restoration in Alabama. The AL TIG will be holding their annual virtual meeting on December 9. The invitation will be circulated in the coming weeks.

- b. FL TIG: The FL DEP is starting construction on three projects: Pensacola Bay Living Shoreline (construction of breakwaters) as well as Bald Point and Deer Lake State parks. The FL TIG is in the process of closing out three early restoration projects: Apalachicola River Wildlife and Environmental Area Fishing and Wildlife Viewing Access Improvements; Strategically Provided Boat Access Along Florida's Coast; and Perdido Key Dune Restoration Project. In June the FL TIG approved its second restoration plan which approved 18 projects for a total of \$62 million. The implementation plans are nearly all approved and implementation will start as soon as environmental consultations are complete. The FL TIG will hold its annual meeting on December 7 at 5 pm eastern. The invitation will be circulated to Trustee Council for those wishing to join.

The TX and OO TIGs will give their report outs on the next TC call.

Discussion Item 2: Updates

- a. Cross-TIG MAM: The Cross-TIG MAM is nearing the completion of updates to the Monitoring and Adaptive Management Manual. The team walked through a history of prior MAM Manual releases. The latest update would flesh out the remaining living coastal and marine resources (birds, marine mammals, sea turtles, mesophotic and deep benthic, fish and water column invertebrates). The revisions also streamline some sections of text and update monitoring parameter names and structure for consistency with DIVER. The revised manual will be circulated to the TC by November 5. The Cross-TIG MAM is also working on refining the MAM Report and MAM template, documenting procedures for the programmatic review, continuing discussion on unknown conditions and adaptive management, and outlining potential frameworks for programmatic monitoring.
- b. Action Item: The TC will receive the updated MAM manual for review (and the new attachment E) by November 5. TC approval to release the revised MAM manual will be requested during the December 6 TC call.

Discussion Item 3: Sharepoint Update

- a. Sharepoint Update: The update for the TC was attached to the agenda. The Sharepoint migration/update is on track. These are needed changes that will make the system work better for everyone. NOAA is reaching out to all the TIGs to request a POC for migration and testing. This will ensure a smooth transition and workflow for the TIGs. If you have questions contact Mike P or Nancy W.

Discussion Item 4: LAT Items

a. Discussion:

- 5-Year Programmatic Review – The programmatic review is on track for a public release on November 9 along with the storymap and website landing page. Thank you for your approval on the landing page and story text. The small group is reviewing the storymap “snippets” this week. These sections are pulled from the PDF with the exception of some small connector language. TC approval was requested via resolution TC-2021-003. The small group will next meet on November 17 to discuss lessons learned and program recommendations for TC consideration.
- Action Items: Approval on resolution TC-2021-003 is requested by COB on November 5.
- Admin Funding Request – The funding estimate was attached to the call agenda.
- Decision: AL, FL, MS, LA, TX, DOI, NOAA, USDA, and EPA approve the administrative oversight comprehensive budget estimate for 2022.
- Project Closeout – A decision memo was attached to the call agenda. Some project closeout information was added to the revised SOP. One question for the group’s consideration is the process to close out projects mid-cycle (or rather, not in a designated month). If projects were to be reported mid-cycle, then the TC would not have the chance to review it unless the process is adjusted. Several options are outlined in the memo. The group had initial discussions on the options outlined in the memo. The idea is that no matter when projects are closed out, they would appear in the next annual financial report.
- Action Item: Additional discussion will take place on a future call.

Other Business

- a. Please review the call notes from this year.
- b. The next regularly scheduled TC call is on Monday, December 6.

**DWH Trustee Council
12/6/21 Conference Call Summary**

Attendees:

TX	AL	DOI	USDA
James Murphy	Chris Blankenship	Michelle Eversen	Ron Howard
Robin Riechers	Amy Hunter		Jon Morton
	Emily Seale	NOAA	
LA	Bethany Kraft	Chris Doley	EPA
Maury Chatellier	Jane Calamusa	Aileen Smith	Mary Kay Lynch
		Mike Peccini	Gale Bonanno
MS	FL	Melissa Carle	Treda Grayson
Valerie Alley	Lisa Robertson	Natalie Matthews	Tim Landers
	Nadia Martin	Laurie Rounds	
			LAT
			Holly Herod

Discussion Item 1: Report Outs

- a. **TX TIG:** The TX TIG held a successful annual meeting last week via webinar. The TX TIG has a number of projects that are currently under construction including the Dickinson Bay Bird Island #2, the Bahia Hydrologic Restoration (construction is expected to be completed in 2022), Galveston Island State Park, and Marsh Restoration at Pierce Marsh. Construction for the Beach and Dune Restoration at McFaddin Beach is expected to begin in 2022.

The TX TIG is also working on Restoration Plan 2 which will likely be released in March 2022 and will include a public webinar along with its release.

- b. **OO TIG:** The OO TIG held their annual meeting on October 28 and had over 100 people in attendance. That webinar also had a special session on Mesophotic Deep Benthic Communities (MDBC) projects. The information is available on the Trustee’s website.

The OO TIG is also screening project ideas for Restoration Plan 3 which will focus on birds and sturgeon. An update will be provided to the TC and the other TIGs once the reasonable range has been determined in early 2022. The draft restoration plan is expected to be released to the public in summer 2022.

The OO TIG is also working on Monitoring and Adaptive Management (MAM), and is developing an annual process to select MAM activities that support their MAM priorities and objectives.

Another TIG effort is developing a long-term strategy for Fish and Invertebrates. That will help prioritize future work. The strategy team completed a species prioritization

process and identified key threats and stressors for restoration priorities. The strategy will likely be released in the spring and it will be shared with the TIG before its public release.

MDBC projects have conducted several stakeholder workshops. A large effort with 60 experts was completed in October which identified spatial priorities for MBDC work. There will be a webinar on Friday that shares the results from that effort and the results can be shared with TC and TIG members if interested.

Additional OO TIG Project Updates:

- **Developing Methods to Observe Sea Turtle Interactions in the Gulf of Mexico Menhaden Purse Seine Fishery** - The first phase of this project is to develop an effective observer methodology for the Gulf of Mexico menhaden purse seine fishery. In October the project completed a “proof of concept” phase to evaluate and test methodologies. With the help of contractors at Saltwater Inc. and industry partners at Westbank Fishing, Trustees tested three methods during fishery operations: human observers, cameras mounted on boats, and drones. The NOAA/Industry steering committee is evaluating the results and will determine which methods are feasible to move into the 1-2 year pilot phase of the project to observe the fishery throughout the April–November fishing season.
- **OO Sea Turtle Small Bar Spaced TED** - The first meeting of the project’s Stakeholder Working Group, which includes a representative from each of the Gulf states, is planned for December 14. A second Stakeholder Workgroup meeting to obtain feedback on anticipated TED designs is being planned for the Spring. A webstory about meetings and details will be published to share information about the workgroup meeting. The project also expects to begin broader outreach efforts to let fishermen know about the project in the Spring during a series of outreach events throughout the Gulf and details about those meetings will be shared when available. The first year of TED testing is planned for summer 2022.
- **OO Better BRDs Project** - On November 4, the Better Bycatch Reduction Devices project team met for the first time with its stakeholder working group. This group of industry stakeholders will be providing feedback regarding the development of new, better BRDs for use in the shrimp fishery. NOAA and project partners from Louisiana and Texas Sea Grants met with the working group virtually and in-person in Galveston, Texas. Project team members also led a training session for Sea Grant staff on bycatch reduction devices and performed dockside outreach in Texas. Outreach activities and gear testing will continue in 2022.
- **OO Barotrauma Reduction Project** – The project is known as “Return ‘Em Right” and publicly launched in September with its first phase to provide training and release gear to the for-hire sector. Since the launch, 90,000 unique individuals have seen Return ‘Em Right social media content and an article published in

Florida Sportsman magazine has raised the profile of the project. Currently, 72 for-hire anglers have taken the training (goal is 300 for Phase 1), which includes signing a pledge to utilize best practices, and have been shipped a package of descending gear. The project is planning its Phase 2 launch in the Spring. The team will continue to target for-hire anglers to participate in the project and build the Return 'Em Right brand by developing digital assets (videos/photos) and identifying media opportunities to raise awareness of the project. Additionally, there will be an emphasis on developing a marketing strategy that effectively targets the private angling community in Florida and Alabama, where the project will focus its Phase 2 launch. The project also held a “Best Release Practices” workshop in St. Petersburg, Florida on December 1-2 with attendees from the angling community and fisheries management field.

- **OO Marine Mammal Noise Reduction** - This 6-year project is intended to reduce the anthropogenic noise exposure to cetaceans in priority areas of the Gulf of Mexico. NOAA, working with NFWF, selected a proposal from an experienced team led by the California Ocean Alliance with members including FIU, Naval Postgraduate School and Duke to develop a risk assessment to identify priority areas and an industry outreach plan. The agreement with NFWF goes through April 2023. Work also continues to analyze and collect additional acoustic data across the Gulf of Mexico.

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

Discussion Item 2: Updates

- a. Cross-TIG MAM: The GOMCON conference is taking place in early 2022. In the past the Cross-TIG MAM has participated in similar conference and has submitted an abstract. The Cross-TIG MAM submitted an abstract for this year’s conference. If the abstract is accepted, it will be circulated to the Trustee Council for review and approval. All information used in the conference would be publicly available.

The MAM Manual was circulated in early November for TC review. No edits have been received so far and the Cross TIG MAM is seeking approval of the revised document.

- b. Decision: NOAA, DOI, USDA, EPA, AL, LA, MS, FL, TX approve the updates and release of the MAM manual and webstory.

Discussion Item 3: Sharepoint Update

- a. Sharepoint Update: The Sharepoint update is on track and the phased migrations will start in January. The Sharepoint team will continue to work with the TIGs regarding the details of the transition. User trainings will start next week and include a pre-recorded session that folks can review at their convenience. There will be additional training for

site content managers. There will also be some log-in testing to ensure that everybody can access the new platform. Users are encouraged to test their log-in prior to the migration.

Discussion Item 4: LAT Items

a. Discussion:

- 5-Year Programmatic Review – The programmatic review was released on November 9. The small group met in mid-November to have an after-action review. There are a few questions for the TC to weigh in on regarding strategy and the path forward for future reviews. Once the Cross-TIG MAM does a similar effort both sets of recommendations will be collated for TC consideration.
- TC Distribution List – Everybody on this call received an email with the agenda.
- Action Item: Please look at that email and review the list of attendees. Contact TIG support if you have any updates for your agency contact.
- Project Closeout – This was discussed briefly on last month’s call. The issue is that when there’s a project that is ready to close out “off cycle” or between the end of May and December 31, there is now a mechanism to do that in DIVER and eliminate the need for extra reporting. The question for the TC is whether the TC wants to approve these “off-cycle” reports or if the Trustee and TIG review is all that is necessary. The group discussed the options.
- Decision: The TC agrees that Trustee and TIG review is all that is needed for “off cycle” project closeout.
- Action Item: The LAT will finalize the guidance document and will post it on Sharepoint.

Other Business

- a. Please review the call notes from this year.
- b. The next regularly scheduled TC call is on Monday, January 3 or 10. The TC next call will be on January 10.