



LaNERR Site Development Committee

Meeting #4

Session 1: Tuesday, March 30, 2021 (9:00 – 10:30 am)

Session 2: Wednesday, March 31, 2021 (1:00 – 2:30 pm)

Attendees

SDC Members - Session 1: Abigail Bockus, LUMCON; Andy Fischer, LDWF; Carol Wilson, LSU; Cheston Hill, OSL; Chip McGimsey, CRT; Craig Colten, LSU; Honora Buras, CPRA; Jill Trepanier, LSU; Justin Lemoine, CRT; Martin O'Connell, UNO; Matthew Hiatt, LSU; Nathan Corley, LDOE; Navid Jafari, LSU; Pat Arnould, GOIA; Robert Mahon, UNO; Sara Krupa, LDNR; Scott Hemmerling, WI; Seth Blicht, TNC; Thomas Gresham, LDOE; Tracy Quirk, LSU; Kevin Ringelman, LSU; John Nyman, LSU; Beth Stauffer, ULL; James Nelson, ULL; Kyle Piller, SELU; Greg Steyer, USGS; Danielle Keller, USACE; Kenny Ribbeck, LDWF; Erik Johnson, Audubon; David Muth, NWF; Michael Pasquier, LSU; Jennifer Hill, Louisiana Tech; Brian Roberts, LUMCON

Site Development Committee (SDC) Members - Session 2: Alex Kolker, LUMCON; Claire Anderson, Ripple Effect; Dean Blanchard, BTNEP; Erin Cox, UNO; Gina Campo, OCD; Julie Whitbeck, NPS; Maida Owens, CRT; Robert Thomas, Loyola; Dinah Maygarden, UNO; Kacie Wright, USGS; Robert Moreau, SELU; Kristi Trail, PC; David Podgorski, UNO; Honora Buras, CPRA; Kenny Ribbeck, LDWF; Mike Carloss, DU; Patty Ferguson Bohnee, ASU; Ron Boustany, NRCS; Brian Gautreau, LSU AgCenter; Corey Miller, CRCL; Rebecca Triche, LWF; Mark Davis, Tulane; Mark Tobler, Loyola; Donata Henry, Tulane; Alternates: Ridgely Myers, PC; Gary Shaffer, SELU

Designation Leadership Team (DLT): Robert Twilley, LA Sea Grant; LaTosha Mullins, LA Sea Grant; Morgan Crutcher, GOCA; Kristin Ransom, NOAA

Royal Engineers & Consultants (LA Sea Grant Support): Kirk Rhinehart, Alaina Grace, Mandy Green

SDC Members Unable to Attend: Aimee Hollander, NSU; Andy Dolan, USFWS; Bryan Piazza, TNC; Cindy Brown, LTL; Emad Habib, ULL; John Tirpak, USFWS; Ken Krauss, USGS; Mark Kulp, UNO; Megan La Peyre, USGS; Mitchell Aleshire, CRT; Morgan Kelly, LSU; Shirell Parfait-Dardar, GCDBCC; Natalie Snider, EDF; Gary Lafleur, NSU; Giovanna McClenachan, NSU; Liz Skilton, ULL; Chuck Hunter, USFWS; Illya Tietzel, UNO; Jonathan Foret, SLWDC; Malay Ghose Hajra, UNO; Simone Maloz, RoR; Joey Breaux, LDAF; Quenton Fontenot, NSU; Heather Stone, ULL

Summary

Welcome

The key objectives of the meeting were to provide an overview of Site Development Committee (SDC) member voting on the six Estuarine Zones, discuss plans to move from the first to second draft of the Site Selection Criteria and the charge to the Site Criteria Subcommittee, review example candidate sites



(core and buffer areas), and discuss next steps for formalizing Proposal Teams and developing Phase I Candidate Site Proposals.

Site Development Committee Voting Results in Six Estuarine Zones

An overview was provided of the voting results in the six Estuarine Zones. As a result of the preliminary screening criteria used and 53 SDC member votes, the Pontchartrain, Barataria, and Atchafalaya Estuarine Zones were nominated for further consideration for developing Candidate Site Proposals.

Site Selection Criteria and Site Criteria Subcommittee

An overview was provided of the NOAA guidelines to establish a LaNERR site, including discussion of several commonly used NERR-related definitions (i.e., unique environment, core and buffer areas, and integrity). The parallel process of modifying NOAA Site Selection Criteria while Proposal Teams begin drafting Preliminary Candidate Site Proposals was discussed. It was noted that modifications are not intended to represent a wholesale revision of the criteria but rather to modify the criteria to make them applicable to coastal Louisiana (if they are not applicable as they are).

A preliminary list of SDC members that volunteered to serve on the Site Criteria Subcommittee was presented, along with a brief overview of their charge to help move from the first to second draft of the Site Selection Criteria for use in screening Candidate Site Proposals. To aid in workflow, members of the Site Criteria Subcommittee were asked to volunteer to serve as a Chair or Co-chair. An email will be sent to members of the Site Criteria Subcommittee with instructions on how to access the shared / collaborative working site through OneDrive / SharePoint as well as a link for scheduling two working meetings before April 30, 2021. The second draft Site Selection Criteria are due to the Designation Leadership Team (DLT) by April 30, 2021.

The SDC was reminded that NOAA must review and approve Site Selection Criteria before they can be used to screen and score final Candidate Site Proposals. At this time, the DLT anticipates that the third draft of the Site Selection Criteria will be sent to NOAA for review/approval in early June 2021. Last, a brief overview was given of the Site Selection Criteria worksheet that subcommittee members will be asked to use to document suggested modifications to the criteria.

Proposal Teams

A preliminary list of SDC members who have volunteered to serve as a Team Lead, Co-lead, Member, or Consultant for a Proposal Team in the Pontchartrain, Barataria, and Atchafalaya Estuarine Zones was presented. An overview of content and format needed for Phase 1 Candidate Site Proposals was presented, and it was noted that Phase I proposals are due to the DLT by April 30, 2021. Proposal Team leads are expected to present their Phase I proposal to the full SDC during SDC Meeting #5 (anticipated to be scheduled in early May).

A brief overview was given regarding support the DLT can provide (e.g., establish a collaborative / shared workspace, make data and files needed for mapping and proposal development available, schedule a 'Q&A' meeting, etc.); however, it was noted that Proposal Teams will largely be expected to 'self-organize' under a team chair or co-chairs. Additional information and guidance are forthcoming. SDC members can submit questions to deltanerr@lsu.edu.



Developing Phase I Candidate Site Proposals

Maps of example candidate sites, including core and buffer areas were presented along with a high-level overview of NOAA's four primary topics related to NERR designation. Phase I Candidate Site proposals are intended to assist with team member identification and organization as well as identifying areas of interest (e.g., core and buffer areas) and outlining a plan for proposal development. It was recommended that Proposal Team members look at other NERRs, such as Weeks Bay NERR in Alabama or Mission-Aransas NERR in Texas to get an idea of how core and buffer areas are designated. The SeaGrant LaNERR website (<https://www.laseagrant.org/deltanerr/>) can be used as a resource for locating information on other NERRs.

Phase I Candidate Site Proposals will go to the Screening Committee (not to screen proposals out but to provide feedback to Proposal Teams). The second draft of the Site Selection Criteria will be made available to Proposal Teams as they begin developing their Phase II Candidate Site Proposals. Additional details are forthcoming to both the Proposal Teams and to the Screening Committee.

The session was opened for discussion, and key points raised are provided below:

- Information provided to SDC members is considered open and available for sharing with non-SDC members who are asked to participate on Proposal Teams.
- Guidance to Proposal Teams regarding MOUs, cooperative endeavors, etc.
 - The DLT is planning to formalize a Gulf NERRs Advisory Panel to provide guidance regarding their experience with MOUs, cooperative endeavors, day-to-day activities, etc. from other NERRS, especially regarding public lands. The DLT will provide additional guidance to the Proposal Teams, which may be in the form of example proposal templates and nomination package templates that have been submitted to NOAA from other NERRs and an informational presentation.
 - Proposal Teams were reminded that every NERR is unique; contracting and agreements can raise unexpected issues, but experience from other NERRs can provide general information regarding management responsibilities.
- Phases of Proposal development and associated requirements
 - Proposal Teams do not need to obtain fiscal commitments or transfer of land ownership at this phase of proposal development, but it is important to indicate state ownership of potential core areas in the Phase I Candidate Site Proposals. It may also be beneficial to open dialogue with agencies that might serve as the reserve's managing entity.
 - The importance of demonstrating support for Candidate Sites in proposals was noted. Having support, advocates, and identifying a potential managing entity will make a stronger case for NERR proposals to move through the screening process. All letters of support would be welcomed as part of a proposal, this could include form letters, formal documentation, etc. as they show engagement and ownership of the community.
 - SDC members were reminded that the LaNERR process is currently in the 'nomination' phase; following the nomination of one site to NOAA for approval, the process would enter the 'designation' phase, which requires an EIS and Management Plan. It is through the process of developing those documents that formal MOUs and cooperative agreements are established; however, it is important to begin thinking about this now and begin reaching out to interested parties.



- Phases of Proposal screening
 - Proposals will go to the Screening Subcommittee for review and scoring. This subcommittee will use the Site Selection Criteria to review proposals at each phase. The DLT anticipates that feedback to Proposal Teams will be in the form of a single report – one report for each phase (Phase I, Phase II, and Final proposal) from the Screening Subcommittee.
 - Phase I proposal screening will be much more generic than later phases (i.e., review and feedback rather than scoring).
 - Phase II proposals will have more depth and content. During screening of Phase II proposals, it is possible that one or more proposals may be screened out from further consideration. The remaining proposals will proceed to the Final Proposal phase.
 - The SDC was reminded that it would be a conflict of interest to serve on both the Screening Subcommittee and on a Proposal Team.
- Town Halls
 - Presentations will need to be customized for Town Halls; they may not be in the same format or include the same content as those provided to the DLT or SDC. There will be time for Proposal Teams to prepare for Town Halls.
 - Soliciting feedback during Town Hall events is very important, as this is a key way to capture stakeholder feedback. The DLT will likely provide a standardized presentation template to ensure equity in type and extent of content presented across teams. Feedback from Town Halls may be in the form of surveys, comment cards, etc. and will be used to gauge the level of community enthusiasm.
 - The DLT will provide additional guidance on how to prepare for Town Halls.

Workplan and Schedule

The LaNERR workflow and schedule was reviewed.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

The SDC Meeting #4 recordings and a copy of the presentation will be posted to the SDC site, as will the revised workplan and schedule. An email will be sent to schedule SDC Meeting #5 (anticipated for early May). Meeting #5 will focus on Phase I Candidate Site presentations from Proposal Teams and review of suggested edits to the NOAA Site Selection Criteria.

Separate emails will be provided to Site Criteria Subcommittee and Proposal Team members with next steps for their respective tasks.