



2018 LISTENING TOUR: REGION 3

BUILDING ON REGIONAL INPUT

The Louisiana Watershed Initiative hosted a Statewide Listening Tour in 2018 with more than 30 meetings held throughout the state's eight watershed regions. This document outlines input provided by Region 3 stakeholders, which informed early LWI efforts and guides the program today.

WHAT WE HEARD FROM TECHNICAL PROFESSIONALS

ACADEMIA

- Academic institutions have access to unique sources of data and knowledge of the local environment.
- Academic tools, research and resources can drive collaboration among larger areas or organizations.
- Academia can help build and clarify messages, allowing the region to communicate in unison about flood mitigation priorities or funding needs.

DATA

- Making datasets open by default can support current and future project planning and execution.
- Understanding where water comes from and how it will impact an area before rainfall occurs can aid in mitigation efforts.
- Data collection and management efforts need to include real-time data, which is a challenge in rural areas with limited capacity.
- The region is open to providing data to the state but needs the process to be reciprocal.
- Standardizing data as it is collected and added to a data portal would support greater and more efficient collaboration.

MODELING

- Local communities lack resources to gather data or conduct modeling. Some flood maps are as old as 1978.
- Some existing models are based on data that is not specific enough, resulting in flawed modeling and decision-making processes.
- Data gathered with a clear scope and distinct purpose would support layers of modeling, creating a more informed and precise model based on the need.



FUNDING

- Discussions with public and private funding sources, including state or federal project leads, can help communities determine funding priorities and understand what data is needed to inform smaller, yet significant, watershed projects that align with those priorities.
- Federal funding sources have started requiring a resilience component for mitigation projects. Using resilience standards in designing future projects will help garner funding and will be more cost effective in the long run.

WHAT WE HEARD FROM PLANNING, PROJECTS AND POLICY PROFESSIONALS

PLANNING

- Statewide planning efforts should include strategies for reducing flooding over time.
- Statewide planning efforts should allow for watershed-to-watershed coordination.
- Existing local, regional and state plans should be aligned with and integrated into watershed-based planning.
- The state should provide planning standards for communities within multiple watersheds.
- Watershed plans should include public outreach and education components.
- Watershed plans should coordinate with parish hazard mitigation plans and incorporate jurisdictional plans so that all planning efforts are fully aligned.

PROJECTS

WHAT IS BEING DONE NOW?

- Restoring natural stream functions
- Targeting historically impacted areas
- Maintaining current mitigation techniques
- Grouping historically problematic areas to heighten their priority

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE MOVING FORWARD?

- Promote and provide open data to drive collaboration
- Focus on equity in cost-benefit analyses
- Update existing equipment
- Complete stagnant studies (e.g., Project 19)



POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

CURRENT CHALLENGES

- Clarifying liability for flooding throughout multiple parishes or watersheds
- Codifying and institutionalizing working relationships among local, state and federal partners
- Balancing voluntary versus required participation in adhering to building or permitting standards
- Developing policy that is adapted and sensitive to local conditions
- Addressing immediate needs for enforcing compliance with plans and policies
- Getting other states to comply with and align policies that impact communities across state lines

ALTERNATIVES TO CURRENT POLICIES

- Implement a statewide zero-impact policy or other policies that are consistent from parish to parish
- Create a regional authority to handle mediation between parishes or municipalities
- Prepare drainage impact statements reviewed at the regional level to guide development decisions
- Establish a regional body with legislative authority and capacity to coordinate among watershed stakeholders
- Host interstate summits and partnerships to address shared challenges across state lines