



2018 LISTENING TOUR: REGION 6

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 6 stakeholders, which informed early LWI efforts and guides the program today.

WHAT WE HEARD FROM TECHNICAL PROFESSIONALS

CAPACITY OF DATA

- Officials should place greater emphasis on dedicated research and data-collection facilities, especially given the region’s relationships with water and educational facilities such as LUMCON.
- Officials should prioritize subsidence research, highlighting the need for research with greater capacity than that provided solely by gauges and survey markers.

ACCESS TO DATA

- Enabling registration-based access to a data clearinghouse would limit liability and permit centralized access to complex data.
- Offering two data portals—one for the public and one for technical experts—would allow anyone interested in the data to analyze it while also providing technical experts access to more complex data.
- Providing descriptions of open data (metadata) is important to help users easily understand it.
- It is worthwhile to allow relevant flood mitigation data collected through LWI to be publicly accessible.

QUALITY OF DATA

- Region 6 needs a standardized quality-assurance, quality-control process for any data housed in a centralized portal to limit misuse or misinterpretation.
- State and regional officials must first define the scope of data use and define the problem before a viable solution can be considered.



WHAT WE HEARD FROM PLANNING, PROJECTS AND POLICY PROFESSIONALS

PLANNING

- The state should define what flooding means (e.g., rain, rushing waters from the north or man-made flooding) and use standard definitions when categorizing flood risk reduction measures within plans.
- Each jurisdiction has different enforcement measures and resources. The region should incorporate sub-basin planning into watershed-based efforts to account for this local variation.
- Some local jurisdictions need help with land-use planning from the state or regional level.

PROJECTS

- Project funding should be based on local or regional match dollars, including existing projects in which local stakeholders have already made significant investments.
- Project selection priorities should include CRS points, shovel-ready projects and regulatory compliance.
- Capital improvement plans should include measures to keep plans consistent and updated, which would better inform project selection and the long-term viability of projects.
- Watershed protection from hurricane flooding is critical, therefore pumping at the southern portion of the watershed is needed to move water out of the levee system.
- “Beneficial use” of sedimentation should be a major consideration, given the diversity of water use in the region and mitigation project needs.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- The state or federal government must create policy standards; local jurisdictions are more likely to adopt higher standards if they are mandated at a higher level.
- Decision makers must assess what policies are in place before implementing new ones. Many areas have already made policy investments regarding development and economic protection.
- Officials must tie funding directly to policy and use funding as an incentive to guide local development activity and decisions.
- Locals need better tools to evaluate policy impacts on surrounding developments and the environment; more data will drive policy enforcement.
- Floodplain managers, levee board members and technical experts at local agencies should guide policy decisions in the region to help separate political decisions from policy decisions.
- State-created model ordinances would give local jurisdictions a framework for establishing policies and broad standards to work toward.