



LOUISIANA WATERSHED INITIATIVE

working together for sustainability and resilience

OVERVIEW

In March and August of 2016, floodwaters impacted more than 145,000 homes throughout Louisiana, causing more than \$10 billion in damage. In the weeks that followed, as recovery efforts began, Governor John Bel Edwards directed state agencies to coordinate programs and efforts toward future flood risk mitigation with a clear mandate – the status quo for floodplain management in Louisiana would no longer be an option. Water flows downhill and does not recognize political or arbitrary boundaries; thus, it must be managed, and associated risks mitigated, in a manner that takes this behavior into account.

Gov. Edwards established the Council on Watershed Management through executive order JBE18-16 to serve as the continuation of this early interagency coordination and collaboration, which is composed of multiple state agencies with floodplain management responsibilities. Through the Louisiana Watershed Initiative, the state is working toward the coordination of floodplain management responsibilities based on watershed boundaries and will be collaborating with local jurisdictions in the months to come to achieve all related long-term outcomes.

LONG-TERM RESILIENCE OUTCOMES

The Council on Watershed Management is focused on working with local leadership and stakeholders to advance and support planning efforts, projects, and policies that achieve six distinct long-term outcomes for the resilience of Louisiana communities involving data, engagement, standards, funding, capability and capacity, and integrated planning. In addition to these long-term outcomes, the Council recognizes that immediate actions must be taken to demonstrate progress toward resilience and reducing flood risk throughout the state.

COUNCIL ON WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

The Council on Watershed Management is composed of the Secretaries and Executive Directors of the following governmental entities:

Office of Community Development (OCD)

Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD)

Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA)

Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP)

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF)

FOCUS ON LOCAL COLLABORATION: STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS IN FLOOD RISK REDUCTION

The Council on Watershed Management is working to empower local jurisdictions and communities to implement regional, long-term solutions that follow watershed boundaries and can cross local political boundaries. This involves the delineation of programmatic, policy and coordination strategies into four areas, beginning with those initiatives that represent high benefit, low risk actions:

Watershed Mapping and Modeling	Topography, bathymetry, surveys of river crossings, river gauges, hydraulic and hydrologic watershed models, and a robust data platform and portal with mapping tools
Cost Share Assistance and Coordination	Hazard Mitigation Grant Program cost sharing, underfunded HMGP project requests and cost sharing and coordination with other eligible programs
Watershed-Based Programs and Projects	Capacity building in areas such as planning and policy, watershed improvements and waterway restoration, strategic land acquisition and flood easements, and economic development
Large-Scale Programs and Projects	State planning, low risk and high benefit flood risk reduction projects

Specific projects or funding decisions considered within these four near-term focus areas are considered by interagency teams within various technical advisory groups, or TAGs, with recommendations made to and considered by the Council on Watershed Management.

TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUPS

Subject matter experts are actively working to support the state's efforts in advancing near-term strategic investments and progress toward long-term outcomes in the form of technical advisory groups. Each TAG is responsible for ensuring the Council operates with the best available information when making decisions that relates to statewide floodplain management efforts and seeking input from stakeholders across the state. Above all, these TAGs are focused on ensuring that objective science, best practices, and industry expertise are constants across any decision making and recommendations provided to the Council.

WATERSHED INITIATIVE KEY MILESTONES BY MONTH (2018 – 2019)

AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Website Plan • Initial project threshold criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial website established • Initial project evaluation criteria • Working Group discussion topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional hiring plan - Initial metrics of program success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops and outreach (i.e. statewide listening tour) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial data gap analysis results • Draft plan for the build out of the “everything flood related” website and data portal • Initial data standard/data standards plan • Initial statewide policy and program alignment plan
DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft recommendations to develop and enforce watershed and state floodplain management plan • Implementation plan for H&H models • Schedule for next 6 months • Program publications in 2019 • Updated outreach and engagement plan based on statewide listening tour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping tool development proposal • Initiate program publications (i.e., policy value proposition research, updated local funding guidance, best practices, templates, etc.) • Project evaluation tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interstate Summits • SR 172 official presentation to legislature and Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full implementation of statewide watershed-based floodplain management effort

GET IN TOUCH

One of the core tenets of the Louisiana Watershed Initiative is transparent communication and active engagement. Please let us know if you are interested in more information on the Initiative, want to attend an upcoming meeting or event, or want one of our agency team members to come and speak with you or an organization in your community.

 watershed.la.gov

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WORKING TOGETHER FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE