Expert Panel on Diversion Planning and Implementation: Meeting #5

August 4, 2015

Expert Panel on Diversion Planning and Implementation: Background

- Convened to provide technical advice on planning and implementation of freshwater and sediment diversion projects
- Midway through 2nd year of meetings
- Expertise encompasses physical and biological sciences, social science, economics, and engineering
- Experience with Mississippi River and Louisiana restoration (or other large restoration projects)
- Independent and objective, but not in a position to make policy or implementation decisions

Charge to Expert Panel on Diversion Planning and Implementation

"Provide technical input, review and guidance as plans are refined on diverting freshwater and sediment from the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers into adjacent estuarine basins to build, maintain and sustain coastal wetlands"

Topics of Previous Findings and Recommendations

- Uncertainty that stems from natural variability and knowledge limitations (Report #1)
- Conceptual models that are used to frame the approach in the planning process (Report #2)
- Data collection and hydrodynamic modeling that define the physical system (Reports #2 and #3)
- Socio-economic analyses that need to link to stakeholder concerns (Reports #2 and #3)
- Ecosystem monitoring and modeling that are essential for understanding the living resources (Reports #1, #2, and #3)

Summary of Meeting #4

- Panel meeting was held February 11-13, 2015 in Baton Rouge
- Thirteen background and update presentations from CPRA, USACE, The Water Institute, academic institutions, and consulting firms
- Main topics: (1) outcome of winter 2014 Decision Point, (2) preliminary engineering on Lower Barataria and Lower Breton diversions, (3) Delta Management Study, (4) ecosystem effects of diversions on vegetation, soils, and water quality, and, (5) socio-economic analyses
- Reviewed each of the 35 previous recommendations!

Meeting #4 Report

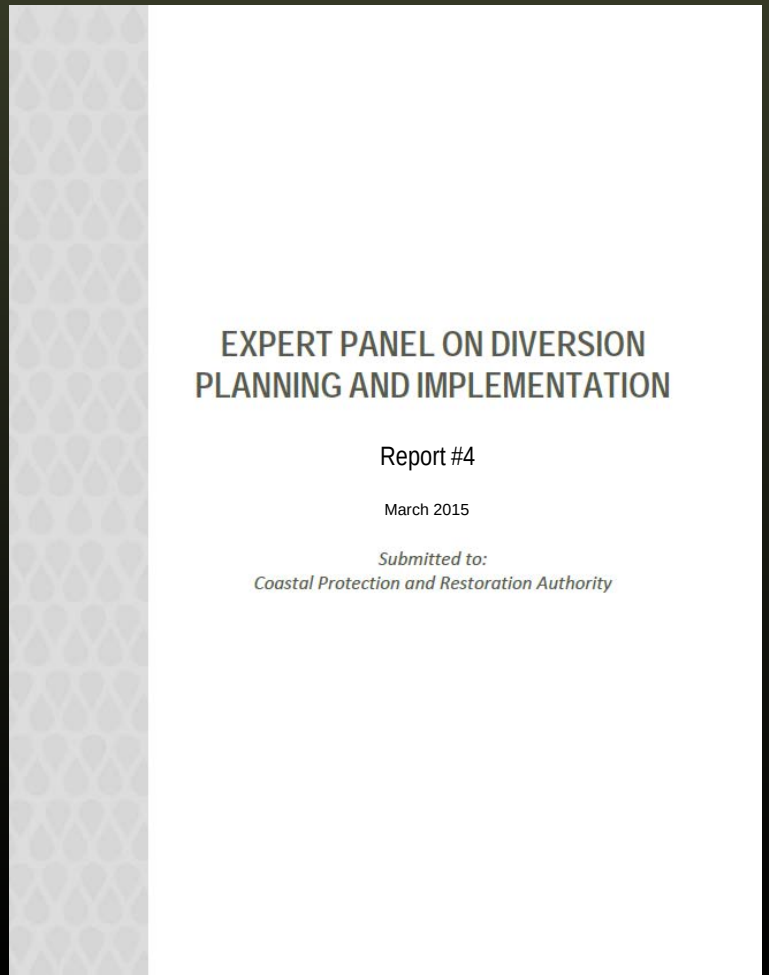
- Short and focused
- Focused on responding to questions in our charge in three broad areas:
  - Support for 2014 Decision Point
  - Water Quality, vegetation and soils
  - Socio-economic analyses
- Synthesis for 2015 Decision Point: summarized and prioritized the 35 previous recommendations
- A total of 4 recommendations in 3 principal theme areas
- Follow-up included two webinars in June on SEA and on Decision Point planning and implementation

Meeting #4 Report

Report of Meeting #4 available at:
www.thewaterinstitute.org

Contents Include:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction and Background
- Focus of Meeting #4
- Response to the Charge
- Synthesis of Recommendations for 2015 Decision Point
- Appendices 1-3



Charge for August 2015 Panel Meeting

- Determine whether approach to modeling, engineering, and socio-economic assessments are clear and appropriate for current stage of diversion planning. Are the decision drivers leading to the Fall 2015 Decision Point appropriate? Is the methodology for project advancement in 2016 and beyond appropriate? Should other elements be considered?

- Determine whether approach for predicting basin-side effects on retention, wetland gain/loss, and water quality are appropriate to support types of decisions that state expects to make in next few months. How does approach compare to current state-of-the-art?

- Provide recommendations for further socio-economic analyses during next stage of engineering and design. Identify types of predictions of SEA effects that are reasonable for next 50 years.