

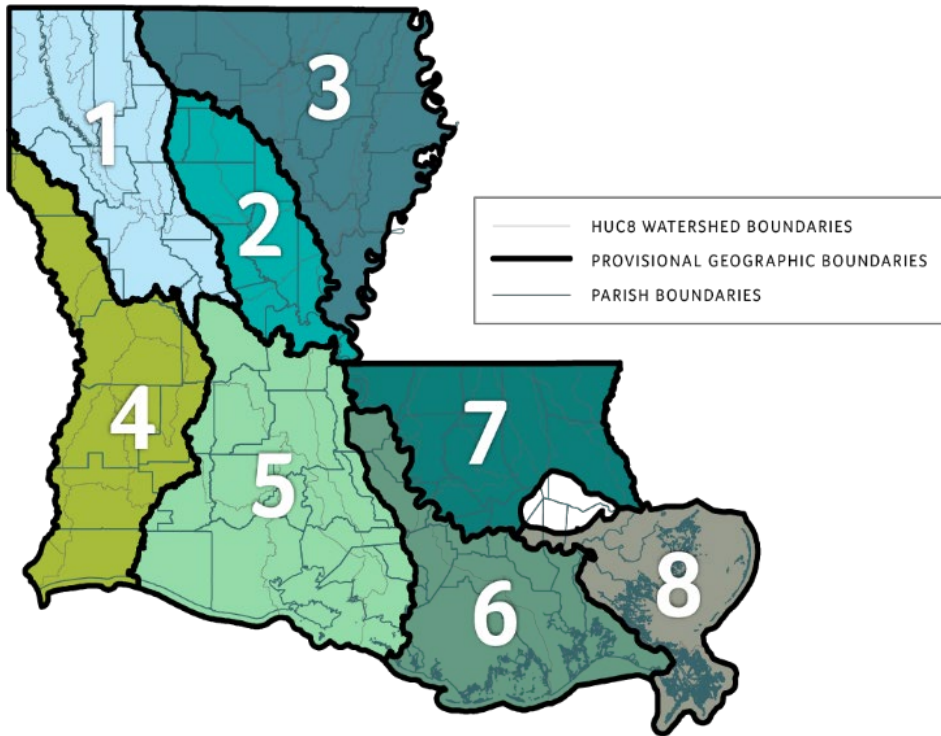
# REGION 5

## GOVERNANCE RECOMMENDATION

### INTRODUCTION

The Region 5 Steering Committee (R5SC) hereby offers the provisional recommendation that a long-term Watershed Coalition be formed within the amended provisional boundaries of Region 5 as shown in Appendix A. Below in Figure 1 is the original LWI provisional watershed boundary. Appendix A illustrates amendments to Iberia and St. Martin parishes, which include said parishes' geography entirely in Region 5 and a modified majority geography of Avoyelles Parish in Region 5. The following details constitute a provisional recommendation, subject to final review and approval by the Council on Watershed Management.

**Figure 1. LWI Provisional Watershed**





Recommendation Date & Vote
<i>Date of recommendation adoption by the Region 5 Steering Committee: July 15, 2021</i>
<i>Vote tally:</i>
<i>Acadia Parish, Earl Garber – Yes</i>
<i>Allen Parish, Gardner Rose – Yes</i>
<i>Avoyelles Parish, Jimmy Landry – Yes</i>
<i>Calcasieu Parish, Terry Frelot – Absent</i>
<i>Cameron Parish, Scooter Trosclair – Yes</i>
<i>Evangeline Parish, Donald Bergeron – Yes</i>
<i>Iberia Parish, Larry Richard – Yes</i>
<i>Iberville Parish, John Clark – Absent</i>
<i>Jefferson Davis Parish, John Marceaux – Absent</i>
<i>Lafayette Parish, Jessica Cornay – Yes</i>
<i>Pointe Coupee Parish, Mark Ward – Absent</i>
<i>Rapides Parish, Matt Johns – Yes</i>
<i>St. Landry Parish, Karl Aucoin – Yes</i>
<i>St. Martin Parish, Chester Cedars – Yes</i>
<i>St. Mary Parish, Tim Matte – Yes</i>
<i>Vermilion Parish, Ralph Libersat - Yes</i>
<i>12 – Yes</i>
<i>0 – No</i>
<i>4 – Absent</i>

## REGIONAL SUMMARY

The Regional Watershed Coalition or Coalition should conduct regional watershed management and assist local entities with watershed planning, policy, project prioritization, and data/modeling in the following ways:

### GOVERNANCE RECOMMENDATIONS – “THE WHAT”

#### Planning and Development Regulation

- Develops watershed/hazard mitigation plan and development policies based on data and science
- Develop a regional Community Rating System strategy and best practice model for local jurisdictions to participate in the CRS program
- Promote consistent watershed-based floodplain management policies that align with state minimum standards for development based on flood risk, including preservation of undeveloped land
- Adopt a regional watershed-based permit and permitting process



1. Align with US Army Corps permitting process to ease permit-timing - As the state conducts vertical alignment efforts, the LWI Region 5 Steering Committee would request that LWI State Watershed Council would work with the USACE to identify methods for improving USACE permitting processes, timeframe and potential alignment with a regional permit developed by the Coalition.
2. Ensure adherence to watershed development standards set for each HUC 8 watershed within Region 5; this should include adherence by both state and local entities. Standards would include any minimum standards set by the state and other additional standards developed by the Coalition.

### **Project Development and Implementation**

- Coordinate with local entities to plan, develop and prioritize funding regional projects through all available funding sources (including Rounds 2 and 3 of LWI Project Funding). Federal and state funds often require a local cost share. The Coalition will assist local entities in coordinating project plans to meet requirements for local match, ownership, and maintenance.
- The Coalition becomes a clearinghouse for projects impacting the watershed.
- The Coalition would be tasked with finding supplemental funding for regional drainage projects and provide support for the implementation of projects by local jurisdictions.
- Provides technical and financial assistance to local jurisdictions in the development of project plans to include project modeling scenarios, environmental impact assessments, cost benefit analysis, and other pre-application project requirements.
- Assist local jurisdictions in funding long-term operations and maintenance of existing projects.

### **Data and Modeling**

- Local/ Regional (Decentralized) Model Use, Storage and Maintenance (MUSM) – A resolution was passed in October 2020 which would allow an entity within Region 5 to house the regional models, see appendix B. In further discussion with the R5SC, a partnership between the “agency” Acadiana Planning Commission and the University of Louisiana at Lafayette’s LA Watershed Flood Center would be developed for MUSM.
- The utilization of the model would be through guidance from a technical subcommittee of the Coalition and parishes could receive technical assistance from the UL Watershed Flood Center for project development.
- The Coalition would financially sustain the MUSM and make it publicly available.
- Operate and maintain a regional gauge network on behalf of the parishes that could be expanded depending on identification of funding sources.



### **Outreach and Engagement**

- Build capacity for a public awareness campaign to promote best practices for development within a watershed system and the benefits of participating in a regional CRS strategy.
- Provide oversight and management of a CRS User Group.
- Support and promote inner- and intra- parish collaboration among municipalities, local drainage districts, and other entities involved in the watershed for effective watershed management.

### **Recommended Authorities for the Coalition**

- Authority to cooperate or contract with other governmental agencies
- Authority to generate revenue (e.g., issue/sell bonds, borrow money or accept grants, collect fees, levy tax/special assessments)
- Authority to oversee regional planning processes
- Authority to issue permits

## **ROADMAP TO IMPLEMENTING THIS RECOMMENDATION**

In order to successfully implement the recommendation above, the R5SC recommends the following implementation steps.

### **GOVERNANCE RECOMMENDATIONS – “THE WHO”**

- The **Acadiana Planning Commission**, is recommended as the “agency” and/or staff of the R5SC and would be responsible for facilitating all meetings of the Coalition and perform administrative functions related to the work of the Coalition. The agency would be responsible for maintaining adequate staff and personnel to fulfill the duties outlined herein as funding permits. Through cooperative agreements, the following work will also be performed on behalf of the district.
  1. UL LA Watershed Flood Center – assist the Coalition in Model Use Storage and Maintenance, data analytics, project modeling scenarios, and general water science needs.
  2. Teche-Vermilion Fresh Water District- assist with coordination, operations, and maintenance of the Coalition gauge network and general water quality efforts.

### **GOVERNANCE RECOMMENDATIONS – “THE HOW”**

#### **ENABLING LEGISLATION AND VERTICAL ALIGNMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The Coalition should be enabled by legislation under state charter and ratified via local ordinances.
- All the watershed coalitions in the state should be authorized by a single charter that includes a list of standards and authorities identified by all regions, wherein each region is able to choose which standard or authority to implement and at what degree within individual coalition bylaws/regional charters.
- The Coalition should have the authority to generate revenue (e.g., issue/sell bonds, borrow money or accept grants, collect fees, levy tax/special assessments) for watershed management activities as decided by the Coalition.



- The Coalition should have the authority to implement a regional watershed-based permit process, wherein federal, state and local development complies to set standards. The intention is to provide oversight of development that has upstream/downstream impacts.
- The state should draft legal elements that reflect regional recommendations in coordination with the RSC coordinators. R5SC members should weigh-in on key decision-points and Watershed Coordinators should coordinate regional review of drafts by legislators, local elected officials, and the general public.
- The regional watershed boundaries should be enabled via state legislation and a process for boundary modifications should also be addressed. This could include review and recognition by a legislatively authorized state agency or board, who has the authority to amend the boundaries at the request of the adjacent coalitions upon completion of a public process.
- The Coalition recommends that appropriate state agency oversight is needed to maintain consistency across the state as it relates to the long-term operations and maintenance of the program. The RSC5 also recognizes the varying capacities around the State of Louisiana with regard to Regional Governance, MUSM, and other related watershed activities. As such, the RSC5 recommends the State offer various levels of technical support as requested by the Regional Committees versus utilizing a “one-size-fits-all” solution.
  1. State Vertical Alignment Recommendations
    - Offer guidance to regional coalitions to include best practices
    - Set minimum standards for development
    - Assist with grant relationships and funding
    - Limited regional reporting requirements
    - Limited fiscal oversight
    - Ensure unfunded mandates are not pushed to the region
    - Advocate for the needs of the region
    - Address areas of concern that cannot be accomplished by the regions alone
  2. Regional Vertical Alignment Recommendations
    - Possess regional fiduciary authority and responsibility
    - Affirm state development standards and set any additional regional standards based on the HUC 8 needs, coastal considerations, etc.
    - Regional MUSM

## **DISTRICT REPRESENTATION AND COMMITTEE STRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The current committee determined that a similar coalition structure is preferred:
  1. “The District”- Region 5 Watershed Management District- comprised of Coalition appointments that can also include technical experts and advisors to the district by the parishes participating in Region 5.
  2. Subcommittees will also be formed to manage the above roles and responsibilities assigned to the coalition. Subcommittees would be formed and dissolved as needed and with approval by the Coalition.
- Parish representation on the coalition would consist of the following levels of representations, as represented in Appendix A.



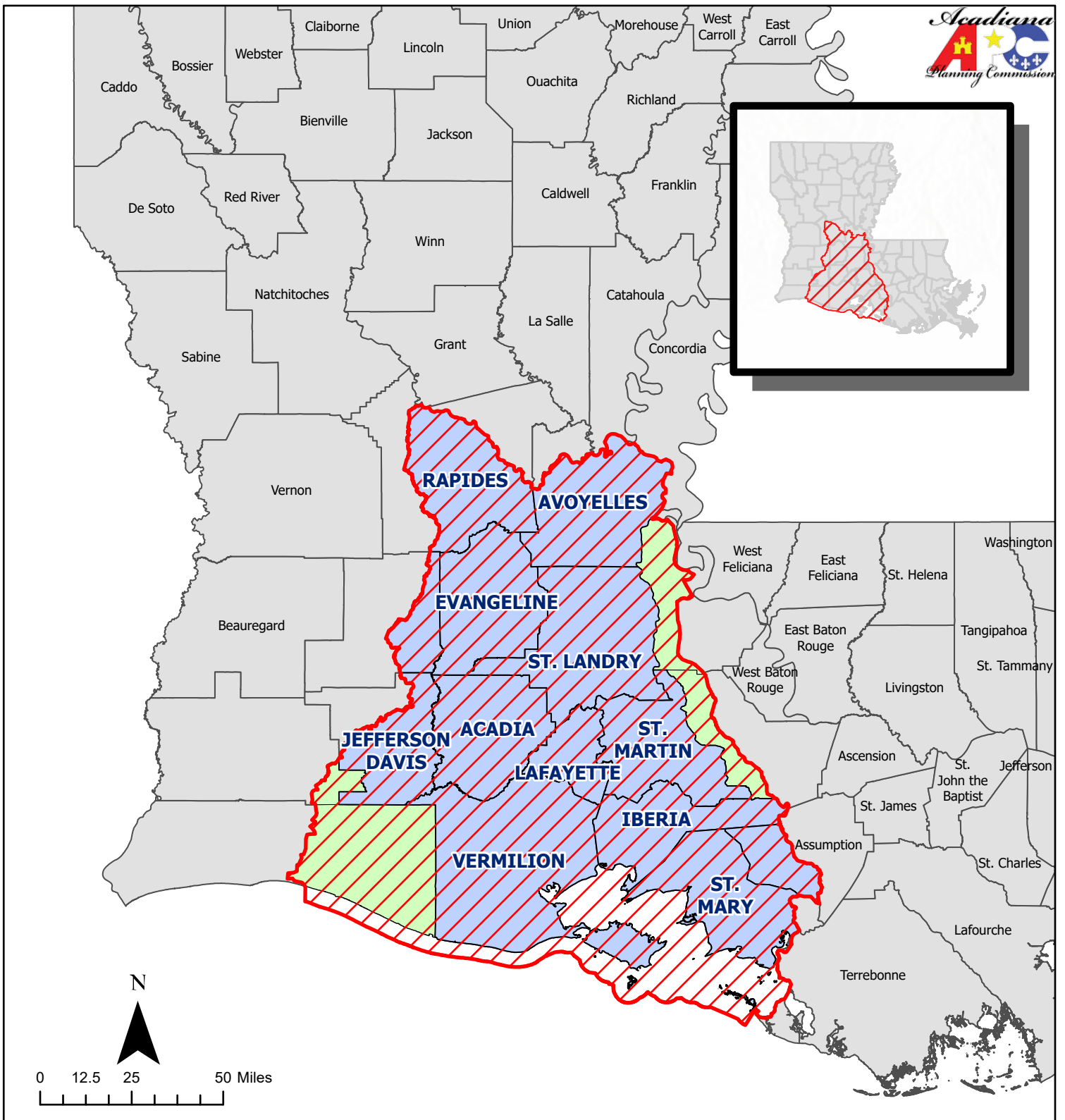
1. Region 5 Watershed Management District – this level of representation includes full representation, full voting rights, participation in the financial sustainability of the region, Coalition permitting oversight, project benefits, etc. Parishes proposed for inclusion:
  - Acadia
  - Allen (Portion)
  - Avoyelles (Portion)
  - Evangeline
  - Iberia
  - Jefferson Davis (Portion)
  - Lafayette
  - Rapides (Portion)
  - St. Landry
  - St. Martin
  - St. Mary (Portion)
  - Vermilion
2. Region 5 Watershed Planning District- this level of representation includes parish representation, proportional voting rights\*, non-financial participation, project benefits dependent on project impact on the entire region. The following areas are characterized as greater impact in a neighboring region and a lack of population in Region 5.
  - Calcasieu
  - Cameron\*\*
  - Iberville
  - Pointe Coupee\*\*

\*Proportional voting rights to be later defined\*


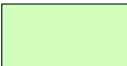

\*\*Still in discussion with these parishes to decide what level of participation is warranted\*\*



# APPENDIX A



## LWI Region 5 Proposed Districts

-  Proposed Management Districts
-  Proposed Planning Districts
-  Proposed Region 5 Boundary





# APPENDIX B

**LOUISIANA WATERSHED INITIATIVE REGION 5 STEERING COMMITTEE  
A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF DEVELOPING  
A REGIONAL HOUSING AND MAINTENANCE WATERSHED MODEL PLAN**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, by the LWI Region 5 Steering Committee of the Louisiana Watershed Initiative (LWI) that:

**WHEREAS**, the Louisiana Watershed Initiative was established in 2018 introducing a new watershed-based approach to reducing flood risk in Louisiana, guided by the following principles: using scientific tools and data; enabling transparent, objective decision-making; maximizing the natural function of floodplains; and establishing regional, watershed-based management of flood risk; and

**WHEREAS**, LWI is developing computer models to better understand flood risk and help select projects best suited for investment in each watershed region to better safeguard our communities and culture for generations to come, as well as provide an example for other states facing similar flood risk challenges.; and

**WHEREAS**, these models will support greater regional collaboration around shared water management challenges and build an objective, science-based understanding of how projects, policies and other measures will reduce flood risk.; and

**WHEREAS**, the LWI Region 5 Steering Committee was formed to help guide the watershed region to build staff capacity for regional watershed management; to provide technical assistance to municipal partners throughout each region; to support strong and effective governance for each watershed region and ensure each region operates in a way that maximizes flood mitigation efforts and funds for risk-reduction projects as they become available.

**WHEREAS**, the Louisiana Watershed Initiative is tasked with developing a sustainable approach to a model use storage and maintenance plan and recognizes that all regional stakeholders should have the capacity to retrieve and utilize the models; and

**WHEREAS**, the desire of the Region 5 Steering Committee is to utilize these models to enhance data driven, water management decision-making at the local and regional level; to build expertise and capacity in our local government jurisdictions and local private sector firms; to build community understanding of existing and potential green infrastructure; to develop local watershed modeling expertise that can be leveraged for all local and regional comprehensive, strategic and community planning efforts in addition to watershed planning;

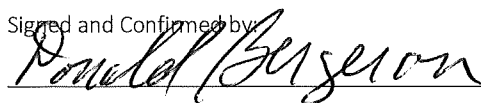
**WHEREAS**, the Region 5 Steering Committee recognizes that the success of these models is dependent on long term usage of the models by the local and region entities;

**WHEREAS**, the Region 5 Steering Committee recognizes that the success of these models is dependent on the development of regional capacity and local technical expertise for the long term sustainable use, storage, and maintenance of these scientific models; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Region 5 Steering Committee fully supports and requests the development of a decentralized, regional approach to a model use, storage, and maintenance plan.

And the resolution was declared to be a formal recommendation of the Region 5 Steering Committee on the 22 of October in the year 2020.

Signed and Confirmed by:



Donald Bergeron, Representative of Evangeline Parish  
LWI Region 5 Steering Committee, Chairman