

Louisiana Decision Support Tool Outreach

Carbon management community & stakeholder engagement in Louisiana



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Key takeaways

- The Great Plains Institute (GPI) received grant funding to create a [Decision Support Tool](#) and conduct community outreach in Louisiana to increase access to information related to carbon management siting.
- GPI hosted four roundtables in Louisiana with their partners at [SWCA](#) and [Franklin Associates](#). The roundtable attendees were compensated for their time and provided valuable feedback on the Decision Support Tool. This feedback highlighted the social factors important to Louisianians and improved the tool's usability.
- GPI's partners at [Carbon Solutions](#) shared findings from the roundtable discussions in a [report](#). GPI is committed to improving the tool to reflect community perspectives, and we encourage you to send us your feedback or suggestions.

Decision Support Tool

The [Decision Support Tool](#) is a mapping tool that aims to enhance transparency, foster collaboration, and align community values when evaluating proposed carbon management projects. The tool contains three interactive maps measuring social, environmental, and comprehensive factors, respectively. Broadly, the social map includes demographic data, the environmental map includes data about protected and developed areas, and the combined map contains data from the social and environmental maps in one comprehensive view. If anyone is interested in getting involved, GPI encourages them to provide feedback on the tool's design and functionality by [reaching out directly](#) or completing a brief [online survey](#).

Louisiana roundtables



1. Funding and goals:

GPI received philanthropic funding to create the tool and conduct community outreach, with a goal of increasing access to information relevant to carbon management siting.



2. Data collection and creating the tool:

Social and environmental data were collected and analyzed to form the foundation of the Decision Support Tool. The interactive maps and the [StoryMap](#) (a dynamic web page featuring maps and resources) were thoughtfully designed to provide user-friendly access to this data.



3. Consulting local experts: GPI partnered with [Franklin Associates](#) (a local facilitation and consulting group) to ensure the outreach process was relevant to Louisiana before hosting the roundtables. In the weeks leading up to the roundtables, Franklin Associates contacted 16 Louisiana-based organizations, including nonprofits, state universities, and state agencies. Five organizations (three nonprofits, one university, and one state agency) shared various perspectives on carbon management in Louisiana.

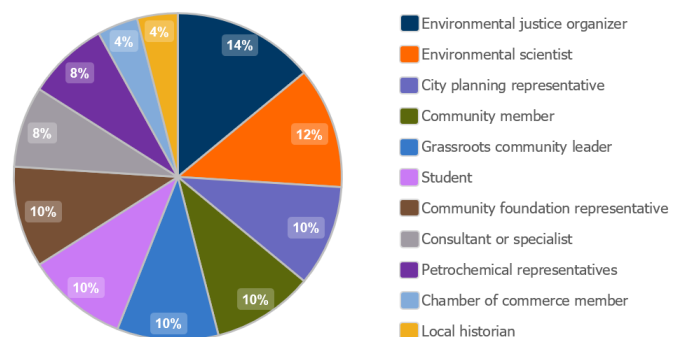


4. Community outreach:

GPI selected four Louisiana communities (Baton Rouge, Kenner, Alexandria, and Sulphur) for roundtable discussions for their regional relevance and proximity to potential carbon management projects.

In collaboration with GPI, Franklin Associates ensured a diverse group of attendees participated at the roundtables (see Figure 1). Outreach efforts included email invitations and social media promotion.

Roundtable Participant Demographics



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5. Roundtable design:

The four roundtables were held in late May and early June 2023, with each session lasting four hours. To acknowledge the value of participants' time and contributions and to ensure equity in participation, all attendees were provided lunch and received \$150 in compensation. Each roundtable followed a consistent structure:

- Programming began with introductions and icebreakers, followed by an informative overview of carbon management by GPI and a Q&A session;
- Participants introduced themselves in smaller groups;
- Partners from [SWCA](#) delivered a presentation on the Decision Support Tool, with time for Q&A.
- Franklin Associates facilitated a group discussion to gather participant opinions on specific social factors depicted on a map. Attendees participated in smaller discussion groups and reported their findings, helping to collectively re-evaluate the weight of each social factor; and
- Finally, participants took a survey from Franklin Associates and discussed future engagement opportunities.



6. Gathering user input:

The main goal of the roundtables was to solicit feedback on the tool and StoryMap from community members, not on carbon management broadly. Specifically, GPI sought to understand how best to rank the social factors within the tool, including proximity to environmental hazards, exposure to climate change, health, demographics, and public service gaps. The community provided valuable input through a ranking activity, ensuring that their voices influenced the tool's development.



7. Tool refinement and sharing:

Following the roundtables, GPI integrated participant feedback into the Decision Support Tool and StoryMap. These changes included re-weighting the social factors in the social map to better reflect community values, changing the tool's name to enhance accessibility, and making the language in the StoryMap more user-friendly. Once GPI incorporated participant feedback, they shared the refined tool with roundtable participants, GPI's network, and other communities and stakeholders across Louisiana.



8. Outreach process transparency:

Transparency in the outreach process was a priority for GPI. During the roundtable presentations, GPI's partners at [Carbon Solutions](#) observed and aimed to identify elements of the roundtables that could serve as replicable and scalable demonstrations of best practices for community engagement around carbon management. Carbon Solutions highlighted potential areas for improvement, emphasizing the importance of providing background knowledge, establishing multiple feedback pathways, maintaining active communication channels, ensuring diverse representation, and consistent facilitation. For more information, review their [report](#) and [webinar](#).



9. Ongoing feedback loop:

Community engagement remains a key to the ongoing success of the Decision Support Tool. Carbon management projects are continually proposed throughout Louisiana, and there are numerous opportunities for community involvement with this tool. Individuals are encouraged to share the tool and other resources related to carbon management widely within their communities. As GPI plans to expand the Decision Support Tool to other states, feedback is actively welcome. If anyone is interested in getting involved, GPI encourages them to provide feedback on the tool's design and functionality by [reaching out directly](#) or completing a brief [online survey](#).



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For more carbon management resources, visit the Carbon Capture Coalition, Industrial Innovation Initiative, Carbon Action Alliance, or Carbon Capture Ready websites. For more information on the Decision Support Tool outreach process, reach out to Bridget Callaghan at bcallaghan@gpisd.net.