



Louisiana State University  
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# Louisiana Wetlands News

June 1997

## Coast 2050 - A Strategic Coastal Plan for Louisiana

*Coast 2050* is a joint coastal planning initiative among the Louisiana Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Authority (State Coastal Restoration Authority); the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act Task Force (Federal Coastal Restoration Authority); and coastal parish governments. Over the next 1.5 years, this partnership will embark on the development of a strategic plan to protect and sustain the state's coastal resources for future generations in a manner that is consistent with people's welfare. The plan will attempt to define Louisiana's coastline

in the year 2050 with and without restoration actions.

The goal of *Coast 2050* is the development of a technically sound strategic plan to sustain coastal resources and provide an integrated multiple-use approach to ecosystem management. Plan development is expected to take at least 18 months.

In the context of this extensive planning process, ecosystems management is defined as a proactive approach to coastal restoration in the context of multiple coastal uses such as fisheries, transportation, flood control, navigation, oil

and gas, water supply, agriculture, forestry and other socio-economic and industrial uses. Under this plan, coastal restoration activities will attempt to maximize the diversity and extent of coastal habitats while minimizing adverse impacts to coastal users.

Public involvement will be crucial to plan development success. To get involved in this important long-term coastal planning process, contact the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources by calling (504) 342-7308 or call my office in Baton Rouge at (504) 388-2266.



THE LOUISIANA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE PROVIDES EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN PROGRAMS AND EMPLOYMENT. LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY AND A. & M. COLLEGE, LOUISIANA PARISH GOVERNING BODIES, SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY, AND UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATING



A State Partner in the Cooperative Extension System

**Coastal Wetlands Planning Protection and Restoration Act**  
**(CWPPRA)**  
**7th Priority Project List Meetings Set**

The CWPPRA Task Force will hold a series of public meetings in mid-June to help select the 7th Coastal Restoration Priority Project List. Candidate projects selected will be carefully evaluated for their effectiveness in preserving, restoring, protecting or creating wetlands. The Task Force will make final selections from among these candidates in January 1998.

Nomination meetings will be conducted at the three locations beginning at 10 a.m.:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Basins Covered</u>
6/17/97	Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service 1105 W. Port St. Abbeville, LA	Mermentau Calcasieu-Sabine Teche-Vermilion
6/18/97	St. Charles Parish Council Chambers 15045 River Road Hahnville, LA	Atchafalaya Barataria Terrebonne
6/19/97	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Office Foot of Prytania Street New Orleans, LA	Pontchartrain Mississippi River Delta Breton Sound

The purpose of the meetings is to provide a forum for the public and local government representatives to propose coastal restoration projects for consideration under the 7th Priority Project List. The CWPPRA Task Force is specifically interested in projects which have widespread benefits and restore natural wetland processes. Priority will be given projects which are cost-effective and can be easily implemented. The Task Force will defer consideration of large scale barrier island and river diversion projects until feasibility results are available.

The 7th List selection process will continue when the CWPPRA agencies meet on June 24 and 25 at 10 a.m. (each day) in the New Orleans Corps of Engineers District Headquarters Assembly Room. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss modifying or adding to the list of nominees developed by the public and local government representatives.

On July 10, the CWPPRA Planning and Evaluation Subcommittee will meet at the LDWF office in Baton Rouge to select the candidate projects which will be further evaluated and developed. Approximately 10 candidate projects from the 7th Priority List will then be officially approved by the CWPPRA Task Force in January 1998.

Anyone wanting to propose a coastal restoration project should attend one or all of the meetings mentioned above. For more information about the CWPPRA project selection process, contact my office in Baton Rouge at (504) 388-2266.

## **President Clinton's Budget Proposal Calls for Increased Funding for Wetlands**

President Clinton's budget proposal would increase funding for the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) from \$45 million to \$164 million. The increase would allow for enrollment of 212,000 acres in fiscal year 1998 and achieve 66 percent of the program goal of 975,000 acres by the end of year 2000.

Additionally, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would get a \$34 million increase next year to manage National Wildlife Refuges, and the North American Wetland Conservation Fund would get \$15 million, a \$5 million increase.

## **Environmental State of the State Conference**

The second annual *Environmental State of the State Conference* will be held in New Orleans on June 19-20. Organized by the Environmental Research Consortium of Louisiana, two important environmental issues facing Louisiana will be the focus of the conference. A panel of experts will give a comprehensive overview of each topic and will answer questions from the audience about these crucial and often controversial issues.

This year's conference topics include:

- (1) Endangered Species Act - How will it affect Louisiana?
- (2) Clean Water Act - Will our waters be protected?

Anyone with an interest in our state's environment is encouraged to attend. Teachers, landowners, conservation organizations, researchers, members of the media and the general public should attend.

The Environmental State of the State Conference will be held at the University of New Orleans University Center on June 19-20. There will also be field trips to the Audubon Center for Research of Endangered Species, Jean Lafitte Cultural History Park and Preserve and Cytec Industries. Advance registration is required. For registration information, call the University of New Orleans Conference Services office at (504) 280-6680.

The Environmental Research Consortium of Louisiana is a group of research, education and conservation organizations concerned about the environmental well-being of Louisiana. Its diverse membership includes colleges and university, nonprofit organizations, business and industry professionals.

For more information, contact Melissa Lee at (504) 565-3020, extension 694.

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## **Compensatory Mitigation for Corps of Engineers (COE) - New Orleans District (NOD) Wetlands Permits**

COE Section 404 permits are typically conditioned to require compensation or mitigation for unavoidable wetlands impacts caused by authorized projects. Compensatory mitigation may be accomplished in several ways. The most common forms of mitigation are projects which result in the restoration, enhancement or creation

of wetlands. Created, restored or enhanced wetlands must meet the technical criteria for wetlands (that is, they must have wetland hydrology, must support predominantly hydrophytic vegetation and must have hydric soils).

There are two general approaches to restoring, enhancing or creating wetlands for mitigation:

- 1) *Project-specific mitigation* - Typically a small or minor mitigation project which serves to mitigate impacts caused by a single or a few permitted projects. The mitigation is performed or funded by the permittee after permit is issued. **The permittee is ultimately responsible for implementation and success of the mitigation.** No interagency agreement is required.
- 2) *Consolidated mitigation* - A single, typically large, mitigation project serving to mitigate impacts resulting from multiple projects. Consolidated mitigation may be in the form of the following:
  - a) *Mitigation Bank* - Wetland restoration, creation or enhancement performed by a landowner or sponsor using his or her own funds prior to receiving any specific mitigation requests from permit recipients. After the bank is established, the landowner may, subject to approval by the COE, sell mitigation credits to permittees needing compensatory mitigation. The cost of credits is set by the landowner or sponsor. An interagency agreement between the landowner or sponsor, the COE and, where applicable, other interested resource and regulatory agencies is required. **The landowner or sponsor is responsible for implementation, maintenance and success of the mitigation.**
  - b) *Mitigation Area* - Similar to a mitigation bank, but wetland restoration, creation or enhancement is performed on a "as

needed" basis by the landowner or sponsor. Funds to implement the mitigation are provided by permittees needing compensatory mitigation. **The landowner or sponsor is responsible for implementation, maintenance and success of the mitigation.** An interagency agreement with the sponsor, similar to the one needed for a mitigation bank, is required.

Mitigation for COE permits is often accomplished on lands belonging to individuals other than the permit recipient. The COE, New Orleans District (NOD), will entertain requests by landowners or sponsors wishing to have specific mitigation projects pre-approved or desiring to establish mitigation banks or mitigation areas. **Approval of the mitigation project, bank or area in no way guarantees that the mitigation will be selected for implementation or that a mitigation bank or area will be used.** NOD will not direct anyone to use a particular mitigation project or mitigation bank or area. If the mitigation is approved, NOD will, in the appropriate circumstances, advise a permittee that this option is available as a means of fulfilling his requirement to provide compensatory mitigation.

**Approval of a mitigation project does not constitute authorization to construct the project. A project may be found to be acceptable as mitigation, but permits may be required to implement the mitigation.** COE permits will typically be required for mechanized land clearing, grading, filling or excavation in existing wetlands and work (for example, dredging fill, installation of structures, etc.) in navigable waters, including tidal waters and wetlands. NOD intends to process permits for wetland mitigation projects using the most expeditious means available. It may be possible to authorize project-specific mitigation which has been approved by the agencies using regional general or nationwide permits. COE permits will not be required for work which would be performed solely in nonwetlands or prior-converted croplands

or for work in non-tidal wetlands which does not involve the excavation or placement of fill in these wetlands (for example, bushhogging, planting of tree seedlings, etc.).

Regardless of whether or not a permit is needed, all wetland mitigation proposals will be evaluated by NOD in consultation with other interested resources and regulatory agencies. These agencies will typically include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LWF), Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality Office of Water Resources (DEQ) and, for projects in the Louisiana Coastal Zone, the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources Coastal Management Division (DNR).

Landowners or sponsors wishing to establish mitigation banks and areas on their property must first obtain approval from the COE District covering the site in question. Approval typically requires a several step process:

- 1) Landowner identifies a typically large wetland restoration, enhancement or creation project which he wants implemented on his property.
- 2) Landowner prepares a mitigation "prospectus" and submits it to the COE-NOD (and DNR if applicable). The prospectus should contain:
  - a) Location map
  - b) Description of existing conditions at the proposed mitigation site
  - c) Total acreage of the bank or area
  - d) Description of the wetland restoration, enhancement or creation measures to be undertaken and source of funding (mitigation credits will not be given for features implemented using public funds)

- e) Where applicable, drawings showing all work which must be performed, including all earthwork and structural features
  - f) Description of the long-term management and operation of the bank or area
  - g) Financial assurances which will be secured by the landowner or sponsor to ensure funds are available to implement the mitigation to maintain, manage and monitor the bank or area.
  - h) Statement that the mitigation bank or area would be maintained and protected through a conservation easement or deed restriction.
- 3) NOD (and DNR if applicable) will determine if a permit is required to establish the mitigation bank or area and will advise the landowner accordingly. The landowner does not need to submit an application for a permit at this time unless he chooses to do so, but he or she must be aware that, if a permit is required, the mitigation bank or area cannot be established until it is permitted.
  - 4) An interagency Mitigation Bank Review Team (MBRT) or Mitigation Area Review Team (MART) will be established to evaluate the proposed mitigation bank or area. The review team will consist of the NOD, DNR if applicable, the landowner and/or sponsor and other agencies and parties which may wish to participate in the review and evaluation of the mitigation bank or area. The review will typically require an inspection of the site. If appropriate, the interagency team will recommend modifications to the plan. The landowner does not have to agree to the modifications, but refusal to do so may jeopardize the approval of the mitigation or reduce the amount of mitigation credit generated by the project.

5) NOD (and DNR, if applicable), in consultation with the other agencies involved in the evaluation will determine if the project is appropriate as a mitigation bank or area. If the proposed bank or area is found to be acceptable, the review team, including the sponsor, will develop an interagency agreement which will address the following:

- a) Location and legal description of the bank or area.
- b) Purpose and objectives (including type(s) of wetland to benefit from the establishment of the bank or area, reason for establishing the bank or area, geographical area to be serviced by the bank or area, etc.).
- c) Funding source and financial assurances (Mechanism to ensure the availability of funds needed to implement the mitigation, perform corrective actions, manage, maintain and monitor the bank or area. Assurances will be phased out over time as specific milestones are attained.)
- d) Existing conditions (Size of the bank or area, existing and prior land uses, acreage of wetlands and nonwetlands contained within the bank or area, topography, soils, hydrology and problems, if any, which need to be addressed.)
- e) Description of wetland restoration, enhancement or creation to be performed by the sponsor to generate mitigation "credit" (plantings, installation of plugs or water control structures in drainage ditches, removal of levees, etc.).
- f) Success criteria (Criteria to be used to determine if wetlands are restored, enhance or created as projected.)
- g) Operational life (period of time the bank or area would be actively

managed and maintained) and description of long-term management plan (timber management, operation of water control structures, etc.).

- h) Evaluation of the amount of credit generated by the mitigation bank or area and credit allocation schedule. The amount of mitigation credit produced by the bank or area will be based on the difference between the value of the wetland area if the mitigation is not implemented and the value if it is implemented.
- i) Procedures for using the mitigation area or bank to compensate for specific wetland impacts.
- j) Long-term protection of the bank or area lands. This section will require that a mitigation covenant or conservation easement be placed on the property and will describe activities which can or cannot occur on the property. It will also discuss issuance of COE permits for future activities within the bank or area. (NOTE: Only certain activities which would be detrimental to the wetlands and which are not otherwise regulated through the Corps permit program will be prohibited. Other activities which typically require permits may be allowed subject to Corps approval. Hunting, fishing and nonconsumptive uses of the property which do not affect the functional value of the wetlands are allowed.)
- k) Monitoring and reporting (protocol for monitoring the success of the mitigation effort and for reporting these results to the review team).
- l) Corrective actions (Measures which must be taken by the sponsor to correct deficiencies and rectify damages. The sponsor must take all appropriate actions to ensure

that the wetland restoration, enhancement or creation measures meet the specified success criteria. Once the success criteria have been met, the sponsor will not be held accountable for damages to a bank or area due to "Acts of God." Impacts to wetlands within the mitigation bank or area which are caused by COE authorized action will be mitigated by the permit recipient.)

- m) Accounting procedures (Sponsor will be responsible for keeping a ledger of all transactions and providing these records to the NOD).
- n) Transfer of Bank or Area lands to a public or private entity (Area or bank must remain protected for a period of time specified by the review team).

The completed bank or area agreement will be circulated for signature by the agencies and the bank or area sponsor. No party will be required to sign the agreement; however, by signing the agreement, all signatories must abide by its terms. If a bank or area sponsor fails to comply with the agreement, recognition of the bank or area will be voided unless corrective actions are taken as prescribed in the agreement. If a sponsor fails to comply with the agreement and refuses to take corrective action, the sponsor will be required to implement mitigation to replace mitigation credits which have already been used or sold. Any agreement may be modified through mutual consent by the signing parties.

- 6) If permits from NOD and/or CMD are required to implement the mitigation bank or area and the sponsor has not yet obtained these authorizations, he or she must apply for and obtain the necessary

permits before constructing and implementing the bank or area. The COE permit will require that the bank or area be implemented, maintained and managed in accordance with the interagency agreement. Failure to do so may result in suspension or revocation of the permit.

Projects which may serve as mitigation for impacts to forested wetlands include, but are not limited, to:

- 1) Reforestation of previously cleared wetlands, such as planting of wetland tree species on lands classified as prior-converted, farmed wetlands or farmed wetland pasture.
- 2) Restoration of wetland hydrology by plugging drainage ditches and canals, removing levees, etc.
- 3) Enhancing the value of existing degraded wetlands. An example would be clearing willows, tallows, etc. and planting mast-producing trees.
- 4) Converting a former nonwetland to a wetland by grading and contouring land and planting appropriate species.
- 5) Combinations of the above - For example, plugging drainage ditches in an agricultural field to restore wetland hydrology and planting appropriate tree species.

A mitigation bank or area proposing the reforestation of bottomland hardwoods to compensate for wetland impacts authorized in COE permits typically involves the planting of appropriate bottomland hardwood tree seedling (Nuttall oak, water oak, green ash, etc.) in abandoned fields and agricultural land (farmed wetlands, prior-converted cropland, farmed wet pasture, etc.). The site selected for the mitigation bank or area must currently be classified as, or must be capable of being converted to, a wetland.

The restored wetland must meet wetland criteria as described in the 1987 Corps of Engineers wetland delineation manual.

Requirements for bottomland hardwood reforestation will typically include the following:

- 1) Restoration of natural hydrology, if necessary, by plugging drainage ditches, removing or breaching levees, etc.
- 2) Prior to planting, the site shall be prepared as needed to facilitate planting. All existing rows and furrows shall be removed to restore natural surface contours. Resultant ground elevations must be appropriate for the establishment and maintenance of wetland vegetation.
- 3) Seedlings shall be planted on 12 foot centers, for a density of approximately 302 trees per acre.
- 4) A mixture of at least 65 percent hard mast and 35 percent soft mast-producing species shall be planted.
- 5) Appropriately handled seedlings shall be planted during the non-growing season (December 15 to March 15)
- 6) A minimum of 50 percent or 150 seedlings per acre must survive through the end of the first growing season.
- 7) If less than 50 percent survival is attained, all dead and missing seedlings shall be replaced during the next nongrowing season. Replantings shall continue until at least 50 percent or 150 trees per acre survive through the end of the growing season following planting.
- 8) Initially, the sponsor will be responsible for monitoring the survival of the seedlings on a yearly basis. Yearly monitoring will require documenting the number and species of surviving seedlings

and general condition of the mitigation bank or area was well as the condition of applicable plugs and water control structures. For large tracts (generally larger than 3 acres), monitoring may be conducted by sampling at least 5 percent of the planted tract.

- 9) Upon attainment of the survival rate or shortly thereafter, the sponsor may begin monitoring at 5-year intervals. Long-term monitoring will be conducted by establishing permanent sample plots within the mitigation area or bank and recording the growth of planted trees, the development of the vegetative community as well as the overall condition of the mitigation area or bank and condition of applicable plugs or structures. The number and size of the sampling plots will vary depending on the size of the mitigation area or bank but must be representative of the entire area.
- 10) Timber harvesting will be allowed if accomplished in accordance with a timber management plan approved by the review team. The sponsor will be required to perform a post-harvest survey.
- 11) The bank or area sponsor will be responsible for providing reports containing monitoring data to NOD and other review team members after each monitoring event. The bank or area sponsor will also be responsible for providing annual reports documenting use of the bank or area (individual debits, account balances, acres planted in a given year, acreage available to plant, etc.).
- 12) The sponsor will be required to execute a conservation easement or mitigation covenant on lands within the mitigation bank or area. The easement or covenant will prohibit certain activities which are detrimental to the wetlands and which cannot otherwise be regulated through the



permit program. It will allow fishing, hunting, nonconsumptive recreational uses as well as developmental activities which received written authorization from NOD (and CMD if applicable). Once the initial success criteria have been met, the sponsor will not be responsible for damages to the area or bank due to Acts of God. For forested wetland mitigation areas or banks used to mitigate wetland impacts associated with Department of the Army permit actions, the covenant or easement must remain in effect "in-perpetuity." (NOTE: Forested wetland mitigation banks used only to mitigate impacts associated with permits issued by CMD typically only have to be maintained and protected for 50 years.) The covenant is subject to change through mutual agreement.

- 13) The sponsor must have secure financial assurances to ensure that sufficient funds are available to implement the mitigation and to manage, maintain and monitor the bank or area. Financial assurances may be in the form of a letter of credit, escrow account or surety bond. Financial assurances may be released incrementally over time as certain milestones are reached (meeting survival criteria, etc.).
- 14) The above provisions will be specified in an interagency agreement to be developed by NOD)and/or CMD if applicable), the sponsor and other agency representatives for each mitigation bank or area.

For more information regarding wetland permit compensatory mitigation requirements in the New Orleans District, contact the COE at (504) 862-2277.

Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - New Orleans District

## **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Final Rules Out - Sign-up Set**

The final rules for Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) newest natural resource conservation program were published in the Federal Register on May 23. With the publication of the EQIP rules, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will be working with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) personnel, the Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the Extension Service (LCES) and others to help set up the program in Louisiana. The first landowner/farmer sign-up began Monday, June 9 at all parish/area FSA offices.

EQIP is part of the 1996 Farm Bill and takes the place of four previous USDA programs, including the Annual Conservation Program (ACP). There are basically two parts to the program. One part addresses statewide concerns related to natural resource conservation and the other part directs assistance to state priority areas.

Under one part of EQIP, four statewide concerns are identified--livestock production, cropland, forestland and wellhead protection areas. Producers will compete for funding as related to the statewide concerns. The most significant resource or environmental need will receive the highest priority. Persons achieving the most environmental benefit at the least cost will rank highest in the process.

Under the other part EQIP, which addresses geographic priority areas, eight areas have been identified to receive initial fund allocation. Parishes which have priority areas, or parts of the eight priority areas, are: Calcasieu, Cameron, Jefferson Davis, St. Helena, Tangipahoa, Washington, Livingston, DeSoto, Natchitoches, Red River, Caddo, Claiborne, Jackson, Lincoln, Union, Ouachita, Bossier, East Carroll, Franklin, Madison, and Tensas parishes.

Louisiana expects to receive about \$4.8 million for EQIP, but obligation of that money depends on producers signing up, receiving approval and developing contracts. Many agencies, groups and individuals are working together to assure that everyone has the opportunity to apply for the program. The cooperative approach to program delivery is an integral component of the process.

The NRCS, Farm Service Agency, Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, Southern University Cooperative Extension Program, local soil and water conservation districts, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Farm Bureau, Louisiana Cattlemen's Association and other commodity organizations and groups will provide outreach, information and education to all potential participants.

Under EQIP, each application will be ranked according to total cost and the environmental benefits derived from the installation of the practices. Producers within a priority area will compete for funding against other applicants within the area. Producers outside the priority areas will compete statewide for EQIP.

To receive funding from EQIP, producers are required to enter into long-term contracts. Contracts must be at least five years long and cannot be longer than 10 years. Producers can receive up to \$10,000 of EQIP funding per year not to exceed \$50,000 for the life of the contract. EQIP will pay up to 75 percent of the cost of installing some conservation practices. EQIP will also provide incentive payments for some practices. A producer will be required to develop a total conservation plan with USDA assistance. EQIP offers a good opportunity for producers throughout Louisiana to participate in a natural resource conservation cost-share program that can assist in improving water quality, soil conservation and wildlife habitat on the farm.

The first sign-up for EQIP is expected to be very short, possibly only two weeks long. Producers must be accepted and contracts signed before to September 30, 1997. Landowners and producers can obtain additional information by contacting this office or the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency or the county agent's office in their parish.

## Clinton Administration Accepts 16.1 Million Acres for Enrollment in CRP

Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman recently announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture will accept 16.1 million acres of the nation's most environmentally sensitive cropland into the new Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Last February, Glickman pledged that the 15th sign-up would be the first step toward a new CRP that would provide more environmental benefits over the next 10 years than the old program did over the last 10. USDA set out to enroll land that would yield the highest environmental benefits, keep productive cropland growing food and fiber and be fair to taxpayers in providing the most environmental bang for the buck. Louisiana had 1,335 applications covering 87,000 acres during the 15th sign-up.

Glickman feels the goal has been met in three significant ways: (1) the 16.1 million acres accepted into the CRP will result in a nearly 85 percent increase in the environmental benefits for every dollar spent, (2) the average Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) of the bids accepted is 46 percent higher than the acreage enrolled presently in the CRP, and (3) while getting greater environmental benefits, USDA will be paying 21 percent less per acre -- saving more than \$1.6 billion for the life of the program.

The environmental benefits of the 16.1 million acres accepted are significantly greater because of a variety of factors, including producer willingness to adopt more environmentally beneficial vegetation, the enrollment of acreage in conservation priority areas, the restoration of more than 790,000 acres of wetlands with protective upland areas and the enrollment of more than 1 million acres of trees.

For this sign-up, the EBI was redesigned to compare the offers of all acreage based on seven factors: soil erosion, wildlife habitat, water quality, air quality, location in a conservation priority area, long-term retention of conservation benefits beyond the contract period and cost.

The temporary retirement of this land is not expected to have a substantial effect on commodity prices, farm income or the United States' ability to supply world markets with agriculture products.

USDA immediately will begin the notification process to let farmers and ranchers know whether their offers were accepted. Those whose land was not accepted should consult with a representative from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), or a conservation district to improve the environmental benefits or rental rate of offers for the next CRP sign up, scheduled to take place this fall. Potential bidders can increase the environmental value, and acceptability, of their offers by proposing to establish certain covers which enhance wildlife habitat and by offering only the more sensitive cropland acres.

Today, some 32.9 million acres are enrolled in the CRP. About 21.2 million acres are subject to CRP contracts expiring on September 30. The new 16.1 million acre enrollment will bring the total acres enrolled in the CRP to 27.6 million on October 1.

The CRP is a voluntary approach to improving the environment by using partnerships between individuals and the government. Landowners and operators establish long-term conservation practices on erodible land and environmentally sensitive land in exchange for 10-15 years of annual rental payments and cost-share assistance in adopting and maintaining those practices. Contracts between USDA and landowners establish the rental rates and cost share assistance to be paid over the 10-15 years covered by the contracts.

For more information on CRP, contact your parish Extension Service office.

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## 4-H Marsh Maneuvers Alumni Attend Governor's Press Conference

Ten participants in 4-H Marsh Maneuvers were on hand for an early May news conference when Governor Mike Foster restated his support for restoring Louisiana's eroding coastline as part of National Wetlands Month.

Alumni of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service 4-H program designed to focus on coastal restoration issues included: John Tucker of East Baton Rouge Parish; Toby Coates, Kelly Cox and Yvette Davidson, all of Livingston Parish; Robert Randall, Howard Spears and Ellen Trappey, all of St. Helena Parish; and Drew Dreher, Richard Kendrick and

Courtney Miller, all of West Feliciana Parish.

Presenters at the news conference recognized these and other Louisiana youth who are taking a keen interest in coastal restoration issues because key policy decisions and future benefits of restoration actions will have to be made by and largely benefit the next generation of leaders, scientists and citizens.

An avid coastal duck hunter and saltwater fisherman, the governor pledged his continued commitment to keep coastal restoration initiatives a high priority on his administration's agenda and praised the efforts being made

to slow coastal marsh loss rates which has averaged 25 to 35 square miles per year since 1956.

LSU Agricultural Center faculty attending the news conference included Peter Cannizzaro, assistant county agent in St. Helena Parish; Donna Zabel, associate home economist in Livingston Parish; and State Office specialists Joan McCrory, 4-H; Diane Sasser, home economics; and Dr. Paul Coreil, wetlands and coastal resources.

Four more Marsh Maneuvers Camps will be held in July at the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) Marine Lab

on Grand Terre Island located immediately east of Grand Isle.

Camp cosponsors include the LSU Agricultural Center's Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, LDWF, LSU Sea Grant, and the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP).

Parishes participating this summer include Allen, Assumption, Avoyelles, Caldwell, East Feliciana, Evangeline, Grant, Rapides, St. James, St. John, St. Martin, St. Mary, Tensas, Vermilion, West Carroll and Winn.

Through hands-on activities, students attending the camp learn about (1) the forces causing coastal wetland loss, (2) wetland functions and values, (3) actions that can be taken to restore the coast, (4) potential user-group conflicts associated with restoration and resource allocation, and (5) science/environmental management career opportunities.

For more information about the Marsh Maneuvers Camps, or to obtain information about becoming a 4-H club member, contact a 4-H agent in your parish Cooperative Extension Service office.

### **New CWPPRA Publication Available**

The LSU Agricultural Center's Louisiana Cooperative

Extension Service and the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program has recently completed a new brochure titled, *Coastal Wetlands Planning Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA): A Commitment to Louisiana's Coastal Wetlands*. This publication is a result of a cooperative project with CWPPRA to produce an easy to read introduction to the functions and values of coastal wetlands, the risks associated with taking no restoration actions, and the options available to help slow the rate of wetland loss along the coast through a state-federal CWPPRA partnership. Funding for the brochure was provided by CWPPRA.

If you would like one or more copies of the new CWPPRA brochure, contact this office or call the Extension Service office in your parish.

### **New Updated Private Lands Assistance Handbook Available**

A new, updated version of the publication *Private Lands Technical Assistance Handbook for Louisiana* has recently been published with Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) funding assistance. Key partners in this effort included the LSU Agricultural Center's Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (LCES), the

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

Numerous state, federal and private programs are available to help Louisiana landowners restore and improve wetlands and other wildlife habitat on their property, however, it is often impossible to obtain information on them all. In an attempt to meet this need, available educational, technical assistance, and incentive-based (cost-share and grants programs) programs are summarized by sponsoring agency or private organization. Additionally, the names and addresses of key program contacts are included for reference by interested landowners.

To obtain a free copy of the *Handbook*, contact this office or call the Extension Service office in your parish.

### **Louisiana Coastal Map #6 Available**

The sixth and last in a series of coastal and offshore fishing maps published by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is now available. The popular series of maps spans the entire Louisiana Gulf coast and provide regional information for recreational anglers.

The newest map covers a larger area than the previous maps, detailing an expanse of coastal and offshore waters from just east of the Texas state line eastward to the mouth of the Mississippi River and northward to California Bay. The new map also extends offshore to include Artificial Reef Planning Areas.

All six of the two-sided full-color maps provide information on the location of oil and gas platforms. Points of return, boat launches and water depths are indicated.

Map #1 highlights the Louisiana coast around Venice and extends west to Fourchon.

Map #2 extends from Fourchon west to Point au Fer. Map #3 details the coast from the western portion of Lake Pontchartrain eastward and southward to Chandeleur Sound. Map #4 covers the coast from Sabine Pass at the Texas state line eastward to White Lake. Map #5 covers the area from White Lake east to the Atchafalaya Bay and Morgan City.

Individual maps cost \$11 each and may be purchased at the office of the *Louisiana Conservationist*, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, 2000 Quail Drive in Baton Rouge.

You can also order by mail by writing to Rigs to Reefs Maps, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, P.O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, La. 70898-2918. Mail orders \$11.44 (including tax) per map plus \$3.50 for shipping and handling. (East Baton Rouge residents please enclose \$11.88 per map plus shipping and handling.) Credit card (MasterCard and Visa) orders are also taken.

For more information, contact Rick Kasprzak at 504/765-2375 (kasprzak\_ra@wlf.state.la.us).

Source: LDWF News Release

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## Snow Goose Overpopulation Crisis

The North American arctic nesting snow goose population has grown to such high levels that long-term and permanent damage has and continues to occur on fragile Canadian arctic nesting habitats. In an effort to address this critical problem, a work group of leading waterfowl scientists and managers from the U.S. and Canada met for a year to compile and examine scientific evidence and make management recommendations. The work group ultimately developed management strategies believed to be useful in reducing and ultimately controlling the snow goose population.

The annual mortality rate for adult snow geese is 12 percent, with about 2/3 of that resulting from hunting. Increasing the harvest by hunters is, therefore, considered the major focus of the work group recommendations.

Population control by hunters. The strategies were hunter-related population control measures included in the report:

- Spring harvest by shooting - Hunting between March 10 and September 1 is prohibited by the Migratory Bird Treaty.
- Late season hunting - Allow hunting until March 10 in all states and Canadian Provinces (this was implemented during the 1995-97 season).
- Hunting methods - Remove restrictions on hunting techniques such as electronic calls, baiting, creeping, etc.

- Subsistence harvest in far north - Work to increase the harvest of snow geese for food by northern native Canadians.
- "Egging" - Work to increase the taking of eggs for food by northern residents.
- Additional hunting on refuges - Change management practices to increase snow goose hunting opportunities on refuges.
- Awards - Develop various award programs to encourage hunters to pursue snow geese.
- Reciprocal snow goose hunting licenses - Develop license that allow hunters to pursue snow geese across state and national borders without multiple license requirements.
- Improved access to private land - Develop improved access for snow goose hunters on private lands.
- Subsidized hunting - Develop programs to reduce the cost of snow goose hunting.
- Bag and possession limits - Increase bag and possession limits and implement innovative ways to allow hunters to increase their daily take and the number of snow geese they can possess.
- Nonresident hunter restrictions - Work to reduce restrictions that inhibit snow goose hunting by nonresidents.
- Information and education programs - Develop communication programs to increase interest in snow goose hunting to improve hunters' abilities to harvest snow geese and use them for table food.

The work group recommended that appropriate management actions begin as quickly as possible, realizing that many of these strategies will be controversial. Because of this, the work group emphasized the need for effective public education and communication targeting both nonhunters and hunters.

I will keep you informed as strategies to help reduce dangerously high snow goose populations continue to be debated.

Source: North Dakota Outdoors, March 1997

For more information about any topic discussed in this newsletter, or to obtain wetland or coastal resource-related educational information, contact your parish Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service office.

Sincerely,



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Visit our website at: <http://www.agctr.lsu.edu/wwwac>

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