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**Agricultural Center**  
 Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service



**LOUISIANA  
 SEA GRANT**  
 College Program

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# Louisiana Wetlands News

## Notification of Furlough and Reduced Services to Clientele

January 1993

*During the next few months, you are likely to experience reduced services from the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, LSU Agricultural Center, as a result of budget reductions imposed on higher education by Executive Order EWE 92-71. In addition to the reduction in force that eliminated more than 40 positions, all Extension employees will be furloughed (leave without pay) for five days from January 1-May 31, 1993. These furloughs will force the closing of all Extension offices on the following days in 1993: January 25, February 15, March 29, April 26 and May 24.*

however, ownership of the land will remain with the landowner.

USDA received 2,730 intentions to participate from eligible landowners representing 466,000 acres in June 1992, but was limited by law from accepting over 50,000 acres for a total cost of \$46.4 million.

Accepted WRP bid offers will be conditional on eligible landowners providing an easement deed on the land which is free of liens and, in some cases, an official contract value appraisal will be required. ASCS will be notifying landowners with tracts that have been tentatively accepted into the WRP in the coming weeks.

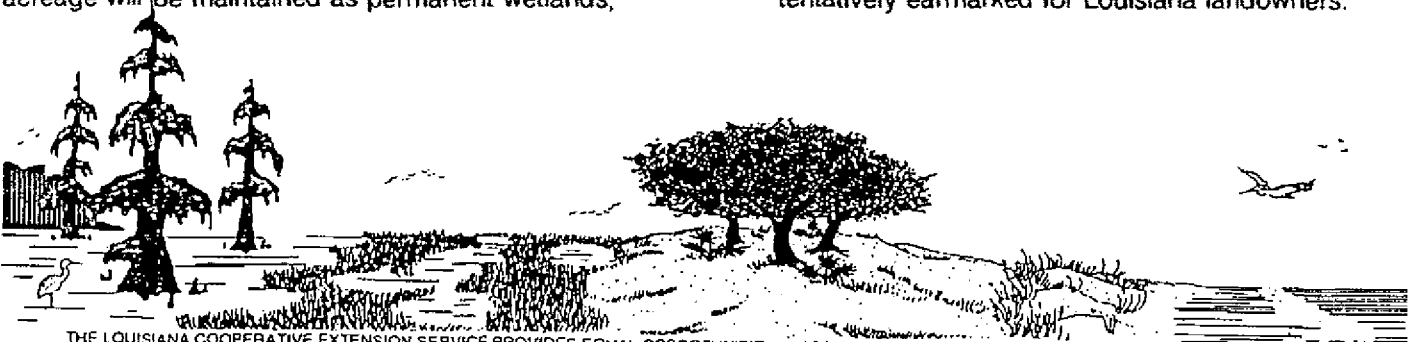
## USDA Accepts Nearly 50,000 Acres Into Pilot Wetlands Reserve Program

The table below lists the tentatively-accepted WRP acres, by state:

State	Acres Accepted	Total Cost	Avg. Cost/Acre
California	6,026.4	\$10,768,059	\$1,787
Iowa	5,095.6	5,951,304	1,168
Louisiana	14,074.7	9,882,279	702
Minnesota	705.8	764,220	1,083
Mississippi	14,885.0	10,763,893	723
Missouri	2,668.5	2,752,547	1,031
New York	71.9	212,457	2,955
North Carolina	4,712.5	3,675,276	780
Wisconsin	1,647.3	1,287,270	781
Total	49,887.7	\$46,057,305	\$923

Over 28% of the total acres and over 21% of the total dollar appropriation for the WRP Pilot Program is tentatively earmarked for Louisiana landowners.

On January 14, USDA announced the tentative acceptance of almost 50,000 acres into the \$46 million Pilot Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) in nine pilot states. Participating states include California, Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, and Wisconsin. Enrolled WRP land will require landowners to sell permanent easements to USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS). Under this program, cropland enrolled will be restored and maintained as a productive permanent wetland habitat. USDA will pay landowners for the acreage covered by the easement and up to 75% of needed wetland restoration costs. Enrolled acreage will be maintained as permanent wetlands,



Funding for future WRP enrollments, however, has not been appropriated to date. With the overwhelming success of the pilot program, additional funding could be forthcoming during the current congressional session.

## **Wetlands Protection Hotline**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is currently operating a toll-free Wetlands Protection Hotline. Through this telephone service EPA will respond to requests for information about the values and functions of wetlands and options for their protection. The Hotline also functions as a point of contact for the Wetlands Division with EPA's Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds (OWOW) to provide a wide range of information on wetlands protection efforts. Additionally, the Hotline uses an extensive contact list to direct callers to appropriate regulatory agencies or additional sources of information when necessary. Requests for certain wetlands related publications and documents are also accepted.

The Wetlands Protection Hotline operates Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The toll-free number for the Wetlands Hotline is 1-800-832-7828.

## **EPA To Use 1987 COE Wetlands Delineation Manual**

EPA recently announced that it will officially accept and follow the wetland determination and delineation guidelines outlined in the 1987 Corps of Engineers (COE) Wetlands Delineation Manual.

EPA's policy for determining jurisdictional wetlands up to now has been the 1989 Delineation Manual.

Free copies of the 1987 COE Wetlands Delineation Manual can be ordered from the Wetlands Hotline mentioned above.

## **Regional Wetland Concept Plan**

The National Wetlands Priority Conservation Plan for the Southeast Region is now available from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This plan was mandated by Section 301 of the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986. The Southeast Regional Wetland Concept Plan

is intended to provide consistent direction and guidance to federal agencies and states in identifying the types and locations of wetlands and interests in wetlands warranting priority consideration for acquisition with funds appropriated through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Priority sites were selected based on evaluation of 1) historic wetlands losses, 2) threat of future loss, and 3) wetlands functions and values of each site.

In Louisiana, 89 sites (2.4 million acres) located within 35 parishes have been nominated for acquisition. Louisiana is by far the state with the most priority sites within the Southeast Region. A nominated site will not automatically be purchased by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; acquisition decisions will depend on internal prioritization of projects and state and private organization interest and funding for specific sites. Additionally, I would assume that current owners of these sites would have to agree to sell to the FWS even if funding for acquisition is available.

To obtain a copy of the Southeast Regional Wetland Concept Plan, contact my office in Baton Rouge.

## **Overview of Louisiana's Coastal Restoration Initiatives**

Louisiana citizens overwhelmingly approved a constitutional amendment in 1989 that dedicated up to \$25 million from state oil and gas revenues each year for coastal wetland preservation and restoration activities. The state deposits these monies into the Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Fund which was also established through Act 6 passed during the 1989 Legislative Session.

The Governor's Office of Coastal Activities, the Office of Coastal Restoration and Management within the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Authority (State Wetlands Task Force) were also established under Act 6. The Wetlands Task Force is charged with developing an annual coastal restoration plan for approval by the State Legislature. The plan specifies coastal restoration projects to be funded through the state "Wetland Trust Fund" each year. The Task Force is chaired by Len Bahr, the Governor's Executive Assistant for Coastal Activities, and consists of the State Department Secretaries John Ales of DNR, Kai Midboe of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Joe Herring of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF), Brig. Gen. Jude Patin of

Transportation and Development (DOTD), Commissioner of Administration Raymond Laborde, and Executive Director of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) Brad Spicer.

In 1990 Congress approved the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act (CWPPRA) which was introduced by U.S. Senator John Breaux and supported by U.S. Senator J. Bennett Johnston (Breaux-Johnston Bill). CWPPRA is a five-year federal program dedicating \$50 million each year to coastal states for developing and implementing wetlands restoration projects. At the end of the five-year period, a Comprehensive Coastal Restoration Plan must also be completed and delivered to Congress.

CWPPRA also established an Interagency Task Force consisting of the Governor of Louisiana, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) (lead agency), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Department of Commerce (represented by NOAA and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)), U.S. Department of Agriculture (represented by the Soil Conservation Service (SCS)), and the U.S. Department of Interior (represented by the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)).

The Interagency Task Force is charged with developing the Comprehensive Coastal Restoration Plan and annual lists of "Priority Projects" that provide for long-term conservation of wetlands, dependent fish, and wildlife populations. Congress must approve the project list each year and the state must provide a 25% match to obtain CWPPRA funds. Matching funds for Louisiana Breaux-Johnston Bill projects originate from the constitutionally created state Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Fund discussed previously.

During the first year under CWPPRA (FY 1992-93), Congress appropriated \$33 million for Louisiana wetland projects. Once implemented, these projects will create or preserve 30,000 acres of vegetative marsh and directly benefit 150,000 acres of wetlands and the fish and wildlife populations these wetlands support. The CWPPRA Priority List for FY 93-94 projects has also been developed and submitted to Congress. Copies are available from my office in Baton Rouge.

For more information contact my office, the Governors Office of Coastal Activities, or the Coastal Restoration Division of DNR.

## **Wetlands Delineation Study**

Just before Congress adjourned this past fall (1992), EPA received funding (\$400,000) for a wetlands delineation study to be conducted by the National Academy of Sciences. The study will focus on evaluating the scientific validity of defining and delineating wetlands through utilization of the 1987 COE Wetlands Delineation Manual guidelines.

The study is expected to be completed at the end of 1993. Results of the study will be provided in a future issue of this newsletter.

## **Zebra Mussels in Mississippi River**

Mississippi River samples taken near Greenville, Mississippi, show the continued expansion of the zebra mussel in the United States. The zebra mussel is an exotic species native to Europe that was accidentally introduced to the Great Lakes in 1986. Zebra mussel larvae are believed to have been inadvertently released through ballast water from a ship that had recently docked in Europe. They have since rapidly spread to many river basins located throughout the eastern United States.

Problems associated with the infestation of zebra mussels have typically involved large numbers clogging water intakes used for both domestic and industrial water supplies. They also attach to boat hulls, commercial fishing nets, and other living organisms such as crawfish, clams, and other native species of mussels.

Biologists are concerned that zebra mussels may adversely affect many of the native Mississippi River Basin species of clams and mussels, many of which are listed by the federal government as either threatened or endangered.

Zebra mussels prefer colder water, and biologists believe that the warmer southern U.S. waters will limit their spread south. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will continue monitoring key points along the Mississippi River in an attempt to keep track of expanded zebra mussel movement southward.

## Wetland Publications Available

- U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) color atlas detailing the results of a five-year coastal erosion investigation conducted in cooperation with the Louisiana Geological Survey (LGS). Useful to scientists, planners, engineers, or others responsible for making decisions about the preservation, management, and utilization of Louisiana's coastal environments. Refer to Louisiana Barrier Island Erosion Study Atlas of Shoreline Changes In Louisiana from 1853 to 1989;

Miscellaneous Investigation Series 12150-A. Copies available for \$60 from either the USGS or LGS:

U.S. Geological Survey  
Books Section  
Federal Center,  
Box 25425  
Denver, CO 80225

Louisiana Geological Survey  
Box G  
University Station  
Baton Rouge LA 70893

- "Coast & Sea" - New magazine published by the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program highlighting marine and coastal research conducted by Louisiana's universities. Free subscription requests should be mailed to:

"Coast & Sea"  
La. Sea Grant Communications Office  
Louisiana State University  
Baton Rouge, LA 70803  
Ph. (504) 388-6488

- The Fragile Fringe - New book jointly produced by the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Beautifully illustrates through colorful pictures the ecology, functions, and values of coastal wetlands. Available free through the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program.

To receive the above publications or this free newsletter, "Louisiana Wetlands News," simply call your parish Cooperative Extension Service Office.

## Louisiana 1992 Beachsweep Results

Area	Number of Volunteers	Miles Cleaned	Number Pounds
Cameron	825	29.0	48,416
Grand Isle	750	7.0	40,000
Acadiana	71	5.0	3,000
Chandeleur	160	10.5	3,752
Pontchartrain	1,285	20.0	51,000
Grand Terre	124	6.0	7,320
Breton Island	65	12.0	612
Beach Totals	3,280	89.5	154,100

### Unusual Items Found

- Japanese distress signals, flares
- Two drums (one with hydraulic oil), one toothbrush
- One smashed metal utility building, stainless steel microwave oven
- Airplane wing, ski pole, dead dolphin, sea turtle, nutria
- Car axle, kitchen sink, two bras, one size 14 shoe
- Sea turtle, Asian liquor bottle, laundry basket, shoes, trash cans

If you have any questions or would like additional wetland and coastal resources related information, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,



Paul Coreil  
Area Agent (Wetland and Coastal Resources)