



Landmarks

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25 YEARS OF LISTENING, WORKING, AND REBUILDING COASTAL LOUISIANA

"I have an idea I'd like to share about coastal restoration here in Louisiana!" or something very similar is the way many ideas for the CWPPRA program begin. The goal of having citizens actively engaged in coastal restoration was a prudent one. After 25 years, the public, federal partners, and the State still work together to wisely use the funds allocated through the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA).

People intimately associated with the federal CWPPRA legislation often turn to the example that former Senators J. Bennet Johnson and John Breaux gave as motivation to continue the efforts to cooperatively help to restore Louisiana's wetlands. Passed in November of 1990, the US Congress gave Louisiana residents a chance to prove that they could expect all five CWPPRA federal agencies to work together here with the State on various wetlands restoration efforts.



Reporters visiting Pelican Island Restoration Site
Photo by: Lane Lefort

Washington's agency turf battles seem to fade as local citizens call the CWPPRA Task Force to the assignment of saving their vanishing coast. Louisiana's rich estuarine treasures of marshes, swamps, and bayous are both culturally and economically significant and need these dynamic coastal stewards. *(Continues on Page 2)*



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DATES TO REMEMBER...

Jan. 22	Task Force Meeting	Lacombe, LA
Jan. 27	Region IV Planning Team Meeting	Lafayette, LA
Jan. 28	Region III Planning Team Meeting	Houma, LA
Jan. 29	Region I & II Planning Team Meeting	Lacombe, LA

(25 Years of Listening... continued from Page 1)

According to Ms. Marietta Smith Greene in a recent oral history interview, *"We knew the problems that were facing us and it (CWPPRA) was a solution. And so we've been with CWPPRA ever since. I have been to hundreds of meetings. I have met some wonderful people with the state, and the governor's office, and the legislators in Congress at that time and we've all worked together to do this..... So, (I'm) very grateful that I have had this marvelous opportunity to help save the land, not just manage it, pay the property taxes, and do all the things that you have to do in the office but to get out in the land to see what needs to be done and have CWPPRA to help us do it."*

For citizens wanting to get involved in the process, the annual plans begin with Regional Planning Team meetings held across Louisiana the last week of January. Exact dates, times, and locations of the meetings can be found on the CWPPRA website at www.LACoast.gov/Calendar. The community is invited to present ideas of effective ways to saving wetland areas that are of value to their local district. Proposed projects are then voted on by local officials and federal officials in a "Coastwide Electronic" vote usually held in February. Citizens may choose to contact their local officials to help them guide their choices. Those projects that are moved forward in the process are evaluated

by the CWPPRA Technical Committee for merit and economic efficacy in the spring.

The CWPPRA Task Force then votes at its late May or early June meeting to select ten candidate projects for further evaluation. The public generally attends these two meetings in mass to help the leaders better understand the value of the projects. Fall meetings usually held in October finalize the choices and prepare projects for funding and construction.

During all public meetings, the community is informed about the CWPPRA program funds, construction updates, monitoring efforts, outreach efforts, and special projects. At each point in the meeting's agenda, people in the audience are invited to share their ideas and comments. This open dialogue between the CWPPRA Task Force, Technical Committee, and citizens has been the backbone for a 25-year ongoing discussion that has led to the construction of over 100 projects creating nearly 100,000 acres of new land in Louisiana and benefiting an addition 400,000 acres.

Mr. Sherrill Sagera, a long-time coastal advocate from Abbeville who attends many CWPPRA public meetings, summed it up in a recent interview, "CWPPRA is a good program, the only program, that has a funding stream...a dedicated funding stream that can get restoration done. I think CWPPRA's a good thing, and I like working with CWPPRA. The agencies are good. I don't agree with them all the time; but you know, that's human nature. You can't agree with them all the time. I think that the agencies that are within CWPPRA are trying to do a good job and they are doing a good job."

"Don't lose hope. There is a way to restore" says Kerry St. Pé, recently retired director of the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program. "We need the support of the people."

As the CWPPRA program begins its 25th anniversary year, we look back and are thankful for the coastal stewards all walks of life who have helped to protect and preserve this vanishing wetlands ecosystem. We would again like to invite the public to continue to join us in the dialogue and efforts to move forward as we restore this unique national treasure we call coastal Louisiana. ■



Oral History Day at the LSU Hill Memorial Library.
Photo Courtesy of: Sissy Albertaine

FEATURED PROJECT: SABINE REFUGE

The Sabine Refuge Marsh Creation, Cycles IV & V (CS-28-4 & 5), is located in the Sabine National Wildlife Refuge, west of LA Highway 27, in large, open water areas west of Brown's Lake in Cameron Parish, Louisiana.

The project area is experiencing marsh degradation due to saltwater intrusion, subsidence, and wind-driven erosion. Salt water migrates into the region from the Calcasieu River Ship Channel through existing canals and bayous. Wind-driven waves cause further loss of the remaining marsh fringe. This has resulted in the conversion of vegetated intermediate marsh to large shallow open water areas.

Cycles 4 & 5 consist of the creation of 230 and 232 acres (respectively) of brackish marsh platform using material dredged from the Calcasieu River Ship Channel. Approximately 1 million cubic yards of material will be placed within each of the two Sabine Refuge Cycle 4 & 5 marsh creation areas. The dredged material will be contained by earthen dikes. Low level earthen overflow weirs will be constructed to assist in the de-watering of the marsh creation disposal area and to create fringe marsh with the overflow. The dredged slurry will be placed between elevations 2.0 and 2.7 feet North American Vertical Datum 88.

The Sabine Refuge Marsh Creation Project, originally sponsored by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, was approved in 1999 as part of the Project Priority List 8 and later broken into 5 cycles. In 2001, the 214 acre Cycle 1 was constructed and in 2007 the 232 acre Cycle III was constructed. Cycle II consisted of the construction of a permanent pipeline to promote the beneficial use of material removed from the Calcasieu River Ship Channel during maintenance dredging events. This permanent pipeline was constructed in 2010. In 2012 the Corps transferred lead Federal sponsorship to FWS, which in turn signed a Cost Share Agreement with CPRA.

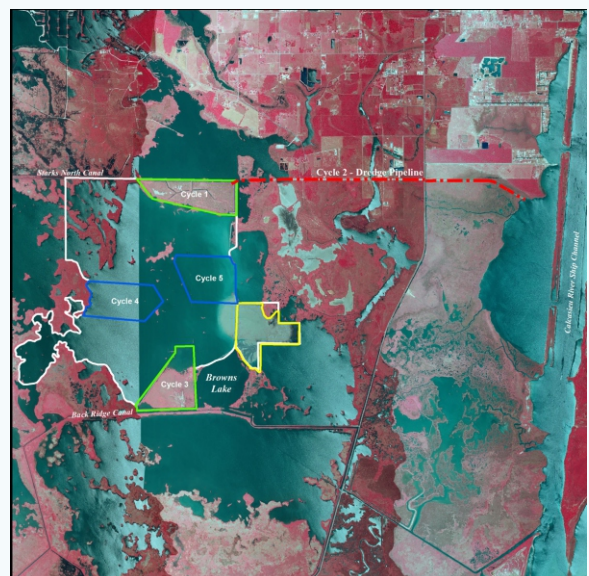
Sabine Refuge Marsh Creation, Cycles 4 & 5 (Pictured Right)

CWPPRA DISPLAY AT RAE

The 2014 Restore America's Estuaries (RAE) Summit: "Inspiring Action, Creating Resilience" was held November 1-6, 2014 at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center just outside of Washington, DC. Restore America's Estuaries is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that leads a national alliance of coastal conservation organizations across the country committed to restoring and protecting estuaries as essential resources for the Nation.

The Summit provided timely attention to the challenges and opportunities for the wetland restoration and management community. Topics and sessions during this weeklong event brought together a unique blend of people who are involved in policy, science, strategy, business, and on-the-ground implementation across all sectors.

During the 2014 event the CWPPRA Public Outreach Committee shared the "I Remember..." oral history project. Visitors to the exhibit were able to interact via QR codes and kiosks with Louisiana wetlands coastal stewards. The team received many wonderful comments during the event and people from around the nation shared their love for Louisiana coastal habitats and the people who call this habitat home. The team also enjoyed hearing visitor's stories about so many of the featured Louisiana coastal stewards. The event was a great opportunity to talk to people from around the country and to hear all the support for the ongoing work in the Louisiana wetlands!



HANDS ON CONNECTION

The Louisiana Sea Grant College Program hosted Ocean Commotion 2014 on Tuesday, October 28, 2014, at the LSU Pete Maravich Assembly Center. Each year Ocean Commotion brings about 2,500 area students, teachers and chaperones to LSU to learn about Louisiana's coast and sea from about 65 exhibitors. Exhibit viewing is divided into two time slots, each two hours in length, with the early time slot reserved for grades 5-8 students (8:45-10:45) and the other reserved for K-4 students (11:30-1:30).

The primary purpose of Ocean Commotion is to give students the chance to learn about and touch the products of the sea and coast—the aquatic animals, plants, and minerals—upon which Louisiana's citizens are so dependent.

“The Mysteries of the Hidden Boxes” was the title for this year's CWPPRA booth. Students were invited to touch different items from the wetlands and use written hints to identify the items. CWPPRA staff and student intern, Nikki Cavalier, participated in the event.

This year CWPPRA was also presented with an award for contributing in the event for 10 years.

To see a wonderful video of students in action at a variety of educational booths at Ocean Commotion visit:

<http://lamer.lsu.edu/oceancommotion/index.html>



Susan Testroet-Bergeron, CWPPRA Public Outreach Coordinator, teaches youth about the various items found in wetland habitats.



COASTAL WETLANDS PLANNING, PROTECTION AND RESTORATION ACT

RESTORING COASTAL LOUISIANA SINCE 1990

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