February 2012
Cost figures as of: March 2013

LaBranche Central Marsh Creation (PO-133)

Project Status

Approved Date: 2012 **Project Area:** 902 acres
Approved Funds: $3.88 M **Total Est. Cost:** $42.1 M
Net Benefit After 20 Years: 731 acres
Status: Engineering and Design
Project Type: Marsh Creation
PPL #: 21

Location

This project is located in the Pontchartrain Basin (Region 1), St. Charles Parish. It is bounded to the north by the railroad running parallel to I-10, to the west by the marsh fringe just east of Bayou LaBranche, to the south by Bayou Traverse and to the east by marsh fringe west of a pipeline canal.

A vulnerable Interstate 10 runs through a section of deteriorated LaBranche Wetlands. Restoration of this wetland resource will be a visible reminder of our efforts to save Louisiana's coast.

Problems

Dredging of access/flotation canals for construction of I-10 resulted in increased salinity & altered hydrology that exacerbated conversion of wetland vegetation into shallow open water bodies. Land loss is estimated to be -0.543 percent/year based on USGS data from 1984 to 2011 within the extended project boundary.

Restoration Strategy

The primary goal is to restore marsh that converted to shallow open water. Project implementation will result in an increase of fisheries and wildlife habitat, acreage, and diversity along with improving water quality. The proposed project will provide a protective wetland buffer to the railroad and I-10, the region's primary westward hurricane evacuation route, and complement hurricane protection measures in the area.

The proposed solution consists of the creation of 762 acres of emergent wetlands and the nourishment of 140 acres of existing wetlands using dedicated dredging from Lake Pontchartrain. The marsh creation area will have a target elevation the same as average healthy marsh. It is proposed to place the dredge material in the target area with the use of retention dikes along the edge of the project area. If degradation of the containment dikes has not occurred naturally by Target Year 3, gapping of the dikes will be mechanically performed. Successful wetland restoration in the immediate area (PO-17 constructed in 1994) clearly demonstrates the ability for these wetlands to be restored using material from a sustainable borrow area (outlet end of Bonnet Carre Spillway). Engineering monitoring surveys of the marsh creation area and borrow area are planned as well.

Progress to Date

This project is on Priority Project List 21.

For more project information, please contact:

Federal Sponsor:
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Alexandria, LA
(318) 473-7756

Local Sponsor:
Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority
Baton Rouge, LA
(225) 342-4736

Labranche Central Marsh Creation (PO-133)

Marsh Creation *

Project Boundary

*denotes proposed features

USGS
science for a changing world

N

0.1 0 0.1 0.2 Kilometers

0.1 0 0.1 0.2 Miles

Map Produced by:
U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey
National Wetlands Research Center
Coastal Restoration Assessment Branch
Baton Rouge, La.

Background Imagery:
2010 NAIP Photography

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