rev. March 2021
Cost figures as of: April 2024

LaBranche Central Marsh Creation (PO-133)

Project Status

Approved Date: 2012
Project Area: 747 acres
Approved Funds: $3.88 M
Total Est. Cost: $3.88 M
Net Benefit After 20 Years: 668 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.

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 change is estimated to be -0.06 percent/year based on USGS data from 1984 to 2019 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 668 acres of emergent wetlands and the nourishment of 79 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.

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.

Progress to Date

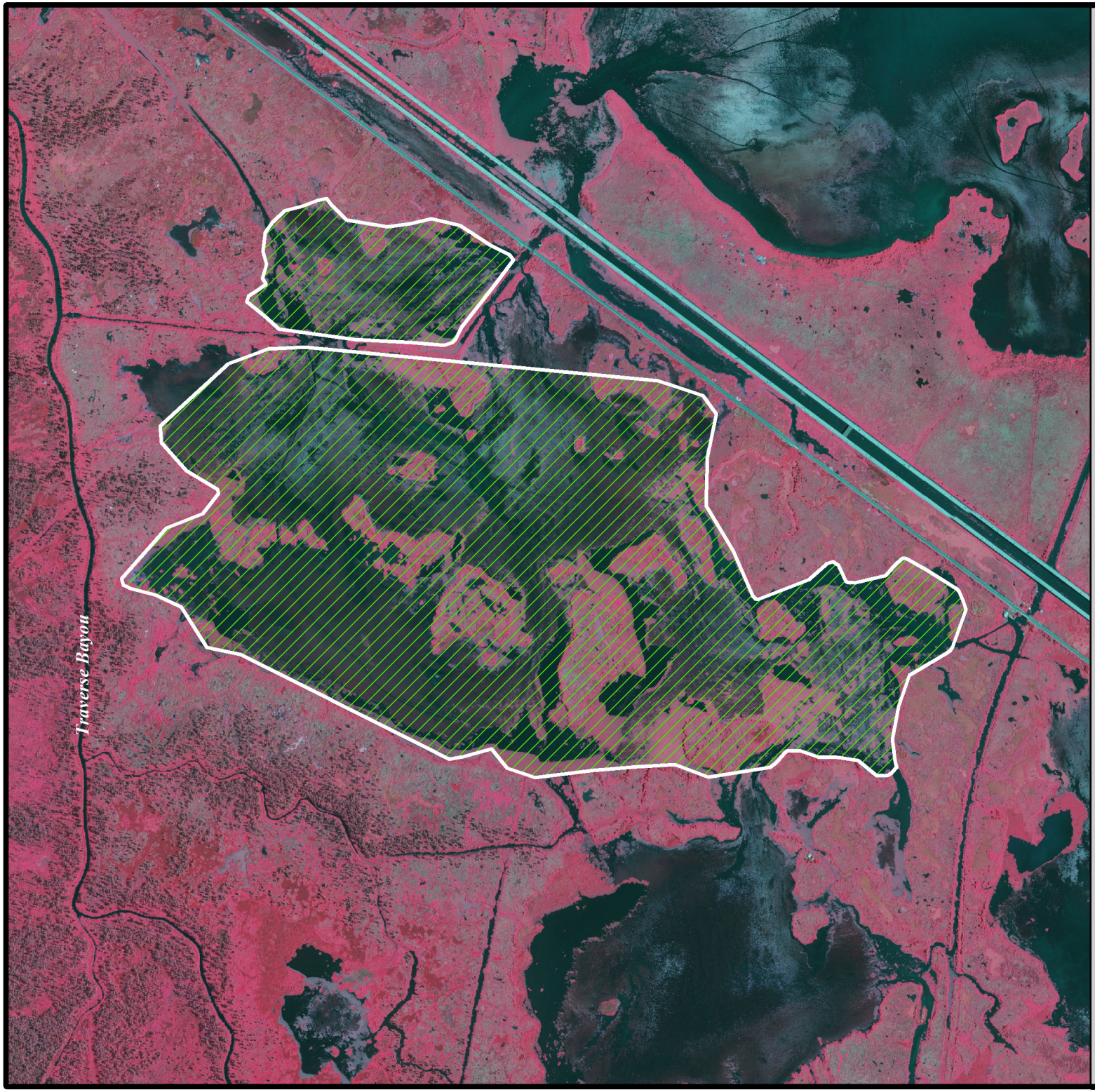
This project was approved for Phase I Engineering and Design on January 19, 2012. The project was approved for Phase II Construction on January 22, 2021.

This project is on Priority Project List (PPL) 21.

For more information, please contact:

Federal Sponsor:
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Alexandria, LA
(318) 473-775

Local Sponsor:
Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority
Baton Rouge, LA
(225) 342-4733



Labranche Central Marsh Creation (PO-133)

Marsh Creation *

Project Boundary

*denotes proposed features

USGS science for a changing world

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0.15 0 0.15 0.3 Kilometers

0.15 0 0.15 0.3 Miles

Map Produced by:
U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey
Wetland and Aquatic Research Center
Coastal and Oceans Restoration Branch
Baton Rouge, La.

Background Imagery:
2019 NAIP Photography

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