

SAVING COASTAL LOUISIANA
A National Treasure

Recommendations for Implementing
an Expanded Coastal Restoration Program

from the

COMMITTEE ON THE FUTURE OF COASTAL LOUISIANA

February 2002

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Louisiana's land loss crisis presents an emergency of untold cost to our state and nation. Since the 1930s, one million acres of wetlands have converted to open water, and without bold action on a scale never before attempted in the United States, Louisiana will lose another one million acres in the next 40 years. In the short-run, the problem is no less disturbing; every 30 minutes, a parcel of wetlands the size of a football field disappears. The implications for the nation's coastal resources are devastating. If current trends continue, nearly 40% of our nation's coastal wetlands will disappear.

The wetlands were not always under siege. The Louisiana coastal zone, which includes the Mississippi Delta and the Chenier Plain, is by far the largest continuous stretch of coastal wetlands in North America. The Mississippi Delta expanded for 8000 years, until its growth stopped in the early 1900s. This halt can be partially explained by sea level rise and subsidence. But the construction of levees and canals played a major role. Such public works projects were built to support nationally important infrastructure, navigation routes, and energy supplies, and the country's need for these assets remains strong. However, meeting these needs exacts a heavy price from Louisiana.

Fortunately, recent data have shown that Louisiana's wetlands can be restored to a sustainable level. To succeed, we must rework the coast's hydrology, using the natural processes that originally formed the wetlands. Such an engineering program will cost approximately \$14 billion and take 15 to 20 years. But this pricetag pales in comparison to the cost of allowing the wetlands to vanish. Without the wetlands, the state and nation will lose benefits worth tens of billions of dollars. These benefits include:

- storm protection;
- protection of oil and gas networks that are critical to our nation's energy security;
- protection of nationally important transportation networks;

- water quality;
- fisheries;
- protection of coastal communities and infrastructure; and
- unique, world renowned ecosystems.

Louisiana began addressing the coastal crisis in 1989 with the passage of Act 6 (LA R.S. 49:213.1, *et seq.*). This legislation was followed by the Breaux Act (16 U.S.C. 4701, *et seq.*) in 1990. Both pieces of legislation helped the state take the first steps toward reclaiming its coast, and without them, Louisiana would never have been able to begin crafting a coherent restoration program. However, the initial implementation of these legislative tools focused on small projects with local impacts. We have since learned that this piecemeal approach will not work. Instead, we must begin a landscape-scale program that attacks the root causes of the problem. The Coast 2050 report, prepared in 1998 by the Breaux Task Force and the State Wetlands Authority, outlined basic strategies for this new approach.

In a speech given at the Coastal Summit on August 15, 2001, Governor Mike Foster affirmed the value of the Coast 2050 strategies and called for concerted action to save the wetlands. Governor Foster's leadership on this issue is a first for our state and has set a new tone for the restoration effort. As part of his commitment to action, the Governor created the Committee on the Future of Coastal Louisiana and charged it with recommending ways that state government could expand its management of the coastal restoration program.

The committee members represent leaders from a variety of fields with hands-on experience managing complex policy and organizational issues. Over the course of seven meetings held between October 2001 and February 2002, the 14-member committee assessed the land loss problem, learned about the state's current restoration programs and coastal restoration efforts taking place elsewhere in the United States. Based on their analysis, the committee has developed seven recommendations for improving the state's coastal restoration management structure.

- Recommendation #1: Expand implementation of Act 6.

- Recommendation #2: Optimize internal management of the state's coastal restoration efforts.

Recommendation #3: Create the Governor's Commission on Coastal Restoration.

Recommendation #4: Maximize opportunities presented by the possible 2002 Water Resources Development Act authorization.

Recommendation #5: Ensure sufficient state funding for an expanded restoration program.

Recommendation #6: Raise public awareness of Louisiana's land loss crisis—both statewide and nationally.

Recommendation #7: Explore legislative and/or constitutional tools that address concerns such as liability issues and user conflicts.

The Governor's Committee on the Future of Coastal Louisiana believes that these recommendations offer a starting point for a renewed coastal restoration effort—an effort that all Louisianians must support if we are to preserve our state's future.

Mission of the Governor's Committee on the Future of Coastal Restoration:

The mission of the Committee On The Future Of Coastal Louisiana is to recommend to the Governor changes and new procedures in state methods and practices regarding coastal restoration so that the state speaks with one voice, united and focused; further that long-term implementation of coastal restoration proceeds as expeditiously as possible in an adequately funded, orderly, and systematic manner predicated on sound engineering and scientific analysis, all through a process that assures accountability.

INTRODUCTION

The Sportsman's Paradise, the Bayou State, the home of the Big Easy—common images of Louisiana suggest a place of carefree leisure where the scenery never changes. And yet, Louisiana's scenery is changing, changing so quickly that unless we take action now, life in our state will never be the same.

The swamps and marshes that adorn thousands of tourists' postcards are vanishing before our eyes. Since the 1930s, one million acres of the nation's coastal land has been lost in Louisiana—a piece of geography the size of Rhode Island. Without decisive action on a scale never before attempted in the U.S., Louisiana will lose another million acres in the next 40 years. Louisiana's extreme land loss rates threaten nearly 40% of our nation's coastal wetlands.

Why are our wetlands disappearing? Simply put, the natural processes that created and sustained the Louisiana coastal zone have been altered. Before we encased the Mississippi River in levees, the river's annual floods deposited vast amounts of sediment across the region. This sediment nourished the wetlands, building new land in the river's deltaic plain and in the Chenier Plain further west. Without a doubt, levees are a necessity, not just for protecting local infrastructure, but for meeting national needs for navigation, flood control, and security. However, this protection has come at a cost. The levees channel the river's sediment directly into the Gulf of Mexico; as a result, the wetlands have lost their most important source of regenerative material.

Canals dug in the wetlands have also played a role. Numerous navigation canals such as the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, the Calcasieu Ship Channel, and the Houma Navigational Canal have all had an enormous impact on surrounding wetlands. Canals were also dug for oil and gas exploration and production, as well as private access. These canals have encouraged salt water intrusion and disrupted the natural flow of water that keeps the wetlands healthy. As with the Mississippi River levees, the nation reaps great benefits from all of these construction projects, not

only during peacetime, but more importantly in times of national crisis. However, only one state—Louisiana—is paying the price.

Sea level rise and the natural sinking of the landscape intensify the problem. As land sinks and the sea rises, more salt water is able to invade coastal areas. This trend, in combination with other factors that harm wetlands, have resulted in the extreme land loss rates Louisiana is now experiencing. Every 30 minutes, a parcel of wetlands the size of a football field converts to open water (CWPPRA Task Force and State Wetlands Authority, 1998, Coast 2050 Report).

Louisiana and the nation are facing an emergency of untold cost. The wetlands that have eroded so far don't just represent one million missing acres, they represent the loss of what sustains much of our state's economy, culture, and national image, not to mention our nation's fundamental requirements for energy, shipping, coastal fisheries, and other resources. If we allow another one million acres to be lost in the next 40 years, we will guarantee even more devastating results. No other state has ever experienced, or even been threatened by, a crisis on so broad a scale—a crisis measured in ecological, economic, cultural, and human terms.

Resources at Risk

Fortunately, recent data have shown that the coast can be restored to a sustainable level. To succeed, we must work with the processes that originally formed the wetlands, while at the same time meeting the needs of the human communities along the Mississippi River and throughout south Louisiana. Maintaining this balance will require us to rework the coast's hydrology by implementing a landscape-scale engineering program larger than any our nation has ever seen. Such a program will cost approximately \$14 billion and take 15 to 20 years to complete. But as the examples below illustrate, solving the problem will be infinitely cheaper than maintaining the status quo.

•**Storm protection.** Our wetlands protect all of south Louisiana from storms and floods. Scientists estimate that every 2.7 miles of wetlands absorb one foot of storm surge, creating a natural buffer zone (USCOE, 1961). One estimate has placed the wetlands' annual storm protection value at between \$208 and \$904 per acre of wetland lost per year (Costanza, Farber, and Maxwell, 1989.) Using these figures, the 2.5 million acres of wetlands that line our coast today have annual storm protection values of between \$520 million and \$2.2 billion, with the average exceeding \$1.3 billion. In addition, our levees are designed to work in tandem with the sheltering wetlands. If the wetlands continue to erode, our flood protection system will be severely compromised. The ever increasing cost of fortifying the levee system against the direct assault of storms will consume billions of taxpayer dollars—far more than has been allocated for this need to date.

•**Coastal communities and infrastructure.** Perhaps the most immediate costs are being paid by the people and communities of coastal Louisiana. These communities, including New Orleans, Houma, Golden Meadow, and Cameron, depend on the wetlands and barrier islands to protect them from storm surges. Not only homes and businesses, but roads, schools, utilities, and city buildings—all of the physical assets that support coastal communities—need the shelter afforded by the wetlands. As the coast disappears, so does the region's most basic means of flood protection, a fact recognized in the recent *Scientific American* (2001) article entitled "The Drowning of New Orleans."

Even on the sunniest of days, land loss diminishes our coast's viability as a place to live and work. Already, communities are seeing their tax base disintegrate. Insurance is becoming difficult to obtain and ever more costly. Salt water intrusion is tainting fresh water supplies. And businesses looking for safe, affordable places to locate or expand are threatening to take their investment dollars elsewhere. Finally, the coastal landscape that has supported south Louisiana culture for hundreds of years is shrinking—and taking this world renowned culture with it.

•**Oil and gas networks.** Louisiana's wetlands and barrier islands protect our nation's energy infrastructure. More than 80% of the nation's offshore oil and gas is produced off Louisiana's

coast, and 25% of all the nation's foreign and domestic oil comes across Louisiana's shore by tanker, barge, or pipeline. The coastal zone also contains the Louisiana Offshore Oil Port; two storage sites for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve; and the Henry Hub, one of the nation's major natural gas distribution centers. As the wetlands erode, this infrastructure becomes increasingly vulnerable to damage from hurricanes and other storms.

Loss of coastal wetlands threatens the jobs provided by oil and gas support industries, suppliers, and contractors. Louisiana has 3,819 suppliers in 165 different communities, who received an estimated \$2.4 billion in oil and gas related business in 1992 (Waldemar Nelson, 2002). If these businesses lose their link to Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas activities, key sources of revenue and jobs will disappear.

There are more than 30,000 oil and gas wells at risk in coastal Louisiana—not counting the thousands of miles of pipelines that depend on barrier islands, cheniers, and wetlands for protection. The equipment was designed for sheltered, inland conditions, but it is now increasingly exposed to open water. In the long-term, this infrastructure cannot withstand the force of Gulf water conditions, and will ultimately have to be abandoned, replaced, or repaired—at great cost. Damage to infrastructure will not only impact the price and consistent delivery of oil and gas products, it will also increase the likelihood of oil leaks and spills, some of which may be catastrophic.

•**Transportation networks.** Unless we take action soon, 155 miles of protected inland waterways will be exposed to open water by 2050. All told, nearly 3,000 miles of deep and shallow-draft channels are threatened by coastal land loss (Waldemar Nelson, 2002). Such a threat impinges on national security and threatens economic markets. Forty-one percent of the markets in America's heartland depend on the international trade conducted in coastal Louisiana (CRCL, 2000). In 1994, ports in Minneapolis alone exported more than 70 million tons of food and farm products directly through facilities on the lower Mississippi River (CRCL, 2000). The continued collapse of our coast will endanger vital navigation corridors and require taxpayers to spend billions on increased maintenance for highways, bridges, and other transportation networks.

•**Water quality.** Louisiana lies at the bottom of the funnel shaped Mississippi River Basin, which drains 41% of the continental U.S. The river brings nutrient rich runoff from 31 states and two Canadian provinces through Louisiana's coastal zone and into the Gulf of Mexico. If left unfiltered, these high concentrations of nutrients can upset the natural balance needed to support fish habitats in waterways. Wetlands trap many of these sediments and nutrients, converting them into biologically useful materials. This purification function has an estimated mean value of \$325 per acre per year (Waldemar Nelson, 2002). Not surprisingly, the loss of swamps and marshes along Louisiana's coast, and the enclosure of the river between levees has increased the nutrient load pouring into the Gulf. Scientists have found a hypoxia or "dead" zone in the Gulf just south of Louisiana that is linked to Mississippi River discharges (Rabalais *et al.*, 1995).

Wetland loss also endangers fresh water supplies. Salty gulf water now reaches further north than ever before, affecting water allocated for drinking supplies, agriculture, and other commercial uses. Although problems with saltwater intrusion have occurred since the early 1960s, the scope and frequency of these incidents are increasing. In 1999, saltwater intrusion in the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway forced Terrebonne Parish to switch its source of drinking water. High salinity in Bayou Lafourche has also caused temporary shutdowns of industry (Waldemar Nelson, 2000).

•**Fisheries.** Each year, Louisiana's commercial and recreational fishing industries contribute over \$3 billion to the state's economy alone. On a national level, one-third of the commercial fish harvested in the lower 48 states comes from Louisiana's coastal zone (CRCL, 2000). In addition, our coastal estuaries and wetlands serve as nurseries for many of the nation's fish and shellfish. Over 95% of the commercially harvested fish in the Gulf of Mexico spend part of their lives in Louisiana's coastal zone (Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, 1998). As our coastal wetlands disappear, so will the fisheries. By 2050, the annual value of lost fisheries could top \$500 million, unless we take decisive action now (CRCL, 2000).

•**Unique ecosystems.** Louisiana's wetland ecosystems are celebrated for their beauty and diverse wildlife. Although the intrinsic value of these habitats cannot be expressed in dollar figures, their

value is strongly felt by residents and visitors alike. People from around the globe are drawn to this land, which is like no other on earth. With each day that wetland loss continues, this precious national resource declines, diminishing the landscape we enjoy today and tarnishing the legacy we leave future generations.

•**Widespread impact.** The consequences of coastal land loss affect every Louisiana citizen, not just those who live near the coast. Besides the loss of culture and ecosystems that can never be replaced, our state's revenue will shrink as industrial activities cease, cities and towns are abandoned, and our tax base washes away. The ripple effects will also be felt beyond our state borders. From farmers in the midwest, to city dwellers in the northeast, to manufacturers in California—the entire nation's quality of life and economy will be harmed by Louisiana's coastal crisis. The federal government's revenue streams will also be affected as the Corps of Engineers, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Environmental Protection Agency, and other agencies are forced to spend taxpayer funds to offset the disastrous effects of wetlands loss.

While it is true that the entire nation has a stake in our coast, Louisiana citizens cannot assume that those beyond our borders will take responsibility for solving this problem. We have sought help from national partners and will continue to do so, but our state's residents and its political, business, and civic institutions must lead the way. Only when our entire state sends a clear message about the need to tackle this problem on a massive scale will we be able to create the national awareness and momentum required to save our coast. There are sound precedents for this level of public involvement. In 1990, Louisiana citizens overwhelmingly approved a constitutional amendment that dedicated Wetlands Fund dollars to coastal restoration (LA Const. Art. 7, §10.2). This civic demonstration of concern for the coast must be encouraged and expanded as we move forward.

Lessons Learned

•**Act 6 (LA. R.S. 49:213.1, et seq.)**. In 1989, the state legislature took a decisive stand on coastal erosion by passing Act 6. The act recognized the catastrophic nature of Louisiana's land loss rates and provided new tools for addressing the crisis. These tools included the establishment of the Governor's Office of Coastal Activities, the Office of Coastal Restoration and Management in the Department of Natural Resources, and the State Wetlands Authority. The act also created a state fund to provide restoration dollars.

However, at the time the act was written, we were not certain about the extent of the problem or how to halt coastal erosion. The authors and first administrators of the act did not know that the solution would require an expenditure of approximately \$14 billion and a landscape-scale engineering program spanning 15 to 20 years. As a result, while Act 6 offered a sound framework for getting started, its provisions and initial implementation fell far short of what was needed to fully address the problem.

•**The Breaux Act (16 U.S.C. 4701, et seq.)**. Enacted in 1990 by the U.S. Congress, the act has since provided an average of \$36 million each year in federal dollars for restoration projects in Louisiana. This visionary piece of legislation provided funding at a crucial stage, and without it, Louisiana would never have been able to sustain a viable coastal restoration program. As the state began using Breaux Act funds, it forged partnerships with federal agencies and gained invaluable experience about how to design successful restoration projects. In this way, the act provided an essential platform for the long-term development of our approach to coastal restoration. However, throughout the 1990s, Breaux Act funds tended to be used for small projects with limited impacts. We now know that such an approach will not succeed. As with Act 6, the Breaux Act helped us take the first steps toward reclaiming our coast, but it was never designed to handle the large scale engineering program that we now know is necessary.

•**Coast 2050: Toward a Sustainable Coastal Louisiana.** In 1998, the Breaux Act Task Force and the State Wetlands Authority published the Coast 2050 report, which provided a conceptual outline for approaching the next, and most important phase of the coastal restoration effort. Although it does not offer detailed solutions or comprehensive plans, the report serves as a reconnaissance study that provides strategies for implementing a \$14 billion restoration program. These strategies, which have been endorsed by all of Louisiana's partners at the local, state, and national levels, presuppose the need for river diversions and the renewal of barrier islands. The Corps of Engineers and the state of Louisiana are now developing a step by step program for applying the strategies to specific projects. The report is also undergoing a peer review by the National Research Council.

A New Approach

It has been more than 10 years since we began giving greater attention to restoring our coast. The experience we have gained in the past decade has taught us two lessons:

- Our coast, and everything that depends on it, is in serious trouble.
- The fight to save south Louisiana is still ours to win if we act decisively.

While we have learned a great deal, neither our past experience nor the strategies expressed in the Coast 2050 report tell us how to do this vital work. Specifically, they don't tell us:

- how to manage such a vast undertaking;
- how to ensure that the best science and engineering are used;
- how to involve and be accountable to the stakeholders who play essential roles in protecting our coast; or
- how to pay for a \$14 billion program.

In September 2001, Governor Mike Foster established the Committee on the Future of Coastal Louisiana to begin answering these questions. Specifically, he charged the committee with suggesting new procedures and methods that state government could use to restore the coast more quickly and effectively. The committee's members are leaders with a variety of backgrounds and areas of expertise. What the committee members have in common is experience, both in administering organizations and in solving complex problems. The committee members also share a zeal to save our coast, and a recognition of the massive undertaking that such an effort will entail.

The committee met seven times between October 2001 and February 2002. During its meetings, the committee gathered information about coastal restoration and planning efforts, both in Louisiana and nation-wide. The committee learned which options have worked, which options have failed, and which options need improvement. After synthesizing this information, the committee members developed the recommendations presented below. These recommendations offer a structure for managing the challenges ahead, while insuring additional accountability and substantive results.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A multi-billion dollar coastal restoration program—Louisiana has never seen anything like it. And without continued direction from the governor’s office, we never will. No one but our governor can eliminate the bottlenecks, marshal the resources, and keep us focused on the urgency of saving the lower third of our state from the sea.

Governor Foster’s words at the Coastal Summit of August 15, 2001 set a new precedent for leadership on this issue. He affirmed that we must move beyond curing the symptoms of land loss and instead attack the root causes of the problem. The Governor’s call to action inspired a renewed sense of purpose among citizens, local officials, and partners in state and federal agencies.

In order to bring the coast’s natural systems back into balance, Governor Foster has endorsed the strategies of the Coast 2050 program. These strategies support the use of a holistic engineering plan and the best available science to restore a sustainable coastline from the Mississippi Delta to the Louisiana Chenier Plain.

Having framed the issues so effectively, the Foster administration must now establish a government structure that will restore our coast—both in the short and long-term. This structure must ensure continuity of purpose, so that future administrations maintain an aggressive coastal restoration effort well into the 21st Century.

As part of this effort, the Governor must make coastal restoration a state-wide priority. Without the support of state legislators, we will not be able to pay the coastal restoration bill. And without coordination on this issue throughout state government, projects undertaken by one agency may undermine efforts of another. We cannot afford such missteps. Through his demonstrated commitment to coastal restoration, the Governor can help all of us—state employees, legislators, private citizens, and business interests—make a sustained leap of faith about what we can accomplish together.

At the same time, the Governor must also use all possible national forums to give heightened prominence to the role of Louisiana's coast, and in particular the remarkable Mississippi River Delta. The Governor should stress the coast's national economic and ecological importance in order to garner support for a comprehensive coastal restoration program.

The need for prompt and united action is acute. Louisiana's rapidly deteriorating coast threatens to destroy much of our state's economy, along with irreplaceable cultural and natural resources. Over \$150 billion worth of municipal and industrial infrastructure is at risk, including roads, pipelines, ports, and related facilities. Without the wetlands' protection, we may well be obliged to abandon these assets over the next 40 years. The Governor's Committee on the Future of Coastal Louisiana believes that this scenario is totally unacceptable.

Although both Louisiana and its federal partners have accomplished a great deal in the last decade, prior coastal restoration efforts have had only piecemeal effects. There is now a widespread consensus that we must begin a comprehensive construction program for the entire Louisiana coast. This program, which has been priced at approximately \$14 billion, will represent the largest environmental engineering effort in U.S. history.

To support this robust approach to coastal restoration, we must:

- create a reorganized and rejuvenated coastal restoration management structure;
- designate tens of millions of dollars in state capital and in-kind expenditures that will meet the requirements of an expanded program; and
- develop a focused message that helps citizens throughout Louisiana, the nation, and the world understand the crisis to be solved and our great prospects for success.

The Governor's Committee on the Future of Coastal Louisiana offers the recommendations below as the framework for securing Louisiana's future prosperity, both now and in the coming decades.

Recommendation #1: Expand implementation of Act 6.

When the Louisiana Legislature passed Act 6 in 1989, the state gained a well-framed and progressive piece of legislation. The act established the Governor's Office of Coastal Activities, the Office of Coastal Restoration and Management, the State Wetlands Authority, the state Wetlands Fund, and broad coastal restoration goals. Unfortunately, Act 6 has not been used as fully as its authors intended. This situation is the result of several factors.

- Our first restoration efforts were based on an incomplete understanding of the complex processes that cause coastal erosion. Since then, we have developed a better grasp of the problem, and our revamped engineering solutions reflect this new level of expertise.
- Act 6 established separate lines of authority for the state agencies involved in coastal restoration. As projects were developed, however, inter-agency coordination became tangled. Conflicts over agency jurisdictions had a divisive effect and caused our federal partners to question Louisiana's commitment to effective action.
- At the outset of Louisiana's coastal restoration effort, the state shaped the scope of its efforts to fit existing federal programs. This approach allowed state agencies to maximize the resources at hand and provided a support structure for continuing the program while Louisiana developed specific strategies for restoring its coast. Now that these strategies have been determined as outlined in the Coast 2050 report, the state is ready to bring a more comprehensive vision to the table when discussing program parameters with federal partners.

- Mike Foster is the first Louisiana Governor to make coastal restoration an executive priority. Although positive actions were taken during previous administrations, former governors did not consistently support these efforts. As a result, the majority of the tasks outlined in Act 6 were either not undertaken or were completed on an ad hoc basis.

The Governor's Committee on the Future of Coastal Louisiana recommends that the framework established by Act 6 continue to be used to accomplish our coastal restoration goals, *as long as*:

- the act is implemented as required for a large scale program;
- the participants understand and embrace their responsibilities;
- the Governor's office is prepared to demand total accountability from all state agencies relative to their coastal restoration responsibilities;
- all state actions affecting the integrity of coastal resources are reviewed in the context of Act 6's mandate for a comprehensive coastal restoration program; and
- ongoing assessments of the system's effectiveness are conducted (see Conclusion).

Recommendation #1, Action Step #1: The Governor should fully equip the Governor's Office of Coastal Activities (GOCA), providing the financial, logistical, and political support the office needs to lead the state's coastal restoration effort.

- The Governor's Executive Assistant for Coastal Activities directs the GOCA. In light of the evolution of the coastal program, the Committee on the Future of Coastal Louisiana recommends hiring a nationally recognized professional for this position.

The Executive Assistant should have planning, organizational, and administrative skills, as well as a detailed working understanding of the complex issues facing coastal Louisiana. He or she must be able to work with diverse stakeholders, from congressional delegates to citizens who live along the coast's rivers and bayous. He or she must also have considerable stature, both in Louisiana and in Washington D.C., as well as proven skills at coordinating complex multi-agency projects. Recognizing that many state residents possess a wealth of expertise on this issue, initial recruitment efforts for this position should focus on candidates who live in Louisiana. However, if the proper person cannot be found in state, we encourage the Governor to conduct a national search.

- The GOCA should prepare a workplan describing how it will accomplish its responsibilities under an expanded program, as outlined in Act 6. These responsibilities include taking the lead in coastal restoration policy making, spearheading the state's outreach effort, insuring coordination among participating agencies, and minimizing opportunities for conflict between the state's restoration program and other activities taking place along the coast. A draft workplan should be submitted to the Governor's Commission on Coastal Restoration (see Recommendation #3) within three months; a final plan should be completed in six months. This work should begin immediately, keeping in mind that the new Executive Assistant may choose to revisit elements of the plan as well as any hiring decisions.

- The Executive Assistant should be authorized to speak for the Governor and the state on all coastal restoration issues. The Executive Assistant should synthesize the various perspectives of agency participants as well as develop and deliver the state's official position to Congress, the legislature, and the nation. Coordination and cooperation with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Office of Coastal Restoration and Management will be critical components of this task.

- The Executive Assistant should immediately begin work with the DNR's Office of Coastal Restoration and Management on policies and procedures that will govern the working relationship of the two offices. Such procedures should eliminate possible conflicts of responsibility between the two offices and ensure that they speak with one voice on coastal restoration issues. As part of this task, the Office of Coastal Restoration and Management should be recognized as having a role in planning, as well as responsibility for construction, monitoring, and daily management of the state's coastal restoration program. DNR personnel should plan to provide the GOCA with regular briefings on these activities.

- At least six new positions should be established within the GOCA to handle the office's broad mission. These positions will supervise intergovernmental relations, state and national outreach, and budgets. Office space and resources commensurate with this staffing level must also be allocated.

- The GOCA should coordinate with entities conducting other major public and private initiatives affecting the coast, such as transportation planning, flood control projects, and hurricane protection activities. This will ensure that coastal restoration is done in tandem with large scale undertakings in other fields, thereby minimizing duplication, as well as missed opportunities for partnerships, and possible conflicts.

- As part of the increase in staff, the GOCA should create the position of Director of Applied Science. The appointee to this position will report to the Executive Assistant. The Director of Applied Science, in coordination with the members of the State Wetlands Authority, will organize and administer an applied research and development program designed to provide guidance for monitoring and evaluating the technical aspects of the state's coastal restoration efforts. In this capacity, the Director of Applied Science, working in concert with our federal partners and

members of the State Wetlands Authority, will:

- a. develop standard scientific, ecologically-based criteria, such as the productivity of affected wetlands, to provide guidelines for the optimal design and operation of coastal restoration projects. These criteria should also be used by the DNR's Office of Coastal Restoration and Management to evaluate restoration project effectiveness.
- b. provide an independent source of peer-reviewed scientific information about Louisiana's progress on coastal restoration; and
- c. coordinate applied research and development at all involved state universities, as well as committed private universities and outside entities.

Recommendation #1, Action Step #2: The Governor should clarify the mission of the State Wetlands Authority, enhance support for the authority, and highlight the need for inter-agency coordination among the authority's members.

- The Governor should make State Wetlands Authority meetings a priority for all secretaries of member agencies. Without the consistent and active participation of the member secretaries, the state will be unable to implement a cohesive coastal restoration plan.

- The members of the State Wetlands Authority should develop a list of needs that must be met in order for them to carry out their future and expanded responsibilities as described in Act 6. The members should also describe how they will approach

these responsibilities by creating an inventory of possible activities and expenditures. This inventory will highlight cost share opportunities as well as important programs that should be included in the state's restoration plan.

- The Executive Assistant for Coastal Activities, who chairs the State Wetlands Authority, should focus meeting agendas on matters of broad policy. The State Wetlands Authority members may consider programmatic details if a significant issue arises, but such details should not dominate meetings. The State Wetlands Authority could schedule informal briefings, attended by specified agency representatives, if certain issues need to be examined in depth. This approach will inform agency secretaries about program particulars, while reserving formal State Wetlands Authority meetings for macro-level discussions.

- As the state expands its coastal restoration efforts to effectively manage a \$14 billion program, the agencies represented on the State Wetlands Authority must have a regular forum for discussing the technical details of program implementation. To this end, we recommend the formation of an interagency team composed of technical personnel from each agency on the State Wetlands Authority. This team would meet regularly, under the direction of the Executive Assistant for Coastal Activities, to build inter-agency cohesion as programs come on line.

Recommendation #1, Action Step #3: Provide the staff and resources that will allow the Department of Natural Resources to fulfill its responsibilities under an expanded coastal restoration program.

- Act 6 established the office of Coastal Restoration and Management within the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to participate in planning, and to construct and manage the state's coastal restoration projects. The scope of these duties has grown dramatically as the Breaux Act and Coast 2050 programs have

taken shape. However, the DNR's staff levels have not kept pace with the department's growing responsibilities. In addition, the department's current structure, created in 1989, may not maximize the levels of expertise among staff members. The DNR's lack of staff capacity compromises the state's ability to implement programs operating now, much less the programs that will be implemented as we obtain a \$14 billion federal authorization for coastal restoration. These staffing challenges must be corrected if we are to effectively manage a multi-billion dollar effort.

- Staff requirements of other State Wetlands Authority member agencies should be reviewed to ensure that they can fully support an expanded coastal restoration effort.

Recommendation #1; Action Step #4: Encourage continued coordination of planning efforts between the State Wetlands Authority and federal partners in order to develop and provide for the implementation of a comprehensive coastal restoration plan. These federal partners include: the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Resource Conservation Service.

Recommendation #2: Optimize internal management of the state's coastal restoration efforts.

Louisiana is not guaranteed to receive billions in federal funding for coastal restoration. But if our state is awarded federal appropriations, we must be prepared to use the funds wisely. We must also coordinate activity among numerous agencies in order to meet complex contractual agreements with our federal partners. This will require state agencies to apply consistent policies over many years. Such consistency may prove difficult, due to competing priorities and mandates. At the same time,

state agencies must remain flexible enough to adjust their approaches if changing fiscal needs or new technical information warrant course corrections. These issues will be exacerbated by changes in administrations, agency personnel, and legislative leadership.

To support participating state agencies as they meet these challenges, the Governor, through the Executive Assistant, should direct the State Wetlands Authority to create a coastal restoration management team. The team should meet not less than semi-annually to review the overall activity of the state agencies and make sure their work is in accord with the objectives of Louisiana's restoration program. As part of this review, the team should identify in advance any obstacle that could slow or impede the fulfillment of the state's financial and contractual obligations. The team must also examine if and how prior activities may have created impediments to progress. The Executive Assistant should brief the Governor on the team's findings to keep the administration up to date on progress.

The team should consist of State Wetlands Authority members, as well as legislative leaders, and the Chairperson of the Governor's Commission on Coastal Restoration (see Recommendation #3). Given the breadth of new challenges facing state agencies under an expanded coastal restoration program, the management team's troubleshooting function should bring substantial benefits.

Recommendation #3: Create the Governor's Commission on Coastal Restoration.

Troubleshooting is important, not just for management issues, but also for the entire coastal restoration effort. To fulfill this role, a Governor's Commission on Coastal Restoration should be immediately established. The commission should be initially established by order of the Governor, and then confirmed by legislative action. Conservation and coastal restoration efforts elsewhere in the nation have used such commissions to evaluate the efficiency of their programs, keep program

activities a high priority in state government over successive administrations, and give critical stakeholders a direct voice in program activities.

In Louisiana, the Governor's Commission on Coastal Restoration would assist, advise, and report to the Governor on state activities related to or affecting coastal restoration. Specifically, the commission would be charged with the following duties:

- provide advice to the Governor and Executive Assistant about the overall direction of the state's coastal restoration program;
- provide general support and leadership for coordinating activities among state agencies on coastal restoration projects;
- foster cooperation on coastal restoration issues between federal, state, and local government agencies, national conservation organizations, and the private sector;
- advise the Governor on the resolution of conflicts among agencies and stakeholders related to coastal erosion, as well as activities in the coastal zone that could conflict with the restoration program;
- gather timely and authoritative information about the conditions and trends of coastal restoration, analyze and interpret this information in order to identify impediments to the coastal restoration effort, and submit these analyses to the Governor;
- evaluate the state's various coastal restoration programs to ensure that the best science and engineering are used for decision making, and make recommendations to the Governor about how these programs could be improved;

- conduct or recommend reviews, studies, and analyses of coastal restoration programs to ensure that funds are spent in the best interest of the state;
- develop an annual report on the state of the coast, describing progress made and challenges remaining. The report would be submitted to the Governor and members of the state legislature.
- at the Governor's request, furnish additional reports and recommendations about policy and legislation that could affect the coastal restoration effort.

Having an independent commission regularly evaluate the coastal program will not only help ensure accountability among all state participants, it will enhance the program's credibility among our national partners.

The commission would include up to 15 members. The majority of these individuals would be Louisiana residents, but out-of-state representatives may also be asked to serve. The commission members would be leaders in the business, academic, non-profit, conservation, and industrial communities. In its first year, the commission would meet quarterly; meetings may become less frequent in subsequent years. The Governor's office would provide appropriate staff and funding for the commission.

The commission would be authorized to create an executive committee to conduct the group's business between meetings. The executive committee would be composed of a chairperson appointed by the Governor, and at least three other commission members. The six year terms of the commission members would be staggered, with the Governor appointing two members every even numbered year and three members every odd numbered year. The staggered terms of commission members would ensure continuity of voice as administrations and state employees change.

The commission would be authorized to establish subcommittees to explore issues and concerns such as river diversions, outreach, and application of scientific options. These subcommittees would

perform targeted inquiries within specific time limits. Recognizing that there are diverse stakeholders who have a significant interest in Louisiana's coastal restoration effort, individuals outside the commission would be recruited to serve on these subcommittee, thereby increasing the pool of expertise involved.

Recommendation #4: Maximize opportunities presented by the possible 2002 Water Resources Development Act authorization.

The federal Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) is the primary vehicle for funding large-scale coastal restoration programs through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. As such, WRDA could be an important tool for Louisiana's renewed coastal restoration effort. Louisiana's federal and state partners intend to pursue a WRDA authorization in 2002. If approved, this authorization will establish a task force charged with developing a detailed plan for the restoration of Louisiana's coast. The plan developed by the task force will form the framework for a larger WRDA appropriation request in 2004.

The final decisions about the membership of the advisory task force will be made by the U.S. Congress. However, the Governor's Committee on the Future of Coastal Louisiana feels it is critical that the task force have access to the experience and perspectives that can only come from representatives of Louisiana's coastal program. Therefore, we strongly support the participation of the following people on the advisory task force: the Executive Assistant for Coastal Activities, the Secretary of DNR, the Commissioner of Administration, and the Chairperson of the Governor's Commission on Coastal Restoration.

Recommendation #5: Ensure sufficient state funding for an expanded restoration program.

The pricetag for coastal restoration in Louisiana is estimated at \$14 billion, not counting long-term operations and maintenance. But before we receive billions of dollars at national taxpayer expense, Louisianians must prove that we are ready to pay our fair share—between \$150 and \$200 million—every year for 15 to 20 years.

We must show our federal partners that we have rearranged our funding priorities to guarantee this cost share for the long haul. Unless we can demonstrate that we have made arrangements, in advance, to meet our financial commitment year after year, our chances of attracting federal funding are remote.

Creating and maintaining this stable state revenue stream will require a level of fiscal discipline not traditionally associated with election cycles of two, four, or six years. The Governor and legislature must make long-term decisions that may conflict with short-term, politically expedient strategies. State leaders must identify alternative sources of funding and dedicate them to coastal restoration. However difficult this might seem, the alternative is worse. These leaders must guarantee the state's contribution to coastal restoration, or national funding for our cause will evaporate. If this occurs, our generation will bear the responsibility for a catastrophic loss of infrastructure, jobs, culture, and natural resources.

Recommendation #5, Action Step #1: The Governor and legislature must identify \$150 to \$200 million in annually recurring funds that will be dedicated to meeting the state's match. These funds may be a mix of cash and in-kind services.

Recommendation #5, Action Step #2: The Executive Assistant and the Commissioner of Administration should work with members of the State Wetlands Authority to create a comprehensive inventory of the in-kind services the state could provide. Creating this inventory will require a three step process.

- List all planned and existing activities that could have a bearing on coastal restoration;

- Think outside normal program boundaries to identify possible sources of in-kind contributions, both within state government and in the private and non-profit sectors. This will require a creative examination of state assets and programs that could add value to the coastal restoration effort.

- Examine all listed items to determine which could be classified as in-kind services. In many cases, this determination will be made on an incremental basis as the state requests federal funding for each new restoration project. During funding discussions with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other federal partners, the state will negotiate the value of possible in-kind contributions and identify which contributions are appropriate. The state must be prepared to conduct these negotiations in a way that bolsters our partnerships with federal agencies and secures the best value for Louisiana.

Recommendation #5, Action Step #3: The Executive Assistant, in consultation with the State Wetlands Authority, should require an annual budgetary review of all coastal programs funded by state and federal agencies. This review will ensure that there is no duplication of effort and that all funding reflects the priorities of the state's restoration program.

Recommendation #6: Raise the public’s awareness of Louisiana’s land loss crisis—both statewide and nationally.

Louisiana must do a better job of telling the story of its coast, not only to gain allies in Washington, but even more importantly, to garner the support of citizens here at home. Although a great deal of work has been done toward this goal, most Louisianians still do not realize how much they depend on a healthy coast. This situation must be reversed.

Unless a large and vocal homegrown constituency demands that their state elected officials make coastal restoration a priority, it will be difficult for legislators to allocate the funds needed to move the program forward. The perception that we lack popular support could also undercut our credibility with national partners. To an outsider looking in, it is easy to believe that many Louisiana residents either aren’t aware of the effects of coastal erosion or don’t believe the problem can be solved. If our own citizens are not enthusiastic advocates for their coast, we cannot expect national legislators and policy makers to care about the issue, much less convince Congress to appropriate \$14 billion for our coastal restoration program. In short, we must galvanize the support of Louisiana citizens who have the most to lose from an eroding coast, or our efforts will stall at a crucial stage.

In order to build public awareness, we must conduct a massive, ongoing outreach campaign on both the state and national fronts. Doing so will require significant funding from government, private businesses, and industry stakeholders.

Recommendation #6, Action Step #1: Create a nationally resonant message.

- The state must speak with one voice on this issue. The GOCA should coordinate with its partners in state government to create a clear and consistent message about the importance of saving Louisiana’s coast. Their goal should be the creation of a

large-scale awareness campaign along the lines of what has been accomplished as part of the Florida Everglades project.

- The message should emphasize Louisiana's role as a lifeline between the Gulf of Mexico and the U.S., referencing the coast's role in protecting major transportation routes, the delivery of 25% of the nation's energy supply, and up to 35% of the nation's fisheries.
- The message must be focused. We will seek partnerships with a wide variety of state and national groups whose missions support coastal restoration. However, we cannot incorporate the issues of these allies into our basic outreach themes.
- The message should be fact-based and derived from sound science and engineering sources.

Recommendation #6, Action Step #2: The Governor should convene periodic meetings with the congressional delegation and state legislative leadership. These meetings should be initiated as quickly as possible in order to ensure coordination on coastal legislation.

Recommendation #6, Action Step #3: Use the Governor's Office of Coastal Activities as the base of operations for a sustained outreach campaign.

- The GOCA should designate specific staff members who will coordinate all outreach, including public relations, public participation, federal and state legislative affairs, and media relations.
- The GOCA outreach staff should create a team with colleagues in other state agencies, such as the DNR. The GOCA should also work closely on this issue with

the Governor's Commission on Coastal Restoration and any outreach subcommittees the commission may create.

- The GOCA should create a central clearinghouse for all outreach activities.
- The GOCA should hire a prominent firm(s) to develop and implement the outreach campaign. An experienced firm can help the state establish the message, target markets, and develop an implementation plan. The firm(s) should have extensive knowledge of Louisiana, be proficient in issues management, and have in-depth knowledge of the varying requirements of applying public relations locally, on the national scene, and, particularly in Washington D.C. The firm should also have a proven track record of successfully rallying supporters for major projects.

Recommendation #6, Action Step #4: Maintain an office and full-time presence in the nation's capitol.

Louisiana is one of only four states in the nation without an office in Washington, D.C. We need daily contact with the congressional delegation, federal partners, and coastal interest groups in order to maximize opportunities for creating partnerships and securing funds.

Recommendation #6, Action Step #5: Target specific audiences, both within Louisiana and in the nation as a whole, to maximize the impact of the outreach campaign. (See Appendix C for list of target audiences.)

Recommendation #7: Explore legislative and/or constitutional tools that address concerns such as liability issues and user conflicts.

The Governor's Committee on the Future of Coastal Louisiana has identified several issues that could impair Louisiana's ability to administer a \$14 billion coastal restoration effort. Implementing a program of this magnitude will require Louisiana to take action in the public interest that may conflict with other projects, property rights, contract rights, or personal rights owned or assumed to be owned by third parties.

Louisiana's experience proves that every lease and permit issued by a government body should be viewed as an opportunity to either support the coastal restoration program or frustrate it. To date, we have not fully coordinated permitting, leasing, and outreach efforts so that property rights and public expectations are harmonized with the broader aims of the coastal restoration campaign. As a result, delays and expenses created by user conflicts have severely hampered our momentum. Through the active participation of the Executive Assistant for Coastal Activities and the members of the State Wetlands Authority, the state should examine a range of tools that will reduce and ultimately eliminate the impact of such conflicts.

Recommendation #7, Action Step #1: Make a formal pronouncement that establishes the paramount importance of coastal restoration for the long-term preservation of our state.

- Government leaders must unequivocally state that a restored, sustainable coast is essential for the long-term preservation of Louisiana's commerce, way of life, and ecosystems. The Governor and legislature must devise, support, and adopt a legal method by which such a pronouncement could be clearly established as a fundamental public policy of the state. The strongest method by which this could be achieved would be the adoption of a concisely worded constitutional amendment that establishes coastal restoration as a fundamental state priority. Such an amendment

could raise the public profile of the coastal crisis, help allocate resources within state government, and more readily resolve legal disputes. In addition, a constitutional amendment would affirm the commitment of Louisiana's citizens, business community, and political leaders to the restoration program.

Recommendation #7, Action Step #2: Plan for and address property rights issues.

When the government takes or unduly impairs the use or value of private property, the owner is, under certain circumstances, entitled to fair compensation. As recent property rights debates have made clear, the best way to handle these issues is to plan for them, avoid them where possible, and face them when they arise. Had such steps been taken a decade ago with regard to oyster leasing, the state might not be appealing verdicts that could cost Louisiana hundreds of millions of dollars, to say nothing of the far-reaching consequences caused by project delays. The suggestions below may help prevent similar problems in the future.

- The Governor should direct the appropriate agencies to temporarily refrain from executing any new leases, permits, or other contracts that conflict with the fundamental public policy of the state to conduct coastal restoration activities. This moratorium should last until such leases, permits, and contracts clearly harmonize with the public expectation that coastal restoration will proceed without litigation or delay.
- The Executive Assistant should convene a working group to review the powers of expropriation already granted to various government authorities. The group should then determine whether giving limited powers of expropriation to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) would enhance coastal restoration activities.
- If it is determined that expropriation rights should be granted to the DNR, the state should consider the need for a "quick taking" provision to eliminate extensive delays caused by possible legal proceedings. To facilitate this effort, the state may

wish to explore other quick taking and legal tools that our federal, state, and local partners already use to good effect.

- The Executive Assistant should develop a system for coordinating the review of appropriate state permits that could affect the coast. The system would ensure that permits support the restoration program. Creating this system would involve taking full advantage of existing legislation that requires permitted activities to be consistent with Louisiana's commitments to its federal partners and its public coastal restoration policies.

- The Governor's Office, in coordination with legislative leadership, should support legislation that would limit the liability of the state, its agents, contractors, or partners who participate in construction activities essential to the restoration program.

Recommendation #7 Action Step #3: Analyze existing laws for compatibility with an expanded restoration program.

- Considering how important a sustainable coast is to the future of Louisiana, all available legal tools must work in tandem with an expanded restoration effort. To this end, state agencies should identify and work to resolve inconsistencies and/or conflicts between existing environmental laws and expanded coastal restoration efforts.

Conclusion

The Governor's Committee on the Future of Coastal Louisiana has studied the state's land loss problem from many perspectives. The more the committee members analyzed the issues, the more we were convinced that Louisianians live, work, and play on the very edge of a crisis. The threats posed by wetland loss are real; indeed, they are already taking a toll across south Louisiana.

If we do not address this crisis immediately, and with all the resources at our disposal, the consequences for our state and nation will be far worse than we can imagine. The devastation will directly affect our nation's security, navigation, energy consumption, and food supply. On a local level, the potential loss of lives, infrastructure, industry, ecosystems, and culture cannot be overstated. Given all that we stand to lose, the committee is convinced that we have no choice—we must do everything in our power to rebuild and sustain the coast.

In order to meet this charge, Louisiana must tackle an unprecedented management and financial challenge. We must confront the size and scope of the pending land loss catastrophe. We must invoke the interest of a national audience. We must create a disciplined program that brings the best minds and billions of dollars to bear on the problem. The entire state must be prepared to commit its resources to the cause, knowing that our future hangs in the balance.

We may fail. We may not attract enough national support to finance this enormous undertaking. But the need for outside partners cannot distract us from our own responsibility: Louisiana must direct this initiative, both now and in the coming years. No one else will take the reins for us. We must provide the leadership and vision to sustain a \$14 billion coastal restoration project. Without our state's unbending commitment, a commitment that becomes a cornerstone of state policy at the highest levels, we have absolutely no chance of success.

So we conclude again that there is no other choice. Louisiana must act, and we must act now. The Committee on the Future of Coastal Louisiana offers the recommendations in this report as a

starting point for beginning a renewed coastal restoration effort that will secure our present prosperity as well as the legacy we leave future generations.

This is a true work in progress, and the committee cannot predict how these recommendations will work when they are applied. Thus, it is incumbent upon everyone responsible for the future of Louisiana—be they legislators, administrators, governors, or commission members—to actively and continuously monitor the results of this study to ensure that the structure we have presented accommodates the state’s evolving coastal program. We may discover that the complexities of an expanded restoration effort overburden the management structure presented in this report. If that is the case, the state may need to either revise portions of Act 6 or move beyond Act 6 as a framework for establishing inter-governmental responsibilities. If the latter option is deemed necessary, the state may wish to consider the establishment of a new agency that would consolidate all programs affecting coastal Louisiana.

The committee wishes to thank Governor Foster for giving us the opportunity to examine what we believe is the paramount challenge confronting our state. Without the Governor’s backing and the support of his staff, this study could not have been accomplished, and Louisiana would not be poised to take its coastal restoration program to a new level. The committee believes that it will be the obligation of all future administrations to follow Governor Foster’s model and pursue these issues with equal diligence, tenacity, and foresight.

Appendix A: Members of the Committee on the Future of Coastal Louisiana

In September 2001, Governor Foster created the advisory Committee on the Future of Coastal Louisiana. He asked R. King Milling, President of Whitney National Bank, to serve as the committee chairperson. The committee's membership is as follows:

R. King Milling is President of the Whitney Holding Company and the Whitney National Bank.

James M. Coleman, Ph.D. is a Boyd Professor at the Coastal Studies Institute at Louisiana State University. He also serves on President Bush's U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy.

Nancy Jo Craig is an award winning conservationist who co-authored some of the first scientific papers documenting wetland loss in Louisiana. She has a Masters in Environmental Biology from the University of North Carolina and a Masters from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. She is currently working as a management consultant specializing in non-profits.

Rep. Charlie DeWitt is a 23-year veteran of the Louisiana House of Representatives. Among other responsibilities, he served as Vice-Chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee. During his tenure, he gained valuable insight into issues concerning our state's natural resources, conservation, wetlands, and tidelines.

Mark Drennen is the Commissioner of Administration for the state of Louisiana.

C. Berwick Duval is a partner with the firm of Duval, Funderburk, Sundbery, Lovell & Watkins.

Sen. John Hainkel, Jr. is President of the Louisiana Senate. He also served as Speaker of the Louisiana House of Representatives from 1980 to 1984. During his career of public service,

Senator Hainkel has received numerous awards, including the National Republican Legislator of the Year Award and the Brown Pelican Award for his efforts in the environmental field. Senator Hainkel is the senior partner in the law firm of Porteous, Hainkel, Johnson, and Sarpy.

William L. Jenkins, Ph.D., is President of the Louisiana State University System. He also served as Dean of Veterinary Medicine, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost, and as Chancellor at Louisiana State University and A&M College.

Alfred S. Lippman is a senior partner with Lippman & Mahfouz, L.L.C. He is the former president and vice-president of the Morgan City Harbor and Terminal District, and serves on numerous other boards and commissions.

Paul C. P. McIlhenny is the President and Chief Executive Officer of McIlhenny Co. in Avery Island, Louisiana.

Randy Roach is the mayor of Lake Charles, Louisiana. From 1988 to 1996, he served two terms in the Louisiana House of Representatives representing parts of Calcasieu and Cameron Parishes. In the legislature, he served as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Natural Resources, and on numerous other committees and commissions.

Wm. Clifford Smith is Chairman of the Board of T. Baker Smith & Son, Inc. He also serves as a member of the Mississippi River Commission and the Louisiana State Board of Regents.

James T.B. Tripp is the general counsel for the Environmental Defense Fund in New York.

Frank Walk, Sr., is a Registered Professional Engineer in Civil and Mechanical Engineering. He holds a Doctor of Engineering Degree, is Chairman Emeritus of Walk, Haydel & Associates, Inc., and is a Member Emeritus of the Mississippi River Commission.

Appendix B: Members and Designees of the State Wetlands Authority

Chairperson: Dr. Len Bahr
Executive Assistant for Coastal Activities

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Mr. Jimmy Jenkins, Secretary
Mr. Phil Bowman

Department of Natural Resources
Mr. Jack Caldwell, Secretary
Mr. Randy Hanchey

Division of Administration
Mr. Mark Drennan, Commissioner
Ms. Robin Hote

Office of the Governor
Ms. Karen Gautreaux, Special Assistant

Department of Environmental Quality
Mr. Dale Givens, Secretary
Dugin Sabins

Department of Transportation and Development
Dr. Kam Movassaghi, Secretary
Mr. Eddie Olivier

Department of Agriculture & Forestry
Mr. Brad Spicer, Assistant Commissioner
Mr. Butch Stegall

Appendix C: State and National Target Audiences for Outreach Campaign

State Targets

- Governor and executive staff

The outreach team must keep the Governor and executive staff informed and actively involved so that they can act as advocates and messengers to colleagues throughout the nation. The Governor, the Executive Assistant, the Assistant Secretary for the Department of Natural Resources's Office of Coastal Restoration and Management, and the Chairperson of the Governor's Commission on Coastal Restoration should make periodic presentations in Washington, D.C. to our congressional delegation.

- Cabinet members and heads of state agencies

These governmental heads must be encouraged to serve as messengers to the media, the legislature, and their counterparts in other states. Their involvement will help ensure statewide coordination on coastal issues.

- Members of the state legislature

Special attention should be given to members of the Louisiana State Senate and House of Representatives. These legislators control the state's funding process, and their buy-in and active support are crucial. Appropriate committees should be regularly briefed, as should legislators from all coastal districts.

- Louisiana business and industry representatives

This group has never been offered a seat at the coastal restoration table, even though its members have the ear of the Governor, the congressional delegation and the state legislature. Strategies for keeping this group informed are essential, particularly for members of the Governor's Commission on Coastal Restoration.

- Stakeholders/user groups

We must not exclude key interest groups, such as environmentalists, insurance representatives, and navigation interests. In addition to mandated “public participation” meetings, the outreach campaign should create opportunities for sharing information with these constituencies and keeping them abreast of all coastal restoration developments.

- General public

The people of Louisiana must become more vocal advocates for the coast and encourage state and congressional leaders to allocate the funds necessary to restore the wetlands. To reach this goal, the outreach team must conduct a broad-based effort to educate citizens about such issues as: what our coast means to the state and the nation, what must be done to save the coast, what this solution will cost, and why taking action is cheaper than doing nothing. One way to ensure consistency in the message is to create a power-point presentation that can be adapted to many audiences (parish councils, rotary clubs, etc.), but that keeps the message clear.

- Statewide media

The outreach team must establish a routine for keeping state media informed, particularly those outlets located outside the coastal zone.

- Gubernatorial candidates

The coast must become a major campaign issue for gubernatorial candidates. In addition to receiving briefings from the outreach team, the candidates should be interviewed by the Governor’s Commission on Coastal Restoration. This two-pronged approach will ensure that each candidate includes coastal restoration in his or her campaign platform. The outreach team should also strive to include the coast in gubernatorial polling data and debates.

National Targets

•Louisiana's congressional delegation

Louisiana has powerful legislators in both the U.S. House and Senate. These legislators are key to our success in obtaining the federal dollars needed for coastal restoration. The delegation must be apprised in advance of all coastal restoration issues and initiatives.

•Congress

Broad congressional support is a prerequisite for federal funding of Louisiana coastal restoration efforts. At the same time, thousands of competing interests clamor for a finite number of federal dollars. In order to make a convincing case to out of state legislators, the outreach team must keep Congress informed about the contributions that Louisiana's coast makes to the rest of nation, how land loss will affect the stability of the nation, and the pricetag for inaction on Louisiana's land loss problem.

•Congressional committees

Special attention should be paid to the authorizing and appropriating committees in both the U.S. House and Senate. We must help our delegation keep staffs and members of the following committees informed: House Resources, House Transportation, House Energy and Commerce, Senate Energy and Natural Resources, Senate Commerce, Senate Environment and Public Works, House and Senate Appropriations.

•Present and future administrations

Policy and decision makers at the cabinet level must be kept informed before the budget cycle begins so that Louisiana's coastal restoration needs are incorporated into every administration's budget.

- Federal agencies

Our federal partners must be kept aware of Louisiana's coastal restoration efforts, so that our projects will be included in each agency's budget. We must develop effective relationships with the executive levels of key federal agencies, including the headquarters of the Corps of Engineers and the office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works.

- National business and industry stakeholders

National interests, from shipping and navigation to the nation's oil and gas suppliers, have a tremendous stake in Louisiana's coast. The outreach team must coordinate frequent and ongoing talks among state leaders, our congressional delegation and these national interests.

- Upstream states

Louisiana is at the bottom of a 36-state funnel that makes up the Mississippi River drainage basin. Sharing a common link with the river could give these states the incentive to form a politically powerful coalition. The outreach team must strengthen communications among these states on issues that affect Louisiana's coast. For example, hypoxia is being addressed on a basin-wide scale by a task force of federal and state agencies, including the Louisiana Governor's Office. Louisiana's role in mitigating hypoxia within our coastal ecosystem gives us an important opportunity to build national political support for our overall restoration program.

- National environmental groups

The active support of these groups will provide invaluable assistance to our funding efforts. The outreach team must identify the decision makers of these groups, both at the national and local levels. This core group should be briefed regularly and their input sought throughout the coastal restoration process.

- National media

The outreach team must develop strategies for communicating with the national media, keeping in mind this group's potential for raising the awareness of the nation at large.