



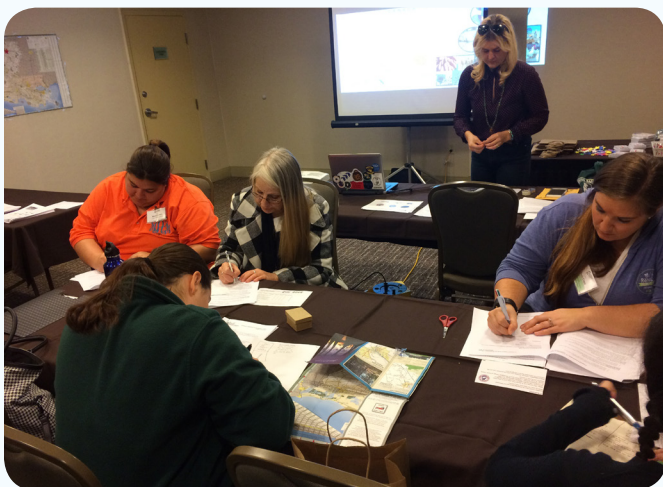
LandMarks

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LOUISIANA ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION STATE SYMPOSIUM

The Louisiana Environmental Education Commission, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, and the Louisiana Environmental Education Association hosted the 20th Environmental Education State Symposium on February 3-4, 2017 at the Embassy Suites by Hilton in Baton Rouge, La. The theme of this year's symposium was "protecting Louisiana's endangered species."



Above: Natalie McElyea, LSU AgCenter, presented a hands-on lesson demo on *Coastal Connections to LA Commodities*. Below: Joann Haydel, Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, presented an interactive project on the *Multiple Lines of Defense*.



The Louisiana Environmental Education Commission (LEEC) provides environmental education news from across Louisiana, including information on environmental education programs, workshops, and grant opportunities. The state symposium furnished opportunities for formal and non-formal environmental educators from Louisiana and surrounding states to meet and share teaching techniques as well as multiple concurrent sessions for various topics and grade levels. Keynote speaker Dr. Jessica Kastler, Coordinator of Program Development at the Gulf Coast Research (Continued on page 2)

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UPCOMING EVENTS FOR MAR/APR

Mar. 2	CRCL Coastal Restoration Road Show	Cameron, LA
Mar. 11	Bayou Lafourche Cleanup	Bayou Lafourche, LA
Mar. 15	CPRA Board Meeting	Baton Rouge, LA
Mar. 16	CRCL Coastal Restoration Road Show	Lacombe, LA
Mar. 18	Audubon Zoo Earth Fest	New Orleans, LA
Mar. 21	Chenier Plain Authority Meeting	Abbeville, LA
Mar. 24	Louisiana Green Schools Youth Summit	New Orleans, LA
Apr. 18	Chenier Plain Authority Meeting	Lake Charles, LA
Apr. 19	CPRA Board Meeting	Baton Rouge, LA
Apr. 22	Bayou Teche Black Bear Festival	Franklin, LA
apr. 23	Louisiana Earth Day	Baton Rouge, LA
Apr. 27	CWPPRA Technical Committee Meeting	New Orleans, LA

(LA Env. Ed. Symposium, continued from page 1) Laboratory's Marine Education Center, used individual cases of endangered species to engage the audience in explorations of the process of science while cultivating environmental stewardship. In addition to the keynote speech, presenters in 15 concurrent sessions provided lesson demonstrations, hands-on workshops, and/or exemplary programs. The Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act Public Outreach Staff was among exhibitors with a multitude of materials to assist teachers of all grade levels in furthering their students' knowledge in environmental education and coastal protection. ■

WETLAND CONVERSATIONS WITH ESA STUDENTS

Environmental Studies students in Christina Hidalgo's class at the Episcopal School of Acadiana do more than learn about general environmental issues; they also get outside and participate in direct monitoring of the ecosystems around them. On February 21st and 23rd they were joined by Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act staff to discuss coastal habitats, the mammal species that call them home, and different wildlife monitoring techniques.

On Tuesday CWPPRA staff and ESA students discussed the importance of barrier beach systems for both human and wildlife communities, and students were given training in how researchers trap small mammal populations in those locations for monitoring. After students deployed small mammal traps around the ESA Cade campus on Wednesday, CWPPRA staff returned Thursday morning to help with trap collection and see what students had



Above: Students check the small mammal traps they placed around the ESA Cade campus.

Top Right: CWPPRA Outreach Coordinator, Mirka Zapletal, explains how to identify different rat species.



captured. In addition to trapping a variety of insects drawn to the oatmeal-soybean bait and several traps which had been moved by larger animals, ESA students successfully captured a marsh rice rat (*Oryzomys palustris*)!

These rodents are found throughout the Gulf and mid-to-south Atlantic coasts and as far inland as Illinois and Kansas. As the name suggests, marsh rice rats are generally found in wetland areas, although drier areas with dense grasses and sedges, while not ideal habitat, are also utilized. A native species in Louisiana, marsh rice rats can even be found out on barrier islands where their omnivorous diet lets them take advantage of both terrestrial food resources and items that wash ashore. The rat captured on the ESA campus was trapped near a stream and probably forages along that water body at night. Finding a marsh rice rat on a school campus is a reminder that wetland habitats come in a range of sizes and types and that we share those habitats with many different species. ■

CWPPRA PPL UPDATES

On January 12, 2017, the CWPPRA Task Force met in New Orleans. Among the topics voted on at this meeting, PPL 26 was finalized. The Task Force approved the Technical Committee's recommendations for the following projects to be funded for Phase I Engineering and Design:

- LA-284 Salvinia Weevil Propagation (also approved for Phase II and Operation)
- PO-178 Bayou La Loutre Ridge and Marsh Restoration
- PO-179 St. Catherine Island Marsh Creation and Shoreline Protection
- TE-138 Bayou De Cade Ridge and Marsh Creation

Additionally, the Task Force approved two projects to be funded for Phase II Construction. They are as follows:

- BA-125 Northwest Turtle Bay Marsh Creation
- CS-66 Cameron Meadows Marsh Creation and Terracing

CWPPRA kicked off its 27th Priority Project List on January 31 through February 2. These regional planning team meetings, held in Abbeville, Morgan City, and Lacombe, gave the public the opportunity to nominate projects that restore and protect Louisiana's coastal wetlands. Anyone from the public, as well as the State and federal agencies can nominate a project to be included on the PPL. A total of 52 basin projects, 2 coastwide projects, and 5 demonstration projects were proposed. Parish representatives, five federal agencies, and the State will participate in an electronic vote on March 7, where typically 22 projects (including 21 basin projects and 1 coastwide project) and up to 6 demonstration projects are selected to move forward as PPL 27 nominees. View the proposed project fact sheets and PowerPoint presentations at www.lacoast.gov/new/Projects/PPL. View the fact sheets for all existing CWPPRA projects at www.lacoast.gov/new/Projects/List. ■

FEATURED PROJECT: BAYOU DE CADE RIDGE AND MARSH CREATION

TE-138 Bayou De Cade Ridge and Marsh Creation is located in Region 3 - Terrebonne Basin in the Lake Mechant Mapping Unit of Terrebonne Parish.

The Terrebonne Basin is an abandoned delta complex, characterized by a thick section of unconsolidated sediments that are undergoing dewatering and compaction, contributing to high subsidence, and a network of old distributary ridges extending southward from Houma. Historically, subsidence and numerous oil and gas canals and pipelines in the area have contributed significantly to wetland losses. Since 1932, the Terrebonne Basin has lost approximately 20% of its wetlands. Current loss rates range from approximately 4,500 to 6,500 acres/year. This loss amounts to about



Photo facing southeast across proposed marsh creation and towards proposed ridge area.



Project map for TE-138. The project boundary is represented by the white polygon. Green lines show the marsh creation area, and the red line represents the ridge restoration.

130,000 acres over the next 20 years. One-third of the Terrebonne Basin's remaining wetlands would be lost to open water by the year 2040. The wetland loss rate in the area is -0.79%/year based on USGS data from 1984 to 2016.

The proposed project's primary feature is to create and/or nourish approximately 504 acres of intermediate marsh adjacent to Lake De Cade and restore 11,726 linear feet of ridge habitat along the northern bank of Bayou De Cade. To achieve this, sediment will be hydraulically pumped from a borrow source in Lake De Cade. The borrow area in Lake De Cade would be located and designed in a manner to avoid and minimize environmental impacts (e.g. to submerged aquatic vegetation and water quality) to the maximum extent practicable. Containment dikes will be constructed around the marsh creation area to retain sediment during pumping. No later than three years post construction, the containment dikes will be degraded and/or gapped. Additionally, the newly constructed marsh will be planted after construction to stabilize the platform and reduce time for full vegetation. It is anticipated that material for the ridge feature will be mechanically dredged from adjacent areas within Bayou De Cade and/or the marsh area and lifted to a crown elevation of +5.0 feet, 25 feet wide, and will be planted.

This project is on Priority Project List (PPL) 26. It was approved for Phase I Engineering and Design in January 2017 and is funded by the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority. ■

WORLD WETLANDS DAY

World Wetlands Day is designated as a day to raise global awareness about the value and benefits of wetlands for both humanity and the planet; it is celebrated every February 2nd. Wetlands provide an immense number of benefits to not only the surrounding areas via protection, but also thriving aquaculture industries and commodities on both a national and international level. Healthy wetlands play a vital role in sustaining life and acting as natural safeguards in extreme weather events through disaster risk reduction.

The Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act participated in the appreciation of wetlands by attending the World Wetlands Day Celebration on February 2nd, 2017 at the Bayou Terrebonne Waterlife Museum in Houma, La. The South Louisiana Wetlands Discovery Center hosted its 8th annual celebration by inviting third grade students from St. Matthews Episcopal School and Honduras Elementary, as well as sixth grade students from St. Francis de Sales Catholic School, totaling 185 local students, to learn about different aspects of wetlands. The CWPPRA Public Outreach Staff informed students about the relevance of wetlands by drawing connections between four different yet familiar types of wetlands and seafood, previous hurricane activity in the region, industry jobs, and wetland functionality. In order to do so, the CWPPRA staff incorporated the Where the Wild Things Are game to teach the students about wetland



habitats and the animals living in them. This game consisted of students matching different wetland bean bag animals to the correct habitat: swamp, marsh, barrier island, and ocean. Where the Wild Things Are provides an opportunity for students to understand the connections between different wetland environments, recognize the adaptability of some animals to more than one habitat, and identify specific characteristics of each habitat, such as vegetation. ■



COASTAL WETLANDS PLANNING, PROTECTION AND RESTORATION ACT

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