LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION
Celebrating 75 years of conserving our natural resources and your right to enjoy them.

NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION AFFILIATE

Resolution No. 18E, 2008

SUBJECT: RETURNING THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER TO ITS DELTA

WHEREAS, coastal Louisiana was formed by the depositional processes of the Mississippi River over the past 7,500 years, and

WHEREAS, the thick fluvial deposits that comprise the Mississippi River delta are naturally prone to compaction under their own weight, but if sediment supplies are sufficient the delta can build and maintain its surfaces as sea level rises, and

WHEREAS, the land building processes of the Mississippi River have been halted in South Louisiana by a combination of levees (which prevent seasonal overbank flooding and sediment deposition), dredged waterways (which channel fresh water and sediment to the Gulf of Mexico), and upstream dam construction (which prevent sediment from naturally reaching the Louisiana coast), and

WHEREAS, over 1,500 square miles of Louisiana's coastal wetlands and barrier islands have been lost to open water since the early 1930's and scientists project that another 500 square miles will be lost by 2050 if current resource management practices continue, and

WHEREAS, more than 120 million tons of river sediment that could be used to sustain the Mississippi Delta will be lost to the Gulf of Mexico each year if nothing is done to restore the natural hydrology of the Mississippi River, and

WHEREAS, prevention of wetland loss in the Mississippi River Deltaic Plain, which comprises most of the southeastern Louisiana coastal zone, is dependent upon restoring flows of fresh water and sediment to the delta, and

WHEREAS, an international team of scientists convened for the express purpose of advising the State of Louisiana about its coastal land loss problem in 2006 concluded that "The most fundamental and essential action needed to achieve a sustainable coast is to reduce, to the greatest extent possible, the amount of Mississippi River sediment and freshwater flowing directly into the deep waters of the Gulf. These valuable resources, which originally built coastal Louisiana, can only benefit the coast if they are redirected to inshore and nearshore waters. This would occur naturally if the river were not artificially maintained for navigation along its present course into deep water.", and

WHEREAS, Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal in his recent Executive Order No. BJ 2008 -7, "ACTIVITY AND PERMIT CONSISTENCY WITH LOUISIANA'S COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN FOR A SUSTAINABLE COAST" recognized the importance of managing coastal activities such that they are not counter to the state's imperative to protect, restore and conserve the coast.

(More)

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THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) calls upon the state of Louisiana, through its legal authorities and executive policies, to demand the US Army Corps of Engineers to permit no additional dam or levee construction along the mainstem or tributaries of the Mississippi River.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LWF requests the State of Louisiana, through its legal authorities, to urge and request the U. S. Congress to fully fund the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers the total amount of funds currently being collected from the Harbor Maintenance Fees and that the funds be used for the beneficial use of dredged material to protect, restore and conserve the coast of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LWF calls upon the state of Louisiana and the US Army Corps of Engineers to proceed with haste to restore the deposition of sediment in the deltaic plain region, sediment that created coastal Louisiana and which is required for its survival, through the implementation of restoration projects adopted in WRDA 2007, State of Louisiana Coastal Comprehensive Plan, the Corps' Louisiana Area Coastal Protection and Restoration Plan, and other restoration actions that enhance deltaic land building processes.

Adopted by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation in Convention Assembled, March 16, 2008 in New Iberia, Louisiana.