

Louisiana Wildlife Federation

Summer 2022



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Since 1940, Louisiana Wildlife Federation has been the voice for Louisiana's wildlife and natural resources. Join us to protect Sportsman's Paradise for future generations.

Principles:

- Conserve Louisiana's natural resources with emphasis on wildlife and their habitat
- Advance sound, scientifically established resource management principles
- Engage outdoor enthusiasts through education and advocacy

This newsletter is printed biannually for members and supporters. Updates on LWF activities and events can be found on our website and social media pages:

-  lawildlifefed.org
-  [LouisianaWildlifeFederation](https://www.facebook.com/LouisianaWildlifeFederation)
-  [@louisianawildlifefederation](https://www.instagram.com/louisianawildlifefederation)
-  [@LaWildlifeFed](https://twitter.com/LaWildlifeFed)

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LWF is an affiliate organization of National Wildlife Federation and together we form a powerful network for wildlife conservation locally and nationally.



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Rebecca Triche, Executive Director
Stacy Ortego, Outreach Coordinator
Angela Hirstius, Office Manager

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LWF Affiliates

American Sportsmen Against Poachers
Baton Rouge Audubon Society
Bayou Chapter of the Ozark Society
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Friends of Grand Isle
Friends of the Atchafalaya
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Louisiana Ornithological Society
New Orleans Power Squadron
Orleans Audubon Society
Pontchartrain Conservancy
Rapides Wildlife Association
Shreveport Society for Nature Study Bird Study Group
Toledo Bend Lake Association
Woodlands Conservancy

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

LWF members and affiliate organizations approach the natural world from unique perspectives, but we agree on many core principles of conservation. In fact, we begin each board meeting by reciting the conservation pledge created for Outdoor Life in 1946 and revised in 1993: “I pledge to protect and conserve the natural resources of America. I promise to educate future generations so they may become caretakers of our water, air, land and wildlife.”



Over 80 years, LWF has created an impressive list of accomplishments. That work is ongoing and more important than ever. This newsletter reflects just some of the most recent efforts to fulfill the promise of that pledge. The North American Model for Wildlife Conservation outlines some of the fundamental principles that guide LWF's approach:

- Wildlife is Held in the Public Trust
- Prohibition on Commerce of Dead Wildlife
- Democratic Process of Rule Making
- Hunting Opportunity for All
- Non-Frivolous Use
- International Resources Scientific Management

To fulfill these principles, we must continue to embrace bold action. To do so we must raise all of our voices, including those whose voices have not often been heard in the decision making process. LWF and its affiliates are committed to an inclusive approach to conservation. ■ - Zac Burson

NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

There's a public relations axiom that advises to deliver the bad news first. A proposed bill (HR 8167) in Congress would repeal the federal excise tax on firearms and ammunition, effectively defunding the Pittman-Robertson (PR) Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937. This funding is set aside for state fish and wildlife agencies to manage natural resources and to recruit and educate current and future outdoorspeople. It makes little sense to stop this funding now – wildlife in America needs additional support, not less.



That's what Recovering America's Wildlife Act would do to help over 12,000 Species of Greatest Conservation Need – 362 of which are in Louisiana. Efforts are also underway to increase GOMESA revenue sharing from offshore oil royalties that we, Louisiana's voters, have dedicated to the Coastal Trust Fund to be spent on coastal restoration. The state legislature passed the Louisiana Outdoors Forever Act to establish a program that provides state dollars to match federal and private funding for eligible voluntary conservation projects throughout the state. This makes Louisiana more competitive for project funds and LWF was happy to work together with conservation and environmental groups in the state to establish this program.

Natural resources are the basis of our economy and must be managed wisely and not treated cheaply. But don't worry, you can still get free Vitamin D from our abundant Louisiana sunshine. Wishing you good summer fun. ■ - Rebecca Triche

LWF WELCOMES NEW OFFICE MANAGER, ANGELA HIRSTIUS

Angela joined LWF in 2022 and offers years of experience managing an office for small businesses, including event planning, HR, and accounting. She has three children and enjoys reading, cooking, and spending time with her family. Angela is a native of Baton Rouge.

Former LWF office manager, Laura Gros, retired in April. Laura joined LWF in 2016 and was instrumental in helping us transition through increased membership and improved efficiencies. We wish her a very happy retirement!



HONORAY & MEMORIAL GIFTS (January – June 2022)

- In Honor of Mary & Stella Bear by Jen Billodeaux
- In Memory of Audie Cutrer by Gwen & Will Moore
- In Memory of Clint Peters by Susan Hayden
- In Memory of James Quarles by Emily Primm
- In Memory of Michael Richard by John Quinn
- In Memory of Peter Smith by Carolyn & Clay Swift
- In Memory of Peter Smith by Marianne Antoine

Leave a Legacy Gift for Louisiana's Wildlife

Ways You Can Leave a Legacy Gift:

Gifts in your Will – You can leave a gift to LWF by bequest in your will or trust. Bequests are one of the most popular options for creating a legacy because they are so flexible.

Gifts by Beneficiary Designation – Many assets transfer by the beneficiary designation form you completed when you established your account, rather than through your will or trust. To name LWF as a beneficiary, please use our legal name, Louisiana Wildlife Federation, Inc. and our federal tax identification number (72-0445638).

*Please let us know if you have already
included LWF in your estate plans.
We want to thank you for your gift.*

Contact Rebecca Triche
225-344-6707
rebecca@lawildlifefed.org



BUSINESS ALLIANCE PARTNERS

LWF offers opportunities to strengthen the connection between Louisiana business leaders and our natural resources stewards. Corporate support has been and always will be essential for the promotion and protection of our sportsman's paradise. Quality outdoor opportunities make Louisiana a desirable place to live and work, and adds to our economic well-being. Business Alliance members join other outdoor-oriented citizens who believe in constructive conservation and protection of our states natural resources. We would like to thank them for their support and belief in the mission of LWF.



Photo credit: Thomas J. Graner

Bald Cypress

Essential Federal Credit Union

Pecan

DRAX Biomass

Longleaf Pine

Crescent Midstream

If you own a business or know a business that might be interested in joining our Business Alliance, please contact Rebecca Triche at 225-344-6707 or lwf@lawildlifefed.org. More information found at lawildlifefed.org. ■



YOUR BANK FOR ALL SEASONS

As a member of Louisiana Wildlife Federation, you can become a member of Essential.



NCUA

CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP CORPS STUDENTS COMPLETE PROGRAM

By Stacy Ortego, LWF Outreach Coordinator

The Edgar Veillon Conservation Leadership Corps (CLC) program is designed to engage and educate college students about conservation policy, advocacy and leadership to foster Louisiana's future conservation leaders.

LWF has completed its fourth year of the CLC program. Adjustments have been made over the years as we've made improvements through experience and student feedback as well as safety measures during the pandemic.



The following students successfully completed the program in 2022:

- Afia Boaitey (Xavier)
- Mario Campo (Southeastern)
- Chelsea Coleman (McNeese)
- Saidee Fonseca (LSU)
- Lily Gleneck (LSU)
- Madelyn Helm (LSU)
- Nautica Jones (UL-Monroe)
- Amanda Ross (LSU)
- Thomas Showers (UL-Monroe)
- Faith Boutte (Nicholls)
- Carly Carpenter (LSU)
- Eva Counts (LSU)
- Mia Foster (LSU)
- Aaliyah Hameed (LSU)
- Alexandra Himel (Nicholls)
- Katarina Perlsweig (Loyola)
- Sarah Sargent (Northwestern)

The CLC program allows students the opportunity to meet and interact with natural resource professionals from federal and state agencies, nonprofits, academia, etc. In total, 12 speakers from the following organizations, agencies, and institutions contributed to this year's program:

- Andrew Barron, Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program
- Katie Brasted, Woodlands Conservancy
- Dr. Virginia Burkett, U.S. Geological Survey
- Charles Caillouet, Louisiana Wildlife Federation
- Jim Caldwell, U.S. Forest Service
- Karen Gautreaux, The Nature Conservancy
- Greg Grandy, Coastal Protection & Restoration Authority
- Brianne Hendricks, Parish Proud
- Chad Kacir, Natural Resources Conservation Service

- Caitlin Lill, Audubon Delta
- Dr. Brady Skaggs, Pontchartrain Conservancy
- Rebecca Triche, Louisiana Wildlife Federation

We were very excited to finally be able to bring students together for our final session in April. Our final meeting was held at Chicot State Park in Ville Platte. Staff and students were thrilled to finally have a face-to-face meeting again. Students also got to enjoy a tour of the Louisiana State Arboretum before a day of very engaging discussions with various federal agency professionals.



LWF appreciates the support of the Stuller Family Foundation for its help in funding this year’s program. In addition, LWF thanks our Conservation Education Committee for their volunteered time and guidance as well as all of our speakers for their participation. We look forward to the continued success and growth of the program.

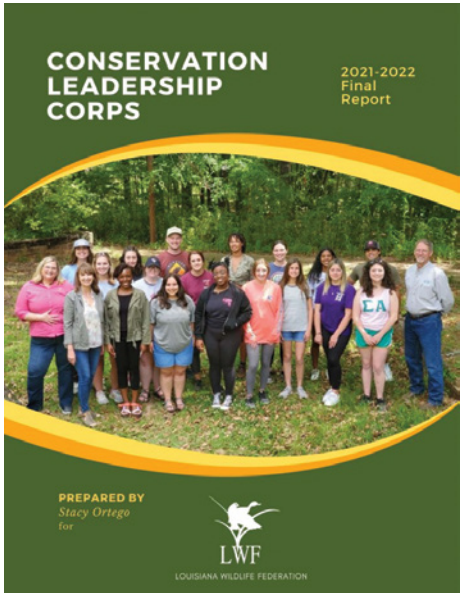
We are so encouraged by the growing interest in the program from tomorrow’s leaders in conservation. Our current and future environmental challenges will require engagement not just from scientists and lawmakers, but from citizens of a wide range of backgrounds and professions, which is why we’re thrilled to see the program gain interest from students at colleges and universities across Louisiana and from a diverse group of majors, including many outside of the typical STEM fields.

Louisiana is full of talented and passionate students who care about conserving our natural resources. LWF is honored to be part of their educational and professional journey. We are confident that tomorrow’s leaders in conservation are up to the challenge.

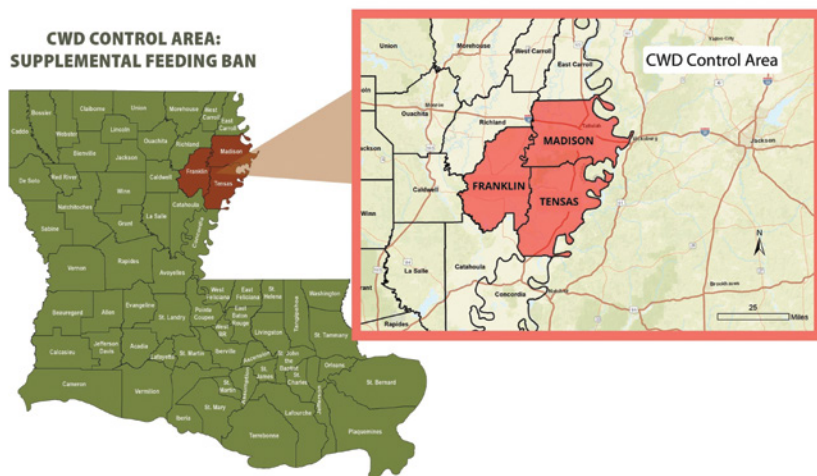
Check out our report for this year’s program on our website.

Students received a \$200 scholarship for completing the program. If you’d like to help support our next cohort, donations can be made at

lawildlifefed.org/donate. ■



CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE: ONE OF THE MOST CONCERNING ISSUES FACING DEER POPULATIONS TODAY



Wildlife & Fisheries Response to CWD in Louisiana

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) instituted its CWD Management Plan in three parishes – Madison, Franklin, and Tensas – in response to Louisiana’s first positive detection in January of an adult buck harvested in Tensas Parish. CWD is a disease that is always fatal to deer. This makes Louisiana the 28th state to discover the disease, which is now occurring in 29 states.

The NOI, in part, reads:

- Baiting, placement of bait, or hunting over bait is prohibited within a LDWF designated CWD Control Area.
- The export of any cervid carcass or part of a cervid carcass originating within a designated Control Area is prohibited, except for: meat that is cut and wrapped; meat that has been boned out; quarters or other portions of meat with no part of the spinal column or head attached, antlers, clean skull plates with antlers, cleaned skulls without tissue attached, capes, tanned hides, finished taxidermy mounts and cleaned cervid teeth.
- Approved parts transported out of the CWD Control Area must be legally possessed. Approved parts must contain a possession tag with the hunter’s name, address, LDWF license number, parish of harvest, date of harvest, and sex of deer.
- Prior to the 2022-23 deer hunting season, LDWF is directed to determine whether there is sufficient capacity to perform taxidermy services for cervids taken within the Control Area and report those findings to the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission. If it is determined that there is insufficient capacity to provide adequate taxidermy services for cervids harvested within the Control Area, LDWF shall establish a permitting system to be in effect no later than the opening of the 2022-23 deer hunting season to allow for uncleaned cervid heads to be transported out of the Control Area solely for taxidermy purposes.

Learn more about CWD at wlf.louisiana.gov/page/cwd



LWF Statement on CWD

Chronic Wasting Disease is now here in Louisiana. Thank you to the LDWF and the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission for taking this threat seriously by monitoring for it and preparing for swift action in response.

The advice from other states with CWD? Keep it out as long as you can and contain it for as long as you can. The measures proposed are the best we can do to buy time while more research is conducted and better testing is developed, as there are no cures for CWD at this time.

It's time for hunters and land managers to be even more vigilant. Educate yourself and others about the seriousness of CWD and its potential negative impact on Louisiana's native deer population.

CWD can take up to a year to be detected. This brings concerns including dwindling deer populations, hunter discouragement, and diminished economic impact. While CWD has not been shown to be contagious to humans, the CDC, USDA, and WHO discourage human consumption of CWD infected animals.

Thank you to Representatives Carter, Graves, Johnson, Letlow and Scalise for voting in favor of the bi-partisan Chronic Wasting Disease Research and Management Act moving through Congress that would fund research on detecting and managing the spread of the disease along with funding state and Tribal efforts to stem the spread.

Learn more about CWD at wlf.louisiana.gov/page/cwd



THE CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE CHRONICLES

PODCAST SERIES



NWF Outdoors & Artemis Release CWD Podcast Series

Chronic Wasting Disease is an always fatal and definitely complex neurological disease afflicting cervids across North America and beyond. More than 50 years after its discovery, the impacts of this disease are ramping up quickly while hunters are having to make tough decisions about how they hunt and feed their families.

The Chronic Wasting Disease Chronicles explores these issues with leading experts from around the country and looks hopefully to a future full of healthy wild cervid populations.

Podcast episodes include:

- CWD overview
- Captive cervids and their contribution to CWD
- How hunters are impacted by CWD and actions they can take
- A state agency perspective on CWD
- The Chronic Wasting Disease Research and Management Act
- Now What? CWD is here for the foreseeable future—living with and managing that reality

Check out the episodes at: nwf.org/Outdoors/Our-Work/CWD-Chronicles ■

GOV. EDWARDS NOMINATES ATCHAFALAYA BASIN FOR NOAA'S NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE

Gov. John Bel Edwards officially selected the Atchafalaya Coastal Basin as the preferred site in Louisiana to be added to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) System.

He also tasked the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) to serve as the state's lead agency,

working with continued support from Louisiana State University, for engaging with NOAA to complete the remaining steps to formally designate it as Louisiana's NERR.



NERR sites serve as living laboratories to study estuaries and the natural and human changes that they experience. They host monitoring, training, and educational activities that connect people to science while helping to build long-term relationships among local communities, state and federal agencies, and other nongovernmental entities. Louisiana is currently the only marine coastal state in the country without a National Estuarine Research Reserve.

“Louisiana’s Atchafalaya Coastal Basin is going to be an outstanding addition to NOAA’s NERR System,” said Gov. Edwards. “From an environmental and scientific point of view, the Atchafalaya River Basin is the nation’s largest freshwater swamp, and where it meets the Gulf of Mexico, there are two active, land-building river deltas and an extremely vibrant estuary. And, as everyone in Louisiana knows, the Atchafalaya Basin is home to a unique and cherished culture and history.”

If NOAA approves the selection and adopts Louisiana into the NERR System, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Management Plan will be drafted, followed by the executing of MOUs between NOAA and the State, the completion of a final EIS and Management Plan, a Record of Decision, and finally a designation ceremony.

“The addition of Atchafalaya Basin to the NERR System provides Louisiana the opportunity to tell our story at the national level of the unique and spectacular environment and culture that a delta estuary represents compared to other estuaries in the nation and around the world,” said Dr. Twilley, chair of the Louisiana designation team. “This is a tribute to efforts of so many coastal champions over the past several years to finally see this NERR nomination accomplished under the leadership of Governor Edwards.” ■



CORPS SELECTS MAUREPAS DIVERSION AS MITIGATION FOR LEVEE PROJECT

By Stacy Ortego, LWF Outreach Coordinator

You spoke up and they listened!

In its original draft Environmental Impact Statement released in October 2021, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) prioritized mitigation banks to compensate for environmental impacts that will result from the construction of the West Shore Lake Pontchartrain Levee (WSLP) project.

Thanks to push back from the public and the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA), the Corps has reconsidered its original decision. In response to public comments and CPRA's willingness to cover any excess expenses over the original preferred alternative (mitigation bank credits), the Corps has selected the River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp project as its new preferred alternative for mitigation of the WSLP project in its updated Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS).

Your continued support for the Maurepas Swamp project has been effective thus far. A final Record of Decision is still needed but we are very hopeful that the final steps are underway to get this long awaited project on the ground!

We look forward to celebrating the beginning of construction of the Maurepas diversion. This decision from the Corps is not only the most commonsense considering the two projects are adjacent to one another but it's also key to saving the state time and money on the Maurepas diversion – a project that's been planned and studied for decades.

Your action makes a difference! Thank you to all who continue to speak up for this project. ■

LWF HOSTS MEETINGS HIGHLIGHTING TULANE DIVERSION RESEARCH TO REDUCE BONNET CARRÉ IMPACTS

By Stacy Ortego, LWF Outreach Coordinator

LWF has wrapped up our two community meetings to highlight Tulane's promising research showing how the Ama and Union diversions – when operated jointly with the River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp project – could both benefit habitat through restoration AND significantly reduce impacts from operating the Bonnet Carré Spillway.



Meetings were held in Gonzales and Luling and featured presentations by Tulane scientist, Dr. Ehab Meselhe – lead scientist of the study – and brief overviews of projects and Louisiana's Coastal Master Plan by the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority.

The study showed that when these diversions are operated jointly, the amount of water flowing through the Bonnet Carré was reduced between 57-61% while the number of days opened reduced by 47 days.

LWF thanks our meeting partners including Tulane University, the Louisiana Coastal Protection & Restoration Authority, Restore the Mississippi River Delta, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Senator Eddie Lambert, Captain Ryan Lambert and especially to those that came out or tuned in to learn more!

The Corps has shown interest in learning more about this research and how it could influence operations of the spillway. Dr. Meselhe also presented his research to the Corps (who manages Bonnet Carré) in May.

While this research shows promising results for the potential of projects to offer additional benefits aside from habitat restoration, more research is ongoing by Dr. Meselhe. The state has also begun modeling projects in preparation for the updated Coastal Master Plan. The Master Plan is legally required to be updated every 6 years with the next update due in 2023. ■

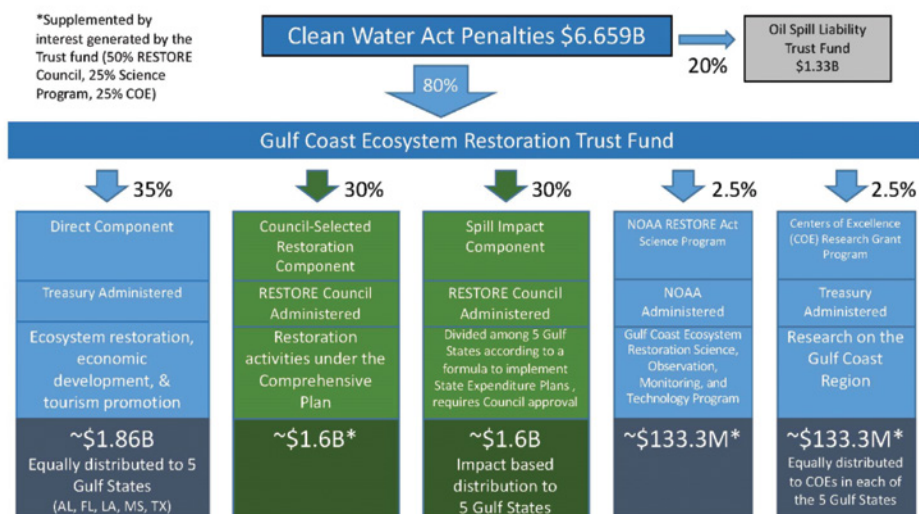


THE RESTORE ACT, 10 YEARS LATER

By Stacy Ortego, LWF Outreach Coordinator

On July 6, 2012, The RESTORE Act (the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act) was signed into law as a result of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill - the largest oil spill in American history that decimated the Gulf Coast on April 20, 2010, causing significant environmental, ecological, and economic damage, killing 11 men and injuring 17.

This legislation established a framework for managing and financing the Gulf Coast's recovery, allocating a great majority (80%) of Clean Water Act penalties from the spill for Gulf Coast restoration. In total, BP and other responsible parties settled for approximately \$20 million. While it's unfortunate that an environmental and human tragedy was the catalyst, the settlement set up a stream of funding for ecosystem restoration never before seen in our nation's history.



In the decade since the passage of the RESTORE Act, Louisiana – the hardest hit state – has wasted no time implementing restoration and protection projects as funds became available, in large part due to planning efforts previously underway through the Coastal Master Plan. Under the RESTORE Act, Louisiana has implemented several projects including:

- Biloxi Marsh Living Shoreline
- Golden Triangle Marsh Creation
- Lowermost Mississippi River Management
- Mississippi River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp
- West Grand Terre Beach Nourishment and Stabilization

In 2020, the River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp project was awarded \$130 million for construction funding. Once constructed, this project will benefit approximately 45,000 acres of coastal forest by reconnecting the Mississippi River and the Maurepas Swamp, thereby improving the swamp ecosystem health and function. LWF has long been a champion of this project. LWF hosted community meetings in 2018 to help educate the public on the importance of funding and implementing this project to protect surrounding communities. Following the announcement of the RESTORE funding, LWF hosted a reception at the LSU Center for River Studies to celebrate this huge milestone as the state takes its final steps to breaking ground on this restoration project decades in the making.

Construction funding was included for West Grand Terre Beach Nourishment and Stabilization (~\$92.5 million), Golden Triangle Marsh Creation (~\$50 million), and Biloxi Marsh Living Shoreline (~\$66.6 million) with the 2020 approval of the Final Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment #6: Restore and Conserve Wetlands, Coastal, and Nearshore Habitats. Together, these projects will create or restore more than 1,900 acres of marsh, beach, and dune habitat and protect more than 11.5 miles of shoreline.

Louisiana is no stranger to environmental threats – natural or man-made. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 put in motion a whole new paradigm to address the vulnerabilities of our coast. The result of that paradigm shift was the creation of the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) which was tasked with developing a plan for a safe and sustainable coast, the Coastal Master Plan. This plan plays a critical role in the selection and development of projects during oil spill restoration planning.

While significant work has been done in the last decade with RESTORE Act funds, there is, as always, much left to do. LWF will continue to monitor progress of coastal restoration and advocate for adequate funding for projects to protect the people and wildlife of Louisiana's Sportsman's Paradise. ■

“

This Administration recognizes that a strong and vibrant ecosystem is the key to the Gulf's future...As Chair of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force and a New Orleans native, I can tell you that a healthy ecosystem is vital to the economy and the way of life for the Gulf Coast. There's a lot at stake in this region: the economies of the five Gulf States supported more than 19 million jobs and nearly \$2.5 trillion of the U.S. GDP in 2008. In addition, millions of people visit the Gulf Coast each year – to vacation, to sail, to swim, to fish, and to enjoy this great waterbody. In 2008, national and international tourists spent about \$145 billion in the 5 coastal states and around 1.7 million people were employed in travel and tourism.

During the oil spill, we essentially “lost” the Gulf for a period of time, and natural resources in the Gulf were extensively damaged. We lost the use of valuable fishing grounds, incredible recreational opportunities and all of the other benefits of a thriving, vibrant ecosystem. That loss helped show folks who aren't from the Gulf Coast just how important it is to our nation.

But our goal and commitment is not simply to address the damage caused by the spill - it is to ensure the long term improvement and restoration of the Gulf Coast and its unique ecosystems.

”

Lisa P. Jackson, EPA Administrator
The White House blog (June 29, 2012)

STATE'S ANNUAL COASTAL SPENDING PLAN TOPS \$1 B FOR FIRST TIME

For the first time, the Coastal Protection & Restoration Authority is planning to spend over \$1 billion on coastal protection and restoration in Louisiana. In May, the legislature unanimously approved the Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Plan, which outlines a \$1.35 billion investment toward 142 active projects.

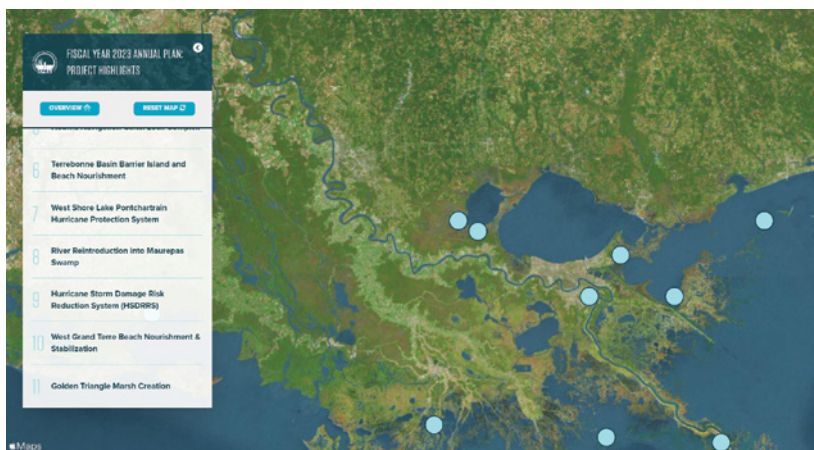
“Fiscal Year 2023 is a pivotal moment for CPRA and our coast,” said CPRA Chairman Chip Kline. “This year marks a historic number of large-scale dredging projects, significant investments in hurricane protection, and the start of construction activities on a first-of-its-kind diversion project...The passage of the Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Plan marks the largest investment in the history of the state’s coastal program. With 81% of funding going directly toward construction, we’re reinforcing our commitment to making real and meaningful progress across our coast. The projects we’re constructing today will benefit Louisianans for generations to come,” said CPRA Chairman Chip Kline.

Key takeaways highlighted by CPRA for the FY 2023 plan include:

- 92% of total expenditures will go toward project construction, implementation, and maintenance.
- Of the 142 active projects, 92 are in construction totaling \$1.1 billion, 41 are in Engineering & Design totaling more than \$75 million, and 9 are in planning totaling \$13.5 million.
- CPRA has 15 active projects in Southwest Louisiana, 39 active projects in South Central Louisiana, and 88 projects in Southeast Louisiana.
- 23 dredging projects are slated for construction, using almost 87 million cubic yards of sediment to create or nourish more than 16,000 acres of coastal wetlands.

“CPRA has remained unwavering in our commitment to fortifying Louisiana’s coast from Holly Beach to Hopedale,” said CPRA Executive Director Bren Haase. “We are continuing this effort in Fiscal Year 2023 with the advancement of several record-breaking efforts, including the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion, and the completion of 18 other highly-anticipated projects.”

The Interactive FY23 Annual Plan interactive map highlights projects CPRA completed construction on in 2021 or those that reached milestones in the last year. It also features projects scheduled to reach major construction milestones or progress in timeline in 2022. Visit ap23.coastal.la.gov to view the map. ■





LWF JOINS GOMESA REVENUE SHARING COALITION ON CAPITOL HILL

In June, U.S. Senators Bill Cassidy (R-LA) and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) introduced legislation aimed at increasing funding for coastal restoration and hurricane protection. The Reinvesting in Shoreline Economies & Ecosystems (RISEE) Act would make needed improvements to the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA) and create a dedicated funding stream for future offshore wind development revenues.

LWF's Stacy Ortego joined advocates from across the Gulf Coast on a trip to Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. as one of 65 stakeholders from all 4 GOMESA to meet with over 40 Congressional offices from across the country to urge their support of the bill.

As introduced, the bill would amend GOMESA by:

- Eliminating the state revenue sharing cap, currently at \$375 million.
- Increasing the amount of GOMESA revenues shared with states from 37.5% to 50%.
- Lifting the Land & Water Conservation Fund's state side funding cap of \$125 million.
- Adding the National Oceans and Coastal Security Fund as a fourth GOMESA equity (12.5%).
- Making oil and gas leases from 2000-2006 eligible for future GOMESA payments to Gulf coast states and the National Oceans and Coastal Security Fund. Currently, only leases from 2007 to present are eligible for GOMESA payments.
- Protecting GOMESA revenues from sequestration.

These revenues are an important source of funding to increase our coastal resilience. In Louisiana, funds received through GOMESA are constitutionally dedicated to fund coastal restoration projects that improve community resilience and increase hurricane protection.

You can follow the latest updates on our website and social media as we track progress of this bill and another expected to be introduced soon in Congress. ■

GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE PHOTO CONTEST: LOUISIANA'S WINNING ENTRIES

In partnership with NWF's Garden for Wildlife program, LWF is working to increase habitat for backyard wildlife species and protect pollinator populations. You can help by creating a wildlife habitat! You can make a difference by inviting wildlife back to your own yard or neighborhood. Learn more at nwf.org/certify

Esther Fleming of Baton Rouge took home the grand prize in this year's Garden for Wildlife Photo Contest. The Honorable Mention award in Louisiana went to Maedbh Ryan of Sorrento. Congratulations to Esther and Maedbh!



"I had just received a new macro lens for my camera, so I decided to visit one of our local gardens to see what I could find. I ended up at LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens on Essen Lane in Baton Rouge. It was early August, so I got there as soon as the gates opened at 8am to avoid the heat

of the day. As I walked the paths, I came upon a patch of yellow flowers that had a lot of bee activity. I stood and observed for a while, then something larger moved, which caught my eye. It was the lizard. Its body, covered in morning dew, was perched atop one of the yellow flowers and its tail was draped across an adjacent flower. There was an unusual pattern running the length of its body. I slowly stooped down to try to get eye level with it when it turned its head and looked at me. I snapped the photo and captured the cutest picture of a lizard I've ever taken. Hope you enjoy!"— Esther Fleming

"This image of a freshly-molted Gulf Fritillary Caterpillar was taken in my front yard in Sorrento. As a photographer and wildlife enthusiast, I am always looking for ways to encourage wildlife to visit my yard. Over the last couple years, I have slowly incorporated some native pollinator plants and host plants for butterflies into my garden as a means to increase biodiversity. I became interested in the NWF Garden for Wildlife program and photo contest in order to encourage others to share their gardens with wildlife, as it can be a wonderfully simple way for each of us to partake in conservation on a personal level." - Maedbh Ryan ■



AFFILIATE NEWS

Woodlands Conservancy acquires Woodlands Preserve



Woodlands Conservancy has permanently protected the 649.11-acre Woodlands Preserve through a land purchase from Plaquemines Parish.

“The acquisition of this precious piece of Gulf Coast habitat will ensure this land is permanently protected for the enjoyment of the community and the wildlife that depend on it,” adds Amy Barton, Woodlands

Conservancy’s Board President. “This property is located on the Mississippi Flyway, a passage that migratory birds take during spring and fall migration. This space is a critical resting and refueling area for songbirds as they recover from and prepare for their long and tiring journey.”

Pontchartrain Conservancy receives EPA award

Pontchartrain Conservancy’s Water Quality team received the Gulf Guardian Award from the EPA Gulf of Mexico Program for their work in keeping the Gulf healthy and productive.



The team inspected home wastewater systems in Slidell’s Ozone Woods subdivision, educating residents on proper operation and maintenance. This resulted in over 214,000 gallons of water being improved. The project calculated a removal of 609 lbs/day of biodegradable pollution to receiving waters of nearby Bayou Liberty.

Toledo Bend Lake Association Glynn Carver Memorial Scholarship

The Toledo Bend Lake Association (TBLA) established the Glynn Carver Memorial Scholarship 2019 in recognition of the contributions that Mr. Carver made throughout his life to Toledo Bend and the surrounding communities.



The \$3000 award went to Lexi Ezernack of Zwolle High School. Lexi plans to attend Northwestern to earn a degree in Nursing. Lexi has been active in many organizations, including Beta Club, SADD, and Explorers Club. Lexi has also achieved an outstanding scholastic record.

The \$2000 award went to Karley Martinez of Zwolle

High School. Karley plans to attend Northwestern to earn a degree in Nursing. Karley has been active in 4-H, FBLA, and Girl Scouts. Karley also has an outstanding scholastic record. ■



LEGISLATIVE REPORT: LWF PRIORITY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2022 REGULAR SESSION

By Rebecca Triche, LWF Executive Director

The state legislature's 2022 regular session was a long one with over 1,000 bills filed. LWF tracked bills related to wildlife, habitat, outdoor recreation, environmental quality, and natural resource management. We asked our members and followers to speak up on some of these issues, and when you do, it is noticed. If you're not already receiving our e-mail alerts (weekly at most), you can sign up at **lawildlifefed.org**.

Here are the highlights that LWF followed at the legislature. Bill numbers are provided if you're interested in finding more details about the bill at **legis.la.gov**.



A top priority for LWF was to support passage of the Louisiana Outdoors Forever Act (HB 762) by Rep. Zeringue, which became Act 714. Thanks to all the legislators who helped establish this program that provides state dollars to match federal and private funding for eligible voluntary conservation projects throughout the state. This closes a gap for matching funds that will make Louisiana more competitive for project funding from NAWCA, Farm Bill programs, other federal programs, plus private funding that requires a non-federal match. The program was kicked off with a \$10 million in seed money (HB406) but ideally, it will need a secure source of funding so look for LWF to focus on that. Learn more at **louisianaoutdoorsforever.com**.

LWF also supported re-establishing the Feral Hog Management Advisory Task Force that had a sunset in 2020. The bill (HCR 19) by Rep. McFarland passed handily. Many folks in agencies and in the private sector acknowledged the benefits of the previous task force's work and recognized the need for ongoing coordination to address the proliferation and impact of feral hogs on the landscape. More than one toxicant is being developed and tested, threats of disease remain, and more people are coming into contact with these animals as their numbers grow. They destroy crops, levees, landscaping, streams, and carry diseases that can transmit to humans.

A perennial issue at the legislature, bills related to coastal restoration and protection were tracked by LWF and in coordination with other organizations. The Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Plan of the Louisiana Coastal Master Plan was presented for passage by the legislature. For the first time, the annual plan calls for spending more than \$1 billion and a great majority of expenditures over the next 3 years are for construction of projects. However, two bills (HB 636 and HB 687) that sought to dedicate revenues received from alternative or renewable

energy production on the Outer Continental Shelf to the Coastal Protection and Restoration Fund did not pass.

Also regarding alternative energy, Rep. Zeringue’s bill (HB 165) was approved to expand the maximum acreage for wind leases to 25,000 acres and add wind energy as a source of energy whereby the State Mineral and Energy Board may enter into operating agreements for the state to receive a share of revenues. Legislators saw this as applying lessons learned from past oil and gas production to future alternative energy, in this case wind. Now that Louisiana has a Climate Action Plan in place, we will see more proposals and projects move forward related to wind, solar, and carbon sequestration.

Related to flooding and water management, Rep. Mincey’s bill (HB 686) that affected Amite River Basin Drainage and Water Conservation District’s board and geographical area was passed. Rep Hodges’ bill (HCR 17) continues the Comite River Diversion Canal Project Task Force. What did not make it to final passage was a bill (SB 414) to create a Watershed Management Council to develop, implement, and manage the Louisiana Watershed Initiative that is a statewide, comprehensive watershed planning process currently housed at State Division of Administration but not a permanent program.

Senator Cathey filed a bill (SB 86) to establish a bear hunt season but did not move it forward. The bill drew lots of attention and LWF opposed it because it’s not the right time to consider whether a season is an appropriate management tool. There is a lawsuit around the delisting of black bear as an endangered species due to questions about the population numbers. The population of bears has not been fully confirmed but there is more data being collected and genetic research is being evaluated, too.

A bill (HB 1046) was filed regarding Catahoula Lake to recreate the Catahoula Lake Game and Fish Preserve and create the Catahoula Lake Game and Fish Commission but when you use words like “property expropriation” and “imminent domain” for private or public property, this tends to draw a lot of concern. This bill did not go anywhere. Instead the House passed Rep. Mike Johnson’s study resolution (HR 129) that creates the Catahoula Lake Study Group to study the feasibility and advisability of establishing a Catahoula Lake Commission to study and make recommendations regarding jurisdiction, management, and maintenance of the Catahoula Lake Game and Fish Preserve; riparian rights; interests of state, local, and private stakeholders; and related matters.



Regarding commercial menhaden fishing, Senator Hensgens’ bill (SB 447) was passed that compels monthly reporting on harvest numbers to the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission and annual reporting to the legislature. A

second bill (HB 1033) that proposed to put more limits on menhaden fishing and particularly dealt with bycatch, did not pass. If you're interested in this issue, there are hours of testimony in both the House Natural Resources and Environment Committee and the Senate Natural Resources Committee about whether or not there is a problem, the nature of the complaints, and economic impacts. As a reminder, the Commission did impose a quarter mile buffer on commercial menhaden along coastal Louisiana to reduce conflicts with recreational fishermen.

The Louisiana Oilfield Site Restoration program is expected to receive up to \$200 million dollars in federal funding from the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to clean up abandoned and orphaned well sites. Senator Allain sponsored a bill (SB 245) that passed to provide for an executive director to help administer the expected increase in contracts and funding and allow for packaging together nonpriority wells with priority well closure or clean-ups when this makes for greater economic efficiency. Louisiana has 4,605 documented orphaned wells that is expected to cost \$650 million to address but this influx of funding will reduce the list quite a bit and hazards associated with these sites.

At least two bills dealt with boater safety. One (HB 1060) addressed the differences in requirements for charter guides in freshwater versus saltwater. Another bill (SB 424) allows boats to be rented and the renter has to at least watch a video on boating safety. There's a bit more to these bills about the public being safely out on the water whether with a paid guide or renting a boat for the day and knowing how to operate it safely. What saddened me was hearing about the increase in deaths from boating accidents in Louisiana per testimony from LDWF's Secretary Jack Montoucet. Drowning deaths have increased too. Be sure to encourage boater safety classes and wearing flotation devices when on water crafts.

PROPER CARCASS HANDLING TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF CWD



PROPER CARCASS DISPOSAL

The carcass of an infected deer can expose other deer to the disease, directly or indirectly, using either an infected caprine deer carcass, the soil will retain infectious for years, possibly exposing other deer to the prions that cause CWD. To avoid this exposure risk, the following disposal methods are recommended:

1. **Bury or inter:** Whenever possible, deer carcasses should be buried on the property where the animal was harvested. Only expert personnel (e.g., wildlife agency) should be used to ensure proper burial. Burial should be deep enough to prevent scavengers from turning and eating the carcass.
2. **Aggravate, feed, or burn:** Infectious prions are highly stable to regular heat and cooking. Carcasses and parts can be disposed of by burning, but this is not recommended. To avoid the risk of disease, carcasses and parts can be disposed of by burning, but this is not recommended. To avoid the risk of disease, carcasses and parts can be disposed of by burning, but this is not recommended.
3. **Leave in place:** If burial is not possible where the deer was harvested, the carcass may be left in place. When this will not prevent scavengers from eating potentially infectious parts, these parts will remain on the landscape where the deer was taken. If CWD is already present on that property, it will likely remain there and be moved to another property where the disease does not occur.



IMPROPER CARCASS DISPOSAL

1. **Shipped in water:** Do not dispose of carcasses in rivers, lakes, or waterways. This has the potential to spread infectious prions to areas previously unaffected.

2. **Burning:** Only commercial incinerators are capable of generating enough heat for a long enough duration to destroy the prion.

3. **Transport to another property:** Removal of harvested deer which was transported to a different property for processing should not be dumped on the landscape where it could infect the environment. Instead, the carcass should be sent to a landfill. Burial as a different property is not acceptable if burial alone enough to prevent scavengers from reaching the buried material and spreading it to the environment, thus making the prion accessible to deer.



Please visit the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries website for more information: www.louisiana.gov

In early 2022 a sickly deer was found to be infected with Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in Louisiana and this triggered Louisiana's CWD response protocol that impacted the three parishes around the site of this case. Some folks believe this response is too restrictive about feeding and negatively impacts the local economy. SCR 67 requests the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to develop protocols, procedures, and appropriate responses when a single isolated instance of CWD is detected verses an outbreak of many cases of CWD and the adverse impacts of mandatory enforcement actions. Testing for CWD continues and

hunters have been very cooperative in providing samples. On behalf of LWF I testified that the only thing Louisiana can do is contain the spread as much as we can for as long as we can because there is no cure, the prions can live in the soil for as long as 15 years, and currently the prions cannot be destroyed except by extreme heat. Deer spread the disease to each other and

congregating deer spreads the disease faster. It's a serious issue and all we can do is learn from other states that have been dealing with this and lament its spread. Learn more about how you can help prevent the spread of CWD in Louisiana at wlf.louisiana.gov/page/cwd.

Rep. Stefanski's bill (HB 422) to allow use of pneumatic devices in hunting passed. It is categorized as a modern firearm. Even though in addition to an air gun there is a pneumatic bow a hunter could use, it would not be allowed during bow season. In testimony, it was noted that veterans and handicapped hunters like using air guns because there is no kick and it's not a loud sound that could trigger PTSD. No one mentioned an advantage for poachers with low gun noise. But every other Southeastern state allows this and now, so does Louisiana. Watch for specific changes in upcoming hunting regulations.

Catfish noodling is officially allowed. Some of the law was kind of murky about this but now it's clear. However, the catfish hole in a muddy river is no clearer than it ever was.

Finally, let's celebrate the newly appointed state butterfly: the Gulf Fritillary. ■

Louisiana now has a state butterfly thanks to Monroe senator Stewart Cathey, Jr. Here's some facts about our new state symbol, the Gulf Fritillary:

- Louisiana's only indigenous butterfly
- They lay their eggs only on the leaves of passionflower vines (aka maypops)
- Caterpillars are orange with black spikes (but they do not sting)
- Planting passionflower in your native garden will ensure they visit all summer and early fall



Meet Louisiana's state butterfly:
Gulf Fritillary (*Agraulis vanillae*)

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