



State of Louisiana

State to Receive \$67.9 million for Louisiana Coastal Master Plan Projects

Projects funded as a part of initial investments as a result of criminal charges against BP and Transocean

BATON ROUGE, LA., Nov. 14, 2013 – Louisiana is receiving \$67.9 million to advance projects designed to improve the marine and coastal environments, ecosystems, and habitats in the Gulf of Mexico and bordering states harmed by the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) announced today. The funds were generated by agreements between BP, Transocean, and the U.S. Department of Justice to settle certain criminal charges against both companies in relation to the spill. This is the first approved dedication of the funds, expected to total \$2.544 billion for the affected states over a five-year period.

“For decades, we have fought to protect and preserve our home -- the abundant natural resources, coastal areas and unique culture found here in south Louisiana,” said Governor Bobby Jindal. “We’ve certainly faced challenges, but these investments will give us the opportunity to make an historic down payment on a 50-year plan to protect our families and businesses, restore the natural processes that built Louisiana’s delta, and ensure that our coast continues to be both a Sportsman’s Paradise and a hub for commerce and industry.”

The expenditures through the newly-created Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund were approved by NFWF, the fund administrator, which must give appropriate consideration to Louisiana’s Coastal Master Plan and the Louisiana Coastal Area Mississippi River Hydrodynamic and Delta Management Study. As required in the settlement agreement, the money will be used for initial planning and engineering on priority barrier islands and projects to reconnect the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers to adjacent coastal wetland areas.

The selected projects are being developed in coordination with the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority and are considered to be critical to the long-term sustainability of one of the most productive, unique, and imperiled coastal and estuarine ecosystems in the world. They include:

1. ***Caminada Beach and Dune Increment II: Engineering & Design (\$3M)***: The project will create approximately 489 acres of beach and dune habitat, restoring approximately 8.9 additional miles (supplementing Increment I) of beach with approximately 5.4 million cubic yards of material from Ship Shoal, an offshore submerged sand source.
2. ***East Timbalier Island: Engineering & Design (\$6M)***: East Timbalier Island is part of a barrier island chain that separates Terrebonne and Timbalier bays from the Gulf of Mexico. The island is currently comprised of two severely degraded segments; the proposed project would re-establish the historic footprint, reconnecting the two segments.
3. ***Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion: Engineering & Design (\$40.4M)***: This project, designed to mimic delta-building processes in the Atchafalaya River delta and others, is expected to restore significant habitat in the Barataria Basin, including fresh, intermediate, and brackish marshes by re-

introducing sediment and nutrients which historically built and maintained the affected area. The project will be instrumental in informing the design of other future diversion projects.

4. ***Lower Mississippi River Sediment Diversions: Planning (\$13.6M)***: The study will examine additional lower Mississippi River sediment diversions designed to reconnect the Mississippi River to degrading marshes east (Mid Breton and Lower Breton) and west (Lower Barataria), building land in shallow open water and introducing sediment and nutrients to sustain existing stressed wetlands.
5. ***Increase Atchafalaya Flow to Terrebonne: Planning (4.9M)***: The project will utilize freshwater and sediment from the Atchafalaya River in order to build, sustain, and maintain wetlands within the Terrebonne Basin.

“The work performed with these funds will help to address uncertainties in critical projects related to reconnecting the Mississippi River system with our coast and reestablishing the land building process in south Louisiana,” said Garret Graves, chair of the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Board. “These projects are fundamental to the success of the Master Plan. This is the difference between Louisiana’s coast being Plaquemines Parish or the City of Plaquemines in 2100. The barrier island component announced today represents over half a billion dollars in barrier island restoration, our first line of defense under Governor Jindal. The progress is unprecedented.”

“Our barrier islands are our first line of defense and fresh water into other areas of our parish are critical for our future,” said Terrebonne Parish President Michel Claudet. “A win-win for Terrebonne.”

“Re-introducing sediments from the Mississippi River and restoring our barrier islands to retain those sediments within the system are key components in restoring our vanishing wetlands,” said Jefferson Parish President and CPRA Board Member John Young. “We all know that sediments are needed to rebuild and sustain our coast, and this funding will allow us to proceed in designing a project that will mimic the natural processes by using river sediments to build land as was done naturally prior to the coastal wetlands being isolated from the Mississippi River by levees. Accordingly, this requires great care, utilizing the best available science and engineering technologies, so that the end results protect and sustain our viable working coastlines to support fisheries and other industries, our people, and our rich cultural heritage. I look forward to information and technical data coming forth during the design phase in order to allay concerns.”

“This is an important source of revenue to address these critical projects,” said Lafourche Parish President Charlotte Randolph. “This is a welcome opportunity to address the coastal restoration that is so badly needed here. The identification of projects to be funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is attributable to Gov. Jindal and the CPRA’s commitment to this region.”

“Under Governor Jindal and this legislature, the CPRA has invested more dollars in protecting our citizens and restoring our coast than ever before,” said Plaquemines Parish President and CPRA Board Member Billy Nungesser. “This announcement today commits an additional \$70 million in planning, engineering and design work to ensure that these NFWF funded projects continue the forward momentum. The State-Parish partnership has yielded hundreds of millions of dollars for projects in Plaquemines Parish. I want to make sure that these new investments not only protect our citizens and restore our coast but also preserve our great culture and Plaquemines Parish’s reputation as home to the nation’s “luckiest” fishermen.”

"Today's announcement is a giant step forward for restoration," said Steven Peyronnin, executive director for the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana. "NFWF and the State of Louisiana deserve tremendous credit for moving quickly to advance key projects that are fundamental to Louisiana's Coastal Master Plan. By focusing on projects that restore our barrier islands and reconnect our rivers to our coast, NFWF and the State of Louisiana have made a smart investment in a sustainable future for Louisiana."

"Restoring and sustaining the wetlands of the Mississippi River Delta and restoring the unique, essential barrier islands along Louisiana's coast are both vital to the long-term sustainability of productive recreational fisheries in Louisiana and throughout the Gulf," said Chris Macaluso, director of the Center for Marine Fisheries for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership. "The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership has been working very closely with recreational fishermen, scientists and researchers, business owners, fisheries managers, and conservation organizations across the Gulf and there has been overwhelming support for projects that build and sustain fisheries habitat among the recreational fishing community. The projects selected by Louisiana and approved by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation are the kinds of projects recreational fishermen have asked for to ensure healthy and sustainable fishing for generations to come."

"A year ago, the Attorney General announced that criminal settlement dollars from BP and Transocean would be dedicated to building diversions and barrier islands in Louisiana. The dream of meaningful large scale restoration took a huge step toward reality," said David Muth, director of the Mississippi River Delta Restoration Program for the National Wildlife Federation. "This announcement by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation of funding for key projects from the Louisiana Master Plan is the next important step toward restoring the Mississippi River Delta. Louisiana's Mid-Barataria Diversion is an example of the scale of project needed to bring hope for a future to a coastal basin with one of the highest land loss rates in the world."

"Dedication of this first round of funding to planning, design, and engineering of complex restoration projects is significant," said Cynthia Duet, government relations director for Audubon Louisiana. "These large river diversions and islands require substantial funding and time at the front end of the process if they are to be truly successful coastal habitats for birds, wildlife, and communities into the future. Today's announcement reflects the collaboration between NFWF and the state of Louisiana, and their true understanding of the needs of our coastal environment."

More information on these individual projects can be found on the CPRA website, <http://coastal.la.gov>.

To learn more about NFWF's Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund in Louisiana, visit <http://www.nfwf.org/gulf/Pages/GEBF-Louisiana.aspx>