



State of Louisiana
Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority

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CPRA CHAIRMAN AND U.S. AGRICULTURE SECRETARY TOUR CANAL BACKFILLING PROJECT TO BE FUNDED BY RESTORE ACT FUNDS



CPRA Chair Johnny Bradberry, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Homer Wilkes, Director of the Gulf of Mexico Ecosystem Restoration Division, tour a portion of a canal in the Jean Lafitte area that will be filled in, funded through the RESTORE Act.

JEAN LAFITTE, LA. – RESTORE Act money from the BP oil spill will be used to backfill 16.5 miles of canals in the Barataria Unit of the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve south of New Orleans near the communities of Jean Lafitte and Crown Point.

The \$8.73 million Jean Lafitte Canal Backfilling project is sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of the Interior with funding through the RESTORE Act. It will take about six months to complete and will allow the area to revert to freshwater marsh, swamp and shallow water habitat through natural processes. The process will enhance the resiliency of the wetland ecosystem adjacent to 20 miles of the Federal levee system protecting Greater New Orleans.

Another RESTORE project approved for planning, this one sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service on behalf of the Federally Recognized Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana, is using \$5.16 million for engineering and design of the Bayou Dularge Ridge, Marsh and Hydrologic Restoration in Terrebonne Parish. If constructed, the project could help re-establish hydrologic and salinity conditions for the health of 540 acres of marsh.

"We are pleased to see ecological restoration being accomplished in such a meaningful way," said CPRA Chair Johnny Bradberry. "We look forward to the implementation of more projects that are so urgently needed, and thank Secretary Vilsack and our Federal partners on the RESTORE Council for the emphasis on achieving restoration with an eye to resiliency and sustainability, goals important to us in Louisiana."

For the canal backfilling project in Jean Lafitte National Park, the spoil banks will be graded to meet the elevation of the surrounding wetlands. The open water of the canals will be partially filled with graded soil and vegetative material in order to reclaim canals. Leveling of spoil banks and dikes will be accomplished through the use of a marsh buggy, barge-mounted excavator, or similar earthmoving equipment and by accessing each site from existing canals or spoil banks. Specific mitigation techniques will be implemented to minimize potential impacts to navigation and recreation as well as to help meet habitat restoration and preservation objectives.

To date, approximately \$52 million in RESTORE Act funding has been allocated for seven projects in Louisiana, with additional projects under consideration. In addition to the Jean Lafitte canal project and the Bayou Dularge project, money is allocated for the Golden Triangle Marsh Creation project, the Mississippi River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp, the Biloxi Marsh Living Shoreline, the West Grand Terre Beach Nourishment and Stabilization project, and the Lower Mississippi River Management Program, projects proposed and submitted by the State of Louisiana to the RESTORE Council. These funds, allocated by the initial Funded Priorities List, are associated with the Transocean Settlement.