



State of Louisiana
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Coastal Caminada Restoration Important to Economic Future of Port Fourchon, America's Largest Energy Port

FORT FOURCHON, LA. (March 9, 2017) – Coastal restoration is more than just restoring marsh and shoreline ecosystems; for Louisiana's working coast that restoration is a necessary protective buffer for people, homes, businesses and critical infrastructure that fuels our nation.

Nowhere is that more evident than at Louisiana's Port Fourchon, the nation's largest energy port, servicing more than 90 percent of all deepwater activity in the Gulf of Mexico. Situated at the mouth of Bayou Lafourche, the port is separated from the Gulf of Mexico by a tenuous stretch of beach, dune and marsh. In the recent past there was more land below Port Fourchon, with the shoreline extending another half mile or more south into the Gulf. Over the past 50 years that shoreline has eroded and retreated. Salt water overtopping began working like a slow-acting poison on the buffering marsh ecosystem, degrading its mass and effectiveness. For Port Fourchon this meant less security against ravaging surges from tropical storms and hurricanes.

So, why are port officials optimistic and thrilled with the prospect of attracting new business to the port? One look at the restoration of the protective beach and dune below Port Fourchon tells the story.

The largest ecosystem restoration project ever undertaken by the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority has restored the Caminada Headland, a 13-mile stretch of beach and dune running from the Belle Pass outlet of Bayou Lafourche eastward to Caminada Pass at the end of Elmer's Island.

The new beach covers an area equivalent to approximately 1,047 football fields. The 8.4 million cubic yards of sand used was dredged from an ancient Mississippi River delta out in the Gulf of Mexico below Cocodrie. It was barged 30 miles to the headland where it was



used to build up 13 miles of beach to a height 4.5 feet above sea level, with a dune elevation of seven feet, and a dune crest width of 290 feet. The average depth of the beach from dune to shoreline is approximately 65 feet.

CPRA Chairman Johnny Bradberry says the restoration is important for the safety of Port Fourchon, and also for much more.

“This is another link in a chain of projects that define and protect our coastal perimeter,” said Bradberry. “These headland beaches and barrier islands are our first line of defense, bearing the initial impact of damaging storm surge. They help lessen the impact on people and infrastructure further inland, and help minimize damage to our maturing marsh restoration projects.”

The renewed protection is already paying dividends for the port.

“Being the southern-most port in Louisiana, and central on the Gulf of Mexico has some tremendous advantages to our tenants in the energy industry, but it also brings with it the challenge of being at the front line of coastal land loss,” says Chett Chiasson, Executive Director of the Greater Lafourche Port Commission. “Being able to tell current and prospective future tenants that the State and its partners have committed over a quarter of a billion dollars to environmental restoration that enhances our sustainability and security over the long term has been critical to us maintaining our market share through a downturn in the energy industry, and will help us continue to attract new investment to keep our economy, communities, and cultures strong.”

Already the nation’s most-important energy port, Fourchon is looking to take things to the next level as it moves forward with development of the next generation of deepwater port facilities.

“We’re looking to develop an additional 900 acres of property that will be home to a state-of-the-art deepwater rig repair and refurbishment facility,” says Chiasson. “This will allow us to service the entire industrial life cycle of the assets for our tenants and their customers in the Gulf of Mexico.”

Another sign of a sustainable and growing future for the port is the proposed development on site of an \$800 million liquefied natural gas production and export facility. Energy World USA says its proposed plant could eventually produce up to two million tons of LNG for export each year. The company is also planning a separate facility at the port that could provide LNG as fuel for offshore supply vessels in the Gulf.



“This commitment of CPRA and federal partners to provide the type of ecosystem restoration and protection represented by the Caminada Headland project is absolutely in line with the Port’s commitment to taking a holistic approach to resiliency in our design and expansion. Through this investment by CPRA and others, current and potential tenants can be confident that Port Fourchon is the best place to be now and in to the future,” says Perry Gisclair, Board President of the Greater Lafourche Port Commission. The \$216 million Caminada Headland restoration is an important project of Louisiana’s Coastal Master Plan. It has been funded by the state (\$30 million in State Surplus), the federal Coastal Impact Assistance Program (\$40 million), and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s Gulf Environmental Fund (\$145.9 million) established in the wake of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill to manage funds resulting from the settlement of federal criminal charges against BP and Transocean.

Gov. John Bel Edwards and other state and local dignitaries will celebrate the Caminada Headland Restoration project with a ribbon cutting and the planting of dune vegetation on the eastern portion of the project, Elmer’s Island Wildlife Refuge managed by the La. Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries, on Tuesday, March 21, 2017, at 1:45 p.m.

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CPRA was established as the single, centralized, State of Louisiana Authority, to consolidate state, parish and federal personnel and resources to create, coordinate and implement a Coastal Master Plan of unified vision for remediation, restoration and protection, to reduce hurricane storm surge flood impact, to restore our bountiful natural resources, to protect our nation’s critical energy infrastructure, and to secure Louisiana’s coast now and for future generations.