Caminada Headland FAQ's

Q **Why is this project the largest restoration project ever to date for CPRA?**

A Placing 8.84 million cubic yards of sand, restoring 1059 acres of habitat, and building over 13 miles beach and dune. This makes Caminada the longest barrier island restoration project done in Louisiana and to date the largest volume of sediment placed. It is also the longest distance for sediment transported. At over $139 million the construction contract for Increment II of the project was the largest ever to date for a restoration project. The combined amount of funding to restore the entire headland totals over $216 million.

Q **What is the difference between a barrier island and a headland?**

A Both are considered barrier shorelines. Barrier islands have detached from the delta that formed them and headlands are still attached. In this case Caminada is still attached to Bayou Lafourche, the delta that formed it, so it is a Headland.

Q **What were some of the challenges in building such a large project?**

A Because the Caminada Headland and Ship Shoal are such unique habitats for a variety of fish and wildlife resources, environmental assessments for impacts are required. Environmental regulations always provide challenges to large scale restoration efforts. Since Caminada headland provides important bird habitat for both nesting and wintering birds, continuous bird surveys were required while the project was under construction. At times when bird nests were discovered, construction activities were necessarily halted and great care was taken to work around nests without disturbing them. Additionally while hopper dredges were used to dredge sediment from the offshore borrow source for this project, it was important to relocate any sea turtles that were in the area of dredging. In total,197 sea turtles were successfully relocated. The assessments of potential cultural and historic resources are also required. Through constant communication between Federal and State regulatory agencies, successful project implementation occurred with little impact to protected and valuable resources.

Q **Why is driving restricted on Elmer's Island and the Headland when it has historically been allowed?**

A Scientific studies show that vehicle traffic on beaches causes significant damage to beaches and dunes. Vehicular traffic causes compaction and displacement of sediment and destruction of vegetation leading to erosion of dunes. Damage to dunes from off road recreational vehicles also leads to destruction of habitats and breeding grounds for wildlife. This restriction is in effect to preserve the $216 million investment in restoring the Caminada Headland, and to ensure that it here for future generations to enjoy.

Q **Why is Ship Shoal such a valuable sand resource and how come this is the first time it is being used?**

A Ship Shoal sand was identified as a target for coastal restoration decades ago, but transporting sand long distances—such as the 30-40 miles from the shoal to the Headland restoration site—is complicated and expensive. CPRA's commitment to funding a dedicated barrier island restoration program makes this tool available to address root causes of the barrier system degradation, which allows us to transport sediment 5 or 6 times farther than ever before. By delivering former barrier island sand to restore the Headland, we are effectively using the natural processes that built the headland in the first place to turn back the erosional clock and prevent our new shorelines from converting to submerged shoals.

Q **Ship Shoal used to be a barrier island?**

A Yes. Over 7,000 years ago Ship Shoal was a former barrier island associated with the Mississippi River's Maringouin Delta. There is a continuous cycle of aggradation and degradation occurring with every delta shift. When a delta shifts the headland, it eventually detaches and becomes a barrier island. Over time, the islands erode and form shoals or offshore deposits of sand.

Q **What kinds of plants are planted after the sand is pumped?**

A On barrier shorelines it is typical to plant native dune plants to help capture sand and stabilize the dune. Two of the most common species are bitter panicum and sea oats. These two species are adapted to dry, windblown-sand habitats that exist immediately after construction and they begin the establishment of dune habitats. Other species are then planted later to add species diversity.

Q **What was the Hurricane of 1893?**

A In October of 1893 a massive hurricane devastated the Cheniere Caminada killing an estimated 2,000 people making it among the deadliest of American hurricanes.