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## The RESTORE Act Center of Excellence for Louisiana Announces Awardees to Receive First Round of Oil Spill Grants

\$2.95 MILLION AWARDED TO FUND COASTAL RESEARCH PROJECTS AND ASSIST GRADUATE STUDENTS

**BATON ROUGE, La. (June 22, 2017)** – Enhancing sediment retention of diversions and improving flood risk assessment are just two of thirteen research projects recently funded through the first round of Louisiana’s RESTORE Act Center of Excellence grant process.

Announced June 22, the two-year grants fund projects that directly relate to the implementation of Louisiana’s Coastal Master Plan. The announcement includes three types of awards – Louisiana-led collaborative awards, research awards, and Louisiana graduate studentship awards to cover tuition, fees, and up to \$5,000 for research expenses. In all, \$2,530,803 was awarded to the research and collaborative awards with \$422,180 awarded to the graduate studentships.

“The Louisiana Coastal Master Plan is nationally and internationally renowned for its incorporation of the best available science,” said Justin R. Ehrenwerth, President and CEO of The Water Institute of the Gulf and Director of the Center of Excellence for Louisiana. “The Water Institute is honored to serve as the State’s RESTORE Act Center of Excellence and to support some of the most talented researchers across the State to help further advance our ability to protect and restore our coast.”

The Center of Excellence received 61 proposals for the research and collaborative awards with a total request of about \$20 million. Two collaborative and five research projects were selected as well as six graduate studentship projects with the approximately \$3 million available during this funding cycle.

“The establishment of the Center of Excellence affords Louisiana a significant opportunity to encourage research that will accelerate the scientific progress relevant to Louisiana’s Coastal Master Plan, and this first round of grant-making is an important step in making that a reality,” said CPRA Executive Director Michael Ellis.

To select the projects, the Center of Excellence coordinated an external peer-review process where three experts from within Louisiana and from around the country evaluated each proposal. Representatives from the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority of Louisiana also evaluated how well each proposal applied to advancing the Coastal Master Plan work and then there was an additional review by an expert external board. This group of independent experts convened to provide technical feedback on the quality and importance of the proposals.

[Link to summary of awards here.](#)

### **About The RESTORE Act Center of Excellence Grants Program**

The Water Institute of the Gulf was selected by CPRA to serve as the State's RESTORE Act Center of Excellence, and on November 1, 2015, the U.S. Department of the Treasury awarded CPRA a grant to begin its research program. Funding for the research program comes from fines and penalties in the wake of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

The mission of the RESTORE Act Center of Excellence for Louisiana is to provide research directly relevant to implementation of Louisiana's Coastal Master Plan by administering a competitive grants program and providing the appropriate coordination and oversight support to ensure that success metrics are tracked and achieved. The Center is a separate program within The Water Institute of the Gulf. More information about the RESTORE Act Center of Excellence for Louisiana can be found at [www.LA-COE.org](http://www.LA-COE.org).

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