



State of Louisiana  
Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **CPRA Board updated on funding programs, partnerships and Center for River Studies**

**BATON ROUGE, LA. (Sept. 20, 2017)** – Presentations on using RESTORE Act funds were made at today's monthly meeting of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Board. Information was presented on CPRA's RESTORE Act Parish Matching Opportunities Program and a project approved to utilize RESTORE Act funds to continue in-depth studies of the lower Mississippi River. Updates were also presented on the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program and the Center for River Studies that is nearing completion.

### ***RESTORE Parish Matching Update***

An update was provided by Governor's Office attorney Chris Barnes on the progress of the CPRA voluntary program to incentivize the matching of parish and state RESTORE Act funds to accomplish parish priority projects. Under this program, parishes receiving RESTORE Act Direct Component funds had until September 14 to apply for state matching dollars to fund integrated coastal protection projects that are either in the Coastal Master Plan or consistent with the goals and objectives of the plan.

"The success of CPRA's coastal program depends on partnerships with coastal parishes," said Barnes.

"While the total amount allocated for this program over a 15 year period is up to \$100 million, this initial solicitation for the RESTORE Act Parish Matching Opportunities Program is up to \$20 million. Projects will be evaluated on a number of criteria including the ability to restore and protect coastal habitats, reduce economic losses from storm surge, feasibility, and additional factors such as synergy with other integrated coastal protection and restoration projects."



Proposals are being evaluated by CPRA staff on a case-by-case basis using selection criteria provided in the State's First Amended RESTORE Plan with the CPRA Board having final approval of the project list. An announcement of a draft list of selected projects is anticipated for November.

### ***Lowermost Mississippi River Management Program***

CPRA is preparing a new program to advance the scientific investigation of subsidence, geomorphology, surge modeling and alternative dredging strategies in the lowermost Mississippi River.

"We are applying to the RESTORE Council for a grant that could potentially total \$9.3 million spread over three years," said CPRA Coastal Resources Assistant Administrator Brian Lezina. "We want to add to the data collected and the modeling established under previous programs so we can keep moving forward in the gathering and application of the best science available. Our goal is to support integrated river management using several technical elements for the collection of new data and analysis."

### ***BTNEP National Estuaries Week***

To highlight National Estuaries Week, an update on the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP) was presented by Director Susan Testroet-Bergeron.

"BTNEP includes the Atchafalaya Basin and everything east to the Mississippi River. It is hardwood swamps and marshes and habitats that extend from Pointe Coupee to the Gulf," said Testroet-Bergeron. "It is a precious resource and we appreciate the partnership of the state CPRA in fighting to preserve it and all of South Louisiana."

BTNEP is updating its Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan that guides its efforts in scientific research, habitat enhancement projects, protection of native species while reducing invasive species, and preserving water quality. It is also a leader in volunteer activities, science-based publications, education and eco-tourism as a means for economic development. Public meetings will be conducted to receive stakeholder input.

"We do a lot at CPRA," said Chairman Johnny Bradberry, "but we get a tremendous amount of help from organizations like BTNEP and our NGO partners. We thank you sincerely for all that you do to help us and the people and environment of Louisiana."



### ***Center for River Studies Update***

The Center for River Studies, which includes a scaled physical model of the lower Mississippi River, is nearing completion on the Baton Rouge Water Campus. The 10,000 square-foot model will flow water and sediment down an artificial river channel from Donaldsonville to the Gulf of Mexico. The physical model will complement computer modeling efforts and provide other information as to how the river reacts to potential sediment diversions called for in Louisiana's Coastal Master Plan.

The model's domain, scale, and movable-bed operations make it one of the most unique physical models in the world. Our team pushed the envelope of innovation on every component of the project," said CPRA engineer Rudy Simoneaux, "In addition to the research and science, the facility will provide us with an opportunity to inspire the next generation of coastal scientists and engineers".

The Center for River Studies, which also houses a state of the art coastal exhibit area, will provide an opportunity for researchers, scientists, and engineers to develop coastal knowledge that can be exported to other coastal communities around the world. Louisiana State University will operate and maintain of the model in collaboration with CPRA.

"This will be a world class research facility to advance coastal research and project planning and engineering, to develop innovative environmental solutions for the challenges facing coastal communities in Louisiana and all over the world," said Chairman Bradberry.

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*Louisiana's Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority is the single state entity with authority to develop, articulate, implement, and enforce a comprehensive coastal protection and restoration Master Plan of unified vision to reduce hurricane storm surge flood impact, to restore our bountiful natural resources, to build land to protect our nation's critical energy infrastructure, and to secure Louisiana's coast now and for future generations.*