



Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority



Mid-Basin Sediment Diversion Program: Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion

State Issue

Louisiana land formed for many millennia by the deposition of sediment delivered by the Mississippi River.

- Mississippi River deposited sediment that formed the lobes of land that we stand on.
- Sediment diversions are constructed conveyance channels that reconnect the river to those lands to rebuild and sustain them by restoring the natural deltaic processes that built them.
- Using the river sediment, it is estimated that the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion could deliver between 2-3 million cubic yards of sediment a year. (*By 2070, the Mississippi River will deliver enough sediment to these basins to fill 22 - 32 Louisiana Superdomes.*)

Coastal Louisiana land loss rates highest in the world at a rate of 30-50km² per year lost over the last two decades.¹

Louisiana coastal parishes have lost 2,006 square miles (5,197 square kilometers) of land from 1932 to 2016.²

The Barataria and Breton Basins along with the Mississippi River Delta, have lost approximately 700 square miles (or 447,000 acres) of land since the 1930s, representing one of the highest land loss rates in the world.

- The loss of Louisiana's coastal area was significantly exacerbated by the *Deepwater Horizon* Oil Spill, which oiled over 684 linear miles of wetlands Gulf-wide, with approximately 95% of this marsh oiling occurring in coastal Louisiana; the majority of the "heavier" and "heavier persistent" oiling was in the Barataria Bay; oil-spill settlement funding will allow large-scale restoration to this area.

Restoration Strategy

- Since 2008, CPRA has dredged nearly 39 million cubic yards from Mississippi River borrow sites.
- Dredging projects create land immediately and provide critically needed short-term benefits. However, long-term sustainability is a major issue for these projects. The delivery of sediment via sediment diversion projects may take longer to yield land building results, but once established will not only continue to build new wetlands but sustain that land as well as existing wetlands around it.
- The latest science shows that constructing a marsh creation project within the proximity of a sediment diversion will prolong its life by providing sediment not otherwise available.
- Over 60 million cubic yards of Mississippi River sediment, the upper limit of sediment availability in this reach of the river, will be dredged to complement Mid-Barataria and Mid-Breton sediment diversion projects.

MBSD Project Overview

- Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion will provide critical sediment, as well as water and nutrients to the Barataria basin in order to build, maintain, and sustain the wetlands, and restore valuable ecosystem services injured by the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill.
- The Mid-Barataria and Mid-Breton Sediment Diversions represent the largest coastal restoration effort in the history of the country and a \$2 Billion investment in Plaquemines Parish, fully funded by oil spill settlement dollars, not tax dollars. These projects will boost the local economy by creating jobs and utilizing the goods and services from local businesses and well as helping to reduce risk of hurricane storm surge protecting billions of dollars worth of existing and future infrastructure.

Collaboration with LDWF

- CPRA and LDWF have taken steps to formalize discussions with fisheries stakeholders, most recently through the Louisiana Oyster Task Force although this will expand to other fisheries sectors. The primary focus of these discussions is understanding the needs of the fisheries, and helping to identify strategies to adapt to coastal change in Louisiana.
 - CPRA will provide data concerning restoration projects and potential future conditions.
 - LDWF will provide data concerning the particular fishery as well as help with interpreting the data
 - The particular fishing industry will use current and future data to identify needs and potential ways to adapt.
 - CPRA, LDWF, and the industry will work together to identify details including what strategies are feasible or implementable.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

- The MOU Establishes a framework for establishing discipline and accountability in the environmental review and authorization process of the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion Project.
- It also establishes the goal of completing all federal environmental reviews and authorizations decisions for major infrastructure projects within two years.
- On August 15, 2017, the President issued Executive Order (“EO”) 13807, noting in the Statement of Purpose:
 - Inefficiencies in current infrastructure project decisions, including management of environmental reviews and permit decisions or authorizations, have delayed infrastructure investments, increased project costs, and blocked the American people from enjoying improved.
 - Regarding Infrastructure that would benefit our economy, society, and environment:
More efficient and effective Federal infrastructure decisions can transform our economy, so the Federal Government, as a whole, must change the way it processes environmental reviews and authorization decisions.
- The United States is focused on improving the efficiency of the federal environmental review and authorization process such that covered infrastructure projects are brought on line quickly, for the benefit of the public and the economy, while ensuring compliance with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws and ordinances.
- Louisiana is committed to developing the Project in an environmentally sound manner and in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and ordinances.

Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act “FAST-41” not the same as “FAST-tracking”

- Recent advancements of the project in no way eliminate steps or jeopardize the integrity of the permitting process.
- These advancements streamline processes and seek to increase available federal resources while ensuring compliance with all federal, state and local laws and conducting a thorough environmental review.
- The project will not receive a permit until these environmental review processes are complete and in compliance according to federal law.

Environmental Impact Statement

- It is anticipated that the USACE will issue a Draft EIS in 2019, which will include a full discussion of the potential impacts of the project according to more than 70 environmental laws and public scoping comments.
- The EIS will address numerous impacts based on science, including but not limited to those related to natural resources (such as shrimp, oyster, crab, and fish), socio-economic impacts (such as commercial fishing), navigation, flooding, cultural resources and water quality.
- The public will have an opportunity to comment on the Draft EIS, and CPRA will be required to address, monitor for, and manage significant negative impacts of the project through avoidance, minimization, or mitigation, in accordance with existing environmental laws.

Public Engagement

In addition to Public Scoping Meetings and other formal engagement opportunities outlined in the NEPA and permitting processes, CPRA is committed to providing numerous opportunities for public engagement. Since September 2016, CPRA’s Diversion Program Team has held 76 meetings reaching over 5,600 people.

To learn more about CPRA and the Mississippi River Sediment Diversion Program:

- Visit with CPRA Staff at an upcoming Coastal Connections event <http://coastal.la.gov/calendar/>
- Attend a CPRA Board Meeting (schedule posted at coastal.la.gov/calendar)
- Visit www.coastal.la.gov to learn more about this project and other coastal program projects
- Email us at coastal@la.gov to request a meeting.
- Connect with Us! @LouisianaCPRA (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter)
[Email Sign Up: www.coastal.la.gov](http://www.coastal.la.gov)

¹Couvillion, 2017; ²U.S. Geological Survey, 2017