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EMBARGOED UNTIL 12:00PM CST ON NOV. 15, 2016

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NFWF Awards More Than \$245 Million for Master Plan Projects in Louisiana

Fourth Round of Grants from the Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

NEW ORLEANS, LA. (November 15, 2016) - The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) today announced the award of five projects totaling more than \$245 million from its Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund (GEBF) to the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) of Louisiana. The projects, developed in consultation with CPRA and federal resource agencies, are designed to advance critical river diversion projects within Louisiana's Comprehensive Masterplan for a Sustainable Coast.

New projects include the engineering and design of two major sediment diversions along the Lower Mississippi River that, once constructed, will restore and protect thousands of acres of vulnerable coastal wetlands in Louisiana. Construction on these major coastal restoration projects is estimated to begin as early as 2021.

Louisiana also will advance engineering and design on a freshwater diversion of the Atchafalaya River to protect marshes in the upper part of Terrebonne Parish Louisiana. The state also will continue its effort to adaptively manage these critical coastal restoration projects. For additional information on Louisiana projects, click [here](#).

Today's announcement represents the fourth year of awards from the payments received thus far by the GEBF to the CPRA of Louisiana. To date, the fund has received \$575 million dollars for projects in Louisiana; with today's announcement, NFWF has awarded nearly \$465 million in Louisiana, or more than 80 percent of available funds for Louisiana.

"Three years ago, the BP and Transocean criminal settlements directed an unprecedented \$1.27 billion dollars to Louisiana to restore our barrier islands and to reconnect the Mississippi River to the delta through sediment diversions," said Louisiana Governor, John Bel Edwards. "I strongly believe that Louisiana received this money not only because of the devastation to our wetlands, but also because of the coordinated efforts in place to restore our coast, as evidenced by our coastal master plan. This latest funding award, \$245 million, is a milestone in advancing implementation of the biggest projects within the Louisiana Coastal Master Plan and another victory for rehabilitating Louisiana's most valuable asset, our coast."



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NFWF created the GEBF in 2012 to receive and administer funds resulting from remedial orders in the plea agreements between the U.S. Department of Justice and BP and Transocean. The plea agreements resolved certain criminal charges against both companies relating to the 2010 oil spill. Provisions within the agreements direct a total of \$2.544 billion to NFWF over a five-year period to be used to support natural resource projects in the Gulf States.

“The awards we announce today include significant investments to advance sediment diversions along the Lower Mississippi River that will eventually protect and restore thousands of acres of wetlands in Louisiana,” said Jeff Trandahl, executive director and CEO of NFWF.

As required under the plea agreements, NFWF consulted with state resource agencies, as well as with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), to identify potential project priorities and funding needs. The discussions ensured coordination between NFWF’s GEBF and the agencies’ related activities under the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and RESTORE Act programs.

“This award gives Louisiana a significant push forward in the implementation of both our barrier island restoration program and our sediment diversion program, in addition to building out a critical and robust adaptive management program for each,” said CPRA Chairman Johnny Bradberry. “Just this month, with our last award from NFWF, we were able to complete pumping over 5 million cubic yards of sediment our biggest restoration project to date, for 13 miles of Caminada headland beach and dune restoration. This latest award allows us to advance even larger projects, the Mississippi River Mid-Barataria and Mid-Breton Sediment diversions, as well as diverting freshwater flows from the Atchafalaya River into areas of Terrebonne parish starved of freshwater.”

The GEBF projects announced today will complement those previously announced or currently under consideration by the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and RESTORE Act programs. Collectively, and where appropriate, these efforts are being coordinated and leveraged to advance large-scale Gulf Coast conservation outcomes and maximize sustainable environmental benefits.

NFWF, a congressionally chartered non-profit foundation, is one of the largest conservation funders in the United States. It is subject to oversight by Congress and a board of directors that includes the heads of the FWS and NOAA, as well as representatives from states, non-governmental organizations and industry. The board is appointed by the Secretary of the Interior.

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