



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: [coastal@la.gov](mailto:coastal@la.gov)

# Queen Bess Island Restoration Contract Awarded to Pontchartrain Partners, LLC *Project Scheduled to Begin in August*



**BATON ROUGE, LA** — The [Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority](#) (CPRA) has awarded the contract to restore Queen Bess Island to Pontchartrain Partners, LLC., a Louisiana-based company headquartered in New Orleans. The \$9.8 million construction contract is being funded through the Deepwater Horizon oil spill Natural Resource Damages settlement administered by Louisiana's Trustee Implementation Group.

Queen Bess Island is a vital nesting habitat for colonial nesting water birds in the Barataria Basin northeast of Grand Isle in Jefferson Parish. The third largest Brown Pelican rookery in Louisiana, Queen Bess accounts for 15-20 percent of the state's total pelican nesting activity. It is also a nesting habitat for approximately 10 species of nesting colonial water birds such as Tri-colored Herons, Great Egrets, Roseate Spoonbills, and Royal Terns. The island provides a crucial nesting habitat for five species designated as species of greatest conservation concern in Louisiana.

Queen Bess Island has historical significance for the Brown Pelican, Louisiana's state bird, which disappeared from Louisiana's coastal wetlands by the mid 1960's, primarily because of the now-banned pesticide DDT. In 1968, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) began

restocking Brown Pelicans to coastal Louisiana and Queen Bess Island was chosen as the first reintroduction location. In 1971, 11 nests were documented on the island, marking the first sign of the species' successful recovery in the state.

"Pelicans now fill the skies of coastal Louisiana, but their future is in jeopardy due to accelerated wetland loss throughout Coastal Louisiana," said Gov. John Bel Edwards. "We want to make sure they continue to flourish, and the restoration of Queen Bess Island will serve as a major milestone as we work to ensure these birds have critical nesting habitat well into the future."

Pelicans, terns, and Black Skimmers are actively nesting on the island, therefore the contractor must wait until early August to begin preconstruction activities. Full construction will commence once LDWF and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determine nesting activities have ended, which should occur no later than mid-September. Construction on the island must be completed by mid-February 2020, when pelicans and other birds return for the next nesting season.

CPRA Chairman Chip Kline said, "CPRA is proud to partner with LDWF and our federal partners to lend our barrier island restoration experience to this important habitat project. Queen Bess Island is symbolic of the damage the Deepwater Horizon oil spill inflicted on our coast, but its restoration can also symbolize the recovery being made through the dedication and hard work achieved through the efforts of our state and federal partners."

Due to subsidence, erosion from overwash, and oil spill damage, approximately five acres remain suitable for nesting within the island's 37-acre footprint. The project will enhance the existing rock ring around the island, which will serve as containment and protection for the sand fill material that will increase the island's elevation. On the southwestern side of the island, a set of rock breakwaters will be placed just offshore creating a lagoon-style nursery feature without harsh wave energy for the young birds to learn how to swim, preen, and feed.

Once the material in the lower elevation portion of the island has settled, it will be planted with black mangrove. The middle elevations will be planted with scrub-shrub vegetation, useful for nesting. Bird ramps will be placed around the island to provide flightless juvenile birds with safe and easy access to the water.

To access photos and video of Queen Bess Island, visit <https://ldwf.cantoflight.com/v/QueenBessIsland/landing>.

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*Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority is the single state entity with authority to develop, articulate, implement, and enforce a comprehensive coastal Master Plan of unified vision, to reduce tropical 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.*