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Contact: coastal@la.gov

\$205 Million in Oil Spill Restoration Funds Approved for Louisiana Oyster, Marine Mammals, and Marsh Creation Projects

BATON ROUGE - Today, Gov. John Bel Edwards announced the Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group (LA TIG), the entity responsible for the oversight, planning, and implementation of *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill Natural Resource Damage Assessment settlement funds in Louisiana, has approved \$204.7 million for a variety of projects aimed at helping the state continue its recovery from the 2010 oil spill. These projects, approved in two recent restoration plans, will assist in the development of Louisiana oyster beds, increase oyster production, improve the response effort for stranded dolphins and whales, and create approximately 1,200 acres of marsh in the upper Barataria Basin.

“This funding advances the largest marsh creation project that the LA TIG has approved to-date and distributes almost the entirety of Louisiana’s oyster settlement allocation, two major feats in our effort to restore coastal Louisiana following the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill,” said Gov. John Bel Edwards. “I would like to thank the Louisiana *Deepwater Horizon* Trustees for advancing these critical projects for our state.”

“These projects will enable us to fulfill the priorities Gov. John Bel Edwards stated earlier this year at the start of his second term,” said Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) Chairman Chip Kline. “The governor wants state agencies to partner with each other to achieve sustainability for our economy and environment, and specifically called for new initiatives to help the oyster industry. CPRA and our sister state agencies are putting those words into action.”

Oyster-related projects total \$25.6 million and will be led by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF). They include:

- Two brood reefs (10-acres each) will be constructed in St. Bernard Parish to increase spawning oyster populations in the Lake Machais/Mozambique Point and Petit Pass/Bay Boudreaux areas. These brood reefs will be closed to harvesting, but are located near open harvesting areas to promote habitat connectivity and provide a source of young oysters for harvestable reefs.
- Identification and construction of additional spawning stock reefs in public oyster grounds with currently-low larval supplies that have conditions suitable for increased productivity.
- Two new public oyster reefs (200 acres each) will be created using limestone cultch material in the Grand Banks area of the Mississippi Sound and Terrebonne Parish's Sister (Caillou) Lake Public Oyster Seed Reservation. Additional reefs will be built in other public oyster grounds where conditions are suitable for oysters. These two reefs will not be opened until performance criteria are met.
- Production of at least 500 million oyster larvae at LDWF's Michael C. Voisin Oyster Hatchery in Grand Isle, with 75% to be distributed to established reefs in Louisiana's public oyster areas in need of rehabilitation, and 25% dedicated to oyster restoration activities in protected areas.

"This is a fantastic outcome for Louisiana with long-range benefits," said LDWF Secretary Jack Montoucet. "Our department thanks CPRA and LA TIG for the funding as it will enable us to perform very important restoration work for these species."

The Marine Mammals Project dedicates \$3.1 million to increasing capacity and improving rapid response for injured and dead dolphins and whales, and facilitate a better understanding of the causes of injury and death. The efforts include infrastructure, equipment, and supplies, and will be led by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in partnership with other federal and state agencies.

The LA TIG also approved \$176 million for the *Large-Scale Barataria Marsh Creation: Upper Barataria Component*, a project that will use 10.5 million cubic yards of sediment

dredged from the Mississippi River to build 1,200 acres of marsh in Jefferson Parish below the Jean Lafitte area known as The Pen. This project continues the process of using restoration funding to restore wetlands, coastal, and nearshore habitats in the [Barataria Basin](#), where the greatest oiling impacts from the *Deepwater Horizon* spill occurred, and expands land building westward along a permitted long-distance sediment pipeline corridor previously used to build over 1,900 acres of marsh through projects funded by CPRA and its federal CWPPRA funding partners.

“The approval of this funding will enable the construction of one of the largest marsh restoration projects in Louisiana history,” said Bren Haase, Executive Director of the Louisiana CPRA, the agency serving as Lead Trustee for the State of Louisiana on the LA TIG. “This massive marsh creation project will build upon previous investments by CPRA and its partners in the Bayou Dupont area and deliver tremendous environmental benefits to this region of Jefferson Parish.”

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