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Louisiana Approved for \$234.6 Million in *Deepwater Horizon* Oil Spill NRDA Funds for Coastal Restoration Projects

BATON ROUGE, LA – Gov. John Bel Edwards today announced the Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group (LA TIG) has approved \$234.6 million in funds resulting from the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill settlement for restoration projects that will create and restore wetlands in Plaquemines and Terrebonne Parishes. In all, the funding will be used for the engineering, design, and construction of five coastal restoration projects.

“We thank the LA TIG for helping to advance these critically important coastal restoration projects,” said Gov. Edwards. “Yet again, Louisiana is showing itself to be a good steward of oil spill resources by implementing large-scale projects that will offer real benefits to the sustainability of the people and ecosystem of our state. Today’s announced projects further our ongoing efforts to restore the natural resource damages caused by the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill and will also provide a measure of protection as we seek to restore the natural ecosystem buffer we once had.”

The Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) will lead the planning and implementation of all projects approved in the LA TIG’s *Final Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment #7: Wetlands, Coastal, and Nearshore Habitats, and Birds*. LA TIG administers Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) funds.

“We have been putting the oil spill settlement funds to work for Louisiana’s people, economy, infrastructure, and environment,” said CPRA Chairman Chip Kline. “The approval of these NRDA projects caps off a very busy year in which the LA TIG has approved a number of restoration plans totaling over \$900 million in restoration planning and implementation funds. CPRA will play the lead role in a significant number of these projects and we look forward to continuing these efforts in years to come.”

The approved projects are intended to restore wetlands, coastal, and nearshore habitats, including bird nesting habitats.

Two projects are located in Terrebonne Parish. The Bayou Terrebonne Increment of the **Terrebonne Basin Ridge and Marsh Creation Project** has been allocated \$157 million for restoration, maintenance, and monitoring

of up to 1,430 acres of brackish and saline marsh and 80 acres of earthen ridge on the eastern side of Bayou Terrebonne, south of Chauvin.

Another \$3.1 million will be used for engineering and design of the **Terrebonne Houma Navigation Channel (HNC) Island Restoration** project, which is intended to restore and enlarge the bird nesting island located about four miles southeast of Cocodrie. The effort will focus on ways to restore the 32-acre bird island and enhance it to approximately 50 acres by importing dredged sediment from a nearby suitable sand source and depositing it on and around the existing island.

“The establishment of land and habitat south of our Morganza to the Gulf levee system is vitally important,” said Terrebonne Parish President Gordy Dove. “Without our barrier islands and the marsh between, our levees face the brunt of storm. The land and marsh we restore provides additional protection to our ecosystem and our way of life.”

Two projects are located in Plaquemines Parish. The **Grande Cheniere Ridge Marsh Creation** project is approved for \$65 million in construction funding and is designed to build up to 624 acres of marsh in the open water areas near Bayou Grande Cheniere, as well as approximately 12,480 linear feet of earthen ridge along Jefferson Canal. A secondary benefit of the project will be its contribution toward the reestablishment of a southern land bridge in the Barataria Basin.

The **Bird's Foot Delta Hydrologic Restoration** project in Plaquemines Parish is receiving \$6 million for engineering and design. The project is intended to restore the hydrology in the Mississippi River Bird's Foot Delta by dredging portions of Pass-a-Loutre, South Pass, and/or Southeast Pass to reconnect the river with the delta's marshes.

These projects bring total NRDA funding for projects either entirely or partially in Plaquemines Parish to \$609.46 million since the *Deepwater Horizon* event in 2010.

“Allocating these funds to projects in our parish means big steps are being taken toward bringing projects to reality,” said Plaquemines Parish President Kirk Lepine. “Having received a major portion of the oil spill impacts, we appreciate the LA TIG directing funds to Plaquemines to mitigate for those injuries.”

Another \$3.5 million is going toward engineering and designing **Isle au Pitre** in St. Bernard Parish. This project is intended to enhance nesting conditions for birds by using dredged sediment to elevate portions of the island and planting suitable vegetation for nesting brown pelicans and wading birds, shell rakes for American oystercatchers, shell or small limestone on the perimeter of the island for tern and black skimmer nesting habitat, and shoreline protection features with oyster benefits.

Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Secretary Jack Montoucet agrees that all aspects of coastal restoration must be addressed, and he commends LA TIG for understanding the importance of birds and habitats.

“The Isle au Pitre and Terrebonne Houma Navigation Channel Island Restoration projects will have direct positive impacts on the continued restoration of Brown Pelicans and other coastal bird species in our state,” said Montoucet. “Those projects along with the Bird’s Foot Delta Hydraulic Restoration project all show again that LA TIG is heading in the right direction to restore the state’s unique and productive coastal ecosystems.”

CPRA is Lead Trustee for the State of Louisiana on the LA TIG, which also comprises four federal Trustee agencies: U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC), represented by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), represented by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the National Park Service (NPS), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM); U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA); and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

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