



GOV. EDWARDS TOURS TRINITY-EAST ISLAND AS CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES ON TERREBONNE BASIN BARRIER ISLAND PROJECT

COCODRIE, LA – Gov. John Bel Edwards today joined the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) and state and local officials in touring construction activities on Trinity-East Island, one of three barrier islands being restored in the Terrebonne Basin. The Terrebonne Basin Barrier Island and Beach Nourishment project is using \$167 million in funds from the *Deepwater Horizon* Oil Spill to restore Trinity-East Island, West Belle Headland, and Timbalier Island.

Trinity-East Island is part of the Isle Dernières Wildlife Refuge, a once-popular resort island on Louisiana's Southeast coast. In 1856, Isle Dernière was destroyed by the Last Island Hurricane, causing it to eventually split into five individual islands.

The project, funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), is using 9.2 million cubic yards of dredged sediment to build 1,100 acres of marsh, dune, and beach in the Terrebonne Basin. Project construction was temporarily halted following last year's hurricane season, but has since resumed with the start of restoration efforts on Trinity-East Island.

"The Terrebonne Basin Barrier Island project marks a critical point for coastal restoration efforts in Southeast Louisiana," said Edwards. "CPRA's previously-completed projects prevented 2020's intense hurricane season from becoming even more destructive, and with more resiliency efforts, we are continuing to build a better future for coastal Louisiana. This large-scale project proves just what can be done with great planning and great collaboration."

Trinity-East construction is connecting eroded and vulnerable areas with 2.5 miles of continuous shoreline and 263 acres of beach habitat. Timbalier Island will see repairs to breached areas and construction of beach and marsh components in a continuous 2.8-mile stretch encompassing 409 acres. The West Belle Headland project is being redesigned due to impacts from Hurricane Zeta, and could see the addition of approximately 525 acres.

"The Terrebonne Basin project continues the incredible restoration of our entire barrier island chain, restoring some of Louisiana's most vulnerable landscapes stretching from Whiskey Island below Houma and Cocodrie to Sandy Point near Venice in Plaquemines Parish," said CPRA Chairman Chip Kline. "In places without barrier islands, we're rebuilding and fortifying our beaches and shorelines all the way west to Cameron Parish. This perimeter defense works in conjunction with the vast areas of land we're restoring in our major basins to strengthen protection for coastal and inland areas alike."

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) manages the Isle Dernières Wildlife Refuge, which includes a portion of the Trinity-East project site.

"Ecosystems and wildlife habitats are very important to us, and working cooperatively with CPRA to restore them is fulfilling the mandate for both state agencies," said LDWF Secretary Jack Montoucet. "This project is right in line with the LDWF goal of protecting and sustaining our unique habitats for threatened, endangered and protected migratory species."

Jeff Trandahl, executive director and CEO of NFWF, said the landscape scale of the Terrebonne Basin project will drive long-term sustainability for the iconic wildlife populations of coastal Louisiana, as well as for the communities and industries that rely on these natural habitats as a first line of defense against storms and erosion.

"The Foundation's \$160 million investment in the Terrebonne project was made through our Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund, which was established to help mitigate the effects of the disastrous *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill in 2010," Trandahl said.

The offshore sand source being used for restoration is provided through a mineral lease with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM).



"This comprehensive barrier island project reflects the importance of collaboration and partnership across state and federal agencies toward shared coastal restoration and land-loss reduction goals," said BOEM Gulf of Mexico Regional Director Mike Celata.

CPRA is the lead state agency charged with building and strengthening Louisiana's coastal habitats as well as manmade protective structures. It also serves as the designated state representative in coastal partnerships with federal entities.

"In terms of acreage across the three islands, the Terrebonne Basin Barrier Island and Beach Nourishment project is our biggest barrier island restoration project yet," said CPRA Executive Director Bren Haase. "These barrier islands act as protection to our interior wetland systems, as our first line of defense from storm surge, and as a buffer for the communities in Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes. With this historic project, we're making a huge stride toward a more sustainable coast."

Local leaders including Terrebonne Parish President Gordy Dove and Lafourche Parish President Archie Chaisson joined the governor for the tour of Trinity-East Island.

"The protection this project will provide to levees, homes, and businesses in the region is invaluable," said Dove. "The future of coastal Louisiana depends on our actions today, not years down the line, and the Terrebonne Basin project plays a crucial role in brightening that future."

"We saw last year just how important our barrier islands are as the first line of protection during hurricane season," said Chaisson. "Projects like these provide countless benefits to our coastal communities and protect critical infrastructure like Port Fourchon and Highway 1."

For more information about the Terrebonne Basin Barrier Island Project, visit <https://coastal.la.gov/news/terrebonne-basin-barrier-island-and-beach-nourishment/>.

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