Atchafalaya River Basin Restoration and Enhancement Task Force

Findings and Recommendations to the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Board

November 17, 2021

ARBRE Task Force

Photo Credit: nola.com

Governor Edwards' Second Term Coastal Priorities:

"Pursuing a more integrated approach to the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers"

- creation of the ARBRE Task Force

ARBRE Task Force

1. Elevating critical issues facing the Atchafalaya Basin and the importance of its holistic management for navigation, flood control, and restoration;

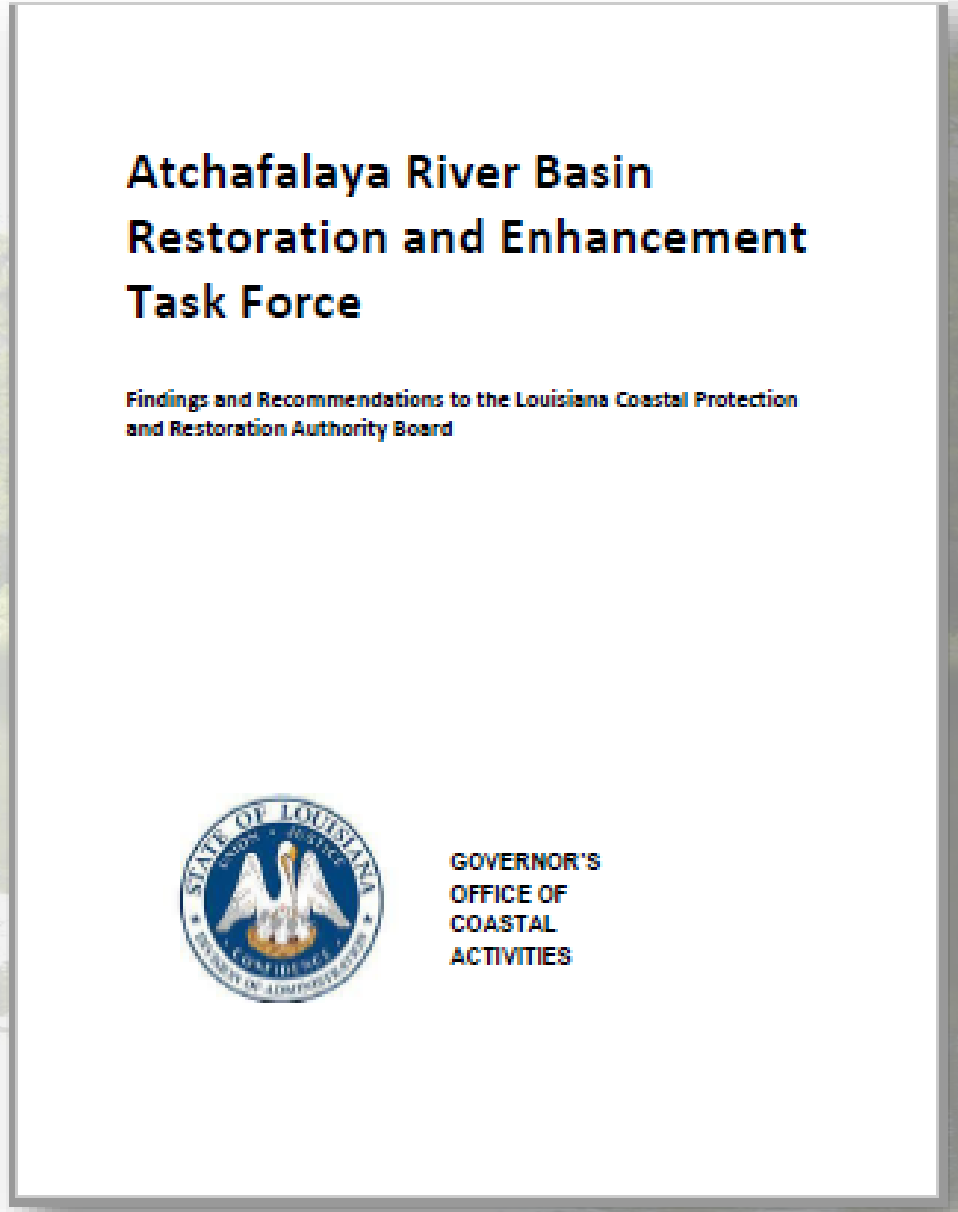
2. Identifying and building support for new and recurring sources of funding, including working closely with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to reinvigorate the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System – Louisiana Project

3. Identifying shared goals and values for restoration and enhancement of the Basin, as illustrated by project types that would benefit both the Basin and the larger coastal program as managed by the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority; and

4. Serving as a proactive means to build consensus and advise the Atchafalaya Basin Program on matters relating to implementation of the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System – Louisiana Project.

ARBRE Task Force

- Diverse membership
- 7 public meetings around the Basin
- Identified challenges and opportunities within the ARB
- Recommendations made to CPRAB



Atchafalaya River Basin Restoration and Enhancement Task Force

Findings and Recommendations to the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Board

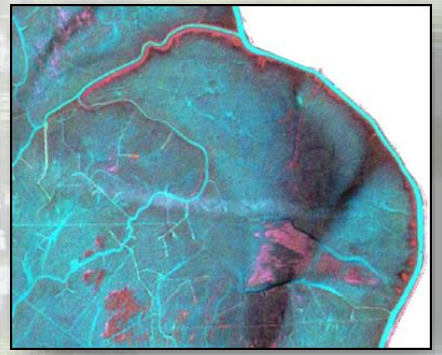
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF COASTAL ACTIVITIES

ARBRE Task Force - Challenges to the Atchafalaya River Basin

1. Hydrology, Sedimentation, Water Quality
   - linked to health of the system, flood fighting, sustainability

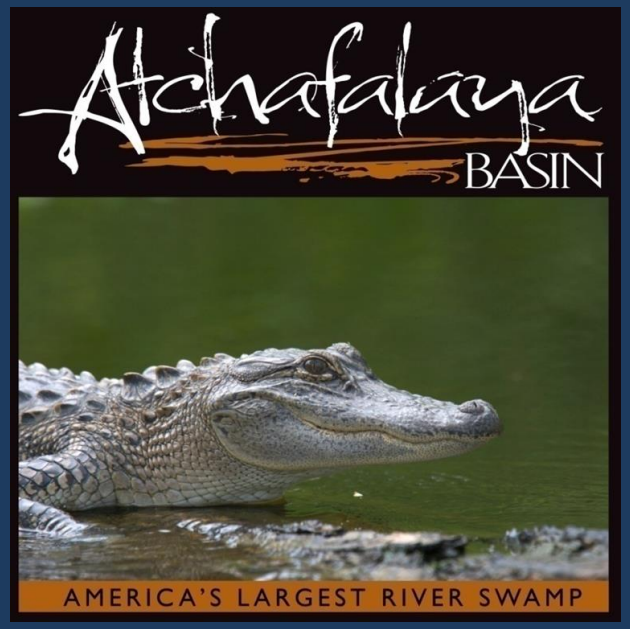
2. Invasive Species
   - degraded habitats, compounds effects of above

3. Stakeholder Conflicts
   - state, federal, private lands
   - land use, resource use, management objectives

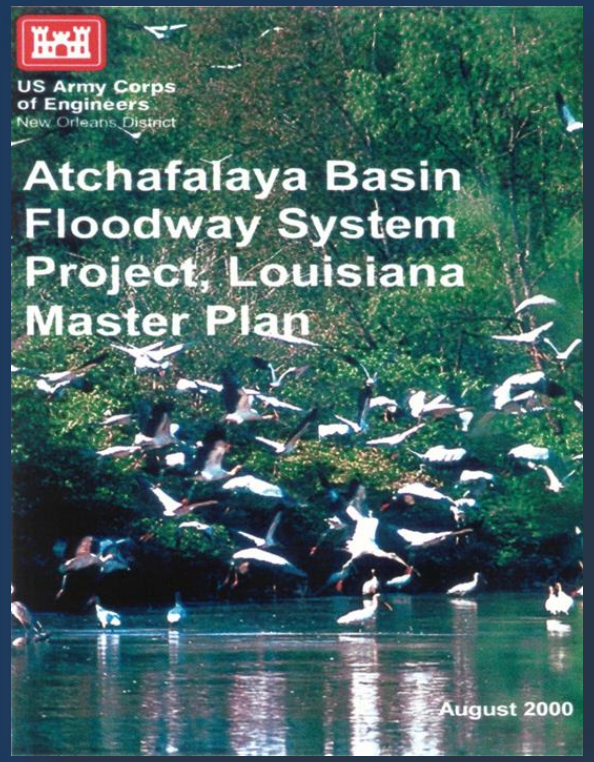


ARBRE Task Force Recommendations for Consideration by the CPRA Board

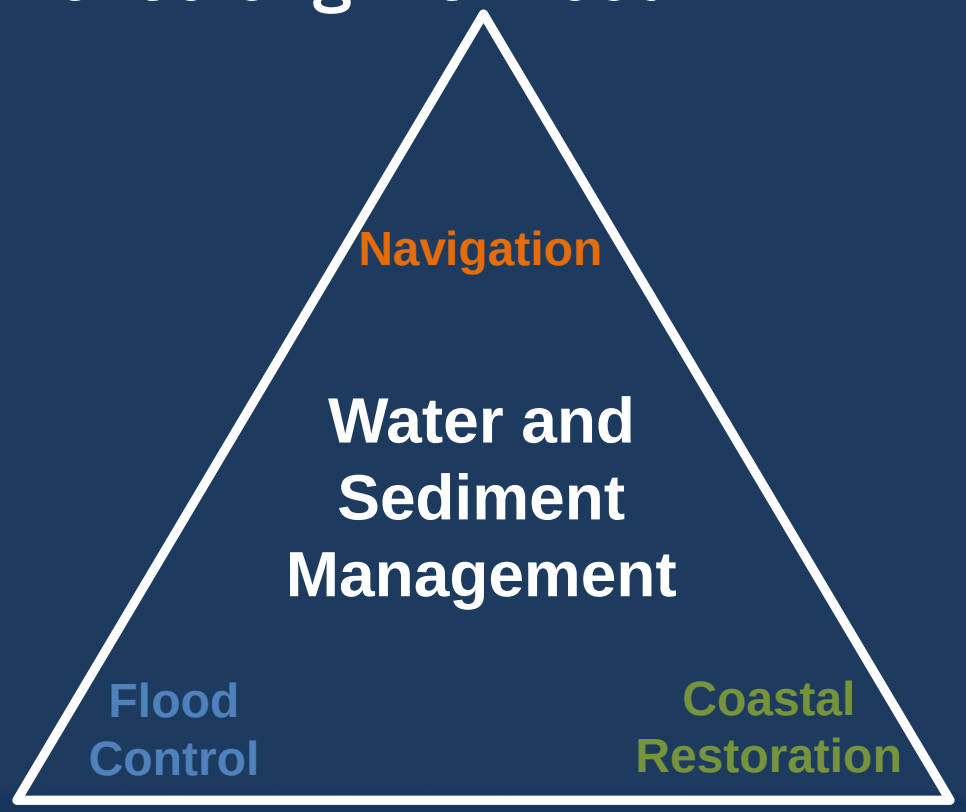
Enhance outreach that highlights the importance of the Atchafalaya Basin locally, regionally, and nationally



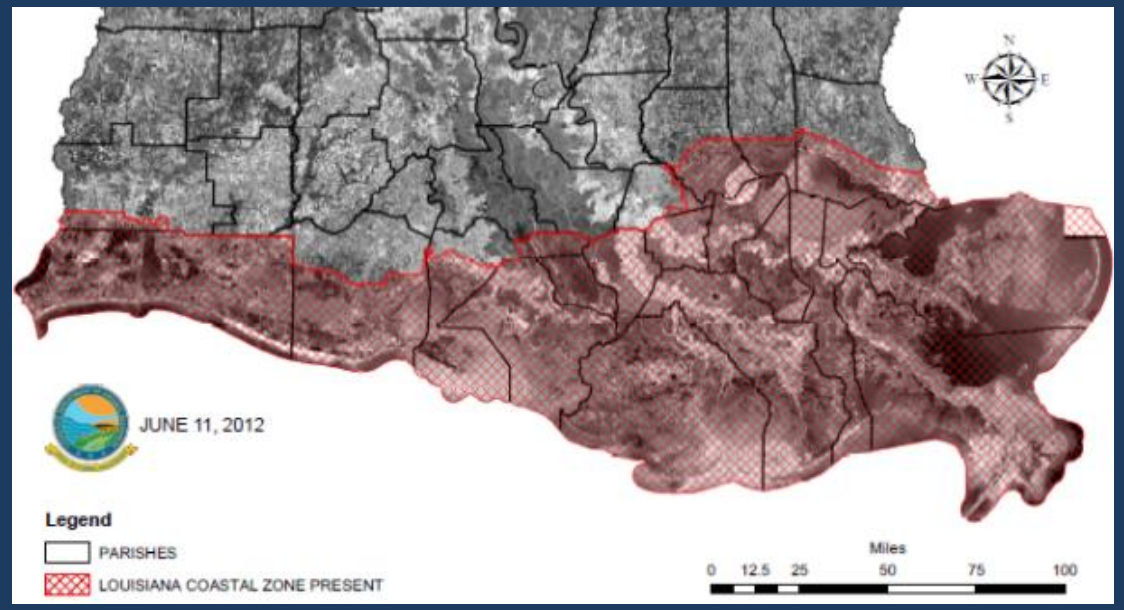
Urge and request Congress fully fund construction of finalized USACE studies relevant to the management of the Atchafalaya Basin as well as fund authorized studies



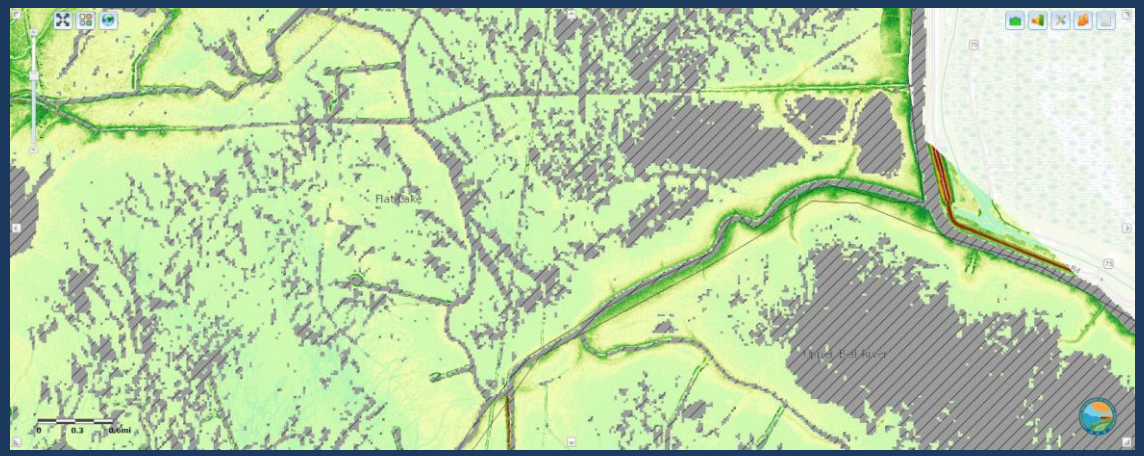
Urge the USACE to approach management of the Atchafalaya Basin holistically, designating ecological restoration as a primary component along with flood control and navigation

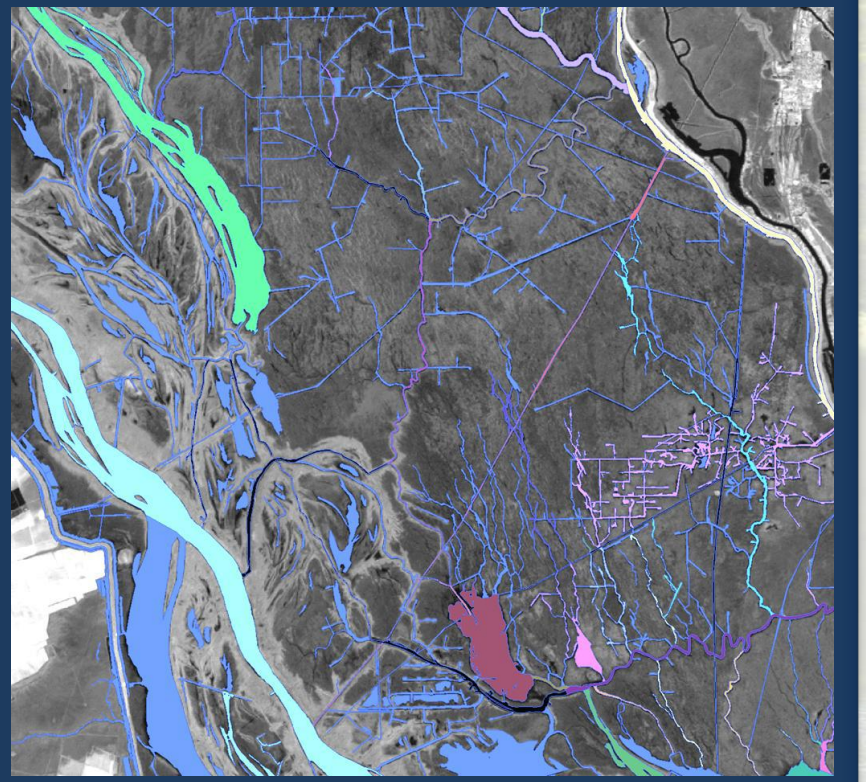


Request the CPRA Board evaluate inclusion of the remainder of the Atchafalaya Basin within the Louisiana Coastal Zone



Management actions should where possible restore north/south sheet flow within the Basin

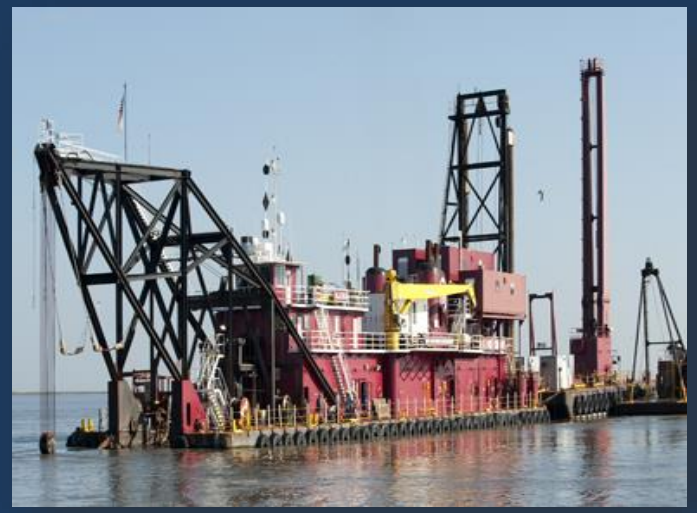




Management actions should, where possible, restore and conserve deep water habitats within the Basin

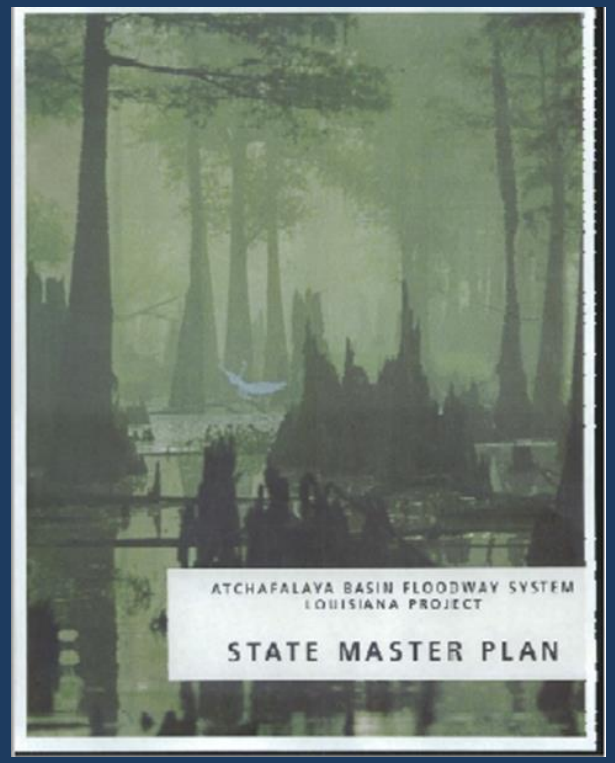
Reproduced from Mossa 2016

Examine ways to better manage sediment within the ARB

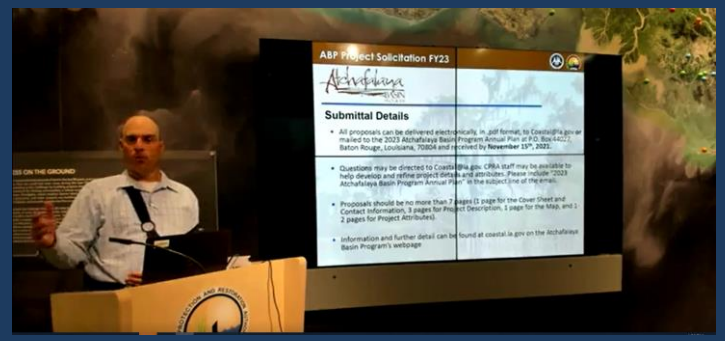


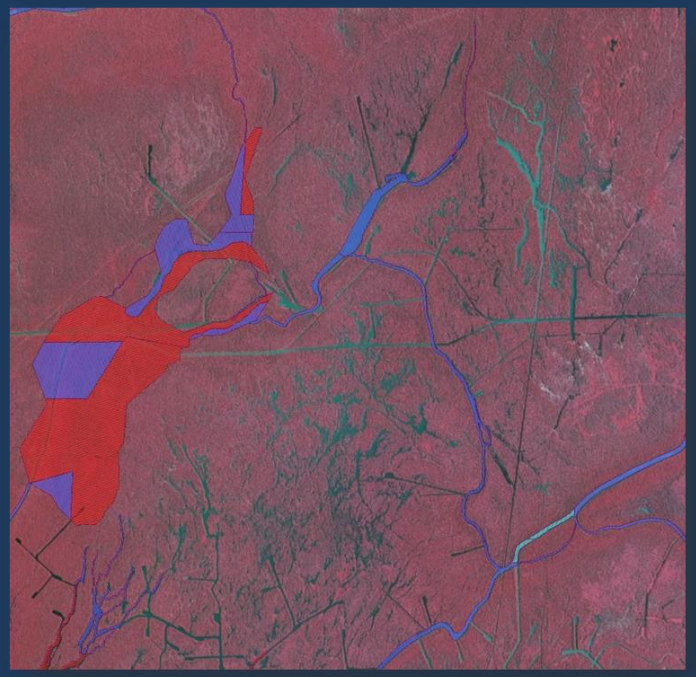
Examine the current hydrology of the ARB, including management of the ORCC and the ARB channel outlets

Update the State's Atchafalaya Basin Master Plan to include current conditions and challenges as informed by the ARBRE Task Force

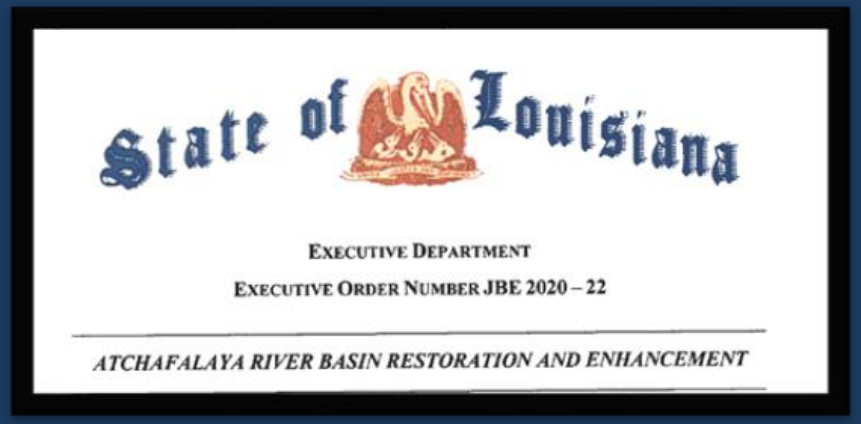


CPRA Board and CPRA to enhance public engagement concerning the management of the Atchafalaya Basin





Recommend the ARBRE Task Force be used to discuss and inform potential management actions within the Atchafalaya Basin


State of Louisiana

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER JBE 2020 – 22

ATCHAFALAYA RIVER BASIN RESTORATION AND ENHANCEMENT

Atchafalaya BASIN PROGRAM

Explore opportunities for significant recurring funding for the Atchafalaya Basin Program

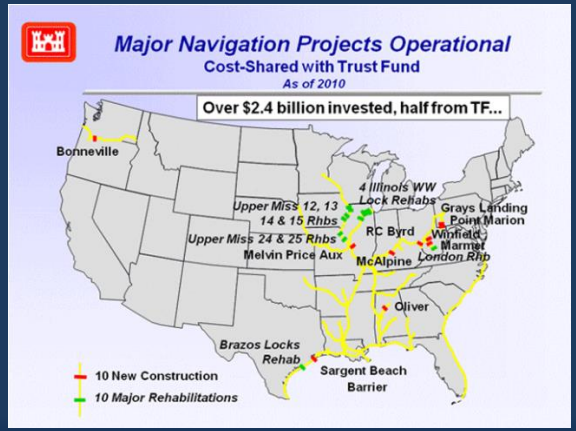
(b) Deposit into the Atchafalaya Basin Conservation Fund.

(i) Notwithstanding any other provision of this constitution to the contrary, after allocation of money to the Bond Security and Redemption Fund as provided in Article VII, Section 9(B) of this constitution, and after satisfying the required allocations in Subsubparagraph (a) of this Subparagraph, Paragraph (E) of this Section, and Article VII, Sections 10-A and 10.2 of this constitution, an amount equal to fifty percent of the revenues received from severance taxes and royalties on state lands in the Atchafalaya Basin, but not to exceed ten million dollars each fiscal year, shall be deposited by the treasurer into the Atchafalaya Basin Conservation Fund, hereinafter referred to as the "fund", which is hereby created as a special fund in the state treasury. The monies in the fund shall be invested by the treasurer in the manner provided by law, and intere earned on the investment of these monies shall be deposited in and credited to the fund. All unexpended or unencumbered monies remaining in the fund at the end of the fiscal year shall remain in the fund.

(ii) The monies in the fund shall be used exclusively for projects contained in the state or federal Basin master plans or an annual Basin plan developed and approved by the advisory or approval board created by law specifically for that purpose, or to provide match for the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System, Louisiana Project. Each year's plan for the expenditure of monies appropriated from the fund shall be subject to the approval of the appropriate subject matter committees of the legislature.

(iii) Of the monies appropriated in any fiscal year, eighty-five percent shall be used for water management, water quality, or access projects, and the remaining fifteen percent may be used to complete ongoing projects and for projects that are in accordance with the mission statement of the state master plan. However, no more than five percent of the monies appropriated in any fiscal year may be used for the operational costs of the program or the department.

Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.



Next Steps

- Board actions on recommendations presented by ARBRE Task Force
- Inform project selection / implementation
- Inform revision to State Atchafalaya Master Plan