

Department of the
Interior

RESTORE Tribal Youth Conservation Corps

Mary Josie Blanchard,
Director
Gulf of Mexico
Restoration





Tribal Youth Conservation Corps Overview – Restore Act Funded Priorities List 1 (FPL1)

- Tribes with trust lands in Gulf Coastal Zone
 - LA: Chitimacha Tribe and Coushatta Tribe (in 2021)
 - MS: Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians
 - AL: Poarch Band of Creek Indians
 - FL: Seminole Tribe, Miccosukee Tribe
- All granted \$50,000 a year in RESTORE funding to develop Youth Conservation Camps
 - Tribal youth hired as interns
 - Work involves community projects and natural resource education

Chitimacha Tribe: LA

Accessible path to boat landing constructed by Tribal Youth

- Landing is at Bayou Teche, a water body of historic importance
- Bayou Teche named after a snake of legend fought by Chitimacha
- The bayou makes the shape of a snake



Chitimacha Tribe: LA

Transplanting river cane

- Used in Chitimacha basket making
- Plants were growing on a Tribal resident's property
- Resident gave permission to transplant instead of him disposing of them
- Plants have strong roots that connect to adjacent plants (heavy!)



Chitimacha Tribe: LA

River clean-up

- The Atchafalaya River and Bayou Teche are sources of drinking water
- Water intake on Bayou Teche is pictured here
- Tribal youth cleaned trash out of the river and off the riverbanks



New Grantee: Coushatta Tribe: LA

Proposed revegetation project Holly Beach,
Cameron Parish

- Area hard hit by Hurricane Laura; wind gusts 140 mph

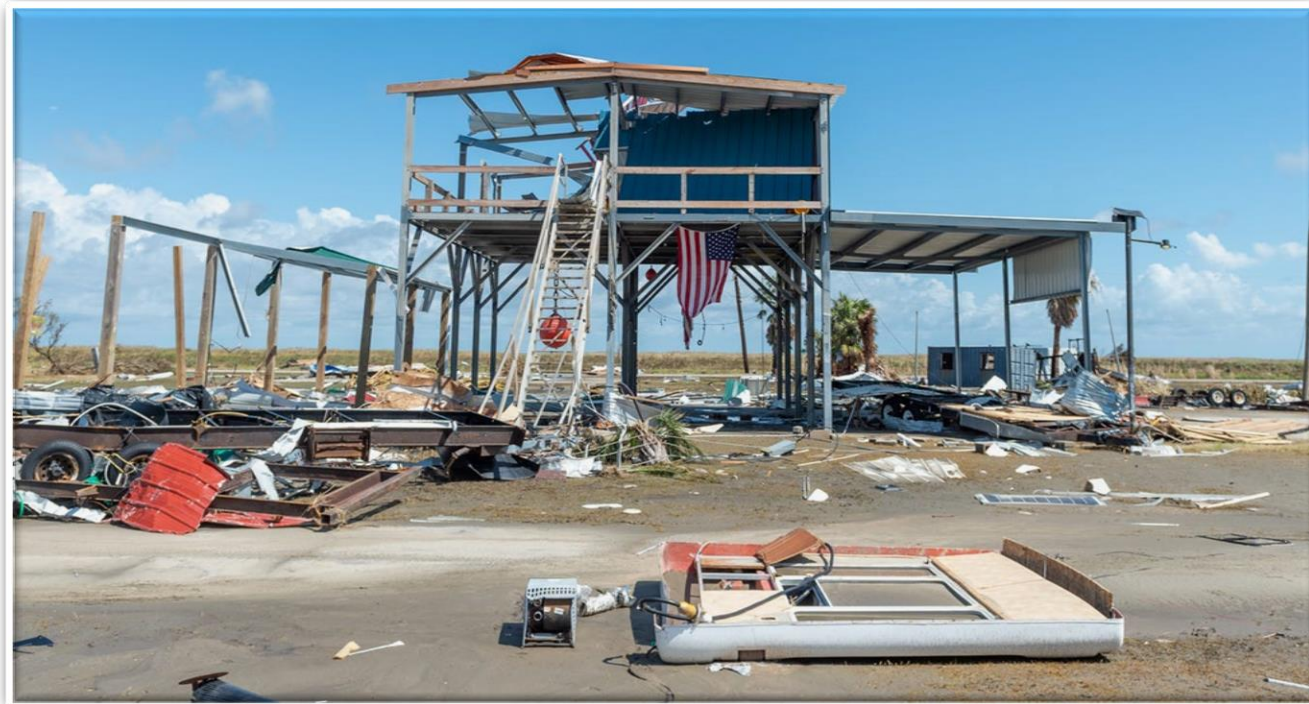


Photo credit: Scott Clause (USA Today)

Coushatta Tribe: LA

- Partnered with experts – USDA NRCS Gulf Coast Soil and Water Conservation District
- Location Identified: Rutherford Beach, Creole
- Learned about
 - Coastal erosion and importance of shorebird nesting habitat
 - Native beach and dune vegetation
 - Cultivation techniques



Coushatta Tribe: LA

- Planted 4,000 plants in one day!
- 3 species of grass:
 - Bitter Panicum (*Panicum amarum*), Sea Oats (*Uniola paniculata*), and Gulf Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium* var. *scoparium*)



Coushatta Tribe: LA

- The proud Coushatta Tribe planting team of Coastal Conservation Interns!
- Learned their work will help reduce coastal erosion and provide valuable nesting habitat for shore birds.



Project Summary

- Native youth along the Gulf Coastal Zone hired for Youth Conservation Corps
- FPL1: Five Tribes in four states, including the **Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana**.
- Additional FPL1: **Coushatta Tribe** (LA) joined as a sixth Tribe.
- FPL3: TYCC, including LA Tribes, approved by each RESTORE Council member
- Outcomes include improvements in Gulf Coast Tribal communities, conservation employment experience for Tribal youth, and Tribal youth education

Thank You