

# THE CONVEYANCE



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## Listen Up America: State Brings Coastal Land Loss Issue to National Audience

Beginning this fall, a new ad campaign will hit the airwaves just in time for the new primetime network season, and Louisiana officials are hoping for crowd pleaser. It's not a high-energy soft drink ad featuring a pop star, nor a clever commercial for a new computer system. The star of this new campaign is Louisiana's wetlands and while it won't push a product, it will push the idea that our wetlands are a treasure worth saving.

Governor Mike Foster unveiled the \$3 million, three-year national education program, "America's Wetland...the Campaign to Save Coastal Louisiana," August 25 during the Southern Governors Association annual convention in New Orleans. Shell Oil Company also announced that it will provide funds to help implement the program designed to make the public aware of Louisiana's coastal land loss and the value of its coast to the rest of the nation and the world. Public support is essential if Louisiana is to acquire the estimated \$14 billion in federal and state money needed to restore the state's coast and maintain the economic and environmental resources.

"We're trying to get the recognition that this fragile land is one of the biggest assets to the United States" Gov. Foster said. "In the next 40 to 50 years, it is at risk of disappearing if we sit here and do nothing."

ROR is one of several cooperative partners in the campaign, and the organization looks forward to helping the state with implementation. The campaign's two themes include ecological significance of the wetlands, such as their role as a critical habitat for wildlife, and economic and energy security issues. This second theme focuses on the role of the wetlands in the nation's energy supply, as a key transportation network for world markets, and as one of America's main sources of seafood.

A 15-minute video touting the importance of our coastal areas has been produced, and will be cut into national television commercials with accompanying newspaper ads. Special attention will also be focused here in the state on building pride in Louisiana's importance to the rest of the nation and the world. Plans include an America's Wetland Trail and America's Wetland festivals.



[www.americaswetland.com](http://www.americaswetland.com)



## ROR Attends NACo Convention

Local government officials from across the country were "shocked and amazed" at Louisiana's alarming land loss rate as they viewed ROR's display at the National Association of Counties Convention at the Superdome in July. According to ROR's Lori LeBlanc, the booth was well visited and many of the attendees expressed concern upon hearing that Louisiana loses land the size of a football field every hour. "We urged them to take this urgent message home with them to inform others about our plight," LeBlanc says.

## Coastal Restoration Supporters Get the Ear of Key U.S. Senator

Characterizing land loss along the Louisiana coast as “a matter of national significance,” U.S.Sen. Joseph Lieberman told a group of concerned citizens in July that he is convinced that the federal government “must take a role in protecting this extraordinary resource.”

Lieberman, a member of the influential Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, met with several local coastal restoration advocates at Armstrong International Airport at the request of Senator Mary Landrieu. Speakers included R.King Milling, chairman of Gov. Mike Foster’s new Coastal Commission, Greater Lafourche Port Commission Executive Director Ted Falgout and ROR Executive Committee member Berwick Duval, among others.

Coastal erosion “is like a cancer eating away at the very existence of our state,” said Milling, pointing to the 25 to 35 square miles of the state’s marshes and wetlands that are washed away daily. He also discussed the need for an estimated \$14 billion to implement a productive coastal protection and restoration plan.

“Wherever one turns the arguments are compelling,” he continued. “The value of the state’s wetlands to this country and the world cannot be overstated.”

Following the presentations, Lieberman acknowledged that it is critical for the federal government to take action to reverse coastal land loss in Louisiana.

“You’ve made a very strong case and educated me,” said Lieberman, adding that he would be interested in a future visit to Louisiana to see the problem first-hand.



## Gates Open, Water Flows in Davis Pond Project

At 5 pm, July 18, U.S. Corps of Engineers employees opened the diversion gates for the largest fresh water diversion structure in the world—the Davis Pond project in St. Charles Parish.

Fresh water from the Mississippi River is now flowing at a rate of 1,000 cubic feet per second through four 14-foot by 14-foot gates into the project’s two-mile channel that leads to the Barataria basin. The long-awaited opening of the \$119 million Davis Pond project had been delayed since its March dedication due to relocations of oyster leases in the affected area.

Monitoring of the project now focuses on salinity levels in the basin. Target salinity levels for each month of the year were established by the Davis Pond advisory group, and flow rates through the diversion gates will be determined by regular salinity readings. The average salinity target is about five parts per thousand. The maximum flow rate is 10,000 cubic feet per second.

By increasing fresh water flow to a basin battling with salt water intrusion, the Davis Pond project is expected to preserve 33,000 acres of marsh and benefit 777,000 acres of marshes and bays. The project’s ecological and economic benefits include \$15 million per year for fish and wildlife, as well as restoring wetlands to protect homes and businesses from hurricane destruction. It is a prototype for the planning of future diversions that will use the Mississippi River to rebuild our wetlands.



## From the Executive Director.... ROR’s Lori LeBlanc



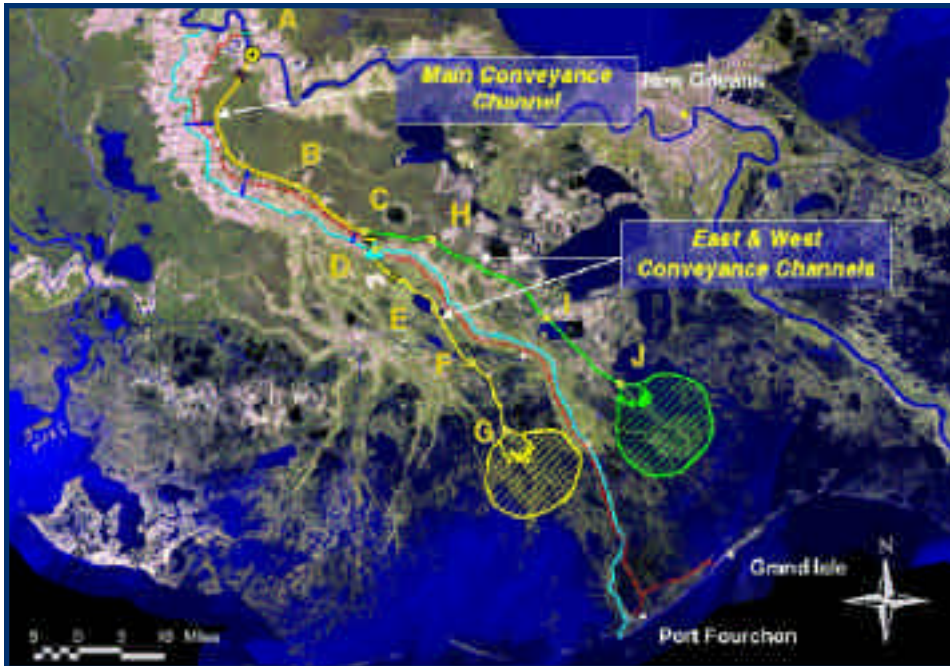
These are very exciting times for Louisiana’s coastal restoration efforts as it moves forward on several fronts. One of these fronts is the effort between the state and federal agencies to seek programmatic authorization of the COAST 2050 plan in the Water Resources Development Act 2004 bill. It is an ambitious goal for such a massive project that holds an estimated price tag of \$14 billion; however, we believe that this authorization can be done and we fully support its efforts. As such, the next two years are critical for Louisiana’s long term coastal restoration efforts.

On the other front, the state is working to garner National support for Louisiana’s plight through a national awareness campaign, entitled “America’s Wetland.” It is off to a great start with a \$3 million commitment from Shell Oil Company and a strong group of cooperative partners. You can read more about the America’s Wetland campaign in this issue.

There are and will be numerous challenges that go along with this massive restoration effort. And while I mention two fronts that are currently moving forward, it will take a collaboration of various groups to move forward on many fronts. We look forward to playing an active role in the solution and we recognize that it will take a combination of public will, political will and good science and engineering to ultimately implement large-scale restoration projects. Through those initiatives we will work together to save our coast, our culture and our future.

# THIRD DELTA CONVEYANCE CHANNEL

## Our Best Chance for Rebuilding the Wetlands



### Benefits of Third Delta Conveyance Channel:

- Two sustainable sub-delta ecosystems
- Dependable potable water supply
- Transportation and Economic Development Corridor
- By-pass historic district
- Introduction of river water/sediment nutrients to wetlands
- Reduction of Mississippi River Flood Elevations
- Local Flood Control
- Reduction of Mississippi River Maintenance Dredging
- Reduction of Anoxic Conditions in Gulf of Mexico

**For thousands of years,** the Mississippi River replenished the South Louisiana coastline with freshwater, sediment and nutrients. Bayou Lafourche was a major tributary of the Mississippi River, carrying 30 percent of the river's flow into the Barataria and Terrebonne basins.

But this delta-building process was cut short over 75 years ago, as levees were built along the river to protect surrounding communities from the sometimes devastating spring-time floods. At the time, no one knew, however, the devastating effects that corraling the river would have on the Louisiana coastline. Since 1930, the state has lost 1,500 square miles of marsh, and we can expect to lose 25-30 miles each year unless drastic action is taken. The only way to save the wetland resources of South Louisiana is to return to the system that built our land those thousands of years ago.

One of the most promising solutions is the Third Delta Conveyance Channel, a project endorsed by ROR and included in the state's Coast 2050 plan. The self-sustaining, man-made channel would begin on the west bank of the Mississippi River near Donaldsonville (A) and proceed south and east along the Bayou Lafourche

Ridge (B), carrying freshwater and delta-building sediment at a rate of 20,000 cubic feet per second. The channel would eventually build itself to an estimated rate of 100,000 to 200,000 cubic feet per second.

Approximately 30 miles downstream, the main channel would divide into two smaller channels in the vicinity of Lake Beouf (C). One branch would flow into the areas west of Bayou Lafourche (F) and the other would continue to the east (I). Each of these smaller distributary channels will create a sub-delta lobe in the lower Terrebonne (G) and Barataria (J) basins about 30 miles further downstream.

***ROR urges you to support our efforts to evaluate the Third Delta concept as a regional solution. Our coastline and our way of life depend on it.***

"The Third Delta Conveyance Channel would use natural delta processes to rebuild our coast," explains ROR Executive Director Lori LeBlanc. "It's our best shot at significant wetlands restoration for the long-term."

The U.S. EPA funded a report completed in June 1999 by Dr. Sherwood Gagliano of Coastal Environments, Inc. that explored the Third Delta concept. Funds have been allocated in the 2002-2003 La. DNR budget for a programmatic feasibility study for the conveyance channel proposal. But it will take a major public works initiative by the federal government, at an estimated cost of \$2 billion, to move this project forward.

ROR recognizes that not all of the questions and uncertainties have been answered with the Third Delta concept. ROR is working to answer the questions and to develop a project that will result in the long-term sustainability of the Barataria and Terrebonne basins. To begin the process, ROR is a co-sponsor of a September 17 technical workshop moderated by Dr. Don Davis of LSU. The technical workshop will bring scientists and engineers together to look at the Third Delta concept with respect to the problems and opportunities within the Barataria and Terrebonne basins. ROR urges you to support our efforts to evaluate the Third Delta concept as a regional solution. Our coastline and our way of life depend on it.

# Mark Your Calendar

La Fete d'Ecologie  
hosted by the  
Barataria-Terrebonne  
Estuary Foundation  
Saturday, September 28  
Peltier Park  
in Thibodaux



YOUR TAX  
DEDUCTIBLE  
DONATION JUST  
GOT EASIER...



ROR NOW ACCEPTS  
MASTERCARD  
AND VISA

Restore or Retreat, Inc. (ROR)  
P.O. Box 2048-NSU  
Thibodaux, LA 70310

## From the President... Alex Plaisance

As this newsletter goes to print we are planning the very first Third Delta Technical Workshop to be held September 17 at Nicholls State University. It is a collaborative effort between the state and several groups and it will bring scientists and engineers together to review the Third Delta Concept with respect to problems and opportunities in the Barataria and Terrebonne basins. The workshop will provide an evaluation of what we know and what we do not know from a scientific viewpoint in order to move forward on implementing a massive project such as the Third Delta Conveyance Channel. While we recognize that we do not have all of the answers we are working to develop those answers and to expedite the implementation process.

## Mission Statement

Realizing that the Barrataria and Terrebonne basins are the two most rapidly eroding estuaries on the earth, and understanding that an economic and ecological travesty is occurring, the concerned members of Restore or Retreat seek to identify, expedite and aggressively engage in solutions to urgently achieve comprehensive coastal restoration.

## BECOME A MEMBER/VOLUNTEER

Contributions to this organization are **tax deductible**. Restore or Retreat is a 501(c)(3) organization. Tax identification number is 72-1474850. Please make checks payable to Restore or Retreat, Inc.

### Levels of Support:

Platinum	\$10,000 or greater	Bronze	\$1,000 to \$2,499
Gold	\$5,000 to \$9,999	Voting	\$100 and above
Silver	\$2,500 to \$4,999	Associate	\$10 to \$99

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