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DNR Secretary Motivates Crowd Gathered for ROR Annual Meeting

Restoration, Not Retreat Is Message of the Day

A presentation by Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Secretary Scott Angelle energized the crowd of one hundred members of Restore or Retreat, Inc. (ROR) who attended the local coastal advocacy group's annual meeting on January 21 in Thibodaux.

"We come to a time when we in Louisiana are losing land faster than any other place in the world. And I don't have to tell you that where we now stand is the epicenter of land loss on planet Earth," Angelle said during his keynote address. "Let me assure you that DNR is committed to restoring this area so you can live, work, worship and play here."

On recent visits to Capitol Hill to testify on behalf of Louisiana's coastal needs and energy production, Angelle said he has attempted to drive home the point that the

continued loss of Louisiana's wetlands is the loss of "America's Wetlands," and the entire nation will feel the impact.

"Louisiana has made her share of deposits into the nation's energy supply," he explained. "Now, it is time for us to withdraw some of those federal funds if we are going to be able to continue serving this important function for the United States."

The DNR Secretary's remarks followed that of ROR President Alex Plaisance, Executive Committee members and new ROR Executive Director Simone Theriot. Also addressing the group were Senator Reggie Dupre, Representative Gordon Dove, Representative Damone Baldone and Lafourche Parish President

Charlotte Randolph.

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Sec. Scott Angelle speaks to ROR members on January 21.

State to Evaluate Third Delta Alternatives

The second phase of a \$1 million state-sponsored reconnaissance-level feasibility study of the Third Delta Conveyance Channel (TDCC) is expected to get underway later this spring, one year following the completion of Phase I. In that first phase, engineering consultant CH2MHill concluded that the proposed TDCC would build more land at a faster rate than what is being built by the Wax Lake Outlet in southwest Louisiana, considered by most to be a model diversion project.

While Phase I evaluated the predicted effectiveness of the TDCC project in rebuilding subdeltas in the Barataria and Terrebonne basins, Phase 2 will focus on restoration alternatives to the TDCC in the region, and the environmental and economic impacts of each. The first step in this second phase of the project evaluation will be a two-day technical workshop scheduled at Nicholls State University on May 11-12.

The Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and contractor CH2MHill have invited local stakeholders and coastal land loss experts to the meeting to brainstorm a list of projects other than the TDCC that could meet the land-building objectives in lower Lafourche and Terrebonne wetlands. Restore or Retreat (ROR) is helping to coordinate the workshop, and will also participate in the session.

DNR expects this second phase to be completed within nine months, and serve as a foundation for a joint full-scale feasibility study of the TDCC with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that could immediately follow.

ROR has remained in constant contact with DNR throughout the past year to keep the TDCC evaluation on the agency's priority list, and Executive Director Simone Theriot will continue to monitor progress during Phase 2 of the reconnaissance-level study.



From the Executive Director... *Simone Theriot*

Even before my mission as Executive Director of Restore or Retreat began, the effects and impacts of coastal erosion on our daily lives in our coastal community was evident. Since beginning my work here, my focus has shifted from awareness of the effects and impacts to targeting and expediting a solution

that will be “on scale” with the problem we are facing. The loss of our favorite fishing spots and impacts on our favorite summer spots have long since faded to rising tides, closing locks with strong south winds and seeing residents truly retreat to lands north, impacting our culture and our community.

With the coast lapping closer to our doors everyday, we are all aware that something must be done, quickly and with urgency. The fate of Louisiana and the nation lies, however, in the hands of many others who do not see the everyday harms. It is our obligation and responsibility to educate these key decision makers on all levels of

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the everyday harms, locally and nationally, and work to keep our issues in the forefront.

As a critical key to success, the ROR Executive Committee and I promise to keep you informed, and by doing so, keep our issues in the forefront so decisions will be made with the necessary

sense of urgency and importance. It will take an army of many, and we promise to do our part by continuing to speak to decision makers on the local, state, and federal levels, as well as continuing to build on relationships with state and federal agencies and collaborating with other organizations to keep the positive momentum of the LCA study and the Third Delta Conveyance Channel studies going.

www.restoreorretreat.org



A group of students from Tulane University's Mississippi River Basin Colloquium visited LUMCON in February to get a better understanding of Louisiana's coastal wetland loss. Windell Curole of the South Lafourche Levee District and Restore or Retreat's Simone Theriot made presentations to the group. The majority of the students were from out of state, and this trip marked their first visit to coastal Louisiana.

To have a ROR representative speak to your school or civic group, contact Simone Theriot at (985) 448-4485.

STATE TRUST FUND WOULD PROVIDE COASTAL MONEY

In her legislative package this spring, Governor Blanco is proposing a state constitutional amendment that would require any new offshore revenue received by the state to be deposited into a trust fund dedicated to coastal restoration. The Governor has long argued that Louisiana deserves at least ten percent of federal revenue received from offshore oil and gas production. Currently, the state receives no money from production farther than three miles off of its coast.

If the proposed amendment is passed by legislators, it will go Louisiana voters for final approval.



ROR, Local Businesses Call for Coastal Help on Capitol Hill

Restore or Retreat Executive Director Simone Theriot and Executive Committee member Jerome Zeringue were among 24 local business representatives and elected officials who traveled to Washington, DC in March to make national leaders aware of the coastal needs of Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes. This is the fourth consecutive year that the Houma-Terrebonne Chamber of Commerce has organized the three-day trip focused on hurricane protection, wetlands restoration and hurricane evacuation—three of the most pressing issues facing our region.

Attendees visited over 25 offices from March 13-16, including Louisiana's Senate and House delegation, and staff from critical Congressional committees such as Water Resources, Environment and Public Works, and Transportation. Meetings were also held with Gary Waxman of the White House Office of Management and Budget, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Defense Fund and Ducks Unlimited.

While funding for the Louisiana Coastal Area restoration plan in a much-anticipated re-authorization of the Water Resources and Development Act was the topic of many discussions, Theriot was also able to explain the Third Delta Conveyance Channel proposal and its funding needs to policy-makers.

“By the end of our trip, we were able to make everyone we met more familiar with the coastal needs of our area and the urgency in implementing comprehensive restoration,” Theriot says. “Most people were overwhelmingly supportive of our efforts.”

Strategic Plan Keeps Large-Scale Restoration in Focus

Five years ago, the founding members of Restore or Retreat, Inc. (ROR) created the organization with the sole focus of identifying and expediting the implementation of large-scale, long-term restoration for the Barataria and Terrebonne basins. Then and now, these basins suffer from the worst land-loss rates not only in the state and nation, but in the entire world. And then and now, the single most promising proposal for comprehensive restoration in the region is the Third Delta Conveyance Channel (TDCC).

Members of the ROR Executive Committee and Board of Directors met for a strategic planning session in March to review this mission and set goals for the the next few years. As a result, the ROR leadership re-committed themselves and the organization to advocating for large-scale restoration like that provided by the TDCC, particularly in the Barataria-Terrebonne estuary. And the focus of the ROR's time, effort and resources will continue to be the Third Delta.

The single, most promising proposal for comprehensive restoration in the region is the Third Delta Conveyance Channel.

In an effort to achieve this goal, President Alex Plaisance, Executive Director Simone Theriot and ROR's Executive Committee plan to increase the group's presence in Baton Rouge and Washington, DC, promoting timely authorization, funding and completion of required feasibility studies for the project. This includes upcoming presentations to Governor Kathleen Blanco, U.S. Senators Landrieu and Vitter, as well as the state's Congressional delegation.

Members will be encouraged to get more involved as well. On its website, ROR plans to post a list of actions needed from the state and federal government to move the project forward, as well as a list of key lawmakers and agency representatives to whom members can contact to voice their support. Enclosed in this issue of "The Conveyance" is also a set of talking points that will help our members become more familiar with the organization and the TDCC and help them spread the message to others in our region.

"ROR's strength over the past five years has been rooted in our single project focus and membership diversity," explains Plaisance. "We believe this will continue to be our strength for many years to come, until we are able to see effective restoration for this great land we call home."



Congressional Delegation Tours Coast

Members of Louisiana's Congressional delegation and their staffs, including freshmen U.S. Representatives Charlie Melancon and Bobby Jindal, took a tour of coastal Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes on February 23. State Senator Reggie Dupre (center) hosted the tour, in which ROR's Simone Theriot participated. Tour plans had originally included helicopter rides along the coastal wetlands for an aerial view of the dwindling coastline, but a stormy forecast demanded that the delegation take a bus tour instead.

LCA Authorized in Federal Water Bill

Louisiana may soon see the fruits of an 18-month effort to develop a near-term state restoration plan. On April 13, the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee approved a water resources bill that authorizes \$1.9 billion for the Louisiana Coastal Area (LCA) restoration plan.

With the bill now heading to the full Senate, state leaders are hopeful that LCA will remain intact, providing some near-term relief to Louisiana's critical coastal needs.

When the LCA Chief's Report was signed in January by Lt. Gen. Carl Strock, Chief of Engineers for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Governor Kathleen Blanco lauded the plan as a "historic" and "significant milestone in our efforts to save our coast." On this road to restoration, ROR and other coastal advocates will continue to push for a comprehensive restoration plan for the long-term sustainability of our coast.

Included in the \$1.9 billion LCA near-term plan are the Bayou Lafourche Freshwater Diversion Project, a science and technology program, and feasibility studies for long-term projects like the Third Delta Conveyance Channel. Final passage of the Water Resources and Development Act of 2005 could come as early as this summer.

DNR Secretary

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"If we don't focus on coastal restoration, nothing else matters, not even health care and education," Randolph told the audience. "Without restoration, we will not survive here."

Before the conclusion of the annual meeting, the ROR membership voted to approve the organization's 2005 slate of officers and Executive Committee, including the newest member of the Board of Directors, former ROR Executive Director Lori LeBlanc.

If you have any
comments or questions,
please contact our office at:

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www.restoreorretreat.org

From the President...
Alex Plaisance, Jr.

The founders of Restore or Retreat come from all walks of life—small business, farming, law, government, banking and industry—in parishes most impacted by Louisiana’s coastal land loss—Lafourche, Terrebonne and Assumption. Here is where we raise our families, run our businesses and enjoy our weekends. And so, despite our different backgrounds and interests, we come together to ensure that this bountiful area of ours along the banks of Bayou Lafourche and Bayou Terrebonne, stretching down to the Gulf of Mexico, is preserved for our future generations. This is why we created Restore or Retreat, Inc. Just as we have for the past five years, your ROR leadership will continue to focus on large-scale restoration of the Barataria and Terrebonne basins by supporting the most promising project we have seen to date—the Third Delta Conveyance Channel. While we don’t represent one single parish, we do exist to help save the wonderful land we all share.

Thank you for your support!



**MAKING YOUR
TAX- DEDUCTIBLE
DONATION IS JUST A
CLICK AWAY!**

**VISIT US ON-LINE AT
www.restoreorretreat.org**

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Mission Statement

Realizing that the Barataria 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	Associate	\$100 to \$999
Silver	\$2,500 to \$4,999	Friend	\$10 to \$99

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I would like to support ROR, my donation is enclosed.

I would like to be an active volunteer; please contact me.

Return form to: ROR, P.O. Box 2048-NSU, Thibodaux, LA 70310