

# THE CONVEYANCE



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## Third Delta Feasibility Study Is Underway

*The Third Delta Conveyance Channel (TDCC) took its first major step toward construction in June as the La. Department of Natural Resources issued a notice to proceed to engineering firm CH2MHill for the project's feasibility evaluation.*

This study will address three primary issues: (1) can a diversion and conveyance channel system be constructed to convey the projected range of flows (up to 200,000 cfs.) (2) what would be the sediment load transmitted from the Mississippi River to the outfall area, and (3) given the sediment load and physical environment, how large could the deltas become and how sustainable are they over time?

"At ROR, we believe that the Third Delta concept provides our greatest opportunity for rebuilding the Barataria-Terrebonne basins. We are thrilled to see the feasibility study now underway and eagerly anticipate its findings," said ROR Executive Director Lori LeBlanc.

The study will be performed in phases, specifically collecting baseline data, identifying alternatives to the proposed concept and the impacts of all alternatives, and determining the economic feasibility of implementation. The entire evaluation is budgeted at \$1 million and is expected to take up to 18 months to complete.

The TDCC concept was designed to restore large areas of coastal Louisiana by building subdeltas within the Barataria-Terrebonne area. The project would involve the construction of a man-made channel that connects the Mississippi River to areas of deteriorating deltaic wetlands. The TDCC is specifically incorporated as a Coast 2050 strategy for Regions 2 and 3.



Congressman David Vitter and ROR's Lori LeBlanc got a birds-eye view of our coastline.



EPA staffers toured the Louisiana coast and Port Fourchon in May.



White House environmental advisor Jim Connaughton (center) with LeBlanc and Shell Pipeline's Ed Landgraf.

## Washington Meets the Louisiana Coast

*Representatives from the White House, Congress and EPA travel to South Louisiana to get a close-up look at our coastal erosion crisis.*

Two hundred years ago, a phenomenal land deal known as the Louisiana Purchase thrust the region now known as south Louisiana into the national spotlight. Today, it isn't land acquisition but coastal Louisiana's alarming land loss rate that requires immediate attention from policy-makers and lawmakers in the nation's capital. This spring, coastal restoration took center stage as restoration advocates like Restore or Retreat (ROR) hosted key federal leaders on

tours of our dwindling coastline. And with thousands of acres of wetlands at risk and billions of dollars in restoration funds at stake, visits like these can never be too soon or too frequent.

U.S. Congressman David Vitter of New Orleans took his first helicopter tour of the Barataria-Terrebonne basins on April 14, accompanied by ROR Executive Director Lori LeBlanc. He pledged his support to help fight for \$14 billion

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

While the first half of 2003 has been an extremely busy time for Louisiana's coastal restoration efforts, the next six months will be even more critical for our state's future. State and federal agencies have been rapidly working on the implementation of Louisiana's Coast 2050 plan through the Louisiana

Coastal Area (LCA) Study with the hope of obtaining congressional authorization in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2004. The draft LCA Study is expected to be completed by mid-summer and will include a wide array of coastal restoration alternatives that consist of individual restoration projects.

Time is running out. Because of the urgency of Louisiana's crisis, we must ensure that the LCA Study stays on track for WRDA 2004 authorization. However, we must also ensure that the LCA Study includes large-scale restoration projects that will provide for the long-term ecological and economic sustainability of our coast.

Louisiana's coast is a place where we live, work and play and it is a place that has national ecological and economic significance. We want to keep it that way by implementing large-scale and long term multi-beneficial projects, such as the Third Delta Conveyance Channel. Although public meetings have been held to obtain public input on the strategies and projects, more public meetings are scheduled for the week of July 13 to seek input regarding the selected array of alternatives. Be sure to attend this next round of public meetings to voice your concerns. You can view the Coast 2050/LCA alternatives on-line at [www.coast2050.gov](http://www.coast2050.gov).

The next six months are also critical as Louisiana elects its next governor. This governor and his or her administration must make Louisiana's coastal restoration a top priority while also continuing to build the momentum towards making this a national priority. We will not succeed unless we have the voice and leadership of our next governor. It is up to the citizens of Louisiana to elect a governor who will make Louisiana's coastal restoration efforts a top priority.



## Lockhart Joins ROR Staff

*Restore or Retreat is pleased to welcome Peggy Lockhart to the ROR team in the*

*position of Administrative Assistant. Born in Louisiana and reared in the Midwest, Lockhart has found herself living and working along the upper and lower Mississippi River deltas for years. After earning a B.S. in Environmental Science from the University of Dubuque in 1995, she went on to work on the Mississippi River Long Term Monitoring Project with the Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources and to manage an air quality laboratory at Iowa State University. She returned to south Louisiana over two years ago to serve as University Education Coordinator for LUMCON before joining ROR this May.*

*"Coastal restoration is an important subject to me personally. Not only do I have many friends directly affected by coastal land loss, but I truly believe this country is quickly losing one of the most beautiful places God ever created,"*

*Lockhart says. "Being a part of Restore or Retreat puts me on the front lines of the effort to help save what's left."*

*Lockhart lives in Bourg, La., and has two adult sons who attend college in Iowa.*

## Key Wetlands Bills Gain Legislative Approval

The future of coastal restoration now lies in the hands and the ballots of Louisiana voters. During the 2003 regular session of the Louisiana legislature, which came to a close on June 23, legislators approved a pair of constitutional amendments aimed at increasing wetlands funding and limiting the state's liability for approved restoration projects. The constitutional amendments, authored by Sen. Reggie Dupre and Rep. Loulan Pitre, now head to voters for approval in the October 4 statewide general election.

The funding measures would allow the state to more aggressively finance the wetlands restoration fund used to match federal project dollars. The amendment would require the legislature to channel \$35 million per year from mineral settlements into the wetlands fund and would allow use of additional moneys from such sources for wetlands restoration. The legislation also raises the cap on the wetlands fund to \$500 million. In addition, the measure allows the legislature to consider the wetlands fund as one of several options for appropriating certain non-recurring revenues. Supporters of this amendment stress that state funding on this magnitude is essential to making the \$14 billion comprehensive restoration plan a reality.

The measures limiting liability for coastal restoration projects would allow the state to reduce or perhaps even eliminate the \$2 billion plus in judgments rendered in favor of oyster lessees, and to prevent similar situations in the future. It is critical that the state be able to contain such liabilities in pursuing a comprehensive restoration program.

Other bills of interest to ROR supporters that gained legislative approval include measures authored by Dupre and Pitre to allow "America's Wetland" bumper stickers to be placed on public vehicles and to provide for the creation of an "America's Wetland" prestige license plate once 1,000 orders are placed for the plate.

"We have long been fighting for recognition of coastal land loss as a crisis the state and the nation cannot afford to ignore. And as Louisiana residents, we cannot expect other Americans to support our efforts unless we are willing to make difficult choices ourselves," Pitre says. "That's why it is so critical that the people of Louisiana approve this effort by the legislature to make coastal restoration a state priority."

## Congressman Tauzin Delivers Restoration Message at "Bayou Region Day"

On May 6, members of the Bayou Region chambers of commerce gathered at the state capitol in Baton Rouge to discuss issues of great importance to the region, including coastal restoration, infrastructure, education and health care. Featured speakers for the coastal restoration presentation, facilitated by ROR's Lori LeBlanc, included John Saia of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Assistant Secretary of DNR Randy Hanchey and Karen Gautreaux of the Governor's Office of Coastal Activities. The main topic of the one-hour session was LCA/ Coast 2050.



Following the coastal restoration session, several chamber members gathered to learn more about the status of key infrastructure projects, only to be surprised with a visit by Congressman Billy Tauzin who was in Baton Rouge for the day. Tauzin briefly addressed the group, touting the value of Louisiana's wetlands and restoration efforts.

"I wish all Americans realized the great resource we have here that is being lost," he told the group.

"Centuries ago, our ancestors were expelled from their homes. It will take the kind of action that I see here today, all of you coming together to make a change, to avoid another expulsion, this one by Mother Nature. We have to start believing that restoration is 'do-able' and the time is right now."

[www.restoreorretreat.org](http://www.restoreorretreat.org)



## We're Live on the Web!

This spring, Restore or Retreat launched a new web site that puts facts and figures about coastal land loss at your fingertips.

The site, [www.restoreorretreat.org](http://www.restoreorretreat.org), includes the mission of our organization, a list of contributors, archived issues of "The Conveyance" newsletters, descriptions of south Louisiana's land loss crisis and our most promising solution—the Third Delta Conveyance Channel, as well as informative maps and interesting photos that support the need for comprehensive coastal restoration.

With the web site, ROR membership is also only a click away. Save a stamp and make your secure financial contributions to support ROR's restoration awareness efforts on-line instead.

Give us a click today!

## "Washington Meets"

*-continued from page 1-*

in coastal restoration funds as a member of the House Appropriations Committee.

"If a picture is worth a thousand words, on this issue, a helicopter tour is worth several million," Vitter told members of the Bayou Region chambers of commerce following his coastline tour. "It's important we get as many federal officials as we can to take that same ride and get that perspective etched in their minds... We must establish a major national commitment to Louisiana's coast."

Whether or not Vitter's words were heard back in Washington, several other policymakers did seem to follow his suggestion and, only a few weeks later, got a birds-eye view of south Louisiana for themselves.

On April 30, the Greater Lafourche Port Commission and the Governor's Office of Coastal Activities hosted Director of EPA Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds Diane Regas and other EPA staffers for an aerial tour of the area. The group also heard presentations by GLPCE Executive Director Ted Falgout and South Lafourche Levee District's Windell Curole at Port Fourchon.

*"We must establish a major national commitment to Louisiana's coast."*

*U.S. Congressman David Vitter*

Local and state coastal restoration officials also welcomed representatives of President George W. Bush's staff to south Louisiana May 21 -22. Led by Jim Connaughton, Chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), the visiting guests included CEQ Director for Natural Resources Bill Leary, Gene Whitney of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, and key personnel from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army-Civil Works (OASA-CW). The two-day itinerary was packed with factual presentations from key stakeholders regarding coastal land loss rates and all that is at risk, from waterfowl and fisheries habitat to the nation's energy supply. Also scheduled were helicopter, bus and boat tours of coastal wetlands, Port Fourchon and critical oil and gas infrastructure, and a private luncheon with Governor Mike Foster in Baton Rouge.

With a land loss rate of 35 square miles per year, King Milling, Chairman of the Governor's Advisory Commission on Coastal Restoration and Conservation, told the White House group that the state's eroding coastline is an "environmental catastrophe of international proportions."

"Over the next 36 hours, you will witness the greatest kept secret. You will see the pending destruction of the seventh largest delta in the world," he said.

Following the meetings, Connaughton commended the state's efforts to bring national attention to the coastal erosion problem.

"It's a passion your leaders are bringing to the issue that I hope will begin to break through the conversation in Washington. As we sequence through our priorities, it's important that this one be well understood and well analyzed," he said.

## Mark Your Calendar

**AMERICA'S WETLAND  
SPORTS & RECREATION SUMMIT**  
August 1-2, New Orleans

**BEACHSWEEP LITTER CLEANUP**  
Saturday, September 20

**La Fete d'Ecologie**  
Saturday, September 27

## From the President... Alex Plaisance, Jr.

*We have often said that saving coastal Louisiana is much more than an ecological emergency, it is a economic emergency as well.*

*Thanks to recent visits by key policy-makers like White House advisor Jim Connaughton and others, we are making great strides in helping leaders in Washington understand the vast economic importance of our vanishing coastline. ROR is also actively soliciting support from one group that has perhaps the greatest stake in halting land loss—our own business and industry leaders. This spring, ROR representatives traveled to Ruston to speak to members of the Committee of 100, the CEOs of Louisiana's top 100 companies. We were also honored to be able to make a presentation to about 100 national and international corporate executives who toured the LOOP facilities. Companies included the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, Merck, Northrup Grumman, Kerr McGee and BOSE Corp. Getting these men and women from across the state and the nation to recognize the ecological and economic importance of Louisiana's coast and to support restoration efforts is critical to maintaining our momentum toward national recognition and, ultimately, federal funding.*

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

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