



# Land Marks

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VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2 - MARCH/ APRIL 2014

## HISTORY AT THE BATTLEFIELD

In January, the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act Public Outreach team set up the "I Remember..." oral history art exhibit at the Chalmette Battlefield - Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve.

Just downriver from New Orleans, in Chalmette, is the site of the January 8, 1815, Battle of New Orleans: Chalmette Battlefield. As historians remind us, the resounding American victory at the Battle of New Orleans became a symbol of a new idea; American democracy triumphing over the old European ideas of aristocracy and entitlement. The art exhibit's new location prompts visitors to learn that our nation is still in a fight - this one to protect and preserve our nation's vanishing Louisiana coastline. The primary goal of hosting the show at the NPS Battlefield in Chalmette is to allow the public to get a view of the 1815 Battle of New Orleans and to hear the voices and see the images of the (Continues on Page 2)



The Malus-Beauregard House at the Chalmette Battlefield - Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve

## BEGINNING THE PROCESS

Projects are implemented under the CWPPRA program by using a systematic approach that starts with an annual planning cycle (Continues on Page 3)



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### DATES TO REMEMBER...

March 15	Audubon Zoo: Earth Fest	New Orleans, LA
March 18-20	2014 State of the Coast Conference	New Orleans, LA
March 31	"I Remember..." Art Show at LSU Hill Memorial Library	Baton Rouge, LA
April 15	Technical Committee Meeting	New Orleans, LA

(History at the Battlefield continued from page 1)  
 “2014 Battle to Save Coastal Louisiana”. One of the most interesting ways to visit the show might be to take the Creole Queen Chalmette Battlefield river cruise excursion, which leaves New Orleans at 1 p.m. and arrives at the battlefield around 2:45 p.m. each day, Tuesday through Saturday. Through this venue, people from all over the world are viewing the exhibit.

The outstanding work by nature photographer Lane Lefort and artist Marian Brister Martinez to create public awareness of the importance of wetland environmental quality and natural resource conservation has been inspiring. The show is a two part venture: oral history and art. In the oral history part of the project, 11 coastal stewards were captured with an environmental portrait and oral history interview by Lane Lefort and CWPPRA Public Outreach staff. Each person captured in this project has an exceptional wetlands tale about how the Louisiana wetlands have been a part of their lives. These coastal caretakers also posed for an environmental portrait in the place of their choosing. Visitors to the show at the Chalmette Battlefield can see these images and also use QR codes posted next to the environmental portraits to hear actual interview clips. Lefort also shared 10 of his gorgeous nature photographs to give national and international visitors a chance to see Louisiana's dynamic coastal ecosystems. Martinez created 10 oil paintings that eloquently captured life along the Mississippi River from the early 1890s through 1960. Her work was designed to tell the story of the historical human interaction with the Louisiana



wetlands. The wonderful pairing of these photographs and paintings, which includes a total of 30 pieces of art, provides the public with a unique way to interact with the most special organisms that inhabit the wetlands - people. Years of experience were chronicled between the storytellers' tales, photos, and paintings, all in an effort to communicate the story of living along Louisiana's fragile coastline and our strong desire to win the battle against land loss through coastal restoration.

The NPS Chalmette Battlefield is a free public venue. The visitor's center which is hosting the exhibit is open Tuesday- Saturday 9AM to 4PM. The last chance to see the show at the NPS Chalmette Battlefield will be March 7, 2014.

The entire oral histories can be accessed online at the LaCoast.gov website link <http://lacoast.gov/new/GetInvolved/OralHistory.aspx> as well as links to the artists' work. The next stops on the Art Exhibit tour will be at the 2014 State of the Coast Conference in New Orleans from March 18-20. After the State of the Coast Conference, the show will be on display at the LSU Hill Memorial Library on the Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge campus, from March 31 through August 30. ■





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## MORE ABOUT MARSH CREATION

Over millennia, sand, silt, and clay delivered via the muddy floodwaters of the Mississippi River built the wetlands of Louisiana's coastal zone. With construction of the levees along the river to reduce flood risk to adjacent communities, the floodwaters responsible for creating the wetlands were channeled into the Gulf of Mexico. Without the annual renourishment from the river, wetlands have been sinking and converting to open water. To restore the sinking wetlands, marsh creation replicates the natural land-building process in a controlled, and much accelerated, fashion.

Land is built by a pipeline dredge that removes sediment from a "borrow site" by using a specialized vessel outfitted with a drill, suction pump, and pipe. As the drill, or cutterhead, spins, it agitates sediment at the bottom of the borrow site. This sediment is then pumped with water into a pipe that carries the resultant slurry to the restoration site. Once the slurry is in place, the water runs off as the sediment settles to form new land. Native vegetation is then installed to jump-start wetland productivity. Marsh creation projects result in restored wetlands in areas that were open water just weeks before.

Even the largest marsh creation projects built to date, however, cannot keep pace with Louisiana's annual land loss of 24 square miles. The current condition in Louisiana did not develop overnight; it has taken more than 80 years of natural and artificial impacts to realize this drastic rate of decline. Marsh

creation projects are limited by increasing water depths and funding constraints; the program cannot restore every acre that has been lost. CWPPRA is striving to identify and construct projects that provide strategic benefits by holding together larger ecosystems and that use renewable sediment resources like the river. Over the course of 20 years, CWPPRA has been restoring one piece of broken marsh at a time, which cumulatively yields significant results over time. The long-term vision is to sustain these restored marshes by restoring part of the riverine processes that first built them. ■

## BEGINNING THE PROCESS *(CONTINUED)*

*(Continued from Page 1)* to select new projects. In January of each year, a new selection process begins with solicitation to the CWPPRA agencies, the public, parish governments, and other institutions to propose new projects. The CWPPRA workgroups screen this initial list of projects to ensure consistency with established restoration plans and then select a smaller list of candidate projects that will be further developed over the course of the year and evaluated for cost-effectiveness, feasibility, and other criteria.

Cost-effectiveness is measured by comparing the estimated cost per acre of wetlands restored, enhanced, or protected among projects. Wetland benefits are estimated by conducting site visits and a wetland value assessment (WVA) by using habitat suitability models. In addition to the WVA, the workgroups also conduct an engineering analysis to estimate project costs and the feasibility of project construction. The project budget is then evaluated to determine the total cost to implement, operate, maintain, and monitor each project for 20 years.

The Task Force uses cost-effectiveness, critical need, and other factors as the primary metrics to determine which projects will be funded for full engineering and design and, ultimately, construction. Other important factors such as areas of critical need, strategic function, and public support are also weighed in the decision making. Once projects are selected, lead Federal agencies are chosen to partner with the State and sponsor the projects through construction. ■



PO-104 Bayou Bonfouca Marsh Creation. The goal of the project is to create 533 acres and nourish 42 acres of low salinity brackish marsh in open water areas.

## WORLD WETLANDS DAY 2014

HOUMA, La. – February 3rd was World Wetlands Day at the Bayou Terrebonne Waterlife Museum. The day was filled with activities for students in grades 3-6, teaching them about different functions and values of wetlands in Louisiana. The Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA) Public Outreach team attended the event.

The primary focus of CWPPRA's activity was to teach the students about the variety of wetland habitats and how each is important to Louisiana. Students learned about swamps, marshes, and barrier islands as well as techniques used by CWPPRA to preserve these areas.

Students participated in an activity called "Where the Wild Things Belong," where the goal was to place the bean bag depicting a native species to Louisiana in the correct habitat. Approximately 240 students attended the Waterlife Museum throughout the day. Each student received a copy of the latest CWPPRA publication entitled "Saving Paradise." The book features local residents' reflections on the importance of coastal restoration in their



CWPPRA Public Outreach Coordinator Susan Testoet-Bergeron explains to students the importance of preserving various wetland habitats.

community. *Saving Paradise* was created in partnership with Bayou Grace.



## COASTAL WETLANDS PLANNING, PROTECTION AND RESTORATION ACT

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USGS/ NATIONAL WETLANDS RESEARCH CENTER  
700 CAJUNDOME BOULEVARD LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA 70506  
OFFICE PHONE: (337) 266-8623 OR (337) 266-8542

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