Project Status

Approved Date: 2012  
Project Area: 902 acres  
Approved Funds: $3.88 M  
Total Est. Cost: $42.1 M  
Net Benefit After 20 Years: 731 acres  
Status: Engineering and Design  
Project Type: Marsh Creation  
PPL #: 21

Location

This project is located in the Pontchartrain Basin (Region 1), St. Charles Parish. It is bounded to the north by the railroad running parallel to I-10, to the west by the marsh fringe just east of Bayou LaBranche, to the south by Bayou Traverse and to the east by marsh fringe west of a pipeline canal.

Problems

Dredging of access/flotation canals for construction of I-10 resulted in increased salinity & altered hydrology that exacerbated conversion of wetland vegetation into shallow open water bodies. Land loss is estimated to be -0.543 percent/year based on USGS data from 1984 to 2011 within the extended project boundary.

Restoration Strategy

The primary goal is to restore marsh that converted to shallow open water. Project implementation will result in an increase of fisheries and wildlife habitat, acreage, and diversity along with improving water quality. The proposed project will provide a protective wetland buffer to the railroad and I-10, the region’s primary westward hurricane evacuation route, and complement hurricane protection measures in the area.

The proposed solution consists of the creation of 762 acres of emergent wetlands and the nourishment of 140 acres of existing wetlands using dedicated dredging from Lake Pontchartrain. The marsh creation area will have a target elevation the same as average healthy marsh. It is proposed to place the dredge material in the target area with the use of retention dikes along the edge of the project area. If degradation of the containment dikes has not occurred naturally by Target Year 3, gapping of the dikes will be mechanically performed. Successful wetland restoration in the immediate area (PO-17 constructed in 1994) clearly demonstrates the ability for these wetlands to be restored using material from a sustainable borrow area (outlet end of Bonnet Carre Spillway). Engineering monitoring surveys of the marsh creation area and borrow area are planned as well.

Progress to Date

This project is on Priority Project List 21.

For more information, please contact:

Federal Sponsor:  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Alexandria, LA  
(318) 473-775

Local Sponsor:  
Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority  
Baton Rouge, LA  
(225) 342-4733

A vulnerable Interstate 10 runs through a section of deteriorated LaBranche Wetlands. Restoration of this wetland resource will be a visible reminder of our efforts to save Louisiana’s coast.