LaBranche East
Marsh Creation (PO-75)

Project Status
Approved Date: 2010   Project Area: 931 acres
Approved Funds: $34.0 M   Total Est. Cost: $34.9 M
Net Benefit After 20 Years: 715 acres
Status: Engineering and Design
Project Type: Marsh Creation
PPL #: 19

Location
The project features are located between Lake Pontchartrain and I-10 in St. Charles Parish, Louisiana. It is bounded on the west by the Fall Canal and the Bayou LaBranche Wetland Creation Project (PO-17) and the east by a pipeline canal.

Problems
Dredging of access and flotation canals for the construction of I-10 and the Illinois Central Railroad resulted in increased salinity and altered hydrology in the area that exacerbated the conversion of wetland vegetation into shallow open water bodies.

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

Project features consist of the creation of 729 acres of marsh and the nourishment of 202 acres of existing marsh using dedicated dredging from Lake Pontchartrain. In addition, 10,000 linear feet of tidal creeks will be created. The marsh creation area will have a target elevation the same as average healthy marsh for this region. Plans are to place the dredge material in the target area with the use of low level, non-continuous retention dikes along the edge of the project area allowing overtopping of material to nourish the marsh fringe. Vegetative plantings will be utilized in the areas deemed most critical by the project team. Successful wetland restoration in the immediate area (PO-17) clearly demonstrates the suitability and stability of soil and material availability from a sustainable borrow area.

Progress to Date
This project is on Priority Project List 19. Surveying and Geotechnical scopes of work and plans are prepared.