



# River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp

## PO-0029

### Frequently Asked Questions

March, 2018

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#### **1. How will this project be funded?**

This project was initially a federally funded CWPPRA project, then transferred to the state and funded through most of the E & D phase. Project funding will continue using RESTORE, DWH oil spill settlement funds.

#### **2. What is the overall schedule for this project?**

It is estimated that the project will be ready for construction approximately 3 years after the receipt of RESTORE funds. Activities include final design, land rights, permitting, pre-construction monitoring, and development of an operations and maintenance plan.

#### **3. What is the difference between the Master Plan project “East Maurepas Diversion (001.DI.21)” and “River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp (PO-29)”?**

Every five years the Master Plan scientifically models, vets, and selects coastal projects that are basin-scale conceptual projects. Master Plan names reflect the project in the context of other Master Plan projects being modeled at the basin-scale. When the Master Plan is approved by the legislature, projects are assigned a new project ID number and sometimes a new name.

#### **4. What effect will the water from the river have on Lake Maurepas?**

The project goal is to keep water in the swamp; therefore the project is designed to increase water retention to benefit woody vegetation from the fresh water, nutrients, and fine sediments. During early project design, hydrodynamic modeling was used to ensure that these objectives can be met. The reintroduction of Mississippi River water should not have a negative impact to the water quality of Lake Maurepas.

#### **5. How fast will the water move in the channel?**

In general, previous design efforts have indicated that the water flowing through the channel will be slow-moving, around 2-3 feet per second. Diversion operations at this rate will have minimal impact to river traffic and aquatic organisms. Estimated travel time of water through the 5.5 mile conveyance channel to the Maurepas Swamp is 4 hours.

#### **6. How is CPRA working with existing industrial landowners in the vicinity of the project site?**

CPRA is accustomed to working with private landowners who live and work in coastal Louisiana. Many landowners understand the importance of coastal protection and restoration and they are able to correlate efforts to resilience, of the coast and their business. For this project, coordination with local land owners and industry has been ongoing and is beneficial during this phase of project design.

#### **7. Are there other projects proposed in the Master Plan that aim to preserve hardwood swamp?**

This is the first master plan diversion project to divert water from the Mississippi river to reconnect a coastal forest and that will largely restore hardwood swamp; however, there are other coastal forest restoration projects, such as the recently completed Hydrologic Restoration of the Amite River Diversion Canal (PO-0142), and Hydrologic Restoration and Vegetative Planting in the Des Allemands Swamp (BA-0034-2). Both are designed to connect surrounding waterways to interior swamp habitat. Additionally, the Coastal Forest Conservation Initiative (LA-0013) project acquires land rights from willing landowners for coastal forests throughout the state and serves to protect coastal forests in perpetuity. There are additional diversion projects in the Master Plan that divert water to swamps: Union, Central Wetlands, and Manchac.

### **8. How can you tell if the project is benefiting the swamp?**

CPRA has assembled a group of leading swamp ecologists from throughout Louisiana to assist in developing the performance measures that will guide development of the operations plan, used to monitor project success. An Adaptive Management Plan will also be developed and will allow managers to modify diversion operations after construction to optimize benefits to the swamp. Additionally, a RESTORE grant will allow for pre-construction monitoring to develop a baseline overall health of the swamp. "Performance Measures for a Mississippi River Reintroduction into the Forested Wetlands of Maurepas Swamp", a 2017 scientific report, can be viewed at: <https://cims.coastal.louisiana.gov/RecordDetail.aspx?Root=0&sid=19628>

### **9. How will the sand captured within the sedimentation basin be used?**

The amount of sand captured within the sedimentation basin will be small relative to the needs of other CPRA restoration projects and will vary over time. CPRA will evaluate beneficial use of captured material in the operations and maintenance plan as the project progresses.

### **10. Is CPRA concerned about contaminants in the Mississippi River coming out of the diversion?**

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) is responsible for monitoring and assessing the quality of the state's water bodies. At this time, this section of the Mississippi River is not listed as an impaired water body for primary contact, secondary contact, or fish and wildlife propagation. For more information about how the LDEQ monitors and assesses water bodies, please visit [www.deq.louisiana.gov/](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/).

### **11. What emergency plans will CPRA have in place should there be a spill on the channel?**

CPRA will develop an emergency operations plan as the project progresses. Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals' Lower Mississippi River Water Works Warning Network functions to alert all downstream water intakes along the Mississippi River of any reported or sighted spills into the river so that the most effective countermeasures can be carried out. CPRA and our diversion operators are listed on this emergency call list.

### **12. Will CPRA be doing any plantings and how can I get involved?**

At this time, CPRA does not have a citizen planting program given that there are a number of non-profits in coastal Louisiana that do organize volunteer plantings. The Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation has been doing restoration work on the Maurepas landbridge. Please visit their website for more information: [saveourlake.org](http://saveourlake.org).

### **13. If the Garyville/Reserve area floods can the structure drain flood waters?**

Natural topography of the area and the size of the basin would make it difficult to allow the diversion to be used as a drainage structure.

### **14. How can I learn more about this project?**

CPRA maintains an online repository of information on all its projects including planning, engineering, design, construction, operation, maintenance, monitoring, and adaptive management reports as well as GIS files, photos, and presentations at <https://cims.coastal.louisiana.gov/default.aspx>.