

SAVE OUR LAKE

LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN BASIN FOUNDATION

Preserve and Restore Maurepas Land Bridge (Pontchartrain Coastal Lines of Defense Program) Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation – Coastal Sustainability Program

Preservation and Restoration of the Maurepas Land Bridge is one of ten priority project areas within the Pontchartrain Coastal Lines of Defense Program for the Pontchartrain Basin (**Figure 1**). All projects within this program provide significant habitat restoration and flood protection. The Maurepas Land Bridge is the natural landscape barrier between Lakes Maurepas and Pontchartrain and therefore is a primary control on the hydrology of the estuarine gradient and movement of storm surges into the surrounding region. The land bridge also serves as a major transportation corridor. Saltwater intrusion and lack of nutrients continue to impair wetland habitats throughout the wetlands around Lake Maurepas. The Maurepas Land Bridge coastal wetland forests should entirely placed in conservation due to their non-sustainable condition, and due to their particular importance on the land bridge to impede storm surge into the Maurepas region. The River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp is also necessary to restore the health of the swamp.

The Pontchartrain Coastal Lines of Defense Program represents an integrated set of projects which is based on the highly vetted Comprehensive Habitat Management Plan for the Pontchartrain Basin (2006). The CHMP was developed over two years by a team of qualified engineers, biologists and physical scientists including representation from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, University of New Orleans, Southeastern University, LA Department of Nature Resources, Pontchartrain Institute for Environmental Sciences and LSU AgCenter. The plan was peer-reviewed by representatives from National Marine Fisheries Service, Natural Resource Conservation Service, LSU, U.S. Geological Survey, LA Geological Survey, The Nature Conservancy, and EPA Gulf of Mexico Program Office and the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana.

The final CHMP is a federally approved plan by the EPA Region VI office. The Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana and the Louisiana Wildlife Federation have passed resolutions endorsing both the Comprehensive Habitat Management Plan and the Pontchartrain Coastal Lines of Defense Program. Since its release, the Pontchartrain Coastal Lines of Defense Program has been presented to numerous parish, state and federal officials. It is also publicly accessible on the web.

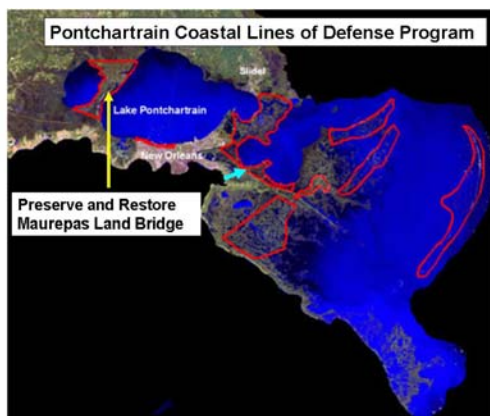


Figure 1: Location of the Maurepas Land Bridge. The project includes coastal wetland forest conservation and a Maurepas Reintroduction. This project is one ten projects in the Pontchartrain Coastal Lines of Defense Program.

Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, 2006, Comprehensive Habitat Management Plan for the Pontchartrain Basin, <http://www.saveourlake.org/wetlands.htm> on April 2006

Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, 2006, Pontchartrain Coastal Lines of Defense Program, <http://www.saveourlake.org/wetlands.htm> on April 2006

Lopez, J. A., 2006, The Multiple Lines of Defense Strategy to Sustain Coastal Louisiana, white paper, Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation

Fact Sheet – Preserve and Restore Maurepas Land Bridge

Project Name: Preserve and Restore Maurepas Land Bridge

Coastal Planning

Comprehensive Habitat Management Plan – endorsed by CRCL and LA Wildlife Federation
State’s Science Working Group recommendation to preserve non-sustainable coastal wetland forests
River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp CWPPRA Phase I project

Project Location

Region 1, Pontchartrain Basin, St. John and Tangipahoa Parishes

Problem

The Maurepas Land Bridge forest has only had slight recovery since being logged in the early 1900’s. Lack of freshwater and nutrients, herbivory, and other factors have generally resulted in forests which are highly stressed with a high rate of tree mortality. Conditions will allow very little re-generation if trees are logged or if they die. The land bridge is a transportation corridor including an interstate evacuation route and a railroad. Continued conversion of swamp to marsh or open water will allow more frequent and severe flooding from hurricanes which threatens nearby communities and the interior swamps.

Proposed Project Features

- Conserve all coastal wetland forests on the Maurepas Land Bridge
- Reintroduce river water into the Maurepas swamp (minimum 1,500 cfs) (see **Figure 2**)

Goals

- Conserve coastal wetland forests for future restoration
- Improve freshwater hydrology with fresh water and improved circulation
- Increase primary productivity of swamps and fresh marsh

Preliminary Project Benefits

River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp CWPPRA (PO-29) – enhance 36,000 acres
Forest Conservation of an additional 50,000 acres on the Maurepas Land Bridge

Identification of Potential Issues

Preliminary Construction Costs

Total estimated construction cost is \$107M

River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp CWPPRA \$57M

Coastal wetland forest conservation \$50M

Preparers of Fact Sheet

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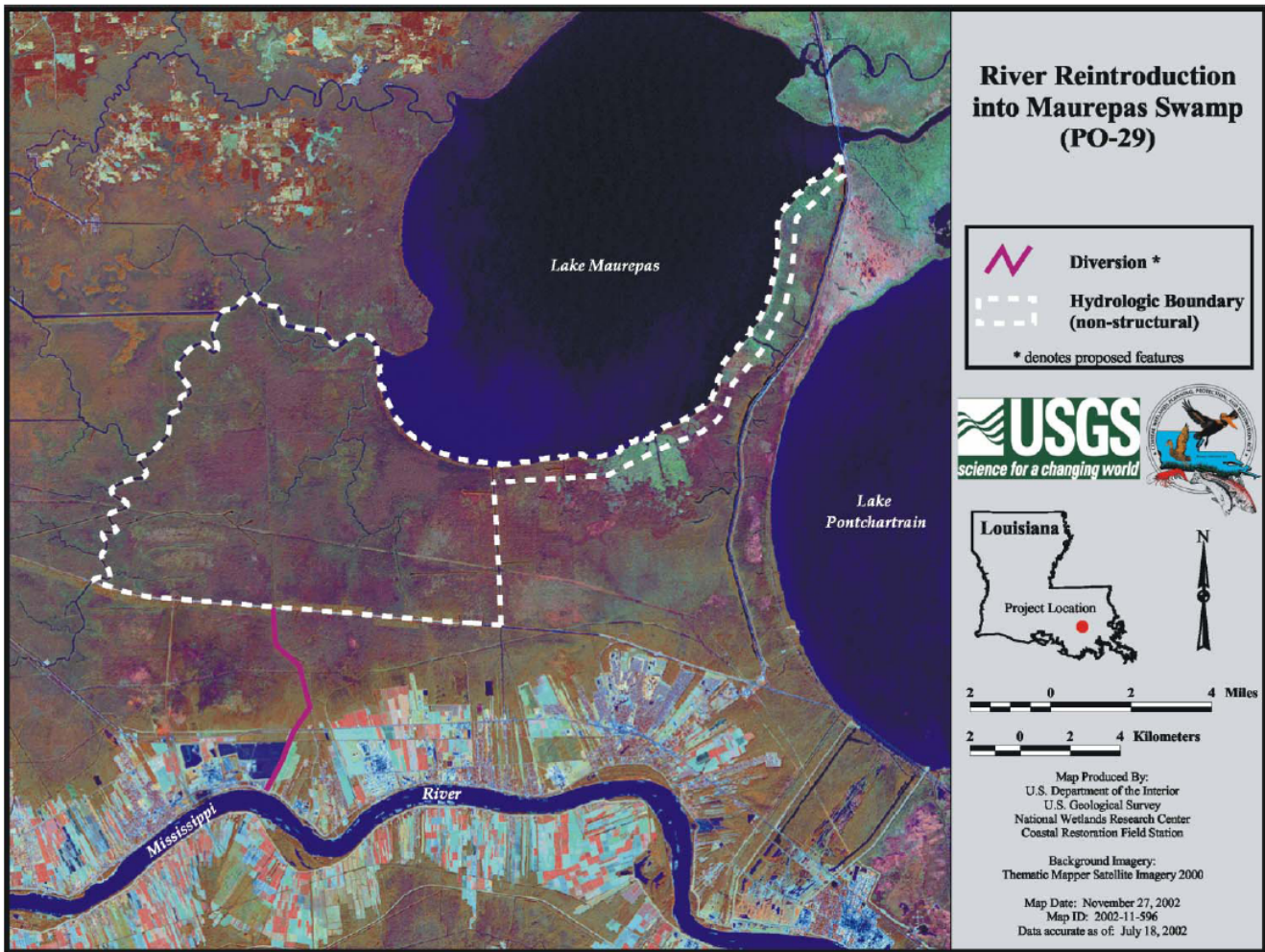


Figure 2: River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp PO-29