Second Amendment to the State of Louisiana's RESTORE Act State Expenditure Plan

Contents

1.0 Executive Summary

The Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012 ("RESTORE Act") requires the State of Louisiana, through the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority ("CPRA"), to publish a State Expenditure Plan (SEP) detailing its plan to expend funds under the Spill Impact Component of the RESTORE Act. This plan and any amendments thereto, are subject to 45 days public review and comment, and approval by the CPRA Board and the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (RESTORE Council). Under the Spill Impact Allocation Final Rule published by the RESTORE Council at 40 C.F.R. Part 1800, 34.59% of the total Spill Impact Component funds, or approximately $551.5 million over a 15-year period ending in 2031, will be allocated to the State of Louisiana.

In 2017, the CPRA Board and the RESTORE Council approved the State's initial SEP (the First Amended RESTORE Plan) for the expenditure of all of the State's Spill Impact Component funds through 2031 (~$551.5 million).[1] The initial SEP identified the following projects and programs for funding under the RESTORE Act's Spill Impact Component:

1. The Houma Navigation Canal Lock Complex ($366 million)
2. Adaptive Management ($60.9 million)
3. CPRA-Parish Matching Opportunities Program (up to $100 million)
4. Contingency Funds ($24.6 million).

In 2018, the CPRA Board and the RESTORE Council approved the CPRA-Parish Matching Opportunities Program Selection Amendment as the first amendment to the State's SEP.[2] That amendment identified projects selected for funding under the first $20 million installment of the Parish Matching Program.

This second amendment to the State's SEP does two things:

1. Expands the geographic coverage coastwide for all aspects of the System-Wide Assessment and Monitoring Program (SWAMP) implementation component of the Adaptive Management program; and
2. Reallocates $60 million from the CPRA-Parish Matching Opportunities Program to a new SEP activity, the River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp Project (the "Maurepas Project").

The selection of the Maurepas Project for funding is based on more than two decades of the State's coordination with and vital action by multiple Federal agencies, including the RESTORE Council and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as well as the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA) Task Force, and support from the United States Congress. Some of the more recent coordination includes the RESTORE Council's 2015 approval of approximately $14.2 million for planning, engineering and design, and permitting for the Maurepas Project under the Council-Selected Restoration Component. This project is a critical component of the State's Coastal Master Plan[3] and will restore processes that will enhance ecosystem health and reduce or minimize future loss of

[1] The State of Louisiana's First Amended RESTORE Plan is available at: http://coastal.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/State_RESTORE_Plan_-_March_2017.pdf.

[2] The CPRA-Parish Matching Opportunities Program Selection Amendment to the State of Louisiana's First Amended RESTORE Plan is available at: https://coastal.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/1-Parish-Matching-Project-Selection-Amendment-FINAL.pdf.

[3] Louisiana Coastal Master Plans (2017 and 2012) are available at: https://coastal.la.gov/our-plan/2023-coastal-master-plan/

approximately 45,000 acres of bald cypress-water tupelo forest in coastal Louisiana by reintroducing Mississippi River water into the Maurepas Swamp. Then, in 2016, Congress authorized the West Shore Lake Pontchartrain Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction Project (the "WSLP Project") as part of the Water Infrastructure Improvement for the Nation Act (WIIN Act, Pub. L. 114-322), and in 2018, under the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (BBA of 2018, Pub. L. 115-123), Congress funded construction of the WSLP Project.

The WSLP Project, which will reduce flood risk for over 60,000 people in St. Charles, St. John the Baptist, and St. James Parishes, overlaps with a portion of the guide levees for the Maurepas Project. This commonality provides a key opportunity to save money by consolidating the engineering, design, and construction of the overlapping portions of the two projects. Therefore, in 2020, the RESTORE Council budgeted $130 million in construction funding for the River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp Project through Funded Priorities List 3a (FPL 3a)[4] under the Council-Selected Restoration Component, pending a future Council vote after all applicable environmental laws have been addressed. Because the total estimated implementation cost of the Maurepas Project is approximately $190 million, the State of Louisiana confirmed in FPL 3a that it was planning to use approximately $60 million from another source, and specifically identified its Spill Impact Component allocation, to cover the remaining cost. Accordingly, this SEP amendment carries out that commitment, in addition to updating and clarifying the geographic scope of the State's Adaptive Management program, which was included in the State's initial SEP.

All other projects and programs, and the corresponding details/provisions that were approved in the State of Louisiana's First Amended RESTORE Plan and the subsequent CPRA-Parish Matching Opportunities Program Amendment remain in full force and effect to the extent not modified in this SEP amendment.

2.0 Public Participation Statement

This second amendment to the State of Louisiana's State Expenditure Plan (SEP) was published and made available for public review and comment for a minimum of forty-five (45) days, from October 20, 2021 – December 6, 2021, in a manner calculated to obtain broad-based participation from individuals, businesses, Indian tribes, and non-profit organizations in accordance with 31 C.F.R. §§ 34.503(b)(4) and (g) and was adopted only after consideration of all meaningful input from the public.

The State's SEP may be amended again over time if allocations among projects and programs are updated, or as new projects or programs are selected for funding. Any future amendments to the SEP will undergo the same procedure for public comment as outlined above.

3.0 Best Available Science[5]

Under 31 C.F.R. §34.503(d), each activity designed to protect or restore natural resources proposed for funding under the Spill Impact Component must be based on best available science. Under 31 C.F.R. 34.2, "best available science" is defined as "science that maximizes the quality, objectivity, and integrity

[4] The Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council's Funded Priorities List 3a is available at: https://www.restorethegulf.gov/sites/default/files/Final_FPL%203a_Final_Perdido_EC_508_3_2_2020.pdf.

[5] Please *also see* the State's First Amended RESTORE Plan (http://coastal.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/State_RESTORE_Plan_-_March_2017.pdf) (the initial SEP) for additional information about the process for prioritizing and selecting projects for the plan.

of information, including statistical information; uses peer reviewed and publicly available data; and clearly documents and communicates risks and uncertainties in the scientific basis for such projects." Louisiana's law requires CPRA to update its Coastal Master Plan every six years to take into account the best available science and the ever-changing conditions on the ground. (*See* Coastal Master Plan p. 28). The Coastal Master Plan, on which the State of Louisiana's SEP is based, is guided by a mission that is comprehensive in scope and based on a broad range of objectives, principles, decision drivers, metrics and constraints. (*Id.* at pp. 44-63). This "master plan approach with its long-term view, consideration of climate change, and integration of natural systems and community resilience" has empowered Louisiana to become a national leader in "large-scale ecosystem restoration thinking". (*Id.* at ES-11). Each project and program selected for funding herein is consistent with the goals and objectives of the State's Coastal Master Plan. As such, each project or program selected for funding in this SEP amendment is based on the best available science, as defined by the RESTORE Act.

4.0 State Certification of RESTORE Act Compliance, Conflicts of Interest and Financial Integrity

In accordance with the Section 5.2.2 of the RESTORE Council's SEP Guidelines, the State of Louisiana hereby certifies that all projects, programs, and activities included in this RESTORE SEP amendment are eligible activities as defined by the RESTORE Act and meet the requirements listed in Sections 4.1 and 4.1.1 of the SEP Guidelines. Additionally, the process used to verify that the projects, programs, and activities meet these requirements is described in Sections II, V and VI of the State's First Amended RESTORE Plan (the initial SEP), as well as this amendment. The State of Louisiana further certifies that issues crossing Gulf State boundaries have been evaluated to ensure that a comprehensive, collaborative ecological and economic recovery is furthered by this amendment. Likewise, the State hereby certifies that:

1. This Second Amendment to the State of Louisiana's SEP complies with the RESTORE Council's SEP Guidelines.
2. The activities included in this amendment contribute to the overall economic and ecological recovery of the Gulf Coast.
3. The activities included in this amendment will be carried out in the Gulf Coast Region in accordance with the requirements of 31 C.F.R. §§ 34.503(b)(5) and 34.203.

The State also certifies that, pursuant to Section 4.2.2 of the SEP Guidelines and in accordance with 33 U.S.C. §1321(t)(3)(B)(ii)(I) and 31 C.F.R. § 34.503(f), no more than 25 percent of funding under the Spill Impact Component will be used to pay for infrastructure projects. Additionally, in accordance with 33 U.S.C. § 1321(t)(3)(B)(i)(III) and Section II.B. of the State's First Amended RESTORE Plan, the State of Louisiana certifies that this RESTORE SEP amendment takes into consideration the current Comprehensive Plan adopted by the RESTORE Council and is consistent with the goals and objectives of that Plan.

All conflicts of interest and financial integrity provisions provided for in Section VIII of the State's First Amended RESTORE Plan will also apply to this SEP amendment as required by Section 5.2.4 of the SEP Guidelines.

5.0 Project List

The following project list includes:

1. Revisions to the geographic scope of CPRA's Adaptive Management Program.

2. Revisions to the funding for the CPRA-Parish Matching Opportunities Program.
3. A description of the River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp Project, which is a new project that CPRA is including in this SEP amendment for Spill Impact Component funding.

Table 1 summarizes funding requests for each project. Please note that the total funds referenced below are not immediately available in their entirety but will be paid in annual installments over a 15-year period ending in 2031.

Table 1: Summary of Funding Requests

Project Name	Funds Previously Allocated Under the Spill Impact Component	Spill Impact Component Amended Request	Total
Houma Navigation Canal Lock Complex	$366 million	-	$366 million
Adaptive Management	$60.9 million	(geographic scope change only)	$60.9 million
CPRA-Parish Matching Opportunities	Up to $100 million	-$60 million	$40 million
River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp	-	+$60 million	$60 million
Contingency Funds	$24.6 million	-	$24.6 million
Estimated Totals Less Sequestration[6]	**$551.5 million**	**$0**	**$551.5 million**

Note that numbers in the above table are estimates and are subject to revision as projects and program budgets are refined over time.

5.1 Adaptive Management

Program Summary: The RESTORE Council approved $60.9 million in Spill Impact Component funding for CPRA's Adaptive Management program in the State's First Amended RESTORE Plan (the initial SEP) in 2017. This program supports the State's entire coastal restoration and protection program and transcends individual projects to provide consistency and transparency within and across hydrologic basins. Adaptive Management includes a number of activities that fall into one of the following categories: 1) future project development; 2) focused applied research; 3) science and advisory boards; 4) model development and improvement; 5) system-wide assessment and monitoring program

[6] In order to maintain consistency with our First Amended State Expenditure Plan, the numbers referenced in this chart are based on Treasury's October 1, 2015 RESTORE Trust Fund Allocation, available at https://www.treasury.gov/services/restoreact/Documents/Allocations/Trust%20Fund%20Allocations%20as%20(10.01.2015%20Revision).pdf

(SWAMP); 6) data management and analysis; and 7) communicating and messaging. These activities are funded by a number of different sources; however, RESTORE funds will be utilized for data collection under SWAMP (#5), and data management and analysis (#6). This includes the development and implementation of future SWAMP monitoring plans, which will be incrementally designed by coastal hydrologic basin, and for data collection activities that transcend basin boundaries. SWAMP parameters fall into the following categories: Weather and Climate; Biotic Integrity (plants and animals); Water Quality; Hydrology; Physical Terrain (LiDAR, bathymetry, land area, etc.); and a number of additional Human Dimension parameters.

Program Modification – Second Amendment SEP: The previous SEP limited aspects of implementation of SWAMP monitoring plans to those areas west of Bayou Lafourche and excluded Barataria Basin. This SEP amendment expands implementation of all components of SWAMP monitoring plans coastwide. This increase in scope can be accomplished with the funds previously approved.

5.2 CPRA-Parish Matching Opportunities Program

Program Summary: The RESTORE Council approved up to $100 million in Spill Impact Component funding for CPRA's Parish Matching Opportunities Program in the State's First Amended RESTORE Plan (the initial SEP) in 2017, and approved the projects selected under the first $20 million increment of that program in the State's Parish Matching Project Selection Amendment to the initial SEP in 2018. This matching program is designed to help parishes that receive RESTORE funds under the Direct Component prioritize Coastal Master Plan projects with those funds, while also recognizing and responding to the needs of parishes to implement projects that are consistent with the Coastal Master Plan and are included in Parish RESTORE Act Multiyear Implementation Plans.

Program Modification – Second Amendment SEP: The previous SEP allocated up to $100 million to this program. This SEP amendment revises that allocation to a total of $40 million, $20 million of which has been allocated under the State's 2018 Parish Matching Project Selection Amendment.

As stated above, all other projects and programs, and the corresponding details/provisions that were approved in the State of Louisiana's First Amended RESTORE Plan and the subsequent CPRA-Parish Matching Opportunities Program Amendment remain in full force and effect to the extent not modified in this SEP amendment.

5.3 Mississippi River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp

5.3.1 Need

The construction of the Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) Levees in 1928 isolated this area from the overbank flooding inputs from the Mississippi River. The altered hydrologic regime restricts oxygenated water, sediment, and nutrient inputs needed to sustain the Maurepas Swamp, specifically cypress-tupelo habitat. Without rapid restoration efforts, this isolation, in combination with sea level rise and subsidence, have and will perpetually degrade the habitat and associated forest health as the area ultimately converts from forested swamp, to marsh, and finally to open water. The conversion of the Maurepas swamp habitat to open water would not only be detrimental to pre-existing fauna and flora that inhabit the area, but also to the people and communities in St. John the Baptist, St. James, Livingston, and Ascension parishes that rely on the ecosystem benefits such as recreation and storm surge-wave-wind protection. The following includes a brief project history and a description of opportunities to leverage previous work and resources:

1. This project is based on an extensive 20 plus year history of planning and science, federal and state support, and Congressional authorization. In 2001, the federal-state CWPPRA Task Force approved funds for the project to achieve 30% design. In 2004, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) identified the project as a near-term priority in the Louisiana Coastal Area (LCA) Ecosystem Restoration plan[7], and it was authorized by Congress in the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 (WRDA 2007, P.L. 110-114). The State funded design to the 95% level in 2014. Additional funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund was utilized for other planning tasks, including contracting a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) of forest wetland ecologists to develop performance measures and targets for ecosystem function, resilience, and sustainability, and an analysis of modeling to support adaptive management.[8] The project was also included in the 2007, 2012, and 2017 Louisiana Comprehensive Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast (CPRA 2017) and will be included in the upcoming 2023 plan.
2. In 2012, the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force (Task Force) Strategy called for expedited construction of authorized river reintroduction projects. The RESTORE Act directed the Council to include in its Comprehensive Plan, the strategy, projects, and programs recommended by the Task Force. Implementing this project builds on the RESTORE Council's 2015 Initial FPL investment which supported completion of outstanding tasks required to make the project ready for construction. The tasks covered by that investment included creating a new hydrodynamic and water quality model, final design, landrights, continuation of engagement with the TAG, continuation of permitting and environmental compliance processes, and creating a Preliminary Operations, Maintenance, Monitoring, and Adaptive Management (OMMAM) plan.[9]
3. In February of 2020, the RESTORE Council voted to budget $130M for construction of the project under Funded Priorities List 3a (FPL 3a) from the RESTORE Act's Council-Selected Restoration Component (Bucket 2), pending a future Council vote which would take place after all applicable environmental laws have been addressed.
4. In August of 2021, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers published its intent to draft a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to evaluate the Maurepas Project as an alternative to compensate for unavoidable impacts to swamp habitat associated with the construction of the West Shore Lake Pontchartrain Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction Project (WSLP Project). The USACE is evaluating the project for swamp habitat compensatory mitigation through preservation for construction impacts by the WSLP Project.

[7] U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). 2004. Louisiana Coastal Area (LCA) Louisiana - Ecosystem Restoration Study November 2004. 2741 pp.

[8] Krauss, K.W., G.P. Shaffer, R.F. Keim, J.L. Chambers, W.B. Wood, and S.B. Hartley. 2017. Performance measures for a Mississippi River reintroduction into the forested wetlands of Maurepas Swamp: U.S. Geological Survey Scientific Investigations Report 2017–5036, 56 pp., https://doi.org/10.3133/sir20175036.

[9] Buras, H., McLain, T., Miller, B., Richardi, D., and Richards, C.P. 2018. River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp Project (PO-0029) Preliminary Operations, Maintenance, Monitoring, and Adaptive Management Plan. CPRA. Available at: https://www.lacoast.gov/reports/project/Preliminary_Maurepas_OMMAM_Plan_10-16-18.pdf.

5.3.2 Purpose

The purpose of the River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp Project is to reintroduce Mississippi River water into the southern portion of the Maurepas Swamp. The project includes the following features:

1. An intake and gated control structure at the river levee near Garyville, LA (River Mile 144.2)
2. A conveyance channel into the swamp with "guide levees" to ensure the water gets to the intended location and prevent flooding
3. An additional outfall management features designed to help distribute the flow throughout the project area.

The project's purpose/goal is to reduce or minimize future loss of coastal swamp forest habitat in the project area through introduction of the Mississippi River water. The project is designed to improve the health and essential functions of the swamp for long-term sustainability. The project will contribute to the overall ecological and economic recovery of the Gulf Coast Region by benefitting approximately 45,000 acres of bald cypress/water tupelo swamp, including closed canopy, transitional, and open canopy/marsh.

The project is in Gulf Coast Region as defined in 31 C.F.R. §34.2 because it is located in the Pontchartrain Basin which is in the coastal zone defined under section 304 of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972.

5.3.3 Objectives

The objectives are to establish a hydrologic regime consistent with swamp forest sustainability that will introduce flowing oxygenated water; ameliorate salinity intrusion; facilitate nutrient uptake and retention; increase forest health and structural integrity; and increase rates of soil surface elevation gain to offset subsidence and future sea level rise. If these objectives are achieved, swamp habitat structure, function, and resilience will increase, and conversion to non-forested habitats will be reduced. According to the 2019 Wetland Value Assessment, the project will provide an estimated net 7,667 Average Annual Habitat Units of swamp habitat improvement to approximately 45,000 acres over the life of the project.[10]

Given the project's connection to the WSLP Project, it potentially falls within two eligible activities under the RESTORE Act. For purposes of Section 4.1.1 of the RESTORE Council's SEP Guidelines, if the Maurepas Project is selected as mitigation for the WSLP Project, the primary eligible activity/objective of the project would be to provide coastal flood protection by providing storm surge protection. (Eligible Activity (7)). In that case, an eligible secondary activity/objective of the project would be to restore and protect the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region. (Eligible Activity (1)). This would mean that the $60 million in funding allocated to the Maurepas Project would be counted towards the 25% infrastructure cap referenced in 33 U.S.C. §1321(t)(3)(B)(ii)(I) and 31 C.F.R. § 34.503(f).

However, if the Maurepas Project is not selected as mitigation for the WSLP Project, the primary eligible activity of the project would be to restore and protect the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region. (Eligible Activity (1)). In this

[10] LaCour-Conant, K., Ramsey, K., Bollfrass, K. 2019. Swamp Community Wetland Value Assessment: PO-0029 River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp. CPRA.

case, the $60 million in funding allocated to the Maurepas Project would not be counted towards the 25% infrastructure cap. Because the USACE has not yet made a determination about mitigation for the WSLP Project, the State has opted to address both possibilities in this SEP amendment and that the eligible activity will be determined based on the USACE's mitigation decision. Importantly, regardless of the USACE's decision, the State will not exceed the 25% infrastructure cap.

Additionally, in accordance with Sections 4.1.2 and 4.1.3 of the RESTORE Council's SEP Guidelines, the Maurepas Project aligns with the RESTORE Council's Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives as follows:

- Primary Comprehensive Plan Goal: *Restore and Conserve Habitat*
- Primary Comprehensive Plan Objective: *Restore and Enhance Natural Processes and Shorelines*

5.3.4 Monitoring and Adaptive Management

A monitoring and adaptive management plan will be developed upon completion of the engineering and design phase of this project and will be implemented to achieve the desired hydrology to restore ecosystem form and function. Monitoring for ecological benefits of the Maurepas Project will be conducted through the Council-Selected Restoration Component grant (Bucket 2) for this project. An operations and maintenance plan will also be developed and a funding source for that phase of this project will be identified in the future.

5.3.5 Funds Requested

The total estimated cost for construction of the project is $190 million. The RESTORE Council has allocated $130 million towards the cost of construction under the Council-Selected Restoration Component (Bucket 2) through FPL3a. CPRA is requesting $60 million in Spill Impact Component (Bucket 3) funding, to complete the funding needs for implementation of this project. Accordingly, 100% of the requested funds under the Spill Impact Component will be used for construction activities.

If the Maurepas Project is selected as mitigation for the WSLP Project, CPRA intends to request approval from the USACE to use the requested Oil Spill Impact Component funding to meet its non-federal cost share for the WSLP Project. If the Maurepas Project is not selected as mitigation for the WSLP Project, CPRA intends to request approval from the USACE to use the requested Oil Spill Impact Component funding to meet its non-federal cost share for the USACE's LCA Program.

5.3.6 Partnerships/Collaboration

Through the collaboration process utilized for developing project ideas for FPL 3a, CPRA and the USACE identified a potential partnership opportunity for the project. Congress recently approved appropriations for the WSLP levee project in the same vicinity as the Maurepas project (WSLP overlaps with Maurepas' guide levees), which creates an unprecedented opportunity for the partners to build an integrated wetland restoration and risk reduction project. This collaborative opportunity would also allow the RESTORE Council the ability to facilitate the project, save money, and improve community resilience. Partnering with the USACE was an effort to reduce the Council-Selected Restoration Component (Bucket 2) funds needed by consolidating the final design/integrated construction of the overlapping portions of the 2 projects while facilitating WSLP. The WSLP project and its mitigation are scheduled to be completed by 2024. A supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is projected to be completed in early 2022. This NEPA document and its decision will determine if these two projects will merge to promote all benefits mentioned above.

5.3.7 High Level Milestones

1. Finalize design
2. NEPA/environmental compliance
3. Advertisement of construction
4. Construction mobilization
5. Completion of Construction

5.3.8 Measures of Success[11]

1. Completion of a draft NEPA Compliance document
2. Completion of a final NEPA Compliance document
3. Award of Construction Contract
4. Mobilization for Construction
5. Completion of Construction

5.3.9 Estimated Start and Completion Dates

1. Completion of Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement in 1st quarter 2022
2. Award of Construction Contract anticipated in 3rd quarter 2022
3. Construction Mobilization anticipated in 4th quarter 2022
4. Completion of Construction anticipated in 2025

The estimated construction timelines referenced above reflect an aggressive schedule that is driven by CPRA's sense of urgency for implementing this project and the potential for integrated construction with WSLP Project. Given that RESTORE funds are subject to a 15-year payout, CPRA anticipates that it may need to access alternative funding streams through its Coastal Protection and Restoration Fund which would be reimbursed with RESTORE funds as those become available over time. CPRA is also exploring available accelerated financing options in order to meet the estimated timelines described herein given that the RESTORE Council cannot award a project grant for Spill Impact Component funds until sufficient deposits are available for distribution in the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund.

[11] As described in FPL 3a, ecological measures of success for the Maurepas Project will be monitored for under the Council-selected Restoration Component grant (Bucket 2) for this activity.

6.0 Project Maps

Figure 1 : General Location of the Maurepas Swamp

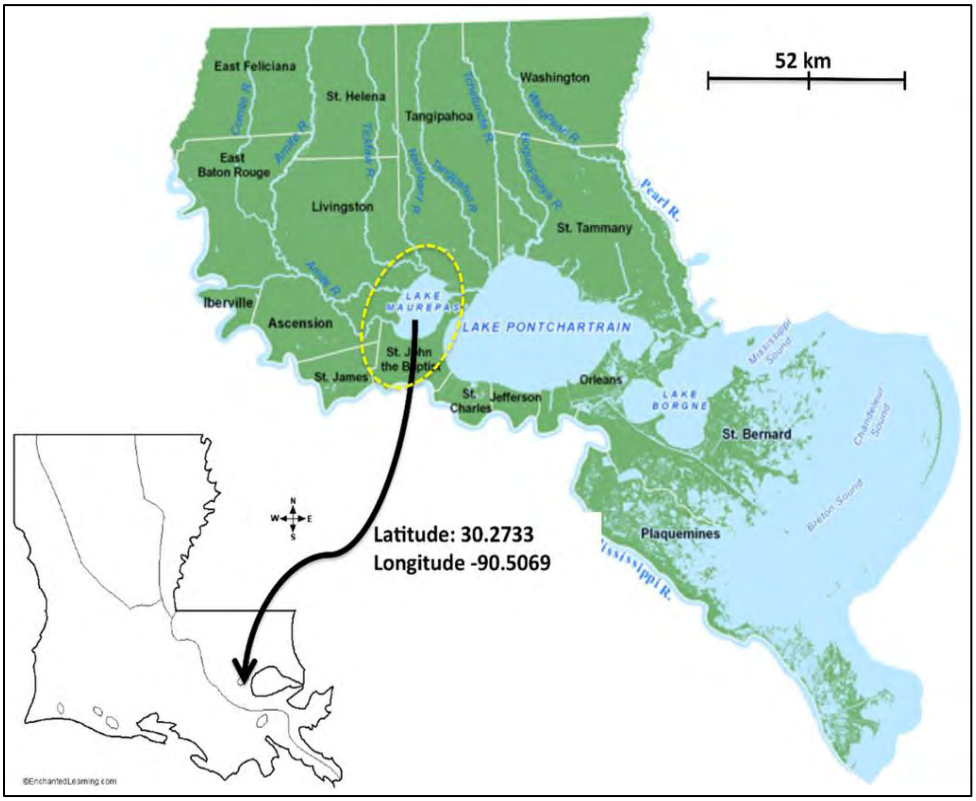
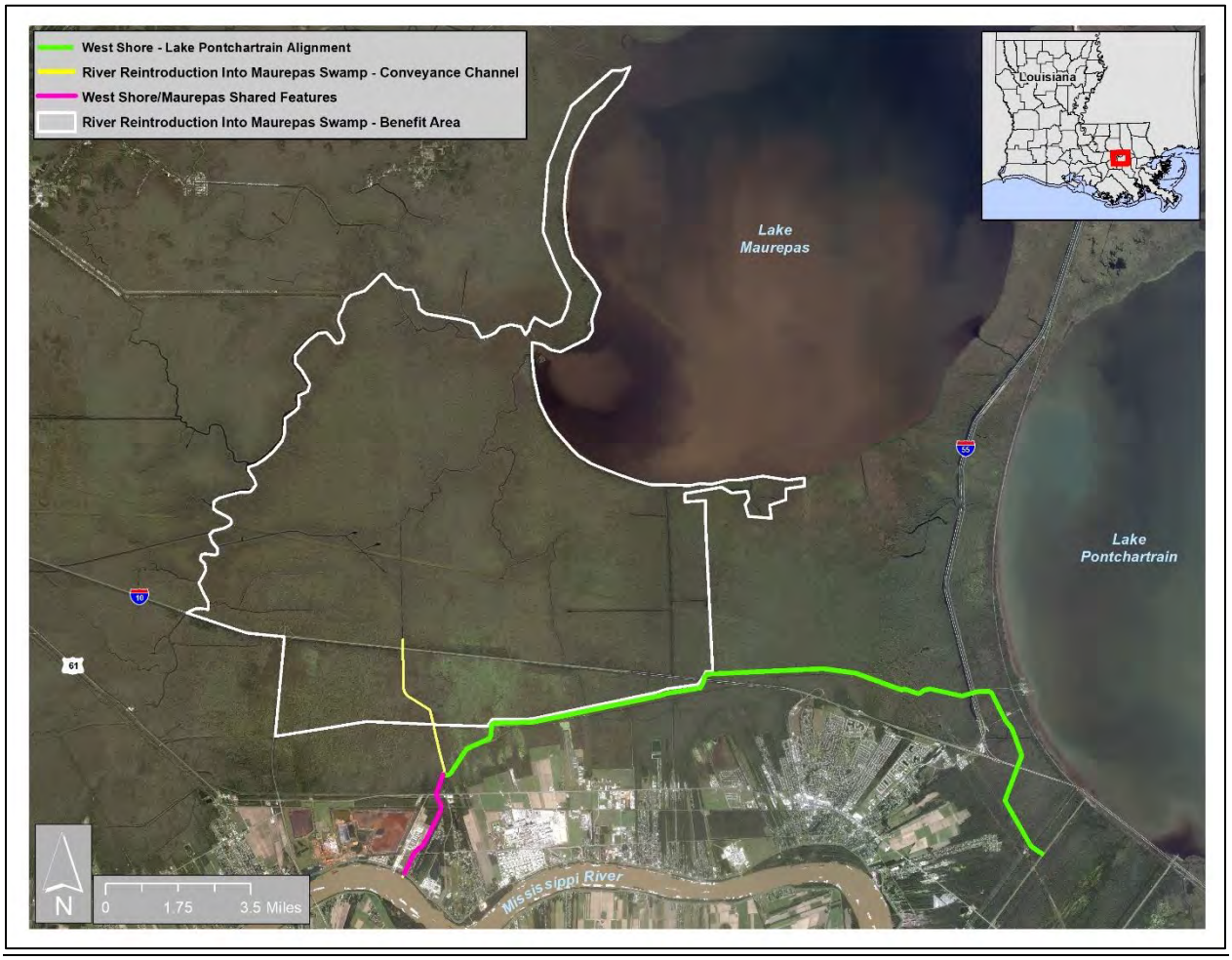


Figure 1 displays the general location of the Maurepas Swamp circled in yellow within the Pontchartrain Basin in southeastern Louisiana. The figure is modified from the Lake Pontchartrain Basin from: https://www.mdpi.com/2073-4441/8/3/101/htm.

Figure 2: River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp Project Overview



This project is located in the Pontchartrain Basin with the intake at River Mile 144.2 near Garyville, Louisiana with conveyance channel alignment (shown in orange). Project benefit area (shown in red) is approximately 45,000 acres roughly between Lake Maurepas, Blind River, Reserve Relief Canal, and developed uplands along the Mississippi River. The benefit area also includes some lakeshore shoreline north of Blind River and east of Reserve Relief Canal. The Maurepas project shares features (approximately 3 miles) with the West Shore Lake Pontchartrain (WSLP) project.

Figure 3: Project Components and Benefit Area

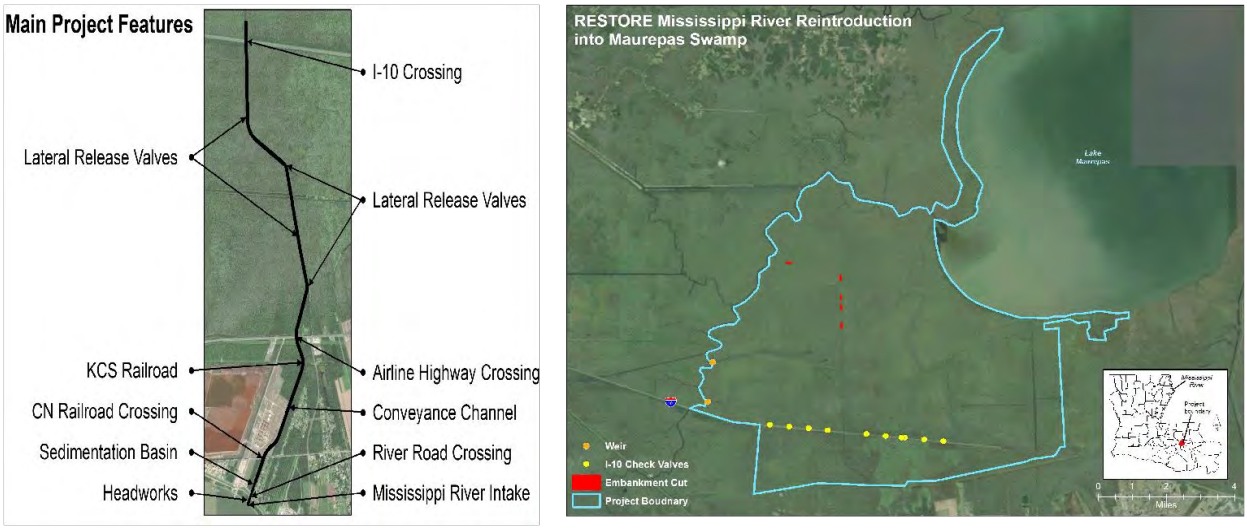


Figure 3 (bottom left) shows area of project components that will be constructed along the conveyance channel alignment, and (bottom right) shows benefit area (outlined in blue) and additional project components that will be constructed, these being: lateral I-10 check valves, submerged weirs in Bayou Secret and Bourgeois Canal, and embankment cuts in the existing ridge of an old railroad embankment.

7.0 Public Comment on the Draft Second Amendment to the State of Louisiana's RESTORE SEP

During the public comment period, CPRA received four public comments. All public comments submitted during the public comment period were reviewed and considered by CPRA before preparing the final Second Amendment to the State of Louisiana's First Amended RESTORE Plan. The public comments received are summarized below.

Comment: Commenter supports the implementation of the Maurepas Project to restore the health of this unique ecosystem and to help sustain 45,000 acres of bald cypress/water tupelo forest. Commenter also supports using the project as mitigation for the West Shore Lake Pontchartrain project and applauds the state and Army Corps of Engineers' collaboration on the Maurepas project and the WSLP project. Commenter further supports the use of other qualifying state funds to be used to effectively backfill any planned coastal protects that qualified for RESTORE Act Spill Impact Component funds in the event that those dollars were redirected.

Comment: Commenter supports the reallocation of funds to the Maurepas project and expressed excitement about the continued progress on this long-awaited project.

Comment: Commenter offered support for the reallocation of funds from the Parish Matching Program to the River Reintroduction to Maurepas Swamp Project and was supportive of the continued willingness of the state and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to collaborate on integrating the West Shore Lake Pontchartrain and Maurepas Swamp projects. Commenter also strongly encouraged the Governor and the Louisiana Legislature to examine the possibility of finding additional funds from identified state surplus, federal infrastructure, or future Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA) funds to augment parish investments into restoration uses as outlined in their own RESTORE allocations or within the upcoming 2023 Master Plan.

Comment: Commenter supports the reallocation of funds to the Maurepas project and expressed hope that the reallocation would move forward in a timely manner.

Figure 1