

State of Texas

Texas Salt Bayou Freshwater Inflows Restoration: Feasibility Study, Design, Engineering & Permitting

The 60,000 acre Salt Bayou ecosystem in Jefferson County, Texas is the largest contiguous estuarine marsh complex in Texas. The Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) bisects the Salt Bayou marsh, in effect creating a freshwater non-tidal marsh north of the GIWW and a brackish to saline tidal marsh to the south. Other factors have also contributed to the increased salinity in the southern marshes. Texas natural resource agencies and local stakeholders have developed the comprehensive Salt Bayou Watershed Restoration Plan. One of the goals of the Salt Bayou Plan is to restore freshwater inflows to the southern portion of the Salt Bayou Watershed. This project will provide the funding needed to design the use of passive inverted siphons to reconnect freshwater inflow from the northern to the southern portions of the marsh. This project would provide funding to complete a needed feasibility study. If the feasibility study finds that siphons can be constructed to provide benefits needed in this area, additional funds from this grant would be used for engineering, design and permitting. The primary goal addressed by this project is to create a shovel-ready freshwater siphon project to restore freshwater inflows and thus restore and conserve habitats in the Salt Bayou System. Upon ultimate construction and the successful lowering of salinities in the lower portion of Salt Bayou marsh, the project will make a significant contribution to restoring the natural resources, ecosystems, wildlife habitats, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region. Requested funding amount: \$1,500,000.