

US Department of Agriculture

Coastal Ecosystem Enhancement and Restoration in the Barataria-Terrebonne Basin

The Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP) is a joint effort between the State of Louisiana and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to conserve the resources of the Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary. The Barataria-Terrebonne watershed includes 4.2 million acres of land between the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers extending from the Gulf of Mexico north to the old river control structure. This coastal ecosystem enhancement project aims to create an ecosystem scale model for Gulf Coast restoration priorities. The ultimate objective of restoring, protecting, and improving water resources and associated habitat value will be achieved by reducing the nutrient loading into impaired watersheds by (1) redirecting agricultural runoff (from soybean and sugarcane fields) through impounded and natural wetlands; (2) rerouting stormwater through wetlands to reduce pollution in local receiving water bodies (water bodies with established TMDLs); and (3) through coastal restoration and the implementation of native plantings and invasive species removal in marginal lands and impoundments to improve migratory bird habitat. In doing so, this project will restore key habitat functions important for coastal water birds, shorebirds, and commercial and recreational fisheries by reconnecting natural flow regimes from agricultural land and coastal communities to degrading wetlands. Project implementation is projected to substantially contribute to restoring and protecting the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region. Requested funding amount: \$16,009,788.