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Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation and Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana Release a New Report for Flood Protection and Coastal Restoration - Effort to Continue in 2008

(9/13/2007 Baton Rouge) The Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation and the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana have released a draft report titled "Comprehensive Recommendations Supporting the Use of the Multiple Lines of Defense Strategy to Sustain Coastal Louisiana." The draft report's recommendations focus on providing reliable storm protection to vulnerable communities by rebuilding and using natural features to enhance storm protection as well as designing structural features such as levees and floodgates to work in conjunction with non-structural protection measures to provide comprehensive protection to communities in coastal Louisiana.

"The coast of Louisiana provides us with many natural buffers and attributes that protect our coastal communities from storms and hurricanes. Levees and manmade structures are an important line of protection, but we must also incorporate natural buffers and nonstructural protection features to build truly safe and sustainable communities. Levees alone are not enough," said Mark Ford, Executive Director of the Coalition.

The report was written by an Assessment Team of scientists and engineers that was tasked with evaluating all existing, external planning processes and documents. The team considered public comments submitted during the state's master planning process in preparation of their draft report

- more -

New Report for Flood Protection and Coastal Restoration
- ADD 1 -

and then utilized the best scientific and engineering data available and the many lessons learned from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita to compile the report. "We have assembled an outstanding team who have exceptional knowledge of our coast," said John Lopez, Chair of the Assessment Team & Director of Coastal Sustainability of the Foundation. The team consulted with members of the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Academies of Science, various stakeholders and submitted the report to 40 independent peer reviewers before issuing their draft recommendations to improve flood protection and coastal restoration using the Multiple Lines of Defense Strategy.

The "Multiple Lines of Defense Strategy" was first developed by the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation in 2005 and later adopted by the Coalition as an overarching approach to coastal planning. The strategy calls for maximizing coastal wetlands, barrier islands and natural ridges outside of levees to impede the progress of storm surge and enhance the effectiveness of levees.

The strategy proposes protecting densely populated communities with levees and floodgates, but additionally proposes leaving certain areas of the coast open to accept and attenuate storm surge rather than constructing long linear levees across the coast which may increase surge height. Areas outside

- more -

New Report for Flood Protection and Coastal Restoration
- ADD 2 -

the levees receive protection from wetlands, ridges and other natural features combined with non-structural protection such as elevating homes and businesses. The report also recognizes that proposed levee alignments must reduce the potential funneling affect that proved disastrous for New Orleans. These are costly lessons that must be considered in any sound planning effort.

"We learned some very difficult but valuable lessons after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. We learned that it is unwise to rely solely on levees to protect our coastal communities. We also learned that levees that are directly exposed to the full force of surge and open water are more likely to fail than levees that retain a buffer of healthy wetlands and other natural buffers in front of them," said Carlton Dufrechou, Executive Director of the Foundation.

The Multiple Lines of Defense strategy has been adopted by the State of Louisiana in its development of the "Comprehensive Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast" and the strategy has also been adopted by the USACE in its ongoing development of the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Plan (LACPR).

The Multiple Lines of Defense report was created to provide additional input into the ongoing evaluations by the state and the USACE, adding robustness and external input. The overriding goal of all these efforts is to promote convergence on a set of optimal recommendations for coastal Louisiana, regardless of point of origin, that are based on sound science and

New Report for Flood Protection and Coastal Restoration
- ADD 3 –

engineering. "The best protection comes from the best science. As we learn more about how our coast functions and how storms impact the landscape, we have to integrate the best science and engineering into our plans. We believe this report considers the best science and engineering available at this time and we will continue to use new information as it becomes available to provide the absolute best protection to our communities," said Natalie Snider, Science Director of the Coalition. As new information becomes available through our efforts and others, the Coalition and the Foundation will continue to produce meaningful recommendations through 2008.

The 2007 report contains specific recommendations on how to blend coastal restoration and flood protection across the entire coast of Louisiana. The draft report emphasizes maximizing coastal wetlands outside of levees to allow surge to spread and reduce storm damage. "The recommendations set forth in this report are an attempt to enhance the planning efforts already underway and assist both the state and the Corps of Engineers in providing real and reliable protection to vulnerable communities while at the same time maximizing the functions and values of a healthy and sustainable coastal ecosystem," said Lopez.

The Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation and the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana are public membership and advocacy organizations that have served as the voice of Louisiana citizens in all matters related to coastal

New Report for Flood Protection and Coastal Restoration
- ADD 4 -

restoration and protection over the last 20 years.

Collectively the two organizations represent citizens from all walks of life and all corners of the state, and consistent with the missions and visions of these organizations, public engagement is the cornerstone of every action we undertake. We welcome members of the public and all interested stakeholders to visit our website (www.mlods.org) and contribute their knowledge about the coast. The website will be available for public comment and serve as a focal point for continuous dialogue for the 2007 report and for future reports

As Louisiana continues the difficult task of rebuilding our communities and coastal landscape, we are reminded that our best hopes for the future depend on the immediate integration of coastal protection and restoration to ensure the sustainability of our coastal communities, economy and ecosystems. Every citizen of Louisiana must understand that we are a long way from solving the problem of coastal land loss and that until we solve that problem life in coastal Louisiana gets riskier every day. Charting the future of coastal Louisiana is a daunting and challenging endeavor, one that must welcome diversity of thought, embrace the best science and technology, and incorporate public engagement in an effort to pursue safer communities, healthier environments, and a sustainable coastal Louisiana. We look forward to working with all who share these ideals.

The draft report and information regarding the Multiple Lines of Defense Strategy is available online for public comment at www.mlods.org