



Louisiana Legislature Approves 2017 Coastal Master Plan

06.02.2017 | In [Press Releases](#)

**CONSERVATION GROUPS PRAISE IT AS
“A PLAN WE CAN ALL BE PROUD OF” AND “ONE WE NEED IMPLEMENTED QUICKLY”**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Baton Rouge, LA—June 2, 2017) Today, Louisiana’s State Legislature passed SCR1, a resolution approving the 2017 Coastal Master Plan, the state’s blueprint for coastal restoration and protection activities. The resolution was authored by Sen. Morrish (R-Jennings), Sen. Alario (R-Westwego) and Rep. Leger (D-New Orleans). The master plan prioritizes \$50 billion in coastal restoration and risk reduction activities over the next 50 years to address the state’s increasingly severe land loss and sea level rise.

Local and national conservation groups praised both the legislature for its oversight and approval of the plan as well as the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) for developing a comprehensive, science-based vision for how our state can realistically address future environmental challenges.

In response to the plan’s approval, [Restore the Mississippi River Delta](#) – a coalition of local and national organizations that have worked on coastal restoration in Louisiana for decades, including the [Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana](#), [Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation](#), [Environmental Defense Fund](#), the [National Wildlife Federation](#) and [National Audubon Society](#) – released the following statement:

“Today’s approval of the 2017 Coastal Master Plan validates the importance and urgency of addressing our coastal land loss crisis, which threatens the very existence of Louisiana as we know it. We are particularly grateful to Senator Dan W. “Blade” Morrish for his leadership in carrying the plan through the legislature. Our organizations are also grateful to CPRA for developing and advancing the master plan, including incorporating public feedback through tremendous community outreach and engagement efforts.

“The 2017 Coastal Master Plan process is truly an innovative, unparalleled effort that all Louisianians can be proud of – and our state desperately needs to implement the plan as quickly as possible. The master plan is grounded in science, balances coastal restoration with protection, and is publicly-informed. Louisiana has again provided a model for how coastal communities around the world can adapt to land loss, rising seas, increased storms and other climate change challenges.

“With sediment diversions as a cornerstone of the master plan, Louisiana stands ready to harness the power of the strongest tool available to build and sustain land – the Mississippi River. The state should continue this momentum by constructing sediment diversions as quickly as possible and take advantage of this amazing resource that is being wasted.

“As we start another hurricane season, we are all too aware of the existential threat facing our region and how important coastal wetlands are as a first line of defense against storm surge. While we have made notable progress since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, we have a long road ahead. Partial funding is in place, a well-researched plan is now adopted, and these projects cannot be constructed soon enough.

“We stand ready to engage with CPRA, state and federal agencies, and community members in the coming years to ensure that coastal funding is protected and that these critical restoration and protection projects proceed as quickly as possible. The very future of our state depends on no less.”

The suite of projects outlined in the 2017 Coastal Master Plan has received [widespread support](#) from a diverse array of coastal advocates, stakeholders, parish officials and communities. Additionally, a [recent poll](#) revealed that an overwhelming majority of Louisiana voters (88 percent) wanted their legislators to approve the master plan, and 97 percent of respondents recognized the value of our Louisiana's coastal areas and wetlands.

Restore the Mississippi River Delta *is working to protect people, wildlife and jobs by reconnecting the river with its wetlands. As our region faces an ongoing and severe land loss crisis, we offer science-based solutions through a comprehensive approach to restoration. Composed of conservation, policy, science and outreach experts from Environmental Defense Fund, National Audubon Society, the National Wildlife Federation, Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana and Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, we are located in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Washington, D.C.; and around the United States. Learn more at mississippiriverdelta.org and connect with us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).*

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