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A RESTORE COUNCIL AWARDS \$14.2 MILLION GRANT FOR GULF-WIDE RESTORATION TO LOUISIANA FOR RIVER REINTRODUCTION PROJECT

The Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) has been awarded a \$14.2 million grant from the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (RESTORE Council) to complete engineering and design activities for the Mississippi River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp project under the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012.

The River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp project is a Coastal Master Plan priority and has long been discussed at both the state and federal levels as a key restoration project for Louisiana. We are excited to advance this important project toward construction readiness”, said Johnny Bradberry, Chairman of the CPRA Board. “This grant represents a significant milestone for our comprehensive, basin-wide strategy for restoration of the Maurepas Swamp ecosystem. Implementation of this project is urgently needed to prevent further land loss, conversion to open water, and rising salinity levels throughout the entire Pontchartrain Basin”, said Michael Ellis, Executive Director of the CPRA.

Once fully constructed, in addition to restoring and enhancing a total of 18,300 hectares (approximately 45,220 acres) of forested wetland, this project would provide a host of other benefits to wildlife that are dependent on cypress-tupelo swamps. Increased primary productivity and water quality will increase food resources and subsequently increase secondary productivity of freshwater fish. Wading birds, migratory birds, bald eagles, alligators and other wildlife species will also benefit. The project could maintain stands of mature bald cypress and other woody vegetation, which would ensure that suitable nesting areas are available for numerous bird species. This project will also enhance community resilience as the Maurepas Swamp provides a significant buffer from storm surge coming across Lakes Pontchartrain and Maurepas helping to protect several nearby communities in St. John the Baptist, Ascension, Livingston, and St. James Parishes, as well as important industries.