

Coastal plan gains approval

By John Guidroz

The state Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Board on Wednesday approved the draft coastal plan for the 2019 fiscal year.

The plan — which includes several projects designed to benefit the Cameron Parish coastline — heads to the state Legislature for final approval during the regular session, which begins March 12.

It projects \$566 million in expenditures for the fiscal year that starts July 1, along with \$653 million in revenue.

During a public meeting in Lake Charles last month, CPRA officials said the anticipated spending was \$562 million.

The report says \$289 million will fund construction of 21 projects; \$131.5 million will go to 42 projects in the engineering and design phases; and \$10.9 million will fund planning for two more projects.

The major projects that are intended to protect Cameron Parish include \$24.7 million for marsh creation in the Cameron-Creole Watershed in Grand Bayou. The \$35.4 million shoreline stabilization project in Rockefeller Refuge is expected to benefit nearly 200 acres of shoreline.

Marsh creation at South Grand Chenier should go out for bid within the next six months, according to the report. The estimated \$23.9 million project will benefit 414 acres of marsh.

CPRA officials gathered public comments on the plan through Feb. 12. The total projected spending in 2020 is \$914 million, and \$826 million for 2021.

The CPRA is also accepting comments through April 9 on projects chosen to be in the parish matching amendment of the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability Tourist Opportunities and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act, or RESTORE. One of the projects is \$6.67 million for construction of the Rockefeller shoreline stabilization project.

Comments can be emailed to coastal@la.gov or mailed to CPRA, Public Comments, 150 Terrace Ave., Baton Rouge, LA 70802.