

## Coastal board recommends \$20 million for parish coastal projects

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The state Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority board on Wednesday (April 18) recommended spending \$20 million in BP oil spill fine money to match \$6.1 million in parish money for six coastal restoration and hurricane protection projects.

The recommendation must now be approved by the federal-state Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council, which makes final decisions on how this particular portion of BP spill fine money can be used.

Included in the projects are a \$5.3 million floodgate on the Paradis Canal in St. Charles Parish that will be part of the parish's West Bank hurricane levee system, a \$3.3 million project to build wetlands along Lake Lery in St. Bernard Parish, and \$3.7 million to extend a rock breakwater along the Lake Pontchartrain shoreline of the Manchac Land bridge in Tangipahoa Parish.

The \$20 million is the first part of \$100 million in Restore Act money that the state will use to support local projects.

Parishes were required to use part of their own money they will receive from the federal Restore Act Trust Fund, which will receive 80 percent of the Clean Water Act fines levied against BP and Transocean, the company that owned the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig that exploded and sank in 2010, killing 11 and causing an 87-day release of oil from BP's Macondo well.

The state selected local projects based on selection criteria that considered their consistency with the state's coastal Master Plan, the ability to restore or protect habitats or to reduce economic losses from storm surge, the project's benefits, and how they fit in with other protection and restoration efforts.

The Restore Council has 60 days to decide whether it will approve the projects. The projects approved by the state are:

Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge Breakwater, Cameron Parish, \$6.7 million. This project includes 6,000 feet of new reef breakwater along the southern boundary of the refuge on the Gulf of Mexico. The parish would spend \$2 million and the state would match that with \$6.7 million from BP Restore Act funds. The state also would spend \$177,044

in Restore money for its administrative costs. If approved by the Restore Act task force, design would begin in December with construction to be completed by April 2020.

Paradis Canal Gate, St. Charles Parish, \$5.4 million. This project would build a gate across the Paradis Canal as part of the St. Charles Parish Hurricane Levee, which will eventually become part of the larger, Upper Barataria Risk Reduction System. The gate's funding would include \$390,284 in parish Restore Act money, another \$2.2 million in other parish funds, \$2.5 million in state Restore Act matching funds and \$286,426 in state administrative costs, paid from another Restore Act funding stream.

Freshwater Bayou Canal Shoreline Protection Project, Vermilion Parish, \$5.3 million. This project would add 10,600 feet of foreshore rock dike along the eastern bank of the Freshwater Bayou Canal to prevent further erosion of the shoreline and adjacent marsh in Vermilion Parish. The funding would include \$494,725 in parish Restore Act money, matched by \$4.6 million in state Restore Act matching funds. The state also would spend \$494,725 in other Restore Act funds for administration costs.

The Manchac Land bridge Shoreline Protection Project, Tangipahoa Parish, \$3.7 million. This project includes 5,348 feet of rock breakwater along the Lake Pontchartrain shoreline at the land bridge on the western side of the lake, and is aimed at decreasing vulnerability of wetlands to the north of Pass Manchac. The project's cost includes \$491,871 in Tangipahoa Parish Restore Act money, matched by \$3 million in state Restore Act matching funds. The state also would spend \$179,266 for administrative costs, paid for with other Restore Act funds.

Lake Lery Marsh Creation, St. Bernard Parish, \$3.3 million. This project would build 39 acres of new marsh along Lake Lery in St. Bernard Parish near previous marsh creation projects that were built with Gulf offshore oil money from the federal Coastal Impact Assistance Program. The parish would pay \$300,000 from its share of Restore Act money and \$2.8 million would come from the state's Restore Act matching program. The state also would spend \$216,844 in administrative costs, paid for with a different Restore Act revenue stream. If approved by the Restore Act task force, advertising for bids would occur in November, and construction would be completed in December 2019.

Grand Bayou Freshwater Reintroduction Project, Lafourche Parish, \$874,533. This money would be used for engineering and design for a project that would increase the flow of freshwater down Grand Bayou Canal from the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway in Lafourche Parish to help reduce salinity in marshes east of Grand Bayou. It also would create 112 acres of new freshwater marsh and nourish 14 acres of marsh to the west of Grand Bayou. The engineering and design costs would cost

\$874,533, including \$275,147 from the parish, \$412,722 from the CPRA Restore Act matching funds program, and \$186,664 in Restore Act money for CPRA administrative costs. The project would be ready to go to bid in February 2020. No construction cost estimate has been released.