

COMPREHENSIVE COASTAL PLANNING

South Louisiana is the crossroad of great environmental productivity and a significant contributor to our national economy. North America's greatest river has constructed and shaped Louisiana forming the most biologically productive coast outside of Alaska. It is a coast not only relegated to a thin strip of barrier islands as in most states, but a coast extending in excess of 70 miles inland as an estuarine system which functions deep into and between the human inhabited ridges. In the 1800's this un-bridled river limited the economic viability of South Louisiana because of frequent flooding.

U.S. Congressional action in 1849 and 1928 was aimed at increasing the taxable activities by providing land which would be protected from flooding. The U.S. government was successful in developing the New Orleans to Baton Rouge economic corridor, which continues to serve our national interest. This contribution and economic significance expanded throughout coastal Louisiana with navigation, fishing, farming, oil industry and the petro-chemical related industries. Louisiana now has infrastructure and communities which support these important economies.

Although we have always needed the proper coordination of economic, social and environmental objectives from a community prospective, many levels of government separate and support one objective over another counter-productively. Whether developer or environmentalist, their ignorance to the needs of the community has lead to conflicting goals. It is essential to minimize those conflicts.

This master plan is not designed to pit flood protection against environmental restoration. Its purpose is to balance the community needs for flood protection and minimizing the disruption of wetland processes where the opportunity exists. The communities of south Louisiana have a unique quality, which is a product of our people and resources. Our South Louisiana communities would not be different from other communities if our natural productivity, and the uniqueness of the people who exploit it, did not exist. But those communities will no longer exist without flood protection.

Although necessary in the past, the 2005 hurricanes forced this necessary planning for the communities of coastal Louisiana. And it is the realization of the economic importance of Louisiana which now gives the state the opportunity to aggressively attack coastal landloss.

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