



# Caillou “Sister” Lake Land Bridge Project

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**

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## Background

Prior studies and reports have documented degradation in the Caillou Lake (also known as “Sister Lake”) project area and have demonstrated the need for ecosystem restoration that simulates historical hydrological conditions.

The shoreline in the Caillou “Sister” Lake Land Bridge project area is eroding as much as 18 feet per year at the marsh edge along the Gulf of Mexico.

Without intervention, the marsh will continue to erode and degrade, allowing increased influence of Gulf of Mexico waters that would adversely affect the state-designated oyster seed ground in Caillou “Sister” Lake.

The goal of this project is to reduce the current trend of marsh degradation between the Gulf of Mexico and Caillou “Sister” Lake.

The project area is located in Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana, approximately 38 miles southeast of Morgan City, Louisiana. A low, marshy area functions as a land bridge that separates Caillou Lake from the Gulf of Mexico. The project area covers this land bridge and the surrounding marshes.

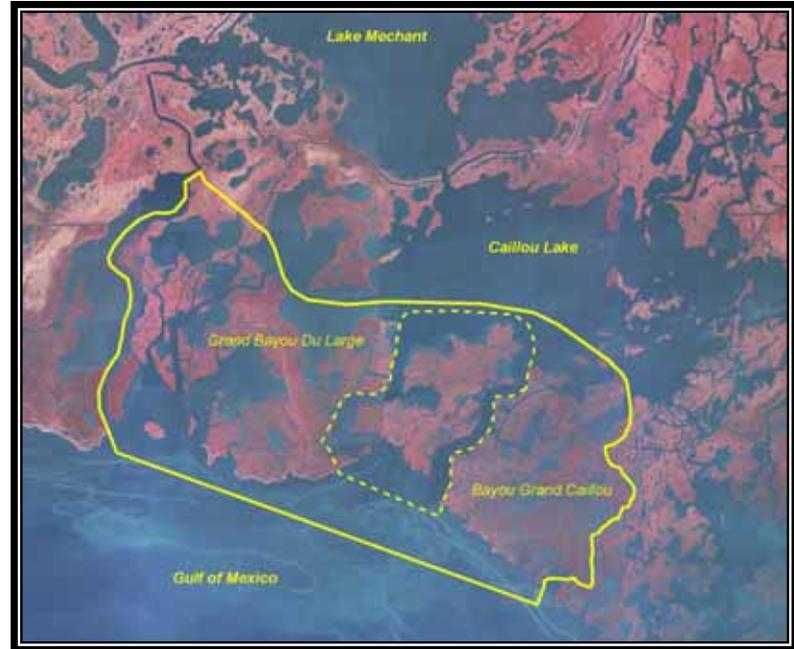
The study area covers approximately 60 square miles in south central Terrebonne Parish. The land bridge area is approximately 2,800 acres.

## Louisiana Coastal Area Ecosystem Study

A jointly funded and managed study was initiated in 1999 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the State of Louisiana to address severe coastal land-loss problems.

The goal of the study was to identify a plan to achieve a sustainable coastal ecosystem that can support and protect the environment, economy, and culture of southern Louisiana and in turn contribute to the economy and well-being of the nation.

The study area includes 20 parishes in Louisiana’s coastal area from Mississippi to Texas and is comprised of two wetland-dominated ecosystems, the Deltaic Plain and the closely linked Chenier Plain, both of which are influenced by the Mississippi River.



## Louisiana Coastal Area Ecosystem Restoration Plan (LCA Plan)

The LCA Plan includes near-term critical restoration projects and a programmatic authorization request for a Science and Technology Program, as well as associated demonstration projects, beneficial use of dredged material, and studies to modify existing water projects. The Caillou Lake Land Bridge project is one of the near-term critical restoration projects identified and recommended for study.

## Issues and Opportunities

The Study will evaluate the following issues:

- Subsidence
- Sea Level Rise
- Wetland Degradation and Loss
- Alteration of Natural Hydrology
- Saltwater Intrusion
- Lack of Freshwater, Nutrients & Sediment

## Planning Process

The Corps uses a six-step planning process to provide a rational basis for selecting and recommending projects for implementation. This multiple-step process results in efficient, effective, complete, and acceptable plans that will benefit the entire study area.

### Step 1 – Identifying problems and opportunities

Define study area issues and identify opportunities to address problems and needs.

### Step 2 – Inventorying and forecasting conditions

Develop an inventory of conditions as they exist now and a forecast of future conditions without the implementation of any additional ecosystem restoration projects. The team will look at a 50-year period for this forecast. This step will verify existing data, including wetlands loss rates, and will develop additional data as necessary.

### Step 3 – Formulating alternative plans

Using input from the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) public scoping process, the team will formulate a range of alternatives to address or contribute to solving study area issues. Following public input, alternatives will be screened through a set of evaluation criteria, and the best performing alternatives will be evaluated in detail.

### Step 4 – Evaluating alternative plans

To identify the alternatives that would likely result in the greatest ecosystem restoration benefits, the study team will evaluate each alternative by forecasting future conditions if that alternative were implemented. Beneficial and adverse effects of each alternative will be characterized by magnitude, location, timing, cost, and duration. The team will consider the degree to which each alternative complies with environmental restoration and protection needs and consistency with other coastal restoration initiatives.

### Step 5 – Comparing alternative plans

Alternatives, including the “no action” alternative as defined by NEPA, are compared to one another according to the net environmental effects, implementation costs, and other factors. Alternatives will be ranked based on these comparisons.

### Step 6 – Selecting a plan

An Ecosystem Restoration Plan will be recommended based on the results of the previous steps. The Plan must meet planning objectives and reasonably maximize environmental benefits relative to costs. The recommended plan must also be shown to be cost effective, environmentally acceptable, and technically feasible.

## Opportunities for Public Input

The Corps and State will provide opportunities for public involvement as the Caillou Lake Land Bridge plan is developed. Stakeholders and the general public will be engaged throughout the study. Stakeholders include Louisiana government agencies, local governments, business interests, landowners, residents, and environmental organizations who can participate in the following ways:

- Multi-agency project delivery team
- General public meetings
- Public comment periods
- Project Web site
- Stakeholder visits, e-mails, and phone calls
- Stakeholder forums
- Inter-agency and public NEPA coordination

### Major NEPA Milestones

Notice of Intent to produce a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS)	September 2009
Public Scoping Meetings	September 2009
Document Existing Conditions	
Conduct Endangered Species Coordination	
Conduct Essential Fish Habitat Coordination	
Determine Alternative Plans	
Prepare Air Quality Determination, 404(b) (1) Evaluation,	
Prepare Water Quality Certification	
Prepare Coastal Zone Consistency Determination	
Complete Preliminary Draft SEIS	Spring 2010
Reviews of Preliminary Draft SEIS (Office of Council, Division, HQ, Agency Technical Review)	
Complete Draft SEIS	
Begin 45 Day Public Review of Draft SEIS	Spring 2011
Review and Respond to Public and Agency Comments	
Receive Final U.S. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Report	
Complete Final SEIS	
Begin Washington Level Review	Summer 2011
State and Agency Review	
Record of Decision Signing	Fall 2011

## For More Information

Additional information on Caillou Lake and the LCA Program is available on the Web at [www.nolaenvironmental.gov](http://www.nolaenvironmental.gov).

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