

Small Diversion at Convent/Blind River

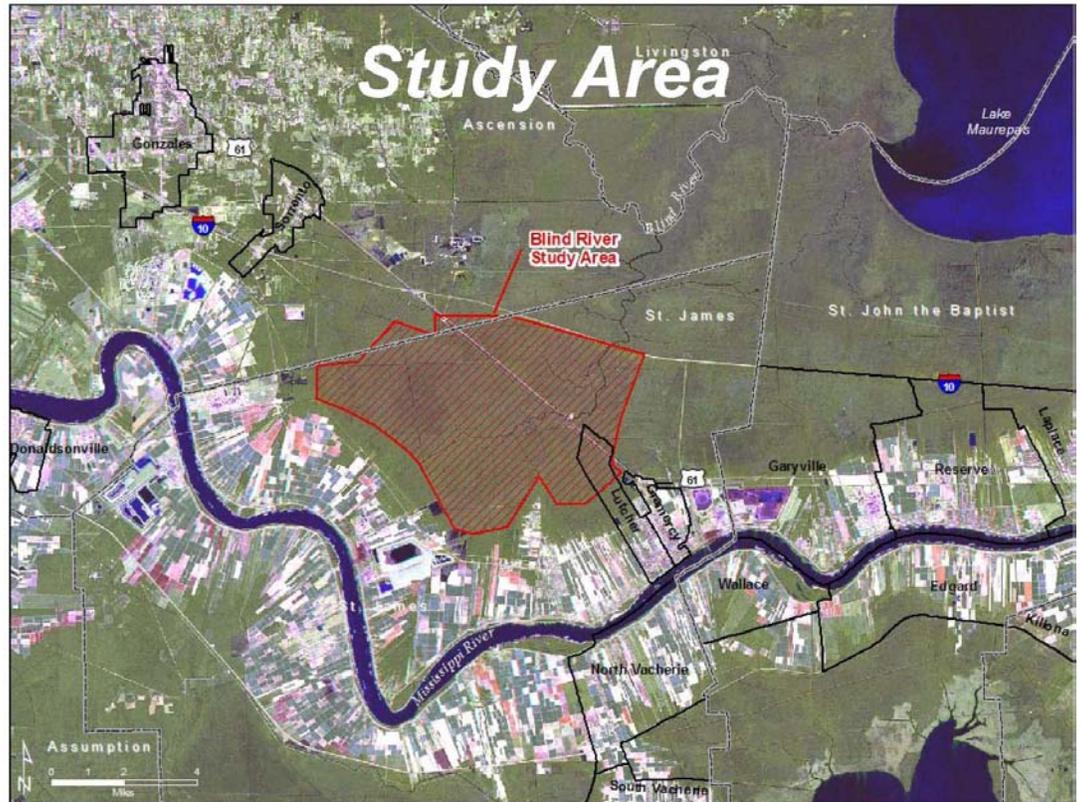
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The Louisiana Coastal Area (LCA) program focuses on critical, near-term ecosystem restoration projects and studies, as approved in the Water Resources Development Act of 2007. The program goal is to slow the current trend of coast-wide wetland loss and resource degradation.

Several restoration techniques are employed in this program, including river diversions, marsh creation and barrier island restoration. Overall, the program is focused on a systematic approach to coastal restoration using larger projects to restore natural features and ecosystem processes.



The Small Diversion at Convent/Blind River project is a freshwater diversion project identified in the LCA program. It was one of six projects (LCA 6) authorized under the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 - Section 7006(e)(3) and the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority of Louisiana (CPRA) is the cost-share partner in the development and implementation of this project.

Project Location

The project is located within the Maurepas Swamp, which is located in Ascension and St. James Parishes, Louisiana.

Project Goals

The goal of the Small Diversion at Convent/Blind River project is to reverse the trend of degradation in the southeast portion of the Maurepas Swamp.

Objectives

The objective of the Small Diversion at Convent/Blind River project is to reduce the level of salinity within the project area by providing additional flow into the Blind River, Lake Maurepas and Lake Pontchartrain by employing controlled introductions of Mississippi River water into the project area. The specific objectives developed for the project are:

- Reduce habitat conversion and future land loss
- Improve existing hydrology

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- Introduce freshwater, nutrients and sediment to swamps
- Promote water circulation to improve water quality
- Improve bald cypress/tupelo productivity (Decrease tree mortality, new seedling establishment)
- Improve the habitat conditions for fish and wildlife

Project Features

The recommended plan for the Small Diversion at Convent/Blind River consists of a 3,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) capacity gated box culvert diversion on the Mississippi River with a delivery channel to be constructed in the vicinity of Romeville, Louisiana. The recommended plan has six major components: a diversion structure, a transmission canal, control structures, approximately 30 berm gaps, cross culverts at four locations along U.S. Highway 61, and instrumentation to monitor and control the diversion flow rate and the water surface elevations in the diversion, transmission, and distribution system in the Maurepas Swamp.

The recommended plan will restore freshwater, nutrients, and sediment input from the Mississippi River. It will promote water distribution in the swamp, facilitate swamp building, and establish hydrologic period fluctuation in the swamp, improving fish and wildlife habitat. The recommended plan will improve habitat function for over 21,369 acres of bald cypress-tupelo swamp and improve habitat for many fish and wildlife species including migratory birds, bald eagles, alligators, gulf sturgeon, and the manatee. The recommended plan meets the LCA program and project objectives and is within the scope of the authorization.

Project Status

The Chief of Engineer's Report for the LCA 6 projects was signed on December 30, 2010, and recommended implementation of the Small Diversion at Convent/Blind River project. The Preconstruction Engineering and Design (PED) Project Management Plan was approved by CPRA and the Corps on August 24, 2011. The PED Design Agreement is scheduled to be signed this month.

Anyone seeking additional information on the Small Diversion at Convent/Blind River project can visit the Louisiana Coastal Area program website at www.lca.gov.

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