



## 3RD PRIORITY PROJECT LIST REPORT

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LOUISIANA COASTAL WETLANDS CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION  
TASK FORCE

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Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration  
Act

3rd Priority Project List Report

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Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act

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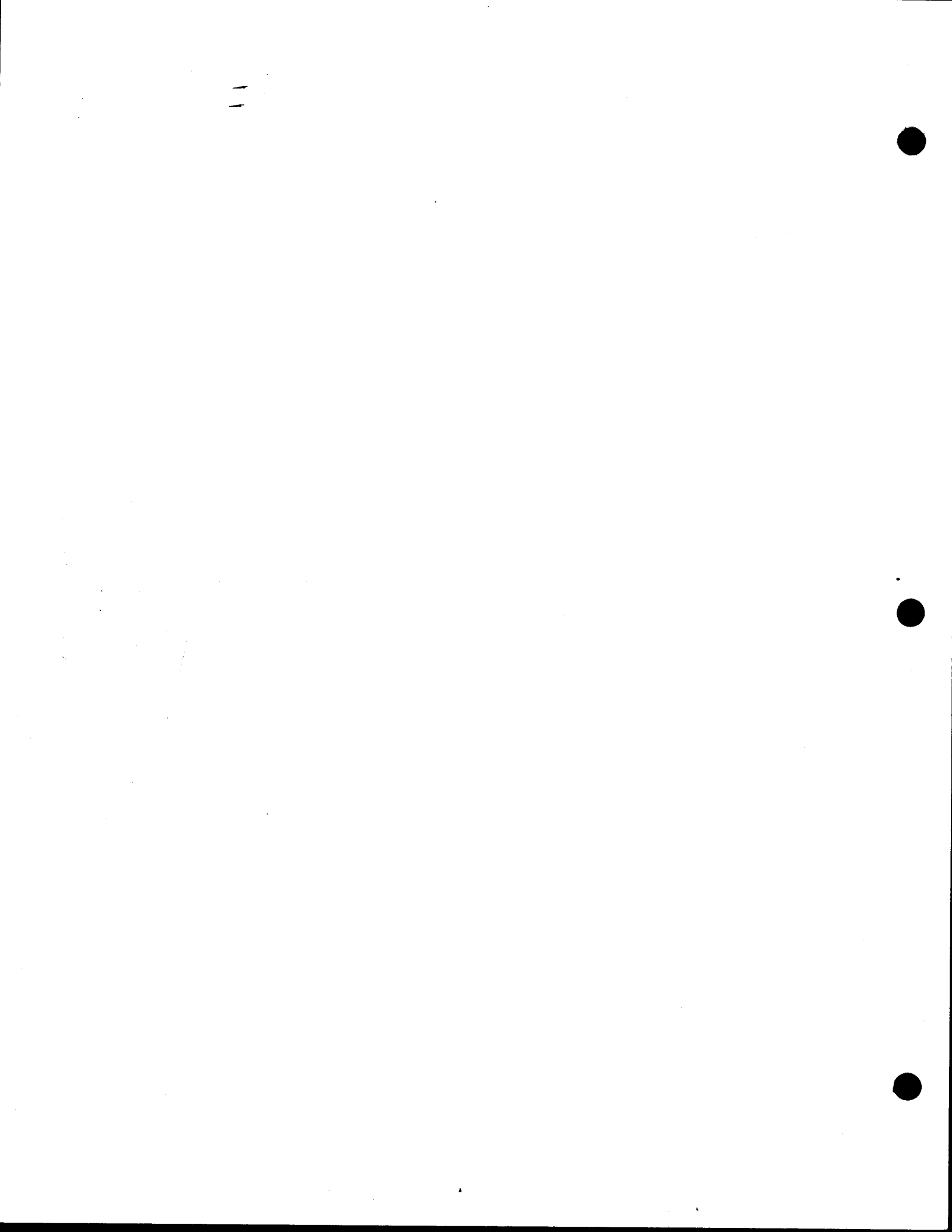
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### INTRODUCTION

The State of Louisiana contains 40 percent of the Nation's coastal wetlands, but is experiencing 80 percent of the Nation's coastal wetland loss. The widespread and complex nature of the coastal wetland loss problem, coupled with the diversity of agencies involved and numerous alternatives proposed, has led many in Federal, state, and local government, as well as the general public, to the conclusion that a comprehensive approach is needed. The Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (PL 101-646) was signed into law by President Bush on November 29, 1990, to address the need for a comprehensive approach to this significant environmental problem.

This report documents the implementation of Section 303(a) of the cited legislation.

### STUDY AUTHORITY

Section 303(a) of the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA), displayed in Appendix A, directs the Secretary of the Army to convene the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Task Force to:

... initiate a process to identify and prepare a list of coastal wetlands restoration projects in Louisiana to provide for the long-term conservation of such wetlands and dependent fish and wildlife populations in order of priority, based upon the cost-effectiveness of such projects in creating, restoring, protecting, or enhancing coastal wetlands, taking into account the quality of such coastal wetlands, with due allowance for small-scale projects necessary to demonstrate the use of new techniques or materials for coastal wetlands restoration.

### STUDY PURPOSE

The purpose of this study effort was to prepare the 3rd Priority Project List (PPL) and transmit the list to Congress by November 1993, as specified in Section 303(a)(3) of the CWPPRA. Section 303(b) of the act calls for preparation of a comprehensive Restoration Plan for coastal Louisiana; that effort is currently in progress, and will be reported on in November 1993, as required by the act.

### PROJECT AREA

Plate 1 is a map which delineates the Louisiana coastal zone. The entire coastal area, which comprises all or part of 20 Louisiana parishes, is considered to be the

CWPPRA project area. To facilitate the study process, the coastal zone was divided into nine hydrologic basins, as shown on the map.

## STUDY PROCESS

### The Interagency Planning Groups.

Section 303(a)(1) of the CWPPRA directs the Secretary of the Army to convene the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Task Force, to consist of the following members:

- the Secretary of the Army (Chairman)
- the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency
- the Governor, State of Louisiana
- the Secretary of the Interior
- the Secretary of Agriculture
- the Secretary of Commerce.

The State of Louisiana is a full voting member of the Task Force except for selection of the Priority Project List [Section 303(a)(2)], as stipulated in President Bush's November 29, 1990, signing statement (Appendix A). In addition, the State of Louisiana may not serve as a "lead" Task Force member for design and construction of wetlands projects of the Priority Project List.

In practice, the Task Force members named by the law have delegated their responsibilities to other members of their organizations. For instance, the Secretary of the Army authorized the commander of the Corps' New Orleans District to act in his place as chairman of the Task Force.

To assist it in putting the CWPPRA into action, the Task Force established the Technical Committee and the Planning and Evaluation Subcommittee. Each of these bodies contains the same representation as the Task Force—one member from each of the five Federal agencies and one from the State. The Planning and Evaluation Subcommittee is responsible for the actual planning of projects and preparation of this restoration plan, as well as the other details involved in the CWPPRA process (such as development of schedules, budgets, *etc.*); the subcommittee makes recommendations to the Technical Committee and lays the groundwork for all decisions which will ultimately be made by the Task Force. The Technical Committee reviews all materials prepared by the subcommittee, makes appropriate revisions, and provides recommendations to the Task Force. The Technical Committee operates at an intermediate level between the planning details considered by the subcommittee and the policy matters dealt with by the Task Force, and often formalizes procedures and assists in formulating policy for the Task Force.

The Planning and Evaluation Subcommittee established several working groups to evaluate projects for Priority Project Lists and the restoration plan. The Environmental Work Group was charged with estimating the benefits (in terms of wetlands created, protected, enhanced, or restored) associated with various projects. The Engineering Work Group reviewed project cost estimates for consistency. The Economic Work Group performed the economic analysis which permitted comparison of projects on the basis of their cost effectiveness. The Monitoring Work Group established a standard procedure for monitoring of CWPPRA projects and developed a monitoring cost estimating procedure based on project type (Appendix F).

The Planning and Evaluation Subcommittee also established an interdisciplinary basin team for each of the nine hydrologic basins in the coastal area. The nucleus of each team consisted of representatives of the five federal Task Force agencies and the State; these six members made the final decisions on team recommendations. However, team meetings frequently involved additional agency representatives, scientific advisors, and local interests. The basin teams serve as the first level of screening for proposed Priority Project List projects and helped shape the comprehensive restoration plans for the basins.

The Citizen Participation Group.

The Task Force also established a Citizen Participation Group to provide general input from the diverse interests across the coastal zone: local officials, landowners, farmers, sportsmen, commercial fisherman, oil and gas developers, navigation interests, and environmental organizations. The Citizen Participation Group was formed to promote citizen participation and involvement in formulating Priority Project Lists and the restoration plan. The group meets at its own discretion, but may at times meet in conjunction with other CWPPRA elements, such as the Technical Committee. The purpose of the Citizen Participation Group is to maintain consistent public review and input into the plans and projects being considered by the Task Force and to assist and participate in the public involvement program. The membership of the Citizen Participation Group is shown in Table 1.

Table 1  
Membership of the Citizen Participation Group

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Gulf Coast Conservation Association	Concerned Shrimpers of America
Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana	Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association
Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation	Louisiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation, Inc.	Louisiana Landowners Association
Louisiana League of Women Voters	Louisiana Nature Conservancy
Louisiana Oyster Growers and Dealers Association	Louisiana Wildlife Federation, Inc.
Midcontinent Oil and Gas Association	New Orleans Steamship Association
Oil and Gas Task Force (Regional Economic Development Council)	Police Jury Association of Louisiana
Organization of Louisiana Fishermen	

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Involvement of the Scientific Community.

While the agencies sitting on the Task Force possess considerable expertise regarding Louisiana's coastal wetlands problems, the Task Force recognized the need

to incorporate another invaluable resource: the state's scientific community. The Task Force therefore retained the services of a scientific advisor, who selected a team of scientists to work with the basin teams in the preparation of the Priority Project Lists. The Task Force is currently developing formal relations with both the academic scientific community and the Citizen Participation Group in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (P.L. 92-463).

Public Involvement.

Even with its widespread membership, the Citizen Participation Group cannot represent all of the diverse interests affected by Louisiana's coastal wetlands. The CWPPRA public involvement program provides an opportunity for all interested parties to express their concerns and opinions and to submit their ideas concerning the problems facing Louisiana's wetlands.

The first step in the program comprised two series of scoping meetings held by the Task Force in October and November 1991—one series for coastal zone parish officials and another series for the general public. The purpose of these scoping meetings was to identify wetland loss problems throughout the coastal zone and potential solutions to those problems. Literally hundreds of ideas were submitted to the Task Force through the scoping meetings. (Appendix E is a compendium of those proposals.) All of the ideas presented in those meetings have been evaluated during the planning process; many of them have been incorporated into the Restoration Plan. The schedule of scoping meetings is shown in Table 2 (for parish officials) and Table 3 (for the general public).

Table 2  
Parish Scoping Meetings (for Parish Officials)

Date	Location	Parishes
October 8, 1991	Crowley, La.	Calcasieu Parish Cameron Parish Iberia Parish Vermilion Parish
October 16, 1991	New Orleans, La.	Jefferson Parish Orleans Parish Plaquemines Parish St. Bernard Parish St. Charles Parish
October 16, 1991	New Orleans, La.	Livingston Parish St. James Parish St. John the Baptist Parish St. Tammany Parish Tangipahoa Parish
October 17, 1991	Thibodaux, La.	Ascension Parish Assumption Parish Lafourche Parish St. Martin Parish St. Mary Parish Terrebonne Parish