# **Amite River Diversion Canal Modification**



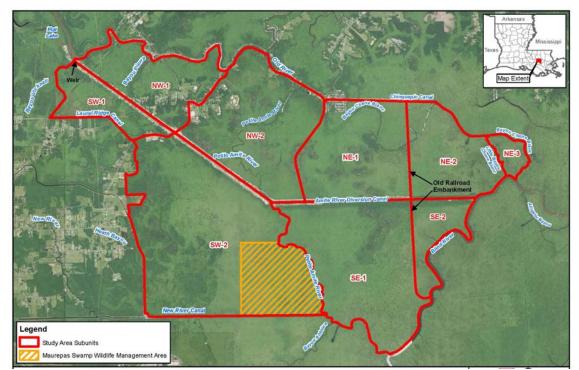
January 2013

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The Louisiana Coastal Area (LCA) program focuses on critical, nearterm 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 freshwater 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 Amite River Diversion Canal Modification (ARDC) project is the modification to the existing Amite River Diversion Canal to improve hydrologic cycles in the project area and includes the construction of gaps in the embankments of the diversion canal. The project was authorized under the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 - Section 7006(e)(3)(A) 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 study area, located within the Pontchartrain Basin, is situated along the Amite River Diversion Canal. The project focus is approximately 19,000 acres of bald cypress-tupelo swamp habitat adjacent to the diversion canal, extending northward and southward from the canal in the western portion of the Maurepas Swamp.

## **Project Goals**

The goal of the ARDC project is to reverse the trend of degradation within the Western Maurepas Swamp ecosystem that has been adversely affected by the construction of the Amite River Diversion Canal so as to contribute toward achieving and sustaining a coastal ecosystem that can support and protect the environment, economy, and culture of southern Louisiana and thus the Nation.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of the ARDC project, with respect to the study area, include the following:

• Increase hydrologic connectivity between the degraded swamp and bottomland hardwood habitats within the study area and the ARDC by increasing the exchange of freshwater, sediments and nutrients over the 50-year period of analysis.



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- Reduce habitat conversion of swamp to open water within the study area over the 50-year period of analysis.
- Facilitate natural hydrologic cycles within the study area over the 50- year period of analysis by reducing
  impoundment in degraded swamp and bottomland hardwood habitats adjacent to the ARDC to improve tree
  productivity and seedling germination.
- Improve fish and wildlife habitat within the study area of the 50-year period of analysis.

#### **Project Features**

The Amite River Diversion Canal is a 10.6-mile long flood control channel conveying Amite River flow to the Blind River. Dredged material excavated during construction of the canal was side cast, creating continuous embankments on each side of the canal, disrupting the natural hydrology.

The Recommended Plan includes gapping the canal embankments in 3 locations and one culvert in a relic railroad bed (that transects the study area) to reestablish hydrologic connectivity to Maurepas Swamp.

Environmental commitments identified during the Feasibility phase will be performed during the Pre-construction Engineering Design (PED) phase. These items are: Adaptive Management and Pre- and Post-construction Monitoring.

#### **Project Status**

The Chief of Engineer's Report for the LCA 6 was signed December 30, 2010, accepting the Feasibility Study for the Amite River Diversion Canal project. The PED Project Management Plan was accepted by CPRA, the project's sponsor, on August 24, 2011. The Design Agreement was approved November 14, 2011. Preconstruction Engineering and Design began January 2012.

By request of the State of Louisiana's Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority in August 2012, Preconstruction Engineering and Design for this project has been suspended.

Anyone seeking additional information on the Amite River Diversion Canal Modification project can visit the Louisiana Coastal Area program website at <u>www.lca.gov</u>.