



St. Bernard Parish Government
Coastal Division

2016 Annual Coastal Report



January 2017

Table of Contents

I. Executive Summary.....2

II. 2016: Recap and Highlights.....3

III. 2017: Vision for Restoring the Coast.....9

IV. Master Project List.....10

V. SBPG Coastal Division.....11



Bayou Terre Aux Beoufs, Delacroix, Louisiana



Bayou La Loutre, Yscloskey, Louisiana

I. Executive Summary

The purpose of the *2016 Annual Coastal Report* is to provide a summary of coastal restoration activities from the previous year and to articulate a vision for the future. The report also includes a comprehensive profile of ongoing and proposed coastal restoration activities in St. Bernard Parish. Finally, the report includes general information regarding the St. Bernard Parish Government (SBPG) Coastal Division.

Governor John Bel Edwards appointed St. Bernard Parish President Guy McInnis to the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) Board in early 2016. As a CPRA Board member, President McInnis represents the interests of St. Bernard Parish while also playing a leadership role in coastal restoration activities across Louisiana. President McInnis's appointment was the first for a local St. Bernard Parish official since the inception of the CPRA.

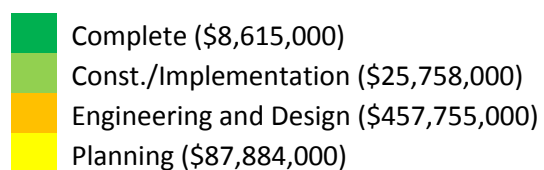
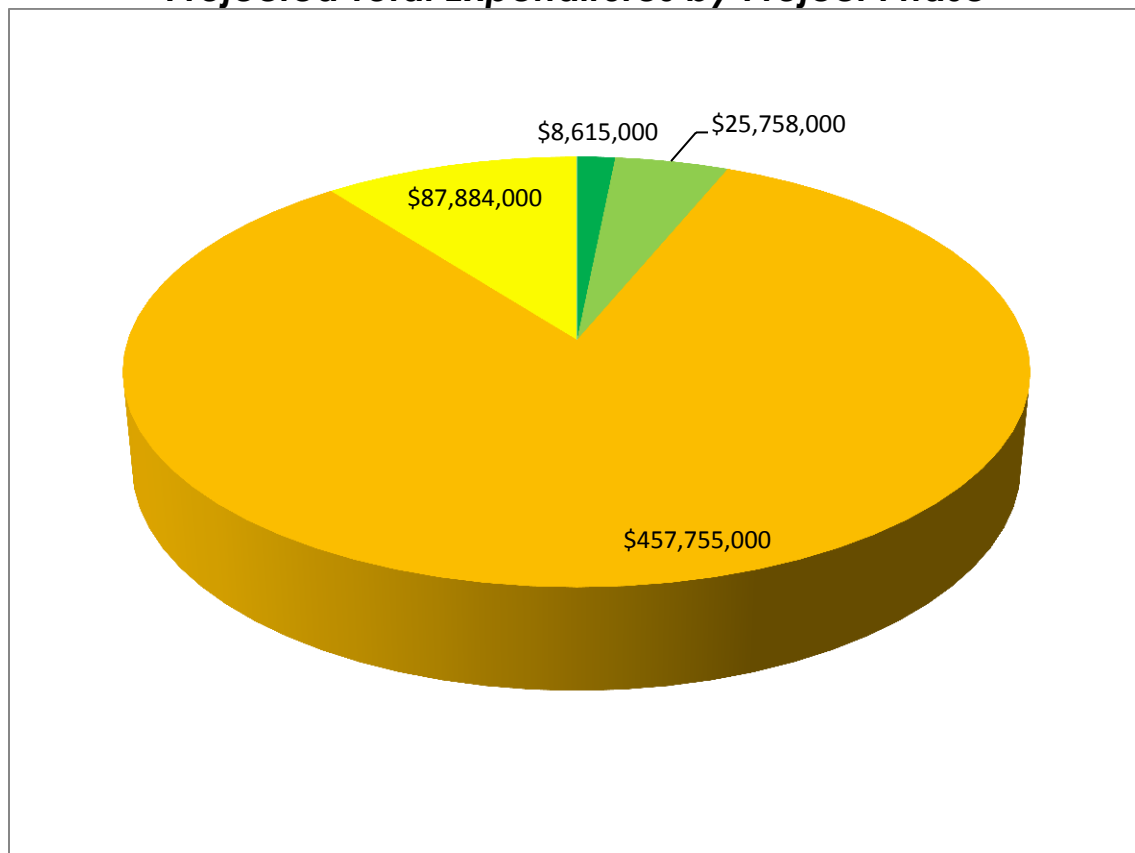
The SBPG Coastal Division spent the first half of 2016 engaging in a planning process that ultimately resulted in the adoption of the *2016 Coastal Strategy Document*. The planning process built on the previous work of the Coastal Zone Advisory Committee (CZAC) and other stakeholders, and the final product includes an updated prioritized list of projects; a set of updated project maps; a preliminary scope of work and budget for each project; and a project funding matrix. The Coastal Strategy Document was approved by the CZAC and adopted by the St. Bernard Parish Council in August 2016.

Since its adoption, the Coastal Strategy Document has informed SBPG decision-making regarding all coastal restoration activities. Virtually every project included on the approved priority list is currently the subject of a pending request for program funding or a grant application. Several projects identified in the Coastal Strategy Document have already advanced from the planning stage to engineering and design or construction and implementation.

Coastal restoration activities conducted in 2017 will be a reflection of the planning that was completed in 2016. Additional priority list projects will advance to engineering and design or construction and implementation, and a number of smaller projects will be completed. As new funding streams become available, SBPG will be well-positioned to capitalize on new opportunities and continue forging partnerships with public agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGO), and private landowners. The overall vision for 2017 is to continue persistently seeking project funding and engaging a broad base of stakeholders.

II. 2016: Recap and Highlights

Projected Total Expenditures by Project Phase



Construction and Implementation

- **December 2016:** The St. Bernard Parish Council approved \$15,000 in funding for the installation of navigational aids near the confluence of the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO) and Bayou La Loutre.
- **November 2016:** The Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana (CRCL) completed a 4.5-mile long shoreline protection project (\$600,000) along the shores of Lake Eloi, Lake Fortuna, and Lake Athanasio.

- **November 2016:** SBPG initiated its *Black Mangrove Planting Program* (\$258,000) by collecting black mangrove propagules in the Biloxi Marsh and potting 1,500 seeds in the greenhouse facility at Chalmette High School (CHS). Students from CHS will assist SBPG and its partners at Nicholls State University, the LSU Ag Center, and the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry with raising the propagules until the trees are mature enough to plant along the shoreline of the Biloxi Marsh. Other project partners include the Meraux Foundation, Orvis, and Low Tide Charters. The parish's black mangrove planting program has been endorsed by over twenty entities, including public agencies, universities, NGOs, and private partners.

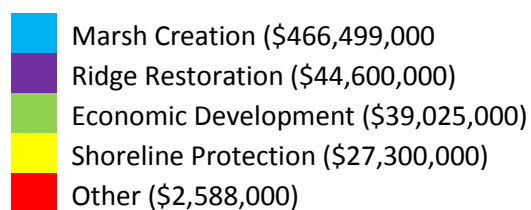
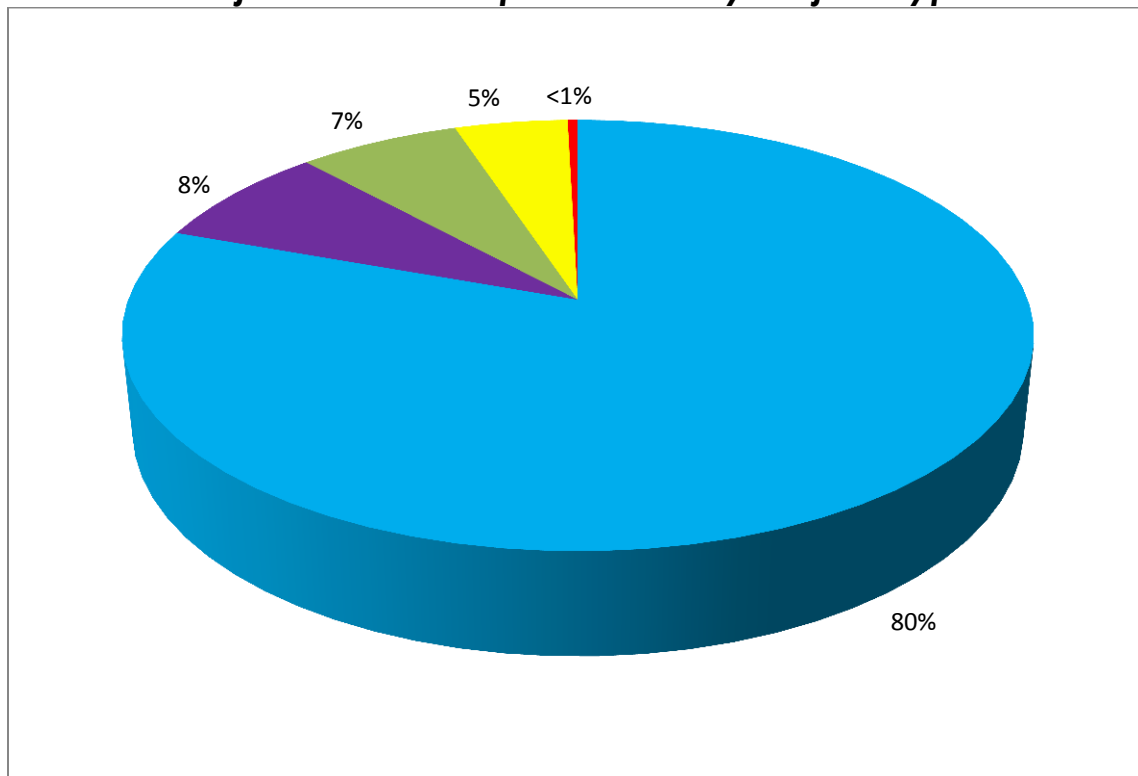


CHS students planting black mangrove propagules at the school's greenhouse

- **September 2016:** The CPRA initiated its *Living Shoreline Demonstration Project* (\$23.5 million), which includes the installation of thousands of artificial reef products along the shores of Eloi Bay and Lydia Point to the shores of Treasure Bay (approximately 21 linear miles). The purpose of this project is to stimulate the growth of oyster reefs along the coast and protect the shoreline.
- **August 2016:** The *Lake Lery Marsh Creation* project (\$8 million) was enhanced with a synthetic shoreline protection product and vegetative plantings along the shoreline and within the containment berm area. The project created approximately 65 acres of new marsh near Delacroix.

- May 2016:** SBPG conducted side sonar in the Violet Canal as part of its ongoing *Violet Harbor of Refuge Project* (\$2 million). The data collected during this sonar exercise will be utilized in future marine debris removal activities in the canal. The purpose of this project is to facilitate the use of the Violet Canal as a safe harbor during tropical weather events.

Projected Total Expenditures by Project Type



Engineering and Design

- December 2016:** The Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration (CWPPRA) Technical Committee recommended approval for Phase 1 (engineering/design) of the *Bayou La Loutre Ridge Restoration and Marsh Creation Project* (\$29.4 million). The project will restore approximately 5.5 miles of historic forested ridge along Bayou La Loutre and will create or nourish over 380 acres of marsh.

- **December 2016:** The St. Bernard Parish Council approved engineering/design funding (\$1.3 million) for Phase 1 of the *Bayou Terre Aux Beoufs Ridge Restoration Project* (\$15.2 million). Phase 1 of the project will include shoreline protection along Bayou Terre Aux Beoufs and Gentilly Bayou near Delacroix. SBPG has also submitted a grant application to the United States Corps of Engineers (USACE) for funding through the Continuing Authorities Program (CAP 206). The USACE Mississippi Valley Division has since conducted a field visit and submitted the project to the United States Department of the Army for review.
- **December 2016:** The St. Bernard Parish Council approved engineering/design and construction funding for the *Delacroix Recreational Fishing Pier and Dry Dock Project* (\$1 million). The publicly owned and operated complex will include a dock, covered pavilion, parking lot, and hoist/dry dock facility.
- **November 2016:** The CPRA committed Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) funding for the engineering/design of the *Lake Borgne Marsh Creation Project* (Phase 1) (\$131 million). The initial phase of the project will create over 1,200 acres of new marsh along the land bridge between Lake Borgne and the MRGO.
- **November 2016:** The CPRA committed state RESTORE Act funding for the engineering/design of the *Golden Triangle Marsh Creation Project* (\$272.8 million) near the St. Bernard/Orleans parish line. The project will create approximately 4,200 acres of marsh between the MRGO and Gulf Intracoastal Waterway.
- **October 2016:** SBPG partnered with the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation (LPBF) and Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to conduct a *Derelict Crab Trap Removal Project* near Delacroix. Removal efforts will be conducted during the first-ever statewide crab fishing closure in early 2017. SBPG also has a pending National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Marine Debris Removal Program grant application for additional project funding and expansion through 2019.
- **September 2016:** SBPG partnered with the LPBF to build on the organization's previous cypress reforestation efforts and develop a *Caernarvon Cypress Reforestation Program* (\$112,000). The next phase of the program will consist of planting approximately 2,400 cypress trees in a 12-acre area in the marsh near the floodwall at Caernarvon. The planting is scheduled to occur in February 2017.

- **June 2016:** The CPRA committed state RESTORE Act funding for the engineering/design of the *Biloxi Marsh Living Shoreline Project* (\$3.2 million). The purpose of this project is to stimulate the growth of oyster reefs along the coast and protect the shoreline.

Planning

- **December 2016:** SBPG completed a first draft of its RESTORE Act Multiyear Implementation Plan (RESTORE MIP) for the purpose of accessing RESTORE Direct Component funding beginning in 2017. Currently, the RESTORE MIP includes additional recreational fishing piers and a public seafood market; a streetscape enhancement project along the Paris Road corridor; a fisheries-oriented workforce development program in conjunction with Nunez Community College; and construction funding for Phase 2 of the Lake Lery Marsh Creation Project. There is currently over \$1.9 million in Direct Component funding available to SBPG, and the CPRA will be making additional state-level Direct Component matching funds available to local entities in 2017. SBPG will submit a final version of its RESTORE MIP to the United States Department of the Treasury for review and approval in early 2017.
- **November 2016:** SBPG began planning an ongoing marine debris removal and maintenance dredging program for critical navigable waterways throughout the parish. It is estimated that the program will cost approximately \$150,000 annually. Program planning will be finalized in early 2017.
- **November 2016:** SBPG submitted a request to the CPRA for over \$34 million in state Gulf of Mexico Security Act (GOMESA) funding to install sheet piling along Louisiana Highway 300 (LA 300) and Bayou Terre Aux Beufs. The proposed project would be implemented in conjunction with the LA 300 road elevation project that has already been designed and funded by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development. It is anticipated that the CPRA will make a decision regarding the request in 2017.
- **October 2016:** The CPRA announced that it is planning a maintenance dredging project in the Violet Canal for 2017. The project will complement SBPG's upcoming marine debris removal efforts in the Violet Canal and will greatly contribute to the overall maintenance of the canal as a safe harbor during tropical events.

- **September 2016:** SBPG partnered with the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry to begin planning a *Central Wetlands Unit Vegetative Planting Program*. The initial planting of bulrush is tentatively scheduled to occur in 2018.
- **August 2016:** The St. Bernard Parish Council adopted the Coastal Strategy Document, a comprehensive local coastal restoration plan that is intended to guide all local coastal restoration activities for the next ten years.



Shell Beach, Louisiana (Painting by: Elaine Mercer)

III. 2017: Vision for Restoring the Coast

The upcoming year will be pivotal for coastal restoration in St. Bernard Parish. The CPRA recently published a draft of its 2017 Coastal Master Plan, which includes a number of new projects that SBPG championed in 2016, including Bayou Terre Aux Beoufs Ridge Restoration and Lake Borgne Marsh Creation. The *Upper Breton Sediment Diversion* proposed by the CPRA in 2012 is no longer included in the Coastal Master Plan, although SBPG will continue to monitor the status of the proposed *Mid Breton Sediment Diversion*.

As the above 2016 Recap and Highlights section indicates, a number of critical projects are slated for either construction and implementation or engineering and design during the upcoming year. SBPG will work closely with the CPRA and other partners to ensure that all projects are executed in a manner that is most beneficial to St. Bernard Parish. The Coastal Division will also remain in close contact with local officials to ensure an appropriate level of oversight and monitoring during all phases of each project. Finally, SBPG remains committed to utilizing local contractors and other resources for coastal restoration activities to the extent possible.

Public education and outreach will be critical to the success of coastal restoration activities going forward. SBPG will continue to cultivate relationships with federal and state officials while also working closely with public and private sector partners, NGOs, and academic institutions. SBPG will also increase its efforts to provide more opportunities for volunteers to become engaged in coastal restoration during the upcoming year.

Given the popularity of recent events such as CPRA *Community Conversations* and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries 3-day mobile licensing program, SBPG will continue striving to provide the public with direct access to federal and state agencies. In fact, SBPG will be hosting an official CPRA board meeting in October 2017. This will mark the first time such a meeting has been conducted in St. Bernard Parish since the inception of the CPRA.

St. Bernard Parish is currently poised for an incredible amount of investment in coastal restoration. New funding streams such as RESTORE and GOMESA will begin to provide a level of funding that once seemed impossible to obtain. Furthermore, the current St. Bernard Parish Council has chosen to invest an unprecedented amount of local funding in coastal restoration. It is therefore critical that SBPG continues to build on its current momentum and capitalize on new opportunities in 2017.

IV. Master Project List

Project	Phase	Cost	Funding
Lake Lery Marsh Creation Phase 1	Complete	\$8,000,000	CIAP
Oyster Reef Shoreline Protection	Complete	\$600,000	CRCL/CPRA/NFWF
MRGO Navigational Aids	Complete	\$15,000	SBPG
Living Shoreline	Const/Imp	\$23,500,000	CPRA
Black Mangrove Planting	Const/Imp	\$258,000	SBPG/NOAA
Violet Harbor of Refuge	Const/Imp	\$2,000,000	CDBG
Lake Lery Marsh Creation Phase 2	Eng/Design	\$3,000,000	TBD
Biloxi Marsh Living Shoreline	Eng/Design	\$3,200,000	CPRA
Caernarvon to Verret Reforestation	Eng/Design	\$112,000	SBPG/CPRA
Derelict Crab Trap Removal	Eng/Design	\$43,000	SBPG/NOAA
Lake Borgne Marsh Creation	Eng/Design	\$131,000,000	CPRA/NRDA
Golden Triangle Marsh Creation	Eng/Design	\$272,800,000	CPRA/NRDA
Bayou La Loutre Ridge Rest.	Eng/Design	\$29,400,000	CWPPRA/CPRA
Bayou Terre Aux Beoufs Ridge Rest.	Eng/Design	\$15,200,000	SBPG/CAP 206
Rec. Fishing Piers/Public Market	Eng/Design	\$3,000,000	SBPG/RESTORE
Central Wetlands Reforestation	Planning	\$10,000	SBPG/LDAF
Point Aux Marchettes Marsh/Shoreline	Planning	\$30,000,000	TBD
Lake Lery Marsh Creation Phase 3	Planning	\$21,699,000	TBD
LA Highway 300 Resilience	Planning	\$35,000,000	CPRA/GOMESA/DoTD
Paris Road Streetscape	Planning	\$800,000	FEMA/RESTORE
Marine Debris Removal and Dredging	Planning	\$150,000	TBD
Nunez Workforce Development	Planning	\$225,000	RESTORE

TOTAL: \$580,012,000

V. SBPG Coastal Division

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