

Louisiana Local Coastal Program's Outlook

From the State Department
of Natural Resources (DNR)



From Assistant Secretary Stephen Chustz
Office of Coastal Management

Contents

Greetings from Assistant Secretary Stephen Chustz	1
Louisiana Now Has an Updated Coastal Zone Boundary	2
Needs, Alternatives and Justification Analysis Update	4
In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Program Status Update	5
New Orleans District Proposes to Designate New Beneficial Use Site from Mississippi River Southwest Pass Dredging	5
Cypress Tree Plantings along the Bayou Segnette Waterway	6
Coastal Resilience Index Update	7
Upcoming Louisiana Coastal Parish Educational Workshop	8

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Office of Coastal Management (OCM) continues to actively address issues that are of great importance to local coastal program managers and we appreciate your partnership in these efforts.

The Louisiana coastal zone inland boundary was redefined in the 2012 Legislative Session based upon the recommendations of the science-based study previously required by the Louisiana Legislature. In partnership with the parishes that saw the most significant changes based upon this legislation, OCM held outreach meetings, provided additional information on its web site, assisted with changes to local coastal programs and set up a temporary office in Thibodeaux to provide assistance. OCM continues to refine our permitting processes and as part of those efforts we are developing revised guidelines for needs, alternatives, and justification from permitted impacts analysis.

(Continues next page)



OCM also continues to work to improve the beneficial use of dredge material and to obtain approval of its In Lieu Fee Program for mitigation from the Corps of Engineers. This edition also contains news about recent Jefferson Parish coastal restoration efforts and an update on OCM's coastal resiliency facilitation sessions.

I hope that you enjoy this newsletter. Please send any questions, comments or other material that you would like to see highlighted in future editions of this newsletter to my local program staff. As always my staff remains ready to assist you with all of your coastal management needs.

Sincerely,



*Stephen Chustz, Assistant Secretary
Office of Coastal Management
Louisiana Department of Natural Resources*



Louisiana Now Has an Updated Coastal Zone Boundary By Dave Frugé and Ed Britton, OCM

As of June 7, 2012, Louisiana's coastal zone boundary was updated according to the recommendations of a science-based study required by the Louisiana Legislature in 2009. The science-based boundary takes into account environmental changes that occurred since the initial boundary was established in 1978. The study used updated information on geology, elevation, soil type, vegetation, storm surge, observed and predicted subsidence/sea level rise, and boundaries of existing coastal programs to identify areas with a high level of coastal influence.

In May 2012, the Louisiana Legislature passed House Bill 656 which adjusted the inland boundary of the Louisiana coastal zone consistent with the recommendations of the science-based study. On June 7, Governor Jindal signed Act 588 which put the updated coastal zone into effect. In this area, conservation of coastal resources is balanced with the needs of economic development. It is important to note that Act 588 does not establish or require any new regulations or exemptions; it merely applies the pre-existing program to a shifted coastal area.

The new boundary resulted in a net increase of 1887 square miles, or 12.6%, in the coastal zone area. The additional areas recommended in the study were found to have a high level of coastal influence. These changes help to ensure consistency of permitted activities with Louisiana's Comprehensive Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast.

The coastal zone area increased in 8 parishes (Cameron, Calcasieu, Iberia, St. Martin, St. Mary, Terrebonne, Lafourche, and Assumption); that area has been reduced in two parishes (Tangipahoa and Livingston) and remains the same in 10 parishes (Vermilion, St. John, St. James, St. Charles, Jefferson, Plaquemines, Orleans, St. Bernard, St. Tammany, and Ascension). No additional parishes were incorporated into the coastal zone or removed from it.

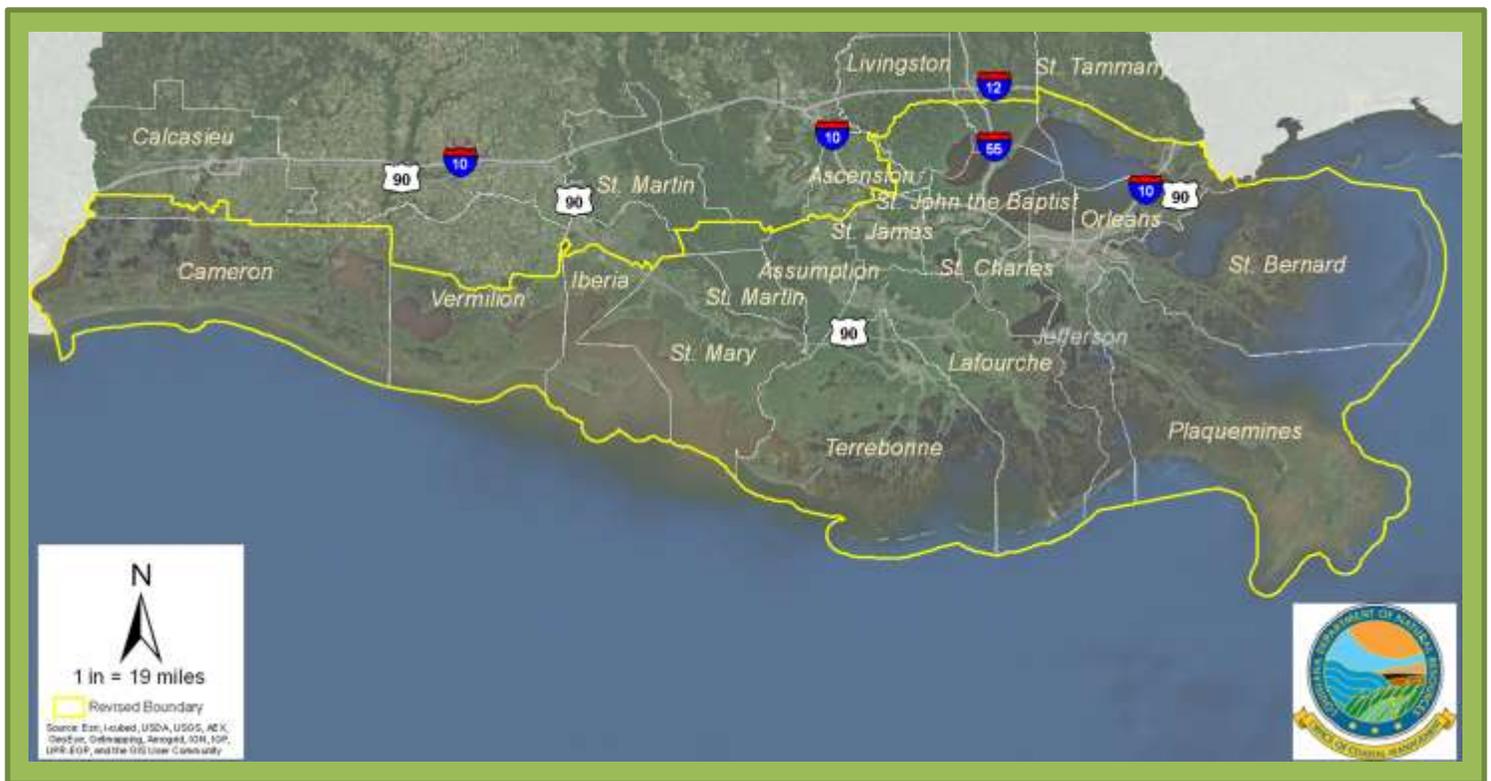
(Article continues on next page)

Maps of the new coastal zone boundary are accessible on the OCM web site for viewing and download, (please see link at end of article). Those maps can help a citizen determine if his or her proposed project is outside the coastal zone and exempt from the permitting process, thus potentially saving time and effort for both the citizen and OCM staff. Printed copies of the new maps will be available to the public in a few months.

The OCM was quick to launch a series of public outreach meetings to present these changes to the public in and near these areas newly brought into the coastal zone. Those meetings were held on June 20 in Thibodaux, June 21 in Houma, June 28 in Patterson, and July 11 in Lake Charles. OCM informed the attendees about the boundary changes and related permitting requirements, outlined actions underway to assist them in the permit application process, and answered their questions. OCM staff also coordinated with parish officials in Assumption Parish, and made a presentation on the new coastal zone boundary at a Louisiana Floodplain Management Association workshop in Gonzales. OCM staff members worked closely with the Corps of Engineers to ensure that new areas added to the coastal zone are covered by the Programmatic General Permit and joint application process.

OCM also established a temporary remote office location at the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority's field office in Thibodaux -- to provide further support to potential permit applicants in newly added coastal areas in that part of the state. OCM staff members have been assisting their local coastal program colleagues in parishes which are updating those programs in response to the new boundary changes. Likewise, Louisiana coastal parish personnel have been involved, and invaluable, in various aspects of the public outreach effort related to those boundary changes.

Extensive information on the new coastal zone boundary is found on the OCM website at:
<http://dnr.louisiana.gov/index.cfm?md=pagebuilder&tmp=home&pid=928>



Needs, Alternatives and Justification Analysis Update

By Christine Charrier, OCM

During normal processing of a Coastal Use Permit application, the OCM requires Alternatives and Justification Analyses (NAJ for “Needs, Alternatives and Justification”) for developments that have the potential to adversely impact coastal resources and/or users. In the past we have provided the “Subdivision Packet” as a generic guide to developing these analyses. This packet was designed for subdivisions but was adjusted and used for other types of uses in a “one size fits all” manner. Unfortunately, the “Packet” does not “fit all” nor does it provide the assistance needed to identify and provide the information OCM requires to fully evaluate the adverse impacts and public benefits of a proposed development.

In an effort to provide a more helpful and meaningful guide to our users, OCM is in the process of developing a new Alternatives and Justification guide designed to provide clear information needs, reasons for those needs, and sources for obtaining the information. The introduction provides general information, explains why OCM performs this review and identifies seven categories of coastal uses. The individual guides provide use-specific guidance for more easily identifying the information needed, how that information should be presented and where the information may be obtained. Likewise, the guide is no longer a “one size fits all” document. The guides have been tiered and each outlines the level of detail needed based on the complexity of the development and amount of potential adverse impacts associated with the development. The idea being that, for small projects and projects with minimal impacts, applicants will not be required to provide the same level of detail required for large projects or projects with significant impact.

The use specific categories are:

- Residential Developments
- Marinas
- Municipal Activities (utilities, drainage, levees, transportation, etc.)
- Pipelines
- Oil & Gas Activities
- Commercial Developments
- Industrial Developments
- Ports

OCM is also developing a Drainage and Coastal Hazards guide to be used in conjunction with the NAJ guides, where appropriate. Research into what OCM deemed acceptable in past applications was used to develop the information requests in each of the guides. Historic application information also was used to develop the resource-impact tiers within each guide. Interviews with local governments and other state agencies helped determine the development-size tiers and the information to be requested. The goal was to reduce duplication of effort for the applicant by mimicking the information that local governments require for similar developments. We are particularly interested in the drainage-impact information requirements for each coastal parish and would like to have input on when drainage impact studies are required. If we have not contacted you for an interview and you would like to contribute to the development of these guides, please contact Christine Charrier at christine.charrier@la.gov.

Each guide goes through several levels of review prior to final implementation. Internal review is done by existing OCM staff. The guide is modified then sent to the Coastal Advisory Council for review and comment. Once the council suggestions are incorporated the guide is sent to an external peer review group. This group is chosen by searching the Coastal Use Permit database for the top five “customers” for that use category. Once external peer comments have been received, the guide is finalized and implemented.

OCM recently released the Introduction document, which contains general information about the overall NAJ process. We also released the Residential Developments guide which outlines the information necessary when proposing a residential subdivision. We are nearing completion of the Oil & Gas Activities, Pipelines, Ports, Marinas and Commercial Developments guides. These guides have been through the review process and are undergoing final modification prior to release. As the guides are released, notifications will be provided announcing their availability. Local Coastal Program staff will ensure that the guides are distributed to the Louisiana coastal parishes.

Cypress Tree Plantings along the Bayou Segnette Waterway

By Jason Smith, Jefferson Parish Coastal Manager

The Jefferson Parish Department of Environmental Affairs received a grant from the National Association of Counties to plant bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) trees along the banks of the Bayou Segnette Waterway and connecting stream corridors as part of the 2008 Five Star Restoration Challenge Grant Program. In order to better maximize limited resources, Jefferson Parish partnered with the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana (CRCL) to create a much larger planting project. The CRCL's commitment to purchase tree guards, allowed Jefferson Parish to use the full grant award to purchase cypress trees, more than doubling the size of the project from 1,400 trees to 3,405 trees planted along the Bayou Segnette Waterway and connecting stream corridor.

A combination of an outpouring of interest in the project, combined with the ability to acquire additional trees, resulted in providing two additional volunteer plantings for a total of four planting events (March 12, 13, 17 and 20, 2012). During the course of the four plantings, 218 volunteers planted 3,405 cypress trees ranging in size from 3.5 to 6 feet tall and installed nutria excluder guards (tree guards) along 32,000 linear feet of riparian buffer of the Bayou Segnette Waterway and connecting stream corridor.

It is anticipated that the project will be self-sustaining due to the project's location within the influence area of the Davis Pond Freshwater Diversion. The cypress trees will benefit from the influx of freshwater, sediments and nutrients from the Mississippi River. As a long-term outcome, this project will increase habitat quality and promote a riparian area along the Bayou Segnette Waterway providing increased coastal protection. Due to its location within the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve and its close proximity to New Orleans, the project will be highly visible and may serve to help attract additional funding for cypress restoration in this area and other areas influenced by freshwater diversions.

It is projected that the planted trees will reproduce naturally once they become stabilized in their environment, which would foster the goal of long-term sustainability. Sustainable growth and self-regeneration is anticipated once trees mature. Young trees as opposed to seedlings were used to increase survival rates. Jefferson Parish and the National Park Service will periodically observe tree growth.

There was a large outpouring of support for the project. It is estimated approximately 350 volunteers helped with the project. Camp owners in the area routinely talk about how the cypress trees are growing and how happy they are that this project was undertaken. The trees should help re-establish and sustain cypress tree habitat along a man-made waterway; help guard against coastal erosion; and provide much needed storm protection. This project made a lasting impression on all who participated and will evoke fond memories for years to come as local boaters observe the trees mature to form a canopy in the riparian zone of Bayou Segnette Waterway.



Coastal Resilience Index Update

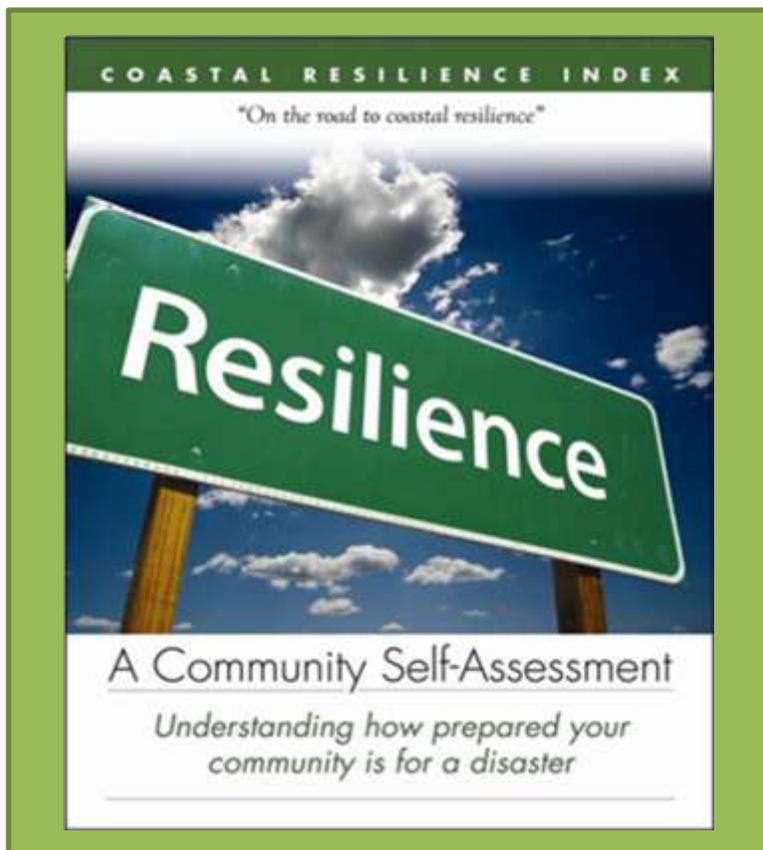
By Melissa Daigle, LSU Sea Grant Law and Policy Program

The Coastal Resilience Index (CRI) is a simple and inexpensive way for a community to predict if it will reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning after a disaster. Melissa Daigle with the Louisiana Sea Grant Law and Policy Program, and Jon Truxillo, with the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources' Office of Coastal Management have worked together to facilitate the CRI in 11 communities across the coast:

June 2011	St. Tammany Parish
July 2011	City of Mandeville
August 2011	Lafourche Parish
September 2011	Cameron Parish
September 2011	Slidell
October 2011	Calcasieu Parish
October 2011	Terrebonne Parish
November 2011	City of Iowa
January 2012	Orleans Parish
March 2012	Plaquemines Parish
April 2012	St. James Parish

Attendees included a range of individuals, such as local government officials and staff, representatives from local non-profit organizations, members of the business community, natural resource agency professionals and local Sea Grant agents. The sessions were a huge success resulting in a detailed discussion of the community's adaptability in times of disaster.

Communities continuously change, as does the makeup of local governments. We are encouraging communities to go through the CRI process on a yearly basis. This will allow local governments to address any changes that might have increased or reduced their resiliency, as well as get any new staff up-to-date. If you would like to have the CRI facilitated in your community, either as a first time or repeat session, please contact Melisa Daigle at mtrosc2@tigers.lsu.edu or Jon Truxillo at jon.truxillo@la.gov. The CRI takes about two hours to complete, and there is no charge for facilitation. OCM asks that you provide the meeting venue and we will provide you with a list of appropriate attendees for you to contact. The CRI workbook can be downloaded here: www.masgc.org/ri.



Upcoming Louisiana Coastal Parish Educational Workshop

By Jon Truxillo, OCM

DNR will be hosting a special Climate Adaptation for Coastal Communities Training for Louisiana coastal parishes' natural resource professionals at the LaSalle Building (DNR) in downtown Baton Rouge on February 25 and 26, 2013. Climate Adaptation for Coastal Communities provides participants with practical skills and information on coastal climate adaptation issues, such as relative sea level rise and higher intensity tropical storms, through a combination of presentations, facilitated discussions and group exercises.

The course will cover understanding climate science and impacts, determining coastal community vulnerabilities, identifying climate related adaptation strategies and finding mechanisms to implement those same strategies. The course is designed for parish administrators, land use planners, public works staff, floodplain managers, hazard mitigation planners, emergency managers, community groups, members of civic organizations, and coastal resource managers.

After completing this course, participants will be able to:

- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of adaptation strategies,
- Apply climate communication research concepts and findings to enable effective communication with target audiences,
- Recognize the changes and variability in climate and climate's influence on coastal communities,
- Identify opportunities to leverage a range of governance mechanisms to integrate adaptation strategies into their existing efforts,
- Examine methods for conducting hazard, vulnerability, and risk assessment as it relates to climate change.

For more information on this course and other National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Coastal Services Center's course offerings contact Jon Truxillo at LDNR at 225-342-3394 or by email at jon.truxillo@la.gov or visit the Coastal Services Center's Digital Coastal Web Page at <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/>



Louisiana Department of Natural Resources

Prepared by Office of Coastal Management
Interagency Affairs and Field Services Division
225.342.7591: 800.267.4019
617 North Third Street
LaSalle Building, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802
Find us on the Web:
<http://dnr.louisiana.gov/>

For additional information about this newsletter or for content submission please contact: Jon A. Truxillo, Coastal Resources Scientist, 225.342.3394, jon.truxillo@la.gov

With Special Appreciation to P.J. Hahn, Director of Coastal Restoration and Management, Plaquemines Parish for providing many of the coastal photographs in this issue.