

CWPPRA Quick News



CWPPRA Home Page Now On-Line

The CWPPRA home page is now on-line on the World Wide Web. Web-surfers who visit the site can find a wide variety of information about the history of CWPPRA, the status of projects, facts and figures about coastal Louisiana, and several links to related information and wetlands websites throughout the United States. ○



The address is: <http://www.nwrc.gov/cwppra.html>

Col. Conner Heads Up Task Force

Col. Bill Conner is the new CWPPRA Task Force chairman. That role is one of the duties he assumed on July 12 when he took command of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' New Orleans District.



Col. Bill Conner (ACOE photo)

Conner is impressed with the hard work and involvement of the CWPPRA Task Force to date. "I intend to build upon the past accomplishments of the federal and state agencies that have made the Breaux-Johnston Act a success," he said. "And I'm anxious to take the next step forward, which is to bring national attention to the national problem of deteriorating coastal wetlands."

Conner formerly served on the Army staff at the Pentagon in Operations and Plans.

New Alliance for Estuaries Formed

A Louisiana environmental group, the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, has joined with seven other similar organizations from around the nation to solicit more publicity and more government financing for estuaries. (An estuary is any area where fresh water from rivers meets salt water from the ocean.)

The alliance, Restore America's Estuaries, will propose federal legislation to restore a million acres of estuary habitats, including marshes, wetlands, beaches and kelp beds, by 2010.

Alliance strategists believe the group's combined clout can accomplish more than regional groups can individually. ○

During his career, the new district engineer has served in a variety of assignments, including two tours of duty in Germany and one in Korea. He is a 1974 graduate of West Point and holds master's degrees in structural engineering and construction management from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. ○

Names to Note

Steve Mathies, formerly of the Army Corps of Engineers, as well as former director of the Barataria-Terrebonne



National Estuary Program, was recently named deputy secretary of the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR). ○

Steve Mathies
(DNR photo)

Katherine G. Vaughan is now serving as assistant secretary of DNR's Office of Coastal Restoration and Management, the office responsible for Louisiana's wetlands resources and implementation of CWPPRA. Vaughan, an attorney, has worked throughout her career in the natural resources field. ○



Katherine G. Vaughan
(DNR photo)

Repairs Under Way on Grand Terre Island



One of the victims of Hurricane Andrew, Grand Terre Island in southern Jefferson Parish, was recently repaired through a barrier island nourishment and wetland creation project implemented by the Louisiana Department of Natural

Resources and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Approximately one-half million cubic yards of material dredged from Barataria Waterway was used to build up an overwash area created by the hurricane. The overwash area threatened to breach Grand Terre Island, leaving inland areas vulnerable to hurricanes and other storms. The dredged materials will also promote development of vegetated wetlands along the northern edge of the island. The Army Corps of Engineers constructed the project at a cost of \$1,370,000. Federal funding through the Water Resources Development Act provided 75 percent of the cost. ○

Congress Funds Oyster Program

A \$7.5 million appropriation to help relocate oyster leases associated with the Davis Pond Freshwater Diversion project was recently approved by the U.S. Congress.

Some 8,000 acres of oyster leases are located in the project area in St. Charles Parish. The federal assistance means that the adverse effects of the project's freshwater diversion on active and productive oyster beds can be offset by moving the beds away from the fresh water. ○

CWPPRA the Answer to Saving Wetlands...

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that used to nest in the marshes around Pontchartrain only use it as a stopping place on their way to other nesting areas. At the same time, the freshwater bass, crappie and perch have been forced further inland.”

Cambre said that he has been watching the deterioration of Louisiana’s coastal wetlands for years, but when he learned of a proposal to extend a hurricane protection levee and drain a large region of the

LaBranche Wetlands around Lake Pontchartrain, he decided enough was enough.

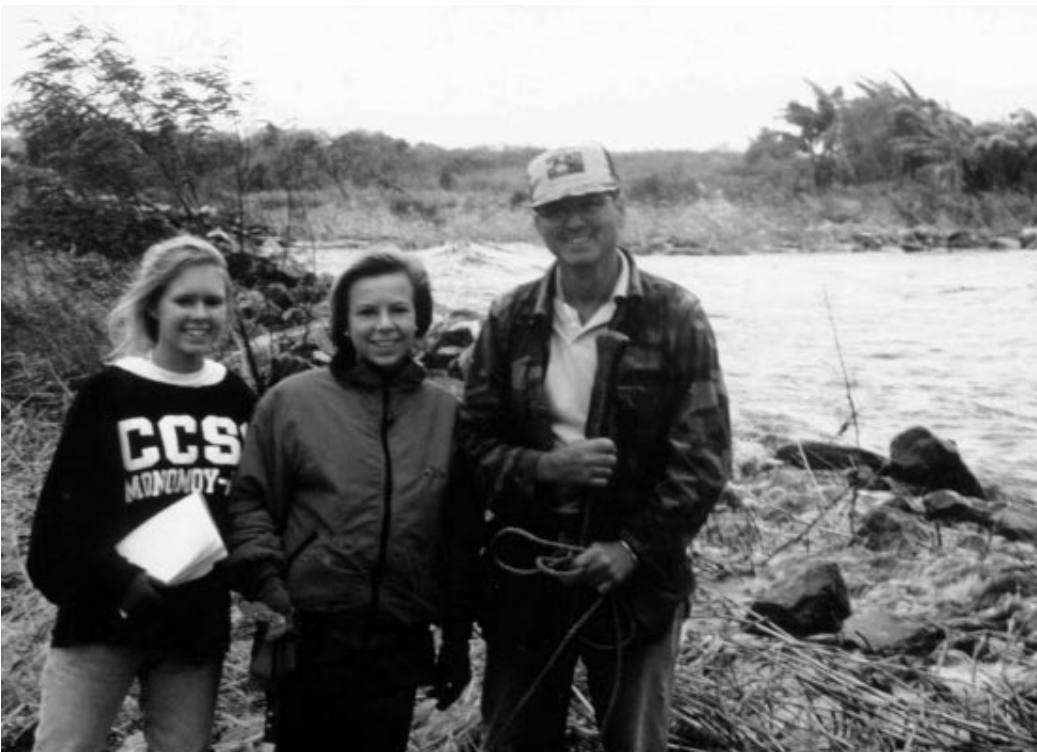
“That project was nothing more than a housing development being financed with public funds, under the guise of flood protection, and it was going to do a lot of damage,” Cambre said. Cambre and his neighbors organized the St. Charles Parish Environmental Council to fight the project, and after six years of writing letters, drumming up sup-

port and legal wrangling, they forced the development’s cancellation.

That was 1968, and Cambre has been one of the nation’s leading environmentalists ever since. He’s played a role in projects throughout coastal Louisiana, including CWPPRA’s Bayou LaBranche Marsh Creation Project. He has, in fact, become so successful in his efforts to protect Louisiana’s wetlands that he was honored by former President George Bush as one of the famous

“thousand points of light.” He has also appeared in several television specials on the environment.

According to Cambre, CWPPRA is the right answer to the question of saving Louisiana’s ailing wetlands. “At long last we’re taking a planned approach to wetlands preservation,” he said. “And with CWPPRA, we’ve finally got the resources necessary to get something meaningful done.” ○



Wendy Weatherel (left) and Cecile Hardy of Newman School pause for a photo during their tour of the LaBranche Wetlands with Milton Cambre (right). The rocks immediately behind make up a portion of the Lake Pontchartrain lakeshore stabilization project. (Photo courtesy of Milton Cambre)

CWPtionary

Saltwater Intrusion

Saltwater intrusion is the movement of salt water into a non-salt water environment, such as a freshwater marsh. This intrusion may occur as the result of a natural process like a storm surge from a hurricane. More often, however, saltwater intrusion results from human activities such as construction of navigation channels or oil field canals. These channels and canals provide conduits for salt water from the Gulf of Mexico to reach deep into interior marshes.



Navigation canals can allow salt water to reach freshwater marshes.

Saltwater intrusion can be detrimental to these marshes because water with high salt concentrations can adversely affect vegetation in the marsh. For instance, when highly saline water enters a low-saline or non-saline area, most or all of the native plant life will be destroyed. And because plant root systems are essential in holding the marsh soil together, loss of plant life eventually leads to rapid erosion. What was once a wetland soon becomes open water. ○

The Water Marks Interview...

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water temperature the right degree, they make their migration back to the Gulf.

Q You said the project involved draw-down. What do you mean by that?

A The purpose of the project was to lower the water table, draw the marsh down, to dry some of the smaller ponds, so they could get in there and get new grass seeded — to rejuvenate it. It worked beautifully; we had dry weather, actually a drought year, that helped things along. It's the best project I've seen.

Q Did you have any opportunity for input into planning the Mud Lake Project?

A Yes. They asked my advice. All my fishing is done behind the weirs — we're in a land-locked situation with 13 or 14 weirs. So I asked for larger box weirs so that I could get my boat in, and they agreed.

Q Now that the project is finished, what's your assessment of its results?

A Well, it's rebounded pretty good. They opened some weirs up on

July 18 and let some larvae in, so it'll be okay this year. We had two bad years on crabs, but it will pick up next year.

Q Now that you've seen your local project installed and working, are there any other coastal wetlands projects you'd like to see implemented?

A This project worked out well here with Fina because of the location. In other places, you'd have to survey it and see what might be possible. That's what we've got the biologists and big dogs for. But any improvement at all in the wetlands is worth doing, even though many of the fishermen don't think so. It's money well-spent in the long run.

Q What do you think the future of commercial fishing in Louisiana would be without CWPPRA?

A Without the estuaries, a place for fish and shellfish to grow and thrive, fishing would be cut short. I didn't go to college, I'm not a biologist, but I've seen what it takes in the long run. I can see the future — and it's do or die. ○

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Carlton Delano of Holly Beach has been a commercial fisherman for 26 years. He and his wife also operate the Holly Beach Seafood Market. He is the former president of Fishermen for Fair Laws.



The *WaterMarks* Interview: *Carlton Delano*

Q Mr. Delano, can you tell us something about your fishing operation?

A I've been a fisherman for 26 years here at Holly Beach — we're right on the coast, about a baseball's throw from the Gulf of Mexico. For the last 10 years I've had the lease to fish on Fina Oil and Chemical property. We catch shrimp, blue point crabs and alligators in season. My wife works with me, and from time to time my son and son-in-law, as well. We sell 75 to 80 percent of our catch at our own seafood market — the rest we sell to wholesale buyers.

Q How has fishing in your area changed over the years?

A As laws have changed, quite a bit of our income has been depleted. More fish have been denied or limited for commercial fishing — redfish, speckled trout, drum, flounder...

Q That makes catching the species still available to you even more crucial. So what was your reaction when you first heard that a CWPPRA project, the Mud Lake Marsh Management project, was to be implemented in your fishing area?

A I knew Mud Lake was coming; it had been in the works for 10 years. I'd seen other projects come about. I knew the first couple of years would be draw-down years that would cut our income. It's hard to do

when you count on the money, but I knew we'd come out okay on the other end.

Q What convinced you that the project was worth doing?

A Well, I've been in this business a long time, and I know we've got to protect the estuaries. Some of the fish reproduce right here in the lake, but the crabs, the shrimp, the redfish, the speckled trout hatch out in the Gulf, and the larvae — the small, minute "ta-ti," the little bitty fellas — come in on the tide. The estuaries give them someplace to hide, to grow and thrive. That's why we need marsh management. Then, when the conditions are right, the

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