

Cheniere Building: Cooperation in South Louisiana Marsh Habitat Restoration

Richard H. Neill¹ and Dean Blanchard²

¹USDA/NRCS Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center, Galliano, LA, USA

²Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program, Thibodaux, LA, USA

As the marshes of South Louisiana subside and suffer salt incursion, much of the maritime forest previously used by a variety of wildlife is also disappearing. Prior to the twentieth century, the coastal marshes of Louisiana contained ridges of maritime forest. These ridges were the primary resting place for neotropical song birds that migrated in the Mississippi flyway and across the Gulf of Mexico from North America to Central American.

In an effort to rebuild both marsh habitat and vital wildlife habitat, the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP) worked with the Greater Lafourche Port Commission to attempt restoring the cheniere habitat. The Port Commission was expanding facilities and agreed to provide their dredge material to the project.

The Golden Meadow Plant Material Center (PMC) was invited to join in exploring ways to restore vegetation to newly dredged material. The goal was to establish maritime forest as quickly as possible to a harsh site with high salt content, no soil structure and exposed to constant adverse weather conditions.

This paper will explore the problems and successes of our efforts.

Contact information: Richard H. Neill, USDA/NRCS Golden Meadow Plant Material Center, 438 Airport Rd, Galliano, LA 70354 USA, Phone: 985-475-5280, Fax: 985-475-6645, Email:richard.neill@la.usda.gov