



MRGO ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

Current As Of: April 2011

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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For nearly 45 years, the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO) provided a shortened shipping route between the Port of New Orleans and the Gulf of Mexico. On June 5, 2008, the MRGO was de-authorized between the Gulf of Mexico and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW), and a rock closure structure was approved for construction in the vicinity of Bayou La Loutre in St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana. The channel was physically closed to shipping in July 2009.

The MRGO Ecosystem Restoration Plan was developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a supplement to the MRGO Deep-Draft Deauthorization Report to Congress. The comprehensive ecosystem restoration plan is aimed at the restoration and conservation of estuarine habitat areas affected by the MRGO navigation channel. Section 7013 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007 authorized the development of the plan, and a feasibility study, fully funded by the Federal government, is underway. Implementation of the recommended ecosystem restoration plan requires the signing of a cost-share agreement with the Corps' non-Federal sponsors, the State of Louisiana and the State of Mississippi.

The study area encompasses portions of southeast Louisiana and southwest Mississippi, including the Lake Borgne ecosystem and other areas affected by the MRGO navigation channel. In Louisiana, the study area includes Lake Maurepas, Lake Pontchartrain, Lake Borgne and Chandeleur Sound. In Mississippi, the study area includes portions of western Mississippi Sound, its bordering wetlands and barrier islands.

Project Features

Study area issues:

- *Decreased fresh water, sediment and nutrient inputs*
- *Hydrologic modifications*
- *Saltwater intrusion*
- *Wetland loss*
- *Ridge habitat degradation and destruction*
- *Retreating and eroding barrier islands*
- *Bank and shoreline erosion*
- *Tropical storms*
- *Subsidence*
- *Sea level rise*
- *Altered circulation and water quality*
- *Habitat change and loss*
- *Invasive species and herbivory*

Ecosystem restoration opportunities:

- *Freshwater, sediment, and nutrient introduction*
- *Wetland protection, restoration, and creation*
- *Shoreline protection*
- *Bank stabilization*
- *Ridge protection and restoration*
- *Barrier island protection and restoration*
- *Water control measures (gates, weirs, sills, plugs, fill areas)*
- *Hydrologic restoration*
- *Use of native vegetation*
- *Natural features for storm surge damage reduction*
- *Modifications to authorized projects*

Project Status

After evaluating many different alternative plans, the Corps developed a Tentatively Selected Plan which, if implemented, would result in the greatest ecosystem restoration benefits for the study area. This plan is cost effective, environmentally acceptable, and technically feasible.

The Draft Feasibility Report, Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Engineering Appendix were available for public review during December 2010 - March 2011. These documents outline the planning process, potential environmental benefits and impacts, and preliminary design details. Meetings were held in January and February 2011 in Louisiana and Mississippi to allow for public review and comments on the draft reports.

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Tentatively Selected Plan

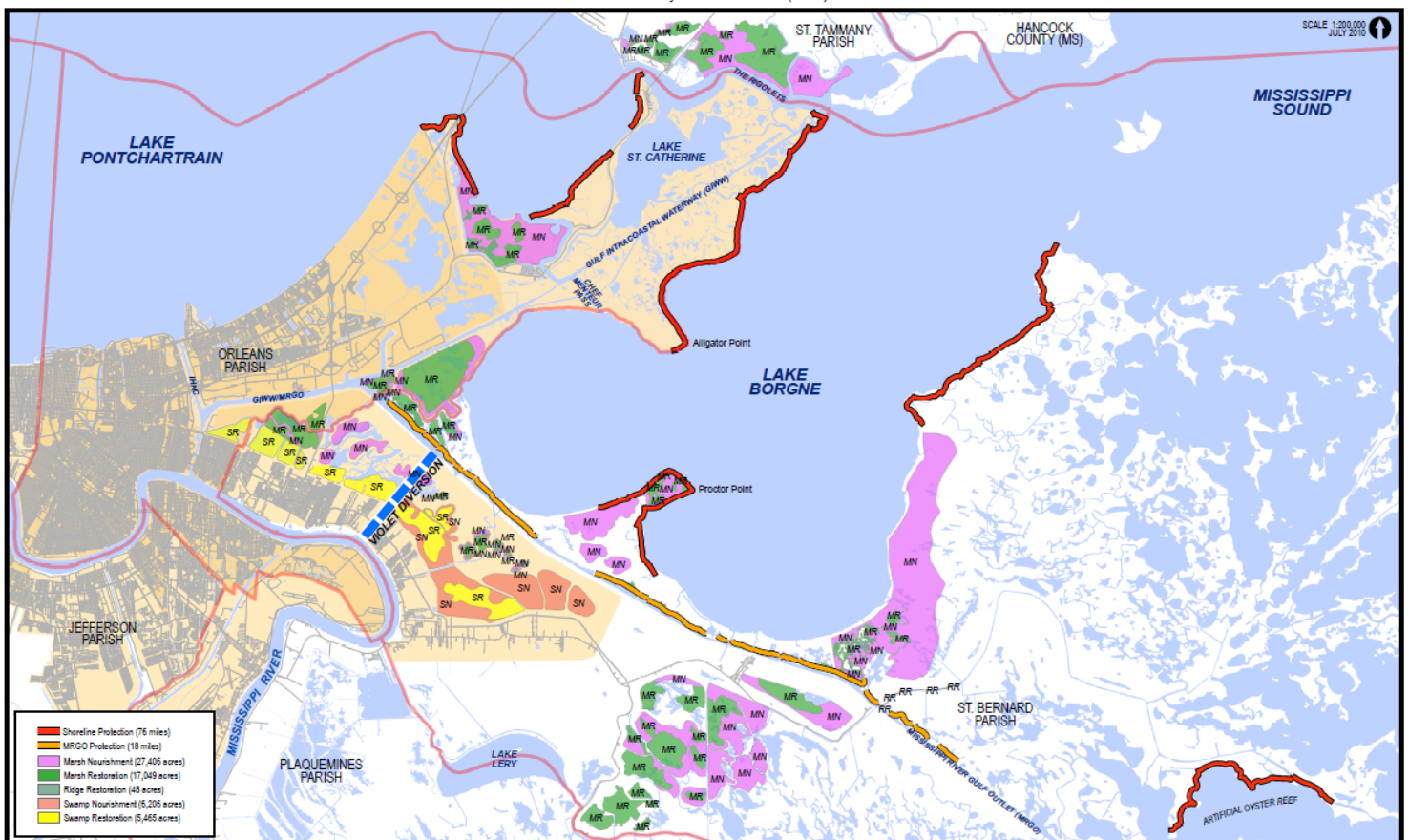
The goal of the plan is to restore and protect a total of 58,861 acres within the project area. The tentatively selected plan is estimated to cost \$2.9 billion for construction, which does not include engineering and design costs, real estate acquisition, and other costs. Features of the tentatively selected plan include:

- Acreage broken down by habitat:
 - 13,950 acres of fresh and intermediate marsh
 - 33,966 acres of brackish marsh
 - 466 acres of saline marsh
 - 10,431 acres of cypress swamp
 - 48 acres of ridge habitat
- 70 miles of shoreline protection broken down by location:
 - 10.5 miles in Lake Pontchartrain
 - 32 miles in Lake Borgne
 - 20 miles along the MRGO
 - 7.5 miles of oyster reef restoration in the Biloxi Marsh

Over 20,000 acres of restoration proposed in the plan are located within critical landscape features such as the Biloxi Marsh and the East Orleans Landbridge. The plan also includes the construction of a freshwater diversion to restore historic salinity conditions in the ecosystem, which would help re-establish historic habitat types such as cypress swamp.

Additional information on the MRGO Ecosystem Restoration Plan Feasibility Study and the Tentatively Selected Plan is available at the MRGO website at www.mrgo.gov.

MRGO (MISSISSIPPI RIVER GULF OUTLET) ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PLAN MRGO Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP)



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