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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 23, 2009

NOAA Celebrates Louisiana Wetlands Restoration
Areas Were Hit by Four Hurricanes in Four Years

NOAA today celebrated the completion of six wetland restoration projects to rebuild more than 300 acres of coastal wetlands damaged by Katrina and Rita in 2005 and Gustav and Ike in 2008. The projects included help from local volunteers and people who traveled cross-country to help restore a storm-ravaged coast.

“These projects, funded in the aftermath of these hurricanes, have contributed not only to habitat restoration, but also to the protection of coastal communities,” said Jim Balsiger, NOAA acting assistant administrator for NOAA’s Fisheries Service, at a ceremony in Louisiana’s Jean Lafitte National Park, the site of one of the projects. “Every project that protects and restores Louisiana’s coastal resources is critical for the state and the region.”

The projects were funded through NOAA’s Community-based Restoration Program, in partnership with the Louisiana Office of Coastal Protection and Restoration and the Gulf of Mexico Foundation. NOAA’s partnership with the state office awarded \$600,000 to the projects, two of which were also sponsored by the foundation. Cash and in-kind services resulted in more than \$1.2 million in leveraged funds for restoration.

The six projects include:

- **Debris Removal Within Barataria Basin:** Implemented with the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program and the Gulf of Mexico Foundation, this project removed marine debris created by the hurricanes, including wood, fallen trees and manmade items like plastics, washing machines, and wrecked boats and homes from 45 acres of wetlands. The debris had clogged five miles of natural bayous.
- **Avoca Island Restoration:** Implemented with the Avoca Island Duck Club, this project involved the construction of 10,000 linear feet of earthen berms, or terraces, within the Atchafalaya Basin, which provide habitat for fish and birds while protecting coasts against erosion and improving water quality.
- **Port Fourchon Maritime Ridge Planting:** Implemented with the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program, this project involved the creation of 30 acres of intertidal wetland and 30 acres of maritime ridge, a higher upland elevation that provides storm protection, in Fourchon, La.
- **Artificial Reef Program:** Implemented with the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, this project constructed four new reefs throughout Lake Pontchartrain using more than 600 reef balls, concrete prefabricated balls with holes that create a three-dimensional artificial reef and refuge for fish. This habitat has been shown to increase fish populations and biodiversity within the lake.
- **Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Terracing:** Implemented with Ducks Unlimited, this project constructed 7,500 linear feet of earthen terraces in the Cameron Prairie National

Wildlife Refuge that will benefit approximately 100 acres of wetland and submerged aquatic habitat.

- **Lower Petite Caillou Shoreline Reconstruction:** Implemented with the Terrebonne Levee and Conservation District, this project involved the restoration of 10 acres of intertidal wetlands along an eroded portion of the Lake Boudreau shoreline.

NOAA understands and predicts changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources.