

## **State of Louisiana**

### **Lowermost Mississippi River Management**

The Lowermost Mississippi River (LMR), defined here as the reach from Baton Rouge to the Gulf of Mexico, is a nationally-significant, multiple use resource. The goal of the Lower Mississippi River Management Program (LMRMP) is to create an integrated, science-based management strategy for the LMR that results in sustaining and restoring wetlands in the ecosystem that is affected by current navigation and flood control systems, and in turn sustaining the LMR navigation and flood control systems through ecosystem restoration.

The Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) have recently engaged successfully in the development of the Louisiana Coastal Area Program (LCA) Mississippi River Hydrodynamic and Delta Management Study (MRHDMS). For the first time, a suite of mutually developed predictive models are available (or soon will be) to assess impacts to the river and adjacent basins of ecosystem restoration Projects. The LMRMP is intended to leverage this important work and will initiate the development of an updated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Mississippi River & Tributaries (MR&T) project. The new EIS will include an evaluation to determine the feasibility of relocating the Saltwater Barrier Sill away from sediment borrow areas used for restoration in the river and the identification of beneficial use opportunities tied to compatible projects in the Comprehensive Master Plan for a Sustainable Coastal Louisiana (Coastal Master Plan). The objective is to create a new river management paradigm where management goals for restoration compliment flood protection and navigation management goals, but all goals are recognized as connected and inter-dependent, and in fact support each other. CPRA will engage the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the USACE as partners to develop a new EIS that will rely heavily on numerical modeling tools developed jointly by CPRA and USACE in the LCA MRHDMS. The LMRMP will result in integrated, science-based, management for the LMR that restores lost wetland habitat and strives to achieve no net loss of wetland habitat in the coastal area affected by the navigation and flood protection programs. The estimated time line is approximately three years for completion of a new EIS. Requested funding amount: \$16,125,000.