

Priority Restoration Solution:

MID-BARATARIA SEDIMENT DIVERSION

RESTORE

THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER DELTA



Louisiana's Land Loss Crisis:

Louisiana has lost 1.2 million acres of land since the 1930s, exposing communities to increased risk of flooding and threatening wildlife habitat and industries. The state is losing a football field of land every 100 minutes, and without action, Louisiana is projected to lose an additional 2,250 square miles – the equivalent of 33 Washington, D.C.s – over the next 50 years.

Coastal Louisiana suffers from some of the highest rates of sea level rise and land loss in the nation, further exacerbated by storm and hurricane events. It is vital that we harness the natural land-building power of the Mississippi River to sustainably rebuild land and combat these forces over time.

Current Landscape



Future Without Project
Year 50—Medium Scenario



Without action, Barataria Basin alone is projected to lose 550 square miles of land with a sea level rise of 2 feet over the next 50 years.

Restoration Solution: Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion

The Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion will mimic natural conditions by directing sediment, fresh water and nutrients from the Mississippi River into adjacent degrading wetlands in Barataria Basin to build and sustain tens of thousands of acres. These new and sustained wetlands will provide vital habitat for a wide variety of wildlife species and a buffer from storm surge for communities and industry.

Since diversions reestablish natural deltaic processes and continuously build land over time, they provide long-term benefits that constructed marsh creation projects alone do not. Sediment diversions provide a regular supply of sediment and fresh water to wetlands, sustaining traditional marsh creation projects while also building new land.

Each year, approximately **100 million tons** of sediment pass through Louisiana – the equivalent of **one large pickup truck per second**.

Much of it is lost to the deep waters of the Gulf.

PRIORITY Restoration Solution: Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion

Time To Act:

The Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion has been studied by state and federal agencies since 1984. Now is the time for action, and that means getting this project permitted, constructed and operating as quickly as possible to match the urgency of Louisiana's land loss crisis.

In January 2017, the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion was designated as a covered project under the Fast-41 Federal Permitting Dashboard, a public platform that tracks agency reviews and permitting for projects of national significance. In the spring of 2018, the timeline for the project was updated to reflect a permitting process ending in November of 2020.

It is critical that federal agencies and the state of Louisiana work collaboratively to meet, and if possible improve upon this timeline, given the immediacy of the situation and the importance of the project for coastal communities and nationally-significant industries.



Sediment diversions will direct sand, silts and clays from the Mississippi River to its delta, creating wetlands and stemming land loss.
Credit: The Water Institute of the Gulf.



The Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion will create and maintain tens of thousands of acres of land in Louisiana's Barataria Basin.
Credit: Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority.

What Went Wrong:

For 7,000 years, the Mississippi River deposited sediment from 31 states and two Canadian provinces across the coast, forming the productive wetlands of south Louisiana. Through regular flood events, the river would break through its natural levees, depositing sediment and laying the foundation for wetlands that sustained wildlife habitat and helped buffer coastal communities from storms. Levees and flood control structures built along the Mississippi River now prevent the river from depositing sediment into its wetlands, contributing to Louisiana's land loss and making the region vulnerable to flooding.

Why It Matters:

Without projects like the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion, Louisiana will continue losing land at an alarming rate, threatening the people, wildlife and industries that depend on the region. Coastal Louisiana feeds and fuels the nation, and its ports connect the U.S. to the world. In addition to being home to more than two million people, coastal Louisiana supplies 90 percent of the nation's outer continental oil and gas, 20 percent of the nation's annual waterborne commerce, 26 percent of continental U.S. commercial fisheries landings by weight, and winter habitat for five million migratory waterfowl.

Learn more about the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion at www.mississippiriverdelta.org/mid-barataria.

WHO WE ARE Restore the Mississippi River Delta is working to protect people, wildlife and jobs by reconnecting the river with its wetlands. As our region faces the crisis of threatening land loss, we offer science-based solutions through a comprehensive approach to restoration. We are composed of conservation, policy, science and outreach experts from Environmental Defense Fund, National Audubon Society, the National Wildlife Federation, Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana and Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation.

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