

# **APPENDIX B**

# Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion Media Resources

Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion Media Resources						
	Title	Link				
Blog Posts	Soaring Above Louisiana's Coast Shows How We Can Restore It					
	Without the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion, the Future for Louisiana's Barataria Basin is Bleak					
	Seeing is Believing When it Comes to Restoring Coastal Louisiana	Vanishing Paradise				
	Project Synergies: Getting the Most Bang for our Buck from Coastal Restoration					
	Let's Get Muddy: How A Mixture of Mud and Sand Can Help Revive Louisiana's Wetlands					
	Helping Communities Participate in the NEPA Scoping Process					
	Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion Takes Another Step Forward					
	Decoding Diversion Permitting: What the Federal Dashboard Means for Restoring Coastal Louisiana					
	Facing Continued Land Loss, Mississippi River Delta Needs Diversions More Than Ever					
	Legal Action from the State on Mid-Barataria Delays Will Be Necessary Without Agreement					
	Plaquemines Gazette Letter to the Editor: River Diversions					
	Can We Build Stable Land in the Mississippi River Delta with River Sediments?					
	The Mississippi River is Our Greatest Force for Building Land					
	A Cornerstone for Coastal Restoration: The Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion					
	5 Places in Plaquemines Parish Building Land Because of the Mississippi River					
	Maurepas Swamp Diversion Selected as Priority in Gulf Restoration Plan					
	New Study Shows Construction of Sediment Diversions Will Deliver Significant Economic Benefits					
	New report studies river diversions as an important restoration tool					
	Mississippi River Diversions Workshop Tackles Difficult Scientific Questions					
	The Next 50 Years: Sediment diversions as a necessary restoration tool					
	Coastal restoration as a climate change adaptation strategy					
	NRDA Trustees should consider long-term sustainability of wetland creation projects					
	Study looks at sediment and water flow through Mississippi River, helps scientists plan effective restoration projects					
	Study demonstrates importance of sediment diversions for building land in the Mississippi River Delta					
	Study on sedimentation will help planners develop effective river diversions					
	Opening of Bonnet Carré Spillway provides insight into use of river sediments					
	The History of the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion					
	The Mississippi River is America's trade artery. It's time to make it more resilient to climate change.					
	To preserve its coast, Louisiana must plan for the future					
	Amid More Frequent Bonnet Carré Spillway Openings, Upriver Diversions Can be a Solution					
	A Mini-Diversion in Boston is Paving the Way for Louisiana's Boldest Coastal Project					
	Losing Ground and Gaining Perspective					
	A Quick Jaunt from New Orleans Reveals the Opportunity to Restore Louisiana's Coast					
Reports	The Mississippi River is Our Greatest Force for Building Land					
	A Tale of Two Basins: Why One is Thriving While the Other is Dying					
	Recommendations for Operating a Sediment Diversion that Balances Ecosystem and Community Needs					
	What is Needed to Protect and Restore one of the Gulf Coast's Largest Swamps?					
	"Optimizing Sediment Diversion Operations: Working Group Recommendations for Integrating Complex Ecological and Social La					
	The Geology of Land Building Using Mississippi River Sediment Diversions					
	"Building Land in Coastal Louisiana: Supplemental Information"					
	Loren Scott - The Economic Impact of Constructing Mid-Barataria and Mid-Breton Sediment Diversions					
	Ten Questions					
Fact Sheets	Sediment Diversions One-Pager	https://mississippiriverdelta.org/files/2018/09/Sediment-Diversion-factsheet-8.30.18.pdf				
	MBSD One-Pager	https://mississippiriverdelta.org/files/2018/09/MBSD-policy-factsheet-7.27.18-FINAL.pdf				
	NFWF MBSD 1	https://mississippiriverdelta.org/files/2017/02/Mid-B.pdf				
	NFWF MBSD 2	https://mississippiriverdelta.org/files/2017/02/Mid-B-2.pdf				
Monograph	Perspectives on the Restoration of the Mississippi River Delta, The Once and Future Delta, Day et al. ed.					
Web Links	MRD Diversions Page	https://mississippiriverdelta.org/restoration-solutions/sediment-diversions/				
	Diversion Operations Expert Working Group	https://mississippiriverdelta.org/learning/diversion-ops-report/				
	Envisioning Our Future Coast	https://www.ourfuturecoast.org/				
Videos	Coast360	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VYsHX91RW0o				
	A local's take on the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzvqMlru_vk				
	Visiting the Mini Mid Barataria Sediment Diversion	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wcW7LA0tqmo				
	Mid Barataria sediment diversion construction proposal	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rj_w1T3VP5g				
	Mississippi River Sediment Diversion Structure Preliminary Construction Scheme	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UwAQ62DrQBw				
	Mending the Marsh (2011) - The Wax & Myrtle Grove	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqKRWXyKRwc				
	Last Call for the Bayou: The Duck Queen	https://www.smithsonianchannel.com/video/series/last-call-for-the-bayou/71139				
	Last Call for the Bayou: Mud, Sweat and Fears	https://www.smithsonianchannel.com/video/series/last-call-for-the-bayou/71137				
	Vanishing Paradise Short Film	https://www.vanishingparadise.org/blog/2018/1/release-of-vanishing-paradise-short-film				
	A View of Restoration from the Barataria Basin	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJr3aP7W008t=42s				
	CSED - Tour of the Lower 9th Ward	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2wCNT6-tHxs				
	Envisioning Our Future Coast	https://vimeo.com/396986288				
	NEW (2021) New Land in a Disappearing Delta	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L3MBqVrh3Gc&feature=youtu.be				
	NEW (2021) Our Best Shot at Restoring Louisiana: Take a Tour with a Local Leader	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKAww84oqts&feature=youtu.be				
Miscellaneous	Sediment Quiz	https://mississippiriverdelta.org/our-coastal-crisis/wasted-sediment/challenge/				
	Faith Leader Sign-On Letter 2017	https://mississippiriverdelta.org/louisiana-faith-leaders-support-coastal-restoration/				
Google Earth Tours	A Tale of Two Basins	https://earth.google.com/web/@38.27113824,-92.17195838,209.71269651a,3460606.47011392d,30y,0h,0t,0r/data=McKJQoCiExRERiTXNmaktU1ZiN2BRVExrOUIFSd3VkdEplVmpFeEg				
	River Fest 2020 - Mississippi River Tour	https://earth.google.com/web/@38.29153635,-92.17306469,221.57506608a,3453380.73931589d,30y,0h,0t,0r/data=McKJQoCiExZTRlUkVvRHlY4cXGEtEzaDjheTlaakOvU2022WzbHo7nli=1				
	UNR Flyover 2019	https://earth.google.com/web/@29.28690552,-90.6992147,-0.18831487a,139437.27203049d,30y,0h,0t,0r/data=McKJQoCiExamJNymcz7iRSaY4vVFk4U2iNMDoxRWRkMFRGoiVPAHfipI=1				
Delta Dispatches Episodes						
Episode	Topic	Segment 1 Guest	Segment 2 Guest	Segment 3 Guest	Segment 4 Guest	
	3 Diversions	Rudy Simoneaux, Brad Barth (CPRA)	Rudy Simoneaux, Brad Barth (CPRA)	Rudy Simoneaux, Brad Barth (CPRA)	Rebecca Triche (LWF)	
	10 Operations	Natalie Peyronin (EDF)	Natalie Peyronin (EDF)	Jimmy Frederick (CRCL)	Jimmy Frederick (CRCL)	
	17 Deltas	David Muth (NWF)	David Muth (NWF)	Alex Kolker (LUMCON)	Alex Kolker (LUMCON)	
	20 MBSD Scoping	Amy Streitwieser, Teresa Chan, ELI	Amy Streitwieser, Teresa Chan, ELI	Natalie Peyronnin, EDF	Natalie Peyronnin, EDF	
	24 Sediment	Jim Robbins (Journalist)	Jim Robbins (Journalist)	Alex Kolker (LUMCON)	Alex Kolker (LUMCON)	

51	SCIENCE STUDIES	Alex Kolker (LUMCON)	Alex Kolker (LUMCON)	Clint Wilson (LSU)	Clint Wilson (LSU)
64	Mythbusting Diversions	Alisha Renfro (NWF)	Alisha Renfro (NWF)	Alisha Renfro (NWF)	Alisha Renfro (NWF)
86	Bonnet Carre Opening	Kristi Trail, Executive Director, LPBF	Kristi Trail, Executive Director, LPBF	Chip Kline (CPRA)	Alisha Renfro (NWF)
88	Freshwater Diversions	Erin Plitsch (CPRA)	Erin Plitsch (CPRA)	Erin Plitsch (CPRA)	Erin Plitsch (CPRA)
99	Untaming the Mighty Mississippi	Tristan Baurick (Times Pic/NOLA.com)	Tristan Baurick (Times Pic/NOLA.com)	Tristan Baurick (Times Pic/NOLA.com)	Tristan Baurick (Times Pic/NOLA.com)
100	Epsidoe 100 with The Governor	Governor John Bel Edwards	Governor John Bel Edwards	Governor John Bel Edwards	Governor John Bel Edwards
101	High River De-brief	Alisha Renfro (NWF)	Alisha Renfro (NWF)	Natalie Snider (EDF)	Natalie Snider (EDF)
104	Weather & Diversions	Steve Caparotta (WAFB)	Steve Caparotta (WAFB)	Steve Caparotta (WAFB)	David Muth (NWF)
105	Fishing with Diversions	Chris Macaluso (TRCP)	Chris Macaluso (TRCP)	Todd Masson (Writer)	Todd Masson (Writer)
117	Diversions 2020	Brad Barth (CPRA)	Brad Barth (CPRA)	Rudy Simoneaux (CPRA)	Rudy Simoneaux (CPRA)
134	Upriver Diversions & Pontchartrain Conservancy	Ehab Meseihe (Tulane)	Ehab Meseihe (Tulane)	Kristi Trail (PC)	Kristi Trail (PC)
135	Mid-Breton Scoping	Brad Laborde & Jeff Varisco (USACE)	Brad Laborde & Jeff Varisco (USACE)	Amy Reed & Stephanie Oehler (ELI)	Amy Reed & Stephanie Oehler (ELI)
News Articles	Title	Link			
	Scientists Sign-On Letter	<a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B50zQJNmJStiamZBNmk1d0FQNI1U/view">https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B50zQJNmJStiamZBNmk1d0FQNI1U/view</a>			
	Guest column: This is no time to give up on Louisiana's coast	<a href="https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/opinion/article_3f402a0c-a69e-11ea-a9d8-1365263788dd.htm">https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/opinion/article_3f402a0c-a69e-11ea-a9d8-1365263788dd.htm</a>			
	WAX LAKE IS A TEST TUBE ON HOW TO CREATE A DELTA	<a href="https://www.stmarynow.com/outdoor/wax-lake-test-tube-how-create-delta">https://www.stmarynow.com/outdoor/wax-lake-test-tube-how-create-delta</a>			
	Scientists set out to answer a question that has plagued them since Hurricane Katrina	<a href="https://www.fox8live.com/story/36468527/scientists-set-out-to-answer-a-question-that-has-plagued-them-since-hurricane-katrina/">https://www.fox8live.com/story/36468527/scientists-set-out-to-answer-a-question-that-has-plagued-them-since-hurricane-katrina/</a>			
	Guest column: Diversion projects critical for Louisiana coast	<a href="https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/opinion/article_d5dca016-e85a-11e8-bc7a-4f60c74f9206.html">https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/opinion/article_d5dca016-e85a-11e8-bc7a-4f60c74f9206.html</a>			
	Mississippi River's high water is a missed opportunity to restore the coast   Opinion	<a href="https://www.nola.com/opinions/article_20588c63-9e05-5dfe-b2c2-83f7aca52d57.html">https://www.nola.com/opinions/article_20588c63-9e05-5dfe-b2c2-83f7aca52d57.html</a>			
	In the sky with Restore the Mississippi River Delta	<a href="https://wgno.com/on-air/in-the-sky-with-restore-the-mississippi-river-delta/">https://wgno.com/on-air/in-the-sky-with-restore-the-mississippi-river-delta/</a>			
	Guest column: Saving Louisiana's coast is not out of reach	<a href="https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/opinion/article_80bbeb80-a697-11ea-be0b-bbb22193fd3.html">https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/opinion/article_80bbeb80-a697-11ea-be0b-bbb22193fd3.html</a>			
	Coastal restoration and the regional economy, post-Katrina	<a href="https://neworleanscitybusiness.com/blog/2020/08/19/coastal-restoration-and-the-regional-economy-post-katrina/">https://neworleanscitybusiness.com/blog/2020/08/19/coastal-restoration-and-the-regional-economy-post-katrina/</a>			
	Caernarvon Freshwater Diversion Project works to rebuild wetlands	<a href="https://www.wdsu.com/article/caernarvon-freshwater-diversion-project-works-to-rebuild-wetlands/28944312#">https://www.wdsu.com/article/caernarvon-freshwater-diversion-project-works-to-rebuild-wetlands/28944312#</a>			
	Old accident in Mississippi Delta holds lessons for saving Louisiana's coast	<a href="https://www.nola.com/news/environment/article_da03ee50-3631-54d3-ae1c-84ff959d285f.html">https://www.nola.com/news/environment/article_da03ee50-3631-54d3-ae1c-84ff959d285f.html</a>			
	Guest column: Rebuilding coast demands commitment, and willingness to change	<a href="https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/opinion/article_edb24246-e622-11ea-b191-6b2e52384907.html">https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/opinion/article_edb24246-e622-11ea-b191-6b2e52384907.html</a>			
	Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion could create, save 47 square miles of land over 50 years	<a href="https://www.nola.com/news/environment/article_fba3837c-28d8-11ea-844c-bf1ddc3a10e1.html">https://www.nola.com/news/environment/article_fba3837c-28d8-11ea-844c-bf1ddc3a10e1.html</a>			
	Mississippi River Diversions Could Save Louisiana's Drowning Coast	<a href="https://www.enr.com/articles/44968-mississippi-river-diversions-could-save-louisianas-drowning-coast">https://www.enr.com/articles/44968-mississippi-river-diversions-could-save-louisianas-drowning-coast</a>			
	State officials defend water diversions for restoring coastline	<a href="https://www.houmatoday.com/news/20190817/state-officials-defend-water-diversions-for-restoring-coastline">https://www.houmatoday.com/news/20190817/state-officials-defend-water-diversions-for-restoring-coastline</a>			
	Letters: Without diversions, some coastal communities would vanish	<a href="https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/opinion/letters/article_f30e06b8-ca7a-11e9-9440-b382d85cc62c.html">https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/opinion/letters/article_f30e06b8-ca7a-11e9-9440-b382d85cc62c.html</a>			
	A Mini-Mississippi River May Help Save Louisiana's Vanishing Coast	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/25/climate/louisiana-mississippi-river-model.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/25/climate/louisiana-mississippi-river-model.html</a>			
	Drastic Measures: Conservation and the murky future of Louisiana's embattled coast	<a href="https://www.myneworleans.com/drastric-measures/">https://www.myneworleans.com/drastric-measures/</a>			
Podio Resources	Link	Notes			
	<a href="https://podio.com/edforg/mississippi-river-delta/apps/file-library/items/37">https://podio.com/edforg/mississippi-river-delta/apps/file-library/items/37</a>	Sediment Diversions Tool-Kit (A Collection of Blogs, Videos, Articles, etc.)			
	<a href="https://podio.com/edforg/mississippi-river-delta/apps/workplan-strategies/items/27">https://podio.com/edforg/mississippi-river-delta/apps/workplan-strategies/items/27</a>	Blogs/Articles/Resources related to Priority Projects Advancement Workplan Strategy			

[https://www.theadvocate.com/baton\\_rouge/opinion/letters/article\\_c40df1b4-b97c-11eb-9a7b-77e8576d875d.html](https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/opinion/letters/article_c40df1b4-b97c-11eb-9a7b-77e8576d875d.html)

# Mark Davis: More than past time to move with Mid-Barataria diversion

BY MARK DAVIS

MAY 21, 2021 - 6:00 PM

Coastal Louisiana is in trouble. The state's once vast system of coastal wetlands and estuaries has shrunk by more than 1,800 square miles and more loss is on the way. We can debate the causes for that, but what is not debatable is that our state is disappearing fast and our options for keeping any significant part of it are extremely limited.

For years, the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion has been a linchpin of Louisiana's coastal protection and restoration plans. Basically, the project will reintroduce the waters and sediments of the Mississippi River back into a landscape the river once built but has been divorced from. Despite all of that planning and discussion, there are still uncertainties about the project and questions about its negative impacts and who will bear them. Some of those uncertainties involve questions of science and engineering that are way beyond my expertise to

process that authorized and funded the project and there is little prospect of doing something meaningful other than the MBSD.

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The MBSD alone won't save our coast. It will need to be supplemented by a wide array of other projects and programs to help communities adapt to the changes ahead. But it is inconceivable that our coast has a fighting chance without projects of the MBSD's scale — projects that reengage the river with the coast it built and do it soon. The choice is not between dropping MBSD and keeping our coast as it is. The choice is between not doing the MBSD and losing our coast and all that entails. Because, if we are unable to find a way to move the MBSD forward, then I don't see us coming together around any other major projects in time for them to matter. That is where we are.

**MARK DAVIS**

*director, Tulane Center for Environmental Law*

*New Orleans*

## OP-ED: The Mississippi River is our strongest asset to hold onto our Coast, it

By: CityBusiness Guest Perspective • May 21, 2021 • 1 Comment

Throughout my life and career — growing up in Louisiana, working during college summers on a towboat pushing oil and chemical barges up the river from Baton Rouge, working to “Save Our Lake” in the early years of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation (now Pontchartrain Conservancy), and working from D.C., and now New Orleans, to rebuild our disappearing coast — I have remained in awe of the power and beauty of the Mississippi River. This river is an ecological treasure, an economic engine for the world, and it literally built the delta on which we live today.

Many now know, our efforts to control the river for shipping and protect our communities from annual floods resulted in walls (levees) that severed the vital connection between the river and the land-building necessary to sustain its delta. That connection was to the sediment and freshwater delivered by the spring floods every year, which built and sustained the land outside of the river banks. While this management approach allowed us to maintain a degree of control over the river, it also created a false perception that things would remain relatively constant along our river and across our coast.

However, one thing about Louisiana’s coast is clear — there is no status quo. Change is the constant. There was a time when people learned to live with and adapt to the changes it brought us. We built elevated homes that could withstand regular flooding events. We harvested and managed the natural cycles of our estuaries.

When prior generations leveed the river, they disrupted a natural cycle, the consequences of which we are now confronting in a big way. With climate change onto the scene, that disruption has become critical.

In a few generations, Louisiana has lost a land mass equivalent to Delaware. As those losses have continued, communities have been hit north with each subsequent storm — confronted by increased tidal flooding during even sunny days, and more severe storm surges have encroached further inland, throwing out of balance our estuaries and threatening the natural resources that helped shape our state the Sportsman's Paradise.

Despite these challenges, we can still effect change for the positive. While we won't be able to get back to the coast of yesterday or have today, we have a very powerful asset to deploy as we work to maintain a sustainable coast for tomorrow.

How do we get there? Louisiana is currently advancing a powerful project to reconnect the Mississippi River to build and maintain the Barataria Basin — one of our nation's most productive, and most threatened, estuaries. The project is called the Mid-Barataria and will be the largest individual ecosystem restoration project in U.S. history.

When operating in concert with the range of other projects in Louisiana's Coastal Master Plan, this is our greatest asset against land loss, and it is one that no other coastal region in the U.S. has at its disposal. As cities like Miami and New York confront how to protect against stronger hurricanes and rising seas, they would be so lucky to have our powerful river and its annual supply of sediment to push back the forces. Shame on us if we don't use it.

Sediment diversions are backed by decades of research, and scientists, engineers and coastal planners have all pointed to these projects as vital to maintaining a future for Louisiana's coast.

There are, of course, some opposed to the project who claim that we can somehow maintain the status quo of our coast, our fisheries without this project. That is simply not true.

A future without the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion will give in to massive change and disruption. And, if we don't take action, the effects of sea level rise will significantly add to that disruption.

That's not to say that the diversion won't cause some near-term disruptions on its own, as it restores the health and balance to the ecosystem. From this perspective, "restoring" will mean moving the Barataria Basin in the direction of how it was decades ago — a healthier, more freshwater system of the restored flow of the river, rather than the more weakened, saline system of today. And this movement has direct implications for the communities that have come to depend economically on the system as it exists now. The places to harvest commercial species like oysters, shrimp and crabs will most likely move in the direction of their earlier habitats supported by higher salinity levels. So growers and harvesters will need to be viable, meaning oysters leases in different places than today, and shrimp and salt water fin-fish in different areas as habitats as history have moved, so we know how to adapt, because we always have; but that doesn't mean it's easy.

To help manage these short-term changes, the state is advancing a mitigation and stewardship plan to help people and wildlife adapt, and to classify coastal monitoring systems and science. Now is the time for all parties to come to the table and be upfront about what their needs are and their part to help meet them. Our state has to do its job to restore the coast that protects our region, and that can be done without leaving people behind.

The project will also bring desperately needed jobs and economic growth. It would spur \$1.4 billion in regional investment through the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. With that investment, Plaquemines Parish, where the project would be constructed, and the surrounding and Jefferson parishes — would expect to see a significant economic boost. Overall household earnings in our region could increase annually, supporting 12,400 additional local jobs and boosting sales to regional businesses by nearly \$1.5 billion.

These are exactly the types of investments that Louisiana, and other coastal areas across the country, need to confront the challenges of climate change. During this month's trip to New Orleans and Lake Charles, an area still recovering from last year's hurricanes, President Biden proposed a Jobs Plan. This plan recognizes that revitalizing our economy must include investing in natural infrastructure that can help protect our coast from sea level rise and hurricanes. In Louisiana, our coast is vital infrastructure.

We can no longer afford to sit on the sidelines as more of our coast and our future sink into the Gulf. We must accept that our coast is changing. However, if we make the right decisions today, future generations will still have a coast to keep.



Tagged with:

MID-BARATARIA SEDIMENT DIVERSION

MISSISSIPPI RIVER



## ONE COMMENT

*John Tesvich*

May 27, 2021 at 11:13 am

Steve Cochran's column regarding the proposed \$2 billion Mid Barataria diversion project is levels that it is hard to know where to begin. His fascination with flooding southeast Louisiana polluted Mississippi River water runs far counter to his profession of love and concern for the habitat and heritage. And he conveniently ignores the fact that the people who live, work in Plaquemines and St. Bernard Parish universally condemn and oppose this project (unlike the contractors who will earn huge fees from the project or the bureaucrats who comfortably ride Baton Rouge while conceiving these things up at taxpayer expense).

Predictably, like his bureaucrat colleagues, Cochran seems more obsessed with building "the ecosystem restoration project in US history" than doing the right thing.

Perhaps most insulting about Cochran's comments is how dismissive he is of the negative Louisiana's fisheries, claiming that "near term disruptions" will be easy for the approximately 100,000 people who earn their livings off commercial fisheries to adjust to. Bottom line is that this project is bad for Louisiana and poison for our commercial fisheries and the families that make their livings off them. Alternatives exist although CPRA, Cochran and their allies have conveniently ignored them. It's a US record for creating more misery than land mass.

[https://www.theadvocate.com/baton\\_rouge/opinion/article\\_aeed71da-96fc-11eb-8091-63cd50dfce88.html](https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/opinion/article_aeed71da-96fc-11eb-8091-63cd50dfce88.html)

# Guest column: Many ways to help the coast, but sediment diversion is a big and important way

BY KIMBERLY DAVIS REYHER and KRISTI TRAIL

**APR 9, 2021 - 6:00 PM**



Just over 30 years ago, two new nonprofits sprang to life in south Louisiana, one to improve the health of Lake Pontchartrain and its basin, at a time when that body of water was closed to recreation because of pollution; the other to rally action around restoration of the state's coastal wetlands, which had been disappearing since the 1930s.

The Pontchartrain Conservancy (originally known as the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation) and the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana were new organizations, but the problems they sought to correct were not.

In the past three decades, our organizations have grown and evolved. We study our coastal issues and potential solutions, and we advocate for the best policies, rooted in the certainty of science. We host volunteer events during which we plant grasses and trees to anchor the fragile soil on which our communities have been built. We build oyster reefs to protect the wetlands that provide seafood and a paradise for sportsmen and women, and that buffer us from storms. There is much we can do to restore and maintain our coast.

Now the challenges and opportunities of coastal land loss are well known, and the level of restoration activity along the coast of Louisiana is at an all-time high, fueled mostly by funding resulting from the Deepwater Horizon settlement.

A guiding principle in our efforts, whether through oyster shell recycling or in taking the lake from impaired to open for recreation, has been re-establishing a natural balance. But we must do more.

Our land loss continues, and our most powerful tool in stopping it has not been deployed — yet. Just as human manipulation led to the unhealthy conditions in the lake, the artificial controlling of the Mississippi River by strictly leveeing it from one end to the other has led to unhealthy conditions in the adjacent wetlands that comprise our coast. The levees have protected our communities from flooding — usually — but they also have choked off the annual supply of sediment and nutrients that built this great delta in the first place, instead sending them downriver and into the Gulf.

Correcting this unsustainable situation is what the Mid-Barataria sediment diversion will do. The project, to be sited about 25 miles downriver from New Orleans, will build a channel that will allow water and sediment to flow from the river into adjacent wetlands when sediment levels are high. It will allow nature to return to work by feeding the starving wetlands Louisiana is losing so quickly.

We know from scientific modeling, not guesswork, that it is our best shot — *our only shot* — at stopping the disappearance of our wetlands. More than 2,000 square miles of our coast have vanished, so we have moved past the point of deciding whether we should implement this project. We are now at the point of figuring out the specifics of how to do it.

Louisiana's coast is not just a geographical area. It is the habitat for untold numbers of birds and other wildlife. It is the first line of defense between millions of people and the hurricane-fueling waters of the Gulf. It is the lifeblood of fishing. And it is where people live.

But this isn't about just the environment. It's also about jobs. This massive public works project will create thousands of them, and it will protect thousands more. The coast of Louisiana will prosper, economically and environmentally, once it is restored.

If you want to safely live, work and play in coastal Louisiana into the future, support this project and urge state and federal officials to proceed through the permitting process without delay.

We urge you to support the sediment diversion, which is now in the public comment period, but we also urge you to ask questions about it. Just as we believe this is a project that will benefit all south Louisiana residents, we want all voices to be part of the solution. This problem of coastal land loss is ours, and it is our responsibility to solve it.

*Kimberly Davis Reyher is executive director of the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana. Kristi Trail is executive director of Pontchartrain Conservancy.*

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**Guest column: Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion will build land, and economy**

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# Louisiana's shrinking wetlands puts communities and cultures at risk | Charles Allen

*Vulnerable populations need to provide input on the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion*

By **Charles Allen** - May 11, 2021



*The Louisiana Highway 1 Bridge, also known as the Gateway to the Gulf Expressway, rises above the marshland and coastal waters on August 25, 2019, in Leeville. Louisiana has been losing its coastal landscape at the rate of almost a football fields worth of land every hour.. (Photo by Drew Angerer/Getty Images)*

Last year, I had the opportunity to board a small plane and fly over Louisiana's coast. Taking off from the New Orleans Lakefront Airport, recognizable landmarks like the Louisiana Superdome quickly faded into the background, and in only 20-30 minutes, we were flying over open water. We often hear that our wetlands are vanishing, but to see firsthand how sparse they are is shocking.





Communities in South Louisiana are the poster children for climate change, and our state's future is at a pivotal turning point. For decades, we've been losing land at an alarming rate from coastal erosion, sea-level rise and other threats. And communities of color are right on the front lines. New Orleans is a majority-Black city, where the people most at risk are also vital to its sense of place. We need systemic change and environmental restoration to protect our people and culture. Often people of color are left out of the conversation, denied the opportunity to discuss possible solutions or provide insight into how they're affected.

We now have an opportunity to turn the tide by raising our voices in support of the single-largest restoration project in U.S. history, the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion. This game-changing project will reconnect the Mississippi River and its rich, life-giving sediment to the wetlands. The sediment diversion will mimic the natural spring floods that once replenished the marshes, benefiting birds, wildlife and fisheries.

The coastal landscape, including areas that are home to communities of Indigenous people and people of color, is dynamic and changing. The Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion will build and sustain wetlands in the Barataria Basin that provide storm protection for countless communities in Southeast Louisiana, from small towns such as Lafitte to population centers such as Belle Chasse and the Greater New Orleans region. Healthy wetlands act as a natural buffer that, in addition to hard structures such as levees and floodwalls, protect our communities from rising seas and storm surge.

Since the 1930s, the Barataria Basin has lost nearly 295,000 acres of land. That loss has displaced communities, threatened critical infrastructure and jobs, and devastated habitat for birds and other wildlife. The Barataria Basin was also ground zero for the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, causing the wetlands there to disappear three times faster than those in the rest of the state. The levees that protect our communities are also partly to blame for this land loss; by walling in the Mississippi River, we've starved our coast of the sediment it needs to survive. We need levees to protect our communities, but if

we don't address the vanishing wetlands, we can expect to be flooded more often, which would further put our diverse and culturally rich communities at risk.



The unique cultures and way of life for millions of Louisianians are inextricably connected to the natural resources of the state's coast. With its special cuisine and traditions and its destination as a place to hunt and fish, Louisiana is world-renowned for its distinctive coastal culture, which relies on areas like wetlands and the resources they produce. In many local areas, generations of families have occupied the same communities — and even the same land and family homes — for generations. These ties to the land are woven into the history and culture of local areas and communities and are at risk of being lost as Louisiana's land loss crisis continues.

Now is the time for all of us to get involved. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is asking for our input on the Mid Barataria Sediment Diversion. This procedural milestone for the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion gives an opportunity for locals to be part of the process. A public comment period is open through June 3, offering individuals and organizations an opportunity to play an active role in the restoration process.

Like any significant issue that affects all the people in our area, it is critical that we diversify the voices who are represented and become more inclusive. The environmental movement should reflect all of the communities it serves. By offering public comment on the record, the real people impacted by and receiving benefits from this project can make their voices heard to state and federal agency officials and other decision makers. Visit [mississippiriverdelta.org](https://mississippiriverdelta.org) to add your voice to this pivotal moment for Louisiana's coast.

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**Charles Allen**

Charles Allen is the Community Engagement Director for the Gulf Coast at the National Audubon Society, where the entire focus of his work on diversity, equity and inclusion by enhancing Audubon's reach to underrepresented communities in the Gulf Coast region.



[https://www.theadvocate.com/baton\\_rouge/opinion/article\\_fc05cf86-9160-11eb-b4ab-7b33a75702ed.html](https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/opinion/article_fc05cf86-9160-11eb-b4ab-7b33a75702ed.html)

# Guest column: Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion will build land, and economy

BY GAY LEBRETON and BRANDON NELSON

APR 2, 2021 - 6:00 PM



The Mississippi River's West Bank levee is shown Thursday March 4, 2021, near Myrtle Grove, where Louisiana structure to divert sediment-laden water from the river, right, into a channel leading to Barataria Basin. (Staff NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune | The New Orleans Advocate)

PHOTO BY DAVID GRUNFELD DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

At the beginning of March, we reached a critical moment in Louisiana's battle to combat coastal land loss and rebuild our coast. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released its draft Environmental Impact Statement on the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion, a key step in permitting for a major component of the state's Coastal Master plan.

The Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion is a game-changing coastal restoration project that must move forward if we are to turn the tide on Louisiana's land loss crisis. We are voicing support for this project, which implements an innovative and sustainable

approach to reducing our land loss, rebuilding our wetlands, and creating significant economic benefit.

Being the largest individual restoration project in U.S. history, the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion will build more wetlands than any other project of its kind in the world. The project, funded by the BP Deepwater Horizon settlement, will develop new land and sustain existing wetlands by using the power of the Mississippi River to move sediment and fresh water from the river into nearby basins, mimicking nature's historic land-building processes. Without this project, over the next 50 years the Barataria Basin alone could lose an additional 550 square miles of land, which is approximately one and a half times the size of the city of New Orleans. Such an outcome would jeopardize the safety and prosperity of the entire region, threaten our way of life and eviscerate coastal habitat that wildlife need to survive.

In the words of Michael Hecht, President and CEO of GNO, Inc., "Coastal restoration is truly where the economy meets the environment." Economic development and coastal restoration are intrinsically linked: By committing to restoring the coast, we protect existing and future investment in Louisiana while developing an exportable knowledge-based industry and specialized workforce. Implementation of projects outlined in Louisiana's Comprehensive Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast, such as the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion, will preserve our working coast, reduce hurricane storm surge, and encourage business growth.

Coastal projects foster diversity and growth for our economy, as highlighted by GNO, Inc.'s 2019 Coastal Restoration Workforce Outlook, which found that Coastal Master Plan projects will yield thousands of jobs in operations, maintenance and monitoring, as well as construction. The Army Corps of Engineers analysis indicates that the Barataria project could generate an impressive 12,400 jobs in the state, mostly in the greater New Orleans region, during its three to five-year construction period. Particularly if coupled with training, these jobs will expand opportunities for locals to enter good-paying career paths as dredge operators, carpenters, plumbers, pipefitters, drafters, engineers, architects, computer analysts and programmers, and more. In a 2017 report, Dr. Stephen Barnes of LSU found that coastal restoration and protection jobs yield an average wage of \$59,000/year, significantly higher than the state's median wage of \$34,9000/year.

Businesses will benefit, too. According to a 2019 report by economist Dr. Loren Scott, construction of the Mid-Barataria and Mid-Breton Sediment Diversion projects will support an increase in regional business sales by \$3.1 billion.

While the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion is the right step in the right direction, we recognize that there will be inevitable environmental impacts that will have to be addressed. We are encouraged that the state has outlined mitigation strategies and designated significant resources to lessen the potential impacts, such as job training programs and startup financial assistance for impacted industry members. Along those same lines, organizations such as GNO, Inc. are postured to serve as connectors to bring together industry and higher education/workforce development training partners to aid those seeking to transition.

Coastal restoration and protection is a cornerstone to securing a thriving economy in the greater New Orleans region, presently and for future generations. We support the construction of the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion, as it is our best shot at protecting vulnerable communities, reducing hurricane storm surge, and fostering economic growth for years to come. The Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion is where the economy meets the environment, and thrives.

*Gay LeBreton is chair of the GNO Inc. Board. Brandon Nelson is chair of GNO Inc.'s Coalition for Coastal Resilience and Economy.*

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## **Our Views: More money needed for coast**

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**OPINION** *This piece expresses the views of its author(s), separate from those of this publication.*

## Guest column: River diversion important to Louisiana coast

**Ted Falgout** Guest Columnist

Published 6:03 p.m. CT Mar. 16, 2021

As a fourth generation Louisianaian living in the Barataria Basin for my entire life, some of my fondest memories involve trapping, hunting, fishing and alligatoring with my grandfather, father, siblings, and now my own sons and grandchildren. But this way of life and Louisiana's bounty -- its fisheries, wildlife habitat, and abundant natural resources -- are at risk of complete collapse without large-scale coastal restoration projects like the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion.

The urgency to build the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion cannot be overstated. Without this project the future for our coast, communities, economy and wildlife is dire. The Barataria Basin alone could lose an additional 550 square miles of land over the next 50 years, a nightmare scenario that would jeopardize the safety and prosperity of not only Lafourche Parish, but our entire



region, threatening our unique culture and our status as Sportsman's Paradise.

With an extensive educational background in fisheries biology and Louisiana's coastal zone, I understand the science behind the basin and its current collapse. As the former executive director of Port Fourchon, I was also directly involved in building offshore breakwaters, coastal dune and beach restoration projects and the creation of thousands of acres of marsh and maritime forest ridges by beneficial use of hydraulic dredge material. As a landowner of over a thousand acres of Barataria's wetlands, I personally have a huge stake in its survival.

**More:** Study marks major milestone for river diversion and Louisiana coastal plan

These experiences have shaped my views on what it will take to address Louisiana's very dire land loss crisis. Today, as a retiree, my "office" is now the basin as I get to enjoy full-time the natural treasures that have sustained me and my family for generations. I know that unless bold and aggressive measures are taken, future generations will not get to experience this bounty or live where we have lived unless we act with urgency and commitment. Both time and the tide are not on our side.

However, we have an opportunity to avoid this worst-case scenario. Louisiana has a resource that many other states, and even other regions of our own coast, would kill for – the Mighty Mississippi

and its land-building sediment. This river built our great delta, producing an unparalleled abundance of natural resources, and it is our best hope of hanging onto all we know and love of our coast.

**More:** State plan outlines coastal work underway or soon to get started in Terrebonne and Lafourche

For decades, scientists and engineers have considered all the tools available and overwhelmingly agree the Mid-Barataria project is the best long-term solution necessary to match the challenges we face from land loss, sea level rise and climate change. No project that has the capability to be such a game changer will be without impacts, but these impacts can be managed and pale in significance to what is at stake if we squander this opportunity. A “future without action” would mean a future without South Louisiana, and that is something we owe to future generations.