

# POINTE-AUX-CHENES



## QUICK FACTS

**LOCATION:** Pointe-aux-Chenes Wildlife Management Area, Montegut, Louisiana

**DATE:** October 2016 - Present

### PROJECT ATTRIBUTES:

- Air & water quality improvement
- Enhanced habitat for fish & wildlife
- Hazard mitigation
- Storm water management
- Flood control

## BACKGROUND

Restore the Earth Foundation is restoring 1 million acres in the Mississippi River Basin, North America's Amazon. To launch this million acre mission, Restore the Earth has chosen to restore a 4,000 acre historic freshwater cypress forest in the Pointe-aux-Chenes Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Louisiana.

The Pointe-aux-Chenes project is also the first project under the US Business Council for Sustainable Development (US BCSD) + Restore the Earth Foundation Strategic Alliance, created to apply a business-led project model for landscape restoration that can be scaled and replicated in water-stressed watersheds and regions.

The selection of this particular site is deeply symbolic. Pointe-aux-Chenes is located in Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes, approximately 15 miles southeast of Houma, Louisiana. The site is an essential ecosystem that includes diverse physical, biological and socioeconomic resources, including:

- Threatened and endangered species
- High fish and bird value
- Great economic value as commercial and recreational fisheries
- Most utilized wildlife management area in Louisiana
- Home to the United Houma Nation and Pointe-au-Chien Indian Tribe



Volunteers from partner organizations joined Restore the Earth for the groundbreaking at Pointe-aux-Chenes



Pointe-aux-Chenes WMA is the largest landmass providing the first and last line of defense protecting over 200,000 residents of this coastal community from the open water of the Gulf of Mexico.

State wide, it is the first line of defense within the “multiple lines of defense” strategy identified in the [Louisiana Coastal Master Plan](#) and deployed by the State of Louisiana.

This area is owned and managed by Restore the Earth partners, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries (LDWF).

## PROJECT DETAIL

In 2005, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita damaged levees along the Gulf of Mexico, leading to major forest degradation, habitat deterioration and reduced wildlife use. As a result, this area lost an extreme amount of land, with contiguous sections of wetlands being lost to open water.

Since 2005, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries has restored the natural freshwater hydrology to this valuable area—utilizing existing Parish levees, the Morganza to the Gulf of Mexico levee and a variety of water control structures—to regulate water saturation and establish intensive water management units. This has stabilized the land and maintained low salinity levels in the system, providing the needed conditions for the return of bald cypress habitat.

## WHAT'S AT STAKE LOCALLY?

The Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes, “Bayou Parishes” with a combined population of over 200,000 people, sit on thin fingers of land that are protected by surrounding wetland swamps and wetlands. To the south of these Parishes lies the Gulf of Mexico. This area is home to the United Houma Nation and Pointe-au-Chien Indian Tribe. The Parishes depend on fishing, hunting, trapping, boat building, off-shore oil and gas production and support activities. These Parishes contribute nearly 40 percent of total U.S. seafood exports. They are true coastal wetland environments.



Yet these communities are highly vulnerable to risks from natural hazards and future land loss. The ground is at or is close to sea level and therefore easily inundated by storm surges if not protected by wetlands. While some communities are protected by a levee system, the Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes remain vulnerable to the impacts of flooding and hurricanes.

## WHAT'S AT STAKE NATIONALLY?

The wetlands in this region represent about 40 percent of the wetlands of the continental United States. About 80 percent of the Nation's wetland loss is in Louisiana, about a football field of wetlands is lost every hour.

The Nation's most valuable natural resources in coastal Louisiana protect terrestrial and marine species and support communities, industries and millions of jobs nationwide.



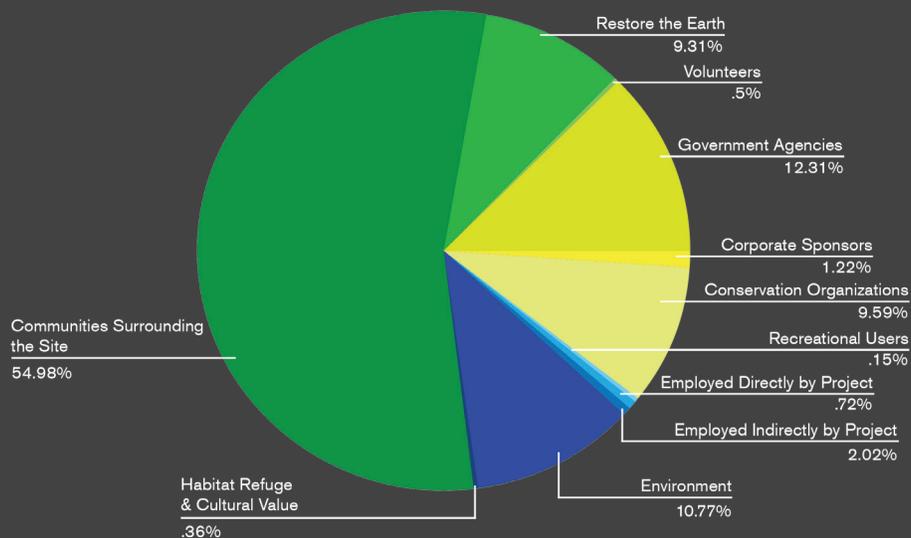
## HOW CAN RESTORATION HELP?

Terrebonne and Lafourche communities understand their dependencies on and importance of the stewardship of their natural resources. They place wetland restoration and creation as top priorities to ensure air quality, water quality, hazard mitigation, stormwater management, flood control and habitat value for the long-term stability, protection and resilience of their communities and local economies.

Reforestation of the Pointe-aux-Chenes site restores an essential ecosystem that includes diverse physical, biological and socioeconomic resources. The restoration enhances and protects overall health, resiliency and

sustainability of these communities. This project offers the opportunity to restore a significant forested wetland system to create real value for partners, its stakeholders, communities, the nation and the Earth.

## SOCIAL VALUE BENEFITS BY STAKEHOLDER GROUP POINTE-AUX-CHENES PROJECT



## RESTORATION OUTCOMES

### Land Protection & Land Building

- Enhances Louisiana's coastal wetland and watershed systems
- Stabilizes existing land mass and supports the building of additional land mass, protects adjacent landward marshes
- Supports and provides storm protection for critical infrastructure and transportation, including Port Fourchon, along the Louisiana coastal area

### Carbon, Water & Nutrient Mitigation

- Restoration of forested wetland ecosystems
- Controls erosion
- Improves water quality/quantity
- Traps carbon dioxide
- Removes nutrients and pollutants

### Community Resilience & Storm Protection

- Provides a natural buffer, putting as many barriers as possible between storm surge and flood waters
- Protects local and regional communities, including indigenous nations/tribes from risks associated with storm surge and flooding events while enhancing their overall resiliency
- Reforestation has major environmental, social and economic impacts supporting stated parish and community objectives for restoration and enhanced resilience

### Habitat

Provides for the protection and enhancement of native habitat for:

- 300 species of Neotropical birds traveling to North America from South America
- 15 species of waterfowl, including high priority species to the area and other wetland dependent birds
- Game and furbearing species: deer, rabbit, squirrels, muskrat, raccoon, opossum and otter
- Critical estuarine and adjacent open water habitat provided within Pointe-aux-Chenes WMA
- Important nurseries for estuarine-dependent species, which represent the beginning of the food chain for the whole Caribbean Basin

### Recreation

- Pointe-aux-Chenes WMA is the most heavily utilized in the state with over 26,000 users annually
- Supports sustainable hunting, fishing, camping and wildlife watching

### Economic & Job Creation

- Local nurseries and businesses to create local jobs
- Rebuilds and supports economic opportunities generated by recreation and tourism

