

PASS A LOUTRE

FIRST WETLAND RESTORATION POST 2010 OIL SPILL



QUICK FACTS

Location: Pass a Loutre Wildlife Management Area, Louisiana

Date: December 2010

Project Attributes

- Supports accretion and soil formation
- Erosion prevention
- Stabilization of newly created land in high wave energy
- Variable tidal range

BACKGROUND

Located in southern Plaquemines Parish at the mouth of the Mississippi River, the Pass a Loutre Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is approximately 10 miles south of Venice and is accessible only by boat. This area is owned by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and encompasses some 115,000 acres.

The area is characterized by river channels with attendant channel banks, natural bayous and man-made canals which are interspersed with intermediate and fresh marshes. It is a critical habitat of major significance to migratory birds accessing the Mississippi Flyway connecting South America and North America.

After the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in 2010, Restore the Earth Foundation secured funding and implemented the very first marsh restoration using its Gulf Saver™ Bag initiative on oil soiled wetlands in partnership with Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries. Pass a Loutre WMA was the first land mass impacted by the oil spill. Following this initiative, multiple Gulf Saver wetland restoration and reforestation projects have resulted in successful Louisiana wetland and wildlife habitat restoration in this area

GULF SAVER™ BAGS

Gulf Saver™ Bags are biodegradable, self-contained packages of native plants with their own site specific, custom mixed composted humus with natural nutrients to support, feed and protect the plants. This bag is a stability kit that jump starts plant survivability and growth.



Gulf Saver bags are 14"x22" and weigh approximately 22lbs

OUTCOMES

- 90% total cover of native vegetation within one year
- 8 meters of lateral growth in 17 months
- Creation of wildlife habitat including rookeries
- Erosion protection

PROJECT BENEFITS

- Rapid establishment of functional wetlands (<2 years)
- Better shore resistance with less plant loss
- Replicable and scalable
- “Hurricane Proof”: survived Hurricane Isaac in 2012
- Re-vegetation of project area 5 times faster than bare root planting
- Coast-wide application
- Easily incorporated into existing projects
- Custom compost remediates soil conditions on challenging sites

PROJECT DETAILS

The project was successfully deployed and completed December 2010 at Pass a Loutre WMA.

This project was the very first wetland restoration approved and implemented in oil soiled wetlands following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The pilot was funded with \$25,000 that was generated from the Bay for the Bayou benefit concert in San Francisco, sponsored by Louisiana natives’ organization For the Bayou and the Ittleson Foundation. The Ittleson Foundation then matched the \$25,000 for a funding total of \$50,000.

The project site was two hours away from Venice, Louisiana and accessible only by airboat. A crew of volunteers assisted LDWF Coastal personnel to distribute Gulf Saver™ Bags at the Pass a Loutre WMA, which forms the southeast tip of Plaquemines Parish where the Mississippi River meets the Gulf of Mexico.



The two day restoration involved one day of filling Gulf Saver™ Bags with specially mixed Root Zone Humus. Natural oil eating microbes were introduced to the custom compost for added protection against oil impact at the site. After the bags were filled, they were stacked on pallets that were loaded on barges for the hour long transport from a LDWF camp staging area to the site. The following day, volunteers planted the Bags in locations carefully selected by LDWF staff within the Pass a Loutre WMA. This restoration required one large transport boat, four airboats, two barges and three skiffs to transport Gulf Saver™ Bags and volunteers.

Gulf Saver™ Bags provide a supportive environment for accretion by slowing water flow and trapping sediment to build and add nutrients to the soil. This process is essential in land creation and stabilization because it prevents the erosion of existing land while also helping to build new land. These activities at the Pass a Loutre WMA are particularly important given that the site is exposed to high wave energy and variable tidal fluctuations.



Pass a Loure Volunteers post-planting



Project success after 8 months

PARTNERS

