



Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana

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CYPRESS PLANTING AT JEAN LAFITTE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Volunteers to Plant 1,000 Cypress Trees on New Wetland Areas Restored from Abandoned Oil and Gas Canals

(Marrero, Louisiana, December 3, 2010) More than 100 volunteers will participate in a tree planting project to restore cypress forests at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve on Friday, December 3rd and Saturday, December 4th. Nearly 1,000 cypress trees, ranging from four to five feet tall, will be planted in areas of newly created wetlands in the Barataria Preserve in the first of many projects aimed to plant 10,000 trees in Louisiana coastal wetlands.

The 10,000 Trees for Louisiana project started with the donation of 10,000 two-gallon trees from RPM Ecosystems, LLC and Restore the Earth Foundation to the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana (CRCL). “This incredible donation of trees, valued at over \$300,000, will allow us to restore large areas of coastal forest with a high success rate,” said Natalie Snider, Science Director for CRCL. “We are excited about the partnership and look forward to educating volunteers from Louisiana and all over the nation about the importance of restoring our coastal forests.”

To help implement the multiple projects across the coast, CRCL partnered with Entergy Corporation, Restore America’s Estuaries and the Louisiana Office of Coastal Protection and Restoration (OCPR) to provide additional funding to support volunteer activities and provide tree protectors to prevent damage from nutria. It’s important to Louisiana, as well as Entergy and our employees that these trees survive and grow to provide protection for inland communities and habitat for wildlife,” said Brent Dorsey, Director of Corporate Environmental Programs for Entergy Corporation.

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ADD – 2

Large areas of Louisiana's coastal wetland forests have been lost already, and more areas are highly degraded and in danger of being lost. "The restoration of coastal forests is vital to the future of Louisiana's coast. In many places along our coast, these forests will not regenerate naturally and OCPR is highly supportive of efforts to reestablish forests through tree planting," stated Chris Allen, Coastal Resource Scientist at OCPR.

CRCL identified the Canal Backfilling Project being completed by the National Park Service as the ideal location for the first of many planting sites under the 10,000 Trees for Louisiana project. The National Park Service has already expended \$2 million to begin backfilling abandoned oil and gas and developer's canals to restore wetlands, repair disrupted hydrology and strengthen the resiliency of the Barataria ecosystem.

David Muth with the National Park Service explains that these abandoned canals are one of the major causes of wetland loss in Louisiana. "Oil exploration, laying of pipelines, and drainage and development projects resulted in dredging and placement of spoil material on sensitive wetlands. These canals also interrupt natural hydrology and allow saltwater to move higher into the system." The backfilling project removed the spoilbanks, partially backfilled the canals and created soil platforms for marsh and swamp re-colonization. "We have successfully removed 4.5 miles of spoilbank and with the help of CRCL and volunteers, we will start to plant these areas to provide habitat for wildlife and protection for Greater New Orleans."

Just adjacent to the Park, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is busy building adequate levee protection for the West Bank. As described in the Multiple Lines of Defense strategy, planting cypress forests outside of the levees will provide an extra buffer from hurricane storm surges. "As these trees grow, they will help reduce the storm surge before it hits the levee," said Dorsey, "and this is beneficial to all the residents of the New Orleans area."

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ADD – 2

The project is being completed with the help and assistance of many partners, including the National Park Service, RPM Ecosystems, LLC., Restore the Earth Foundation, Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, Entergy Corporation, Louisiana Office of Coastal Protection and Restoration, Jefferson Parish, Restore America's Estuaries, LSU AgCenter, EXCEL Construction and Maintenance, and AmeriCorps.

Partnerships such as these are essential to bringing together numerous entities with the same goals to achieve the largest benefits. PJ Marshall with RPM Ecosystems, LLC and Restore the Earth Foundation added, "We are delighted to provide the 10,000 high performance native gulf coast RPM trees to this collaborative effort with such committed and dedicated Gulf Coast partners."

If you are interested in volunteering on future restoration projects, please sign up with the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana at www.crcl.org or call (888) LA-COAST.

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Note: Any media interested in covering the volunteer events, please call Natalie at (225) 303-3567 to schedule. The project site is an approximately 20 minute boat ride from meeting location at Jean Lafitte Historical National Park.