



“RE-BUILDING THE CITY’S WATER SYSTEMS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY”

Sewerage & Water Board OF NEW ORLEANS

Mitchell J. Landrieu , President

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Orleans and St. Bernard Parishes Form Partnership To Restore Bayou Bienvenue Wetlands

Mayor Mitchell J. Landrieu led groundbreaking ceremonies today marking the start of a unique environmental project to restore areas of Bayou Bienvenue (Central Wetlands Unit) severely damaged by Katrina’s salt-water surge from the now-closed Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO).

Joining the Mayor were St. Bernard Parish President Craig Taffaro, officials from the Sewerage & Water Board, the City and State and community leaders from the area.

The Wetlands Assimilation Project, the brainchild of the S&WB’s Environmental Affairs Division, is an innovative partnership between the Sewerage and Water Board and the St. Bernard Parish government to restore 20,000 acres of Bayou Bienvenue.

The restoration includes planting Bald Cypress and Tupelo trees to enhance wetlands growth. Established trees will aid in wetland stability, water filtration and storm protection in the future

The project is designed to re-establish cypress swamps that will help protect Orleans and St. Bernard parishes from future storm vulnerability because wetlands and barrier islands can take the brunt of a storm.

Mayor Landrieu said, “The project we are beginning today fits in perfectly with what I said at my inauguration, “It’s time to declare that we are no longer recovering, we are no longer building.... now we are creating. And creating we are, as we take an environmental journey into new territory which is already getting the attention of scientific groups from across the country.”

Parish President Taffaro said, "St. Bernard is pleased to be in partnership with the Sewerage & Water Board as we take a giant step forward to discover effective methods of restoring or building new wetlands for maximum protection for both of our parishes."

Marcia St. Martin, S&WB Executive Director, said, "I'm very proud of our employees who saw an opportunity, brought it to management and, once approved by the Board of Directors, moved full speed ahead. They were successful in obtaining a \$400,000 grant from the Delta Regional Authority to develop feasibility and pre-design for this project."

The Environmental Affairs Division was also able to obtain a \$10 million grant from the state's Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) to construct the first phase of the estimated \$65 million Wetland Assimilation Project.

The restoration is not an easy task. Dredge material will be used to raise the elevation of the bayou in order to support the trees that will be planted. The innovative aspect of this project is 1) It will take five dry tons of bio-solids and 1,000 tons of incinerated ash from the Board's nearby East Bank Sewage Treatment Plant (EBSTP) and 2) Treated effluent that will be pumped into the bayou to control salinity and provide nutrients necessary to promote the growth and health of the area.

The backside of Bayou Bienvenue runs along the perimeter of plant in the Lower Ninth Ward. A 20-acre section adjacent to the plant will be used for this demonstration project. Dredge material will be used to raise the elevation of the bayou in order to support the trees that will be planted. It will take five dry tons of bio-solids and 1,000 tons of incinerated ash to accomplish this.

Treated effluent will be pumped into the bayou to control salinity and provide nutrients necessary to promote the growth and health of the area.

The exact same environmental effort will be made by our partners on the St. Bernard Parish side of the project.

Construction of the project has commenced with a 20-acre demonstration project adjacent to the East Bank Sewage Treatment Plant.

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