

## Presentation Notes

### Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group 2022 Public Meeting for Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessment #7.1: Terrebonne HNC Island Restoration

September 8, 2022

This document is intended to accompany the Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group's presentation slides from their September 8, 2022, RP/EA #7.1 Public Meeting webinar.

#### Slide 1

Hello. I'd like to welcome you to the *Deepwater Horizon* Natural Resource Damage Assessment Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group public meeting for Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessment #7.1, Terrebonne HNC Island, and the Louisiana Trustee's Annual Public Meeting. Thank you for your interest and attendance. My name is Jane Petersen, I'm a contractor supporting the Louisiana TIG, and I'll be going over the agenda and some preliminary information. We will begin with a public webinar for Restoration Plan / Environmental Assessment #7.1, Terrebonne HNC Island Restoration, and following at 2:30, the Louisiana Trustees will present their annual meeting to update you on the restoration progress that they have accomplished over the past year.

#### Slide 2

First, we will go over some webinar logistics.

Next, Maury Chatellier with the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority will introduce you to RP 7.1, after which we will take your comments. Then at 2:30, we will begin the Trustees' annual meeting.

After each presentation you will be able to provide input to the LA TIG via the process I'll now outline.

### Slide 3

Hopefully everyone's logged in to the webinar by now. You should be able to see the control panel on the right-hand side of your screen.

If you're using a phone for audio, you should all be dialing in using the phone number provided by GoToWebinar—that's the number and access code listed under "Audio" in the control panel. Please note that only presenters will be heard over the phone during the webinar; attendees will be muted.

Take a look at the "Questions" box at the bottom of the control panel (shown on this slide). If you have a comment you would like to share with the Trustees, please type it into this box and we will read as many comments as we can in the time allotted. Note that comments will not be responded to on this call but will be recorded for the Trustees. If you have a question that you would like the trustees to respond to, please hold on until the end of the annual meeting portion of the webinar, when we will do a full Q&A.

### Slide 4

All the meeting materials will be available at <https://la-dwh.com/> as well as the Trustee website <https://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/>.

And now I'll turn it over to Maury Chatellier with the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority to begin the public webinar for Restoration Plan 7.1

### Slide 5

Thank you Jane. Good afternoon everyone and thank you for your time today. As Jane said, my name is Maury Chatellier and I work for the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority. I am here today to provide an overview of the Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group's most recently released draft restoration plan focused on the restoration and conservation of bird habitat in Louisiana. In Restoration Plan #7.1, the Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group proposes the selection of one construction preferred alternative for the restoration of the Terrebonne HNC Island. We will discuss this project in more detail shortly.

Again, After the presentation, we will take your comments on Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessment Plan #7.1.

## Slide 6

At this point in the presentation, we typically present a detailed history of the NRDA process and funding allocations. As we are going to present the Trustees' Annual Meeting immediately following this presentation at 2:30, we've decided to forgo the summary portion and present that information during our annual meeting. What I would like to present is a brief timeline of events that has led us up to the release of Draft Restoration Plan #7.1.

As this timeline shows, the oil spill began in April 2010 and injury assessment started right away.

In April 2011, BP agreed to make up to \$1 billion available for restoration even before the injury assessment was complete to get a jump start on restoration.

On April 4, 2016, the federal government and the five Gulf states reached a settlement with BP; it totaled approximately \$20.8 billion. Of the \$20.8 billion, up to \$8.8 billion (including the \$1 billion in early restoration) would go to natural resource restoration across the Gulf – with \$5 billion for restoration in the Louisiana Restoration Area, which is managed by the Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group, or TIG.

Since the settlement, The Louisiana Trustees have released eight Major Restoration Plans (as well as a number of smaller restoration plans) which have selected or proposed projects that will restore for injuries in Louisiana, ranging from birds to oysters to wetlands and nearshore habitats to restoring for lost recreational opportunities as a result of the oil spill.

In November 2020, we released Draft RP/EA #7 which considered additional Wetlands, Coastal, and Nearshore Habitat restoration projects and Bird restoration projects. In that restoration plan, the Terrebonne HNC Bird Island project was ultimately selected for engineering and design funding by the trustees.

Today, we're here to present Draft Restoration Plan / Environmental Assessment #7.1, which was released for public comment on August 25. This restoration plan considers multiple design alternatives for the construction of the Terrebonne HNC Bird Island.

## Slide 7

The Terrebonne HNC Bird Island is an important active colonial waterbird nesting island located in Terrebonne Bay in Terrebonne Parish, west of Grand Isle and Port Fourchon. Based on historical maps, this island was originally part of a larger land mass of naturally occurring marsh that has eroded and degraded over time. The island was used as a disposal site for US Army Corps of Engineers maintenance dredging from the Houma Navigation Channel. Disposal on the island began in the mid-1980s and ended in the early 2000s.

Subsidence and erosion of this 50-acre island has resulted in the remaining visible 27-acre island that exists today.

## Slide 8

Of the 27 remaining acres, suitable nesting habitat is only less than 4 acres. Bird species that currently depend on this island include brown pelicans, roseate spoonbills, terns, skimmers, and many others. In fact, more than 38 species of birds have been documented on or near the island. Some of the birds expected to use the island are on the threatened and endangered species list, as well as the US Fish and Wildlife Service species of conservation concern list for Terrebonne Parish. This island is also critical because it is home to 1 of only 10 remaining brown pelican colonies in the state of Louisiana. Brown Pelicans disappeared from the state in 1963 and were listed on the USFWS federally endangered species list in 1970, and they remained on the list until they were removed in 2009 (just six months before the *Deepwater Horizon* Oil Spill).

Restoration of this island would create more suitable nesting habitat that would encourage recolonization of many bird species.

## Slide 9

Restoration Plan #7 provided \$3.1 million in design funds to develop a restoration plan for the island. After surveying and geotechnical soil data was collected and analyzed, the design team developed a range of reasonable alternatives to compare to a No Action Alternative.

The No Action Alternative will likely result in the continued loss of the less than 4 acres of suitable nesting habitat remaining on the island. This habitat would be lost and replaced by open water, which is unsuitable for any bird nesting.

## Slide 10

The LA TIG's screening process evaluated a range of design alternatives based on the OPA NRDA evaluation standards. The project features of each alternative evaluated included a borrow area, rock dike containment, 3 habitat types, tidal exchange points, and off-island breakwaters. The alternatives assumed the same off-shore borrow area near Cat Island Pass located approximately 10 miles south/southeast of the island.

This is Alternative 7, which is one of two preferred alternatives. Alternative 7 contains 7 acres of ground nesting habitat, 10.3 acres of marsh habitat, and 36 acres of shrub nesting habitat for a total island size of 53.3 acres. This design enlarges the island size by 26 acres. The next alternative is Alternative 7a, which is a reduced version of this alternative.

## Slide 11

This alternative is Alternative 7a, which reduced the total acres of Alternative 7 by 12 acres resulting in a total island size of 41.4 acres. The cost of this Alternative is \$34 million.

Either alternative (7 or 7a) would be constructed the same.

- First, rehabilitation and extension of the existing limestone rock dike would be completed.
- Then hydraulically dredged sandy sediment from Cat Island Pass would be transported through a pipeline to the island and placed at various elevations to achieve the proposed habitat types. Project success is dependent on achieving the elevations of these habitats to prevent routine tidal inundation of the island. Higher elevations mean that fewer nests and eggs would be washed away or flooded, which results in increased nesting success.
- Finally, off-island breakwaters would be constructed with limestone rip rap. The breakwaters will absorb wave energy, provide calm water loafing area for birds, and act as a nursery habitat for various aquatic species.
- Following construction of the breakwaters, the island may be planted with vegetation to provide additional nesting substrate.

After a thorough analysis, the Trustees recommend design Alternative 7a as the preferred alternative for the Terrebonne HNC Island Restoration project because it is the most cost-effective design alternative evaluated.

## Slide 12

The three different habitat types in Alternative 7A will provide up to 50 acres of nesting and foraging habitat for a variety of birds.

The 4-acre Ground Nesting Habitat, the highest elevation on the island, will be a limestone gravel beach-like feature. Birds that will use this habitat include terns, skimmers, and laughing gulls.

The 27-acre Shrub Nesting Habitat, which comprises the majority of the island, will be constructed at an elevation lower than the ground nesting habitat and will slope such that water can drain off of the island. Birds that will use this habitat include brown pelicans, herons, egret, and white ibis.

The 10-acre Marsh Nesting Habitat will range in elevation from 2.5 feet to less than 5 feet based on the slope needed for drainage. An area of existing mangrove marsh habitat on the northwestern part of the island would be preserved so that birds (like the brown pelicans) have an undisturbed area in which to nest after construction while the rest of the island revegetates. Other birds that will use this habitat include clapper rails, seaside sparrow, marsh wren, and mottled duck.

### Slide 13

Restoration of this island would create up to 50 acres of essential nesting, brood-rearing, and foraging habitat for 20 or more years for the bird species damaged by the BP oil spill.

Design alternative 7A provides a balance between constructability and creation of optimal habitat features for nesting birds, while minimizing environmental impacts during construction. This alternative fulfills the restoration objective to “create, restore, and enhance barrier and coastal islands and headlands” to address the DWH Oil Spill Trustees’ programmatic restoration goal to replenish and protect living coastal and marine resources.

I will now turn the presentation back over to Jane to take us through the public comment portion of the presentation.

### Slide 14

The restoration plan and environmental assessment describing this project and the considered design alternatives is available for public review and comment now through September 26.

You can download a copy at <https://la-dwh.com/> or the [NOAA Gulf Spill Restoration website](#).

That site also contains instructions for submitting comments either online or by mail to this address. After the public comment period for this draft plan ends on September 26, the TIG will review all comments and make any necessary adjustments to this plan. We expect to issue public notice for the final restoration plan around the holidays. A decision on whether to move forward with the proposed project will be made. If selected for implementation, all required environmental reviews permits will be completed before construction begins.

Please note that today we will not respond to any comments or questions that members of the public submit during this webinar, but all comments and questions submitted by the public here will be recorded and considered along with any comments received in writing. All comments received will be considered in the finalizing of the Restoration Plan.

We appreciate your input.

### Slide 15

Now we’d like to hear from you. Take a look at the “Questions” box at the bottom of the GoToWebinar control panel (shown on this slide). If you have a comment you would like to share with the Trustees, please type it into this box and we will read as many comments as we can in the time allotted.

I will now hold for a few moments to allow for public comment.

Thank you!

*No public comments were made at this time.*

**Slide 16**

This closes the public comment period for our public webinar for RP/EA 7.1. We will take a short break, and then begin the Louisiana Trustees' annual meeting at 2:30 PM.