

Louisiana Coastal Area Study

January 2003

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is the LCA Comprehensive Coastwide Study?

A. The LCA Comprehensive Coastwide Study team is currently developing the report to identify a comprehensive coastal wetland restoration program in the State of Louisiana. The report will be provided to Congress for approval and is the first step leading to specific authorization of projects for construction. This program would be based on the restoration "blueprint" presented in the report, *Coast 2050: Toward a Sustainable Coastal Louisiana*. The LCA Comprehensive Coastwide Study will produce a more "nuts and bolts" document that will detail specific engineering, implementation and cost proposals. It will be the primary study that the Congress will use to decide if it will approve proceeding with the comprehensive restoration of Louisiana wetlands.

Q. What does "approval of the program" mean?

A. Programmatic authorization is the means by which the United States Congress creates new federal programs. It is the enactment of a law that outlines a program's framework, including a program's objectives, how long a program will be in effect, and an upper limit on the amount of money a program can spend. The LCA Comprehensive Coastwide Study's main objective is to achieve programmatic authorization for a coastwide restoration effort in south Louisiana.

Q. What is "WRDA"?

A. WRDA stands for the "Water Resources Development Act," an act that provides federal authorization of water resources projects. The act addresses the water resources of the country, helping to provide communities with economically justified and environmentally sound water resources solutions. It does so by authorizing water programs such as those sponsored and constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of

Engineers. The LCA Comprehensive Coastwide report is intended to meet the congressional requirements necessary to secure WRDA authorization in 2004. Even if WRDA authorization is secured, annual congressional funding will still have to be sought in order to fund the program's planning and construction activities.

Q. Why do we need another study when we already know what the problems and the solutions are?

A. The LCA Comprehensive Coastwide Study is not simply another study investigating problems or proposing solutions, but a report required by the United States Congress before it can authorize a program. The feasibility study evaluates the existing research and consensus-based solutions arrived at throughout the state's various coastal regions and provides the necessary scientific, technical and engineering details that the Congress will need in order to make an informed decision.

Q. What is the difference between the LCA Comprehensive Coastwide Study and other Corps of Engineers feasibility studies?

A. While the typical feasibility study seeks construction authorization for a specific project, the LCA Comprehensive Coastwide Study is aimed at securing approval for a comprehensive program to address wetland loss in coastal Louisiana. If authorized, the resulting umbrella program will open the door for the sizable funding necessary to coordinate unprecedented large-scale, coastwide projects through individual Project Implementation Reports. The program would enable Louisiana to design and build the large restoration projects critical to saving the state's coastal resources.



Frequently Asked Questions (Continued)

Q. When will the LCA Comprehensive Coastwide Study be completed?

A. The LCA Comprehensive Coastwide Study will be completed in time for consideration under the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2004. This will require submission of a report to the Congress by July 2004.

Q. How is the LCA Comprehensive Coastwide Study being funded?

A. The LCA Comprehensive Coastwide Study is being jointly funded and managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources. They are funding and managing the study in a 50/50 partnership.

Q. How will the resulting coastwide program itself be funded?

A. The funding or “appropriations” process is distinct from the authorization process. However, future Federal appropriations will be dependent on obtaining Congressional approval under the Water Resources Development Act for a restoration program. The LCA Comprehensive Coastwide Study will outline the process by which specific project authorizations will be obtained. The state and federal funding necessary to implement the program will have to be approved each year.

Q. How will Louisiana fit into the funding process?

A. Submission of the LCA Comprehensive Coastwide report to Congress for authorization requires Louisiana to indicate its intent to cost share in implementation of the comprehensive restoration plan. Once approval from Congress is secured, Louisiana will share in the cost of implementation.

Q. What is the public’s role and how can they play a part?

A. Participating in the Louisiana Coastal Area study means staying informed and providing your comments and

knowledge throughout the process. Written comments are encouraged. Current and updated information is available to the public at www.coast2050.gov/lca. Planned public meetings will also be announced on these Web sites and in local newspapers. To reach one of the public information offices involved in the process, call Corps of Engineers at 504-862-2201 or DNR at 225-342-8955.

Q. What is the difference between the original Coast 2050 Plan and the LCA Comprehensive Coastwide Study?

A. The *Coast 2050: Toward a Sustainable Coastal Louisiana* report outlined more than 80 restoration concepts. It was a consensus-based document compiled by the state of Louisiana, federal agencies, local governments, academics, and the input of numerous groups and citizens. Additionally, this effort provided a reconnaissance-level assessment of coastal restoration needs and a preliminary cost estimate of coastwide restoration. It was used as a basis for initiating more detailed comprehensive studies under the LCA study authorization. Although it presented the conceptual framework for restoring sustainability to coastal Louisiana, it did not provide the scientific and technical analyses or the engineering details needed to describe the plan fully. The LCA Comprehensive Coastwide Study is intended to construct a program that will provide this necessary information, enabling the state of Louisiana to secure funding and build projects.

Q. What is the future of the Coast 2050 Plan?

A. The Coast 2050 Plan (*Coast 2050: Toward a Sustainable Coastal Louisiana*) is acting as the basis of the present study. It will also continue to provide guidelines for local projects and those implemented under the Breaux Act/CWPPRA (Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act). In addition, the Coast 2050 Plan's concepts are continually updated, revised and reviewed as new information is developed.