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CRCL celebrates Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion groundbreaking *State project will restore natural processes that built southeast Louisiana*

The Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana is celebrating today's start of construction on the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion, an essential component of the state's coastal program. CRCL, the first statewide organization dedicated to confronting coastal land loss in Louisiana, has advocated for projects such as the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion since its founding 35 years ago. The project, undertaken by the Coastal Restoration and Protection Authority, will reconnect the Mississippi River to wetlands in the Barataria Basin, reintroducing sediment, nutrients and fresh water that are critical for the wetlands' survival.

The Mid-Barataria project, the first large-scale sediment diversion to be built in Louisiana, is expected to restore up to 27 square miles of wetlands. It will mimic the natural process by which the river built southeast Louisiana. Thousands of supporters of CRCL have helped champion the project over the years.

"We are thrilled that construction on the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion is finally beginning," said Kimberly Reyher, the executive director of CRCL. "Since 1988, our organization has been stressing the urgency of building this project, so to be at this stage finally makes it clear that all the hard work has paid off. We are grateful to our supporters who have worked so hard over the years, as well as to CPRA and to champions of this project including the Restore the Mississippi River Delta campaign."

The first recommendation written by CRCL in its 1989 report "[Here Today and Gone Tomorrow?](#)" notes that "restoration of delta building, on a massive scale, using the sediment and freshwater resources of the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers is required to retard land loss." At that time, there was no state agency focused on coastal restoration, nor was there funding to build a sediment diversion.

Louisiana's wetlands are a naturally occurring component of hurricane protection, helping to minimize storm surge. They also serve as habitat for numerous species of wildlife and are the birthplace of Louisiana's world-famous fisheries. And hundreds of thousands of people live along the state's coast. About 2,000 square miles of coastal wetlands in Louisiana have been converted into open water since the 1930s.

An overwhelming majority of Louisiana voters [support sediment diversions](#), including those who live in Plaquemines Parish, where the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion is being built. Funding for the project largely comes from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill settlement.

"We need to put the river to work to protect and build land. We need this project right now," Reyher said. "We're eager to see the project built as quickly as possible -- and to see the linked efforts to help fisheries dealing with coastal change implemented as quickly as possible."

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[The Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana](#) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to unite people in action to achieve a thriving, sustainable Louisiana coast for all.

References:

[Here Today and Gone Tomorrow?](#)
[No Time to Lose](#)