

Bayou Bienvenue Wetland Triangle Restoration Project

Restoring critical wetlands in an urban community through science-based prioritization and design.

The Bayou Bienvenue Wetland Triangle (BBWT) is a culturally significant and ecologically critical wetland area in New Orleans' Lower 9th Ward. Severely damaged by the construction and operation of the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO), BBWT has been a focal point of coastal restoration conversations for decades. Located within the state's Coastal Master Plan priority areas, BBWT continues to face ongoing habitat degradation and wetland loss without intervention. Predictive models indicate this trajectory will worsen without targeted restoration strategies that address hydrology and sediment deficits.

Prior efforts by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the EPA, and the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act (CWPPRA) have laid important groundwork, as have locally driven efforts by the Pontchartrain Conservancy and others. Yet, the complexity of restoring the entire BBWT—due to landownership fragmentation and scale—has prevented comprehensive implementation. The surrounding community, particularly the Lower 9th Ward, remains highly vulnerable to flooding, with limited access to resilient natural infrastructure.

Building a Foundation for Restoration

This project aims to overcome these long-standing barriers by developing a science-based restoration prioritization plan using structured decision-making. The effort will consider key factors such as restoration costs, sediment availability, land tenure, and ecological benefits. By approaching this challenge through a deliberate and collaborative framework, the project sets the stage for scalable restoration in a landscape where momentum has been difficult to sustain.

Anticipated Benefits

“This project aims to deliver immediate and long-term impacts, including:



Development of a restoration prioritization plan that enables phased, cost-effective wetland restoration aligned with community values and environmental needs.



Enhanced wildlife habitat and ecosystem services in a degraded urban wetland.



Opportunities for education and recreation that connect youth and residents to local ecology.



Economic growth through enhanced ecotourism and local job creation.

Photo by John Taylor

Communities at the Center

Located adjacent to New Orleans' Lower 9th Ward, the BBWT is tightly linked to a community that remains disproportionately affected by economic disinvestment and vulnerable to environmental hazards. Once home to over 14,000 residents, the Lower 9th saw catastrophic flooding during Hurricane Katrina and now has a population of just over 4,000, more than 90% of whom are African American, with approximately one-third living below the poverty line.

Restoring the BBWT offers not only ecological benefits but also cultural and social significance. Long used for hunting, fishing, and recreation, this wetland is deeply rooted in the community's identity. Local organizations like the Center for Sustainable Engagement and Development (CSED) and Common Ground Relief have long championed restoration and environmental education efforts in the area, hosting school groups and public tours in partnership with national nonprofits.

Partner Organizations

This initiative brings together a diverse coalition of science, policy, and community leaders:



CITY OF NEW ORLEANS



**NATIONAL
WILDLIFE
FEDERATION**

NUNEZ
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



**THE WATER
INSTITUTE**

Project Location

