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State of the Coast hosts speakers who shaped post-Katrina strategy, spill settlement

Conference will be held May 20 to 22 at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans

This year marks the 20th anniversary of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the 15th anniversary of the Deepwater Horizon disaster, milestones that have profoundly shaped Louisiana's approach to coastal resilience and disaster preparedness. [State of the Coast](#), Louisiana's premiere conference focusing on coastal issues, will feature distinguished speakers discussing the state's coastal program that developed after Katrina and Rita, the philosophy of living in harmony with water instead of trying to fight against it, insurance challenges that threaten the future of coastal communities and a behind-the-scenes look at how the Deepwater Horizon oil spill settlement was struck.

The conference, which is hosted by the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, the state Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority and The Water Institute, will be held May 20 to 22 at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans.

"Katrina, Rita, and Deepwater Horizon changed everything. Two decades later, we've made remarkable progress, but urgent challenges remain." said Kim Reyher, executive director at CRCL. "The State of the Coast conference is where we convene coastal experts and community members to celebrate our momentum and shape the future."

The opening plenary session on Day 1 of the conference is titled "Resilience and Reflection: Two Decades of Coastal Recovery and Innovation." The confirmed speakers are The Honorable Mary Landrieu, former U.S. senator of Louisiana; The Honorable Ryan Bourriaque, Louisiana representative for District 47; Mark Wingate, former deputy district engineer for programs and project management at the Army Corps of Engineers; and Mark Schleifstein, longtime environmental reporter at The Times-Picayune and The Advocate who was part of a team that won two Pulitzer Prizes for its coverage of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. The moderator of the panel discussion will be Beaux Jones, president and CEO of The Water Institute.

The lunchtime plenary session on Day 1 of the conference is titled "Living With Water™: Designing Our Future in Harmony with Nature." The panelists will include Rob Holmes, co-author of the book "Silt Sand Slurry"; and David Waggoner, lead designer of the Greater New Orleans Urban Water Plan and founding principal at Waggoner & Ball. The moderator will be Lauren Alexander, executive director of the Gulf Research Program.

The conference's second day will have a lunch plenary session with an introduction by Col. Cullen Landry of the Army Corps of Engineers. Gov. Jeff Landry has also been invited to speak. A panel discussion titled "Ensuring and Insuring the Future of Coastal Louisiana" will follow. The panelists will be CPRA Executor Director Glenn Ledet; state Insurance Commissioner Tim Temple; Michael Hecht, president and CEO of GNO Inc.; and Roy Wright, president and CEO of the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety and former chief executive of the National Flood Insurance Program. The moderator will be Steven Procopio of the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana.

The final day's lunch plenary session is titled "Deepwater Horizon: Insider Perspectives on the Litigation, Settlement and Legacy." The speakers will be U.S. District Court Judge Carl Barbier; retired U.S. Magistrate Judge Sally Shushan; and John Cruden, principal at Beveridge & Diamond PC who is a former assistant attorney general in the environmental and natural resources division at the Department of Justice. The moderator will be Ben Allums, assistant professor at the Loyola University College of Law.

The eighth iteration of the State of the Coast conference will carry the theme *Our Changing Coast*. It will consist of three days of presentations by leading and emerging experts in concurrent sessions of talks and panels, and poster sessions as well as networking opportunities. More than 1,000 people are expected to attend. Registration is [open now](#). Media seeking credentials to cover the event should email James Karst at james.karst@crcl.org.

To learn more about State of the Coast, visit the [conference website](#).