

For Immediate Release
May 18, 2007

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Chaland Headlands Restoration Project Named One of America's Top Restored Beaches

Project completed after Hurricane Katrina's landfall 8 miles away

Ft. Myers, Fla. – On the eve of the summer beach season, the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA) named the Chaland Headland Restoration Project in Louisiana as one of America's Top Restored Beaches. Chaland Headland received the award following successful efforts by local, state and national authorities to nourish the beach along almost three miles shoreline.

“This project provides more than a just a recreational beach or the benefits of storm protection,” said Rachel Sweeney Project Manager for the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service. “This project helps protect the coastal wetlands that provide critical habitat for fish and wildlife in addition to protecting oil and gas infrastructure.”

Louisiana has been faced with a having one of the highest relative sea level rise rates in the world which complicated this project. The Chaland Headland Project was designed with ecological benefits in mind. It included a large back-barrier marsh to assist with increasing the project's ecological benefits and to provide a stable platform for island retreat and overwash. This three-mile long project took 1,792,000 cubic yards of beach fill and 950,200 cubic yards of marsh fill.

A contract was awarded to begin this nourishment project just four days prior to the landfall of Hurricane Katrina eight miles east of the project site. Federal and state governments, particularly NOAA and the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources worked together to ensure additional permits and designs were obtained to begin working on the project after the devastating impact of Katrina.

“The Top Nourished Beach award was created in 2001 as a way of highlighting nourished beaches,” said Mayor Harry Simmons of Caswell Beach, N.C. and President of ASBPA. “As Americans begin to flock to our nation's coastline during the upcoming beach season, most beach-going Americans don't even realize they may be enjoying a nourished beach.”

Beach nourishment – the process of placing sufficient quantities of beach quality sand on eroding beaches to combat erosion – began occurring in the United States over 40 years ago in coastal communities on the East, West and Gulf Coasts. America now has over 370 nourished beaches, including Miami Beach; Coney Island, N.Y.; Waikiki and Venice Beach, Calif. Studies have shown that each dollar spent on beach nourishment generates an additional four to five in taxpayer benefits.

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The Top Restored Beaches were chosen based upon three criteria: the economic and ecological benefits the beach brings to its community; the short and long-term success of the nourishment project; and the challenges each community overcame during the course of the project. In addition to the Chaland Headland Restoration Project, the 2007 winners included: East Beach in Norfolk, Va.; Surfside-Sunset Beach in Orange County, Ca.; Collier County Beaches, Fla.; Perdido Pass, Ala.; West Hampton Dunes, Long Island, N.Y.; and Folly Beach, S.C.

For more information about ASBPA, to schedule an interview with Harry Simmons or to obtain photos, please contact Larry Farnsworth of Crosby-Volmer International Communications at lfarnsworth@crosbyvolmer.com.

ABOUT ASBPA: Founded in 1926, the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association represents the scientific, technical and political interests along the coast in an effort to shape national research and policy concerning shore and beach management and restoration. ASBPA strives to engage in a factual debate on coastal issues and economics that will foster sound, far-sighted and economical development and preservation of our beaches; thereby aiding in placing their beliefs within the reach of the largest possible number of people in accordance with the ideals of a democratic nation. For additional information about ASBPA, please visit www.asbpa.org.

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