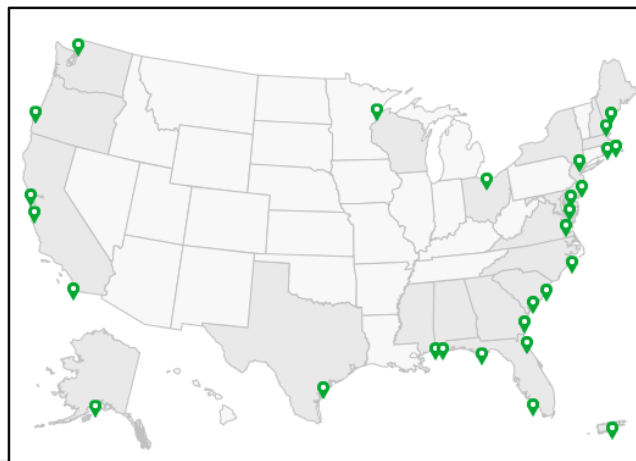


Proposed LaNERR: Pontchartrain Basin

National Estuarine Research Reserve System

This network of 30 sites protects and conserves more than 1.3 million acres of coastal and estuarine habitat and is managed by a partnership between NOAA and coastal states. NOAA provides federal funding and oversight, while state agencies or universities implement day-to-day operations for each reserve. Reserve staff work with local communities to address challenges related to natural resource management such as nonpoint source pollution, habitat restoration, invasive species, and more.



Value of Establishing a Louisiana Reserve

Louisiana is the only coastal salt-water state in the nation without a designated Reserve (and Michigan is the only other coastal freshwater state without a freshwater Reserve). A Louisiana-based Reserve could complement and extend the scientific, educational and

stewardship activities and needs of programs like the EPA National Estuary Program (Barataria National Estuary Program), the Louisiana Coastal Management Program, the Louisiana Sea Grant Program and various academic institutions through the addition of funding, resources and expertise. The health of the Mississippi River Delta ecosystem and its many services to Louisiana and the nation would benefit from establishing a NERR.

Each reserve administers four core programs using similar protocols to ensure they are locally relevant and nationally significant. These programs are tailored to address local issues and priorities important to Louisiana. Illustrative details are provided below.

Reserve System Snapshot

~1.3+ million acres of public land and waters

4.5K miles of waterfront and diverse habitat

280 monitoring stations

3,000+ educators and 81,000+ K-12 students receive outdoor STEM education

36,000+ volunteers support reserves

Programs and Potential Focus Areas

Each reserve administers four core programs using similar protocols to ensure they are locally relevant and nationally significant. These programs are tailored to address local issues and priorities important to Louisiana. Illustrative details are provided below.

Research



Stewardship



Training



Education

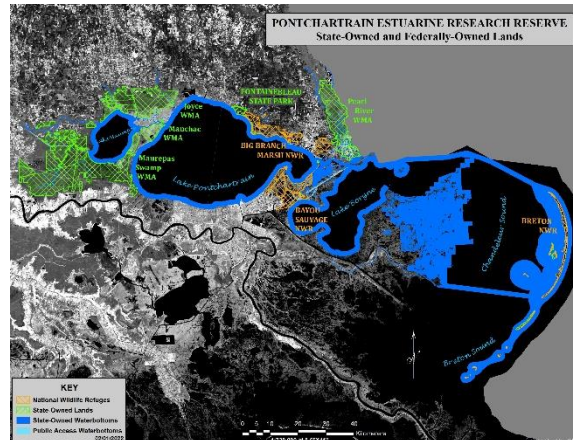


Overview of LaNERR – Proposed Pontchartrain Estuary Site

Louisiana’s NERR - Pontchartrain Site, ranges from the upper northwestern corner of the Basin surrounding Lake Maurepas to the southeastern boundary of the Chandeleur Islands. The proposed site consists of a wide array of habitats that include: bottom-land hardwood forest; pine savannah; forested wetland; fresh-to-saline attached marsh; floating marsh; submerged-aquatic vegetation; to barrier islands. Salinity ranges from fresh to marine.

Proposed Lands, Water and Monitoring

State Wildlife Management Area and park lands (207,453 acres); Federal National Wildlife Refuge lands (52,360 acres); and a connecting boundary of state-owned water bottoms (acreage TBD) are included in the proposed NERR. Other lands could be added in the future. Many are already part of Louisiana’s Coast-Wide Reference Monitoring System (CRMS).



Human Inhabitants and Access

A diverse population of 2.1 million residents across 16 boundary parishes that have access to the estuary from: major highways (including 3 interstates); 60+ boat launches and marinas; 130+ miles of car-free bike lanes and 15+ miles of protected urban bike lanes; and other developing recreational greenways.

Higher Education Institutions and Research/Education/Outreach Centers

The site is within a 1-hour drive of 17 universities and colleges in the 16-parish area (118,672 students); at least 10 major research and education enhancement facilities in the immediate Basin; and a multitude of other state and municipal parks and educational programs.

Other Interesting Facts of the Pontchartrain Site

Fisheries-over 100 species; *Wetland Plants*-over 100 species; *Mammals*-approx. 40 species

Migratory Birds – over 270 species move through the Basin every year

Reptiles and Amphibians – approx. 120 species

All Plants and Animals (incl. invertebrates): rare to endangered-690 species; *Invasive*-60 species

of Permitted State WMA Hunting/Fishing Users (yr 2021): 24,246

#K-12 Schools (16 parish area, not including Charter Schools): 511 schools//289,494 students

Support for the Proposed Louisiana Reserve

The designation process for the Louisiana NERR is being led at the state level by Louisiana Sea Grant and a team of professionals from the state and federal levels. For more information on this designation process please visit: www.laseagrant.org/deltanerr. Stay connected at:

