

NORTH AMERICAN

WETLANDS

CONSERVATION ACT

# project flash

## Texas/Louisiana Partnership Receives \$998,952 for Wetlands Project

On September 8, 2004, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, as authorized under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, approved **\$998,952** in funding for the **Chenier Plain Coastal Wetlands Conservation Phase II Project in Liberty, Orange, Jefferson, and Chambers Counties in Texas' Congressional District 2 and 9**. A portion of this project also takes place in Louisiana. The Act is nonregulatory and calls for voluntary partnerships to develop and implement wetlands and associated uplands projects to benefit wildlife. Projects must meet certain biological criteria to be considered for funding, and partners must be able to match the grant request 1:1 with nonfederal funds.

The main threat to the Gulf Coast's wetland habitats is altered hydrology, caused primarily by the intrusion of saltwater and tidal energy via manmade canals. The loss of coastal habitat has been serious in the Chenier Plain region of southeast Texas and southwest Louisiana. In Phase II of this project, partners will build on their previous efforts by restoring or enhancing a total of **10,719 acres** of prairie and coastal marshes. In Texas, partners will restore or enhance 2,970 acres of privately owned land, restore and enhance 3,506 acres on the J.D. Murphree Wildlife Management Area (WMA), enhance 30 acres on the Lower Neches WMA, and enhance 4,031 acres on or adjacent to the McFaddin National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). In Louisiana, they will enhance 182 acres on Cameron Prairie NWR.

Situated at the southern end of the **Central and Mississippi Flyways**, the project area supports more than 40 percent of the Gulf Coast's wintering ducks and geese. Waterfowl as well as millions of shorebirds and a myriad of wetland-associated songbirds in the Gulf Coast Prairie Bird Conservation Region will benefit from this project. People also will benefit from improved recreational opportunities on public lands in the project area.

Partners include Ducks Unlimited, Inc., Camp Bailey, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Jefferson County Drainage District No.6, LaBelle Properties, Walter Umphrey, private landowners, and British Petroleum(BP)/Amoco. They are matching grant funds with **\$6,256,930**, which includes a portion (\$5 million) of the value of a 71,130-acre property donated to the State of Louisiana by BP/Amoco in Phase I of this project. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service are contributing **\$645,290** in nonmatching funds. This project advances the goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan's **Gulf Coast Joint Venture**, U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, North American Waterbird Conservation Plan, and Partners in Flight.

*For more information about this project, contact Keith McKnight, Regional Biologist-Texas/New Mexico, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., (832) 595-0663, [kmcknight@ducks.org](mailto:kmcknight@ducks.org), or David Buie, Standard Grants Program Proposal Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, (301) 497-5870, [david\\_buie@fws.gov](mailto:david_buie@fws.gov).*

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