



SMART Project

Saving Marshes and Ridges Together

Project Status

Project Year: 2016

Status: Ongoing

Category: Restoration

Location: Multiple locations

Project Partners: Shell Oil Company and BTEF

Background and Problem Addressed:

While Louisiana has the largest contiguous area of wetlands in the lower United States, it's also losing these wetlands at a breakneck pace. The fastest disappearing landmass on Earth is occurring within the two estuaries that make up the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary. These estuaries are some of the most ecologically productive places on the planet due to their changing salinity regimes and varying landforms.

On average, coastal Louisiana is losing a football field size area of land every 90-100 minutes. These losses include barrier islands, saline, brackish and fresh marshes, swamps, and chenier ridges that provide habitat for wildlife. Barrier islands, marshes, and ridges act as speed bumps to storm surge and wind from tropical events while providing critically important habitat for many species of Neotropical migratory songbirds. As these landforms are lost, so is the critical habitats of over 338 migrating bird species depend upon traveling the Mississippi Flyway each spring and fall.

BTNEP provides leading research and on the ground habitat enhancement concerning ridge/marsh habitat in Louisiana. BTNEP has also played an instrumental role in the advancement of private, corporate, and public collaboration leading to unique partnerships resulting in meaningful restoration for coastal Louisiana.



There are various coastal projects coming online that combat this loss by restoring or rebuilding land that is being lost. The newly created/restored bare land needs to be protected and managed for biodiversity, that's where BTNEP and Shell Oil Company come in. The Saving Marshes and Ridges Together - SMART restoration project will utilize newly created ridges and surrounding marshes for the establishment of trees and herbaceous species that will protect the land from washing away while also providing habitat diversity for a variety of animals.



SMART Project

Saving Marsh and Ridges Together

Project Description:

In 2016, Shell Oil Company and BTNEP came together to form the SMART (Saving Marshes and Ridges Together) Program, which also incorporates the BTNEP Volunteer Program and many additional partners. The SMART program is designed to utilize newly created ridges and surrounding marshes for the establishment of trees and herbaceous species to enhance wetlands that can be used by a variety of wildlife.

BTNEP volunteers using experimentally-designed plantings, will utilize a number of beneficial native woody species and herbaceous plants to help restore these newly created marsh and ridge habitats. Through SMART, funds were allocated from Shell Oil Company for ridge and marsh restoration in Lafourche and Plaquemines parishes. Projects include plant propagation at the BTNEP Native Plant Production Facility on the Nicholls State University Farm, the Port Fourchon Ridge and Marsh and Port Fourchon-Mars Pipeline Wetland Projects, the USACE Tiger Pass/Spanish Pass Ridge and Marsh Project, and the CWPPRA Bayou Dupont and Grand Liard Ridge and Marsh Projects.

In order to insure the best use of funds, personnel, and physical resources, primary goals were developed jointly for the SMART program. Some of these goals include:

- using Louisiana native plant propagation for ridge and marsh restoration.
- using seeds of native plants known to grow on chenieres and marshes that would be collected, germinated, and grown out to be plant-able size,
- planting woody and herbaceous plants across the sites ,according to needs of each project and/or BTNEP scientific study parameters,
- conducting multiple volunteer activities related to ridge/marsh restoration, and
- the creation of scientific and public documents that describe the joint ridge and marsh restoration projects.



CCMP Action Items Addressed:

Community Engagement (Sustained Recognition and Citizen Involvement #1)

Media Engagment (Sustained Recognition and Citizen Involvement #3)

Public Engagment (Sustained Recognition and Citizen Involvement #4)

Protection and Enhancement of Native Biological Resources (Ecological Management #15)