



Volunteer Program

Project Status

Project Year: 1995-Present

Status: Ongoing

Category: Volunteer

Location: Various Locations

Project Partners: The Volunteer Program has a host of partners and works actively with state, federal, and business entities.

Background and Problem Addressed:

Coastal Louisiana is of immense importance to our nation's economy and it should be restored and protected. The Barataria and Terrebonne Basins are vital to coastal Louisiana's seafood production, but due to coastal land loss these resources are being depleted. It is important for people to volunteer with BTNEP to help restore the habitats in the Barataria-Terrebonne Estuarine System.

A major aspect of BTNEP's Volunteer Program is the planting of native species in areas heavily affected by sea level rise and subsidence. Mostly made up of salt, brackish, and freshwater marshes, these affected areas are increasingly transitioning from healthy marsh to shallow open water. In an effort to counter these effects, BTNEP utilizes volunteers for plantings of native marsh species to help stabilize soil and accumulate sediment.

Additionally, people who volunteer with BTNEP come from all over the country and because of this the volunteers also serve as important communicators of the issues and the importance of all the resources coastal Louisiana provides for the nation. Volunteers take home and spread the knowledge of why it is important to restore and protect coastal Louisiana.



Project Description:

Since the 1990's, BTNEP's Volunteer Program has worked to educate the public about issues concerning coastal Louisiana and in getting the public involved in restoration efforts. Annually, BTNEP coordinates 500-800 volunteers to participate in native vegetation plantings as well as coastal and inland debris cleanups. BTNEP volunteers come from all across the nation to help restore areas affected by coastal land loss as well as to learn about the ecological and economical importance of coastal Louisiana.

BTNEP hosts 25 to 30 volunteer events a year in communication with BTNEP's Native Plant Program. The Volunteer Program plugs volunteers into the Native Plant Program that implements restoration of our coast through native vegetative plantings of our barrier islands, salt and fresh marshes, lakes, bayous, and ridges. Critically imperiled habitats and species are protected while volunteers from across the nation are educated about the area's problems and needs. Many of the groups come for a week or sometimes more. Many have been housed and chaperoned by our partners at Bayou Grace Community Services in Chauvin, Louisiana. Typically, volunteers are college, high school or religious groups that work with BTNEP for two to four days of their week long service. During their time with us, they often spend a day in Cocodrie at the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON) receiving in depth academic education about the estuary and the organisms inhabiting it. The other days BTNEP staff takes volunteers in the field somewhere within our estuaries to do on-the-ground restoration and to receive hands-on education.

An additional aspect of the Volunteer Program involves the facilitation of inland and coastal debris cleanups. In partnership with Louisiana's Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) Marine Debris Program, BTNEP hosted the 2016 Derelict Crab Trap Rodeo in Lafitte, LA. This volunteer effort removed more than 1,000 abandoned derelict crab traps that increase mortality of blue crabs and other species, as well as, create navigational hazards. In partnership with the Lafourche Parish Game and Fish Commission, BTNEP also hosted the 2016 Lake Fields Cleanup. This volunteer cleanup up event removed close to eight tons of trash and debris from the Lake Fields area near Lockport, LA.



CCMP Action Items Addressed:

Citizen Involvement Programs and Activities (Sustained Recognition #3)

Shoreline Stabilization and Induced Sediment Deposition (Ecological Management #6)

Protection of Habitat for Migratory and Resident Birds (Ecological Management #15)

Reduction of Impacts from Exotic Vegetation (Ecological Management #16)