

# LaNERR – Roadshow Presentation

Louisiana  
National Estuary Research Reserve

*What is the National Estuarine Research Reserve  
(NERR) System and What are benefits of a NERR in  
Louisiana*

*November 1, 2020*





# A Louisiana National Estuarine Research Reserve— Participating in a National Network to Tell our Story

## National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS)

network of protected areas  
representative of the various  
biogeographic regions and  
estuarine types in the United States.

Reserves are established as state-  
NOAA partnership for long-term  
research, education, and  
stewardship to promote informed  
management of the nation's  
estuaries and coastal habitats.





# Primary Goals of the Reserve System

1. Long-term protection to insure longitudinal research
2. Address significant coastal management issues through coordinated research
3. Enhance public awareness and understanding of estuaries
4. Partner with feds, state, public, and private entities on research
5. Conduct and coordinate system wide research



## STEWARDSHIP

- Mapping
- Restoration
- Land Acquisition



## RESEARCH

- Monitoring
- Collaboration
- Student Fellowships



## TRAINING

- Target Audiences
- Priority Issues



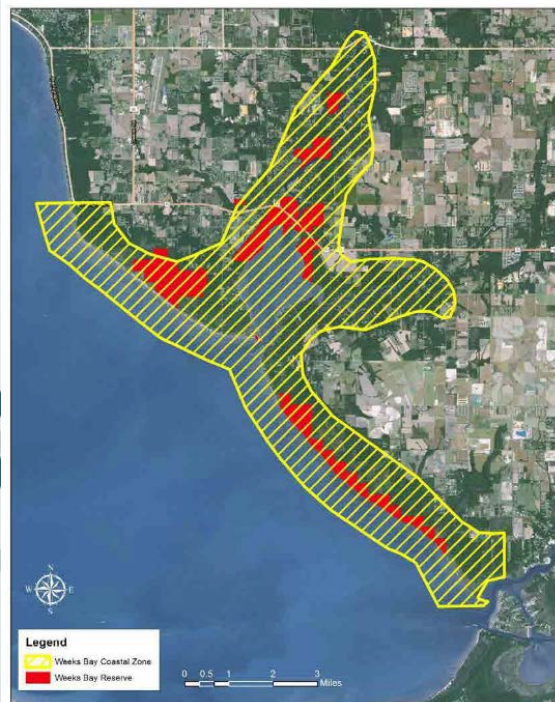
## EDUCATION

- Teachers
- Communities
- Students

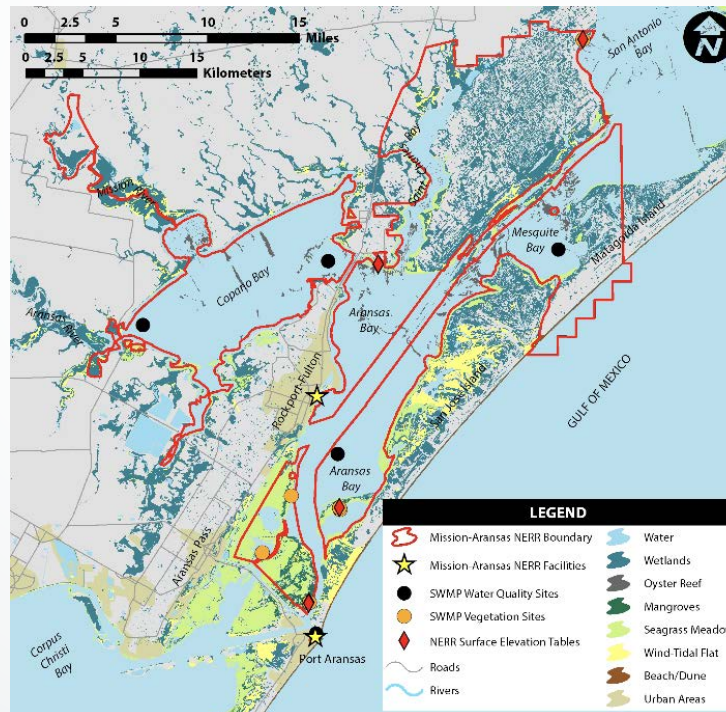


# Public lands connected by state waters

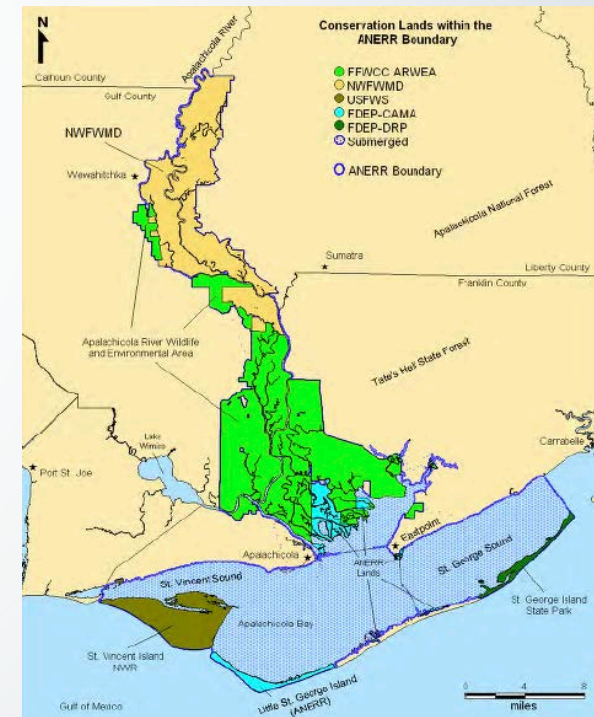
Weeks Bay NERR, AL



Mission-Aransas NERR, TX



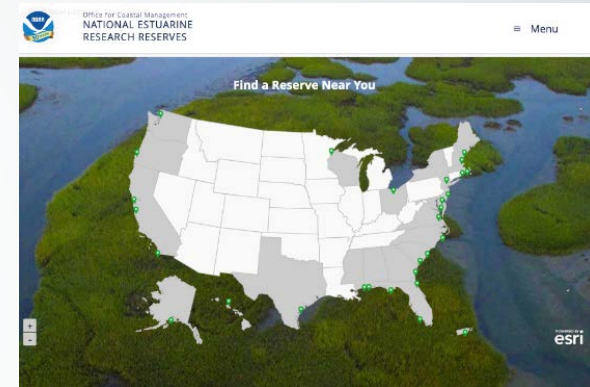
Apalachicola NERR, FL





## What are benefits of NERR System to Louisiana?

- The NERR System provides a national network to describe the unique attributes of a major delta ecosystem to the nation; and **promote our efforts at national level** to restore and protect this natural, economic, and cultural resource.
- Establishing a Louisiana National Estuarine Research Reserve (LaNERR) will provide **federal support** for applied science, monitoring, education and outreach opportunities and resources to our coast.
- Facilities and site to enhanced education of 'what is a delta estuary' to K-12 and public builds support for our coastal programs from **recreation to restoration.**







## Benefits – Education & Research Facilities

- Interpretive center
- Nature trails
- Research field station
- Conference room
- Overnight accommodations
- Boats
- Public boat access
- Docking facilities
- Weather Station
- Public Access for research, education and stewardship





## Common Questions

- **Will the state have to purchase land for a Louisiana reserve?**

No. Louisiana is considering sites from existing publicly owned lands and adjacent public trust waters. NOAA would not own or manage the land within a LaNERR. The LaNERR would be the property of Louisiana along with any other agreements with other public (federal refuge) or private lands (conservation easements).

- **Does the designation of a reserve bring more rules and regulations?**

The designation of a LaNERR would not add any new regulations. There are no federal regulations imposed as a result of reserve designation.

- **Will the federal government run the reserve?**

LaNERR would be a partnership between NOAA and Louisiana. The state is responsible for the day-to-day management of a reserve. NOAA administers the entire reserve system. NOAA responsibilities include establishing standards for designating and operating reserves that benefit the entire system.



# NOAA's NERR Designation Process

## Step 1- Letter of Interest

- **Governor John Bel Edwards sent letter of interest on July 23, 2019** to the Undersecretary of the NOAA who responded affirmatively in December that same year.
- **Governor Edwards identified Louisiana Sea Grant as the lead agency** in the designation process that, along with Governor's Office of Coastal Activities, would initiate a process to nominate a Louisiana NERR (LaNERR) to NOAA.

## Step 2- Site Selection and Nomination (*Current Step*)

Step 3- Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Management Plan

Step 4- Final Environmental Impact Statement and Final Management Plan

Step 5- Designation findings and certificate; Record of Decision

Step 6- Designation Ceremony





## Step 1- Letter of Interest

## Step 2- Site Selection and Nomination (*Current Step*)

- **Site-Selection Process** must include: Site Selection Committee, site criteria that are applied to entire coastal zone, key stakeholder outreach and engagement, and at least one public meeting held jointly with NOAA
- **Governor Submits a Site Nomination Packet** including: Governor's nomination letter, description of the proposed site in relationship to each of the site selection criteria, an analysis of the proposed site based on the biogeographical scheme defined in regulations, a description of the site's major resources, location, proposed boundaries, and adjacent land uses, the public engagement process, and all other sites considered and why none of these were chosen.

## Step 3- Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Management Plan

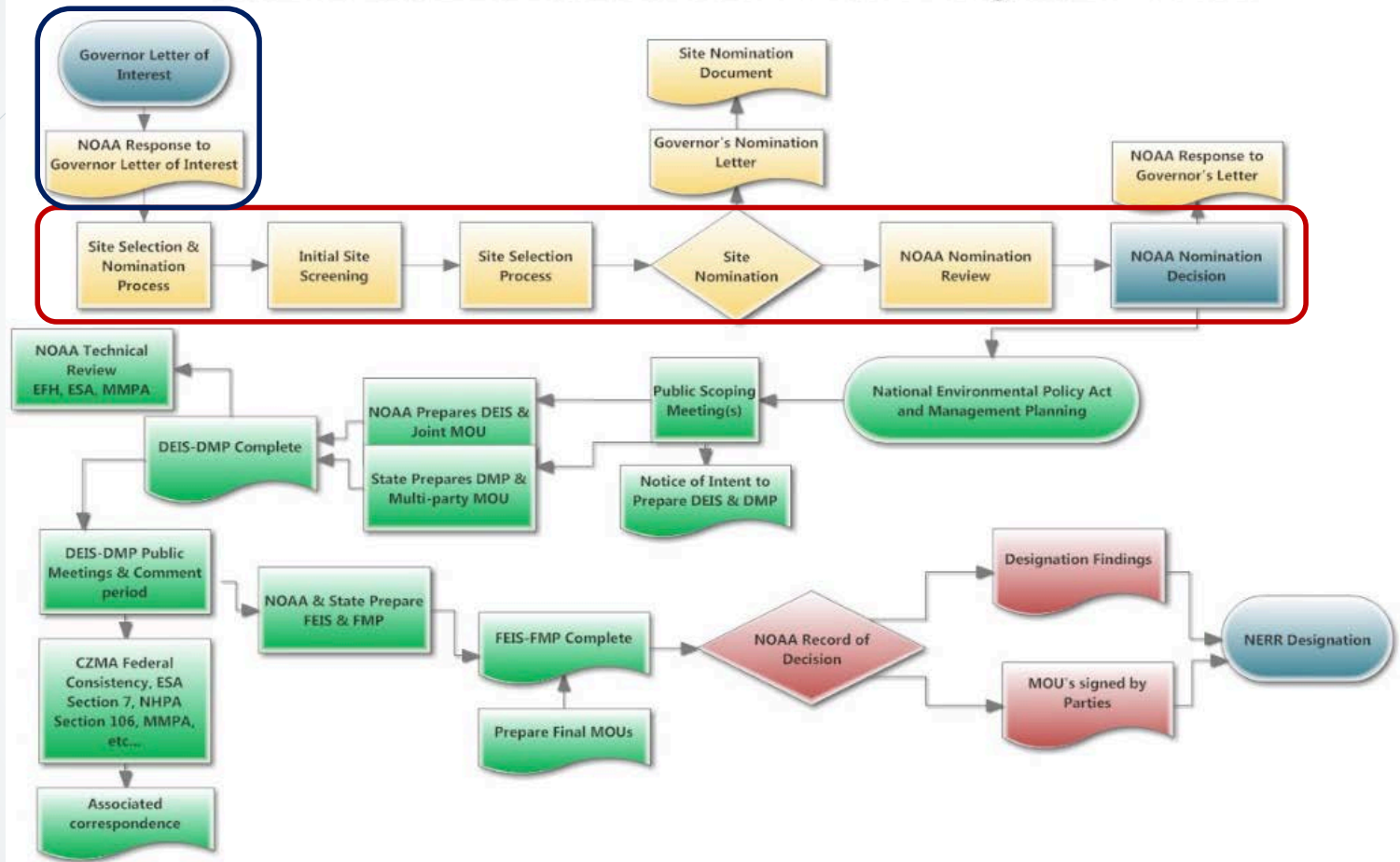
## Step 4- Final Environmental Impact Statement and Final Management Plan

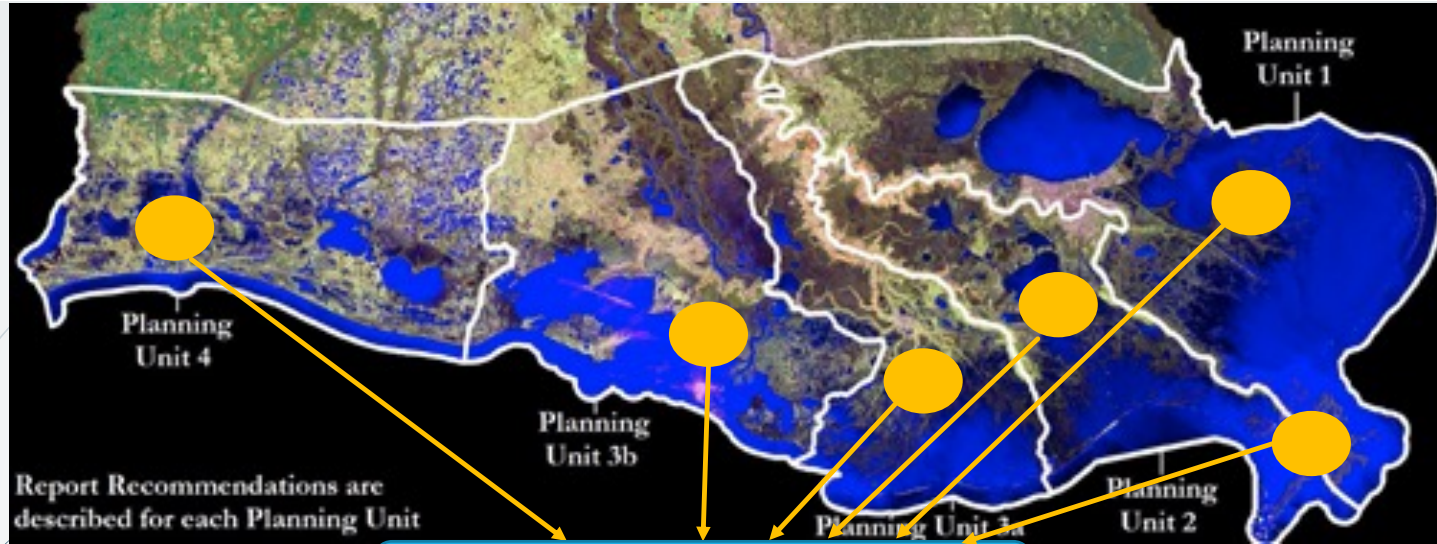
## Step 5- Designation findings and certificate; Record of Decision

## Step 6- Designation Ceremony

## Pre-designation Process

### National Estuarine Research Reserve Basic Designation Process





Zones  
(Pre-screening)

Sites  
(Development and Evaluation)

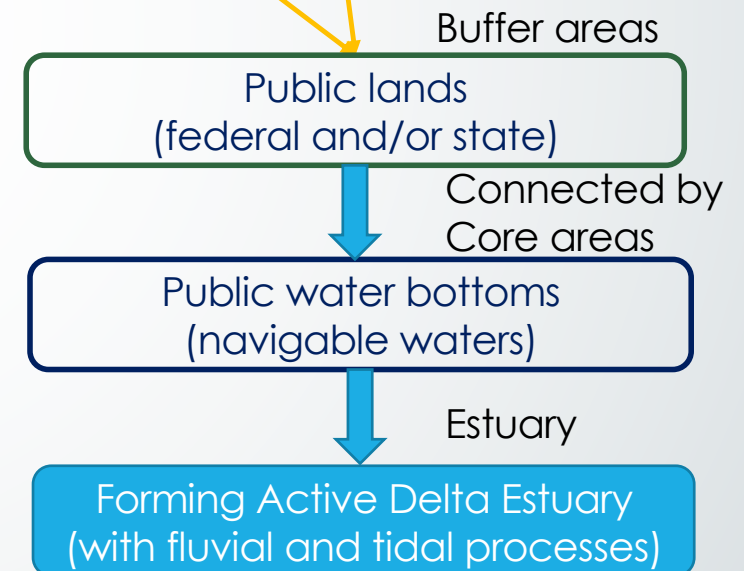
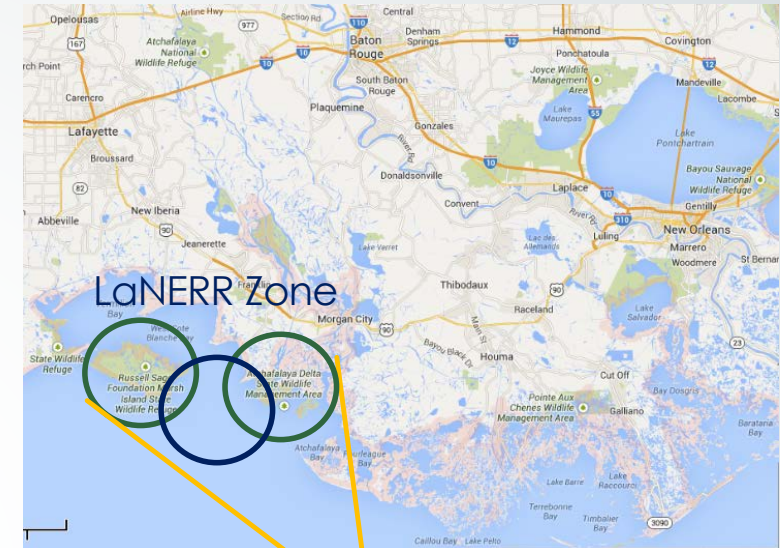
Single Site Nomination  
(Selection)





## Establish LaNERR generalized zones (not site-specific boundaries):

In each of the coastal basins, look for a combination of federal and/or state lands ( $\leq 50\%$  federal) composed of intertidal wetlands representing buffer areas connected by public water bottoms (navigable waters) that form estuary proper of the core areas that together form an active delta estuary with fluvial and tidal processes supporting delta ecosystem attributes.







## Six proposed LaNERR zones for pre-screening by the Site Development Committee





# LaNERR Site Selection and Nomination Teams

## Site Designation Coordination Team

- Serves to provide leadership and oversight of the state designation. Its task is to manage the phases of the designation over time by coordinating the various committees, engaging the public, and by working closely with local NOAA Liaison to keep NOAA updated on progress

## Site Development Committee

- the technical team responsible for pre-screening the coastal zone to evaluate those areas clearly suitable to serve the function of a LaNERR. Its task is to submit 1-3 proposed sites to the Site Evaluation Committee for nomination of one final site to NOAA for site designation

## Site Evaluation Committee

- the executive level committee responsible for reviewing the final proposed sites for a LaNERR as recommended by the Site Development Committee. Its task is to select the final site to be recommended to the governor for nomination prior to being submitted to NOAA





The **Site Designation Coordination Team** provides leadership and oversees the designation process by the state. This team includes:

- **Robert Twilley** (Director of Louisiana Sea Grant),
- **Morgan Crutcher** (Governor's Office of Coastal Activities)
- **LaTosha Mullins** (Louisiana Sea Grant).
- This committee will work closely with the NOAA Liaison member, **Kristin Ransom**, to keep the Ecosystems and NERRS Program in the NOAA Office of Coastal Management updated on progress.
- In addition, this group will communicate with the Site Development Committee, and the Site Evaluation Committee to coordinate phases of the designation process over time.



The **Site Development Committee** is a technical team that will be responsible for pre-screening the coastal zone to evaluate those areas clearly suitable to serve the function of a LaNERR.

The Site Development Committee will submit 1-3 proposed sites to the Site Evaluation Committee for nomination of a LaNERR to NOAA for site designation.

**State Agencies:** CPRA; Archaeology; State Parks; La. Culture, Recreation and Tourism; Atchafalaya Basin Natural Heritage District; State Lands Office; LDAF;LDEQ; LDNR; LDOTD; LDWF; Louisiana Watershed Initiative

**Federal Agencies:** NOAA OCM - Gulf Coast Rep; USFWS; USGS; NWRC; NRCS; National Park Service; USACE; EPA

**NGOs:** The Nature Conservancy; Ducks Unlimited; The Conservation Fund; Land Trust for LA; LWF; Pontchartrain Conservancy; Restore or Retreat; The Water Institute of the Gulf; Mississippi River Delta Campaign – EDF; Audubon; CRCL; Trust for Public Land; BTNEP; Pointe au Chien Indian Tribe

**Universities:** LSU; LSU AgCenter; LUMCON; Nicholls State; McNeese; Southeastern La. University; Loyola University; University of Lafayette; Tulane; SUNO;



## MEETINGS FOR THE SITE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

### Meeting 1: ORIENTATION

October 8th And 9th;

### Meeting 2: LaNERR PRE-SCREENING BREAKOUT GROUPS

Oct.14, AND Oct.15

### Meeting 3: SYNTHESIS/SITE CRITERIA EVALUATION DISCUSSION

Planned for November/Early December





# LaNERR Executive Committee Members

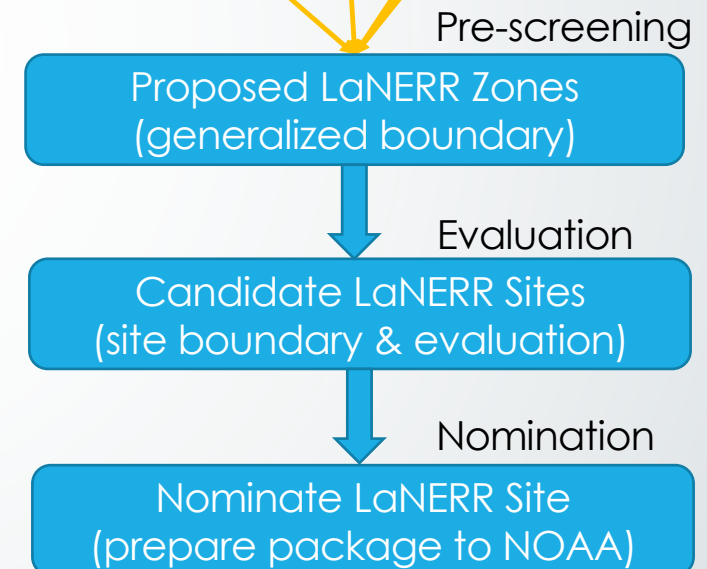
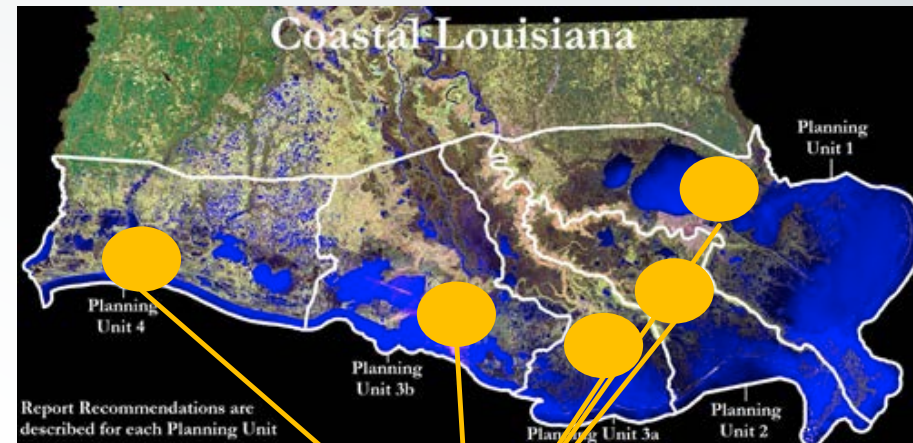
- Harry Vorhoff
  - Governor's office of Coastal Activities
- Russell Caffery
  - Governor's office of Coastal Activities
- Gregory Grandy
  - CPRA
- Bren Haase
  - CPRA
- Charles Reulet
  - DNR
- Keith Lovell
  - DNR
- Randy Myers
  - LDWF
- Cole Gararrett
  - LDWF
- Patrick Banks
  - LDWF
- Members met on August 13<sup>th</sup> to receive an update on LaNERR Site Selection process
- Executive Members felt the process depicted a fair and transparent way to select and nominate a site
- Members will be updated as process evolves





## How will Louisiana determine where to establish a LaNERR?

1. Develop **pre-screening criteria** that reflect LaNERR goals;
2. **Establish generalized zones** within which to identify candidate sites;
3. Use proposed zones to **modify NOAA site criteria** to help identify sites for consideration and final nomination;
4. Evaluate proposed LaNERR Zones to **select candidate sites** that define preferred goals;
5. **Generate public support and partnerships** for proposed final site to NOAA.





# Criteria from the NOAA guidelines to establish a LaNERR site in the Mississippi River Delta.

## National Estuarine Research Reserve Designation Guidance

Site Selection, Nomination, and Designation



February 1, 2020

Authored by NOAA

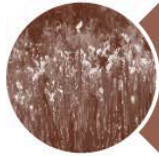


Stewardship Division  
Office for Coastal Management  
National Ocean Service  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration





## Criteria from the NOAA guidelines to establish a LaNERR site in the Mississippi River Delta.



I. Environmental Representativeness



II. Value of the Site for Research, Monitoring, and Resource Protection



III. Suitability of the Site for Education and Interpretation



IV. Acquisition and Management Considerations



## Six proposed LaNERR zones for pre-screening by the Site Development Committee







#### IV. Acquisition and Management Considerations

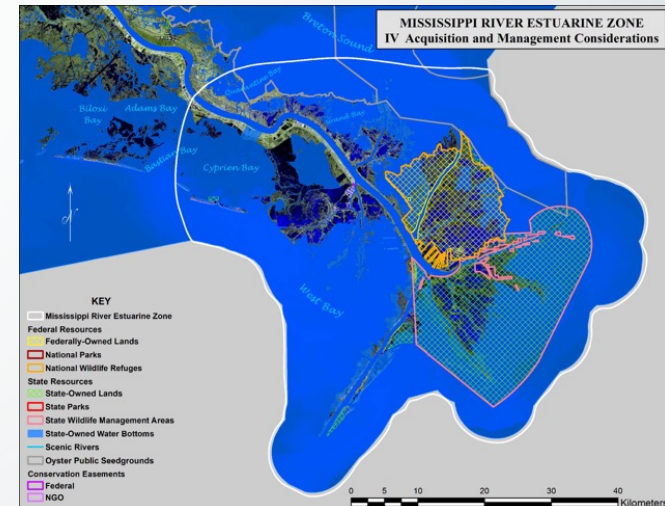
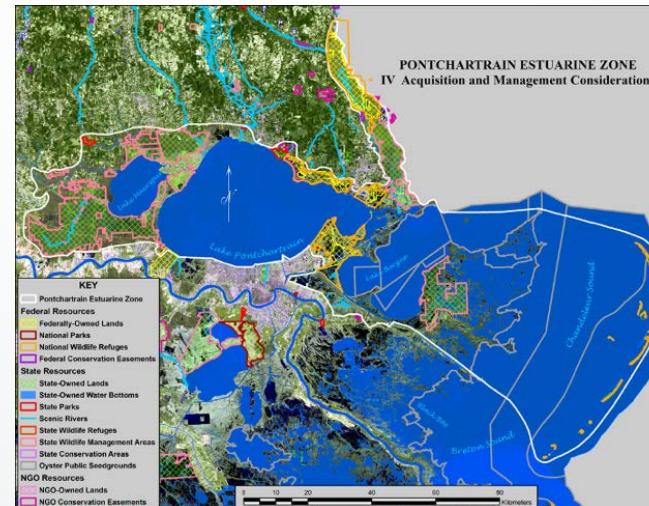
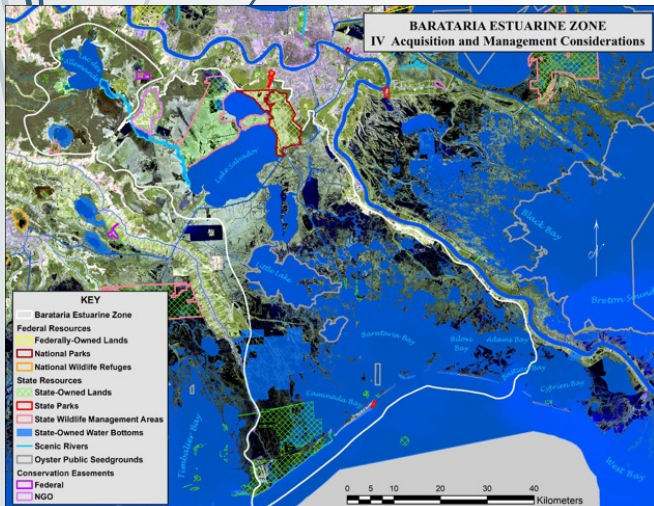
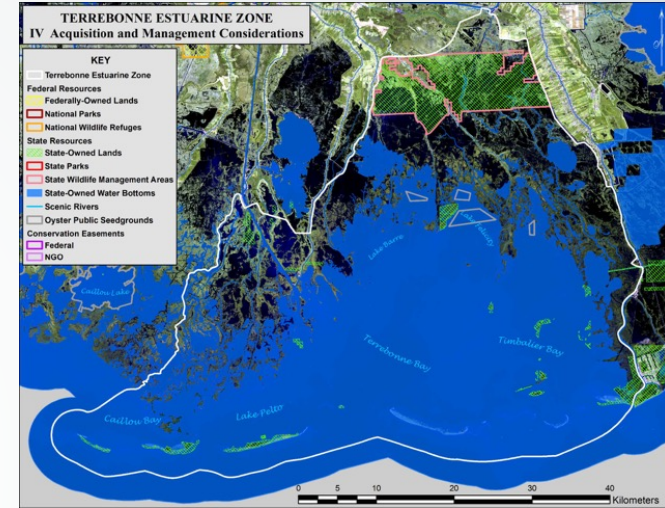
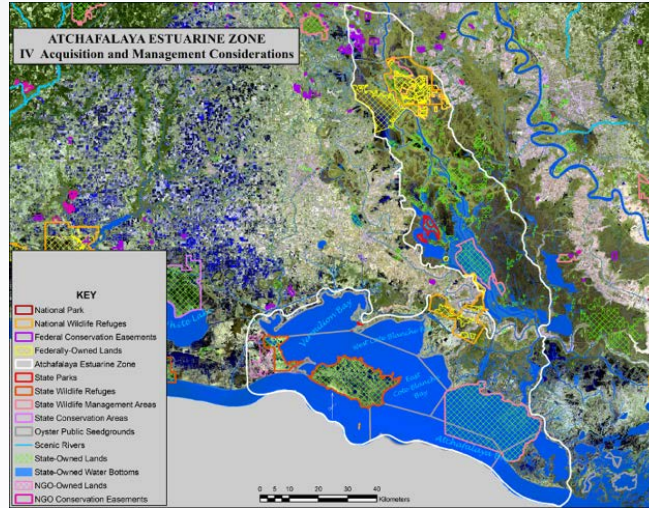
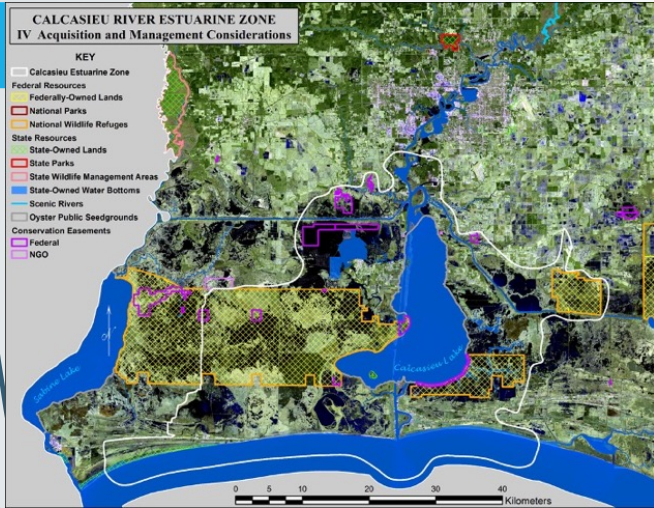
The generalized boundaries of the proposed LaNERR zone include **sufficient land and water area to maintain the integrity of the delta ecosystem.**

- The candidate site consists of publicly owned lands or demonstrates sufficient potential for land acquisition and adequate land-use control to meet Reserve System goals.
- There are Wildlife Management Areas, State Parks, National Parks, conservation easements, etc. in the LaNERR zone.
- The candidate site is suitable to address key **coastal management issues.**





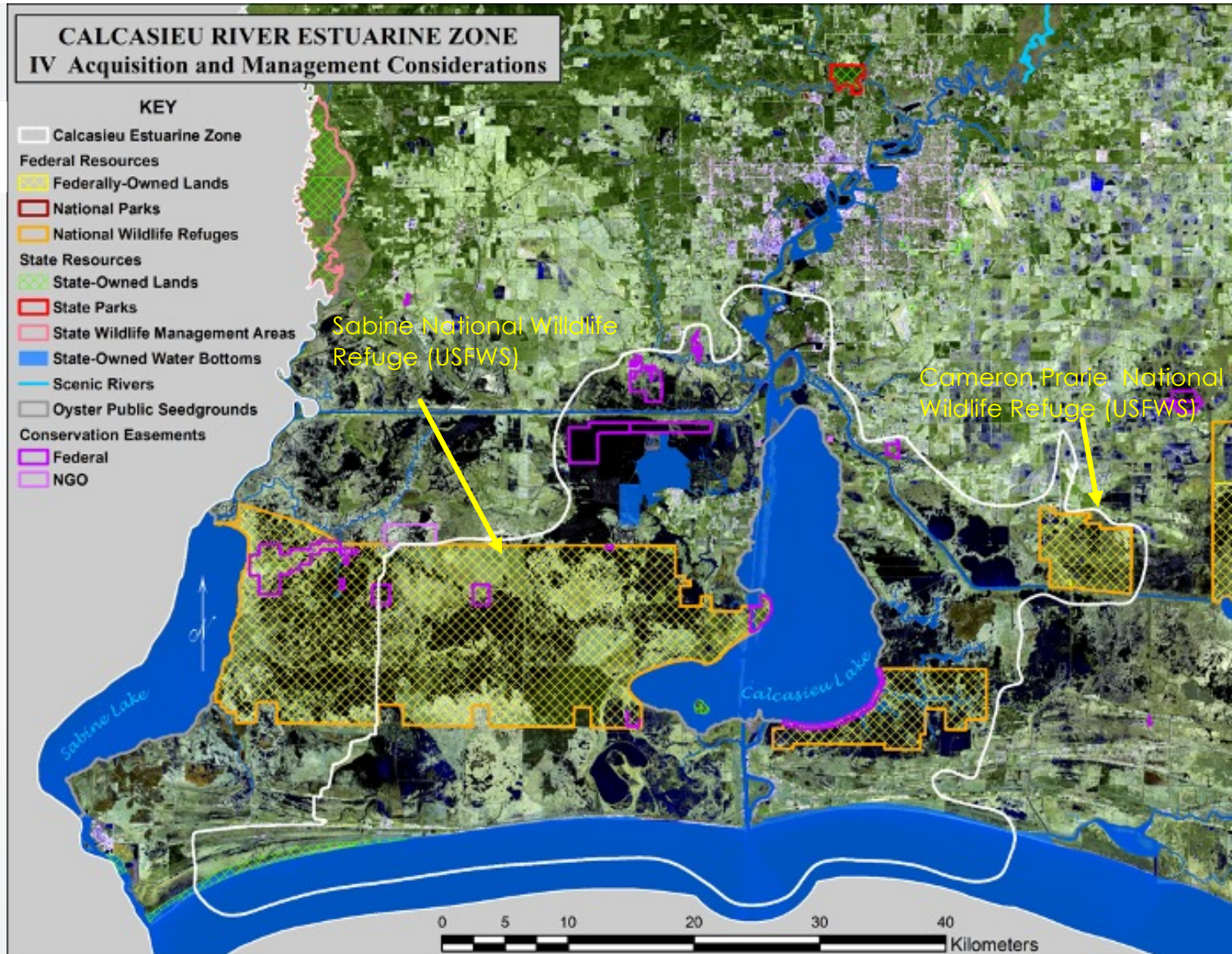
## IV. Acquisition and Management Considerations







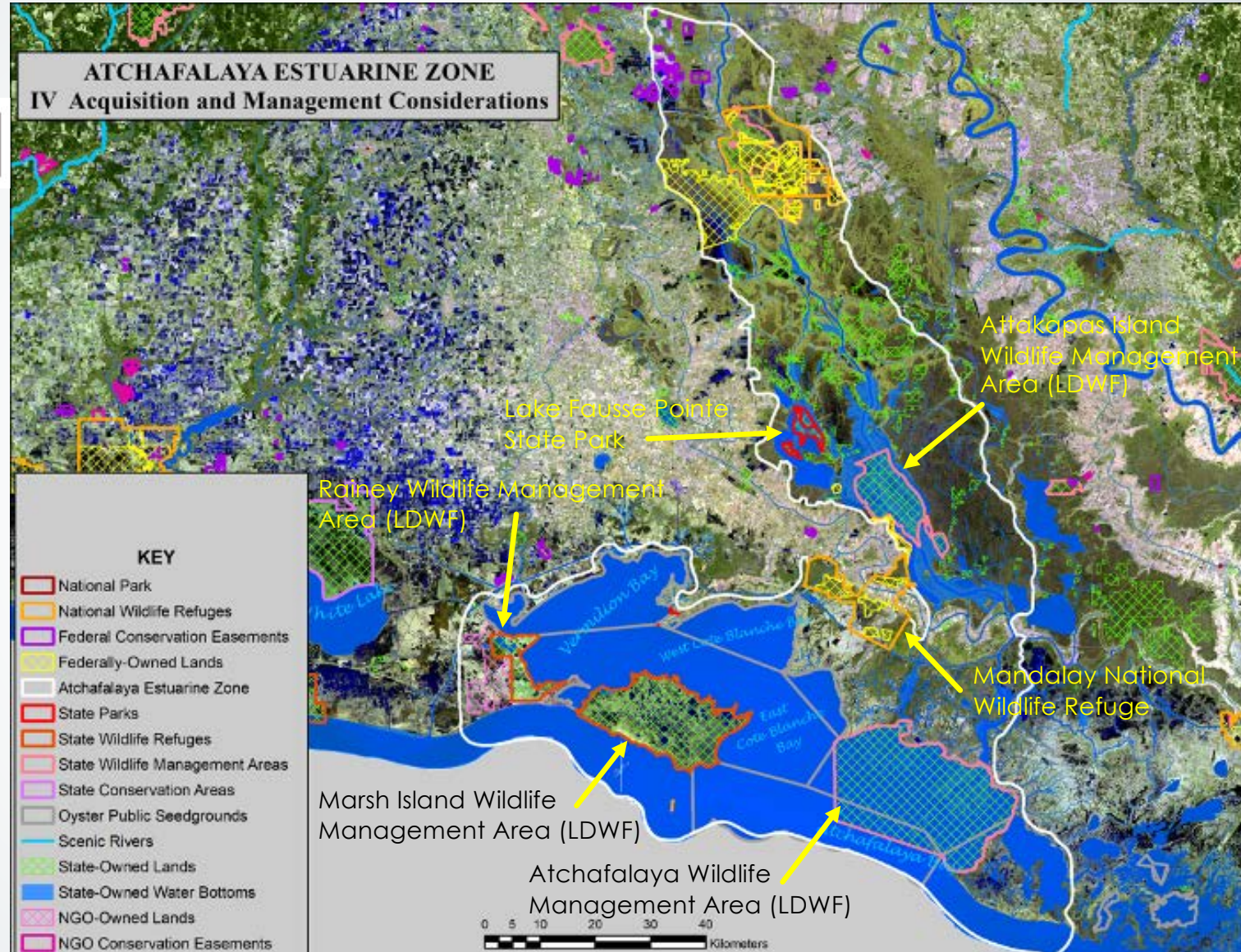
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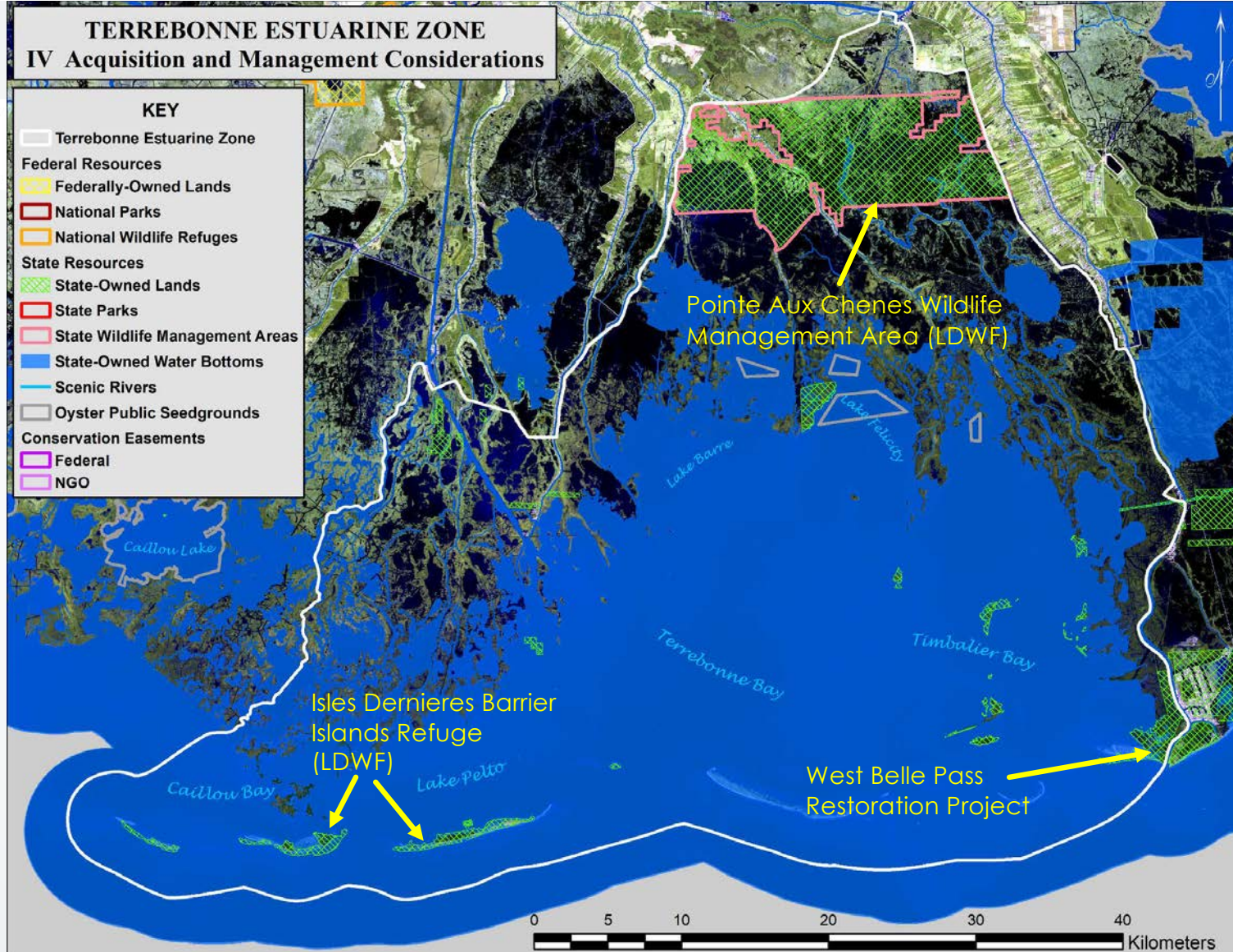
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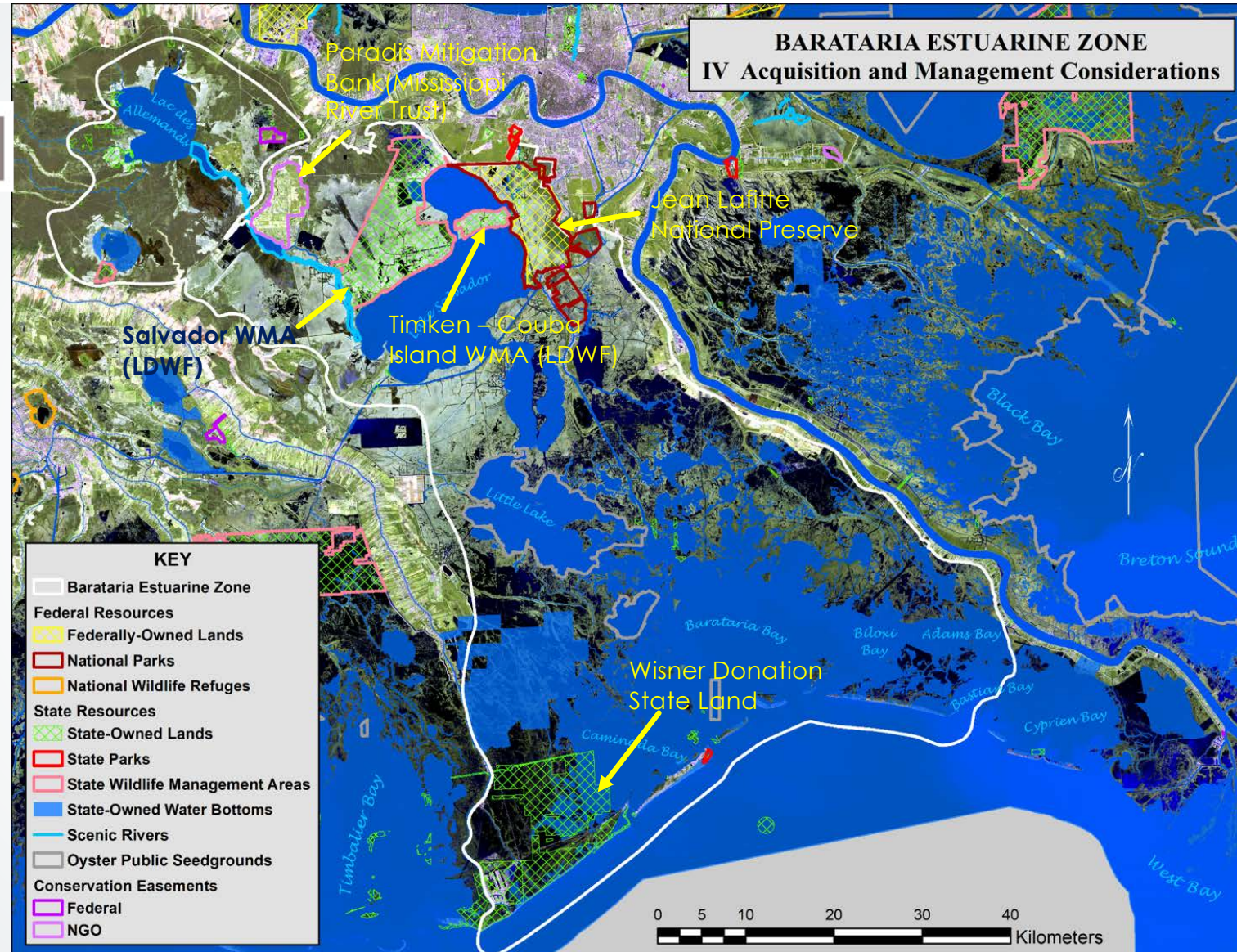
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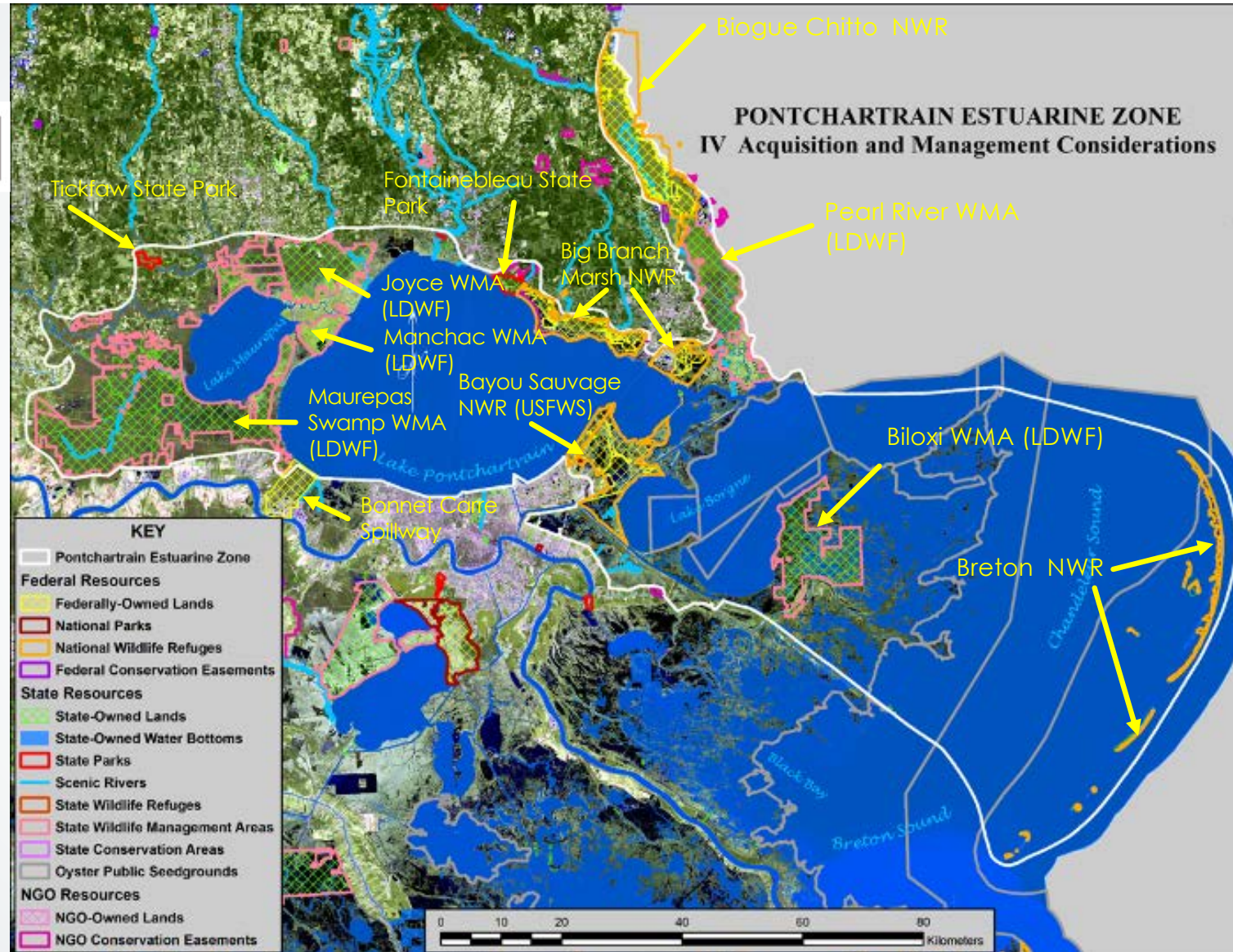
#### IV. Acquisition and Management Considerations







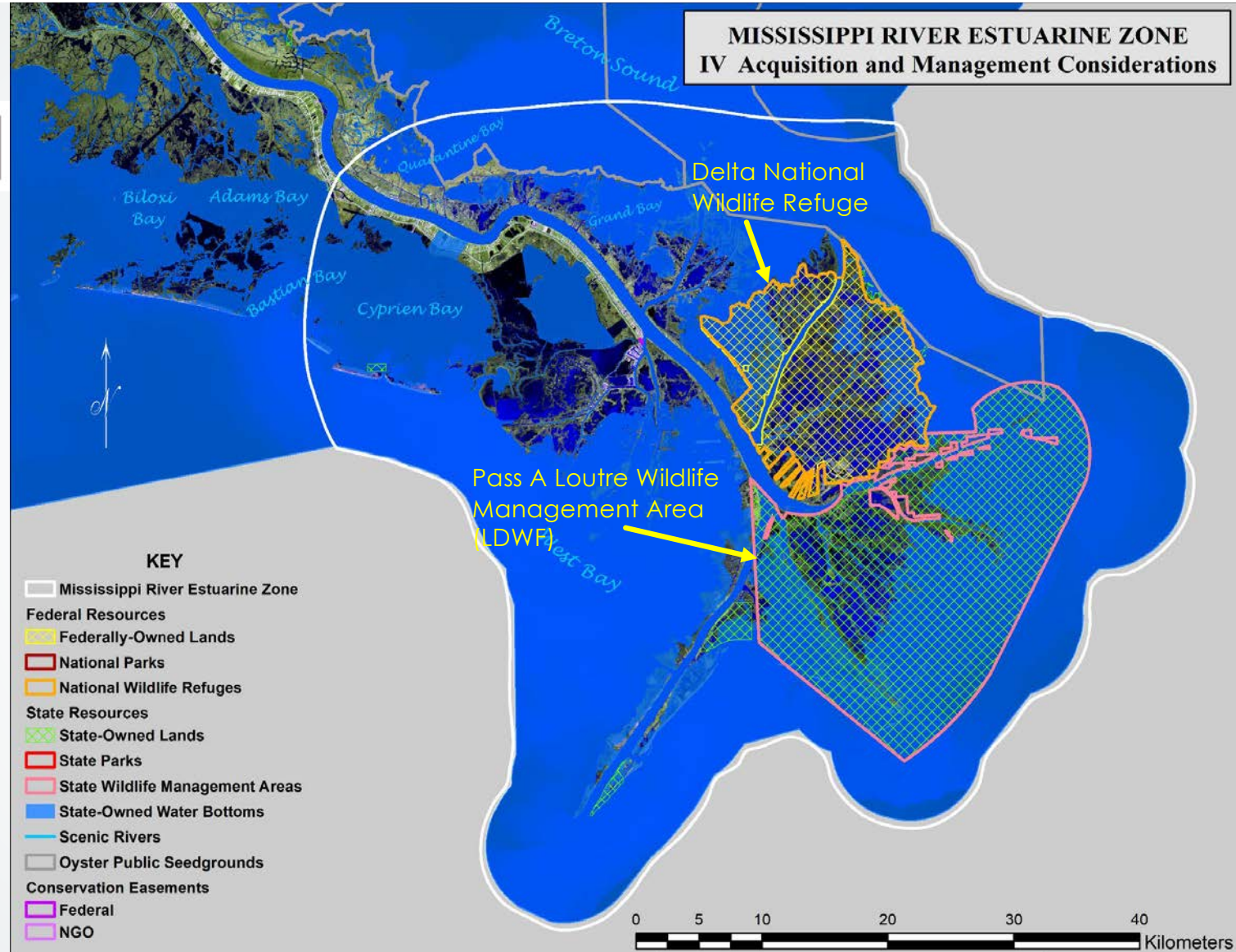
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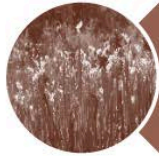


#### IV. Acquisition and Management Considerations





## Criteria from the NOAA guidelines to establish a LaNERR site in the Mississippi River Delta.



### I. Environmental Representativeness



### II. Value of the Site for Research, Monitoring, and Resource Protection



### III. Suitability of the Site for Education and Interpretation



### IV. Acquisition and Management Considerations



## I. Environmental Representativeness

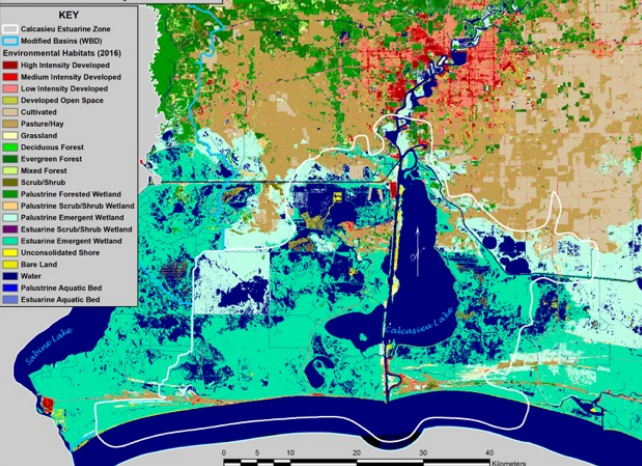
The candidate site is in the **Mississippi River Delta** that represents an active delta estuary.

- Core and buffer areas describe the ecological features of a delta estuary such as the life cycles of estuarine-dependent species;
- Vegetation types include the delta estuary habitats from tidal freshwater to estuarine marshes and forested wetlands;
- Does the proposed delta estuary have habitat with unique and endangered species;



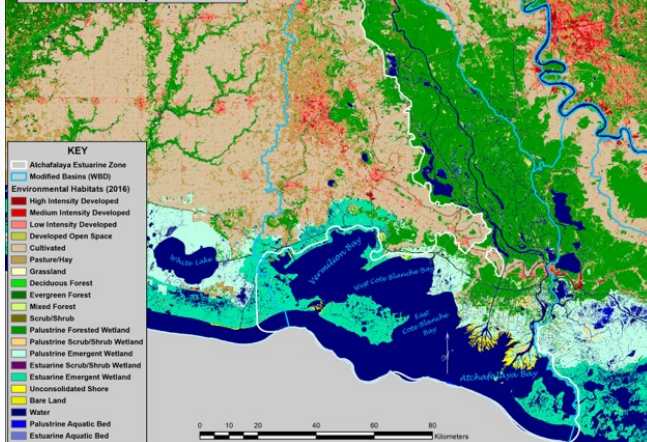


## CALCASIEU ESTUARINE ZONE I Environmental Representativeness

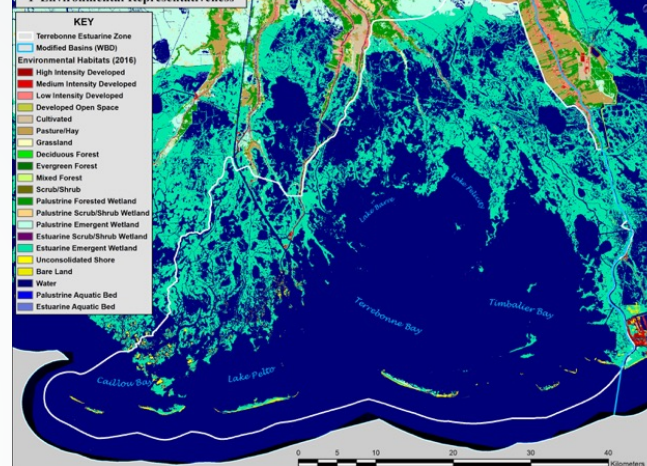


## I. Environmental Representativeness

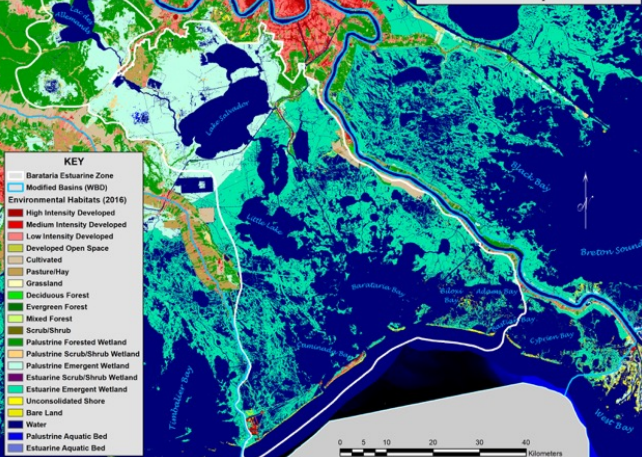
## ATCHAFALAYA ESTUARINE ZONE I Environmental Representativeness



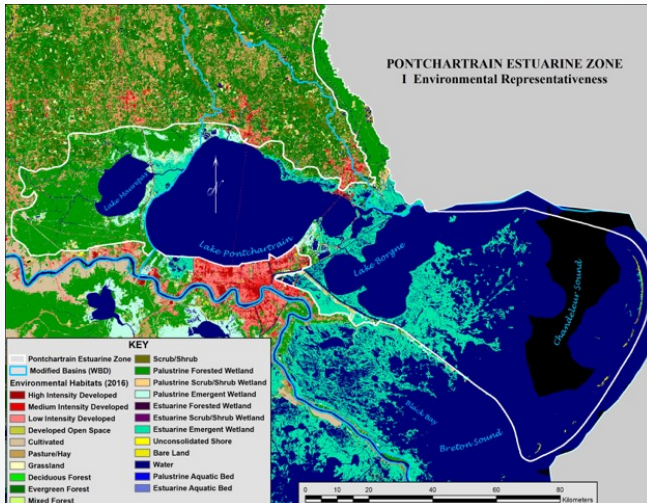
## TERREBONNE ESTUARINE ZONE I Environmental Representativeness



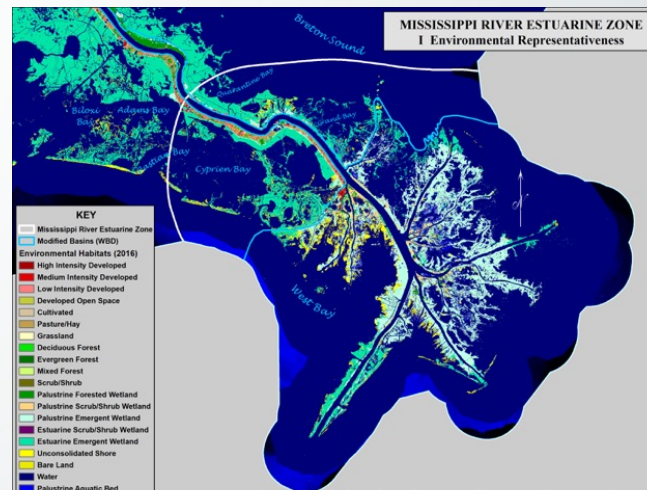
## BARATARIA ESTUARINE ZONE I Environmental Representativeness



## PONTCHARTRAIN ESTUARINE ZONE I Environmental Representativeness

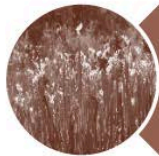


## MISSISSIPPI RIVER ESTUARINE ZONE I Environmental Representativeness





## Criteria from the NOAA guidelines to establish a LaNERR site in the Mississippi River Delta.



I. Environmental Representativeness



II. Value of the Site for Research, Monitoring, and Resource Protection



III. Suitability of the Site for Education and Interpretation



IV. Acquisition and Management Considerations





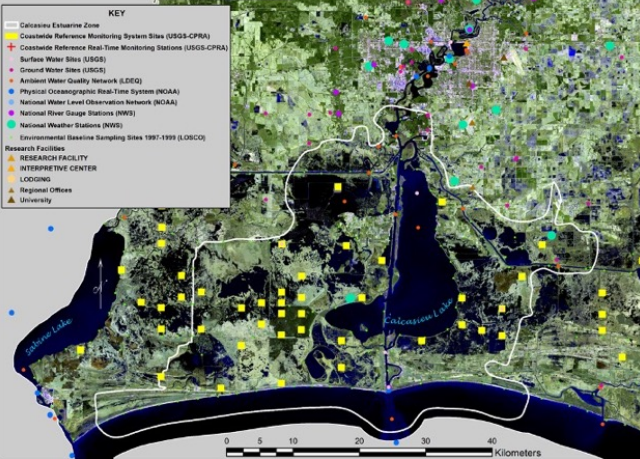
## II. Value of the Site for Research, Monitoring, and Resource Protection

The candidate site is suitable for **research, monitoring, and resource protection** activities.

- The proposed zone has ecosystems suitable for monitoring processes of delta estuary; and has been site of long-term research efforts.
- There are research institutions and facilities in general area that can utilize the proposed site for research and monitoring programs;
- There is long-term sustainability and resilience to ecosystems in the proposed site; land use issues allow for resource protection.

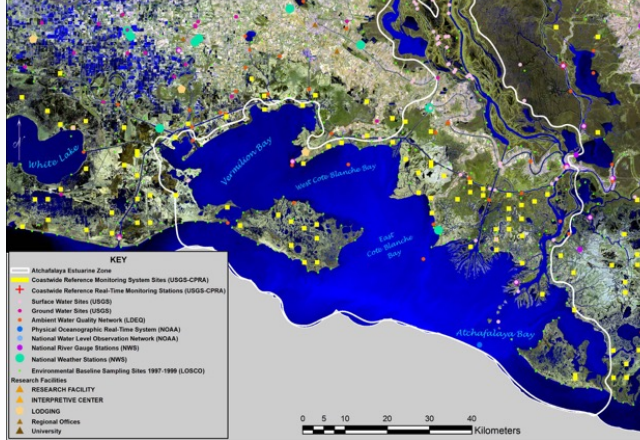


## CALCASIEU RIVER ESTUARINE ZONE II Research, Monitoring and Resource Protection

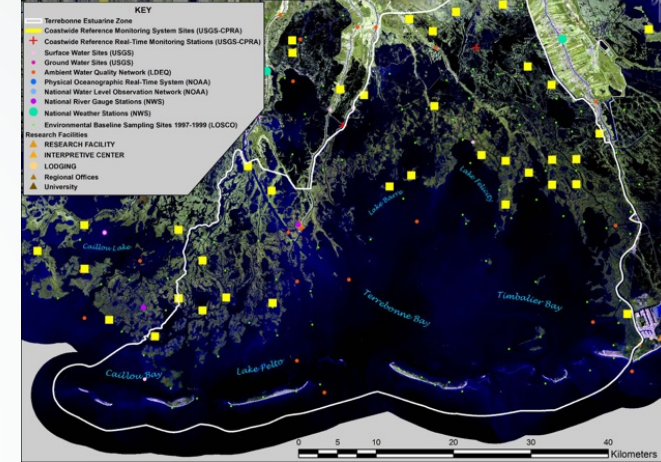


## II. Value of the Site for Research, Monitoring, and Resource Protection

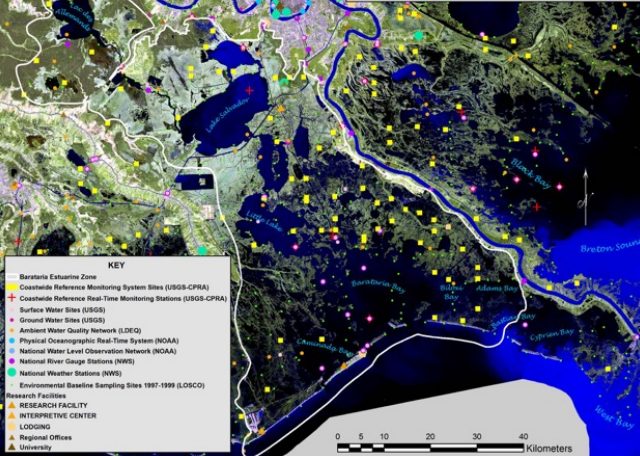
## ATCHAFALAYA ESTUARINE ZONE II Research, Monitoring and Resource Protection



## TERREBONNE ESTUARINE ZONE II Research, Monitoring and Resource Protection



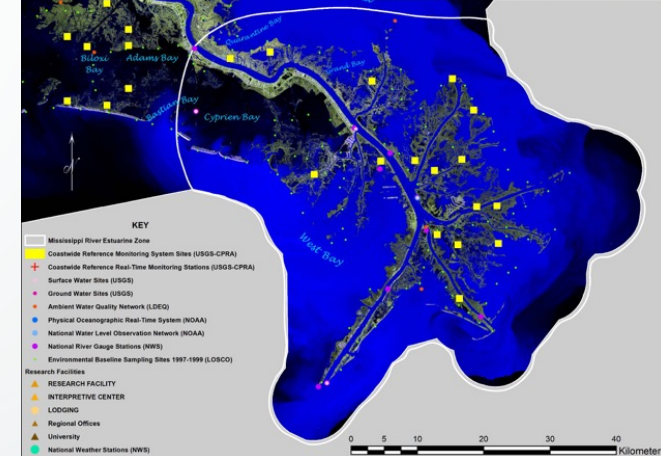
## BARATARIA ESTUARINE ZONE II Research, Monitoring and Resource Protection



## PONTCHARTRAIN ESTUARINE ZONE II Research, Monitoring and Resource Protection



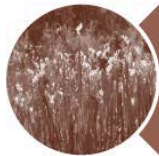
## MISSISSIPPI RIVER ESTUARINE ZONE II Research, Monitoring and Resource Protection







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I. Environmental Representativeness



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III. Suitability of the Site for Education and Interpretation



IV. Acquisition and Management Considerations



### III. Suitability of the Site for Education and Interpretation

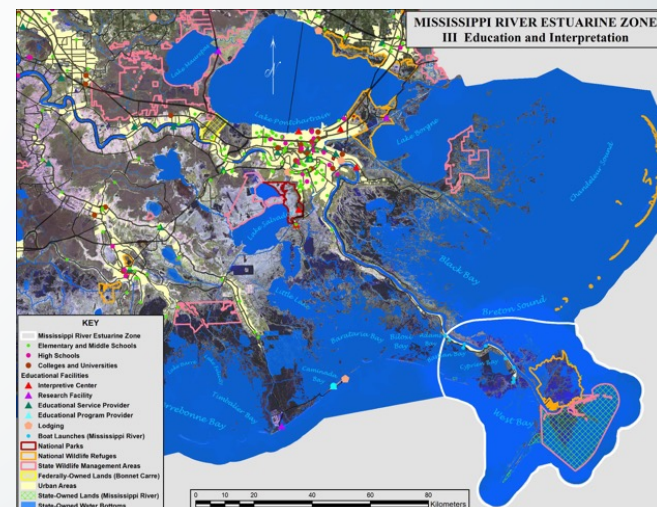
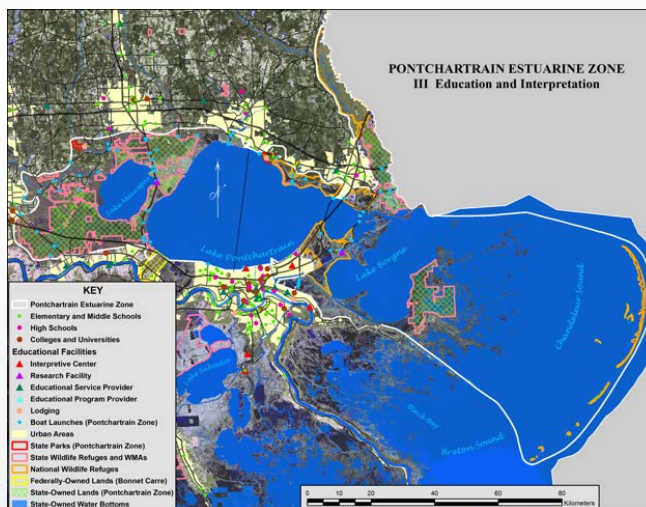
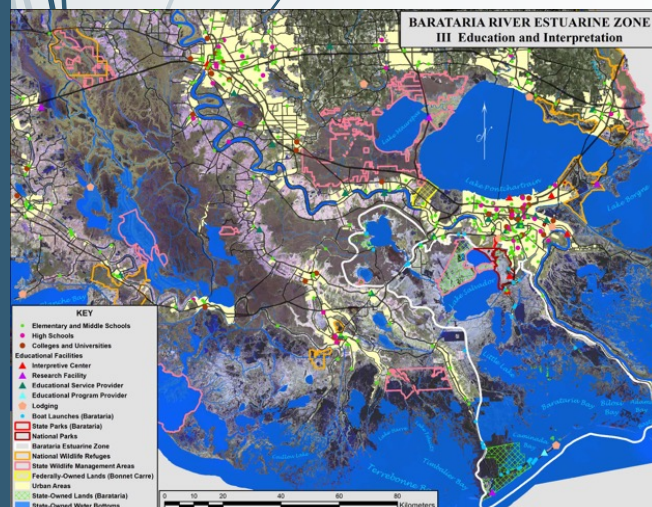
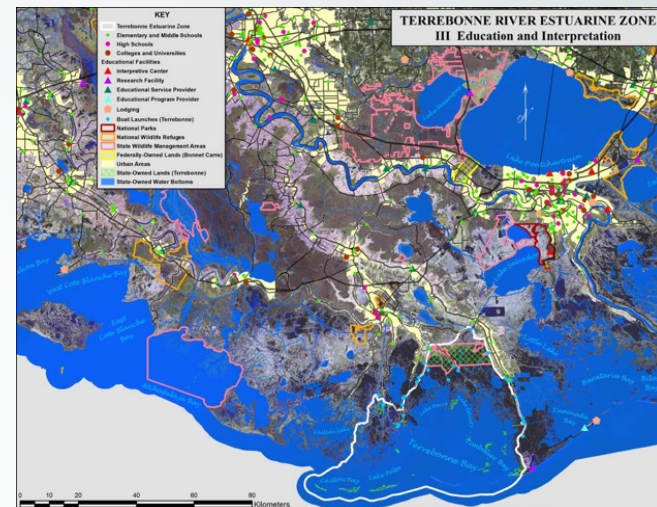
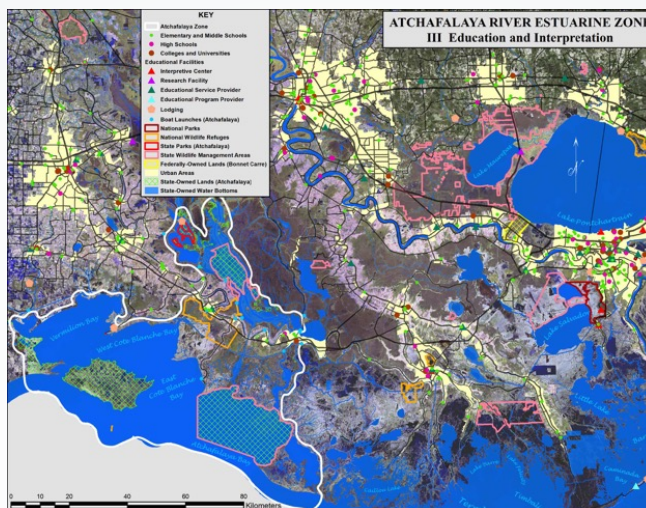
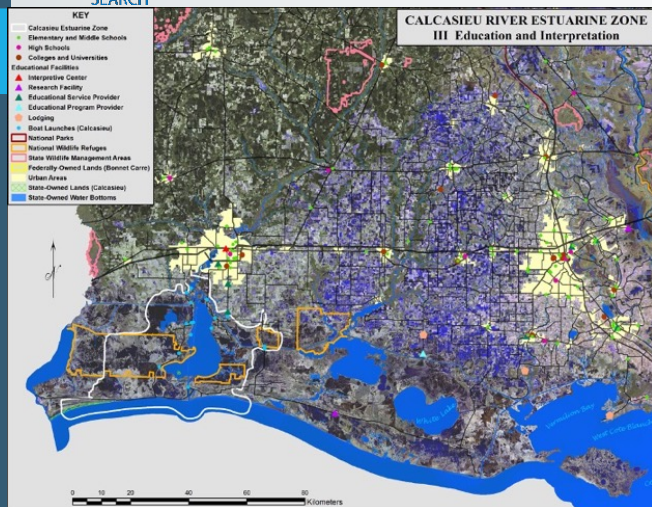
The candidate site is suitable for **education, training, and interpretation** activities.

- Does the LaNERR zone have significant features such as Scenic and Historic Rivers, Scenic Byways, Indian mounds, Archeological sites, etc., that provide education and interpretation value;
- Are there schools and known educational and interpretive centers near the LaNERR zone;
- Is the proposed site accessible by normal modes of transportation. What roads and boat launches provide access points to waterways of the LaNERR zone.





### III. Suitability of the Site for Education and Interpretation







# LaNERR Site Selection and Nomination Process: Public Participation and Transparency

## Site Development

- Propose LaNERR Zones
- Prescreen Zones to identify Sites
- Develop Candidate Sites
- Modify Site Criteria to NOAA

## Public Roadshow

- Outline Benefits of NERRS & LaNERR
- Overview of LaNERR Process to Stakeholders
- Receive feedback on Proposed LaNERR Zones

## Town Halls at Candidate Sites

- Presentation of Candidate Sites to local communities
- Public and stakeholder engagement
- Evaluate potential value of sites



## What are the next steps in the pre-designation process.

2020					2021						
SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG
Pre-screening of Coast: Identify Zones & Potential Sites		Roadshow: NERR Intro Public Review of Zones, Criteria, & Potential Sites		Collaborative Site Development: Evaluate & Prepare Candidate Site Proposals			Town Halls: Public Review of Candidate Site Proposals			Final Site Selection and Nomination	

1. Site Development Committee will be evaluating the six proposed generalized estuarine zones as qualifications for a LaNERR.
2. Based on that recommendation, the Site Development Committee will begin to develop more specific Candidate Sites for consideration for a LaNERR.
3. Town Hall meetings will be held at those Candidate Sites that have merit for a LaNERR.



# How do I stay engaged in the process?

Home  
About Us  
Outreach  
Education  
Research  
LaNERR  
Communications  
Law & Policy  
Resources  
Funding

Louisiana Sea Grant > LaNERR

## Louisiana National Estuarine Research Reserve (LaNERR)

The National Estuarine Research Reserve System is a network of 29 coastal sites designated to protect and study estuarine systems. Established through the Coastal Zone Management Act, the reserves represent a partnership program between NOAA and the coastal states. NOAA provides funding and national guidance, and each site is managed on a daily basis by a lead state agency or university with input from local partners.

For decades now, the concept of siting a NERR here has been a point of discussion here in Louisiana. The first step was taken with a letter from the Governor's office to NOAA on July 23, 2019. Correspondence from Governor John Bel Edwards' office to the NERR program proceeded and advanced the initiative.

### LaNERR Status Update

Louisiana NERR, or LaNERR, is currently in the Site Development phase in the process of selecting a site to nominate to the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Visit [LaNERR Site Selection Process & Timeline](#) for more details.

[National Estuarine Research Reserves System](#)  
[Find a Reserve Near You](#)  
[Fact Sheets & Videos](#)  
[LaNERR Site Selection Process & Timeline](#)  
[Frequently Asked Questions](#)  
[Get Involved](#)

Twitter: Louisiana National Estuarine Research Reserve (7 Tweets)

Facebook: Louisiana National Estuarine Research Reserve

## Contact

email  
[deltanerr@lsu.edu](mailto:deltanerr@lsu.edu)

### • Social Media:

• <https://twitter.com/DeltaNERR>

### • Website:

• <http://www.laseagr.org/deltanerr/>

### • Facebook

• <https://www.facebook.com/DeltaNERR/>



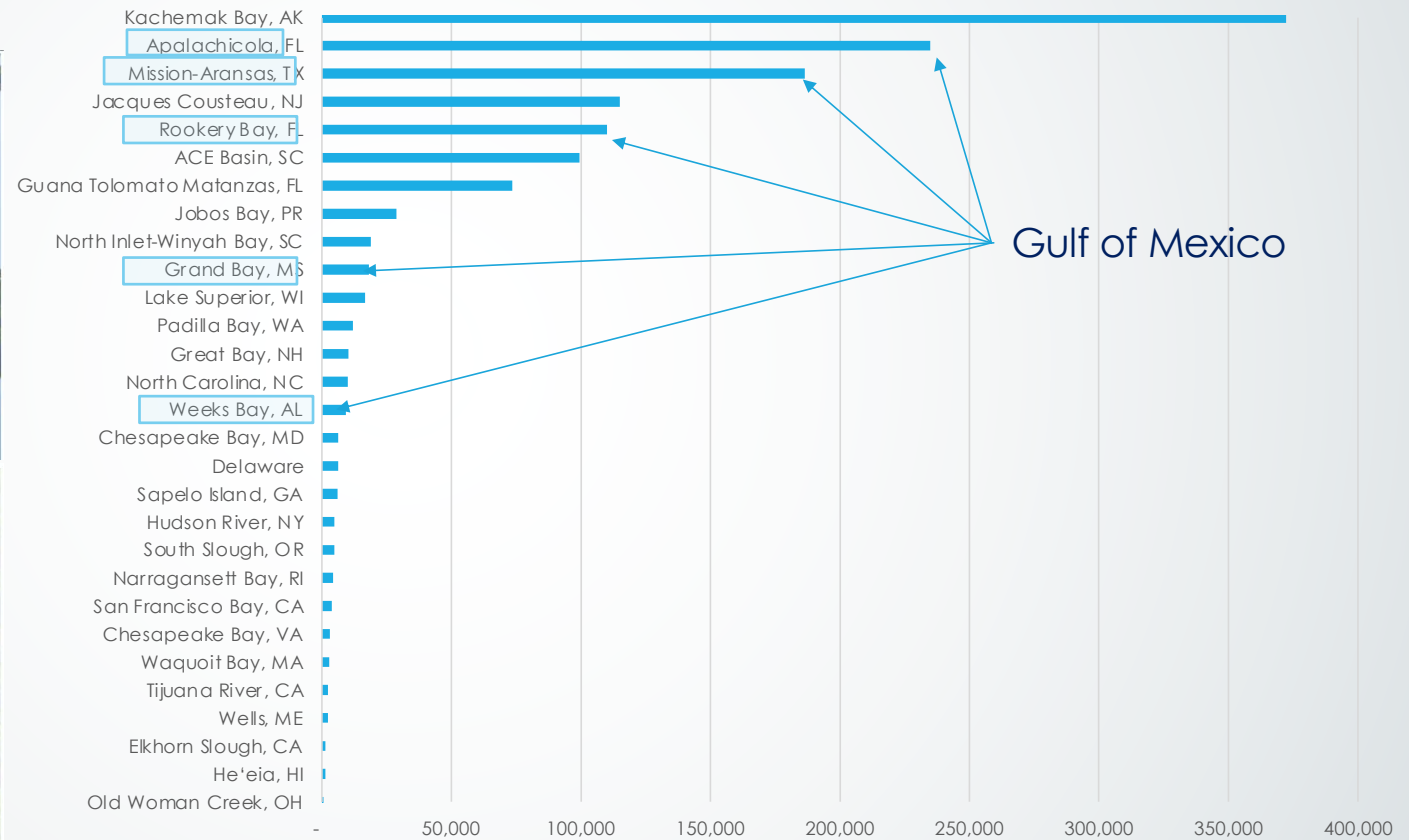
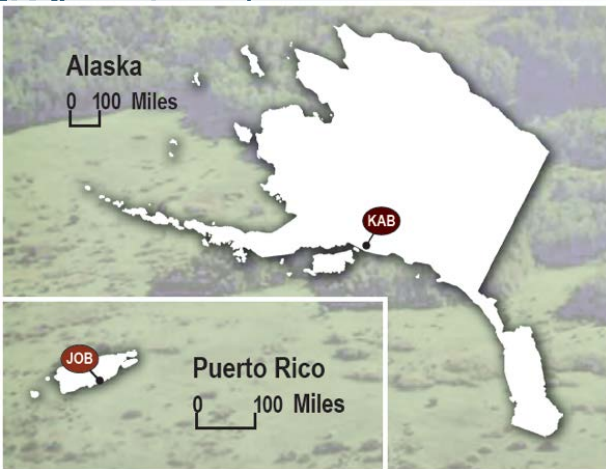
# LaNERR

Louisiana  
National Estuary Research Reserve

## Questions?



# Reserve Size Varies







## Common Questions (A)

- **Will the state have to purchase land for a Louisiana reserve?**
  - No. Louisiana is considering sites from existing publicly owned lands and adjacent public trust waters. Additionally, the LaNERR site could expand with municipal and non-profit property; and with donated or purchased land.
- **Will a new reserve involve NOAA taking land from the State?**
  - NOAA would not own or manage the land within a LaNERR. The LaNERR would be the property of Louisiana along with any other agreements with other public (federal refuge) or private lands (conservation easements).
- **Will the federal government run the reserve?**
  - LaNERR would be a partnership between NOAA and Louisiana. The state is responsible for the day-to-day management of a reserve. NOAA administers the entire reserve system. NOAA responsibilities include establishing standards for designating and operating reserves that benefit the entire system.



## Common Questions (B)

- **Does the designation of a reserve bring more rules and regulations?**
  - The designation of a LaNERR would not add any new regulations. NOAA will examine whether a proposed site is adequately managed for long-term research and education by existing state authorities. There are no federal regulations imposed as a result of reserve designation.
- **If the reserve site is designated, will there be restrictions to the existing cultural, recreational or commercial activities that occur in the area?**
  - No. Recreational and cultural, attributes of a LaNERR are important to designation. Designation of a LaNERR site does not preclude existing uses and does not result in the total preservation of the area.





## Common Questions (C)

- **We already have a site in mind for our state. Is it necessary to go through the site selection process?**
  - Yes, the state is responsible for developing a site selection process that examines potential sites throughout the entire biogeographic subregion within the state and then narrows down the options to the best location.
- **How long does it take to designate a reserve?**
  - Most site designations have taken an average of 4-6 years.