

Orleans Audubon Society

RESOLUTION: 7-14-2011

SUBJECT: ESTABLISHING A MIGRATORY BIRD GREENWAY CORRIDOR WITH RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN PERPETUITY TO MITIGATE NATURAL RESOURCE DAMAGES FROM THE MACONDO WELL OIL SPILL IN SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA

WHEREAS, the Macondo well oil spill has adversely impacted large areas of some of the Gulf Coast's critical bird habitat for both resident and migratory birds;

WHEREAS, U.S. Fish & Wildlife reports that 335.1 miles of Louisiana's coastline has been subjected to oil impacts;

WHEREAS, hundreds of millions of birds utilize this area for critical stop-over habitat at some point during their life cycle;

WHEREAS, the Mississippi Flyway is considered one of the most important migratory bird corridors on Earth;

WHEREAS, the region hosts, during their twice-yearly migrations, a major portion of all birds that breed in North America;

WHEREAS, Natural Resource Damage Assessment work completed by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provides detailed bird impact data by species;

WHEREAS, birding surveys conducted by Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries shows that the Woodlands Trail and Park Bird Sanctuary in Plaquemines Parish and land targeted for expansion of the Woodlands Greenway Corridor in Orleans Parish provides habitat for hundreds of species of resident and migratory birds, many of which are listed in the bird impact data;

WHEREAS, the current and planned expansion of the Woodlands Greenway Corridor is located within the Barataria Basin, just six miles from open water and currently provides both migratory bird habitat and recreational opportunities;

WHEREAS, natural resource trustees are charged with selecting projects that closely match resources damaged and that are supported by planning efforts;

WHEREAS, Woodlands has been included in the City of New Orleans Master Plans for Transportation, Recreation and Open Space, Riverfront Vision 2005, the Unified New Orleans Plan for District 13; the Plaquemines Parish Master Plan, the 2001 Plaquemines Parish Bike Pathway Plan, Plaquemines Parish Long Term Recovery Plan and the 2010 and 2011 Coastal Restoration and Protection Plan under future projects;

WHEREAS, Woodlands Conservancy is a nonprofit organization formed as a land trust to ensure that habitat and recreational opportunities are provided in perpetuity for the benefit of current and future generations;

WHEREAS, Woodlands Conservancy has worked with Louisiana Culture, Recreation and Tourism, Recreational Trails, to establish over six miles of America's Wetland Birding Trail within a 609-acre forest dedicated as Woodlands Trail and Park Bird Sanctuary;

WHEREAS, projects submitted by Woodlands Conservancy to the Regional Restoration Program would fund acquisition of forested land of a willing seller to complete an expansion of Woodlands Trail Bird Sanctuary and provide low-impact recreational facilities in Orleans Parish;

WHEREAS, projects submitted by Woodlands Conservancy to the Regional Restoration Program would fund acquisition and enhancement of migratory bird habitat in Plaquemines Parish to ensure that Woodlands Trail Bird Sanctuary remains a forested wetland habitat for migratory birds and available for public educational and recreational use in perpetuity;

WHEREAS, USFWS has committed technical and financial assistance as a Federal partner to Woodlands Conservancy to implement restoration work for bird habitat improvement on acquired land through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program;

WHEREAS, Louisiana State Office of Culture Recreation and Tourism's, Recreational Trails program has committed assistance as a State partner to Woodlands Conservancy to plan and implement low-impact public recreational amenities;

WHEREAS, the City of New Orleans Mayor's Office of Coastal and Environmental Affairs has committed assistance as a local advisory partner to Woodlands Conservancy to promote the Woodlands Greenway Corridor for ecotourism and development of the onsite interpretive program to educate others of the project's value for mitigation for natural resource impacts, storm retention, water quality, recreation and habitat for wildlife and neotropical migratory birds;

WHEREAS, recognizing the environmental and recreational characteristics of this area, the Louisiana Wildlife Federation passed resolution No. 2B, 2010 supporting the preservation of the [this parcel of land that is the] last remaining low-lying land between English Turn Golf Course and English Turn Wilderness Park and urges the New Orleans City Planning Commission to zone this tract as Parks and Openspace; and

WHEREAS, the New Orleans City Council passed Resolution 11-132 supporting Woodlands Conservancy's Greenway Corridor projects submitted for Natural Resource Damage Assessment funds in order to ensure migratory bird habitat and recreational opportunities in perpetuity.

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Wildlife Federation passed Resolution No. 3B, 2011 supporting Woodlands Conservancy's Greenway Corridor projects submitted for Natural Resource Damage Assessment funds in order to ensure migratory bird habitat and recreational opportunities in perpetuity.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Orleans Audubon Society supports Woodlands Conservancy's Greenway Corridor projects in Orleans and Plaquemines Parish submitted for Natural Resource Damage Assessment funds through the Regional Restoration Program in order to ensure migratory bird habitat and recreational opportunities in perpetuity.