

SPOTLIGHT ON THE GULF COAST

“EDF’s expertise in the region proved invaluable as we put together recommendations to restore the Gulf Coast.”

Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy

HELP FOR COMMUNITIES We helped close the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, the little-used shipping channel that funneled Hurricane Katrina’s storm surge into New Orleans. We also partnered with leaders in the Lower 9th Ward and the United Houma Nation to make communities more resilient to flooding.

WETLANDS RESTORATION Since the 1930s, Louisiana has lost 2,300 square miles of wetlands, putting the coastline at risk. EDF helped design wetlands restoration projects in places like Myrtle Grove, north of Barataria Bay.

SCIENTIFIC EXPERTISE EDF played a key role in exposing the potential danger of chemical dispersants, which threaten vulnerable deepwater corals at the base of the Gulf food chain.

AID TO FISHERMEN Our catch-share program for snapper enabled commercial fishermen to ride out the BP crisis. We’re now implementing a system to keep Gulf seafood safe.

A HAND IN THE RECOVERY

Long before the BP disaster or Hurricane Katrina, EDF was in Louisiana, striving to restore the state’s wetlands, which are vanishing at a rate of 20 to 30 square miles a year. The losses are largely due to navigation canals and levees, which starve wetlands of the sediment and fresh water they need.

BP’s spill made the ecological crisis worse, jeopardizing wildlife, the livelihoods of fishermen and the future of coastal communities.

In response, EDF dispatched wetlands experts and marine scientists to aid in relief efforts. Now, with BP’s well capped, our overarching goal is to revive the wetlands that help protect New Orleans from hurricanes, provide habitat for wildlife and nurture the region’s \$2.5 billion fishing industry.

VIDEO See the wetlands at risk at edf.org/lawetlands

TRAGEDY IN THE GULF

“This disaster didn’t begin with the Deepwater Horizon explosion, and it didn’t end with the capping of the well.”



Elgie Holstein
EDF oil disaster response coordinator

EDF MILESTONES

1973 EDF attorney Jim Tripp sues to prevent expansion of a destructive navigation channel in Terrebonne Parish.

1989 We negotiate rules requiring “turtle excluder devices” in shrimp trawls; we then help draft regulations to protect sea turtles during egg-laying season.

2000 EDF reveals that the Army Corps of Engineers is “cooking its books” to justify dubious projects that endanger wetlands; we help pass reform mandating independent review for controversial projects.

2008 We help convince EPA to block the Yazoo Pumps, a farmland creation scheme that would have destroyed 200,000 acres of wetlands in the lower Mississippi Delta.

2010 EDF creates a program to help Gulf fishermen switch to gear that minimizes harmful interaction with sea turtles.