



EcoLocalizer

Louisiana Kids Work to Save Wetlands



Written by **Shirley Siluk Gregory**

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What a great way to both help restore a critical ecosystem while teaching young kids valuable lessons about the real world: encourage schoolchildren to grow wetland plants at their schools for later planting in coastal habitat restoration projects.

That's what Louisiana State University's (LSU) Coastal Roots Project aims to do. Established in the pre-Katrina days of 2001, the program is now more vital than ever and — happy to say — schools across the state have come on board to join the cause.

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In 2007 alone, nearly two dozen grade schools, junior highs and high schools participating in the Coastal Roots Project. In all, more than 700 children in grades 4 through 12 helped out that year by raising, and then transplanting, 2,929 tree seedlings and 6,230 grass plugs.

Over the course of the project, 35 schools have helped to raise more than 21,000 plants for vital restoration projects. Among the plants the program aims to reintroduce to threatened wetland areas are the water oak, the southern bald cypress, the southern wax myrtle, the black mangrove, the red mulberry and *Spartina alterniflora* grass.

The damage wrought in New Orleans by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita proved to be an inspiration for many schools in the Crescent City. *Times-Picayune* writer Molly Reid notes that only one city school took part in Coastal Roots before the storms. Now, 14 are participating.

"We were trying to find a better way to inform the K through 12 population of the problem (of coastal erosion)," Pam Blanchard of LSU told Reid. "When Katrina and Rita hit, a large number of people were severely impacted by that."

You can learn more about the Coast Roots Project [here](#), and read more of the Times-Picayune article [here](#).

Tags: **Coastal Roots Project, coastal wetlands, Hurricane Katrina, hurricane protection, Hurricane Rita**

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[...] The Louisiana restoration project, formally known as the Coastal Roots Project , isn't just busywork, though it does keep these young people quite busy. Under the auspices of Louisiana State University, the program - established in 2001, before Katrina left its scars - is now a vital part of coastal restoration . [...]

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