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Bids for rock wall come in under budget Project aims to thwart shoreline erosion

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Bids to extend a 3-foot-high rock wall to reinforce the shoreline along Lake Salvador in St. Charles Parish came in under budget, according to a state official.

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Luhr Construction of Columbia, Ill., bid \$3.4 million, the lowest of four bids last week, according to Dona Ours, a project manager with the state Department of Natural Resources, which is administering the project. The budget to extend the line of existing armoring by 7,300 feet was \$4.6 million.

The rock wall, currently about two miles long, works by trapping sediment dropped by wave action behind the wall.

The next step is to have the contract signed, before the company can mobilize for the job, Ours said.

The current project is a continuation of a job begun in the late 1990s, when part of the wall was built as a control project while alternative anti-erosion methods were tested.

"The experimental methods not only didn't work, they fell apart so quickly that they had to be removed because they were a hazard to navigation," said Earl Matherne, St. Charles Parish's coastal zone manager.

The second phase got under way in 2004, when 8,000 feet of barrier was completed.

The last phase is being paid for with money from the federal Coastal Impact Assistance Program, which funnels to coastal states a portion of mineral royalties from drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf.

The St. Charles project was among the first on the list because it already had been designed and permitted.