



Everything New Orleans

The Times-Picayune

Too little, too late

Sunday, July 27, 2008

Re: "Wetlands save states billions new study says," Page 1 July 23.

This study says that 1,927 square miles of coastal wetlands have disappeared in the past century. At 640 acres per square mile, that's 1,233,280 acres. Just how much do we plan to restore?

According to the same study, two recent hurricanes caused the disappearance of 77 square miles, or 49,280 acres. Assuming that the average rate of loss is 19 square miles, the average annual loss is 12,160 acres. We can't create an average of 12,160 acres per year to stay even, much less restore coastal wetlands to some undefined goal.

Now, federal and state agencies are creating 600 acres of new marsh, according to Weeks Marine Vice President Steve Chatry, who wrote a letter to the editor that also appeared July 23. That leaves only 11,560 or 1,232,680 acres to be created, depending on the goal.

Finally, even if it was physically possible to create an average of 12,000 acres of wetlands annually, sea level rise will drown it.

Louisiana is not ready to deal with the "inconvenient truth."

John C. Weber

Slidell