



VANISHING
PARADISE
National Wildlife Federation

Brian Latimer (right), pro bass fishing angler (FLW and BASSMasters) and Andy Crawford (left), outdoor writer (former editor of *Louisiana Sportsman Magazine*) fishing in the Birdsfoot Delta of Louisiana. Photo Credit: Shane Clevenger.

RESTORING SPORTSMAN'S PARADISE

Rebuilding the Mississippi River Delta & the Gulf Coast for Future Generations

Louisiana's Sportsman's Paradise, special places along the Gulf Coast, and the Everglades are all facing rapid decline.

Coastal Louisiana and the marshes surrounding the Mississippi River Delta have the highest rates of land loss on the planet. Louisiana loses a football field of land every 100 minutes, resulting in significant loss to wildlife habitat.

The Gulf of Mexico is home to approximately 15,000 unique species of wildlife, including many different types of salt- and fresh-water fish and shellfish and millions of migratory waterfowl and neotropical birds every year, enjoying a wide variety of habitats including wetlands, barrier islands, coral reefs and oyster beds.

Decades of mismanagement and the 2010 Gulf oil spill have wreaked havoc on these habitats. Restoration efforts are underway in each of the Gulf States, using once-in-a-lifetime funding opportunities from the oil spill legal settlements.

The Everglades are the largest subtropical wetland in North America - and a unique place to fish and hunt. The historic Everglades ecosystem once stretched more than 3 million acres, from south of Orlando to the Florida Keys. Now, less than half of this historic ecosystem remains.

Why should you care?

If you hunt or fish, this conservation crisis should matter to you.

Some 10 million ducks, geese and other waterfowl from the Mississippi and Central flyways winter along the Louisiana coast.

Recreational fishing along the Gulf Coast generates nearly **\$10.5 billion** in annual revenue.

Hunting in Louisiana alone generates nearly **\$1 billion** annually.

One mile of coastal marsh can reduce storm surge by one foot, providing vital protection to communities and wildlife habitat.

Louisiana is home to 40% of our nation's wetlands— and experiences **90% of the nation's coastal wetland loss.**

Nearly **50,000 jobs** rely on Louisiana fisheries.

A SOLUTION EXISTS.

We can restore the Mississippi River Delta by reconnecting the river to its wetlands.

We can protect Gulf Coast habitats by spending funds wisely and using a variety of projects.

GET INVOLVED!

Vanishing Paradise works with hunters and anglers across the U.S. to raise awareness and support in the outdoors community on a critical conservation issue of our time— restoring the Mississippi River Delta and Gulf Coast. Learn more at:

VANISHINGPARADISE.ORG

HOW WE WORK *for* THE GULF COAST

From meeting with legislators at the state Capitol to connecting outdoor industry leaders to the conservation movement, we're educating on the issue of coastal restoration in duck blinds, out on the water, and in D.C. — and everywhere in between.



Engaging with leaders to reconnect the river with its wetlands

Our Vanishing Paradise Sporting Council is a group of volunteer leaders who have a passion for the outdoors and for passing on our nation's conservation legacy.

These individuals are working to enhance and expand Vanishing Paradise's reach so hunters and anglers across the country are aware of the Mississippi River Delta's and Gulf Coast's importance to fish and waterfowl—and become inspired to take action to protect this great American landscape.

Here, Vanishing Paradise team members Erin Willhoft and Bill Cooksey talk with Sporting Council member Warren Coco, founder of Go-Devil motors, about restoration solutions for the Mississippi River Delta.



Hosting meetings with state and federal legislators

Vanishing Paradise staff coordinate and host fly-ins in D.C. and around the Gulf to bring conservation leaders together to educate and advocate with elected officials, policy influencers and other decision-makers.

These meetings help us convey our message that we support a wide range of restoration solutions for hunting and fishing habitats, and we want to ensure funding is spent strategically to gain the most returns for the future.

Here, Vanishing Paradise's Bill Cooksey, Tennessee Senator Lamar Alexander, Allan Ranson of Strike King Lure Company and Tennessee Senator Bob Corker at a meeting about Everglades conservation in Washington, D.C.



Keeping the conversation fun with Conservation on Tap

We host **Conservation on Tap** events in communities across the Gulf Coast, allowing us to bring our conservation message to local breweries and connect with in-state conservation organizations, the hunters and anglers community and government agencies.

At this Conservation on Tap event, the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority partnered with us to give a presentation on restoration projects happening right where these hunters and anglers hunt and fish — and generated support on the ground for these important initiatives.