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State of the Coast includes governor, top EPA deputy, scientists

Theme of event references pivotal point in Louisiana's coastal restoration

[State of the Coast](#), the premier conference on coastal restoration in Louisiana, returns today in a virtual format after a delay caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The event, which will bring together about 1,000 scientists, industry leaders, public officials, students, community members and others, will continue through Friday.

State of the Coast is the largest statewide conference of its kind, providing an interdisciplinary forum to exchange timely and relevant information on the dynamic conditions of Louisiana's coastal communities, environment and economy. [The Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana](#), [the Water Institute of the Gulf](#), [the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority](#) of Louisiana and [Louisiana Sea Grant](#) have partnered to produce this forum, the need for which grows with every acre of land lost to the Gulf of Mexico.

Gov. John Bel Edwards, CPRA Board Chairman Chip Kline and National Academy of Sciences President Marcia McNutt are among the speakers at the conference. Other speakers include Richard Campanella, a geographer and writer at Tulane University; and Colette Pichon Battle, the founder and leader of the Gulf Coast Center for Law & Policy. EPA Deputy Administrator Janet McCabe and Water Institute CEO Justin Ehrenwerth will have a conversation touching on the Biden's administration's priorities and the RESTORE Council.

The conference will include about 60 presentations and 70 posters pertaining to Louisiana's coastal issues. There will also be virtual networking opportunities, music from the bands Lost Bayou Ramblers and Sweet Crude, student awards and a women's leadership event. Though the event is virtual, in-person receptions are planned on the first night of the conference. The theme of this year's conference is *Time for Action. Together*, reflecting the need to proceed on large-scale restoration projects with urgency and to do so in a way that is inclusive and equitable and just. Registration remains open.

"This conference has been a long time coming," said CRCL Executive Director Kimberly Reyher, who will welcome attendees this morning. "Our state is experiencing some of the fastest rates of land loss in the world, with no end in sight. Sea levels are rising, and about 2,000 square miles of our state has simply vanished in less than a century. It is truly time for action. We are fortunate to have science-based solutions, funding and broad, bipartisan support. Let's do this!"

Chip Kline and Gov. John Bel Edwards will speak this morning about the state of Louisiana's coast and major restoration projects on the horizon for Louisiana. This afternoon, Colette Pichon-Battle will talk about why climate justice must be prioritized as we confront coastal land loss. Thursday morning, Janet McCabe and Justin Ehrenwerth will hold a virtual fireside chat. On Friday morning, Marcia McNutt will talk about the role of science and the National Academies in confronting climate change. She will be followed by Rep. Garret Graves. On Friday afternoon, Richard Campanella will present on historic coastal New Orleans.

The conference, which is usually held every two years and in person, is made possible by its generous sponsors. Regular [registration](#) costs \$199. Student registration is \$50.

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About the conference partners:

[The Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana](#) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to drive bold, science-based action to rebuild coastal Louisiana through outreach, restoration and advocacy. The Water Institute of the Gulf is an institution that connects academic, public and private researchers and conducts applied research to serve communities and industry. The Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority is a state agency that directs Louisiana's coastal priorities and implements restoration projects large and small. Louisiana Sea Grant is a college program based at LSU that promotes stewardship of the state's coastal resources through a combination of research, education and outreach.