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**Testimony for**  
**Senate Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee**  
**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**  
**April 10, 2008**

Mr. Chairman, on behalf of over one million members and supporters of Audubon, thank you for the opportunity to submit our views on the fiscal year 2009 budget of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). Our national network of community-based nature centers and chapters, scientific and educational programs, and advocacy on behalf of areas sustaining important bird populations, engage millions of people of all ages and backgrounds in positive conservation experiences. Our statement on the Corps' FY 2009 budget emphasizes ecosystem restoration programs critical to our mission.

#### **EVERGLADES ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PROGRAM**

The 18,000-square-mile Everglades ecosystem of central and southern Florida is one of the world's most diverse and productive wetlands, but is also one of the nation's most imperiled natural wetland ecosystems. Since 1900, more than half of the ecosystem has been drained and lost to urban and agricultural development, and the remaining marshes are crisscrossed by 1,400 miles of canals that alter natural water flows. Restoration of the Everglades is at a critical juncture. With the long anticipated passage of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, the federal government is now authorized to construct the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, approved by Congress in 2000. Keeping Everglades restoration on schedule and the Federal/Florida partnership strong requires significant federal investment in fiscal year 2009.

<b>Everglades Restoration Project</b>	<b>FY'09 Cost</b>
Everglades & S. FL Ecosystem Restoration (Critical Projects)	\$3.8 million
Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park Construction	\$50 million
Kissimmee River Restoration Construction	\$69 million
Indian River Lagoon (IRL-S) CERP Project Construction (WRDA 2007)	\$20 million
Picayune Strand CERP Project Construction (WRDA 2007)	\$24 million
Site 1 CERP Project Construction (WRDA 2007)	\$22 million
CERP Pilot Projects	\$10 million
CERP Planning & Design (\$4.5 million for IRL)	\$70 million
C-111 Construction	\$28 million
Manatee Pass Gates	\$1.4 million
Southwest Feasibility Study	\$1.5 million
C-51	\$2 million
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$301.7 million</b>

## **GREAT LAKES ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PROGRAM**

The Great Lakes hold one fifth of the world's fresh surface water supply. More than 42 million people live within the watershed; the Great Lakes hold the key to economic health and sustainability. They support the economy through agriculture, industrial manufacturing, steel production, shipping, commercial and sport fisheries, and recreation and tourism. The economic benefits in the Great Lakes are more than \$15 billion for hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching.

Despite their overwhelming greatness and their vast expanse, the Great Lakes are fragile and in peril. Raw sewage contaminates beaches, invasive species threaten native fish, and toxic pollution makes fish unsafe to eat. These problems have reached a critical tipping point. Scientists say that action must be taken now or the entire Great Lakes ecosystem could be damaged beyond repair. Funding is needed to restore the health of the Great Lakes. Everyday the problems intensify and the solutions become more costly. Audubon supports full funding for the FY 2009 for Great Lakes restoration projects.

<b>Great Lakes Restoration Project</b>	<b>FY'09 Cost</b>
Great Lakes Fishery & Ecosystem Restoration Program (\$506 WRDA 2000)	\$10 million
Remedial Action Plans Assistance	\$3 million
Great Lakes Tributary Modeling Program	\$1.5 million
Chicago Sanitary Ship Canal Barrier	\$6.5 million
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$21 million</b>

## **MISSISSIPPI RIVER ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PROGRAM**

The Mississippi River flows through the heartland of America and is arguably the nation's most important – and neglected – ecological resource. The Mississippi River Basin drains about 40 percent of the area of the lower 48 states, making it the largest watershed in the country. Up to 90 percent of all freshwater entering the Gulf of Mexico comes from the Mississippi River. Approximately 60 percent of all North American bird species depend upon the River's habitats, including 40 percent of all waterfowl and shorebirds that migrate along the Mississippi flyway.

### **UPPER MISSISSIPPI ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (EMP)                      \$ 20 MILLION**

Since 1986, the highly successful Environmental Management Program (EMP) has served as a model for interagency and interstate cooperation on natural resource management. The program continues to protect wildlife, address flooding in the region, and offset damages to the environment.

### **NAVIGATION AND ECOSYSTEM SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM (NESP)                      \$50 MILLION**

The Upper Mississippi River Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP), authorized in WRDA 2007, in its first 15 years, could restore 105,000 acres of habitat, protect 35,000 acres of floodplain habitat in five states along the river, and will include a significant monitoring program. By restoring islands, backwaters, side channels, and using the existing dams to manage water levels, this program will benefit more than 300 bird species, 100 fish species, and improve habitat along more than 800 miles of river, including a complex of federal refuges receiving more than 3 million visitors annually.

### **TRANSITION FROM UPPER MISSISSIPPI EMP TO NESP**

Ecosystem restoration activities under NESP will expand on decades of success under the EMP. While EMP continues to protect wildlife and offset damages to the environment, we recognize the need to transition the Corps' ecosystem restoration functions from EMP to NESP. This transition must be carefully structured to ensure that the gains made under EMP are not undone and build on prior success with the additional authorities contained in NESP.

**LOWER MISSISSIPPI RIVER RESOURCE ASSESSMENT (§ 402) \$250,000**

The Resource Assessment, authorized in WRDA 2000 for \$1.75 million, will provide the information necessary for river-related management, habitat needs, and public access along the lower Mississippi River. More than 200 habitat enhancement or public access enhancement projects have been identified in the six lower river states. State and federal agencies are now prioritizing the projects.

**COASTAL LOUISIANA RESTORATION PROGRAM \$601 MILLION**

The Louisiana coastline is disappearing as coastal wetlands erode at an alarming rate (more than 1.2 million acres since 1930), with devastating effects to the region's quality of life. The Coastal Louisiana Restoration program will begin to reverse this devastating pattern of land loss, protecting important habitat for birds, fish, and other wildlife, as well as the region's economy and quality of life.

<b>Coastal Louisiana Restoration Project</b>	<b>FY'09 Cost</b>
MRGO rock dam at Bayou la Loutre (WRDA 2007 & MRGO report)	\$35 million
Violet Diversion project design funds (WRDA 2007)	\$10 million
Louisiana Coastal Area- MRGO Environmental Restoration (WRDA 2007)	\$105.3 million
Louisiana Coastal Area – Hope Canal diversion (WRDA 2007)	\$80 million
Louisiana Coastal Area- Beneficial Use of dredged material (WRDA 2007)	\$30 million
Brazalier Island Acquisition	\$2 million
LCA Science and Technology	\$25 million
Comprehensive Plan authorized in (WRDA 2007 Section 7002)	\$15 million
Medium Diversion at Myrtle Grove per Section 7006(c )	\$20 million
Modification of the Canaervon Diversion per Section 7006(e)	\$10 million
Modification of the Davis Pond Diversion per Section 7006(e)	\$10 million
Barataria Basin Barrier Shoreline	\$100 million
Terrebonne Basin Barrier Shoreline	\$100 million
Land Bridge at Caillou Lake and Gulf of Mexico	\$56.3 million
Chenier Plain Study	\$2.5 million
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$601.1 million</b>

**PROJECT MODIFICATION FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT (§ 1135) \$25 MILLION**

The Section 1135 Program allows the Corps to modify the structures and operations of existing Corps projects to improve the quality of the environment where those projects have contributed to the degradation of the environment. The program also authorizes the restoration of areas harmed by Corps projects.

The environmental damage caused by existing Corps projects, many constructed before federal laws requiring mitigation, are enormous. These projects have caused devastating impacts to natural systems such as the Everglades, and severely degraded rivers such as the Missouri, Upper

Mississippi, Illinois, and Apalachicola Rivers. The environmental impacts from Corps projects include the loss of rivers' critical side channels, sandbars and wetlands, and jeopardize the continued existence of federally listed endangered bird and other wildlife species. We strongly urge you to appropriate full funding of \$25 million to ensure that non-federal partners may participate in the Corps' 1135 program in FY 2009.

**AQUATIC ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION (§ 206)**

**\$25 MILLION**

The Section 206 Program allows the Corps to undertake small-scale projects to restore the aquatic environment, even in areas not directly harmed by past Corps projects. Projects carried out under this program must improve the quality of the environment, be in the public interest, and be cost-effective. Individual projects under this program may not exceed \$5 million, and non-federal interests must provide 35 percent of the cost.

In order for willing communities and non-federal partners to ameliorate both environmental and economic impacts caused by altering our nation's rivers, floodplains, and wetlands, we strongly urge you to appropriate full funding of \$25 million for the Corps' Section 206 program in FY 2009.

Thank you for providing us with this opportunity to provide comments on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers proposed FY 2009 budget.

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