



2026 Legislative Session

Louisiana Priorities



Safeguarding Louisiana's Natural Legacy

For nearly 40 years, The Nature Conservancy has been working in Louisiana to protect nature through conservation policy. With your support, we can continue to work toward a vibrant future for our state.

Founded in 1951, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is one of the largest environmental non-profits in the world. We operate in more than 70 countries and territories, and we have protected more than 125 million acres of land across the globe and here in Louisiana.

TNC has operated in Louisiana since 1987, working to restore and protect some of the most important ecological areas in the state. For example, in St. Tammany Parish and Southwest Louisiana, we have helped protect thousands of acres of longleaf pine. Along the coast, we have protected important coastal habitats, including the Mandalay marshes in the central coast, Chenier woodlands along the southwest coast, the live oak forests of Grand Isle, the White Kitchen area in the Pearl River Swamp, and the great Cat Island Swamp along the Mississippi River.

Along important rivers and waterbodies, we have focused on conserving land, including miles of forested frontage along Bayou Bartholomew, Bayou Dorcheat, and Corney Bayou in north Louisiana and along the Bogue Chitto River and other streams in south Louisiana. We've constructed 10 miles of oyster reefs around Calcasieu Lake, Vermilion Bay, Grand Isle and St. Bernard Parish. We've restored tens of thousands of acres of floodplain back to the pulses of the Ouachita

River, and we've planted well over a million trees across the state.

Thousands of wading birds depend on our Cypress Island Preserve near Breaux Bridge, and waterfowl flock to areas like Grand Cote, Lake Ophelia, and the Red River wetlands we have protected. Our Louisiana Treesilience program is planting trees and helping maintain the tree canopy in parishes affected by hurricanes. These are just a sample of the great places we have worked to conserve in the last 35 years.

TNC in Louisiana has more than 20 staff members who are devoted to protecting and conserving this state. Louisiana's position at the base of the Mississippi River and along the Gulf Coast means we have a variety of important habitats and critical needs to address in our work.

In 2024, TNC embarked on a process to identify the key areas of work to help us meet our global goals in climate mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity protection, and positively impacting people. Our legislative goals fall under our broader TNC Louisiana vision goals.

2026 Legislative Priorities & Policy Positions

The Nature Conservancy Louisiana External Affairs team continues to build support and find innovative ways to work with elected leaders to address our conservation goals in the state. We engage with city, parish, state, and federal representatives to influence policy and keep nature at the forefront of decision-making. Our priorities for the 2026 Louisiana Legislative Session include:

- *Designing a Resilient Louisiana*
- *Connecting Kisatchie to the Coast*
- *Renew Responsibly*
- *Keeping Our Promise*
- *Enhancing Shared Spaces*





©Matt Pardue

Designing a Resilient Louisiana

By the year 2030, TNC has a global goal of helping 100 million people at severe risk of climate-related emergencies by protecting and restoring the health of natural habitats, from mangroves and reefs to floodplains and forests. That work includes efforts to protect communities from storm surge, extreme rainfall, severe wildfires and sea level rise. In Louisiana, TNC's statewide conservation work uses nature to provide flood resilience for communities and protection and restoration of floodplains to improve water quality and provide habitat for resident and migratory fish and wildlife.

Lower Mississippi River Watershed Conservation and Protection

Louisiana sits at the base of the Mississippi River watershed, a challenging position that is also full of conservation potential. We advocate for science-based legislation that will restore ecological features, reconnect floodplains, protect sources of drinking water, and protect biodiversity.

Louisiana Watershed Initiative and other state agencies

We support the implementation of state programs and legislation that takes a comprehensive look at floodplains and watershed management and keeps people out of harm's way. We also support implementing resilience into state planning.

We support the Louisiana Department of Conservation and Energy and other state agencies' priorities that support our goals of watershed and habitat protection and restoration in Louisiana.

For nearly 40 years, The Nature Conservancy has been working in Louisiana to protect nature through conservation policy.

Connecting Kisatchie to the Coast

Restoring biodiversity and combating climate change require innovative and landscape-scale leadership. TNC's Kisatchie to the Coast initiative will design and implement a robust network of protected natural lands across southwestern Louisiana, including coastal prairies and longleaf pine. This vital but imperiled region is often overlooked for conservation. We will restore and protect rare and resilient habitats that anticipate Louisiana's future coastal needs.

Renew Responsibly

By the year 2030, TNC aims to globally reduce or store 3 gigatons of carbon dioxide emissions annually. To contribute to this goal in Louisiana, we sequester carbon on TNC's properties through tree plantings, and we advocate for renewable energy and carbon sequestration in the state. We understand a diverse energy portfolio is necessary for the future. Bringing wind and solar energy to Louisiana is necessary, but it must be done responsibly. We support responsible renewable energy siting that provides a future with abundant, clean energy that doesn't needlessly harm habitats and fish and wildlife populations.



©Will DeGravelles

Climate Action

We advocate for legislation that will help achieve TNC's goal of avoiding greenhouse gas emissions or sequestering 3 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions each year. We support the development of energy sources including wind, solar, and carbon capture that help reduce emissions, provide energy security and expand growing economies in Louisiana.

Prescribed Fire Burn Management

Controlled fire on conservation and working lands is beneficial for many of the state's natural communities. It helps return nutrients to the soil and reduces risk to adjacent communities by lessening the impacts from wildfires. We advocate for the continued ability to maintain healthy habitats and wildlife on private property through the use of prescribed fire.

Restoring Coastal Prairie

Coastal prairie once spanned more than 2.5 million acres of southwest Louisiana; today there remains less than 1,000 acres among many small patches. Restoring and recovering prairie in the coastal zone is a means of building a more resilient coast, renewing our cultural history and sense of place, and increasing wildlife habitat. We support legislation that assists landowners in restoring coastal prairies on their properties (especially in areas where crop production may be unsustainable).

Coastal Protection

Since 2010, TNC has constructed 10 miles of oyster restoration/shoreline protection projects, including four miles in Calcasieu Lake. These projects are restoring oyster populations, slowing loss of coastal wetlands, and increasing production of recreationally and commercially important seafood species. We support legislation that continues to restore and maintain the natural coastal habitats that protect communities and enhance economies.

Keeping our Promise

By 2030, TNC has a goal to conserve 1.6 billion acres of land globally. Since TNC began operating in Louisiana, we have worked with public and private partners to conserve more than 300,000 acres of important habitats. We protect and manage more than 45,000 acres across Louisiana. On all of our properties, we conduct land management and monitoring on par with our promise to our donors and partners, the public, and most importantly, the species that use them. We seek to expand restoration at our preserves, provide access to nature, and protect rare and endangered species.

Private Lands Management

We advocate for legislation that allows for responsible management of private lands.



©Carlton Ward Jr.



©Rory Doyle

Enhancing Shared Spaces

For decades, TNC in Louisiana has worked in tandem with our state agency partners to conserve and protect valuable habitat in Louisiana. We helped facilitate the acquisition of lands that were then transferred to state agencies for the creation of new Wildlife Management Areas and State Parks. We advocate for funding for Louisiana’s natural resources agencies to conserve our precious habitats. We believe that well-managed public and private lands provide quality habitat for fish and wildlife, safe and abundant recreational opportunities, and flood protection for Louisiana’s citizens.

The Louisiana Outdoors Forever program and other Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) priorities:

TNC, with a group of dedicated partners, led the development of the Louisiana Outdoors Forever program, created in 2022. So far, the program has been allocated \$12 million from the legislature. We advocate for additional funding to carry out this program’s mission.

We advocate for other LDWF priorities and projects which support our goal of habitat protection and conservation in Louisiana.

The Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority’s (CPRA) programs and projects:

We advocate for CPRA programs and projects which support our goal of coastal habitat protection, oyster restoration, coastal resilience and conservation in Louisiana.

Contact

Emily Vuxton
Louisiana Director of External Affairs
The Nature Conservancy
emily.vuxton@tnc.org