

## **Army Corps of Engineers “Actively Managing Collapse” of Mississippi River Delta Ecosystem, Groups Say**

### *NWF, EDF Support Louisiana Initiative to Seek Commerce Secretary Intervention to Make Corps Restore Ecosystem*

(New Orleans – November 23, 2009) – National Wildlife Federation and Environmental Defense Fund “fervently” support the state of Louisiana’s initiative announced this afternoon to seek the intervention of the U.S. Commerce Secretary to stop the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from mismanaging the Mississippi River Delta Ecosystem.

“The Corps is actively managing the collapse of the Mississippi River Delta Ecosystem, and Congress has not authorized that purpose,” said Environmental Defense Fund General Counsel [Jim Tripp](#), who serves on the Louisiana Governor's Commission on Coastal Restoration and Conservation. “This on-going collapse is contributing to increased instability of the navigation system, mounting vulnerability of oil and gas infrastructure and reduced vitality of Gulf fisheries, assets of national economic importance, and undermining the integrity of urban levee hurricane protection systems.”

“The Corps’ current management of Mississippi River water and sediment is actually compromising the core flood control and navigation missions of the Corps that date back to 1927,” added Tripp, whose statement was endorsed by the National Wildlife Federation. “The collapse of the coastal delta is occurring in large part because the sediment in the Mississippi River that used to be conveyed by high water river flows into the deltaic ecosystem is now confined and shunted by navigation and flood control levees to the Gulf of Mexico, thanks to the Corps’ mismanagement.”

“Since the Commerce Department’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is playing a leading role as a member of the White House Coastal Mississippi - Louisiana Restoration Working Group, this intervention also provides the Working Group with an immediate opportunity,” concluded Tripp. “It can begin the process of redirecting federal management of the sediments of the Mississippi River away from the 20th century acceptance of delta collapse towards a 21st century engagement with sediment reintroduction and delta restoration. Such an orientation is both consistent with and ultimately necessary for flood control and navigation.”

To read Tripp’s full statement, visit

[http://www.edf.org/documents/10608\\_CoastalLAConsistencyStatement112009.pdf](http://www.edf.org/documents/10608_CoastalLAConsistencyStatement112009.pdf).