

Global Design Competition Presents 100-Year Visions for Restoring and Sustaining Louisiana’s Eroding Coast

Designs Offer Solutions to Rebuild Mississippi River Delta, Protect Communities and Industries

(NEW ORLEANS – August 20, 2015) The international [Changing Course](#) design competition today announced its winning teams and the teams’ 100-year visions for restoring and sustaining the Mississippi River Delta for the people and industries that call it home. The winning teams – comprised of some of the world’s top engineers, coastal scientists, planners and designers – are [Baird & Associates](#), [Moffatt & Nichol](#), and [Studio Misi-Ziibi](#).

“We challenged the world’s top experts to find the most innovative ways to make sure that New Orleans and southeast Louisiana aren’t held hostage to worsening storms, rising seas and a disappearing delta,” said Steve Cochran, Associate Vice President of Ecosystems at [Environmental Defense Fund](#) and a member of the Changing Course Leadership Team. “We hope the winning ideas will help citizens, communities, industries and governments engage in real conversations about what it’s going to take to make this important region more resilient and prosperous.”

The winning teams’ designs are based on a 100-year planning horizon and focus on maximizing the Mississippi River’s natural and sustainable land-building potential while taking into the account of needs of navigation and other industries, flood control and sustainable community development – a challenge raised by the state of Louisiana’s master planning process.

“Because of the quality of the work, the State has committed to bringing the technical work from Changing Course into its process of analyzing the management scheme for the Lower Mississippi River, said Kyle Graham, Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Executive Director. “We look forward to working with the teams.”

Over the last century, nearly 1,900 square miles of Louisiana’s coastal wetlands have vanished. Every hour, a football field-sized swath of land drowns in the Gulf’s advancing tides. At this rate, by 2100, Louisiana’s protective coast will be gone. The solutions proposed by the winning teams focus primarily on the Mississippi River south of New Orleans.

While each of the winning teams offered a different vision, all three identified three major themes as critical to sustaining the Mississippi River Delta today and into the future:

- A clear focus on a sustainable delta through using the natural forces of the Mississippi River;
- Maximum integration of navigation, flood control and restoration, including consideration of ideas for a better and more sustainable navigation channel;
- Consideration of a gradual transition of industry and communities into more protected and resilient communities, over time.

“As sea levels rise, communities around the world, particularly in major river deltas, need novel approaches to find sustainable solutions. Changing Course is a great example of how world class expertise can be combined with local wisdom to produce ideas that work.” said Dr. Don Boesch Changing Course leadership team member and Professor of Marine Science and President of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science.

Read more about the teams and see their designs at ChangingCourse.us.

To set up interviews or for more information, contact Molly Moore at molly@sandersonstrategies.com.

***Changing Course** is a design competition aimed at developing innovative solutions to rebuild and protect the Louisiana coast. It is led by a leadership team of prominent leaders in Louisiana’s civic, industry, and academic communities along with national experts in coastal resiliency, engineering, and design. It is supported by The Rockefeller Foundation, blue moon fund, Greater New Orleans Foundation, Shell, The Kresge Foundation, The Selley Foundation and The Walton Family Foundation; with leadership support from Van Alen Institute, a nonprofit organization that mobilizes the power of design to transform cities, landscapes and regions to improve people’s lives, and Environmental Defense Fund, which has 30 years of experience in the Mississippi River Delta region; and with technical support from BuroHappold Engineering, a worldwide consulting and engineering firm. Learn more at www.changingcourse.us and follow Changing Course on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).*

About BuroHappold

BuroHappold is a global, integrated, multidisciplinary consulting engineering firm that offers a complete range of services for the built environment, from individual buildings to campuses, and from neighborhoods to regional plans. BuroHappold is engaged in both the built and natural environments, tackling complex design and implementation issues relating to buildings, neighborhoods, cities, and institutions. In providing a range of technical engineering and management consulting services, BuroHappold combines globalized knowledge with local understanding and experience.

About Van Alen

At Van Alen Institute, we believe design can transform cities, landscapes, and regions to improve people’s lives. We collaborate with communities, scholars, policymakers, and professionals on local and global initiatives that rigorously investigate the most pressing social, cultural, and ecological challenges of tomorrow. Building on more than a century of experience, we develop cross-disciplinary research, provocative public programs, and inventive design competitions.

Our recent and ongoing competitions include Rebuild by Design, sponsored by President Obama’s Hurricane Sandy Task Force and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which resulted in nearly a billion dollars of funding to support innovative design and planning strategies to better protect cities and towns across the Northeast from future storms; and Future Ground, in partnership with the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority, which will develop design and policy strategies to reuse vacant land in New Orleans. Learn more at www.vanalen.org and on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).