

September Update

I have met with the majority of the Sea Grant extension agents, which has brought me all over beautiful coastal Louisiana. The agents are very positive that working together with NOAA OR&R, and potentially other agencies involved in oil spill response, will be very beneficial for a sustainable future in Louisiana. My meeting in Ascension Parish led me to an alligator farm where I got to walk between rows of dead gators and see the skins that were being salted and boxed for shipment to Italy for future Prada products. Professors Mimi Becker and Nancy Kinner came in early October to have a series of meetings with the stakeholders involved in this project. We got much positive feedback and some potential new contacts from the Coast Guard and the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program. As for school, I just finished midterms, then went on a weekend field trip to Port Fourchon with my class. We got to design our own experiments and test them in the vast marshes along Bayou Lafourche. My group was studying nekton so we got to seine in various marsh ponds, which I quickly learned was not an easy process, but one that involved lots of hip-deep mud, water, fire ants, and sulfur aromas.

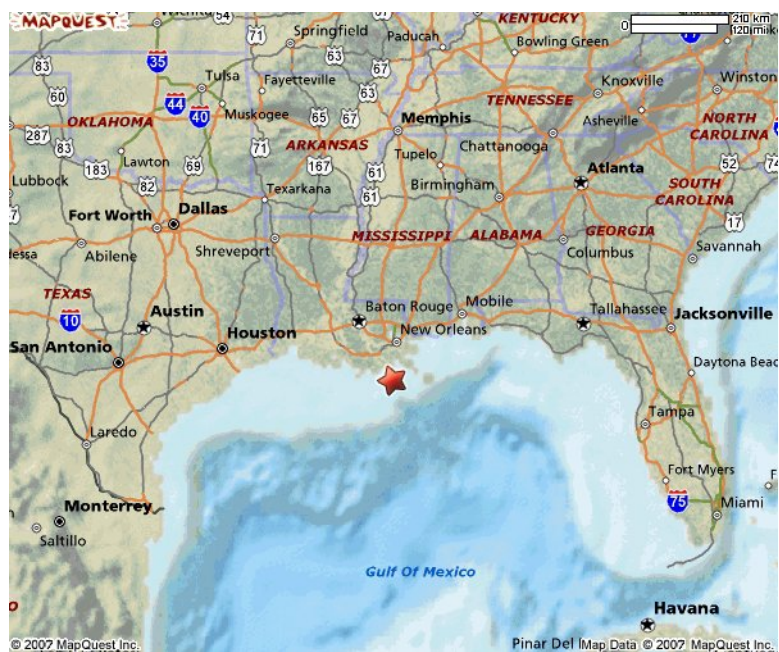
Heather Ballestero



A gas pipeline sign in the middle of the bayou.



Cows with a "pipeline crossing" sign



Where is Port Fourchon?