



Proposed Lone Star Coastal National Recreation Area Economic Impact Projections

Kayakers with the Artist Boat program, Galveston Island. Photo: © Bob Howen.

Hurricane Ike tore through the upper Texas Gulf coast in 2008, unleashing devastation on communities and economies. Yet portions of the region fared better, showing that undeveloped lands along the coast serve as a natural buffer for a tremendous amount of storm surge tide, reducing flooding and property damage to inland communities.

Creating a new national recreation area within this coastal buffer zone has been proposed as one strategy for capitalizing on the economic value of the area's natural, cultural, and historical sites while ensuring long-term flood protection. A study of potential economic impacts for a four-county coastal region finds the proposed Lone Star Coastal National Recreation Area could offer nearly \$200 million in annual economic benefits from recreation and heritage tourism.

Visitation Growth to Spur Expanding Economic Impact

Visitation Projected to Triple in First Ten Years

The new Lone Star Coastal National Recreation Area would be built on a core of existing natural areas and heritage sites, providing a strong base of visitors in its first year. Over the first ten years of full staffing and operations, as the national recreation area matures, visitation is projected to triple.

Three Factors that Will Attract More Visitors

The national recreation area would benefit from:

- 1) The national and international drawing power of the National Park Service.
- 2) Development of new or expanded recreational sites, visitor facilities, services, and programs.
- 3) Regional coordination to connect discreet sites and events into more cohesive offerings for visitors, and to market the area as an outdoor recreation and cultural tourism destination.

National Recreation Area Impact Could Quadruple by Tenth Year

Growing visitation is projected to quadruple the economic impact of the Lone Star Coastal National Recreation Area in its first ten years of operation.

Significant Increases in Local Jobs Forecasted

By its tenth year, the national recreation area could support 4,060 new jobs in Brazoria, Chambers, Galveston, and Matagorda counties—in addition to 1,200 jobs projected for its first year of full operation. These additional jobs would represent a two percent increase over the region's current private employment. Approximately 3,500 of these jobs would be in tourism-related businesses—an eleven percent increase in tourism jobs over current levels.

Key Findings

Projected benefits for Brazoria, Chambers, Galveston, and Matagorda counties

By its 10th year of full operation, the Lone Star Coastal National Recreation Area could:

Attract

1,500,000 annual visitors

Support

\$192 million local sales

5,260 local jobs

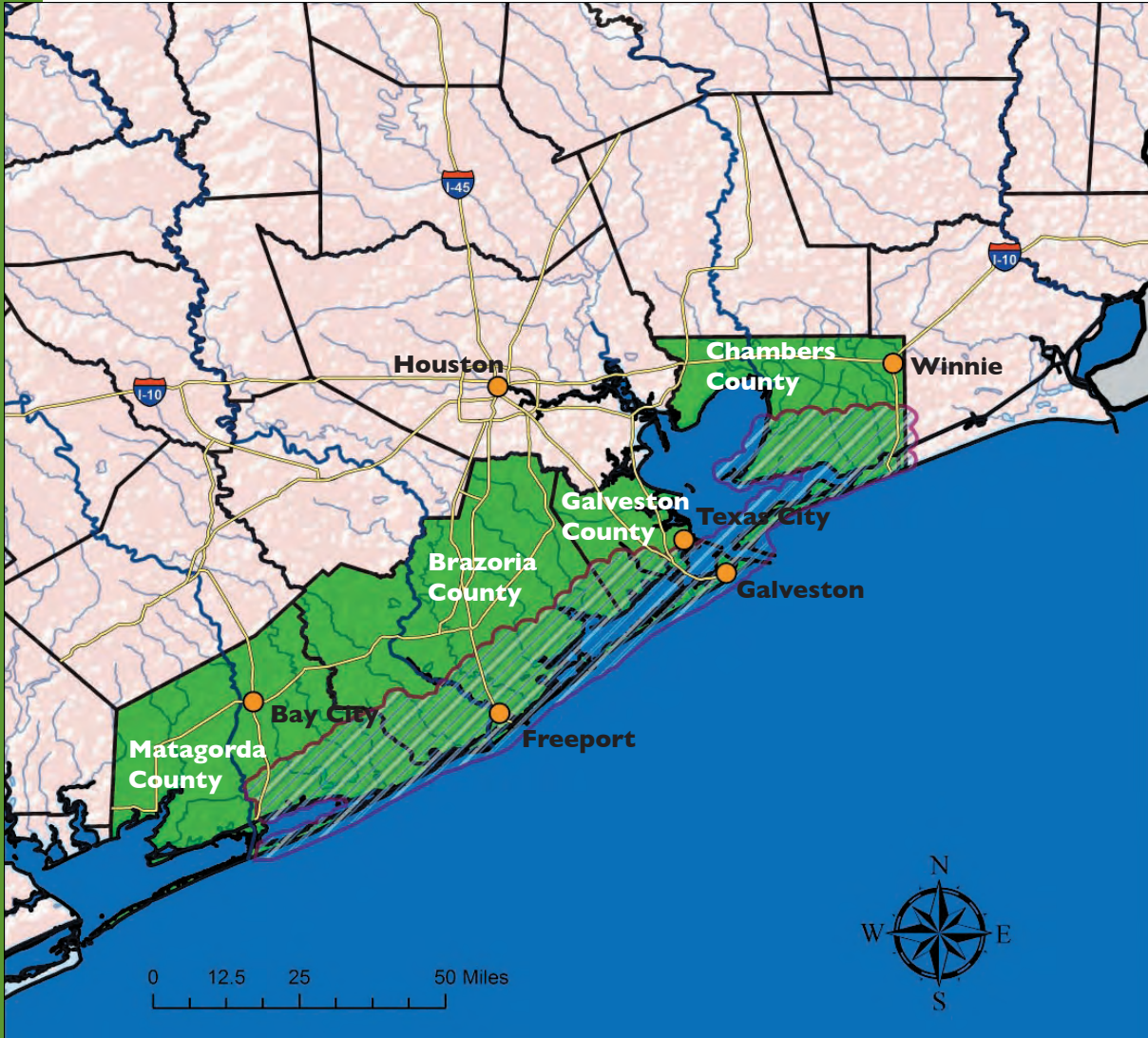
\$69 million personal income

Sustain

2% increase in private employment over current levels

11% more jobs in the tourism industry

Four-County Economic Impact Study Area





The proposed Lone Star Coastal National Recreation Area would include voluntary partners in four coastal counties: Matagorda, Brazoria, Galveston, and Chambers.

This region boasts significant natural areas, outdoor recreation opportunities, and historical sites. The proposed national recreation area would be built around a core of existing sites through coordinated management by voluntarily participating public, private, and non-profit landowners.

Map: Dan Servian, Direwolf Graphics.

On the map:

 Coastal buffer zone, in which the proposed Lone Star National Recreation Area would be located.

 Four-county economic impact study area

About the Economic Impact Study

- Conducted in 2011 by the Harbinger Consulting Group to evaluate potential economic impacts of the proposed national recreation area.
- Used the National Park Service MGM2 model, widely used for estimating economic impacts of NPS units.
- Examined likely impacts of spending by out-of-town visitors and National Park Service operations on a four-county region including, from west to east, Matagorda, Brazoria, Galveston, and Chambers counties.
- Technical report can be downloaded at www.npca.org/TXCoastalEconomic or houstonwilderness.org/index.php/NationalRecreationArea.

For more information, contact:



Suzanne Dixon, NPCA
214.370.9735 x 11 • SDixon@npca.org

Victoria Herrin, Houston Wilderness
713.524.7330 • VHerrin@houstonwilderness.org

James Blackburn, SSPEED Center, Rice University
713.524.1012 • Blackbur@rice.edu