

What is the role of the Steering Committee for the Lone Star Coastal National Recreation Area planning process?

## **Background**

Local business leader John L. Nau, III and former Secretary of State James A. Baker, III are leading a steering committee and creation of a Partners Coalition to help establish a nationally significant coastal recreation area as part of a four-county approach to economic development and hurricane flood abatement.

The coastal recreation area concept is a locally proposed component of a broader hurricane flood abatement program being developed by the Severe Storm Prediction, Education and Evacuation from Disaster (SSPEED) Center at Rice University in association with the Houston-based non-profit organization Houston Wilderness. The national recreation area concept was identified by the SSPEED Center at Rice University under funding provided by The Houston Endowment. The SSPEED Center project proposed the idea as part of a structural and non-structural hurricane flood abatement framework. The concept is designed to offer flood protection, while also being capable of implementation in these difficult economic times.

## **Steering Committee Purpose**

The Steering Committee will facilitate dialogue with the Texas public, the business community, local organizations, local communities, and state and federal leaders to achieve the necessary community and political support for national designation of an Upper Texas Coastal National Recreation Area.

### *Key Tasks:*

- Develop broad community support for the national recreation area concept, including creation of a broad-based Partners Coalition
- Work with the SSPEED Center to identify and address information needs, including mapping; identification and assessment of natural, historic and cultural, recreational, and infrastructure assets; evaluation of storm surge and related coastal threats and ecosystem benefits; and other technical and scientific information to complete a review regarding the suitability and feasibility of a national recreation area designation
- Communicate with key opinion leaders, the business community, local organizations, government officials, and legislators (federal, state, and local) to elicit their ideas and achieve their endorsement of and commitment to the concept

## **Process**

- A group of local community leaders will be invited to serve on a Steering Committee.
- Concurrently, the major stakeholders will be invited to serve on a Partners Coalition that will explore the composition and function of the governing body for the area.
- Both groups will engage citizens, businesses, and organizations throughout the area as partners in this dialogue, with the goal of achieving federal designation for the area as a national recreation area.

## **Tasks**

- The Steering Committee, working with a broad array of participants in the Partners Coalition, will explore how to structure a local, state, and federal partnership to maximize the benefits of a 130-mile area along the coast identified in a SSPEED Center report as having significant potential to reduce impacts to Texas communities from severe storm events.
- The Steering Committee and Partners Coalition will review concepts for the design and implementation of a national recreation area
- The Steering Committee will review economic benefits information relevant to evaluating and building support for the concept
- Steering Committee members will communicate with key local constituents and policy makers and build a coalition of supporters
- The Steering Committee Chair and members will communicate with key state and national legislators and other public officials
- Steering Committee and Partners Coalition members will assess funding opportunities