



## **Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill Relief Fund**

**[RAE Newsletter / January-February 2011 Newsletter](#)**

### **Restore America's Estuaries Helps Purchase Gulf Saver Bag™**

The tragic oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Louisiana last spring touched the hearts of people from around the country. Many responded with financial support for the restoration of the impacted shore lines, and Restore America's Estuaries was able to raise over \$7,000 for the Gulf Coast Oil Spill Relief Fund. Restore America's Estuaries is supporting its member group, the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, a lead organizer for engaging volunteers in on-the-ground restoration projects.

The oil spill disaster has impacted large areas of Louisiana's fragile wetlands. Volunteers are engaged in planting native vegetation in vulnerable project areas to bolster wetland health and productivity. Although volunteers do not work in oiled areas, the marsh restoration projects will assist in the overall recovery of the region by increasing the wetland habitat for wildlife and fisheries, reducing erosion, increasing species diversity and providing a seed source for natural regeneration.

Louisiana's shorelines are losing 50 wetland acres everyday. High wave energy off the Louisiana coast makes it difficult to decrease erosion rates with plantings alone. Newly planted vegetation can be washed away in a single high-tide event. To counter this, the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana is using Gulf Saver Bags™ to restore the shoreline. The Gulf Saver Bag is a biodegradable burlap sack filled with natural humus (organic matter with vital nutrients and microbes) that provides a base for vegetation to grow. Marsh grasses are planted directly into the bags. They degrade over a three- to four-month period, but in that time allow the plant roots to become established in the soil, increasing shoreline stability and providing a secure base for plant growth.