



Photo courtesy Dennis Holt

POTENTIAL
ECONOMIC
IMPACTS OF
NATIONAL PARK
UNITS —
GALVESTON BAY
(Texas) AND
MOBILE-TENSAW
DELTA(Alabama)

Can landscape conservation
and protective designations be
good for local economies?

Opportunity Knocks

How the Proposed Lone Star Coastal National Recreation Area Could Attract Visitors, Boost Business, and Create Jobs



An Evaluation of Potential Economic Impacts for the Upper Texas Gulf Coast Counties of Brazoria, Chambers, Galveston, and Matagorda



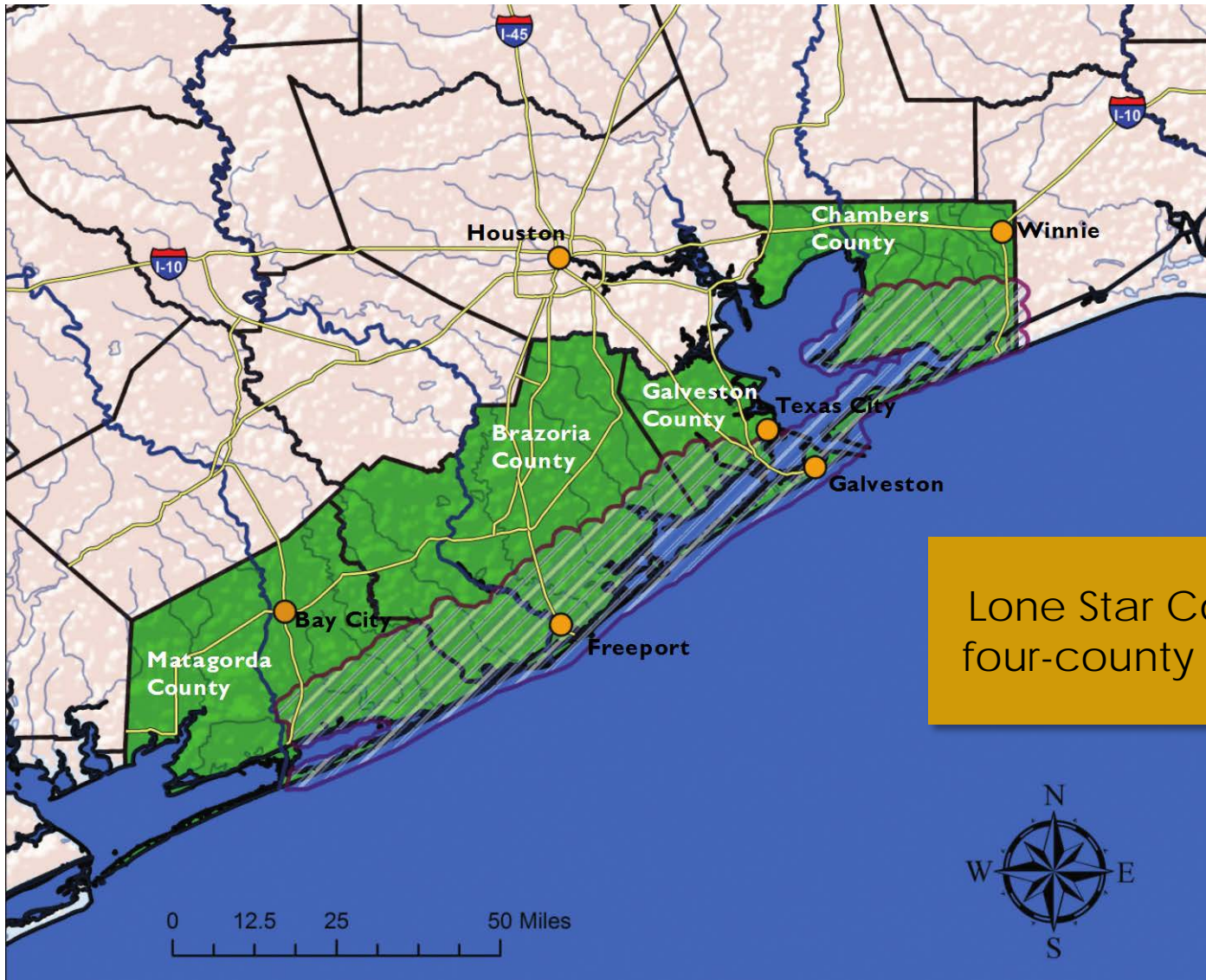
4 examples of Harbinger's work

- Ten case studies on economic benefits of ecological restoration — NPCA *Restore • a • Nation*
- Economic impact study for a public-private effort to preserve and redevelop an historical hot springs resort — San Antonio River ecological restoration
- Economic impact projections for proposed national recreation area — Texas coast
- Economic impact projections for potential NPS unit — Mobile-Tensaw Delta, Alabama



Main points

- Protective designations and long-term conservation can have tremendous economic value — in lasting and direct ways that matter to local communities. (Some of these can even be measured.)
- That value can be best realized and even increased when local communities are engaged.



Map courtesy Dan Servian



Tourism is big here

- **1 in 5 jobs related to tourism**, most concentrated in Galveston County
- **Nature and cultural tourism** — 50% more important here than statewide
- **Hunting and fishing** — double in popularity among visitors than across Texas

But there are still opportunities for growth



Why a National Recreation Area?

- Post-Ike (2008) studies showed undeveloped lands along the coast significantly buffer storm surge.
- Part of a **long-term, non-structural flood mitigation system** to reduce flooding and property damage inland.
- **Enhance recreational use** to draw additional economic value from maintaining this coastal buffer zone.
- **Coordinate** flood control, visitor services, tourism marketing, and land management among voluntarily participating partners.
- Maintain **local control**.

Lone Star Coastal NRA: Projected Economic Impacts

Built on a core of existing natural areas and heritage sites, the LSCNRA would start out with a strong base of visitors in its first year of full staffing and operation.

YEAR ONE of Operation

Attract

500,000 annual visitors

Support

\$46 million local sales

1,200 local jobs

\$19 million personal income

YEAR TEN of Operation

Attract

1,500,000 annual visitors

Support

\$192 million local sales

5,260 local jobs

\$69 million personal income

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Private employment  2%

Tourism jobs  11%



What's behind the increase?

- **NPS exposure** and drawing power. Maturing of the NRA as a destination.
- Development of **new or expanded** recreational sites, visitor facilities, services, and programs.
- **Regional coordination** in connecting discreet sites and events into more cohesive offerings for visitors, and of tourism marketing and marketing collaboration.

Current status of the proposed Lone Star Coastal National Recreation Area

Community-based steering committee has drafted a governing charter. Business plan near completion. Authorizing legislation being finalized.





Mobile-Tensaw River Delta

NPS involvement potentially attractive to help with:

- Conservation of natural and cultural resources
- Improved recreational access
- Long-term ecosystem resilience
- Catalyzing and focusing development nature and cultural tourism industry in the region

Building Nature and Cultural Tourism

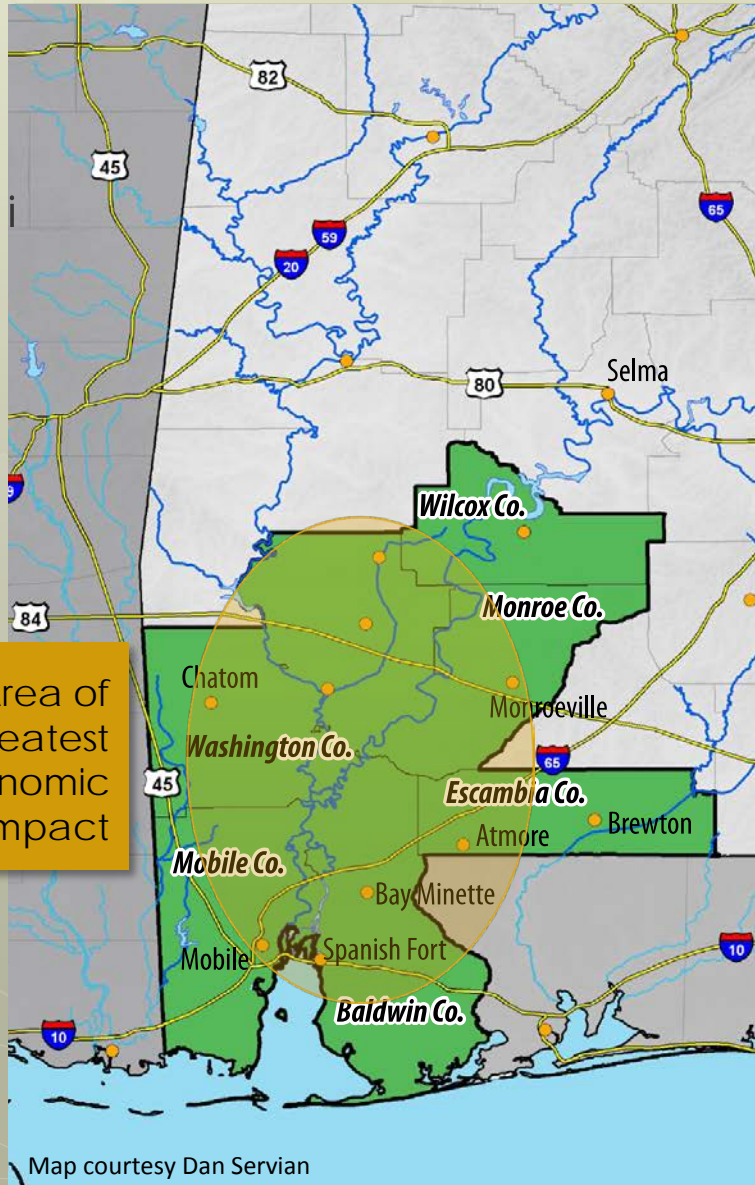
A National Park and Preserve could support — and be supported by — an array of efforts and plans underway around the Delta to develop and promote nature and cultural tourism in the region.



Tourism Job and Business Growth Focused Away from the Beaches

Preliminary analysis — a Delta National Park and Preserve might support something on the order of a **three percent growth in tourism jobs**, focused away from where the tourism industry is already strong — at the beaches and in the city of Mobile.

Area of greatest economic impact



Reliable & Growing Benefits

Visitation at peer national park areas grew an average of 290% over the first 10 years of operation. Parks can be a reliable, long-term source of economic benefit for nearby communities.

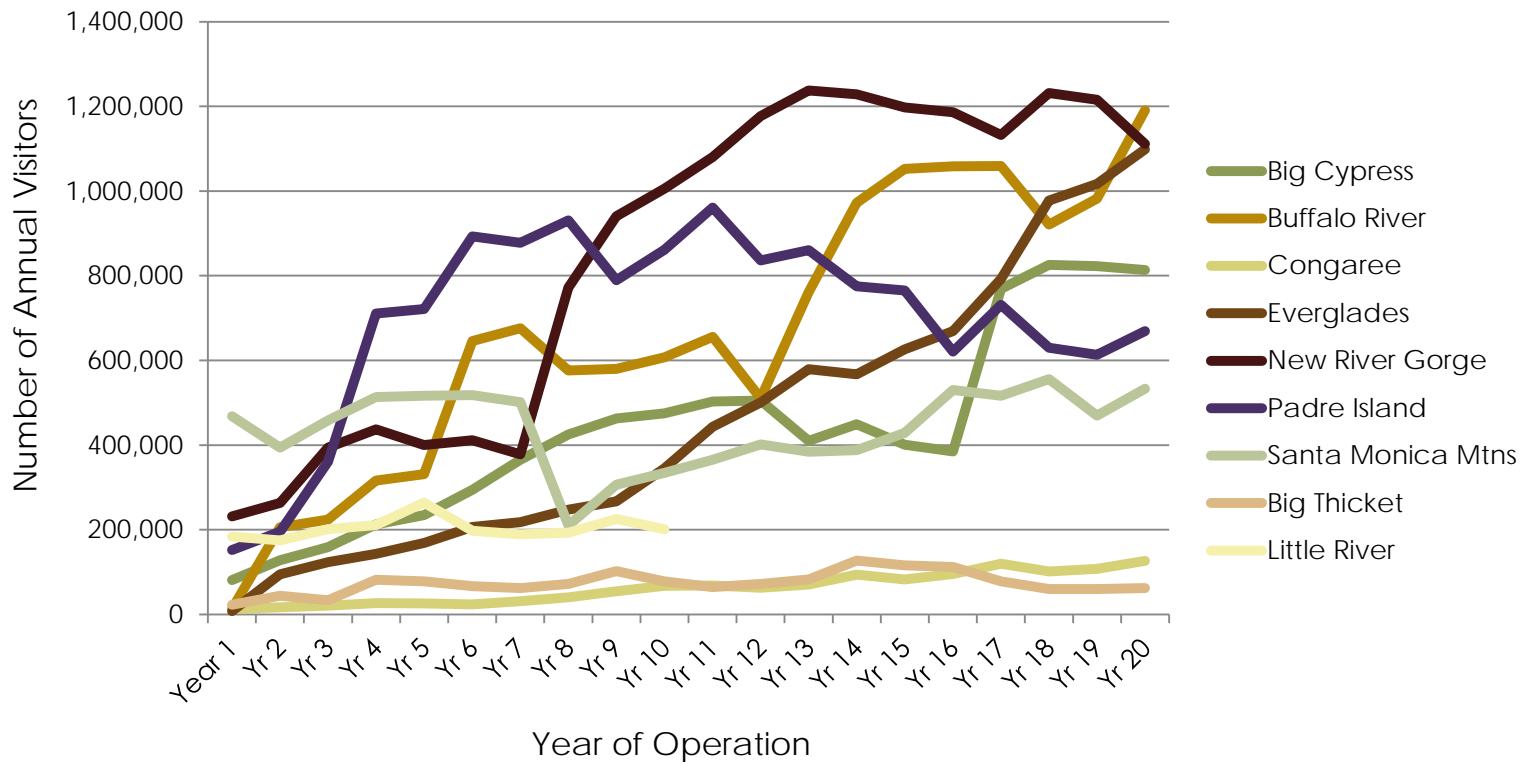




Photo courtesy 5 Rivers Delta Safaris

Impacts in Tenth Year of Operation

Constructed some scenarios:

- Attract between **a quarter million and three-quarters of a million visitors**
- Generate between **\$20 and \$75 million in sales** at local businesses
- Support between **250 and 1,000 local jobs**
- Add between **\$1 and \$3 million in hotel and sales tax revenues** to state and local coffers

What makes the difference?

National Park and Preserve

- Broaden area appeal to U.S. and international travelers
- Expand markets for traveler services and local goods
- Offer a unifying brand and focal point for business development and promotion

Delta communities and businesses

- Develop and package nature and cultural visitor experiences
- Promote the region as a nature and cultural tourism destination
- Improve transportation links



- Create a diverse park including a variety of entry points, landscapes, facilities, activities and services
- Collaborate on events, research and education facilities and programs, volunteer and business opportunities, etc.



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