

Study: Southern Louisiana is sinking

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A Louisiana State University scientist says southern Louisiana is sinking and restoring flooded marshes to protect the state's Gulf coast is futile.

LSU researcher Roy Dokka says Louisiana coastal areas are sinking 2 to 4 feet since 1950, with some sections, including New Orleans, sinking 2 inches a year, the Baton Rouge (La.) Advocate reported Monday.

Using GPS and other methods, Dokka's says he's found the Earth's crust beneath the Mississippi River delta is bending under the weight of the material the river has dumped into the Gulf of Mexico.

He said that means the state's push to rebuild wetlands as hurricane protection is futile and, while rebuilding marshes for other reasons may be fine, it won't provide hurricane protection.

"Obviously, you have to build a levee," he told the Advocate, noting such levees must be built high enough to provide Category 5 hurricane protection well into the future as the land they're built upon continues to sink.

Not all scientists concur with Dokka's conclusions, but officials told the newspaper they are listening to what he has to say.

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