

New Orleans Byens Netværk studietur 2014

8. november – 16. november 2014

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Foto: Peter Rasmussen

Studieturen 2014 gik til New Orleans, hvor vi bl.a. oplevede kulturel mangfoldighed, udfordringer med oversvømmelser, genopbygning efter Katrina, byplanlægning, arkitektur og meget andet. New Orleans er den største by i den amerikanske delstat Louisiana. Byen er gennemsyret af påvirkninger fra Europa, Caribien og Afrika og er hjemsted for en helt unik smeltedigel af kultur, mad og musik.

Byens Netværks tema for 2014 er mangfoldighed, netop derfor besøgte vi i år New Orleans, en af verdens mest fascinerende og multikulturelle byer, hvor alle sociale, etniske og økonomiske samfundslag eksisterer side om side, smelter sammen og fremelsker en unik kultur på baggrund af de indbyrdes forskelligheder. På godt og ondt, for på skyggesiden er ulighedsforholdet mellem rige og fattige, sorte og hvide tydelig.

Samtidig er New Orleans verdensberømt for sin unikke joie de vivre, jazz, Cajun cuisine og det ubegribelige Mardi Gras-karneval. Men det er også en martret by, der blev sendt i knæ af orkanen Katrina i 2005. Langsomt men sikkert har byen nu igen rejst sig efter katastrofen. "You just can't kill the spirit of New Orleans", som indbyggerne selv siger det.

I august 2005 blev New Orleans ramt af oversvømmelser efter orkanen Katrina. Digerne sprang læk, 80 % af byen stod under vand, og omkring 1500 mennesker omkom i hele Louisiana.

Umiddelbart efter katastrofen faldt indbyggertallet i New Orleans fra 400.000 til lidt over 200.000. Mod alle odds kæmpede byen sig langsomt, men sikkert tilbage, og i dag - 9 år efter katastrofen - er byen så godt som genopbygget og revitaliseret, og indbyggertallet er oppe



på ca. 350.000. Mere end 10.000 ødelagte ejendomme er fjernet og nye boliger er opført, nye virksomheder er kommet til, gamle virksomheder er vendt tilbage og byen gør comeback som centrum for investeringer og iværksætteri. I dag tiltrækker byen derfor en lang række håbefulde unge pionerer, herunder unge arkitekter, som vil være med til at forandre hele bydele.

Det kunne ellers være endt anderledes, idet der var forslag om helt at sløjfe New Orleans som by, på grund af den geografiske placering. Størstedelen af det urbane område er nemlig anlagt på inddæmmede sumpområder, der ligger under havets overflade og kun er beskyttet af diger.

Byen synker ligesom Venedig

New Orleans er en by i en alvorlig, geologisk knibe. Dels forsvinder vådområderne i Mississippis delta ganske langsomt, dels synker hele området på grund af den massive olieindvinding ude i den Mexicanske Golf. De færre vådområder skyldes manglende sandtilførsel fra Mississippi, og det er yderst problematisk for New Orleans, da vådområderne tidligere har beskyttet byen mod oversvømmelser. Regnvand, oversvømmelser i forbindelse med orkaner og storme samt højtstående grundvand er generelt et problem for byen. Alt det vand, der kommer ind i New Orleans, bliver spærret inde af de diger, man har bygget for at holde det ude. Derfor har New Orleans også et af verdens største dræningssystemer. 22 pumpestationer, fordelt over hele byen, pumper dagligt vand fra byen ud i Lake Pointchartrain, Mississippi og i Intracoastal Waterway. De ca. 70 pumper, der står på pumpestationerne har en samlet kapacitet på over 100 millioner ton i døgnet, og under normale omstændigheder pumper ca. 65 millioner ton vand væk fra byen i døgnet.

USA's kongres har bevilliget 15 milliarder dollars til at beskytte New Orleans og opland. Beskyttelsen omfatter bl.a. at man mod syd bygger det hidtil største betondige i USA. Det danske ingeniørfirma COWI er via sit amerikanske datterselskab, Ben C. Gerwick, med til at projektere og bygge diget, der bliver 8 meter højt og 2,4 kilometer langt, og som skal være med til at forhindre fremtidige orkaner i at oversvømme New Orleans.

Byområder i New Orleans

I modsætning til mange andre byer, hvor



man taler om "Uptown" og "Downtown", taler man i New Orleans om "Riverside" og "Lakeside". Geografisk er byen opdelt i 17 såkaldte wards. I midten ligger det ikonografiske French Quarter, der udgør byens hjerte. Ikke langt derfra er Warehouse District, et charmerende, gammelt industri kvarter, der er blevet konverteret til kunstdistrikt med museer og gallerier. Byens vestlige halvdel snor sig langs Mississippi-floden og er kendt som The Uptown Wards og er fyldt med smukke, gamle victorianske villaer. Midcity er et lokalt neighborhood med grønne områder og gotiske kirkegårde. The Ninth Ward er byens største ward og hjemsted for både trendy Bywater og det fattige boligkvarter Lower Ninth Ward, der led en hård skæbne under Katrina.

Af hensyn til vores internationale samarbejdspartnere er studieturens program beskrevet på engelsk.

Saturday, November 8, 2014

Saturday is travel day. We are leaving Copenhagen in the morning and arrive in New Orleans late in the evening.

Sunday, November 9, 2014

Tours and visits:

Introduction to New Orleans – field trip with Prof. Richard Campanella from Tulane, School of Architecture

Campanella introduces us to the complex physical, urban, and cultural geography (historically and currently) of greater New Orleans, across 35 miles, including important areas rarely seen by locals let alone visitors.

Among the themes and sites that we visit is uptown residential patterns, Napoleon Avenue containerization wharf, "Old Lafayette" German/Irish area, River Garden/Hope/"New Urbanism" public housing projects, Lower Garden District, French Quarter / "Little Palermo," Marigny / Bywater neighborhoods; issues of gentrification; opening up of the Mississippi riverfront; Lombard Plantation House, Industrial Canal, Lower Ninth Ward and Katrina levee breach sites, Bayou Bienvenue coastal restoration project, Holy Cross riverfront; Jackson Barracks, St. Bernard Parish, Intracoastal Waterway/Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet Canal, Vietnamese neighborhood, Chef Menteur Highway/



Gentilly Ridge, Seventh Ward, Bayou St. John Plantation Houses/ Portage, Bayou Road/Esplanade Ridge, Rampart-Faubourg Tremé, Old Chinatown, Old Dryades/Central City, Claiborne Avenue, and others.

Lunch at **Vietnamese restaurant Ba Mien**

Visit **National World War II Museum** - extraordinary contemporary architecture. The Museum is considered one of the most iconic buildings in NO. Tour with Architect Scott Evans, Mathes Brierre Architects.

Designed by Voorsanger Architects, Lead Designer Martin Stigsgaard. Founded by historian and author, Stephen Ambrose, the Museum tells the story of the American Experience in the war that changed the world — why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today. In 2003, Congress officially designated us as America's National WWII Museum.

The museum is a great example of contemporary architecture and urban renewal in New Orleans, with its undulating, irregular masses of cast concrete, metal and glass panels in irregular geometrical shapes mixed with the old brewery and other historic buildings that remain on the museum site in the Warehouse District.

The design approach for the World War II Museum is to offer architectonic events that honor the story of World War II. The extensive size of the exhibit —85,000 square feet—suggested multiple pavilions placed on a commemorative surface called the Parade Ground. Open to the sky and located one level above the street level entryway, the parade represents the daily rallying of events, reveille, close order drill, celebrations, disciplinary action, calisthenics, and ceremonies that permeate military life. Historically, parades in New Orleans function as either simple or elaborate events celebrating life or death. The confluence of this local tradition and military ritual offered a platform on which to present the story of the world-changing war.

In the evening dinner at **Red Fish Grill**.



Monday, November 10, 2014

Tours and visits:

Visit at the New Orleans City Council Chamber.

Meeting with City Council member Latoya Cantrell and Susan Guidry about the City

Governance Perspective on rebuilding and recovering post Hurricane Katrina.

Visit at Delgado Community College.

Meeting with State Senator Conrad Appel and House Representative Wesley Bishop.

Responding to Hurricane Katrina; State Governance Perspective.

Lunch at **Café Reconcile in Central City.**

Café Reconcile is a nonprofit restaurant that uses innovative strategies to provide life skills and job training to youth from at-risk communities in the New Orleans area.

During Lunch Glen Armantrout III, CEO at Cafe Reconcile and Kysha Brown Robinson, Executive Director at Central City Renaissance Alliance (a resident led community development organization) tell us about their work.

Café Reconcile is a nonprofit restaurant, located in the severely distressed Central City neighborhood of New Orleans, serves as the primary training ground for students seeking to acquire skills in the food service industry.

Reconcile New Orleans transforms the lives of young adults (ages 16-22) from severely at-risk communities through the ministry of reconciliation.

They do this by encouraging personal growth, providing workforce development and training, promoting entrepreneurship, working with businesses, nonprofits and people of faith to support this transformation, and building strong communities through community economic development.

Reconcile's students arrive facing a vast array of challenges, from extreme poverty and high school attrition to homelessness, violence, and participation in the juvenile justice system. Nonetheless, these young people possess a deep desire to break the cycle and become productive, contributing members of society.

Featuring soul-filled local dishes and some of the city's lowest prices, Café Reconcile is a destination lunch spot for a wide cross-section of New Orleanians as well as visitors from all across the country.

Councilmember Latoya Cantrell



Central City Renaissance Alliance (CCRA) is a resident led community development organization that honors the collective voice of its residents in one of New Orleans' historic uptown neighborhoods. Their work is in four areas: Education, economic development, leadership development, and advocacy.

CCRA has three program areas: Community Renaissance (includes Monthly Community Meeting; Annual Convening; Resident Leadership Fellows; Community Outreach and Organizing; and Civic Engagement/Voter Registration), Promise Central City (a youth-focused cradle to career program. CCRA provides both education and wraparound family and community support. The goal is to support whole child development that results in healthy, safe, educated, and employed young people), and the Center for Working Families (aims to increase family assets, financial stability and security. The strategies include: education advancement, employment and training, and asset building).

Visit **Lower 9th Ward** with architect John Williams of Williams Architects. We start with an oral presentation followed by a tour of the Lower 9th Ward neighborhood, which was ground zero for the failure of one of the City's major floodwalls. John Williams takes us on a tour in Lower 9th Ward focusing on this area's devastation after Hurricane Katrina and the **"Make it right" housing project**.

During the tour we also meet a local resident, J.F. "Smitty" Smith and visit the **House of Dance and Feathers** - a cultural museum-turned-community-center based on Ronald W. Lewis' participation in the culture of Mardi Gras Indians, Social Aid & Pleasure Clubs and Skull & Bone Gangs. The museum has been a fixture in the Lower Ninth Ward since 2003 and is located in Ronald's backyard on Tupelo Street.

New Orleans' Lower 9th Ward is a culturally vibrant and historic neighborhood that was devastated in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in August 2005. As one of the neighborhoods hardest hit by the storm and the subsequent flooding of the city, the Lower 9th Ward saw thousands of residents displaced and homes destroyed.



The Make it Right Foundation, founded by actor Brad Pitt, is building 150 safe, sustainable homes in Lower 9th Ward. To date, 100 homes are built and all have earned LEED Platinum, the highest level of certification offered by the U.S. Green Building Council. Homeowners choose from 21 innovative designs, including single-family and duplex houses, and customize their homes by choosing the paint colors, flooring, cabinets and countertops that best suit their style and needs. The average single family home is 1,400 square feet.

More than 350 people are now living in Make It Right homes in part of the neighborhood that was desolate just four years ago. In addition to providing homes, Make it Right have built an eco-friendly, solar-powered playground and worked with residents to plant community gardens throughout the neighborhood. Now they are exploring ways to attract other needed services and amenities to ensure the long-term sustainability of the community.

In the evening The Honorary Consul of Denmark, John F. Fay Jr. and Ben C. Gerwick, Inc. | COWI and Dennis Lambert has invited us to a **network dinner at The Honorary Consul of Denmark, John F. Fay John and his wife Christina Fay's Residence.**

The event is an elegant evening with the participation of local professionals invited on the occasion of our visit in New Orleans.

Tuesday, November 11, 2014

Tours and visits:

Visit at **Louisiana State University Baton Rouge.**

First stop is a visit at a **small scale physical model of the Lower Mississippi River** in the College of Engineering at Louisiana State University. The 24 x 48-foot model is used to model river flow and sediment transport, while studying geographical locations and better integration of flood control that complements coastal restoration.

Clint Willson, LSU professor of civil and environmental engineering and director of the university's Vincent A. Forte River and Coastal Hydraulics Lab, shows us the model and explain "the big picture" regarding the water issue in the area around New Orleans and Mississippi.



Next stop is a lunch and meeting with the **Water Institute of the Gulf and The Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA)**. We meet with Denise Reed, Chief Scientist at the Water Institute of the Gulf and Kyle Graham, Executive Director of the CPRA. During lunch they tell us about their work and the issues they are addressing in the areas of coastal restoration and protection and water resource management.

The Water Institute of the Gulf was created to provide the state of Louisiana with a central point of science and engineering capacity, one that can help the state build better projects more quickly. By serving as a vehicle for collaboration among the best scientists and engineers in the world, The Water Institute will drive innovation in coastal restoration and hurricane protection, building world class expertise in these areas.

The CPRA is established as the single state entity with authority to articulate a clear statement of priorities and to focus development and implementation efforts to achieve comprehensive coastal protection for Louisiana. The Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority's mandate is to develop, implement, and enforce a comprehensive coastal protection and restoration Master Plan.

We spend the rest of the day at **Houmas House Plantation and Gardens**.

Houmas House Plantation and Gardens is a historic plantation complex and house museum in Burnside, Louisiana. The plantation was established in the late-1700s, with the current main house completed in 1840. It was named in honor of the native Houma people, who originally occupied this area of Louisiana. At one time during the 19th century, Houmas House farmed sugarcane on tens of thousands of acres, and became the largest producer of sugar in the country.

Houmas House was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. The mansion and grounds have been thoroughly restored and enhanced to reflect the opulent lifestyle and grandeur of the successful sugar barons who once lived in Houmas House. Most of the furnishings are not original to the house, but the current owner (and resident), Kevin Kelly, has collected some fine period antiques to fill in.



In the evening we are enjoying a great dinner in the fantastic surroundings.

Wednesday, November 12 2014

Tours and visits:

Tour of the **New Orleans Inner Harbor Navigational Canal (IHNC) Lake Borgne Barrier** with Ben E. Gerwick | COWI.

The \$1.2 Billion, 9,000-foot long IHNC Lake Borgne Barrier is the largest design/build civil-works construction ever undertaken by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It guards the east side of New Orleans from hurricane storm surges including water levels up to 26 feet high.

Area Manager, Dennis G. Lambert, P.E., Ben C. Gerwick, Inc. | COWI introduces us to the project and gives us a tour at the Surge Barrier.

The American Council of Engineering Companies, Engineering News Record, Structural Engineers Association of California, and Structural Engineers Association of Northern California have granted the project several awards.

Lunch at Borgne Restaurant at the Hyatt Hotel.

Visit at **the University Medical Center** with Skanska. The University Medical Center will be a new, state-of-the-art Medical Care Campus in New Orleans and is designed to replace the 68-year-old Medical Center of Louisiana at New Orleans (MCLNO), which was heavily damaged and closed following Hurricane Katrina. The new academic medical campus is situated on 38 acres, and will include the only Level 1 Trauma Center in South Louisiana.

Designed to meet flood-resistant construction standards, the first floors of the hospital and ambulatory care building, which house critical functions, is built 22 feet above sea level, well beyond the five-foot base flood elevation for the hospital site. The new campus incorporates storm-proofing technology, including six generators for emergency backup power, which allows the medical campus to withstand up to Category Three hurricanes as well as tornadoes; nuclear or biological accidents; physical attacks; fires; and chemical, biological and radiation hazards, all while remaining in operation for up to a week with virtually no outside



support or back-up supplies. The design incorporates the best practices of Evidence Based Design, Sustainability, Operational Efficiency, and Flexibility & Growth for the Future. Construction began in September of 2011, and the facility is expected to open in Spring 2015.

Next visit is at a **Permanent Supportive Housing initiative for homeless people: The Rosa F. Keller Building.** Valerie Miller, Assistant Director of CoC Programs, UNITY of Greater New Orleans is taking us on a tour in the building.

The Rosa F. Keller Building is an apartment building providing 60 units to fill a great need for supportive homeless housing in the community. The supportive housing facility provides on-site caseworkers to residents transitioning out of homelessness, about half its tenants. The remaining tenants are renters that meet low-income criteria.

The construction company, Woodward Design+Build, was the general contractor on this project and maintained the site layout of the previous construction that existed on the site in order to minimize demolition costs and reduce the cost of new foundations. Existing piling and foundations were reused as the new building went up. The building features an interior open air courtyard with open walkways for access to the apartments, as well as on-site parking underneath the building. The Rosa F. Keller building was built to Enterprise Green Communities standards, with each unit featuring an open floor plan, hardwood, ceramic, and linoleum flooring.

In the evening we are having dinner at Palace Café and afterwards some of us visit Bourbon Street.



Bourbon Street

Thursday, November 13 2014

Tours and visits:

Visit **Port of New Orleans**. Seeing the port facilities and hear about the Port's development.

Our visit includes a boat tour on the Port's Fireboat, the General Kelly to see the Port facilities from the river.

We are also going on a police escorted bus tour at the Port. Here we visit inside a state of the art cold storage facility and a new cruise passenger terminal at the Port.

New Orleans has one of the world's greatest international ports and it is a major focus of the city's economy. The Port of New Orleans handles about 62 million short tons of cargo a year. The port also handles about 50,000 barges and 700,000 cruise passengers per year with several ships from Carnival, Royal Caribbean, and Norwegian cruise lines making it one of the nation's premier cruise ports. The Port of New Orleans and the Port of South Louisiana combined forms one of the largest port systems in the world by bulk tonnage, and ranked top 10 in the world by annual volume handled.

The Port of New Orleans has made significant investments (some \$400 million over the past decade) in assuring state-of-the-art facilities throughout the port. Revitalized container and breakbulk terminals are well equipped with multi-purpose cranes, expanded marshalling yards, and new roadways. The Port of New Orleans facilities include over 204 hectares of cargo-handling areas and more than 12 hectares of covered storage. Port facilities accommodate about two thousand vessel calls per year.

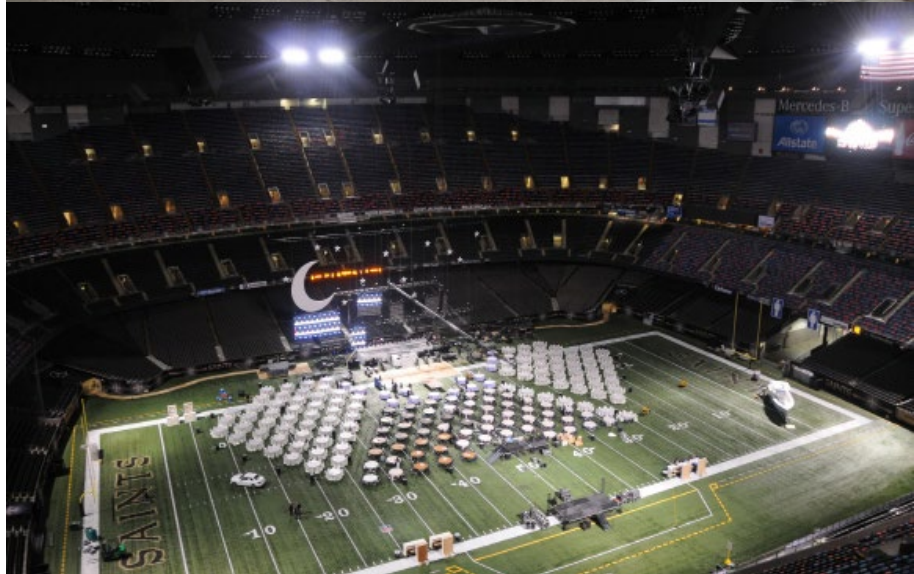


Port of New Orleans

The rest of Thursday we have made room for the participants to explore the city on their own.

Some of our participants visit **The Mercedes-Benz Superdome** together with the Honorary Consul of Denmark, John F. Fay Jr.

Others spend the afternoon enjoying the great spirit of New Orleans.



Friday, November 14 2014

Tours and visits:

Tour of **the Barataria Swamps and wetlands**. We are drifting slowly down the waterways and we are lucky to see some of the wildlife that made the Barataria Swamps the Crown Jewel of the Louisiana Purchase: Birds, turtles, fur animals and a few Gators.

In the afternoon we visit **Le Petit Salon**. The historic house at 620 St. Peter Street in the French Quarter is home to a women's club called Le Petit Salon.

The Salon's building was built in 1838 by Victor David, a Frenchman who came to New Orleans in the wake of the fall of Napoleon. The building, which was purchased by the women's club in 1925, is considered to be an example of Greek revival architecture at its best and a jewel of the French Quarter. It has been well preserved in as close to its original construction and decoration as possible by the women of Le Petit Salon.

The Salon is a private organization and normally the building is never opened to non-members.

We consider ourselves very lucky to have the opportunity to visit inside this fantastic building and meet with some of the admirable women from Le Petit Salon.



In the evening, we celebrate our last night in New Orleans at Dooky Chase's Restaurant in Treme, where we get to meet the amazing Executive Chef, Leah Chase.

Known as the "Queen of Creole Cuisine," Leah Chase has fed Quincy Jones, Jesse Jackson, Duke Ellington, Thurgood Marshall, James Baldwin, Ray Charles, Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama and countless others as Executive Chef of Dooky Chase's Restaurant — one of the best-known and most culturally significant restaurants in New Orleans.

Saturday, November 15 2014

(Going home to Denmark).

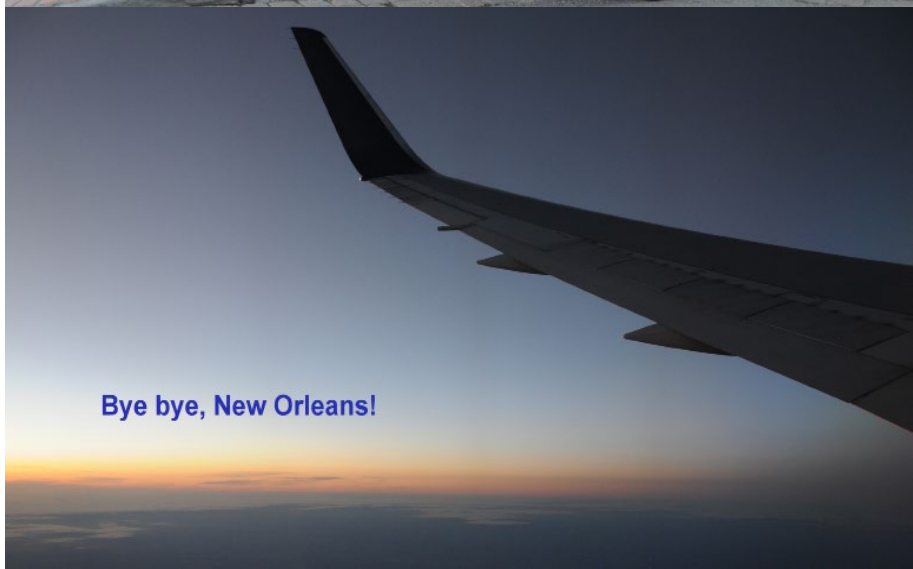
Lørdag morgen går turen hjem til København igen, og for de flestes vedkommende bruger vi rejsen til at hvile ud oven på det lange program og de mange oplevelser.

Sunday, November 16 2014

Søndag middag ankommer vi godt trætte til Kastrup.

Tak for en dejlig tur i rigtigt godt selskab med både tidligere og nye studietursdeltagere og tusind tak til jer, der også bidrog med små reportager og tanker fra studieturen og de enkelte besøg.

På hjemturen evaluerede deltagerne studieturen sædvanen tro. På en skala fra 1-5 blev turen evalueret til 4,8.



Bye bye, New Orleans!

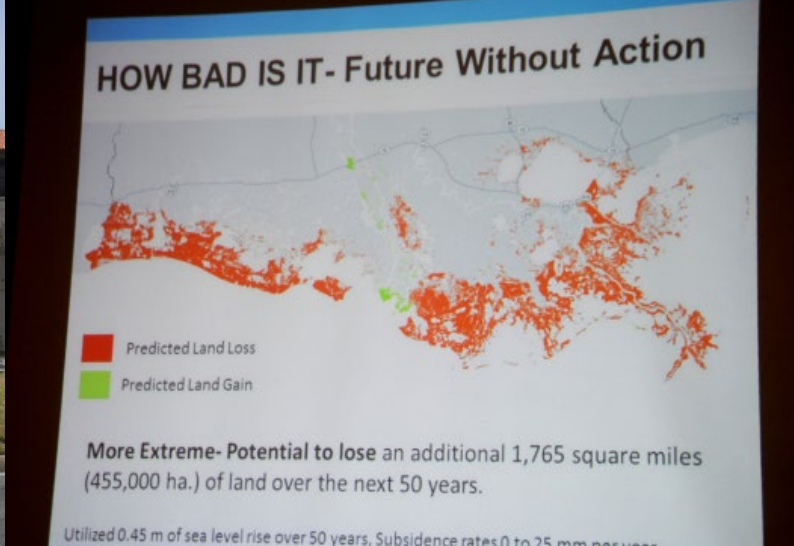












Louisiana is Experiencing a Coastal Crisis

1,883 square miles lost since the 1930s

Currently losing over 16 square miles per year







Denis Lambert, COWI





Dinner at John and Christina Fay's home









CEO Glen Armantrout at Cafe Reconcile



Kysha Brown Robinson, Executive Director











