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According to the Coastal Protection & Restoration Authority ([CPRA](#)), since the 1930's, Louisiana has lost about 1,900 square miles of land.

"It's the biggest problem Louisiana has ever faced," said Jonathan Henderson, with the [Gulf Restoration Network](#), a non-profit dedicated to protecting and conserving the Gulf.

"Hurricane Katrina for instance, would not have had done as much damage to say, the city of New Orleans had we had that 1,900 square miles of land in place to help prevent the storm surge," said Henderson.

As for the blame, Henderson points to a number of factors including hurricanes battering the coastline, rising sea levels, engineering changes to the Mississippi river, and years of dredging oil and gas canals.

"It is mother nature, absolutely, but it's largely driven by the activity of man," said Henderson.

"Whenever there is a storm surge, the saltwater intrusion comes up and gets caught behind the edges of the oil and gas canals," said Henderson.

As for what can be done, Henderson points to the CPRA's [Master Plan](#). It's a sweeping proposal of projects aimed at restoring the integrity of the wetlands. Henderson says funding the plan has become a sticking point, but that could change if the public gets involved and puts pressure on state lawmakers.

Coastal erosion is at the center of a controversial lawsuit, filed by a New Orleans levee board last year against the oil & gas industry. The Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East alleges 97 companies are contributing to coastal erosion by not maintaining oil and gas canals. The case is making its way through federal court, with a hearing set for December 10.

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