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The Takeaway

How State Neglect Led to Louisiana's Flooding Emergency

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Ryan Evans walks along a flooded road on August 15, 2016 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

(Joe Raedle / Getty)


Aug 16, 2016

From  **PRI** and  **WNYC**

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Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards declared a state of emergency over the weekend after The Pelican State was hit with "[unprecedented and historic <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/08/14/489964835/photos-dramatic-rescues-underway-as-louisiana-floodwaters-reach-historic-levels>](http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/08/14/489964835/photos-dramatic-rescues-underway-as-louisiana-floodwaters-reach-historic-levels)" flooding. The aftermath has left seven people dead, and thousands displaced and without power or cell phone service.

Though flood warnings are still in effect as rivers are expected to rise, on Sunday, President Barack Obama signed a disaster declaration for Louisiana, which will free up federal aid to support recovery efforts in affected areas.

Louisiana has a long history of neglected waterways and fast-eroding coastlines, which has led to disputes between [fishermen and property owners <http://www.wwltv.com/news/investigations/sportsmans-paradise-coastal-erosion-spurs-fishing-rights-fight/277097982>](http://www.wwltv.com/news/investigations/sportsmans-paradise-coastal-erosion-spurs-fishing-rights-fight/277097982), and of course the catastrophic aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.  contributing to this incredibly damaging flood.

What have we learned from the state's history, and how can they prevent another catastrophe? [Cynthia Sarthou <http://www.gulfbase.org/person/view.php?uid=csarthou>](http://www.gulfbase.org/person/view.php?uid=csarthou) , executive director of the [Gulf Restoration Network <http://healthygulf.org/>](http://healthygulf.org/) , explains how neglect of state waterways and coastlines led to disaster.

ABOUT THE TAKEAWAY

A fresh alternative in news featuring critical conversations, reports from the field, and listener participation. The Takeaway, hosted by John Hockenberry, provides a breadth and depth of world, national, and regional news coverage that is unprecedented in public media.

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