



State of Louisiana

JOHN BEL EDWARDS

GOVERNOR

22 April 2019

Dr. Tracy Quirk, Assistant Professor
Department of Oceanography and Coastal Sciences
3173 Energy, Coast & Environment Building
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803

Dr. Quirk,

As a senior coastal resources scientist for the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA), I would like to express my support for the research proposal titled "Robots in Nature: Human-Robot-Environmental Interaction for Advanced Ecosystem Services", being submitted by you and others for an LSU Faculty Research Grant. CPRA holds primary responsibility within the State of Louisiana for the development and implementation of a project-based strategy for achieving sustainability of both the coastal habitats and the human communities within the Louisiana coastal zone. Those risk reduction and restoration projects are outlined in *Louisiana's Comprehensive Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast*.

It is thus with great interest that I read your team's proposal to explore the integration of robotics into the more traditionally-linked coastal human and environmental systems. A scientific understanding of the state of our coastal wetlands, the local drivers that threaten wetland sustainability, and thus what are the most appropriate restoration techniques, underpins the Coastal Master Plan. So too does the continuing efforts by CPRA and its federal, State, and local partners to apply technological innovations to our flood risk reduction and restoration efforts and improve both the effectiveness and efficiency of our actions. I see both areas benefitting from the proposed work that your team has outlined. The coastal risk reduction and restoration partners often have difficulties with access to areas across the coast for both monitoring and direct restoration actions. Your team's proposed development of the Environmental Restoration Robotics research track and the pilot project to explore the potential of robotic planting on LSU AgCenter property, for instance, could assist the State in planting recently-constructed restoration projects.

I thus reiterate my interest and support in your team's proposed work. If chosen for funding, I will be happy to advise the team as appropriate and desired on the needs of the agency and the potential opportunities for interaction with CPRA and the coastal program partners as a whole.

Sincerely,

James W. Pahl, Ph.D.

Coastal Resources Scientist - Senior, CPRA Planning and Research Division