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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contacts:**

John Hill, America's WETLAND Foundation

[jh@mcopr.com](mailto:jh@mcopr.com) 504.756.0101 mobile

Aaron Viles, Gulf Restoration Network

[aaron@healthygulf.org](mailto:aaron@healthygulf.org) 225.615.0346

**FORMER SAINT SCOTT FUJITA DONATES TO LOUISIANA WETLANDS  
CAUSES IN A PARTING GIFT TO THE WHO DAT NATION**

**NEW ORLEANS** -- Scott Fujita, the former New Orleans Saints linebacker, took time off Friday from packing for his move to Cleveland, to donate \$25,000 to Louisiana wetlands causes.

Fujita presented two \$12,500 checks, one to the America's WETLAND Foundation and one to the Gulf Restoration Network during a Friday morning press conference to say farewell to New Orleans.

"I hope this inspires others to donate to these two worthy organizations," Fujita said. "This is a critical issue to the nation."

The Fujitas will maintain their New Orleans residence. "This city has come to mean so much to us," Fujita said. "This is where our daughters, Isabelle and Delilah, were born. We're always going to bring them back because the culture of New Orleans has so much to offer."

For the past four years, the Fujitas have made New Orleans home. Fujita arrived in 2006 along with Drew Brees and Sean Peyton and helped build the Saints into the Super Bowl winning team.

Fujita's sense of humor proved prophetic when he famously asked Indianapolis Quarterback Peyton Manning on the field, "Why don't you throw us one of those?" which Manning did at the bottom of the Fourth Quarter to cinch the Saints' victory in the Super Bowl and resulted in big bonus checks for the Saints.

A saint off the field as well, Fujita pledged to donate half his Super Bowl winning check to local charities.

He was attracted to the wetlands issue by watching the film, "Hurricane on the Bayou" and by learning that Louisiana loses the equivalent of a football field every 50 minutes. He became alarmed by the threat to New Orleans' culture.

"Preserving that is important to us. The wetlands are the city's main defense mechanism, and we need urgent action to restore them," Fujita said.

Fujita's generosity has already inspired another donation. His friend, fellow linebacker Kawiki Mitchell and his wife, Billie, are making a \$10,000 donation to the coastal groups, with each getting \$5,000.00. Mitchell and Fujita were teammates in Kansas City when both were NFL rookies.

"My wife and I don't want to just have great stories for our children about the coastal wetlands," said Mitchell, who grew up in Florida. "We want them to experience the beauty for themselves as they grow up. When we found out Scott and his family feel just as strongly about a region they did not grow up near, it prompted my wife and I to get involved. Our small donation is the least we can give back to a Gulf that has given us so much."

Paul McIlhenny, a founder and board member of the America's WETLAND Foundation, and Cyn Sarthou, executive director of the Gulf Restoration Network, said they hoped Fujita's generosity also inspires others.

"Your gift demonstrates that the coastal issue is more than just a parochial New Orleans or Louisiana concerns," AWF's McIlhenny said "As we began our campaign to save the coast, we calculated land loss as the equivalent of a football field every 50 minutes. The idea stuck. We are pleased that analogy attracted your interest. We are also pleased that the Saints organization is one of our partners in helping get out our messages."

GRN's Sarthou added, "We are incredibly grateful for the Fujita family's support for Louisiana coastal wetlands and our work to make their restoration a national priority. This type of high-profile support is critical to keep up our momentum for restoration. From the White House's coastal restoration roadmap, to Louisiana's master plan for the coast, state and federal leaders are beginning to come together to tackle the restoration of our region's best defense against storms and hurricanes."

Cajun fiddler Amanda Shaw, whose music is featured in the movie, "Hurricane on the Bayou," was hostess of the press conference. "Scott, we are sad to see you leave, but we are so grateful for everything you are leaving behind," Shaw said.

ON THE WEB:

[www.americaswetland.com](http://www.americaswetland.com)

[www.americasenergycoast.org](http://www.americasenergycoast.org)

[www.healthygulf.org](http://www.healthygulf.org)

*America's WETLAND Foundation is a non-partisan, non-profit organization that has acted as a neutral arbiter for coastal interests since its inception in 2002, elevating issues facing the Gulf Coast, specifically those of coastal land loss, to regional and national attention. Through its America's Energy Coast (AEC)*

*initiative, the Foundation has brought together a diverse group of major U.S.- based businesses and industries, national environmental organizations, renowned scientists and researchers, and coastal interests from across the four energy-producing states of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama.*

*The Gulf Restoration Network is the only environmental advocacy organization exclusively focused on the health of the Gulf of Mexico. Based in New Orleans, GRN seeks a national commitment to avert the crisis facing Louisiana's coastal wetlands system, the driver of the entire Gulf ecosystem. Since the catastrophic 2005 storm season, GRN has been a leader in efforts to protect the region's natural storm defenses.*