



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT:**

John Hill  
Email: [jh@mcopr.com](mailto:jh@mcopr.com)  
Cell: 504.756.0101

**NOTE: Fujita PSA is attached and available at [www.americaswetland.com](http://www.americaswetland.com)**

**NFL STAR SCOTT FUJITA AND AMERICA'S WETLAND FOUNDATION  
LAUNCH TEXT MESSAGING DRIVE TO REPLANT WETLANDS**

*Text-to-Give Donations will be used to support environmental restoration in the wake of the Gulf of Mexico oil spill off Louisiana's endangered coast*

NEW ORLEANS – Marking the opening of hurricane season, former New Orleans Saints Super Bowl linebacker Scott Fujita and the America's WETLAND Foundation (AWF) have teamed up to heighten awareness and build support for restoring Louisiana's eroding coastline.

As part of a public service announcement campaign, AWF is launching a text-messaging drive to support volunteer planting and restoration projects in Louisiana's marshes after the oil spill.

Fujita, now with the Cleveland Browns, donated \$12,500 to AWF for plantings in April and is a strong supporter of coastal restoration. He recently taped a PSA that urges supporters to "Give Now" by texting "isupport wetlands" to 20222, then replying "yes" when asked for confirmation of their \$10 donation.

All donations will go directly to support the work of the America's WETLAND Conservation Corps (AWCC), an LSU Ag Center-based AmeriCorps program that will manage volunteers and plantings in the wake of the Gulf Coast oil spill.

"These wetlands, already endangered due to coastal erosion, need all of us to pitch in to save this internationally important habitat," Fujita said. "Please join me to save this threatened area. Now, more than ever, it is critical to protect America's WETLAND," Fujita said.

Learning that Louisiana is losing land at the rate of a football field every 50 minutes triggered Fujita's interest in the wetlands.

"We estimate it would cost between \$2,500 and \$5,000 to purchase the plants needed to restore a wetland habitat the size of a football field," said Hilary Collis, program director of the AWCC. "Once areas are declared safe, and don't require the wearing of hazardous material clothing, we will go in and replant areas that need it," Collis said.

Each plug of Smooth Cord Grass, the primary grass used for wetlands restoration, costs about \$1.00. The grass grows well in salt and brackish water at low levels and has an intricate root system that supports retention of marshland. One text message donation will purchase 10 plants.

The AWF has long raised money for the conservation corps to support its replanting efforts, but has



stepped up the appeal because of the potentially huge impact of the oil spill on America's WETLAND. During 2009, AWCC members exceeded all expectations. Volunteers and energetic AWCC members recruited 4,155 volunteers that logged almost 25,000 hours while helping with 87 restoration projects. The 2010 members are eager to help out with wetland restoration as the oil is removed.

"The accomplishments of the America's WETLAND Conservation Corps have both immediate impact – through their wetlands planting projects – as well as long term, through their educational programs. The AWCC volunteers teach thousands about the importance of maintaining the wetlands for habitat, seafood production and hurricane protection for our communities and the nation's critical transportation and energy infrastructure," said R. King Milling of New Orleans, chair of the America's WETLAND Foundation.

"The long-term partnership with the Saints organization and some individual team members such as Fujita, help in our efforts to reach broader audiences to join in the fight to save the coast," Milling continued.

**To view the new PSA featuring Scott Fujita visit: [www.americaswetland.com](http://www.americaswetland.com)**

**There are two ways to donate to this effort:**

**Online:** go to [www.americaswetland.com](http://www.americaswetland.com) and click on the "Gulf Oil Spill Restoration Fund."

**Give Now:** Text "isupport wetlands" to short phone number 20222 (note no space between "I" and "support," then answer "yes" when the return message asks for a response.

A one-time donation of \$10 will be added to your mobile phone bill or deducted from your prepaid balance. Messaging and Data Rates May Apply. All charges are billed by and payable to your mobile service provider. Service is available on most carriers. Donations are collected for the benefit of the America's WETLAND Foundation by the Mobile Giving Foundation and subject to the terms found at [www.hmgf.org/t](http://www.hmgf.org/t). You can unsubscribe at any time by replying STOP to short code 20222; Reply **HELP** to 20222 for **help**.

*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.*

*The America's WETLAND Conservation Corps is a partnership of the America's WETLAND Foundation and the LSU AgCenter, which is supported by AmeriCorps through the Louisiana Serve Commission, and the Office of Lt. Governor. The Corps build community pride and environmental awareness through volunteerism and education. It supports collaborative efforts to organize and engage participants in a variety of activities, all with the message of responsible stewardship and a call for action to save coastal Louisiana. Exciting hands-on volunteer programs involve and educate audiences through the work of a diverse group of members, who not only take their experience with them when they leave Louisiana, but also leave a physical, virtual and emotional handprint on the state.*

###