

· DRAFT ·
FY 2018 ANNUAL PLAN
ATCHAFALAYA BASIN PROGRAM



America's Largest River Swamp

Atchafalaya
BASIN



LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

ATCHAFALAYA BASIN PROGRAM

Don Haydel, Director

April Newman, Coastal Resources Scientist

Research and Promotion Board Appointees

Gerald Alexander / Chairman, Atchafalaya Levee Board

Bijan Sharafkhani, Dept. of Environmental Quality

Lance Broussard, Dept. of Health and Hospitals

Jonathan Robillard, State Land Office

Guy Cormier, St. Martin Parish (non-voting)

Ray Berthelot, Dept. of Culture, Recreation & Tourism

Keith Lovell, Dept. of Natural Resources

Paul Naquin, St. Mary Parish

J. Mitchell Ourso, Jr., Iberville Parish (non-voting)

Brad Spicer, Dept. of Agriculture & Forestry

Charles Sutcliffe, Office of the Governor

Marty Triche, Assumption Parish (non-voting)

Myles Brumfield, Dept. of Transportation & Development

Melissa Kaintz, Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries

Technical Advisory Group

Bobby Reed / Chairman, Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries

Joey Breaux, Dept. of Agriculture & Forestry

Glenn Constant, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Dr. Bill Kelso, LSU School of Renewable Resources

Bijan Sharafkhani, Dept. of Environmental Quality

Dan Kroes, U.S. Geological Survey

Charles Reulet, Dept. of Natural Resources

Brac Salyers, Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries

Vacant, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Special thanks to these scientists who contributed to the TAG in an ex-officio capacity:

Dr. Richard Keim, LSU School of Renewable Resources

David Walther, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Atchafalaya Basin Program Legislative Oversight Committee:

Sen. R.L. “Bret” Allain

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OUR MISSION IS TO CONSERVE,
RESTORE, AND ENHANCE THE NATURAL
HABITAT OF THE ATCHAFALAYA BASIN AND
GIVE ALL PEOPLE THE OPPORTUNITY TO
ENJOY THE ATCHAFALAYA EXPERIENCE.

In Memory of Gerald Alexander

The Atchafalaya Basin Program lost a dear friend and passionate supporter on November 28, 2016, upon the passing of Chairman and long-time Research and Promotion Board member Gerald Alexander. Mr. Alexander was a native and resident of Donaldsonville and an educator at Donaldsonville High School for 33 years. He has made lasting contributions to the ABP over the years and will be greatly missed.



FROM DNR SECRETARY THOMAS HARRIS

January 6, 2017

Dear Members of the Louisiana Legislature,

I am pleased to present to you the FY 2018 Atchafalaya Basin Annual Plan, developed in accordance with Act 606 of the 2008 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature. That act requires the Atchafalaya Basin Program (ABP), within the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR), to identify water management, access, and recreation projects, make recommendations for state funding, and implement projects that best provide for those goals.

Comprising nearly one million acres from Simmesport to the mouth of the Atchafalaya River near Morgan City, the Atchafalaya Basin is the crown jewel of Louisiana's bountiful natural resources, and is our nation's largest and most productive river swamp. DNR is entrusted, through the ABP, to conserve, restore, and enhance this natural treasure, making use of the Annual Plan process and available funding for identified projects that are critical to the sustainability of our precious Basin and its bountiful resources. I thank members of the Research and Promotion Board, Technical Advisory Group, and Legislative Oversight Committee, as well as our ABP staff and local residents, for their work culminating with the publication of this FY 2018 Annual Plan.

Included in this print edition are descriptions and photos of work now being done and planned on Atchafalaya Basin projects previously authorized and funded. These include Grand Lake and Little Pigeon depth restoration, East Grand Lake water quality/water management projects, and the Butte La Rose and Wilson's Landing boat launches. You will also find lists of other previously approved projects that are pending funding, and projects that have been completed since the modern ABP Annual Plan Process began in FY 2010.

Additional information about the history and culture of the Atchafalaya Basin, a description of the ABP and the Annual Plan process, previous Annual Plans, a map of the water management units, and other related material are available to read, print and share on our website at basin.la.gov.

We thank you for your support of the Atchafalaya Basin Program, and look forward to working with you to implement and complete the water quality/water management and access projects identified on the following pages. Together, we can act as stewards of the Atchafalaya Basin that has been passed down to us from previous generations so that future generations will still be able to enjoy and take pride in it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "T. F. Harris".

Thomas F. Harris, Secretary
Louisiana Department of Natural Resources



FY 2018 PROJECTS

WATER QUALITY/WATER MANAGEMENT PROJECTS



East Grand Lake Project (201006)

This project was initially approved in the FY 2010 Annual Plan process as “Development of a Complete and Specific Plan to Address Water Quality and Sedimentation in East Grand Lake/Flat Lake/Upper Belle River Management Units Through Modification of Water & Sediment Inputs.” The project was intended as a first step toward realigning water flow patterns and strategically redirecting sediment in the East Grand Lake (EGL) project area, and the upper region was chosen as a starting point.

The upper region encompasses the area south of Bayou Sorrel to Old River and east of Grand Lake to the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. It covers an estimated 72,143 acres. This area has only a few flow restrictions preventing water from entering and circulating throughout a large portion of the area, and the highly channelized flow of water through the School Board Canal (Unnamed Canal), Indigo Bayou, Salt Mine Bayou, Williams Canal, Bayou Pigeon, and the Coon Trap creates a sediment delivery network that carries sediment deep into the area, promoting further restriction of flow and isolation of small areas. Hydrologic restoration of the area requires modifying this network of channelized water inputs.

The conceptual design of this project initially included construction of bank shavings to re-establish existing fresh water inputs along Bayou Sorrel, School Board Canal (Unnamed Canal), Indigo Bayou, and Cannon Bayou. To complement additional input entering from the north, gaps positioned further south in the banks of Salt Mine Bayou, the Florida Canal, and the Williams Canal would promote southward flow.

Ownership of the area is a mix of public and private land, so completing landscape-scale hydrologic restoration requires cooperation among landowners. Lack of cooperation had caused the project to stall, but The Nature Conservancy (TNC) recently acquired specific tracts that are needed to provide critical water inputs, and the project is now moving forward through a partnership between the ABP and TNC. In 2015, DNR and TNC signed a Memorandum of Understanding to formalize this partnership.

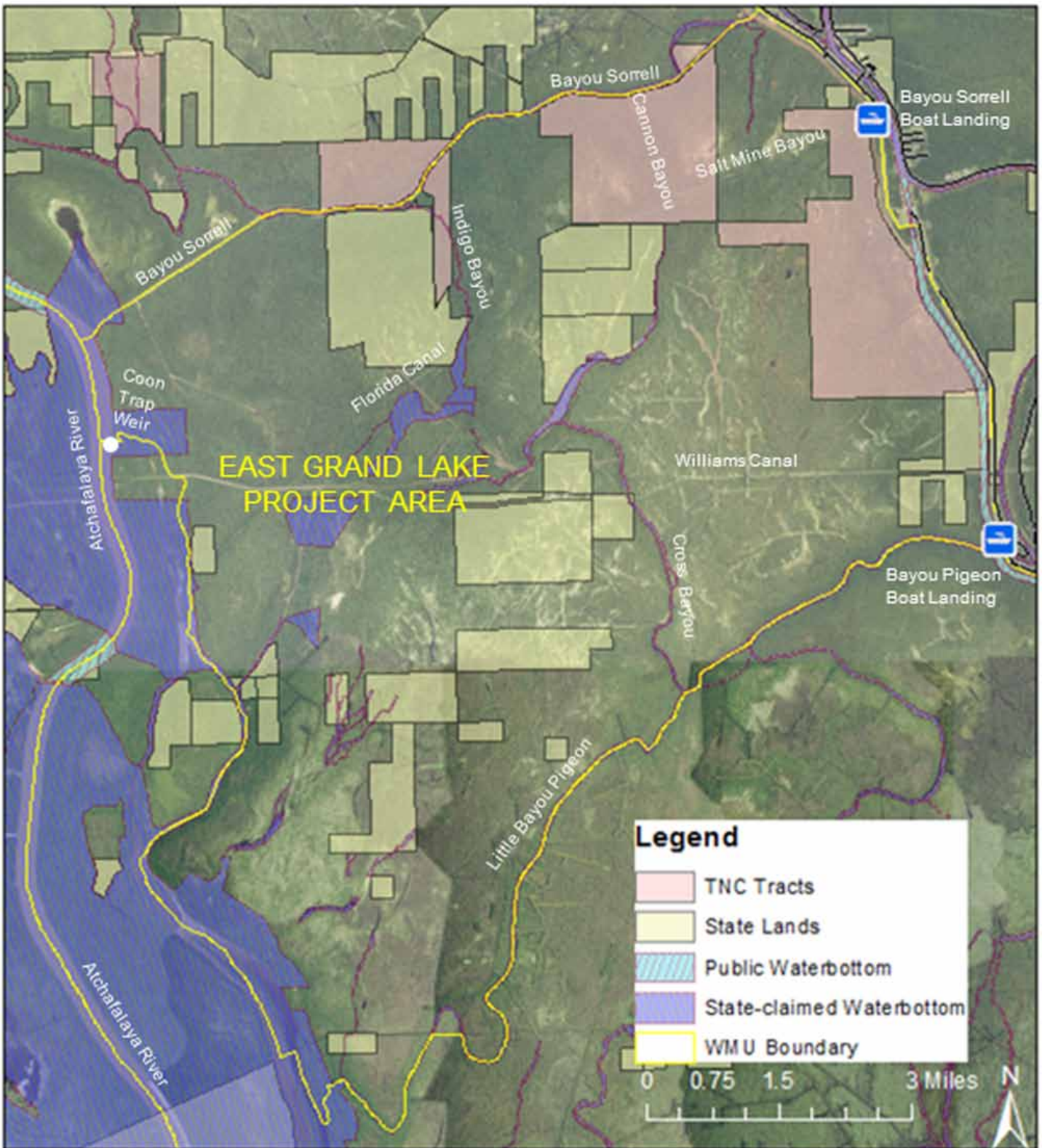
Status Report

Current funding for this project was reallocated from projects that were unable to proceed including Pigeon Bay. It is proposed for additional funding in the FY 2018 Annual Plan.

This project is still in the conceptual phase, and there will be multiple opportunities for public input as the project moves from concept to design to implementation. Design proposals will be presented to the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) for review, and members of the public are welcome to attend TAG meetings and provide feedback. Design plans will be presented at annual public meetings, at certain Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority meetings, and in committee meetings of the Louisiana Legislature; public comments are welcome at any of those venues. Additionally, we encourage interested individuals to contact ABP staff members at any time with questions or concerns.

For additional information on this and other ABP projects, please visit our website at basin.la.gov.

East Grand Lake Project (201006)



Grand Lake Delta Depth Restoration (201601)

A canal blockage at the Atchafalaya River was breached in 2011 and has completely washed out. The opening is allowing large amounts of sediment to enter and settle in Grand Lake. The incoming sediment is rapidly forming a delta and filling in what was previously open water. The filling of Grand Lake is a threat to access and aquatic habitat. The TAG identified this project as the number one priority in the FY 2016 Annual Plan process because of the importance of preserving the remaining open water habitat.

Status Report

This project has been combined with the adjacent depth restoration of Little Bayou Pigeon and has received funding reallocated from projects designated as unable to proceed in FY2016. Restoration of the blockage at the Atchafalaya River is being pursued outside the ABP, and depth restoration will commence once the blockage is restored. Design and permitting for this project are underway.

The Grand Lake Delta Depth Restoration Project is proposed for additional funding in FY 2018.



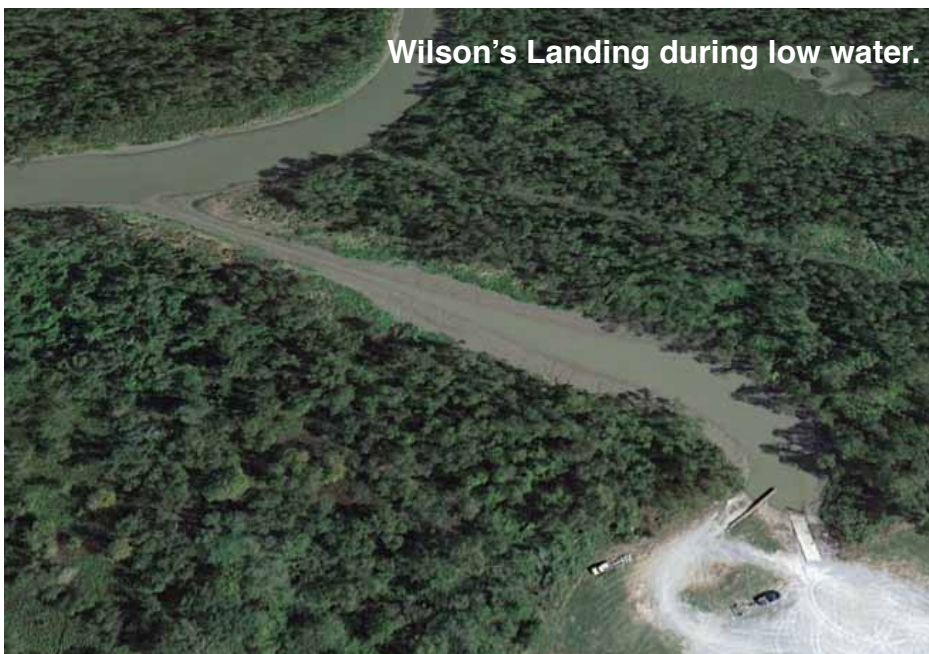
OTHER PROJECTS

Wilson's Landing Boat Launch

Upgrades to this launch were proposed in the State Master Plan and approved in the FY 2011 Annual Basin Plan . Proposed renovations to this landing include bringing in fill material to raise the elevation of the present “low-water launch” so that it can also function at higher river stages. In addition, the ramp(s) may need to be extended farther out into the water to facilitate safe launching at lower river stages. Improvements such as those to the parking area and lighting, as well as other improvements, are also proposed.

Status Report

The ABP has entered into a cooperative agreement with St. Mary Parish to complete this launch. Design and permitting are underway and construction is anticipated to begin in 2017.



Butte LaRose Boat Launch

This project was proposed in the State Master Plan in 1998 and involves upgrading the Butte La Rose Boat Launch at the Atchafalaya River by extending the launch an additional 15 feet into the river to accommodate safe launching when the river falls below three to four feet at the Butte La Rose gauge.

Status Report

The Butte La Rose Boat Launch was approved in the FY 2011 Annual Basin Plan but not funded by the Research and Promotion Board due to the total level of funds available. The project was proposed for funding in the FY 2012 Annual Basin Plan as the top priority water access project. The Research and Promotion Board has agreed to fund a portion of this project, and St. Martin Parish has committed to share a portion of the project cost. Additional land acquisition for the boat launch area is being pursued by the Parish. Once that is complete, plans and specifications will be designed by the engineer. It is anticipated that the project will proceed to construction during 2017.



Butte La Rose Boat Launch.

ADA Compliant Trail/Wilderness Trail at the Atchafalaya Welcome Center

A 1,200 foot ADA-compliant trail and an additional 2,400 foot wilderness trail will be designed and built south of the Visitor Center. A construction grant from the Federal Highway Administration and 20 percent matching funds from the ABP for design will fund the project.

Status Report

Construction is anticipated to begin in 2017.



The new trail will be behind the Atchafalaya Welcome Center in Butte La Rose.

Geo-Caching Trail

This project is to establish a number of locations (20-30) of interest related to the Atchafalaya Basin that would be documented by photos/GPS coordinates accompanied by a booklet that explains the significance of each location to the history and physical or cultural geography of the Basin. Individuals who complete and document visits to all locations would receive a geo-cache "coin."

Status Report

This extremely low cost (<\$200) project is set to be implemented in 2017.

MAP OF FY 2018 PROJECT LOCATIONS



APPROVED PROJECTS PENDING FUNDING



WATER QUALITY/WATER MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

- Big Bayou Pigeon
- Flat Lake Ecosystem
- Depth Restoration in Murphy Lake

OTHER PROJECTS

Sandy Cove Landing
Catahoula Landing
Joe Russo Landing

Ramah Landing
Grand Avoille Cove Landing
Morgan City Interpretive Center

COMPLETED PROJECTS

WATER QUALITY/WATER MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

- Bathymetry Data in American Pass
- Bayou Fourche
- Dog Leg Sediment Trap Maintenance Dredging
- Henderson Lake Access Channels
- Development of a Complete and Specific Plan to Address Water Quality and Sedimentation in East Grand Lake/Flat Lake/Upper Belle River Management Units Through Modification of Water & Sediment Input

For project
descriptions, visit
www.basin.la.gov

OTHER PROJECTS

Atchafalaya Basin Natural Resource Inventory and Assessment System (NRIAS)
Bayou Sorrell Boat Launch
Bayou Amy Boat Launch
Bayou Benoit Boat Launch
Belle River Park
Lake End Cabins
Primitive Campground
Big Alabama Boat Launch
Millet (Myette) Point Boat Launch
Belle River Boat Launch
Stephensville Park
Veterans Park

INACTIVE PROJECTS

- Improve water quality in Upper Grand River Flats*
- Cocodrie Swamp Project*
- Pigeon Bayou WMU*
- Open Brown Bayou to the I-10 Canal (200931)*
- Evaluate the Effectiveness of Dog Leg Sediment Trap**
- Sediment Trap in 21 Inch Canal**
- Sediment Trap in Orange Barrel Canal**
- Dredge Work Canal*
- Bristow Bayou North of I-10*

*Unable to proceed due to lack of landowner cooperation

**Not recommended to proceed by TAG



Atchafalaya

BASIN

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS:

Louisiana Swamp Base, Inc.
Ben Pierce
Dr. John Fuselier
Darlene Bouchet
Greg Guirard
Antoinette DeBosier
Charles Reulet
Matthew Armand
Eric Blanchard
Twana Casey
John Clark
Sherbin Collette
Josh Domingue
Don Haydel

Charles Hebert
Bonnie Hedges
Ashley Herrick
Sara Krupa
Raywood Lagneaux
Andre de Alencar Lyon
Tim Matte
Burton Mayeaux
April Newman
John Taylor
Rhonda Thibodeaux
Theodore Thibodeaux
Jennifer Brooke Wallace
James Wilson

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Victor Guarisco Lake End Park

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Armand Communications, LLC
Houma, LA
ArmandCreative.com

Additional Atchafalaya Basin Program FY 2018 Annual Plan documents available at basin.la.gov



Atchafalaya Basin Program

Louisiana Department of Natural Resources

P.O. Box 44487

Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9396

phone: (225) 342-6437 • fax: (225) 342-9439

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