

HUMAN CONDITION

Preserving the legacy of False River important

BY JODY THIBAUT

Special to The Advocate

During my summer breaks from school more than 50 years ago, I would take my old fishing pole on my daily trek across La. 1 to spend the day on False River. It was a time when I could look across the lake and let my imagination flow. I meditated as to what directions my life would take.

The bream, sac-a-lait and catfish were plentiful. I would watch turtles, frogs and snakes crossing in front of me. There were wood ducks hens with their ducklings trying to keep up with them in the water, while the herons and pelicans would fly above. All we had then was an old pier, and there were only a few small camps across the lake from

my fishing hole.

From that fishing spot, I did not realize that my whole future was right before me — that near this lake, I would open my office, raise my children and later even take my grandchildren to play on its banks.

False River is more than a body of standing water. It is a natural lake formed by an oxbow in the Mississippi River.

It is one of the most important areas for Pointe Coupee Parish's environment, providing the habitat for fish and wildlife and for flood control.

But it's more than that. False River is an inspiration for people who live in our parish and for all those who pass everyday on La. 1. Everyone can enjoy its beauty and hours of recreation with their fami-

pened in the last 50 years.

The fishing is not the same. I do not even remember the last time I was able to catch the grass shrimp that were my special bait. The ducks and other wildlife have been losing their breeding areas and shelters, with fewer areas of natural habitats.

The lake of my inspiration and imagination was rapidly become a dead lake.

The good news is that many of our local leaders, with the guidance of Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries, are trying to fix things. Many of the area fishermen and concerned citizens have pushed an effort to help in the restoration of the lake.

Now, as I walk out my back door of my lake house, I see the framework of a new island being built on the south flats.

It was designed to revive the lake and remove the sediment. As this island is being slowly raised, my hopes in those childhood days are being renewed and lifted for the generations to come. Much is happening under the glass surface of the beautiful lake.

With time, hopefully everyone will join in its protection as a legacy to our children and grandchildren.

— Thibaut lives in Oscar

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lies. sediment and algae and a great loss of nutrients. The aging process that should have taken hundreds of years has hap-

Since my summer days as a child, I have seen the lake get unnaturally older with