

NEWS RELEASE

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Spawning Beds to be Constructed in False River *Efforts Aimed at Restoring Local Fisheries Habitat*

NEW ROADS, La. – In an effort to improve the fisheries habitat of False River, state officials and local residents serving on the False River Watershed Council have approved efforts to begin constructing spawning beds in the oxbow lake as early as this month.

The council recently asked the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to identify locations in False River that would be suitable for constructing spawning beds. Nine suitable locations with hard bottoms have been identified; including old shell beds that are still intact but currently do not host small living aquatic life.

“We plan to begin with the construction of the beds as early this month,” said Ron Pourciau, president of the Pointe Coupee B.A.S.S. Federation Nation Chapter “Twin Rivers Anglers,” and a member of the False River Watershed Council.

“These beds should play an important role in the future of False River as we restore the habitat to promote the spawning of Bass, Bream and Sac-a-lait,” Pourciau said.

Each spawning bed will be roughly 400 square feet, measuring in strips of 20-foot by 20-foot or 10-foot by 40-foot, and measuring in thickness of about four inches of gravel. The beds also will be located in water depths of between 2 feet and 4 feet, according to Department of Wildlife and Fisheries specifications.

State Rep. Major Thibaut, D-Oscar, said the construction of the spawning beds is a low-budget project that can be done immediately with existing funds.

He said the project is a cooperative endeavor among private donors, the local Kiwanis Club, the Pointe Coupee Police Jury and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

He said the gravel is being donated by private citizens. The Pointe Coupee Police Jury is providing the dump trucks to haul the gravel to the lake, and the Wildlife and Fisheries Department will provide the barge to assist with moving the gravel to the lake sites.

Once each spawning bed is created, the local Kiwanis Club will mark the sites with special buoys, Thibaut said.

“This project is relatively easy and inexpensive, thanks to the cooperation of state and local officials, and it’s just the beginning of what we are planning to do,” Thibaut said. “We have all our community entities pitching in to help. With this cooperative spirit at work, we can definitely get started on returning False River to the luster of its glory days.”

Meanwhile, Thibaut said he worked with the State Legislature over the past two legislation sessions to allocate \$1.5 million to a larger restoration project that is currently in the engineering design phase.

Engineers will dredge silt from the lake’s bottom and use the material to construct islands/terraces in the South Flats, which are located south of New Roads between Jarreau and Lakeland. That area has continued to become shallower over the years because of increased sedimentation in the lake, making it less navigable for boat traffic and less habitable for local fish species.

Thibaut said the number and size of the islands/terraces and the dredging method will be dependent upon geotechnical data, which will characterize the properties of the lake bottom’s sediment, and will be critical in developing the cost of gathering the dredged material and constructing the islands/terraces.

Construction of the islands/terraces is expected to take place next fall following an approximate two-foot drawdown of the False River, which will expose some 83 acres of the lake bottom in the South Flats, making it easier and cheaper to dredge the material and construct the islands/terraces or remove it from the lake.

Thibaut said the False River Watershed Council presented a comprehensive report to state legislators in the spring, detailing the various issues and potential remedies of the restoration effort. The report included information on creating spawning beds in the lake, silt discharge from local canals, target areas for dredging to lessen turbidity and improve the lake bed, options for constructing islands/terraces to enhance aquatic habitat, and the need to drawdown the lake’s water level to consolidate shallow lake beds and more affordably dredge and remove debris.

A copy of the report and information on restoration efforts for False River can be found at www.dnr.louisiana.gov.

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