Louisiana Department of Natural Resources

Atchafalaya BASIN

America's Largest River Swamp

Draft FY 2012 Annual Plan

Atchafalaya Basin Program

Louisiana Department of Natural Resources
Atchafalaya Basin Program

Stephen Chustz, Acting Director
Antoinette DeBosier, Resource Scientist
Annette Wiegleb, Administrative Specialist

Research and Promotion Board Appointees

Louis Buatt / Chair, Dept. of Natural Resources
Gerald Alexander / Vice-Chair, Atchafalaya Levee Board
Alex Appeaning, Dept. of Environmental Quality
Guy Cormier, St. Martin Parish (non-voting)
Cynthia Duet, Office of the Governor
David Guilbeau, Dept. of Health and Hospitals
Stuart Johnson, Dept. of Culture, Recreation & Tourism
Paul Naquin, St. Mary Parish (non-voting)
J. Mitchell Ourso, Jr., Iberville Parish (non-voting)
Shawn Wilson, Dept. of Transportation & Development
Brad Spicer, Dept. of Agriculture & Forestry
Charles St. Romain, State Land Office
Mike Wood, Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries
Marty Triche, Assumption Parish (non-voting)

Technical Advisory Group

Bobby Reed / Chair, Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries
Glenn Constant, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Charlie Demas, U.S. Geological Survey
Lamar Hale, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Dr. Bill Kelso, LSU Renewable Natural Resources
Keith Lovell, Dept. of Natural Resources
Chris Piehler, Dept. of Environmental Quality
Mike Thomas, Dept. of Agriculture & Forestry
Mike Walker, Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries

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

Dr. Richard Keim, LSU Renewable Natural Resources
Dan Kroes, U.S. Geological Survey
David Walther, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Atchafalaya Basin Program Legislative Oversight Committee:

Rep. Karen St. Germain, Chair
Rep. Simone Champagne, Vice-Chair

Sen. Jody Amedee
Sen. Butch Gautreaux
Sen. Nick Gautreaux
Sen. Elbert Guillory
Sen. Troy Hebert
Sen. Eric LaFleur
Sen. Rob Marionneaux
Sen. Neil Riser
Rep. Elton Aubert
Rep. Bobby Badon
Rep. Taylor Barras
Rep. Mickey Guillory
Rep. Joe Harrison
Rep. Robert Johnson
Rep. Sam Jones
Rep. Bernard LeBas
Rep. Fred Mills
Rep. Major Thibaut
Rep. Ledricka Thierry

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.

from DNR Secretary Robert Harper

Dear Members of the Louisiana Legislature,

I am pleased to present to you the FY 2012 Atchafalaya Basin Annual Plan, developed in accordance with Act 606 of the 2008 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, which requires the Atchafalaya Basin Program to focus on the management of and access to Basin resources. It identifies projects related to water quality and water management in the Basin, as well as access and recreational projects that will enhance the public's opportunities to enjoy the natural resources of the Basin. Most importantly, however, I believe this Plan represents a very successful effort to gather and consider public input during this nine-month Plan development process, as well as use the best science available in proposing priority projects.

As a Louisianan, I am proud that our state is home to the most productive swamp in the world, and I also recognize the tremendous responsibility we have as Basin stewards to preserve its productivity. Encompassing nearly one million acres of bottomland hardwoods, swamps, bayous and backwater lakes in eight parishes from Simmesport to the mouth of the Atchafalaya River, the Atchfalaya Basin is home to over 250 species of birds and more than 100 species of fish. The goals of the Atchafalaya Basin Program and this FY 2012 Annual Plan are to ensure that this natural treasure continues to serve as a fertile animal and fisheries habitat, that its natural beauty is preserved, and that residents and visitors alike are provided recreational access to the Basin.

Since FY 2010, when this modern Annual Plan process began, the Louisiana Legislature has approved over $ 7 million for Atchafalaya Basin water quality/water management, access and recreation projects, clearly sending a message that the Atchafalaya Basin is vital to our State's ecological, environmental and economic well-being. On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of vistors to the Basin each year, we thank you for your support of the Atchafalaya Basin Program. I also look forward to working with you to secure funding to implement the important Basin projects listed in this FY 2012 Annual Plan. I strongly believe that the fruits of our commitment to responsibly manage the Basin will not only be realized in the next few years as projects advance, but in the decades that follow us, as our children and grandchildren make their own outdoor memories in America's largest river swamp.

I want to recognize all those who have made this Annual Plan possible: the staff of the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources Atchafalaya Basin Program and members of the Technical Advisory Group who worked diligently to identify and assess the projects listed in this document; the members of the program's Research & Promotion Board for all of their assistance in compiling and approving the final Plan; and Basin stakeholders who took time to attend our public meetings and nominate projects.

Each and every day, the Atchafalaya Basin Program staff and volunteers are focused on conserving, restoring and enhancing the natural habitat of the Atchafalaya Basin and giving all people the opportunity to enjoy the Atchafalaya Experience. We thank you for allowing us to continue this valuable mission and encourage you to enjoy all the Atchfalaya Basin has to offer.

Sincerely,

Robert Harper, Secretary
Lousiana Department of Natural Resources

Table of Contents

What is the Atchafalaya Basin?	page 5
Atchafalaya Basin Milestones	page 8
People, Wildlife & Economy of the Basin	page 10
Atchafalaya Basin Program	page 14
Current Challenges in the Basin	page 15
The FY 2012 Annual Plan Process	page 16
Project Funding & Prioritization	page 18
FY 2012 Project List	page 20
Project Descriptions	page 24
Appendix	page 42
Acknowledgements	page 46

Photo Credits

Greg Guirard
Ben Pierce
Antoinette DeBosier
Charles Reulet
Matthew Armand
Twana Casey
John Clark
Sherbin Collette
Charles Hebert
Tim Matte
Rhonda Thibodaux
Theodore Thibodaux
Jennifer Brooke Wallace
James Wilson

Andrew D. Lytle Collection, LSU Libraries
LA Dept. of Natural Resources
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
LA Dept. of Culture, Recreation & Tourism

Publication Preparation

Design & Copywriting by
Armand Creative, LLC
Houma, LA
Editor: Jennifer Armand

What is the Atchafalaya Basin?

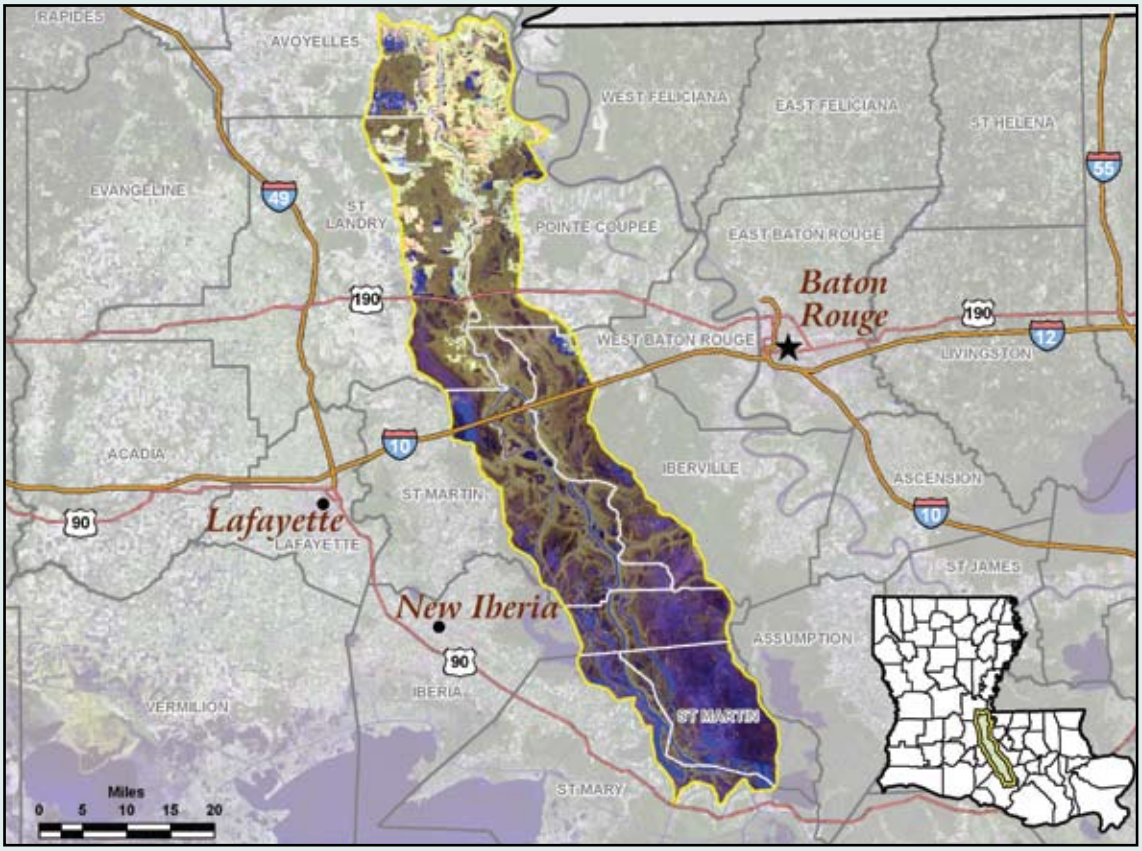
In the Beginning

The story of the Atchafalaya Basin begins over a half of a million years ago, when melting glaciers and rising oceans created what we now call the Mississippi River. Over thousands of years, the Mississippi River actually built South Louisiana, transporting sediment from upriver and depositing the rich silt as the river meandered across the delta, changing course, always in search of a shorter path and steeper gradient to the Gulf of Mexico. Following decades of flood events, the river's path changed, resulting in the formation of distributary channels and natural levees. Over time, floodplain processes created a thriving environment for plant, animal and marine life that remains with us today.

The Atchafalaya River

From its start at the Old River Control Structure to its mouth at the Gulf of Mexico, the Atchafalaya River is now the largest distributary stream of the Mississippi River. The navigable river is approximately 170 miles long and provides a significant industrial shipping channel for the state of Louisiana and is the flowing lifeline of the nation's largest river swamp – the Atchafalaya Basin.

The Atchafalaya River has its origin near Simmesport, Louisiana, in Avoyelles Parish at the confluence of the Red River with the Mississippi, where the Mississippi connects to the Red by the seven-mile channelized Old River. It receives the water of the Red as well as part of the water of the Mississippi, which itself continues in its main channel to the southeast. It meanders through extensive levees and floodways before emptying into the Gulf at Atchafalaya Bay, approximately 15 miles south of Morgan City, Louisiana. The river is now forming new deltas in Atchafalaya Bay – the most successful land-building process in the nation.



America's Largest River Basin

The Atchafalaya Basin is the river's floodway, bound by natural ridges to the east and west formed as the Mississippi River changed its course as much as 4,500 years ago. Encompassing 838,000 acres of forests, bayous, swamp and lakes, it extends south from the Old River Control Structure approximately140 miles to Morgan City. The Basin represents the largest contiguous bottomland hardwood forest, and overflow, alluvial swamp remaining in the United States.

Approximately 400,000 acres of the Basin are publicly owned, including Wildlife Mangement Areas, National Wildlife Refugees and state water bottoms. The remaining 438,000 acres are privately owned lands, including upland forest habitats as well as deep-water swamps.

Home to some of Louisiana's signature wildlife like alligators, roseate spoonbills, water moccasins and crawfish, plant life like cypress trees and water hyacinths, and abundant fish and marine life, the Atchafalaya Basin has long captured the interest of fishermen, photographers, hunters and those who simply enjoy the sights and sounds of nature. For centuries, people have adopted features of the Basin as part of their heritage, including the Native Americans who made their homes among the bottomland hardwoods, and the loggers and fishermen who made their livelihoods by harvesting the natural riches of the Atchafalaya Basin.

Channeling the Power of Nature

Until a monumental U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) project was completed in the 1960's to regulate water flow in the Atchafalaya River, the unpredictable flow caused the residents and landowners of the area many problems. The river was not much more than a bayou in the mid-1800's when a thirty-mile obstruction of logs and debris known as "the raft" was removed from the upper reaches of the river, dramatically increasing the river flow. Over the next century, flooding in the Atchafalaya Basin became more severe. The Great Flood of 1927 is the worst flood on record in the lower Mississippi River. It put the entire Atchafalaya Basin, nearby communities and rural areas under water.

A levee break during the Great Flood of 1927

In reaction to this natural catastrophe, the federal government took steps to protect lives and property in the Basin, as well as preserve the river as a shipping channel. As part of the USACE flood control plan, the Atchafalaya swamp was formally designated as a "spillway," to provide an outlet for diverted Mississippi River water in times of flooding. Extensive artificial levees were built to enclose the designated spillway area, distributary channels of the Atchafalaya River within the Basin were closed, the river was enlarged to handle increased capacity, and new diversion channels were created to provide for maximum discharge of floodwaters. In addition, a variety of dikes, dams, drainage canals, floodgates, pumping stations, locks, levees and floodwalls were built to aid in navigation and flood control. The unintended consequence of these actions was an increase of sediment flowing into the Basin, turning many swampy areas into dry land. The physiography, hydrology, water quality, landscape and habitats of the Basin were changed significantly.

The Atchafalaya Basin is the nation's largest river swamp, containing almost one million acres of America's most significant bottomland hardwoods, swamps, bayous and backwater lakes.

It is larger than the Florida Everglades.

In 1963, the USACE opened the Old River Control Structure to regulate the flow of water into the Atchafalaya River from the Red and Mississippi Rivers. Ten years later, a catastrophic failure of the control structure during the height of a spring flood nearly resulted in the Atchafalaya River claiming over 70 percent of Mississippi River flow and virtually changing the course of the Mississippi River once again. Today, the Old River Control Structure directs 30 percent of Mississippi River flow into the Atchafalaya River.

Photos from Basin Fans

For the FY 2012 Annual Plan, we asked Louisiana residents who live, work and play in the Atchafalaya Basin to send us photos that truly depict the beauty and outdoor wonder of the area. The response was amazing! Many of the photos we received can also be found on the "Basin Pics" section of the Atchafalaya Basin Program website, **www.Basin.la.gov**. Thank you to all of our photo contributors, and keep the great shots coming!

"Sphinx Moth on Ginger Lily" by Basin resident Twana Casey

The Atchafalaya Basin begins near Simmesport and stretches 140 miles southward to the Gulf of Mexico.

Atchafalaya Basin Parishes:

- Assumption Parish
- Avoyelles Parish
- Iberia Parish
- Iberville Parish
- Pointe Coupee Parish
- St. Landry Parish
- St. Martin Parish
- St. Mary Parish

Milestones in Atchafalaya Basin History

"The Raft"

1800 – 1838

A 30-mile obstruction of logs and debris known as "the raft" in the upper reaches of the Atchafalaya River impedes the flow of water from the Mississippi and Red Rivers.

1838-1850

A substantial portion of "the raft" is removed, greatly increasing the river flow and allowing navigation between the Atchafalaya, Red and Mississippi Rivers. Commerce begins to develop in the Atchafalaya Basin and flooding becomes more severe.

1849-1860

Farmland in the Basin begins to fail as flooding continues. The wetland environment of the Atchafalaya Basin greatly expands, signifying the birth of this important floodplain.

1870's-1930's

Large portions of the Atchafalaya swamp are clear-cut, resulting in the near extinction of old growth cypress forests.

1927

The worst flood in recorded history in the Lower Mississippi River Valley occurred in 1927, putting the entire Atchafalaya Basin and nearby communities and rural areas under water.

1928

The Flood Control Act of 1928 transforms the Atchafalaya Basin into a "spillway."

1929

Atchafalaya Basin Guide Levee construction begins.

1963

Operation of the Old River Control Structure begins to regulate water flow from the Mississippi and Red Rivers into the Atchafalaya River.

Old River Control Structure

Sources for this historical information include the Center for Louisiana Studies at the University of Louisiana-Lafayette, the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

1970

Louisiana Governor John McKeithen creates the first Atchafalaya Basin Commission.

1972-1980

Boat ramps are built, recreational facilities are planned, and the State begins purchasing land for state parks.

Recreational Boat Ramp

1973

The Interstate 10 elevated expressway over the Basin is completed.

1981

The "Treen Agreement"(Governor Dave Treen) is negotiated between landowners and environmental groups and is presented to Congress.

1985

Congress enacts the Multipurpose Plan, authorizing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to spend $250 million, subject to future appropriations, to preserve and restore the Basin ecosystem.

1998

The Atchafalaya Basin Program is created within the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources.

1999

The Louisiana Legislature unanimously approves the State Master Plan for the Atchafalaya Basin Program and $85 million, subject to future appropriations, over 15 years for access, easements, water management and recreation projects.

Welcome Center

2004

Atchafalaya Welcome Center in Butte LaRose opens.

2007

Congress directs an investigation and study of the maximum effective use of the water and sediment of the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers for coastal restoration purposes consistent with flood control and navigation and an investigation and assessment of alterations in the operation of the Old River Control Structure.

2008

The Louisiana Legislature adopts Act 606, authorizing the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources, through the Atchafalaya Basin Program, to submit to the legislature each year an Annual Plan for the Basin that will include water management and access projects, such as boat launches, and other projects consistent with the mission statement of the Atchafalaya Basin Master Plan. Act 606 also creates the Atchafalaya Basin Conservation Fund.

2009

The Louisiana Legislature approves $3,500,000 in state funding for water quality/water management, access and habitat restoration projects identified in the FY 2010 Atchafalaya Basin Program Annual Plan, the first since adoption of Act 606.

The People, Wildlife and Economy of the Basin

The Atchafalaya Basin's cultural history goes back at least 2,500 years, when Native Americans were living in the Basin along natural levees and along the bayous. Archeological research by Dr. Mark Rees of the University of Louisiana – Lafayette indicates that many mound sites and villages on natural levees and along bayous within the Basin date from A.D. 700-1700. Villagers harvested and hunted fish, shellfish, reptiles, birds, deer and small mammals that were plentiful in the area.

Tribes with a history in the Atchafalaya Basin include the Chitimacha, Attakapas, Opelousa, Houma, Coushatta and Alabama, Tunica-Biloxi and Avoyel, and Taensas. Native American association with the "great swamp" is evidenced by many place names in the modern Basin, including Atchafalaya (hacha falaia), bayou (bayuk), Catahoula (oka hullo), Chacahoula (chukka hullo), Plaquemine (piakimin), and Whiskey Bay (oski abeha).

Animals in the Basin include the Louisiana Black Bear, Florida Panther, white-tailed deer, nutria, bobcat, mink, fox, muskrat, and beaver.

In the early 1700's, French settlers and slaves arrived in the Atchafalaya Basin to trade with the Native Americans, primarily in the fur trade. In 1755, however, one of the most culturally significant migrations into the Atchafalaya Basin occurred when refugees expelled from the Canadian province of Acadia found a home here. These immigrants quickly adapted to their new environment and developed skills that allowed them to survive in the challenging, yet fertile, swamp. As the years went by, they intermarried with other settlers of the area, including Hispanics, Old World and Canadian French, Anglo-Americans and Native Americans, resulting in a people and culture referred to as "Cajun." Many residents in the region surrounding the Basin, in fact, can trace their roots back to the Acadians, and the unique Cajun heritage is expressed in the food, music and traditions of the area. Other ethnic groups who immigrated to the area over the years include Creoles, African Americans, Colonial Spanish and Islenos, Italians and Asians, with each contributing their own cultural "seasonings," so to speak, to the Atchafalaya Basin region's cultural "gumbo."

In the early years, the one element that seemed to tie all of the Basin settlers together was the bountiful resources of the hardwood forests, cypress swamps, bayous, and marshes, and the utilization of these resources for subsistence and commerce. Logging, agriculture and cattle farming were staples of life in the Basin. Based on an 1874 river commerce survey report, "The products of the Atchafalaya country are cotton, sugar, molasses, moss, lumber, staves and shingles. The cotton is all grown above the Courtableau and is sent to New Orleans by the two steamers that run to Washington, or the one that makes a 10-day trip to the Teche country."

Today, people from across South Louisiana and beyond continue to rely on these natural resources for their livelihood and for recreation. According to a USDA Census of Agriculture report, the market value of all agricultural products sold in the area totals almost $900 million, about 45 percent of the state's total. The value of livestock and livestock products sold totals about $168 million, or 28 percent of the Louisiana total. While much of the Basin today is unsuitable for farming due to its wetland status, major crops include sugarcane, rice, soybeans and cotton.

The Atchafalaya Basin contains three distinct areas of landscape that provide some of the country's most productive wildlife and fish habitats. These areas include the northern region composed of bottomland hardwood forest, the middle region composed of cypress-willow-tupelo swamps, and the lower region of freshwater and brackish marsh. The Atchafalaya Basin is five times more productive than any other river Basin in North America, and is probably the most productive swamp in the world.

The Bayou Teche National Wildlife Refuge in Franklin, Louisiana, is home to the largest concentration of Louisiana Black Bears in America.

Forty-five species of mammals inhabit the Basin, including bobcat, coyote, fox, armadillo, opossum and beaver. Small game animals like the fox squirrel, gray squirrel and swamp rabbit live here, as well as white-tailed deer, the principal big-game species. Raccoon, mink and nutria are so abundant in the swamps and marshes that Louisiana was ranked as the number one fur producer until the downturn of the industry about 15 years ago.

Parts of the Basin are also home to the Bald Eagle, in addition to the endangered Louisiana Black Bear, Florida Panther, Peregrine Falcon and Bachman's Warbler. In fact, it is a haven for an estimated nine federal- and state-recognized endangered/threatened wildlife species, six endangered/threatened bird species, and 29 known rookeries. Over 40 reptilian species, including the American alligator and western cottonmouth, can be found in the Basin, along with twenty species of amphibians.

Crabbing is an important part of the Basin seafood industry, and Basin crabs are some of the largest and tastiest in the area.

- From January to May 2010, over 8.6 million pounds of wild crawfish were harvested in the Atchafalaya Basin with a dockside value of more than $8.5 million, according to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries.
- Nearly 92 percent of wild crawfish harvesters who participated in a survey by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries reported harvesting most of their crawfish within the Atchafalaya Basin in 2009.
- The majority of seafood dealers to whom wild crawfish harvesters sold their catch in 2009 were located near or within the Atchafalaya Basin.

The People, Wildlife and Economy of the Basin (continued)

The wetlands of the Atchafalaya Basin provide excellent feeding and resting areas for migratory waterfowl, making the region an important wintering area for mallards and gadwalls. Over 250 species of birds can be found in the Basin, including wood ducks, great blue herons and great egrets, which are common inhabitants of the shallow lakes and bayous.

With over 100 species of fish, crawfish, shrimp and crabs, recreational and commercial fishing play significant roles in the economy of the Atchafalaya Basin. Commercial fishing began here in 1873, and by the early 1900's, it had become a booming enterprise with catfish as the most popular catch. Thousands of sport fishermen traverse the Basin's waterways each year with the hopes of hooking yellow, striped or large-mouth bass, and white and black crappie. The commercial fishing industry in the Atchafalaya Basin is valued at approximately $95 million per year and the recreational fishing industry is valued at approximately $47 million annually.

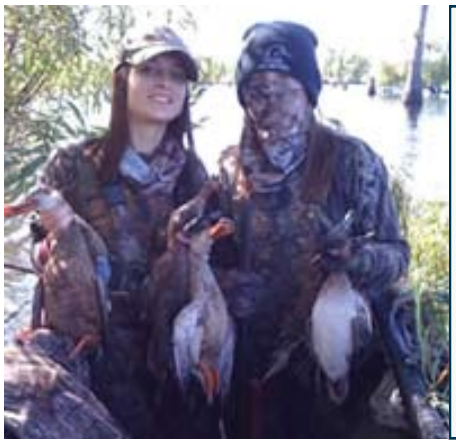
Crawfish are typically associated with the cultural heritage of South Louisiana and the Basin, with images of crawfishermen and crawfish boils common to any story about the Cajun people. While crawfish have been eaten in Louisiana since before the arrival of the Europeans, commercial crawfish harvesting in the Atchafalaya Basin did not take off until the 1960's, and it is now one of the most widely recognized industries in the Basin. Alligators, turtles and bullfrogs are also commercially and recreationally harvested along the Atchafalaya, and crabbing and trapping remain integral parts of the Basin culture and economy, along with recreational pursuits like boating, water skiing, bird-watching, hiking and camping.

The landscape has changed since Native Americans first made their home on the grassy prairies and along the bayous of the Atchafalaya River Basin, but its natural beauty, ecological value and economic significance have endured for centuries. The current generation is challenged with conservation and restoration of this unique Louisiana treasure so that many more generations of Louisianans can enjoy all that it has to offer.

Economic Impact of Travel in Atchafalaya Basin Parishes (2009)

Parish	Travel Expenditures	Jobs	Payroll	State Sales Tax Receipts	Local Sales Tax Receipts
Assumption	$ 10,070,000	60	$ 1,130,000	$ 550,000	$ 240,000
Avoyelles	$ 99,530,000	1,200	$ 24,100,000	$ 2,470,000	$ 1,630,000
Iberia	$ 41,460,000	370	$ 6,490,000	$ 2,060,000	$ 750,000
Iberville	$ 20,080,000	160	$ 3,070,000	$ 1,060,000	$ 850,000
Pointe Coupee	$ 10,100,000	80	$ 1,350,000	$ 490,000	$ 260,000
St. Landry	$ 88,070,000	630	$ 10,510,000	$ 5,000,000	$ 2,560,000
St. Martin	$ 25,700,000	160	$ 3,240,000	$ 1,340,000	$ 1,480,000
St. Mary	$ 140,370,000	1,640	$ 31,130,000	$ 4,200,000	$ 2,400,000

Source: Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism



The number of hunting and fishing licenses sold by vendors in and/or to residents of Atchafalaya Basin Parishes in 2009*:

- Resident hunting licenses - 36,577
- Non-resident hunting licenses - 592
- Resident recreational fishing licenses - 63,385
- Non-resident recreational fishing licenses - 4,152
- Commercial fishing licenses - 11,705

*Data gathered from information provided by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

ATCHAFALAYA ONLINE

Want to submit a photo of your family's experience in the wonderfully wild and beautiful Atchafalaya Basin or your once-in-a-lifetime snapshot of a bald eagle atop a Basin cypress tree? Want to check the real-time water levels of your favorite fishing spot or find a list of Basin sportsmen's groups? Give the Atchafalaya Basin Program's website a click at **www.Basin.Louisiana.gov.**

Also available on the website:

- FY 2010, 2011 and 2012 Atchafalaya Basin Annual Plans.
- Information on purchasing full-color Basin maps.
- A list of upcoming Atchfalaya Basin Program meetings.
- A list of facts about the Basin.

When you can't visit the Basin in person, visit us online at www.Basin.Louisiana.gov

The Atchafalaya Basin Program

Louisianans have long recognized the ecological value of the Atchafalaya Basin and, as early as the 1960's, began efforts to attract federal support for its restoration. The federal government's interest in the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway, however, was primarily focused on its value as a flood control and navigation asset. With the adoption of the Water Resources Development Act, and subsequent legislation, in 1985 and 1986, the U.S. Congress established as public policy the need for the nation to invest in public access, acquisition of environmental easements, water management projects, and recreational opportunities in the Atchafalaya Basin.

In response to this expanded focus on the ecology of the Atchafalaya Basin, the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (LDNR), in 1996, was named lead state agency in the development of a plan to protect and develop the Atchafalaya Basin as directed by Congress, in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The Louisiana Legislature created the Atchafalaya Basin Program and its advisory Research and Promotion Board in 1998. The State Master Plan for the Atchafalaya Basin was completed that same year and approved unanimously by the legislature in 1999. Act 3 and Act 920 of the 1999 Louisiana Legislature empowered the Atchafalaya Basin Program to act on behalf of the State to implement and manage a comprehensive State Master Plan for the Atchafalaya Basin. To that end, the program staff regularly meets with USACE representatives regarding activities and projects in the Basin.

Over 250 species of birds, including the Bald Eagle, Great Blue Heron and the Peregrine Falcon, can be found in this productive region.

Over the years, the Atchafalaya Basin Program has also entered into agreements with the USACE, Basin parishes, area towns and cities, the Atchafalaya Basin Levee District and several state agencies involved in the Basin Program to advance conservation, restoration, recreation, and enhancement projects. These state agencies include Agriculture and Forestry; Culture, Recreation and Tourism; Environmental Quality; Health and Hospitals; Natural Resources; Transportation and Development; Wildlife and Fisheries; and the State Land Office.

The Atchafalaya Basin Program office is located in the LaSalle Building on N. Third Street in Baton Rouge.

Atchafalaya Basin Program Staff:

Stephen Chustz, Acting Director
Antoinette DeBosier, Resource Scientist
Annette Wiegleb, Administrative Specialist
Contact Us:
P.O. Box 94396, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9396
Phone: (225) 342-6437 · Fax: (225) 342-6887
E-mail: atchafalaya@dnr.state.la.us

The Atchafalaya Basin Program was primarily focused on the recreational component of the Atchafalaya Basin Master Plan from its inception through 2005, when the focus transitioned to water resource management and enhanced water access. Recognizing the need to codify this shift in public policy, the LDNR took a lead role in working with the legislature to draft and enact Act 606 of the 2008 Regular Legislative Session. This Annual Plan is a direct result of that effort.

Current Challenges in the Basin

The Atchafalaya Basin is the nation's largest river swamp and one of America's most valued ecological resources. However, like many of America's water resources, this system faces many stresses and challenges, including several cited in a 2001 U.S.Geological Survey fact sheet, "The Atchafalaya Basin – River of Trees."

- **Ever-Changing Hydrology** – Natural changes and human-induced modifications have resulted in the alteration of the ecology of this resource and will continue to do so.
- **Sedimentation** – Since 1932, there has been a net accretion of nearly 2.5 billion cubic meters of sediment in the Basin floodway, converting much open water and cypress swamps to bottomland forest.
- **Hypoxic Conditions** – Spoil banks, oilfield canals and natural levees inhibit the historical sheeting pattern of water flow, causing hypoxic conditions (poor water quality) within nearly all of the large, interior swamps.
- **Invasive Exotic Plant Species** – Massive growth of hydrilla, salvinia, giant salvinia and water hyacinth restricts access to many areas in the Basin and exacerbates hypoxic conditions in the swamps.
- **Land Use/Resource Issues** – Diverse and sometimes conflicting activities within the Basin occur with regard to flood control, commercial fisheries, navigational, petrochemical, silviculture, recreational, environmental, and cultural interests.
- **Subsidence and Land Loss** – Areas within the Basin but outside the floodway lack sufficient sediment, resulting in subsidence and land-loss problems.

The Atchafalaya Basin Annual Plan process is the key to the sustainable future of the Atchafalaya Basin's ecology and economy. The focus on science-based decisions for water management will ensure that projects selected for implementation will be beneficial to the ecological health of the Basin. Successful project implementation will lead to improved habitat, improved water quality and a more vibrant ecological community. Collaboration between Basin stakeholders and State and Federal agencies will ensure that limited resources and restoration efforts are coordinated and focused to maximize results and provide a healthy ecosystem in the Atchafalaya Basin for generations to come.

FY 2012 Annual Plan Process

Act 606 of the 2008 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature specifically mandates that the Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (LDNR) present an Annual Basin Plan to the Louisiana Legislature at least thirty days before the start of each regular legislative session for the legislature's review and approval.

The plan identifies all projects or stages of projects in the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System and surrounding areas that will be proposed for funding in that fiscal year. The Plan recognizes three distinct project categories: water quality/water management, access, and other projects consistent with the mission of the Atchafalaya Basin Master Plan.

Water management projects are intended to accelerate restoration of the Atchafalaya Basin by facilitating improvement in water quality, interior circulation, water access, or improving the general ecosystem through sediment reduction, removal or redistribution. Public access projects are focused on enhancing public use of the recreational opportunities, such as the construction or renovation of a boat launch or a roadway that provides access to areas of the Atchafalaya Basin, acquisition of a maximum of 1,500 acres, or other projects consistent with the mission of the Atchafalaya Basin Master Plan.

Structure

In order to develop the Annual Plan, Act 606 activates a 14-member Atchafalaya Basin Program Research and Promotion Board and creates a nine-member Technical Advisory Group (TAG), chaired by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. LDNR is the lead agency for the development of the Annual Plan.

The Research and Promotion Board oversees the Atchafalaya Basin Program, approving projects in the Annual Plan that enhance, protect and preserve this unique treasure of Louisiana. This Board is charged with adopting criteria to be used in determining the eligibility of projects listed in the Annual Plan, identifying access projects for the plan, conducting public hearings prior to adoption of the plan, publishing the plan and submitting the final plan to the LDNR Secretary.

The TAG is composed of resource experts responsible for reviewing, evaluating and approving all water management and water quality projects for the Basin Program's Annual Plan. The makeup of the TAG is intended to ensure that the best science is used in focusing on restoration and preservation of the Basin ecosystem. TAG members are confirmed by the Atchafalaya Basin Oversight Committee of the Louisiana Legislature.

"Atchafalaya" is derived from the Choctaw words "hatcha" (river) and "falaia" (long), meaning, "long river."

The FY 2012 Annual Plan Process (continued)

Development

The FY 2012 Atchafalaya Basin Annual Plan process began in July 2010 as the Department of Natural Resources Atchafalaya Basin Program invited the public to suggest water quality/water management projects to be considered for inclusion in the Plan. Public involvement was key in plan development.

Following is a list of public meetings conducted as part of the FY 2012 Annual Plan process:

Research & Promotion Board Meetings

July 22, 2010

November 4, 2010

Week of December 6, 2010 (tentative)

Week of March 1, 2011 (tentative)

Technical Advisory Group Meetings

August 5, 2010

September 9, 2010

September 27, 2010

October 4, 2010

Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Meetings

January 19, 2011 (tentative)

February 2011 (tentative)

Public Meetings

August 16, 2010 in Morgan City, LA

August 18, 2010 in Henderson, LA

August 19, 2010 in Plaquemine, LA

November 8, 2010 in Morgan City, LA (scheduled)

November 9, 2010 in Henderson, LA (scheduled)

November 10, 2010 in Plaquemine, LA (scheduled)

One hundred species of fish and aquatic life can be found in the Atchafalaya Basin, and it is five times more productive than any other river basin in North America.

The Draft FY 2012 Annual Basin Plan will be submitted to the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) for that panel's review and approval as consistent with the Master Plan for Coastal Protection and Restoration on January 19, 2011, and may be approved at the CPRA's February 2011 meeting. The FY 2012 Annual Plan will then be submitted to the Research & Promotion Board for final approval in March 2011, and published and submitted to the Louisiana Legislature for consideration, in compliance with Act 606 of the 2008 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature.

Funding

Act 606 of the 2008 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature also creates the Atchafalaya Basin Conservation Fund to finance projects listed in the Atchafalaya Basin Program Annual Plan. Of the monies allocated to the fund in any one fiscal year, Act 606 requires that 75 percent shall be used for water management, water quality or access projects, while the remaining 25 percent may be used to complete ongoing projects or for projects that are in accordance with the mission statement of the State Atchafalaya Basin Master Plan that was unanimously approved by the Legislature in 1998. Implementation of Annual Plan projects relies on traditional state and federal appropriations.

Project Funding and Prioritization

In order to provide transparency in government, the Louisiana Legislature through the passage of Act 606 of the 2008 Regular Legislative Session, requires multiple public meetings for the development and review of the Annual Basin Plan and subsequent approval by the Atchafalaya Basin Research and Promotion Board and the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority all to be completed at least thirty (30) days prior to commencement of the regular legislative session. Therefore, it is required that the Annual Plan be drafted prior to the development of the appropriation bill that funds the plan. While it is certainly appropriate to have a public vetting prior to submittal of the Annual Basin Plan to the Louisiana Legislature, one of the challenges of the process is determining the level of funding that will be provided. Until such time as appropriations are finalized, the level of funding for projects and the number of projects in the Plan that may be funded is uncertain. The Louisiana Legislature recognized this challenge and enacted House Bill 765 (Act 541) during the 2009 regular legislative session that will bring a constitutional amendment before the voters of Louisiana in 2010 that, if passed, will provide a dedicated source of funding that will allow for predictable funding levels for future plans.

Water quality/water management projects that were approved in the FY 2011 Annual Plan but not funded for construction may be funded under the FY 2012 Annual Plan based on the prioritization given to these projects by the Atchafalaya Basin Research and Promotion Board. Additionally, projects that are proposed for FY 2012 are listed in this Annual Plan in order of priority as established by the Atchafalaya Basin Research and Promotion Board. It is intended that both FY 2011 and FY 2012 projects may be constructed based upon the level of funding provided in FY 2012 and prioritization established by the Research and Promotion Board. The Board will consider funding provided through Capital Outlay to the Atchafalaya Basin Conservation fund, with 75% of the funding being used for water management, water quality or access projects and the remaining 25% used to complete ongoing projects and for projects that are in accordance with the mission statement of the State Master Plan for the Atchafalaya Basin as required by Act 606.

Adaptive management is a key component of ecosystem restoration in the Atchafalaya Basin and, as such, funding flexibility and project implementation flexibility must exist to ensure that projects in the Annual Plan are implemented in a way that will maximize our resources.

It is recognized that some projects may encounter unforeseen circumstances that will hinder project implementation such as access, land rights, availability of federal matching funds, and costs that were not anticipated. Those projects that are listed and are subject to these circumstances will be deferred until such time as those issues are resolved or additional funding is obtained to address the circumstances.

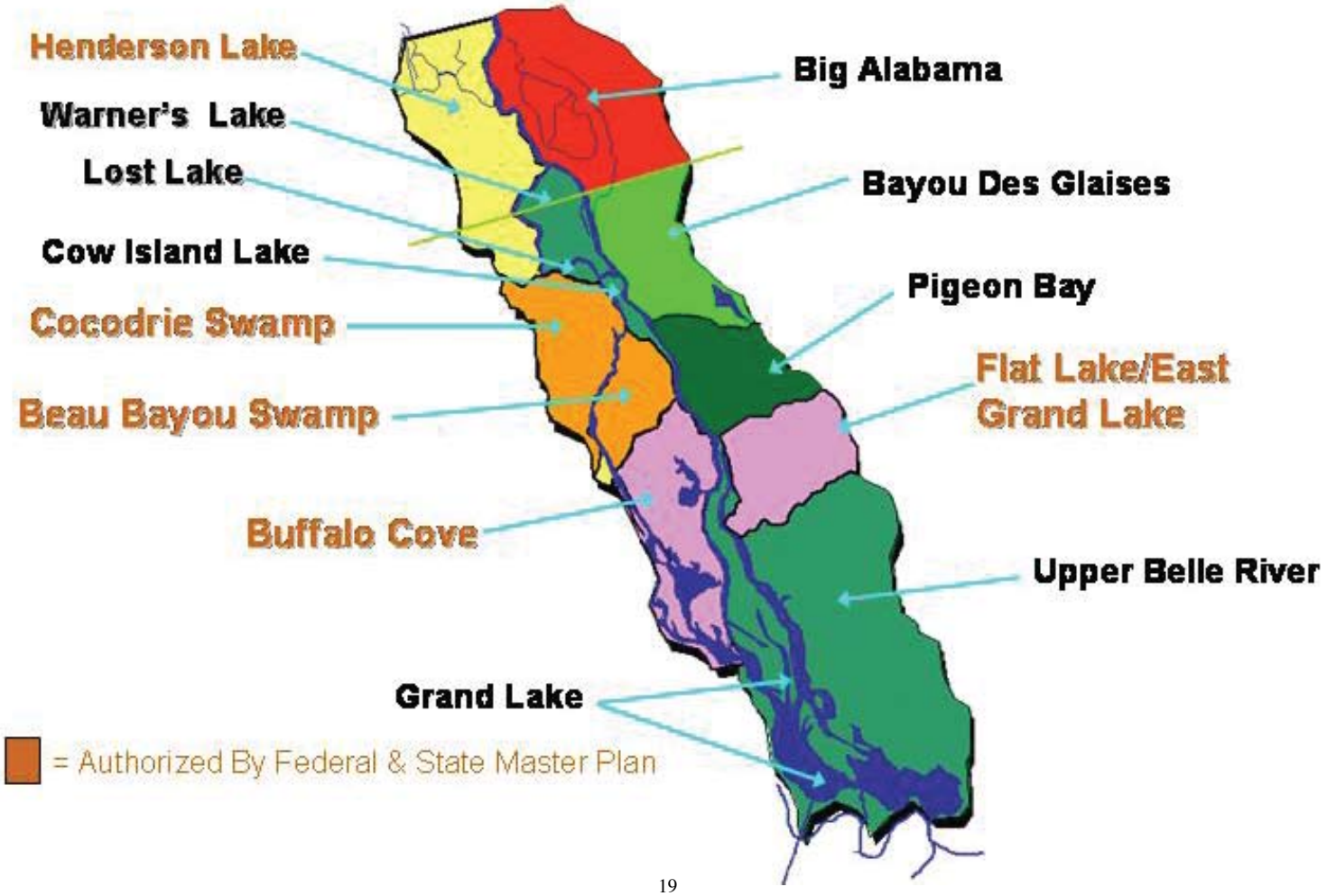
In which case, funds that are provided for implementation of this Annual Plan may be used for funding other projects included in the Annual Plan that would not have otherwise been funded based on the appropriation. In addition, based on the level of funding provided, it may be necessary to fund portions of projects to ensure that these projects move forward despite the lack of adequate funding to complete all projects. Once funding levels for the FY 2012 Annual Plan are determined and project costs detailed, projects that are proposed for funding will be brought before the Atchafalaya Basin Research and Promotion Board with proposed budgets for approval. Any subsequent significant changes to the approved budgets or project scope will also be brought before the Research and Promotion Board for approval.

Some projects that have been deferred as part of this Annual Plan process may later be identified for implementation. Should funding become available, previously deferred projects may be implemented provided that they are approved by the Technical Advisory Group, Atchafalaya Basin Research and Promotion Board, and the Joint Legislative Committee on Natural Resources; are consistent with the language of Act 606 of the 2008 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature; and meet one or more of the following qualifications:

1. Part of the Basin Master Plan;
2. Part of the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System, Louisiana Project;
3. Water management or water quality project that meets the criteria developed by the board for inclusion in the Annual Plan and has been approved through the procedures adopted by the board for inclusion of a project in the Annual Plan, including public hearings;
4. Consistent with the mission statement contained in the Basin Master Plan;
5. A project to be completed which was previously approved by the Board.

Atchafalaya Basin WMU's

13 Water Management Units



FY 2012 Project List

Water Quality / Water Management Projects

This category includes activities such as sediment removal, redistribution, construction of cuts and gaps; data collection, evaluation and monitoring; and related planning, engineering and design within the Atchafalaya Basin's 13 Water Management Units. In addition to these projects listed, Water Quality/Water Management Projects that were approved in the FY 2011 Atchafalaya Basin Annual Plan but not funded for construction may be funded under the FY 2012 Annual Plan based on the prioritization given to these projects by the Atchafalaya Research and Promtion Board.

NEW WATER QUALITY/ WATER MANAGEMENT PROJECTS PROPOSED IN FY 2012 ANNUAL PLAN

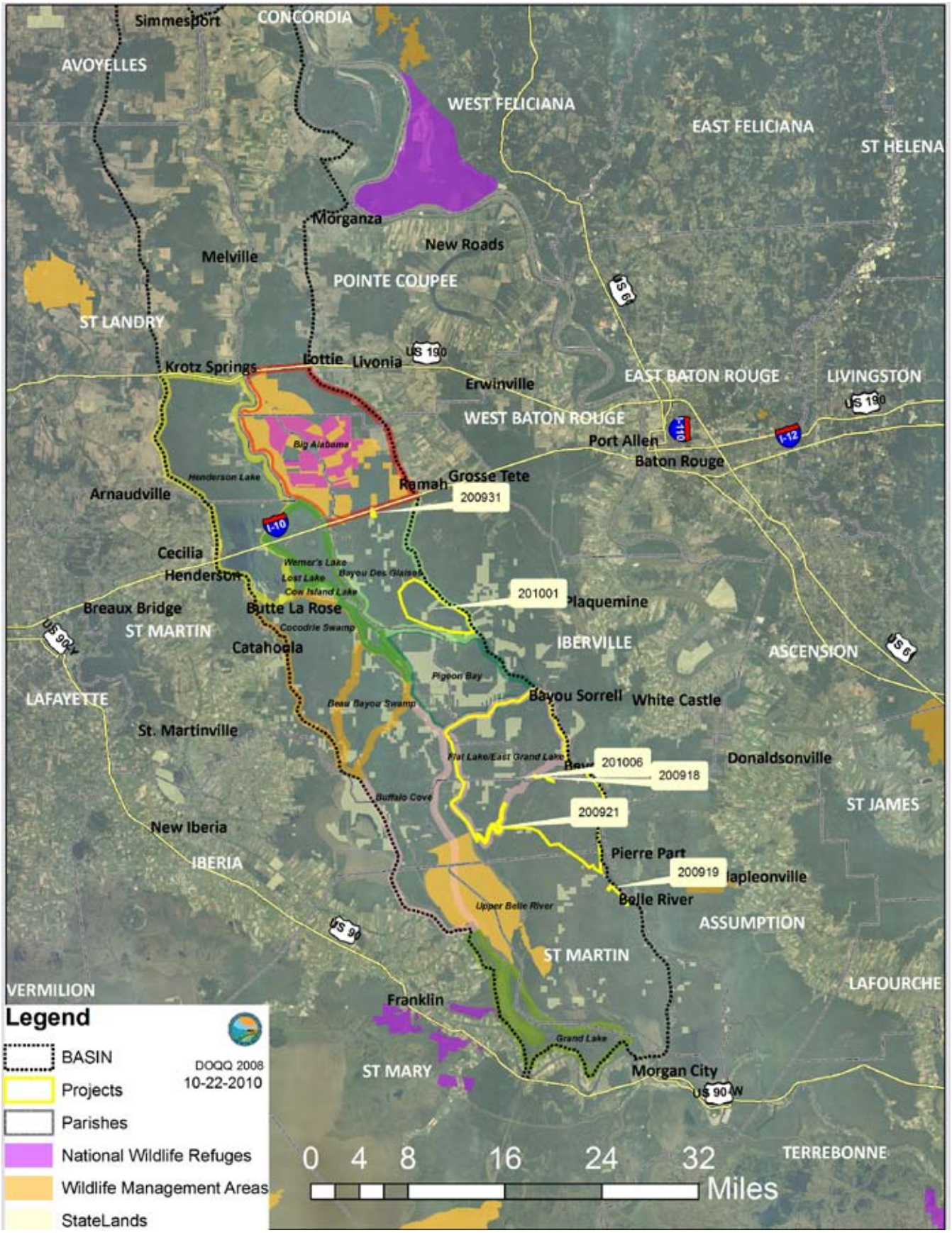
PROJECT NAME	PROJECT NUMBER	STATUS
Improve Water Quality in the Upper Grand River Flats	201001	Proposed for Funding
East Grand Lake Project	201006	Proposed for Funding

APPROVED FY 2011 WATER QUALITY/ WATER MANAGEMENT PROJECTS PROPOSED FOR CONSTRUCTION FUNDING IN FY 2012 ANNUAL PLAN

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT NUMBER	STATUS
Open Brown Bayou to the I-10 Canal	200931	Proposed for Funding
Big Bayou Pigeon	200918	Proposed for Funding
Little Bayou Pigeon	200921	Proposed for Funding
16" and 21" Pipeline Canals	200919	Proposed for Funding

The projects listed above are referenced by their project numbers on the map displayed to the right: >>>

Water Quality/Water Management
Projects Proposed in FY 2012 Annual Plan



Access Projects

This category includes the construction or renovation of boat launches that provide public access to areas in and adjacent to the Atchafalaya Basin. Access projects proposed below are listed in order of priority.

PRIORITY	PROJECT NAME	STATUS
1.	Butte LaRose Landing at the Atchafalaya River	Proposed for funding
2.	Wilson's Landing	Proposed for funding
3.	Sandy Cove Landing	Proposed for funding
4.	Ramah Landing	Proposed for funding
5.	Catahoula Landing	Proposed for funding

Tourism in the Atchafalaya Basin

Visitors to Atchafalaya Welcome Center

2004-2009: 569,537

Visitors to Lake Fausse Pointe State Park

2009: 99,308

Data gathered from information provided by the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism.

Other Projects and Initiatives Consistent with the Mission Statement of the State Master Plan

The Atchafalaya Basin Program has a history of promoting public use of the Basin and, as such, continues to work to implement recreation projects that are part of the State Master Plan, part of the legislation, ongoing projects previously approved by the Research and Promotion Board, and/or consistent with the Mission Statement of the State Master Plan.

Projects consistent with the above criteria, including additional phases of some ongoing projects, are proposed for funding in FY 2012. These projects, in alphabetical order, include: updating of the Atchafalaya Basin Master Plan, Belle River Park, biking/paddling/hiking trails, Camp Atchafalaya, Eagle Point Park, Lake End Park Cabins, Morgan City Interpretive Plaza, primitive campgrounds, Stephensville Park, and Veterans Park.

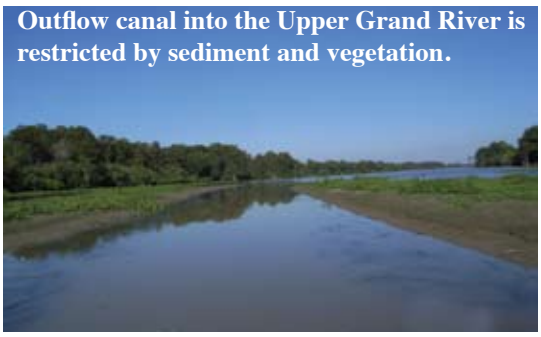
Based upon the level of funding provided, projects that are proposed for funding will be brought before the Atchafalaya Basin Program's Research and Promotion Board for approval.

Lake End Park on Memorial Day, 2010

New Water Quality/Water Management Projects Proposed in FY 2012 Annual Plan

Project Descriptions

Improve Water Quality in the Upper Grand River Flats (201001)



Outflow canal into the Upper Grand River is restricted by sediment and vegetation.

Over the years, local users have witnessed water quality, crawfish harvest, and fish abundance diminish as freshwater input into the Upper Grand River Flats (UGRF) has decreased due to sediment build up and decreased fresh water input. Based on data and local statements, water flow patterns are unique in the project area throughout the year. During the higher water periods of the crawfish season, water flows from the Atchafalaya Basin Main Channel eastward through the Upper Grand River and then north through the Work Canal and north into the UGRF at the southeast corner.

Utilizing this unique hydrology, it is expected that by constructing and improving fresh water inputs on the east side of the Work Canal and improving the current drain on the southeast corner, incremental improvements in water quality and ecological conditions will occur. In total, there are four (4) project features in the UGRF area. The three (3) features proposed to increase fresh water input from the Work Canal, which borders the area to the west, are bank shavings to an approximate 8 ft. bottom elevation and 30 ft. bottom width. The last feature is to reduce the elevation by 1 and 2 feet of sediment in the southeast corner of the project to promote draining into the Upper Grand River. See figure below for location of project features. Locations may have to be modified based upon landowner and access issues and adaptive management strategies.

East Grand Lake Project (201006)

The ABP's FY2010 Annual Plan project titled "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" or "East Grand Lake (EGL) Project area" has been utilized to develop projects that are proposed in these water management units for the FY2012 Annual Basin Plan. The funding of these projects in the Upper Region is the first step in developing the plan to realign water flow patterns and strategically redirect sediment in the EGL Project area. Additional Annual Plan cycles will be necessary to identify and fund projects for the Western and Lower Regions as described in the Summary Report (located at: http://dnr.louisiana.gov/sec/atchafalaya/East-Grand-Lake-Summary-Report.pdf).

The Upper Region was chosen as the initial point of developing the overall strategy for the EGL Project area because there is a reasonable confidence in the projected benefits for realignment of flow and sediment. Additionally, since north-south flow patterns that disperse water and sediment more evenly throughout the Project area are desired, a north to south planning effort seems to be the most logical approach. Also, the Western and Lower Regions present greater uncertainty in realignment and will therefore require additional information before projects can be designed.

The Upper Region takes in the area south of Bayou Sorrel to Old River and east of Grand Lake to the GIWW and covers an estimated 72,143 acres. While elevation or "LIDAR" data suggests the Upper Region has fewer restrictions to flow than other areas of the EGL Project area which allow for good water to enter and circulate throughout a large portion of the Region, the highly channelized delivery of water through the School Board Canal (Unnamed Canal), Indigo Bayou, Salt Mine Bayou, Williams Canal, Bayou Pigeon, and the Coon Trap has developed a sediment delivery network that carries sediment deep into the Project area which in turn promotes further restriction of flow and isolation of small areas. Modifying this network of channelized water inputs was the initial target for realignment.

Sediment in the Upper Region of East Grand Lake restricts flow and contributes to poor water quality. Proposed modifications will improve water flow patterns and water quality conditions.

East Grand Lake Project (201006) *continued*

The strategy to improve water quality is the realignment of water input through the northern part of the Upper Region with construction of bank shavings and reestablishment of existing fresh water inputs along Bayou Sorrell, School Board Canal (Unnamed Canal), Indigo Bayou, and Cannon Bayou. To complement additional input entering in the north, gaps positioned further south in the banks of Salt Mine Bayou, the Florida Canal, and the Williams Canal are designed to promote sheet-flow patterns southward through the Region.
There are a total of 171 features that were identified by the TAG subcommittee and found to be the best possible solutions for achieving the desired goals of realigning sediment and water in the Upper Region of the EGL Project area. Elements were excluded that were found to be less than optimal for achieving the desired goals and may be incorporated into future plans should the need arise.

The 171 features include the following and are depicted in the map on the facing page:

- 37 – Cleanouts to remove woody vegetation and debris from aproxmently100 ft. wide x 100 ft. long in existing gaps where little if any sediment will be removed.

- 14 – Bank shavings typically to 8 ft. bottom elevation and 30 ft. bottom width and an average estimated length of 1,967 ft.

- 49 – Reestablishment of existing water inputs, typically to 6.5 ft. bottom elevation and 30 ft. bottom width and an average estimated length of 810 ft.

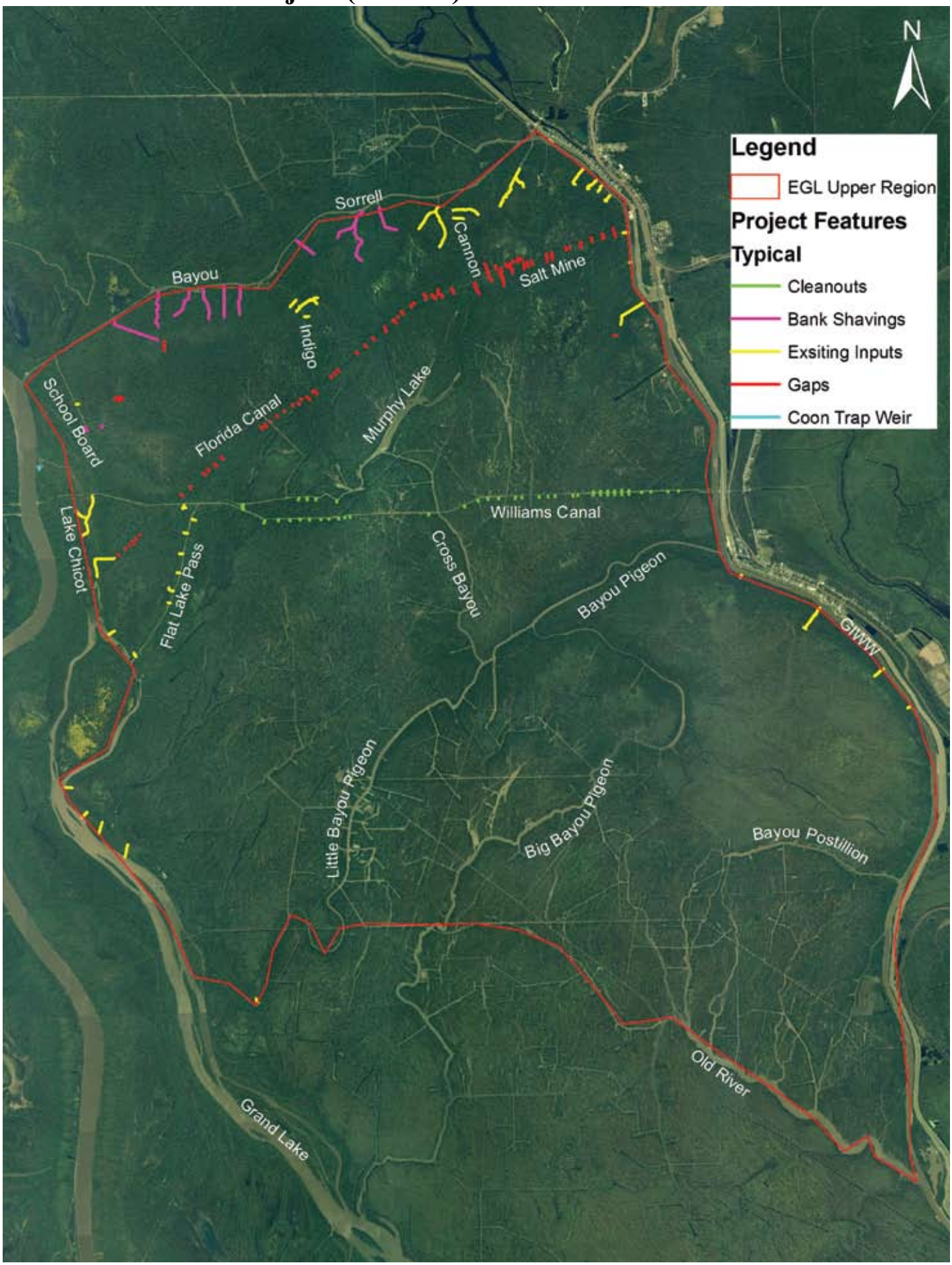
- 70 – Gap developments and reduction of banks typically to 6.5 ft. elevation and 100 ft. wide and an average estimated length of 302 ft.

- Although technically located in the Western Region of the EGL Project area, when water levels are above 8 - 8.5 ft. at the Butte La Rose water gauge, the Coon Trap input is an important source of fresh water to both the Upper and Western Regions. Dependent upon the need for additional water in this area, an option to remove a maximum of 3 ft. of material from the Coon Trap Weir to improve input at lower River stages will also be evaluated and constructed if needed.

The success of the entire EGL Upper Region and EGL Project area hinges on the implementation of a suite of construction projects that complement each other in order to keep the water moving from north to south throughout the Region. Benefits that will be realized are therefore dependent on the amount of funding that is provided to construct the features that are proposed. Locations may have to be modified based upon landowner and access issues and adaptive management strategies.

See pages 28-30 for a description of Approved FY 2011 Water Quality/Water Management Projects Proposed for Construction Funding in FY 2012 Annual Plan.

East Grand Lake Project (201006) *continued*



A Review of Approved FY 2011 Annual Plan Water Quality/Water Management Projects

Cocodrie Swamp

Project Descriptions

Cocodrie Swamp Project (200915 and 200916)

Approved for Design/Engineering and Construction Funding

Bayou LaRose, in the Cocodrie Swamp Water Management Unit in St. Martin Parish, was once a very significant, commercially navigable waterway and the main source of freshwater for the swamp area. The cutting of oil and gas canals and USACE channel training has caused Bayou LaRose to silt up in many places and has resulted in portions of the bayou and the surrounding swamp being cut off from fresh water and devoid of plant and marine life. The goal of the project is to open natural waterways that are currently blocked to improve freshwater flow and navigation and to promote forest health.

The work would include directing water through two existing deltas south of Bayou Garofier and possibly through Bayou LaRose by removing sediment from the main channels and near the mouths of the bayous and removing impediments to water flow throughout the length of the canals. Other work involves removing the plug from Old Bayou LaRose at the Panatec Canal, opening old Bayou Cocodrie to allow water to enter the swamp to the east, and overall drainage improvements in the project area.

Status Update: Funding for design, engineering and construction was approved by the Research and Promotion Board, and approved by the Bond Commission on October 21, 2010. Budget amendment being prepared and actions being taken to contract engineering services for project plans and specifications.

Open Location Canal into Swamp North of Bayou Sorrel (200941)

Approved for Design/Engineering and Construction Funding

Bayou Sorrel is located in the Pigeon Bayou Water Management Unit in Iberville Parish. Poor water quality has resulted in poor fishing conditions and fish kills, and the original lakes in the Sorrel Oil Field area and north of that area are nearly gone. What remains is cut off from freshwater flow.

This project would include opening Location Canal south of the pipeline along the Upper Grand River extension to increase freshwater flow into the area north of Bayou Sorrel Oil Field. An opening from Upper Grand River just south of the Location Canal that flows into two ponding areas would function as vegetated sediment filtration zones.

Status Update: Funding for design, engineering and construction was approved by the Research and Promotion Board, and approved by the Bond Commission on October 21, 2010. Budget amendment being prepared and actions being taken to contract engineering services for project plans and specifications.

Open Brown Bayou to the I-10 Canal (200931)

Approved for Design/Engineering Funding. No Funding Approved for Construction.

When the canal between the I-10 spans and the Work Canal in Iberville Parish was dug, Brown Bayou and several other natural waterways were cut off, eliminating access and a route for freshwater flow to interior lakes and swamps. The Technical Advisory Group recommends clearing Brown Bayou to the I-10 Canal. This action will re-establish flow south into Brown Bayou. The work area is the Bayou Des Glaises Water Management Unit.

Status Update: Design/engineering funding was approved by the Research and Promotion Board, and approved by the Bond Commission on October 21, 2010. Budget amendment being prepared and actions being taken to contract engineering services for project plans and specifications. Additionally, regulatory and landowner issues must be resolved prior to proceeding with this project.

Bayou Fourche (200925)

Approved for Design/Engineering and Construction Funding

There is no longer any water flow at any river stage in Bayou Fourche below Bayou Postillion, in the Flat Lake/East Grande Lake Water Management Unit in Iberville Parish. This project would involve clearing or dredging the existing canal to promote flow into the area from the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway.

Status Update: Funding for design, engineering and construction was approved by the Research and Promotion Board, and approved by the Bond Commission on October 21, 2010. Budget amendment being prepared and actions being taken to contract engineering services for project plans and specifications.

Big Bayou Pigeon (200918)

Approved for Design/Engineering Funding. No Funding Approved for Construction.

Sediment has built up along nearly seven miles of the main channel of Big Bayou Pigeon in Iberia Parish, reducing water flow and impairing navigation. The project area is in the Upper Belle River Water Management Unit. The Technical Advisory Group recommended dredging Bayou Pigeon to no more than the width of the channel at low or intermediate river stage and only as far downstream as needed to provide for small boat passage at low water (low water level to be determined). The bottom contour of the channel shall mimic natural channel side-slope, and the channel depth shall provide three feet of access depth at low river stage. Sediment reduction will be achieved with a mid channel dug deeper than the rest of the bayou within the first half-mile of the dredging operation, and the sediment trap should have a five-year life expectancy. Spoil disposal options shall be in a manner that is beneficial to the surrounding forest and does not increase the elevation of existing flow barriers. Project details will be further developed during the engineering phase with review by the TAG.

Status Update: Design/engineering funding was approved by the Research and Promotion Board, and approved by the Bond Commission on October 21, 2010. Budget amendment being prepared and actions being taken to contract engineering services for project plans and specifications. Additionally, landowner issues must be resolved prior to proceeding with this project.

Little Bayou Pigeon (200921)

Approved for Design/Engineering Funding. No Funding Approved for Construction.

Little Bayou Pigeon

Silt has built up in Little Bayou Pigeon from the crossover to Grand Lake in the Upper Belle River Water Management Unit in Iberia and St. Martin Parishes. This project would involve clearing debris and vegetation from Little Bayou Pigeon east from East Grand Lake and dredging, if necessary, to provide access to the lake.

Status Update: Design/engineering funding was approved by the Research and Promotion Board, and approved by the Bond Commission on October 21, 2010. Budget amendment being prepared and actions being taken to contract engineering services for project plans and specifications.

16" and 21" Pipeline Canals (200919)

Approved for Design/Engineering Funding. No Funding Approved for Construction.

Sediment from dredging the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway has silted up the mouth of 21" and 16" canals, leaving the water in the canals with poor quality and no fresh water moving through system. Additionally, more cuts are needed along the canal banks to allow for historical sheet flow of water through this vast swamp area, located in the Upper Belle River Management Unit in St. Martin Parish.

The Technical Advisory Group recommends that the entrance to both pipelines be dredged only to the degree necessary to facilitate access into the areas. The dimensions of dredging will have to be designed to safely clear around existing pipelines.

Status Update: Design/engineering funding was approved by the Research and Promotion Board, and approved by the Bond Commission on October 21, 2010. Budget amendment being prepared and actions being taken to contract engineering services for project plans and specifications.

A Review of Approved and Funded FY 2010 Annual Plan Water Quality/Water Management Projects

Atchafalaya Basin Natural Resource Inventory & Assessment System

The Atchafalaya Basin is a resource that must be managed on a system-wide basis to ensure this invaluable national resource is protected and restored. It is recognized that we must develop better tools for managing the Basin and that data evaluation is necessary to ensure sound decision-making. The natural resource inventory and assessment system that was approved and funded in the FY 2010 Annual Plan will serve as the primary tool for decision making in the Basin. The system will provide a means for scientists to access relevant project data for the Basin and to request and fund data acquisition, monitoring, and data analysis to be used in project planning. This will be critical in providing information necessary for the development and approval of specific projects to be included for construction in future Annual Plans, projects that meet the needs of Louisiana's citizens and protect our our natural resources.

This system will also assist in evaluating how the Atchafalaya Basin may interconnect with Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority projects by providing sediment and fresh water to nurture emerging marsh habitat without having an adverse impact on Basin resources. According to the Louisiana Comprehensive Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast, "The Atchafalaya River delta is the only region of coastal Louisiana that is building land naturally, and the master plan seeks to take maximum advantage of this resource."

Status Report: Development of the system continues. It was used, in part, to identify and evaluate projects included in the FY 2011 Annual Plan. The Atchafalaya Basin Program has developed interagency cooperative agreements with the USGS Wetlands Center, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Army Corps of Engineers and further development of the system is ongoing. It is envisioned that a web-based version of the system will be available in early 2012.

Dog Leg Canal Sediment Trap Maintenance Dredging

The Dog Leg Canal was previously opened to the Atchafalaya River, at the request of the commercial fishing industry, to allow freshwater to flow into this area of the Basin and improve water quality, primarily dissolved oxygen levels. A natural sediment trap existed near the Dog Leg cut that is believed to be in part responsible for the success of the project. That sediment trap is now almost completely filled and has caused transportation of sediment further into the canal. This sedimentation of the canal has decreased the canal's ability to transport freshwater into the adjoining swamp. Maintenance dredging of the Dog Leg Canal sediment trap will restore the functionality of the sediment trap and prolong the transport of freshwater from the Atchafalaya River to the swamp.

Status Report: The project has been designed and the permit application is under review by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Plans and specifications will be finalized once the Corps permit is issued and the project will then be put out for bids to construct. The construction schedule will be dependent on water levels in the basin once a construction contractor is selected.

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 East Grand Lake/Flat Lake/Upper Belle River WMU's have degraded due to water movement being blocked by sediment and spoil deposition, thereby causing low oxygen levels and loss of habitat. This project will analyze water flow and sediment deposition throughout the study area, including analysis of five inputs into the system: American Pass, Bayou Sorrel, Blue Point Chute, Coon Trap Weir, Dog Leg Canal and Indigo Bayou. A plan is being developed to realign water flow patterns and strategically redirect sediment. The result of this action will be a specific list of construction items to accomplish water and sediment realignment in these WMU's, to thereby improve water quality and habitat and reduce the sedimentation of waterways and lakes.

Status Report: The Atchafalaya Basin Program has worked with the Technical Advisory Group and has developed scopes of services and interagency agreements to implement the project. Data collection efforts have been initiated by USGS and LSU who are collecting discharge and sediment information. Scientists have begun this planning effort and are working with the TAG to utilize the data collected to develop a water management unit level plan for redistribution of the water and sediment. Work performed to date has been used to develop proposed projects in this FY 2012 Annual Plan. Data will be made part of the Atchafalaya Basin National Resource and Assessment System.

Previously Authorized Water Quality/Water Management Projects

Prior to the enactment of Act 606 of the 2008 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, the water quality/water management projects listed below were initiated, and in part funded, with federal and local partnerships by the State of Louisiana. It is the policy of the Atchafalaya Basin Program to submit these projects to the Technical Advisory Group for approval prior to any additional obligation or additional funding by the State of Louisiana not contracted as of the effective date of Act 606.

Buffalo Cove Water Management Project

The Buffalo Cove Water Management Project was designed to improve water circulation and sediment management in the Buffalo Cove Water Management Unit in an effort to enhance fish and wildlife resources. The project includes the improvement of interior circulation within the swamp; the removal of barriers to north-south flow; the input of oxygenated, low temperature river water; and the prevention or management of sediment input into the interior swamps.

Element 9-2 has been constructed at Buffalo Cove.

The project location is the lower Basin in Iberia, St. Martin and St. Mary parishes. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) began construction on Buffalo Cove in 2004, and the project was estimated to benefit more than 7,500 acres initially and 53,000 to 58,000 acres eventually.

Status Report: Previously constructed elements include 1,8, 9-1 and 7. The USACE received funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to complete construction of additional elements of the project. Construction Element 9-2 in the Buffalo Cove Water Management Unit was completed in 2010. The USACE is in the process of easement acquisition for the remaining elements and anticipates this will be completed in July 2011 and then plans for construction may proceed. Once the last element is constructed, the USACE is required to monitor the project's effectiveness for a five-year period.

Henderson Water Management Unit (WMU)

In an October 2006 scoping report, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) identified three major challenges within the Henderson WMU in St. Martin and St. Landry Parishes: hydrology, environment/habitat, and environmental quality. With regard to hydrology, the use, control, and function of the water control structures at the northern and southern end of the WMU was the main concern, followed by restoring the area's water flow patterns. Constructing a freshwater distribution structure to increase water flow throughout the WMU was an additional concern. Habitat issues that are considered a primary component of the project include the control of invasive aquatic vegetation, protecting the native habitat, and the effects of initiating these activities.

Status Report: This project is in the planning stage. Proposed actions, benefits, and alternatives are being identified, as well as additional details such as dredging dimensions and the size of gaps to be cut to restore water flow patterns. The USACE planning group, consisting of state and federal agencies, is holding regular meetings to complete the planning documents.

Sherburne Freshwater Diversion Structure at Big Alabama Bayou

This project was authorized by the Water Resource Development Act of 1986 in accordance with the plan recommended in the February 1983 Chief's Report. The plan included construction of freshwater distribution structures from the Atchafalaya River to provide water inflow into the Alabama Bayou area. To date, no funds have been budgeted for or allocated to this effort by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE); however, the Atchafalaya Basin Program is actively working with the USACE New Orleans District to move this project forward.

Status Report: This project is in the planning stage. Discussions with the USACE have taken place to provide future funding for the project.

Beau Bayou Swamp Hydrologic Restoration

Beau Bayou Swamp is located in the west central region of the Atchafalaya Basin in St. Martin Parish. Once known as a highly productive fisheries area, hydrologic manipulation within the Atchafalaya Basin from levee construction, pipeline canal spoil banks, sediment diversions, and channelization of the Atchafalaya River led to hypoxic conditions within Beau Bayou Swamp, along with many of the Basin's other interior swamps. Most of the natural bayous and man-made canals flowing into Beau Bayou Swamp carry significant amounts of sediment adding to the already degraded condition of the swamp.

The proposed Beau Bayou hydrologic restoration project would include:

- Dredging of Beau Bayou through the center of the swamp, along with dredging of some of the natural waterways. Dredged material is to be used beneficially to address subsidence problems within the adjacent swamp. Any exposed spoil is to be vegetated with native plants.
- Gapping of the natural levee along the northern east section of Bayou L'Embarras to allow for the exchange of freshwater and nutrients into the swamp.
- Creation of inline sediment traps to reduce the sediment load currently flowing into Beau Bayou Swamp.

St. Martin Parish has been approved to receive $ 4,707,000 in Coastal Impact Assistance Program funds to advance the Beau Bayou project.

Status Report: St. Martin Parish has selected an engineering firm for the project and is currently in the planning stage.

Henderson Lake Access Channels

This project is being implemented through a cooperative endeavor agreement between the Atchafalaya Basin Program and St. Martin Parish Government. It consists of dredging canals from the existing boat launches on the West Guideline Levee of the Atchafalaya Basin into Lake Henderson in St. Martin Parish to facilitate boat traffic during low water periods that are due to the annual lowering of lake levels for the ongoing hydrilla control project. Dredging will also create deepwater fish habitat during low water periods.

Status Report: The revised permit application and mitigation plan have been forwarded to the USACE. Work continues to obtain servitudes and easements that are necessary to initiate construction of this project.

FY 2012 Access Projects Proposed for Funding

Project Descriptions

Butte LaRose Boat Launch at the Atchafalaya River

Upgrades to this launch were proposed in the State Master Plan. The project involves upgrading the Butte LaRose Boat Launch at the Atchafalaya River by extending the launch to accommodate safe launching when the river falls below three to four feet at the Butte LaRose gauge, as well as other improvements.

Wilson's Landing Boat Launch

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.

Sandy Cove Landing

Upgrades to this launch were proposed in the State Master Plan. Improvements to the existing launch are proposed. Improvements to the parking area, lighting, restrooms and a fishing area, as well as other improvements, are also proposed.

Sandy Cove Landing

Ramah Landing

Upgrades to this launch were proposed in the State Master Plan. Improvements to the existing launch as well as consideration of an additional launch on the South Side of the Weir are proposed. Improvements to the parking area, lighting, restrooms and a fishing area, as well as other improvements are also proposed.

Catahoula Landing

Upgrades to this launch were proposed in the State Master Plan. Improvements to the existing launch are proposed. Improvements to the parking area, lighting, restrooms and a fishing area, as well as other improvements, are also proposed.

Ongoing Access Projects

A Review of Approved FY 2011 Annual Plan Access Projects

Bayou Sorrel Boat Launch

Bayou Sorrel Boat Launch October 2010

This project to construct improvements at the current location of the Bayou Sorrel boat launch has been an ongoing project of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the State of Louisiana and Iberville Parish Government. The proposed project consists of new concrete ramps with multiple lanes each, floating courtesy dock adjacent to boat ramps, concrete landings adjacent to boat ramps, expansion and improvement of stone parking area, security and restroom shelter, access roads, demolition of the existing ramp and electrical service to power and light the facility.

Status Report: Project design is nearing completion. Project was funded through Capital Outlay in the FY2011 Annual Basin Plan. Iberville Parish has elected to move forward with this funding immediately and intends to construct the facility as soon as possible independent of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Butte LaRose Boat Launch

This project involves upgrading the Butte LaRose 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 LaRose gauge.

Status Report: The Butte LaRose 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 funding available. The project is being proposed for funding in this FY 2012 Annual Basin Plan.

King's Ditch Boat Launch

This project icnludes the design and construction of a small boat landing south of Ramah at King's Ditch for commercial and recreational fishermen. The next landing from Ramah is at Grand River and is not convenient for those from this area.

Status Report: King's Ditch 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 funding available. Land access issues must be resolved before this project can move forward.

Wilson's Landing Boat Launch

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.

Status Report: Wilson's Landing 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 funding available. The project is being proposed for funding in this FY 2012 Annual Basin Plan.

Ongoing Access Projects

A Review of Approved and Funded FY 2010 Annual Plan Projects

Construction of Krotz Springs launch improvements is underway.

Krotz Springs Boat Launch

The Krotz Springs Boat Launch project in St. Landry Parish is the subject of a cooperative agreement between the State of Louisiana and the Greater Krotz Springs Port Commission. The facility will consist of coordinated signage to the site and improved access from the service road, construction of a new concrete three-lane boat launch with floating courtesy dock, renovation of the existing launch into a canoe launch, expansion of parking area, security lighting, landscaping and curbing.

Status Report: Project was funded in FY 2010 Annual Basin Plan. Construction has been initiated and is expected to be completed prior to January 1, 2011.

Big Alabama Boat Launch Phases I and II

Big Alabama I boat launch is complete.

The state-owned Sherburne Wildlife Management Area, which is operated and maintained by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, has between 30,000 and 40,000 visitors annually. The Sherburne WMA adjoins other properties, including the lands owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Corps of Engineers. The total site including all three government properties totals 44,000 acres.

The first phase of this boat launch project included the construction of a new, two-lane boat launch located in Pointe Coupee Parish, in the Morganza Floodway System of the Atchafalaya Basin. The second phase will include improvements to the boat launch parking lot, the addition of a handicapped accessible fishing pier, and a modular restroom facility.

Status Report: Construction of a new two-lane boat launch, with a center pededstrian pier (Phase I) has been completed and facility is in use. The Atchafalaya Basin Program, working with the Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries, as well as the Division of Administration, Office of Facility Planning and Control has developed a scope of work to finalize design specification for additional features at the boat launch (Phase II). Funding for Phase 11 was approved in the FY 2010 Annual Basin Plan. Plans and specifications have been completed and approved by the Fire Marshal. Approval has been granted for the project to be put out to bid for construction.

Previously Authorized Access Projects

Bayou Amy Boat Launch

This new boat launch facility is already funded and will be constructed on Bayou Amy, directly across from the Atchafalaya Basin western guide levee in Henderson, Louisiana. The project will include a new boat launch, parking area, and docking facility. Additional improvements are being designed at this site, and that component will be funded with CIAP funds. That portion of the project will include an educational pavillion, self guided nature boardwalk, and a restroom facility.

Status Report: An engineering firm has been selected. Project design has been completed and work to obtain acquisition of easements is ongoing.

Myette (Millet) Point Boat Launch

The Myette (Millet) Point Boat Launch project is the subject of a cooperative agreement between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the St. Mary Parish Government. The project area is in the vicinity of the town of Charenton, Louisiana, in St. Mary Parish. Construction began in September 2007. The purpose of the proposed action is to provide a point of entry into the Lower Atchafalaya Basin Floodway for recreational fishing vessels, commercial fishing vessels, hunters, crew boats, federal and state government personnel, and others.

This project consists of a new concrete boat ramp with five lanes (four lane boat launch and one canoe launch) to be constructed; a new floating courtesy dock adjacent to the ramp; a concrete apron adjacent to the boat ramp that will be constructed by pre-loading the site and installing wick drains; a comfort station (restroom); a crushed stone parking area; upgrading of existing public roads used for ingress and egress; partial demolition and partial removal of an existing boat ramp with the remainder of said ramp converted into a canoe launch; water service for the comfort station; a sewage treatment plant; electrical service to power and light the comfort station and service to light the parking area and boat ramp; and landscaping.

Status Report: A ribbon cutting ceremony was held on October 14, 2010 and the boat launch is now operational.

Myette Point Boat Launch was completed in October 2010.

Myette Point Boat Launch

Bayou Benoit Boat Launch

The improvements to this boat launch were included in the State Master Plan. This launch was originally constructed with grant funds from a Wallop-Breaux Grant. Improvements consisted of the construction of a floating dock to allow boaters to tie up their boats while parking trailers.

Bayou Benoit Boat Launch floating dock has been completed.

Status Report: Construction has been completed and facility is in use.

Belle River Boat Launch

This project is already funded and involves the installation of restroom facilities at the existing Belle River boat launch. The boat launch is operated and maintained by the Atchafalaya Basin Levee District.

Status Report: Construction contract has been awarded. It is anticipated that the modular restroom building will be installed in November 2010.

Other FY 2012 Projects and Initiatives Proposed for Funding

Project Descriptions

Update of Atchafalaya Basin Master Plan

The original Atchafalaya Basin Master Plan was published by the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources and Atchafalaya Basin Advisory Committee, and unanimously approved by the Louisiana Legislature, in 1998. The Master Plan states that it is expected that, after 15 years, the Plan will be evaluated and revised and a new 15-year Plan adopted. As such, an update of the Atchafalaya Basin Master Plan is being proposed for funding in FY 2012 in order to be submitted to the Legislature for approval.

Belle River Park

This is an ongoing project to provide a recreation facility for visitors and residents of lower St. Martin Parish in the Belle River Area. Work completed to date includes earth work and a walking trail. Work remaining to be completed includes a roadway, parking, drainage, trails, landscaping, playground equipment, lighting, pavilion, meeting hall, building utilities and sewer treatment. The design of this project was funded through the Atchafalaya Basin Program and a Trails Grant.

Biking/Paddling/Hiking Trails

The Atchafalaya Basin is a paradise for outdoor adventure, and the Atchafalaya Basin Program aims to increase accessibility to the Basin's natural wonders through biking, paddling and hiking. Mountain bike paths, hiking trails and paddling areas are proposed for development within the Atchafalaya Basin in FY 2012.

Camp Atchafalaya

Camp Atchafalaya is a project to construct a facility to provide the Atchafalaya Basin Experience to those individuals who are physically challenged. The goal of this project is to create a universally accessible environment for people with disabilities to connect back to nature. This facility shall be constructed in its entirety as a barrier free and completely accessible park. The Park shall be void of any designation of handicap signage, areas and identifications, because the park and anything in it will be designed accordingly for access. Users will be able to do any activity that would normally be done in a typical State Park regardless of their disability. They will be able to hike, bike, canoe, fish, bird watch, view wildlife, enjoy water facilities, boat ride, etc. This project will ensure that everyone will have access to what Louisiana and the Atchafalaya basin has to offer. The Office of State Parks is currently working on design and planning of this project with funding that has been provided by the Atchafalaya Basin Program and additional funding may be needed to complete the planning process.

Eagle Point Park

This project involves construction of an 80-acre eco-tourism park located in Iberia Parish near Jeanerette, Louisiana, that will offer year-round recreation activities, boat launch, camping options along the western shoreline of Lake Fausse Pointe. Recreation features may include nature trails, walking paths, canoe trails, bird watching, a botanical garden and cultural center. Overnight accommodations may include waterfront cabins, R.V. Parking, tent camping, and facilities for large group gatherings.

Lake End Park Cabins

This project will be to construct cabins at Lake End Park in Morgan City along the shore of Lake Palourde. Shoreline stabilization has been completed as well as cabin design. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has completed the infrastructure for RV trailers including water and sewer lines consistent with the master plan that was developed for Lake End Park.

Morgan City Interpretive Plaza

This project would be a cooperative effort with the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The concept of this project is for design of a building that would showcase the cultural aspects of the lower Atchafalaya along with other projects, both existing and proposed, that have been constructed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The funding provided for this project would be used as matching funds for the development of the Engineering Design Report (EDR) by the Corps.

Primitive Campgrounds

These campgrounds are proposed to support needed recreational opportunities in and around the Wildlife Management Areas within the Basin. They will include fire rings and leveled areas for tents only. Some proposed locations being considered are areas near Bayou Pigeon, East Grand Lake, Simmesport, and Indian Bayou.

Stephensville Park

This is an ongoing project to provide a recreation facility for visitors and residents of lower St. Martin Parish in the Stephensville area. Phase I of this project has been completed and included earth work, ballfields, walking trail, parking area, playground and a picnic shelter. Work remaining to be completed includes ball field lighting, concession stand, restroom, landscaping, bleachers, playground equipment, parking, tennis court and sewage treatment.

Veterans Park

This is an ongoing project to provide a recreation facility for visitors and residents of the Pierre Part area in Assumption Parish. Phase I and II of this recreational facility have been completed. The facility includes baseball fields, tennis courts, concession stand, walking trail and a playground.

Work remaining to be completed includes additional landscaping and lighting for baseball fields, tennis courts, walking trail and the parking lot. Also planned are bleachers, concession stand equipment, batting cages and sidewalk canopies, waterfront dock, spray water park, shuffleboard and volleyball court(s).

Fee Purchase

The Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System authorization requires that the Public Access feature provide for fee lands to be purchased from non-governmental, willing sellers. To date, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has acquired ownership of 47,297 acres for public access lands toward a total authorized 70,000 acres.

Acquisition of Environmental Easements

Acquisition of environmental easements refers to the purchase of federal easements in the Atchafalaya Basin for the purposes of developmental control and environmental protection. To date, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has acquired 111,689 acres of comprehensive easement toward an authorized 367,000 acres.

View Proposed Basin Projects and Other Basin Maps Online

The Atchafalaya Basin Program is now on the Maps section of the Department of Natural Resources' SONRIS site, at the Interactive Maps link under the GIS section. The Basin Program information is listed under the Coastal group in that section.

www.SONRIS.com

Here, you will be able to view locations of approved projects and project details, as well as the boundaries of the Atchafalaya Basin area, water management units and links to proposed projects. The map section includes a tutorial for those unfamiliar with navigating the site and using the maps.

APPENDIX

Atchafalaya Basin Water Management Technical Advisory Group

*Bobby Reed, **Chair***
Louisiana Department Of Wildlife & Fisheries
breed@wlf.louisiana.gov

Glenn Constant,
U.S. Fish & Wildlife
Glenn_constant@fws.gov

Charlie Demas,
U.S. Geological Survey
crdemas@usgs.gov

Lamar Hale,
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
lamar.f.hale@usace.army.mil

Bill Kelso,
LSU – Renewable Natural Resources
wkelso@lsu.edu

Keith Lovell,
Department of Natural Resources
Keith.lovell@la.gov

Chris Piehler,
Department of Environmental Quality
Chris.piehle@la.gov

Mike Thomas,
Department of Agriculture & Forestry
Mike.thomas@ldaf.la.gov

Mike Walker,
Department of Wildlife & Fisheries
mwalker@wlf.louisiana.gov

Alternates:
Richard Keim,
LSU – Renewable Natural Resources
rkeim@lsu.edu

Dan Kroes,
U.S. Geological Survey
dkroes@usgs.gov

David Walther
U.S. Fish and Wildlife
David_walther@fws.gov

October 8, 2010

Mr. Louis E. Buatt, Chairman
Atchafalaya Basin Research and Promotion Board
P. O. Box 94396
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9396

Re: List of recommended projects

Dear Mr. Buatt:

Attached please find the list of water management projects that have been approved and recommended by the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) of the Atchafalaya Basin, in accordance with House Bill 1135 of the 2008 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, for consideration by the Atchafalaya Basin Research and Promotion Board to include in the FY2012 Annual Basin Plan. I have also included the TAG's recommended prioritization of the approved projects. If you have any questions or would like additional information please contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Bobby Reed

Bobby Reed, Chairman
Atchafalaya Basin Technical Advisory Group

BR:aw
Enclosure

TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP
Atchafalaya Basin Water Management
Post Office Box 94396 - Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9396
(225)342-6437 - atchafalaya@dnr.state.la.us

FY2012 Water Management Projects Approved by the Technical Advisory Group

1. **Project Number/Title** – 201001 / Improve Water Quality in the Upper Grand River Flats

Prioritization - 1

Type of Problem – Water Quality

Nominating Party – Pete Kelly, Plaquemine Parish Councilman, on behalf of William Edwards

Statement of Problem – Local users witnessed water quality, crawfish harvest, and fish abundance diminish as freshwater input into the western Flats through a location canal decreased.

Proposed Work Area – Bayou DeGlaises Water Management Unit in Iberville Parish

Proposed Action Description – Improve fresh water input into the western Flats from the Work Canal to improve water quality conditions and dredge the opening of the current input in the southeast corner of the WMU in the Unit interior to improve access.

TAG Analysis and Recommendation -The subcommittee recommends that the elements being proposed for inclusion in the 2012 Annual Plan be approved for construction with the understanding that the projects can have a significant positive influence on the target area. Based on water flow and turbidity patterns evaluated through the NRIA and ground observations by DNR representatives, it is anticipated that new water inputs should be constructed on the Work Canal and that the influence of those new sources will be to improve water quality in the swamp to the east of those new inputs. The potential for water movement through the system from the new inputs to the current drain on the southeast corner of the WMU is recognized as a potential benefit in that it will provide for the removal of detrital material during some portion of the year, but that the potential for such flow patterns to be established on a continuous basis is very limited due to the dependency of such a large area on the limited flow that is available from the Work Canal. The removal of any detrital material will be beneficial in reducing the Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) in the area and therefore promote incremental improvements in water quality and ecological conditions in the target area throughout the life of the project.

There are 4 project features in the Grand River Flats area. Three of the features are related to improving fresh water input into the western Flats from the Work Canal, while the remaining feature is designed to improve access and promote drainage.

2. **Project Number/Title** – 201006 / East Grand Lake Project

Prioritization - 2

Type of Problem - Access and Water Quality

Nominating Party – Atchafalaya Basin Program, LDNR

Statement of Problem –Channelized flow into the Upper Region of EGL has developed a sediment delivery network that carries sediment deep into the Project area which furthers restriction of flow and isolation of small areas with persistent water quality problems.

Proposed Work Area – Flat Lake and Upper Belle River Water Management Units in Iberia, Iberville and St. Martin Parishes

Proposed Action Description – Realign sediment and flow in the Upper Region of East Grand Lake (EGL). Modify channelized flow from Coon Trap, School Board Canal, Indigo Bayou, Salt Mine Bayou, and the Williams Canal to reduce sediment input into the interior of the Project area, increase input into the northern part of the Upper Region, and install cuts and gaps in flow barriers in the interior of the Project area to improve water flow patterns and deliver water and sediment to isolated areas to improve forest health and water quality conditions.

TAG Analysis and Recommendation

The Flat Lake and Upper Belle River WMUs have been divided into three Planning Regions as outlined in the East Grand Lake Planning Document. The entire areas is 202,424 acres, 72,143 of which is in the Upper Region and has been partitioned into 15 Assessment Units (AU) for purposes of project planning for the 2012 Annual plan as outlined in the Planning Document. The subcommittee has approved projects for AU 1-3, 5-7, 9-10 and 12 and discussed options for the Coon Trap input located in AU 8 of the Western Region.

Assessment Unit 1 - There are 31 potential project features in the AU. The main features in the AU are improved delivery of water through Salt Mine Bayou and two oil field canals near the GIWW. There are also 15 interior circulation features that are designed to move water through the AU and into other AU's.

Assessment Unit 2 – There are 23 total project features in the AU that include 8 features that improve the supply and input of freshwater from the Indigo Bayou, Bayou Sorrel, and the Salt Mine Bayou. The remaining features are designed to transfer water to adjacent AU's.

Assessment Unit 3 – There are 29 project features in this AU that introduce new water,improve interior circulation, and improve the movement of water through the AU or into other AU's. Twelve of the 29 features are designed to improve the supply of water into the AU, while 19 are designed to move water through the AUand into adjacent AU's.

Assessment Unit 5 – There are 7 project features in this AU, of which 3 are related to increasing input into the AU from the GIWW, 3 are related to improving flow from Unit 1 to the north, and 1 is designed to distribute water to isolated areas in the AU.

Assessment Unit 6 – There are 17 project features in this AU. Twelve of these features are related to increasing flow from AU's 1, 2, and 3 to the north, 4 are related to improving water movement through the interior of the AU, and 1 is related to improving water movement to AU 10 to the south and improving access at Bee Bayou and the Williams Canal.

Assessment Unit 7 – There are 17 project features in this AU and all arerelated to realigning flow from Coon Trap to reduce channelized flow into the AU. Fifteen of the features are designed to divert flow into the eastern part of the AU, 2 are designed to move water out of the AU, and 1 is designed to increase input into Chicot Lake.

Assessment Unit 8 – While AU 8 is technically located in the Western Region of the EGL Project area, when water levels are above 8 - 8.5 ft. at BL the Coon Trap input is an important source of water to both the Upper and Western Regions. There is only one project feature for this AU and it is related to keeping the Coon Trap open without modifications to the rock weir, and an option for reducing the elevation of the rock weir to improve input into the Project area at lower River levels.

Assessment Unit 9 - There are 21 project features in this AU and all relate to improving flowinto the AU from AU 5 to north and diverting channelized flow from the Williams Canal into the AU.

Assessment Unit 10 – There are 19 total project features in the AU that include 2 features that improve the supply and input of freshwater from the Coon Trap in the AU, 10 features that improve water movement into the AU from AU 6 to the north, and 4 that re-establish connectivity of the AU with Grand Lake to promote drainage and circulation patterns.

Assessment Unit 12 –There are 4 potential project features in the AU. Three of the features increase delivery of water into the AU from the GIWW, while 1 feature distributes water from one of the three inputs to isolated areas of the AU.

Assessment Unit 15 –There is only 1 project feature in the AU and it is related to improving drainage of the AU in the south at Little Bayou Pigeon

Potential FY 2012 Atchafalaya Basin Water Management Projects Identified by Stakeholders and Presented to the Technical Advisory Group

The subcommittee of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) met on September 3, 2011 and again on September 9, 2011 to evaluate projects nominated during the public hearings for the development of the Atchafalaya Basin Program's 2012 Annual Plan. The following is a list of the projects that the subcommittee evaluated. The projects are not ranked in any order of importance.

Priority	Project Name	Project Number
1.	Upper Grand River Flats	201001
2.	Dredge Toy-Toy Lake in Henderson WMU	201002
3.	Taylor Point Dredging Project	201003
4.	Close Dog Island Pass	201004
5.	Close Coon Trap (re-submitted from 2010)	201005
6.	East Grand Lake Project	201006

More detailed information on nominated and proposed projects, and maps identifying all nominated and proposed projects may be viewed online:

www. SONRIS.com

Follow these steps for viewing project information:

At the SONRIS home page, click on GIS Access, then Interactive Maps.

Click on Coastal at the left side of the page that now appears.

Scroll down this section until you you reach Atchafalaya Basin Projects.

Check the box or click on the text to activate this section.

Click the Search Tool. (an icon of binoculars located in the top right of the screen)

In the Search pop up window, select "Year Proposed" for the dropdown list.

Type in the Year you want to view. (2009 or 2010).

Click the Execute button to view information available.

Acknowledgements

Information for the FY 2012 Annual Plan was compiled from a variety of sources, including state and federal agencies, organizations and individuals, as well as books, publications and websites produced by these sources. We thank all of them for their contributions and assistance.

Atchafalaya Basin Program

Louisiana Department of Natural Resources

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

Louisiana State University Agricultural Center

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

U.S. Department of Agriculture

U.S. Geological Survey

Atchafalaya Basinkeeper

Greg Guirard and C. Ray Brassieur, authors of *Inherit the Atchafalaya* (2007)

Mark A. Rees and Patrick C. Livingood, editors of *Plaquemine Archaeology* (2006)

Atchafalaya BASIN

Atchafalaya Basin Program
Louisiana Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 94396
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9396
phone: (225) 342-6437 • fax: (225) 342-6887
http://dnr.louisiana.gov/atchafalaya

This document was published at a total cost of $000.00. XXX copies of this public document were published in the second printing at a cost of $000.00. The total cost of all printings of this document, including reprints, is $000.00. This document was published in-house by the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, Atchafalaya Basin Program to comply with Act 606 of the 2008 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, which requires the development and publication of an Annual Plan for the Atchafalaya Basin Program. This material was printed in accordance with the standards for printing by state agencies established pursuant to R.S. 43:31.

TO BE UPDATED