

# Council offers solutions, steps to improving water body quality in report

*From Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries*

Lake Providence, located in north-east Louisiana in East Carroll Parish, is a favorite outdoor recreational playground for many residents of the surrounding area. From boating to fishing to simply enjoying a day at the lake, the oxbow waterway formerly linked to the Mississippi River is another reason why Louisiana is called the Sportsman's Paradise.

The Lake Providence Watershed Council (LPWC), formed by Louisiana Senate concurrent resolution 115 of the 2015 legislative regular session, has been charged with preserving and making it even better. The LPWC has taken the first step, issuing a plan of action for watershed management to improve and enhance the quality of the Lake Providence. (To see the full report, visit <http://dnr.louisiana.gov/index.cfm?md=pagebuilder&tmp=home&pid=1316>.)

The council will hold a public meeting Thursday (May 26) at the Cotton Museum at 7 p.m. to take input and

discuss the report.

The council released its initial report to the Louisiana House Committee on Natural Resources and the Louisiana Senate Committee on Environmental Quality on Friday (April 29). The council said revitalization of the lake, "can be accomplished through engineering, education, enticement and enforcement of existing and new regulations focused on best management practices."

"Louisiana is blessed to have so many talented individuals who can collaboratively work and create a detailed plan to address complicated issues," said Louisiana State Senator Francis Thompson of Delhi, a member of the council and who represents East Carroll Parish. "That was certainly the case here. The work accomplished by the council was done with an eye to making sure Lake Providence thrives in the generations to come. We're addressing the water quality concerns."

The LPWC presented several man-

agement strategy recommendations in the report to upgrade the quality of the lake. It seeks to improve the fisheries, turbidity and lake level management among other enhancements.

Local stakeholders as well as several local, state and federal agencies contributed to the report.

"The key is to engage all stakeholders who want to see the quality of our lake improve," said Andy Anders, a member of the council and the Louisiana House of Representatives, from District 21. "That starts at the local level. But we also want to use the ideas from the federal and state level as well. This particular partnership has allowed us to bring the best ideas and practices into a solid plan of action."

The report sought to identify impacts to water quality, excess nutrient and sediment run-off, shoreline modification management, watershed conservation measures and habitat restoration. The council also stressed the importance of coordination of fed-

eral, state and local entities for optimal management and protection of the natural resources.

It also offered changes for management and protection of the Lake Providence watershed to make it more efficient and sustainable.

One key element is to improve the lake's water quality which will result in stimulating submerged aquatic vegetation growth. That would help to improve not only fisheries habitat but also the overall health of the lake.

Managing the water level is also important, the council concluded. It recommended that Baxter Bayou and Tensas Bayou structures, which were installed to regulate flow out of the lake, be rehabilitated or replaced and regular maintenance to Tensas Bayou be made a priority.

Education is stressed in the council's report. The council plans on having several informational meetings to address concerns, explain the report along with the prescribed solutions as well as get feedback on the report.