

Achnafalaya

BASIN
PROGRAM

DRAFT FISCAL YEAR 2022 ANNUAL PLAN





PROGRAM HISTORY

The Atchafalaya Basin Program was established to develop, implement, and manage a comprehensive state master plan for the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System, Louisiana Project. This master plan directs the efforts of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) as the non-federal sponsor for the US Army Corps of Engineers Floodway Project and provides the mechanisms to match federal dollars used in the mitigation of that system. Although the Program has focused on the components of the Atchafalaya State Master Plan approved in 1999, activities have also expanded to address the needs of both the resources and resource users of the Atchafalaya Basin.

The Atchafalaya Basin Program Annual Plan resides within the overall annual planning process of the CPRA. This process allows for extensive public review and input as well as oversight from the CPRA Board and the State Legislature. This plan authorizes the expenditure of funds as well as provides a 3-yr outlook for the agency as a whole.

Although the structure of the Program has undergone revision in statute, the CPRA is committed to continue the important work benefitting the Basin in particular as well as its linkage to the state’s coastal program as a whole. This Annual Plan includes descriptions of planned and implemented projects as well as an overview of the Advisory groups and other oversight. More information can be found on the CPRA website coastal.la.gov/atchafalaya-basin-program/. We thank all involved with the management and preservation of the Basin.

COASTAL PROTECTION AND RESTORATION AUTHORITY BOARD

- Governor’s Executive Assistant for Coastal Activities (Chair)
- Lieutenant Governor, State of Louisiana
- Secretary, Louisiana Department of Natural Resources
- Secretary, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
- Secretary, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
- Secretary, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
- Secretary, Louisiana Department of Economic Development
- Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry
- Commissioner of Administration
- Commissioner of Insurance
- Chair, Governor’s Advisory Commission on Coastal Protection, Restoration and Conservation
- Director, Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness
- Regional Representatives (8 appointments)
- Designee of Senate President (Ex-officio)
- Designee of Speaker of the House (Ex-officio)

TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP

The Atchafalaya Basin Program Technical Advisory Group (ABP TAG) is in place to review, evaluate, and approve water management projects for inclusion into the Basin Annual Plan. Interdisciplinary advice and efforts from the diverse membership provides a holistic understanding and scientific approach for decision-making. Membership is as follows. Each of the entities below has one member unless otherwise noted:

Executive Director, Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (Chair)
Louisiana Department of Environmental Equality
Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry Louisiana
Department of Natural Resources
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism
Louisiana Department of Health
Louisiana State Land Office
Atchafalaya Basin Levee Board*
Police Jury Association of Louisiana East of the Atchafalaya*
Police Jury Association of Louisiana West of the Atchafalaya*
United States Geological Survey
United States Fish and Wildlife Service
United States Army Corps of Engineers
Louisiana State University School of Renewable Natural Resources

*Denotes memberships that have specific requirements for selection and appointment as set forth in Act 570 of the Louisiana Legislature Regular Session 2018.

PROJECT ACCEPTANCE PROCESS

All projects submitted through the CPRA Atchafalaya Basin Program Solicitation process are screened on the basis of (1) consistency with Coastal Master Plan objectives and principles, (2) geographic areas with issues of water quality, sedimentation and public access, (3) non-duplication of submissions previously turned down, unless justifiable in light of changing conditions, and (4) adequate information with sufficient detail for thorough evaluation. Although a project may not meet the screening criteria, CPRA strives to utilize the public's input to inform and improve ongoing projects.

FY 2022 PROJECT LIST

No new project nominations met the Program's screening criteria. Therefore, there were no new projects accepted for inclusion in the FY 2022 Annual Plan. However, much of the public input received during project solicitation was within the scope of projects already included in the Basin Master Plan or current Annual Plan and will be used to inform and improve project design and implementation.

Projects Specifically Included in the FY22 Annual Plan

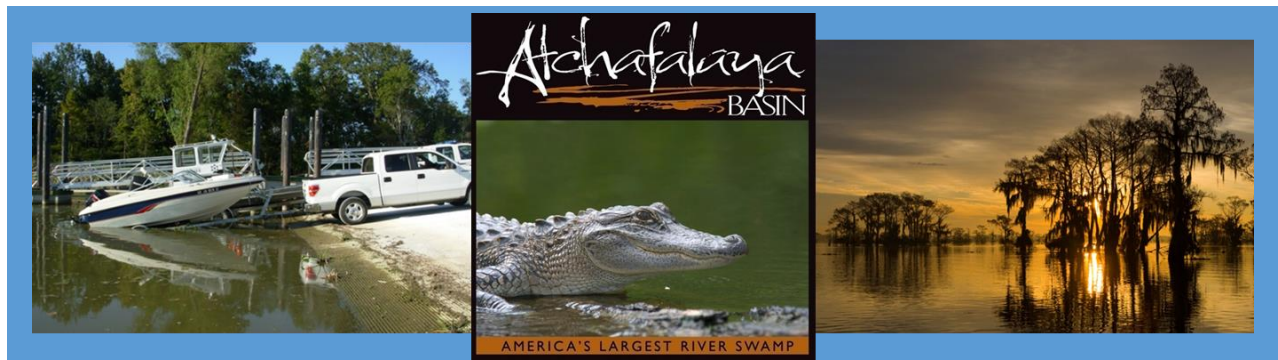
Water Quality/Water Management

The updated water quality priority list is as follows. This list will remain the priority water management projects for the Program unless updated through subsequent planning.

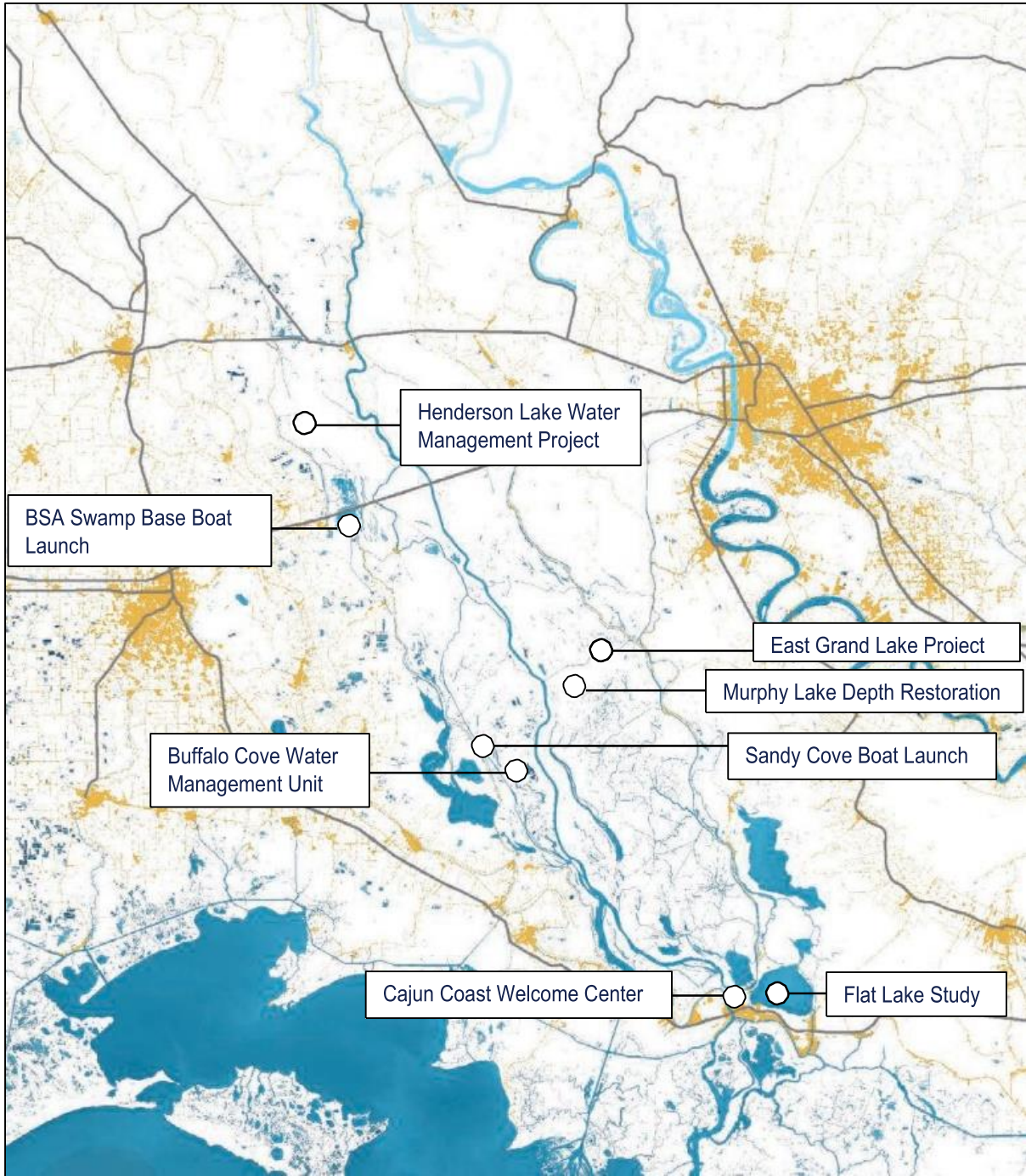
- Henderson Lake Water Management Project
- Flat Lake Sediment Study
- Murphy Lake Depth Restoration
- Buffalo Cove Water Management Project
- East Grand Lake Upper Region

Recreation/Access

- Cajun Coast Welcome Center Trail
- Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Swamp Base Boat Launch
- Sandy Cove Boat Launch
- Atchafalaya Basin GeoTrail



MAP OF FY2022 PROJECT LOCATIONS



WATER QUALITY/WATER MANAGEMENT PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

Henderson Lake WMU Spoil Bank Gapping Program

The Henderson Lake Water Management Unit Spoil Bank Gapping Program will address restricted water flows north of Henderson Lake. The restricted flows contribute to water quality issues in the swamps and the lake and also inhibit flood flows south to the lower basin. The Program will help to reestablish more natural North/South water flows present in the Basin. Due to the importance of improving water quality and hydrologic regime, the ABP TAG identified this project as a top priority in the FY 2022 Annual Plan process.

Status Report

This project is partially funded and is currently in the Planning Phase. Outreach with stakeholders is ongoing to inform project design.



Example of spoil bank adjacent to pipeline.

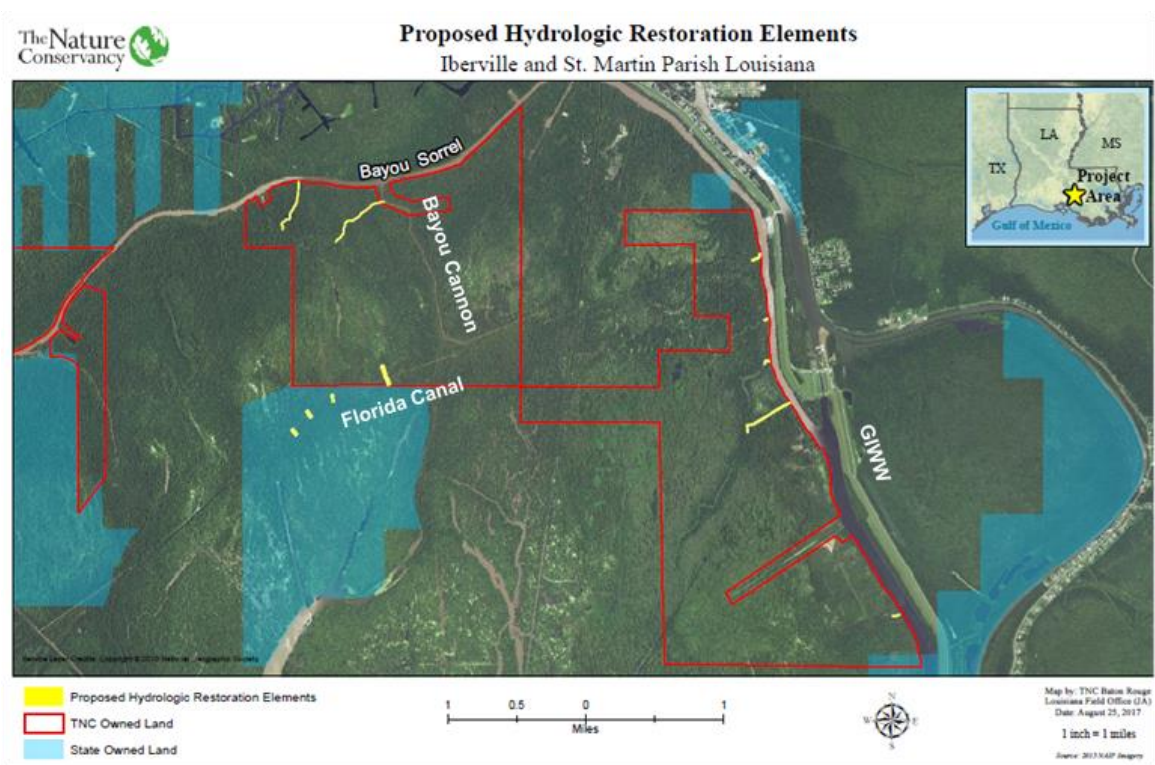


Pipeline Canal through wetlands

WATER QUALITY/WATER MANAGEMENT PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

East Grand Lake Upper Project

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



The EGL Upper Region encompasses the area south of Bayou Sorrel to Old River and east of Grand Lake to the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. It covers an estimated 72,143 acres. This area has only a few flow restrictions preventing water from entering and circulating throughout a large portion of the area, and the highly channelized flow of water through the School Board Canal, Indigo Bayou, Salt Mine Bayou, Williams Canal, Bayou Pigeon, and the Coon Trap creates a sediment delivery network that carries sediment deep into the area, promoting further restriction of flow and isolation of small areas. Hydrologic restoration of the area requires modifying this network of channelized water inputs. Ownership of the area is a mix of public and private land, so completing landscape-scale hydrologic restoration requires cooperation among landowners. In 2015 The Nature Conservancy (TNC) acquired specific tracts needed to



WATER QUALITY/WATER MANAGEMENT PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

provide critical water inputs, and the project is now moving forward through a partnership between ABP and TNC.

Status Report

This project is currently funded for construction. Additionally, a robust monitoring program was initiated in 2016 by TNC and continues in partnership with CPRA. This monitoring program includes a combination of continuously recording instrumentation and discrete monitoring stations to determine the change in water flow patterns resulting from restoration. The program will also track the corresponding effects on water quality, habitat, forest health, biodiversity, and carbon and nutrient sequestration during flood and drainage events. Design and permitting for phase 1 of project construction is underway and includes a suite of elements designed to restore healthy flow patterns in the EGL Upper Region. As the project progresses, there will be ample opportunities for public input at TAG and CPRA public meetings, which are held throughout the year.

Flat Lake Sediment Study

Sedimentation is causing loss of access and aquatic habitat in Flat Lake and is detrimental to the overall health of the ecosystem. Sediment accumulation in Flat Lake exacerbates drainage issues and stagnation of interior swamp habitat throughout the Upper Belle River WMU. This study is an evaluation of the sediment characters within the Lake to inform planning that incorporates both basin and coastal restoration.

The "Overview and Planning Process of the East Grand Lake Water Quality Improvement and Sediment Management Plan" (2010) clearly identified the Flat Lake area as an important component of the drainage of the East Grand Lake and Upper Belle River WMUs. The study concluded that the hydrodynamic influence of Flat Lake should be quantified as part of the planning process and suggested that decisions regarding the future management of the waterways in and around Flat Lake will have a significant influence on the hydrology and ecology of the Western and Upper regions. Because of its proximity to Coastal Master Plan projects designed to build wetlands in Terrebonne Parish, Flat Lake was chosen as a location for a demonstration project for utilizing Atchafalaya Basin sediments as a borrow source. This study will include analysis of lakebed sediments and will provide that and other information to assess the feasibility of this area as a component of the Coastal Plan.

Status Report

The project was funded and is currently substantially complete. A draft final completion report has been delivered and any future actions are pending review and acceptance.

WATER QUALITY/WATER MANAGEMENT PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

Murphy Lake Depth Restoration

Sediment has closed off access to Murphy Lake in the East Grand Lake WMU in low water conditions, causing water circulation and water quality problems. The project would involve dredging sediment accretion from the entrance of Murphy Lake to improve access and water flow into the lake. Additionally, the project may include features to address future sedimentation of Murphy Lake and surrounding wetlands.

Status Report

This project is not currently funded. The project remains a priority of the Program and funding has been repeatedly requested through State Surplus Funding and the Capital Outlay Program. Also, extensive public input received during the project solicitation process is being utilized to inform project design and future implementation.

Buffalo Cove Water Management Project

The Buffalo Cove Water Management Project is a project of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). It 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.

The project location is the lower Basin in Iberia, St. Martin and St. Mary Parishes. The 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. Initially constructed Buffalo Cove elements included Bayou Eugene and elements 1, 6, 7, 8, 9-1, and 9-2. Some of these elements were impacted by unprecedented high water during the Mississippi River Flood of 2011 and were no longer functioning as designed. The following elements were repaired as of February 2013: 6, 7, 9-1, 9-2, and elements within Bayou Eugene (E1, E2, and E3). In 2016, the USACE began construction on elements 3, 12, 14, and 16 to further improve interior flows, and with the completion of those elements in June 2016, the project was considered substantially complete.

Status Report

The USACE released a Draft Environmental Assessment in 2018 for Element 10 (Logjam). Element 10 which was a late addition to the project design, still remains to be constructed. Element 10 was designed to improve a historic flow corridor of approximately 2.9 miles in the south/central Buffalo Cove WMU. It includes construction of cuts in hydrologic

WATER QUALITY/WATER MANAGEMENT PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

impoundments, which have been caused by the spoil banks of two oil and gas canals and one impoundment caused by sedimentation along a ridge. This project element was added to improve hydrologic connection between Buffalo Cove Lake, the Ice Box, and areas further downstream to the Atchafalaya River.

In order to construct the proposed cuts, an existing access channel (Bayou Bieber) will be partially improved from Poncho Chute and a 100-foot portion of the access channel will be backfilled to preexisting conditions in order to maintain the existing channel capacity. The Atchafalaya Basin Program has set aside a portion of the funding received in 2017 funding to provide the State’s 25% cost-share for Element 10.

Once Buffalo Cove WMU is completed, the State of Louisiana has a cost share of 25% of ongoing operation and maintenance funding for this project.

RECREATION/ACCESS PROJECTS

Cajun Coast Welcome Center Trail

This project will include construction of boardwalk behind the Cajun Coast Welcome Center in St. Mary Parish to provide a trail through the scenic cypress-tupelo swamp. It will also include informational signage to explain flood protection and its relation to the floodway. This project is unfunded.

Boy Scouts of America Swamp Base Boat Launch

A new commercial grade floating concrete marina dock system will be constructed in Henderson, Louisiana with ADA compliant gangways for passengers. The new dock will provide Basin access to individuals who vary in age from toddlers to seniors as well as physically disabled persons with walkers or motorized wheelchairs. This project is currently funded and is in implementation.



Sandy Cove Boat Launch

Located in Iberia Parish, Louisiana, upgrades were proposed in the State Master Plan to improve the boat launch, parking area, lighting, restrooms, and fishing area. The boat launch project is currently unfunded.

Atchafalaya Basin GeoTrail

The Atchafalaya Basin GeoTrail is a series of 24 geocaches that have been placed in and around the Atchafalaya Basin. Launched in 2017 each site highlights how water has influenced the region. CPRA strives to maintain the GeoTrail for the interest of Basin visitors. However, recent persistent high water events have impacted several locations.





With the passage of Act 8 of the First Extraordinary Session of 2005 (Act 8), the Louisiana Legislature mandated the integration of hurricane protection activities (e.g., levee construction) and coastal restoration activities (e.g., river diversions or marsh creation). Act 8 also created the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Board (CPRA Board) and tasked it with oversight of these activities. The Office of Coastal Protection and Restoration (OCPR) was designated as the implementation arm of the CPRA Board. To avoid confusion, the 2012 Louisiana Legislature changed the name of the state agency from OCPR to the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA).

The CPRA Board, with the assistance of CPRA, is required by Act 523 of the 2009 Regular Legislative Session, amended by Act 604, to produce an Annual Plan that inventories projects, presents implementation schedules for these projects, and identifies funding schedules and budgets. This Atchafalaya Basin Program Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Plan provides an update on the state's efforts to protect and restore its coast and describes the short-term and long-term results that citizens can expect to see as the state progresses toward a sustainable coast.

Act 570 of the 2018 Regular Session, enacting La. R.S. 49:214.8.1, et seq., transferred the responsibilities of the Atchafalaya Basin Research and Promotion Board and the Atchafalaya Basin Program from the Department of Natural Resources to the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority. The Atchafalaya Basin Program (R.S.49:214.8.1 et seq.) is placed within the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, which shall perform and exercise the powers, duties, functions, and responsibilities of the Program as provided by law. The annual basin plan shall be included in the Annual Plan: Integrated Ecosystem Restoration and Hurricane Protection in Coastal Louisiana produced each year by the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority.



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