



Atchafalaya
BASIN
PROGRAM

**FISCAL YEAR 2023
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 (Atchafalaya State Master Plan). 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.

ATCHAFALAYA RIVER BASIN RESTORATION AND ENHANCEMENT TASK FORCE

In 2020, Governor John Bel Edwards established the Atchafalaya River Basin Restoration and Enhancement Task Force comprised of stakeholders to address long-standing issues within the Basin and to raise public awareness of the importance of these concerns and their implications for the future. Membership of this Task Force includes:

- Governor’s Executive Assistant for Coastal Activities (Chair)
- Executive Director of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority
- Policy Director for the Office of the Governor
- Secretary, Department of Natural Resources
- Secretary, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
- Public Lands Administrator, Division of Administration, Office of State Lands
- Governor’s Advisory Commission on Coastal Protection, Restoration and Conservation
- Representative from each of the East and West Atchafalaya Basin



- Two representatives of landowners in the Atchafalaya River Basin
- Two representatives of conservation organizations participating in policy or projects relating to the conservation of the Atchafalaya River Basin;
- Representative of the energy transportation sector;
- Representative of the inland navigation sector;
- Representative from the Port of Morgan City;
- Representative from the commercial fishing industry in the East Atchafalaya Basin;
- Representative from the commercial fishing industry in the West Atchafalaya Basin;
- Representative from the recreational fishing industry in the Atchafalaya River Basin; and
- Representative from an academic institution doing research in the Atchafalaya River Basin.

PROJECT ACCEPTANCE PROCESS

CPRA held three project solicitation meetings in October 2021 (two in-person and one virtual) to inform the public about the project solicitation process and discuss potential project submittals. Project proposals were accepted from the public from October 11 to November 15, 2021.

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 2023 PROJECT LIST

Although several projects were presented during the public solicitation process, the projects were either largely represented by currently authorized projects or did not meet the criteria and goals of the Program. Additionally, the Program will continue to pursue the projects included in the Annual Plan as well as utilize the upcoming Master Plan revision to guide future selections using best available science, and expert and public input.

Projects Specifically Included in the FY23 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
- Murphy Lake Depth Restoration
- East Grand Lake Upper Region

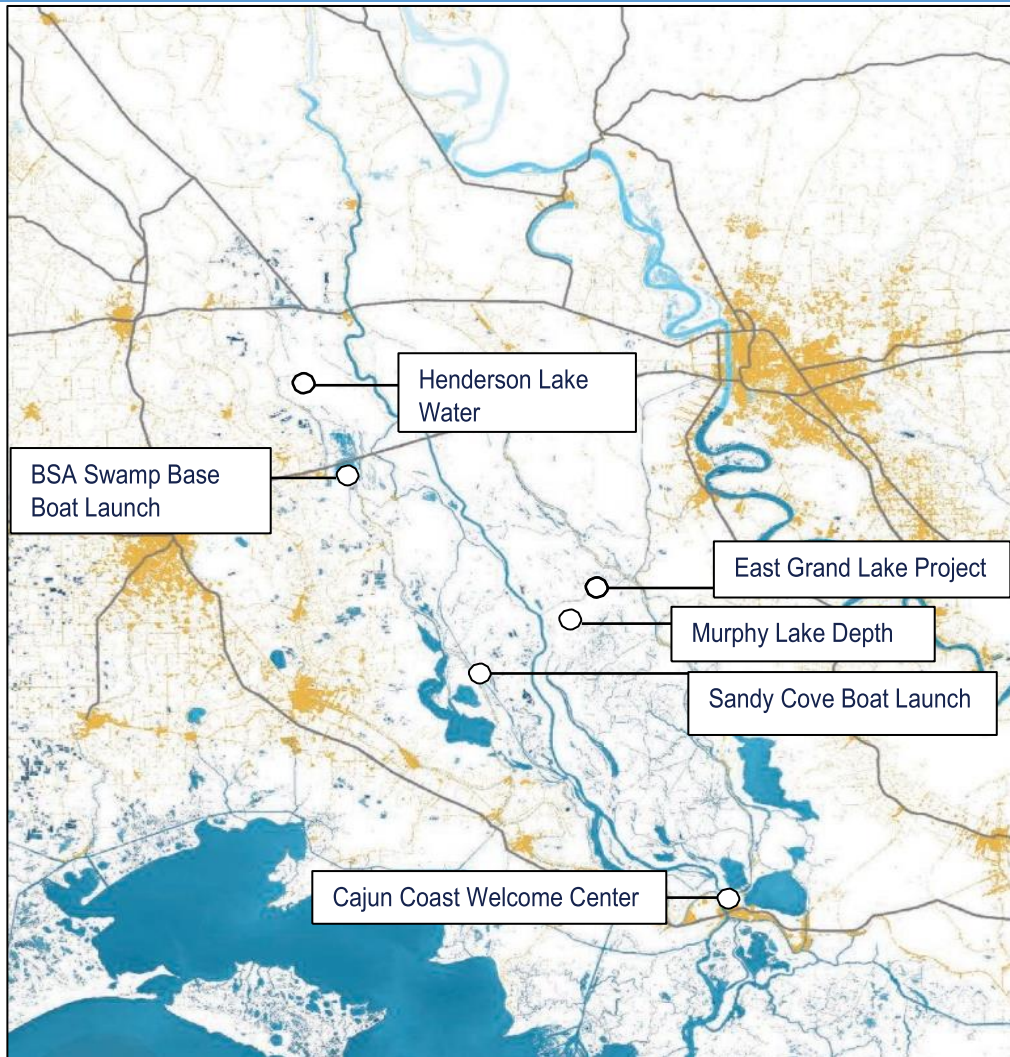
Recreation/Access

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

Other

- Update to the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System, Louisiana State Master Plan

MAP OF FY2023 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 2023 Annual Plan process.

Status Report

This project is funded and is currently in the Engineering, Design, and Permitting phase. Outreach with stakeholders is ongoing to inform project design. The program anticipates project construction beginning in FY22.



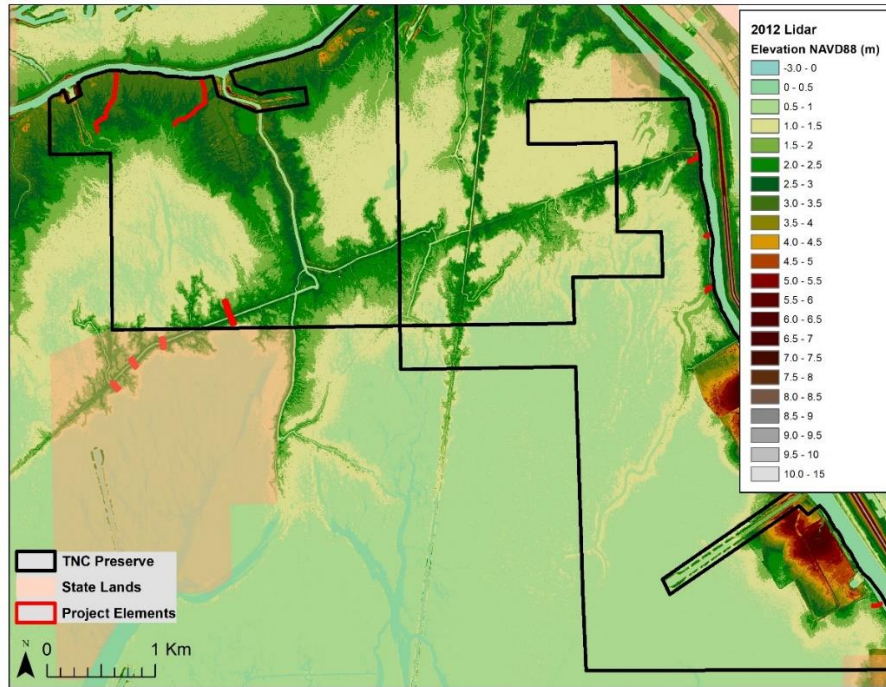
(Left): Project location along the Dixie Pipeline Canal. (Right): Location of a proposed soil gap.

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.



Above: Lidar imagery depicting the 13 proposed restoration elements for East Grand Lake project.

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.

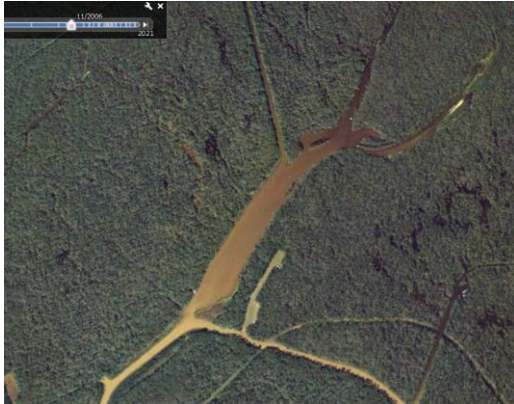
Status Report

This project is currently funded for construction. Additionally, a robust monitoring program was initiated in 2016 under a partnership between TNC and 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 opportunities for public input at TAG and CPRA public meetings, which are held throughout the year.

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.



(Left): Lake Murphy, Google Earth Image 2005. (Right): Sediment plug located at southeastern corner of Murphy Lake

Status Report

This project is not currently funded for construction. Extensive public input received during the project solicitation process is being utilized to inform project design and future implementation.

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.



OTHER

Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System, Louisiana Project State Master Plan Update

In 1972, Congress directed the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to conduct the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System (ABFS) Louisiana Project. The purpose of the study was to 1) review the ABFS features of the Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) project to develop a plan for flood control; 2) review the operation of the Old River Control Complex (ORCC) and determine if the 30/70 water flow was sustainable; and 3) develop a comprehensive plan for



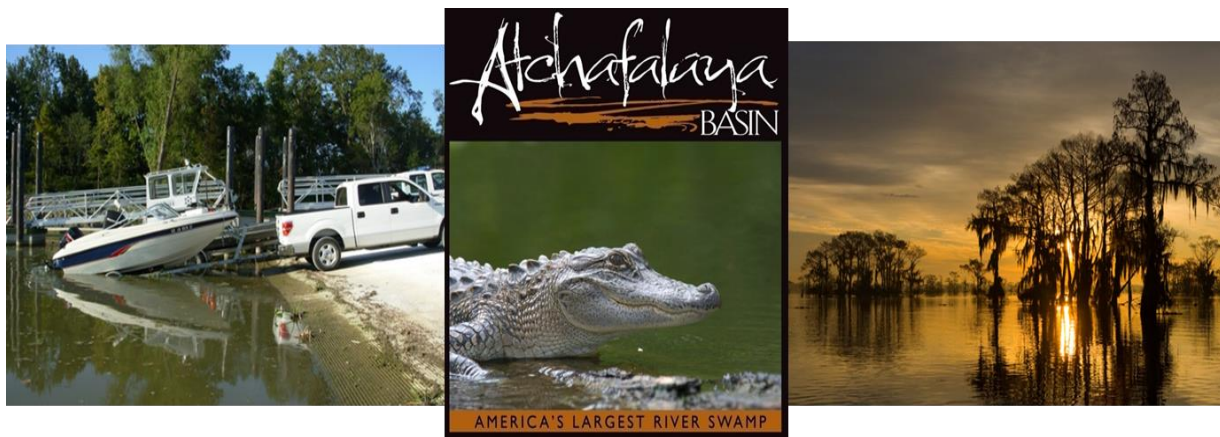
the preservation and use of water and land resources of the Atchafalaya River Basin. Congress designated responsibilities for these items within the Atchafalaya River Basin to the USACE.

In 1998 the State of Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (LDNR) and a committee comprised of basin stakeholders reviewed the USACE ABFS Louisiana Project and incorporated the USACE recommendations into the 1998 State Master Plan. The Plan incorporated all major aspects of the Atchafalaya Basin Project including: water management for improved water quality and habitat, environmental easements, public access, and recreation; and proposed projects designed with a 15-year implementation period.

In 2021 the Atchafalaya River Basin Restoration and Enhancement Task Force produced a list of recommendations for restoring and managing the Atchafalaya Basin. An update to the Atchafalaya State Master Plan was one of 12 recommendations the Task Force presented to the CPRA Board.

Status Report

This project is currently funded. There will be extensive opportunities for public input which will be used to inform the development of the plan.





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 2023 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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