



Atchafalaya

BASIN
PROGRAM

DRAFT FISCAL YEAR 2024 ANNUAL PLAN



committed to our coast



PROGRAM HISTORY

The Atchafalaya Basin Program (ABP) was established to develop, implement, and manage a comprehensive state master plan for the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System, Louisiana Project (Atchafalaya State Master Plan). The 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 Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System, Louisiana Project and provides the mechanisms to match federal dollars used in the mitigation of that system. While 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 CPRA. This process allows for extensive public review and input as well as oversight from the CPRA Board and the State Legislature.

Although the structure of the ABP has undergone revision in statute, CPRA is committed to continuing the important work benefitting the Basin in particular as well as its linkage to the State's coastal program as a whole. This Fiscal Year 2024 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 Atchafalaya 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 ABP 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

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 2024 PROJECT LIST

Water Quality/Water Management

- Dredging in Big Bayou Pigeon**
- Grimmatt Canal Improvements**
- Pointe Coupee Water Flow Improvements**
- Henderson Lake Water Management Project
- Murphy Lake Depth Restoration
- East Grand Lake Upper Region

** Denotes newly solicited projects for the FY24 Annual Plan. All others are continued from FY23 Annual Plan.

Recreation/Access

- Bayou Pigeon Boat Launch Improvements
- Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Swamp Base Boat Launch
- Cajun Coast Welcome Center Trail
- Sandy Cove Boat Launch

Other

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

MAP OF FY2024 PROJECT LOCATIONS

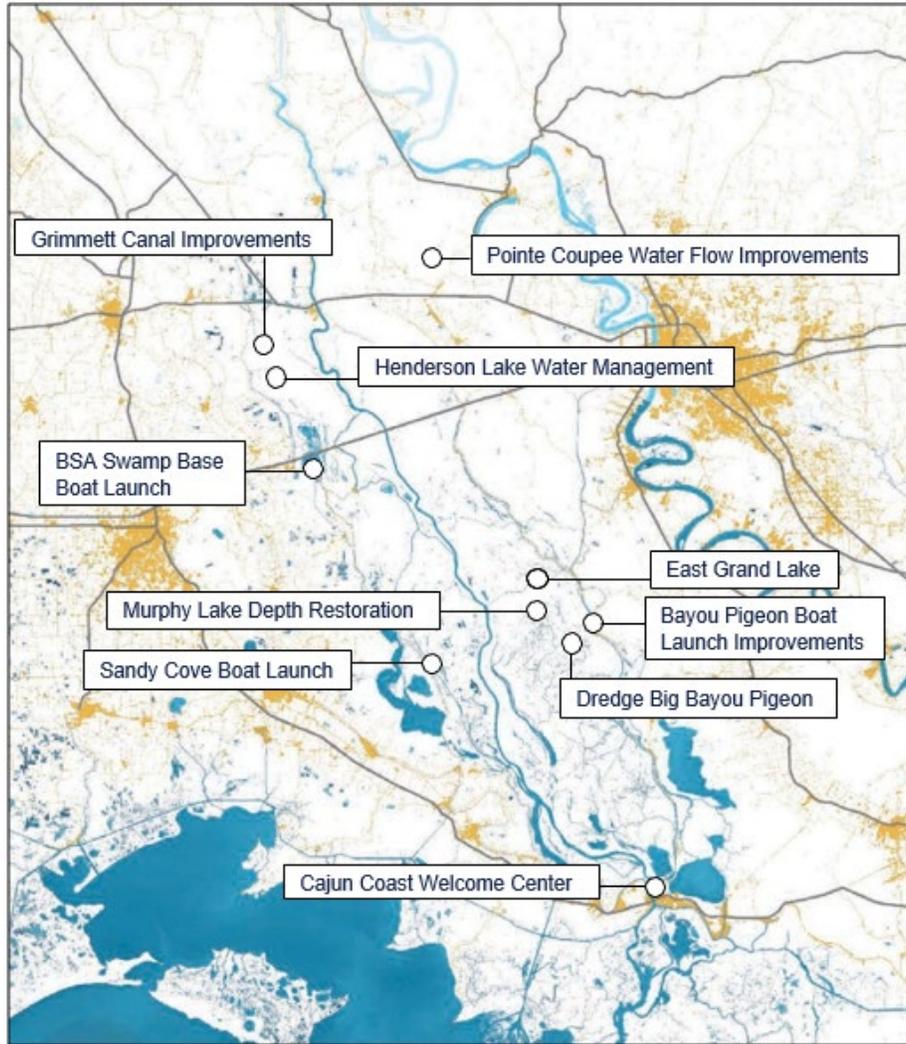


Figure 1: Map of FY24 project locations.

WATER QUALITY/WATER MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

Dredging in Big Bayou Pigeon**

The Big Bayou Pigeon project is located south of two previously approved (FY23) ABP projects, the East Grand Lake project and the Murphy Lake project. Big Bayou Pigeon has been infilling with sediment since the mid-1960s. This project proposes to dredge the Big Bayou Pidgeon area in order to improve floodwater movement through the interior Basin and provide a southern drainage outlet for areas north of the project. Spoil from the project is proposed to be placed adjacent to the bayou, along existing natural alluvial ridges. Spoil bank gaps will be installed to allow for north to south water flow during high water events.

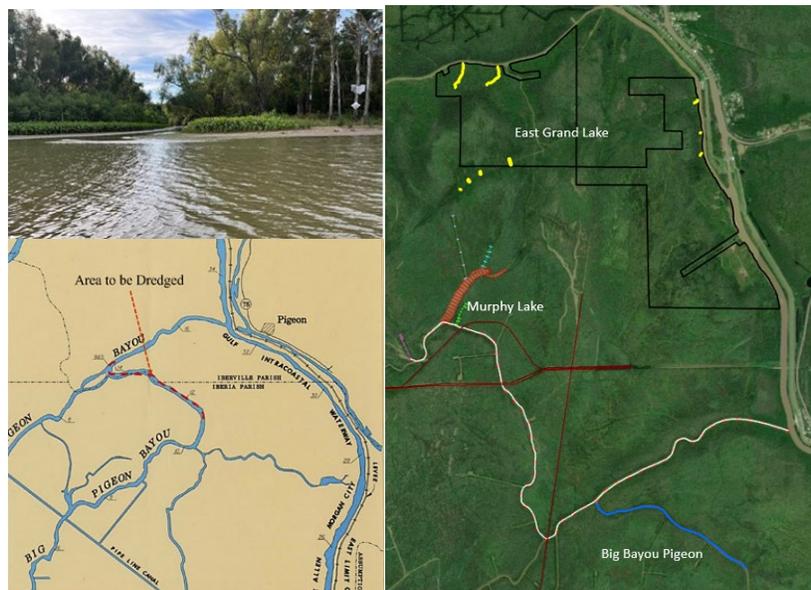


Figure 2: (Left-Top) Point bar formation at the confluence of Little Bayou Pigeon and Big Bayou Pigeon. (Left-Bottom) Depicts proposed project location. (Right) Project location is in the vicinity of other on-going CPRA water quality projects.

Grimmett Canal Improvements**

The Grimmett Canal project is located west of the Atchafalaya River, north of Henderson Lake and the ABP’s Dixie Pipeline Spoil Bank Gapping Project. This project proposes to clear and snag Grimmett Canal and install culverts along a right of way that runs east to west on the southern end of Grimmett Canal. The goal of this project is to increase north to south water flow from the Bayou Courtableau floodgates to Henderson Lake, which will improve floodwater movement through the interior swamp, improving water quality as well as alleviating flooding events in adjacent communities.

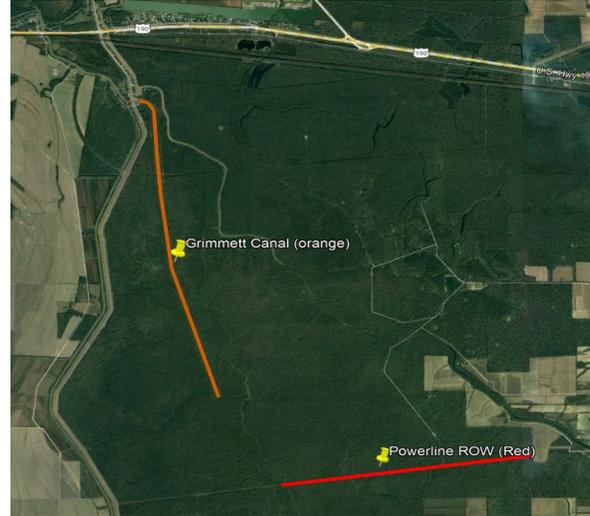


Figure 3: Locations of the two proposed efforts of Grimmett Canal Improvements project

Pointe Coupee Water Flow Improvements**

The Pointe Coupee Water Flow Improvement project is located in Pointe Coupee Parish in the northern Atchafalaya Basin. Currently, the project area has water drainage obstacles varying from collapsed culverts, leveled roads, and siltation and debris within bayou waterways. The project proposes to correct these drainage issues by replacement or new installation of reinforced concrete culverts in 24 locations as well as clearing and mucking four major bayous within the area (Johnson Bayou, Bayou Gerance, Bayou Close, and Stiff Bayou).



Figure 4: Locations of the proposed efforts (culvert placement and bayou clearing/mucking) of the Pointe Coupee Water Flow Improvements project.

Henderson Lake WMU Spoil Bank Gapping Project

The Henderson Lake WMU Spoil Bank Gapping Project, located in St. Martin and St. Landry parishes, will address restricted water flows north of Henderson Lake. The restricted flows contribute to poor water quality in the swamps and lake. Twenty-five alternating (North and South) gaps will be constructed along the Dixie Pipeline Canal to increase hydrologic flow within the area and improve water quality and habitat.

Project Status

This project is fully funded. Construction will begin in early 2023.

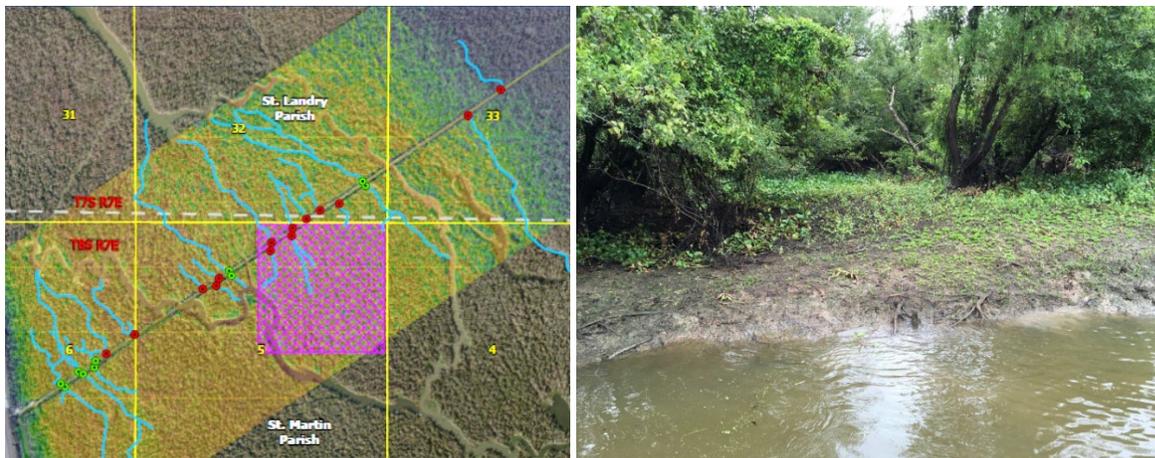


Figure 5: (Left) Project location along the Dixie Pipeline Canal, red and green dots represent gap locations, blue represents waterways. (Right): Example of a proposed soil gap location.

East Grand Lake Upper Project

The East Grand Lake Upper Project was initially approved in the ABP FY 2010 Annual Plan 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. The current project encompasses only the northern portion of the original FY10 project.

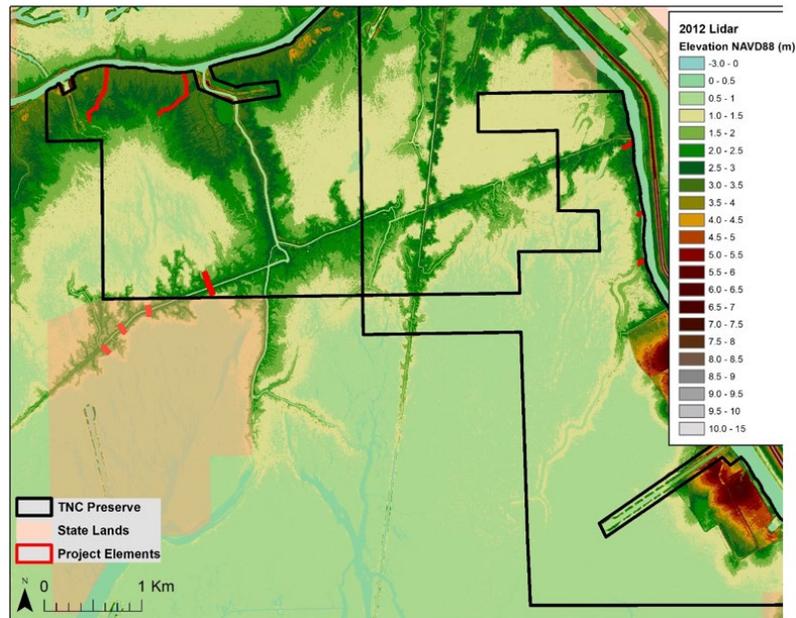


Figure 6: LIDAR elevation imagery of the project area, the Atchafalaya Basin Preserve Boundary, and the 12 proposed restorative elements locations.

Project Status

The project is located on state owned land and the Atchafalaya Basin Preserve, which is owned and managed by The Nature Conservancy (TNC). The project area is adjacent to Bayou Sorrel, the Florida Gas Pipeline canal, and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW). This project is currently undergoing engineering and design and permitting for 12 restorative elements. The element locations have been chosen to re-establish north to south flow, and thus increase water circulation and water quality, particularly dissolved oxygen levels. 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 monitor the change in water flow patterns resulting from restoration. The monitoring program will also track the corresponding effects on water quality, habitat, forest health, and biodiversity during flood and drainage events.

Murphy Lake Depth Restoration

The Murphy Lake Depth Restoration project is located on the southern end of the ABP’s East Grand Lake Upper Project. The project proposes to dredge Murphy Lake to improve access and water flow into the lake as well as reestablish historical deep water habitat. Additionally, this project will improve the capacity of southern water flow through the interior Basin that is expected to increase following the construction of the ABP’s East Grand Lake Upper Project.



Figure 7: (Left) Surveying effort map for the Lake Murphy project (Right) Sediment plug located at southeastern corner of Murphy Lake.

Project Status

Bathymetric, magnetometer, and topographic surveys are ongoing. The surveys will provide necessary information for CPRA to determine the feasibility of proposed dredging in the area.

RECREATION/ACCESS PROJECTS

Bayou Pigeon Boat Launch Improvements

The Bayou Pigeon Boat Launch Improvement project is currently funded and undergoing engineering and design and permitting. The Bayou Pigeon Boat Launch is one of the most heavily utilized boat launches for commercial and recreation access into the Atchafalaya Basin. The project includes construction of additional boat ramps with accompanying floating piers, improvements to the parking area, and installation of a new ADA compliant kayak launch to attract new users to the Basin.

Boy Scouts of America Swamp Base Boat Launch

A new commercial grade floating concrete marina dock system will be constructed in Henderson 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 for construction and is expected to be completed in 2023.

Cajun Coast Welcome Center Trail

The Cajun Coast Welcome Center Trail project will include construction of a boardwalk adjacent to the Cajun Coast Welcome Center in St. Mary Parish to provide visitors with access through a scenic cypress-tupelo swamp. The boardwalk will include informational signage to explain flood protection and its relation to the floodway. This project is currently unfunded.

Sandy Cove Boat Launch

The Sandy Cove Boat Launch is located in Iberia Parish. Upgrades were proposed in the State Atchafalaya Basin Master Plan to improve the boat launch, parking area, lighting, restrooms, and fishing area. The project is currently unfunded.

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.

Project Status

This effort is currently funded and is anticipated to start in FY24. There will be extensive opportunities for public input (public, TAG, ARBRE TF, stakeholders) which will be used to inform the development of the Master 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 2024 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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