

Update on the False River Ecosystem Restoration Project

September 5, 2012

This is a status report of the on-going progress on tasks undertaken prior and since the August 1, 2012 Public Meeting of the False River Watershed Council (the "Council).

1. **Task:** Develop Sediment Trap and Channel Maintenance Plan

Status: Draft plan developed by Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (LDNR) was sent to the Parish Administrator and Council members to review, and added to the agenda of the September meeting for discussion.

2. **Task:** Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) grant application for channel landowners to reduce erosion

Status: Parish Officials working with landowner to submit application and obtain funding.

3. **Task:** Develop Water Quality Monitoring Program

Status: Plan is under development - coordinating work being performed by Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) and Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) and identifying data needs. Draft Scope of Services has been prepared by LSU School of Renewable Resources that is currently under review. Funding source must be identified for additional work in scope of services beyond what is being performed by LDWF and LDEQ.

4. **Task:** Perform Watershed Drainage Network Assessment

Status: Four proposals from LDNR engineering contractors have been submitted, reviewed and a contractor selected. LDNR has obtained pre-approval from the Division of Administration to task out watershed drainage network assessment plan that was determined to best accomplish goals. The notice to proceed has been issued to the contractor. LDNR staff performed field reconnaissance and obtained GPS coordinates of all drainage inputs to False River. Funding will be by 2011 Capital Outlay appropriation.

5. **Task:** Obtain and review Pointe Coupee Parish Drainage Master Plan

Status: Plan has been provided by the Parish's consultant to LDNR. LDNR is evaluating impacts to the False River Watershed and will discuss any suggestions with Parish officials.

6. **Task:** Apply for Apache Corporation Tree Grant for Habitat Improvement

Status: LDNR submitted on behalf of the PCPJ a request for 150 one-gallon and 150 five-gallon trees to the Apache Corp. program. The request was not funded by the Apache Corp. program this

year. A grant application will be prepared and submitted to Apache Corp in the next grant cycle and additional partners for habitat improvement will be identified.

7. **Task:** Submit Beneficial Environmental Project Nomination to LDEQ for funding of sediment trap maintenance

Status: Completed and submitted by Parish Officials to LDEQ

8. **Task:** Make request to LDEQ for 319 (Non-Point Source) funding for False River Watershed

Status: Meeting held with LDEQ to discuss project. Chances for funding do not appear good due to lack of recognized water quality impairment in False River. LDNR will continue to monitor other potential non-point source funding sources. Barataria Terrebonne National Estuary Program funding may be available in 2014. Application for BTNEP funding has been submitted by the parish for consideration in the upcoming fiscal year budget cycle.

9. **Task:** Determine permitting requirements for work during drawdown if individuals want to perform dredge work other than what is paid for with public funds

Status: Under development – LDNR has discussed with State Lands, LDWF, and the Corps of Engineers what permits will be required for this type of work.

10. **Task:** Develop Best Management Practices (BMP's) for False River Watershed - Work with LDEQ for BMP's related to home construction and other items that may cause runoff issues and provide to Police Jury for consideration to use as part of building permit process or to otherwise make available.

Status: LDNR/LDWF/LDEQ working to develop BMPs to provide to Parish for consideration. Numerous discussions with parish on building code requirements regarding runoff control during construction activities have taken place. An erosion and sediment model ordinance was submitted to the PCPJ for their review and comments

11. **Task:** Obtain Grant to Expand Sewer System and improve Individual Wastewater Treatment Systems

Status: Parish has grant application in with LDEQ for \$100,000 for island evaluation, implementation projected at \$5-6 million – currently not funded. LDNR is working with Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (LDHH) to make information on web site available regarding when new sewer systems are required and best management practices for existing individual waste water treatment systems. Information obtained to date has been placed on web site.

12. **Task:** Develop Plan for Habitat Improvement

Status: LDWF developing brochures for camp/homeowners, working with LDWF on other grant opportunities. Identifying steps needed once Capital Outlay Funds become available to initiate habitat improvement immediately.

13. **Task:** Perform standardized sampling of fish population in False River to continue fishery evaluation and assist with management decisions

Status: Ongoing effort by LDWF. LDWF completed in April the last sampling round of a 3-year age & growth sampling program for largemouth bass. Analysis and result should be available later this year. LDWF has scheduled their fall electrofishing survey to estimate fish population for October.

14. **Task:** Extend No Wake Zone in North and South Flats

Status: Surveying has been completed and information provided to Parish to review and determine proper placement. The Council will review data at its September meeting.

15. **Task:** Set up fund for individuals and corporations to contribute to False River Ecosystem Restoration effort.

Status: False River Watershed Council discussed in August meeting and will have further discussion on proposal in September meeting.

16. **Task:** Further develop False River Ecosystem Restoration Website

Status: LDEQ water quality study from 2001 and 2011/2012 data has been posted to website along with a large map of False River Watershed. Frequently Asked Questions have been developed from emails submitted to False River email address and phone calls and have been posted to the False River website. Newspaper articles and other pertinent information have also been posted.

17. **Task:** Develop Public Outreach Plan

Status: In development, documents and presentations have been placed on web site along with news articles and frequently asked questions. Plans are to update website with list of actions completed and in progress. Press Releases will be issued as actions are taken. Other means of communication under consideration are email blasts, flyers, etc.

18. **Task:** Monitor Progress of Mitigation Bank Development in False River Watershed

Status: One company has indicated plans to establish a mitigation bank in the watershed and is currently in discussions with the Corps of Engineers but has not been approved to date. There have been indications that another mitigation banking company may also be interested in locating in this watershed.

19. **Task:** Obtain information from Corps of Engineers on plan that was being developed

Status: Interim Draft Feasibility Study has been obtained and posted to the web-site, and is under review

20. **Task:** Obtain funding through Capital Outlay for Ecosystem Restoration

Status: House Bill 2 was approved by the Legislature in the 2012 Regular Session and includes \$500,000 in Priority 2 funding and \$2.2 million in Priority 5 funding for the False River Ecosystem Restoration project. Bond Commission approval is necessary for these funds to become available for use. It is anticipated that a bond commission hearing on this funding will take place in September or October 2012. Parish Officials are currently working with the Division of Administration to provide them with necessary information. Preliminary steps being discussed with State and Parish officials to ensure rapid implementation once approved.