



Louisiana State University
Agricultural Center
 Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service



Mailing Address: P. O. Box 25100
 Baton Rouge, LA 70894-5100

Office: Knapp Hall
 (504) 388-2266
 Fax: (504) 388-2478

Louisiana Wetlands News

September 1996

Public Workshops Set for Coastal Wetlands

Four public workshops will be conducted during October 1996 to help the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) develop a comprehensive Coastal Wetlands Conservation Plan (hereafter referred to as the "Plan") for Louisiana. The four meetings will be co-sponsored by DNR and the LSU Agricultural Center's Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (LCES). The meetings will be held in Lake Charles, Metairie, Lafayette, and Houma.

Through this plan, Louisiana is attempting to achieve "no net loss" of coastal wetlands as a result of developmental (permitted)

activities. Key benefits to the state resulting from an approved Plan include:

(1) Increases availability of federal coastal restoration funding from the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA). The required state cost-share will be reduced from 25% to 15% which will allow for better leveraging of limited state restoration funds,

(2) Honors Congressional intent outlined in the CWPPRA legislation,

(3) Assists in CWPPRA reauthorization (which is set for Congressional

vote in 1998) by convincingly showing the state's willingness to address wetland loss caused by permitted developmental activities,

(4) Assists in the implementation of Louisiana's new coastal mitigation program, and

(5) Helps assure continued provision of important coastal wetland functions and values such as storm surge protection, flood protection, recreational and commercial fisheries productivity, water purification, wildlife habitat, nature-based tourism attractions, and the unique cultural diversity found in south Louisiana.



THE LOUISIANA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE PROVIDES EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN PROGRAMS AND EMPLOYMENT. LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY AND A. & M. COLLEGE, LOUISIANA PARISH GOVERNING BODIES, SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY, AND UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATING

 A State Partner in the Cooperative Extension System

Public participation in the Plan development process will be critical in achieving federal agency plan approval. Additionally, individuals and businesses that conduct activities requiring state and/or federal wetland developmental permits (such as Coastal Use Permits and Section 404 Permits) in the coastal zone should also attend. The Plan will ultimately outline how wetlands losses due to permitted activities will be mitigated and result in "no net loss" of wetland functions and values.

Coastal Wetlands Conservation Plan Public Workshops will be conducted in the four locations listed below:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>
October 17	Lake Charles Extension Service Office Hwy 335 at Burton Coliseum Ph. (318) 475-8815	7:00 p.m.
October 21	Metairie Joseph S. Yenni Bldg. 2nd Floor Council Chambers 1221 Elmwood Park Blvd. Ph. (504) 736-6442	2:00 p.m.
October 22	Lafayette National Biological Service Wetlands Research Center Cajundome Drive at Congress Ph. (318) 266-8500	2:00 p.m.
October 23	Houma Extension Service Office 511 Roussell St. Ph. (504) 873-6495	7:00 p.m.

Landowners, oil and gas companies, marine construction companies, pipeline companies, and the public are encouraged to attend.

Once a draft Plan is developed, a similar series of public meetings will be conducted in early 1997 to present the draft Plan and obtain public comments.

For more information about the October public workshops, contact the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources at (504) 342-7308 or the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service office in your parish.

3rd Annual Coastal and Wetlands Field Day Set

The 3rd Annual Coastal & Wetlands Field Day is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, October 15, 1996, at the USDA Plant Materials Center in Galliano. Public education and research are key components of the continuing effort to preserve threatened coastal and wetland areas and the field day allows for in-the-field evaluation of ongoing actions.

Last year, more than 100 participants from throughout the Gulf area attended, representing local, state and federal agencies; landowners; researchers; conservationists; and interested citizens.

Conference attendees participated in informational presentations and saw field demonstrations highlighting efforts to protect marshes and other wetlands.

This year's program will focus on the use of water diversions for enhancing deteriorating wetland areas. The morning program will be held at the Plant Materials Center and feature the following presentations:

- Use of water diversions for enhancing wetlands: the science & social implications,
- Landowners' perceptions related to wetland regulatory policy in coastal Louisiana, and
- Hypoxia: what are the causes?

Immediately after the complimentary, on-site lunch, attendees will break into groups to participate in the following concurrent field tours/demonstrations:

- Landowner recommendations: components for plant selection,
- Giant cutgrass plantings along Bayou Lafourche, and
- Thibodaux wastewater treatment using adjacent wetlands.

Although the program is free, and all interested persons are invited to attend, advance registration is required because of limited accommodations.

To register or obtain additional information, contact

Paul Coreil, Extension Wetland and Coastal Resources Specialist, at (504) 388-2266 (e-mail address: pcoreil@agctr.lsu.edu) or Alan Matherne, Extension Fisheries Agent at (504) 632-6852 (e-mail address: amatherne@mathco.com). Anyone having access to Internet can register and obtain additional information by accessing the *Coastal & Wetlands Field Day* website (home page) at <http://mathco.com/cwfd>.

Obstruction Removal Scoping Meetings Set

The Louisiana State Senate will sponsor three scoping meetings to investigate the feasibility of consolidating all underwater obstruction removal programs in Louisiana and begin focusing more on obstruction removal. This action follows recommendations made by an Underwater Obstruction Task Force that met in 1993-94 and developed a Pilot Underwater Obstruction Removal Plan for Louisiana.

For more than 15 years, the state Fishermen's Gear Compensation Fund has allowed commercial fishermen to make claims for lost gear caused by unidentifiable

obstructions located in state coastal zone waters out to 3 miles. The Compensation Program is funded through oil & gas lease-related leaseholder assessments. The legislation setting up the compensation program did not specifically require obstruction removal, only compensation for lost fishing gear. Currently, there is a two claim per year limitation, and the maximum payment per claim is \$5,000. Only lost gear can be claimed. Economic impact (lost income) is not eligible.

Many feel the only long-term solution to underwater obstructions is removal, and the scoping meetings are being held to obtain feedback on the feasibility of implementing a hang removal program in Louisiana.

Three meetings will be held at 7:00 p.m. at the following locations:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Place</u>
September 12	Lafitte City Hall
October 1	Cameron Parish Police Jury Annex
October 15	Houma Municipal Auditorium

All commercial fishermen, oil and gas industry representatives, and other interested parties are urged to attend.

For more information, contact David Smith or Cathy Ortego at the Senate Office at 504-342-0682 or call your parish Extension Office.

Conference Announcement:

Advanced Fish and Wildlife Management Tools - Entering the 21st Century

The Louisiana Wildlife Biologists Association (along with several co-sponsors) will hold a conference at the LSU Agricultural Center in Baton Rouge November 14-15 titled *Advanced Fish and Wildlife Management Tools - Entering the 21st Century*. The conference will center on using geographic information systems (GIS), remote sensing, telemetry, electronic communication, and global positioning systems (GPS) for natural resource management.

A conference program and registration will be mailed to everyone receiving this newsletter. The program is shaping up to be very exciting, and a jambalaya social is

planned for the evening of November 14.

Mark your calendars and look for the conference program in the mail.

Wetlands Workshop Planned in Cocodrie

The Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana will conduct its 8th Annual Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Workshop in Cocodrie on October 19-20. Included in the workshop will be boat tours to nearby marshes and remote barrier islands off Terrebonne Parish. Local residents and guest speakers will tell participants about efforts being made to restore fragile wetlands and the value of these wetlands to Louisiana citizens.

Registration is \$95 and includes two night's accommodations, five meals, lectures, two boat tours and local entertainment.

Attendance is on a first-paid basis.

For more information, call the Coalition (504) 280-6680.

**American Water
Resources
Association Fall
Symposium
- Protecting
Louisiana Waters
'96 -**

On Wednesday, October 9, the American Water Resources Association and the American Institute of Professional Geologists will sponsor a conference titled *Protecting Louisiana's Waters '96* at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Gonzales.

Topics include (1) activities at the Louisiana Water Resources Research Institute, (2) coastal restoration activities - focus on water quality issues, (3) nonpoint source pollution - statewide education program, (3) watershed protection:

focus on habitat and floodplain management, (4) innovative technology in industrial and municipal wastewater treatment, (5) remediation of groundwater: problems and techniques, (6) the Safe Drinking Act, (7) geographic information systems (GIS) in water resources studies, and (8) mineral resources and water-related issues.

Pre-registration by October 1 (includes lunch) is \$45. Regular registration after October 1 (including lunch) is \$55. Student registration is \$20 including lunch. Exhibitors are encouraged.

For more information, contact Ann Burruss at (504) 355-6555.

**Louisiana Wetlands:
A Field Trip Guide**

The LSU Agricultural
Center's Louisiana

Cooperation Extension Service, Baton Rouge Earth Day, and the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana recently cooperated in the publication of a wetland field trip guide titled *Louisiana Wetlands: A Field Trip Guide*. The guide lists 15 popular wetland field trip sites located approximately two hours from Baton Rouge that would be appropriate for elementary and high school field trips. A map is also included to help provide travel directions.

Information on each site includes (1) location, (2) available facilities, (3) recommended age for potential student visitors, (4) required entry fees, and (5) contact person.

To obtain a free copy of the guide, contact my office in Baton Rouge.

For more information about any topic discussed in this newsletter, or to obtain wetland or coastal resource-related educational information, contact your parish Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service office.

Sincerely,

Paul Coreil
Associate Specialist (Wetlands)