

Image courtesy of Lenny Wells Photography (www.naturallylouisiana.com)



Chapter 1: **INTRODUCTION**

A. VISION FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION IN LOUISIANA

Through a series of six stakeholders meetings across Louisiana, online and random surveys, coordinated GIS mapping, and working closely with the **2014-2019 Louisiana SCORP** Task Force Committee (TFC), the following vision was developed:

SCORP VISION

To provide Louisiana communities with well-maintained, professionally run recreational facilities, natural areas, and trail systems in order to promote healthy, active lifestyle choices.

A Visioning Workshop was conducted with the TFC, and included developing strategies and recommendations based on all input received for the **2014-2019 Louisiana SCORP**. The five areas of focus were:

- Economic Tourism
- Trails
- Innovation
- Community Outdoor Recreation
- Cooperation and Coordination

A summary of these strategies and regional priority recommendations can be found in **Appendix H**.

This vision builds upon the Top Ten priorities identified for various categories in the 2009-2013 Louisiana SCORP. The categories, which outlined parish specific issues, needs and opportunities as articulated through the public engagement process, included:

- Funding
- Acquisition
- Development
- Promotion and Marketing
- Planning and Implementation
- Program Development
- Greater Access
- Management

Each of the categories had priorities associated with them. These priorities were used to inform the vision for the **2014-2019 Louisiana SCORP**. A full list of these previous planning efforts is included in **Appendix A**.

C. ALIGNMENT WITH NATIONAL OUTDOOR RECREATION PRIORITIES

The America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative is intended to develop a 21st Century conservation and recreation agenda. AGO takes as its premise that lasting conservation solutions should come from the American people - that the protection of our natural heritage is a non-partisan objective that is shared by all Americans. This initiative turns to communities for local, grass roots conservation initiatives to rework inefficient policies and partner the federal government with states, tribes, and local communities.

A unique opportunity exists for alignment among national, state, parish, and local outdoor, recreation, conservation, and natural resource goals. From a national perspective, President Barack Obama's 2010 America's Great Outdoors Initiative has identified the following recommendations relevant to Louisiana:

Connecting Americans to the Great Outdoors

- Enhance recreational access and opportunities

Conserving and Restoring America's Great Outdoors

- Establish great urban parks and community green spaces
- Conserve our national parks, wildlife refuges, forests, and other federal lands and waters
- Protect and renew rivers and other waters

"Our natural areas and waterways, whether publicly or privately owned, are reconnected, healthy, and resilient and support both human needs and the wildlife that depend on them."

*America's Great Outdoors
Vision Statement*

The **America's Great Outdoor Report** provides an important source of comparison for the State of Louisiana. A full version of the 2011 report can be found online at www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors/documents/upload/AGO-Report-With-All-Appendices-3-1-11.pdf.

D. VALUE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION IN LOUISIANA

The value of outdoor recreation in Louisiana is demonstrated through the three concepts of sustainability: economic, social (health and wellness), and environmental.

Economic

Little has been done to prove the economic benefit of Louisiana parks. A study completed for the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism in 2006 by Dr. Harsha Chacko of the University of New Orleans examined the contributions of the Office of State Parks to the economy and quality of life for the year 2004-2005. The study summarized the economics, overnight visitor profile, state park experience, and Hurricane Katrina post-script March 2006 for Louisiana State Parks only. www.ltgov.la.gov/Assets/documentarchive/impact-report/State%20Parks.pdf

In addition, the website agrilife.org/cromptonrpts/selected-books-articles-and-presentations/selected-articles/ offers a quick review of available analysis on multiple studies that could provide justification for conducting an economic impact study.

Public recreation facilities have much to gain from groups of interested citizens. Support groups, friends groups, non-profit organizations and the like have demonstrated various levels of assistance in development, fund raising and operation.

Residents of areas adjacent to Baton Rouge's Gayosa Park organized in support of redevelopment of that facility. Initially the interested parties identified the improvements they felt were needed at the park in keeping with the qualities of the community. Renovation plans were prepared and community members engaged in fund raising activities accumulating

monies needed to achieve the development. Through sweat equity, the neighborhood engaged a greater connection with the facility. Now completed, Gayosa Park is attracting increased numbers of users from the immediate area.

Parkway Partners in New Orleans is a non-profit organization that empowers citizens to preserve, maintain and beautify green space in the city. The organization was founded in 1982 in response to massive budget cuts to the New Orleans Department of Parks and Parkways. Today Parkway Partners supports extensive programming throughout Orleans Parish, including community gardens and urban farms, schoolyard gardens, planting of trees, and development and restoration of multiple parks.

The Louisiana Office of State Parks is served by multiple friends groups. Most of these groups identify connections with specific recreation sites or historic sites. For example, the Friends of Palmetto Island State Park provide assistance in delivery of interpretive programs, facilitating concession stand services and development of primitive camping areas. Through fund raising as well as manpower, this friends group helps fill gaps to enhance the visitor experience of park guests.

Many outdoor enthusiasts visit Louisiana as a destination for hunting, fishing, birding and other forms of outdoor recreation, which significantly impacts the state's economy. The LSU Agriculture Center recently released an article titled "Outdoor Recreation in Today's Economy" that quantifies these benefits. A full version of this article can be found online at www.lsuagcenter.com/en/our_offices/parishes/lincoln/news/outdoor-recreation-in-todays-economy.htm.

In 2012 and 2013, Louisiana surveyed waterfowl hunters to gather their opinions on topics related to this form of recreation. The 2012 survey primarily focused on hunting zones, while the 2013 survey focused on hunting season dates. Both surveys revealed that the majority of waterfowl hunters are men, with an average age of 44 years old. A complete summary of those survey results is included in **Appendix J**.

Information and statistics for hunting, fishing, and boating license revenue in Louisiana over the past 5 years can be found here: www.wlf.la.gov/licenses/statistics



Louisiana is a popular destination for hunting (Image courtesy of Todd Baker/Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries)

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State Park and Historic Site Visitation

Visitation trends at Louisiana State Park and State Historic Site facilities have trended down over the last four years, but only slightly. The primary decline has been recorded in overnight visitation. In Fiscal Year 2010 the Louisiana Office of State Parks had 924,209 overnight visitors, including 622,003 using campers and an additional 210,157 in cabins and lodges. By the end of Fiscal Year 2009, overnight visitation was reported as 827,813 with 552,510 using campers and an additional 186,019 in cabins and lodges.

During the same period, day use visitation remained almost constant, ranging from a high of 1,327,968 visitors in Fiscal Year 2011 to a low of 1,139,191 in Fiscal Year 2013.

Visitation of State Historic Sites across Louisiana has also remained almost constant, with a high of 148,915 in Fiscal Year 2011 to a low of 125,109 in Fiscal Year 2012.

Table 1.1: FY 09-10 Visits

FY 2009-2010 Visits			
Day Use	1,144,585	Campers	622,003
Overnight	924,209	Lodges	18,964
Total	2,068,794	Cabins	191,193
State Historic Site Visitation	148,915		

Table 1.2: FY 10-11 Visits

FY 2010-2011 Visits			
Day Use	1,327,968	Campers	620,691
Overnight	914,015	Lodges	21,670
Total	2,241,983	Cabins	188,322
State Historic Site Visitation	142,861		

Table 1.3: FY 11-12 Visits

FY 2011-2012 Visits			
Day Use	1,277,249	Campers	579,954
Overnight	873,403	Lodges	22,278
Total	2,150,652	Cabins	182,465
State Historic Site Visitation	125,109		

Table 1.4: FY 12-13 Visits

FY 2012-2013 Visits			
Day Use	1,139,191	Campers	552,510
Overnight	827,813	Lodges	21,773
Total	1,967,004	Cabins	164,246
State Historic Site Visitation	142,279		

While it is important to consider park and historic site visitation trends, there are factors weighing on these results. These include closures of cabins for an extended period at Fontainebleau State Park due to damage from Hurricane Isaac, closures of cabins at Chicot State Park for renovations, drawdowns of lakes and reservoirs which limit access for boating and fishing, weather incidents causing closures due to damage, and budget actions curtailing operating hours of State Historic Sites from seven days-a-week to just five days-a-week.

An analysis of overnight guests at Fontainebleau State Park before and after Hurricane Isaac identified the impact of natural disasters on visitation trends. Hurricane Isaac reached the Louisiana coast on August 28, 2012 pushing a storm surge onto the north shore of Lake Ponchartrain and seriously damaging cabins at Fontainebleau State Park. The 20 cabins at Fontainebleau have yet to be reopened while repairs are being completed. In Fiscal Year 2012 Fontainebleau State Park welcomed 108,567 overnight guests. With cabins closed due to storm damage, overnight visitation for Fiscal Year 2013 at Fontainebleau State Park was 68,347. This decline of 40,220 for just the last 10 months of the fiscal year is attributed to this cabin closure.

Social

Land and Water Conservation Fund

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) assistance has supported hundreds of model projects since the first grant was approved for Port Hudson State Historic Site on December 22, 1965. Louisiana has received more than \$73.2 million in matching fund assistance through the LWCF for 722 projects in 62 of the state's 64 parishes. These projects have included ball fields and boat ramps, tennis courts and hiking trails, swimming pools and splash pads, picnic areas and playgrounds.

St. Tammany Parish's Pelican Park is an example of how a small initial investment of LWCF assistance inspired continued growth into a major facility with significant impact for the local community. An LWCF investment of \$49,663.82 in a project sponsored by St. Tammany Parish Recreation District #1 has grown into a vital part of the community. The park consists of 32 athletic fields, a three-court gym, a two-court gym, the 46,000 square foot multi-purpose Castine Center, paved roads, walking trails, dog park, batting cages, sand volleyball courts, an 18-hole disc golf course and parking for more than 1,700 vehicles. On a typical Saturday, the park hosts more than 12,000 visitors with more than one million visitors each year.

Pelican Park also serves as a major economic generator for the community through shows and tournaments for a variety of sports. In 2011 the park hosted 11 major sport tournaments with 50-200 participating teams that brought thousands of visitors to the area for the weekend. The park also employs 35 full-time employees supported by an army of volunteers.

Nearby Pelican Park is Tammany Trace (www.tammanytrace.org/), the first Rails-to-Trails project in Louisiana. Although this facility has not received LWCF assistance, the project transformed an unwanted rail line that cut across the southern portion of St. Tammany Parish into a 31-mile corridor for hiking, biking, and equestrian use. The "Trace" offers wildlife sightings of turtles, snakes, rabbits, birds, deer, and even an occasional bald eagle.

Development of the facility has not been cheap. Millions of dollars have been poured into Tammany Trace during more than two decades of development. Annual spending by the Parish on the Trace is more than \$1.25 million with funding from numerous sources including grants, donations, parish government general funds, and cell phone tower revenues.

Supporters say that the money has been well spent. Nearly 230,000 people use the Trace in a given year. The Trace does not fit the traditional Louisiana economic development model, but supporters credit the facility's importance in the area's economy. While no formal economic development study has been conducted, local shops do cater to runners and cyclists. Restaurants and cafes near the Trace attribute boosts in business on nice weekends to the trail. Perhaps more importantly, St. Tammany Parish economic development leaders credit the Trace as being a key component in attracting new businesses to the community.

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Model recreational developments are not limited to the southern part of the state. Kiroli Park, an LWCF-assisted facility in West Monroe, offers 150 acres of natural beauty. The park features playgrounds, a unique conservatory, a dog park, tennis courts, numerous gardens, picnic areas, fishing ponds and hiking trails. Most of the park is wooded and accessible through paved streets and trails that hold surprises like a suspension bridge, covered bridge, observation tower, and elevated walkways.

A short drive west is Lincoln Parish Park north of Ruston. This LWCF-assisted facility became fully operational in 1995 and hosts more than 100,000 guests annually. Facilities are developed around a 30-acre lake and include nationally recognized biking trails, 90 RV campsites, boating, fishing, swimming, and picnic areas.

LWCF assistance also has been instrumental in assisting local government agencies to rebuild recreation areas in the aftermath of natural disasters. Olla Sports Park in LaSalle Parish was developed in the aftermath of tornados, and Tuten Park in Lake Charles is a natural area in the middle of residential and commercial development that was redeveloped after Hurricane Rita.

The 1965 Land and Water Conservation Fund Act is set to expire in 2015. In order to meet the outdoor recreation needs of all Americans for the next 50 years, the Society of Outdoor Recreation Professional (SORP) created [The 2015 Land and Water Conservation Fund Act - Adapting the Landmark 1965 LWCF to Meet the Outdoor Recreation Needs of Americans for the Next 50 Years](#). This paper presents SORP's core values to strengthening the LWCF, and provides a proposed 2015 edition of the document. An online version of this report is located here: www.recpro.org/assets/SORP_Reports/2013_adapting_lwcf_2015_final_compressed.pdf.

Rails-with-Trails

According to the National Trails Training Partnership, a trail's success depends on good design. "Design of a whole trail system as well as its component parts must meet the needs of the anticipated users, which include people of all ages, socioeconomic status, abilities, and activities (bicycling, walking, running, wheelchair, equestrian, inline skating). Design elements such as making trails aesthetically pleasing and easily accessible, with multiple points of entry, will also encourage use of the trail."

The main finding in a recent study from the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy on the development of multi-use trails along active rail lines is that "rails-with-trails are safe, common, and growing." Entitled *America's Rails-with-Trails: A Resource for Planners, Agencies and Advocates on Trails Along Active Railroad Corridors*, this report studies the characteristics of 88 projects in 33 states. Key findings include:

- A 260% increase in rails-with-trails since 2000
- A growing trend for rails-with-trails alongside local and regional transit corridors
- Evidence that rails-with-trails provide a safe travel alternative

Visit the following link to download a current copy of this study: www.railstotrails.org/ourWork/reports/railwithtrail/report.html.

Currently, there is not a "one-stop shop" source for trail maps and information in the state. Nonetheless, the following online resources may be helpful:

- Complete Streets Work Group – www.dotd.la.gov/programs_grants/completestreets/
- www.bikelouisiana.com/
- www.cajuncyclists.org/
- crescentcitycyclists.org/chain-links/
- N.O. Bike Map – bikeeasy.org/

Bayou Teche Paddle Trail (130 miles)

The Center for Cultural and Eco-Tourism (CCET) partnered with the TECHÉ Project and the National Parks Service to plan and implement this 130-mile long paddle trail. After two years of planning, the Bayou Teche Paddle Trail is moving to the implementation phase.

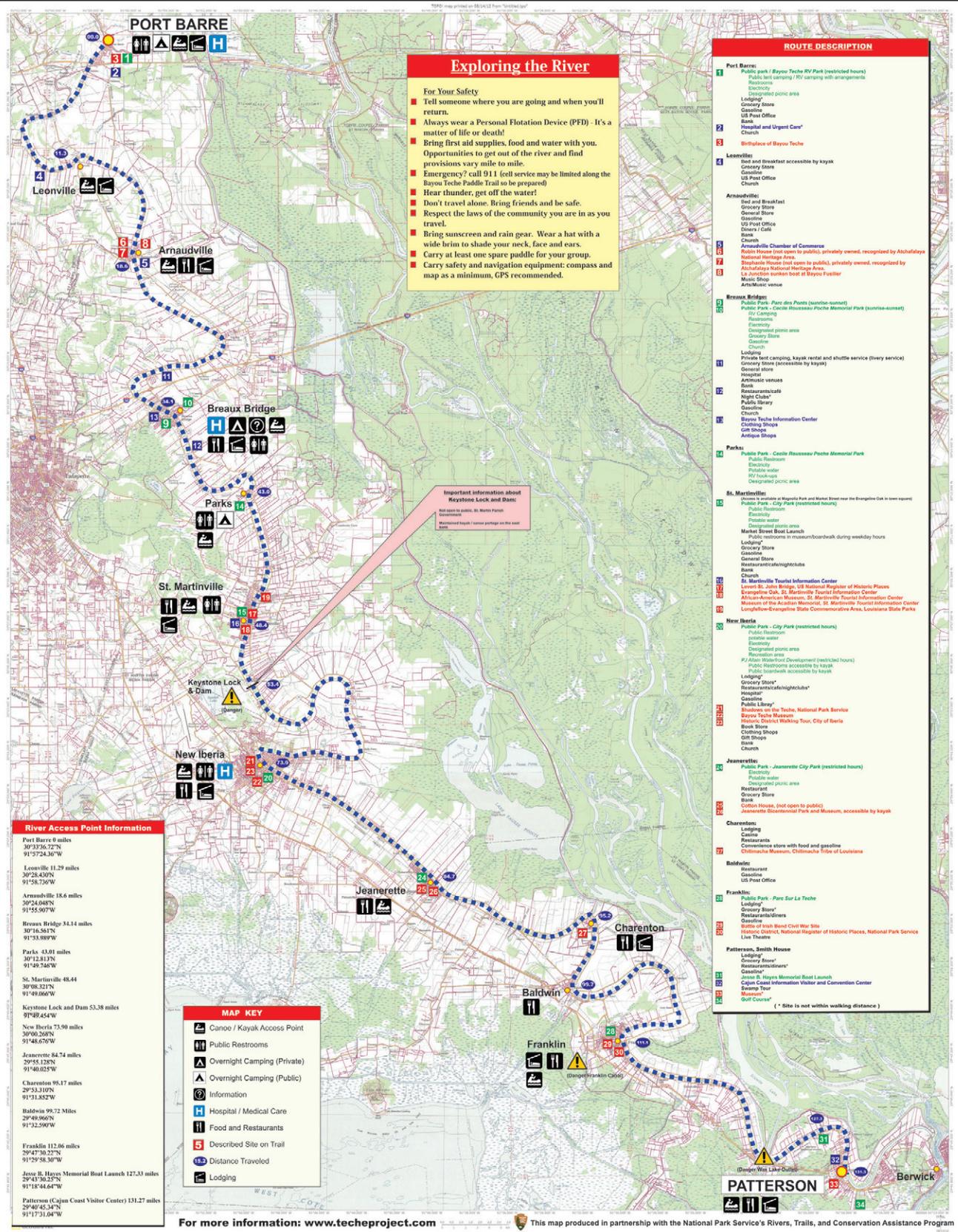
- techeproject.org/bayou-teche-paddle-trail/
- www.wbrz.com/news/four-acadiana-parishes-create-paddle-trail/
- ccet.louisiana.edu/Conference/bayou-teche-paddle-trail.html

The Tour du Teche is an annual race for canoes and kayaks along the entire 130-mile length of Bayou Teche that attracts both competitive and recreational paddlers alike. The event began in 2010 to introduce the area to paddlers and other eco-tourists, as well as show off the recreational, aesthetic, cultural, and economic value of the Bayou to local residents. Since then, the event has become known not only as a tough challenge, but also a fun party for participants of all ages. To find out more, visit www.tourduteche.com.



Paddlers take part in Tour du Teche, a nationally-known annual race on Bayou Teche (Images courtesy of Ron J. Berard/Tour de Teche)

Figure 1.1: Bayou Teche Paddle Trail Launch and Support Facilities Map



Map courtesy of the Bayou Teche Paddle Trail report (cct.louisiana.edu/Conference/BTPT-plan-final.pdf)



Recreation Groups, Providers, and On-line Resources

- Cajun Coast Visitors Convention and Bureau - www.cajuncoast.com
- Louisiana North - www.explorelouisiananorth.org
- Baton Rouge Bike Club (BRBC) - www.batonrougebikeclub.com
- Baton Rouge Area Mountain Bike Association (BRAMBA) - www.bramba.org
- Audubon Golf Trail - audubongolf.com
- Louisiana Outdoors Outreach Program (LOOP) – www.crt.state.la.us/louisiana-state-parks/louisiana-outdoors-outreach-program/loop-new-orleans/index
- BREC Outdoor Adventure – www.facebook.com/brecadventure
- www.bikelouisiana.com/bike-trails-search
- www.traillink.com/trailsearch.aspx?state=LA
- www.mapmyride.com/us/baton-rouge-la/
- www.mapmyride.com/us/houma-la/
- www.bramba.org/trails.php
- www.brec.org/index.cfm/page/350
- www.downtownbatonrouge.org/aroundbike.asp
- alltrails.com/us/louisiana/baton-rouge
- www.batonrougebikeclub.com/
- www.scout.me/bike-paths-and-trails--near--louisiana
- bccbike.org/
- Wanna Go Paddle Facebook page - www.facebook.com/groups/104713559643727/
- www.explorelouisiananorth.org/itinerarycategories.aspx
- kayaklouisiana.org/
- www.refugewatch.org/2012/08/10/new-paddling-trails-to-open-at-tensas-river-nwr-in-louisiana/
- www.atchafalaya.org/page.php?name=Paddling
- canoeandtrail.com/
- bccbike.org/
- Bikes Belong Coalition - bikesbelong.org
- American Trails - www.AmericanTrails.org



Recreation programs can introduce participants to new activities and adventures [Images courtesy of the Baton Rouge Recreation and Park Commission (BREC)]

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Environmental

The LSU AgCenter recently received a grant from the Walton Family Foundation to develop three paddling trails, such as the Bayou Bartholomew paddling trail, that will draw outdoor enthusiasts to the northeast part of the state. Additional grants will continue to support other ecotourism initiatives. An online article detailing this project can be found here: www.lsuagcenter.com/en/our_offices/parishes/Franklin/News/Ecotourism-project-leads-to-3-canoeing-trails.htm.

The Memphis District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, released the Assessment of River Related Recreation and Access, the second report authorized by the Lower Mississippi River Resource Assessment. This report will address recreation on the Lower Mississippi River and the need for facilities and access. The report is available at: www.mvm.usace.army.mil/Missions/Projects/LMMRA.aspx.



Canoeists explore a cypress tree along the Bayou Bartholomew paddling trail near Chemin-A-Haut State Park (Image by John Ruskey, courtesy of the LSU AgCenter [website](http://www.lsuagcenter.com))



A fun day of fishing (Image courtesy of the Louisiana Office of Tourism)



Teamwork makes the dream work (Image courtesy of the Louisiana Office of Tourism)



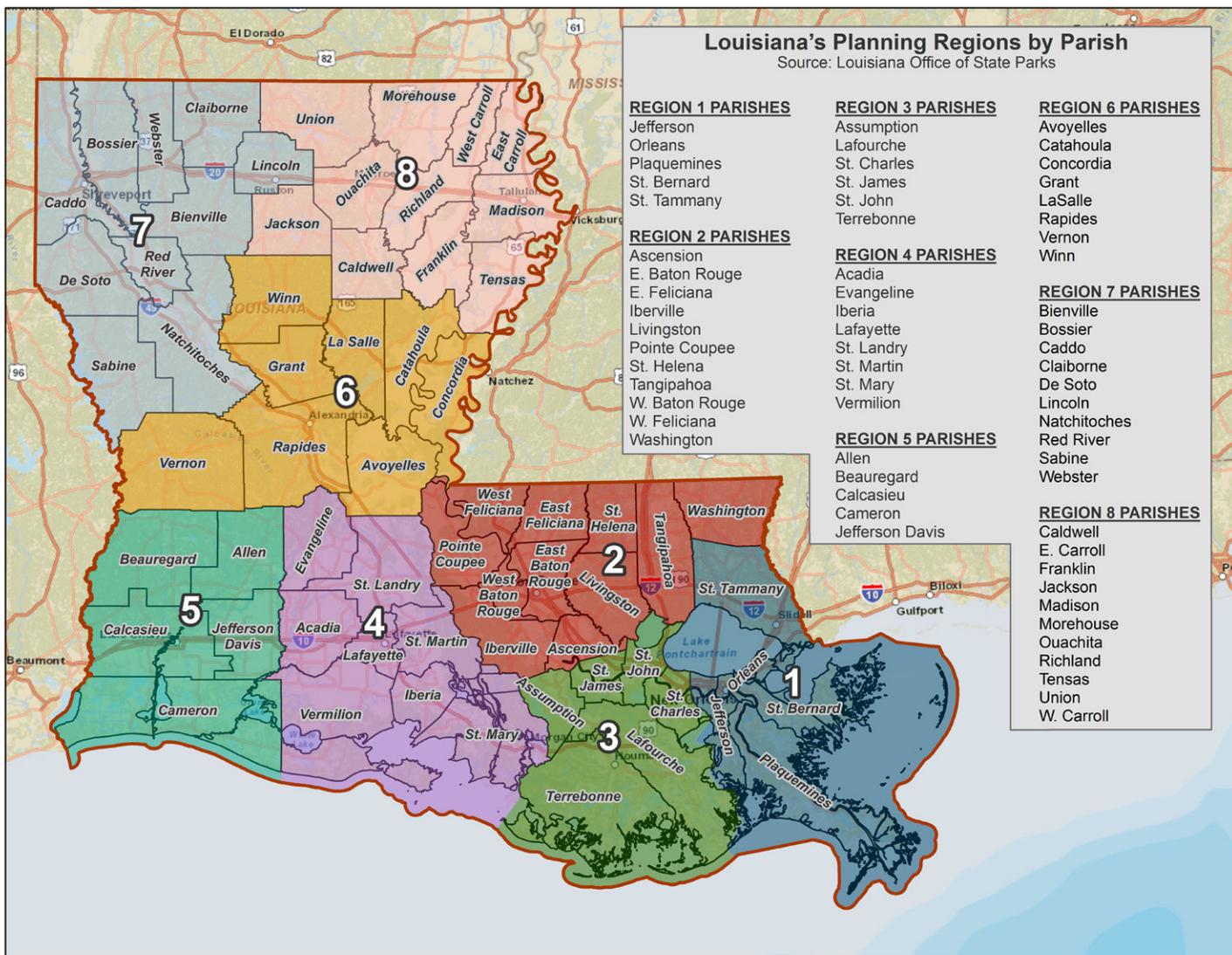
Fontainebleau State Park (Image courtesy of David Gallent)

E. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND ANALYSIS

Overview

The population data used in this demographic profile of the State of Louisiana comes from ESRI Business Information Solutions, based on the U.S. Census. A summary of demographic highlights is followed by more detailed demographic analysis. This plan includes a demographic analysis in eight planning regions as identified by the Louisiana Office of State Parks. The map in **Figure 1.2** identifies each of the eight regions.

Figure 1.2: Louisiana Planning Regions



Map courtesy of NTB Associates, Inc.

Demographic Analysis

Population Projections

Table 1.5 illustrates the population forecast for the State of Louisiana, which is predicted to grow by about 10 percent from 2010 to 2023, reaching 5,002,273. The biggest growth areas are predicted to be Region 2 (7 percent growth from 2010 – 2018) and Region 1 (12 percent growth from 2010 – 2018). Region 1 is predicted to come close to recovering its 2000 (pre-Katrina) population (1,224,058) level by 2018 (predicted at 1,195,698).

Table 1.5: Population projections for Louisiana*

US Census (2000 and 2010) and ESRI Projections	
2000 Population	4,468,976
2010 Population	4,533,372
2013 Estimated	4,643,169
2018 Projected	4,823,289
2023 Projected	5,002,273

Source: U.S. Census and ESRI Business Information Solutions.

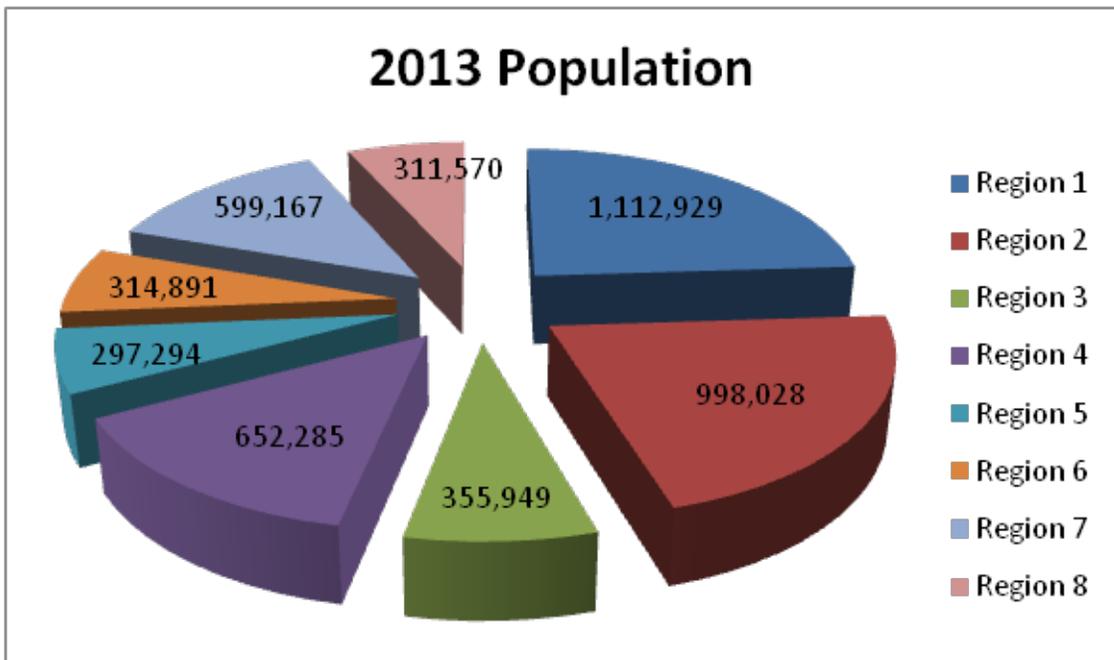
*GreenPlay, LLC, calculated projected population for 2023 based on ESRI growth multiplier of .76 % for the State of Louisiana.

Louisiana Subregions

The population distribution represented in **Figure 1.3** shows that in 2013:

- Region 1, including New Orleans, has the largest population (1,112,929), followed closely by Region 2, which includes Baton Rouge (998,028).
- Region 4 with Lafayette (652,285) and Region 7 with Shreveport (599,167) have mid-range population levels.
- Region 5 in southwest Louisiana has the lowest population (297,294).

Figure 1.3: 2013 Louisiana Population by Planning Region*

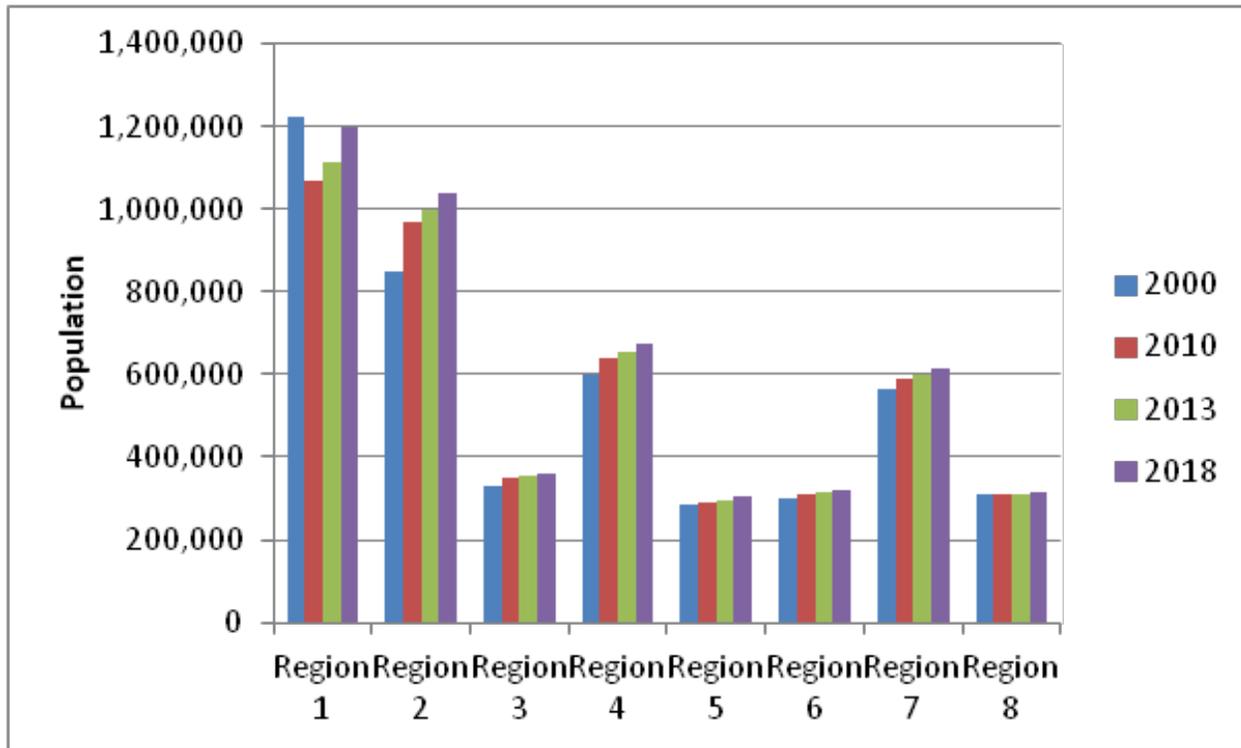


Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions 2013 estimate based on U.S. 2010 Census data

*Refer to Page 17, Figure 1.2 for the Louisiana Planning Regions Map

Figure 1.4 illustrates the population growth trends for the eight regions over the 2000 – 2018 period. The New Orleans area (Region 1) has not yet recovered the population loss due to Hurricane Katrina.

Figure 1.4: 2013 Louisiana Planning Region* Population Trends, 2000 - 2018



Source: U.S. Census and ESRI Business Information Solutions 2013
 (2013 populations are ESRI estimates and 2018 populations are ESRI projections)
 *Refer to Page 17, Figure 1.2 for the Louisiana Planning Regions Map

Population Distribution, Median Age, and Median Income were collected for each planning region. Refer to **Table K.1** in **Appendix K** for more information.

- The median age in the 8 planning regions ranges from 34.4 in Region 2 (holding 21% of the State’s population) to 37.6 in adjacent Region 1 (holding 24% of the population).
- The median income in the planning regions spans a \$15,000 range from a low of \$35,902 in Region 8 to a high of \$50,854 in Region 3.

Population: Age Ranges, Ethnicity Distribution, and Income Distribution Information

Age Distribution

As part of the population trend analysis, it is useful to understand age distribution in Louisiana as a whole as well as in each of the planning regions. According to ESRI Business Information Solutions estimates based on the 2010 U.S. Census, the 2013 median age for the State of Louisiana is 35.8. Comparisons of age distributions in the state are illustrated in **Appendix K. Figure K.1** compares the age distribution in the United States with that of Louisiana. **Figure K.2** illustrates the full age distribution for each planning region, as estimated by Esri for 2013, based on 2010 U.S. Census data.

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Figure K.1 illustrates that the age distribution for the State of Louisiana (median age 35.8) and the United States (median age 37.6) compare favorably with the United States as a whole trending slightly older. **Figure K.2** illustrates the age distribution among the eight Louisiana planning regions.

- Some outliers to note:
 - Regions 2 and 7 have significantly higher population in the 20-24 age range than in the other regions
 - Regions 1 and 2 have noticeably higher populations in the 25-34 age range
 - Region 3 has a higher population in the 45-54 age range
 - Region 1 has a higher population in the 55-64 age range
- In general, Regions 2, 3, and 4 have lower populations in the 65-85+ age range than in other regions
- Regions 1, 6, and 7 have the greatest senior populations (65-85+), and Region 1 trends older than any of the other regions, in general

Ethnic Distribution

The current ethnic breakdown for the State of Louisiana shows that a significant percentage (61.8%) of Louisiana residents are Caucasian, but that African Americans also have a significant presence in the state (32.3%). Statewide, the next highest ethnic cohort is Hispanic Origin (of any race) at 4.9 percent. In **Appendix K, Figure K.3** illustrates the racial/ethnic distribution statewide and among Louisiana's eight regions. **Figure K.4** illustrates the distribution of Hispanics (of any race) in the eight regions of Louisiana.

Population Demographics Summary by Planning Region

- Distribution of the Caucasian population in Louisiana ranges from a high of 73.1% in Region 5 to a low of 56.7% in Region 7.
- The African American population is moderately well distributed among the regions, with the highest population (38.2%) in Region 7 and the lowest population (22.3%) in Region 5.
- Regions 5, 6 and 7 hold the largest American Indian populations at .7%, .9%, and .8%, respectively.
- Region 1 is the most diverse with the highest percentage of Asian people (2.9%), along with those of two or more races (2.2%), "some other race" alone (3.1%), a significant percentage of African Americans (34.6%), and an American Indian presence (5%).
- The Hispanic population is notable as well in Louisiana (4.9% statewide), with the highest Hispanic percentage found in Region 1 (9.1%).

Household Income

According to ESRI Business Information Solutions (based on 2010 U.S. Census data), the estimated median household income for Louisiana residents was \$43,437 in 2013. In **Appendix K, Figure K.5** demonstrates the full income distribution for the State of Louisiana. **Figure K.6** reflects the median income for each planning region and for the state as a whole in 2013.

- Region 3 has the highest median household income in the state in 2013, estimated at \$50,854.
- Sixteen-to-nineteen percent (16-19%) of household income levels in all of the regions were in the \$50,000 – 75,999 range.
- Region 8 has the most households with income levels of under \$15,000 (22.6%) while Region 1 has the most households with income levels of \$200,000+ (3.9%).
- Data for Region 8 reflected the lowest median income at \$35,902, with 63% earning under \$50,000.

F. OUTDOOR RECREATION IMPACTS ON HEALTH AND LIVABILITY

Extensive research has been conducted on the positive impacts of outdoor recreation participation on health and livability. In a 2013 report, the United Health Foundation identified Louisiana as the state with the third highest obesity rate in the nation, with 66 percent of the population recognized as overweight. To positively address this issue, the [Blue Cross and Blue Shield \(BC/BS\) of Louisiana Foundation](#), in collaboration with Pennington Biomedical Research Center, funded a total of \$10.6 million to 12 projects around the state in its 2012 Challenge Grant program, leveraging an additional \$16.9 million in matching funds.²

Many of the Challenge Grant projects are designed to involve youth in outdoor adventure recreation, encourage community gardening, improve play areas, and construct trails and pathways in both rural and urban communities in Louisiana. Outcomes will be measured over the course of the three year grant period, using metrics such as measuring usage of new trails, parks, sports facilities, and playgrounds through user surveys and interviews.

Nationally, studies have shown that a connected system of trails increases the level of physical activity in a community.



Capital Area Pathways Project (CAPP) partners joined together for a ground breaking ceremony, officially launching construction of the new walking/running/biking path for East Baton Rouge Parish residents (Image courtesy of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation)

This fact has been scientifically demonstrated through the Trails for Health initiative of the CDC.³ Trails can provide a wide variety of opportunities for being physically active, such as walking/running/hiking, rollerblading, wheelchair recreation, bicycling, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, fishing, hunting, and horseback riding. Communities are recognizing that active use of trails for positive health outcomes is an excellent way to encourage people to adopt healthy lifestyle changes.

² "Blue Cross Foundation Announces up to \$10 Million in Challenge Grants to Fight Obesity in Louisiana," BlueCross Blue Shield of Louisiana, <http://www.bcbsla.com/AboutBlue/mediacenter/news/Pages/BlueCrossFoundationAnnouncesupto10MillioninChallengeGrantstoFightObesityinLouisiana.aspx>.

³ "The Guide to Community Preventive Services," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/index.html>



Kids at Valencia Park showed off their gardening skills as part of the Healthy, Green and Into the Outdoors project (Image courtesy of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation)



HGIO participants enjoy mountain bicycling in Shreveport (Image courtesy of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation)

“The Healthy Green and Into the Outdoors (HGIO) Youth Corps program is just one of the projects developed in the wake of last year’s \$600,000 Challenge Grant award from the BCBSLA Foundation, with the goal of supporting healthy lifestyle opportunities for the residents of Shreveport. Youth Corps was developed as a mentorship program allowing high school students to work with kids 6-12 years old on a variety of projects (including physical fitness challenges, cooking classes, gardening/farming and volunteer work within the community).”

BC/CS Louisiana Foundation website

The health benefits for trails in urban neighborhoods are similar to trails in state or national parks. A trail in a neighborhood, also known as a “linear park,” makes it easier for people to incorporate exercise into their daily routines, whether for recreation, fitness, or non-motorized transportation. Urban trails need to connect people to places they want to go, such as schools, transit centers, businesses, and neighborhoods.⁴

Louisiana ranks 29th among states as a “bikeable” state, according to the League of American Bicyclists’ 2013 Bike Friendly State Ranking.⁵ The league’s ratings are based on the following scoring criteria:

- Legislation and Enforcement – (Louisiana received 40-60% of points available)
- Policies and Programs — (Louisiana received 40-60% of points available)
- Infrastructure and Funding — (Louisiana received 0-20% of points available)
- Education and Encouragement — (Louisiana received 20-40% of points available)
- Evaluation and Planning — (Louisiana received 0-20% of points available)

⁴ Health Community: What You Should Know About Trail Building,” National Trails Training Partnership: Health and Fitness, <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/health/healthcombuild.html>

⁵ The League of American Bicyclists, <http://www.bikeleague.org/content/ranking>, accessed on March 27, 2014.

G. LWCF SUCCESS STORIES: CELEBRATING OUTDOOR RECREATION IN LOUISIANA

Historically, the value of Land and Water Conservation Fund applications in Louisiana have generally far exceeded available funding. This clearly demonstrates rising demand for outdoor recreation resources in the state.

Figure 1.5: LWCF Funding and Application History

Year	# LWCF Applications	\$ Value	# Projects Awarded	\$ Value
2009	6	\$701,247	4	\$454,978
2010	6	\$682,634	5	\$639,246
2011	11	\$1,984,633	6	\$614,847
2012	9	\$2,068,823	5	\$694,679
2013	7	\$1,749,000	4	\$658,310

Planning Regions

(Refer to Figure 1.2 on page 17)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8

2009-2013 Priorities Legend

Trails	Regional Park	Partnerships
Nature Based	Innovative Ideas	

Project highlights that received funding and accomplished one or more of the 2009-2013 statewide priorities include:

Riverside Park



Riverside Park received assistance in the development of a waterfront walking trail providing scenic views along this professionally designed linear park. The trail leads to multiple recreation facilities, natural areas, and parking (Sponsor: City of Lake Charles). www.cppj.net/index.aspx?page=853



The pavilion at Riverside Park (Image courtesy of the Louisiana Office of State Parks)



The park offers a great place to go fishing (Image courtesy of the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury [website](#))

Chapter 1: Introduction

Gum Swamp Boardwalk



Camp Salmen Nature Park’s Interpretive Journeys trail system meets the region’s recreational vision identified in The Comprehensive Plan for St. Tammany Parish – New Directions 2025. This professionally designed park is being developed with LWCF assistance as an active and passive public recreational facility located close to a residential population along the Tammany Trace. The interpretive trails and boardwalks provide public access to one of St. Tammany’s most attractive streams (Bayou Liberty) and publicly owned natural resources. The park’s trail system offers a connection to the 28 mile Tammany Trace Trail (www.tammanytrace.org), part of the National Rail to Trail Network – a safe route through five historic communities with vistas of rivers and streams from atop 31 bridges (Sponsor: St. Tammany Parish Police Jury). www.campsalmennaturepark.org/



Ruins at the Order of the Arrow Gardens (Image courtesy of the Camp Salmen Nature Park [website](#))



Blackeyed Susans (Image courtesy of the Camp Salmen Nature Park [website](#))



The Tammany Trace trail is enjoyed by 290,000 users every year (Image courtesy of the St. Tammany Parish Government [website](#))



An equestrian trail runs parallel to the main paved trail (Image courtesy of the St. Tammany Parish Government [website](#))

Rathborne Park Improvements



Multiple grants provided assistance in the restoration and development of this 12.6 acre active and passive recreational park in easy walking distance of the Luling area and adjacent to rapidly developing residential areas. Improvements include trails with fitness stations, ballfield lighting, a new restroom, concessions building, fencing, dugouts, basketball court, pavilion, picnic tables, water fountains, bike racks, and parking (Sponsor: St. Charles Parish). www.facebook.com/stcharlesgov



Rathborne Park is a popular place for families (Image courtesy of the St. Charles Parish Rathbone Park and Walking Trail Group [website](#))

Chapter 1: Introduction

Polk City Park Improvements



Vidalia received LWCF assistance for multiple phases of development for Doctor William T. Polk City Park. Amenities include basketball and volleyball courts, a fishing pond, a boardwalk and pier, restrooms with showers, and a concession building. The master plan also includes a skate park, amphitheater, spray park, bocce ball, playground equipment, a community garden and farmer’s market pavilion, and a sculpture garden. The park’s trail was funded by the Recreational Trails Program (Sponsor: City of Vidalia). www.cityofvidalia.com/index.php/concordia-recreation-district-3/



Lighting will be added to the tennis courts (Image courtesy of the City of Vidalia)



The park will be developed in four phases (Plan courtesy of the City of Vidalia)

Washington Parish Recreation Complex



LWCF assisted in the acquisition of 115 acres and development of a recreation facility to provide physical fitness activity and recreational opportunities. This facility will provide walking and bike trails, baseball and soccer fields, basketball courts, restrooms, concession stands, as well as picnic pavilions. This facility will be lighted (Sponsor: Washington Parish Recreation District #1). wprd1.com/



The park program focuses on active recreation (Plan courtesy of Washington Parish Recreation District 1)



View of the undeveloped site from the proposed entrance (Image courtesy of Washington Parish Recreation District 1)

The Great Park at Coquille



The Great Park at Coquille, being developed on a 130-acre parcel of land with LWCF assistance, is a regional park with an innovative children’s play area. Included in this project area are several of the top 10 important outdoor recreational activities listed in the 2009 – 2013 SCORP including water based recreation, walking trails, sports fields, swimming and tennis facilities, playgrounds, picnic and day use facilities, dog park, nature and event center and an outdoor amphitheater, splash pad, pavilion, fishing pier, parking, walkways, and a public restroom (Sponsor: St. Tammany Parish Rec. Dist. 14). www.coquillemasterplan.org/

COQUILLE RECREATION

MASTER PLAN



Coquille Park Master Plan (Plan courtesy of Joseph Furr Design Studio)

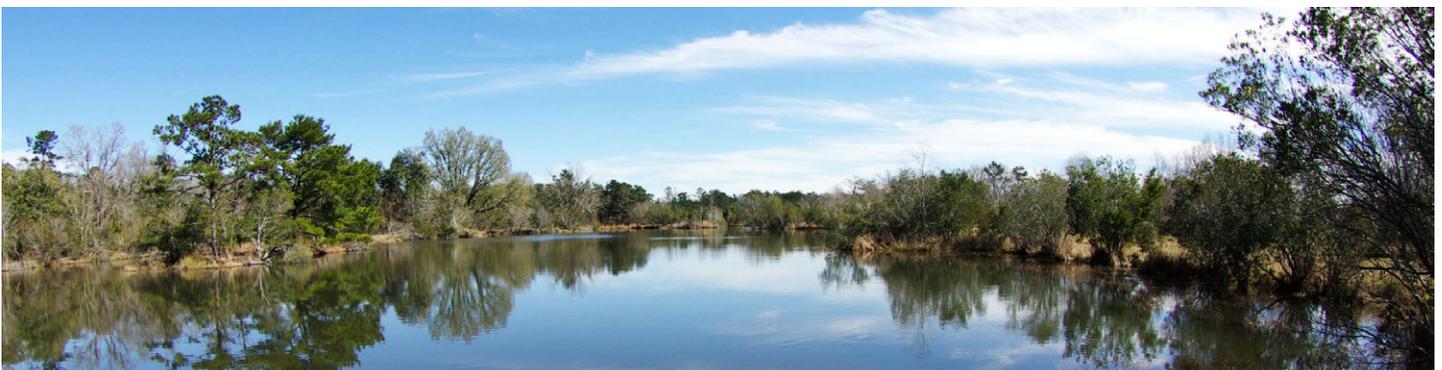
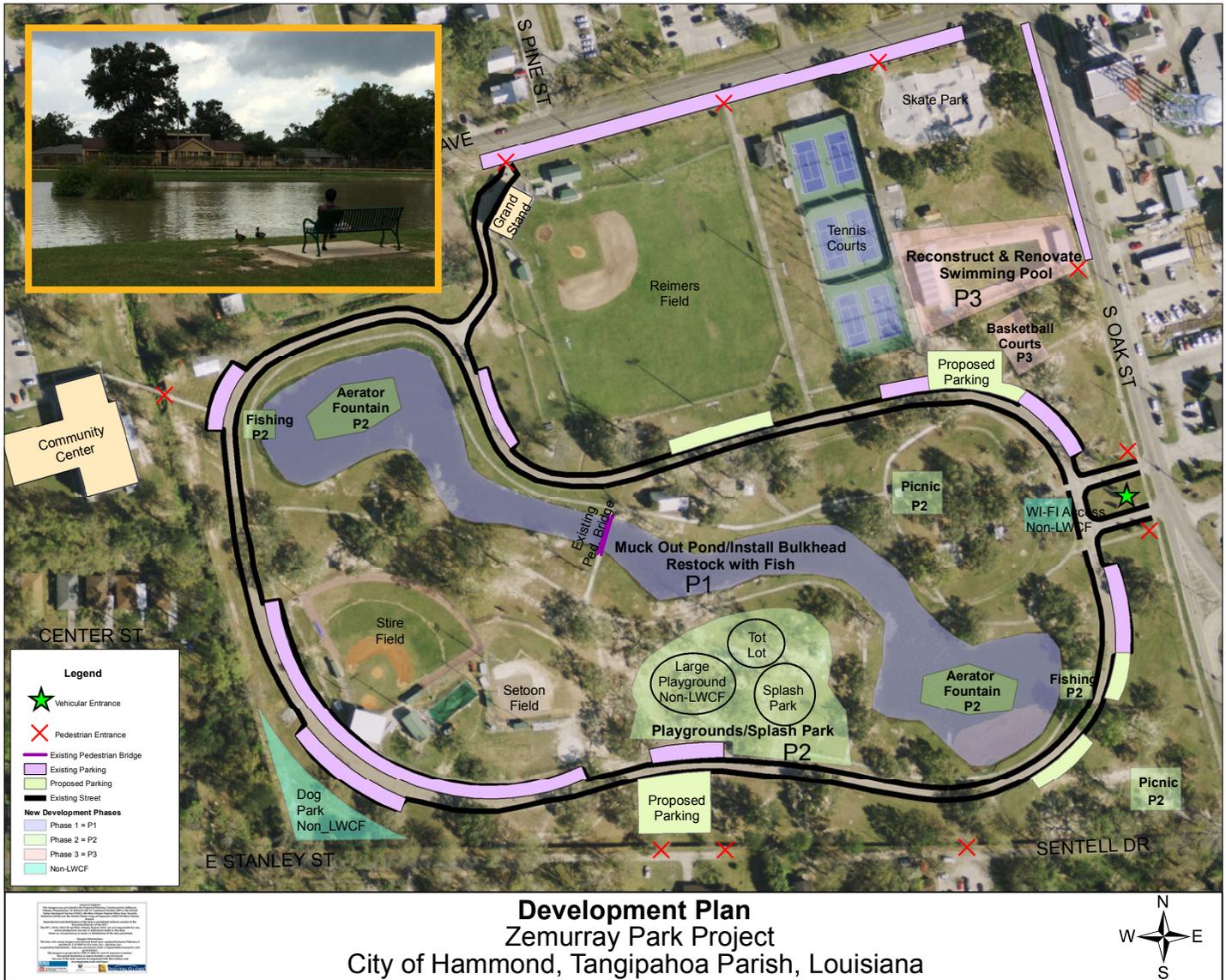


Image courtesy of Joseph Furr Design Studio

Zemurray Park Pond Restoration

The master plan of this historic LWCF-assisted park included multiple phases of development and renovation to existing recreational assets. The improvements include restoration of the three acre Zemurray pond to provide for fishing, kayaking and canoeing, new playground equipment, and picnic facilities with site improvements. Additional park amenities include a skatepark, tennis courts, baseball fields, a swimming pool, and walking trails (Sponsor: City of Hammond). www.recreationparks.net/LA/tangipahoa/zemurray-park-hammond; www.facebook.com/hammondrec



Zemurray Park Development Plan (Plan and inset image courtesy of the City of Hammond)

Terrebonne Parish Community Park



LWCF assisted in acquiring 39.9 acres of undeveloped land adjacent to an existing 144 acre community park. The master plan details development of a second entrance; a paddling lake and water based activity center; green trails; a disc golf course; baseball, softball, soccer, and sports fields; a tennis facility; a dog park; a skate park; splash pads and play equipment; additional lake development for paddling and fishing; walking, jogging, and bicycle trails; a great lawn with a performance venue; natural areas; green cross-country trails; and ancillary facilities to support outdoor recreation (Sponsor: Terrebonne Parish and Recreation District 2.3). www.tpcg.org/?f=planning&p=community_park



Terrebonne Parish Community Park Development Plan (Plan courtesy of Joseph Furr Design Studio)



Terrebonne Bayou Country Sports Park public planning session (Image courtesy of Joseph Furr Design Studio)