



US Army Corps
of Engineers
New Orleans District

Commenting on the proposed improvements to the Bonnet Carré Spillway Master Plan Update

The New Orleans District is collecting input on current and potential improvements to recreational uses and management of natural resources found in the Bonnet Carré Spillway.

Provide feedback on the recommended plan by:

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Draft Master Plan Available Online:
www.mvn.usace.army.mil/recreation

The Corps is also hosting two public meetings to share details about the plan and accept public comments. Details of the meetings are:

Wednesday, May 13, 2009
La Maison Magnolia Reception Hall
950 First Street, Norco, LA
Open House 6 p.m.
Presentation 7 p.m.

Sunday, May 17, 2009
Bonnet Carré Spillway Pavilion
Open House 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Facilities Proposed for Development

The master plan update recommends a number of potential facilities and actions that can be undertaken in partnership with non-Federal sponsors. Recommended improvements include:

1. Establish a 4-WD Truck Area - During preparation of this master plan update, meetings with 4-WD enthusiasts resulted in the review of options for establishing a 4-WD truck recreation area. A proposed 4-WD truck area has been designated and includes minimal implementation requirements. These would include the marking of area boundaries with paint and signs, minor grading and brush clearing, and installation of entrance signs and bulletin boards. The suggested approach would open the area to 4-WD truck recreation initially through the Corps' special event permit program. Under the program the Corps would allow organizations to use the area after they provide insurance, site security and control, and to restore the area to previous conditions.

2. Establish a Horseback Riding Area - There has been an increase in horseback riding activity in the spillway. Currently, there are no specially designated use areas or prohibitions on this activity. Some of this activity occurs in small groups, which has posed little problems or concerns. However, large group riding events typically are held at the St. Charles Parish recreation area operated under a recreation lease and these events have been problematic at times. The suggested approach would open the designated riding area initially through the Corps' special event permit program, wherein the equestrian clubs would be required to provide insurance, site security and control, and to restore the area to previous conditions.

3. Provide a Safe Channel into Lake Pontchartrain - The boat launch located at the intersection of I-10 and the lower guide levee is used primarily by boaters accessing Lake Pontchartrain. These boaters use the I-10 access channel located between the east- and west-bound spans of I-10 and then follow a poorly marked and unmaintained channel into the lake. The clearing, snagging, and proper marking of this channel and portions of the cross-cut channel would remove the safety hazards and provide a safe channel into Lake Pontchartrain. Material taken from the channel would be used beneficially to stabilize the lake shoreline.

4. Include a Bike Trail - A bicycle trail will be developed along the Spillway Road (SC 12) route to connect bicycle trails on the Mississippi River levees upstream and downstream of the project.



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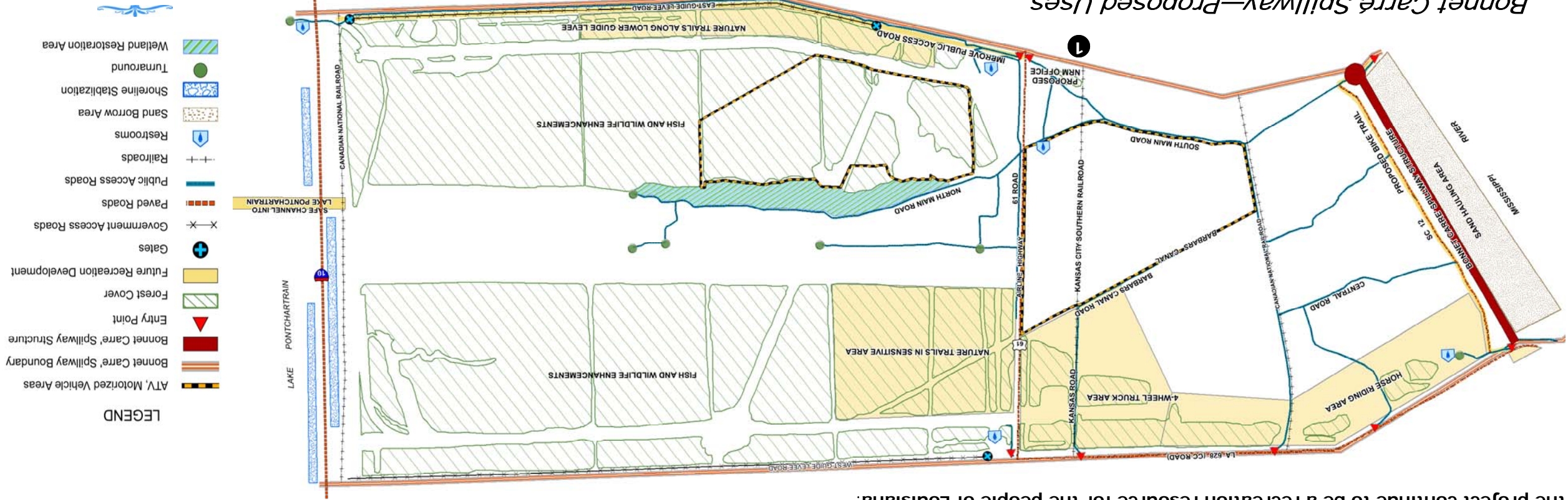


The primary purpose of the Bonnet Carré Spillway is flood control. It is also an increasingly popular outdoor recreation area. At the Bonnet Carré Spillway the highest growth is seen in non-consumptive activities such as birding and photography. A number of traditional recreational pursuits continue to grow as well; among them big-game hunting, camping, fishing and boating.

The project's bountiful natural resources, diversity of habitats and water resources, and its wide expanses of open land provide a great capacity for a wide range of outdoor recreational pursuits including several that are unique or, at least, not commonly available in the region.

As the population of the region grows and other outdoor recreation venues are lost or diminished, the spillway's role in satisfying the recreational needs of south Louisiana will increase. This brochure highlights the proposed improvements to the project master plan.

In 1998, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District developed the first Bonnet Carré Spillway Master Plan which included extensive involvement and input from the Bonnet Carré Citizen's Advisory Board Committee. The Corps is updating the project's master plan to facilitate further improvements that will help the project continue to be a recreation resource for the people of Louisiana.



Bonnet Carré Spillway—Proposed Uses

Recommended improvements to the Bonnet Carré Spillway include:

- (1) New Administration Building for Park Ranger Staff and Visitor Information** - The project would advance the natural resources management program by constructing a new administrative building – one that will improve the effectiveness of the project staff and will also better serve the visiting public.
- (2) Improved Restroom Facilities** - At present, restroom facilities at the project consist of portable restrooms at numerous sites around the project. These basic facilities should be replaced with vault restrooms at strategic locations of high visitor use and access.
- (3) Project Road and Access Plan** - A reliable road network is essential for project maintenance, surveillance of project resources and control of public activities. Public use of the project's roadways is incidental to the purpose of the roads but provides valuable recreational benefits. The master plan recommends instituting some controls over vehicular access into project lands.
- (4) Sand Hauling Permit Program** - The informal annual permitting program will be replaced with a real estate leasing program that awards sand excavation and hauling privileges through an open and competitive process. The leasing program will employ reasonable lease conditions that are designed to set high standards for the sand mining activities.
- (5) Vegetation Management Plan** - An overall vegetation management plan should be developed to balance the various needs of the project.
- (6) Management of Clay Borrow Activities** - With the increase in clay borrow activity at the project in the aftermath of the 2005 hurricane season, the project staff must remain involved in planning for clay borrow sites at the spillway.
- (7) Outreach Program** - The project has been effective in educating project visitors on the rules and regulations in force at the project. Efforts in the areas of water safety education, telling the project story, and environmental education will be enhanced.
- (8) Landscape Improvements** - Project aesthetics have benefited greatly from implementation of the natural resources management program. Illegal trash dumping has been greatly reduced and responses
- (9) Limited Expansion of ATV Use** - The limited allowance of ATV use outside the designated riding areas should be continued for special purposes and people with disabilities. Management should include the use of special use permits to ensure appropriate control, limitations on speed and access areas, and require safety equipment for riders.