

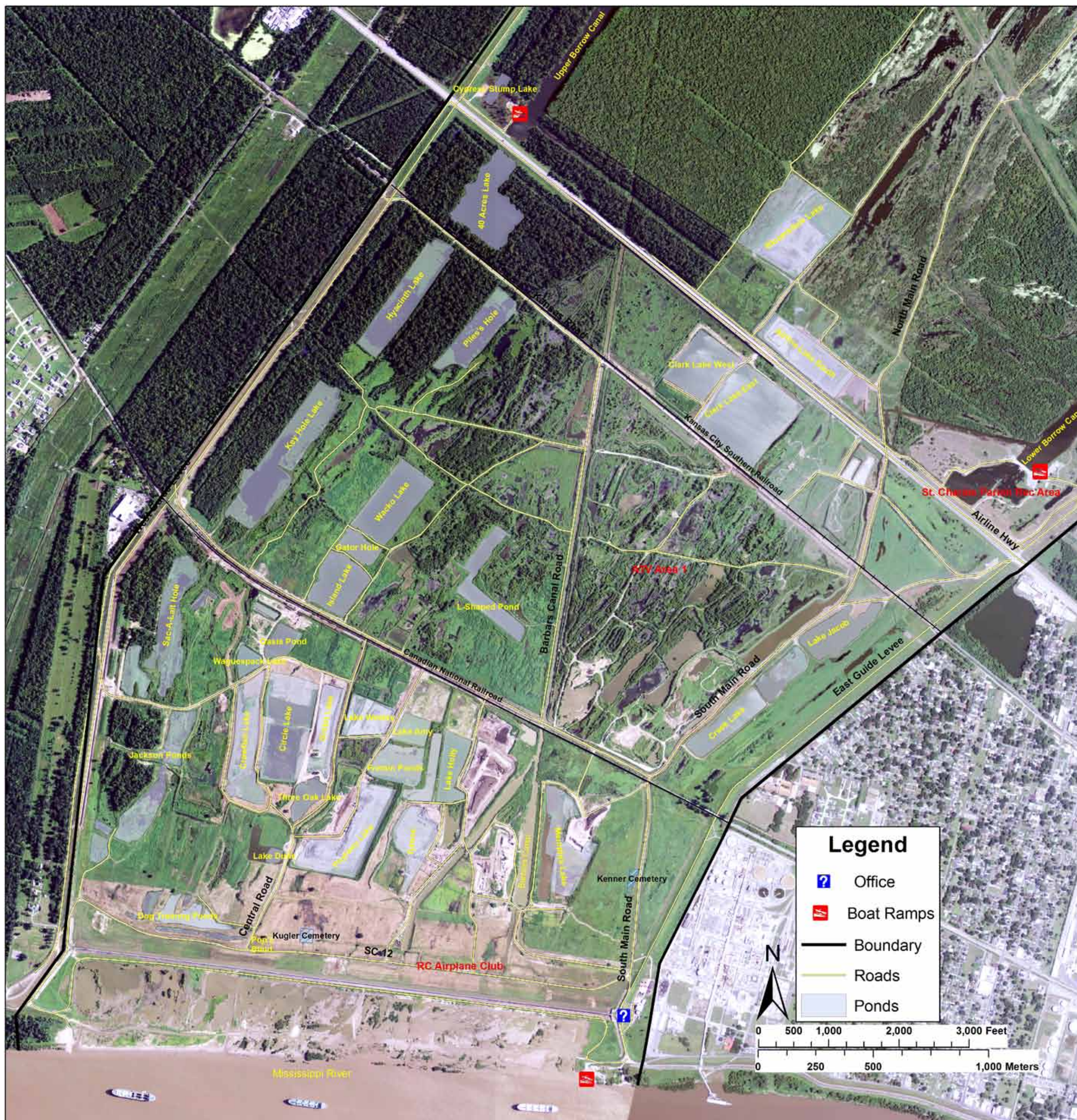
The Bonnet Carré Spillway is a vital element of the comprehensive plan for flood damage reduction in the Lower Mississippi Valley. The southernmost floodway in the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project (MR&T), Bonnet Carré Spillway protects New Orleans and other downstream communities during major floods from the Mississippi River.

The Bonnet Carré Spillway was constructed in 1929 and is a 7,623-acre floodway nestled between the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain in St. Charles Parish, Louisiana.

Recently, the Bonnet Carré Spillway has been used as a source of clay material for levee rebuilding following the devastating Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The clay excavation areas, known as borrow pits, are as deep as 25 feet and

provide ideal areas for game fish habitat. By collaborating with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Natchitoches Fish Hatchery, we are able to stock the borrow pits with Bluegill, Largemouth Bass, Channel Catfish and Hybrid Striped Bass.

The Bonnet Carré Spillway offers areas for both freshwater and saltwater fishing, and at times anglers are able to catch sunfish, bass, speckled trout and redfish from the same area. The Spillway also offers areas to catch blue crabs, shrimp, and crawfish. Check Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries regulations for licenses, methods of take and size or possession limits.



**From Baton Rouge:**

**Driving Directions to the Bonnet Carré Spillway**

**From New Orleans:**

Take the second LaPlace exit off Interstate 10 east. Take a right at the bottom of the ramp and follow U.S. Highway 51 south to U.S. Highway 61 (Airline Highway). Take a left on Airline Highway and go approximately 4 miles until you see the signs for the Bonnet Carré Spillway.

Take Interstate 10 west toward Baton Rouge. Take the Interstate 310 exit, and go about 2 miles and then take the Norco exit onto U.S. Highway 61 (Airline Highway). Go west toward Norco until you see signs for the Bonnet Carré Spillway.

## Popular Fishing Sites

### Mississippi River/Forebay/Stilling Basin

Commercial fish species are caught in the Mississippi River and during spring overflow from the river into the forebay area; crappie and bass can be fished from the many ponds in this area.



### Lake Pontchartrain

Fishing in Lake Pontchartrain can be accessed by the St. Charles Parish Recreation Area boat launch, the parish boat launch at the Lower Guide levee undemarcate Interstate 10, or the public fishing area at the end of the Lower Guide levee. Common species in Lake Pontchartrain include speckled trout, redfish, Atlantic croaker, sheepshead, ladyfish, needlefish, and striped mullet.



### Pleasure Beach at St. Charles Parish Recreation Area

This area was reshaped in the spring of 2007 as sand deposits were removed to repair haul roads in the spillway. Approximately 500 Florida strain largemouth bass were stocked in this area in the spring of 2007 and is a favored crabbing area.



### Lower & Upper Borrow Canal

This large water body was constructed in the 1930's as the spillway was cleared of vegetation and clay deposits were used to build the guide levees. In addition to providing habitat for freshwater species such as crappie, bluegill, and largemouth bass, saltwater species such as speckled trout, sheepshead and redfish are also occasionally caught.



### Fish Species of Special Concern

In the Bonnet Carré Spillway, there are four fish species of special concern; the pallid sturgeon, shovelnose sturgeon, gulf sturgeon and paddlefish. Please help us conserve these unique members of the native fish community.

#### Pallid/Shovelnose Sturgeon

The pallid sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*) is both federal and state listed as an endangered species. The native range for this fish is the Mississippi River drainage basin, including the Atchafalaya River and Bonnet Carré Spillway.

The shovelnose sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus platorhynchus*) closely resembles the pallid sturgeon, but has several distinguishing characteristics. It can be darker in appearance than the pallid, has the presence of small embedded belly scales, and the inner barbels in front of the mouth are longer, almost approaching the length of the outer barbells. Although it is not a listed species, there is no open fishing season for this species.

After the 2008 and 2011 openings of the spillway, researchers sampled the ponds and waterways of the spillway for the presence rare fish. These fish were measured, tagged and released back into the Mississippi River near the spillway. (See table below.)

SAMPLING DATA	2008	2011
Pallid	14	20
Shovelnose	41	77
Ratio (Pallid:Shovelnose)	1:3	1:4

#### Gulf Sturgeon

The gulf sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrhynchus desotoi*) is a federal and state listed threatened species ranging from Tampa Bay to the Mississippi River. In southeastern Louisiana the fish can be found in the Lake Pontchartrain drainage basin. The species is anadromous, meaning it spawns in freshwater streams, but spends most of its life cycle in salt or brackish water.

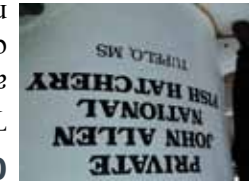
#### Paddlefish

Paddlefish (*Polyodon spathula*), or spoonbill catfish is a very unique North American freshwater fish. It has several primitive fish characteristics, including a skeleton made of cartilage. This species can only be legally fished by baited hook and line. The possession limit is two and size limit must be smaller than 30 inches measured from fork length to lower jaw. Any fish caught larger than the 30 inch limit must be returned to the water immediately.



### Circle Lake

This lake is currently being constructed as clay deposits are being removed to rebuild the Jefferson Parish Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction levee. This lake was stocked with bluegill in the fall of 2007.



### Clark Lake East & West

These two lakes, totaling approximately 42 acres, were also constructed by removing clay material for use in rebuilding and/or reinforcing the Hurricane Storm Damage Risk Reduction System. In 2011, the pond was stocked with approximately 2,500 channel catfish, 25,000 bluegill, and 7,500 redear sunfish.

This 23-acre lake was constructed as clay deposits were removed to rebuild a part of the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System in Jefferson Parish. The southern half of this lake was stocked with channel catfish in October 2007. The northern half of this lake was stocked with bluegill in the fall of 2008 and Florida strain largemouth bass in the spring of 2009.

### Cypress Stump Pond



This area, though only a couple of acres in size, provides favorable habitat for crappie and largemouth bass. These ponds are slated for reconstruction as sand deposits from previous spillway openings will be removed. We anticipate stocking the ponds with bluegill.

### Dog-training Ponds

Although this is only a 16-acre lake, it was constructed in the 1980s and has been a favored fishing area for many years. It was stocked with 200 hybrid striped bass and bluegill in 2004 and 400 Florida strain largemouth bass in the spring of 2005.



### Frem'in Ponds

These ponds provide excellent habitat for catfish and crappie. These areas have been favored fishing areas for crappie.

### Hyacinth Lake, Pile's Hole and Keyhole Lake



This 8-acre lake was constructed in 2003. It was stocked with 85 hybrid striped bass and bluegill in 2004 and 200 Florida strain largemouth bass in the spring of 2005.

### L-Shaped Pond



### Three Oak Lake



This 4-acre lake was constructed in the 1990s. In addition to the 60 hybrid striped bass and bluegill that were stocked in 2004, the 400 channel catfish stocked in October 2007, the proximity of this lake to the Mississippi River overflow provides habitat for catfish, crappie, and buffalo.

### Oasis Pond

This pond was stocked with bluegill in the fall of 2006 and was stocked with bass in the spring of 2007. A stocking of 300 channel catfish was done in October 2007.

### Lake Jacob

This 8-acre lake was created in 2002 and is named after Kirt Jacob, the former maintenance leader at the Charles Parish Recreation Area boat launch, the parish boat launch at the Lower Guide levee undemarcate Interstate 10, or the public fishing area at the end of the Lower Guide levee. Common species in Lake Pontchartrain include speckled trout, redfish, Atlantic croaker, sheepshead, ladyfish, needlefish, and striped mullet.



### Wacko Lake, Gator Hole and Island lake, Gator Hole and

### Research and Tagged Fish



Beginning in 2008 and continuing after the 2011 opening, biologists with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Research and Development Center and the Bonnet Carré Spillway have

been tagging sturgeon and paddlefish to better understand habitat requirements and population recruitment. The tagged fish have a marked orange spaghetti tag beside the fin along the back of the fish. If you catch a tagged fish, please help us by:

- Recording information such as location, length and weight of fish, and location caught;
- Releasing the fish back into the water where caught;
- Contacting our office at 1-800-522-6937 ext. 3397, 985-764-7484, or stopping by the spillway project office at 16302 River Road, Norco, LA.



Your assistance is greatly appreciated and will help us learn valuable information about these fish species.

### Invasive Species

Several species of introduced plants, clams and fish can be found within ponds and lakes of the Bonnet Carré Spillway. These organisms reproduce and grow very rapidly and take over space that would otherwise be occupied by native species.

Two of the more common species of invasive aquatic plants in the spillway are water hyacinth and species of *Salvinia*. These plants grow on top of the water and keep oxygen levels in the water lower. These plants are easily transported to other waterways growing and reproducing rapidly.

Several species of Asian carp can be found in the spillway including silver, bighead, grass, and common carp. These species degrade aquatic ecosystems and grow rapidly feeding on plants and microorganisms.

The Rio Grand Cichlid is another harmful non-native fish species that can be found in the spillway. This species poses a threat to aquatic vegetation, out-competes native fish, and can harbor parasites harmful to native fish.

If you encounter any of these species, please assist us by keeping them from spreading to other parts of the state.

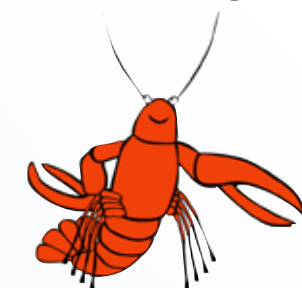
### Fishing Regulations

Visitors fishing, crawfishing, crabbing, and shrimping at the Bonnet Carré Spillway are expected to follow the rules and regulations set forth by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

There is no set season to crawfish in the spillway, but in most years crawfish are available for harvest during the spring (February-June). There is no size limit and the possession limit per person is 150 pounds per day. A state recreational gear license for up to 35 of the coated wire funnel traps is required.

There is no set season to harvest crabs in the spillway, but the summer and fall months are usually the best times. There is no recreational size limit and daily limit is 12 dozen per person per day. See Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries for license requirements.

Pond depths and sizes change with each structure operation. Structure operations will change fish populations in each of the ponds moving previously stocked fish to other ponds. The Mississippi River contains most of the local species of freshwater fishes with many washing into the spillway during structure operations restocking the ponds. Ponds on map are changing with new ponds being excavated and old ponds being cleared of sediment.



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