Research and Tagged Fish

Beginning in 2008 and continuing after the 2016 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 as they feed 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.

Any person using crawfish nets, crab nets or crab lines for the purpose of taking crawfish or crabs for recreational purposes shall not be required to purchase or possess a basic state recreational fishing license or be required to purchase a state gear license. However, persons using crawfish nets, crab nets or crab lines on Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Wildlife Management Areas or refuges must possess a state basic and saltwater recreational fishing

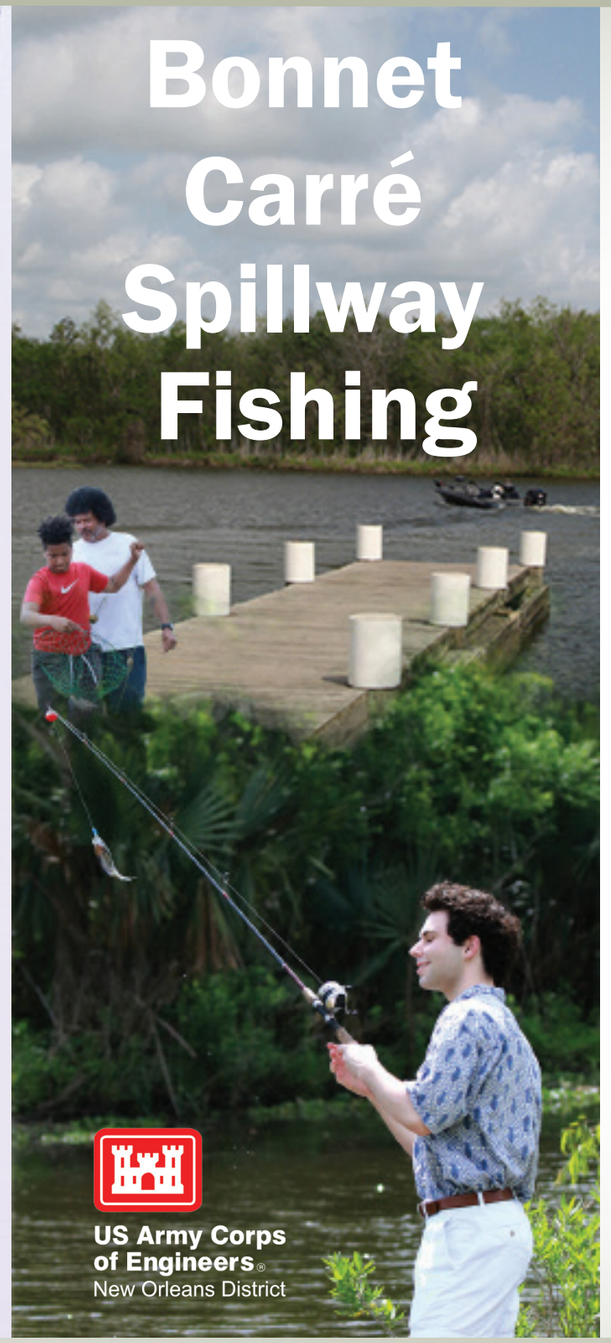
Visit our Recreation pages at:

http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/BonnetCarreSpillway.aspx

Like us on Facebook:

https://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Bonnet-Carre-Spillway/192125074330471

Bonnet Carré Spillway Fishing



US Army Corps of Engineers®
New Orleans District

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, 2011, and 2016 openings of the spillway, researchers sampled the ponds and waterways of the spillway for the presence of rare fish. These fish were measured, tagged, and released back into the Mississippi River near the spillway. (See table below.)

SAMPLING DATA	2008	2011	2016
Pallid	14	20	1
Shovelnose	41	77	0
Ratio (Pallid:Shovernose	1:3	1:4	1:0

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.

Popular Fishing Sites

Mississippi River/Forebay/Stilling Basin

Commercial fish species are caught in the Mississippi River. During 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 underneath 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.

Cypress Stump Pond

This area, though only a couple of acres in size, provides favorable habitat for crappie and largemouth bass.

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.

Creek Lake

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.

Bloomsdale Lake and Airline Lake South

Located just north of Airline Hwy, these two lakes were constructed due to their clay deposits which were used for the Hurricane Storm Damage Risk Reduction System. In coordination with Private John Allen National Fish Hatchery, the ponds were stocked with approximately: 3,000 channel catfish, 22,500 bluegill, and 6,800 redear sunfish.

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.

Lower & Upper Borrow Canal

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

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.

Dog-training Ponds

These ponds are slated for reconstruction as sand deposits from previous spillway openings will be removed. We anticipate stocking the ponds with bluegill.

Forty-Acre Lake

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.

Fremin Ponds

These ponds provide excellent habitat for catfish and crappie.

Hyacinth Lake, Pilie's Hole and Keyhole Lake

These areas have been favored fishing areas for crappie.

L-Shaped Pond

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.

Island lake, Gator Hole and Wacko Lake

This is a series of three borrow pits constructed just before, during and immediately after the 2005 hurricanes. Wacko Lake was stocked with 84 hybrid stripers, bluegill and 375 Florida strain largemouth bass in 2004 and 2005. Island Lake and Gator Hole were stocked with bluegill in the fall of 2006 and bass in the spring of 2007. They were all stocked with channel catfish 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 spillway. It was stocked with 40 hybrid striped bass and bluegill in 2004 and in the spring of 2005, we added 300 Florida strain largemouth bass. Several hundred additional Florida strain largemouth bass were added in the spring of 2007 and nearly 1,000 channel catfish were stocked in October 2007.

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.

Three Oak Lake

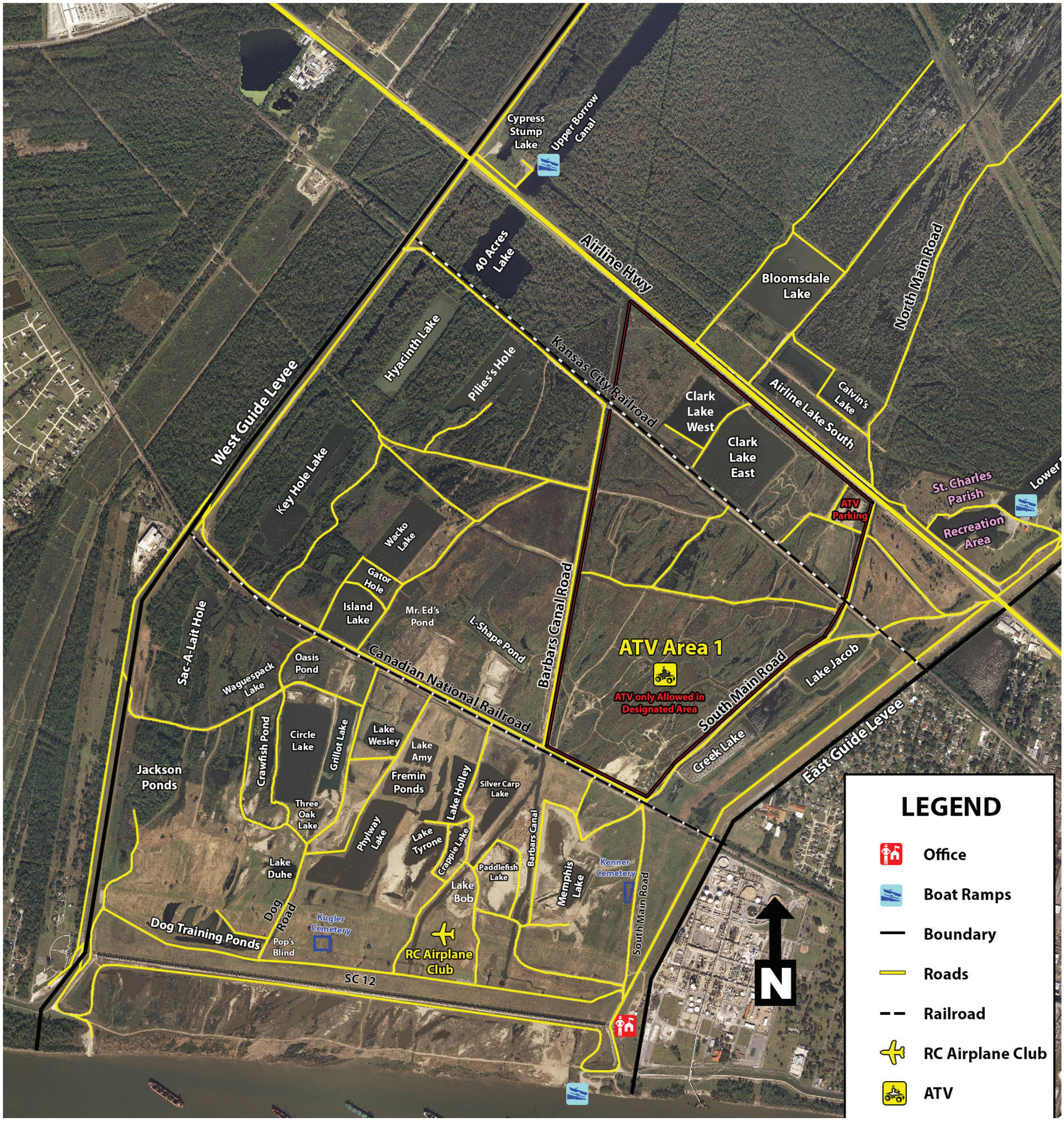
This 4-acre lake was constructed in the 1990s. In addition to the 60 hybrid striped bass and bluegill that were stocked in 2004 and the 400 channel catfish stocked in October 2007, the proximity of this lake to the Mississippi River overflow provides habitat for catfish, crappie, and buffalo.

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.



Driving Directions to the Bonnet Carré Spillway

From Baton Rouge:

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.

From New Orleans:

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.