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Drawdown of False River to begin Sept. 2

Police Jury Selects Texas Contracting Company for Dredging Project

The Pointe Coupee Police Jury on Tuesday (Aug. 26) approved recommendations from the False River Watershed Commission to begin the drawdown of False River on Sept. 2, and to select RLB Contracting, Inc., of Port Lavaca, Texas, to perform the hydraulic

dredging and construction of a containment dike in the South Flats of the oxbow lake.

The Police Jury will drawdown False River over a three-week period, by decreasing the water level by approximately 1 and ½ inches per day, until it reaches a target

level of 13.5 feet on the lighthouse gate. The water level will remain at this low level through March 2015, according to engineering plans.

“The drawdown is part of an ongoing action plan to improve
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PHOTO BY MARY DENNY

Drawdown of False River ...

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the water quality of False River," said State Rep. Major Thibaut, who along with Sen. Rick Ward, has worked to secure much of the state funding for the project – approximately \$2.7 million over the past three years, which has been earmarked for Phase I of the False River Ecosystem Restoration Project.

"Since beginning our efforts nearly a year ago, we have completed several important studies and invested in practical, low-cost improvements. Now, with the necessary funds in place, we're beginning our largest project in the first phase," Thibaut said.

Dredging in the South Flats will begin immediately following the drawdown, according to the plan. The sediment removed from the lake bed will be used to construct a 16.5-acre containment dike planted with vegetation to improve fish hatching.

Randy Boyd, president of RLB Contracting, Inc., said his company is uniquely qualified to complete Phase I of the restoration project in the prescribed timeframe, noting that his company specializes in civil and marine construction.

Officials with the State Department of Natural Resources have posted signs along False River,

and issued updates in local newspapers, on their official website and through social media, alerting the False River community of forthcoming changes associated with the drawdown.

Property and boat owners are being cautioned to protect their properties. Boaters are urged to avoid shallow areas and to use caution while traveling in the lake, as the low water levels may cause boats to come into contact with underwater debris. Boat owners are also being warned that access to boats stored on the lake may be limited during the drawdown period.

At the same time, homeowners and camp residents are encouraged to take advantage of the low water levels to clean the shoreline and do pier maintenance.

Engineers have predicted that an approximate 2-foot to 2.5-foot drawdown will expose some 83 acres of the lake bottom in the South Flats, making it easier and cheaper to dredge the material and relocate it to create the 16.5-acre containment dike.

The Police Jury plans to close the control gates no later than March 1 to allow the lake to refill. The rate of the refill will depend upon rainfall.