



## BARATARIA-TERREBONNE NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **BTNEP WORKING ON POINTE COUPEE BLUEBIRD TRAIL**

*BTNEP looking for Bluebird Backers!*

THIBODAUX, LA – The Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP) is entering into the second year of the Pointe Coupee Bluebird Trail that has now expanded from New Roads into the communities of Livonia and Morganza. Since the Spring of 2016, BTNEP has been working with the False River Parish Park, LSU Ag. Extension Service, Boy Scout Troop 66, False River Memorial Cemetery, False River Academy, Pointe Coupee STEM Academy, and several interested landowners to build, install, and monitor nest success. To date, 16 nest boxes have been installed in the communities of New Roads and Morganza, and we hope to install more in those areas and especially in Livonia this spring.

“My students have enjoyed learning about eastern bluebirds and their nesting behavior and like the hands on approach of monitoring the nest box. They are involved in a community-based science project that is fun and interesting,” said teacher Ms. Tara Robillard of the STEM Academy.

Results from the monitoring effort will go into a national database tracking eastern bluebird population trends. According to Patti Holland, BTNEP’s Project Coordinator for the Pointe Coupee Bluebird Trail, this project provides a hands-on approach to youth mentoring while benefiting a bird species that is nationally significant. Because of its visibility in public places, like the False River Park, this project is something that the entire community can appreciate. It also provides important knowledge skills for young people interested in environmental science or wildlife biology.

In conjunction with this project, BTNEP is also looking for Bluebird Backers. A bluebird backer is anyone who is interested in having an eastern bluebird nest box on their property and is willing to monitor or have someone else come observe nesting success. Anyone who would like to be a backer and if their location is a suitable site for raising eastern bluebirds, BTNEP will supply the nest box and volunteers can enjoy watching one of the most beautiful North American songbirds go about their family business.

BTNEP is funded through the state of Louisiana and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Their mission is to rebuild and protect the economic, cultural, and ecological resources of the Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary for future generations. They implement projects involving vegetative plantings, invasive species control, litter removal, biological research on marine life and water quality, and restoration of bird nesting habitat. While most of the Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary is located in coastal areas, the headwaters and northern apex of the estuary is located in the upper reaches of Pointe Coupee Parish.

“Our organization is very excited to be working on a project in the northern reaches of the estuary,” said Richard DeMay, BTNEP Senior Scientist. “The creation of an eastern bluebird nest box trail represents our first project in Pointe Coupee Parish, and because this area provides abundant open upland habitat, it is perfect for this project!”

The 16 nest boxes currently installed are just the beginning of the Pointe Coupee Bluebird Trail. “We hope to have many more nest boxes installed in the years to come, and we hope to bring in more individuals and groups into this community partnership effort,” said DeMay.

Anyone interested in being a Bluebird Backer or if you belong to a group that would like to get involved in this project, contact Ms. Holland at [howldogfarms@gmail.com](mailto:howldogfarms@gmail.com). For more information about the Pointe Coupee Bluebird Trail go to [www.btnep.org](http://www.btnep.org)

**BTNEP is one of the 28 national estuary programs in the United States. All or parts of sixteen Louisiana parishes are located in the Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary system. The organization was established under the EPA Clean Water Act to protect coastal resources. BTNEP is a partnership of government, businesses, scientists, conservation organizations, agricultural interests and individuals for the preservation, protection, and restoration for the Barataria Terrebonne National Estuary in southeast Louisiana. For more information on BTNEP, visit our website page at [www.btnep.org](http://www.btnep.org) or like us on Facebook.**

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