



Bayou Lafourche Cleanup

Project Status

Project Year: 2012-Present **Status:** Ongoing

Category: Volunteer

Location: Donaldsonville-Leeville, LA

Project Partners: Various local business partners, groups, and organizations

Background and Problem Addressed:

Bayou Lafourche is a distributary of the Mississippi that originates in Donaldsonville, LA. From there it meanders over one hundred miles, through Ascension, Assumption, and Lafourche parishes, until it reaches the Gulf of Mexico at Port Fourchon. The bayou has always been a source of life to the people who inhabit its banks and has played a major role in the growth of the area. The bayou provides a source of water for households. It is also used for industry, farming, transportation, drinking and recreational purposes in the three parishes and also Terrebonne Parish. Bayou Lafourche is lined by well-traveled Highways 1 and 308 with over 4,000 residents and businesses along its banks.

In the 1940's, Bayou Lafourche, called 'The Longest Street in the World', became a stagnant ditch that was used as a dumping place for many people after being cut off from the Mississippi River. Finally, in 1955, a water control structure was installed at the head of Bayou Lafourche in Donaldsonville to allow for river water flow. A recent CPRA (Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority) project to increase Mississippi River water flow in Bayou Lafourche through dredging and a new pumping station has brought life back to the bayou. More attention was then brought to the litter problem among the residents and elected and appointed officials.

Over the years, litter abatement has become a focus of BTNEP. The program and its Management Conference decided that a bayou wide cleanup was the best solution. The event was designed to also create an awareness of the trash that could end up in our waterways and eventually in the Gulf of Mexico.





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Project Description:

In an effort to improve the water quality of the resource that provides 300,000 citizens with drinking water, the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP) has held the Bayou Lafourche Cleanup for the past six years. Over 900 volunteers per year take part in the event by collecting trash along the bayou side and with boats in the water.

Volunteer site captains cover 12 different areas along Bayou Lafourche. Captains help in the planning of the year's event, coordinate volunteers for their area, set up a staging area for the distribution of supplies, and serve as the lead the day of the event.

Tons of trash have been collected over the years. Items have included shoreline/recreational items, fishing and boating items, smoking items, and dumping activity. Shoreline/recreational items have been the most abundant items collected. This includes plastic beverage bottles, plastic grocery bags, aluminum cans, glass bottles, cups, plates, spoons/forks, straws, toys, balls, clothing, and shoes.

The goal of the Bayou Lafourche Cleanup is litter abatement and to encourage recycling. The event has become popular over the years and has raised awareness to the litter problem along Bayou Lafourche.

CCMP Action Items Addressed:

Community Sectors and Leader Teams (Sustained Recognition and Citizen Involvement #1)

Participatory Meetings and Forums (Sustained Recognition and Citizen Involvement #2)

Citizen Involvement Programs and Activities (Sustained Recognition and Citizen Involvement #3)

Cultural Heritage (Sustained Recognition and Citizen Involvement #5)

