



Paddle Bayou Lafourche

Project Status

Project Year: 2001-Present **Status:** Ongoing

Category: Outreach

Location: Donaldsonville-Lockport, LA

Project Partners: Various local business partners, groups and organizations

Background and Problem Addressed:

In 2001, Paddle Bayou Lafourche was initially a project designed to help educate people about the value of the bayou as a drinking water source. Many people were unaware of the value of the source water. By encouraging the public to paddle or kayak down the bayou, with an organized BTNEP group leader, people were better able to understand the value of the resource.

Bayou Lafourche provides drinking water to over 300,000 people in the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary system. Parishes that get drinking water from Bayou Lafourche include: Ascension, Assumption, Lafourche, and Terrebonne. The water is also used by offshore oil and gas communities as their potable water. Additionally, the bayou helps to replenish our coastal marshes with much needed fresh water.

The trip now also highlights the work of the Bayou Lafourche Fresh Water District (BLFWD) in partnership with the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) working for years to bring more fresh water down the bayou through a project called the Mississippi River Reintroduction to Bayou Lafourche Project (MRRBL).

While Paddle Bayou Lafourche still has water quality and wetlands education as a mainstay of its mission, the project has grown to include historical, cultural, and economical experiences. Paddle Bayou Lafourche also encourages ecotourism within the estuary.



Project Description:

Paddle Bayou Lafourche is a 52-mile, 4-day adventure that winds its way through a number of rural communities and small cities. Paddlers are treated to scenic natural vistas, and a fascinating “backyard view” of this historic bayou from Donaldsonville to Lockport.

The goal of Paddle Bayou Lafourche is to help create a sense of stewardship and pride for the environment. The trip offers a unique approach to educating the participants about the great gift of Louisiana’s wetlands, and helps them recognize that Bayou Lafourche is historically, culturally, economically, and ecologically important to the communities along its banks. The first annual trip made in 2001 was designed to increase awareness of Bayou Lafourche being a drinking water source.

Paddlers can now choose which day or days to participate from one to four days. Participants enjoy the bonding, camaraderie, and sense of accomplishment that comes from going the distance on Bayou Lafourche. Paddlers also get to experience the culture, music and food the area is known for. They take home a sense of pride and knowledge about Lafourche.

Paddlers are locals, from out of state, and sometimes even from out of the country. Paddlers are given the chance to **“Discover the Estuary”** in a very up close and personal way.

CCMP Action Items Addressed:

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

Cultural Heritage (Sustained Recognition and Citizen Involvement #5)

Continuing and Informal Education Programs (Sustained Recognition and Citizen Involvement #15)

Nature-Based Tourism and Recreation (Economic Growth #2)

