



February 11, 2005

Dear Friend,

I would like to inform you about the 2005 Derelict Crab Trap Removal Program. What is a derelict crab trap? A derelict crab trap has been defined as any trap that is not being actively fished and may range from a crushed encrusted trap without a line or buoy to a relatively new trap with a line and buoy.

Some negative impacts from these traps include: ghost fishing mortality of blue crabs and by catch (crabs and fish continue to enter the traps and die, they then serve as bait for a continuous cycle); user group conflicts with shrimp fishermen and other water-based user groups; navigational hazards to boaters; and decreased visual aesthetics. Consequently, there may be a negative perception of commercial crab fishermen by some individuals. However, the truth is that all user groups contribute to derelict traps. In addition to traps lost due to storms and tides, traps may be lost due to clipping of buoy lines by recreational fishermen and boaters, displacement of traps by shrimp fishermen, and abandonment of traps by both recreational and commercial crab trap fishermen.

A positive solution to these negative issues lies in derelict crab trap sweeps. The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) has begun a derelict crab trap removal program. This program will center around a crab trap closure with defined times and areas and removal of remaining derelict crab traps by volunteers.

In 2004, a derelict trap sweep took place within a portion of the upper Terrebonne Bay estuary (Bayou Lafourche to Bayou Grand Caillou) from February 28 to March 14. The first cleanup was very successful, with over two hundred volunteers helping to collect 6,676 derelict crab traps.

Another derelict trap sweep is planned for 2005 within the geographic boundaries of the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary. The trap closure will take place from March 5 through March 19 within a portion of the Terrebonne Bay Estuary south of Cocodrie and Dulac. A map of the closure area and additional information about the derelict crab trap removal program is available at www.derelictcrabtrap.net.

The LDWF's derelict trap removal program is volunteer based. The Louisiana program cannot succeed without the assistance of individuals such as yourself. The Barataria Terrebonne National Estuary Program was an active participant in the 2004 trap sweep, and will again be involved in 2005. If you would like additional information or would like to volunteer, please contact Vince Guillory by phone [985-594-4139] or via EMAIL [vguillory@wlf.louisiana.gov].

With Warm Regards,

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Program Director