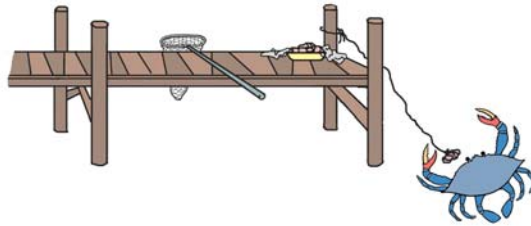


Crab Lines



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Dear Friends of BTNEP,

In this new year, the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program is working hard to continue its mission to preserve, protect, and restore the natural and cultural resources of the Barataria and Terrebonne Basins.

The BTNEP is working with our partners and sister agencies to launch projects and initiatives that will enhance and restore some of our wild habitat areas in these two dynamic basins. We want to inform you of some of these efforts:

January - Citizen's Water Quality Monitoring Workshop

In January, the BTNEP will be co-hosting a two-day workshop on the importance of water quality to the health of our estuary at LUMCON in Cocodrie. This free workshop, to be held on January 20th and 21st, will allow estuary residents the opportunity to learn from scientists how water quality impacts our quality of life, and how to sample water and test water for various pollutants. Thanks to EPA and the Ocean Conservancy, participants will be able to not only attend this workshop for free, but also to spend the weekend in one of the great recreational fishing destinations in coastal Louisiana and learn more about their estuarine resources. For more information about this workshop, and future citizen's water quality monitoring efforts by BTNEP, visit:

<http://volunteer.btnep.org/default.asp?id=22>

To register for this workshop, contact Andrew Barron or Joni Blanchard at BTNEP by phone at (985) 447-0868, or via email at Andrew@btnep.org or Joni@btnep.org.

March - Derelict Crab Trap Removal Program

In March, the BTNEP will once again be assisting the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries with their annual Derelict Crab Trap Removal Program. This important program needs volunteer help to remove derelict or abandoned crab traps from our marsh areas.

Why are derelict crab traps so bad for our estuarine habitat? Only a few of the negative issues from these traps include: ghost fishing mortality of blue crabs and bycatch; user group conflicts with shrimp fishermen and other water-based user groups; navigational hazards to boaters; and decreased visual aesthetics. Consequently, there can be a negative perception of 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. The commercial crabbing industry has been fully supportive of this program.

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 and 2005, successful derelict trap sweeps took place within portions of the Terrebonne Bay Estuary. A total of 9,113 traps were removed from the estuary.

Another derelict trap sweep is planned for 2006 within the geographic boundaries of the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary. The trap closure will take place from March 4 through March 12 within a portion of the Terrebonne Bay Estuary from Bayou Grand Caillou to Oyster Bayou. A map of the closure area and additional information about the derelict crab trap removal program is available at www.derelictcrabtrap.net.

To learn more about this important effort, or to volunteer your time and efforts, contact Vince Guillory by phone [985-594-4139] or via EMAIL vguillory@wlf.louisiana.gov.

Ongoing – Mississippi River Reintroduction Into Bayou Lafourche Project

Another project that aims to improve the quality of habitat and ensure a safe supply of drinking water for the 300,000-plus residents of the Bayou Region is the Mississippi River Reintroduction Into Bayou Lafourche Project. This important coastal restoration and protection project has just completed its Phase One Report, which was a massive effort to screen 144 different design alternatives through rigorous screening criteria, and narrow that wide field to the best 7 design alternatives.

The remaining seven projects focus on maximizing the benefits of more Mississippi River water in Bayou Lafourche while minimizing negative impacts to bayouside residents. To learn more in detail about the findings of this report, and about all the remaining design alternatives, visit www.bayoulafourche.org, or contact Joni Blanchard at BTNEP by phone at (985) 447-0868, or by email at Joni@btnep.org to obtain a copy of this report on CD.

With Warm Regards,

Kerry St. Pé,
Program Director