



For Immediate Release:
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Bayou Bonfouca swimming and sediment contact advisory lifted

BATON ROUGE – After completion of sediment sampling in Bayou Bonfouca in January 2020, followed by detailed risk assessment analysis by Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) and Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), the agencies signed a notice May 29 rescinding the long-standing swimming and sediment contact advisory on Bayou Bonfouca in Slidell.

This marks the second time, following the December 2018 removal of a fish consumption advisory on Sibley Lake, that a chemical related advisory has been fully rescinded following remedial actions.

“This notice marks the end of a long, expensive but successful effort to return this beautiful waterway to full accessibility,” LDEQ Secretary Chuck Carr Brown said. “We are very proud of this achievement.”

A fish consumption and swimming advisory was originally placed on the bayou in November 1987. This first advisory was put in place as a result of investigations in the 1970s and 1980s by the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The investigations followed a 1970 spill of creosote into the bayou and adjacent areas caused by a fire and explosion at a now defunct facility. In 1983, EPA placed the area on its National Priorities List, under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) program, commonly called Superfund, to initiate investigation and cleanup of the bayou and affected areas.

Remediation of Bayou Bonfouca involved the removal and onsite incineration of over 170,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediments from the bayou along with removal and incineration of 8,000 cubic yards of surface material from the site of the facility. Groundwater pumping to remove contaminants beneath the surface was also initiated at that time and is ongoing. Remediation actions were initiated by EPA and LDEQ, with LDEQ now responsible for ongoing maintenance, through a contractor, of the groundwater pumping system.

Following removal of the contaminated sediment and additional fish testing, the original advisory was revised in December 1998 to remove the fish consumption portion of the advisory. The swimming and sediment contact advisory remained in place, until now.

Following remediation of the contaminated site near Bayou Bonfouca, the city of Slidell built a new recreation area known as Heritage Park. The park is extensive, including a boat launch and boat slips, picnic areas, playgrounds, a splash pad, walking/jogging trails, and a pavilion. Now, through the efforts of EPA, LDEQ, and the city of Slidell, what was once a hazardous eyesore has become a beautiful public area for recreation.

“Cleaning up contaminated sites is one of EPA’s most important jobs. By working with LDEQ and other state and local partners, we have restored Bayou Bonfouca as an asset to the community and the environment,” said EPA Regional Administrator Ken McQueen. “EPA is proud to see the hard work at Bayou Bonfouca pay off, and for the residents of the Slidell area to enjoy the benefits.”



Photo courtesy of EPA

Revitalization effort at Bayou Bonfouca includes a new dock adjacent to a recreation area

For more information on the advisory, please visit:

www.ldh.la.gov/EatSafeFish

<http://ldh.la.gov/assets/oph/Center-EH/envepi/fishadvisory/Documents/BayouBonfoucaAdvisoryRescissionNotice5-29-2020.pdf>

