

News Release

Department of the Interior / U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Southwest Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge
1428 Highway 27
Bell City LA 70630-9618

For Immediate Release

Date: May 18, 2005

Contact:

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Results of the Lacassine National Wildlife Refuge Pool Meeting held at the Lake Charles , Louisiana Civic Center 12:00 noon, May 18, 2005.

Current Management

The Fish and Wildlife Service will manage the Lacassine Pool in the following manner until a preferred alternative is selected from the Lacassine National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan and fully implemented:

Continue repairing and maintaining all spillways and leaking levees;

Set the spillway structures to accommodate a Pool level between full pool and 6 inches above full Pool during the spring and summer (approximately March 1 through October 31), and adjusting the spillway structures to accommodate a lower water level in the fall and winter (approximately November 1 through February 28) depending on environmental conditions for migratory bird management purposes.

Conduct prescribed burns as environmental factors permit. Secure advanced permission from appropriate decision makers to conduct prescribed burns during severe fire danger periods.

Pool elevations will be surveyed to allow for subsidence and the resetting of spillway structure gages and stop logs.

Rehabilitate and maintain a deepwater perimeter ditch around the interior perimeter of the Pool

Continue to stock fish as needed and continue to collect fisheries and waterfowl use data.

Attendees at the meeting ranked 10 proposals as follows:

1 st Proposal 8. Subdivide the Pool into 3 interconnected units approximately 5,000 acres in size. Treat each unit on a 7 to 10 year cycle as follows. (41 dots)

2 nd Proposal 7. Subdivide the Pool into 2 interconnected units that would result in an approximately 5,000 acre Pool and an 11,000 acre pool. (31 dots)

3 rd Proposal 9. Subdivide the Pool into 6 interconnected units of varying size. (1990 Proposal) (24 dots)

4 th Proposal 5. Experiment with managing the Pool level between full Pool and 6 inches above full pool during the period February through October to see if the levees can sustain the pressure (conduct managed draw-down) (6 dots)

5 th Proposal 6. Continue to manage the Pool level at full pool (conduct managed draw-downs) (3 dots)

The following Proposals received no support

Proposal 10. I will provide a written proposal by June 1, 2005

Proposal 4. Attempt to manage the Pool level far above full pool (1 foot above full pool or higher, wait for natural events to draw down the Pool)

Proposal 3. Manage the Pool level at Full Pool (wait for natural events to draw down the Pool)

Proposal 2. Rebuild the entire dike system to accommodate the highest water level possible (wait for natural events to draw down the Pool)

Proposal 1. Take no action

The higher ranked alternatives will be remolded into Alternatives which will appear in the Comprehensive Conservation Plan that the public will have an opportunity to comment on later this year .

Feasibility Studies were ranked as follows:

1. Conduct a feasibility study for plant removal (52 dots)

Conduct a feasibility study focused at the removal of dead plant vegetation that has accumulated over the last 60 years through a private entity that can sell the material as top soil or peat on the open market. Concurrently the study should also investigate the feasibility of mechanically removing floating aquatic vegetation with the best available technology. The study would determine what the permitting requirements would be and if it can be a financially and environmentally viable project. If the project is viable implement it in conjunction with one of the other alternatives identified.

Note: This alternative is intended to be used with one of the above alternatives. Your support or non support for this alternative will aid in determining if the Fish and Wildlife Service moves forward with this initiative in conjunction with one of the above alternatives or an alternative which will be developed in the future.

3. Do not Conduct Feasibility Studies (6 dots)

2. Conduct a feasibility study relating to the use of explosives to blow holes in the marsh and spread the organic material around. (3 dots)

Conduct a feasibility study focused at how the use of explosives can be used to manage the Pool. The study would include an analysis of the distance that various explosive charge shock waves will travel below ground in all directions and above ground. The study would also provide examples of how this technique has been effectively used in the past in Louisiana coastal marshes that support oil and gas infrastructure. The study should include an analysis of potential impacts to oil and gas facilities above and below ground, oil and gas reservoirs, adjacent dikes, spillways, the Intercoastal Waterway and other facilities and infrastructure within the shock wave area.

Note: this alternative is intended to be used with one of the above alternatives. Your support or non support for this alternative will aid in determining if the Fish and Wildlife Service moves forward with this initiative in conjunction with one of the above alternatives or an alternative which will be developed in the future.