

News Release

**Department of the Interior / U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Southwest Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Cameron Prairie and Lacassine National Wildlife Refuges
1428 Highway 27
Bell City, LA 70630
337-598-2216**

For Immediate Release
February 12, 2009

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281-252-9799

Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for Cajun Exploration, LLC's Proposed Lacassine 3D Seismic Survey within the Cameron Prairie and Lacassine National Wildlife Refuges is Available for Public Review and Comment---February 16 through March 17, 2009

Cajun Exploration, LLC (Cajun Exploration) is proposing to conduct a three dimensional seismic survey within the Cameron Prairie and Lacassine National Wildlife Refuges (Refuges) during the spring and summer of 2009 on behalf of Alta Mesa Holdings, LP. The project area encompasses a total of approximately 17,190.40 acres (26.86 square miles) within the Refuges; 4,588.80 acres (7.17 square miles) within the Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge and 12,601.60 acres (19.69 square miles) within the Lacassine National Wildlife Refuge, which includes portions of the Lacassine Pool.

The purpose of Cajun Exploration's proposed 3-D seismic survey is to provide a high-resolution image of subsurface geological features, allowing them to effectively evaluate the hydrocarbon reserves underlying the project area. Data gathered from proposed activities will help to alleviate the need for more numerous two dimensional (2-D) exploration projects, as well as decrease the likelihood of drilling dry wells. As a result, adverse impacts to natural resources would be minimized.

The USFWS is considering issuance of a Special Use Permit to Cajun Exploration in order to access surface lands of the Cameron Prairie and Lacassine National Wildlife Refuges to conduct the above described 3-D seismic survey; however, the USFWS is required to assess the conditions of all natural resources within and immediately adjacent to the proposed project area, as well as the potential impacts that Cajun Exploration's operations could have on these

resources prior to issuing authorization to conduct operations. The assessment of resources and potential impacts is necessary so that operations and equipment can be tailored to protect and minimize any adverse impacts.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared by Dixie Environmental Services Co., LP (DESCO) for the Lacassine 3D in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidelines. The EA is designed to aid the USFWS in the decision-making process, and it describes and evaluates two alternatives in detail. The first alternative (Alternative A, Proposed Action) consists of Cajun Exploration's proposed plan of operations. The second alternative (Alternative B, No Action) includes a scenario in which the USFWS takes no action. In this case, No Action means that the USFWS would not issue an SUP to Cajun Exploration; however, Cajun Exploration would still exercise its mineral rights and conduct the survey across Refuge lands without restrictions. There would be no permit stipulations or guidelines to minimize and mitigate impacts to Refuge resources, nor would non-service Refuge representative(s) be present to ensure adherence to the permit stipulations and assist in least impact equipment choices and methodology.

The following resources and other concerns were identified for evaluation in the environmental assessment: fish, wildlife, and habitat; public use; cultural resources; and oil and gas activities.

The EA is available for public review and comment for a period of 30 days, beginning on February 16, 2009. A hard copy will be on file at the Southwest Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex Office, located at 1428 Highway 27 Bell City, LA 70630. Hard and/or digital copies of the document will be available to the public upon request. To obtain a copy of the document, please contact Tanya Matherne of DESCO at 281-252-9799 or via email at tmatherne@desco-online.com. The EA may also be downloaded from the refuge website at www.fws.gov/swlarefugecomplex from the "Lacassine 3D EA" link. Comments received will aid the USFWS in the decision making process.

Comments should be submitted electronically to [tmatherne @desco-online.com](mailto:tmatherne@desco-online.com) or mailed to Tanya Matherne, DESCO, 26902 Nichols Sawmill, Magnolia, TX 77355. Comments should be sent prior to March 17, 2009 and contain the following information:

- Printed or typed name, address, and telephone number (if possible)
- Title of the project on which the comments are being submitted
- Specific facts or comments along with supporting reasons that the person believes the Responsible Official should consider

We value your interest and ideas for the management of the Lacassine and Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuges. If you need additional information about the EA, please contact Tanya Matherne at 281-252-9799.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System that encompasses more than 540 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands, and other special management areas. It also operates 70 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. The agency also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.
