



LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

"... conserving our natural resources and your right to enjoy them."



SUBJECT: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION PLAN
FOR THE ATCHAFALAYA BASIN

WHEREAS, the State of Louisiana has developed a comprehensive master plan (Plan) for the Atchafalaya Basin that, in collaboration with responsible federal agency partners, will conserve habitat and fish and wildlife resources while maximizing opportunities for public enjoyment of the Basin's environment, consistent with the rights of private landowners and leaseholders, and

WHEREAS, the State Master Conservation and Recreation Plan for the Atchafalaya Basin was developed with the participation of a Citizens Advisory Committee, eight state and six federal agencies including the Corps of Engineers, local governments and essentially all other public and private interests which have a stake in the use and management of the Atchafalaya Basin, and

WHEREAS, the 15-year Atchafalaya Master Plan includes projects to provide and enhance public access, water management and recreation, and land use easements to protect the Basin's natural habitat, and

WHEREAS, the implementation of this comprehensive plan for the Atchafalaya Basin over the next 15 years will help preserve an extraordinary resource for the citizens of Louisiana and visitors from around the nation and the world while maintaining the Basin's vital flood control function and the rights of Basin landowners, and

WHEREAS, last year the Louisiana Legislature approved the Atchafalaya Master Plan and authorized its funding (up to a total of \$85 million) over the next 15 years by adopting Act 920 of the 1999 Regular Session, and further approved general fund appropriations and capital outlay funding for the first year of plan implementation, and

WHEREAS, to accomplish one of the Plan's keystone projects, the visitor's center and children's fishing pier at the I-10 Butte LaRose rest area on Lake Pelba, it will be necessary for the Legislature to approve a land swap with St Martin Land Co., and

WHEREAS, land has been secured immediately north of the planned visitor's center by the National Rehabilitation Resource Center for potential development of an Atchafalaya Basin summer camp for physically-challenged youth, and although not originally included it is consistent with the State Master Plan for the Atchafalaya Basin, and Act 920 of 1999 provides for the inclusion of additional projects as long as Plan implementation does not exceed \$85 million over 15 years, and

(over)

WHEREAS, along with the commitment to coastal restoration and the development of the Coast 2050 "Plan", the development of the State Master Conservation and Recreation Plan for the Atchafalaya Basin is a hallmark of conservation leadership for the Foster Administration and the Louisiana Legislature and demonstrates an astute understanding of natural resource conservation priorities and their related future economic benefits, and

WHEREAS, even with the current difficult fiscal situation facing state government it is wise to "stay the course" in implementing the State's Atchafalaya Plan by continuing to provide the necessary modest level of funding required in the upcoming fiscal year.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation urges the Louisiana Legislature to (1) approve the appropriation requested by the Atchafalaya Basin Program to continue implementing the State Master Plan for the Atchafalaya Basin for fiscal year '00/'01; (2) approve the land swap between the State and St. Martin Land Co. so that development of the visitor's center and children's fishing pier at the Butte LaRose rest area along I-10 on Lake Pelba can continue as planned; (3) authorize a study of the proposed Atchafalaya Summer Camp for physically challenged youth that would be located north of the planned visitor's center at the I-10 Butte LaRose exit.

Adopted by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation in convention assembled, March 12, 2000 in Alexandria, Louisiana.