



LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

"... conserving our natural resources and your right to enjoy them since 1940."

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Resolution No. 1B, 2018

SUBJECT: SIGNAGE AT NATURAL WETLANDS RECEIVING TREATED SEWAGE FROM MUNICIPALITIES

WHEREAS, treated sewage from municipalities is permitted to be discharged into natural wetlands in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, such permits have no dissolved oxygen requirements and have relaxed requirements for Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) and Total Suspended Solids (TSS); and

WHEREAS, these relaxed constituent levels can make disinfection more difficult; and

WHEREAS, excursions (violations of permit limits) of these relaxed permits are common during heavy rain events; and

WHEREAS, the wetlands receiving a continuous flow of sewage effluent treated to relaxed levels is a very different environment from streams receiving effluent treated to higher levels; and

WHEREAS, wetlands are generally anaerobic with an abundance of decaying organic matter and surface waters are generally aerobic with much less organic matter; and

WHEREAS, these differences constitute more favorable habitat conditions in effluent receiving wetlands for the survival, concentration and regrowth of pathogens; and

WHEREAS, it is well known that enteric pathogens concentrate in and survive better on decaying organic matter that more closely approximates anaerobic conditions found in the intestine; and

WHEREAS, there is insufficient or no monitoring data required to determine the current level of pathogen exposure in receiving effluent wetlands; and

WHEREAS, wildlife pathogens can also be pathogenic to humans and where the two pathogens mix in effluent receiving wetlands, gene transference between various bacteria and viruses can easily take place; and

WHEREAS, avian botulism spores are ubiquitous in natural wetlands and are more likely to be activated to create toxins under anaerobic and nutrient rich conditions typically found in effluent wetlands; and

WHEREAS, hunting and recreation are common in effluent impacted wetlands and therefore increase exposure rates to potential pathogens and toxins; and

WHEREAS, those who recreate in effluent wetlands often do not realize they may be exposed to higher health risks; and

WHEREAS, there are no permit requirements for monitoring potential health risks within the effluent receiving wetland; and

WHEREAS, there are no requirements for notifying the public that the effluent receiving wetlands could pose increased health risks; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality is the permitting agency responsible for issuing permits for effluent discharged into natural wetlands; and

WHEREAS, municipalities which are issued these permits have a responsibility to ensure the public is not at increased risk because of their activities; and

WHEREAS, in cases where effluent wetlands merge into State-owned wildlife management areas, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has responsibility for the management and safety of animals and those who recreate in such areas.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation recommends that the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality require municipalities with wetland permits, relaxed or otherwise, to post warning signage clearly stating that exposure within the receiving wetland could constitute an increased health risk for humans and animals.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation recommends that, regardless of permit requirements, municipalities post warning signage on the boundaries of effluent wetland areas that are under their control and responsibility.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation recommends that the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries post warning signage at entry points to wildlife management areas that are being impacted by permitted municipal sewage effluent.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation recommends that such signage clearly state “Warning” or “Caution” and that there is a potential for increased health risks for humans and wildlife.

Adopted by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation Board of Directors at their meeting on January 20, 2018 in Woodworth, Louisiana.