



## LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

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

337 S. Acadian Thruway, Baton Rouge, LA 70806  
P.O. Box 65239, Baton Rouge, LA 70896-5239

(225) 344-6707  
www.lawildlifefed.org

Resolution No. 2, 2019

### **SUBJECT: OPPOSITION TO THE ONE LAKE PROJECT**

WHEREAS, as a result of promotion by a local real estate developer since 1996, the Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood and Drainage District (Drainage District) based in Jackson, Mississippi, has pursued several plans that involve damming the Pearl River to create new developable waterfront property along with questionable flood control benefits for the Jackson metropolitan area; and

WHEREAS, the Drainage District's latest plan, known locally as the "One Lake Project" (One Lake), involves dredging 25 million cubic yards of sediment from a nearly 10-mile stretch of the upper Pearl River and constructing a dam to create a 1900-acre lake; and

WHEREAS, One Lake poses significant, irreversible damages to the Pearl River, birds and their habitats and the ecological impacts go well beyond the immediate project footprint to include the downstream resources that lie along the 200-mile stretch of the Pearl below the proposed dam as well as Mississippi Sound, Lake Borgne, and the Gulf; and

WHEREAS, One Lake will destroy over 2500 acres of habitat that supports Bald Eagles and several species of conservation priority songbirds, as well as a variety of fish and other wildlife; and

WHEREAS, One Lake will destroy or degrade critical habitat for several federally threatened species like the Wood Stork, Gulf Sturgeon, Ringed Sawback Turtle, and Northern Long-eared Bat; and

WHEREAS, Mississippi Wildlife Federation has identified several priority species that would be impacted in the One Lake project: Prothonotary Warbler, Swainson's Warbler, Swallow-tailed Kite, Clapper Rail and the endemic Pearl River Map Turtle; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) is concerned about One Lake's impacts to Louisiana's state and federal public landholdings, including the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area and the Bogue Chitto National Wildlife Refuge, to which LWF considers any impacts unacceptable; and

WHEREAS, LWF promoted and has helped protect the Louisiana Natural and Scenic Rivers program and is concerned with One Lake's impacts to certain streams in the system including West Pearl River, Pushepatatpa Creek and Morgan River, to which LWF considers any impacts unacceptable; and

WHEREAS, wetland habitats downstream from the project site serve as vital buffers to protect coastal communities by helping to absorb waters from flooding and storm events; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Oyster Task Force has identified insufficient freshwater flows from the Pearl River to coastal waters as a threat to oyster production in Louisiana and this problem will worsen as a result of the One Lake project thereby putting this component of the seafood industry in jeopardy; and

WHEREAS, changes to the downstream hydrology of the Pearl River risks hundreds of millions of dollars in BP oil disaster restoration projects underway or planned for Louisiana, as these projects depend on stable salinities and will be less likely to succeed if freshwater discharge from the Pearl River is diminished; and

WHEREAS, over a dozen downstream stakeholders have passed unanimous resolutions opposing One Lake, including both houses of the Louisiana Legislature; St. Tammany and Washington Parishes, La; Town of Pearl River, La; and the cities of Bogalusa and Slidell, La; and

WHEREAS, upon reviewing the Draft Study on One Lake, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concluded that it “is the most environmentally damaging plan;” and

WHEREAS, the Drainage District continually has failed to produce documents required by federal laws for adequate, timely public and scientific review such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Report, Independent External Peer Review Report, and Biological Opinion; and

WHEREAS, the One Lake proposal lacks scientific rigor, comprehensive modeling and technical analyses that are all essential components to fully and adequately assess impacts to environmental resources, public health, community interests, and economic sectors; and

WHEREAS, if the true goal is to address flooding problems—real or perceived—in the Pearl River Basin, there is a recognition that approaches to flood control have evolved over the past decades to now emphasize the use of natural infrastructure; however, the Drainage District has failed to prioritize, consider or employ these less ecologically damaging, more comprehensive flood control measures.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Louisiana Wildlife Federation is wholly opposed to the One Lake Project.

*Adopted by Louisiana Wildlife Federation in Convention Assembled on August 17, 2019 in West Monroe, Louisiana.*