



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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For Immediate Release
April 18, 2013

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DEQ to initiate watershed inspection project in southwestern Louisiana

BATON ROUGE – In mid-May, environmental scientists from the Southwestern Regional Office of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality will be commencing a comprehensive water quality investigation of the watersheds in Calcasieu Parish.

The inspection project is part of DEQ's statewide watershed-based approach, which focuses on improving water quality in watersheds that currently show impairment for their designated uses such as primary and secondary contact recreation (swimming, fishing and boating), fish, shellfish and/or wildlife propagation, agricultural support and drinking water supply.

The project will ensure that each facility discharging into the watersheds is doing so properly and in accordance with state and federal environmental regulations. The project has been successfully conducted at other watersheds within the state, including Bogue Chitto River, Bogue Falaya River, Pearl River, Bayou Lafourche, Bayou Terrebonne and the Tchefuncte River.

“A leading cause of pollution to our state's waterways is the improper discharge of wastewater, so it is imperative that Louisiana's watersheds continue to be protected from illegal and unpermitted discharges,” said DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch. “The goal of these inspection projects is to promote fish and wildlife propagation and support our state's sporting and recreational activities in our waterways to ensure that we preserve our Sportsman's Paradise.”

The project is designed to address the source(s) through a combination of surveillance inspections, enforcement actions, compliance assistance and community outreach programs. DEQ's Inspections, Enforcement, Water Permits, Assessment and Drinking Water Protection Divisions will work together to identify all permitted and unpermitted facilities contributing pollutants into the targeted watershed. Once identified, all contributors to the watershed's impairment will be required to comply with their permit or apply for a permit if they currently are unauthorized to discharge. DEQ's Small Business Assistance group will help qualified facilities with permit applications and initial compliance-related issues.

Facilities who contribute pollutants to the watershed will then be inspected to ensure compliance. Facilities which fail to apply for a permit or fail to comply with applicable regulations will be referred to DEQ's Enforcement Division for appropriate action.

Geographic boundaries of the project will be businesses along Louisiana Highway 27 (south of I-10 and north of the Calcasieu-Cameron parish line); and businesses along Louisiana Highway 108 between Highway 27 and I-10.

The project will focus on watersheds which drain into the Calcasieu River; specifically, Bayou D'Inde, Moss Lake, Intracoastal Waterway and Calcasieu River.