

BAYOU BARTHOLOMEW ALLIANCE



NEWSLETTER



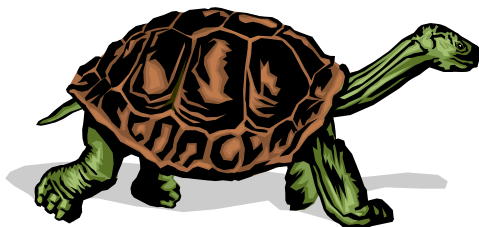
Fall, 1998

Vol 1.

Our First Newsletter

Our first newsletter will be mailed out to over 1,500 individuals. The majority of these people, well over 1,000, are landowners in the Bayou Bartholomew Watershed. Other individuals include business people, environmentalists, concerned citizens, and recreationists.

We hope to publish a newsletter on a quarterly basis. We need your help!!! Please send your suggestions for a name for the newsletter to the Bayou Bartholomew Coordinator. We also would like suggestions on topics for inclusion in upcoming newsletters.



Who We Are

The Bayou Bartholomew Alliance was incorporated in October of 1995 as a nonprofit organization. It was Dr. Curtis Merrell's vision and concern for this resource which initiated the formation of a group of concerned citizens, landowners and others who realize the importance of this unique southern stream.

Bayou Bartholomew begins its journey northwest of the city of Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and flows approximately 300 miles before crossing the Louisiana border on its way to joining the Ouachita River. It is heralded as the longest bayou in the world. Lined in portions with cypress and tupelo swamps and inhabited by alligators and large turtles, visited by wintering waterfowl, containing over sixty fish species, this bayou is truly a wonder of nature.

However, the Bayou does have problems which cause its water to be of a lesser quality than what it could be. All of us who live in the Bayou's watershed, of almost one-million acres, probably contribute to the impacts the bayou feels from man's activity. Noticeable activities which lead to some water quality problems or loss of habitats include urban development

which removes the trees along the stream bank. This causes bank erosion and increases in stream temperature which leads to stress on aquatic organisms.

As we drive through the watershed we often see evidence of dumping of everything from worn out furniture, garbage, pesticide barrels, to other unwanted items. Silviculture and farming activities can also lead to problems for the stream by denuding stream banks or allowing soil erosion to occur. Of course these same kinds of activities can lead to loss of fish and wildlife habitat.

All of these concerns and a desire to try to improve the situation led to the establishment of the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance. This non-profit organization has brought together representatives of many different areas of interests including agriculture/forestry, environmental, recreational, industrial and others to preserve water quality, improve the beauty of the Bayou, enhance wildlife and fish habitat and related recreational pursuits, educate the public about the historical and ecological significance of this resource, and to improve overall benefits to landowners adjacent to the Bayou.

Senegal Delegate Tour

Arrangements were made to conduct a tour of Bayou Bartholomew for delegates from the country of Senegal in Africa. One June 23, 1998 we presented a slide show to the group. Also present were a French interpreter and staff from the Office of International Affairs at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. After the slide presentation in Pine Bluff, the entire group traveled to the only concrete boat ramp on the Bayou, located near Cane Creek State Park. Two boat loads of individuals including Bill Layher, Scott Crab, Curtis Merrell, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission employees, and the visitors toured about three miles of the Bayou. After lunch in Star City, hosted by the Alliance, the group proceeded to Howard Kimbrell's farm. While there they viewed the restoration efforts in the riparian areas and visited at length with Howard on topics related to agriculture. Apparently they are experiencing many similar problems with their rivers and streams.

Technical Support Group

The Bayou Bartholomew Technical Support Group met on June 24, 1998. Also attending were staff from all of the county conservation districts within the watershed. Reviews of programs and efforts for each agency were discussed. Primary benefits of the meeting were to avoid duplication of effort on the part of each agency and for all of the participants doing business within the watershed to get acquainted. The meeting was productive and met those

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Pine Bluff, AR 71603

Or calling:
Dr. Curtis Merrell
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Dr. Bill Layher

ARKLA Proposal

Earlier this summer the BBA Coordinator met with Mr. Beadle Moore, Assistant to the President of ARKLA. A number of potential items that the Alliance is interested in were discussed. Mr. Moore indicated that ARKLA would be most interested in funding computers for educational programs that would assist in combining WET clubs and "Stream Teams" at high schools within the watershed. We have sent a short proposal to him. That proposal was sent on August 4, 1998. It was to be included in his requests for funding in next year's budget. His proposals went to the ARKLA board for consideration in October. We are optimistic that this proposal will be approved by the Houston-based corporation in November.

Former Soil and Water Commission Grant

We have received final payment from the Soil and Water Commission on the grant that we completed work under some time ago. The balance paid was \$1,559.00

404 Review Results in Withdrawn Application by Developer

On June 8, 1998 the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance (BBA) Coordinator met with Arkansas Game and Fish Commission personnel who toured the site of a 404 violation in Jefferson County on the Bayou Bartholomew. They were conducting a second review based upon BBA's comments. We are unaware of what recommendations the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission may have made to the Corps of Engineers. However, we received a letter from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers stating that the applicant had withdrawn the 404 permit for development on the Bayou. The Corps of Engineers requires anyone filling wetlands to obtain a permit from them to insure that environmental and water quality standards are protected.

Presentation to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Scientists

The BBA was invited by the Soil and Water Commission to give a presentation on Bayou Bartholomew to scientists from NRCS who are developing a nonpoint source of water pollution model which might be used in our watershed to evaluate areas, projects, et cetera. Officials from several other agencies also attended the meeting held in Little Rock on July 9, 1998.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) Special Initiative

The BBA Coordinator attended a meeting of officials from Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Louisiana Department of Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and NRCS which was held on July 1, 1998 in Bastrop, Louisiana. The Alliance agreed to be a supporter of a special project which would include the entire watershed area in both states. If approved at the federal level, it would mean that each state would receive an additional \$600,000 dollars in federal funds for WHIP projects that would target restoration within the Bayou Bartholomew Watershed. These monies would be in addition to WHIP funds already coming into the state. Alicia Childress with Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AG&FC) drafted the proposal.

Restoration Efforts

We conducted a review of property located in Lincoln County for possible reclamation. Initially, the area was visited by Board member Robert Mitchell and the BBA Coordinator. BBA coordinated efforts with NRCS and Arkansas Game & Fish Commission personnel and reviewed and rated the site for WHIP enrollment. The area was severely eroding and runoff from the site directly enters Able's Creek near its headwaters. It appears that WHIP funds will completely finance restoration of this site.

We reviewed possible sites for restoration with Alicia Childress of AG&FC. Three sites were selected for Alliance assistance. Additionally, we have ordered most of the trees for the projects so we should be ready to plant this winter.

We were made aware of another potential restoration project in Lincoln County. Apparently, loggers have clear-cut the riparian corridor on some bayou frontage and erosion will result unless something is done. We have located landowners and reviewed the situation. We will restore approximately 25 acres. Two adjacent landowners agreed to plant an

additional 30 acres of forests along the Bayou.

The Alliance received a call from Brian Hollis, District Conservationist (DC) in Hamburg, Ashley County. He indicated that a landowner wants to plant 9.6 acres Conservation Reserve Program (CPR) riparian corridors on lands next to the Bayou Bartholomew and would require approximately 3,800 to 4,200 trees, at an estimated cost of \$1,050, depending on species. It could be slightly higher. This was selected for Alliance assistance as it is right on the Bayou and represents one of the first where we have worked closely with a District Conservationist and a conservation district.

Aquatic Education

The Bayou Bartholomew Alliance was asked to provide aquatic education experiences to sixth and seventh graders, who were primarily minorities, as part of a grant received by a UAPB-based program. The BBA Coordinator spent five Monday mornings this summer with these kids. While some activities were held in Regional Park, in Pine Bluff, we were also able to talk about bayou ecosystems and even had boat rides on Bayou Bartholomew at Byrd Park in Pine Bluff. The kids enjoyed the experience very much!

Soil and Water Commission Grant

It appears we are nearing final approval for our 319 Non-point Source Pollution Grant. A review meeting with EPA was held in Little Rock on September 1 and we have met with Soil and Water several times since to polish up the proposal. If approved, this grant is for nearly \$370,000 over a three year period. A portion will fund assistance for Lincoln and Jefferson County Conservation Districts. Two individuals will be hired to assist with conservation plan development on farms within the watershed in those counties. A no-till drill will also be purchased to loan to farmers. Some monies will target urban planning in Pine Bluff and others will be made available for newsletter assistance, et cetera. It looks like this grant lacks only the final approval from EPA. This grant is quite exciting and will really get things going. It will begin around March of 1999.

Bayou Bartholomew Alliance
7233 Camden Cutoff
Pine Bluff, AR 71603

Wood Duck Boxes

As reported some time ago, the Three Rivers Audubon Society in Pine Bluff provided \$1,500 for the Alliance to construct wood duck boxes. The monies were sent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Foundation to be considered as match for the grant we have received from them. We will be requesting the transfer of that money and the remainder of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant in the near future. The materials have been purchased to construct the boxes. The Ducks Unlimited Chapter at the University of Arkansas/Monticello will help construct the boxes. Dates for the effort will be November 17 and 18.

If you would like to help assemble these boxes, please give the BBA Coordinator a call. We will be building the boxes the evenings of November 17 and 18 at the Monticello Vocational Center on Scogin Drive. Mr. Bob Kizer, Director, graciously provided space and is having his students cut the boards to desired lengths for construction.

Many thanks to Bob.

Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation Proposal

We have submitted an annual report to the Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation and were also requested to submit a proposal for funding for next year (1999). Within this proposal we requested \$2,500 for matching funds for the Soil and Water Commission grant to purchase computer hardware and software necessary for GIS operation. We also requested \$4,000 dollars to receive writing and artist assistance on teaching modules which we plan to develop for use with educational programs. We hope to get started in the schools within the watershed this winter. One area that we need finances for next year is coordination, travel and communications. We requested \$3,500 from this foundation for those purposes for a total request of \$10,000.

Bartholomew History Project

Rebecca DeArmand-Huskey, author of "Beyond Bartholomew," is currently engaged in authoring a complete history of Bayou Bartholomew. The Bayou Bartholomew Alliance has been receiving donations for this work and acting as fiscal agent on behalf of her endeavors.

To date, around \$5,200 has been received to support Rebecca's labors. While that seems like a lot, it will not complete the project. If you would like to donate or contribute to this history project, you may send your check, payable to BBA, to the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance Coordinator or President and clearly mark it "History Project." The Alliance is a non-profit 501(3)c organization and such donations are tax deductible.

Alliance Receives PC&E Grant

The Bayou Bartholomew Alliance recently received a grant from Pollution Control & Ecology (PC&E) to provide a watershed coordinator to assist with implementation of a variety of state, federal and local programs. The Alliance has contracted with Layher BioLogics RTEC, Inc. of Pine Bluff, Arkansas for these services. Dr. Bill Layher, President of the environmental consulting firm, brings some twenty-five years of experience on river research and environmental science to the task.

Potlatch Donates 60,000 Trees

The Potlatch Timber company has donated 60,000 trees for planting this winter. To date we have found locations along the Bayou to plant 15,000 of those trees. The trees are fast growing hybrid poplar-cottonwoods and would be ideal for filter strips. Anyone who has land along a tributary to the Bayou, which needs stabilized, by tree planting should call the BBA Coordinator. Sites will be selected on a first come, first serve basis until the trees are allocated. Land must be in the Bayou Bartholomew Watershed.

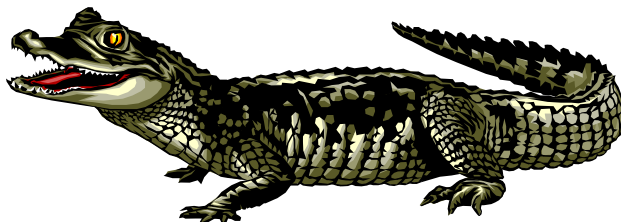
Conservation Sign-Up

Beginning October 26, 1998, landowners may enroll in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Sign up will continue through December 11, 1998. The program allows landowners to enroll environmentally sensitive cropland in conservation practices that will reduce erosion and benefit water quality and wildlife. The sign ups, if accepted, enroll such lands for 10 or 15 year periods. Landowners awarded such contracts receive payments on a per acre basis. Cost-share assistance is also available to establish such practices.

For more information on the CRP Program and other farm bill programs, call your County Conservation District, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, or Bayou Bartholomew Alliance. These organizations can help you get in touch with individuals who can assist you with the application and evaluation process.

Alliance Holds Hunter Education Classes

Wildlife is an important part of the Bayou ecosystem. Ensuring that future hunters are aware of wildlife laws and conservation is important in maintaining this renewable resource. Also of major importance to the continuation of sport hunting is the responsibility the hunter must show toward wildlife, landowners and themselves. To assist with making hunters safe and ethical, the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance, along with personnel from Layher BioLogics RTEC, Inc., David Ferrell of Hunter's Refuge in Pine Bluff, and April Layher, of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, taught a Hunter Education Class in mid-October, with over 60 participants. A second class was held on October 24 and 25th with 47 participants. The Alliance hopes that safe, ethical, and responsible hunters will help build positive relations with landowners in the watershed.



Assistance Needed

While the Alliance has received many grants and donations from industry, individuals, and foundations we still need help. With nearly 1,000,000 acres in the watershed, the job of protecting, restoring, and preserving the Bayou will be a long term one. Many grants require local matching funds. Some of those may be actual dollars or services such as volunteer efforts.

You can make a difference. We often hear of troubled environments around the world but don't often look close to home. There is much you can do. We need help building wood duck boxes, preparing land for tree planting, planting trees, picking up trash from the streams, clearing log jams and slash from the Bayou, raising funds, talking to students, and much more. If you can help or know someone who can, please fill out the form below and send it to the BBA Coordinator. Let's all put something back into the environment from which our sustenance comes.



Bayou Bartholomew Alliance Board

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President

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Vice-President

Sonia Byrd
Jack Edwards
Cynthia Kimbrell
Howard Kimbrell
Robert Mitchell
George Pugh

Dr. Bill Layher,
Coordinator

To Help Restore Bayou Bartholomew I Would Like

to donate _____ (a tax deductible donation).

to be used for tree planting

educational programs

general funds to be used wherever needed most

a memorial gift in memory of

to donate time as a volunteer

to plant trees

clean-up Bayou Bartholomew

wherever I am needed

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Comments: