

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



2005 Targeted Watersheds Grants: Tangipahoa River Louisiana and Mississippi

WHY IS THIS WATERSHED SPECIAL?

The Tangipahoa River is located in eastern Louisiana, along the northern edge of Lake Pontchartrain. The watershed covers 520 square miles and is characterized by pine and mixed hardwood forests, bottomland hardwood forests, swamps and freshwater and brackish water marshes. The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has designated the middle and upper reaches of the river as a scenic stream.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

Historically, the river was popular for recreation. However, pollution levels in the river became a public concern in the 1980s when a group of girl scouts became ill while swimming. The Tangipahoa River is on the 2004 Impaired Waterbodies 303(d) list due to high fecal coliform levels.

- High fecal coliform levels are a result of discharges from dairy farms and wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs).
- Small individual wastewater treatment plants often function improperly and release fecal bacteria into the watershed.



Water Quality sampling in the watershed.



LPBF is working with the Natural Resource Conservation Service to implement best management practices on dairy farms.

RESTORATION ACTIVITIES

The Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation (LPBF) will use the Targeted Watersheds Grant funds to implement the Tangipahoa River Water Quality Improvement Project. Actions include:

- Helping small WWTPs come into compliance through education and technical assistance.
- Assisting municipal WWTPs in implementing a flow-proportional disinfection program to reduce fecal loading to the watershed.
- Airing a public service announcement on local television to educate the public on the impacts of home wastewater.
- Reaching out to local dairy farmers to promote best management practices and the lagoon cleanout program.
- Assisting dairies in obtaining the proper permits and providing assistance with closing dairy lagoons.
- Bi-weekly monitoring of the water for E. coli and nutrients and long-term modeling of the water quality to measure impacts of the program.



A STRONG PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE

The Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation has worked to build a strong coalition known as the Tangipahoa River Task Force. Members include:

- Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
- Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Louisiana State University's Agricultural Extension Program
- Tangipahoa Parish and several municipalities
- Louisiana Department of Natural Resources
- Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service
- Tangipahoa Futures Network
- Citizens for a Clean Tangipahoa
- Hammond Daily Star and WWL-TV

EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grants

EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grants program is a competitive grant program designed to encourage collaborative, community-driven approaches to meet clean water goals.



Since Hurricane Katrina, development has flourished in the Tangipahoa Watershed, impacting water quality. LPBF is working with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality to mitigate the damages.

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