

10-16-2016

Parish President Guy Cormier
St. Martin Parish Government
301 W Port St.
St. Martinville, LA 70582

Dear Mr. Guy Cormier,

We are writing to you to express our concerns about the Beau Bayou Project.

In the Atchafalaya Basin, directing more river water into deep swamp will forever fill those wetlands, creating uplands. Since 1932, there has been a net accretion of nearly 2.5 billion cubic meters of sediment in the Basin floodway, converting a substantial amount of open water and cypress swamps to bottomland hardwood forests. The ability of the Atchafalaya Basin to move flood waters is still huge, but is already severely diminished because of this massive accretion issue. As an example, during our last ongoing flood, Grand River at Bayou Sorrel crested at 10.39' on August 17, while across the levee inside the floodway it crested at only 7.1' on August 14 (levels are fluctuating as the Mississippi River rises). Converting more of the Spillway's wetlands and open water into uplands will greatly diminish the ability of the Spillway to handle future floods. This is not only irresponsible but negligent.

We understand that there is a huge water quality problem in the Beau Bayou area, but expending over a million dollars to temporarily improve water quality to eventually forever destroy those wetlands, should never be an acceptable solution. We are borrowing those wetlands from future generations, and we have the moral obligation to make sure that they will be there for generations to come.

In addition to converting cypress swamps and open water into uplands, projects to enlarge or create new cuts to increase river water diversions will most likely silt-up again in a short period of time, making the project a complete waste of money. Louisiana should not be using public funds to fill valuable wetlands located far away from the coast until such time as sediment control measures are put in place to guarantee the integrity of those ecosystems. these constant controversies are unnecessary and very detrimental to Louisiana's image in the rest of the nation.

We urge you to look at the LIDAR maps to better understand the sediment problem, to create a sediment management plan to keep sediments in the Atchafalaya River main channel, or to explore different ways to improve water quality without introducing more river water into the system.

Please contact us if you have any questions about our concerns regarding the Beau Bayou Project.

Sincerely,

Greg Guirard

Ben Bienvenu

Roy Albert

Shane Doucet

Charles Bourque

Jody Meche

Dean A. Wilson

