

BATON ROUGE AREA FOUNDATION

# Baton Rouge Lakes Master Plan

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

SWA; Jeffrey Carbo Landscape Architects



from top: Louisiana State University Nature Center concept drawing; Restoration opportunities which charrette participants helped identify

In the 1930s, as part of a Works Progress Administration project to bolster the economy after the Great Depression, a cypress-tupelo swamp in the Bayou Duplantier in Baton Rouge was dammed and timbered, leading to its transformation

into a series of lakes. The lakes, which span 275 acres and connect Louisiana State University with the surrounding neighborhoods, have become a key feature of the LSU campus and a valued recreational asset. They also provide important remnant habitat for such birds

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*A master plan improves lake access for the community while enhancing an important ecological resource and critical wildlife habitat in the heart of Baton Rouge.*

as cormorants (*Phalacrocorax sp.*), herons and egrets (*Ardea sp.* and *Egretta sp.*), ibis species (*Eudocimus sp.*), wood ducks (*Aix sponsa*), and American white pelicans (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*).

Due to issues of eutrophication after years of sedimentation and nutrient accumulation from urban stormwater runoff and natural accumulation, the lakes were in need of restoration and a master plan to guide ecological enhancements and improvements.

As part of a master planning team led by SWA, Biohabitats helped ensure that the lakes' ecology was seamlessly woven into design concepts aimed at creating a sustainable and resilient open space destination. Biohabitats examined the ecological conditions on site, as well as data from prior planning and assessment work. After presenting

a summary of the ecological conditions to the Master Plan Advisory Committee, Biohabitats participated in a public design charrette. The "Build Your Own Park" charrette provided community members the opportunity to learn about the ecological context and challenges of the lakes and to contribute to the planning process.

The final master plan includes strategies for habitat enhancement and ecological restoration, which will improve the lakes as an open space asset. The American Society of Landscape Architects awarded this master plan a 2016 Honor Award for Analysis & Planning.

## SERVICES

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