



Biloxi Lions Club

LIONS ROAR

Founded February 18, 1924

<http://biloxilionsclub.org>



4th Edition

August 2019

BONNET CARRE' SPILLWAY EVENT

2019-2020 OFFICERS

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Reed Hendon, Ph.D.
Associate Director, Fisheries
University of South Mississippi
Gulf Coast Research Lab

What does 123 consecutive days of the Bonnet Carré Spillway being opened mean for the Mississippi Gulf Coast?

Well, to start, let's get a bit of history...

- The spillway was built 1929-1931 in response to the Great MS River flood of 1927 to lower river stages at New Orleans
- Opened for the 1st time in 1937, and opened only 12 times thereafter, until February 2019
- Opened most recently in Feb. 2019 to anticipate flood stage in New Orleans on March 19, 2019 with 38 of

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UPCOMING DATES, EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

SEPT 4	Jeff O'Keefe, Funeral Industry, Loewen Group Lawsuit
SEPT 11	Rodger Wilder, Gulf Coast Community Foundation
SEPT 14	MS Diabetes Foundation Walk, Jones Park
SEPT 18	Lion Rev. Elijah Mitchell, MS Sight and Hearing
SEPT 19	Board Mtg, noon, McAlister's Restaurant
SEPT 25	Loyal Owens, Depression Screening Month, Board Mts Review
OCT 16	Brian Lamar, Naval Birthday/Nava History

Meetings are noon every Wednesday at the One Thirty One Lameuse Restaurant, Downtown Biloxi

August 28, 2019 Club Meeting Recap

- ◆ Meeting called to order by Lion President Matt; Lions Jaye, Jerry and Tom Wicks led us in song; Lion Leslie led the Pledge of Allegiance; and Lion Elijah offered prayer
- ◆ 50/50 was won by guest Lynn Finch; and Lion Tadd; no King of Clubs Progressive
- ◆ Lion Greg announced to assist in the catering of the noon meal each week club members are asked to fill out and sign the ticket which will be at each place setting. The ticket ask if you will be attending the next weeks meeting and if you plan to bring a guest. Since the meals are now catered having a closer estimate of how much food to prepare will assist the caterer with the meal planning. Also, at each table there is 1 seat that will not have a place setting. Members who to do not plan to eat at the meeting to asked to please sit that seat.
- ◆ Lion Greg mentioned that it is the responsibility of the Lion Tamer to set up the room, the banners, PA/podium system, gavel and any other items, for each meeting. He asked that members arriving early who want to assist our Lion Tamer in this duty to please do. A cart with our meeting supplies is downstairs in the closet next the elevator
- ◆ Lion Jerry introduced our guest speaker, Reed Hendon, USM Gulf Coast Research Lab, Bonnet Carre Spillway Event, Monitoring and Assessment

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of the 350 bays opened, increased to 206 bays when the flood stage crest arrived later in March

- Closed in April 11, 2019; reopened again of May 10, 2019; closed July 27, 2019
- 1st time opened in consecutive years (2018 & 2019); 1st time opened 2 times in same year
- 2019 total volume discharge of 1.35 trillion cubic feet of water (or 15,000,000 Olympic size swimming pools)

Now, that the spillway has been closed for just over a month, how does 1.35 trillion cubic feet of fresh water being released into Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Borgne impact the Mississippi Gulf Coast?

First of all, as we are so keenly aware, the fresh water entered the our brackish waters through Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Borgne opening to the MS Sound. The sheer abundance of the spillway water means that nutrients, mainly from fertilizers, activated and increased the blue-green algae bloom. This alone has caused beach waters from Bay St. Louis to Pascagoula to be closed due to elevated algae toxins inside of the barrier islands of Cat, Ship and Horn Island. At the time of this writing, the Sound waters are still closed due to the high concentration of the algae bloom with no indication of when it will dissipate enough to consider safe to open.

However, the unprecedented amount of fresh water released is a different story when it comes to our marine life, particularly the seafood industry.

Dr. Reed Hendon, through a slideshow presentation, gave the club members a more thorough understanding of how the data from the water salinity sampling during the months of May-July will hopefully be used in determining the long-term damage the extended opening of the Bonnet Carre' Spillway had on our marine environment.

"90-100% mortality of the oyster beds, blue crab average is 21-40% down from 2018, and the shrimp catch is 50-68% down from last year's average" states Hendon.

Hendon stated that 64 USM staff and graduated students are assisting with the monitoring and assessment sampling process. Just a side note of interest, a scientist at Stennis Space Center isolated isotopes known in the Mississippi River and matched those to water found along the Mississippi Sound samples. The match sampling went as far over to the Pascagoula waters.

To keep up to date on USM's continuing monitoring and assessment project you can access their findings by going to <http://gcr1.usm.edu/news/2019.bonnet.carre.spillway.overview.php>.