



Making Connections

The Official Publication of the Louisiana Ground Water Association

Volume 8 Issue 1 Summer 2023

From the Executive Director's Desk



Well, it looks like Summer has arrived. I hope everyone enjoyed the long spring and had plenty of work during that time, but I believe the only cool weather from here forward will be during a rain.



Our 2023 convention went well, however, attendance remains lower than before COVID. We have had to place the Scholarship Awards on hold because of low revenue, at least until our attendance at the convention goes back to normal. Now that COVID has been declared officially over, it is my hope all members will return to the live convention in Marksville. We will have only one convention and trade show again this year. It will be held on January 10, 2024, at the Paragon. As membership improves, we will be able to consider adding the make up session in the future.

There is a new requirement for maintaining your license this year and going forward. The Title 46 rule change requires five of the six required continuing education hours, "shall consist of continuing education in generalized water well drilling principles; drilling or reworking of water wells; drilling monitoring wells, heat pump wells or holes; geotechnical boreholes; plugging and abandoning wells or holes; safety in drilling operations, including utility notifications and equipment transport; well construction/pumps; geology and hydrogeology; new technologies; and/or other relevant topics approved by the department. One hour shall consist of training provided and/or approved by the department on relevant state law, rules, and regulations governing the above, or relevant compliance and enforcement matters." We will be including this specified training in our agenda for the next convention.

I hope you have an excellent and productive Summer and Fall season. If the association can be of service to you, please give me a call. We are available to do what we can in all matters pertaining to Water Well Drilling, Environmental Drilling, etc.

Joel

Joel Walton
LGWA Executive Director

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EPA Adds Louisiana Superfund Site to the NPL

Adapted from Information by the Environmental Protection Agency

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) uses its Superfund program to take care of some of the most hazardous sites in the country. These sites are selected using the National Priorities List (NPL). The NPL is a roster of the nation's most contaminated sites threatening human health or the environment. Once a Superfund site is added to the NPL, the EPA can prioritize funding for cleanup and necessary enforcement action. The NPL is intended to guide the EPA in determining which sites need further investigation.

Recently, the EPA decided to add the Louisiana Superfund site at Capitol Lakes to the NPL. The site, encompassing three lakes in Baton Rouge, Louisiana: North Lake, South Lake, and East Lake, occupies 60 acres adjacent to the Capitol Building and the Governor's Mansion.

"The EPA remains committed to ensuring the safety and health of citizens who live near these Superfund sites," said Regional Administrator Dr. Earthea Nance. "By adding the Capitol Lakes site to the NPL, we are enforcing environmental justice and taking action to remove a threat that impacts the environment and public health."



Despite signs around the lake advising people not to fish there, the EPA has seen evidence of fishing continuing to take place. Photo courtesy of LDEQ.

The Capitol Lakes were originally part of a natural drainage system called Grassie Bayou. Grassie Bayou was contiguous with the Mississippi River until the early 20th century, when it was dammed creating the lake system. Since there is no natural outlet, water flowing into the lake must be pumped out using a pumping station on the Mississippi River. This created a stagnant lake system, which led to the retention of sediment and contaminants. Contamination of the lake system was first discovered in 1972, with the detection of oil contaminated with pesticides and Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs). In 1983, when the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) investigated a report of PCB-laden oil entering the lake, a fish advisory was established due to PCBs and various metals which remains in place today.

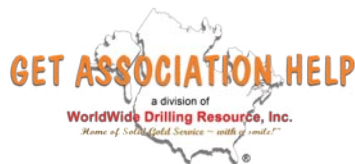
In the late 1990s, LDEQ conducted a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study. By 2021, with limited long-term remediation options available, the LDEQ referred the site to the EPA. In April 2022, the EPA reassessed the lakes; both sediment samples and fish tissue samples were collected and analyzed for chemical constituents. Chemical analysis of the sediment samples indicated the presence of PCBs. Fish tissue analysis continued to detect PCB concentrations above the Human Food Chain Cancer Risk benchmark. To address safety concerns and to remove a threat to the environment, the EPA decided to move forward with proposing this site to the NPL.

"When we add a site to the National Priorities List, EPA is committing to permanently addressing contamination on-site and ensuring surrounding communities receive the protection and support they deserve," said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan. The EPA is making sure complex hazardous waste sites receive the long-term federal financial assistance and cleanup support they need to safeguard resources families rely on, like clean drinking water.

According to LDEQ Secretary Dr. Chuck Carr Brown, "This is the first step in restoring these key assets to their designated uses. Once the lakes are clean again, all Capital area residents will be able to take advantage of these centrally located water bodies for sports and recreation, and a potential source of ongoing pollution will be removed thanks to the assistance of our federal partners."

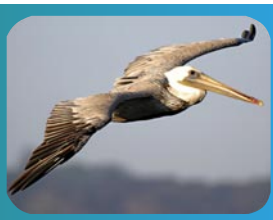
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Membership in the Louisiana Ground Water Association (LGWA) is open to water well and geotechnical drilling professionals. LGWA and its members are active throughout the State of Louisiana.

Final Grades Released for Louisiana Water Systems

Adapted from Information by the Louisiana Department of Health

The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) released its final water grades for 951 community water systems across the state, a process which creates accountability for water systems and provides transparency for water system customers.

LDH is publishing the first ever water system grades in 2023. A preliminary water system grade was published in January, with the final water system grade being published in May. Starting in 2024, only the final grades will be published by May 1, each year.

Water grades were enabled under Act 98 of the 2021 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, and is known as the Community Drinking Water Accountability Rule. The grades are calculated using points assigned to seven standards evaluating infrastructure, sustainability, and overall water quality.

State Senator Fred Mills authored the legislation as a way to provide residents with a snapshot of the quality of their community water systems and to encourage water systems to invest in improvements or explore consolidating with another water system to improve sustainability. Amanda Ames, chief engineer for the Louisiana Department of Health, led the initiative's implementation.

According to Senator Mills, "Clean drinking water is such a fundamentally important part of our existence. In my 16 years as a state legislator I have filed nearly 300 bills, and Act 98 is one of the most important because it educates consumers about the quality of their drinking water and holds the operators of those systems accountable. I am so proud of Amanda Ames and her LDH team for bringing this bill to life. I have never been more pleased with implementation of a legislative concept, and I know that the water system grades will be a valuable tool for consumers and an incentive for water systems to make their infrastructure a priority."



Find out the grade of a water system by visiting www.ldh.la.gov/page/4815

Water system grades evaluate community water systems' long-term sustainability to provide safe drinking water to Louisiana residents. Seven standards (categories) are evaluated for the water grade:

- ↔ Federal water quality violations
- ↔ State violations
- ↔ Financial sustainability
- ↔ Infrastructure
- ↔ Operation and maintenance
- ↔ Customer satisfaction
- ↔ Secondary contaminants (iron and manganese)

Although more than 65% of the water systems in the state received an A or B grade, 15% of the systems received a D or F. "Dedicated funding through the LDH Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund Program, as well as other funding mechanisms, are available to help systems invest in this critical infrastructure," Ames explained.

Water grades: A: 386 systems, or 41% B: 256 systems, or 27% C: 171 systems, or 18%
D: 56 systems, or 6% F: 82 systems, or 9%

Water systems are also eligible for bonus points for maintaining asset management plans, a storage assessment and maintenance program, a well assessment and maintenance program, and for participating in a capacity development program or management training program.

It is important to remember, a poor water system grade does not mean the water is unsafe or that it poses an immediate health risk. A poor water system grade indicates significant concerns with the long-term viability of a water system and requires major improvement/up-grade to continuously provide safe drinking water. The water is safe to drink unless notified otherwise by LDH or the community water system. Water systems are required to notify customers immediately when the drinking water is unsafe to drink.

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In Memoriam

Manuel Gomez Rios - March 29, 1960 - April 14, 2023

Born March 29, 1960, in Santo Tomas, Mexico, Manuel Gomez Rios ended his earthly journey on April 14, 2023. He emigrated to the United States as a young man. When he arrived, he persevered to learn English and carve a place for himself with his determination and strong work ethic.



He began his life-long career in the water well drilling industry working for Landford Drilling, with Preston Niette and Carl Niette. Several years later in 1984, all three joined Continental Drilling and Service, where they continued to work as a team.

Manuel excelled at Continental Drilling and Service over his 39-year career with the company, eventually holding the position of lead driller for over 26 years. His sense of humor and camaraderie on the rigs always made the day speed by. His knowledge and skill as a driller were respected by fellow workers, customers, and engineers alike. His greatest passions were family and work, but he also enjoyed collecting vintage fire-arms, hot rod cars, and travel. He loved to hunt down deals; every pawnshop in North Louisiana knew Manuel by name. Spending time on the beach with his wife was a favorite place. He always saw the best in people, trying to find the good in life and to see the positive in any situation. He led an amazing life, becoming a father, a grandfather, a U.S. Citizen, a farm owner, mastering his craft of drilling, and so much more. He will be missed by all who knew him.

Manuel was preceded in death by his parents Manuel Rios and Elaina Rios; also, Oscar and Christine LaBorde, whom he thought of as his second parents.

He is survived by his wife Tammy; sons Derrick (Katie), Damon, Christopher, Derrick (Brittini), and Brandon (Nicole); sisters Nina, Martha, Olivia, and Juanita; and brother Humberto. He was blessed with eighteen grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.



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Remind Customers to Service Water Wells After Flooding

Adapted from Information by the Louisiana Department of Health

With hurricane season starting, now is the time to remind customers of the importance of water well safety during a natural disaster. In fact, the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) is advising residents who own private water wells to make preparations to protect their well system.

Although private wells are not regulated in Louisiana, well drilling professionals can help well owners prepare, protect, and maintain their well. Left unchecked, wells are vulnerable to damage and contamination which could cause negative health effects.

More than 90,000 private water wells exist in Louisiana, of which an estimated 1075 were impacted by flooding caused by Hurricane Ida. Another 34,196 private wells were impacted by hurricane-force winds during the 2021 hurricane season impacting coastal areas of Southeast Louisiana.

State Health Officer Dr. Joseph Kanter said, "Louisiana is no stranger to natural disasters and is regularly affected by active hurricane seasons, storms, and spring flooding. Faced with emergency events, there are often concerns regarding the impact to private water well systems. Louisianans who rely on private water wells should take action now to protect the health of themselves and their families by ensuring the safety of their water supply in the event of a disaster."

Before a natural disaster - Remind your customers of the importance of covering the wellhead and pump to protect the

equipment from flying debris. If a well is located in a flood-prone area, suggest it be fitted with a floodproof well cap. These caps are watertight to prevent floodwaters from contaminating the well.



It is also important to educate customers of the importance of shutting off the pump at the circuit breaker just before a storm hits. Power outages can cause spikes and surges through the electrical lines, and this can damage the electrical components of the pump. Power to the pump should not be turned back on until floodwaters recede.

After a natural disaster -

If a customer's well does flood, sustain damage, or experience

power loss for an extended amount of time, they should assume the well is contaminated. Once you are able to inspect the well, it should be disinfected and thoroughly flushed before collecting a sample of water for analysis by a laboratory.

Until the water is confirmed to be negative for coliform bacteria, it should not be used for drinking purposes. Before receiving results from the laboratory, advise customers to use bottled water or some other safe supply of water.

Take this opportunity to get in touch with your customers and let them know the services you offer to make sure they have access to clean water.



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Why Purchase Contractor's Professional Liability Coverage?

Many well drilling contractors may wonder what contractor's professional liability has to do with being a drilling/pump contractor and why is it necessary? Where is the wisdom of spending more money on a professional liability policy when you already have general liability?

Let's take a look at some real-life examples where professional liability is the **ONLY** answer to solve unfortunate contractor claim situations **NOT COVERED** by general liability:

Example 1: You install a water system in a multimillion dollar facility. The system, despite intense troubleshooting by everyone, fails to perform adequately. The remedy is an expensive retrofit, which is just as costly as the original system. Without contractor's professional, you must lawyer up and hope you don't have to pay for it and install it yourself!

Example 2: A water well drilling contractor spends a couple weeks drilling a well and then, while setting the casing, the borehole collapses. Some of the casing is recovered, but the hole is lost, along with the profit, and he must move over and start over again when he should be off making money somewhere else!

Example 3: A geothermal contractor installs a 200-bore-hole loop field. However, a coupling used in each borehole has a manufacturer's defect and the entire field must be redone. The manufacturer fulfills his obligation to replace the faulty parts, but the geothermal contractor has to choose between protecting his bottom line, or protecting his reputation and redo the entire system.

Example 4: An environmental contractor is hired to sample soil at a site prior to a real estate purchase. The soil is tested at a lab, found to be free of pollutants. Months later, pollution is discovered. Eventually, it is discovered the environmental contractor's employees inadvertently sampled at the wrong locations. The result is a serious lawsuit against the contractor for the wrongful purchase of the property, plus the environmental cleanup of the site.

In each of these examples, ordinary general liability will deny a claim. A contractor's professional liability policy, however, will immediately pay to correct the situation. Then the insurance company will seek reimbursement. Most of all, you the contractor avoid a serious financial loss, lost time, lost revenue, and lost reputation.

A contractor's professional liability policy will empower you to act like you want to act, make things right, and in fact, better your reputation.



New Appointments to the Capital Area Groundwater Conservation District

Adapted from Information by the Office of the Governor

Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards announced his appointments to the Capital Area Groundwater Conservation District.



Mr. Nolan R. Brown III of Baton Rouge is a budget analyst for the Louisiana Special School District in Baton Rouge. He will represent East Baton Rouge Parish.

Mr. Eric B. Lewis of Zachary, the executive director of Baton Rouge STEM in Zachary, was nominated by Diversion Water Company. He will represent municipal users.

Mr. D. Gregory "Greg" Phares of Baton Rouge owns 5940 Training, LLC in Clinton. He will represent East Feliciana Parish.

The mission of the Capital Area Groundwater Conservation District is to provide efficient administration, conservation, orderly development, and supplementation of groundwater resources in the parishes of East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Pointe Coupee, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana. The board is responsible for developing, promoting, and implementing management strategies for the groundwater resources over which it has jurisdictional authority.

Record-Breaking Project Installs Power Lines Underground

Adapted from Information by Entergy

Entergy Louisiana recently completed the longest underground project in company history, adding to the list of upgrades which have increased resilience of the electric system to improve day-to-day reliability and help communities recover more quickly following major storms.



Workers undergrounding a portion of the distribution system in Grand Isle.

Using horizontal directional drilling, crews buried approximately eight miles of distribution power lines along Louisiana Highway 1 (LA 1) from Leesville to Grand Isle. This is one of two main lines serving the area, with the other being a hardened overhead line boasting Class 1 poles placed into steel caissons and backfilled with rock to create a stronger foundation to offset challenging soil conditions.

While the underground line brings significant benefits in terms of combatting high winds, the overhead line, also along LA 1, was built to withstand winds up to 150 miles per hour, and provides the company an option for quickly repairing equipment and bringing power back to the area in case both feeds are affected.

"Grid resilience isn't a destination as much as it is continuous improvement, and although Mother Nature will always find a way to challenge us, we do believe continuing to make investments to harden the electric system will help Entergy and the communities we serve recover more quickly following major storms," said John Hawkins, vice president of reliability for Entergy Louisiana.

In addition to undergrounding work, installing larger poles, and creating stronger foundations near the coast, Entergy Louisiana also shortened spans, or the length of wire from pole to pole, and installed lighter transformers and tighter framing of equipment to help reduce effects of high wind on the electric system. The company also relocated some portions of the electric system which had to be rebuilt following Hurricane Ida from hard-to-access areas in the marsh to more accessible areas, another tactic aimed at reducing the time it takes to perform work and safely restore power.



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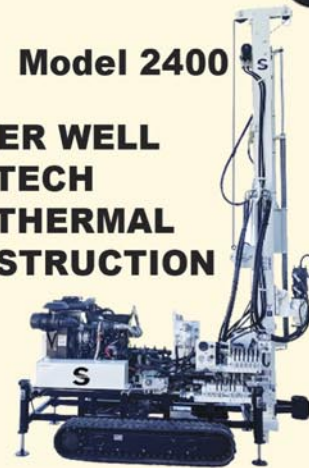
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*Scientists sampling fish along the marsh edge in Bay Batiste.
Photo by Eddie Weeks courtesy of Louisiana State University.*

Are Man-Made Tidal Marshes as Effective as Natural Ones?

*Adapted from Information by
Louisiana State University (LSU)*

According to Louisiana's draft of the state's *2023 Coastal Master Plan*, \$16 billion will be spent constructing new tidal marshes to combat coastal land loss. Many are wondering whether these newly created, man-made marshes will be similar to existing natural marshes.

A new study, published in the journal *Ecosphere* and funded by the NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) RESTORE Science Program, addresses this issue. The results are good news for the state's plans to rebuild the coastline.

"This work is really exciting because it shows that when they're carefully designed, restored marshes very rapidly become indistinguishable from natural marshes, from an ecological standpoint," said Melissa Carle, monitoring and adaptive management team lead for Deepwater Horizon restoration with NOAA Fisheries' Restoration Center, a division of NOAA's Office of Habitat Conservation. "The research here suggests that if you build it right, all of the organisms that make up a healthy marsh community will come."

The research team was headed by Michael Polito, an associate professor at LSU's Department of Oceanography & Coastal Sciences, or DOCS, and included fellow DOCS Professor Nancy Rabalais, Department of Environmental Sciences Professor Linda Hooper-Bui, and researchers from University of Wisconsin-Madison, Michigan Technological University, University of Florida, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium.

Their work focused on the tidal marshes of Barataria Bay near Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana. Using a wide range of sampling methods, the team made side-by-side comparisons of the living organisms found in both created and naturally occurring marshes; everything from fish, shrimp, crabs, arthropods, and worms, to plants and microbes in the soil.

"We found broadly similar biodiversity in created and natural marshes, which provides support for marsh creation as a tool to offset land loss and restore coastal habitats," said Polito. "In other words, the plants and animals that make Louisiana's natural coastal marshes a healthy and productive ecosystem also make themselves quite at home in the state's man-made coastal marshes."

Biodiversity can be difficult to measure. After all, creating an outline to understand the abundance and health of a wide array of marsh species is no easy task. The team took into account different aspects of biodiversity, such as abundance, or the number of individuals of each species, and richness, which is defined as the overall number of species in an area.

While created and natural marshes were remarkably similar, the study did observe a few subtle differences in the abundance and composition of infauna, soil-dwelling worms and crustaceans, as well as other soil microbes. The study attributes the differences to slightly higher elevation and drier, sandier soils found at one created marsh site, a finding the study authors said highlighted the importance of designing marsh construction projects which also replicate the elevation and hydrological conditions found at nearby natural marshes. Carefully designing new construction projects in this way, will make the resulting marshes more likely to support the diverse array of microbes, plants, and animals found in natural marshes.

NOAA officials noted the importance of studies like this as part of the ongoing exploration of restoring the coastline. "Louisiana is losing a football field's worth of coastal wetlands every 100 minutes," said Ian Zink, marine habitat resource specialist with NOAA Fisheries' Restoration Center. "Marsh creation can be a powerful tool to restore coastlines damaged by erosion, sea level rise, subsidence, and disasters like hurricanes and oil spills. This work improves our understanding of how created marshes can mimic the ecological structure and function of natural marsh habitats to support important fisheries, such as redfish, shrimp, and blue crab."

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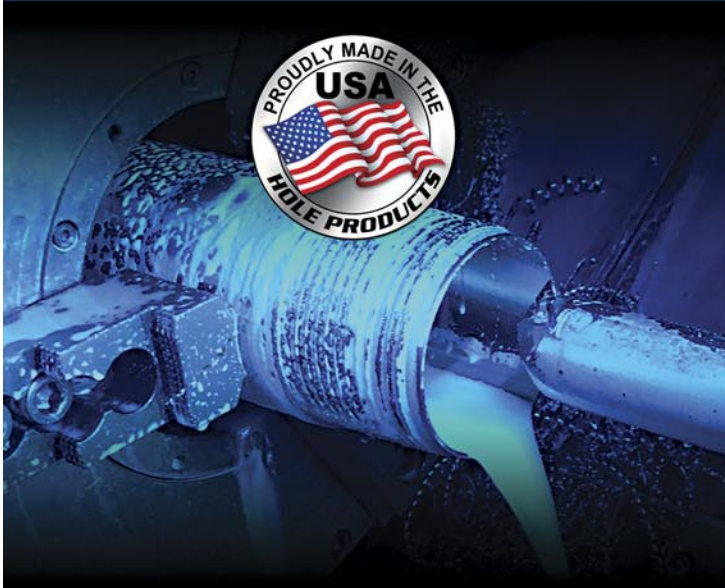
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