



SAVE OUR CYPRESS
COALITION WWW.SAVEOURCYPRESS.ORG

Press Release - February 21st 2008

BATON ROUGE, LA: The Save Our Cypress Coalition, a coalition of environmental organizations working to protect Louisiana's endangered swamps, expressed strong opposition today to the possibility that the proposed Baton Rouge Interstate loop would go through the Spanish Lake/Bluff Swamp ecosystem.

The Spanish Lake Basin system incorporates sections of three parishes - Ascension, East Baton Rouge, and Iberville. It is one of the last wetlands of its kind in the state, and has a rich historical and natural heritage. "There are cypress trees well over 1,000 years old in the Spanish Lake system," said Dean Wilson, the Atchafalaya Basinkeeper. "Those are irreplaceable."

Two of the potential routes of the proposed Baton Rouge "loop" would cross through sections of the Spanish Lake Basin and Bluff Swamp. The Spanish Lake Basin is an ancient backwater swamp of the Mississippi River. It is part of the 16-parish Lake Pontchartrain Basin that covers Southeast Louisiana. The basin's nutrient-rich waters, lush vegetation and numerous species of trees nurture wildlife, check the destructive powers of floods and storms, and provide people with the opportunity to enjoy and learn from nature. The area is a popular one for eco-tourism, bird watching, boating, hunting and fishing.

Alligator Bayou has become an important area for environmental education in Louisiana. Over 20,000 school children participate in an environmental tour of Alligator Bayou/Spanish Lake every year.

"There are so few of these amazing places left and this one is right in our backyard," said Paul Orr, Lower Mississippi Riverkeeper. "Our cypress swamps are part of our culture, our heritage. It is part of what makes south Louisiana so unique. People come from all over the world to experience these places and this one is just a short drive from Baton Rouge. It has such incredible value as it is. We don't need to let a toll-road destroy that."

###

The members of the Save Our Cypress Coalition are:

Atchafalaya Basinkeeper
Baton Rouge Audubon society
Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana
Delta chapter of the Sierra Club
Gulf Restoration Network
Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation
Louisiana Audubon Council
Louisiana Environmental Action Network
Lower Mississippi Riverkeeper

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Dean Wilson
Atchafalaya Basinkeeper
(225) 692-4114

Paul Orr
Lower Mississippi Riverkeeper
(225) 802-9255