

Baton Rouge Area Foundation



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Finalists Chosen for Baton Rouge Lakes Master Plan

They will present in open meeting June 30; master plan will begin in late summer

Four teams led by landscape architects have been picked as finalists to create a master plan for restoring the Baton Rouge lakes and making them a great space for the community. A selection committee deliberated for three hours Friday to pick these finalists:

- * Design Workshop
- * EDSA
- * SWA Group in association with Jeffery Carbo Landscape Architects
- * Kyle Zick Landscape Architecture

Each of the finalists is partnering with one or more local firms. The list of final teams and their select projects is at the bottom of this release.

Finalists will present their credentials and other work at a public meeting Monday, June 30. It begins at 9 a.m. at the Manship Theatre.

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation asked landscape architects to bid for a master plan for enhancing the lakes and their surroundings in balance with long-term preservation of the natural system. Fifteen teams submitted proposals.

A selection committee that picked finalists on Friday also will choose a winner after hearing presentations attending June 30. People attending the meeting will have a chance to fill out comments cards for input to the selection committee.

Committee members are representatives of the Foundation, LSU, BREC, city-parish government, Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Louisiana Department of Transportation, underwriters of the project and lakes-area homeowners.

With engineering and public outreach, master planning is estimated to cost \$750,000. The Foundation has secured money from fund donors, generous philanthropists and other foundations. The master plan

will identify potential sources for funding the actual implementation, which is expected to include dredging and shoreline amenities.

The Foundation expects to contract with the winner in July. Planning will begin in late summer, and the final blueprint is expected a year thereafter.

Planners must engage residents to seek ideas for making the lakes an even better destination for the community. Planners will use public input to produce an overall design for the lakes and 45 acres that surround it, a circulation plan that includes paths with connections to area neighborhoods, and gateway suggestions for exits at I-10 and Dalrymple Drive. Planners also must deliver a landscaping scheme, design wayfinding and signs, offer a habitat restoration plan and suggest methods for reducing noise and mitigating drainage from I-10.

Recommendations for governing will be included to ensure the long-term upkeep and improvement of the City Park and LSU Lakes, along with the four smaller lakes that surround them.

The Foundation announced the lakes project – Destination: The Lakes – at its 50th anniversary celebration in March. The work is being conducted in consultation with donors to the project, lake-area residents, LSU and the city-parish, which own the lakes; and BREC, which operates Milford Wampold Memorial Park on Stanford Avenue.

The city's lakes were created in the 1930's by transforming an undesirable stretch of swamp to open water for the parish to enjoy. But the lakes face problems, much bigger than even the lack of safe pathways for pedestrians. On average, the lakes are only 2.5 feet deep and getting shallower each year. If nothing is done, the lakes will turn into mud flats and eventually revert to swampland.

Four Finalists

1. Design Workshop Inc.

Select projects: Lafitte Greenway in New Orleans, The Park at Horse Farm in Lafayette, Houston Arboretum and Nature Center.

Team partners: Applied Ecological Services, Baird Engineering, CSRS, Dr. Yi Jun Xu/LSU, Eskew Dumez Ripple, ETM Associates, Reich Associates

2. EDSA

Select projects: Lehigh Riverfront Master Plan in Allentown, Pa.; Tunica Hills State Preservation Area in West Feliciana, Harborview Floating Wetlands in Baltimore

Team partners: CBI Inc., Dr. Jim Richardson, Joseph Furr Design Studio

3. SWA Group in association with Jeffrey Carbo Landscape Architects

Select projects: Buffalo Bayou Promenade, Hills Farm District Master Plan at LSU, Shangri La Botanical Gardens

Team partners: Biohabitats, ETM Associates, Pros Consulting, Sherwood Engineering, Stantec

4. Kyle Zick Landscape Architecture

Select projects: BREC's City Park, Emerald Necklace urban forest, Powers Farm in Randolph, Mass.

Team partners: HDR, Kevin Harris Architect, Lincoln Builders, ORCA Consulting, Roll Barresi Associates, Toole Design Group

About the Foundation: The Baton Rouge Area Foundation is among more than 700 community foundations in the United States. The Foundation pursues its mission in two ways. One, The Foundation connects donors who open charitable accounts with nonprofits that provide services to the community. Over 50 years, fund donors and the Foundation have granted more than \$350 million. Two, the foundation takes on projects that improve the quality of life for all people of South Louisiana. Contributions from members, who number about 600, underwrite the projects, which include master planning of the Baton Rouge lakes, education reform, downtown redevelopment, and creating The Water Institute of the Gulf to solve problems caused by rising seas and vanishing wetlands. People can learn more about becoming a member or opening a charitable fund by calling 225-387-6126.
