Dec. 3, 2014
For immediate release

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Second Lakes Master Plan Meeting in December

Residents attending will design lakefront parks, suggest uses for dredged materials

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation will host the second of four public meetings next week for its master plan for the University and City Park lakes. People at the December meeting will collaborate in groups to design lakefront parks and amenities, and to suggest where to relocate materials that must be dredged to save the lakes.

The meeting will be held Thursday, Dec. 11, 6-8 p.m., at the LSU Student Union Cotillion Ballroom. Parking is available a short block away in LSU’s new parking garage, which is on the corner of Raphael Semmes Road and East Campus Drive, with the entrance on East Campus. The Foundation appreciates an RSVP at BatonRougeLakes.org.

The Foundation began a master plan after consulting LSU and city-parish government, which own the lakes, and BREC, which cares for the lakes and operates parks around them. SWA Group, in association with Jeffrey Carbo Landscape Architects, was hired last summer to do the work, which is a first step toward reversing the declining lakes.

Planners hired by the Foundation will use drawings and ideas from the December meeting to begin their own formal designs. They will present overall designs at a third meeting to be held Thursday, Jan. 29, 6-8 p.m., and will reveal a draft of the master plan at a fourth meeting slated for Thursday, April 30, 6-8 p.m. The January and April presentations will be at LSU’s E.J. Ourso College of Business Auditorium. All meetings are open to the public.

The problem: University and City Park lakes – and three of the four smaller lakes that surround them – are too shallow, and are silting over time. In 2008, the Army Corps of Engineers issued a draft report that recommended dredging to deepen the lakes and installing pipes to flush sediment to keep them rich with oxygen for more than five decades. This year, the Foundation raised nearly $750,000 for the master plan and related studies to advance the Corps’ draft.

In summer 2015, SWA and JCLA will deliver a comprehensive design for the six lakes and land along their banks, along with gateway suggestions for the Dalrymple Drive exits at I-10. Planners are also charged with delivering a cohesive landscaping scheme, suggesting way-finding signs, providing a habitat.
restoration strategy, and proposing methods for mitigating both noise and drainage from I-10. As well, the planners will recommend shoreline improvements with the dredged materials, such as walking and biking paths. To achieve all these ends, they will identify funding sources for implementation.

Recommendations for governance will be included to ensure the long-term upkeep and improvement of the lakes.

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 and lake-area residents, users of the lakes, LSU, the city-parish, BREC, Louisiana Division of Administration, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, La. Department of Transportation and Development, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, Louisiana Department of Natural Resources and Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry.

About the Foundation: The Baton Rouge Area Foundation is among more than 700 community foundations in the United States. The Foundation works in two ways to improve the quality of life across South Louisiana. 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. Contributions from members, who number about 600, partly underwrite these 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