

Baton Rouge Area Foundation



For immediate release

July 1, 2015

Contact: Mukul Verma, (225) 381-7116, (225) 362-9260, mverma@braf.org; on the web: BatonRougeLakes.org, [Facebook.com/BRLakes](https://www.facebook.com/BRLakes)

Media Advisory: Final Lakes Master Plan to be Revealed

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation will host a public meeting in July to reveal the final plan for dredging and enhancing the lakes near City Park and LSU. The open house will be held:

Thursday, July 16

6-8 p.m.

LSU's Lod Cook Alumni Center

The Foundation appreciates an RSVP at BatonRougeLakes.org/OpenHouse

The meeting will begin promptly at 6 p.m. with a short presentation of the plan and steps toward implementation. After that, people who attend can see renderings of the master plan, such as location of proposed parks, walking and biking trails and wetlands for bird habitats and runoff filtration. Representatives of the design team – SWA Group, working in association with Jeffrey Carbo Landscape Architects - will be available to answer questions.

In spring 2014, the Foundation launched a master plan on its 50th anniversary as a response to a declining lakes system. It 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.

The Foundation raised \$750,000 from private donors for the master plan and hired the planning team last summer. The team used public input – both online and at meetings attended by hundreds – to draw up a draft, then used comments from the community to create this final blueprint.

They are addressing two main problems. One, University and City Park lakes – and three of the four smaller lakes that surround them – are too shallow and are silting over time. Two, people use the lakes for running, biking, fishing and other recreational activities, though the lakes, when they were dug from swamps in the 1930, were not designed for those purposes. Planners are recommending dredging and a sediment bypass system to improve and sustain water quality, and shoreline enhancements with the dredged material for recreational uses.

The plan 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, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Nature Conservancy of Louisiana and The Audubon Society.

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 nearly \$400 million. Two, the foundation takes on projects that improve the quality of life, such as the master plan for the lakes.

Contributions from members, who number about 600, partly underwrite these projects, which include 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