

Calcasieu Parish Police Jury **Park Facilities Inventory**

AN ONLINE AREA-WIDE GUIDE



Hurricane Laura

PHOTO: NOAA



FEMA



NPS-RTCA

Rivers, Trails and Conservation
Assistance Program

When the Category 4 hurricanes, Laura and Delta, swept through southwestern Louisiana in August and October of 2020, their high winds, heavy rains, and extensive flooding left a pattern of destruction across the region reaching more than 80 miles inland.

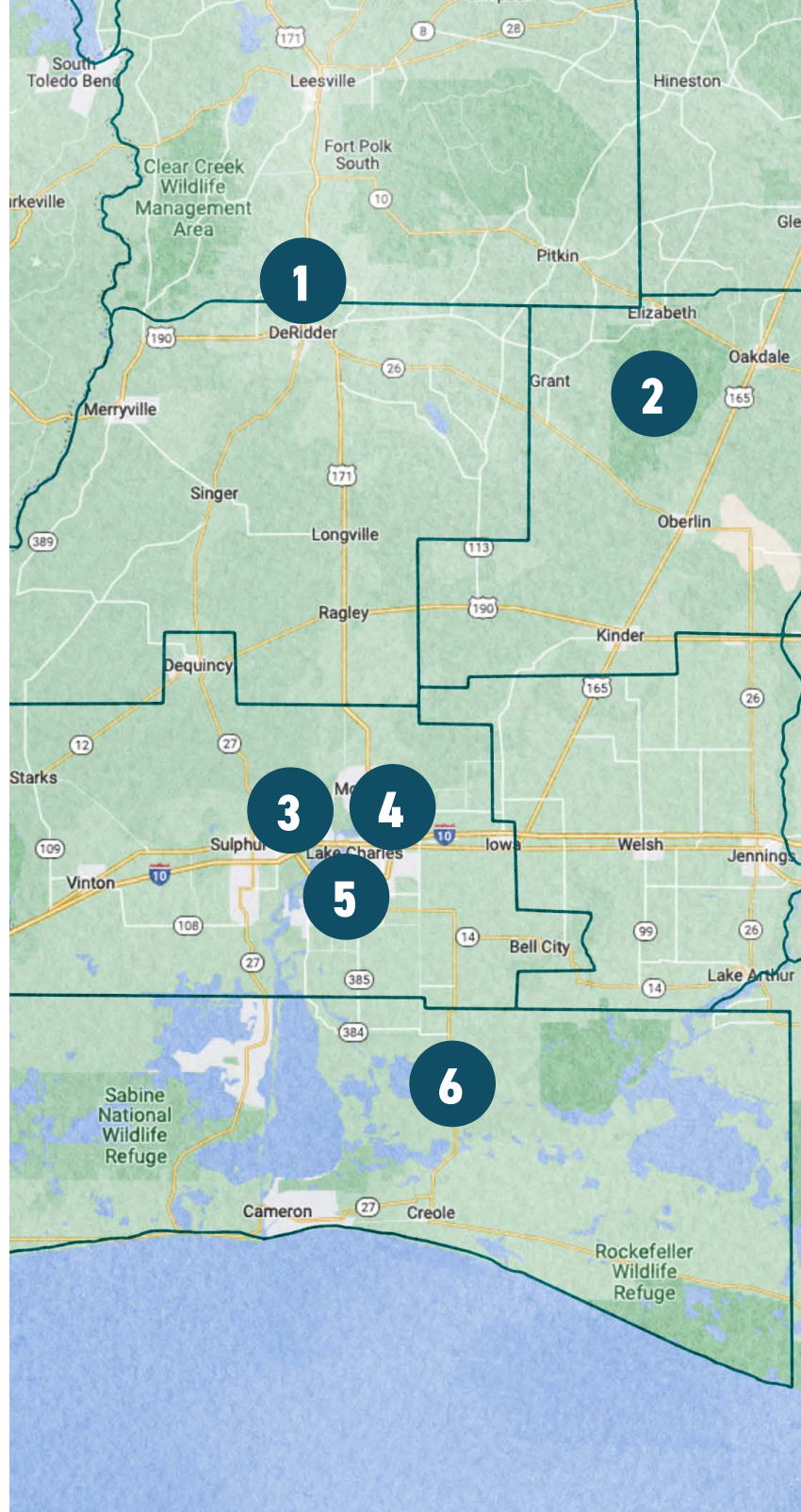
Showing the generational resiliency arising from the impacts of numerous storms, the disaster-impacted communities of DeRidder and Lake Charles, along with representatives of Calcasieu, Cameron, and Allen parishes, requested assistance from the National Park Service – Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program (NPS-RTCA) to help with the development of long-term recovery plans.

Working closely with local partners, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the National Park Service helped facilitate six southwest Louisiana community-led projects focused on natural and cultural resource conservation, outdoor recreation, and nature-based tourism.



LOUISIANA
Office of
**COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT**

- 1** DeRidder
WEST PARK
 - Concept plan to restore West Park
- 2** Allen Parish
MILL CREEK
 - Potential pilot project for public outdoor recreation and flood mitigation
- 3** Calcasieu Parish
PARKS
 - Parks inventory
 - Concepts for disaster-impacted parks
- 4** North Lake Charles
LOCAL FOOD, LOCAL PLACES
 - Address food insecurity with mobile markets and community gardens
- 5** Lake Charles
BAYOU GREENBELT
 - 23-mile water loop around Lake Charles
- 6** Cameron Parish
CAMERON PARISH REDEVELOPMENT
 - Amenities and opportunities for nature-based recreation



INTRODUCTION

As part of recovery efforts following the devastating hurricanes of 2020, the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury requested assistance from NPS-RTCA to facilitate a comprehensive inventory of park facilities.

What began as a focus on parish parks grew into a broader vision: a user-friendly, searchable, “one-source” online guide designed to help residents and visitors easily access all park facilities in the area, whether managed by the state, parish, or municipality.

6 PROJECTS FOR LONG-TERM RECOVERY

These community-led projects for long-term recovery seek to improve the quality of life in disaster-impacted areas. In advancing its mission in natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation, the National Park Service teams up with local partners to extend the benefits of the mission to special places close to home, in communities across Southwest Louisiana.



Calcasieu Point Landing

PHOTO COURTESY OF CALCASIEU PARISH POLICE JURY

PROJECT PARTNERS

The **Calcasieu Parish Police Jury**, through the Administrator’s Office, staff from both parish parks, and the Geographic Information Systems Department, provided invaluable input and mapping services. The Parish also provided critical data for project modeling purposes.

The City of Lake Charles provided assistance and input primarily through the Mayor’s Office as well as the Planning and Development and Recreation and Parks departments.

The Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana “connects people who care with causes that matter while enhancing the quality of life in Southwest Louisiana.” Among many other regional efforts, the Community Foundation worked with Urban Design Associates to develop the “Just Imagine SWLA” initiative, a 50-year resilience master plan featuring 11 catalytic projects for Calcasieu and Cameron parishes.

Visit Lake Charles promotes Southwest Louisiana and has supported the “Just Imagine SWLA” catalytic projects, including the Bayou Greenbelt, through promotional efforts.

The Creole Nature Trail All-American Road is one of only 150 designated scenic byways in the United States. Affectionately known as Louisiana’s Outback, the Creole Nature Trail is a journey into one of America’s “Last Great Wildernesses.”

The Cameron Parish Tourist Commission helps visitors explore iconic wildlife refuges, uncrowded beaches, and welcoming towns to find the best places for birding, shelling, fishing, boating, and paddling.

Louisiana’s 38 State Parks, including nearby Sam Houston Jones State Park, offer outdoor recreation resources, opportunities to explore the state’s historic sites, and places to stay and camp.

The National Park Service – Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program (NPS-RTCA) supports locally-led conservation and outdoor recreation projects and assists communities with natural disaster recovery across the United States. NPS-RTCA assists communities and public land managers in developing or restoring parks, conservation areas, rivers, and wildlife habitats, as well as creating outdoor recreation opportunities and programs that engage future generations in the outdoors.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Community Assistance Recovery Support Function (CARSF) enables local governments to effectively and efficiently carry out community-based recovery planning and management in a post-disaster environment. CARSF also supports state or territorial governments in developing programs of support for local recovery planning. FEMA introduced local Calcasieu Parish partners to the NPS team. With FEMA’s input, the planning partners focused on outdoor recreation as an important foundation of economic recovery.



PROCESS

With a broadened focus to include all area parks, regardless of the managing agency, project partners and NPS-RTCA began to work on how to best develop the vision of a single source guide for all facilities. A group with in-depth knowledge of parks and facilities in Calcasieu and Cameron Parish was convened.

Using an inventory template provided by NPS-RTCA, local partners adapted and completed the spreadsheet, supplying the necessary information to develop the online guide.

A preview of the template and completed spreadsheet are shown here.

Park Name	Address	Agency	Shelter First Come	Shelter Rental	Rest Room	*Drinking Fountain	*Play Ground	*Picnic Area	Baseball	Softball	Soccer	Tennis	*Pickleball Court	*Fitness Equipment
Sam Houston Jones State Park	107 Sutherland Road 70611	Louisiana State Parks												
Alligator Park	5316 Alligator Park Road Starks, LA. 70661	Calcasieu Parish Parks	NO	YES	YES	PEOPLE	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Holbrook Park	1868 Holbrook Park Road Sulphur, LA. 70663	Calcasieu Parish Parks	YES	YES	YES	PEOPLE	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Lorrain Park	7803 Lorrain Road Hayes, LA. 70646	Calcasieu Parish Parks	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
White Oak Park	5584 River Road Lake Charles, LA. 70615	Calcasieu Parish Parks	YES	YES	YES	PEOPLE	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Mallard Junction Park	599 August Street Lake Charles, LA. 70615	Calcasieu Parish Parks	YES	NO	YES	PEOPLE	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Calcasieu Point	3599 Henry Pugh Blvd. Lake Charles, LA. 70605	Calcasieu Parish Parks	YES	NO	YES	PEOPLE	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Intracoastal Park	7955 Intracoastal Park Road Sulphur, LA. 70663	Calcasieu Parish Parks	YES	YES	YES	PEOPLE	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Israel LaFleur Park	2937 Kiwanis Lane Lake Charles, LA. 70605	Calcasieu Parish Parks	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Prien Lake Park	3700 West Prien Lake Road Lake Charles, LA. 70605	Calcasieu Parish Parks	YES	YES	YES	PEOPLE/ PET	YES (ADA accessible)	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES
Riverside Park	1700 Miller Ave. Westlake, LA. 70669	Calcasieu Parish Parks	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
River Bluff Park	543 Theriot Road Lake Charles, LA. 70611	Calcasieu Parish Parks	YES / Electrical	NO	YES	PEOPLE/ PET	YES (inclusive, ADA accessible)	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES

			Facilities														Sports / Fit			
Park Name	Address	Agency																		
			Shelter First Come	Shelter Rental	Rest Rooms	Bicycle Parking	Drinking Fountains	Play Ground	Accessible PlayGround	Picnic Area	Trash Receptacle	Trash Receptacle On Site	Community Center	Amphitheater	Baseball	Softball	Soccer	Tennis		
Alligator Park	5316 Alligator Park Road Starks, LA. 70661	Calcasieu Parish Parks	NO	YES	YES		PEOPLE	NO		YES	YES	NO				NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
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Following an online planning meeting, the Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana and the National Park Service facilitated a workshop hosted by the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury on August 30, 2023. During the workshop, the working group reviewed similar online guides, refined the spreadsheet, added necessary categories, and began entering content. Among the guides discussed, a park finder website from South Carolina stood out for its user-friendly design, particularly its filters, which make it easy for visitors to find and personalize their experiences and adventures.

The working group was highly engaged and provided valuable input throughout the meeting. Each organization was assigned the task of completing its respective spreadsheets. Options for hosting and maintaining this important web-based inventory and guide were discussed. Given the regional nature and impact of the Creole Nature Trail and Visit Lake Charles' role in its administration, Visit Lake Charles agreed to explore options for hosting the website. In turn, Calcasieu Parish Parks staff committed to maintaining the consolidated data in a single spreadsheet.

After the August workshop, project partners began finalizing their spreadsheets as Visit Lake Charles incorporated the information into their existing website framework.

Recognizing that long-term projects benefit from “low-hanging fruit” implementation, project partners identified signage as an opportunity for an early, impactful success. In 2011, the Creole Nature Trail partners developed and implemented a Signage Plan, but since then, many signs have been damaged or destroyed by subsequent storms. With funding from FEMA, NPS-RTCA was able to purchase 165 route identification signs to address this crucial need, and in 2024, local partners coordinated their installation with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development.



Prien Lake Park



A new cabin at Sam Houston Jones State Park.
PHOTO COURTESY OF LOUISIANA STATE PARKS.



Official road sign used for route identification of the Creole Nature Trail.



RECOMMENDATIONS

To move the online Regional Parks Guide project toward completion, partners should consider forming a subcommittee, with members from each organization sharing in the following tasks:

- ✓ Confirm that all spreadsheets have been completed and are up to date.
- Add information about the wildlife refuges mentioned above to the guide.
- ✓ Formalize Visit Lake Charles' involvement as host of the online Regional Parks Guide.
- Include pedestrian and bicycle connections to the listed facilities within the guide. Partners can refer to the Lake Charles Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and the recently adopted Bayou Hike and Bike Plan. Boat and paddling access sites should also be featured.
- ✓ Coordinate the installation of the 165 new wayfinding signs for the Creole Nature Trail.
- Promote the regional outdoor recreation opportunities provided by the Creole Nature Trail.
- Ensure that connections and directions to facilities along the Bayou Greenbelt and the Creole Nature Trail are included in the guide, as these connections are valuable for residents and for growing the local tourism economy.
- Look for opportunities to expand to other municipalities in Calcasieu Parish such as Sulphur, Vinton, DeQuincy, and Iowa.
- Highlight and promote any existing ADA-accessible facilities in the Regional Parks Guide and continuously advocate for the development of additional ones.
- Collaborate with Cameron Parish tourism officials to add their facilities to the Regional Parks Guide.
- Work with local officials and congressional delegations to prioritize funding for reopening visitor facilities in Sabine, Lacassine, Cameron Prairie, and Rockefeller National Wildlife Refuges.
- After the Regional Parks Guide goes live, project partners should establish a regular meeting schedule to update content, review the guide's effectiveness, and address any necessary improvements.



THANK YOU

The National Park Service – Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program is thankful for the invitation to work with the Southwest Louisiana community to help identify and promote its incredible outdoor recreation opportunities.

NPS-RTCA is confident that the online Regional Parks Guide will help residents better access their local facilities and at the same time attract visitors from near and far to this very special and unique place.



FEMA

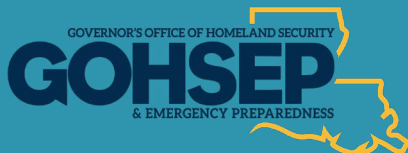
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NPS-RTCA

Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program

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The Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness leads and supports Louisiana and its citizens to prevent, prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate against man-made or natural disasters that threaten the state.



LOUISIANA
Office of
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

The Louisiana Office of Community Development creates a safer and stronger Louisiana by leading the state's disaster recovery and long-term community resilience planning efforts with a great sense of urgency through innovation, partnerships, and best practices.
