

LEFLEUR'S LAKES PROJECT, JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

WHEREAS, Congress has appropriated \$2.8 million for a feasibility study of the proposed LeFleur's Lakes Projects and associated levee projects; and

WHEREAS, local match for this study has been approved by the Hinds County Board of Supervisors, Rankin County Board of Supervisors and the City of Jackson; and

WHEREAS, the LeFleur's Lake Project, in order to provide flood control benefits to Jackson and surrounding areas, requires that Ross Barnett Reservoir serve primarily as a flood control reservoir; and

WHEREAS, the Ross Barnett Reservoir was constructed to provide recreation and a water supply for Jackson and surrounding areas, and was never intended to be a flood-control reservoir; and

WHEREAS, converting Ross Barnett Reservoir to a flood control reservoir was considered and rejected after both the 1979 and 1983 floods; and

WHEREAS, large fluctuations in water levels of Ross Barnett Reservoir will have a detrimental effect on reproduction of largemouth bass, crappie, catfish and other species of game fish; and

WHEREAS, the proposed LeFleur's Lake Project would permanently destroy 5,492 acres of stream forest and emergent wetlands, resulting in decreased habitat complexity and decreased wildlife diversity, and the possibility of establishment of nuisance plants and animals; and

WHEREAS, the proposed LeFleur's Lake Project would permanently destroy 3,479 acres of bottomland hardwood habitat, and 31.77 miles of riverine habitat; and

WHEREAS, the proposed project could cause additional downstream flooding along the Pearl River and flash flooding in the Jackson metro area; and

WHEREAS, the proposed lake will destroy a major portion of LeFleur's Bluff State Park, which was developed with Land and Water Conservation Fund Act monies, and which will have to be replaced with lands of at least fair market value, usefulness, and location as that being lost; and

WHEREAS, LeFleur's Bluff State Park is the largest public natural area in an urban setting in Mississippi with 300 acres of undeveloped area which will be severely impacted by the LeFleur's Lakes project; and

WHEREAS, the LeFleur's Bluff State Park is home to the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, a highly visited attraction in Mississippi, with annual visitation of over 170,000.

Educational opportunities could be limited by the LeFleur's Lakes project; and

WHEREAS, there are two closed municipal landfills which would be partially or fully inundated by the proposed lakes potentially causing pollution problems; and

WHEREAS, the Pearl River in the area of the proposed lakes provides habitat for two federally threatened species, the Ringed Sawback Turtle and the Gulf Sturgeon, and the proposed lakes would provide unsuitable habitat for either of these two species; and

WHEREAS, this section of the Pearl River falls within U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service designated critical habitat for the Gulf Sturgeon, and

WHEREAS, the Mississippi Wildlife Federation supports non-structural sustainable floodplain management such as voluntary buyouts and the development of green space, and

WHEREAS, we urge decision makers to enhance and protect the area for its scenic and recreational values, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mississippi Wildlife Federation opposes the development of the LeFleur's Lakes Project, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mississippi Wildlife Federation encourages the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers to fully consider sustainable non-structural alternatives for flood control in the Pearl River watershed.