

GUEST COLUMN to the MONROE DISPATCH

For the Thursday, October 20, 2016 Edition

From: Mayor James E. "Jamie" Mayo

## **Lake Bartholomew Water Levels Lowered for Vegetation Control**

To all of our area fisherman, the City of Monroe Water System has begun the process of lowering Lake Bartholomew for vegetation control and maintenance. The lake will be lowered at a rate of no more than 4 inches per day. During this time, the lake will be lowered by a total of 2 to 6 feet below normal pool stage. Lake Bartholomew will remain at that level for a minimum of 2 months and be re-filled no later than mid-February. This process will result in a slight lowering of Black Bayou and Bayou Desiard.

Lake Bartholomew currently has a dense growth of coontail in the shallows, which could be reduced by lowering the lake for a minimum of two months. Hydrilla, which has plagued the lake for the past few years, would also be partially controlled, though its coverage is currently insignificant. Other emergent species growing along the shoreline would also be partially controlled. This two month process will not have any adverse effect on wildlife.

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries typically recommends drawdowns for these purposes to begin in late summer to early fall. This is a period when boating activity is normally below average and daytime temperatures are still high enough to adequately dry out and kill submerged vegetation and increase the decomposition of accumulated organic materials (muck) on the lake bottom. This is also a fisheries management tool, in that the spawning substrate for nest building fish is normally improved following drawdowns.

In regard to the lowering of Lake Bartholomew for the purpose of property repair and vegetation control, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries provided some general guidelines and recommendations. The recommended duration normally depends on the frequency of drawdowns, type of nuisance vegetation, and other needed maintenance. Typically, drawdowns are recommended for a minimum of two months to accomplish these goals, though drawdowns may be extended through late winter if necessary.

It is important to the fisheries that the lake be rising or re-filled prior to the spring spawning season. By working together, we are making a difference. Monroe is one city, with one future!