

METRO

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La. fisheries disaster declared

Federal government OKs designation due to three 2020 hurricanes

BY MIKE SMITH
Staff writer

The federal government has announced its approval of a disaster declaration over damage to Louisiana fisheries due to three 2020 hurricanes, opening the door to federal aid for commercial fishers.

Separately, Mississippi fisheries were issued another disaster declaration over the unprecedented

2019 Bonnet Carre Spillway openings in Louisiana.

The strongest of the 2020 storms, Hurricane Laura, roared ashore as a Category 4 in southwest Louisiana's Cameron Parish, leveling much of the region with its winds and storm surge. About a month after the storm, Gov. John Bel Edwards requested a fisheries disaster declaration, a separate process from the more common overall di-

saster declaration for hurricanes.

Hurricane Delta followed in the same region about six weeks later, while Hurricane Zeta hit southeast Louisiana in October of that year. The declaration announced June 26 relates to portions of the state's saltwater finfish, oyster and shrimp fisheries.

"Hurricane Laura's storm track impacted some of the nation's most important fishing communities,"

Edwards said in his September 2020 letter to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, calling Louisiana the largest producer of domestic seafood for the country.

The governor noted the affected parishes were home to nearly 2,500 commercial fishers and vessels combined along with more than 100 wholesale dealers and a similar number of charter captains. The storm led to damaged docks

and boating facilities, lost gear and vessels, lost housing and loss of stored seafood, Edwards said.

A statement from U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo noted that officials had to determine requirements under federal laws governing fisheries were met. The requests are evaluated based on state data.

The lengthy process involves comparing 12 months of commercial revenue data to the previous

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Smiley Anders

How Mom made stormy night fun

Vickie McWaters, of Metairie, gets my vote for "Mom of the Year." Here's why:

"Kirk Guidry's recent story on making the best of a situation when rain ruins your drive-in movie plans (watching TV from the car, with popcorn) reminds me of our experience when my children were little.

"A terrible storm came through one evening and knocked out the electricity. My husband, who had to get up early for work the next morning, went to bed.

"The kids were upset about not being able to watch TV. I said, 'We don't have electricity when we go camping. Let's pretend we're camping.'

"We built a tent with blankets and watched for bears (the dog) and mountain lions (the cats). We ate snacks and told spooky stories.

"When the electricity came back on, my son said, 'Mom, can we keep the lights off and still pretend we're camping?'

"And we did."

Security measure

Charlie Anderson, of Shreveport, contributes this story for our "You can't be too careful" file:

"In the 1960s, my friend Ronnie got a new D.H. Holmes store credit card and went in to make the first purchase with it.

"When he handed it to the clerk, the clerk handed it back, saying the card hadn't been signed.

"He signed it, and then the clerk ran it through the imprinter with the sales slip.

"After Ronnie signed the sales slip, the clerk took it and the card, compared signatures, and okayed the sale."

Just not hungry

Donald Landaiche, of Donaldsonville, says our mention of charter fishing boats "brought back a very memorable experience.

"The father of a friend bought a charter boat and was taking it out to see if everything was OK. My friend invited me along, and said to pack a lunch, since it was an all-day fishing trip.

"I packed a big bag with eight sandwiches, six small cakes, four small pies and some fruit.

"It was a very dreary, rainy day, and the wind was blowing, causing many swells. The poor boat kept going up and down. We arrived at a good spot to fish, but the only thing I could do was lie down.

"When we got back to the dock, I had a big bag with eight sandwiches, six small cakes, four small pies and some fruit.

"It was my first and last deep-sea fishing trip."

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STAFF PHOTOS BY SOPHIA GERMER

Nadine Madore, 2, picks a wildflower at the home of Angie and Patrick Madore in Metairie on Thursday.

Metairie couple fights lawn war

Duo seeks to preserve their native plant garden

BY MARIE FAZIO
Staff writer

The first sign of trouble was a notice taped to their front door — a horticultural scarlet letter.

Angie and Patrick Madore were overjoyed when the seeds they had scattered over their front lawn in Metairie's Airline Park area survived the spring and blossomed into a colorful array of wildflowers, a sprawling garden frequented by butterflies, bees and dragonflies. They wanted to grow native plants to draw pollinators and aid



► See **FLOWERS**, page 2B Angie Madore, Patrick Madore and Nadine Madore stand among their wildflowers.

TikTok banned on government devices

BY LEAH CLARK
Staff writer

Louisiana has banned the use of TikTok on state-owned equipment after Gov. John Bel Edwards signed a law restricting the China-based social media app and other related apps amid concerns about cybersecurity in government agencies.

House Bill 361, sponsored by state Rep. Daryl Deshotel, R-Marksville, bans the use of the popular app on all state-owned devices and networks. Edwards signed the bill into law on June 13; it is now Act 308 of the 2023 legislative session.

The ban is a result of recent concerns following a string of cybersecurity attacks in Louisiana.

In December, Secretary of State

Kyle Ardoin announced that he was banning TikTok from state-owned devices at his agency and urged Edwards to extend the ban statewide.

State Superintendent of Education Cade Brumley urged public schools and school systems to remove the app from their devices a month later.

In the most recent cyberattack, the Louisiana Office of Motor Vehicles was hit in a massive data breach when a third-party software it uses was hacked. The OMV data breach left millions of Louisianans' personal information vulnerable.

Deshotel said he believes the ban is another "level of protection" for the state.

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Roadwork stalled at busy Metairie intersection

BY MARIE FAZIO
Staff writer

A roadwork project to alleviate traffic congestion at Airline Drive and Clearview Parkway in Metairie has been stalled since March, frustrating motorists as they try to navigate the busy intersection.

The work stopped when the contractor went insolvent, according to the state Department of Transportation and Development.

Magee Excavation and Development, a Folsom-based contractor, was awarded a \$6.28 million contract in July 2021 to widen and re-stripe the lanes and do subsurface drainage work. The project was scheduled to be completed at the beginning of this year.

But in March the contractor defaulted and work stopped, DOTD spokesperson Daniel Gitlin said.

"While frustrating, situations like these do happen from time to time," Gitlin said via email. "A silent construction zone can be maddening to those anticipating its completion. The goal is to complete the project for the community, and we appreciate their patience as we make that happen."

Western Surety, the bond issuer for the contractor, has taken over the project and is expected to select a replacement contractor in the coming weeks, Gitlin said. Work will likely restart in the summer, with completion slated for three to four months later.

The project is under the

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