

Dave Donaldson Black River, Big Lake and St. Francis Sunken Lands WMAs

1. Will boat lanes be cleaned out?
We have contracts written and awaiting confirmation of funds to accept bids for boat lane maintenance.
2. Are we waiting on FEMA funding before cleaning boat lanes?
We met with FEMA on Sept. 7 to obtain representative samples of boat lanes for eligibility determinations.
3. Will there be public meetings before major decisions are made?
Yes, we will conduct a comprehensive waterfowl hunter survey and then hold public meetings around the state.
4. Why can't we clean our boat lanes and holes this year?
The public is currently prohibited from taking cutting devices onto state-owned wildlife management areas (except hunting knives, pocket saws and hatchets; if you are trapping). In the past, this regulation has been overridden by an administrative order signed by the Director for Dave Donaldson Black River, Big Lake and St. Francis Sunken Lands WMAs. That administrative order defined what could be cut and how the vegetation had to be removed. After cleanup, Game and Fish personnel spent hundreds of manhours inspecting these holes for violations. Every year we found holes that were enlarged by cutting additional trees as well as dead vegetation from the use of herbicides. Furthermore, due to the massive flood this year, it was late July before the water was completely gone so there shouldn't be very much vegetation.
5. Can we leave our decoys out?
Yes, there have been no regulation changes and will not be without public comment.
6. Why is the chain up at the Hubble Bridge?
The chain was up until FEMA site assessments were made and WMA staff could temporarily repair the damages to allow safe vehicle access and remove debris from the road. The road was opened on Sept. 6.
7. How many citations have been written on DDBRWMA vs Bayou Meto?
For every five citations written on Bayou Meto, one is written on Dave Donaldson during waterfowl season. Bayou Meto WMA is twice the size of Dave Donaldson and the hunting pressure is much greater on Bayou Meto.
8. How many boating accidents were reported on DDBRWMA vs Bayou Meto?
No boating accidents were reported on either WMA.

9. Why was the foot bridge burned over slough near Mallard Point?
A foot bridge did exist at that location at one time; however, we did not burn it and are unaware of the reasons it was burned, by whom and when. Only remnant posts remain in that area. We are uncertain who built the foot bridge and we have not had any requests to replace it. However, if it needs to be replaced, we will do that.
10. Would the Corps consider holding water in Clear Water Lake and not flooding DDBRWMA?
It is doubtful since Clear Water Lake has to be lowered to the normal pool level in order for farmers up above the lake to be able to plant their crops.
11. Why don't you let hunters help with maintenance?
Volunteers have been used on a limited basis to assist with projects; however it is difficult to recruit volunteers to assist with projects that do not benefit them directly (i.e. boat lane maintenance within different compartments from where they hunt). We have not been able to recruit a volunteer leader to oversee an organized volunteer group due to lack of interest and responsibility. Volunteers have been used to clear boat trails that lead to individual holes on a case by case basis, and some maintenance has occurred within major boat lanes.
12. Is the boat lane and hole cleanout restriction one year or more?
At this time it is uncertain what we'll do. As already stated, we'll conduct a comprehensive waterfowl hunter survey immediately following the close of waterfowl season.
13. Will trees be planted back in DDBRWMA?
Yes
14. Can AGFC clean the holes?
Due to the recent flood, vegetation is minimal and after flood-up for the waterfowl season, hunting should be great.
15. If we can't clean our boat lanes, how do we get kids in there?
We will clean out as many lanes as possible. Although the public cannot take cutting devices onto the WMA, debris can still be manually moved.
16. Why do you allow skidders when harvesting timber but won't allow four-wheelers in to clean boat lanes and holes?
Skidders are a necessary part of cutting timber. Contractors are required to repair any damage made by heavy equipment.
17. If we can't clean our holes, then why does the Commission clear 3- to 5-acre tracts in the forest?
Our wildlife management areas are managed for many different wildlife species; therefore, we create openings, cut timber and create regeneration areas in order to enhance the habitat.