

# Cypress-Black Bayou

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## Winner in Recreation Race

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It's hard to say with any degree of certainty exactly when it all began.

At some time during the past decade, however, the demand for recreational opportunities suddenly skyrocketed. That demand seems to grow even more intense with each passing year.

Tens of millions of Americans with more money and more leisure time than ever before are still constantly searching for new places to spend it.

One of the most common complaints crossing this desk during the past several years has been that Louisiana has fallen far behind in providing recreational outlets for residents of the state, and for visitors from other areas of the nation.

And this is undoubtedly true. The explanation for the noticeable lack of facilities for family-oriented outdoor activities is always the same — inadequate funding.

Last week, however, with the closing of the spillway at the new 3,000-acre Cypress Lake in central Bossier Parish, the standing of this area in the recreation race was instantly much improved.

When Cypress Lake fills to a pool stage of 179.6 feet above sea level some time during the next few months, depending upon winter rains and when the adjoining 700-acre Black Bayou Lake is completed in about two years, the complex will still be relatively small in comparison to other impoundments throughout the Ark-La-Tex.

There is every indication, however, that what it lacks in size, it will more than make up for in the quality of recreation which the lakes and the facilities surrounding them provide.

Local, state and federal officials, working shoulder to shoulder on the project for the past 13 years, are successfully developing a facility which

is expected to attract tens of thousands of visitors from throughout the United States into the North Louisiana area each year.

Officials of the U.S. Soil Conservation Service say that when it is complete, the Cypress-Black Bayou Lakes project will provide what is certainly one of the finest recreational areas in the entire United States.

After touring the area last week, I would certainly have to agree.

If two heads are better than one, three are better yet. Local, state and federal participation in the Cypress-Black Bayou project seems to have accomplished what one level of government could have likely never done — namely provide a multi-use facility which would seem to offer something for almost everyone.

Much of the credit for coordinating the efforts of each level of government must go to the board of commissioners of the Cypress-Black Bayou Recreation and Water Conservation District.

Members of the board are J. A. Dunnam Jr., board president and representative from the town of Benton; W. H. Beene, representing the Bossier Parish Levee Board; Clyde W. Fowler, representing Bossier City; D. E. Burchett, representing the Bossier Parish Police Jury, and R. C. Atkins, representing the Bossier Parish School Board.

Benton Mayor D. G. Thompson is the executive secretary of the board.

### District Created

The district was created by the Louisiana Legislature way back in 1958, and the commissioners appointed by the governor in 1962.

In 1966, voters in the district approved a \$2.5 million bond issue to provide the local funds for the most ambitious project, which included

laying a line from Bossier City to Benton to provide the area with water, the construction of Cypress and Black Bayou Lakes and the connecting irrigation project and the construction of a 342-acre recreation area with facilities to accommodate well over 1,000 persons at a time.

It is the recreation area, slated for completion in the late summer of 1976 at a total estimated cost of some

## Outdoor Times

\$2 million, which sets this lakes project apart from those constructed previously in other areas of the Ark-La-Tex.

Adequate funding has insured that everything within the recreation area is strictly first class.

The U.S. Soil Conservation Service, after providing 45 per cent of the funds for the construction of Cypress Lake itself, has underwritten 50 per cent of the contracts for the recreation area in which it participated. The Department of Interior's Bureau of Outdoor Recreation is cost sharing 50 per cent of the recreation area projects in which it is participating. The remainder of the funds for the recreation area are being provided by the district and through appropriations of the Louisiana Legislature through the State Department of Public Works.

Recreational activities available at Cypress Lake which are expected to attract large numbers of people are camping, picnicking, swimming, pleasure boating, water skiing, fishing and some fall and winter duck hunting on that heavily timbered area north of the Bellevue Road (Hwy. 162).

In addition, one of the most outstanding attractions will be a com-

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