# State Agencies Issue Advisory for Devil's Swamp, Bayou Baton Rouge Area

## *Officials Warn Against Participating in Water Activities and Eating Fish from the Area*

**Baton Rouge, La.** – The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH), Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (DWF) today released an update to the advisory for the Devil's Swamp and Bayou Baton Rouge area in East Baton Rouge Parish. State agencies have changed the advisory from "limited consumption" to "no consumption." Residents should avoid eating fish and crawfish from the area, as well as avoid swimming and participating in water activities there. Under the previous limited consumption advisory, residents were advised to eat no more than two meals per month that included fish from the area.

The agencies oversaw sampling of largemouth bass, channel catfish, crappie, bluegill and crawfish from the area, which is bounded on the north by Hall Buck Marine Road, on the east by the bluffs and Baton Rouge Barge Harbor, and on the south and west by the Mississippi River. Unacceptable levels of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and mercury were found in some species of the sampled fish.

The advisory is a warning of contamination in fish and crawfish in Devil's Swamp. While eating small amounts of fish or crawfish in the past may not result in observable health effects, prolonged exposure from frequent consumption over many years could negatively impact human health.

The fish were also tested for hexachlorobenzene (HCB), hexachlorobutadiene (HCBD), arsenic and lead. Results were negative or below health-based screening values for HCB, HCBD and arsenic, while trace levels of lead were detected in some species.

The advisory is based on sampling data from 2012 – 2013 and supersedes a previous advisory issued for the area on July 9, 1993. The 1993 advisory did not include crawfish. Any further sampling of this area will be evaluated to determine the need for further modifications to the current recommendations.

DHH, DEQ and DWF are updating and expanding this advisory under the Protocol for Issuing Public Health Advisories for Chemical Contaminants in Recreationally Caught Fish and Shellfish. DEQ and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Remedial Program will continue with the remedial investigation of the Devil's Swamp Lake Superfund Site.

To view the advisory online, visit http://dhh.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/page/564. Local fishers or community members should contact DHH at 1-888-293-7020 with any questions. For further information from the EPA, contact Bill Little, Community Involvement Coordinator/SEE, at 214-665-8131 or 800-533-3508. You can also visit the EPA website at http://www.epa.gov/region6 for more information.

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals strives to protect and promote health statewide and to ensure access to medical, preventive and rehabilitative services for all state citizens. To learn more about DHH, visit www.dhh.louisiana.gov. For up-to-date health information, news and emergency updates, follow DHH's Twitter account and Facebook.

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