

## Abstract

The Tangipahoa River was one of the first projects that were targeted for inclusion in Louisiana's Nonpoint Source Management Program. The river originates in Mississippi, but then flows for 79 miles through Tangipahoa Parish before entering Lake Pontchartrain. Tangipahoa River is one of Louisiana's natural and scenic rivers and the surrounding watershed has a wide range of plant diversity and wildlife habitat. The Natural Heritage Program database indicated that there are several plant and animal species found in and along the river. The Tangipahoa River has provided excellent fishing and canoeing, but in 1988, a health advisory was issued for the river because of high levels of fecal coliform bacteria.

Several sources of fecal coliform bacteria were identified as contributing to the water quality impairment with the two principle problems being unsewered or poorly sewerred homes and dairies. The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) worked with the Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH), the Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on management strategies to reduce the amount of bacteria entering the river. DHH worked with the parish to implement a home sewer inspection system and passed an ordinance that required all homes to be inspected prior to occupancy and connection to electricity.

In order to address the bacteria problems from dairies, the USDA and the LDAF implemented a cost-share and technical assistance program for installation of no-discharge animal waste management systems. LDEQ notified each of the dairies that they would need to have one of these systems installed or apply for a wastewater permit for their discharge. The dairyman responded to the program and animal waste management systems were installed at most of the dairies within Tangipahoa Parish.

The purpose of this project was to continue maintenance and inspection programs for each of the dairies that had the no-discharge systems installed. During the two phases of this project, LDEQ provided funds to the Office of Soil and Water Conservation for 2 technicians to inspect the dairy lagoons. During the project, the technicians provided planning assistance for 115 dairy lagoons, while surveying and designing 121 lagoons. They assisted in the construction of 170 lagoons and provided operational assistance to 179 dairymen. The project was considered to be successful and the water quality in the Tangipahoa River did improve as a result of the collaborative efforts of the agencies working with the local people on the project.