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SPECIFIC AREA STUDY

PASS MANCHAC SWAMP

LOUISIANA

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
REGION ONE

September - 1960

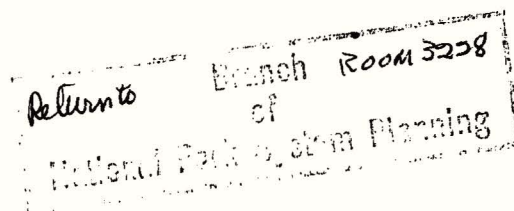
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SPECIFIC AREA STUDY

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
REGION ONE

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E. M. Lisle, September 23, 1960  
Acting Regional Director

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SPECIFIC AREA STUDY

PASS MANCHAC SWAMP

LOUISIANA

SUMMARY

1. Pass Manchac Swamp, a low lying region of cypress and hardwood forest with sluggish winding streams is located approximately 45 miles northwest of New Orleans, Louisiana.

2. The entire area which belongs to the Louisiana Cypress Lumber Company has been extensively logged.

3. Deer, alligators, and muskrats which were once plentiful are now present only in greatly depleted numbers because of hunting pressures both legal and otherwise.

4. Although much of the virgin aspects were destroyed when logging occurred, the waterways still present scenic appeal which fosters continuously increasing recreation boating in the area.

CONCLUSION

Although the Pass Manchac Swamp probably was of national significance in its virgin state, the great loss which occurred when the virgin stands of timber were cut is such that suitability for inclusion in the National Park System appears lacking.

The area contains a system of available waterways, capable of satisfying a large State and local need for recreation boating. The passes and bayous of this area appear to possess significance which qualifies the area for preservation at the State or local level.

NAME OF AREA

Pass Manchac Swamp

LOCATION

Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana

BACKGROUND TO AND PURPOSE OF STUDY

Authorization for this investigation was given by Acting Director Tolson by his approval on September 18, 1959, of the Recommended Work Program National Park System Plan, Region One, submitted by memorandum dated August 7, 1959, in which a preliminary investigation of the Pass Manchac Swamp was recommended.

The purpose of the study was to determine whether a significant portion of the swamp remained unlogged and therefore worthy of consideration as a possible addition to the National Park System.

STUDY PROCEDURES

This study was made July 11-12, 1960 by Carl P. Screiber, Regional Chief, Proposed Park Studies Section, Region One. Since almost all of the area being considered is trackless swamp penetrated by a number of winding waterways it was decided to travel through a representative portion by boat. This was done on July 12. (See attached sketch for travel route.)

RELATED STUDIES AND REPORTS

"A Cypress Swamp National Monument," August 16, 1939, by Willis King, Associate Wildlife Technician and Victor H. Cahalane, Acting Chief, Wildlife Division, reports on floral and faunal conditions observed by the writers during their visit to the Pass Manchac Swamp on April 10, 1939.

DESCRIPTION

Pass Manchac Swamp, a low lying region of hardwood and cypress forests with sluggish winding streams, is located approximately 45 miles

northwest of New Orleans, Louisiana, on the narrow strip of land separating Lake Pontchartrain from Lake Maurepas.

Logging has been extensive throughout the area particularly in the stands of cypress, and as one passes along the streams it is noted that the only large trees of this species still standing are broken topped, hollow, or in an advanced stage of decay. Even so, a pleasing picture is presented to those who travel slowly through the area.

Both deer and alligator, once plentiful, are now scarce, due in part to legal hunting pressures but even more so to the inroads of poachers.

#### ACCESSIBILITY

The main North-South highway, U. S. 51, passes just to the west of the area, while East-West highway, U. S. 190, passes along the northern edge. The only practical access into the interior of the swamp is by small boats using the several waterways in the area.

#### ANALYSIS OF AREA

##### Scenic

The slow moving streams, the moss draped cypress trees, and the lush subtropical appearance of the area present a most pleasant picture to those who travel along the waterways. Although the hinterland has been cut over to the extent that there are few mature trees remaining, the scenic aspect presented to most people remains one of unspoiled wilderness since few, other than hunters, venture beyond the stream banks.

##### Scientific

From the viewpoint of the scientific category this area undoubtedly at one time possessed outstanding significance, both biological and geological. Even today, in its cutover condition and with some of the animal populations,



particularly deer, alligator, and muskrat in depleted numbers, there is much of interest and value which could and probably, at the State or local level, should be preserved. However, the loss of integrity suffered when the virgin stands of cypress and other tree species were cut is so serious as to impair whatever national significance the area at one time possessed.

An additional loss is the ecological change which has undoubtedly occurred in the area to the north of the canal which has been dug from Middle Bayou to the Tangipahoa River. This gives unnatural drainage to an area which at one time was periodically flooded.

Alligator grass and water hyacinth are plant pests introduced into the waterways some years ago which, if control measures were not applied, would soon choke up and close the passes and bayous to travel by small boats.

#### RECREATION

Heavy and continuously increasing recreational use is being made of the area particularly in connection with boating.

Hunters gain access via the waterways to hunt deer and alligators. Many camps, used exclusively by people engaged in this type of recreation, are located along the streams.

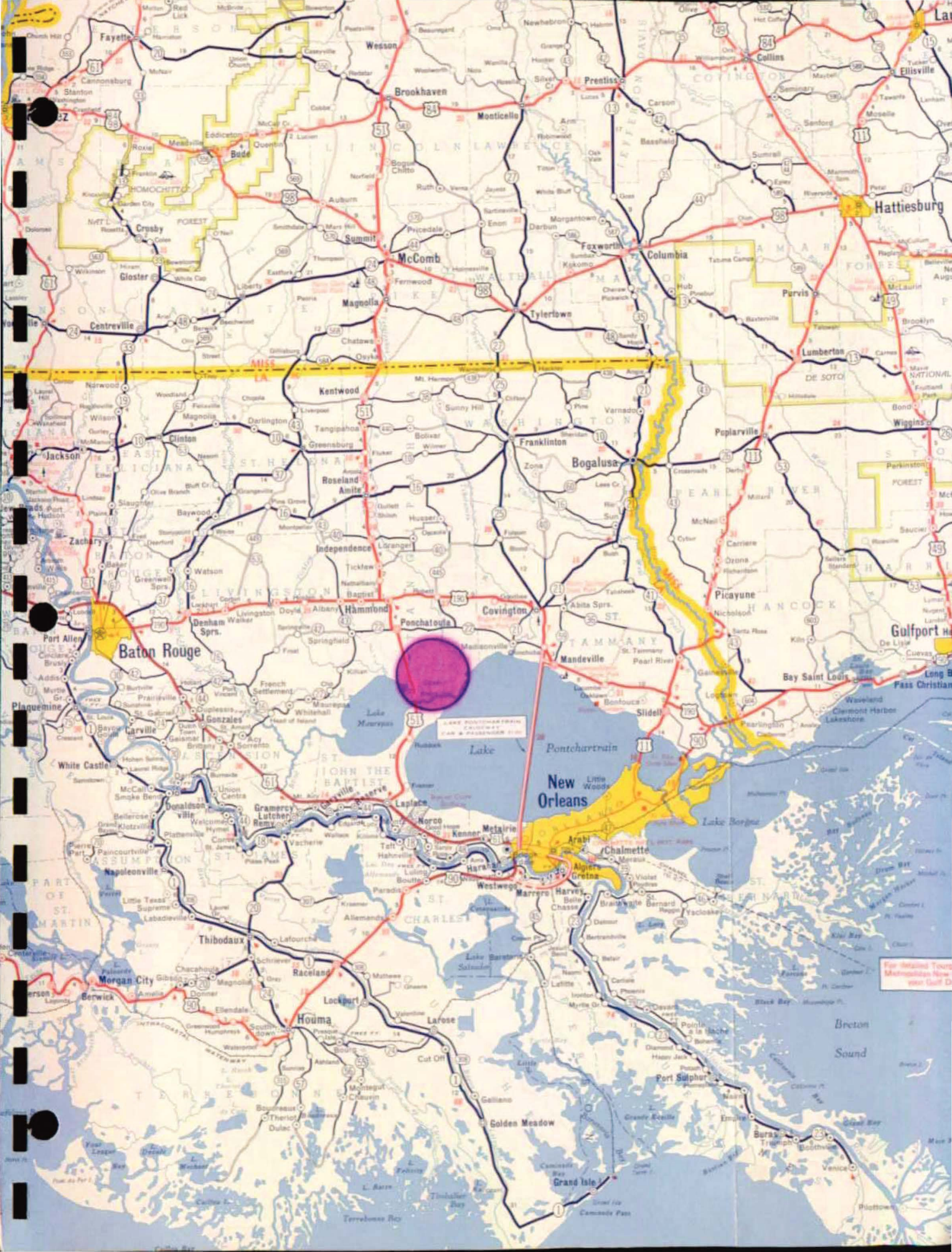
Fishing is done almost entirely from boats, in part by people making day trips into the area from nearby population centers and in part by people who own or have access to camps located along the streams.

The heaviest recreational use, however, appears to be in pleasure boating. This activity brings people in ever increasing numbers on weekends and during vacations when the many privately owned cottages on the banks of the streams are occupied by family groups and their guests. Although

the narrow streams do not appear to the uninitiated to be ideal for water skiing, this activity has been increasing in popularity. Many family groups are now enjoying "Sunday-boating" much in the manner of "Sunday-driving" of bygone days. Fishermen are beginning to voice the opinion, and not entirely without scientific basis, that the use of the streams by fast moving motor boats is having a harmful effect on natural reproduction of fish.

As a system of available waterways capable of satisfying local need for recreation boating, the passes and bayous of this area possess significance which probably qualifies the area for preservation at the State or local level.







PASS MANCHAC SWAMP  
TANGIPAHOA PARISH  
LOUISIANA ..



0 1 2 3  
SCALE IN MILES

LAKE

MAUREPAS

LEGEND

- STUDY AREA BOUNDARY
- PHOTO POINT
- TRAVEL ROUTE

lumber railroad

NORTH

PASS

Middle

Stinking

Bayou

MANCHAC

PONTCHARTRAIN

Tangipahoa

River

Bayou

Creek



PASS MANCHAC SWAMP, LOUISIANA



1. One of the many privately owned camps located on the banks of the streams of the Pass Manchac area. A few are occupied by year round residents but most are used by family groups on weekends or during vacation periods and by hunters during hunting season.



2. Both alligator grass and water hyacinth are plant pests which would soon make the streams of the area impassable if control measures were not applied. Here, along the open water of Middle Bayou which is periodically sprayed with weed killer, a small unsprayed "bay" illustrates the density of uncontrolled alligator grass.



PASS MANCHAC SWAMP, LOUISIANA



3. Dense subtropical growth and moss draped trees along Stinking Bayou.



4. This canal, built in part some years ago by logging interests and more recently extended on through the swamp to the Tangipahoa River, provides unnatural drainage for a major portion of the area during periods of high water.

PASS MANCHAC SWAMP, LOUISIANA



5-6. Typical views along Bedico Creek.