

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION OF SABINE COUNTY IN SUPPORT OF THE SABINE RIVER AUTHORITY OF TEXAS IN THEIR EFFORTS TO CONSTRUCT A PARK IN SABINE COUNTY TO ENHANCE RECREATIONAL OPPORUTNITIES AND FUTURE ECONOMIC GROWTH FOR THE REGION

WHEREAS, Sabine County, Texas seeks to promote tourism and economic growth in the Sabine County area; and

WHEREAS, outdoor recreation is an important part of the tourism industry in the Toledo Bend Reservoir area and the overall economic development efforts in Sabine County; and

WHEREAS, prior to 1999, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) owned and operated parks in Sabine County along the shorelines of Toledo Bend Reservoir, but due to federal budget cuts in 1999, these parks did not receive the funding necessary to be adequately maintained and risked closure; and

WHEREAS, the Sabine River Authority of Texas has been operating the USFS parks on behalf of the USFS since 1999 to minimize the impact to the local economy from closing these parks; and

WHEREAS, the Sabine River Authority of Texas embarked on a Parks and Recreation Master Plan project that proposes to construct, improve and enhance parks at Toledo Bend Reservoir that would provide facilities for major fishing tournaments, camping and family-friendly amenities; and

WHEREAS, the Sabine River Authority of Texas assessed existing and potential parks focusing on sites that would offer the most positive economic impact for the area; and

WHEREAS, the USFS park, Indian Mounds Recreation Area, in Sabine County, provided the most opportunity for recreational enhancements and future economic growth for the region; and

WHEREAS, the Sabine River Authority of Texas proposes to construct an \$8 million park that would provide a first-class permanent park facility in Sabine County, promoting tourism and increasing the economic growth for the Sabine County area,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Sabine County, Texas does hereby support the U.S Forest Service selling or providing a long-term lease to the Sabine River Authority of Texas and the Sabine River Authority of Texas proceeding to purchase or lease and construct capital improvements to the USFS Indian Mounds Recreation Area that will enhance recreational opportunities and have the highest economic impact to the Sabine County area.

PASSED AND APPROVED on this 29 day of May, 2018.

APPROVED:

Janice McDaniel
Sabine County Clerk

ATTEST:

Janice McDaniel

Jimmy McDaniel

Thomas H. Clark

Charles W. Ellison

Layne Stamer

David J. Smith



Sabine River Authority of Texas
Toledo Bend Parks & Recreation Proposal to the U.S. Forest Service

Background

The Sabine River Authority of Texas (SRA-TX) was created as a conservation and reclamation district with responsibilities to control, store, preserve, and distribute the waters of the Sabine River and its tributary system for useful purposes. The boundaries of SRA-TX were established by an Act of the Texas Legislature and comprised all of the areas lying within the watershed of the Sabine River Basin within the State of Texas including the largest man-made reservoir in the south, Toledo Bend, which is operated under a license with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Prior to 1999, the U.S. Forest Service owned and operated six parks in Sabine and Shelby County along the USFS shorelines of Toledo Bend Reservoir. Due to federal budget cuts in 1999, these parks did not receive the funding necessary to be adequately maintained and risked closure. To minimize the impact to the local economy from closing these six parks, SRA-TX agreed to take over the operation and maintenance of these facilities.

Since 1999, SRA-TX has invested substantial funds to improve the appearance and condition of these parks and to preserve and expand recreational opportunities around Toledo Bend Reservoir. Currently, with SRA-TX's continued commitment, all six parks operate year-round.

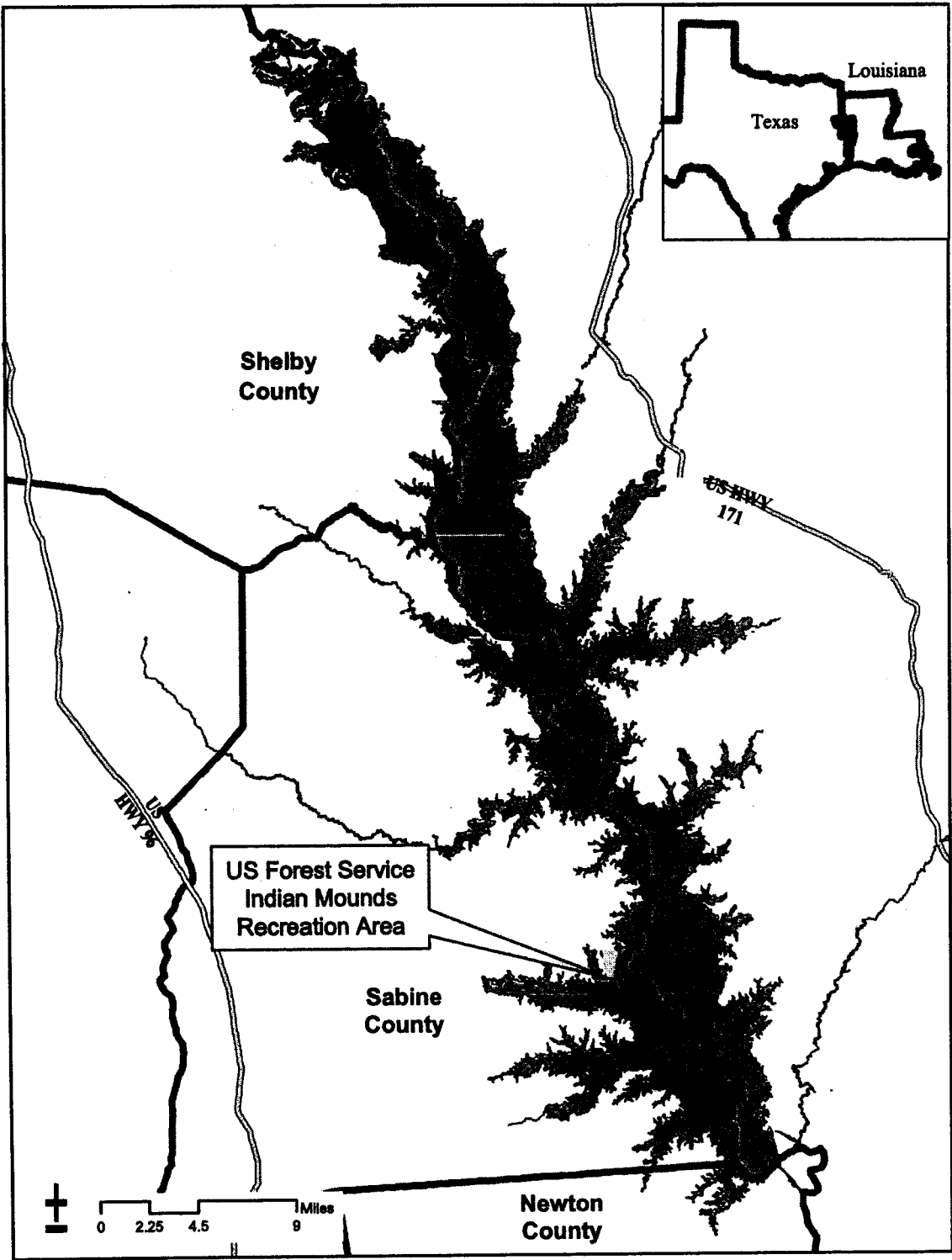
In 2018 SRA-TX embarked on a significant Parks and Recreation Master Plan project that proposes to construct, improve, and enhance three major parks at Toledo Bend Reservoir. The Master Plan includes constructing major fishing tournament sites, building and improving day-use and camping facilities, and constructing recreation and family-friendly beach and playground facilities.

To identify the three major parks to be improved, SRA-TX recently assessed existing and potential parks focusing on potential sites with an emphasis on positive economic impact for the area. Upon completion of the evaluation, it was determined that one of the six USFS parks, Indian Mounds Recreation Area, provided the most favorable location for fishing tournament amenities, boat ramps, and camping facilities in Sabine County. Construction of this \$8 million park facility would provide much needed economic growth to the area and is fully supported by Federal, State and Local officials.

Request

The Sabine River Authority of Texas requests to purchase 300 acres of Indian Mounds Recreation Area in Sabine County from the USFS thereby allowing SRA-TX to construct capital improvements to the site that will enhance recreational opportunities and provide a large capital infusion toward economic growth in the region. Although SRA-TX would prefer a fee simple purchase, other options for a long-term solution could be considered.

VOL 3-0 PG 202





U.S. Forest Service National Forest System Briefing Paper

Date: March 27, 2018

Topic: Secure Rural Schools (SRS) reauthorized by the 2018 spending bill P.L. 115-141

Payments to States

- P.L. 115-141 reauthorizes SRS payments to states, including retroactive payments to states for FY17. Per P.L. 115-141:
 - “for fiscal year 2017, the amount that is equal to 95 percent of the full funding amount for fiscal year 2015; and
 - for fiscal year 2018 and each fiscal year thereafter, the amount that is equal to 95 percent of the full funding amount for the preceding fiscal year.”
- FY16 is not authorized for retroactive payments, and will remain as 1908 Act payments.
- FY17 payments (2018 payment year).
 - 1908 Act, or 25% payments were already released to states in February 2018.
 - Because P.L. 115-141 authorizes retroactive FY17 SRS payments, the payment amount to states will be minus the 1908 Act payments that were already released.
 - We are actively working with ASC to determine next steps for making retroactive payments to states, and do not have exact payment amounts at this time.
- **Response to public inquiry.** The following statement is our current response to public inquiry as to the status of payments to states:
 - “The Forest Service is reviewing the spending bill and working on its process for prompt payments to states. We will release updated numbers once we have them.”

Title II and RACs

- For FY18 Title II funds, RACs now have the authority to initiate projects through September 30, 2020. Title II project funds must be obligated by September 30, 2021.
- We are still determining the expiration status of FY17 retroactive SRS payments.
- **Important Reminder:** For Title II funds that had to be initiated by September 30, 2017 (funds from FY14 and FY15), these funds must still be obligated by September 30, 2018.
- The RAC charter expires in June. Key WO FACA and SRS staff are working on the charter reauthorization.
- We are still awaiting clarification as to how RACs re-engage after SRS reauthorization, as well as how the lapse in SRS may have affected RAC member term limits. Updates will be provided as soon as possible.

Title III direct payments to counties

- Title III payments now have some new authorized uses, which are italicized below:
 - (1) to carry out activities under the Firewise Communities program
 - * ○ (2) to reimburse the participating county for search and rescue and other emergency services, including firefighting *and law enforcement patrols*
 - ○ (3) *to cover training costs and equipment purchases directly related to the emergency service described in paragraph (2); and*
 - * ○ (4) to develop *and carry out* community wildfire protection plans

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VOL 30 PG 204