FACTS ABOUT THE LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN BASIN

Another name for the Lake Pontchartrain Basin is the Lake Pontchartrain Watershed.

The Basin, or watershed, is home to 1.5 million people.

The watershed drains the land in 16 Louisiana parishes and 4 Mississippi counties.

The Louisiana parishes in the Lake Pontchartrain Watershed are: Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Jefferson, Livingston, Orleans, Plaquemines, Tangipahoa, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Helena, St. Tammany, and Washington.

Lake Pontchartrain, formed 5,000 years ago, is the largest feature of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin.

Lake Pontchartrain is not a lake; it is an estuary, or an area in which fresh water from rain and rivers measurably dilutes the salt water from the Gulf of Mexico.

Lake Pontchartrain is an entire ecosystem with great biodiversity. An ecosystem is made up of all the living and non-living components of the environment.

WHAT IS A WATERSHED?

A watershed is the total land area that contributes runoff to a specific body of water.

The runoff is the water which flows off the land surface.

The elevation and slope of the land determines which way the surface water will flow.

The lowest areas in the watershed that act as collecting basins include rivers, bayous, canals, ditches, streams and lakes.