ECOSYSTEMS IN DELICATE BALANCE: Threatened, Endangered, and Introduced Species of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin

OBJECTIVES:

• Visualize the conceptual units which make up an ecosystem and discuss how various organisms interact in a functioning ecosystem versus a malfunctioning ecosystem.

• Develop an appreciation for the complexities of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin’s varied ecosystems, as well as an understanding of how biodiversity (or a lack of) affects the health of an ecosystem.

• Understand the various relationships and roles of organisms in a food chain and how these relationships can become unbalanced.

• Realize the important role each of us plays in preserving and maintaining the health and biodiversity of the ecosystems of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin.

• List several threatened and endangered species in the Lake Pontchartrain Basin.

• Understand the status and roles of threatened, endangered and introduced species in the Lake Pontchartrain Basin.

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

Verbal/Linguistic: Develop and verbally defend a particular point of view formulated during problem-solving exercises.

Logical/Mathematical: Reason and propose a certain course of action in a given circumstance.

Interpersonal: Choose opposing sides to defend a current, relevant social and ecological issue.

Bodily/Kinesthetic: Construct an “ecosystem” using building blocks to represent the various organisms involved.

Verbal/Linguistic: Conceptualize the various organisms which comprise an ecosystem and learn their relative relationships.

Intrapersonal: Explain personal values regarding selected environmental issues of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin.

Naturalist: Visit a field site, using senses to observe wetlands plants and animals; observe and collect ecological information about wetland plants and animals; understand adaptations of plants and animals to wetland ecosystems; participate in a volunteer litter cleanup.