

**NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST (NPL)**

\*\*\*NPL Site\*\*\*

September 2023

**CAPITOL LAKES** | **Baton Rouge, Louisiana**  
*East Baton Rouge Parish*** Site Location:**

The Capitol Lakes site in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, is currently composed of three lakes: North Lake, South Lake, and East Lake, and occupies an aerial extent of approximately 60 acres adjacent to the State Capitol Building and the Governor's Mansion in downtown Baton Rouge. The Capitol Lakes sub-watershed is an urbanized, mixed-use area comprised of residential, commercial/industrial, and governmental properties.

** Site History:**

The Capitol Lakes were originally part of a natural drainage system called Grassie Bayou. Grassie Bayou was contiguous with the Mississippi River until the early 20th century, when it was dammed creating the lake system. Because there is no natural outlet, water which flows into the lake must be pumped out by a pumping station on the Mississippi River. This creates a stagnant lake system and causes retention of sediment and contaminants. Contamination of the lake system was first found in 1972 with the detection of oil contaminated with pesticides and Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs). In 1983, when the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) investigated a report of PCB-laden oil entering the lake, a fish advisory was established due to PCBs and various metals which remains in place today.

** Site Contamination/Contaminants:**

Antimony, arsenic, cadmium, copper, lead, manganese, zinc, mercury, and PCBs in the form of Aroclor-1016 and Aroclor-1260 in sediment at significant concentrations provides evidence that hazardous substances have migrated to North Lake and South Lake.

** Potential Impacts on Surrounding Community/Environment:**

Despite the advisory and signage around the lake that advises against fishing, there is evidence that fishing continues to take place and occasional consumption of the fish occurs. In April 2022, EPA analysis of fish tissue samples from Sunfish, Smallmouth Buffalo and Yellow Catfish in North Lake, found PCBs at concentrations above the Human Food Chain Cancer Risk benchmark.

** Response Activities (to date):**

There have been no cleanup activities involving the contaminated sediments of the lake system.

** Need for NPL Listing:**

The state of Louisiana referred the site to the EPA because no other viable options for long-term remediation were available. The EPA received a letter of support for placing this site on the NPL from the state of Louisiana.

*[The description of the site (release) is based on information available at the time the site was evaluated with the HRS. The description may change as additional information is gathered on the sources and extent of contamination. See 56 FR 5600, February 11, 1991, or subsequent FR notices.]*

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. [ATSDR ToxFAQs](https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp) can be found on the Internet at <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp> or by telephone at 1-800-CDC-INFO or 1-800-232-4636.