A CLOSER LOOK:

BVD has plans to access bayou

Forget about the San Antonio Riverwalk — that is, if you’re looking for a comparison with the Bayou Vermilion District’s proposed Beaver Park Riverwalk.

Lorna Guynn, executive director of the Bayou Vermilion District, recently discussed the progress of the riverwalk and other projects, on the deck of Lafayette Sheriff Department’s Water Patrol boat, skippered by Deputy Sheriff Paul Evans.

As the boat hummed along Bayou Vermilion, Guynn said the Beaver Park Riverwalk will be a little more subdued than the Texas venture.

“We’re going to start the programming on it this year,” said Guynn. “We may see that constructed this year,” said Guynn.

Another project is a launch and a park at the Bayou Vermilion Recreation Area.

“We’re going to start the programming on it this year,” said Guynn. “We’re still looking at a couple of years on that one.”

At the fork where the Vermilion and the Black Bayou intersect, Evans steers to the right and snakes around a couple of fallen trees. Up on the lush bank is the site of another proposed project: the Black Interpretive Area.

“This is a really pretty bayou,” Guynn said of the Black Bayou. “It’s smaller and there’s a lot of growth along the banks. And, there are a lot of alligators here.”

Because of Attakapas burial grounds found in the area, the master plan has the interpretive site featuring these former Native American inhabitants of the bayou. However, the site’s subject matter may change.

“At this time, we’re not even sure if we’re going to strictly use Indian interpretation,” said Guynn. “We may be looking at nature, showing people through a series of floating docks the different trees and wildlife that is back here.”

Guynn said no matter which route the interpretive site goes, conservation will be the focus.

“We try to be sensitive to the whole environment of the area,” said Guynn, “both from the standpoint of preserving archeological sites, but also the environmental aspects.”

Reality for the Black Bayou Interpretive Area is a couple of years away. But Guynn is encouraged by the speed the BVD brings ideas to life. And she is inspired by Vermilionville.

“Vermilionville was only a paragraph in the master plan,” Guynn said. “We started working on that in 1986 and we opened it in ’90. So that’s pretty fast.”

Guynn said the tourism-related projects aren’t just a facelift along the Vermilion bayou.

“It creates jobs. It’s a better quality of life,” said Guynn. “Before, we hardly had boats on this river. Now, people come out here and enjoy a day out in the sun.”

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