Chicot Park offers new challenges, new view to the public

By: CARISSA HEBERT
Managing Editor

A new challenge awaits horse owners at Chicot State Park, along with a scenic view of the park.

Six miles long, the horse trail at Chicot State Park, which opened this summer in June, is marked with signs and green markings on trees, according to Howard Cormier, one of the trail organizers.

“Green dots and blue and white flags mark the trail,” he explained. “You can ride along the lake and in the shade all day. There are a variety of sites to see, varied terrains and creeks to cross. There’s a lot of variety.

“Beginners need to realize that there are a lot of up and down challenges.”

Cormier said the trails are open to anyone who wishes to utilize them. To ride the trails, one needs to make reservations because the parking area only has space for 10 trucks and horse trailers. Riders must also use the buddy system, and they may not ride without a buddy.

Cormier said the trail is designed so that someone could leave their house and drive a couple of hours to reach the site near the North Landing at Chicot Park, unload, ride and arrive back at their vehicle before dark. He said riders should also pack their own lunch and water on the ride.

“Don’t forget bug spray for yourself and your horse.” He explained that a rider could encounter ticks and red bugs along the route.

Horses must have breast collars to keep the saddle from sliding and ropes to tie the horses up at lunch. Poles have been set up for that purpose.

Cormier said the trails were not used a lot in the summer months because of the heat, but they are beginning to see an increase in activity. On this day, November 6, Cormier was leading a group of riders from this area which included a special guest, Dwight Landreneau, assistant secretary for the Louisiana Office of State Parks.

Jane Ahrends, who once worked for Chicot State Park, said she came across a family riding on the...
trails the other day. She said this would make an excellent outing for the entire family.

This project has been underway for three years, according to Cormier, who is an extension county agent in Vermilion Parish.

He said the next stage in the plan is to secure funding to create an area for overnight accommodations for horse riders. He said overnight possibilities would include place for motor homes, horse camping trailers and horses. It would probably be located on the east side of the lake.

For more information or to make reservations to use the new horse trails, call 1-888-6777-6100 toll free or 363-6289 in the Ville Platte area.

Donna Broussard of Turkey Creek prepares her horse for a ride on Tuesday at Chicot State Park.

PREPARING THE HORSES - On Tuesday morning, riders prepare for a trail ride at Chicot State Park. Horses were groomed and saddled. Riders should remember to bring a lunch, water, rope, breast collar, and a buddy. (Gazette photos by Carissa Hebert)