Flaws Discovered In Basin Plan

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — A joint legislative committee on environmental quality says it has found serious faults in the state’s plan to develop the Atchafalaya Basin for tourism. The committee has authorized a study to see what kind of corrective legislation may be needed.

For one thing, the committee’s investigators found a 20-foot fluctuation in the water level of the area where the state wants to build a tourist center. Water marks were found 20 feet up the trunks of trees in the prime site of the proposed center.

Special Permission

For another thing, the committee’s lawyers have tentatively concluded they will need special federal permission, probably by act of Congress, to build any permanent structures in a floodway.

The committee, chaired by state Sen. Sam Nunez of Chalmette, already has voted to authorize $7,200 for three geoscience students to study soil distribution, drainage and accretion and vegetation in the area of the proposed center.

“We've gone in there and done some surveys in that area, and I don't think they're going to be able to do it,” said Donald Whittinghill, staff director for the committee, speaking of the tourist center.