

Wisconsin Student Pond Project to Benefit Wetlands

Monday, August 3, 2009, 3:30 p.m., EDT

University of Wisconsin-Madison students launched two "floating islands" in Bayou Bienvenue to help restore New Orleans wetlands damaged by Hurricane Katrina. University of Wisconsin-Madison students launched two "floating islands" in Bayou Bienvenue in an effort to restore New Orleans wetlands that were damaged by Hurricane Katrina. The project, which took place June 23, is part of the U.W. New Orleans Sustainable Restoration Workshop.

The goal is to foster plant growth and provide habitats for wildlife as one of the first steps in restoring wetlands areas ravaged by the storm. The project is led by students at the U.W.'s Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies.

The islands measured 35 square feet each and were made from recycled plastic and marsh grasses. "Two small islands won't do much for a 435-acre lake," said Tigie Bonneval, an employee of Floating Islands Inc., a Baton Rouge-based company that supplied the islands, "[but] this is a demonstration project to basically show what the islands can do and how they can function in that type of environment to restore wetlands."

The students purchased one island with a McKnight Foundation grant. Floating Islands donated the second one.