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News -> [INDReporter](#) TUE, MAY 15 12:18PM by Wynce Nolley

Atchafalaya Basinkeeper and friends file suit

The Atchafalaya Basinkeeper organization and several other concerned citizen groups are making good on their promise to deliver swift legal action against the St. Martin Parish School Board and Good Hope Inc. for plans to log several acres of cypress-tupelo trees in Section 16 of the Atchafalaya Basin.

A notice of intent to file suit has been delivered to Good Hope Inc. President and CEO Vidal Davis, St. Martin Parish School Board President James Blanchard and Louisiana Commissioner of Administration Paul Rainwater on behalf of the Atchafalaya Basinkeeper, Louisiana Environmental Action Network, Lower Mississippi Riverkeeper, Louisiana Crawfish Producers Association—West, Sierra Club Delta Chapter and the Gulf Restoration Network. The notice was delivered by the collective citizen groups' counsel, Machel Lee Hall of the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic.

"This Notice of Intent is critical to stopping the cypress logging that is about to spread like wildfire all over the Basin," says Dean Wilson of the nonprofit Atchafalaya Basinkeeper organization in an email sent with the official notice. "At a time when the state of Louisiana is asking for billions of dollars for wetland protection and coastal restoration, the state should be showing the nation that it is taking very seriously the protection of its wetlands and should be taking the lead on finding ways to stop the demise of the Atchafalaya's cypress forests."

The notice cites violations under the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1311(a) for any illegal discharges of pollutants and fill material into the basin as a result of the logging process and building of access roads; the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1540(g)(1)(A), as the logging would encroach upon a critical habitat for the endangered Louisiana Black Bear. The notice also alleges a violation of Louisiana Revised Statute § 41:1009, which prohibits cypress logging on state-owned water bottom land.

Relief sought from the groups include \$37,500 dollars for each day of violation of the Clean Water Act; an injunction issued from a federal district court to protect species listed under the Endangered Species Act; and an injunction to stop the sale and cutting of the cypress trees on state-owned water bottoms.

"Atchafalaya Basinkeeper will do anything within our power to stop the craziness of forever destroying our cypress forests for mulch," declares Wilson. "It is as insane as making gravel out of the coliseum in Rome or selling Picassos as recycled paper."

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