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## **Pickets Plan Comes Together**

*Private/public effort launches artificial reefing project to save famed Louisiana trout hotspot*

A \$1.2 million plan to preserve habitat in the area known as the Pickets, often referred to as hallowed ground in Louisiana trout fishing circles, was unveiled this week by officials of Apache Corporation, Fieldwood Energy LLC, Coastal Conservation Association (CCA), and the State of Louisiana, in coordination with the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE). As soon as the energy structures and pilings are removed per federal requirements from Ship Shoal 26 sometime in July, this cooperative effort at the local level is set to deploy 15,000 tons of concrete rip-rap in three artificial reefs to maintain the summer-time hotspot for speckled trout and the anglers who pursue them out of Cocodrie and Dularge.

“There are many trout fishermen in this state who have fond memories of the Pickets,” said David Cresson, executive director of CCA Louisiana. “It is unfortunate that we have to say goodbye to those structures, but we are grateful to have partners here who were committed to doing everything they could to maintain the area for future generations. The Pickets have been a special place, and this partnership is working to make sure it stays that way.”

Fieldwood acquired Apache’s Gulf of Mexico shelf assets in 2013, including the Pickets structures and pilings located at Ship Shoal 26. As part of the acquisition, Fieldwood entered into a decommissioning agreement with Apache and is responsible for making sure the removal work at Ship Shoal 26 that is required by the federal government is completed. From the outset, both companies understood the significance of the iconic structures and were committed to mitigating the impact of the removals on the fishery and the recreational angling community.

Obie O’Brien, vice president of Governmental Affairs for Apache Corporation, said, “Apache has operated in South Louisiana and in the Gulf of Mexico for decades. Hundreds of our employees and former employees live, work and raise their families along the coast. We were happy to be part of this effort to preserve, protect and enhance one of the iconic fishing spots in Louisiana. We understand the need for a strong and diverse environment because we live it every day.”

John Seeger, Fieldwood’s vice president of Decommissioning, noted, “The Pickets is an area that residents of Louisiana and Texas—including many of our employees at Fieldwood—have fished for decades. We are required by federal law to remove the structures but wanted to come up with a solution that would preserve this renowned fishing area for generations to come.”

The \$1.2 million project will create three separate reefs arrayed in a manner to protect depressions in the seafloor that were created by the prevailing current flowing around and through the Pickets. It is hoped that the reefs will protect and enhance these scour holes, while providing additional habitat for marine life. The reefing project will begin immediately after the existing structures are removed to preserve the scour holes as much as possible. To cover the cost, Apache, Fieldwood, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Reef Trust Fund, and CCA’s national habitat program collectively will contribute \$1.05 million to fund the project. The contractor for construction of the reefs, DLS Energy, and the company providing the materials for the reefs, Matt Durand Contractors, are both giving significant discounts on their services as in-kind donations to the project.

“This had the potential to be a sad ending to a storied fishing spot, but now we have a tremendous amount of hard structure going in to replace habitat that is required to be removed,” said John Walther, chairman of CCA Louisiana’s Habitat Committee. “This is the best outcome that could be achieved, and Apache and Fieldwood should be commended. They didn’t have to go the extra mile, but both companies wanted to make this right from the beginning and they certainly stepped up. We hope this can be a template for addressing marine habitat that stands to be lost due to the Idle Iron Policy.”

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*CCA Louisiana will be coordinating a media event for construction of artificial reefing at the Pickets. Exact date TBD. Contact David Cresson (225.952.9200) to receive information about boat transportation to the reefing site for photo opportunities and media access to representatives of the four funding entities during the media event.*

#### **About Apache Corporation**

*Apache Corporation (NYSE, Nasdaq: APA) is an oil and gas exploration and production company with operations in the United States, Canada, Egypt, the United Kingdom and Australia. Apache posts announcements, operational updates, investor information and copies of all press releases on its website, [www.apachecorp.com](http://www.apachecorp.com). From its nationally recognized and award winning tree program to its daily efforts to preserve over 240,000 acres of wetlands in South Louisiana, Apache has a long track record of environmental stewardship. Apache was recently recognized for its efforts to preserve the Louisiana coast in a proclamation from the Louisiana Legislature highlighting the company’s commitment to the coastal environment.*

#### **About Fieldwood Energy LLC**

*Fieldwood, a Houston-based portfolio company of Riverstone Holdings LLC, is focused on the acquisition and development of conventional oil and gas assets in North America. The company is the largest operator on the Gulf of Mexico Shelf. Fieldwood is led by CEO Matt McCarroll.*