

Ancient rivers begin to build Southern Louisiana

Sea level drops due to the formation of glaciers. The lowered Mississippi River cuts into the terrace, creating the valley that begins to form the Spanish Lake Basin

Sea level rises due to another glacial melt. The Gulf of Mexico floods the valley, creating a salty estuary up to the prairie ridge. The presence of abundant wildlife attracts Native American people.

Sediment deposits from the Mississippi, Comite and Amite Rivers build up the Spanish Lake Basin area into a high terrace

Sediments from melting glaciers (carried by the Mississippi River) build the floor of Bluff Swamp

The Mississippi River shifts to its present-day course. Bayou Manchac forms as a distributary (leading water out from the river) and tributary (bringing water to the river) to the Mississippi. As the Mississippi builds natural levees, the Spanish Lake Basin becomes its own distinct watershed, a backwater swamp of the Mississippi River.

60 million years ago

100,000 years ago

90,000-80,000 years ago

12,000-11,000 years ago

6,000-5,300 years ago

4,800 years