

TheDeltaSierran

PUBLICATION OF THE SIERRA CLUB'S DELTA CHAPTER • FALL 2016

Climate Deniers Leave Louisiana All Wet

Last month's flooding events will be seen as historically significant as the hurricanes Katrina and Rita that we experienced 11 years ago. Not just for devastation but also for the distinction that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has drawn a scientific conclusion that there is a 40% chance that the increased rain was caused by Climate Change.

Part of the evidence is that we have had measurable sea level rise. The combination of natural subsidence and sea level rise has been projected to result in a net sea level rise of 6 feet in south Louisiana by year 2100. Disasters that are made worse by the effects of climate change are happening and will continue to effect Louisiana.

Yet our political representatives in Washington and in the State Legislature continue to deny the connection between climate change and Louisiana's disasters, and they continue to obstruct any cooperation with the federal Clean Power Plan which is our best national shot at reducing global warming emissions from fossil fuel fired power plants.

The failure of our politicians to acknowledge the problem inhibits the discussion of strategies for adapting to what the science tells us is coming. Our politician, who espouse small government and



LA DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION

independence from Washington and who don't want to cooperate on reduction of emissions are never reluctant to go to Washington for disaster recovery assistance. We will see this story play out again in the coming months.

Sierra Club has consistently advised the governor, committees of the state legislature and the Louisiana Public Service Commission that the State should acknowledge the effects of climate change and should cooperate with the federal government in reducing the air emissions that make it worse. Furthermore, we have advocated for adaptive strategies and planning

for what we know is coming. The storms of August 2016 once again provide an opportunity to make the connection that this is a genuine emergency that we need to start preparing for.

By Woody Martin, chair and
Leslie March, editor

[NOAA article http://tinyurl.com/zr5fqe2](http://tinyurl.com/zr5fqe2)



VOTE ON NOV 8

DELTA CHAPTER
ENDORSES US
SENATE
CANDIDATE

SEE PAGE 5

The DeltaSierran Fall 2016

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Highlights of the Past Year

Victories Hot Off the Press. Congratulations to Margie Vicknair-Pray, Delta Chapter Conservation Coordinator and the Honey Island Group for building public pressure and support for legal actions against the Helis fracking well in St. Tammany. Helis has decided not to drill. Delta Chapter has been working with Sierra Club national staff to develop legal actions forcing coal fired power plants and industrial plants to clean up their emissions. We had a recent significant victory in forcing the proposed Yuhuang chemical plant in St. James Parish to be required to get a more rigorous air emissions permit.

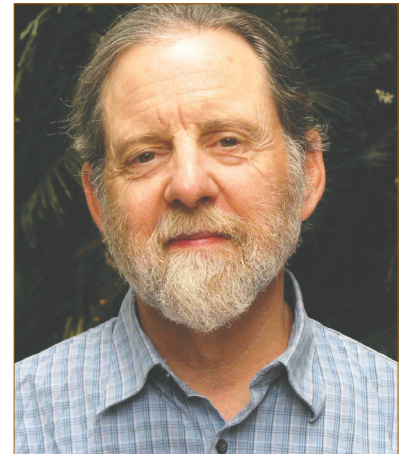
Sierra Club Delta Chapter and the local groups that make up the Chapter have been active this year with outings including a hike in the Kisatchie Hills Wilderness, and the Annual Chapter Retreat at Chicot State Park. We conducted a Water Sentinels update workshop on Bayou Teche to train new team

members and refresh knowledge of water sampling techniques for existing members.

The Delta Chapter groups including Acadian, Baton Rouge, Honey Island and New Orleans all conduct regular meetings and have informative presentations, usually on a monthly basis. You can see contact info for the groups in this newsletter or on our website, lasierraclub.org.

We were active at the State Legislature again this year, We lobbied in coalition with the Green Army for good bills and against the bad ones and by conducting two different citizen lobby days. We combined the efforts of volunteer lobbyists along with our professional lobbyist to make Delta Chapter's voice heard at the State Capitol. For more information see the legislative report on our website.

We are pleased to have hired Margie Vicknair-Pray as our Delta Chapter Conservation Coordinator. She has been actively working with us since February to conduct events



and develop programs to help further the goals of Sierra Club Delta Chapter in Louisiana. One of her events is a one day Sierra Club Outings Leader training program that will give a jump start to our outings program by bringing in new people to conduct outings. We hope to make this training a recurring event in case you missed our announcements about it.

You can always see what Delta Chapter is up to by going to our website at www.lasierraclub.com. We thank you for your continued Sierra Club membership and donations of support to help keep us going and to help keep our new Conservation Coordinator on staff.

You can make an end of year donation to Delta Chapter by clicking the Join/Donate tab on our web page or by sending a check to the chapter address P.O. Box 52503, Lafayette, LA 70506

Thanks so much to our Sierra Club members in Louisiana for your membership and support. Hope to see you at the Fall Retreat.

Haywood "Woody" Martin,
Chair, Sierra Club Delta Chapter

FALL 2016

Fall Retreat Is Coming Up

October 28-30 at Fontainebleau State Park Come and meet other

members at our Fall Chapter Retreat at Fontainebleau State Park in Mandeville. Participants will enjoy the cooler weather of late October (28-29-30) at the Group Camp, a private retreat inside the park. We'll have informative speakers and workshops, as well as chances for outings and fun. The park is located on the Tammany Trace, a 30-mile hiking/biking trail set on an old railroad bed that runs from Slidell to Covington. There are bayous and Lake Pontchartrain for those who want to bring canoes or kayaks for exploring, and a beautiful park to wander in. We'll get a private tour of the on-site museum which houses artifacts found around the ancient site of Native American ruins and the sugar plantation of French-Creole nobleman Bernard de Marigny de Mandeville, founder of the nearby city of Mandeville. Native Americans settled in the area long before European settlement, and mounds, remains of villages, are in and adjacent to the park.

Contact Margie Vicknair-Pray at margie.vicknair-pray@sierraclub.org 225) 383-5673 to make reservations.

Fees for support of our costs: Two nights in group shelter with food \$75
Other options are available including just coming for the day on Saturday See website for more information. www.lasierra.org

ACADIAN

Western Parishes centered around Lafayette

Meets: ExCom/Conservation meeting at 6:30pm on the 2nd and 3rd Wednesday of every month.

First United Methodist, 703 Lee Ave., Lafayette

Contact: Chair: Harold Schoeffler, cadistyle@aol.com.

Vice Chair and Group representative to the Delta Chapter Excom:

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Treasurer: Billy Fortier.

billyfortier@yahoo.com

Website: <http://lafayettesierraclub.org/>

Facebook: Acadian Group of the Sierra Club

BATON ROUGE

Baton Rouge and environs

Meets: third Thursdays of odd numbered months. The location is in the Backpacker, the store is located at 7656 Jefferson Hwy in Baton Rouge. On alternate months, there's usually an outing.

Contact: Chair, Nancy Grush (225) 938-9353

nancygrush@gmail.com

Treasurer: Gwen Pine

gpine48@att.net

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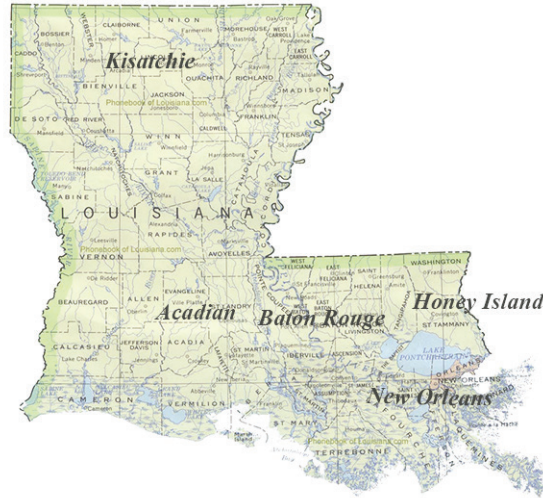
HONEY ISLAND

Northshore from Gulf to Amite

Meets; Third Saturday at 2:30 PM

Contact: Chair: Diana Morgan, sierra.honeyisland@yahoo.com for location

THINK GLOBALLY, AND GET ACTIVE WITH YOUR LOCAL SIERRA CLUB GROUP! Sierra Club is the largest grassroots environmental organization in the country, and the Delta Chapter's five regional Groups host outings and work on conservation issues. Groups have monthly informational programs. Members and supporters are invited to attend outings and meetings—everyone is welcome!



NEW ORLEANS

New Orleans and West Bank

Meets: At the Audubon Zoo Dominion Greater New Orleans including West Bank Auditorium near the main entrance, 6500 Magazine St. Drive to the front entrance to the Zoo, just off Magazine St. To the right of the Zoo's main public entrance, go through the gate and bear right to the Dominion Auditorium open at 6:30 pm and the program starts

at 7:00 pm. To get the latest details, call 1-504-836-3062.

Contact: Chair: Vance Levesque, mrkahuna@juno.com

Website: <http://neworleanssierraclub.blogspot.com/> and Facebook

KISATCHIE

Northern Louisiana

Meets: No regular meetings at this time

Contact: Chair and group rep: Jeff Wellborn, j.w.wellborn@gmail.com

Volunteer Opportunity

Learn to lobby, or, if you've already enjoyed the experience, dive back into swaying our politicians! Have you ever wondered what lobbyists do and how they go about influencing our political representatives? Well, now is your chance to get involved and practice how to 'win friends and influence people'. If you want to be part of the Delta Chapter's "Lobbying & Outreach" campaign, please join us. We'll be ramping up soon for the upcoming legislative session, and we need members from across the state to be involved. The best influence on a sitting politician is a constituent, so get involved and make a difference. Contact Margie Vicknair-Pray at (225)383-5673.

Delta Chapter Endorses Foster Campbell for Louisiana US Senate Seat



Foster Campbell consistently fights in the interest of regular people and rate payers for affordable clean energy. He has shown that he is not a paid servant of the big utilities and energy companies. No other candidate can match his record of public service and experience. We think he will do an excellent job as a US Senator representing the interest of regular people in our state on the national stage in Washington. We request and urge your vote and support for Foster Campbell for US Senator.

Between now and November 8 is a crucial time for us to show support for Foster Campbell. Spread the word with your friends and neighbors..

If you want to volunteer with the Campaign be sure and let them know that you are a Sierra Club member. You can contact the Campaign at <http://www.fostercampbell2016.com/>

Delta Chapter of the Sierra Club is endorsing Foster Campbell for US Senate from Louisiana. We have known Foster Campbell for years as an advocate for clean energy and a fighter for fairness in energy taxation in Louisiana. We have watched his advocacy on the Louisiana Public Service Commission for Renewable Energy, fair net metering for residential and commercial solar installations and for Energy Efficiency as the cleanest and cheapest way to make more electric energy available.

He has been steadfast in defending the right of nonprofit groups and public citizens to be heard in LPSC hearings and proceedings.

Campbell is the only Louisiana US Senate candidate to acknowledge human caused global climate change. He is also a supporter of the USEPA Clean Power Plan as the only currently viable plan to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases from electric power generation.



Earl's Pearls

Color Coded Legislation

On August 1, 2016, four hundred (400, count them) new laws went into effect, the product of the Louisiana Legislature trying to be a governing body, trying to balance a budget without mentioning the intensely feared word “taxes,” and trying to show voters that they had actually accomplished something.

Among those laws were some that are colorful. For example, heretofore hunters have been required to wear bright orange vests and caps for safety, a color called “hunter orange” or “blaze orange.” To add more color to the woods (and perhaps to show that the hunter might be female) a new law permits hunters to wear a fluorescent “blaze pink” as an alternative to orange. Want to go hunting? Think pink.

In response to the “Black Lives Matter” movement, the “Blue Lives Matter” movement has sprung up to call attention to the danger law enforcement officers face. One of the new laws has added law enforcement and other emergency workers to the “hate crimes” law providing additional penalties for committing violent crimes on them because of their status.

Elsewhere, a neo-Nazi group tried to start a “White Lives Matter” event, but got into a brawl with some “Black Lives Matter” members, and the scuffle had to be broken up by the cops. (See “Blue Lives Matter.”) With David Duke running for the U.S. Senate, we

will probably hear more about this.

Color is all over the map of Louisiana. The Red and Vermillion Rivers cross the state. Baton Rouge (“Red Stick”) is the capitol. Near the city of Houma (Choctaw-derived name meaning “red”) are Bayou Black and Bayou Blue. The town of Golden Meadow is on Bayou Lafourche. In Washington Parish is the city of Bogalusa, a name from Choctaw meaning “Black Creek.”

With sickening frequency, we are reminded of the chronic and continuing violence to our environment, with the well publicized loss of one football field of wetlands every hour. (Why is wetlands loss measured in football fields? Not that anyone ever played football in the marsh. Why not something scientific like hectares or acres or cubic furlongs?) When those football fields disappear hourly, Louisiana loses its best color: Green.

The Louisiana wetlands are home to lots of wonderful green things. Like Roseau cane and cattails, marsh ferns and marsh mallows (the plant, not the candy). Duckweed and pickerel weed, wax myrtle and dwarf palmetto. And there are all the green things that swim and fly and crawl around: green mallards, green anoles (we call ‘em lizards). There are green trout, a.k.a. black bass, and green

herons; green water snakes and green frogs (think Kermit); the black-Throated green warbler and green sunfish. Green plankton on fresh water ponds provide food for fish. The loss of wetlands is the loss of green is the loss of Louisiana.

Maybe it is time for the Louisiana legislature to include in their annual plethora of laws something to protect the green wetlands. Violence against the wetlands destroys the natural biologic breeding ground and habitat of many green things. Those green wetlands also present a buffer, a natural “speed bump,” to incoming tropical storms and hurricanes.

Let’s say it and get it into legislation: “Green Lives Matter.” And perhaps willful destruction of the green riches of Louisiana’s wetlands should be a “hate crime” too.

– Earl Higgins



Northshore News

Manchac Parkway Becoming a Reality

By Ben Taylor

The stretch of U.S. 51 between Laplace and Ponchatoula, LA runs twenty-three uninterrupted miles through the swamps and marshes between Lakes Maurepas and Pontchartrain. Except for the villages at Pass Manchac (Galva and Akers) there are few other signs of habitation, yet the road is alive with history, wildlife and scenic beauty. In many ways, it already functions as a public greenway and is only in need of some extra attention and tender loving care.

The first man built access on the isthmus was the railroad built in the 1850s. Just west of that the Hammond Highway was built in the 1920s. Then U.S. 51 was built in the early 1960s. Continuing west, Interstate 55 was built in the late 1970s. The two middle roads were built by piling up swamp soil and shell to create a roadbed leaving a canal running alongside. These canals were filled for the next roadway however the construction of the raised interstate left a wide canal that was needed to float in necessary construction equipment.

Eventually the raised interstate was completed and the “low road” became a back-water, formally designated as an “Access Road”. Massive illegal dumping made the trip down old 51 unpleasant but people continued to use it to travel, hunt, fish and access the surrounding wetlands. In recent years, citizen’s groups, volunteers, businesses, state agencies, local government and property owners have worked



Natalie Robottom, President of St. John the Baptist Parish, Robbie Miller, President of Tangipahoa Parish and Gordon Burgess, Immediate Past President of Tangipahoa Parish.

to turn things around. An initial cleanup campaign during a three-week period in 1995 collected an estimated 289 tons of debris. Afterward, diligent surveillance and enforcement helped change bad habits. The Sheriff of St. John worked with citizen groups to create and maintain several roadside water recreation areas along the road. Thousands of fishermen, bicyclists, canoeists and sightseers continue to appreciate and use the road yet it remains a “diamond in the rough,” just another one of Louisiana’s empty two-lane blacktops.

The concept of formally designating the highway as a recreational Greenway would be the first step in an incremental effort to take the many assets already here and enhance and improve them with signage, selective vegetation management and regular maintenance. More ambitious investments from a number of potential sources could create fishing piers, shelters and picnic areas, walking and bike trails (including a segment of

the more-than-halfway-finished Around the Lake Bike Trail), park spaces, interpretive displays and a marketing effort to allow the parkway to reach even fuller potential.

The Friends of the Manchac Greenway (www.manchacgreenway.org) is an organization made up of citizens from Tangipahoa and St. John the Baptist Parishes, who seek to create partnerships between the private and the public including the user groups involved in outdoor recreation to give the old low road the identity it needs to be an important recreational and cultural asset to the community. Hopefully it will become a regional tourist destination and an economic engine for the region.

<http://www.manchacgreenway.org/>

Create An Environmental Legacy

Not everyone can make a large gift to protect the environment during their lifetime, but you can preserve the environment for generations to come by remembering the Sierra Club in your will.

Just imagine how much good and change could be done if each one of us remembered a favorite charity or cause in our will or estate plans. This would create an immeasurable impact

If you would like to remember the Delta Chapter in your will contact Woody Martin at

337-298-8380

FALL 2016



Protecting Southern Hills Aquifer

On Saturday May 7th, the Delta Chapter and Honey Island Group of the Sierra Club co-sponsored a “Celebration of Our Sole-Source Southern Hills Aquifer” in Abita Springs, Louisiana – the first ever Southern Hills AquaFest. The originator and co-sponsor of the event was a citizens group fighting fracking on the Northshore, Voices of St Tammany.

The aquifer supplies a ten-parish area in Louisiana, the Florida Parishes, including the Baton Rouge area, and from the Northshore of Lake Pontchartrain into southern Mississippi. The event educated and entertained over 600 visitors to the Abita Springs park.

The aquifer has historically delivered pure drinking water from the Southern Hills Aquifer system,

but the aquifer is being assaulted and poisoned. Salinity is increasing in the western end of the aquifer system because of huge quantities of water being drawn from the aquifer in and around Baton Rouge. A cluster of industries located north of downtown Baton Rouge draw so much water that they are pulling saline water in from the south.

Fracking operations and deep well injection of toxins are also issues. Fracking companies claim that drilling and fracking is no threat to drinking water, but recent university studies and EPA studies prove differently; these studies show fracking as a source of both surface water and aquifer pollution.

The Southern Hills Aquifer is an EPA certified ‘sole-source’ aquifer – meaning that there is

no other aquifer in the region. Although the Southern Hills Aquifer has many layers, they are all interconnected. Pollution in one layer will eventually affect other layers. Once polluted, aquifers are not easy things to clean.

The Honey Island Group has battled to keep the fracking out of St Tammany Parish, where Helis Energy recently pulled out but other companies are already fracking in Tangipahoa, Washington, St Helena parishes and southern Mississippi. What about the companies that depend on the purity of our aquifer, are they testing for toxic chemicals?

For more information about how you can get involved in this issue contact Margie Vicknair-Pray at (225)383-5673.