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The Delta Chapter of the Sierra Club
Protecting people and the environment for over 40 years

Delta Chapter E-Zine

Issue: # 1

FEB 2012

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The Delta E-Zine version of the Sierran will be published via email and online three times a year. A print version will be published at year end in 2012. If you want your ezine sent to your mailbox please send an your email address to hrmartin2sc@gmail.com

Delta Chapter facebook page

Be sure to check out the Sierra Club Delta Chapter facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/groups/314869644946/>
You will find news and postings there from over 400 friends of Sierra Club Delta Chapter. If you are on facebook, just put in a request to become a friend and you're in.





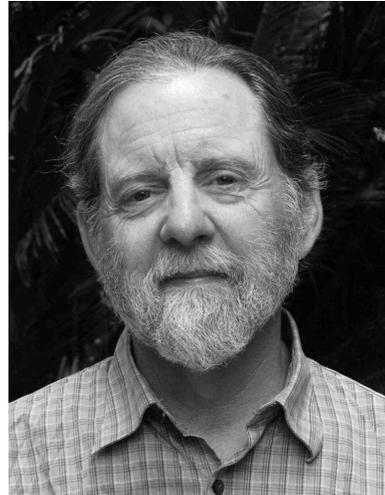
Acadian Group members in the moonlight on Bayou Teche

View From the Chair

January 16, 2012

The great Toledo Bend water deal scare has now subsided to the relief of Louisiana politicians and taxpayers, leaving all to puzzle what can be done to prevent unscrupulous speculators from selling and profiting from our water. The deal would have diverted up to 600,000 Acre feet annually from Toledo Bend for sale to Texas water users through a middleman composed of in-state and out of state investors. The contract for the diversion of water would have been for 99 years. The deal was scotched by negative vote of the Sabine River Authority after overwhelming negative comment and resistance from the Governor's office.

So who owns our water anyway? The State Constitution just says in Article 9 that natural resources (including water) "shall be protected, conserved, and replenished insofar as possible and consistent with the health, safety, and welfare of the people." There are no other provisions in the Constitution about water. So who controls allocation of water in our state and under what legal authority? Louisiana, traditionally a riparian water rights state, long has had some regulation of ground water but virtually none of surface water. If you could find a way to take some, without damaging endangered fish or wildlife and without interfering with navigation, you could do it. That is changing. A string of attorney general's opinions have declared that water in the state is a public asset and can't be sold without some kind of permission. In the 2010 State legislative session there was a bill sponsored by Representative Jim Morris, R-Oil City, calling for some regulation of surface water withdrawals. (Ridenbaugh Press). That bill was successful and became Act 955 which "requires that a cooperative endeavor agreement to withdraw running surface water with an agency or subdivision of the state shall be in writing, for fair market value, in the public interest, and approved by the attorney general and the secretary of the Dept. of Natural Resources." Curiously the Act sunsets and has to be renewed every two years.



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Newsletter

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In the 2011 legislative session there was a bill to sell water from Lake Bistineau for fracking. The bill did not pass with everyone saying let's wait for the soon to be released State water management plan. That plan is now here in draft form and doesn't say anything about surface water withdrawals. So the prevailing law will continue to place almost all of the decision authority for water withdrawals with the Department of Natural Resources under the Governor.

Current law allows us to recover "fair market value" but don't hold your breath waiting for the check to state taxpayers. Act 955 further provides that "fair market value includes the economic development, employment, and increased tax revenues created by the activities associated with the withdrawal of running surface water." Maybe that was the biggest problem with the Toledo Bend deal. We get no benefit from shipping our water out of state, and we get locked into 99 years of wishing we hadn't signed the deal because we have increasing water needs here in Louisiana. This is one of those few times that our governor has been right on a natural resources issue. That is a fortunate coincidence since all of his decisions appear to be based on politics rather than based on science. The law as currently written places almost all the authority for decisions about surface water sales in his hands. This was not the first time nor will it be the last time Texas comes after our water. At the very least the people of Louisiana should have the right to public hearing and comment on such proposals. Even better would be new legislation that sets monetary charges for diverted water, with funds returning to conservation easements and watershed protection. Long term protection of surface water supplies in Louisiana requires long term planning, commitment of resources for monitoring and adequate valuation of our water that takes into account the public interest.
Woody Martin

Excom Election

New Members Elected for 2012-2014

Introducing our new Delta Chapter Excom members

Stacey Leah Scarce and Dean A. Wilson have been elected to two year terms on the Delta Chapter Executive Committee. Their terms start in January of 2012. Thanks to all Delta Chapter members who voted in the election.



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Group Contacts

Acadian Group

Chair: Harold Schoeffler

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Vice Chair and grp rep to Excom: Woody Martin hmartin2sc@gmail.com

Treasurer: Billy Fortier
billyfortier@yahoo.com

Baton Rouge Group

Chair (acting chair): Nancy Grush, Outings Leader

nancygrush@gmail.com

Vice-Chair: vacant

Member: Ann Vail Shaneyfelt, Newsletter Co-Editor, Delta Chapter Recycling Chair
ashaneyfelt@gmail.com

Member: John Westra, Group Representative to the Delta Chapter,
jwestra@agctr.lsu.edu

Treasurer: Gwen Pine,
gpine716@bellsouth.net

Honey Island Group

Chair: Vacant

Treasurer: Diane Casteel

Stacey Leah Scarce



Stacey Scarce currently serves as the manager of Acadiana Park Nature Station, environmental education facility in Lafayette. Additionally, she is an expert guide for paddle, camping and hiking trips for Pack and Paddle, the outdoor excursion center in Lafayette. She also teaches wilderness adventure training at University of Louisiana at Lafayette's kinesiology department. She played an integral role in creating the community roots project in partnership between Lafayette City Government, Lafayette Sheriff's Office, EarthShare Gardens and community or neighborhood groups. The organization helps create food gardens in low-income neighborhoods.

Stacey created an educational game for the black bear conservation coalition, which is given to teachers across Louisiana. She serves on the advisory committee for two environmental charter schools in Lafayette, and is on the board of trustees for Atchafalaya Basinkeeper. She also created a 4th grade program that adheres to state science GLE's for Nature Station fieldtrips for 150 4th grade classes every school year in Lafayette Parish.

Dean Wilson



Dean Wilson was born on an American Air Force Base in Spain to an American father and a Spanish mother. He grew up in Spain, but came to Louisiana in 1984 to

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481-3659
Jordan Macha, Associate Organizing
Representative,

train to go to the Amazon in Brazil. After living for four months in the swamps south of Franklin he fell in love with Louisiana's swamps and decided to stay and make a living as a commercial fisherman in the Atchafalaya Basin. After years of seeing the decline of the wetlands, he started a swamp tour company in 2000 to try to raise awareness about the plight of the Atchafalaya Basin. In 2003 Dean was voted the Chair of the Atchafalaya Basin Committee by the Delta Chapter of the Sierra Club. In the spring of 2004 he was approved as the Atchafalaya Basinkeeper by the Waterkeeper Alliance.

Dean helps to protect the Atchafalaya Basin through education, research, and enforcement of our environmental laws. He continues to conduct regular surveillance flights over the Atchafalaya, Maurepas, Barataria-Terrebonne, and Pearl River Basins to monitor for legal and illegal cypress logging and other activities. He is one of the founders of the Save Our Cypress Coalition, and is working on an ongoing education campaign in local schools and civic clubs. He is also helping to organize strong Save Our Cypress Coalitions in other southern states.

Holiday Fundraiser a Success!

I'd like to personally thank everyone who made a contribution for our special Holiday fundraiser. Every gift counts, and will go a long way to make sure that 2012 is one of the best years ever for the Delta Chapter. We will be planting the memorial trees this spring with the help of the Acadiana Chapter of the Boy Scouts. Much thanks goes to Harold Schoeffler for helping to arrange this.

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About Us

The Delta Sierran is published four times a year by the Delta Chapter of the Sierra Club. Articles and editing by local volunteers. Production by Penguin Platitudes. Text of articles may be reprinted if duly acknowledged. Artwork and photos may not be reproduced without permission.

The Delta Chapter is 3,000 of your neighbors supporting the work of the Sierra Club in Louisiana. We advance the cause of protecting Louisiana's environment in a variety of ways, including lobbying the state legislature in Baton Rouge to create clean jobs, develop renewable resources like wind and solar and most important to protect our natural heritage for our families and future generations. We work to save the Cypress, keep the Atchafalaya Wet and Wild and promote restoring our wetlands, the natural coastal barriers. We also go outside and enjoy our beautiful planet with canoe trips,

We have a long list of things to accomplish this year, from expanding our outreach and education programs to our neighbors, to fighting for Louisiana in our state Capitol, to inspiring new generations to get out into the outdoors. It wouldn't be possible without the continuous support from members like you. Thanks!

-Devin Martin, Delta Chapter Conservation Coordinator

Keystone XL Pipeline Dead (For Now)

Permit denied but we still need to be vigilant

On January 18, 2012, President Obama announced that he would deny the permit for the Keystone XL oil pipeline. This pipeline, a project of Canadian company TransCanada, would have moved nearly 900,000 barrels of synthetic crude oil per day from the Athabasca tar sands in Alberta, Canada, across 1,700 miles of the Great Plains (and the Ogallala Aquifer), down to Port Arthur and Houston, Texas, where it could be refined and shipped on the global market. The project faced fierce opposition from environmental groups, including the Sierra Club, and inspired one of the largest acts of civil disobedience in recent history. Many climate experts, including NASA scientist James Hansen, declared that the wholesale exploitation of the Athabasca tar sands would be "game over" for the battle against catastrophic climate change. Boosters said the pipeline would bring jobs and energy security for the US.

Although many environmentalists are declaring this to be a major victory, prudence would suggest that we keep our eyes peeled for a resurrection of the "dead" pipeline. Many analysts are suggesting that the decision had much to do with ongoing opposition from the state of Nebraska to the route of the pipeline through sensitive territory. President Obama himself qualified his denial of the permit with a statement that his decision was based on the "process" rather than the "merits" of the pipeline. TransCanada will be allowed to submit a new permit application once it drafts plans that avoid the sensitive Sandhills region of Nebraska.

Keep updated on this issue by reading the Delta Chapter blog or joining us on facebook.

New Website to be released in 2012

hikes and camp outs.

Contributions and Announcements for the next issue of the Delta Sierran should be sent no later than March 30, 2012. Please forward via email to lesliemarch@hotmail.com.



March Fund

Appeal

It is that time of year again. You will be receiving a request in the mail soon to make a donation to the Sierra Club that goes 100%

With the generous help of Sierra Club National, we will be working in 2012 to redesign and improve our Delta Chapter (and possibly Group) websites. Our goal is to make the website more attractive, easier to use, and more interactive, as well as giving more volunteers the capacity to help update it. We'd like to add more pictures to our site, so please send any photos that showcase Louisiana's natural beauty, along with credit and captions, if any, so we can add them to our new site.

If you have ideas on how to make our website better, or if you'd like to volunteer to help maintain our online presence, please contact Woody Martin or Devin Martin (listed in the contact section of this newsletter).

Mardi Gras Beads

to your local Chapters work in your state. This donation is not tax deductible as it supports our organizational and lobbying work. You can make tax deductible donations and bequests to the Delta Chapter in care of the Sierra Club Foundation to support our conservation work, contact hrmartin2sc@gmail.com for more information.



White Ibis on Bayou Sorrel by J. Dubinsky



Pounds of Beads in ARC Warehouse.

The New Orleans Group of the Sierra Club is partnering with the ARC of New Orleans and VerdiGras to green up Mardi Gras. A pilot project is planned for the uptown parades. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Holly Groh at kandhgroh@yahoo.com. You can find out more about VerdiGras at > http://www.nola.com/mardigras/index.ssf/2012/01/mardi_gras_goes_green_if_resid.html.

The ARC's bead recycling program is really phenomenal. Last year they recycled over 100,000 pounds of beads. This year, they have donation bins at the following addresses:

- 925 S. Labarre Rd., Metairie
- 5700 Loyola Avenue, New Orleans
- 333 Sala Avenue, Westwego

- 3406 Hessmer Avenue, Metairie

Bins will also be available on the neutral ground of St Charles Avenue, between Amelia and Toledano Streets, before, during and immediately following the Krewe of Pontchartrain's Parade. Questions about recycling or purchasing recycled beads may be directed to Margie Perez at 504-837-5105.

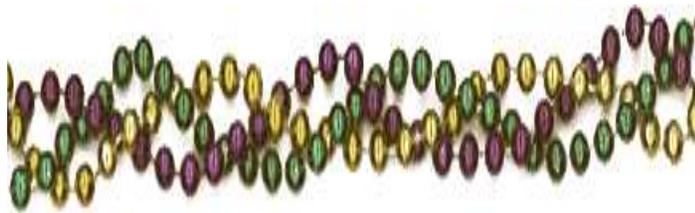
The ARC received a \$1,000 grant from LifeCity to participate in the Little Rascal's parade on February 5th. They will be using the money to build a float that will be at the end of the parade so people can throw beads and other items that they wish to recycle rather than toting them home.

Here are your opportunities to be green this Mardi Gras season:

Empty out your attic and get rid of those old beads and throws.

Volunteer to help with recycling and collecting beads.

If you are riding on a float, you can buy sorted beads knowing that you will be benefiting people in the community. The ARC is dedicated to providing services and employment to intellectually challenged individuals in Orleans, Jefferson and St. Bernard Parishes.



Time to Register for the Chapter Retreat **Lake Fausse Point**

Delta Chapter Retreat March 16 - 18, 2012 at Lake Fausse Point State Park

The Delta Chapter annual retreat is scheduled for March 16 -18, 2012 at Lake Fausse Point State Park. The address so you can find it using GPS is: Lake Fausse Point State Park, 5400 Levee Rd, Saint Martinville, LA. 70582

Accommodations: Cabin spaces are available for \$45 per person for the two nights, both Friday and Saturday. The contact person for booking your reservation is Diane Casteel, email 999diane@gmail.com. Contact her for reservation availability as soon as you can but no later than Feb 29. We have reserved four cabins this year. Each cabin sleeps up to 8 people with 1 double bed, 2 bunk beds and 1 sofa sleeper Other options for overnight stay include RV and tent camping in the Park. All are encouraged to attend at least the Saturday daytime and evening events.



Honey Islanders at 2011 Chapter Retreat.

Delta Chapter will provide snacks on Friday evening as people are coming in, Saturday breakfast and lunch makings, and Sunday breakfast. Folks are welcome to bring their own prepared dishes or snacks. Saturday dinner will be a provided catfish fry or crawfish boil.

Friday evening will be an informal get together. The big day is Saturday, March 17 and all are welcome to attend just for the day and evening (\$8 charge for Sat only food including dinner). Saturday morning is outings with canoes, bicycle ride, hike, etc. Sat afternoon Harold Schoeffler will be conducting discussions starting at 1:15 pm. Subjects will be Atchafalaya canoe and hiking trails, map compass and GPS, and knot tying. We are looking also for someone to do a presentation on birds of the area.

Saturday evening around 6 pm we will cook up something for everyone. We will have non-alcoholic refreshments, but feel free to bring your own other types of refreshments. On Saturday night after dinner we will go out on the water by moonlight.

Bring your own boat(s) if you have them. Canoes can be rented at the state park entrance. All cabin spaces are non-smoking areas. No boom boxes or commercial music playing equipment is allowed. No pets.

The Lake Fausse Point website is <http://www.crt.state.la.us/parks/ilakefaus.aspx>

For further info you can contact Diane Casteel 999diane@gmail.com or Woody Martin hrmartin2sc@gmail.com

Scenic Rivers Campaign

Delta Chapter's New Campaign

Beginning this year, the Delta Chapter will start a campaign to draw attention to the rivers and waterways that are included in Louisiana's Scenic Rivers Act. Our initial push will focus on the West Pearl River, which was severely impacted by last summer's Fishkill on the Pearl River. Although the Scenic Rivers Act provides for management plans and broad authority for the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to protect Scenic Rivers, we feel that it is not being used effectively.

It is our hope that by enforcing this powerful piece of legislation, we can create a space where citizens and the state government can work together to improve and protect some of our most important waterways.



Acadian group on the water by W. Martin

We will be continuing our Bayou Teche Water Sentinels program, and hope to expand the program in the coming year with grants and donations from individuals and organizations who are interested in the health and quality of their local waterway. Together, these two programs will put a strong focus on the interplay between our health, our culture, and our environment. If you would like to learn more or get involved, please contact our Chair Haywood Martin or Conservation Coordinator Devin Martin for more details



Bayou Teche Sampling by W. Martin

Water Sentinels

Bayou Teche Water Sentinels

The next sampling date for the Bayou Teche Water Sentinels is Feb 11, 2012. Our five teams will take samples for water temperature, pH, conductivity, dissolved oxygen, and nitrates. The information will go into our records of sampling data from each quarter for the last eighteen months. The program is always open to participation by new samplers so if you would like to get involved just email Woody Martin at hmartin2sc@gmail.com. We will set you up for training and for a field trip with an experienced sampling team to help you get started.



Earls Pearls

KATRINA FICTION . . . AND BEYOND

In the six-and-a-half years since Hurricane Katrina, there have been at least four score and seven books written about the catastrophe. More are coming. Most of the books are documentary: journalists' recollections and investigations, photographers' scenes of devastation and despair, and historians' analyses. There have been several works of fiction, even a television series about post-Katrina New Orleans called "Treme," named for one of the city's historic neighborhoods. But besides non-fiction and fiction, there has also appeared in print a genre of Katrina books that can accurately be called unintentional or inadvertent fiction.

First was former New Orleans Mayor C. Ray Nagin's recitation of his purported participation in the horror of Katrina. The Man With C-Ray Vision called his book *Katrina's Secrets*. His Honor writes about all sorts of events and incidents during those horrible days and how he was on top of everything and directing rescue and recovery. Much of what he writes are indeed secrets because nobody knows of what he writes because it is fantasy. He became famous (or infamous) for his speech several months after the storm in which he implied that he had direct communication with God; he said that The Almighty intended New Orleans to be a black-majority city, "Chocolate City," a name Nagin (or maybe God) plagiarized from a 1975 piece of music by the rock group Parliament. Nagin's book continues his narrative in the same spirit of Mardi Gras, fantasy, and make-believe that has made New Orleans an exciting place to be.

Not to be outdone by his former boss, the mayor, Professor Ed Blakely has flim-flammed the University of Pennsylvania into publishing his grandiose, self-worshipping account of how he directed the recovery of the City of New Orleans

and made it rise, Lazarus-like, from the dead. Blakely was hired by Nagin to be the "Recovery Czar." Before coming to New Orleans as its self-described savior, the professor was on the faculty of the Center of Urban Planning at the University of Sydney, Australia, and has touted himself as an expert on all things urban. His book is *My Storm: Managing The Recovery of New Orleans in the Wake of Katrina*. Like his fellow author Nagin, factual accuracy is too much of a distraction for Blakely, who had promised that there would be "cranes on the skyline" of New Orleans by September 2007 in neighborhoods that he says he identified. That these neighborhoods were already well identified long before the storm is irrelevant. That nothing of significant was accomplished on his watch is unimportant. Blakely's book adds to the genre of unintentional or inadvertent fiction with panache and chutzpah.

What's next? I am waiting for a book of unintentional fiction to come out of Louisiana's near-apocalypse following the BP oil gusher in the Gulf of Mexico in April 2010. Who could write such a book? A few names come to mind, beginning with the former CEO of BP, Tony Hayward (Or was his name "Haywire"?). You remember BP, those same wonderful people who smile at you on television commercials and tell you how hard they're working to make the Gulf Coast beautiful. Sir Tony (he's not a real knight, but as a nightmare he should have a title) could entitle his book *How Green Is My Gulf* and regale us with tales of smiling shrimpers plying the clear waters with new boats and gobs of cash stuffed in their pockets. He could tell us how deeply sorry he is for BP's creation of eleven widows and several orphans and that he knows that he cannot help the dead men "get their lives back," but that he has worked diligently to get his back.

Hayward could include in his book photographs of white beaches in Florida and Alabama and a picture of him supposedly eating a dozen raw oysters on the half shell. The photographer could even encourage a salacious smile from the Great Man and put a caption on the picture: "Louisiana oysters still make you love longer." Of course he would have to eliminate from the printed version of the photo the mandatory sign posted in oyster bars that "Eating Raw Shellfish May be Hazardous To Your Health." Another photo could show Hayward tending a crab trap in the water at Grand Isle, with the photo crimped to get rid of the picture of the local fisherman being restrained by cops as he tries to make crab bait out of Sir Tony.

No book of inadvertent fiction about BP and the Gulf would be complete without

participation by two congressmen. When President Obama pressed Hayward and BP to put up a \$20-billion deposit to restore the Gulf and its coast, Texas Congressman Joe Barton, vigorous advocate for the rights of his constituents, which seem to be almost exclusively Big Oil companies, called down the president for his "shakedown" of such a lovely and loving citizen, BP, a foreign conglomerate formerly known as British Petroleum, for defiling the Gulf..

Another congressman who should appear in a book of unintentional fiction about the BP disaster is Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky. The senator seems not to believe in the legal and philosophical doctrine of causation and the ancient maxim that one who causes harm to another is obliged to correct the harm. Rather, Senator Paul declared that a mile-deep oil well that gushed millions of gallons of crude oil into the Gulf, onto beaches, and into coastal marshes was "just an accident," and the discussion, accusations, and blame should stop there. He said that President Obama's demand of \$20 billion was un-American because it was an interference with free enterprise. Lest we forget, Senator Paul was also famous for his comments about the disaster at the Massey Energy mine in West Virginia that killed 29 miners. "Sometimes accidents happen," said the sage of the senate. Such breezy comments would definitely freshen up a work of inadvertent, unintentional fiction about BP, a foreign energy company that just wants to help Americans and make us feel good about ourselves -- and BP.

With millions of Americans believing that there's no such thing as biological evolution and that the science supporting global warming is a hoax, it should be easy to convince them that BP was wronged by the country's response to the gusher it caused.

--- Earl Higgins

Delta Chapter Legislative Updates 2012

The 2012 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature convenes at noon on Monday, March 12, 2012 and final adjournment is no later than 6:00 pm on Monday, June 4, 2012. The length of the session is 60 legislative days during an 85 calendar

day period. The subject matter of the session is general in nature; however, the legislative bulletin says that no measure levying or authorizing a new state tax, increasing an existing state tax, or legislating with regard to state tax exemptions, exclusions, deductions, or credits can be introduced or enacted.

You can see the full text of the official legislative information bulletin at <http://www.legis.state.la.us/archive/12rs/12rsbulletin.pdf>

Sierra Club Delta Chapter will be monitoring the 2012 Louisiana State Legislative Session for proposed legislation that may be of interest to the environmental community. We will follow the progress of legislation of interest and we will be posting our updates on the Delta Chapter blog at: <http://deltasierraclub.blogspot.com/>

We look forward to an interesting legislative session.



Rest in Peace: Joe Piazza, Jr.

The New Orleans-area Sierra Club community mourns the death of Joe Piazza, one of our group's long-time Sierra Club members. Joe and his widow Helen attended our monthly meetings, enjoyed going on Sierra Club outings, and have been active in our group on many issues. We extend our condolences to Helen and her family. Joe will be greatly missed. The January 16 visitation for Joe and his family had many one-time and long-time Sierra Club

members, and reminded us of how many lives he touched in his 83 years.
Joe passed away on Tuesday, January 10. He is survived by his wife, Helen T. Piazza and his four children. Donations preferred to the American Cancer Society . To view and sign the guest book please go to www.lakelawnmetairie.com.

Acadian Group

Check website for updates

Meetings held at First United Methodist Church, 703 Lee Ave Lafayette,
Louisiana unless otherwise noted.

Second Wednesday of the month @6:30 pm-Acadian Group Conservation Meeting

Third Wednesday of the month @ 6:30 pm - Acadian Group General Meeting,

Last Sunday of the month @ 7 - 8:00 pm - Ecologic, Acadiana Open Channel 5,
Live Call-In

Outings on web page <http://louisiana.sierraclub.org/acadian/>

For more information contact Harold Schoeffler: 337-234-4042 or 356-9764

Baton Rouge Group

The BR Group Excom meets the first Monday nite of the month at 7PM at
LaMadeline's on Jefferson. If you would like to put something on the agenda,
contact Nancy Grush at 225- 938-8353.

Acension Parish Recycles

When: 1st Saturday of the Month: 9am-1pm
Where: Prairieville WalMart on Airline Highway
Glass, styrofoam, plastic wrap and bags not accepted.

New Orleans Group:

We usually meet on the second Sunday of each month unless there is a conflict with a holiday/event and then we reschedule. Please check our calendar on the Delta Chapter website. All programs are in the Dominion Auditorium at the Audubon Zoo (6500 Magazine St, New Orleans, LA). The doors open at 6:30 pm and the program starts at 7 pm. Refreshments served.

Join our Facebook group or our yahoo group list serve for up to date meeting details, outings and volunteer opportunities.

Dear Friends,
We are trying out this new format for the E-Zine. I would appreciate any comments on formatting and readability. We are always looking for contributions.

Sincerely,

Leslie March
lesliemarch@hotmail.com please put Delta Sierran in the subject line.

Confirm that you like this.

Click the "Like" button.