



# DELTA SIERRAN

Newsletter of the Louisiana Chapter of the Sierra Club

*Protecting people and the environment in Louisiana since 1975*

## A Tale of Pearl and Swine



Photo by Jeffrey Dubinsky

Beginning on August 9, the Temple-Inland paper mill in Bogalusa began discharging very large amounts of toxic “black liquor” into the Pearl River. This discharge eventually caused the death of hundreds of thousands of fish and other wildlife throughout the length of the Pearl River basin. The damage included the death of at least 24 endangered Gulf Sturgeon. The discharge could also have a significant long term impact on endangered Ringed Map turtles and heelsplitter mussels. Only time and observation will determine the true extent of the damage.

The company failed to notify the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) until August 13, well after the agency had been alerted by the media who had flocked to the river

to investigate local claims of large amounts of dead fish. Due to its sheer size and scope this event garnered massive attention from local residents and state media, and led to a huge public outcry over the handling of the incident by both the paper mill and the state agencies charged with administering the cleanup effort. It’s especially upsetting to the Delta Chapter of the Sierra Club, as our volunteers have been working for nearly 40 years to make the Pearl a cleaner and more protected waterway.

Though the mill’s owners and names have changed several times over the years, its poor environmental record has not. The “Pearl River Fish Kill of 2011” is only the latest and most publicized example of this particular mill’s longstanding

Continued on page 4



The National Sierra Club’s members and supporters are more than 1.3 million of your friends and neighbors. Inspired by nature, we work together to protect our communities and the planet. The Club is America’s oldest, largest and most influential grass roots environmental organization.

# November 2011

# View from the Chair

When I traveled to the White House in Washington DC to participate in civil disobedience protesting the proposed Keystone XL tar sands pipeline project I knew it would be an experience and it certainly was. First of all I knew that I could not represent Sierra Club Delta Chapter because the Club has a national policy that does not support or encourage civil disobedience on the part of Club members. So I had to go representing only myself and my personal convictions about the issue. Turns out that was enough. While participating in the event with Bill McKibben, I met him and many others who I would count as some of the most committed people I have ever met. They were inspirational and entertaining.

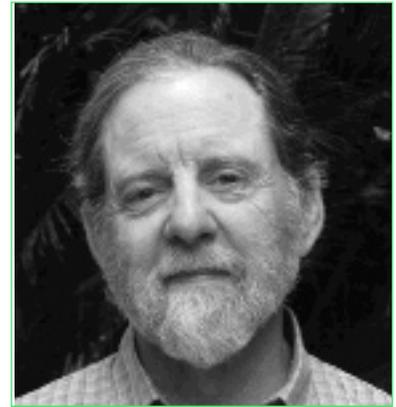
Everyone had a story. There were heart rending stories from the leaders and representatives of the Indigenous Environmental Network and the Assembly of First Nations about the destruction of their tribal lands and the sickness and hazards that they have experienced living near the tar sands mining in Alberta. There were stories from farmers whose land had been in the family for generations and whose land and water was now subject to destruction by the pipeline. And there were the passersby who, knowing nothing about the issue, became interested and involved in discussions about the pipeline.

I was arrested with 136 other people on September 1st. The next day there were 166 and the final day on September 3rd, there were 243. The two week total arrested was 1,252. At least half dozen Sierra Club leaders were among those arrested. The group of 52 people who were arrested on the first day of the protest were kept for two nights and endured frigid cold temperatures in jail.

Personal belongings had been confiscated and the women had to sleep bunched up on the concrete floor trying to stay warm. The men experienced similar conditions. None of us who came later knew for sure if our experience wouldn't be the same. In the police van waiting with handcuffs on for transportation to jail we had a great group of six of us talking and sharing stories. The hours went by quickly. As things developed the authorities had decided to ease up and most of us were processed out of police custody on the same day that we were arrested.

I note as I am writing this that there is an ongoing and highly visible street protest in New York with Wall Street as the target of the protest. It seems that Bill McKibben, our leader of the campaign to stop the Keystone XL pipeline, is on to something. To me it looks like a general lack of trust in the institutions of government to represent us. Lisa Jackson as Administrator of USEPA courageously holds on doing the best she can but those who really own our government would like nothing more than to see her go. The Obama administration seems to be backing off of its commitments to the environment. All indications are that the time is now for us to participate in every way possible in order to get our country back from those who profit from the plundering of our natural resources.

I think the Sierra Club as a democratically run volunteer based organization with national recognition has a unique place in this fight to save our natural environment. Thank you to all of our Delta Chapter members for your support and participation in this endeavor.



## Chapter Election Time Again

Every year the Sierra Club Delta Chapter schedules an election for at large positions on the Chapter Executive Committee (Excom). The positions are for two year terms. Two positions are up for election this year. Any member of the Delta Chapter who would like to be involved in decision making may qualify for nomination. Interested persons should send a statement of interest and qualifications (approx 250 to 300 words) to [hmartin2sc@gmail.com](mailto:hmartin2sc@gmail.com), or by mail to Sierra Club Delta Chapter, PO Box 52503 Lafayette, LA 70505.

The deadline for nominations is November 11, 2010 so that the Excom can approve a list of nominees by vote on Nov 12. If you think you might like to serve the Chapter by being part of the Executive Committee then we are very interested in talking to you. For further information you can contact Woody Martin, Chapter Chair at [hmartin2sc@gmail.com](mailto:hmartin2sc@gmail.com) or call at 337-298-8380.

# Sierra Club Calls For Strong Gulf Coast Recovery Bill

Since the BP oil disaster began, the Sierra Club volunteer leaders and staff have sought meaningful restoration at all levels based on the fundamental principles of transparency, accountability, and independent science, including legislation to restore the Gulf Coast.

In late July, a bipartisan delegation of Gulf Coast Senators introduced the Resources and Ecosystems, Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act, or the RESTORE the Gulf Coast Act (S. 1400). The bill would direct 80% of the anticipated Clean Water Act (CWA) fines levied against BP to the five Gulf Coast states. This move reflected recommendations by Navy Secretary Mabus and the presidential Oil Spill Commission as well as countless Gulf residents, regional and national non-profits, and community leaders, including the Sierra Club.

The Sierra Club staff and volunteer leaders gave careful consideration to the language of the RESTORE bill, and determined that while the bill was a step in the right direction in allocating 80% of CWA fines to the Gulf, the bill needed safeguards to provide accountability, restore public trust, create mechanisms for public engagement, and support independent science. The Sierra Club firmly believes that any Gulf legislation, including RESTORE, should include these provisions.

Drawing from lessons learned following Hurricane Katrina and Gulf disaster response efforts like the Louisiana sand berms, as well as the widespread public mistrust that continues to color recovery efforts, the Club determined that working to strengthen the bill was the best path forward. In the months that

have followed, the Sierra Club has continued to work constructively to strengthen the bill so that our concerns are addressed.

Visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/oil/bp-disaster.aspx> to see the safeguards that we are promoting. Importantly, we will continue to work with our coalition partners on recovery efforts, regardless of the positions other groups have taken on RESTORE.

The RESTORE bill was marked up and passed out of the Senate's Environment and Public Works Committee on September 21st, and a companion bill was introduced in the House on October 4th. The Sierra Club will continue its 40-plus year history of working to fight for a healthy, sustainable region that all residents deserve, and our effort includes creating the best Gulf recovery bill possible.

If you have any questions about these issues or the Sierra Club's position, contact Jill Mastrototaro, Gulf Coast Protection Campaign Director, at [jill.mastrototaro@sierraclub.org](mailto:jill.mastrototaro@sierraclub.org) or 504/861-4835.

for more information check out <http://www.sierraclub.org/oil/bp-disaster.aspx>



# Keystone Pipeline

The Keystone XL pipeline project is a huge new assault on the environment in western Canada, in the western states of the US and on global climate change. It consists of a 1,711 mile 36 inch pipeline from the tar sands pits of Alberta to refineries in the U.S. Gulf coast. The pipeline will transport up to 830,000 gallons per day of the dirtiest of the dirty fuels, using one gallon of oil and four gallons of water for each gallon of tar sands oil produced. US Department of State has issued a FNSI (Finding of No Significant Impact) for a project in which 1711 miles (1384 mi in US) of 36" pipeline crosses two Canadian provinces and six states with constructed support including 30 pump stations, 112 mainline valves, 50 permanent access roads, new oil storage facilities, and electric transmission and distribution lines to supply electric power. The proposed pipeline route crosses hundreds of rivers. Our recent example of the consequence of pipelines in pristine western rivers is the Yellowstone River oil spill.

The EIS provides estimates of the number of oil leaks and spills that will occur along the length of the pipeline. Past estimates have been shown to seriously underestimate the frequency and seriousness of oil leaks and spills from pipelines. This project represents a huge step toward the industrialization of the American heartland. A determination of "no significant impact" for this project defies logic and common sense.

The Environmental Assessment includes a study of carbon emissions. Based on an analysis referenced in the EIS, the proposed Project would not substantially in-

Continued on page 5

# Pearl River Fish Kill cont.

Continued from page 1  
pollution problems and its various operators' apparent disregard for the health of the Pearl River and the people and communities that rely on it for their livelihoods and recreation. Over the years, this mill has dumped over one million pounds of pollution into the Pearl, and is the source of the severe mercury contamination problems which have led to fish consumption advisories being issued for the entire length of the river in Louisiana. Barry Kohl, an environmental champion and long-time member of the New Orleans Group of the Sierra Club, was instrumental in getting those advisories established, as well as working to see that the plant stopped dumping mercury compounds.

On August 22, the Louisiana Senate Committee on Environmental Quality held a public hearing in Bogalusa to learn the causes and details of this incident and to hear from representatives of Temple-Inland, agency officials, and the concerned members of the public. At that meeting, elected leaders and state officials said that they would not allow the plant to re-open until assurances could be made that "this will never happen again," and promised that they would "keep working as long as it takes" to clean up the mess and restore the Pearl River. Although official promises are a nice start, we know that they are not always kept and that the public must remain diligent to that they follow through in holding Temple-Inland fully accountable for their longstanding degradation of the Pearl River.

In fact, the plant was given permission to re-open--and resume discharging into the Pearl--on August 29. Its pollution permits or pollution control technologies have not been changed, which gives us reason to suspect that this

may simply be another slap on the wrist from Louisiana officials to polluting industries.

The Delta Chapter of the Sierra Club has been involved in Pearl River issues since the 1970's,



Photo by Janice O'Berry

and our record there is substantial. Over the years, our volunteers have been instrumental in getting Endangered Species protections for Gulf Sturgeons and other species, working to establish the Pearl as a Louisiana Scenic River and EPA Outstanding Natural Resource, reducing toxic mercury pollution in the River and warning the public about the dangers of eating mercury-contaminated fish, and working to make sure that the LDEQ enforces environmental laws like the Clean Water and Clean Air Acts that the national Sierra Club helped to establish.

More recently, we have been working with local residents and conservation allies to understand the depth of the fish kill and discover the best strategy for restoring the Pearl River. Pearl River resident Janice O'Berry has reached out to us to help with the circulation of a petition that calls for accountability and the establishment of an independent conservation program for the Pearl that would help to restore

the river, educate the public on its importance, and improve public access.

If you would like to add your name to this petition, go to: <http://www.petitiononline.com/hicp2011/petition.html>

In order to stop another major pollution event, we need to make sure that state agencies do their jobs by enforcing fines and penalties against the mill, as well as allowing for more citizen input into any important decisions that affect those who live near the river. We need to ensure that state and federal agencies do a complete assessment of the damages, including an accurate count of the types and numbers of fish and other wildlife that were impacted. We also need to be certain that any fines paid by Temple-Inland go to the restoration of the Pearl River, and don't get spent on unrelated items.

We need your voice to achieve these goals. Call the Senate Environmental Quality Committee.

Secretary Betty Boudreaux  
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225-342-1771

Chair--Sen. "J.P." Morrell (Dist. 3)  
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504-284-4794

Go to the club blog at <http://deltasierraclub.blogspot.com/2011/09/tale-of-pearl-and-swine.html> and scroll down to the bottom of the article to find out how you can contact your local state officials and let them know that you want full accountability and restoration of the Pearl.

# Keystone Pipeline cont.

Continued from page 3

fluence the rate or magnitude of oil extraction activities in Canada, or the overall volume of crude oil transported to the United States or refined in the United States. Thus, from a global perspective, according to the study, the project is not likely to result in incremental GHG emissions. This conclusion is debatable. Bill McKibben argues the common sense point of view that the pipeline will enable easy transportation and marketing of huge new quantities of crude oil thus increasing consumption. Estimates are that, on a life cycle basis, displacing reference crudes with oil sands crudes would result in an increase in the US carbon footprint of 17 percent. The study in the EIS estimates that the total effect of importing oil sands crudes through the proposed project on the U.S. GHG life-cycle carbon footprint is between 3 to 21 million metric tons CO<sub>2</sub>. This is equivalent to from half a million up to 4 million automobiles on the road annually.

The issue becomes one of US leadership in moving to a clean energy economy. Strong US leadership would enable bargaining with other major countries to do the same. President Obama has a big decision to make with the Keystone XL pipeline project. He cannot make the right decision all by himself. He needs our outrage and our actions here and all over the country to provide political backing for the decision we hope he will make. We had to pick a time and place to draw a line in the sand over the issue of continued and increased carbon emissions. Our thanks go to Bill McKibben for seeing that this Keystone XL project is that time and place.

The President holds the authority to approve or to stop this project because it crosses an international boundary. We expect our president to stand against continuing down the same path of

ever more risky extraction of dirty energy. Now is the time for departure toward clean energy, in order to slow down carbon emissions that if allowed to continue will change life as we know it for our children, our grand children, and successive generations. We appeal to the President to stop this catastrophic project. Your letters and calls to the White House can help in this effort.

For details look up Keystone XL Pipeline in Wikipedia

For updates on the action you can go to <http://www.tarsandsaction.org>.

Woody Martin

## Volunteers Needed

Sierra Club Delta Chapter is a volunteer based organization that depends on your donations and volunteer support. We are currently looking for volunteers to take on roles that will help keep the Club active in Louisiana.

If you are a senior or stay at home Mom maybe you could help us welcome new members. We also need several people to work on fundraising for the chapter. If you like to work on-line with web sites we could use some help there also.

We have volunteer assignments available in energy, transportation, and solid waste/recycling. If you can dedicate some time to working in any of these areas please send an email to Woody Martin, Chapter Chair [hrmartin2sc@gmail.com](mailto:hrmartin2sc@gmail.com)

# Barbara Van Duym



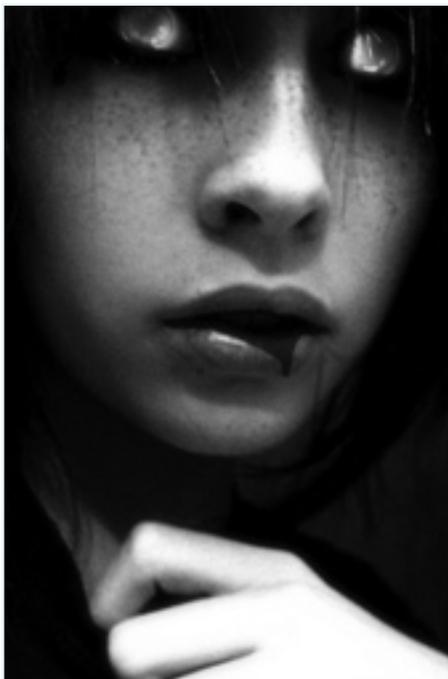
Barbara Van Duym, one of the New Orleans area's long-time Sierra Club members, died August 31, 2011 in Madison, Wisconsin. Barbara and her husband Pete were long-time New Orleans Group members. I learned to canoe on one of my first Sierra Club outings with them in 1977-78. Barbara Van Duym will be missed by all Sierra Club (and Bayou Haystackers) members who knew her. Her stories about her kids and grandkids were wonderful.

Barbara and Pete were avid canoeists and hikers, and many of us send our condolences and sympathies to her husband Pete and their children and grand-children.

As written in the September 15th, Times-Picayune, she was a warm, nurturing, & loving mother & companion, & her brilliant light will live on in her family: husband Peter; daughter Diana (deceased) & son-in-law Paul, & children Johanna & Natalia Kieniewicz, of the UK; son Dirk, daughter-in-law Sherry, & children Marty, & Marena, of Mandeville, LA, and Suzanne, Minneapolis, MN; & son Andy, daughter-in-law Anne, & children Dirk & Raina, of Madison, WI. A memorial service will be held Saturday 9/17 at 2pm at the Northshore Unitarian Universalist Society in Lacombe (28662 Krentel Road, off Hwy 434, just north of I-12 exit 7. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Nature Conservancy or the Northshore Unitarian Universalist Society.

Wendy King

## Earls Pearls:



The approach of All Hallows' Eve followed by All Saints Day and El Dia de los Muertos joined with the popularity of the Undead in contemporary popular culture have inspired me to contemplate Zombies. You know the Haitian import of which I write, the previously dead people who crawl or climb from their graves to wander somberly, mingling with the not-yet-dead.

Zombies seem to have originated on the island nation of Haiti, that most destitute of Caribbean societies. As if they didn't have enough problems with earthquakes, regular hurricanes, intractable poverty, endemic political corruption, and environmental degradation, the Haitians have to look out for dead people wandering around and terrorizing the citizenry. With all the relief organizations trying to help the Haitians, one has to wonder how they keep track of the people they are helping. I mean, how do you count a dead guy on your spread sheet? Especially if the dead guy is wandering around your soup kitchen.

Zombies, although currently a hot item in popular culture, have been on the American scene for a long time. In the 1930s a barroom owner invented a powerful drink made with different kinds of rum and named it the Zombie. (Recipe to follow) But it was in 1968 that the horror film "The Night of the Living Dead" brought the mysterious

## Zombies are Green Too

Zombies into the dark consciousness of North American white people, thrilling and chilling them as the undead plodded through America, not just Haiti.

Speaking of thrilling people, the greatest music video of all times, "Thriller," reprised the undead to entertain the living. Some think that the late Michael Jackson was even then one of them, a Zombie or at least an alien. But his choreography for the living dead surpassed the spooky danse macabre of the Middle Ages and had immensely more rhythmic character than Maurice Ravel's Pavanne for a Dead Princess.

Consider the Zombie, from an environmental perspective. The Zombies are as green as it gets. First and foremost they recycle people. Why waste good human beings by getting rid of them when they die, burying them forever? How much better for a green planet that the dead become the undead! When Zombies climb out of all those graves, they reopen space in which to bury more dead people, obviating the creation of new cemeteries on prime land.

Zombies roaming the land in their staggering style of ambulation means that they are releasing less carbon because their decomposition has abated, no chemical changes are taking place. They don't breathe, so they don't exhale carbon dioxide. They don't eat, so there is no wasting of food, no annoying of P.E.T.A. members by chowing down on some pork chops or liver and onions. They're not even vegans, which means that they do not contribute to the degradation of farmland by consuming mass-produced agricultural products, many of which are beneficiaries of large government handouts, euphemistically called "subsidies." Nobody subsidizes a Zombie for anything.

Although there are no scientific studies to quantify the beneficial effect vel non of Zombies rejoining the living, there must be some social and economic influences from a potential work force that needs no wages and has already outlived all social security and Medicare benefits. Put them back to work in the fields replacing the Latinos who have been scared off by pig-headed xenophobic legislation.

Have you ever heard of a Zombie being a "consumer"? You may run into Zombies in your local mall or Wal-Mart or Home Depot (Many of the liv-

ing customers of those emporia have the characteristics of Zombies, and distinguishing the living from the undead in such venues should be left to the experts.) Zombies don't buy throw-away toys for their children, they don't buy groceries that are so heavily processed that they are more chemicals than food, all wrapped in more chemical packaging. They are not consumers, so they don't create garbage that fills expensive landfills, they don't litter, they don't feel compelled to buy some fashion just because a person who has no purpose in life other than as a celebrity has told them to wear it or be a clod. Zombies don't care about what they wear; they wander the earth in the same garments they were buried in. Because they don't eat or drink, Zombies do not befoul the earth with their excreta. I have never encountered a zombie in a public restroom, as least I don't think I have. (There were some people of whom I was not sure whether they were alive and others who smelled as though they were not.)

Perhaps best of all for the environment, Zombies don't drive. They don't take planes, they don't take buses or trains. They just walk, stagger actually, slowly and sedately. Walking is the transportation form least harmful to the environment. They don't even ride horses or mules, even though I am quite sure I saw one riding the Flying Horses carousel in New Orleans's City Park.

Let us therefore offer a toast to our ecological friends, the Zombies. Fix yourself a libation from the following recipe and know you will not have to share it with one of the Living Dead. For one Zombie:

1 ½ oz. gold rum;	3 tbs. lime juice
1 tbs. Dark Jamaican rum;	1 tbs. light rum
1 tbs. pineapple juice;	1 tbs. papaya juice
1 ½ tsp. sugar syrup;	1 tbs. 151 proof rum
1 pineapple stick;	1 pinch of powdered sugar

Shake all liquid ingredients with ice, pour into a glass, garnish with the pineapple stick, and dust the concoction with powdered sugar.

To make it even more friendly, add a drop of green food coloring. Cheers! To the Green Zombies!

□ Earl Higgins

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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, hikes and camp outs.

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# PUT THE SIERRA CLUB ON YOUR GIFT LIST

This has been a very active year for the Sierra Club Delta Chapter. We continue to deal with the fallout from the BP oil disaster by responding to the oil industry attempts to minimize the public perception of the damage caused. We have been actively involved in making the case that penalties assessed as part of fines to BP should come back to the Gulf for ecosystem restoration. We significantly stepped up our State legislative organizing and lobbying campaign this year. We have recently been active against the potentially disastrous Keystone XL tar sands pipeline. Our Conservation Coordinator Devin Gene Martin has increased the number of Club outings and worked to strengthen the Delta Chapter groups. Our Bayou Teche Water Sentinals Program is going well and we look to expand that to other waterways in Louisiana. These are just a few of the initiatives that we are involved in. Help us to keep these actions going.

We need your financial support. You can make a year end gift directly to the Delta Chapter by sending a check today Payable to the Sierra Club Delta Chapter, P.O. Box 52503, Lafayette, Louisiana 70506.

This donation will not be tax deductible because it supports our operations and political lobbying program. Year end tax deductible contributions are also gratefully accepted. Contact Woody Martin if you would like to make a tax deductible contribution to the Sierra Club Foundation.