

Delta Sierran

LOUISIANA CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2004

BUSH ADMINISTRATION MISSES THE TRAIN

By Aaron Viles

The Bush administration's transit policies are missing the train, and American workers are paying the price. That's the conclusion of a new Sierra Club report, which details how local economic pressures feed a growing demand for rail and other public transit projects and how the administration's bias against transit is out of touch with America's communities and commuters.

The growing popularity of public transportation underscores an important realization that is taking hold in communities across the country: that public transit spurs revitalization and redevelopment and it fights smog and traffic. It does so without feeding sprawl the way haphazard roadbuilding does. Regardless of these facts, the Bush administration is trying to shortchange transit and favor highway building in our communities.

Public Transportation Progress Jeopardized

Among hundreds of public transportation projects that could be significantly stalled due to the Bush administration's transportation proposal, the report highlights a dozen public transportation projects. These include:

- Florida – Tampa Bay Regional Rail System
- Georgia – Atlanta-Athens Commuter Rail
- Indiana – Northeast Indianapolis Corridor Rapid Transit
- Louisiana – Jefferson, Orleans, and St. Charles Parishes light rail
- Maryland – Bethesda to New Carrollton Purple Line
- Michigan – Downtown Detroit to Metro

INSIDE :

Contact & Getting Active Information	2
Creating Jobs or Cleaning the Environment	2
Earl's Pearls	3
Kerry Gets It – Sierra Club Endorses Kerry	4
All of Us – An Editorial by Wendy King	5
Bush/Kerry Environmental Positions	6

- Airport Rail Project
- New Hampshire/Massachusetts – Lowell-Nashua Commuter Rail Extension
- Ohio – Cincinnati Interstate 75 Corridor Light Rail
- Oregon – Portland South Corridor Light Rail
- Texas – Houston Light Rail Extension
- Virginia – Williamsburg-Newport News-Hampton Light Rail
- Wisconsin – Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee Metra Extension

While dozens more projects would likely suffer under the Bush Administration proposal, the projects listed above are a representative sample. Delaying or preventing these from getting built would harm commutes, economic revitalization, better jobs and improving our environment.

Need for Greater Transit Investment
The Sierra Club report documents the benefits of transit and the costs of the Bush administration policies. The report argues that the United States deserves a balanced transportation plan that is sensible for both the environment and the economy.

In recent years, demand for public transportation has increased significantly, and new transit ridership has greatly exceeded projections. Since the last time Congress took up a major transportation funding bill in 1998, public transit

ridership has increased 21 percent. New transit lines are greatly exceeding projected ridership in Houston, Dallas, Denver, Salt Lake City and elsewhere. New Starts, the federal program that helps promising transit projects get off the ground, has a record backlog of over 200 projects, reflecting the fact that more and more communities are embracing, and clamoring for, public transportation.

The report lays out the economic issues behind this growing support for public transit in America's communities, looking at employee stress levels, the challenges of low wage commuters, redevelopment linked to transit, and jobs directly in the transit sector.

The benefits of transit seem lost on the Bush administration, which proposed, as part of its six-year transportation plan, a radical change to the ratio for federal matching transit funds. Currently, the federal/state funding match for new transportation projects is 80:20, however, the Bush administration would like to dramatically increase the state share to 50 percent for all new transit projects.

“Train” continued on back page

Creating Jobs or Cleaning the Environment – Do We Really Have to Choose?

By Nancy Grush

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The **Delta Sierran** is the bi-monthly newsletter for the Delta Chapter of the Sierra Club. This newsletter is published to inform statewide members and interested non-members of the activities of the chapter and pending local, state and national environmental issues.

Members of the sierra Club can subscribe to the **Delta Sierran** through annual dues

Anyone who has made Louisiana his/her home is all too familiar with the argument that if we want jobs, we can't be worried about the environment. In fact, the petro-chemical industry has been quite successful in convincing Louisianians that this is true.

Just recently, a July 7, 2004 news story in the Advocate, the daily paper in Baton Rouge, quoted a study sponsored by the American Council for Capital Formation and United for Jobs. The author of the study, Anne E. Smith, an energy consultant with Charles River associates, contended that the McCain-Lieberman "Climate Stewardship Act" would have a negative effect on the economy. The Act, if passed, would cap greenhouse emissions at their emission level in 2000. The cap would have to be achieved by 2010, and by 2016, emissions would have to be reduced to their levels of 1990. Greenhouse emissions include carbon dioxide emissions in fossil fuels such as oil and natural gas. As we all know, these emissions have long been associated with global warming.

While Lieberman projected the bill would cost households \$20 per year, Smith argued that the bill would cost Louisiana residents \$913 to \$2,036 per household by 2010 and \$1,336 to \$2,816 per household by 2020. That is because, she added, retail gasoline prices will be 30 to 50 cents higher per gallon by 2020. Natural gas prices and electricity prices would spike and "energy intensive industries" would lose 3.3 percent to 7.4 percent of production.

Micah Walker, director of the Alliance for Affordable Energy, responded by pointing out that the study quoted in the article was based on much higher reductions (80 %) and over a longer period of time (by 2050). The bill, she explained, calls for reducing emissions to 2000 levels by 2010. She then cited a study done by E2 (Environmental Entrepreneurs) that, using the standards of the McCain-Lieberman bill,

found a net increase of 1,300 jobs in Louisiana by 2015 and \$100 billion in net present value gain nationwide by 2025 due to increases in energy efficiency, energy savings and economic growth.

Local professor debunks myth.

"How can this be true?" you ask. Had you attended the June 14 meeting of the Baton Rouge Group, you probably would not be asking this question because you would have heard Dr. Paul Templet, a Louisiana State University professor of Environmental Studies.

His presentation focused on "Jobs vs. the Economy." This presentation was actually the brainchild of Baton Rouge Group Conservation Chair Steve Poss, who at the group's excom meeting in March, suggested that we set forth to destroy the myth that protecting the environment costs jobs. That idea catapulted into a major rally the Sierra Club, in conjunction with the AFL-CIO and various environmental groups, held on May 19 on the Capitol steps. Coverage of the rally made the front page of the Advocate the next day – the day that President Bush spoke at the LSU commencement.

According to Templet, who served as Secretary of the Department of Environmental Quality during the Roemer administration (Roemer served from 1988 to 1992), protecting the environment has a very positive impact on the economy. When Templet took over at DEQ, Louisiana had a 12 percent unemployment rate, the highest in the country, and also led the nation in toxic discharges. By the end of Templet's and Roemer's terms, the state's toxic discharges had been cut in half while, at the same time, manufacturing jobs increased by 25,000 and spending on pollution control rose by 600 percent.

As Templet explained, major corporations have a set amount of money budgeted for environmental compliance. That money goes to those plants where the residents are demanding cleaner air and water. Conversely, companies in communities where residents are not so demanding, do not operate as cleanly.

The environment and its natural resources are the foundation of all economies. But they are not unlimited. If exploited, a dirty environment will, in fact, have a negative effect on the economy! It does not take a rocket scientist to see the cost of health care is higher in areas where companies use the environment as a "sink."

Pollution subsidies parallel poverty levels.

Dr. Templet used a far more scientific approach. He computed each state's "pollution subsidy" (the cost that manufacturers avoid by spending less than the national average per pound of toxic pollution, times the total pounds released in the state.

"We Can Have Both" continued on page 4

Photo by Jeffrey Dubinsky



EARL'S PEARLS

WHAT'S EXOTIC ABOUT EXOTICS?

By Earl Higgins

Go out into the swamp and look around. Think primeval thoughts. ("This is the forest primeval," wrote Henry W. Longfellow as he began "Evangeline.") Look at the plants and animals. Focus them in your mind's eye. Now imagine the swamp without what are known as exotic or invasive species. The place would look very, very different. The ubiquitous water hyacinth, with its delicate blue-purple blossom would be gone. So would the ugly hydrilla and salvinia that were clogging the water. Ditto for the dense alligator weed. No Chinese tallow trees. No Japanese honeysuckle. Hooray! There wouldn't be any fire ants either. Those big ugly water rats, the nutrias, would be gone too, along with the even uglier feral hogs ("wild boars" as they are often called).

The Nature Conservancy reports that in the last century at least 4500 different exotic species arrived in the United States. That list wouldn't include the water hyacinth, which was brought to New Orleans from South America by the Japanese delegation for the Great Cotton Exhibition of 1884. Nor does the list include an invasive species from Austria, the California "governator," Arnold Schwarzenegger. There are many web sites maintained by several organizations and governmental agencies that list, describe, and illustrate exotic species.

What makes these species "exotic"? When I was a callow youth, Bourbon Street was overrun with "exotic" stuff. There were "exotic dancers," "exotic entertainment," "exotic drinks." In those days "exotic" was a euphemism for "lewd," except in the case of the drinks, in which instance it meant "watered down." The New Orleans yellow pages has listings for

Exotic Aquatics, Exotic Cars, Exotic Fashions, Exotic Fish Bowl, and Exotic Images Beauty Salon. The word means, according to the dictionary, "not native to the place where found." That definition makes you wonder if there is much that is not exotic.

A few years ago some friends of mine were entertaining visitors from France. (I guess that makes them exotic.) The visitors were interested in eating a meal prepared from exclusively American ingredients. The friends asked my advice, and we came up with what sounds like a Thanksgiving menu: turkey, wild rice, sweet potatoes, succotash (corn and beans cooked together), tomatoes, pumpkin. Pretty much everything else is an exotic species. No domestic rice, no chicken, no beef, no pork, no eggplant, no peas, no okra. None of all those staple European peasant foods, cabbages and turnips and rutabagas. At least there would be shrimp and mirlitons. (How could there be a valid Thanksgiving without stuffed mirlitons?) No good wine, either. The native American grape is muscadine, and the wine is made from it sweet and unsuitable for dinners. And no coffee! At least we could have chocolate, which originated in Mexico along with vanilla bean and was domesticated by the Aztecs..

Speaking of Indians, the American Indians are often called "native American," implying that the non-Indians who were born in this country for several generations are not "native" to the United States. Maybe those of us born in America – that's what "native" means – who aren't Indians will eventually be considered an invasive or exotic species. The population could then be divided into "Native Americans" and "Exotic Americans." Then it will sound like we exotics are all working on Bourbon Street, taking off our clothes to the beat of a drum. Any semantic misunderstanding will soon be overlooked, I trust.

Think kudzu. It was brought into this country from Japan to use for erosion-

control because it grows rapidly and covers everything. In fact, the huge vine keeps growing after it has covered the bare earth it was supposed to protect. It keeps growing until it covers living trees and utility poles. Kudzu came to America before some other Japanese imports, Godzilla, Rodan, and all those wonderful monsters who have devoured Tokyo at least forty times. Ominously, kudzu sometimes grows on trees and structures until it begins to resemble its horrible fellow countrymen, huge, green, and menacing.

So what can be done to control the likes of kudzu and zebra mussels and walking catfish? Try eating them. Chef Paul Prudhomme and some other Louisiana cuisine gurus tried to promote using nutria in the kitchen, a food for people and not just alligators. As the cliché goes, it supposedly "tastes like chicken" or maybe rabbit. The idea didn't catch on. No matter what you do to it, the exotic nutria is still a big marsh rat.

There is even a kudzu cookbook. It seems to rely a lot on the dried, powdered root of the kudzu rather than all those spreading vines and leaves. Maybe eating exotic plants and animals will catch on some day. Perhaps new names, preferably in a foreign language other than scientific Latin will help. The "fish of the day" in a nice restaurant recently was announced as "Tasmanian Sea Bass." They could have been serving Asian Walking Catfish or zebra mussels for all I know. The name is probably more exotic than the seafood.

Go take a hike. You know, through the woods or just the local park. Try to imagine what it would look like without all the exotics, like what Longfellow's Evangeline and Gabriel might have seen as they paddled Bayou Teche in The Forest Primeval, searching for each other. And tell your Thanksgiving dinner guests that they are eating an exotic-free meal. Then you can explain what you mean and show them all the stuff you learned in the Delta Sierran.

Got Mardi Gras beads? Got time to spare? Looking for a place to send your Mardi Gras beads? Want to help the Sierra Club and ARC (Association for Retarded Citizens)? If you've answered "Yes!" to all (or most) of these questions, email Betty Brody at BBrody8745@aol.com or call her at (504)586-1381.

KERRY GETS IT – SIERRA CLUB ENDORSES KERRY FOR PRESIDENT

This year the choice for president could not be clearer, said Sierra Club President Larry Fahn when the Sierra Club announced its endorsement of John Kerry for President in May. We are faced with a choice between the most anti-environmental president ever and a true friend who would bring to the office a dedication to improving all issues facing the environment. The last four years have witnessed an outright assault on 30 years of environmental progress, selection of staunchly anti-environmental judges, backroom deals with polluting industries—the list goes on. The Club's endorsement surprised few Sierra Club activists, who are by and large more familiar with the Bush administration's environmental depredations than the average American. But even Club members may not realize the extent to which Kerry has been an environmental leader throughout his career in public service. In 1970, fresh back from service in Vietnam, he gave some of the first speeches of his career at Massachusetts' first Earth Day, which he helped organize. As Massachusetts

Lieutenant Governor he co-chaired the 1983 Acid Rain Task Force and Issued the Call for Action Against Acid Rain Report, at the time one of the most comprehensive analyses of the damage caused by acid rain in this country.

As a senator, Kerry has consistently supported the Sierra Club's agenda; the League of Conservation Voters this year gave Kerry a 96.5% career rating, the highest LCV rating of any presidential nominee ever from a major party. He has been a Senate leader on fuel efficiency, led the charge against the Bush administration's attempts to allow oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and has strongly opposed the nominations of anti-environmental candidates for judicial and federal agency appointments.

Kerry advocates removing the incentives in federal regulations and tax policy that encourage sprawl, and he favors restoring the Superfund Act's "polluter pays" trust fund to clean up hazardous waste sites. He has promoted an energy policy that would reduce our dependence on oil, increase our energy efficiency, and increase the amount of clean, renewable energy used to generate electricity. In 1997 Kerry traveled to Kyoto to promote the climate control accords that President Bush subsequently shunned, and he has stated that as president he

would work to re-establish the United States as a world leader on environmental policy.

The Sierra Club's Political Committee sent an environmental questionnaire to all of the presidential candidates earlier this year, and the Club's interview team interviewed the seven Democratic contenders who returned the questionnaires. (President Bush did not return his questionnaire.) Senator Kerry had an amazing grasp of the issues, reported Fahn. This guy really gets it.

Kerry's running mate, Senator John Edwards, has led congressional opposition to the Bush administration's plans to weaken the Clean Air Act, calling on the EPA to make power plants in 13 states reduce smokestack emissions. He has fought to protect North Carolina's beaches and waterways and spoken out forcefully against the administration's pork-laden, backward-thinking energy bill. Edwards has fought to secure funding for environmental projects such as new waste treatment technology to help hog farmers clean up waste lagoons, and he has introduced legislation to make the Blue Ridge Mountains a National Heritage Area, as well as legislation that would offer a tax credit for the use of environmentally-friendly technology.

“We Can Have Both” *continued from p 2*

each state's “energy subsidy” (how much more the industrial sector in each state would spend if the residential-to-industrial price ratio were equal to the U.S. average), and the “tax subsidy” (the ratio of regressive taxes collected to progressive taxes in comparison to the U.S. average divided by the state's population). Templet then added the three subsidies for a total subsidy for each state. Not surprisingly, the states with relatively high subsidies tend to be in the South.

In his research, Templet found that states with high pollution subsidies also ranked high in terms of poverty, income disparity, unemployment, and average personal income.

The irony is that Louisiana, which leads the nation in toxic pollution per job, at more than 10 times the national

average, sees roughly \$5,000 per person exported in the form of corporate profits to other states and to other countries. The profits leak to richer and cleaner states.

And, as you would expect, states that demand cleaner environments ranked higher in educational performance.

So, I guess my question is why have we allowed huge corporate polluters to brainwash us into thinking that if we require cleaner air and water, they'll pack their bags and leave, or that unless we give huge corporate incentives (such as weaker environmental regulations) we'll lose jobs?

We can have both.

We don't have to choose between a clean environment and a healthy economy.

The Baton Rouge Group is currently trying to develop a partnership between labor and environmentalists. If you would like to be part of this effort, please contact Nancy Grush at 225-381-9440 or email her a nancycgrush@aol.com. The rally on the Capitol Steps on May 19 was the first step in this direction. Three hundred or so folks attended notwithstanding the oppressive heat and the threat of a thunderstorm during the latter part of the event. Sen. Melvin “Kip” Holden, Rep. Edwin Murray, AFL-CIO president Red Bourg, as well as a number of environmentalists, all addressed the crowd on how we really don't have to choose between jobs or the environment. We can have both.

ALL OF US – A DELTA SIERRAN

EDITORIAL

By Wendy King

On November 2nd, this country will either elect Senator John Kerry as our 44th president or keep President Bush in the White House. There will also be congressional races in many states, and their outcomes will decide how or whether our government enacts its environmental laws. This election will send an important message to our citizens and the world about our country's environmental priorities: Will the next administration sign on to and amend the Kyoto Protocol? Senator Kerry has pledged the US's real participation on the climate change issue; the next Administration should help the other countries to implement the Kyoto Protocol's Climate Change provisions. Will the next administration walk out, once again, and take the stubborn "go-it-alone" approach previously used by the Bush Administration? How will the next US administration work to increase fuel-efficiency in cars, trucks, and SUVs? How far can (or will) the next administration go, to cut mercury emissions in power plants? What part can (or will) environmentalists play a part in a potential Kerry Administration? Can we finally get the next administration to take coastal erosion and wetlands loss in Louisiana seriously? Will either

administration focus on our problems with the Gulf's "dead zone" and its link to fertilizer and pesticide run-off from farms in the Mississippi River basin? Should John Kerry be elected president, demanding "a place at the table" in formulating energy and environmental policies should be high on the Sierra Club's political "to do" list.

Should the status quo persist, we will continue to work for our environmental priorities: stopping coastal erosion and loss of our wetlands, increasing fuel-efficiency in cars, trucks, and SUVs, protecting roadless wilderness areas from mining, logging, and drilling, keeping the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge off-limits to oil and natural gas interests, and fighting to protect wild places like our own Kisatchie National Forest and Alaska's Tongass National Forest.

Contrary to the Bush administration's catching policy titles, none of its environmental policies are designed to benefit the environment. The so-called "Clear Skies" Initiative, gives a green light to the Bush administration's most loyal supporters in the nuclear, oil, and coal industries to cloud the nation's skies with toxins and smog, by allowing the oldest and dirtiest power plants to put off installing anti-pollution devices. This policy shifts the costs from the power companies onto the consumer. The

"Healthy Forests Initiative" lets the timber companies go into our national forests, log out the oldest, biggest, and most valuable (not to mention fire-resistant) trees, and leave behind the dried-out shrubs, and smaller, less valuable trees. This proposal does nothing to protect communities in the urban-wildland interface. These communities, who are urged to keep small trees and brush trimmed near their homes, and to use fire-resistant materials inside, are getting the message that the Bush administration isn't interested in protecting their homes and properties from wildfires.

In the name of "protecting" our last wild places, Bush has turned a blind eye to snowmobile pollution, and has slashed the National Park Service's budget, leaving our national parks understaffed. Inadequate National Park staffing has meant cutbacks in the hours these parks are open.

This election, as well as the Congressional races in many states, reminds us how vital are a pro-environmental protection president and Congressional leadership. Our weapons? Our votes! Lets make a pro-environment administration and congress happen!

The Delta Chapter Leadership

Act Now and Save the Environment!

Make a commitment to the next generation by remembering the Sierra Club in your will. Your support will help others preserve the intricate balance of nature.

For more information and confidential assistance, please complete the form and send to:
John Calaway, Director, Gift Planning
 85 Second Street, 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105 | 415 | 977-5639 •
 e-mail: planned.giving@sierraclub.org

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SIERRA CLUB

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to plan, enjoy and protect the planet

Sierra Club – Bush/Kerry Environmental Positions

George W. Bush is seeking to allow coal-fired power plants to put three times more mercury into the air than the current Clean Air Act allows.

* The administration is also seeking to delay smog reduction and exposing millions of Americans to air pollution for longer than the Clean Air Act allows.

* George W. Bush is weakening the law that requires power plants and factories to install modern pollution control technology when they make changes that would increase air pollution.

* George W. Bush proposed a policy directive to allow a combination of untreated and treated sewage to be discharged into waterways during rainstorms.

* George W. Bush suspended a more protective standard for arsenic in drinking water set during the previous administration. He was forced to reverse his policy after public outcry.

* George W. Bush, under pressure from hunting and fishing groups, stopped a threatened rulemaking that would have removed many of the nation's wetlands and small streams from Clean Water Act protection. * However, he issued a directive to agencies not to enforce the Clean Water Act for these small streams and wetlands without first obtaining permission from national headquarters, leaving 20 percent of America's wetlands at risk for dumping, filling, or pollution.

George W. Bush has refused to support the principle of "polluter pays" and believes taxpayers, not polluters, should pay to clean up abandoned toxic waste sites.

* George W. Bush approved the creation of a nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain.

* George W. Bush backed away from the Kyoto treaty to reduce international greenhouse gas emissions responsible for global warming and reversed his campaign promise to cut emissions of carbon dioxide.

* George W. Bush proposed cutting energy efficiency research and development by 27 percent overall.

* George W. Bush has pushed repeatedly to open the Refuge to drilling.

* George W. Bush opened millions of acres of National Forests to increased logging in the name of wild fire protection.

* John Kerry was an original co-sponsor of the Clean Power Act of 2003 which would cut emissions of mercury, carbon dioxide and other pollutants.

* John Kerry voted for the Edwards amendment to delay the Bush administration's efforts to allow aging factories and power plants to make changes that increase pollution without having to install modern pollution cutting technologies.

* John Kerry has repeatedly advocated for increased enforcement of clean water laws and for strengthening the Safe Drinking Water Act.

* John Kerry voted to prevent the Bush administration from returning to a standard that would have allowed more arsenic in drinking water.

* John Kerry co-sponsored legislation that would restore Clean Water Act protection for wetlands.

* John Kerry co-sponsored legislation that would take the burden off the taxpayers and reinstate taxes which would hold polluting companies responsible for paying to clean up abandoned toxic waste sites.

* John Kerry has consistently voted against establishing a nuclear repository at Yucca Mountain in Nevada.

* John Kerry introduced legislation to address global climate change and cut greenhouse gas emissions.

* John Kerry voted against defunding renewable energy programs.

* John Kerry voted repeatedly to block oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and co-sponsored a bill to protect a portion of the refuge as

wilderness.

* John Kerry has voted to cut subsidies for logging in National Forests.

Check Out the Facts: 1 69-Federal Register 4652-4700, 1/30/04 2 Clear Skies Summary Document, pp 18-19, revising sections 107/110 of the Clean Air Act 3 S.366, 2/12/03 4 New Source Review, 67-Federal Register 80186, 12/31/03; 68-Federal Register 61248, 10/27/03 5 H.J.Res 2, Senate Vote 12, 1/22/03 6 68-Federal Register 63042, 11/7/03 7 S.343, 7/12/95; S.1316, 11/29/95 8 66-Federal Register 99, 5/22/01 9 67-Federal Register 74, 4/17/02, "Bush Vows To Reduce Arsenic in H2O" Associated Press, 3/29/01 10 H.R. 1836, Senate vote 148, 5/22/01 11. "Administration Backs Off Clean Water Act" Los Angeles Times, 12/17/03 12 68-Federal Register 10, 1/15/03. "U.S. Plan Could Ease Limits on Wetlands Development," The New York Times, January 11, 2003. 13 S. Con. Res. 57, Senate vote 125, 5/22/96 14 GAO Superfund Program: Current Status and Future Challenges, July 2003 15 S.173, 1/16/03; S. Con. Res. 23, Senate vote 97, 3/25/03 16 White House News Release, 2/15/02 17 Senate Vote 167, 7/9/02 18 White House Announcement, 3/28/01 19 White House Announcement 3/13/01 20 S. Amendment 249 to S. Amendment 170, 4/6/01; S20030420, 10/30/03 21 Budget of the United States Government FY 2002 (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/usbudget/fy02/pdf/budget.pdf>) 22 S.1186, Senate vote 171, 6/16/99 23 National Energy Policy Development Group Report (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/energy/Chapter5.pdf>), White House Statement of Administrative Policy for S. 14 (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/legislative/sap/108-1/s14sap-s.pdf>) 24 Senate Vote 58, 4/6/00; S 517, Senate Vote 71, 4/18/02; S. Con. Res 23, Senate Vote 59, 3/19/03; S. 543, 3/5/03 25 Public Law 108-148, 117, Stat. 1887

CHAPTER EVENTS

DELTA CHAPTER

Executive Committee Meetings

Honey Island April 17 & 18

Acadian July 17 & 18

New Orleans October 16 & 17

>>Aaron Viles and Charlie Fryling were elected to the chapter ExComm in the recent election.

Outings

We have no outings scheduled for this month. Please check back with us soon. Or better yet, volunteer to lead an outing yourself!

ACADIAN GROUP

General Meeting and Lecture Series

Held on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 6:30 pm at the Acadiana Symphony Building, 412 Travis St., Lafayette, LA. The Acadian Group is always looking for speakers. Past topics include native plants, wildlife, invasive species, reforestation, environmental education, the news media and environmental concerns of local or global nature. If you would like to volunteer or suggest a speaker, please call Paul Fontenot at 337-235-0011.

BATON ROUGE GROUP

<http://www.louisiana.sierraclub.org/batonrouge>

General Membership Meetings

TBA. Please call Nancy Grush, chair, at 225-381-9440.

Executive Committee Meetings

Held the 4th Thursday of each month
Location: Maura Wood's office at 4521 Jamestown Ct, Suite 12-13 at 7 pm. Her phone is 225-925-8560, fax is 225-925-8725

Transportation Committee Meeting

Held at 6:45 pm on the 1st Wednesday of each month at Bluebonnet Library, 9200 Bluebonnet. For more info call David Lindenfeld at 766-1983.

Conservation Committee Meeting

Held at 7 pm on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at the "Community Room" of the Law Office of Moore, Walters, Thompson, et. al. at 6513 Perkins Rd.

Group Vacancies

The Baton Rouge Group is in need of a new membership chair, newsletter editor and a member-at-large for the ExCom. If any of these positions interest you please call Nancy Grush at 225-381-9440. Charlene Deroche, editor of the newsletter for the past five years, has offered to train the new

editor. The newsletter has been published monthly but can become a bi-monthly or quarterly if need be.

Baton Rouge News

The Sierra Club Environmental Justice Campaign is proud to announce the publication of its first "Louisiana Environmental Justice Voices" newsletter. This monthly newsletter serves as a communication tool for the communities along the Mississippi River to share their stories, campaign strategies and successes, learn from other groups, and remain aware of environmental justice news and events. If you would like to receive a copy of the newsletter though email, please contact mara.cohen@sierraclub.org.

Outing

Oct 30/31st, 2004 -- camping (or day trip) on Halloween weekend up at Murrell Butler's property near St. Francisville -- Join us as we hike the hills and streams of this rolling property in all its late-year glory -- we'll look for (and cook) wild edible mushrooms and persimmons, enjoy a potluck supper, stand around a roaring fire, and just enjoy ourselves -- since it's Halloween weekend, we also carve pumpkins that night -- those who have signed up can meet and leave from Coffee Call early on Saturday, Oct 30th -- camping spots are limited, so call as soon as possible, 225-907-7271, to reserve your tent spot -- day trippers are welcome as well, but be sure to call first so you don't get left behind at Coffee Call.....

HONEY ISLAND GROUP

<http://louisiana.sierraclub.org/honeyisland>

Please see our website for meeting info.

This region is one of the fastest growing in the country! In these times of runaway development, we see our primary responsibility as representing our environment -- and we are at a crisis point. The pace and personality of our area attracts families looking for a lifestyle that's lost elsewhere. Yet, the laissez faire perspective that was part of those simpler less-enlightened times is costing us habitats and natural beauty. A short time ago, Dr. Susan Howell of the University of New Orleans surveyed Northshore voters, and what they had to say was startling. Respondents said they would accept restrictions on property development, even higher taxes, if it meant

controlling development and protecting the environment (86% agreed to prohibiting building in flood plains, marshes, and wetlands)!

The more we all know, the broader our perspectives, the more we can understand how all the parts fit, the better we can fit them together. Getting the word out is crucial. So, we see our role as primarily educational. We hope our newsletter, outings, and programs will help.

KISATCHIE GROUP

The Kisatchie Group is the home of Sierra Club members throughout much of northwestern Louisiana, centered on Shreveport.

Our group is looking for an activist and/or volunteer to coordinate meetings. Any members who want to become more active with the group are welcome. The Kisatchie Group is currently involved in a number of local activities, including supporting efforts to form an advisory group to help develop a plan for Shreveport's Riverfront to preserve green spaces, the kickoff of the Community Foundation of Shreveport/Bossier Environmental Field of Interest (FOI) to support and promote environmental education, and responsible development of the Red River Education and Research Park at Bickham Dickson Park. If you are interesting in our group's activities contact Jeff Wellborn at 318-222-1801 or jwellbrn@bellsouth.net or write to Kisatchie Group, PO Box 2098, Shreveport LA 71166-2098.

NEW ORLEANS GROUP

<http://louisiana.sierraclub.org/neworleans>

Executive Committee Meeting

Open to all members. If interested in attending call Darryl Malek-Wiley at 504-865-8708.

General Membership Meeting

Call Aaron Viles at 504-314-0773 work or 504-259-7664 cell or check the website for info.

New Orleans News

Darryl Malek-Wiley's new job! Darryl Malek-Wiley, former New Orleans Group Excomm Chair and long-time Sierra Club activist, is now a part-time program assistant for the Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama Field Office. Congratulations to Darryl Malek-Wiley, and best wishes in his new job!

Train (continued from front page)

In doing so, this administration would put hundreds of transit projects across the country in jeopardy, and with them, the jobs and economic benefits those projects bring locally.

And it's not just the Sierra Club that is criticizing the Bush Administration over public transportation. Paul Weyrich, of the conservative Free Congress Foundation, in a recent commentary called the Bush Administration "THE most anti-rail administration in the history of federal involvement in mass transit" and notes "the Bush folks are not pro-transit."

We Can Do Better

We can enjoy easier commutes, more sensible development, jobs in better locations, and a better environment with a stronger commitment to public transportation. Unfortunately, the Bush administration has chosen to reward its friends in the

road lobby rather than rather than promote a balanced transportation policy. What's more, communities across the nation are eager for public transportation, but they will be waiting longer and paying more for transit under the Bush administration's plan.

Please see www.sierraclub.org/sprawl/report04 for a copy of Missing the Train.

To weigh in on these important public transportation issues with your Members of Congress, visit:

<http://whistler.sierraclub.org/action/?alid=280>

Eric C. Olson works for the Sierra Club's national Challenge to Sprawl Campaign. □

Sierra Club makes Phone Banking Easy!

Wondering what more you can do as a Sierra Club volunteer to put a pro-environment president in office? Check out the recently added sierraclubvotes.org. You'll find information on volunteer opportunities in Environmental Voter Education Campaign (EVEC) states, voter registration, and phone bank parties. Even if you cannot travel to EVEC states, you can have a large impact by inviting over your cell-phone-carrying-friends over for a phone bank party. All you have to do is fill out an application online to receive a list of names to call, a script, and a feedback form. There are also smaller lists available for individuals who want to call on their own, instead of with a group. <http://www.sierraclubvotes.org>

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