

# Delta Sierran April

*E- Edition*

Protecting people and the environment in Louisiana

## Chapter Retreat Spring 2011

On the weekend of March 25 - 27 some hardy members of the Delta Chapter attended the Chapter retreat at Bogue Chitto State Park near Franklinton, in Washington Parish, Louisiana. Activities included canoes on the Bogue Chitto River, a presentation from Colleen Morgan on birds of the the upland pine forested eastern part

of Louisiana, and some evening and early morning birdwatching. Woody Martin served up eggs and pancakes for breakfast and Harold Schoeffler's recipe for broiled catfish with peppers and onions for dinner. A good time was had by all and we look forward to doing another one next year.



*Chef Woody*



*Honey Islanders ready for a paddle*



*Colleen Morgan gives a great bird talk*

## ***Delta Chapter Legislative Day May 3rd***

### **Baton Rouge**

Delta Chapter has reserved space for a display table in the State Capital Rotunda for Tuesday, May 3, 2011. We will be exhibiting and passing out literature on environmental and health issues and talking up our legislative priorities. We will be showing our Sierra Club members and interested persons around the capital and showing how to find update status on legislative bills. We are also there to accompany you on visits to your own legislators. It

would help us if you could send me a message at [chair@louisiana.sierraclub.org](mailto:chair@louisiana.sierraclub.org) or call at 337-298-8380 if you plan to come.

We are facing a daunting Louisiana legislative session this year. The State is faced with a \$1.6 billion state general fund shortfall in the FY that begins July 1, 2011. This equals more than 20 percent of what the state is spending this year in the general fund. Budget cuts will be deep in areas where the legislature has discretion

including health care, education and environment. This will be a fiscal session so the number of bills that can be introduced is limited. Before the legislature meets for the budget cutting session they are meeting in a special session that started March 20 to redraw legislative districts. Louisiana is losing one of seven congressional districts so the redistricting session will be contentious. Delta Chapter will again this year be in there for the fight to stop bad bills and introduce a few good ones.

Some of the issues that Sierra Club Delta Chapter will be working on are:

Introduce the Louisiana Climate Change Policy Commission

resolution as an urgent issue affecting coastal economy and infrastructure. The resolution would be the same as the 2009 resolution passed by Sen. Karen Carter Peterson (HCR 93).

Request for the governor to implement his Green Executive Order requiring energy efficient operations in state government

Propose legislation to establish a statewide electronic waste recycling program

Defend against any legislative attempts to re-define or expand definition of woody biomass as a renewable fuel.

Defend against any legislative attempts to restrict funding to

environmental law clinics  
There may be some controversy over the issue of hydraulic fracturing for natural gas development. We will also have to watch for and analyze numerous other industry sponsored bills that may have harmful effects on public health and the environment.

We are putting together a list of interested persons who would like to help us watch legislative hearings and track bills. If you would like to be involved or would like any other info related to our legislative agenda please contact me very soon at [chair@louisiana.sierraclub.org](mailto:chair@louisiana.sierraclub.org) and I will get back to you.

Woody Martin

## Atchafalaya Basinkeeper gives award to Leigh Haynie



*Leigh Haney and Greg Guirard  
Photograph provided by Atchafalaya  
Basinkeeper*

In February 2011, the Louisiana Crawfish Producers Association-West (LCPA-West) and Atchafalaya Basinkeeper joined together to honor the work of Atchafalaya Basinkeeper staff attorney Leigh Haynie and author-photographer Greg Guirard. Leigh Haynie received the Atchafalaya Angel Award, and Greg Guirard received the Super Swamper Award.

Former, long-time Ex-com member and Delta Chapter volunteer, Leigh Haynie for years has volunteered her time as an attorney, helping to defend the Atchafalaya Basin and other wetlands; her love, hard work and dedication have helped to save thousands of acres of wetlands from destruction. Leigh was hired by Basinkeeper last year as a part-time staff attorney. We could not ask for a better or more dedicated attorney!

Greg Guirard is best known for his books about the Atchafalaya Basin and the Cajun families who make their living hunting and fishing in the Basin. No one, dead or alive, has done more to educate the public about the Atchafalaya and its people than Greg. Today he is a Basinkeeper board member and works tirelessly to help raise funds for the organization. Greg is also a long-time member of LCPA-West, and increasing Basinkeeper and LCPA-West membership is part of his lifetime commitment. To learn more about ABK please go to: <http://www.basinkeeper.org> . To learn more about LCPA-West please go to: <http://www.lcpa-west.com/main.html>.

## View from the chair

### Changing the Narrative

Ever since the April 20, 2010 blowout at BP's Macondo 252 well the oil industry has rallied around creating their version of a story that has been consistently and effectively fed to the media. Typical of their line is that the moratorium on deepwater drilling imposed by the government would be responsible for oil industry job losses and severe economic downturn in south Louisiana.

This point was pounded over and over by every industry spokesman and media outlet, and amplified by an industry organized rally in Lafayette. As facts became known it turned out that there were no net oil industry job losses in south Louisiana, and that the overall economy sustained its gradual growth through the moratorium period. The attempt was to divert blame for any downside economic effects to the administration in Washington and away from the oil companies that were responsible for the disaster.

Their narrative will not say the truth which is that the deepwater drilling moratorium was a reasonable response by the administration to protect health and safety in the face of a disaster for which the oil industry is responsible.

Another attempt to circumvent science with myth making was the claim that dispersants and oil would quickly biodegrade as they are consumed by bacteria that naturally reside in the gulf. How many times have we heard that the oil is all gone, and yet tar balls continue to roll up on the beach at Grande Isle and black pools are

found in places not frequented by cleaning crews.

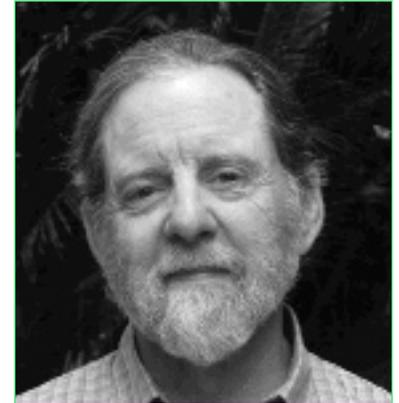
Oil has also have been found sitting on the bottom of the Gulf. Oil related toxins continue to be found in Gulf seafood, and in the bloodstreams of cleanup workers and coastal residents who were closest to the oil. You don't hear anything about this in the industry narrative.

So among other things you can expect to continue hearing the story that the BP disaster was an isolated incident not reflective of the industry, that the seafood is safe, and that we need to expand drilling everywhere with no regulation.

What we need from the industry is not their self absolving story but money now for Gulf wide sampling of workers and coastal residents for the presence of oil and dispersant toxins in their bodies.

Right now we need medical and community assistance to help resolve health problems in coastal communities. If we wait for overall settlement and penalties to be decided it will be too late for many people whose lives are being seriously affected.

We need also to start the healing of the Gulf itself. Accelerated interim projects can get the process started and help to stabilize areas that will be lost to coastal erosion without immediate action. Years of dithering about



penalties will have serious consequences for people and for the Gulf.

As for changing the narrative, the truth is coming out and will continue to come out. But it will take the actions of Gulf communities, universities and research institutions that have not accepted BP hush money, and non-profit groups to tell the real story.

Importantly it will take resolve and commitment to press the demand to Washington that a credible and transparent science based accounting for the short and long term consequences of the BP disaster be delivered, that funds from penalties to BP be directed to Gulf recovery, and that the people in the Gulf be given a voice in how penalty funds are used.

What can you do personally?

Go to the Delta Chapter Oil Debacle page and take action.

<http://deltasierraclub.blogspot.com/p/bp-gulf-oil-debacle-2010.html>

Woody Martin

## Leigh Haney is hired by Chapter

*The Sierra Club Delta Chapter has initiated more aggressive response to public notices for Corps of Engineers 404 permits and for construction projects in the State's Coastal Management Zone. We have hired environmental attorney Leigh Haynie to help us comment on public notices for permits for such projects.*

*The projects include residential subdivisions, pipelines, bulkheads and canals. We are currently seeing a lot of subdivisions coming in to Livingston Parish. We are also seeing no requirement by the Corps of Engineers for evaluation of cumulative impact of numerous construction projects. We intend to speak up more than ever on proposed projects that will cause loss of wetlands and wildlife habitat.*

*Your membership and extra donations to Sierra Club Delta Chapter helps to support our ability to send in effective legally based comments on proposed construction projects in the Louisiana Coastal Zone. It isn't too late to give to the March Fund Campaign.*

*The March Fund Campaign stays here in Louisiana for our local work. Send your check to The Delta Chapter, PO Box 52503, Lafayette, LA 70505-2503.*

## Water Sentinels Workshop May 12 and Bayou Tech Update

We will be having a workshop on May 12, 6:00 to 8:30 pm in New Iberia at the Parks and Recreation Oak Room, which is located at 300 Parkview Drive. Persons interested can contact me at [hmartin2sc@gmail.com](mailto:hmartin2sc@gmail.com) or 337-298-8380 for more details.



businesses pitched in to do the dirty work and everyone felt like it was a day well spent. The event also served as the starting point for a project in which Cajuns for Bayou Teche, Acadiana RC&D, and Sierra Club Delta Chapter would work together to start a volunteer based water quality monitoring program on the Bayou called Water Sentinels.

One of the most successful strategies for protecting surface water quality has been the adoption of streams and watersheds by interested volunteer groups. In November of 2009 Cajuns for Bayou Teche held a fundraiser and a volunteer cleanup day that was successful in pulling many boatloads of trash out of the bayou. Volunteers from nonprofit organizations and



Funding support from the three organizations was combined to purchase sampling kits for basic surface water quality monitoring. Local and guest instructors from the Sierra Club conducted two water quality monitoring workshops to train volunteers to perform water sampling and analysis, and reporting of results. Five volunteer sampling teams were formed and they have successfully monitored water quality at five different locations along the Bayou.

The sampling teams run tests at the five locations on the same date to establish a continuous profile of water quality. The tests are for temperature, pH, conductivity, Dissolved Oxygen and Nitrates. Additional field observations made at the time of each sampling further complete the picture.

We discuss in the workshops the meaning of each of these parameters and what they show us over time. Three coordinated sampling dates in May, August and November of 2010 have provided a good initial set of data representing Bayou Teche water quality. We plan to continue monitoring four times per year for as many sampling locations as possible. In time we hope to add a test for E. coli that will provide information on bacteriological contamination in the water, and add observations of streambed small organisms.

Bayou Teche Water Sentinals is looking for interested persons to serve as volunteers to monitor additional sampling locations along the Bayou. We work on a small budget of donated funds to buy sampling and safety equipment so we are always looking for funding help to keep the program going.

Water Sentinals program coordinator time is volunteered by Woody Martin, the writer of this article. Persons interested in participating as a volunteer or helping with funding support can contact me at [hmartin2sc@gmail.com](mailto:hmartin2sc@gmail.com) or 337-298-8380. Big thanks go to Blake Couvillion of Cajuns for Bayou Teche and to Kristen Kordecki of Acadiana RC&D for their participation and support of the program.

## New Conservation Chair Elected

William Fontenot – A distinguished fighter for the people and environment in Louisiana joins Sierra Club Delta Chapter as Conservation Chair



Before retiring in April of 2005 I served as the Community Liaison Officer for the Louisiana Attorney General's Office for twenty seven years. My duties were to assist individuals, groups, local officials, other agencies, businesses and others, such as the news media, with environmental problems, issues, or questions. In this capacity I had the opportunity to assist thousands of individuals and help organize more than five hundred groups with a wide variety of problems and issues throughout Louisiana and more than thirty other states.

I have also been very active with a number of organizations and currently serve on the board of directors of Clean Water Fund. For eighteen years I served on the board of directors of Clean Water Action. In past years I have also served on the board of Louisiana Environmental Action Network (LEAN), and the Labor Neighbor Project. I have also served as the executive director of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation and as chairman of the New Orleans Group and the Delta Chapter of the Sierra Club.

Much of my effort over the last forty years has been focused on assisting poor and minority communities, workers and others who were impacted by pollution, bad government or industrial decisions and who felt they had no where else to turn. Some of this work is documented in the book *Deeper Shades of Green*, by Jim Schwab, a Sierra Club book that came out in 1994. Another book, which documents some of my work, is *Uneasy Alchemy*, by Barbara Allen, which came out in 2003. You can also go to the web site of LEAN, Louisiana Environmental Action Network, to learn more about my early retirement. If you Google "Willie Fontenot" you can find stories and photographs of some of my work and an incident that led to my "early retirement" in 2005. You can also Google a series of interviews I did with Eric Wolf from Ohio on his Progressive Tool Kit. Eric has interviews with a couple of people from New York state on political campaigning and with me on organizing. There is a new book entitled *American Environmental Leaders* by Grey House Publishing, September 2008 which presents several pages about several hundred people across the U.S. over the last couple of hundred years and my biography is on pages 296-299. I welcome Delta Chapter member input on which conservation issues concern you the most and what you think we should be working on. Call or send an email to me at the following phone number or email address.

William Fontenot  
225-383-5673  
[wafont@cox.net](mailto:wafont@cox.net)



## Sunday Paddle to Bayou Nezpique



We shuttled vehicles, then started paddling at approx 10:45 am. A nice day out on the bayou. I counted that we had 21 boats (kayaks & canoes) launch at the put-in point.

A mixture of paddlers from Lafayette Paddle Club, Pelican Paddlers (Lake Charles paddle club), and Sierra Club.

*Submitted by Mike VanEtten Acadian Group*

***Acadian Group:*** <http://louisiana.sierraclub.org/acadian/>

Check website for updates

Meetings held at Meetings held at Lourdes Hospital, 611 St. Landry Street, Lafayette, first floor, rooms 108 or 110 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: [www./batonrouge.sierraclub.org](http://www.batonrouge.sierraclub.org)***

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.

Save the Ales is heating up again on the third Wednesday@ 7PM at Chelseas.

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.

**Earth Day Celebration**

The Baton Rouge Group will host a presentation on the N.O. to B.R. Rail by The Center for Planning Excellence at 7 p.m., Thursday, April 21, at the Jones Creek Library in Meeting Rm. 3.



*Honey Island Group: [www.louisiana.sierraclub.org](http://www.louisiana.sierraclub.org)*

**Meetings:** Sign up for our google groups hotline and our Recycling guide for the Northshore.



*Saturday, April 16th  
Twilight/Nearly Full Moon canoeing/kayaking in  
the Honey Island Swamp--*

*We'll put in on the West Pearl River at the Indian Village Road landing south of Slidell and canoe into Maple Slough and Eagle Slough before taking out at the Hwy 90 landing. Experience the swamp by moonlight! For more info please contact Harvey Stern at [hrstern@juno.com](mailto:hrstern@juno.com) or 504-891-7116*

## **New Orleans Group Meetings**

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 our yahoo group list serve for up to date meeting details, outings and volunteer opportunities. <http://neworleanssierran.blogspot>.

## New Orleans Group gives Science Award

The New Orleans Group of Sierra Club has been a sponsor of the Greater New Orleans Science Fair projects for several years. There are usually about twenty-five projects of Environmental Science and Management by the region's high schools. The New Orleans Group gave three awards in February, two in the Senior Division, for: "Are Dispersants a Good Choice for Oil Spill Cleanup?" Jessica Lawrence, John Curtis of Christian School, New Orleans. and "The Effects of Chemical Dispersant on Plankton." Stefan Moll, of Ben Franklin School, New Orleans and one award in the Junior Division: "Deterioration of Gulf Coast Tar Balls." Anton Derbes, Christian Brothers School, Mandeville. This not only gives recognition to the students and the teachers, but promotes consideration on the environmental applications of science. A student-membership to the national Sierra Club was also given to each student

Want to Volunteer to help Table at Earth Day?  
contact Vance at [mrkahuna@juno.com](mailto:mrkahuna@juno.com)

Live Music  
CYRIL NEVILLE WITH TRIBE 13  
AMANDA SHAW & THE CUTE GUYS  
CHEGADÃO  
SWEET STREET SYMPHONY  
AND MORE!

SUNDAY  
APRIL 17

EARTH DAY 2011 FESTIVAL  
& GREEN BUSINESS EXPO

HOSTED BY LOUISIANA BUCKET BRIGADE  
BAYOU ST. JOHN 8:30 AM - 6:00 PM

i.nolaearthdayfest.org  
WORKAGENCIES | www.workagencies.com

SURI solutions  
SOUTHERN EDGE  
LOUISIANA BUCKET BRIGADE  
W  
COX  
yelp  
SIERRA CLUB

New Orleans Group Update:  
New Orleans Group got a \$2500 lobbying grant from the Delta Chapter for recycling in 2010. Both Orleans and Jefferson Parishes will start recycling services this year.

Wendy King  
Secretary, New Orleans Excomm  
Chair, New Orleans Group Waste and Recycling Committee



# Contacts: Delta Chapter, PO Box 52503, Lafayette, LA 70505-2503

## Delta Chapter and Groups Excom members/officers list

### Delta Chapter

Chair: Haywood (Woody) Martin hrmartin2sc@gmail.com

Vice Chair: Charlie Fryling cfryling@me.com

Secretary: Aaron Viles aaron@healthygulf.org

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Devin.Martin@sierraclub.org

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### Acadian group

Chair: Harold Schoeffler cadistyle@aol.com

Vice Chair and grp rep to Excom: Woody Martin

hrmartin2sc@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: Katie Peterson, Group Representative  
to the Delta Chapter, ECO@LSU Vice-President  
kpeter8@lsu.edu

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

Treasurer: Paul Kirk pnkirk@cox.net

### Honey Island group

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Treasurer: Diane Casteel 999diane@gmail.com

Chapter Delegate Frank Neelis bucktree@bellsouth.net

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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.

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.