



# Louisiana Environmental Justice Voices

Volume 1, Issue 1

September 2004

Louisiana Environmental Justice Project

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## La. Sierra Club EJ Staff

Darryl Malek Wiley  
Associate Representative  
Grassroots Organizer  
Environmental Justice  
darryl.malek-wiley@sierraclub.org

Mara Cohen  
Program Assistant  
mara.cohen@sierraclub.org

Louisiana Sierra Club  
4521 Jamestown Court  
Suites 12-13  
Baton Rouge, LA 70808  
Phone: 225-925-8650  
Fax: 225-925-8725

New Orleans  
Phone: 504-865-8708

## A STARTING POINT: FIRST NEWSLETTER

At the listening session on March 6, 2004, you began the process of identifying and preventing toxic pollution your communities, in conjunction with the Sierra Club. Darryl Malek-Wiley is already working with each community in the upper, middle, and lower river regions. While we will hold meetings and workshops through the year, they provide just one piece of maintaining your cohesion as a group. This newsletter will give you another outlet to stay in touch with the communities along the Mississippi who are in a similar struggle as yourself. Use the newsletter as a tool to share your strategies for success and learn from other group's methods. I will include summaries of relevant news articles and editorials, when necessary. Remember that this newsletter is a resource for you and we can format the articles to provide you with the information that you need and want. The most important part is to have stories from each of your communities during your campaigns. Please send me feedback,



Moderator Ernest Wright-Irvin leads the group in a strategy session at the August 14th Listening Session in Gonzales.

and most importantly, articles, so that we can communicate effectively through this newsletter. Articles should be submitted by the 5th of every month. Articles for the next issue will be due on Tuesday, October 7th, the week after the LEAN conference. I look forward to hearing your feedback and reading your stories.

[mara.cohen@sierraclub.org](mailto:mara.cohen@sierraclub.org)

## HOLY CROSS PRESENTS INFORMATION SESSION ON THE INDUSTRIAL CANAL

by Pam Dashiell

On Thursday evening, September 9th, the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association (HCNA) presented an informational session titled "Toxics in the Industrial Canal" at Holy Cross School. This date marked the 39<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hurricane Betsy's devastation of the Lower Ninth Ward.

The Army Corps of Engineers plans to replace the Inner Harbor Lock in New Orleans' Holy Cross/Lower Ninth Ward communities. This replacement mandates the removal of sediment from the area to be stored elsewhere. The problem is that this sediment is toxic, and must be treated as such. The Tulane Environmental Law Clinic (TELC), on behalf of the HCNA, Gulf Restoration Network (GRN) and Louisiana Environmental Action Network (LEAN), has filed a lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers for violation to do the necessary research before implanting this project. The suit was

filed under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Five speakers gave powerhouse presentations concerning the Inner Harbor Lock replacement to a receptive and enthusiastic audience of about 50 people. Presenters included: Tulane Scientist and Sierra Club member Dr. Barry Kohl; GRN Director Cyn Sarthou; lead attorney and Director of the TELC Adam Babich; and St. Bernard engineers Ed Doody and John Leguens of the Coalition to Close Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO).

First, Kohl and Sarthou described the toxics found in the Industrial Canal, how they got there and how careless release and inadequate containment of those sediments could affect life – marine and human- in and around the canal and the lake. Next, Babich presented the basic elements of the lawsuit that HCNA is working on with the GRN

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Sierra Club  
4521 Jamestown Court  
Suites 12-13  
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

Phone: 225-925-8650  
Fax: 225-925-8725

[www.sierraclub.org/  
environmental\\_justice](http://www.sierraclub.org/environmental_justice)



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### LEAN Conference

Saturday, October 2nd  
Embassy Suites Hotel  
4919 Constitution, Baton Rouge  
225-924-6566

This year's topics will include: Jobs and the Environment, 3 Waterkeeper projects in Louisiana, Technology & Non-Profits, Cumulative Risk In Grassroots Communities, Louisiana's Environmental Public Health Tracking Program, and more! Tune into [www.leanweb.org](http://www.leanweb.org) for more information

### Join the Sierra Club for Lunch!

Every 2nd Tuesday of the Month, the Louisiana Sierra Club invites all environmentally minded folks to join us for lunch at our Baton Rouge office. The next lunch will be October 12th. RSVP if you can make it to [maracohen@sierraclub.org](mailto:maracohen@sierraclub.org) or 225-925-8650.

### WEBSITE OF THE MONTH:

Environmental Health News  
[www.environmentalhealthnew.org](http://www.environmentalhealthnew.org)

**Don't forget: Saturday, Sept. 25th  
TIES Cross- Cultural Communication Workshop  
9:30-4 at the Holiday Inn- La Place**

## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE NEWS

*"St. Bernard Cancer Figures Raise Eyebrows." Times Picayune (8/23/04)*- Statistics from 1988 to 2000 imply that St. Bernard Parish's cancer rate is higher than normal. Louisiana Tumor Registry's report, "Cancer in Louisiana" is the first parish-by-parish breakdown of cancer rates. According to the report, colon cancer rates among black women in the Parish were 79 percent higher than data for the entire state. For black men in St. Bernard, the incidence rate of any cancer was 35 percent high than the statewide number. When compared to the national rates 1996 to 2000 from the American Cancer Society, Louisiana men are struck with lung cancer more frequently. The article does not explain why cancer rates are so high here. (see "St. Bernard Cancer Figures Raise Eyebrows." by John Pope. *Times-Picayune*. 23 Aug 2004: B1.)

The Trust for American's Health (TFAH), in *Do States Make The Grade*, a September 2003 report, rates states on how well they track and utilize cancer rates. To analyze the states' performance they reviewed data quality, data linkages and data accessibility, community-level answers and state legislation. The Louisiana Tumor Registry declined to take part in this report.

### Holy Cross

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and LEAN. Finally, Doody and Leguens discussed the effects of the project on St. Bernard Parish and Holy Cross/Lower Ninth Ward. The speakers brought home the dangers and pinpointed responsibility.

*For more information on the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association contact Pam Dashiell at 504-277-3218 or John Koefler at 504-615-7266*