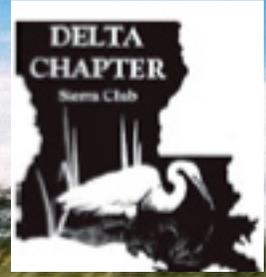


Delta Chapter 2012



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Saving Trees!

As Sierra Club members, we often get accused of being Tree Huggers. This year, we really earned that label.

In April of 2012, the Sierra Club Delta Chapter heard that the St. Martin Parish School Board had signed a contract to log a 640 acre tract of School Board owned land for about \$90,000 profit. This was a desperate and short sighted move to pay the equivalent of two teacher salaries for one year.

Wait a minute we said. There are several much better ways to raise revenue from forest lands that would leave the cypress standing. So we started attending school board meetings. Atchafalaya Basinkeeper, Greg Guirard and Harold Schoeffler of Sierra Club all made presentations about the value of standing cypress for local culture, for the environment and for future generations.

We described how they could make revenue from the standing cypress by way of ecotourism, conservation easements, and carbon mitigation bank credits. Nothing worked. The school board president and their lawyer said, "The logging contract is a done deal." Though we knew that we had started internal discussions within the school board, we could not get enough votes for them to change course.

So we started a letter writing campaign, filled their meeting room with people who wanted to keep the trees standing. Still no movement.

Finally with help from the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic, we sent them a 60 day notice of intent to sue. This got them thinking that the cost of defending themselves in the lawsuit would exceed the amount of profit from the timber sale. In the end they relented on the timber contract. Then Louisiana Department of Natural Resources stepped in and purchased conservation easements with funds in an amount equivalent to what the school board would have made from cutting the trees.

We can be proud that our resistance actually saved the cypress trees and resulted in their permanent protection. Last we heard the school board was talking about taking kids out there. We did good with the help of Dean Wilson who is our Atchafalaya Basin chair, members of Sierra Club Acadian Group, and the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic.

We are not always able to find out about a timber cut before it happens. But when we do, and the proposed cut is on public lands, we can use people power to generate visibility and use the law when all else fails.

Legislative Cookout

The Delta Chapter of the Sierra Club started engaging with the 2012 legislature back in the Nov 2011 elections by actively supporting several state legislators including doing campaign work for Stephen Ortego, active support for Jack Montoucet, and formal endorsement of J.P. Morrell of New Orleans. This year we put on two social events for legislators, one in New Orleans on March 1, and one in Baton Rouge on March 21. We received great feedback and recognition among legislators for these events. The purpose of these events was to get ourselves and allied legislative advocates in the same rooms with legislators to enjoy a casual evening of food and conversation. Our legislative lobbyist Darrell Hunt deserves major credit for coming up with the idea and for doing the cooking at our event in Baton Rouge.

The 2012 regular session of the Louisiana legislature adjourned on June 4. Here are some of the laws that have been signed by the governor.

Oil Industry Legacy lawsuits - The legislation appears to give the oil industry what it wanted at the outset, which was a limitation on liability for cleanup costs when plans are developed and approved by relevant state agencies. Landowners still retain the right to sue for damages. The real effect of the laws will be determined in the course of litigation sure to follow.

Water Issues - SB 436 by Sen Gerald Long, signed into law by the governor as Act 784 requires the Sabine River Authority to obtain legislative committee and local government approval for out-of-state water

sales. The effect of the law will be to ban out of state water sales by the Sabine River Authority and by implication all water authorities in the state. The State of Louisiana has never had a consistent plan how to deal with in state or out of state sale



of water.

For more information about the legislative session and laws that protect the environment go to the Chapter blog at <http://louisiana2.sierraclub.org/content/politics-legislation>.

To get involved in our legislative activities, contact Woody Martin at hmartin2sc@gmail.com.

**Not getting the
Delta Chapter E Zine?
Email
lesliemarch@hotmail.com
to get on the list.**

Scenic Rivers

The Delta Chapter has embarked on a project to protect our scenic rivers. The Louisiana Scenic Rivers Act is one of the best statutes in the country for helping to preserve and enhance natural streams. The Act was passed into state law in the early 1970's and if administered with adequate resources could be one of our most effective tools in helping to protect natural places in Louisiana. But we found that enforcement of the law was being left to only one or two staffers in Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDW&F). We found also that the required management plans were badly out of date and incomplete.

In order to examine compliance with the Scenic Rivers Act, we have obtained close to a 1000 pages of documentation from LDWF. We contracted with local attorneys, Hugh Penn and Richard Exnicios to review the maze. Our intention is to push regulatory agencies into meeting their responsibilities under applicable regulatory statutes. The Delta Chapter sent letters to Robert Barham, Secretary LDWF and to the Governor, demanding that the state comply with language of the Act and file a management plan for the West Pearl River. The results of meetings with our advocates and our science advisor, Dr. Barry Kohl with LDF are that they have agreed to prioritize work on three new management plans under the requirements of the State's Scenic Rivers Act.

See next page

Dear Fellow Sierran:

As you get caught up with some of the things that we have been doing this year, please consider making a donation to the Delta Chapter. Every dollar will be used here in Louisiana to protect our environment for future generations.

Volunteers from the club work on many issues including holding corporations accountable for environmental destruction like in the BP oil disaster. We are also preserving Cypress trees, stopping coal trains and depots, promoting clean energy, making sure that our Scenic Rivers are protected, preventing mercury spills, promoting green building and advocating for clean water.

Your funds will be used to pay for legislative advocacy, legal costs, printing communications and educating the public on our issues. Any sized donation is welcome. There is an envelope provided for your convenience.

Thank you from the Chapter Chair and Excom.

All contributions are not tax deductible because they support our effective citizen-based lobbying and advocacy efforts.

Scenic River Cont.

In addition to the plan for the West Pearl, the Department has agreed to undertake management plans for Bayou Manchac and Bayou Lacombe. This is a victory for all three river systems because after years of negligence, it draws LDWF back in to active planning and management of the river segments for preservation and enhancement of their scenic and water quality characteristics.

Delta Chapter also has a state legislative initiative related to scenic rivers. It is HCR 49, a

concurrent resolution introduced by Rep Stephen Ortego in the 2012 state legislative session. The resolution requests LDWF to study inclusion of Bayou Teche into the state scenic and historic rivers system. We expect to see a public hearing on this issue early in 2013 and we will push for legislation in the 2013 State Legislature to make a formal designation of Historic and Scenic River status for Bayou Teche.

Water Sentinels

The Sierra Club Delta Chapter Water Sentinels program is composed of five teams of local volunteers who participate in quarterly water quality tests along Bayou Teche, with the intention of building knowledge and respect for the health of the Bayou and all those who live near it. Testing parameters include temperature, turbidity, conductivity, pH, nitrates, and dissolved oxygen. These basic qualities can go a long way in telling us how healthy the Bayou is, and what kinds of pollutants or problems are present.

Twenty seven months of data were put together to make the graphic (on the back page). It shows trends in water characteristics over time. Most notable are the inverse relationships between water temperature and dissolved oxygen, and water temperature and conductivity representing salt content.

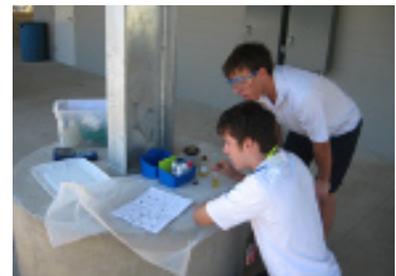
The objective of this project is to conduct sampling and report results in order to learn about water quality in Bayou Têche. We want to know what is in our water and how it responds to seasonal changes. We live and play on Bayou Têche and we want to be sure we have a healthy bayou.

Our teams of two sample every quarter. Each team tests their assigned location on the same day and time to reduce variability in the results. Each team uses a water testing kit to test conductivity, temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, nitrogen and turbidity. Our kits can test all of these parameters on site.

Volunteers send their data to the coordinator who then shares findings with the Institute for Coastal Engineering and Ecology and Engineering, at University of Louisiana-Lafayette. Together, we assess the data and look for trends in pollution.

Our conclusions were that: Higher water temps in summer give us higher conductivity and lower dissolved oxygen; Higher summertime nitrates may result from use of lawn and agriculture fertilizers; High turbidities

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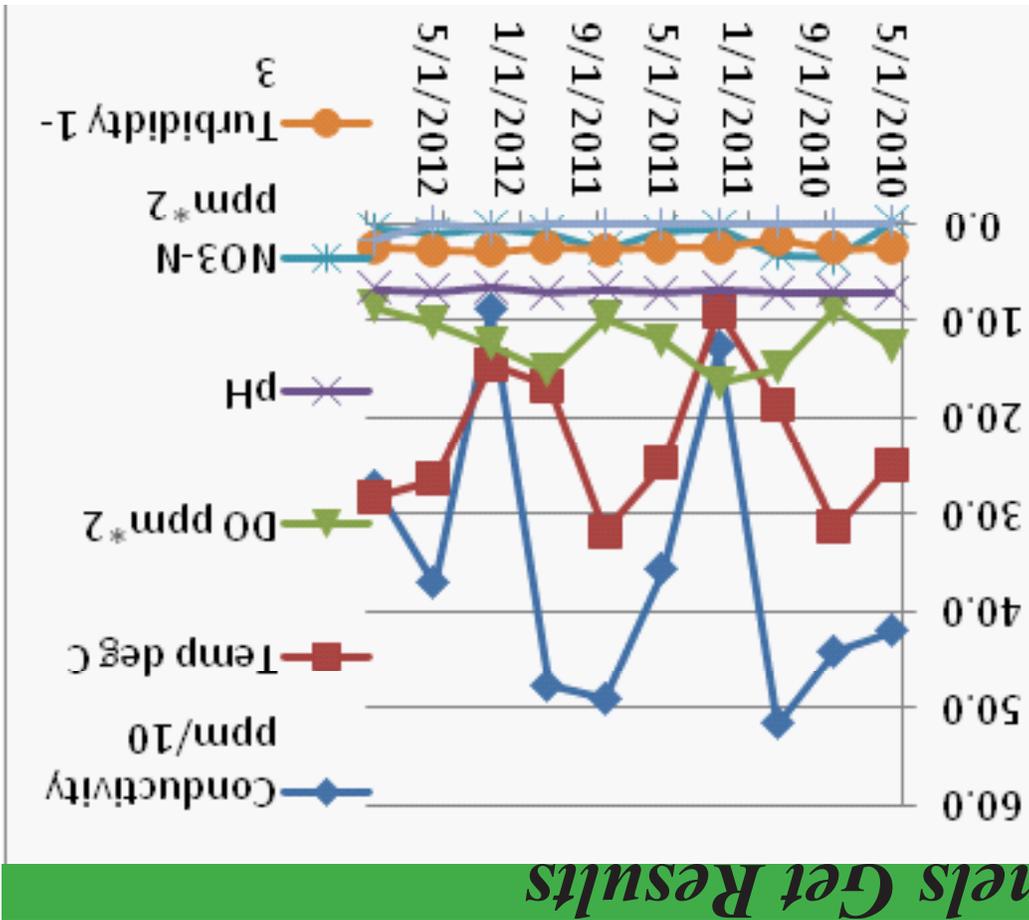




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Comments or Questions?

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Water Sentinels Continued
 may be a result of construction and other activities that destabilize vegetated stream banks
 Continued water quality monitoring by a Citizen Science Team is important for us to protect Bayou Teche for future fishing, kayaking and other recreation. All testing equipment and training is provided free of charge by the Delta Chapter Sierra Club and the Acadiana Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D). If you are interested in joining the Water Sentinels or want to learn more, contact our volunteer coordinator Carl Bakay at carl.bakay@yahoo.com.