

Delta Sierran

Delta Chapter Newsletter www.louisiana.sierraclub.org

Aug/Sept 2005

GULF SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

The Sierra Club joined the Gulf Restoration Network to release a GRN report titled "Every Fish Counts - How the Gulf Council and the National Marine Fisheries Service Ignore Bycatch to Allow Overfishing." The Gulf Sustainable Fisheries Campaign involves Sierra Club staff and volunteers in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida, along with GRN's Fisheries Director, Aaron Viles, Fisheries Consultant Marianne Cufone and Outreach Coordinator Briana Kerstein.

Bycatch is any wildlife caught accidentally when other species are targeted. In most instances, bycatch is thrown back into the water, dead or dying. In 1996, Congress passed the Sustainable Fisheries Act, which required the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council (Gulf Council) to meet the following goals:

Establish a standardized reporting method to assess the amount and type of bycatch in managed fisheries

Adopt conservation measure that minimize bycatch through avoidance

Minimize the mortality of bycatch that cannot be avoided.

If you agree that Every Fish Counts, please call Maura Wood at 225-925-8650 to find out how you can help. The complete report is available on the internet at http://healthygulf.org/fisheries/Bycatch_Report.FINAL.pdf.



Maura Woods and Aaron Viles Talk to Press

To this date, no standardized bycatch reporting methodology or reporting plan is in place in the Gulf of Mexico. Without a method of assessing bycatch, bycatch mortality cannot be included in total assessments of fish stocks. Fisheries management then remains focused on total landings, rather than on total mortality (landings + bycatch.) This results in overfishing and depletion of fish stocks in the Gulf of Mexico.

The report was released at coordinated press conferences at a Tampa Fish House and the GRN office in New Orleans. Charter boat captains and commercial and recreational fishing interests from Mississippi, Florida, and Louisiana participated along with the conservation organizations. In Louisiana, the story ran on WWL - Channel 4 in New Orleans and in the Baton Rouge Advocate.

The goal of this campaign is to cause the Gulf Council to develop bycatch estimates for all fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico. These estimates should include small fish that are caught in other fisheries, should assess all types of commercial and recreational gear used in the Gulf, and should be peer-reviewed. Once established, bycatch estimates for

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photo by Jeffrey Dubinsky

SIERRA CLUB KIDS' DAY IN THE ATCHAFALAYA

Close to 100 parents, kids and helpers attended the first Kids Day in the Atchafalaya hosted by the Baton Rouge Chapter on Saturday, June 4, 2005. Molly Weise, Mara Cohen and Sandra Thompson chaired the committee to put the event together.

The agenda included meeting at the new Atchafalaya Welcome Center at the Butte LaRose exit on I-10 at 9:00 a.m. Tours of the Center followed with children especially excited about the animatronic turtle, raccoon and alligator. The video shown in the

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Inside The Sierran

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Editor's Viewpoint

Here we are in the dog days of Summer. As a matter of fact, any typos etc in this newsletter, I attribute to being interrupted by my puppy. Kids are going back to school. Fall beconds. Fall has always felt like the beginning of my year. Cooler weather brings the resolve to get things done, attack the landscaping projects, organize the garage, and do the household repairs. Thanksgiving and Christmas are around the corner. This year I am participating in what we hope is the beginning of a new age of renewal for the Sierra Club. Ten delegates and activists from the Delta Chapter are heading to San Francisco for the Summit. I hope that some of you have decided to go too. It isn't too late to make plans to go. The Summit will be a gathering of like minds dedicated to conserving our environment and preserving it for the future.

Here at home base in Louisiana, we are excited about funds being available for coastal restoration. We hope to be able to influence the use of these funds for the greatest public good. At the same time we are very concerned about the incentives being offered for deep water drilling and we are very concerned about the siting of Liquid Gas Terminals

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The Sierra Club has many national committees. From time to time I will print correspondence that I receive from them so we can read what other chapters are doing about issues that we may encounter soon in our own state.

California endorses SB 644

Sierra Club California has endorsed a bill, S.B. 644, sponsored by Sen. Debra Ortiz of Sacramento, which would make contraceptives available to California women when "morality police" pharmacists refuse to fill their prescriptions.

But, wait a minute!!--Don't California women—indeed all American women—have easy access to contraceptives? Not in this political climate!

Since the Weldon amendment was quietly inserted into the Omnibus Bill last fall and passed without debate, it is legal to refuse women either information or referrals for ending pregnancies. Now, it seems, it is even legal to withhold the means of preventing unintended pregnancies.

Women appearing at a pharmacist's counter seeking to obtain birth control pills, or emergency contraception pills, might be met by pharmacists who claim that religious beliefs prevent them from filling such prescriptions. A woman coming to a pharmacist's counter might receive a stern moral lecture, instead of birth

control pills. It is disturbing that 4 states have already approved bills that allow pharmacists to do this, and 23 states are considering such legislation.

Senator Ortiz's bill makes allowances for pharmacists with such beliefs. But SB 644 makes it mandatory that pharmacists who object to filling certain prescriptions notify their employers in writing when they're hired. The pharmacies would then be required to have someone else on hand to fill those "objectionable" prescriptions, or refer customers to a nearby pharmacy.

It is not clear at this time whether those same moral policemen/pharmacists will refuse to fill prescriptions for Viagra or AIDS-treatment medicines.

Why is the Sierra Club interested in insuring women's access to contraception? Forty years ago the fertility rate of the U.S. was 4 children per woman. Without chemical contraception, the population of the U.S. would have grown much faster than it has, and today's population would be more than twice what it is today. The present birth rate of California is 2.4 children per couple, far above replacement level, and is one of the major contributors to the population growth of our state. Rapid population growth impacts air quality, water availability, wetlands, farmland, traffic congestion, global warming, and rapidly outgrows planning for liveable communities.

All of us should be aware of the far-reaching impacts of denying women the means of preventing unintended pregnancies. If Senator Ortiz's bill passes, California would again be the "bellweather" state, encouraging other states to follow suit in protecting the rights of women and recognizing that to do so also protects our environment.

Joan Jones Holtz & Karen Gaia
Pitts, Sierra Club California
Population Committee

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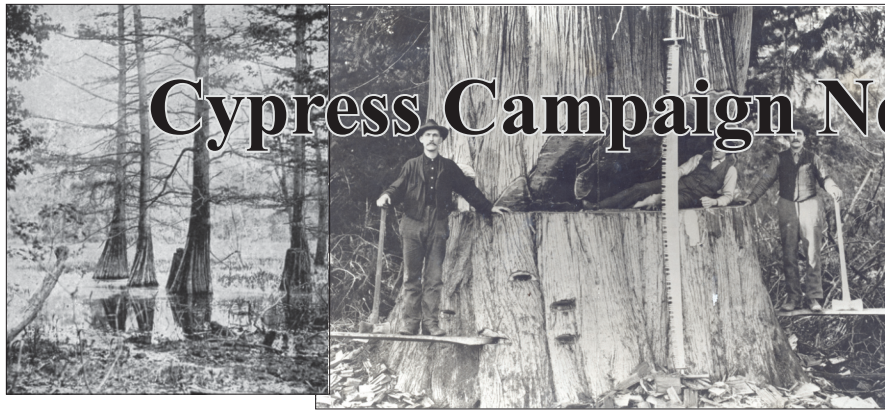
Address Changes: To change your address, send your name, old and new addresses and member number to:

Sierra Club Member Services
PO Box 52968

Boulder, Colorado 80322-2968

or email the information to:
address.changes@sierraclub.org

Submissions: Article and photograph submissions are always welcome. Please send submissions to the newsletter editor at lesliemarch@hotmail.com or mail to Leslie March, 67017 Dolan St., Mandeville, LA 70471



Cypress Campaign News



Today's Destruction

The campaign against Cypress logging is heating up. We will keep you updated through this page and the Chapter website

Meeting with EPA. Dean Wilson, chair of the Atchafalya Committee and Leslie March, Chapter Vice Chair met with officials at the EPA on June 15th in Washington, DC to talk about the EPA's role in enforcing section 404 of the Clean Water Act and to discuss the fact that we do not consider Cypress Logging to be sustainable silviculture. We were spurred to go directly to the EPA because of a permit that has been filed with the Army Corp of Engineers New Orleans District that requested permission to log 200 acres in the Lake Maurapas area. We are concerned that the area to be logged is not sustainable and that the Cypress will never come back after it is logged. In the meantime, the landowner and his allies persuaded Sen. David Vitter to introduce an amendment in congress that would reduce the ability of the Army Corps of Engineers to protect wetlands. We felt that we needed to use the national muscle we have through allied groups and approach the EPA directly ourselves. Cathy Coats of Audubon was responsible for organizing the appointments but unfortunately was unable to go with us.

We were fortunate to have representatives from National Wildlife, The Environmental Defense Fund, Audubon and the national Sierra Club lobbying office to accompany us. Representing the EPA was Ben

Planning Meeting. Interested in working on the Cypress Campaign. A strategy meeting will be held August 27, 2005 from 10 am to 2 pm at The Cabin at the Donaldsonville exit of I-10. If you have questions please contact Briana Kerstein at 504-525-1528 x208

Grumbles, Assistant Administrator of the Office of Water: Greg Peck, Acting Director of the Wetlands Division and Diane Regas, Director of Wetland, Oceans and Watersheds. They each brought staff people. The EPA gave us almost two hours of their time. The definition of normal silviculture was discussed. We provided them with the data available through the Coastal Forest Advisory Groups Science Working Group report. The EPA staff had read the report and were knowledgeable about the findings. While they appeared to be sympathetic to our argument, they weren't making any promises. It was obvious that this will be decided on a political level. I think that it was a good thing for them to hear from us. It was apparent that they have heard from the forestry people many times. The meeting resulted in a letter being sent to the Army Corps of Engineers and the permit applicant asking them to develop a management plan showing how they will be able to regenerate the area to be logged. We are still waiting for the plan at this point. (Watch for updates on the Delta Chapter website)

SCR71. Our state legislators elected to send a message to congress via Senate Concurrent Resolution 71.

This resolution asks Congress to tell the Army Corps of Engineers to stop enforcing Section 10 regulations within the New Orleans District. The argument for this resolution is best expressed by Sen, David Vitter's aide, Garret Graves, who told Dean Wilson and myself that the Army Corp of Engineers in New Orleans were going over board in enforcing Section 10 and the next thing they were going to do was to "outlaw putting a swing set in your back yard or letting you park on your own street." If this doesn't make sense to you, you are not alone. The reason why timber interests are pressuring both local and national politicians is that Sierra

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What can I do about Cypress logging?

- 1. Don't use Cypress Mulch**
- 2. Download Cypress Info from [www.http://louisiana.sierraclub.org/honeyisland](http://louisiana.sierraclub.org/honeyisland)**
- 3. Talk to your Friends, Family and Neighbors**
- 4. Talk to your Garden Retailer**

Memorial to Peggy Hoffman



The National Sierra Club asked a group of 500 leaders across the country to sit down and write them an email about what they were doing on August 6th. The parameters were to write about how you spend time volunteering for the club whether it's doing, meeting or planning. I asked our environmental justice employee to send me a few notes on the life of a woman who died last week so we could honor her in the Delta Sierran. Coincidentally, her funeral was held on August 6th. This touching report is what I received from Darryl Malik-Wiley

"This is what I submitted for the One Day SC project edit as you see fit."

Darryl

This morning I got in my car and drove to a small town in Louisiana's Cancer Alley called St. Gabriel.

The event was a memorial service for Peggy Hoffman a woman who was willing to speak out about pollution and its very personal impact on her and her family's life.

While driving I thought about the time 18 years ago that I met Peggy. Then I was the Chair of the Delta Chapter, and was working with members of the Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers Union (OCAW) Local 4-620 on their labor struggle with the BASF Corporation.

We wrote a joint report on air pollution in the St. Gabriel/Geismar area, looking at the 17 chemical plants located there. The report was done before the Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) and there was no data on cumulative permitted amounts of pollution. We found out

the pollution was 195 million pounds per year in the area of about 10 square miles.

In doing the research and talking to folks in the community I met Peggy Hoffman. She and a number of her friends had had a series of miscarriages which they felt were related to environmental pollution.

When we held our joint press conference to release our air pollution report Peggy was there to talk about the series of miscarriages in the area. We did not say air pollution caused the miscarriages but we raised concern and asked the Louisiana DHH & DEQ to study our concerns.

The chemical industry argument was it was the "lifestyle" causing these miscarriages and not chemical pollution.

The drive today reminded me that the struggle goes on with a sense of 'deja vue all over again' with a news article this week "DHH finds no cause for rash of health problems in Convent" a community that I am helping now.

Peggy and her daughter Adriann were hit by a drunk driver several weeks ago. They were trying to help an injured alligator at the time. They were hospitalized with serious injuries. Her daughter is still in the hospital. Peggy leaves behind her daughter. Peggy's husband and Adriann's father died a year ago. Peggy is Kay Gaudet's sister. There is a fund set up for the daughter. The Delta Chapter will be making a donation to the family. If you would like to contribute personally, the fund for Adriann Hoffman is at the Iberville Bank and Trust, 6120 La. Hwy. 74, St. Gabriel, La. 70776.

Editor's Notes

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in the Gulf of Mexico off our coast. We only have so much room in our newsletter to cover all of the issues. Our webmaster Rene Maggio is doing an excellent job of keeping the hottest news on the website. If you go to louisiana.sierraclub.org you will find information and talking points on many of the issues. You will also find contact numbers and emails for club leaders. Please feel free to contact us at any time with your concerns or questions. All members are welcome to attend the quarterly excom meetings. The first day of the excom is generally dedicated to informational presentations about issues that we all need to know more about. If you email the chair ahead of time to get on the agenda, you can present any issues of your own that you think the chapter should look at. Basking in the sun but looking forward to Fall,
Sincerely,
Leslie March

Issues to be aware of:

Cypress Mulch Campaign
<http://louisiana.sierraclub.org/#cypress>

No Fish for Fuel
<http://healthygulf.org/fisheries/LNG/>

NO Reservoirs
<http://www.angelfire.com/gundam/reservoir/>

(opposition to 14 man made lakes to be built in rural parishes for economic development)

Email comments on the EPA Strategic Plan. <http://sierraclub.org/action/?alid=413>

Chapter Events

Next Chapter Meeting

**15-16 October hosted by
the New Orleans Group**

New Orleans Group

Checkout our website for up to date information and how to receive action alerts <http://louisiana.sierraclub.org/neworleans/>

Executive Committee Meeting Open to all members. If interested in attending call 504-836-3062 or check the above website.

Group News

Held our first urban outing in City Park. It involved birding and bicycling on the lakefront. Even attracted a member from Houma to drive in. We are trying to do more membership outreach outside of New Orleans. We plan to do another outing in Bayou Sauvage in the fall. The group awarded science recognition awards at an annual High School Science fair. Our meetings are well attended. We supported the Alternative Energy Conference in Baton Rouge Micah Walker-Parkin and James Guilbeau represented the Group.

Upcoming events.

Help plan a Summer Outing: Because of the heat, we plan to spend most of our summer indoors. However, we are in the beginning stages of planning an evening/night outing that may involve a sunset cruise. Perhaps a nocturnal nature hike? Perhaps a nocturnal fishing tournament? If you would like to help plan contact outings chair Steve



Roberts, 504-982-1141 or giantgringo@yahoo.com.

You bring your beverages, chips or salad to share, plates, silverware, games, balls or Frisbees.

Check out Honey Island's outings on the Northshore. All Sierrans and their friends welcome.

Acadian Group

Sierra Club in the heart of the Bayou.

Harold Schoeffler will moderate third Friday of the month one hour Eco-Logic live call in programs on Acadiana open channel. The topic for

August 19 will be renewable energy featuring discussion with an expert on the use of bagass from sugar cane pulp. The topic for September 16 will be Louisiana forestry.

Meetings

September 21 Acadiana Chapter Conservation and General meeting at 6:30 412 Travis St. Lafayette

August 24 Outings Planning Meeting 7:00 PM, 3502 E. Simcoe St. Lafayette, Harold Schoeffler 337-234-4042

Outings

September 24-25 Overnight Atchafalaya Basin canoe trip from Jeanrette to Verdunville. Call 337-234-4043 for further information.

Baton Rouge Group

Check out current events and issues at <http://batonrouge.sierraclub.org>

Excom Meeting

Our Group has a monthly Excom meeting. All are welcome. Call Steve Poss at 225-223-6296 for information.

Outings

Nancy Grush is leading an overnight canoe trip on Aug. 20 on the Bogue Chitto with the help of Darryl Pry. Canoes can be rented from a place on the river for \$45 per boat. If you have a partner, that's \$22.50 per person. The fee also includes the shuttle. For more information, interested persons can call her at 225.342.9937 or email me at nancycgrush@aol.com. Unless Darryl gets someone to help him, we're limiting it to 10 people.

Honey Island Group

Please see our website for upcoming

SAVE THE DATE

Chapter Retreat

11/18-11/20/2005

Chico State Park

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Dreaming of Fishing on the Coast

Bycatch continued from page 1

assess all types of commercial and recreational gear used in the Gulf, and should be peer-reviewed. Once established, bycatch estimates for managed fisheries must be fully incorporated into management decisions, including calculations of yearly total allowable catches.

In August, we'll be meeting with the La. Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries to move forward on this exciting campaign to protect the Gulf of Mexico.

Environmental Brown Bag Lunch

***Every Second Tuesday
at 4521 Jamestowne Ave.
Suite 12-13 in Baton Rouge,***

Call Maura Wood for details.

225-925-8650.



***2006
Delta
Chapter
Leaders
Sign Up
Here***

Seeking at-large candidates for the Delta Chapter Executive Committee,

Please contact Nancy Grush at nancy.c.grush@aol.com or 225-381-9440 for more information.

Seeking editor for the Delta Sierran. Opportunity to use desktop publishing skills to help the environment and our state. If you have some basic Microsoft skills and want to learn, the current editor will be glad to teach you. Please contact Leslie March at 985-871-6695 or lesliemarch@hotmail.com.

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Cypress Activists

Continued from page 3

Club volunteers and members of other environmental groups have been investigating illegal loggers and turning them over to the Army Corps of Engineers.

Public Meetings. Activists from all over the state attended meetings in July held by the Governor's Coastal Advisory Taskforce to solicit public comments regarding the findings of the Science Working Group Report. The report, prepared by twelve scientists was finalized at the end of April 2005. The Sierra Club was well represented. The meeting, I attended was in Hammond at SELU. The majority of the public comments supported logging only in sustainable areas. The majority of the loggers present were more concerned about the report including hardwood forest areas than wanting to talk about the Cypress Forests. The landowners that were present are looking for a compromise but the millowners are talking about environmentalists taking food off the tables of working men. There was a comment that input from public meetings may not represent what the average Louisianan thinks about this issue. I think that we need to send as many written public comments regarding the Science Working Group's report as possible. The

report is on the internet at http://www.coastalforestswg.lsu.edu/SWG_FinalReport.pdf should be sent to goca@gov.state.la.us or you can contact Pat Forbes at the Governor's Office of Coastal Activities, Capitol Annex, 1051 N. 3rd Street, Suite 138, Baton Rouge, LA 70802 225-342-3968 or email at pat.forbes@gov.state.la.us.

Public comments will be directed to the advisory panel. The purpose of the panel is to determine whether or not the state should follow the recommendations of the Science Working Group in regards to Coastal Forests. The Sierra Club supports the working group's recommendation that all of the coastal forests be designated Classes I, II or III based on their ability to regenerate Cypress and be sustainable. We agree that all logging should be restricted on Class III lands until sufficient restoration is done to enable the forest to be sustainable. This is where we disagree with the working group. They want to only restrict logging on public lands. Only about 20% of our coastal Cypress-Tupelo swamps are publicly owned so we support a ban on logging in all Class III areas. We think that easements and other incentives need to be developed so the landowners are not penalized and we can save the trees.

Cypress Petition. Diane Casteel of the HI Group and Dean Wilson, chair of the Atchafalya committee have been working hard getting the Cypress Petition out. You can download copies at <http://louisiana.sierraclub.org/honeyisland/petition.pdf>.

Mini Grant. We applied for a mini grant from the National Sierra Club to pay for public education on the issue. We are in the process of developing radio and print ads.

If you would like to volunteer for this important issue, please contact Leslie March at 985-871-6695. We will have statewide tabling opportunities at fun festivals.

Groups

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events and more about our group. www.louisiana.sierraclub.org/honeyisland

Meetings

Excom Meeting. Our group has a bi-monthly Excom meeting on the third Thursday of the month. All members are welcome. No meeting in August, Next meeting is October 20th. Call Caryn Schoeffler at 985-386-7678 for information.

Next General Meeting. Sept 15 7P.M. at the Mandeville Community Center. Call Diane Casteel at 985-626-5628 for directions.

Outings

Taking August off. See website for September outings.

Kisatchie Group

We cover the northwestern part of the state. We are looking for activists interested in being conservation leaders for N. Louisiana and Outings Leaders. Please contact Jeff Wellborn at 318-222-1801 or jwellborn@sport.rr.com

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 it to:
John Calaway, Director, Gift Planning
#5 Second Street, 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105
(435) 973-5639
Email: planned.giving@sierraclub.org

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____



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