



DELTA SIERRAN

Delta Chapter Newsletter

www.louisiana.sierraclub.org

Fall 2009

Climate Call To Action



The forces of resistance against doing anything about climate change are hard at work and have huge amounts of money to spend on lobbying and public disinformation campaigns. They are putting out wildly exaggerated estimates of costs and job losses. They refuse to look at the overwhelming body of peer reviewed scientific evidence that tells us that greenhouse gas emissions from human activity are causing global climate change. The information that we have tells us that rapid climate change will cause disruption to economies and human lives that will be far more costly than taking action now to prevent its worst effects.

The Sierra Club nationally and in Louisiana is committed to the fight to educate about climate change and persuade individuals, families, interest groups and politicians on the necessity for change in the current energy economy that is skewed to encourage consumption of fossil fuels and emissions of greenhouse gases. The American Clean Energy and Security Act (HR 2454) passed by the House of Representatives is an imperfect but significant step in the right direction towards establishing economic incentives to transition to a clean energy economy and create thousands of jobs for people who will work in a clean energy economy.

The coal industry has been successful in obtaining big loopholes in the currently proposed legislation that will allow them to carry on business as usual at their oldest and dirtiest plants. A principal objective of the Sierra Club will be to get these loopholes closed as the legislation moves forward. It's also vital that we ramp up the bill's investments in energy efficiency and hasten the transition toward clean energy sources like wind and solar.

Whatever happens to the Clean Energy and Security Act it is important for the Sierra Club and the environmental/conservationist community to encourage the movement beyond dirty coal to a clean energy economy with incentives for energy conservation and use of renewable non fossil based fuels. This message is a call to

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Mercury Victory

EnerVest Operating LLC of Houston, a major operator of natural gas wells in the Monroe Gas Field, has agreed to remove all mercury meters and to clean up mercury-contaminated wetlands and other soils at gas production sites in Ouachita, Morehouse and Union parishes.

The agreement was reached July 3rd in U.S. District Court in Monroe between the company and a coalition of environmental groups, including the Louisiana Audubon Council, the Delta Chapter of the Sierra Club, Gulf Restoration Network and the Louisiana Environmental Action Network. The coalition was represented by the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic.

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Delta Sierran



FALL 2009 NEWSLETTER OF THE DELTA CHAPTER

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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.

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View From The Chair

August 7, 2009

Senator Mary Landrieu
328 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510
<http://landrieu.senate.gov>
Dear Senator Landrieu,

The historic passage of the American Clean Energy and Security Act in the House of Representatives creates a sound framework for a clean energy future. While imperfect, it sets forth goals that America must achieve -- and exceed. Its most important achievement is setting the United States on a path to reduce carbon emissions some 80 percent by 2050. It also makes strides in halting international deforestation, requires new buildings to dramatically slash energy waste, will speed the development of made-in-America electric vehicles, and provides important protections for workers, consumers, and others who may be affected by our transition to a clean energy future.

The Clean Energy and Security Act is also an important long term investment in protection of Louisiana's coast from more violent storms and rising sea levels. The consequences of global climate change fall very heavily on low lying coastal areas such as south Louisiana. We have the most to lose in terms of destruction of our coastal communities, destruction of our energy and transportation infrastructure, and coastal land loss.

Although it makes a strong start, the Clean Energy and Security Act must be strengthened before it reaches the President's desk. I hope that you will work to strengthen this plan as it moves forward. There are a few main areas for improvement I urge you to push for. In particular, a mechanism for cleaning up the oldest and dirtiest coal plants must be included in a final bill. It's also vital that we ramp up the bill's investments in energy efficiency, hasten our transition toward clean energy sources like wind and solar, and steer more of the bill's investments toward the public benefit, not polluters.

Comprehensive clean energy and climate legislation can create millions of new, good-paying clean energy jobs, make us more energy independent, help solve our climate crisis and help protect the Louisiana gulf coast. Please ensure that this legislation is strong enough to achieve these goals.

Haywood Martin, Chair
Sierra Club Delta Chapter

Hope that you and your family had a great summer. If you have some time, you might sit down and write a short note to Mary and other members of our delegation to remind them that clean energy matters. What congress enacts now will effect generations to come.

Delta Chapter Turns 40

Forty years ago I bought a new 1969 Volkswagen beetle. Forty years ago I joined the Sierra Club. I still have the beetle, it's still running fine; I still belong to the Sierra Club, and it's going strong too.

It was 1969 when I read in the Tulane University Hullabaloo that a Louisiana chapter of the Sierra Club was forming. I had hiked and camped in Yosemite when I was on U. S. Navy active duty in California, so I had already heard a little bit about the club. The organizer, later chairman and even later president of the national Sierra Club, was a somewhat stuffed-shirt lawyer named Bill Futrell. Bill was intensely focused, with a missionary's zeal, on getting the chapter established, and his efforts paid off as the Delta Chapter makes 40 (as we say in New Orleans)



What is it about so much importance? times because forty is a built the ark, it rained for passed through the Red wandered for 40 years desert to pray and fast he stayed there 40 days. period during the 40 days commemorates when and whose name is given after Easter. St.. Paul when he was beaten 39 Corinthians that he had been whipped “forty times less one.” On the other hand, maybe Paul didn't like to write “thirty-nine.”

40 that carries so much power, Maybe it got started in biblical big number in the Bible. After Noah 40 days and 40 nights. After they Sea, Moses and the Israelites in the desert. Jesus went into the before beginning his mission, and Christians commemorate that of Lent. Ascension Day, which Jesus left the earth for heaven to Ascension Parish, is 40 days liked the number 40 so much that times, he reported in a letter to the

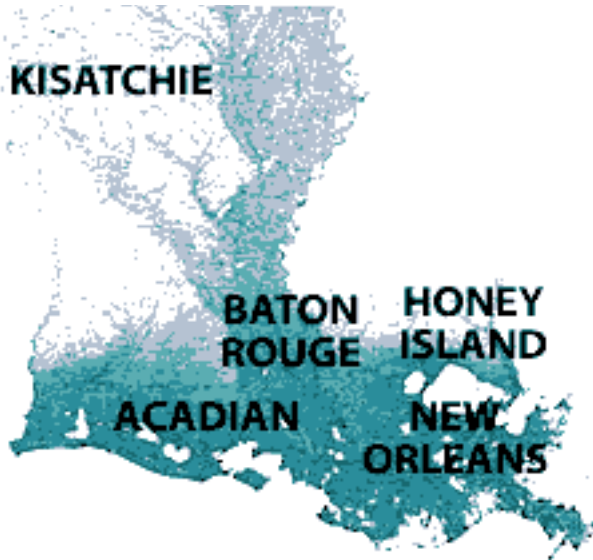
Remember the story of Ali Baba in Arabian Nights? He isn't associated with Baba Ganoush or Babas au Rhum but with 40 thieves who hung out with him in the desert.

In one of his sonnets Shakespeare elegantly described reaching the magic age of 40 as “When forty winters shall besiege thy brow. . . .” In Will's day I guess that was getting sort of old, and people were losing teeth; today forty-year-olds are still wearing braces. Something magical must have happened in the 400 years since Shakespeare's time. Four hundred years is ten times forty.

One of the wisest men in American history spoke of the importance of 40. In Poor Richard's Almanac Ben Franklin wrote that “At twenty years of age, the will reigns; at thirty, the wit; and at forty, the judgment.” I wonder how old he was when he was flying that kite in a thunderstorm.

After General William Tecumseh Sherman drove his army from Atlanta to Savannah, he issued a hopeful but unenforceable order giving freed slaves “40 Acres and a Mule.” They never got it; the magic of 40 didn't go that far. But the order was reasonably credible. Had he promised “40 Mules and An Acre” no one's hope would have been raised.

Group News



Acadian: The group meets at the Acadian Symphony Building, 412 Travis St., Lafayette, La, general meetings at 6:30 PM on the third Thursday. Contact Harold Schoeffler at 337-234-4042. Outings listed on web site at louisiana.sierraclub.org/acadian.

Baton Rouge: Excom meets on the first Monday of the month at Whole Foods in their upstairs room at 7PM, Check out Green Pub night activities and other events on Facebook. Contact Karynne Abel @ karynn.abel@gmail.com

Honey Island: Meets monthly on the Northshore contact Bill Sussky at wsussky@minilogic.com or www.louisiana.sierraclub.org/honeyisland. You can also join the new Honey Island Google group; groups.google.com/group/honeyislandsierra.

Kistachie: Contact Jeff Wellborn, 318-222-1801, jwelbrn@seaber.com

New Orleans: The New Orleans Group has a monthly program on the first Sunday at the Dominion Building at the Audubon Zoo starts at 6:30PM. To get directions and to get the latest information go to louisiana.sierraclub.org/neworleans or call 504-836-3062. For up to date outings information join New Orleans group on Facebook.

Volunteers needed for the NOLA Recycles 2010 Campaign, A Rally will be held on December 14th at Touro Synagogue in New Orleans from 7-9 PM. Volunteers are needed to help with organizing the rally, mailings, phone banking with the goal of getting local politicians to sign on to the NOLA Recycles 2010 Plan and to get the plan implemented in 2010. Contact Darryl Malek-Wiley at 504-865-8708.



Power Shift 2009

To our friends at Delta Sierra Club,

We would like to thank you for giving us this amazing opportunity. Going to D.C. opened the eyes of so many students who wanted to make a change but didn't know how. At Powershift, we found a way to make a difference in our world, we found a supporting network. Most of us did not fully know the impact that we, as humans, have on our world, or the power of our collective voices. There is a new hope for tomorrow.

Thank you for helping us to attain it.

ECO@LSU

S at LSU

Dear Delta Sierra Club,

I'm writing on behalf of Katie Peterson, Matt Wyatt, and Ashley Braquet-- the three youth that the Delta Chapter sent to Sprog, the Sierra Student Coalition's Summer Trainings Program. With your donation, these three bright young leaders, along with 4 others from Louisiana and 24 others from Texas and Oklahoma, were given the opportunity to learn, practice, and share countless environmental organizing skills.

Katie and Matt will now go on to lead ECO, the student environmental group at LSU as president and vice president respectively. Ashley will become the facilitator of the Youth Alliance for Louisiana Leaders (YALL), the new network for student climate environmental organizers, and she has also just taken a full-time job with Repower Louisiana as a Baton Rouge Field Organizer.

All 31 students and youth who attend Sprog are now paying Sierra Club members. I would encourage the Delta Chapter and the individual Sierra Club groups to welcome Katie, Matt, and Ashley (as well as the other 4 from LA: Jason Faulk, Caroline Gilchrist, Lizzy Hingle, and Amanda Harb) into the chapter as members and leaders. I hope that they will continue to represent our generation and recruit others to the Sierra Club. I also hope that y'all have the opportunity to work with these new leaders and become inspired by their passion and dedication to ensuring a just and clean energy future for our state. I know I'm inspired!

Again, thank you for investing in our youth and allowing us to bring more and more people into the movement.

Sincerely,

Rachel Guillory
Co-Director, Texas Sprog 2009
Sierra Student Coalition
rachel.guillory@ssc.org
985-768-8997



Katie Peterson



Ashley Braquet



Matt Wyatt



Sprog Texas 2009

ECO is on Facebook, join today for the latest happenings.

Greening Louisiana

Sierra Club hosts state and industry leaders to come together and discuss green jobs and our climate.

Contributed by Jordan Macha

On September 15th, over 70 citizens from the metro New Orleans area came together for an evening of education and dialogue on addressing Louisiana's economic and energy challenges through the creation of green jobs and training programs in areas like energy efficiency and solar and wind.

The panel featured Senator Nick Gautreaux, Representative Walter Leger, Troy Von Otnott of South Coast Solar and Dawn Falgout-Loebig of the Old City Building Center. The conversation between the panelists ranged from green jobs, energy efficiency, renewable resources and how these initiatives fit into the 2009 state legislation just passed, regulatory programs that the state and the city of New Orleans is considering and the challenges and benefits we will face with the adoption of these programs.

"We are in a time where critical decisions need to be made regarding energy, climate change and its impacts on Louisiana and the nation. We have the opportunity to provide green jobs to stimulate the economy and help reverse the consequences of our past choices," notes Jordan Macha, Sierra Club Conservation Organizer in Louisiana. "Today's leaders and youth will inherit this crisis and are in need of serious education on the issue."

This event highlighted that doing more of the same is not only dangerous to the health of our coasts, but it won't solve our problems. Embracing clean energy options and efficiency measures can accelerate the transition to new energy while creating new jobs, spurring investment in new industries and curb the effects of global climate change. "This should not be a division between the haves and have-nots," said Troy Von Otnott. Von Otnott and Dawn Falgout-Loebig stressed the importance of making energy efficiency measures affordable to the public, and providing training for green industry jobs keep jobs local and help move New Orleans and Louisiana into a clean energy economy.

Check it out

The New Orleans Green Building Assessment, a report compiled by the Sierra Club and graduate students from the Monterey Institute of International Studies and sponsored by UWA Local 620.

The report is about the growth of support for green building in New Orleans after Katrina/Rita. To read the report and an interview with co-author, Kristin McKee go to www.louisiana.sierraclub.org

Both Senator Gautreaux and Representative Leger recognized the need for the state to step up and create incentives for industry to move in an environmentally conscious direction. The representatives each authored and passed legislation to encourage "green industry" in the state this past session. Representative Leger noted that we must begin to focus on the fact that "a job is a job", and as industry becomes more environmentally mindful, we will no longer be talking about "jobs" versus "green jobs", but jobs that get the work done while preserving our environment.

"Louisiana has become the international leader in the oil and gas industry, sending people all over the world to train and educate others on the technology and best practices we have developed," said Senator Nick Gautreaux. He emphasized, however, that Louisiana can and should become the future leader of the clean energy industry, finding balance between the fossil fuel industrial leadership of the past and the new energy leadership of the future.

The evening concluded with poignant questions from the audience, ranging from the federal climate bill to what a green job is, how a green job is defined, what defines a green job.

First Annual
**Green Rebuilding of
New Orleans Conference**
Nov. 8 & 9th

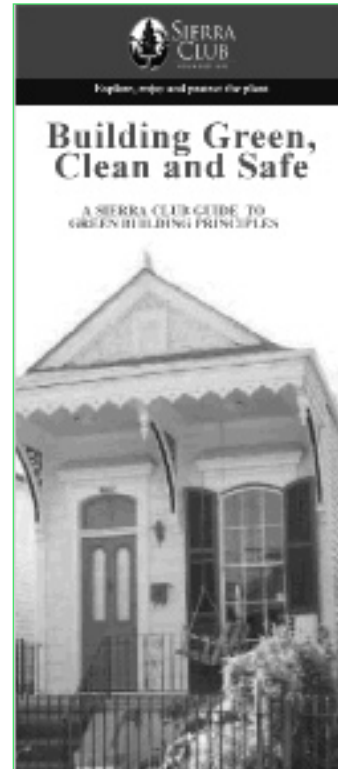
Doubletree Hotel,
300 Canal St. in Downtown
New Orleans

Register at
rebuildnolagreen.com

First Annual Green Rebuilding of New Orleans Conference

Following up from the Sierra Club's recent release of a New Orleans Green Building Assessment report, the Sierra Club Delta Chapter, the United Steel Workers Local 620 in partnership with local community and environmental organizations are planning the first annual post-Katrina conference to discuss green building and rebuilding efforts that have occurred throughout the city since the infamous 2005 storm. The conference will take place on November 8th and 9th at the Doubletree Hotel in downtown New Orleans. The event is the first of its kind and will have three simultaneous tracks on Green Building, Urban Farming in Metro New Orleans, and Green Jobs.

While we are awaiting the confirmation of an exciting keynote speaker, you can check out the most recent agenda at nolarebuildgreen.com. The conference committee includes the Alliance for Affordable Energy, Lower 9th Ward Center for Sustainable Engagement & Development, Mary Queen of Vietnam CDC, Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, Historic Green, Global Green, Make It Right, LA Green Job Corps, Pontchartrain Park, Gulf South Solar, Green Coast Enterprise, RePower and the New Orleans Food and Farm Network. The 2-day conference will culminate in a unique brainstorming workshop that will serve as a



Check out the new and improved
Green Building Brochure on
www.louisiana.sierraclub.org

launch point for the New Orleans community to devise a working plan for future green initiatives throughout the metro area.

Darryl Malek-Wiley, Regional Representative at the Sierra Club's office in New Orleans, has been working for environmental justice and sustainable waste management in New Orleans for over 25 years. An extremely well respected member of the community with unparalleled first-hand knowledge of New Orleans' environmental issues, Malek-Wiley has organized a bus tour for conference attendees wanting to have a close-up experience of the city's green building efforts. The 3-hour tour is an additional \$15, which includes a boxed lunch.

The conference will serve as a great networking opportunity for professionals, community leaders, and citizens, and people of all backgrounds are both welcome and encouraged to participate in the event. Continuing education credits for architects and landscape architects will be available with a professional grade registration. For more information on registration, being a presenter, sponsorship opportunities, and scholarships, please contact Jennifer Grosso, Event Coordinator, at (504) 861-4835 or Jennifer.Grosso@SierraClub.org.

No Justice in First FEMA Trailer Trial



By Becky Gillette

NEW ORLEANS—It feels like the Katrina\Rita survivors have been once again been let down by the federal government in the decision by a federal jury in New Orleans against the plaintiffs in the first FEMA trailer trial. It is like being back to square one when the government denied for 2.5 years that formaldehyde was a problem in the FEMA trailers.

I think all the discussion of the different formaldehyde standards could have been confusing to jurors. The defense claimed that none of the trailers tested over HUD's target level of 400 parts per billion. HUD doesn't have a standard for indoor air levels of formaldehyde in manufactured housing, but its extremely weak and useless regulations for wood products used in the housing are supposed to meet a "target" of 400 parts per billion.

That level is EXTREMELY high, and most people would have trouble even drawing a breath in an environment with formaldehyde levels that high. One person whose travel trailer tested nearly that high told me it was like "trying to breathe with two burning cigarettes up your nose."

In contrast, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry's Minimum Risk Level is only 30 part per billion for 14 to 365 days exposure, and only 8 part per billion for 364 or more days exposure.

People in the FEMA trailers lived with formaldehyde so high it caused bloody noses, watery eyes, sinus congestion, constant coughing, rashes, depression and short-term memory problems. Many also got cancer, and more are at risk for getting cancer in the future.

This is a "bellwether" trial, meaning that the outcome is not legally binding, but will be used to help allow parties to decide if a

settlement would be the best way to resolve the issue. The next FEMA trailer bellwether trial is scheduled to start Dec. 6.

While the decision is very disappointing, remember we are up against powerful business interests that have made millions of dollars by making sure formaldehyde is not regulated in the U.S. to protect people's health. Here is a comment from a Sierra Club volunteer that puts it in perspective:

Remember that it took YEARS to bring down Big Tobacco – and a long trail of defeats that left prosecutors believing the tobacco companies were untouchable. But when that first case finally broke for the plaintiffs, the eventual outcomes were the largest in history.

"We are fighting for the right side. And we are just beginning to fight."

Background from editor: Becky Gillette was the first to recognize the travesty of putting hurricane victims in temporary housing that made their families sick. As a member of the Sierra Club Gulf Coast Restoration Task force, Becky recruited Mary Devany, Cascade chapter member and industrial safety expert. Following Mary's expert advice, members of the Delta, Mississippi and Alabama Chapters were involved in testing FEMA trailers throughout the Gulf Coast.

To read the entire article written by Becky Gillette go to the Delta Chapter web site, www.louisiana.sierraclub.org, to continue to follow this issue and to read more detail about the trial checkout Becky's Blog at www.toxictrailers.org.

Hot news at press time is that the verdict will be appealed.

Mercury



Dr. Barry Kohl

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The suit was originally filed in May of 2007 against EnerVest, the largest natural gas producer in the Monroe Field. The company was accused of neglecting older manometers that were leaking mercury into their sites risking contamination of ground water and local water bodies. Mercury has been extensively studied by public health scientists and has been found to cause death or genetic damage to unborn fetuses and it has been tied to severe learning disabilities in young children.

As a result of the suit and court-adopted settlement, EnerVest has removed more than 400 active mercury meters and replaced them with dry-flow meters, which do not pollute, according to a news release from the coalition. "EnerVest is setting a good corporate example by settling this case and agreeing to clean up their mercury meter sites," said Barry Kohl of the Audubon Council. He said other natural gas producers in the Monroe Gas Field must come forward with cleanup plans to reverse mercury pollution. "If not, the coalition will continue to seek legal remedies. Leaky meters continue to contaminate private property and public resources," he said.

The Delta Chapter wants to applaud the work of Dr. Barry Kohl, member of the Audubon Council and the Delta Chapter Excom. Without Dr. Kohl's perseverance and determination, this suit might have fallen on deaf ears. Dr. Kohl has dedicated a great amount of his personal time to protecting Louisiana citizens from the dangers of mercury pollution. We couldn't have won this suit without his expertise and wise hand. We need to thank our environmental NGO partners and the Tulane Environmental Law clinic too. Great job everyone!

Climate Wars

Chapter needs help

Continued from pg... 1

action requesting you to join in that effort. Our Senators and Congressmen are hearing much more from the big money funded industry groups than they are hearing from us. We have to change that.

The immediate objective is to get the Clean Energy and Security Act passed on the Senate floor. We feel that this is an urgent priority. Here are some ways that you can help:

Letters to Senators Landrieu and Vitter can be sent by going to – <http://action.sierraclub.org/aces> – and using the online letter at the top right of the web page. You can also go to the Delta Chapter web site, global warming page <http://louisiana.sierraclub.org/climatechange.asp> to find the letter I wrote to Senator Landrieu. Feel free to use that letter as is or personalize it to represent your concerns.

Another effective tool is to write letters to the Editor of your local newspaper supporting the Clean Energy and Security Act – legislators keep track of what is printed in their local newspapers. Further information and other options for action are listed at <http://action.sierraclub.org/aces>

And finally I would like to make an appeal for Delta Chapter Members to respond to me at chair@louisiana.sierraclub.org if you would like to work with me on this issue. I envision a group of volunteers who will send letters, make phone calls and show up at meetings to show support for climate change legislation and related issues at the national level and in the state legislature. Our coastline and coastal communities, our economy, and life as it will be experienced by our children and grandchildren depend on moderating the worst effects of climate change and on adapting to the effects of climate change that are already upon us.

Please help us in this effort.

Haywood (Woody) Martin, Chair
Delta Chapter Sierra Club

UAW Local 640 members had a Jambalaya Party with Delta Chapter Members on September 10th at the Union Hall in Gonzales, LA. The UAW is a major contributor to the Delta Chapter's work to promote green jobs.



Blue Green Alliance

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