Earth Day 2005

Delta Chapter Groups were active throughout Southeastern Louisiana for Earth Day 2005. The Children's Committee of the Baton Rouge Chapter of the Sierra Club hosted a meeting with East Baton Rouge Mayor President Kip Holden on Tuesday, April 12, 2005 at 4:00 p.m. to highlight activities in connection with the 2005 Earth Day celebrations. Children decorated oversized postcards about the environment to the Mayor and thanked him for his long history of support for clean air and water issues. Molly Weiss, chair of the Children's committee, stated "The Sierra Club believes that the younger we educate children about the importance of the environment, the stronger the support will be in twenty to thirty years when these issues will be critical". Later in the week, on Sunday, April 17th, Sierra Club Volunteers, Gavin Robinson, Lu Cutrera and David Jenson helped organize tabling at the annual Baton Rouge Earthday Event. The theme of this year's Event was Imagine. The events included an All-Species Parade led by the Mayor. After the parade, hands on earth friendly activities were available for all ages including children's art and checking out the hybrid cars. If you missed this event, I would recommend putting this event on the calendar for next year.

On the Northshore, the Honey Island Group participated in two Earth day events. The volunteers provided the community with an updated guide to recycling household items. This guide has an extensive list of places located in St. Tammany Parish that recycle a majority of your common household trash.

If you would like to compile a guide for your own area, check it out on the Honey Island website http://louisiana.sierraclub.org/honeyisland. Volunteer, Diane Casteel tabled at the Watershed Festival held at the Mandeville Trace on Saturday, April 16th, Volunteers, Margie Vicknair-Pray along with her daughter Peyton tabled with Carolyn and Terry Montieth at the Earth day in Slidell at the Heritage Park.

Inside The Sierran

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Activist Update

Conservation Chair speaks: Reservoirs. Coastal wetland loss. Cypress logging. Mercury in our fisheries. Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) facilities. The Atchafalaya Basin. Environmental Justice. And the list goes on. These are just some of the issues the Delta Chapter is actively engaged in. Folks just like you giving what time they can spare to help make things right. Folks that have full time jobs, families, homes, other social commitments and, yes, a great concern about what is happening to Louisiana’s natural heritage and quality of life.

Over the years I have been involved with the Sierra Club I have written many paragraphs like the one above. I plan to continue to write those words. For each time someone reads and understands what I am trying to convey, and it awakens the need to become active and participate in our efforts, I feel an important step has been taken to reach our goals.

There are so many ways to get involved, the first step is to determine what you want your time and activity level to be. You can literally spend how many minutes a month making an impact through writing letters, both to the decision makers and for the editorial page of your local newspaper. We need to make our case not only to those who have the authority to decide on the matter but also to the general public who can assist us in swaying those in authority to make the right choice in policy and regulations.

If you want more, there is always more to do. Going to public meetings, becoming a member of the Delta Chapter Conservation Committee, gathering information for our website, creating handout materials and working a table at a public event, meetings with your legislators, the list is only limited by our imaginations.

Just do me one favor before you decide not to do anything at all. Go to our website <www.louisiana.sierraclub.org> and read the information that is already there. Not all of the issues I listed above have thorough presentations but you can get a feel for what we are trying to accomplish. You could be the person that helps us fill in some of those information gaps.

I believe the Delta Chapter has a great deal of momentum from the great work already ongoing within several of the issues listed above. We need to keep that going but none of us can continue forever without the assistance of others. Please think about how you want our state to be outside your door in the future. If you’re concerned that future may not be what you envision, give me a call or send me a message. Maurice Coman, Conservation Chair, mfcoman@aol.com, 504-481-0919

Legislative News

As the 2005 Legislative Session winds down, it is time for us to get started on 2006. Why? Because you can be sure that those in opposition to our ideas or those with ideas we oppose will be too. While the 2005 “Fiscal” Session somewhat limited both sides to the amount of legislation to be considered, the 2006 General Session will once again be the biennial free-for-all with a new twist. Next year will be the last general session to about 2/3 of the legislature that is term-limited. In other words, this will be the last hurrah for many a legislator who in the past could always wait for another year or two to push their priorities. In 2006 that will no longer be the case. It will be a no-holds-barred, go-for-broke and get-while-the-gettin’s-good shoot-for-the-stars extravaganza.

Now that I’ve purged myself of cliches, here is what we must do to be ready. First, and most importantly, we have to put a face or several faces of the Sierra Club to each legislator. That means making appointments to go and talk to these people. That is the operative word, “people.” Legislators, no matter how many times they appear in the newspaper or on TV, they are still just people. Speaking to a legislator is no different than speaking to a co-worker, social acquaintance or neighbor. You don’t have to be an issue or policy expert. Just go and tell them your environmental concerns, issue or policy expert. Just go and tell them your environmental concerns, maybe throw out a couple of ideas they are not some stranger who calls during the session to ask them to consider the Sierra Club’s position on legislation. Once you do it you will laugh to yourself how really easy it turned out to be. The trick is timing.

A good many legislators tend to be busy people who must also make a living outside their time in Baton Rouge. So you must make an appointment far enough in advance that you get their undivided attention

Continued on page 7
The Mulch Beast Helped by Sen. Vitter Keeps On Munching

By: Maura Woods, Regional Staff. Sierra Club

Recently, Senator David Vitter placed an amendment on the Water Resources Development Act of 2005 (WRDA) that would allow clearcutting of our coastal cypress forests. Why would our Senator, who says he wants Louisiana’s coast to be restored, instead help to facilitate its destruction? Here’s the story.

A couple of years ago, a Mississippi timber company began to clearcut 3000 acres of cypress swamps in Lake Maurepas to be chipped into garden mulch. They claimed that they did not need any permits for this cutting because normal silviculture is exempt from having to obtain a Section 404 dredge and fill permit. The Corps of Engineers, however, stepped in and issued a cease and desist order. Section 10 of the 1899 Rivers and Harbors Act gives the Corps the responsibility of overseeing the condition and capacity of the nation’s navigable waters, and they asserted this jurisdiction to halt the logging and require the loggers to apply for permit.

Working through Rep. Billy Tauzin’s office, and now through Senator David Vitter, timber and logging interests including the La. Forestry Association have been trying to remove the Corps Section 10 jurisdiction ever since. Senator Vitter was successful last month in sneaking an amendment into WRDA that would indeed severely curtail the Corps ability to protect our nation’s waters under Section 10. Although Senator Vitter was aiming at allowing logging to proceed in Louisiana’s forests for his timber friends, unfortunately his amendment will affect rivers and streams nationwide.

COASTAL RESTORATION OR COASTAL DEMOLITION?

Meanwhile, Senator Mary Landrieu, in a big gift to oil corporations, has filed a bill that would lift the moratoria that protect the shorelines and beaches of many states from the ravages of offshore oil and gas exploration and drilling. We in Louisiana know that the impacts of such activities can be very severe. In fact, oil and gas activities have been a contributing cause of our coastal erosion problem, which we are hoping that the nation will help us pay up to $14 billion to repair.

It seems like our Senators would show some consistency in their approach to coastal protection. If they want America to care about protecting Louisiana’s coast, they need to show that they are willing to take some political heat to protect what we’ve got, not work on behalf of timber corporations to enable destruction. Instead, our Senators’ actions seem to say ‘log our coast, drill their coast, and give Louisiana the money, money, money.’

Cypress Mulch Facts

Cypress is not a Sustainable product. It grows very slowly in order to grow its’ strong heartwood. http://www.coastalforestswg.lsu.edu/

Cypress is the lifeblood of our swamps. Birds come from South America and the Arctic to nest in the Atchafalaya.

Cypress loggers are harvesting trees as small as a 2 inch diameter for mulch.

Cypress Mulch does not last longer than other mulches nor is it insect resistant. The old growth Cypress was insect resistant. Today’s young trees are not.

What can I do about Cypress logging?

1. Don’t use Cypress Mulch


3. Talk to your Friends, Family and Neighbors

4. Talk to your Garden Retailer

For more information, and to take action, please visit the Delta Chapter website at www.louisiana.sierraclub.org
HI-YO, SILVER! Earl’s Pearls Celebrates Twenty Five Years

In 1979, Stu Phillips was the editor of the Delta Sierran. He was not content to use the monthly newspaper to report environmental news, print outings schedules, and provide editorial commentary. He wanted more spirit in the paper. He printed an inverted symbol of a brown pelican on the top of the front page as a distress symbol for several years until the exterminated state bird made a come-back along the Louisiana coast. He wrote goofy and racy headlines that raised eyebrows and made people talk – just the effect he wanted. When I was in high school, twenty years earlier, I had written a column of humor and satire in the school’s monthly magazine. The column was appropriately named The Bull Pen, and I offered to write a similar column for the Delta Sierran. Stu heartily endorsed the idea, and the first piece of now more than twenty-five years of humor, satire, and general nonsense appeared in the January 1980 issue. Stu decided to publish it, not as a separate humor column but as part of the general news section.

Sierrans weren’t sure what they were writing was real – most of it wasn’t, of course, but that policy and format continued for several years, including the March 1980 issue. Stu decided to publish it, not as a separate humor column but as part of the general news section.

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Earl’s Pearls Hits 25

A quarter century of wit ...

Earl on assignment at the Krewe Du Vieux

only missed the point and the fun on occasion but decided they were offended by the satire they didn’t understand. But, hey, isn’t satire supposed to offend, at least a little bit? Especially those who don’t get it? I guess the question is what or who is being satirized. It was Nancy who decided that the periodic columns would henceforth be designated “Earl’s Pearls.” Let it be said that this was not an entirely original title. Until the 1970s or maybe earlier there was a syndicated newspaper gossip columnist by the name of Earl Wilson. His column, defunct by the mid-1980s, was called “Earl’s Pearls.” I was not entirely thrilled by Nancy’s decision; Earl Wilson was a crummy writer, campy and tattling. But she stuck with the name, and it is now identified with me instead of the mostly forgotten Earl Wilson. I imagine that if someone in the future (Will anybody be named “Earl” in the future?) wants to name his (or her?) column “Earl’s Pearls,” someone will protest because it may remind him of that nasty stuff that used to be in the Delta Sierran.

Some past editors, unnamed here, were so uncomfortable with publishing satire that months would go by with no “Earl’s Pearls.” However, readers were looking for it and asking why the column did not appear. Changes in editors helped until they decided to quit editing what I wrote and just printed it out – for God and everybody to read and feel offended or entertained or whatever.

Over the years I have had fun with many interviews with Smokey the Bear. There will be more in the future. Somewhere along the story line the Florida Parishes

Continued to page 7
Calling all Outings Leaders

Outings is how the Sierra Club started. It is where many of us started with the Sierra Club. Waiting out there in our communities are many others who love the outdoors and are just waiting (though they may not know it yet) to become involved with our organization after going on one or more of our planned trips into the natural world. There is only one problem: who is going to take them there? We already have some volunteers who are doing just that. Yet we need many, many more leaders who are willing to offer them to their favorite places. Yes, it really is that simple. The next time you plan to go to that special place that takes your breath away, or allows you to fill your lungs with that special air or fills your heart with serenity and the joy of living, couldn’t you take just a few others and enrich their lives? Couldn’t you wake up those activists-in-waiting to the reality that what they are seeing, breathing, and feeling can be lost without diligence on their part? While I will admit that Sierra Club does require our Outings Leaders to now adhere to some bureaucratic requirements, it is absolutely necessary. In our current litigious society, we have to follow these rules in order to be covered by Sierra Club’s insurance. All leaders are responsible for properly advertising your outing, being clear on the abilities of your participants and getting the waiver forms signed. All leaders need to meet the Aid/CPR class and Sierra Club Outings Leader Training prerequisites. Your Group Outings Chair or I will gladly help you meet these requirements. Help our Outings Program be the vehicle to get our members (and even non-members) outside and experience what we are working to protect. If some become inspired to get engaged in our work, even better. The main point is we have already have some very good outings leaders. Yet we need many more to offer the variety of trips necessary to give everyone the opportunity to do what interests them most. We need you to share the outdoors with others who need that guiding hand to get to those special places. For more information and to lead your own outing contact the chapter or your group outings chair.

Chapter Events

Next Chapter Meeting
16-17 July hosted by the Acadian Group
15-16 October hosted by the New Orleans Group

New Orleans Group
Checkpoint our website for up to date information and how to receive action alerts http://louisiana.sierrclub.org/neworleans/
Executive Committee Meeting Open to all members. If interested in attending call Micah Walker Parkin at 504-865-8708 or check the above website.

Group News
New Orleans Group receives Arc of Greater New Orleans Award

Wednesday, May 11, Wendy King, New Orleans Group Waste and Recycling Committee Chair accepted an award plaque on behalf of the New Orleans Group from the Arc of Greater New Orleans, for the group’s coordination of the collection and recycling of Mardi Gras beads. Former New Orleans Group member Betty Brody (now living in Washington, DC) first began this project, by placing announcements in the Delta Sierran, to remind fellow Sierrans to collect their old Mardi Gras beads, and donate them to bins placed throughout the city, at various businesses, and leaving an email address so that people could contact her for more information. The awards ceremony, part of the Arc’s annual business meeting and recognition service, took place at the Audubon Zoo’s Administration building, and honored not only our group, but local businesses, and the Arc’s students, for their hard work and achievements throughout the year. The New Orleans Group is very happy with the response of our communities towards recycling Mardi Gras beads, and encourages all of our members and friends to continue to donate their beads, so that these beads can be reused, and bring rewards to both the Arc’s students and local businesses throughout Carnival season.

New Orleans Group Rewards Students

The New Orleans Group awarded $25 Cash and a student membership to three Greater New Orleans Area Students at the annual Spring 2005 Math and Science Fair. The winners were Bayley Simmons and Brittany Ross of the Benjamin Franklin High School, Betsy Lopez at East Jefferson High School and Sarah Norton at Crescent City Baptist School. Kudos to teachers, Lawana Stewart, Cheryl Offner and David Prentice for mentoring these students. The money for the award was granted to the New Orleans group by a retired teacher.

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.

Reminder: Sunday, July 10th Sierra Club Annual BBQ – 4-7pm Not sure if we’ll be at Audubon or City Park, if you’ve got a preference email Program Chair, aaronviles@netzero.net Sierra Club will provide the grill, burgers (meat and veggie) & buns. 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.

General Meeting and Lecture Series. Held on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 6:30 P.M. in the Acadiana Symphony Building, 412 Travis St. Lafayette. Please call Paul Fontenot at 337-235-0011 for more information

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Baton Rouge Group

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

June Meetings

Excom Meeting

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

Outings

Alligator Bayou Canoe Trip - Saturday July 10th 2004. Sierra Club Alligator Bayou Moonless Canoe Trip. Meet at Alligator Bayou Bait Shop at 6:00pm. Bring food, rain gear and a flashlight. Rental canoes ($12) are available by contacting trip leader David Roussanier via email (drousma@yahoo.com) or call 225-768-7561 or bring your own canoe. Trip fee is $2 per person. Put-in fee is $5. Please bring exact change.

Honey Island Group

Please see our website for upcoming 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. Next meeting is July 19th. Call Caryn Schoeffler at 985-386-7678 for information.

General Meeting. Sept 15th, 7p.m. at the Mandeville Community Center. Call Diane Casteel at 985-626-5628 for directions.

Outings

(Note outings are open to all members and nonmembers)

Saturday, June 18th, Paddling on the Pearl River. This time, as a nod to our Washington Parish members, we are going to meet at Poole's Bluff near Sun, LA, and ride down the canal and back. We'll round out the afternoon with a meal at the Poole's Bluff Catfish House. We will be taking a break from the canoe to explore the Bogue Chitto Wildlife Management area across the canal. Launch is at 5:00pm and the paddle will last approximately 2-3 hours. The outing is free but supper will be on the participant. Canoes will not be furnished. To request information regarding directions, etc. to Sandy at 985.643.6363 or at lobo53@bellsouth.net for reservations. See you there!

Sunday, June 19th, Fairview-Riverside State Park. We're going to Madisonville to enjoy an afternoon of biking, walking, and socializing. Meet us at 1:45p at the Otis House on the grounds. We will be taking a tour of the house ($2) and then enjoying watermelon at the picnic tables nearby. So, bring your kids, bring your bikes and bring your curiosity. Let us know if you are coming so there will be plenty of watermelon! Warren Zimmermann 985.871.6695 or WzCarnival@aol.com.

Sunday, June 25th, Bayou Sauvage. We'll bike the trail at the National Wildlife Refuge and expect to see bunnies, birds, and the occasional beast (gators, feral hogs, all at a safe distance). The trip will total about 10 miles with a stop at the Visitors’ Center at the halfway mark. Meet at the fishing bridge off Highway 11 at 8:00am. Bring water. Watermelon will be provided. Contact Sandy at 985.643.6363 or lobo53@bellsouth.net.

August 12-14th

Weekend at Little Black Creek. We are going to Little Black Creek near Lumberton, Mississippi, for August 12-13 and !4! I have to reserve the cabins on June 15th so please let me know your intentions before then. The cost per person will be between $55 and $65 for the weekend, payable in advance. The difference in the price is contingent on the total number of attendees. More primitive camping spots are available as well. The cabins are air conditioned and equipped with BBQ pits, TVs, and the kitchen is fully functional with appliances, utensils, etc. Most have 1 and 1/2 baths. We will need to bring linens and food. Closer to the weekend, I will be in touch so we don’t all bring lasagna! This is a very special place where there are opportunities for fishing, swimming, hiking and canoeing. Our third annual weekend outing is going to be as wonderful as the last two at Clarkco and Camp McDowell in Alabama. Check your calendar soon and sign up! — Sandy Parke

For further information or to be put on the e-mail list for notification of outings only, contact Sandy at 985-643-6363 or lobo53@bellsouth.net.

* All participants must sign a standard liability

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 Welborn at 318-222-1801 or jwellborn@sport.rr.com

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.
How to reach your Legislature continued from page 2

during your meeting. The best time is going to be early fall. By then the Delta Chapter will have decided on our legislative plan for 2006. We will be able to provide you with information to present but not overwhelm either you or your legislator. Then after the meeting follow up with a telephone call or handwritten letter simply thanking the representative for their time and listening to your concerns and ideas. The do the same a couple of times leading up to the legislative session.

In the meantime, the Chapter will be organizing on several fronts. If you are so inclined, we would hope you would be able to be an active participant in our planning and organizing efforts. We will schedule a pre-session volunteer lobbying workshop, possibly sometime in February or early March. We will organize an Environmental Voter lobbying day in Baton Rouge during the session. This year we did one for the first time in several years and on short notice and had a decent turnout. With much planning for next year, we hope to greatly improve our impact. We will be seeking willing legislators to introduce bills for legislation we believe will be of great benefit to the Louisiana environment. The list goes on and on.

The bottom line is, to be the most effective, we need the volunteers who are already active and many more who want to be but are unsure how to proceed. Contact me and we will work with you to so you can do all of this and really feel good that you've done the best you could to make a difference.

One last request. Even if your life is not at a point you can devote much time to this work, please grant me one favor. Please go to this web site:< www.CLOUP.org> . Read the description what this coalition is trying to accomplish. Subscribe to their daily news feed. The Delta Chapter supports what CLOUP is working to achieve. The connection to us is that CLOUP puts out alerts for action during the Legislative Session on good bills that need support and bad bills that need to be defeated. If you can do only this, you WILL be making a difference.

Please contact Maurice Coman, Legislative Chair
504-481-0919

Earl’s Pearls continued from page 4....

Institute of Phrenology and Cuisinart Maintenance was created to provide a structure for announcing environmental scientific experiments and discoveries as profound as those of New Orleans’s Morgus the Magnificent. That august seat of learning will probably show up again too.

This most recent edition of “Earl’s Pearls” is the 155th in the twenty-five years since Stu Phillips decided that the Delta Sierran needed to be more lively. Most of them were written and published before I had any word processor other than a typewriter. (Yes, I’m that old. I used to write on a manual Smith-Corona. It may have been on the Ark with Noah.) For the past several months I have been slowly retyping old columns into computer format and sending them to René Maggio, the keeper of the Delta Chapter’s web site. René wanted to create an archive of the twenty-five years of buffoonish satire that I’ve inflicted on loyal and suffering readers. So if you are looking to read something more exciting than, for example, the 1964 edition of the Bismark, North Dakota, telephone book, go to the Delta Chapter’s web site and click on some of the old stuff. It’s interesting to see how dated some of them are, with references to public figures and Sierrans who aren’t around anymore due to death or other lack of interest..

People ask where I get ideas from and won’t I run out of them. As long as there are public officials making outlandish statements about the environment, as long as there is Smokey the Bear, as long as there are scientific discoveries, and as long as there are Sierra

March Fund Appeal
Still have that envelope....
Send it in soon.