

Vote!
ExCom
Ballot inside!



Delta Sierran

Winter 2020

Group Meetings:

GROUPS ARE NOT HOLDING MEETINGS EXCEPT FOR ZOOM ONLINE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

ACADIAN-LAFAYETTE AREA
Twice a month, Wednesdays at 6:30PM

BATON ROUGE
Fourth Thursdays, 6:30 PM
Check website calendar for location of upcoming monthly meetings

HONEY ISLAND (Northshore)
Fourth Sundays, 4:30 PM

NEW ORLEANS
Second Sundays at 6:30 PM at the Zoom meetings until further notice.

ALTHOUGH COVID-19 HAS LIMITED OUR GROUP EVENTS, PLEASE CHECK OUR CALENDAR FOR UPCOMING EVENTS & MEETINGS AT OUR DELTA CHAPTER WEBSITE:
SIERRACLUB.ORG/LOUISIANA



Sierra Club Delta Chapter 50th Anniversary



Celebrate with fellow Delta Sierrans who were active in the Chapter's early years, and meet today's staff and volunteers who are following in their footsteps.

All are welcome!

When:
Sunday,
February, 28th
11:30 AM until....

Where: **Outdoor Shelter #1, City Park, New Orleans**

Complimentary Pot-Luck dishes as well as catered food will be available. We are trying to put together a display/auction table of SC memorabilia, so let us know if you have something to donate.

Please RSVP (or direct questions) to Vance Levesque

at mrkahuna@juno.com or Harvey Stern at hstern@bellsouth.net.

If you cannot personally attend, we will try to set up ZOOM call-ins, so let us know if you are interested in that option!

Also let us know if you would like to contribute a dish, or make a donation.

More details on location and Pot-luck will be sent to those who RSVP.

QUOTES in the NEWS:

"The Sierra Club is both an organization and a community, but at the heart of it are the people."

Sierra Club Executive Director
Michael Brune



**SIERRA
CLUB**

DELTA CHAPTER

Get Involved! The Sierra Club is only as good as the members make it. You ARE the Sierra Club. Your participation is the key!

FROM THE CHAPTER CHAIR — *David Stets*

Happy holidays, I hope you are all well. We're sorry our December newsletter is so late in the month but we have had to deal with a lot of problems, like all of you. This issue contains our list of candidates for three Delta Chapter Executive Committee at Large positions for 2021 to 2023. Our ExCom members represent you, since we can't all get together, so please VOTE. We thank our outgoing three members at large for their service during the last two years. And we also thank all of our member volunteers who make our Sierra Club possible.

Atchafalaya Basin Coalition Forms to Protect Louisiana's Iconic Swamps

Several Louisiana organizations have joined together to form The Atchafalaya Basin Coalition (The Coalition). The Coalition consists of fishermen and environmental groups with the common purpose of protecting Louisiana's Atchafalaya Basin swamps, lakes, and waterways for generations to come. Louisiana Crawfish Producers Association West, Atchafalaya Basinkeeper, Sierra Club Delta Chapter, and Healthy Gulf all have serious concerns that there are issues in the Atchafalaya Basin that are not currently being adequately addressed and managed.

The Coalition issued a letter to Governor John Bel Edwards requesting representation on the Atchafalaya River Basin task force that was announced in December, specifically a representative from the Louisiana Crawfish Producers Association West to represent commercial fishing interests in the Basin and a conservation organization, such as the Atchafalaya Basinkeeper, that prioritizes the preservation of deep-water swamps for ecosystem services and flood control. The Coalition was created in response to several river diversion projects by the State and the Corps of Engineers that are rapidly filling the Basin's waters.

"Natural functioning swamp in the Atchafalaya requires adequate capacity for seasonally changing water levels. This provides for regeneration of cypress, for wildlife habitat and for retention of flood waters," said Haywood Martin, Chair Emeritus, Sierra Club Delta Chapter. "Diversion projects that cause sediment infill of the swamp are highly destructive to the important functions of a natural swamp." Jody Meche, President of The LCPA-West, representing the fisheries workers in the Basin, The Basin for far too long has been neglected or harmed by river diversion projects benefiting only special interest groups which fill the Basin with far too much sediment causing loss of deep-water habitat and decreasing its ability to handle project flood." Coalition members believe that the river diversion projects violate Congressional Resolutions directing the U.S. Corps of Engineers and EPA to develop a comprehensive plan for the management and preservation of the water and related resources of the Atchafalaya River Basin, including provisions for reduction of siltation, improvement of water quality, and possible improvement of the area for commercial and sport fishing. "River diversions in the Atchafalaya Basin,

away from the coast, are among the most reckless projects ever created by the Corps district and the state of Louisiana," said Dean Wilson, the founder of Atchafalaya

Basinkeeper.

Alarming, the river diversion projects ignore a 1979 EPA report that specifically outlines the importance of keeping those swamps deep for flood capacity and warns against river diversions to introduce river water into wetlands through cuts.

"The state of Louisiana is the steward of the most beautiful and productive wetland forests in the world and the most important wetland habitat for migratory birds in the

Western Hemisphere. The systematic destruction of the Basin's wetlands will have ecological consequences globally," said Scott Eustis, community science director for Healthy Gulf. "It is time for the state to start working with NGOs and fishermen that share the same goals of preserving the Basin for future generations of fishers, protecting Louisiana residents from flooding, and preserving the last standing deep water swamps for which Louisiana is so well known."

To learn more about the activities of the group, visit facebook.com/AtchafalayaBasinkeeper or <https://www.basinkeeper.org/>

SC Interns Make a Statement: Stop 1-Use Plastics!

LOVE the Cane's, hate the Styrofoam. So why has the Delta Chapter been focused on Cane's? Hopefully you have seen our presence on social media and in your inbox grow significantly over the past year. The Delta Chapter was privileged and honored to have a team of 5 interns work remotely to engage our volunteers, new leaders at Louisiana universities, and to stand up the entire **#StyroFreeCanes** campaign. The goal of this campaign is to get the CEO of Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers to ditch Styrofoam, a petrochemical byproduct and single use plastic, and to stop using this product by June 2021. You may wonder why this matters: Louisiana is home to the largest polystyrene plant in the country, a petrochemical plant that pollutes both air and water. By addressing the corporate consumption end of this waste stream, we seek to impact petrochemical's bottom line and their justification for producing these items. More importantly, this is the first step and campaign of many to support and provide infrastructure for Louisiana-based corporations and businesses to move to renewable use business models. By doing so, we all work together to address carbon emissions, toxics and environmental degradation. Beginning in mid-August, our interns developed the Cane's campaign, reaching out to Cane's headquarters and then sending a letter with our asks and demands; revamped our brand; achieved 1000 Instagram followers, 600 Twitter followers, increased Face-



Taylor Hodge toured Southeastern's Sustainability Center in Hammond with Alejandro Martinez, Center Manager.

Book engagement and led an online trivia night for volunteers. They also began or continued partnerships (to be announced) with university students and leaders, and will be co-developing a waste rubric for businesses and corporations in Louisiana to grade themselves against. Our intern team finished their final day of work on December 7th. Stick with us in 2021, as we continue to hold Todd Graves accountable and shift our focus to another campaign that reflects our priorities and goals here in Louisiana. [Editor's Note: Angelle Bradford, volunteer and Chapter ExCom member oversaw the five interns and inspired and directed their team. The interns responsible for the development of this project are: Taylor Hodge (Coordinator), Charles Bengtson, Jenny Deneen, Sophia Jordan and Taylor Lass.]

Ballot for 2021-23 Delta Chapter ExCom

Vote for up to **THREE** Delta Chapter Executive Committee (ExCom) At-Large board member positions. **To VOTE write your membership number** in the space below, then initial the voting line for the three candidates you wish to vote for. Joint Memberships - Both members of a joint membership may cast a vote by initialing the second vote space.

Your membership number may be found on the mailing label of your national Sierra magazine.

MEMBERSHIP #: _____

We sincerely appreciate our members who have volunteered as nominees to help guide our chapter into the future. Your Sierra Club Delta Chapter (Louisiana Chapter), has an Executive Committee (ExCom) of nine volunteer members whose position provides leadership and direction to the Chapter and Groups. ExCom members are active on various committees, such as Conservation, Political, Outings and the Environmental Justice Committee, which are also open to all Sierra Club members.

ExCom members serve **two-year terms** and may run for re-election; ANY MEMBER may run for a position on ExCom.

Responsibilities of the Chapter Executive Committee:

- Understand and promote the mission of the Sierra Club
- Attend Executive Committee meetings and General meetings
- Lead and provide educational training and/or conservation opportunities to the general membership
- Promote the Outings Program and help members and others to get out into and enjoy and understand nature
- Participate in long range planning for the Chapter, and guide national on grassroots interests
- Actively assist in fundraising activities
- Ensure financial stability and solvency
- Modify and allocate resources as applicable to the opportunities, the abilities, and the commitment of the Chapter/Groups
- Monitor, question, and evaluate club activities
- Provide Leadership and Vision within the Chapter/Groups for a just, equitable and sustainable future

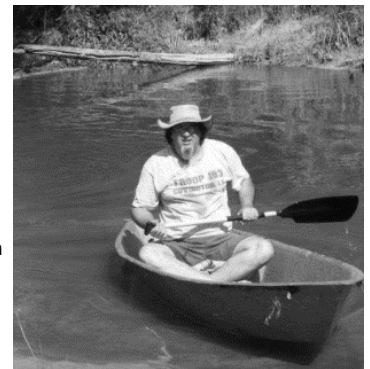
THERE ARE FIVE (5) CANDIDATES—PLEASE VOTE FOR UP TO THREE OF THEM.

Matthew Allen **Vote for Matthew:** _____

I have been active in the environmental community in St. Tammany since 2007, a member of Sierra Club since 2016, and President of Little Tchefonct River Association for over 10 years. I am also a Certified Floodplain Manager.

Over the last 10 years, I have worked closely with Tulane Environmental Law Clinic, Gulf Restoration Network, Sierra Club, Goodbye Civic Association, and LDWF Scenic Rivers Program. This work included consultations, comment writing, giving testimony at the Louisiana Legislature and Parish Council Meetings. Many consider me an expert on the Northshore River system. I have been active in the environmental community in St. Tammany since 2007, a member of Sierra Club since 2016, and member and past-President of Little Tchefonct River Association for 10 years.

I have a BS in Secondary Education with a Major in Physics and Minor in Mathematics. I have been successfully teaching science and math for 20+ years.



Sue deRada **Vote for Sue:** _____



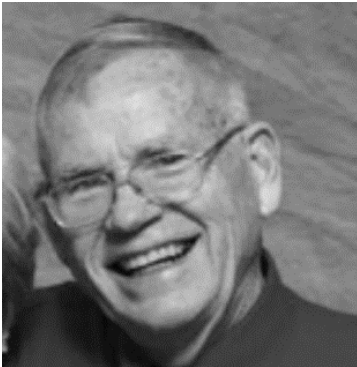
Sue deRada loves nature and wishes to promote “care of our natural resources for future generations”. Caring for nature preserves essential resources for future survival and enjoyment. Sue upholds the Sierra Club’s vision to explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth. She became a member in the 1980s, is a lifetime member, and a Sierra Club National Outings Leader. “I believe I could further promote the Sierra Club’s vision to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth and to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment .” She wishes to introduce and recruit young adults to care for our environment by becoming members of the Sierra Student Coalition; a network of high school and college students to fight for climate, racial and economic justice and to protect the environment. Sue’s vision is to create a “rite of passage” merit badge from the Girl/Boy Scouts to Sierra Club which would mark a major transition or change from childhood to adulthood. To be an adult means you accept responsibility for your actions and the consequences of your behavior. The Sierra Club needs young adults to take this vision into the future.

Candidates bios are continued on other side...

BALLOT:

Delta Chapter ExCom Nominees for 2021-2023 term - Vote for up to **THREE** of the FIVE Candidates.

Charlie Fryling



Vote for Charlie: _____

As a member of the Club since 1968 I have seen the importance of the Sierra Club and Delta Chapter to Louisiana. The Club has been the lead organization shaping public opinion and working on such issues as coastal and wetlands protection, urban sprawl, clean air and water, wildlife protection, and environmental justice. We have made a difference but there is much more that needs to be accomplished. I teach landscape architecture at LSU so my vocation and avocation fit nicely together with many of the issues that challenge the Club. Through the years the

Atchafalaya Basin has been of special interest to me. At present I am the East Baton Rouge Parish representative to the Atchafalaya Trace Commission. We have recently made the area surrounding the Atchafalaya a National Heritage Area. It was Delta Chapter that got the Commission established. The Club has always been enjoyable to me and it should be fun for all its members. Outings are an important aspect of the Club. They provide both environmental education and pleasure that leads to strong membership. Delta

Chapter Ex Com is responsible for all aspects of the Club within the State and we should be working to provide our members with as many opportunities as possible to appreciate the good qualities of Louisiana and to make environment better when needed.

Kirk Green

Vote for Kirk: _____

Hello, my name is Kirk Green. I currently serve on my local (Baton Rouge) Ex-Com in addition to the Delta Chapter Ex-Com, and the Delta Chapter Political Committee. I teach history and government at Westdale Middle in Baton Rouge along with being an assistant coach with football and boys/girls track and field. I was born in Louisiana, learning to enjoy the natural beauty as a Boy Scout, served in the Army (82nd Airborne Division), and found my way home to have a family.

I believe in building capacity of the organization, helping as many people as possible to go on outings and enjoy nature in all forms, providing education and information to the public, keeping a watchful eye on the business and industry of the state, supporting and crafting legislation to protect the environment, and forwarding projects of the Sierra Club like Ready for 100.



Jeffrey Wellborn

Vote for Jeffrey: _____



Throughout my past 25 years plus of being involved with the Sierra Chapter Delta Chapter Kisatchie Group I have worked to make north Louisiana and the US environment a better place. My involvement has included: Don't Ditch Caddo - work to stop and limit the Red River navigation and the extension of navigation through Shreveport and into east Texas; worked with the Black Bear Conservation Committee; was up front and on top of the many land, water and air issues directly impacting and affecting northwest Louisiana; involved with land planning and smart development efforts in Shreveport and Bossier City; continue to work with Allendale community to grow the neighborhood and stop the building of the I-49 Inner City corridor; participate on many committees and forums involving environmental issues of this area. i.e. park development, better and wiser land use and development, water quality, sewerage issues, etc.

I have helped and continue to help direct people to places they can get answers, if I don't have an answer, for any issues they are concerned about regarding the local environment such as landfill issues, over development, bike/ped development. I have served as institutional memory for several groups and organizations ramrodded by people much younger than me to help their efforts be successful and avoid basket weaving misdirects.

**After marking your votes on this ballot, please insert into a stamped envelope addressed to:
DELTA CHAPTER EXCOM, P.O. Box 8619, New Orleans, LA 70182-8619**

WRAP-UP: 2020 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

In a nutshell: The 2020 legislative session was a mini-version of what's been happening nationwide. Destructive and remarkably bad legislation was put forth by legislators whose only objective seemed to be to make as much in PAC contributions as they could before sanity is restored. To say that the bills put forward were bad is such an understatement that it is laughable... except environmentalists and other sane observers watching the block votes to support horribly damaging legislation were crying, not laughing.

Governor John Bel Edwards saved the day by vetoing a few of the especially putrid bills, such as HB 84 (Edmonds), which would have given legislators the power to override the Governor in emergency situations, and HB 29 (Devillier) which would have given the oil & gas industry even more tax breaks. Of course, the oil industry was pitching with their paid lobbyists — I mean our legislators — promoting bills to allow them to continue to take our resources while giving us little in return. There were many such bills, most of which didn't get through the entire process. Some were thinly veiled as "Covid aid" but were actually more giveaways to the industries that pollute the state.



Amendment 5 (introduced by Sen. Mark Abraham as SB 272) was created to change the state constitution to authorize certain local government agencies (such as police juries) to enter into "cooperative endeavor agreements" with new or expanding establishments, overriding the state property tax and allowing the manufacturing establishments to make (much smaller) payments to the local authority. Sound like a vehicle for corruption to you? It did to many, and after being approved by an almost unanimous vote in the Senate and a strong vote in the House, it was shot down by Louisiana voters in an overwhelming response. Maybe our Legislators will get the message that we are sick of handing the state over to destructive industries?

The 2021 Regular Legislative Session convenes on **Monday, April 12, 2021**, and runs through Thursday, June 10, 2021. Citizen Lobbyists will be needed again. Many of the same people who voted against the interests of the citizens of Louisiana remain in office. Depending on the Covid situation, we may visit Baton Rouge to lobby special bills, but our members' health is our first priority, so please put a reminder on your calendar to

set aside 5 to 10 minutes a week to make a call, send an email or if you're in the mood, make an appointment with your elected representative in their home office.

And not all battles are in Baton Rouge! Contact your Alderman, Council member, Mayor, Parish President, Representative/Senator (State and Federal) and Governor. Or write a Letter to the Editor! Pick an issue that is important to YOU! Be consistent and do it weekly. The paid lobbyists are promoting what industry wants, they don't promote what you want, so take the time to lobby for yourself and your family. It's important!

LA Purchase Cypress Legacy visits Cat Island NWR

Louisiana Purchase Cypress Legacy campaign paid a long overdue visit to the Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge in West Feliciana Parish, site of what is considered the largest cypress in the US. This cypress was awarded the very first LPCL plaque when the LPCL campaign started in 2003. During dry spells, we highly recommend visiting the several dozen trees in the immediate vicinity of the champion tree - very easy to walk to and almost as impressive in size as the "champ".

The LPCL is pleased to announce the discovery of the **oldest known cypress in E Baton Rouge Parish**. This tree is on BREC Park property at the Airline Highway Park site, on Ward Bayou. Although the tree is currently not accessible to the public, current Master Plan Development of this area may make this beautiful old cypress accessible for viewing. (Comments to BREC asking for public access to this site would certainly be welcome) Based on the tree's **24 ft circumference** and



the very tightly spaced growth rings on the boring, we estimate this tree to be well over 500 years old, and among the very oldest cypress in Southeast Louisiana. Details on how the age of this tree was estimated, including a photo of the boring, and a site map, can be viewed at our blog: LaPurchaseCypressLegacy.blogspot.com

Voting Against Our Best Interests...

The **Public Service Commission**, which oversees utilities throughout most of the state, had elections for two of its members in November.

We had a big win and a big loss.

Foster Campbell, a champion of the people and alternative energies, was re-elected in District 5 in the primary in November. He represents north Louisiana, across the boot top from the Texas to Mississippi borders. However, in District 1, the eastern toe of Louisiana's boot, incumbent Eric Skrmetta won in the December runoff. This is a big blow to solar as Skrmetta originally ran for the office declaring his determination to end solar subsidies in Louisiana. He's led the commission in his pledge to support grid electricity and deter private installations of

solar. Allen Borne, the runner-up, campaigned on a platform including the promotion of solar jobs in Louisiana.

Skrmetta's opponents pointed out that he receives campaign contributions from regulated companies but that disclosure was not enough to override support from other Republicans, including US Rep. Scalise. Louisiana will likely be at the bottom of the list for the top job market for years to come: nearly 3.3 million Americans are working in clean energy - outnumbering fossil fuel workers by 3-to-1.

But in Louisiana, Skrmetta — in power for another six years — will likely hang on to dying industries and polluting energy. We don't just shoot ourselves in the foot; we aim for the head.



Top: Trees are measured and tagged. Bottom: Largest Bald Cypress in US is in W. Feliciana Parish - 85 ft. tall, 54 ft. circumference



SIERRA CLUB

DELTA CHAPTER

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Visit us on Facebook:
Sierra Club Delta Chapter

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Website:

www.sierraclub.org/louisiana

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Please send Photo & Editorial Contributions to:

margie.vicknair-pray@sierraclub.org



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE!

Visit our website to see a listing of volunteer opportunities:

<https://clubvolunteer.org/volunteer?z=70001>

We're looking for:

- ◆ Volunteer Conservation Coordinators (to oversee Group conservation issues and work with our staff Conservation Projects Coordinator)
- ◆ Welcome Wagon (to welcome New Members)
- ◆ Citizen Lobbyists (to engage with local and state elected officials on vital issues)
- ◆ ExCom members
- ◆ Any other volunteering that you see as a need!

Please get in touch with any active leader, or check-in at the volunteer website, which can also be reached via our Delta Chapter website.

During the year we sometimes need a member to fill in for a vacancy on our Ex-Com. To volunteer as a substitute, talk to any ExCom member or send us an email at davidmstets@gmail.com

Only \$5 a Month to Protect What You Love...

Join us in the fight to protect Louisiana's environment. Gifts to the Sierra Club Delta Chapter give citizens a voice -- helping us hold Louisiana leaders accountable for decisions that affect our air, waters, lands and climate.

Your investment means we can keep up the pressure on state officials to protect our waters, expand clean energy, and hold toxic polluters accountable.

Best of all, 100% of your contribution stays here in Louisiana to work locally on the issues you care about!

Donate at www.sierraclub.org/louisiana

Your support is key in helping the Delta Chapter's efforts to secure an environmental legacy that future generations will thank us for. **Your generous donation is an investment allowing us to hire interns and pay staff - here in Louisiana!**

If you would prefer to mail in your donation, please make your check payable to Sierra Club Delta Chapter and mail to Sierra Club Delta Chapter, PO Box 8619, New Orleans, LA 70182 *Thank you for your generous support!*

Sierra Club
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