



DELTA SIERRAN

Inside	
Contacts	page 2
View from Chair	page 3
Earl's Pearls	page 4

Delta Chapter Newsletter

www.Louisiana.sierraclub.org

Summer 2010



New Orleans tells BP to Clean It UP

Sierra Club, environmental allies and Gulf Coast citizens rallied in New Orleans, Louisiana at Lafayette Square to demand that BP and the federal government use all their resources to mitigate the oil disaster, as well as call for an immediate moratorium on offshore drilling. Over 500 citizens, some of whom traveled from as far as Mobile, Alabama and Pensacola, Florida, gathered at Lafayette Square in downtown New Orleans. The rally was kicked off with an activist duet, Sassafras, setting the stage with a powerful vocal message to end our addiction to fossil fuels. Kristin Diable, fresh from her Jazzfest debut, joined the rally along with Big Chief Monk Boudreaux and the Golden Eagles. Big Chief is part of larger group of musicians, known as Voice of the Wetlands, who work to raise awareness on Gulf Coast, Louisiana Wetland issues.

Sierra Club President Allison Chin rallied the crowd to demand that BP and the federal government "Clean It Up". John Nguyen, EJ organizer with Vietnamese American Young Leaders Association of New Orleans, spoke on behalf of the local Vietnamese fishermen who are endangered of losing their culture and some of whom who have already cost them their jobs due to the oil disaster in the gulf. George Barisich, President of the United Commercial Fisherman's Association spoke of the impending dangers to the livelihoods of Louisiana fishermen and the need for the federal government to utilize their resources to help mitigate this disaster and provide relief to the workers on our working coast. Jonathan Carpenter, LSU student who co-founded Student Coalition for Helping the Oil Leak Relief (SCHOLR), spoke about the ramifications of this oil disaster on the future generations and the need for a stronger state, federal and industrial response to this disaster. State Representative Cedric Richmond from New Orleans spoke about the need for better state and federal regulations to ensure this type of disaster is not repeated. The rally ended on a positive note with Big Chief wrapping up the event and local Sierra Club organizer Jordan Macha noting that the rally served as the first step towards activating the Gulf Coast community and ending the nation's addiction to fossil fuels.

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Delta Sierran



SUMMER 2010 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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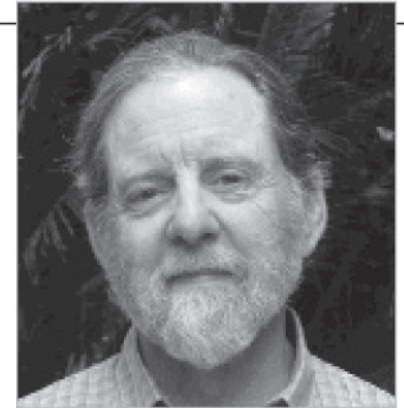
WE NEED YOUR EMAIL ADDRESSES MORE THAN EVER BECAUSE THE DELTA CHAPTER IS GOING DIGITAL.

The Delta Chapter publishes four newsletters per year. The Excom has decided to go to digital only editions for two of the four so if we do not have your email address you will not receive those editions. All Delta Chapter members will receive the two printed editions per year. As usual all four newsletters will be available on the Delta Chapter website as soon as they are published. So send in your email address or read us on the web. We think that this is a sustainable choice that we can make to make our chapter greener.

Send your email to Woody Martin at
chair@louisiana.sierraclub.org.



View From The Chair



A major source of the wealth in Louisiana and the Gulf Coast once again shows its dark side. British Petroleum, the company responsible for the Deepwater Horizon oil rig fire and sinking on April 22 was slow to alert us to the seriousness of the threat, saying for days that it was something they could handle. Flyovers by Gulf Restoration Network showed us a huge oil slick with very few boats out there trying to do anything. Finally on April 28 BP asked for federal help and the coast guard started trying to burn off some of the oil. A nasty south wind stopped everything for 2-3 days and as this is being written good weather is allowing more work to be done.

Our sincere condolences go out to the families of the victims of this disaster. We hope the best for success of containment and cleanup of this huge mess. As our fossil fuel addicted economy goes

farther and deeper for coal and oil the risks of environmental devastation and loss of human life will increase. It is unfortunate that once again it takes a disaster to focus attention on an issue which demands corrective action.

This is a major "We told you so" moment for the environmental movement. The whole discussion about drilling off of our coastlines is infused with the fear of exactly the kind of environmental and economic catastrophe that happened in Prince William Sound with Exxon Valdez, and that could now happen here with BP Deepwater Horizon. But this is not just about American coastlines. The multinational oil industry has for decades been despoiling the environment in corrupt or inadequately governed countries that do not have effective environmental standards. Apparently we too lack the political will to effectively regulate this industry. Witness the sorry state of affairs at MMS the Minerals Management Service.

We will now see congressional hearings

and probably new legislation that attempts to bring balance back to a relationship between the public interest and the private interest of an industry that has had its own way for too long. Teddy Roosevelt knew about taking on the big monopolies, we need some of that now. This is also the point at which our country needs to truly start on the path toward clean energy with less reliance on dirty and hazardous fossil fuels. We have the technology, but so far we have lacked the political will to put the correct mix of incentives in place



Image: Barry Kohl

to make it happen. The politics needs a game changing event and perhaps the sinking of BP Deepwater Horizon is it.

What do we do?

Now more than ever the planet and our country need advocacy for a policy based on clean energy, clean energy jobs and reduced dependence on dirty fossil fuels. The question now is how do we get there. We need to recognize that the conversion to a clean energy economy will not happen overnight, no matter how big the disaster. We should start with a new effort toward national energy legislation that would finally put in place an American clean-energy infrastructure that would set our country on a real, long-term path away from reliance on dirty fossil fuels. This would be right for the environment, for the health and safety of our communities and for our economic security. We know the forces working against real change seem to have limitless resources. This campaign will require a huge new effort.

What else can we do?

Those of us in the environmental community should face reality. No one really believes that the oil and gas industry is going away anytime soon. But their proportion of energy production has to come more into balance with the amount of energy we get from clean energy sources. In order to achieve this we need to re-balance the economics by looking again at some of the outrageously over generous tax benefits and exemptions that the oil industry currently receives.

An example is the Outer Continental Shelf Deep Water Royalty Relief Act of 1995. This legislation was enacted when oil prices were low and the industry argued that it needed incentives to go into deep water to get oil. Now oil prices are high and the industry is returning record profits but they will not want to give up royalty relief that excuses them from paying tens of billions of dollars back to the taxpayers of this country. It is very likely that Royalty Relief is the economic incentive (government handout) that created the BP Deepwater Horizon disaster.

The Sierra Club and others can loudly proclaim the need for a moratorium on offshore drilling and transition to clean energy but until we hire some experts and engage in a campaign to re-balance the economics of energy we will not achieve the major goal. The time for action is now while the nation's attention is focused on these issues.

You can contact me at chair@louisiana.sierraclub.org to let me know you are interested in helping or to obtain further information.

Teed off at the Tea Party

Let's review a little American history. On December 16, 1773, a group of colonists in Massachusetts, poorly disguised as Mohawk Indians, boarded a ship moored in Boston harbor and dumped bales of tea overboard. The group's membership included Samuel Adams, who would later become better known for beer than for tea, and Paul Revere, a skilled silversmith who would become famous for his ride of warning on the night of April 18-19, 1775. What was going on with the tea?

Parliament had responded to the colonists' objections to being taxed to support English adventures elsewhere in the world by removing most of the hated taxes. But, to show that Parliament had power to tax the colonies, who were not represented in the British government, Parliament retained a tax on imported tea, a sort-of "in your face" tax. To protest this tax, the tea got dumped into the harbor. Obviously, this action was before the passage of the Clean Water Act prohibiting dumping anything into the water. It was also at a time before mocking Native American Indians was considered "hate speech." The protest was a critical event that would lead to rebellion and the Declaration of Independence.

Over 200 years later, in 2009, disgruntled people of the right-wing persuasion resurrected the image of the Tea Party and made it into a general hate-the-government movement. Like the original tea partiers, the reborn group dons garish costumes. They also carry anti-everything signs and proclaim themselves the true Americans through the foam that surrounds their mouths. Anger is elevated to a group virtue, paranoia and vituperative speech are qualities to be shared. Their disdain and contempt for conservationists and environmentalist are declared

in their tribal chant, "Drill, baby, drill," which is only incidentally a statement of energy policy.

The energetic, aggressive tea partiers have also co-opted the word "green" and created a "Green Tea Party," dedicated to exposing the purported falsehoods of human-caused global warming. Their web site, junkscience.com, gets you started. They also are peddling a book to further their cause, *Green Hell: How Environmentalists Plan to Control Your Life And What You Can Do to Stop Them*. (Hey, how's that for a catchy title? You Sierrans didn't know how powerful you are, trying to control the world and all.) Al Gore is viewed by the Green Tea Party as the embodiment of evil, possibly even *The Anti-Christ*. Needless to say, one looks in vain for Sierra Club members at Tea Party gatherings.

Reasoning with such people who get their information from mad-dog talk radio and Internet myths is a waste of time. After all, "reasoning" is sneaky device used by the intellectual elites to cover up common sense. The way to engage the Tea Party is to stage another tea party.

In the nineteenth century author Lewis Carroll used satire and parody with great effect, writing humor and absurdity to illustrate the foolishness of his day. Why shouldn't the Sierra Club and other environmentalists throw their own alternative tea party, one like the tea party in *Alice in Wonderland*? The Mad Hatter would be a good companion to those tea partiers who parade around in oversized Uncle Sam hats and other headgear with political messages on them. The Alternative Tea Party should be staged along with the foam-at-the-mouth Tea Party. Mad hatters, red queens, and big white rabbits could mingle with the angry demonstrators and cry out, as did the red queen, "Off with their heads!" leaving open and enigmatic any antecedent identity to which "their" refers.

While the Tea Partiers are waving signs and working up their collective opprobrium for all things governmental ("Down with Social Security; down with V.A. Hospitals; down with the National Parks!") the Alternative Tea Partiers could be playing lawn croquet through the assembly, swinging mallets and flamingos, ignoring the sign-wavers.

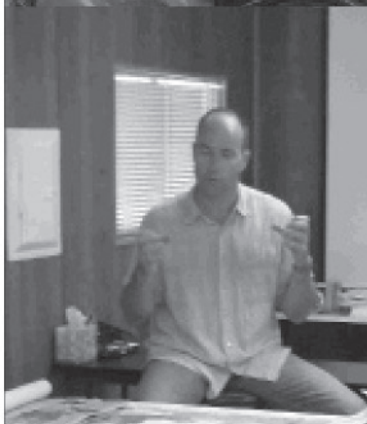
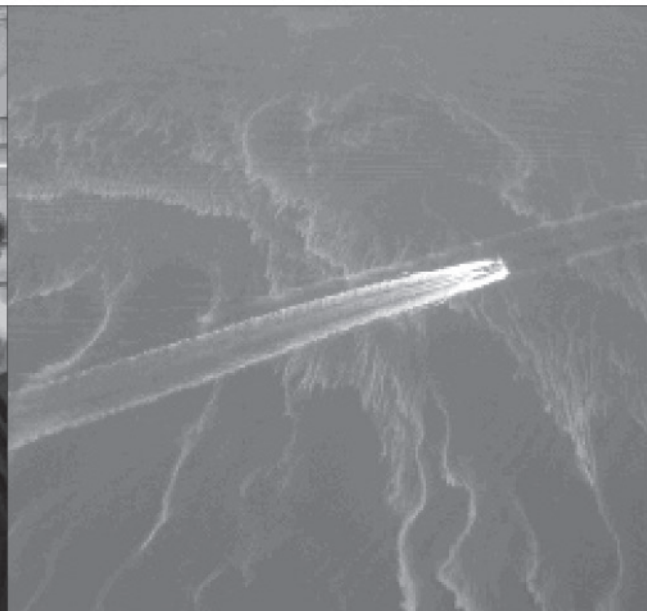
While the party is in progress, Alice, in blue dress and white apron, should be mingling with the crowd, cajoling them with more calls of "Off with their Heads!" With her face a mask in the image of a recent short-term Alaska governor, she will be instantly recognizable as she decapitates the crawfish in the bucket carried at her side by the Chesire Cat, a creature whose face looks a lot like a former C.E.O. of Halliburton who became vice president of the United States.

Who could stand up to such absurdity? The Tea Partiers seem to be heavily populated with those afflicted with humor-impairment syndrome, so they will become very uncomfortable that they do not, cannot get the joke. What a horrible feeling! Being laughed at and not knowing why. The Tea Partiers deserve to be laughed at. They're in Wonderland.

-- Earl Higgins

Image: hannah corbett / Free Digital Photos

Sierra Club takes action on the Gulf



Images by Devin Martin and B. Kohl

Michael Brune, Executive Director of the Sierra Club visited Louisiana on May 5th. Dr. Barry Kohl of the New Orleans briefed him on the oil spill and accompanied him on a flyover of the disaster. Michael held a live facebook chat on May 6th. He said "You can't see this mess and not be angered by the impact BP has had on this entire region." He extended his sympathies to the families of the workers that were killed on April 20th. It's clear that the residents of the Gulf Coast are going to be dealing with this disaster for years to come. This is an unspeakable tragedy, not just for the families of the 11 workers lost in the explosion, but for all the residents of the Gulf Coast who rely on the ocean for their livelihoods." If you want to read more about what the national club is doing to represent us during this catastrophe go to sierraclub.org/oilspill.

Oil Spill Facts:

The oil spill exceeds the worst-case scenario predicted by BP when it filed its exploration plan with the government. The spill is estimated at roughly 210,000 gallons a day. In BP's exploration plan, the company outlined a worst-case scenario of 162,000 gallons a day.

The disaster may have been prevented by a special shut-off switch, but BP did not purchase the switch and after drilling companies questioned its cost and effectiveness, the Interior Department's Minerals Management Service, which oversees offshore drilling, decided the device wasn't needed. [Wall St. Journal 4/30/2010]

At its current rate, the spill could surpass by next week the size of the 1969 Santa Barbara spill that helped lead to the far-reaching moratorium on oil and gas drilling off the Pacific and Atlantic coasts

Some estimates show it could take 3-4 months to contain the spill. By that time, the spill could exceed the size of the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill in Alaska.

59 Fatalities, More Than 1,300 Injuries, and 853 Fires. There have been nearly

60 casualties and more than 1,300 injuries on the rigs in the Gulf of Mexico alone since 2001. "Working in the oil industry is more dangerous than working in coal mines." [CBS, 4/22/2010]

BP Facts:

\$5.6 Billion In Profits. During the first quarter of 2010, "BP said its profit rose to \$6.08 billion from \$2.56 billion during the same period of 2009. Excluding the impact of energy prices on unsold inventories as well as \$49 million of one-time items, and BP would have earned \$5.65 billion, topping consensus estimates by about \$900 million." Profits increased 135% from 2009. [Bloomberg, 4/27/2010]

41% Raise For BP's CEO. "Chief Executive Tony Hayward's total remuneration and share awards rose 41% in 2009 on performance bonuses from improved operations which made the company one of the best performing oil majors in the

fourth quarter, despite lower full-year profits due to the fall in the oil price." [Wall Street Journal, 3/5/2010]

\$16 Million In Lobbying. BP spent \$16 million lobbying in 2009. [Opensecrets] **\$3 Billion In The World's Dirtiest Oil.** Meanwhile the company invested \$3 billion in 2007 in the dirtiest source of oil on earth: Canadian tar sands. "The result will be the development of a major new Canadian oil field and the modernization and expansion of the Toledo refinery to allow far greater use of Canadian heavy oil and to increase clean fuels production by as much as 600,000 gallons a day." [Climate Progress, 12/18/2007]

\$900 Million In Alternative Energy Budget Cuts. In 2009, BP cut its alternative energy budget to between \$500 million and \$1 billion from \$1.4 billion in 2008. "BP has shut down its alternative energy headquarters in London, accepted the resignation of its clean energy boss and imposed budget cuts in moves likely to be seen by environmental critics as further signs of the oil group moving "back to petroleum." [The Guardian, 6/28/2009]

Honey Island Record

During three hours on the morning of Saturday, April 17, a total of 579 vehicles dropped off materials from 774 households – a new record!

A new record also is the number of community groups and local businesses who partnered with the Honey Island Group and the St. Tammany Parish Dept. of Environmental Services to provide this valuable service. This year Keep Covington Beautiful, Keep Mandeville Beautiful, and Keep Slidell Beautiful helped to advertise the event and to solicit volunteers, as did numerous other organizations, municipalities and businesses.

CACRC furnished in-kind service, MWH Americas, Inc. provided a generous monetary donation, and some of the food was furnished by Domino's Pizza, Mandeville Bake Shop, and PJ's Coffee. The Sierra Club's national Water Sentinels Program provided gloves, and highly sought-after Sierra Club caps and T-shirts, as they have for the past several years.

Key to the success of the event were the 54 volunteers who unloaded materials, directed traffic, and recorded survey responses. The majority of the volunteers were provided by the Honey Island Group; Best Buy of Slidell; Keep Slidell Beautiful, and MWH Americas, Inc., and we thank them as well as everyone else who spent the better part of that Spring day working, sweating and feeling righteous about doing good work for our community.

Participating vendors and organizations who received materials were Colt, Inc.; The Green Project; LEI; Madisonville Jr. High School; Rineco; St. Tammany SALT Council; and the Capitol Area Corporate Recycling Council (CACRC). Materials collected for proper disposal and recycling included 49,891 lbs. of paint; 4,325 lbs. of batteries; 708 ft. of fluorescent light bulbs; 163 cell phones, pagers, and PDAs; 83 printer cartridges; 231 used tires; 75 lbs. of mercury devices; and 33,458 lbs. of televisions, computers and other electronics. Approximately 100 additional monitors, 100 printers, 60 CPUs, & 15 laptops were also collected for redeployment by CACRC within the community. The paint total above includes approximately 9,000 gallons of paint

Calling all Louisiana youth! Come spend a week at Fontainebleau State Park and learn how to make a difference in your community!

This August, forty high school and college-age youth from all over the country will come together in Mandeville, LA for a week to learn about something they don't usually hear about in class-- environmental organizing. The Sierra Student Coalition, the student-run branch of the Sierra Club, holds these trainings known as Sprogs (or Summer Programs) all over the country every summer. Learning and practicing skills like leadership development, working with the media, and meeting with administrators, these students went back to their campuses and communities armed with the skills they need to enact change.

Graduates of the program have gone on to lead campus organizations, establish their own non-profits, and even get jobs as full-time organizers. Every graduate of Sprog receives a year-long Sierra Club membership, which in turn strengthens our Chapter and brings fresh, young ideas into the organization. As a graduate of Sprog myself, I would not have stuck with the environmental movement all these years without the skills and motivation I got at Sprog in 2006-- and I've been coming back every summer since then.

If you want to be one of the forty youth who are learning how to make a tangible difference in their communities, see the details below and sign up at www.ssc.org/sprog. And please don't hesitate to call or email me if you have any questions.

Special thanks the generosity of the Delta Chapter and the many individuals who donated to make this event happen!

What: a grassroots organizing training program that gives you all the tools you need to

organize on your campus or in your community, with a focus on environmental issues

When: August 8-15, 2010

Where: Fontainebleau State Park, Mandeville, LA

Who can attend: any youth who wants to change their community. *we do not restrict "youth" to age ranges, but generally focus on high school- and college-age youth

Cost: Yes, this program has a cost, but we have scholarships and support people to help you fundraise or find a sponsor organization if this is in anyway a problem for you. The subsidized cost of the program is set up on a sliding scale, from \$250-450*. (please pay what you can afford). This covers tuition, room and board, food, and all the benefits of being a member of the Sierra Club.

Early Bird Special: If you register and pay BEFORE May 15th, you get an added discount of \$50 (sliding scale \$200-\$400).

Special Group Rate: 3+ people
\$200/person (\$150 Early Bird rate)
Go to www.ssc.org/sprog to register and get more info.

Hope to see you there,
Rachel Guillory
Co-director, Louisiana Sprog 2010
Sierra Student Coalition

that The Green Project took to be blended for resale.

Our one regret is that a number of vehicles were turned away near the end of the event due to overload of the vendors resources at hand. We hope that those turned away will put our newly revised Reduce Reuse and Recycle Directory to good use.

9th Edition of the Reduce Reuse and Recycle Directory is now in Print

This little brochure and its link on The Honey Island Group's web site (<http://louisiana.sierraclub.org/honeyisland/recycle.pdf>) have become the resource on the subject in St. Tammany Parish. A copy was given to the occupants of every vehicle that came through the HHWC and each of the Honey Island Group members will soon receive a copy by mail. The

St. Tammany Parish Library system has agreed to distribute copies to each of its Branches, as they gladly do each year. We are already in the process of reprinting this latest, March 2010, edition due to the requests from several community groups who wish to distribute them. St. Tammany Parish has a link to it on its website, as do several community based organizations, and we see and hear it referenced often.

We'd like to thank the Delta Sierra Club for supporting the Household Hazardous Waste Collection and the Reduce-Reuse-Recycle Directory once again. You can all be proud to have contributed to these projects!

Diane Casteel and Therese Kwiecien for the Honey Island Group

Group Events

Acadian Group:

Check website for updates

Meetings held at 412 Travis St., Lafayette unless otherwise noted.

Second Wednesday of the month @ 6:30 pm - Acadian Group Conservation Meeting

Third Wednesday of the month @ 6:30 pm - Acadian Group General Meeting,

Last Sunday of the month @ 7 - 8:00 pm - Ecologic, Acadiana Open Channel 5, Live Call-In

Outings on web page <http://louisiana.sierraclub.org/acadian/>

For more information contact Harold Schoeffler: 337-234-4042 or 356-9764

Baton Rouge Group:

The BR Group Excom meets the first Monday nite of the month at 7PM at LaMadeline's on Jefferson. If you would like to put something on the agenda, contact Nancy Grush at 225-938-8353.

Save the Ales is heating up again on the third Wednesday @ 7PM at Chelseas.

Acension Parish Recycles

When: 1st Saturday of the Month: 9am-1pm

Where: Prairieville WalMart on Airline Highway

Glass, styrofoam, plastic wrap and bags not accepted.



Acension Parish Recycling Day Image: Ann Shaneyfelt

Honey Island Group:

Meetings: Sign up for our google groups hotline. Go to louisiana.sierraclub.org/honeyisland.

New Orleans Group:

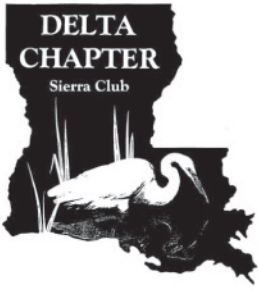
We usually meet on the second Sunday of each month unless there is a conflict with a holiday/event and then we reschedule. Please check our calendar on the Delta Chapter website. All programs are in the Dominion Auditorium at the Audubon Zoo (6500 Magazine St, New Orleans, LA). The doors open at 6:30 pm and the program starts at 7 pm. Refreshments served.

Join our Facebook group our yahoo group list serve for up to date meeting details, outings and volunteer opportunities.

DON'T FORGET TO MAIL YOUR MARCH APPEAL DONATION



This is the only time of year to make a donation to the Sierra Club that goes 100% to your local Chapters work in your state. Mail your donation card in soon. This donation is not tax deductible as it supports our organizational and lobbying work. You can make tax deductible donations and bequests to the Delta Chapter in care of the Sierra Club Foundation, contact lesliemarch@hotmail.com for more information.



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Chapter Retreat 2010

Weather was perfect. We ate fresh broiled catfish and salad, eggs and pancakes, fried catfish with boiled vegetables, dined with live fiddle music on Saturday nite, went out in canoes daytime, party boat at nite under ¾ moon, viewed wildlife, learned about Atchafalaya basin and how to tie some very useful knots and had a great visit with everybody in attendance. Come out with us next year in March.

Thanks to Diane Casteel, Harold Schoeffler and all who helped make the event happen.

Woody Martin