



SIERRA CLUB

HISTORY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Delta Chapter (Louisiana)

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1970 The New Orleans Group of the **Delta Chapter** was started April 1968 when 14 people showed up at the house of Iva & Bill Futrell. By Feb. 1970 they also included Dr Donald Bradburn-Conservation Chair, Mike Osborne-Outings, Susan Wilkes-Secretary, Dr Hans Johanson-Treasurer, and Dr Garrison Wilkes a leading activist. In May 1970 the Baton Rouge Group started meeting under leadership of Ben Brown and Charles Fryling. In 1970 the Delta Chapter joined 32 other chapters and made the Sierra Club extend to all 50 states.

1970 Delta Chapter lobbies to pass the **Louisiana Scenic Rivers Act**, which finds that there exist in Louisiana many unique & diverse free-flowing rivers, streams, & bayous which should be preserved, protected, and enhanced for the present and future benefit of Louisiana citizens. These shall be administered for the purposes of preserving, protecting, developing, reclaiming, and enhancing the wilderness qualities, scenic beauties, and ecological regime of certain free-flowing streams or segments thereof.

1972 The Delta Chapter was in its infancy when Byron Almqvist put together some mimeographed sheets and leaflets in envelopes, which were sold under the name Outings Kit. The kit turned into the Guide to Louisiana, Wilderness Trails and the Delta Country which came out in 1975. Published by the New Orleans Group of the Sierra Club, John P. Sevenair was the Editor-in-Chief. It listed 35 detailed maps, 16 canoe trails, 13 hike trails and 8 bike trails, plus birding, caving, and tubing.

1978 When Donald Bradburn was invited to join the fledgling Delta Chapter Sierra Club in 1968, he became an activist to save Horn & Petit Bois Islands on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. **Horn Island**, with its dark forests, high dunes, and deserted beaches needed preservation. Don supported legislation that would keep both islands as part of the National Wilderness System, instead of the unlimited opportunities for camping, picnicking, water skiing, boating, bicycling, hiking, and bird watching which was proposed and might attract up to 10 million annual visits! In 1978, the islands were added as designated wilderness to the National Park System.

1978 Mirex is a white crystalline odorless solid that was commercialized as an insecticide. It was popularized to control fire ants but by virtue of its chemical robustness it was recognized as a bioaccumulative pollutant. The spread of fire ants was encouraged by the use of Mirex, which also kills native ants that are highly competitive with fire ants. Mirex was applied to fields in the Southeast between 1962-75. One of the first fights Ross Vincent of the Delta Chapter took up in his two decades of environmental activism, was stopping the widespread spraying of Mirex. Donald Bradburn got the Louisiana Medical Society to pass a resolution banning the aerial application of Mirex. Mirex was banned nationwide in 1978.

1980 Members of the Delta Chapter led by Mike Osborne and Ross Vincent filed suit against the US Army Corps of Engineers to stop drainage of 3,000 acres of wetlands north of Crown Point in Jefferson Parish. The EPA instituted the first 404(c) veto to protect the area. Most of the land and **Bayou aux Carpes** is now in the Jean Lafitte National Historic Park and Preserve.

1980 The Guide to Louisiana Wilderness Trails and the Delta Country which came out in 1975 was updated in 1980. The **Trail Guide to the Delta Country** was published by the New Orleans Group of the Sierra Club, John P. Sevenair, Editor-in-Chief. It listed 17 rivers and creeks, 14 marshes and swamps to canoe, 20 hiking and backpacking trails and 15 bike trails, plus a note about birding.

1985 In late summer 1985 at a N.O. Group meeting, an attendee mentioned a New Jersey shoreline cleanup being planned there. Another member suggested a cleanup at Grand Isle. The word went out and on Oct 13, 1985, one bus from N.O. and two buses from Baton Rouge and a fleet of personal vehicles filled with almost 300 volunteers picked up beach litter, debris, and dead animals along the 7.5 mile beach. The annual **Grand Isle Beach Sweep/Louisiana Coastal Cleanup** was born! The Mayor of Grand Isle and various corporate partners joined the annual cleanup which also spread to Elmer's Island and Grand Terre. It grew to over 3,000 people statewide in 1987 and even included Lake Pontchartrain divers. After the 1987 cleanup, the Lieutenant Governor's office took over, but has never matched the heydays of 1985-87.

1985 The **Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana (CRCL)** is an organization dedicated to the stewardship of one of the world's greatest natural, cultural, and economic treasures - the bays, wetlands, and estuaries of coastal Louisiana. The Coalition is made up of a wide spectrum of organizations and individuals - conservationists, businesses, local governments, landowners, civic organizations, religious groups, commercial and recreational fishers, scientists, teachers, and concerned individuals like Mike Osborne of the Delta Chapter. Recognizing that Louisiana's coastal land-loss will have dramatic impacts on the nation's energy, navigation and fisheries interests, CRCL works at the state, local and federal level to ensure that restoring and protecting coastal Louisiana is a top priority for our state and the nation.

1988 **Gourmet Camping (a Menu Cookbook and Travel Guide** for Campers, Canoeists, Cyclists and Skiers) was published by Joan Osborne, secretary in the founding group of the Baton Rouge Sierra Club in 1970. From the start Delta Chapter had a lively outings program coming from a base of New Orleans grown-up boy scouts who had made the rivers and lakes their own prior to helping form the Delta Chapter. The book also details many of the trips taken and the people involved in the Club. Food was important to the Delta Chapter and individual groups as you will see.

1990 Delta Chapter attorney assists in halting shell dredging in **Lake Pontchartrain**, which supported a mining industry from 1933 to 1990. Shells were used primarily for construction of roadways, parking lots, and levees, and in the production of cement. The goal was to restore the lake to the condition it was in when it was the most popular site for swimming, boating, fishing, crabbing, and picnicking in southeastern Louisiana

1997 The **Trail Guide to the Delta Country** was updated in 1997. Published by the New Orleans Group of the Sierra Club, John P. Sevenair, Editor-in-Chief, it listed 15 nearby rivers and creeks, 20 swamps and marshes for canoeing, 26 hiking and backpacking trails and 18 cycling trails.

1998 A vision of “sustainability” has been written into the **Atchafalaya Basin** master plan, signed into law in 1998. The basin is to be a place where “a diversity of livelihoods will continue and where the overriding mood will be a harmonious balance between naturalness and unimpaired ecological processes, and the enlightened and unobtrusive use of the land.”. Sierra Club field representative Sarah Craven, Charlie Fryling, chair of the Delta Chapter’s Atchafalaya Committee, and Harold Schoeffler, focus on a long-fought-for accord over the fate of the Atchafalaya Basin. They are working toward a landscape where the complex interrelationships of all components will be not only evident but carefully protected and interpreted. They are crafting “a place where natural processes are operating on a grand scale, where humans moderate their activities so that they become less intrusive and a reasonable part of, rather than an encumbrance on, these processes. Ten agencies, including the Army Corps of Engineers, state that this is exactly what they’re trying to achieve.

2003 The Corps of Engineers project “Pearl River Navigation Channel” completed in the 1950’s had a lasting impact on the Gulf Sturgeon numbers. The placement of 2 low water sills and 3 navigation locks on the Pearl River have altered the historic migration routes and the overall life cycles of the Gulf Sturgeon. The primary constituent elements essential for the conservation of Gulf Sturgeon are those habitat components that support feeding, resting, and sheltering, reproduction, migration, and physical features necessary for maintaining the natural processes that support these habitat components. In 2003 the USF&WS created **critical habitat for the threatened Gulf Sturgeon** after a coalition lawsuit which included the Delta Chapter.

2003 After 4 year battle Delta Chapter is instrumental in getting DEQ to post signs of fish consumption advisories at public boat ramps for 29 waterways in Louisiana & the Gulf of Mexico to alert fisherman about the **unacceptable levels of mercury** that have been detected in freshwater fish species. Health effects from harmful levels of mercury can include nervous system and kidney damage. Women of childbearing age, pregnant women, children less than seven years of age and developing fetuses are more sensitive to the toxic effects of mercury.

2005 Open-loop Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminals posed a developing threat to commercial fishing in the Gulf. LNG needs to be warmed (regassified) to be deliverable to Louisiana gas pipelines infrastructure. Eight terminals proposed for the Gulf of Mexico were all designed to use an open-loop system, running seawater through radiator-like racks. These terminals were proposed in essential habitat for shrimp, redfish, king mackerel, & blue fin tuna. Delta Chapter was a leading member of the Gumbo Alliance for Safe LNG, joining the Louisiana Charter Boat Alliance, Gulf Restoration Network & the Louisiana Shrimp Assoc. in opposing the open-loop LNG terminals.

2005 Since Hurricane Katrina the Delta Chapter has worked with the neighborhood around the Mary Queen of Vietnam Church on the issues of **hurricane debris, illegal landfills, & illegal dumping**. It established a regional Green Zone Task Force to address these issues, & authored a series of reports on debris & solid waste.

2006 40 years ago, **Bayou Bienvenue** was a freshwater cypress swamp, but levee construction, saltwater intrusion from the MRGO shipping channel, and subsidence transformed it into open water. Delta Chapter has played an instrumental role in restoring the bayou, coordinating hundreds of volunteers to plant

trees, build a viewing platform, giving dozens of tours to visitors near and far, and publishing a self-guided tour brochure. Delta Chapter also submitted comments which helped deny a permit to fill in wetlands adjacent to the Bayou and also to build an industrial park.

2006 The **1st St. Tammany Parish Household Hazardous Waste Day** took place on Oct 28, 2006 in Mandeville. St. Tammany Parish Dept. Of Environmental Services along with the Delta Chapter’s Honey Island Group now annually host Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days in the spring and fall at two selected locations in the parish. Items collected include: batteries (all kinds), cell phones, light bulbs (all types), mercury-containing devices, tires (5 per household), ink jet and toner cartridges, E-waste (TVs, PCs, copiers, fax machines, microwaves, radios, VCRs stereos.), latex and oil-based paints, spray paint, & polyurethane coatings with readable labels.

2006 After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Delta Chapter and The Gulf Restoration Network released a report entitled **The School of Big Storms: The High Cost of Compromising Our Natural Defenses and the Benefits of Protecting Them**. The report took a look at communities across the Gulf to see what they have been doing to strengthen or weaken their protection from storms. Much of the infrastructure used to extract, refine, process, & prospect for fuels – including natural gas & oil platforms, oil refineries, & natural gas processing plants – is located offshore or near the coast, making it particularly vulnerable to sea level rise & extreme weather.

2006 As part of its Hurricane Katrina response and recovery efforts, the Delta Chapter helped launch the first ever **formaldehyde testing** of FEMA trailers. The results revealed that many trailer occupants were being exposed to dangerous levels of formaldehyde which were causing serious health issues. As a result, Congress implemented federal regulations of the trailer and RV industries.

2006 The **Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO)** is a 76-mile long channel that was built to provide a navigation shortcut from the Gulf of Mexico to the heart of New Orleans. The Delta Chapter helped found The MRGO Must Go Coalition in response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The Coalition’s mission is to ensure that the wetlands affected by the MRGO are carefully restored in a timely manner. By 2009, the channel was closed with a rock dam near Bayou La Loutre and a \$1.1 billion surge barrier across the MRGO funnel was officially completed in 2013. These closures have moderated surface water salinity, setting the stage for large-scale ecosystem restoration.

2007 The Tulane Environmental Law Clinic represented the Delta Chapter as amicus in an Endangered Species Act case in which the court ordered the US Dept. of Interior to designate critical habitat for protection of the **Louisiana Black Bear**, and stopped federal participation in destruction of critical habitat. The listing also stopped hunting of the black bear.

2007 Hurricanes Katrina & Rita had an overwhelming impact on forests. But one species held fast and protected other trees, wildlife, property and, most important, people. The bald cypress is the best form of natural storm and flood protection for the Gulf Coast, but it was ending up in garden beds as mulch. **Cypress mulch** was the main driver of cypress logging, so the Delta Chapter participated in a “Save our Cypress” campaign which got Walmart, Home Depot & Lowe’s to state that they will not buy cypress mulch from coastal Louisiana



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2007 Delta Chapter joined a coalition of environmental groups that sued a natural gas well operator (EnerVest) in northern Louisiana for using **leaky mercury meters** that contaminated the Ouachita River, Black Bayou Lake and Bayou DiSiard, which exhibit high levels of mercury, endangering the environment & lives of fish consumers. EnerVest entered into a voluntary cleanup agreement, and removed its mercury meters.

2008 Delta Chapter helped the Louisiana Green Corps (a 501c3 non-profit) secure \$500,000 from the Louisiana, Dept. of Labor to create a **“Green Jobs” training program** for youth 16-24 years of age that reached 100 youth over a one year period. The Louisiana Green Corps celebrated its 10 year anniversary in 2018.

2009 The Delta Chapter worked with the **Washington Parish Community Alliance** in opposition to the proposed eight square mile reservoir located south of Louisiana Highway 10 between Franklinton and Bogalusa. The reservoir, proposed in 2003, would have flooded the Bogalusa Creek and inundated historic homes, farms, cemeteries and timberland, and cost an estimated \$29 million. It took six years, but the permit to build was denied in 2009.

2009 Entergy canceled its plan to convert its **Little Gypsy power plant** to a coal and coke burning facility following more than 18 months of litigation by Delta Chapter and the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic. The Louisiana Public Service Commission originally approved the project, but the project was cancelled after being ordered to show that the project was economically viable.

2009 **Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve** was established in 1978. The Barataria Preserve, originally 1,000 acres, located 10 miles south of New Orleans interprets the culture of those who settled the area & the unique ecosystem that sustained them, and preserves a representative example of the Delta's environment containing natural levee forests, bayous, swamps, and marshes. A successful ten-year coalition battle prevented developers from draining adjacent wetlands. Delta Chapter worked to get a +/- 20,000 acre addition, which included Bayou aux Carpes and Bayou Segnette, to the Preserve added to congressional legislation

2009 Delta Chapter released the **New Orleans Green Building Assessment**, it's report on the state of the local green building infrastructure, timed to coincide with the fourth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. The report was intended as an analysis of the green building resources, and a guide to tapping those resources.

2010 In April BP dumped nearly 2 million gallons of oil dispersant into Gulf waters as part of the response to the BP Oil Disaster. Delta Chapter petitioned EPA to create **regulations for toxic dispersants** that safeguard our environment and require more extensive testing, and require full disclosure of each dispersant's ingredients.

2010 The City of New Orleans denied a proposed coastal use permit to **fill in wetlands adjacent to Bayou Bienvenue** and the MRGO to build an industrial park. Delta Chapter worked with the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic to show the potential environmental benefits of not authorizing the project outweighed the potential economic benefits.

2010 Louisiana Generating canceled plans to build a new 705MW coal burning unit at its Big Cajun Power Plant after Delta Chapter and the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic appealed the plant's Clean Air Permit, and petitioned the EPA to veto the permit.

2010 Delta Chapter spearheaded the **NOLA Recycles Coalition** to pressure the new mayor of New Orleans to reinstitute residential curbside recycling which was suspended following Hurricane Katrina. The mayor subsequently renegotiated new garbage contracts which included residential recycling.

2011 Delta Chapter working with the Holy Cross Neighborhood Assoc. and the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic enjoined the US Army Corps of Engineers from continuing the \$1.3 billion **Industrial Canal Lock Replacement Project**. The Court granted summary judgment that The Corps selected a “deep-draft” plan without analyzing the impact that closing the MRGO outlet had on the need for a deep-draft canal.

2011 Delta Chapter worked with the Holy Cross Neighborhood Assoc. Center for Sustainable Development and Engagement to educate homeowners about **green building improvements** that can be included in home rebuilding. The effort led to over 100 homes installing radiant barriers in their attics to reduce solar heat and save homeowners money through reduced energy use.

2012 Bayou Teche Water Sentinel is a program that Delta Chapter started. It consists of local volunteers who have conducted water sampling 4 times per year since spring of 2012 and who have developed more than five years of data on water quality in the Bayou. It still continues and has been successfully taken over by Teche Project, a volunteer organization that works to improve public knowledge and enjoyment of the Bayou.

2013 Waste Management settled a case brought by the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic on behalf of the Delta Chapter about the **Chef Menteur Landfill**. The landfill was located less than a mile and a half from the Vietnamese-American community and Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge in New Orleans East. The lawsuit alleged that the landfill did not meet federal requirements for disposal of the types of waste deposited during the post-Katrina hurricane-recovery effort.

2013 The St Gabriel Redevelopment Company withdrew its **dredge and fill permit application to destroy 17.1 acres of wetlands** and replace with a C&D landfill in Iberville Parish. The Delta Chapter objected to the Army Corps proposed permit in cooperation with the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic.

2014 Heck Industries moved its concrete production facility away from Moreauville Louisiana to resolve a Clean Air Act violation submitted by the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic on behalf of the Delta Chapter. The violations stressed concerns about the impacts of particulate pollution on children in two nearby schools.

2014 The EPA granted in part petitions to Louisiana's Clean Air Act permit for the **Nucor pig iron facility in Convent**. The Tulane Environmental Law Clinic submitted the petitions on behalf of the Delta Chapter because the facility failed to control hazardous air pollutants, failed to include enough monitoring to insure compliance with permit requirements, and failed to include emission limits for particulate matter,

2015 Delta Chapter and the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic challenged the Louisiana Recovery School District's plan to move students, teachers and staff from **Cohen High School** to a rebuilt school on the site of a toxic waste dump. The District announced it will build the school in its current location rather than the dump site.

2015 In a suit by the Delta Chapter and the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic, **United Bulk Terminals** consented to update its pollution control technology and implement new inspection and monitoring procedures aimed at preventing spills of coal and petroleum coke into the Mississippi River. The company also agreed to wet the coal and coke and stop operating during high wind conditions to reduce dust blowing into neighboring communities and wetlands.

2015 The Shell Pipeline Co. decided to not build a 204 mile **proposed Westward Ho crude oil pipeline** originating in St James Parish thru the Atchafalaya Basin after comments opposing the project by the Delta Chapter, which was represented by the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic.

2016 EPA granted the lion's share of a petition that the Delta Chapter and the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic submitted objecting to a proposed Yuhuang Chemical **methanol plant in St. James Parish**. The Louisiana Dept. of Environmental Quality had issued a Clean Air Act permit without state-of-the-art technology to limit release of volatile organic chemicals, greenhouse gases, and other chemicals.

2017 Abita Springs becomes the first Louisiana town to commit to a goal of transitioning to 100 percent clean and renewable energy like wind and solar by 2030. The National Sierra Club launched the **Ready for 100** Campaign in 2016 and the Delta Chapter worked with the Mayor and Town Council to approve the resolution. Abita Springs joins 24 other cities across the U.S. like Atlanta and Pueblo CO. to make such a commitment.

2017 Delta Chapter New Orleans Group pushes for rules **allowing electric car chargers to be installed**. New Orleans City Council passes measure to allow electrical vehicle owners to apply for permits to install chargers next to the curb in front of their houses.

2017 Delta Chapter New Orleans Group led a coalition of environmental and community groups in opposing the proposed **RAM coal export terminal in Plaquemines Parish**. The no longer permitted terminal would have harmed the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion project, a major restoration project of the Louisiana coastal master plan, and would have resulted in mile long uncovered coal trains running through Gretna and Belle Chase.

2018 Delta Chapter is a Plaintiff in the Earthjustice lawsuit against the **Bayou Bridge Pipeline** and the Temporary Injunction that has stopped construction on that highly destructive project in the Atchafalaya Basin.