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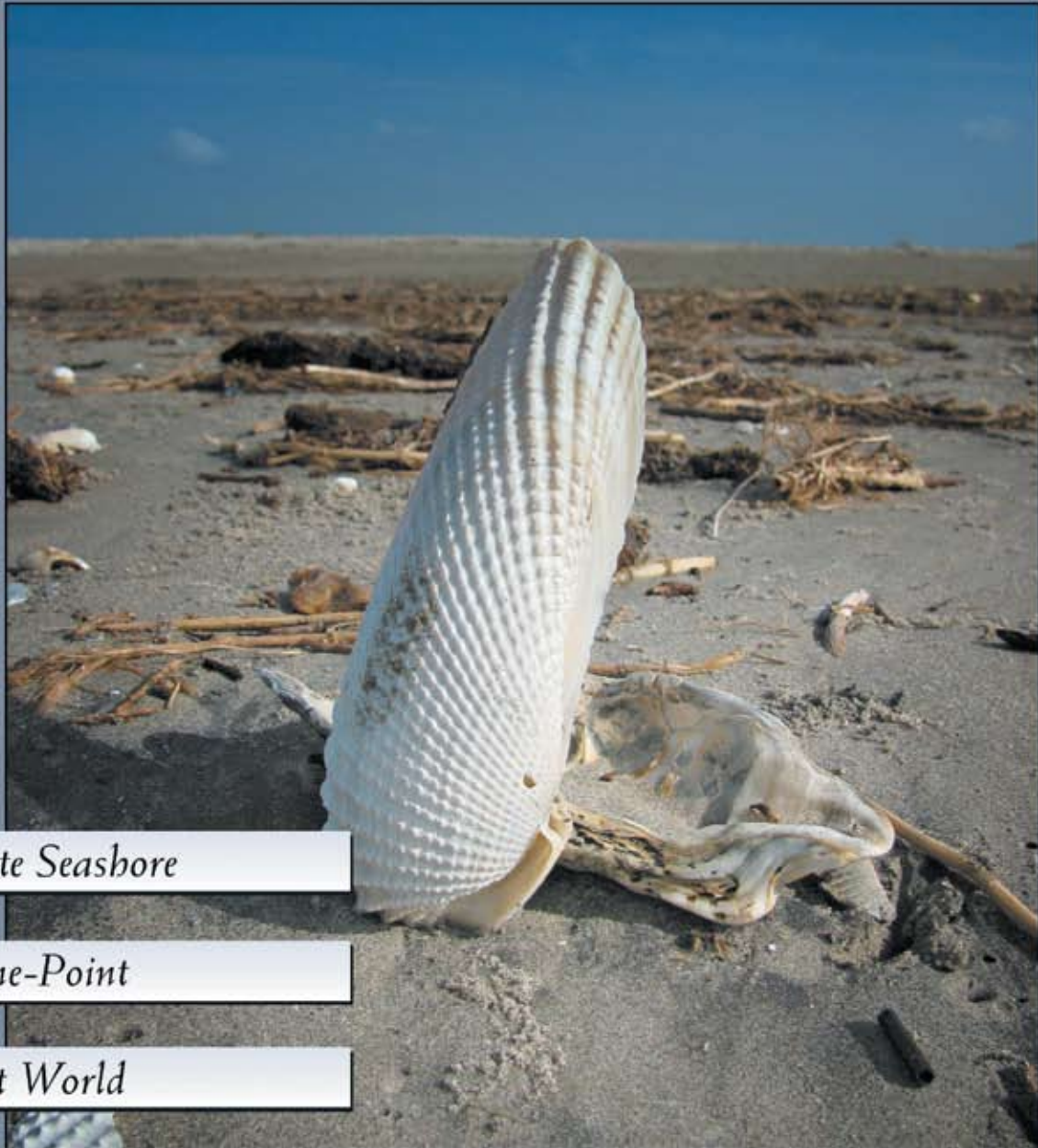
Wildlife

FEDERATION

Number 1

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Fall, 2009



■ *State Seashore*

■ *Nine-Point*

■ *Lost World*

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On the Cover....

Fragile “angel wing” sea shells (*Cyrtopleura costata* is the scientific name of this species of clam) are at times abundant along the Caminada Headlands shore, but are only one of the many interesting and sometimes beautiful “finds” an observant beach walker can experience along this fascinating stretch of Louisiana’s working coastline.

Photo by Randy Lanctot



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Editorial Creed: To create and encourage an awareness among the people of Louisiana of the need for wise use and proper management of those resources of the earth upon which the lives and welfare of all people depend: the soil, the air, the water, the forests, the minerals, the plant life, and the wildlife.

Magazine Staff

Randy P. Lanctot: Editor

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*Barney
Callahan*



Well, it looks like fall is finally here and not a moment too soon. At least in these parts, outdoor folk have had their fill of unseasonably warm and wet weather. The recent cool fronts have helped stir nature and people alike. It's a great time of year, and I know I can speak for all in being thankful that we didn't have to contend with more big storms like Ike, Gustav, Rita and Katrina that have visited us over the past 4 years. If we can buy a little more time, it will help our coast, wildlife and especially people who make their homes and livings there. And it will help us get a leg up on the restoration and protection that are essential to the future of the coast and living with it.

It's been a while since LWF has produced a magazine and I thank all of you who have stuck with us by joining or renewing despite not receiving this benefit of membership on a more regular basis. We are rethinking the ways in which we communicate our programs, activities and advocacy to take advantage of more economical and effective delivery of information and hope to develop more consistent and effective communication products in the near future.

In recent months we have been privileged to welcome two new LWF Life Members, Sandra Thompson Herman of New Orleans and Earl P. King, Jr. of Amelia. Ms. Herman is recent past director of the Atchafalaya Basin Program and was largely responsible for reengaging the state's involvement in pursuing the comprehensive conservation and recreation plan for the Basin in the mid-90s under the administration of Governor Mike Foster. Mr. King is a past chairman and current member of the Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Commission. He and former LWFC member Marc Dupuy, Jr. of Marksville are the only LWFC members to be LWF Life Members. I want to personally thank our Life Members for their confidence and support.



Sandra Herman with LWF Life Member plaque presented by LWF Past President Edgar Veillon.

In recent months the LWF has been the beneficiary of a generous contribution from the Behrman Hwy. location of Wal-mart Stores in Algiers. Thanks to the store's Community Outreach Coordinator Jaimie Derenbecker and store manager Todd Jabbia for recognizing LWF's work securing this contribution. We also welcome new Corporate Sponsor member DSK, Ltd. of Minden. To this I add a welcome and thanks to nearly 40 new individual Sponsor members and 60 new individual contributing members who are listed at the close of this column.

We have added two new affiliates this year, the Baton Rouge Chapter of the National Audubon Society and Friends of the Atchafalaya. Both are dedicated to the principles of conservation and wise use of our natural resources and I look forward to their participation in the Federation.

Speaking of participation, we have set the dates for the LWF's 71st convention which will be held at Cypress Bend Resort on Toledo Bend Reservoir the weekend of February 26-28, 2010. We have secured excellent room rates and hope you will join us. More details of this event will soon be available on the LWF's website, but mark your calendars now and make plans to attend.



Earl P. King, Jr. member of the Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Commission is LWF's newest Life Member.

One of the highlights of the Federation's convention is the recognition of outstanding conservation achievement. We are now soliciting nominations for these awards and I hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to recognize someone in your group or community who has earned recognition for their conservation work. Details of the program, including tips on creating a successful nomination are included in this issue of the magazine. Additional awards program information is posted on the LWF website.

One last thing before I sign off: We are holding elections this fall for LWF directors representing Districts 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9. In case you are unfamiliar with the 9 Federation Districts, I refer you to the map on page 26. There is information on page 11 about how to submit a nomination and a sample nomination form is posted on the



Jaimie Derenbecker presents big Wal-Mart check to LWF Past president Edgar Veillon.

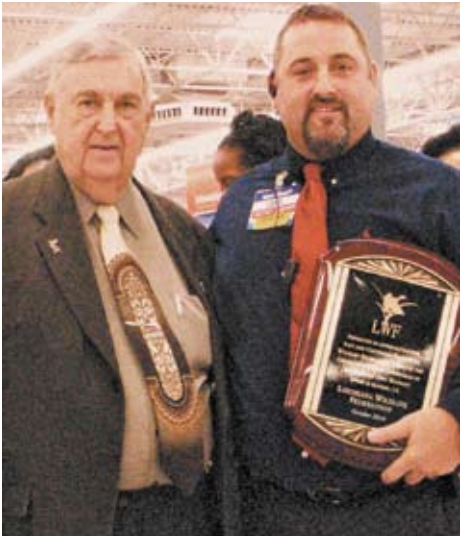
LWF website. I can't stress how important it is to have strong leadership for the Louisiana Wildlife Federation and I hope you will consider joining us at a level of participation that can really make a difference for LWF and conservation in the State of Louisiana. Should you have any questions about this opportunity, I welcome your call.

Thanks again for your confidence and support and I hope to see you out on the water or in the field.

Yours in conservation,
Barney Callahan
President

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Wal-Mart store manager Todd Jabbia (R) with LWF appreciation plaque presented by Edgar Veillon.

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First-time \$100 or greater LWF Contributing members are entitled to receive a sponsor plaque for their home or office. We extend our grateful appreciation to the following Sponsor Members of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation. Their support and that of all our loyal members is directly responsible for the Federation's growth and success.

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*Randy
Lanctot*



I hope you are enjoying this issue of *Louisiana WILDLIFE Federation* magazine. It's been a long time coming and will help "catch you up" on some of the things your organization has been working on over the past several months. Thanks to Gary Ross and Betty Marsh, Mike Perot and Amanda Moore for contributing stories that I know you will find interesting and informative.



Elmer's Island habitat – lagoon and sand flats.

After pulling an edition together, there's usually not much left to say in an editor's column. But I did save something special this time, something the Louisiana Wildlife Federation has been advocating for and working on for 7 years that finally came to fruition, in substantial part, this year. It all began with a resolution submitted to the LWF convention by the East Ascension Sportsman's League in 2002 – a simple proposal for the state to acquire Elmer's Island, a highly popular surf fishing, crabbing and camping area on Louisiana's central coast across Caminada Pass from Grand Isle. Admission via road to this fishing and wildlife haven had been closed shortly after the operator of the access concession died. The property was for sale. But for various reasons, the state and the owner could not come to terms on a deal, despite the interest shown and attempts made by two governors. Elmer's Island advocates were growing weary but hoping that a new administration might be able to shake things loose.

The first good news came when Governor



Elmer's Island habitat – vegetated low dunes and tidal channels

Jindal traveled to Grand Isle last December to announce that the state was asserting its ownership of the shore and all the accreted beach comprising between 200 and 300 acres of the approximately 1700-acre "island." In his announcement the Governor, quite rightly, described Elmer's Island as a Louisiana jewel that he was dedicated to conserve and make available to the public. The LWF welcomed the action as a good first step and thanked the governor for his initiative, knowing, of course, that nothing really had changed. Access to the

Elmer's Island shore remained as it always had been - via the water. But we were encouraged by the words of Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries Secretary, Robert Barham that negotiations would begin immediately to restore road access to the beach.

Fast forward 6 months to June 30th and the grand opening of LDWF's new marine lab on Grand Isle where Secretary Barham announced that the Elmer's Island road had been restored and would be open during daylight hours for the public to use. I was personally elated at the news



LDWF staff checking out Elmer's Island

and extremely proud of the role LWF played in making it happen. But there's more, much more to the story and there will continue to be as the saga of Elmer's Island unfolds.

Assistant LDWF Secretary, Office of Fisheries, Randy Pausina invited those attending the marine lab festivities to ride out to Elmer's Island for a sneak preview. The gate would be open for a few hours that afternoon.

Clint and Susan Ourso with the East

place. If you have not been already, you will just have to go there. Hint: it is more than just about getting to the shore to fish. The LDWF was perhaps surprised at the "instant" public use that followed the opening of the road (which required additional work to make passage to the shore safe and feasible). Kudos to The Grand Isle Port Commission and its director, Wayne Keller for helping to make that happen.

Public use has been heavy with thousands of

the while, materializing once the gate was open, like mushrooms sprouting after a good rain. I am not surprised.



Dumpster with over 3 tons of trash and debris volunteers collected during the "Trash Bash" on September 19th.



Elmer's Island Beach Sweep trash pickers

Ascension Sportsman's League were the first "public" to officially travel the road to the beach. I was riding with LWF President Barney Callahan, and after a stop to inspect the massive geo-tube beach levee construction on Grand Isle, we crossed Caminada Pass, turned left on E. I. Road, and enjoyed the short one-mile drive to the back of the beach. We stepped out and surveyed the landscape – hundreds of acres of gently rolling sand, broad lagoon, salt-marsh and mudflats that had been out of reach of most Louisianans for a long time. It was, well, exhilarating. That feeling was corroborated by the smile on Barney's face and, later, by a group of LDWF marine biologists who came to assure all were off the "island" before locking the gate. One might suspect these professionals would be jaded by their routine exposure to such places. Wrong! They seemed to skip out of their vehicles, pointing at landscape features, and smiling, too. Their excitement and elation was readily apparent.

I don't have the space here to describe all the qualities of Elmer's Island that make it a special

citizens from all demographics flocking to Elmer's Island. It was as if they were out there in spirit all

Just one example of the affinity people have for this place is the response to the beach clean-up that took place last September. Tons of litter and debris were cleared from the beach by almost 200 volunteers in just a few hours, all the while other "users" populated the shore and roadside fishing, crabbing and beachcombing without missing a beat. Sponsors and cooperators did not have to be asked twice for support of the event and were talking about "next time" as they departed.

It has been great to be part of the restoration of public use to Elmer's Island. There is more to be done to assure safe and respectful use and to secure additional acreage, funding, programming and other things to maximize the benefits of this place. But it's moving along.

It was a good idea, don't you think?



A lot of youngsters came out with parents and friends to help clean up Elmer's Island.

Louisiana's "State Seashore"

- An Idea Whose Time Has Come

By Randy Lanctot

When you think about the literally thousands of miles of shoreline Louisiana has and the affinity of its citizens and visitors for the coast and its abundant fish and



Caminada Headlands shoreline from the air.

wildlife resources, it's indeed remarkable that the Sportsman's Paradise does not have its own "State Seashore." You could say that all of the shoreline is state seashore since, at least where the water meets the land (the shore), the state claims ownership and the public has some right of use. But in Louisiana with its soupy wetland soils and ever-moving coastline, the public/private interface is as muddled as the dissolving, evolving shore itself.

For the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF), whose mission is "conserving our natural resources and YOUR right to enjoy them," establishing an official "State Seashore" is a worthy endeavor. Some might ask what designating a "State Seashore" has to do with conservation. To LWF, the answer is clear: conservation does not happen without people to advocate for it. Connecting people with nature is the best way to assure public understanding and support for conservation.

The idea of a "State Seashore" is an extension of the LWF's successful cam-

paign to restore public access to Elmer's Island (EI). At about the same time EI was closed to the public in 2002, vehicle access to and along the Fourchon Beach was also being curtailed. A "State Seashore" that would include the entire headland between the passes was a LWF dream from the outset. However, Elmer's Island, for sale at the time, required immediate attention.

To explain why the Caminada Headland*, rather than somewhere else along the Louisiana coast, should be considered for designation as a "State Seashore," I offer the following.

An obvious idea: The Caminada Headland is the only non-developed, (relatively) conveniently accessible from land, 14-mile stretch of shoreline and beach in a state with one of the longest coastlines of any US coastal state.

A compelling idea: To restore managed public access and use, for which there is a strong public demand, that was traditionally enjoyed via the Elmer's Island road and Hwy 3090 prior to 2002.

Not a new idea, though a different vision: The Louisiana Office of State Parks

"State Seashore" like the cultural and economic importance of the area, the natural resources, including game and commer-



The shore is a haven for gulls, pelicans and terns.

cial fish and wildlife, that are abundant there and the opportunities for education and interpretation of what can, without challenge, be considered the epitome of



The shore is a haven for gulls, pelicans and terns.

included a concept plan for a state park from Caminada to Belle Passes in its 1997-1012 Master Plan.

There are other reasons why the Caminada Headland should be Louisiana's

Louisiana's "working coast."

The definition of a state seashore that we are working within is "a length of shoreline, adjacent waters and beach of significant quality, scale and character that



Spotted Sandpiper.

is managed for conservation of natural resources and compatible (with conservation) public uses, and that is reasonably accessible to the public via land and water.”

Access to the envisioned “State Seashore” is intended to be controlled and uses managed by designated state and/or local government agencies or their contractors, similar to a state park or wildlife management area. Uses at all times will be consistent with habitat preservation and the conservation of aesthetic and natural resources, with emphasis on providing compatible recreational opportunities.

Depending on the variety of site-specific attributes and habitats of the “State Seashore,” different types of access and

uses would be allowed: from walk-in/float-in only, to public vehicle conveyance and permitted tours, to private vehicle access on and along the beach. Where suitable and manageable, some areas might be designated for overnight camping while others may be altogether off-limits as wildlife sanctuary or restricted for security reasons (pipelines).

Presently, there is no such thing as a “State Seashore” defined in Louisiana law. Assuming that we can garner sufficient support, and with the cooperation of affected landowners and other stakeholders, statutory language will be crafted and legislation introduced to create the legal underpinning for the concept. The statutory language would likely include a gen-

eral description of the area, the purposes of the “State Seashore,” and the intended public uses. It would also direct the designated state agency(s), in cooperation with the pertinent parish and local governments, to develop a plan for management and use of the “State Seashore,” including the acquisition of any necessary land rights or execution of use easements from willing sellers/donors.

This all sounds so logical and simple, but there are hurdles to negotiate. One immediately in front of us is the proposed



The shore goes on forever.

Caminada Headlands Restoration Project, which also presents an opportunity to advance the “State Seashore” concept. The state and federal governments are developing plans for a \$300 million “ecosystem restoration” project for the Caminada Headlands with the draft feasibility report to be available for public comment in November of 2009. The state is considering starting on its \$70 million share of the project next year with the Corps coming in along the way, after the sand-mining permits are secured and Congress authorizes the funding. If the envisioned “State Seashore” is to be realized, it is essential that the ecosystem restoration project be designed and executed to complement it, and vice versa. If it does not, it could preclude the “State Seashore” purposes and essentially foreclose on the idea altogether.

So, what can you do to support the “Caminada Headlands State Seashore?”

Talk up the idea and recruit support



Shrimping off the beach.



Trees drift in from the Tropics.

of your friends, family and colleagues for it. Make it clear that the success of the campaign will depend on the attitude of prospective “State Seashore” users: this will be a wildlife conservation and public use area, not public abuse area like those leery of the idea will charge.

Watch for and comment on the draft feasibility report for the Caminada Headlands Ecosystem Restoration project due out this November; be sure to urge that the project be compatible with establishing a “State Seashore” between Caminada and Belle Passes.

Support LWF; the Federation is leading this charge and cannot succeed without your support. Please continue supporting the LWF and encourage others to join us. I invite organizations to become an affiliate of LWF to have a role in determining conservation policy, programs and action.



Bayou Moreau sometimes empties into the Gulf at the shoreline until natural sand-building processes fill it in again. Here it winds back up toward Port Fourchon.

Stay informed and be ready to act.

* The Caminada Headland is the shoreline and associated beach and dune complex between Caminada Pass on the east and Belle Pass on the west. It is immediately west, across Caminada Pass, from Grand Isle in south Lafourche and Jefferson Parishes on the central Louisiana Coast. Other than via watercraft, access to the shore is by the Elmer’s Island Road on the east and Hwy. 3090 on the west. A



Bay Champagne was once an arm of the sea, open to Gulf waters, but as the headland has eroded, the beach has built up across it, separating it from the Gulf. The beach between the Gulf shoreline and the Bay Champagne shoreline is claimed by the state and traditionally has been a popular fishing and camping spot.

headland, is defined as an area of “high” land jutting out into the sea from a land mass (which distinguishes it from a barrier island). In Louisiana, many of what we consider barrier islands are formerly



Gulf shoreline at Bay Champagne.

headlands that, through erosion and subsidence of the land “behind” (that is, landward-facing), have been severed from the “mainland.” The Caminada Headland was



Grass planting and sand fencing between the Gulf and Bay Champagne to defend against storm surge over-wash.

formed primarily by the discharges of sediment from the Mississippi River when the River occupied the channel of present-day Bayou LaFourche, reworked by wave and current from the Gulf of Mexico. Other Mississippi River alignments, including the present active delta, have also, for better or worse, influenced the evolution of the Caminada Headland.

Endangered Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle Released

Photos & story courtesy LDWF

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) and the Audubon Aquarium of the Americas (AAoA), through their partnership in the Louisiana Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Rescue Program, released an endangered Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle into the Gulf of Mexico on October 14, 2009. "Lagniappe," as the biologists named the turtle, is the first animal in Louisiana's history to be equipped with a

and tells the transmitter to send a signal to the satellite. This is the only way to track a turtle in the open ocean. The battery life of the transmitter will allow tracking capabilities for approximately 250 days, or longer.

At 90 pounds, a healthy adult weight, the turtle is one of the largest adult Kemp's Ridelys rescued by biologists in at least a decade, according to Michele Keller, director of the rescue program. It was rescued last March from a borrow pit pond near Freshwater City in Vermilion Parish where

that she was meant for."

LDWF enforcement agents, in coordination with the U.S. Coast Guard, transported the sea turtle 28 miles off the coast and released it near an oil rig where sources of food, primarily crab, congregate. The turtle was gently lowered into the Gulf waters and within moments it descended into the depths.

Prior to release, the turtle was housed at the Audubon Center for Research of Endangered Species in New Orleans where it was treated for both internal and external parasites acquired while stranded in the pond.

Kemp's Ridelys are the most endangered sea turtles in the world. The public can follow the turtle's movement via a Web link on both LDWF and AAoA Web sites.



Lagniappe the sea turtle - rigged and ready.

device that will allow it to be tracked via satellite, according to Mandy Tumlin, coastal research biologist with LDWF. The turtle will be carrying a little something extra as she traverses Gulf waters, hence the name "Lagniappe." For the next several months the satellite antenna attached to the back of the turtle will allow scientists to track her movements.

The satellite transmitter has two metal contact points called a salt-water switch. When the transmitter is underwater, an electric current is able to flow between the metal contact points through the water. When the turtle surfaces to breathe, one or both of the metal contact points come out of the water

biologists believe she was trapped since Hurricane Ike in September 2008.

Biologists are hoping the turtle will mate and nest. Unlike other turtles, Kemp's Ridelys nest every year, Tumlin said. "We're excited to follow her migration and see where she goes."

"We eagerly await the information that this sea turtle will relay to us through the satellite tag, as we strive to unravel the unknowns surrounding this critically endangered species," said LDWF Secretary Robert Barham. "The release was an exciting day for our staff. I know I am personally looking forward to tracking the status of Lagniappe as she resumes her normal life in the habitat



LDWF marine biologist Mandy Tumlin, with a little help, launches an eager Lagniappe over the gunwale.

YOU'RE INVITED! Become a Director of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation

Nominations are now open for seats on the Board of Directors of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF/Federation) representing Federation Districts 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9. The geographic boundaries of each District are represented on the map on page 26. District 1 includes Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Orleans and St. Tammany Parishes. District 3 includes Lafayette, Vermilion, St. Martin, Terrebonne, Iberia, St. Mary, Iberville, Assumption Parishes. District 5 is comprised of Union, Morehouse, East Carroll, West Carroll, Ouachita, Richland, Madison, Caldwell, Franklin, Tensas Parishes; District 7 represents Cameron, Calcasieu, Beauregard, Allen and Jefferson Davis Parishes. District 9 consists of DeSoto, Red River, Sabine, Natchitoches, Winn, Vernon Parishes.

To be eligible for nomination, members must reside or work in one of the districts described above and have been an individual member of the LWF for at least two consecutive years as of the end of

2009. Members who first joined in 2008 are eligible as long as their dues for 2009 have been paid. If you have a question about your eligibility or any other aspect of service on the LWF Board, please call or email the Federation office (225/344-6707; lwf@lawildlifefed.org).

District at-large directors serve two-year terms and may seek reelection for additional terms. Directors must keep their LWF membership current while serving on the Board.

The Board of Directors is the Louisiana Wildlife Federation's chief governing body. It approves programs, builds organizational capacity, and along with the delegates to LWF's annual meeting, establishes policy on conservation issues. The Board elects the LWF's executive officers from its members. Over the past 20 years, several District At-large Directors have risen through the ranks to serve as President of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation. Others have been able to accomplish personal conservation goals

by leading committees and representing the LWF on task forces, commissions and advisory groups pertaining to environmental quality and natural resource conservation. Board members can be extremely influential in conservation matters through their work with fellow board members and LWF affiliates.

If you are interested in this opportunity, please do not hesitate to nominate yourself or provide background information to other members who may wish to nominate you. If you know of another LWF member who might be interested in serving on the Federation Board, please offer to nominate him/her. A form and sample resume outline is posted on the LWF website at www.lawildlifefed.org. Nominations will be accepted through November 15th. District at-large directors will be selected by LWF members from their district via mailed ballot later in the month. If you'd like more details, please contact the LWF office. Your organization needs you. ■

Fall Tips for Living with Bears

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) asks the public to become "Bear Aware" during this active time for Louisiana Black Bears. During fall months, black bears instinctively gear up for the winter and the associated decrease in available food. Bears increase food intake to gain as much weight as possible during this time to survive through the winter. They seek out every available food source and this sometimes includes food waste in garbage cans. Garbage containers are especially attractive to bears because their contents contain discarded food that is higher in fat and calories than naturally occurring food sources.

"Bears can be good neighbors, as long as they don't learn to associate people's homes with an easy meal," said LDWF Large Carnivore Manager Maria Davidson. "In fact, if everything goes well, you might not even know they are there."

An amazingly acute sense of smell enables the bear to find sources of food, which can lead it to a garbage can or pet food left outdoors. If the bear is unsuccessful in accessing food

easily at a residence, it will move on and not return. However, an easy meal will usually prompt a return visit.

Bears are generally shy creatures, but also very intelligent, possessing excellent learning and long-term memory capabilities. A regular food reward will cause a bear to lose its instinctive fear of humans and condition it to seek food near residences.

The best way to avoid trouble with nuisance bears is prevention:

- Secure all garbage containers or deposit all edible waste in separate containers that are stored where bears cannot gain access.

- Keep your garbage inside your home or closed utility shed in doubled-up garbage bags and place garbage outside for pick up on the morning of, not the night before, to limit the time a bear will have access to the food source.

- To further eliminate attractive odors, wash garbage cans regularly with disinfectant solution, bleach or ammonia.

Pet foods, bird feeders and outdoor grills can also attract bears. If attractants

are allowed to remain outdoors for extended periods of time, a bear will find it and come back for more.

- Limit the amount of time pet food is outside and take all foods in at night.

- Suspend bird feeders out of a bear's reach at least 8 to 10 feet high, or remove them.

- After cooking out, clean grills to eliminate odors that will attract bears.

Although intentionally feeding wild black bears is illegal in Louisiana, problems still occur when people unintentionally allow bears access to garbage and other human related foods.

"Fear of humans is a bear's most important survival mechanism. Once bears lose their fear of humans, there is little incentive for them to avoid circumstances that bring the two together. This could easily result in a dangerous situation for both people and bears," Davidson said.

To report a bear problem, call 1-800-442-2511. ■

9-Point

by Betty Taylor Marsh

My husband and I had been hunting hard. It was so wonderful. There is nothing like having the love of your life to share the one thing that you are as passionate about as he is. He's the perfect man as far

bucks but no shooters. It was nothing for us to see 25 bucks a day, but no shooters. So Friday, the day after New Years, we got up early and had a great morning. Saw lots of deer but no shooters. If I'm seeing deer I can stay all day long. Just ask Marsh Man about that. Poor thing!

Marsh Man and his brothers own property on the levee in East Carroll parish and they have a family hunting club. They have a bunch of box stands and you

We got to the stand at about 3:00 P.M. We always, always, take a pee-pee can because I cannot sit on a stand for 2 1/2 hours without having to use it. Any of you men out there that have ever hunted with women know about this. Young or old, night or day, whether we've had a beverage or not, we probably are going to HAVE TO PEE-PEE. This particular day we forgot the can.

After being on stand a while we had



Betty with her 9-Point Buck

as I'm concerned. He gave me guns and jewelry for my birthday and Christmas. What more could a gal ask for? I put guns right up there with jewelry.

The way the holidays fell last year I had lots of time off and that time was spent in the woods. I saw sights I'd never seen before, like looking at 4 eight-points at one time. I saw two bucks crossing a bar pit at close range in a thunderstorm; a doe taking a drink of water at the end of a point with the sunset behind her. These are images I'll never forget.

Anyhow, we had been seeing lots of

just sign up for the stand you want to hunt on a particular day. I saw this stand when we were driving down the levee and I told Marsh Man that it looked like a good one. We went to the skinning shed to sign up, and sure enough, that stand was available, so it was ours for the evening hunt. When we signed up my husband mentioned to me nobody had hunted that stand all year long. He said it would probably be real good hunting or real bad hunting. I told him a bad day hunting was better than a good day at work. Actually I don't believe I've ever had a bad day hunting.

seen a few does and yearlings, but that was it. I think we had seen 5 by 5 o'clock, but with all the excitement that followed, everything before 5:00 is now kind of a blur.

So at 5:00, Marsh Man (who never has to pee on the stand) has to pee. He tells me he's going to step out on the "porch" of the stand. I thought, no big deal, we are not seeing anything. Now keep in mind that the club has specific harvest rules to manage the deer on their property and Marsh Man has to okay the deer that I shoot to make sure it's big enough. I'm

used to shooting anything with a forked horn; correction, anything with a horn! It's just the way I was raised. Suffice it to say Marsh Man has had to practically sit on top of me to get me not to shoot every buck. I have improved tremendously, though. My husband is real proud of me.

Marsh Man is on the porch and I look



Betty T. & Jimmy Marsh

up toward the levee and see deer running down the levee, coming our way. I can't tell if they're bucks or does at that point but I whispered real loud to Marsh Man that I see deer running down the levee. This likely means one of two things. Either a vehicle has scared them up or there's a chase on. Since the rut was at its peak in our area I was pretty sure it was a buck chasing a doe. I told myself right then not to get the shakes.

About that time the deer headed straight to the food plot in front of our stand, a small plot about 50 x 50 feet. When the deer started down the levee I could hear a buck.....GRUNT, GRUNT, GRUNTTTTT!!!!!! I threw my binoculars down and starting whispering "IT'S A BUCK, IT'S A BUCK CHASING A DOE and they are headed right for us!" Marsh Man is still on the porch. You see, he had decided he needed to tuck his shirt in and took this opportunity to not only unzip but unbuckle too.

The next thing I know it's 1...2...3.....bucks chasing a doe not 50 yards from

me, right there at the end of the food plot. The 9-point is right on the doe. He is the biggest of the three and in the lead. I put the scope on him. Marsh Man is finally in the stand with his binoculars up but his pants are still down to his knees! He's asking, "WHERE, WHERE, WHERE IS HE?" I want to knock him in the head; all I can say is "HE'S RIGHT THERE!!!!!!!" I believe my husband learned how to whisper in a cotton gin. I want to shoot so bad my finger is twitching. I'm holding the 30/06 he gave me a few weeks earlier for my birthday and eager to try it out. I could just see this 9-point slipping away.

Even after all the ruckus coming from our stand the buck was still in the middle of the food plot, still after the doe. Marsh Man says, "Yep, this is the one you want. Shoot him if he gives you a shot."

Well, the buck's butt was to me. Then the doe spun around and he spun around with her, but he was in a real fast trot. I decided I could hit him anyway. BAM!! I shot. The buck never looked our way, never stopped chasing the doe. The doe never looked our way. The other two bucks never looked our way. Marsh Man said, "SHOOT HIM AGAIN!" I pulled the trigger. CLICK! I wanted to scream!

The click of a gun when a 9-point buck is 50 yards in front of you after you have obviously missed because you think you are Annie Oakley (and that just because the deer is moving doesn't mean you can't hit him), your husband has gotten back in the stand, slammed the door, knocked the metal chair around, and you have whispered real loud 50 times "HE'S RIGHT THERE!," is the absolute worst sound in the world. At least I thought it was. But there's more.

Marsh Man started cussing, OMG, did he cuss. He started telling me to give him that gun, but with some explicit terms. I tried to shoot again and it clicked again! I couldn't believe the buck was still out there. That buck wanted to die. Now keep in mind that Marsh Man has still got his pants down. Bless his heart.

Marsh Man took the gun and looked at it. Two cartridges were trying to go in the chamber at the same time. I stuck my hand in the receiver trying to get one of them out. He told me to REMOVE MY HAND (again, with specific vocabulary.) He's dug in his pocket for a pocketknife (pants still down) to try and get

the shells unstuck. He tried to get the clip out and the clip wouldn't come out. I'M SCREAMING....HE'S STILL OUT THERE, HE'S STILL OUT THERE!!!

Thinking back on this I remember saying some things like, "If we kill this buck it will be a miracle" and "This gun is going back! I HATE THIS GUN!"

Can you believe that buck stayed through all that? I took another try and was able to remove one of the offending shells. Marsh Man successfully got a cartridge in the chamber. I got the gun out the shooting window and waited until the buck stopped broad side.....BAM! He took off like he wasn't hit at all. The two smaller bucks followed him, then the doe. We lost sight of them behind a big pecan tree. We didn't hear him fall. It wasn't looking good. I had to make myself take a breath at this point because I realized I wasn't breathing at all.

Then, a shooter 8-point came down the levee on the very same path that the doe and bucks had been on. I wanted to shoot him so bad I didn't know what to do. He had his nose to the ground and went the same way as the buck I had just shot at. We lost sight of him, too, when he went behind the big pecan tree. Right before dark we got down from the stand to take a look. There he was, dead on the ground not 20 yards past the big pecan tree.

Marsh Man's nephew, Cade, was on the other side of the levee about 600 yards south of us. Cade came to the truck after dark and said he saw a 9-point fight an 8-point down, and described the shooter that we had seen come down the levee after I shot the 9-point. Then, he said the 9-point bred the doe and they went down the levee. It was too far for Cade to shoot.

Cade took the new 30/06 and tried to get the clip out and couldn't. He did get the gun unloaded, thank goodness because I really didn't want to give it to Marsh Man for fear of never seeing it again. When we got home that night my son-in-law, Garrett took a look at my new gun and realized that the clip wasn't fitting into the gun just right. He fixed it to work perfectly.

My biggest buck so far, my first wall-hanger, harvested with the man I love right beside me (with his pants down.) It was a perfect day and the most exciting and best hunt ever!

Louisiana's Lost World

Story & photos by Gary Noel Ross

During the late summer of 2005, two “Category 3” hurricanes slammed into south Louisiana. My residence in Baton Rouge was not damaged. However, a

square miles is open water, and the vast majority of the rest is a labyrinth of soupy marshlands. The parish and its residents have been through hurricanes before, so they were prompt in heeding evacuation warnings and no lives were lost.

Just 26 days prior to the arrival of “Rita,” the now legendary Hurricane Katrina made landfall near the Louisiana/Mississippi border precipitating the unprecedented and catastrophic flooding of the major and historic city of New Orleans. The physical and human maelstrom monopolized the international media for days, weeks, and months. The recovery of New Orleans continues to be bannered in headlines while the toll of Hurricane Rita on the people, flora, fauna, and land of Cameron has received scant attention outside the state.

As a professional biologist, I have doted on southwest Louisiana for more than 4 decades. But it’s not Cameron’s aquatic and semi-aquatic ecosystems that have held my attention. Rather, I have been fascinated with another unique feature of the parish: slivers of dry, tree-covered land within extensive treeless marshes; the “cheniers.”

From the French *chênière* (“place where oaks grow”) and rooted in *chêne* (“oak”), Louisiana’s early Cajuns and Creoles in coastal southwest Louisiana coined the word to refer to the elevated ridges that provide the region’s only dry land—about three percent—and which were covered in dense forests of the evergreen tree known



*From the French *chênière* (“place where oaks grow”)*

favorite biological research site of mine, Cameron Parish, was hit especially hard.

Hurricane Rita, now recognized as the third most intense Atlantic hurricane ever recorded and the most intense tropical cyclone ever observed in the Gulf of Mexico, made landfall at the Louisiana/Texas border on September 24. Mercifully, the storm downgraded from a Category 5 to a Category 3 just before impact. Still, Rita packed winds of 120 miles per hour and pushed a 10-12-foot surge of salt water that took nearly two weeks to fully recede. Cameron took a direct hit.

Although Cameron ranks as the largest of the state’s 64 civil divisions, the parish is rural with less than 10,000 residents. Most are in the oil, hunting, trapping, fishing, and cattle industries. Cameron is a very watery world, hence the sparse human population. Statistically, a whopping 32 percent of the parish’s 1,932



But other trees like this hackberry also colonize healthy cheniers

as live oak (*Quercus virginiana*). The Chenier Plain, as the coastal region of alternating marshland and dry ridges is technically labeled, exists as an expansive 600 mile-long and 15-mile deep coastal strip stretching from Vermilion Bay in the east, then westward and across Sabine Pass into extreme eastern Texas. All of the actual cheniers are similar: a few inches to about 20 feet above the surrounding marsh; between 100 and 1,500 feet in

width (average 600 feet); oriented parallel to the coast, that is, an east-west direction; and a steep Gulf-facing slope but a more gentle and irregular inland declination.

The Chenier Plain has a distinctive geomorphology, too. True and extensive cheniers occur outside the Louisiana-southeast Texas gulf coast only in one other area: Suriname-Guyana-French Guiana coasts in South America. [However, less typical and minor chenier-type ridges

occur in Australia, New Zealand, and Baja California (Mexico).] Typically, cheniers are relict beaches, stranded by river sediments that drift with prevailing currents and accumulate seaward of the former shore. Such unique landforms are necessarily proximate to the mouths of rivers that carry large sediment loads. These stranded beach ridges are composed of sand, shell, and resilient organic matter. They are shallow and rest on marine clays and sands. The Louisiana-Texas cheniers date back from several hundred to 2,700 years. They represent an historic record of the Mississippi River's fickle past of having meandered in a westward direction from its present position as it emptied incalculable tons of sediments into the Gulf of Mexico. Parts of Cameron Parish at one time or another have been open Gulf, sand-shell beach, quiet bay, bare mudflat, and marsh. Wave action, tides, currents, along with occasional summer tropical cyclones from the south and winter cold fronts from the north all have worked and reworked the various organic and inorganic deposits into their present form.

From a biological perspective, Louisiana's cheniers are upland forests surrounded by a grassy sea. These "islands" are the only terra firma within thousands of square miles of coastal marshlands. But even here, the distinction between land and water is often not clear. Where else, for instance, can one find growing within just a few feet of one another water hyacinths, Louisiana irises, lantana, prickly pear cacti, Spanish bayonet yuccas, and gigantic live oak trees festooned with Spanish moss?

Although the live oak was the signature tree on Louisiana's cheniers, other trees were common, too. These included hackberry, honey locust, pecan, toothache tree, black willow, and American elm. Despite lumbering, cattle grazing, and energy exploration that have occurred since settlement, many of the Cameron cheniers have retained a semblance of their woodland character so important to migrating songbirds.

Investigations by vanguard ornithologists George H. Lowery, Jr., Robert J. Newman of Louisiana State University, and Sidney Gauthreaux, Jr. (Clemson University) in the '40s, 50s and 60s and more recently by Frank Moore



Louisiana Iris flourish in wetlands along healthy cheniers

(University of Southern Mississippi) have documented that a greater number of North American songbirds (passerines) pass through Louisiana than any other state. This is because Louisiana is positioned at the mouth of the Mississippi River and at the very center of the great Mississippi Flyway—a “highway in the sky” for migrating birds. In the autumn, birds move southward from their breeding grounds in the north to spend winter in the warmer climates of Mexico, Central and South America. The following spring, these same birds return to the temperate forests of the United States and Canada to nest and rear young.

During ideal weather, migrants fly directly over Louisiana’s coastal marshlands. However, the elevated land of the cheniers offers a rest stop. In autumn, for instance, the trees serve as staging grounds. Limbs provide platforms to rest, foliage provides opportunities to forage. This last-chance food helps to restore fat reserves necessary for the impending 20-plus hour non-stop, 500-600 mile trans-Gulf flight. In the spring, the cheniers are the first high ground between Mexico and the forested interiors of the United States. If the birds encounter rain and strong northerly winds during these spring flights, the cheniers become vital harbor for exhausted travelers. The passage of a strong cold front in April can cause “fallout,” a unique phenomenon in which tens of thousands of songbirds descend into the chenier woodlands for refuge from wind and rain. Once the weather improves, the birds re-embark on their northward paths.

Fallouts on Louisiana’s cheniers have been generating considerable ecotourism for the last few decades. Birders from practically every state in the union and at least a dozen foreign countries have visited Cameron during peak migration time. To accommodate visitors while at the same time conserve chenier habitat, the Baton Rouge Chapter of the National Audubon Society established “Peveto Woods Sanctuary,” several acres of woodland near Johnson Bayou just eleven miles from the Texas border.

Songbirds are not the only migratory creatures to benefit from Louisiana’s chenier woodlands. Take monarch butterflies, for instance. In the early 1960s I learned that in October, monarchs (*Danaus plexip-*



Falcate orangetip butterfly, female-top, male-bottom on Louisiana Iris flower

pus), use the cheniers in much the same way as do songbirds. The butterflies roost in mass in the trees and nectar heavily on wildflowers before they launch southward over the Gulf. [NOTE: At the time, entomologists assumed monarchs neither flew at night nor over large bodies of open water. The butterflies supposedly traveled to and from their overwintering grounds in Mexico by using land routes through Texas.] The following April, the butterflies fly in from the south, and once again take advantage of the trees to roost, the abundance of wildflowers to feed, and the common antelope horn milkweed (*Asclepias viridis*) plants to lay eggs for their next generation.

In the 1990s with the assistance of UNOCAL Corporation and Petroleum

Helicopters, Inc., I was able to board several oil/gas production platforms located 70-80 miles off the Cameron coast to monitor monarch sightings. After four years of research, I documented that thousands of monarchs wing their way over the Gulf of Mexico. If the weather becomes inclement, many of these monarchs will descend upon the man-made offshore structures for temporary respite. Although these dockings have proven a showcase phenomenon in themselves, my analysis of the pinpoint data reveals an even more important discovery: the existence of a consistent and unmistakable over-water flyway approximately 90-100 miles wide and 400 miles long extending from the southwest coast of Louisiana to the northeast coast of Tamaulipas, Mexico. I have

theorized that this “Monarch Trans-Gulf Express” allows the insects to substantially shorten, both in time and mileage, their fall and spring journeys. In a nutshell, Louisiana’s coastal cheniers are strategically important to both migrating birds and monarch butterflies.

Another luminary that captured my



Antelope horn milkweed plant

attention in Cameron is the falcate orangetip butterfly. *Anthocharis midea* is a small, delicate species that is basically white with a mottled underside. The male, however, sports a bright orange patch on the hook-like tip of each forewing. In Louisiana, orangetips are found most commonly in upland hardwood forests. The butterflies usually emerge from their chrysalis (pupal stage) in late March to mid April. They remain on the wing for only a few days—just long enough to mate and lay eggs in order to get another generation underway. But on March 23, 1991 while in a hackberry woodland just south of the town of Cameron and within earshot of the Gulf’s surf, I noticed several orangetips flying low to the ground.

During the next several years I discovered that woodlands on several cheniers hosted an isolated but stable population of orangetips. The adult females lay their eggs on a small herbaceous annual in the mustard family known as Pennsylvania bitter cress (*Cardamine pensylvanica*). The plants can be found at the interface between chenier and north-facing inner

marsh as well as along the dendritic cattle queues indelibly etched within the heavy clay supporting the woods. Curiously, the most robust individuals grow within the actual hoof prints of cattle within the dappled light of the woodlands. Turns out, bitter cress needs a lot of moisture to complete its springtime life cycle of barely a month. Southwest Louisiana, though, is often plagued with springtime droughts that compromise the survival of the plants. But the edges of the cheniers and the depressions in the ground stomped out by cattle remain moist for the longest time; therefore, bitter cress does best there. And where bitter cress flourishes, orangetips can complete their flash-in-a-pan life cycle.

But orangetips have another peculiarity associated with drought. During those springs when rainfall is deficient and bitter cress plants are severely stunted, adult orange-tips do not emerge from their shroud-like chrysalises. The encased butterflies somehow sense low moisture in the environment. So they wait. And wait. And wait. Not as one might expect until the next rainfall, but instead until the following March. And if that following spring is also moisture deficient, the butterflies reset their biological clocks—and again to another 12 months. My research has shown that these fully formed butterflies are able to remain in what appears to be a state of suspended animation within their pupal skins for a full three years. With such elapses of time possible between generations, orangetips are very dependent upon environments that are reasonably stable. [In 1995 I published in *Natural History* magazine a story—“Butterfly Wrangling in Louisiana”—describing my research in Cameron with orange-tips. The essay was honored with the John Burroughs Award for Outstanding Nature Essay.]

Other biological favorites of mine in the chenier region are irises and indigo. Louisiana irises are the “fleur-de-lis” for Louisianans. Although the genus *Iris* is distributed worldwide, a special group occurs as native wildflowers only in the lower Mississippi delta and along the Gulf coast. The plants were originally christened “Louisiana flag” irises by none other than America’s premier 19th century naturalist, John James Audubon when he painted it as a backdrop for

northern parula warblers. Technically, five species are involved. *Iris giganticaerulea* is the largest, most common, and the official state wildflower. Coincidentally, the colors of this species—basically purple and gold—are the traditional colors of Louisiana State University, the state’s flagship university. (See my “Wild Iris: Louisiana’s Fleur-de-lis” in *LWF*, 2006, Vol. 34, No.1, pages 4-6, 25.)

Historic chronicles report that Louisiana irises were common throughout Louisiana’s wetlands, particularly in what is now New Orleans and Cameron Parish. However, the longterm draining of the wetlands for the establishment of the “Crescent City” obliterated massive fields of iris. By the turn of this century, the plants were relicts, found commonly only in two localities: Jean Lafitte National Historic Park’s Barataria Preserve just south of New Orleans, and along the margins of Cameron’s cheniers.

In the 1970s I chronicled the use of natural dyes in Zapotec textiles woven in



Antelope horn milkweed seed pod

Oaxaca, Mexico. One of these, indigo, is considered to be one of the most permanent dyes known to man. The dye proper is derived from a feathery leaf shrub in the legume family. Both the Old and New World have specific species. In Mexico, Central America and the West Indies, *Indigo suffruticosa* is the variety. This plant was imported into the southeastern United States during the 18th century colonial period. Soon, indigo became

Louisiana's number one export. By the 19th century, other crops assumed importance, and by 1878 with the synthesis of aniline dyes, natural indigo received its decisive blow—although early settlers most likely continued to grow some plants in their cottage gardens to color homespun fabrics. Today, indigo plants are cultivated only in a few tropical countries to accommodate small communities of artisans.

Imagine my surprise, then, when in the late 1980s I noticed *Indigo suffruticosa* growing in profusion along a cattle fence near Grand Chenier. Happens that indigo was locally common, growing mainly on the ridges' north-facing slopes

and often along fencerows—presumably by seed dispersal through the feces of perching birds. My take on the plants is that their ancestors date back to the original Cajun homesteaders. Possibly because of the remoteness of the land, generations of plants have survived over the intervening centuries. As such, the indigo plants represent a living legacy of Louisiana's—dare I say, “colorful”—colonial past. Throughout the last decade or so I have furnished seeds from these indigo relicts to museums interested in showcasing early Cajun gardens and have provided photographs to illustrate essays, historical texts, and even children's readers.



Indigo plant

That was then. On September 24, 2005, 2:38 CDT Hurricane Rita made landfall. Reports of the devastation were gut-wrenching. Most settlements were leveled. The largest community and parish seat, Cameron, was also leveled except for the courthouse and a few other steel/concrete structures.

I delayed my first post-hurricane visit to my old stomping grounds until late April 2006 when Louisiana had definitely stepped into spring and when I had mustered sufficient grit to face the grimness.

But Cameron still was deeply scourged—almost apocalyptic. No structure remained intact. Houses, barns, boats, vehicles, and home furnishings and appliances were scattered throughout the marsh and even along the roads. Driving was tedious, hazardous. Even the quaint centuries-old cemeteries had not been spared. Many of the concrete tombs had surfaced, releasing their caskets to float away to points unknown.

Mats of marsh vegetation had been ripped from the muck and were scattered everywhere—including in the canopies of trees. The islands of remaining vegetation were brown—deathly brown—and coated with a ghostly film of brine. The characteristic stench of rotting plants permeated the air. Most trees other than the live oaks had been reduced to snags. In contrast, the majority of the signature trees remained basically intact except for peripheral limb pruning. And when the oaks grew within groves, the mass had acted as a windbreak, thus lessening damage to each individual tree as well as to anything underneath or behind. Nonetheless, all of the oaks sustained damage. All, however, now sprouted only occasional tufts of leaves. Although the warm sunlight conveyed to my brain that the spring season had definitely begun, my eyes deceived me into thinking that the land was still in winter's grip. But what affected me most was the interminable silence. No birds chirping. No dogs barking. No splashes in the water from a diving alligator, snake, turtle or nutria. No sound or movement anywhere. Even the air was still, eerily still.

I returned to Cameron in late July. The steely determination of the Cameron people was now in evidence. Sounds of chair saws and heavy equipment resounded throughout the region. Although brine

still covered much of the marsh, vegetation was somehow greening. Lantana, prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia*) and scarlet salvia (*Salvia coccinea*) were attempting to bloom on the cheniers. Both were attracting a few insects, including butterflies. The tally of butterflies for my 13 annual “Fourth of July Butterfly Count” for the North American Butterfly Association was 99 individuals representing 15 species (average for the preceding 12 years: 224 individuals, 22 species). I could locate no Louisiana iris, indigo, or milkweed, however.

I revisited Cameron only once in 2007, April. Low vegetation in the marsh and on the cheniers was recovering, albeit, slowly. The malignant brine was not as evident, but the paucity of spring and summer rains wasn’t helping the purge. But by 2008, conditions had improved considerably. In late March, the marshes were for the most part green, and wildflowers were in abundance on the high ground—particularly yellow sour

clover (*Melilotus indica*), Indian blanket (*Gaillardia pulchella*), vetch (*Vicia*), and spiny thistle (*Cirsium horridulum*). However, the term woodland could no longer be applied to what few patches of trees remained. The non-oak species were still so physiologically stressed from the salt water that they sprouted very few leaves. Uprooted trees and fallen limbs created massive amounts of rubble. The direct sunlight now reaching the ground stimulated the growth of shade intolerant understory vegetation such as dewberry (*Rubus*) and gray grape (*Vitis cinerea*) vines and clumps of salt bush (*Baccharis*). In an effort to tidy up the land, some landowners had bulldozed and then burned the litter. The cleanup produced more usable pastureland but in the process, eliminated woodland regeneration. Pity.

My primary goal this spring was to assess the exact sites that had supported my past projects. Even though good location data filled my notebooks, I had difficulty in pinpointing the sites.

The habitats where the falcate orange-tip butterflies had once flourished now were unidentifiable. Debris and invasive understory plants were everywhere. The shaded, damp areas where the annual Cardamine once had flourished now were covered with two species of sun-loving buttercups (*Ranunculus*). As I suspected, I located neither bitter cress nor orange-tips. Disappointed, I then began searching open roadsides and pasturelands for milkweed, the host for monarch butterflies, which, by the way, were streaming north, pausing to nectar on the blooming lantana and thistle. No luck. My search for the indigo dye plants was unsuccessful, too. The Peveto Woods Sanctuary, however, was in reasonable shape. Volunteers from the Baton Rouge Audubon Society had spent many days clearing the sanctuary of rubble, reestablishing trails, and even planting some live oak trees to replace many of the lost hackberries. Theoretically, the standing oaks should still provide some refuge for migrating



Hurricane Damage to oaks and dwellings on the chenier



Chenier eroding at the Gulf shore

birds and butterflies. As testimony, the during the meeting of the Louisiana Ornithological Society in Creole in mid April, a total of 205 species of birds was recorded throughout the cheniers and marshlands—not bad considering the all-time high for the region stands at 225.

Louisiana irises, however, were beginning to recover—especially on Little Chenier. During my two-day survey, I located 23 different clumps of plants scattered throughout the Chenier Plain. Granted, each clump was small—from one to six plants—but at least the plants appeared healthy and beginning to bloom. Most plants were located in relatively protected places such as near the bases of oaks or in depressions where the water surge could not dislodge their matted roots.

I planned my next visit in late summer of 2008. But this was not to be. On September 1, Hurricane Gustav roared into south Louisiana. Cameron was a bit west of landfall and so the parish wasn't impacted too badly. Celebration was short lived, however. Less than two weeks later, September 12, Hurricane Ike packing 110 mile-per-hour winds made land-

fall near Galveston Bay in Texas. While southwest Louisiana was spared a direct hit, "Ike" proved to be a replay of "Rita" only three years prior. "Ike" sent salt water some 30 miles inland, flooding thousands of homes, breaching levees and soaking areas still recovering from Labor Day's Hurricane Gustav. Downtown Cameron, once again found itself beneath 12-15 feet of water. Officials said the flooding in some areas was actually worse than during Hurricane Rita.

I remain guarded about the future of the fragile chenier ecosystem in Cameron Parish. Will the surviving trees be sufficient to provide meaningful refuge for migrating birds and monarch butterflies? Will the Louisiana iris ever again form extensive fields? Are the perennial roots of the indigo and milkweed plants viable but only still too stressed to sprout? And will the ephemeral bitter cress and falcate orange-tip butterfly ever reestablish populations, and from where will they immigrate?

In the past, I have always marveled at the regenerative powers of nature. Furthermore, Cameron residents have

always displayed a rootedness and stability in their homeland. That said, however, I am of the opinion that time no longer is a friend of this unique corner of Louisiana. The hard evidence is humbling. At no time in history have these coastal cheniers been so denuded of their tree-dependent cover. Combine this with the ominous facts that our coast is continually subsiding and the Gulf waters continually rising, and one has to acknowledge that the cheniers will be gradually eroded grain by grain and returned to the sea. As a scientist, of course, I understand that every aspect of Planet Earth is dynamic—even beyond our most vivid imaginings. Ergo, the geology, geography, climate, flora, fauna, and even human cultures as we have come to know are always in a state of flux, that is, mere flickers in time. Nevertheless, efforts should be made to restore and thus fortify these unique landforms to slow their loss and the loss of the ecosystem they support. When these "places where oaks grow" are no more, I will be particularly saddened since I will have lost a world that nurtured both my body and spirit. ■

Nominations Sought For Top Conservation Awards

The Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) is now accepting nominations for the 46th Governor's State Conservation Achievement Awards. The program recognizes those persons and organizations who make outstanding contributions to the natural resource welfare and environmental quality of the community, parish and state. There are eight award categories for which nominations can be made. They are:

on behalf of our natural resources here in Louisiana. Thanks to the participation of hundreds of Louisiana citizens who have, over the years, encouraged good conservation work by submitting nominations to the program, these awards are widely acclaimed as the most prestigious recognitions of conservation accomplishment that are presented annually in our state."

Herring noted that, in keeping with tradition, Governor Jindal has endorsed the

Those awarded for accomplishments in 2008 were –

Leonard "Len" Bahr of Baton Rouge, recently retired after many years with the Governor's Office of Coastal Activities where he helped to coordinate and lead the state's coastal restoration efforts, for creating LACOSTPOST.com, a weblog about all things coastal that serves as a new conscience for Louisiana's coastal protection & restoration endeavors;

John Pitre of Alexandria, State Wildlife Biologist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service for developing and delivering habitat conservation strategies through coordination with and outreach to other agencies and private landowners throughout the state;

R. King Milling of New Orleans, Chairman of the Board of the America's WETLAND Foundation and Chairman of the Governor's Advisory Commission on Coastal Protection & Restoration for effectively impressing the urgency of Louisiana's coastal land loss on diverse and influential audiences and for leading efforts to rally those constituencies in support of effective restoration and protection strategies;

The Lafayette 4-H Junior Leader Club for outreach and assistance to 4-Hers and their families in Cameron Parish after the hurricanes and continuing with hands-on coastal restoration activities there;

The Toledo Bend Lake Association for uniting the community in support of protecting, conserving and enhancing Toledo Bend Lake with a variety of projects ranging from Florida bass stocking and improving fishing habitat, access and opportunities to teaching all the 5th graders in the Parish how to fish.

The Louisiana Wildlife Federation is a statewide conservation education and advocacy organization with over 10,000 members and 23 affiliate groups. Established in 1940, it is affiliated with the National Wildlife Federation and represents a broad constituency of conservationists including hunters, fishers, campers, birders, boaters, and other outdoor enthusiasts.

(Note: Nominations were not made in every category, therefore only 5 of the possible nine awards were presented.)



Conservation Award Winners (L-R) Jack Vermiere, president, Toledo Bend Lake Association, Conservation Organization of the year; R. King Milling, Volunteer Conservationist of the Year; John Pitre, Professional Conservationist of the Year; Len Bahr, Governor's Award-Conservationist of the Year; Jean Deville & Emily Desormeaux, Lafayette Parish 4-H Leadership Club, Youth Conservationists of the Year.

professional; volunteer; business; educator; youth; elected official; communications and organization.

The awards themselves, handsome statuettes of majestic wild animals, are unique to the program and highly coveted by all who receive them.

According to Joe L. Herring, awards program co-chair, "For over 40 years the federation's annual conservation awards program has recognized those individuals, organizations and businesses who have gone 'above and beyond' in their efforts to conserve fish and wildlife resources, to enhance opportunities for all of our citizens to enjoy the outdoors, to improve the quality of the environment, and to educate and advocate

program. He encouraged the public to make nominations.

Nominations are now open and will be accepted until February 2, 2010. The awards will be presented on February 27 at a special banquet held in conjunction with the 71st annual convention of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation at Cypress Bend Resort on Toledo bend Reservoir near Many, Louisiana. More details of the program, including rules, descriptions of award categories, a nomination form and tips on submitting a nomination are included in this publication and are also posted on the LWF website (www.lawildlifefed.org) along with a "model" nomination prospective participants can consult.

70th LWF Convention Report

The annual convention of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation is the organization's biggest event of the year. In one short weekend, Federation members adopt policy on conservation issues, honor conservation heroes, learn about new conservation initiatives, and adopt a budget and choose leaders to guide the LWF over the next 12 months. Then, there is the hospitality and camaraderie that always accompanies the gathering of an organization that, this year, celebrates 70 years of "conserv-

conventioners up with an introduction to the award-winning work of FoBB. In his presentation he graciously recognized the LWF for its early role in helping to get the refuge established. Professional photographer and chairman of FoBB's annual photo contest, **Charlie Heck** then gave all a real treat as he projected images of last year's wining wildlife and landscape photos. What is normally a pretty boisterous crowd oooed and aaaed at the parade of unique and spellbinding images. Mr.

tions submitted for consideration by LWF affiliates and directors. This democratic, inclusive and highly participatory process to develop conservation policy positions is unique among conservation organizations in Louisiana and a big reason why LWF is effective and why members maintain interest in and support of the organization.

True to form, the largest crowds were drawn to the conservation committees fielding the most controversial proposals. This year, those dealt with the use of dogs to hunt deer on the Kisatchie National Forest (KNF) and the use of feed to attract deer to the gun. The deer dogs on Kistachie resolution was deferred after almost an hour. The gist of the resolution was to urge the Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Commission (LWFC) to support a proposed ban on the use of dogs for deer hunting on the KNF similar to the prohibition to the use dogs for deer hunting on state Wildlife Management Areas. The majority of voting delegates felt that the question should be decided by the managers of the KNF, with appropriate public participation in the decision-making, not the LWFC.

The deer feeding resolution was amended to request a study of the practice by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries, and though it was approved as amended, it was defeated the following day in the General Assembly of Delegates by a strongly divided vote. Perhaps the most significant in terms of LWF follow-up action is the resolution calling for the designation of a State Seashore. There is a story on that elsewhere in this publication. The resolve portion of the resolutions as finally adopted are printed later in this report.

LWF wishes to thank the following leaders who served as chairs and secretaries of the convention conservation committees this year: Migratory, Forest & Upland Wildlife Committee – **Vance Gordon**, Chairman, **Tyson Lee**, Secretary; Habitat Conservation & Management Committee – **Ken Dancak**, Chairman, **Rebecca Triche**, Secretary; Boating & Fresh/Saltwater Fisheries Committee – **Smitty Smith**, Chairman, **Dane Bourgeois**, Secretary; Conservation Policy, Laws & Enforcement Committee – **Keith Saucier**, Chairman, **Andy Mayer**, Secretary.

The Board Luncheon was treated with a presentation from the new Region 8 Director of the National Wildlife Federation, **Dr. Greg Smith**, Director of the USGS National



L-R, Joe Herring, Rebecca Triche & Keith Saucier visiting the new Conservation Learning Center at the Black Bayou Lake NWR. Photo by Clint Ourso.

ing our natural resources and your right to enjoy them.”

The 2009 convention was hosted by LWF Affiliate, **Friends of Black Bayou** (National Wildlife Refuge). It was held at the new Hilton Garden Inn in West Monroe the weekend of February 27-March 1. Special thanks to FoBB for making everyone feel welcome and at home in their “neck of the woods.”

A nice crowd was on hand for the kickoff social event on Friday evening where almost \$7,000 was raised, thanks to meeting benefactors who supported the convention with their generous gifts, and enthusiastic bidders willing to let some cash go for a good cause. The fundraising was only part of the Friday evening program, however. Friends of Black Bayou President **Wallace Hardy** warmed the

Heck even donated a few of his wildlife photos for the LWF auction.

Special thanks to auctioneer **Harold Sullivan and wife Barbara** who kept the bidding lively and to **Ray Bordelon, Joe McPherson** and other helpers who sold out the decks on two 52-card raffles – one for the Presidents’ Gun donated by LWF president **Barney Callahan**, a Henry “Golden Boy” lever action, 22 rimfire rifle engraved to commemorate the LWF’s 70th Anniversary, and the other, a Remington SPR 453 12 ga. autoloader provided by Academy Sports & Outdoors of Lafayette. A full listing of convention sponsors and donors is posted at the close of this article. LWF is grateful for their support.

Saturday began with a series of meetings to debate the 11 conservation policy resolu-

Wetlands Research Center in Lafayette. In addition to bringing a message from the National Wildlife Federation, Dr. Smith gave lunchers a sneak preview of the fascinating research underway comparing the world's major deltas. Also at the luncheon the following officers were elected to serve the LWF for the next term: Barney Callahan, President; Ken Dancak, 1st VP; Gary Kinsland, 2nd VP; Vance Gordon, Secretary; Clint Mouser, Treasurer. The following District Vice-Presidents were also selected: Jimmy Johnston-District 1; Clint Mouser-District 2; Chad Leblanc-District 3 (in absentia); Vance Gordon-District 6; Jerry

on Black Bayou Lake and touring the trails as originally intended. But the windy cold just made the hot coffee and hospitality that much more enjoyable.

Back at the Hilton on Saturday evening, the Federation welcomed guests to the banquet honoring the winners in the 45th Conservation Achievement Recognition Program competition, also known as the Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards. Photos of the presentations and summaries of each honoree's accomplishments are posted on the LWF website. Honorees were: Len Bahr-Governor's Award-Conservationist of the Year;

The following are the resolved portions of the resolutions that were finally adopted by the delegates to the 70th Annual Convention of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation.

SUBJECT: NEIGHBORHOOD FISHING PROGRAM

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) urges the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) to develop a Neighborhood Fishing Program, based on a formal, written implementation plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LWF urges the LDWF to consider the following in developing the Neighborhood Fishing Program: establishment of criteria for inclusion of a body of water in the program; listing and evaluation of sites such as city park lakes or borrow pits in or near urban areas statewide; obtaining permission from willing landowners and agencies such as DOTD, levee boards, etc. as required; developing and implementing intensive management plans to include liming, fertilizing, feeding and stocking of easily managed species such as channel catfish, hybrid bream, etc.; and providing site amenities such as lighting, fishing piers, fish attractors, trash receptacles, etc.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LWF urges the LDWF to act as the lead agency in this effort and identify partner agencies, local governments, organizations, or other potential sources of funding, labor, and services.

SUBJECT: MAINTAINENCE OF PHYSICAL EVIDENCE OF "BIG CATS" IN LOUISIANA

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) urges that the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF), possibly in conjunction with academic institutions, maintain and genetically analyze samples of all physical evidence of "big cats" collected in Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the LWF requests that the LDWF continue to make the results of these ongoing genetic analyses and statistical studies available to the public so as to enhance the public's awareness of the status of "big cats" in Louisiana.

SUBJECT: REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT OF BRIDGES ON WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF)



Conservation Awards Banquet MC Don Dubuc get last minute details from LWF Executive Director Randy Lanctot and assistant Jodie Singer. Photo by Dane Bourgeois.

Haas-District 7; Ken Dancak-District 8; J. C. Ashford-District 9.

As is often the case during LWF conventions, a major cold front passes through with violent weather on the leading edge followed by unseasonably cool temps. And so it happened this year. Wouldn't you know it, the Saturday afternoon general session was planned as a field trip to the Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge, and though the bad weather persuaded a few not to go, those who did got to see the outstanding facilities that have been developed at the refuge headquarters through the support of Friends of Black Bayou, including the authentic plantation home converted into the visitor's center and the new conservation learning center. The weather did keep most participants from taking a canoe out

John Pitre-Professional Conservationist of the year; King Milling-Volunteer Conservationist of the Year; Lafayette Parish 4-H Leadership Club-Youth Conservationists of the Year; Toledo Bend Lake Association-Conservation Organization of the Year. Renown outdoor radio personality Don Dubuc entertained the honorees and guests with his humor and wit. A subtle highlight of the banquet was the "live" centerpiece created by volunteers with Friends of Black Bayou.

Once again, thanks to Friends of Black Bayou for hosting the convention. The LWF's 2010 convention is scheduled for February 26-28 at the Cypress Bend Resort on Toledo Bend Reservoir and will be hosted by the Toledo Bend Lake Association. Further details will be available soon. Please make plans to attend.

urges that the closed bridges on Wildlife Management Areas be restored to safe condition and reopened to the public, that the Legislature provide funding for such repair and replacement work and that the Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development

AREAS IN COASTAL RESTORATION PROGRAMS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) urges the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority of the state of Louisiana and the



FoBB volunteers set the banquet tables with a live centerpiece—a program first! Photo by Dane Bourgeois.

make restoration of these bridges a priority in its budget.

SUBJECT: DESIGNATED NON-MOTORIZED-ONLY AREAS IN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS (WMAs)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) urges the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries (LDWF) and the Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Commission (LWFC) to consider and determine the feasibility of establishing “Walk-in Areas” on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs); such areas to comprise 10 - 20% of each area where no off road motorized access is allowed and where nearby ATV trails (including handicapped-only) offer no advantage to the ATV rider over the hunter arriving by highway vehicle, that is, so that there is no motorized advantage to an ATV rider.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that no funds be spent to maintain or develop trails in these areas.

SUBJECT: STUDY AND MONITORING OF BORROW

CWPPRA Task Force to include the assessment of ecosystem impacts due to the creation/use of borrow sites for proposed wetland/marsh restoration projects in the Wetland



Cold? No kidding! Sunday morning dawned with ice on the hotel fountain. Locals said “That’s why it’s called NORTH Louisiana.” Photo by Dane Bourgeois.

Value Assessment used to prioritize and fund implementation of each wetland restoration project that requires the use of borrow material.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this procedure be applied to other coastal protection and restoration projects such as those implemented through LCA, CIAP, State Surplus Funds, etc.

SUBJECT: ASSESSMENT OF COASTAL RESTORATION PROJECTS THAT INCORPORATE ORGANISM INGRESS/EGRESS FEATURES

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) urges the CWPPRA Environmental Work Group and its academic advisors to review the application of the assessment of “Average Annual Habitat Units” (AAHU) to restoration projects that include gaps/structures for organism ingress/egress with the intent of revising, as warranted, the allocation of AAHUs based on overall beneficial (compared to natural conditions) ingress/egress provided by the project.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this procedure be applied to other coastal protection and restoration projects such as those implemented through LCA, CIAP, State Surplus Funds, etc.

SUBJECT: PROTECTING WOODED CHENIERS, BARRIER HEADLANDS AND RIDGES IN LOUISIANA’S COASTAL ZONE

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) urges the state of Louisiana to protect and restore coastal barrier headlands, ridges and cheniers and establish/reestablish, via plantings and habitat management, the presence of woody species of plants appropriate to the sites.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that LWF urges the state of Louisiana to preserve the habitat quality and storm buffering capacity of coastal cheniers through acquisition, easement and regulation, including prohibition of sand mining, land clearing and other significant alterations to chenier integrity.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this procedure be applied to other coastal protection and restoration projects such as those implemented through LCA, CIAP, State Surplus Funds, etc.

SUBJECT: CONTROL OF FERAL HOGS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that

the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) urges the Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Commission (LWFC) to act swiftly and decisively to lift or ease current restrictions on taking feral hogs to the maximum extent possible or practical on both public and private lands.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LWF urges that the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries (LDWF) establish a working group composed of LDWF deer biologists, enforcement staff, deer hunters, agriculture and livestock interests, private landowners, and managers of federal public lands to study the problem caused by the proliferation of feral hogs in the state and make recommendations to the LWFC and the Louisiana Legislature for controlling or eliminating feral hog populations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LWF supports legislation necessary to regulate the introduction of hogs to public lands in the state.

**SUBJECT: CAMINADA HEADLANDS
STATE SEASHORE**

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) does hereby express appreciation to Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal for his historic investment in Louisiana coastal restoration as announced on August 13, 2008.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LWF supports the concept of creating a "Louisiana State Seashore" along the Caminada Headlands, from Elmer's Island and Caminada Pass on the east to Belle Pass and the Fourchon on the west, to be managed for fish and wildlife conservation and public uses compatible with coastal conservation, restoration, and protection.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LWF urges the State of Louisiana to incorporate the creation of a "Louisiana State Seashore Recreation Area" into the current plans for restoration of the Caminada Headlands and to pursue negotiation of land rights necessary to achieve this goal.

**2009 LWF Convention
Sponsors and Donors**

Special thanks go to the following persons, organizations and businesses for supporting this convention with their generous donations.

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* * * * *

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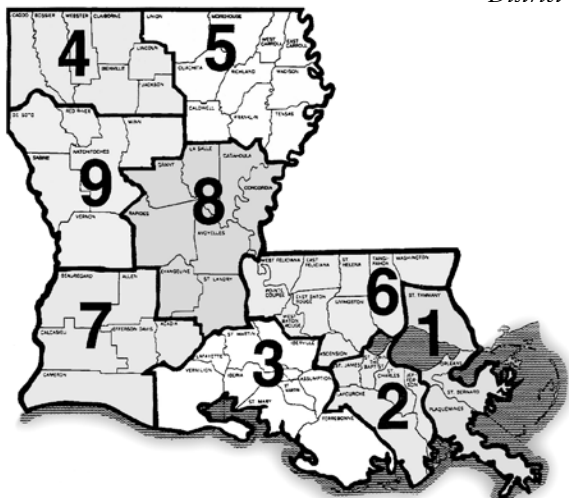
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Tips for Creating a Conservation Award Nomination

The Louisiana Wildlife Federation has been conducting a conservation achievement recognition program for almost 50 years following the same basic procedures for selecting and recognizing outstanding accomplishment. Because LWF solicits nominations broadly and relies on an elaborate process of judging by peers rather than hand-picking those to be recognized like many organizations do, serendipity has a lot to do with whether or not worthy nominations are received and awarded in every category. It is always disappointing when categories go without winners for lack of a strong nomination. And these days, it seems like it is getting harder and harder to persuade the general public, and for that matter, even LWF members into taking the time and effort to nominate themselves or others they know to be deserving of honor. That is a shame. We hope to overcome that by providing these tips to make you feel more comfortable and capable to submit a winning nomination.

Focus on Recent Achievement

The LWF awards highlight accomplishment during a single year, rather than cumulatively over many years or a lifetime. That may be confusing to a prospective nominator, but what it means is this: 1) the year for which the work/accomplishment of the nominee is being nominated (which is the year prior to the presentation of the award) is the year during which the effort of the nominee comes to fruition; or 2) regardless of the final outcome of the work (which may not be realized until a future year) the effort was so impressive or extraordinary to warrant recognition in and of itself. So, a nominee may have done many years prior work but the purpose of the effort is substantially achieved in the year for which the nomination is made; or a nominee has done impressive work during the year that is likely to produce an important conservation outcome in a future year; or a nominee has done impressive work with important conservation outcomes during the same year. The work and accomplishment for which a nomination is made must have currency to be eligible, therefore a nomination can be made based primarily on past (previous to the nomination year) work if that work produced conservation benefits in the nomination year.

Conservation Broadly Defined

A fair question is “What kinds of ‘conservation’ are eligible for one of these awards?”

Conservation is broadly considered and includes almost anything that advances, by word or deed, the conservation and wise use of natural resources or protects or improves the quality of the environment. The work a nominee is nominated for does not have to focus solely on conservation. In fact, even if conservation is a collateral outcome of an effort intended primarily to achieve some other benefit, that effort is eligible for nomination in this program. LWF welcomes the opportunity to address questions of eligibility, so don't be deterred. Just give us a call or send us an email.

Scouting for Prospects & Why Make the Effort

The LWF Conservation Awards Program is based on the premise that the recognition of conservation work encourages the continuation and growth of such work. That is a good reason by itself to seek and nominate good candidates for recognition. But in addition to that, and the obvious purpose of giving due praise to the nominated individual, group or business doing the conservation work, it's good for the nominator. Though perhaps not sought, the nominator receives appreciation from the nominee and the larger community in addition to the personal satisfaction of having done a good deed. Where do you find prospective nominees? They are all around – in civic and professional organizations, schools and youth groups, universities and agencies, business and industry and yes, even in political office. Some will be so excited you noticed their good work that they will detail their own resources to assist you with the nomination.

The Nomination

The awards program brochure describes the award categories and the basic requirements of a proper nomination which must be followed – name, address and other contact information for the nominee and nominator; a résumé which includes a summary of the nominee's achievements in addition to other information; a bit of documentation to corroborate the description of the nominee's work, etc. Think about a nomination from the perspective of a program judge. A judge wants to be objective, fair and to be able to compare the efforts and accomplishments of the nominees and the significance of what the nominees have done. A winning nomination has to minimize the guess work. A judge does not want to have to “suppose” to come to a

conclusion on a winner.

The nominee's résumé is limited to 3 single-spaced, typed pages or about 2,000 words. It can be shorter. What the judges want to know in this document is what the nominee did to advance conservation and why the outcome of the work is important. Since there is a level of detail required in describing the nominee's work, it may be necessary to ask the nominee to provide that information. Most nominees will be honored if you ask them to help you put their nomination together. The résumé should not be merely a listing of the work done and milestones reached. In fact, it is best to include such a listing as an addendum to the résumé so it does not take up résumé space but provides a quick reference for the judges.

The nomination résumé should be constructed just like any good story. It should answer the questions of who, what, when, where, why and how, with emphasis on what the nominee did and why that is important within the context of conservation. Pretend that you are presenting the award. What would you say to the audience about your nominee to make them understand and appreciate the importance of his/her/their efforts? The judges need to hear that, and more. Although all judges are qualified by being a past award winner, an acknowledged expert in a field of conservation, or a leader of a major state, regional or national conservation organization, they are not familiar with every kind of conservation work, so a nomination should sell the judges on the worthiness of the nominee. Make a strong, persuasive and passionate “pitch” for your nominee.

Although documentation is required, it does not have to be extensive. Media coverage of the nominee's work in the form of newspaper clippings and printouts of stories posted on the Internet suffice nicely. Testimonial letters vouching for the nominee's work from persons familiar with it also are good, if available. It is not necessary to compile a voluminous “scrapbook” of documentation.

Anatomy of a LWF Conservation Award Nomination

The following is one example of assembling a nomination. You may prefer another for making your presentation. Just remember that that the nomination must provide the

essential information to the judges of what the nominee has accomplished and why it is worthy of recognition. You have to sell them on it. Pull out the stops. It can be fun.

1. Be sure to complete and attach the Nomination Form that is in the program brochure or include a separate page with all the information required for the Nomination Form. Include a photo of the nominee if you have one (or email it to the LWF), but a photo is not a requirement, so don't delay submitting the nomination to wait for a photo.

2. The résumé should describe the work of the nominee and its significance.

A. Introduce the nominee with some background and biographical information.

B. Describe the work and accomplishments of the nominee with emphasis on the year of nomination. This description should be in as much detail as possible and address what was done and when, where, how and why it was done.

C. Explain in simple detail the importance of your nominee's work in advancing conservation. Connect the dots for the judges. It may not be as apparent to them as it is to you. Explain the meaning of your nominee's accomplishments in the larger context of conserving natural resources, protecting the environment, assuring a bright future, etc. Inspire the judges. Be passionate. Don't worry about over-embellishing. If you convey to the judges that it is important to you, and why, it will be important to the judges as well.

3. Compile a timeline of activities and accomplishments of the nominee during the year for which the nomination is being made. If relevant, compile a timeline for previous years' efforts and accomplishments. This information should be appended to the résumé.

4. Provide documentation with media clippings, other publications and testimonial letters regarding your nominee's work. Printed copies of media coverage and other publications posted on the Internet can be used. Documentation does not have to be extensive and voluminous, just enough to corroborate the validity of the nomination.

5. Organize the nomination in a folder or notebook binder so that it will be orderly and logical for the judges. A plain package is just as effective as a fancy one. The judges are interested in the content and the pitch more than the presentation of the materials.

NWF Endorses GreenTrees Forest Carbon and Conservation Program

The National Wildlife Federation has announced its support for the GreenTrees program as a scalable model of land conservation to simultaneously create climate benefits, fast-growth wildlife habitats and new income streams for private landowners.

In a letter to C2I, LLC, the company that originated and manages the GreenTrees program in Louisiana and Arkansas, NWF CEO Larry Schweiger described GreenTrees

restored in the Delta region for generations to come.

Also, USDA has included this cottonwood/hardwood inter-planting practice on suitable soils in its Conservation Reserve Program. This means that Louisiana landowners can receive CRP enrollment incentives and incomes from USDA's Farm Services Agency in addition to and independent of GreenTrees incomes, thus further increasing the total economic benefits for landowners who care to simultaneously enroll in both programs.

"The National Wildlife Federation knows that we have to push forward all credible approaches that deal with the twin

"There is an urgent need for models which combine land conservation and restoration with the growing market for carbon storage and sequestration. The launch of the GreenTrees program is one of the most promising models we've seen for accomplishing this."

**-Larry J. Schweiger, President & CEO
National Wildlife Federation**

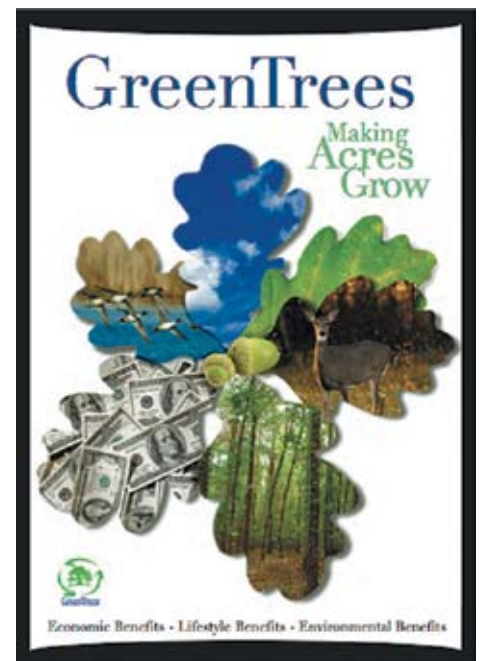
as "one of the most promising models" NWF has seen in combining land conservation and restoration with the growing market of carbon storage and sequestration.

GreenTrees is a voluntary land use choice for landowners to plant new trees on marginal ground, fallow pasture or crop acres where trees have not previously existed for at least 20 years. Its tree planting design specifically uses 302 cottonwood trees interplanted with 302 mixed hardwoods per acre to significantly accelerate forest growth and carbon sequestration. The cottonwoods serve as trainer trees to create a healthier, more valuable hardwood forest and accelerate biomass timber markets and bio-economic development jobs in the Delta.

GreenTrees directly raises private capital from sources that desire the future carbon sequestration rights produced from this planting. This funding in turn provides landowners cash payments, additional income streams, tree planting assistance and forest management oversight. Because landowners enter into a long-term lease prohibiting total deforestation of these new forests, multiple ecological and wildlife benefits are

threats of habitat loss and global warming at a pace much faster than we ever expected," Schweiger added. "The creativity that private interests can bring to bear in helping solve these problems is well exemplified by the GreenTrees program."

Louisiana landowners may now enroll in GreenTrees. More information can be found at www.green-trees.com or calling Page Gravelly at 540.687.8950.



The White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area

by Miriam L. Davey

With just enough cloud cover to cut the glare and a hint of fall in the morning breeze, I joined my fellow White Lake board members aboard the LDWF excursion boat bound for the group camp at the White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area (WLWCA). After several

America. It's a huge chunk of the map; the contiguous unit is 70,965 acres. Located in Vermilion Parish, the WLWCA is about 7 miles south of Gueydan, and lies along the northern edge of White lake, one of the largest bodies of open water in coastal Louisiana. It's owned by the State of Louisiana, and since 2005 it has been managed by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. Prior

ponds at the terminus of Hwy 91 on the north side of the area.

Another development that may hold exciting possibilities for both conservation and public interest in the WLWCA, not to mention economic development for the surrounding area, is its inclusion in a scientific study of the suitability of coastal Louisiana habitat for possible re-introduction of an "experimental" population of endangered Whooping Cranes. The WLWCA is near where the last of Louisiana's whoopers was captured for relocation to the Aransas flock on the Texas coast and is a likely location to reintroduce the birds provided ecosystem change over the past half-century has not substantially diminished the capacity of the habitat to support healthy whooping cranes. The project is partly funded by the private, non-profit International Crane Foundation, famous for using ultra-light aircraft to guide young, first-time migrating cranes across country. Millions of dollars are spent annually in Texas by tourists and birders to view North America's last surviving flock of wild Whooping Cranes, and if this species were to be re-established in Louisiana, by some measures the center of its ancestral home, it's reasonable to assume they would attract similar attention.

After the meeting, site manager Wayne Sweeney took a few of us in one of White Lake's custom-made vintage wooden mud boats (custom-made in order to squeeze through narrow locks), on a mini-tour of some of the hunting areas and some of the areas that look like they might be good for Whooping Cranes. We saw one of the largest flocks of "gro-becs" (otherwise known as Night Herons) I've ever seen, and numerous American Alligators. Despite the area's "Duck Capital of the World" reputation, most of the ducks we encountered were the plastic kind. Then, it was still several weeks away from the major fall flight of ducks and geese.

It was a most pleasant day, and I was glad for the opportunity to serve the people of Louisiana in the interest of conservation of our living natural resources. I invite anyone who wants to know more about the White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area to contact www.wlf.louisiana.gov, hit the Experience Wildlife banner, and click on White Lake in the drop-down box, or to contact me at the Louisiana Wildlife Federation.



Miriam Davey was appointed to the White Lake Property Advisory Board in 2008 by Governor Bobby Jindal. She was nominated by Louisiana Wildlife Federation.

years of hearing of this legendary waterfowl hunting refuge, (and a good many miles of wondering if I'd been speeding south down the right roads to get to the boat dock), I would finally get to visit this legendary, "last great places" kind of place.

With the last passenger safely boarded, the captain pattered down a down the Florence Canal through the marsh. A few miles after crossing the Intracoastal Canal, we came upon a smaller canal in the middle of an alley of smallish Live Oaks. Perched on a grassy island knoll at the end of the oak alley in the marsh, and framed by those oaks, rose a complex of substantial-looking, low-slung gray buildings. We had arrived at the White Lake Lodge.

The lodge sits on an island in the northern section of one of the most productive waterfowl and wading bird hotspots in North

to 2002 when the property was donated to the state by energy giant, BP, it had been operated by AMOCO and its predecessors as an exclusive hunting camp used for entertaining corporate clients. The White Lake Property Advisory Board (Board) was created by the Louisiana Legislature to guide the management of property, and this was my first visit since being appointed to the board.

In serving on the Board, one of my goals is to not only help keep the property world-class special regarding abundance and diversity of wildlife, and opportunities to enjoy that wildlife, but to help the managers in their efforts to find ways to extend some of those opportunities to enjoy White Lake to a wider segment of the public. So, I was pleased to hear a report to the Board on plans to create a birding trail and observation tower, parking area and fishing

46th Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards Program

The Louisiana Wildlife Federation is now accepting nominations for the 46th annual Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards. The awards program seeks to recognize those individuals, organizations and businesses that have made a significant and outstanding contribution toward the protection and wise use of the state's natural resources – its air, soil and minerals; its forests, waters and wildlife.

There are 8 award categories for which nominations can be made. The deadline for submitting nominations is February 2, 2010. Self nominations are welcome. Nominees are encouraged to cooperate in providing adequate background information in support of their nomination. We urge you to bring your accomplishments, or those of others, to the public's attention through this program.

Awards will be presented at a special Saturday evening recognition banquet to be held in conjunction with the Louisiana Wildlife Federation's 71st annual convention, February 27, 2010, at Cypress Bend Resort in Many, Louisiana.

A description of the award categories, rules, procedures and other details of the program follows.

Award Categories

Category # 1 – PROFESSIONAL

For outstanding accomplishments by a person who, in a professional capacity, has made a significant contribution to the management, enhancement, or protection of Louisiana's fish, wildlife, air, water, soil or forest resources, or related recreational opportunities. (For the purpose of this category, a professional is a person who receives compensation for the work that has resulted in the accomplishments for which s/he has been nominated. Professionals include, but are not limited to, persons employed in natural resource conservation/ environmental quality fields, including biologists/technicians, planners, enforcement officers, administrators, researchers, advocates, etc.)

Category # 2 – VOLUNTEER

For outstanding achievement during the year in the management, enhancement, or protection of Louisiana's fish, wildlife, air, water, soil or forest resources or related recreational opportunities by a person acting in a volunteer capacity.

Category # 3 – YOUTH

For outstanding conservation work by a youngster (18 years of age or younger). Youth

groups are also eligible in this category. The winner should have demonstrated leadership and accomplishment in any phase of conservation.

Category # 4 – BUSINESS

For significant achievement by a business in pollution abatement, land use planning and management, conservation education/awareness, habitat stewardship including providing lands for wildlife conservation and public recreation, etc. (This category is to honor a company, not an individual person. It covers a wide variety of possible achievements. Submit an entry and let the judges consider the nomination.)

Category # 5 – EDUCATOR

For outstanding performance in conservation education by a professional or volunteer. Instructors of hunter safety and outdoor ethics are eligible in this category as are teachers of the natural sciences, fish and wildlife management, environmental design and management, various aspects of environmental education, etc. Emphasis should be on teaching and working with students or the public rather than on research or administration.

Category # 6 – ELECTED OFFICIAL

For outstanding conservation achievement by an elected official. All Louisiana elected officials, except the Governor, are eligible in this category.

Category # 7 – COMMUNICATIONS

For outstanding work by a writer, reporter, radio or TV broadcaster, photographer, artist, cartoonist, radio or TV station, newspaper, website or other publication in creating a public awareness of the importance of environmental quality and natural resource conservation or making a significant contribution toward the solution of a major conservation problem in the state.

Category # 8 – ORGANIZATION

For outstanding conservation achievement by a state or local organization, including but not limited to civic organizations, environmental groups, sportsmen's clubs, garden clubs, etc., in addressing significant natural resource management and environmental quality challenges. In special cases where government agencies or institutions have accomplished extraordinary work above and beyond their normal responsibilities, such organizations will be given consideration for this award.

GOVERNOR'S AWARD

For the outstanding overall conservation achievement. The Governor's Award recipient is selected by the judging committee from among the category winners. Nominations are not accepted for this award.

Program Rules and Procedures

1.) Winners may not be named in every category. Recognition will be based primarily on accomplishments during 2009. Prior records may be considered, but this will be left up to the judges. Immediate past winners are not eligible to succeed themselves in the same category of accomplishment for which they were recognized the previous year.

2.) Nominations must be hand-delivered or sent by USPS mail or other delivery service to the Louisiana Wildlife Federation at the address on the nomination form. They must be postmarked on or before midnight February 2nd.

3.) Attach the Nomination Form to the nominee's résumé of achievements. The résumé should be a narrative description of the nominee's accomplishments and include an explanation of their significance or impact, that is, why the nominee's accomplishments are important and worthy of recognition. The résumé is required and should not exceed 3 single-spaced typed pages. Information such as past recognition, organization memberships, etc. may be appended to the résumé. Documentation of accomplishments such as newspaper clippings, correspondences, etc. should be included as a supplement to the résumé. If a nomination is submitted for more than one category, a separate nomination form and complete résumé must be submitted for each category entered. If available, please include a photograph of the nominee with the nomination or email to lwf@lawildlifefed.org.

4.) Nominations which do not meet all standards and criteria will be returned to sender to be resubmitted with appropriate additions/modifications. Program judges may declare any nomination ineligible if proper documentation and supportive materials are not included. The decision of the judging committees will be final.

(Note: Visit www.lawildlifefed.org for tips on creating a nomination and to see a sample of a winning nomination as well as examples of the work of previous award winners.)



Bobby Jindal, Governor

With the knowledge and understanding that conservation, wise management and use of our State's natural resources is essential to the health, happiness, welfare and economic well-being of Louisiana's citizens; and with the belief that proper recognition of conservation efforts promotes wise resource management and use, I, Bobby Jindal, Governor of Louisiana, do hereby endorse the concept of the Governor's State Conservation Achievement Awards Program as conducted annually under the auspices of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation.

BOBBY JINDAL, GOVERNOR



NOMINATION FORM

Date _____

Full Name of Nominee _____ Category _____

Address _____

Recommended by _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email address _____

Signature _____ Title (if any) _____

Reply to: LWF P. O. Box 65239 Audubon Station Baton Rouge, LA 70896-5239
337 South Acadian Thruway Baton Rouge, LA 70806

More Conservation “Action” Than Expected in Short Session

The 2009 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature that wrapped on June 25 held more interest for conservationists than is normally anticipated in the short 45 legislative-day “fiscal” session that occurs in odd-numbered calendar years. Despite the relatively small number of bills introduced, approximately one-third of the bill volume of a general 60-day session, and a similarly reduced portion of bills related to conservation and the environment, there were some significant issues raised by the 100 or so bills and resolutions tracked by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation.

Of great concern were several bills that, among other things, proposed to diminish dedicated funds, including the Conservation Fund, and transfer conservation dollars to the state general fund. Thanks to the efforts of Representatives Eddie Lambert, Jack Montoucet and others, SB 1 proposing to double the amount that could be taken from dedicated funds from 5% to 10% was amended to exclude the Conservation Fund and other user fee-based statutory dedications. The bill died in conference committee. We were not so lucky with SB 2 that now allows the Governor to take 5% of dedicated funds every year rather than only once when there is a budget deficit. Debate on SB 2 was limited by the Speaker as the bill came to the House floor. Reps. Lambert and Montoucet had prepared similar amendments to those they successfully added to SB 1, but they were not allowed to be offered. Although LWF urged Governor Jindal to veto the bill, it was among the last bills he signed as the deadline for vetoes approached. Thankfully, SB 267 which originally proposed to abolish all statutory dedications was amended to require only a report to the legislature on the details of the funds and the programs they support.

Despite all the funding intrigue and threats, the Department of Wildlife & Fisheries did very well in securing appropriations for the 09/10 fiscal year. The details of the LDWF appropriations are provided in the summary of HB 1 posted on the LWF website along with the digests of other pertinent conservation legislation that made it through the process.

This was the session to pick on the Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Commission, with one bill filed proposing to abolish the Commission and another proposing to reestablish legislative oversight for setting the hunting seasons. The bills were brought by legislators who had opinions differing with the Commission on the use of dogs to hunt deer and the use of a wildlife management area for a major trail ride event. In the testi-

mony before the House Natural Resources and Environment Committee, it became clear that the displeasure of the legislators was as much due to their perception of being disregarded by the LDWF and the LWFC when bringing the concerns of their (legislators’) constituents to them rather than a disagreement over the ultimate action taken by the Commission or Department. The oversight bill was deferred by its sponsor on the House floor after he had received numerous contacts from sportsmen opposed to the bill. The “abolish the Commission” bill was transformed in the House committee into an “expand the Commission” bill and sailed through the House. LWF was able to address the misperceptions behind the legislation in testimony before the Senate Natural Resources Committee and the bill was deferred. That testimony is posted below. Apparently this matter is not closed as LWF has been informed that Rep. Chandler intends to introduce another bill to restructure the LWFC during the 2010 legislative session.

On another bill related to setting of the turkey season, LWF was able to work with the sponsor to promote a compromise that allowed him to back off the bill, thereby preserving the LWFC’s authority and keeping the Legislature out of the season setting process.

Legislation LWF successfully supported included a measure authorizing an earlier start of the bait shrimp season and another designating Bayou Manchac a Historic & Scenic Stream within the Louisiana Scenic Rivers System.

Of interest to those concerned about climate change and energy consumption, there were about 30 bills and resolutions introduced to the session related to these subjects, including many proposing various incentives for alternative and renewable energy and energy conservation/efficiency. Several were adopted, even a few that will reduce tax collections by the state which is a significant consideration in a budget deficit year – a sign that Louisiana is getting greener.

Thanks to Don Dubuc for inviting LWF to report on the happenings down at the legislature on his radio show and to Bob Marshall for recognizing LWF’s work in his column during this past session.

Testimony Regarding HB 529 to Expand the LWFC

The Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Commission was established by an amendment to the Louisiana Constitution in 1952 to oversee the state administrative agency, also known as

the Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Commission (formerly the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries). The 7-member LWFC was given the authority to hire the “Director” of the agency. Prior to that, the “Director” was appointed by the Governor.

The establishment of the LWFC was consistent with a national trend to create a group of peers of each state’s stakeholders in the conservation and use of the natural resources that would determine the management of the state’s fish & wildlife resources and regulation of the use of those resources. The primary purpose of establishing such a commission form of governance was to reduce to a minimum the amount of political interference in the management of fish and wildlife resources compared to the preexisting situation where the sitting Governor had all the influence over the decision-making through the appointment of the agency director.

Establishing a commission form of governance for regulating the take of fish, fur and game was a chief goal of the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI), an organization established by a national association of leaders in the manufacture of sporting arms and ammunition and other outdoor gear with the intent of promoting the management of fish and wildlife resources based on sound science. In Louisiana, establishing the LWFC was the primary purpose of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation at the time. Interestingly, the WMI recommended, and still recommends when asked, a 5-person wildlife commission.

The language creating the 7-member LWFC in 1952 is as follows:

“The control and supervision of the wildlife of the state, including all aquatic life, is vested in the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission. The commission shall be in the executive branch and shall consist of seven members appointed by the governor, subject to confirmation by the Senate. Six members shall serve overlapping terms of six years, and one member shall serve a term concurrent with that of the governor. Three members shall be electors of the coastal parishes and representatives of the commercial fishing and fur industries, and four shall be electors from the state at large other than representatives of the commercial fishing and fur industries, as provided by law. No member who has served six years or more shall be eligible for reappointment.”

With the adoption of the new state constitution in 1974, the governance of the administrative agency was removed from the LWFC’s authority and in 1975 the Legislature created

the Department of Wildlife & Fisheries as a cabinet agency with a secretary appointed by the Governor. The constitution retained the LWFC and its authority to regulate harvest and other aspects of fish and wildlife conservation, though the Legislature maintained statutory authority over certain aspects of the regulations of seasons, limits, etc.

As the LWFC matured and new processes for rulemaking were established to maximize the opportunity for public participation while allowing the full consideration of the data and advice provided by the professional fish & wildlife managers and enforcement experts of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries, the Legislature ceded more authority to the LWFC so that it now has complete jurisdiction over the setting of seasons, size limits, creel and bag limits and harvest quotas, without the requirement for legislative oversight in the process of making these rules. Most conservation advocates and members of the Legislature understand and appreciate the wisdom of this separation of responsibilities. The Legislature still has full opportunity to participate in providing counsel to the LWFC as the rulemaking process proceeds and it retains its ultimate authority over the actions of the LDWF and LWFC through the appropriations process.

The LWFC performs what is sometimes a difficult job, well. In observing its work over the past 30 years I have never known it to take action that is adverse to conserving the resources it is bound by the state constitution and statutory law to "protect, conserve and replenish." If it did, we would be meeting them in court.

Since many of the decisions of the LWFC affect user preference, sometimes one "side" gets what it wants at the expense of the "other side," such as in setting a specific opening day of a hunting or commercial fishing season. These decisions are what sometimes provoke dissatisfaction on the part of segments of stakeholders and the legislators who represent them. The Louisiana Wildlife Federation advocates that, when a controversial decision by the LWFC is pending that is not compelled by conservation need but is provoked by user preference, a statistically valid survey of stakeholders be made, when feasible, prior to decision and that the results demonstrate a supermajority of survey respondents in support of the proposed rule for it to be finally adopted.

Some have expressed the opinion that LWFC members should have technical expertise in resource management, or that the LWFC is a duplication of effort and its responsibilities could easily be assumed by the LDWF and its

Secretary. The concept of the commission is that of a board of peers to the users it regulates and it is not intended to be a board of technical experts. That expertise is available through the LDWF staff. We view the LWFC as a necessary complement to the work of the LDWF and vice versa, and its role is essential to the stakeholders' need and right to participate in the decision-making process.

With the exception of the requirement that 3 members of the 7-member LWFC be representatives of the commercial fur and/or fishing industry, the idea of the LWFC is to represent all citizens of the state and all the natural resources within its authority, not just citizens and resources within a certain region. Although it makes sense that the LWFC and its constituencies would benefit from having at least one LWFC member from each geographic region of the state, both to avoid the perception of regional bias in decision-making, and more importantly, to inform the decision-making process with knowledge of and familiarity with each geographic area, it is a mistake to mandate it in statutory or constitutional law because it would imply that the commissioner from each specified region should represent the interests of that region rather than those of the state as a whole; therefore it would make the LWFC more "political." The Governor should have the sound practical and political sense to appoint LWFC members from each part of the state to avoid the perception of regional bias in decision-making.

All this relates to our concern with HB 529 by Rep. Chandler & B. Badon, Billiot, H. Burns, Gisclair, S. Jones, Lambert, Little and Morris to amend the Louisiana Constitution to expand the Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Commission (LWFC) to 9 members and require geographic representation per the 5 Public Service Commission Districts and an additional state at-large member. Additionally, the legislation eliminates the reference to the fur industry with respect to representation on the LWFC.

HB 529 was introduced as a proposal to abolish the LWFC because the primary author is disgruntled with the treatment he received when appearing before the LWFC and the outcome of the petition to the Commission by his constituents. He has opined that the LWFC is just an opportunity for political patronage and is redundant to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries and therefore an unnecessary layer of state bureaucracy. Yet now, the author of the original bill and its co-authors want to expand the LWFC!

HB 529 proposes to require geographic representation on the LWFC by having 5 of the

LWFC members appointed, one each from a different Public Service Commission District. That guarantees that only one of the proposed 9 be from north of Alexandria (more or less) and does not provide for compact geographic representation that the authors apparently desire, so the premise of the legislation to promote geographic representation is faulty.

In summary:

Adding members to the LWFC and requiring geographic representation will make it more, not less political; LWFC members should represent all citizens of the state and its natural resources, not just the people and resources from regions of the state.

The Wildlife Management Institute, a well-respected industry-supported conservation advocacy organization founded in the 1930s recommends 5-member state fish and game commissions, which many states have; a 9-member LWFC is going in the wrong direction. HB 529 can be viewed as merely adding the opportunity for more political patronage.

Since the CA HB 529 proposes will not be on the ballot until 2010, there is plenty of time to evaluate the efficacy of the LWFC and its structure and develop, if deemed advisable after thorough review and study, legislation for the 2010 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature. There is a state (read taxpayer) cost for each item added to the election ballot, so washing hands of the issue with the idea of "let the people decide" ignores the need to assure that the proposed amendment is well considered, advisable and worth the public expense to put it on the ballot.

The Governor(s) should exercise good practical and political sense when making appointments to the LWFC to assure that appointments are reasonably distributed geographically to avoid the perception of regional bias in LWFC decision-making. It is not necessary to designate those geographic boundaries. Doing so will tend to lead LWFC members to represent their "region" over resources.

The Louisiana Wildlife Federation believes that the LWFC performs a difficult task well, and should not be altered without a more thorough evaluation of the pros and cons of changing its structure and adding members than has been provided in the meager discussion of the merits of HB 529 during this legislative session.

Thank you for your consideration.

Randy P. Lanctot, Executive Director
Louisiana Wildlife Federation

Black-bellied Whistling Duck Update

Stories and photos by Mike Perot, Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries

In January 2005, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries was notified about a very large concentration of black-bellied whistling-ducks in the New Orleans area. At the time there were approximately 4,000 black bellies that found their own niche at the Cargill Grain

Black-bellied whistling-ducks are a tan, mallard-sized duck with long legs, bright pink bill, and as their name suggests, black bellies. They are easily identified by their goose-like wing beats, white wing coverts, and shrill whistle call similar to a widgeon. Blackbellies are native to Mexico and South Texas, but are expanding their range east into Louisiana. It is believed that many black-bellies in southeast Louisiana overwinter

been reported to be nesting in Arkansas. They have expanded their range dramatically over the past few years. It has even become more difficult to band wood ducks because black-bellies tend to monopolize our trapping sites.



Black-bellied Whistling Ducks at Cargill Grain Elevator in Westwego.

Elevator on the Mississippi River in Westwego. More recently, estimates of 8,000 have not been uncommon. LDWF personnel recognized an excellent opportunity to continue banding these ducks and to better understand the population and their dispersion.

in the Audubon Zoo in New Orleans and the Cargill Grain elevator making them less susceptible to hunting. In the spring they disperse to the surrounding swamps and marshes to nest. I have observed black-bellies on the rock jetties at South Pass of the Mississippi River and they have



Black-bellied whistling ducks find wood duck nest boxes accommodating. Here BBWD eggs cover the bottom of a wood duck nest box.

In 2003, a nesting pair was banded in a wood duck box on Manchac Wildlife Management Area. At the time, it was believed this was the farthest east black-bellies had been documented nesting, with the exception of Florida. The following year, 6 more black bellies were also banded in wood duck boxes on Manchac WMA, and by 2006 they were using wood duck boxes on most of the coastal WMAs. Coincidentally, during our first banding effort at Cargill Grain Elevator in February of 2005, we recaptured one of the black bellies banded on Manchac WMA. LDWF Region 7 Wildlife Division has banded over 700 black bellies at the Cargill site and almost 200 in wood duck nest boxes and while bait trapping wood ducks. To my knowledge, only 2 black-bellies banded at Cargill were harvested and reported.

LDWF would like to thank the staff at the Cargill Grain elevator in Westwego for their cooperation with this project. We look forward to continuing our banding efforts at Cargill in the future. Hunters should be on the look out for black bellies in their decoy spread during duck season and be sure to report all band recoveries to the band hotline at 1-800-327-BAND. Black bellies may be taken during the regular duck season and are included as part of the 6 duck limit.



Banding black-bellied whistling ducks at Cargill Grain Elevator.

(Note: This report was submitted in 2008. Due to the rapid expansion of the BBWD in Louisiana, it remains of interest. – ed.)

Louisiana Kids Go Coastal

by Amanda Moore

As part of the National Wildlife Federation's Coastal Louisiana project, a traveling banner was launched last spring to engage children in the fight to save our coastal wetlands. It started with the

George Washington Carver Elementary School and Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School in the 9th Ward traveled to Baton Rouge to flood the steps of the State Capitol and present the banner to the Governor's Office of Coastal Affairs. There, students heard a message from National Wildlife Federation's Maura Wood about the impor-



The banner at the Nation's Capitol last month in DC. NWF photo.



Mikaila and Victoria Kinsland helping with the handprinting at LWF's Earth Day exhibit. Photo by Heidi Hitter

annual Louisiana Earth Day celebration in Baton Rouge where NWF teamed up with the Louisiana Wildlife Federation and LWF's perennially popular "Nature In Your Neighborhood" exhibit to recruit kidprints for the banner. It was an easy sell. The tent was packed all day with eager youngsters patiently waiting to make their mark to save Louisiana's coast.

After the Earth Day festival, the banner made its way to four elementary schools in the Greater New Orleans area, where students added hundreds more handprints after hearing about the importance of wetlands to our environment and our safety.

The completed banner is ten feet high and thirty feet long and boasts over 1,000 colorful handprints spelling out the message, "Restore the Wetlands: Our Coast, Our Future."

On September 21, third-graders from

tance of their efforts and they even got quizzed a little on wetland loss by Kyle



New Orleans 9th Ward students with the "Restore the Wetlands" banner on the steps of the state capitol in Baton Rouge. NWF photo.

Elmer's Island Wildlife Refuge Use Rules

The LWFC has adopted visitor regulations for public use of Elmer's Island Wildlife Refuge under emergency rulemaking authority. Elmer's Island is the state's newest wildlife refuge, located on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico across Caminada Pass from Grand Isle in Jefferson Parish. The regulations are as follows. Use of the refuge will be permitted from 30 minutes before official sunrise to 30 minutes after official sunset. This includes any land access routes to the refuge. No person or vehicle shall remain on the refuge or any land access routes during the period from 30 minutes after official sunset to 30 minutes before sunrise. No person shall possess any glass bottles, glass drink containers or other glass products. No person shall enter onto or be on the grounds of the refuge during a restricted access period; or alternatively shall do so only in accordance with restrictions set forth by the Secretary. No person shall commercially fish, conduct any guiding service, hunt, pursue, kill, molest or intentionally disturb any type of wildlife on the refuge, except for the legal recreational harvest of living aquatic resources. No person shall be in areas marked as restricted by signs posted by the department. No person shall operate any vehicles in a restricted area. No person shall operate a vehicle in an unsafe or careless manner as to endanger life or property or at any speed in excess of five miles per hour. There is no permit required for Elmer's Island access by anyone 15 years of age or younger. Those wishing to utilize the island for recreational purposes, ages 16 and above, must possess one of the following: a valid Wild Louisiana Stamp, a valid Louisiana fishing license or a valid Louisiana hunting license. The LWFC also adopted a Notice of Intent that, in addition to the foregoing rules includes a prohibition on the possession of firearms on the refuge and will be accepting public comment before voting to finally adopt the rules at it February 2010 meeting.

* * * * *

**Atchafalaya on the Web -
post your Basin photos**

The Atchafalaya Basin Program has added a new feature to its website at "[http://](http://dnr.louisiana.gov/atchafalaya)

dnr.louisiana.gov/atchafalaya" <http://dnr.louisiana.gov/atchafalaya>, giving the public the ability to share memories and experiences, whether of working in the Basin or enjoying recreational time there, by posting photos on the site. Accessible on the right-hand side of the site under "Basin Pics," it offers the opportunity to e-mail a photo, caption and other information to a secure DNR site for review and posting. Photos should be appropriate to a public website, but can be on any subject matter related to activity in the Basin, from hunting or fishing trips to amateur nature shots or anything else reflecting life in the Basin. The site includes links to the U.S. Geological Survey's web-based tracking of water levels in the basin and has up-to-date weather for the Basin area and links to parishes and tourism and conservation groups with ties to the Basin. It also provides notice of meetings and other announcements pertaining to the Atchafalaya Basin Program and the development and execution of the state's master plan for conservation and management of the Atchafalaya Basin.

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Attention Louisiana Youth Hunters

The Louisiana Outdoor Writers Association and the Deer Program of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries invite you to participate in the 2009 Youth Hunter Registry. This program is for youth hunters 15 years or younger. Participating youths will receive a certificate recognizing hunting achievement. Simply fill out the form that is available at the department's website, www.wlf.louisiana.gov, click on deer hunting, big game hunts. Participating youths are recognized in the Big Game Records Newsletters that are available at the same website. You can also enter the Youth Hunter of the Year contest for 2009. The contest requires that you submit a story about your hunting experience along with photographs of the hunt. The Outdoor Writers and LDWF will select a male and female youth hunter of the year based upon the stories that are received. This program is sponsored by the Bayou State Bowhunters Association, the South Louisiana Branch of the Quality Deer Management Association, the Louisiana Chapter of the National

Wild Turkey Federation Jakes Program the Louisiana Wildlife Federation and Bowie Outfitters in Baton Rouge. So this year when you go hunting take along a notepad and pen to take notes about your hunt, what you saw and heard, people you met, etc. and also be sure to take photographs. We look forward to reading your stories and seeing your pictures. Hunt hard but hunt safe. Remember, the program is not about recognizing what you killed or how many, it is about enjoying a true hunting experience with family and friends. But, if you do kill a big buck or shoot a limit of squirrels or a few fat greenheads, it's alright to do a little bragging!

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**Revamped Ground Water
Resources Web Site Launched**

The Louisiana Department of Natural Resources has revamped and re-launched the Office of Conservation's Ground Water Resources Program web site with new features, making it easier for people and businesses to access the information they need related to their ground water concerns. The redesigned site includes regulations governing the drilling and use of water wells, as well as forms needed to properly document such wells with the state. The site is designed to allow users to more easily find the information they need, categorized by use – such as water well owners, prospective water well owners and water well users. Included in the information provided on the site is information on groundwater use in the state and recommendations for best practices to conserve ground water. "Our state has been blessed with abundant ground water, and nearly two-thirds of our people use ground water as their primary source of water every day," said state Department of Natural Resources Secretary Scott Angelle. "It is critical that we be good stewards of that resource, and making information easily accessible to the public is an important tool in that stewardship role." The site can be found at "<http://dnr.louisiana.gov/cons/groundwater/>" <http://dnr.louisiana.gov/cons/groundwater/>.

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Canada Goose Hunting Regulations

The LWFC has extended the Canada goose hunting season from 16 to 44 days allowing hunters to take a Canada goose during the entire second segment of the duck season. The Canada goose season will be from Dec. 19 to Jan. 31 statewide, except for a small closure area in southwest Louisiana. The daily bag limit is now an aggregate bag limit with white-fronted geese (specklebellies) allowing hunters to take two dark (white-front and Canadas) geese with no more than one being a Canada goose. Lastly, the special \$5 permit that has been required to participate in the annual hunting of Canada geese no longer applies. As long as hunters are legally licensed to hunt waterfowl, they may take Canadas during the season.

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LDWF Now on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) has thrown its hat into the Web 2.0 ring by creating official accounts on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr and Scribd. The public can now watch LDWF videos on YouTube, keep up to date with the latest department news on Twitter, become a fan of LDWF on Facebook, read the latest regulations on Scribd and look at department photos on Flickr all free of charge. All of these social media devices are on LDWF's front page at www.wlf.louisiana.gov. "These services offer the department additional channels to use when delivering departmental news, videos, photos or publications to the public," said LDWF Public Information Assistant Director Thomas Gresham. "We are encouraging everybody who utilizes these Web sites to sign up and follow us as we post new videos, photos and news feeds."

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2008-09 Deer Harvest Results

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) has posted the results of the 2008-09 deer harvest at www.wlf.louisiana.gov/hunting. LDWF compiled the deer harvest data by utilizing a mail-in survey, internet/phone deer tag reports and

Wildlife Management Area (WMA) managed deer hunts. The 2008-09 hunting season marked the start of the mandatory deer tagging and reporting program. LDWF issued 227,001 sets of deer tags last year, which accounted for a reported deer harvest of 95,718. When the Deer Management and Assistance Program and WMA harvests are added, the total count comes to 116,571 deer harvested. Union Parish led all parishes with 7,915 deer harvested last season. Rounding out the top 10 parishes are: Bienville (5,387 deer harvested), Claiborne (5,171), Vernon (4,311), Bossier (3,930), Jackson (3,689), Webster (3,652), Iberville (3,398), Natchitoches (3,384) and Tensas (3,376) parishes. The reporting system count is substantially lower than the mail survey index (used to monitor long term trends) of 158,200. Since this was the first year of the mandatory deer tagging and reporting system, LDWF suspects there was less than 100 percent compliance with the new rules. The 2008-09 managed deer harvest on WMAs was over 5,000. On the either-sex managed deer hunts there was an average hunter success rate of 11 hunting efforts per deer, which is better than the long-term average of 16 efforts per deer.

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Hunting Regulations Available Online

The 2009-10 Hunting Regulations pamphlet is available on the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) Web site at "<http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/hunting/regulations>" <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/hunting/regulations>. Printed copies of the 2009-10 Hunting Regulations booklet can be found at local hunting license vendors and LDWF field offices.

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Natural Areas Registry Rules

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission (LWFC) has adopted rules for a program allowing the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) to enter into dedication and servitude agreements with landowners who opt to participate in the Louisiana Natural Areas Registry (Registry). The Registry was established

by the Louisiana Legislature in 1987 in an effort to identify and preserve valuable species and the lands on which they occur. Up until now, landowner agreements have been informal, non-binding contracts. Under the new rule, landowners who volunteer for the program would have the option to dedicate a property to LDWF either by sale or donation, or enter into a conservation servitude which transfers some property rights to the department while the current landowner retains ownership of the property. The Registry currently includes over 100 properties encompassing almost 50,000 acres statewide. The majority of registered properties belong to individual landowners. The many rare and endangered species that benefit from the program include animals like the red-cockaded woodpecker, gopher tortoise, and plants such as Southern lady's-slipper and parrot pitcher plant. More information is available on the program at www.wlf.louisiana.gov/experience/naturalheritage/naturalareasregistry.

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Live Online Streaming Audio of LWFC Meetings

For those who cannot attend Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' (LDWF) public meetings in Baton Rouge, live streaming audio will be made available for all Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission meetings usually held on the first Thursday of every month at 9:30 a.m. and every Louisiana Shrimp Task Force meeting at "<http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/streaming/>" www.wlf.louisiana.gov/streaming/. Some other public meetings will also be broadcasted live over the Internet at LDWF's discretion. Advance notice of public meetings with the live streaming audio will be provided with meeting agendas sent to the media and posted on the LDWF Web site at "<http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/news>" www.wlf.louisiana.gov/news. A Windows Media Player, or similar media player, and flash program are all that should be needed to listen to the public meetings. The Louisiana Shrimp Task Force already has several meetings available as archived audio at "<http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/shrimptaskforce>" www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/shrimptaskforce.



Tibby (R) and LWF Executive Director Randy Lanctot, cutting up at the 2004 State Duck & Goose Calling Contest.

Most know by now that long-time columnist (*Tibby Sez*) for this publication, Wilson J. “Tibby” Thibodeaux passed away last year, barely a month past his 91st birthday. Tibby was kind of a legend. He had “The Accent” (Cajun) from his upbringing on the Church Point prairie. An affable and extremely social person, he never met a stranger. Yet “Tib” was as cantankerous as they come when he detected in others less than full devotion to those values he held dear. Those values centered on hard work, family and serious regard for participating in and preserving Louisiana’s outdoor heritage.

Tibby was probably best known for his passion for waterfowling, especially in pursuit of specklebellies (white-fronted geese) and the blues and snows that historically have swarmed the ricefields and wet pastures of southwest Louisiana. That passion was manifested in another pursuit – the founding of the state (and local) duck and goose calling contests for which he often served as chairman.

Above all, Tib was a mentor. He liked nothing better than to share his wealth of knowledge about the ricefields and marsh and hunting waterfowl – how to blow a predator call to sound like a lonesome specklebelly pining for company; how to place a spread of white “goose rags” to draw the big flocks of snow geese (and how to pick the hundreds of them up after the hunt). Kid’s flocked to him and the string of calls dangling from his neck. They knew he was interested in them. In his enthusiasm and wonder at

the world, he was one of them.

My first recollection of Tib was of him helping with a duck and goose calling clinic sponsored by the LSU student chapter of The Wildlife Society while I was a leader of that organization. Shortly after, I was his guest at the famed but now long-gone Le Chien Caille (spotted dog) camp below Gueydan where he hunted for many years. I had just come aboard as the new executive director of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation and I suppose Tibby wanted to check me out in the field, since, despite my French surname, I was a “Yankee.” I did okay, I guess, as we remained friends and occasional hunting and fishing partners for almost 30 years.

Tibby aspired to the LWF presidency and he got his turn in 1986. Under his leadership, the LWF succeeded in securing constitutional protection for the Conservation Fund, the operating fund of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries. For that accomplishment, LWF was honored in 1988 as the National Wildlife Federation’s “Affiliate of the Year.” Tibby received the “Connie” conservation award on LWF’s behalf at the NWF annual convention hosted that year by the LWF in New Orleans. He was very proud of that moment. At the NWF meeting the year prior, held in Quebec City, Canada, Tibby was the “toast of the town” as he toured delegates around the old city quarters, introducing them to the shopkeepers and city dwellers in the local French language. At the close of the meeting, he proudly stood from the audience and extended a cordial invitation to Louisiana - in his Cajun French, of course.

In recent years, Tibby would admonish readers to get out and enjoy the outdoors while they could, no doubt thinking about the confinement age had cast upon him. But he didn’t complain, only asking us to share our stories, to take a kid hunting or fishing, or just by the hand for a walk around the block, to open their eyes to nature. It was his wish and charge to us. It is what Tibby said.

- Randy Lanctot

AFFILIATE CLUBS

DISTRICT 1

Woodlands Trail and Park

DISTRICT 2

Bayou Gun Clubb

Jefferson Rod and Gun Club

Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation

DISTRICT 3

Iberia Rod and Gun Club

DISTRICT 4

Friends of Red River

DISTRICT 5

Friends of Black Bayou

DISTRICT 6

American Sportsmen Against Poachers

Baton Rouge Audubon Society

Citizens For A Clean Environment

East Ascension Sportsmen’s League

Friends of the Atchafalya

DISTRICT 7

Acadiana Sportsmen’s League

DISTRICT 8

Avoyelles Wildlife Federation

Rapides Wildlife Association

DISTRICT 9

Louisiana Toledo Bend Lake Association

STATEWIDE

Association of Louisiana Bass Clubs

Bayou State Bowhunters Association

Black Bear Conservation Committee

Louisiana Association of Professional

Biologists

La. Chapter, National Wild Turkey

Federation

La. Chapter, Safari Club International

Louisiana Trappers and Alligator Hunters

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Welcome to the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF). We are a statewide, non-profit conservation education and advocacy organization established in 1940 to "restore, preserve, develop and increase the birds, fish, game, forestry, wild flowers and all other wildlife resources of the State of Louisiana." LWF represents a broad constituency of conservationists including hunters, fishers, campers, birders, boaters, and other outdoor enthusiasts who believe in constructive conservation and protection of our state's natural resources and the quality of the environment. Thank you for visiting our web site. We welcome your comments. Email to lwf@lawildlifefed.org

LWF Recommends Swamp Forest Conservation Strategies

Jul 15, 2005

In response to concern over the harvest of timber from swamp forests provoked by proposals to commercially harvest the timber from fairly large tracts of privately-owned swamp in the Lakes Pontchartrain-Maurepas Basin and elsewhere in the so... For the entire story [More ...](#)



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