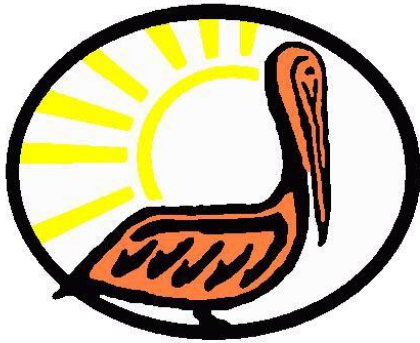


FRIENDS OF LOUISIANA



The Pelican Scoop

Friends of Louisiana Wildlife Refuges
61389 Hwy 434, Lacombe, LA 70445
(985) 882-2000

www.friendsoflouisianawildliferefuges.org

WILDLIFE REFUGES, INC

Brett Henry, President

Winter 2011- 2012

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Presidents Corner:

I cannot believe I am writing my last President's Corner, I am leaving my position and the area. I will be moving back home, to Illinois but still plan to remain involved with US Fish and Wildlife Refuges. It is hard to believe that almost two years have passed and look at all we have achieved! Our membership continues to grow, the Pelican Newsletter was re-born, Wild Things gets bigger each year, the new Friends Photo Club is going full steam ahead and the canoe trips are very popular and always full. The Visitor's Center continues with upgrading exhibits and hands on learning, our gift shop continues to change merchandise, and the number of visitors discovering or re-discovering our grounds and the Visitors Center continue to grow. This year our Friends Group was recognized for our hard work and achievements in Atlanta and this month our Friends Group is highlighted in the National Wildlife Refuge Association "Flyer".

It has been an honor to work with all of you and I am proud of what WE have achieved. Remember – there is no I in team – it takes all of us to accomplish our goals. Please take some time and stop by, or volunteer a couple of hours to our work/play days or other events throughout the year. I am leaving you in very capable hands – Brett Henry has been in the background, watching, learning and helping – he is going to be a great leader! Please give him your support and keep this wonderful Friends Group going!

With fond memories, Denise

Hello Friends. I'm so excited and honored to be the next President of the Friends of the Louisiana Wildlife Refuges. First, I must thank our outgoing President Denise Stearns. The accomplishments and sacrifices Denise made during her tenure will leave a positive lasting impression and I sincerely appreciate her guidance during this transition. I am truly fortunate to be handed the leadership reins of a strong and stable Friends organization and I welcome the challenge of working with the refuge staff and my fellow Friends to continue the mission of promoting and enhancing our treasured Louisiana Wildlife Refuges.

Recently, I had the privilege of attending The Friends Academy workshop at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The week long session was beneficial to me in many ways.

During my time there, I learned from other successful Friends group leaders as they shared their stories of accomplishments and setbacks. Likewise, I shared our unique story of how we overcame devastating hurricanes and oil spills and yet remained the vibrant organization we are today. I hope to continue networking with those new Friends and apply all the valuable lessons learned to our current situation.

As expected, Wild Things was an overwhelming success once again as an estimated 4500 participants took part in the family friendly event that celebrates National Wildlife Refuge Week. I want to personally thank all who volunteer their time and energy to make this event run so smoothly. Looking ahead, we have many exciting activities planned through the upcoming holiday season like Cajun Christmas with Santa and the Paddling Through Time canoe outings. Please check the Calendar of events located in this newsletter or contact the Friends e-mail address lwrfriends@gmail.com for more details about participating in these activities.

Once again, I look forward to the opportunity of representing you as our new president.

Sincerely, Brett

2011 Wild Things Youth Art Contest and Exhibition

Three hundred twenty seven qualified entries from youth between the ages of 5 and 18 were received, judged and displayed for this year's Wild Things Youth Art Contest and Exhibition. As always, the subject matter of the program is native Louisiana Wildlife, specifically that which may be found on one of the 8 refuges of the Southeast Louisiana National Wildlife Refuges Complex. The mediums are drawing and painting.

The vision of the contest is to connect youth to nature through art. Hopefully, this connection will foster a desire to care about the animals and habitats depicted, and thereby the participants will become citizen scientists and stewards of their rich wildlife inheritance.

This year's panel of 5 distinguished judges was comprised solely of art teachers and/or professional artists, all of whom were selected because of their interest and experience in wildlife subject matter. Entrants were from around the North and South Shores as well as the following parishes: Baton Rouge, St. Landry, Lafourche, and Lafayette.

Two stories about the art contest and show appeared in the Times Picayune.

"Keep your love of nature for that is the true way to understand art more and more."

- Vincent van Gogh -



Wild Things visitors enjoy the art exhibition.

A Message from the Project Leader

There are a few changes at Southeast Louisiana Refuges that will affect our operation capability.

Assistant Manager at Mandalay refuge, Paul Provence, transferred to Central Louisiana Refuges. Equipment Operator Mike Seal received a promotion to move to Bayou Cocodrie Refuge in central Louisiana. Park Ranger, Interpretation, Jody DeMeyere, has accepted a position that offers her a promotion at Long Island NWR in New York and her husband Fire Management Officer Dave DeMeyere will be moving with her in November.

Refuge Manager of Delta, Breton and Bayou Sauvage refuges, Jack Bohannon, has accepted a position as Manager for Flint Hills NWR in Kansas which offered him a promotion. His last day working with us will be December 20. Due to anticipated budget cuts we are not allowed to fill the vacant positions behind Jody and Paul. That money is being held in our regional office to cover expected shortages.

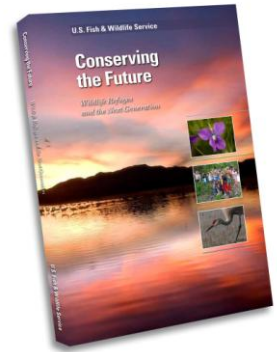
I am proud and happy that all these excellent employees stepped up and decided to reach-out and better themselves and better serve the FWS. I am also saddened to lose such quality individuals here at SELA. We have advertised to fill behind Mike Seal and are in the processing of advertising to refill Dave DeMeyere's and Jack Bohannon's positions but it will be six months before the actions are complete and we have new people on at the refuge. In the mean time, any extra assistance we can receive from Friends or volunteers will be, as always, greatly appreciated. As you also know we have lost two great Friends and volunteers in Friends president and board members Denise and Bryan Stearns.

Ken Litzenberger

Good luck in your next endeavor!

"Protecting and Promoting National Wildlife Refuges"

Conserving the Future Vision Online



The renewed vision for the growth and management of the National Wildlife Refuge System, entitled *Conserving the Future: Wildlife Refuges and the Next Generation*, is now available online at www.americaswildlife.org. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's vision was developed with extensive input from stakeholders through a transparent public process over the past 18 months.

"For more than 100 years, the National Wildlife Refuge System has conserved America's great wildlife heritage and working lands for current and future generations, and this blueprint will ensure that a new era of conservation – one rooted in strong partnerships with the community – remains vibrant for the next 100 years," said Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. "I applaud the Fish and Wildlife Service for its commitment to increasing the public's access to open spaces and to inspiring a new generation to enjoy America's great outdoors and get involved in conserving our nation's wild things and wild places."

Conserving the Future underscores the importance of building and expanding partnerships – working with other federal agencies, states, tribes, conservation organizations and citizens.

"The conservation challenges of the 21st century demand that the Service renews its commitment to our important relationship with state fish and wildlife agencies and with traditional partners such as anglers and hunters," said Dan Ashe, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service. "At the same time, we need to be creative and bold in forging new partnerships."

Among the *Conserving the Future*'s recommendations, the Refuge System will:

- launch an urban refuge initiative to increase the American people's connection with their natural heritage, including wildlife refuges;
- work with state fish and wildlife agencies to prepare a strategy for increasing quality hunting and fishing opportunities – especially for youth and people with disabilities – on wildlife refuges;
- collaborate more with private and regional groups to conserve wildlife habitat;
- undertake an inventory and monitoring of the Refuge System's land and water resources to better protect against future threats;
- develop a plan to guide refuges in assessing potential climate change impacts to refuge habitats and species; and
- plan for strategic growth by prioritizing potential acquisition sites and assessing the status of current habitat protection efforts.

In describing the Refuge System's role in addressing America's conservation challenges, the vision document states: "Human demands on the environment combined with environmental stressors are creating an urgent need for conservation choices. The scale of issues and challenges we face is unprecedented and impacts us all; no single entity has the resources necessary to address these challenges on its own.

"*Conserving the Future* acknowledges that strategic, collaborative, science-based landscape conservation -- along with effective public outreach, education and environmental awareness -- is the only path forward to conserve America's wildlife and wild places."

"Protecting and Promoting National Wildlife Refuges"

Redemptorist Alumni Reunion

On Saturday, October 29 the Friends organization and staff of the Bayou Lacombe Centre hosted a gathering of Holy Redeemer alumni. The group was a part of a national reunion of present and former Redemptorist priests, brothers and students. That event took place at the Convention Center in New Orleans October 27 through October 29. Following the final activities of the national reunion those attendees who had taken classes at Holy Redeemer Seminary in Lacombe were invited to drive across the lake for a memorial service in the cemetery and a tour of the current facilities.

The alumni assembled in the Visitors Center where snacks and soft drinks were provided by the FLWR. It didn't take long for the old comrades to start telling stories about the time spent at the school. After all had arrived (about 28) they walked to the cemetery. The memorial service was conducted by Deacon Gerardo Mechler of San Antonio, Texas who was a Holy Redeemer student. After the formal service the men moved from grave to grave remembering their former teachers and administrators.

Staff member Diane Barth then took the men and their wives on a tour of the administration building which, at one time, housed their dormitories, classrooms, administrative offices, infirmary, etc. After the tour one of the men said that he found an item in the building that he had hidden forty-eight years ago.

The Redemptorist religious order acquired the 110 acre property in 1956 from former Louisiana Governor Richard Leche. The main building was constructed in 1960. In September 1961 Holy Redeemer opened its doors to 55 young seminarians. The chapel (present Visitor Center) was opened in 1965. Due to a declining enrollment of seminarians the Redemptorists, in 1969, allowed non-seminarian "day students" from the



Above: Alumni and their families visit their old stomping grounds.

surrounding area to attend classes at the school. The school officially closed in 1980. The Redemptorists continued to use the property for religious retreats until 1997 when it was sold to the Conservation Fund. The Fish and Wildlife Service acquired the land and buildings in 1998.

Roy Rogge

Wild Things – The annual National Wildlife Refuge Week event at SE LA Refuges headquarters was held Oct. 15 and attracted an estimated 4,500 visitors, surpassing last year's total. Ideal weather made for a fun family day. 37 conservation-related guest exhibitors added to the many activities presented by the refuge staff, Friends members, and volunteers, including an extensive hands-on kids' tent, canoe and pontoon boat tours, two hayride shuttles around the 110-acre grounds, the Youth Wildlife Art Show, and the casting pond. New visitor center exhibits were unveiled, and guests enjoyed a variety of food as well as live music presented by The Friends of LA Wildlife Refuges. The event is the major fundraiser of the year for the Friends group, and this year was quite successful, with over \$5,600 raised for Friends programs and projects on the refuges!

Youth Art on display at Wild Things→



“Protecting and Promoting National Wildlife Refuges”

2012 Calendar of Events
Friends of Louisiana Wildlife Refuges, Inc.

Saturday, January 14th, Work-Play Day – Bayou Lacombe Centre (See General Info)

Saturday, January 14th - Friends Photo Club meeting, Bayou Lacombe Centre (See General Info)

Thursday, January 19th @ 6:30 P. M. – Friends Board of Directors Meeting, Bayou Lacombe Centre

Saturday, February 11th, Work-Play Day – Bayou Lacombe Centre (See General Info)

Saturday, February 11th - Friends Photo Club meeting, Bayou Lacombe Centre (See General Info)

Saturday, February 25th, Bayou Gardens Open House -- Bayou Lacombe Centre, 61389 HWY 434 Lacombe, Louisiana 70445

Saturday, March 10th, Work-Play Day – Bayou Lacombe Centre (See General Info)

Saturday, March 10th - Friends Photo Club meeting, Bayou Lacombe Centre (See General Info)

Thursday, March 15th @ 6:30 P. M. – Friends Board of Directors Meeting, Bayou Lacombe Centre

General Info concerning Specific Events

Work-Play Days consist of three hours of volunteer work (9 A.M. -12 noon) followed by a light lunch (provided by the Friends of Louisiana Wildlife Refuges) and a canoe adventure on Bayou Lacombe. The major focus has been on restoring Bayou Gardens (an historical garden) and in developing interpretative trails at Bayou Lacombe Centre (located at 61389 Hwy 434, Lacombe, Louisiana). The Garden includes many varieties of camellias and other exotic plants. For reservations contact Byron Fortier (Byron_Fortier@fws.gov) or Jim Schmidt (jasbjs@aol.com). Reservations should be made by Thursday before the event.



Friends Photo Club - Meetings are generally held at 1:30 pm each month at Bayou Lacombe Centre, but times and meeting locations may vary if photo safaris or workshops are scheduled. Contact Ron Alexander for more information at ralexan913@bellsouth.net

Bayou Gardens Open House Bayou Gardens, located on the grounds of the Southeast Louisiana Refuge Complex in Lacombe, is an historical garden that was developed between 1935 and 1956 by Judge Borah and former Governor Richard Leche. In its prime, it contained over 400 varieties of camellias and many other exotic plants. Since 2004 over 700 volunteers have assisted in helping to restore the gardens and preserve its heritage. Come join us for our annual Open House, education programs, flower displays and free garden tours. Refreshments will be served in our Visitors Center.

Canoe Tours: Paddlin' Thru Time: People & Louisiana's Wetlands allows individuals to experience the excitement of canoeing southeast Louisiana's scenic Cane Bayou, while learning how humans have interacted with and changed the land over time. Each tour lasts 2-3 hours. The outings are offered on a first-come, first-served basis. *Individuals must pre-register, including payment of a non-refundable fee, to participate.* (Paddlers age 10 and up \$10, Children age 5 thru 9 \$5. Members of "the Friends" are charged \$5).



Spring and Fall dates will soon be determined. Check the following web site for more information: <http://www.fws.gov/southeastlouisiana/calendar.html>. These tours fill quickly!

“Protecting and Promoting National Wildlife Refuges”

**Join us as a
Friend of Louisiana Wildlife Refuges**

As a member, you'll have the opportunity to help form the ideas and activities that make the Friends of Louisiana Wildlife Refuges a unique and important organization. You can also enjoy a variety of fun and rewarding volunteer opportunities organized by the Friends and know that you are making a worthwhile contribution to the future of these special places.

You join a unique group of individuals who have grown to be great "friends", as they share the rewards of promoting educational and environmental projects throughout the refuge system.

Member benefits include

Participation in exciting development and restoration projects on the refuges
Exploring the refuges on special member tours
Receiving updates on latest refuge events
A 15% discount at the Visitor Center Gift Shop

Make Checks payable to:
Friends of Louisiana Wildlife Refuges (FLWR)
61389 Hwy 434
Lacombe, LA 70445
www.flwr.org • lwrfriends@gmail.com

Membership Application (Please print legibly)

Membership Level

____ Individual \$20 ____ Supporting \$100
____ Family \$25 ____ Corporate \$250
(immediate household only)
____ Student/Teacher \$15 ____ Sponsor \$300

Name:

Address:

City: State: Zip:

Phone: Cell Phone:

New Member? Renewal? Date:

Email:

List Names of Family Members:

Check all areas of interest:

- Membership Committee Special Events Volunteer
(Work-Play Day, Wild Things, Earth Fest, Fishing Event, etc.)
 Visitor Center Volunteer
 Board of Directors Photo Club

Note: Memberships are for calendar year. New members who apply from September 1st thru December 31st will be considered members thru the next calendar year.

Friends of Louisiana Wildlife Refuges Inc.
61389 Hwy. 434
Lacombe, LA 70445