

**For More Information**

ccet.louisiana.edu  
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**Steering Committee Contacts**

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Water Quality

**Steering Committee Meetings**

- ✦ March 24, Acadian Memorial, St. Martinville, 4pm.
- ✦ April 21, Chitimacha Community Room, Charenton, 4pm.
- ✦ May 26, Port Barre Community Center, 4pm.
- ✦ June 30, Bayou Teche Museum, New Iberia, 4pm.

The Committee is scheduled to meet monthly on the third Thursday of the month in each of the four parishes along the Bayou Teche. Meetings will start promptly and end no more than 90 minutes from the start time. Beverages and light snacks will be provided. Meetings are open to the public. If you would like to include an issue, item or project in the agenda, please contact Kristen or Jennifer at least two days prior to the meeting.

**Other Useful Contacts\***

*Improved Water Quality*  
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*\*This list is not intended to be comprehensive. It will change and grow with each newsletter issue. We welcome your suggestions*



February 2011

Low-impact Non-motorized Recreation  
 Improved Water Quality  
 Small Business Development

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**Overview**

In October 2010 the National Park Service (NPS) issued a technical assistance grant through their Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program to Center for Cultural and Eco-Tourism (CCET) at UL Lafayette and the Teche Ecology, Culture and History Education (TECHE) Project with the goal of creating a permanent and cohesive paddle trail for the Bayou Teche, from its headwaters in Port Barre to its terminus in St. Mary Parish.

This national program offers communities technical assistance to plan a low-impact foot or water trail. The NPS assists in facilitating meetings and may provide planning needs such as GIS mapping and landscape architectural design. They may also direct the planning committee to potential funding sources for implementation activities, for example, making and installing conservation and recreation signs or designing and distributing maps.

**Project Managers**

✦ The Center for Cultural and Eco-Tourism at UL Louisiana, represented by Jennifer Ritter, is responsible for public outreach, internal communications, media coordination and promotional activities. Jennifer will also work with potential business operators.

✦ The TECHE Project's volunteers will provide information about Bayou Teche and help identify conservation and low-impact recreation needs.

✦ Acadiana RC&D, through Bayou Teche Watershed Coordinator Kristen Kordecki, addresses the technical aspects of Bayou Teche water quality and conservation issues, as well as related administrative responsibilities.

✦ Stacye Palmer-McBride at the NPS serves as our meeting facilitator and planning advisor. She will assist groups and municipalities in identifying funding opportunities for BTPT projects.

NPS assistance guarantees the paddle trail for consideration in its national trails program, it will be recognized in NPS literature and on its website and we are allowed usage of its logo on items included in the plan.

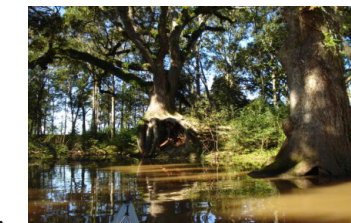
The Bayou Teche Paddle Trail (BTPT) plans will also be included in the Bayou Teche Watershed Implementation Plan currently in preparation at Acadiana Resource Conservation and Development (ARC&D), scheduled to be submitted to the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) in Fall 2011.

Both of these plans will serve as documentation to increase and improve funding opportunities for project implementation.

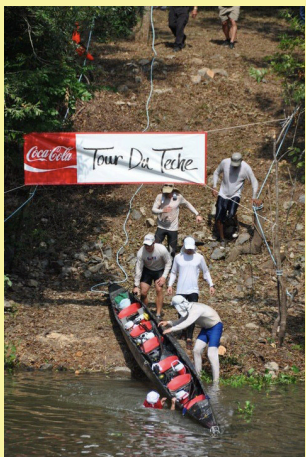
Your time and effort on this project are essential to the success of the BTPT. Creating a well thought-out plan will ensure good things keep flowing our way!

**The Steering Committee**

The Steering Committee is responsible for providing an assessment of the Teche, conservation, education, access and small, relevant business needs. The group is composed of the project managers, who will lead the committee but do not have voting privileges. Each parish president named a community member familiar with one of the three themes of the project, and the Chitimacha Nation is also represented with a seat on the committee. The other three committee members hail from various points along the Bayou Teche, and each represent one of the three BTPT themes. This group regularly communicates about the trail plan development, project ideas and attends scheduled meetings. The Committee is scheduled to dissolve on September 31, 2011.



Bayou Teche, St. Martin Parish. Photo courtesy Mike VanEtten.



Six-person kayak racing team portage at Keystone Dam during Tour du Teche, 2010. Photo courtesy Ken Grissom.

The water downstream will not be clear if the water upstream is muddied. — Korean proverb

### Goals of the Bayou Teche Paddle Trail

- ✦ To physically, intellectually, and spiritually connect people with the place where they live
- ✦ To provide access to the Teche for recreation and education
- ✦ To enhance local stewardship along the Teche
- ✦ To support improvements to sites and facilities that benefit small, non-motorized boats
- ✦ To highlight places of interest along and within each waterfront community
- ✦ To encourage residents, communities, and resource agencies to think holistically and work together to support a regional water trail system

### The Importance of Low-impact Non-motorized Recreation

Low-impact non-motorized recreation is the best way for people to enjoy the natural environment responsibly. Environmental education opportunities are abundant on a waterway like Bayou Teche. A high-quality recreation experience, along a clean and safe waterway, can provide occasions for individuals and groups to better understand ecological concepts and become more familiar with local flora and fauna. Working with landowners, agriculture producers and towns along the Teche, we are planning a paddling experience that celebrates the landscape and facilitates self-guided environmental education.

The state recently identified nature-based tourism as a priority and paddle trails are underway in several locations across Louisiana. Self-guided interpretative trails featuring education kiosks, interpretative and directional signage and literature at starting and end points are just a few examples of an effective paddle trail plan.

### The Importance of Small Business Development

The Bayou Teche flows through four predominantly rural parishes with few businesses currently located within easy access to the waterway. Multiple business opportunities exist, from restaurants and campsites to portage services and recreational outfitters. Through the planning process we will identify possible locations and interested property owners as well as entrepreneurs and expanding businesses. As suggested in the public meetings, we are in the process of developing a checklist for new business development and investigating potential tax incentives.

By promoting outdoor recreational experiences to visitors while simultaneously developing these destinations for local entertainment, we intend to create a premiere paddle experience for everyone, young and old, resident and tourist.

### The Importance of Improved Water Quality

The Clean Water Act requires all navigable waters in the US be “swimmable” and “fishable.” Bayou Teche is currently on the EPA’s 303d list of impaired waterways, because it can not support as much wildlife as it should. Non-point source pollution poses a threat to water quality and, in turn, aquatic habitat. Bayou Teche also has been contaminated with fecal coliform due to livestock, failing home septic tanks and/or municipal water treatment plant failures. Although the Teche does not currently exceed the standard level of acceptable fecal coliform, this is an ongoing concern for any watershed with extensive agriculture or urban activities and should be monitored.

Fishing is a celebrated sport in the state and healthy aquatic habitats are essential for fishing opportunities to residents and visitors. We need to create positive habits along the waterway so that visitors and locals can enjoy the Bayou Teche in its full glory—both as an abundant source of fish and a safe



Morning start of Tour du Teche 2010, Port Barre. Photo courtesy ARC&D.

place to swim. Together, we will tie together the interdependent relationship between clean water, low-impact recreation and relevant business opportunities.

### Partnerships, Planning and Funding

Working cooperatively is key to any successful project. Cooperation among the interested parties in developing the Bayou Teche Paddle Trail includes sharing information, planning collaborative projects and finding funding to implement projects. Funding agencies and foundations look for applications that demonstrate an in-depth planning process and strong relationships with organizations who can further the project’s goals.

The Bayou Teche weaves together our concerns, problems and solutions. This paddle trail planning project encourages decisive action between parish governments, soil and water conservation districts, homeowners, agriculture producers, recreation groups, entrepreneurs, environmental educators, university professionals, the tourism industry, governmental agencies, civic and non-profit organizations. By bringing municipalities, businesses, volunteer organizations and devoted individuals, we will find creative ways to improve water quality, plan for first-rate recreational experiences and attract relevant businesses along the Bayou Teche.

### Public Meetings Results

Four public meetings were held in November 2010 and January 2011, one in each parish along the Bayou Teche. NPS facilitated these meetings, gathering comments and concerns from the community. After an assessment of the current conditions of the Bayou Teche, Stacye guided attendees through prioritization of improvements and identification of possible community partners.

Several recurring topics included:

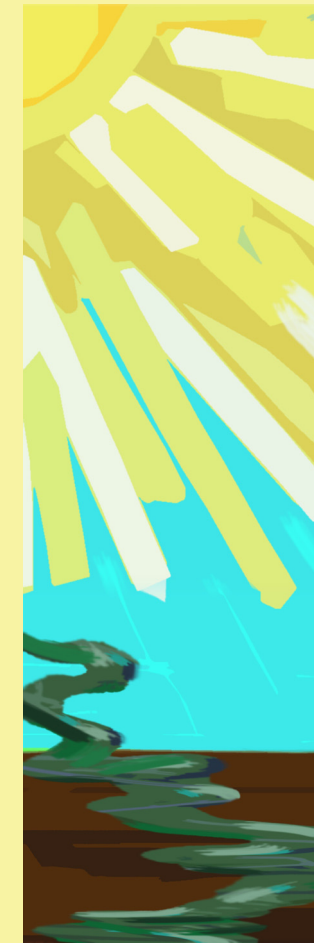
- ✦ Safe access to the bayou and campsites along the waterway
- ✦ An education campaign to address clean quality and litter
- ✦ Places to purchase necessary items, i.e., batteries, water, snacks
- ✦ Places to lock up boats and adequate bathroom facilities
- ✦ Conservation education information
- ✦ Comprehensive maps and emergency access points
- ✦ Privacy for land owners
- ✦ Portage services and guided tours



Bayou Teche, St. Martin Parish. Photo courtesy ARC&D.

### Bayou Teche Watershed Highlights

For the last two years, volunteers have addressed water quality problems and recreation restrictions on Bayou Teche. Working together is half the battle when working on such projects. Sharing information and data are essential to effecting positive change and improvement along the waterway. Water quality testing is currently conducted by LDEQ and the Water Sentinels Citizen Monitoring Program teaches volunteer teams to test water quality every three months. Additionally, five municipalities along the Teche have recently agreed to test the Teche on a quarterly basis. Beginning this Spring, Dr. Whitney Broussard, of the Institute for Coastal Ecology and Engineering at UL Lafayette, will begin a year-long comprehensive water testing project.



High quality water is more than the dream of the conservationists, more than a political slogan; high quality water, in the right quantity at the right place at the right time, is essential to health, recreation, and economic growth. — Edmund S. Muskie



Blue Heron perched atop garbage, Bayou Teche, St. Martin Parish. Photo courtesy Penny Blair.