



## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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### **For Immediate Release**

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### **Cajuns for Bayou Teche continues their cleanup effort on March 27**

BATON ROUGE – Cajuns for Bayou Teche is a community organization that volunteers its time and boats in order to haul debris out of Bayou Teche in an ongoing cleanup effort. Through their partnerships with Acadiana Resource and Development Council, St. Martin Parish Sheriff's Department, Shane Seneca Welding & Fabrication, and Keep St. Martin Beautiful, they will undertake a cleanup event at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 27, at 2085 Highway 31 in Arnaudville.

The Department of Environmental Quality supports local programs and organizations that take voluntary steps to protect the environment. Cajuns for Bayou Teche has continued to serve as a fine example of groups who work tirelessly to promote environmental stewardship in their communities.

According to the EPA, Bayou Teche is on a national list of impaired waterways due to excessive nutrients and an industrial pesticide. A section of Bayou Teche has been adopted by Shane Seneca Welding & Fabrication in the Keep St. Martin Beautiful program. This section from the bridge in Cecilia south toward Poche Bridge extends the adopted areas of the Kiwanis Club and Cajuns for Bayou Teche in the Keep St. Martin Beautiful program.

Seneca is a neighbor to Blake Couvillion of Cajuns for Bayou Teche, and was inspired by his efforts to clean up the bayou. In conjunction with Cajuns for Bayou Teche, Seneca is coordinating the public cleanup and utilizing his own backyard in Arnaudville as the launch point for boats. Gumbo will be provided to volunteers and anyone in attendance. Acadiana RC&D will provide information and Bayou Teche Watershed t-shirts created by local artist, Lucius Fontenot to volunteers.

"We are happy to have Mr. Shane Seneca join our efforts to restore Bayou Teche. He is a valuable asset to our project, and a great welder who has made tools for our boat, the 'St. Michael,'" said Blake Couvillion, Director of Cajuns for Bayou Teche and President of the TECHE Project. "His area connects two other adopted stretches of bayou to form an unbroken chain of adopted waterway. We hope others will take interest in our project and volunteer to adopt an area as Mr. Seneca has done."

"With so many volunteers from the community coming out to help clean up the Teche, we can begin to talk about how we can also prevent non-point source pollution like run-off from urban, rural homeowner and agricultural land and start to improve water quality in our bayou," said Kristen Kordecki, Watershed Coordinator from Acadiana RC&D.

Additional cleanup dates for Bayou Teche include May 8 in Port Barre and September 25 in Breaux Bridge.

Volunteers with motor boats are needed, as well as those with kayaks or canoes. Cajuns for Bayou Teche invites the community to join in the cleanup effort or to enjoy home-cooked gumbo and cheer on the volunteers. For more information, contact Blake Couvillion at 337-230-8596.