DISCOVER DEQ
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER

December 2013 Issue Number: 23

## What's Inside?

DEQ marks completion of landfill cover project in Tangipahoa Parish

DEQ's Underground Storage Tank Division checks tanks within the state

Marathon Petroleum hosts workshop for DEQ employees

Regional Offices Cover the State

Nonpoint Source Group hosts Annual Project Review meeting and training

Who's Who At DEQ?

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# DEQ marks completion of landfill cover project in Tangipahoa Parish

DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch joined parish officials, media and other guests at the Tangipahoa Parish Regional Solid Waste facility in Independence on Nov. 22 to mark the completion of the landfill's Cell 10 cover project.

The steep slopes of the project had defeated efforts to cultivate natural grass, the traditional medium for sealing landfill covers. An innovative solution was necessary, so at the urging of DEQ officials, the parish installed a covering of ClosureTurf, which resembles the artificial grass used on athletic fields. Now the man-made knoll is grassy and green and might pass for a pasture or golf course at first glance.

*DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch, third from right; and DEQ Assistant Secretary Sam Phillips, second from right; listen as landfill operations manager Terrance Stewart, second from left, discusses the project. Tangipahoa Parish President Gordon Burgess, far left, hosted the event. Also attending were Tangipahoa Parish Public Works Director Nace Garafola, behind Stewart; Tangipahoa Council Chairman Lionell Wells, in red shirt; and Tangipahoa Councilman David Vial, far right.*

"It's very effective because you don't have to plant grass every year if there is a drought. This is an excellent coverage for this landfill," Secretary Hatch said. "They were having some erosion problems, and our inspectors were out here multiple times to help find a solution. ClosureTurf is a method they can use to address the issues and continue on course."

Tangipahoa Parish President Gordon Burgess said the project covers 20 acres of non-active fill. Erosion problems were chronic on the 187-foot-high hill, leading to DEQ's concerns. The parish had to get a loan to pay for the project. "It's the first time we ever had to borrow money – we borrowed $2.5 million. Hopefully, it will take care of us for 30 years," Burgess said. He said the turf requires little maintenance, reducing the parish's costs even further. The turf

*Continued on page 2*

DISCOVER DEQ
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER
December 2013 Issue Number: 23

also cuts down on landfill odors and scavenger problems, Burgess said.

Landfill operations manager Terrance Stewart explained that the turf is laid down on a carefully prepared base then anchored in place at the edges. Sand is then applied to the surface and acts as ballast, he said. "The sand is 90 to 95 percent of what makes it work."

According to the company website, the turf sheds up to six inches of rain an hour, can survive up to 150 mph winds and is guaranteed for 30 years.

Small gas wells dot Cell 10, visible evidence of a methane collection system that was installed about four years ago, Stewart said. The collected methane is flared off, and the parish collects a carbon credit, Burgess said.

*Gas collection wells dot the artificial turf covering Cell 10 at the Tangipahoa Parish Solid Waste Facility near Independence.*

The turf covering will actually improve gas collection efficiency, Burgess added, since the turf is less permeable than natural grass and will trap more of the methane to be collected.

The best solution for landfill waste is recycling, DEQ Assistant Secretary Sam Phillips said. "The more recycling we do, the more it will reduce the problem."

But not all waste can be recycled with current technology, Phillips said, and he acknowledged that landfills are a necessary part of contemporary waste handling strategies.

## DEQ's Underground Storage Tank Division checks tanks within the state

One responsibility of DEQ's Underground Storage Tank Division is to check and inspect underground storage tanks on a periodic basis. The division, known as UST, is a component of DEQ's UST and Remediation Division.

"It is imperative that underground storage tank owners properly manage their tanks in accordance with state regulations," said Tom Harris, UST and Remediation Division Administrator. "The UST group periodically inspects all underground storage tanks in the state to ensure that they meet the regulations."

Many underground storage tanks hold petrol and are located at gas stations and truck stops throughout the state. Once a tank is deemed out of accordance with certain regulations, a red tag is applied to the tank fill port and the tank cannot receive fuel deliveries until the owner complies with the applicable regulations.

*Continued on page 3*

DISCOVER DEQ
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER
December 2013 Issue Number: 23

*A red tag is placed on an underground storage tank to label the tank as noncompliant with regulations*

Once the tank owner takes measures to comply with regulations, DEQ will conduct an inspection of the tank to assess whether or not the tank is back in compliance with the regulations. If so, the red tag is removed. In each instance, DEQ's Communications Section will email a courtesy notice to a list of all distributors to USTs within the state to inform them of the status of a particular tank. This is done to ensure that all fuel distributors are made aware of a red-tagged tank before they deliver the product to that location. In addition, DEQ posts a list of all red-tagged UST facilities on the DEQ website: www.deq.louisiana.gov.

## Marathon Petroleum hosts workshop for DEQ employees

Twenty-four DEQ staff members got an inside look at refinery operations during Marathon Petroleum Company's Annual Refinery Operations Environment Workshop on Dec. 6. The daylong training event included classroom PowerPoint presentations that included an overview of refinery processes, pipeline environmental processes, the plant's ambient air monitoring systems and procedures and the refinery flare systems. Marathon personnel employed in the respective areas gave the lectures.

After lunch, the group divided into smaller tour groups, suited up with hard hats, safety glasses and flame resistant coveralls and set out on a tour of the refinery.

*A Marathon Petroleum employee at the Garyville, La., plant*

Protecting the environment and compliance with environmental regulations is a primary concern for Marathon. DEQ staff not only learned how a refinery operates, but saw the methods used for safety and environmental protection. Air monitoring, leak detection, wastewater treatment and emission reduction are all part of the operation.

A stop at one of the company's expansive Mississippi River docks gave attendees a close-up glimpse of a giant tanker being loaded with diesel fuel for shipment. Marathon guides answered questions about the process and pointed out safety features on the dock and air quality control equipment in use there.

*Continued on page 4*

DISCOVER DEQ
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER
December 2013 Issue Number: 23

DEQ staff climbed to the top of a treatment tank in the wastewater treatment area to see brown mix of wastewater and sludge in the process of being transformed into cleaner water through a biological process.

A FLIR camera (infrared) was the star attraction at a fugitive emission demonstration. An employee of Guardian, a contractor at the plant, demonstrated how the camera can "see" gas leaks invisible to the naked eye. Control of leaks in pipe joints and valves is an ongoing effort at the plant. A visit to the circular control room, the heart of the plant, revealed a work area ringed with banks of big screen monitors. Plant activities are displayed on some of the monitors, showing everything from flares to construction and traffic. Other monitors display operational schematics of various processes underway in the plant. Control room operators monitor and occasionally adjust settings. On the shoulder of a street that passes next to a cooling tower, a small demonstration was set up to show how the "El Paso Monitoring Method" strips air from water samples and tests for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs).

At the end of the tour, a vendor had a display of a floating roof seal system for storage tanks. The system is designed to reduce product loss to evaporation and cut down on emissions at the same time.

## Regional Offices Cover the State

Headquartered in Louisiana's capital city of Baton Rouge, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality also maintains several regional offices positioned throughout the state, covering all 64 parishes.

Currently, DEQ maintains six regional offices and two satellite offices within the state. Since DEQ's mission is to respond to air and water quality issues, solid/hazardous waste concerns and emergency response issues within a short amount of time, regional offices are a necessity in order to provide adequate and prompt service to any parish in the state.

DEQ environmental scientists and staff members at the regional offices often wear many hats, as most environmental threats or concerns must be addressed at any given time. Emergency response and coordinating with local, parish and state officials is also an important aspect of the regional office mission, as train derailments, facility mishaps, hazardous waste spills, fires and other events may occur at any moment.

Over the next few e-newsletters, we will focus on a DEQ Regional Office in order to provide an overview on their function and the key role they play as a component of DEQ's mission to protect human health and the environment throughout the state.

This issue spotlights the Bayou Lafourche Regional Office based in Lockport:

**BAYOU LAFOURCHE REGIONAL OFFICE**

Parishes served: Lafourche, St. John the Baptist and Terrebonne

Physically located in the heart of Lafourche Parish at 110 Barataria St. in Lockport, the Bayou Lafourche Regional Office serves as both a satellite office supporting the mission of the Southeast Regional Office in New Orleans

*Continued on page 5*

and as a stand-alone regional office serving the parishes of Lafourche, Terrebonne and St. John the Baptist. Both regional offices often work closely together and share tactical resources; particularly during Louisiana's high-profile environmental events, as the region includes the Mississippi River Delta, the surrounding lower wetlands that stretch into the Gulf, Lake Pontchartrain and an array of major shipping channels and coastal inlets.

The Bayou Lafourche Regional Office maintains a staff of eight environmental scientists who predominantly conduct water quality surveys and inspections, based on the office's proximity to several of Louisiana's key waterways and its noted history as a water quality management office. The staff, however, is also skilled in conducting air analysis, underground storage tank inspections, solid waste inspections and facility inspections. Several wastewater treatment plants are on the inspection rotation, and the staff also responds to a variety of inquiries from the public regarding sewage issues, waste tires, releases of dust or particulate matter into the air, illegal dumping and illegal discharges of untreated wastewater and oil. The Bayou Lafourche Regional Office responded to more than 500 incidents in 2012-2013.

*DEQ's Bayou Lafourche Office in Lockport primarily serves Terrebonne, Lafourche and St. John the Baptist parishes*

"A large part of our mission is connected with a wide array of environmental concerns as they relate to the Gulf Coast parishes and the wetlands areas," said Steve Lorio, DEQ Environmental Scientist Supervisor of the Bayou Lafourche Regional Office. "In addition to our daily responsibilities, the Bayou Lafourche office is also engaged in numerous aspects related to the ongoing response to the 2010 BP oil spill, including water and sediment sampling related to the Safety Seafood Program, and the inspection and removal of orphaned containers and drums. We also maintain a rotation for the region's emergency response duties after-hours and on weekends and holidays."

*Christian Brignac, DEQ environmental scientist, conducts a water quality equipment calibration in the Bayou Lafourche Regional Office.*

As probably the most active waterborne office in DEQ, the Bayou Lafourche Regional Office maintains a fleet of boats, which most of the staff are fully qualified to operate at any given time in response to water quality inspections or environmental emergencies that involve water access. Given the office's size and scope of responsibility, the staff's multi-faceted expertise allows them to systematically respond on land or water to nearly any environmental issue under DEQ's purview.

DISCOVER DEQ
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER

December 2013 Issue Number: 23

# Nonpoint Source Group hosts Annual Project Review meeting and training

DEQ's Nonpoint Source Group held a two-day Annual Project Review Meeting at DEQ this month. In attendance were Sylvia Ritzky, 319 (H) Project Officer; Brad Lamb, State Program Coordinator for Nonpoint Source from EPA Region 6; DEQ's Nonpoint Source staff, and watershed coordinators.

The purpose of this annual project review meeting was to discuss progress and share findings of nonpoint source related projects being implemented on a number of watersheds throughout the state. Day one of the meeting focused on the Project Investigators' findings and discussions on the success and limitations of their projects.

The presenters were Dr. Kevin Baer, University of Louisiana at Monroe; Donny Latolais, Capital Region Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council; Dr. Durga Poudel, University of Louisiana at Lafayette; Dr. Beatrix Haggard, LSU AgCenter – NE Research Station; Dr. Whitney Broussard, University of Louisiana at Lafayette; Kelly J. Carlin, Calcasieu Parish Police Jury; India Anderson and Crisalda Adams, DEQ Nonpoint Source staff; Jennifer Roberts, Bayou Land RC&D; Olivia Ward, Trailblazer RC&D; Dr. Andrea Bourgeois-Calvin, Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation; Mike Adcock; Louisiana Delta P-R-I-D-E; Kecia McConathy and Raquel Wheeler, Twin Valley RC&D; and Marisa Escudero, Land Trust for Louisiana.

Day two of the meeting was devoted to training on Hyrolabs and Personal Digital Assistants (PDA).

*Sylvia Ritzky, EPA; Mike Adcock, Louisiana Deltas P-R-I-D-E; and Bruce Lamb, EPA, attend the Nonpoint Source Group Meeting*

*Watershed Coordinator, Olivia Ward, practices with the Hydrolab as coordinators Kecia McConathy, Rachel Wheeler and Mike Adcock look on. Zak Sihalla with Hydrotech Zs Consulting, (back right) was the instructor.*

*The new Personal Digital Assistants (PDA) will save time and streamline the monitoring and recording process.*

DISCOVER DEQ
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER
December 2013 Issue Number: 23

# Who's Who At DEQ?

### Tom Killeen – Administrator – Inspection Division

Killeen attended the University of New Orleans and Northwestern State University in Natchitoches where he received a Bachelor of Science in wildlife biology and a Master of Science in zoology. He has been employed by DEQ and its predecessor agency since 1982 and has worked in various Clean Water Act programs including compliance, surveillance, enforcement and permits. Killeen was selected as the Senior Technical Advisor for the Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (LPDES) Permit Program under DEQ's reorganization in 2001. He served as an LPDES Permit Manager from 2004 -2012, and is currently the Administrator of the Inspection Division.

### Evita Lagard – Administrator – Assessment Division

Lagard received a Bachelor of Science in chemistry from Louisiana State University and a Master of Science in environmental science from Southern University. She has been employed with DEQ since 1989. She has worked in permitting, solid waste enforcement and surveillance, hazardous waste, underground storage tanks and the air vapor recovery program (Stage II). She was named the Assessment Division Administrator in September 2013.

### Lewis "Dutch" Donlon – Administrator – Waste Permits

Donlon received a Bachelor of Science in geology from the University of Southwestern Louisiana in 1985. After working four years in petroleum exploration in Lafayette, LA, he began his career in environmental geology in 1989 with DEQ's Groundwater Protection Division. Donlon is currently serving as Administrator for Waste Permits.