DISCOVER DEQ
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER

May 2019 Issue Number: 88

What's Inside?

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LDEQ 2019 Natural and Catastrophic Disaster Parish Resource Book now available

Hurricane season is upon us, and it is time to prepare should a storm come our way. Hurricanes and natural disasters leave many problems for first responders and emergency response.

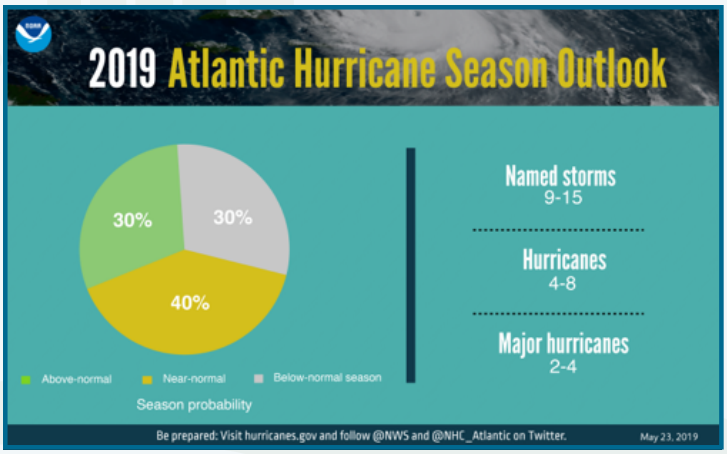
One important piece to the response effort is the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality's 2019 Natural and Catastrophic Disaster Parish Resource Book. The book contains information pertaining to disaster/emergency recovery assistance as it relates to permitting and debris collection. LDEQ compiles the book for parish emergency officials, and the book is also available to the public online at https://deq.louisiana.gov/page/parish-resource-book. The book is updated and can be downloaded and/or printed. The book contains vital information, such as:

- LDEQ Regional Office Contact Information and Office Map
- Parish Liaison Contact List
- Single Point of Contact (SPOC) Notification Procedures and Requirements
- Guidance for Segregation of Curbside Debris and Debris Management
- Comprehensive Plan for Disaster Clean-up and Debris Management

LDEQ parish liaisons send the book and information to parish contacts so it will be available in case of a hurricane or natural disaster. The book includes the Comprehensive Plan for Disaster Clean-up and Debris Management, which can be an important tool in the aftermath of such an event.

Parishes and the public are encouraged to download and print this information prior to an emergency and to check the website for updates regularly.

For emergency information, the public can access information from the Governor's Office of Homeland Security web sites http://emergency.louisiana.gov/ and https://www.getagameplan.org/.



Source: https://www.noaa.gov/

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Message from the Secretary

Chuck Carr Brown, Ph.D.

I hope everyone enjoyed a day off for the Memorial Day observance. It's good to remember that no matter what the holiday, some folks at LDEQ are working. I'm talking about our emergency responders. Come weekends, holidays, whatever – they are ready to spring into action when a spill occurs, a train derails, a pipeline leaks or a truck overturns. They are trained to deal with everything from toxic releases to fires to explosions. And they never know when it's going to happen. But they know it will happen.

Emergency responders and supervisory staff meet in my conference room.

I hosted most of the emergency responders at a meeting in my conference room at the Galvez Building on May 15. I told them I wanted to let them know how much I, and everyone at the agency, appreciate what they do. I also told them that work with our unmanned aircraft and the MAML is proving essential to our emergency response function. I want them, and everyone at LDEQ, to think about ways to make their jobs easier. Take advantage of our new technology (we are getting two new MAMLs). I want everyone to work smarter, not harder.

Louisiana is the only state in the country that has a mobile air lab. That's a point of pride for us. With the staff we have and the equipment we have, I feel confident that when the governor calls a Unified Command Group meeting, we are ready for whatever mission he assigns us.

I spoke at the EPA Hypoxia Task Force Meeting at the Hilton on May 16. There was a large turnout and good information was exchanged. Although our state is a very minor contributor to the nutrient load in the Mississippi River that fuels the hypoxic zone (oxygen depleted) in the Gulf every season, we feel the brunt of its effect. It was good to hear the "I-state" representatives outlining what is being done in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa and other Midwestern states. We are not alone in our effort to reduce or eliminate the annual Gulf of Mexico dead zone, but we are in the lead on the issue of Water Quality Credit Trading. Our program will be a model for other states.

Following my speech, I met with EPA's Office of Water's Assistant Administrator David Ross and EPA Office of Water Deputy Assistant Administrator Anna Wildeman to talk more about our water programs. LDEQ Assistant Secretary for Assessment Roger Gingles, LDEQ Administrator for Water Assessment Jonathan McFarland and LDEQ Scientist Manager Dr. Amanda Vincent were also in the meeting. Ross talked about getting more information about our water programs out to the public. As more details emerge, we plan to do just that.

This is the last newsletter before the beginning of hurricane season. Get ready. Get a game plan. You can find good information on our website about what you should be doing personally to prepare for a storm. There are links there to GOSHEP's site where there is more information. You need to be ready at home and work. A storm will bring challenges all around. After a storm passes, the public and local government may need guidance on removal and disposal of storm debris. There are some videos on our website that will be helpful: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3yunEs3aYGY and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oA5TN-tIKGU.

As always, stay safe out there.

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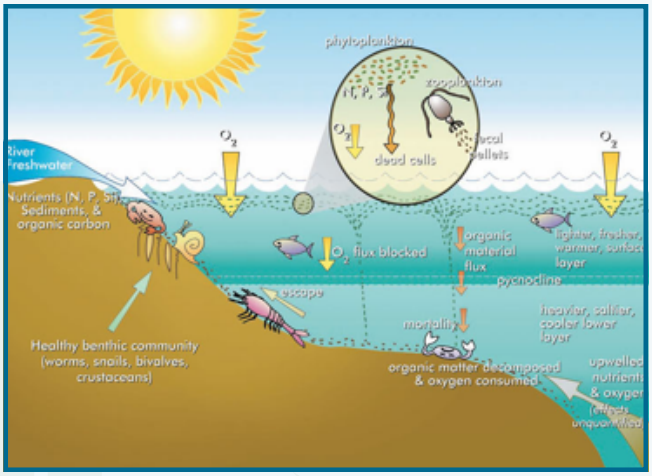
Gulf of Mexico 'Dead Zone' and Louisiana's efforts for nutrient management

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) attended the Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia Task Force bi-annual meeting in Baton Rouge, May 15-17, to discuss basin-wide efforts to address excess nutrient loads in the Mississippi/Atchafalaya River Basin and the estimated size of the hypoxic zone in the Gulf of Mexico for 2019. The Hypoxia Task Force is a coalition of state and federal leaders working under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to understand the causes and effects of eutrophication (a big word for when a water body becomes over saturated with dissolved nutrients that feed the growth of algae) in the Gulf of Mexico; coordinate activities to reduce the size, severity, and duration; and alleviate the effects of hypoxia.

Hypoxia, or low oxygen, is an environmental phenomenon where the concentration of dissolved oxygen in the water column decreases to a level that can no longer support living aquatic organisms. Hypoxic areas, or "Dead Zones," have increased in duration and frequency across the world. The largest hypoxic zone currently affecting the United States, and the second largest hypoxic zone worldwide, is the northern Gulf of Mexico.

The hypoxic zone in the Gulf of Mexico forms every summer and is a result of excess nutrients from the Mississippi/Atchafalaya River and seasonal stratification (layering) of the water in the Gulf. The dead zone forms when nitrates and phosphates enter the Gulf, where algae feed on them. Hypoxia occurs when those nutrients run out, the algae die and decompose, sucking the oxygen out of the lower layers of water.

Animals capable of swimming evacuate the area, but less mobile or immobile animals, such as mussels or crabs, cannot move to waters with more oxygen and are often killed during hypoxic events. Ultimately, hypoxia has the potential to damage important commercial fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico over the long term as it affects the ability of young fish or shellfish to find the food and habitat necessary to become adults. Additionally, it can also affect species that rely on fish for food. Such species might have to leave an area to find the necessary food to survive.



A diagram of the eutrophication process.
Source: https://www.epa.gov/ms-htf/hypoxia-101

Hypoxia can persist several months until there is a strong mixing of the ocean waters, which can come from a hurricane or cold fronts in the fall and winter. The Mississippi River basin drains approximately 41% of the land area of the United States, making it the dominant source of freshwater and nutrients to the Gulf of Mexico. Consequently, all the rain that has soaked the Mississippi River Basin this spring is also expected to wash the nutrients that feed the dead zone down the Mississippi River further working against the disruption of the hypoxic zone.

The size of the hypoxic zone for 2019 is still undetermined at this time. According to the Hypoxia Task Force, once the data for May is complete, the public can expect an official estimate of the size of the dead zone. "Louisiana contributes only two percent of the nutrients that wind up in the Gulf," LDEQ Secretary Chuck Carr Brown said. The other side of the coin is that while Louisiana's contribution may be minimal, it is most significantly impacted by the environmental phenomenon. Resources,

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simplification and coordination were identified as the way forward during the May meeting.

To that effect, LDEQ is actively involved in partnerships and collaborative efforts regarding water quality protection and restoration in the state. In one such effort, LDEQ is working to implement a water quality trading program. Water quality trading programs are not new to the water planning and assessment arena, but Louisiana is leading the way. According to the EPA, water quality trading (WQT) is an innovative, market-based, cost-effective mechanism to help achieve local water quality improvements. In WQT, sources with high costs of reducing pollution can purchase equal or greater pollution reductions from sources with lower costs. This cost difference provides an incentive for trading to occur.

For example, a buyer (e.g. a pollution source such as an industrial facility) purchases water quality improvements, or credits, from a seller (e.g. a farmer installing a buffer along a stream to capture sediment runoff or a facility installing technology that achieves reductions greater than established water quality-based effluent limitations requirements) that reduces pollutants. Under the program, both buyers and sellers will need to meet a minimum level, or baseline, before generating credits. Additionally, the baseline for generating pollution reduction credits must be consistent with applicable water quality standards. Therefore, a credit is a reduction in pollutant loads beyond baseline conditions. “The WQT program is meant to target pollutants found in the state’s waters, and the proposed program could be implemented as early as 2019,” LDEQ Water Planning and Assessment Division Administrator Jonathan McFarland said.

The Hypoxia Task Force also toured the ExxonMobil Refinery in Baton Rouge, a site that highlights the efforts of local industry to voluntarily reduce the impact of wastewater discharges into the Mississippi River with the aim to improve water quality in the Gulf. In 2015, ExxonMobil Refinery invested in a denitrification treatment step as part of a project to replace two Biox basins with new Biox tanks. The project implemented a “tank-in-tank” design that helps to reduce nitrate emissions in wastewater discharges to the Mississippi River well below levels required by regulations. As a result of the installation of the Biox Basins Wastewater Treatment Project, the refinery was able to reduce nitrate emissions by 1.4 million pounds in 2015; greater than 80% nitrate removal compared to the previous year.

It’s worth noting that LDEQ also works with an interagency team of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA), the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) and the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (LDNR) on the statewide nutrient management strategy. Developed in 2014, the Louisiana Nutrient Management Strategy focuses on collaborative and voluntary efforts, among other activities, to address nutrients in Louisiana’s waters. At the Hypoxia Task Force meeting, LDEQ co-presented with CPRA an update on the state’s activities regarding nutrient management. As with Louisiana and other states within the Mississippi/Atchafalaya River Basin, partnerships and collaboration are key in addressing nutrients and other water quality improvements.

This is illustrated by LDEQ’s partnership with LDAF and U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on many nonpoint source efforts within the state. One such effort takes place at Lake Providence. Collaboration among partners, including with the Lake Providence Watershed Council, LDAF and NRCS, has enhanced nonpoint source focused activities in the watershed. NRCS named Lake Providence as a Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI) project, which led to funding support for producers in the watershed to implement best management practice (BMPs). NRSC has indicated that 100% of the producers in the watershed are participating in implementing BMPs that may focus on reducing soil loss, utilizing cover crops and nutrient management.

As part of the nonpoint source program, LDEQ has been monitoring Lake Providence since 2016, and reduction in sedimentation in the lake has been noticeable. LDEQ plans to continue to monitor the water quality of the lake to document other water quality improvements, and current results indicate that an impairment on the lake for total dissolved solids may be able to be removed in the upcoming 2020 Integrated Report, highlighting the collaborative efforts that are leading to water quality improvement in the lake.

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Another project highlighted by LDEQ in the presentation at the Hypoxia Task Force meeting was LDEQ's collaboration with the LSU AgCenter. The LSU AgCenter's Louisiana Master Farmer Program helps agricultural producers voluntarily address environmental concerns while also helping them enhance the production and resource management skills they need for the continued sustainability of Louisiana agriculture. LDEQ participates in the Louisiana Master Farmers Partners meetings and provides information on water quality in the state's waters to inform the program.

LDEQ is also working with the LSU AgCenter on watershed nutrient management plans. Funds from a Beneficial Environmental Project (BEP) are being used to develop producer-specific (beef cattle, dairy, and poultry) master programs and watershed nutrient management plans to reduce pollution, such as excess nutrients, into the environment through improved farm practices. LDEQ is in the process of contracting with LSU AgCenter for an expected 3-year project that will include producer-specific education and outreach.

These and other partnerships and collaborative efforts are essential to addressing water quality protection and restoration. LDEQ and the interagency team are currently working on the planned 5-year review of the Louisiana Nutrient Management Strategy.

To learn more about LDEQ's water quality trading program, visit https://deq.louisiana.gov/page/water-quality-trading.

To learn more about hypoxia, visit https://www.epa.gov/ms-htf/hypoxia-101.

Australian EPA representatives visit LDEQ, GOHSEP

When Australians Ashleigh Jones and Sally MacPhail came to visit Baton Rouge, they wanted to see how local response agencies handle emergencies. Being a hospitable place, Baton Rouge conveniently offered up a real emergency for their visit: flooding.

The May 9-10 event was not a life-threatening emergency, but there was plenty of street flooding and some neighborhoods saw water creep into houses. Jones and MacPhail work for the Environment Protection Authority for Victoria, Australia (EPA Victoria), the environmental regulator for the state of Victoria, preventing and protecting the public and environment from the harmful effects of pollution and waste.

Australians Ashleigh Jones and Sally MacPhail visit with LDEQ staff during a roundtable discussion on environmental emergency response.

Jones, Senior Program Manager Transformation Programs, set up the visit to Louisiana. Specifically, they wanted to visit the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Planning (GOHSEP) and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality as both have programs with emergency response operations. The objective of their visit was "to learn from Louisiana's experiences in setting up and running emergency response operation centers."

The Australian regulators were able to tour the emergency operations center at GOHSEP on May 9 then visited LDEQ on May 10. At LDEQ, they met with Secretary Chuck Carr Brown, and members of

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his staff, and were hosted at a roundtable discussion in the meeting room of Assistant Secretary for Environmental Enforcement Lourdes Iturralde.

LDEQ Secretary Dr. Chuck Carr Brown, left, talks with EPA Victoria environmental staff Sally MacPhail, center, and Ashleigh Jones.

Despite a few language differences, LDEQ staff and the visiting regulators had a wide-ranging and lengthy discussion of shared experiences and responsibilities, best practices and response strategies. Landfills, waste tires, flooding, fires, spills, air quality issues and other familiar topics were on Jones' and MacPhail's list. EPA Victoria issues permits for industry, just as LDEQ does, but the permits are called "licenses" in Australia. LDEQ staff provided detailed accounts of how emergency events are assessed and how responses are delivered.

Jones and MacPhail, along with colleague Anna Lamont, were awarded a scholarship this year to undertake a project to design a central operations center for EPA Victoria, which would be supported by a strong data analytics function. The operations center could potentially become EPA Victoria's external call center and advisory service as well as perform regulatory response triage and resource deployment, including during emergency incidents.

Jones and MacPhail visited organizations with experience setting up and running similar operations and services to look and learn from different models that are leading in this area. The visits serve as case studies for their project. The purpose of the project is to investigate and design a model for a central operations center for EPA. The project has two phases: a discovery phase and a design phase. As part of the discovery phase, the project team visited a number of local and international organizations to learn from world-class operations and customer service centers. These will form case studies upon which an analysis of different options will be based.

Internationally, Jones and MacPhail visited the California Office of Emergency Services, California EPA and the Air Resources Board, the Louisiana State Emergency Operations Center and LDEQ, and met with the U.S. EPA Emergency Operations Center and Continuity Branch team.

Of course, no visit to Louisiana could be complete without eating. LDEQ hosts took Jones and MacPhail to lunch where they tried some Cajun/Creole cooking. "That's the best meal we've had since we've been here," Jones said.

Bayou Bonfouca: A flourishing success story in St. Tammany Parish

A waterfront city park area with a storied past sits on 54, now-remediated, acres in Slidell. After a long history of contamination, the site is now usable and an attractive recreational area. Following the major cleanup in 1997, the owners donated the prime waterfront property to the city of Slidell for redevelopment, and today a municipal marina operates there, thanks to a $1.5 million boat infrastructure grant received by the city in 2012. In addition to the marina, Bayou Bonfouca now boasts walking paths, floating docks and piers, a playground and a green space/city park area.

Bayou Bonfouca, an inlet from Lake Pontchartrain to the heart of Slidell, has come a long way during its history. From around 1882 until 1970, various companies owned and operated a wood-treating facility that used creosote for wood preservation processes.

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The plant's operation pre-dated proper hazardous waste disposal techniques and a complete understanding of the long-term public health and environmental impact.

As operations continued, releases of creosote and runoff from the plant occurred into the 1960s. A fire in 1970 dealt the final blow, when several large tanks ruptured, spilling creosote into the bayou. Years of improper waste disposal and the creosote that was discharged directly into Bayou Bonfouca as a result of the fire contaminated the soil and sediment as well as the area's surface and groundwater. The plant closed soon after, and the site was investigated to determine the extent of the impact on the environment.

The addition of a dock is part of the revitalization effort at Bayou Bonfouca. Photo courtesy of EPA.

The timing of the fire fell during a period when new environmental laws were being promulgated and cleanup methods were being refined in the 1970s and '80s. Many contaminated properties, later known as "Superfund Sites," were being placed on EPA's National Priorities List (NPL), where they would await investigation and remediation. Bayou Bonfouca was one such location -- listed in 1983.

EPA began working with LDEQ on an extensive cleanup and restoration plan along more than a mile of Bayou Bonfouca's waterway. Groundwater and sediment cleanup plans were initiated in the attempt to mitigate the damage done and return the bayou to acceptable standards for human health and the environment.

Soil and sediment remediation efforts ramped up into the early 1990s when excavation and on-site incineration of creosote contaminated soils and sediments were performed. Structures were built on the site by EPA to store and ultimately treat the contaminated material, and the extensive cleanup included the creation of a landfill, built on-site strictly to receive treated incinerator ash and waste. From 1983 to 1997, approximately 170,000 cubic yards of sediment was treated. As part of the long-term remedy, incineration of contaminated soil and sediment was completed in 1995.

To date, 235 million gallons of contaminated groundwater have been treated, and at least 9.8 million gallons of creosote oil has been recovered. Through rigorous efforts from combined actions by federal, state and local parties, the area has turned around and is a success story on how a once-blighted property can be cleaned to a standard that promotes recreational and ecological use.

The buildings also found reuse. "The structures that were built to handle the cleanup operations were refurbished and turned over to the city for use as offices and buildings for Slidell's public works department. It's a win-win," LDEQ Senior Environmental Scientist Keith Horn said.

EPA has conducted four 5-year reviews of the site's remediation. The reviews verify that the remedies put in place are protective of public health and the environment. The next 5-year review is due in August 2021.

The comprehensive, multi-faceted effort hasn't gone unnoticed.

In May 2018, EPA Region 6 recognized Slidell with an Excellence in Site Reuse Award – an honor established to celebrate organizations and individuals that support Superfund site reuse efforts that surpass the required cleanup parameters.

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The work continues. The groundwater treatment that began in 1991 is ongoing, and EPA and LDEQ continue to review the operation and maintenance of the groundwater pump and treatment system where impacted groundwater from two recovery wells removes approximately 100 gallons of liquid contaminants each month. The system extracts the contaminated groundwater, separates the creosote and then stores the creosote material on-site where it's disposed of regularly.

Oversight and constant attention are key, as LDEQ employs two contract workers who manage the water wells, conduct testing and maintain the landfill. Monthly operational reports document these endeavors for the groundwater treatment system and are submitted to LDEQ for review and comment.

"Land revitalization is a primary goal of the EPA Superfund cleanup mission. The Slidell Municipal Marina project is a milestone for this community," EPA Region 6 Superfund Reuse Coordinator Casey Luckett Snyder said.

A park, marina, docks and lakefront area are the result of efforts made by EPA and LDEQ to transform once-blighted Bayou Bonfouca into a site for public recreational use. Photo courtesy of EPA.

While work still needs to be done, all parties are working toward a comprehensive removal of any remaining contamination, so that the site's groundwater eventually falls into compliance with environmental and health standards.

Southeastern Louisiana University students seek to improve environment by biking

For this year's celebration of Bike to Work Day, college students speak out on bike regulations that are safer for bikers and better for the environment.

May 17, Bike to Work Day, brings more awareness to the health and environmental impact of using bikes for transportation nationwide. For Louisiana, it is a day to talk about how biking impacts the environment. The city of Baton Rouge hopes to do this with the bike share program that will be implemented this year. The program will start with almost 500 bikes downtown, as well as on Louisiana State University and Southern University and A&M College campuses. This program will help encourage the younger generation to positively impact their environment by biking.

Southeastern University student Jacob O'Neill preparing to ride his bike to campus.

Southeastern Louisiana University students see the benefit of bicycling to and from campus. The Sustainability Center at the university installed more than 120 bike racks on campus to encourage the students to bike to school. Basanta Khakurel, an international student from Nepal who is majoring in biology, says that the reason he rides his bike from his home off campus to the university is to exercise and to help the environment. "If students are nearer to the campus, then riding a bike is better for the environment than driving a car every day," Nepal said. According to Infrastructure USA, noise pollution and the emission of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide and

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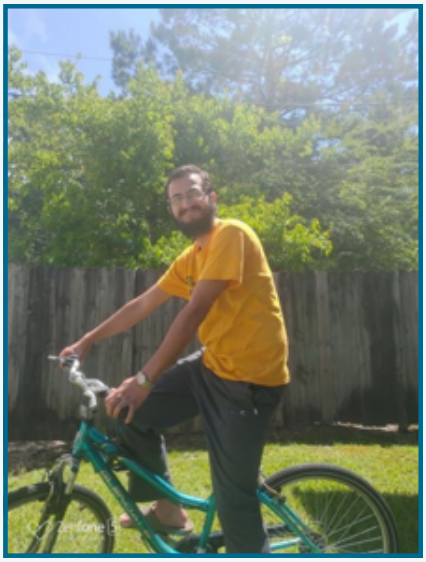
carbon monoxide, affect the kind of health issues society experiences. Mobile emissions also affect the loss of economic opportunity. National Geographic reported that nearly half of the United States' nitrogen oxide emissions are caused by motor vehicles each year. The less driving and the more biking that people do will decrease those emissions.

Basanta Khakurel finds it hard for students like him to ride their bikes to campus. "There are no bike lanes for students or anyone to cycle on. It is quite unsafe sometimes for me to ride to campus," Khakurel said. He is not the only student who believes that the university should have bike lanes. Graduate student in sociology Jacob O'Neill says that it is hard to ride his bicycle to campus because people don't notice bikers like him on sidewalks. "I have almost gotten run over several times crossing from one sidewalk to another," Jacobs said. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that the state of Louisiana is ranked third in the nation for bicyclist fatalities.

O'Neill believes that days like Bike to Work Day will shed some light on the ordeal that bikers go through, and hopefully will encourage Hammond council members to make biking safer, in Hammond and Louisiana. The Bike Baton Rouge organization stated that a survey they conducted shows 39% of Baton Rouge residents would consider bicycling to work if Baton Rouge had dedicated bike infrastructure.



International Southeastern University student Basanta Khakurel enjoying the bike ride to campus.

Presentation on Microplastics in Louisiana Waters held at LDEQ May 21

Plastic is a part of modern products we use every day, from clothing to containers and everything in between. In fact, so much plastic is in use that it has become an environmental problem that increasingly finds its way into our state's waterways. This has a direct impact upon our fisheries and our drinking water supplies. As plastic degrades slowly and leaches into soil and waterways, it ultimately can affect our drinking water.

LDEQ's Water Planning and Assessment Division hosted a free event May 21 at LDEQ headquarters to provide some insight and history on this subject. The presentation examined microplastics in Louisiana's waterways and was free and open to the public.

Guest speakers were Dr. Mark Benfield, professor of LSU's Department of Oceanography and Coastal Sciences, and Alma Robichaux, Education/Outreach Coordinator with the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP).

Benfield's presentation began with a revelation that more than 8.3 billion tons of plastic have been produced since 1950. He then discussed the presence of plastic in everyday life and how litter is a pervasive problem across the world. Benfield mentioned his research team's ongoing work in water sampling as it relates to

Dr. Mark Benfield presentation included aerial footage that showed high concentrations of plastic along Louisiana's waterways.

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determining the amount and types of microplastic and fibers in those samples, along with his collection methods and how drone flights have helped to pinpoint problem areas where plastic is concentrated. To reduce the problem, he promoted the use of steel beverage cups, opting not to use plastic straws and lids, reducing the use of plastic grocery bags and participating in cleanup days.

Robichaux's presentation centered on BTNEP's work in sampling water at schools and educating the public about reducing plastic so that it doesn't enter the drinking water sources. She capped off her talk with a demonstration where attendees looked through microscopes to see microfibers in water samples. BTNEP's presentation included an interactive display that demonstrated the impact of plastic on the environment and how it negatively affects fish and wildlife propagation.

For more information on microplastics, visit: https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/plastics-in-the-ocean/, https://keeplouisianabeautiful.org/tools-resources/research/ or https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/microplastics.html.

Alma Robichaux with BTNEP prepares a drinking water sample viewing station for attendees.

LDEQ On The Move

LDEQ lawyer coaches LSU Law's Energy & Sustainability Law Moot Court team

LDEQ Attorney Charlotte Goudeau (second from left) coached LSU's Energy and Sustainability Law Moot Court team.

LSU Law's Energy & Sustainability Law Moot Court team advanced to the National Semifinals of this year's competition in West Virginia.

Coached by Charlotte Goudeau of LDEQ's Legal Division, the team of three law students (Erick Norem, Marina Wilson and Daniel Bosch, pictured) prepared written and oral arguments for this year's problem on several issues of law.

Topics included whether a coal ash impoundment constitutes a point source under the Clean Water Act and whether liability attaches under the Clean Water Act for the unpermitted discharge of pollutants into groundwater with a direct hydrological connection to surface waters.

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Wetland Watchers Celebration goes on despite high water

For 21 years, the Harry Hurst Middle School LaBranche Wetland Watchers have planned a celebration for fourth-grade students in St. Charles Parish in the spring. In all that time, it has only been canceled twice. It was held this year, although the date had to be changed. The celebration could not be held in the Wetland Watchers Park on Lake Pontchartrain because of high water and the opening of the Bonnet Carré Spillway. Barry Guillot, the Wetland Watchers teacher and mentor, organizes the event every year, and it is usually held at the Wetland Watchers Park with its nature trail and large dock. However, with the opening of the spillway, flexibility was the key.

"The overall goal of the United Way Wetland Watchers Celebration is to provide the students with a full day of interactive environmental education experiences at Wetland Watchers Park where they are surrounded by the beautiful wetlands along the shoreline of Lake Pontchartrain," Guillot said. However, this year the event had to be moved from March 28 to May 15 and to the Edward Dufrene Community Center parking lot. Despite the high-water issues, nearly 800 fourth-grade students attended the event and enjoyed the exhibitors, food and outdoor adventure.

United Way sponsored the event, and LDEQ has participated every year. This year, the Drinking Water Protection Team demonstrated how drinking water can become contaminated, and other staff set up Walnut Bayou, a display that shows how a river meanders and changes.

Karen Latuso and Rachael Matthews, LDEQ environmental scientists, demonstrate the Walnut Bayou model for the fourth grade students.

Jesse Means, LDEQ Drinking Water Protection Team member, demonstrates how water gets contaminated.

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"NO DUMPING - ONLY RAIN IN THE DRAIN."

Feb. 2, 17 Cub Scouts from local Pack 455 marked over 100 storm drains in the Cypress Crossing and Cypress Meadows subdivisions in Broussard.

As part of the project, LDEQ provided medallions marked with "NO DUMPING - ONLY RAIN IN THE DRAIN."

Chartered by the Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church, Cub Scout Pack 455 has been active in Broussard for more than 50 years. The 45-member Cub Scout Pack hails from St. Cecilia, Catherine Drexel and other schools in St. Martin and Lafayette Parish. They conduct three community service projects per year; one of which involves the marking of storm drains with medallions noting the hazards of dumping.

LDEQ employees present at Louisiana Chapter of the American Fisheries Society

LDEQ employees participated in the 40th annual meeting of the Louisiana Chapter of the American Fisheries Society at Jean Lafitte Park, Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center in Thibodaux, May 23-24. Scientists from around the state, representing state agencies, non-governmental organizations, private industry and consulting firms, were in attendance. Presentations were given by keynote speaker, Bryan Piazza, Director of Freshwater and Marine Science at The Nature Conservancy and about 20 others. Water Quality Standards and Assessment Section Manager Amanda Vincent, and Environmental Scientists John Grosch and Karen Latuso, all from LDEQ, presented at the meeting.

LDEQ Environmental Scientist John Grosch demonstrates how to access water quality data using the new LDEQ Louisiana Environmental Assessment Utility (LEAU) web portal.

LDEQ Environmental Scientist Karen Latuso delivers a presentation on LDEQ's work on detecting nutrient thresholds in inland waterbodies.

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Jason Dewitt retires from LDEQ after 25 years of service

(I to r) Jeff Dauzat, Jeff Nolan, Jason Dewitt and Jeff Jackson of LDEQ, together at Dewitt's retirement party. The "four amigos" started at LDEQ in Surveillance and the Water Division.

Bijan Sharafkhani, LDEQ confidential advisor to the secretary (middle), and LDEQ Secretary Dr. Chuck Carr Brown (right) congratulate Jason Dewitt on his impending retirement.

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Who's Who At LDEQ?

Cherian M. Grady—Environmental Project Specialist, Financial Services, Office of Management and Finance

Grady is a native of Magnolia, Miss., who recently moved to Baton Rouge. She graduated from Alcorn State University in 2017. She joins LDEQ Financial Services as an environmental project specialist after working for the Warrant Division at the Pike County Sheriff's Office for two years.

When not working, Grady enjoys DIY projects, shopping and cooking.

Blake Watson -- Environmental Scientist, Surveillance Division, Office of Environmental Compliance

Watson was born and raised in West Monroe. He received a Bachelor of Science degree from Louisiana Tech University in applied and natural science with a focus on environmental science and a minor in geographical information system (GIS). He joined LDEQ's Surveillance Division in 2007, working mainly in air quality and asbestos. In April 2018, Watson was promoted to environmental scientist 4.

He enjoys hiking, biking, swimming, beaches, anything outdoors and spending time with family and friends.

Danielle Laguaite - Environmental Scientist, Enforcement Division, Office of Environmental Compliance

Laguaite is a Baton Rouge native who graduated from LSU with a bachelor's degree in coastal and environmental science in 2018. Before joining the LDEQ Enforcement Division, she worked as a laboratory technician at LSU while studying marine ecology.

In her free time, she enjoys boxing, traveling, cooking, eating and playing guitar.

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Louisiana Department Of Environmental Quality's First Quarter Summaries

First Quarter 2019 Enforcement Actions:
http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/enforcement-actions

First Quarter 2019 Settlement Agreements:
http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/enforcement-division

First Quarter 2019 Air Permits:
http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/permits-issued-by-calendar-quarter

First Quarter 2019 Water Permits:
http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/lpdes

First Quarter 2019 Solid and Hazardous Waste Permits:
http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/waste-permits