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## Improperly discarding masks, gloves and wipes poses health and environmental hazards

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is a common acronym many of us hear about in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic. As many citizens increase their use of protective masks/face coverings, plastic or latex gloves and sanitary wipes, a new litter problem arises from those who decide to discard those items carelessly.

LSU professor Dr. Mark Benfield has called upon citizens to be on the lookout for such discards while reminding us that these items need to be discarded properly as they are a human health and environmental concern. Benfield has been documenting the rise in COVID-related litter as more and more masks, gloves and wipes begin making their way into our streets and sewage systems instead of into the trash.

PPE items such as gloves, masks and wipes left in the street will soon be washed into storm drains, ultimately reaching our streams, rivers and eventually into the Gulf of Mexico.

The fact is that the longer we deal with the virus and increase our use of personal protective items, some of those items will find their way onto the street simply because a careless few choose to toss it anywhere besides a trash can. Benfield and his team have noticed such an increase. On a recent piece presented by WAFB news, Benfield noted that "as times progressed and we've seen masks become more common, they are becoming a more common item on the street."

During Benfield's daily neighborhood walks, he began noticing used disinfectant wipes and disposable masks in the street – items that began increasing in number over time. He then began systematic surveys while mapping, photographing, documenting and counting the PPE waste that he found. Anything discarded in the street eventually makes its way into our waterways via storm drains, and PPE discards are a particularly detrimental category as they pose a potentially harmful biological health hazard. An increase in the PPE waste stream means an increase in bacteria that can pose a detriment and a host of health and environmental problems. According to Benfield, the declines in gloves and wipes are likely due to a combination of recent heavy rains and mowing of the vegetation along the road. The survey covered one hectare in length (approx. 2.47 acres).

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Date	Masks/ha	Gloves/ha	Wipes/ha	Other/ha
5/2/20	1.471	12.132	20.588	0
5/21/20	1.103	10.294	30.882	0
5/31/20	1.103	11.029	18.382	0.368
6/14/20	1.103	9.927	19.118	0
7/11/20	2.574	7.721	15.074	0

*Data from a portion of La. 22 in Madisonville denotes an increase in mask litter from May through July. According to Benfield, the declines in gloves and wipes are likely due to a combination of recent heavy rains and mowing of the vegetation along the road. The survey covered one hectare in length (approx. 2.47 acres).*



*Photos courtesy of Dr. Mark Benfield.  
Dr. Benfield has documented dirty disinfectant wipes, used masks, plastic gloves, medicine bottles, cotton swab wrappers and other PPE that have wound up in the street or in front of storm drains*

Benfield implores everyone to properly wrap and discard their used disposable masks, gloves and wipes by placing them in a plastic bag and then into the trash for proper disposal. Doing so is the best way to protect yourself, your neighbors and the environment.

In keeping with tracking COVID-related waste, if you are interested in helping to survey PPE waste in your area, please email Benfield at [covid19waste@gmail.com](mailto:covid19waste@gmail.com). He will provide you with survey instructions.

The personal protective equipment litter issue speaks to a greater problem, however, which is the detriment that the wide range of microplastic waste has on our oceans and natural environment. Many simply do not think about the effects or repercussions of dropping waste onto the ground. PPE waste aside, cigarettes are a common discard, as well as cups, cans, napkins, food containers and a variety of Styrofoam and plastics that can have detrimental impacts on human health and the environment.

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### What you can do:

- Place used PPE (Personal Protective Equipment -- gloves, masks/face coverings and disposable wipes) into a bag before discarding in the trash
- Consider whether you need to use gloves at all, regular use of hand sanitizer and handwashing is more effective
- If you take a daily walk in your neighborhood, bring a bag for the collection of any PPE waste or other waste you may come across
- Storm drains are the access points to our streams. Keep your neighborhood drains clear and free of waste
- Talk to your friends, neighbors and co-workers about properly discarding PPE waste
- Consider cleaning and re-using masks and gloves instead of throwing them away
- Reusable masks are effective and environmentally safer than disposables.



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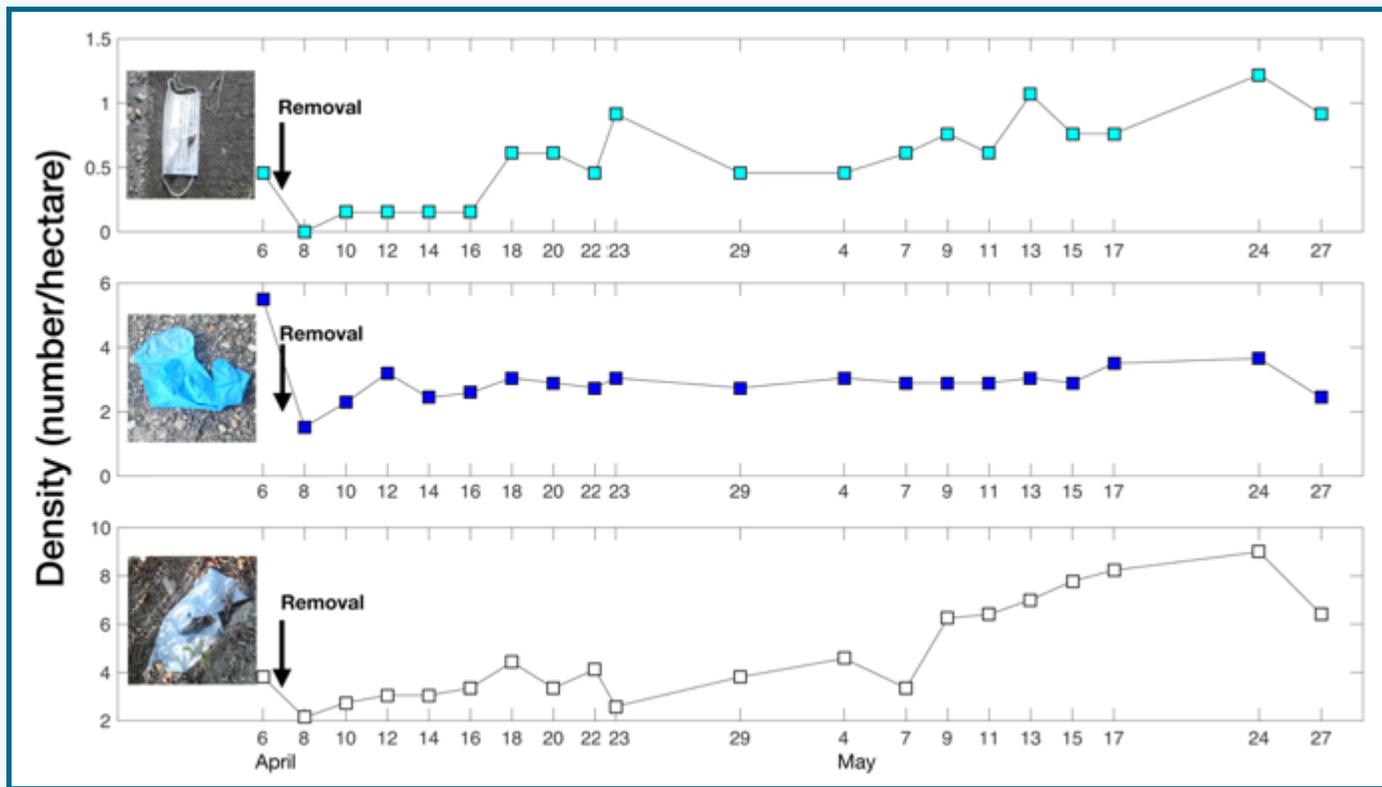
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As consumers, we can reduce the use of plastics we purchase and/or choose to use through a change in habits and/or an alteration in our choices when it comes to food consumption, shopping and being mindful of what we're buying and how those products will be disposed of after use.

To make a dent in reducing waste, please check with your city or parish on how you can get involved in a litter cleanup event in your area. Stop by the Keep Louisiana Beautiful website for details: [www.keeplouisianabeautiful.org](http://www.keeplouisianabeautiful.org).



Benfield and his team personally identified PPE waste in various areas throughout the state. This survey from the Beaugard town district in downtown Baton Rouge shows fairly steady and alarmingly upward trends in PPE litter (specifically masks, gloves and wipes). Chart courtesy of Dr. Mark Benfield.



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## Message from the Secretary

**Chuck Carr Brown, Ph.D.**

Louisiana Clean Fuels (LCF) celebrates its 20th Anniversary this year. The group is an affiliate of the Department of Energy's Clean Cities Program. LCF has worked tirelessly to promote alternative fuel vehicles with goals of better air quality and extending energy resources. Their promotional programs push the use of domestic fuels, alternative fuel vehicles, increased fuel economy, hybrid and electric vehicles and idle reduction technologies.

On Nov. 5, LCF will mark its birthday with a gala at the Estuary at the Water Campus on River Road in Baton Rouge. At that event, they will show a commemorative video. It was an honor to participate in the production of the video. All I had to do is say nice things about LCF, and that is easy to do.

LCF has been a partner to the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) from its inception. The organization has been involved in the establishment of alternative fuels corridors, the VW settlement, electrification of city bus systems and many more energy conservation and air quality improvement projects. I know they share my vision of clean, sustainable energy to power the future.

I want to congratulate LCF on their fine work and thank them for partnering with LDEQ to help the people of Louisiana make the transition to cleaner energy – be it propane, liquefied natural gas, high-efficiency diesel or zero-emission electric. I'm proud of the things we have achieved together, and I know these two agencies will continue to work together for many more years.

Nowadays it's hard to talk about doing anything without mentioning COVID-19. It seems like a very long time ago when we first heard about this new virus. But it was only last winter, and the first case in the U.S. was in January of this year in Washington State. We all know what happened after that. Now we have to address this concern every time we leave our house, every time we go shopping, every time we go to work, every time we get on an elevator, every time we attend a meeting.

The past two weeks have been hard. The virus caught its breath and surged again, halting re-opening efforts after many areas had tamped down the first surge and were trying to regain some normalcy. Here in Louisiana, some restrictions that had been relaxed had to be re-imposed. We all look to our governor for leadership, and he has delivered just that. We have all tried to listen and follow his directions. It's the right thing to do but it hasn't been easy.

Now we are coming up on another really big test: reopening of schools. Some are delaying their return to classroom instruction and going full online instruction instead. Not everyone feels that e-School is the best choice. Some systems are offering modified attendance schedules. We know students have to return to school eventually. When they do, anxiety will ratchet up even more. Parents will worry about students catching the virus. Grandparents and other after-school caregivers will worry about students bringing the virus to them. Workers worry about their work schedules. Bosses worry about workers not being able to come to the office.

It's a new, scary reality. We all have to be patient and find a way through this. We will, but it won't be without more stress and lots of change. Stay flexible, Stay Strong, Stay Safe!



*I am speaking about Louisiana Clean Fuels as we film a video commemorating LCF's 20th anniversary.*



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## A look at water quality in Louisiana for National Water Quality Month

August is National Water Quality Month, which means it's the perfect time to educate ourselves on where our water comes from and how we can help protect it. Thankfully, the answers to both of these questions lie in education. Educating ourselves is the best way to ensure that our water remains pollution-free and, thereby, the highest quality possible.



According to the United States Geological Survey (USGS), the average person uses approximately 80-100 gallons of water or more per day. Uses include bathing, cleaning, household waste, drinking water and much more. The USGS also reports that the human body consists of 60% water highlighting the need for non-contaminated water in order to stay healthy.

Considering how vitally important water is, it is unfortunate that 40% of the nation's waterways are currently suffering from water quality problems, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

"One household alone may not produce enough pollution to affect a waterway or cause a fish kill, but the combined output of multiple homes can ultimately have a negative impact," LDEQ Secretary Dr. Chuck Brown said. "That's why it's important that we all continue to do our part to help the collective make a positive impact. That starts with education."

The Clean Water Act (CWA) was passed in 1972 in an effort to "restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters" followed closely by the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) in 1974 which was established to protect the quality of drinking water in the United States. Under the CWA, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has implemented pollution control programs such as setting wastewater standards and developed national water quality criteria recommendations for pollutants in surface waters. Since the establishment of the CWA, EPA has also placed federal regulations on public water suppliers to ensure that they are monitoring more than 100 contaminants. Their role is to take household wastewater that flows into the utilities' main wastewater pipeline, remove pollutants from it, reuse it or release it back into the environment.

Maintaining water quality can be a challenging undertaking because of the vast amount of pollution resulting from its use by manufacturing, industry and wastewater treatment facilities. This type of pollution is considered point source pollution. While point source pollution plays a significant role, nonpoint source pollution is also one of the largest water quality problems in the United States. Nonpoint source pollution is pollution from a specific area generated primarily during rainfall events versus coming from a discharge pipe.

In Louisiana, water quality is a top priority. The Louisiana Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP) is the plan with water quality management, pollution control and planning activities carried out by the state in its effort to implement the provisions of federal law under the Clean Water Act (CWA). The WQMP goal is that the waters of the state meet established water quality standards and maintain all designated uses for each waterbody.

The WQMP identifies water quality problems, details the state's objectives and strategies for their resolution, and outlines the institutional framework necessary for the effective implementation of the proposed strategies. To meet these objectives,

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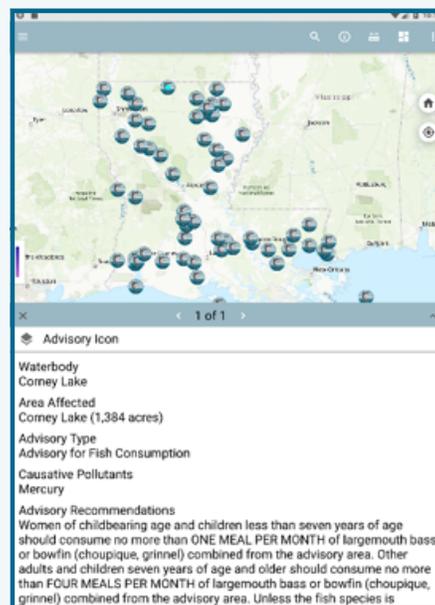
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the WQMP must contain the details providing the necessary analyses and information for management decisions, while remaining flexible enough to meet changing requirements. Therefore, the plan is a management tool containing a wide range of information that is integrated into an assessment of both the sources and impacts of water pollution, as well as the possible management alternatives available for the resolution of the problems. To read the full plan, visit <https://deq.louisiana.gov/resources/category/water-quality-management>.

Water quality in Louisiana is managed under two broad areas: surface water and groundwater. The LDEQ Aquifer Sampling and Assessment Program seeks to protect the quality of all waters found in underground aquifers as well as the surface water sources of that groundwater. Most groundwater monitoring and protection take place with LDEQ's sister agency, Louisiana Department of Natural Resources. However, LDEQ does focus on the risk pollutants in an area can potentially have on those aquifers and work with the community to mitigate those risks. In comparison, the LDEQ Ambient Water Quality Monitoring Program seeks to protect the surface water quality of all waters of the state, including rivers, streams, bayous, lakes, reservoirs, wetlands, estuaries and many other types of surface water. While these two areas are broad, the Water Quality Division of LDEQ is broken down into many more programs than just the two listed. There are many programs with specific focuses and expertise aimed at addressing the various water quality issues faced by the state, and all equally important.

Additionally, there are tools for the public to access water quality information collected throughout the state via these programs including:

1. The Ambient Water Quality Monitoring Data portal can be viewed at <https://waterdata.deq.louisiana.gov>.
2. The currently available 2018 Louisiana Water Quality Inventory: Integrated Report (305(b)/303(d)). Found at <https://deq.louisiana.gov/page/water-quality-integrated-report-305b303d>.
3. Fishing consumption and swimming advisories can be viewed at <https://deq.louisiana.gov/page/fishing-consumption-and-swimming-advisories>.
4. The online fishing and swimming advisory map is now available as an application (app) for smartphones as well. The new app, released July 11, 2019, is available through Google Play and the Apple Store by entering the search term: LA Fish Advisories.



Fishing and Swimming Advisory App

When it comes to water quality, it's not only the job of the EPA, state and local government, or private water suppliers' to protect our water. Though they play an important role, we all have a part to play. Most people remain unaware of the little ways they contribute to the water quality in their area or how water quality directly affects them. In honor of National Water Quality Month, LDEQ challenges you to:

- **Be Aware**— Learn about water quality in your area and water pollution issues. Join LDEQ's Enviroschool for a webinar on Water Quality in Louisiana and/or Onsite Sewerage System Maintenance, Health and the Environment. Both webinars will be hosted in August and are free to the public. Please register online at <https://www.deq.louisiana.gov/form/enviroschool>.
- **Get Involved**— Reduce your household's water usage by not wasting water while washing dishes, showering, or brushing your teeth. Pick up trash and pet waste at home to avoid water pollution.
- **Volunteer** — Volunteer in a local cleanup/restoration project. Find ways that you can help with the water crisis locally, or start your own efforts.

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Water Quality Month reminds us to examine what can be done at home and in the community to protect our water sources. Water pollution is a major problem and only growing. LDEQ hopes you will join us in raising awareness, reducing pollution and positively impacting local water quality by celebrating Water Quality Month next month.

To learn more about Water Quality in Louisiana and the programs that support it, visit <https://deq.louisiana.gov/subhome/water>.

## Prevent Negative Water Quality Impacts At Home

- Try not to use antibacterial soaps or cleaning products. Regular soap and water will do the trick. Much of the antibacterial soaps contain a registered pesticide that is known to harm marine life.
- Do not flush unwanted or out-of-date medications down the toilet or drain.
- Turn off the faucet when you brush your teeth and in between rinsing dishes and fruits and vegetables.
- Choose nontoxic household products when possible.
- Pick up after pets. Animal waste contains harmful organisms like E. coli, salmonella, and giardia. Animal waste is also high in nitrogen, which at excess can deplete the oxygen in the water making it harmful for fish and certain underwater plants.
- If you have a private well, make sure it is tested and cleaned regularly. There can be bacteria build up in wells.
- Read your local water quality report, so you know what the water quality is in your area.
- Repair leaky faucets. Make certain all hoses have shut-off nozzles to prevent leaks and unnecessary water use.
- Wash your vehicle at a professional car wash, as it's the better option as they are required to drain into sewer systems so that wastewater plants can treat the water before it is re-used.
- Do not hose down, but instead sweep driveways, sidewalks, gutters and patios.
- Do not pour anything other than water down storm sewers.
- Avoid using pesticides or chemical fertilizers.
- Install cisterns and rain barrels to collect water for use on your lawn and gardening.
- Mow grassy areas responsibly and only as necessary.
- Plant native trees, shrubs and grasses.
- Group plants according to their water needs; use drought-tolerant plants.
- Irrigate and water responsibly. If using spray irrigation, do not water your lawn except in the cool morning to avoid evaporation. Use drip irrigation, if possible, so water goes directly to the roots of the plants.



## Saharan dust plume causes LDEQ Air Quality Advisory for PM2.5

Last month, LDEQ issued an Air Quality Advisory for Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5). Since this is an unusual event, it is important to explain what it is and what caused the advisory. This advisory was issued because of Saharan dust. The question of how a dust storm in the Sahara Desert can affect weather in the United States is an interesting and complex one.

According to the National Weather Service, an extensive plume of dust moved from Africa to the southern United States and Puerto Rico, traveling 5,000 miles across the Atlantic, Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico. This particular dust event is unique because of its thickness over parts of the Caribbean earlier last week. According to Dr. Olga Mayol of the Institute for Tropical Ecosystem Studies at the University of Puerto Rico, the event saw the highest concentrations of dust particles observed over Puerto Rico in at least the last 15 years.

The Saharan Air Layer (SAL) is a mass of very dry, dusty air that forms over the Sahara Desert during the late spring, summer and early fall, and moves over the tropical North Atlantic every three to five days. Saharan Air Layer activity usually ramps up in mid-June, peaks from late June to mid-August and begins to rapidly subside after mid-August, according to NOAA Hurricane Research Division (HRD).

The HRD says the Saharan Air Layer is typically located between 5,000 and 20,000 feet above the Earth's surface. It is transported westward by bursts of strong winds and tropical waves in the central and western Atlantic Ocean at altitudes between 6,500 and 14,500 feet.

The Saharan dust is tracked as far west as the Caribbean, Florida and the Gulf of Mexico each year.

Not all PM2.5 advisories are issued because of Saharan dust. So the next question regarding the advisory is: What is PM, and how does it get into the air? PM stands for particulate matter, which is particle pollution. This is a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets found in the air. Some particles, such as dust, dirt, soot or smoke, are large or dark enough to be seen with the naked eye. Others are so small they can only be detected using an electron microscope.

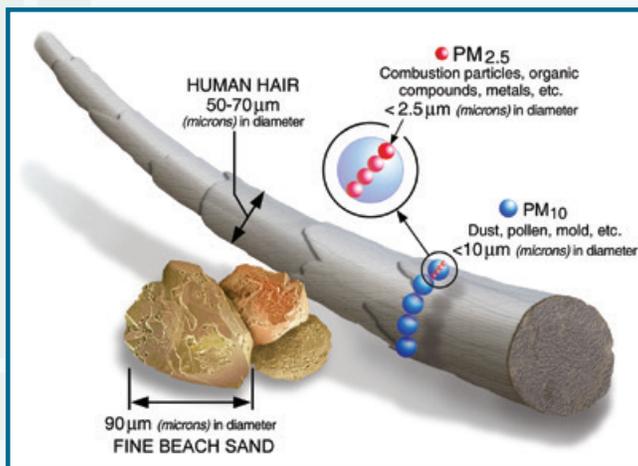
There are two designations for particle pollution: PM2.5 and PM10.

- PM2.5: fine inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 2.5 micrometers and smaller.
- How small are 2.5 micrometers? Think about a single hair from your head. The average human hair is about 70 micrometers in diameter – making it 30 times larger than the largest fine particle.
- PM10: inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 10 micrometers and smaller

These particles come in many sizes and shapes and can be made up of hundreds of different chemicals.

Some are emitted directly from a source, such as construction sites, unpaved roads, fields, smokestacks or fires. In the case of recent events, the PM2.5 Air Quality Action Days have been due to southwesterly winds transporting a large plume of Saharan dust over the Gulf of Mexico and into the state.

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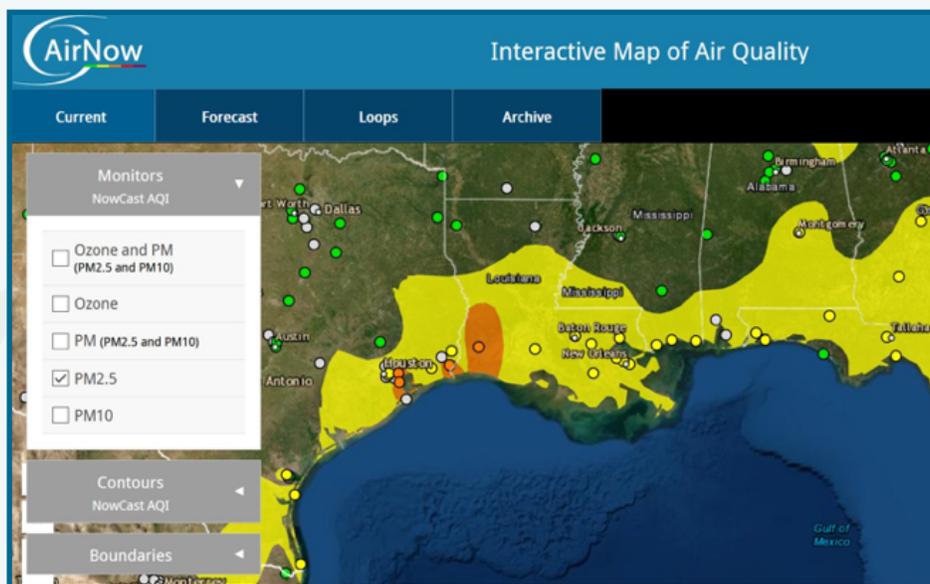




The Saharan Air Layer is unique and can affect the weather and the formation of tropical hurricanes. The properties of warmth, dry air, and strong winds can have significant moderating impacts on tropical cyclone formation and intensification, according to NOAA’s Hurricane Research Division (HRD). For those populations on and near the Gulf Coast, including Louisiana, and areas prone to hurricanes, this is important. The warmth, dryness and strong winds associated with the Saharan Air Layer have been shown to suppress tropical cyclone formation and intensification.

There are three characteristics of these Saharan dust outbreaks, according to HRD, that can affect tropical cyclones, tropical disturbances and the general climatology of the Atlantic tropical atmosphere:

- 1. Extremely Dry Air:** The Saharan Air Layer’s dry, dusty air has about 50% less moisture than the typical tropical atmosphere. This extremely dry air can weaken a tropical cyclone or tropical disturbance by promoting downdrafts around the storm.
- 2. African Easterly Jet:** Strong winds in the Saharan Air Layer (25-55 mph or 10-25 meters per second) can substantially increase the vertical wind shear in and around the storm environment. This “mid-level jet” of enhanced winds, typically found at a height of 6,500-14,500 feet (2000-4500 meters), can cause tilting of the tropical cyclone vortex with height and can disrupt the storm’s internal heat engine.
- 3. Warm Temperatures:** The Saharan Air Layer’s warmth acts to stabilize the atmosphere, which can suppress the formation of clouds. This stabilizing effect is produced when the Saharan Air Layer’s warm, buoyant air rides above relatively cooler, denser air. The Saharan Air Layer’s suspended mineral dust also absorbs sunlight, which helps maintain its warmth as it crosses the Atlantic Ocean. The movement of the air layer can be tracked by satellites, and researchers at NOAA routinely use satellite data to detect these aspects of the Saharan Air Layer. Some of this information is ingested into models to improve forecasts.



Map of the affected area of the Saharan dust dated June 25, 2020. Courtesy of AirNow.gov



## Mobile Air Monitoring Labs continue to enhance LDEQ's ability to protect the environment

In November 2019, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) Secretary Dr. Chuck Carr Brown accepted delivery of two new Mobile Air Monitoring Laboratory (MAML) vehicles. These new MAMLs joined the MAML LDEQ received in December 2006. The first MAML was deployed 13 times in 2019, including to New Orleans for the removal of the cranes from the Hard Rock Hotel collapse site.

The new MAMLs have more extensive equipment and capabilities to sample and analyze air quality data on-site and in real-time.

"The new MAMLs have all the bells and whistles – gas chromatograph, reduced sulfur compounds analyzer, methane/nonmethane analyzer, and more," Roger Gingles, LDEQ assistant secretary for the Office of Environmental Assessment, said. "Additionally, they have all the capabilities of the older MAML regarding testing for all criteria pollutants – ground-level ozone, particle pollution, lead, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, and nitrogen oxide, as well as hydrogen sulfide, methane, ammonia, speciated reduced sulfur compounds, speciated hydrocarbons and atmospheric mercury."

Due to equipment shakedown and training in the early part of 2020 and then the pandemic with the stay-at-home orders, the new MAMLs didn't make their first deployment until mid-July. Both of the new MAMLs deployed for the Hard Rock Hotel demolition activities in New Orleans. They first went there on Tuesday, July 14, and returned on Thursday, July 16, due to demolition delays because of deteriorating weather conditions. They returned the following week on Monday, July 20, and stayed until Wednesday, July 22, when demolition activities ceased prior to the approaching storms in the Gulf of Mexico.



*The MAML was recently deployed to New Orleans to check the air during the Hard Rock Hotel partial collapse.*



*LDEQ Environmental scientists atop the MAML ensure that the equipment is calibrated and ready to pull air samples.*

Each MAML requires trained staff and, in many cases, additional team members to help with set up and take down. Once the set-up is complete, the MAML is usually staffed by two to four employees, depending on the mission and required equipment. While deployed in New Orleans, "it was necessary to set up each morning, take down each evening and move the MAML to overnight parking before returning the next morning," Bob Bailey, environmental scientist manager in the Office of Environmental Assessment, said. Seven staff members helped during the day --- some measuring PM (particulate matter) with handheld monitors and others tending to MAML operations.



## LDEQ's Enviroschool to host two water-focused webinars in August

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality's (LDEQ) Enviroschool will hold two live webinars in August. The first will discuss Water Quality in Louisiana and the second will focus on Onsite Sewerage System Maintenance, Health and the Environment. August is National Water Quality Month which means it's a great time to educate yourself on local water quality programs and how your actions have an impact.

The Water Quality in Louisiana webinar will provide information about Louisiana's Water Quality Program and Louisiana's 2018 Water Quality Integrated Report: the 305(b) Report and the 303(d) List. The Water Quality Program presentation will cover LDEQ's authority to protect water and how this is accomplished. This includes an overview of standards, permitting, nonpoint source pollution and enforcement. The Integrated Report presentation will give an overview of surface water quality monitoring and assessment efforts by LDEQ as part of its Clean Water Act commitments.

**When:** 10 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 13

**Online:** Live Webinar Only

The Onsite Sewerage System Maintenance, Health & the Environment presentation will provide information about the importance of maintaining home sewage systems, how it affects human health and the environment and how to maintain these systems.

**When:** 10 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 20

**Online:** Live Webinar Only

Please register online at <https://www.deq.louisiana.gov/form/enviroschool>.

The Enviroschool program at LDEQ is the environmental education outreach arm of the agency and provides training for communities, businesses and other organizations on a number of regulatory topics. The goal of this program is to inform attendees about the environmental regulatory process and to maintain and improve environmental compliance.

The workshops are free and open to the public. If you are interested, please feel free to register for any of our workshops. For more information, go to <http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/enviroschool> or email Enviroschool at [Enviroschool@la.gov](mailto:Enviroschool@la.gov).





## Jefferson Parish institutes “Do Not Toss” program to combat litter

Receiving unsolicited advertisements, mail and newspapers is a growing concern in many areas, and it’s made worse when residents and business owners simply leave those tossed papers unattended. It becomes litter at that point, soon decomposing and creating an environmental blight.

Depending on where you live, the delivery of unsolicited publications can be a seemingly endless nuisance. Additionally, the delivery no longer serves its intended purpose if the paper isn’t even acknowledged. It’s a problem that becomes more significant when those publications go uncollected, only to add to the litter in a community, washing into storm drains, potentially clogging those drains and contributing to street flooding. With those negative results, the labor, gas, transportation and time spent in support of the paper’s mission results in only unnecessary paper production and waste that’s ultimately disposed of.

Lack of interest in reading the publications aside, there are a host of residual effects that arise. Many elderly citizens have mobility issues that make removing the newspapers difficult for them; it creates a potential hazard for joggers, walkers and bicyclists. Additionally, some families who might be away on vacation worry that uncollected papers only serve to loudly announce the family’s absence to burglars.

Many, however, were ready to seek a compromise. A group of residents approached the Jefferson Parish Council to express their concern that unwanted, improperly discarded, non-biodegradable, bagged publications were harmful to the environment. With a parish population of around 436,000, imagine how much waste can be generated by news or advertisement publications.

To address the issue, the parish collaborated with the Times-Picayune, New Orleans Advocate and the Real Yellow Pages on guidelines supporting an opt-out process regarding unsolicited publication delivery. That collaboration proved successful, and in July 2018, the Jefferson Parish Council adopted an environmental ordinance establishing the “Do Not Toss” list.

Making sure that Freedom of Speech wasn’t patently silenced for those publications, citizens now have a choice to opt-out of receiving the material. “It was important to take into account the balance between Free Speech and personal preference,” Katherine Costanza, assistant director for Environmental Affairs in Jefferson Parish, noted. “The program is voluntary, and those who don’t wish to receive these publications can opt-out.” Under the ordinance, residents can simply go online to the Jefferson Parish website and add their addresses to the list.

Much like the federal “Do Not Call” registry that attempts to combat telemarketing, the ordinance can be replicated in other jurisdictions, with some considering the creation of “Do Not Toss” registries that include fines issued to any publication who ignores the registry. Following Jefferson Parish’s model, the cities of Covington and New Orleans both adopted similar ordinances in late 2018.

Aside from the obvious litter or nuisance aspect, however, are the additional environmental implications relating to the production of unsolicited paper and newsprint. Papermaking involves a significant consumption of water, which also consumes



*Unwanted newspapers can lie on driveways and streets until they are washed down storm drains during the next rain event, causing an environmental problem*

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a great deal of energy, thereby taking the form of greenhouse gases and toxic pollutants that soon make their way into our air and waterways. While paper can be recycled, much of what's thrown on your sidewalk either enters your storm drain or winds up as landfill waste – adding an additional contributor to man-made methane emissions.

According to Jefferson Parish government, the key to this concept within the waste management hierarchy is that the ordinance serves to provide residents with the choice to avoid the unnecessary consumption of a product while reducing the array of input processes that go into the creation of that product.

It's very much a win-win, in that the publisher reduces waste by targeting only interested readership while saving money on logistics. Readers enjoy the publication and hopefully recycle the paper after use, while non-readers save the publisher and themselves precious time.

A Do Not Toss registry simply reduces time, waste and energy on both ends of the spectrum.

## EPA celebrates its 50th Anniversary in 2020

EPA was established on Dec. 2, 1970, when President Richard Nixon signed the Reorganization Number Three to create the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This consolidated into one agency a variety of federal research, monitoring, standard-setting and enforcement activities to ensure environmental protection. Since its inception, EPA has been working for a cleaner, healthier environment for the American people.

On Dec. 4, 1970, William Ruckelshaus became the first EPA Administrator.

Many milestones distinguish the environmental progress made since that December day 50 years ago. Some of the benchmarks in this progress are:

- Clean Air Act of 1970 – This set national standards for air quality auto emissions and anti-pollution standards. In 1977, President Jimmy Carter signed the Clean Air Act Amendments to further strengthen Air Quality standards.
- In 1971, four years ahead of the Clean Air Act deadline, EPA announced national standards on six common pollutants: sulfur oxides, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, photochemical oxidants, nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons. These standards are referred to as the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).
- In June 1973, EPA set regulations requiring car manufacturers to comply with the Clean Air Act emission standards.
- Clean Water Act (CWA) – In October 1972, Congress passed the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, commonly referred to as the Clean Water Act. Its purpose is to restore and maintain our nation's waters by preventing pollution, maintaining the integrity of the wetlands and assisting wastewater systems.
- Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) – In December 1974, the Safe Drinking Water Act was passed to regulate the quality of public drinking water. Amendments to this act were created under President Ronald Reagan's tenure, requiring the EPA to regulate more than 100 contaminants by 1991 and which banned lead materials in drinking water systems.
- Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) – This Act was promulgated and gave EPA the authority to control hazardous waste generation, transportation, treatment, storage and disposal of harmful materials.
- RCRA Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments of 1984 – These amendments established requirements that filled regulation gaps in the original bill.
- Superfund Program - Created December 1980, the program holds polluters responsible for cleaning up hazardous waste sites.

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- Energy Star Program – In cooperation with the U. S. Department of Energy, this program helps Americans save money and protect the environment through energy-efficiency.

These milestones, as well as many more modifications and innovations, are the framework for environmental protection. They also provided the model for the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, formed in February 1984 under the administration of Gov. Dave Treen.

LDEQ and EPA work together to protect the environment in Louisiana and the country. EPA will reach its 50 Year Anniversary in December of this year.

*\*Information in part from the EPA website.*

## LDEQ welcomes new General Counsel

After 36 years of dedicated service, General Counsel Herman Robinson will be retiring in September. Robinson has been an asset to the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ), and his absence will be strongly felt. Fortunately, LDEQ has already filled with the position with a highly qualified and enthusiastic candidate.

As of Monday, July 27, Courtney Burdette will be the new LDEQ General Counsel. The two will work together until Robinson's official retirement. This will give Burdette the opportunity to train with Robinson prior to his departure and facilitate a smooth transition while maintaining the continued high level of performance from the Legal Affairs Division.

Burdette is a native of Baton Rouge. She attended Howard University in Washington, D.C., where she earned a bachelor's degree in English. She then studied at LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center, where she earned juris doctorate and bachelor of civil law degrees.

Prior to coming to LDEQ, she served as a law clerk to two federal judges, Hon. Ralph Tyson and Hon. Brian Jackson of the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Louisiana. Between the federal clerkships, she was employed as an attorney with the Louisiana Board of Ethics. Immediately prior to coming to LDEQ, she was an employed as an Assistant Attorney General with the Louisiana Department of Justice.



Courtney Burdette

She is married and has two children, Payton and Carter. She enjoys reading, shopping and spending time with her family. Join us in welcoming General Counsel Courtney Burdette.



## LDEQ employee wins Lexus in raffle

For 10 years, Carla Pitcher has given. After her niece was born prematurely and received care at the Our Lady of the Lake Children's Hospital, she wanted to express her gratitude for the care the hospital provided. Each year the Children's Hospital is the beneficiary of a raffle called "Driving the Future," where each of the top five tickets drawn qualifies to win one of five new Lexus automobiles. The tickets are \$50 each. It seemed like a good way to help and have a little fun at the same time.

"I play every year," Pitcher said. This year was a little different for Pitcher. "My mom and I play every year, just to give back. This time I bought two tickets."

Pitcher, an environmental project specialist 3 for the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ), said she has no lucky rituals or anything special that she does to enhance her chances of winning. She did buy the extra ticket right at the purchasing deadline, and that extra ticket must have tipped the karmic scales in her favor. On June 24, her name was one of the five announced as a winner.

The winners get to draw unmarked boxes containing a key for one of the cars – IS Sedan, ES Sedan, UX Crossover, NX SUV and RX SUV. They draw in the order in which their tickets were drawn. "They have five cars, and I was fourth," Pitcher said. She selected a silver ES Sedan. She has a shiny new Lexus in which her now-healthy sixteen-year-old niece can take a ride.

"I wasn't really in need of a car, but I'll take it," Pitcher said. Winning really wasn't her motivation. "People should play. It's for a good cause."



*Pitcher stands next to her new silver Lexus ES Sedan.*



## Who's Who At LDEQ?



**Celine Flores-Robinson – Environmental Scientist, Surveillance Division, Office of Environmental Compliance, Northeast Regional Office**

Flores-Robinson was born in Orlando, Fla., but grew up in Morgan City. She graduated from the University of Louisiana Monroe with a Bachelor of Science degree in toxicology in 2017. She then went to graduate school, joined LDEQ in November 2019 and earned a Master of Public Administration (MPA) in December 2019.

In graduate school, she was a grant writer and graduate assistant. She has volunteered for HEROES, Inc., in Columbia; the Environmental Education Research Center in Monroe; and the Louisiana Environmental Education Commission in Baton Rouge. She currently serves on the committee for Downtown Streetscape and Placemaking Master Plan for West Monroe.

Her hobbies include reading, outdoor sports/hiking, sand volleyball (she played for ULM's indoor and sand volleyball teams for two years), cooking, traveling and watching movies.

**Jacob Byrd – Environmental Scientist, Permit Support, Office of Environmental Services**

Byrd is a current resident and native of Denham Springs, who graduated from Southeastern Louisiana University in 2013 with a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry. Immediately following graduation, he worked in an environmental laboratory for five years in various roles.

For the last two years, Byrd worked at Community Coffee's manufacturing plant as a quality manager while also pursuing an MBA from Louisiana Tech (with an expected graduation of May 2021). He began at LDEQ in April 2020.

Outside of work, he enjoys all things golf-related and is a self-described coffee snob.



**Jared Champagne – Training and Development Program Manager, Human Resources, Office of Management and Finance**

Champagne is from Thibodaux and moved to Baton Rouge in 2002 when he transferred to LSU from Nicholls State University.

He earned a bachelor's degree in political science from LSU in 2004 and a Master of Science degree in human resource training and development from LSU in 2012. Champagne started working for the state in 2014 in Human Resources for the Louisiana Department of Revenue, and came aboard at LDEQ in March 2020.

He enjoys LSU football and baseball, fishing, cooking and traveling in his spare time.



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## Louisiana Department Of Environmental Quality's Second Quarter Summaries

### Second Quarter 2020 Enforcement Actions:

<http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/enforcement-actions>

### Second Quarter 2020 Settlement Agreements:

<http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/enforcement-division>

### Second Quarter 2020 Air Permits:

<http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/permits-issued-by-calendar-quarter>

### Second Quarter 2020 Water Permits:

<http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/lpdes>

### Second Quarter 2020 Solid and Hazardous Waste Permits:

<http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/waste-permits>

