

**SWAMP WARS:
THE FIGHT FOR THE
ATCHAFALAYA BASIN**



Atchafalaya
BASINKEEPER®

Annual Report 2016-2017

A Word from Your Atchafalaya Basinkeeper

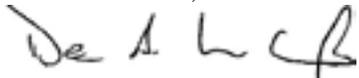
A huge welcome to our new Staff Attorney, Misha Mitchell, and new Development Director, Katherine Barney. We are all very lucky to have two such talented, and bright new people in our movement to save our Basin. Their wits, and talents will be put to the test as we continue working to protect the Basin against all odds.

The last twelve months had been very hard for Baton Rouge, Lafayette, and many towns around the Atchafalaya Basin. Massive historic flooding has directly or indirectly affected most of our members in our region. This catastrophic weather event reminds us of how important is to protect the Basin's wetlands: a spillway to protect us from future floods. Atchafalaya Basinkeeper responded to the flood by bringing our boat to rescue people in the O'Neil Lane area of Baton Rouge. As our communities focus on recovery, threats to the Atchafalaya Basin are mounting. Plans by DNR to use public funds to destroy the Basin's swamps through sedimentation continue to move forward, cypress logging in the Basin has begun again and new pipelines on illegal right-of-ways are being proposed. Despite all this, the biggest loss for me personally, and for ABK, is the passing our dear friend and volunteer Judith Zoble Gardener.

This has been a year of great victories, great losses, and huge new challenges to preserve our beloved Atchafalaya Basin. For many years ABK have been "putting out fires" in a desperate effort to stop the destruction of our Basin and protect what is left for generations to come. All our members should know that we are fighting to protect the Atchafalaya Basin with very few resources against incredible odds and the people determined to destroy it are not going anywhere, their political muscle stronger than ever. Our main weapons are, and always have been, love against hate, truth against lies, unselfishness and generosity against greed.

It is the support of our members, sponsors, volunteers, and partner organizations that allows us to keep up the fight to protect Atchafalaya wetlands and Louisiana's cypress forests. Thank you for taking a stand on this epic battle to protect our very special corner of this planet.

For Our Children,



Dean A. Wilson

In Memoriam

~Judith Zoble Gardener~

It is very hard for me to write about Judith, the wound that her loss left in my heart is too fresh, the thought of her passing so hard to bear. No one loved the Atchafalaya Basin more than Judith, and for reasons that are still a mystery to me, very few people other than my own family new me as well as Judith did. She loved the Basin, and she fought valiantly to protect it. For many years, Cara and Judith were like two sisters fighting together to keep ABK afloat. For many years, every single thankyou letter or gift sent to our members was sent by Judith, and all envelopes and postage were paid by

Judith, and her husband John. Judith and John came to all our events, helped us send all our mailouts, and volunteered every time it was needed. It is so hard to think that this fearless woman is no longer with us!

Judith was more than our friend, she was our hero, and will forever be missed.

-Dean Wilson



Judith Zoble Gardener
receiving the 2015
Atchafalaya Basin Award
from Cara Leverett

Atchafalaya Basin: Overall Status

The major threats to the long-term integrity of the Atchafalaya Basin's ecosystems are:

- excessive sediment
- unsustainable cypress logging
- widespread illegal development of wetlands
- oil and gas industry activities
- poor water quality; much of this is a result of lack of enforcement of the environmental easements and our environmental laws.

Cypress logging in the Atchafalaya Basin resumed again last fall east of the Whiskey Bay Pilot Channel and south of I-10.

The biggest threat to the Atchafalaya's swamps comes with the reviving of the East Grand Lake project by The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

Our challenges against illegal development and the Corp of Engineers' (Corps) after-the-fact permits program continue. Alongside excessive sedimentation and cypress logging; illegal development of wetlands is one of the biggest threats to the future of the Atchafalaya Basin.

Last year the Louisiana black bear was delisted for what we believe to be mainly political reasons. This delisting has a huge impact in our legal actions in the Basin. We are prepared to challenge the bear's delisting in the coming months.

Efforts to privatize our public waters and waterways continue, and ABK is working to stop them.

2017 Atchafalaya Awards

On January 29, 2017, Cara Leverett and Jody Meche were honored with our Atchafalaya Awards for their years of work protecting Louisiana's wetlands and the Atchafalaya Basin. Cara Leverett received the Atchafalaya Angel Award engraved with the following: Atchafalaya Angel Award. With eternal gratitude to Cara N. Leverett for years of selfless devotion to protect Louisiana's wetlands and the Atchafalaya Basin. You are our hero and you are one of God's most beautiful Angels!

Cara served the organization for 9 years. When Cara started working for ABK, we were much smaller, having only about 100 members, and we about to face the biggest financial crisis in the organization's history. Cara created and implemented our first fundraising plan, and quickly become the heart of the organization. Working tirelessly day after day, she increased our membership to over 1,000 members and found us the grant funding that keeps ABK in business today. We will forever be grateful to Cara for everything she has done for the Atchafalaya Basin and for Atchafalaya Basinkeeper.

Jody Meche received our fifth Super Swamper Award from Atchafalaya Basinkeeper engraved with the following: Super Swamper Award To Jody Meche, one of God's chosen champions for the Atchafalaya Basin, with tremendous gratitude for your integrity and courage, putting up a herculean fight to save what is left of the Atchafalaya Basin for generations to come. You are "the ultimate Super Swamper", our champion, our hero.

Among his many titles, Jody is president of LCPA-West and on the Board of Directors for ABK. A Cajun commercial fisherman, Jody has been on the frontlines protecting the Atchafalaya Basin and the right of access to public waters by his people and the public for over 25 years. Fearless and incorruptible, Jody has fought relentlessly to protect the Basin at great cost to himself and his family. We are proud and thankful to have him working with us.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES IN 2016

In 2016 with help from our Board of Directors, our Board of Trustees, and many of our members, ABK managed to increase its membership to 1,120 (up from 1,000 members in 2016). About 40% of our annual budget came from memberships, business sponsorships, and other direct donations. The other 60% of our budget came from the generous support of foundations. We are very thankful for the support of our foundations, members, and sponsors for making ABK's work possible in 2016-17!

Louisiana Black Bear Delisting

Despite strong opposition by most environmental groups, and by Paul Davidson with the Louisiana Black Bear Conservation Coalition, the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife delisted from the list of endangered species

Louisiana black bear in March of 2016. There are as few as approximately 500 bears in the entire state (from a maximum of 400 bears before the listing), and evidence that an integral population segment is not expanding. There has also been large-scale development on land that was targeted as permanently protected corridors for safe migration of black bears and other wildlife.

This delisting was a political decision and we hope to challenge it in court as soon as possible. The only environmental NGO that commented in favor of the delisting was TNC.

ABK and Big Oil

Enterprise Products Operating LLC second permit to lay a pipeline along an illegally-built pipeline canal was approved. This right-of-way is out of compliance with the original permit. Permits should never be issued on a right-of-way that is out of compliance with the original permits. Furthermore, the Corps is unable to enforce the terms of the permits because the enforcement department does not own a boat for monitoring violations.

Bayou Bridge applied for a permit for the southern leg of the Dakota Bakken that will run from Texas to the Mississippi River across the Atchafalaya Basin. Bayou Bridge pipeline is a corporation jointly owned by Energy Transfer Partners and Sunoco Logistics. Energy Transfer Partners is a corporation that is responsible for the Florida Gas pipeline in the Basin. Energy Transfer has previously built illegally pipelines in the Basin. This time ABK is planning to take legal action if the permit is granted. It is negligent for our agencies to give permits to companies that fail to comply with previous permits. We have already seen illegal pipelines devastate our Basin and our coast, and this pattern must stop if we wish to preserve the Basin. These illegal right-of-ways impeded public access, degrade water quality, and inhibit the natural function of the Basin to act as a spillway for floodwaters.

On another note, Enterprise recently applied for a permit for a

different pipeline using the same right-of-way as the first one. ABK is opposing the permit after multiple failed attempts to meet with the company to find ways to minimize impacts during construction.

Oil spills

Due to death threats and other reprisals by certain oil companies, ABK is reporting all oil spills, cover-ups and illegal discharges anonymously and, therefore, will no longer be able to keep our members updated about these issues. We want to assure all our members and the public that we will continue to take whatever actions are necessary to expose oil companies that try to cover up spills, or that illegally discharge produce waters into our wetlands.

Assaults Against ABK and LCPA-West

Two different assaults took place against LCPA-West president and ABK Board of Directors member Jody Meche. Recently the lugs on one of Jody's trailer tires were purposely loosened, which caused the tire came off on I-10. Luckily there were no injuries, but this dangerous situation could easily have resulted in injury or death for Jody or another driver. In a separate incident, Jody took a film-maker into the Basin to film illegal development, and when they returned to the landing the one of the windows of Jody's truck had been smashed, as had a window of the film-maker vehicle.

Such attacks against the people who fight to protect Louisiana's treasured natural heritage are acts of barbarism. Similarly, clearcutting our swamps, illegal developments and destroying our wetlands by filling them up with sediment are barbaric, and rob our children and grandchildren of their rightful inheritance.

Monitoring and Enforcement

In 2016, Atchafalaya Basinkeeper (ABK), and Delta Chapter of the Sierra Club conducted seven monitoring flights and reviewed most permits and permit applications for work in wetlands through the New Orleans District of the Corps of Engineers.

In addition to cypress logging, we monitor for illegal pollution and illegal development of wetlands. We are immensely grateful to SouthWings, and all volunteer pilots, who make our air monitoring possible.

Swamp Shield Campaign

It is with great distress that we must report that cypress logging started again in the Atchafalaya Basin last fall, and is currently underway. The landowner responsible for the logging happens to be one of the landowners that will benefit most if the Atchafalaya Basin Project/East Grand Lake project (discussed further herein) is fully approved. ABK believes that the logging roads are illegal, and we have reported the violations to the Corps, though there is little hope that the Corps will take any action. Atchafalaya Basinkeeper will do anything in our power to stop this unsustainable and illegal logging operation.

The Swamp Shield Campaign is a coordinated effort by ABK and our allies to shield cypress-tupelo swamps from further destruction, by stopping any threats to our forests as early as possible. This proactive program allowed us to identify this new cypress logging operation.

In addition to cypress logging, we monitor for illegal pollution and illegal development of wetlands. We are immensely grateful to SouthWings, and all volunteer pilots, who make our air monitoring possible

Wood Pellets

Drax and ABK Partnership

In an effort to protect our cypress/tupelo swamps and our native broadleaf forests, Drax and ABK created and signed the following commitments agreement in 2016:

- ✓ *Built on credible commitments*
- ✓ *Designed to protect Louisiana's natural treasures and promote sustainable growth in the biomass industry*

1. Drax Biomass will use southern yellow pine as the primary source material for wood pellets manufactured at its facilities.
2. Drax Biomass will not source cypress or tupelo for use in wood pellets manufacturing.
3. Drax Biomass will not source material from land that is being converted from natural hardwood forest to plantation, or from land that has undergone such conversion since 2008.
4. Drax Biomass will not source material from wetlands that are being drained or otherwise converted into non-wetland uses, even if the impacted wetlands are mitigated.

5. Drax Biomass will regularly work with the Atchafalaya Basinkeeper and other interested stakeholders to identify ecologically important areas within its supply base.

Though Drax Biomass is a foreign company, it has nonetheless recognized the importance of the Atchafalaya Basin and our cypress/tupelo forests as a unique and irreplaceable treasure to humanity. In response, Drax it is voluntarily moving away from sourcing wood from cypress/tupelo swamps. After years of trying to work with our agencies, the Louisiana Forestry Association, and the Louisiana Landowners Association, and being exposed to unethical behavior, ABK has found that working with Drax has been inspiring, productive, and has instilled renewed hope in the efficacy of future cooperation from industry. Furthermore, we are hopeful that this commitment will influence timber industry standards.

German Pellets

In 2015 German Pellets went bankrupt, and the plant was purchased by Drax Biomass, that will follow its agreed commitments to sustainability.

Highland Pellets

Early in 2017 Dean, with Atchafalaya Basinkeeper, and Woody Martin, with Delta Chapter sierra Club, traveled to Pine Bluff, Arkansas, to meet with the wood-pellet company Highland Pellets. Highland Pellets will be sourcing their wood in southern Arkansas and northern Louisiana. The owners of Highland Pellets have adopted the same sustainability standards of Drax in an effort to protect our forests. This is the impact we had hoped that we would see reflected across industry standards after our commitment with Drax Biomass. Our children and their future first, profits second.

Legal Actions

ABK is immensely grateful for the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic (New Orleans), who offers tremendous support to ABK with their legal pursuits, and has done so consistently for several years. We are also very grateful for all the hard work and assistance provided by attorney Buzzy Joy from Joseph Joy and Associates, attorney David Brown, and our new staff attorney Misha Mitchell.

It is only after exhausting all other possibilities that ABK takes legal action, an act of last resort and always a sign of failure by our State and Federal agencies to uphold their obligations to enforce our environmental laws, and to protect the best interests of the public and the nation. Before any legal action is taken, ABK goes to great lengths to investigate the situation, to report the violations, and to do whatever is in our power to help our agencies do their jobs effectively.

Bayou Postillion

A jury ruled in favor of Atchafalaya Basinkeeper Trustee Dan Collins in his whistleblower lawsuit against the State of Louisiana. Instead of adequately investigating the corruption related Dan presented in the case, the First Circuit reversed their own opinion from 2013, which brought the case to trial. The Court held that the jury was manifestly erroneous in concluding that Collins was an employee (even though the jury was unanimous on that finding).

The First Circuit did not address the facts of the case regarding what occurred with the environmental violations. The ONLY issue that was addressed regarded whether or not Collins was an employee, in an effort to dispute his standing, a threshold issue.

These environmental violations in the Basin are still going unchecked with no state or federal investigation. This is seven years after the suit was filed and later obtained a favorable jury verdict. Now that verdict has been overturned.

Illegal Roads and Dams Along I-10

ABK and LCPA-West sued the Corps for unlawfully issuing a permit to legitimize the illegally-built roads and dams on wetlands protected by environmental easements. The judge ruled against us, and ABK appealed this decision. Unfortunately, due to procedural deficiencies, our appeal was denied.

Challenge to General Permit NOD-13 (now GP-13)

Victory! In 2015, Atchafalaya Basinkeeper, Gulf Restoration Network, and LCPA-West, represented by Tulane Environmental Law Clinic, challenged general permit NOD-13 (now GP-13) in court. GP-13 has served as the basis for authorizing activities resulting in irreparable harm in the Basin. Atchafalaya Basin. GP-13 protects environmental criminals from our legal actions, avoiding comments by the public and other agencies.

The case against the Corps was settled out of court, after the Corps agreed to include the following exclusion:

Exclusion "k." was added to exclude the use of GP-13 for projects located within the Atchafalaya Basin.

This permit has previously served as the basis for authorized activities resulting in irreparable harm in the Basin. By excluding the Atchafalaya Basin altogether from permits under GP-13, Basinkeeper and its comrades have assured application of individual permits providing opportunities for public notice and comment prior to authorization of this manner of activities in our watershed.

The case is closed, settlement papers signed and the comment period for the proposed permit modifications is now complete. We now await the publication of the modified permit language in the federal register (anticipated to be on or around July 1, 2017).

This is a HUGE victory for ABK, and the other NGOs who supported us in this case. Our thanks and congratulations go out to all the groups who have worked so hard to make this success possible. We anxiously await final publication.

Fisher Lake Lawsuits

In 2010 ABK, together with LCPA-West, took legal action against an illegal developer in the Basin after multiple failed attempts to get the Corps to take action. The Corps responded by granting an after-the-fact permit to the developer and conducted an evaluation based on the developer's own incorrect data to justify the permit. ABK complained to the head of the Corps' permitting department, without redress. Next, Atchafalaya Basinkeeper, LCPA-West, and LEAN—represented by the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic—filed suit against the Corps, challenging the Corps' issuance of the after-the-fact permits for development of Atchafalaya Basin wetlands. By issuing after-the-fact permits, the Corps encourages destructive behavior—sending the message that it is easier to seek forgiveness than permission and meaningful public comment. Such permits allow developers to avoid environmental assessments, encouraging the degradation of wetlands, precious and endangered natural resources that are critical to the livelihood and culture of many Louisianans.

The challenged permits purport to validate prior unpermitted activity. Seeking to replace natural wetlands with a private duck pond, developers dug a ditch more than two miles long through wetlands, drained the water out of a lake, and installed a dam and metal water-control devices to artificially control the flow and level of water—all without obtaining permits required by the Clean Water Act. These actions alter the hydrology of over 700 acres of lake and forested hardwood swamp in the Atchafalaya Basin in an area formerly designated as critical habitat for the Louisiana black bear, and they also block access to the area by sport and commercial fishermen. By granting after-the-fact permits, the Corps dismisses the Clean Water Act and rationalizes the unpermitted actions of the developer.

The same landowners filled Bayou Cane with dirt and the Corps, again, refused to take action against them. The Corps also granted another permit, this time a General Permit, for the illegal developers to expand the dam. The illegal developers also made an elevated road without a permit which has been completely ignored by the Corps.

The Fisher Lake lawsuit against the Corps for giving after-the-fact permits to environmental offenders is ongoing. The lawsuit against the landowner for damming and dredging Bayou Cane and draining Fisher Lake without a permit is still pending.

Privatizing our waterways

The next big push by Louisiana's major landowners is privatizing our waterways. Gates, plugs and dams are being built all over coastal Louisiana blocking public access to public waters. The Corps wrote a Cease & Desist order on the gate that was built across Beaver Slough; however, the gate was never removed.

The Corps also granted a permit to S.M. Energy to build plugs/dams on four natural streams to block public access to an area within the Atchafalaya Delta. The permit in the growing delta of the Atchafalaya River was granted in the name of coastal restoration despite ABK's exposing the untruths of S.M. Energy by sending the Corps a timeframe of satellite pictures showing massive accretion in the area. Sadly, ABK does not have the resources to fight every fight and, at this time, we will not be able to challenge this permit.

DNR, & The Nature Conservancy – A Partnership that Threatens the Basin

The EGL project which Atchafalaya Basin Program wants to implement with help from the TNC will rapidly fill with sediments hundreds, if not thousands, of acres of swamps lakes and streams, forever destroying those unique wetlands and lush habitat.

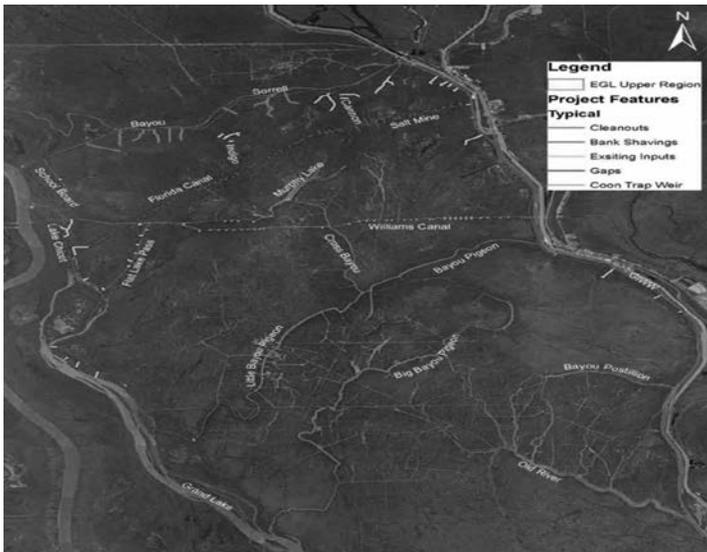
Excessive sedimentation is by far the biggest threat to the health, integrity, and future of the Basin's swamps. About 75% of all our swamps lakes and bayous have already been lost due to excessive sediments. Though some slight and gradual sedimentation can be a natural process, the Basin is seeing an immense sediment load diverted to its waters, in a most unnatural and anthropogenic process which has resulted in filling many of our lakes, bayous, and swamps in just a few years' time. Years of unrestricted, noncompliant oil development, coupled with the Corps' attempts to control the natural processes in manipulating flow and boundaries, has led to this increased accretion in the Basin.

For years, powerful Atchafalaya Basin landowners behind the scenes have fought to divert public funds for projects that embrace their interests, including projects aimed at facilitating oil and gas access, blocking access by the public to public waters and diverting river sediments to transform our Basin's wetlands into uplands. Bayou Postillion, Brown Bayou and the East Grand Lake are examples of projects, proposed and designed behind the scenes by Basin's landowners and implemented by the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Atchafalaya Basin Program as "water quality" projects.

Today, the Nature Conservancy (TNC), with funds from Shell Oil and undisclosed "others", is working to revive DNR's East Grand Lake (EGL) project. The pertinent facts about the project are as follows:

The EGL project was created years ago to distribute sediments into the East Grand Lake area. The project was originally designed by the US Fish & Wildlife Service and an influential landowner (and maybe others) as a compromise to temporarily increase crawfish productivity in the Basin by diverting sediment-laden river water into the East Grand Lake area. The resulting temporarily improved water flow and quality would please some commercial fishermen; meanwhile, the introduced sediment water will eventually transform the swamps into uplands, benefitting a few large landowners. The project is thus presented as means to satisfy the needs of the commercial fishermen (temporarily) and, ultimately, the landowners. ABK, Sierra Club and LCPA-West have actively opposed this and other projects like this one, since they were first presented by the US Fish & Wildlife Service in 2009-2010. These groups immediately recognized the potential danger in those project's design. As proposed, those projects assure the quick destruction of the lakes, bayous and swamps in the Atchafalaya Basin through accelerated sedimentation. The publicly stated "purpose" of the EGL project is to augment north-south water flow, improve water quality and distribute sediments in the area through a series of cuts.

This project is not based on sound science, contrary to what TNC has assured the agencies, legislators and the public. This project was previously developed, and TNC is trying to create and manipulate scientific data that will support the project. Despite requests from concerned citizens, partner groups and ABK, the DNR and TNC have repeatedly failed to provide scientific proof that the swamps, lakes and bayou will not fill with sediment and be lost forever if the project receives full legislative and permit approval.



East Grand Lake Project



Occurring Accretion East Grand Lake Area. Notice the deltas forming from pipeline canals everywhere there is a cut into the swamps.

Most egregious is that TNC has fabricated the conditions of the Basin to justify the project. They assert that cypress trees are dying to such an extent that the project is necessary to improve the sheet flow and divert sediments to the area and the trees' habitat. Cypress trees in the project area are not dying, in fact, all signs point to the contrary. When ABK confronted TNC about this fact, TNC refused to produce evidence of dying trees. Since ABK has begun to unravel the untruths of these assertions, TNC has been taking people to a small area where cypress trees died as a result of an illegal discharge of industrial produced waters, asserting that the trees died because there is too much water. Meanwhile, Don Haydel, head of the Atchafalaya Basin Program, has forbidden any of his employees from visiting the sites with ABK to talk about the project.

Who are the Key Players Behind the Project?

The project is a product of the influence of the powerful landowners in the Basin. Both TNC and DNR stated that they will develop projects with the "vision of the landowners in the forefront."

Brian Piazza, the key scientist with TNC working to provide "scientific" justification for the project, has stated in an article by GCPOLCC on October 18, 2015 that: "We [TNC] are working closely with Louisiana's Atchafalaya Basin Program to implement the East Grand Lake Restoration Project, something that has been in their annual plan since 2012. This will be the first example of a partnership between landowners and the Basin Program that is focused on building a restoration project, and we hope this is the first of many."

Jim Bergan, director of fresh water and wetland conservation for TNC, made the following statement: "This is just the beginning.. We're hopeful that a lot of folks are going to say if The Nature Conservancy is working with Wilbert's and Wilbert's is working with The Nature Conservancy, it's got to be a positive thing. Gaining the trust of private land owners is key, because the vast majority of the Atchafalaya Basin is privately owned. But The Nature Conservancy is hopeful this deal with Wilbert's will be a model for future projects" WRKF 89.3 July 21, 2015.

What Is the "Landowner Vision" for the Future of the Atchafalaya Basin?

It all comes down to financial profit and exclusion of the public from these resources. The landowner interests include: enhancing oil access, blocking public access, logging cypress trees, and creation of uplands to avoid development restrictions, thus increasing property values and expelling commercial fishermen and the public.

There are three main landowners that will benefit by creating uplands out of these swamps. One of them, A. Wilbert's Sons, has already harvested and destroyed hundreds of acres of cypress swamps in the Basin. The second main landowner was logging cypress swamps just last fall, and the third landowner stated that they want the accretion so "they can manage their timber."



Logging operation by one of the land owners who will benefit from this project. Photo taken Fall 2016. This is the "landowner vision for the Atchafalaya Basin".

The Advocate (Baton Rouge) July 8, 2015:

"For A. Wilbert's Sons LLC, the company that owns and manages a total of 125,000 acres for stockholders, the sale is a good one for the company and a good fit for how they want to see the land maintained. 'We wanted to sell it to someone who thought of the property like we did. Not to preserve but to conserve,' said Vic Blanchard, land manager at A. Wilbert's Sons."

Not only has A. Wilbert's Sons cut down hundreds of acres of swamps, but they allowed an oil company to dam Brown Bayou, East Branch of Bayou des Glaises, Bristow Bayou and other waterways, negatively impacting water quality to hundreds of acres of swamps. ABK and LCPA-West had already sent them a Notice of Intent to sue to prevent them from damming the East Branch of Brown Bayou and another one for the unpermitted damming of several waterways along I-10.

Status of the Atchafalaya Basin Program's East Grand Lake Project

The project is moving forward despite 100% opposition by fishermen during the public hearing in Bayou Sorrel and 100% opposition by fishermen during the public hearing in Henderson. ABK's attempts to work with TNC have been well-intentioned but fruitless. ABK sent a letter to DNR asking to be a part of TNC and DNR's Memorandum of Understanding, to be a partner in the development of those projects, but DNR denied our request, instead merely "inviting" us to participate during the comment period (required by law). Meanwhile, the responsible parties continue to put landowner vision on the forefront in designing those projects.

ABK and LCPA-West commented against the project in front of the Atchafalaya Basin Program Research and Promotion Board; however, they unanimously voted to approve the project, refusing to even look at our facts.

The Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) voted to approve the project after they twice refused to even look at the facts we wanted to present, by twice denying ABK and LCPA-West's request to be on their agenda to present evidence to the board. CPRA is expending millions of dollars restoring bird habitat along the coast but at the same time is allowing projects like this one to destroy established and irreplaceable bird habitat away from the coast, using sediments that are desperately needed along the coast to fill up the most productive swamp in the world. One of CPRA's projects, the Queen Bess Project, will expend nearly \$600,000 per acre to restore an island in Barataria Bay owned by an oil company. ABK and LCPA-West have a video footage showing tens of thousands of birds using the East Grand Lake area about to be destroyed, but CPRA refused to look at the video.

The LA Senate Natural Resources Committee unanimously approved the project. For the first time, TNC managed to get some support for the project from a few commercial fishermen. TNC presented cards in support from those fishermen to the senators. None of the fishermen were present in the committee session to present their cards or speak in favor, and many of those fishermen sell to a crawfish buyer, the main individual pushing for commercial fishermen support for the project, and a very close friend of Vic Blanchard with A. Wilbert's Sons.

ABK, LCPA-West and Delta Chapter of the Sierra Club sent a letter of complaint to the governor that he has yet to answer. Senator Fred Mills sent another letter of complaint to the governor. No response from the governor's office has been received.

In all of ABK's years working to protect the Basin we have never witnessed such unethical behavior by an environmental group as we are presently experiencing with TNC. **The East Grand Lake project, and similar others to follow, are the greatest threat the Basin has ever encountered, endangering the future of the Atchafalaya Basin, and all Louisiana's cities and communities that depend on the Basin for flood protection. Stopping this project and any similar projects will be ABK's top priority.**

Not only are projects like this one unethical- they are criminal. As the Basin fills in with sediment, its capacity to absorb floodwaters becomes severely diminished, putting entire communities in coastal Louisiana at risk from flooding, and endangering the entire region, from Lafayette to Baton Rouge, and from Morgan City to New Orleans.

You can help by calling your senator, your representative, the governor and our congressional delegation demanding him/her to put a stop to the project ASAP and to invest in science aimed at how we can better protect the Basin's swamps and increase the Basin's productivity without destroying it, and condemning the creating of false science to justify its destruction.

Education & Outreach

We are invested in educating today's advocates, as well as the next generation of environmental stewards in Louisiana. In 2016/17 ABK directly connected with over 2,000 people through PowerPoint presentations, paddling trips, swamp tours, workshops, and meetings. We work with civic groups, school groups and outdoor groups for children; bringing people out into the Atchafalaya Basin to learn the importance of its ecology, history, and culture, threats to Louisiana's forested wetlands, and applying the Clean Water Act and the Rivers and Harbors Act to protect wetlands.

**“The true meaning of life is to plant trees,
under whose shade you do not expect to sit.”**

-Nelson Henderson

We are so very grateful that our love for the Basin and desire to protect it brings us together with so many friends, supporters and members across the globe! Behind ABK's every action is the drive to prevent this natural wonder from being lost, so that future generations can enjoy its breathtaking beauty, and thrive from the generous bounty of resources which we have been so fortuitous to inherit. Our endless gratitude goes out to all of you who have empowered us to be the Basin's protectors, and without whom we would not exist. Our victories are yours.

How Can You Help?

- Don't buy cypress mulch!
- Renew your membership, donate, and attend events.
- Become a Business Sponsor. The way you spend your money can make a big difference.
- Spread the word. Talk about the issues.
- Encourage others to join ABK in the fight to save the Basin.
- Invite Basinkeeper to do a presentation for your organization, civic group, school, or university.
- Don't support businesses that use or sell cypress mulch.
- Volunteer.
- Report possible violations in Atchafalaya wetlands and waterways by calling: 225-685-9439.

Become a Member or a Sponsor

Join or sponsor us online at: www.basinkeeper.org

Send your check or money order to:

Atchafalaya Basinkeeper

P.O. Box 410 Plaquemine, LA 70765

Acadiana Fishermen's Co-op, Henderson
Acadiana Master Naturalists
Acadiana Science of Mind
Artmosphere, Lafayette
Atchafalaya Honey LLC, Plaquemine
Barnel's- The Art & Framing Gallery
Black Warrior Riverkeeper
Bluewing Civil Consulting LLC
Covent of the Sacred Heart
Dan Colins, CPL & Associates, Inc.
Delta Chapter Sierra Club, Louisiana
Dr. Ann Laurant's Dental Artistry
Edward P. Lyons, MD. Ltd.
EnvironMental Design
Hayes Fisheries
Grass Roots, Inc.
Greg Guirard Photography, Catahoula
Healthy Water and Coastal Restoration Group: Society
of the Sacred Heart
Louisiana Crawfish Producers Association-West, St. Martin
Parish
Massey's Outfitters
McGee's Landing, Henderson
Michael Caire, M.D. Obstetrics & Gynecology
No Water No Life, New York, NY
Pack & Paddle, Lafayette
Paul Ridley Coal Sales
Patagonia Clothing Company
The Pittenger Law Firm, LLC
Proctor Academy
Quapaw Canoe Company, Clarksdale, MS
S & D Bait, Pierre Part
Saint Mary Seafood Inc.
SouthWings, Asheville, NC; New Orleans St.
Spiritual Living Circle
Vanguard Company, Texas
Webster's Meat Market

Thank You, Basinkeeper 2016 Business Sponsors!

Thank you for your support!

ABK would like to thank the following individuals for volunteering their time and/or resources: the folks at SouthWings, especially Meredith Dowling and pilots Lance Rydberg, Ken Broussard, Mark Blair, Ken Knevel and Jerry Kirby; John and Becky Williams of Pack and Paddle; Greg Guirard; David Brown; Adam Babich, Lisa Jordan, Liza Calderon, Corinne Van Dalen, and the student attorneys at the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic; Gordon Schoeffler; Buzzy Joy; Robert Wiygul; Stacey Scarce; Jody Meche; Dan Collins; Judith Z. Gardner and John Guillory; Milton Daigle; Anik Boudreau and Faren Serrette; the Atchafalaya Basinkeeper Board of Directors and Board of Trustees; Senator Fred Mills, Jr.; Henderson Mayor Sherbin Collette; St. Martin Parish President Guy Cormier; Stacy Sauce, Linda Cooke, Silvia Wilson, Bill Talley and all of the volunteers that have helped with mailouts; and all of the members and business sponsors whose generosity makes our work possible. We also thank the musicians that volunteered at the third annual Save the Basin Event: Yvette Landry, Richard Comeaux Psycho Swamp, Farouche, Randy Vidrine, Jimmy Breaux, Walter Pousson, Joel Breaux, Forest Huval & Friends, and Emolin Linden, and the Linden Family Band. Thank you to the artists that donated to the Save the Basin Event: Beth Stark, David Chauvin, Greg Guirard, Marilyn Vice, Andrea Rubinstein, Dana Manly, Margaret Melacon, Frank Sierra, Kathleen Grumich, Silvia Broussard, Gary Broussard, Nan Landry, Darnel Delcambre, Gayle Trim, Rosemary Smith, Linda Meaux, Paula Billaudeaux, Margaret Melancon, Adrian Guidry, Mare Martin, Julie Martin, Cayla Zeek, Kelly Russo, Ned Rutland, Bonnie Camos, Arthur McVicar, Dirk Guidry, Tom Griffin, Pat Juneau, Ron D'Aunoy, Alex & Cindy Williams, Susan Chiquelin, Bruci Gauthier, Chap Gary, Pamela Conway Caruso, David & Emily Wortman, Mr. Rogers, Susan David, Bruce Odell, Jimmy Jones, Andrew M. Hebert. The Save the Basin event would not have been possible without the generosity and support of Beryl Kemp of Artmosphere, Tricia Hunt, Marilyn Vice, Betty Bass, Carol Antosiak, Howard Darlington, Yann Colin, Beth Stark, Stacey Scarce, Steven O'Brian, Kim Hamm, Sue Schlefier, Tara Harvey-Gros, Carol & Howard Antosiak.

Tremendous gratitude goes to Greg Guirard for his ongoing, herculean efforts to increase members, sponsors, and donors.

Atchafalaya Basinkeeper could not continue to operate without the generous support that we receive from several environmentally conscious and responsible foundations and corporations. Thank you!

Atchafalaya Basinkeeper Staff

- Dean A. Wilson, Atchafalaya Basinkeeper & Executive Director
- Misha Mitchell, Staff Attorney
- Katherine Barney, Development Director

Contact Information ~ Atchafalaya Basinkeeper

Main: 225-685-9439

Dean, cell: 225-692-4114

basinkeeper@gmail.com

www.basinkeeper.org

P.O. Box 410

Plaquemine, LA 70765

Become a Member or a Sponsor

Join or sponsor us online at: www.basinkeeper.org

Send your check or money order to:

Atchafalaya Basinkeeper

P.O. Box 410 Plaquemine, LA 70765

Please cut & send reverse with your check or money order to join, sponsor or renew. You may also renew, join or sponsor online: www.basinkeeper.org

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS

- Student.....\$15
- Basic Membership.....\$30-\$49
- Commercial Fisherman.....\$20+
- Family Membership.....\$55+
- Supporter.....\$50-\$99
- Swamper.....\$100-\$499
- Guardian.....\$500-\$999
- Steward.....\$1000+

Title, Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone

E-mail

Please Check One:

- New Member/Sponsor
- Renewing Member/Sponsor

Business Sponsorships

Business/ Organization Name

Owner/Contact Name

Phone

Address

City, State, Zip

E-mail

Amount of Contribution \$ _____

Please make your tax-deductible check payable to:

Atchafalaya Basinkeeper

P.O. Box 410, Plaquemine, LA 70765

OR RENEW ONLINE: www.basinkeeper.or