

May 2004

FRIENDS OF LOUISIANA



WILDLIFE REFUGES, INC.

NEWSLETTER

THE PELICAN SCOOP

The Friends of Louisiana Wildlife Refuges, Inc.
61389 Hwy 434 Lacombe, LA 70445

www.flwr.org

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

June 5, 2004 - Youth Fishing Rodeo at Bogue Chitto NWR (**Volunteers needed**)

June 24, 2004 - (tentative) A re-enactment of President Roosevelt's visit to Breton Island.

July - General Membership Meeting (time and day has not been finalized)

October 2, 2004 - Wild Things at Big Branch NWR

October 4, 2004 - Centennial Celebration for Breton NWR

BOARD MEETINGS:

Thursday, June 3, 2004
Thursday, July 1, 2004
Thursday, August 5, 2004

All members of the Friends Group are invited to attend the Board's monthly meetings. They are held at the Slidell Cultural Center at 444 Erlanger Street in Old Towne Slidell at 6:00 P.M.

Stay up to date on Friends issues by logging on to our website. It is constantly being updated with news and pictures of interest. Log on at www.flwr.org.

Learning from Conferences Attended by Board Member

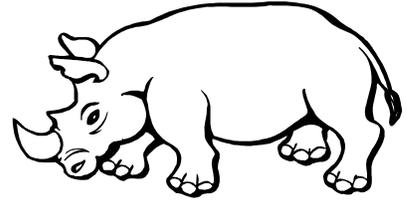
Our Friends group was recently represented at both a national and a regional conference, where they focused on networking, learning how to lobby effectively and successfully run our organization. The lobbying activities following each event have paid off because some of our Representatives and Senators have asked for increased funding to help our refuges.

Denise Bonck participated in the 2004 Advocacy and Media Bootcamp from March 5-7 in Rosslyn, Virginia, organized by the National Wildlife Refuge Association. The Bootcamp informed us about the Refuge System budget, the appropriations process, how to lobby and deliver our message effectively, and how to implement successful media strategies and events. Denise then visited the staff of Representatives Vitter, Jefferson, and Tauzin, and Senators Landrieu and Breaux. She gave them each a packet of information and told them about some of the specific needs of our refuges.

Denise also attended the Southeast Region Friends Conference from April 2 -4 in Monroe, La., hosted by the Friends of Black Bayou, Inc. The regional Friends conference taught us how to increase membership and community support, successfully organize special events, expand fundraising, and develop educational programs. During this conference, attendees signed a testimony letter asking for increased funding for the Refuge System. This letter was later mailed to our Representatives, Senators and the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies.

EARTH FEST 2004 - AUDUBON ZOO

It was a Baby Boom on Earth Fest Weekend at the Audubon Zoo. The zoo took this opportunity to showcase their new arrivals. The newborns consisted of Satchmo, a baby rhino, a litter of jaguar cubs, a sea lion pup and a host of others. The babies, of course, along with all the animals made a huge hit with visitors young and old alike. But, most of all, the Fest provided visitors with a comprehensive overview of how we can help preserve and protect the environment of this planet we all have to share. The participants at Earth Fest 2004 educated, informed and answered questions concerning refuges, recycling, wetland restoration, animal rehabilitation and rescue and much more.

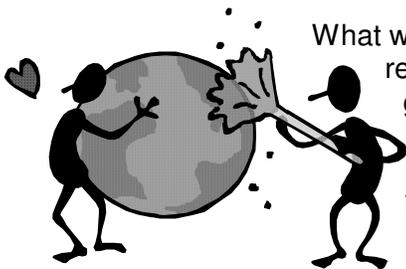


Adding to an exceptionally beautiful spring weekend, visitors could take a leisurely stroll under the oaks and view the arts and crafts of our local talent while listening to the entertaining sounds coming from (also local) the Iguanas, Cyril Neville & the Uptown Allstars, Topcats and Chee Weez. And, as usual, there were long lines at the food stands selling Louisiana cuisine such as crab cakes, shrimp po-boys, alligator kabobs and many other local favorites.

Special thanks to our Friends volunteers, **Michele Hubert, Denise Bonck, L. J. Guillot, Lynne and Chuck Cuccia, Tony and Carol Serio, Anita and Gary Cross and Loretta Fitzgerald** who assisted USFWS staff members at their station. The focal point of the USFWS booth this year was to bring attention to the 100th year celebration of Breton National Wildlife Refuge. Breton was the second NWR established in the system of national refuges throughout the country. Friends' volunteers imparted information concerning the refuges and also encouraged people to join our organization. Everyone benefited from this great weekend.

EARTH DAY 2004 - HERITAGE PARK, SLIDELL

The Earth Day celebration in Slidell is modeled after the Audubon Zoo Earth Fest, but on a much smaller scale. The focus was on the environment, animal habitat and conservation. The kids participated in a scavenger hunt by answering questions at each booth and collecting ribbons to be turned in at the main tent for prizes. All questions were based on ways to save our earth. This was fun for all who participated and they were being educated at the same time. A good concept!



What was particularly interesting was the tent promoting the recycling of paint for reuse. And not only paint. This organization recycles art supplies, plastics, garden supplies and building materials. This is called the Green Project. It is a non-profit 501c3 corporation that takes the recycled products and sells them back to the public for a fraction of the original cost. For more info, their e-mail address is thegreenproject@bellsouth.net. The Green Project Warehouse accepts materials from homeowners, contractors and businesses. The resale of these materials keeps them from going into our

landfills and along the sides of the road. This is a much needed program.

Visitors to Earth Day were entertained by the Aabikta Native American Dance Team. This is a group of girls and boys ages 12-17 from the local area. Their costumes were colorful and festive. It was very unique and quite good.

Thanks to Friends Board Members, **Lynne Cuccia and Michele Hubert** for assisting USFWS staff members **Rhonda and Jeremy** at their station.

BACK TO THE BAYOU 2004

The first annual Back to the Bayou event was held May 8, 2004 at the Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge. It was kicked off at 8:00 A.M. with a bike path dedication in honor of **Mildred Fossier**. Ms. Fossier was the force behind the creation of a wildlife refuge in eastern New Orleans. While those in city government wanted to develop this area, she stood her ground in wanting to preserve it in its natural state for future generations. She won the fight. Other special guests at the dedication were Council-Person **Cynthia Willard-Lewis**, State Legislator **Paulette Irons**, staff member for Senator Mary Landrieu **Lavem Salny**, and **Yarrow Etheredge**. According to **Liz Souheaver**, Refuge Project Manager, at least 30 bikers were present for the inaugural ride on the "Mildred Fossier Bike Path".

Throughout the day, additional visitors were able to mount bikes provided by USFWS and ride the 4.5 mile path from exit #251 to the "crabbing bridge" at Hwy. 11 and Lake Pontchartrain. It provides a spectacular view of the lake on one side and the refuge on the other. This was the highlight of the day.



Other activities included free canoe trips, fire fighting demonstrations, a photography workshop (courtesy of Friends member, **Joe Madere**) birding, tree and plant walks, live animals and half price swamp tours. Our Friends group sold food, drinks and merchandise brought from the bookstore. The

weather co-operated and allowed everyone to enjoy a fun filled and very educational day.

USFWS hopes these types of events on the refuge will encourage more visitors to take advantage of the attributes this particular area has to offer. If you are interested in birding, biking, hiking, photography or just plain sightseeing, this is the place to be.

Many thanks to our Friends volunteers, **L.J. Guillot, Glen Ruiz, Carol and Tony Serio, Anita Cross, John, Kathy and Sydney Sconza, Michele Hubert, Jerry Sweeney, Denise Bonck, Lynne and Chuck Cuccia** who manned the food and merchandise tent. The work gets a little physical at times but it is, beyond a doubt, always a pleasure.

To Join or to Volunteer,
please contact:

Call Michele Hubert
(985 641-7809) or

Lynne Cuccia
(504 254-4256)

for more information

We Want YOU!!



To Volunteer!