

# LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

Fall 2016

## 52nd Annual Governor's State Conservation Achievement Award Winners

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The 52nd Governor's State Conservation Achievement Awards Program, hosted by Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF), celebrated six individuals, an education program, an organization and a business for their outstanding achievement in natural resource conservation in 2015 at a banquet held on Saturday, April 2, 2016 at Embassy Suites Hotel in Baton Rouge.

State Representative Jerome "Zee" Zeringue of Houma served as master of ceremonies. LWF President Barney Callahan presented each award along with Secretary Charles "Charlie" Melancon of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries representing Governor John Bel Edwards.

The awards are presented jointly by Louisiana Wildlife Federation and the National Wildlife Federation and the program is endorsed by Governor Edwards. The selections were made from among nominations submitted from the public by a panel of independent judges with expertise in a wide range of conservation fields. Pictures by Teri Henry.

Special Thanks to the sponsors who helped make the program and banquet a special event for our award recipients and guests.

Banquet Sponsors: Shell Pipeline Company, LP; Land Trust for Louisiana; Warren and Jodie Singer; Van Kerrebroek & Associates, P.C.; Volks Constructors, LLC; Barney and Donna Callahan; Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana; Marsh Dog, LLC; Rapides Wildlife Association; T. Baker Smith LLC; Delacroix Corporation; Jim and Barbara Dodds; East Ascension Sportsman's League; Clint and Virginia Mouser; Bob and Norma Stewart; and Edgar F. Veillon.



### **Danica Williams, Governor's Award - Conservationist of the Year for 2015**

The Governor's Award is presented annually to the person or organization deemed to have made the most outstanding contribution toward the protection, wise use and enjoyment of Louisiana's natural resources. Danica Williams works as the Fisheries Extension Program Manager of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, leading programs to promote recreational fishing enjoyment and education.

Danica is volunteer leader and founder of the Wish to Fish

Foundation, which in 2015 provided fishing opportunities to children with disabilities; children of deployed active duty parents; and young boys who have lost their fathers to violence, natural causes or long-term incarceration being raised by a single mother. Wish to Fish teamed up with Belle Chasse Academy in April 2015, the Son of a Saint Foundation in June 2015, and the Miracle League of Greater New Orleans in July 2015, to provide a day on the water or along the shore these children might not otherwise be able to access.



### **Christopher Reid, Professional Conservationist of the Year - 2015**

For his work as the State Biologist for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Natural Heritage Program and his vital role in working with private landowners in southwest Louisiana to conserve and restore coastal prairies on their property, a dwindling but essential part of Louisiana's natural heritage.





### **Pamela Kay Connery, Volunteer Conservationist of the Year – 2015**

For her volunteer leadership as founder of Louisiana Bobcat Refuge (LBR) and its volunteer Executive Director since 2010. LBR is the only bobcat species-specific rehabilitation center in Louisiana and across the southeastern United States that offers long-term rehabilitation.



### **Taylor Renee Wagner, Youth Conservationist of the Year – 2015**

For her conservation efforts at Edward Douglas White Catholic High School and starting the E.D. White Ecology Club. She participated in the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program's Marine Debris Prevention Program, the Youth Ocean Conservation Summit, the Junior Master Naturalist Program, and the Wetlands Youth Summit.



### **ORA Estuaries, Business Conservationist of the Year – 2015**

For their innovative approach to coastal habit protection and developing the OysterBreak, a stackable ring of concrete and oyster shell that is designed to both prevent erosion and serve as a breeding ground for oysters that creates oyster reefs. Accepting the award on behalf of ORA Estuaries is Tyler Ortego.

### **LDWF's Becoming an Outdoors-Woman Program, Conservation Educator of the Year for 2015**

For their commitment to providing women with opportunities to learn about hunting, fishing, and outdoor skills, which encourages them to take part in outdoor activities with confidence by offering more than 20 specialty courses at their annual workshop. Accepting the award on behalf of LDWF's Becoming an Outdoors-Woman is program coordinator Dana Norsworthy.



### **Representative Gene Reynolds, Conservationist of the Year – Elected Official 2015**

For his vocal and collaborative leadership for the community members near Camp Minden who expressed concern about the use of an open burn method to dispose of volatile and aging explosive materials that were improperly stored at the site. His efforts, along with community leaders, helped lead to the selection of a safer, closed-burn disposal method at Camp Minden and Representative Reynolds continues to advocate for a ban on open burn of these kinds of chemicals statewide.



### **Bo Boehringer, Conservation Communicator of the Year - 2015**

For his dedicated and creative work to raise public awareness about the State's Whooping Crane Project in his role as public information director for the Office of Wildlife at Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, from which he recently retired. Boehringer was instrumental in gaining media coverage and developing education materials to remind citizens of the presence of whooping cranes in Louisiana.

### **Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, Conservation Organization of the Year – 2015**

For their efforts to return harvested oyster shells to Louisiana's coastal waters through their Oyster Shell Recycling Program to be used in coastal restoration projects. The program collected 1,650 tons of oyster shells since its inception in 2014 and in 2015 alone, 1,123 tons of oyster shells were collected through a partnership with 26 New Orleans restaurants. Jimmy Frederick and Deborah Visco Abibou accepted the award on behalf of the organization.



# LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

## The Louisiana Wildlife Federation Invites Your Nomination for the 53rd Annual Governor's State Conservation Achievement Awards

*Nominations due Monday, February 13, 2017*

The awards program seeks to recognize those individuals, organizations and businesses that have made a significant and outstanding contribution toward the protection and wise use of Louisiana's natural resources in 2016. Each honoree will receive a handsome wildlife statuette. Winners will be honored at a banquet in Baton Rouge on March 18, 2017.

Self-nominations are welcome as are those submitted by others. Nominees are encouraged to cooperate in providing adequate background information in support of their nomination. Please visit [www.lawildlifefed.org](http://www.lawildlifefed.org) for tips on creating a nomination and program rules and procedures.



Award Categories to Recognize Significant Conservation Achievement in 2016 include:



**Category #1 - PROFESSIONAL** – For outstanding accomplishments by a person who, in a compensated professional capacity, has made a significant contribution to the management, enhancement, or protection of Louisiana's fish, wildlife, air, water, soil or forest resources, or related recreational opportunities.

**Category #2 – VOLUNTEER** – For outstanding achievement during the year in the management, enhancement, or protection of Louisiana's fish, wildlife, air, water, soil or forest resources, or related recreational opportunities by a person acting in a volunteer capacity.

**Category #3 – YOUTH** – For outstanding conservation work by a youngster (18 years of age or younger) or youth group. The winner should have demonstrated leadership and accomplishment in any phase of conservation.

**Category #4 – BUSINESS** – For significant achievement by a business in pollution abatement, land use planning and management, conservation education/awareness, habitat stewardship including providing lands for wildlife conservation and public recreation, etc. (This category is to honor a company, not an individual person.)

**Category #5 – EDUCATOR** – For outstanding performance in conservation education by a professional or volunteer instructors of hunter safety and outdoor ethics are eligible in this category as are teachers of the natural sciences, fish and wildlife management, environmental design and management, various aspects of environmental education, etc. Emphasis should be on teaching and working with students or the public rather than on research or administration.

**Category #6 – ELECTED OFFICIAL** – For outstanding conservation achievement by a local, state or federal elected official. All Louisiana elected officials, except the Governor, are eligible in this category.

**Category #7 – COMMUNICATIONS** – For outstanding work by a writer, reporter, radio or TV broadcaster, photographer, artist, cartoonist, radio or TV station, newspaper, website, social media site, or other publication in creating public awareness of the importance of environmental quality and natural resource conservation or making a significant contribution toward the solution of a major conservation problem in the state.

**Category #8 – ORGANIZATION** – For outstanding conservation achievement by a state or local organization, including but not limited to civic organizations, environmental groups, sportsmen's clubs, garden clubs, etc., in addressing significant natural resource management and environmental quality challenges.

In special cases where government agencies or institutions have accomplished extraordinary work above and beyond their normal responsibilities, such organizations will be given consideration for this award.

**GOVERNOR'S AWARD** – For outstanding overall conservation achievement. The Governor's Award recipient is selected by the judging committee from among the category winners. Nominations are not accepted for this award.





"Recognizing that wise management of our State's natural resources is essential to the health, happiness, welfare and economic well-being of Louisiana's citizens, and understanding that proper recognition of conservation efforts promotes wise resource management and use, I fully endorse the concept of the Governor's State Conservation Achievement Awards Program as conducted annually under the auspices of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation."

Governor John Bel Edwards

### Program Rules and Procedures

- 1) Winners may not be named in every category. Recognition will be based primarily on accomplishments during 2016. Prior records may be considered, but this will be left up to the judges. Immediate past winners are not eligible to succeed themselves in the same category of accomplishment for which they were recognized the previous year.
- 2) Nominations may be hand-delivered or sent by USPS mail or other delivery service to the Louisiana Wildlife Federation at the address on the nomination form. They must be postmarked on or before midnight February 13, 2017. Nominations may also be submitted via email.
- 3) An essay of achievements should be attached to the nomination form for the nominee. The essay should describe the nominee's accomplishments in 2016 (and previous years, if relevant), including a) an explanation of their significance or impact and b) why the nominee's accomplishments are important and worthy of recognition. The essay is required and should not exceed 3 single-spaced typed pages. Information such as past recognition, organization memberships, etc. may be appended to the essay.  
  
Documentation of accomplishments such as news articles, letters of support, photos, etc. should be included as a supplement to the essay. If a nomination is submitted for more than one category, a separate nomination form and complete essay must be submitted for each category entered. If available, please include a photograph of the nominee with the nomination and email to [lwf@lawildlifefed.org](mailto:lwf@lawildlifefed.org).
- 4) Nominations that do not meet all standards and criteria will be returned to sender to be resubmitted with appropriate additions/modifications. Program judges may declare any nomination ineligible if proper documentation and supportive materials are not included. The decision of the judging committees will be final.



## 53rd Annual Governor's State Conservation Achievement Awards Nomination Form

*Nominations due Monday, February 13, 2017*

Award Categories to Recognize Significant Conservation Achievement in 2016 include:

- |                             |                                 |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Category # 1 – PROFESSIONAL | Category # 5 – EDUCATOR         |
| Category # 2 – VOLUNTEER    | Category # 6 – ELECTED OFFICIAL |
| Category # 3 – YOUTH        | Category # 7 – COMMUNICATIONS   |
| Category # 4 – BUSINESS     | Category # 8 – ORGANIZATION     |

### NOMINATION FORM

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Category \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name of Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Nominated by \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Nominator \_\_\_\_\_ Title (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

## Back from the Brink: Saving the Whooping Crane in Louisiana

Matthew J. Faldyn, LWF Intern

Flat. Tedious. Boring. Driving down Interstate 10, heading West to Beaumont, Texas from Baton Rouge, La. isn't necessarily a sightseers dream. That is, until the shadows overhead pierce the sunshine falling across the car dashboard. Graceful giants, once lost to time, make a bugle so distinct it demands your attention. Whooping cranes (*Grus Americana*) fly overhead, in a massive flock, nearly one hundred strong. A sight like this is not seen today, but stepping back in time, something like it may have existed in our very own Louisiana marshes and bayous. It is thought that whooping cranes (affectionately named whoopers) originally numbered 10,000+ before European settlement of the Americas. But, crane populations collapsed to little more than 15 adults by 1938 in the U.S., and only now have returned from the brink of extinction to 630 cranes today thanks to crafty biologists. The fight to save these beautiful creatures is far from over.

Whooping cranes are a testament to being descendants of dinosaurs; they can reach an average height of 5 feet with a wingspan of 8 feet. Their charismatic adult coloration, a stunning white plumage with black tipped wings and a bright red head-patch, give them a regal appearance. Whoopers in Louisiana are from the Eastern flock, most commonly flying through Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin. Historically, whoopers occurred in Louisiana in both migratory and non-migratory flocks. The greatest threat to these cranes is habitat loss. In Louisiana, the conversion of prairie and wetland habitat into large-scale agriculture and unregulated hunting practices in the early 20th century led to their demise in both Louisiana and the United States. By the mid-1900s, only a single crane remained in Louisiana, and after being captured by authorities, Louisiana didn't have a single whooping crane until 60 years later.

Despite having been effectively extinct in Louisiana for 60 years, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) and concerned citizens have been working tirelessly to bring the whooper population back. Through reintroduction efforts such as this, LDWF has nearly completed its sixth year of fostering the population of Louisiana whooping cranes. In April 2016, two whooping crane chicks were hatched in Jefferson Davis Parish to the same nesting pair of cranes that brought forth the first chick hatched in Louisiana in the wild in more than 75 years! In the Fall of 2016, Louisiana received multiple shipments of juvenile whooping cranes to the Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge in Grand Chenier, La.

Despite being charismatic and listed under the Endangered Species Act, whooping cranes face threats from humans as illegal killing still occurs. In 2011, two teenagers shot and killed two whooping cranes in Jefferson Davis Parish. This was a tremendous setback for LDWF as the department received just 10 cranes earlier that year to start the non-migratory

population in Jefferson Davis Parish. As recent as January 2016, a teenager from Beaumont, Texas shot and killed two cranes, dealing another blow to the Louisiana whooping crane population. The teenager from the January 2016 killings was sentenced October 2016 to five years of probation and ordered to pay nearly \$26,000 in restitution. While one senseless killing is too many, I can attest that the people most outraged over these events are other hunters and outdoorsmen like myself. These events are rare and far from the norm for most hunters and outdoorsmen and we need to stand together to reinforce that these actions are reprehensible and irresponsible.

Going forward, concerned members of LWF can continue to help these cranes. Namely, working to protect wetland stopovers is crucial to protecting whooping cranes as habitat loss is their greatest threat. Since whooping cranes are still targets of illegal killing, this should be an opportunity to reinforce best hunting practices in Louisiana. Teaching a child to thrive in the outdoors builds an appreciation and respect for the natural world. Ethical hunters are some of the most active conservationists you will find, and because of this play a vital role in protecting wildlife. Additionally, contributing funds to agencies and groups dedicated to the protection of these animals will certainly aid in the fight to save them. Sharing news and being vocal about saving and protecting whoopers is critical to build positive activist momentum, to stay updated on the LDWF whooping crane project, visit <http://wlf.louisiana.gov/wildlife/whooping-cranes>, or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/lawhoopingcranes>, and contact LDWF Biologist Sara Zimorski. Remember, always report when you see a whooper to LDWF and US Fish and Wildlife Service via their whooping crane reporting service. Awareness leads to appreciation; appreciation leads to protection. The whooping crane is one of wildlife conservation's great success stories, and on behalf of LWF, let's continue to keep it that way, but their recovery is far from complete.

Louisiana Department of Fisheries,  
Photo by Eva Szyszkoski.







## 2016 Kayak Drawing Winner Announced

LA Camo Coalition is excited to announce the winner of our annual drawing for new members. This year's prize is a custom fishing kayak from Kajun Custom Kayaks (valued at \$1,550). Chad Nolan of Gonzales was the lucky winner! Chad joined the Camo Coalition at the Louisiana Sportsman Show. Congratulations, Chad! Special Thanks to Kajun Custom Kayaks for supporting LWF and sportsmen and women who care about our coast.



STRAY THE COURSE

## 2015 Louisiana Youth Hunters of the Year Honored at LOWA Conference

Kamryn Paige Hatton of Crowville and Earl Darby Jr. from Broussard have been named the 2015 Louisiana Female and Male Youth Hunters of the Year (YHOY). The duo was recognized during the Louisiana Outdoors Writers Association (LOWA) conference in Shreveport in August.

The Youth Hunter of the Year Program is a joint effort between the LOWA and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF). Program sponsors include the South Louisiana Branch of the Quality Deer Management Association, Bowie Outfitters in Baton Rouge, the Louisiana Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, the Louisiana Wildlife Federation, the Baton Rouge Area Chapter of Delta Waterfowl, and Andrew Harrison of Harrison Law, LLC in Baton Rouge.

Ten-year old Hatton, the daughter of Angel and William Hatton, harvested her first two deer during the 2014-15 hunting season. She made the most of her first deer hunt in 2014 when hunting with her father, taking a doe on her grandfather's land in Madison Parish. Then in 2015, Hatton harvested her first buck.

Darby, age 7, enjoyed a successful 2014-15 hunting season with his grandparents, Arden and Rhonda Delahoussaye. In the fall of 2014, he went on his first squirrel hunt and harvested five squirrels. The family had one black fox squirrel mounted as a keepsake for him. He showed in 2015 that his first hunt wasn't beginner's luck. On his first deer hunt, he harvested a doe in Olla, La. Then later in the season, he took his first buck, an 8-pointer.

The 2016 Youth Hunter of the Year contest began with the 2016 turkey season and gets into full swing in September when the 2016 hunting season opens for dove and teal. LDWF and LOWA encourage all youth hunters, 15 years old or younger, to participate in the Youth Hunter Registry Program and the YHOY of the Year Program.

This article appears on the the Youth Hunter Registry and YHOY Program website at <http://www.wlf.state.la.us/hunting/yhrp> where you can learn more about the program.



## LWF Comments on LDWF Commission Cervid Carcass Ban

Recently, the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission adopted regulations on handling cervid carcasses as a preventive measure to hopefully halt the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) into Louisiana. Currently CWD is present in 31 different states across the United States, and the spread of CWD into Louisiana would negatively impact deer (cervids) by crippling herds through disease spread. CWD cases have been found in Texas and Arkansas.

Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) is concerned about this threat and commented on the regulations when they were proposed.

In order to combat the serious threat of CWD moving into Louisiana, in July 2016, the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission issued a Notice of Intent to ban the importation of cervid carcasses (LAC XIX.V.1.119). Three portions of the original NOI were amended in the Commission's September meeting. The first amendment addressed specifics about what kind of cervid carcass material can be transported into Louisiana. LWF supported this amendment as it allows for carcass materials to still be transported, but the portions most afflicted with CWD are assured to be removed. The second amendment addressed proper containment protocol of potentially infected cervid carcass material, and while LWF agrees that containment of carcass material is important, LWF strongly advocates for stricter containment methods (e.g., burial in municipal solid waste facilities, incineration). Finally, the third amendment set the implementation date of the ban at March 2017, of which LWF supports as this allows for adequate time to educate Louisiana hunters.

Why so serious? CWD is an infectious disease which causes the accumulation of misfolded proteins (prions) in the brain, spinal cord, lymph nodes, and skeletal muscle tissue of cervids- causing a decline in an infected animal's temperament, appearance, memory, and is 100% fatal with no existing cure. Additionally, CWD has an incubation period up to 16 months' post infection and an animal can appear asymptomatic while spreading prions. While the exact mode of transmission is unknown, CWD prions are easily spread through saliva, feces, and urine. CWD prions remain in soil for long periods of time, up to 26 months, and common grazing between cervids and agricultural animals occurs. To date, both cattle and sheep have only been infected with CWD through inoculation, but the potential for interspecies transmission exists. Since CWD prions aggregate in skeletal muscle, there is no doubt humans have consumed CWD prions, but human susceptibility to CWD is still unclear and considered low. The spread of CWD threatens deer populations, and in Louisiana alone outdoor, wildlife-related recreation generates \$2.2 billion annually, with hunting generating \$564 million annually, supporting communities and our economy.

LWF has been concerned about the threat of CWD for some time. In October 2003, LWF members donated \$5,000 to support the CWD testing program of the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study (SCWDS), which monitors the spread of CWD. The SCWDS Lab, located at the University of Georgia-Athens, performs diagnostic testing and wildlife disease research for the members of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, including the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. CWD's infectiousness, propensity to spread, difficulty to remove from infected areas, potential transmissibility to other animals, unknown harm to human health, and potentially negative impact to the state's economy make it a topic of dire importance.

CWD is not in Louisiana at this time but we must remain vigilant and we applaud the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission for taking action to protect Louisiana's white-tail deer herd.





# Louisiana Preparing Update on \$50 Billion Plan to Protect the Coast

By Stacy Ortego, LWF Outreach Coordinator

The Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) has been hard at work updating Louisiana's Comprehensive Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast (Master Plan). The Master Plan serves as a blueprint for selecting the best coastal protection and restoration projects to improve the sustainability of Louisiana's coast.

By law, this plan must be updated every five years in order to take into account changes in the environment, public input, and the latest innovations in science, engineering, and policy. The first plan was released in 2007 and gave an overview of the threats facing Louisiana and potential projects to mitigate those threats. The 2012 plan included a comprehensive list of projects tested through computer modeling. CPRA is now preparing its 2017 update, set to be released in January.

In preparation for this update, CPRA held community meetings in Buras, Dulac, Lake Charles, Larose, Lafitte, and New Orleans to discuss what's changed in the last five years.

These meetings were anything but typical. CPRA took a different approach to have more community engagement, offering dinner and a brief presentation followed by round table discussions with residents. Residents were pleased with the more open and informal structure that these meetings provided.

So what's different about this plan? While the list of projects will not be released until January, we do have some information on how the 2017 plan will differ from 2012:

## **Emphasis on Communities**

The 2017 plan puts more focus on communities with considerations of the effects of restoration activities on local residents and businesses. Projected impacts will be quantified, analyzed, and included in the decision making process.

## **Focus on Flood Risk and Resilience**

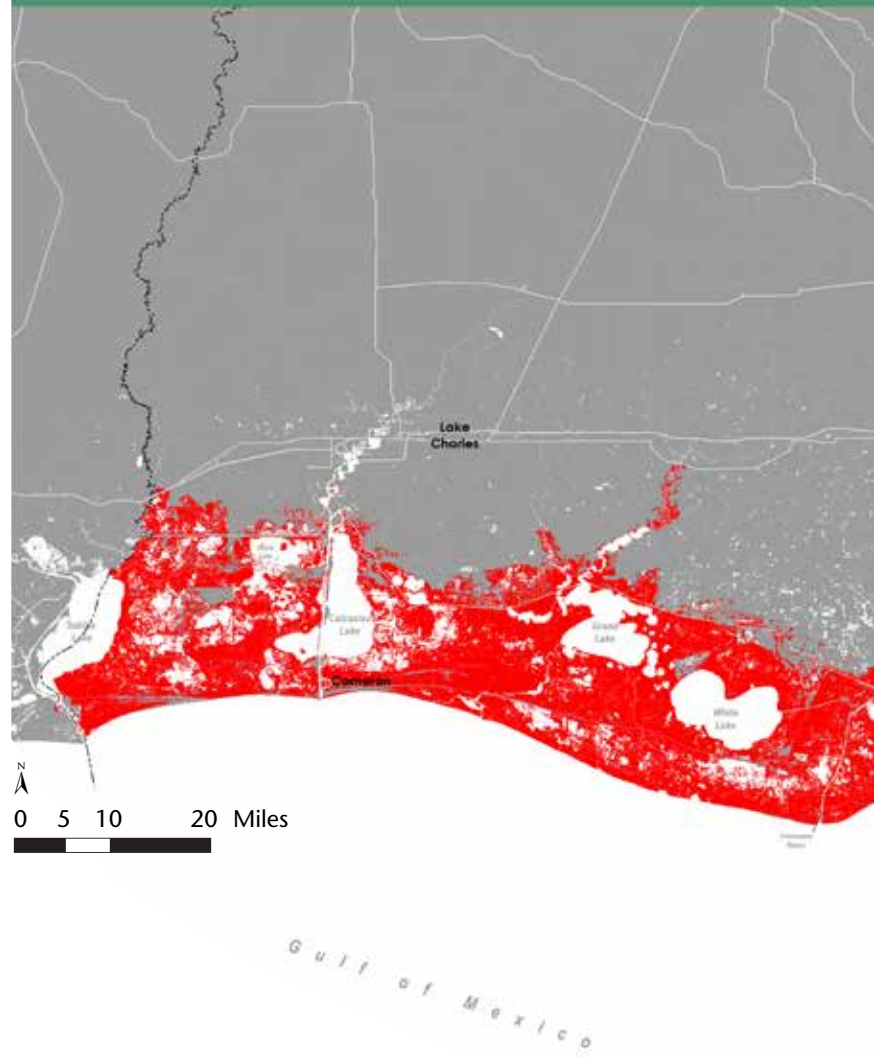
This includes updating the Flood Risk and Resilience Viewer on CPRA's website ([coastal.la.gov](http://coastal.la.gov)) with current data. The viewer allows the user to enter an address and see current land loss and flood risk as well as future projections up to 50 years. Nonstructural projects are also being included to protect communities. These projects include flood-proofing, elevating, and relocating homes and/or businesses to safer locations as well as voluntary acquisition of structures.

## **Incorporating New Ideas and Information**

The 2012 plan only looked at projects that had been considered in the past. In order to incorporate new ideas, the New Project Development Program was formed; 150 projects were submitted and are being evaluated for inclusion in the 2017 plan in addition to projects that were proposed in 2012. In addition to the consideration of new project ideas, the new plan will also include a wider range of ecosystem outcomes such as additional fisheries and wildlife species.

## 2017 Coastal Master Plan

### High Scenario | Future Without A



## **Improved Science and Technical Analysis**

The updated plan includes enhanced modeling and the inclusion of more landscape and ecosystem processes. More spatial detail on land loss and flood risk will be included as well.

Reality hits when you look at the updated maps depicting the projected land loss for our coast. These maps are quite sobering and show more land loss than previously predicted if we go on with business as usual. While it can be daunting to think about how much work is needed and how much money is required to implement the many projects that are necessary to protect our coast, it is assuring to know that we have such a comprehensive plan using the best available science to guide our decision making process to protect where we live, work and play.

Want to get involved? There are several ways you can get involved and stay updated on coastal issues. After the official release of the 2017 Master Plan in January, there will be public hearings in which you will have to opportunity to view a presentation of the plan and give feedback to CPRA.



*Master plan group*

The following public hearings will be

## LWF OFFICE STAFF

Rebecca Triche, Executive Director  
Stacy Ortego, Outreach Coordinator  
Laura Gros, Office Manager  
Matt Faldyn, Intern

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Marty Floyd, 1st Vice President & Rep. to NWF  
Ryan Schaefer, 2nd Vice President  
Mark Shurtz, Secretary  
Clinton Mouser, Treasurer  
Barney Callahan, Immediate Past President  
Paul Coreil, PhD, Executive Committee  
Edgar F. Veillon, Executive Committee  
Paul Whitehead, PhD, Executive Committee

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Rebecca Triche



Stacy Ortego



Matt Faldyn



Laura Gros

## 2016-2017 LWF Office Staff

### Rebecca Triche, Executive Director

Rebecca has been Louisiana Wildlife Federation's executive director since 2012 and previously worked for several non-profit organizations in Louisiana, the US Department of State and is a returned Peace Corps volunteer (Kazakhstan). Rebecca holds a Master of Public Administration from The George Washington University and a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication from LSU. She grew up in Ascension Parish.

### Stacy Ortego, Outreach Corrdinator

Before becoming outreach coordinator, Stacy was previously an intern at LWF and office manager. She received a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and later completed a second bachelor's degree in Biology. Stacy is currently finishing a graduate degree at LSU in the Department of Oceanography and Coastal Science. She's also worked as a wildlife rehabilitator and has done field work in the Atchafalaya Basin, Lake Pontchartrain and the Everglades. She is a native of Sunset.

### Laura Gros, Office Manager

Before joining LWF in 2016, Laura previously worked for the Louisiana Conference Office of the United Methodist Church. She and her husband, Roy, managed a family hardware business for more than 20 years. She has two sons who are both firefighters. Laura received an associates degree from Southeastern Louisiana University.

### Matt Faldyn, Intern

Matt is an avid outdoorsman from Katy, Texas who earned his B.S. in Biology from LSU. While interning with LWF, Matt has worked on projects focusing on environmental policy while learning about the function of a non-profit. He enjoys working with LWF because the work LWF does is active in protecting, preserving, and conserving Louisiana wildlife.



## From the President – Robert E. “Bob” Stewart, Jr., PhD



As the days and nights get cooler and 2016 comes to a close, it is a good time to reflect upon our great state of Louisiana. We are known worldwide for our fantastic wildlife and fish resources, our bottomland hardwoods, rivers and streams, and wide coast. We are also known for our conservation issues -- restoration of coastal marshes, restoration of bottomland hardwoods and challenges to our rivers and streams and other habitats.

I am pleased to be your President during this time and want you to know that our small but very talented staff are doing a great job to protect our fish and wildlife, water, coastal and forest habitats. While we have many challenges facing us we also have many opportunities. And over the next six months or so we hope to be able to announce new programs that will complement and expand our existing ones.

For those who don't know me, I'm a wildlife biologist who has spent most of his career as the Director of the USGS National Wetlands

Research Center and later as the Vice-President for Research at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. I was raised on Patuxent Wildlife Research Refuge in Maryland, surrounded by wildlife and nationally known research scientists. I also spent thirteen wonderful years in North Dakota focusing on wildlife issues and four interesting years in the Washington DC office of the US Fish and Wildlife Service working on coal issues of the time and bringing new technologies to the table. My wife Norma and I have lived in Louisiana now for thirty-seven years and I spend many hours bird watching, hunting, and fishing -- particularly fishing around Grand Isle.

I look forward to seeing you at an upcoming meeting or event of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation. My very best to you and your family in 2017.

Robert E. “Bob” Stewart Jr.  
President, Louisiana Wildlife Federation



### Affiliate Organizations of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation

Acadiana Sportsmen's League  
American Sportsmen Against Poachers  
Avoyelles Wildlife Federation  
Baton Rouge Audubon Society  
Bayou Chapter of the Ozark Society  
Bayou Vermilion Preservation Association  
East Ascension Sportsman's League  
Friends of Black Bayou  
Friends of Grand Isle  
Friends of Red River NWR  
Friends of the Atchafalaya  
Jefferson Rod & Gun Club  
La Chapter, Safari Club International  
La Trappers & Alligator Hunters Association  
Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation  
Louisiana Assoc. of Professional Biologists  
Louisiana Ornithological Society  
Louisiana Waterfowl Alliance  
New Orleans Power Squadron  
Orleans Audubon Society  
Rapides Wildlife Association  
Shreveport Society for Nature Study - Bird Study Group  
Toledo Bend Lake Association  
Wildlife Education & Rehabilitation of Louisiana, Inc.  
Woodlands Conservancy





## LWF's 77th Annual Convention in Bossier City

The Louisiana Wildlife Federation held its 77<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention on August 19-20, 2016 at the Red River National Wildlife Refuge in Bossier City, Louisiana. On Friday evening, members and guests enjoyed an informal food and drink social along with a silent auction, focusing on conservation concerns and spreading the Wildlife Federation message at the local, state and national level.

Saturday's board of director's luncheon featured a presentation on the Red River NWR from refuge manager Pat Stinson and a delicious fish fry, with the luncheon including elections of officers, the executive committee, LWF's representative to NWF and the alternate representative, and the District Vice Presidents. Additionally, during the convention, Marty Floyd received the Presidents Cup, as presented by Barney Callahan, for his outstanding service to LWF.



2016-2017 LWF Executive Committee. From left to right:  
Back row: Paul Whitehead, Mark Shurtz, Bob Stewart, Barney Callahan,  
Clint Mouser. Kneeling: Paul Coreil, Marty Floyd. Not pictured: Ryan Schaefer and  
Edgar Veillon.

Thanks to host affiliate Friends of the Red River NWR and members of the Shreveport Society for Nature Study - Bird Study Group for helping welcome us to northwest Louisiana this year. Additionally, we want to thank and celebrate the Legacy Sponsors: Mark Shurtz, Clint & Virginia Mouser, Bob & Norma Stewart, Barney & Donna Callahan, Warren & Jodie Singer, and S & S Mechanical Services, Inc.

One of the main orders of business during the 77th convention was the convening of the General Assembly to consider and debate resolutions that establish the policy for LWF work on conservation issues.

To read the resolutions in full, visit: [Lawildlifefed.org](http://Lawildlifefed.org)  
Here are brief summaries on the resolutions approved:



### Resolution No. 1A, 2016: Review of the Triploid Restriction on Grass Carp.

LWF requests that the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries review its ban on the use of diploid grass carp for weed control, should its study show that the ban is pointless with respect to restricting the expansion of grass carp populations in the State of Louisiana.

### **Resolution No. 2B, 2016: Support for Increased Funding to Maintain and Operate Louisiana State Parks and Other Properties Managed by The Office of State Parks.**

LWF urges the Legislature to maintain funding for the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism to support the Office of State Parks in adequately funding operations, management, and maintenance of parks. Additionally, LWF further urges the legislature to give the Office of State Parks authority to modify its fee structures to reflect demand along with the authority to evaluate and implement public-private partnerships/concessions for new or expanded park services.

### **Resolution No. 3E, 2016: Ban Open Burning of Munitions and Waste Explosives in Louisiana.**

LWF supports the use of contained burn methods to dispose of munitions or waste explosives and supports a ban on the permitting or licensing of open burning of any munitions or waste explosives in Louisiana.

### **Resolution No. 4B, 2016: Segmented Breakwaters for Coastal Restoration Projects.**

LWF requests that the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, other agencies, and engineering firms consider the benefits of segmented breakwater systems as a primary option in shoreline protection projects when and where applicable. Additionally, LWF is a proponent of using segmented breakwaters in lieu of conventional (sand/dirt alone) shoreline protection and should be recognized as a "standard tool" to be used in coastal restoration projects without the specific alteration requests currently required.

### **Resolution No.5B, 2016: Support for Maintaining Public Lands and Their Proper Management.**

LWF opposes the transfer of federal lands to states or private interests, and supports the full funding of land and resource management agencies. Furthermore, LWF supports collecting fair value for consumptive use of our Nation's resources, and directing the revenues toward enhanced land and resource management and ensuring that federal, state and local government officials and private stakeholders be encouraged to emulate successful examples of collaborative public lands management.



*Cindy and Keith Saucier*

### **In Memory of Keith Saucier, Long-time LWF Board Member, Past President**

Keith Saucier, 1st Vice President of Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF), passed away in June 2016 after a battle with cancer. Many of our members may have worked with Keith when he was LWF President in 2000 and 2001. You may have known him through his various leadership roles for LWF since joining the LWF board in 1991. Keith was an effective volunteer, a thoughtful colleague and a champion for wildlife and habitat conservation and protection. He was LWF's strongest advocate for the state's acquisition of Elmer's Island and making it available for recreation and insuring its preservation for the future. Most recently he was LWF's leading voice to protect the Artificial Reef Development Fund, urging LWF to take action. While his passion for saltwater fishing was an obvious motivation for the projects he worked on, he was equally interested in preserving all wildlife. For example, Keith led a project over several years to distribute more than 1,000 bluebird boxes around Ascension Parish after joining East Ascension Sportsman League's (EASL) board of directors in 1989. He served as EASL president in 1993 and 1994 and remained on the EASL board through 2015. For both organizations, he consistently volunteered to chair committees and organize events. There were many issues and volunteer efforts Keith was engaged with – too many to list here. So many of us in the Wildlife Federation family at the national, state and local level appreciated his contributions. Keith cared about the preservation and success of Louisiana Wildlife Federation and East Ascension Sportsman's League because he believed in helping citizens have a voice in managing our resources and encouraging people's enjoyment of being outdoors. He lived his values about protecting our environment and he will be deeply missed.

### **Memorial Donations in 2016**

In memory of Richard Daniel Hill from Diana Nixon

In memory of Herbert Allen Thomason from David Weinstein

In memory of Diane Conner

In memory of Keith Saucier from Kellene Cochran, Ellis White, Carla Dove, colleagues of Jacob Saucier at Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, and Fred Borel



# Louisiana Wildlife Federation Legislative Report for 2016

By Rebecca Triche, LWF Executive Director

The first half of 2016 was busy at the state capitol. There were **three legislative sessions in 2016**. Louisiana's new governor, John Bel Edwards, and legislators, many of them new as well, faced difficult decisions regarding the state's budget, a continuing theme over the past few years. Most agencies and state departments changed leadership. January to June felt like a marathon race.

LWF staff and volunteer leaders **identified nearly 100 bills and closely monitored several** related to conservation, wildlife management and protection of our natural resources. We spoke up or provided testimony on several key issues in line with LWF's policy positions. The following summary and highlights would be of interest to our members or is related to LWF's ongoing policy focus areas.

LWF worked with Senator Rick Ward to file SB 345 to **establish a feral hog task force** to address the growing feral hog problem. While this bill was passed by the Senate, a similar House Concurrent Resolution, HCR 9, was the final bill passed by the legislature, which ultimately adopted many of the elements of the Senate bill that LWF believes will better assure an effective task force participation. Thanks to Senator Ward and Representative Major Thibaut and the 26 House co-sponsors of the House Concurrent Resolution for recognizing the problem and encouraging various agencies, land managers, and other users to strategize on how Louisiana can tackle the problem. The newly-created Feral Hog Management Advisory Task Force held its first meeting in November to study and monitor the impact of feral hogs and make recommendations for controlling the feral hog population. Feral hogs damage levees and habitat, destroy crops, and prey upon livestock and wildlife, and carry disease. The spread of feral hogs is linked to transport and release. The feral hog population is estimated at more than 500,000 and growing exponentially. Because they are a non-native invasive species, feral hogs have no natural predators and are considered an outlaw quadruped.

Regarding feral hog control, LWF opposed SB 244, which proposed allowing nighttime hunting of feral hogs year round, including during deer and duck seasons. This bill did

not pass out of Senate Natural Resources Committee and LWF spoke up about concerns that it would make enforcement of illegal nighttime hunting and illegal trespass incredibly difficult. The law currently allows 24-hour hunting for outlaw quadrupeds, nutria, and beaver from the last day of February to the last day of August and hunting during daylight hours the remainder of the year. Landowners seeking to eliminate feral hogs at night on their property in September through February can get a free permit from the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. Obviously, there is growing frustration about feral hogs and the damage caused. Hopefully, the new task force will help bring together cooperation between agencies and among land managers about how Louisiana can be more effective in control measures.

LWF opposed a bill to **discontinue the White Lake Property Advisory Board** and provided testimony in Senate Natural Resources Committee on the merits of maintaining the board for public input and suggesting modifications to make the board more relevant. The arguments made about how well White Lake Management Area has been managed by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries despite the Advisory Board not meeting for at least two years prevailed. The White Lake Property Advisory Board was deemed to have accomplished its purpose in the earliest years of its inception and was abolished by the legislature. LWF has a long history of monitoring management of White Lake since its donation to the state and encouraging its use for the public's benefit. LWF leaders will continue to monitor and provide input.

LWF also weighed in on bills related to **coastal restoration** and participated in Coastal Day at the Capitol on April 14. The state's coastal annual plan for projects and funding, "Integrated Ecosystem Restoration & Hurricane Protection in Coastal Louisiana: Fiscal Year 2017 Annual Plan," was passed, as expected. The legislature reaffirmed how funding from the 2010 Gulf oil spill would be received and managed by the state in HB 409 now Act 601. LWF also monitored the passage of the "FY 2017 Annual Plan Atchafalaya Basin Program" as it moved from approval by the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority to the legislature, which is an annual process, but at one point the program's (currently minimal) funding was removed then returned during the second special session. Representative Zeringue sponsored House Concurrent Resolution 70 to reaffirm support for achieving the goals of the Gulf Hypoxia Action Plan to reduce the hypoxic zone off Louisiana's coast.

To improve reporting and record keeping on the number of **exported turtles** and other amphibians and reptiles being harvested in the state, Representative Stuart Bishop introduced HB 423, which became Act 114. This matches reporting required for commercial fisheries trip tickets. In 2015, LWF expressed concern about the high and escalating number of native turtle exports. The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has taken steps to improve monitoring and limit impact of exports on turtle populations. Regarding sea turtles, House Concurrent Resolution 30 calls for increased state enforcement of use of turtle excluder devices with shrimp nets.

This year, the legislature lifted the moratorium on **oyster leases**. HB 902 by Representative Leopold became Act 595 and provides a lot of guidance and requirements on approving oyster leases. The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is working on these rules. Related to oyster leasing, HB 1130, now Act 570, introduced by Representative Garofalo, was heavily debated. It provides for dual leasing on water bottoms for oyster leases for cultivation and harvest that allows a lease to be held jointly with the state and by private landowners. These rules are to be worked out in conjunction with the lifting of the moratorium. If interested in this issue, please contact the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries for current information and details but the rules will go before the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission. Representative Zeringue's HB 306 became Act 134 to add research into oyster propagation and habitat, oyster hatchery operations, and the administrative functions of the oyster lease and survey section as acceptable use for funds in the Public Oyster Seed Ground Development Account.

Representative Gene Reynolds introduced HB 11 to **ban open burn disposal** of munitions and waste explosives in Louisiana. The bill was amended in committee to allow exception for military and state police, which would not constitute a ban, and was deferred. In its place, House Concurrent Resolution 118 was passed that required the Department of Environmental Quality conduct sampling for pollution levels in locations where open burn of chemicals and munitions has been allowed in Louisiana and produce a report to the legislature within six months. The issue of banning open burning will likely return due to the ongoing clean-up of abandoned munitions and chemicals at Camp Minden and the permitted open burning of munitions chemicals near Colfax. LWF supports a ban of open burning of munitions and waste explosives.



LWF did not take a position on but followed a set of bills introduced by Senator Allain to address **orphaned oil and gas wells**, using recommendations from a 2014 report by the legislative auditor. SB 371, which addressed lowering the threshold amount of the state's recovery of the restoration cost to plug and restore an orphaned oilfield site, was amended by the Senate and was not taken up by the House so it did not pass. However other bills were passed into law that better support restoration work on orphaned well sites. SB 165, which requires notification of the surface owner as well as operator on record that a well site has been declared orphaned and addresses how to declare an operator of record orphaned, became Act 342. SB 425, which dedicates 50% of any annual assessment paid by an operator who chooses not to plug a well classified as inactive into the Oilfield Site Restoration Fund with the remainder being deposited into the Oil and Gas Regulatory Fund, became Act 582. SB 428, which mainly authorizes trust accounts to be set up for oilfield sites that can be used for plugging and restoration when necessary, became Act 583. The following bills from Representative Jim Morris also addressed the orphaned well problems in the state. House Concurrent Resolution 72 requests the Department of Natural Resources to develop a pilot program to demonstrate an alternate method of contracting for services to plug orphaned oil and gas well sites. HB 819 became Act 666 and it provides authority for the Oilfield Site Restoration Commission to issue bonds and change the fee structure to (hopefully) provide more funding for the program, among other changes. The auditor's report noted that the Department of Natural Resources' Office of Conservation was not properly regulating and inspecting the state's 57,819 oil and gas wells nor effectively managing abandoned wells. There were 2,846 orphaned wells as of 2013, posing environmental and safety risks. The Department has since made changes based on recommendations from this report.

Regarding protecting both the quality and quantity of **water in Louisiana**, bills were introduced to address use of surface water, including water from a designated scenic river, and ground water for fracking in the Northshore area but ultimately deferred. A bill to address the problems of municipal drinking water in the town of St Joseph was heavily debated twice but did not pass. HB 424 became Act 248 and extends the cooperative endeavor program for use of the state's surface water resources. This is a minimal monitoring measure of water use. Louisiana must develop a more comprehensive set of laws, policy and regulations to protect the state's water resources for its citizens' use and the economic development and sustainability of this valuable natural resource in the future.

State budget problems have led to more vocal support of allowing access to all funds to balance the budget, in times of economic woes, including **statutorily dedicated and constitutionally protected funds**. You can count on LWF watching and reporting back on attempts to move dedicated funds for natural resource conservation away from their expected use. One of LWF's enduring and important achievements was securing constitutional protection for the Conservation Fund in the 1980s. Sometimes, we all need a reminder of why this protection is important. Not only are hunters, anglers, boaters and other commercial and outdoor users supporting the budget of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries with their licenses and fees, some of the federal funding to help manage our natural resources is tied to dedicated and secure sources of matching state funds from these fees. It is important that the state maintain this protection. Similarly, when LWF was concerned about the continued swiping of funds from the Artificial Reef Development Fund, we sought stronger protection because this continued abuse of the promise of dedicated use for enhancement of Louisiana's marine resources threatens the trust the public and donors have in dedicated use. When Louisiana's citizens passed a constitutional amendment to constitutionally protect the Artificial Reef Development Fund in 2014, this was a clear signal that citizens understand and support the intentions of dedicated funds to conserve our natural resources. Looking to the future, we must be vigilant about the use of funds committed to coastal restoration to be used on coastal restoration projects and programming. However, the discussion about whether certain – or any – funds should be protected under the constitution will likely continue as lawmakers grapple with expected budget challenges in the next few years.

Related to the state's budget problems and solutions that came from the 2016 legislative sessions, Louisiana's voters did not pass the proposed constitutional amendment to further adjust the threshold for tapping into dedicated funds. Currently most constitutionally and statutorily protected funds can be tapped up to 5% if a trigger is met during times of extraordinary revenue downfall. However, voters approved the creation of the Revenue Stabilization Trust Fund that would receive oil and gas revenue and corporate taxes when those collections are higher than predicted.

On a fun but practical note, Representative Malinda White's bill to make **blaze pink** an acceptable alternative to hunter orange was signed into law. This is not so much a fashion statement for the growing number of women hunters as it is a practical safety matter because blaze pink can be more noticeable than orange around changing Fall foliage

colors. Wisconsin was the first state to approve pink as camouflage for hunters.

This report is written to give you an overview of key issues and details to encourage learning more about potential change in policy or regulation. LWF volunteer leaders and staff monitor the legislature, the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, and agency rulemaking to keep you informed. We update members via our website at [LaWildlifeFed.org](http://LaWildlifeFed.org) and a regular email newsletter. Follow us on Facebook and on Twitter: @lawildlifefed.





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