

Louisiana Department of Natural Resources Newsletter

Celebrating Spring and Louisiana Earth Day 2018

Louisiana Earth Day will be held Sunday, April 29, at the LSU Parker Coliseum, from Noon to 5 in the afternoon. It will be a family-friendly, fun-filled event where everyone can learn more about environmental stewardship.

The department will be participating as one of a number of exhibitors that strive to share information and hands-on activities that address environmental issues, sustainability, and responsible stewardship of our Earth's resources.

Everyone, young and old, should reflect on the meaning behind taking the Louisiana Pledge, which is this year's ceremonial theme. "We pledge our commitment to Louisiana, to its waterways, coast, wildlife, soil and sky, one state, irreplaceable, to be cherished and protected by all."

DNR staff joins with our partners, the Clean Fuels/Clean Cities Coalition, to specifically engage Earth Day goers with facts and information on alternative energy sources, ride-sharing, wetland and coastal protection, and energy and water conservation topics. And, along with many of the other presenters of the day—our agency prescribes to the three R's **reduce**, **reuse** and **recycle**—which help to cut down on the amount of waste we throw away. The three R's can save communities land and money which would otherwise be used to dispose of waste in landfills.

First Lady holds traditional Easter Egg Hunt at the Mansion



Oh, what a day to celebrate the coming of Spring! On March 26th, hundreds of kids had a picture-perfect day at the Governor's Mansion – participating in the 21st annual Easter Egg Hunt!

In addition to the hunt, the children were treated to face painting, train rides, bounce house fun and a visit from Miss Louisiana. They were also able to visit with Gov. John Bel Edwards and First Lady Donna Edwards, who leads the coordination and preparation of the event.

That morning, children from the Head Start program, which gives kids pre-school educational instruction so that they are better prepared for later grades were treated to fun at the mansion. The afternoon saw a second round of young guests of the Governor and First Lady.

DNR Office of the Secretary Executive Assistant Mollie Montelaro and hubby, Jody Montelaro (a former Assistant Secretary Office of Mineral Resources) and their cute "bunnies" Andy (with Mollie) and Max (with Gov. Edwards) enjoyed being a part of all the exciting activities held on the grounds of the mansion.

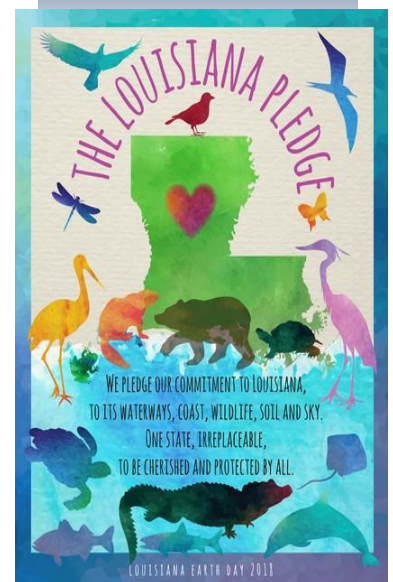
The kids were especially thrilled to see the real Easter Bunny as well as the mansion's new live bunnies.



Louisiana Department of Natural Resources



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State Employees in Capitol Complex should know about Commuter Krewe

Word is spreading about the [Commuter Krewe](#) program, which is sponsored by the Capital Region Planning Commission and state Department of Transportation and Development. There are many benefits of a program like this for state employees. When you share a ride, you can lower your costs, save time and lessen the traffic congestion we experience in our region.

It can help commuters and other travelers in the Baton Rouge area find a less stressful and less costly way to get to work or move around during rush hour. Its ride-matching database can help people find others who live and work near them to share the driving time. As we all know, **Carpooling** cuts down on the number of cars and vehicles traveling on the road. Fewer cars mean there is less carbon and other gasses and pollution getting into the air.

If you have an interest in carpooling, Commuter Krewe can help you to find a ride-match based on those registered in the database. Take a serious look at what the Commuter Krewe website has to offer at www.commuterkrewe.la

In an effort to help encourage and advance the program, DNR and other state agencies are beginning to formulate policies and procedures, as they look to solutions that better employees through these challenging times in our society. Look for more information to come from DNR's Human Resources Director.

KLB *Leaders Against Litter* campaign this year has notable results

The Keep Louisiana Beautiful organization each year promotes community cleanup events across the state that involve civic leadership at the highest of levels. *Leaders Against Litter's* mission is to help promote personal, corporate, and community responsibility for a clean and beautiful Louisiana- and in doing so, brings together government and community officials donned in t-shirts, gloves and work boots to litter-marred areas where bags of trash and other discarded items are collected.

On an exceptionally beautiful day in March, Gov. John Bel Edwards, First Lady Donna Edwards, and Lt. Gov. Billy Nungesser participated in a litter cleanup event around the Capitol Lakes in Baton Rouge. Several of the downtown BR state agencies held events around their buildings and grounds.



27 KLB affiliate groups also held morning cleanup events in their local areas. Statewide, there were **120** local elected officials, **10** state legislators, **45** school administrators, over **100** law enforcement officials and **182** business leaders taking part and contributing to the effort.

Shown here is Clean Fuels Executive Director Ann Vail helping during the Capitol Lakes cleanup on March 23, Vail and DNR Public Information Director Phyllis Darensbourg are Keep La. Beautiful Advisory Board members.

At A Glance Results from March 23rd

Leaders Against Litter Cleanup Day

1,657 volunteer hours

10,865 bags of trash collected

267,765 lbs. of litter

8,449 cigarette butts picked up

Tulips All Around Town

Simply Breathtaking!

KLB Natchitoches affiliate was one of 27 affiliates to sponsor a Leaders Against Litter event. The group also promoted a floral extravaganza where the river-front and it's historic brick Front Street was ablaze with tulips in vivid breathtaking colors.

In late March, the city held its 13th annual Bloomin' on the Bricks festival—a celebration of spring flowers in its downtown area.



A Message from DNR Secretary Tom Harris



In recent weeks, I have had the opportunity to speak to annual gatherings of several groups – ranging from the industries DNR regulates to partner agencies in environmental protection. The feedback I have gotten is that both the regulated community and our regulator colleagues are appreciative and impressed by the work our staff continues to do, even during time of exceptional budget challenges for the state.

Even during times of slowdown in the oil and gas exploration and production industry, the workload does not let up for our inspectors, engineers, accountants, scientists and other staff charged with oversight of drilling, pipelines, audits of production and coastal development. That is why it is gratifying to meet with people who deal with our agency from the outside and hear from them that the efforts of the men and women of DNR are recognized and appreciated. It is a testament to the hard work you have all put in over these past years and months, and I would like to join with them in expressing that appreciation and thanking you for your efforts.



Secretary Harris speaks to the La. Solid Waste Environmental (LSWA) Conference held in Lafayette in March. The La. Solid Waste Association sponsors the conference each year—providing training and education to people in the industry. The conference theme is “Environmental Partnerships of Business, Industry and Government.”—drawing some 600 attendees. Secretary Harris also congratulated LSWA’s college scholarship recipients for 2017-2018, who each receive \$1000. This year’s scholars were Madelyn Carlos of Houma Christian School, Kallie Kieffer of Calvin High School, Katie Walker of Haughton High School, and Eric Moore, III of Parkway High School.

Office of Conservation reports on water wells and groundwater program

National Groundwater Awareness Week was held in March, and the Office of Conservation provided an informational exhibit on its “Water-Wise in BR” campaign in the Lobby of the LaSalle Building; provided messages for FB and Twitter posts during the week of March 11- 17; and issued a summary of program activities through its education and outreach alert network. According to DNR Office of Conservation’s Outreach Coordinator Dr. Matthew Reonas, half of the state’s population utilizes groundwater daily for drinking, bathing and other routine activities.

The Commissioner of Conservation is empowered and responsible for the administration of all matters related to the management of the state’s groundwater resources, particularly in the sustainability of this vital resource. Likewise, the state Department of Environmental Quality deals with specific instances of groundwater contamination or pollution, and the Department of Health ensures that groundwater pumped into the state’s public supply systems meet the national standards for safe drinking water.

Private Water Well Owner Information

Learn more about the Private Well Initiative sponsored by LDH’s Office of Public Health online at <http://new.dhh.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/page/1407>

Learn more about how to register a water well, ownership transfers, and plugging & abandonment of a well at DNR’s Office of

Conservation website at <http://dnr.la.gov/wellowners>

The office also works with the Department of Transportation and Development and the U.S. Geological Survey in maintaining the state’s expanded groundwater monitoring network. There are some 318 monitors positioned across the state that are deemed ‘eyes on the ground’ in this management program.

Finding Well Information through the GWRP

One of the most important aspects of the office’s Ground Water Resources Program (GWRP) is oversight of its well water program. This is an important safeguard for the state’s aquifers as it ensures proper construction and registration of all classes of water wells. A water well database of 200,000-plus water wells in the state is an important source of information for state, municipal and parish government employees, water well drillers, oil and gas operators, geologists, environmental scientists, academic researchers, and many others. This easy to search database is available on the department’s well-known SONRIS system, www.sonris.com

A typical water well file includes such basic information as the age of the well, its status (active, inactive, plugged & abandoned), its location and depth, diameter, screen size, expected pumping rate, and assorted geo-

logical data found in the well log.

The prior notification evaluation is an important step in development of a water well and is required of all public supply, industrial, and irrigation wells. A staff geologist looks at the location of a well, its proposed pumping volume, and other pertinent information such as the location of other nearby wells and known or potential sources of contamination, in determining a course of action. In some cases, there is no action required; in others, the agency will issue orders requiring such actions as monitoring or reduced/limited pumping volumes.

Water-Wise in Baton Rouge

Learn more about this public awareness campaign and the free educational materials it has to offer at www.waterwise.dnr.la.gov

Educators should not miss out on receiving the “Adventures of Waterman!” DVD that was premiered a short time ago, intended for elementary and middle school teachers in the Greater Baton Rouge area. Let us know if we can send a copy your way. The video is a tongue-in-cheek story that follows several school-age children and their teenage daycare provider who get mysteriously transported to “H₂O HQ,” where they meet our superhero—“Waterman”—who teaches them about local groundwater resources in Baton Rouge.

100 Ways to Save Water

Louisiana's Coast: Educational Interactive Map is Brand New and Online

CPRA has introduced a new way for the public to learn about our state's vital coastal area and our working coast. With this new and innovative story-telling tool called "[Story Map](#)" – coastal experts are encouraging people to see it and to spread the word about Louisiana's working coast and the projects that are being done in an effort to restore and protect these valuable resources.

According to Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority's Outreach Director Anne Hawes, the story map is intended to further communicate how the challenges of the state's vanishing coast are being addressed through the State's Coastal Master Plan aimed at resiliency.



Office of Mineral Resources develops more maps and land information on website for public

DNR Office of Mineral Resources' Geology, Engineering and Land division performs mineral leasing for the State Mineral and Energy Board while maintaining mineral lease ownership and property information. This office is responsible for keeping the official mineral lease files. Periodically, the office plans to present more detailed information on its website relative to state lands and water bodies that have acreage for available leasing. Each month, the division announces a list of Lease Numbers, Locations, and Acreage where previously leased land has been returned to the state for further potential activity. According to Geology Lands Administrator Boyd Handley, the following is a recent public service announcement published for the OMR website.

Consider What's Open and Available for Mineral Leasing in Louisiana (3/20/2018)

Here are a few things that the Mineral and Energy Board would like prospective oil and gas companies and industry interested in the Austin Chalk to know-

- The Austin Chalk play is experiencing a resurgence in drilling activity
- The eastern portion of the Austin Chalk play has unexplored and under-explored areas with significant open acreage available
- Specifically, over 70,000 acres of land and water is currently open in this emerging Austin Chalk Play, while over 3,000 acres is available in the Mature Austin Chalk Play
- New permitting and leasing activity is happening right now in Rapides, Avoyelles and Pointe Coupee parishes

Prospective leaseholders have the convenience of nominating state owned lands and water bottoms online, [linked here](#).

It's that time again. 2018 Legislative Session underway- looking at the state's priorities

The current Legislative Regular Session began on March 12th and runs through June 4th. DNR's Executive Counsel Blake Canfield and Assistant to the Secretary Ashlee McNeely help lead the department's legislative oversight team.

Several proposed bills with particular impact to our agency are currently being monitored and those include HB 422, HB 47, HB 118, HB 120 and SCR 14. In late March, DNR Secretary Harris and Undersecretary Beverly Hodges appeared before the House Committee on Appropriations to present the department's budget. The Appropriation's committee is chaired by Rep. Cameron Henry of Metairie and vice chair Rep. Franklin Foil of Baton Rouge.

Celebrating 20 years—Salute to LaBranche Wetland Watchers & Science Teacher Barry Guillot



DNR Office of Coastal Management has been working with [Harry Hurst Middle School Wetland Watchers](#) students from Destrehan in St. Charles parish and their organizer Science Teacher Barry Guillot for many years. And our OCM scientists Frank Cole and Kirk Kilgen, along with Donna Thompson would not have missed joining in the special event and learning festivities held just before Easter for their 20 year celebration hosted by United Way St. Charles.

The Watchers are middle school students that volunteer and participate in activities such as water quality monitoring, macro-invertebrate collection and identification, litter clean-ups, soil and plant identification, tree planting, and wetland education programs. Their

service activities are tied to required academic standards in each of their core subject areas.

Nearly 800 fourth graders in the parish were invited to experience a day of learning about wetland conservation including presentations, displays, and demonstrations by academic and environmental groups, and other Wetland Watchers partners.

OCM's Kirk Kilgen said that he finds it quite rewarding to be a part of teaching and instructional outreach events such as this one. He said that both parents and young people tell him time and again how much they appreciate getting a better understanding of the importance of wetlands and our coast.



Photo left: DNR OCM scientist in New Orleans Frank Cole shows students how they can protect wetlands with a board demonstration at this year's Wetland Watcher's celebration at Dufresne Community Center. Photo right: Wetland Watcher 8th grader and Alligator mascot pose for a picture while presenting at the La. Environmental Education Association's Symposium held in Baton Rouge in February. Harry Hurst, Cammon and JB Martin students showed several of their native and exotic animals to environmental educators attending the conference.

Mark the Calendar

Local Coastal Management Program Managers' Meeting

Tuesday, May 8 @ LaSalle Building, Baton Rouge

Topics: GOM Project Gulf Tree, Federal Consistency, CPRA 2017 Master Plan

Advisory Committee Meeting for Regulation and Control of Water Well Drillers

Wed., May 9 @ LaSalle Building, Baton Rouge

Mineral and Energy Board Meetings and Lease Sale

Wednesday, April 11 and May 9

LaSalle Building, Baton Rouge



State Energy Office and DEQ

Air Quality Awareness Week April 30—May 4

Video Presentation and Website Posts



At Audubon Zoo Earth Fest In New Orleans, March 2018 Coastal Scientists Craig Leblanc and Jessica Diez enjoyed plenty of sunshine and bright smiling faces as they talk to hundreds of kids during this year's Earth Fest.