

Rediscover the Vermilion

Expanding the Economic & Cultural Resources of Our River



EST. 2013

BAYOU VERMILION
PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

6th Annual River Symposium

Friday, September 13, 2019



The mission of the Bayou Vermilion Preservation Association is to create awareness of our natural environment by providing education and outreach to the general community about ways to *conserve, protect, and enjoy* the Bayou Vermilion Watershed.

WELCOME TO THE BVPA!

Your ticket purchase for this event covers membership dues, valid until September 2020. We want to thank those who have renewed their memberships *and* welcome our new members! You can exercise your membership by serving on a committee and/or attending our meetings and events.

Email BVPConnect@gmail.com for more information.

ABOUT THIS EVENT



We are pleased to have you "Jump on Board!" with the BVPA to make this symposium a success, help us achieve our mission, and learn more about community-driven watershed management.

This year's presentation topics will highlight how strategic development around our river can improve our quality of life while protecting natural resources in our community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank our *generous sponsors* and those who have provided resources for our programming and those who have given their time and expertise to make this event possible. Cover photo by: Nathaniel Atakora Martin.

This year's Honorary Chair is *Chef Patrick Mould*. For the past 20 years, Chef Mould has owned and operated Louisiana Culinary Enterprises, Inc. a Consulting and Catering Firm located in Lafayette, LA. The BVPA's Symposium Planning Committee appreciates the time Chef Mould generously spent helping to create today's program.

BVPA'S GOVERNING BOARD

Officers

President: Bess Foret, Environmental Quality Manager, Lafayette Consolidated Government

Vice President: Donald Sagrera: Executive Director, Teche-Vermilion Freshwater District

Secretary: Jackie Vargas-Beitia, Regulatory Compliance Supervisor, Lafayette Consolidated Government

Treasurer: Kelia Bingham, Regulatory Compliance Officer, Lafayette Consolidated Government

Board

Dr. David Cheramie: Chief Executive Officer, Bayou Vermilion District

Heather Warner-Finley: President, Acadiana Native Plant Project

Dr. Ernest Girouard: ret. Coordinator LSU AgCenter Master Farmer Program

Dr. Durga Poudel: Asst. Director, School of Geosciences, ULL

Jeff Jackson: Acadiana Regional Office, LA Dept. of Environmental Quality

Babette Werner: President, Lafayette Garden Club

Sarah Schoeffler: Founder, Southern Garden Festival

Ariel Dazart: Biology Instructor, South Louisiana Community College

Amber Robinson: Environmental Scientist, HDR Engineering

Kiera Frey: Environmental Compliance Supervisor, Lafayette Utilities System



BVPA, founded by Jan & Charlie Wyatt et al., had its first "core group" meeting in July 2012. We became a Not-for Profit Louisiana Corporation in August 2013.

BVPA'S ADVISORY BOARD

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The BVPA board is grateful to have a long list of community leaders to call on for guidance and expertise in their respective fields.



6TH ANNUAL RIVER SYMPOSIUM VISIONARY SPONSORS

HDR



A special **THANK YOU** to our **VISIONARY SPONSORS** who have *exceeded* expectations in their support of this year's symposium.

AGENDA

REDISCOVER THE VERMILION:

A Symposium on Expanding the Economic & Cultural Resources of Our River

7:30 AM Check-in and biscuits & coffee

8:00 AM Welcome by Bess Foret, BVPA President and David Cheramie, CEO of Bayou Vermilion District

8:10 AM Honorary Chair, Chef Patrick Mould

8:20 AM Keynote Speaker, Lieutenant Governor Billy Nungesser

8:40 AM History of Settlement on the Vermilion, presented by Dr. Michael Martin

9:05 AM Existing Resources & Community Vision, Greg Guidroz and Cathie Gilbert

9:30 AM Tourism: Building on Our Natural Resources, Erik Johnson and Scott Schilling

10:00 AM Break

10:15 AM Strategic Planning to Capitalize on the Improvement & Preservation of Natural Resources, presented by Kristen Veldhouse

10:45 AM Review of Redevelopment Programs, presented by Chad Lacombe

11:15 AM Community Stewardship Awards & Lunch is provided

12:00 PM - 1:30 PM Panel Discussion: Developing the Vermilion to boost the economy while protecting our natural resources.

Your Partner in Preservation!

The BVPA creates positive action for the preservation and protection of our water resources by serving as a hub, connecting available resources, agencies, and manpower. We are so glad you could *JUMP ON BOARD!* with us.

KEYNOTE

Lieutenant Governor Billy Nungesser

Billy Nungesser is the 54th Lieutenant Governor of the state of Louisiana. He was elected in 2015 and took office in January of 2016. In July 2019, he officially took over as Chairman of the National Lieutenant Governors Association, a professional association which charts issues and work to be pursued by the second-highest ranking officials in all 50 states and U.S. territories.

Today Billy is second-in-command in the executive branch and Louisiana's ambassador as Commissioner of the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism. From natural disasters to promoting our great state, Billy Nungesser is a man for all of Louisiana.

Under his administration, the state of Louisiana celebrated a third consecutive year of record-breaking visitation as Louisiana welcomed more than 51.3 million visitors, bringing in more than \$18.8 billion dollars to the state.



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NOTES

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HISTORY

Dr. Michael S. Martin, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

History of Settlement on the Vermilion River

Dr. Martin will be providing a brief overview of early Vermilionville and Lafayette Parish, and their relationship to the Vermilion River.

Dr. Michael S. Martin holds the Cheryl Courrégé Burguières/Board of Regents Professorship in History. His research and teaching interests focus on Louisiana history, public history, and the history of the U.S. South. Martin's most recent publications include *Rethinking New Acadia* (as editor, 2019), *The Louisiana Experience* (as co-author, 2017), *Creolization in the French Americas* (as co-editor, 2015); *Russell Long: A Life in Politics* (2014), *Louisiana Legacies: Readings in the History of the Pelican State* (as co-editor, 2013), *Louisiana Beyond Black and White: Recent Interpretations of Twentieth-Century Race and Race Relations* (as editor, 2011) and *Historic Lafayette* (2007). He also is managing editor of the journal *Louisiana History*, the state's historical journal published quarterly by the Louisiana Historical Association.

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COMMUNITY VISION

Cathie Gilbert, Planning Manager, LCG

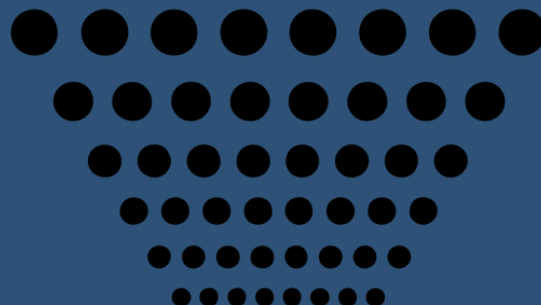
PlanLafayette: Vermilion River Action Items

A big picture look at PlanLafayette's action items as they relate to the Vermilion River and sustainability. Lafayette's twenty year comprehensive plan was adopted in 2014 after over two years of extensive public outreach. Overview of various action item implementation successes. Highlights from the Evangeline Corridor Initiative that was an important effort to plan for the future I-49 Connector project. The Vermilion River Recreational District was one of the study areas in the plan. General concepts of multi-functional projects, interconnectivity, and multi-modal transportation as part of the planning office work will be highlighted.

Cathie Gilbert began her career in Toronto, Canada, working in the private sector for a builder/developer. Cathie moved to Lafayette, Louisiana in 2005 and joined the Lafayette Development and Planning Department as a senior planner mainly doing neighborhood planning work. In 2011, Cathie assisted the Mayor-President's office with the project by managing a consultant in the development of PlanLafayette and the Unified Development Code. In 2014, Cathie became the manager of the newly formed comprehensive plan office under the Department of Development and Planning. Cathie holds two undergraduate degrees; a Bachelor of Arts in Geography from the University of Windsor and a Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning from Ryerson University in Toronto.

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POTENZA



COMMUNITY ASSETS

Greg Guidroz, Director of Environmental Awareness, BVD

Vermilion River: Resources and Public Access

Greg Guidroz is the Director of Environmental Awareness for the Bayou Vermilion District and has served the organization in several capacities including picking up trash in the Bayou Vermilion, conducting water quality sampling, implementing stream bank restoration projects, and serving as grant writer, event planner, artisan, tour boat captain, and environmental educator. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Renewable and Sustainable Resources from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in 2000, and served as a member of UL's Environmental Student Organization S.P.E.A.K. During his tenure with S.P.E.A.K., the organization was instrumental in helping Festival International de Louisiane develop its festival recycling program in 1999, as well as Festivals Acadiens et Creoles in 2005, the Black Pot Music Festival, and several other smaller annual festivals held in Lafayette. In 2014 he was awarded the Bayou Vermilion Preservation Association's "Visionary of the Year" award. In 2015 he was awarded Keep Louisiana Beautiful's "Golden Can Award" for his volunteer service and his efforts to keep the festival recycling effort alive by collaborating with LCG, Lafayette Parish Sheriff Department, and UL Lafayette. He is an Eagle Scout, a veteran of the United States Marine Corps, a lover of Nature, and an advocate for environmental health.

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The logo for CGI, consisting of the letters 'C', 'G', and 'I' in a bold, red, sans-serif font. The 'C' and 'G' are connected at the top, and the 'I' is a simple vertical bar to the right.

ECO-TOURISM

Erik Johnson, Director of Bird Conservation, Audubon Louisiana *Ecological Resources and Our Economy*

Erik joined Audubon in April 2011 as a Conservation Biologist for the Mississippi Flyway and Gulf Coast Initiative where he provided science-support and guidance for Audubon's strategic planning process and building upon conservation and monitoring efforts in the region. Before coming to Audubon, Erik's graduate work at Louisiana State University included researching the effects of forest fragmentation on Amazonian bird communities and understanding the effects of fire management on grassland birds in pine savannas of the southeastern U.S. and has published his work in scientific journals including *The Auk* and *Ecology*.

Scott Schilling, Philanthropist & Entrepreneur *Eco-tourism Opportunities on the Vermilion*

Scott Schilling has done remarkable trail advocacy work in founding and serving as president of TRAIL (Transportation Recreation Alternatives In Louisiana), a trails advocacy group based in Lafayette. Scott Schilling founded this organization nine years ago in order to improve the recreation and transportation options in our community. Although rich in natural resources for outdoor activities and great year round weather, the Lafayette area has limited facilities to encourage individuals to get outside and enjoy their environment. TRAIL has been a leading organization in our community. TRAIL's efforts include funding a marketing program to promote safe road cycling, purchasing properties to add to existing parks for the development of hiking trails, and providing the matching portion of grant requests submitted by other organization.

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STRATEGIC PLANNING

Kristen Veldhouse, Senior Strategic Communications Coordinator, HDR

Strategic Planning to Capitalize on the Improvement & Preservation of Natural Resources

The Missouri riverfront has long been an unaddressed engineering and design challenge in downtown Omaha and Council Bluffs, resulting in the underutilization of nearly 200 acres of prime riverfront real estate. In 2017 and 2018, a private LLC and a team of consultants successfully tackled these challenges through strategic planning and a comprehensive stakeholder and public engagement process. This presentation will provide an overview of the history of the Missouri riverfront as well as lessons learned related to several attempts to revitalize the area over the decades. This presentation will then detail challenges and opportunities the project team faced throughout planning and design, and how the Missouri Riverfront Revitalization project is moving from a vision to a reality.

Kristen Veldhouse is a young professional responsible for leading Strategic Communications efforts for local, regional and statewide strategic communications programs, and developing and implementing public relations and engagement strategies. Kristen excels in leveraging existing communication strategies and employing new technologies and tools to achieve the best possible outcomes for her projects. Kristen obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Event Planning and Public Relations in 2014 from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, as well as a Master of Science in Negotiation and Conflict Resolution and a Master of Business Administration in 2017 from Creighton University.

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REDEVELOPMENT

Chad Lacombe, JD, Project Specialist, Acadiana Planning Commission

Review of Redevelopment Programs

Chad has worked for the Metropolitan Planning Organization and then the Acadiana Planning Commission since January of 2011 as a Planner and Project Manager. He obtained a Juris Doctorate from Southern University Law Center in the Spring of 2014. While a law student, and working with Lafayette Consolidated Government, he set up and coordinated a pilot project to address a backlog of tax adjudicated property within Lafayette Parish. As part of the project, and with the assistance of interns from SULC, five properties were moved out of tax adjudication and acquired by LCG for McComb-Veazey Neighborhood Revitalization projects. The pilot project also surveyed the legal histories of over 30 adjudicated properties and estimated the annual cost to local government for each of these properties.

In 2017 Chad successfully wrote the first Community-Wide EPA Brownfields Assessment grant to be awarded in the Acadiana Region. The focus of this grant is the revitalization of Lafayette's Four Corners Area – one of the most impoverished in Lafayette parish. To support community engagement for this project he successfully applied for an AmeriCorps-Vista position that was awarded through EPA Region 6. These efforts have successfully attracted over \$15 million dollars in proposed private redevelopment within the target area of the grant.

Chad Lacombe will also join our other panelists for the roundtable discussion after lunch.

Is the Vermilion a *river* or *bayou*?

It's both! Some researchers and regulatory agencies say that the terms are interchangeable as they both describe flowing waterways. The northern part of the more often thought of as a bayou while the southern end is a tidally-influenced river.

PANEL DISCUSSION

How strategic development around the Vermilion can improve our quality of life while protecting natural resources in our community.

Scott Brazda, Executive Director, Stuller Family Foundation

Scott Brazda is the executive director of the Stuller Family Foundation in Lafayette, La., through which he helps nonprofit organizations “connect the dots” and teaches Junior Philanthropy at seven south Louisiana schools. In addition, Scott has been a member of the KATC-TV3 news team for the past 29 years, during which time he has chaired the station’s “St. Jude Dream Home” program. Scott is also a freelance writer and an adjunct faculty member of the Communications Department at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Scott has been married to his wife Suzanne for 21 years, and they have two children, 19-year-old Sophia and 11-year-old Nick.

Kenneth Boudreaux, Lafayette City-Parish Council, District 4

Councilman Boudreaux has used his community leadership position as an opportunity to listen, learn, and most importantly—serve. He has always strived to represent the best interests of all Lafayette families, businesses, and communities. He is passionate about issues on leadership, cultural diversity, non-violence, esteem building, drug, alcohol and substance-abuse prevention, black history, community action, parenting, education, relationships, motivating people and bullying prevention. Kenneth has founded "TO THE FRONT TO THE TOP"-CONSULTANTS, LLC a motivational, speaking and consulting organization to provide learning, training and development tools for individuals, families and businesses. He is a member of Louisiana Avenue United Methodist Church and a proud graduate of Northside Senior High School and the University of Southwestern Louisiana.

PRESENTING SPONSOR



PANEL DISCUSSION

How strategic development around the Vermilion can improve our quality of life while protecting natural resources in our community.

Amy Dupuis, Pack and Paddle

Amy is an avid paddler with 18 years of exploring the waters of Louisiana. Her passion for introducing others to the unique ecosystem and culture of our area comes to life through her many years as a Guide and Inventory Manager for Pack and Paddle.

Patti Holland, TECHE Project

Patti and her family have lived in the Acadiana Region of Louisiana for 35 years. She graduated from Texas A & M University with a Wildlife Biology Degree, and worked 31 years with the Lafayette, Louisiana U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office where she specialized in migratory bird and wetland regulatory issues. In 2011, Patti joined the TECHE Project as a Council Member. The TECHE Project's mission is to raise awareness of the values of the Bayou Teche Corridor by enriching its habitat, providing opportunities for people to explore the bayou, and encouraging sustainable development along the bayou to enrich the lives of those who work and recreate along Bayou Teche. Patti heads up the organization's Ecological Program. She conducts workshops on the flora and fauna of Bayou Teche and manages a wood duck nest box program involving 48 Bayou Teche landowners. She is currently developing a Bank-Line Management Brochure for Bayou Teche Landowners, and is working with BVPA, Trees Acadiana, and the Acadiana Native Plant Project on bank-line restoration demonstration projects. She is also working to implement the nationally acclaimed Bayou Teche Water Trail, which involves the installation of paddle trail amenities in all 15 trail towns along 133 miles of Bayou Teche. Working with stakeholders to build a paddle trail-based economy for the communities along Bayou Teche is a primary goal of the TECHE Project.

DID YOU KNOW?



BVPA partners with Lafayette Garden Club to sponsor cash prizes for students who participate and place in the *annual Anti-litter Poster Contest* for Lafayette Parish Schools. The contest is a great way to engage students and get them thinking about the importance of reducing litter to protect our waterways.



PANEL DISCUSSION

How strategic development around the Vermilion can improve our quality of life while protecting natural resources in our community.

Anne Famoso, Development Manager, Lafayette Consolidated Government

Anne joined LCG's Development & Planning Department in 2018 where she currently works as development manager. Prior to joining LCG, Anne worked in neighborhood planning and revitalization for the City of Des Moines, IA, and as a policy analyst for One Acadiana. Anne has a Master's degree in City & Regional Planning from Cornell University and BA in Historic Preservation from the University of Mary Washington.

Ryan Pécot, Senior Retail Leasing & Development Advisor, Stirling Properties

Mr. Pécot joined the Stirling Properties team in 2001. Currently, he spends the majority of his time in the Lafayette office, but also spent multiple years working out of Stirling's New Orleans' CBD office. Because of his ties to both markets, Mr. Pécot has extensive experience in virtually all markets throughout the State of Louisiana. Mr. Pécot graduated in 2000 from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in Business Administration with a concentration in Business Law. He also serves on OneAcadiana's Board of Directors and is the co-chair of the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee. He served in an advisory role within the City of Lafayette's Development & Planning Division's Unified Development Code's creation and refinement, and currently sits on the University of Louisiana's Ragin Cajun Athletic Foundation's Board of Director's Executive Committee. Mr. Pécot historically contributed to The Independent's Acadiana Business publication and continues to deliver the retail presentation at the annual Acadiana Commercial Outlook.

A WATERSHED is the area of land that drains to a ditch, coulee, bayou or river.

We are in the **TECHE-VERMILION WATERSHED.**





6TH ANNUAL RIVER SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER SPONSORS



**Harold
& Sarah
Schoeffler**



We appreciate all of our sponsors and community supporters!

JUMP ON BOARD!

TO IMPROVE WATER QUALITY

- Pick up litter
- Use a rain barrel
- Pick up pet poop
- Bag and compost yard waste
- Properly dispose of chemicals
- Wash vehicles over grassy areas
- Plant natives to reduce pesticide use
- Install a rain garden to slow stormwater down

TO STAY INVOLVED

- Visit a Riverside park
- Check out regional paddle trails
- Participate in community programming
- Attend events focused on resource conservation
- Follow BVPA and our partners on social media
- Join the Embrace-A-Space program through LCG



The Vermilion, and all Louisiana waterways, are ours to enjoy and protect!



6TH ANNUAL RIVER SYMPOSIUM SUPPORTER SPONSORS

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We appreciate all of our sponsors and community supporters!

WHY SHOULD WE PROTECT AND IMPROVE OUR WATERSHED?



**Watershed conditions
impact our lives.**



**Clean Watersheds
support our economy.**



Watersheds provide:

- Clean surface water
- Fisheries
- Outdoor recreation
- Eco-tourism





Programming

VERMILION RIVER ALLIANCE

The Vermilion River Alliance (VRA) was founded by BVPA in July 2014 and is managed by the BVPA President. The VRA is comprised of multiple agencies across St. Landry, St. Martin, Lafayette and Vermilion Parishes. Parish Presidents, Mayors, Police Juries, LDEQ, Soil and Water Conservation groups and other stakeholders are generally represented at the meetings.



RAIN BARREL ART PROGRAM

The rain barrel art program is an annual collaboration of BVPA, LCG, Project Front Yard, LUS, and Lafayette area schools. This art contest, geared toward middle and high school students, promotes drinking water conservation, stormwater management, and public art.



STORM DRAIN ART PROGRAM

2018 was the inaugural year of the storm drain art program. Our partners include LCG, Project Front Yard, Habitat for Humanity, ULL, BVD, and the ACA. Ten drains have been painted by local artists to illustrate the need for watershed protection. The art work symbolizes local ecology, culture and community.



STATE OF THE RIVER MEETING

The first state of the river meeting was held in May 2018. Held annually, this public meeting covers the latest information on water quality and sampling initiatives, fish and wildlife, and current efforts being made by various groups to improve the watershed. BVPA board members are available for questions, refreshments are served, and networking is encouraged.



WATER SAMPLING PROGRAM

The Long-term Water Quality Sampling Program has grown over the last five years. Through the coordination of Donald Segura, Director of Teche-Vermilion Fresh Water District, and the cooperation of our partners, we sample both the Bayou Teche and Vermilion River. Currently there are a total of 19 sample points throughout five parishes.



REVIVING RESILIENT LANDSCAPES

The BVPA and other *Partners in Preservation* will host a series of educational workshops throughout the watershed. Participants will learn about stormwater management and resiliency through native plantings, have an opportunity to install a demonstration area, and receive advice and complimentary plants.



Follow us on Facebook to learn about future events!

**Thank you for being a
Partner in Preservation!**



EST. 2013

**BAYOU VERMILION
PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION**