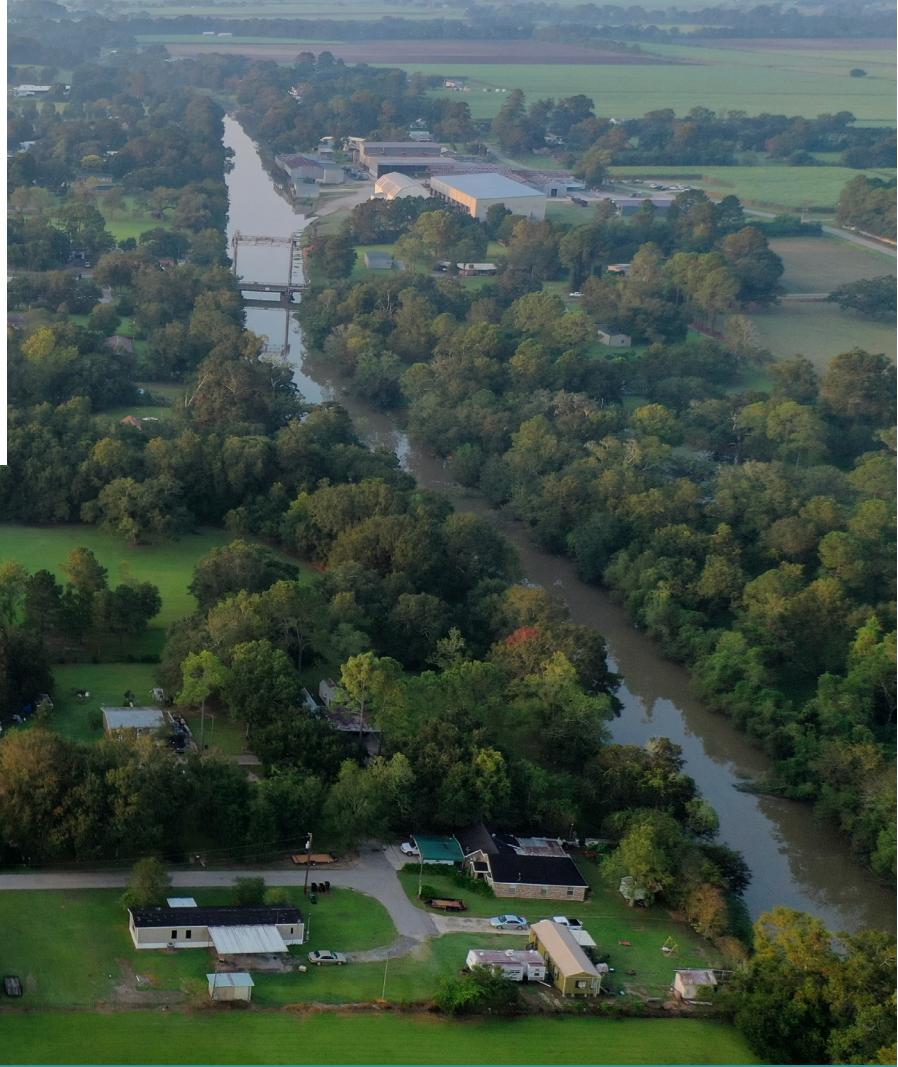


2019 Annual Report



THE
TECHE PROJECT



The Bayou Teche
Louisiana's most
historic and culturally
significant waterway!



To Members, Sponsors and Friends of The TECHE Project



Aerial photo of Loreauville on cover by Stuart Amidon, Page 50 Digital Marketing & Media.

The TECHE Project Council:

Conni Castille
Jimmy Gravois
Patti Holland
Eric Martin
Brent Miller
Trey Snyder
Dane Thibodeaux

January 2019

It has been a decade since the TECHE Renaissance was launched to restore the river as the focal point of our communities. It seems to be working.

Any success in our vision is dependent upon a healthy watershed. Our ENRICH It program has attracted hundreds of volunteers, ranging from youth groups to local government personnel taking to the water with pickers and trash bags and debris removal equipment collecting more than 50 tons of garbage. The result is a visible one. But the river ecology is more than its length, width and surface. Water quality runs deep; it impacts water tables and wildlife, some effects visible to the casual onlooker, some not.

In considering our focus for 2020, I was moved by the writings of Wendell Berry on conservation and Pope Francis on the health of our planet. Conservation is the foundation of the TECHE Renaissance. Originating from the late 14th century, the concept suggests “preservation of health and soundness, maintenance in good condition, act of guarding or keeping with care.”

Early settlers of the Teche corridor—native Americans, Acadians and African Americans—understood with humility their true dependence on their environment. They understood the necessary human limitations when borrowing natural resources; their wellbeing depended upon the longevity of these life-giving resources. Because of their considerate stewardship, their reluctance to not diminish or take too much from the river, we are able to inherit its beauty and bounty. So too should we be considerate in our relationship with the most famous bayou in Louisiana that we are privileged to live alongside.

To me, the year “2020” implies a year of clarity and of better understandings of systems around us. This year’s guest speaker, Dr. Brandon Ballengée, a conservationist, biologist and artist, takes a deeper look into these systems through his work. Our community welcomes him and his family to the Cecilia/Arnaudville area. We are proud to introduce him and his research to you.

There is no more effective way to build good stewardship than to experience the bayou. Whether sitting along its banks in a park, paddling it or living on it, I ask you to imagine your view in three dimensions. Reflect upon that which you cannot see. Its depth. Its quality. The miraculous and continual system of life upon which we depend, and yet not fully comprehend. By doing so, we gain an understanding and appreciation that this ecosystem can be improved by what we do not do as much as by what we do. Let us not take it for granted. Let us save some for the next generation.

Suggested readings:
Wendell Berry’s *Two Economies*
Pope Francis’ Encyclical Letter “On Care for Our Common Home”

Conni Castille, Executive Director



ENRICH It

The vision of the TECHE Renaissance is dependent upon the ecological health of the Bayou Teche corridor.

It all starts with a clean watershed!

Bayou Operations

On March 30, we conducted our Spring Trash Bash from the Leonville Trailhead. Around 25 volunteers pitched in to remove an estimated 800 pounds of garbage from the bayou. Volunteers pulled out many bags of miscellaneous trash. Thanks to this volunteer effort, we are now closing in on a total of more than 50 tons of garbage in the 11 years that we have been pulling trash from the bayou!



Water Sentinel Program

In 2019, we expanded our water testing work to include a test site on the south end of New Iberia. This brings our total number of volunteer water sampling sites to 10 and ensures good water sampling coverage from Port Barre to Franklin (110 bayou miles). By May of 2020, the Water Sentinel Program will have provided continual water quality testing four times a year for 10 years. This has been an amazing effort by a dedicated group of volunteers, many of which have been compiling data for the entire 10 years! At this upcoming 10-year mark, we will end the volunteer sampling program and will compile our data for the public to learn about water quality trends on Bayou Teche. The TECHE Project is not abandoning our efforts to improve water quality in the bayou, but we are shifting our focus. Now that much of the garbage has been removed and our efforts to remove debris continue methodically, we turn our efforts to the main water quality problem: fecal coliform loading. Therefore, we plan to strengthen our partnership with the Teche-Vermilion Fresh Water District to concentrate on expanding fecal coliform testing in the watershed in hopes of resolving hotspot areas and ultimately have the Bayou Teche corridor removed from the DEQ's impaired waterway listing.



Wood Duck Workshops

As part of our McIlhenny Coypu Grant partnership, we expanded our wood duck management efforts to provide several workshops in 2019. Training was conducted at two workshops in Loreauville and Leonville, as well as in the Heritage Tent at our Shake Your Trail Feather Festival. We are proud to say that we now have 48 participants in the Wood Duck Rearing Program (from mile 1 to 132), and those participants yielded more than 350 ducklings in 2019!

Bankline Restoration Workshops

In 2019, we formed a partnership with the Acadiana Native Plant Project, the Bayou Vermilion Preservation Association, the Bayou Vermilion District and Trees Acadiana to conduct several training workshops on both Bayou Teche and Bayou Vermilion. The restoration sites on Bayou Teche took place in Port Barre and Leonville. Each restoration effort included a training workshop on bankline erosion problems and the various bioengineering techniques that can be applied to restore the bankline to a natural riparian slope. Hundreds of plants were planted by volunteers to stabilize eroded banks, improve water quality and provide riparian habitat. Thanks to all of those who participated! We plan to continue this partnership effort in the years to come, so look for announcements of future bankline restoration workshops in Leonville in March 2020, Breaux Bridge in the fall of 2020 and New Iberia in the spring of 2021.



EXPLORE It

Trailhead Docks

Development of low-impact recreation that promotes tourism and trail-based development in the communities along the Teche is a major goal of The TECHE Project. To that end, we are working hard to accomplish full implementation of the Bayou Teche National Paddle Trail infrastructure within the next two years! With grant funding, we designed and received permit authorizations for eight trailhead dock projects and are currently soliciting bids for the construction of three trailhead sites (Arnaudville, Jeanerette and Baldwin), which we plan to have constructed in the first half of 2020! Additional grant funding is being secured to construct four more trailhead access docks in Leonville, Parks, Franklin and Centerville. We are also working with the City of New Iberia in the design of their new kayak park in the center of town, and we are working with St. Martin Parish to locate a future dock site in the Cecilia area. Once completed, the Bayou Teche National Paddle Trail will have access docks ranging from 6 to 12 miles apart in all of Bayou Teche's 15 Trail Towns on Bayou Teche and the Lower Atchafalaya River.



National Water Trail Information Kiosks

Installation of information kiosks in conjunction with the new trailhead docks continued as planned in 2019. The two-sided structures provide an orientation panel featuring a map of the entire Bayou Teche National Water Trail on one side. Side two will be a community panel designed to communicate the unique stories of the individual trail communities and their special connections to the waterway. Five new kiosks were installed in 2019—Leonville, St. Martinville, Parks, Franklin and Patterson—bringing the total to seven. With the completion of one of the final amenities for our first trailhead in Breaux Bridge, we worked with St. Bernard Catholic Church and School to develop and install two interpretive exhibits highlighting the history of St. Bernard in the community since its beginning on Bayou Teche. 2020 will see the complete installation of all 16 information kiosks.

The TECHE Project is highly appreciative of the various individual, family, local government and business sponsorships, which are making this important project possible. We are especially honored to be awarded a \$46,000 grant from the Atchafalaya Trace Commission for this long-term improvement to the Bayou Teche National Water and Paddle Trail. Please contact The TECHE Project to take advantage of the remaining sponsorship opportunities.



TECHE Renaissance envisions locals and visitors navigating ecology, history and culture by boat.

You must experience it to appreciate it!

EMBRACE It

Encourage and assist communities on Bayou Teche and the Lower Atchafalaya River to turn to the water for recreation and economic development.

As communities turn toward the water, the Bayou Teche Renaissance is becoming a reality!

Youth Paddling

Investing in youth paddling ensures that generations to come will love the bayou. The St. Bernard Catholic School Paddle Club and the Chitimacha Tribe Paddle Club are great examples of young people enjoying the Teche. In the spring, Dane Thibodeaux hosted the 4th annual Cecilia High School Senior Paddle Trip on the Bayou Teche. Starting in Cecilia, students paddled down the Teche to a lunch stop at Poche's and finished up at Parc Des Ponts in Breaux Bridge.



Books Along the Teche Literary Festival

This festival is a prime example of a community utilizing the unique cultural values of the Bayou Teche Corridor. New Iberia's literary festival is a tribute to Louisiana authors and books written about our local culture. The TECHE Project was honored to help out by serving as the bayou guide service highlighting the famed Bayou Teche locales written up in James Lee Burke's popular novels.



Outreach and Partnership Efforts

As a community-driven organization, we are always seeking opportunities to strengthen partnerships and recruit new partners to come on board and embrace the TECHE Renaissance through volunteer work or membership dues. In 2019, we partnered with the TECHE-Vermilion Fresh Water District to maintain bayou mileage signs, and we provided a chase boat for the Tour du Teche 130-mile race. We competed in the Black Pot Festival cookoff and attended the Bayou Vermilion District's Boat Parade and Earth Day celebration. We also participated in the Bayou Vermilion Preservation Association Symposium and spoke to several parish and city councils about our mission. Thanks to all of you who represented The TECHE Project and got the word out about what we can accomplish together.



Shake Your Trail Feather

The Trail Feather festival, which is a celebration of the Bayou Teche Paddle Trail, had record attendance. Community support of this event and the Bayou Teche Renaissance continues to surge. We extend our gratitude to all of the festival sponsors, artists and our awesome volunteers for making this event a big success. Festival proceeds go toward paddle trail amenities, and we are happy to announce that over \$25,000 has been raised to put toward wayfinding signage and other items for the Bayou Teche National Paddle Trail. The festival also offers an opportunity to get more people on the water. The Paddle-to-the-Party excursion, co-hosted with Cajun Paddle, continues to grow each year. We had over 120 paddlers participate in our annual float trip and two lucky winners of our Pack & Paddle-sponsored kayak raffle. Our next Trail Feather celebration will be October 17, 2020, so mark your calendars and come support this worthwhile cause!



What's Around the Bend for 2020?

The TECHE Project plans for 2020 include the following. Should you have a skill set to achieve any of these objectives in the coming year, please consider volunteering your time and expertise.

Awareness and Promotion:

Recruit more community members to embrace the TECHE Renaissance by joining The Teche Project as volunteers, members or sponsors.

ENRICH It

- Continue hosting Wood Duck Management Workshops and the Wood Duck Box Mile Marker Program.
- Work with partners to expand fecal coliform water testing efforts.
- Develop and distribute Bankline Management Brochure to waterfront landowners.
- Conduct workshops with conservation partners on riparian habitat restoration.
- Continue cleaning the bayou routinely and conduct a volunteer trash bash as needed.

EXPLORE It

- Continue to nurture existing partnerships and to develop new ones in completing the paddle trail infrastructure to conclude the floating docks and information kiosks installation.
- Secure funding to fabricate and install roadway directional signage for the National Paddle Trail.
- Develop the Bayou Teche National Paddle Trail day and multi-day trip planners.
- Work with youth and school paddle clubs and summer camps.
- Revamp the techeproject.org website format and include language options in French, German and Spanish.

EMBRACE It

- Hold planning meetings with fellow stakeholders to optimize development of the National Water Trail and Paddle Trail System.
- Host the 9th Annual Shake Your Trail Feather Festival on October 17, 2020!
- Although we encourage shopping local, we understand that sometimes online shopping is necessary. We continue to appreciate when members and supporters In those situations select The TECHE Project as their default nonprofit organization for Amazon to donate 0.5% of the price of eligible AmazonSmile purchases with no additional cost.



The TECHE Project Financial Summary

2019

What do all the numbers mean? Memberships continue to provide the majority of financial support for The TECHE Project, followed by local government support in 2019.

Our financial management team has assured the total assets of this nonprofit are stable.

Please urge your family, friends and business colleagues to join and support The TECHE Project. The benefits are immediate and lasting.

Support and Revenue

Membership and Contributions	\$ 38,861
Local Government Support	\$ 23,000
Fundraising Sales	\$ 8,974
State and Federal Grants	\$ 12,250
Other Organization Contributions	\$ 500

Total Support and Revenue **\$83,585**

Expenses

General Administration (no salary expenses)	\$ 6,179
Fundraising	\$ 1,076
Programs	\$ 43,593

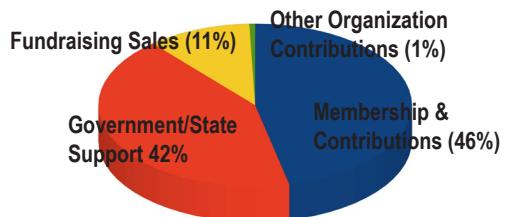
Total Expenses **\$ 50,848**

Assets

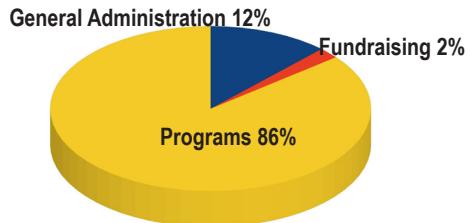
Cash	\$ 111,230
Equipment	\$ 2,836
Encumbered Grant Funds	\$ 0

Total Assets **\$ 114,066**

Contributions by Donor Type



Organization Efficiency



Fundraising Goals For 2020

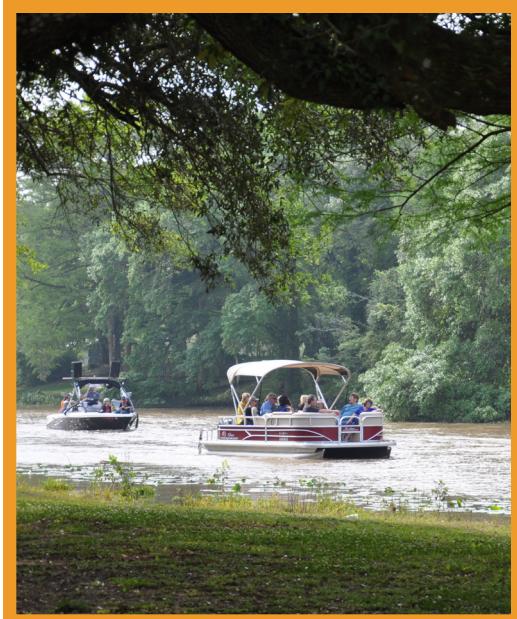
General Funds	\$ 35,000
Low Impact Recreation	\$ 120,000
Bayou Operations	\$ 8,000
Cultural Programming	\$ 3,500
Ecology and Water Quality	\$ 6,000
Outreach and Events	\$ 5,000
Total:	\$177,500



2019 Special Contributors

Bayou Banker (\$101 to \$500)

Mark Ackelson
Camille Broussard
Cajun Paddle
City of Breaux Bridge
Gary Couret
Margaret Elbert
John Gibbs
John and Terri Hale
Melissa Hebert
Hub City Diner
Cathy and John Indest
Metal Shark Boats
Don and Barbara Meyer
Mark and Marsha Meyer
Peter Patout
St. Bernard Elementary School
St. Martin Parish Tourism
Russell's Food Center



Kayak Packer (\$501 to \$999)

Bayou Teche Brewing
Jackie Benoit
FM Bank
Tour du Teche

Brown Water Lover (\$1,000 to \$2,499)

Courtesy Motors of Breaux Bridge
Pack & Paddle

Wood Duck Nester (\$2,500 to \$4,999)

Cajun Coast Visitor and Convention Bureau
City of Franklin
Lloyd and Sandra Marshall
Sean and Lesley Marshall
Trey and Gina Marshall
St. Landry Parish Tourist Commission
St. Martin Parish Government
David Dahlquist and Mary Ubiñas

Teche Royalty (\$5,000+)

Atchafalaya National Heritage Area
Dr. Marella Yonque and Gary Schoelman
SLEMCO
St. Martin Parish Tourist Commission
Teche-Vermilion Fresh Water District

The TECHE Project Council deeply appreciates the growth of financial and in-kind support provided by individuals, businesses and public organizations and agencies from across the United States.

Please consider including The TECHE Project in your estate planning and beneficiary designations.



Business Members, Partner Organizations and Governments

Special thanks to our business members, partner organizations and governments that assisted The TECHE Project in 2019!

As of January 20, 2020, The TECHE Project is honored to have 100 individual and two-person memberships; 55 family memberships; and 35 business and government memberships, representing approximately 400 individuals!

Thanks to all who joined and renewed their faith in The TECHE Project!

Together, we are doing great things on the bayou!

Business Members

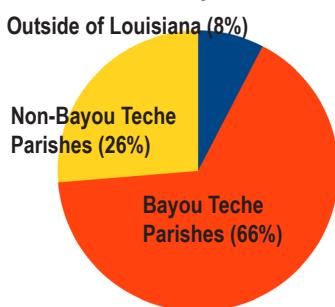
Ashton Grace Montessori School
Bayou Teche Experience
Bayou Teche Brewing
Bayou Teche Museum
Café Sydnie Mae
Courtesy Motors of Breaux Bridge
David Benoit
David L. Dahlquist Associates
FM Bank
Historic Map Company
Hub City Diner
Albert P. Kuhlman
LHC Group
McGee Scott Realty
Metal Shark Boats
Myran's Maison de Manger
Nature's Link
Pack & Paddle
Peter Patout
Pfizer
Poche's Meat Market
Russell's Food Center
SLEMCO
St. Martin Hospital
Tom's Fiddle & Bow

Partner Organizations and Government Agencies

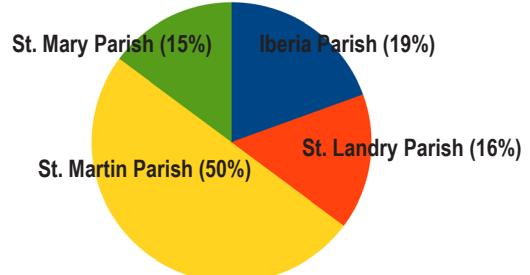
Acadiana Native Plant Project
Atchafalaya National Heritage Area

Atelier de la Nature
Bayou Vermilion District
Bayou Vermilion Preservation Association
Cajun Paddle
Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana
City of Breaux Bridge
City of Franklin
City of Jeanerette
City of New Iberia
City of Patterson
City of St. Martinville
FHWA Recreational Trails Program
LA Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
LA Department of Transportation and Development
LA Trails and Byways Program
Longfellow-Evangeline State Historic Site
New Acadia Project
St. Landry, St. Martin, Iberia and St. Mary Parish Governments
St. Landry, St. Martin, Iberia and St. Mary Tourism Offices
Teche-Vermilion Fresh Water District
Tour Du Teche
Town of Baldwin
Town of Leonville
Town of Loreauville
Trees Acadiana
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Village of Parks

Total Membership Distribution



Membership Distribution by Bayou Teche Parish



Brown Water Stories



Bayou Blood

by Erin Z. Bass

The first meal my grandmother cooked for my grandfather in their New Iberia home as a married couple was crawfish stew. She bought a pound of live crawfish and invited her parents over for dinner. My grandfather's response to the meal was "poof!" He was from North Louisiana and was raised on meat and potatoes. The bayou seafood my Cajun French grandmother was used to eating wasn't going to cut it.

The month before my mother was born, my grandparents moved from a tiny, two-bedroom house in town to a 10-acre property on Bayou Teche. It was called Beau Soleil, which means "beautiful sunshine" in French, a language my grandmother grew up speaking with her mother. Although the rambling house was a wreck, their five-person family, which would eventually grow to eight, had plenty of room to spread out and roam the banks of Bayou Teche.

"I used to go sit on the edge of the bayou all the time," my grandmother Harriet Babineaux Shea recalls. "I loved the bayou."

Going down to the bayou was probably a respite from her six children. She says they weren't supposed to actually go in the water, but "I would catch them every once in a while."

Most of the family's time on the bayou was spent in the barbecue house, a screened-in structure located at the back of the property where parties were held. "Every time it was a birthday, we had it at the barbecue house," my grandmother says. One legendary family story recalls the time somebody parked their car for a party and it slowly slid down into the bayou. They had forgotten to put the emergency brake on.

The barbecue house is no longer standing, my grandmother now lives back in town on the other side of the bayou, and my grandfather is no longer with us, but Beau Soleil remains in the family. My aunt raised her children there, and it's where we gather for birthdays, holidays and special occasions. We celebrated my grandmother's 90th birthday there in October and laughed and cried together for our first Christmas without my grandfather.

My 4-year-old daughter, appropriately named Harriet, can now roam the banks of the bayou with her cousins just as my mom and I once did. The bayou is in our blood and is a part of my family's lifeline that will always connect us.



The TECHE Project Council and Administration

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Please contact members of The TECHE Project Council with your interests in supporting all that the Bayou Teche provides our local communities and parishes, partner organizations, Louisiana and the United States.

Website:
techeproject.org
Email: techeproject@techeproject.org



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#BayouTeche

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