

# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



## The Bayou Teche

Louisiana's most  
historic and culturally  
significant waterway!

# To Members, Sponsors and Friends of The TECHE Project



Aerial photo of St. Martinville on the cover by Phanat Xanamane

## The TECHE Project Council:

Conni Castille  
Jimmy Gravois  
Greg Guidroz  
Alex Guillory  
Patti Holland  
Eric Martin  
Brent Miller  
Margaret Simon  
Glenn Thomas  
Dane Thibodeaux

## January 2021

**Conni Castille, Executive Director**

We all know 2020 was a strange year. But, in its wake, many things have been revealed, from social and economic inequities, to an understanding of nature's healing powers. It seems life's pause button of lockdowns unlocked some primordial need to return to wild places. And, there's a reason for that.

Studies find that spending time in an urban park can have a "positive impact on a person's sense of wellbeing." This phenomenon is why the largest cities in the world dedicate spaces, oftentimes valuable real estate, to parks, trees and smaller pockets of nature within busy streets. It also explains the resurgence of a term called, "forest bathing"—the act of spending time outside, in nature. Reductions in stress, anger and depression, and lowering of blood pressures and heart rates, are positive impacts found in these studies. The past year has certainly been stressful for everyone. For us, in the rural areas in South Louisiana, our natural setting is predominately our waterways, so we've been "bayou bathing" down here.

With the revelations of 2020 came shifts in priorities and renewed inspirations to keep safe ourselves, our communities and our natural resources. We know our mission and programming has always prioritized these values, but 2020 has affirmed it and motivates us to keep our keel moving forward.

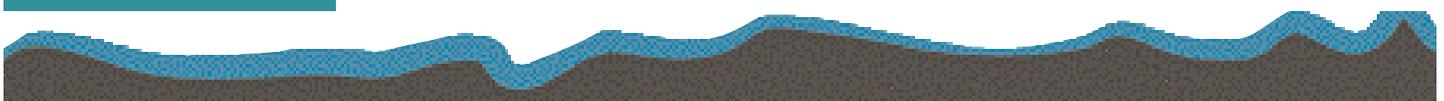
A watershed moment for our bayou town communities in 2020 has been the significant progress we've made on the National Paddle Trail infrastructure. Having a convenient way to enter and exit the bayou by canoe or kayak encourages more recreational paddlers on the water. You can read about our progress on the floating docks and Information Kiosks being installed in each bayou town in the EXPLORE It section. With the trailheads near completion in each town, tourism representatives and businesses can use the trail to drive economic development, while paddlers get healthier by being outdoors and on the water. Just as important, being on the water instills an appreciation for this natural asset and a paddler begins to understand why The TECHE Project, its members and the Trail Town communities do what we do.

Although being on the Teche and Lower Atchafalaya has its health benefits to paddlers, a healthy waterway is essential for recreational trail users and the wildlife living in its waters and along its banks. We share our 2020 achievements and the 2021 goals of our ENRICH It program in a section titled "What's Around the Bend."



As we invite you to turn the pages to meet our new Council members who embody talents and qualities matching programming areas we are strengthening in 2020, including increased youth engagement through art and literature, and water quality—we ask your help as we bid farewell to council member Trey Snyder (pictured at left). Trey served our bayou for 10 years. As a bayou resident, he first became involved in the early days of the Tour du Teche paddle boat race. The inaugural race was actually hosted by The TECHE Project. In the next year, Tour du Teche organizers branched off to form their own 501(c)(3). Trey served on both councils as liaison to these sister organizations. His philosophy that "you must experience the Teche to fully appreciate it" became a fundamental approach to our mission. As an accountant, he was instrumental in establishing The TECHE Project's financial and tax records. The TECHE Project extends a heartfelt thanks to him for his efforts to help fulfill our mission.

We also want to take this time to thank our members and sponsors and the local and state government agencies that support our Teche Renaissance vision. Together, we ensure preserving and continuing the legacy of Louisiana's most famous rivers: Bayou Teche and the Lower Atchafalaya River.



# ENRICH It

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

It all starts with a clean watershed!

## Bayou Operations

The bayou got a little cleaner in 2020 with the help of recreational paddlers taking to the water to escape lockdowns or cabin fever. (Our large, community-driven trash pickups had to be postponed due to the pandemic.) You can check out their efforts through our various social media platforms. We also teamed up with the Coastal Wetlands Planning Protection and Restoration Act and Gulf of Mexico Alliance to participate in International Coastal Cleanup Day on Sept. 19. Volunteers, including those from the UL Lafayette Biology Society, picked up their cleanup kits from the floating dock in Arnaudville and set off by boat and on foot to help clean up Bayou Teche.



## Water Testing and Water Quality

As we shift our focus and resources to reduce pollution levels with the goal of getting Bayou Teche removed from the state's Impaired Waterways list, we are fortunate to have 10 years of valuable data compiled by a dedicated group of volunteers. In May 2020, we ended our Water Sentinel Program, a water testing program performed by residents along the bayou. Their data will now be compiled with that of the Teche-Vermilion Fresh Water District and Dr. Whitney Broussard's study to enhance fecal coliform testing efforts.

## Wood Duck Workshops

In January, we held a Wood Duck Workshop at The Shadows-on-the-Teche Visitor Center in New Iberia and had a packed room of enthusiastic duck breeders. We gained 4 new participants in our mile-marker/duck rearing program and are proud to say that we fledged over 375 ducklings along the bayou in 2020!



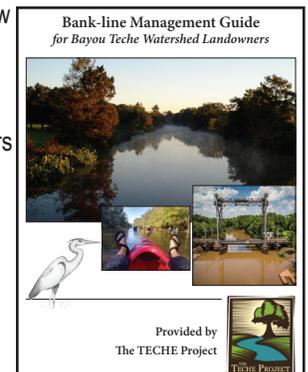
## Bank-line Management

In the spring of 2020, The TECHÉ Project produced a Bankline Management Guide for Bayou Teche Watershed Landowners. The guide addresses negative factors affecting the watershed and how landowners can help make a positive change on their property and along the Bayou Teche Corridor. The guide can be downloaded for free at [techeproject.org](http://techeproject.org), so go check it out.



We also partnered with the Bayou Vermilion Preservation Association, Acadiana Native Plant Project, Trees Acadiana and the HDR Foundation to conduct 3 Bank-line Restoration Workshops. The virtual spring workshop was held at the Leonville Trailhead and was broadcasted on Facebook. The fall workshops were held at the Breaux Bridge Trailhead and at Devil's Pond in New Iberia City Park. Each restoration effort included a training on bank-line erosion problems and the various bioengineering techniques that can be applied to restore the bank to its natural habitat. Kiosks will be installed at each location to highlight this restoration effort. We plan to continue bank-line restoration projects in the years to come, so look for announcements of future workshops.

In 2021, we are kickstarting an Iris Planting Initiative on the bayou. We will be partnering with the Louisiana Iris Conservation Initiative to plant native Giant Blue Irises at public sites along the bayou. The first site planted was the Chitimacha Trailhead in Charenton. Look for beautiful blue irises blooming at that site this spring!



# EXPLORE It

## Trailhead Docks

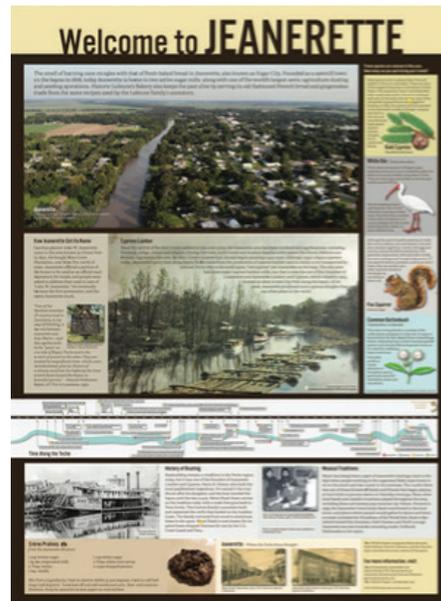
We are happy to announce that 2020 was the year the paddle trail grant under the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Recreational Trails Program for Louisiana was implemented! We installed 5 new trailhead access docks in Arnaudville, Parks, Jeanerette, Baldwin and Franklin. When full implementation of the Bayou Teche National Paddle Trail is complete, there will be access docks ranging from 6-12 miles apart in all of Bayou Teche's 15 Trail Towns! We plan to install another dock in 2021 and acquire additional funding to install the last two docks with the goal to have them completed by early 2022. We are also working with the city of New Iberia in the design of their new Kayak Park and dock, which hopefully will be completed by early 2022 as well. Once installed, the grant-funded trailhead amenities are donated to local governments for long-term ownership and maintenance. The grant that partially funds the 8 docks The TECHE Project is implementing requires a 20% local sponsor cost share. We calculate that the enhancement value to each community from the paddle trail infrastructure amounts to approximately \$45,500 per trailhead. The growth of low-impact recreation that promotes tourism and trail-based development will continue to be a priority of The TECHE Project as we work to complete the National Paddle Trail and promote this valuable resource.



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

## National Water Trail Information Kiosks

Our Consultant David Dahlquist and his team worked hard in 2020 to complete the 16, two-sided Information Kiosks located at every dock site and trailhead along Bayou Teche and the Lower Atchafalaya River from Port Barre to Berwick. One side of the kiosk features a map of the Bayou Teche National Water and Paddle Trail, along with safety information, while the other side offers unique community stories, history, recipes, a timeline and much more. This project took months of research and an extensive review process during the past year, with many kiosks sponsored locally. Information Kiosks are now in the final stages, and all panels should be installed by spring 2021. The Council is exploring funding to support the effort of bringing this valuable information to our website and translating the narratives to four languages. Sponsorships of kiosks in Loreauville, Jeanerette, Charenton, Baldwin, Centerville and Berwick are available!



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!

## Shake Your Trail Feather

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our annual fundraiser festival became a “Paddle-to-the-Party” float parade and an after-paddle lunch service. Despite this limitation, we had a very successful event with more than 160 paddlers attending. Community support of this event and the Bayou Teche Renaissance continues to grow. We extend our gratitude to all of the festival sponsors and our awesome volunteers for making this event a big success. Festival proceeds will go toward paddle trail amenities, and we are happy to announce that over \$14,000 was raised. Our next Trail Feather celebration will be October 16, 2021, so mark your calendars and come support this worthwhile cause!



## New Council Members

With a shift in focus from building the paddle trail to improving water quality and strengthening our youth education program, The TECHE Project is bringing in new Council expertise. We are happy to welcome:

### Margaret Simon

Margaret Simon is a Mississippi native who married into a Louisiana life. She lives on Bayou Teche in New Iberia and has been an elementary school teacher for 33 years, most recently teaching gifted students in Iberia Parish with a master’s degree in Gifted Education. She has published two middle-grade novels and a book of children’s poetry titled *Bayou Song: Creative Explorations of the South Louisiana Landscape*, a poetic journey along Louisiana’s Bayou Teche, with UL Press. Margaret is vice president of the board of Solomon House, an outreach mission for the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany in New Iberia. She writes for *The Daily Iberian* and on a blog regularly at [reflectionsontheteche.com](http://reflectionsontheteche.com).



### Greg Guidroz

Greg Guidroz is a native of Breaux Bridge currently serving as recycling supervisor for Lafayette Consolidated Government. He is responsible for overseeing the city’s curbside recycling program, household hazardous waste materials management program and Louisiana’s only municipally owned and operated yard waste composting facility. He holds a B.S. in Environmental and Sustainable Resources from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and has 20-plus years of experience as an environmental educator, with a focus in water quality and aquatic litter abatement.



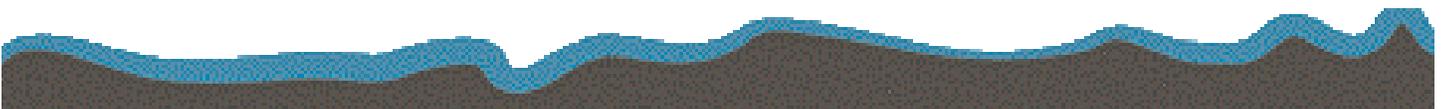
### Alex Guillory

Alex Guillory is the owner of Bluewing Civil Consulting in Lafayette, which specializes in floodplain engineering and design of roads, drainage, water, sewerage and public infrastructure. He received his Masters of Hydrological Engineering from Texas A&M and his bachelor’s in Civil Engineering from McNeese. He is a licensed professional civil engineer and certified floodplain manager in both Louisiana and Texas. Guillory began his building and design career with a family-owned and operated Louisiana rice farming operation. He is currently a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers and Louisiana Floodplain Management Association.



### Glenn Thomas

Glenn Thomas lives on the bayou in Breaux Bridge and has a Ph.D. from Louisiana State University in Wildlife and Fisheries Science. He worked with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries from the early 1990s until 2013, when he retired as research director. He has served on the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council, Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee, Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program Management Committee and Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority.



# What's Around the Bend for 2021?

The TECHE Project plans for 2021 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 continue the Wood Duck Box Mile Marker Program.
- Work with partners to expand fecal coliform water testing efforts and take on other tasks to reduce Bayou Teche Watershed pollution.
- Continue bank-line restoration demonstration efforts and develop the Louisiana Iris Planting Initiative.
- Continue cleaning the bayou routinely and conduct volunteer cleanup efforts.
- Continue outreach to landowners along the Teche corridor and within its watershed to share natural and innovative techniques to improve water quality, while reducing land erosion.

## EXPLORE It

- Work to install the last 3 paddle trail docks in Poché Bridge, Centerville and Leonville.
- Continue to work with our partners to acquire funding for Information Kiosks.
- Secure funding for directional signage for the Bayou Teche National Paddle Trail.
- Work on the development of a Paddle Trail Day Trip Planner and an updated Paddle Trail Map.
- Work with youth and others to promote the cultural heritage inherent to the Bayou Teche Corridor
- Continue to promote The TECHE Project at events and develop a brochure to educate the public on our mission.
- Update the [techeproject.org](http://techeproject.org) website and add programming information in French.

## EMBRACE It

- Hold planning meetings with fellow stakeholders to optimize development of the National Water Trail and Paddle Trail, reduce watershed pollution, and promote the cultural heritage of the Bayou Teche Corridor.
- Host the 10th Annual Shake Your Trail Feather Festival on October 16, 2021!
- Expand our Youth Education Program
- Continue to appreciate when members and supporters select The TECHE Project as their default non-profit organization for Amazon to donate 0.5% of the price of eligible AmazonSmile purchases with no additional cost.
- Continue legacy awareness to all landowners along the Teche corridor by working with real estate agents and through membership drives.



# The TECHE Project Financial Summary 2020

What do all the numbers mean? State and federal grants provided the majority of financial support for The TECHE Project, followed by membership in 2020.

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	\$17,052
Local Government Support	\$12,500
Fundraising Sales	\$4,701
State and Federal Grants	*\$139,315
Other Organization Contributions	\$0
<b>Total Support and Revenue</b>	<b>\$173,568</b>

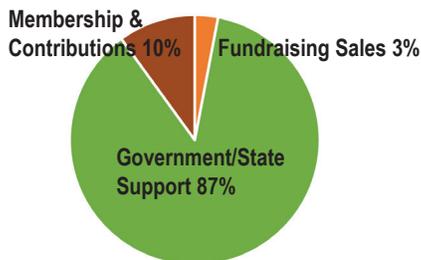
## Expenses

General Administration (no salary expenses)	\$24,709
Fundraising	\$1,837
Programs	\$227,090
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$253,636</b>

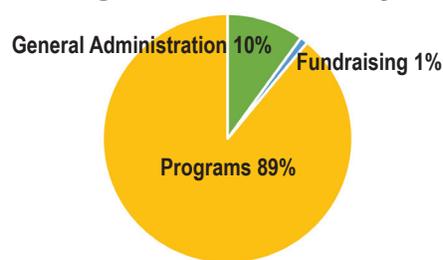
## Assets

Cash	\$34,151
Equipment	\$0
Encumbered Grant Funds	\$0
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$34,151</b>

## Contributions by Donor Type



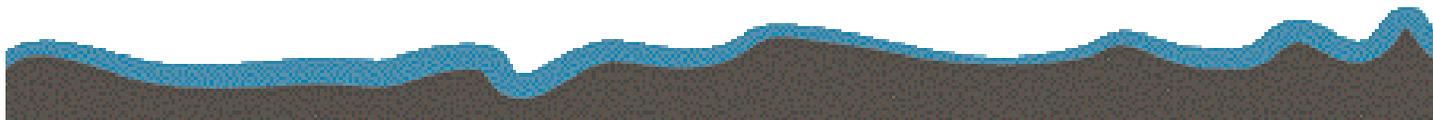
## Organization Efficiency



## Fundraising Goals For 2021

General Funds	\$25,000
Low Impact Recreation	\$85,000
Bayou Operations	\$5,000
Cultural Programming	\$10,500
Ecology and Water Quality	\$2,000
Outreach and Events	\$10,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$137,500</b>

\*Note: The TECHE Project is awaiting \$69,000 in grant reimbursement for docks installed in 2020.



# 2020 Special Contributors

## Bayou Banker (\$101 to \$500)

Kenny and Alyshia Boagni  
Gary Couret  
John and Terri Hale  
Melissa Hebert  
Don and Barbara Meyer  
Poche's Meat Market  
Peter Patout  
St. Martin Parish Tourism

## Kayak Packer (\$501 to \$999)

Courtesy Motors of Lafayette  
Pfizer

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

Rhonda Ardoin  
Tricia and Adam Johnson



Doc Voorhies

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

Cajun Coast Visitor and Convention Bureau  
Gravois Family  
Lloyd and Sandra Marshall  
Sean and Lesley Marshall  
Trey and Gina Marshall  
St. Landry Parish Tourist Commission  
St. Martin Parish Tourist Commission

## Teche Royalty (\$5,000+)

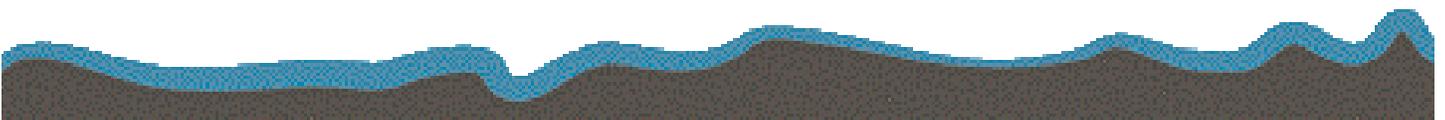
Atchafalaya National Heritage Area  
City of Franklin  
Iberia Parish Convention and Visitors Bureau  
St. Martin Parish Government  
SLEMCO  
Teche-Vermilion Fresh Water District

## Lifetime Members

Alan and Brenda Broussard  
David Dahlquist and Mary Ubinas  
Dr. Marelle Yongue and Gary Schoelerman  
Metal Shark Boats  
Bayou Teche Brewing  
Barry Landry  
Patrick and Elizabeth Little  
Sandra and Lloyd Marshall  
Trey and Gina Marshall  
Sean and Lesley Marshall  
Bayou Teche Experience

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 2020!

As of February 10, 2021, The TECHE Project is honored to have 42 individual and two-person memberships; 39 family memberships; and 26 business and government memberships, representing approximately 250 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

Bluewing Civil  
 Courtesy Motors of Breaux Bridge  
 Carrie Tutwiler  
 Historic Map Company  
 Hub City Diner  
 Jon Jenkins  
 Kenneth Douet  
 Lastrapes Nursery  
 Myran's Maison de Manger  
 Nature's Link  
 Pack & Paddle  
 Pfizer  
 Poche's Meat Market  
 Russell's Food Center  
 SLEMCO  
 Taco Sisters

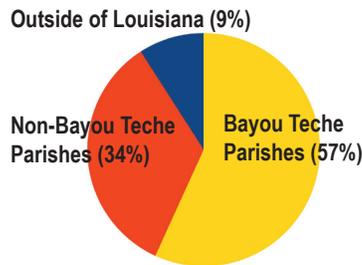
## Partner Organizations and Government Agencies

Acadiana Native Plant Project  
 Atchafalaya National Heritage Area  
 Atelier de la Nature  
 Bayou Vermilion District  
 Bayou Vermilion Preservation Association  
 Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana  
 City of Breaux Bridge  
 City of Franklin  
 City of Jeanerette  
 City of New Iberia  
 City of Patterson

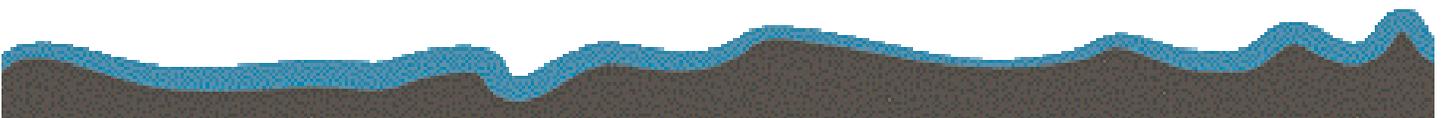
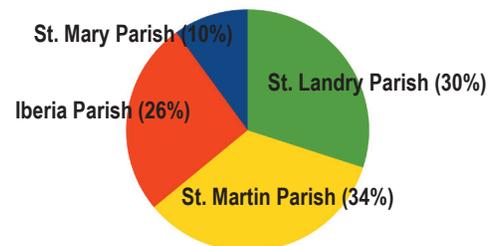
City of St. Martinville  
 FHWA Recreational Trails Program  
 LA Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism  
 LA Department of Transportation and Development  
 LA Trails and Byways Program  
 Longfellow-Evangeline State Historic Site  
 New Acadia Project  
 St. Bernard Elementary School  
 St. 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



# In Memoriam

The TECHE Project lost some loyal supporters, volunteers, friends and advocates in 2020. We'd like to take this space to remember them and their valuable contributions to our organization and mission. They will be greatly missed.



## DANA ROLKE

Constant supporter Dana Rolke (pictured at left center) succumbed to COVID-19 in December. Over the last 10 years, Dana assisted with access dock maintenance, bayou cleanups, wood duck workshops, the Annual Banquet and the Shake Your Trail Feather Festival. Many of you knew him as the happy guy who ran the festival's Teche Cafe and cooked delicious breakfast burritos for all of the volunteers.



## JENNIFER RITTER GUIDRY

In November, we mourned the loss of our friend Jennifer Ritter Guidry, who did so much to help facilitate the mission of The TECHE Project. While working for the University of Louisiana at Lafayette's Center for Culture and Eco-Tourism office, she worked alongside Kristen Kordecki, our former executive director who conceived placing Bayou Teche on the national waterways system. Both were instrumental in the development of the Bayou Teche National Paddle Trail Plan. In her role at UL, Jennifer also assisted The TECHE Project with obtaining and administering a grant to install the paddle trail access docks in Port Barre, St. Martinville, Loreauville and Charenton. We have dedicated a bench (pictured at left) in her memory at the St. Martinville Trailhead, which was her favorite.



## JUDE DESORMEAUX

Our boat captain for Shake Your Trail Feather, Quentin "Jude" Desormeaux (pictured waving at left), passed away in July. A native of New Iberia, Jude loved the Bayou Teche and felt strongly about keeping the waterway clean. We appreciate his years of volunteer service to The TECHE Project.



## DONA DEGATUR RICHARD

We also mourned the loss of Dona Degatur Richard, a friend and unwavering supporter of The TECHE Project, who passed away in July. In Dona's service to St. Martin Parish as its tourism director, her avocation demonstrated her understanding of what she was hired to promote: not hotel rooms, but culture. Dona was always there supporting our initiatives any way she could. With her support and partnership, we accomplished so much—from National Water Trail status for the bayou to informational kiosks and floating docks and significant trash removal. Today, the Bayou Teche is healthier in part because of her.

# The TECHE Project Council and Administration

## Contacts for Programs, Activities and Events

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**Patti Holland:** Floating Dock Grant, Shake Your Trail Feather, Ecology Workshops & Programs  
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**Tom Holland:** Bookkeeper, Wood Duck Box Builder  
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**Erin Z. Bass:** Administrator, Membership Coordinator, Public Relations and Marketing  
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Please contact members of The TECHE Project Council with your interest in supporting all that the Bayou Teche provides for our local communities and parishes, partner organizations, Louisiana and the United States.

Website:  
[techeproject.org](http://techeproject.org)

Email: [techeproject@techeproject.org](mailto:techeproject@techeproject.org)



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[#GeauxPaddle](https://facebook.com/TecheProject)  
[#BayouTeche](https://facebook.com/TecheProject)

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# The TECHE Project 2020 Annual Report Credits

## Special Thanks To:

Phanat Xanamane for  
the aerial cover photo

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- David Dahlquist

## Graphic Composition

- Erin Z. Bass

## Photographs

- Patti Holland
- David Dahlquist
- Erin Z. Bass
- Conni Castille
- Brent Miller

Version 1.1  
Issued: February 11,  
2021

