

# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT



## Bayou Teche & Lower Atchafalaya River

Louisiana's most  
historic and culturally significant waterway

# To Members, Sponsors and Friends of The TECHE Project



Cover photo credit:  
David Dahlquist

## The TECHE Project Council:

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

March 2023

Patti Holland, Executive Director

As The TECHE Project enters its 12th year of operation, I feel like many of the goals we set out to accomplish so many years ago are now coming to fruition. The Bayou Teche National Water and Paddle Trail is nearing completion, with only one more trailhead dock to install. Within the next year, we hope to have all of the Paddle Trail infrastructure complete. Our bayou is truly cleaner and more beautiful than ever before thanks to all of you who have contributed to bank-line restoration and cleanup efforts.

You'll notice that Conni Castille has stepped down as executive director. Conni led The TECHE Project for 10 years. Her enthusiasm and inspiration guided our nonprofit organization through its formative years, giving us the vision to create the Bayou Teche Renaissance. With her leadership and your support, Bayou Teche has become a nationally recognized water trail! There is genuine pride in the bayou these days, with more and more people enjoying low-impact recreational opportunities and the aesthetic values that the waterway has to offer. I'm happy to say that even though Conni has stepped down from her role as director, she continues to inspire The TECHE Project as an active Council member. Our nonprofit organization is extremely fortunate to have a Council that has kept its passion alive and consistent over the years, with members like Conni, Dane Thibodeaux, Brent Miller, Eric Martin and Jimmy Gravois providing unwavering insight and guidance. Our newer Council members Alex Guillory, Margaret Simon and Greg Guidroz, along with Administrator Erin Z. Bass, have brought increased knowledge and skills in areas we hope to gain strength in as we move through our second decade of operation. Paddle Trail promotion, water quality improvement and increased youth involvement are some of the goals we have set out to achieve as we move forward.

Now that we are closing in on finalizing the Bayou Teche Paddle Trail amenities, we look forward to turning our focus to Bayou Teche Paddle Trail promotion and working to increase the eco-tourism opportunities along the bayou corridor. In 2022, we published a Paddle Planner that highlights the many cultural opportunities awaiting those who choose to paddle our National Water Trail. We intend to spread the word nationally to increase recreational tourism and economic opportunities for the communities along the bayou.

Through your volunteer efforts and membership support—and with the assistance of local businesses, organizations and governments—we have truly turned the focus of the Bayou Teche Corridor back to the waterway. On a community-wide level, we are preserving the ecological and cultural inheritance for which Bayou Teche is so famously known.

One example of how the Bayou Teche Renaissance continues to inspire awareness and local pride is the Meander Mindset Project that we are excited to highlight at our 2023 Banquet. This art project, born out of the vision of Marla Kristicevich and Kristie Cornell, was inspired through their personal experience with the natural elements that so characteristically define Bayou Teche. Their photography and eco-sculptures capture how those elements interplay with the cultural aspects of our beloved bayou. The intrinsic connection and dependence of bridges, sugarcane smokestacks and the boating industry to the lazy brown waters and the flora and fauna of Bayou Teche cannot be denied and, thankfully, is being embraced through our collective love of Bayou Teche.



# ENRICH It

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

It all starts with a clean watershed.

## Bayou Operations

On May 21, 2022, we hosted our Spring Bayou Cleanup from the trailhead dock in Jeanerette. Our Jeanerette Community Ambassador Monica Duplantis was instrumental in gathering volunteers, including Mayor Carol Bourgeois Jr., who actively participated. To date, The TECHE Project volunteer efforts have removed close to 59 tons of trash from the bayou!



## Wood Duck Workshops

In January of 2022, we held a Wood Duck Workshop at Bayou Teche Brewing in Arnaudville, and in January 2023, we held another workshop in at Teche Theatre in Franklin. Council member Brent Miller has continued our popular Facebook posts providing helpful nest box rearing tips. This spring, look for more entertaining footage on our Facebook page from member Scott Albarado, who will be submitting video clips as the ducklings hatch out and jump from the boxes. Also in 2022, we worked with Boy Scout Ethan Arena to fulfill his Eagle project installing nest boxes at several dock sites on Upper Bayou Teche. The TECHE Project now has 55 participants in our mile-marker/duck rearing program who are managing over 85 nest boxes along the bayou. We are proud to say that in 2022, over 800 wood duck chicks and 40 black-bellied whistling duck chicks were produced from our duck rearing program on the bayou!



*Photo by Danny Womack*

## Bank-line Management

The TECHE Project partnered with the Louisiana Iris Conservation Initiative to plant phase two of the New Iberia City Park bank-line restoration project. This initiative was aided by New Iberia Mayor Freddie DeCourt, who actively helped with bank contouring and planting. Look for beautiful Louisiana irises on the New Iberia City Park bank-line each spring. If you are interested in doing bank-line restoration work on your bayou property, download our free Bank-line Management Guide from [techeproject.org](http://techeproject.org) and feel free to contact Director Patti Holland with questions any time.



# EXPLORE It

## Paddle Trail Infrastructure

The last year has been very productive for development of the Bayou Teche National Water and Paddle Trail. In the spring of 2022, the city of New Iberia completed a Kayak Park equipped with an access dock consistent with the high-quality docks being installed through The TECHE Project's grant work. Under our Federal Highway Administration



Recreational Trails Grant, we installed a dock in Leonville and, now, we are proud to announce that the last access dock on the Bayou Teche National Water and Paddle Trail at Poche Bridge will be installed in the spring of 2023! The completed Paddle Trail will have access docks in 15 communities along the bayou, with paddling distances from 5-12 miles. Our Paddle Planner published in August can now be used by locals and tourists to visit the trail towns along the bayou.

We are also happy to announce that the full-service trailhead pavilion being installed by St. Marin Parish in Arnaudville will be completed soon.

Additionally, the town of Leonville is installing another restroom/pavilion at the dock site in that community. Thanks to the initiatives of local governments, the Bayou Teche National Water and Paddle Trail is being supported with first-class amenities.

Promoting tourism through low-impact recreation will continue to be a priority of The TECHE Project as we embark on our next project to install directional signage for all access docks and information kiosks on the Bayou Teche National Water and Paddle Trail. We would like to thank all of the local governments that have supported this project so far.



## Bayou Teche Brewing Dock

In 2022, we donated our small portable dock (which is not part of the official Bayou Teche National Water and Paddle Trail) to Bayou Teche Brewing. Before that donation could take place, maintenance work was needed, so we called on our volunteers to make that happen. The TECHE project would like to acknowledge the Lafayette Paddle Club and the brewery for their ongoing support in maintaining this dock. The Knotts and the staff at Bayou Teche Brewing have always understood the importance of the paddle trail for recreational tourism, and the brewery invites all paddlers to continue using this dock and then stop by for a cold beer and wood-fired pizza.

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

You must  
experience  
it to  
appreciate  
it.



# EMBRACE It

## Community Ambassadors

Port Barre - Gayle White  
Leonville - Mary Finley  
Amaudville - Myran Chautin  
Cecilia - Brandon Ballengée  
Poche Bridge - Bryan Taylor  
Breux Bridge - Cory Werk  
Parks - Joey Abshire  
St. Martinville - Christi Disher  
Loreauville - Nick Bourgeois  
New Iberia - David Dahlquist  
Jeanerette - Monica Duplantis  
Charenton - Sherry Pinell  
Baldwin - Jaunita Clements  
Franklin - Tony Scelfo  
Centerville - Sam Hanagriff  
Patterson - Luke Bienvenue

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

## Membership Banquet

Our Annual Banquet in 2022 was held at the Sliman Theater in New Iberia. We had opening remarks by Mayor Freddie DeCourt and guest speaker Anne Darrah on the Lil' Brooklyn Neighborhood Initiative. Food was catered by Bon Creole, and live music was by Amis due Teche with special guest Christine Balfa.



## Community Ambassador Program

Our Community Ambassadors representing each Trail Town along the bayou continue to be a great asset to our efforts. They monitor each trailhead for maintenance issues and let us know when events are happening along the bayou so we can promote them. In 2022, they took part in Keep Louisiana Beautiful's (KLB) Love the Boot Week and also helped us obtain a grant with KLB to acquire new trash receptacles for our trailheads.

## Youth Workshop

As part of our efforts to expand our youth offerings, we applied for and received a Healthy Communities Grant from Keep Louisiana Beautiful. The grant will be implemented in June with a "Geaux Paddle" youth recreation program that will include paddling, a water testing experiment, trash pickup, education on bayou ecology and an art project made from recycled trash.

## Shake Your Trail Feather

Our 2022 Shake Your Trail Feather Paddle Parade was bigger than ever, with over 180 paddlers attending. We extended the paddle to include a 2-mile reach to Lils on the Bayou in Breux Bridge. We were also able to bring back live music with Horace Trahan and the Ossun Express at Parc des Ponts for the party after the paddle, and it was heartwarming to see dancing at the event once again. Our The next Trail Feather celebration will be October 21, 2023.



Photo by David Dahlquist

## Twilight on the Teche

Our first party on the bayou just for members was a big success! Margaret and Jeff Simon served as hosts from their midcentury home in New Iberia, and we ate gumbo and danced on the deck in the twilight. We also offered a cocktail cruise on Bayou Teche in advance of the event. We plan to continue this annual party in the fall and move it to different private homes along the bayou.

## Other Outreach Efforts

We provided information at Books Along the Teche Literary Festival and wrote the script for the festival's boat tours in April. We manned a table at the Bayou Vermilion Preservation Association's Annual State of the River meeting at Vermilionville in September and participated at Atelier de la Nature's Halloween event in Arnaudville.



# What's Around the Bend for 2023?

The TECHE Project plans for 2023 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 Bayou 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 reduce Bayou Teche Watershed pollution.
- Continue bank-line restoration efforts and further develop the iris planting initiative.
- Start a Bank-Line Restoration Certification program for landowners improving their banks along the bayou.
- Continue cleaning the bayou routinely and participating in the state's Love the Boot Week in April.
- 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

- Secure funding for directional signage for the Bayou Teche National Water and Paddle Trail and complete implementation of that element.
- Continue to distribute and promote the Paddle Planner.
- Identify more spots for camping and overnight stays along Bayou Teche.

## EMBRACE It

- Continue to expand youth education with the "Geaux Paddle" program.
- Continue to work with community ambassadors to promote The TECHE Project at events to educate the public on our mission.
- Hold planning meetings with fellow stakeholders to promote the cultural heritage of the Bayou Teche Corridor.
- Hold the second-annual Twilight on the Teche membership party.
- Continue to represent the great work being conducted along Bayou Teche at community outreach events.
- Host the 12th Annual Shake Your Trail Feather event on October 21, 2023!





# The TECHE Project Financial Summary 2022

What do all the numbers mean? State and federal grants provided the majority of financial support for The TECHE Project, followed by memberships and fundraising in 2022.

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

State and Federal Grants	\$63,723
Membership and Contributions	\$19,975
Fundraising Sales	\$8,037
Local Government Support	\$7,800
<b>Total Support and Revenue</b>	<b>\$99,535</b>

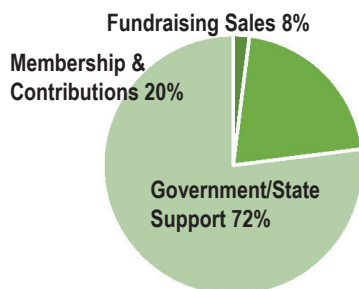
## Expenses

Programs	\$85,748
General Administration	\$23,663
Fundraising	\$2,634
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$112,045</b>

## Assets

Cash	\$46,161
Equipment	\$0
Encumbered Grant Funds	\$0
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$46,161</b>

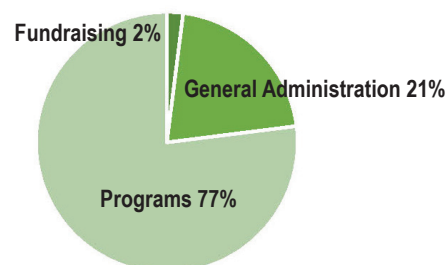
## Contributions by Donor Type



## Fundraising Goals For 2023

General Funds	\$25,000
Low Impact Recreation	\$95,000
Bayou Operations	\$5,000
Cultural Programming	\$10,000
Ecology and Water Quality	\$3,000
Outreach and Events	\$10,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$148,000</b>

## Organization Efficiency



## Estimated Economic Value By Program Element (2010–2022)

Bayou Operations/Clean Ups	\$38,000
Paddle Trail Development	\$1,300,000
Bank-line Restoration	\$12,000
Ecological Workshops/Water Quality	\$10,000
Cultural/Economic Development	\$122,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$1,482,000</b>

# 2022 Special Contributors

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

A&S Farms  
Bayou Chateau  
Carlos Ubinas  
Don and Barbara Meyer  
Historic Map Company  
Jerry Shea Jr.  
Margaret & Jeff Simon  
Mark Sinclair  
Poche's Meat Market  
Robert Greco  
Russell & Mary Zaunbrecher  
St. Bernard Elementary



*Photo by David Dahlquist*

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

City of Jeanerette  
David Dahlquist & Mary Ubinas  
Doc Voorhies  
John & Mary Osborne  
FM Bank  
Pack and Paddle  
Pfizer  
SLEMCO  
St. Martin Parish Tourism  
Teche-Vermilion Fresh Water District

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

Adam & Tricia Johnson  
City of New Iberia  
Courtesy Motors

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

Atchafalaya National Heritage Area

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

St. Landry Parish Tourist Commission  
Dr. Marelle Yongue & Gary Schoelerman

## Lifetime Members

Alan & Brenda Broussard  
Barry Landry  
Bayou Teche Brewing  
Bayou Teche Experience  
David Dahlquist & Mary Ubinas  
Dr. Marelle Yongue & Gary Schoelerman  
Metal Shark Boats  
NuNu Arts and Culture Collective  
Patrick & Elizabeth Little  
Sandra & Lloyd Marshall  
Sean & Lesley Marshall  
SLEMCO  
Teche-Vermilion Fresh Water District  
Trey & Gina Marshall

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 2022!

As of Feb. 28, 2023, The TECHE Project is honored to have 53 individual and two-person memberships; 52 family memberships; and 30 business and government memberships, representing over 300 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

Atelier de la Nature  
Bayou Teche Brewing  
Bayou Teche Museum  
Bluewing Civil  
Center for Louisiana Studies  
FM Bank  
Historic Map Company  
Howldog Wood Works & Framing  
Little Big Cup  
Myran's Maison de Manger  
Nature's Link  
Pack & Paddle  
Pfizer  
Poche's Meat Market  
SLEMCO

## Partner Organizations and Government Agencies

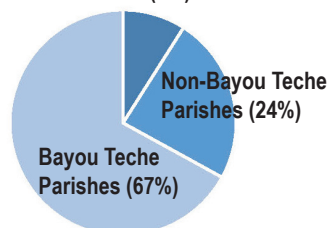
Acadiana Native Plant Project  
Atchafalaya National Heritage Area  
Bayou Vermilion District  
Bayou Vermilion Preservation Association  
Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana  
City of Berwick  
City of Breaux Bridge  
City of Franklin  
City of Jeanerette  
City of New Iberia  
City of Patterson  
City of Port Barre

City of St. Martinville  
FHWA Recreational Trails Program  
LA Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism  
LA Department of Transportation and Development  
LA Office of State Parks  
LA Trails and Byways Program  
Louisiana Iris Conservation Initiative  
St. Bernard Elementary School  
St. Landry, St. Martin, Iberia and St. Mary Governments & Tourism Offices  
Teche-Vermilion Fresh Water District  
Town of Arnaudville  
Town of Baldwin  
Town of Leonville  
Village of Loreauville  
Village of Parks

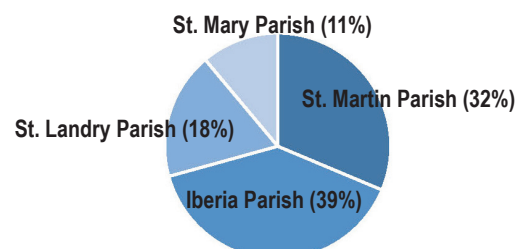


## Total Membership Distribution

Outside of Louisiana (9%)



## Membership Distribution by Bayou Teche Parish & Lower Atchafalaya



# ONLINE RESOURCES

AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD AT [TECHEPROJECT.ORG](http://TECHEPROJECT.ORG)

## PADDLE PLANNER

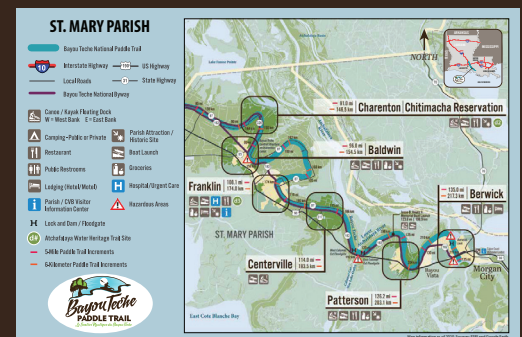
Our Bayou Teche National Paddle Trail Paddle Planner was published last summer and includes maps, safety tips, trip itineraries for each of the four parishes, a shopping list, travel times, Bayou Teche Bucket List and lots more.

Download the planner from our website or pick one up at a tourism bureau or visitors center in St. Landry, St. Martin, Iberia or St. Mary Parish.



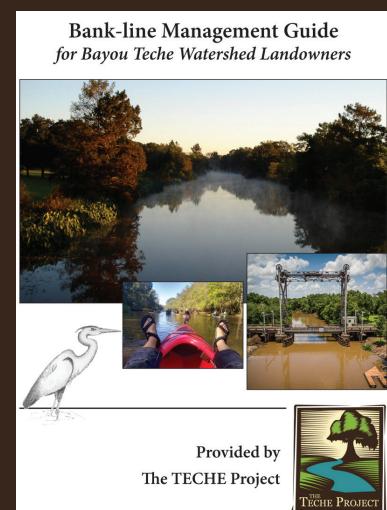
## PADDLE TRAIL MAPS

Easy-to-print maps by parish are available on our website. Each version includes safety information on the back, along with amenities like restrooms, camping, historic sites, etc. You can also find the maps at tourism bureaus. We suggest taking one with you on your next paddle trip.



## BANK-LINE MANAGEMENT GUIDE

The TECHE Project has also produced a Bank-line Management Guide for landowners that details bank-line restoration techniques and provides insight on appropriate plants and where to acquire them. The guidebook also addresses other landowner concerns such as sewerage treatment, groundwater retention measures and nuisance wildlife control.





# The TECHE Project Council and Administration

## Contacts for Programs, Activities and Events

**Patti Holland:** Executive Director, Floating Dock Grant, Shake Your Trail Feather, Ecology Workshops & Programs (337-277-4645) [howldogfarms@gmail.com](mailto:howldogfarms@gmail.com) or [patti\\_holland@techeproject.org](mailto:patti_holland@techeproject.org)

**Conni Castille:** Paddle Trail Planning, Historical Program Activities (337-277-5292) [connicastille@gmail.com](mailto:connicastille@gmail.com) or [conni\\_castille@techeproject.org](mailto:conni_castille@techeproject.org)

**Jimmy Gravois:** Fundraising, Logistical Support (337-967-5044) [jg@metalsarkboats.com](mailto:jg@metalsarkboats.com) or [jimmy\\_gravois@techeproject.org](mailto:jimmy_gravois@techeproject.org)

**Greg Guidroz:** Bayou Operations, Ecological Education (337-654-6936) [gregoryguidroz@gmail.com](mailto:gregoryguidroz@gmail.com)

**Alex Guillory:** Water Quality Improvement (337-419-0911) [alex@bluewingcivil.com](mailto:alex@bluewingcivil.com)

**Eric Martin:** Fundraising, Paddle Trail Planning, Government Liaison (337-277-3960) [Eric.Martin2@pfizer.com](mailto:Eric.Martin2@pfizer.com) or [eric\\_martin@techeproject.org](mailto:eric_martin@techeproject.org)

**Brent Miller:** Breaux Bridge Trailhead, Wood Duck Workshop & Social Media Updates (225-772-5015) [Brent.W.Miller@pfizer.com](mailto:Brent.W.Miller@pfizer.com) or [brent\\_miller@techeproject.org](mailto:brent_miller@techeproject.org)

**Margaret Simon:** Cultural and Historical Programming, Youth Education (337-380-4507) [margaretsmn@gmail.com](mailto:margaretsmn@gmail.com)

**Dane Thibodeaux:** Bayou Cleanup Operations, Outreach and Marketing (337-654-3012) [dane\\_thibodeaux@techeproject.org](mailto:dane_thibodeaux@techeproject.org)

**Tom Holland:** Bookkeeper, Wood Duck Box Builder (337-277-4636) [howldogfarms@gmail.com](mailto:howldogfarms@gmail.com)

**Erin Z. Bass:** Administrator, Membership Coordinator, Public Relations and Marketing (337-706-2323) [erinzbass@gmail.com](mailto:erinzbass@gmail.com)

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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[#BayouTeche](https://twitter.com/techeproject)



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# The TECHE Project

## 2022 Annual Report Credits

### Special Thanks To:

David Dahlquist for  
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Feather photo on  
the cover

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- Patti Holland
- Tom Holland
- Erin Z. Bass
- David Dahlquist

### Graphic Composition

- Erin Z. Bass

### Photographs

- Patti Holland
- Erin Z. Bass
- David Dahlquist
- Danny Womack

