

2023 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:
Stuart Amidon

The TECHE Project Council:

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

March 2024

Patti Holland, Executive Director

When I started working with The TECHE Project a little over a decade ago, I had no idea that I would be joining a community of inspirational people from all walks of life that share one common vision: a love of Bayou Teche. It's truly amazing to see what our membership-based organization has accomplished in 14 years. We have removed 60 tons of trash from the bayou, an astounding amount considering that the work was done primarily by dedicated volunteers. Many of our trash pickers have been part of the cleanup crew since the beginning. You should be proud of your efforts, as the Bayou Teche Corridor is much cleaner today because of you.

The ecological health of the bayou has improved in several ways through our various programs. The bayou has a thriving population of wood ducks thanks to our many wood duck nest box program participants. Additionally, several of our members and communities have taken the initiative to improve water quality by planting native vegetation along the bank-line. In 2023, we started the annual Geaux Paddle Youth Workshop, which combines paddle training with an understanding of the ecological importance of a healthy waterway.

The TECHE Project's 14th year of operation has turned out to be momentous, as it marks the year that we completed installation of the access dock infrastructure for the Bayou Teche National Water and Paddle Trail. In June of 2023, we installed the last of 15 paddle trail access docks on over 130 miles of Bayou Teche and the Lower Atchafalaya River! We are also proud to announce the completion of another major effort, the installation of over 100 directional signs marking the way for travelers to locate paddle trail amenities. A huge amount of gratitude goes out to all of our partners, including local community governments, parish governments and tourism offices, who helped fund this project. A special thanks goes out to our contractor David Dahlquist, whose tireless efforts literally paved the way to make the directional sign project a reality.

The TECHE Project Council looks forward to the next chapter of our nonprofit's mission to increase awareness of the importance of Bayou Teche as a destination for nature-based tourism. We find ourselves lucky to be blessed with a beautiful bayou that contains the added benefit of rich cultural attributes. Where else can you paddle for half a day on a scenic waterway and then stop in a town for a bowl of delicious gumbo with a side of Zydeco dancing?

Raising awareness of Bayou Teche's beauty, history and culture is what The TECHE Project is all about. As such, we are excited to be hosting our Annual Banquet at the venue of our partner organization NuNu Arts and Culture Collective in Arnaudville. Our guest speaker, art historian Claudia Kheel, will be sharing works of artists and photographers that capture the beauty of our beloved bayou. We hope you can join us at the banquet. We also hope that all of you who share our love of the bayou can find the opportunity to get on the water or visit one of the many awesome communities located on 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

In April of 2023, we took part in the state's "Love the Boot" campaign. Our community ambassadors and other volunteers cleaned each trailhead, making them welcoming sites for visitors. We also collaborated with state and local parish/town officials to install 10 trashcans at our dock sites as part of a Keep Louisiana Beautiful grant. Just this past February, we held a volunteer bayou cleanup with the participation of the Teche-Vermilion Fresh Water District. Our grand total of garbage removed from the bayou is now 60 tons!



Wood Duck Program

In January of 2023, we held a wood duck workshop at the Teche Theatre in Franklin, and in January 2024, we held another workshop at the Acadian Memorial Museum in St. Martinville. Also in 2023, we worked with Boy Scout Andre O'Kelly from Troop 224 to fulfill his Eagle Project, which comprised construction and installation of nest boxes along the bayou and increasing landowner participation. Council member Brent Miller has continued providing helpful nest box rearing tips via our Facebook page. With all of these efforts, we have increased our nest box rearing program to 61 participants. The wood duck program is now managing close to 100 nest boxes. While we are targeting wood ducks in our program, other cavity nesters are benefiting as well. We are proud to say that in 2023, over 800 wood duck chicks, 90 black-bellied whistling duck chicks and 24 hooded mergansers were produced from our duck rearing program on the bayou!



Bank-line Management

The TECHE Project partnered with the Louisiana Iris Conservation Initiative to plant the third phase of the New Iberia City Park bank-line restoration project. This initiative was aided by New Iberia Mayor Freddie DeCourt, who actively supports bank-line restoration. Currently, over 1,000 linear feet of iris are growing and blooming on the bank at the park. The trailhead bank-lines at Leonville and Poche Bridge were also planted with iris and water-filtering wetland plants by our volunteers in the fall of 2023. We will continue to plant beneficial bank-line vegetation in the future. If you are interested in doing bank-line restoration work on your bayou property, download our free Bank-line Management Guide at techeproject.org and feel free to contact Patti Holland with questions any time.



EXPLORE It

Bayou Teche National Paddle Trail

The TECHE Project is proud to say that all the major infrastructure features for the Bayou Teche National Paddle Trail have been installed! In the spring of 2023, we completed the last access dock of 15 trailheads along the National Paddle Trail at Poche Bridge. We also completed, with the assistance of local governments, tourism offices and the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, a major initiative to install over 100 directional signs guiding motorists to the paddle trail from Port Barre to Berwick.

We are thrilled to see a new trailhead pavilion/bathroom installed by St. Martin Parish in Arnaudville and the impressive pavilion complex installed by the town of Leonville in 2023. Thanks to the initiatives of local governments, the Bayou Teche National Paddle Trail is being supported with first-class amenities.



From left: New trash receptacle in Jeanerette; Arnaudville pavilion; directional sign; dedication of Leonville pavilion



Nature-Based Tourism

Promoting tourism through low-impact recreation will continue to be a priority of The TECHE Project as we shift gears from paddle trail infrastructure installation to facilitating recreational use on Bayou Teche. To that end, we are participating in an ecotourism network of nonprofits and local government officials with the goal to increase tourism through the creation and promotion of recreational opportunities that offer a combination of ecological and cultural insights. Now that the bulk of the paddle trail infrastructure has been installed, we are working with Wanderlust Rentals in their endeavor to install kayak rental lockers at key trailheads. If you don't own your own kayak, don't worry, you will soon be able to rent one!



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

Arnaudville - Myran Chautin

Cecilia - Brandon Ballengée

Poche Bridge - Bryan Taylor

Breaux 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

Over 100 TECHE Project members attended our 2023 banquet at the newly renovated Albania Mansion, with opening remarks by Jeanerette Mayor Carol Bourgeois. Artist Marla Kristicevich and photographer Kristie Cornell also spoke about their inspiration behind the “Meander Mindset” art installation, which infuses natural elements into a multimedia art exhibit exploring the beauty and culture of Bayou Teche.

Youth Workshop

We received a Healthy Communities Grant from Keep Louisiana Beautiful in 2023 and used the funds to hold our first annual “Geaux Paddle” youth recreation program in June. Ten youth ages 10-14 participated in paddling, a water testing experiment, trash pickup, education on bayou ecology and an art project made from recycled trash over two days. We are already planning another workshop for June 2024!



Outreach Efforts

We presented a booth at the Bayou Vermilion Preservation Association’s Annual State of the River event at Vermilionville in September and participated in Atelier de la Nature’s Halloween Art and Nature Festival in Arnaudville. Director Patti Holland spoke at the Vermilion River Alliance quarterly meeting, and Administrator Erin Bass consulted on a potential paddle trail in Houma in May.



Shake Your Trail Feather

Our annual fundraiser and celebration of the Bayou Teche Paddle Trail continues to be an astounding success. Over 175 paddlers attended the 2023 floating parade. Live music with Corey Ledet and his Zydeco Band brought a crowd of feather-clad merry makers to Parc des Ponts in Breaux Bridge, where we auctioned a kayak donated by our friends at Pack and Paddle. Special thanks go out to all our festival supporters who make Shake Your Trail Feather so successful. We will continue to host this event each fall. The next celebration will be October 19, 2024, and we hope to see you there!



Twilight on the Teche

Our second party on the bayou just for members was held in Franklin. Josh Caffery served as host from his family home Columbia Hall on Bayou Teche. We ate seafood gumbo and danced in the parlor to the Babineaux Sisters as the sun went down.

What's Around the Bend for 2024?

The TECHE Project's plans for 2024 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.
- Conduct community bayou cleanups and routinely clean the bayou where needed.
- 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 with the newly organized Acadiana Eco-Tourism Network of concerned stakeholders to develop nature-based tourism products and promote those opportunities nationally.
- Continue to distribute and promote the Paddle Planner.
- Identify more spots for camping and overnight stays along Bayou Teche.
- Work to get more outfitting services along the bayou.
- Work with the public to provide guidance on making their float trip on the bayou more enjoyable.

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 the third-annual Twilight on the Teche membership party.
- Continue to represent the great work being conducted along Bayou Teche at community outreach events.
- Host the 13th Annual Shake Your Trail Feather event on October 19, 2024!



The TECHE Project Financial Summary 2023

State and federal grants provided the majority of financial support for The TECHE Project, and local government support increased fourfold from previous years due to contributions to the directional signage project, a community-wide effort.

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	\$44,013
Local Government Support	\$33,302
Membership and Contributions	\$21,939
Fundraising Sales	\$7,232
Total Support and Revenue	\$106,486

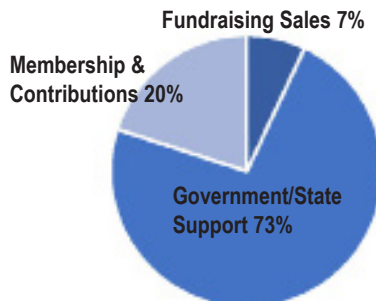
Expenses

Programs	\$84,654
General Administration	\$22,088
Fundraising	\$1,193
Total Expenses	\$107,935

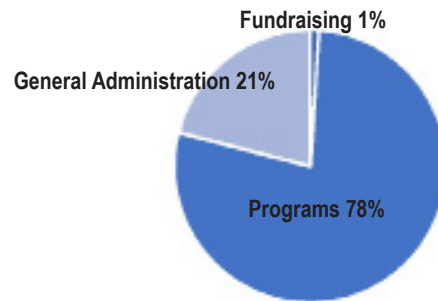
Assets

Cash	\$44,712
Equipment	\$0
Encumbered Grant Funds	\$0
Total Assets	\$44,712

Contributions by Donor Type



Organization Efficiency



Fundraising Goals For 2024

General Funds	\$30,000
Low-Impact Recreation	\$4,000
Bayou Operations	\$5,000
Cultural Programming	\$9,000
Ecology and Water Quality	\$5,000
Outreach and Events	\$10,000
Total:	\$63,000

Estimated Economic Value By Program Element (2010–2023)

Bayou Operations/Cleanups	\$40,000
Paddle Trail Development	\$1,800,000
Bank-line Restoration	\$14,000
Ecological Workshops/Water Quality	\$12,000
Cultural/Economic Development	\$125,000
Total:	\$1,991,000

2023 Special Contributors

Bayou Banker (\$100 to \$500)

Alan & Brenda Broussard
Don & Barbara Meyer
Gareth & Lucy Stevens
Historic Map Company
Jerry Shea Jr.
John E. Caviar
Mark Patout
Mark Sinclair
Poche's Meat Market

Kayak Packer (\$500 to \$999)

Chitimacha Tribe
City of Jeanerette
City of Patterson
David Dahlquist & Mary Ubinas
NuNu Arts & Culture Collective
SLEMCO
St. Martin Parish Tourism
Teche-Vermilion Fresh Water District
Town of St. Martinville
Village of Loreauville

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

Adam & Tricia Johnson
City of Breaux Bridge
City of New Iberia
Courtesy Motors
Doc Voorhies
Village of Parks

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

Cajun Coast Tourism
Iberia Parish Tourism Commission
St. Mary Parish Government

Teche Royalty (\$5,000+)

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

Lifetime Members

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



2023 Annual Banquet at
Albania Mansion

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 2023!

As of March 7, 2024, The TECHE Project is honored to have 62 individual and two-person memberships; 64 family memberships; and 30 business and government memberships, representing over 350 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

A&S Farms
Bayou Teche Brewing
Bayou Teche Museum
Bayou Paddlesports
Center for Louisiana Studies
Courtesy Motors
Historic Map Company
Howldog Wood Works & Framing
Iberia Cultural Resources Association
Jacqueline Benoit
LA Networx
Little Big Cup
Mickey Bellott
Nature's Link
Pack & Paddle
Peter Patout
Poche's Meat Market
SLEMCO

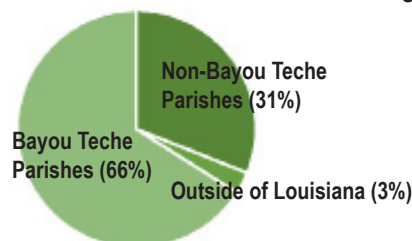
Partner Organizations and Government Agencies

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 Berwick
City of Breaux Bridge
City of Franklin

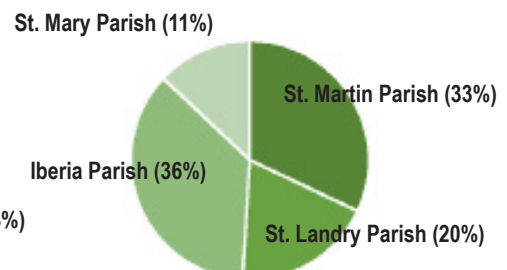
City of Jeanerette
City of New Iberia
City of Patterson
City of Port Barre
City of St. Martinville
FHWA Recreational Trails Program
Lafayette Paddle Club
LA Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
LA Department of Transportation and Development
LA Office of State Parks
LA Trails and Byways Program
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 Leonville
Village of Loreauville
Village of Parks



Total Membership Distribution



Membership Distribution by Bayou Teche Parish & Lower Atchafalaya



ONLINE RESOURCES

AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD AT TECHEPROJECT.ORG

PADDLE PLANNER

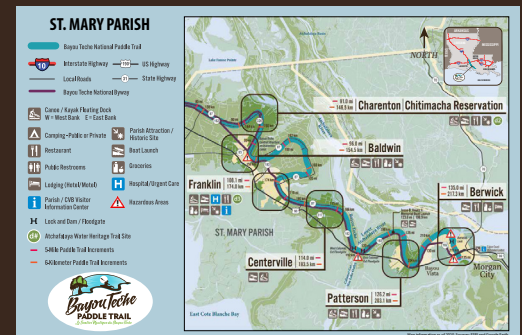
Our Bayou Teche National Paddle Trail Paddle Planner includes maps, safety tips, trip itineraries for each of the four parishes, a shopping list, travel times, Bayou Teche Bucket List and lots more.

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.



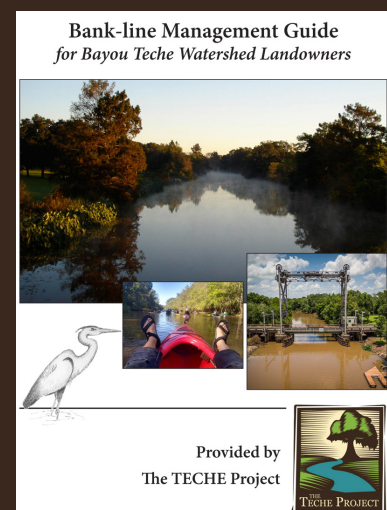
PADDLE TRAIL MAPS

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, Shake Your Trail Feather, Ecology Workshops & Programs
(337-277-4645) howldogfarms@gmail.com or patti_holland@techeproject.org

Conni Castille: Paddle Trail Planning, Historical Program Activities
(337-277-5292) connicastille@gmail.com or conni_castille@techeproject.org

Jimmy Gravois: Fundraising, Logistical Support
(337-967-5044) jg@metalsarkboats.com or jimmy_gravois@techeproject.org

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

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

Eric Martin: Fundraising, Paddle Trail Planning, Government Liaison
(337-277-3960) Eric.Martin2@pfizer.com or eric_martin@techeproject.org

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

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

Dane Thibodeaux: Bayou Cleanup Operations, Outreach and Marketing
(337-654-3012) dane_thibodeaux@techeproject.org

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

Erin Z. Bass: Administrator, Membership Coordinator, Public Relations and Marketing
(337-706-2323) 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

Email: techeproject@techeproject.org



facebook.com/TecheProject
facebook.com/bayou.teche.1
[@techeproject](https://twitter.com/techeproject)
[#GeauxPaddle](https://twitter.com/techeproject)
[#BayouTeche](https://twitter.com/techeproject)



CONTACT US
The TECHE Project
PO Box 165
Arnaudville, LA
70512

The TECHE Project

2023 Annual Report Credits

Content Development

- Patti Holland
- Tom Holland
- Erin Z. Bass

Graphic Composition

- Erin Z. Bass

Photographs

- Patti Holland
- Erin Z. Bass
- David Dahlquist



Version 1.1
Issued: March 11, 2024

