

NATURE

LOUISIANA

Spring 2024 • nature.org/louisiana



© JCW Creative

We're all in this together.

Partners. Volunteers. Members. Trustees. The list goes on and on of the people and organizations who are critical to achieving The Nature Conservancy's mission in Louisiana. Whether you fall into one (or all) of these categories, or you are just becoming familiar with our work in the state, I am here to say that we need YOU and many others to ensure that Louisiana's lands and waters can continue to invigorate our lives and livelihoods for generations to come. In this issue of Louisiana Nature News, we highlight only a couple of ways to give back. We appreciate every effort, big and small.

See you outside.

Karen Gautreaux, State Director

WHAT DO YOU THINK?:

Email us at lafo@tnc.org.

SUPPORT OUR WORK

Visit nature.org/lagiving to donate towards our mission to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends.



Longleaf pine forest and savanna at the CC Road Savanna Preserve © Will deGravelles/TNC

Louisiana Outdoors Forever

A Nature Conservancy project benefits from this new state program

Last fall, our effort to acquire a 288-acre property adjacent to The Nature Conservancy's CC Road Savanna Preserve was among 13 conservation projects funded by the new Louisiana Outdoors Forever (LOF) program. In addition to expanding the preserve, the acquisition allows TNC to build on efforts to restore and manage longleaf pine forest, a habitat that is critical to the federally endangered American Chaffseed, and other plants and animals. With funds in hand, we will acquire the property and move forward with forest thinning, prescribed fire, herbicide application, tree planting and other restoration work over the next three years.

Once abundant throughout the southeastern United States, longleaf pine forests—when maintained by low-intensity, periodic burning—boast an open canopy that welcomes sunlight to foster unique grassland savannas. This unique habitat supports diverse birds, reptiles, amphibians and insects, many of which decline in the

absence of these open conditions. Longleaf pine trees are also more resistant to hurricane winds, drought, disease and pests than other pine species. And when healthy, they are less susceptible to out-of-control wildfires, more effective at storing carbon and serve as a valuable resource for local economies.

"Collectively, the projects permanently protect priority conservation areas, increase recreation opportunities, enhance wildlife habitat, improve water quality and conserve working lands for the benefit of all Louisianans."

Lisa Creasman, Associate State Director

During this first LOF funding cycle, an initial \$10 million appropriation leveraged \$27.9 million in additional funds from public and private sources to secure \$38 million for conservation across Louisiana. The 13 (out of 50) projects funded range from establishing a city park in Shreveport and enhancing marsh habitat along the coast to creating a nature center in Abita Springs and restoring longleaf pine forest at our TNC preserve.



Clockwise: Volunteers build a 15-foot bridge at the Abita Creek Flatwoods Preserve. The Nature Conservancy Gulf Corps volunteers help at the Lafitte Woods Preserve in Grand Isle. A volunteer group builds a landing at the Abita Springs Flatwoods Preserve. © TNC

NATURE LOUISIANA

38%

of our total revenue last fiscal year at The Nature Conservancy of Louisiana came from public grants or funds.

—TNC Louisiana Finance Operations Office

Volunteer Leadership Summit



© Celeste Richard/TNC

Our Louisiana staff, Karen Gautreaux (State Director) and Emily Vuxton (Director of External Affairs) along with two Louisiana trustees, Tina Freeman and Mary Lavigne, joined hundreds of their peers in Washington D.C. to meet with members of Congress to advocate for bold and nonpartisan government action to prioritize conservation funding, protect wildlife, and support clean air and water for future generations.

Top of mind during conversations with the Louisiana delegation was advocating for the passage of the next Farm Bill, the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) and the Reinvesting in Shoreline Economies and Ecosystems (RISEE) Act.

The Nature Conservancy also used some of this time to describe some of the work we have been doing in Louisiana, including in the Atchafalaya River Basin and with the new Treesilience TNC has played a role in establishing within Louisiana.

Visit us Here!

nature.org/louisiana

Ways of Giving

Volunteering represents a key way of giving back to nature in Louisiana

There are many ways to give back to nature in Louisiana, from donating money to getting up-close-and-personal with the soil and sharing The Nature Conservancy's mission with others. In recent months, several of our nature preserves benefited from volunteers whose collective efforts made a big difference at in places that are used and appreciated by so many around the state. For example, two Louisiana-based companies gave their staff the day off to help remove a damaged boardwalk and build a 370-foot section of the new boardwalk at our Abita Creek Flatwoods Preserve.

“The Gulf Coast Conservation Corps volunteers are a hardworking, goal driven, creative group of young people who truly want to make a difference in the world!”

Jean Landry, Grand Isle Program Manager

Not to be outdone, young adults working with the Gulf Coast Conservation Corps maintained the 2.5-mile nature trail running through our Lafitte Woods Preserve, installed cement picnic tables and benches, and removed litter that blows into the understory of the forested portions of Grand Isle.

Thank you to all of these individuals and organizations, and many others, for dedicating their hands and hearts to TNC priorities around Louisiana.

At our Cypress Island Preserve, six volunteers helped with improving the trails around the Visitor's Center and added a fresh coat of paint to the Center's porch. And 14 volunteers gathered at our Mary Ann Brown preserve to remove and rebuild a 15-foot bridge to allow visitors to better maneuver the nature trail around the pond.



The Nature Conservancy
P.O. Box
Baton Rouge, LA 70821

Louisiana
lafo@tnc.org
nature.org/louisiana

@natureconservancylouisiana
 @naturelouisiana
 @nature_louisiana