

conservation year in review

louisiana 2010

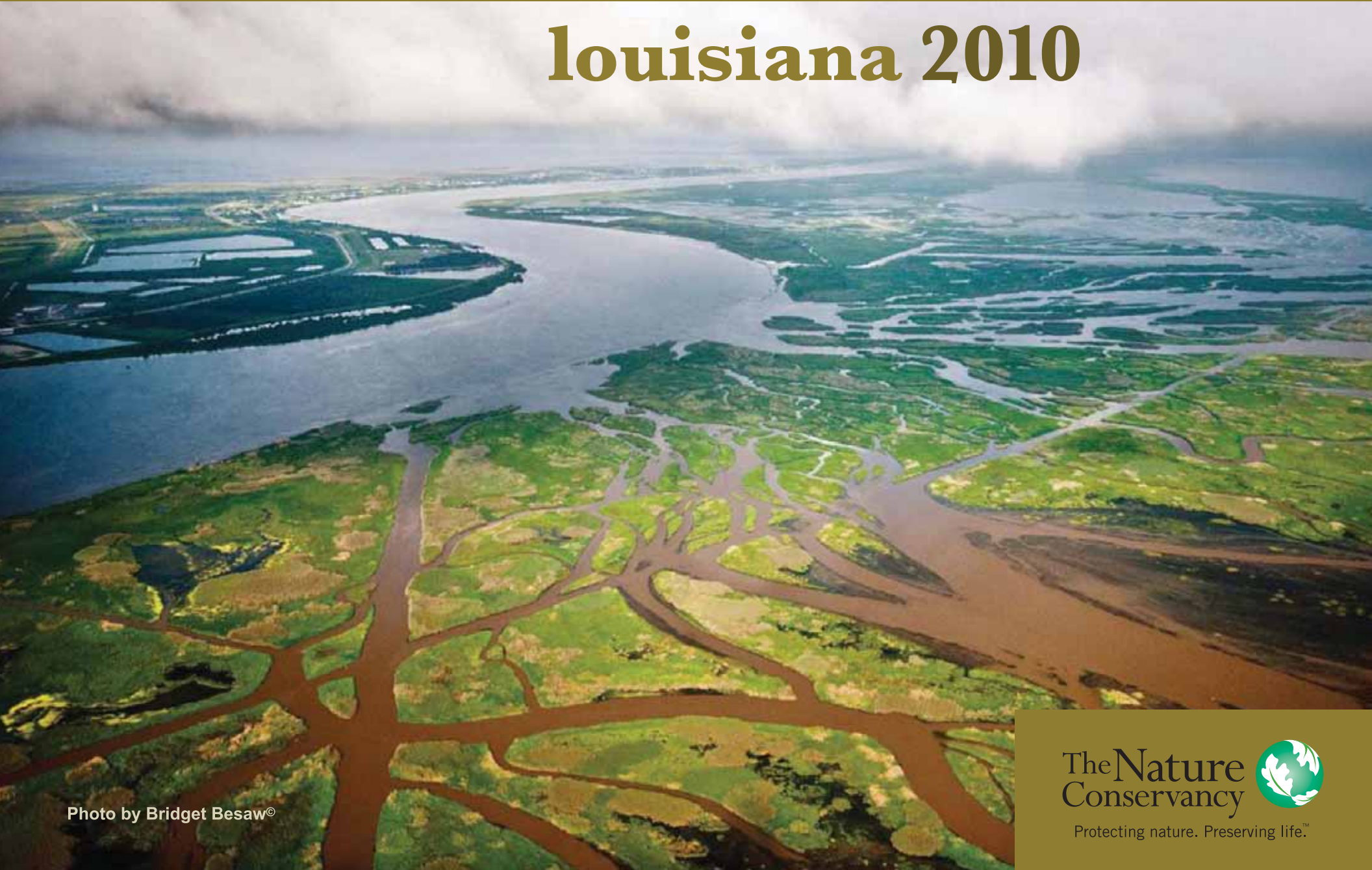


Photo by Bridget Besaw®

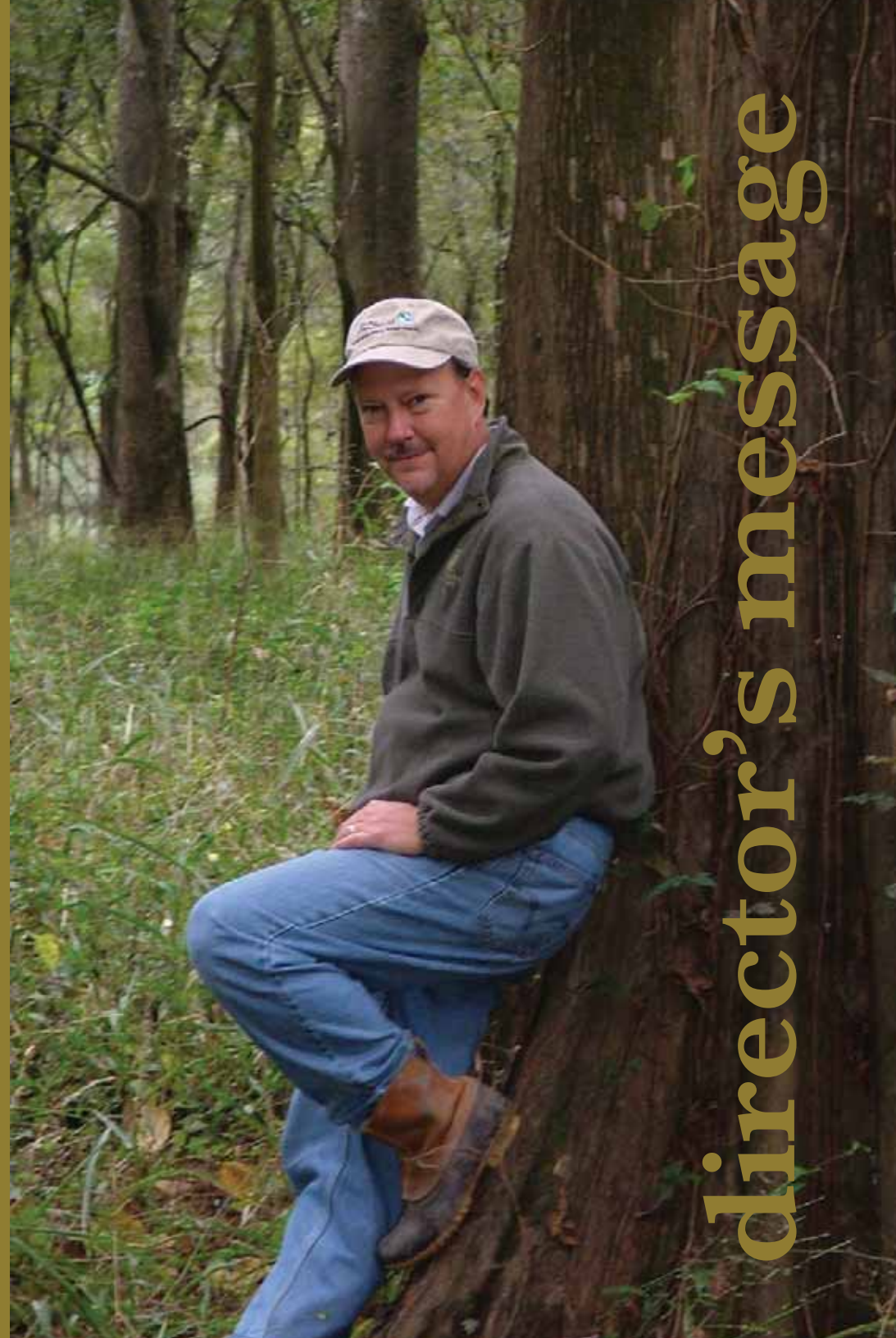
In 2010 the heat of the summer found us deploying containment boom around our projects along the Gulf and monitoring for oil in some of the most productive wetlands in the country. I'm glad to say that no Nature conservancy projects or properties were oiled. Thanks to vigilant efforts by our staff and partners - and a bit of good luck - we seem to have escaped the worst of it. We will continue to monitor and watch for any affects into the future though. An event of this magnitude is unprecedented and all of the consequences will likely not be understood for some time. If there is one silver lining to the oil spill this summer it would be that it has focused the nation's attention on the importance of Louisiana's wetlands and the Gulf of Mexico as a whole. We will continue to press that message forward in hopes of returning our coastal ecosystem to even better shape than it was before the spill.

The Conservancy's work around the state continued to move forward this summer with our great staff and partners working on a number of exciting projects. Working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at Mollicy Farms along the Ouachita River we have moved over 1.5 million cubic yards of dirt in tearing down the levees to restore the Ouachita River back to its historic floodplain. We have reconnected several bayous back to the river that had been separated by the levees resulting in the hydrologic restoration of over 60,000 acres of watersheds in that area. It is truly impressive work at a scale that is unprecedented and it all could not have happened without great staff and partners and support from you, our members.

In late spring/early summer of last year we opened our visitor center at our largest preserve, Cypress Island, near Breaux Bridge at Lake Martin. This great facility is a wonderful place for visitors to begin their tour of the preserve, and it will provide benefits for the state and local community for years to come as we educate people from around the country about the importance of Louisiana's vital wetlands.

These are just a couple of great projects your staff at The Nature Conservancy of Louisiana has helped achieve in the past year. There's a lot more to do and we remain as committed as ever to making you proud to be a supporter of our work. Thank you for all you do; without you our work would not be possible.

Keith Ouchley, Ph.D.
State Director



director's message



Bryan, board member Virginia Noland, and donor Charlie Lamar in the Atchafalaya Basin.

Bryan Piazza

Bryan Piazza is one of The Nature Conservancy's newest staff members, but he is not new to coastal restoration. Bryan has dedicated much of his professional life to restoration ecology and has experienced many facets of the discipline, including coastal policy development, project management, education, and

research. He is well known and respected among wetlands scientists and managers throughout the state. While studying for his Ph.D. at LSU, Bryan also worked full time as a coastal researcher. Now, as an adjunct assistant professor at LSU, Bryan is able to provide graduate students the opportunity to see first hand what can be accomplished through conservation and how their science can be directly used to get conservation projects on the ground.

In just over a year with The Nature Conservancy, Bryan has compiled a comprehensive state of the science review for the Atchafalaya River Basin and is helping TNC colleagues develop a program to conserve Atchafalaya swamp forests. More recently, Bryan has focused on developing targeted scientific research projects that are designed to help TNC bring Gulfwide oyster reef restoration to scale. He is also developing strong partnerships with public agencies, private consulting groups, and academia, and building a strong science foundation for conservation efforts in the Atchafalaya and coastal Louisiana. Bryan describes his time with The Nature Conservancy as "incredibly informative, challenging, and invigorating." He is impressed with the strengths of TNC, which he describes as having "the highest caliber and most dedicated staff of anywhere I've worked. Brian is doing great things to put into practice the "One Conservancy" mantra in our mission statement.

Katherine Kobrin

Katherine Kobrin has been with The Nature Conservancy for 6 years. Before joining the Conservancy, she had diverse experience in the natural resource conservation field, including working as a park ranger



Katherine Kobrin in a kayak on Lake Martin

in the mountains of Colorado and the coast of California. Katherine always wanted to work for The Nature Conservancy and originally joined the team to work on the important task of statewide fundraising.

For the past several years, Katherine has been busy managing the Cypress Island Preserve Program. Because thousands of visitors come each year to witness the wading bird rookery in the Preserve, a new Visitor Center and picnic pavilion opened this year at Cypress Island Preserve to help reach out to the community and educate the public on Louisiana ecosystems and the importance of preserving these resources. Katherine is proud of how the historic Acadian earth friendly building design combines with modern green building techniques used in their design and construction. The new Visitor Center is staffed with trained volunteer docents. Katherine says, "What I am most proud of is the way we have become part of the community and are looked to as a leader in conservation."



Jean Landry planting tree with ExxonMobil representatives on Earth Day, 2010 on ExxonMobil property on Grand Isle.

Jean Landry

Jean Landry has been managing the Grande Isle Program for The Nature Conservancy for about 10 years. She says, "Living on a barrier island gives one an opportunity to view nature at its finest whether it is a stormy day or a gentle breeze. I see it as an honor and a duty everyday to be a part of preserving and restoring some of the most precious habitat on earth."

Jean was part of two important accomplishments this year. First, she established a BioLab program at the Grand Isle School, where students were able to grow native trees in their BioLab. It was exciting to share the students' excitement "when they observe the first sprouts of an acorn or other native tree seed that they are nurturing. Helping them to learn the importance of their maritime forest and to take ownership for its survival is a most gratifying experience." Jean's second important accomplishment this year was "surviving the aftermath of the BP DeepWater Horizon Platform explosion and oil spill." Jean was instrumental in working productively with the onslaught of publicity of that tragedy, hosting all manner of journalists and media personnel at the TNC Grand Isle Field Office. This past year, Jean has played such an important role at The Nature Conservancy and her community.



Rick Jacob along the Houston River in Southwest Louisiana

Rick Jacob

With his strong background in forestry and his deep commitment to conservation, Rick Jacob is uniquely qualified to serve as The Nature Conservancy's Director of Conservation Forestry. For the past ten years, Rick has worked tirelessly to manage the Nature Conservancy's preserves in the Southwest Region of Louisiana. Rick is The Nature

Conservancy's "go to" expert on forestry issues, and he is often asked to speak on behalf of the Conservancy in legislative committees and at other public engagements throughout the state.

One of Rick's most important responsibilities is to oversee the reforestation of new areas acquired by The Nature Conservancy by reintroducing the natural species back into their intended environment. It's not always easy to get some people to appreciate the efforts of the Nature Conservancy in protecting and conserving these natural areas. Rick says "one of the things I love most about my job is taking people out to CC Road Savannas who have never visited the site before...You can tell the moment they 'get it.'" CC Road Savannas is just one of the many preserves that Rick manages as Louisiana's Southwest Region Program Manager. Rick Jacob is helping more and more people 'get it' and understand why it is important to protect our forest.

Dan Weber

Mollicy Farms is the largest floodplain restoration project in the United States. This past year, Dan Weber has been responsible for guiding The Nature Conservancy's efforts in some of the most crucial phases of the restoration of Mollicy Farms. Working closely with the Fish and Wildlife Service and other partners, The Nature Conservancy has undertaken a restoration project in four distinct phases (design, baseline monitoring, controlled breaching of levees, and multi-year monitoring.) The project will dramatically enhance natural community



Dan Weber and TNC staff inspecting work at Mollicy Farms

health and improve water quality.

As Northwestern Louisiana Program Director, Dan Weber always has a lot on his plate. In the course of his 12 years with The Nature Conservancy, Dan has been involved with many projects. Dan says that he has "watched with great pleasure as the complexity and scale of the projects continues to increase." He has been involved in many projects that he says "are leaving lasting and tangible positive impacts on our State's natural communities."

Ronnie Ulmer

Ronnie Ulmer's family history is centered on a deep love and respect for rural America – from South Carolina to Laurel, Mississippi, to the Tensas River swamp. "My work is more of a thread that runs through the fabric of my life than a separate thing," says Ronnie, Northeastern Louisiana Program Director for The Nature Conservancy. "I really don't often think of things other than in the context of my work. My family history and my formative experiences are really tied to this concept of 'the woods'."



Ronnie Ulmer with Apache Oil staff at a site in NE Louisiana which was recently reforested.

Ronnie studied agriculture at LSU and spent 20 years teaching agriculture and other science courses in public high schools. For ten years, Ronnie has managed the Northeastern Louisiana preserves for The Nature Conservancy. During this past year he has concentrated his efforts on three projects: he has collected GIS data to produce maps for the Mollicy 1 project; he has secured CPRC approval for USDA programs in conjunction with The Nature Conservancy carbon project; and he has worked on the Farm Bill. Ronnie says, "Working for TNC gives me the hope that I may be able to do something positive about that which I felt so powerless to affect so long ago."

Nelwyn Mcinnis

Have you ever seen a group of adults round up birds by crazily waving their arms while walking through tall grass? Nelwyn Mcinnis has participated in this activity while working with ornithologist Dr. Mark Woodrey and his graduate students in a successful effort to direct uncommon Henslow Sparrows into a net mist at the Nature Conservancy's Lake Ramsay

In this Annual Report you have read about the Conservancy projects in Louisiana and met some of our incredible staff. Another critical component for success in conservation are partners who share our concern for Louisiana's natural heritage.



Johnny and Karen Armstrong of Ruston

Having grown up in the rolling hills of north Louisiana in Lincoln Parish, Johnny and Karen Armstrong built a home on 500 acres, which has been in Johnny's family for several generations called Wafer Creek Ranch. About 10 years ago, they reached out to the Conservancy seeking expert scientific advice on how to restore and protect the 500 acres of Wafer Creek Ranch. Additionally, Johnny and Karen have become Legacy Club members by naming the Conservancy as a beneficiary in their will and currently are working with Conservancy staff to establish a Charitable Remainder Trust which will provide life time income for them and leave a legacy to support the on-going work of the Conservancy in Louisiana. As Johnny recently recounted, "Since I am only a rank amateur naturalist I have needed professional aid, and I have received it from the Conservancy of Louisiana." The partnership forged between the Armstrong's and the Conservancy will eventually lead to the protection of the 500 acres of Wafer Creek Ranch and leave a financial legacy to support the work of the Conservancy for generations to come. Johnny and Karen are joining with other Legacy Club members such as **Dr. Dorothy Prowell of Baton Rouge, Ruth Tupper of Bossier City, James Bransford of Springhill, Joan Glynn of New Orleans, Mary Johnson of Baton Rouge, Katherine Kobrin of Breaux Bridge (TNC Staff member), Cathy Coates of Baton Rouge and Boysie Bollinger of Lockport** to ensure that the work of the Conservancy will continue to save the last great places in our state!

Out of the 5,500 people living in Louisiana who support the work and mission of the Conservancy these are just a few examples.



exist on a broad range of questions and issues. Shell is proud to donate the property in Iowa, Louisiana to the Conservancy and help preserve the Long Leaf Pine as well as other species on the property. We are also pleased to work with TNC on projects such as oyster reef restoration in the Gulf of Mexico that will help make the Gulf sustainable for generations to come."

Our other Partners

The Conservancy is about protecting the diversity of plants and animals, so it is fitting that we have a diverse range of supporters. This past year we received support from many individuals in response to the crisis in the Gulf. Supporters Kevin and Winifred Reilly made a significant gift to our Gulf of Mexico program. When asked about his gift, Kevin, a Louisiana Conservancy board member -responded, "Having lived much of my life along the Gulf coast and in the waters of the Gulf, I have a deep appreciation for the value which the Gulf of Mexico has played in the lives and communities along the coast. It is a rich ecosystem with great biological diversity. As a trustee for the Nature Conservancy in Louisiana, my wife Winifred and I wanted to add our support in these crucial days to support the work of the Conservancy in restoring the health of the Gulf. We encourage others to do what they can in this effort." In addition to the Reilly's gift, support has come from such diverse sources as: Paragon Casino and the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe; the Brown Foundation and the Freeman Foundation of New Orleans; the Kinsey family, Attaway Foundation and Biedenharn Foundation of Shreveport; Scott and Kathryn Anderson of Alexandria; the Leach family of Lake Charles; Freeport McMoRan Foundation; Nancy Link of Rayne; Joe and Martha Boudreaux of New Orleans; Parrot Head Club of Baton Rouge. We are grateful to all 5500 Louisiana residents whose contributions support the work and mission of the Conservancy in Louisiana.

Shell Oil Company

This past year, Shell Oil Company donated to the Conservancy a 500 acre tract of land -located outside of Iowa, Louisiana. Expecting to find coastal prairie habitat, Conservancy staff were surprised to instead find a stand of longleaf pine. This was the latest in a long line of cooperative ventures between Shell and the Conservancy. Most recently they have been involved with our strategic oyster reef restoration project in Vermillion Bay. Shell Upstream Americas Environment and Sustainable Development Vice-President Elizabeth Cheney recently said, "Shell sees our partnership with The Nature Conservancy as a way to better understand each other's perspectives, learn from each other and identify common ground that may



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