



Environmental Grantmakers Association

## 2013 Annual Fall Retreat



### Field Trip and Field Excursions Descriptions

**Saturday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

#### **Pre-Retreat Overnight Field Trip**

Saturday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 PM – Sunday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 PM  
Houston, TX to New Orleans, LA

#### **The Gulf Coast: The U.S.'s Ground Zero for the Export of Fossil Fuels**

*This trip is co-sponsored by The Houston Endowment and the Rockefeller Family Fund.*

We invite you to attend a two-day tour in the Gulf Coast region commonly referred to as a national sacrifice zone. Although some areas around the country are responding to and cleaning up pollution, the industries in the Gulf are expanding. Ports and the surrounding industries in and around Houston, Texas and New Orleans, Louisiana, best showcase this trend. The field trip, which will begin with an afternoon tour of the Houston Ship Channel, will allow funders to visit frontline communities living with the devastating practices of the oil, gas, and coal industries. During the tour and at a special dinner in downtown Houston hosted by The Houston Endowment, community leaders, local advocates, and environmental experts will provide additional context of the range of environmental health, justice, and climate issues in the region. Environmental accomplishments along with opportunities for the region will also be presented during the dinner.

After spending the night in Houston, early on day two of the trip participants will fly to New Orleans, where participants will experience Louisiana's massive Cancer Alley and see the disappearing Louisiana habitats and coastline. Before an aerial tour of the area, local advocates will brief funders on current efforts to restore the region's critical and sensitive wetlands in order to protect the state's disappearing coastline. Attendees will also learn about the coal industry's latest attempts to further harm the region's fragile ecosystem and human communities by constructing and expanding coal port terminals along the great Mississippi River.

Funders working on a wide range of issues, including environmental health, fossil fuel campaigns, environmental justice, as well as ecosystem restoration and water issues will all find this trip of interest.

**Schedule:**

- *Saturday, September 28th from 12:00 pm until 8:00 pm*  
Meeting Location: Houston, Texas – Lunch at Brady’s Landing (on the Houston Ship Channel), followed by a bus tour of the Houston Ship Channel and environmental justice communities adjacent to the Port of Houston, with dinner hosted by the Houston Endowment.
- *Sunday, September 29th from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm*  
Location: New Orleans, LA – flight from Houston, tour of Cancer Alley, coal terminals and coastal impact zones by small planes. Conclude in New Orleans.

**Programs include:**

- Adrian Shelley, Air Alliance Houston
- Scott Eustis, Gulf Restoration Network
- Tom “Smitty” Smith, Public Citizen Foundation
- Al Armendariz, Sierra Club and former Region 6 US EPA Administrator
- Residents and activists living in port-side communities

[Click here](#) to see photos of ports and industrial wastelands along the Gulf Coast. (Password: gulfports).

Cost: \$675 – All inclusive, including food, lodging, air travel from Houston to New Orleans and the aerial tour.

Tour is limited to 15 participants. Registration closes on August 26th.

**Sunday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

**Pre-Retreat Field Trips**

Sunday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM – *All trips include lunch and transportation.*

**1. Coastal Communities Collaborative**

Outside the Levees

Join us in a pre-conference daylong field immersion experience that will take us outside the levees to visit grassroots community leaders from bayou communities threatened by coastal erosion. The group will travel by van and oyster boats to see the land and waters of the Coastal Communities Collaborative, and meet with the indigenous people who live in these small, traditional island communities. This is designed to be an intense and personal experience intended to encourage funders to explore new ways of partnering with frontline communities to address deep systemic threats like climate change.

Cost: \$150.00

## **2. Common Ground Relief, Wetlands Restoration Program**

Day of Service

Common Ground Relief is a community-initiated volunteer organization offering assistance, mutual aid and support in several areas of recovery and sustainability for short-term relief for victims of hurricane disasters in the Gulf Coast region and long term support in rebuilding the communities affected in the New Orleans area.

Join them for a day of service to restore Louisiana's coastal wetlands. Activities may include marsh grass and tree plantings, nursery propagation, and other activities that aim at growing out plant material and using it to restore coastal salt marshes, swamps and bottomland hardwood forests. This field trip will take place in a wetland area within an hour drive of New Orleans.

Cost: \$55.00

## **3. Down by the River**

Bicycle tour by Louisiana Bucket Brigade, Cancer Alley

This is a bicycle tour atop the levee bicycle trail led by the Louisiana Bucket Brigade to explore historical connections between race, resistance and place along the Mississippi River Road between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, highlighting environmental justice initiatives and movement-building in the region. This experience will take participants to the heart of Cancer Alley, where plantations have become chemical plants. This is an easy, flat bicycling route that will not be physically demanding to those of moderate physical condition.

Cost: \$135.00

## **4. Lost Land Tours**

Kayak trip, Plaquemines Parish to Grand Isle and Grand Terre Island

Although vast areas of South Louisiana cypress and tupelo forests were eliminated by loggers and real estate developers, outdoors enthusiasts can go back in time, paddling kayaks through some of the few remaining forested swamps in the Maurepas Swamp Wildlife Management Area about 40 minutes outside of New Orleans. Participants learn about the cypress, tupelo, and oak-forested swamps that were in the city before it was drained to develop newer New Orleans neighborhoods – the same neighborhoods that received most of Hurricane Katrina's floodwaters due to lower elevations caused by draining swamp land.

A bus will take participants to Plaquemines Parish 25 miles south of New Orleans. You will then board kayaks and travel down canals and bayous and through marshland to the rapidly eroding Barataria Bay and south to the waters around Grand Isle and Grand Terre Island.

Lost Land Tours is led by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, Bob Marshall.

Cost: \$95.00

## **5. Urban Farming**

Tour & garden lunch

Join us by van to an assortment of unique urban farms – from the Lower 9<sup>th</sup> Ward, to the 7<sup>th</sup> Ward, and New Orleans East. Take a ferry ride over to Algiers on the West Bank and visit the historic Hollygrove neighborhood to see previously unused and abandoned spaces creatively transformed into amazing edible green places. Final stop is the innovative recirculating hydroponic farm on the rooftop of Rouses grocery store downtown. Enjoy a fresh-picked lunch at one of the gardens along the way.

This trip will have a follow up Institute session on Wednesday, October 1st.

Cost: \$65.00

**Tuesday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013**

### **Field Excursions**

Tuesday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1:00 – 5:30 PM

#### **1. Bayou Kayaks Trip**

Bayou St. John

First time kayakers as well as seasoned paddlers are invited to paddle down Bayou St. John through Mid-City and Lakeview neighborhoods, allowing kayakers the opportunity to enjoy the sights and sounds of the city from a new perspective. Total route distance is about eight easy miles round trip.

Cost: \$40.00

#### **2. Columbus Greenway Initiative**

Bicycle ride through the 7th Ward and Esplanade Ridge/Tremé

The Columbus Greenway Initiative (CGI) is a project led by a diverse coalition of 7<sup>th</sup> Ward residents and organizations including the New Orleans Food and Farm Network and the Neighborhood Story Project. The CGI specifically grew out of a partnership between Ms. Pat O'Brian, who owns vacant land parcels along Columbus Street, and a group of men who had been using one of the lots as an informal gathering space. This partnership has demonstrated how neighbors can come together to create vibrant and high functioning green space in a neighborhood where the city does not provide adequate space.

Cost: \$35.00

### **3. Grow Dat Youth Farm**

Tour and discussion

Grow Dat Youth Farm creates job opportunities for high school students in the field of urban agriculture. With a focus on developing a sense of responsibility, community, environmental stewardship, and service among participants, the farm enhances leadership and teamwork abilities through the collaborative work of growing food.

This visit will include a guided tour of the urban farm, bayou corridor, and eco-campus, and an overview of Grow Dat's model and implementation of sustainable agriculture and biodiversity led by staff with support from Grow Dat youth employees.

Cost: \$40.00

### **4. Jean LaFitte State Park**

Guided Walking Tour

The Barataria Preserve outside Marrero offers a taste of Louisiana's wild wetlands. The preserve's 23,000 acres include bayous, swamps, marshes, forests, alligators, nutrias and over 200 species of birds. Boardwalk and dirt trails wind through the preserve. Participants will be guided through the marsh and wooded area of the Jean LaFitte State Park by a park ranger.

Cost: \$30.00

### **5. New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park**

Performance at the Old U.S. Mint

In 1987, the 100<sup>th</sup> U.S. Congress resolved that "Jazz is hereby designated as a rare and valuable national American treasure to which we should devote our attention, support, and resources to make sure it is preserved, understood and promulgated." The New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park was developed to serve the nation as a global leader in the promulgation of New Orleans jazz by enhancing and instilling a public appreciation and understanding of the origins, early history, development and progression of this uniquely American music art form.

Join the New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park for a live performance at the Old U.S. Mint.

Cost: Free!

#### **Confederacy of Cruisers**

Immediately following the New Orleans Jazz performance, tour the French Quarter on a two-hour bicycle ride.

Riders will cruise the narrow streets touring the Faubourg Marigny and the Bywater, early 19<sup>th</sup> century New Orleans – originally home to the Creoles and Free People of Color, and later the Irish and Italians, this neighborhood now belongs to the art galleries and musicians. The decorative facades of traditional shotgun houses and corner stores set the perfect backdrop to

begin the journey. The tour provides a knowledgeable guide, tuned-up bicycles and safety helmets. Group meets outside of the U.S. Mint.

Cost: \$50.00

## **6. New Orleans School of Cooking**

Demonstration and tasting

The cooking classes are treated to a demonstration and food presented by well-known local chefs skilled in the arts and traditions of Cajun and Creole cuisine preparing a wide range of local classics using seasonal ingredients. Chefs demonstrate the culinary techniques while sharing history and recipes.

Cost: \$25.00

## **7. SouthWings Flyover**

Join SouthWings, a non-profit conservation organization that provides a network of volunteer pilots to advocate for the restoration and protection of the ecosystems and biodiversity of the Southeast, for an hour-long flight over the Louisiana coastline. This experience will highlight the current state of local coastal erosion, focusing on urban growth, land loss, oil infrastructure and water routes of the Mississippi and beyond.

Cost: \$100.00

## **8. A Studio in the Woods Visit**

Visit a local artist retreat residency program focused on the interconnectedness of the arts and the environment, while discussing local ecology with an environmental curator/botanist along the banks of the Mississippi River.

Cost: \$45.00