Where conservation is current. Where history is hands on.

Annual Report 2020
FROM DAVID CHERAMIE,
Bayou Vermilion District CEO

Dear Bayou Vermilion Stakeholders,

It is my pleasure to present to you the 2020 Bayou Vermilion District annual report. It goes without saying that 2020 was a year fraught with challenges the likes of which we have never seen before. In spite of these difficult times, we managed to pull through, maybe a little worse for the wear, but still moving forward with our mission of improving water quality and beautifying Bayou Vermilion, providing a diversified economic base through cultural and eco-tourism through Vermilionville and all other acts to enhance the general condition of the bayou. As we apply the lessons learned from this past year—remaining resilient in the face of adversity, pivoting to new ways of operating, assuring everyone’s health and safety—we move forward from a better place and with a better understanding of what lies ahead. I hope you enjoy reading about our activities. Please feel free to contact us at any time. Merci beaucoup!
Where Conservation is Current

Bayou Vermilion District’s mission is to improve the water quality in the Bayou Vermilion, to maintain its riparian facilities and installations, to empower its recreational users, and to engage the public in a greater awareness of our cultural and natural resources.

Bayou Operations

- Trash and Debris Management
- Water Quality Testing & Reporting

Recreation

- Four public parks
- Boat Launches
- Paddle Launches

Education

- Watershed Exhibit
- Environmental Field Trips
- Community Presentations
- Water Quality Project Demonstration

The Bayou Vermilion District’s Bayou Operations crew has worked diligently since 1984 to improve water quality in and around the Bayou Vermilion. 2020 was no exception. Our team was proud to be considered essential workers during the pandemic, taking to the bayou every day to maintain this important waterway.

Septic System Inspections

For the past five years, the Bayou Vermilion District’s Department of Water Quality has been working diligently to inspect individual on-site sewer systems within the Coulee Mine watershed of Lafayette Parish. The program goals are to educate individuals on maintenance of their systems, to improve the water quality within the coulees and, ultimately the Bayou Vermilion. This will allow the BVD to remove the river from the EPA’s list of impaired waterways, and to reopen the river for primary contact. This department goes door-to-door to perform educational inspections on these systems and to encourage homeowners to comply with the current ordinances and laws. These rules have been established by the parish and the state for both humans and the environment.

150 addresses along the bayou were assessed by the Water Quality Staff

Initial inspections proved a 75% system fail rate

Educational and resource efforts led by the BVD resulted in a program-end assessment of an improved 52% pass rate

BVD also hosted its Environmental Science Tour Package during 2020, which included: a guided tour of the watershed exhibit, a microinvertebrate sampling activity, and a student water quality sampling that utilizes student chemical test analysis kits.

2233 BARRELS OF TRASH
211 TREES CLEARED
99 TIRES
131 ITEMS TAKEN FROM THE BAYOU
3,478 guests experienced tours of our Watershed Exhibit

Water quality testing takes place at 23 sites along the Bayou Vermilion
Vermilionville's Mission is to increase appreciation for the history, culture, and natural resources of the Native Americans, Acadians, Creoles, and peoples of African descent in the Attakapas region through the end of the 1800s. Through historic interpretation and conservation along the Bayou Vermilion, we strive to educate guests on the interactions of these groups and the connections between past and contemporary folklife, thus empowering guests to apply these lessons from our shared histories.

Paddlers & Captains
In collaboration with the Rotary Club of Lafayette, Rotary Point landscaping was updated, potable water access was improved, and the on-site lighting was upgraded.

200 Paddlers & Captains
(took to the water to celebrate the bayou as part of the 2020 BayouFest and Boat Parade!

At Camellia Bridge, repair and safety work was completed on the floating canoe and kayak launch.

At Southside Park, new landscaping was developed as part of a Boy Scout Eagle Project. Trees damaged by Hurricane Delta were cleared, and lighting fixtures were repaired and newly installed.

4000 sqft is the footprint of the BVD’s new water lab which broke ground in 2020. This space will allow the BVD to handle our own water testing and research on-site, provide lab access and viewing for students, host environmental tests for field trips, and house our exhibit on the watershed.

What a year.
While it would be easy to focus on the numerous disappointments and challenges of a year like no other, looking back over the year in review also shows many places where the determination of the Vermilionville team and the support of our community created some real sparks of creativity and engagement. 

First and foremost is the completion and recognition of Vermilionville as a museum accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. Vermilionville is now one of only 22 museums in Louisiana, and the only one in the Acadiana region to have received this mark of excellence. This process began over five years ago and, led by our Curator Anne Fontenot, our staff, community, and stakeholders have all worked together to finally make this recognition possible.

Over the year, we explored many ways to connect and re-connect with the community, including taking our annual Culture Day series, Les Vues, and our education programs into virtual or hybrid models. We implemented social media to better deliver museum resources while we could no longer offer history as ‘hands on’ as we’d come to love.

And while we cannot wait to have the music back at Vermilionville, to have our entire family of artisans to return to work, and have visitors from across the world walking through our gardens again, we’ve certainly learned valuable practices this year that will only help us continue to bring the best cultural and historical content from here on out.

Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to seeing you soon at Vermilionville.

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8,307 jobs
Important jobs within the state are supported by the museum industry each year.

$349m income
Museums provide substantial wages and other income to the state’s residents annually.

$141m taxes
Even though many museums operate as nonprofits, they generate significant tax revenues to the federal, state, and local governments.

89% Regardless of political persuasion, 89% of Americans believe that museums provide important economic impacts back to their communities.

$562 million
The total financial impact that museums have on the economy in Louisiana.
**CULTURE DAY** events were hosted in a virtual or hybrid format this year.

More than 60 Artists, Poets, Musicians, Chefs, Storytellers, Historians, & Craftspeople were hired for these events.

More than 3400 man-hours at Vermilionville this year.

**Volunteers contributed more than 7860 guests experienced 18 hours of Programming.**

The Vermilionville Education Enrichment Program

More than 33 New videos developed for this program

115 LPSS students engaged

90 UL Education & History Students

18 Digital Lesson Plans Generated

The Vermilionville Education Folklife Initiative

68 Students experienced music hands-on

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The Folk-Arts Teen Advisory Council took part in 7 art workshops and experiences.

The Vermilionville Education Folklife Initiative

23 New Videos & At-Home Offerings

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#MuseumsatHome LearnUnited Pastry & Pastimes Les Veus Series Ask the Curator Vermilionville ABC's

6 Storytellers & 57 guests came to spend Halloween in the village

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2 sold out weeks of summer camp in 2 languages

Opportunities to “Live in French” included First Friday French Tables and Yoga en Francais.

**3 Curated Special Exhibits**

*Made by Hand, Built on Tradition: 30 Years with Vermilionville*

*Determined to Rise: The Woman’s Suffrage Movement in Louisiana*

*Colors and Connections: The Power of Natural Dyes*

Vermilionville celebrates people as the髓integrated and diverse and provides the visitor center, Verdi, to help guests to experience the "Live in French" included First Friday French Tables and Yoga en Francais.

Full of fun and learning activities, Vermilionville is a unique place to explore and learn about the region's French and Creole cultures.

The Vermilionville Education Folklife Initiative

5 fully-funded internships and Public History Practicums support our work

Vermilionville's educational programs provide hands-on learning experiences for students of all ages, from kindergarten to high school. Students can participate in workshops and classes that focus on art, music, dance, and history, as well as special events like storytelling sessions and traditional craft demonstrations.

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We would like to thank the following for their support in 2020:


Special thanks to the following organizations that provided additional support to weather the challenges due to the pandemic:

Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, Louisiana Office of Cultural Development, National Endowment for the Humanities

Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, & Inclusion

“Those who have historically been relegated to the margins of society due to legacies of racism, ableism, sexism, heterosexism, xenophobia, and all other forms of injustice must be fully included in museum workplaces and communities.” -American Alliance of Museums

Inclusion is central to the effectiveness, relevance and sustainability of museums and to furthering our mission of increasing appreciation for the history, culture, and natural resources of our region’s diverse peoples. As such, the Bayou Vermilion District’s Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion Group creates opportunities to increase understanding and awareness of individual and institutional barriers to inclusion, accessibility and equity, identifying actionable steps to address these barriers.

Come and be a part of all Vermilionville has to offer!

Volunteer
Memberships
Newsletter

Contact Charissa Helluin at Outreach@BayouVermilionDistrict.org
The Bayou Vermilion District
300 Fisher Rd
Lafayette, LA 70508
(337) 233-4077

Vermilionville is open Tuesday - Sunday, 10am - 4pm
La Cuisine de Maman is open Tuesday - Sunday, 11am -2pm

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