

# FUR ADVISORY COUNCIL 2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT



# CONTENTS

Washington D.C.	
Education.....	3
2020-2021 Expenditures.....	3
Education Program.....	4
Fur Queen Promotion.....	6
LA Fur Advisory Council Members.....	7



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## INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

Louisiana has a strong trapping heritage. From the early 1900s through the 1980s, Louisiana led the continent in the production of wild fur pelts.

During the early 1900s, the Louisiana fur market supported over 20,000 trappers and 1,000 fur buyers and dealers. Muskrat populations expanded, and trappers harvested over 9 million pelts worth \$12 million in 1945. Louisiana produced almost 65% of North American fur during this period.

Farming of a much larger non-native rodent, the nutria, began in the state in the late 1930s and some animals escaped and/ or were released into the near perfect habitat of coastal Louisiana. Nutria multiplied quickly and by 1962 surpassed the muskrat in numbers harvested. Between 1962 and 1982, average harvest by trappers topped 1.3 million nutria annually, representing over 60% of the total fur industry. Today, nutria harvest is an essential part of habitat management due to the nutria's aggressive eating habits.

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) manages the state's 12 different species of fur-bearers (beaver, bobcat, coyote, gray fox, mink, muskrat, nutria, opossum, skunk, raccoon, red fox, and river otter). During the past 10 years, the state has averaged producing 16,556 pelts annually. The average annual production of nutria during the past 10 years has been 5,685 and raccoon has been 5,421. These two species alone provided approximately 68% of the value of an industry worth over \$1 million annually to Louisiana trappers, including the \$6.00 per tail Coastwide Nutria Control Program (CNCP) payments to participating trappers.

Although fur harvest has continued to decrease due to a poor market, trapping license sales have increased for the past four seasons, thus keeping this Louisiana heritage alive.

# WASHINGTON D.C. EDUCATION

Photo by Toni Smith, USGS



The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) contracted with Glenn Delaney to stay abreast of any federal administrative or legislative activities that might be of interest to LDWF, the Fur Advisory Council (FAC), or the Alligator Advisory Council (AAC).

Mr. Delaney maintained his dialogue with key Members of Congress and their staff to educate them on issues important to Louisiana's sustainable use wildlife programs including a broad range of funding and policy legislation. In particular, he monitored and provided analyses of legislation advanced by animal rights groups

and their advocates on Capitol Hill so that they could be addressed in a timely and effective manner. This included anti-trapping legislation such as the Refuge from Cruel Trapping Act and provisions hidden in various large-scale funding bills. Animal rights groups also sought to exploit the allegation that the coronavirus had its origins in live animals sold at wet markets in China as their strategy to promote several House and Senate bills such as the Preventing Future Pandemics Act designed specifically to undermine the principles of sustainable use and impose global bans on legitimate wildlife trade.

Mr. Delaney sought funding for a variety of programs that affect Louisiana wildlife management programs. Mr. Delaney worked with Congressman Garret Graves to develop and secure enactment of an amendment to the Nutria Eradication and Control Act of 2003 that has now increased the level of the authorization of appropriations for Louisiana. He also worked with Senator John Kennedy's office to secure \$3 million in the FY 21 appropriations legislation to further develop a CITES ePermitting system to facilitate wildlife trade in Louisiana. He continued to pursue funding with both Louisiana Senators for research on infectious diseases affecting Louisiana's alligator farms and wild population in the FY 21 appropriations cycle. Although a specific funding amount for this research was not specifically appropriated, in its Report the Senate Appropriations Committee continued to stress the need for USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to develop "a critical strategy for addressing these threats" to both alligators and human health.

Mr. Delaney worked closely with LDWF administration and program managers to address pertinent federal administrative and legislative issues. The funding for the contract was split equally between the Fur Advisory Council and the Alligator Advisory Council's budgets.

## 2020-2021 EXPENDITURES

The Fur Advisory Council operates within the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and uses the Louisiana Fur Public Education and Marketing Fund.

LOUISIANA FUR PUBLIC EDUCATION AND MARKETING FUND	
Budgeted	\$65,000
Salaries	\$ 8,313
Related Benefits	\$ 3,806
Travel	\$137
Operating Services	\$1,418
Supplies	\$ 14,898
Professional Services (Washington D.C. Education Contract)	\$25,000
Inter-Agency Transfer (Office of Technology Services)	\$ 1,162
<b>Education and Marketing Funds Expended</b>	<b>\$54,734</b>
<b>Remaining</b>	<b>\$10,266</b>



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# EDUCATION PROGRAM

The first goal specified in the legislation that created the Fur Advisory Council identifies the need for education, and the Council and LDWF focuses primarily on this directive. The Council has taken a two-tiered approach to education focusing on both outreach education and trapper education.

Many festivals and large events were cancelled this year, but staff participated in a number of school and library presentations. Staff also worked a series of 4-H events targeting elementary and middle school children. The Council provided biological facts and educational support to other LDWF staff who presented at schools and at other outreach events. The Council also partnered with a number of educational and outreach organizations such as the Audubon Zoo and Wetland Watchers to reach a broader audience.

LDWF and the Louisiana Trappers and Alligator Hunter's Association hosted a trapper instructor workshop followed by six trapping workshops around the state. These workshops attracted a wide range of students, including teenagers, biology students, working adults, and retired adults. LDWF also ran three full weekend trapping schools, where students set and ran their own trap-line and skinned their own harvest under the supervision of an instructor. Due in part to this program, trapping license sales have increased the past several years.

LDWF continued the partnership with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) for the Louisiana Level 1 Online Trappers' Course. The online course covers Louisiana trapping regulations, ethics, safety, and habitat management as well as practical trapping skills.

Although all trapper education is voluntary in Louisiana, trapping students are encouraged to take the online course as a prerequisite to the hands-on workshops and the trapping school.





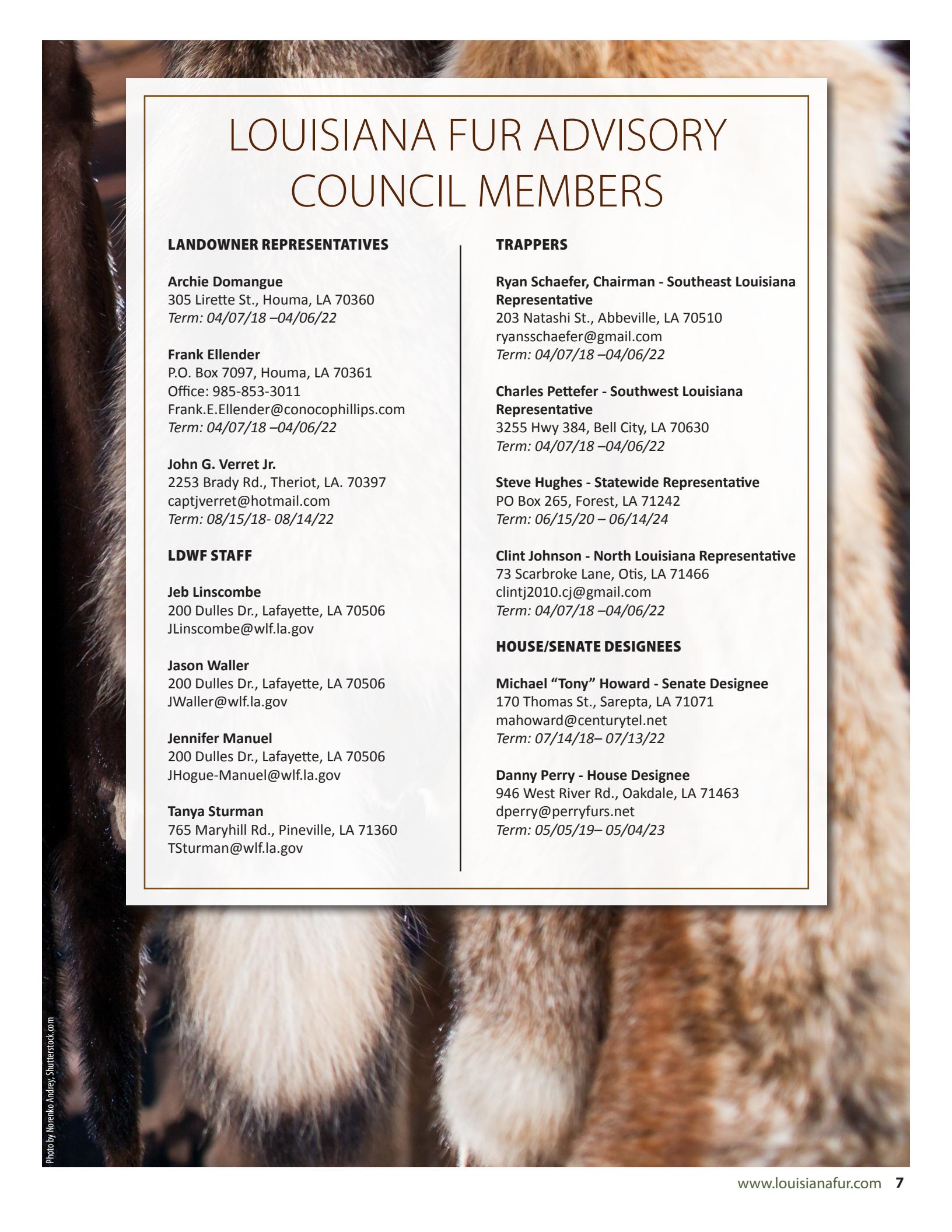
# FUR QUEEN PROMOTION

The FAC and LDWF sponsor the Louisiana Fur and Wildlife Festival by providing a fur garment to the Louisiana Fur and Wildlife Festival Fur Queen and alligator or fur accessories to the Fur Queen, Miss Cameron, and Miss Teen Fur as a prize at the end of each pageant. Due to Covid-19, the pageants were cancelled, and the FAC did not provide any products during the fiscal year. However, the previous year's queens continued to attend events and represent the fur industry this year. The queens wear real fur at these events and explain how supporting the fur industry invests in Louisiana's beautiful, rich habitat. They promote the use of real fur over faux fur, show examples of the different furbearers found in Louisiana, and talk about ecology and habitat management as it relates to trapping.

The queens as well as the pageant coordinators use social media platforms to promote the Louisiana Fur and Wildlife Festival and all that the festival represents. The queens attended a number of festivals and balls throughout the state, participated in parades, and used their platforms to promote cultural pride in Louisiana and its natural resources.



Miss Alivia Mudd was crowned Fur Queen this year. She was the previous year's Miss Cameron and continued to represent Louisiana under her new title.



# LOUISIANA FUR ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

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