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Discover the Natural Heritage of Louisiana

New Book introduces the state's landscape, wild places, and wild creatures

Ponchatoula, LA – In order to appreciate our lives, we have to appreciate where we live. Author Paul Keddy, a professor of biology who lived on the edge of a vast Louisiana swamp for many years, has released a book that introduces the full range of wild places and wild creatures in Louisiana. It is called *Water, Earth, Fire: Louisiana's Natural Heritage*. The book is titled for the *water* that carried the *earth* that built Louisiana, and for the *fire* that has created the prairies, pine forests, and savannas.

“Too often,” says Keddy, “you mention Louisiana and people think of Mardi Gras and Bourbon Street. There is so much more to see and do in this subtropical paradise. Louisiana is one of the most beautiful parts of North America.”

With 25 maps and 60 illustrations, this is the first book to introduce the full range of wild places in the state. “This is information I wanted when I first arrived in Louisiana,” says Keddy. “Much of it was buried in libraries in old articles, or known only to a few experts. I have tried to do all the hard work to make this information freely available to everyone who loves the state.”

Of course the state's magnificent swamps are described in tender detail, but Louisiana showcases a great diversity of natural habitats—including prairies, longleaf pine savannas, oak forests, Appalachian forests, river valleys, cliffs, sand dunes, and cheniers. Each has its distinctive plant and animal species. Frogs living in trees, fish digging burrows, pelicans nesting on offshore islands and plants eating insects, as well as wild orchids, dwarf palmettos, armadillos, and... the list is almost endless. Some of the author's favorite places to visit are highlighted. He also describes the challenge of conserving wild places for the enjoyment of future generations and offers a simple plan for the future of wild places in Louisiana.

Carlton Dufrechou, Executive Director of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, has seen the book and followed its progress. “Dr. Paul Keddy captures what truly is the best about Louisiana— its many and varied natural habitats. Dr. Keddy is more than a gifted scientist. He takes the science out of science. He describes complex processes in terms that are easy to understand, enlightening, and enjoyable. From the rolling pine forest to cypress swamps to barrier islands; from birds to bugs to bears; from frogs to fish, Dr. Keddy covers all that makes Louisiana one of the most unique places on the good planet Earth.”

Eminent writer Michael Grunwald, who has detailed the steamy and seamy side of the Everglades in his book *The Swamp*, added “This is an impressive guide to the magical and bountiful world of Louisiana nature, and an excellent primer in why we should save it—not only for the sake of pelicans and woodpeckers and tupelos, but for the sake of ourselves.”

Paul Keddy has brought to the book an accumulated experience of thirty years as a professor and his personal experience with many of the wild places in Louisiana. In addition, he has authored several prize-winning books on ecology, and received the National Wetlands Award for Science Research. He has helped develop conservation programs for the pelican state, advising groups including The Nature Conservancy and the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation. He is frequently invited as a speaker to both small meetings and large scientific conferences.

If you own only one book about Louisiana nature, this is the one to have—a perfect gift for student, tourist, hunter, or neighbor.

Water, Earth, Fire: Louisiana's Natural Heritage by Dr. Paul A. Keddy

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