



## ***MEDIA RELEASE***

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For Immediate Release

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### **THANKS FOR THE MUSIC BUT STOP KILLING OUR FISH**

**NEW ORLEANS** – Heading into its second weekend, Jazz Fest already has generated considerable positive attention in its first post-Katrina appearance – the quality of this year’s musicians, the generous attitude and size of the crowds, even the cooperation of the weather.

Shell is Jazz Fest's first presenting corporate sponsor and is reaping beneficial press for coming to the aid of the festival. Specifically, the multinational corporation has earned points for donating money yet not inserting its name in front of Jazz and Heritage Festival, as other potential sponsors had requested.

“I love Jazz Fest no matter what,” says Leslie March, chair of the Delta (Louisiana) Chapter of the Sierra Club. “Whether the weather is hot or cold, whether the crowds are small or large, whether the musicians are great or less than great. But as a Louisianan who knows that Shell is more concerned about profits than people, I am deeply troubled by its sponsorship of the event.”

The Sierra Club and the New Orleans-based Gulf Restoration Network (GRN) are working to educate Jazz Fest attendees about Shell’s true story through a variety of methods. The groups say Shell might be doing the right thing by supporting Southeast Louisiana culture by sponsoring Jazz Fest at a critical time in its history, but that its good intentions do not necessarily carry over into its business operations. They cite Shell’s insistence on building an open loop liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal in the Gulf of Mexico as evidence of the company’s saying one thing and doing another.

“Shell wants to create and operate LNG terminals that will use an open-rack vaporizer, which also is known as an open loop system,” explains GRN’s Campaign Director Aaron Viles. This system pulls water up from the Gulf and runs it through a radiator-like rack in order to vaporize the natural gas. The water – which has been chilled, chlorinated and stripped of all marine life such as fish eggs, larvae and zooplankton – is returned to the Gulf, negatively impacting critical habitat for Gulf fisheries such as shrimp, redfish, king mackerel, red snapper, blue fin tuna and others.

Shell officials argue that there will be no consequential loss yet there are no valid scientific studies that support their stand. Louisiana Fish and Wildlife and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration officials have expressed their concern that there is not enough data to be sure that extensive damage won’t be done.

“Shell has committed to pull the plug on the project if it will damage marine life to an ‘unacceptable’ degree,” continues Viles. “It’s time for Shell to abandon it’s flawed proposal, as marine scientists just this week have determined that Shell’s terminal could destroy the equivalent of 26 percent of the entire Gulf’s annual recreational red snapper catch – clearly an ‘unacceptable’ risk.”

March says that she is particularly irritated because Shell can develop LNG terminals using closed-loop or forced-air vaporizer systems which are less destructive though they are more expensive to operate. “The oil and gas industry is not hurting for profit these days,” she says. “It’s wrong for Shell to use a system that puts our commercial and recreational fishing industries at risk so it can take more profit.”

But there’s more, March says. “Just a few miles from the Fairgrounds, Shell officials are meeting with an environmental organization that Shell supports financially,” says March, who is referring to America’s Wetland. Shell describes itself as America’s Wetland “World Sponsor” and is the official sponsor for “A Place Called America’s Wetland.” She notes that Shell has

given money to other environmental organizations, followed quickly by press releases patting itself on the back for being a good corporate citizen.

“By using this organization as a shield, Shell is lobbying government officials and proclaiming itself as a guardian of the coastal environment,” says March. “If Shell truly wanted to be a guardian of our environment, it would make decisions based on concern for the environment instead of trying to push its own agenda and create profits for its shareholders.”

GRN and Sierra Club staff and volunteers will be positioned outside Jazz Fest entrances this weekend, wearing shirts proclaiming “Thanks for the music - Don’t kill our fish.” The groups will be handing out flyers and stickers as well as collecting postcards to Shell that they will deliver to the international energy giant’s annual shareholder meeting this month in The Hague. In addition, a plane is scheduled to fly over the fairgrounds Saturday towing that same message.

March says that Shell would benefit greatly by facing its own music. “We don’t have any problems with companies making profits – that’s why they are in business,” she says. “We just want Shell to make decisions that take the environment into account.”

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The Sierra Club's 750,000 members work together to protect communities and the planet. The Club is America's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization. The Delta (Louisiana) chapter of the Sierra Club has more than 3,500 members and has been active in local conservation projects for more than 30 years. For more information, contact the organization’s website: [www.louisiana.sierraclub.org](http://www.louisiana.sierraclub.org).

The Gulf Restoration Network is a diverse network of individuals and local, regional and national groups united to empower people to protect and restore the resources of the Gulf region for future generations. Founded in 1994, we provide technical support and mentoring to member groups. The GRN works to connect our members to developments on issues of importance to their work and we coordinate member activities across the Gulf when needed. For more information, visit their website: <http://healthygulf.org>.