



MEDIA RELEASE

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REPAIRING AND RECYCLING WATERLOGGED TOOLS

NEW ORLEANS – When Jonathan Wallick returned home after Katrina, he was heartbroken to see his tools under six feet of water. He grew up with all manner of tools and inherited many from his father. Some were antiques and were considered family heirlooms.

“The water level came over my workbench and storage shelves,” says Wallick, a New Orleans native who renovates older homes and redevelops distressed rental properties. “Tools are not cheap and many were not replaceable.”

“Some portable power tools I threw out because they were beyond repair,” he says. “But I couldn’t throw out the antiques and the tools that had special significance. My attitude was, ‘This is going to take a long time, but sooner or later, I can repair them and clean them up.’”

Wallick, who serves as president of The Green Project and is a Sierra Club member, decided to put his recycling skills to good use. He began with a Delta 10” table saw.

“To buy a new one would probably cost at least \$1000,” he says. “So I began to refurbish it and have probably spent 10 hours on it so far. The motor ran briefly and then started smoking. I decided to take it in to see if it could be rebuilt. I felt it was worth it.

The motor will probably cost about \$200 but that still less expensive than buying something new. The saw is like a collector car.”

On a smaller scale, Wallick repaired a pair of cutting pliers. “They were my father’s,” he says. “I used a stationary grinder with wire wheel to remove rust. Then I sharpened them with a file. The whole thing took about 20 minutes to repair but it was a labor of love.”

Next, Wallick will tackle a wood-handled chisel. The wood handle became swollen when wet, shrank when it dried, and then fell apart. Wallick will clean it with a wire wheel, sharpen it and refasten the blade to the handle.”

“When you are restoring your property, no matter what the catastrophe, you have to weigh whether to repair your tools or throw them out,” says Wallick. “I believe in recycling and I just cannot envision these tools being dumped into a landfill. So I am going to try to repair as many as I can. I know it might take me a long time, but it’s time that I have.”

Wallick urges those with tools needing repair to consider whether they can be repaired. “Is it less expensive to repair your tools than buy new ones? Do some of the tools you need to repair have significant meaning for you? Would it be better to recycle damaged tools into something you can use?”

Wallick decided all were important to him.

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The Sierra Club's 700,000 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.