

Bios for Steve Cochran

Short version — Steve has spent most of his working life advocating for better environmental policy and outcomes - locally, nationally, and internationally. Over 40 years, the work took him to live in New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Washington DC, and to work in Europe, India and Vietnam. He worked in the U.S. Congress and in the state capitol for Buddy Roemer. Most of the last 3 decades were working in senior roles for a New York based international environmental advocacy group, the Environmental Defense Fund.

But his first and last environmental roles have been coastal and have been here, in New Orleans. In 1990 he became the first executive director of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation (now the Pontchartrain Conservancy), and since 2014 he has been focused on helping restore and protect the Louisiana coast, working through RESTORE, a coalition of 3 national and 2 local advocacy organizations.

Because this has always been home, Steve came back home to stay in 2015. He now describes himself as “mostly retired.”

Longer version — Steve Cochran, now mostly retired, has spent the last 40 years of his professional life working on public policy, including spending the last 33 years advocating for progress on clean air, climate, clean water and coastal restoration and protection.

Having grown up in Covington LA, and graduated from LSU, his professional career began in Shreveport LA, where he spent five years as a petroleum landman. Changing direction, as he began to be more interested in ideas than money, took him first to graduate studies in political philosophy, and then to 7 years with Congressman and Governor Buddy Roemer — in Washington DC and Baton Rouge. Roles with Cong. Roemer included DC legislative director, Shreveport district director, field director for his gubernatorial campaign, and with Governor Roemer, deputy chief of staff for policy, acting Commissioner of Administration, Chief of Staff, and Executive Assistant to the Governor. **1984-90**

Having learned second hand of the range of environmental policy needs in Louisiana, largely from the advocates who lobbied the Governor’s Office to help clean up and protect Louisiana communities, it became a natural next career step to move into full time environmental advocacy, taking the role of first

Executive Director of the the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation (now the Pontchartrain Conservancy). **1990-92**

Next up was a move back to DC, where many of the national and international issues impacting Louisiana directly play out, and where Cochran stayed for the next 22 years. He took a role at the US Environmental Protection Agency as senior advisor in the Office of Air Policy for five years, and then joined the non government organization Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) where he worked for his last 26 years. National and international roles for EDF included legislative director, director of strategic communications, executive director for EDF's political advocacy wing, assoc. vice president for coastal resilience, and vice president for climate. **1992-2014**

His last career stop was back home in Louisiana where he helped build and expand EDF's coastal program, managed *Restore the Mississippi River Delta* (RESTORE, a coalition of 3 national and 2 local environmental orgs) and helped build a new focus on state based work for EDF. The titles associated with those roles were assoc. vice president for coastal resilience, director of RESTORE, and assoc. vice president for state affairs. **2014-23**

As a volunteer, in 2016 Steve helped found and was original board chair for New Harmony High School, a charter high school in New Orleans with a curriculum built around environmental issues. He remains on its board. **2016-current**

He serves on the board of the Center for Planning Excellence. **2018-current**

He serves on the Governor's Advisory Commission for Coastal Protection and Restoration. **2018-current**