



BAYOU BANNER

Newsletter of the Houston Regional Group of the Sierra Club

Volume 37, Number 11

December, 2013 - January, 2014

houston.sierraclub.org — facebook.com/HSCenvironment — www.meetup.com/Houston-Sierra-Club-Outings

TWO MORE PIPELINES AND NWP 12

by George Batten

The U. S. District Court for the District of Columbia rejected the request by Sierra Club and the National Wildlife Federation for an injunction immediately stopping construction of Enbridge's Flanagan South tar sands pipeline. The pipeline - 600 miles long and carrying 600,000 barrels/day is to run from Flanagan, IL to Cushing, OK.

Unlike the proposed Keystone XL pipeline (by TransCanada Corp.), Flanagan South does not cross a national border, so it does not require

See **TWO MORE PIPELINES** on *Page 5*

See our Meetup page (web address under *Bayou Banner* above) for our activity schedule.

DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING (DECEMBER 12, 2013) ANNUAL AUCTION

This is our annual auction. Please come and buy Christmas presents, art, camping gear, and other things. See pages 9 AND 11. 🌐

JANUARY GENERAL MEETING (JANUARY 9, 2014) EXPLORE HOUSTON - BAYOU LAND CONSERVANCY

The Bayou Land Conservancy is the Houston region's leading conservation easement holder, protecting more than 10,000 acres of land in the surrounding area. Since 1996 they have been one of the most successful land conservation organizations in the state of Texas. Their focus on Houston's bayou systems also includes the water

quality that flows into the bayous and the floodplain green spaces surrounding the bayous. For a look at their latest successes, and their current projects, BLC Executive Director, Jennifer Lorenz, will join us. Come learn first hand from the experts in land management for conservation in Texas 🌐

**Annual Auction
Your Help Needed!
See Pages 8 and 11**

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

**Local Efforts are Key to Growing Energy
Efficiency in Texas – Go Team Houston**

by Cyrus Reed, Lone Star Chapter Conservation Director

The Lone Star Chapter of Sierra Club has done significant work over the years to raise the amount of money and programs focused on energy efficiency and renewables. Thus, whether raising the energy efficiency goals at Investor-Owned Utilities through the Public Utility Commission, promoting onsite solar programs or getting the State Energy Conservation Office to raise the statewide minimum energy building codes, the Lone Star Chapter continues to do work to get state officials, agencies and the Legislature to take advantage. But much of our work occurs at the local level – in cities like San Antonio, Austin and yes, Houston. And that also depends on local volunteers.

And much has happened. Under both Bill White and current Mayor Anise Parker, the City of Houston has committed to providing at least

See **ENERGY EFFICIENCY** on *Page 8*

St. Stephens Episcopal Church
1805 West Alabama

Enter one parking lot from Woodhead, the other from Sul Ross. Before 7:00 PM, left turns to Woodhead are not allowed. If you are going west on W. Alabama, turn right at Dunlavy, then left to Marshall, then left to Woodhead.

**GENERAL MEETINGS: 2ND THURSDAYS,
7:30 PM**

December 12, 2013

January 9, 2014

Doors open at 7:00 PM

Join us prior to the meeting for refreshments at the hospitality table and to visit the information tables for Forestry, Outings, and Inner City Outings. Find out how you can volunteer with us.

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U.S. POSTAGE PAID
HOUSTON, TX
PERMIT 8796

The Sierra Club — Houston Group
P.O. Box 3021
Houston, TX 77253-3021

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTION

FRANK BLAKE

I've been an active member of the Houston Sierra Club since the early 90's. During this time I've participated in a wide variety of Club activities and committees, including outings, conservation, and fundraising. On the Outings Committee, I've served as a trip leader, trip organizer, and outings leader trainer. On the conservation committee, I've worked on transportation issues and recycling. Since the mid 90's I have coordinated the Group's annual spring yard sale. Offices held over the years have included those of Outings Chair, Conservation Chair, and Group Chair. I have agreed to run for another term in the interest of maintaining 'institutional memory' and administrative continuity.

The Houston Group, through its various outings programs, conservation work, and dedicated volunteers has made significant contributions to our community over the years.

It is most important that we sustain and grow these efforts. 🌱

LORRAINE GIBSON

I have served on the ExCom and as the group's treasurer the past fourteen years. My fundraising efforts include organizing the annual calendar sales for several years and helping with past Yard Sales and Auctions.

I am actively involved in the outings program from participating to organizing local trips and serving as a leader and assistant leader on numerous air/bus trips. I am the current chair of the Inner City Outings program. I have organized several day outings and participated in many other ICO events.

As a member of the executive committee, I will work to ensure that the club's resources of volunteers and dollars are used effectively to impact other's lives by an awareness of environmental issues and solutions. Please consider me for re-election to the executive committee. 🌱

JOE LENGFELLNER

I have enjoyed more than 10 years with the Sierra Club. I have served on the Houston ExCom the last two years, but I first got involved to learn about good places to hike and enjoy the beauty of the natural world. I think of our country – and specifically the parts often featured in our Sierra Club calendars – as an amazing gift. It is a gift from our ancestors to us; and a gift we are obliged to cherish and protect until it's time to give it to our descendants. As a member of the Sierra Club Executive Committee, that will be one of my chief goals. We need to cherish, enjoy and protect our natural world.

I will also focus on exploring ways to grow our membership. Even in the heart of the oil industry, I strongly believe there exists a large pool of caring Texans that do NOT want to see us pollute away our natural heritage. I believe good, honest Texans, when presented with the facts (which are becoming harder and harder to find in mainstream media) will make the right decisions to save our state and our planet for future generations to enjoy.

Previously, when I was with the Dallas Sierra Club, I helped organize the programs for the club's general meetings each month. In that role, I saw firsthand how much a good presentation can impact the audience. I saw a clear desire for two kinds of meetings. Many people appreciated the honest, frank reviews of the troubles our environment faces; and many people also loved the pictorial essays on how beautiful our world still is. Currently, I serve a similar role on the Houston ExCom, and my goal is the same here in Houston as it was in Dallas. I work to blend the two themes of information and inspiration in the programs we present at our general meetings.

In my business life, I work as a communications consultant. I spent 25 years in PR, media relations, government relations and employee relations. My experience has taught me how to find common ground and look for paths to move forward

in challenging situations. One challenge I worked on in my free time was the fight to prevent a big corporation from building a coal plant just south of Houston in Matagorda County. We won that battle. Now I am working on the campaign to establish a refundable deposit system to ensure Texans recycle beverage containers (i.e. water bottles, soda cans, beer bottles, etc.). In short, "I walk it like I talk it" and I would be honored to be one of your voices on the Sierra Club's ExCom team. 🌱

EVELYN MERZ

I am a member of the Houston Regional Group and also serve as its Conservation Chair. I've devoted much of my volunteer efforts to coordinating HSC's response to projects affecting Buffalo Bayou, Memorial Park, and the riparian corridor. I'm also the liaison from the Ex-Com for our lawsuits against FEMA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Segment E of the Grand Parkway). During the last legislative session, my focus was being the volunteer lead on non-game and state park funding issues for the Chapter. As part of the Chapter effort to open undeveloped state parks to limited public use, I've coordinated two service outings in 2013 to Davis Hill State Park near Houston and more days to remove invasive plants are planned for 2014. Hiking, canoeing and native plants are my biggest outdoor interests. I would appreciate your vote to continue my work with the Houston Ex-Com 🌱

JIM WILLIAMS

Jim Williams has been a member of the Sierra Club for the past eighteen years and has actively participated in the Sierra Club for the past fifteen years. He has served on the Outings Committee and Inner Cities Outings, has been the Houston Group's representative to the state Lone Star Sierra Club chapter and was the Houston Group's Chairperson for three years. He is currently the Energy and Climate Change Chair of the Houston Group and is the Houston Group's representative to Houstonians Against Tars Sands (or HATS). As a past member of the Outings and ICO Committees, he has organized and provided leadership

for numerous trips. He is a member of other organization such as Earthjustice, Public Citizen, Move To Amend, and Veterans for Peace.

His goals as a member of the Executive Committee will be to (1) promote environmental education about the dangerous use of fossil fuels and nuclear energy; (2) work to educate legislators about energy issues and especially the dangers of tar sands pipelines; (3) work to promote clean air for Houston and the surrounding areas; (4) work to prevent the extraction, transportation (including any and all tar sands pipelines), and burning of any fossil fuels; (5) work to prevent the construction or expansion of any coal, natural gas, or nuclear plants; (6) work with other groups in Houston and the surrounding area to promote renewable energy, such as community solar. 🌱

PAGE WILLIAMS

Page Williams has volunteered for a number of environmental groups for several decades. She has served as secretary of both Houston Regional Group and Lone Star Chapter of Sierra Club, Houston Audubon Society, Galveston Bay Foundation. Houston Underwater Club, Texas Gulf Coast Council of Diving Clubs, Audubon Council of Texas, and Texas RICE (Rice Industry Coalition for Environment). Her campaign promise is to once again serve as secretary for Houston Sierra's board if needed!

Page is a SCUBA diver and kayaker, and her special interests are marine and endangered species. She has just rotated off the advisory council of the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, having served since its inception. She is still on the advisory boards of Galveston Bay Foundation and Gulf Restoration Network. Having more free time than in years past, she would enjoy bringing her organizational and networking experience to Houston Sierra's executive committee. 🌱

SIERRA CLUB BALLOT

Statements by candidates for the next two-year term on the Executive Committee of the Houston Group of the Sierra Club appear on this page. Please read them, then vote by checking the boxes by their names.

Use this ballot because the mailing label on the reverse side shows your membership number. If you get it off the Internet, write your membership number on it.

Clip and mail the whole ballot by **December 31** to:

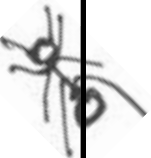
The Election Committee
Sierra Club — Houston Group
P. O. Box 3021
Houston, TX 77253-3021

or bring this ballot to the General Meeting on December 12 and drop it in the ballot box.

Vote for up to 5 candidates.
Joint memberships are allowed double votes.

- Frank Blake
- Lorraine Gibson
- Joe Lengfellner
- Evelyn Merz
- Jim Williams
- Page Williams

Note: Jim Williams and Page Williams are not related.



TRIPS AND LOCAL OUTINGS

Bike Ride

URBAN BIKE TOUR

Sunday, December 1, 2013

The itinerary for this ride may be the Buffalo Bayou/downtown area, the Heights, or Hermann Park/Rice University area. An updated itinerary and meeting point will be posted to the Houston Sierra Club Outings Meetup site. The tour will begin at 9:30am and last approximately 3 hours, taking a leisurely pace. Participants will need to bring a helmet. For meeting point and other details, contact Frank Blake at frankblake@juno.com or 713-528-2896. Or sign up at the Houston Sierra Meetup site. ☺

Marysee

MARYSEE PRAIRIE WORK DAYS

First Saturday most months fall through spring,
December 7, 2013, February 1, 2014

(No January work day.)

The Marysee Prairie is one of the last remnants of tallgrass prairie in the Big Thicket region. Come assist the Texas Land Conservancy in this ongoing effort to revive and maintain the native grasses and wildflowers on this site near Batson, Texas. Work tasks vary by month, but usually involve controlling the regrowth of woody species and keeping the prairie clear for mowing. Tools provided. For more info and to confirm work dates, contact Tom Maddux at 936-697-3425, or Frank Blake at frankblake@juno.com or 713-528-2896. ☺



CYPRESS WONDERLAND CANOE/KAYAK

Saturday, December 7, 2013

Experience the maze of lakes and shaded, winding bayous deep within the heart of the largest cypress forest on the Texas coast. This is one of the most scenic paddling destinations in this part of our state, and it is located only 30 miles east of Houston. Depending on the water and weather conditions, we will focus on one or more of the area's many features: wildlife, river processes, Texas history, and the impact of human interventions. Participants must provide their own canoe or kayak, life jackets (required to be worn), and paddles. The trip leader can help you with advice regarding gear rentals from Houston area outfitters, if needed. Paddling time: 4-5 hours, plus breaks for sightseeing and lunch. Difficulty: moderate to strenuous. Recommended donation to the Houston Sierra Club: \$10. Trip size is limited. To register, contact Tom Douglas at baymail@sbcglobal.net or (713) 869-6026. A detailed trip information sheet will be sent by email to registered participants. ☺

Car Camping

BRAZOS BEND STATE PARK

December 13-15, 2013

This will be a weekend car camping outing timed for the Geminid meteor shower.

The Geminid meteor shower is one of the finest, with plentiful meteors rivaling the August Perseids. And Geminid meteors are often bright, so, if there's a bright moon, many meteors may be able to overcome the harsh moonlight. These

meteors are often as good in the evening as in the hours between midnight and dawn.

Brazos Bend State Park features an extensive hike/bike trail system, a variety of lakes and streams, and good wildlife viewing opportunities. We plan guided hike options on Saturday, and weather permitting a night hike one evening.

The George Observatory is open to the public on Saturdays from 3-10pm for participants who would like to star gaze. This outing is family friendly and well behaved dogs are ok with permission of the leader. For more details and to sign up, contact Frank Blake at frankblake@juno.com or 713-528-2896 (e-mail preferred) or Lorraine Gibson at 281-384-4104 or raineygib@aol.com. ☺

Forest Walk

COLUMBIA BOTTOMLANDS

Saturday, December 14, 2013

Join us as we visit the deep, dark, mysterious, and beautiful Columbia Bottomlands forest in Brazoria County. This distinctive and unique coastal forest has majestic Live Oak, Pecan, Cedar Elm, Burr Oak, and many other trees, wildflowers, vines, and grasses. This is the place where songbirds, waterfowl, and wading birds live and feed, and migrate through.

We will have as our guide U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist Mike Lange, who will show us recent acquisitions that have been made for the public to add to the San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge.

Bring your daypack, water (at least two quarts), lunch, hiking shoes, cameras, bug repellent, sunscreen, field guides, binoculars, and clothes to fit the weather.

We will meet at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot just west of Starbucks (look for Becks Prime) in Meyerland Plaza. Starbucks fronts the 4700 block of Beechnut (south side of Beechnut, near the West Loop South). Look for a silver-gray Honda Civic with lots of bumper-stickers on the back. For those who want to meet us at Hudson Woods, where we will start our trip, the directions are:

1. From Houston, go south on State Highway (SH) 288.
2. Exit SH 288 and turn right onto SH 35 and go west about 5 miles.
3. At the intersection of SH 35 and FM 521 turn right onto FM 521 and go about one mile.
4. From FM 521 turn right onto Sally Lake Road, veer left, and drive about one-half mile to the entrance gate.

Contact Brandt Mannchen at 713-664-5962 or brandtshnfbt@juno.com and leave your name, phone number, and email. If plans change Brandt will contact you. ☺

Nature Center

BAYTOWN NATURE CENTER

Sunday, December 29, 2013

On this 'a little after winter solstice' outing we will hike the Nature Center's extensive network of trails and observe the wintering bird species.

The Baytown Nature Center occupies approximately 450 acres on the west side of Baytown and directly across from the San Jacinto Monument. The site comprises two connected peninsulas, surrounded by three bays. The larger peninsula is being developed into fresh water and salt water wetlands, with mixed woodland habitat for animals, birds, and other wildlife.

The Nature Center charges a \$3 admission fee. Maps, visitor information, and bird/wildlife lists are available at their website: <http://www.baytownnaturecenter.org/>

We'll meet at 9am and the outing will last until early afternoon. Those interested can include a visit to the San Jacinto Monument and Battleground SHS in the afternoon. For meeting

point and other details, contact Frank Blake, frankblake@juno.com or 713-528-2896. ☺

METRO

METRO: REDLINE EXTENSION TOUR

Ride, Hike, Explore

Sunday, January 5, 2014

The new METRORAIL Redline extension is scheduled to begin service on December 21.

This line will extend rail service from UH Downtown to the old Northline Mall area just north of 610.

On this outing we will ride the new line and take a look at the new station art. We will also visit Moody Park, check out some neighborhood murals, and explore this part of town. Each station has incorporated the work of a specific artist with designs for wind screens, cut metal panels, and pavement. One can take a look at the station art at the website: www.gometrorail.org - under the 'Stations' tab, click on "Arts in Transit".

The tour will begin at 9:30am and last approximately 3 hours. Participants should purchase a METRO day pass for the outing. For meeting point and other details, contact Frank Blake at frankblake@juno.com or 713-528-2896. ☺

Katy Prairie

KATY PRAIRIE SERVICE OUTING

Saturday, January 11, 2014,

Visit the beautiful Katy Prairie on a cool winter morning and plant native grasses and wildflowers at the Indian Grass Preserve. The Sierra Club will help the Katy Prairie Conservancy (KPC) in its efforts to protect and restore this remnant coastal prairie.

After our project we will enjoy birding, strolling, and just relaxing on the Katy Prairie. Bring your daypack, water (at least two quarts), lunch, hiking shoes, cameras, bug repellent, sunscreen, field guides, binoculars, and clothes to fit the weather.

We will meet at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot just west of Starbucks (look for Becks Prime) in Meyerland Plaza. Starbucks fronts the 4700 block of Beechnut (south side of Beechnut, near the West Loop South). Look for a silver-gray Honda Civic with lots of bumper-stickers on the back.

Contact Brandt Mannchen at 713-664-5962 or brandtshnfbt@juno.com and leave your name, phone number, and email. If plans change Brandt will contact you. For those who want to meet us at the KPC Indian Grass Preserve and Field Office, see the directions on Page 8, bottom of column 1. ☺

Car Camping

ENCHANTED ROCK SNA

January 31-February 2, 2014

Join us for our annual camping trip to Enchanted Rock in the Texas hill country. The Rock is a huge, pink granite exfoliation dome that rises 425 feet above ground. It is one of the largest batholiths (underground rock formation uncovered by erosion) in the United States. The park has a good network of hiking trails and one can hike off trail on the granite domes.

Leaders are Frank Blake and Lorraine Gibson. This outing is family friendly, and well behaved dogs are ok with permission of the leaders. For further details and to sign up, contact Frank Blake at frankblake@juno.com or 713-528-2896 (e-mail preferred) or Lorraine Gibson at 281-384-4104 or raineygib@aol.com. ☺

FEATURES

See the outings calendar at our website
<http://houston.sierraclub.org>
 for possible additions to schedule.
 Click **Calendar**, then
 scroll down to **Quick Links**.

Also, the calendar is available on our
Meetup site:
www.meetup.com/Houston-Sierra-Club-Outings

LEADER TRAINING

For leader training, contact Frank Blake at
frankblake@juno.com or 713-528-2896. ☎

NOTICES

Sierra Club is a California non profit corporation, with "California Seller of Travel" registration number: CST 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.

All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver. If you would like to read the liability waiver before you choose to participate on an outing, please go to <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms>, or contact the Outings Department at the national Sierra Club office at (415)-977-5528 for a printed version. ☎

KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS PROGRAM

Please re-link your KROGER PLUS Card. Using your card helps support the Houston Sierra Club.

To link your KROGER PLUS Card:

Register online at

www.krogercommunityrewards.com.

Online customer: Sign In with email & password
 - OR -

Not an online Kroger customer:

YOU MUST SIGN UP in the new customer box:

- Enter required information & agree to terms
- Respond to confirmation email & link to the Kroger Community Rewards Program
- Scroll down to "Texas" & click Enroll Now
- Input your Kroger Plus card number - Update or confirm your information
- Enter NPO#: 81991 -or - select Sierra Club Foundation-Houston from list

REMEMBER - Your purchases will not count for the club until you register your card.

If you have questions, contact Lorraine Gibson: by cell phone (281-384-4104) or email raineygib@aol.com. ☎

2014 SIERRA CLUB CALENDARS



Wilderness Wall Calendar
 Best seller for over 34 years
 All the grandeur of the
 North American wilderness

Engagement Calendar

Most popular nature calendar ever published
 Stunning images of flora and fauna
 Week-by-week format with 57 full-color
 photographs



Available at the monthly General Meeting sales table, or order by mail using the form below.
 If you are interested in volunteering for calendar consignment sales,
 contact Lorraine Gibson at 281-384-4104 or raineygib@aol.com.

2014 SIERRA CLUB

CALENDARS Order By Mail

1) Fill in your name, address, and telephone number:

Name: _____
 Address: _____ Phone: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Email: _____

2) Fill out the order form below, selecting the quantity and total ordered of each calendar:

DESCRIPTION	CALENDAR PRICE	SHIPPING	TOTAL EACH	# ORDERED	TOTAL ORDER
(Prices include all applicable Texas state and local sales taxes.)					
2012 Wilderness Wall Calendar	\$14.00	\$3.00	\$17.00	_____	_____
2012 Engagement Calendar	\$15.00	\$3.00	\$18.00	_____	_____

3) Add the total order column to determine the total:

ORDER TOTAL

(Questions - Contact Lorraine Gibson: raineygib@aol.com or 281-384-4104 cell.)

Thank you!

4) Clip and mail this order form along with your check payable to:

Houston Sierra Club
 c/o Lorraine Gibson
 3010 Norwich
 Pearland, TX 77584

(We are unable to accept credit card orders. Please do not send cash.)

TWO MORE PIPELINES AND NWP 12

Continued from Page 1.

approval by the U. S. Department of State. If a permit for XL is denied, Flanagan South will carry about 75% of the tar sands “oil” that XL would have. The “oil” is flowing across the border to the Flanagan area because of a permit approved by the Obama State Department during a Congressional recess in 2009.

The issue before the court was the legality of use of Nationwide Permit 12 (NWP 12) by the Army Corps of Engineers in approving the pipeline.

A similar case, reported on DeSmogBlog (<http://www.desmogblog.com/2013/10/13/us-court-keystone-xl-profits-more-important-than-environment>), was about TransCanada’s proposed Gulf Coast Pipeline, planned to carry 700,000 (up to 830,000) barrels/day from Cushing, OK to Nederland, TX. It crosses 2,227 streams. The Corps separated the permit process so that NWP 12 was applied to each of the crossings; i.e., *there were 2,227 “separate” NWP 12 approvals!*

Nationwide permits are described in the U. S. Code of Regulations (CFR: 33 CFR Part 330), according to which “The NWPs authorize activities that have minimal individual and cumulative adverse environmental effects.” These permits can be issued **without public awareness or comments**. They are a way to avoid the requirement of public hearings and public comments as required by NEPA, and they are being used to stealthily permit many projects across the nation.

It is hard for me to understand how 2,227 separate construction activities for a single pipeline cannot have cumulative adverse environmental effects. Nevertheless, in their 2:1 decision to reject the request for an injunction against construction of the Gulf Coast Pipeline, Judges Jerome A. Holmes and Paul J. Kelly, Jr. (appointed by Presidents George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush, respectively) ruled that “The threatened environmental injuries were outweighed by the financial harm that the injunction would cause TransCanada.” Judge William Martinez (appointed by President Obama) desented, saying “...Gulf Coast Pipeline required a comprehensive NEPA analysis.” For more on this, see DeSmogBlog mentioned above.🌐

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP

The Houston Sierra Club gets a small part of your membership renewal fee (the rest of it is used by the National Sierra Club and the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club). The amount passed to the Houston Sierra Club is more if you use a credit card and renew on line through our website than if you mail a check.

ACRONYMS

Sometimes the acronyms and abbreviations appearing in the Bayou Banner seem overwhelming, so this list is included to help our readers (and the editor). -Ed.

Specific to this Issue of the Bayou Banner

PACE	Property Assessed Clean Energy
SECO	State Energy Conservation Office

General

BTNP	Big Thicket National Preserve
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ExCom	Executive Committee
FS	U. S. Forest Service
GBASCH	Galveston Bay Area Sierra Club Houston
HSC	Houston Sierra Club
LSHT	Lone Star Hiking Trail
NEPA	National Environment al Policy Act
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPS	National Park Service
PDF	Portable Document Format (computer file)
SC	Sierra Club
SHNF	Sam Houston National Forest
TCEQ	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
TPWD	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
TxDOT	Texas Department of Transportation 🌐

An NWP - a Nationwide Permit What’s this NWP stuff?

- is a “preapproved” permit that provides Army Corps of Engineers a way to approve small projects without the usual public review process.

What’s wrong with that?

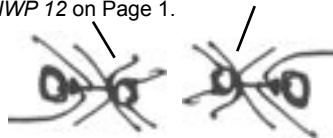
NWPs are intended for very small projects that have minimal individual and cumulative impact.

So?

So some large projects are broken up into many - several thousand in some cases - small projects, each getting a single NWP.

Wow! That sounds like a way to avoid environmental protections under NEPA.

Exactly right! See *Two more pipelines and NWP 12* on Page 1.



Current numbering of Bayou Banner issues uses odd numbers to correspond, approximately, to the monthly numbering used previously. 🌐

SIERRA INFO ON LINE

by John Berlinghoff

Since paper copies of the Bayou Banner are being mailed only every other month, we now have some other options to keep you informed.

- The HSC Website at <http://houston.sierraclub.org> has our Bayou Banner pictures in color, links, etc.
- Monthly Outings Newsletter, a shortened version of the outings list that I send out monthly.
- FaceBook Page for our Group, information on activities and environmental or political news.
- FaceBook page for Houston Sierra Club Outdoors, the latest news on outings and other stuff about the outdoors. Look us up at HscOutdoors.
- Twitter @sierraouting is a work in progress.

For help in finding the Facebook pages or for any other questions contact me. John Berlinghoff: johnb@hal-pc.org, 713-644-8228. 🌐

RECYCLE ALMOST ANYTHING

New “Recycle just about anything” website: TCE Fund has re-launched its website www.TexasTakeBack.org, which is designed as a comprehensive guide to give you information for recycling almost anything. Need to recycle your electronics, pharmaceuticals or CFLs? Want to know how to reduce household plastic or paper waste? Check out the new site, and give us your feedback, please! 🌐

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

1. Explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth.
2. Practice and promote responsible use of the earth’s ecosystems and resources.
3. Educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment.
4. Use all lawful means to carry out these objectives.



SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

BAYOU BANNER

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Volume 37, Number 11
houston.sierraclub.org • [facebook.com/HSCEnvironment](https://www.facebook.com/HSCEnvironment) • www.meetup.com/Houston-Sierra-Club-Outings

December 2013 - January, 2014

The Bayou Banner is the newsletter of the Houston Regional Group of the Sierra Club. It is published 6 times a year by the Houston Sierra Club. Circulation is 5,000 copies; about 2,500 are mailed, and 2,500 are delivered electronically to members; some are distributed through other outlets.

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TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP - NOT ABOUT FREE TRADE

Communicated by Jim Williams

Shortly before press time, WikiLeaks released the secret negotiated draft text for the entire TPP Intellectual Property Rights Chapter. Reports are that this text has shown that the TPP is worse than reported here. An update will be forth coming. JW

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is the newest so called Free Trade Treaty. It is like NAFTA but on steroids. NAFTA promised prosperity, even riches, with jobs across our great land. But only the corporations got wealthy. NAFTA caused thousands of factories to be closed, millions of middle-class jobs to be outsourced, and the economies of hundreds of towns and cities to be destroyed (most notably Detroit). Most Mexicans were also affected badly. The TPP is even more destructive.

The TPP is not about trade at all, but is rather a corporate power grab that circumvents domestic judicial systems and undermines national sovereignty. The TPP is a trade deal that mostly does not deal with trade. In fact, of the 29 chapters of this document, only five cover traditional trade matters. The other twenty-four chapters deal with corporate protectionism. They create sweeping new rights with escape clauses to protect multinational corporations from accountability to our governments and to “we the people”. Here are some of the provisions that the TPP threatens.

Trashes Food Safety Laws. Any of our government’s food safety regulations that are stricter than “international standards,” as most are, could be ruled as “illegal trade barriers.” Then our government would have to revise our consumer protections to comply with the weaker global standards. Our government could no longer ban meat imports that do not meet our “safe to eat laws”, as long as the exporting nation simply claims that its inspection system is “equivalent” to ours. In addition, food labeling laws we rely on (organic, country-of-origin, animal-welfare approved, GMO-free, etc.) would also be subject to challenge as trade barriers.

Prevents Local Governance of Fracking. The US Department of Energy would lose its authority to regulate exports of natural gas to any TPP nation. This would create an explosion of the destructive fracking process across the US. This would allow both foreign and US corporations to export fracked gas from America to member nations without any DOE review of the environmental and economic impacts on local communities or on our national interests. It also means that most of the gas produced by this polluting process will not go to us, but to foreign users, which will raise consumer prices and cut manufacturing growth.

Outsources US Jobs. US corporations would get special foreign investor protections to limit the cost and risk of relocating their factories to low-wage nations that sign onto this agreement. For example, an

American corporation thinking about moving a factory would know it is guaranteed a sweetheart deal if it exports to a TPP nation like Vietnam. The corporation could skirt Vietnam’s laws and demand compensation at an international tribunal for any government policy or action (such as a hike in the minimum wage) that undermined its “expected” profits. These guarantees would be strong incentives for corporate chieftains to export even more of our middle-class jobs.

Raise Drug Prices. Large pharmaceutical companies would be given more years of monopoly pricing on each of their patents and be empowered to block distribution of cheaper generic drugs. Besides artificially keeping everyone’s prices high, this would be a death sentence to many people suffering from cancer, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and other treatable diseases in impoverished lands. The deal would also restrict the rights of our government to negotiate with drug giants to get lower consumer prices with bulk purchases, as Medicare and Medicaid do in the US.

Benefits Wall Street and Other Financial Giants. The TPP explicitly prohibits transaction taxes (such as the proposed Robin Hood Tax here) that would shut down super-rich speculators who have repeatedly triggered financial crises and economic crashes around the world; it restricts “firewall” reforms that separate consumer banking from risky investment banking (thus prohibiting Congress from reinstating the much needed Glass-Steagall firewall in our country); it could roll back reforms that governments adopted to fix the extreme bank deregulation regimen that caused Wall Street’s 2007 crash; and it provides a backdoor escape from national rules that would limit the size of “too-big-to-fail” banks. These extreme provisions would be enforceable by the banks themselves. The TPP empowers banks to force governments either to repeal reform laws or to compensate banks with taxpayer money for “losses” they say are caused by reforms.

Internet freedom. The TPP would change the internet as we now know it. Corporate-created content, for example, would be given copyright protection for a stunning 120 years! The deal would also transform internet service providers into a private police force, empowered to monitor our “user activity,” arbitrarily take down our content, and cut off our access to the internet. Consumers could be assessed mandatory fines for non-commercial, small-scale copying -- like sending your mom a recipe you got off of a paid site.

Would Cause Public Services to be Taken Over by Corporations. TPP rules would limit how governments regulate such public services as utilities, transportation, and education, including restricting policies meant to ensure broad or universal access to those essential needs. One rule says that member countries must open their service sectors to private competitors, which would allow the corporate provider to cherry pick the profitable customers and sink the public service. Also, corporations from any TPP nation must be allowed to bid on contracts to provide public

services in the US on the same terms as American corporations.

Nations that join the TPP must conform their laws and rules to TPP’s strictures, effectively supplanting US sovereignty and cancelling our people’s right to be self-governing. Worse, it creates virtually permanent corporate rule over us -- there’s no expiration date on the agreement, and no provision in it can be altered unless all countries agree. Thus, even if Americans voted in an election to make changes, any other TPP country could overrule us by not agreeing.

Additionally, the TPP creates new legal system called the “Investor-State Dispute Resolution” system. In this private, supra-legal court, corporations are empowered to sue TPP governments over environmental, health, consumer, zoning, or any other public policies that the corporations claim are either undermining their TPP “rights” or diminishing their “expected future profits.”

This elevates thousands of private, profit-seeking entities to the legal status of sovereign nations. Under the investor-state system, a smaller version of which was included in NAFTA and other free-trade schemes, the deck is stacked for corporate interests. Cases are decided behind closed doors by three-person international tribunals of private attorneys who often have a glaring corporate bias. The same lawyers who represent corporations in these cases routinely switch over in other cases to serve as “judges.”

These judges are not accountable to any electorate, and their decisions are final; there is no appeal to a real court. If a corporation wins a case, taxpayers of the government being sued compensate the corporation for its loss of profit. Currently, even without the TPP, corporations are demanding a total of nearly \$14 billion just in cases brought under free trade arrangements that include the US.

Why does the US public not know about this monstrosity? Because the corporate and political powers do not want us to know about this, and they are keeping the whole process secret.

TPP negotiations were initiated back in 2008 by none other than President Bush. The media, however, did not see the story then and have since devoted zero investigative energy to it -- even as seventeen rounds of closed-door negotiations have occurred. Obama pledged in 2008 to avoid sneaky, NAFTA-style, corporate sell-outs, but promptly surrendered to the global schemers once in office. Team Obama goosed up the TPP negotiating process and has gone to extremes to make it more furtive than Bush did. In 2010, all nations involved signed a formal pledge to keep details of their deliberations from the public and to keep documents related to the deal under cover until four years after the process is completed. (But obviously some leaks have occurred.) Congress is also in the dark.

See **TRANS-PACIFIC...** on *Page 8*

WINDSTORM SALVAGE MADE LESS DAMAGING

by Brandt Mannchen

After a nearly two year process, the U.S. Forest Service (FS) signed a decision notice (DN) for the “Wind Event Adaptive Management Environmental Assessment” (EA). This planning document allows the FS to react quicker when a hurricane, tornado, or windstorm blows down trees in one of the four National Forests in Texas (Sam Houston, Davy Crockett, Angelina, and Sabine). This EA allows the FS to salvage log, prescribe burn, mulch, and lop and scatter trees that have been killed or wounded after a windstorm.

The EA will be used for the next 10 years and allows, in the event of a windstorm, up to 10,000 acres of salvage logging, burning, and other actions per year. With this EA the FS has conducted most of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements that deal with alternatives and environmental analysis. When a windstorm occurs the FS can log, burn, etc., quickly and get the national forest back to normal operations. According to the FS, Hurricane Ike and other windstorms have stretched its’ ability to react quickly.

In July and again in October 2013 the Texas Conservation Alliance (TCA), and the Lone Star Chapter and Houston Regional Group of the Sierra Club (Sierra Club), met with Mark Van Every, Forest Supervisor of the National Forests and Grasslands in Texas, to discuss the EA.

At the July meeting several concerns were discussed with the FS. These concerns included removal of downed trees from sensitive management areas like stream-side zones (streams and rivers), aquatic habitats (along lakes), scenic areas (like Big Creek and Winters Bayou Scenic Areas in Sam Houston National Forest), research natural areas (Mill Creek Cove in Sabine National Forest), and other sensitive areas; leaving some downed trees as wildlife habitat; the public involvement process; adaptive management; protection for the Lone Star Hiking Trail and other trails; and other concerns. Mr. Van Every was interested in the concerns and said he would talk to his staff and see if and how they could be implemented.

When the final EA was signed with a DN a number of the concerns, particularly removal of sensitive management areas from salvage logging (which removed tens of thousands of acres from logging), had been incorporated in the final EA. However, TCA and Sierra Club were still concerned that some issues had not been resolved and met again Mr. Van Every in October.

Mr. Van Every said that the final EA was signed and that he could not change it unless the change was minor. Mr. Van Every did say that he could write guidance that would address our concerns. The guidance is issued as part of the implementation of the EA. Mr. Van Every was interested that the TCA and Sierra Club not appeal his decision. Four guidance points were worked out between the FS and TCA and Sierra Club. Those guidance points, while not perfect, do result in an improved protection for stream-side zones, trails, downed trees, and illegal off-highway vehicle (OHV) use after a windstorm.

The participation of TCA and the Sierra Club in the NEPA process has resulted in more protection for the

National Forests in Texas in the event of a windstorm. The Sierra Club is pleased (although not totally satisfied) with what has been accomplished.

Kudos must go to the TCA for working together with the Sierra Club in this effort. Also the Forest Supervisor, Mr. Van Every, has done things that no other Forest Supervisor has done over the past 35 years by inviting TCA and the Sierra Club into the process and actually taking our input and putting it into the EA and implementation guidance (a first time event).

For that the Sierra Club is very grateful. Of course the proof will be in the pudding. Until there is a windstorm we will not know how the EA will be implemented. The Sierra Club must go out and do citizen oversight and continue to point out to the FS what can be done better. That is the goal of the Sierra Club for the future. 🌍



PRESIDENT OBAMA’S EXECUTIVE ORDER ON CHEMICAL FACILITY SAFETY

By Mary Schultz

The ammonium nitrate explosion on April 17, 2013 that left 15 people dead and more than 150 buildings destroyed or damaged in West, Texas will leave a stark impression on Texans’ psyche for a long time to come. The West Fertilizer Company, which stored and distributed fertilizer, had not been inspected by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) since 1985 because the plant was not on OSHA’s “National Emphasis Plan” for inspections. Not only were immediate questions about federal, state and local regulations and inspections associated with hazardous chemical storage reawakened in the minds of public agencies charged with citizen safety, but fence-line communities who live daily with the “fall out” of chemical plants said “Not again!”

Perhaps President Obama was personally horrified by the outcome of the West plant explosion, by the proximity of a nursing home, residences and a school to the dangerous site, or by the dearth of regulatory oversight. Perhaps organizers of otherwise invisible communities living in the shadows of the Gulf Coast petrochemical plants and chemical storage throughout the US found an opening for influence in the aftermath of West. Whatever the trigger, President Obama, on August 1, 2013, issued an Executive Order mandating “... Chemical Facility Safety and Security Working Group, co-chaired by ...” Homeland Security, EPA, and the Department of Labor (OSHA). Among other things, this Working Group, which will include representatives of many other agencies, is charged to:

- Deploy a pilot program ...to validate best practices... of collecting, storing, using facility information, stakeholder outreach, inspection planning and, as appropriate, joint inspection efforts;
- Create comprehensive and integrated standard operating procedures for a unified Federal approach

for identifying and responding to risks in chemical facilities...

- ...determine what, if any, changes are required...for timely and full disclosure of information;
- Develop an analysis with recommendations on improving information collection by and sharing between agencies to help identify chemical facilities that may not have provided all required information, or may be non-compliant with Federal requirements to ensure chemical facility safety;
- Produce a proposal for data sharing... with ... State, local, and tribal entities where possible;
- Recommend changes to streamline and improve data collection;
- Identify improvements to existing risk management practices through agency programs, private sector initiatives, government guidance, outreach, standards and regulations;
- *Engage key stakeholders to discuss the options to improve risk management...* [emphasis added];
- Develop a plan for implementing practical and effective improvements.

This executive order is of interest to Sierra Club members largely because Sierra Club members can use this opportunity

- 1) to share personal and group knowledge of the behavior of chemicals, of alternatives to serious toxics currently being chosen by plants, and of ways to reduce the risk of toxic exposure to the human and natural environment;
- 2) to partner with those “invisible” communities of fellow human beings who always suffer the first effects of faulty chemical management.

On Tuesday, November 5, the “Working Group” agencies held the first of 5 “Listening Sessions” with stakeholders, as required by this executive order (EO13650). It took place at College of the Mainland in Texas City, with another planned in Texas at the beginning of January, 2014. Powerful statements from community stakeholders were heard at that session, including dignified but angry statements from steelworkers’ union members working inside of chemical plants; from the adult daughter of a man killed in one of the BP plant explosions; from a citizen activist in Freeport who as a physical therapist is daily dealing with medical repercussions of exposure to toxins. There were many helpful recommendations from first responders.

A structure for receiving recommendations from stakeholders at the local level between the infrequent “Listen Sessions” is that of *Local Emergency Planning Committees* (LEPCs). These have been developed at the county level all over the country, at least after the disaster of 9-11. LEPCs enable the “Working Group” to carry out the executive order to “convene... chemical companies..., State and local regulators, infrastructure owners and operators, first responders, labor organizations, *environmental and community groups* [emphasis added] and consensus standards organizations in order to identify and share successes to date and best practices....

Local Sierra Club members who are interested in finding out more about how to participate should contact one of the Houston Sierra group executive committee members. 🌍

CANOE/KAYAK DOUBLE BAYOU

November 16, 2013

by Tom Douglas

Well, all right, even if there were a couple of muddy banks to contend with, the paddling on Double Bayou was still great. And there was a lot of diversity, including a large flock of vultures in the middle of the day, and many brown pelicans swimming near our take-out point in Oak Island. During the day, we saw mixed pine/hardwood forest, clusters of oak trees, patches of freshwater marsh, and, toward the end, salt marsh. One of our adventurers even noted that, of the twelve canoes and kayaks, no two were alike. Soon after we began paddling, our exploration of a tributary took us up to the point where it crosses the road that we had used to shuttle vehicles just an hour earlier. Farther down the bayou, we passed several docked shrimp boats. During the lunch break, which, with the generous permission of a local land owner, we spent under the shade of a beautiful grove of oaks, Tom read several stories about earlier days along Double Bayou that had been written by members of the pioneering Jackson family. Even though it stayed cloudy all day, the weather could hardly have been more pleasant. Once we had loaded up our boats and run the afternoon shuttle, many of us rounded out the day with seafood at a table out on the dock of a local watering hole that is located just down the bayou from where we paddled. Well, all right, maybe the sunset was a bit on the gray side, but that just gave us something more to look forward to, next time. Maybe in the spring? 🌍



The long and short of it

Photo by Linda Shead

HOW TO GET TO THE KPC INDIAN GRASS PRESEVE

1. Go Interstate 10 West past Katy and exit and turn right (north) onto Pederson Road and go about one-half mile to U.S. Highway 90.
2. Turn left (west) onto U.S. Highway 90 and go about one-half mile and then turn right onto FM 2855 and go about 6 miles.
3. After 6 miles, stop at FM 529. After you cross FM 529, FM 2855 is called Morrison Road. Go 1 mile and turn left. You will still be on Morrison Road.
4. Go 1 mile and at the stop sign turn right (north) onto Pattison Road. Go 3 miles and stop at Hebert Road. Turn left (west), onto Hebert Road. 🌍
5. Go 1 mile to the KPC Field Office entrance road and Indian Grass Preserve. Turn left (south) onto the entrance road and drive 0.3 miles and park in front of the Field Office. 🌍



Welcome wagon at Oak Island

Photo by Alan Bernstein

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Continued from Page 1.

50% of the electricity that city buildings consume through renewable energy, twice raised its energy codes for new construction, and begun a variety of programs to encourage and incentivize green building practices. There are more opportunities available for Sierrans to move Houston forward on renewable and energy efficiency.

First, currently, City Council is considering a new modification to the energy building code for residential buildings that would raise the minimum standard to 15% above the International Energy and Conservation Code, which is SECO's minimum standard. On November 12th, the proposed change has already been considered by the Transportation, Technology and Infrastructure Committee headed by Councilmember Noriega, and is scheduled to go to the full Council in December. Sierrans can play a role in letting city council know that a slight improvement in energy codes will mean lower electricity bills and lower emissions from energy and natural gas use in buildings.

Next year, Centerpoint, which runs the local transmission and distribution grid, will once again have to roll out their annual efficiency goals and programs, and Sierra Club wants them to consider adding an onsite solar program to their menu of programs. Look for an opportunity to get involved.

Finally, the Lone Star Chapter is part of a group known as Keeping PACE in Texas, which is trying to implement Property Assessed Clean Energy Districts throughout Texas as part of legislation we recently passed. These districts must be approved at the local city or county level, and would allow financing of energy efficiency, water conservation and onsite solar programs. While the details are still being worked out, Sierrans need to work with the City of Houston to get PACE off the ground, and more energy and water efficient buildings.

For more information about these and other efforts or to get involved, please contact Cyrus Reed, Conservation Director,
Lone Star Chapter, Sierra Club.
512-740-4086, Cyrus.reed@sierraclub.org. 🌍

TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

Continued from Page 6.

Even though the Constitution says Congress has exclusive authority to regulate trade, the White House has repeatedly rejected requests by lawmakers to attend negotiations as observers, and congressional leaders have not been allowed to review or have any meaningful input on the draft texts of the TPP's 29 chapters. In June TPP critic Rep. Alan Grayson (Democrat Florida) was finally allowed to see the full draft, but was not allowed to take a copy. Grayson confirmed that the TPP puts corporate interests ahead of American interests.

However, there are 600 or so corporate representatives who have been welcomed inside to help write the TPP. They are handpicked members of the 16 Industry Trade Advisory Committees -- practically all of them corporate executives. These corporate representatives will make sure the final document serves corporate interests. (There is no room at the negotiating table for environmentalist or others.)

Formal negotiations are to be finished by October. The White House can shut the Congress and US public out of the process, but they cannot pass the TPP without Congress's approval. To get the TPP passed, the White House will start with "fast track". Under this procedure, President Obama is allowed to sign the TPP before Congress votes. Then he writes an "implementing bill" to make US laws conform to the hundreds of pages of TPP documents. He will send this to Congress, where no amendments will be allowed and debate will be strictly limited. The idea is to force members to swallow the whole deal in one, hurried, up-or-down vote. However, Congress first has to authorize the White House's use of the fast track. But the fundamental problem for the deal's boosters is not procedure, it's content. The TPP stinks. The TPP is simple; it is a power grab by the world's richest corporations.

But we can protect our democratic rights from this latest threat of corporate governance. The only way the multinational corporations can win is to keep the public in the dark about what the TPP is. So now is the time to spread the news about the Trans-Pacific Partnership and to begin writing our congressmen about this new attack on our national sovereignty.

Condensed from [The Hightower Lowdown](#), "The Trans-Pacific Partnership is not about free trade. It's a corporate coup d'état – against us!", Volume 15, Number 8, August 2013. 🌍

FEATURES

Obituary

HANA GINZBARG

1925-2013

If you have enjoyed Buffalo Bayou, Armand Bayou Nature Center, or Bellaire's Russ Pitman Park with its Nature Discovery Center, you have been touched by Hana Ginzburg. She was instrumental in protecting and/or establishing all of these. She and her husband Arthur were faithful supporters of the Sierra Club.

Hana left Prague, her birth city, in 1939 on the last train with Jewish children escaping Nazis, arrived in the U. S. in 1943, earned degrees: BA at Vassar College in 1945, MS at Smith College, and PhD at Purdue University, all in chemistry. At Purdue she met and married another student, Authur Ginzburg. They moved to Houston in 1948. Hana worked at M. D. Anderson Hospital, then taught chemistry at various schools.

Her enjoyment of the outdoors, and her distress at the disruption of natural areas by urban development, and at hearing that the Army Corps of Engineers was planning to line Buffalo Bayou with concrete led her to environmental activism. The Buffalo Bayou lining was stopped after she collected over 2,000 signatures on petitions against it. After that she was a prime mover in establishing the 2,500 acre Armand Bayou Nature Center. Later she started a nonprofit group for supporting parks in Bellaire; in 1981 her work led to establishing the Hana & Authur Ginzburg Nature Discovery Center. Hana's home across the street from the Discovery Center was embedded in trees.

The following quote from the *Bellaire/RiverOaks/West U Examiner* summarizes Hana: "Hana was a scientist with a humanitarian and ecological bent. As a volunteer herself, she has inspired an army of volunteers with her contagious enthusiasm. She believed in the ability and duty of individuals to shape and conserve their environment for the common good and has been a remarkable role model for us all." 🐜



The ant seen on these pages is the fictitious *Sieromeymex houstonensis*, drawn for and named after the Houston Sierra Club by world-famous biologist E. O. Wilson.

Houston Sierra Club's
2013 Benefit Auction and Holiday Party

7:00 PM
Thursday
12 December

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
1805 West Alabama
@ Woodhead

*Just a few of the
Wonderful Items up for your bid...*

- Sevylor inflatable fishing boat
- 4 tickets to an Astro game in 2014
- 2 tickets to Stages Theater production
- "Rio Villa Bass" Gyotaku fish print
- Jewellery:
 - Variety of Natural Stone and Sterling
 - Silver Pendants
 - Sterling Silver Necklaces
 - Child's 5-in-1 playset

Autographed Books
Breaking New Ground...
by Lester Brown
A Garden Book for Houston
by Lynn Herbert
... and others

Hand-Crafted Art
- "Welcome" birdhouse hanger
- Ceramic tile wall plaque
... and others
...and much more.

Lorraine Gibson 281-284-4104
For complete and specific Item listings, please visit our website at:
houston.sierraclub.org

CLEAR LAKE AND GALVESTON BAY AREA

Obituary

SAMMY M. RAY

1919-2013

On October 14, 2013 Texas - and the world - lost Sammy Ray, a world renowned marine biologist who was one of the founders of Texas A&M University (TAMU) at Galveston. His interests, listed on his page of the University web site, were "Marine biology, oyster biology, oyster aquaculture and hatcheries invertebrate pathology, environmental impact assessment and coastal zone management." This is minimal: it does not show his interests in teaching; supporting students; educating the public; working with citizens, industry, and government; protecting the environment and health of both oysters and humans; and ping-pong.

His degrees include BS (zoology, 1942) from LSU, and MA (biology, 1952) and PhD (biology, 1954) from Rice Institute (now Rice University). He joined TAMU in 1957 and became an internationally acclaimed oyster scientist. In the 1950s he invented a diagnostic test for oyster disease; the test is still in use today.

He established, and until 1993 served as director of Sea Camp, a program for youth 10 to 16 years old. Participants in this program explored the Galveston area in research vessels, visited research laboratories, and used scientific instruments to study marine organisms. He was also Director of the Community and Youth Program for the University.

He participated in Sierra Club programs, especially in talks and outings with Galveston Bay Area Sierra Club Houston. Those who attended them will not forget Sammy.

For more about him, search the web for "Sammy Ray" - Google will provide his web page at TAMU, a longer obituary in the *tamuTimes*, and a posting by one of his students. A description of his memorial service, written by John H. Cross, is to appear on the web site of the Houston Sierra Club. 🌐

GBASCH DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING (DECEMBER 18, 2013)

U. S. WATERWAYS

Peg Hill with the League of Women Voters and husband sailed out Galveston Bay, turned left and went up the coast all the way to the St. Lawrence waterway. Then, they came down the Mississippi River and back to the Gulf and into Galveston Bay. She will show us her slides and discuss her experience and impressions from an environmentalist standpoint. Peg has done environmental work on the Hill. By the way, this is also our Holiday Meeting. Everybody Bring something to share. 🌐

GBASCH JANUARY GENERAL MEETING (JANUARY 15, 2014)

OYSTERS, RIGS, AND REEFS

Speaker to be determined.

NOTICE

Galveston Bay Area Sierra Club Houston (acronym GBASCH) is part of the Houston Regional Group of the Sierra Club (also called the Houston Sierra Club — acronym HSC). HSC is so large - over 100 miles in diameter - that it is useful to provide local organization of activities for members in outlying areas. GBASCH does that by planning activities and holding general meetings in the Galveston Bay area. These are open to all HSC members. 🌐

BIKE TRAILS COMMITTEE

A bike trails committee was started to explore enhanced hike and bike trail connectivity in the Bay Area. Initially three folks doing this are Debra Goode, Richard Lee, and Doug Peterson. They are brainstorming and investigating breaks in existing trails and systems where it is hazardous to travel by bike, and identifying some of the variables for implementation, other interested parties, local government, sources of funding, etc). Contact Debra Goode at 281-280-9944 if you are interested in participating. 🌐

**Galveston Bay Area Sierra Club Houston
GENERAL MEETINGS: 3RD WEDNESDAYS**
Clear Lake Park - 5002 NASA Parkway
Bay Area Community Center (Blue Roof)

December 18, 2013
January 15, 2014
6:30 -9:00 PM

CLEAR LAKE WALKERS

Every Saturday morning at 7:30, rain or shine

Some Bay Area Sierra Club members and friends meet weekly for a three-mile walk, conversation and breakfast. Much of the walk is along the water and we often see a variety of shore birds.

Where: Nassau Bay, meeting in the Dollar Store parking lot across from the Post Office.

Contact: Betty Armstrong at 281-333-5693.

Editor's note: The Clear Lake Walkers have been active for 21 years. 🌐

Houston Sierra Club

VOLUNTEER NEEDS

Air Quality Advocates

The Houston Sierra Club is seeking members to serve on the new Air Quality Committee. Training and mentoring will be provided free! The Club expects from volunteers: a willingness to learn about air quality issues, persistence and patience, and active advocacy for clean air. Contact Brandt Mannchen at 713-664-5962 or brandtshnfbt@juno.com.

Website Help:

We need a couple of people to assist the webmaster with posting material to the Houston Group website. This normally requires a few hours per month. For more information, contact the webmaster at houston.webmaster@lonestar.sierraclub.org.

Renew your membership on line to help:

If you renew your membership on line at our web site (<http://Houston.sierraclub.org/>), then click on Join or Give/Membership Benefits), part of your payment comes back to support Houston Sierra Club.

WANT BREAKING NEWS?

Check our website:

<http://houston.sierraclub.org/>.

Since the print copy of the *Banner* takes several weeks from editorial deadline to members' mail boxes, some late-planned activities appear only on the web site. 🌐



Hardwood Forest (Double Bayou) Photo by Paul Woodcock

HELP!**We need help from Sierra Club members and supporters!**

If you're on our email list, you should have received a plea to fill out a survey and think about ways you can help your local Sierra Club. The Houston group of the Sierra Club is involved in many of the leading environmental issues affecting our region -- from how the BP oil disaster money will be spent to curtailing urban sprawl associated with the Grand Parkway. But we can only engage fully when our members and supporters engage with us.

The survey is only 10 questions and it's aimed at understanding what types of activities you would like to participate in, and what are the topics that are most interesting to you. The greater Houston region is huge -- it has the worst air quality in the nation, all the bayous are full of bacteria, and urban sprawl is an understatement.

Can you help us encourage sound environmental policy by participating more with us? Please fill out the survey located at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FYPRGH7>.

Or contact me directly to learn how to get "on-board" in this great organization that does so much for our state. Jen Powis, jenniferpowis@yahoo.com. 🌐

Bayou Banner Advertising Rate Schedule

Full page	\$400.00 per issue
1/3 page	\$160.00 per issue
1/4 page	\$125.00 " "
1/8 page	\$ 75.00 " "
1/18 page	\$ 45.00 " "

(1/18 page is business card size)

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2 issues	3%
3 issues	5%
4 issues	6%
6 issues	10%
10 issues	15%

Additional

Back page (if available)	+50%
Preferred page (not front or back page)	+25%

Contact George Batten, Editor:
BayouBanner@gmail.com
 281-381-4990

KPFT 90.1 FM

The station with much for Sierrans:

Explorations, Tuesdays, 6:00-7:00 PM

Eco-Ology, Wednesdays, 6:00-7:00 AM

The New Capital Show,

Thursdays, 3:00-4:00 PM

Democracy Now (with Amy Goodman),

8-9 AM and 5-6 PM, weekdays.

Progressive Forum (with Wally James)

Thursdays, 8-9 PM

Of course there is news:

BBC News, 5-5:30 AM

Free Speech Radio News,

weekdays, 4-4:30 PM

KPFT local news, weekdays, 4:30-5 PM

And lots of music, especially on the weekends.

You can see the program schedule at

www.kpft.org

HOW TO PRINT THE BAYOU BANNER IN COLOR

The web version of the *Bayou Banner* (which is a PDF file; see News at our web site) has some color pictures. You can print it on letter-size paper using the Adobe Acrobat Reader. After you click "Print", select "Reduce to Printer Margins" from the "Page Scaling" window. Make sure the printer Properties page is set for color. 🌐



MAP: GETTING TO THE GENERAL MEETING

Correction: The article "Texas Bottle Bill" in the previous issue of the Bayou Banner was incorrectly attributed to Grace Martinez. It was written by Joe Linkfeller. 🌐

CREDITS

Some photos in the *Bayou Banner* are public domain photos provided by the National Park Service and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The clip-art canoe is from 1st Lancaster Baptist Scouts, Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada (<http://www.geocities.com/Yosemite/3246/index.html>). All photos are used by permission. 🌐

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Just go to our web site
<http://Houston.sierraclub.org/>
 and click on
 Join or Give/Membership Benefits

For a limited time:

Only \$15

Get a FREE rucksack

See it online

Part of your payment
 comes back to support the
 Houston Sierra Club

Some activities shown on the Announcements pages are not managed by the Houston Sierra Club.

ANNUAL AUCTION DECEMBER 12, 2013 DONATIONS AND VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Our Annual Auction will take place this year at our December General Meeting on Thursday, December 13. This is one of the principal fundraising events for the Houston Group and features both a live and silent auction. All proceeds from the auction stay here in Houston to fund local conservation efforts and activities.

We are now seeking donations for this year's auction. An early response will help us publicize items in advance. Suggestions for donations are: goods such as camping equipment, sports equipment, tools, crafts, artwork, or autographed books; nature tours, adventure activities, or sailing excursions; gift certificates or gift cards for services, performances, merchants, or restaurants; stays at cabins, bed & breakfasts, or resorts.

We also need volunteers to help solicit auction items, pick up donated items or help promote and advertise the event. And we will need volunteers on the day of the event to help with a variety of set up tasks.

To donate, volunteer, or for more information about the auction, please contact one of the following: Lorraine Gibson at 281-384-4104, raineygib@aol.com Frank Blake at frankblake@juno.com or 713-528-2896. 🌐

VOLUNTEER NEWS AND NOTES

MONTHLY MEETINGS

GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING:

Second Thursday monthly in Pecore Hall of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 1805 West Alabama. Enter parking lot from Woodhead. The meeting opens at 7:00 PM, and the program starts at 7:30 PM. Everyone is welcome.

Before 7:00 PM, left turns are not allowed at Woodhead. If you are going west on W. Alabama, turn right at Dunlavy, then left to Marshall, then left to Woodhead.

CONSERVATION:

Second Tuesday monthly, 7:00 PM. Meet in the H-E-B food court at West Alabama and Dunlavy. Contact Evelyn Merz, 713-644-8228, elmerz@hal-pc.org. Come early (6:30) and grab a bite to eat.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Fourth Thursday monthly, 7:00 PM.
Contact Frank Blake frankblake@juno.com.

INNER CITY OUTINGS (ICO):

Normally the third Tuesday every month, 7:00 PM, at the Whole Foods store at 701 Waugh Dr. Please contact Lorraine Gibson at 281-384-4104 or raineygib@aol.com for more information.

OUTINGS:

Usually the third Monday of the month, 7:00 PM, at the Whole Foods store on Bellaire near Wesleyan. Help us plan regional day outings, weekend trips, and air/bus trips to exciting outdoor destinations across the country. Please call to confirm meeting date. Frank Blake, 713-528-2896, frankblake@juno.com.

RECYCLING RESOURCES

CITY OF HOUSTON RECYCLING

The City of Houston has several drop off sites (note: some are specialized for certain items), and provides curbside recycling in many neighborhoods. Principal drop off locations are the Westpark Consumer Recycling Center at 5900 Westpark, and the self serve site at 3602 Center Street in the Heights. For other locations and a complete list of recyclable items, consult the City's recycling web page. One can also phone the City's 311 hotline with recycling questions, or connect to

www.houstontx.gov/solidwaste/recycling.html

BELLAIRE RECYCLING COMMITTEE

This group has a useful website, with a variety of info on recycling activities in the Houston area. Committee phone line is 713-662-8173. bellairerecycles.org/index.html.

HUNTSVILLE

The City of Huntsville's recycling facility — north of town on the I-45 access road — takes cardboard, paper, tin and aluminum cans, glass, used oil, plastics, and has a warehouse for reusable donated construction materials (doors, windows, tile, wood etc). One employee is available Monday-Friday to help you unload; it is self-service on Saturday. The web site is

http://www.huntsvilletx.gov/residents/trash_and_recycling/recycling.asp.

PEARLAND RECYCLING CENTER

5800 Magnolia Road in Pearland, Texas, 77584, 281-489-2795. Takes most recyclable wastes: PC's, TV's, plastics, bottles, cans, paper, etc.

WEST UNIVERSITY RECYCLING CENTER

5004 Dincans (just south of Westpark near Kirby)

Open for drop offs 24/7; www.westu.org.

More available at <http://www.h-gac.com/>, especially at <http://www.h-gac.com/community/waste/resources/>.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December 2013

12 General Meeting - Annual Auction
13-15 Camping at Brazos Bend State Park

January 2014

9 General Meeting: Bayou Land Conservancy
31-Feb 2 Camping at Enchanted Rock SNA

February 2014

13 General Meeting - TBD

March 2014

13 General Meeting - TBD

April 2014

10 General Meeting - TBD

Houston Sierra Club E-MAIL ALERT LIST

Subscribe to the Houston Sierra Club's E-mail alert list to get timely alerts on Houston area conservation issues, and occasional announcements of interest to Houston Sierra Club members. *(Whenever you want to drop from the list it is easy to unsubscribe yourself—those instructions will be included.)*

INSTRUCTIONS:

Send FROM the E-mail address to which you want to direct the messages. Subscribe by sending TO:

LISTSERV@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG

Subject: [this line may be left blank]

Message Body:

SUBSCRIBE LONESTAR-HOUSTON-ANNOUNCE FirstName LastName

(Insert YOUR name in place of "FirstName LastName")

That's it. You will receive confirmation messages. from the listserve. Thanks for your interest. If you have any difficulty, contact frankblake@juno.com.

The *Bayou Banner* is the newsletter of the Houston Regional Group of the Sierra Club. It is published 6 times a year, in odd-numbered months. Circulation is 5500 issues sent to members and distributed through various outlets.

EDITOR: George Batten
email: BayouBanner@gmail.com

SUBMISSIONS: The deadline to submit articles is the fifth day of the month before the date of the issue in which the articles are to run (for example, articles for the September issue must be submitted by August 5). All submissions must have the author's name, and contact information (including phone number) even though it will not be printed. Articles may be edited for clarity, accuracy, and space considerations. Opinions stated are those of the author and not necessarily that of the Houston Sierra Club. Get instructions for submitting material, including pictures, by sending a email with the subject line

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(capital letters; brackets are required) to the address above. The instructions will be in an automatically-generated email reply. Usually the reply is done in 15 minutes, but it may take longer. Text articles must be in RTF (-.rtf) files. Pictures must be at 300 dpi or greater resolution JPEG (-.jpg) files, except that by special request other file formats (PDF (-.pdf), or TIFF (-.tif) files) may be accepted.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Telephone 415-977-5633 or send address changes to Sierra Club Membership, PO Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322, or via email to address.changes@sierraclub.org.

Include both old and new addresses and allow 6 weeks for delivery of the first issue. Please **DO NOT CONTACT THE EDITOR FOR CHANGE OF ADDRESS.**

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See the *Bayou Banner* on the club website:
<http://houston.sierraclub.org/news/index.htm#banner>