

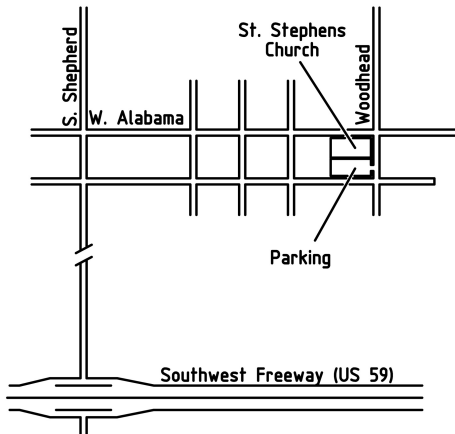


**GENERAL MEETINGS: 2nd  
Thursdays, 7:30 p.m.**

Doors open at 7:00 p.m. 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.

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. Going west on W. Alabama, turn right at Dunlavy, then left to Marshall, then left to Woodhead.



**GENERAL MEETING APRIL 9, 2015  
LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FROM SIERRA CLUB  
ACTIVISTS INVOLVED IN AUSTIN THIS  
SESSION**

Clean Air. Clean Energy Solutions. Safe Management of Radioactive Waste. Defend Citizen and Local Government Participation in Environmental Decision-Making. Oversight of Oil and Gas Operation. Adequate Funding for Public Lands, Wildlife and Clean Air. Water Conservation and Management. These are the priorities stated in the "2015 Texas Legislative Agenda" of the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club. Join the Houston Regional Group at our monthly meeting April 9th for an update on some of these issues.

Special guest speakers from Austin will be Reggie James and Jennifer Walker. Come early, for the 7 p.m. social half-hour before the meeting starts, so you can meet and greet them. Reggie is the chapter's Interim Director, and he comes to us after a very active stint in Austin heading up the regional office of Consumers Union. Jennifer has been defending our rights and the rights of nature to have safe and secure water in the state and region for years. Visiting with them beforehand will be well worth your while.

Rounding out the panel will be Evelyn Merz, Conservation Chair for both our group and the chapter; she has been spending hours, days and weeks recently addressing committees and speaking with legislators and their staff on behalf of us and nature. We'll also hear about the progress of The Bottle Bill from our own Patsy Gillham and/or Joe Lengfellner, and we may field some more presenters as bills rise to the top.

The meeting is at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, corner of West Alabama and Woodhead. Social period 7:00 p.m. Main program begins at 7:30 p.m.

**GENERAL MEETING MAY 14, 2015  
STUART MARCUS, TRINITY RIVER  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

On May 14, 2015 Stuart Marcus, Manager of the Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge (TRNWR), will present a program to the Houston Regional Group of the Sierra Club. The TRNWR was established in 1994 to protect bottomland hardwood forests which are important for waterfowl, wading, and songbirds; provide homes for many species of reptiles, mammals, amphibians, fish, and insects; and provide flood control and water quality benefits for us. Currently, almost 30,000 acres has been acquired by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Stuart will bring us up-to-date on what is happening with this important refuge. He will also provide a presentation which focuses on the hundreds of moth species that can be found in TRNWR and show us their beauty and discuss their importance.

The meeting is at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, corner of West Alabama and Woodhead. Social period 7:00 p.m. Main program begins at 7:30 p.m.

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# TRIPS AND LOCAL OUTINGS

## OUTINGS UPDATES MEETUP

See the outings calendar on our Meetup site:  
[www.meetup.com/Houston-Sierra-Club-Outings](http://www.meetup.com/Houston-Sierra-Club-Outings)  
for possible additions to schedule.

Also, outings information is available at our website  
[www.sierraclub.org/texas/houston](http://www.sierraclub.org/texas/houston)

## OUTINGS LEADER TRAINING

We are always looking to maintain and expand our pool of outings leaders. Our leader training (OLT 101) provides participants with the background requirements for leading a Sierra Club outing in the field.

Besides gaining rewarding personal experience, our leaders and trip organizers make an important contribution by creating opportunities for others to experience and enjoy the natural world.

If you have an interest in becoming an outings leader, or want more information, contact Frank Blake, [frankblake@juno.com](mailto:frankblake@juno.com) or 713-528-2896. Each class is approximately 2 hours long, and dates are coordinated with participants.

## OUTINGS CALENDAR

**April 4 - Hike - Roy E. Larson Sandylands Preserve**

**April 10-12 - Weekend Outing - Trail Between the Lakes (from the Golden Triangle Sierra Club)**

**April 17-19 - Weekend Outing - Guadalupe River State Park**

**April 18 - Trail Work - Sam Houston National Forest**

**May 2 - Work Day - Marysee Prairie**

**May 9 - Hike - Attwater's Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge**

**May 16 - Trail Work - Sam Houston National Forest**

**May 16 - Hike - Blackland Prairies in Sam Houston National Forest**

**May 17 - Canoe/Kayak - Cypress Wonderland**

**June 13 - Hike - Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary**

**July 11 - Hike - Hudson Woods and Sea Center**

**Sept 26 - Hike - Smith Point/Anahuac Bird and Bay Trip (see the Meetup site or the next issue of the Bayou Banner for details)**

**See Meetup for dates - Service - North Jetty Beach Cleanup**

## Service

### MARYSEE PRAIRIE WORK DAYS

**First Saturday most months fall through spring.**

**Saturday, March 29, 2015**

**Saturday, May 2, 2015**

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. Check the Meetup site for updates. For more information and to confirm work dates, contact Tom Maddux at 936-697-3425, or Frank Blake at [frankblake@juno.com](mailto:frankblake@juno.com) or 713-528-2896.



Giant Coneflower on the Marysee Prairie, By Frank Blake

#### 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.

# TRIPS AND LOCAL OUTINGS

## Service

### NORTH JETTY BEACH CLEANUP

**Saturday, March 28, 2015, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.**

**Check Meetup site for possible dates in April and May, and for updates.**

The Houston Group has adopted this stretch of beach as part of the Texas "Adopt-A-Beach Program". The North Jetty is a popular fishing, crabbing, and birding spot on the Bolivar Peninsula just south of the Audubon Society's Bolivar Flats Sanctuary. Because this site is heavily used, trash and litter have been a problem. Much of the trash, such as discarded fishing line and plastics, are hazards to area wildlife.

From Galveston we will take the ferry to Bolivar, watching for birds and dolphins on the way. It is interesting to visit the jetty in different seasons. In winter there is usually a flock of white pelicans close by. After the clean up, those interested can visit the Bolivar Flats Audubon Sanctuary or Anahuac NWR depending on the route taken back to Houston. We plan to return to Houston by late afternoon.

For meet up times and complete details, contact Frank Blake, [frankblake@juno.com](mailto:frankblake@juno.com) or 713-528-2896.



North Jetty Beach Cleanup Sign, By John Berlinghoff

## Hike

### FOREST WALK IN ROY E. LARSON SANDYLANDS PRESERVE

**Saturday, April 4, 2015, 7:30 a.m.**

On Saturday, April 4, the Houston Sierra Club will hike at The Nature Conservancy's Roy E. Larson Sandylands Preserve near Silsbee, Texas. This unique part of the Big Thicket is found along Village Creek and has deep, sandy Longleaf Pine forests, desert-like yuccas and prickly pear, and many grasses and wildflowers. The beauty of the white, sandy bluffs, overlooking the tannin-stained waters of Village Creek, is breath-taking. Photographers should have a great time.

Bring your daypack, hat, water, snacks, lunch, binoculars, hiking shoes, camera, field guides, and clothes to fit the weather. Long pants are highly recommended. We will meet to carpool/caravan 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 Honda Civic with lots of bumper stickers. We will be back in Houston about 5 p.m. If you would like to come you can sign up at the Houston Sierra Club Outings Meetup site, call 713-664-5962, or email [brandtshnfbt@juno.com](mailto:brandtshnfbt@juno.com). In case of trip cancellation you will be notified.

For those who want to meet us at the Preserve at about 10 a.m. the directions are:

- 1) Go east on I-10, cross the Trinity River, and exit to FM 563.
- 2) Turn left (north) onto FM 563 and go about 8 miles to FM 770.
- 3) Turn right onto FM 770 and go until you come to U.S. 90 (in Raywood).
- 4) Turn right (east) onto U.S. 90, go 100 yards, and turn left (north) and continue on FM 770.
- 5) Go on FM 770 about 15 miles to the blinking red light at State Highway (SH) 105/FM 770 in Batson.
- 6) After stopping at the blinking red light, turn right and go about 3 miles and turn left onto FM 770. SH 105 continues straight to Sour Lake.
- 7) Continue on FM 770 until you come to the town of Saratoga (about 5 miles).
- 8) Continue through Saratoga and go about 13 miles where you will dead-end into SH 326.
- 9) Turn left onto SH 326 and go about 3 miles until you come to U.S. 69/287 in Kountze, Texas.
- 10) Turn right onto U.S. 69/287 and go about 3 miles to SH 327.
- 11) Turn left onto SH 327 and go about 3 miles. After you cross Village Creek turn left into the parking lot.

# TRIPS AND LOCAL OUTINGS

## Weekend Outing

### TRAIL BETWEEN THE LAKES

Friday-Sunday, April 10-12, 2015

The 2015 Trail Between The Lakes spring trip will be April 10-12, in the Sabine National Forest. You can hike the entire 28 miles over 3 days, or parts over 2 days or just 1. If you want to backpack you can camp at designated areas on the trail, or you can let us shuttle you from our group campsite to the starting points each day and hike back with just a day pack. RV'ers can camp at Mill Creek, Lakeview, and other spots. Or you can "rough it" in a few motels and lodges in the area.

We will rendezvous each morning at 9 a.m. to meet new hikers arriving on those dates, at the Sportsman's Cafe on Hwy 87 at Six Mile, on Hwy 87 across from the intersection with FM 2928. We will then drive to the group campground a few miles away on FR 109c, and shuttle everyone to each day's trailhead. The campsite is located north from the cafe on Hwy 87 to the intersection with FM 2426, but TURN RIGHT (east) onto FR 109. After about 1 mile, turn right onto FR 109c. It is easy to miss! We will try to put up a Sierra Club sign at the corner. If you go to the firetower, you missed it! The campsite is on the pipeline easement about 1 mile south on FM109c.

Day 1 is normally from mile 1 at Lakeview to the camp, about 10.8 miles, though there is a second spot closer, about 6 miles, for those who prefer.

Day 2 is from the crossing on FM 2426 back to camp, about 9 miles. A closer option exists off FR 152.

Day 3 we strike camp and drive to trail's end off Hwy 96 south of Pineland, then shuttle back to the crossing at FM 2426. This segment is about 9 miles, and relatively flat.

There is no size limit to this outing, but it is important to RSVP so we can plan shuttling (especially if you want the shorter options) and know to expect you and what days you will be there. There are no fees, but your shuttle driver is a volunteer, so offering a little gas cash would be courteous. Meals are not provided. Bring food and water. The Sportsman's cafe is good for breakfast and dinner if you prefer. The site is primitive! The bathrooms are the woods! Cell phone service is spotty! We will provide maps for those who need them.

VERY IMPORTANT to RSVP. Call, text, or email our trip leader, Phil Rogers, at 409-543-4616, or philarogers@gmail.com. Look us up at gtgsierra.org and like us on facebook at Golden Triangle Sierra Group.

## Weekend Outing

### GUADALUPE RIVER STATE PARK

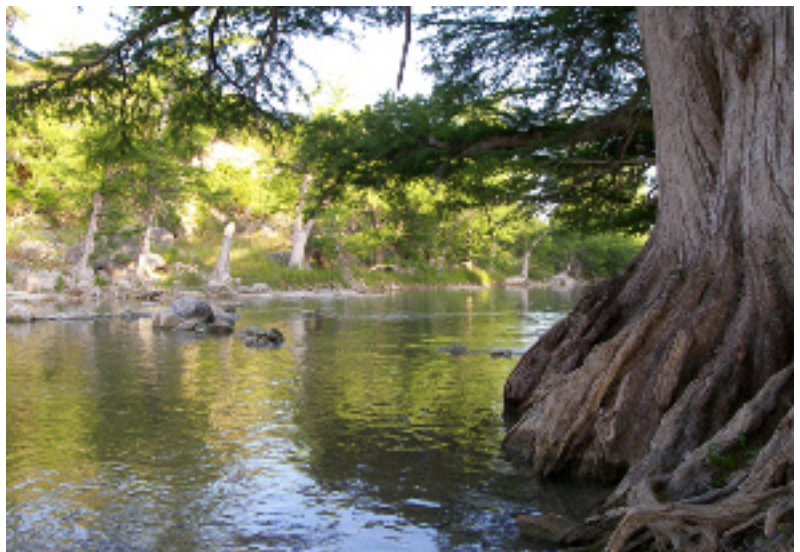
April 17-19, 2015

Friday through Sunday

Guadalupe River State Park is situated about 30 miles north of San Antonio. The river, with banks lined by huge bald cypress trees, is the park's most outstanding natural feature. On its winding path through the park, the river courses over four natural rapids. In the uplands away from the river, the limestone terrain is typical of the Edwards Plateau and is composed of oak and juniper woodlands, with interspersed grasslands. The park includes habitat for the rare golden-cheeked warbler, as well as a variety of other hill country wildlife. There is a network of hiking trails on both sides of the river.

Adjacent to the park is the Honey Creek State Natural Area, which usually offers a two-hour guided tour on Saturday mornings, emphasizing the history, geology, flora and fauna.

Car camping means tent camping at a regular car accessible campground. 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



Cypress Tree on the Banks of the Guadalupe River, By Larry D. Moore, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

# TRIPS AND LOCAL OUTINGS

## Trail Work

### TRAIL MAINTENANCE HIKE IN SAM HOUSTON NATIONAL FOREST

Saturday, April 18, 8 a.m.

Saturday, May 16, 8 a.m.

Enjoy a trail maintenance hike on the Lone Star Hiking Trail in the Sam Houston National Forest. The part of the trail to be maintained will be chosen based on current trail conditions.

Bring your daypack, two quarts of water, a snack, hiking shoes, hat, insect repellent, and clothes to fit the weather. Please plan on about 4 – 5 hours of volunteer work at the site.

We will meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot behind the International House of Pancakes (IHOP) at I-45 North and Greens Road. Look for a maroon and silver F-150 truck.

To reach the parking lot, enter the feeder off I-45 North, via the Greens Road exit, and then pass through the traffic signal at Greens Rd.

Turn right into the first strip center you come to (look for Brown Sugar's Barbecue) and drive to the end of the strip center. The parking lot behind IHOP is on the right.

Contact Darrell Matula at 281-667-7024 or [dmatula@verizon.net](mailto:dmatula@verizon.net) for additional details.

Please supply your name and contact information in case we need to contact you.

Check the Houston Sierra Club Meetup site on the web for possible updates and sign up there.



Lone Star Hiking Trail, By Carol Woronow

## Hike

### BIRDS AND WILDFLOWERS AT ATTWATER'S PRAIRIE CHICKEN NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Saturday, May 9, 2015

On Saturday, May 9, 2015, the Houston Sierra Club will visit Attwater's Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). We will hike the two trails at the NWR, Pipit Trail (1.5 miles) and Sycamore Trail (2.0 miles), and take the 5 mile auto tour loop which crosses prairie and wetlands.

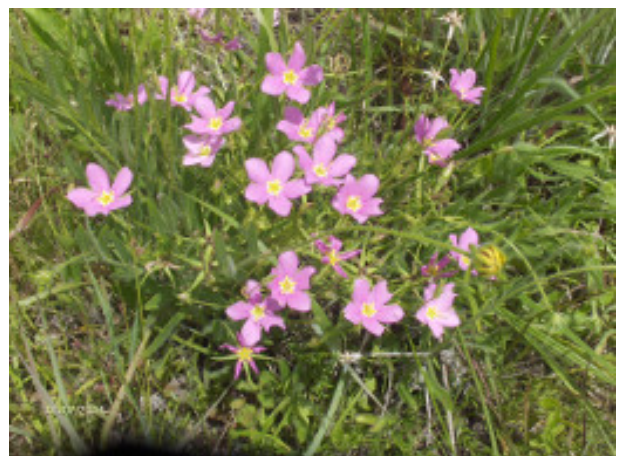
We will look for migratory birds, songbirds, wading birds, waterfowl, raptors, and other feathered, friends. Bring your daypack, water, lunch, hiking shoes, cameras, bug repellent, sunscreen, field guides, binoculars, and clothes to fit the weather. Long pants are highly recommended.

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 bumper-stickers on the back.

You can sign up on the Houston Sierra Club Outings Meetup site, call 713-664-5962, or email Brandt Mannchen at [brandtshnfbt@juno.com](mailto:brandtshnfbt@juno.com).

Leave your name, phone number, and email. In case of trip cancellation Brandt will call or email you. For those who want to meet us at the NWR the directions are:

- 1) Take Interstate 10 west (I-10) from Houston until you get to Sealy, Texas (about 70 miles).
- 2) In Sealy, exit I-10 and turn left onto State Highway (SH) 36 south and go about two miles.
- 3) Turn left from SH 36 onto FM 3013 and go about 10 miles to the Refuge entrance.



Meaadow Pink, By Frank Blake

# TRIPS AND LOCAL OUTINGS

## Hike

### VIEW WILDFLOWERS ON BLACKLAND PRAIRIES IN SAM HOUSTON NATIONAL FOREST

Saturday, May 16, 2015

On Saturday, May 16, 2015, the Houston Sierra Club and the Native Prairies Association of Texas will visit blackland prairies in Sam Houston National Forest (SHNF). We will see wildflowers in bloom on prairies that are unique to SHNF and are indicative of the Fayette Prairie found farther west. The U.S. Forest Service will act as our guide and show us how they manage these prairies using prescribed burning and other management methods.

Bring your daypack, hat, three quarts of water, snacks, lunch, binoculars, hiking shoes, camera, field guides, and wear long pants and a short-sleeved shirt. Long pants are recommended due to briars and chiggers. It will be warm so we will dress cool.

We will meet to carpool/caravan 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 Honda Civic with lots of bumper stickers.

If you would like to come you can sign up on the Houston Sierra Club Meetup Site or contact Brandt Mannchen at 713-664-5962 or by email at brandtshnfbt@juno.com. For those who want to meet us at the District Ranger Office at 9 a.m., the directions are as follows:

1) Drive from Houston about 55 miles north on Interstate 45 (I-45), past The Woodlands, Conroe, and Willis, and exit at New Waverly exit (FM 1375/SH 150/FM 1374).

2) Follow the detour signs on the north I-45 feeder road (east side of I-45) to FM 1374, turn left onto FM 1374, cross over I-45, and turn left onto the south I-45 feeder and follow it until you come to FM 1375. Turn right onto FM 1375.

3) Go west about 2 miles on FM 1375 and on your right you will see a sign for the SHNF District Ranger Office, a driveway, and a parking lot. Turn right into the driveway, park in the parking lot, and walk to the front of the District Ranger Office where we will meet.

## Canoe/Kayak

### CYPRESS WONDERLAND CANOE/KAYAK

Saturday, May 17, 2015

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.



Wind at Our Backs, By Linda Shead.

# TRIPS AND LOCAL OUTINGS

## Hike

### LITTLE THICKET NATURE SANCTUARY

Saturday, June 13, 2015

Join the Sierra Club as we hike in the beautiful Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary (LTNS). Owned by the Outdoor Nature Club, the LTNS has been protected from logging for over 60 years. We will be looking for blooming wildflowers, birds, and whatever else we can see. We will also view diverse hardwood and pine forests, spring-fed creeks, and a hilltop meadow.

Bring your daypack, hat, water, lunch, binoculars, hiking shoes, camera, field guides, and clothes to fit the weather. Long pants are highly recommended. We will meet to carpool/caravan 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 Honda Civic with lots of bumper stickers.

You can come sign up on the Houston Sierra Club Outings Meetup site, call 713-664-5962, or email Brandt Mannchen at brandtshnfbt@juno.com and leave your name, phone number, and email. In case of trip cancellation Brandt will email or call you.

Directions to the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary:

- 1) Go north on U.S. 59 to Cleveland, Texas.
- 2) Get off at the FM 2025 exit and turn left (northwest) on FM 2025.
- 3) Go northwest on FM 2025 about five miles until you come to FM 945.
- 4) Turn left (west) onto FM 945.
- 5) Go approximately 10.2 miles on FM 945. On your right you will pass Butch Arthur Road.
- 6) Continue on FM 945, beyond Butch Arthur Road, another 0.7 miles.
- 7) Turn right onto a grassy two-track road and turn immediately left and drive 30 yards to a metal gate with 2001 on it. This is the gate to the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary.

## Hike

### VISIT HUDSON WOODS AND SEA CENTER

Saturday, July 11, 2015

The Houston Sierra Club will celebrate summer by hiking Hudson Woods in the Columbia Bottomlands of Brazoria County. The Columbia Bottomlands is a unique coastal forest of Live Oak, Pecan, Shumard Oak, Burr Oak, Water Oak, Hackberry, Green Ash, and many other trees.

To get out of the heat after our early morning hike we will have lunch in Lake Jackson and then visit Sea Center in the afternoon, where in air conditioned comfort, we can visit aquariums and fish hatcheries. We will also view the lake and wetlands that are located next door. We will be back in Houston at about 5 p.m.

Bring your daypack, water (three quarts is recommended), snacks, hiking shoes, cameras, binoculars, bug repellent, sunscreen, field guides, clothes to fit the weather, and enough money for lunch. Long pants are highly recommended!

We will meet to carpool/caravan at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot just west of the Starbucks (look for Becks Prime) in Meyerland Plaza. Starbucks fronts the 4700 block of Beechnut (near the West Loop South). Look for a silver Honda Civic with lots of bumper stickers.

You can sign up at the Houston Sierra Club Outings Meetup site, call 713-664-5962, or email Brandt Mannchen at brandtshnfbt@juno.com and leave your name, phone number, and email. In case of trip cancellation Brandt will either email or call you.

Directions to Hudson Woods:

- 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, go about ½ mile, and go straight through the entrance gate.



Brandt Goes Out on a Limb at Hudson Woods, by Nicida Maerefat.

# OUTINGS AND TRIP REPORTS

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## DEWBERRY PATCH TAKES A HIT ON THE KATY PRAIRIE

By Brandt Mannchen

On February 7 thirteen dedicated Sierrans participated in a service outing on the Katy Prairie. We visited the field office of the Katy Prairie Conservancy (KPC, known as Indian Grass Prairie) in Waller County and pulled, clipped, raked, dug, and carted off the plants in a dewberry patch that will become a native prairie garden used to teach others about tall-grasses and wildflowers on the Katy Prairie.

Kathleen, David, Lynn, Michael, Mike, Kathy, Catherine, Alexandra, Tara, Jennifer, Nicida, Jane, and Brandt all pitched in for several hours and when the dust had settled the dewberry patch was no more and there were a lot of sweaty folks who had breathed in a lot of fresh air on the sunny, cool, windy, Katy Prairie.

While we removed the dewberry patch Nature came to us. When we met Laura Hodges at the gate (Laura is a dedicated KPC employee) Sandhill Cranes could be heard overhead. Red-Winged Blackbirds, Eastern Meadow Larks, Savannah Sparrows, American Pipets, and a Caracara flew overhead at various times during the day.

Jaime Gonzalez, who works for KPC as the Conservation Education Director, got us to take a break from our labors and gave us a tour of the new trails and wetlands created on the Indian Grass Prairie. The original prairie pothole wetlands were filled in over decades as farming took precedence over Nature. KPC took old aerial photographs and rediscovered where the prairie pothole wetlands were and dug these areas out so that some hold water year round and some are seasonally wet. It was quite an learning experience as we walked with Jaime over the trails and watched birds scatter wherever we went.

We then finished our dewberry patch removal, had lunch, and then left to visit the observation platform on Warren Ranch Lake. I went to say goodbye to Laura and was surprised when 11 White Pelicans flew right over our heads. Before we got out of the gate, the KPC property to our west got our attention. There were birds in a pond next door so we got out and looked. We saw Pintail Ducks, Blue Winged Teal, nutria, and a beaver swimming in the pond. What a treat!

Then it was off to the observation platform. We wound our way across the Katy Prairie and pulled into the parking lot. The wind had picked up and we were cold as the winter sun shone down on Warren Ranch Lake. Michael used his spotting scope and soon we saw Green Winged Teal, Northern Shovelers, a Pied Billed Grebe, Great Egret, Great Blue Heron, cormorants, Black Crowned Night Herons, and vultures galore. Most of the birds were on the far side of the lake, huddled together protecting themselves from the waves.

Unfortunately, it was then time to go. We had given back by doing our service work on the Katy Prairie. But as always, the Katy Prairie gave back more to us than we gave to it. I would call that a “darn” good bargain. Can't wait to go back!!!

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## GIANT LIVE OAKS, RARE BIRDS, AND BALD EAGLES: WHAT'S NOT TO LIKE ABOUT THE NEW BRANIFF TRACT

By Brandt Mannchen

The Houston Sierra Club visited the newly acquired Braniff Tract in February. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) bought this 425 acres of Columbia Bottomlands habitat as part of its Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership. The tract is located in Brazoria County about 40 miles south of Houston.

Mike Lange, a wildlife biologist and the realty specialist who bought the property for FWS, showed us around. The eight of us were delighted and amazed at the beauty of the forest. We saw very large Live Oaks (one Live Oak measured over five feet in diameter) scattered across the landscape. The Palmetto Flats were impressive as was the Green Ash, American Elm, Hackberry, Trumpet Vine, Cedar Elm, Coral Berry, Pecan, Yaupon Holly, Deciduous Holly, Water Oak, and other forest plants. Mike called some of the forest “old growth” and none of us disagreed with him.

The wildflowers were just coming out to announce the beginning of spring. The butterweed, buttercup, dewberry, and violets lit up the forest. In addition to the eight of us, three very excited birders came at the invitation of Mike. They were looking for a rare bird that had been seen by FWS earlier in the week. The three birders were successful in finding the Painted Redstart which should be in Arizona but decided to pay the Braniff Tract a visit. Even the birds know a good thing when they see it. In addition, two Bald Eagles, Eastern Phoebe, American Crow, Turkey Vulture, Black Vulture, Northern Cardinal, Red-shouldered Hawk, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and American Robin were seen during our visit.

We had a great time and enjoyed hiking through these shaded, old, woods. I hope that I can go back soon. There is a lot still a lot to see and I want to see it!



# OUTINGS AND TRIP REPORTS

## BIRDS GALORE AT SAN BERNARD

By Brandt Mannchen

It had been a stressful time. All week long I had followed the weather forecast. I was supposed to lead a Houston Sierra Club outing and hike on some new trails that the Club had helped flag last year in the Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge. But all it did was rain, rain, rain, with the forecast for more rain. Saturday was supposed to be clear. However, with all the rain the floodplain bottomlands of the Trinity River and the trails we wanted to hike would be flooded.

What to do? Should I cancel? Should I reschedule? Should I go someplace else? I looked for alternatives near the Trinity River and did not find any that made sense. Finally, I realized that I did not need to visit someplace near the Trinity River. I had the freedom to choose a new location.

I decided that since the Sierra Club outing I led in January visited only the Brazoria NWR, when it was scheduled to visit both Brazoria and San Bernard NWR's, that I would take my folks to the San Bernard NWR. As expected many people canceled or did not show. But we had 12 people who did make the new outing. I am so lucky because the people that did come were great! They were troopers and were out to have fun and get some sunshine, wet ground or not.

And were we lucky!!! We were in the San Bernard NWR and headed on a road to the Bobcat Woods Trail, when about ¼ mile from the woods, we saw an animal in the distance, standing on the road. At first people said it must be a dog or coyote, but my binoculars told a different story: Bobcat!!!

This cat was different from any I had seen in the past. This was a dark-colored, large cat. The times in the past when I had seen a Bobcat it was a few seconds, a flash of that "bobbed tail", and it was gone. This time, this cat, seemed undecided about what to do. First it stood in the road and looked toward us for awhile. Then it walked forward and turned to our left and slowly made its way across a ditch, into the brush, and out-of-sight. As we all talked loudly and rapidly, with a joy and excitement in our voices that had not been there before the sighting, the Bobcat reappeared, looked at us, sauntered down the road, turned right, slowly crossed the ditch on the road shoulder, and finally disappeared into the thicket.

I told the people in my car that as far as I was concerned, as a Sierra Club leader, we had already had a successful outing. But of course we were a long way from being done for the day. We gathered, got ready, and walked down the Bobcat Woods Trail, alongside a stream, past a friendly Yellow-crowned Night Heron and a bunch of buzzing honey bees, until we came to a road that led to a large lake.



Great Egret, By Carol Woronow.

At the lake we saw White Ibis, Great Egret, Blue Heron, Blue-winged Teal, Ring-neck Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, Red-headed Duck, Lesser Scaup, Northern Harrier, Common Moorhen, Mottled Duck, Mallard Duck, Fulvous Whistling Duck, Barn Swallow, Tree Swallow, Turkey Vulture, and others. It was a great reward for waiting all week for the rain to stop.

We heard a Bullfrog calling over the water and tree frogs back in the woods. Then we saw the alligator! What a treat! I had hoped we would see one since the sun was peeking out. Everyone wanted to see this ancient resident and many photos were snapped. The wildflowers were out in force this day and we saw coreopsis, Cut-leaf Primrose, Texas Dandelion, Scarlet Pimpernel, Oxalis, Crow's Poison, and dewberry blooming yellow, white, pink, orange, and blue.

We also found a Brown Snake that looked like it had been attacked (meal ticket for some other animal) but had been lucky enough to get away. We warmed it up in the cool morning air, let it go, and hopefully it was OK. Finally, we decided we had squeezed as many critters out of

the lake as we could and we were off on the loop road.

Our loop road visit provided us with more alligators, sunning and not inclined to have us hang around, and a host of other birds including White-tailed Hawk, Eastern Phoebe, Palm Warbler, Northern Shoveler, Loggerhead Shrike, American Bittern (standing in the grass as straight as an arrow), Willet, Black-crowned Night Heron, Snowy Egret, Greater Yellow Legs, and others.

We lunched by an overlook on a flooded marsh and enjoyed the sun and each others' company. But that Bobcat! And those alligators! And all those ducks and wading birds, about 50 different birds in all! Quite a trip for one that almost got canceled. It is hard to beat being out in "Nature" no matter what it takes to get there. Can't wait to go again.

# FEATURES

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## HOUSTON NEEDS OUR INPUT!

By Jen Powis

Houston City Council will adopt an ordinance requiring a "general plan" for the city that will create a benchmarking system to promote accountability in government spending. This is a unique opportunity to ensure that the environment and our coastal heritage are not forgotten by specifically asking that the general plan look at environmental factors. Here's what you can do today:

First, go to the [www.planhouston.org](http://www.planhouston.org) website and amend the "vision statement" to include the words natural resources. You have to register and if you do not want to register, send your emails directly to [Pat.Walsh@houstontx.gov](mailto:Pat.Walsh@houstontx.gov) and tell him that requiring registration for participation is wrong. Once on the site, go to "participate" and amend the vision statement to something like the one below:

Houston works with its natural resources to promote healthy and resilient communities through smart civic investments, dynamic partnerships, education, and innovation.

Then, each time it asks you to participate in different scenerios, highlight some of the natural resources or opportunities that you love about Houston. This is an opportunity to celebrate some of things we can improve on, like our bayous, our parks, and protecting our coast. But if we don't highlight them, these items won't be discussed.

Third and most importantly, please take the time to participate and promote the environment through this process. By doing so, it may be able to shift -- ever so slightly -- how city council and our elected officials think about working with nature instead of against it!

Democracy only works if you participate!

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## NEW BIKE LANE IN DOWNTOWN HOUSTON

By Frank Blake

The new protected bike lane is going in downtown. Yea!

They just started work on it the weekend of February 28. I was on my bike downtown returning library books and checking the Houston Sierra Club P.O. Box. The bike lane will run on Lamar St. from Sam Houston Park over to Discovery Green.

It is supposed to be completed in about mid-March.



New Bike Lane, By Frank Blake

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## FOSSILIZED IN HOUSTON

By Matthew Schneider-Mayerson

"Fossilized in Houston" is a participatory public arts project that will run in Houston from March to July, 2015. Information about climate change and species extinction is in the news every day now, but it's easy for people to avoid it. The organizers of "Fossilized in Houston" have commissioned twenty Houston artists to create paintings, drawings and murals of species that are expected to go extinct as a result of climate change, and these images (along with the name of the species, expected date of extinction, and the project's website) will be printed on hundreds of lawn signs and thousands of posters throughout the 'Energy Capital of the World' from March through July. The ongoing mass extinction is a global problem -- 25-40% of all species on the planet may go extinct by 2050 -- but it has a special resonance in Houston, which is of course the home of 5,000 energy companies, some of which actively question or minimize climate science and lobby against the U.S. and other governments addressing climate change in any meaningful way. "Fossilized in Houston" hopes to promote an enhanced, regular intellectual and emotional awareness of the consequences of continued fossil fuel extraction and consumption on the current scale, but it will only succeed with lots of participation from folks who are concerned about this issue. To learn more and have a free lawn sign, poster, or stickers delivered to you, go to [fossilizedhouston.com](http://fossilizedhouston.com).

# FEATURES

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## ANNUAL YARD SALE Saturday, May 9 2318 Waugh Dr. at Fairview

Spring cleaning? Don't forget the Sierra Club yard sale, and you can 'recycle' those unneeded items. The sale is scheduled Saturday, May 9, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at "CORAZON Fair Trade", 2318 Waugh (at the corner with Fairview). We will gladly accept most saleable items, including clothing, knickknacks, furniture, books, etc. We also need help the day of the sale, particularly for the morning set up and the afternoon knock-down. To donate items, either bring them to the General Meeting on April 9, or you may drop off items at CORAZON (713-526-6591, call for current hours), during the week immediately prior to the sale (but NOT before Saturday, May 2). The web address for CORAZON is [www.CorazonFairTrade.com](http://www.CorazonFairTrade.com). If you need to drop off items before May 2, contact Frank Blake to discuss options (contact information below).

Please bag or box up smaller items. Large objects such as furniture would be best delivered to the site on the morning of the sale. If you have workable appliances, electronics, etc. to donate, securely attach an index card that describes the condition of the item, and any information a potential buyer would need to know. This is important! If we don't know the workability of an item, we are forced to sell it for far less than its potential value. Please DO NOT BRING broken or obsolete computers, computer peripherals, or non-working electronics. Those items should go directly to an e-waste recycling facility.

This event is one of the Houston Group's annual fundraising efforts. All proceeds go to support the Houston Group and its local conservation and educational programs. To volunteer, contact Frank Blake at [frankblake@juno.com](mailto:frankblake@juno.com) or 713-528-2896.

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## DEEPWATER HORIZON REPRISAL ON APRIL 21 WITH "THE GREAT INVISIBLE" FILM

By Page Williams

On April 20, 2010, a blowout on the Deepwater Horizon offshore oil drilling rig caused an explosion that killed 11 of its 126 crewmen and ignited a fireball that was visible 40 miles away. The fire could not be extinguished, and two days later the rig collapsed to the seabed. The largest spill in U.S. waters continued to gush millions of barrels of oil into the Gulf of Mexico until it was finally capped on July 15. "The Great Invisible", a SXSW award-winning documentary on the spill, will be shown on PBS at 10:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 21.

The rig was owned by Transocean, insured for \$560 million USD, and leased to a consortium with 65% ownership by BP. The well, which was nearing completion, had a measured depth of 35,055 feet, below 4,132 feet of water, making it the deepest oil well in the world and making the well more than 5,000 feet further below the seabed than the rig's official drilling specification stated on the company's fleet list. Since the spill, BP has cleaned up less than one-third of the spill and Congress has yet to pass any safety legislation for the petroleum industry, according to the documentary. After a brief moratorium on Gulf drilling, there are now more rigs in the Gulf of Mexico than before the spill.

We all watched the environmental damage on TV with horror: the oiled seabirds and crabs, the suffocated marshes, and the toasted sea turtle hatchlings. The newspapers have kept us informed about the wrangling over legal and financial responsibility which is so unprecedented that it is likely to last for 20 years. Now "The Great Invisible", directed by Margaret Brown and released in October of 2014, shows us the previously invisible side of the spill.

Ms. Brown's film gives us an inside look at the survivors of the rig; their initial pride at working on "one of the most powerful rigs in the world", then their guilt over implementing the shortcuts that were ordered by their bosses, and finally the physical and mental pain with which they now live. We see the despair of residents in Bayou La Batre, once the seafood capital of Alabama, who have lost their livelihood and are dependent upon grocery donations. We watch oil men enjoying their success at a country club, and CEOs squirming at congressional hearings.

I was fortunate to attend the film during its Houston one-week showing, and to attend a panel afterward. We heard from the director, from a survivor, from his artist wife who now paints portraits of anguished faces, from the father of a crewman killed, and from Houston oilman Bob Cavnar, who also appeared in the film. As the Houston Chronicle reviewer wrote, Brown does not try to demonize any one person, group or company; the public demands cheap oil.

If you missed the film in December, you may want to mark your calendar now to watch or record it on Channel 8 - five years and one day after the Deepwater Horizon disaster. It's one hour and 32 minutes, and, in the words of Bob Cavnar, "It's important for people to know the truth."

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## EARTH DAY AT DISCOVERY GREEN

**Saturday, April 11, 2015, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.**

Earth Day Houston will celebrate this day with entertainment, environmental education, and a Green Expo at Discovery Green. This is a good networking event to see what various environmental groups are doing in the region. The Houston Sierra Club will be one of the many local groups to have a booth.

Developed by Air Alliance Houston, and now in its tenth year, Earth Day Houston is a community centered, family friendly event open to the public and free to all. For additional details visit the website by searching for "Earth Day Houston 2015".

If you can attend, drop by the Sierra Club table, and share your specific interests.



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## THE DEBATE OVER CLIMATE WARMING IS OVER (OR SHOULD BE)

By Jim Williams

The debate over Global Climate Change should be over this year. As you probably know by now, 2014 was the hottest year ever. The National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration calculates global average temperature going back to 1880. That's 135 years. So if no other forces were in play and temperatures last year were totally at random, then the odds of 2014 being the warmest on record are 1 in 135. Not too high of odds, but not one that you would want to bet on.

But since record and near record heat have happened in the last two decades, climate scientists say it's not random but from heat-trapping gas spewed by the burning of coal, oil and gas. And one of their pieces of evidence is how statistically unlikely it is for the world to have warmed so much in the past decades. So how unlikely is it? To figure this out, statisticians were used to calculate the odds of this hot streak happening at random. They are explained with statistics that defy astronomical odds. Here are some statistics and the odds they calculated:

The three hottest years on record — 2014, 2010 and 2005 — have occurred in the last 10 years. The odds of that happening randomly are 3,341 to 1.

Nine of the 10 hottest years on record have occurred in the 21st century. The odds of that being random are 650 million to 1.

Thirteen of the 15 the hottest years on record have occurred in the last 15 years. The odds of that being random are more than 41 trillion to 1.

All 15 years from 2000 on have been among the top 20 warmest years on record. The odds of that are 1.5 quadrillion to 1 ( $1.5 \times 10^{15}$  to 1). A quadrillion is a million billion. (Note: There is a better chance of winning the Texas Mega Millions Lottery than climate warming being a random event.)

But wait. Hasn't there been a really cold winter on the US East Coast this year? Of course, yes. But the US West Coast has been warmer than usual, and at times this winter Houston has been colder than parts of Alaska. As it turns out, January 2015 is the second hottest January on record.

With these odds, the climate debate should forever be over!

Main Source: "GO FIGURE: Figuring the odds of Earth's global hot streak" by SETH BORENSTEIN, Jan. 16, 2015

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## ANOTHER BAYOU WARRIOR DIES

By Brandt Mannchen

On February 7, 2015, Frank Salzhandler, a long-time resident of Cherryhurst in Montrose, died. I only knew Frank for the last three years of his life but I feel like I lost an "old soul" that I had known for all of my life.

Frank you see was a Buffalo Bayou Warrior. He ran the Endangered Species Media Project and focused his efforts on many occasions on those animals that were slipping away into extinction. But his real heart was in the effort to save and protect one of the last wild streams we have in Houston, Buffalo Bayou.

Frank was unusual because he talked to everyone, friend or foe alike. He kept the channels of communication open. Frank also loved to talk, like many conservationists do, in the John Muir manner, "everything is connected to everything else". He loved nothing more than having coffee or lunch and talking about what needed to be done to stop some terrible project that would degrade Buffalo Bayou. Frank was also a great kidder and loved to laugh, particularly at himself. He knew life was serious enough as it was and that "laughter really is the best medicine."

In recent years he was particularly concerned about the Memorial Park Demonstration Project and Buffalo Bayou Park. He felt both projects would lead to the de-wilding of the stream he loved best. Frank loved to go down Buffalo Bayou with others in a canoe and take video so that he could put together visuals and audios that would catch people's eyes, ears, and hearts.

The best memorial for Frank is to fight to protect and retain the wild and natural that still inhabits and suffuses Buffalo Bayou and other natural, riparian streams in Texas. I can see it now, Don Greene welcoming Frank in the wild "up there", laughing and joshing with each other, and pulling for Buffalo Bayou to win. Let's fight so that Frank and Don's memories are honored.

## HOUSTON GROUP OF SIERRA CLUB DONATES MONEY TO USW OIL WORKERS STRIKE FUND

By Jim Williams

### BlueGreen Alliance/Project Apollo

In support of the National Sierra Club's BlueGreen Alliance/Project Apollo, the Houston Group has made a cash donation of \$250 in support of the USW Oil Workers strike. The USW has said that the strike is not about money but is about safe working conditions, a healthy working environment, loss of jobs to contractors, lack of apprenticeship training positions for young workers, and delayed maintenance in plants. The BlueGreen Alliance is a coalition of labor, business, and environmental organizations. It includes other environmental organizations like Natural Resources Defense Council/NRDC Action Fund and National Wildlife Federation, and labor organizations like the United Steel Workers (USW), Communications Workers of America (CWA) and Service Employees International Union (SEIU). The Union of Concerned Scientists are also a member. For a full list of organizations follow this link:

[www.bluegreenalliance.org/members](http://www.bluegreenalliance.org/members)

The BlueGreen Alliance/Apollo Project objective is to offer a vision to catalyze the transition to a clean energy economy that will put millions of Americans to work in a new generation of high-quality green jobs. The Project promotes investments in the clean energy economy and seeks to reduce carbon emissions and oil imports, spur domestic job growth, and position America to thrive in the 21st Century economy.

Although it may sound like some of the objectives of environmentalists and labor unions are at odds, many are complimentary. We both want clean, safe environments for our communities. And we both have the same powerful enemies. For instance, the David and Charles Koch Brothers' Foundations are both anti-environmental and anti-labor. We have a far better chance of success of obtaining our common objectives by working together.

### Strike Update

Although some major issues have been settled between strikers and management, the strike is still ongoing until a number of local issues are resolved. If you would like to support the strikers, please call the USW Union strike hot line at (832) 517-9311 to find out what you can do. Or drop by their Union Hall at 311 Pasadena Blvd., Pasadena, Texas 77506.



Art Browning, Jim Williams, and Madeleine Crozat-Williams bring a \$250 check and a bag of groceries in support of the USW Oil Workers Strike. Photo by James Worrell USW Strike Coordinator.

## THANK YOU 2014 AUCTION DONORS!

The auction was quite successful due to contributions of items by club members and others, work by those who managed the operation, and bidding by those who attended. Thank you contributors, workers, and participants! Special thanks to Art Browning and Frank Blake who oversaw the auction, acquired contributed items, prepared lists for and arranged the silent and live auction; to Madeleine Crozat Williams, our auctioneer who also helped with planning the live auction; and Lorraine Gibson who managed the financial part of the auction; and to Carol Lee who, as usual, did a great job of preparing and operating the hospitality table.

The Houston Sierra Club greatly appreciates the many items donated to our Annual Auction Fundraiser held on December 11th. A special thank you to the following generous donors:

Teresa Allen & Ron Reeves  
Nancy & Dave Barzazia  
George & Barbara Batten  
John Berlinghoff

Frank Black  
Lorraine Bonney  
Art Browning  
Gail Carter  
Carol Lee  
Tom Douglas  
Lorraine Gibson  
John Glover  
Katy Prairie Conservancy  
Penny & Carl Lindsey  
Ken & Judy Margolis  
Grace Martinez  
Evelyn Merz  
Rick Rice  
Southwest Paddle Sports, Spring, TX  
David Sykes  
Jacqueline & Kirk Weaver  
Wild Birds Unlimited  
Jim Williams & Madeleine Crozat-Williams  
Page Williams  
Auction Committee

# FEATURES

## A GREAT DAY IN THE FOREST

By Brandt Mannchen

After several cold and wet days I was concerned that this day would be the same no matter what the forecast said. But luckily the weather gal was right! I arrived at the Sam Houston National Forest District Ranger Office about ten minutes early. I went in and asked for Bob and he came out and shook my hand. I told him I needed to hit the restroom and we agreed we would then meet in the parking lot. After I came out of the restroom I ducked my head into Warren's office (District Ranger) and shook his hand, went out to my car and got my gear, and waited for Bob. He pulled up in a pick-up, I stashed my stuff in the back seat, and we were off!!!

The sky was clear, with just a few clouds, the wind was low, and the sun was shining brightly. The weather was cool but would warm up with the sunshine. I remarked to Bob that this was a great day and he agreed. We arrived in the Four Notch area (also called Boswell Creek) where Forest Road 206 crossed the Lone Star Hiking Trail (LSHT) and Bob parked the truck.

Soon we were walking down the LSHT admiring the Red Maples that were blooming or had already turned into red, winged, seeds. Gorgeous. Bob told me about the logging that was going on in the area. The purpose of my field trip was to conduct citizen's monitoring with the U.S. Forest Service (FS) of a logging operation (called the Boswell Creek Healthy Forest Initiative Project, a part of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act, a misnomer if ever there was one from the Bush Administration in the early 2000's) to ensure that the LSHT was not damaged.



Sam Houston National Forest Ranger Station, By Carol Woronow

In 2003-2004 the Sierra Club filed a lawsuit against the FS about logging impacts and a lack of inventorying and monitoring of the national forests. Several logging sales were emphasized in the lawsuit which was broken up and set in several district courts for trial. One of those lawsuits dealt with Boswell Creek where we were now walking and the Compartment 28/37 Project. After about 6 years and a court battle that went to the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, the Sierra Club and the FS agreed to settle the case. Some of the terms of the settlement agreement were:

1. A primary buffer zone of 50 feet on both sides of the LSHT would be implemented for both of the projects where no logging would occur.
2. A secondary buffer zone of another 50 feet where thin logging would be limited to 80-100 feet of basal area (called variable basal area thinning).
3. The marking, protection, and minimization of logging damage for oak, hickory, red maple, magnolia, dogwood, sassafras, winged elm, holly, and blackgum trees 5.0 inches in diameter or greater.
4. Trees that would be logged would be marked with paint on the backside, away from the LSHT.
5. Hardwood clumps and individual trees would be protected to increase diversity in Pine/Hardwood communities.

As we walked, spring showed itself with Christmas Ferns unfurling fronds, bright red maples, Wood Bentony peeping above the leaf litter, and blooming violets. We passed a beautiful and unfortunately rare upland hardwood forest dominated by White Oak and elms. In the distance we heard the calls of Pileated Woodpeckers and American Crows echo in the forest.

This day I was particularly interested in checking the width of the buffer zone along the LSHT. We measured the width at four locations and found that one buffer zone was 48.5 feet wide instead of 50 feet. Bob showed me several areas where he had found that initial flagging was less than 50 feet. Bob had his staff reflag the buffer zone in these locations so that it was much wider than 50 feet.

We also walked down to Boswell Creek on the LSHT, where Bob had not been. We saw big Loblolly Pines, Water Oaks, and a rare Black Walnut. Unfortunately, the large Southern Magnolia that I enjoyed here in the past had fallen into the creek. Now instead of being alive it served as dead, downed wood and a hiding place for aquatic critters. Even in death, trees play an important role in the forest.

We finished our field trip and went back to the District Ranger Office. I shook Bob's hand and rolled out of the parking lot for the drive back to Houston. What a beautiful day spent in the forest, no matter what the purpose. What a great day!!!

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## **NATIONAL SIERRA CLUB ELECTIONS ARE UNDERWAY - VOTE! A DEMOCRATIC SIERRA CLUB DEMANDS GRASSROOTS PARTICIPATION**

By Page Williams

The annual election for the Sierra Club's Board of Directors is now underway.

Those eligible to vote in the national Sierra Club election will receive in the mail (or by Internet if you chose the electronic delivery option) your national Sierra Club ballot in early March. This will include information on the candidates and where you can find additional information on the Club's web site.

Your participation is critical for a Strong Sierra Club.

The Sierra Club is a democratically structured organization at all levels. The Club requires the regular flow of views on policy and priorities from its grassroots membership in order to function well. Yearly participation in elections at all Club levels is a major membership obligation.

In a typical year less than 10% of eligible members vote in the Board elections. A minimum of 5% is required for the elections to be valid. Our grassroots structure is strengthened when our participation is high. Therefore your participation is needed in the voting process.

How can I learn about the candidates?

Members frequently state that they don't know the candidates and find it difficult to vote without learning more.

Each candidate provides a statement about themselves and their views on the issues on the official election ballot. You can learn more by asking questions of your group and chapter leadership and other experienced members you know. You can also visit the Club's election web site for additional information about candidates:

<http://www.sierraclub.org/board/election>

Then make your choice and cast your vote!

Voting Online is Quick and Easy!

Even if you receive your election materials in the mail, we encourage you to use the user-friendly Internet voting site to save time and postage. If sending via ground mail, please note your ballots must be received by no later than election day, April 29, 2015.

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## **BIG THICKET NATIONAL PRESERVE CELEBRATES NATIONAL PARK SERVICE 100TH BIRTHDAY WITH "CENTENNIAL" LONGLEAF PINE FOREST PLANTING**

By Brandt Mannchen

In 2016 the National Park Service (NPS) will celebrate the 100th birthday of its founding. Big Thicket National Preserve (BTNP) has decided that it will celebrate this momentous occasion by planting on 250 acres of the Big Sandy Creek Unit, 100,000 Longleaf Pine seedlings. This future "Centennial Forest" will be planted next to an existing Longleaf Pine "Centennial Forest" ("New Growth" meets "Old Growth").

But why plant Longleaf Pine trees? The Longleaf Pine forest in the Southern United States, from Virginia to Texas, originally covered from 60 to 90 million acres. Today only about 3 million acres (most of which is heavily degraded) of Longleaf Pine forest is left. BTNP has about 15,000 to 20,000 acres of potential Longleaf Pine forest habitat. The NPS will restore and maintain this area so that rare or endangered species like the Texas Trailing Phlox and Louisiana Pine Snake and prairie grasses and wildflowers will flourish.

The NPS plans to have at least six weekends in January through March 2016 when planting Longleaf Pine seedlings will occur. This will be a large-scale volunteer service project that you can participate in with the NPS and other organizations. All of our efforts will help the original BTNP vegetation grow back.

The Houston Sierra Club will participate in this ecological restoration project by holding at least two volunteer outings where we will plant Longleaf Pine seedlings in the Big Sandy Creek Unit. The NPS will give volunteers a tour of the existing 100 year Longleaf Pine "Old Growth" forest so you can see what your efforts will achieve over the next century!

If you or your organization want to join this "Birthday Centennial Event" you can contact Ken Hyde, Chief of Resource Management, BTNP, at 409-951-6820 or [ken\\_hyde@nps.gov](mailto:ken_hyde@nps.gov) or Erica Pelletier, National Parks and Conservation Association, 214-370-9735, ext. 211 or [epelletier@npca.org](mailto:epelletier@npca.org).

If you want to participate with the Houston Sierra Club on its Longleaf Pine planting outings in the Big Sandy Creek Unit contact Brandt Mannchen at 713-664-5962 or [brandtshnfbt@juno.com](mailto:brandtshnfbt@juno.com). The Sierra Club will keep you informed about this project's progress over the next 12 months.

Come join us and help "Grow the forest"!!!

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## CLEAR LAKE/BAY AREA MEETING

The Sierra Club organization meeting in Clear Lake, and then on a hiatus, is rebooting!

A first meeting was held Wednesday, March 18 at the same location as in the past.

The next meeting of the Bay Area Sierra Club is April 15 at 7-8:45 p.m. preceded by a 6:30 social. Location is the Bay Area Community Center in Clear Lake Park (across NASA Parkway from Clear Lake) at 5002 NASA Parkway, Seabrook. Visitors are always welcome! Contact Linda King at 281-467-3624 or LindaAWKing@att.net for more information.

### 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. 🌍

The station with much for Sierrans:

Explorations, Tuesdays, 5:00 AM  
Eco-Ology, Wednesdays, 3:00 PM  
Democracy Now (with Amy Goodman),  
7:00 AM and 5:00 PM, weekdays.  
Progressive Forum (with Wally James)  
Thursdays, 7:00-9:00 PM

Of course there is news:  
BBC News, 6:00-7:00 AM and 8:00-9:00 AM  
KPFT local news, weekdays, 4:00-5:30 PM  
Bird Note, 9:58 AM... at the end of  
Open Journal, 9:00-10:00 AM

And lots of music, especially on the weekends.

You can see the program schedule at

**www.kpft.org**

RSS and ATOM web feeds, and  
PODCASTS are available.

Revised March 31, 2014

## CREDITS

Some photos in the Bayou Banner are public domain photos provided by the National Park Service, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or Wikipedia. All photos are used by permission, and the photographer is given credit, where known.

## RECYCLING RESOURCES

### CITY OF HOUSTON RECYCLING

The City of Houston has several dropoff sites (some are specialized for certain items), and provides curbside recycling in many neighborhoods. Principal dropoff 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, phone the City's 311 hotline with recycling questions, or connect to <http://www.houstontx.gov/solidwaste/recycling/>

For Houston e-waste recycling options at GREENspot locations, just do an online search for Dropoff Houston, or visit <http://dropoff.houstontx.gov>.

### BELLAIRE RECYCLING COMMITTEE

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

More available at <http://www.h-gac.com/>

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

# BAYOU BANNER

Newsletter of the Houston Regional Group of the Sierra Club



# VOLUNTEER NEWS AND NOTES

Bayou Banner — Volume 39, Number 3 — April - May 2015

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## 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 p.m., and the program starts at 7:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome.

Before 7:00 p.m., 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 p.m. 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 p.m.  
Contact Frank Blake frankblake @ junio.com.

### INNER CITY OUTINGS (ICO)

Meeting times and place to be determined. Please contact Lorraine Gibson at 281-384-4104 or rainygib@aol.com for more information.

### OUTINGS:

Usually the third Monday of the month, 7:00 p.m., 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@ junio.com.

## VOLUNTEER NEEDED TO HELP WITH THE HSC WEBSITE

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](mailto:houston.webmaster@lonestar.sierraclub.org).

## JOIN THE SIERRA CLUB

Just go to our web site  
<http://www.sierraclub.org/texas/houston>  
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

## 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 online through our website than if you mail a check.

## THE BAYOU BANNER (PRINTED EDITION) HAS ENDED

The Bayou Banner has ended printing and distribution by conventional mail. The issue of June-July, 2014, was the last issue for which paper copies were mailed to members.

A PDF copy of the newsletter, letter-sized, suitable for printing yourself, is available at the website of the Houston Sierra Club

<http://www.sierraclub.org/texas/houston/newsletters>

Also, outings, trips, and other activities are posted on our Meetup site

[meetup.com/Houston-Sierra-Club-Outings](http://meetup.com/Houston-Sierra-Club-Outings)

and we have a facebook page for discussion of environmental issues

[facebook.com/HSCenvironment](https://www.facebook.com/HSCenvironment)

The primary reason for abandoning mailed paper copies was the cost.

If you have questions about the current Bayou Banner, contact the editor at [HSCBanner@gmail.com](mailto:HSCBanner@gmail.com).

If you do not receive email notices of the availability of the *Bayou Banner* online, you should sign up on the Email Alert/Announcement List.

The Bayou Banner is the newsletter of the Houston Regional Group of the Sierra Club. It has been published 6 times a year, in odd-numbered months, but that is changing. See the Group's web site for the latest information (<http://www.sierraclub.org/texas/houston>). Current circulation is 5500 issues sent to members and distributed through various outlets.

CURRENT EDITOR: Carol Woronow.

SUBMISSIONS: The deadline to submit articles is the 15th day of the month before the date of the issue in which the articles are to run (for example, articles for the September/November issue must be submitted by August 15) — but articles and information is welcome at any time. The online Bayou Banner will be posted on the first day of the month (for example September 1).

All submissions must have the author's name, and contact information even though it will not be printed. All photos must identify the source and have proof of permission to use (or link to the policy of royalty-free photos). 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.

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](mailto: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.

# VOLUNTEER NEWS AND NOTES

## HOUSTON SIERRA CLUB

### EMAIL

## ALERT/ANNOUNCEMENT LIST

Subscribe to the Houston Sierra Club's email 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 are included at the bottom of each message sent out on the list.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Send FROM the email 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 need assistance in locating the instructions or in signing up for the email list, please contact Frank Blake at [frankblake@juno.com](mailto:frankblake@juno.com) or 713-528-2896.

Since the Houston Group will not be mailing out the *Bayou Banner* on a regular basis, one option for getting information on Club activities is this Houston Group EMAIL ALERT LIST.

Note: There is the possibility that we may produce some sort of periodic newsletter in the future that could be mailed out to those members specifically interested in subscribing.

The December-January issue may be mailed because of the Executive Committee ballots.

## HOUSTON REGIONAL GROUP

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Art Browning (Chair) (Lone Star Chapter Delegate)	<a href="mailto:art.browning@gmail.com">art.browning@gmail.com</a>
Jim Williams (Vice Chair)	<a href="mailto:ezz@pdq.net">ezz@pdq.net</a>
Lorraine Gibson (Treasurer)	<a href="mailto:raineygib@aol.com">raineygib@aol.com</a>
Page Williams (Secretary)	<a href="mailto:page.williams@gmail.com">page.williams@gmail.com</a>
Melanie Oldham (Alternate Lone Star Chapter Delegate)	<a href="mailto:oldham_melanie@yahoo.com">oldham_melanie@yahoo.com</a>
Evelyn Merz (Conservation Committee Chair)	<a href="mailto:elmerz@hal-pc.org">elmerz@hal-pc.org</a>
Frank Blake	<a href="mailto:frankblake@juno.com">frankblake@juno.com</a>
Patsy Gillham	<a href="mailto:patsytbb@gmail.com">patsytbb@gmail.com</a>
Stephanie Thomas	<a href="mailto:Stephanie.germaine@gmail.com">Stephanie.germaine@gmail.com</a>

### REGIONAL GROUP LEADERSHIP

Banner Editor	Carol Woronow	<a href="mailto:HSCBanner@gmail.com">HSCBanner@gmail.com</a>
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Conservation	Evelyn Merz	<a href="mailto:elmerz@hal-pc.org">elmerz@hal-pc.org</a> 713-644-8228
Conservation Subcommittees		
Air Quality	Brandt Mannchen	<a href="mailto:brandtshnfbt@juno.com">brandtshnfbt@juno.com</a> 713-664-5962
Coastal Issues	Page Williams	<a href="mailto:page.williams@gmail.com">page.williams@gmail.com</a>
Energy and Global Warming	Jim Williams	<a href="mailto:ezz@pdq.net">ezz@pdq.net</a>
Forestry and Big Thicket	Brandt Mannchen	<a href="mailto:brandtshnfbt@juno.com">brandtshnfbt@juno.com</a> 713-664-5962
Recycling Watershed	Frank Blake Evelyn Merz	<a href="mailto:frankblake@juno.com">frankblake@juno.com</a> <a href="mailto:elmerz@hal-pc.org">elmerz@hal-pc.org</a> 713-644-8228
Hospitality	Carol Lee	713-523-2294
Inner City Outings	Lorraine Gibson	<a href="mailto:raineygib@aol.com">raineygib@aol.com</a> 281-384-4104
Lone Star Chapter Delegate	Art Browning	<a href="mailto:art.browning@gmail.com">art.browning@gmail.com</a>
Membership Outings	John Berlinghoff Frank Blake	<a href="mailto:johnb@hal-pc.org">johnb@hal-pc.org</a> <a href="mailto:frankblake@juno.com">frankblake@juno.com</a>
Political	Doug Peterson	<a href="mailto:dougpeterson@earthlink.net">dougpeterson@earthlink.net</a>
Programs	Joe Lengfellner	<a href="mailto:thatsjoesmail@yahoo.com">thatsjoesmail@yahoo.com</a>
Webmaster	houston.webmaster@lonestar.sierraclub.org	



### 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.

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