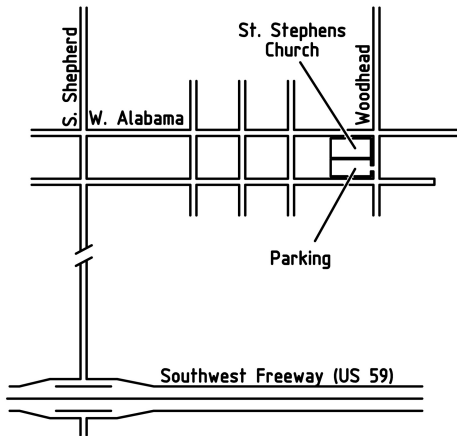




**GENERAL MEETINGS: 2nd
Thursdays, 7:30 p.m.**

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 AUGUST 13, 2015
DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES**

On August 13, the Houston Sierra Club will host Bob Honig, environmental consultant and board member of the Katy Prairie Conservancy, to talk about how dragonflies and damselflies live, grow, and reproduce.



Male Carmine Skimmer (*Orthemis discolor*), Waller Co., TX, By Bob Honig

Dragonflies and damselflies comprise the insect order Odonata and are important components of both terrestrial and aquatic food webs. The adults' beautiful colors and easily observable habits have spawned an increasing interest among naturalists, including Bob who got hooked on them over 20 years ago. He'll describe intimate details of odonate sex, including how an individual male best ensures that he is the father of the progeny of the female with which he mates. And you'll find out answers to such questions as: Is it possible to breathe and poop via the same orifice? And what is the killer lip?

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 SEPTEMBER 10, 2015
BEYOND COAL**

Please join us at our September 10th general meeting and welcome two guests from the national Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign. They will focus on air quality issues in the Houston region resulting from the use of coal to provide electricity. Dave Cortez and Chrissy Mann are based in Austin and head up the Club's campaign to move from coal-based energy in Texas and the surrounding region.

Chrissy is the Senior Campaign Representative of Beyond Coal and was formerly an attorney with the Public Utility Commission of Texas. She is a graduate of UT at Austin and the University of Texas School of Law. Dave Cortez is the Central Texas Beyond Coal Organizer. Previously, he worked for the Chapter's Texas Blue-Green Alliance, which brought business, labor, and the environmental movement together to work towards job-creating clean energy solutions.

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
for possible additions to schedule.

OUTINGS CALENDAR

Also, outings information is available at our website
www.sierraclub.org/texas/houston/outings

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 or 713-528-2896. Each class is approximately 2 hours long, and dates are coordinated with participants.

Service

NORTH JETTY BEACH CLEANUP

Usually Saturdays, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Check Meetup site for possible dates in August and September, and for updates.



North Jetty Beach Cleanup Sign. By John Berlinghoff

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.

The ferry crossing to Bolivar is usually a great opportunity to observe dolphins and brown pelicans. It is interesting to visit the jetty in different seasons. To sign up, contact Frank Blake, frankblake@juno.com or 713-528-2896 (e-mail preferred). Additional details will be emailed to participants.

Service

MARYSEE PRAIRIE WORK DAYS

First Saturday most months fall through spring.
Check Meetup site for possible dates in August and September, and for updates.

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 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

Bike

Bike Ride Outings

Check our Meetup site for dates in August and September.

We periodically schedule bike rides in various parts of town to try out new trails, explore specific neighborhoods, and visit unique Houston sights. We typically limit group size to simplify logistics and provide everyone a safer and better experience. Some planned destinations are the East End, downtown, Buffalo Bayou trails, Heights, etc. Usually the rides are two or so hours long and moderately paced. So watch the Meetup site or Houston Sierra website for new postings during the summer.



Biking Houston, by Frank Blake.

Hike

Smith Point/Anahuac Bird and Bay Trip

Saturday, September 26, 2015

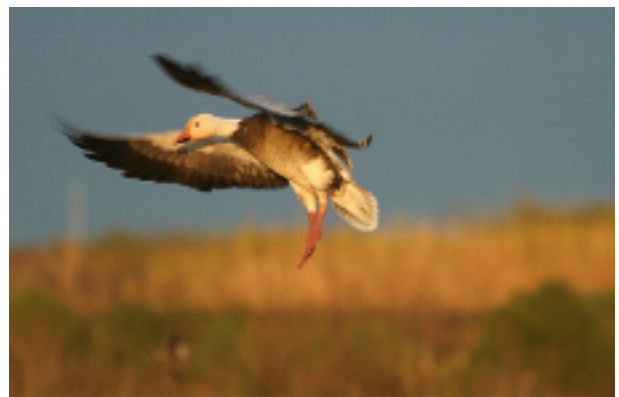
Enjoy a migration bird/bay trip to Chambers County. We will drive to Smith Point and visit Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Candy Abshier Wildlife Management Area (WMA). At the WMA we will use the observation platform to look for hawks, raptors, and other birds. Later we will drive to Trinity Bay and look for shorebirds.

After lunch we will drive to Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge and bird and enjoy the natural scenery. If time permits, we will visit the visitor center for the Texas Chenier Plain Refuge Complex and enjoy a board walk through a cypress swamp on Lake Anahuac.

Bring a daypack, plenty of water, lunch, snacks, sunscreen, hat, field guides, binoculars, cameras, bug repellent, and comfortable hiking shoes and clothes. Long pants are recommended. It will be hot so plan accordingly.

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-gray Honda Civic with many bumper stickers.

You can sign up on the Houston Sierra Club Outings Meetup site, call 713-664-5962, or email Brandt Mannchen at brandtshnft@juno.com and provide your name, phone number, and email. If there is a trip cancellation Brandt will email or call you.



Snow Goose (blue phase) by William Powell. Courtesy of the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge.

TRIPS AND LOCAL OUTINGS

Hike

Introduction to Sam Houston National Forest: The West End

Saturday, October 10, 2015, 7:30 a.m.

On Saturday, October 10, 2015, the Houston Sierra Club will begin a three outing "Introduction to Sam Houston National Forest (SHNF)". This is a great way to "Get to know SHNF." The idea is to have fun, learn about SHNF and what you can see and where you can see it, and get you acquainted with its beauty and why it is important. This introduction will be just in time for the upcoming forest plan revision where your voice is needed and will count to protect this beautiful landscape.

We will begin our trinity of outings on the "West End" of SHNF. Some of the sights you will see and be introduced to include: the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Lake Conroe, the Lone Star Hiking Trail, Little Lake Creek Wilderness Area, unique blackland prairies, Stubblefield Recreation Area, and the Palmetto-Bottomland Hardwood Forest of East Sandy Creek. After we finish our tour of SHNF, we will have a delicious meal at a nearby restaurant.

Bring your day-pack, hat, three quarts of water, snacks, binoculars, hiking shoes, camera, field guides, and wear long pants and a short-sleeved shirt. Long pants are recommended due to briars, chiggers, and ticks. The tour will take about 3-4 hours and will consist of a car caravan with short stops where we look at different points of interest.

We will meet to carpool/caravan at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot just west of Starbucks (next to Becks Prime) in Meyerland Plaza. Starbucks fronts the 4700 block of Beechnut (south side, near the West Loop South). Look for a silver Honda Civic with bumper stickers. If you would like to come, you can sign up on the Houston Sierra Club Outings Meetup site or contact Brandt Mannchen at 713-664-5962 or brandtshnfbt@juno.com. For those who want to meet us at the District Ranger Office in SHNF at 9 a.m., the directions are:

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.

Hike

Visit Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge in October

Saturday, October 24, 2015, 7:30 a.m.

On Saturday, October 24, 2015, the Houston Sierra Club will hike through some of the best bottomland hardwood forests in East Texas in the Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge (TRNWR). This is a make-up hike from March when we had to visit another refuge due to high water levels in the Trinity River Floodplain. We will hike about 6 miles over new trails that have recently been established in the TRNWR.

Bring your daypack, hat, water, lunch, binoculars, hiking shoes, camera, field guides, and clothes suited for 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 610 West Loop South). Look for a Silver Honda Civic with lots of bumper stickers. We will be back in Houston about 4:30 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. In case of trip cancellation you will be notified. For those who want to meet us in Liberty, Texas at 9 a.m. the directions are:

1) Go west on I-610 South and then north on I-610 East across the Houston Ship Channel Bridge to I-10 East.

2) As you take the exit to enter I-10 East, instead veer to the left and take U.S. Highway 90 (Crosby Freeway) and go northeast.

3) You will cross the San Jacinto River, pass Crosby, and State Highway (SH) 146 in Dayton, Texas.

4) You will go east through Dayton and SH 146 will join U.S. Highway 90 in Dayton. Then you will cross the Trinity River Floodplain on elevated U.S. Highway 90.

5) After you cross the Trinity River you are in Liberty, Texas. Continue on U.S. Highway 90 through Liberty until you come to the McDonald's at Spur 227. Turn into the McDonald's where we will meet at 9 am.

OUTINGS AND TRIP REPORTS

GREEN AMBLE BRINGS SURPRISES IN LITTLE THICKET NATURE SANCTUARY

By Brandt Mannchen

We gathered at the Starbucks and signed in. There were Jaime, Sara, Lisa, Yong, Belinda, Kathleen, Toni, and Magaly. Into the cars we jumped and finally, after all last week and this week threatened us with stormy weather, we motored toward Cleveland, Texas, made a pit stop, picked up John at a convenience store, and then drove to the entrance of the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary where we met Matt.

The Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary is owned by the Outdoor Nature Club (since 1923, the oldest environmental club in Houston), is about one square mile in size (about 655 acres), and is a remarkable example of how Nature heals the landscape when people cut down all the trees and then farm the land to death. The Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary exists as a lush, green, living testament to the wonders of Mother Nature and her ability to restore the Earth.

I opened the gate (yes, the combination was still good) and everyone drove in. Immediately we saw Northern Cardinals flitting across the road and a Cottontail Rabbit bounded ahead and then dove into the green forest that surrounded us.



Pond at Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary next to a Blackland Prairie. By Magaly Fleytas

All of a sudden I put on the brakes. There was a fallen dead tree (a snag) across the road. I had been afraid that this might happen because of the rain and wind that we experienced over the past two weeks. I got out with several others and walked over to the tree. It was fractured in several places and with the help of eight hands we managed to wrestle the downed tree to the side of the road and drove on.

All of us made it to the "Cove" and parked the cars. After a short introduction about the history of the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary and a talk about safety we were off. It felt good to be on the trail, ambling and strolling along, seeing Summer's green curtain. All eleven of us headed down Middle Road and then turned right to go to the Chasm. We looked at the stark dropoff along bedrock into an ephemeral stream bed lined with Christmas Fern. During rain the runoff turns the Chasm into a six foot waterfall.

We followed the Chasm and as it wound around and water seeped into the channel. Then we walked to Enchanted Isle and enjoined the shade from a large Southern Magnolia (a very shade tolerant tree) where a small delta had been formed alongside Mill Brook (a seepage creek).

We then backtracked and what looked like a Bumblebee buzzed around us. Only it was not a Bumblebee! It was a robber fly dressed up to look like a Bumblebee (a mimic) and it had an insect in its mouth that unfortunately had fallen prey to this small, but fierce, predator.

We decided to take the Beech Tree Trail. Right before we began our 10 minute hike, Belinda and Toni found a Three-toed Box Turtle (our forest box turtle) and the group oohed and aahed over its tan shell and orange streaked face, took lots of photos, and then we turned it loose to amble, like us, through the forest.



Mill Brook Bridge in the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary, By Magaly Fleytas

After a short hike we came to a beautiful peninsula where three seepage creeks came together. American Beech, Southern Magnolia, Loblolly Pine, and American Holly shaded the area and ferns lined the creeks (Royal, Chain, and Cinnamon) which unfortunately had been mucked up by feral hogs. It was a great place

OUTINGS AND TRIP REPORTS

WATSON PRESERVE REVEALS ITS SECRETS

By Brandt Mannchen

I told David to be at the house by 7 a.m., since I thought it would take about three hours to drive to the Watson Rare Native Plant Preserve just south of Warren, Texas, in the Big Thicket. David got there a little early and we left at 6:50 a.m. The traffic was light, for Houston, and we soon were headed toward the FM 563 exit on Interstate 10 East. We hit the exit and were off to Raywood, Texas, Batson, Saratoga, Honey Island, Village Mills, Wildwood, Lake Hyatt Estates, and finally the Watson Preserve.

The reason I was so excited about this trip was I would get to see David and Patricia Lewis, old friends, whose interest is fungi, mushrooms, both the edible kind and the kind that fascinates you. In addition, I knew that Pauline Singleton would be there to guide me with the identification of wildflowers and other plants that I did not know.

A final reason why I was so excited about this trip was to pay homage to the person who the Watson Preserve is named after, Geraldine Watson. I knew Geraldine for over 30 years and without her we would not have succeeded in the creation and protection of the Big Thicket National Preserve. Geraldine was on the “front lines” and she paid a price because many “locals” and people in the community did not want any part of the Big Thicket saved. But Geraldine persevered and “we all won”. We owe her a debt of gratitude that can never be fully repaid.

But Geraldine's own heart wanted more than a Big Thicket National Preserve. She wanted people to see, all together in one place, all the plants that were disappearing in East Texas. These were plants that Geraldine loved, plants from her childhood, and plants that were rare and that had all too often vanished. Our natural heritage gone forever! That was reason enough alone to visit Watson Preserve and I was glad to be part of this trip with my trusted companion, David.

To my surprise we got to the Watson Preserve about an hour early. How could I have so misjudged the time? I guess my foot was a little heavy on the accelerator pedal with the joy of a fun time ahead.

David and I, after coming to a truce with two local dogs, started wandering the trails of this 11 acre botanical jewel. We first walked down slope toward Lake Hyatt and the seepage area that is traversed by the boardwalk. The flowers burst from the undergrowth like bright pins of light. Yellow Colic Root, pink Meadow Beauty, yellow Water Primrose, white Rough Rose Mallow, red Tefrosia, green Desert Lavender, white Ten-Angle Pipewort, Red Milkweed, claret colored Wine Cup, an early orange Chapman's Orchid, deep, rich, pink Grass Pink Orchid, and on, and on, and on. A beautiful, natural, bouquet for our eyes to feast upon.

Then we saw, up-slope, two people. We walked up and there were David and Pat. It was good to see them and after awhile others came so that we had 10 people in our group. This day, for summer, turned out to be wonderful. Clouds partially shaded our group as we walked the trails and a soft breeze rustled through the foot long needles of the tall, straight, Longleaf Pines, calling to us their ancient song – “Come join us in our forest splendor!”

Then we set out looking for fungi and more wildflowers. The pickings were lean for fungi but eventually about a dozen species were found, with several unnamed or rare for the area. We traversed other areas of the Watson Preserve, with the blooming White Water Lilies of Lake Hyatt serving as a background. We saw an equally impressive natural bouquet including Snowy Orchid, Pencil-flower, Rosin Weed, Button Bush, Button Weed, Slender Leaf Gayfeather, Purple Pleat-leaf, Pinewoods Gentian, Camphor Weed, White-topped Sedge, Green Eyes, Ashy Sunflower, Texas Ironweed, Wild Potato, Joe Pye Weed, and many more. What a blessing to be in the presence of Nature, the creator.

Finally, the herptiles (reptiles and amphibians) were out. Baby Woodhouse's Toads hopped in the leaf litter, a Bullfrog could be heard calling in Lake Hyatt, an Upland Chorus Frog escaped our outstretched hands, a Fence Lizard played hide and seek with us on the boardwalk, a Green Anole leaped from wildflower to wildflower, a Six-lined Racerunner outran us in the sandy upland Bracken Fern, and a Green Treefrog tried to hide in the Porta-Potty at the beginning of the trail.



Brandt Mannchen with Ratsnake, By Pauline Singleton

OUTINGS AND TRIP REPORTS

GREEN AMBLE BRINGS SURPRISES IN LITTLE THICKET NATURE SANCTUARY continued from Page 5



Three-toed Box Turtle in the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary, By Magaly Fleytas

(with a bench) for lunch, so we sat down, drank our water, ate our lunch, and rested. What really caught our attention and dazzled us were the many damselflies that flitted along the creeks and by the wetland Lizard's Tail. These cousins of dragonflies had iridescent green and blue bodies that glistened in the sunlight.

After lunch we strolled back to Middle Road and saw off John, who had to get back home. We walked on as the day began to get hot. There were very few flowers blooming in the forest. But we did see Dayflower, with its sky blue flower, and Wild Petunia, with its vivid purple bloom, as we ambled on.

We crossed the Triangle (a mowed meadow) and began to follow alongside Mill Brook and its floodplain. We came to a swinging bridge which was very slippery. We all helped each other get across. American Crows called in the distance and a Yellow-billed Cuckoo croaked in the dense thickets of Switchcane. We saw large Green Ash and giant American Sycamore trees next to Mill Brook.

We finally got to Cullinan and Big Meadows and saw a mixture of prairie and forest plants growing in these blackland soils. We stopped at a small, old, wooden bridge, walked down to Mill Creek, and baptized ourselves. The water was oh so cool and refreshing! We began our long hike back but made good time. By the time that we got to the Cove, it was about 2 p.m. It was hot and we cooled off and talked about what we had seen and the good time that we had.

Then it was off to Houston, with a short stop at a convenience store along the way (where we saw a Luna Moth, Rhinoceros Beetle, and a beautiful unidentified pink and gold moth). This was truly a blessed day. Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary had come through again. And the folks who came, marvelous!!!



Swinging Bridge at the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary, By Magaly Fleytas



Luna Moth on the Trip from the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary, By Magaly Fleytas

WATSON PRESERVE REVEALS ITS SECRETS continued from Page 6

But the piece de resistance happened after David and I said our goodbyes and hiked the trail to the car so that we could drive to Warren and have lunch. There, half-way on the trail, was a snake about two-and-a-half to three feet long. I recognized this "old friend" and caught its tail and slowly pulled a Texas Ratsnake out of the bushes. As I picked up the snake I noticed that one of its eyes was blind. David and I hiked back to the others to show them the ratsnake and then we turned it loose so that it could again roam the beautiful Longleaf Pine forest.

A delicious lunch in Warren followed and then we headed home. We were satisfied. Not only did we fill our stomachs but more importantly we filled our souls. You cannot ask for more!

FEATURES

JUNE'S GENERAL MEETING: A CAMBODIAN CHALLENGE

By Page Williams

How can you teach a small village, in an isolated area of a developing country, to recycle? That was the challenge facing our June General Meeting presenter, Della Barbato, when she was sent, in May of 2014 to the village of Chi Phat in Cambodia as part of a US-sponsored Community Solutions Program. Having known Della as a former Education Manager for the Galveston Bay Foundation, I can think of no one better suited to accomplish such a task.



Constructing recycling bins in the village of Chi Phat, Cambodia, By Della Barbato

The villagers had previously used biodegradable containers, such as banana leaves, to transport their lunch, so the established culture was to discard their lunch containers anywhere on the ground. With the introduction of cans, bottles and bags, it had not occurred to them to change this habit, so the litter piled up in the village. As they were adjacent to the scenic Cardamom Rain Forest, with impressive biodiversity and increasing eco-tourism, Della educated the community about "zero waste" through recycling litter prevention, and she helped to implement a Green Ambassador Board to guide them toward becoming an attractive eco-tourism village.

Results were impressive. Community youth cleaned the village of litter. Trained Green Ambassadors directed the sorting. Simple net recycling collection bins were constructed. Aluminum cans brought cash and plastic bottles were filled with local dirt and will be used as construction bricks. Poaching in the rain forest decreased by more than 80% as 243 community eco-tourism jobs were created in the village of Chi Phat. And, with the help of Della's energetic leadership, the Community Based Eco-Tourism Community in Chi Phat was a winner in the Dubai International Award for Best Practices in February 2016 for outstanding achievement made towards improving living conditions of communities while protecting the natural environment.

Since leaving the Galveston Bay Foundation, Della has been working part-time for a recycling company, Federal International Recycling. She encourages us to contact her for details if we want to start a recycling program at our own location. She has her own business called Earth Voice, and is available for presentations and Earth Programs tailored for any audience, K through seniors. To learn more, you can contact her at 832-283-0383 or Della@Earth-Voice.com. Her website is www.Earth-Voice.com. There could be no more inspirational and energetic voice for our environment and we were lucky to have her share this project with us.



Constructing recycling bins in the village of Chi Phat, Cambodia, By Della Barbato

KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS PROGRAM – RELINK FOR 2015/2016

The Houston Sierra Club participates in the Kroger Community Rewards Program. Each year our members/supporters must RELINK their Kroger Plus Card to participate in the program. The first day you can link your Kroger plus Card is August 1, 2015. All supporters must have a registered Kroger Plus card account online to be able to link their card to an organization. Go online to www.KrogerCommunityRewards.com. On your Account Summary, enroll in the Community Rewards and enter #81991 for the Sierra Club Foundation-Houston Group. If you are a new online customer, click on SIGN UP TODAY in the New Customer box to register.

Starting August 30, 2015, any time you shop at Kroger using their Kroger Plus Card, the Club will be accumulating rewards for the 2015-2016 program. REMEMBER, your purchases will not count for the Houston Sierra Club until you register your card online.

Sending a big THANK YOU to all of our members/supporters that continue to participate in this program each year.

BAYLOR COLLEGE OF MEDICINE STUDYING THE ROLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURES IN AREA ASTHMATICS

By Winifred J. Hamilton

The Environmental Health Service at Baylor College of Medicine (BCM) has received an award from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute to conduct a randomized clinical trial testing the effectiveness of a home-based exposure reduction intervention in Houston-area African American adults with asthma.

“African Americans are disproportionately affected by asthma—even after controlling for socioeconomic factors,” notes principal investigator Dr. Winifred J. Hamilton. “In the Houston area,” she says, “this population is roughly twice as likely as Whites and three times as likely as Hispanics to be hospitalized or to die from asthma.” She also notes that “although our study targets African American adults, the findings are likely to be relevant to others who suffer from asthma or other diseases in which inflammation plays a central role.”

The study, titled the “Houston Home-Based Integrated Intervention Targeting Better Asthma Control (HIIT-BAC) in African Americans,” is currently enrolling 300 African Americans adults with poorly controlled asthma. Enrollment is expected to continue into the fall of 2015.

Patients who meet the inclusionary criteria and consent to participate in the study are assessed at the BCM Environmental Health Clinic where they undergo clinical assessment of their asthma—including pulmonary function and allergy testing, and complete a comprehensive exposure history. During that visit, the Clinic’s environmental health team discusses with each enrollee a customized asthma management plan based on the clinical and exposure findings. At the end of the clinic visit, each patient is randomized into one of two groups: in-clinic care or in-clinic care plus a year-long home-based environmental intervention.

This intervention includes an environmental assessment of the home and/or other key exposure sites; and four subsequent home visits to implement and support a customized plan to reduce asthma hazards—which might, for example, include allergen pillow covers, increased ventilation and reduced use of products with irritating chemicals or fragrances. The study team works closely with the patient’s physician when possible, reinforces proper use of asthma medications, and provides other help and support, such as addressing stress and nutrition.

All participants undergo a follow-up assessment at one year. Key outcomes being studied include pulmonary function, quality of life, control of asthma symptoms, and utilization of services for asthma. All enrollees receive \$100 for participating in the study. Up to \$350 worth of supplies and/or services are budgeted for each home intervention; patients in the control group are eligible to receive the home intervention at the end of the study.

“We are thrilled,” says Hamilton, “to have the opportunity to conduct this study here. Our region—with its large industrial base, air pollution issues, long growing season, dependence on cars, high humidity, and sequelae of flooding—has special challenges for asthma sufferers. We hope and believe—based on studies elsewhere—that this program will lead to measurable and lasting improvements in asthma control and quality of life.”

For more information about this study or the Environmental Health Service’s other clinical, educational and research initiatives, please visit www.bcm.edu/environmentalhealth.

**HOME-BASED
ASTHMA STUDY**

713.798.1082
environmentalhealth@bcm.edu

WE PROVIDE:

- **FREE** help in reducing your asthma triggers — at home and elsewhere!
- **FREE** tools to make your home healthier.
- **COMPENSATION** for your time and parking.

YOU ARE ELIGIBLE IF:

- You are an African-American adult, age 18 or older.
- You live in Houston and Harris County.
- You have asthma that is not well controlled.

This research study is funded by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI)

Baylor College of Medicine ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

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.

For the next meeting of the Bay Area Sierra Club, contact Linda King. 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

HEADS UP FOR SEPTEMBER 23RD SPECIAL EVENT!

Please join Houston Sierra Club Volunteers for a special benefit evening to support the work of the Houston Regional Group and the Lone Star Chapter. Did we mention that 2015 is the 50th anniversary of the Lone Star Chapter?

The big evening will be on Wednesday, September 23rd at the Houston Arboretum. Gather with like minded folks. Enjoy good company, great appetizers and desserts. See displays of local conservation efforts and service projects.

There will be optional short hikes/walks for adults & kids from 6:00 to 7:00 PM, with refreshments beginning at 6:30 PM and a special program at 7:15 PM.

Stay tuned for announcements about ticket purchases and opportunities for sponsorship.

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.

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

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.

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 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.

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 and we have a facebook page for discussion of environmental issues 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.

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 is published 6 times a year, in odd-numbered months. See the Group's web site for the latest information (<http://www.sierraclub.org/texas/houston>). Current circulation is online at <http://www.sierraclub.org/texas/houston/newsletters>, except for a printed December/January issue for the elections of Executive Committee members.

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.

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 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)	art.browning@gmail.com
Jim Williams (Vice Chair)	ezz@pdq.net
Lorraine Gibson (Treasurer)	raineygib@aol.com
Page Williams (Secretary)	page.williams@gmail.com
Melanie Oldham (Alternate Lone Star Chapter Delegate)	oldham_melanie@yahoo.com
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Frank Blake	frankblake@juno.com
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Outings	Frank Blake	frankblake@juno.com
Political Programs	(open) Joe Lengfellner	thatsjoesmail@yahoo.com
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.