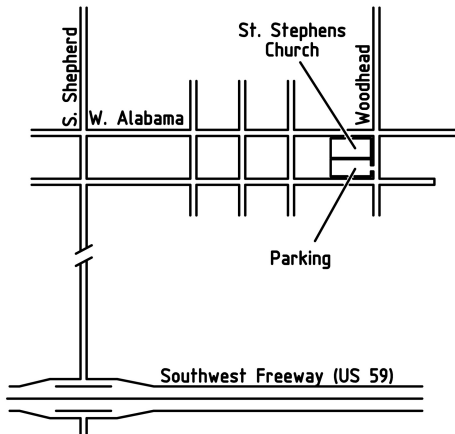




**GENERAL MEETINGS: 2nd
Thursdays, 7:30 p.m.**

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. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. 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.

NOTE: The November General Meeting is not in the usual room. It has been moved to Havens Center at the same church.

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**GENERAL MEETING OCTOBER 8, 2015
CITY OF HOUSTON PLAN AND BIKE PLAN**

Please join us Thursday night, October 8 as the Sierra Club welcomes the City of Houston's Director of Planning & Development, Patrick Walsh. Walsh will share his insights on Houston's future and how the city is preparing for the unique challenges the area faces. From the broad-reaching HOUSTON PLAN that supports all citizens, to the BIKE PLAN that directly addresses bicyclists' needs, the Planning and Development Department is a critical resource for the City Council and a guiding force for all of Houston. Come hear firsthand what the Planning and Development team is doing lately to help ensure Houston remains a vibrant and sustainable city.

The meeting is at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, corner of West Alabama and Woodhead.

Main program begins at 7:30 p.m. (Open for a social period before the program at 7:00 p.m.)



Biking Houston, by Frank Blake.

**GENERAL MEETING NOVEMBER 12, 2015
SUSTAINABILITY IN DESIGN**

On November 12, the Houston Sierra Club hosts Steve Stelzer, the Program Director at Houston's Green Building Resource Center. Stelzer offers guidance on cost-effective green building options. From ideas that can lead to energy and water savings, to creating healthier living environments and waste reduction, Stelzer is the City of Houston's "go to guy." Visit with us on November 12, as Stelzer shares his knowledge and green-building insights. The Sierra Club meeting is free and open to the public.

The meeting is at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, corner of West Alabama and Woodhead, in Havens Center.

Main program begins at 7:30 p.m. (Open for a social period before the program at 7:00 p.m.)

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 NOTICES ON MEETUP

Visit the Houston Sierra Club MeetUp for notices of outings and updates to outings.

Join the Sierra Club Outings group on Meetup to get updated information about local outings, meetings, and events.

<http://www.meetup.com/Houston-Sierra-Club-Outings>

View the list of outings and events without joining, or join Meetup to get emails about events coming up, and updates to events.

You can let the Outings leader know you are coming, so you can be informed of any last-minute changes or cancellations due to weather.

You can see who else is going on a particular Outing, how many people are going, and how many are on the waitlist. For any outing in the list, click “going” or “waiting” at the left of the description.

You can view the Outings in a Calendar format, or as a list. Click “Upcoming Meetups” in the left column. Then click the “Calendar” tab, just under “Welcome!”

You can also post photos from outings and view the photos from others.

You can read and comment on Discussions about one of the Outings.

The Outings and Events on Meetup are updated all the time, not only every two months like the Bayou Banner.

Go to the Houston Sierra Club Outings on Meetup at <http://www.meetup.com/Houston-Sierra-Club-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

MARYSEE PRAIRIE WORK DAYS

First Saturday most months fall through spring. Check Meetup site for possible dates, 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.

NORTH JETTY BEACH CLEANUP

Usually Saturdays, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Check Meetup site for possible dates, 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.

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.

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:

<http://www.meetup.com/Houston-Sierra-Club-Outings>

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.

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.



TRIPS AND LOCAL OUTINGS

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 a.m.

Hike

Come Visit Deer Park Prairie in November

Saturday, November 7, 2015, 8:00 a.m.

On Saturday, November 7, 2015, the Houston Sierra Club and the Native Prairies Association of Texas will celebrate the autumn wildflower blooming season with a joint outing to Deer Park Prairie. Deer Park Prairie is a type of prairie called The Cajun Prairie. This prairie is dominated by wildflowers and tall grasses like Eastern Gama Grass, Little Bluestem, and Switchgrass. Over 300 different plants have been found at Deer Park Prairie!

Bring your camera, daypack, water, snacks, hiking shoes, binoculars, bug repellent, sunscreen, field guides, clothes to suit the weather, and enough money for lunch. Long pants are highly recommended! After our prairie tour we will eat lunch at a local restaurant.

We will meet to carpool/caravan at 8:00 am 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 Interstate (I)-610 West Loop South. Look for a silver Honda Civic with lots of bumper stickers.

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 drive directly to the Deer Park Prairie and meet us at 9 a.m. the directions are as follows.

- 1) Go east on I-610, South Loop, to I-45.
- 2) After you cross I-45, I-610 becomes the East Loop. Get into the second lane from the right (before the Houston Ship Channel Bridge) and take State Highway (SH) 225 East.
- 3) Go east on SH 225 East about 9 miles until you come to the Center Street exit, exit SH 225, turn right onto Center Street, and go about 2.5 miles until you come to Pasadena Blvd.
- 6) Turn left onto Pasadena Blvd and go about 3/4 of a mile and turn right at the traffic light onto Luella Avenue.
- 7) Go about 1/2 mile on Luella and turn left onto Purdue Street (next to College Park Elementary School).
- 8) Go one block and as Purdue veers right make a U-turn and park your car on the school side of Purdue. Deer Park Prairie is directly to the east between the school fence and a grassy area that is part of the house/yard in front of you.

OUTINGS AND TRIP REPORTS

SMITH POINT AND ANAHUAC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE OUTING BRING END OF SUMMER SURPRISES

By Brandt Mannchen

NOTE: More wonderful photos are on the Meetup pages. On Meetup, click Photos, then this trip. <http://www.meetup.com/Houston-Sierra-Club-Outings/photos>

Our caravan pulled into the Chevron station on FM 563, just off Interstate 10 East, in Chambers County. We were looking for Janet and found that she and her husband had just arrived. After a quick bathroom break, off we went.

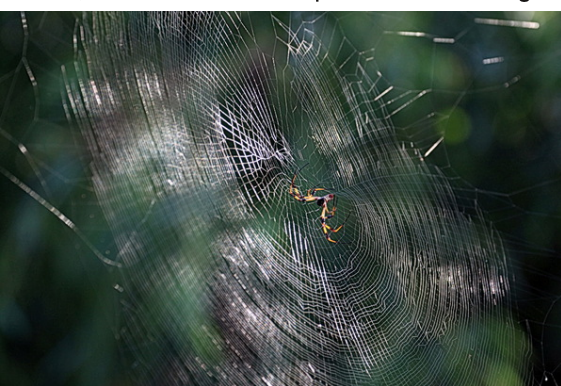
On the spur of the moment, as I drove down FM 563 toward the City of Anahuac, I pulled into the visitor center/office of the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge. We all piled out, Lilibeth, Tom, Gary, Elizabeth, Michael, Magaly, Yong, Beverly, Janet, Bob, and I. I told them I wanted them to see Lake Anahuac, which used to be called Turtle Bay, after all the sea turtles that used this body of water.

Then the bay was dammed and turned into a freshwater lake for the City of Anahuac and farms and ranches in this part of Chambers County and the turtles disappeared.

We first came to the wetlands demonstration pond which was full of beautiful, blooming, purple, Pickerel Weed, a native wetlands plant. A hummingbird zoomed over the pond as we headed down the concrete trail.



Lilibeth takes photos of lily-pads and Pickerel Weed in the demonstration wetland pond at the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center, by Gary Stephenson.



Great Silk Orb-Weaver Spider and Web, by Janet Albright.

This upland ridge was covered with hickory, Water Oak, and other native hardwood trees as well as exotic, non-native, plants like Chinese Tallow, privet, and Ligustrum.

The low hanging tree limbs and Giant Ragweed had webs of Great Silk Spiders (Golden Silk Orb-Weavers) which we ducked under (except for the one I got on my hat) as we made our way down the trail. We saw a lot of shells embedded in the soil which are the remnants of middens (garbage piles) created by native peoples many hundreds of years ago when they ate clams.

We went down only 10 feet in altitude on the trail and found ourselves in an entirely different forest ecosystem, a Bald Cypress Swamp. We sauntered down the boardwalk and saw Button-Bush, Giant Cut-Grass, and Green Ash interspersed

among the cypress. Lake Anahuac looked peaceful and the Bald Cypress gave it a grace and solitude that was appreciated by all of us.

Back in our cars we high-tailed it to Smith Point. When we arrived there must have been 20 vehicles in the small parking lot on the shoreline at the confluence of East and Trinity Bays. There must have been 40 people who were on the two-story observation platform.

We were here for "Hawk Watch" to see raptors, hawks, kites, vultures, falcons, etc. Each fall these birds of prey gather, from August through November, at Smith Point and migrate along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, through the Yucatan, Central, and then South America to get to their winter homes. These large birds catch thermals (rising columns of hotter air) so that they can soar up and then glide along the coastline on their journey to home.

Several experts, hired and paid by the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, are at this observation platform throughout the



Houston Sierra Club group at "Hawk Watch" observation platform in Candy Abshier Wildlife Management Area, by Gary Stephenson.

OUTINGS AND TRIP REPORTS

migration season and count and record the raptors that fly by Smith Point. They helped us identify what we saw fly overhead.

We were not disappointed. Broad-winged Hawks, Cooper's Hawks, Mississippi Kites, Crested Caracara, Kestrels, Black Vultures, Turkey Vultures, Osprey, and a Peregrine Falcon were all spotted. It was fun to watch these magnificent birds soar with such ease and comfort. We also saw Brown Pelicans, Cattle Egrets, Blue-Grey Gnat-catchers, around the platform.

After about an hour and fifteen minutes we headed over to the Trinity Bay side of Smith Point to look for shorebirds. The tide was very high and most of the small shell or sand spit islands were either underwater or nearly so. However, we did see several American Oyster-catchers, a Great Blue Heron, and many Royal Terns.

Then it was off to Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge. Beautiful, pink, Salt Marsh Mallows greeted us in the ditches as we drove toward the refuge entrance. When we pulled up to the entrance, we were starved so we sat down in the small picnic area, which also serves as an informal wildlife observation blind, and had our lunch. Swallow (bird) nests lined the ceiling of the picnic shelter and an immature Little Blue Heron stood on the edge of the pond that we faced. A few of us saw a Green Tree-frog



Neotropical Cormorant chilling out at Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge, by Gary Stephenson.

blend into the cattail fringe on the pond.

After lunch we visited the gift shop to look at the books, maps, t-shirts, and other trinkets as well as talk with the hosts who ran the shop. In 2008, Hurricane Ike had destroyed the gift shop with 8-10 foot storm surge waves. Now the gift shop had been built back, elevated to hopefully withstand any new storm.

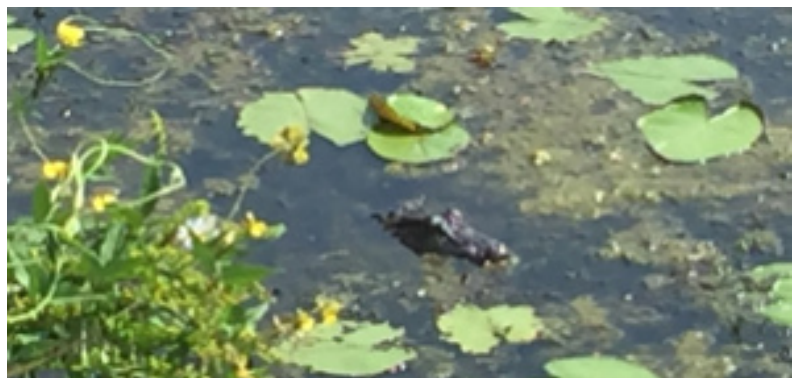
Finally, we were off looking for wildlife. It was 1 p.m. and the sun was hot. Not the best time to see birds or other critters but the fresh air felt great to breathe. The dragonflies were flying in patrol looking for mosquitoes and other insects to dine on. The freshwater marshes were covered with porcelain-white water lilies (with a purplish tinge) and 100's of two-inch frogs jumped into the water whenever we pulled over and parked our cars to get out.

A small American Alligator (about 3 feet long) popped up and floated, immobilized in front of us among the water lilies, looking lost in thought. We saw White Ibis, Great Egret, Red-wing Blackbird, Mottled Duck, grackles, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Neotropical Cormorant, Common Moorhen (both juvenile and adult), and my favorite, Purple Gallinule. Michael saw a secretive rail but we were unable to identify it.

It was a great day but we were getting tired. So we headed for home, after stopping to get some refreshments, gas up the cars, and go to the bathroom. When we got back to the parking lot where our cars were parked we all shook hands, hugged, and wished each other well. I had that good, tired feeling that I always have when I am outdoors and join wildlife, my friends, neighbors, and community members. This is where we all belong! Come join us soon.



White Water Lilies, by Gary Stephenson.



American Alligator at Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge, by Gary Stephenson.

FEATURES

FOREST SERVICE BEGINS PLANNING EFFORT IN 2016

By Brandt Mannchen

In 2016, the U.S. Forest Service (FS) will begin a four-year process to revise the existing National Forests and Grasslands in Texas (NFGT) forest plan. Usually, forest plans are revised every 10-15 years. However, our existing forest plan is already 19 years old! To say we are overdue for a change, is an vast understatement. Sam Houston, Davy Crockett, Angelina, and Sabine National Forests and LBJ and Caddo Grasslands all deserve a revised plan with better and more protective environmental measures.

The revised forest plan will occur in three phases and include an assessment of existing information; revision of the plan; and monitoring that ensures the forest plan does what it says it will do.

The forest plan must use the best scientific information and contain desired conditions (a snapshot of what the forest will look like in the future with plan implementation); objectives that provide measurable progress using a reasonable budget; standards and guidelines to constrain projects or activities; suitability of lands for multiple use activities (wildlife, range, water, timber, and recreation); and goals which provide broad statements of intent.

Some of the issues that will play a role in the forest plan revision include protection of water quality (for our cities, recreation, and fish) and stream-side vegetation (called riparian areas); continued protection and an increase in the number of federally endangered Red-cockaded Woodpeckers (RCW); trail uses, locations, and impacts; protection of wilderness and scenic areas; management of unique areas, like blackland prairies; other recreational uses; adequate law enforcement; and a budget sufficient to implement the forest plan.

The Sierra Club wants people who love forests and want to get involved. If you want to visit and get to know Sam Houston National Forest and if you want to be part of the team that provides input into the revised forest plan please contact Brandt Mannchen at 713-664-5962 or brandtshnfbt@juno.com.

Our NFGT are too important not to speak up for wildlife, wilderness, water, landscapes, plants, and compatible recreation. See you in the forest!



Pines in the Big Thicket, By Nicida Maerefat

NEW 2016 FOREST PLAN EFFORT BEGINS WITH ASSESSMENT

By Brandt Mannchen

This article is one of several that will be written over the four-year planning period for the revision of the National Forests and Grasslands in Texas (NFGT) plan for the Angelina, Sabine, Davy Crockett, and Sam Houston National Forests (NFs) and the LBJ and Caddo National Grasslands (NGs). The planning process includes three phases: assessment, plan development, amendment, or revision, and monitoring. This article talks about the first phase of the planning process: assessment.

According to the National Forest System Land Management Planning regulation (36 CFR Part 219), the definition of “assessment” is: “the identification and evaluation of existing information to support land management planning. Assessments are not decision-making documents, but provide current information on select topics relevant to the plan area, in the context of the broader landscape.”

Now that we know what an assessment is, what does it include? Again, according to the planning regulation, assessments “rapidly evaluate existing information about relevant ecological, economic, and social conditions, trends, and sustainability and their relationship to the land management plan within the context of the broader landscape. The responsible official (in our case the Forest Supervisor of the NFGT) shall consider and evaluate existing and possible future conditions and trends of the plan area, and assess the sustainability of social, economic, and ecological systems within the plan area in the context of the broader landscape.”

What does that mean? It means if you are a NFGT user or visitor and you have information about what is happening, what has changed, what trends you see for any ecological, economic, and social factor or the sustainability of those factors then you have important and valuable information to provide to the FS during the assessment phase.

What does “in the context of the broader landscape” mean? Each of the NFs and NGs has a surrounding landscape of developed and undeveloped lands which affects the management of NFs or NGs just as the NFs

FEATURES

NEW 2016 FOREST PLAN EFFORT BEGINS WITH ASSESSMENT Continued from Page 7

and NGs affect these surrounding lands. To manage the NFs and NGs the FS must know what is needed for management and how this management is affected by nearby land uses (the landscape).

For instance, prescribed burning is important to manage for the federally endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW). However, as land use becomes more developed or urban, prescribed burning becomes more of a challenge due to the impact that fire has on air pollution, people's health, and smoke drifting across roads. The plan must address these concerns of the "broader landscape" so that the RCW can be managed and protected.

The Forest Supervisor will identify and consider information found in governmental or non-governmental assessments, plans, monitoring reports, studies, and other information. Local knowledge (that is what you and I know) will be considered if publicly available or voluntarily provided. So you have an avenue to provide information to the FS to consider when preparing the assessment.

The FS is required to coordinate and provide opportunities for the public to provide existing information for the assessment. The assessment report must document how the "best scientific information" was used. Some of the information that the FS will particularly look at includes:

1. Terrestrial/aquatic ecosystems (the living/non-living elements of a landscape) and watersheds.
2. Ecosystem drivers (which push the development and functioning of ecosystems) including dominant ecological processes, disturbance regimes, and stressors (like natural succession, wildland fire, invasive species, climate change, etc.) and the ability of terrestrial/aquatic ecosystems to adapt to change.
3. Baseline assessment of carbon stocks.
4. Threatened/endangered/proposed/candidate/potential species of conservation concern.
5. Social/cultural/economic conditions.
6. Benefits people obtain from the NF/NG planning area.
7. Air/soil/water resources and quality.
8. Multiple uses and their contributions to local/regional/national economies.
9. Recreation settings/opportunities/access and scenic character.
10. Renewable and non-renewable energy/mineral resources.
11. Infrastructure like recreational facilities and transportation and utility corridors.
12. Areas of tribal importance.
13. Cultural/historic resources and uses.
14. Land status and ownership/use/access patterns.
15. Existing designated areas located in the plan area (like wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, scenic areas, etc.) and the potential need and opportunity for additional designated areas.

A public notice will be prepared and released that the assessment is beginning in the Federal Register, Newspaper of record, and online. It is up to the Forest Supervisor to determine what opportunities the public will have to provide existing information for the assessment.

The Forest Supervisor should use traditional and non-traditional sources of information including user generated content and reach out to a variety of communities to obtain their perspective on social, economic, and cultural needs and values and ecological sustainability and plant and animal communities.

The intent of public participation in the assessment phase is to provide opportunities for the public to share its knowledge of existing forest conditions and identify concerns about trends and perceptions of risk to social, economic, and ecological systems. The interdisciplinary team that prepares the assessment must provide the following opportunities for public participation:

1. At the start of the assessment, tell the public about the scope and scale of the assessment and encourage participants to share their knowledge of existing forest conditions.
2. During preparation of the assessment receive public input on specific elements of the assessment.
3. Make the draft assessment report available for public review and feedback.
4. Public participation opportunities must also be assessed for potential list of species of conservation concern; geographic extent of the influence of social, and economic contributions of the planning area on the surrounding communities and the broader landscape; and wilderness or wild and scenic river inventories initiated during the assessment process.

The Sierra Club welcomes people who love NFs/NGs and want to get involved. If you want more information please contact Brandt Mannchen at 713-664-5962 or brandtshnfbt@juno.com.

Our NFGT are too important not to speak up for wildlife, wilderness, water, landscapes, plants, and compatible recreation. See you in the forest!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2016 SIERRA CLUB CALENDARS

Wilderness Wall Calendar

Best seller. All the grandeur of the North American wilderness.



Engagement Calendar

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



Available at the monthly General Meeting sales table. If you are interested in volunteering for calendar consignment sales, or need information about the calendars, contact Lorraine Gibson at 281-384-4104 or raineygib@aol.com.

GENERAL MEETING DECEMBER 10, 2015 ANNUAL AUCTION DONATIONS AND VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Our Annual Auction will take place this year at our December General Meeting on Thursday, December 10. This is one of the principal fundraising events for the Houston Group and features both a live and silent auction. All proceeds from the auction stay here in Houston to fund local conservation efforts and activities.

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

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

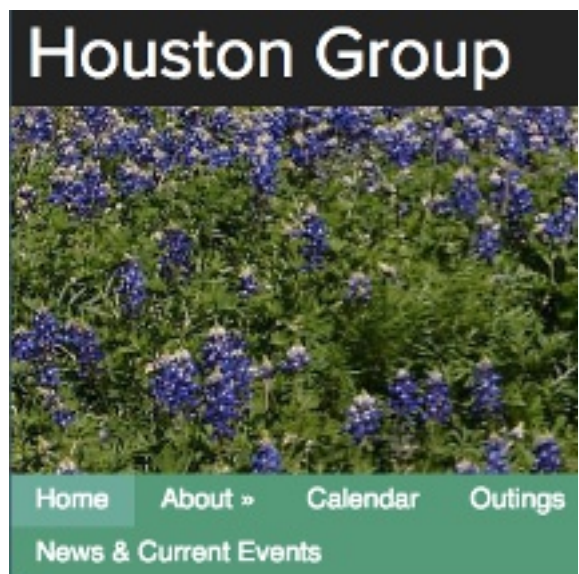
To donate, volunteer, or for more information about the auction, please contact one of the following: Frank Blake (frankblake@juno.com or 713-528-2896), or Page Williams (page.williams@gmail.com or 281-679-7221).

EXCOM ELECTIONS IN DECEMBER

Although paper copies of the Bayou Banner will no longer be mailed bimonthly to members, club bylaws require ballots to be mailed in December. Therefore, a brief paper version of the December-January issue of the Bayou Banner will be mailed to members.

That issue will have ballots for election of members of the Executive Committee of the Houston Regional Group of the Sierra Club. Candidates can be suggested by any member of the club. Until a Nominating Committee Chair has been established, you can submit suggestions for candidates and petitions to Art Browning (art.browning@gmail.com, phone 281-728-6327) or George Batten (bayoubanner@gmail.com). Petitions for candidacy must be received by November 1, 2014 for publishing in the Bayou Banner December issue.

NEW HOUSTON SIERRA CLUB BLOG



The Houston Sierra Club web site now has a new Blog at

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

Scroll down past the meeting notices, past the Calendar, down to our Blog.

Or click the News & Current Events at the top, to see all the latest news and action items.

These news items are updated frequently, so look at them often.

There are also new sidebars with boxes and images to link to local action items, as well as links to our Facebook pages.

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

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.

Huntsville

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

Pearland Recycling Center

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

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

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@juno.com.

INNER CITY OUTINGS (ICO)

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

OUTINGS:

Usually the third Monday of the month, 7:00 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@juno.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
Evelyn Merz (Conservation Committee Chair)	elmerz@hal-pc.org
Frank Blake	frankblake@juno.com
Stephanie Thomas	Stephanie.germaine@gmail.com

REGIONAL GROUP LEADERSHIP

Banner Editor	Carol Woronow	HSCBanner@gmail.com
Beach Cleanup	Frank Blake	frankblake@juno.com
Conservation	Evelyn Merz	elmerz@hal-pc.org 713-644-8228
Conservation Subcommittees		
Air Quality	Brandt Mannchen	brandtshnfbt@juno.com 713-664-5962
Coastal Issues	Page Williams	page.williams@gmail.com
Energy and Global Warming	Jim Williams	ezz@pdq.net
Forestry and Big Thicket	Brandt Mannchen	brandtshnfbt@juno.com 713-664-5962
Recycling Watershed	Frank Blake	frankblake@juno.com
	Evelyn Merz	elmerz@hal-pc.org 713-644-8228
Hospitality	Carol Lee	713-523-2294
Inner City Outings	Lorraine Gibson	raineygib@aol.com 281-384-4104
Lone Star Chapter Delegate		
	Art Browning	art.browning@gmail.com
Membership	John Berlinghoff	johnb@hal-pc.org
Outings	Frank Blake	frankblake@juno.com
Political	(open)	
Programs	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.