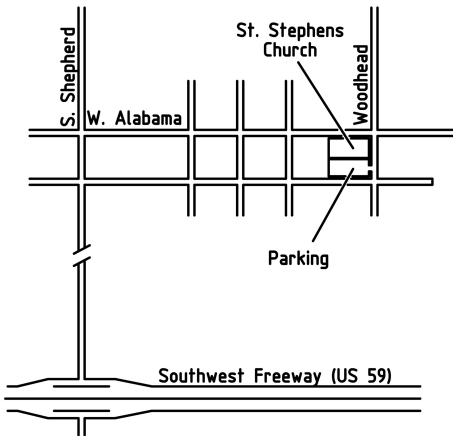




**GENERAL MEETINGS: 2nd  
Thursdays, 7:30 p.m.**

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.

**GENERAL MEETING DECEMBER 10, 2015  
ANNUAL AUCTION  
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.

This is our annual auction. Please come and buy Christmas presents, art, camping gear, and other things.

We also need volunteers to help 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 setup 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).

**GENERAL MEETING JANUARY 14, 2016  
KENT CLINGERMAN, PRECINCT 4**

On January 14, the Sierra Club welcomes Kent Clingerman, Community Aide with the Harris County Precinct 4 Community Assistance Department. Kent will provide an overview of the latest developments at the parks in Precinct 4, as well as a special presentation on Spring Creek and Cypress Creek Greenway project.

Precinct 4 is part of the headwaters for Houston and the Galveston bay, and as such Precinct 4 plays a critical role in flood control and floatable litter mitigation. In addition to the critical infrastructure work, Precinct 4 offers many great parks and opportunities for recreation. Kent will bring maps for



Faulkey Gulley Hike and Bike Trail during flood season, by Carol Woronow

folks interested in visiting one of the Precinct 4 parks. To learn more, join us Thursday night, January 14, as we learn together how Precinct 4 works to support Houston's quality of life!

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.

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

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# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTION

## FRANK BLAKE

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

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

It is important that we sustain and grow these efforts.

## LORRAINE GIBSON

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

and coordinating the food for our annual Fall Fundraiser Reception.

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

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

## JOHN JACOB

I am the director of the Texas Coastal Watershed Program, and Professor and Extension Specialist with a joint appointment with the Texas A&M Sea Grant Program and the Texas AgriLife Extension Service through the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Science. I hold a B.S. and M.S. degrees from Texas Tech University, and a Ph.D. from Texas A&M University, all in soils and natural resources. I am registered as a Professional Geoscientist with the State of Texas and is a Professional Wetland Scientist. My current

project, Coastal CHARM (Community Health and Resource Management), focuses on enabling coastal communities in Texas to improve quality of life in cities and towns while preserving and enhancing the natural coastal environment.

## ELIZABETH SPIKE

Elizabeth Spike is a High School Science Teacher of 14 years. She has been active in high school science life in various ways. Elizabeth developed curriculum and reached out to other disciplines to co-teach interdisciplinary lessons and field trips. Elizabeth developed her high school's Advanced Placement Environmental Science program and sought opportunities to coordinate with the Urban Studies instructor for shared experiences from different perspectives. She assisted in winning an EPA grant for the construction of a storm water pond to treat the non-point source pollution from her former school's campus in Florida. She is currently her high school's Envirothon coach and sponsors her team's participation at the Texas Envirothon competition. Elizabeth has leadership experience. She served as a board member of the Humanists of Florida Association, organized Darwin Day for the Tallahassee community, and served on a

## SIERRA CLUB BALLOT

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

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

Clip and mail the whole ballot by December 31 to:

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

or bring this ballot to the General Meeting on December 10 and drop it in the ballot box.

### Vote for up to 5 candidates.

Joint memberships are allowed double votes.

- |                          |                          |                 |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Frank Blake     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lorraine Gibson |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | John Jacob      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Elizabeth Spike |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Jim Williams    |

# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTION

## Executive Committee Candidates, Continued from page 2

School Improvement Committee. Elizabeth would like to apply her skills as teacher, coach, and leader to broaden the Sierra Club membership base to younger individuals. She would like to engage younger people with a variety of activities, such as environment-related contests and TEDx-type programming.

### JIM WILLIAMS

Jim Williams has been a member of the Sierra Club for the past twenty years and has actively participated in the Sierra Club for the past seventeen years. He has served on the Outings Committee and Inner Cities Outings, has been the Houston Group's representative to the state Lone Star Sierra Club chapter and chaired the Houston Group's for three years. He is currently the Energy and Climate Change Chair of the Houston Group. As a past member of the Outings and ICO Committees, he has organized and provided leadership for numerous trips. He is a member of other organizations such as Earthjustice, Public Citizen, and Veterans for Peace.

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

## HEADS UP 2016!

Look for updates on the following local activities at our website, Bayou Banner online, and Outings Meetup:

- Annual Yard Sale, usually scheduled during May
- Local State Park service
- Hike, Bike, and Canoe outings
- Backpacking and camping classes
- Outings Leader Training
- ICO (Inspiring Connections Outdoors) Outings for kids
- Regional and local environmental issues

## HOUSTON GIVE 5 PROGRAM

Houston Sierra Club has applied to join several other local environmental organizations and participate in the 2016 Houston Give 5 program. In this program area businesses sign up and pledge to donate 5% of their revenue on a specified date to one of the area beneficiary organizations. This date is typically a date in April close to Earth Day. Participating businesses are promoted at the Houston Give 5 website, individual group websites and through various promotional materials. Information about the program is available at the Houston Give 5 website, including the participating environmental groups, and lists of past business participants.

If you have a business or service and want to consider participating to benefit the Houston Sierra Club, please contact Frank Blake at [frankblake@juno.com](mailto:frankblake@juno.com) or 713-528-2896, or Lorraine Gibson at 281-384-4104.

## NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER

Mary Wood has been appointed by the Executive Committee to fill out the remaining year of a term vacated by a resignation.

Mary said "I'm excited and honored to be chosen to be on Board of Sierra Club."

Sierra is an organization of advocacy, being the voice for those who can not speak for themselves, our waterways, air and natural areas across the nation. There are problems within our state that need to be brought to the attention of our state residents and legislators. Through my past and present advocacy experience, I hope I will be an asset in the communications of Sierra's campaigns and programs to expand Sierra's influence in the state. For the past 5 years, I've been focused on litter in our water through two main activities:

2009 to 2013 - Plastic Pollution Texas

Worked to establish deposits legislation for beverage containers in two sessions of the state legislature

2013 to present -Texans for Clean Water

Working to bring the awareness of litter to our state legislature and Texas residents through a comprehensive study of litter, from roadside to illegal dumping. What are the cost and consequences of litter.

# 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.

### OUTINGS CALENDAR

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

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

## 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.

## 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.

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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

## Hike

### December Forest Walk in Brazos Bend State Park Saturday, December 12, 2015, 7:30 a.m.

On Saturday, December 12, 2015, the Houston Sierra Club will hike in Brazos Bend State Park (BBSP). BBSP has many trails that wind through the Columbia Bottomlands with Spanish Moss covered Live Oaks, Pecans, Cedar Elms, Green Ash, and other hardwood trees. Tallgrass prairie surrounds this Columbia Bottomlands forest. Alligators, White-tailed Deer, and wading birds are year-round residents that are usually easy to see.

Bring money for the entrance fee (\$7), daypack, water, lunch, hat, field guides, binoculars, cameras, comfortable hiking shoes, and clothes that fit the weather. Long pants are highly recommended. There should be great opportunities for nature photography.

We will meet to caravan/carpool 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 I-610 West Loop South. Look for a silver-gray Honda Civic with a lot of bumper stickers on the back.

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 Brazos Bend State Park and meet us at 9 a.m. the directions are as follows.

- 1) From Houston, go south on U.S. 59, across the Brazos River, to the Crabb River Road (FM 2759)/SH 99 exit. Turn left, south, on Crabb River Road and go two miles. You will cross a railroad track and are now on FM 762.
- 2) Follow FM 762 as it zigs-zags about 16 miles until you come to the park entrance on your left. If you go too far you will come to FM 1462.

## Service

### December Service Trip to Watson Rare Native Plant Preserve Saturday, December 19, 2015, 7:30 a.m.

On Saturday, December 19, 2015, the Houston Sierra Club will visit the Geraldine Watson Rare Native Plant Preserve and conduct service work and enjoy a cool, winter hike on the trails of the Preserve. We will clear vegetation away from boardwalks in preparation for a prescribed fire. Fire is a natural way that many East Texas Forests regenerate themselves.

The Watson Preserve was founded by Geraldine Watson, a self-taught naturalist, with the intent of saving many of the rare plants of the Big Thicket which have been vanishing over time. Today her dream is preserved on 10 acres which front Lake Hyatt, just south of Warren, Texas. Some of the habitats that have been protected on the Watson Preserve include Arid Sandylands, Longleaf Pine Upland Forests, Mesic Slope Forests, Pine Savannah Wetlands, Baygalls and Fern-beds, and Freshwater Wetlands.

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. If you have a gas-powered weed-eater or loppers please bring them. Long pants are highly recommended! We will work for about 3 hours and then go into Warren for lunch at a great local restaurant.

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 many 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 let people know via Meetup, email, or phone.

No pets, no firearms, and no radios. We will put our cell phones either away or on vibrate as we enjoy the solitude, quiet, and natural sounds during our great early winter adventure. If you want to meet us at 10 a.m. at the Watson Preserve the directions are as follows:

- 1) Go east on I-10 from Houston, 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 about 15 miles to the blinking red light at State Highway (SH) 105 in Batson, Texas.
- 6) Turn right, and go about 6 miles on FM 770 and turn left and continue on FM 770. SH 105 continue straight to Sour Lake.

(Directions to Watson Preserve continued on the next page.)

# TRIPS AND LOCAL OUTINGS

Directions to Watson Preserve (continued).

- 7) Continue on FM 770, to the town of Saratoga (about 5 miles). Keep going on FM 770 until you come to FM 1003.
- 8) Turn left onto FM 1003, follow this road as it twists and turns, and go about 8 miles until you come to the US 69/287 intersection.
- 10) Turn left (north) onto US 69/287 and go past FM 420, FM 3083, and FM 2827.
- 11) After you pass FM 2827 go about 1.5 miles and turn right onto Lake Hyatt Road (County Road 4770). There will be a large Lake Hyatt Estates sign on U.S. 69/287.
- 12) You will cross Lake Hyatt after about a mile. The first road on the left that you come to after crossing Lake Hyatt is County Road 4777 which is also known as Red Oak Lane.
- 13) Turn left onto Red Oak Lane and go about ¼ mile and on your left will be the Watson Preserve sign. Turn your car around and park on the grass alongside the road.

## Hike

### Introduction to Sam Houston National Forest: The Central Section

Saturday, January 9, 2016, 7:30 a.m.

On Saturday, January 9, 2016, the Houston Sierra Club will continue its 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.

Our second of three outings will be in the “Central Section” of SHNF. Some of the sights you will see and be introduced to include: Upland Hardwood Forest, Four Notch Area, Briar and Boswell Creeks, the Lone Star Hiking Trail, Bottomland Hardwood Forest, and Big Woods Area. After we finish our tour of SHNF we will have a delicious meal at a nearby restaurant.

Bring your daypack, 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.



# OUTINGS AND TRIP REPORTS

## POST-HALLOWEEN PADDLE – NOVEMBER 1 AT LAKE CHARLOTTE

By Tom Douglas

Two major rain events made it necessary to shift the venue for our post-Halloween paddle from the San Bernard River to Lake Charlotte, where we could enjoy the high-water conditions while avoiding treacherous currents. The next-to-last band of rain from the weather system was just clearing as we left Houston, but we caught up with it as we headed out Interstate 10. Knowing that this patch of rain was forecast to move on out in about one more hour, our hardy band of paddlers used that time to introduce themselves and trade stories under the shelter of one of the pavilions at Cedar Hill Park. And what an interesting group it was. We had a person who has purchased many acres of Texas land for protection in national wildlife refuges, a nutritionist, a Master Naturalist, several scout leaders, one person who hitchhiked across Venezuela, and another who spends part of the year living in a remote part of Alaska. When the rain did stop, right on schedule, we wasted no time getting our boats on the water.

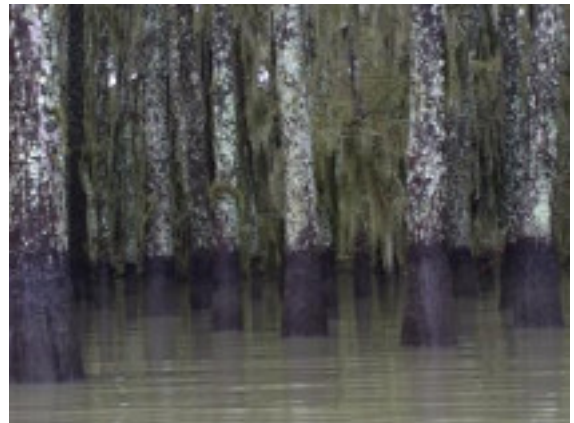
Paddling down the eastern side of Lake Charlotte, we visited one of the locations featured in a video that was produced by the Galveston Bay Estuary Program. The USGS gauging station showed a water depth of 11.7 feet, nearly 4 feet higher than what it had been just two weeks before.

The usual cut into Mud Lake was difficult to locate, but the flooded cypress forest offered us several different possibilities. Finding that the entrance to Mud Lake Bayou was blocked by a large raft of water hyacinth plants, we paddled up the west side of Mud Lake, and out into the forest for our lunch break. Back in Lake Charlotte, via a forest route to the west of the one that we had used earlier, we took a moment to regain our bearings, and then headed west to Sand Point.

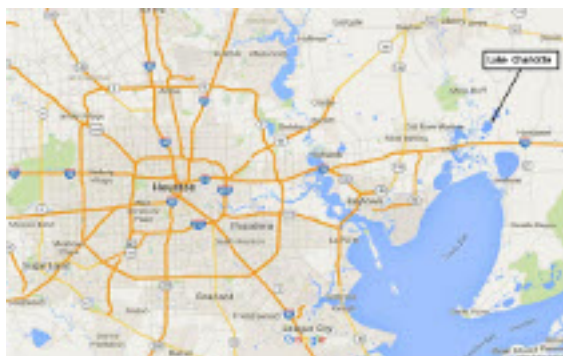
Crossing some open water to the north of Sand Point, we found that the ghostly cypresses at Buzzard Roost were still setting a thoroughly spooky Halloween mood. Then, on to what proved to be the best part of the day for some: about a half-hour paddling through the forest just to the west of Lake Charlotte. Even though we didn't venture very close to Mac Bayou, we could feel that the current flowing in from it was reaching well out into the lake. Returning to Cedar Hill Park, we concluded our 5.7-mile outing and loaded up our boats, only to meet up with that one final round of rain during the drive home. Whew! A close call with the rain, and a great day on the water. Kudos to our dauntless group, who stayed with us through Halloween and High Water!



USGS Gauging Station by Linda Shead



Dark Forest by David Portz



Map of Lake Charlotte



Spooky Buzzard Roost by Tom Douglas

# OUTINGS AND TRIP REPORTS

## AUTUMN'S SEASON SHINES BRIGHT ON MARYSEE PRAIRIE

By Brandt Mannchen

As we drove down County Road 2077, Heman looked to the end of the road and wondered whose car was parked by the gate. I told him that was Tom's car and pulled up alongside and got out. We shook hands, opened the trunk, and took out our gear and prepared to walk out on Marysee Prairie to begin our service work.



Marysee Prairie by Heman Wai

Marysee Prairie, a name not known or said by many prairie lovers. Marysee is the only restored prairie in the Big Thicket. I knew that well since I had been in on the first restoration service trip over 23 years ago. As I looked out on the almost 10 acres I was amazed at how beautiful it looked, yellow, golden Swamp Sunflowers and Bearded Tickseed waving in the gentle fall breeze. This prairie, which has suffered so many starts and stops, has never looked better, radiant in its recovery.

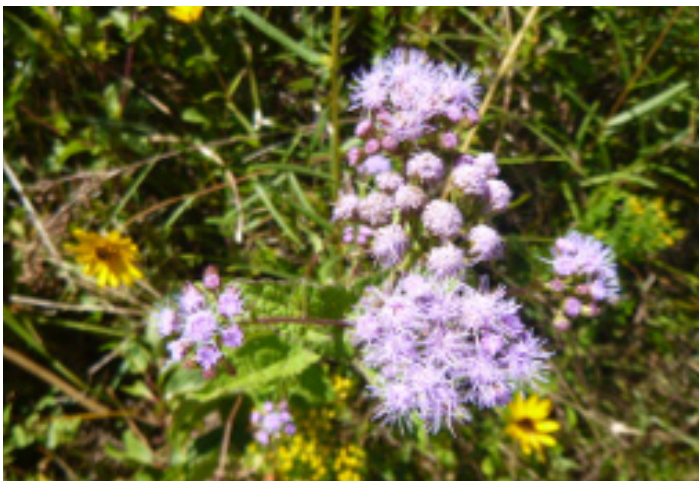
I blinked, came back from my daydream, and started walking toward the prairie. Tom showed us a place where many small woody plants, mostly Common Persimmon, had sprouted in the prairie. Heman and I waded out through the thick grass, herbaceous plants, and vines and began cutting each of the woody plants at soil level. I worked out about 40-50 feet from the edge of the prairie and then worked my way back. The cool breeze was delightful and I realized that I could work a lot more today than during the summer, where two hours of cutting woody plants resulted in a very tired, wet, and spent guy.



Julie Gaylord working on the Marysee Prairie by Heman Wai

Periodically, I walked back to my daypack and drank water. I also wrote down the grasses and wildflowers that were blooming that I could identify. This was a small way to understand and put into print what I saw and began to understand about Marysee Prairie. This small grassland, from March through November, was host to an array of grasses and wildflowers that bloomed in waves over the months. My small and incomplete list, which I mailed to Tom, was a poor representation of a natural phenomena that shaped Marysee and the plants that grew on it. To breed and seed was the central tenant of all plants or they would surely not survive, they would perish.

Back to work. Over time, Arlene, Ellen, Heinz, Julie, and Glen arrived and fanned out on the prairie. We always had a good crew but now it was a bit larger than normal. Nine motivated people who loved beauty and would spend their time to protect it.



Blue Mistflower on the Marysee Prairie by Heman Wai

After about an hour I moved across Marysee to a large pimple mound that I had been eyeing due to the hazy wall of vegetation that stood above the horizon. I was right to come to this place to cut. There was way too much Common Persimmon, American Beautyberry, red oak, sumac, and vines for a prairie. I began at the foot and moved upward and then around the mound. I worked back and forth and slowly the brush hit the ground and the prairie grasses and wildflowers were exposed to full sunlight. I finally finished and looked at my watch. Almost noon. I slowly trudged back to the gate. When I got to the shaded spot near the storage building, the chairs were set out, Maxine had set up



# OUTINGS AND TRIP REPORTS

## WEST SIDE OF SAM HOUSTON NATIONAL FOREST STARS ON A BEAUTIFUL FALL DAY

By Brandt Mannchen

There we were, sixteen individuals, ready to get away from the city and all the hurly-burly of life. I was really happy to see everyone, some old stalwarts like David, Regina, Michael, Allen, Carol, and Jane, and some new folks like Lori, Sara, Magaly, Andrew, Laurie, Yong, Amit, Pat, and Cindy. What a crew! As always people were friendly, curious, and ready for fun on a fine, fall day.

The weather, which I joked about ordering, was cool, with a light breeze, sunny, and perfect for hiking and being out in Sam Houston National Forest. After the interminable sign-in routine and short talk about why we were gathered there (for fun, for education, for new places, and for conservation) we were off.

After heading west on FM 1375 for a few miles we pulled off the side of the road and parked the cars next to the U.S. Forest Service Red-cockaded Woodpecker wildlife viewing area. This cluster (the nesting and roosting area for this federally endangered bird, about 10 acres in size) consisted of tall, widely spaced, large Loblolly Pine trees with few understory or midstory trees.

I talked about this rare bird's unusual life story with helper birds for raising chicks; making cavities in living, old, pine trees; 200 acres of foraging area; and being very faithful homeowners where their cavities exist in their clusters. I was very impressed by everyone's interest and the range of questions folks asked. As I told people when we recrossed FM 1375 to get back into our cars, "This is the most dangerous part of our day, crossing the highway".

We drove several more miles on FM 1375 until we crossed Lake Conroe and parked at the trailhead for the Stubblefield Section of the Lone Star Hiking Trail. We were not the only ones parked at this trailhead since we saw a bow hunter come back out of the forest after his hunt for White-tailed Deer. Allen gave a short talk about the Lone Star Hiking Trail and off we went. The wind whipped through the pines above and felt cool on our bodies. Blue Mistflower, aster, lobelia, and spurge bloomed along the side of the trail. We stopped and examined Pokeweed and Devil's Walking Stick.

Before we knew it we had hiked the 0.6 miles to the shoreline of Lake Conroe and we oohed and aahed at the scenic view of the water. Someone was camping next to the lake and I thought, "You lucky ducks!". We looked at Loblolly Pine and Shortleaf Pine trees that grew right next to each other and discussed the differences between these two species. We also admired the American Basswood and Eastern Hophornbeam hardwood trees that grow within a few dozen feet of the shoreline.

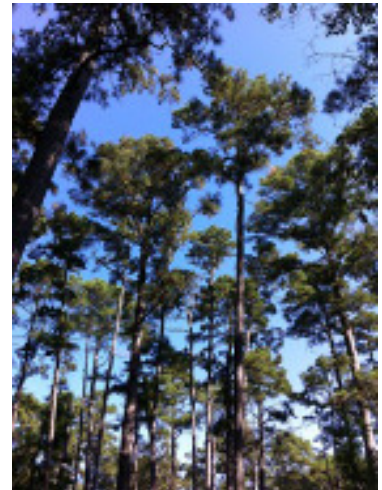
We then turned around and hiked back and took off again. Our ride down FM 1375 ended when we turned left onto Osborn Road and followed it to FM 149. We then drove down FM 149. I was engaged in such a wonderful conversation that I passed the trailhead where we were to stop. How embarrassing! Just call me "wrong-way Mannchen".

After we parked at the trailhead we crossed FM 149 at a very dangerous corner and then melted into the shadows of Little Lake Creek Wilderness Area as we strolled down the Lone Star Hiking Trail. We did not have time to really hike the wilderness area (what a shame) but we did talk about why it is important to protect some areas (wilderness) so that there is someplace where humans were not in charge. In wilderness, "Nature calls the shots" and we bend in humility to that age-old proposition. We need a place for solitude, quiet, and awe where we can reflect that we are part of the "community of life" and that animals and plants are our neighbors and not our enemies. A couple came up the trail while we were talking and we invited them to stay for the conversation.

Unfortunately, time was slipping away! I had promised folks that we would have a wonderful lunch in the town of New Waverly and we were running late. I could tell people were hungry and we still had two stops to make. So let's go!

When I turned onto Welch Road from FM 149 I knew that people were wondering where we were going. Not only were we in Sam Houston National Forest but the roads changed from more civilized asphalt to rural gravel limestone pretty quick as we kicked up dust galore.

Our fourth stop was at a blackland prairie I call Welch Prairie (in honor of the road). We walked about 40 yards onto the prairie, first through some shrubby brush, and then the prairie opened up and took hold of our imaginations. People were amazed to see a prairie completely surrounded by forest. Some thought the prairie was human made but I told them it was a natural, alkaline, Fleming Formation, blackland prairie. We saw



Loblolly Pines in the SHNF by Carol Woronow

# OUTINGS AND TRIP REPORTS

## WEST SIDE OF SAM HOUSTON NATIONAL FOREST Continued from Page 9

blazing star, Snow-on-the-Prairie, and other wildflowers blooming as Little Bluestem waved in the wind.

Finally, we were on the way to our final destination. But it took awhile! We bumped and rolled over about 15 miles of gravel road through the heart of Pine dominated uplands in Sam Houston National Forest. We finally turned onto FM 1374 and when I turned right onto Forest Road 222 I was glad our tour was almost over and lunch was just over the horizon.

Instead of taking a short hike, we parked the cars, walked about 30 feet off the road, and I let the mystery and exotic look of a Palmetto-Hardwood Forest sink into people's minds. Folks understood immediately how easy it would be to get lost with Palmettos and Switchcane grabbing at your legs as you waded through the brush. This floodplain of East Sandy Creek is a beautiful place but I suggested that Winter and early Spring were better times to hike because the foliage would be less dense and easier to see and move through.

Finally, our tails flagging, we made it to the Waverly House at about 1:45 p.m. We were all tired, hungry, and ready for some conversation. We ordered our food, some from the buffet table and some from the menu, and had a great meal with fabulous companionship.

I love the woods, I love Sam Houston National Forest, and I love the camaraderie that you get on Sierra Club outings. The cooler Fall and Winter and coming up. I can't wait to find out what we will see and who we will meet. Come join us!

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## MARYSEE PRAIRIE Continued from Page 8

her usual spread of food and lunch was served! It was good to see everyone and to sit down and eat. Susan, who I had not seen in over 10 years, was sitting and she rose and we walked toward each other and hugged. It was good to be among those who loved Marysee Prairie as much as I do.

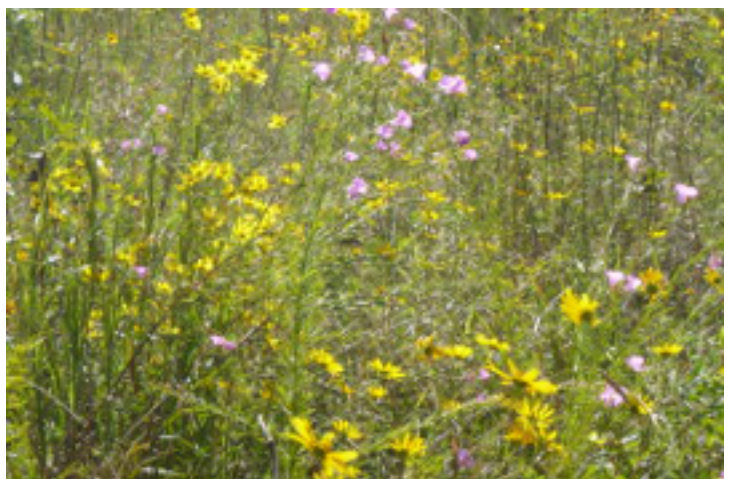
After eating a sandwich, potato salad, and drinking not one, but two lemonades, I went back out with Heman and we attacked another pimple mound. By the time we walked back to sit down and rest it was almost 2 p.m. Several people had left but we still had a nice group.

Tom had been bugging me about walking Marysee and naming the grasses and wildflowers so we all decided to go: Tom, Arlene, Frank, Heinz, Heman, and myself. We walked slowly, counterclockwise, around Marysee and enjoyed the sun, cool air, company, and scenery. Every once in awhile Frank would cut a woody plant and then we would continue. It took us about 30 minutes but it was well worth the walk. Asters, Obedient Plant, Gerardia, Blue Mistflower, Sugar Cane Plume Grass, Little Bluestem, Canadian Goldenrod, Woolly Croton, Missouri Ironweed, Big Bluestem, Longspike Tridens, White Gaura, and many more. What a banquet to delight the eyes and a what a bouquet of natural beauty.

Heman and I talked as we drove back to Houston. What a day! What weather! What a Prairie!



Brandt Mannchen stalking woody plants on the Marysee Prairie by Heman Wai



Wildflowers on the Marysee Prairie by Heman Wai

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## 2016 SIERRA CLUB CALENDARS

### Wilderness Wall Calendar

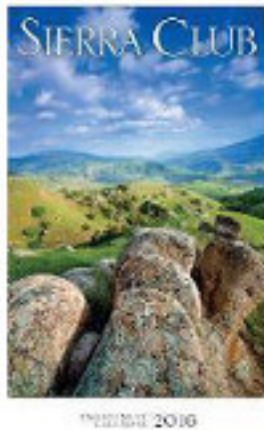
Best seller. All the grandeur of the North American wilderness.



### 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](mailto:raineygib@aol.com).



## SCREENING OF "THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING" WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9 7:30PM - 9:30 PM AT EDWARDS HOUSTON MARQ'E STADIUM 23 & IMAX

Please join us for an exclusive, one-night screening of "This Changes Everything," a documentary on the climate crisis, inspired by Naomi Klein's international best-selling book of the same name. What if confronting the climate crisis is the best chance we'll ever get to build a better world? Filmed over 211 shoot days in nine countries and five continents over four years, "This Changes Everything" is an epic attempt to re-imagine the vast challenge of climate change.

After the screening, there will be a Question and Answer session with local groups on responding to the call to action.

Purchase your tickets here:

<https://www.tugg.com/events/76606>

The event is here:

<https://goo.gl/maps/njUFNj3Q9KL2>

## HOUSTON GIVE 5 PROGRAM

Houston Sierra Club has applied to join several other local environmental organizations and participate in the 2016 Houston Give 5 program. In this program area businesses sign up and pledge to donate 5% of their revenue on a specified date to one of the area beneficiary organizations. This date is typically a date in April close to Earth Day. Participating businesses are promoted at the Houston Give 5 website, individual group websites and through various promotional materials. Information about the program is available at the Houston Give 5 website, including the participating environmental groups, and lists of past business participants.

If you have a business or service and want to consider participating to benefit the Houston Sierra Club, please contact Frank Blake at [frankblake@juno.com](mailto:frankblake@juno.com) or 713-528-2896, or Lorraine Gibson at 281-384-4104.

## EXCOM ELECTIONS IN DECEMBER

Although paper copies of the Bayou Banner are 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.

You can send in your ballot from the paper Bayou Banner, or clip the ballot in this issue and send it in with your membership number.



Burning Sugar Cane Field in El Salvador, from the film "This Changes Everything"

# 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](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

## 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.

## 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](http://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 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](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

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:frankblake@juno.com).

## 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.

### JOIN THE SIERRA CLUB

Just go to our web site  
<http://www.sierraclub.org/texas/houston>  
and click on  
Join/Renew/Give

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

## 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>
Stephanie Thomas	<a href="mailto:Stephanie.germaine@gmail.com">Stephanie.germaine@gmail.com</a>
Mary Wood	<a href="mailto:mary@texansforcleanwater.com">mary@texansforcleanwater.com</a>

## REGIONAL GROUP LEADERSHIP

Banner Editor	Carol Woronow	<a href="mailto:HSCBanner@gmail.com">HSCBanner@gmail.com</a>
Beach Cleanup	Frank Blake	<a href="mailto:frankblake@juno.com">frankblake@juno.com</a>
Conservation	Evelyn Merz	<a href="mailto:elmerz@hal-pc.org">elmerz@hal-pc.org</a> 713-644-8228
Conservation Subcommittees		
Air Quality	Melanie Oldham	<a href="mailto:oldham_melanie@yahoo.com">oldham_melanie@yahoo.com</a>
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	John Berlinghoff	<a href="mailto:johnb@hal-pc.org">johnb@hal-pc.org</a>
Outings	Frank Blake	<a href="mailto:frankblake@juno.com">frankblake@juno.com</a>
Political Programs	(open) Joe Lengfellner	<a href="mailto:thatsjoesmail@yahoo.com">thatsjoesmail@yahoo.com</a>
Webmaster	houston.webmaster@lonestar.sierraclub.org	

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.



### 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.