

Outdoor
Nature Club

Nature Notes

May '06
volume 57 • number 8

our charter ...

Outdoor Nature Club
was established in
1923 as a nonprofit
organization with the
purpose of protecting
and conserving our
natural resources by
fostering an interest
in nature study

ONC Outdoor Nature Club
P.O. Box 270894
Houston TX 77277-0894

our websites ...

OutdoorNatureClub.org
OrnithologyGroup.org



Excerpted from an essay by
ONC's first president, R. A. Selle

The Land of Bluebonnets

[Editor's note: Spring is in the air and wildflowers are blooming, so I thought you might enjoy an essay about bluebonnets written by ONC's first president, R.A. Selle. Dr. Selle was a science teacher and prolific writer; many of his writings were published by ONC in the 1930s. The essay reprinted here was published in April 1935. Enjoy!]

BLUEBONNET TIME! There is an elixir in the theme, an uplift in the mere mention of bluebonnets in bloom. Preparations for the trip have engendered a buoyancy of spirits.

We join the motorcade at Heights and Washington. Off to the bluebonnet fields, we pass the street cars, the slow-moving trucks, and even the glib little rent cars. Gay Houston, lively Houston, noisy Houston—the city is hardly awake when we take the underpass and come out where the prairie unfolds fields of pink primroses, verbenas and yellow daisies. A yellow-vested meadowlark offers a good-morning song, and a scissor-tailed flycatcher swings from the telegraph wire, to make a loop in catching a breakfast.

A wonderful highway, a perfect ribbon of concrete; miles of stretch along pastures where cattle are grazing; dairy cows, a herd of Jerseys; stock cattle, white-faces, big and little, but all have white faces; and then a herd of humpbacks, large, awkward-built, mouse-gray India cattle....

At Waller, a few bluebonnets; but we are not interested; we are thinking of the big fields, all blue with bluebonnets. On the Navasota road, we cross a little bridge, emerge from a woods, and a blue lake hangs

on the hillside—not only hangs, but overflows a valley, jumps a branch, crosses the road, and wells up to the edge of the timber. Blue and bluer, an unlimited jewel of blue—sparkling, twinkling, scintillating in overtones of the bluest blue; jade blue, cobalt blue, lakes, rivers, waves and billows of blue jewels....

We leave the sweeping lakes of bluebonnets, cross the ridge and turn into the Brenham road. Soon we are in another domain of bluebonnets. They spread beyond the wire fence; they jump the ditch; they climb the hillside; their jeweled opal blue rolls across the prairie. Into the skyline, this curtain of cobalt merges into a border line of dissolving silver and jade, opalescent and radiating. Ever-changing, blue is the dominant tone, but it blends and dissolves.

The emblem of England is the rose; of France, the lily; Scotland honors the thistle; and green Ireland wears the shamrock; Uncle Sam wears the corn tassel, and Dixie sings of cotton; Colorado has her columbine, and California her golden poppies—but Texas wades in bluebonnets. The song of bluebon-

Continued on page 3

Group Activities

Conchology

Thursday, May 25, 7:00 pm
 Bayou Manor, 1st Floor
 4141 S. Braeswood

Join our monthly meetings to share you photos and experiences with fellow group members.

Botany • Entomology

Tuesday, May 9
 Bayland Community Center, 7:30 pm
Identification of Local Trees by Their Leaves, presented by Leland Day. Learn how to key out and identify local trees simply by looking at leaves.

Ornithology (OG)

Monday, May 1
 Bayland Community Center
 Learning Corner: 6:30 pm
 Those Confusing Brown & Black Birds
 Program: 7:00 pm
Participating in the Texas Bird Classic

OG FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, May 13
 Big Thicket National Preserve
 Leader: Tom Kihn

ONC Regular Meeting

Thursday, May 11
 Bayland Community Center
Tracking Trees: Dendrochronology and Dendroecology to be presented by geologist Lincoln Foreman.

Did you know scientists can track weather patterns, changing climate conditions, bug infestations and more just by reading tree rings? Learn more at our May meeting with amateur dendrochronologist (tree ring reader) Lincoln Foreman. Lincoln is an ONC member and has recently begun studying tree rings at Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary.

Upcoming in June

June 3
 Highway Pickup at LTNS, 8:30 am

June 8
 ONC Planning Meeting
 Bayland Community Center, 7:00 pm
 Bring ideas for programs and field trips for next season.

June 17
 ONC Field Trip to LTNS for wildflower viewing; looking for bluebells and other summer bloomers.

LTNS Visitors Weekend

Saturday/Sunday, May 13-14

May at the sanctuary is a good time to learn your wildflowers and bird calls. Nesting birds abound and sing from dawn to dusk. We might also see some late spring migrants. Primitive camping is available at the sanctuary. For questions or additional information, contact Aaron Stoley at 713-781-1372.

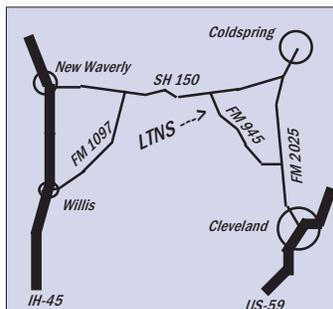
Saturday, June 3
 at
 Little Thicket
 Nature Sanctuary

8:30 a.m.
 Trash Pickup along
 our adopted highway

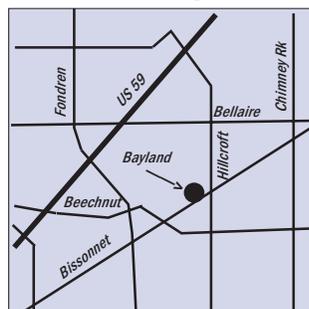
May 2006

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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Map to LTNS



Map to Bayland



Contact Persons

Conchology
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Botany/Entomology
 Russell Jeffords, 713-504-9215

Ornithology
 Michael Williams, 713-228-9064

Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary
 Aaron Stoley, 713-781-1372

Notes of Interest

Bluebonnets ...

Continued from page 1

nets is a gypsy song. In the blue dream-land of Texas, there are no discordant notes. The intriguing mystery of bluebonnets offers a symbolism, a companionship, a friendship, peace, joy, complete happiness. Nodding girlish heads, innocent children marching, they spread their dainty revels over the landscape, and we catch some of the spirit of youth and buoyancy.

There is a seep, a bigness about bluebonnets that makes us alive to the larger beauties of nature; we catch the glory of dawns and sunsets, the splendor of moonlight nights, the vastness of velvety green plains and the superb richness of fields of ripening grain.....

The surprising blue, the overwhelming blue of bluebonnets, offers something of a shock that rivets the attention and brings all of the forces to bear on the one big subject. But there is a glory of greenness; few people have not felt it in the spring of the year, when it seemed that all of the colors were sunk in a glory of green, when the landscape, all nature seemed greenly resplendent.

Election of Officers held at March meeting

The Nominating Committee, comprising Chair Margret Simmons, Michael Williams, and Bill Saulmon, worked long and hard trying to fill officerships for next year. The following accepted nominations and were elected for a two-year term:

Executive VP, Charlie Smith
Secretary, Wanda Smith
Treasurer, Farrar Stockton
Custodian, Russell Jeffords

We have not been able to fill the positions of **President**, **Sanctuaries VP**, and **Conservation VP**. If you can help us out and would like more information about one of these positions, please contact Calvin Blakley at 281-358-5407.

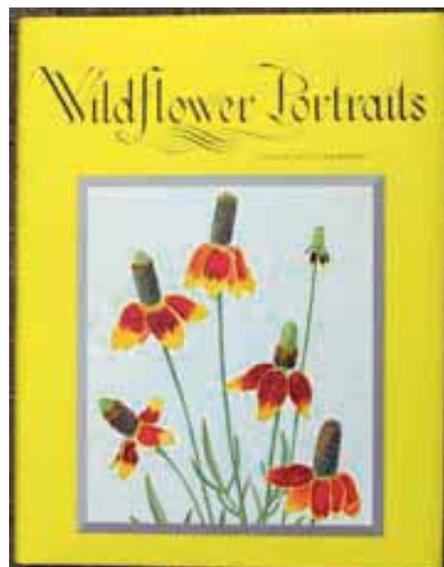
New Auction Item: "Wildflower Portraits" by Eloise Reid Thompson

Katrina Ladwig has again graciously donated to the auction page, this time a book of wildflower portraits painted by her mother, Eloise Reid Thompson. Originally printed in 1964, the book is now out of print. Edna Miner, who was an active member of Outdoor Nature Club during her lifetime, wrote the botanical descriptions.

This copy is brand new in the box, though we removed it to make photographs for this auction. It is hard bound, 8-3/4" by 11-3/4", 200 pages plus index and forward. There are 100 wildflowers with facing captions by Edna Miner. The 1964 price printed on the dust jacket was \$15.00.

The original watercolor paintings are in the collection of the Houston Museum of Natural Science which is planning a showing in the fall of 2006.

You can view the prints at our website, OutdoorNatureClub.org, where the latest bid will be posted. There are several ways to place a bid:



Front cover of book donated for auction is a bright sunny yellow. See color photos at OutdoorNatureClub.org.

- use the link on our website;
- send an e-mail to Auction_bid@outdoornatureclub.org giving your name and bid;
- send snail mail bids to ONC Auction, PO Box 270894, Houston, TX 77277-0894; such bids must be received by May 11, 2006.
- place a bid at the May 11 ONC meeting where the book will be on display.

We will update the latest bid soon after receipt. The highest bid received by noon, Saturday, May 13, 2006, will be notified and arrangements made for payment and pickup.

Donations ... Honor Gifts ... Memorials

Donations are always appreciated and gratefully acknowledged. Memorials and Honor Gifts are contributed to the Permanent Endowment Sanctuary Fund for Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary. Other gifts go to special projects designated by donors. Thanks, everyone, for your generosity.

*Donations to
Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary
AnnWier/Arthur Jones
Norman Young*

*Donations to General Fund
Kate Hillhouse
Suzanne/Douglas MacLean
Daryl/Mary Styblo
Norman Young*

thank you

Leave a Legacy

Please consider including ONC in your will or estate plan. By so doing, you can help ensure that our sanctuary will be protected for future generations.

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Read *Nature Notes* in **COLOR** at
www.OutdoorNatureClub.org

HELP WANTED!!

Publicity Chair for ONC

- write a short paragraph bi-monthly about ONC's meeting
- mail or email it to local newspapers



THAT'S IT!!

Can you help?

Call Calvin, 281-358-5407