

Outdoor
Nature Club

May/June 2011
volume 62 ♦ number 5

Nature Notes



Members of the Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society (far left) enjoyed a field trip to LTNS in mid-April. Co-leaders were Walt Hesson (left), describing the characteristics of cinnamon fern, and Dr. Larry Brown.

Fabulous Ferns

story and photos by Connie Blakley

On April 17 the Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society held a field trip at Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary. The event was attended by 15 members, who were joined by several ONC members. The outing was led by ONC member and fern expert, Walt Hesson, and Dr. Larry Brown, coauthor of the book "Flora of the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary."

In the morning the group hiked to the Chasm and Enchanted Isle, where a permanent stream traverses the sanctuary. Both locations held good populations of fern species, including Christmas fern, cinnamon fern, royal fern, cutleaf-grape fern, southern shield fern, and lady fern. Along the trail, Dr. Brown pointed out numerous other plants, although very few were blooming due to the drought.

The group returned to the Cove to compare notes over lunch and to take a look at resurrection fern that had been "resurrected" with a dousing of water!

After lunch everyone traveled to King's Hill, where ebony spleenwort is common, and then on to Little Jordan. Even though the creek at Little Jordan is practically dry, the ferns were still evident. Bracken fern, Virginia chain fern, and Christmas fern are resident in the area.

All in all, it was a productive day with perfect weather and the group were able to find nine of the 14 species known to exist at LTNS. To see photos of the ferns or to learn more about the Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society, visit their website at www.tgcfersoc.org.

Group Activities – See websites for additional details

(www.outdoornatureclub.org or www.ornithologygroup.org)

ONC Contacts

ONC General Information

Calvin Blakley, 281-358-5407

Botany/Entomology Group

Russell Jeffords, 713-504-9215

Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary

Aaron Stoley, 713-781-1372

Ornithology Group (OG)

Pam Smolen, 832-212-1368

OG Field Trips

Adam Wood, 713-515-1692

Meeting Place, Bayland Community Center

Unless otherwise noted, all meetings are held at Bayland Community Center, 5400 Bissonnet at Hillcroft (see map)



Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary Events

All LTNS events are held at the sanctuary, 2001 FM 945, Cleveland, TX (see map)



May 2011

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	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				

June 2011

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

- 2 **Ornithology (OG) Meeting**
6:30 pm—Learning Corner
7:00 pm—Program
Birds of the Bering Sea, by Stephan Lorenz
- 10 **Botany-Entomology**
7:30 pm—Program
Ditches of Chambers County, *Plants and Insects*, by Don Verser.
- 12 **ONC Meeting**
7:00 pm—Social
7:30 pm—Program
Geology of the Big Horn Basin, Wyoming, by Gary Gray.
- 14 **LTNS Open House**
Join us to explore the Little Thicket in search of spring wildflowers and nesting birds. Saturday evening the moth sheet will be out. Camping Saturday night for those who wish to stay over.
- 21 **Ornithology (OG) Field Trip**
Birding on the Katy Prairie with leader Adam Wood. **Participants must print/sign/bring a release form** to visit Katy Prairie Conservancy's properties. Details and release form available at OG's website (www.ornithology.org).
- 9 **ONC Planning Meeting for 2011-2012 Programs/Field Trips**
7:00 pm — Bayland Community Center
Please join us to plan ONC's activities for next year. Bring your ideas for speakers and field trips, and hopefully your willingness to help organize at least one activity. If you can't attend the meeting, please send your suggestions via e-mail to onc_pres@outdoornatureclub.org.
- 18 **LTNS Adopt-A-Road Trash Pickup**
We will begin the trash pickup at 8:00 am and try to finish before it gets too hot. Bring the usual: hat, gloves, insect spray, water, etc. The state provides trash bags.
- 18 **ONC Field Trip to LTNS in search of Texas bluebells (*Eustoma grandiflorum*)**
Meet 9:00 am at the building in the Cove. We will hike/ride tractor to Cullinan Meadow to see the bluebells and other summer bloomers then return to the Cove in time for lunch. Bring hat, sunscreen, insect spray, water, lunch. It will be HOT!

Other Notes of Interest

(Submit news and articles to editor – see back page for contact info)

ONC Appreciates Your Donations

Donations to ONC are always appreciated and gratefully acknowledged. Thanks, everyone, for your generosity.

Donations for LTNS Sanctuary Fund

Michael/Margarita Beathard

Betty Cawfield

Cleveland/Danielle Huddle

Norman Young

Donations for General Fund

Arlene Bennett

Ted/Jean Richardson

In memory of Jane Dodge

Calvin/Connie Blakley

In memory of Sharon Saulmon

Paul/Bette Lester

In memory of Monroe Waxman

Edith Waxman

In memoriam



ONC lost a good friend and long time life member when Jane Dodge passed away on April 7. Jane was an avid birdwatcher, instilling a love for nature and conservation in her children from an early age. She was active in both the Ornithology Group and the Botany/Entomology Group of ONC. She always looked

forward to rare bird alerts followed by field trips to get a new "lifer" accompanied by fellow birders. Visiting the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary was a favorite outing.

Jane also enjoyed attending the Botany Group's annual Twelfth Night Party, and she was the original hostess of this popular event beginning in the 1980s. Her friendship will be missed by all of us who were honored to know her.

Notes from Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary

March Adopt-A-Road

We had a good turnout for our quarterly trash pickup in March. The following volunteers worked hard to keep our section of FM 945 free of debris: Calvin/Connie Blakley, Leland Day, Sergio/Wanda Henao, Kellene Jarratt, Charles/Wanda Smith, Aaron/Karen Stoley. Thank you!

March Visitors Day

As with everywhere else in Texas, LTNS suffers from lack of rain — only 0.2 inches in March and none so far in April. Calvin Blakley maintains a weather station at LTNS and you can view the data at our website. Go to www.outdoornatureclub.org and click on "LTNS weather archive."

Despite the lack of rain, dogwoods, Silver-bell trees, bluebonnets, and other spring flowers were blooming on March visitors day. After trash pickup, we ventured to King's Hill and found plenty of bluebonnets in bloom, many of them being pollinated by bees. In the afternoon, a group hiked to Enchanted Isle and spent the afternoon studying tree identification.

Saturday night we erected the moth sheet and black lights, attracting numerous species of moths and very few June bugs (yeah!). We are still working on IDs, but probably added about five new species, bringing our total at LTNS to over 170 species. A fun time was had by all.



During March Visitors Day at LTNS, Charles Peterson helps with plant identification on King's Hill.



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 Ornithology Representative Pam Smolen

our charter...

A nonprofit educational and scientific organization established in 1923 to protect and conserve natural resources by fostering an interest in nature study.

our sanctuary...

ONC owns a 700-acre nature preserve, Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary (LTNS), 11 miles northwest of Cleveland, TX. All members and guests are invited to attend monthly open houses.

Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary Sightings

Each time we visit the sanctuary we encounter something new, whether it be an insect, a plant, a snake, a bird, or even new people visiting LTNS for the first time. This page of *Nature Notes* will be devoted to highlighting our encounters. Next time you're at the sanctuary, if you find an interesting species and would like to share, please send your photo with a brief description to the editor.

We hope you will learn something here and also be encouraged to visit the Little Thicket! (NOTE: last month's mystery tree was White Ash (*Fraxinus americana*).



📍 Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*)

This perfect example of sporangia (spore cases) was found by Dr. Larry Brown in the Chasm at LTNS during a field trip of the Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society. [Photo by Connie Blakley.]



©Calvin Blakley

📍 Caterpillar on Pawpaw Tree

This unusual caterpillar was found by Charles Peterson on a pawpaw tree at LTNS. It's the larva of the Tulip Tree Beauty moth (*Epimecis hortaria*). The hump is indicative of this particular species. [Photo by Calvin Blakley.]