

Outdoor
Nature Club

Nature Notes

September '06
volume 58 • number 1

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



History of the West 11th Street Park

Originally owned by the Hogg Foundation, the West 11th Street Park property was conveyed to the University of Texas over fifty years ago, and subsequently sold to the Houston Independent School District. The land has been a de facto park since the surrounding neighborhood was developed in the 1950s. Some residents who played here as children thirty years ago are now raising families in the same area.

In early 2001, a Park Advisory Council (PAC) was formed to plan and implement activities related to the park, and to serve as liaison between the surrounding community and PARD. In January 2005, the PAC reorganized as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation called Friends of the West 11th Street Park. The Friends have devoted their efforts to activities that will increase knowledge about and enjoyment of West 11th Street Park. In the 6½ years we have been in existence as a formal group, we have accomplished the following:

- With the cooperation of the mowers from the Parks and Recreation Department, the understory of this lovely forest is slowly growing back, and a surprising variety of saplings, small shrubs, wildflowers, and native grasses have returned to the site.

A Forest In The City

This story is a prelude to our September 14 program and was contributed by Lorraine Cherry, president of "Friends of the West 11th Street Park" and our September speaker.

- Small existing footpaths that were made over the years by continued usage were enhanced and widened, enabling dog owners, walkers, and runners to more easily enjoy the forest. It is not uncommon to see 10 or more people at once using an area that was previously much less accessible. Again, the city mowers have been instrumental in keeping the edges of the trails cleared.
- A large stand of wildflowers planted on the south side of has been re-seeded every year. A small educational butterfly garden has recently been replanted and enhanced.
- A quarterly e-letter about the ecology of the West 11th Street Park is being sent to ~ 150 subscribers.
- Subsequent to an article written for the Audubon Society Newsletter, birding enthusiasts from throughout the area have been coming to the park to see some of the 6 species of woodpecker that have been identified here. The park has also been visited by the Ornithology Group of the Outdoor Nature Club of Houston, who participated in a spring migration bird count

Continued on page 3

Group Activities

Botany • Entomology

Tuesday, September 12

Bayland Community Center, 7:30 pm

The Important Grass Family, presented by Flo Hannah, steward of Houston Audubon Society Sanctuaries.

Ornithology (OG)

Monday, September 11

Bayland Community Center

Learning Corner: 6:30 pm

Program: 7:00 pm

The Nature Conservancy: Fort Hood, Texas, and Beyond, presented by Rich Kostecke

OG FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, September 16

Smith Point Hawk Watch

Leader: Adam Wood

Saturday, September 23

Beginning Birder at Brazos Bend State Park; Leader: Adam Wood

ONC FIELD TRIP

Wednesday, September 27

Kleb Woods Nature Center in Northwest Harris County
See page 4 for details.

ONC Regular Meeting

Thursday, September 14

Bayland Community Center

West 11th Street Park to be presented by Lorraine Cherry.

Did you know there is a beautiful, forested park right in the middle of Houston (no, not Memorial Park)? Join us at the September meeting to learn about the park and its history from Dr. Lorraine Cherry, president of Friends of the West 11th Street Park. See accompanying story, page 1.

Upcoming in October

October 12

ONC Board Meeting, 7:30 pm, at Bayland Community Center

October 14

OG Beginning Birder Field Trip
Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary

October 21

OG Field Trip, Birding at Quintana/
Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge

October 28-29

Halloween Celebration at Little Thicket
Nature Sanctuary

LTNS Visitors Weekend

Saturday/Sunday, September 23-24

We hope it will be cooler by the end of September when we return to LTNS for our first visitors weekend of the new season. Maybe we'll see some migrating hawks, and we always find mushrooms in the fall. Trash pickup is on Saturday morning, then we can play! For questions or additional information, contact Aaron Stoley at 713-781-1372.

Saturday, September 23

Little Thicket

Nature Sanctuary

8:30 a.m.

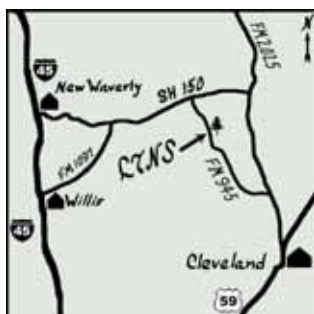
Trash Pickup along
our adopted highway



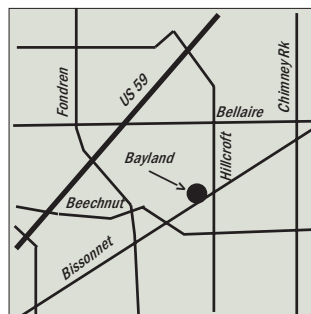
September 2006

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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

Map to LTNS



Map to Bayland



Contact Persons

Botany/Entomology
Russell Jeffords, 713-504-9215

Ornithology
Michael Williams, 713-228-9064
Adam Wood, 713-515-1692

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

Notes of Interest

Park ... Continued from page 1

in the park in April and May of this year.

- The North American Butterfly Association sponsors regular visits to the park, and the 4th of July butterfly count now includes the park on their inner loop itinerary.
- As a result of the increased usage and awareness of this asset, the neighborhood and the community association are even more committed to preserving this park.

Lorraine M. Cherry, PhD, is president of Friends of the West 11th Street Park. She came to Texas originally as a postdoctoral research fellow at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. She was on the faculty there and at the UT Medical School for 15 years, at which time she started a consulting business in biomedical communications. She has devoted her time and money for over 8 years to preserving this 21-acre inner city forest located in her neighborhood, Timbergrove Manor.

The accompanying picture was taken during one of our nature walks. The gentleman on the left in the hat and white t-shirt is Dr. Mark Kulstad, a member of the Board of Directors of Friends of the West 11th Street Park. Mark has been birding in the southeast Texas area for over 30 years.

Rex Brasher Prints Go On Exhibit at HMNS

Many of you might remember ONC's program presented last year by Connie Blakley and Wanda Smith about the bird paintings of Rex Brasher. A selection of Brasher's paintings will be displayed at HMNS beginning September 9. The following is a write-up from the museum's web site (www.hmns.org).

"Birds and Plants of North America stands as a tribute to the dedication of

artist and naturalist Rex Brasher (1869 - 1960). From an early age Rex knew he was going to paint all the birds of North America. He completed his field work by the age of 42 and settled down to paint. Within his collection of 848 paintings are 1,071 images of bird species or subspecies and 833 species of North American shrubs and trees. Unlike Audubon who sold his works individually, Brasher insisted that all paintings be kept together in one collection. In 1929 he set out to self publish his work. He reproduced, hand colored and assembled 100 copies of his 12 volume set. The Outdoor Nature Club of Houston purchased one of these sets for the Houston Museum of Natural Science in 1944. This exhibition includes a selection from this gift.

"This exhibition is organized by HMNS with Wanda Smith and Connie Blakley of the Outdoor Nature Club."

In memory of ...

Dorothy Parmesan, past president of ONC, passed away in June. Dorothy was our friend, mentor, educator, and a source of inspiration to her fellow naturalists.

By profession, Dorothy was a geologist, but she also studied botany and had a vast knowledge of all aspects of our natural world. She loved hiking, bird watching, wildflowers, shells and fossils. If you were ever on a field trip with her, or even in the same room, you would learn something from Dorothy.

One of her daughters said Dorothy thought of ONC as her extended family, and the sentiment was shared by her many ONC friends. Our club's activities will not be the same without her.

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**
Katrina Ladwig

Donations to General Fund
Barbara Rapstein

Memorials for Dorothy Parmesan

Calvin/Connie Blakley

Antoinette Bonno

Lucia Bonno

Thomas Bonno

Henry/Gloria Blair

Otto Johnson Family

Irene Leslie

Margery Oldfield

Thomas/Donna Parmesan

Rosanne Sicola

Charles/Wanda Smith

Aaron/Karen Stoley

Mr/Mrs Buzz Timmons

Supporting Member

Heather George



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

Conservation Corner ...

USFWS Approves Establishment of the Neches River National Wildlife Refuge

On June 12, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approved establishment of the Neches River National Wildlife Refuge in east Texas. With more than 75% of the hardwood forest in Texas already destroyed, the old-growth oaks and bald cypress trees along the scenic Neches River are ranked a "Priority 1" for conservation by the federal government.

Although the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) had identified this area for protection as far back as 1985, water developers with the city of Dallas had been pushing to cancel plans to create the refuge so the city could use the site for their proposed Fastrill Reservoir. This would have drowned Texas' last best hardwood forests, destroying habitat for wildlife like bobcats, river otters, and the endangered bald eagle. The approval of the refuge means the Service can begin purchasing land to establish the refuge, effectively blocking water developers from building the reservoir.

The proposed 25,000 acre refuge will protect vital habitat for wildlife, waterfowl, and migratory songbirds, will provide wonderful hunting and other outdoor recreational opportunities for the public, and will serve as an economic boon to surrounding communities. Once home to the ivory-billed woodpecker, the Upper Neches is prime wildlife habitat. The refuge site is in the debris field of the wreckage of the space shuttle Columbia and has been proposed as a memorial to this national tragedy.

ONC Field Trip to Kleb Woods

One of Harris County's newest nature preserves is Kleb Woods Nature Preserve, dedicated in 1994. It consists of 132 acres and is located in northwest Harris County. Fred Collins, Director of the Kleb Woods Nature Center, has invited members of the Outdoor Nature Club to their Grand Opening on Wednesday, September 27, 2006 at 10:00 AM. Refreshments will be served following the opening ceremonies. Visitors may then tour the Nature Center building, the 1896 Kleb Farmhouse, the 1901 barn, see the demonstration farm, and walk the nature trails. For more information, visit the website page:

www.pct3.hctx.net/PKleb/#Facilities.

Directions: Take Highway 290 west and exit Mueschke Rd. Turn right (north) on Mueschke Rd. and go about 7 miles to Draper Road. The entrance to the nature center will be on your left with a large sign "Future Home of Kleb Woods Nature Center". Key Map 286-P.

We will try to arrange carpooling if enough members are interested. For information on carpooling, call Gwen Kunz 713-796-0639.

Yearbooks Mailed

The new 2006-2007 ONC Yearbook and membership directory was mailed in early August, so you should have your copy by now. If you did not get it, copies will be available at all ONC and group meetings.

Electronic Version Available

We are now publishing the yearbook in electronic form for members only. If you would like to receive the book in pdf format, send an email to Connie Blakley (connie@cblakley.com).