



Outdoor  
Nature Club

# Nature Notes

November '05  
volume 57 • number 3

## 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

## Outdoor Nature Club needs your participation

By Calvin R. Blakley, Ph.D.

Acting President

**W**hen the Outdoor Nature Club (ONC) was founded in 1923 there were no special study groups and for thirty years the only meeting to attend was the general meeting. During the fifties, however, enough people wanted to have more programs and activities in particular fields that the club amended the constitution to permit the creation of special study groups. Each group was given a seat on the board and was permitted to elect its own officers and to collect dues. Some of the founders, in particular Joe Heiser, thought this set a dangerous precedent, possibly leading to splintering and a lack of cohesiveness within the club. Sadly to say, I think he was correct.

Generally our program planners try to pick interesting programs of general interest that do not fall within the purview of the study groups. Except for a core group of long time members who also attend the group meetings, however, few others attend ONC's general meeting. During my tenure, the board has tried several things to enhance participation. We moved the meeting to Sunday afternoon because many didn't like driving at night in traffic. It did not help. We moved the meeting location to Bayland Community Center with the thought that familiarity of location would help. It has not. We even planned programs of particular group interest, which was a major disappointment when they did not attract more attendees. We have unfortunately also retrenched. Since it is embarrassing to bring in an outside speaker for an audience of only a dozen, we are limiting the presenters to members and are meeting every other month. Not good. This withering of attendance has occurred while the special study groups (Conchology, Botany/Entomology, and Ornithology [OG]) have generally thrived. Only fifteen percent of our intown members are not also members of a special study group, which begs the question, were we first attracted to a special study group or to ONC?

An organization's leadership is supposed to be upbeat and I do not like writing negative articles, but ONC is approaching a crisis due to lack of participation. Last year I decided it was way past time for new leadership and chose not to seek another term, which brings us to our current situation. No one agreed to take over my job and it is nomination time again. Will you help? Will you help to lead the club back to growth? Will you help unify the club?

**Will you participate?**

# Group Activities

## Conchology

Thursday, November 17, 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, November 8, 7:30 pm  
 Bayland Community Center

*Texas Mushrooms*, by Teri MacArthur, president of the Master Naturalist Society Heartwood Chapter and a member of Texas Micological Society. A great opportunity to learn mushrooms prior to our November 12 field trip.

## Ornithology

Monday, November 7  
 Bayland Community Center  
 Learning Corner: 6:30 pm

Cackling vs. Canada Geese

Program: 7:00 pm

*Digiscoping* by Clay Taylor of Swarovski.

## OG FIELD TRIPS

Sunday, November 6  
 Digiscoping at Bolivar with Clay Taylor of Swarovski

Saturday, November 19  
 Katy Prairie with Clay Taylor

## ONC Regular Meeting

Thursday, November 10  
 Bayland Community Center  
 7:00 pm Refreshments  
 7:30 pm Program

Fire Ants, presented by Pat Ireland  
 ONC member Pat Ireland has been a teacher and researcher for most of her life. In 1997 she earned her Ph.D. after completing her research on the ecology of fire ants. Pat recently retired and now enjoys volunteering to teach science enrichment at her grandchildren's school and studying insects at the Houston arboretum.

Pat's program addresses the life history of fire ants, their introduction and spread in the US, and problems presented by introduced species, fire ants in particular.

## ONC Field Trip

November 12  
 Mushrooming at Brazos Bend SP  
 David and Pat Lewis will be our leaders. This is a joint trip with Gulf Coast Mycological Society so there will be plenty of experts on hand to help us find and identify the mushrooms at Brazos Bend State Park.

For more details, as they become available, check our web site or contact Virginia Anderson, 281-930-1518 or [ginia@ev1.net](mailto:ginia@ev1.net).

## Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary

November 18-20 VISITORS WEEKEND  
 November 19 TRAIL MAINTENANCE

Fall is a favorite time for many members to visit LTNS. The cool crisp weather and changing tree colors beckon to all outdoor enthusiasts.

Saturday is trail maintenance day and there's lots to do. Hurricane Rita blew down zillions a twigs and small branches and a few small trees so trails need lots of work. Remember to bring your gloves, a hat, clipper/loppers, and plenty of water.

Primitive camping is available at LTNS. There is also camping with hookups in Evergreen (3 miles north). For more information about accommodations, contact Aaron Stoley.

*Trail Maintenance*  
 Saturday, November 19

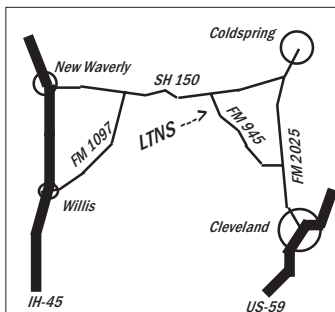
*Little Thicket*  
*Nature Sanctuary*

*9:00 a.m.*

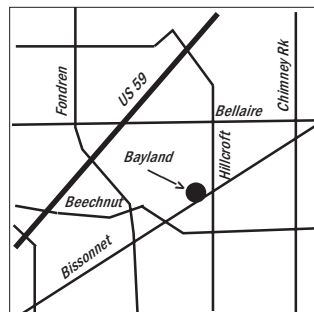
### November 2005

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			

### Map to LTNS



### Map to Bayland



### Contact Persons

**Conchology**  
 Elizabeth Ruthven, 713-861-7301

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

**Ornithology**  
 Michael Williams, 713-228-9064

**Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary**  
 Aaron Stoley, 713-781-1371



## Rita Report

Those of us who live in Houston will remember Hurricane Rita for a long time. In the aftermath, many of our members have called or written ONC's officers enquiring about Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary. Thankfully, it is a good report. For the most part we sustained minimal damage, but there are lots of twigs and branches down and a few small trees have fallen across some trails. That's why WE NEED HELP – to clean up all the debris. Please join us for Trail Maintenance on Saturday, November 12, beginning at 9 am. Be sure to bring gloves, and clippers or loppers.

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### Master naturalists visit LTNS

On Saturday, October 8, the Heartwood Chapter, Montgomery County, Master Naturalists Society conducted a field class in forest ecology at ONC's Little Thicket sanctuary. ONC's VP for Sanctuaries Aaron Stoley hosted the group. There were about 25 naturalists in attendance and they covered a goodly portion of the sanctuary. Beginning at the Cove, the group hiked to the Triangle, then via Panhandle Trail to Big Meadow and Cullinan Meadow. LTNS is an ideal location for this type of "hands on" learning because of the various forest communities represented there.

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## OCCUPIED!

Photos by Calvin Blakley



A squirrel treefrog (*Hyla squirella*) chose a unique, out of the way spot, to take shelter. This critter, found in the men's restroom at LTNS, was surprised when his hiding place was discovered. The squirrel treefrog is primarily nocturnal, seeking shelter

during the day in hollow tree limbs or under loose bark. This little guy must have mistaken the "tp" roll for a hollow limb and was perfectly content until someone yanked on the paper and woke him up! You never know what you'll find in the great outdoors.

### New Memorials Chair assumes duties

A big "thank you" to Sylvia McCrevey who has agreed to serve as our new Memorials Chair beginning in October. Please be sure to send your memorials to Sylvia McCrevey, 2 Carlotta Ct, Houston, Texas, 77074-7817.

We would like to once again express our gratitude to outgoing chair Sharon Donahue for her conscientious devotion to the job during her six year tenure. Next time you see Sharon, please take a moment to say "thanks" for a job well done.

### In memory

ONC life member Mary Gillette was, tragically, a victim of the bus fire that occurred near Dallas during Hurricane Rita evacuations. Mary had lived at Brighton Gardens for the past several years. She and her husband Jack were active in ONC for many years. They were both avid environmentalists and devoted much of their efforts to conservation issues in the Houston area.

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### 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 Sanctuary Fund**  
Heartwood Chapter  
(Montgomery County)  
Master Naturalists Society

thank you

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### 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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**Nature Notes**

published monthly September thru May

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