



BAYOU BANNER

Newsletter of the Houston Regional Group of the Sierra Club

Volume 33, Number 9

<http://houston.sierraclub.org>

November, 2009

HYPE DIKE

Hyped "protection" plan threatens coastal destruction

by Page Williams

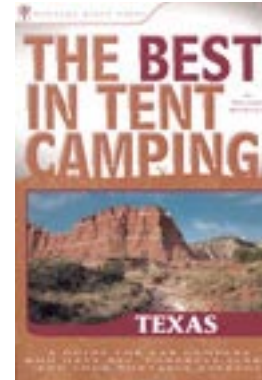
It's been on the evening TV news. It's been in newspapers (Houston Chronicle, Galveston Daily News, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post). It's now even in Wikipedia. Yet some folks still ask "Ike Dike? What's that?"

See **HYPE DIKE** on *Page 3*.

Support the annual Auction...
... More information is available on page 5.

NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING NOT-YET-FAMOUS AUTHOR TO SPEAK

After two years of on-site research and 35 years of wandering the back roads of Texas, Author and current Dallas Sierra Club Chair Wendel Withrow, will discuss his recently published book entitled: *The Best in Tent Camping - Texas*. With a sub-title of "A Guide for Car Campers Who Hate RVs, Concrete Slabs and Loud Portable Stereos." The author will discuss and cuss the necessary research and the rating system for the 50



the speaker, verbatim. 🗣️

best tent campgrounds in Texas. He will share photographs of some of his favorites and answer questions from the audience (sure to be large, of course).

After the program, the Not-Yet-Famous (not by a long shot) Author will sign books, sure to be collector's items or perfect gifts for that favorite friend who is impossible to buy for.

Editor's note: This description is from

The Annual Auction is coming...
...see Page 5.

POLITICAL ENDORSEMENT REMOVED

The printed version of this issue contains a political endorsement in this column, but election rules prohibit our showing it on our web site, so it has been removed from this, the web-site version of the Bayou Banner.

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

NONPROFIT ORG.
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HOUSTON, TX
PERMIT 8796

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. If you are going west on W. Alabama, turn right at Dunlavy, then left to Marshall, then left to Woodhead.

NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING
NOT-YET-FAMOUS AUTOOR TO SPEAK
Thursday, November 12, 2009

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. Find out how you can volunteer with us.

TRIPS AND LOCAL OUTINGS

Page 2

Bayou Banner — Volume 33, Number 9 — November, 2009

Car Camping

DOUBLE LAKE RECREATION AREA FAMILY CAMPOUT

NOVEMBER 6 - 8, 2009

A weekend of fall camping in the Sam Houston National Forest. Join us Friday night at Double Lake Recreation area near Cleveland. Saturday morning we will shuttle to the Big Creek Scenic Area where there are several loop trails for moderate hiking. Or hike through the Scenic Area back to Double Lake along the Lone Star Trail (about 5 miles). For the little kids we can play some games around the campground. This area is habitat for the red-cockaded woodpecker, an endangered species. Sunday morning is an opportunity to enjoy Double Lake's many other attractions: canoeing, fishing, hiking & biking. Cost is \$25 donation to the club. Space is limited. Please contact Tony King at 713-669-0837 home, 281-804-6896 cell or kingt8@comast.net. ☎

Hike

NOVEMBER BRINGS HIKE IN HUNTSVILLE STATE PARK

Saturday, November 7, 2009

We will hike the nine-mile loop around Lake Raven in Huntsville State Park. The weather will be cool and fall will be in the air so this will be a great hike.

Bring your day pack, water, lunch, hiking shoes, clothes to fit the weather, binoculars, cameras, and field guides. Hiking time should be about 6-7 hours. There is a fee to get into Huntsville State Park.

We will meet at 8:00 am in the parking lot behind the International House of Pancakes (IHOP) at I-45 North and Greens Road. Look for the green Nissan Mini-van. To reach the parking lot, enter the feeder off I-45 North, via the Greens Road exit, and then pass through the traffic signal at Greens Rd. Turn right into the first strip center you come to (look for Brown Sugar's Barbecue) and drive to the end of the strip center. The parking lot behind IHOP is on the right.

Contact Jane Prentiss at 713-201-5755 or lshtrailboss@yahoo.com for additional details. Please supply your name and contact info should we need to make changes. ☎

Forest Walk

NOVEMBER FOREST WALK VISITS COLUMBIA BOTTOMLANDS

November 14, 2009

We will celebrate fall by visiting and hiking in the Columbia Bottomlands of Brazoria County. The Columbia Bottomlands is a unique coastal forest of Live Oak, Pecan, Shumard Oak, Burr Oak, Water Oak, Hackberry, Green Ash, and many other tree species. The Columbia Bottomlands is a very different forest from the Piney Woods we are used to visiting in East Texas.

Bring your daypack, water, snacks, hiking shoes, cameras, bug repellent, sunscreen, field guides, and clothes to fit the weather. Long pants are highly recommended!

We will meet to carpool/caravan at 7:30 am in the parking lot just west of Starbucks (look for Becks Prime) in Meyerland

Plaza. Starbucks fronts the 4700 block of Beechnut (near the West Loop South). Look for a blue Plymouth Neon with lots of bumper stickers.

If you want to go call Brandt Mannchen at 713-664-5962 or email him at brandtshnft@juno.com and leave your name, address, phone number, and email. In case of trip cancellation Brandt will either email or call you. ☎

Trail Work

NOVEMBER TRAIL MAINTENANCE ON HUNTSVILLE SECTION OF LONE STAR HIKING TRAIL

Saturday, November 21, 2009

We will conduct trail maintenance on the Huntsville Section of the Lone Star Hiking Trail (LSHT), in Sam Houston National Forest. The weather should be cool so it should be great time to hit the trail and give back by trimming it so that all can enjoy fall's splendors.

Bring a lopper, machete, swing-blade, saw, or similar tool to trim branches and low growing vegetation. If you do not have a tool we have extra ones. Bring a daypack, two quarts of water, hat, lunch, and hiking shoes. Long pants are highly recommended!!!

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot behind the International House of Pancakes (IHOP) at I-45 North and Greens Road. Look for a green Nissan mini-van.

To get to the parking lot, enter the feeder off I-45 North via the Greens Road exit and then pass through the traffic signal at Greens Road. Turn right into the first strip center you come to (look for Brown Sugar's Barbecue) and drive to the end of the strip center. The parking lot behind IHOP is on the right.

Call Jane Prentiss at 713-201-5755 or email her at lshtrailboss@yahoo.com for more details. Please supply your name and contact information should we need to make changes. ☎



CANOE/KAYAK DOUBLE BAYOU

Saturday, November 21, 2009

Observe wildlife and hear tales of history along Double Bayou as you enjoy a day-long paddle on the east side of Trinity Bay. Visit waters that have stood silent witness to pirates' exploits, pioneer settlements, and the birth of a future Texas governor. We will see a rich variety of habitats, from forests to wetland marshes. There is also an active harbor and a conveniently located county park. Participants must provide their own canoe or kayak, life jackets (required), and paddles. The trip leader can help you with advice regarding gear rentals from Houston area outfitters, if needed. Paddling time: about 4 hours, plus breaks for sightseeing and lunch. Difficulty: moderate to strenuous. Recommended donation to the Houston Sierra Club: \$10. Trip size is limited. To register, contact Tom Douglas at baymail@sbcglobal.net or (713) 869-6026. A detailed trip information sheet will be sent by email to registered participants. ☎



CANOE/KAYAK CYPRESS WONDERLAND

Sunday, December 6, 2009

Experience the maze of lakes and shaded, winding bayous deep within the heart of the largest cypress forest on the Texas coast. This is one of the most scenic paddling destinations in this part of our state, and it is located only 30 miles east of Houston. Depending on the water and weather conditions, we will focus on one or more of the area's many features: wildlife, river processes, Texas history, and the impact of human interventions. Participants must provide their own canoe or kayak, life jackets (required), and paddles. The trip leader can help you with advice regarding gear rentals from Houston area outfitters, if needed. Paddling time: about 5 hours, plus breaks for sightseeing and lunch. Difficulty: moderate to strenuous. Recommended donation to the Houston Sierra Club: \$10. Trip size is limited. To register, contact Tom Douglas at baymail@sbcglobal.net or (713) 869-6026. A detailed trip information sheet will be sent by email to registered participants. ☎

Camping

ENCHANTED ROCK SNA CAMPING

January 22-24, 2009

Join us for our annual camping trip to Enchanted Rock in the Texas hill country. The Rock is a huge, pink granite exfoliation dome that rises 425 feet above ground. It is one of the largest batholiths (underground rock formation uncovered by erosion) in the United States. We plan to have both a backpacking and a base camping group. This outing is family friendly and well behaved dogs are ok with permission of the leader. For more information or to reserve a spot, contact Lorraine Gibson at 281-384-4104 or raineygib@aol.com. ☎

STATE PARK RESERVATIONS

Want to make a reservation for a Texas State Park? Call 512/389-8900 instead of using the Internet. You can reserve more than one campsite at a time. ☎

See the outings calendar at our website
<http://houston.sierraclub.org>
for possible additions to schedule.
Click **Calendar**, then
scroll down to **Quick Links**.

POLITICAL ENDORSEMENT REMOVED

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HYPE DIKE

Continued from *Page 1*.

It is important that every single Sierran know and understand that Ike Dike (aka “Hype Dike” to us) is a proposal by Texas A&M Galveston’s Dr. William Merrell, to extend the Galveston sea wall more than 50 miles, from High Island to south of San Luis Pass, with Rotterdam-style floodgates at Bolivar Roads, and other surge suppressors at San Luis Pass and the intracoastal canal crossings. Merrell claims that this would protect Galveston Bay from the kind of destruction that it experienced from Hurricane Ike, and worse destruction from a larger storm. Other experts dispute this, and claim that an Ike Dike would have exacerbated Hurricane Ike’s destruction.

There is certainly merit in some of his concerns, used as justification for Hype Dike. The petrochemical corridor along the ship channel is a vulnerable spot and should be protected by additional levees, and possibly even floodgates at its entrance near Barbour’s Cut. NASA merits similar special protection. The east end of Galveston (the only part of the island actually accreting sand) which is significant historically and economically, and already elevated, could reasonably be protected by expanding the existing sea wall to encircle it – and concentrate future development there. We do not need to destroy our state’s most productive and important estuary to accomplish reasonable goals.

To see the full extent of Dr. Merrell’s plan in power point, search (Google, YAHOO, etc.) “Ike Dike TAMUG” or go to <http://www.tamug.edu/CTBS/Ike%20Dike%20CTBS%20TAMUG%2019March09.pptx>. Familiarize yourself with his proposal (which changes, from time to time, corresponding to concerns raised). Then remember that:

- 1) The Rotterdam floodgates were not built on barrier islands, which naturally migrate.
- 2) The Texas coast is not lower than sea level and does not need the kind of protection that Holland and New Orleans need.
- 3) As a result of global warming and sea level rise, the Texas coast could soon be lower than sea level, making a 17-foot wall totally obsolete for storm protection.
- 4) It took four days for Ike’s surge to retreat from Galveston Bay and it would have been longer if the water had been blocked all along the coast by a 17-foot wall.
- 5) Texas is a big state, and Texans have lots of

options about where to live.

- 6) An Ike Dike would encourage more development on the fragile Galveston west end and Bolivar wetlands, and give a potentially lethal false sense of security to residents.
- 7) The construction alone of such a wall would involve massive environmental damage.
- 8) There is not enough science to prove that these barriers will not inhibit the migration of the 95% of Gulf of Mexico marine organisms that spend part of their lives in our bays.
- 9) The Dutch are now re-thinking their approach to storm protection, and have recently come to Louisiana to study a more balanced system, that includes wetlands restoration and protection.
- 10) In the projected 20 years it would take to complete this wall, construction costs would skyrocket, maintenance costs must be accounted for, and the chance to have completed more practical solutions will have been lost.
- 11) As the barrier islands recede, the beach will disappear in front of the wall, just as it has receded in front of the existing sea wall – and the paucity of sand on our part of the Texas coast will make beach re-nourishment a particularly wasteful practice.

Unfortunately, Governor Perry’s post-Ike disaster preparedness commission is supporting the concept of Ike Dike; so are the petrochemical and port businesses, and many political entities. FEMA insurance still encourages people to develop and build in vulnerable areas which should be our protective barrier islands. And the General Land Office is now planning to spend \$135 million to rebuild Texas beaches, when it has been repeatedly demonstrated that one storm can – and eventually will – undo the project.

What can a concerned citizen do? Read Dr. John B. Anderson’s “The Formation and Future of the Upper Texas Coast” so you can speak with authority. Phone Governor Perry’s office at 1-800-843-5789 and urge him to re-direct the focus of his disaster preparedness commission. Phone Commissioner Patterson’s office at 1-800-998-4956 and attempt to explain why his \$135 million for beach restoration should be re-directed to buyouts along our coastal barrier islands. And at every opportunity to communicate with your federal representatives, tell them that FEMA insurance reform is needed so that our tax dollars do not support rebuilding where people should not be building! ☹



American Black Bear
Ursus americanus

National Park Service photo



Black Bear range

From Wikipedia

NORTH AMERICAN WETLANDS CONSERVATION ACT AND DUCK STAMPS SAVE WETLANDS HABITAT

by Brandt Mannchen

In 1989 the U.S. Congress passed the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) to provide federal matching funds to public/private partnerships for wetland protection, restoration, and enhancement projects, including associated uplands habitats.

The money raised helps implement the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and other national and international conservation plans that are used to protect migratory birds and wetlands. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS – the folks who manage our National Wildlife Refuge System) administers the NAWCA grant program and the North American Wetlands Conservation Council establishes the policies that run the grant selection program.

Money to fund the NAWCA grants for wetlands projects comes from general appropriations, interest earned on some federal accounts, federal excise taxes, and Migratory Bird Treaty Act fines. The NAWCA program requires that applicants match the federal dollars they receive (one federal dollar is matched by at least one non-federal dollar). The matching funds often come from state agencies, private foundations, private landowners, and non-profit organizations.

To date over 23 million acres of wetlands and associated uplands in more than 1,800 projects have been funded by NAWCA. \$900 million federal funds and more than \$2.7 billion non-federal funds have been invested due to NAWCA. About 50% of the funds have been spent in the U.S. on projects, 45% in Canada, and 5% in Mexico.

But besides NAWCA how else can we protect wetlands? It is now the time of year to buy your “Duck Stamp.” But what is a “Duck Stamp?” A “Duck Stamp” is a pictorial stamp that is created by the FWS and U.S. Postal Service and is required for federal licenses that allow the hunting of migratory birds. 98% of the money generated by “Duck Stamps” goes to purchase or lease wetland habitat for protection of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

You don't have to be hunter to purchase a “Duck Stamp.” The money, no matter who buys the “Duck Stamp,” will be used to help our local wildlife refuges, like the San Bernard or Brazoria National Wildlife

Refuges, buy more important migratory bird and waterfowl wetland habitats. If not for “Duck Stamp” money there would be far less Columbia Bottomlands and other habitats saved in these refuges. So every fall I buy a “Duck Stamp” and do my part to save wetlands habitat in Texas and the United States.

So how do you buy a “Duck Stamp?” You can order a “Duck Stamp” or “Stamps” from the U.S. Postal Service by phone, 1-800-782-6724, or on the internet at the Postal Store (<https://shop.usps.com>). You can also order from Amplex Corporation (the distributor for the FWS) by phone, 1-800-552-4897, or on the internet at www.duckstamp.com. You can even get a “Duck Stamp” by mail by sending a letter and \$15 and requesting either a self adhesive or gummed 2009-2010 federal “Duck Stamp” from: Amplex Corp., 1100 Fountain Parkway, Grand Prairie, Texas 75050-1513.

So there you have it. You can have an individual impact protecting wetlands and it does not cost you a fortune. For many of us, \$15 is small change. For ducks and wetlands, it is big money and a matter of life and death. I know what decision I am going to make!

Information from the Ducks Unlimited Conservation Fact Sheet on NAWCA and the FWS webpage on duck stamps was used in this article. 🌐

SHOREACRES SERVICE TRIP A SUCCESS

by Brandt Mannchen

About ten members of the Sierra Club, Galveston Baykeeper, and Shoreacres residents worked two hours in Heron Park in Shoreacres cutting, clearing, and piling shrubs from coastal prairie and wetland habitats along Taylor Bayou. By the time the work was complete water could be seen from the prairie where before it was hidden by shrubs.

Unless burning or mowing is conducted to keep shrub growth down coastal prairie will disappear because all the beautiful native grasses and wildflowers will be shaded out. As we cleared the shrubs we saw strikingly bright pink Salt Marsh-mallows growing near the cleared areas. These and other native prairie and wetland plants will benefit from the shrub cutting in the future. In addition, Sierra Club members picked up trash along Miramar Drive.

After we finished our work we enjoyed a potluck meal at the home of Charlotte Wells, President of Galveston BayKeeper. Charlotte's house fronts Galveston Bay and has a beautiful view. Brown Pelicans and several species of terns were constantly

flying back and forth or diving into the water. Shoreacres took a heavy hit from Hurricane Ike and Charlotte talked about the challenges that her community faces during the recovery with a PowerPoint presentation.

The Sierra Club hopes to revisit Heron Park in the fall and winter to conduct additional service work to restore the coastal prairie and wetlands of this hidden gem of a park.

For information about Galveston Baykeeper call Charlotte at 281-455-9595 or email her at baytime@mac.com. If you are interested in doing service work on Heron Park call Brandt Mannchen at 713-664-5962 or email him at brandtshnfbt@juno.com. 🌐

Telegraphic Book Reviews

SOME BOOKS OF INTEREST AT THE HOUSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY:

by Frank Blake

Eco Barons, The Dreamers, Schemers, and Millionaires Who Are Saving Our Planet, by Edward Humes, 2009,

Chronicles the efforts of a number of motivated individuals who have engaged a variety of environmental issues, from species conservation to climate change.

Return to Wild America, A Yearlong Search for the Continent's Natural Soul, by Scott Weidensaul, 2005.

A retracing of a continental tour taken by Roger Tory Peterson in the early 1950's, visiting North America's most noted eco-types and wild lands.

Prairie Time, A Blackland Portrait, by Matt White, 2006.

Describes the blackland prairies of northeast Texas and their natural diversity.

Twilight of the Mammoths, Ice Age Extinctions and the Rewilding of America, by Paul S. Martin, 2005.

Explores the extinction of large mammals in America following the last ice age, one of the greatest mysteries in the earth sciences. 🌐

E-WASTE RECYCLING

For information on where to recycle computers, TVs, and other e-waste, visit the website of TexasTakeBack. org at <http://www.texastakeback.com/>. 🌐



Mountain Lion (Cougar)
Puma Concolor

USDA Photo

The cougar (*Puma concolor*), also known as puma, mountain lion, mountain cat, catamount, or panther, depending on the region, is a mammal of the Felidae family, native to the Americas. This large, solitary cat has the greatest range of any large wild terrestrial mammal in the Western Hemisphere, extending from Yukon in Canada to the southern Andes of South America. An adaptable, generalist species, the cougar is found in every major American habitat type. It is the second heaviest cat in the American continents after the jaguar, and the fourth heaviest in the world, along with the leopard, after the tiger, lion, and jaguar, although it is most closely related to smaller felines.

Due to excessive hunting following the European colonization of the Americas, and continuing human development of cougar habitat, populations have dropped in most parts of its historical range. In particular, the cougar was extirpated in eastern North America, except an isolated sub-population in Florida; the animal may be recolonizing parts of its former eastern territory, such as Maine, where there have been recent sightings in the southern part of the state. With its vast range, the cougar has dozens of names and various references in the mythology of the indigenous Americans and in contemporary culture. The Cougar has recently made a comeback in the state of Wyoming, where it presently has the largest population in North America.

From Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cougar/>).

BE AN AGENT OF CHANGE! SWITCH TO REUSABLE SHOPPING BAGS

CLEAR LAKE WALKERS

Every Saturday morning at 7:30, rain or shine

A group of Sierra Club members and friends in the Bay Area 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 17 years. 🌍

ANNUAL AUCTION DECEMBER 10, 2009 VOLUNTEERS AND DONATIONS NEEDED

We will hold our fundraising "Live and Silent Annual Action" along with our Holiday Gathering at our December monthly General Meeting, Thursday, December 10, at 6:30 p.m.

This is one of the club's biggest fundraising events. All proceeds will be used to support our local conservation and educational programs including the printing and mailing of our newsletter. We had many successful auctions in the past years, thanks to all our donors, volunteers and bidders, and we are looking forward to another successful event.

We are beginning to accept donations for the auction. An early response is needed so we can publish the auction items in the upcoming issues of our Bayou Banner. Suggestions for donations would be rentals for cabins, rooms, sailboats, canoes, bicycles, etc.; gift certificates or gift cards for services, performances, merchants or restaurants; and goods such as camping equipment, crafts, artwork, or autographed books.

We need volunteers prior to the event to help solicit for auction items, pick up donated items or help promote and advertise the event. Additionally we will need many volunteers on the day of the event to help with our refreshment table and setting up the event.

To donate, volunteer or for more information about the auction contact Arlene Diehl at 281-252-4639 or arlediehl@peoplepc.com. 🌍

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.

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 on line through our website than if you mail a check.

That's interesting.

That there are articles about both open beaches and the "Ike Dike."

It is important that we keep open beaches in Texas, but what happens if we also get the "Ike Dike?"

In a few years the beaches in front of the dike will disappear.

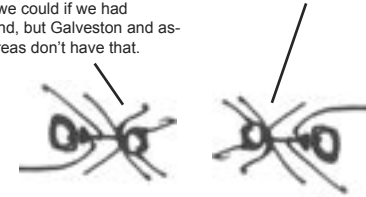
I suppose we could if we had enough sand, but Galveston and associated areas don't have that.

What's interesting?

Yeah?

I don't know - tell me.

Can't we just rebuild them?



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. 🌍

KROGER NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR PROGRAM

If you shop at Kroger you can help support the Houston Sierra Club financially by linking your Kroger Card to support the Houston Group. This year Kroger re-organized their community giving process, and to participate in the new program shoppers need to get the Houston Sierra Club 'bar code' and have that scanned and linked to their Kroger c+ard. This can reportedly be done by any Kroger cashier in a check out line.

You can obtain a copy of the instructions and the Houston Sierra Club bar code (in a PDF file) by contacting Frank Blake, frankblake@juno.com or 713-528-2896; or Lorraine Gibson, raineygib@aol.com or 713-436-1833. 🌍



SIERRA
CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

BAYOU BANNER

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Volume 33, No. 9

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November, 2009

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Circulation is 5,000 issues that are mailed to members and distributed through various outlets.

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Opinions stated are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Houston Sierra Club.

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FEATURES

CITY OF HOUSTON INTRODUCES BIODEGRADABLE BAGS FOR YARD WASTE

by Frank Blake

In September, the Houston City Council approved an ordinance that will require residents to use "bio bags" for City collection of green organic material (leaves, grass clippings, etc.) beginning in December 2009.

The introduction of biodegradable bags will allow an anticipated 60,000 tons of organic material per year to be diverted from area landfills to composting facilities. This change should also result in an estimated disposal savings of up to \$2 million dollars. Many states have already banned yard trimmings from landfills. In addition to taking up valuable landfill space, buried organic material usually produces methane, a highly potent global warming gas.

According to the City of Houston press release, the bio bags are made from bio-polymers or other renewable resources that decompose naturally like other organic materials. Regular plastic bags take over 100 years to break down. The bio bags reportedly begin decomposing in as little as three months and leave no harmful residue behind.

The new bio bags bearing the City of Houston logo should be available in area retail stores beginning November 1, 2009.



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.

HOW TO PRINT THE BAYOU BANNER IN COLOR

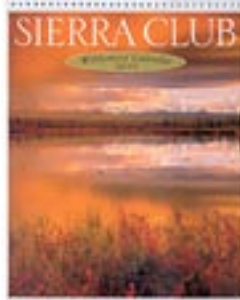
The web version of the Bayou Banner (which is a PDF file; see News at our web site) has some color pictures. You can print it on letter-size paper using the Adobe Acrobat Reader. After you click "Print", select "Reduce to Printer Margins" from the "Page Scaling" window. 🖨️

WANT BREAKING NEWS?

Check our website:
<http://houston.sierraclub.org/>.

Since the print copy of the Banner takes several weeks from editorial deadline to members' mail boxes, some late-planned activities appear only on the web site.

2010 SIERRA CLUB CALENDARS



Wilderness Wall Calendar

Best seller for over 31 years
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 57 full-color
photographs



Available at the monthly General Meeting sales table, or order by mail using the form below.
If you are interested in volunteering for calendar consignment sales, contact Lorraine Gibson at 281-381-4990 or raineygib@aol.com.

2010 SIERRA CLUB CALENDARS

Order By Mail

1) Fill in your name, address, and telephone number:

Name: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Email: _____

2) Fill out the order form below, selecting the quantity and total ordered of each calendar:

DESCRIPTION	CALENDAR PRICE	SHIPPING	TOTAL EACH	# ORDERED	TOTAL ORDER
2010 Wilderness Wall Calendar	\$14.00	\$3.00	\$17.00	_____	_____
2010 Engagement Calendar	\$15.00	\$3.00	\$18.00	_____	_____

(Prices include all applicable Texas state and local sales taxes.)

3) Add the total order column to determine the total:

ORDER TOTAL

(Questions - Contact Lorraine Gibson: raineygib@aol.com or 281-384-4104 cell.)

Thank you!

4) Clip and mail this order form along with your check payable to:

Houston Sierra Club
c/o Lorraine Gibson
3010 Norwich
Pearland, TX 77584

(We are unable to accept credit card orders. Please do not send cash.)

Your order will be processed as soon as your check is received. Calendars will be mailed to the address supplied unless you give us other instructions. All orders are subject to final acceptance. Checks will be returned for orders that cannot be filled. Quantities are limited.

PRAIRIE HERITAGE DAY

At Brazos Bend State Park
Saturday, November 7, 2009
10AM-4PM

This special event focused on prairie ecology will feature presentations, exhibits, activities, wildlife, and guided hikes – educational fun for the whole family! The event is presented by the Coastal Prairie Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program and is free with park admission. For more information, including presentation schedule and list of exhibitors, visit www.coastalprairie.org. 🌐

ACRONYMS

Sometimes the acronyms and abbreviations appearing in the Bayou Banner seem overwhelming, so this list is included to help our readers (and the editor). -Ed.

Specific to this Issue of the Bayou Banner

NAWCA North American Wetlands Conservation Act

FWS U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

General

ExCom Executive Committee
 FS U. S. Forest Service
 HSC Houston Sierra Club
 LSHT Lone Star Hiking Trail
 NOAA National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
 PDF Portable Document Format (computer file)
 SHNF Sam Houston National Forest
 TCEQ Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
 TPWD Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
 TTC Trans-Texas Corridor
 TxDOT Texas Department of Transportation 🌐

JOIN THE SIERRA CLUB

Just go to our web site
<http://Houston.sierraclub.org/>
 and click on
 Join or Give/Membership Benefits

For a limited time:

Only \$25
 Get a **FREE** rucksack
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Part of your payment
 comes back to support the
 Houston Sierra Club

HELEN THOMAS TO SPEAK AT THE HPJC ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER

Saturday, November 7, 2009
 Marriott Houston West Loop
 1750 West Loop South

Yes! This year the Houston Peace and Justice Center (HPJC) national Peacemaker Award recipient and keynote speaker is the venerable Helen Thomas, doyenne of the White House Press Corps. Ms. Thomas has covered the administrations of 10 presidents in a career spanning nearly 60 years.

Other, local honorees are:

- Ann Wright, activist and movement strategist.
- Lee Loe and *The Houston Peace News*.
- Ester King, longtime community activist.
- Wally James and *The Progressive Forum Radio Show*.
- Cesar Espinosa, immigrants rights organizer.

Dinner tickets are \$75, with subsidized seats available; ticket cost includes parking garage fees. Proceeds support HPJC services to Houston's communities of conscience. See the HPJC web site (<http://HPJC.org>) calendar (Nov. 7) for more information.

The Houston Sierra Club is a member of HPJC. 🌐

KPFT 90.1 FM

The station with much for Sierrans:

Explorations, Tuesdays, 6:00-7:00 PM
Eco-Ology, Wednesdays, 6:00-7:00 AM
The New Capital Show, Thursdays, 3:00-4:00 PM
Democracy Now (with Amy Goodman),
 8-9 AM and 5-6 PM, weekdays.

Of course there is news:
BBC News, 5-5:30 AM
Free Speech Radio News, weekdays, 4-4:30 PM
KPFT local news, weekdays, 4:30-5 PM

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.

INFORMATION FOR ADVERTISERS

The Bayou Banner is the newsletter of the Houston Regional Group of the Sierra Club (also known as the Houston Sierra Club). It is published 10 times per year, with single issues for July-August and December-January. All advertising must be compatible with the mission of the Sierra Club, and it must be approved by the Executive Committee of the Houston Regional Group of the Sierra Club. The circulation is over 5,000 per issue.

Discounts are applied only if an order for all issues is made in advance. Back page and preferred pages may not be available in some issues.

Contact George Batten, Editor:
 BayouBanner @ lonestar.sierraclub.org
 713-665-1505

Rate Schedule

1/3 page	\$160.00 per issue
1/4 page	\$125.00 “ “
1/8 page	\$ 75.00 “ “
1/18 page	\$ 45.00 “ “
(1/18 page is business card size)	

Discounts

2 issues	3%
3 issues	5%
4 issues	6%
6 issues	10%
10 issues	15%

Additional

Back page (if available)
 +50%
 Preferred page
 (other than front or back page)
 +25%

**MAP: GETTING TO THE GENERAL MEETING**

Some activities shown on this page are not managed by the Houston Sierra Club.

OUTINGS NOTICES

If you are interested in getting reminder notices of the bike rides and other outings please email John Berlinghoff at johnb@hal-cc.org. 🌐

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 PM, and the program starts at 7:30 PM. Everyone is welcome.

Before 7:00 PM, left turns are not allowed at Woodhead.

If you are going west on W. Alabama, turn right at Dunlay, then left to Marshall, then left to Woodhead.

CONSERVATION:

Third Tuesday monthly, 7:00 PM. Call for new location. Contact Evelyn Merz, 713-644-8228, elmerz @ hal-pc.org.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Fourth Thursday monthly, 7:00 PM, Houston Clayton Library, 5300 Caroline. Contact Jim Williams at ezz @ pdq.net.

INNER CITY OUTINGS (ICO):

Normally the second Tuesday every month, 7:00 PM, at a place to be determined. Please contact Angie Langolf at 713-467-6875 or outdoor.girl.01@gmail.com for more information.

OUTINGS:

Usually the third Monday of the month, 7:00 PM, 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.

AIR QUALITY

The Air Quality Subcommittee will meet on the third Wednesday of each month, 7:30 pm, at 5431 Carew.

RECYCLING RESOURCES

CITY OF HOUSTON RECYCLING

The City of Houston has several drop off sites (note: some are specialized for certain items), and provides curbside recycling in many neighborhoods. Principal drop off 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. One can also phone the City's 311 hotline with recycling questions, or connect to

www.houstontx.gov/solidwaste/recycling.html

BELLAIRE, TX RECYCLING CENTER

4402 Edith, Bellaire Tx 77401

Open for drop offs: 8am-5pm, 7 days a week Accepts a good range of items, consult web page for details: www.ci.bellaire.tx.us/index.asp?SID=289.

BELLAIRE RECYCLING COMMITTEE

This group has a useful website, with a variety of info on recycling activities in the Houston area. Committee phone line is 713-662-8173. 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.

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.

WEST UNIVERSITY RECYCLING CENTER

5004 Dincans (just south of Westpark near Kirby)

Open for drop offs 24/7; www.westu.org.

More available at <http://www.h-gac.com/>, especially at <http://www.h-gac.com/community/waste/resources/>.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 2009

12 General Meeting

December 2009

10 General Meeting: Annual Auction

January 2009

7 General Meeting

Houston Sierra Club E-MAIL ALERT LIST

Subscribe to the Houston Sierra Club's E-mail 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 will be included.)*

INSTRUCTIONS:

Send FROM the E-mail 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
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YourFirstName YourLastName

(Insert YOUR name in place of "YourFirstName YourLastName")

That's it. You will receive confirmation messages. from the listserve. Thanks for your interest. If you have any difficulty, contact frankblake@juno.com.

The Bayou Banner is the newsletter of the Houston Regional Group of the Sierra Club. It is published 10 times a year, with single issues for July-August and December-January. Circulation is 5500 issues that are mailed to members and distributed through various outlets.

EDITOR: George Batten
email: BayouBanner @ gmail.com

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.

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.

SUBMISSIONS: The deadline to submit articles is the last Thursday of the second month before the month in which the articles are to run. All submissions must have the author's name, and contact information (including phone number) even though it will not be printed. 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. Send articles via email to BayouBanner @ gmail.com; if sent as attachments, the preferred format is RTF. Preferred formats for pictures are PDF, JPEG, and TIF (300 dpi or greater resolution). No MS Publisher (PUB) files, please.

HOUSTON REGIONAL GROUP

713-895-9309

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See the Bayou Banner on the club website:
<http://houston.sierraclub.org/news/index.htm#banner>