



# The Warbler

## Newsletter of the Pineywoods Sierra Group

### June 2006

**NOTE: For JULY, Print Kramers' correction re State Parks Funding.**

#### June Meeting

##### CADDO LAKE

##### **Rick Lowerre, Caddo Lake Institute**

Join the Pineywoods Sierra Group for a presentation by Rick Lowerre, President of the Caddo Lake Institute. Mr. Lowerre will describe the general features of Caddo Lake and outline a brief history of the area, with a focus on how the community has stepped up to protect it's watershed.

Mr. Lowerre will touch on the positive features of the lake and its Ramsar designation as a Wetland of International Significance, some history of environmental issues surrounding the lake and the health of it's environment and how the community has been involved in primary actions to keep Caddo Lake protected.

Tuesday, June 6<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. at Austin Heights Baptist Church, 2806 Appleby Sand Rd., Nacogdoches. Bring a friend!

#### Bill Introduced to Fund State Parks

Rep. Harvey Hilderbran, R-Kerrville, has introduced House Bill 1292, which proposes to save our parks by more than doubling the allocation of sporting goods tax revenue dedicated to state and local parks. This bill would raise the decade-old cap to \$85 million from \$32 million. Instead of \$16 million annually, state parks would receive \$58.5 million, with local parks getting the balance to offset the amount taken away from them during the previous budget cycle.

This bill sits in the House Ways and Means Committee, with no hearing date set. There are other legislative opportunities to boost state park funding, but this is the most generous. And its chances for survival are not that good. Passage could depend on our input.

[http://www.caller.com/ccct/recreation\\_columnists/article/0,1641,CCC\\_T\\_868\\_3628757,00.html](http://www.caller.com/ccct/recreation_columnists/article/0,1641,CCC_T_868_3628757,00.html)

#### Notes From May Business Meeting

At the May Business Meeting, the group discussed priorities and nominated chairpersons for 2007 elections in the fall.

Priorities for the next year were listed as Mercury, Neches River, National Forest Issues, State Parks Funding and Creation of a Local Produce Market.

Nominations for leadership positions are: Chair: Dian Avriett, Co-Chair: Tammy Baker, Secty/treasurer: Vicki Baggett. The August meeting will be to discuss and plan programs—bring your ideas.

#### Calendar

July meeting: Fourth of July Party at Dian's!!!

August: Program planning, Austin Heights

September: Debbie Stevens, Keep Nacogdoches Beautiful

**DeBerry Article:** Pick up the May 19 edition of the Texas Observer and read Jonathan York's article *The DeBerry Debacle* and Rusty Middleton's cover story *What Lies Beneath?: The Threat From Waste Injection Wells*. [www.texasobserver.org](http://www.texasobserver.org)

#### Neches River Update

**By Janice Bezanson, TCONR**

#### **TOP CONSERVATION PRIORITY FOR THE NEXT TWO WEEKS – PLEASE CONTACT ELECTED OFFICIALS!**

The director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has indicated that he is planning to make a decision about whether to establish the Neches River National Wildlife Refuge by **June 1**.

The single thing that would most help to make this decision go in favor of the Refuge is for Senator Hutchison, Senator Cornyn, and some of the Members of Congress from Texas to come out publicly in support of the refuge. The basic situation: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was in the final stages of establishing the Neches River National Wildlife Refuge in Anderson and Cherokee Counties when promoters of Fastrill Reservoir (on essentially the same site) convinced Dallas Water Utilities to include Fastrill as a future project in its Long-Range Water Supply Plan. The Dallas City Council has directed staff to work with USFWS to determine whether building Fastrill could "meet the multiple objectives of water supply and wildlife preservation". Lobbyists for the Upper Neches River Municipal Water Authority are urging USFWS to put the refuge somewhere else, but other potential sites have conflicts as well. The Neches River site is one of the best and least-disturbed Priority 1 bottomland hardwood forests in the state and should be made into a national wildlife refuge. **WE NEED A HUGE PUSH TO GET PEOPLE TO CONTACT SENATORS HUTCHISON AND CORNYN, CONGRESSMEN GOHMERT AND BRADY, AND OTHER ELECTED OFFICIALS IN THE NEXT TEN DAYS.**

#### Primary Targets:

Everyone should contact Senator Hutchison, 202-224-5922, Fax 202-224-0776 <http://hutchison.senate.gov/e-mail.htm> Folks in lower Neches Basin should also contact Congressman Kevin Brady, 202-225-4901, Fax 202-225-5524 [rep.brady@mail.house.gov](mailto:rep.brady@mail.house.gov) Both are champions of the Big Thicket National Preserve.

#### What to say:

Building Fastrill Reservoir on the upper Neches River would reduce the amount of water that reaches the Big Thicket National Preserve. Biologists say that this would greatly impact the Preserve that you have worked so hard to expand. The Neches River National Wildlife Refuge would help protect both the quantity and quality of water in the Neches to nourish the Big Thicket. The director of USFWS will be deciding soon whether to establish the Neches River Refuge.



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Urge Ms. Hutchison and Mr. Brady to send USFWS a letter supporting the Refuge today! Everyone should contact Senator Cornyn, 202-224-2934, Fax 202-228-2856  
<http://cornyn.senate.gov/index.asp?f=contact&lid=1>

*(continued on back page)*

