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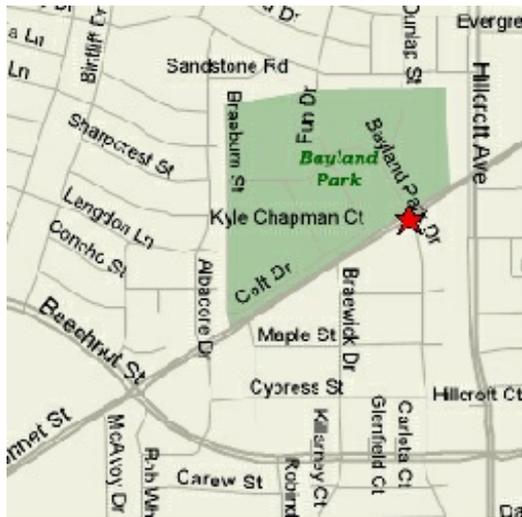


Meeting Announcement!

The next general meeting of the Houston Canoe Club will be Wednesday, February 8, 2006 at 7:00 pm at the Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet St, Houston, TX 77074-6520, (713) 541-9951. The Community Center is on the east end of the park, near the stadium. Park & enter by doors on west side.

Tom Goynes, president of Texas River Protection Association (TRPA), will speak at the February 8 HCC general meeting. Tom will update us on plans to replace Rio Vista dam with a series of man-made rapids. No doubt paddle craft registration will also be discussed. Tom is a longtime advocate for river rights for paddlers. He and his wife, Paula, own and operate Pecan Park Retreat campground on the San Marcos. They have lived on the river for many years. Tom is an informative and entertaining speaker. Don't miss hearing him!

We have reserved a larger room to accommodate a larger turnout.



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Houston Canoe Club
Waterline



www.houstoncanoecub.org :: Volume 54 :: Jan/Feb 2006

A Note From the Editor

by Jo Anne Johnson

I apologize for the late date at which this newsletter is finally being published. As always, I was determined to put my own stamp on the thing, and it turned out to be a little more involved than I had thought.

You will notice a couple new things in this edition of the newsletter. First, there is a section called "In the HCC Inbox." These are emails that have come across the HCC Listserv that may be of particular interest to HCC members that nobody has yet written an article about. Second, you can see that this is listed as the Jan/Feb edition - I don't plan to make this bimonthly. I was just late getting everything together. We should be back on schedule for a March 1 publication. Third, of course, is the new format. I hope you find it easy to navigate and easy to read.

I was really impressed with the responses I got from everybody who had material to contribute. Thank you so much, and keep it coming!

If you have any comments or ideas for future publications, please feel free to let me know. My [email box](#) is always open.

I look forward to seeing you all Wednesday, February 8 at the general meeting!

Jo Anne

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Houston Canoe Club
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HCC's Newest Lifetime Members

by Anne Olden

Chet and Lillian Tigard were honored as Lifetime Members at the January meeting. Mary Z had a very nice plaque made, and Christy Long, Commodore, presented it to them. Chet and Lillian have been members since 1978. Chet told us that when they married, Lillian asked that they go on adventures together, and canoeing has brought them a world of adventures and good friends. They realized early in their paddling career that lessons were important. They learned to paddle from good instructors, then became instructors themselves. They lead trips and became officers. Lillian chaired Rendezvous, with Chet helping on the Site Committee and in numerous other ways. They met Bob Foote, and solo canoed the Grand Canyon twice on Bob's trips. At the other extreme, Lillian became a champion freestyle paddler. The club continues to benefit from their enthusiasm and experience. Congratulations, Chet and Lillian!

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Transfer of Lake Houston State Park

by Bob Arthur

An Article about the planned transfer of Lake Houston State Park ownership jointly to the City of Houston (Parks Dept) and Montgomery County Precinct 4.

Your opinion sought. Please write or e-mail the people listed below.

The purpose of the Dec. 5 meeting at Splendor, TX was to gain public input for the proposed transfer of Lake Houston State Park (LHSP) to the City of Houston (CoH) and Montgomery County. The meeting was moderated by TPWD Region IV Director Jerry Hopkins and in attendance was Houston Parks & Rec. (HPARD) director, Joe Turner, Rick DeWees, Karen Cullar and others. Also Walt Dabney, TPWD Director and many other TPWD reps as well as Montgomery County Commissioners and other officials.

Operation of LHSP will be jointly between CoH and Montgomery County Pct. 4, although Montgomery Co has no funding to contribute to the operation. The TP&W Board is expected to approve the transfer on Jan. 25. TP&W assured last night's attendees that the transfer documents will call for the wilderness character of the park to be retained. Of the 4900+ acres in the Park, 3800+ are floodplain, which should not be developed. After the legal documents are complete, a Master Plan will be written which should take about a year. There will be opportunity for public input during the Master Plan development.

Facts about the park:

Approx 2/3 of the 4955 acre park is in Montgomery County, with approx. 1/3 being in Harris County and a portion being within the city limits of Houston, and the entire park being within Houston's ETJ.

The park has approx 11 miles of creek/river frontage and paddling access is planned.

HPARD's first steps will be to compile a master plan.

The park will NOT become a "ballpark/soccer field" type of park, but will retain its wilderness aspect.

The Grand Parkway is planned to miss the park either N or S.

No entry or access is planned for all-terrain or off-road vehicles.

Interesting factoids:

Texas spends some \$50 million annually on the state park system. Missouri spends over \$500 million. One wag commented that Mississippi exists so that Texas won't be last on every major list of a states accomplishments.

Brazos Bend State Park had some 500,000 visitors last year and Lake Houston Park had around 40,000.

TPWD is and has been in a financial bind for years and rather major layoffs are occurring, 73 employees have been laid off recently with more to come in the future.

Matagorda Island will become a wildlife management area, rather than a state park.

There were many comments from local citizens, off-road enthusiast, equestrian

enthusiast and others. Of particular note were several comments regarding SB 155, by members of the ATV/ORV organization, The Texas Motorized Trail Coalition. These folks are organized and they're coming to your town and your park.

Your comments should be sent to both people below. Please make individual comments now. Specific knowledge of and recommendations about the park are especially helpful.

Mr. Tim Hogsett
State Parks Division
Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept.
4200 Smith School Rd.
Austin, TX 78744
E-mail: tim.hogsett@tpwd.state.tx.us

Mr. Joe Turner
City of Houston Parks & Recreation Dept
2999 South Wayside
Houston, TX 77023
E-mail: lhsp@cityofhouston.net

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Ivory Billed Woodpecker... Sighted Along Buffalo Bayou

by Louis Aulbach



The Ivory Billed Woodpecker
by John James Audubon, 1840.
(courtesy of Wikipedia)

The recent sightings of the elusive ivory billed woodpecker in Arkansas have revived interest in this magnificent bird that was thought to be extinct. In the past, none other than John James Audubon himself had reported seeing the ivory billed woodpecker in the Houston area.

At 19 to 21 inches in length and weighing from 1.0 to 1.25 pounds, the ivory billed woodpecker is the second largest woodpecker in the world. It is only slightly smaller than the Imperial Woodpecker of western Mexico, which is also believed to be extinct.

The ivory billed woodpecker can be visually identified by its shiny blue-black body with extensive white markings on its neck and on both the upper and lower trailing edges of its wings. It has a pure white bill and a prominent top crest which is red on the male of the species and black on the female. The bird can also be recognized by its alarm call, a "kent" which sounds like a toy trumpet repeated in a series or as a double note.

The ivory billed woodpecker prefers thick hardwood swamps and pine forests with large amounts of dead and decaying trees where the birds feed mainly on the larva of wood boring beetles. A mating pair needs about ten square miles of forest for enough food for them and their young.

The original range of the ivory billed woodpecker was in the primeval hardwood forests from East Texas to North Carolina, and from southern Illinois to Florida and Cuba. The bird's habitat was reduced as the timber industry deforested millions of acres in the South after the Civil War. By the late 1800's, the loss of habitat from heavy logging activity and the hunting of the bird by collectors had decimated their population.

By 1938, only about 20 individual ivory billed woodpeckers remained in the wild. Prominent biologist John Dennis took the last scientifically accepted photographs of the ivory billed woodpecker in 1948 in Cuba.

Yet, in 1966, John Dennis reported seeing the ivory billed woodpecker in the Big Thicket of East Texas, but the sighting could not be confirmed. In late February, 1968, Dennis and Armand Yramategui, a Houston naturalist and namesake for Armand Bayou, recorded what may have been kent calls of the ivory billed woodpecker in the Neches River bottom land forests of the Big Thicket. Unfortunately, it was too foggy to see the bird, and the sound analysis of their recordings proved inconclusive. The critics said that it may have been mimicry by a blue jay. Others contend that the findings were thwarted by those seeking to prevent legislation to preserve the Big Thicket pending in Congress at the time.

For nearly forty years after the ivory billed woodpecker was listed as an endangered species on March 11, 1967, the outlook for the species was bleak. Then, there were reports of the sightings of at least one male ivory billed woodpecker during 2004 and 2005 in Arkansas. A very large ivory billed woodpecker was video taped on April 25, 2004, and the news of the recovery of the species was reported in the journal Science on April 28, 2005.

The situation today is a far cry from the way things were in an earlier time, and that brings us back to John J. Audubon.

On April 24, 1837, John J. Audubon and his son John arrived in Galveston where they were officially greeted by the secretary of the Texas Navy, Samuel R. Fisher. They spent a month observing wildlife from Galveston to Houston, and Audubon met with President Sam Houston at Houston in Houston's dog-trot cabin that served as his "White House" at the time.

Audubon expressed his dismay at the abundance of mud in the streets and the incomplete construction of many of the buildings in town. Nevertheless, Audubon's stay in the Houston area offered him the chance to complete his research on the birds of the Gulf Coast. Audubon's technique for studying birds, like the ivory billed woodpecker, was to shoot the bird, then arrange it on a board using pins and string. From the constructed model, he would draw the specimen, usually as a life size illustration, on paper. Although he struggled financially at the time he produced his folios, John James Audubon's single print of the ivory billed woodpecker, Plate LXVI from his Birds of America series, sells for around \$125,000 today.

In the 1840 edition of Birds of America, John J. Audubon had this to say about the ivory billed woodpecker: "I have only to add to what I have said of the habits and distribution of this species, that I found it very abundant along the finely wooded margins of that singular stream, called 'Buffalo Bayou,' in the Texas, where we procured several specimens."

A singular stream, indeed.

Houston has many aspects of its history for which its residents can be proud. The City's historic association with the ivory billed woodpecker is just one more feather in its cap, so to speak.

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Annual Clear Creek Cleanup

by Natalie West

Have a Say in Galveston Bay!

Hello, Galveston Bay Neighbor!

[The Galveston Bay Estuary Program](#) cordially invites you to attend a Charting the Course to 2015 Galveston Bay Community Open House. This is your opportunity to learn about Galveston Bay's impact on our economic well-being, health, and quality of life, and how you can become involved in shaping its future! Be a part of Charting the Course to 2015 to take action toward sustaining Galveston Bay for generations to come.

Visit the exhibits, talk to Bay experts, and watch A Day on Galveston Bay, a great new video. Share your interests, ideas and concerns to help Chart the Course to a sustainable region that depends on the bay! We want to hear from you.

Come to any Free Open House!

They located throughout the Houston-Galveston region:

- Saturday, February 25 - [UH Recreation Center](#), corner of University Drive and Calhoun Road, Houston.
- Sunday, February 26 - [Bayland Community Center](#), 6400 Bissonnet Street, Houston.
- Saturday, March 4 - [Bear Creek Community Center](#), 3055 Bear Creek Drive, Houston.
- Sunday, March 5 - [Eddie Gray Wetlands Center](#), 1724 Market Street, Baytown.
- Sunday, March 26 - [Armand Bayou Nature Center](#), 8500 Bay Area Blvd., Pasadena.
- Saturday, April 1 - [Alvin Senior Citizen Center](#), 309 West Sealy, Alvin.
- Sunday, April 2 - [National Marine Fisheries Service](#), 4700 Avenue U, Galveston.

Attend an open house anytime between 1 pm and 5 pm. In addition to great exhibits and information, there will be food, fun, and prizes for you to enjoy.

We Can Come to You!

The Estuary Program would like to share the Galveston Bay story with your group! A Day on Galveston Bay, a fun short video also is available. Please call Scott Jones at the phone number below to schedule a presentation.

To learn more about the Estuary Program and Charting the Course, please visit the Estuary Program website or contact:

Scott Jones, Galveston Bay Estuary Program Public Information Officer at (281) 486-1245 or sjones@tceq.state.tx.us.

Please forward this message to your colleagues and friends!

Have a Say in Galveston Bay!

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Brazos River to Hwy 21 Hidalgo Falls

by Mark Andrus

There were four of us in four boats on the trip-Jack Richardson, Patrick Burke, Shaun Burke and I. Patrick had a blue Dagger Reflection 15 canoe and I had a red one. Jack paddled an Old Town Discovery 169. Shaun paddled a Dagger Atlantis sea kayak. We finally got on the water about 4PM, Wednesday, December 28, 2005 after having to drive to the Highway 21 Bridge, unload, and get the cars down to Hidalgo Falls and the drivers back up to the bridge. James and Patti of Southwest Paddlesports drove the drivers back to the bridge. We offered them \$40 for the shuttle and they refused it. They suggested we give it to the Hidalgo Falls improvement fund with the Texas River Protection Association (TRPA). There are plans to get a water well, bathrooms and showers at Hidalgo Falls if TRPA gets enough donations for it. We also discussed plans for the Hidalgo Falls Festival that will occur on the April 8-9 weekend which will have many events of interest to paddlers.

We paddled a couple of miles downstream and found a gravel bar to camp on a few minutes before sunset. We eat dinner. I found a bottle of single malt Scotch in a bag that I had forgot about. I shared it and Patrick shared some of the Scotch he had. It was not easy getting my tent set up in the dark after that: however I managed. It is just as well that had much experience setting up the tent before.

We could not get on the river until around ten the next morning. Patrick and Shaun had too much gear to fool around with. We saw some large petrified logs in the river about a mile past the gauging station. The river was generally shallow and not all that wide until just before we reached the FM 60 Bridge where the river broadened and deepened and the wind blew against us. I had us push on beyond the 60 bridge for about 1 mile before we finally camped in order to keep to the schedule we needed to do finish the 53 on Sunday. We found another gravel bar to camp on around 4:15 on Thursday night. I watched the 6 o'clock weather report on a handheld TV set I had and put up my tent before dark. I called the office on the cell phone to be sure that everything was all right there. The Brazos does not have the isolation that the Pecos or Rio Grande have. We saw many planes that were on the approach to Easterwood airport, which was nearby.

On Friday, we stopped for lunch at another gravel bar. We saw some children playing across the river. A hundred feet behind them, we heard a chain saw and saw trees falling down. We wondered about whether it is wise to cut down trees that might be protecting the cut bank from erosion. The parents came out and explained that they were not going to cut down too many trees so that would not cause a problem. Both the children and parents admired the canoes and liked the idea of going down the river. We explained that Jack Richardson was continuing paddling the Brazos in various stages all the way from Possum Kingdom to the mouth. He finished paddling everything upstream of where we were and had previously done some of the downstream sections. There was a mild Class I rapid around where the Batts Ferry road hits the bank. We camped on another gravel bar that night.

On Saturday, December, 31, we set a goal to paddle past the railroad bridge and camp at a gravel bar just before the mighty (not really) Yegua reaches the Brazos. Jack almost had a beaver ram his canoe. We were seeing large groups of wild hogs going to the river to drink and finally running off when they finally heard us. Their eyesight is not that great. One set of piglets was stuck up on a cut bank, but their mother was making a lot of noise. We reached the sandbar just before dark. We heard shots slightly after dark, but it was too late to move. We saw a fireworks display that was several miles away judging from the difference when we saw it and heard it. Someone in a four wheeler pulled up the next morning and explained that he had been shooting wild hogs. We were asleep long before midnight.

The wind was at our backs when we paddled on New Year's Day, which was the last day. The paddling was lazy and we let the wind push us. The riverside scenery was nice. We reached Hidalgo Falls around 3PM. The water level was the lowest I had ever seen at Hidalgo Falls and I saw rocks exposed that I had never seen exposed. Patti had warned me that we would have to take out the upper part, since it would take getting the boats a couple of hundred feet over land to get out at the ledge. Jack asked me if I was sure that I was in the right spot.

I got up the stairs and brought my truck over. We struggled to get the sea kayak pulled up with the manual pulleys that are at the upper part. We were pulling up the boats with the gear still in them. Patrick got his Suburban and we started using his electric winch to pull up the canoes. I found an isolated part of the upper campground to change out of my river clothes. It would have been nicer if the showers we want would have already been built. Please contribute to the Hidalgo Falls improvement fund. We went over to James and Patti's trailer to say goodbye. They got out beer, chips and cheese sauce. We finally left to go home when it got dark.

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New Year's Day in the Hill Country

by Christy Long

Saturday, December 31, 2005 found us at Hueco campground running the gates. The river was flowing at about 120 cfs. Not enough for the big dogs, but we little puppies were challenged to keep the boats open-side-up and pointy-end heading for the designated eddy.

We each made the run several times, carrying our boats upstream to run the first drop, make that first eddy on river right, clear the first gate, ferry across the shooting currents of the drop, and on to the second gate. Watching Janice and Fraser maneuver their OC2 through this first set of gates was truly impressive.

As it started getting crowded at the top, one boater after another would float down to the next gate and work the water in that area. We even started to do attainment moves to get the most out of an area before moving to the next drop. The instructor mode came out in Debbie as she advised Janise and Tracy on the fine art of the ferry move. The phrase "hard moves on easy water" came to mind as the group played/worked on this stretch of water. Around 4:00pm we called it quits and returned the gates to their original place out of the flow of the main channel. River runners included Tracy (K1), Debbie (K1), Janise (K1), Fraser (OC2), Janice (OC2), Bob (OC1) and I (K1).

We saw Jo Anne and her family and Jo Anne's friend, Ruth, coming down the river just as we were taking out. They were camping a few sites from us. It is a small paddling world.

New Years Eve dinner was at El Nepalitos (sp). We knew it was time to leave the restaurant when we noticed the wait staff mopping the floor. Because of the burn ban, at the campsite (and the rest of the state), we laughed and talked while sitting around the table. We hit the sack when it became uncomfortably cold. I called my husband around 10:30 to wish him a Happy New Year and that is how my year ended, full of boating, friends, and family.

Sunday, January 1, 2006, New Years Day, we headed to the San Marcos. Robert (K1), Rob (K1), Ken (K1), Tommy (Rec), and Rheda (OC1) joined us at Pecan Park.



Although Bob had a new boat he paddled aggressively and took his turns on the surfing waves. At times he took my turn on the rapid. Each rapid had its own set of conditions. Old Mill has a tree deep in the current on river left. S-turn had rocks and trees right where you comfortably needed to put your paddle. Of course don't forget about the barbed-wire on the river left side.



Safari boaters provided the entertainment at Cottonseed, when a twenty foot boat hit one of our paddlers. Both safari guy and kayaker were new to the situation of long unmanageable boats in the water and it made for some fun conversation later in the day. No boats or paddlers were injured in the collision. At the end of the run we parted ways with Bob, Ken, Robert, Rob, and Tommy.

In honor of Debbie's upcoming birthday we ate at Herberts Taco Hut. When we returned to camp we found Scott (K1) was there and where he had paddled the gates.

Monday, January 2, 2006, for a short paddling day we paddled the gates. We had a

good time surfing, ferrying, and squirting. We also made bigger efforts in our attainment moves. I joined the HCC/BCWC 2006 swim team because I did the squirt right but the roll wrong. Anna (K1) joined us for the day, improved her ferrying skills, and made some impressive attainment moves. After we broke camp, we headed to Rio Vista for a nostalgic lunch on the patio of the San Marcos River Pub and Grill, watching the boaters run the shoot. It was another good day that ended way too soon.

Sincerely,
Christy Long
BCWC Pool Coordinator
HCC Commodore

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www.houstoncanoecub.org :: Volume 54 :: Jan/Feb 2006

New Year's on Clear Creek

by Ken Anderson

The sky was blue and the day was warm: a great day for paddling in Southeast Texas. The only thing unusual about the day was that it was January 1st and whereas most American paddlers were "frozen out" of any paddles HCC was "on the move."

Nine paddlers went to 1776 Park in Friendswood planning to go down Clear Creek. Two opted to go to the beach in Galveston leaving seven to plan the shuttle...and what a shuttle it was.

After spending over an hour finding most parks closed (as in locked gates) we settled on a takeout at Oxnard Park. It was even suggested that there be a new award given each year for the number of miles spent looking for a takeout.

The actual paddle was peaceful. Folks waved at us and fish jumped around. One of the things I've always found interesting in paddling Clear Creek is some of the beautiful homes (or at least their backs).

The takeout was somewhat of a challenge because of the steep banks but there were no accidents.

It was a great day for a paddle. I later spoke with some folks in Chicago who told me it had warmed up there to 28 degrees from 8; no one believed me when I told them about this New Year Day shirt-sleeve paddle.

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January 7, 2006, Surfside, TX

by Christy Long

January 7, 2006, Surfside Jetty Park, Surfside: The breaking waves were pretty good maybe at shoulder level or smaller when sitting in my kayak. The waves beyond breakers were head high. Most of the board surfers (about 100 of them) were just east of Jetty Park and just beyond the breakers.

Good air temperatures (70 up to 78), the water was clean, there was enough wind to bring in the waves, and the sun came out around 3:00. Six kayaks were on the water that day. Debbie, Linda, KP, Dave, Gary, and I started surfing around 2:30 and quit around 4. Mark was there but decided to be our safety instead of surf. We thanked him for that.

It was a good way to spend a Sunday afternoon.

Christy
HCC Commodore

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New Year's on Clear Creek

by Natalie Wiest



New Year's Day found me out and about early in the day to watch a dog event of all places, on the campus of Rice University. I knew that would potentially put me too late for Rick Brunson's trip on Clear Creek, but resolved to paddle a short stretch I'd never been on instead, and figured I could do that later in the day. Sure enough, it was 2 p.m. until I was loading my boat and heading for the Creek, practically in my backyard, with my faithful (and equally wacky and determined)

friend Marilyn Kircus. The chosen segment was putting in at Walter Hall Park (highway 3 crossing in League City) and taking out at Clear Lake Park on NASA 1. The distance is about 6.5 miles.

The water was noticeably low, exposing miles of mudflats along this section of the stream. That opened a virtual smorgasbord to the plentiful wading and shore birds, and they were there in great numbers feasting on tasty crustaceans or whatever else they could find. We thought it a good omen that a roseate spoonbill flew across us right at Walter Hall Park, and crisscrossed us several times beyond. We saw several osprey, and all manner of gulls (ring-billed for sure), Royal terns, white ibises, great blue herons, snowy egrets.

I thought this day would be a good one to traverse a segment known for high concentrations of high speed motorboats, jet skis, and yes, even water skiers. Well, I guess the two we saw on tow weren't technically skiers, looked to me like wakeboards they were on. At least one of them had the sense to be wearing a wetsuit, but it was (for those of us not immersed) a quite pleasant day on the water temperature-wise.



Much of this land is too low for building, but where it has been bulkheaded are some of the biggest houses imaginable. Sad to me was one nice tract of undeveloped land, at this water level obviously a Native American campsite with the telltale shell midden, and the "For Sale" sign and lot designations posted all over it. You can bet it will be bulldozed, bulkheaded, and turned into megahome lots with little of the natural world left behind. Farther upstream from the lake, I understand my

home town of League City is developing a nature walk and eco-tourist attraction.



I'd never paddled across Clear Lake, and we ran into two sea-kayaking men coming our way from the boat launch as we were approaching it, so obviously there are other people who do. There was a veritable traffic jam at the boat launch - we just threaded our way through the motor crowd and had a big-enough sand beach to the right of the cemented launches to safely take out. We were off the water by 5 p.m. - a very pleasant 2 hour paddle to bring in the New Year!

Natalie Wiest
HCC Paddler, League City

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Trip Report: San Antonio River

Natalie Wiest



Now here's an exciting way to get to a put-in - buttslide mandatory!



The beautiful banks of the San Antonio River.

Natalie Wiest
HCC Paddler



Trip Report: Galveston Bay North Shore

Natalie West

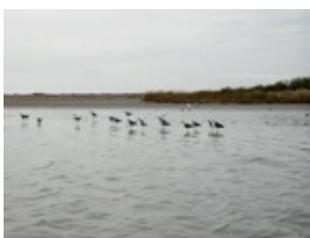


For my Thanksgiving trip of 2005, I chose another route I'd never paddled but have been curious about for some time: an overnight camping trip along the north shore of Galveston Bay. Under most circumstances, I'd suggest this as a sea kayak trip, but necessity and the sparsity of boarding kennel space at this holiday season, dictated my two dogs would come along. Luckily I was able to talk my paddling buddy Marilyn into bringing her 18' Sundowner canoe, and dogs, camping gear, and paddlers were easily accommodated.

We put in at Louis' bait camp where highway 6 crosses Highland Bayou. Running our shuttle Thanksgiving morning was a superb-omen experience: we HAD to stop our cars along highway 2004 to watch hundreds and hundreds of sandhill cranes and snow geese flying overhead. V after V left the swamps and was headed inland for daylight grazing. It was an astonishing sight to take in. Our takeout spot was the boat ramp where 2004's high bridge crosses Chocolate Bayou; the steam plant of the nearby refinery and the general mists rising in the morning gave that an other-worldly glow. A commercial pushboat was at the dock as we dropped my car there, and many motorboats. Our route followed the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW), so we weren't much surprised to see boat traffic here and along the way.

We were underway from Louis' by 11 p.m., what with birdwatching, shuttle driving, and boat loading, it was a little later than we'd hoped but turned out to not be a problem. We paddled south along Highland Bayou until we met the ICW, and thence west. Imagine the blonde consternation at our first snack break to discover the cooler with all the refrigerated food, and Thanksgiving dinner, was NOT in the canoe. Bummer. However, being that neither of us either a) pack lightly or b) was in danger of disappearing from lack of food consumed in past days, we decided to push on. Not that it was a hard decision, it was just beautiful out there on the water. There was a fair amount of barge traffic, and even some sailboats under power, but plenty of room for all. We were surprised to see at least two instances of substantial (for "fish camp" style) homes under construction on the islands between the ICW and Galveston Bay. I had my doubts these were legal building sites, but in retrospect, perhaps these are on property that was in private hands before the ICW was cut through. I'd assumed barrier islands resulting from dredge spoil might be in the public domain, but not sure that's the case.

There is a frenzy of building going on at what used to be called Flamingo Isles, a John Mecom project from the 70s that was never completed. It's now called Harborwalk. A 2003 Houston Business Journal article says it was half sold out then, but if you've got \$100,000s you want to plunk down for a home on the water that could be swept away by the next major hurricane, well, but all means... That thankfully is the last major home area you will see along this stretch and to the west at least to Chocolate Bayou.



The saltwater shorebirds were out along this stretch. Our camp site was on an island near Karankawa Lake, and our treat of the morning was sipping our coffee and watching the sandpipers and a host of their relatives working the flats less than 50' away. I was very glad we'd chosen this higher site from another we'd considered; the tide came up more than I'd have thought during the night. However, the one downside of the trip was the meals we provided to hundreds of blood-thirsty mosquitoes. I was horrified as I crawled into my tent that night, and switched on my flashlight lantern, to see hundreds of the devils inside my tent with me. And, I

am sorry to say, no hope of eradicating them by hand, as Marilyn was doing in her tent, as the dogs were sharing the tent with me. Imagine trying to find them in a long-coated black poodle's coat using a flashlight. Bummer! For at least a week after I looked like I'd had the measles, I was so covered with red welts. At least I had a head net so I didn't have to breathe them too.



I was perhaps more nervous than Marilyn as we paddled across the open water of Chocolate Bay on our way up the bayou to our takeout. We were trying to stay out of the shipping lane, but surprised also to discover the multiple oyster beds were so undetectable until we ground to a halt on them. Ouch for the thin-skinned Kevlar canoe! We were off the water by 3 p.m.. This was a very enjoyable overnight paddle - just watch out for the 'skeeters after sundown!

Marilyn's photos are at the Webshots site:

<http://community.webshots.com/album/512016487WZqNeT>

Natalie Wiest
HCC Paddler

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Remember Goliad!

by Natalie Wiest

In case there are any of you out there less versed in Texas history than I am, you should know that "Remember Goliad" was the cry that rallied Texans to the Alamo and the fight for Texas independence, before "Remember the Alamo" became the battle cry at San Jacinto. Over 300 Texas "militia" were cold-bloodedly murdered at and around Goliad, some of them on the banks of the San Antonio River. But that was before 1836, and in 2005 "Canoe Trail, Goliad Texas" was the action and several of us from Houston participated.

The group "Canoe Trail Goliad" is led by citizens of Goliad County to create a safe, integrated system of access points along the San Antonio River. As any successful group on a mission like that, they have many public and private partners, and in this case the Goliad State Park staff were very much in evidence. Consider this service with a smile and a strong helping hand, as you shall soon see.

What I noticed is that at the current time, both putin and takeout have gated access roads, so if you're not here on a scheduled trip day, you may be out of luck. The objective of the Canoe Trail group will be to improve these points and make them more accessible - great idea!

The putin place was practically under the highway 59 crossing, north of the river and on the west side of the road. I don't know what the total count was on floaters for the day (can't say just "canoeists" or "kayakers", we followed a motorless jon boat with six people and a dog in it), but there were bunches of us and pretty well spread out. Those of you who know my daughter Ellen know she's not real secure about less than flatland walking, and I was wondering if we'd get her down the 8' mandatory butt-slide down a near vertical bank to the river, but we did. Gravity sure helped!. Here and at the takeout, ablebodied volunteers helped get boats down to the water and and back out, and their assistance was much appreciated - and needed!

The view from the water was a very different environment than what we'd driven across to get here. The banks were entirely tree-lined; and the river flow occasionally tree-obstructed as a result of flooding the past year or years. There were large sycamores, native pecans, and many oak trees. The bird treat of this trip was the green kingfishers crossing from side to side. The length of the trip was 6.5 miles, and good maps to putin and takeout were provided by the committee - and free shuttle service too for drivers. I met Wyatt Collier and Anna Luckenbach, and their friend Roberta at the putin. Marilyn Kircus was paddling with another group that included at least Page Williams and Mark Arnold from Corpus Christi. There were more Houstonians as well and we made a long leisurely float down the river. It was well worth the 3 hour drive from Houston, even if there hadn't been a free lunch provided (which there was!).

Several of the group camped at Goliad State Historical Park. I've enjoyed several other non-paddling visits to the park and its Spanish mission church. Presidio La Bahia is quite close by, so whether you paddle or not it's well worth a drive to see the parks.

Natalie Wiest
HCC Paddler

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**Trip Report: 01/15/06 Buffalo Bayou
Terry Hershey Park off of Memorial Mews to Beltway 8**
by John Bartos (Photos)/Christy Long (Report)

Trip participants included:



Bob A. (OC1), John B. (OC1), Sandy T. (OC2), Jeannette T. (OC2), Lillian T. (OC2), Chet T. (OC2), Rosie T. (OC2-1/2), Anne O. (OC2), John O. (OC2), Janice F. (OC2), Fraser B. (OC2), Christy L. (OC1), Tracy C. (K1), Mathew B. (K1).



We met at 9:00 am, ran shuttle, and started dropping our boats into the bayou around 10:00 am. The day has cool with no wind to speak of and the water level was low (50-60 cfs). This section of the bayou would be a first descent for me. We had a great time on the obstacle course setup by

nature and I would like to paddle this section again. Because it is relatively natural I'm sure it changes often. Besides having a great navigable stream, the putin and takeout have designated parking spaces for park users, which is always a plus for river runners.



There was current and we navigated small rapids, made from trees, rocks, tires, machine parts, and concrete, one boat at a time to prevent any pile ups. The fallen tree trunks and branches made downstream progress slow.



We climbed over some fallen trees and paddled under others. It took strength and balance to haul the canoes over the trees then walk down the big branches to get to the boat. Paddling underneath some of the fallen trees required bending forward and tilting the boat at just the right

angel to fit through the allotted space.



I sighted an egret, a hawk, and several other birds along the way. Occasional, I was reminded of the fact that we were paddling in the city, when I sighted a runner or a family on the trail that parallels the bayou.



After the shuttle was run and boats tied down, a couple of us went to a Mexican food restaurant and relived the outing. I want to thank Bob Arthur for inviting us on this trip and introducing me to this section of the bayou.

Sincerely
Christy Long

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Anahuac Harborfest, December 2005

by Mark Ittleman



It was a chilly day and we arrived in Anahuac; Linda, my son David, and me. There were two paddles scheduled and unfortunately just a few of us showed up. My son David was visiting from Florida, and this was his first 'Kayak Paddle.'" It was cold that morning, and David made one of the first

paddling mistakes:

Never stand up in a Kayak while entering.....



These wood boats were so beautiful, and they were treated with "kid gloves," by their owners.....Due to the cold weather there were not as many people as expected at the event.





Sierra Club Paddle, Nov/Dec 2005

by Mark Ittleman

These photos are from the Sierra Club paddle in late November/December and was led by Tom and Judy. This paddle commenced at the I-10 put in at the Trinity River. We all had a wonderful time taking a path from the Trinity to Lake Charlotte. We attempted to make passage to Mud Lake, as the final photographs demonstrate, however, after portaging and getting stuck in knee deep mud, the pass was unmanageable and we retraced our steps.....I mean our path out of the bayou.....(sic)





La Grange , Nov 2005

by Mark Ittleman

These are photos from the La Grange trip sponsored by HCC in November. A great time was had by all! Fraser and Janice were in the lead boat and we paddled close to 12 miles the first day. Linda and I were relative newcomers to Texas paddling and the Colorado proved to have quite a number of challenges for novice paddlers. John was the sweeper for the trip and he and Ron helped some of us who got hung up along the way. It was a beautiful day on the river, seasonably warm it was nice to meet new friends who shared the same interests in paddling.



Fraser and Janice who helped lead the way and were responsible for helping organize the paddle



The canoes and kayaks pulled up on shore and the tents pitched for the night of good food, conversation, rest, and rejuvenation. In the morning Mary made us breakfast and many pots of coffee were consumed. The hot coffee came in handy especially since there were two canoes after setting off the following

morning that had some "unfortunate circumstances."

Linda and I were blessed to have fellow paddlers come to our aide and to others who may have misjudged the river. Our members, are not only kind and thoughtful, but knowledgeable and patient in helping the "neophyte" paddlers.

Thank you Fraser, John, and Rob, as well as all the others who made this trip truly great!



Mary Z's untiring effort to make sure we were well fed, with healthy, tasty food. For some of us it was the first time we had ever seen or tasted food from Dutch Ovens..... (they can really weigh down some canoes - ask Pauline about that sometime.)



Serving up the cherry cobbler.

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Houston Canoe Club
Waterline



www.houstoncanoeclub.org :: Volume 54 :: Jan/Feb 2006

Classifieds

Post your equipment for sale here! Personal ads for items for sale and items "wanted to buy" are run free of charge. Please submit all items to Jo Anne at joanne8678@yahoo.com.

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Upcoming Trips

Please note that there are new written guidelines for establishing a Houston Canoe Club trip. Please contact Anne Olden, Fleet Captain if you need more information.

Feb. 11, 2006 Village Creek

Put in: bridge over creek at hwy 418 (east of Kountze)
take out: bridge at 327 (west of Silsbee)

Village Creek is usually considered a flat but moving water trip. Water level and weather can affect necessary skill level. Non-ACA members must pay \$10. Be sure to call the trip coordinator if you have questions or would like to attend.

Beginner 2: Familiarity with basic strokes and can make the boat go straight on flat water typically experienced on Armand Bayou.

Contact John or Cindy Bartos of HCC by phone 713-694-6697, or by email jbartos@ix.netcom.com.

March 4-5 San Marcos River Cleanup on Saturday; Sunday paddle in the area

Join people from throughout Texas as we clean up a favorite river. HCC cleans from Pecan Park to Spencer's campground. This year we'll divide into 2 groups: those with moving water skills from Pecan Park to Sculls; those less comfortable on moving water from Sculls to Spencers. Flatwater cleanup in City Park; walking cleanups also needed. FREE camping at Spencer's or Pecan Park. FREE dinner on Saturday night. Sun. paddle to be determined. Sanctioned by American Canoe Assoc. Non-ACA members must pay \$10.

Novice 1: ~Good ability to execute basic strokes, can maneuver the boat on moving water, is aware of basic river safety and can confidently avoid hazards and strainers frequently experienced on Texas' Colorado River or the Buffalo Bayou at a good flow rate.

Contact Ken Anderson by phone 281-856-9388, or by email klandrsn@hal-pc.org.

March 31-April 2 First Annual Texas Gulf Coast Sea Kayak Symposium

Austin Outdoor Gear and Guidance is hosting this event at San Luis Pass (south of Galveston). For more info see website www.kayaktexas.com/symp06.htm

(Not a Houston Canoe Club event)

Skill level rating shown below does not apply to this event.

Beginner 1: Never paddled before.

Contact Mike by email mike@kayaktexas.com.

March 31-April 2 La Louisianne Freestyle Symposium Mandeville, Louisiana

Expert canoe instruction (solo and tandem) on quietwater to improve paddling skills, with an emphasis on Freestyle techniques at the advanced level.

See website for details: www.laloucanoe.com

(not a Houston Canoe Club event)

Skill level rating shown below does not apply to this event.

Beginner 1: Never paddled before.

Contact John Steib by phone 225-654-5224.

April 2 East Fork/West Fork Challenge Race

This 16 mile race starts at 5 A.M. in Lake Houston State Park and traverses both the East and West Forks of the San Jacinto River. For more info, go to luv2paddle.com and click on the barely visible text just above the opening picture to get into the site. See the East Fork/West Fork Forum for details on registration, boat classifications, etc.

Not a Houston Canoe Club event.

Contact Randall Kissling by email TXSven@aol.com.

4/8-4/9 Hidalgo Falls Festival

There will be many different activities available including a float to Washington on the Brazos, long distance race, whitewater competitions and boat exhibitors. See www.txrivers.com and go to Hidalgo Falls for more details. Primitive camping is available on site.

Admission fee charged, which will be used for Hidalgo Falls improvements. Skills needed depend on water level & river section. Not a Houston Canoe Club event.

Novice 1: Good ability to execute basic strokes, can maneuver the boat on moving water, is aware of basic river safety and can confidently avoid hazards and strainers frequently experienced on Texas' Colorado River or the Buffalo Bayou at a good flow rate.

Contact Mark Andrus by phone 979-849-4738, or by email mandrus@brazoria.net.