



Houston Canoe Club
Water Line



www.houstoncanoeclub.org :: Volume 55 :: March 2006

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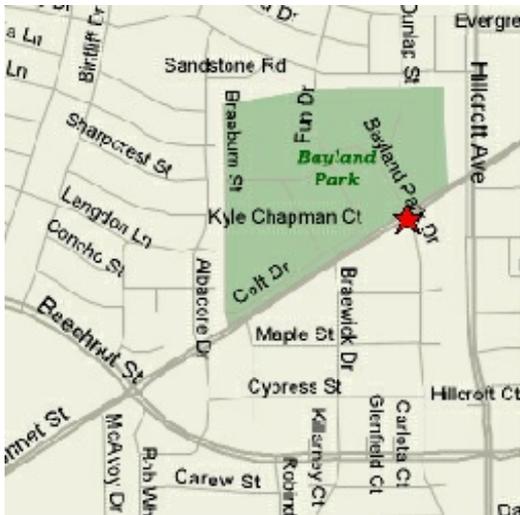
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Meeting Announcement!

The HCC meeting on March 8 will feature Jerry Hopkins, Region 4 Director of TP&W. Region 4 includes 12 locations, among them Village Creek, Sheldon Lake and Lake Texana. Mr. Hopkins has worked in the TP&W system for 23 years. He will discuss the failure of appropriations to match rising expenses. He will share how the shortfall has been handled over the past 5 years, what is being done to mitigate the shortfall, and the importance of state parks to local economies.

The meeting begins at 7 PM at Bayland Park, 6400 Bissonnet, in the community building. The park is located just west of Hillcroft on Bissonnet.



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A Note From the Editor

by Jo Anne Johnson

Well, spring is finally showing its face around our area, with warmer weather and spring showers that will hopefully start filling our rivers, lakes and streams again. Take advantage of it all this season. Paddle safely, paddle friendly, and paddle a lot.

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SUMMARY OF TEXAS RIVER PROTECTION ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

March 5, 2006 at Pecan Park Retreat, Martindale, Texas

By Anne Olden

- Roy Edwards, landowner on the San Bernard River, discussed the silting over of the mouth of the River and efforts to reopen it. The local economy and wildlife sanctuaries have been adversely affected. He asked for TRPA support to communicate the need for the river to flow. For additional information on this topic, go to sanbernardrivers.com
- Ed Lowe, TRPA Board Member and President of Friends of the Brazos River, said the Brazos River Authority has applied to TCEQ for all the unappropriated water rights in the river. Ed's group is contesting this application and working to inform riverside landowners and others about the value of maintaining water in the river. There is a cleanup on the river near Glen Rose on April 1. For more information about FBR, go to the TRPA website, txrivers.org and click on the FBR link.
- Steve Daniel, TRPA Board Member and driving force behind the development of Hidalgo Falls, has been approached by a Brazos County Commissioner regarding the commissioner's desire to establish a canoe launch/park on the Brazos River. The commissioner needs ideas for funding this area. Several resources were suggested.
- Jim Hannah, from Bandera, discussed the need for instream and groundwater flow studies of the Medina River watershed. It is important to know water availability in the rapidly developing area north and west of San Antonio. TRPA agreed to write a letter supporting a study by the USGS.
- Michael Van Winkle, TRPA Board Member and longtime Kerrville resident, gave the background of a rock crushing operation recently started in the community of Center Point on the bank of the Guadalupe River. This is a popular area for HCC paddlers. TRPA, on behalf of several local landowners, has requested a contested hearing on a TCEQ air quality permit for the business. There may be negative impacts on the river from this as well.
- Tom Goynes, TRPA President, said the Rio Vista rapids project to replace the deteriorating dam, is on track.

JOIN TRPA TO SUPPORT EFFORTS TO PROTECT YOUR LAKES & RIVERS

I have membership applications (just \$25 to join) and bumper stickers (just \$1).



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LaLou Canoe

by John Steib

Obedience lessons for your canoe, tandem or solo, that's what La Louisiane Canoe Symposium is all about. La Lou to most, is an open canoe symposium for any level, beginner to advanced. It usually consists of about 12 to 14 instructors and 40 to 50 students and is held in Louisiana at the beginning of April at a private group camp which features bunkhouses, a dining hall, and private pond. La Lou 06 will be on March 31, April 1 & 2, 2006. Unfortunately camping is not allowed but the bunkhouse rate is the same as a campsite in the nearby State Park and camping gear does not have to be hauled across the country. The food issue is conveniently handled at an on site mess hall and anyone who has attended will testify that the food is very good. Full breakfasts, and real Cajun cuisine are featured (that means not overly hot as some seem to believe). We usually have a music jam around a campfire ring on Sat. night.

We have a lot of fun, but the main emphasis is instruction. Orientation, class assignments, and introductions are held after Friday supper. The classes are 3 hours each on Sat. morning, again that afternoon, and Sunday morning. We meet great paddlers from all over the world, eat well, and learn a lot. The first Freestyle Development Workshop was held on this site in 1992, so 2006 will make 14 years of instruction there.

For details go to the website at laloucanoe.com

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Clear Creek plans progressing

By: Colleen O'Brien

Did you know at one time there was a ferry in Friendswood?

What is known is that around the turn of the 19th century, Frank J. Brown, the credited founder of Friendswood, "visioned Clear Creek as a great ship channel," and "before cheap motor transportation and good roads, large barges pulled up to the mouth of Coward's Creek hauling rice and lumber."

Friendswood's founder would have been proud of some of his town's citizens last Wednesday night as they met at South Shore Harbor for a Clear Creek Nature & Tourism Council (CCNCTC) meeting.

Friendswood City Council Member Mel Measles, heading up the Budget and Finance Committee, was there, as well as Friendswood City Council Member Laura Ewing, working with the Development and Fundraising Committee. The CCNCTC, created a year and a half ago, is charged with coming up with a master plan for viable ecotourist dollars for the Clear Creek Watershed and its surrounding municipalities.

These municipalities include: Friendswood, Pearland, Alvin, Manvel, League City, Webster, Nassau Bay, Kemah, Clear Lake Shores, Seabrook, El Lago, Taylor Lake Village, Houston, Shoreacres, La Porte, Pasadena, and Deer Park. The Friendswood Development Corporation is in the process of donating land to the city of Friendswood, to be earmarked as a nature area for the city, said Ewing. Friendswood Mayor Kim Brizendine, though not in attendance, had, at a prior City Council meeting suggested that municipalities be encouraged not to build on the flood plain or in the flood way.

Brizendine also had said that the CCNCTC needs to build bridges with both legislators in Austin, and with developers - to help them understand the benefits of being proactive with Mother Nature.

"We all have common goals and we all need to be working together," was the common refrain heard at the meeting Wednesday night.

The CCNCTC is distributing a city/county survey to the Clear Creek community. Survey questions include: Do you have public access to Clear Cree for kayaks and canoes? If so, is it in public parks or on a city right of way? Is it marked for this and are there signs directing the public to these areas? Do you have any locations that birds or wildlife can be observed? Are these in city parks or on city land? Are there observation decks, elevated platforms, or areas that observation will not disturb the birds or wildlife?

Are there historical sites or museums in your city? Are there special events planned around these locations? Do you have hike and bike trails? Within your city, do you have groups that produce plays, musicals, concerts, art shows, or displays?

In your city do you have businesses that sell sporting goods, rent canoes or kayaks, rent scuba tanks or gear, rent bicycles, schedule interpretive tours of the creek or areas within the watershed?

The survey is being conducted by CCNCTC Committee Co-chair and Friendswood resident Judy Kimball. Pearland's Mayor Tom Reid was at the meeting. He heard a Council member mention that their next stumbling block is gathering monetary resources to become a 501(c)3

organization.

Reid promptly waved a \$100 bill in the air, donated the money to the cause, and then challenged board members to each come up with \$13.50 for their tax-exempt status. Representatives from the Galveston Bay Estuary Program (GBEP), the Bayou Preservation Association, and the Houston Canoe Club, were on hand to spread the word about their upcoming events.

"Galveston Bay was designated an estuary of national significance in 1989," said one GBEP representative. "We want folks to be involved in the future of Galveston Bay, but we like to keep the kids busy doing fun things. So we're offering Community Open Houses, from 1-5 p.m., with free refreshments, free give-aways for kids and adults, and door prize drawings."

GBEP Open House events around the Bay are: Saturday, March 4, Bear Creek Community Center, 3055 Bear Cree Drive; 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; and Sunday April 2, National Marine Fisheries Service, 4700 Avenue U., Galveston.

For more information call 281-218-6461 or go to www.gbep.state.tx.us

"We've been working on freshwater management, shoreline management, water quality projects, and public outreach," another ecotourism advocate said. "We'll be asking corporations, civic groups, churches, and Rotaries, to get involved and have a say in the future of Galveston Bay."

Eric "Eyes on the Bayou" Ruckstuhl, from the Bayou Preservation Association, made a stunning presentation of his canoe rides on the bayous and creeks in the area. Ruckstuhl's canoed a large part of Clear Creek and has an online column called "Canoeing Houston's Bayous and Creeks."

Ruckstuhl called Clear Creek "one of the most beautiful wild streams in the Houston area," saying "It has been compared to streams in the rain forest and parts of it also resemble the Big Thicket."

Ruckstuhl went on to say that most of the mid-section of the creek, including a paddle trail from 1776 Memorial Park, to Oxnard Park, a 3 ½ mile trip, is a great experience and has large pines and hardwoods along the banks.

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Chocolate Bayou an Easy Run

by Anne Olden



February 4 was a perfect day to paddle. The morning was cool and clear, and the day warmed gently. The parking area for the put-in is just off State Rd. 35, about ¼ mile below FM 2917 in Brazoria County. There is no sign, except that you have just crossed the Bayou before you turn left (assuming you're heading south). Dave Ramsey, trip co-coordinator, described it well in saying that there are two driveways to the put-in. This location is a good day trip for those living in the south and southeast of Houston.



Fourteen paddlers, including eleven HCC members and three guests, met about 9 a.m. Dave very generously brought equipment for people who did not have their own. Laura Faulkenberry, Wendy MacArthur and Michael Turner used Dave's kayaks. Mitch and Meredith Catrett brought their new Wenonah tandem; Lorin and Nadira Martin brought small 25 pound sea kayaks – a joy to lift. James Keen, a guest, brought an old Wenonah Solo Plus that he'd bought on e-bay and repaired. New member Ed Mayo paddled a beautiful sea kayak that he'd made from a kit. Mark Andrus paddled his Caption solo. Rheda Boardman borrowed one of Dave's kayaks; Rheda is a Red Cross instructor and offered paddling advice. John and I tandemed our Legend. Dave zipped around in his whitewater kayak, offering tips to the new paddlers.



We started about 10:15, after Dave gave a safety talk and explained the portage about 3 ½ miles into the 6 mile trip. There were a few minor strainers, but no flow at this low level. About noon we stopped at the dam, a concrete barrier which blocks saltwater from Galveston Bay from coming up the Bayou and contaminating this water, which is used for irrigation. The saltwater barrier should always be portaged, never run. Although the water was well below the dam, there were still muddy/slippery places on top, so we disembarked gingerly. This was snack time, a chance to stretch legs.

Below the dam the banks are more heavily wooded. The take-out is in a park near Liverpool. We helped each other out of our boats and lunched on the picnic tables under the trees. Ed Mayo shared beautiful 8 1/2 x 11 photos he'd taken at Armand Bayou, Caddo Lake, and Buffalo National River. We hope he'll show us some of them at a meeting. There is no drinking water available on the trip, and there are no restrooms. Special thanks to Dave for bringing boats and equipment.



San Marcos River Cleanup

by Cecilia Gill

Instead of being smart and going up to pecan park retreat friday night, we waited to leave saturday morning. first, I woke up late, which should have only put us about half an hour behind. Then, there was something going on on I-10 headed west, so we sat for an hour between Voss and Fry road. As a result, we got there an hour and a half late, about 10:30ish. then, after we got there, no one seemed to know anything, so we went ahead and set up camp at Pecan Park retreat.

Then the fun started. I got our two little whitewater kayaks off the jeep and suited up my two boys (ages 2 and 5) in their wet suits. Mokai, (2 years old) had a fit because he didn't want to wear his pfd. I made it very clear, "no pfd, no river." He relented, with much complaining. Then, instead of riding with Lonnie in his kayak which I had tied to mine to tow it, he insisted on riding on the back of mine, sitting with his feet in the boat right behind me. this put me in a wierd position, so that my feet eventually went numb. Once i convinced him to get in the other boat with his big bro, we set off to gather trash in the flat water area along Pecan Park and a little further upstream.

I started off trying to put the trash in a trash bag, which became a problem that i won't bore you with. so then, I had the brilliant idea of just putting the cans and plastic bottles (pretty much all we found) in the boy's kayak and in mine, the idea being that we would bag the trash after we got back to pecan park. I heard a splash behind me. I looked, and it just looked like the boys were splashing their hands in the water. They were laughing, having a great time. I heard another splash a little later, and realized that mokai was tossing the trash BACK into the river! "No, no!" I told him. "We're trying to CLEAN the river, not dirty it!" so I had to go back and re-pick up the cans that they threw in. Then, around 3:30 or 4:00, the boys were tired of sitting in the boat and wanted to jump in. So we went back, and swam around by the little rapid at Pecan Park.

That night, after the wonderful fish fry dinner at Spencer's, the boys conked out early, and so did I.

Sunday morning, we played some more in the river, paddled some, swam some, and generally had a great time. Bob Foote was there teaching a class. Lonnie wants a paddle next time... and both boys want to go through the rapids. Maybe they're ready for that, maybe not... but I'M not ready for them to go through the rapids yet! I think we may have a couple of up and coming little kayaker's on our hands! Are we ready for this? I sure hope so! I never got any pictures of anything, but Bob Foote did take a picture of the boys in their little white kayak.

Then we packed up to go to a friend's birthday party at Chuck E. Cheese's.... When we got there, Lonnie looked around at the madness in there, looked up at me, and said, "Go back to the campsite? Go back to the river?"

That's my boy!

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Classifieds

Rarely used Old Town Penobscot 16 touring canoe. Red, 16'2", Rolalex. \$850. Contact 281.489.3585."



Mad River Explorer 14' canoe, green, new condition with lite scuffs on hull.\$500 or trade for Old Town Pack canoe.409-925-2249 / TWRDDELES@aol.com

I am starting to look for a good used canoe. Based on the research I've done into building methods/materials I think I should look for either an aluminum, fiberglass cloth (not chopped fiber), or an ABS type, 14 or 16 foot.

I'd be using the canoe only on occasion, normally with someone else, and need something that can handle hitting the bottom and/or bouncing off a few rocks in the rivers around San Antonio.

Does anyone know of such a canoe for sale? I may also be in the market for a kayak as well, that way if I'm going out solo I've got a toy for that as well.

Thanks for any help you can provide me.

Tom Willems
willems5038@yahoo.com
home 210-499-5652

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.



Upcoming Trips

March

3/17 - 3-20 Goose Island State Park/Rockport area.

Four day trip exploring the bays and estuaries immediately around this beautiful area of the gulf coast.

This trip usually requires Intermediate to Advanced skills in open water due to the usually high March winds on the Bay.

Contact Bob Pearson by phone 281-835-5229, or by email pearson9247@sbcglobal.net.

3/25 HCC Annual Burnham's Ferry Exploratory Trip on the Colorado River

13 mile day-trip with primitive car camping at the private property take out.

Meet at Ellinger, TX at 9 a.m. sharp for shuttle to the put-in on private property.

Non ACA members must pay \$10.

On March 19, 1836, the Texas Army crossed the Colorado River at Burnham's Ferry on their way ultimately to San Jacinto.

For the last several years the quest has been to find exactly where the ferry was located. We've been several times and found what looked like good crossing areas with no assurance that we had located the exact crossing. This year, plans are to invite a local historian and archeologist along to pinpoint the exact ferry and crossing.

Beginner 3: Confidently execute basic strokes plus ability to manage high wind and high waves typically experienced on Lake Charlotte or Sheldon reservoir.

Contact Bob Arthur of HCC Member by phone 713-416-0017, or by email rwarthur@ev1.net.

March 25, 2006 Armand Bayou/Bay Area Park Trash Bash

Don't miss the annual Armand Bayou Cleanup. 8:30 to 9:00 Registration and Canoe Launch at Bay Area Park, with lunch to follow at noon. A coordinator is needed for this event. If you'd be willing to do this, please contact Anne Olden at aolden@ix.netcom.com or 713-864-0205

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

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)

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)

Contact John Steib by phone 225-654-5224.

April

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.

April 8, 2006 Cornfield and Cottonmouth Canoe and Kayak Race

26.5 mile race on the Brazos River just south of College Station, taking out above Hidalgo Falls.

Takes place on Sat. of Hidalgo Falls Festival weekend. For race info see

<http://www.downrivertons.com>

See separate entry for info on Hidalgo Falls Festival

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. \$12 admission fee (kids 12 & under free), which will be used for Hidalgo Falls improvements. Skills needed depend on water level & river section.

Not a Houston Canoe Club event.

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

4/14-4/16 Easter Trip

Club trip in the Hill Country, the rivers to watch are the San Marcos, Guadalupe, and Medina.

Watch this site for more details.

Non-ACA members pay the \$10 event fee.

Contact Jo Anne if you are even remotely interested in meeting us. We would like to see you on the river(SYOTR).

Novice 2: Good ability to maneuver the boat on moving water plus familiarity with eddy turns, ferrying and surfing in Class 2 rapids typically found on the San Marcos and Guadalupe Rivers. Able to read the river and identify the eddy line.

Contact Jo Anne Johnson, HCC member by email joanne8678@yahoo.com.

April 15, 2006 REI Boat Demo Day

REI is hosting a boat demonstration day at the Cypress Creek YMCA, 19915 Tomball Parkway on Saturday, April 15. Vendors will bring boats for you to try. Time not yet determined.

4/22 - 4/23 Women's Paddle on Village Creek

We will paddle a section of Village Creek on Saturday the 22nd and stay overnight at a facility in the area: <http://villagecreekretreat.com/>.

The cost of a one night's stay will be split by the number of attendees and we will plan a group supper for Saturday evening and a breakfast for Sunday morning.

Space is limited, so in order to insure a spot we are asking that you pay \$10 at the time you sign up. The money will also be applied to the amount due for the rental of the facility.
A description of the Creek can be found on pages 96 - 97 in Texas Rivers and Rapids or on line at: http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/pwdpubs/pwd_rp_t3200_1047/11_e_tx_village_creek.phtml
Let me know if you want to get on the list for fun, good company and a great spring time paddle.

Mary Carter and Cindy Bartos
cbartos@ix.netcom.com or
713- 694 -6697Cindy BartosCindy Bartos

Contact 713-694-6697 by phone cbartos@ix.netcom.com, or by email Blank: Select this level if this portion is not to appear in the listing..

April 22, 2006 Champion Lake Earth Day Event

Trinity River Nat'l Wildlife Refuge & Friends of Trinity River Refuge will host an afternoon of outdoor activities at the Champion Lake Public Use Area. 11 am-2 pm. Activities will include canoeing, kayaking, boat tours, bird & butterfly viewing, dip netting & fishing lessons in the lake for kids. Located at end of CR 417, 2 miles east of FM 1409 in southern Liberty Co. 10 miles south of Dayton from Hwy 90 or 6 miles north of I-10 at Cove exit (FM 565) Free admission. Bring a lawn chair.

April 29 Texas Kayak Builders Bash 2006

Join folks at Huntsville State Park to see beautiful homemade boats and talk boatbuilding. For details go to www.outdoorplace.org/bash.

(Not a Houston Canoe Club event)

May

May 6, 2006 Medina River Cleanup

Work with folks from throughout the state to keep this beautiful river clean. Free camping and dinner on Sat. night. If you'd like to coordinate HCC's participation, please contact Anne Olden at aolden@ix.netcom.com or 713-864-0205.

June

June 21-25, 2006 Family Paddling Camp

You & your kids can get together with other families to learn paddling skills & boating safety. For kids 7 & up & their families on San Marcos at Olympic Outdoor Center. Cost is \$10/hr for onwater time (about 4 hrs/day). Families may camp at Center or by water. Meals & other activities for families will be coordinated by staff. Updates on website (under construction) at www.kayakinstruction.org

July

7/1-7/9 Carolina Canoe Club Week of Rivers

Rack up some river miles with the Houston Canoe Club while enjoying the gracious company of the Carolina Canoe Club members.

This trip is challenging and should not be taken lightly. Read about the rivers in the area then contact the trip coordinator to discuss the details. On some runs, even the take outs are rated. Sanctioned by American Canoe Assoc. Non-ACA members must pay \$10. For more info www.carolinacanoecub.com

Contact Christy Long of HCC member by phone 281-233-5358 wk, or by email stevechristylong@att.net.

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