

The Pine Warbler



March 2009

Vol.29, No.3

East Texas Nature

Gardening is Art by Diane Cabiness, Texas Master Naturalist

"Nothing is more the child of art than a garden" - Sir Walter Scott

Why is art a necessary part of our life? There is now research pointing to the economic benefits of bringing art into communities. There are efforts to scientifically prove that the arts help influence the education of our children. Art can potentially help improve our children's school grades, and it helps them to interact better with their world by influencing how they think. We are hopeful that in a few years we will have more data to demonstrate these positive effects giving credence to what we all recognize anecdotally today. There is evidence that the arts help slow down dementia as we age, and art can reduce stress on us today.

Aristotle defined art as "our capacity to make." Our gardens are a type of art. And the critters and plants add moving color and sound to this living canvas we call Nature. Some days you will have the usual visitors walking or flying through your painting and other days you get special visitors. Tom & Vickie Barnes in Spring, Texas were honored with the appearance of an American Goldfinch they were able to photograph that was almost solid white. In another yard belonging to Ed and Joan Earles this past January we were treated to the sight of several hundred blackbirds that had congregated on one of their remaining deciduous trees. With a sense of humor Joan spooked the blackbirds with a single word and with a great deal of noise and grace the birds flew next door to continue their raucous assemblage. Not one blackbird bumped into the other during their hasty retreat. The awesome beauty with which the blackbirds moved with ease as they were silhouetted against the light blue sky was breathtaking to behold.

On January 26 about 10:30 AM I spied a white-breasted nuthatch on the handsome white oak that is outside our front door. Each time I got a glimpse of his profile or viewed this delightful bird upside down on a branch searching for food, I had no doubt this was art of the highest quality. Whether you take photographs of your flowers and wildlife or like me snap a memory to be filed away in your head, each of us can consider our gardens a masterpiece in the making.

I invite each of you into your yard to create your "piece de resistance". The arts are an excellent way to imagine a better world to live in. If any

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March Presentation Precinct 4 Parks Projects Presented by Dennis Johnston

Dennis Johnston, Harris County Precinct 4 Parks Administrator, is a man with a vision and that vision is green! Johnston will present the PWS program on Tuesday, March 17, and discuss the status of Cypress and Spring Creek Greenway projects as well as new Precinct 4 parks.

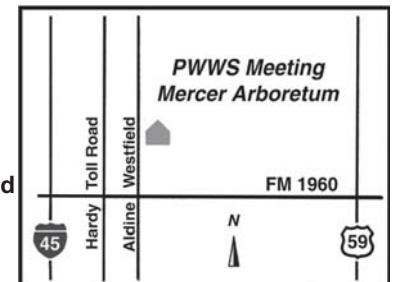
The Spring Creek Greenway was established in 2004 and described as a project to "connect and protect up to 12,000 acres of forest on both sides of the Creek preserving an ecological gem and creating a mecca for ecotourism, education and outdoor recreation just north of Houston." Without people like Dennis Johnston, much of the acreage which will be protected from development would already be gone.

Visitors to the region will be able to explore by foot, bicycle, or horseback between the larger gateway preserves, such as the Montgomery County Preserve, Peckinpugh Preserve, Pundt Park and Jones Park. PWS members will have an opportunity to show Dennis Johnston that we appreciate his work to keep the Cypress and Spring Creek Greenway projects rolling along. Don't miss this exciting program!

Date: March 17

Time: Social 7:00 p.m.
Meeting 7:30 p.m.

**Mercer
Arboretum
22307
Aldine-Westfield**



Somewhere else
in some other dream
the same butterfly.
-Vukasovic





Heart Happenings

The month of March is one of anticipation for sea turtle volunteers and workers. We're wondering if sea turtles will visit the Bolivar beaches that were hit

so hard by Hurricane Ike. Will new sand be placed there in time? Will sand also be replaced along the Galveston Seawall in time for nesters? Will enough debris be picked up along the beaches of the Padre Island National Seashore to make nesting possible?

Kemp's ridley sea turtles have come a long way in spite of overwhelming odds. The huge army of shrimp boats that plied the Gulf of Mexico for decades did not catch and kill all of the female sea turtles before the Turtle Excluder Device regulations were put in place. But thousands were drowned. Mother Nature allows millions of hatchlings to lose their lives in the marine food chain; yet a few survive each year....More and more beaches are being developed along the Gulf Coast taking precious nesting grounds with them. Vehicles roll along many Texas beaches putting nesters at risk. Last year, two adult females out of the water for nesting were run over and killed on South Texas beaches, accidents which should not happen.

The sea turtle "hospital" at the Galveston sea turtle facility of National Marine Fisheries Service has not been replaced nor has the water acquisition system which was also damaged by Hurricane Ike. The US Fish and Wildlife Service which is active in South Texas participates very little in sea turtle work on the upper Texas coast although it's mandated as their job. Texas A&M at Galveston will be coordinating patrolling this year, but money provided by state and federal grants will be running out after this year. We need a sea turtle bailout, but I doubt if one is in store. When I write my next column, I hope we have some good news to report about beaches and nesters.

HJR 18 is moving through Congress slowly and may still be on its way. The Sierra Club tells us this resolution would reverse a policy that would allow highways, dams and other projects to be built without ever checking with expert biologists in the US Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service. Defenders of Wildlife is working on this project so you might want to go to their website at <http://action.defenders.org/saveesa3> and read why they believe HJR 18 should be passed.

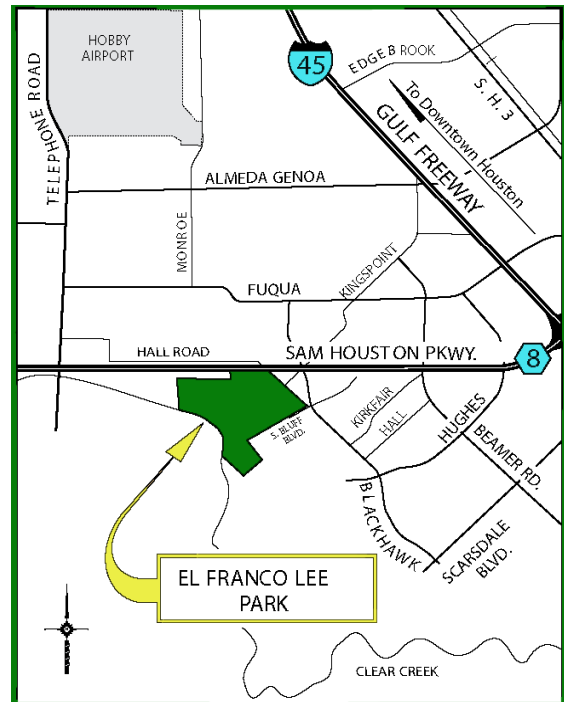


March Field Trip El Franco Lee Park, with Jennifer Backo

Join Pineywoods People as we continue to explore Harris County parks. On March 21, we will meet at the gazebo in El Franco Lee Park and walk around the lake where we will look for late ducks and other wintering species. I was there in late February and found Osprey, Bald Eagle, Vermillion Flycatcher and lots of ducks and wading birds. It is a good place for Vermillion Flycatcher and two Bald Eagles were seen over the park in February. Hopefully, we will also find some early Spring migrants. We will walk around the lake and then have lunch.

The trail is in excellent condition. From there, if we have time, we will continue West to Tom Bass Regional Park which also has a lake for shorebirds, ducks and geese. You will need to bring lunch and drinks as we will picnic in one of these two parks. Wear good walking shoes and don't forget your binoculars. A scope is useful for the lake if you have one.

Join us to explore a new park. El Franco Lee Park March 21 at 8 a.m.



Directions: The park is off South Sam Houston Tollway just West of I-45. If coming down I-45, turn right (West) at the tollway and take the service road to Blackhawk Road (about 3 miles) , go left under the tollroad and continue on Blackhawk Road. Follow that to Hall Street and turn right again onto Hall. The park entrance is on your left. If you are traveling East on the South Sam Houston Tollway, take the Blackhawk exit and continue on the feeder in the right lane . Hall Road is on your right before you will reach Blackhawk. Turn right on Hall and right into the park. If you miss Hall, you can turn right on Blackhawk and continue to Hall and turn right on Hall. The park entrance is on your left. At the stop sign in the park go right and continue to the end of the paved road to the parking lot at the end.

of you have not had success gardening, persevere. Thomas Edison said he discovered “99 ways that a light bulb would NOT work” before he had success. “Colonel Sanders, who at an age when most of us are beginning a peaceful retirement, tried 67 different investors before he found one to back him in making his now famous chicken. The people who built this country understood that sacrifice and perseverance are necessary elements of a successful life.” (Peg Luksik, Ph.D.) Spring is in the air, it is time to get out your paintbrush—the shovel and rake that will create for you a landscape filled with hope of a better tomorrow.

*“Whoever makes a garden
Has, oh so many friends!
The glory of the morning,
The dew when daylight ends.”*
- Douglas Malloch

Please share your nature experiences with me at dianecabinessplants@consolidated.net



Photo courtesy of Eddie and Joan Earles

Education Chair Needed

PWWS needs a new education chairperson, someone with energy, enthusiasm, and resourcefulness. The challenge is how to “hook” more people into protecting our environment. Karen Stockton, present chair, has presented hundreds of live nature concerts for many years now – but she is Road Wary... Won't you consider creative ways through which the general public (children especially) can be reached? Karen will gladly assist the new chair; she just doesn't want the chairmanship herself. Contact Al Barr, president; or Karen (281 444-0343).

2009 PWWS Dues are Due January 1 Please renew your membership today

Membership dues for 2009 are due on January 1 so please take a few moments to fill out the enclosed renewal form, write your check, and return them to:

Piney Woods Wildlife Society
P.O. Box 189
Spring, TX 77383-0189

Also, donations to the Piney Woods Wildlife Society are always welcomed and appreciated.

Members who joined in the last quarter of 2008 are paid up through 2009.

Piney Woods Wildlife Society Membership Form

| | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|---|----------------|
| Last Name(s): | | First Name of Members(s): | |
| Street Address: | | City: | State and Zip: |
| Home Phone No: | Work Phone No: | Email Address(s): | |
| Annual Membership Fee \$15.00* | | Mail this form and check made payable to PWWS to: | |
| Additional Contribution \$ _____ | | | |
| Total \$ _____ | | | |
| *Per Household - Includes <i>The Pine Warbler</i> newsletter | | | |
| New <input type="checkbox"/> | Renewal <input type="checkbox"/> | Rejoining <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | | Piney Woods Wildlife Society P.O. Box 189 Spring, TX 77383-0189 | |



Piney Woods Wildlife Society
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Spring, Texas 77383-0189

Piney Woods Wildlife Society Field Trips

El Franco Lee Park
March 21, 2009 - Jennifer Backo

Bird Walks with Al Barr - 2nd Saturday of every month through May, 2009. 8:30-10:30 at Mercer Arboretum. All that participants need to bring is some binoculars and mosquito repellent if it is needed.

Visit: <http://pineywoodswildlifesociety.org>

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Numbers of Interest

Heart Hotline.....281444-6204



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For membership information write to us at P.O. Box 189, Spring Texas 77383-0189. Annual Dues: \$15.00 per household.

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The deadline for submissions is the 25th of the previous month, earlier if possible. Always add "PWWS" in the subject line. All emails will be resonded to with in 3 days. If you do not recieve a response please call 832 717-3276. All articles are subject to approval by the PWWS Board.

Please send new address changes and corrections to Mike Drummond at drummond@thedrummonds.com and add PWWS to the subject line. Thank you.