Clear Creek tributary lined with Dwarf Palmetto (Sabal minor)
Photo by Eric Ruckstuhl

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For 48 years, Bayou Preservation Association (BPA) has worked to ensure that our region's most precious natural resources are protected. From on-the-ground service projects to behind the scenes advocacy, the BPA promotes the health of all Houston-area waterways.

"Give 5% to Conserve Houston" campaign on Saturday, April 26, 2014!
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Protect and restore the richness and diversity of our waterways through activism, advocacy, collaboration and education.

BPA Vision
- No further degradation and ultimate improved visible water quality
- Successful stream restoration project
- One-Stop Shop for bayou information
- Better watershed management

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Earth Day Lets BPA Shine in the Water Zone

Waste Management’s Earth Day Houston at Discovery Green on April 12 attracted more than 15,000 attendees to the city’s largest Earth Day celebration. The Water Zone, managed by the Bayou Preservation Association and sponsored by Port of Houston Authority and Texans for Clean Water, focused on why water matters and why we need to keep our waterways clean to preserve and enjoy our local bayous. Family-friendly entertainment on the BBVA Compass Kids’ Stage; environmental education zones on air, land, sustainability, healthy living and wildlife; a Green Expo and HealthCorps’ LOCAL FARE touting green products and services were also prominently featured.
Maria Modelska and University of Houston interns organized a rain gauge water game that was popular with children at BPA's booth in the Water Zone.

Volunteers manned BPA’s booth, which drew curiosity seekers wanting to know more about our 2500 miles of bayous and waterways in the Houston area. People of all ages got to experience what we can do to conserve water and how water recreation comes into play through hands-on activities. Highlights included building a rain barrel and learning how to collect rainwater to use in gardens; composting tea in the rain barrel; competing in the kids’ rain gauge race, solving the watersheds puzzle and riding in a kayak on Kinder Lake, which especially appealed to the younger crowd. Earth Day Houston is an important part of BPA’s community education efforts.

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The 2014 Terry Hershey Bayou Stewardship Award winner will be announced at Bayou Preservation Association’s annual meeting on Wednesday, May 7 at the Lora Jean Kilroy Visitors and Education Center at Bayou Bend, 6007 Memorial Drive. Established in 2010, the Award recognizes those who have “demonstrated an outstanding commitment to aiding in the conservation, preservation, restoration or advocacy of Houston’s waterways.” Past award winners include former President George H.W. Bush and George Mitchell (2013); Hugh Barrett (2012) and Art Storey (2011).

The annual meeting, from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m., is open to all BPA members. Lights refreshments will be served. Please RSVP by May 1 to bpa@bayoupreservation.org or call 713-529-6443.
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Shell Styrofoam Cup Goes to BPA and Awty

Winning a Styrofoam cup might not sound like much of a feat. However, to BPA’s Water Quality Director Steve Hupp and 15-year-old Awty International School student Hamid Nazemi, it’s pretty special. The pair won the “Shell Styrofoam Cup” at the Buffalo Bayou Regatta in March for the most trash collected along the race course before the 1 p.m. cut-off time. “We even had seven minutes to spare,” says Hupp. “Hamid was good about time keeping and pace; he is also a strong paddler.”

REI – Willowbrook donated the canoe used by Hupp and Nazemi, which capably handled the estimated 150 pounds of trash they gathered along the way. Some of the debris included a mud-filled tire, lumber, a sheet of plywood and large amounts of Styrofoam cups, plastic bottles and aluminum cans. The “Shell Styrofoam Cup” was displayed at an assembly at Awty and later at the BPA March board meeting. Kudos go to the other four Awty students who collected almost as much trash as Hupp and Nazemi but did not make the qualifying time for judging.
Awty International student Hamid Nazemi and BPA's Steve Hupp stand next to their canoe after winning the "Shell Styrofoam Cup" for most trash collected in the Buffalo Bayou Regatta. They hauled in 150 pounds by the 1 p.m. cut-off time. The canoe was donated by REI - Willowbrook.

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New Life for an Old Canoe

A 40-year-old canoe that sat in Pat Rickey’s garage for 20 years got to see active duty thanks to some elbow grease and a little tender loving care from Austin Canoe and Kayak, facilitated by BPA’s Steve Hupp. The refurbished canoe was used by Hupp and Awty International School students on February 22 in a practice run for the Styrofoam Cup competition in the Buffalo Bayou Regatta on March 15. Awty students renamed the canoe “Yellow Buffalo.”

BPA thanks Champions resident and retiree Rickey, who donated the canoe after hearing that we can always use extra watercraft for bayou clean-up efforts. “I’m so glad my canoe can be used for a good cause,” says Rickey. He also offered paddles and life jackets as part of his donation. You can be sure that the bright yellow canoe with the moniker “Yellow Buffalo” will be seen on area bayous in the near future for collection of trash and debris.
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BPA to Hire Education Director

Bayou Preservation Association is expanding its education efforts with the hiring of a new, full-time Education Director. This person will broaden and enhance our education program, working closely with the Executive Director and the board’s Education Committee to implement community projects, including school-based programs. Recruiting, training and managing volunteers to assist with education projects will also fall under this position. Several qualified candidates have applied, and we hope to make an announcement soon.

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BPA Educates at Scout Fair

Sam Houston Area Council celebrated its 100th birthday at the 77th annual Scout Fair held April 12 at Reliant Arena, and BPA got to participate in the party. Spearheaded by Steve Hupp, BPA sponsored an educational booth which attracted lots of interest and interaction with a choice location, a mix of giveaways (including small native plants and wildflower and native grass seeds) and the display of our watershed map. “I asked many people about their ‘watershed address’ and pointed out the new Get Out Here Houston! website as a way to engage them,” says Hupp.

Scouts from 16 counties in the Houston area participated in the Fair, many checking out the Conservation Corner, where BPA was an exhibitor. Several local, state and federal agencies displayed information and had hands-on activities related to environmental issues, animal science and conservation. Conservation Corner helps Scouts learn how to live in the outdoors and how to preserve it for future generations. Several older Scouts and unit leaders discussed plans for conservation projects where BPA can provide technical assistance.

BPA also plans to host a project site at one of the bayous with the Council’s Civic and Land Stewardship Service Day on November 15, 2014.
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Tires, a Tractor and Trash: All in a Day’s Work on Cypress Creek

Thanks to a grant from REI, 27 volunteers spent part of a recent Saturday on Cypress Creek in kayaks cleaning up debris, both small and large, on this potential future Texas Parks & Wildlife Paddling Trail. Arriving at Collins Park on April 19 at 8:30 a.m., the volunteers were on the water by 9 a.m., paddling upstream to Stuebner-Airline Road, removing multiple tires, a tractor and other trash from the water. Then the group headed downstream gathering more items that do not belong along a waterway, stopping for lunch under the T.C. Jester bridge, where the trash, including a couch, was unloaded.
At 1 p.m., the group resumed trash duty and proceeded downstream to the paddling access at Kuykendahl Road, where they deposited more trash. “Everyone had fun and got dirty on a productive day,” says Rico Torres, president of Bayou Shuttle Service and the event coordinator. “They are looking forward to the May 31st Buffalo Bayou cleanup.”

Bayou Shuttle Service transported the volunteers and their kayaks back to Collins Park after 2 p.m. Trash was deposited in dumpsters, with the tires stacked behind them, for removal by Harris County. Sponsors for the Cypress Creek cleanup, which took place a few days before Earth Day, include REI, Bayou City Adventures, Bayou Preservation Association, Bayou Shuttle Service, Cypress Creek Greenway Project and Kayaking in Houston Meetup Group. BPA board member Jim Robertson and advisory board member Tom Douglas both participated in the event.
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Trash Bash® Draws Record Number of Volunteers

Trash Bash® 2014 at Collins Park on March 29 drew a record 743 volunteers this year, well beyond the 550 people expected to turn out for the annual cleanup of lakes, rivers and bayous in the Houston area. Bayou Preservation Association is the sponsor and coordinator of the event in the Spring area, which is now in its fifth year. The Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) organizes the multi-county event involving thousands of volunteers, now in its 21st year.
Lots of students came out to help with Trash Bash.

On a beautiful spring day, Trash Bash® volunteers picked up 42 cubic yards of trash along Cypress Creek and its tributaries. These included students from area high schools, retirees, corporate teams (including ExxonMobil) and area citizens of all ages who have a keen interest in keeping Cypress Creek and its surrounding green spaces clean and pristine. Site coordinators dispatched 19 buses to 14 different locations, which required good planning and logistics for a smooth operation.

BPA Executive Director Kathy Lord helps hand out hot dogs to hungry Trash Bash volunteers.

BPA thanks all of its staff, board members and volunteers who came out to “Clean It Like You Mean It,” with special recognition to Jim Robertson, BPA Board Member and Chairman of the Cypress Creek Greenway Project, for his efforts on behalf of Cypress Creek, Collins Park and Trash Bash®, along with site coordinators Brittany Tones (BPA Advisory Board Member) and Bruce Helberg (BPA Board Member). Mark your calendars for March 28, 2015 for Trash Bash® 2015.
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GOH Website Brings the Great Outdoors to Your Fingertips

Now Houston-area residents will have a handy, go-to-guide for the great outdoors at their fingertips with the launch of the brand new website getoutherehouston.org. BPA is one of many organizations involved in this collaboration of nonprofits committed to the preservation and appreciation of the diverse eco-systems within the Houston Gulf Coast Region. At the April 10 launch party at the Houston Arboretum (attended by BPA executive director Kathy Lord) Sanford Criner, chairman of the Get Out Here Houston! board, noted that people just aren’t aware of what’s out there. “GOH! will change that by providing a comprehensive outdoors website and App, a one-stop shop for activities and events that are going on that day,” he said.

Whether it’s a canoe trip with Bayou Shuttle Service, a bayou cleanup project, a Bayou HEROns event or Trash Bash®, you can easily find up-to-the-minute information about BPA on GOH!. Other participants in GOH! include Armand Bayou Nature Center, Bayou

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