



The Bayou Beat

Newsletter of the Bayou Preservation Association - November 2014

Memorial Mews Launch, Langham Creek, Buffalo Bayou Paddling Trail
Photo by Eric Ruckstuhl

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Education Update

The Woods Project, BPA and Memorial Park Conservancy will collaborate on a community service project on December 11, which gives corporate volunteers and inner city high school students the opportunity to work together to beautify Memorial Park. The students will also pick up debris along the bayou and participate in an educational activity that encourages environmental awareness and stewardship.

Eyes on the Bayou Update from Eric Ruckstuhl

Boy Scouts and adult participants in the David Wolf Eagle Scout Project workday on November 1 assisted in restoring habitat in Telge Park in Northwest Houston. David, his father and I had paint-marked invasive plants earlier in the week. After the safety talk, we made our way to the "front lines" along the main hiking trail. Some of the volunteers had loppers, some used machetes, and others dragged the cut material to a pile.

Our BPA contractor Dave Handley manned the chainsaw for some of the larger shrubs and

trees to be taken out. We removed approximately 25 cubic yards of invasive species, including Chinese Privet, Ligustrum and Chinese Tallow, as well as a small amount of litter.



After lunch, the scouts from Troop 846 planted native plants in the wetland boardwalk area, such as Powdery Thalia, Halberd Leaf Hibiscus and Redbay. We noticed Chinese Tallow seedlings trying to re-establish in the wetland, but the scouts prevailed and extracted more than 250 by hand. David will do a follow-up visit soon to see how the work holds up. Hats off to Harris County Precinct 3 for assisting us with removal of the cut debris piles.

Additionally, Eyes on the Bayou continues to lead Clean and Green Projects with the Harris County Sheriff's Office (Sheriff Adrian Garcia), which provides inmate crews to work on area parks and bayous removing invasive species and collecting trash. We have recently worked at Bud Hadfield Park, Telge Park and Collins Park in the Cypress Creek watershed, as well as Nassau Bay Peninsula Wildlife Park in the Clear Creek watershed.

BPA Introduces "Preserving Buffalo Bayou" Website

BPA is proud to introduce the website, www.preservingbuffalobayou.org, which provides important information about plans to restore Buffalo Bayou to a more natural state using Natural Channel Design. We are partnering with Harris County Flood Control, the City of Houston, the Memorial Park Conservancy and River Oaks Country Club on what is called the Memorial Park Demonstration Project to address destructive erosion on the banks of Buffalo Bayou near Memorial Park.

Learn more about preserving and restoring this section of Buffalo Bayou by visiting preservingbuffalobayou.org, and check out the dramatic photos of the effects of erosion on the bayou's banks. We also encourage you to read the [outstanding editorial](#) by BPA president Robert Rayburn supporting the Memorial Park Demonstration Project, which appeared in the Houston Chronicle on November 14.

Interested in a Bayou HEROns Leadership Role?

Bayou Preservation Association is now seeking young professionals to serve as Bayou

HERONs Co-chairs and Steering Committee members for 2015-2016. Bayou HERONs is a membership-based group comprised of bayou enthusiasts and partners who support the BPA mission through events, volunteering and advocacy.

In keeping with our mission, we are recruiting members who are committed to improving Houston's bayous and have an interest/expertise in one or more of the following: fundraising, public relations, volunteering, events and networking.

If you would like to be a Bayou HERONs co-chair or part of the Steering Committee or wish to nominate a current member, please email Amanda Brown (abrown@bayoupreservation.org) by December 19.



Save the Date for Upcoming Events

BPA Paddle Trail Committee meeting - January 22, 2015 at noon (no December meeting)

Buffalo Bayou On-the-Water Clean-up - February 28, 2015 (location TBA - pending construction at Lost Lake)

Buffalo Bayou Regatta - March 7, 2015 - Details: www.buffalobayou.org

Trash Bash® - March 28, 2015 - Details: www.trashbash.org (BPA is sponsoring the Collins Park location.)

Earth Day 2015 - April 11, 2015 at Discovery Green. (BPA will head up the Water Zone.)

Cypress Creek On-the-Water Clean-up - Mercer Arboretum - September 12, 2015 (details TBA)

Cypress Creek Regatta - Mercer Arboretum to Jesse Jones Park - September 19, 2015 (rain date: September 26, 2015) details: www.cypresscreekregatta.org

Symposium Educates, Entertains and Yields Valuable Research

BPA's Symposium on October 23 at the United Way of Greater Houston welcomed 171 attendees for a lively and thought-provoking forum focused on "Get Out to the Bayous and...Swim?" An impressive group of professionals from academia, government, engineering, nonprofit organizations and business participated in this year's conference, which is BPA's signature professional education event.

What should be the community's priorities when it comes to improving & maintaining our bayou system?



Vote for your top 3 in order of importance

A highlight of the Symposium was polling the attendees via live voting to collect real-time feedback on survey questions pertinent to the material that the speakers were covering. Sponsor Freese and Nichols, Inc. provided a special set of polling equipment with clickers that interfaced with software on the presentation computer. The numbers on the input pad corresponded to numbered questions which were projected for the audience to see. As people voted, the response charts changed in real time based on the feedback received.

Freese and Nichols' Cory Stull explains that it allowed for valuable data which speakers could use in their presentations, or for the panel session to address later in the day. "It's the first year we did this, and I think it was very well-received," says Cory. "Hopefully, my company can provide the clickers next year so that we can continue this great interactive experience."

Polling results:

- Are the bayous a significant contributor to quality of life in Houston? - 84% - Yes

- What one bayou-related activity do you do most frequently? - 47% - Trails and Greenways (Other choices were Swimming or Skimming; Canoeing/Kayaking; Fishing; Watch Wildlife; Meditate; Nothing)

- What activity is most valuable to the community? - 76% - Trails and Greenways (Other choices were Swimming or Skimming; Canoeing/Kayaking; Fishing; Watch Wildlife; Meditate; Nothing)

- Residents would use bayous more if: Water was clear - 35%; Easier to Access - 29%. (Other choices were: There were more trails; There were more interactive events (like kayak tours or paddle boarding; There were more on-the-bank events (like concerts or festivals)

- What should be the community's priorities when it comes to improving & maintaining our bayou system? - 31% - water quality; 23% - flood control

- If you knew bayou waters were clean but not clear, would you swim in the bayous? 64% - Yes

- Do we need more water quality regulations or do we just need to enforce what we have? 75% - Need better enforcement of what we have (Other choices were: The regulations are good as they are; Need fewer, the quality isn't bad;

Need more regulations)

- Should public funds be spent on identified priorities? 82% - Yes, with greater funding (Other choices were: Yes, maintain current funding; Yes, but reduce funding; No, public funding shouldn't be used)

Bayoutopia Enchants Party-Goers

Many thanks go to Natasha and Michael Bleyzer for opening their magnificent Memorial residence overlooking Buffalo Bayou to more than 300 party-goers for BPA's *Bayoutopia*, our 2014 fund raising gala. Guests were oohing and aahing over the art-filled contemporary home with its sleek design and environmental features focused on energy efficiency, along with admiring the lush grounds.

Co-chairs Mariana Green and Dan Searight, Frances and Nick Stephens and Laurie and Doug Vander Ploeg were thrilled with the turnout and the support of bayou enthusiasts. Guests mixed and mingled while supping on delicious food prepared by Tony's. Music by Lainey and the Tramps and performances by the talented young gymnasts from the Houston Gymnastics Center of the Jewish Community Center added to the fun. Stay tuned for details about our 2015 gala.



Coming Soon - Our New Website

Watch for details about the new **bayoupreservation.org** website coming soon. Website designer Les Lee, of e-Siteful, reports that we are currently in the graphic design phase. "The site will feature an updated look and feel, more interactive features and will be easier to use on mobile devices," says Lee. "We see the new website as an important tool in furthering BPA's mission." Look for an unveiling in early 2015.

And Finally...

The staff and board members of the Bayou Preservation Association wish you a Happy Thanksgiving and a holiday season filled with joy and wonder. It's a time of the year when we count our blessings and do for others.

As you ponder your year-end giving, we hope that you will consider a gift to the Bayou Preservation Association. Your generous donation will help us continue our mission to preserve, protect and restore our bayous and waterways, which are the signature ecological resource of our region.

You can go to www.bayoupreservation.org to donate, or you can mail your check to the Bayou Preservation Association, P.O. Box 131563, Houston, TX 77219-1563.

We appreciate you!



BPA Mission

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