



# Lake Creek Preserve News

## December, 2019



With the completion of the 54<sup>th</sup> Eagle project, work on preserve infrastructure is nearing completion allowing us to soon shift focus to outdoor programs, education and the canoe trail. Aside from maintenance, remaining work in the preserve includes: addition of a kiosk and trail improvements at the NE corner of the preserve to connect to the new Christine-Allen Park; addition of a pollinator garden across from the current trail head and painting and landscaping the storage container next to the pollinator garden. This will offer area residents two ways to access the preserve and help offer visitors to Christine-Allen park an easy access to the preserve. Physical work on the canoe trail is temporarily on hold pending completion of the new section of bridge across Lake Creek. This will give us time to work on additional access points and evaluate the type of work needed to make the creek easily passable.

Comments below summarize some of our recent activities including improvements to the preserve to make it more enjoyable and easier to maintain.

### HARVEST FESTIVAL



Given the proximity of the Lake Creek Preserve to Woodforest it made sense to coordinate programs where possible. This gave us the opportunity to increase the breadth of activities and increase exposure to the preserve. The Harvest Fest was our first attempt at a joint program. Activities included a petting zoo with domestic animals and a kangaroo, local wildlife, Smokey the Bear, fishing, face painting, making models of local snake patterns, discovering critters that make soil productive, rainfall simulator and bounce house. There was also



information on coastal pollution prevention, native landscaping, safe forest practices and neighborhood pollution prevention.

Next year we are planning to combine this event with the Woodforest Trail of Treats at the end of October when it should be a bit cooler and hope to have a joint spring activity related to some features of the adjacent bottomlands in the Lake Creek watershed. We also hope to have two on site programs related to the local plants and wildlife.

### ROAD IMPROVEMENTS COMPLETED

A portion of the recent grant from the Westwood Magnolia Improvement District has allowed us to partner with Hasara Land Services and several local property owners to add over 200' to the all-weather program/parking area and around 1700' of improved road to the NE corner of the preserve. This will not only allow us to do some programs at the preserve trail head but also allow overflow parking and easier access to the NE portions of the preserve for maintenance. It also prevents mud from being tracked into the program area from unimproved portions of the road to the east.

## **FALL TRAIL MAINTENANCE COMPLETED**

Scouts and leaders from Scout troop 1180 and several area residents mowed, trimmed and removed debris from the trail in preparation for winter visitors. Barring any winter flooding the next maintenance day will be scheduled for sometime in March. A call for volunteers will go out once a date has been set and new volunteers are always welcome. To volunteer or report downed trees/hazards leave a message at [trail@lakecreektx.org](mailto:trail@lakecreektx.org) or in an emergency contact [glenn@lakecreektx.org](mailto:glenn@lakecreektx.org).

## **STORAGE AREA/POLLINATOR GARDEN**

An area directly across from the current trailhead has been prepared to receive the installed 20' shipping container to store our maintenance/ program equipment. That will make it easier to access tools when needed. Per our agreement with Woodforest the container will be painted and landscaped to blend with the local vegetation. The cleared area next to it will be developed as a pollinator garden. Aside from the pad preparation and clearing we hope that most of the work will be done by Eagle Scout Candidates.

## **BIRD FEEDERS ADDED AROUND OBSERVATION DECKS**

There are a variety of birds present in the bottomland forests not often seen in upland areas. A recent Eagle candidate constructed and installed several birdseed feeders within sight of both observation platforms and hung fruit feeder trays around the platform along the blue trail. It is hoped that this will improve the chance that hikers will see some of the birdlife shown on the signs on the platforms. It may take a while for the birds to discover the feeders so be patient.



## **WOOD DUCK NESTING BOXES ADDED AROUND PRESERVE POND**

Over the past several years Wood Ducks have been observed in the pond along the orange trail. The males of this species are among the most colorful of our native waterfowl and the only north American duck that produces two broods a year. It nests in trees generally near or over water. Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was declining toward extinction due to the loss of bottomland hardwood forests and uncontrolled market hunting. The bird rebounded due to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and a temporary ban on hunting. The use of artificial nesting boxes started in 1930 also contributed to it's recovery along with wetland conservation and the support of duck hunters. Today these boxes help maintain a sustainable population. Racoons, foxes and black rat snakes are the Wood Duck's chief predators and the reason for installing shields at the base of each box. Loss of bottomland forests and related wetlands such as this continue to be a threat to the sustainability of the Wood Duck and other waterfowl populations.

## **LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS INTERESTED IN KYAKING AND CANOEING**

We are ready to grow our committee of those interested in a canoe/kayak trail to help identify access points and survey obstivals. Even though the clearing is delayed we have some safety and planning that needs to be completed before we get in the water. Those interested should contact us at [trails@lakecreektx.org](mailto:trails@lakecreektx.org).

## **FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF LAKE CREEK GREENWAY PARTNERSHIP NEEDED**

We recently received a \$2500 grant from the Hauber Foundation to help support a Project Wild Workshop and improve our outdoor educational programs. While we have been successful in

receiving a number of grants to support programs and improvements to the preserve, we still need some community support to cover annual operating expenses. Since we are entirely volunteer run at this point our overhead is very modest at around \$3,000/year. This includes annual expenses related to insurance, PO Box, web site hosting etc. Donations are welcome and can be made through our web site. In addition, the Lake Creek Greenway Partnership is registered with Amazon Smile, iGive and Kroger as a relatively painless way to support us if you shop through any of those organizations. A small % of each purchase is donated to us if you specify us as a recipient.