



# Lake Creek Preserve News

## Summer 2022



**OUR MISSION:** To improve recreational and educational opportunities and preserve green space and water quality within the Lake Creek Watershed.

We are currently in the process of reviewing our objectives and developing goals for the next two years. Some of the activities below relate to that evaluation process.

### **NATURE/ECOLOGY CENTER**

The nature/ecology complex has been included in a study of the viability of a regional park on the additional 391 acres recently acquired by the county. Results of that study should be completed by this summer. Meanwhile, we will continue to evaluate all of the potential users of this facility and how that might impact some of the design features.

### **MEETINGS WITH LONE STAR COLLEGE AND MAGNOLIA ISD**

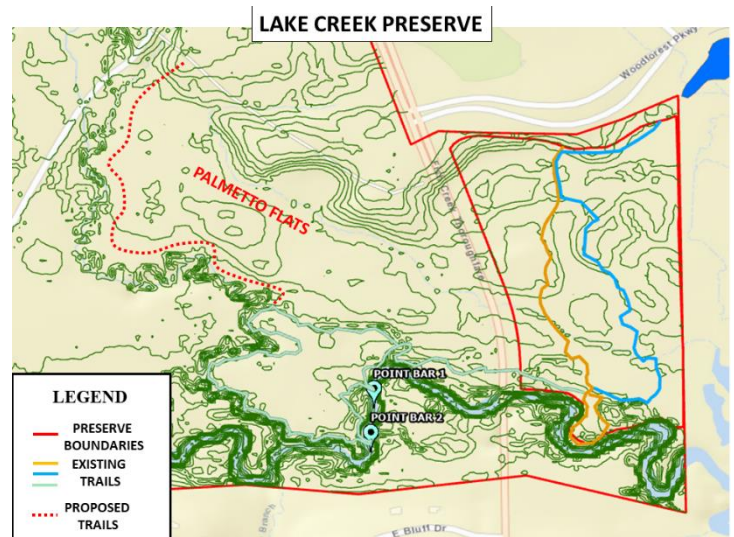
We recently met with Dr. Rebecca Riley, President of Lone Star College, Montgomery and Bob McCallister, Foundation board member, to determine whether there were opportunities to work together on certain educational programs that would benefit from access to the preserve and nature/ecology center. The outcome was very positive and Dr. Riley is willing to give us a letter of support as well as talk to Commissioner Riley in support of the educational center. She will ask one of her deans to find appropriate staff to join us by Zoom at our next board meeting in June. This is a start, and we'll have to see how this evolves, but hopefully they will see this as an opportunity to use the preserve and center for some of their programs.

The following morning, we met with Sheri Gallimore, Science Director at Magnolia ISD to talk about developing a program on the preserve for middle school students to meet science objectives. The trail system gives access to a variety of environments that can be used to meet TEKS requirements. This will also increase awareness about the trails and preserve. We envisioned having stations along the trail staffed by API students, college and/or TMN. Our timeline is the fall of 2023 and spring of 2024 for first programs. This is a program we hope to get the Magnolia Rotary involved in. Our hope is to develop something that will be sustainable and grow.

### **IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING PRESERVE**

**New Green Trail:** The route for a 1.6 mile loop of the new green trail has now been marked with orange tape and rough-cleared. It passes

by great views of the creek, access to sandy beaches, ephemeral ponds, a small waterfall along Mound Creek and a variety of bottomland forest habitats. We expect work on stump removal, trimming and



widening to continue through the rest of the year. How fast we progress will depend on the heat and volunteers. While currently rough, the trail is usable, and for the adventuresome, may be accessed from the orange creek loop.

Several Eagle Scout projects related to the trail have already been completed, including: an all-weather walkway under the Fish Creek Thoroughfare bridges connecting the eastern and western parts of the preserves, a boardwalk crossing the drainage ditch on the west side of Fish Creek Thoroughfare, an ATV barrier at the access to the western part of the green trail and benches along the green trail. Plans are underway to construct steps and geotextiles where the trail crosses a large ravine. (pictures at end of newsletter text).

**Existing Blue and Orange Trails:** On May 21 volunteers mowed and trimmed the orange trail including the loop and entrance to the green trail. Pipevine swallowtails along the creek loop were very active and individuals were observed laying eggs. Work on the blue and green trails was limited due to the heat, but we hope to schedule one or two mornings this summer for additional work depending on volunteers. We've noticed some early rot in a few of the treated boards on boardwalks and continue to



replace them as we notice them or they are reported (**report maintenance issues at [trails@lakecreektx.org](mailto:trails@lakecreektx.org)**). Other ongoing projects on the east side of Fish Creek Thoroughfare include cleaning and repainting several of the boardwalks, finishing/adding crushed granite to the low areas along the NE portion of the blue trail and hopefully convincing Woodforest to add directional signage to the preserve in Christine-Allen Park. Finally, while not everyone using the trail has time or interest in volunteering for trail work, everyone can contribute by removing deadfall from the trails as they hike and reporting items too difficult to move or in need of repair.

## INITIATION OF NEW PROGRAMS

**Guided Nature Hikes:** Started this year with the Texas Master Naturalists Heartwood Section leading guided nature hikes in the Lake Creek Preserve. While the attendance has been light so far we expect attendance to increase with better promotion. May will be the last scheduled tour until fall. We will post the tour schedules on our website under coming events as well as the Texas Master Naturalists Newsletter and a variety of neighborhood media. Links for signup will be listed on the Coming Events portion of our webpage or through the Texas Master Naturalists.



**Wildlife Tracking:** We will eventually be placing information at both trailheads regarding how to report wildlife sightings in the preserve. This will supplement our few current game cameras. In the interim please report any wildlife sighting with day, time and location at [trails@lakecreektx.org](mailto:trails@lakecreektx.org).

**Special Events:** Watch our website to sign up for coming program opportunities related to presentations on local plants and wildlife. The next event is planned for fall 2022.

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

We would like to thank all of the Scouts and their volunteers responsible for the 88 Eagle projects completed on the preserve to date, Covia Corporation and all of the other volunteers who are making the trails possible. Our organization is completely volunteer-run. Our overhead is very low due to volunteer support, allowing us to direct most of the donations to supporting Scout projects and other infrastructure improvements. Even when we come to hiring permanent staff for the nature center, we expect to rely heavily on volunteers for trail maintenance and program to try to involve as much of the community as possible. That said, we hope that you will consider volunteering to help on one of the areas listed below:

**Trails & Grounds Committee-** keep a list of contacts willing to help with trail and grounds maintenance (trails, infrastructure, pollinator areas), keep track of the condition of the trails, schedule trail maintenance days as needed, supervise workdays.

**Program Committee-** Identify programs and presenters for the community consistent with our mission, work with related organizations such as Texas Master Naturalists and the Nature Center Director (when hired) to schedule tours and events for the community, work the logistics of events, promote the events, make presentations as your interest and skill permit.

**Financials Committee** – with the board, develop an annual budget, keep the financial books, track grants

**IT** – maintain web site and keep track of computing equipment and software licenses.

**General Support:** keeping records, organizing and tracking equipment, helping with demonstrations/displays; maintaining game cameras (coordinate with program and trails committees).

**Anyone interested in volunteering in any capacity should contact:** Glenn Buckley at [glenn@lakecreektx.org](mailto:glenn@lakecreektx.org) or Bob Wise at [trails@lakecreektx.org](mailto:trails@lakecreektx.org).

## **DONATIONS**

Finally, we would like to thank The ExxonMobil Corporation, Westwood Magnolia Parkway Improvement District, Hauber Foundation, Ted and Leslie Cummings and an Anonymous donor for their financial support in 2022. It is helping the Scout projects and other improvements in the preserve as well as allowing us to develop the educational programs planned to restart this fall.

# **GREEN TRAIL PICTURES**



**ALL WEATHER PATH AND STEPS CONNECTING  
E AND W PARTS OF PRESERVE**



**BOARDWALK TO WEST TRAIL ENTRANCE**



**ONE OF MANY PONDS ALONG  
TRAIL  
WINTER**



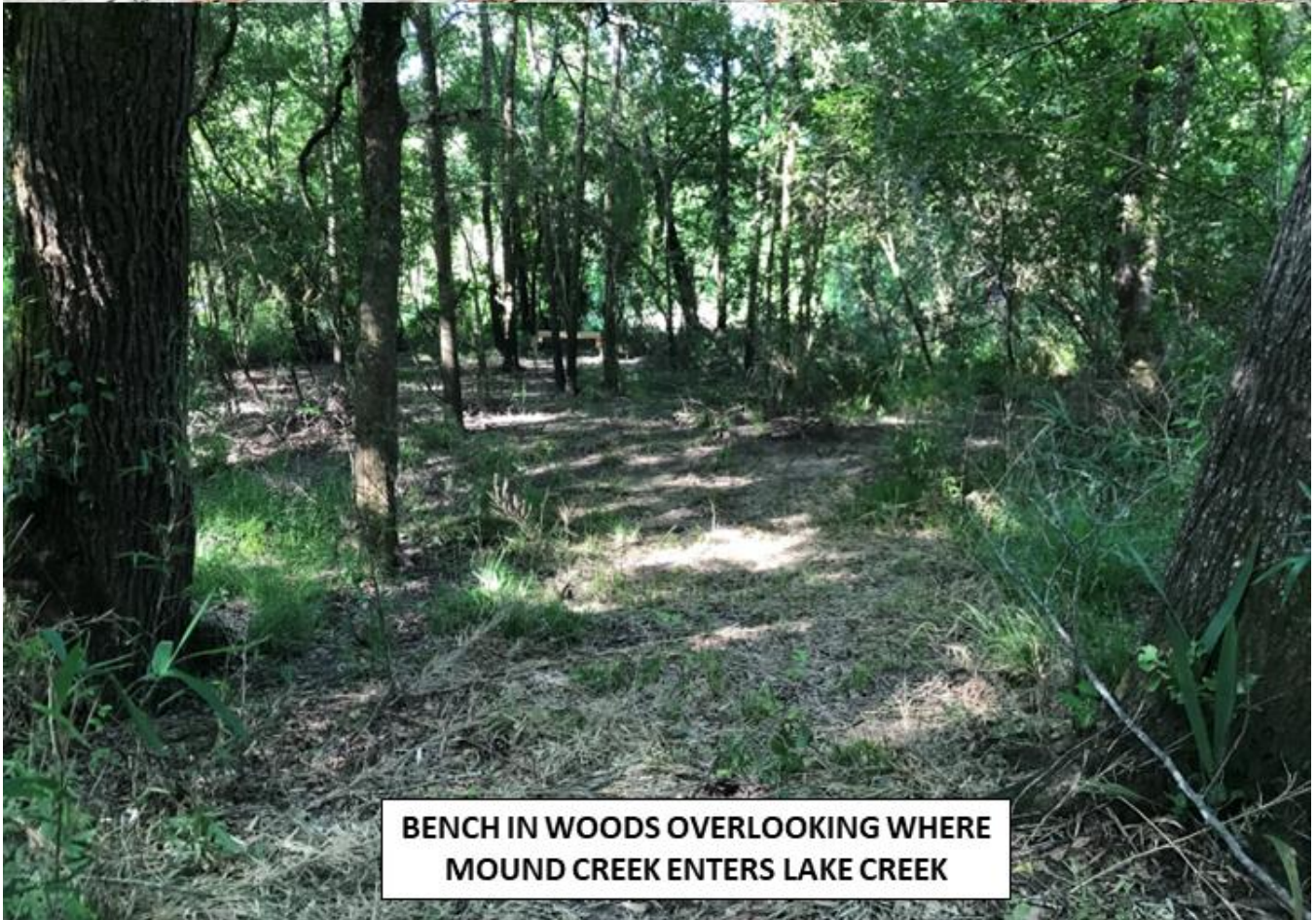
**SAME POND IN MAY**



**ONE OF SEVERAL OVERLOOKS  
OF LAKE CREEK**



**ONE OF ACCESSIBLE POINT BARS**



**BENCH IN WOODS OVERLOOKING WHERE  
MOUND CREEK ENTERS LAKE CREEK**



**WATERFALL ON MOUND CREEK**



**SWEETHEART TREES  
PATH GOES BETWEEN THEM**