



DOCK LINE

Huntsville/Lake Livingston

MAGAZINE

APRIL 2020

Hello Beautiful Boutique 

**Become the Beauty You
Want to See in the World**

See page 8



**GIS at the San Jacinto River
Authority**
See Page 18

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Spring has finally sprung once again! Although we have been consumed with experiencing the devastation of the Corona Virus, house isolation and consumed with worry about what the future has to hold for us this year. We would like everyone to remember it's still a great time to live in Texas. Longer days, great weather and blooming flowers means a longer dog walk and one super happy dog.

We would just like to say thank you to all the great people who read and follow Dock Line Magazine. We have met so many wonderful people and made some great friends throughout the community. Now that the weather is getting sunny once again, we encourage you to look for the brighter days to come. Remember now more than ever how important it is to shop local and support our great community for we are all in this together. The April edition is filled with some great articles, new businesses and interesting facts to help you explore your community and keep you informed. We hope you enjoy it and thanks for reading Dock Line Magazine.

GT2

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DOCK LINE

Huntsville/Lake Livingston

MAGAZINE



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DOCK LINE

Huntsville/Lake Livingston

MAGAZINE



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Huntsville Audubon Society

When: Thursday, April 16, 2020

Time: 6:00 p.m. – Snacks and chat; 6:30

p.m. – Guest Presentation

Where: St. Stephens Episcopal Church,

5019 Sam Houston Ave. (TX-75),

Huntsville, TX

Our guest speaker this month is Jackie Cullens from Kim's Home and Garden Center. She will share information on Hummingbirds and their habitat. Bottled water provided, but bring a snack to share. For additional information email huntsvillexaudubon@gmail.com. All are welcome!

Livingston Trade Days

When: April 17 – 19, 2020

Times: Fri. 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Sat.

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Sun. 9:00 a.m. to

3:00 p.m.

Where: Pedigo Park, 925 US 59 Bypass,
North Livingston, TX 77351

Admission & Parking: FREE

Open year-round on the Friday through Sunday before the third Monday of each month. Trade Days is set in Livingston's scenic Pedigo Park. Shoppers browse through two covered pavilions and open-air lots that are host to a wide variety of food, arts and crafts, collectibles and antique vendors. This great environment welcomes families, day-trippers and outdoor enthusiasts who come to enjoy a few hours at the park. Their goal is to bring a treasure or two home. Vendors with an eclectic selection of wares, there's something for everyone. For more information contact Stacy Edwards or Lynn Riley at 877-824-6653 or email livingstontrade-days@livingston.net

Everything's Coming up Earth-kind Roses

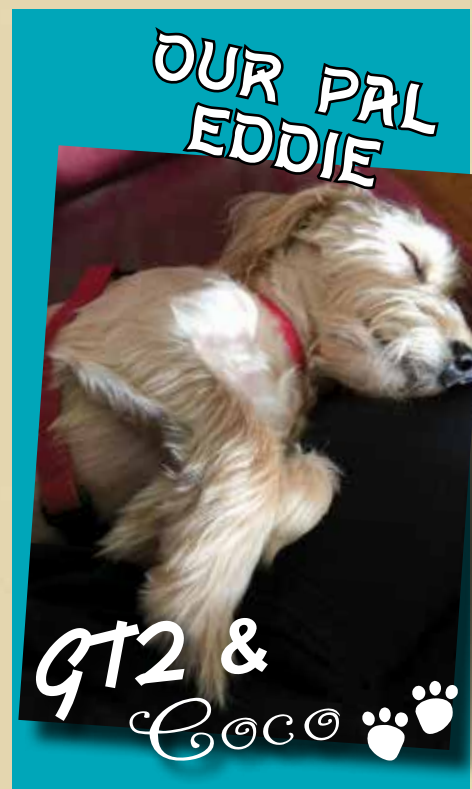
When: Thursday, April 23, 2020

Time: 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m

Where: Shepherd Community Center,
10251 TX 150, Shepherd, TX 77371

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Become the Beauty You Want to See in the World

How Hello Beautiful Boutique helps women feel beautiful, inside and out



BY: BRIAN SHERMAN

"Ok, let's talk. But first let me say hello to everyone." Judy Burks is the epitome of "boutique". Having just arrived to meet with me, I assumed she needed to check in with her employees. Judy then proceeded to greet everyone in the little shop on West Davis Street. That small act could just about sum up who Judy is and the heart behind her thriving store, Hello Beautiful Boutique. I would say it made quite a first impression, but my interaction with Judy wasn't actually my first impression.

Walking through the front doors of Hello Beautiful Boutique is a bit like passing through a portal into another world. Beautiful chandeliers hang throughout the store and the smell of warm vanilla floats in the soft-lit atmosphere. Fashionable clothes and interesting items are spread throughout the store with an invitation to spark curiosity and perhaps joy. Although small and full, nothing about the store feels crowded.

Robin, the store manager, is setting up a display of llama slippers toward the front and immediately greeted me with a smile. It didn't take long for Robin to light up as she began to tell me the history of the store. Even though she has only been with Judy for 12 years, starting back when it was still called Silks & Twigs, she reflected on the original story, which began 38 years ago. Robin's love for Hello Beautiful Boutique and for Judy Burks was evident from the start. "It never feels like work when it's something you love to do." She says.

"Ribbon!" Judy calls out to Robin as we walk back out into the main store "Bring me one of the Save the Girl bags to show Brian." The nickname made me smile, emphasizing that Judy's love for practical fashion and jewelry is only eclipsed by her love for people. To be honest, it didn't take more than a few minutes to realize that Judy and her staff are much more like family than anything else. Sitting in her office in the back of the shop, she joyfully discusses the college degrees that her employees are pursuing. She knows that not all of them will be with her forever and she's perfectly happy to pour into their lives while they're with her and empower them to follow their dreams. Judy is much more a mentor than a boss. Everyone in the shop feels it. "I've always believed that a store is only as successful as the people you surround yourself with and I have the best staff in the world".

It's not just the people who work and shop in the store that Hello Beautiful nurtures. Judy has a passion for giving back. "The big, big thing that we are so blessed to be a part of is Faith Fighting Cancer," Judy passionately brings up. It's an organization that they've partnered with for the past few years and again this year by

Continued on page 10 ☞







donating 20% of their total sales on September 12, 2020. Judy adds what makes it so special to her: "They are run entirely by volunteers and the money stays in Montgomery County." Hello Beautiful also supports charities for animals, veterans, and several others in and around Montgomery County.

One part classy chic and another part hospitality, Hello Beautiful Boutique offers a unique and desirable collection of fashionable, yet affordable apparel, unique gifts, jewelry and accessories. Although it may sound like I'm describing a typical boutique gift shop, that description would fall far short of accurately depicting this place. Everything is intentional, as if the regulars who shop in the store had their say in what goes in it. Such is another reflection of Judy Burks, the store's long-time owner, and her intimate knowledge of the designers and makers of every piece of clothing and every accessory in her store.

I asked Judy what made her want to greet everyone in her store before doing any other business. "Enthusiasm with our customers is what we offer them. Our employees and customers leave their problems at the door. When they walk in our store, it's sunshine and roses. Nobody likes negativity, especially now." Judy talks through a smile.

Hello Beautiful Boutique is centered around stylish clothing, jewelry and accessories, but the overarching vision of the store is centered around beautifying the lives of the people that come through the door. For instance, at one point, Judy explains that they are not a bookstore, but that she found two special books that she had to offer. One is for someone graduating, which she plans to give to her grandson next year, and the other is about the tooth fairy. Such is the case throughout



the store. Yes it has many of the same types of items that you'd find in most boutique stores, but it's also full of heartfelt exceptions hidden throughout the shop, inviting you to discover them as though part of a chic scavenger hunt.

Jewelry by Kendra Scott, bags by Makeup Junkie Bags, clothing by Clara Sun Woo - Judy and Robin, who go to 5 different trade shows a year to discover new designers and trends, know what their customers really want. They make a point to stay on the forefront of innovation and design. While style and name brands are desired attributes, Hello Beautiful Boutique makes a point to also stay practical. Fashionable doesn't have to be expensive. Judy emphasizes that they offer something at every price point. Perhaps even more important is the focus on local artisans and American-made products.

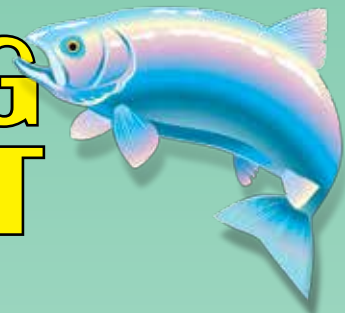
I asked Judy, "What is your vision when it comes to treating customers? What do you want them to know?" She smiles, "When they

walk out the door, they say 'I am definitely coming back. And they do...and they bring a friend.' She continues. "We know that there are so many places that they can go shop, and that we are honored that they would choose our store to come shop."

Of course, Judy talks about all the success over the years not from an "I" point of view, but always from a "we" perspective. Her store and all her success she attributes not to her own efforts, but made possible by the steadfast love and support of her husband of 57 years, Kenneth.

Come experience what a boutique is meant to be (and ask to see one of the new "Sash" bags...wow) at Hello Beautiful Boutique at 3915 W. Davis, Suite 230 in Conroe, TX. Check them out online at www.hellobeautifulboutique.com or call "Ribbon" (Robin) at Hello Beautiful at (936) 756-3700. ♦

FISHING REPORT



By: David Scott Cox

FISHING FORECAST: April is Blue Cat month on Lake Livingston. Time to "Bang the Bulkheads". Conditions are shaping up for the annual Blue Cat spawn. Look for shad on the bulkheads early morning at first light and the hungry Cats will be there. Crappie will be shallow now providing great action. Black Bass and Whites are in post spawn in April and sometimes hard to pattern. With the right conditions falling into place April is a great time to be fishing Lake Livingston. Lake Livingston consists of over 90,000 acres of water and 450 miles of shoreline.



SPECIES REPORT:

Black Bass - {largemouth} Fish black and blue lizards and June Bug Baby Brush hogs around the log jams now. Throw white spinner baits around shallow wood and rocky points. Some good fish still being caught on Charlie's jigs fished around docks in Newton, Upper Carolina and Bethy Creeks.

Catfish - Good fishing for Blue Cats now on fresh shad fished under a cork shallow on the bulkheads early morning. When the sun gets high move to deeper water and fish fresh shad on the bottom. Good catfishing on rod and reel baited with fresh shad in the river channel near Riverside as long as the water is moving. Fishing for Blue Cats on jugs has been good in the bays when the wind is blowing. Harmon Creek is producing Blue Cats early morning fishing under the bird roost.

Crappie - Look for Crappie to move shallow near the banks in upper lake creeks. Bethy, White Rock and Harmon should be good now. Use minnows and

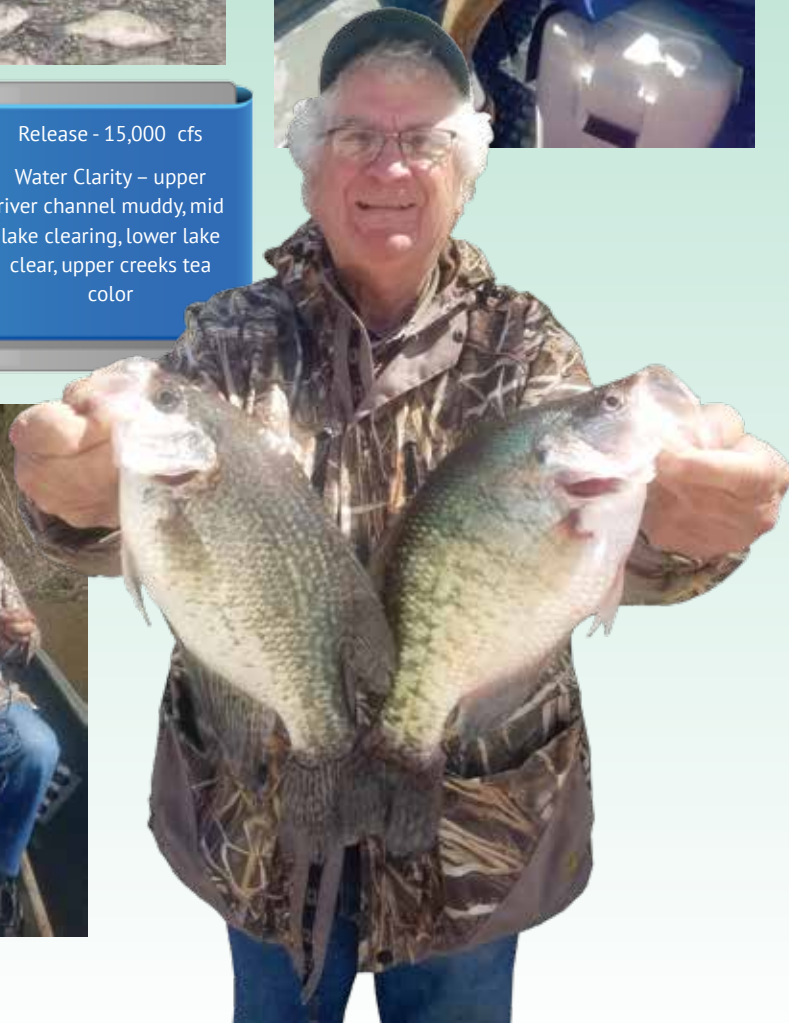
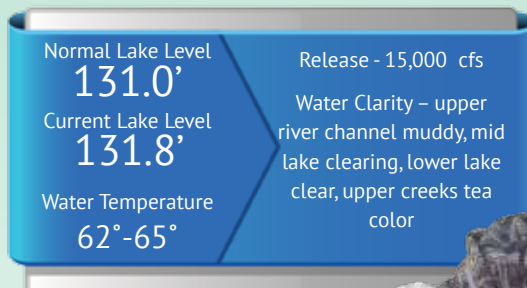
jigs on a slip cork in 2' to 4' of water as water temperature rises.

White Bass - Whites will be scattering out and can be caught anywhere from the Dam to north of Riverside after the spawn. Pay close attention now to current weather patterns and

David Scott Cox
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They Love To Be Petted – Therapy Animals

By: Marilyn Meshell

Last month's article discussed service dogs, emotional support animals, and proposed changes on how airlines will handle those animals. This month we will consider another class of animals that many people have heard of but they may not know much about – therapy animals. Therapy animals are not service or emotional support animals. They do not have the legal rights of those classes of animals. Therapy animals cannot enter restaurants or live in housing that have a no pet policy. Therapy animals do not have the right to travel in the cabin of airplanes with their handler/owner. They have the legal status of pet.

Pet therapy is a unique form of volunteer in which a person and their animal partner use the magic of the human-animal relationship to improve an individual's social, emotional, or cognitive functioning. While generally referred to as pet therapy, the more proper terms are Animal Assisted Therapy and Animal Assisted Activities. Animal Assisted Therapy is directed by a medical professional who have set goals for the individual being treated. Animal Assisted Activities utilize a more informal process and are conducted without medical professional direction. Each therapy team consists of one dog and one handler/owner. Therapy teams work in many settings: visit patients, family and staff in hospitals and nursing homes, work with hospice, safe houses, or visit prisons. Other teams may go to elementary schools where children read stories to the animals with the goal of improving their reading skills and developing an enjoyment of reading. Therapy animals can ease the loneliness of seniors, provide physical and emotional contact for the infirmed, and comfort struggling readers.

Therapy animals come in a variety of species. Dogs are the most common therapy animals but most domestic animals are eligible to become a therapy animal if they have the proper temperament. Some other therapy animal species are cats, rabbits, hamsters, guinea pigs, birds, chickens, pigs, horses, goats and llamas. Exotic animals such as snakes, ferrets, and lizards are not accepted as therapy animals because of a lack of research on their behavior and their reaction to stress cannot

be predicted.

Therapy animals need to be very people friendly and well socialized because their "job" is to visit and comfort people. Where service and emotional support animals assist one individual, therapy animals comfort many individuals. Another key difference to remember:

HPHP Therapy Dogs



Dixie, Australian Cattle Dog

10 years old; therapy dog for 6 years. Visits hospital

Roxie, Chihuahua-Jack Russell mix

5 years old; therapy dog for 4 years. Visits hospital & elementary school
Both dogs work with Marilyn



Leo, German Shepherd Dog

Therapy dog for 1 year
Works with Riley
Works at rehab hospital

service and emotional support animals should not be petted while they are working. This is not true for therapy animals. Therapy animals are there to be petted by many people.

Currently, all our therapy animals are dogs.

The dogs are our individual animals who are our pets and family members when not on therapy visits. To be a therapy dog, a dog must have lived in the home for a minimum of six months and be at least 18 months old. Our members never "check out" a dog from a shelter to use on therapy visits because their temperament is unknown. In addition, taking a shelter dog from one stressful situation and putting them into another stressful situation, in this case a therapy visit, could be harmful to the animal or the people being visited.

Therapy dogs have been temperament tested to ensure that they are relaxed, friendly with strangers and that they show no signs of shyness, aggression or fear. Next, the handler of the dog attends a workshop to learn about therapy work with an animal partner. After that, the potential therapy dog and handler go through a formal team evaluation process to ensure that they are very people friendly, comfortable in a variety of situations, and suitable for therapy work. There are no restrictions on dog breeds as there are some suitable therapy dogs of all breeds. It depends on the temperament of the individual dog. HPHP has had therapy dogs that were Rottweilers, Doberman Pinchers, German Shepherds, and an Australian Cattle Dog as well as Australian Shepherds, Collies, Labradors, and a Corgi. We have large dogs such as a ninety-five pound Great Pyrenes, small dogs such as a five pound Chihuahuas, and many dogs who are in between sizes. Some of the dogs are purebreds and others are mixed breeds. We have two long-haired Chihuahuas who are champion show dogs when not being therapists and a few individual dogs who could use a DNA test to determine their breed makeup. Some of the dogs are rescues and others have always lived in their forever home. Most therapy dogs have four legs, a couple have had prosthetic limbs, and one used a doggie wheelchair to get around. As you can see, therapy dogs come in all varieties.

The banner at the top of this page says Huntsville Pets Helping People (HPHP). HPHP is a therapy animal organization located in Huntsville, Texas. HPHP was founded in 2004 and is affiliated with Intermountain Therapy Animals (ITA), a national therapy animal organization. ITA has established procedures for evaluating therapy animals for temperament, knowledge of obedience skills and role playing of therapy visits that each affiliate, including HPHP, follow. Animals who pass the evaluation and become registered therapy animals are covered by liability insurance. Equally important, each new team chooses where they would like to visit and is mentored by an experienced team as they learn their new volunteer job. If you would like more information about therapy dogs, please visit our webpage or check us out on Facebook. ♦

Back to Health

By: Tony W. DeRamus, DC, CCSP



A Little Bit of Dirt is Healthy

The purpose of the immune system is to allow us to live in harmony with our environment. In fact, most of the trillions of foreign cells present in our body exist peacefully, and in some cases even contribute to our health and well-being. In spite of this, chronic diseases such as allergies, asthma, and eczema, which were much less common several decades ago, have risen exponentially, especially in children,

evidence that certain antibacterial products may be contributing to the alarming problem of bacterial resistance that was initially linked to our improper or over use of antibiotics.

While everyone is busy killing all of those “germs,” they didn’t stop to think about what this would mean for the future generations. Children are now growing up without being exposed to the bacteria, viruses and parasites that have existed throughout the world. In some cases, this can be a good thing. But to children’s immune systems, which are not being exposed to bacteria and viruses like they were in the past, it results in an excessive immune response against routine things, like grass, resulting in allergies and autoimmune diseases.

The immune system has two different components: the cell-mediated immune system and the humoral immune system. The cell-mediated immune system involves white blood

cells and specialized immune cells which basically “eat” antigens, or foreign particles in the body. This helps drive the antigens out of the body causing symptoms such as skin rashes and the discharge of mucous from the throat and lungs. The cell-mediated response is associated with the beneficial acute inflammatory illnesses, and represents the driving out of the infection.

The other aspect is called the humoral immune system. Antibodies, special defense proteins, are produced to recognize and neutralize the antigen. It is a constant humoral response that is associated with chronic allergic-type diseases.

In order to be healthy, one needs to keep a balance between the cell-mediated system and the humoral system, with the cell-mediated system predominating. The cell-mediated response is activated by the natural exposure to bacteria and viruses. Through repeated exposure to infectious organisms, various types of bacteria and spores found in dirt, dust, and animal dander, we develop many immune

response patterns. It is the cell mediated response that protects us from future illness, and develops the type of immune response we commonly associate with life-long immunity. The cell-mediated system suppresses the activity of the humoral system.

If the cell-mediated system is not properly stimulated, it does not fully develop. This can lead to an abnormally high production of humoral system antibodies. A humoral system that is continually running will overdevelop, creating a hypersensitive environment. When infants are exposed to germs early, their immune systems are pushed to go in an “infection-fighting direction.” Without this push, the immune system’s shift to infection fighting is delayed, and it becomes more likely to overreact to allergens; dust, mold, and other environmental factors that most people can tolerate.

Early exposure to allergens and infections also prime our immune systems to resist them later on.

Many studies have provided very fascinating evidence that your body actually benefits from regular exposure to dirt. So when we are exposed to a little bit of bacteria, our immune system does what it’s supposed to: develop a tolerance to it. Here’s what has been found so far:

- Individuals with the highest degree of personal hygiene, those who washed their faces and hands more than five times per day, cleaned before meals, and bathed more than two times each day, were the most likely to develop eczema and wheezing.
- Those who grow up in extremely clean homes are more likely to develop asthma and hay fever than those who grow up on farms or in houses with a little bit of dirt.
- Individuals who are raised with pets, or who have older siblings, are less likely to develop allergies, possibly because they are exposed to more bacteria.

The future of your immune system is in your hands. Make sure you are doing all you can to help build up the resistance it needs! ♦



quadrupling during the last two decades.

Researchers suspect the increase is due to many aspects of modern living including the “hygiene hypothesis,” which blames being raised in increasingly sterile homes.

As society in general becomes more “sterile,” it is causing real problems for your immune system, which is becoming increasingly unable to differentiate between real threats and harmless things like pollen and dust-bunnies.

How many people do you know who carry a bottle of antibacterial hand sanitizer with them wherever they go? Meanwhile, you’re exposed to antibiotics, in your food and by prescription, while most of the food supply is pasteurized or otherwise treated to remove both good and bad bacteria.

Antibacterial products are designed to remove disease causing organisms from external surfaces before they can enter the body. But we’re learning that, in the case of a large group of these products, this is not a healthy approach to keeping disease at bay for a number of reasons. Most important, there’s growing



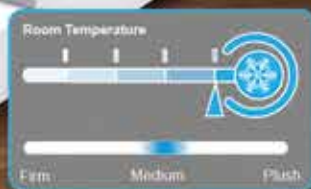
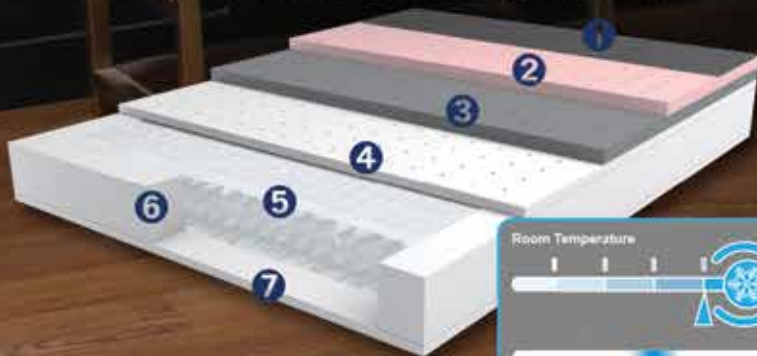
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GIS at the San Jacinto River Authority

Just about everyone is familiar with mapping apps on mobile phones. In fact, most of us probably use one on a weekly, if not daily, basis. These mobile applications are a type of Geographic Information System (GIS). The roads, imagery, restaurants, gas stations, and other information available are all different GIS datasets. These datasets make it possible to zoom in to The Woodlands, search for 'restaurants,' and then populate various restaurant locations on the map. The data also enables the user to see the establishment's name, address, reviews, and other useful information. Most people don't realize they have been using GIS for years.

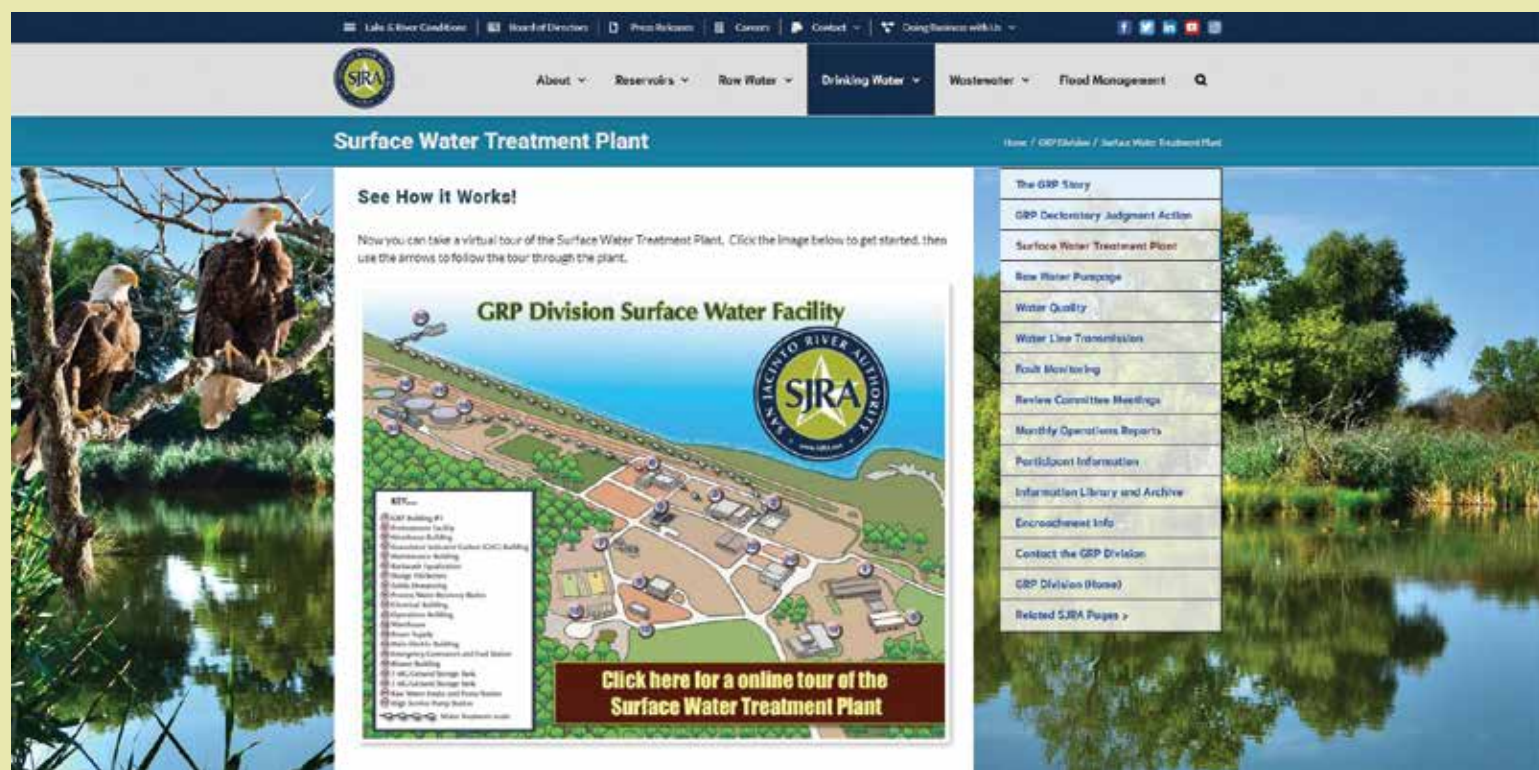
GIS is a technology field that has been around since 1968. GIS utilizes the location, or geography, of objects/features and the information associated with those objects/features for mapping and analysis. So how is GIS being used by an organization like the San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA)?

Geographic tells us the where – location of a water line, dock, or siphon.

er equipment on the truck before leaving the shop, saving time and money.

SJRA also utilizes GIS in preventing future erosion and extensive damage. The Lake Conroe Division uses GIS for internal data collection, dropping points such as animal damage or erosion issues onto a map which allows technicians to accurately map and plan repairs and note trouble spots while out in the field. In SJRA's Highlands Division, GIS is used for assessing the Highlands canal system for levee improvements, vegetation clearing, and new access gates. The collected data is instrumental in mapping future projects and planning budget expenditures.

Most internal and external presentations, studies, reports, as well as the SJRA 10-Year Project Plan use GIS to help visualize projects. GIS is also useful for public education campaigns to show SJRA's work sites within a community and convey complicated topics or messages in a more creative and easy to understand way than words alone.



phon.

Information tells us the details – diameter of a water line, owner of the dock, or name of the siphon.

Systems are the computers, software, data, and people needed to build the data, run the analysis, create the map, and support the users.

SJRA has four GIS professionals on staff who are responsible for building and maintaining data for our Operational Divisions. The datasets and the information associated with them are used in various ways. By using GIS, SJRA can map locations of various assets. For example, the SJRA Woodlands Division operates and maintains three regional wastewater treatment plants, a wastewater conveyance system, five water plants, 38 water wells, six elevated storage tanks (ESTs), eight ground storage tanks, and hundreds of miles of wastewater collection and potable water distribution lines. GIS allows a technician or water operator to locate specific assets for routine maintenance or potential repair. Technicians can look at the valve dataset to find where a particular valve is located and confirm the size prior to a repair allowing staff to be proactive by loading the prop-

Two ways SJRA is using GIS for public education is through the Know Your Watershed campaign and operational Story Maps. Know Your Watershed (www.KnowYourWatershed.com) is an interactive website designed to educate San Jacinto River Basin residents by engaging them in 1) identifying their watershed 2) recognizing flow patterns 3) observing how water naturally drains throughout the basin, and 4) learning important water-related facts in a creative and entertaining way. Viewers can access information by clicking on an "Address Viewer" link and searching for their location, or take a virtual tour with perky water drop SJ Watershed and her friends by clicking on the "Story Map" which features fact sheets, animation, and videos. On SJRA's website www.sjra.net viewers can take a virtual tour of the GRP water treatment plant or type in their address to see if they are conserving our aquifers by receiving treated surface water from Lake Conroe. SJRA has both water and wastewater virtual tours of their Woodlands facilities coming this spring. SJRA Highlands will have a public viewer to track mowing and maintenance schedules on line this summer.

Continued on page 20

SJRA Board of Directors Recommends Renewing Flood Mitigation Strategy

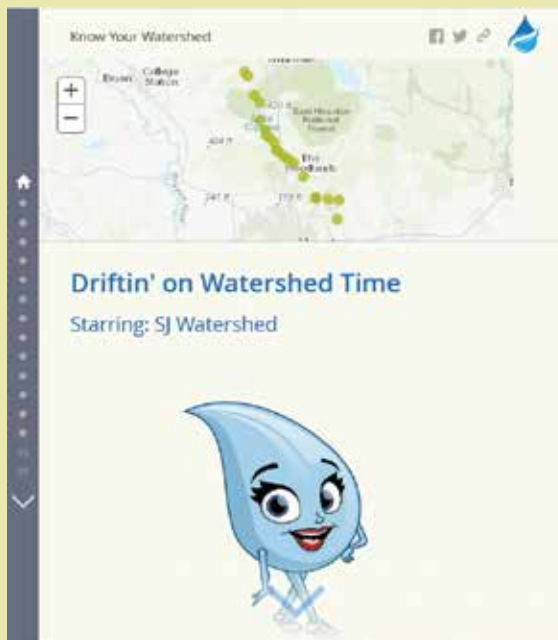
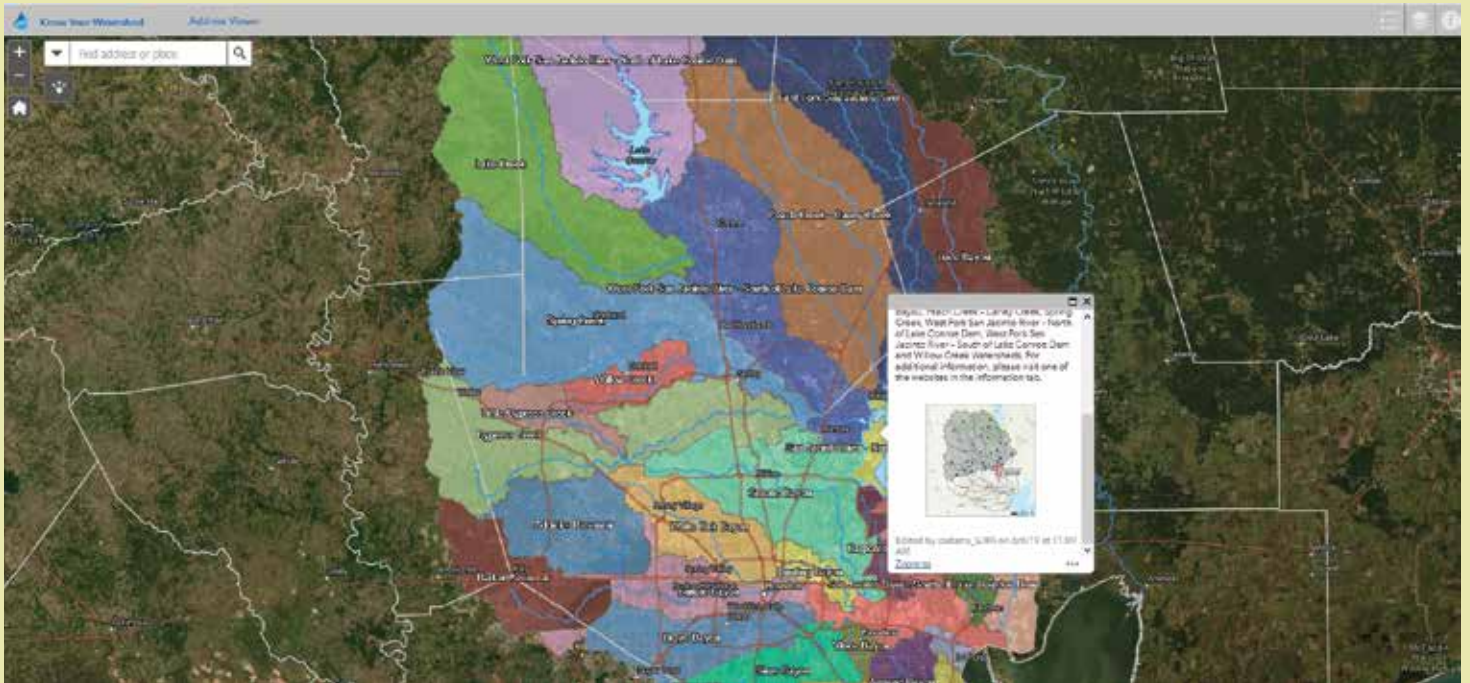
San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA) Board of Directors last month approved a recommendation to the City of Houston (COH) to continue a temporary flood mitigation program at Lake Conroe. The board's vote proposed extending the initiative through December 2022 and serves as a recommendation to the City of Houston who owns the majority of the water rights in Lake Conroe.

At the special board meeting, over 100 constituents voiced their opinions on the initiative to reduce water level in Lake Conroe on a seasonal basis to create extra capacity to catch rainfall and storm water runoff. During the meeting SJRA Director of Water Resources and Flood Management, Chuck Gilman, gave a presentation to the board that included 20 years of rainfall and lake level data for consideration.

The SJRA Board of Directors approved the following recommendation to the COH regarding the operation of Lake Conroe:

- Spring strategy: Beginning April 1, release only an amount of water from Lake Conroe to create a one foot capacity to catch rainfall and storm runoff (from 201' mean sea level to 200' msl). Recapture of lake level beginning June 1.
- Fall strategy: Beginning August 1, release only an amount of water from Lake Conroe to create a one foot capacity to catch rainfall and storm runoff (from 201' msl to 200' msl). After September 1, increase capacity an additional six inches (from 200' msl to 199.5' msl). If a named storm is predicted to impact our region, the COH may initiate an additional release of six inches (to 199' msl) by notifying SJRA in writing of their call for release. Recapture beginning October 1.
- All releases come from the COH's 2/3 share of permitted water supply in Lake Conroe at the city's request. SJRA staff to coordinate with COH staff on the details and timing of any releases.
- If the lake level of Lake Conroe has already dropped to the target elevation due to natural evaporation, no releases should be made.

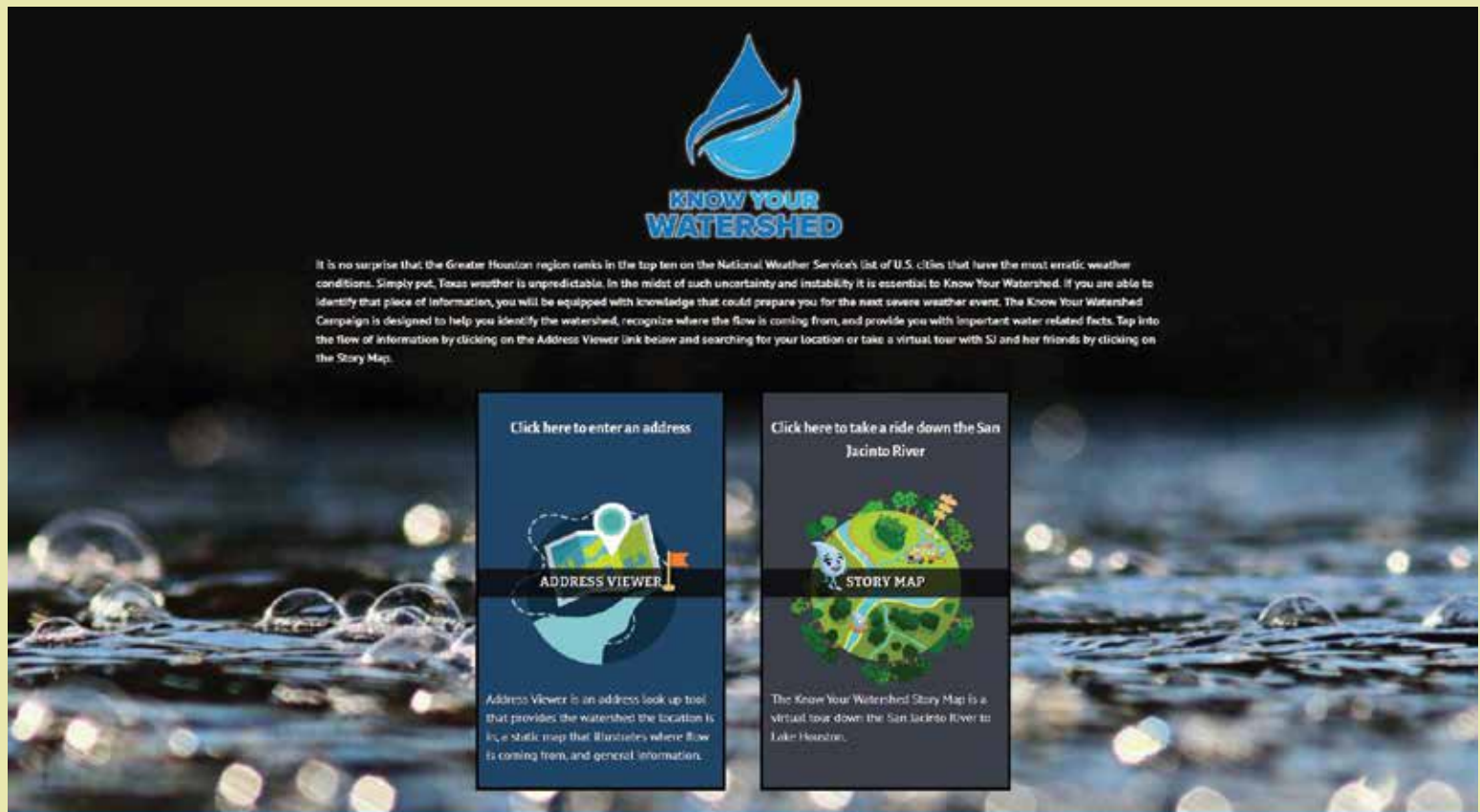
The strategy of temporarily creating capacity in Lake Conroe on a seasonal basis began in 2018 to provide flood mitigation benefits for regional downstream constituents in both Montgomery County and Harris County by catching rainfall and runoff in Lake Conroe.



Created in 1937 by a special act of the Texas Legislature, the San Jacinto River Authority's (SJRA) mission is to develop, conserve, and protect the water resources of the San Jacinto River basin. From managing Lake Conroe to providing water and wastewater services in The Woodlands to operating a water treatment plant designed to reduce reliance on underground aquifer water supply, SJRA has grown from a small agency that primarily helped farmers construct stock tanks for water and soil conservation to a community partner with five distinct operating divisions throughout the San Jacinto River basin. SJRA's operational divisions—Lake Conroe, Woodlands, Highlands, Groundwater Reduction Plan, and Flood

Management—serve the community through municipal and industrial water supply, wastewater treatment, water quality management, and flood mitigation strategies.


One of the major river authorities in Texas, SJRA's mission is to develop, conserve, and protect the water resources of the San Jacinto River basin. Covering all or part of seven counties, the organization's jurisdiction includes the entire San Jacinto River watershed, excluding Harris County. For additional information on SJRA visit our website at www.sjra.net, like SJRA on Facebook @SanJacintoRiverAuthority, follow us on Twitter @SJRA_1937, or find us on Instagram @SanJacintoRiverAuthoritySJRA. ♦



KNOW YOUR WATERSHED

It is no surprise that the Greater Houston region ranks in the top ten on the National Weather Service's list of U.S. cities that have the most erratic weather conditions. Simply put, Texas weather is unpredictable. In the midst of such uncertainty and instability it is essential to know your watershed. If you are able to identify that piece of information, you will be equipped with knowledge that could prepare you for the next severe weather event. The Know Your Watershed Campaign is designed to help you identify the watershed, recognize where the flow is coming from, and provide you with important water-related facts. Tap into the flow of information by clicking on the Address Viewer link below and searching for your location or take a virtual tour with SJ and her friends by clicking on the Story Map.


Click here to enter an address



ADDRESS VIEWER

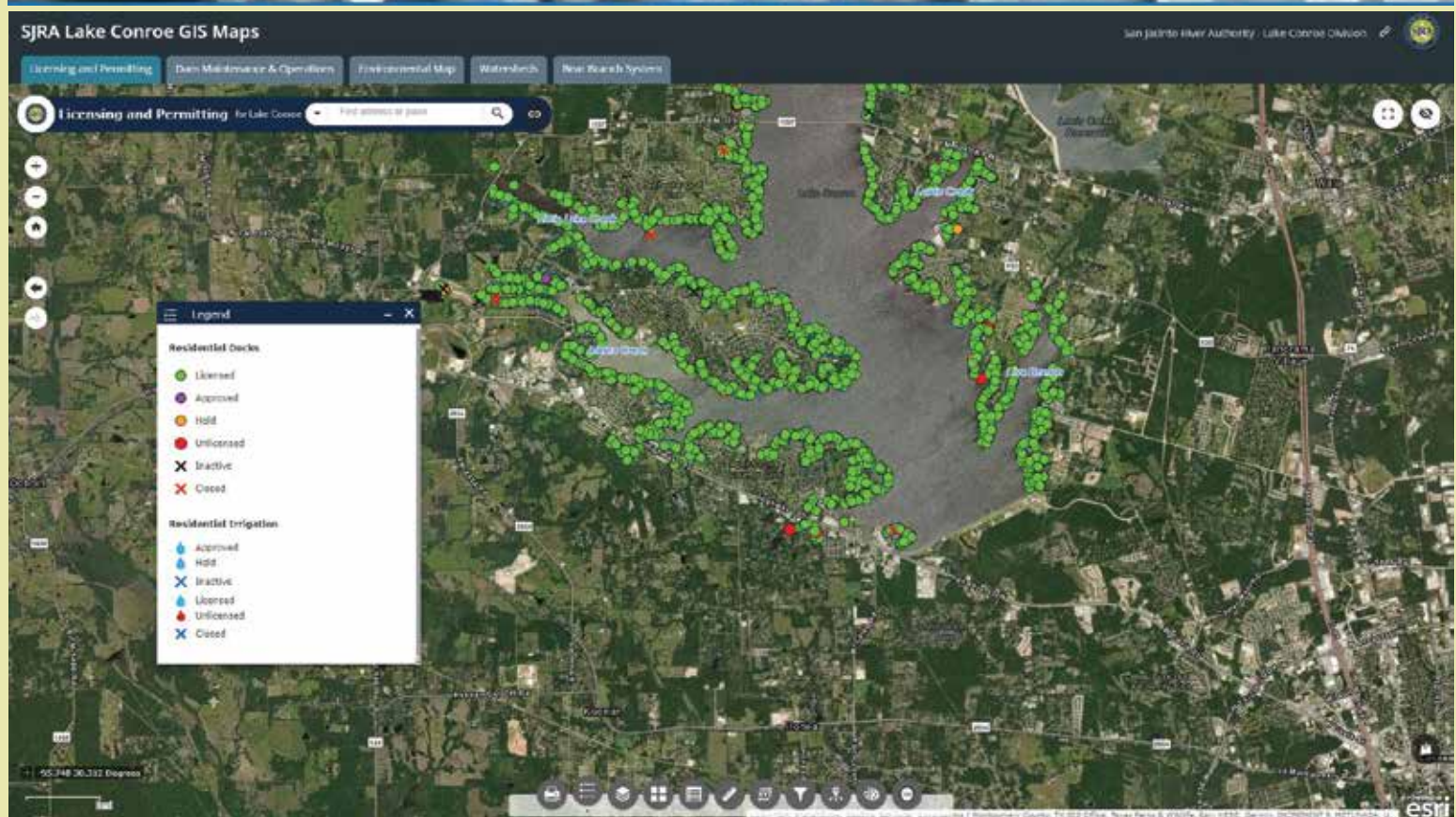
Address Viewer is an address look up tool that provides the watershed location in a static map that illustrates where flow is coming from, and general information.

Click here to take a ride down the San Jacinto River



STORY MAP

The Know Your Watershed Story Map is a virtual tour down the San Jacinto River to Lake Houston.





National Forests and Grasslands in Texas to close selected facilities

By: Greg Deimel

Multiple recreation sites on the National Forests and Grasslands in Texas have been closed indefinitely for the health and safety of visitors and staff.

Effective immediately the following recreation sites will be closed and unavailable to reserve via Recreation.gov where applicable.

Sam Houston National Forest

- Northwest Multi-Use Trailhead Toilets - Walker County.
- 233 Multi-Use Trailhead Toilets - Walker County.
- 208 Multi-Use Trailhead Toilets - Montgomery County.
- Kelly Pond Multi-Use Trailhead Toilets - Montgomery County.
- Entire Kelly Pond Recreation Area - Montgomery County.

Caddo-Lyndon B. Johnson National Grasslands

- Tadra Point Horse Camp – Wise County.
- Valley View - Wise County.
- Black Creek Lake Recreation Area - Wise County.
- East Lake Crockett - Fannin County.
- West Lake Crockett - Fannin County.
- Coffee Mill - Fannin County.

Angelina National Forest

- Entire Boykin Springs Recreation Area – Angelina/Sabine Ranger District (Angelina National Forest), Jasper County.
- Caney Creek Recreation Area (Closure of Camping only, Boat Ramp will remain open) – Angelina County.

Sabine National Forest

- Entire Boles Field Recreation Area – Angelina/Sabine Ranger District (Sabine National Forest), Shelby County.

Davy Crockett National Forest

- Ratcliff Lake Recreation Area, campsites, day use and 4C trailhead - Davy Crockett Ranger District, Houston County.
- Piney Creek Horse Camp and White Rock Horse Camp, closed to overnight camping, but day use/trails remain open - Davy Crockett Ranger District, Houston County.

The following recreation areas were closed March 19, 2020.

Sam Houston National Forest

- Cagle – Walker County.
- Stubblefield – Walker County.
- Scott's Ridge – Montgomery County.
- Double Lake – San Jacinto County.

The National Forests and Grasslands encompasses 675,000 acres and most of the forest is open. We ask all visitors to respect social distancing when enjoying your time in the forest.

As we work through an unpredictable and rapidly changing situation, health and safety is our number one priority. We are committed to continuing to support our communities and fulfill our mission as we all work together to minimize the impacts and spread of COVID-19.

These actions have been taken based on the best available medical advice for cleaning per CDC guidelines and to promote social distancing.

The National Forests and Grasslands in Texas continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation, evaluate potential impacts, and monitor Recreation.gov. Reservation holders will be notified via email or cell phone text messages if any changes are affecting their reservation. In the event of any delayed openings either for a portion of or the complete recreation areas and campgrounds to ensure safe social distancing, you will receive a full refund for your reservation. Please remember to review current recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and focus on recreating safely while protecting yourself, Forest Service employees, and our volunteers. ♦

Critters in Your Attic or Chimney?

By: Lisa Wolling, Executive Director

At Friends of Texas Wildlife, we often get calls from homeowners who have nuisance wildlife issues. While many of us enjoy coexisting with our furry and feathered friends, we can generally agree that we really don't want to share our houses with them. We would like to offer some simple, humane, and inexpensive ways you can encourage wildlife to move along and that your home is not a good place for them to stay.

If you have animals in an unwanted place (usually an attic, chimney, or under a deck, shed, or trailer), here are some things to remember. Because we live in an area where weather is usually mild, and animals do not hibernate, typically wildlife animals generally only want "in" when they are looking for safe denning places to have their babies. With the spread of suburbia and more clearing of wild areas, there are less natural denning places left for wildlife, so they try to adapt and find the next best thing. The most common animals people have problems with are raccoons, bats, and squirrels (in attics or chimneys) or skunks and opossums (under decks, sheds, or trailers). A little prevention can limit having problems in the first place. Keep tree limbs trimmed away from roofs and eaves so access by wildlife is limited. Make sure your chimneys are capped with screening, which will prevent all wildlife from gaining access (some birds may also try to nest in chimneys). If you feed your pets outdoors, please remember to pick up all food and water bowls before dark; skunks, opossums, and raccoons are all nocturnal and love a free meal when they can get one. Feeding wildlife encourages them to congregate in areas too close to people and domestic pets, and it can also increase the number of animals in a particular area, which can lead to overpopulation and the spread of disease. If you feed birds and squirrels, try to keep the feeders away from housing structures to discourage climbing on your home. Keep your home and outbuildings in good repair, making sure to fix any holes or rotten wood in roofs, eaves, or siding. A small hole can easily be enlarged by animals seeking an entrance point.

Raccoons and squirrels are the most common animals to be a nuisance in chimneys or attics due to their great climbing abilities. The animals typically take up residence in very early spring or early fall, just before they give birth. The reason they select a particular space is because they could gain access and they perceive that particular attic or chimney to be a safe place to keep their babies. It is the mission of the homeowner to convince them otherwise. If it is not possible to leave the animals alone until they naturally vacate in a few weeks, you should make them believe your home is no longer a safe, quiet spot to raise their babies. First you will need to locate where the animal(s) are getting in. Tape some newspaper over the access hole as this will allow you to monitor the animal's coming and going. Here are three effective means to convince unwanted attic or chimney occupants that your home is NOT a safe place for them to den:

PREDATOR SMELL. Place a stinky dog blanket (the smellier the better) near or as close to the area of animal activity in your attic or chimney. Brush your dog and place the dog hair around access points (or get some dog hair from a friend or neighbor). Purchase fox or coyote urine at a sporting goods store or online, saturate some tennis balls with it, and toss them around in the attic (for chimneys, you can try some soaked cotton balls. In a pinch ammonia may also work as it mimics a strong urine smell.

MAKE A LOT OF NOISE. Periodically, over a 3-day period, go into the attic or near the chimney base and make a lot of noise. Blow whistles, honk air horns, and clang pots and pans. You can also attach a box or cans to a cord, toss it into the attic, and drag it across the rafters. Make the noise during the natural sleep period of the animal (raccoons sleep



Because of their ability to climb and their tenacity, raccoons are one of the more common animals found in people's attics. They usually have their litters in mid-spring or occasionally early fall. Raccoons generally have two to six kits. Families often stay together through their first winter.

during the day; squirrels at night). Put a portable radio in the attic or at the base of the chimney and tune it to talk radio. Play it loud during the natural sleep cycle of the animals. The sounds of human voices will reinforce that your home is not a safe place for them to stay.

LIGHTS. Keep bright lights on in the attic 24 hours a day for the 3-day period. Flashing strobe lights can also be quite effective. For chimneys you can try a drop light.

All of these methods can be adapted to scare animals out from under decks, sheds, or trailers also. Utilizing all three of these methods usually assure you of a critter-free space in about 3 days. Remember, if a mother animal has already had her babies, she will need a little time to find another denning location and then relocate her babies. Mothers will move their babies (one by one) to a new location. Raccoons or skunks will typically move their babies during the night and squirrels during the day. Also remember that the mother animal almost always has multiple denning spots already scoped out; given the time and opportunity she will move her babies to another location if she senses danger. Opossums, as marsupials, have a "built-in nursery" as baby opossums grow up in their mother's pouch. Once mama opossum leaves, the babies leave with her. Skunks may need a little more time to leave, especially if the babies are not yet old enough to follow their mother. Give the animal ample opportunity to move out. Do not block entrances/exits and make sure to keep your dog(s) inside as much as possible. Keep checking the newspaper you have taped over access holes; once the paper remains undisturbed for several days and you no longer notice noises coming from your attic, chimney, etc., you can safely seal up all access points. Take care to repair all access points. Block entryways with thick boards or wire and trim back tree branches to prevent any further access. This method of removal has been used hundreds of times over the years in

our area and has proven extremely successful. Encouraging wildlife to move out on its own is a win-win situation; mom gets to raise her own babies, you save lots of money since you didn't need to pay anyone to remove the animals, and baby animals were not unnecessarily orphaned. NOTE: This technique does NOT work for mice/rats or bats. This technique should also not be used for owls or chimney swifts since mother birds cannot move their babies. Many species of bats are protected, so they can only be dealt with after breeding season is over. Typically, a one-way "door" is installed at the access point to the attic or eave; the bats can fly out but not get back in. Almost all songbirds and birds of prey are federally protected, so their active nests, eggs, or young cannot be interfered with. If you notice a bird building a nest in a spot that is a nuisance to you or your home, the nest can be removed ONLY if eggs or young are not yet present.

Many people's first impulse is to set live traps and remove the animals themselves, or to call a pest control company. Trapping is a very ineffective way to deal with wildlife issues. You may be able to trap the mother, but it is almost always impossible to trap the babies, so trapping often leads to needlessly orphaning baby animals. A mother animal, trapped and separated from her babies, often injures herself quite severely while struggling to free herself from the trap (imagine her being trapped and listening to her crying babies nearby). Studies show that trapped wildlife animals transported and released into new areas have extremely low survival rates. Another reason trapping will not solve the problem is because wildlife from the surrounding areas will soon replace any animals removed. Raccoons, skunks, opossums, and squirrels are everywhere in our area; trapping merely creates turnover in the population. We discourage trapping unless an animal is stuck somewhere and does not have the ability to get out.

If you have tried all of the above, or if you have a situation you feel you cannot deal with on your own, please call us at 281-259-0039 so we can refer you to some help. We encourage people to please NOT use regular pest control agencies as many are not licensed or trained to deal with wildlife. Many of these companies euthanize animals they remove, and most are not trained in how to locate babies, thereby often leaving orphaned baby wildlife behind for the homeowner to still deal with. We will be happy to refer you to the appropriate companies who can safely and humanely help you deal with nuisance wildlife and to also assure that no orphaned babies are left behind. Please remember that we need to try to share our space, as best as we can, and to try to coexist with our wild friends. They benefit us by keeping the natural balance in order; remove one species, and you are likely to create unbalance up and down the food chain.

To learn more about what we do and view pictures of many of the animals we as-



Baby skunks (left) are typically born late spring or early summer. Mother skunks prefer dens such as rotten logs or fallen trees, but in the absence of those they will look for den sites under decks, sheds, or other buildings. Baby squirrels (right) are born early spring or fall. Mother squirrels prefer to nest in trees or tree cavities, but occasionally they will get into house eaves or attics.

sist, please visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/SavingTexasWildlife. Our educational visitor's center is open the second Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., located at 29816 Dobbin Hufsmith Road, Magnolia, Texas, so the next open house date will be Saturday, April 11. Come on out and visit us, learn a little more about local wildlife, do some fun activities and a craft, and meet some of our non-releasable wildlife educational animals.

We also host birthday parties, camps, and educational presentations. Summer Camp registration will open April 1. For more information about any of these activities, or to register for summer camp, please visit our website or email ftlw.education@gmail.com. There are many other ways you can help support our efforts, too (such as Kroger Community Rewards, Amazon Smile, etc.). Details can be found at www.ftlw.org, and then click on "How to Help". ♦

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Stuck at Home and Thinking of Starting an Online Business?

What to Know Before You Start an Internet-Based Business

As the whole world comes to a standstill in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, I predict that we will see an influx of online businesses started in the next few months. People are spending more time at home with time off of work and have been instructed to not leave as much as possible. It's the perfect mix of ingredients for pursuing personal creative expression. The "right time" that most people wait for to follow their passions has fallen in their laps.

So, with this new time on your hands, you can finally start that thing that you've been putting off for years. If you've ever wanted to start your own business, you can do it right now from the comfort of your own home with just a laptop and an internet connection.

Before you dive head first into the world of online business, there are a few things you need to know. Thousands of people venture into the online space every year to start a virtual business, but the sad truth is most of those businesses fail quickly, if they really ever get started at all. You really can succeed online, but you need to take the proper steps to get there. Most of all, you need to understand why most online businesses fail and how you can follow the steps of those who are crushing it.

Let's dive in! Here are the keys to success you must follow before you start your online business.

1. Demand

Do people actually want what you have to offer? Some people jump into starting an online business and may have everything in place



to make it work, but nobody buys. Sadly, this happens quite often. Before you decide to start an online business, you need to first determine if the idea is solid - if you are meeting a real need for someone.

A great resource for testing your business idea before you go all in is Pat Flynn's book, *Will It Fly*. Pat is one of the most successful online entrepreneurs in the world and his book walks you through the necessary steps to make sure your idea will actually be successful. You could also just ask. Put out a poll on your personal social media pages and get some

real feedback. Ask friends and family for honest opinions. Search online to see if there are other businesses already doing it well. Most of all remember, if someone else is already succeeding at your idea, it doesn't mean you shouldn't pursue it. It just means it already works!

2. User Experience

So, you have a solid idea. Now you need to make sure that people can get it easily. This means you need to have a solid platform online. A good online "platform" is centered around a user-friendly website that is attractively de-

signed, easy to navigate and helpful to the visitor. When someone comes to your website to buy your product or service, they need to know what to do and where to go. As simple as this sounds, most business websites don't work well at all. They confuse people with unclear messaging and they are difficult to navigate.

Make your website easy to use, and free of clutter. Don't talk about yourself unless it will directly help the customer. Instead, talk about your customer and how you help them. Give them as few steps as possible to buy your product.

3. Consistency

The most successful online businesses provide value consistently, day after day, week after week, and month after month. Most people start an online business with lots of momentum in the beginning, but fizzle out quickly and their website becomes a ghost town. However you decide to provide value, whether it's through blogging, email, video, or social media interaction, you need to create a schedule and stick to it for a while. How long is a while? About 2 years.

4. Authenticity

The internet is chock full of personalities, influencers, and experts. Many of them are genuine and their main goal is truly to help others. However, there are far too many people online who put up a front. They show you what they want you to see. They create personas, fabricate an identity of massive success, and smooth talk

their way into your wallet. If you are going to start an online business and start inviting people to get to know you, just be real. Be yourself. Be genuine. As you grow in popularity any false persona you create will become harder and harder to hide behind. Be real from the beginning.

5. Generosity

Starting an online business requires a lot of work up front, but if done correctly, it can run on autopilot to a degree. However, instead of letting it run in the background as just a tool to make money, be willing to invest your time into it. What I mean by this is to show up online where your customers are, like your social media pages and on your email list, and be available to them. The best way you can be generous, especially in the beginning, is with your time. Talk to your audience. Show them you care. Give away your advice and knowledge.

One of the best methods for building an audience online is to offer something for free in exchange for someone's information, like an email address. Give away something genuinely valuable and people will listen to you, buy from you, and tell their friends about you.

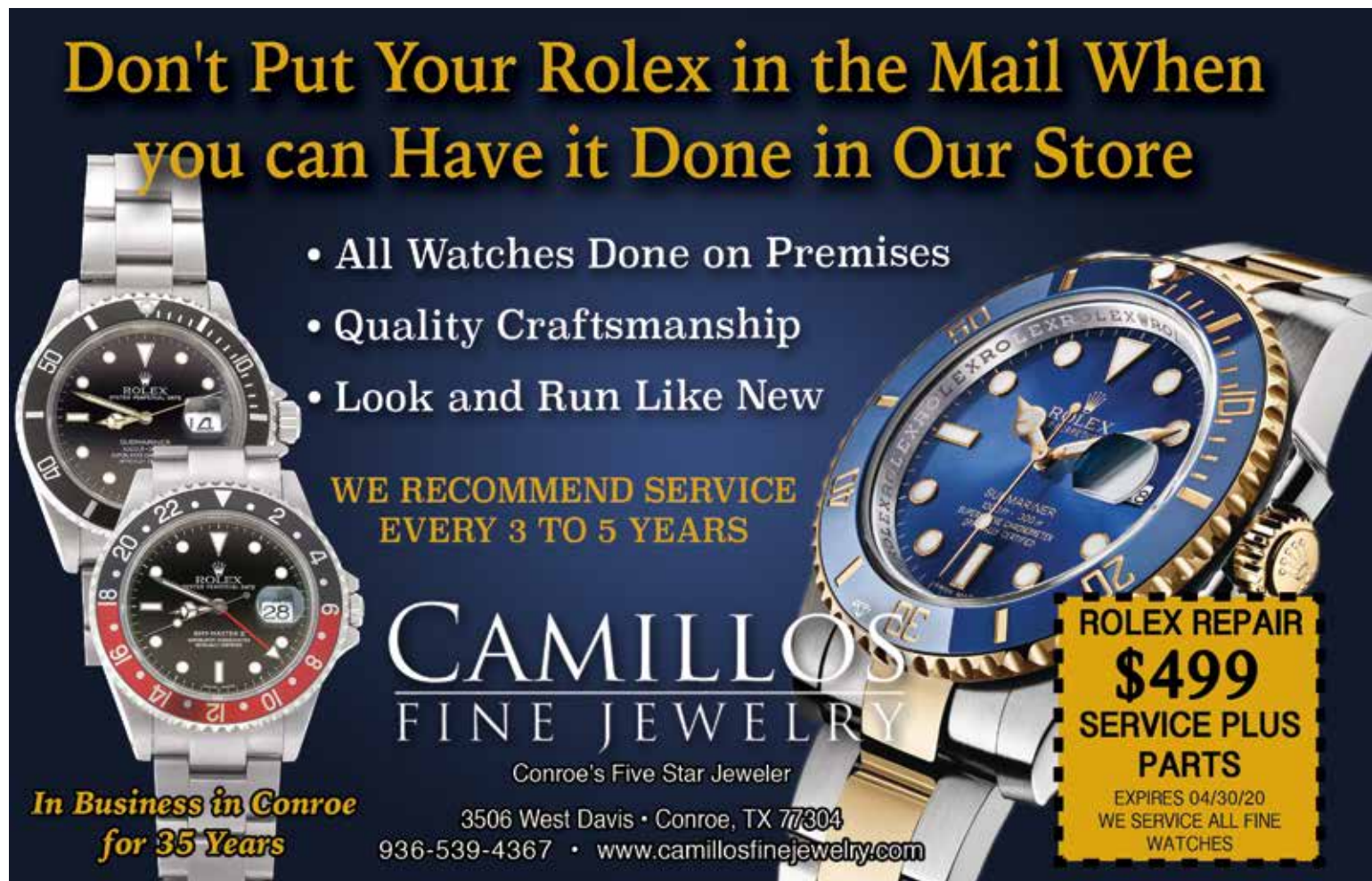
6. Marketing

One of the most common ways online businesses fail is a lack of marketing. Believe it or not, just building a great website and offering your amazing product or service doesn't mean people will actually visit your site or buy your offering. They need to know you exist and

that you have something they need to make their lives better. That means you need to show where they hang out and get their attention... without spamming them. How do you do that? By providing real value. This is why we always recommend a business to have a blog. It's a time-tested method of providing real value to your audience and letting them know you're the expert. The great thing about a blog is that, if written and published correctly, it does a ton of marketing for you with SEO. Search engine optimization helps Google find your content and recommend you to searchers. People searching for what you offer will visit your site if Google recommends you. That's why the best marketing is always through the channel of providing great value to people. You can do the same thing with video on YouTube. YouTube is actually the second largest search engine in the world, behind Google.

Of course, you can also run ads on social media sites or use pay-per-click advertising, but my recommendation is to utilize the organic, value-based methods most often.

Are you thinking of starting an online business? Do you already have an idea, but need to build an online presence around it? Let us know. At Dock Line, we have tons of resources for starting an online business, whether you want to build it all yourself or have a web design agency help you. If you'd like more information or to get access to our "Starting an Online Business" resources, send me an email at brian@thedockline.com. I hope to hear from you soon! ♦



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Egrets are stone cold killers. Small fish are swallowed quickly and big fish are brought to shore and stabbed to death with sharp beaks. All fish are swallowed head first.

The Elegant & Fashionable Great White Egret

From the late 1800's to early 1900's Great White Egrets were so fashionable that they were hunted almost to extinction! Back then women's high fashion used all those long gorgeous white feathers for hats, capes, accessories and other clothing. But conservationists rallied and laws were passed to protect these lovely birds. Now they are common in all wetland habitats including streams, lakes, sea shores, ponds, marshes and even occasionally your roadside ditch! Any wetland area with fish, lizards, insects or frogs is a great place to look for these beauties.

Great White Egrets are hard to miss but easy to misidentify because their cousins, snowy egrets and cattle egrets, also have large populations in the area. Look for the great white's distinctive long black legs, big black claw feet, a yellow-orange beak, and of course all that beautiful white plumage! They stand over 3' tall with a 5-1/2' wingspan. During breeding season they have lime green coloring around their eyes, and spectacular mating plumage cascading down their backs.

These tall birds slowly wade in shallow waters to hunt, patiently waiting for their meals

to swim or hop by. Fish and frogs see the long dark legs as a safe, protected place to swim because the Egret's legs look like reeds and twigs. You can also see the big birds standing on a

The glorious breeding plumes were once highly sought for women's fashion.

Egrets and Great Blue Herons often nest together in rookeries. There is safety in numbers for all their eggs and chicks.



bulkhead or a shore bank, staring down into the water, watching intently for their next meal. A great white egret will carry a big fish to shore, stab it through repeatedly with its sharp beak, and eat it head first after the wiggling stops. Never forget that these birds are true carnivores.

In April and May you will spot our nesting great whites up creeks, high atop secluded pines away from human activity. They make good-sized stick nests that look as if they would rattle apart during a storm! Not surprisingly, the parents are constantly bringing in twigs, sticks and other nesting material to reinforce their rickety nests. And the egrets are not alone in their chick nurseries. There are often Great Blue Herons nesting alongside in the same rookery! There is safety in numbers for all their eggs and chicks because predators include black vultures, eagles, raccoons and



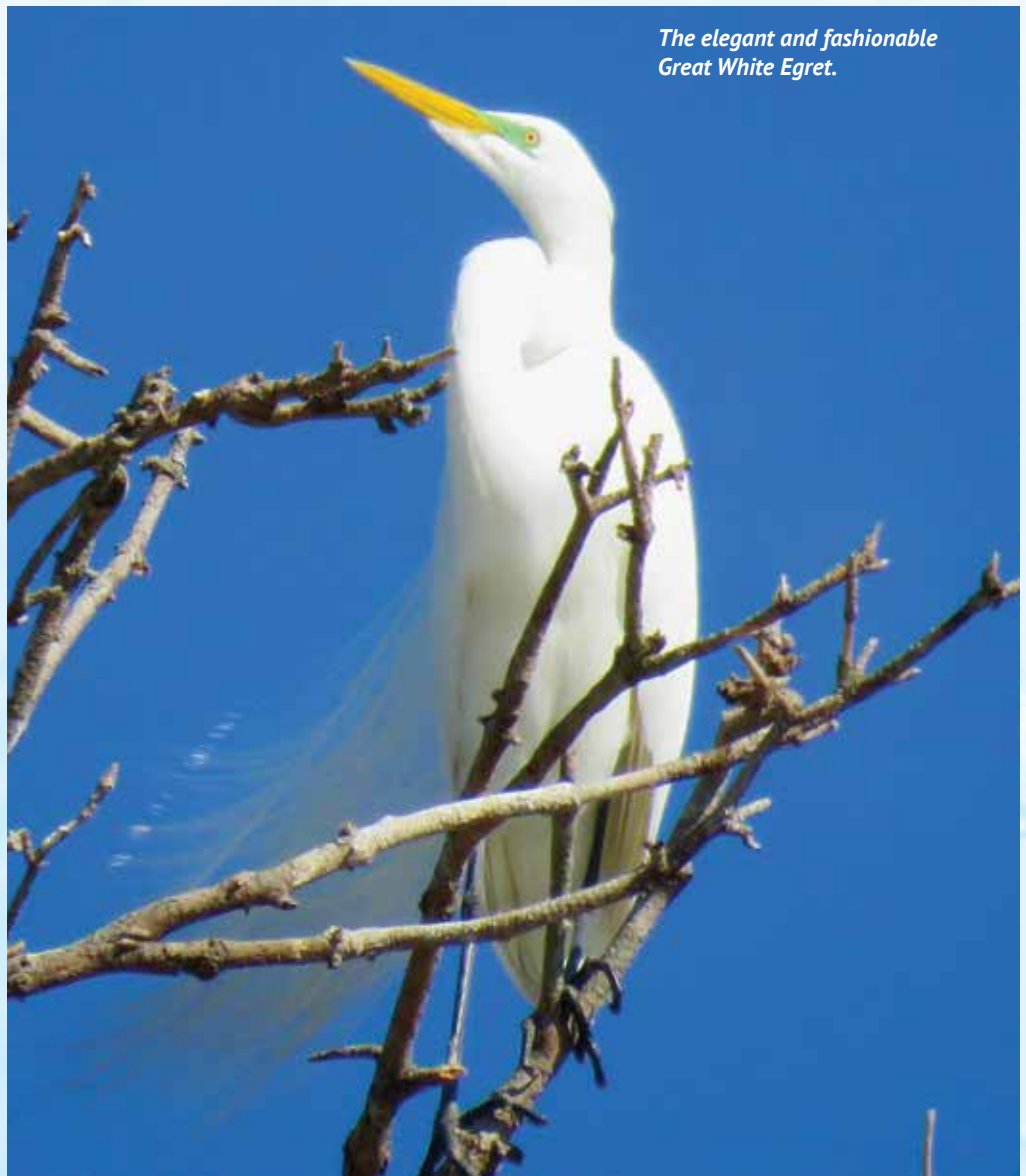
Great whites are defined by their long black legs, black claw feet and orange beaks.



These nests are near water in tall secluded pine trees. And they need constant repair with additional sticks and twigs.

snakes. After about 4 weeks of incubating eggs, and 3 more weeks of feeding the hatchlings, the chicks are ready to leave the nest and start out on their own adventures.

Learn more about the incredible nature in your area by joining a local chapter of the



The elegant and fashionable Great White Egret.

Texas Master Naturalist organization. To find a chapter close to you, or to read about the state

program, go online to www.txmn.org. Volunteer and get involved! ♦



A black vulture predator sits below the birds' nests, waiting quietly for a clumsy chick to fall, or an easy egg to snatch.

The Joy of Fostering Homeless Pets

When I was alone... You were there!

**By: Ruby Cross, Animal Shelter
Volunteers of Texas, 501c3 (ASVT)**

Animal Shelter Volunteers of Texas is a foster based rescue organization. We depend on foster parents to help us improve the quality of lives for animals in our community. ASVT has been active in rescuing homeless and abandoned pets since 2010.

I personally became involved with fostering for ASVT about 5 years ago. I was asked if I would like to foster an injured Chihuahua named Soldier that was having his leg amputated. My first thought was how can I ever love a dog and then let him go. Everyone assured me I could do it, so I went with it. Well, I was right. When it came time for his first meet and greet I was in tears. Soldier was my first "foster fail". But, I did try again and it didn't become easier to let them go, but I realized I was saving a life and making sure my fosters were placed in a safe and loving home. After more than 250 fosters, many tears of joy, it has been one of the most rewarding experiences in my life.

When I was alone...You were there!

Someone who cared!

This is Rue's story. A tiny senior Chihuahua that came to the shelter after her owner passed



away. She was scared and very nippy. When the call came in from the shelter ASVT said "Yes"! I picked her up and tried to ease her sadness.

Rue's Freedom Ride from the shelter.

She was overlooked from all my foster Chihuahuas for 18 months. She learned to love and

lost her need to be nippy. Then one day a lovely lady in Vermont saw her picture. After several weeks of communicating with her I made the decision for her to be adopted and make the journey to Vermont. This foster mom didn't sleep for three nights during this journey. Rue arrived safely and is living the life she deserves with so much love!

I'm Alive...Sofie's Story

My name is Sofie Bear. I'm alive because I had a foster home. I'm alive because they made a small sacrifice, a small adjustment to their



routine and welcomed me into their home. I'm alive because they loved me!

Sofie living the wonderful life she deserves.

All fosters shown here are waiting to be adopted. Please consider adopting a rescue pet.
WHAT IS A PET FOSTER HOME?

Being a pet foster parent, you provide a temporary home for a pet on the way to adoption. The number of pets that ASVT can save depends on the number of fosters who open their homes and hearts to foster them.

WHY DO ANIMALS NEED FOSTER CARE?

Fostering saves two animals lives when shelters are full. The one you foster and the one that can now take the empty kennel left by your foster. Many times homeless pets are found on the streets having been dumped by uncaring humans or simply lost and don't find their way

back home. ASVT can take these pets into our rescue only if we have a foster home for them.

Whatever the reason, these pets need extra love and care before they can be adopted. Providing foster care can be a lifesaving gift for a homeless pet.

TRANSPORTS!

ASVT does transports to northern states that have a need for adoptable dogs. These pets need to be in a foster home for at least two weeks prior to the transport. Temporary fosters are needed for this time before the transport leaves. These puppies were rescued by ASVT and are on their way to Iowa. All are being temporarily fostered.

On The Fence About Fostering? I would rather cry watching a foster pet leave my home to live a full life of happiness and joy in a loving home... than cry because no one stepped up and the animal died alone and frightened and sad in a shelter, FOSTERING SAVES LIVES, PLEASE TRY IT!

HOW IS IT DONE?

Fosters find their forever homes by ASVT



networking on numerous pet finder websites, on our website, Facebook page and adoption events. This gives people looking to adopt a rescue pet a wide venue to look for their dream pet.

If you would like to help the homeless pets of our community and become an ASVT foster, just visit our website and submit a foster application at www.ASVTexas.org

HOW TO SAY GOODBYE.

It's not easy to say goodbye. Giving up a pet you have fostered can be emotional. We all shed our tears of joy. Seeing your foster take their second freedom ride with their new family will help you remember that he or she has found a wonderful new home.

Foster parents are the unsung heroes of rescue. They offer compassion, love and temporary shelter for pets on their way to a loving permanent home.

HOW CAN YOU HELP US HELP THEM?

ADOPT, SPONSOR, VOLUNTEER, FOSTER, DONATE!

You can visit our website to sign up to volunteer and/or foster and donate using our DONATE button. Donations help us pay for medical expenses, food, supplies and transporting animals to areas with high adoption needs.

ASVT also sponsors a Spay/Neuter Program for community animals whose owners cannot afford to have their pets altered. This helps decrease the rise of community puppies and kittens that will end up in the shelters.

YOU CAN SUPPORT ANIMAL SHELTER VOLUNTEERS OF TEXAS BY JUST SHOPPING AT KROGER!



Each time you use your registered Kroger Plus Card at checkout a percentage of your purchase is donated to ASVT.



To support ASVT through the Community Rewards Program by Kroger please use this link to sign up: <https://www.kroger.com/o/store-services/community-rewards>

The accomplishments of ASVT would not be possible without partners like Wiesner Automotive, Empire Electric, Ransom's Steakhouse,

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Who Rescued Who's mission is to aid homeless, abandoned and neglected dogs, to nurture them in the foster care of volunteers, to provide veterinary care and socialization, and to place them in permanent loving and responsible homes at the same time, educating people on the importance of companion animals in our society.



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