

DOCK LINE

Tomball

MAGAZINE

September 2020



TEXAS
STAR
PROPANE



TEXAS
STAR
POWER

A Texas Star Propane Company

Fueling Future Generations

From a garage apartment office to a 7-acre facility, and on to a second location, as well as a Generac Generator Division, Texas Star Propane & Texas Star Power is only just getting started. See page 8



TEXAS
PARKS &
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Texas Parks and Wildlife
Completes Annual Vegetation
Survey on Lake Conroe

See Page 14

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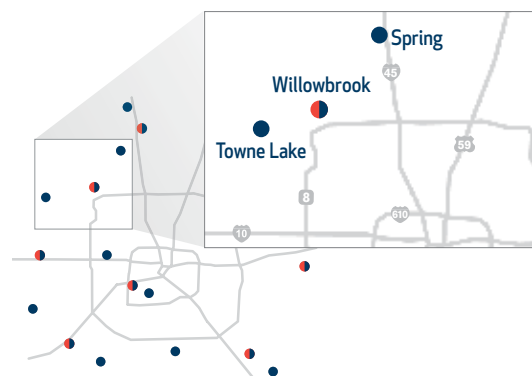
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table of CONTENTS

SEPTEMBER 2020

Well, as we enter into September it is safe to say nothing much has changed from the summer months. We are continuing on the road of uncharted territory as we move through another month of 2020, which means we are continuing to learn what new normal behaviors are excepted of us with changing variables on a daily basis and it gets to be a bit confusing. Nobody seems to know what normal even looks like anymore. Here at Dock Line we will continue to be here to support our community, since now more than ever our community needs all of our support. As we continue to navigate the new waters of this ever changing year, just know here in Texas we will still have a few more beach days and cookouts but there will also be social distancing, smaller gatherings and a crazy school year kick off. Our new normal is anything but normal. It is true our vocabulary has changed but throughout it all, the message remains the same. We are a community of resilience, compassion and generosity. It has become apparent what a great community in which we live in. We encourage everyone to take a look around, celebrate the little things and support your local businesses. They need your support now as we all struggle to get through this unprecedented time. If we all stick together we will be stronger than ever. Until next month, be kind and stay safe...

Bentley & Ellie 

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ON THE COVER



Texas Star Propane is a turnkey residential and commercial provider of propane products and services. You can find them at www.texasstarpropane.com or Texas Star Power, at www.texasstarpower.com or you can also contact them at 281-259-2162 (Plantersville), 936-439-6544 (Huntsville). Feel free to also contact them by email at info@texasstarpropane.com or huntsville@texasstarpropane.com. Call Now!

- 8 Fueling Future Generations - From a garage apartment office to a 7-acre facility, and on to a second location, as well as a Generac Generator Division, Texas Star Propane & Texas Star Power is only just getting started.
- 12 Be EXTRAordinary (How to BE the EXTRA among the ordinary)
- 13 Back to Health
- 14 Texas Parks and Wildlife Completes Annual Vegetation Survey on Lake Conroe
- 18 Online with Dock Line: How to Start a Podcast in 2020
- 20 LEGAL ISSUES: DOES A SMALL ESTATE REQUIRE A WILL AND/OR PROBATE?
- 22 SJRA Receives Two Industry Excellence Awards
- 26 Fishing Hole Nature: Carolina Wrens - Little Brown Jobs
- 28 Fishing Adventures with Derek Pietsch



Check our Dock Line Magazine page online for any upcoming events that might happen in September 2020

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DOCK LINE MAGAZINE - TOMBALL

is published by:

Magic Marketing, Inc.

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Conroe, TX 77301

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Subscriptions to DOCK LINE MAGAZINE - TOMBALL cost \$25.00 per year. To subscribe, mail a check with your name and address to:

P.O. Box 174

Conroe, TX 77301

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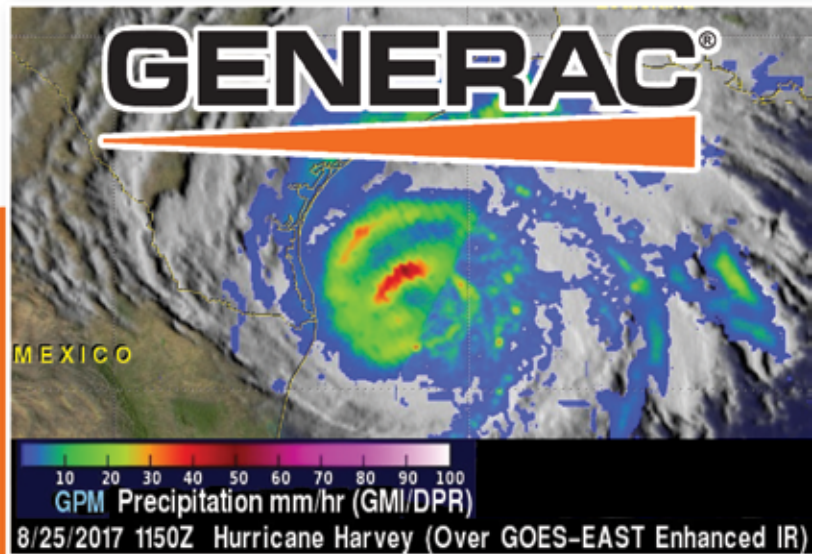
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Fueling Future Generations

From a garage apartment office to a 7-acre facility, and on to a second location, as well as a Generac Generator Division, Texas Star Propane & Texas Star Power is only just getting started.

BY: MATTHEW CALHOUN



Since opening, Texas Star Propane has gone from a small start-up company in a garage apartment, to a thriving and successful business. Texas Star Propane is a turnkey residential and commercial provider of propane products and services. In addition, Texas Star Power (a Texas Star Propane company) handles all of your generator service needs. From purchasing, installing, maintenance, and warranty repair, Texas Star Power helps you prepare for the worst situations.

Owners Joel Sopchak and Josh Kasprzak, who have been best friends for over 20 years, opened the company over a decade ago. While their company is over a decade old, they are backed by more than 75 years of combined customer service of propane and generator knowledge.

Joel, who is the co-owner and President of Texas Star Propane, grew up in the propane

industry, working for his family's company that started in 1950. "My late grandpa Albert P. Stennett, Jr. started his own propane company in 1950 and my late father, Carl Sopchak continued running that company," Joel explained. "I learned a lot and I wanted to continue my grandpa's and father's legacy of offering the best customer service in the propane industry." After his family's company was sold, Joel decided to open his own business with his best friend by his side. "I remember calling Josh and saying, 'I'll teach you the propane business and you teach me customer service.'" Through this bond, the work of generations that came before is making a difference in the lives of customers.

In September of 2009, Texas Star Propane was created and four months later they made their first delivery. Since then, Texas Star Propane and their subsidiary Texas Star Power have taken their propane and generator services to the next level. Texas Star Propane now offers:

- 6 Delivery Trucks
- 3 Services Trucks
- 90,000 + gallons of propane storage
- A team of 26 employees that are dedicated to serving you
- Two locations to choose from. One in Plantersville, TX that sits on 7 acres of land, and the second location is situated in the Huntsville area.

As with any industry-leading company, the customer experience is the real testament to success:

"We bought a generator from these guys. They were able to give us a price over the phone, that they later confirmed after doing a site visit. The price was the lowest of the three that we received. The delivery time was two weeks, as opposed to 4-6 weeks for the competition. They established an install date that was less than two weeks, and installed the generator and connected it to the propane. Due to weather messing up the scheduling, it took about another week to connect the electrical side of the unit, but Texas Star gave us appropriate compensation for the delay. The installation was completed and lo and behold, only a week or so after the installation, we had a power outage. The generator performed perfectly for the three hour outage, and we were very pleased. I highly recommend Texas Star Propane for the purchase and installation of a backup generator."

—Richard Gremillion from Google Reviews

Generators That Stand the Test of Time

Have you ever thought about buying a generator for your business or home? Not sure what the benefits of owning one could be? In the event of a natural disaster or storm, a standby generator can:

- Keep vital electronics running
- Keep food from spoiling
- Help keep your business running when electricity is down
- Provide comfort and stability when the going gets rough

Within seconds, your standby generator

taps into its fuel supply and your electricity is back up and running.

In June 2017, Texas Star Power teamed up with Generac Generators to become a licensed dealer so they can not only provide propane for back-up generators but provide the generator as well. "Teaming up with Generac allowed us to offer a full turnkey service," Josh highlighted. "We sell, set and service all size Generac generators, so customers don't have to worry about going here and there to get their generator up and working. They can just call us and we'll take care of the rest." Texas Star Power can service natural gas and diesel generators.

Texas Star Power will walk you through the process of buying and installing a generator that is based on your needs. "Our first priority is helping customers find the right generator based on the size and needs of their home or commercial property."

When partnering with Texas Star Power for your generator needs, you can expect:

- Special Financing Available
- Texas Star Power will sell, set & service your whole home standby generator
- Repairs, maintenance, & warranty for your generator
- Generac Elite Plus dealer
- Hassle-free process
- No money down
- Licensed & Insured
- Free on-site consultations

That's not all, though. Texas Star Power is a Generac dealer; however, they sell other high-quality brands like Kohler. You aren't just limited to one option or one price.

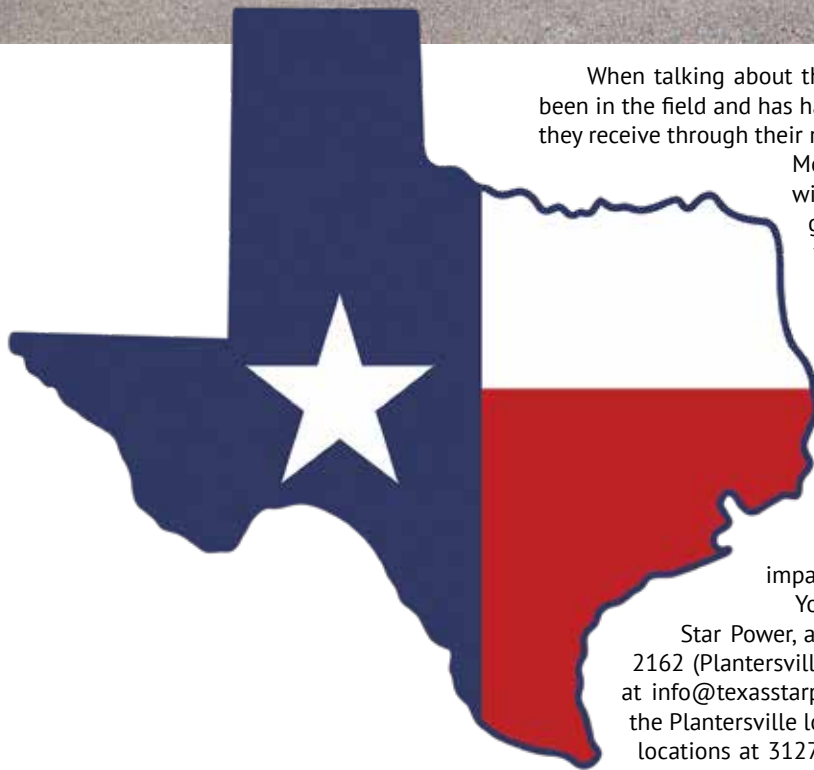
Thinking about installing a standby generator yourself? Think again. When installing, you'll need to worry about electrical connections, building permits or HOA restrictions, plumbing connections, site selections, and the yearly maintenance required to upkeep a generator. Every house, commercial business, and neighborhood is different as each requires a special understanding of both the technical aspects of installation and upkeep as well as the societal impacts. Already have your own generator? We will gladly service and maintain that unit as well. Call us today to insure your unit is ready in your time of need.

"I immediately felt that Texas Star was concerned with my service and satisfaction, not just securing a sale as others seemed to try to rush me into. Thanks for the time and information needed to make an informed decision, Texas Star. I'll send everyone I know!" —Joseph C.

More Than Just a Propane Provider

"We pride ourselves on customer service and a huge part of that is ensuring our customer's safety," Josh said. "Every time we acquire a new customer, we do a system safety check before delivering the propane, whether it's our tank or theirs. We just want to make sure everything is done to our and our customer's satisfaction."

Continued on page 10 ➞



When talking about the staff Texas Star Propane has hired, "Every member of our team has been in the field and has hands-on experience. We also do in-house training on top of the training they receive through their railroad commission training," Joel added.

More importantly, they also know that none of this would be possible without the support of their community, which is why they continually give back through their propane donation program and the Lone Survivor Foundation. "No matter how successful we are or will be, we will never forget where we came from and how we got here," Josh vowed. "We wanted to give back to a community and people who have given so much to us."

Every month since the beginning of 2017, Texas Star Propane has selected a family in need through nominations and provided them with 100 free gallons of propane. Also, a portion of their sales goes to the Lone Survivor Foundation in an effort to help provide wounded service members, their spouses, children, and care partners with health, wellness and therapeutic support. When you choose Texas Star Propane & Texas Star Power, you are also helping make a direct impact on your community.

You can find Texas Star Propane at www.texasstarpropane.com or Texas Star Power, at www.texasstarpower.com or you can also contact them at 281-259-2162 (Plantersville), 936-439-6544 (Huntsville). Feel free to also contact them by email at info@texasstarpropane.com or huntsville@texasstarpropane.com. You can stop by at the Plantersville location at 45664 FM 1774 Plantersville, TX 77363, or at their Huntsville locations at 3127 TX -19 Huntsville, TX 77320. Texas Star Power can be reached at the Plantersville location. Call Now! ♦



Be EXTRAordinary

(How to BE the EXTRA among the ordinary)

Lynlee Linke is a single mom of three (soon to be married and mom to six), a recently semi-retired veterinarian after 25 years in practice, and currently a Level V Circle Mercedes achiever with Rodan+Fields.

Lynlee enjoys running, going to the beach house, and drinking wine. She's an animal lover, an aspiring author, and has a desire to empower and inspire others. Lynlee loves being with her family and friends and believes in living life to the fullest and that you should show up in life in the grandest way and ALWAYS bring the Fun!

How bringing out your true unique and authentic self is the path to success not only in business but also in life.

- Developing and Believing in who YOU are!
- Creating the life, you want by showing up that way
- Embracing the Joy in the Journey

This month's CYFEN meeting begins with networking at 11:00 am followed with a prompt 11:30 am start of the program. Luncheon held at our new location, Longwood Gulf Club, 13300 Longwood Trace, Cypress, TX 77429.

About Cy-Fair Express Network (CYFEN)

Now over 40 members strong. Cy-Fair Express Network's vision is to be a community and national leader for the support of professional women by providing a nurturing environment for business development, networking, education, and mentoring. Our members have opportunities to pursue excellence and achieve both local and national recognition. CYFEN is part of the national organization of the American Business Woman's Associate (ABWA), for more information go to www.CYFEN.org

About American Business Women's Association (ABWA)

Founded in 1949, ABWA provides business training and networking opportunities for women with diverse occupations and backgrounds. ABWA has dedicated 60 years to women's education, workplace skills and career development training. For more information, visit, www.cyfen.org. ♦



Lynlee Linke

Luncheon Details

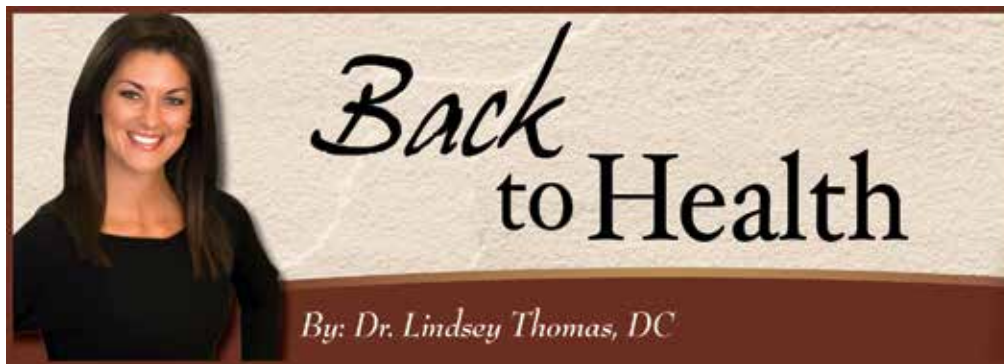
Thursday, September 24, 2020

Networking 11:00 am;

Luncheon begins at 11:30 am

Longwood Gulf Club, 13300 Longwood Trace
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Cost: \$30 with reservations; \$35 at the door
(Please check our website for information in the event we are not about to meet in person)



Chiropractic: A Winning Approach For Your Child Athlete

As the start of new school year begins, more and more children will be engaging in a variety of sports-related activities. Along with these activities comes the danger of injuries.

A "ding" may be more serious than expected. After a "ding" on the field, shook-up athletes may sit on the sidelines for a little while, then, if they look okay, they often go back into the game.

According to the National Safe Kids Campaign, more than 30 million children participate in organized sports in the US. Even more kids participate in recreational activities such as bicycling, in-line skating, skateboarding and riding scooters. Approximately 775,000 children are treated in hospital emergency rooms for sports related injuries, and about 25 percent of those injuries are considered serious.

Injuries to children's spines are not unique to contact sports like football or martial arts. They are also seen in non-contact sports like gymnastics and competitive cheerleading. Injuries to the pediatric spine vary according to the specific mechanism of injury.

Remember your young athlete is NOT a mini adult athlete! Girls grow until about age 18 and boys grow until about age 21. This means they still have a lot of cartilage and growth plates where their bones have not fused together yet.

Athletic performance and chiropractic go hand and hand. At Sandstone Chiropractic we have doctors that specialize in sports and pediatrics. Athletes of all types, from the youngster in little league to the world-class athlete, rely on chiropractic care to assist in the body's natural healing processes and to optimize overall function. The nervous system is the master control system of the entire body. Spinal imbalances, caused by athletic demands and injury have negative effects on normal muscle and organ function.

Athletes count on the function of their bodies to help them perform at peak levels. Studies have shown that athletes who receive regular chiropractic adjustments react faster, execute fine movements with improved accuracy and precision, and have better co-ordination, all in all, amounting to an overall better athlete. It's not just simply based on size and strength.

Head impacts as experienced in football or martial arts, or from falling on the child's feet or

buttocks as in gymnastics or cheerleading lead to minor misalignments of the spine, or "vertebral subluxations". Subluxations cause nerve interference and weaken the entire structure of the spine. Athletic training can often jar and misalign the spinal column because the spine is at the center of the body. Impact to the legs, feet, head, shoulders and torso often radiates to the spine.

The nervous system controls every activity in the body by sending and receiving nerve messages

and is protected by the bones or vertebra of the spine. When the spine is in its ideal structural position, the nerves are protected and optimal communication exists between the nervous system and the rest of the body. The vertebra of the spine are susceptible to certain stresses and forces, which can cause them to lose their proper position.

Whether your children are participating in contact or non-contact sports, a proper chiropractic evaluation by a qualified chiropractor can keep them in the game and help to minimize if not prevent injuries.

Elite athletes recognize the importance of a subluxation-free body for maximum performance and health. Your children deserve the best as well. Whether your children participate in sport activity for fun or are part of the athletic world for competition, regular chiropractic care for healing and athletic performance are a winning combination! ♦

Along with chiropractic care, here are some other tips for keeping your child athlete healthy and injury free:

- Wear the proper equipment
- Eat healthy meals
- Drink water
- Avoid sugar-loaded, caffeinated and carbonated drinks
- Follow a warm-up routine
- Take vitamins daily: A multi-vitamin and Vitamin C are good choices for the young athlete. Vitamin B and amino acids may help reduce the pain from contact sports. Thiamine can help promote healing. Also consider Vitamin A to strengthen scar tissue.
- Get plenty of rest.



"The best way to use Chiropractic is not only after injuries, but before they occur."

-Arnold Schwarzenegger, 7 time Mr. Olympia



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Texas Parks and Wildlife Completes Annual Vegetation Survey on Lake Conroe

By: Alice Best, Fisheries Biologist

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Inland Fisheries College Station - Houston District

Twelve patches of hydrilla found in the Caney Creek arm of Lake Conroe and were treated with a selective herbicide to control hydrilla spread with low impact to native beneficial species. Texas Parks and Wildlife Technician Mike Gore dives to feel for hydrilla tubers near the largest patch of hydrilla to determine if it has spread.

Every summer, Texas Parks and Wildlife, College Station-Houston Fisheries district team conducts an annual vegetation survey on Lake Conroe. The Conroe surveys began when hydrilla dominated the lake and were used to track its coverage and control. We still use annual surveys to track invasive species, but nowadays we also get to follow restoration efforts of beneficial native species.



The Lake Conroe Native Plant Nursery was built by Seven Coves Bass Club and Texas Parks and Wildlife and is maintained by the San Jacinto River Authority. Each year the San Jacinto River Authority plants over 600 native plants into Lake Conroe for habitat restoration, often with the help of volunteers, anglers, and Texas Parks and Wildlife.

Many scientific surveys will subsample a population instead of counting each individual. For example, we may catch 200 largemouth bass and use their ages, lengths and weights to estimate what the entire population of bass looks like without disrupting the fishery by trying to catch every single fish. Not so with our vegetation survey! Each summer we travel the entire perimeter of Lake Conroe's shoreline—every cove, canal, and island—cataloguing the size and species of each plant we find touching the water. This data is then mapped in a Geographic Information System (GIS) which allows us to calculate the total area each species covers. The process also creates maps that we can share with the San Jacinto River Authority to control invasive species and with our restoration partners like Seven Coves Bass Club to promote native beneficial species with and find the best fish habitat.

Vegetation surveys can be grueling. We spend long days in direct sunlight, traveling at a snail's pace around the lake with no end to the boat engine's drone as we monotonously note each species. However, it gives provides us with data vital to manage the fisheries and habitat on Lake Conroe and is one of the best chances we have to see every detail of the lake. We often see eagles diving for fish, herons gliding over the surface, and Largemouth Bass hunting the shallows.

The 2020 survey wrapped up in July, just in time to send the results off for this article. There has been a marvelous expansion of native sub-

Continued on page 16 ➞



Texas Parks and Wildlife Technician Mike Gore displays young vallisneria from a free growing colony in the northern end of Lake Conroe.

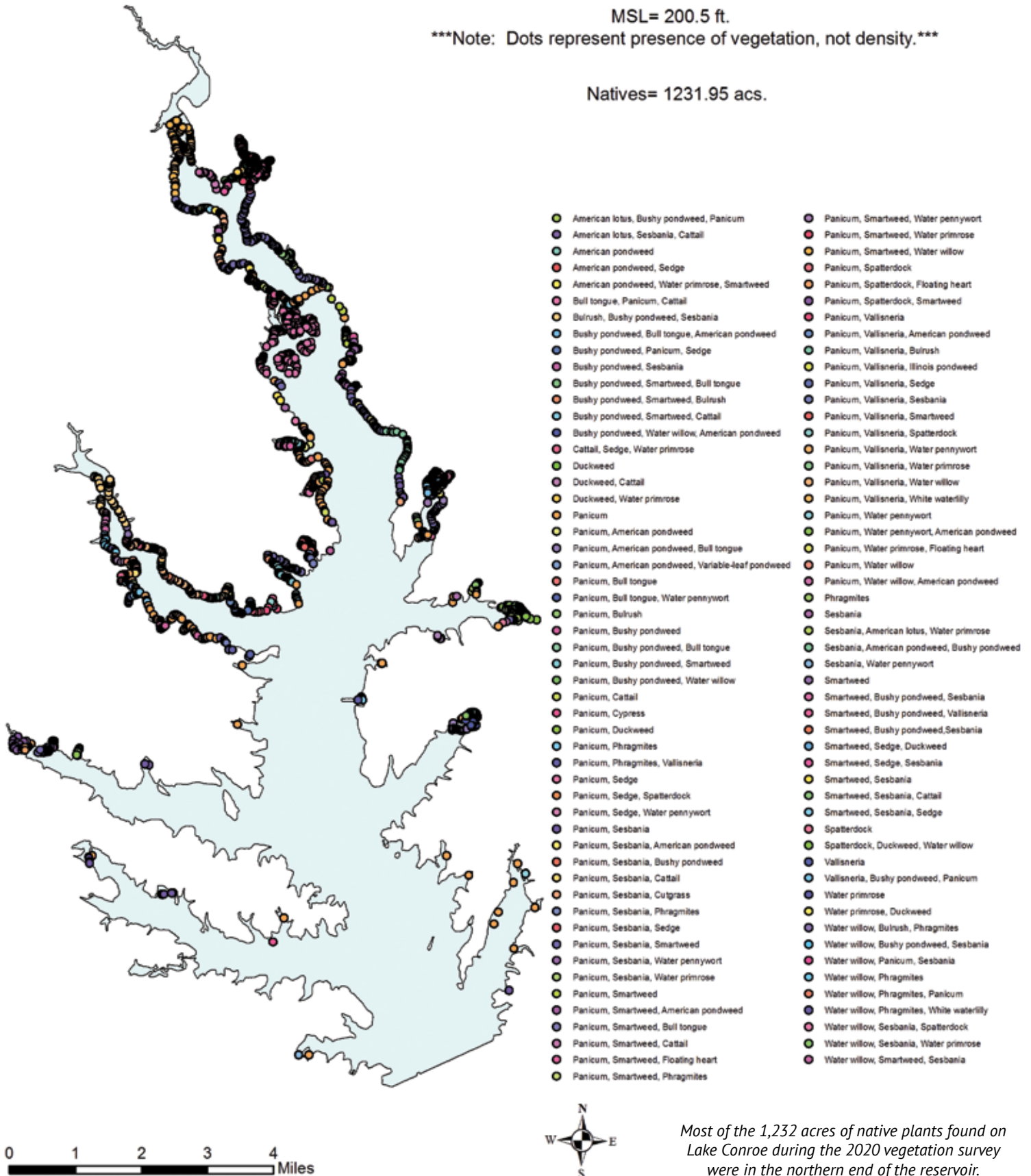
Lake Conroe Natives 2020

Survey dates 07/06-07/07, 07/10, 07/14, 07/16-07/17, 07/22-07/23

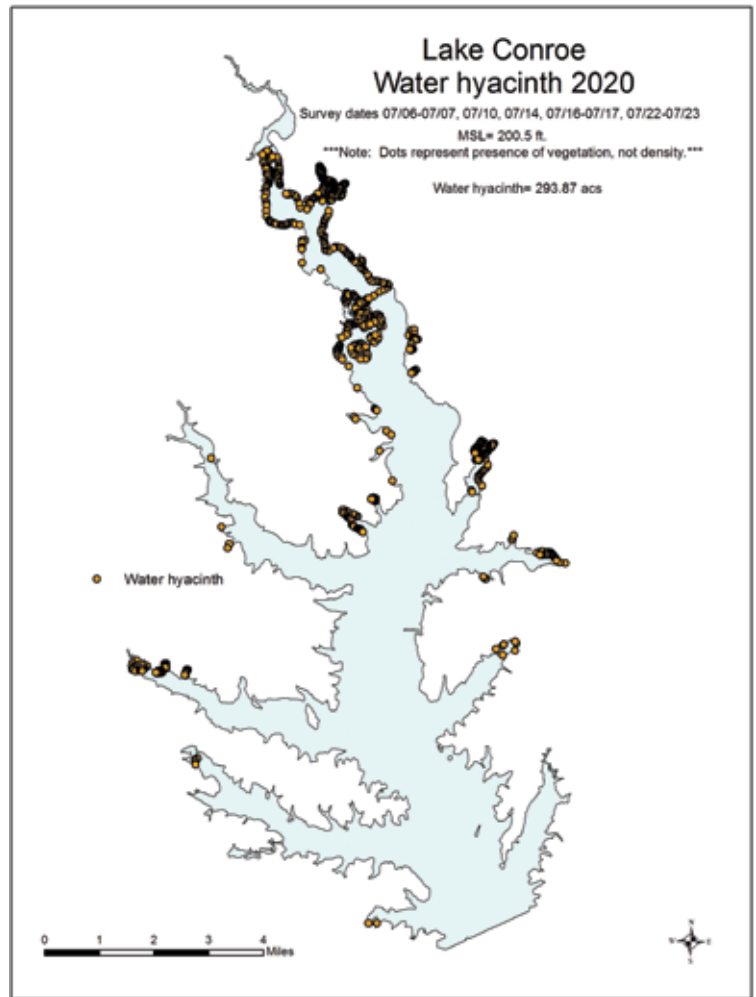
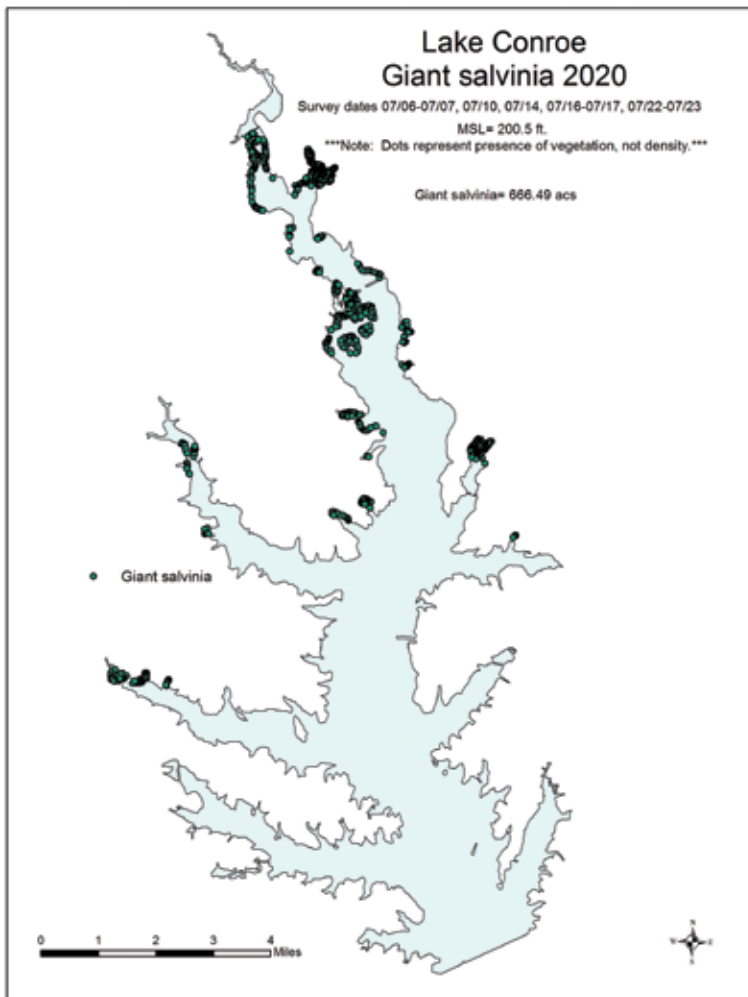
MSL= 200.5 ft.

Note: Dots represent presence of vegetation, not density.

Natives= 1231.95 acs.



Most of the 1,232 acres of native plants found on Lake Conroe during the 2020 vegetation survey were in the northern end of the reservoir.



The 2020 annual Lake Conroe vegetation survey completed by TPWD found 666 acres of giant salvinia and 294 acres of water hyacinth. Both plants expanded coverage in 2020, likely due to a lack of high spring flows that have helped flush them out in past years. The San Jacinto River Authority has been busy treating giant salvinia and water hyacinth throughout the summer.

mersed and floating-leaved species like American pondweed, bushy pond, vallisneria, and white water lily. These species provide valuable fish and wildlife habitat, reduce erosion, and improve water quality without forming thick mats that interfere with access to the lake. These native species were introduced to Lake Conroe from a nursery built by the Seven Coves Bass Club and maintained by the San Jacinto River Authority as part of the Lake Conroe Aquatic Restoration project spearheaded by Texas Parks and Wildlife.



Plants like vallisneria (also called eel grass) form excellent fish and wildlife habitat and do not block access to the water. Vallisneria has formed waving underwater meadows in several sheltered coves north of the FM 1097 bridge.

This effort has been successful so far: this year we saw 1,232 acres of native aquatic plants, mostly in the northern end of the lake above FM 1097. Natives have been expanding for the last several years, but this year's boom was a surprise to everyone and treat to see our hard work with native restoration bear fruit. The habit these plants create will be boon to fish and wildlife throughout the lake.

Unfortunately, not all plants are beneficial to Lake Conroe. The annual survey also allows us to track the abundance of invasive species like water hyacinth and giant salvinia. Both species form dense mats on the surface of the water that most boats cannot pass through. They prevent oxygen from diffusing into the water, lowering oxygen levels available to invertebrates and fish, block sunlight, and acidify the water. They grow quickly (giant salvinia can

double in size in under 10 days) and they don't even provide good habitat for most fish species!

We did see an expansion of water hyacinth and giant salvinia this year, likely due to a lack of large rain events this spring. Lake Conroe has experienced large rain events each spring for the last several years. The rains pushed the hyacinth and salvinia out of the hard-to-reach coves and back waters, and downstream over the dam. Without Mother Nature's help this year, both species were able to expand more quickly. The San Jacinto River Authority has been busy treating these invasives, running multiple simultaneous vegetation control teams throughout the summer and treating hundreds of acres of water hyacinth and giant salvinia.

We also found minute traces of hydrilla in the Caney Creek arm of Lake Conroe. This is the first hydrilla we've



Native aquatic plant species, like the white water lily and vallisneria shown here, are introduced into Lake Conroe in protected founder colonies to give them a head start over herbivores like grass carp and turtles. Over time, the plants spread beyond the protective wire and create new colonies from seeds and propagules.

seen since grass carp were stocked in 2006-2008. For several years we have expected hydrilla to reemerge in 2020-2021 as the grass carp naturally die off. Hydrilla can provide good fish habitat in some lakes, but on Lake Conroe it has a history of forming dense mats across thousands of acres, preventing access to the water for boaters, anglers, and homeowners. We caught the reemergence early, finding just 1,300 square feet (0.03 acres) of hydrilla in 12 small patches. Each patch was immediately treated with an herbicide that selectively targets hydrilla and has low impact on native species.

Texas Parks and Wildlife and the San Jacinto River Authority intend to strictly control hydrilla on Lake Conroe to prevent access issues while protecting and promoting native aquatic plants to improve fish habitat and fishing. We know that hydrilla brings out many people's passion and love for Lake Conroe and will be seeking public input from anglers, boat-



Giant salvinia is a nuisance on Lake Conroe and requires constant control by the San Jacinto River Authority, who have been running multiple vegetation control groups throughout the summer.

ers, homeowners, and local businesspeople in the coming months. We will also continue to provide updates through this publication, social media, and regular meetings. If you would like more information, to ask us questions about

vegetation management, or to be notified of upcoming public meetings, please contact Alice Best at Alice.Best@tpwd.texas.gov of 979-272-1430 ext 224. ♦

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How to Start a Podcast in 2020

Starting a podcast in 2020 is a lot easier than it was a couple of years ago. Equipment is easier to use and cheaper to come by. However, that's not to say that there aren't a couple of learning curves when it comes to starting a podcast. Although the field may be less crowded than the blogging sphere, there are over 800,000 podcast shows and will soon be in the millions. If you are going to start a podcast in 2020 you'll need to up your game to be noticed even with a captive audience. Starting a podcast can be daunting, but it doesn't have to be. You can launch a podcast for your business or as a hobby. You should know that the average podcast takes time to build an audience. It's time to mix your creative side with the marketing side.

Picking Your Topic and Niche

Before you start buying equipment and scheduling podcast episodes, you are going to want to know what to talk about. Defining the topic and niche of your podcast is critical to growing and building your audience. Answer questions for yourself like:

1. What are your interests?
2. Is this just a hobby or do you want to eventually start a business with this podcast?
3. Which interest of yours would you like to further explore? Do you want to become an expert in that interest or a casual observer?
4. Do you want your podcasting to be dependent on a product or service? For example, movie reviews or political news? Going down this route may mean that your content needs to be extremely relevant or target specific niches. Meaning you'll have to keep up with timely movies and news or be very specific in who you cover. For example, you only review horror films from the 1960s or your podcast is over the rise and end of the Vietnam War covering multiple angles. The downsides of covering relevant reviews or movies is that you are always dependent on content from other sources and that content can be worthwhile or not.
5. Do you want your topic to have clearly definable facts to base itself off of? For example, a Supreme Court ruling. This is different from talking about a topic like

Buddhism vs. Christianity. This is also different from talking about personal taste, i.e. ranking the albums of a classic rock band. These decisions all affect workload as you'll need to gather more information and establish yourself as trustworthy to your audience. Try brainstorming ideas that you are interested in using brainstorming techniques.

Spend some time on this process, as clearly knowing what you are going to talk about can help guide the format, duration, and production process of your show. Defining topics and niche can also help you discern whether you need a co-host or not when you start a podcast in 2020.

Recording and Preparing Your Podcast For Launch

So you've narrowed down your topic, figured out your niche audience, and have a format for your podcast. Great! Now it's time to get to recording. If you never have tried to record a podcast or worked with microphones, you DO NOT need to spend hundreds of dollars on a microphone. Quite frankly, you need to keep your investment low as a first-timer. There





is a very real possibility you don't have the right set-up for an expensive microphone and you may always quit podcasting. If that happens, you're stuck with a \$300 dollar paperweight that isn't benefiting you any. Some common items you may need for a podcast setup include:

- Computer
- Recording Software
- Microphone
- Pop Filter
- Boom Arm
- Isolation Box
- Headphones
- Audio Interface
- Mixer

Some of these items are optional or not necessary depending on your set-up. When starting out, try to keep your set significantly smaller and easy to operate. The last thing you want is to have a very technical process of recording as that can kill your enthusiasm for an episode. Do your research before buying any product and make sure it is absolutely necessary that you buy the item. Be creative, with the right treatment to a room you can even record a podcast with a voice recorder.

Where to Host Your Podcast

So, you've recorded the first couple of episodes of your podcast. You've edited them in your software. Now you're ready to upload to iTunes, except, you can't actually upload your podcast straight to iTunes or Spotify directly from your computer. iTunes and other podcasting apps need an RSS feed submitted to them. An RSS feed can come from two places, either a website or an audio host. To get started, you just need an audio host and can later transition to building a website.

What is an Audio Host, though?

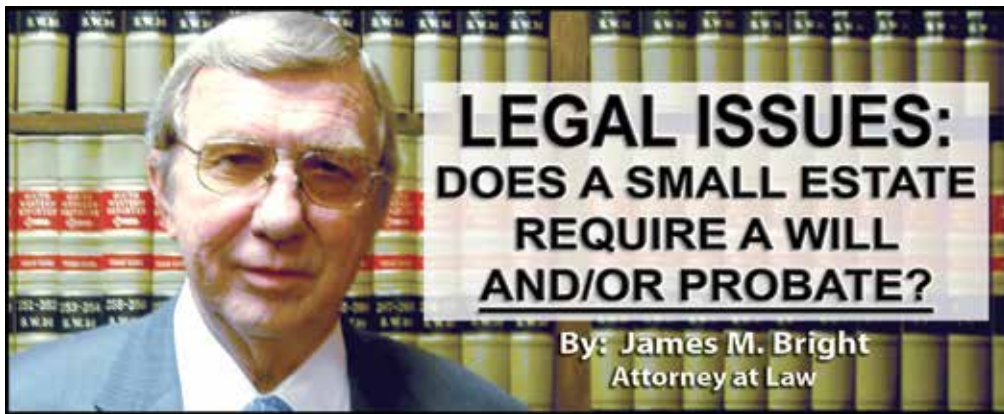
An audio host is an online platform that houses all of your audio and syndicates it through an RSS feed. It makes it easy to upload and submit your podcast to iTunes, Spotify, etc. They usually will run you around \$20

dollars, although there are some free options. Select an audio host that has in-depth analytics about your podcast. It should monitor things like downloads, playing time, what country your podcast is getting the most downloads, and more.

Submit Your Podcast to iTunes and Spotify

Once you have recorded your podcast, edited them, picked an audio host, and uploaded an episode, now is the time to submit to iTunes and Spotify. This is a fairly simple process, and you'll want to submit to these podcast directories because these are the biggest platforms available. Uploading to these platforms gives you instant access to millions of listeners around the world. Try making a list of specific people on your friend's list to share the podcast with. Also, when you post your first episode on social media try to write engaging headlines about the episode or who is involved. Really sell yourself and your work, and position yourself as a content provider. What would make a potential listener's ears perk up? Start a podcast off right with having a couple of marketing tactics to get noticed. This will help get you on the new and noteworthy page which will grab you a sizable subscriber base to start with.

So, do you have a passion that you love learning about? Are you an expert about something that you could help others get better at? Do you have a hobby that you spend a lot of time on? If you have something valuable to share with the world and are willing to devote a few years to share it, then yes, you can and should start a podcast. If you want to start a podcast in 2020 and need a more in-depth resource we have you covered! At Dock Line Magazine, we have compiled a comprehensive guide (over 12k words) on starting a podcast. We go in-depth about planning and buying equipment as well as picking an audio host. Contact us today to find out more! ♦



The following is provided for informational purposes only and is not, nor should it be construed as legal advice.

A common question that presents itself in my law practice is, "Do I need a will and should it be probated if all that I own is a house, car, some furniture and a small bank account or savings account?"

Unfortunately, the answer to this question is not always a simple "Yes" or "No" and, sadly, sometimes inquiry regarding the need for a will is not made until after a person has died. The only safe answer to, "Do I need a Will?" is "Yes".

The need for probate really depends not so much on the value of the decedent's property as it does upon the type of property.

A greatly over-simplified rule of thumb

is, "If the property being passed after death is property that must pass by title or deed, then the estate will probably need both a will and a probate proceeding."

Examples of assets which are commonly held by small estates include:

Bank or Savings Accounts – If they are only in the name of the decedent and do not have a designation on the account that they are "joint with right of survivorship" or "payable on death," then they must pass through probate.

Residence – Settling title to real property will in most cases require a probate proceeding even if the property is a community interest which is passing to a surviving spouse. This becomes even more important if the decedent had children from a prior marriage. This cir-

cumstance can result in the surviving spouse owning only one-half of the residence, and the children from a prior relationship owning the other one-half. In the most simple of cases, where the residence is being offered for sale and all of the heirs-at-law agree (a situation that does not often exist with blended families), and a title company is willing to write a title policy to protect the new owner solely upon the authority of an affidavit filed by the heirs, probate may not be required. (This is not usually a viable alternative and should not be relied upon.)

Automobiles – Typically, automobile titles may be transferred without probate through an "Affidavit of Heirship for a Motor Vehicle." A form of the affidavit may be found free of charge by downloading from the Texas Department of Transportation site online at www.tx-dmv.gov

Insurance Policies and IRA Accounts – These accounts typically pass outside of probate, and "letters testamentary" are not normally required to transfer ownership. A large and often encountered exception is when the decedent has failed to designate a beneficiary or the beneficiary predeceases. In those cases, probate will be required to transfer title. If there is a will, accounts will be transferred pursuant to the will; if no will, the accounts will be distributed pursuant to intestate succession.

Personal Belongings – Most personal items do not require a probate proceeding to determine how they should be distributed after death, and if those items are the only items in controversy, it is recommended in most cases that you not submit it to probate and simply find a way to distribute the estate to the decedent's heirs. In some cases, however, no matter how small the estate, it may take a probate proceeding and a court declaration of heirs to keep one heir from riding roughshod over the others.

If the decedent's estate is less than \$75,000.00 exclusive of homestead and no will exists, then it is possible to obtain a court order declaring the identities of the heirs and establishing the percentages of property which should pass to those persons. (Although this is still a probate proceeding, it is greatly simplified and is only used when no will exists.)

In addition to the preceding, at least two other things should be considered before a person decides that they may not need a will:

1. If they have minor children, they should have a will to designate a guardian. (A designation can also be made without a formal will.)

2. If they have a blended family, it is almost certain that they will need a will if they are to protect either their current or previous family.

Should you have questions regarding the necessity of a will or the necessity of probate, do not hesitate to call an attorney of your

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choice to make your needs known. Most attorneys will not try to perform those tasks if all of the indications are present that they are not needed.

If you do need a will, which is probable in most cases, please be advised that it is far less expensive to do a will that expresses your intent than it is to die intestate and leave your heirs with the burden of sorting out the relationships.

James Bright has been admitted to practice before the Federal Courts for the Southern District of Texas and Eastern District of Texas as well as all of the Justice Courts, Probate Courts, County Courts at Law, District Courts, Courts of Appeal and Supreme Court for the State of Texas. He maintains an office in Houston and by appointment another at 208 McCown Street in the heart of historic Montgomery. Contact may be made by telephone (936) 449-4455 or (281) 586-8277. For more information about wills or probate in Texas, please see- www.houstontxprobate.com. ♦


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SJRA Receives Two Industry Excellence Awards



Congratulations SJRA! Special thank you to all of our employees for effort, devotion, and commitment to providing first class, uninterrupted services to our communities. Our employees are our greatest asset.

This year, the San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA) had the honor of receiving multiple awards at Texas Water 2020-the largest regional water conference in the U.S. The awards were the Watermark Award and the Wastewater Treatment Plant of the year award.

Know Your Watershed

SJRA received the Watermark Award for the Know Your Watershed educational campaign. The campaign was created to help residents of the San Jacinto River Basin identify their watershed, understand the San Jacinto River basin as a whole, and learn how water naturally drains throughout the region, while also providing

important water-related facts. Armed with the information on this website, residents will be able to understand how their property is being impacted by a given rainfall event by monitoring regional rainfall and stream gages from the SJRA and Harris County Flood Control District websites.

The Watermark Award for communications excellence recognizes Texas Section - American Water Works Association (AWWA) and Water Environment Association of Texas (WEAT) members who have produced top quality communications. Effective internal and external communication is essential to a member's ability to provide excellent service. Today's water resource professionals must communicate with a variety of audiences to achieve success. Through these awards, Texas Section AWWA and WEAT hope to heighten awareness among all water resource professionals about the importance of effective communication.

Texas Water 2020 held a virtual Watermark Award Reception on Friday, July 17th. The event was broadcast live on Facebook.

Wastewater Treatment Plants (WWTP) #2 and #3

Additionally, SJRA's Woodlands Division WWTP #2 and #3 received the WWTP of the Year award from WEAT in each of their designated categories. This award is presented to a WWTP in Texas that has consistently showed

outstanding performance of daily activities beyond the normal call of duty.

WEAT held a virtual award ceremony on July 10th to congratulate the winners of this year's award. SJRA is very proud of the hard work and dedication of our staff at the Woodlands Division which is working 24/7, 365 days to serve the community and ensure superior wastewater treatment.

For more information on WEAT and their awards, visit their website at <https://www.weat.org/>, like them on Facebook at The Water Environment Association of Texas and follow them on Twitter @WaterEnvAssnTX.

For information on AWWA, visit their website at <https://www.awwa.org/>, like them on Facebook at American Water Works Association and follow them on Twitter @awwa.

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, or connect with us on LinkedIn @San Jacinto River Authority. ♦



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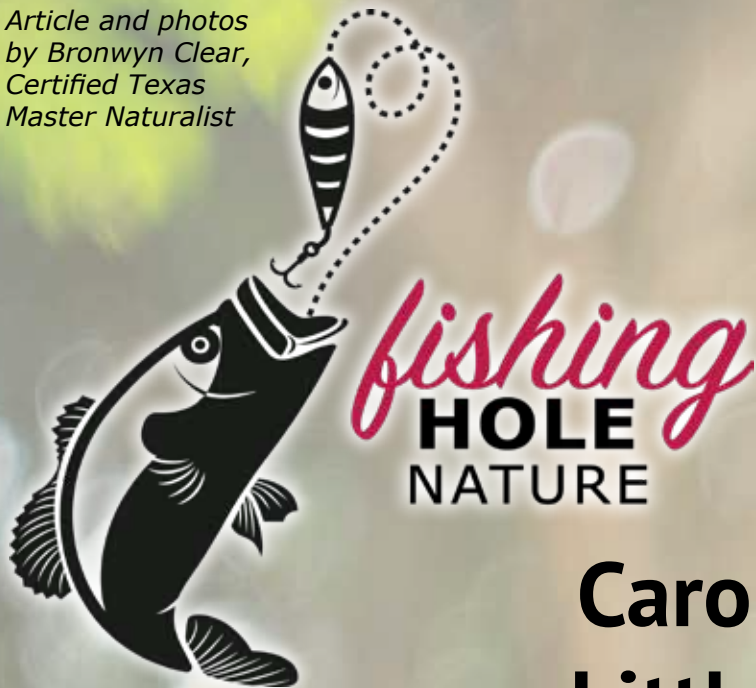
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This adorable fluffy chick is only around 2 weeks old, and out exploring a great new world with its siblings.

Carolina Wrens – Little Brown Jobs

In the birding world small brown birds are sometimes lumped together and called Little Brown Jobs, or LBJs for short. Our local wrens fall right into this category. You may see House Wrens and maybe even a Bewick's Wren, but a very common LBJ in East Texas is the beguiling little Carolina Wren. You will hear them before you see them, and their call gives them away. A

huge noise comes out of these little round birds, and when they blast, they often repeat their call in 3's or 4's. From the males you will hear loud calls of "CheeseburgerCheeseburgerCheeseburger" or "WeNeedYou WeNeedYou WeNeedYou", or even "FigaroFigaroFigaro"! Listen for any loud repeating call of three, and it is probably a Carolina Wren. However, when they are en-

couraging their chicks to leave the nest for the first time, the parents make a lovely quiet trilling call.

These bitty birds are easy to hear but often very hard to spot! They blend in extremely well with leaf litter and tree trunks. Shy, restless, but very curious, these fellows are always on the move. Carolina Wrens will explore your garage or patio, pillage through your yard leaves and brush piles, and then flit to low branches or to climb up and down tree trunks. They hop around endlessly and never seem to quit moving! Extended flight is not one of their strong points. Mostly they just fly a few feet up to the next tree or down to the nearest ground litter.

Nesting generally no more than 6 feet off the ground, these wrens will nest almost anywhere. On your patio or in your garage you may be surprised to find their little 5 inch nests in a flowerpot or a cardboard box! Outside they nest in dense yaupon stands or tall thick shrubbery. Clutch sizes range from 3-7 eggs, and these little birds can have up to 3 broods per season! Once eggs are laid it takes only about 4 weeks total for chicks to hatch and fledge, and these newly fledged chicks are tiny, only 2-1/2" tall! Looking more like a plop of old leaves, the babies have fuzzy head feathers, short wings and the tiniest of tails! Encouraged by their parents, they hop and climb, staying low to the ground on their first day out of the nest than most other fledging birds. They simply cannot fly well until their feathers grow more, but they can climb trees, forage for insects, and explore their new territory.

The East Texas Piney Woods is a fine home for our Carolina Wrens. During springtime, leave your garage door open and you may discover a batch of nesting LBJs. But during winter, if you care to keep these cute birds close, put out a suet feeder for them. Carolina Wrens will enjoy the feeders, and this way you can enjoy them!



Since it cannot yet fly, one of the first instinctive actions this fledgling has is to get off the ground and climb up into the safety of a nearby pine tree.



Adult Carolina Wrens are only 5" tall. Shy but loud, they blend into the forest with cinnamon wings, white eyebrow stripes and little round bodies. They use their curved beaks to turn over ground litter and find insects.



What better camouflage than for a chick to look like a small pile of leaves! Note how tiny his tail and wings are during his first hours out of the nest. He can flit, climb and hop just fine, but not yet fly.

Learn more about the incredible nature in our area by joining a chapter of the 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 Carolina Wren nest is made of mud, leaves and twigs, and is only about 5" wide by 5" deep. These birds build them almost anywhere, and they often have side entrances. This nest sits under a car jack in a garage!

Fishing ADVENTURES

with Derek Pietsch



7-18-20 Fishing at Galveston with Trey

Today Trey and I went wade fishing at Galveston. We waded the flats and fished with swimbaits. We caught a lot of redfish.

8-11-20 TUESDAY NIGHT TOURNAMENT

Today Jeremy asked if I wanted to compete in the Tuesday Night Tournament on Lake Conroe. It was a hot 99 degrees when the tournament started at 5:45 at the Edge Restaurant on Lake Conroe. We were #25 and are weighing in at 9:15 p.m. That is the second flight. John Jay, Grant's fishing partner from A&M is also fishing and so was Vince from Stow-A-Way Marina. Tonight, there are 34 boats competing.

Our first stop we were fishing shallow. Jeremy tried to set the hook. The fish, which was a crazy monster dug in, broke the line and snapped the rod in half. I just wonder how big that fish was. I lost one when Jeremy tried to net the fish and it jumped in the water. It was about 2 pounds. We caught one keeper on that spot.

We moved to the second spot, where we fished a brush pile in 8 feet of water. I caught a 3 ½ pounder using a big black worm on a Texas rig. The next spot was horrible. The waves were coming over the boat. The wind was so bad it bowed the line and I couldn't feel the bottom.

The next spot we fished shallow and caught only small ones. Then we hit a green light and culled one of our small keepers.

At 8:15 pm we had 3 fish in the boat and they were all small. My mom said she was coming to the weight in and I texted, "Don't come we have 3 small ones and I am not holding them up". She texted back, "You better they might win money, you never know". Then she texted "KEEP FISHING".



We went to another green light. A few minutes later I hooked up a 5.63 on my Texas rig. Jeremy was fishing with a jerk bait.

I will let John Jay tell his story of what happened when he was fishing the same tournament on Tuesday night.

After take-off we ran to our first spot where I had found a few fish and did good in the past. Immediately I thought I made a good decision because I hooked into a good fish right away. Fought it for a while and it wrapped me up in some brush. I got the boat on top of the brush, kept pressure on the line and could still feel it on there. All of a sudden it came out and started coming up. My adrenaline was going because I thought we were about to see a big one come up by the boat. We'll, that wasn't wrong, it was a fish, but a 4 pound catfish!

I got back up and kept casting, seeing more fish on my graph and I was hoping they weren't all catfish. Then the wind suddenly picked up and the manageable breeze turned into a 15 mph winds and taking occasional waves over the bough. After catching a few more small bass, we determined we had to move.

Ran to another spot and found a school of fish on it. We started catching a bunch of 15 inch non keeper bass, but it was every other cast. Normally any other time of year I'd move on and write that school off as small ones. But being that it is August and fishing is typically pretty tough, I decided to stay around active fish (which may have been what cost me a win). We ended up catching 2 small keepers off of it but I had a gut decision to go check a spot I hadn't caught any fish off of recently, but I knew conditions were right.

I stayed with that thought for 10-15 minutes before I finally decided to go with it and run to this last spot at 8:25 (we were due in at 9pm). I put the trolling motor down and immediately see fish all on the spot. My partner caught a 3 ½ right away to fill our limit and I started catching several more 15 inch non keepers. It came down to 8:48 and I knew we needed 7-10 minutes to make it back to check in for the ride and idle in the no wake zone. On my second to last cast, I had a good fish ham-

mer my bait but miss it. I knew I only had time for 1 more cast so I made it. Half way in I get a really big bite. I set back into the fish and it immediately takes off and starts ripping drag and came up to the surface to jump, but just makes a splash and darts on top of the water, taking off pulling more drag. I thought that it was kinda odd the way it did that and that maybe I just foul hooked a gar or a hybrid by the way it took off and was pulling so much drag. I chased the fish with the trolling motor and as it got closer to the boat, I saw it come up again and try to jump. This time, I was able to see the fish and saw it was a big bass. We netted the fish on the bow, my partner ran to pick his rods up and get ready to go as I pulled the trolling motor up, strapped the rods, grabbed the fish and culled the smallest one as we were idling out. We made it back to check in with a minute to spare. But I was wishing before I even caught that 6.51 pounder that I had made the decision to go there 10 minutes earlier or was in the second flight to have that 9:15 check in. I was confident I could have made another cull to get rid of that small 2 pound keeper for one that would have won it for me. None the less, it was a fish catch I won't forget catching one that big on the very last cast. Kind of like the stories you hear the pros talking about. Which should always make you remember that it can ALWAYS come down to the very last cast.

Wow, my mom was right and she was there when I came in with my fish. Jeremy and I came in 3rd place with 12.22 pounds and \$400 cash.

John Jay and his partner, Dawson came in 4th with a bag weighing in at 11.91 pounds and John actually caught his big bass on his last cast. That is why every second counts. He also got a check.

8-13-20 Trey and I Fishing in the Bay

Today I went down to Trey's beach house and we went fishing in the boat out in the bay. We caught 6 redfish and 1 Bull Red. We let the Bull Red go. I also caught a flounder. We filleted our fish so we can cook them for dinner when we start school next week. **THROW IT OUT, POP IT IN, FISH ON!** ♦



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