

## Intern Training Field Trip Kayaking on San Bernard River

On Wednesday, April 27, six TMN-COT members, including two interns, met at Hanson Riverside County Park for an intern class and a kayaking trip on the San Bernard River. Our instructor was James Glover, Special Events Coordinator for Brazoria County Parks Department. After a short class session by Glover, we boarded kayaks and canoes to paddle our way upstream to the "spillway" -- a low concrete dam constructed many years ago to provide water for an aviation fuel plant in Old Ocean (now ConocoPhillips). At the spillway, we turned around and returned to the park, having paddled a total distance of about 4.6 miles.



**Marty Cornell, Ed Barrios, Elaine Crews, Donna Graham, James Glover, Leo O'Gorman**



**Elaine readies her kayak**

Hanson Riverside County Park is a 35-acre wooded day-use park along the San Bernard River near West Columbia. Hanson features a large covered pavilion, scattered picnic tables and grills, an observation tower, playground, fishing pier, canoe launch, extended trail system, paved parking areas, and restrooms.

Once the site of a ferry landing, Hanson's natural attractions include native hardwood trees, bird watching, nature viewing, and fishing. Hanson Riverside County Park is on SH 35 between West Columbia and Sweeny.



**On the water: James Glover and Donna Graham**



**Elaine and Ed paddle on ahead**



**Ed and Marty haul out kayaks**



The quite river



Map: Wikimapia/Google



Dona Graham enjoys the kayak outing on the San Bernard River.

Interns with the Cradle of Texas Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists recently participated in a kayak outing on the San Bernard River. The group left Hanson Riverside County Park with the Phillips Spillway as their destination.

The local TMN chapter sends interns out on the stream twice yearly as part of their training on rivers and streams, a requirement for the statewide program.

The outing consists of an open-air class concerning the importance of streams and watershed areas in terms of environment, habitat, and economic considerations, as well as the historical importance of waterways in development and transportation. The Brazoria County Parks Department has been involved with this phase of their intern-

ship program for the past two years, providing a "guide" and kayaks for boatless interns.

The Texas Master Naturalist program is coordinated by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife. Interns to the program are required to complete specific training criteria and must contribute a minimum of 60 hours in related areas such as public education, wetland issues, or habitat restoration. Volunteers with the Cradle of Texas Chapter help support many local organizations by providing volunteers and expertise in many facets of nature studies.

"TMN Training on the San Bernard."  
*The Bulletin*.

Angleton: J&S Communications, Inc.  
May 24, 2011, p. 10.



Even James looked tired by the end of the trip.

**Left: Copy of an article from *The Bulletin*. Mav 24, 2011.**

### **A historical note about the spillway by James Glover, Brazoria County Parks Department**

The spillway was built to back up the river to secure a steady volume of water for operations at the aviation fuel plant in Old Ocean (now ConocoPhillips). A constant supply of water for evaporative cooling is critical in the refining process of turning crude oil into diesel, gasoline, and aviation fuel. Without the spillway, water quality would be compromised (varying levels of salinity which changes evaporative properties and therefore the effectiveness of the cooling process) and the plant's water supply would be at the mercy of tides and drought. Also makes for some good fishing!

The aviation fuel plant was built as part of the wartime effort in 1941. They took crude oil from the Old Ocean and New Gulf oil fields and processed it into aviation fuel. I've seen piping valves in the plant with German markings—they were in warehouses from before the war. I always thought it interesting that the fuel produced in this plant sped our bombers to German targets.

Huge wartime production in Brazoria County: aviation fuel in Old Ocean; magnesium for munitions and lightweight airplane parts at Dow (they also made napalm a bit later); sulfur for medicines and incendiary weapons in Freeport. There was good reason for the cannons at Quintana and the blimp base at Hitchcock.