

GUIDE FOR NATURE HIKE LEADERS

ORANGE AND BLUE TRAILS

You will be hiking through forests of the Lake Creek floodplain. Most of the preserve is in the floodway of Lake Creek and regularly flooded. In addition to serving as home to numerous wildlife, such as Bobcat, Barred Owl and Pileated Woodpecker, these forests serve as flood mitigation by slowing down floodwaters allowing time for some of the water to be taken up by the plants and sink into the soil. The plants also take up some of the pollutants in the water. Clearing them significantly reduces that benefit.

TREE GUIDE: The numbered posts correspond to trees described in a tree guide that contains interesting information about them. It may be accessed on your cell phone on our web site home page at lakecreektx.org.

START: Trail head at the NE corner of the preserve adjacent to Christine-Allen Park.

Informational kiosk at the trailhead for the Blue trail

Trail parallels the road to the main trailhead and contains examples of Willow Oak, Parsley Hawthorn and Black Gum trees.

MAIN TRAILHEAD: kiosk and start of orange trail (blue and orange trails joined here).

FIRST BOARDWALK: crosses E-W wetland. Signage show some of plants found here.

SECOND BOARDWALK: Additional wetlands to east. Some Parsley Hawthorn to east.

NATIONAL CO-CHAMPION LITTLE HIP HAWTHORN: on left (#11)

Blue trail splits from orange on left.

THIRD BOARDWALK (ORANGE): Crosses another E-W wetland. Note the change in vegetation in this area compared to higher ground to north and south. This wetland turns south on the east side and occupies the central part of the preserve.

BETWEEN THIRD AND FOURTH ORANGE BOARDWALKS: This section of trail is slightly higher. Soils are sandy loam and support assemblage dominated by Loblolly Pine, Sweetgum and Yaupon Holly.

FOURTH BOARDWALK (ORANGE): Note the change in vegetation related to the change in soil type and flooding frequency. Soils are now almost pure clay. Trail turns east for a while bordered by wetland species of trees including Overcup Oak, Water Hickory, Green Ash and Green Hawthorn.

POND AND PROGRAM AREA: These ephemeral ponds support a variety of wildlife including Red Eared Slider, Green Frogs, water snakes including Cottonmouth and the occasional River Otter. They also help store water after floods.

TRAIL BETWEEN ORANGE BOARDWALKS 5 AND 6: Note Green Hawthorns along trail.

TRAIL SPLIT- BLUE STRAIGHT AND ORANGE CREEK LOOP AND GREEN TRAILS TO RIGHT:
Follow creek loop to right.

TRAIL SPLIT: orange loop return on left. go straight.

TRAIL SPLIT: green trail to right. Go straight to creek. Be careful at creek edge. Cut bank is steep and subject to slumping. Heed signage. From this point good example of riparian habitats.

OBSERVATION DECK: Good views of the creek and potential to see wildlife if quiet.

SIGN MARKS POINT BAR/CREEK ACCESS ON RIGHT: Several good examples of Sycamore on point bar. Cardinal Flowers also observed here and along creek.

HUGE RIVER BIRCH ON LEFT: This section of trail is noted for a large number of Pipevine Swallowtail butterflies. Careful observation and you may see the females laying eggs. Larvae periodically abundant in the area.

SIGN MARKING GOOD VIEW OF CREEK.

DEAD END SIDE BRANCH ON RIGHT: Leads to cut off portion of old stream channel and a specimen of Water Elm.

REJOIN ORANGE TRAIL: Bear to right

JUNCTION OF BLUE TRAIL: Bear right

CUTOFF MEANDER: Trail follows old stream channel for a while until turns north. Watch for Poison Ivy (ground and on trees along trail).

OPEN BOTTOMLAND HARDWOOD FOREST:

OBSERVATION DECK: gives good views of surrounding forest

BOARDWALK 5 (BLUE): Trail north of this site contains some Cardinal Flowers and wetlands on the left side of the trail.

PALMETTO GROVE (JURASSIC PARK): Dense stand of very large palmettos. The small palmettos in the area are Sabal minor, but there is some speculation that these are a different species related to palmettos in Louisiana. This stand is a prime hiding place for wildlife including feral hogs. Soils from this point on are sandy loam along the trail. Wetlands crossed on orange boardwalk three are on the left almost to blue boardwalk four. Rejoin Orange trail after blue boardwalk three.