

## **LAFFITE'S COVE NATURE SOCIETY**

### **Annual Members Meeting**

The Laffites Cove Nature Society (LCNS) annual members meeting was held on March 17, 2012 at the Galveston Country Club. Scott Weaver, Vice President, called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. A quorum of members was established by the attendance of members. Hulse Wagner with the law firm of McLeod, Alexander, Powel, & Apffel, PC. and Susan Gonzales, CKM Property Management were present.

Gary Poltorak presented the prior minutes. Upon motion by Jim Murphy and seconded by Mort Voller, the members approved the minutes of February 18, 2012.

Jim Murphy and Susan Gonzales presented the Financial Report. Upon motion by Taras Romanchuk and seconded by Mort Voller, the members approved the financial report.

According to the Bylaws of the LCNS the Scientific Directors #5, #6, and #7 as their terms expire are elected by the Scientific Directors. Mort Voller's term has expired and he is up for election by the Scientific Board. Motion by Scott Weaver, Mort Voller was elected in position #5 as a Scientific Director.

#### **Gary Poltorak gave the Canal shelf and Marsh grass report.**

**Marsh Grass Project** *Gary Poltorak* - Planning and logistics, a Team effort with communication vital to the success of the project. One of the Galveston Bay Foundation's early **Living Shoreline** projects involved the creation of a 450-foot riprap and sacrete breakwater that was constructed and backfilled to create approximately 4,000 square feet of tidal marsh along Dickinson Bayou in Galveston County, Texas. The bluff shoreline was graded to allow for more plant-able area (Figure 11 below). A breakwater was constructed approximately 8-feet offshore, and the area between the breakwater and newly graded shoreline was filled with clean fill. The filled area was planted with *Spartina alterniflora*.

**Deed Restrictions, ACOE Permit Compliance Issues** *Scott Weaver* – Communication and cooperation with our Residents to find workable solutions to non-compliance issues.

- Work with homeowners and contractors to find solutions to non-conformance issues
- Coordinate the application and permitting process with CKM to make the process simple
- Retain legal representation in order to protect our community from threats to our deed restrictions
- Maintain an open dialogue with our community about issues that arise and to hear concerns or suggestions from our residents

**Wern Cemetery Project** *Gary Poltorak* – report covered clean up and protection of Cemetery.

**Preserves Maintenance Projects** *Mort Voller* - Enhancements to improve viewing possibilities and to improve the health of our Preserves. On a beautiful, sunny Saturday January 14, 2012, the Houston Chapter of the students Conservation Association Inc. provided 9 Houston area high school students and 2 supervisors who volunteered to help us remove invasive Chinaberry trees in part of the Laffite's Cove Nature Preserve E.

**Community Involvement Communication Project** *Jim Murphy* – **Information sharing with our Community from the LCNS.**

- Update and replace signs on the Nature Walk in Preserve E
- Install a gate with a chain and lock for Preserve F
- Hire a Tree Expert to prune oaks in Preserve E and the Wern Cemetery
- Identify the true location of the Egert home in Preserve E
- Schedule a “Clean-up Day” with volunteers
- Prepare for FeatherFest!
- Post monthly updates or information of interest to the community on the website
- Create a system on the website for requesting information or to arrange tours for new residents who want to become involved in LCNS projects
- Invite organizations to include the LCNS Preserves as a meeting place for their members
- Write articles about the history of Laffite’s Cove
- Sponsor a community event.

### **Nature Preserve work & plans presented by Mort Voller.**

#### **2011: Actual**

Maintenance of the Nature Preserves involves routine, regularly scheduled and non-scheduled activities. Keeping a yard or so of vegetation short along the paths is a monthly activity while the non wooded areas are mowed to control invasives and permit grasses to grow, once a year generally in the summer when most dry and accessible. The following describes those activities that are not subject to a definite schedule.

During the year we spent money on building a new bridge, tearing out rusty hurricane fencing and replacement with posts and rope, re roofing the Gazebo, repairing the Boardwalk and painting/sealing the handrails and parts of the three entrance kiosks.

In Preserve E we continued to focus on removal of any potentially dangerous newly dead tree limbs and commenced a focus on the removal of invasive Chinaberry trees. On the flip side we planted more wax myrtle bushes in E and D, and purchased and spread wildflower and prairie grass seed in E and F.

To help get through the drought, new hose lines to facilitate irrigation were run. We should also add here, that a huge number of personal (non paid, board member) hours was spent on that irrigation effort. Despite this, some plants were lost.

We installed three large signs summarizing the rules for using Preserve E, but unfortunately find that LC homeowners or their guests continue to flout them, creating uncomfortable situations for board members when we have to enforce them. The worst offenders are those that ride bikes through with their kids in tow, or enter with their dogs.

We might have to consider creating a purposeful short cut between Binnacle and Jibstay that skirts Eckert’s Bayou, and also to install entry hurdles that only permit pedestrians.

#### **2012: To date and Plans**

We have already expanded the size of one of the water-drip features to reduce congestion and confrontation between photographers and non-photographers during the peak spring birding season.

We have continued to wage war on the Chinaberry infestation. We had a group of students working with the Students Conservation Council help cut down and herbicide stumps working from Jibstay and with temporary paid labor have pretty well cut out all likely fruit bearing age plants throughout the forest. Hopefully as the tree canopy comes back the infestation will slow.

To prepare for a 2012 drought and to protect the remaining “monument” oaks, we have installed four heavy-duty sprinkler heads that will work at night for an hour so as needed. We are also in the process of repairing the ad hoc hose based irrigation systems used for the past two years.

In the past week we have planted 15, 5Gal. American winged elm trees most where we already have irrigation systems, plus 4 Willow trees by the Boardwalks entrance. On a negative note, we have had to pay for and install several NO DUMPING signs around the edges of Preserve E. Landscape contractors and some owners are dumping their waste there.

We are in the process of cleaning or replacing and adding to, the interpretive trail signage. New signs have been ordered. A few large interpretive signage is being looked into, they are not cheap!

A summary of the canal issues was presented. In January there were forty-six issues on the canal, by April it was reduced by half. Property owners have been cooperating.

The Galveston Bay Foundation will help us do water quality testing in four (4) locations.

Discussion was held on the slate of Officers. Motion by Taras Romanchuk and seconded by Gary Poltorak, the Board approved the following slate of Officers.

Gary Poltorak – President  
Jim Murphy – Vice President  
Taras Romanchuk – Treasurer  
Mort Voller - Secretary

There being no further business before the Board and member the meeting was adjourned to an executive session which adjourned at 1:06 p.m.

C.K.M. Property Management, Inc.  
Susan Gonzales