Steve Radack, Commissioner  
Harris County Precinct 3  

Kleb Woods Nature Preserve  
March 2016  

Harris County Precinct Three Commissioner Steve Radack’s Kleb Woods Nature Preserve has received a record number of visitors in the first two months of 2016 – an increase of 50 percent more than the number of those who visited the popular facility in the first two months of 2015. Staff doesn’t know if the increase is due to the warmer weather or the fact that park patrons were anxious to get outside after a rainy December. Whatever the case, they were delighted to welcome so many people to the Nature Center to begin the year.

Volunteer activities  
The spring-like weather encouraged our volunteers and we were delighted to welcome new additions. The ranks of the Yaupon’s Worst Nightmare Crew swelled to ten workers on several work days recently. That many hands removed a great deal of invasive privet and yaupon. Please consider joining them on Mondays from 8 a.m. to noon. The Tuesday volunteer crew continued with park maintenance. They recently prepared the vegetable garden and our blacksmiths provided a demonstration for a Discover Precinct 3 bus trip. The vegetable gardeners recently met and will begin their annual garden in early March. A number of scouts also volunteered this past month. Troop 329 helped spread the Christmas tree mulch on the Wetland Trail. This mulch comes from trees Precinct Three residents have recycled in Commissioner Radack’s annual Christmas tree recycling program.

History Discussion Group  
Our History Discussion Group was enhanced by our friends at Rosehill Christian School. They brought us Amanda Danning, a forensic sculptor who has reconstructed the faces of historical figures skeletal remains. Her work is on display at the Bob Bullock State History Museum in Austin, the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. and other museums. She talked about a buffalo soldier whose skull was found in a grave robber’s home. The buffalo soldier’s identity was eventually discovered, as well as the story of his murder. The program was attended by our regular visitors and 65 students from the school.

Our next History Discussion Group will meet March 10. We will then look at early 20th century Texas, the oil boom and the multiple families of H.L. Hunt from the perspective of the ultimate insider, Margaret Hunt Hill, in *H L and Lyda: Growing Up in the H L Hunt and Lyda Bunker Hunt Family As Told by Their Eldest Daughter.*
A Closer Look at Nature class
The A Closer Look at Nature class in February was about bird houses. The kids first listened to a program about birds that nest in cavities, usually holes in trees and why there are not enough natural cavities to satisfy the needs of these species. They then learned about different types of bird houses and which birds utilize them. After the lesson, the kids went to the woodshop where they made a bird house for chickadees. They will put them up in their yard at home and, hopefully, provide important habitats for birds in their neighborhoods.

Mom helps with bird houses. Mom and daughter work together. Photos by Megan Ahlgren.

Information on future classes can be found at the Nature Center or check www.pct3.com.

Backyard Habitat classes
The Backyard Habitat series, which started in January, had two classes in February. The first covered native plants for backyard habitats. After a presentation, the class roamed the park and discussed many of the plants in the preserve. For many species, we discussed their advantages, disadvantages and how they might fit into a backyard habitat. The outdoor session was informal and participants were able to ask specific questions. That allowed staff and other participants to offer their opinion about various plants. The second class was about water features and followed a similar format. A good portion of this session was spent talking about specific water features and how these designs would fit into a backyard.

Backyard habitat workshop. Photo by Megan Ahlgren.
German classes
The three German classes – 1-A, 1-B and 2-A – continue. Check the website for dates and meeting times. German 1-A and 1-B are the equivalent of high school German 1, while our German 2-A and 2-B are equivalent of high school German 2. If you would like more information, email us at klebwoods@pct3.com

Birding activities
February 10th is our winter birding Big Day. We had 22 observers come out early and stay late. They found 66 species by 10 a.m. but could only find two additional species the rest of the day. This year’s total of 68 species was two species short of our record. The most unusual bird found was a flyover Long-billed Curlew. It is the fourth record for the park.

The senior birding bus trip in February was to Goose Island State Park and the Big Tree area. The group’s quest was the magnificent Whooping Crane. They were successful in finding three of these stately birds. Unfortunately, they were a bit too far away for good photographs. The group found plenty of other species to photograph, as you can see.


Great Blue Heron. Photo by Linda Patterson. Roseate Spoonbill. Photo by Carol Mills.

Oldest known Texas Live Oak. Photo by Jerry Hunter.
The calendars for March and April can be found on the website. There is a link from the park web page or you can look under the Community Center events calendar. The website is [www.pct3.com](http://www.pct3.com)

**Dog owners**: Pets are no longer allowed in Kleb Woods. For your convenience and enjoyment, Precinct Three maintains five popular dog parks where your dog can run free. They are the **Millie Bush Dog Park**, 16756 Westheimer Parkway, in George Bush Park; the **Danny Jackson Family Dog Park**, 4828 ½ Loop Central Dr., near Loop 610 and Westpark; a dog park in **Congressman Bill Archer Park**, 3201 Highway 6 North; **Deputy Darren Goforth Dog Park**, 9402 Barker Cypress Road and **Beverly Kaufman Dog Park** located in Katy at Paul D. Rushing Park, 9114 Katy Hockley Road. The dog parks have their own set of rules. Please visit the Precinct Three website [www.pct3.com](http://www.pct3.com) for more information.