Commissioner Steve Radack and his staff hope you have enjoyed your summer. Please mark your calendar for our Annual Hummingbird Festival on September 8. You can find the event flyer on the Precinct 3 homepage. It is also attached to the end of this newsletter.

July was seasonally warm with enough rain to keep things from heating up too much or trees suffering from lack of water. The forest that Elmer Kleb planted is prospering this summer.

**Volunteer activities**
The **Tuesday Volunteers** have been busy with many maintenance items and trimming the lush growth that is so typical of a good summer. The **vegetable gardeners** have been busy tending the garden which continues in spectacular fashion. The **master gardeners** have continued the upkeep of the butterfly and hummingbird flower beds as well as the heritage garden near the 1896 Kleb house. A **master naturalist** has worked on removing invasive yaupon and privet as well as thinning some of our native tree stands. His efforts should increase the growth and health of the reforested areas. Our **woodworkers** continue to build shelves and make other improvements for the workshop. We were again blessed by the Cypress Stake Youth Service Project this July. Approximately 70 youths and their adult chaperons came out and worked on a variety of trail and invasive vegetation control projects. The group is a delight and highly productive. They had a significant impact in their morning of hard work.

*At left, a group loads mulch for transport to the path. At right, this group rakes out the mulch. Photos by Megan Ahlgren.*
Discovery Days
These special summer classes are more interactive than our typical classes. They provide kids with some memorable experiences which should help them write that “What I did this summer” essay. During the mid-July class, the kids learned what it takes to be a blacksmith. They watched a blacksmith demonstration by Dave Koenig. He explained the process of transforming a piece of metal using a hammer, anvil and applying heat and cold at just the right time. Following that basic introduction, the kids tried their hands at hitting an anvil, sanding metal to transform its surface and punching letters and designs into metal.
History Discussion Group
Margo Herman, a Kleb Woods staff member, led a special July discussion about our Country’s forefathers. She reviewed the book: *The Faiths of our Fathers: What America’s Founders Really Believed* by Alf J. Mapp, Jr. Mapp is a noted author, historian and Eminent Scholar Emeritus of English at Old Dominion University. With a lifetime of study, few people know the founding fathers better than Dr. Mapp.

Mapp illustrated the religious journeys of eleven of America's founding fathers, including John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison. He described men with religious beliefs as diverse as their political opinions. The profiles shed light on not only the lives and times of the revolutionary generation, but also the role of religion in public life in early American History. The group also reviewed a chapter about Revolutionary America in the book *A Renegade History of the United States* by Thaddeus Russell. Russell suggests that the need for more disciplined and thoughtful citizens in an independent democratic republic required the values and virtue that religion provides. Hence the founding fathers attended church more regularly as they aged to demonstrate that they believed following church doctrine was a good way to guide citizens.

Introductory German language classes
The final summer German Class is August 22. The class is designed to give you a feel for the language in a fun one hour class. Participants learn to say “good morning,” count to ten and sing a few German songs. Formal German language classes will be offered beginning in September and run through May. German 1-A and 1-B are the equivalent of High School German 1, while our German 2-A and 2-B are the equivalent of High School German 2. If you have any other questions, please contact Linda Martin-Rust at klebwoods@pct3.com.

Birding activities
The weekly bird walks in July, as in June, are attended only by the diehards. While they predominately find the regular resident species, Roseate Spoonbills were found on one walk to the delight of all the participants. When bird numbers are low, the walks often turn into butterfly and dragonfly walks. A Painted Skimmer, a new species of dragonfly for the park, was one of the highlights.

The walks during August will be from 8-10 a.m. We generally get about 35 species with evidence of migration building through the month. We will also take time to admire the other wildlife we see on these walks, such as butterflies, dragonflies, and skinks.

The July Senior Birding Bus Trip was a black and white affair. The group’s targets were Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Swallow-tailed Kite and Wood Stork. All three species are largely black and white in plumage. Our first stop was at W. G. Jones State Forest on FM 1488 where we were met by Texas Forest Service Biologist Donna Work. She is a Red-cockaded Woodpecker specialist and is intimately familiar with the birds at the state forest. She led us to an area where there is an
active breeding cluster with some recently fledged young. We soon found the birds and Ms. Work told the participants about the birds’ biology as we watched them.

Following a successful quest at Jones State Forest the group took a rest stop and a late breakfast at a nearby fast food place before starting the second leg of the day’s quest. They traveled to Newport Subdivision in Crosby in search of Swallow-tailed Kites. They visited a small park in the subdivision that a family group of Swallow-tailed Kites had been frequenting. They were unable to find them but had numerous consolation prizes. The lake was beautifully decked out in yellow floating heart lilies. Unfortunately, this plant is not native and considered invasive. A family group of Mississippi Kites put on something of a show over the lake and several of our photographers caught one of the kites with the crescent moon as a backdrop. A pair of Eastern Kingbirds, a type of flycatcher, were nesting in the area. When a Mississippi Kite came near the nest, the Kingbird, no larger than a Mockingbird, attacked the Kite viciously. It was quite a show to see the small bird drive away the larger Hawk. The group also found some Red-headed Woodpeckers and Brown-headed Nuthatches at this interesting spot. They cooled off with lunch at a well-known spot near the San Jacinto Monument.

After lunch the group drove out Highway 90 toward Nome. Just before Nome they stopped at a wetland which supports an Egret Rookery. At the rookery they found a group of seven Wood Storks. These large black and white waders nest in tropical
regions of Florida and Mexico during late winter and come to Texas during the summer months. They loaf and roost in Egret Rookeries when not out feeding in small wetlands.

At left, Wood Storks roosting in a pine tree near Nome. At right, a Swallow-tailed Kite carries a prey item. Photos by Barbara Heaton-Knapke.

After lunch, the group made a final attempt for the elegant and graceful Swallow-tailed Kite. This Hawk is black and white with a long, forked tail. It is a master glider and during the heat of the day, drifts in the rising air currents and wind to sail gracefully over the trees. They are often seen over the Trinity River bottoms along Highway 90 between Dayton and Liberty. The birds are migratory and come to Texas from their wintering grounds in Central and South America in early March. They nest in southern bottomlands and in July begin congregating in the Trinity bottoms in anticipation of migration in mid-August. We found one on the way to Nome and stopped to get pictures. On our return toward home we spotted three more. The one we stopped for swooped down and took something off a tree top. It ate the morsel on the wing as it sailed above us. One photographer looked closely at her pictures and thought the prey was a tree frog.

The group’s final stop of the day was the Dairy Queen in Dayton. It happened to be a new manager’s first day on the job and while we overwhelmed the small shop, the lady was delighted and most gracious to the Seniors. The group had made that young person’s day. We ended the day with 70 total species, which is a record high for this regular July trip.

**Signing Up for Senior Birding Bus Trips (Must be at least 50 years old to go on these trips)**

You may now sign up for the **August 24** trip to Somerville Lake, Lake Bryan, and the Biodiversity Teaching and Research Collection at Texas A&M University, the **September 28** trip to Formosa-Tejano Wetlands and Calhoun County, and the **October 5** trip to Freeport and to hear Kevin Karlson speak about his book *Birds of Prey: Hawks, Eagles, Falcons, and Vultures of North America* (note: this trip will start and end later than usual). To sign up for these trips, email klebwoods@pct3.com or call 281-357-5324.

You may only sign up yourself plus one friend/spouse. No multiple reservations. **You will get a confirmation e-mail a week before the trip if you have a seat.**

The calendars for July and August can be found on the www.pct3.com website at Community Calendars. There is also a link from the park’s web page.

**Dog owners:** Pets are not allowed in Kleb Woods Nature Preserve. The scent they leave negatively affects wildlife. For your convenience and enjoyment, Precinct Three maintains five popular dog parks where your dog can run free. The dog parks have their own set of rules. Please visit the Precinct Three website www.pct3.com for more information.
COMMISSIONER STEVE RADACK INVITES YOU TO THE

11TH ANNUAL KLEB WOODS HUMMINGBIRD FESTIVAL

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2018
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

HUMMINGBIRD BANDING:
Sumita Prasad will be capturing and banding hummingbirds throughout the day. She will be assisted by Jim Renfro; both are licensed hummingbird banders. In addition to seeing these feathered jewels up close, you will learn about their unique structure and amazing biology.

RAPTORS:
Houston Audubon Society Education Director Mary Anne Weber will display several live raptors to be photographed in a natural setting. She will field questions and show her raptors throughout the day.

NATURE TALK:
Staff naturalist Kendra Kocab will present A Closer Look at Nature. This class is part of an ongoing series designed to give school-aged children a closer look at our natural world. Today’s 20 minute presentation: Hummingbird Biology at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

NATURE WALKS

KIDS ACTIVITIES

Featuring as many as 100 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds!

HISTORY TALK:
Kleb Woods staff will introduce visitors to A Closer Look at History. This series is designed for school-aged children. Each class investigates a historical topic. Today’s 20 minute presentation: The Story of Elmer Kleb & His Woods at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

WHAT:

WHERE:
Kleb Woods Nature Center, 20303 Draper Rd. at Mueschke Rd., Tomball 77377
http://www.pct3.com/parks/kleb-park/

WHEN:
Saturday, September 8 from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Admission is free. Patrons are encouraged to bring their own refreshments. Drinks and snacks will not be sold.

For additional information, call Kleb Woods Nature Center at (281) 357-5324.