



The Park People

The Park People, a not-for-profit citizen's organization, advocates for and participates in restoring, preserving and expanding parks, natural areas and trails for present and future generations.

Founded in 1979 by Terry Hershey and The Citizen's Environmental Coalition, The Park People has provided over \$3.9 million and 19,000 volunteer hours to the Houston community for the sole purpose of creating and maintaining Houston's natural areas and parks.

Commitment to Trails



The Park People have long been advocates of Lake Houston Park, urging the state purchase in 1980, and supporting the transfer to the City in 2005. Lake Houston Park is extraordinary in the many varieties of recreation it offers-camping, paddling, and hiking. During this last year, The Park People published a new Greenway Trails map, identifying almost 600 miles of actual and proposed Greenway Trails, or off-road trails, in the greater Houston/Harris County area. These trails serve to "Get Houston Moving", promoting good health by walking; trails also improve the local economy through tourism and civic improvement. Trails are both linear parks and serve to connect existing parks.

The Park People have committed, in partnership with Keep Houston Beautiful and the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, to provide 250 volunteers to build trails at Lake Houston State Park. This event will be part of a city wide "On the Trail of Trash" event.



"All trails work is a partnership. Without vibrant non-profit organizations, supportive state programs, and the assistance and recognition of local communities, it is almost impossible to bring these trails forward as real places to visit and experience."

-STEVE ELKINTON

CRM and the National Trails System, CRM, 20(1), 1997



Houston Parks and Recreation Department

Partners with the Bayou Preservation Association's

Paddle Trails Committee

"The way of a canoe is the way of the wilderness, and of a freedom almost forgotten. It is an antidote to insecurity, the open door to waterways of ages past and a way of life with profound and abiding satisfactions. When a man is part of his canoe, he is part of all that canoes have ever known."

-SIGURD F. OLSON
The Singing Wilderness, 1956

Houston calls itself the Bayou City. With over 2,500 miles of waterways, protecting and transforming the bayous into "beautiful ribbons of green" makes good sense. Properly managed, they provide recreational opportunities close to neighborhoods, scenic views to offset the stress of city living, and reduce flooding by maintaining the water-absorbing qualities of the flood plain. The Bayou Preservation Association and its Paddle Trails Committee, have partnered with the Houston Parks and Recreation Department and Montgomery County, to identify stakeholders and outline park assets to use Lake Houston's eleven miles of shoreline for water-based recreation.

The Paddle Trails Committee, headed by Bob Arthur, is dedicated to providing information on canoeing and kayaking in Houston and surrounding area streams and bayous. Recent activities include publishing a web-based Paddle Trails Guide by Eric Ruckstuhl entitled "Canoeing Houston's Bayous and Creeks." The guide provides descriptions of paddle trails in seven counties. BPA is dedicated to growing the guide to include new routes and updating current routes as conditions change.

Paddlers following this guide are warned that the dynamic nature of the area's streams and bayous may change the accessibility of put-ins and take-outs. Additionally, local government policies toward parking and stream access may change, requiring paddlers to observe due diligence when parking around and paddling a given stream. Above all, paddlers are encouraged to be conscious of their own safety. Know the rules, plan your trips, be aware of local dangers and never paddle in flood stage.