



## SPRING 2014 WRAP UP

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### Club Program

The success of our after-school club program has continued in the spring. We logged 1,308 student hours at 8 different high schools, which means we nearly doubled our participation from fall to spring. Our club with 40-45 students maintained its high attendance, with many students indicating on the survey that they'd like to participate again next year. Clubs took place at HISD, Spring Branch ISD, KIPP schools and at a few other private charter schools that work primarily with low income communities. In a survey about their experiences with club at one school, students listed what they learned throughout the year. Responses included:

- How to pitch a tent
- How to make survival knots
- Leadership
- How to be confident about your opinions
- How to use a compass
- Kayaking
- Making Friends
- How to be cooperative
- Leave No Trace
- Perseverance
- How to take care of a campground
- How to preserve nature

These responses are very encouraging and it was evident that students experienced a wide range of lessons and learned different skills from each lesson. We look forward to expanding our club program for the upcoming year to build off the lessons that were most useful to the students.

### Spring Trips

Our 2014 spring season was our most successful yet. We doubled the number of students and leaders that were out compared to spring 2013. This spring, 247 and 90 leaders spent a weekend in the woods, including a new program with 6<sup>th</sup> graders at Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge which was a huge success. We've received great feedback from both teachers and students on what they are learning in the woods and how it's making an impact back in the classroom. In addition to our USFWS partnership, our relationship with Texas Parks and Wildlife also continued to grow and we were able to take our students to two other new locations this spring: Galveston Island and Brazos Bend State Parks. See below for a description of our trips this spring:

#### Weekend #1: February 28-March 2

**TRIP 1: Service and Learning Project with Bayou Land Conservancy (BLC).** We will camp both Friday and Saturday nights at Sam Houston National Forest at Stubblefield Campground. Saturday will be spent doing service out at one of BLC's properties. Activities may include- water quality testing, trail

maintenance, trail building, etc. This will be led by Jennifer Lorenz of Bayou Land Conservancy who was listed as one of “Houston’s Most Fascinating People of 2013” by the Houston Chronicle. She is a great conservationist and her organization always plans a great trip for us!

**TRIP 2: Lavaca Rio Ranch Service and Learning Project.** This trip is brought to us by friends of The Woods Project. They are offering our students to go to a working ranch southwest of Houston (about 15 miles Northwest of Edna, TX). The plan is to do a service project (build fencing, cleaning stables, or trail maintenance) and then learn about the inner workings of a Texas Ranch—from land to cattle management. This is a great way for our students to connect with potential career opportunities and learn more about life outside of the city. We will spend both Friday and Saturday nights camping on property owned by the ranch.

### **Weekend #2: March 7-9**

**TRIP 3: Kayak at Galveston State Park.** We are working again with Texas Parks and Wildlife to offer a new location for our canoe/kayak weekend but due to us being on the bay side of Galveston, we are dropping the canoes and sticking with kayaks. The plan is to spend the day on Saturday kayaking, fishing, and geocaching with a trip in the afternoon to the beach side of the state park. This is a great opportunity for the students to see a different side of Galveston island. Both Friday and Saturday evening will be spent at Galveston State Park.

**TRIP 4: Backpack at Sam Houston National Forest.** This is a great opportunity for our students and leaders to have a little glimpse of what to expect on their summer trip. We will be hiking the Four Notch Loop Trail and the Little Lake Creek Trail which have both been done by TWP students in the past and are about 10 – 12 miles over the course of Saturday and Sunday morning. Friday evening will be spent camping at Stubblefield Campground in Sam Houston National Park and Saturday evening will be spent camping out on the trail.

### **Weekend # 3: March 28-30**

**TRIP 5: Houston A+UP Weekend.** We will be working with 6th grade students from Houston A+ Unlimited Potential on service and learning projects partnered with US Fish and Wildlife Services at Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge. Being known for its bird habitat and rare bird sightings for this time of year, The Woods Project is excited to take our first group of leaders and volunteers to the Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge. Friday evening will be spent setting up camp and familiarizing the students and leaders with the area. After dark, we plan to do either a night hike or a quick astronomy lesson (weather permitting) with the students and leaders. On Saturday, USFWS will have service and learning projects prepared for our students and volunteers. Throughout the weekend events, there will be a strong focus on developing character traits and team building. If weather agrees, we may also have the opportunity to go kayaking at Lake Jackson.

### **Weekend # 4: April 11-13**

**TRIP 6: Service and Learning Project at Brazos Bend State Park.** New location for the spring with campsites dedicated just to The Woods Project students and volunteers. We will do some hiking and exploration of the park including learning about the alligators that live here. There is also an observatory onsite and we are working on setting up some time dedicated to exploring the night sky.

Activities outside of the service project will include geocaching, hiking, and team building. Both Friday and Saturday nights will be spent camping at Brazos Bend State Park.

**TRIP 7: Backpack at Sam Houston National Forest.** This is a great opportunity for our students and leaders to have a little glimpse of what to expect on their summer trip. We will be hiking the Four Notch Loop Trail and the Little Lake Creek Trail which have both been done by TWP students in the past and are about 10 – 12 miles over the course of Saturday and Sunday morning. Friday evening will be spent camping at Stubblefield Campground in Sam Houston National Park and Saturday evening will be spent camping out on the trail.