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# NNC NEWS

Volume 12

Northlake Nature Center – Mandeville, Louisiana

Winter – 2004 Dec

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## By the Beaver Pond

Larry Burch  
President NNC

With the summer heat a distant memory and few bugs to accompany you on your stroll, you will find fall and winter are a great time to visit the NNC site. There is wildlife activity - deer, turkey and birds. Once the leaves drop the vistas are improved. We have been working on extending and improving the clubhouse loop that starts near the pavilion including four new bridges on trail sections that were often muddy. Thanks to the St Paul's School service group that has helped with this project.

A few items of note:

**Website** - see the update - BirdFest 2004, children's activities, BirdFest/ NNC products available online.

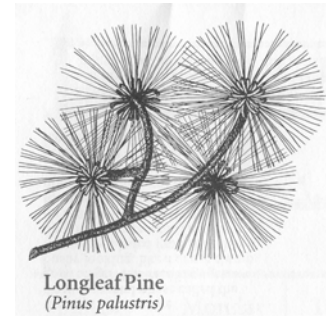
**The Great Louisiana BirdFest 2004.** Brochures are in the mail. You can register online. Register early for the best choice since the popular trips will fill up well before BirdFest.

**St Tammany's Growth Management Plan - New Directions 2025.** Congratulations to our Board member Rick Wilke who has taken on Chairmanship of the ND2025 Critical and Sensitive Committee. The C&S Committee will have a phase 1 report out in early 2004. What has 2025 accomplished to date? - Transportation plan phase one, Land Use plan, signage & landscape regulations, Economic Development plan, Critical & Sensitive element phase 1 report near completion, Housing element initiated.

I have chaired the Transportation Committee since the inception of ND 2025. Got transportation complaints, who doesn't???? Call or email me if you must but first let me say that the phase one 2025 transportation plan approved two years ago identifies the key problems and critical improvements needed. What is needed is lots of money to make the critically needed backlog of improvements (\$200 million) to catch up with growth and we only have \$3 -\$10 MM per year state and local funds. Second, we need a strong linkage between transportation needs and future land use.

*(continued on page 2)*

## Longleaf Pine Planting



Last year the NNC planted 4,000 longleaf pine seedlings and this year we will plant 2,000 more. The longleaf pine restoration project has been ongoing for seven years, in which we have planted over 18,000 seedlings. The NNC restores longleaf pine habitat for several reasons. First of all, longleaf pines are more resistant to fire, the southern pine borer, and diseases. Longleaf pines once flourished in the United States, covering more than 90 million acres. They were the dominant trees where fires occurred frequently. In the 1930's, almost all of the virgin longleaf forests were cleared for their lumber, turpentine and resin. Today, less than 1,000 acres of virgin longleaf pines remains and the longleaf pine forests cover less than 3.3 million acres. Fast growing pines such as loblolly and slash have replaced the longleaf pines.

The longleaf pine ecosystems have a diversity of flora and fauna. There are 900 endemic plant species in the longleaf forests. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, fire was considered harmful to forest systems and was suppressed. As a result, the longleaf forests have suffered. To support habitat restoration the NNC offers educational programs on longleaf pine savannahs and conservation.

The NNC will need volunteers to help plant longleaf pine seedlings on January 31<sup>st</sup> and February 7th, 2004. All volunteers should meet at the Northlake Nature Center parking lot at 9am. Please call to sign up and for more information.

### NNC WEBSITE & EMAIL

[Http://www.northlakenature.org](http://www.northlakenature.org)

Email: [info@northlakenature.org](mailto:info@northlakenature.org)

Phone: (985) 626-1238

(Continued from page 1)

## By The Beaver Pond

### St Tammany Land and Water Conservation Proposal.

St Tammany's rapid growth brings up a property tax proposal St Tammany residents will see on the ballot January 17. More detail is provided in the fact sheet included with the newsletter. The proposal is for a twenty year, two-mil property tax to raise funds for the purchase and preservation of strategic open lands. The selected properties will promote conservation, improve water quality and provide storm water runoff capacity. Although this type tax is fairly common in other parts of the country, St Tammany is the first parish to propose a tax to preserve open land in Louisiana history. Given that we have the fastest growth rate in the state we need to find ways to preserve our open space and this is a viable proposal for voters to consider.

The proposal is guided by The Trust for Public Land and a citizen advisory committee made up of parish residents representing a wide variety of community, geographic area, political affiliation, and economic interest in the parish. The proposal is endorsed by numerous individuals and organizations including The Nature Conservancy, the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, 2025 Steering Committee and parish government. One of the most common questions about the tax is exactly how the money will be spent and where. This is a 20-year proposal. It would be difficult to firmly designate a plan that would be valid 10 to 20 years into the future. What is defined is the process with an annual audit, the general property selection criteria and an oversight process for selection via a citizen oversight committee combined with the vested interest of the parish council members who will have to approve purchases. It has a good chance of being reasonably equitable for parish residents. As far as I am concerned having \$20 million dollars worth of open space land is better than having none. This fund will also allow the parish to leverage the funds with federal, state, and private funds, as they become available.

**Go to the polls on January 17 and make your choice, open space or concrete.**

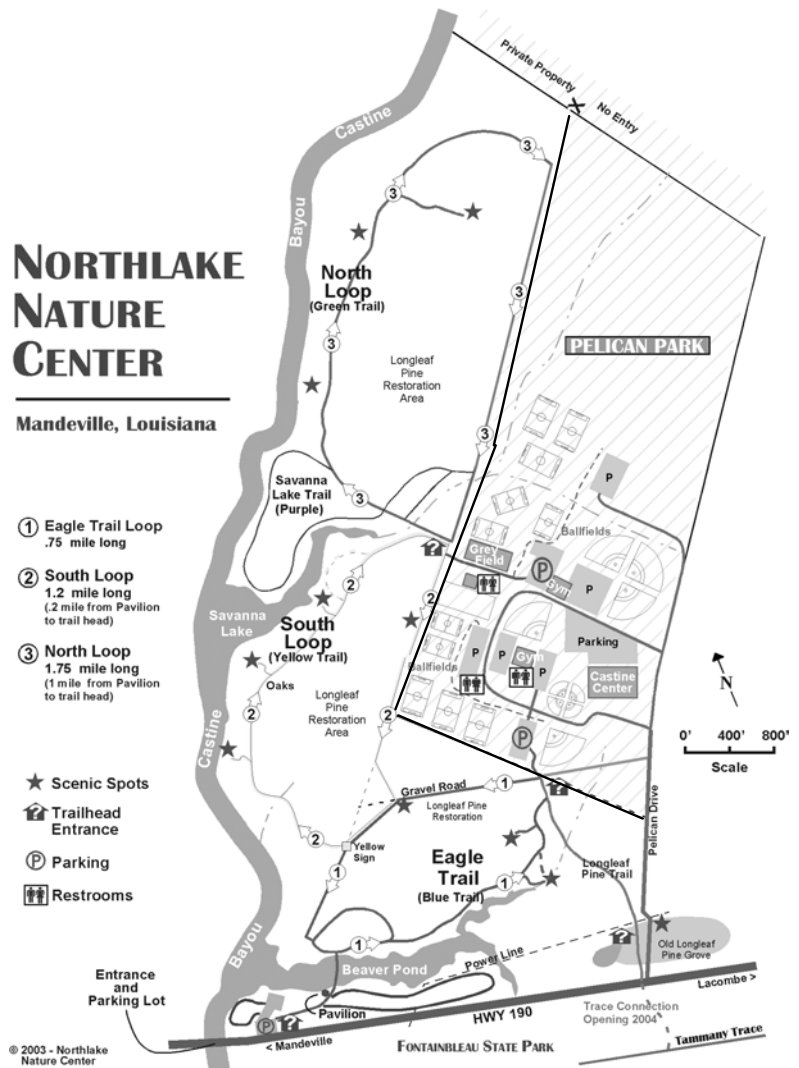


## Volunteers Needed

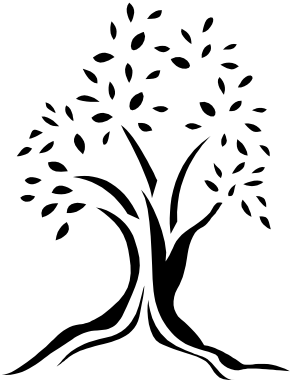
The NNC needs volunteers to help with site maintenance, programs, longleaf pine planting, and BirdFest 2004. If you are interested in volunteering please call (985) 626-1238 or email us at [info@northlakenature.org](mailto:info@northlakenature.org). We appreciate the support and generosity of our volunteers!

## Memberships

It's that time of year again. Don't forget to renew your membership for 2004. All proceeds go towards operating costs and educational programs. The NNC looks forward to another fantastic year in 2004. Thanks for your support!



# Longleaf Pine Planting Volunteers Needed



The Northlake Nature Center would like you to help us plant 2000 Longleaf Pine seedlings this year. These seedlings will help restore an area devastated by the Southern Pine Beetle infestation.

## Why do we need this?

In the late 1700's Longleaf Pines covered more than 90 million acres of southeastern forests. Today, less than 3 million acres exist in the southeastern states. Hundreds of plants and animals are particularly suited to the Longleaf Pine habitat. Over 30 plants and animals species are currently listed as threatened or endangered as a result of the decline in Longleaf Pine forest.



**MEET AT THE NORTHLAKE  
NATURE CENTER PARKING  
LOT**

**PLEASE CALL (985) 626-1238**  
(GROUPS PLEASE CALL FOR RESERVATIONS)

**CONTACT US AT**  
**info@northlakenature.org**



**DATE:**  
1/31 & 2/7

**TIME:**  
9:00 AM

## Louisiana Black Bear

*Ursus americanus luteolus*



The Louisiana Black Bear has been on the threatened species list since 1992. This species was once numerous throughout Louisiana, but now it is restricted to large forested areas. The bears can be found in cypress-tupelo swamps, cypress swamps, bottomland hardwood forests, and coastal marshes. This species can be found primarily in the Tensas and Atchafalaya river basins. Black bears have also been sighted in Kisatchie National Forest, Pearl River Basin, and the Tunica Hills area. The black bear population is declining due to habitat loss and poaching. The hardwood forests are cleared and the land is used for agricultural purposes. When the forests are cleared the bears are sometimes forced into areas where humans live. Black Bears are omnivores, feeding on tubers, bulbs, berries, nuts, honey, shoots, grubs, carrion, fish, and small mammals. The next time you take a hike through the woods, look for signs of the black bear. Look for turned over logs, decayed stumps torn apart, and trees scarred with tooth and claw marks. Never approach a black bear! Help protect our future by becoming involved in conservation.



## Marie Celino

### BirdFest Featured Photographer

Each year The Great Louisiana BirdFest offers a photography workshop. This year, we are privileged to have Marie Celino as our presenter. Marie's work has been published in numerous books, magazines, newspapers, calendars, and postcards all over the world.

On Saturday, April 17<sup>th</sup> from 2:30 pm – 4:00 pm Marie will present this workshop on bird and nature photography techniques. She will teach you techniques to help you better use your everyday equipment when out in the field. This workshop will help you enjoy the process of capturing nature on film and experience the thrill of being able to capture the beauty of nature that you see and love.

## Calendar

Please call (985) 626-1238 for more information and to make reservations.

### January

- January 31 – Longleaf Pine Planting, 9 am

### February

- February 7 – Longleaf Pine Planting, 9 am
- February 28 – Children's Program, 9 am

### March

- March 27 – Children's Program, 9 am

### April

- April 15-18 – The Great Louisiana BirdFest
- April 24 – Children's Program, 9 am

### May

- May 29 – Children's Program, 9 am

## Explore The NNC Webpage

Do you feel like hiking at the NNC? Make sure you go to our website first for a trail map and to explore the nature center activities. There are several children's programs you can do while hiking, such as a scavenger hunt. There are also several activities you can do at home. We hope you have fun while learning about nature. BirdFest and Nature Center products are also available online.

# The Great Louisiana BirdFest



**April 15 – 18, 2004**

Several new trips have been added to the list for BirdFest 2004. A variety of trips are offered, so those who have attended in the past get a chance to bird in new places. The birding fieldtrips for BirdFest include the following:

- **Grand Isle**
- **Fontainebleau State Park**
- **Lake Martin / Whiskey Bay**
- **Manchac Swamp / Joyce Wildlife**
- **Big Branch Wildlife Refuge**
- **Little Pine / New Orleans East**
- **East Pearl River Estate**
- **Backyard Gardens**
- **Pine Island Rookery**
- **Big Branch by Night**
- **Bayou Sauvage**
- **Mill Bank Farm / Lake Ramsey Preserve**
- **Northlake Nature Center**

New for this year the Lake Martin / Whiskey Bay trip will visit the Atchafalaya Basin area, the largest river bottom swampland in North America. Then it's on to The Nature Conservancy's Cypress Island Preserve at Lake Martin, home to one of the largest wading bird rookeries in North America. Since this is breeding season and the nesting population is so dense, the early morning bird song can be overwhelming. You are guaranteed an unforgettable birding experience.

The Seafood and Silent Auction benefiting the NNC will be on Friday, April 16, 2004. Enjoy feasting on southern specialties like boiled crawfish and jambalaya. Don't forget to bid on birding and nature related items during the auction. Go home with some great buys!

Register for guided bird trips, a photo workshop with Marie Celino, a photo shoot, or the Seafood and Silent Auction at [www.northlakenature.org](http://www.northlakenature.org).