The Fall is always a time of reflection of the many accomplishments and challenges of the past year. Unprecedented events shape us and 2020 is one of those years with COVID-19 forcing many challenges and hardships as we all struggle to process the “new normal” in our everyday lives. And keeping our focus on environmentally sustainable living is an ongoing goal for TWG.

In our 31st year, The Woodlands GREEN has continued with its programming throughout the pandemic, although with some changes. At a recent virtual retreat held in August, fifteen goals were envisioned for 2020-21. Also, the first ever Virtual Annual meeting was held June 1 on Zoom, excerpts from the meeting can be seen on the TWG website. An enthusiastic group of students, teachers, and members participated.

A theme for the year was to grow the number of our community partnerships. A most notable addition was the new partnership with Coulson Tough Elementary School and their Race for Awareness. TWG was selected by students and teachers to be the recipient of fund-raising with a special project to install a pollinator garden at the Sterling Ridge Park and Ride. The school adopted a novel approach at the race accommodating social distancing and other safety measures and raised $22,500. Later this Fall, Environmental Services of the Township with TWG breaks ground for the new garden.

In partnership with Woodlands Water, Environmental Services, and Rainwater Solutions, TWG has helped deliver 104 rain barrels to The Woodlands residents in the past six months. With the spring lockdown, there has been a resurgence of interest in gardening projects and water conservation. Still available, rain barrels can be acquired via the TWG website, and Woodlands Water provides a promotion to Woodlands residents who purchase a barrel; a rebate on their water bill.

Another partner, Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC) has generously provided facilities for the popular Going Green Lectures spearheaded by Paul Nelson. Lectures were held in January and February, suspended with lockdown, and are resuming this month on October 22nd via Zoom. The past and present activities of the Bayou Land Conservancy will be our first topic. The website provides the calendar with the next five months of upcoming lectures.

Strategic partners expanded to include Chevron Phillips in addition to long term partners HEB, Woodlands Water, and Hughes Corporation. These companies provide the funds for Village Challenges: Green Up, Waterwise, and other initiatives held annually by the Township. Next challenge comes with the 3R drive-thru event on November 14th.

The Invasive Task Force, spearheaded by director Kathie Herrick, has tackled miles of trails this past year, including paths in Grogan’s Mill, Indian Springs, Cochran Crossing, and Panther Creek Villages, eradicating the persistent air potato vine that has been overtaking the trails. The task force works early hours on the weekends, and some weekdays. If interested in lending a hand in this important endeavor, send her a note via info@thewoodlandsgreen.org.

Local high school students volunteer with TWG via our Student Ambassador program spearheaded by Wendy Packer and committee. For 2020/2021, a total of 48 students have signed up.

Continued on next page…
Many great plans this Fall are highlighted by Wendy in her Student Ambassador article. Our high school director Beth Verghese, senior at TWHS, provides an Eco-Club update as well.

Carolyn Newman, TWG director, continues her work on Renewable Energy Projects. It has been a year since she spearheaded the project bringing residential solar to the area. Several TWG members now have solar panels on their homes and are experiencing energy independence. She describes other upcoming projects in her newsletter article.

Maryann Braid, TWG director, partnered with the Township this past year in bringing more pet waste stations to the parks. Years of persistence paid off. Check out her article to learn how you can help protect our watersheds.

And finally, we have a special offer for our new and renewing members. Cynthia Reid, education director at the Glade Art Foundation, along with Lampros Art Gallery are assisting in this year’s membership renewal effort. Cynthia created the iconic 2009 Earth Day design for the Township, which was printed on t-shirts and posters. Stored all this time, a few artist proofs and prints have been found and donated to TWG. While supplies last, with this year’s renewal, or donation by a Lifetime member, Cynthia has graciously agreed to sign your poster. Check the membership form included with this mailing. The poster can be mailed or can be picked up. Thanks to Terrilynn MacArthur for envisioning this creative project!!

We thank all our partners and members for helping TWG to continue its dedication to sustainability and environmental education. For 2021, get involved, offer your input, see our special article inside asking for your great ideas for the future. Stay safe and healthy!

3R RECYCLING DRIVE-THRU: CONVENIENT, FREE ONE-DAY RECYCLING EVENT!
BY ZOE KILLIAN

The Woodlands Township’s annual 3R Bazaar is mobilizing this year and has been reimagined as the 3R Recycling Drive-thru. Enjoy convenient, free one-day recycling from the comfort and safety of your own vehicle or bicycle on Saturday, November 14, 2020 from 9 a.m. to noon in the parking lot of The Woodlands High School (enter from Millennium Forest Dr.)

Although the traditional bazaar element was removed this year, residents are encouraged to celebrate the true spirit of 3R, finding new opportunities to recycle items that cannot be recycled in curbside carts. Refer to the list below for accepted items and guidelines. Free recycling is for residents only, please no businesses.

The safety of volunteers, staff and residents is the highest priority. All volunteers and staff will wear face coverings. Participants are required to wear a face covering, as well, while items are being removed from the car. If you do not have one, we will provide one.

This year’s Village Recycling Challenge item is Alkaline AA, AAA, C, D, and 9V batteries. This friendly competition awards funds for scholarships to Villages with the highest participation; funds are donated by The Woodlands G.R.E.E.N. Please label your bag/box of batteries with your Village’s name.

Free 1-Day Drive-thru Recycling
Bag or box items separately by category and place them in your trunk or back passenger side seat for safe access by volunteers. A volunteer will open the trunk, hatchback or rear side passenger door to remove items. Residents only, no businesses.

- **Batteries** - Alkaline AA, AAA, C, D, and 9V labeled with village name.
- **Disposable Razorblades** with packaging.
- **Eyeglasses, sunglasses and cases**
- **Oral Care Products** - Toothbrushes, toothpaste tubes and floss containers.
- **Snack and drink pouches** - Any brand with straws and pouch lids.
- **Styrofoam block packaging** - No food containers or cups.
- **Textiles** - Overly worn clothing, shoes, linens, fabric scraps and other unusable textiles. Please donate any good, usable items to local charities.

**Document Shredding**
- Secure on-site document shredding
- Residential only - limited capacity (first come, first served)
- Recommended donation of 5 cans of food or $5 per box; benefits Interfaith Food Pantry

For event updates and more information, contact The Woodlands Township Environmental Services Department at 281-281-3800 or visit www.thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov/3rbazaar.
Despite ongoing COVID restrictions, the TWG Student Ambassador Program is up and running for the fall. Many of our 48 Student Ambassadors have already been involved in both virtual and in-person environmental projects around The Woodlands. Student Ambassadors and several TWG members kicked off our fall program by participating in The Woodlands GreenUp Fall Sweep at Cartail Park on September 5th. We collected quite a bit of trash and recycling and enjoyed getting out in the nice weather. Student Ambassadors also participated in the Landscaping Solutions drive-thru event at the Sterling Ridge Park ‘n’ Ride. Since we couldn’t host our traditional educational booth at Landscaping Solutions, we instead loaded 32 rain barrels into the cars and trucks of residents who had pre-ordered them. Since rain barrel sales benefit TWG’s scholarship program, it was a win for both the local environment and for our students! Finally, several Student Ambassadors have joined other Woodlands residents on environmentally-related webinars offered by the Township. What a great way to learn about a new topic from the comfort of your own home!

Coming up this fall, Student Ambassadors will again make their attractive cork trivets available thru November 14th (presales only). See trivet article for instructions on ordering. They make wonderful holiday gifts, but supplies are limited! Our thanks to Neil Sammis, long-time TWG member, for creating the beautiful frames that our students fill with wine corks in various designs. This project is a great way to repurpose old wine corks and benefit our student scholarship program!

Other activities planned include more virtual learning via various webinars, volunteering at the 3R recycling event, helping with the Township’s storm drain marking project, tackling the air potato invasion with the Invasives Task Force, and harvesting vegetables at the TWG community garden plot. During these uncertain times, Student Ambassadors need to attend just one event this fall in order to remain active members. Easy and fun!

Finally, we are always looking for adult members who would be willing to help out with the Student Ambassador program by joining us for an activity or teaching a skill to the group. Our current Student Ambassadors are especially interested in using their skills in photography, fine arts, social media, and marketing to benefit The Woodlands G.R.E.E.N. and our environment. We’d be delighted to have you join us for some of these activities. Let us know if you have skills in any of these areas that you’d be willing to share! Thank you!

TWG Student Ambassador Committee:
Debra Wymore – wymoredebra@gmail.com
Kathie Herrick – kigherrick@gmail.com
Teri MacArthur – texasnaturelover@earthlink.net
Wendy Packer – whpacker@hotmail.com

Plug-in EV % of sales Sep. 2020

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
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<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
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<td>US</td>
<td>&lt; 3</td>
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Over 1.6 million plug-in cars have been sold in the US.

— CleanTechnica

Rain Barrel distribution at Landscaping Solutions with Kathie Herrick, Carolyn Newman, and SAs Joe and Ben Templet.
A transition to clean energy is about making an investment in our future.

– Gloria Reuben
TWHS ECO CLUB UPDATE
BY BETH VERGHESE

With a slow and partially online start to high school this year, and teachers and students feeling overwhelmed alike, there has also been an equally slow start to Eco Club. We had to switch teacher sponsors, which was quite the process, and now we are finally able to get things going again for the second nine weeks! Mr. Swart, who teaches honors and AP physics, will be our sponsor for the 2020-2021 school year. Our members are ready to get back into projects and volunteering, masked and socially distanced! We are all excited to continue working with the Woodlands G.R.E.E.N. this year, and we plan to grow our student ambassadors program and TWHS Eco Club even more! Eco Club is planning to create events and meetings that are accessible to those students who have stayed virtual, and those who are back in person. We’re adapting to the new normal and we’re excited for the future!

RAIN BARRELS

Rain Barrels have been in big demand 2020 and we expect strong demand to continue into 2021! To acquire, go to www.thewoodlandsgreen.org. Pictured David Hitchcock and his furry friend.

SUPPORT OUR FALL FUNDRAISER!

Cork Trivets 8”x 8” $20 each, limited supplies available.

This re-purposing project was crafted by The Woodlands GREEN Student Ambassadors and Members, with sincere gratitude to Neil Sammis for his woodworking talents.

Reserve yours before November 14.
Text Debra @ 713-628-3846 to arrange for pick up with your personal check dated 11/14 payable to The Woodlands GREEN.

SPOTLIGHT: NEW BUSINESS MEMBER

VILLAGE BOOKS TO OFFER NEW LITERARY EXPERIENCES IN THE WOODLANDS
BY TERESA KENNEY

Opening soon across from the Sterling Ridge Park-n-Ride, Village Books will be bringing a new literary flavor and community-building experience to The Woodlands. Founded by Teresa Kenney, the independent bookstore will invoke the community spirit and demographics of The Woodlands to offer the ultimate educational, intellectual, and literary experience for all ages.

“The strength of the independent bookstore is that it’s never just a store. It is a community gathering space. To that end, Village Books will maintain an active calendar of events,” Teresa says.

The store will focus on new books and gift items and provides an opportunity for neighbors to connect and engage. “It’s my hope that at Village Books we will be able to really interact with our surrounding community in ways that will reflect the area’s multicultural dynamic, diverse interests and the Mitchell vision for environmental responsibility.” Village Books will offer children’s story time in American Sign Language, Spanish, Hindi, and a unique time that will be specifically designed for children on the autism spectrum. Writing groups, author readings and signings, and craft and writing workshops will also be on the bookstore’s calendar, as will workshops on topics ranging from composting to recycling to the wildlife of The Woodlands. In addition, the store will be dog-friendly and have a resident “bookstore dog,” Oso.

To sign up for the latest news, visit myvillagebooks.com.
Look up! Look down! Air Potato is all around! It is not difficult to imagine how growth of the non-native air potato vine (Dioscorea bulbifera) is altering the character of The Woodlands—our unique ‘city in a forest’.

At the height of the growing season, in late summer and fall, identifying infestations in our greenbelts is easy. Having no wildlife value and growing as much as 8-inches a day, the vines ascend to the treetops often completely covering the foliage of the support trees and understory shrubs. The heart-shaped leaves that can be up to 10 inches across essentially block the light for photosynthesis to the hosts causing their demise. The dense mass of vines on the forest floor prevents growth of the nursery tree seedlings interfering with forest restoration. Where the invasive air potato vine dominates we are losing the woods in The Woodlands—it is causing harm, the very definition of an invasive.

The Invasives species Task Force has been on the radar since 2018 and OFFICIAL since 2019. TWG launched a pilot project focusing on air potato with the Township Natural Resources Dept. in January 2018 following the Going Green Sustainability lecture on “The Quiet Invasion” (See Spring 2018 Dragon Circle).

Simultaneously, the Environmental Services Dept. began offering the Invaders of Texas training program to residents, hosting classes conducted by Hans Landel with Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center two times per year. To date, six classes have since been organized by TWG member Teri MacArthur in her capacity as Water Education Specialist with the Township. Ongoing, the program is to be coordinated out of Sam Houston State University by Ashley Morgan-Divera.

Task Force participants do NOT need to attend a training class to volunteer. However if you wish to target invasives independently in your home landscape. Regrettably some are part of the horticultural trade.

- If an invasive plant is part of your landscape, consider replacing it with a native selection.
- Share your knowledge, alert your friends and neighbors.
- Participate in the 2021 Invaders of Texas training class—the last one was virtual.
- Join us—the Invasive Task Force is Adopt-a-Path on steroids (we remove litter too)! It is a great family activity for ages 10 and up.

It's ALL about greenbelt conservation!

Restoration of an area takes vigilance - monitoring up to 3-4 years. But we already have some success stories. One perk of Task Force involvement is that we can prioritize where we work and where forest restoration occurs based on neighbor participation.

TWG members who have contributed 10 hours or more in the field this year include Steve Easton, Dick Herrick, Will and Ingrid McGinley, Paul Nelson and Wendy Packer. But we are not alone in our efforts we are joined by Texas Master Naturalists, Eagle Scouts and concerned residents. The enthusiasm for the effort is evident by the 952 volunteer hours amassed Jan to Sept 2020.

Call to Action—what YOU can do!

- Air potato is only one among a number of invasive plants in The Woodlands, to become familiar with others check out www.galvhayinvasives.org.
- Avoid planting these species in your landscape.
- If an invasive plant is part of your landscape, consider replacing it with a native selection.
- Share your knowledge, alert your friends and neighbors.
- Participate in the 2021 Invaders of Texas training class—the last one was virtual.
- Join us—the Invasive Task Force is Adopt-a-Path on steroids (we remove litter too)! It is a great family activity for ages 10 and up.

It's ALL about greenbelt conservation!

Sites are reported by citizens (via The Woodlands 311 or iNaturalist apps) and must be approved by the Township re ownership. We cannot work on private property. Presently, we have ongoing work in 4 of the 8 Villages (Cochran’s Crossing off Lake Woodlands, Grogan’s Mill along the Nature Trail, Indian Springs off Rush Haven, Panther Creek off Tanglebrush).
Everyone experiences life differently. Your observations about a challenge facing the community are singular—what you see people doing, or not doing. When shared with others, each unique insight about a needed change can lead to inspiration. A culture encouraging people to work together turns inspiration into new ideas. Solutions are developed and implemented based on experience-driven innovation. In such an experience culture, consumers are converted into participants as the change unfolds, becoming a new social norm. The Woodlands GREEN is eager to tackle the next environmental education challenge. Help us create an experience culture with ideas inspired by your insight, based on your observations, and feasible for implementation through environmental education in our community! Tell us about it by using the My Great Idea outline below, send in with your renewal form, or email us at info@thewoodlandsgreen.org.

MY GREAT IDEA:

Write a one-sentence description or title for the need you suggest TWG tackle:

_____________________________________________________________________________________

What is the INSPIRATION for the need you suggest? What problem should be tackled?

_____________________________________________________________________________________

Give your three best IDEAS for achievable outcomes? What is the framework for solving the problem?

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

Suggest two ways for education to lead to IMPLEMENTATION of the change you want to see.

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for Your GREAT IDEA. As the TWG Board reviews submitted suggestions to determine which we have the skills and resources to consider, you may be asked to attend a brainstorming session to elaborate on your thoughts.

NOTE:
If renewing your membership online, please scan and email this page to info@thewoodlandsgreen.org.
The Woodlands Township and The Woodlands GREEN organization have worked together to install several Pet Waste stations along the walking trails to help our residents reduce the introduction of pet waste into our waterways. The stations have been installed near existing garbage cans and bodies of water to allow for the best way to reduce possible pollutants. The pet waste stations have been added to the following locations along the trails: Sundance Park, Cypress Lake Park, Larkwood Park, Rush Haven Park, May Valley Park, Wedgewood Park, Shadow Lake Marsh Experience, Pondera Park, Mystic Lake Park, Player Bend Park, the trailhead of Ann Snyder Way and the North trail head and the South trail head of the George Mitchel Preserve.

According to the Houston Galveston Area Council (HGAC) most of the waterways in the Houston area suffer from at least one water quality problem. The overwhelming majority of these do not meet water quality standards for acceptable levels of fecal bacteria. Water polluted with fecal waste can carry pathogens that endanger public health and impact local economies, as well as causing aesthetic issues for waterways and drinking water sources. While there are many sources of human and animal fecal waste, pet waste is an appreciable and growing part of the problem. This is especially prevalent in rapidly developing urban and suburban areas. The relatively concentrated waste of pet dogs and the likelihood that much of it will reach waterways through storm drains without treatment (unlike human waste), makes it an important focus of efforts to address water quality issues.

In our local area waterways, HGAC has estimated that the relative contribution of pet waste as part of all fecal sources is over 70%. It is clear that pet waste is an important part of the overall issue in our waterways. Additional information about the impact of pet waste in general can be found at http://www.h-gac.com/community/pet-waste/default.aspx.

One of the common "low hanging fruit" options for implementation of remediation strategies in a watershed is the installation of pet waste stations in public areas. Because local public areas that see high dog traffic also tend to be near waterways, they are an effective location for pet waste station installation. The benefits of pet waste stations, as part a comprehensive approach to mitigating pet waste that is reinforced by education, are many, and drawbacks are few. Benefits include:

1) Low initial cost - depending on the type, stations range from $100-$400, exclusive of bags and installation.

2) Direct pollutant removal - unlike other outreach efforts, pet waste stations lead to direct removal of wastes from the watershed that would otherwise likely be transferred directly to the waterway without treatment.

3) High visibility - the placement of stations in highly trafficked areas is a passive visual reminder of pet waste as an issue, and impacts pet owner behavior.

4) Aesthetic benefits - reduction of litter/waste in public areas and the visual, smell, and safety issues it can cause.


Enjoy walking your dog and please use the pet stations. Bag it. Trash it.
As the new year approaches, please consider renewing your membership, or making a donation. Go to www.thewoodlandsgreen.org, use Paypal, or download a membership form and mail with your check. Because we are a 501(C)(3) organization, your TWG membership and donations are both tax deductible.

Dragon Circle Editor and Layout: Steve Easton

We invite your submissions and requests for articles! Please email info@thewoodlandsgreen.org

Calendar and Volunteer Opportunities

All meetings are virtual using Zoom. GG-Going Green Lectures hosted by TWG, ES-Environmental Services of the Township. Go to TWG website for the Zoom links and more details.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>GG Lecture, Bayou Land Conservancy, Becky Martinez</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>ES, Landscape Gardening Class, Texas Foodscaping</td>
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<td>November</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>ES, Rainwater Harvesting Workshop</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>6:30 pm</td>
<td>ES, Walk in the Woods, Friends of Texas Wildlife</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>ES, 3R Recycling Drive Thru at The Woodlands High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>GG Lecture, USGS Groundwater Levels, Mike Less, USGS Regional Manager</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<td>GG Lecture, CISD Campus Solar Initiatives, Easy Foster</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>ES, ARBOR DAY TREE GIVEAWAY, Location TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td>ES, 7th ANNUAL VILLAGE TREE PLANTING, Location TBD</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>GG Lecture, State of the Bay Annual Report by Dr Erin Kinney, HARC</td>
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<td>March</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>ES, EARTH DAY GREEN UP (various locations in The Woodlands)</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>GG lecture, Spring Creek Watershed Partnership by Rachel Windham, HGAC</td>
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