Nature Activities at Village Creek State Park

The Village Creek BioBlitz, May 1-3, 2015 was a collaboration between Village Creek State Park, Texas Nature Trackers, the Fishes of Texas Project and the East Texas Naturalist Community. The goals of the BioBlitz were to demonstrate the power of Citizen Science, share strategies for detecting and identifying different species, and to document the biodiversity along Village Creek. While the BioBlitz was open to any observations in Hardin County, the focus was Village Creek and Village Creek State Park. The project wanted to confirm and add as many species to Village Creek State Park as possible. The following is a list of documented nature observations. <http://www.inaturalist.org/places/tpwd-village-creek-state-park>

Approximately 30 people participated during the BioBlitz event and many are still submitting data. Cell phones and digital photos were used to document observations using the inaturalist app. Some went further to even link their data with TPWD all Texas Nature and National Geographic.

This project complements the Thicket of Diversity established in 2006. The BioBlitz was coordinated and conducted by Texas Parks and Wildlife Biologists Cullen Hanks, Jason Singhurst, Andy Gluesenkamp, Sarah Robertson, and Village Creek State Park staff. Also participating were: Melissa Casarez and the University of Texas Fish Team; David Lewis, ToD Macrofungi reasearcher; Big Thicket National Preserve Biologist Herbert Young; Sabine Neches Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists; and members of the Village Creek Volunteer Association.

During the month of June, Village Creek State Park focused on butterflies with activities and an exhibit. A butterfly gardening program was presented, children’s crafts created and butterflies raised from crysalids and released. Kountze High School teachers, Mary Johnston and Meagan Allen, shared student created butterfly artwork for an exhibit in the Nature Center. Art supplies were funded by Entergy Texas.

Kathy Smith, Park Naturalist/ Interpreter, shared, “On behalf of the Village Creek State Park staff and our visitors, I would like to thank Kountze High School for allowing us to display the Butterfly Exhibit in the Nature Center at our park.  During the past month we have had over 125 visitors view the exhibit and learn about these fascinating creatures.  Many people picked up information on butterflies and butterfly gardening.  Both the exhibit and the Bioblitz have been a great success!”