



Everything New Orleans

Plaquemines Parish woodlands get some support for invasive species removal

Invasive Species Assessment

A measuring tape is wrapped around a tree at the Woodlands Trail in Belle Chasse during an assessment in 2009 of non-native invasive species. *(Photo by NOLA.com | Times-Picayune archive)*

Benjamin Alexander-Bloch, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune By **Benjamin Alexander-Bloch, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune**

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About 610 acres in **Plaquemines Parish** that helps protect communities from floodwater and wind soon will receive some help in removing non-native invasive vegetation that exploded in the area after **Hurricane Katrina**. A \$35,0000 grant to the nonprofit **Woodlands Conservancy**, which manages the property, will help cover the cost of planing trees and pulling invasive seedlings that can choke out native hardwoods.

Woodlands Trail in Belle Chasse has some improvements planned for this summer.

The forest of cypress and tupelo must contend with the Chinese tallow, privet and Chinaberry trees that became rampant after Katrina. The habitat can absorb floodwater and serve as a wind buffer from storms, but it also is a vital habitat for local wildlife and migratory birds, according to Katie Brasted, the conservancy's director.

The grant from **Shell Oil Company** comes soon after the conservancy acquired 190 acres in Orleans Parish in the same general area as the Plaquemines property it manages.

Sean Anderson, an ecologist with the California State University Channel Islands that has been assisting the conservancy, said, "not only is a native forest important to sustain the wildlife of Louisiana but during storms, it's a question of do you want your home surrounded by toothpicks or two-by-fours for protection from wind damage."

The conservancy was formed as a nonprofit organization in 2001 to promote smart growth and establish greenways and trails in one of southeastern Louisiana's last remaining coastal forests. The **Woodlands Trail and Park Bird Sanctuary** in Plaquemines serves as habitat for hundreds of resident and migratory bird species.

The bottomland hardwood wetlands also are near the Audubon Center for the Research of Endangered Species, which is **beginning construction on a 1,000-acre breeding facility in conjunction with San Diego Zoo Global later this year.**

Brasted spoke in 2011 on the construction of a pavilion in the hardwood forest. In the video, she describes the conservancy's mission and the video shows the more 12 miles of trails:

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Woodlands Conservancy Builds New Pavilion

The United States Navy Seabees, based out of NAS JRB New Orleans in Belle Chasse Friday, January 28, 2011 are helping to build a pavilion at Woodlands Conservancy, the former Woodlands Trail and Park, in Belle Chasse. The park, which straddles Plaquemines and Orleans Parishes, is one of the last remaining coastal forests in Southeast Louisiana and features more than 12 miles of trails. The 12 foot by 24 foot pavilion will be at the entrance to the park and be used by visiting groups and individuals for both educational and recreational purposes. The pavilion was funded through donations given by Daybrook Fisheries and American Electric Power. The pavilion should be completed in February.