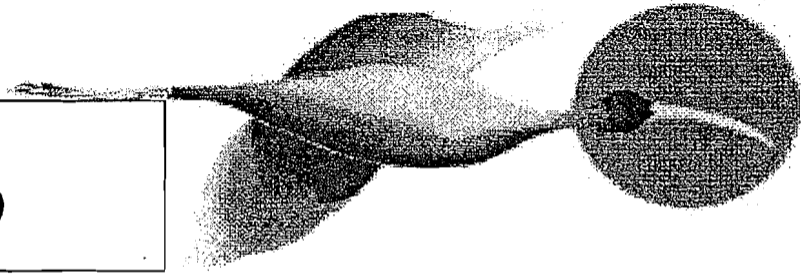


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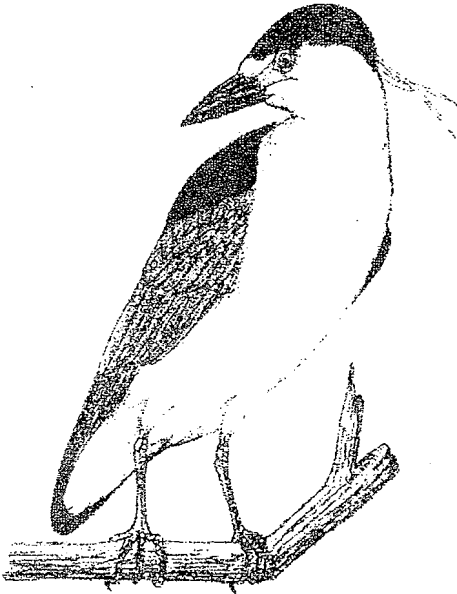
November/December 2001

Preserving the Lower Coast

By David Muth

One of the treasures of New Orleans is the beautiful natural levee forest still growing near English Turn on the lower coast of Algiers, in Orleans and Plaquemines parishes. Residents of the lower coast enjoyed a long period of splendid isolation, close to the city, but living in a very peaceful rural community. That is all changing. New roads, bridges, and subdivisions are transforming the area, and development threatens to turn forest and green open spaces into just another series of tract housing developments.

Recognizing the threat, local residents, old and new, are banding together to try to preserve some of the character that attracted them to the area in the first place. They have convinced the City of New Orleans to place a moratorium on new subdivision development until a comprehensive land use plan has been prepared. They are working with Plaquemines Parish authorities to preserve a large tract of parish property as a park. Just as importantly, they have sought to find a vision for their community which finds a means for preserving essential elements of the natural world they enjoy, while recognizing that some development is inevitable. This vision has coalesced into the Woodlands Trail and Park project.



"The Woodlands Trail and Park project was created from the desire to preserve, protect and celebrate the beauty and unique character of the Lower Coast Algiers and Belle Chasse region, to enhance community access to the river, and solidify public opportunities to take advantage of recreation and transportation amenities." The proposal seeks to establish a park on the Plaquemines Parish property, and link that park to the community, the river levee, and the Wilderness Park in Orleans Parish, through a series of green-ways, incorporating nature trails for birding, biking, hiking and horseback riding.

Orleans Audubon is committed to assisting this citizen effort to preserve habitat and public access for the people of the Lower Coast. For information, visit www.woodlandstrail.com or write to Woodlands Trail and Park, Inc., 11900 Willow Drive, New Orleans, Louisiana 70131.