

# Woodlands Trail documentary debuts

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*Nonprofit wants to  
educate public*

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**By Shellita Dalton**

*Contributing writer*

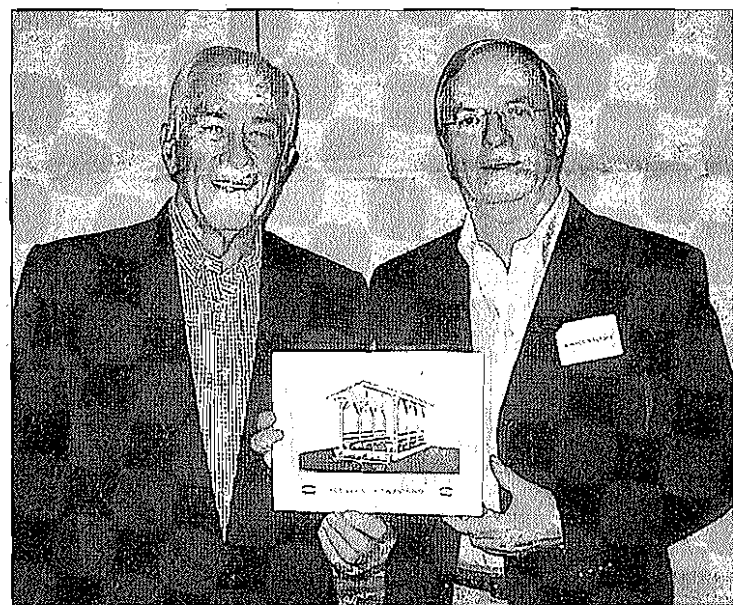
Woodlands Conservancy, a nonprofit organization, recently held a premiere screening of the documentary "Woodlands Trail and Park: Struggle to Survive," in hopes of educating the

public about the park's struggles as well as demonstrating the organization's efforts to solve the ongoing issues.

According to its website, the association was created with the mission to preserve and develop an ecosystem dedicated to creating daily public opportunities for recreation, ecotourism and education in a natural and historic setting.

The progress of their mission and restoration efforts to

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PHOTOS BY SHELITA DALTON

Woodlands Conservancy board member Dan Dreiling, left, and Executive Vice President of Daybrook Fisheries Borden Wallace, right, showcase the plans for the Daybrook Pavilion, which will be located in the park. Daybrook will provide finances and materials for the pavilion.

# Conservancy always needs more support

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protect this area, located in the 10,000-acre peninsula formed by Orleans and Plaquemines parishes, is being threatened by foreign plants such as Chinese tallow, Chinese privet and chinaberry trees.

"Many people aren't aware of how bad these plant species are," said Diane Roy, board president. "They are not our natural species of plants for this area and they are trying to cover and kill the natural species."

The park, which houses both cypress and tupelo trees, represents one of southeastern Louisiana's last stands of bottomland hardwoods in the peninsula. Along with being a place for education and recreation, this area has been instrumental in protecting parts of southern Louisiana from further damage caused by

storms.

"During windstorms, the native trees have a better chance of staying in place because they are used to the area," said Katie Brasted, executive director. "They provide protection and serve as wind buffers."

She added that the native trees also work as a sponge to help soak up some of the water brought in by storms, which helps reduce flooding.

Brasted also said many native animals and migratory birds depend on the Woodlands as a source of nutrition.

"Nearly 20 million birds migrate across the gulf every spring," she said. "As we lose more coastal land, many birds will become even more dependent on this forest for nutrients."

By having an increasing number of non-native invasive plants, the migratory birds as well as native species are put in danger.



Members of the Matt Johnson Trio perform as part of the documentary premiere.



Woodlands Conservancy board members include, from left, Rob Salus, Heidi Poche', Katie Brasted, Diane Roy, Dan Dreiling, Jan Rice and Lee Dupont.

The members of Woodlands Conservancy, along with several sponsors and volunteers, continue to make efforts to protect and restore the forest area. However, they are in need of more support.

The organization is using tools such as the documentary to educate those who may not be aware of or concerned about the dangerous effects of the foreign invasive plants.

"It's kind of like global warming," Roy said. "You don't see the changes and effects until later down the road, but these plants have the potential to take over."

The documentary will air on WYES Jan. 10 at 9:30 p.m., Jan. 14 at 10:30 p.m. and Jan. 18 at 11:30 p.m. It was made possible by contributions from the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Entergy, ConocoPhillips, Plaquemines Parish Government and the Plaquemines Parish Sheriff's Office.

To learn more about how you can help with the efforts of Woodlands Conservancy, visit their Web site at [www.woodlandstrail.org](http://www.woodlandstrail.org). They may also be contacted at 504.433.4000.