

# LEOH Trip

March 23, 2021

## Houston Arboretum and Nature Center



Thank you, Ann Fairchild, LEOH trip coordinator. We enjoyed a nature outing on a beautiful day.

And thanks to our bus drivers, our journey was safe and comfortable.



We were divided into two groups for nature walks, led by nature guide Kelsey Low. Kelsey was very knowledgeable, as well as delightfully enthusiastic, making the walks quite enjoyable.





Our first stop on the walk was right outside the Nature Center, where we admired a very large and beautiful Crepe Myrtle, estimated to be over 50 years old.

Although the arboretum is all about preserving and growing native plants, this magnificent example of an invasive species was left alone to flourish.

Further along on our walk, Kelsey pointed out an example of another type of myrtle tree, the native Wax Myrtle.





We saw some beautiful examples of native flowering plants.

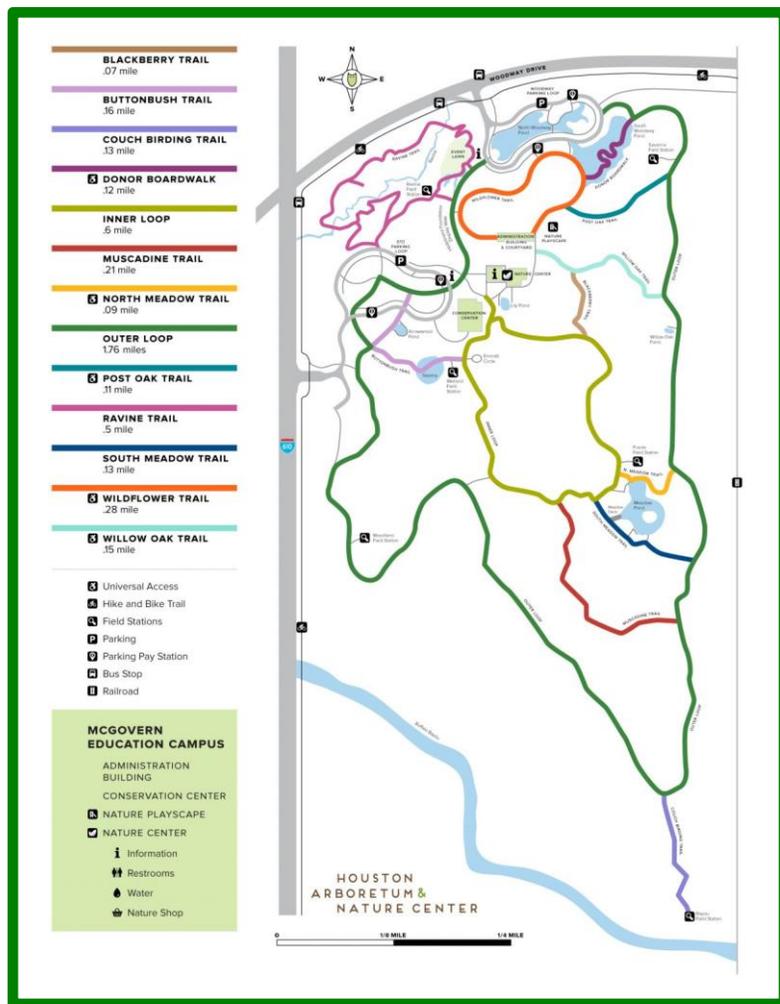
Along the way, we also saw a few small bog-like areas, teeming with plant life, minnows, and turtles. Can you spot the red-eared turtle in the picture?

The arboretum is dependent on donations to ensure it thrives. One example of a beautiful way to honor donors are these “cattails”.





While one group went on the nature hike, the other group enjoyed the Nature Center. There were many interesting and informative displays of native flora and fauna, as well as artistic renderings of nature.



The trail map indicates the many points of interest and opportunities to observe wildlife. The arboretum master plan will include large areas of prairie and savanna habitat.

The master plan came about following the major natural disasters of Hurricane Ike in 2008 and the severe summer drought in 2011. Many trees were lost, while invasive species began to thrive.

These natural disasters created the opportunity to rethink how the arboretum ecology and educational efforts could be managed and improved.

For example, the natural resource of goats has been used to eat invasive plants.

Two days after our visit, a prescribed burn was used to clear out specific areas to allow the return of native grasses and wildflowers.

The Houston Arboretum and Nature Center is a non-profit organization funded exclusively by members and supporters. There is a parking fee, with free parking on Thursdays. Otherwise, admission to the Nature Center and trails is free.

Check out their website at [houstonarboretum.org](http://houstonarboretum.org)

# Our next and last stop – lunch at *FM Kitchen & Bar*



The food, drinks, and  
fellowship were excellent!  
A great ending to a great trip!





After lunch, the last leg of our trip included a drive by of the work in progress on the Memorial Park Land Bridge (scheduled for completion next year). The huge traffic tunnels already in place were very impressive.

When completed, the land bridge will provide additional prairie and plants, recreational opportunities, and safe passage for both humans and animals, from one side of the park to the other.

To find out more, check out the website [memorialparkconservancy.org](https://www.memorialparkconservancy.org)

