

LEOH Trip

Artist Boat Galveston, Texas

April 22, 2026



Artist Boat & Coastal Heritage Preserve 13330 Settegast Road, Galveston

The mission is to “promote awareness and preservation of coastal margins and the marine environment through the disciplines of the sciences and the arts”.



Karla Klay founded *Artist Boat* in 2003 and currently serves as Executive Director.

She also served as our tour guide this day and began by describing a map of the Preserve, including its planned expansion, located in the West Beach area.

Karla created five environmental education programs for use both in the classroom and in the field. These programs are intended to provide “people, wildlife, and community resiliency”.

Her programs have now expanded to 18,000 participants annually, ages “K through Grey”. They include youth eco-art workshops, adventures, residencies, professional development, and habitat restoration adventures.

Preserve Goals



The primary goal of the Preserve is to acquire, protect, manage and enhance roughly 1,400 acres of contiguous coastal habitats on West Galveston Island.



The current Coastal Prairie is less than 1% of the original acreage.

Coastal prairies not only protect habitat and wildlife but also reduce runoff pollution and light pollution.

An amazing biodiversity of wildlife inhabit coastal prairies. Many species of birds, including ducks, roseate spoonbills, and sandhill cranes, call coastal prairies their home, either permanently or temporarily during migration. Fish, rabbits, raccoons, opossums, coyotes, snakes, frogs, turtles, and more also call coastal prairies their home. As an example, each Spring brings at least 38 species of warblers to the Preserve.



There is constant and tremendous pressure from developers for land, such as a proposed 280-acre tract for Anchor Bay, a canal subdivision.

The Preserve's most recent acquisition is 141 acres originally meant to hold 52 channelized second homes.

The Preserve plans include habitat restoration, trails, boardwalks, viewing platforms, and the *Gulf Coast Environmental Education Center*.

Funding for projects is a continuing challenge, and the Preserve looks for funding from a variety of sources, including grassroots fundraising and tapping into government grants.

For more information:

Artistboat.org

Galveston.com

Houstonaudubon.org





Following Karla's introduction to the area, we were ready to embark on a tour, hoping to do a little birdwatching along the way.



The Preserve kindly loans binoculars to its visitors, and Karla gave everyone a brief lesson on making the appropriate adjustments for optimum viewing. She also shared that initially, guests were allowed to take binoculars on canoe trips in the Preserve; however, that practice had to stop when too many binoculars accidentally went overboard, never to be seen again!

Some of us walked to a choice bird-watching area in the Preserve, while others chose to arrive by cart.

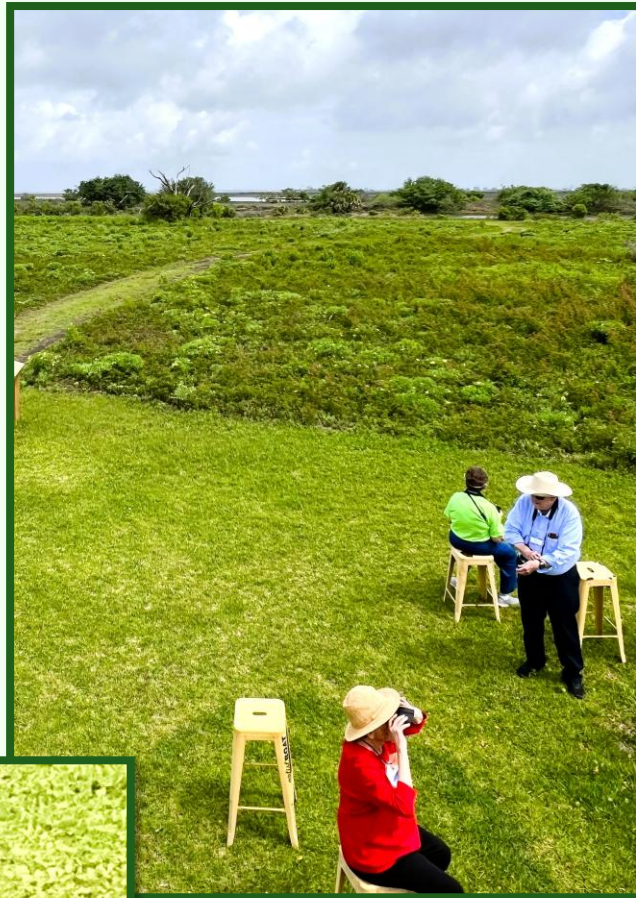




Flowers were abundant and admired throughout the Preserve tour.

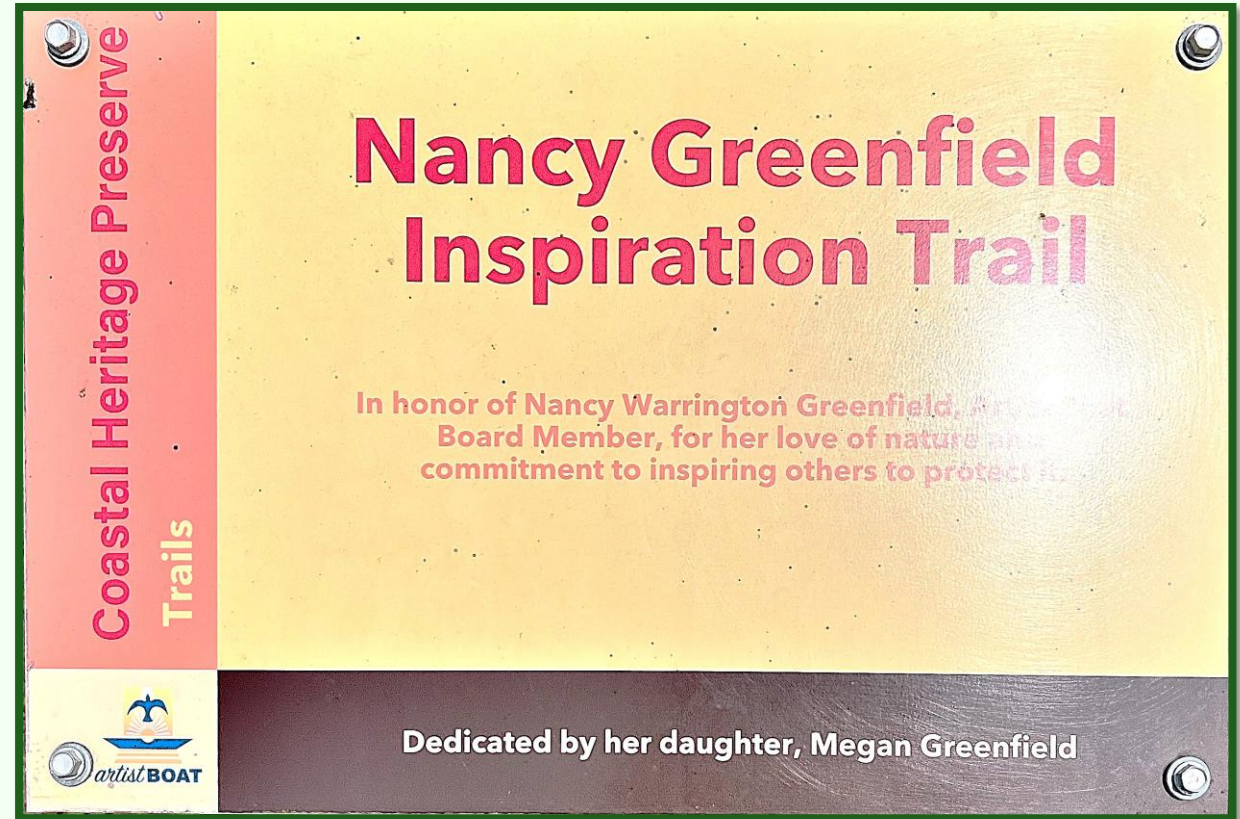
To the right: dewberries were also on display, with some ripe enough to enjoy as a snack on our walk.





A prime spot for bird-watching included tall stools to view activity at bird and hummingbird feeders, while a viewing stand offered a different perspective.





Part of our group continued on to explore the trail inspired by Artist Boat board member Nancy Warrington Greenfield.

Birds were people-watching throughout the tour!



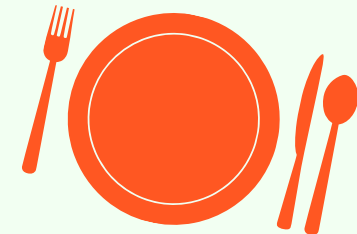
The coastal prairie provided many nice views of land, water, and wildlife.

To the left, a view across the trail to those enjoying the prime bird-watching spot.



Following the tour, it was time to relax and enjoy food and drink at the seawall, before returning to Houston.

Another successful and interesting LEOH trip, thanks to trip coordinator Ann Fairchild!



Future Trips - all by Precinct 1 bus

Wednesday, May 20: Galveston Railroad Museum

Wednesday, June 10: Brookwood Community

July: Amazon Distribution Center

Complete details/dates will follow closer to the trip dates

Signing Up for a Trip

Trip Coordinator Ann Fairchild may be contacted at fairann@sbcglobal.net or **281-686-1325**.

She will publish complete trip details, with the opportunity to sign up, closer to the trip date.

If the traveler quota is full, you may ask to be put on a waiting list.