



JUNE 2021

CULLINAN PARK CONSERVANCY

# *Off the Beaten Path*

**It's a  
Date!**

**Friday  
October 22, 2021**

**11:30 am  
River Pointe  
Church**

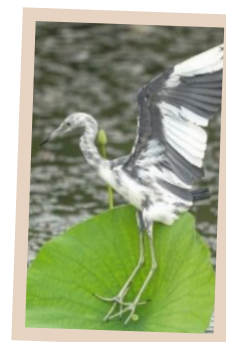
Your support helps  
us continue planning for  
Phase II and the L.E.A.P.  
(Learn, Explore And Play)  
area for children at the park,  
so please attend.

We hope you've been able to enjoy Cullinan and all of its  
natural beauty during the past year. Thanks to your generosity  
at last year's Skip-nic, our Phase II improvements have begun,  
and we are moving ahead with expanded trails and parking!

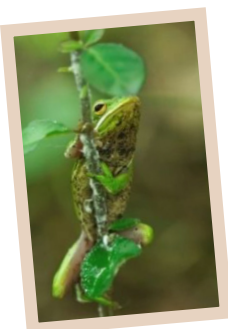
Please join us for these two upcoming activities:

*Picnic*  
for the  *Park*  
2021

**Live and In Person!!**  
**Honoring John and Diana Null**  
for their continued support of Cullinan Park



**CULLINAN PARK  
PHOTO  
CONTEST  
2021**



**Enter Your Best Shots!**  
**Entry Dates:**  
**July 1 - September 24, 2021**

We received more than 250 entries  
in 2020 and expect more this year.  
Photos must be taken at  
Cullinan Park.



Keep an eye out for more information. In the meantime, keep up with the latest park  
news by signing up for our E-news at [cullinanparkconservancy.org](http://cullinanparkconservancy.org) or following us on  
Facebook or Instagram.



# Buy a Brick!



## Pave The Way For More Improvements!

Purchase bricks as gifts for family, friends, employees or even yourself! These bricks are a perfect way to memorialize or honor someone special or recognize a special group. This lasting and meaningful tribute will stand the test of time for years to come.

Bricks are \$250\* each and can be engraved with your personalized message – up to 3 lines, 3 words per line. The memorial bricks will be beautifully integrated into the walking paths throughout the park.

This is a legacy gift that reflects the values you care about and will be enjoyed for years to come!



Sample only



## To Purchase

Visit [cullinanparkconservancy.org](http://cullinanparkconservancy.org)

\*Donation is tax deductible.



# Big Sit Team Spots 93 Bird Species

Timing is everything in birding, and Saturday, April 24th turned out to be perfect timing for a “Big Sit” at Cullinan. Temperatures were in the 70s and a nice breeze blew across the observation tower as Team “Cuckoo for Cullinan” competed in Texas Parks and Wildlife Department’s 25th Annual Great Birding Classic (GTBC).



The Big Sit is a category where teams compete to see who can observe the most bird species in a 24-hour period from a 50-foot diameter circle. Teams could choose to hold their Big Sit on any date between April 15 and May 15. Only birds seen or heard from within that circle can be counted for the competition.

The team identified an impressive 93 different species of birds from the circle in 9 hours, birding from 6 am to noon and 4-7 pm. The team included Cullinan Park Conservancy board members and local birders that frequent the park.

“We were hoping to get 80 species, so 93 exceeded all expectations. It’s pretty exciting to have a 90+ species day when birding the entire park, but to get that many when restricted to a 50-foot circle is incredible,” said Big Sit Coordinator Robbin Mallett.

During this year’s Big Sit, the experienced birders were excited to see a number of species rarely found in this area including a Chuck-Will’s Widow, Swallow-tailed Kite, Long-Billed Dowitchers, Western Kingbirds, Franklin’s Gulls and multiple species of migrat-

ing songbirds including warblers, orioles, vireos and tanagers.

Team member Bob Richter said one of the most thrilling sightings was when a migrating Swainson’s Hawk dove at an adult Bald Eagle.

“It was just a really fun event, and it’s amazing to see how excited everyone got over each new bird we ID’d. We also enjoyed chatting with park-goers and pointing out birds to people who stopped by the tower,” said Kelsey Low, a Conservancy Board Member and long-time birder.

Money raised through team registrations and sponsorships makes it possible for the GTBC to award Conservation Grants for Texas birding conservation projects including on-the-ground habitat acquisition, restoration and enhancement projects. The 2020 tournament brought the grant total to just over \$1 million.

Team Cuckoo for Cullinan was one of 18 Big Sit teams in the highly competitive Upper Texas Coast region. Final tournament results will be posted soon on the GTBC website.



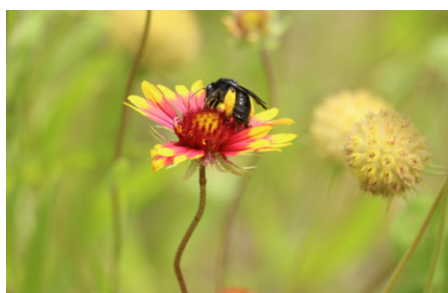
**amazon**smile

Every time you shop on Amazon, you can be donating to Cullinan Park! AmazonSmile is operated by Amazon with the same products, prices and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to Cullinan Park Conservancy! Start shopping!!!

# Springing Back from the Big Freeze



**D**uring the big freeze in February it seemed like spring would never come. Cullinan Park was hit hard by ice, snow, and even illegal firewood collection. But now, just a few months later, Cullinan is blooming with plant life. You may wonder why the park is so green and lush when so many nearby yards are brown and crispy – the answer is native plants. Native trees, shrubs, and flowers are perfectly adapted to the Texas Gulf Coast’s weather cycles, including severe events like freezes, droughts, and floods. Here are a few amazing, hardy native plants to look for on your next visit to Cullinan that you can also find in local nurseries. If you grow them in your garden, they’ll survive our harshest weather and provide amazing benefits for local wildlife like birds, butterflies, and bees.



**Showy Evening Primrose** (*Oenothera speciosa*): this early-blooming wildflower is a life-saver for native bees after a long, cold winter. The four-petaled flowers are delicate pink and produce a sweet scent in the evening. Look for masses of this plant growing in sunny places along trail edges or around the parking lot.



**Prairie Nymph** (*Herbertia la-hue*): this tiny wild iris has three blade-like, purple petals and intricate markings in the center to help guide pollinators inside. You’ll find this little plant growing wherever the grass is short, even in shady places.



**Purple Passionflower** (*Passiflora incarnata*): once you learn to recognize the shape of the three-lobed leaves, you’ll see this vine everywhere. The exotic purple flowers attract large native bees, and the Gulf Fritillary Butterfly uses the leaves as a host for its caterpillars. The green, egg-like fruits are beloved by squirrels and birds.



Photo Credit: Ilouque

**Yaupon Holly** (*Ilex vomitoria*): one of our most common shrubs, this evergreen has small, oval-shaped leaves with rounded teeth along the edges. The flowers are tiny and white, but the real show happens in the fall when bright red berries appear. Bees love the flower nectar and birds eat the berries.



**Pecan** (*Carya illinoensis*): the state tree of Texas and one of our most majestic shade trees. The compound leaves look like bright green feathers, and the nuts grow in angled green “pods” that turn brown and split open. Humans and wildlife love to eat pecan nuts, and over 100 species of butterflies and moths use the leaves as caterpillar food.



# White Lake Invasive Plant Treatment Underway

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**T**hanks to all who contributed “Save White Lake” during the 2020 Skip-nic! We could use some more help. Why? 40-acre White Lake is a prized feature of Cullinan Park, but have you noticed that the plants and algae seem to be taking over! White Lake is only three feet deep and over the last several years, organic and inorganic matter has accumulated at the bottom of the lake making the water level shallower and allowing invasive weeds and algae to flourish, deteriorating the water quality. This process is called eutrophication and is a threat to the health of the lake. If left unchecked, White Lake will eventually become a swamp instead of the beautiful lake that park visitors enjoy for fishing, kayaking and viewing birds and wildlife. To prevent this, Cullinan Park Conservancy is working with Lake Management Services and the City of Sugar Land to begin algae and invasive plant control measures, including mechanical cutting/shredding of giant cutgrass and cattails around the boardwalk. The remediation efforts will follow all Texas Parks & Wildlife recommendations to ensure the health of the ecosystem and support the lake’s diversity of plants, migratory birds and resident wildlife. Please consider helping us with this project.



The Cullinan Park Conservancy is a non-profit group charged with the promotion, enhancement and protection of Cullinan Park at Oyster Creek for the use and enjoyment of wildlife and human visitors alike. Located in Sugar Land, Cullinan Park is one of the largest nature parks in the Houston area. Learn more about the amenities at this beautiful nature park.

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12414 Hwy 6 • South, Sugar Land, TX 77478 • **Mailing address: PO Box 422 Sugar Land TX 77478**

[www.cullinanparkconservancy.org](http://www.cullinanparkconservancy.org)

[cullinanparkconservancy@gmail.com](mailto:cullinanparkconservancy@gmail.com) | 281-616-7860