

# Hodges Gardens State Park

## *Louisiana's Garden in the Forest*

Friends of Hodges Gardens A 501(c)3 Organization  
Established to Restore, Preserve, Protect and Promote Hodges Gardens  
Newsletter, April 2017

<http://hodgesgardens.net/>

Facebook—Friends of Hodges Gardens

### CHRIS'S COMMENTS

The Community informational meeting hosted by Many Mayor Freeman was very well attended filling the Community Center. Information regarding the possible closure and reconveyance of Hodges Gardens to the Hodges Foundation was provided the crowd.

I urged the State to fulfill its contractual and legal obligation to sufficiently fund the park in order to continuously operate it as Hodges Gardens State Park emphasizing the power of Lt. Governor Nungesser to fund the park whatever his budget and that he should due to its unique status within the State Park system.

Linda Curtis Sparks, Marci Cook, and Stacy Brown representing the tourist commissions from Sabine, Vernon, and Caddo-Bossier Parishes respectively provided data of the local and regional economic impact of the park. Office of State Parks director, Robert Barham stated the Hodges Foundation had delivered a letter asserting the state was in default of the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA) and had 60 days to "cure" the default.

Senator Long, and Representatives Armes and Howard indicated support for the park. District Attorney Don Burkett stated that he had read the CEA and the State was not in default and would not be until July 1<sup>st</sup> and only then if the park was not funded. He asked why the State had been so quick to 1) shut down cabin reservations after March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2) discuss movement of staff to other parks, and 3) plan for the removal of state property from the park site if closure had not already been determined. Mr. Barham failed to provide answers.

Don Weinell of the Baton Rouge Astronomical Society, which holds an annual Star Party at Hodges, pointed out that no other park in the state provides the experience that Hodges does. Other parks in the system have similar amenities and facilities to one another thereby providing similar experiences unlike Hodges Gardens.

I urged the crowd to continue to contact the Lt. Governor and legislators to fund the park. Thanks to Chase Baker of Broken Stone Productions, you may view the entire meeting as he live streamed it on Facebook. If you would like to view the meeting Like his page and click on videos.

Please continue contacting your legislators and the administration as requested previously especially during the budget discussions. We will continue our fight to stay open as Hodges Gardens State Park.



*Chris*



## MOVIE IN THE PARK APRIL 14, 2017

OUTDOOR MOVIE HOP Friday, April 14, 2017 7:00 PM

Come make memories with this great family movie for Easter sponsored by **Interstate Building Materials of Many**. HOP tells the comic tale of Fred, an out-of-work slacker who accidentally injures the Easter Bunny and must take him in as he recovers. As Fred struggles with the world's worst house guest, both will learn what it takes to finally grow up. Regular park admission applies. Pass holders and children under 3 are FREE. Concessions will be sold by Friends of Hodges Gardens. All profits from these sales will help support restoration efforts in the Gardens. Be sure to bring blankets and chairs for seating on the lawn.



## PICTURES WITH THE EASTER BUNNY

Bring your families and your cameras to the park on Saturday, April 15<sup>th</sup> beginning at 10:00 am through 12:00 noon and take pictures with the Easter Bunny. Donations will be accepted. All proceeds will support the restoration efforts of the Gardens.

## EASTER DUCK RACES

Come join the fun and try and win the Easter prizes. Registration begins at 10 am with the race starting at 11 am. Entry fee is \$1.00/duck. Each duck is numbered. All ducks begin the race at the high waterfall. The first, second and third ducks to cross the finish line win. Bring the family and cheer on your ducks. Regular park admission applies. Snacks, drinks and hot dogs will be sold with all proceeds supporting the restoration efforts of the Gardens.

*The previously advertised Geocaching Egg Hunt has been cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances.*



## STAR PARTY RECAP

The Baton Rouge Astronomical Society had a fantastic week of star gazing. Approximately 190 visitors and amateur astronomers participated on Saturday for the Public Star Party. Friend's concession sales netted approximately \$230 including several generous donations.

## EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE APRIL 16, 2017

Mr. Gene Davis of the Vernon Parish Community Choir will once again fill the Lakefront Stage with the word of God in song. The Vernon Parish Community Choir with additional voices from Sabine Parish under the direction of Mr. Gene Davis will present *The Seven Last Words of Christ* by Theodore Dubois.



Listening to the Hallelujah chorus while the sun rises over the lake on this special morning is not to be missed. Everyone is invited to join us for this year's performance at the Lakefront Stage. Bring blankets and/or lawn chairs for seating on the lawn.

The Park Gates will open at 4:30 am and close **promptly** at 5:45 am so that the service is not interrupted by incoming traffic. Admission is FREE. After the service, regular park admission will apply

## WHAT'S BLOOMING



While the azalea show has passed the Oleanders on Willow Point are beginning to bloom. The Bog Garden yellow and purple Irises are also blooming. The Dogwoods are still blooming and beautiful. Continue to check out the Wild Azalea Trail to see the wild azaleas and the dogwood trees on the trail.

## STAR GAZING 101—APRIL 22, 2017

Bob Nolen will lead an introductory talk in identifying the brightest stars and constellations as well as Jupiter in the Spring skies. This is a free event but you must register on the Friends website [www.hodgesgardens.net](http://www.hodgesgardens.net) to participate. The group is capped at 25 in order to allow for full participation so be sure to register early. Star gazing will take place at the big Red Barn on the western loop road of the Park. The talk will begin at sundown which is 7:45 pm. Plan to arrive by 7:15 to give your eyes time to develop your night vision. You may drive to the barn and park at the site. Bring chairs as there is no seating in the observation area.

## STREAM REPAIRS ONGOING

Due to the substantial leaks in the water features, they will remain off except for special events while plans for repair are developed, funding identified and repairs completed. Stay tuned.

## VISITOR CENTER

The Visitor Center will be open on Saturdays in April from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm and Sundays from 1:00-4:00 thanks to Peggy Fisher who has volunteered to open each Sunday. Those interested in volunteering to work in the Visitor Center contact Chris Nolen at (318) 315-0793.



## VOLUNTEERS



Volunteers are the life blood of Hodges Gardens State Park. It is never too early to learn each of us can give of ourselves for the betterment of our environment. For more information about how you can help by becoming a volunteer or making a donation in memory or honor of a loved one, contact Friends of Hodges Gardens at [fohgsp@gmail.com](mailto:fohgsp@gmail.com).

## AMAZON SMILE

Don't forget to do to your online shopping through AmazonSmile to help support the Gardens. Use this link to connect with [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/26-4480938) to automatically support Friends of Hodges Gardens State Park <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/26-4480938> or use the amazonsmile link on the Friends of Hodges Gardens website at [www.hodgesgardens.net](http://www.hodgesgardens.net).



### Friends of Hodges Board of Directors

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The Friends of Hodges continues to seek new members to support our beloved Hodges Gardens. There is a membership level to meet all needs and all donations are tax deductible. Please consider joining us in our efforts to Restore, Preserve, Protect, and Promote Hodges Gardens. Link to [membership](#)

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## Park Hours of Operation:

The gates open at 8AM daily and close at 9PM Sunday through Thursday and 10PM on Friday and Saturday. The Gardens close at sunset. Admission is \$7 per person, seniors 62+ and children under 3 are admitted free. Annual passes are available for \$80 and admit the cardholder and any passengers in the vehicle. For more information about the Park, visit [www.lastateparks.com](http://www.lastateparks.com), call 800-354-3523 toll free. **Reservations** for overnight accommodations can be made online or through the Call Center at 877.226.7652.

There are 13 cabins and a group camp, and 9 unimproved tent campsites and a primitive camping area. Also there are boats with paddles and life jackets available for rent.