

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, August, 2016

<http://hodgesgardens.net/>

Facebook—Friends of Hodges Gardens

ANNUAL VISITATION NUMBERS FINALIZED

The number of visitors from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016 reached 53,560. This exceeded the previous record of 49,286 in 2012-2013 since Hodges Gardens joined the State Park system. Historical attendance records between 1975 to 1999 show that the largest number of visitors to the Park was 78,000.

I am confident that we can reach that level of visitation. It is essential for us to continue to identify ways to bring new visitors as well as old friends into the park to increase attendance as well as visibility to avoid any future closure threats. Friends members can help by sharing information about the park through social media, visiting the park more frequently, bringing family and friends with you, and encourage organizations you are affiliated with to have outings or meetings in the park. Chris Nolen

WATER ON THE WAY!

Through the increase in new memberships, Friends is now in a position to fund the purchase of all the supplies needed to provide a new source of water to the Butterfly, Herb and Old Fashioned Rose Gardens. This may not seem like a big deal, but to our volunteers and the folks that have adopted these three special gardens, it's HUGE!

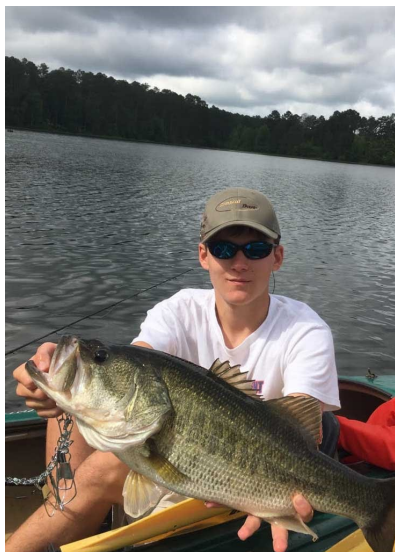
Currently, the only source of water for the 60-acre garden area is the irrigation system that provides water from the lake. This system is not very flexible and does not give our volunteers access to hose bibs and water hoses while they are working. It also means that the volunteers have had to schedule their time around the irrigation schedule. We will be connecting water lines to these gardens from the main park fresh water system so that water is readily available at any time and independent of the irrigation system. This will help accommodate the many different volunteer schedules and still allow us to irrigate the main gardens on a schedule.

The Sabine River Authority has graciously agreed to loan us the equipment to dig the ditch, the supplies have arrived and we are ready to begin! Stay tuned for an update on the project and if you have been considering volunteering, let us know!

A big thank you to our members and to the Sabine River Authority for making this much needed project possible, and to the volunteers who continue to passionately care for these gardens and have been so patient with our progress!

PAINTING IN THE PARK AUGUST 13, 2016

Join us at 1pm for a fun filled Saturday afternoon with artist Kimberly Remedies. All supplies are provided. Regular park admission of \$5 applies along with a \$20 registration fee paid directly to Ms. Kimberly. Annual pass holders are admitted FREE and only pay the registration fee. Remember no talent required -step by step instructions provided. Hidden talents are discovered every time. Please call 318-424-6526 to reserve a spot.



HODGES GARDENS FAVORITE FISHERMAN

If we could give an award for our favorite fisherman at Hodges, it would go to 15 year old Chase Hopkins of Florien. We could all learn a lesson from this young man about good stewardship and taking care of our natural resources. On any given day of the week, Chase can be found fishing at Hodges. He gets big brother Cody to sign a contract, promising to bring him to Hodges and come back to pick him up or talks mom into driving him. Chase's parents, Lewis and Kayla Hopkins, report that Chase lives and breathes fishing.

An avid outdoorsman and naturalist, fishing is definitely his favorite pastime of all. But this young man is not your average fisherman. He never keeps his catch (and he almost always has a great catch). Instead, he is adamant about catch and release. He is also diligent to pick up any trash and fishing line that he sees. He is a great ambassador of the 225 acre lake at Hodges Gardens.

We caught up with him last week to find out exactly why he feels so strongly about catch and release. He said "I release them alive because when big fish spawn, they lay an estimated 4,000 eggs per pound of body weight, which is a big thing in a little fishery such as Hodges. Especially in a fishery that doesn't get re-stocked with fish

every year and doesn't have regulations on size and amount of fish you can keep". With a grin and twinkle in his eye, he added "Plus, you might get the chance to hook them again!"

We salute and thank you Chase Hopkins!

STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

Thanks go to all of the staff for their hard work in maintaining the park. Over the years, their numbers have diminished due to state budget cuts yet the major responsibilities continued. They have stood up to the task. We appreciate all of their efforts to keep the park operating. Just as Friends recognizes the dedication of the park staff, the park staff recognize the contributions of the volunteers. As one of the employees stated, "we couldn't do it without the help of all of the volunteers." Friends says THANKS to all of you.



Back row: Kenny Mitchell, Edrick Garner, Perry Garner

Front Row: Edith Holland, Ashley Barnhill, Kristi Smith



Cecil Brooks



Laura Wilson and Cindy Cox

CONSERVATORY ASBESTOS ABATEMENT UPDATE

So happy to report that approval has been received to begin the abatement process in the Conservatory. Bob Nolen has contacted Abatement Services Inc. to initiate the work. The asbestos will be removed from the exposed pipes in the conservatory. Further information will be provided as the work progresses.



VOLUNTEERS-LIFE BLOOD OF THE GARDENS



It cannot be said enough the importance of volunteers in the restoration and maintenance of the park gardens. We are working to update our volunteer database and to streamline the process of notification of projects. I will be sending out an email to all of those who are currently in the Volunteer Database. I want to update the database, therefore if you don't receive the message, please contact me at chrisnolen61@gmail.com to add your name. Friends is currently working on a new website which will include a volunteer button. We are hopeful that this will make volunteering easier. Thanks to all of you who share your time and talents with the Gardens. See you in the gardens!

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.

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Florien, LA

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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 \$5 per person, \$4 for 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, 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.



FRIENDS OF HODGES GARDENS

A 501(c)3 Organization

Established To Restore, Preserve, Protect and Promote Hodges Gardens

fohgsp@gmail.com

☐ **Bronze - One Individual Membership**

- ✓ \$25 donation
- ✓ Quarterly electronic newsletter
- ✓ Friends membership card

☐ **Silver - One Individual Membership**

- ✓ \$100 donation
- ✓ Quarterly electronic newsletter
- ✓ 10% discount on all Gift Shop merchandise
- ✓ **1** membership card that provides the individual passholder and passengers in their vehicle free day use entrance to **Hodges Gardens State Park** for 1 year.

Please include the name of the passholder: _____

☐ **Gold - One Family or Corporate Membership**

- ✓ \$300 donation
- ✓ Quarterly electronic newsletter
- ✓ 10% discount on all Gift Shop merchandise
- ✓ **3** membership cards that provide the individual passholder and passengers in their vehicle free day use entrance to **Hodges Gardens State Park** for 1 year.

Please include the names of the individual passholders:

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____

☐ **Platinum - Contact Friends of Hodges Gardens**

- ✓ \$500 or more, all of the above and other special benefits

☐ **\$_____ Other - a donation of your choice**

I am interested in helping Friends with:

- ☐ Garden Projects
- ☐ Gift Shop Volunteer
- ☐ Outdoor Movies
- ☐ Financial Support
- ☐ Other _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Amount included: \$ _____

RETURN TO:

Friends of Hodges Gardens Gift Shop

1000 Hodges Loop

Florien, LA 71429

State Park Annual Passes are sold separately at the Hodges Gardens entrance station