

ACA CLUB FOSTERED STEWARDSHIP GRANT — FINAL REPORT

The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment
July 2018



THE MEADOWS CENTER
FOR WATER AND THE ENVIRONMENT
TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

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MEMBER THE TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

WRITTEN DESCRIPTION

I am pleased to provide the following report of a very successful program made possible through the American Canoe Association and LL Bean. The Meadow Center for Water and the Environment are the entrusted stewards of Spring Lake, an environmentally sensitive spring fed lake that is home to eight federally endangered or threatened species. The Lake is part of Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas.

Over 120,000 visitors come to the Lake annually for environmental education, research and recreation. The Lake must be maintained and cared for and there are several invasive species that have made home in the lake – compromising the habitat for native species, some of which are threatened or endangered. Among these invasive species, Water Lettuce and Water Hyacinth grow at a rapid rate and need to be managed not only for habitat integrity but also to keep the water ways clear for educational programs. The lake remains a constant 72 degree throughout the year so aquatic vegetation grows unabated year-round.

One of the objectives of the education program at Spring Lake is to fuse environmental education with recreation. The ACA Club Fostered Stewardship Grant was a perfect fit to have volunteers come together in an effort that included an introduction to safe paddling skills, education about native and non-native invasive species at the Lake, and a stewardship initiative involving the joy of kayaking on the clear spring waters. We had three separate dates engaging volunteer youth from the Texas State University community and the Austin Youth River Watch. All three programs were fantastic as we learned about paddling and the Lake and then kayaked into areas that were heavily inundated with invasive vegetation. Volunteers were able to learn about the invasive vegetation and remove it from the Lake- stacking it in our kayaks as we paddled along. Wildlife sightings abounded as did conversation and community.

The grant funds helped us to purchase PFD's and paddles. We had sparse equipment that was well worn, and the newer gear worked great and helped us get on the Lake in a proper and safe manner. We are excited about the results of the program and have had an overwhelming response to continue our efforts. With the equipment and curriculum in place we should be able to do just that. Interestingly, numerous volunteers commented how peaceful it was combining kayaking and gardening (weeding) so to speak! It really was an all-around effective blend of instruction, adventure and stewardship.

Thank you for your support.

Number of Volunteers:

- Session One = 13
- Session Two = 20
- Session Three = 25
- **Total = 58**

Total Number of Volunteer Hours: 8 hours (duration of Session One and Two = 2 hours each; duration of Session Three = 4 hours)

Total Invasive Vegetation Removed: 420 pounds

PHOTOS





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