



Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program, Inc.

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Leadership Portland Class II Make a “Shady” Difference at Sunset Lake Park

Corpus Christi, Texas, April 26, 2007 --- Portland residents have a lot more to boast about when it comes to their prized treasure known as “Sunset Lake Nature Park”. Leadership Portland Class II, the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program (CBBEP), and the City of Portland have partnered to make Sunset Lake Nature Park a more “user-friendly” and modern city park by adding shaded structures over the benches along the “Hike and Bike Trail”.

This collaborative partnership was spearheaded by the Leadership Portland Class II when they were tasked with identifying and implementing a project that would make a difference in the community. The class recognized the need to provide shade and shelter to the park benches that border the outdoor “Hike and Bike Trail” parallel to Corpus Christi Bay. The class did their homework and under the direction of Portland City Council Members, Cathy Skurow and Ron Jorgensen, contacted the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program seeking to finalize this joint partnership.

Under this unique partnership, Leadership Portland Class II provided the leadership in identifying the need for the shelter structures. The CBBEP provided funding (\$1,700) for the materials and the City of Portland provided the expertise and labor to build the shelters.

Years ago, in its foresight, the City of Portland set a new environmental standard on how local government can protect important habitat while maintaining public open lands and access for park and recreational use. In 2000, the city acquired this 270 acre area that includes one of the areas high quality wetland complexes and dedicated it as a park. The park setting is a distinctive high quality saltwater system with ecologically valuable coastal wetland marsh and sandflat habitat. Numerous migratory and protected bird species nest, roost, and feed within the lake, along the shoreline, and within the rich wetlands.

In 2001, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality recognized water quality challenges in Sunset Lake during low tides and periods of drought. A solution was promptly executed through a collaborative partnership effort. The solution to improving water exchange to the various wetlands and shallow ponds in the Sunset Lake Nature Park was through the installation of culverts between Nueces Bay and Sunset Lake, across the “Hike and Bike Trail” to adjacent shallow ponds. It also included the removal of a sand bar that allowed water exchange from Corpus Christi Bay to connecting shallow ponds and wetlands.

The Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program is a local non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to protecting and restoring bays and estuaries in the 12-county region known as the Texas Coastal Bend. The CBBEP implements management solutions and supports research with a focus on *Water and Sediment Quality, Freshwater Inflows, Maritime Commerce, Habitat Loss, Human Uses of Coastal Resources, and Public Education and Outreach.*

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