

NPI - Field Trip
Turtle Cove Environmental Research Station – Bayou Manchac
Saturday, May 31st – Meet ON SITE at 8am

Due to the 30 person limit, this event is for NPI MEMBERS ONLY.
unfortunately, we cannot accommodate any guests

(87 Alligator Lane, Akers, LA 70421)

RSVP LINK:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E4FAEAA2BA7FACE9-56003797-turtle>

Our group will be led by Turtle Cove staff. The highlight of the field trip is a pontoon boat ride down Pass Manchac, which is provided by a covered 40' x 12' commercial-grade pontoon touring boat. The boat seats approximately 32-35 people.

We will learn about the natural history of the area; environmental history (social, economic, and cultural aspects); impacts of cypress deforestation and ecosystem restoration; and physical and socioeconomic impacts of and solutions to wetland loss and coastal erosion. Plan to see a variety of flora and fauna, including alligators, snakes, birds, mammals, fish, and invertebrates.

Time Frame: approx. 3.5 hours (8:00 am – 12:00 pm, plus optional add-on to JMA Boardwalk)

You should bring your own drinking water, proper clothing for weather conditions, sunscreen, hats, binoculars, etc.

8:00am	Group Arrives at Turtle Cove Boatshed/Classroom Complex at Galva Canal in Manchac, LA//Bathroom break (only one bathroom at boatshed)//Orientation of Facilities
8:30-9:15	Introductory PowerPoint Lecture on the <i>Overview of Turtle Cove and the Historical and Holistic Impacts of Wetland Loss in Coastal Louisiana</i>
9:15-10:15	Pontoon boat ride down Pass Manchac to Lake Pontchartrain (if time/conditions allow) then to Turtle Cove Environmental Research Station w/continued discussion on wetland issues
10:15-11:00	Guided boardwalk tour (including dip-netting) behind Turtle Cove. Group may eat lunch on picnic tables there or on boardwalk (4 bathrooms available at Turtle Cove).
11:30-12:00	Pontoon boat ride back to Galva Canal Boatshed (our grad students usually need to be back to Galva Canal boatshed to make 1:00 pm classes on campus in Hammond)

12:30 Optional Add-On short trip to [Joyce Wildlife Management Area Swampwalk](#), nearby led by Susan Norris-Davis

Directions to Turtle Cove Boatshed/Classroom at Galva Canal in Manchac (Akers)

The field trips begin at the Galva Canal Classroom/Boatshed, which are south of Pass Manchac in St. John the Baptist Parish, off US Hwy 51. Galva Canal is approximately one hour from New Orleans and Baton Rouge or 25 minutes from Hammond. The official address is 87 Alligator Lane, Akers, LA 70421 (GPS Coordinates: 30° 16' 35.4" N and 90° 23' 53.4" W).

1. From New Orleans/LaPlace, travel north on Interstate-55. From Baton Rouge or Hammond, travel south on I-55.
2. From I-55, take Exit 15 toward Manchac.
3. Turn right (south) onto Hwy 51—also noted on a sign there as “Frontage Road.” Pass Middendorf’s Restaurant on your left.
4. Cross the bridge over Pass Manchac, taking you to the south side of the Pass.
5. After the bridge, travel about 1/4 of a mile and turn left onto an asphalt road that crosses over the railroad tracks (it’s the second left possible)—there are green road signs on each side of HWY 51 there stating “Southeastern Turtle Cove ERS.”
6. **Stop and look both ways as you approach and cross the railroad tracks!!!**
7. After crossing the tracks, turn right immediately. This road curves and takes you to a yellow iron-pipe gate, which should be open when you arrive.
8. Enter into the Manchac Wildlife Management Area/Southeastern Turtle Cove Boat Shed Area at Galva Canal.
9. Continue 100 yards from the gate until you come to Southeastern/Turtle Cove section of the property marked with green “Parking” signs in front of the boat shed. Overflow parking is against the marsh still further right.

What to Bring on the Field Trip

Among other necessary items, remember to bring your own water, food, and mosquito spray and to dress appropriately for the weather (hat/sunscreen for hot; jacket for cold). Binoculars, Cameras.

While on the pontoon boat, children age 15 and younger must wear life jackets. Everyone wears life jackets while in canoes and other vessels. Alcohol, smoking, and behavior detracting from a safe and meaningful educational experience are prohibited.

Joyce WMA Swampwalk

The boardwalk is very short at a quarter mile each way, but very pretty. The boardwalk is sturdy and there are places to sit and take in this secluded swamp. No pets.

Joyce WMA is a wetland within the Pontchartrain Basin; it mainly consists of cypress-tupelo swamp. A large portion of the area is a dense shrub marsh community with red maple, wax myrtle, red bay, and younger cypress-tupelo. There is a 500-acre freshwater marsh, mainly of maiden cane, on the northern portion of the WMA.

Through the original donation of 12,809 acres from the Joyce Foundation in 1982, and several additional donations, leases, and acquisitions, Joyce WMA currently encompasses 42,292 acres.

Birding and wildlife viewing: Popular for birding, Joyce WMA is a site along the American Wetlands Birding Trail. Bald eagles and osprey nest in and around the WMA. Numerous other species of birds, including neotropical migrants, use this coastal forest during fall and spring migrations. Resident waterfowl, including hooded mergansers and wood, mottled, and black-bellied whistling ducks, are found in the area year-round. LDWF maintains and monitors more than 50 wood duck nesting boxes on the area.

Alligators and a variety of other reptiles and amphibians are common on Joyce WMA. LDWF constructed an elevated “Swamp Walk” boardwalk in 1990 to provide WMA visitors with an opportunity to view the swamp interior and observe the associated wildlife and vegetation. LDWF renovated the boardwalk after it was damaged by Hurricane Isaac.

There are self-clearing permit stations throughout the WMA.

Recommended Reading - Good Stuff!:

[A NATURALIST'S DRIVE ACROSS THE LABRANCHE WETLANDS, LOUISIANA](#)

Shared by Robert A. Thomas, Loyola Center for Environmental Communication, Department of Strategic Communication, School of Communication & Design, Loyola University New Orleans, & Louisiana Master Naturalists of Greater New Orleans (rathomas@loyno.edu, 504-865-2107)

Note: All place references are by mile marker points (MM) on I-10. Drive time between the Kenner levee on I-10 and the I-55 exit from I-10: 10 minutes.

BALD EAGLES IN LOUISIANA

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FLORA AND FAUNA OF TURTLE COVE

shared by the Louisiana Master Naturalists of Greater New Orleans