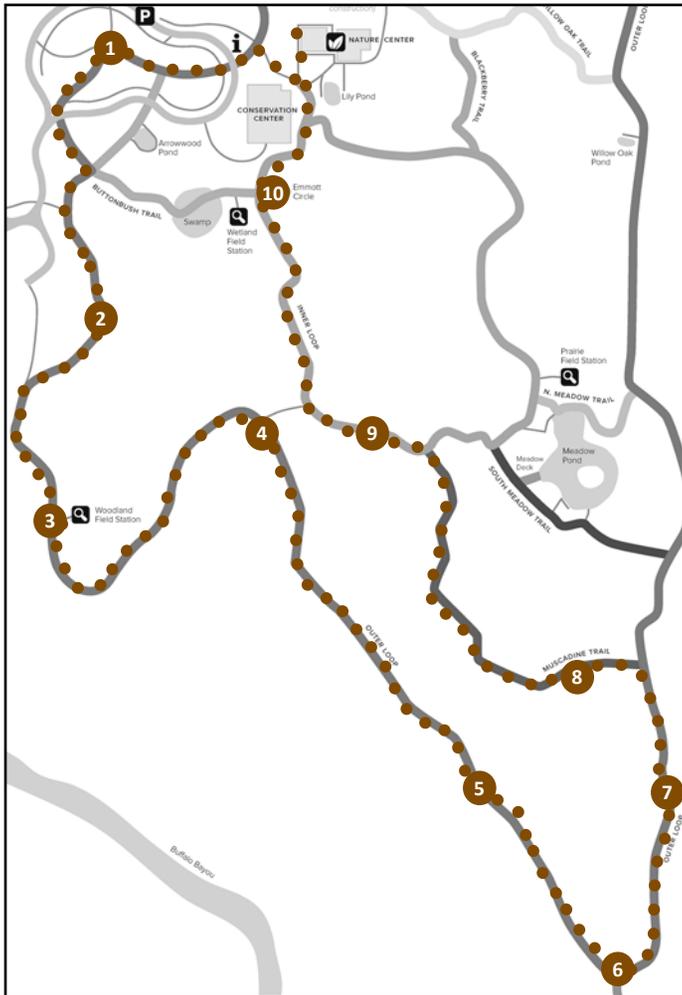


Habitat Hike: Woodland



About the Hike

This self-guided hike should take about 45 minutes to an hour. The path is a mixture of mulch, boardwalk, and gravel. Distance: 1.7 miles.

The woodland stretches all the way down to Buffalo Bayou at the edge of the Arboretum. Along the way you will see areas of pine forest like you would find in east Texas, as well as more open hardwood forest which would be found from here towards central Texas. Houston's woodlands are an intersection point of these two regions.

1 Hollow Log

Woodlands are not always dense with trees. The woodland habitat contained in this parking loop is more open. Notice the hollow log on your left, which can provide shelter for woodland creatures.



2 Tree Arch

This arched post oak tree was bent over when a larger tree fell on it. The bent oak managed to survive, and you can even see new shoots emerging from its crooked trunk. The larger tree that fell on it has since decomposed.



3 Woodland Field Station

We built the Woodland Field Station deep in a mixed area of pines and oaks. You can clearly see the layers of a mature woodland here. Take a break and see if you can spot any of the microhabitats described in the signs.

4 Shortcut Trail & Woodland Clearing

Here you can see a small clearing. These open spots make great hunting and foraging areas for wildlife. The dead trees (snags) provide lookout spots for predatory birds, and fallen logs hide insects that are eaten by armadillos. Take the shortcut trail to the left if you want to bypass the rest of the loop.

Being in Nature

Slow down for nature: no jogging or biking. Look and listen, but stay on the trails. Leave no trace: carry out what you carry in. Leash and clean up after pets. Be kind and stay safe!



5 Check Dam

Erosion shapes the land around Buffalo Bayou and nearby waterways. Here an Eagle scout built a check dam to stop the spread of a large sink hole that formed over the last few years. These logs divert rainwater away from the disturbed area and slow it down, keeping it from carving away more soil.

6 Couch Birding Trail

The trailhead for the Couch Birding Trail (a tenth of a mile roundtrip) leads to the sloped riparian habitat on the banks of Buffalo Bayou. Here sweetgum and river birch trees grow tall in the wet, sandy soil. You can see Buffalo Bayou from the platform at the trail's end.



7 Cherry Laurel

To your right is a dense stand of cherry laurel, an aggressive native plant. When large trees fall—like many did in our drought—they leave an open spot in the canopy. Fast-growing plants like cherry laurel quickly take advantage of the sunlight and may crowd out slower-growing species like oaks.



8 Trumpet Creeper Vines

Along this path, look for large woody vines winding up the scattered loblolly pine trees. These trumpet creepers can live for decades and produce large orange flowers adored by our hummingbirds. See if you can find horizontal rows of small holes in the vines made by Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers.

9 Tree Gallery

This stretch of the inner loop hosts a variety of oak trees. The willow oaks stand out with their slender, willow-like leaves. In contrast, the red oaks have wider lobed leaves.



10 Emmott Circle

Emmott Circle is dedicated to Catharine Mary Emmott, one of the original philanthropists responsible for preserving this area. This land eventually became Memorial Park, and over the years naturalists like Robert A. Vines helped set aside part of the park as a nature sanctuary which became the Arboretum.

Get Involved with The Houston Arboretum

Join: Become a member to support our mission and enjoy benefits like free parking and discounts on programs

Volunteer: Get outside and get back into nature through active and support activities

Check us out at www.houstonarboretum.org

