

Fostering appreciation & stewardship of coastal resources, heritage and culture by providing hands-on waterborne education services

## Time Flies: A Decade of Service

by Amy Turner

A little more than 10 years ago, a steering committee met to develop an education avenue unique to Texas' gulf coast. On December 23, 1998, the Upper Texas Coast Water-Borne Education Center was incorporated...an early Christmas gift to the citizenry of the area.

Like every other small organization, the early years were formidable, full of ups and downs, close calls and triumphs. And perhaps, like most non-profits, many things remain the same.

The WEC is in the process of overcoming its greatest challenge to date - the loss of our vessels due to Hurricane Ike. But with hard work from staff, friends and partners, we will be back on the water this spring to open our 10th year of service!

We have partnered with the Galveston Bay Foundation to charter their vessel, *Bay Ranger*. The vessel is smaller than our regular boats, but also offers many new opportunities that *Moss Bluff* and *Smith Point* did not. We expect to have this vessel available in early March.

We are also working diligently with CLCND to repair *Moss Bluff*. This process has required sorting through a lot of red tape, but we expect to have the boat back to work no later than April.

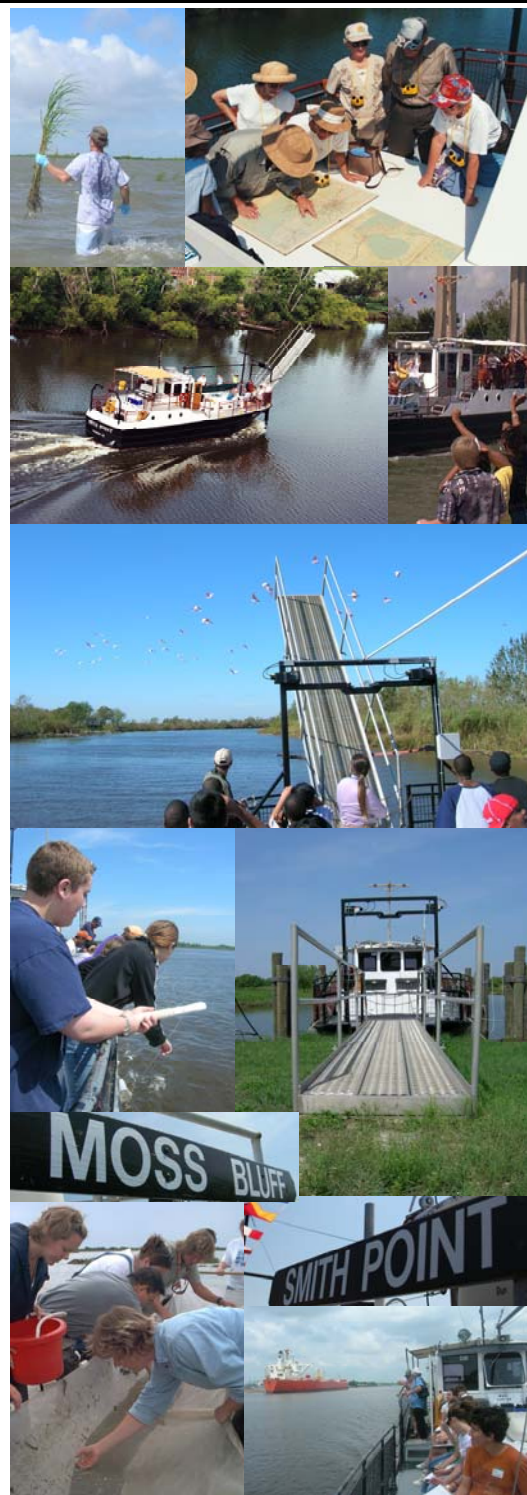
In the past 10 years, the WEC has conducted approximately 683 field labs, serving 17,007 participants. For our 10th Anniversary, we hope to add 100 more field labs and at least 1,700 more passengers to that list.

Since the boats began running up and down the Trinity, many participants have passed from students to active citizens, - voting, volunteering, and taking jobs in the ecological, conservation, and water-recreational fields. I am one example. As a senior A.P. biology student at Anahuac High School, I participated in one of WEC's early voyages in the spring of 1999. I had no idea that I was being introduced to my future employer.

In 2009, the WEC will continue doing what we do best, but will also add services, host anniversary events, offer anniversary specials and celebrate the wonderful region in which we live and work. Look for the calendar of events and updates on our website, in this newsletter, and in your mailbox!

To our longtime partners, funders and friends, we offer a very heart-felt thank you. The WEC could not have come this far without your support. Special thanks go out to our captains, deckhands and interpreters. You make the field labs the valuable and safe experiences that they have become and brought the steering committee's vision into reality. We look forward to working with and serving you in 2009, and the decades to come.

Please send us your stories and pictures from your trips aboard *Smith Point* and *Moss Bluff*. Tell us how we have made a difference in your life. And schedule your field lab today!



# The Waterborne Education Center

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## Mark Your Calendar

- **February 11th** - Chambers County Day in Austin
- **February 16th** - Presidents' Day; WEC office will be closed
- **February 18th** - WEC Board of Directors Meeting at 4:00 p.m. at the WEC office. Time and date subject to change
- **February 19th** - Anahuac Area Chamber of Commerce Awards Banquet at Whites Park
- **March 7th** - Mini-C.A.S.T. in Beaumont
- **March 12th** - WEC Board of Directors Meeting at 4:00 p.m. at the WEC office. Time and date subject to change

"We are all schoolmasters, and our schoolhouse is the universe. To attend chiefly to the desk or schoolhouse while we neglect the scenery in which it is placed is absurd."



Henry David Thoreau, Journal, 15 October 1859

## Bob Jamison

The WEC is excited to welcome a new director to its board. J.R. "Bob" Jamison was elected to the board in January, and will attend his first meeting in February.

Bob was born and raised in Dayton, Texas, where he lives today. He took a job at Dayton State Bank after college, and was elected chairman of the board in 1962. He held this title until retirement in 2003.

Bob is an avid conservationist. He formerly served as state chairman of Ducks Unlimited, Inc., and later became the regional vice president and member of the executive committee serving the U.S., Mexico and Canada. He traveled as a DU volunteer, speaking on bird recognition, reasonable legal harvest of wild game and beneficial feeding.

He enjoys hunting and fishing, both locally and abroad, including jaguars in British Honduras, grizzly bears in British Columbia, mule deer in Montana and Wyoming, roe deer in England, driven pheasants in Hungary, sturgeon in Oregon, fly fishing in Montana and dove hunting in south west Mexico.

As a nature writer, Bob has served as an editorial page columnist for several newspapers and contributes stories for state and national magazines. These consist of outdoor adventures, travel, conservation and business. He is the author of the book, "Airplanes, Alligators and Hi-Fin Blues". Bob is also a member of Texas Outdoor Writers Association.

The WEC is honored to have him aboard!