



An owl rests on a tree stump in the wilderness area stretching from Lower Coast Algiers to Belle Chasse. The Woodlands Trail and Park's National Trails Day event will feature hikes into a habitat for more than 400 species of migratory birds as well as many species that live in the forest year round.

Lower Coast Algiers trail to have hikes

Woodland park is years in the making

By Susan Langenhennig
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For years, Katie Brasted has been slowly working to designate an expanse of wilderness in Lower Coast Algiers and Belle Chasse as the Woodlands Trail and Park, a place that one day she hopes will have 19 miles of public running, bicycle, hiking, horseback-riding and birding trails through bottomland hardwood forests.

Over the years, she's gotten

support from civic, corporate and elected leaders, and on June 4, she's hoping to show off the project's accomplishments to those supporters and others at the first National Trails Day celebration at the Woodlands Trail.

The event, which will be held from 9 a.m. to noon, will include free interpretive hikes into the forest conducted by Richard DeMay of the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program and David Muth of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park's Barataria Preserve and the Orleans Audubon Society.

"The goal is to give people a bird's-eye view of what we're

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Trail is habitat for birds

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trying to accomplish," Brasted said Wednesday. "This has been a long time evolving into reality. It's an opportunity to show our community supporters, private and corporate supporters what we're accomplishing and what still needs to be done."

The hikes will take participants into a habitat for more than 400 species of migratory birds and will be followed by a presentation on the "Progress and Future Direction of Woodlands Trail and Park Inc."

"Hopefully they'll see some of the great birds there," she said. "This is vital habitat."

Woodlands Trail is a nonprofit organization "created from the desire to preserve, protect and celebrate the beauty and unique character of the Lower Coast Algiers and Belle Chasse region, to enhance community access to the river and solidify public opportunities to take ad-

vantage of recreation and transportation amenities," according to its Web site at www.woodlandstrail.com.

Those interested in joining the hike may follow the green balloons on F. Edward Herbert Boulevard in Belle Chasse to the trail entrance.

According to the Web site www.americanhiking.org, National Trails Day "brings together thousands of outdoor enthusiasts to participate in educational exhibits, trail dedications, gear demonstrations, instructional workshops and trail work projects on the first Saturday of June."