

## Eagle Service Project Benefits Brazos Bend State Park



Srikanth addressing the volunteers regarding the finer details before the commencement of the project.

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Srikanth Thiyagarajan with Boy Scout troop 616 in New Territory has successfully completed his Eagle Project in Brazos Bend State Park. He had a keen interest in doing a service project that benefits our environment. The Eagle Project he undertook involved the eradication of adult Chinese Tallow trees. The Park currently has over 40 acres infested with Chinese Tallow trees. An eradication of some sections improves the quality of state park and promotes the natural vegetation as well as increasing habitation for many animals such as rabbits, squirrels, etc.

The Chinese tallow tree is an aggressive weed tree of Southern Texas and is one of the greatest threats to habitat in the South and rapidly replaces native communities ranging from Prairies, marshes and bottomland forests into Chinese Tallow forests. It changes the soil chemistry by lowering the pH of the soil it grows on and makes it very acidic. This soil serves to promote its own growth aggressively, once established. The native plants then die in the altered soil condition. The insects, birds and mammals living on the natural vegetation as food and shelter also must leave. The adult trees are eradicated by chemical treatment on the Chinese Tallow bark. The project focused on one area of the trail.

The volunteer turn out was excellent. 29 volunteers turned out and in groups applied herbicide to eradicate these trees, estimated to be about 1200 trees.

Srikanth, a scout since third grade, has participated in various service projects in our community through his Boy Scout troop.