

Fort Bend County News

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Sugar Land Scout focuses on environment

Boy Scout Troop 100 performed Rohan Kulangara's Eagle and Hornaday conservation project — invasive species control removal of Chinese tallow trees at Sheldon Lake State Park on Jan. 26.

Kulangara, 13, is an eighth-grader at Sartartia Middle School and the son of Sonal and George Kulangara.

Scouts of all ages from Troop 100, under the supervision and guidance of adult volunteers and park ranger Tom Olson used hatchets, machetes and loppers to cut down the tallow trees. Adults sprayed herbicide Grazon P+D on the inside of the bark of each tree that was to be destroyed.

The Chinese tallow tree is native to China and Japan and was introduced to North America around the 1700s by Benjamin Franklin in South Carolina. Tallow trees will transform native habitats into single species tallow forest in the absence of land-management practices. This tree will out compete native plant species, reducing and eliminating habitat for wildlife as well as forage areas for livestock.

Kulangara's project is a work in progress. Between May and June, Kulangara will return to the park to take photographs of what's left of the trees to show what effect his project has had. He has completed the other requirements for Eagle Scout.

The prairie that has been rid of the tallow tree can now be replanted with native grasses and plants which will contribute to the restoration and preservation of the park's native ecological system.

The Hornaday Awards program encourages and recognizes units, Scouts, and Venturers who design, lead, and carry out conservation projects that are based on sound scientific principles and practices.

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