



2009 Annual Report



President's Letter



I'd like to introduce our annual report for 2009 -- the first time we've presented it like this, and it does make for some impressive reading. We have achieved so much, but we're already looking forward to 2010 to being even better on every front: more trails, more races, more membership activities and more members. GHORBA celebrated its 10th anniversary, and we're going into our second decade stronger than ever with even loftier goals.

I hope that more of you will join us in helping to keep up the momentum. We never really have enough volunteers, and there are always so many ways to help with trail work and events. We're holding regular monthly meetings in addition to other events, so please come along and meet the leaders and your fellow members. We know that our future leaders are out there just waiting to pick up the baton.

I'll see you out on the trails!

Kevin Highfield

GHORBA President

2009 Accomplishments and Events

New Management

2009 saw some changes on the Board of Directors. GHORBA would like to thank Mike Lutomski for his years of service as he steps down as the President. Kevin Highfield stepped up from the VP position and the rest of the Board was filled out with energetic faces, both old and new.

Trailwork and Advocacy

The Justin P. Brindley Memorial Mountain Bike Trail was opened in Sugar Land from an initiative by the Sugar Land City Council and the Brindley family. This short trail is full of technical trail features (TTFs) that make the ride much more entertaining. After the initial opening, GHORBA was enlisted by the City to address trail maintenance. Additionally, Daniel Reading, GHORBA's new trail steward for Sugar Land trails, had been pursuing additional trail opportunities in the area. We were rewarded with the City offering 100 acres of land for natural surface trails to be built upon in the upcoming year, and initial site inspections have already been accomplished. Their Master Plan has the potential to include many more miles of trails, so we are excited to be included as part of this process. For up-to-the-date information, keep an eye on our newly created [Sugar Land Trails Forum](#) and [Trails Condition](#) section.

The Double Lake expansion project continues to work its way through the complex process of building trail on government property. In 2009, GHORBA directed use of \$10,000 of the previously awarded grant to get the 11 miles of new trail laid out. Since then, the review process has been challenging but we hope for it to be complete in early 2010 so that construction of the trail may commence shortly thereafter.



GHORBA started laying the groundwork for grant applications toward a significant expansion of the Huntsville State Park trail system onto adjacent Forest Service land, which will be part of the continuing development of the Sam Houston National Forest Trail Master Plan. We have received considerable interest from the Northwest Cycling Club in this project, and we look forward to their continued support as it goes forward.

One of the results of much work done in 2008 is that the Cypresswood trails have now been an official Precinct 4 mountain bike trail system for a year. GHORBA has received very positive feedback from the parks management about how successful the trail has been and how our collaboration may serve as model for volunteers working with parks departments. This is a great relationship that we look forward to continuing, and we would like to thank Dennis Johnston, Precinct 4 Parks Administrator, for taking the time to speak with our organization at one of our monthly meetings.

Jack Brooks kept things going down south with more trailwork and a great relationship with Galveston County Parks. 2009 saw bridges replaced and some trails rerouted as the users contributed more than 250 hours of volunteer work to the park.

Flintridge, a trail completed in 2008 and developed through funding from REI, Montgomery County, and the Woodlands, has started to see some expansion. Currently there is additional mileage of trail that has been professionally laid out and is waiting for construction.

The relationship with the Memorial Park Conservancy and the Houston Parks and Recreation Department continues to improve through our consistent contributions to the park. GHORBA led or provided over 800 volunteer hours in Memorial Park in 2009 valued at over \$15,000, along with contributing \$2500 of funds towards some much needed bridge projects that improved the natural-surface trails for all user groups.



GHORBA is currently participating in the Greens Bayou Corridor Coalition Committee with an eye towards possibly developing a trail system in eastern Harris County. This is still in the early stages but things are looking very promising for this 1400-acre tract of land along the Bayou.

The Houston area desperately needs pump/jump tracks, and GHORBA has been actively working with Houston Parks and Recreation to try to provide a somewhat centralized location for these. Talks are ongoing and very positive. Additionally, GHORBA has raised this idea with Precinct 4 Parks for land up in the Spring Creek area, which was also positively received.

To summarize, in 2010 GHORBA members contributed and led more than 1500 volunteer hours of trail work across the greater Houston area and spent more than \$14,000 on new trail development and ongoing maintenance. These are the direct results of member and community support.

Racing

The 2009 edition of the Big Ring Challenge was held at the Double Lake Recreation Area in Coldspring under threatening weather conditions. With a Golden GT Bike up for grabs as part of their national series, about 475 racers showed up to compete. Congratulations and thanks to Brian Thigpen and his crew for putting on another great race.

GHORBA also hosted the 2009 Short Track Stampede Series at Cypresswood, Flintridge, Double Lake, and Jack Brooks. Through a creative format that ensured that everyone raced against riders of similar pace, many people were introduced to mountain bike racing for the first time. We are looking forward to Rafael Fontela and friends putting on this series again in 2010.

Rider Clinics

For the first time GHORBA hosted two types of rider clinics in 2009: skills clinics and race clinics, both led by Jeff Shoemake. The skills clinics were free to GHORBA members and catered to riders of all levels starting from the most basic skills to working on carrying speed and technical ability. Approximately 200 riders attended the four clinics that were held around the Houston area.



Additionally, an opportunity was presented by the scheduling of three of the 2009 TMBRA fall racing series races within a two-hour drive from Houston. GHORBA worked with the various race organizers and set up basic race clinics to teach new racers about race-day preparation, strategy, and how to have the best possible experience from their first race.

Miscellaneous

2009 saw the 10th anniversary of GHORBA, which of course led to a gathering; and what better place to have such a get-together than at Double Lake Recreation Area? On October 10th-11th, members and officers, past and present, got together to ride and celebrate the accomplishments and progress that GHORBA has made in its 10 years of existence. It was great to have some of the founding officers back around to rehash the old times and celebrate the community that has been built. In addition to relaxing around the campfire, there was a little bit of riding that occurred including a ride from Double Lake to Huntsville State Park and back. We can probably expect some repetition of the "Sam Houston Century" in the future.

GHORBA would especially like to extend their thanks to some of our members who, in addition to spending a great deal of time helping and organizing GHORBA events, also worked with their employers to secure company matching grants for their volunteer hours. These monies

contributed significantly to the GHORBA budget and opened up some trailwork options that might not otherwise have been possible.

Stemming from some of the successful grant work that was done for trail development on the north side of town, our current President now sits on the Texas Trail Review Board as the Mountain Bike Representative. This board reviews and endorses Recreational Trail Program grant applications on an annual basis, which puts us in front of statewide entities on a regular basis.

We wrapped up the year with our regular [Christmas party held in conjunction with Bike Houston at the St. Arnold's Brewery.](#)

2009 Financials and Statistics

	Jan - Dec 09
Income	
Total Event income	25500
Total Grants / Gifts / Programs	24750
Total Individual / Family income	7250
Miscellaneous Income	100
Total Income	57600
Expense	
Total Advertising and Marketing	500
Bank Fees	500
Total Contract Services	2750
Donations	500
Total Event expenses	21500
Total Facilities and Equipment	200
Total Operations	4000
Total Other Types of Expenses	200
Total Trail Work Expenses	14500
Total Travel and Meetings	1000
Total Expense	45650
Net Income	11950

Note: these numbers have been rounded to simplify the details

Summary:

- the 2009 BRC was a success even though weather was marginal
- most of our net income is from a grant towards the Double Lake expansion and is subsequently set aside for future expenses relating to this project
- membership was up in 2009 and currently hovers near the 500 member mark

2010 Plans and Projects

2010 should see some long-standing projects resolve themselves and some new ones commence. To be sure, there will be ample opportunities for members of the Houston bicycling community to contribute their support in this coming year.

With the evaluation and approval process nearing completion for the Double Lake expansion, the bidding process should begin in the spring. This might mean that there will be trailbuilding starting by the summer.

With Sugar Land recently offering up 100 acres for possible natural-surface trail, layout and flagging have already started, and this new trail is well on its way down the road to approval. We can expect trailbuilding to start in the first quarter of 2010.

Plans have already been laid to start work on expanding the trail system out of Huntsville State Park into the adjacent US Forest Service land. This will probably be another challenging project, similar to the Double Lake expansion, but hopefully lessons learned in 2009 will help smooth and ease the process. It is still too early to determine when the trailbuilding might start for this project.

GHORBA also feels that we are now in a position to address the delicate task of obtaining legal, natural surface trail on the west side of town. This will most certainly be long project and one that will have to be handled slowly, but the Board is determined to make this one of our current priorities.

There will be more racing. The [2010 STS calendar](#) has just been released and the dates are:

Feb 13	Collins Park
Feb 20	George Mitchell Preserve Trail
March 20	Jack Brooks Park
April 3	Justin P. Brindley Trail (Sugar Land)
May 8	Memorial Park (tentative)
May 22	Stephen F. Austin State Park

The 2010 edition of the GHORBA Big Ring Challenge will be on May 1st-2nd. Let's hope for some good weather this year.

There has been some renewed interest in our established Sprockids program, and we hope to have many of these great community events in 2010. This program educates children of all ages about bicycle safety and introduces them to the fun of riding off road using bicycles that have been donated to GHORBA. If you are interested in helping out, please get in touch with one of your friendly GHORBA Board members.

There is nothing quite like exploring a trail for the first time with a group of friends. GHORBA hopes to instill this feeling in our members through organizing some rides and trips to trails both on the other side of town and out of the state that may be new to many of us.

We look forward to continuing to build upon the great relationships that we have with our land managers and the bicycle community in Houston. In the past 10 years, GHORBA has supported and facilitated the creation or legalization of many miles of trail. As we start our second decade, we are excited about the projects in our immediate future and can only imagine what other opportunities will present themselves.

See you on the trail,

Your [2009-2010 GHORBA Board of Directors](#):

President	Kevin Highfield
Vice President	Rafael Fontela
Treasurer	Carla Rowland
Secretary	Veljko Roskar
Membership	Amanda Fontela
Trails	Chris Brown
At-Large	Bill Begnaud
At-Large	Philip Teitel
At-Large	Steve Booker
At-Large	Russell Adams

GHORBA would like to extend its thanks to our sponsors and partners in 2009:

		
		
		
		
		

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	City of Conroe		