

“First Above, Then Below!”

As an astronaut, I had the unique privilege to view our world from a vantage point of extraordinary perspective. This March, I had the opportunity to view that very same world from a vantage point available to everyone..., and I highly recommend it!

The wetlands of Galveston became my mission for about four hours on a quiet, cloudy –and sometimes chilly–spring break afternoon near the island’s west end. My wife and I, joined by her lifelong friend and significant other, booked an outing with the organization known as [Artist Boat](#). With their help, and the voluminous knowledge of our guide Karissa, we paddled ourselves through a thoroughly enjoyable four hours in the wetlands.

One of the unique attributes of our quest came about halfway through our trek within the marshlands. Gingerly “rear-end parking” our kayaks against the banks of the newly awakening grasslands --gripping tightly to the murky and muddy soil below-- we were given a watercolor paint kit..., that’s right, a paint kit! Our mission morphed quickly into a lesson of art and nature appreciation, as we were ably instructed by Karissa to capture our personal visions of the near-pristine environment surrounding us. Seeing this world, from a frame of reference I had not previously imagined, brought back similar memories experienced when I gazed upon this same world through the ground-facing windows of the International Space Station, 250 nautical miles straight up.

This is an educational opportunity to be experienced by all. It is challenging (your muscles will be invigorated), it is educational (I learned an incredible amount of unique information about how land is formed through these marshes), and it is beautifully visual (Pelicans up close are HUGE!). I recommend you consider this vista for your next “what shall we do this weekend” adventure.

Respectfully,

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