



Friends of Guadalupe River, Honey Creek, Inc.

A non-profit organization

President's Letter

by Wilt Shaw

Board of Directors

GOOD NEWS ON THE HORIZON FOR STATE PARKS?

After years of poor funding and a failing infrastructure, it looks like there might be good news on the horizon for our State Parks. On August 29 a contingency from Texas Parks and Wildlife led by State Parks Director, Walt Dabney, of key personnel with representatives of the State Legislative Budget Board (LBB) made an unprecedented visit to Guadalupe River State Park. This fact-finding mission to assess the financial needs tells me maybe something is finally getting done. Over the past several years studies have been done and recommendations have been made, but, so far, action has not been taken.

After years of budget cutting and exploitation of the state sporting goods taxes meant for Parks, it appears our great State of Texas is finally taking positive action. Here is what I mean by exploitation: The sporting goods tax, projected to generate \$104 million in revenues in 2007, was capped for Parks in 1995 by the legislature at \$32 million. Do the math. It's appalling.

There are 114 properties in the Parks system, some of which, no matter what happens now, will probably be closed for good. Our Park and Honey Creek State Natural Area will survive--but under what conditions? That of course is for the new State Legislative session to decide. In state per capita spending, Texas ranks a shameful 49th, out-ranking only Mississippi.

Companies, in assessing where they want to relocate, rank such quality-of-life amenities as Parklands high on their list, and Texas has been rejected more than once for the state's lack of attractiveness. In an April 2006 article in *The Texas Observer*, writer Joe Nick Patoski quotes Walt Dabney: "Tourism is the second or third component of the Texas economy and Parks are the biggest component of the tourism segment," he said, "If you're not taking care of that, that's bad economics."

Will action be taken this year? We hope to have that answer at the end of the next legislative session. Make your voices heard. Contact your congressman to express your concerns. Our accumulative voices will make a difference.

Next steps for The Friends: A joint invitation with Government Canyon State Park to State Legislative body representatives and policy makers for a show-and-tell. The next newsletter will hopefully bring news of life-giving investment renewal for our Parks.

A must-read article can be found at:

http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/newsmedia/releases/news_roundup/state_park_facts/state_park_funding.phtml

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Texas Parks and Wildlife Funding "The Dedicated Myth" by Tom Anderson

From 1980-1993 Texas Parks and Wildlife received a 2 cent tax on a pack of 20 cigarettes. One cent of that was allocated to TPWD for operation of state parks. In the 1993 the state Legislature passed a bill that switched the cigarette tax to the general revenue fund and allowed the sales tax collected from sporting goods to go to TPWD. This was called a "**Dedicated Fund**". Many of us that volunteer at parks thought, "What a great plan." As more people bought sporting goods, more funds would be available to parks, and a self sustaining park system would grow and be the envy of the nation. This plan depended on the Legislature to raise the cap from time to time. However, later the Legislature put a \$32 million cap on the amount to go to TPWD and subsequently reduced that amount as well. **Last year \$104 million was made from the sporting goods tax, yet parks and wildlife did not even receive the \$32 million that was dedicated.** Texas government spent \$2.71 per person in 98-99 on parks and recreation, while the average state spent \$14.12.

I have tried to find the reason for this. I looked to Webster's Dictionary for a possible answer. The second definition given for "dedicate" is, "to set apart for a definite use or purpose," but then I looked at part of the first definition which is, "to devote to sacred uses." Eureka! I have found the answer that no one seems to have addressed. The Legislature of 1993 used the second definition of "dedicate" and every Legislature since has used the first. They no longer choose to use the "Dedicated Fund" set up specifically for parks and wildlife for that "definite use and purpose."

Now, after years of under funding and legislative neglect, our parks are suffering greatly. What some may have forgotten is that during every election year the topic of "funding for state parks" is an issue prior to the election, but quietly becomes a topic that "we can't find the money for" after the "devote to sacred uses" definition is applied by our Legislature.

Let's get close to home:: Guadalupe River State Park/Honey Creek State Natural Area

Facts:

Staff and Volunteers

The park has at the present, nine full time year-round positions. Over the last biennium, GRSP/HCSNA has had about 5.0 hourly employees that are full time, provided the budget permits. For much needed help, the park has a Host program that allows a host or host couple to camp without charge in turn for a minimum of 25 hours of work per week. The park can accommodate up to four park hosts at a time. By August 31 of this year park hosts will have logged over 4,100 volunteer hours at GRSP & HCSNA. In all, about 7,700 volunteer hours will be logged at GRSP & HCSNA (interpretive volunteers 300+; youth volunteers 1,500+; community service volunteers 300+; other individual volunteers 1,400+). The third grade interpretive educational program in operation since 999 with a grant from TPWD has reached over 10,000 children.

Attendance, Revenue, and Economic Impact

The attendance at GRSP is about 142,275 up about 9% over the last two years. The revenue is about \$768,000 up about 50% over the last five years. The economic impact was estimated in February 2005 by the Texas Coalition for Conservation with the following figures: Impact on sales- \$2,378,930, impact on personal income- \$960,336, number of jobs created- 69, sales tax generated- \$11,884.65. These figures were estimated with a park visitation of only 121,707. We have about 20,000 more visits than estimated so the impact figures are significantly higher.

What Can Be Done?!

If you would look at Friends accomplishments elsewhere in this newsletter, it seems quite clear that GRSP/HCSNA has accomplished a great deal with very little support from the Legislature. The park staff has kept this park not only functioning but gaining in attendance, revenue and economic impact for the community. Also elsewhere in the newsletter are opportunities that additional funding could provide to make this the best state park in the system. Don't think that you do not need to act. Just because the recent advisory committee report said that the sporting goods sales tax cap should be removed and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission voted unanimously to endorse this report the success of their recommendations lies with the Governor and the Legislature. Our present governor wants to hear from you concerning funding for the parks. His number is **1 800-252-9600**. If you would call and let him know that our parks are vital to Texas and the "Dedicated Fund" for parks should be as intended, SET APART FOR THE PARKS OF TEXAS and take priority in the next Legislative session and not just election year verbiage. Also it is very important that you contact your State Senator and Representative and let them know your wishes.

Friends of GRSP/HCSNA Accomplishments

Major accomplishments since September 2002 of Friends of Guadalupe River and Honey Creek Inc. :

- Continued to implement and coordinate Saturday morning guided interpretive walks of Honey Creek State Natural Area.
- Continued to implement and coordinate 3rd grade curriculum based outdoor education program for the North East Independent School District from San Antonio.
- Implemented and coordinates Saturday evening interpretive programs in the park's amphitheatre.
- Assisted with development and implementation of tour guide training program for guided Honey Creek State Natural Area walks.
- Implemented and coordinates "Hike-N-Hack" program where volunteers go on interpretive tours and trim trails or remove appropriate invasive vegetation.
- Expanded guided interpretive walks of Honey Creek State Natural Area to include specially requested group tours as guides are available.
- Implemented and organizes annual Halloween "Fright Walk."
- Coordinated Eagle Scout project constructing and replacing a bridge that had been washed out on the Honey Creek State Natural Area walk trail.
- Coordinated Eagle Scout project constructing and installing benches along the Honey Creek State Natural Area trail walk route.
- Landscaped (native plant xeriscape) and maintains "South Island" at park entrance directly in front of the park headquarters.
- Assisted in locating trail heads for future trails and primitive camp sites on the north side of the park.
- Assisted with the development of the IMP for Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek State Natural Area
- Expanded Honey Creek State Natural Area guided interpretive walks to Thursday mornings during the park's peak spring break and summer seasons.

Expanded curriculum based outdoor education program to Comal Independent School District.

- Funded restoration of historic Rust House - leveling and porch repairs (approximately \$16,000)
- Funded purchase and installation of automatic gate at the park entrance (\$6,500).
- Funded material cost for construction for three informational kiosks (\$750).
- Funded purchase and installation of aesthetically appealing outdoor lighting at the park's amphitheatre (\$300 expended; labor valued at \$3,000).
- Funded purchase of eight portable park radios used primarily for safety related and operational communications during Honey Creek State Natural Area tours and programs (\$1,700).
- Provided labor for construction of fence around the Bauer House (labor valued at \$3,000).
- Provided labor for clearing of the road on the park property on the north side of the Guadalupe River to make it passable for vehicles (labor valued at \$3,000).
- Funded material and construction costs for Rust House leveling (\$6,900).
- Funded material costs and provided labor for Honey Creek Trail repairs (\$500).
- Funded purchase of small storage building (\$500).
- Total funding provided for major maintenance and construction projects = \$33,150 plus rust house
- Estimated value of labor provided for major maintenance projects = \$9,000

TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS FOR FY 2006 = 7,540 (estimate)

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR RIVER CLEAN UP

By Tom Anderson

**Friends of Guadalupe River State Park/Honey Creek State Natural Area Participates
in Statewide Program to Clean Texas Waterways**

When looking in and around our local waterways, residents notice beautiful landscapes, lively creatures...and litter. *The Friends of GRSP/HCSNA* hopes to change that as they invite all area residents to join its members in removing litter and debris out of Texas waters as part of the Guadalupe River Cleanup on Sept. 30 from 9-2. Registration will begin at 8am in the park at the day use picnic area. Please bring gloves and wear clothing that can get wet.

Friends of GRSP/HCSNA is requesting volunteers to help improve local water quality, restore natural beauty, and reduce potential threats to human health and wildlife. Litter blocks storm drains, reduces property values and aesthetic appeal, and injures thousands of animals through ingestion or entanglement each year, but with the help of cleanups and great public participation to prevent litter, that can change in our community. After a busy summer at the park and on the river there is a need to restore the beauty of our great natural resource.

The Guadalupe River Cleanup is supported by the Lake and River Cleanup Program, a partnership between Keep Texas Beautiful and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. The program assists community organizations, scout and youth groups, schools, local governments, businesses, and concerned citizens across the state as they host waterway cleanups and environmental education activities. In addition to lakes and rivers, the program supports cleanups of all inland freshwater areas, such as streams, creeks, ponds, and wetlands.

If you would like more information about organizing a cleanup in your area, visit www.ktb.org or call Keep Texas Beautiful at 1-800-CLEAN-TX. For more information on the *Guadalupe River Cleanup*, please call Guadalupe River State Park at **830/438-2656**

Proposed Friends Historical Committee

by Terry Urbanczyk

In April of this year several descendants of the original German settlers of the Honey Creek area presented outstanding information and artifacts. 150 year old hand written letters, old photos and deeds signed by Sam Houston himself provided a unique insight into the recent past of this area. Mr. Adolph Scheel a 96 year old former resident of the community, Mrs. Bernadette Cobb and others are walking history books of our local heritage. However, as the local farms and ranches get quickly swallowed up by the rapid advance of city sprawl, we are losing the character of the hill country as well as the people who helped to tame and build this community along with its history.

The Friends of GRSP/HC see a necessity in finding a permanent place to preserve and protect our local heritage. We would like very much to form a new committee in the Friends group dedicated to that purpose. If you have an interesting serving on this committee and guiding its development, please contact a board member or the Guadalupe River State Park at 438-2656.

We need to act now before these precious resources are lost forever!

Interpretative Walk for the Bulverde Community

by Tom Anderson

I was extremely fortunate to be able to provide a walk at Honey Creek for the community on Wed. the 19th of July. I was told their theme was "Living Water" when I met them at the Rusk House and was able to tie their theme to much of what we interpret on our Sat. walk. The leader, Cynthia, says it best in her email that I requested for the Newsletter. This is not intended to give the guide praise but instead to give the area Honey Creek the praise that it deserves. The following is her email and a picture of the future of our area that was able to enjoy our great treasure.

Bulverde United Methodist Church Guadalupe River Day Camp 2006

Three days to live in God's beautiful outdoors. 4th, 5th, and 6th graders from the community gathered at Guadalupe River State Park for our third Annual Day Camp. Three years ago the Children's Ministry Team at BUMC decided to take our older elementary children out of the church and into God's beautiful world to discover creation. Each year we have grown and each year we have discovered more of the beauty of our very own Guadalupe River State Park. It is a JOY to work with the staff of the park and live in God's beautiful creation for three glorious days. This year our theme was "Living Water"! We celebrate the gift of Tom Anderson! Tom spent Wednesday with the 48 children and 20 adults discovering the beauty of the Honey Creek Nature Center. What an awesome gift he gave to the children! First to see the beautiful area and discover the different fossils, trees and the beautiful spring fed creek. Our special thank to Tom and to his ministry with children. We were blessed to hear of his passion for this area! What a blessing! As he spoke to these children he told them many facts but what we witnessed was his passion for saying YES to God's creation. Being a voice for something that makes the world a better place. A love for children and for their minds to be enlightened to the beauty all around us. Right here in our Guadalupe State Park we have God's Gift of excellence in creation! You must take a visit any Saturday morning at 9:00 a.m. Be ready to be Surprised by God's gifts here in Spring Branch!

Cynthia L. Deaton

Discipleship Pastor, Bulverde United Methodist Church



Halloween at the Park Volunteers Needed

by Terry Urbanczyk

It's that time again to get ready for this year's Halloween at the Park event . Last year we had about **1,000 goblins** and parents attend an old fashioned, quiet, outdoors nighttime walk through the forest trail. With 30 decorated spooky candy stations along the trail, a terrific Ghost Story Teller, hot dogs and refreshments, our visitors had a full evening of fun, safe entertainment. **(No traffic to dodge and car fumes to smell!)**



Some of the wonderful station decorations and candy were provided by several Scout Troops, Smithson Valley High School Girl's Basketball Team and several other clubs, Cordillera Nature Club, and many local families. And, once again HEB donated all the food and refreshments. Thanks to their help the event was a again a great success.

We need help again this year because we expect an even bigger crowd! We are also going to extend the length of the trail through the woods to allow more space between stations for a more "woody", natural experience.

If you or an organization would like to participate in the event, please call Terry Urbanczyk at 830-980-2311 or email at rturban@gvtc.com. Look forward to seeing you there!






Saturday Evening Programs






September 16

Texas Caves (tentative)




Mike Burrell
Mamger of Cave Without a Name



September 23

Bugs and other Creepy Crawlies

Discussion of the importance of invertebrates, especially arthropods, to our environment. There will be many examples of bugs and creepy crawlies to look at



Holly Camero
President, of the Alamo Area chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists,



September 30

Hill Country Mammals

Lots of information and fun things about hill country mammals. Maybe a trunk full of hides, scat, skulls and other fun things to help discuss the various mammals of the Texas hill country







Tom Anderson

October 7

Local Area Archeology




Wilson Mc Kinney




October 14

Groundwater and Flooding

Components of the hydrologic cycle in the context of the Texas Hill country. There will be a focus on groundwater and flooding. The speaker is in charge of hydrologists and technicians collecting and interpreting water data in south Texas and The Texas hill country






George Ozuna, USGS
Chief of the San Antonio Office which has 30 hydrologists and technicians




October 21

San Antonio Astronomical Association Star Night

The San Antonio Astronomical Association invites you to see Saturn and it's spectacular rings through professional grade telescopes. View the Great Orion Nebula, a nursery for infant stars. See the Earth's moon in amazing close-up detail

Members of the San Antonio Astronomical Society,
Coordinated by Don Baker



Membership Renewal

by J.W. Pieper

2007 Membership Dues Are Now Payable

If you have not renewed your Friends of GRSP/Honey Creek membership this year, please do so.

As a reminder, we are a 501(c) (3) organization which means that contributions to the Friends organization are tax deductible. Just mail your check to the official address for the Friends, 3350 Park Road 31, Spring Branch, Texas 78070, or drop it off at Park Headquarters on your next visit.

There are several levels of membership available:

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| Individual | \$10 |
| Family | \$15 |
| Sustaining Member | \$50 |
| Contributing Member | \$100 |
| Life Member | \$1000 |

As you know, this newsletter keeps you current with the activities at the Park, but with the costs of sending it out continuing to increase, the Board of Directors has authorized the cancellation of subscription privileges to the Quarterly Newsletter for all members who are in arrears.

Please remember that your contributions go toward making the Park a better place for all of us to enjoy. Please feel free to let your friends know about the Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek and the Friends organization.

Thank you for your continued support!

Friends of Guadalupe River/Honey Creek, Inc. Membership

(Membership Renewal date is January 1st)

Name(s): _____ Date _____

Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

Email _____ Phone: _____

Membership Type: ___ New Member ___ Renewal ___ Change of Address

Level of Membership: ___ \$5 Education or Youth Organization ___ \$50 Sustaining Member
 ___ \$5 Student (under 18) ___ \$100 Contributing Member
 ___ \$10 Individual (over 18) ___ \$500 Corporate Partner
 ___ \$15 Family ___ \$1000 Life Membership

I would like to help the Friends by volunteering for:

___ Interpretive hikes ___ Outdoor Ed. Programs ___ Trail Maintenance
 ___ Historical Drama ___ Evening Programs ___ South Island Beautification
 ___ Trail Ride Event ___ Fundraising ___ Other _____

Send checks payable to "Friends of GR/HC, Inc. Mail to: 3350 Park Road 31, Spring Branch, TX 78070

**Friends of Guadalupe River
and Honey Creek, Inc.**

3350 Park Road 31
Spring Branch, Texas 78070

We're on the web!
www.honeycreekfriends.com

*The Friends of Guadalupe River and
Honey Creek, Inc. is a non-profit
organization working with Guadalupe
River State Park and Honey Creek
State Natural Area.*

*The "Friends" meet monthly at the
Park. Please join us on the third
Thursday at 7:00 pm.
And bring a friend!*