

SPRING 2008 NEWSLETTER

Friends of Guadalupe River, Honey Creek, Inc.

A non-profit organization

President's Letter

by Nancy Gray

Board of Directors

Welcome from your new president to an exciting year with Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek State Natural Area. I hope to get to know many of you during the year and see you involved in and enjoying the expanded opportunities at our favorite park and natural area. My husband, Bob and I lead the Honey Creek hike every 3rd Saturday of the month; come take a walk with us.

The friends group along with the park is expecting a very interesting year with many opportunities to participate in volunteer work as well as learning opportunities about nature and the area. The park plans to open its expanded area on the north side of the river this spring or early summer. The addition of a full time park interpreter, Craig Hensley, provides us with new chances to learn in workshops and activities. Be sure to check out these in Craig's section of this newsletter. The weekly Saturday night programs at the park amphitheater are another fun opportunity; check that schedule, there are some interesting speakers coming up. If you have a particular area of knowledge and interest, why not consider giving one of the talks yourself? There are numerous, varied ways to help as a volunteer this year, bird monitoring and bird banding, golden-cheek warbler and butterfly counts, amphibian surveys, cultural history activities with our historian, Bryden, trail and park maintenance and others which may be your favorite activity. If you have an idea of something that you would like to do that I haven't mentioned, please contact me or one of the board.

The friends group will have four general meetings this year, one each quarter. The first of these is scheduled for March 25 at 7:00 PM at the amphitheater; see the announcement in this newsletter. I hope to see many of you there. As always, any of you are invited to sit in on board meeting which are held every 3rd Thursday of the month at 6:30 PM at the Rust House in the park. As you can probably tell, one of our main goals this year is to encourage all of you to come support the Friends group with your time as well as your dues. The ability to feel, touch and be with nature and others who enjoy it is a reviving, enriching activity and so much fun! It's going to be an exciting year.



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Park Happenings

by Craig Hensley

With the approach of spring and days of warm weather and sunshine, the Park is already experiencing an increase in visitation. To accommodate our visitors, the Park has been busy throughout the winter with the development of nearly five miles of new trails on the Bauer Unit, that part of the park north of the Guadalupe River. Thanks to the hard work of Park staff and many volunteers, the trails have been laid out and cut. The opening of the trails should occur within the next few months. These trails will provide hikers and horseback riders with new options for enjoying the natural beauty of Guadalupe River State Park.

In addition to the trails, construction of three new parking lots and the expansion of the existing lot in the day-use area is well underway. These lots will provide much-needed additional parking for the many people that pour into the park throughout most of the year.

On the program front, The Friends continue to offer its popular Saturday morning interpretive walks at Honey Creek. And, with the coming of March, the Saturday night program series begins again. Guest speakers will speak on a wide variety of topics during the spring, summer and fall, ranging from monarchs and astronomy to hummingbirds and caves. Add in night hikes and owl prowls, natural history workshops and daytime programs for kids and families and visitors will have a host of opportunities to learn about and enjoy the park and natural area.

On behalf of the park staff, we say "thank you!" to the Friends group for your on-going support in our efforts to make the park and natural area the best it can be. Be sure to come out and enjoy the park this spring!

Honey Creek Trail Maintenance

by Dave Kibler

On Friday, 28 December, 2007, a fine group of Boy Scouts from Troop 285, Coker Methodist Church, San Antonio, completed the necessary maintenance work on the Honey Creek Interpretative Trail. The Scouts, accompanied by a number of Scout leaders and other adult volunteers, spread 20 yards of native bark mulch along areas of the trail susceptible to muddy conditions.

The mulch was provided by the Friends of Guadalupe River State Park, and the Friends provided and served a hot lunch to all the volunteers. Instrumental in the success of the day's activity were Tom Anderson of the Friends group, who cooked and served the lunch, and Rick Laird, Assistant Scoutmaster, Troop 285.



Workshops

by Craig Hensley

Educational Workshops are available for Friends members as well as non-members. Please call the park for more information. All workshops meet at the Interpretive Center unless otherwise stated.

***Workshops have a \$10 event fee
unless you are a member of the Friends group**

Saturday, March 1: Birds of Guadalupe River/Honey
Creek, 8-11 a.m.

Saturday, March 22: Bird Banding Workshop, 8-11 a.m.

Saturday, March 22: Wildflowers of the Hill Country, 1-4 p.m.

Saturday, April 5: Flights of Fancy: Butterflies of the
Hill Country, 1-4 p.m.

Thursday, April 17: Interpretation and Protection of
Cultural and Natural Resources, 9-3

Saturday, April 26: Wildflowers of the
Hill Country, 1-4 p.m.

Saturday, May 17: Flights of Fancy:
Butterflies of the Hill Country, 1-4 p.m.

Thursday, May 22: River Ecology, 9 a.m.-Noon

Saturday, May 24: Wildflowers of the Hill Country, 1-4 p.m.

Trails to the Past

by Bryden Moon

Down by the Old Mill Stream

Milling and Milling at Local Gathering Spots

The pretty pastoral scene below, with water flowing, cascading over a small rock ledge is a wonderful natural location. It is situated on private property less than a half mile from our GRSP boundary on Curry Creek, just a few hundred yards before it "T's" into the Guadalupe River. What a nice place to camp out.

And 150 years ago, visitors came to the area, but they were not here for camping - they did so for reasons that you and I can only imagine today. In 1854, a future landscape architect, crossed into our picture providing us unique insights:

Not far beyond the thick wood of the bottom of the north side, we came upon Currie's Creek, and found an American settler, with some negroes. He is owner of an adjacent sawmill, rented and managed



by a German, who appeared a man of education, and, we learned, was one of the exiles who had retreated to the Guadalupe. At the last freshet, the whole roof of the mill, which is on high ground, as has its power from the creek, was covered by the back-water of the river. The chief wood sawed is cypress, and all lumber finds a ready market.

So, now you know that the visitors to the beautiful site (pictured above), came here not to camp, but because it housed a saw mill. And that future landscape architect, well, the insight is courtesy of Frederick Law Olmstead (who designed Central Park in New York City). He made a trip just outside our park's northeast boundary in 1857 [1853] and described it in his book, A Journey Through Texas, (within a couple of pages titled "Currie's Creek"). That owner of the mill was a fellow by the name of William E. Jones - credited with being the first settler active in the area who owned land that is now part of Guadalupe River State Park. His "educated" German millwright was Edu-ard Q. Kriegner. [Ref to Olmstead, p. 213]

A letter from this era tells us that mills not only provided a community service, but in rural areas, also served as social centers: ***"Often this place looks like a market place with three to five wagons drawn by two to four yoke oxen and driven by a man on horseback. They arrive anytime between 8 and 10 o'clock. Mules and horses come and go constantly....Even after the customers have been attended to they often stay as long as an hour or two for a sociable visit as this is the place where all farmers get together. Visiting in Texas is difficult due to long distances."*** This June 9th 1853 letter passage was lifted from An Immigrant Miller Picks Texas - the translated letters of Hilmar Guenther, detailing his early milling days at Live Oak Mill in the Fredericksburg area (prior to establishing Guenther Mill (now Pioneer Mill) in the King William district of San Antonio).

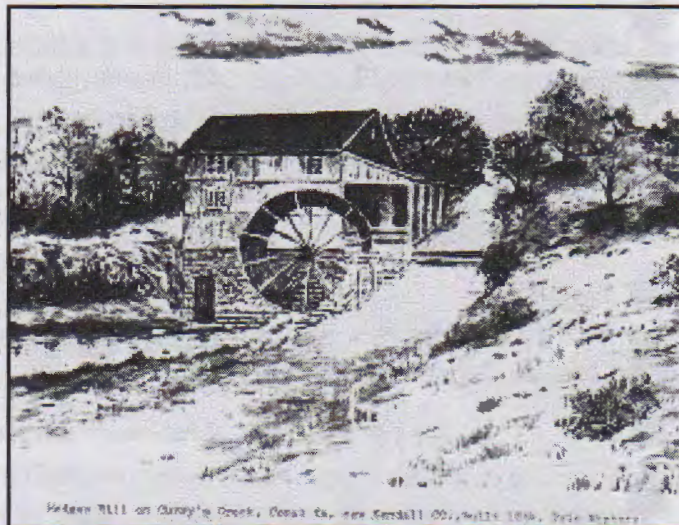
Some mills doubled up on their functions by grinding grain and sawing lumber: ***These mills were combination saw and grist mills which were operated by water. Much Cypress lumber was sawed by these early mills for the use of the early settlers as well as for sale as far as San***

Antonio. The above from John Stribling Moursund in Blanco County History, in which he covers mills in the region. After discussing Carl Hilmar Guenther's Live Oak Creek mill near Fredericksburg, Texas which was established in 1851, and one built in Sisterdale by Christian Rhodius about the same time, he gets back to our neck of the woods: **About 1854, Neill Robison built a mill on Curry's Creek and this mill was later operated by a man named Hodge, thus being known as Hodge's Mill. Robison's Mill or Hodge's Mill was a grist mill located above the falls in Curry's Creek. It was probably this mill which served the needs of most of the early residents in what is now the southern part of Blanco County.** This Robison's/ Hodge's mill was different from the Jones' Mill, and was established about eight miles from the Guadalupe River on Curry Creek toward Kendalia.

From a pioneer's translated letter, written on January 16, 1859, to his relatives in Germany (his homestead just a few miles up the Guadalupe from the park) we learn that the mills, many times, handled one other extremely important function. After protesting to his family that they are sending mail to him at the wrong address, he adds, **Please do not sent the next letter to San Antonio, but rather the address I will list at the end of this letter.....My address is: C. F. Bergmann, Hodges Mill, Blanco County, Texas.**

Since Jones, the Jones' Mill owner, and Kriegner, his millwright, were both actively involved in the area, they along with Robison and Hodge will cross our paths in future articles.

There are more stories to be told!



Hodges Mill on Curry's Creek, Blanco Co., near Kendall Co., built 1854. Photo by Hensley

Migratory Bird Day

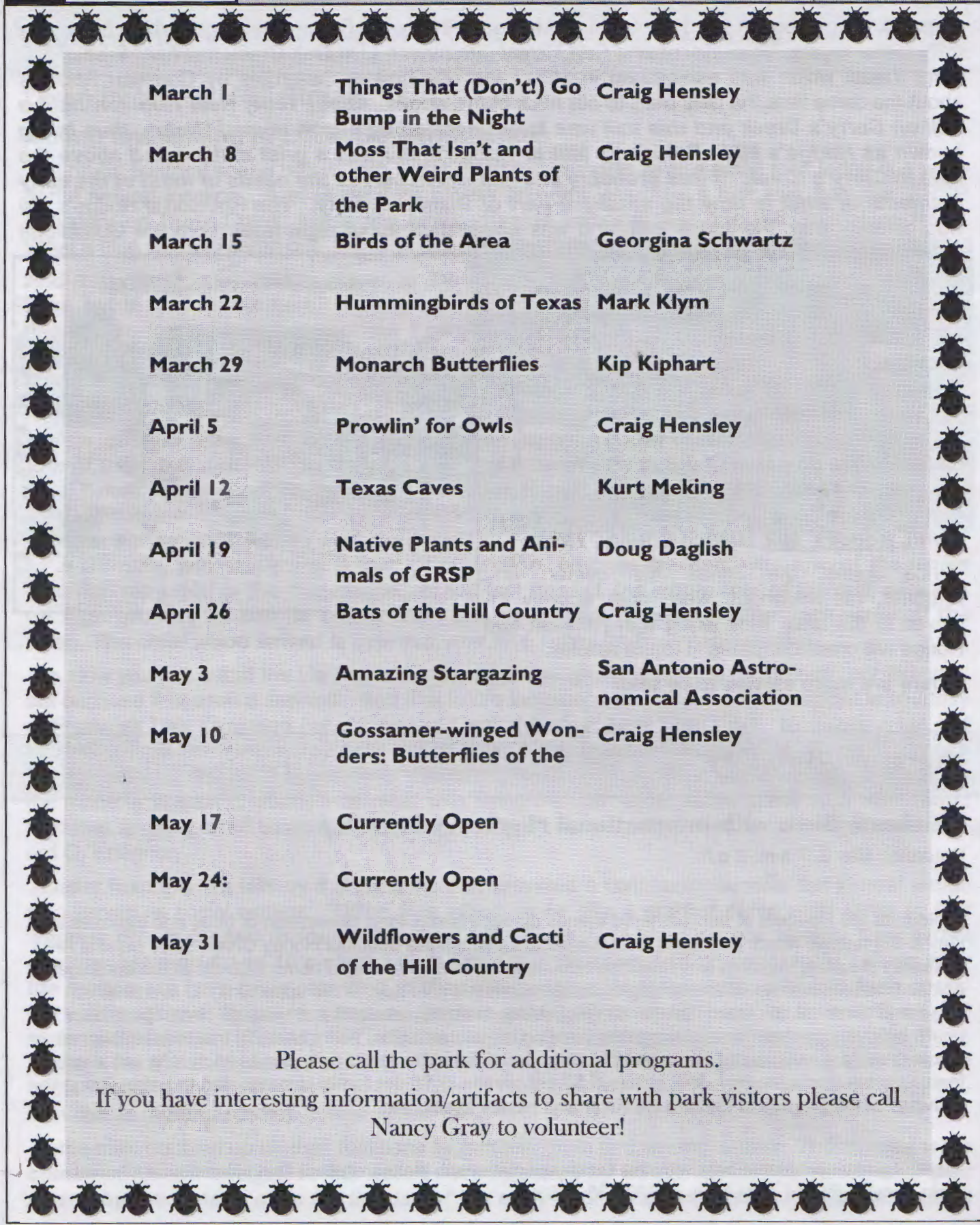
by Craig Hensley

Celebrate Birds with International Migratory Bird Day

Saturday, May 3, 7 a.m.-2 p.m.

Celebrate the wonders of our feathered friends during this day-long celebration of birds and the roles they play in the natural world. Bird hikes will take people through the beautiful Honey Creek State Natural Area in search of spring migrants and breeding birds ranging from orioles and hummingbirds to the endangered golden-cheeked warbler. Bird banding demonstrations will give guests the opportunity to see birds up close and personal and learn how banding is used to better understand and manage bird populations. Learn how you can help birds through the planting of natuescapes, visit a bluebird trail to learn how nest boxes provide a vital habitat component to these beautiful birds. Children's games and crafts will also be featured throughout the day. A donation of \$2 per person or \$5 per family is suggested to help support the activities of the Friends of Guadalupe River and Honey Creek, Inc.

Note: If you would like to help with this family special event, please contact Craig Hensley at craig.hensley@tpwd.state.tx.us or 830.438.7653.



March 1	Things That (Don't!) Go Bump in the Night	Craig Hensley
March 8	Moss That Isn't and other Weird Plants of the Park	Craig Hensley
March 15	Birds of the Area	Georgina Schwartz
March 22	Hummingbirds of Texas	Mark Klym
March 29	Monarch Butterflies	Kip Kiphart
April 5	Prowlin' for Owls	Craig Hensley
April 12	Texas Caves	Kurt Meking
April 19	Native Plants and Animals of GRSP	Doug Daglish
April 26	Bats of the Hill Country	Craig Hensley
May 3	Amazing Stargazing	San Antonio Astronomical Association
May 10	Gossamer-winged Wonders: Butterflies of the	Craig Hensley
May 17	Currently Open	
May 24:	Currently Open	
May 31	Wildflowers and Cacti of the Hill Country	Craig Hensley

Please call the park for additional programs.

If you have interesting information/artifacts to share with park visitors please call Nancy Gray to volunteer!

It's membership renewal time again! For those members who have already sent in your dues for the 2008 season, thank you very much. We have an exciting year ahead with new programs and new people enriching our park community. Your annual membership dues help improve and enhance all of our activities.

Last year, Friends members like you throughout the state were very instrumental in showing our state legislators how much park funding was desperately needed. Through your efforts, new funding policies have been adopted and our beautiful parks will soon be returning to the jewels they once were.

With all this change and improvement happening rapidly it is imperative that interested citizens remain informed and in touch. Membership in the Friends of Guadalupe River and Honey Creek, Inc. will help you do just that. This year we are implementing quarterly general meetings with the primary goal of keeping members updated on upcoming construction projects, community events, river based activities and educational opportunities for kids and adults. We are also working to discover and develop the historic and cultural attributes of the Honey Creek and Spring Branch areas that have so strongly influenced our community today.

Networking is an important part of the general meetings; it's amazing who you will see here supporting our park. People from all walks of life have valuable experience and information that benefit us all and we are all enriched as a result of the interaction.

Volunteer opportunities abound here as well. If you or an organization would like to participate in a volunteer service oriented activity, this is the place to do it! Attending the quarterly meetings will allow members to learn about upcoming activities and have input in planning new events.

We look forward to your membership renewal and to seeing you here March 25th.

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/Honey Creek, Inc. is a 501(c)3 organization. All donations are tax deductible.

**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 second
Thursday at 7:00 pm.*

And bring a friend!