



WINTER 2009 NEWSLETTER

Friends of Guadalupe River, Honey Creek, Inc.

A non-profit organization

President's Letter

by Nancy Gray

Board of Directors

It's Been Great!

My time as president of the Friends Group is ending at the end of December 2009. It has been a wonderful experience and I have had the privilege of working with a great group of people on the board, the park staff and in the membership. I may get to write this letter but the entire group deserves the credit for two years packed with activity, change and accomplishments.

Tom Anderson will return to the presidency. All of you who know Tom know of his love for the park and many years of excellent service. We will be in very capable hands. All of the board members are continuing and we have one new member although some roles have changed. I will continue to be on the board and will head up Saturday Night Programs and the Honey Creek Hikes.

We were really sorry to see our park interpreter, Craig Hensley, make a decision to change his career and leave the park in August. Craig made many contributions to the park and Honey Creek. We wish him all the best. The park staff has been interviewing candidates for the position and we all hope to have someone by the first of 2010.

The Discovery Center at the park, staffed by wonderful volunteers, is now open! There will be another training session for Discovery Center volunteers on December 6th from 1:00-4:00PM at the Discovery Center. We hope to have the center open every weekend and we need enough volunteers for this to be a fun place to volunteer and not a chore for anyone. So come on out and become a volunteer at this great new asset.

We had another wonderful Halloween in the Park this year. We had more volunteers than ever before. The haunted trail looked wonderful and everyone had a good time. Our new scheme with the Friends Group handling the front gate went very smoothly and the traffic flow was much better than last year. Halloween continues to be Spook-tacular!

Many new people have gotten more active in the past two years as Honey Creek guides, Discovery Center volunteers or in other ways. The board and the park staff really appreciate all of you. The Friends still have so many exciting ideas for ways to help our favorite park. All that is needed to get a lot of them moving is some more Friends members that are active in helping. This is my last plea as president. Come out and help. You will find it rewarding and fun. Call one of the board members and find something fun to do.

Again, it has been a blessing to me to know and work with many of you during the last two years.

Nancy Gray

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Discovery Center Opens

by Tom Anderson

The Discovery Center opened on November 7th and 91 park visitors came in during the first weekend to enjoy the center with the theme “Take Another Look”. Texas Parks and Wildlife is making a real effort to have families discover the outdoors. From the children’s entrance, the exhibits, and the Activity Boxes the Discovery Center did exactly what the state park system hoped it would. As soon as you enter everything you see (“Discover”) leads you back out to nature to “Take Another Look”.



All of the exhibits are site specific so that visitors have a chance to see in Guadalupe River State Park what they have learned in the center. As you arrive there is a book that has visitors read clues about critters that are at the park and then guess what the critter is before turning the page to reveal the name and picture of that animal. Inside visitors are greeted by volunteers who make them feel at ease while looking at the exhibits and answering their questions. It isn't long before parents get involved helping their children learn from the exhibits. Labeled Activity Boxes arouse curiosity about their contents and are soon put on the counter to explore all that is inside. Boxes contain such things as hand puppets, skeletons, magnifiers, puzzles, insect stages, turtle shells, animal tracks and many more wonders of nature.

If the first month is any indication of this popular addition to our great park soon everyone from the area will be coming to the Discovery Center. We can always use additional volunteers and if you would like to see how you can become involved email Tom Anderson tanderson46@satx.rr.com. The first month 108 volunteer hours were logged. See pictures in this issue of the first visitors to enjoy the Discovery Center. Beginning in January backpacks loaded with field guides, binoculars, magnifiers, and other neat things can be checked out by parents for the family to borrow while at the park..



Park Happenings

by Scott Taylor Assistant Park Manager

The Park's new Discovery Center is currently running smoothly thanks to the help of all of our volunteers and especially our Friends Group; they have been our saving grace in helping us get the center open to the public. On behalf of the entire park staff I say thank you to all. There are still a few minor details that need to be ironed out such as the Discovery Backpacks and a few other minor details but overall things are really clicking. If you have not had a chance to see the Discovery center I encourage you to come on by and check it out.

In other news, the park has been conducting a few of our public hunts with good success. We started in October with two weeks of archery hunts on the Bauer unit (North Side) and have recently concluded two weeks of muzzleloader hunts on the Bauer unit as well. There are four additional weeks of hunting scheduled, two weeks in December and two weeks in January both here in the park and on Honey Creek State Natural Area. These hunts are general hunts meaning traditional center fire rifles will be used and therefore both Honey Creek and The Park will be closed to everyone except the hunters. The specific dates of the closures are as follows.

Monday, Dec. 7 through Noon on Friday, Dec. 11, 2009

Monday, Dec. 14 through Noon on Friday, Dec. 18, 2009

Monday, Jan. 4 through Noon on Friday, Jan. 8, 2010

Monday, Jan. 11 through Noon on Friday, Jan. 15, 2010

In addition to these hunts we have one youth only hunt scheduled for the weekend of **Saturday, December 12th and Sunday, Dec 13th, 2009 (Honey Creek Only)**.

The Park continues to move forward with our public use plan for the Bauer Unit (North Side). We found a break in the midst of the drought this summer long enough to allow us to burn the accumulated brush from having cleared the parking area. We have been in consultation with TxDot for recommendations on how best to prepare the area that will be utilized for parking. We are now in a holding pattern until we can get the site area prepped for our parking material. As far as the trails go, we are making good progress and should have no problem having these open when we open the Bauer Unit to the public.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those of you that are members of our Friends Group. I feel the recent months have been a good example of the tremendous benefit that each of you provides to the park both in service and in partnership. This Park certainly would not be where it is today without people like you, and for that I say thank you. I would like to encourage all members to get active, come out and experience all that the park has to offer, I know the Friends Group is always looking for help in multiple areas and would greatly appreciate any time you could give to help some of the worthy causes they/we have going. For those who are not members of the Friends Group and would like to learn more please feel free to call the park for more information, we would be glad to help.

Trails to the Past

by Bryden Moon

Establishing Heritage on the Guadalupe

A few editions back we introduced a German immigrant, Mr. Christian Friedrich Bergmann, who with his wife and three boys had left Germany in early August 1854, and after an odyssey of over 3 months (seven weeks across the Atlantic), arrived in San Antonio on November 18, 1854. The family had made it safely, despite an experience that was described as **“difficult and hard.”** In San Antonio what the family found was a rough and tumble town: **“because here the life of a man is worth not more than the life of a dog.”**

In letters written from San Antonio to his family in Ebersbach, Germany, in 1856 & 1857 you get glimpses of his desire for a new start; you can almost “hear the wheels turning” as he sorts out what he wants to do and where he wants to do it. It is easy to see that two factors played a part in his career move...the bad conditions in San Antonio and the lure of the peaceful and less chaotic environment that awaits the life of a farmer. **“Once I am further away from the city it will be easier...”** Then: **“The calmest and best life in Texas is that of farmer...”** And finally: **“...so I have decided to buy a farm.”** Also embedded in the letters is a plea for financial support to buy land: **“So I ask you again to most urgently send me the money so that I can buy a farm, because my budget does not yet allow me to do so – it takes a lot of money to get a farm going.”** **“Now dear father, I have decided seriously to buy land, even if I have to pay a little extra for each acre, I just want to have my own so that I have wood and water, and don’t get near the Indian’s land...”**

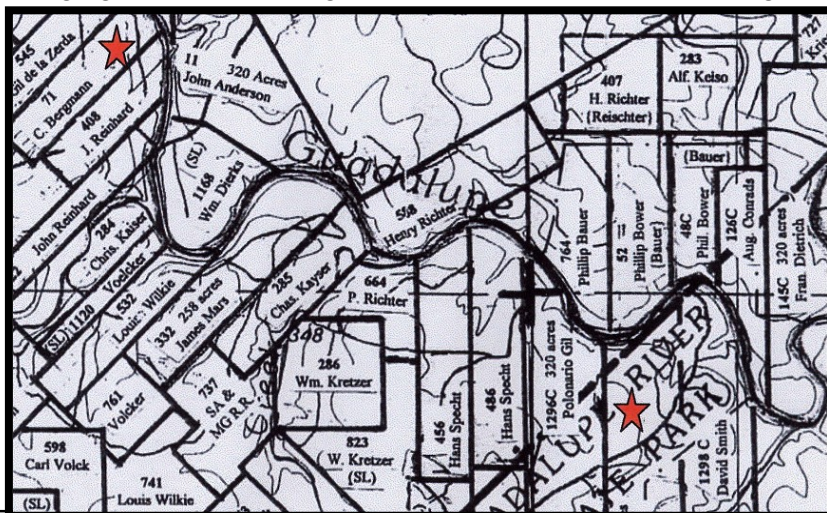
On June 21, 1857, he writes from San Antonio, **“I have 320 acres of land in Comal County at the Guadalupe** (his land is in eastern Kendall County - established in 1862 – see stars which show the position up-river from GRSP) **...which cost me \$200. I wanted to move in the spring, but great dryness caused us the delay – it hadn’t rained much between mid September and mid May; a bit of rain fell on Easter evening, but only a little and mixed with hail, followed by such a cold that we had quite a bit of ice on the roads, which had never happened before.”** (Doesn’t this sound like our weather – some things never change.) **“The corn already froze twice...”** **“Come fall I want to move out there.”** To his sister he noted that **“I will move to my land in December because it is and remains the best in Texas.”** Just think, 150 years ago this man was sitting in San Antonio, excited to be moving into land right out here by the Guadalupe River.

Like most of the settlers in our region of Texas, the quality of land, Mr. Bergmann had obtained would play a big part in his success or failure. Unlike today, his selection transcended a place to put his home, since the water, stone, and trees were viewed as resources for constructing his house and contributed to a way of making a living in an agrarian society. These pioneers needed everything the land could provide. Just as today, river property was especially valued 150 years ago. These pioneers needed water and the “low-hanging fruit” was having access to a river, creek or spring water. While a hand-dug well was a possibility, it was accomplished with great difficulty.

Think about hand digging a well on your land.

Mr. Bergmann had been on his land for over a year when he writes home on January 16, 1859:

“I have 320 acres of land of which some 20 to 21 acres are fenced: I have built a stone fence that is about 700 feet in length, the remainder is of wood. The land is situated at a large river, the Guadalupe, as it is called, and I have therefore very good water and when time, good fishing....” Those



rock walls are still standing today.

This is not the last time that Christian Bergmann's words will bridge the past. The Bergmann's are truly unique to the area and we are blessed that they have left behind a heritage of vivid documentation (available through the generosity of Mr. A. J. Bergmann of Comfort, Texas).

There are more stories to be told!

Mr. A. J. Bergmann of Comfort, TX provided some of the resource materials.



4th Homesteader Homecoming

Please mark your calendar - the 4th Homesteader Homecoming is scheduled for the afternoon of

Halloween at the Park 2009

by Tom Anderson



The 6th annual Halloween Event on Sunday October at the park was a Big Success. We had over 393 adults and 422 children attend. We also had 301 volunteers assist in making it great.

The Trick or Treat Trail was decorated better than ever. We had 30 stations giving out treats to the kids.



Some stations had games for the children to play. We had the addition of a fortune teller this year. We again had a storyteller at the amphitheater telling Halloween ghost stories. The park staff assisted with traffic control both vehicle and pedestrian. Mark Abolafia-Rosenzweig, park manager, again dressed as the clown.





The entire park staff helped all day long providing the Friends with assistance. Nancy Gray, Friends President, served as this year's chairman and did an outstanding job of making sure everything ran smoothly. Hot Dogs, chips, and punch were handed out at the end of the trail. A different method of allowing people to enter the park this year greatly improved the flow of traffic. We are looking forward to another great event next Oct. Look for pictures of this event on the Friends website.

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<http://www.honeycreekfriends.com>.



Volunteer Opportunities

by Tom Anderson

Guadalupe River State Park has opened a Discovery Center at the park. It is housed in the newly renovated Interpretative Center which is next to the park amphitheater. Tara Tucker, regional interpretative specialist, will be doing the training on Dec. 6th from 1-4 pm at the Discovery Center. This 3 hour period will give volunteers an overview of the exhibits and to get you more familiar with them so you are prepared to guide the visitors when they come to the Center. Even more important will be the activity boxes and backpacks. This Center is focused towards children (and thus, their parents) to get them engaged in the outdoors – there will be several activity boxes with furs, skulls, books, etc. These boxes will give visitors a hands-on experience with natural resources found at the park. So we will need volunteers to guide visitors in their exploration of the boxes and activities. Backpacks will be available for visitors to “check out” for further exploration outside. The packs will have binoculars, field guides, magnifying glasses, etc. During the volunteer orientation, Tara will orient you to the activity boxes and their contents in addition to giving an overview to the building's exhibits. Lastly, she will talk a little about customer service and how to convey these resources (interpretation) to the public. So, in summary, the training will encompass:

- 1) Orientation to Discovery Center exhibits
- 2) Orientation to activity boxes and backpacks
- 3) Customer service and interpretation overview

This may not take the entire 3 hours, it may only take 2, but she wants to leave plenty of time for questions and exploration.

Because the park is in the process of filling the Interpretative position The Friends of Guadalupe River State Park/Honey Creek State Natural Area will be assisting Tara in filling volunteer time slots so we can have this exciting addition to the park open as soon as possible. Upon completion of the training the Friends would appreciate you signing up for a 2 hour time slot or more. At the present we have the center open on Saturdays and Sundays. The center would be open from 9-5 each of these days. If enough people volunteer we could have a rotating system that would only require someone to volunteer once or twice a month. Once you see this exciting “hands on” center I believe you will also realize what a contribution this is to the park and what a great way to volunteer. If you are able to attend this training please contact Tom Anderson (210-241-1916) tanderson46@satx.rr.com . If you are unable to attend this session but are interested in attending a training session in the near future please contact Tom and let him know so he can have your contact information and notify you of upcoming trainings.

Guadalupe River Clean-up

by Dave Kibler

In spite of very threatening weather on Saturday 3 October 2009, a group of sixty-one eager volunteers spent 220 total hours collecting trash and debris from the north and south banks of the river within the park boundaries. Since water levels were low, access to most of the banks was expedited. In addition to the work at the river, a group of Boy Scouts and adult leaders were sent to spread mulch on a section of the Honey Creek Natural Area trail. All participants then enjoyed a sumptuous lunch of grilled sausage, tortillas, chips, beans, and desserts, prepared by the adult leaders of Boy Scout Troop 285. The Friends of Guadalupe River State Park/Honey Creek State Natural Area provided funds for the lunch. And fortunately, the torrential rains which fell throughout the afternoon held off just long enough to actually complete the project.

This event is held twice each year, usually in October and April, under the auspices of the "Keep Texas Beautiful" division of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. Most of the volunteers have been Scouts and adults from Troop 285 of San Antonio, which had adopted this project as its primary troop service endeavor for the past four years. This year volunteers from the Ohio State University Alumni Association of San Antonio were also involved. Volunteers from other groups are always welcome.



Thanks Guys!

The next cleanup event is scheduled for
17 April 2010.

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!