



## WINTER 2010 NEWSLETTER

# Friends of Guadalupe River, Honey Creek, Inc.

A non-profit organization

## Farewell to a Great Friend

by **Scott Taylor, Park Superintendent**

## Board of Directors

It is with great appreciation that I write to inform you that Joan Nitschke is retiring from her esteemed career with Guadalupe River State Park. I have only been at Guadalupe River State Park a short while but words cannot tell how much I have learned from Joan. Her work ethic is something that one only reads about in books about being a better employee. Her attitude is always “can do” even when common sense is screaming “can’t do” or better yet “how to???” She has truly been a pleasure to work along side and I am sure that Mark and Duncan can both attest to this as well. I would love to go into detail about Joan’s career while at the park but in reality I know very little about her time here, after all when she started working here I was only 9 years old. I did ask Joan to provide us with a short timeline of her career while here at the park; this is what Joan had to say.

*“April 1988 I drove by the park one afternoon asking about job openings and started the next week as a clerk. Entrance Fees were \$2 per car! All camping permits were done by hand - in triplicate with messy carbon paper. We kept our own reservation system by scribbling the customer’s initials in an archaic notebook, with lots of erasures and a clever card system to keep track of where the campers were. It was not so clever when they changed sites and we forgot to move the card.”*

*“The park had opened 5 years before (1983) so we had not been discovered yet. It was truly a friendly, family park because we knew just about every visitor. Duncan Muckelroy was the park manager, Deirdre Hisler was a ranger and Penny Solis did all the Saturday morning hikes at Honey Creek. Bill Beach was one of the earliest visitors and brought his family on many camping trips. I got to lead Honey Creek hikes for school groups and special tours. Jobs were not as specialized and in the off season I was cleaning bathrooms, planting and watering rye seed on tent pads and arriving at 5 a.m. to escort hunters to their blinds. “High tech” consisted of 1 electric typewriter, and even small purchases had to be done by Purchase Orders (with 5 carbon copies, of course). If we needed copies, I went to the office supply store in Boerne. In my spare time, I took every opportunity to learn plants and trees.”*

*“In the early 90’s, we began to transition to the modern world when Andy Sansom became Executive Director of TPWD. With a precarious funding situation from the legislature, parks were mandated to operate as a business and goals were set with the “Entrepreneurial Business System (EBS). Many programs were initiated to increase visitation and revenue and I was involved in the early establishment of the Park Host program, the Friends Group, scheduling interpretive programs and selling a few products. Those products increased and we cleaned out the amphitheater building (which was used for storing toilet paper) and opened the park store.”*

*“The Park Store became my full time job and we offered a fun variety of t-shirts, toys, books, camping items, and even Promised Land Dairy delivered ice cream each*

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week. If we had a program on bats on Saturday night, the store stayed open to sell bat t-shirts and books. TPWD developed a full line of products which we also sold. That venture came to an abrupt halt with the 500 year flood of 1998. Rising over 60 feet, the river flooded the day use restrooms, continued over the parking lot and flooded the amphitheater with over 5 feet of water. We opened the doors to display cabinets, computers, file cabinets and all the products were covered in mud.”

“Deirdre was given the special assignment of going to Government Canyon SNA to help get it established from the ground up. I went to the park headquarters to “help out” and somehow brought us into the computer age. We even got email addresses; registered campers with a new computer system called “Park Office” and managed to make it through Y2K. Mark Abolafia-Rosenzweig became our manager and we got even busier (and had a lot of fun along the way). He and Bill led us into TxParks and now Scott gets to carry it into the future.”

“It’s great to look back upon the fond memories – but it is also delightful to be able to turn the park over to the next generation.”

I hope you will all join me in wishing Joan the best as she heads out on her next adventure.  
**Thank you Joan., you will be missed!**

## President’s Letter

by Tom Anderson

I am not quite ready to leave 2010 as it has been a big year for the Friends and the park. For instance The Discovery Center has been open one year this month even though the grand opening was in April. It is a huge success and now we need to have a training session in order to keep it open for quests all weekend. We have a Wildlife Viewing Area that was built as an Eagle Scout Project and added a board member Bruce Jones to assist us in making the viewing area even better. We had a very successful Homesteader Day at Saint Joseph’s Catholic Church thanks to Bryden Moon’s hard work in making this a Friends priority. We have continued to provide Honey Creek Walks on Saturday mornings as well as special requests. Our Saturday evening programs began in April and ran through October. Both of the above programs have been coordinated by Nancy Gray and I appreciate her work with these. October 24<sup>th</sup> we had our eighth very successful Halloween Event coordinated by Holly Camero (Article in Newsletter). Holly also coordinates the third grade environmental program titled “A Day of Discovery” each March and October. This program has been operating since 1999. Wilt Shaw is heading up our landscaping project at the Rust House. Look for an article in this Newsletter. This project will carry over into 2011 as will our making the Rust House inside a Cultural and Historical Center for the park and will continue to be a focus of the Friends. We have continued our relationship with “Make Texas Beautiful” by having Boy Scout river clean-ups coordinated by Dave Kibler. We also said good-bye to Mark and Joan. These park employees will be missed by us all.

2011 will bring new and finishing up projects for the park and Friends. I would hope that we can continue all of the above programs. We would like to see a completed Wildlife Viewing Area as well as beautiful landscaped Rust House. The Rust House becoming the Historical and Cultural Center of the park which may be an ongoing project as money and time permits. The Friends will continue to push for a covered pavilion that we believe would be a real asset to the park. With a completed Wildlife Viewing Area I would hope we can increase our interpretation in that area. As always The Friends are proud of what we have accomplished, but are never satisfied because we know more can be done. If any of the above projects interest you contact me and I will make sure you are connected with the chairman in charge.

## Halloween at the Park

by Holly Camero



The 7<sup>th</sup> annual Halloween at the Park event was once again a great success. We had a turnout of 358 kids and 310 adults. Helping put this all together was the help of over 250 volunteers! Besides the folks who decorated and manned the over 30 candy stations there were many people responsible for making and giving out the refreshments along with decorating the amphitheater area.

Park personnel helped throughout the day with assisting the Friends where ever needed and helping control vehicle and pedestrian traffic. That, along with the new method of entering the park by the carload, really kept everything moving smoothly.

We were happy to have Mark Abolafia- Rosensweig the former Park Manager, come out dressed in his traditional clown suite, to greet the trick or treaters before they entered the trail. The Storyteller was also there entertaining everyone with Halloween ghost stories. The trail was awesome and after dark transformed into a delightfully creepy experience!

It was wonderful to have many return station sponsors along with our corporate sponsors and we welcome and are thankful for the new folks who came out to help. Throughout the years HEB has supported us with food donations, along with Randy Ehmén who has donated the extra candy for the Event. Broadway Bank helped out with sponsoring stations and guidance around the trail corner. The Urbanzick Family was there helping with the food area set up along with taking a station as they have every year. And this year Starbucks of Bulverde donated several bags of candy. We were helped by so many wonderful

organizations and individuals that sponsored candy stations: Cordillera Nature Club did an incredible job by manning over 6 stations, All Around Cleaning, Girl Scout group

1136, Kappa Omega #5511, Pat & Mike Hansen, Smithson Valley FFA, Camero & Friends Group manned by the Rodriguez and Cou-teau families, Park hosts the. Klosés, Kristin & Josh Aljoe, Tara Anderson, Chapel Hill Methodist Church and the Bulverde 4-H. We thank everyone for this year and look forward to another amazing event next October. Keep in mind next year we will be having Halloween in the Park the day before Halloween, Sunday, October 30<sup>th</sup>!





## Trails to the Past

by Bryden Moon

### Road Blocks to Filling the Past's Void No Welcome Mat

Last time out, the land canvass of what became the Hill Country was described as unpainted. Our raw land was a blank slate waiting to be settled. The random presence of Native-Americans throughout our region was fingered as the prime reason that it stayed unpopulated, until the Verein-engineered German immigration in the 1840s. We'll continue to explore that theme - the intractable deterrents to settlement - in this outing and in our next edition.

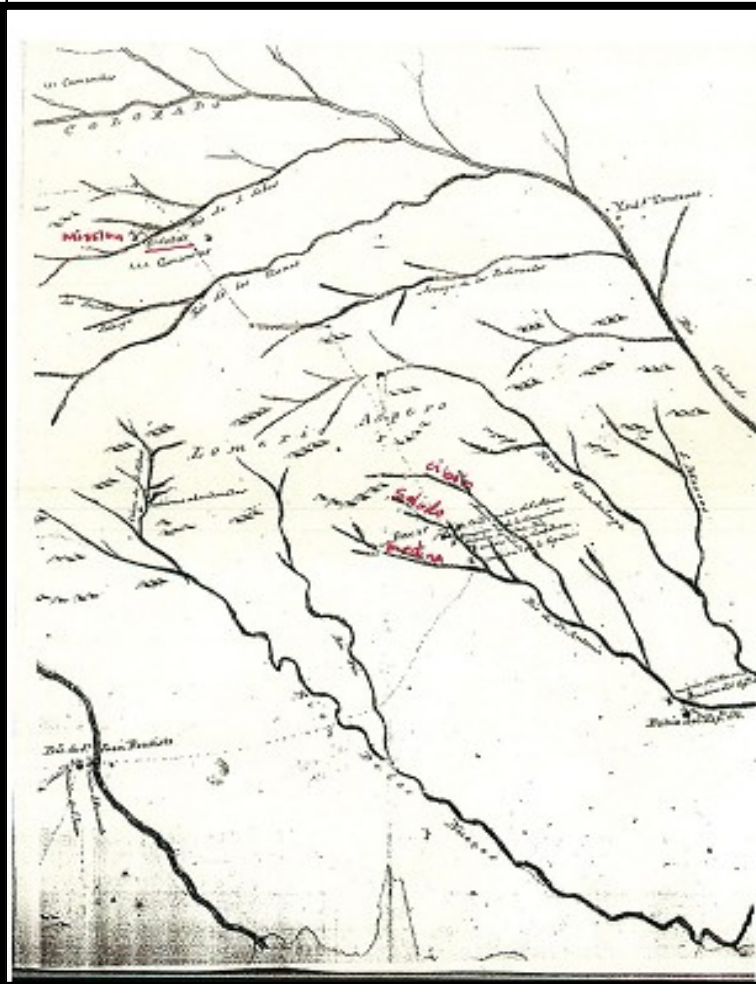
The presence of Apache and Comanche were without a doubt the reason this 1815 Spanish map is absent Hill Country missions, presidios, and villas. The following Spanish-colonial era eye-witness account describes a Spanish voyager's concern:

***In 1722, when traveling near the border of present Hayes and Guadalupe Counties and into what is now Travis County with the Aguayo expedition, San Antonio de la Peña wrote: "The Apaches live in the Lomería Grande, a very broken country about a league to the north...Travel in this country was dangerous, for it borders on the Lomería Grande inhabited by warlike Apaches." For the early Spanish the Hill Country was clearly a place of dread to be avoided.***

The above passage with its embedded quote is courtesy of Del Weniger's **The Explorer's Texas – the Land and Waters**, (published in 1984). In his Hill Country chapter, he utilizes multiple eye-witness narratives to describe the region and laments that since traveling through, or even near, Native-American territory was to be avoided, he was limited in his collection efforts: ***When the great Spanish explorations***

***were made and the accounts of them, which constitute the bulk of the contemporary material on the 18<sup>th</sup> century Texas' natural history were written, most of these Spanish explorers very pointedly avoided the Hill Country, leaving us in the dark about this section*** (the Hill country).

And while the Spanish generally avoided this region, it does not mean that they did not try to colonize it. There were attempts by the Spanish to found missions and even a presidio and a villa in different parts of the Hill Country and its fringes, however as you will learn, the outcome was always the same.



The closest mission was just outside of New Braunfels and it was established in 1756. From Franciscan Friar Marion Habig's **Spanish Texas Pilgrimage** - ...*the so-called Guadalupe Mission of 1756 – 1758 on the Guadalupe River at Landa Springs...it was not a new mission but the third site of the San Francisco Xavier ...it was abandoned in March 1758, as a result of...the hostility of the northern tribes, who were now in league with the Comanches.*

Up the road in the San Marcos area there were temporary missions and even a villa. Father Habig recounts, ***Near the present San Marcos, a few miles north of the confluence of the San Marcos and Guadalupe Rivers, there was a Spanish villa for four years, 1808 – 1812. The settlers had to abandon the villa because of the repeated attacks of the Comanches.***

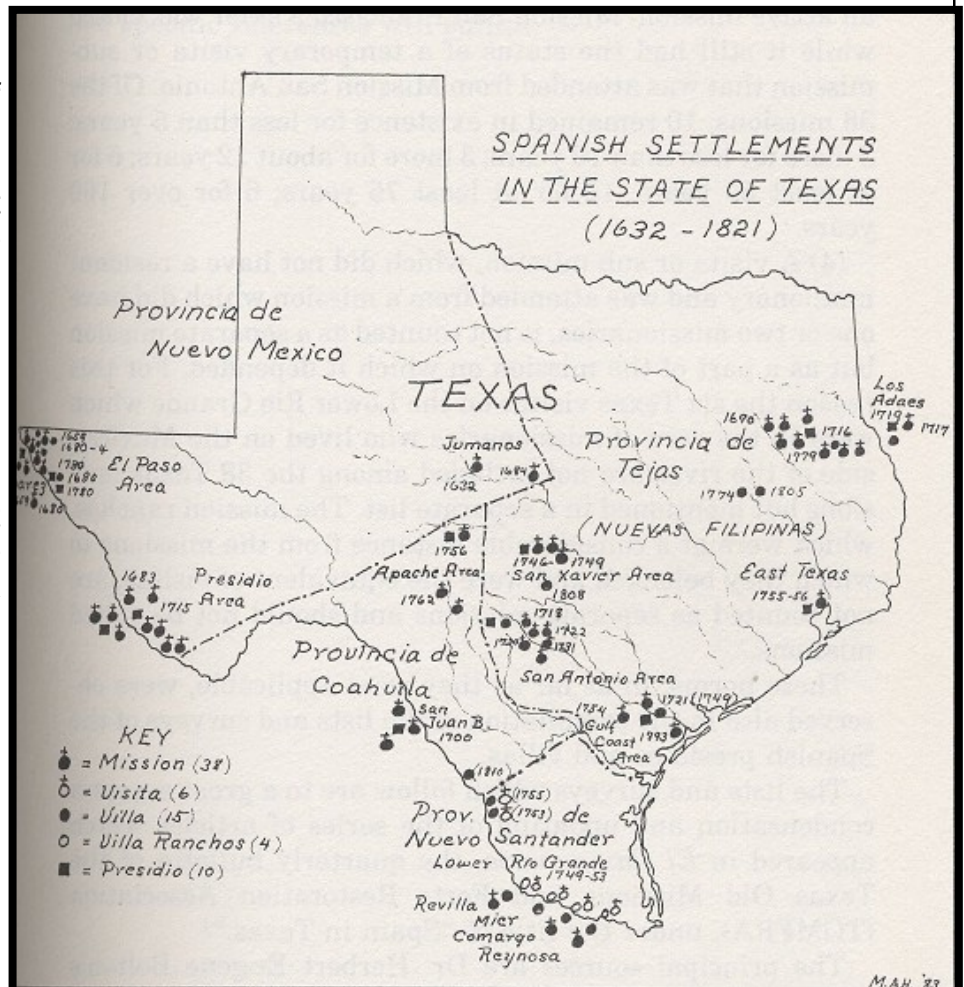
The Spanish founding of the Presidio (fort) of San Luis de la Amarillas in the Menard area led to an only slightly better legacy in longevity, not necessarily effectiveness. Founded in 1757, it remained until 1768. The presidio is mentioned by Father Habig:

***The Presidio of San Luis or San Saba, was established near Menard, on the north bank of the San Saba River, about three miles west of the Mission Santa Cruz... which was founded for Apache Indians, was destroyed by the Comanches and other northern tribes in 1758; but the Presidio remained...***

And that is it. The entire body of Spanish-colonial legacy in the Hill Country is represented by these three fleeting outposts - their short tenure and ultimate demise courtesy of hostile Native-Americans. Their continued presence insured the blank land canvass that was available for German settlement in the 1840s.

Next edition: Del Weniger's quest to answer an often-asked question unearths a different roadblock theory, one that is truly unique to the Hill Country.

**There are more stories to be told!**







## Rust House

by Wilt Shaw

### Landscape Project Underway!

We finally found a window of opportunity to work on the first phase of landscaping at the Rust House. On November 10, 2010, Several folks from the Friend group and two volunteers from the Alamo Area Master Naturalist as well as a park ranger with a Bobcat built two planting beds in the front (historic back yard) using 10 cubic yards of Hill Country soil and limestone quarried from the north side of the river. This workday marks the beginning of what is planned to be a fantastic native plant garden surrounding the house and a layout of benches on the east side to accommodate assembly of Saturday morning hikers. Also planned is a new pathway extending from the bench area to the Honey Creek State Natural Area entry gate.

Thanks are extended to the volunteers who worked diligently to accomplish this crucial first step. They are: Alamo Area Master Naturalists Linda Gindler and John Prentiss; Friends Members Tom Anderson, Bryden Moon, Kay Moon, Dave Kibler, Chris Menzel and Wilt Shaw; and from Guadalupe River State Park and Texas Parks and Wildlife, Sean Roberts whose mastery of a Bobcat is unprecedented, making our task easy to accomplish. More progress is anticipated this year with hopes of project completion sometime in 2011. Stay tuned!





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

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We're on the web!  
[www.honeycreekfriends.com](http://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!*