



Spring 2011 NEWSLETTER

Friends of Guadalupe River, Honey Creek, Inc.

A non-profit organization

President's Letter

by Tom Anderson

Board of Directors

Please come to the park soon and see the new entrance sign. It has been completely redesigned and it is much improved. If first impressions are lasting impressions then visitors will surely be impressed and realize what a great park this is from the moment they come the gate. The recent park logo was used to change the first view park visitors will have.

A big **THANK YOU** goes to all who assisted in this transformation. They consisted of Park Hosts and park rangers. The following park hosts assisted: Paul and Sharon Klose, Richard O'Donnell, and Jerry Wesenick. The hosts continue to provide outstanding service to the park. Several come back year after year and have made positive improvements at our park. Many times what they do goes unnoticed but is vital for the park to function, such as: cleaning out grills and fire pits, mowing, cleaning restrooms, repairing plumbing and electricity, picking up litter, directing traffic, painting and helping with special events. This list is not everything they do for the park but it gives you an idea of how vital they are.

The park rangers also worked to make this project possible. The following rangers assisted: Tyson Brussels, Terre Davila, Greg Nash, Craig Bocan, Sean Rogers, and Clay Boone. Many of these park employees may also go unnoticed but park visitors appreciate having running water and working electricity, clean campsites, toilets and restrooms clean and a safe environment in which to enjoy the outdoors. These rangers also help make the hunting program possible.

The Friends Board recently approved monies to complete this project. The money will be used to purchase an improved landscaping plan in front of the sign. Take a moment on your next trip to the park to view this park improvement.

President

Tom Anderson
tanderson46@atx.rr.com

Vice Pres./Maintenance

Dave Kibler
djki@gvtc.com

Secretary

Bob Gray
RGrayTX@gmail.com

Treasurer

J.W. Pieper
jwp1@gvtc.com

Director/Newsletter

Terry Urbanczyk
rturban5@gmail.com

Director/Sat. Programs/Hikes

Nancy Gray
grayabbott@aol.com

Director /Education

Holly Camero
chcamero@aol.com

Director/Historian

Bryden Moon
Bemoonjr@aol.com

Director/Webmaster

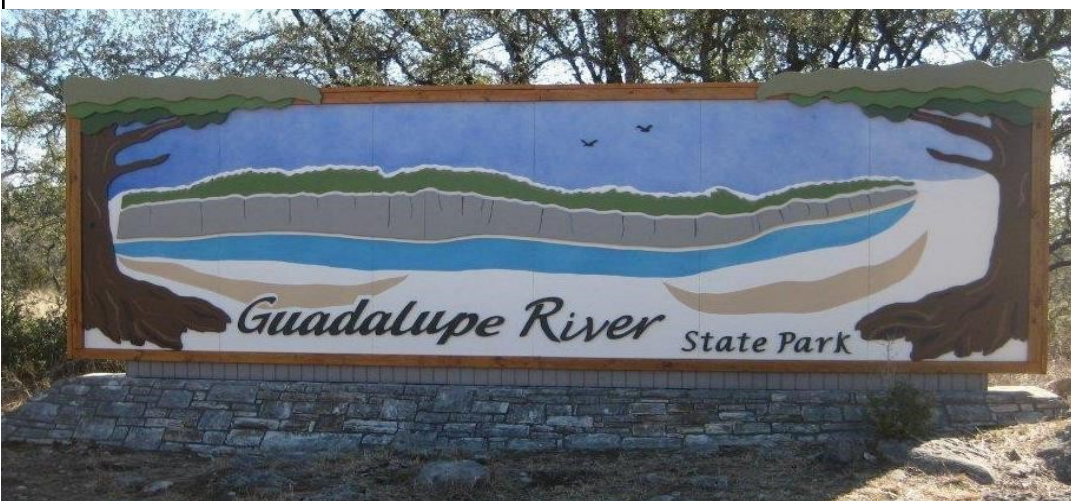
Dan Freeman
alyeskia@yahoo.com

Director Wildlife Viewing

Bruce Jones
clplbg@gvtc.com

Director at Large

Wilt Shaw
wshawjr888@aol.com



Park Happenings

by Chris Dooley

For a “slow season,” this winter has been anything but. True, we might not have had the vast crowds so typical of the summertime, but we at the Guadalupe River have kept ourselves more than busy with maintenance projects, public hunts, and preparations for the spring.

Our first big change you will see as you drive into the park. Through the efforts of our Rangers and Park Hosts, we have a beautiful new sign at our main entrance. The sign was the brainchild of our Park Hosts and borrows themes and visual cues from our park logo and the interior design on the Discovery Center. It is fantastic work and we think it’s much more appealing than the old sign design. We are currently working on a landscaping project around the new sign in order to increase its appeal and help protect the sign from traffic. Thanks to all the Hosts and Rangers that helped make this project possible.

As some of you may have noticed, we’ve been without water at the headquarters for some time now. As a result of a minor mishap involving a septic tank and cedar-eater, our sewer system at HQ has been offline. However, after months of planning and weeks of digging through solid limestone, we are currently in the process of installing the new septic system. We should be online by the beginning of summer, but much work remains to be done. Thank you all for putting up with the inconvenience for so long.

Our public hunt season began back in with archery in October and November, but things really picked up in December and January, when we were closed for a total of four weeks, during which time we had over 120 hunters both on the park proper and on Honey Creek SNA. As many of you know, this area of the Hill Country has an overabundance of whitetail deer, as well as ever-increasing numbers of exotic and invasive species. The primary means we have of controlling our deer and exotics population is our public hunter program, and we were very pleased with the results of this year’s hunt. In addition to our whitetail harvest of over 60 deer, hunters took more than 3 dozen hogs and exotic animals off the park. All of which helps us meet our natural resource management goal of improving the habitat quality for our native wildlife.

As the weather warms up again we are beginning to see the numbers of visitors grow. We welcome the increase in business and we have been busy preparing for the rush. Our rangers have spent much effort repairing erosion damage on our trail system, in order to make trail use easier for our bicycling and equestrian visitors. Likewise, work is being done in the camping loops and day use areas to ensure that all sites, grills, tables etc. are fully up and running in time for Spring.

The warm weather also signals the start of our interpretive season. Already the park has reservations for several schools, scout troops, and other groups for interpretive field trips in the park and natural area. March also means the start of our Saturday Night Programs. Every Saturday, around sunset, the park will host an interpretive program at our amphitheatre. These are our current program schedule ranges in topic from Nighttime Animal Adaptations to Prehistoric Hunting Methods, so there should be something for everyone! See the program schedule on page X, but be aware that the schedule is subject to change based on weather and other variables.

On a less happy note, anyone who has been following the budget negotiations in Austin knows that the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will be taking some steep budget cuts. While we are not sure yet exactly what form these cuts will take or how they will impact our park, rest assured that we will continue to provide the best possible visitor experience that we can. People come to this park to enjoy the beauty of

our natural resources, and we will do our best what we have to make sure that those resources are available to them. What these cuts mean, however is that we will be relying on the support of our Friends Group more than ever. The Friends have always been willing to support of in any way possible, and we are always appreciative of the work you do. Thank you all again.

Last but certainly not least, GRSP is very proud to welcome our new Assistant Manager, Clay Boone to our ranks. Clay joined us in December from Garner State Park, so he is no stranger to the Hill Country or high-visitation river parks. Please join us in welcoming Clay and his family to our park

Honey Creek Homesteaders

Come be a part of the search for our park's heritage. Share or just listen. All are welcome. Please direct any questions to Bryden Moon at (830) 336-3375 or bemoonjr@aol.com .

Honey Creek Homesteaders Meeting

Sunday, May 1 at 2:00 pm

At J&A Gass Ranch

On Park Road 31 just before the Park.



Trails to the Past

by Bryden Moon

An Alternative Road Block to Filling the Past's Void Lomeria Áspero

In our last edition we explored the fact that Spanish settlement in the Hill Country was limited and when attempted, fleeting. Native-American presence, which included periodic attacks on the nascent Spanish missions, was the prime reason our region remained an unsettled void until the 1840s. Last time, we left off with ***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.***

The Explorers' Texas

The Lands And Waters

Del Weniger



RAKIN PRESS
AUSTIN, TEXAS

Although you might be fooled by his title, The Explorers' Texas – The Lands And Waters (published in 1984, see inset), Del Weniger, who was introduced in the last edition, is not a historian but a naturalist (described by some as “eminent ecological historian of Texas”). While he used explorers as his conduit, what he set out to do was to collect and research early eye-witness narratives by Texas travelers to answer the question, ***What did Texas's flora, fauna and terrain look like in the earliest recorded descriptions?*** And while this is his over-arching question for Texas, when he gets to Chapter 5 – The Texas Hill Country, he raises a unique and “often-asked question”: ***Did the Spanish explorers, American & German naturalists and even those who lost their bearing and stumbled into the Hill Country, see much cedar?*** Here we are provided eye-witness accounts from the familiar, like Dr. Ferdinand Roemer (1849) and Frederick Law Olmstead (1854) to the obscure like Jean Louis Berlandier (1828), J. W. Benedict (1839), Francis Moore Jr. (1840), Abbe Domenech (1848), Melinda Rankin (1850), and J. De Cordova (1858). If you can find this book in a library, check it out, as you will be able to

read vivid descriptions by early Hill Country voyagers. The net sum of all his work: early landscapes filled with greenery, filled with cedar breaks. (Available at Boerne Public Library's Family and Local History Archives for in-room reading).

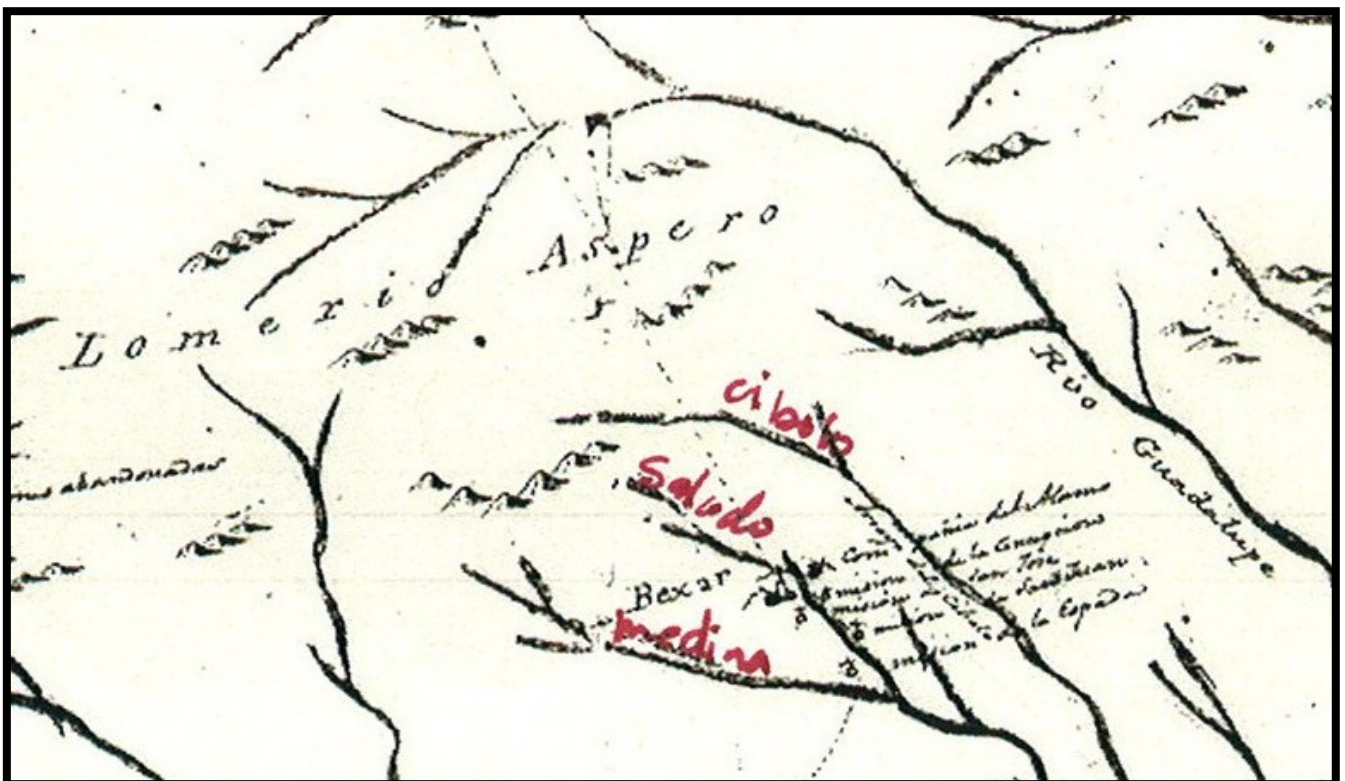
In a more contemporary view, our much-beloved regional naturalist, Bill Ward (Boerne - Native Plant Society, recently deceased) waded into the same brush via two July, 2010 Boerne Star newspaper columns dedicated to the Mountain Cedar (Ashe Juniper). In one column he asks and answers: ***How long has mountain cedar been in the Hill Country?*** He references Robert P. Adams of Baylor University, who has done 30 years of research on the topic. Mr. Ward writes: ***Dr. Adams is an authority on...all living juniper species ...and has studied both extinct and living varieties of mountain cedar...after the Ice Age ended, (circa 10,000 years ago) a different variety of the mountain cedar species emerged from a remnant population and colonized Central Texas limestone outcrops.*** This subject-matter expert is telling us that cedar has been out here a long

time. And while Ashe Juniper is present in other regions of Texas, it is a predominant area evergreen. You can't miss its presence in the Hill Country as it must like our combination of climate and soil.

Let's conclude by presenting Del Weniger's alternative theory of what contributed to the lack of early settlement in the Hill Country and is **truly unique to the Hill Country**. Well, it turns out to be what makes the Hill Country the Hill Country - the forests of trees including cedar breaks, and steep slopes of the hilly, rocky terrain. From Mr. Weniger - **And they seemingly had good reasons for detours around the Hill Country. Father Espinosa, for instance, wrote at length about the site of San Antonio up to headwaters of the river, but halted his exploration there because of "the density of its groves" and the "brushwood." And when Fray Francisco Celiz came to the edge of the hills in Comal County in 1718, and started upstream along the Guadalupe, "with the desire to ford it or reach its source," he soon stopped when his reconnoitering soldiers came back down saying that, "it could not be traveled because it is more wooded and contains more rocks." If we recall how ill-equipped these parties were for travelling rough country and the kind of trappings they were encumbered with - up to full sized carriages in some cases - it is not hard to see why they did not enter the Hill Country.**

And actually the answer was before us all the time, summed up by those two Spanish words in today's subtitle, which were lifted from an enhanced portion of that 1815 map utilized in the last edition. Note the Spanish words **Lomeria Áspero** on the map. Whether Native-Americans or rough terrain, the Spanish avoided the Lomeria Áspero. Roughly translated each word means: La Lomeria = Hill Country & Áspero - ra = rough, harsh, rugged, craggy. When combined they paint a pretty harsh picture.

There are more stories to be told!



Saturday Evening Program Schedule

by Chris Dooley

5-March	Things that don't go bump in the night	Chris Dooley	
12-March	Raptors	Kim Hoskins	
19-March	Bugs as Bioindicators	Archis Grubh	
26-March	Animal Adaptations	Chris Dooley	
2-April	Plants and Animals of the Hill Country	Doug Daghish	
9-April	Where have All the Horny Toads Gone?	Rollo Newsom	
16-April	The Amazing Monarch	Kip Kiphart	
23-April	Star Party- SAAA	Bill Balletine	
30-April	Plants and people in the Hill Country	Chris Dooley	
7-May	How Can You Help Scientists Help Wildlife	Mark Klym	
14-May	Things that don't go bump in the night	Chris Dooley	
21-May	Animal Adaptations	Chris Dooley	
28-May	River Critter	Chris Dooley	
4-June	Owls	Susan Campbell	

Bird's Eye View

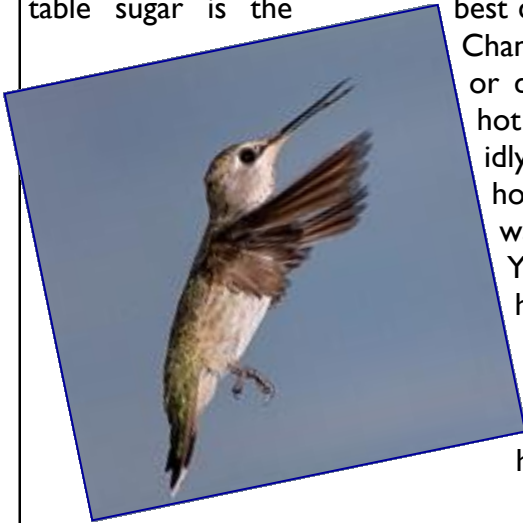
by Bruce Jones

The great migration of many species of birds is starting to happen and one of many people's favorite is the hummingbird. Here in central Texas we are able to observe both the eastern Ruby-throated Hummingbird and the western Black-chinned Hummingbird.

The Wildlife Viewing Area of the Guadalupe River State Park now hosts some hummingbird feeders and should draw both species during the spring migration and then help support some breeding hummingbirds in the local area. The most common hummer in this area is the Black-chinned.

It's fairly easy to attract Black-chinned Hummingbirds to feeding stations. Make sugar water mixtures with about one-quarter cup of sugar per cup of water. Food coloring is un necessary; table sugar is the

best choice. Never use artificial sweeteners. Change the water before it grows cloudy or discolored and remember that during hot weather, sugar water ferments rapidly to produce toxic alcohol. During hot spells, change your hummingbird water daily or at most every two days. Your feeders will attract far more hummingbirds if you also grow appropriate flowers attractive to them. For more information about hummingbirds in general: <http://hummingbirds.net/>



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!