



Winter 2011 NEWSLETTER

Friends of Guadalupe River, Honey Creek, Inc.

A non-profit organization

HALLOWEEN IN THE PARK 2011

Guadalupe River State Park

by Tom Anderson

Board of Directors



The 8th annual Halloween at the Park event was once again a great success. We had another huge turnout of over 1,100 Participants. Helping put this all together was the help of over 250 volunteers! Besides the folks who decorated and manned the over 27 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 our 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 suit, 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 Ehmen 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 again this year Starbucks of Bulverde donated several bags of candy. The food tent is always a busy place giving out 1,100 Hot Dogs, chips, and a drink in about 1 1/2 hours.



Distributing the food this year were previous volunteers Jack and Jane Donner, Carole Anderson, and Bob Hamilton. Joining them was Yvette Bell and the Spring Branch Middle School NJHS. As always Dave & Judy Kibler and Bryden & Kay Moon cooked the dogs. 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 445, Pat & Mike Hansen, Smithson Valley FFA, Camero & Friends Group



manned by the Rodriguez and Couteau families, Tara and Bill Anderson and family, Chapel Hill Methodist Church, Clown People 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 on Sunday October 28th.



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3rd Grade Program

by Holly Camaro

This October Honey Creek State Natural Area was home to the Third Grade Program as it has been for over 10 years. The program is a partnership between Guadalupe River State Park and the North East Independent School District. The program is set up so the students rotate through 4 stations on a one mile loop. Each station has a theme and activity dealing with Texas, the environment and our natural history. The first station is Habitat; what it is, what affects it and how it has changed over the last 200 years. The next is the Fossil Station which deals with fossils found in the area and the story they tell about prehistoric Texas. Here the kids get to make a take home "fossil" which they love. Down the hill by Honey Creek at the Art Station, they sit on the rocks and observe their natural surroundings making several styles of drawing, like the early naturalists might have done. Lastly they are right by the creek where they find out about Honey Creek, water sources and how you can test for water quality by looking at aquatic "baby bugs"; larvae, naiads, nymphs (aquatic macro- invertebrates).

Although there is teaching and a curriculum, nature has a way of teaching itself. Besides the flora and fauna, sometimes the area presents and astonishes the kids with a visiting critter; deer, reptiles, fish, sometimes armadillos and even porcupines. We also point out to the students how fortunate they are to be in such an awesome area. The Honey Creek SNA isn't usually open to the public during the week, but being an educational group not only do they get to be there, they also get to picnic!

This year we had 5 schools attend with 537 students and 173 adults which was the combined total of parent volunteer presenters, chaperones and teachers. It is so wonderful to have the kids come out, get outdoors and have a wonderful outside encounter, maybe their first. With every group that attends we hope that their experience will affect someone in such a way that they become champions for the environment.

We are very excited about our next session in the spring. March is an incredible time to be working outdoors in the Park and this session is the first time every available day is full. We will have 9 schools attending the program!

Boy Scouts Perform Service Again

by Dave Kibler



On Saturday, 22 October 2011, an enthusiastic group of Scouts and adults from Troop 285, sponsored by Coker Methodist Church in San Antonio, arrived early on a beautiful, sunny, fall morning to walk the banks of the Guadalupe River inside the park boundaries to pick up trash and litter left by park guests throughout the busy summer months. Meanwhile, a larger group from the troop attacked with saws and loppers the Ash Junipers which had overgrown some of the park's equestrian/hiking trails, creating a more pleasant environment for users of these trails. Late in the morning a fine lunch of grilled sausage, tortillas, beans, chips, and cookies was



prepared for all participants. This lunch, prepared by Scouters from Troop 285, was provided compliments of the Friends of Guadalupe River State Park and a generous donor from Troop effort. In

285. A grand total of 42 Scouts and parents participated in this semi-annual cleanup the afternoon, the Scouts and adults enjoyed a guided hike through the Honey Creek Natural Area, followed by a super overnight camping experience in the Bauer Unit of the park. And these Scouts from Troop 285 will be back in the spring of 2012 to perform similar service.



Discovery Center

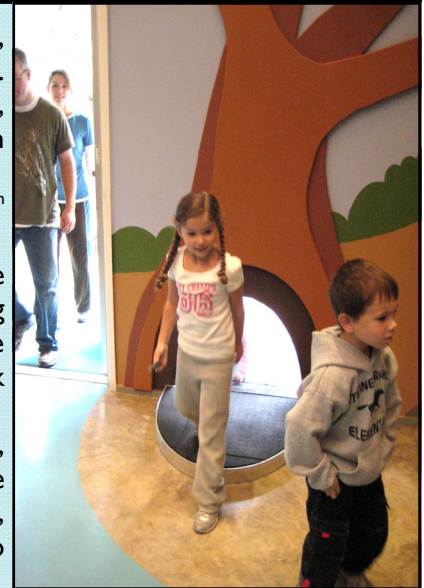
by Richard Mizanin

We would like to begin by thanking the “seasoned volunteers” for their hard work, loyalty and dedication in keeping the Discovery Center open and running this year. We would also like to welcome the new volunteers and encourage them to sign up, whenever convenient, with the senior volunteers to meet them and capitalize on their volunteer experience.

We have conducted two orientation training sessions. The first was on August 20th and the second was on September 24th. A total of six volunteers were trained.

Chris Dooley, the Park Interpreter, did a great job of covering the interpretive information we needed to learn. The various subjects included – identifying mammal, fish, raptor, snake and bird skulls and skins. We reviewed the interactive wall displays on bees, bugs, water health, night sky, animal sounds at night and park pollution.

We had fun going through the “activity boxes” on insects, animal tracks, geology, fossils, bird feathers, leaves and trees. Chris also reviewed the extensive library we have at the Discovery Center. This includes information books on birds, snakes, trees, animal skulls, flowers, grasses, fish, etc. We use these important resources to answer various questions that our visitors may have.



We reviewed the “check list” for Discovery Center volunteers, which are our basic business rules. We also spent a great deal of time discussing customer service, reviewing the topics of sociability, honesty, individuality needs based analysis and customer service excellence. We also discussed the expectations of Discovery Center volunteers and completed the course with the topic of “Science for Young Children.”

All in all, we had a great time and the feedback from the participants was very positive! So far for the year beginning January 2011 we have had 2,825 participants. That goes with 889 who attended during the 6 month soft opening.

In discussing the Discovery Center with Texas Parks and Wildlife Regional Specialist, Tara Humphreys, we learned that:

“- The concept of the Discovery Center began prior, but once funding was secured in fall 2008, the planning and fabrication was worked on throughout the year by park staff, interpretive services in Austin, and Museumscapes.

- Finished in fall 2009 and opened with “soft” opening to the public.

- Grand opening event in April 2010.

- The purpose is to get families to “Take Another Look” with interactive exhibits that make you look at nature through the eyes of a scientist. Besides exhibits, there are themed touch boxes and “parent guides” that parents can read to help their kids use the touch boxes. (there are Parent Guides in Spanish)

- The Discovery Center also promotes stewardship, and taking it outside by borrowing backpacks or guessing what the tracks are near the Discovery Center.

- All of the flora and fauna that were chosen in the exhibits are native to the park, so were carefully chosen to represent what you might see on a park visit.”

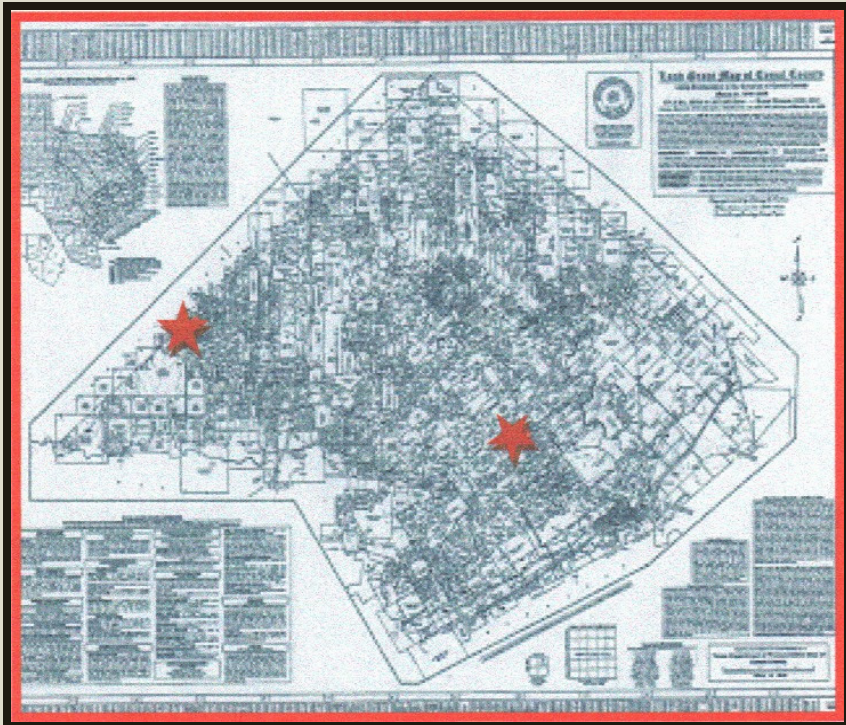
In conclusion, we are always looking for volunteers to keep the Discovery Center open on the weekends. If you know of anyone who is interested in doing this kind of work or if you would like to volunteer yourself, please contact Richard Mizanin at:

Telephone: (830) 837-1842 or **E-mail:** rjmizanin@yahoo.com



Trail to the Honey Creek Name Takes a Detour – Part II

Family lore held that the land adjacent to and surrounding the headwaters of Honey Creek was populated with settlers in 1850. However, recent research has unearthed the fact the land just outside Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek S.N.A.'s boundaries witnessed an influx of settlers in the mid-1860s. The five families that had their land surveyed in 1867 are tied to the legends that surround the Honey Creek name and the origination of St. Joseph's Honey Creek Catholic Church. Due to these links we have been profiling George F. Kunz, Johann Adam Kneupper, as well as Michael Bechtold. The 1860 census records tell us that these three, Kunz, Kneupper and Mr. Kunz's stepson, Michael Bechtold, were living on land grants five miles outside of New Braunfels. This is where we left you in our last edition. It is a long stretch across Comal County from where they first homesteaded to their ultimate site at Honey Creek (see stars on map right) and today we will attempt to answer the remaining questions posed last edition. **Hubert Robert (H. R.) Moos & Casper Moos, the other two settlers, what was their story and how do they fit in? Why would these five families come together at Honey Creek (and at the same time)? Finally, we'll dip into the origins of the Honey Creek name?**



So what about H. R. & Casper Moos? The Moos brothers' story has an eerily similar story-line to that of the Bechtold family. The Moos family arrived onto Texas shores on the boat, Sarah Ann, in 1845. They were fellow passengers with the Bechtold family.

H. R. was nine years old and Casper was three. A dysentery and cholera epidemic claimed the lives of many of the German immigrants that arrived in 1845 & 1846, and quite coincidentally, tragedy struck the Moos family in a pattern that mimicked the Bechtold family. The Moos' father, Michael, died, as well as three siblings. Based on the date of deaths, it is probable that at least three of the Moos family members perished on their inland trip to New Braunfels. The boys' mother, Agatha Moos, remarried in 1851. Her new husband, Valentin Horne, had lost three wives after arriving onto Texas shores in 1845. The Horne family, including stepsons H. R. & Casper, moved well north of Honey Creek to the Spring Branch area in the 1850s. Robert & Casper fought in the Civil War.

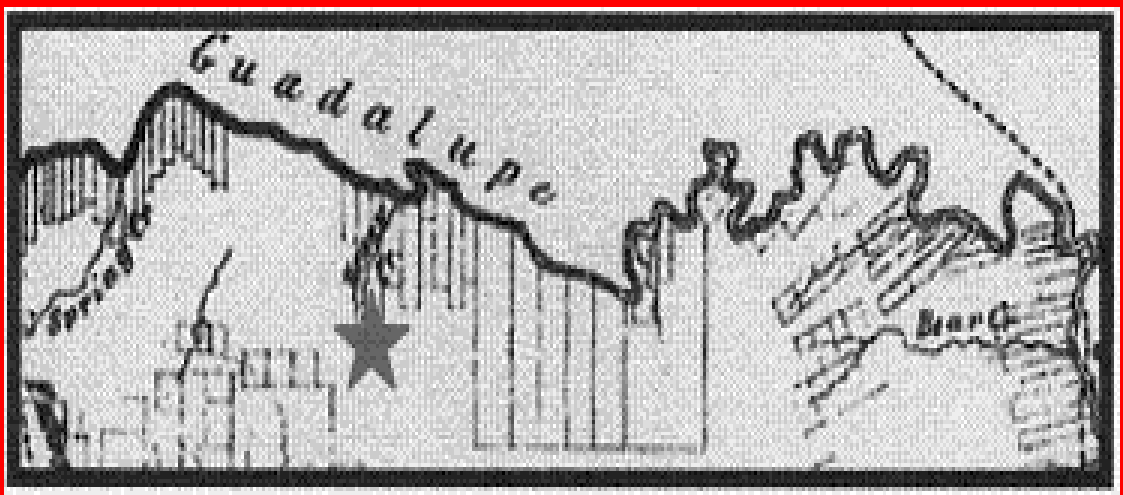
Answering the question of what tied the Moos brothers to Kunz, Kneupper and Bechtold, also helps answer the bigger question, **"What drew these five men to survey their lands within days of each other?"** We know that the Moos brothers came over on the same boat as the Bechtold family. A critical connection was unearthed by Friends board member, Dave Kibler: all five Honey Creek settlers emigrated from the same part of Germany - the independent duchy of Nassau. And with the exception of Kneupper, who lived 25 miles away, the Kunz, Moos and Bechtold families lived within five miles of each other. Not only were they connected from the "old country" but they all shared the same faith, they were Catholics. And H. R. Moos married Eva Kunz on October, 20 1867. Eva was the daughter of G. F. & Christina "Bechtold" Kunz.



Finally, we also know that Johan Kneupper was the neighbor of George F. Kunz and his stepson, Michael Bechtold outside of New Braunfels near Buffalo Springs. As these five men are interconnected in various degrees by birth country - including its dialect and customs, friendship, faith, adoption, blood and marriage, it should be no surprise that, with land grants available in the Honey Creek area, their survey and patent dates were also interconnected. The symmetry is that all five men's land grants were surveyed in 1867 and all were patented on 1871. Many of the handwritten dates on their paperwork were not only identical in the month recorded but also the specific day.

The last topic is the origin of the Honey Creek name. A few theories for the origination of the name abound. One suggests it was due to the honey-combed rock so prevalent in our region. Another says that the creek takes on a honey hue when the angled, filtered sunlight illuminates its waters in the afternoon. However, the most romantic story involves the Honey Creek settlers' children. Mr. Alfred Engel, son of Andreas Engel and grandson of Michael Bechtold, captured the family's oral history in 1976. He relates that on repetitive errands to collect water during a construction project, the children encountered large swarms of bees. The children are credited in his accounting of saying, **"where there are so many bees, there must be honey...why can't we call this Honey Creek?"** While this oral history may have been true and the family members of new community of Honey Creek christened the creek, **"Honey Creek,"** they were not the first. The Honey Creek name shows up many years before the five families ever arrived to have their land surveyed in 1867.

Recent research has uncovered the Honey Creek name gracing the pages of early documents. In this small detail lifted from a regional map drawn by the Comal County surveyor, J. J. Groos, in 1850 - Honey Creek is illustrated (see star on above inset). Honey Creek seems oddly isolated between the distant



bookends of Spring Creek and Bear Creek due to the fact that those creeks feeding into the Guadalupe from the north were not drawn in. And there are even earlier references, both on land surveys. One is an April 19, 1846 Comal (Bexar) County land survey for David Smith (abstract No. 521, survey No. 93) for 320 acres. Yet it was preceded by the earliest known printed reference to Honey Creek: April 12, 1846 is penned onto a Comal (Bexar) County land survey for Joshua Threadgill (abstract No. 624, survey No. 97) also for 320 acres.

So based on the dates, it is unlikely 1867 founding families were involved in the original designation of Honey Creek. Leaving two lingering questions:

"Does an even earlier reference exist on older parchment?"

And

"Who named Honey Creek so that it was penned onto 1846 surveys?"

We'll keep digging!

There are more stories to be told!

President Letter

by Tom Anderson



It has been a very good but dry year at the park. The Friends have provided docents for the Discovery Center each weekend. The interpretative guides have led walks to Honey Creek each Saturday and many special hikes for groups. The Saturday evening programs at the amphitheater have had great presentations. The homesteader homecoming event was outstanding with a visit to the Gass Ranch. The 3rd grade education program continued with children participating in the months of March and October. Our organization provided food for 2 river clean-ups by the scouts. We just completed another great Halloween event. The Friends continue to make improvements to the Rust House with displays inside and landscaping and benches outside to add to the cultural experience of the park guests. We have made improvements to our wildlife viewing area by adding a water feature and a cistern. We have provided monies to complete the new entrance sign and also a sprucing up of the headquarters by park hosts and staff. We have an excellent webpage and newsletter. I am asking for ideas from the membership that will grow this organization to accomplish even more for our parks. One area that I believe needs attention is making our members feel needed and useful. I believe the addition of a membership chairman that's main role will be to keep in contact with members and make sure that they become engaged in helping the Friends help the park. If any member would consider discussing this position with me and or the board please contact me. I can see this person as someone that will help us make sure all members realize how they can be beneficial to the Friends. I hope each of you have a happy holidays and many trips to the parks in 2012.

Public Hunts

by Chris Dooley

Guadalupe River SP/ Honey Creek SNA Public Hunt Schedule December 2011 - March 2012

Contact Park HQ at (830) 438-2656 for park closure and standby hunter info.

December 5-9:	Guadalupe River State Park; Rifle hunt for does only (<i>Park Closed</i>) Honey Creek State Natural Area; Rifle hunt for does only
December 12-16:	Guadalupe River State Park; Rifle hunt for does only (<i>Park Closed</i>) Honey Creek State Natural Area; Rifle hunt for buck and does
January 9-13:	Guadalupe River State Park; Rifle hunt for does only (<i>Park Closed</i>) Honey Creek State Natural Area; Rifle hunt for does only
January 16-20:	Guadalupe River State Park; Rifle hunt for does only (<i>Park Closed</i>) Honey Creek State Natural Area; Rifle hunt for does only
February 6-10:	GRSP Bauer Unit; Rifle hunt for feral hogs/ exotics only
March 10-11:	GRSP Bauer Unit; Youth only, Shot hunt for turkeys

Park Happenings of November 2011

by Chris Dooley

Well, it's been another 3 (mostly) dry months here at Guadalupe River State Park. What rain we have gotten has greened things up a bit, and our river is flowing a little better now than it did during the hard, dry summer. The leaves are turning, the cypress needles are falling, and autumn has returned once again to the park.

For us here at GRSP, autumn means one thing: hunting season. In some cases, it means taking off a day or two to bag something on our own properties or leases, but for the park as a whole it means the beginning of our drawn public hunts, during which time lucky members of the public have a chance to hunt whitetail deer and exotic/feral species in the park. These hunts began in October with two weeks of archery hunts on the Bauer Unit (our 660 acres on the north side of the river), and have continued in November with a highly successful weekend rifle hunt for kids and a weeklong muzzleloader hunt.

These hunts require a good deal of work on the part of our staff and volunteers. The process begins a year early, when we conduct whitetail population surveys with our local TPWD wildlife biologist to give us an idea of how many deer are out there. We use that information to plan the hunt schedule, bag limits, and other details of the next years hunt. About a month prior to the start of the hunts, we will go out and repair our box blinds tripods, and well as trimming back trails and clearing shooting lanes for the hunters. We start feeding at least two weeks before the hunt, and we will set up trail cameras at different blinds to get some idea of what wildlife is coming to the feeders. One important note about our feeders: We never feed long enough, or in a volume high enough, to artificially prop up our wildlife population. The feeders are out there solely to concentrate the deer population at a known time and place, to make it easier for hunters to harvest an animal.



So what are our hunters gunning for this season? Primarily, they're after whitetail deer. In the Hill Country, there are far too many whitetail for the habitat to sustain. There are several reasons for this. A lack of predators, combined with the eradication of certain parasites, has severely reduced the natural mortality rate for whitetail in the last century. Combined with overfeeding, these factors have led to an artificially high, but overall less healthy, whitetail population. Our job as resource managers is to try to bring the whitetail population down to a reasonable level for our habitat type. Our primary management strategy is to take over the role of the large predators, and the easiest way to do this is to bring in hunters. We allow hunters five whitetail deer each, primarily does, per hunt. We tend to focus on removing does because it is the surest way of reducing the herds' breeding population. In addition, a does- only hunt reduces the temptation for a hunter to pass up perfectly good doe while waiting for a big buck that may never turn up.

While the primary target species for most of our hunts may be whitetail, we encourage our hunters to harvest any exotic or invasive species they may see. We have several species of exotic game here at Guadalupe River, including Axis deer (a native of India), Sika deer (Siberia, China and Japan), Aoudad sheep (North Africa), Mouflon sheep (Iran), and of course, feral hogs. We do not restrict the number of exotic or feral animals the hunters can take. Part of the job of habitat restoration is the removal of exotic species, and our hunters are the best means we have of doing just that.

Although we've had hunts in the park for the past two months, our season is just getting warmed up. We will have 2 large hunts on both the park and Honey Creek State Natural Area, during the 2nd and 3rd weeks of December, during which time the park will be closed. Two more hunts are scheduled for the 2nd and 3rd weeks of January, and again the park will be closed during those times. We have a feral hog hunt planned for February, and we round out the season with a turkey hunt for kids in March. By now the deadline to apply for these hunts has passed, but if you would like a chance to hunt at GRSP, please check the hunt schedule and contact the park for information about standby hunter opportunities.

As the days grow shorter and the weather gets colder, we at Guadalupe River State Park are glad to provide an opportunity for Texans to continue our long-standing hunting traditions in a safe, responsible, and beneficial manner. Of course, during the weeks the park is not closed for hunting, all trails and facilities will be open as usual. Now is a great time of year to come and hike our trails, and the more pleasant weather makes this a perfect time for camp out for a night or two. Give us a call, and we'll be happy to make a reservation for you!

2012 Dues

by J.W. Pieper

2012 Membership Dues Are Now Payable

With the New Year approaching it is a time of renewal, and if you have not renewed your Friends of GRSP/Honey Creek membership for 2012 it is time to do so. As you know, this newsletter keeps you current with the activities at the Park, but the costs of sending out the newsletter are continuing to increase.

As a reminder, we are a 501 (c) 3 organization which means that contributions to the Friends organization are tax deductible. Just use the application on the inside back cover of this newsletter and 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.

The Board of Directors has authorized the cancellation of subscription privileges to the Quarterly Newsletter in June for all members who are in arrears.

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.org

**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 6:30 pm.
And bring a friend!**