



Fall 2012 NEWSLETTER

Friends of Guadalupe River, Honey Creek, Inc.

A non-profit organization

Halloween at the Park

Guadalupe River State Park

by Tom Anderson



Sunday night, October 28th, the Friends of Guadalupe River State Park/Honey Creek SNA will again host the 10th annual Halloween in the Park for children ages two to twelve. "Halloween at the Park" allow children to walk down a wooded path lit by solar lights and lanterns while being greeted by costumed characters with candy treats along the way. Just the experience of walking through the trees at night, feeling the wind



and hearing the night sounds is a special, unique experience. After completing the trail that starts and ends at the amphitheater, visitors can have hot dogs and refreshments. A storyteller will be telling age



appropriate stories at the amphitheater. The event will begin at 6:30 PM with storytelling and trick or treat for young children (2-6) followed by the same activities for big spooks (7-12) from 7:00 to 8:30 PM. Hot dogs and drinks will be served between 6:30 and 8:30 PM while they last. The Park has worked with the Friends to expedite Park entry. **The fee at the entrance to the park will be a \$10.00 flat fee per vehicle which includes entrance, parking, and event.** If you wish to make an additional donation to the Friends you may do so at the event. Due to the tremendous response in the past couple of years we need community support to man the trail stations where volunteers in costume will provide and hand out candy. We also need volunteers to assist with food, decorating, donation collection, and Monday morning clean-up. If you or your group is interested in participating in this event, please contact:



Holly Camera at eyesthatfly@aol.com, or

Tom Anderson at tanderson46@satx.rr.com,

210-241-1916



If volunteers identify themselves at the gate they will get **FREE** Admission to the Park.



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Four Generations of Weidners visit to the old Homestead

by Joan Nitschke

In June 2012, Violet Weidner Wolfshol (age 92) and Gloria Weidner Voges (age 83) shared their memories of growing up at the homestead on the Honey Creek State Natural Area. Joining them were Violet's daughter, Patricia Davila, grandson Jason and wife, Danielle, Jason's father, Gilbert Ornelas and four great grandchildren. The Weidners purchased the property in 1910 from the Doeppenschmidt family. The original log home dates to the early 1870's and was built around a central hall. The home was expanded in the 1920's with frame additions, and the parlor still retains the original floral wallpaper. One of the interesting features of the house was the carbide lighting system. Numerous outbuildings, such as the smokehouse, cow milking and sheep shearing sheds and stone water troughs still remain.

The land was primarily a ranching operation, raising cows and sheep, and the fields were planted with oats and wheat. The family was self sufficient by milking the cows, gathering eggs from the chickens and harvesting the garden and orchard. Sugar cane was grown in a field near Honey Creek and Mr. Weidner operated the press to make molasses. Horses were the primary means of transportation and Violet rode her horse to the school house (the stone structure on the west side of the park road was the teacher's house and the actual frame schoolhouse next to it was relocated many years ago.) One of Gloria's tasks was to ride her horse to the Spring Branch Road to collect the mail. They also rode their horses across Honey Creek to visit Opa and Oma Rust (Heinrich and Louisa Rust) at the white and green house where visitors meet for the Honey Creek Tour.

The Weidner sisters have generously shared their time and memories and have donated photographs which are displayed at the Rust House.

News from the Park

by Craig Hensley

Greetings from Guadalupe and the staff. The beginning of school brings endings and beginnings for the park. Seasonal staff have completed their duties at Headquarters and with Maintenance and the madness (in a good way) of the summer has come to an end. With those things ending however, new things have begun.

As any of you that have visited the park in recent weeks knows, we have begun implementing a long-range burn management plan for both the Park and Natural Area, with the first prescribed burn having been conducted in the park on the south end where Ashe juniper had been cut a few years ago. This and all subsequent burns require a great deal of planning and preparation, as well as a good number of highly trained staff from TPWD, the Texas Forest Service and other local agencies. I second burn was just completed at Honey Creek.

These burns are being conducted to not only eliminate accumulated slash but also to help restore landscapes to a more original pre-settlement look. It is hoped that this level of land management will result in the restoration of native grasslands reminiscent of what was here when the first German immigrants arrived. Over time, the suppression of fire and overgrazing by cattle and other livestock created a diminished landscape in terms of plant and animal diversity and quality.

Over the course of the next year plan to see more prescribed burning of the park and Honey Creek and if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to give us a call.

Also new this late summer is the opening of the north entrance to the Bauer Unit, a 670-acre area across the river from the day use area. While it has always been open, this parcel now has several established and marked hiking and bicycling trails that will provide visitors a new and varied experience. In addition, with some hiking involved, this area will provide more access to the Guadalupe River upstream from the heavily-used Day Use area.

A map of the Bauer Unit can be picked up at Headquarters and are also available at the self-pay station between the parking lot and trail head to the area. Please note that the area's hours are from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., there are no restroom facilities on the property, nor any potable water. Please be sure to plan accordingly for your hiking experience (directions to the parking lot can be obtained by calling the office at 830.438.7656.

Thanks to the efforts of Eagle Scout candidate Madison McNair and his troop and their parents, the Park has five new picnic tables available in the Day Use area complete with poured concrete pads and grills. In addition, they also provided trees for each table as well as a planting of trees along the large, overflow parking area. A second Eagle



Scout project, completed by Roberto Donahue, involved landscaping around the Rust House at Honey Creek. Both scouts are with Troop 285.

We also have new hours for our Discovery Center. This facility, located near the Day Use area, will be open on Friday afternoons from 1 to 5 p.m., Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sundays.

We hope you'll get a chance to visit the park this fall for one or more of our programs or to hike the trails. The staff of the Park greatly appreciates the support of the Friends Group for all the good works.

Naturally,
Craig Hensley, Park Interpreter

Seeking Discovery Center Volunteers

Do you like interacting with children and adults? Do you enjoy learning about and sharing your understanding of the natural world? Do you like air conditioning? If you answered yes to the first two (we assume you like the third one!), then here is an opportunity for you! Sunday, October 21 from 2-3:30 p.m. we are hosting an Open House for anyone interested in becoming a volunteer at the Discovery Center. You'll have the opportunity to visit with Park Interpreter Craig Hensley who will go through the duties and responsibilities of volunteers at the Discovery Center, as well as the requirements to become a TPWD volunteer. So that we will know about how many people to expect, please call 830.438.7653 to register.

Upcoming Managed Hunts Announced

This fall and winter, the Park and Natural Area will host a number of public hunts (by drawing). The dates for hunts in October-December are as follows:

Saturday - Sunday, October 6-7: Youth Exotic Hunt at the Bauer Unit

Saturday - Sunday, October 13-14: Youth Exotic Hunt at the Bauer Unit

Monday - Friday, October 15-19: Archery Deer Hunt at the Bauer Unit

Saturday - Sunday, November 10-11: Youth Deer Hunt at the Bauer Unit

Saturday - Sunday, November 17-18: Youth Deer Hunt at the Bauer Unit

Monday - Friday, November 26-30: Muzzleloader Deer (Anterless/Spike) Hunt at the Bauer Unit

Monday - Friday, December 3-7: Anterless/Spike Deer Hunt at GRSP and HCSNA

Monday - Friday, December 10-14: Anterless/Spike Deer Hunt at GRSP and Any Sex Deer Hunt at HCSNA

** Please note that during these hunts the area(s) involved including all trails are closed to the public for their safety.*

Programs at the Park

Park Interpreter Craig Hensley provides programs for Park guests each weekend in addition to the Honey Creek Hike led by volunteers. His programs range from catching insects to geocaching to bird banding. A complete list of programs is available on the Guadalupe River Web Site:

http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/guadalupe-river/park_history)

as well as the Friends calendar

<http://www.honeycreekfriends.org/>).

Programs begin at 10 a.m. each Saturday morning are generally designed for families. The Saturday evening program beginning time varies with the seasons so be sure to check the website for start times. Most programs begin at the Amphitheatre located behind the Discovery Center in the Day Use area of the park. Call Craig at 830.438.7653 for more details.

Trails to the Past

by Bryden Moon

Unraveling the Past

The Pathway to St. Joseph - Honey Creek's Immaculate Conception Chapel

With an estimated constructed date of 1904/1905, the Immaculate Conception Chapel is not the oldest relic on present-day St. Joseph Catholic Church - Honey Creek's Highway 46 grounds, there are headstones that are older...but it is the oldest building that still remains. Before I knew about this area's rich history, I used to imagine a horse-riding cleric finding this land and after riding to the top of the hill to take in the magnificent view, deciding that he would set up shop on the crest of the hill and worry about finding his parishioners later. Yet that was not the route taken. **So why are we able to stand high on this hill today, taking in the vistas and panoramic views of both Comal and Kendall County's Guadalupe River valleys, next to a chapel called the Immaculate Conception Chapel?** Well, I would like to answer that question by asking and answering a series of questions; linking events that led to the construction over 107 years ago of this handsome relic dedicated to Mary - the Immaculate Conception Chapel.

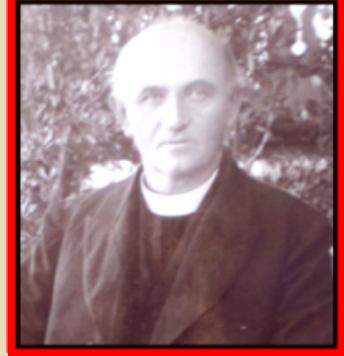


Is this site on Highway 46, the first site of St. Joseph – Honey Creek? St. Joseph – Honey Creek origins started in 1867 - 3 miles north (see small blue star) of its present-day location (see larger red star) ...5 Catholic German settlers started surveying and settling land – Kunz, Kneuepper, Bechtold and two Moos families (some adjacent to park land) . Very soon they were joined by Acker, Lux, and Scheel. Outside of San Antonio, circuit priests from Boerne and New Braunfels rode through from time to time to administer to the families of Honey Creek. In 1876 St. Joseph - Honey Creek's name appears on archived records, and a wooden church is constructed. The story goes that this first church burned and was replaced within a year by another cedar church.



So if this was not the original site, how did St. Joseph – Honey Creek wind up on Highway 46? In the early 1890s, Father Gerlach, a priest who served out of Boerne, engineered the move to the Boerne – New Braunfels road. It is said that he did so because of the road and to get the church closer to a growing parish population in Bulverde. Herman Scheel, the son of one of the original local settlers, Bernard Joseph Scheel, sold one acre of his father's land to the church: officially recorded in 1893 for \$5.00. Sold, not gifted, because as descendant Clarence Scheel says **“our family was too poor to have given the land away.”** In 1892 a substantial wooden church was constructed (it has since been removed) on the one-acre plot on the Boerne – New Braunfels Road. St. Joseph parishioners continued to be administered by circuit priests.

So if the one-acre plot was down by the road, how come the Immaculate Conception Chapel was constructed far away from the road at the top of the hill? That question is answered by the arrival of Father Virgilius Draessel in 1898. This supposedly sickly priest – St. Joseph – Honey Creek’s first resident priest definitely rolled his sleeves up and got to work. The deed records indicate that Father Draessel presided over three separate land acquisitions between 1900 and 1905, starting with an additional 34.9 acres of Scheel land in 1900 for \$100.00. Then from O. G. Bartels he obtained 6 acres in 1903 and 8 acres in 1905. Thus by 1905 the church’s 1 acre campus had grown to 50 acres.



Why name it for the Immaculate Conception? Father Draessel was devoted to Mary, as was evidenced by the names he chose for multiple churches and chapels. When his first naming opportunity came in 1899 with the consecration of a new mission church in the Twin Sisters area (from translated diary entries we learn) he called it Mariankirchlein - Little Church of Mary on the Little Blanco River. Later he would dedicate a second mission church to support the influx of Mexican immigrants generated by the Mexican Revolution (1910 – 1920). In his 1923 Archdiocese report he introduces “Maria Guadalupe” Church or Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe - Our Lady of Guadalupe in Spring Branch. So why all the attention to Mary, it well may have been his nature or perhaps it was nurture! When Father Draessel joined a religious order back in Austria, he entered a Franciscan convent – he was a Franciscan. From the Franciscan website we learn: ***Devotion to Mary is perhaps the least known aspect of the life of St. Francis and the Order of Friars Minor... The devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary has been the distinguishing characteristic of Franciscans throughout their long history.*** With this background, and an upcoming anniversary, it is not surprising that Father Draessel chose Immaculate Conception for this chapel...you see in 1904, the Catholic Church was celebrating a 50th anniversary...the golden [jubilee](#) of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception.



In summary! All these events: the settlement by German Catholic immigrants and the formation of a Catholic community 3 miles north in 1870s, the move to the Boerne – New Braunfels Road, Father Draessel’s entry into the Franciscan order, his assignment to St. Joseph – Honey Creek, his subsequent acquisition of land and the celebration of the 50th anniversary or golden jubilee of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception in 1904, all combined to allow us today to be able to visit this handsome relic, with its majestic views, the Immaculate Conception Chapel.

There are more stories to be told!

September 2012 Programs at Guadalupe State Park

by Craig Hensley

Making of a Naturalist: Wildflowers of the Hill Country

Thursday, September 20, 2012

Guadalupe River State Park

10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

The Friends of Guadalupe River State Park & Honey Creek present this five-hour workshop on the wildflowers of the Hill Country. Led by Park Interpreter Craig Hensley, this workshop will help you learn basic terminology and parts of plants, and include a PowerPoint presentation to introduce you to a variety of the common wildflowers in the area. We'll then head outdoors for a walk to identify those plants currently blooming. This workshop does have limited enrollment and includes a \$5 fee payable to the Friends Group on the day of the workshop. For more information or to register, please call 830.438.7653, or email Craig at craig.hensley@tpwd.state.tx.us. Please be sure to bring a sack lunch and drink.

Monarch Mania Celebration

Saturday, September 22, 2012

Guadalupe River State Park

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Join us to celebrate the migration of the Monarch Butterfly and butterflies in general! We'll have children's crafts, presentations on what you can do to help monarchs and other butterflies, butterfly catching opportunities and more. Watch our Facebook page for more details or call 830.438.7653. This event will be held in and around the Discovery Center. This program is free with a Park Pass or a \$7 daily pass (children ages 12 and under are free).

Bauer Unit Bird Walk

Sunday, September 30, 2012

Guadalupe River State Park

8:30 a.m. - Noon

Whether you are a beginning birdwatcher or seasoned birder, help us learn about the birds of the Bauer Unit. We will be conducting monthly bird surveys/walks to document the birds of this area. Led by Park Interpreter Craig Hensley, you'll be helping us get a handle on the birds of this area as well as enjoy a wonderful morning bird watching with fellow enthusiasts.

We'll meet at the Headquarters parking lot at Guadalupe River State Park and then head for the Unit. Please bring binoculars, a field guide (we do have a few to loan), water and wear sturdy hiking shoes or boots. This program is free with a Park Pass or a \$7 daily pass (children ages 12 and under are free).

Walk Under the Full Moon

Sunday, September 30, 2012

Guadalupe River State Park

7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Join us for our monthly series as we walk under the Harvest Moon. We'll head out along one of our trails and enjoy the night sights and sounds. We'll even view the moon through one of our telescopes at hike's end. Please meet at the Guadalupe River State Park Headquarters parking lot for this walk of approximately one mile. Be sure to wear sturdy shoes, bring a flashlight and water. This hike will be along a fairly level trail with some rocky spots. This program is free with a Park Pass or a \$7 daily pass (children ages 12 and under are free).

President Letter

by Tom Anderson



The Board and Park Interpreter, Craig Hensley, are in the process of making improvements that will benefit the membership of the Friends of Guadalupe River SP/Honey Creek SNA. We need the membership to assist us in making our organization the best it can be. Please send suggestions to me so that they can be brought up to the board. Beginning with the park fiscal year which starts September first we plan to have a minimum of four free events for the membership to enjoy. This includes free entrance to the park for these events. One of the programs will be the Eagle Lady who has come to the park the last few years and puts on a very entertaining program. Others will be the Holiday pot luck party and also the homecoming homesteaders day either at the park or a nearby ranch. We also are planning evening hikes and other events. Keep watching our newsletter, emails and local newspapers for upcoming programs. How this will work is current members will be admitted free and a fee will be charged to individuals that are not members. They will be given a chance to join in order to save money over the entire year. We do not at this point plan to have a meeting on these dates but will be available to answer questions and take suggestions to improve the Friends.

**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 first
Thursday at 6:30 pm.
And bring a friend!**