



Winter 2014 NEWSLETTER

Friends of Guadalupe River, Honey Creek, Inc.

A non-profit organization

Halloween at the Park

Guadalupe River State Park

by Tom Anderson

Board of Directors



The 12th annual Halloween at the Park event was a great success. We had another large turnout of over 800 Participants. Helping put this all together was the help of over 200 volunteers! Besides the folks who decorated and manned the over 34 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. JW & Jan Pieper and Bryden Moon greeted those entering the park at the headquarters.

We were happy to have Craig Hensley the Park Interpreter greet the trick or treaters before they entered the trail. The Storyteller, Sue Kuntz was also there entertaining everyone with Halloween ghost stories, and she brought along some of her students to also tell 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 the 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. HEB at 281 & 46 also helped with a 2 stations as did GVTC, McDonalds, and Chili's. The food tent is always a busy place giving out 1,000 Hot Dogs, chips, and a drink in about 1 1/2 hours. Distributing the food this year were previous volunteers, Carole Anderson, Bob Hamilton, Joan Nitschke, Bill Beach, Bill Anderson and family. Tara Anderson was our photographer. Dave & Judy Kibler and 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 2 stations, Scout groups 1136, 1458 and 848, Smithson Valley FFA, Camero & Friends Group manned by the Rodriguez and Couteau families, Meredith Taylor and Friends, Taylor family, Thode family, Bergheim VFD, Clown People and the Bulverde 4-H, and new comers Genie



& David Dasheill, and Calli Pesina. New this year was the Spring Branch Library. 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 25th.



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Trails to the Past

by Bryden Moon

A Skirmish along the Trail Battle of Walkers' Creek (part II)

Welcome back! In the last edition, we spotlighted Ranger leader John Coffee Hays and introduced you to a small Native American/Texas Ranger engagement called the **Battle of Walker's Creek** (BWC) that played out in 1844 just a few miles upriver from the Guadalupe River State Park (in future Kendall County's Sisterdale region). Our final words from that article: **So what happened 170 years ago just a few miles up the Guadalupe from here? Why is this event described as a watershed?** Like an old movie serial, we left you hanging...as to the details of the skirmish and why this turned out to be described as a landmark engagement.

So let's recap: On June 8th 1844, Major John Coffee Hays led 15 rangers north of San Antonio (fifty miles above Seguin) and in today's Sisterdale area, he encountered hostile Indians, which he estimated **to be between sixty and seventy** (portion of actual column from 1844 Texas National Register, Washington, Texas edition, right). It is easy to do the math. Major Hays and his Rangers numbered 16...so 70 Native-Americans against only 16 Rangers. Yet Hays charged ahead through a gauntlet of 60 to 70 Comanches and even with a 4 to 1 advantage stacked against the Rangers, the outcome was flipped on its head. Hays reported, **"I however, charged their ranks; and, with a courage that is rarely displayed, my men succeeded in routing and putting them to flight-killing twenty dead on the ground, and wounding, at the lowest estimate, twenty or thirty more."** A little later he reports, **"My loss was, one killed (Peter Fosh) and three badly wounded, but not mortally, and one slightly. Two were wounded with lances and two with arrows."**

The Houston Morning Star's story of the Battle of Walker's Creek in June 23rd 1844 edition, also credited courage and the gallant Hays' leadership...**Thus ended a fight unparalleled in this country for the gallantry displayed on both sides and deadly struggle, and the triumphant success of the gallant partisan captain of the West...I scarcely know which to admire most, the skill and courage of the officer who commanded on that occasion, or his modesty ..."**Concealing his own deeds, he did ample justice to his comrades...

"Rare courage" is one thing but was there another factor in the successful outcome and the disproportionate number of casualties? Was there an X factor? Was the difference in the outcome contained in Major Hays' high praise for the 1830s Paterson Colt pistols the Rangers carried? The answer to all questions is yes! Detailed in Major Hays' report... **"closed in with them, hand to hand, with my five-shooting pistols, which did good execution. Had it not been for them, I doubt what the consequences would have been. I cannot recommend these arms too highly."**

—

*REPORT of the Battle of Walker's Creek,
fought by Capt. J. C. HAYS, in June,
1844.*

SAN ANTONIO, June 16, 1844.

Hon. Secretary of War & Marine,

Sir,—On the first of this month, I left camp, which was near this place, with fifteen men, for the purpose of scouring the country, and, if possible, to ascertain what tribe of Indians were committing so many depredations.

I proceeded a north course, as far as between the Pedernales and Llano. After scouring that country, and wishing to go no further, on account of the negotiations that were going on, I concluded to return; although I saw sufficient sign of Indians to have induced me to proceed farther up the country. But having an eye single to my instructions, I deemed it prudent to return.

When on Walker's creek, about fifty miles above Seguin, when encamped, a party of Indians made their appearance, numbering about ten, and endeavored to draw me out. I immediately ordered my men to saddle, and prepare to fight; for I could have no doubt but that their intentions were hostile. After being mounted, I proceeded slowly towards them—they, at the same time, using every art and stratagem to throw me off my guard, and induce me to give chase to them. They, however, did not succeed in their design.

I then fell into the timber, and moved up the creek about a quarter of a mile, when I discovered their number to be between sixty and seventy. After ascertaining that they could not decoy or lead me astray, they came out boldly, formed themselves, and dared us to the fight. I then ordered a charge; and, after dischar-

Trails to the Past

by Bryden Moon

Why gush over these firearms, didn't Texas Rangers always carry pistols? Why would this small singular confrontation engender descriptions of seminal and watershed? Answering both questions includes the fact that earlier Ranger firearms were single-shot and required nearly a minute to reload. All 16 Rangers involved in the Battle of Walker's Creek were equipped with two five-shooting Paterson Colts (picture right). In this real life-and-death field test, Hays' men demonstrated that the capability of firing multiple rounds before reloading would allow the Texans to successfully defend, engage and defeat a much larger band of Native-Americans. This development thus shifted the balance of power on the western frontier to settlers and rangers when so equipped.



As to the naming of the Battle, why name it after Walker? Could that answer reside in a June 16, 1844, letter from Thomas G. Western to Sam Houston? Does this same letter also provide a clear indicator of where the Battle of Walker's Creek occurred? **Dear General**

The Western mail arrived here last evening and brings the intelligence that Maj. Hays has had a pretty smart brush with some 60 Indians supposed to be Comanche, on the river Guadalupe, above the San Antonio Road and near the "Pinto trail" ... Maj. Hays sent to Bexar for reinforcements and supplies...two wounded, Mr. Walker seriously, perhaps mortally, and Mr. Gillespie severely... The serious character of Walkers obliged Hays to maintain his position, he could neither advance or retreat without abandoning his wounded... Be pleased to present my respect to Mrs. H[ouston] etc. etc. Yours Truly WESTERN



Samuel Walker (pictured left) did survive and joined Hays in the U. S. fight against Mexico a couple of years later, dying during an engagement in 1847. Nothing has been uncovered to certify his connection to any creek in Kendall County. And while the landmark Guadalupe River and Pinta Trail only come together in Kendall County, a map designating "X marks the spot", has never turned up. But the significance of this small skirmish, first named by Hays in his report, was never forgotten by serious historians. From contemporary author, S. C. Gwynne's Pulitzer-nominated book, Empire of the Summer Moon: ***Though it would take a while for everyone else on the frontier to understand what happened at Walker's Creek...a fundamental paradigm-shattering change had occurred. The Indians now faced the prospect of being blasted from horseback by guns that never emptied; the whites could now fight entirely mounted against their foes with weapons whose frequency of firing nearly matched that of the Comanches. The odds had been evened up. Or better. "Up to this time," Samuel Walker wrote in a letter to Samuel Colt in 1846, "these daring Indians had always supposed themselves superior to us, man to man, on horse....The result of this engagement was such as to intimidate them and enable us to treat with them."***

And this historic event, hidden to most and know only to astute historians and weapon experts, occurred just a few miles upriver from GRSP in Kendall County.

There are more stories to be told!

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

by JW Pieper

Winter came in with a rapid transition from summer temperatures to freezing weather in the Texas Hill Country. Seemingly overnight we saw bright red, orange, golden, and yellow leaves to announce that many of those leaves would soon be leaving us. The bald cypress trees along Honey Creek were showing their golden ornamentation in mid-November with many of those leaves already floating on the surface of the creek. Our visitors on the Saturday morning Honey Creek Hike marveled at the beauty of this time of year, and couldn't pass up the photos just waiting to be taken!

Halloween in the Park in late October was a roaring success, with the many volunteers and GRSP staff working diligently to welcome the many costumed children and adults, assist them in parking, directing them to the Amphitheatre where ghost stories were being told, opening the path to the many volunteer candy stations along the lighted, half mile trail, then serving the visitors hot dogs, chips, and liquid refreshment. All sizes of little and large goblins, ghosts, pirates, football players, princesses, etc. were seen carrying their container of candy back to their cars for transportation home.

The Friends Group is appreciative of our members and the Park staff who worked for days to make our Halloween in the Park fun for so many children. The candy station volunteers enjoy the event as much as the children, but they, too, are a vital part of making the night a success. We thank those who are new to the event and extend a huge thanks to the loyal candy station sponsors who help out year after year. To name all of the volunteers for our Halloween in the Park extravaganza would be impossible, but we could not have accomplished the task without Tom Anderson and Holly Camero who labored before, during and after the event to plan and coordinate this annual event, set up the lighting and the decorations, entertain and feed the visitors, and then clean up the trail on the day or days after that Sunday evening. If you missed out on the fun this year we hope that you will join us as a volunteer, candy station sponsor, or bring your family to enjoy the sights, sounds—and of course—the candy in October 2015.

Guadalupe River State Park is a beautiful place to enjoy nature year-round, and Honey Creek Stat Natural Area is displayed every Saturday morning at 9:00 AM with a guided hike. Plan to visit and see what a treasure we have in our back yard!

Meet the Ranger

by Sandra Espara, Park Staff

I would like to introduce Layla Emerson, she is one of our new Customer Service Representatives who shares a like vision of conserving, protecting and educating others about our natural and cultural resources. Layla's interest to be part of GRSP was first peaked when she attended a Master Naturalist class in the Spring of 2013 where Craig Hensley was giving a presentation. After seeing his presentation she was hooked! She later attended one of his interpretive programs in the park, where she decided that working in the same place a person with so much enthusiasm and passion for what they did was someplace she herself wanted to be.

Layla worked as a seasonal employee for the first time in the Summer of 2013 and decided to join us again this past summer. Shortly after her seasonal employment started, an opening for a full time CSR came available and she was able to secure the full time position. As a CSR she plays many roles which include greeting visitors, answering their questions, issuing entrance permits, checking them into campsites and promoting our interpretive programs. Layla strives to make a difference and she recently adopted the project of breathing life back into the gardens at the entrance of the Park. She believes in finding creative ways to educate and engage GRSP visitors; this project will serve not just as a means of beautification for the park but also as an educational tool. She wants to encourage the use of drought resistant native plants and shrubs that will provide food and nectar for our wildlife to help balance the encroaching urbanization in our area. Layla has done a lot of research and sought out help from a local nursery to ensure that only native plants are showcased. Her long term goal is to use the gardens for interpretive purposes, to educate the public on landscaping for wildlife in our drought prone region.

Layla is relatively new to Texas as she just celebrated her 10th anniversary as a resident of this great state! Growing up on a dairy farm in upstate New York, she was brought up to love the outdoors and be a steward to the land and nature. She spent much of her free time exploring the many acres on their farm with siblings and friends. Camping and hiking are some of her most cherished activities. "Wouldn't it be fun if she could work at a park?!"

Well I guess some dreams do come true and some transplants are great!

We lead by example and I want to say "Thank you" to both Craig and Layla because it's thru Craig's passion for his work that our connection was made possible to reach Layla and we are fortunate to have her as part of the GRSP family.

Halloween at the Park

by Tara Anderson



Green Initiatives at the Park

by Laura Horner, Park Staff

Our society as a whole is becoming more green/sustainably aware and has started looking for such improvements within their local communities. Our Texas State Parks is one of the best places to showcase greener and more sustainable initiatives since our mission is to manage and conserve the natural and culture resources for use of present and future generations. Here at Guadalupe River State Park, we have two sustainable initiatives which are happening at the park. We are working on replacing all of our outdoor lighting with more energy efficient, dark sky complaint LED lighting and we are working on also replacing all of the water fountains with new models that feature a water bottle filling station using some end of the year money.

Some of the end of year money enabled us to change most of the exterior lighting but not all. We wanted to focus on areas in the park which visitors would be occupying during the night time so they could have a better opportunity to view the night sky. With this in mind, we replaced all of the exterior lighting in the day use area, camping loops and headquarters. The new lights are down facing lights so that the majority of the light is pointed down to not create light pollution which hinders your ability to view the night sky. The new lights only utilize 11.3watts making them 83% more efficient than the old exterior lights which will save us on our electric bill and help the bottom line of our operating budget.

In addition to the LED lighting upgrades, we also used the money to purchase four new water fountains by Elkay. These new water fountains feature a water bottle filling station that has a built in water bottle filler counter. An interpretive message is communicated to our visitors via the fountain which reads "helped eliminate waste from # amount of disposable plastic bottles." This is a great way to provide a new service to our visitors and remind them to consider bringing a refillable water bottle as opposed to utilizing the one time use plastic water bottles that appear to be overflowing the trash cans in the park. By using the water bottle refilling station it creates less waste in landfills and in turn less work for our rangers who empty the trash cans.

By utilizing some extra dollars at the end of the fiscal year, we were able to add some nice additions to the park. This dove tails in with the agency's mission statement on conserving natural resources. This also shows the public that TPWD and Texas State Parks are committed to protecting our natural resources for future and present generations through [green initiatives](#).

Guadalupe River's 1st Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup

by Laura Horner, Park Staff

Recently, the park staff and friends group adopted the three mile stretch of Park Road 31 from the park entrance to Hwy 46. Some of you may have noticed the sign along on the road. As sponsors of the highway, we are tasked with cleaning it up and our first highway cleanup will be on Thursday, January 15, 2015. We will start at 9 am with breakfast tacos and cleanup will begin around 9:30 am. Hope to see you out there!



Upcoming programs at Guadalupe River State Park

by Craig Hensley

First Day Hikes at Guadalupe River State Park

The park is offering a series of First Day hikes, providing the opportunity to enjoy the many sights and sounds of both the park and Honey Creek State Natural Area. Make plans to join us for one or all of them and welcome the 2015, naturally!

Midnight First Day Hike

Guadalupe River State Park
 Wednesday, December 31, 2014 to Thursday, January 1, 2015
 11:30 p.m. - 1:30 a.m.
 Get a jump on the new year by joining Ranger Craig for a midnight hike to welcome the new year (complete with a cup of warm cider)! We'll meet at the park headquarters at 11:30 p.m. and head to the river to take a walk and welcome the new year with our best coyote (or whatever critter you feel like) calls. If you plan to join us, please email Craig at craig.hensley@tpwd.texas.gov. Dress for the weather!!!

First Day – First Birds – Hike

Guadalupe River State Park
 Thursday, January 1, 2015
 7:30-9 a.m.
 Join Park Ranger and birder Craig Hensley for a sunrise walk to welcome the new year. We'll meet at the front gate at 7:30 a.m. sharp and head out in search the first birds of 2015. Be sure to dress for the weather and bring binoculars if you have them (we do have a limited number for loan). This hike is for ages 12 and up. Please email Craig at craig.hensley@tpwd.texas.gov to reserve a spot.

Honey Creek First Day Hike

Guadalupe River State Park
 Thursday, January 1, 2015
 9-11:30 a.m.
 Join Friends board member and trained Honey Creek guide Tom Anderson for a special First Day hike through Honey Creek State Natural Area. This guided hike will give you the opportunity to view beautiful Honey Creek and learn about the cultural and natural history of this unique area. To participate in this hike, please be at the Rust House inside the park by 9 a.m. Please dress for the weather and wear sturdy hiking shoes. No reservations necessary.

Bauer Unit First Day Hike

Guadalupe River State Park
 Thursday, January 1, 2015
 1-4 p.m.
 Join us for a walk on the wild side of the Bauer Unit to welcome the new year. We'll meet at Park Headquarters and drive to the Bauer Unit, hiking from there to the river and back. This hike will be between two and three miles in length. Be sure to dress for the weather, bring water and wear sturdy hiking shoes. This hike is for ages 10 and up. No reservations necessary.

2015 Dues

by Bill Beach

2015 Membership Dues Are Now Payable

It is a time of renewal, and if you have not renewed your Friends of GRSP/Honey Creek membership for 2015 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 February 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 first
Thursday at 6:30 pm.
And bring a friend!**