



Summer 2017 NEWSLETTER

Friends of Guadalupe River, Honey Creek, Inc.

A non-profit organization

BOY SCOUT SERVICE PROJECT AT THE PARK by David Kibler

I APRIL 2017

On Saturday, 1 April, a group of twenty-six enthusiastic Scouts and adult volunteers from Boy Scout Troop 285, sponsored by Coker Methodist Church in San Antonio, returned to the park for the nineteenth time since 2007 to perform service work and to make improvements at the park. The primary work performed involved continuing the on-going project of removing Ashe juniper growth in the eastern portion of the Honey Creek State Natural Area near the Doepenschmidt House off Spring Branch Road. A highlight of the morning, which was later interrupted by the beginning of a significant weekend rainfall event, was the removal of trees and other plant life from around an historic barn structure on the entrance road. The remainder of the work involved removing cedar (Ashe juniper) growth which had survived a controlled burn in the fields to the north of the barn.

All volunteers displayed their spirit of cheerful service in performing this work for the park. The boys and adults of Troop 285 always look forward to this semi-annual service project as a way to demonstrate their Scout Spirit and will return to Guadalupe river State Park in the fall of 2017.

Highway Cleanup by Tom Anderson

by Tom Anderson



The park staff and the Friends joined forces and did their semi-annual park cleanup on May 8th. Watch in the fall for our next adventure in picking up all that people misplace on our park road.



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Traveling down Memory Lane Reunion in Honey Creek State Natural Area

Unfortunately, due to our concern for potentially severe weather with thunderstorms, we felt obligated to cancel this year's Homesteader Homecoming celebrating the 100 -year-old Rust House. While our annual Homesteader Homecomings are large gatherings, over the years other small, unpublicized park "homecomings and reunions" take place, chaperoned by park staff and Friends of Guadalupe River, Honey Creek members.

The background for the reunion covered in today's article took place in 2009. - Author

Remember that trip to your grandparents' farm out in the country? For city -raised kids, this is usually an exotic adventure with old rusty things, a patchwork quilt of wooden structures and large, live animals. Many times these visits were tied to holidays & reunions.



For Sara W. Turner those trips were a ritual of summer, made even easier because her trip from the big city to the country only took only took an hour or so. She grew up in San Antonio and if you knew that she headed north, I'm betting that you might be able to guess her destination. Yes, the trips she made were to the lands of Guadalupe River State Park (GRSP) and Honey Creek State Natural Area (HCSNA). The "W" in Sara's name is the initial of her family's surname, she was born a Weidner. Her grandparents were Otto and Meta Weidner who owned the majority of acreage (over 1500 acres) that make up today's HCSNA. So when Sara made her visits north, she wasn't greeted by a park ranger, she was visiting Otto's working ranch (picture left of **Otto on his horse "Boy"**) and Meta's numerous gardens and flower beds. Although she was never able to meet them because they had died prior to her birth, her great-grandparents were Henry and Louisa Rust. For historical context, her grandmother, Meta, was the daughter of Henry and Louise Rust for whom our GRSP Rust house was named.

When I met Sara at the Ranger Contact Station on a hot, nearly 100-degree day in mid-June, 2009, she told me that her trips to the ranch started to slow to a trickle when she reached her teens. But during her early visits to the ranch she gathered enough memories to last a lifetime. With an extended family in tow, we caravanned to Honey Creek State Natural Area (HCSNA) to see the Weidner/ Doeppenschmidt house. This house was not only the home of Sara's grandparents, it was also the house that her father, Oswald, grew up in; it was where he was born. So we strolled around her grandparents' land, pointing out pens and dipping tanks, imagining flower beds and gardens and wire fencing that no longer existed.

Continued...

Trails to the Past

by Bryden Moon



During her visit I asked her about her favorite memories and these she graciously shared: *The time I spent playing and exploring with my cousins and the second would be the time that I spent with my dear, sweet Grandma Meta. She was wonderful - so loving and patient with us.* But she also got excited just thinking about time spent riding horses and taking dips in Honey Creek.

Sara Weidner Turner also shared a treasure trove of family photos, including the picture Sara took her last trip out, when the ranch was in possession of the Nature Conservatory. On that visit in August of 1986, since she wasn't going to have any relatives to greet her, she brought her own: her brother, James Weidner's three kids, Suzanne, Ross & Curt and her own daughters, Brandy & Laura. They snapped this photo at the time of the trip by the old pump that was used to draw water from their gutter-fed cistern (photo left - **Summer 1986 – Weidner House** - (l-r) Laura Turner, Suzanne Weidner, Curt Weidner, Ross Weidner, and Brandy Turner).

At the onset of this piece we talked about how trips to your grandparents can turn out to be reunions, family gatherings. Once again our 2009 adventure contained elements of family. Additionally in the past, this column has emphasized how the passage of time quietly creates history. This was again brought home to me on this warm Saturday afternoon, as Sara had arranged a 2009 reunion. If you take a close look at the group photo Sara had crafted, 23 years later the same family cast members were in 1986 formation; the same cousins, 23 years older, arranged in the same order one more time around that old cistern pump handle (photo right - **Summer 2009 – Weidner House** (l-r) Laura Turner, Suzanne Weidner Smith, Curt Weidner (holding photo from 1986), Ross Weidner, Brandy Turner Pevehouse).



There are more stories to be told!

Nature opportunities at the Park

by R. Craig Hensley, Park Interpreter

Welcome to our summer intern Meagan Bell

Howdy y'all, my name is Meagan Bell and I am this year's summer intern at Guadalupe State Park. I was born and raised in Sugar Land Texas, outside of Houston, where Brazos Bend State Park, Girl Scouts, and playing in the river across from my childhood home sparked my interest in natural resource and wildlife. I received my Bachelor's Degree at University of Texas at San Antonio in Biology with a concentration in Wildlife Ecology. I discovered through a wildlife technician position at Bent Creek Experimental Forest, North Carolina, in the summer of 2014, that my dreams could become a reality, as I spent countless hours gathering data on the impacts of forest management on the small mammal, reptile, and amphibian community. My favorite species I caught was the least shrew and the eastern red-spotted newt. In pursuit of that dream I decided to become a Graduate student at Texas State University, under the advisement of Dr. Randy T. Simpson starting in the fall of 2015. My study species is the Gulf-coast kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys compactus*), who is a Texas endemic ranging from Mustang and Padre Islands inland just south of Bexar and Guadalupe counties. I was interested in the inland population's ecological requirements, due to the lack of data on this rather inconspicuous (and adorable species). As I approach my thesis defense this summer, I reflect on the valuable lessons and knowledge I have gained from my research. Currently, I hope to extend that knowledge through this great internship opportunity in both natural resource techniques and interpreter skills. I am

looking forward to perhaps meeting many of you either at the Discovery Center or along a trail throughout my time at the park. I am hoping in the near future I can land a job at Texas Parks and wildlife to further my career as a wildlife biologist passing on that knowledge to future generations

All,

Please help me in welcoming our newest member to our Guadalupe River SP Team Matt Ahrens! Matt has accepted the position of Operations Ranger and is actually already working in the field as most of you already know.

Matt was born and raised in San Antonio, Texas and graduated from MacArthur High School in 2012. He received a bachelor's degree from Texas State University in Geographic Information Science and a bachelor's degree from Texas A&M University in Recreation, Park and Tourism Science. His concentration at A&M was on local and state parks systems. He worked last summer as a Park Ranger for the City of New Braunfels Parks and Recreation Department.

Matt has 6 older siblings 5 of which are step siblings. He's an avid sports fan of both of his alma maters and of the San Antonio Spurs and Dallas Cowboys. Matt spends his free time playing sports as well as hiking, playing guitar, and watching movies.

Matt would love to advance his career and one day work in other positions around the state such as at Mustang Island State Park, Enchanted Rock State Natural Area, or at the TPWD Headquarters in Austin.

**Introducing Patti Still Lozano**

Hello, my name is Patti Still Lozano, I am the new face you will see in the Discovery Center and following Craig around this summer. I have been volunteering with Craig for a few months, which is where I met so many wonderful Master Naturalists. This inspired me to sign up for the Master Naturalists training. I am a proud graduate of Class 40 (Alamo Area) and have never enjoyed a program more. I am excited to be joining the GRSP team and putting all the great training to good use.

I have been married for 23 years and have 4 children, Patrick-22, Emily-20, Amanda-18 and Andrew-10. We are all nature lovers, and are off camping at State Parks whenever possible. I make the best smores and vegetarian hobo packets around. We have more animals than children; enough said on that subject. I also volunteer with Wild Life Rescue & Rehabilitation, the Feral Cat Coalition, and the butterfly gardens at Phil Hardberger Park.

I am a certified elementary teacher and have a Master's degree in Education Leadership. For the past fourteen years, I directed a non-profit program that conducted parenting classes all over Bexar County to prevent child abuse. I taught classes San Antonio College, prisons, in-patient rehabilitation centers, and churches. The grant ended and for the past few months I have been substitute teaching as I contemplate my next career. I look forward to working with all the wonderful volunteers and staff at GRSP. Life is better outdoors!



Nature opportunities at the Park

by Linda Gindler

Come on out – the birding is GREAT for a Patriotic Challenge

In recent years, the Park Staff has focused effort in reestablishing savannah areas within the Park. Savannahs were once common in the hill country before humans began fire suppression that changed the landscape into denser thickets of ash juniper (cedar trees) with fewer open areas. The Park Staff has worked to return sections of Guadalupe River State Park to oak savannahs by utilizing controlled burns. Their efforts have been rewarded in recent years with the return of summer savannah birds in goodly numbers.

Many of the summer savannah birds arrive looking for love and they quickly began to find mates. By June, nests are built and adults focus on egg tending, feeding, and preparing young for the all important first flight. Most will raise two broods before leaving in late summer for their winter feeding grounds. It's a wondrous and hectic time, where park visitors are treated to glimpses of renewal.

With the 4th of July just around the corner, I thought it would be a great time to challenge park patrons with a patriotic tribute. That would be – finding our national colors (red, white and blue) in avian form out on the savannah. The best savannah hike to accomplish the challenge is the Painted Bunting Trail. It's a little less than 3 miles, but you can opt for only doing a portion if you like. Come early for good photography light and cooler temperatures.

The first challenge, RED, is best met with a male Vermillion Flycatcher. These flycatchers use to be rare at the Park, but the control burns have been a main factor in the return of breeding pairs. They are stocky shaped flycatchers that love to sit on an open perch and rapidly dart out for insects, catching them in mid air. Look for them low (i.e., ground level up to 20 feet). Males spend most of the day perched, so scan the savannah looking for a red spot. Watch for males presenting a colorful butterfly or showy insect to their lady love. Females are brown with a streaked breast and a touch of salmon color on the belly.



Male Vermillion Flycatcher
(Photo by John Prentice)



Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (Photo by John Prentice)

The second challenge is WHITE and the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, while not 100% white, certainly has a very showy white underside. It too is a summer breeding resident found along the Painted Bunting Trail. Like the Vermillion, it likes open areas where it perches and darts out for prey delighting watchers with quick acrobatic turns. Scissor-tails establish territories and aggressively defend them. Interlopers test these territories in the early mornings so keep an eye out and you may be treated to an amazing aerial chase. Both the male and female look similar.

Now cap off the patriotic triple challenge, by finding BLUE on a male Blue Grosbeak. This one will be a bit harder to spot as Grosbeaks tend to stay within the protection of taller grass, shrubs or small trees where they feed on insects and seed. You might hear them first as the males sit high in small trees to belt out their rich metallic song. The female is a rich cinnamon color and difficult to spot.

If you are not sure you can find one of these special birds, come out for one of Ranger Craig's Summer "Big Year Bird Hikes". Hikes occur the first Sunday of the month, beginning at 8:30 a.m. at the Discovery Center. If you want to join a hike, bring along a pair of binoculars and/or camera because the birding really is great!



Male Blue Grosbeak (Photo by John Prentice)

The Latest from the Habiscape

by Susan Bogle

New plant markers are slowly appearing in the Habiscape, which makes plant identification much easier for the park's visitors. The Friends of Guadalupe River State Park generously provided the funds to purchase both the metal markers and the label maker. And park hosts have been steadily producing the labels under Ranger Craig Hensley's direction.

These markers are being distributed as they are made and as the plant appears above ground or its blooms begin developing. While any one species of plant might be found in various areas of the Habiscape, it will be identified only once. These markers provide both the common name and the botanical name, making plant identification by a curious public much more accurate.

Other additions to the Habiscape are several plants which have been recently planted into the collection. These include Huisache Daisy, Engelmann Daisy and the exotic sounding Greendragon. Each specimen is dug from a remote location in the park and is then transplanted to an appropriate site inside the Habiscape. Since the intent is to mimic the natural setting of the park, the plants are placed in a random fashion.

These transplants can be successfully made so late in the spring because they are native plants that very naturally can tolerate the calcareous soil, limited moisture and rising temperatures. The Habiscape is intended to reflect the conservation of plants native to the park which then both conserves resources and creates a sustainable landscape.

Expressing Gratefulness...I Hope

by Craig Hensley, Park Interpreter

I am blessed.

Blessed in the sense that I have come to know many good people through my work at Guadalupe River, whether they are staff, volunteers or the general public. All of these connections have mattered to me, but perhaps none more lasting and powerful than the connections I have had the good fortune to make with the volunteers who dedicate time – and many a great deal of their time – to help the park and myself accomplish a great deal for the benefit of both the natural world and the visitors we serve. There are so many, including many of you reading this that have and continue to enrich my life with every encounter.

When I made the decision to return to the park, now several years ago, selfishly I wanted to come back because of the Discovery Center, a project I was intimately involved with helping create, at least conceptually. I wanted to see how it turned out and was received by the public. I have not been disappointed. Yet, I also knew that returning to Texas would re-unite me with people that had volunteered for the park while I was here the first time. I missed them; I missed you. And with this too, I have not been disappointed.

There are so many people that have joined the Guadalupe River State Park volunteer family over the past five years. They/you have helped with everything from Park Hosting to counting, capturing and identifying butterflies and birds, working with school children to deliver high quality, hands-on education field experiences, educating everyone that visits the Discovery Center, or teaching a child to fish, re-habbing and taking care of the bird feeding station, tending to the wonderfully successful wildflower and butterfly garden known as the Habiscap and even helping with the paperwork/record-keeping that isn't my forte.

You all matter – to the park, to our visitors and guests – and to me. Everything you volunteer to do – everything – matters. It doesn't matter if it is one Discovery Center shift a month or teaching multiple school field experiences a month – it all matters.

I honestly try not to take any volunteer for granted and yet sometimes I wonder if I say "thank you" enough, whether each volunteer knows how much I appreciate his or her participation at the park. The best I can do is say thanks – thank you for your service, your dedication and for your support and friendship – and for putting up with a rather quirky, sometimes forgetful, sometimes disorganized, but always thankful and passionate, Park Interpreter.

My life has been enriched by each of the volunteers that have come into my life. Moving forward I hope they/you will continue to share yourself with the Park (and me).

And, I hope those of you reading this that aren't yet a volunteer will consider becoming one. I am telling you that you will not find a better extended family anywhere.

Contributions/Donations

by Bill Beach, Treasurer

The following are contributions and programs that the Friends of Guadalupe River State Park/Honey Creek SNA have been able to accomplish with memberships and donations.

Items Purchased**Sponsored Events**

New Automatic Front Park Gate - 2004	Trailer for Interpretive Activities - 2014	Saturday Evening Programs - Ongoing
Leveling of Rust House - 2006	Archery Equipment - 2014	Honey Creek Saturday Morning Hike - Ongoing
Painting of Rust House - 2006	Shirts for Volunteers - 2014	Honey Creek Special Morning Hikes - Ongoing
Car Ports For Park Residences - 2006	Supplies for Youth Hunt - 2014	Trail Maintenance - Ongoing
Skulls and Skins for Discovery Center - 2008	Plants and Mulch for South Island - 2014	Halloween Program - Ongoing
Vests For Discovery Center Volunteers - 2009	Storage Container - 2015	Third Grade Outdoor Classroom - Ongoing
Hand Held Radio Batteries - 2010	Water Feature Upgrade in Bird Viewing Area 2015-2016	School Classrooms - Ongoing
Landscaping for Rust House - 2011	Loppers for Park - 2015	Interpretive Training For Discovery Center - Ongoing
Display Case for Rust House - 2011	Plants for Butterfly Habiscap - 2015	Homesteaders Program - Ongoing
Bird Seed for Bird Viewing Blind - 2011 - Current	Caps for Youth Hunt - 2015	Christmas Movie in The Park - Ongoing
Landscaping for Park Sign - 2011	Supplies for Butterfly Habiscap	Bird Lady Presents Raptors 2009 - 2015
Park Benches - 2011		Volunteer Appreciation Dinner (Xmas Party) - Ongoing
Bird Viewing Area Improvements - 2012		Butterfly Count - Ongoing
Tables & Chairs for Discovery Center - 2012		Milkweed Count - Ongoing
Hand Held Radios for Park - Various Dates		River Clean Up - Ongoing
Hand Held Radio Antennas - 2012		"Cedar" Clearing- Ongoing
Flat Screen TV's for Discovery Center & HQ		Park Road Clean Up - Ongoing
Various Supplies for Discovery Center - Various Dates		Dutch Over Cooking
GRSP Display & Table Cloth - 2014		Weekend Interpretive Programs - Ongoing



Summer Programs at the Park

by Craig Hensley

Make plans to join our Park Interpreter for one or several of our summer programs at the park. From archery to tracking armadillos, we will be havin' fun in the summer sun! For more information on specific programs, please check out this link: http://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/guadalupe-river/park_events for more details including times and locations.

- Astronomy/Stargazing:** Saturdays June 3, July 1, August 5
- Archery:** Saturdays, June 17 and August 19 and Friday, July 28
- River Critters:** Saturdays June 10 and July 29 and Friday, June 30
- Fishing 101:** Saturdays July 8 and August 5 and Friday, June 16
- Prowlin' for Owls:** Saturday, June 10
- Storytime in the Park:** Fridays, June 9, June 23, July 14, July 28, August 11
- Bugs-R-U's:** Fridays, June 16 and July 7 and Saturday, July 22
- Honey Creek at Night:** Friday, June 24 and July 7
- Geocaching 101:** Saturday, June 24
- Critter Programs** (different topics):
 - Frogs – Saturday, June 17
 - Mammals – Saturday, July 1
 - Tracking (Who Goes There?) – Saturday, June 17, Friday, July 21
 - Bats – Friday, June 2; Friday, June 16, Saturday, July 22 and 29
 - Snakes – Friday, August 4
- Full Moon Walk** – Friday, June 9
- Campfire/Smoers and Stories** – Friday, June 23
- Rope-making:** Saturday, June 15
- GRSP Big Year Bird Hikes:** Sundays, June 4, July 2 and August 6

2017 Dues

by Bill Beach

2017 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 2017 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!**