



Summer 2018 NEWSLETTER

Friends of Guadalupe River, Honey Creek, Inc.

A non-profit organization

Trails to the Past

by Bryden Moon

Homesteader Homecoming – Trails That We Have Taken (We've Been Everywhere, Man!)

Our 1st Homesteader Homecoming, hosted in 2006 by Terry Urbanczyk, was held in Guadalupe River State Park's amphitheater, followed by a reprise in 2007, a rainout in 2008, and a Rust house gathering in 2009. Then from 2010 through 2016, we left the park's campus for seven outings at regional sites. Our 2017 Homesteader Homecoming was canceled due to thunderstorms, thus our 2018 reunion at the Rust House was the 11th Homesteader program.



St. Joseph – Honey Creek 2010



Bergheim 2014



Honey Creek Headwaters Ranch 2011



Knibbe Ranch 2015



Honey Creek Ranch 2012



Kendalia 2016



Wehe Ranch 2013



Rust House 2018

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Trails to the Past

by Bryden Moon

All Trails Lead to the Rust House 11th Homesteader Homecoming

(35th Anniversary of GRSPark & 101st Anniversary of Rust House)

“As humans, we roam the entire world. We even venture beyond it. The whole planet is ours, but the whole planet is not our home. Instead, home is the ground we measure with our own two feet. And home is the place that measures us. Home is the place that names us and the place we, in turn, name. It feeds us, body and soul, and if we are living well, we feed it too. Home is the place we cultivate with our love.”

Author - Christie Purifoy, *Roots and Sky: A Journey Home in Four Seasons*

On April 29th with the 101-year-old Rust House as the back drop, and the last words of Donna Peacock’s poetry, **“Home is the place we cultivate with our love”** still ringing in our ears, the Friends of Guadalupe River/Honey Creek kicked off Guadalupe River State Park’s 11th Homesteader Homecoming. Honoring our park house namesake couple Henry and Louise Rust, this event was truly a



Descendants of Henry and Louise Rust

homecoming as it was the first “in-GRSPark” gathering in nine years.

Friends’ members, Thea Platz, Holly Camero, Tom Anderson, Dave and Judy Kibler, Joan Nitschke, Wilt Shaw, Mackenzie Brown, Charleen Moore and Kay Moon, did their best to welcome guests, continuing the tradition of bringing a treat to share. And in a nod to Guadalupe River State Park’s 35th Anniversary, all were able to view new panels profiling three other early settler families, in addition to Henry and Louise Rust: Phillip and Marie Bauer, Otto and Meta Weidner, Jacob and Marie Doepenschmidt & their sons, Peter and Adam.



Setting up in the Backyard

Continued...

Trails to the Past

by Bryden Moon



Photo credits:
Wilt Shaw
Mackenzie Brown
Charleen Moore

There are more stories to be told!

Happenings in the Habiscape

by Susan Bogle

The Habiscape continues to grow, develop and evolve this spring. A variety of plants are popping up from the seeds that had been distributed both naturally and by hand last year, while the existing perennials are clearly regenerating, with new growth appearing daily. All of this results in a diversity of plants in the Habiscape that is becoming even more a true reflection of the plant community that is found growing naturally throughout the park. The lovely colors of the flowers and the inviting green foliage are attracting more and more park visitors, as witnessed by the increased foot traffic seen in the Habiscape.

The newest addition in the Habiscape is a Mexican Plum tree (*Prunus mexicana*) that was recently donated. It was planted just beyond the garden's perimeter. This tree will eventually grow to approximately 25 feet, adding some welcome shade to the area. In the spring it is one of the first plants to bloom, offering white flowers that will perfume the garden with a lovely fragrance, while attracting the bees and other pollinators. Its small fruit will attract other wildlife later in the season.

The popular Basket Flower (*Centaurea americana*) should be blooming shortly, attracting not just a variety of insect pollinators, but also park visitors who cannot resist its thistle-shaped flower with its vibrant pink color. Standing over two feet tall, this flower offers a convenient view of the large variety of butterflies that come to nectar on it. This plant is an annual that dies away in the summer heat, but it germinates easily from the plentiful seeds that it will be dropping.

And thanks to the support of the Friends of Guadalupe River State Park, the popular and colorful butterfly guide that first became available last year is being reprinted, so it will be available for this summer's guests for a one dollar donation. And in addition, this year a wildflower guide is also being developed. This guide is planned to be made available at the same time as the butterfly guide. This will be an exciting and wonderful addition that park visitors can really appreciate.

Solar at the Discovery Center

by Felicia Lopez, Park Ranger

Solar Panels will now provide converted UV light from the sun into usable energy for our Discovery Center! Our philosophy in fulfilling our mission includes balancing outdoor recreation with conservation as we manage and protect natural and cultural resources. This project is a responsible choice within that mission since our new system will offset carbon emissions equivalent to driving 89,001 fewer miles per year-taking 8 cars off the road, and planting 958 trees! Savings will help fund possible future sustainable building up-grades in the park, so let the sun shine!





New Employees

by Rangers

Howdy, my name is Dylan Wallace and I am an Operations Ranger II here at Guadalupe River State Park. I graduated from Texas A&M University in December of 2017 and have long been waiting to get my career started with Texas Parks and Wildlife. Guadalupe River is my first official employment with the department which I hope to be the beginning of a lifelong career. I have had a passion for the outdoors since I was a young kid and I sincerely believe life is better outside. Gig 'em.

Gabriel Dominic Garza

Born in San Marcos, Texas on April 28 1979

Graduated from San Marcos High School in 1997

I was born and raised in San Marcos and most of my family still lives in or around the area. One of the earliest memories I have as a child is going to Goose Island State Park with my family and feeding the fish and crabs and birds with flour tortillas. This was the beginning of my life long interest in parks and wildlife. Throughout my childhood, my parents took us to parks all over the state and I always looked forward to those trips and it ingrained an appreciation and deep interest in my mind of our states natural resources. As I got older and began looking for a career path, I tried several different occupations but the one that gave me the most satisfaction was city parks maintenance. Eventually I reached out to TPWD and after almost 2 years and 10 tries, I was finally awarded a position at Guadalupe River State Park in February of 2018, where I am today. I hope to continue and grow at TPWD where I can contribute to our states natural resources.



GRSPTroop285 Event

by Dave Kibler

On Saturday, 14 April, twenty-one Scouts and adult volunteers from Boy Scout Troop 285, sponsored by Coker Methodist Church in San Antonio, returned to the park for the twenty-first time since 2007 to perform service work and to help make improvements at the park. The work performed this time involved clearing the roadsides of the access road from Spring Branch Road to the Döppenschmidt House . This historic farmstead, settled in 1871, is located in the southeastern



portion of the Honey Creek State Natural Area. Work that morning consisted of the removal of Ashe juniper and other vegetation which had over grown the roadside. Volunteers displayed their spirit of cheerful service in



performing this work for the park. The Scouts followed this with an afternoon of Scout-skill learning activities. And many of the Scouts and dads camped overnight near the historic house. 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 plan to return to Guadalupe River State Park in the fall of 2018 to complete the project on the road.

Come on out - the birding is GREAT

by Linda Gindler

Summer is on the way and the Park is yet again transforming. Each season brings its own joys for the birders among us and early summer is no exception. Late spring migrants continue to pass through the Park and bring unexpected surprises to the careful observer. Summer residents have arrived in number and are busily attracting mates, building nests, and raising young. One bird family to watch during the summer is the cuckoos. Cuckoos have long played a role in human culture appearing in Greek mythology and Shakespeare. As well as making their way into our language with words such as “cuckold” and “cuckoo clocks”.

The Park is home to two types of cuckoos and both are Park rock stars. The first, Greater Roadrunner, is known to many as the crafty bird that continually out smarted Wile E. Coyote in the Warner Brothers’ cartoon series. Cartoon animators took liberties in drawing the Roadrunner using vibrant blues and purples. Real Roadrunners are streaked brown & black with tail and crest feathers showing iridescent blue, purple and green when the lighting is right. They are one of the larger Park birds measuring almost two feet. Their long legs propel them with a strong smooth gait that easily outpaces humans. Unfortunately, unlike the animated Roadrunner, in real life, coyotes do run faster and do present a real threat. Roadrunners eat anything they can catch including small mammals, reptiles, frogs, insects, eggs, and birds. The Roadrunner cartoon gave the impression that they are desert birds. They do like the arid southwest including southern California, Arizona, New Mexico and west Texas, but their home range extends all the way to Louisiana and Arkansas. They like semi-open scrubby habitat which means to find one in the Park you need to look in the savannah areas along Painted Bunting, Prairie, and Oak Savannah trails. In recent years, one is a frequent visitor at the headquarters building. Roadrunners call the Park home



Greater Roadrunner (photo by John Prentice)

year-round so be on the lookout whenever you visit the park.



Yellow-billed Cuckoo (Photo by John Prentice)

Another cuckoo in the Park is the Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Sometimes these birds are called “Rain Crows” because of an interesting habit of calling during thunderstorms. The Yellow-bills arrive in mid-April and call the Park home until late August. Yellow-bills are slender, long-tailed birds reaching 12” in length so considerably smaller than their Roadrunner cousin but still a good-sized bird. They have a thick slightly downcurved mostly yellow bill. Their backs are light brown and undersides whitish. Tails feature large bold white spots. They are patient feeders, foraging slowly and methodically for their prey of caterpillars, insects, lizards, and frogs. Their slow approach to feeding can make them hard to spot but, they are very vocal making it easy to find them by sound. Their slow, rolling, guttural calls are distinctive so listen to one of the many recordings offered on the internet before starting your search. Yellow-bills arrive at the Park with one goal in mind – nesting. Consequently, they set up territories and find mates quickly and get down to the business of raising young. They have one of the shortest nesting cycles of any species. From start of incubation to fledging can take as little as 17 days. The Yellow-billed has gotten a bad reputation from their cousin the European Common Cuckoo which lays its eggs in other bird’s nests leaving the rearing for foster parents. Yellow-bills have been known to do this, but it is not a regular habit and typically the adults do build nests. Look for Yellow-bills in the Park’s woodland areas such as the Day Use Area or along one

of the woodland trails such as the River Overlook, Live Oak, Hofheinz or Bamberger Trails.

If you would like to learn more about birds, watch the Park’s Facebook page and website for upcoming birding programs. Programs vary from month to month and include day as well as evening events. Or take a seat in the Park’s bird blind located in the Day Use Area. With its shaded seating it is one of the coolest places in the Park without getting wet. Birds flock to the water feature and provide visitors with up-close views. So, visit soon and often – the birding is GREAT!



More Than a River

by Thea Platz, President

Temperatures are rising and the pull of the cold waters of the Guadalupe River is strong.

Seems like a trip to the park is in order, a refreshing swim and a picnic is always a good way to spend a day. But there is so much more you can do at Guadalupe River state Park, it is so much more than a river.

Have you taken the kids to the Discovery Center? They can come in through a special entrance just for kids , explore several interactive areas and even check out an explorer backpack full of fun items to help them continue their discoveries throughout the park. The kids can complete activities from the Junior Ranger Activity Journal and become a Junior Ranger.

The bird and wildlife viewing area is fun for the whole family and is always bustling with activity; you never know what you might see taking advantage of the water feature and feeders.

Why not take to the trails? Whether you choose the scenic .26-mile Barred Owl Trail, A short trail perfect for stretching your legs before heading back to your campsite. Or the longer 2.86-mile Painted Bunting Trail in search of the colorful bird that is its namesake or others you won't be disappointed.

Another good option for hiking or biking, where you are likely to find plenty of solitude, is on the lesser known trails in the Bauer unit.

If you don't know where to begin your journey consider attending a guided hike though the Honey Creek State Natural area or one of the many programs lead by our park naturalis, Craig Hensley, one of the best interpreters in the state park system.

Regardless which activities you chose, we are glad you are here and glad you are a Friend to Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek State Natural area.

2018 Dues

by Bill Beach

2018 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 2018 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!**