

# FRIENDS

OF GUADALUPE RIVER STATE PARK  
HONEY CREEK SNA

## WINTER NEWSLETTER 2018

A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION



### What a perfect day for our first Monarch and Friends Pollinator Fiesta

by Thea Platz, President

On October 27th the sun came out and so did the visitors to the wonderful Monarch and Friends Pollinator Fiesta event sponsored by the Friends of Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek State Natural



Area. Children and adults enjoyed making their way through the many stations learning more about Monarchs and other pollinators while having fun making crafts and getting “pollinated” with candy at each station. Even the Monarch’s showed up, most of the day you could see a few of them flying through the area, delighting the crowd.

Participants were able to hear from author and naturalist Jan Wreade about her adventures traveling to a monarch roost in Mexico and to learn more about bats, some of the lesser known pollinators, from wildlife biologist Kim Hoskins.



A big thank you goes out to all of the volunteers who donated their time and talents to make the event a success. Tables were borrowed from the

Bergheim volunteer fire dept. and delivered by Dave Kibler who was working double duty assisting the Boy Scouts with a



service project in the Bauer unit. Welcoming the people at the Friend’s information table were Bob and Nancy Gray, they did a great job promoting the Friends group. On hand to give tours of the Habiscape was Susan Bogle, it was wonderful to see the families enjoying walking among the plants filled with butterflies. The Discovery Center volunteers Cyndi DeWitt and Eva Fromme cheerfully took on the extra visitors



and showed them the many pollinator exhibits and activities inside the center. The San Antonio Zoo, The Witte Museum, National

Park Service /San Antonio Missions, City of San Antonio Natural Areas Parks - Phil Hardberger park and Friedrich Park, Discovering the 58, Project ACORN and students from Our Lady of the Lake

**Continued...**

### What a perfect day for our first Monarch and Friends Pollinator Fiesta

by Thea Platz, President

university (OLLU) all partners of the Texas Children in Nature San Antonio Collaborative, a group that works together to get kids outdoors, offered up special activities and demonstrations for the event. We had tree cookie necklace stamping, painting and mask making. There were children taking a pledge



to do their part for conservation and becoming Jr. Rangers. There were live arachnids and spiders to see and even to touch and so much more!

Our pollinator costume contest winner was a precious little Monarch that flew to each station entertaining visitors.

When the event came to a close Mackenzie Brown, Charleen Moore who arrived after giving the morning hike at Honey Creek SNA and OLLU students, among others, made quick work of policing the area for stray trash, taking down and loading up tables, chairs and supplies so that Will Platz could return the tables to the fire station in a timely manner.

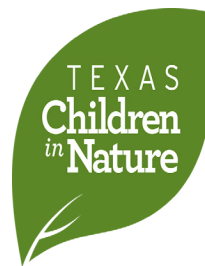
A big shout of thanks goes out to Barrett Durst and the Park staff for their help and support working behind the scenes preparing the area, delivering items and informing visitors at the gate. It was great to see many of the park staff and their families enjoying the fiesta along with the visitors. A special thanks goes to interpreter Holly



Platz for her help in organizing the event and especially for promoting the event with the help of talented volunteer, Cathi Pettersen who designed our promotional materials.

Many Participants as well as the activity providers gave positive comments on their experience and said they look forward to returning next year.

A great team of people came together to make the Monarch and Friends Pollinator Fiesta a successful event. The Friends of Guadalupe River State Park/Honey Creek State Natural Area support the park with a variety of projects. "Many hands make light work" won't you join hands with us?



## Interpreter Update

by Holly Platz, Interpretive Ranger



I am so excited to be part of the team at Guadalupe River State Park. I've been working here about two months now and everyone, both staff and volunteers, has been so welcoming and helpful. I'm eager to continue working with you all to connect visitors to the park.

I have been a Park Interpreter with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department since 2012, starting at Lake Casa Blanca State Park in Laredo, and then working for three years at South Llano River State Park in Junction. My husband Will and I have a beautiful baby boy named Carl, who is now six months old. We are so excited to instill a love of the outdoors in him the way our families did for both of us. Guadalupe River State Park is a very special place to me and my family, and I'm so happy to be here.

Below are some of our upcoming interpretive programs. All programs are free with Texas State Parks pass or park entrance fee - \$7 per person ages 13 and up, kids 12 and under are free! Programs meet at the amphitheater behind the Discovery Center, unless otherwise noted.

Look for more programs and information at the park's webpage:

[https://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/guadalupe-river/park\\_events](https://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/guadalupe-river/park_events)

And be sure to follow us on Facebook,

where you'll find events, updates, and photos!

<http://www.facebook.com/guadalupeiverstatepark>

### Bird with the Ranger:

**Saturday, December 1st and Saturday, December 29th, 9:00 - 10:00 am**  
Come birding with us! We'll check out the bird blind to see what birds are coming in to eat, bathe, and drink. Then if time permits, we'll take a short walk. A limited number of loaner binoculars provided, or bring your own. All ages and skill levels welcome!

### Oak Savannah Loop Hike:

**Saturday, December 1st, 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm**

Meet at the Prairie Trail parking lot near Park Headquarters. Join us for an easy hike in this restored prairie and oak savannah! Along the way we'll find out more about the nature of this area. Wear good walking shoes, dress for the weather, and bring drinking water. All ages welcome!

### The Magic of Geocaching:

**Saturday, December 8th, 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm and**

**Friday, December 28th, 4:00 - 5:30 pm**

Join us for an introduction to the magical world of Geocaching, where we'll discover a whole new way to explore the outdoors! Loaner GPS units will be provided, but are limited in number, so be sure to show up early! Wear good walking shoes and dress for the weather. All ages welcome!

### Night Hike:

**Saturday, December 8th, 5:30 - 7:00 pm**

Discover the park after dark! Join us as we walk an easy trail and

look and listen for nocturnal animals. Wear good walking shoes, bring a flashlight and dress for the weather. All ages welcome! No dogs, please.

### Archery in the Park:

**Saturday, December 15th, 1:00 - 3:00 pm, meet at**

**the Rust House at Honey Creek State Natural Area**

Find out the 11 steps to Archery Success! This program is for ages 10 and up. Pre-registration is required, check the park website or Facebook for more details.

### Christmas for the Birds:

**Saturday, December 22nd, 2:00 - 3:00 pm**

Join us to make a bird feeder for your feathered friends this holiday season!

### Bald Cypress Trail Walk:

**Saturday, December 29th, 2:00 - 3:30 pm**

Take a stroll with us beside the river. We'll find out more about the river as well as the plants and animals that live here at the park. Trail is paved and level, with one long slope and one set of stairs. Round trip is approximately 1 mile. All ages welcome! Dress for the weather and bring drinking water.

### Tuesday, January 1st: First Day Hikes

**Start off 2019 right - outdoors!**

We'll have two different hikes to choose from, and a First Day Run as well! Check the website or Park Facebook for more details.

## GRSP - Scout Service Project

by Dave Kibler

On Saturday morning, 27 October, eighteen Scouts and adult volunteers from Boy Scout Troop 285, sponsored by Coker Methodist Church in north San Antonio, returned to the park under beautiful fall weather for the twenty-second time since the spring of 2007 to perform service work while making improvements at the park. The activity performed this time involved continuing to clear the roadsides of the Honey Creek State Natural Area entrance road off Spring Branch Road, which leads west over a mile to the Döppenschmidt House. This historic farmstead, settled in 1871, is located in the southeastern portion of the State Natural Area. The work that morning consisted of the removal of Ashe juniper and other vegetation which had overgrown the roadsides. All volunteers displayed their spirit of cheerful service in performing this service for the park. And after lunch the Scouts enjoyed an afternoon of Scout-skill learning activities. Several of the Scouts and dads then camped overnight near the historic house. The story is that these campers were visited overnight by a meandering feral hog, which eventually moved on after significant sound effects. The boys and adults of Troop 285, which will soon celebrate its 65th anniversary since the founding in 1954, always look forward to this semi-annual service project as a way to demonstrate their Scout Spirit. The organization will return to the park in the spring of 2019 to complete the final portions of this road-clearing project.

## Trails to the Past

by Bryden Moon

## Fading Passages - Two Ancient Trails in Kendall County

With the column title Trails to the Past, and a continuing fascination of old trails and the antique maps that trace these pathways through the Hill Country, it would probably come as no surprise two trails will make it into my final Friends of Guadalupe River/Honey Creek Inc. article.

When it comes to major Kendall County Native-American trails, confusion reigns, even when well-intentioned historians weigh in. In a 2005 edition of our Guadalupe River/Honey Creek Friends' newsletter, it was written that the Pinta Trail once coursed through the confines of today's Comal County boundaries. Conversely, that same year, Jeff Morgenthaler's 2005 Boerne – Settlement on the Cibolo espoused that the Pinta Trail worked its way to and through the early plot of Boerne...and the purported Boerne link continues to be repeated, as just a few months ago a history article written by a Ph.D. and published in one of Kendall County's newspapers, claimed the same.

While other old Native-American pathways probably existed, but were never documented in western Comal County, the Pinta Trail's route never ventured through the confines of today's Comal County; the Pinta exited Bexar County, cut northwest thru Kendall County and entered southern Gillespie County. And while an old Indian trace grazed a remote corner of the original Boerne plot, it wasn't the Pinta Trail, but a pathway originally called the Camino Viejo and later the San Saba Road. These experts' placements fall under the idiom "missed by a mile." Or "miles," as the Pinta Trail skirts the eastern boundary of the 1852 Boerne plot by over 4 miles and at its closest the Pinta Trail is over 3 miles from Comal County's western boundary. How do we know this? Well, old maps for one (see both Pinta and Viejo Trails on the southern portion of an 1862 Kendall County map below).



**1862 Kendall County Map Showing a Segment of Its Southern Boundary  
Faint Dotted Lines Ranging to the Northwest  
Indicate the Caminos Viejo (left) & Pinta (right)  
Continued...**

Trails to the Past

by Bryden Moon

Still today's confusion is understandable, since the early trails were natural pathways without sophisticated improvements, without road signs. Further complicating their identity, these early trails threaded through unsettled land absent of community landmarks and way stations. In 1854 Frederick Law Olmsted rode the Pinta Trail headed for Sisterdale and tells us, "...we took the old, now disused, Fredericksburg Road." Getting as far as Comanche Spring (located in today's Camp Bullis) he shares, "The old road-marks were grown over with grass and quite indistinct." And a little later Olmsted admits, "... we soon lost the trail." After our recent rainfalls and resulting high grasses, it's easy to imagine that Olmsted's pathway was obscured.

So you might be thinking, with all this confusion, "How did the early map makers know to chart these routes?" The answer...land surveyors who trekked over the raw frontier terrain, assisted by two ever present chain carriers. These early surveyors intentionally made note of the old Native-American routes in addition to the resident creeks and rivers; with the absence of landmarks in the virgin land, the major trails were an important additional point of reference.

If you'll look closely at the 1862 map on the prior page, you'll notice the mosaic of squares and rectangles with names and numbers; this patchwork quilt of building blocks is made up of individual land surveys. Of varying sizes, the largest blocks were the earliest surveys and contained a league (4428.4 acres) and a labor (177 acres). These Republic of Texas land grants were the most generous and were called "first class" head right grants, given to heads of families who could prove they lived in Texas on March 4th, 1836. Over time the size of land grants shrunk, trending to 640 acres and then 160 acres plots.

Stretching between San Antonio and the outer reaches of the Hill Country, over time the two Kendall County trails were renamed and Anglicized. The Viejo Camino changed to the San Saba Road and the numerous spellings of the Pinta Trail (Pintas, Pindas) became Paint Road. One of the earliest illustrations tracing portions of these two Native-American routes with their "contemporary" names was drawn by John James on a February 20, 1840 survey map.



1840 Survey Map  
 Drawn by John James  
 Balcones Creek Defined Kendall County's Southern Boundary

You'll see on James' simple map two dotted lines running to the northwest; on the right is Paint Road (Pinta Trail) and shadowing it approximately 3 miles to the west is its lesser-known sister trail, the San Saba Road. As both trails were evident to James, they served as useful landmarks for these plots and as points of reference for future surveys. Still twenty-two years in the future, James had no way of knowing that he was also charting out a portion of future Kendall County's (organized in 1862) southern boundary, including Balcones Creek (note its merge with Cibolo Creek). Surveys # 170 and # 171 were some of the earliest that were conducted in future Kendall County. Without metrics, and other contemporary points of reference, the scale of these two adjacent and identical blocks of land is lost. Surveys number 170 and 171 each contained a league and labor (4605 acres) and were over 2 & 1/2 miles square.

**I have enjoyed the opportunity to explore our regional history with you. Although this will be my last sojourn, through the efforts of our extremely talented new Friends' historians, Mackenzie and Charleen, "There are more stories to be told!"**



One League to Each Wind  
 Profiles Early Surveyors

## Tributes

by Mackenzie Brown and Charleen Moore

In this issue we pay tribute to three long-time Friends of Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek State Natural Area who have recently retired from the Board of Directors after devoting many years of service to the group. The three are J.W. Pieper, Wilt Shaw, and Bryden Moon. They have each served in unique capacities, as you will see.

J.W. Pieper and Wilt Shaw can hardly be described independently, since they formed an inseparable team when Wilt joined the Friends in 2002.



J.W. and Wilt on their last joint Honey Creek hike, December 16, 2017  
Photo by **Mackenzie Brown**

The two started leading Honey Creek hikes together in 2002. J.W. began his career as a Honey Creek interpretive guide in the spring of 2001, almost by default. The scheduled guide that day was unavailable, so two Park hosts who knew very little about Honey Creek were to fill in. J.W. knew just a bit more about Honey Creek ecology than the hosts and ended up leading the 108 visitors who showed up that Saturday morning! Wilt joined him a year later, and in 2003 they took the 13th Texas Master Naturalist class with the Alamo Chapter. They figured that as guides, they had

better learn something about Honey Creek and its cultural and natural history, suspecting they had winged it long enough.

J.W. retired as a guide at the end of 2017.

As for J.W. himself, did you ever wonder what his initials stood for? He was named for his two grandfathers, John and William, and was called J.W. from the start to distinguish him from them, since they were both integral parts of his life growing up. He attended UT Austin in the late 50's, participated in the naval ROTC there, graduated in 1960 with a BBA, and was immediately commissioned in the US Navy. On December 7, 1961, he sailed into Pearl Harbor on a guided missile cruiser, exactly 20 years to the day after the Japanese attack, to commission the USS Arizona Memorial.

After his stint in the Navy, J.W. worked for IBM and eventually ended up in the banking business for 35 years. He retired in 2000, moving to the Hill Country (Cordillera Ranch) with his wife Jan. They have now been married 53 years. J.W. was anxious to volunteer at the Park, so he joined the Friends in 2001 and immediately took over the accounts as treasurer, since the previous treasurer had simply left. It was that same year that he became a Honey Creek guide. He soon became President of the Friends, serving from 2004-2006, and again in 2014-2015 while continuing to serve as treasurer for much of this time, from 2001 to 2013. Soon after stepping down from the presidency in 2006, being succeeded by Wilt, J.W. became involved in a Wilt-inspired project to make repairs to the Rust House (see below for more details on this project).

J.W. has been involved in other local naturalist and conservation activities, being one of the co-founders with Bill Ward of the Gorge Preservation Society at Canyon Lake, and the Cordillera Nature Club with Wilt. He taught in the outdoor classroom program at the Cibolo Nature Center and now serves as the treasurer, operations manager, and trustee for the Cibolo Preserve.

Among his many extracurricular hobbies, J.W. served as

a high school football referee for 35 years. He has participated for a number of years in the Texas Senior Games, winning the 50- and 100-yard sprints for his age group, as well as the long jump, high jump, and triple jump. And he has won the golf tournament for Texas Seniors in the 80+ age group. When he first moved to Cordillera Ranch in 2000, there was no fire department close by, so as is typical of J.W.'s civic mindedness, he co-founded the Bergheim Volunteer Fire Department.

At the end of his last official hike as a nature guide, as he and Wilt assembled the visitors at the last set of benches, Wilt gave a stirring testimony to J.W. and their partnership in the woods, as well as their deep friendship. As Wilt concluded, after embracing J.W., "This is not an obituary." That is clear enough for those who know him. Wilt, of course, though no longer a director, continues to lead Honey Creek hikes.

Turning to Wilt Shaw's background, we note that he is a native Texan who grew up in San Antonio. He graduated from Central Catholic High School and St. Mary's University with a BS in Mathematics. He served in the US Army paratroopers and spent his career as an exploration geophysicist, living and working in many countries, from Indonesia to Brazil to Kazakhstan. In 2001, he "retired" to the Hill Country and has been amazingly active in all things native. As noted above, he became a Texas Master Naturalist in 2003 and is a member of the Alamo Area Chapter. His retirement activities have included serving as a board advisor and president of the Boerne Native Plant Society, becoming involved in their conservation program fittingly named NICE! (Natives Instead of Common Exotics!). He also served as an outdoor classroom teacher and as leader of the riparian research project at Cibolo Nature Center, as well as landscape overseer at the Bergheim Volunteer Fire Department. The landscape, incidentally, is designated as a Boerne NPSOT Demonstration Garden and an official Monarch Waystation. His hobbies include research in environmental studies, organic gardening, and puzzlesolving. He was a member of an army karate team stationed in Germany that never lost a match. He has been supported in these many activities by his wife, Sylvia. They have been married 51 years and have three children and eight grandchildren.

After joining the Friends in 2002 and immediately starting his partnership as an interpretive guide with J.W., Wilt became a Director on the Board in 2003 and served until earlier this year. During those 15 years, he served as President, Past-President and was the Director in charge of Membership. In 2006, while presiding over a Board meeting in the Rust House, Wilt found himself rolling into a corner with all the other Directors. They were all sitting on caster chairs, and the floor was far from level. Wilt decided at that point to recruit J.W. to undertake repairs to the foundation, to level the house, and to give it a facelift. The house was jacked up, the 54 rotting cedar posts removed, concrete footings poured, and 54 new cedar posts were installed underneath. The two porches were next repaired, and then the fun began: many hours of scraping the peeling paint from the siding before



Wilt thanking J.W. and giving him a hug after announcing to hikers that this was J.W.'s last hike.  
Photo by **Mackenzie Brown**

**Continued...**

## Tributes

by Mackenzie Brown and Charleen Moore

they could paint the entire exterior of the house. One memorable day, J.W. was on his back on the porch roof scraping paint from underneath the eaves. A swarm of flying insects making their home under the roof, annoyed by the commotion created by J.W., attacked him, stinging him 3 or 4 times. Wilt, wisely working on the other side of J.W., rolled away unharmed, and graciously identified the insects as *Polistes carolina* (red wasps).

Over the years, Wilt and J.W. spent many hours at Halloween in the Park, passing out candy and helping with the activities at the various booths.

J.W. and Wilt find that the most rewarding part of the Honey Creek hikes were the children who were often the most interested and at times even the most knowledgeable. However, occasionally youngsters wanted to lead the hike, so to keep them behind the true leaders, the children were told that the first person to arrive at the next stopping place had to give the presentation. That took them scurrying to the end of the line. There were a couple of times when journalists from Texas Highways and Texas Parks and Wildlife magazines joined the hikes to gather information. Both groups took many pictures and wrote articles featuring Honey Creek and mentioning Wilt and J.W.

On a personal note from Charleen and Mackenzie, we are incredibly grateful to J.W. and Wilt for introducing us to Honey Creek when we took our first hike there in the fall of 2017, as one of the required field trips for the Hill Country Master Naturalist class in Kerrville. It was their knowledge, leadership, and friendly personalities that induced us to become interpretive guides ourselves. We were also honored to be on J.W.'s last official hike and to document that special occasion. Thank you, J.W. and Wilt. We know we speak for many others.

### Bryden E. Moon—A Tribute

by Mackenzie Brown and Charleen Moore



Bryden Moon in his office at the archives of the Patrick Heath Public Library  
Photo by **Mackenzie Brown**

#### “Trails from the Past” Historian:

Bryden E. Moon is retiring this month from the position of historian of the Friends of GRSP/HCSNA after 12 years of dedicated service. He is better known to many of us as the author of the “Trails from the Past” column in the Newsletter. He became the first official historian of the Friends in the winter of 2006-2007, shortly after joining the Friends that fall. His wife, Kay, had become a member of the Friends soon after she and Bryden moved to the Hill Country in 2005. She read in the Fall 2006 Newsletter (back when there were only hard-copy versions) that the Friends were interested in forming a Friends Historical Committee to find “a permanent place to

preserve and protect our local heritage.” The notice enticed Bryden to attend a meeting of the Board of Directors, where he promptly volunteered to become the historian, and as he told us recently, the rest is history.

As the President of the Friends back in 2006, Wilt Shaw welcomed Bryden to the Board in the Winter 2006-2007 Newsletter:

The Friends recently received a great surprise volunteer addition to our board. Bryden Moon, who retired from AT&T in San Antonio after working within the Bell System for 27 years, has requested to be the Historian for the Friends group. We welcome Bryden and his wife Kay with open arms! In December of 2005 Bryden and Kay, who recently retired from the Comal Independent School District, moved into the WaterStone subdivision.

Bryden has become a self-described amateur historian after serving

as a docent at the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park for six years, conducting tours of four missions/churches and giving demonstrations. He is a member of St. Joseph's church, and recently joined the Genealogy Society of Kendall County. He writes a history column, “Of Water, Stone, and Trees” for the WaterStone subdivision's newsletter.

One activity that Wilt does not mention was Bryden's participation on the amateur rugby team in San Antonio that won the state championship back in 1976, an accomplishment of which he is justly proud.

In his role as historian for the Friends, Bryden contributed over the course of twelve years about four dozen articles for his column, “Trails from the Past,” including ten accounts of the annual Homesteaders' Homecoming gatherings, that were published in the Friends quarterly newsletter. In his first essay, for the Spring 2007 Newsletter, Bryden enthused about our good fortune in not having to drive seven hours to Big Bend to enjoy pristine nature, as we can “feel one with nature” (Bryden's words) right in our own backyard at Honey Creek. The article continued with what became a hallmark of Bryden's column, a snippet of history based on his conversations with descendants of the early pioneer settlers of the area—in this case, a story from talking with Hilmar and Barbara Wehe at the 2006 Christmas party about Alfred Wehe's death benefit he received from the old Anhalt Farmer's Verein. Over the years Bryden's columns portrayed the lives of several early settlers and their families, including of course the Rust family, often with a bit of humor and suspense mixed in. He also covered various economic, political, social, and religious activities of the lives of these men and women. Topics included the making of molasses (an article punningly entitled, “Sticking to the Past”), early maps and trails of the area, the mills and floods, and the famous battle of Walker's Creek describing the role of the 5-shooter in giving Anglo and German settlers an advantage over the Comanches. Assisting Bryden with his essays throughout the years, Kay has been a great support with numerous suggestions and editorial advice.

Although no longer historian of the Friends, Bryden will continue to be very active in preserving local history. He gives frequent presentations at the Boerne City Library and is an Associate Member of the Kendall County Historical Commission. He continues to submit proposals to the Texas Historical Commission for new historical markers in Kendall County. He has already succeeded in having three historical markers established: one for the Pinta Trail on Amman Road, another for the Ottmar Von Behr homestead near Sisterdale, and the last for the community of Sisterdale itself.

At the 2017 Friends Christmas party at the Cibolo Nature Center, we (Charleen Moore and Mackenzie Brown), were first introduced to Bryden and Kay and sat next to them during the meal. We were regaled non-stop for over an hour with historical anecdotes about local pioneering families, about whom we knew absolutely nothing! But we were intrigued. In the spring of 2018, we met with Bryden and his wife to see if there was any way we could assist him in his historical researches, as we were also becoming interested in the history of the area and are trained historians. As it turned out, Bryden was ready to relinquish his duties as the Friends historian, and he welcomed our offer by asking if we would take over writing the historical columns for the newsletter. After his promising us that he had lined up articles extending through the winter 2018 edition (the one you are now reading), so that we would not need to submit an article until the spring of 2019, we agreed. Then, in an historical reprise, we appeared at a Board meeting, volunteered, and the rest...well, there will still be historical essays in the future in each newsletter.

In his last letter as President of the Friends, and just one year after Bryden signed on as Friends historian, Wilt Shaw paid Bryden the highest of compliments: “In the short time he has been on board, Bryden Moon has done more to advance our knowledge of the history of the park area than all the past efforts combined” (Winter 2007 Newsletter).

Bryden's contributions to local history will long be remembered. Thank you, Bryden.

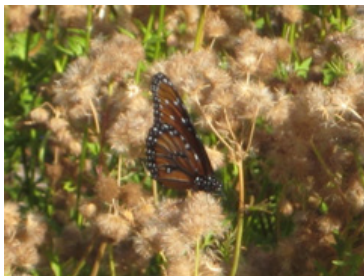
## Habiscape Happenings

by Susan Bogle

The recent cooler temperatures are a relief from this year's scorching and dry summer, but these cooler days are also foretelling that winter is approaching. And while the gardening chores in the Habiscape tend to decline this time of year, those plants that you find growing both there and in the Park are becoming even more important to the local wildlife, as they are a source of both food and shelter during the cold and wet weather.

Mature seeds on grasses, forbs, shrubs and trees are an important food supply for both birds and mammals. Even the tiniest of grass seeds can be a nice meal for a small finch. Lantana seeds are poisonous to humans, but they are quite tasty to the birds. And the acorns from oak trees are a well-known food for squirrels who even store them away for another day.

Surprisingly, the dried and spent flowers from summer are attractive to certain butterflies which are able to glean the last bit of nectar from them. You may have already noticed queen butterflies on the dried and brown flower heads of the Gregg's Blue mistflower. Now you know why they are there.



Even the pathways can provide a form of sustenance to certain critters. Butterflies, moths and other insects seek out nutrients and minerals in certain moist substances, such as mud and rotting plant matter, where they suck up the fluid. So when a butterfly is seen on a path, it might be sunning itself or it just might be "puddling".



Shelter comes in all shapes and sizes. Any number of insects spend their winter days and nights

among grass leaves, tucked into the folds of bark on the trees or clinging to the underside of the leaves of evergreen shrubs. Depending on the species, they may be overwintering in the form of eggs, larva, pupa or adults.



Non-migratory birds will be seeking shelter in tree cavities, within their flock on the limbs of trees, along the rock face of a bluff and even in burrows on the ground. And mammals will be in the burrows that you can find under rock outcroppings, at the base of a tree, in an embankment and even under structures.

So winter might be a time that appears dormant, but take a closer look to discover that wildlife is still thriving in the Park and in the Habiscape.

## Come on out - the birding is GREAT

by Linda Gindler

Winter tends to be a quieter time at the park with respect to human visitors, but it is loaded with birds. By winter, leaves have dropped, and grasses are laying over making it much easier to observe our feathered friends. It's a great time to practice birding skills on harder to observe active small birds. So, grab a pair of binoculars and head to the park soon. Our mild winter temperatures make it a great time to be outdoors along one of the many park trails.

Two species to seek out during winter months are the Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Hutton's Vireo. Both are woodland birds and can be found along the River Overlook, Discovery Loop, and any of the camping loops. Or head over to the Bauer Unit and hike along the Hofheinz and Bamberger trails.

Ruby-crowned Kinglets come to the park for the Winter and are fairly common late fall until early spring. Their main summer breeding range is well up into Canada and Alaska, so they arrive at the park hungry. Rubies are small songbirds of 4 1/4". They have large heads for their body, almost no neck, and a small, thin, straight bill. They have olive-green upperparts, prominent white eye rings,

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Come on out - the birding is GREAT

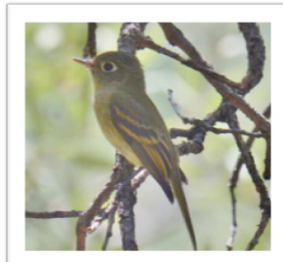
by Linda Gindler

white wing bar with a black bar below the white. If you find one, take the time to watch for a while. You may be rewarded with a male raising its tuft of red crown feathers from which it gets its name. Rubies are restless birds moving quickly through foliage and branches while flicking their wings. You will find them in low to middle levels of the woodlands.



Male Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
(picture by John Prentice)

Hutton's Vireo can be at the park year-round but are easier to see during the winter. They only have a small range (including the Park) in Texas making them a sought-after bird for birding enthusiasts and a park rock star. They are not as common as the Ruby and can easily be confused with the Ruby. Like the Ruby they are small birds, but they are 1/4 to 1/2 inch larger. They also have a short neck, but their bill is stouter than the Ruby. The bill also has a small hook on the upper half. They too sport an "olive-ish" back and a wing bar. They too have a white eye-ring but it is broken above the eye. The most distinguishing feature to tell them from the Ruby is their blue-gray legs and feet. Both male and female have a similar appearance.



Hutton's Vireo  
(picture by John Prentice)

During the winter Rubies and Hutton's sometimes join common feeding flocks so check flocks carefully and you may find both in the same tree. The diet of both is mostly small insects which they glean from foliage, branches, moss, and lichen. Both will occasionally catch flying insects and eat small fruits.

If you would like to learn more about birding at the park, pick up a birding checklist at the Ranger Station, Discovery Center, or Bird Blind. The checklist outlines by season what species you may encounter. Follow the park on Facebook to learn about upcoming birding programs with Ranger Holly and park volunteers. Be sure to stop in at the bird blind located in the Day Use Area for up close looks. The bird blind is supported by the Friends of Guadalupe River and is maintained all year by a Bird Blind Care Team. If you are interested in being a part of the care team contact Linda Gindler (xxgindler@earthlink.net).

**\*2019 Membership Dues Are Now Payable\***

**Become A Friend / Renew Your Friendship Today:**

Memberships at all levels directly support Guadalupe River State Park /Honey Creek State Natural Area. You will be kept up to date on all the upcoming programs, events and park news as well as information on volunteer opportunities through our quarterly newsletter and park updates. As a Friends member you and your family will also have access to member only events.

**Fill out the section below and mail to the address below:**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Type:** \_\_\_\_\_ New Member \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal

Friend \$25.\_\_\_\_, Good Friend \$50.\_\_\_\_, Really Good Friend \$100.\_\_\_\_,

Best Friend \$500.\_\_\_\_, Best Friend Forever (lifetime level) \$1000. + \_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

If you are also interested in helping the park through volunteering, please tell us your areas of interest: \_\_\_\_\_

Make 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. Membership dues renew in January.  
 We will not share your information or clutter your inbox.

**President**

**Thea Platz**

tplatz@neisd.net

**Director / Hikes**

**Nancy Gray**

grayabbott@aol.com

**Vice President / Maintenance**

**Dave Kibler**

djkib@gvtc.com

**Director / Co-Historian**

**Mackenzie Brown**

mbrown@trinity.edu

**Secretary**

**Bob Gray**

RGrayTX@gmail.com

**Director / Membership**

**John Prentice**

**Treasurer**

**Bill Beach**

bill.beach@sbcglobal.net

**Director / Webmaster**

**Mackenzie Brown**

mbrown@trinity.edu

**Director / Publicity**

**Saturday Night Program**

**Holly Platz**

Holly.Platz@tpwd.texas.gov

**Director at Large**

**Terry Lashley**

**Director / Education**

**Holly Camero**

chcamero@aol.com

**Director / Co-Historian**

**Charleen Moore**

mackandchuck@gmail.com

**Friends of Guadalupe River  
and Honey Creek, Inc.**

3350 Park Road 31  
Spring Branch, Texas 78070

**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!**