



Volume 1 No. 2

# Friends of Guadalupe River Honey Creek, Inc.

A non-profit organization

3350 Park Rd 31, Spring Branch, TX 78070 ☎ 210-438-2656

Aug. - Oct. 1994

## At A Glance

- ✧ Habitat Restoration
- ✧ Volunteers Needed
- ✧ Summer Stargazing
- ✧ Plant Facts
- ✧ Activity Roundup
- ✧ Calendar of Events

## Volunteers Needed for Friends of Guadalupe River/Honey Creek, Inc.

Friends of Guadalupe River/Honey Creek, Inc. has been organized exclusively for charitable, educational purposes. We rely on energy of our volunteers to assist these two state parks. It's an excellent opportunity for individuals and organizations to become part of a grass roots effort to benefit present and future Texans in the conservation of its natural and cultural resources.

We have many professionals and local organizations that already generously give of their time to present evening programs and lead trail walks through Honey Creek State Natural Area.

However, we are in need of volunteers to help with everything from habitat restoration to park events and setting up the amphitheater prior to programs for the public. Perhaps just lend a hand now and then. No effort is too small and all help is greatly appreciated. Let us know if you're available and want to become involved. Let your local scout chapter or high school know we welcome youths that need to perform a community project.

It's easy to become a volunteer. Just contact Joan Nitschke our coordinator at GRSP, (210) 438-2656 or meet Penny Solis, our Park Naturalist on any Saturday at 11:30 a.m. at the Rust Visitor Center Honey Creek SNA. Hope to see you soon.

## *Habitat Restoration Workshops Scheduled this Fall at Honey Creek and Guadalupe River*

This fall, under the guidance of Texas Parks and Wildlife, volunteers working under the supervision of Friends of Guadalupe River/Honey Creek, Inc. will resume habitat restoration efforts at these two State Parks. Work begun in 1989 to halt the rapid loss of habitat to Ashe juniper or "cedar" and vegetation surveys begun in 1992 to document the changes in restored and unrestored habitat will continue.

The first of these events will begin in early September with native grass and plant walks on September 10 by Range Ecology Expert, Katie Carden, September 17 by Agricultural Specialist Kurtiss Smith and September 25 (Sunday) by Dr. Floyd Waller. All of these events begin at 9:00 a.m. at Honey Creek SNA.

The first of two Workshops will be conducted by Kevin Good of Texas Parks and Wildlife on September 24. Kevin will discuss the ecological importance of fire. Lecture will be conducted in the field and site visits will emphasize the theory, techniques and processes of habitat restoration with participants joining in on a brief work session. Workshop will begin at 9:00 a.m. at Honey Creek SNA and wrap up around 1:00 p.m.

The second Workshop will be held on October 1st and will be a vegetation survey, a project begun by Matt Wagner of TPWD in 1992 to scientifically document changes in vegetation between "restored" and "unrestored" areas of the parks. Devin Koehler of New Braunfels and Boy Scout Troop 163 will coordinate the teams of volunteers, present a brief training session and then take the teams to the various sites for data collection. It's easy and interesting work. Also those of you interested in joining us on this survey will benefit greatly by attending one or more of the native grass and plant walks in September as one of the tasks will be to recognize and name the kinds of vegetation that will be collected. The Vegetation survey will begin at 9:00 a.m. on October 1st. Participants should meet at Honey Creek SNA and workshop will wrap around 1:00 p.m.

We hope to see you there and please watch for additional work weekends for this winter and spring.

## Superintendent's Corner

Highlighting the spring and summer seasons at the park have been the exciting array of interpretive programs - geology and botany walks, Texas reptiles, aquatic ecology - and many more! I extend a sincere thank you to the Friends Association for their sponsorship and especially to Penny Solis, the energy and creative force behind the interpretive programming. These programs would not be possible without your support, and we appreciate your participation and your donations.

Educators and families are increasingly looking to the state park for environmental tours and activities. We have a wonderful opportunity to instill appreciation of nature and principles of conservation in our youth. We welcome your ideas and assistance with developing curriculum based activities, leading walking tours and planning Earth Day activities. Our goal is to serve as an environmental education resource for our local communities and for park visitors and we need your help to make this a reality. Our current wish list includes nature books for children, natural resource books, display cabinets, bookcases, and table and chairs for children.

This is an exciting time to be "A Friend", as the opportunities to "make a difference" are endless. If your heart is in the right place but your time is limited, you may choose to make a financial donation. Donations remain at the park level and are used exclusively to enhance park efforts and projects. Donation boxes are located at the park headquarters, the Rust Visitor Center and at all special activities, or mail donations to us if you prefer. Your donation is an excellent way of telling us you support what we are doing and that you encourage us to continue. Give yourself and others the gift of a Friends Membership and take part in a group committed to the conservation of our natural and cultural resources.

Whether your gift is a word of encouragement, sharing your expertise at a program or a monetary donation, we welcome it all and look forward to an enduring friendship with you.

*Joan Nitschke*  
Volunteer Coordinator

### Board Members of Guadalupe River/Honey Creek, Inc.

Richard Solis	President
Jeanne Manry	Treasurer
Leon Manry	Board Member
Patti Martin	Secretary
Joe G. Vanecek	Vice-President
Henry Wagner	Board Member
Janet Wagner	Board Member
Duncan Muckelroy	Superintendent
Joan Nitschke	Volunteer Coordinator

## 1st Annual Meeting Held for Friends of Guadalupe River/Honey Creek, Inc.

The first annual meeting of the "Friends" group was held July 16th at Guadalupe River State Park. Our current Board of Directors will continue in their current position for the next three years. The next Board meeting will be held August 6, 1994 and board meetings are open to members. Anyone wishing to attend, please call Richard Solis, President at 210-935-2586 and we'll be happy to give you directions.

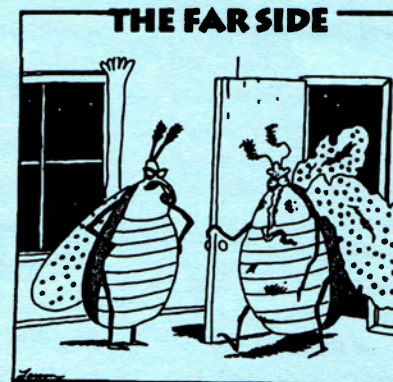
The meeting and business was quickly taken care of so that we could join the San Antonio Astronomical Association's Star Party. Many of their members arrived with their telescopes and gave some 200 visitors a chance to view Jupiter, the Moon and other celestial objects. The most popular sight was, of course, Jupiter with the impending collision of Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 due to take place that very evening.

As I walked around the viewing area, I met dozens of people (adults and children) who were taking their very first look through a telescope. Everyone seemed to leave that evening with a greater awareness of our earth and the vastness of our solar system. This event was our best attended event ever at the Park and we greatly appreciate the help of the SAAA members for hosting the evening. We hope they will come out for many more.

*Richard*

## Perseid Meteor Shower Due in August

The Perseids are one of the most reliable and best of the annual meteor showers. Last year we were treated to beautiful "fire balls" that stretched across the sky. We should still have a richer than average display this year as the earth sweeps up more meteoroids left behind by Comet Swift-Tuttle in 1992. We will have our own smaller (thankfully) but closer display of comet-debris impacts. Observing conditions will be excellent, since the Moon is only a waxing crescent and sets soon after dark. The peak times to watch are throughout the night of August 11 and the morning hours of the 12th. Get away from the city's glare for the most beautiful views and good viewing!!



"Good Heavens - just look at you! You've been down at the Fergusons' porch light, haven't you?"

## What is that plant?

Mustang Grape - *Vitis mustangensis*

### Native Plants of the Hill Country and their cultural uses by Penny Solis



The Mustang grape has long been a favorite of many Texans who boast of its qualities for making delicious homemade jellies and tasty wines.

Mustang grape vines are found throughout the state, most commonly along stream bottoms, thickets, fence rows, edges of woods, and sandy slopes. The vines are deciduous and are vigorous high climbing vines. Leaves are broad heart-shaped

with densely fuzzy undersides. The inverted saucer-like leaf presents one of the most striking characteristics of the species giving the appearance of a canopy as the thick foliage grows over the top of a bush or tree.

It can endure heat and drought because its root system is the most penetrating of any of the wild grapes found in Texas. On occasion, vines may reach up to 6 inches at the base and climb 100 feet or more up into tree tops.

The Texas pioneer horticulturist Thomas Volney Munson once saved the French wine industry with native Texas grape root stock like the mustang grape. In addition to many other selecting and breeding programs, Munson was interested in classifying and improving the American grape. He produced some three hundred new varieties of grapes. Munson was the second American to receive the French Legion of Honor, which was awarded to him for saving the French vineyards from total destruction by the grape phylloxera. From extensive study and breeding of native American grapes, he was able to supply the French vineyards with a resistant rootstock.

More recently, Texas Tech and Texas A&M universities, as well as private commercial owners, have developed vineyards in the High Plains, the Davis and Chisos mountains, and the Llano Uplift. It may be that our native grapes have unexplored potential as hardy drought-tolerant rootstocks suitable for varietal grafting. And even as hardy vines for arbors, trellises, and as ground covers.

**Mustang grape jelly.** In July look for a good fruit bearing vine away from drainage of heavily used roads. The grapes are ripe when deep purple or black. A quart of grapes yields about a quart of juice. Wear gloves, jeans, hat, boots, etc to protect yourself from the acidic grapes, poison ivy, chiggers and concealed wasp nests within the vines. Collect grape clusters with good pair of clippers or a good pair of dikes will do nicely. Never, tear the grapes off the vine, you damage the vine and ruin it for good production next year. You may not be back, but respect the wildlife that depends upon it for food. Mustang grapes are not table grapes because their acidity is so great that it will make your mouth sore, but if you must taste the raw grapes, squeeze the grape and pop the pulp out of its skin into your mouth. And don't eat more than two or three. Trust me.

After collecting, pick out leaves and trash, it is not necessary to remove grapes from stems. Wash thoroughly. Place in pot, add water until you can just see it through the grapes and cook at a low simmer until the skins pop easily from the grape. Remove and let cool. Then unless you want sore purple hands for the next

week and a half wear rubber gloves while you strain grapes and juice through a cloth. You can use a jelly bag or sheeting

**To cook jelly:** With highly acidic fruits like Mustang it's hard to go wrong. But be sure you have the proper cooking equipment. Go to the canning section of your grocery store and there you will find the necessary supplies and a handy little "how to" book on home canning. The terminology I use here is carefully explained. Once ready to make jelly, measure into a tall pot 5 cups juice and 1 box of pectin. Stir constantly until it boils, then add 7 cups of sugar - keep stirring. Bring back to a rolling boil and then cook for 4-5 minutes or until it passes the jelly test (The mixture forms a string as it is poured from a spoon). Mustang jells like a charm, if you're not good at the jelly test, you are safe with this recipe. Remove from heat, skim foam from surface and pour into sterilized jars and seal immediately.

Following is a very easy wine recipe by Alvin Sueltenfuss of Boerne, Texas. Recipe was received by me at a visit to the Texas FolkLife Festival in San Antonio from Mr. Sueltenfuss. It's great for those of us with little or no knowledge of how to make wine and just want to try it for fun. The process of fermentation is very interesting to watch and makes a good family project, even if you aren't a wine drinker. You'll need a large ceramic crock - (I used a large pot meant as a planter), cheese cloth to cover the crock, a large glass bottle such as apple juice gallon jars, or better the old glass 5 gallon drinking bottles. (Those are hard to find nowadays) A cork to fit the bottles, tubing (such as for aquariums) and a water air trap device that seals the bottle but allows the wine to expel gases while fermenting. Mr. Sueltenfuss's homemade air trap is pretty handy. This equipment can also be found at a beer and wine making stores.

1/2 Bushel of Mustang Grapes. Crush the grapes. See that all are crushed good. Put into crock or barrel. Add 4 gallons of water and 2 lbs. sugar to start fermenting. Stir every morning after the 5th or 6th day until all solids come to the top. Don't stir any more after that. Drain juice off of solids. Strain juice through cloth sack.

Put into another crock for mixing with sugar, from 2 to 3 lbs. sugar per gallon of juice.

Stir, and put into 5 gallon distilled water jug. Drill hole in cork. Put one end of small plastic tube in hole and other end of tube into a jar filled with water (i.e., mayonnaise jar) A hole should be drilled into top of the jars lid for the tubing. It will form an air lock and will start bubbling.

When it quits bubbling, bottle and cork up lightly. Let settle until it clears up. Then bottle in small bottles. This will make 5 gallons or more.

If you have too dark colored juice, add a little more water and sugar per gallon, if needed (from 2 to 3 lbs. sugar per gallon of water). If you like dry wine, add less sugar per gallon.

Which ever you decide to try -- good luck!!

Sources for articles from *How to Grow Native Plants* by Jill Nokes. *Texas Highways Magazine* July 1981, *Image of Mustang vine from Native & Naturalized Woody Plants of Austin and the Hill Country* by Brother Daniel Lynch.

# If You're Not Checking Us Out....



Sunprints

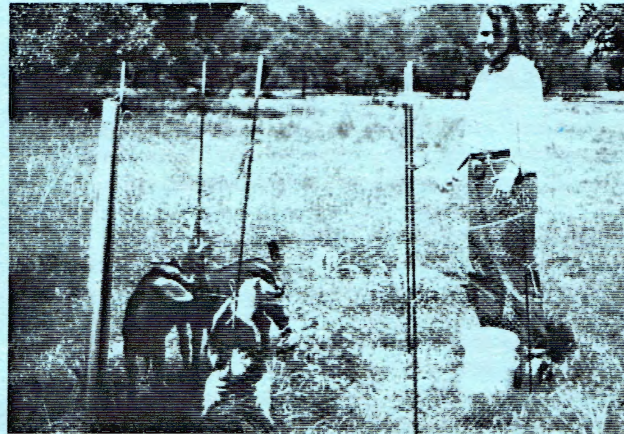
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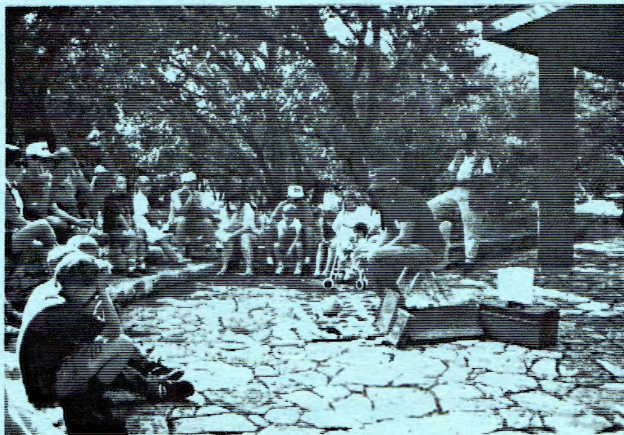
Fun



Sundials



Kids meet Kids



Richard Dobie showed us how Indians made arrow points!



Joe Vanecek helps children make casts of animal tracks.

# You're Missing Out !!!

Geologist Chris Caran shares his expertise with us in Honey Creek.



David McKelvey always brings neat friends like Willie the hedge hog.



Professional Diver Allen Furlow takes us beneath the action.



Our youngest trail guide, Wesley Blackman, teaches us about native grasses.



The San Antonio Astronomical Assoc shows us the Universe.

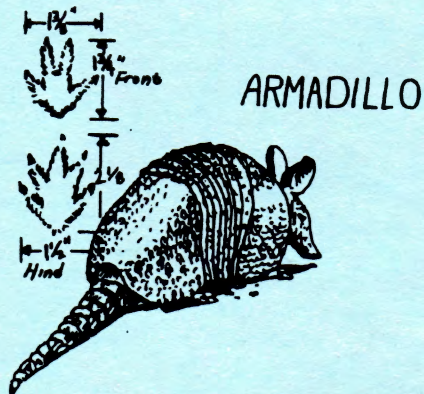


Aquatic programs get kids involved.



Naturalist Thomas Vermersch hosted a Memorial Day program on reptiles.

## Itochte (Rabbit - Turtle)



The Nine-banded Armadillo. It looks like a reptile with an anteater's nose and a sowbug's armor. But this little creature is a mammal: it has hair and nurses its' young. The armadillo's many tiny protective armor plates are made of bone. Each plate is covered by a layer of tough skin and separated from its neighbors by soft skin from which a few hairs grow. Their armor offers protection as they forage for insects and other invertebrates, eggs, and small vertebrates.

The Aztec's called this unusual little mammal Itochte (Rabbit-Turtle), early explorers call it Turtle-Pig. The Spanish name "Armadillo" means little armored one. Armadillos are related to sloths and anteaters which are all members of the family Dasypodidae, which includes 20 species, all found in the New World. The Nine-banded Armadillo is the northernmost member of the family and the only one found within the United States.

About 3 million years ago a twelve foot long version of the present day armadillo lived in the

southern United States. An ice age caused their extinction from the present day U.S. and they were pushed back into Mexico. Then 150 years ago they returned when a smaller version crossed the Rio Grande and spread east to the Mississippi River. In 1922, a pair escaped from a zoo in Florida and began populating the Southeastern U.S. The western pioneers crossed the Mississippi and joined them. The little Armadillo has the distinction of accomplishing the fastest known migration of a mammal in recorded history.

The nine-banded Armadillo is about the size of a house cat. It prefers shady cover or dense brush, where it lives in holes underground. It is mainly crepuscular (active at dusk) or nocturnal (active at night). Armadillos have poor eyesight, but appear to be sensitive to vibrations. The armadillo's tongue is long and sticky and entangles insects as its owner probes cracks and crevices. It can slurp up 70 ants with one swipe of its tongue and consumes 14,000 in a single meal.

Armadillos are accomplished swimmers even though they are weighed down by their armor. They can gulp air to inflate their stomach and intestines and thus be able to float. Or they can hold their breath for up to 6 minutes and walk along the bottom of a pond or creek.

They are vigorous diggers and live in burrows. Abandoned armadillo burrows become important homes for other wildlife such as skunks, burrowing owls, and tortoises.

Perhaps their most important

contribution to human welfare is in Leprosy research. About 20 years ago Dr. Eleanor Stores began her research into a cure for Leprosy. She faced a very important problem - Leprosy bacteria cannot be grown artificially. So she began the search for a host. Dr. Stores discovered that the low body temperature of the Armadillo made it an ideal host for the bacteria.

Leprosy is the least infectious of contagious human diseases. However there are still some 12 - 15 million sufferers worldwide and thousands of cases in the United States.

Through Dr. Stores research it became possible for one armadillo to produce enough bacilli to meet the current world's demand for Leprosin. Leprosin predicts how Leprosy will progress in the patient and helps the treating physician determine the best course of treatment.

One other unique characteristic of the female Armadillo is that she always produces a single egg cell, which upon fertilization, divides and then divides again. This produces 4 genetically identical young.

This offers a unique opportunity to study the relationship between genetics and Leprosy.

The Armadillo could someday help us discover a cure for an ancient human disease.

*Information for this article taken from PBS's "Wild America" television series and John Wiessinger's "Right Before Your Eyes", natural history mini-poster series.*

# Welcome New Members

Larry Bachhofer, Family  
Barbara Reeves, School  
Diane Clamp, School  
Beverly Dornberg, School  
Chris Farias, Family  
Louise Golden, School  
Firman Haddix, Family  
Henry Hidalgo, Family  
Deirdre Hisler, Sustaining  
Ron Holliday, Individual  
Chuck Janzow, Family  
Tom Jones, Family  
Genevieve Kerr, Whole Foods, Contributing  
Bob Kirtley, School  
Tink Manry, Sustaining  
Jean Manry, Sustaining  
Patti Martin, Family  
Suella Milikien, Girl Scouts

Duncan Muckelroy, Family  
Lois Newton, Sustaining  
Joan Nitschke, Individual  
Suzette Perry, School  
Wayne Rahe, Family  
Pearl Rahe, Contributing  
Emily Riding, Sustaining  
Kay Smith, Girl Scouts  
Penny Solis, Sustaining  
Richard Solis, Sustaining  
Ken Sutton, School  
Sarah Swinney, Family  
Melanie Taylor, School  
Joe Vanecek, Contributing  
Janet Wagner, Sustaining  
Henry Wagner, Sustaining  
Jerry and Pamela Wyrick, Family

Friends of Guadalupe River/Honey Creek, Inc is created on WordPerfect 6.0 for Windows. original copy is printed on HP LaserJet 4L and most images are done with Logitech Scanman. Acting editor is Penny Solis. Articles are welcomed for the quarterly newsletter from members and other sources. Please submit articles for publication in November's issue by October 1st. Suggestions for subject matter, reports on activities, etc are welcomed.

## Friends of Guadalupe River/Honey Creek, Inc. Membership Application

### Annual Membership Dues and categories:

- \$5.00 Classroom: students or youth organizations ages up to 18.
- \$5.00 Student: Age 13 to 18
- \$8.00 Individual: Adult over 18
- \$12.00 Family
- \$50.00 Sustaining
- \$100.00 Contributing
- \$500.00 Corporate
- \$1,000.00 Life

Make check payable to:  
Friends of GR/HC, Inc. 3350 Park Rd. 31  
Spring Branch, TX 78070

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State & Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: home, work, fax \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to donate \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
beyond membership dues to help the Friends  
of Guadalupe River/Honey Creek, Inc. support  
educational programs at these state parks.

*Friends of Guadalupe River/Honey Creek, Inc. is recognized by the IRS as a tax exempt, non-profit organization. All donations to the FGR/HC, Inc. are greatly appreciated and tax deductible.*

## Spring Planning Calendar For Guadalupe River State Park & Surrounding Area

Events from Guadalupe River State Park (GRSP), Honey Creek SNA (HCSNA) (210)438-2656 may require a conservation passport (TCP) to participate. Represented here are events at Friedrich Wilderness Park (210) 698-1057, Cibolo Wilderness Trail (210)537-4141. Dates and programs are subject to change. It is recommended to call to confirm dates, reservations, fees, program information and directions.

(HCSNA)(TCP) On - going Saturday activity - 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

✓ August 13, 20

✓ September 3

✓ October 15, 22, 29

✓ November 19, 26

Nature hike along Honey Creek Canyon. Learn about the cultural and environmental history of the hill country area. About 2 miles. Wear good walking shoes, hat, etc. Meet at Rust Visitor Ctr.

(HCSNA)(TCP) Aug 6 - 9:00 a.m. to Noon. Ethno-Botany walk. Learn about cultural uses of native hill country plants for foods, medicines, fibers. 1 mile hike, wear good shoes and hat, etc. Meet at Rust Visitor Center.

(GRSP) Aug 6 - 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. Aquifers, Bats and Caves. Presented by Bexar Grotto Society. Kids will love this program (and adults, too). Meet at Park Amphitheater.

(GRSP) Aug 13 - 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. The Way it Was in the Good 'Ole Days. A fascinating look at how people lived and worked their land. Presented by retired County Extension Agent, Hilmar Bergman Meet at Park Amphitheater.

Friedrich Wilderness Park. Aug 13, Second Saturday program is Summer Stargazing. Perseids meteor shower is peaking near that date!!

Cibolo Wilderness Trail, Aug 20, 8:00 a.m. Members of Cibolo Wilderness will caravan to Blanco and Leander to visit dinosaur tracks on private property.

(HCSNA)(TCP) Aug 27 - How to Make Cactus Jelly. Participants will make cactus tuna jelly from scratch. All supplies provided. \$10.00 fee. Reservations are required and limited. Special date and fee for "Friends" members. More info at headquarters.

Cibolo Wilderness Trail, Aug 27, 8 - 9 p.m. Gayle Ross - Native American Storytelling. Stories of Coyote and Rabbit. Through stories, lessons of life and nature were taught through the generations. \$2.00 donation requested.

(HCSNA)(TCP) Sept 10, 9:00 - 11:30a.m. Native grass and plant walk. Led by Range Ecology Major (Texas A&M) Katie Carden. One mile hike, wear good shoes and hat, etc. Meet at Rust Visitor Center.

Friedrich Wilderness Park, Sept. 10, Second Saturday program.

(GRSP) Sept 17, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Learn how to identify area woody plant species using a Plant Key. Program fee \$5.00 and participants keep their plant key. Park Amphitheater.

Friedrich Wilderness Park, Sept 17 thru October 15 every Saturday Interpretive Guide Training, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Subjects will cover geology, archeology, wildlife, botany and general ecology.

(HCSNA)(TCP) Sept 17, 9:00 - 11:30a.m. Native grass and plant walk. Led by Range Ecology specialists Kurtiss Smith. Meet at Rust Visitor Center.

(GRSP) Sept 17, 8:00 p.m - 9:00 p.m. Well known Hydrologist Dr. George Veni will take us into the underground world of aquifers. Meet at Park Amphitheater.

(HCSNA)(TCP) Sept 24, 9:00 - 1:00 p.m. Habitat Restoration Workshop I, by Kevin Good of TPWD. Site visits and field lecture on the theory, techniques and process of fire ecology. Participants will also join in on a brief work session. Meet at Rust Visitor Center.

(HCSNA)(TCP) Sept 25, Sunday, 9:00 - 11:30 a.m. Native grass and plant walk led by Dr. Floyd Waller. Meet at Rust Visitor Center.

(HCSNA)(TCP) Oct 1, 9:00 - 1:00 p.m. Habitat Restoration Workshop II, Help continue work begun by TPWD in 1992. Teams of volunteers will collect vegetation data to scientifically compare "restored" and "unrestored" sites in park. Meet at Rust Visitor Center.

Friedrich Wilderness Park, Oct 1, 9 to 3:00 p.m. Project Wild Workshop. Teachers receive AAT credit. Call for registration. Free.

(HCSNA)(TCP) Oct 8, 9:00 - 11:30a.m. Aquatics expert James White of UTSA will lead us down to Honey Creek Canyon and help us better understand water resources and the biology of aquatic systems. Meet at Rust Visitor Center.

(GRSP) Oct 8, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Learn how to identify area woody plant species using a Plant Key. Program fee \$5.00 and participants keep their plant key. Park Amphitheater.

Friedrich Wilderness Park, Oct 8, Second Saturday Program.

(GRSP)(TCP) Oct. 15, Flintknapping Workshop, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. Allen Bettis, Archeology Graduate Student will teach this ancient skill to interested learners in an afternoon workshop. Reservations limited. But seating area available for visitors to quietly look on to workshop. \$5.00 fee for participants. Make reservations at headquarters.

(HCSNA)(TCP) Nov 5, 9:00 a.m. to Noon. Ethno-Botany walk. Learn about cultural uses of native hill country plants for foods, medicines, fibers. 1 mile hike. Meet at Rust Visitor Center.

(HCSNA)(TCP) Nov 5, 9:00 a.m. to Noon. Ethno-Botany walk. Learn about cultural uses of native hill country plants for foods, medicines, fibers. 1 mile hike. Meet at Rust Visitor Center.

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