



# Friends of Guadalupe River Honey Creek, Inc.

A non-profit organization

Issue #14

3350 Park Rd 31, Spring Branch, TX 78070 ☎ 830-438-2656

January - March 1998

## Guadalupe RSP and Honey Creek SNA Celebrates the 75th Anniversary of TPWD

As 1998 begins, our State Park System prepares to celebrate its 75th Anniversary. On September 12, 1923 under the leadership of Governor Pat Neff, Legislation became effective and created a system of state parks for the people of Texas. Today Mother Neff State Park southwest of Waco and 124 other parks honor Governor Neff and his vision.

On April 25th Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek SNA is planning a Diamond Jubilee celebration of this event. Please join us for a great day of fun. Plans are in the works for activities involving Archeology, Bird Watching, Hiking, Birds of Prey, Childrens' Wilderness Survival Camp and much more.

## Honey Creek "Outdoor Classroom" set for May 1998

This May Guadalupe River State Park and the Friends of Guadalupe River/Honey Creek, Inc. will again sponsor an environmental education program for Comal ISD sixth graders. **We are in need of volunteers as Activity Guides.** No experience necessary, just a love of nature and

children and ability to help two or more days a week from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. during May. Contact Tom Campsey at GRSP at 830-438-2656. Tom Campsey, of Guadalupe River State Park staff did an outstanding job of writing the grant proposal for funding from TPWD. With a little help from last years writers a proposal was completed and mailed by the December 1st deadline. We've all got our fingers crossed for success.



## New Group Forms to Help State Parks

Last Fall, I and many other concerned citizens from across Texas were invited to join together and create Texans for State Parks, a non profit organization that supports the State Parks, State Historic Sites and State Natural Areas of Texas. State Parks need the involved support of citizens if they are remain strong and viable. Our parks are opportunities for interpretation, education and outreach to our youth. And are also vitally important to the tourism and travel industry.

The *mission* of Texans For State Parks is to preserve and enhance the State Park System for the benefit of the people of Texas and their guests. There are presently many groups that have an interest in support of state parks. These include the nearly 50 friends groups, other user groups, environmental groups, cultural history groups, and business groups. Unfortunately, there is no way for these groups to communicate with each other on important park issues.

Texans for State Parks hopes to provide that platform. And by working together, the individual groups can be more effective in achieving their goals.

A major issue facing State Parks is a lack of adequate funding. Although the legislature did help in the last biennium to provide funding for much needed infrastructure repair, money is still sorely needed for the day-to-day operation of the state park system. Texans for State Parks will work to inform and educate citizens and decision makers about the financial needs of state parks.

Other concerns that brought Texans for State Parks together is that in 1996, Texas ranked 48th in the nation on amount of state government spending in parks and recreation per capita. The national average was \$13, Texas spent \$3. Texas ranked 49th on park operating expenses per capita. The national average was \$4.81, Texas spent \$1.79. Texas ranked 48th in the nation on parks staff per capita. The national average was 2.5 park employees for each 10,000 state residents, Texas had .5 employees. Yet Texas has one of the largest state park systems in the nation with more than 650,000 acres, an average of 20,000,000 visits to the park system each year, and the fastest growing state in the nation.

I am very proud to be a charter board member of Texans for State Parks and wish to invite all to join Texans for State Parks at their very first membership meeting, January 24, 1998 at TPWD headquarters building at 4200 Smith School Rd in Austin, from 1p.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, please contact Richard Solis at 830-935-4011.

---by Richard Solis



## Superintendent's Corner

by Duncan G. Muckelroy

Change is constant, and one of the most exciting and encouraging changes occurred at our Saturday, December 6th Friends board meeting. It was decided by the Friends and Equestrian representatives in attendance that all activities throughout the boundaries of Honey Creek State Natural Area should be limited to supervised interpretive guided tours and educational outreach activities. However, in an effort to expand the equestrian, mountain biking, and hiking opportunities, a suitable trail system is to be developed within the boundaries of Guadalupe River State Park. In my opinion, this decision is a win/win solution for all the parties involved, and everyone present contributed to this desired outcome. In addition to the Friends Board members, I would particularly like to recognize Mr. Robert Ryan, a leader in the equestrian interests, as well as a member of our Friends Group. My new (as of September 1, 1997) Regional Director, Mr. Jimmy Swaim, also played a key role as the facilitator for all of the interested parties.

Deirdre Hisler has been "temporarily" assigned to Government Canyon State Natural Area in San Antonio. In the limited time she has served as the acting manager of this complex facility, she has already demonstrated her outstanding abilities as a Park Manager and coordinator of complex issues and diverse personalities. I immediately realized that I lost my right arm with Deirdre's departure, but as time has passed, I now also realize that my left arm is also gone. Fortunately, Deirdre remains committed to continuing to act as the official staff coordinator for our Friends Organization.

On December 7th at Bastrop, Deirdre, Joan, and I were able to attend a joint region wide meeting facilitated by our Executive Director, Mr. Andrew Sansom. Although Andy covered a broad range of topics, his reoccurring emphasis was the vital importance of communication. Andy's message reminded me that although this newsletter is only one way we strive to communicate within our Friends group, this format is an essential part of our overall communication effort.

## Notes from the President *Tink Manry*

As 1998 begins, our State Park System prepares to celebrate its 75th Anniversary. On September 12, 1923 under the leadership of Governor Pat Neff, Legislation became effective and created a system of state parks for the people of Texas. Today Mother Neff State Park southwest of Waco and 124 other parks honor Governor Neff and his vision. On April 25th we are planning a Diamond Jubilee celebration of this event at Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek State Natural Area. Please join us for a great day of fun with Archeology, Bird Watching, Hiking, Birds of Prey and more.

I am very pleased to announce that last Fall, a strong and diverse collection of citizens and activists groups came together to form Texans for State Parks, a not-for-profit organization that supports the State Parks, State Historic Sites and State Natural Areas of Texas. State Parks provide Islands of hope for all Texans and need the involved support of citizens if they are to be strong and viable for today and the future. While our State Parks and State Natural Areas preserve our natural and recreational heritage for present and future generations, State Historic Sites are the places where our history happened and they preserve our cultural heritage. Parks provide the opportunity for interpretation, education and outreach to our youth. Parks are vitally important to the tourism and travel industry and provide an approximate \$1 billion boost to the state's economy.



## So you want to plant a tree?

---by Ed Gunter

The information presented below is from a workshop at the Bamberger ranch, located between Blanco & Johnson City. Mr. Bamberger is known throughout the world for his conservation practices. He has transformed the Ranch from a desolate, barren piece of the hill country into a lush, fruitful paradise. These points are from his reforestation seminar.

**Selection:** Pick a tree (or trees) that are native to the area. These are adaptable, and will thrive. Some good ones in the hills include Live Oak, Chinquapin, Lacey, or Shin Oak, Cedar Elm, Big Tooth Maple, Texas Ash, & Bald Cypress. Ashe Juniper (Cedar) is native, and certainly adaptable, but MANY people strongly advise against reforesting the hill country with it. Books could be written about the "cedar" debate. Although Oaks do well here, the future of these beautiful trees is uncertain due to oak wilt. Find out where your nursery gets its trees. If available, locally grown trees will do better than a tree from a Florida acorn that was germinated in Tennessee, shipped to east Texas to grow for two years, and then trucked to San Antonio for the planting season.

**Timing:** October is generally considered the best month, followed by November, September, December, January, and

*So you want to plant a tree ..... continued*

February, in order. This will allow the tree to develop a strong root system before the stress of a Texas summer. Planting during the heat of June, July, or August is not recommended.

**The hole:** A common misconception here is "the deeper, the better." In reality, tree roots are generally not much deeper than about 12" into the soil. Below this level, growth doesn't take place, as there is not sufficient oxygen. You want the top of the true root ball to be level with the surrounding soil. For the typical 5 gallon size tree, you should have a square hole about 30" by 30" wide by about 8 (yes, eight) inches deep.

**How to plant:** Now that you have the right size hole, you can remove the tree from the container. Use a pencil to gently pry roots from the root ball. Dust off extraneous material from the top of the ball. Put the tree in the hole, using firm soil or rock to get the top of the ball level with surrounding soil. Fill with local soil, not potting soil, and water as you fill. Create a watering berm if you have sufficient soil.

**Fertilizer:** You can top dress with a high quality, slow release, balanced fertilizer. You're better off with no fertilizer than a cheap one, or an overdose.

**Protection:** MULCH, MULCH, MULCH!! Any questions? Use local materials (grass, leaves, etc.) if available. If deer or cattle are a problem, (if you live in central Texas, they probably are,) protect the young tree from them with fences, or brush piled around the tree.

**Water:** Don't let the roots dry out for the first couple of years. Supplemental watering is especially important during the dry spells we sometimes have. A week to 10 days is a guideline, depending on your soil.

**Proximity:** 12-15 feet apart is a good distance. This will let you string a high quality hammock between your trees after a few years.



Bumblebee performing stationary wing vibrations

## Fur Coat

Even in near-freezing weather, the Bumblebee can function well enough to gather nectar and pollen. Strong flying insects must warm up their flight muscles to about 100-104° F before their wings can operate efficiently. They can do so by

warming in the sun or by stationary wing vibrations like the bumblebee. Once optimum muscle temperature is reached, the Bumblebee's thick covering of hair insulates its body; its "fur coat" lets a Bumblebee function on days that stop many other insects "cold".



## Guadalupe River SP Monarch Watch Meets Churchill ECHO

### (Environmentally Conscious Highschool Organization)



This Fall the Monarch Watch TCP program was adopted by the environmental science students of Tom Anderson, Churchill High School. Five students, Laura Booher, Peter Donbavand, Parvona Fernandez, Regan Murphy, and Brian Walsh constructed a life cycle poster of the Monarch butterfly, coordinated the volunteer tagging each Saturday in October, and have created a section for the Churchill HS webpage for Monarch Butterflies.

The migration this Fall was quite different than the Spring northward migration. Weather conditions such as rain and unfavorable winds held the Monarchs a few hundred miles north of here for several weeks. All the while, their numbers increasing as they stalled out of their southern migration and remained along a line from Abilene to Dallas. They were waiting for a strong cold front to clear their route and when the front passed, the butterflies arrived in great numbers during a brief few days. Volunteers tagged 93 Monarchs by the end of day on October 18th. Ace Ed Gunter captured 85 of the Monarch Butterflies for tagging which makes him the undisputed record holder for GRSP. Only 13 more were tagged on following Saturdays in October to bring the total this season to 106. A very good number nonetheless and a great job by Churchill High School students.

Spring migration of the Monarch Butterflies should begin in March and peak during April. Check us out for tagging days and join us at the Rust Visitor Center. All ages can participate. We have the butterfly nets, you just need to bring your strong running legs!

Visit the Churchill HS website at [198.213.60.251/churchill/club.html](http://198.213.60.251/churchill/club.html). For detailed information visit the Monarch Watch Website at [keil.ukans.edu/~monarch/](http://keil.ukans.edu/~monarch/). You can also keep up with migration news in Texas by calling the Texas Monarch Watch at 1-800-468-9719 and is manned by Dr. Bill Calvert. The Texas Monarch Watch offers memberships for \$10.00 which includes a Spring and Fall newsletter and tags. There are curriculum guides available for levels K-2, 3-6 and 6-8. This is an easy and fascinating family and classroom activity.

## Weeblos Conquer City Hall



The area around the Rust House Visitor Center takes on a lot of foot and vehicle traffic. And recent dry years have left large areas

bare. The only way to keep the ground from compacting to the density of concrete is to mulch the area generously. Last Spring GRSP staff were able to bring in two truck loads of mulch and it improved the turf by the Rust House so much we began looking for a way to bring in more. A dump truck was made available for hauling the mulch from the San Antonio Recycling Center, but a front-end loader would be necessary to fill the truck. The problem was that the City could not assist anyone with loading due to insurance and liability restrictions. After weeks of working with various City of San Antonio staff, Board member Charlene Simmons was unable to gain the City's help in loading the truck.

It seemed our mother-of-all loads of mulch would not be.

I then contacted John Brandt a member troop, Dark Tigers 302 and asked if they would be interested in organizing an effort to bring out a few pickup loads of mulch. As the work weekend details were discussed, Charlene talked about her unsuccessful encounter with "city hall". Then the Dark Tigers set to work making a few phone calls and by presenting the good name of Boy Scouts of America was able to gain the assistance of the City in loading the mulch. The Dark Tigers were also able to enlist the help of weeblos Dragon Pack 536 and Boy Scout Troop 20. An effort by 18 scouts and leaders. Camping accommodations were paid for by the Friends of GR/HC and a brisk 17 degree camping night for the boys on Friday evening by mother nature. Saturday morning, the boys were treated to a wonderful display of "ice plant". A herbaceous plant that extrudes its sap out into frozen ice cycles on cold mornings. It became a pretty good substitute for snow balls.

In addition to December's project, Dark Tigers have interpreted at last years Volksmarch, spread the mulch last spring, cleaned and filled bird feeders, hummingbird feeders, blue bird nest boxes and carried our foot bridge back to position along Honey Creek Canyon after flood waters moved it downstream last June. By inviting members of other troops we hope that they will be interested in teaming up with the Dark Tigers for future projects at GRSP. The service hours

from these young men have been sorely needed and well done.

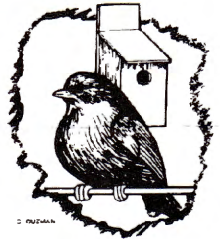
Thanks again to Boy Scout Troop 20, Dragon Pack 536 Dark Tigers 302, Ronnie Ubanczyk, Aggregate Haulers, truck driver Ed Perez, Loader Bobby Williams and the City of San Antonio. We sincerely appreciate the generous donation of time, labor and assistance everyone those who recognized this as a worthwhile community service project by our young volunteers.



## What do you do in the middle of winter?

**Why, start getting ready for Spring!**

Clean out those nest boxes, martin houses, and hummingbird feeders. Flycatchers, wrens, titmice, blue birds and others lay claim on the best nest boxes in January while Purple Martins may arrive as early as February. Hummingbirds usually arrive in early March.



**Are you thinking about buying a Purple Martin house this year?** That's great, Martins are pleasing to the eyes and ears. But, you must purchase a house that can be lowered and with doors on apartments that can be opened for easy inspection and management during nesting season. Martins are domesticated, so to speak. That is, they have become dependent upon humans for housing, protection from competitors, predators and yes, they even require health care. If your housing does not offer these perks, Purple Martins will not sign a long term lease with you.

**Have bananas, apples, pears, etc. that are overripe?** Don't throw it away! Not everyone lives on bird seed alone. Insectivorous birds, like Mockingbirds, woodpeckers and others will love you for hanging them outside in suet feeders or wedge them on a branch. Insects such as bees and butterflies will also appreciate the nectar of these fruits especially while flowers are in short supply.



## 1998 Winter Activities at Guadalupe River S.P. & Honey Creek SNA

**Readme!** Activity fees for Saturday hikes into Honey Creek Canyon are \$2 per person (members of "Friends" are free). Other program fees/reservations as noted. If you are not a TCP pass holder, be aware that park entrance fees are extra. Park phone # is 830-438-2656 for additional information, reservations for special programs and directions.

**January 3, 10, 17, 24, 31:** Honey Creek Canyon Walk 9 - 11 a.m. Join us for a leisurely two mile hike along Honey Creek Canyon with interpretation of the environmental and cultural history of the Edwards Plateau and the Texas hill country. Lead by Penny Solis. Meet at Rust House.

### 2 Activities Today!

**January 31st:** Honey Creek Canyon Walk 9 - 11 a.m. (See Jan.3rd for details)

**January 31st:** Birdhouse Spring Cleaning, 9:30 - noon. Volunteers needed to clean out and spruce up Blue bird boxes for nesting season. Bring a phillips and panhead screwdriver, a bar of soap, and yourself to the Rust Visitor Center.

**February 7, 14, 21, 28:** Honey Creek Canyon Walk 9 - 11 a.m. (See Jan.3rd for details)

### 2 Activities Today!

**March 7th:** Honey Creek Canyon Walk 9 - 11 a.m. (See Jan.3rd for details)



**March 7th:** Outdoor Dutch Oven Cookin'. 12 - 3 p.m. Reservations

required, \$25 per person. **Members of Friends Of GR/HC, \$15 per person.** Pot Wrangler, Charlene Simmons will teach the basics of using the Dutch oven on a campfire. Plus tin turtle ideals. Participants will eat the prepared meal!! Make your reservations early, this is our most popular program.

**March 14th:** Honey Creek Canyon Walk 9 - 11 a.m. (See Jan.3rd for details)

### 2 Activities Today!

**March 21st:** Honey Creek Canyon Walk 9 - 11 a.m. (See Jan.3rd for details)

**March 21st:** Monarch Watch Survey. 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.. Hosted by Churchill High School students, you can participate in a nationwide scientific



program tracing migration patterns of the Monarch butterfly as they begin their Fall migration south. Our observations will help expand what is known about the Monarch's Texas migration. If you cannot come to the scheduled event, it is still possible to help by counting flybys. Survey forms and instructions will be available in park headquarters. Meet at Rust House.

### 2 Activities Today!

**March 28th:** Honey Creek Canyon Walk 9 - 11 a.m. (See Jan 3rd for details)

**March 28th:** Monarch Watch Survey. 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.. See March 21 for details.

## Coming in April

April brings extra fun programs. This will our State Parks 75th Anniversary and in conjunction with Earth Day. we'll have a full slate of activities from Bird watching to Birds of Prey, Archeology, Kids Wilderness Survival and more!!

Friends of Guadalupe River/Honey Creek, Inc., Membership Application *Dues are annual and renew each January. Dues paid after June 30th of each year are prorated at half of the full membership fees.* Make check payable to: Friends of GR/HC, Inc., 3350 Park Rd. 31, Spring Branch, TX 78070.  \$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 Supporting  \$100.00 Sustaining  \$500.00 Corporate  \$1,000.00 Life

Date      Name       Renewal       New Membership

Street, City, State & Zip

Phone: home, Optional: e-mail, work, fax

## Scared Stiff

Almost everyone knows about the opossum "playing dead." "Fear" in an opossum can set off a charge of internal chemicals that cause the muscles on both sides of its joints to contract, making its body stiff. After a time, the paralyzing chemicals fade, and the opossum can move again.



The advantage to the opossum is that predators often require the stimulation of the struggling prey to kill and eat. So, "dead" prey is a real turn-off and the predator often abandons the opossum before severe injuries are inflicted.

The opossum is a well-known animal over much of the North American continent. Slow-moving, slow-witted, it hardly seems like a successful species. In fact, the marsupials in general have not competed well with the more advanced

placental mammals. Yet the opossum not only survives, it has been expanding its range for many years now.

Originally derived from South American ancestors, it has spread through Central America into the warmer regions of North America. Opossums can now be found along the West Coast and the eastern half of the United States as far north as southern Canada.

The opossum probably owes its success to man-made environmental changes including the spread of urban and suburban areas, with their wealth of food sources and shelters for omnivorous, nocturnal animals. Its range is likely to be limited only by cold winter weather as it is poorly suited to northern winters.

Article on Bumble Bee and Opossum are from *Right Before your eyes* by John Weissinger poster series.

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