



SPRING 2005 NEWSLETTER

# Friends of Guadalupe River, Honey Creek, Inc.

A non-profit organization

3350 Park Road 31, Spring Branch, Texas 78070 830-438-2656

## Presidents Letter

by J.W. Pieper

## Board of Directors

Spring is in the air in Honey Creek, and you are missing a wonderful time of year if you have not participated in a hike lately. The agarita bushes are beginning to show tiny yellow flowers and the wild plum tree behind the Rust house is in full bloom—a true indicator that Spring is upon us. Soon the golden-cheeked warblers will be sharing their songs with us on the Saturday hikes as they return to build their nests. We have seen the first wildflowers peeking through to liven up the countryside—a wonderful time of year.

Your board of directors—see the accompanying article to learn more about who they are—recently voted to level the Rust House in order to prevent damage to the structure and preserve it for posterity. That leveling process should be completed by the time this newsletter is available. The next project will be the painting of the Rust House in order to preserve the structure and keep it looking much younger than the 85+ year old lady that she is! We will need volunteers to help with the painting project, so please respond when we send out a call in the next month or so. Dave Kibler and Wilt Shaw have worked diligently to evaluate bidders, present their recommendations, plan the timing of the leveling, and oversee the work as the contractors returned the house to the planned and original level floors.

Holly Camero has been busy preparing for the influx of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders from Northeast Schools. In two days of training in mid-February she and Tom Anderson trained over 75 volunteer trainers who will present the material to the students during the month of March. If you have some available time, come out and watch our future in action as the children learn to appreciate nature and become comfortable in the great outdoors.

Soon we will see the telltale green appearing as the cedar elms, persimmons, gum bumelias and buckeyes begin to show their spring colors. The scent of the agarita blossoms will greet you and the prickly pear will be showing their bright yellow colors. A great time to visit the park and renew your friendship with our beautiful Honey Creek!

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## Friends Officers

By J.W. Pieper

In the last edition of your "Friends" newsletter we spotlighted the new officers of the Friends group and promised to spotlight the remainder of the Board of Directors in this issue. Some of these folks who are so generous with their time and efforts are equally as shy about their accomplishments, but through a considerable amount of arm twisting we were able to compile the following brief biographical backgrounds to familiarize you with this talented and public servant oriented group.

Tom Anderson is our immediate past president of the Friends of GRSP/Honey Creek. He retired from teaching after 32 years and has continued to work for NEISD doing Environmental Outdoor Education on a contract basis. In 2000 he was awarded the Naturalist Award for Education by the AAMN. In 2001 Tom received the Trinity Prize by Trinity University as one of two outstanding educators for the area. In 2002 he received the Texas Excellence in Education Award by the Texas Exes, The College of Education and The University of Texas at Austin. Tom has been married to Carole for 37 years and has 3 sons and 2 daughters-in-law and 3 grandchildren.

Holly Camero moved from Long Island, New York to San Antonio in 1981. Continuing her chosen profession she was employed by a local jeweler, met her husband, Charles, and continued employment until the birth of her son, Charlie. After Charlie had grown, she read an article about becoming a Master Naturalist. Knowing that this was a "calling" after a lifetime of being a birder and "backyard naturalist" she joined and graduated from the 5<sup>th</sup> class. This gave her the ability to be the "Bug Lady" working with schools, the John Knox 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Camp, and also acting entomologist at the Cibolo Nature Center survey. She is a Tour guide with S.A.Parks & Recreation Dept., as well as Tour Coordinator at Honey Creek. She also coordinates the N.E.I.S.D. 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade program at Honey Creek and is currently serving as President of the Alamo Area Master Naturalists. Through these efforts she hopes to better serve the community and environment.

Ernie Lee and his wife Donna live at Canyon Lake. Ernie is a life-long outdoorsman and served with the Boy Scouts for 35 years in various positions including Commissioner and Camp Director. He holds BSA's coveted Silver Beaver and Woodbadge awards. Ernie's outdoor adventures have taken him to many exciting places like the Artic Circle in Labrador and Mt. Ararat in eastern Turkey. Ernie and Donna graduated from the 2nd Texas Master Naturalist class offered in Comal County -- Lindheimer Chapter. Ernie is currently the Training Coordinator for the Lindheimer TMN training. Ernie and Donna are trained interpretive guides for the

Honey Creek SNA, and normally cover the 4th Saturday at Honey Creek. Ernie also schedules speakers and events for the Saturday evening interpretive programs at GRSP amphitheater. Ernie is a specialist in fireflies, and holds an annual firefly presentation and observation hikes at GRSP each spring. Donna and Ernie are Texas Water Watch Water Quality Monitors, and regularly monitor a site on the Guadalupe River at GRSP. Ernie is also a certified trainer of Water Quality Monitors. Both serve on the adjunct faculty of Palo Alto College in San Antonio.

Dave Kibler is retired from SBC and moved to the Bergheim area in 1998 from San Antonio. He has been an avid gardener throughout his lifetime, and is an active member and former officer of the Boerne Chapter of Native Plant Society of Texas. Dave has been active in the Friends of GSP/HCSNA for several years, working with the maintenance aspect of the Friends' program. He has been active as an adult leader with the Boy Scouts of America for over 30 years. He is also a member and past-President of the San Antonio Kiwanis Club.

Donna Smith is our Historian and is actively involved in many volunteer activities throughout Comal and the surrounding counties. She has been a Certified Master Gardener since 1999 and a Certified Master Naturalist since 2000. In addition, she is active in the Lindheimer Chapter of the Native Plant Society. She is the current chair of the Comal County Master Gardeners Lindheimer Garden Project in New Braunfels where she helps maintain the gardens at the Ferdinand Lindheimer House for the New Braunfels Conservation Society. She designed and assisted in the planting of the South Island Beautification Project at the Guadalupe River State Park.

Dan Freeman is a board member and is webmaster for our Friends website [www.honeycreekfriends.org](http://www.honeycreekfriends.org). He is a former school district science supervisor/specialist and director of the 120 acre Roy Hyatt Environmental Center in Florida. Dan arrived in San Antonio a little more than two years ago on a transfer from the Navy to the Army, where he supervises the design and development of computer mediated medical courses. He holds academic degrees in Zoology and Education, including a doctorate in Instructional Technology. Dan's interests involve traveling, photography, reading, and developing computerized educational science topics including mathematical modeling and image processing.

This is an impressive gathering of people who are dedicated to making the Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek State Natural Area a destination for both children and adults.

# Rust House Restoration

by Wilt Shaw

Maybe you haven't noticed but our beloved Rust House has been in dire need of repair and refurbishing. Well, the Friends have decided to do something about it! Our long-range plan is to completely restore it literally from the ground up with the intention of maintaining as much historic integrity as possible. Heading up this project are Friends members and board representatives Wilt Shaw and Dave Kibler.

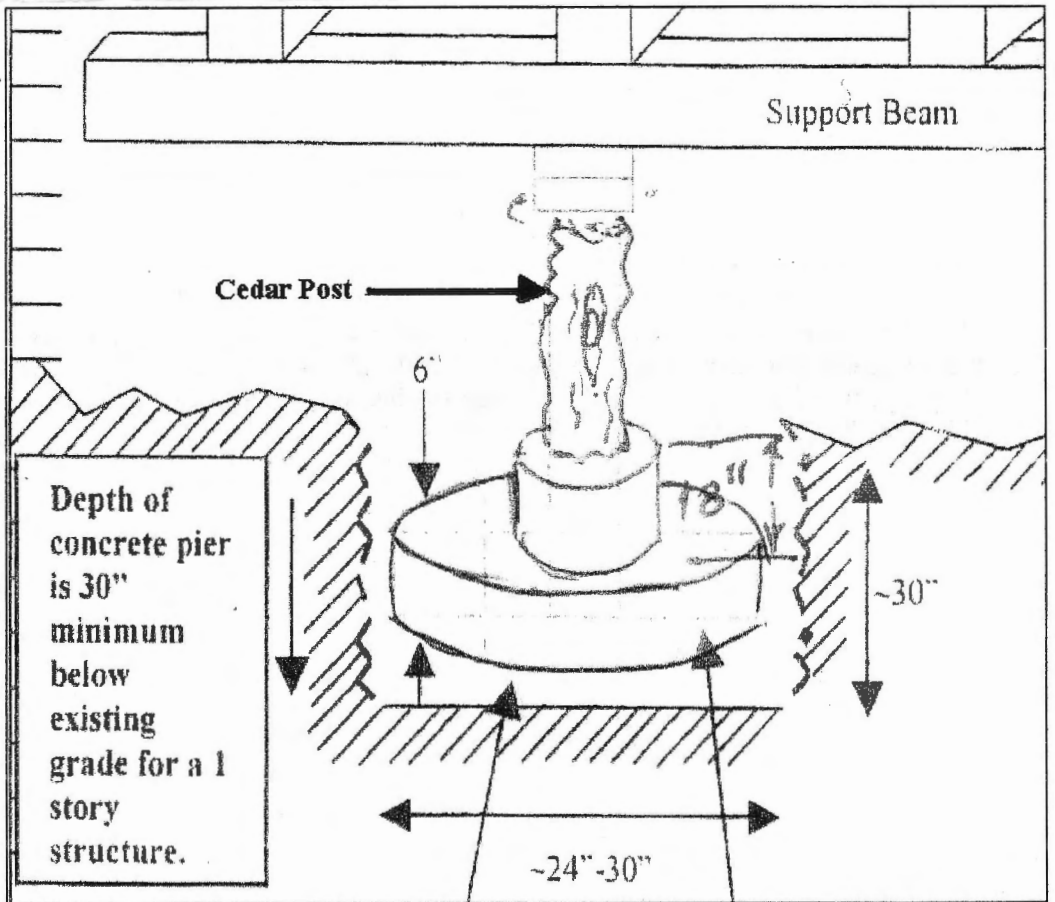
The first phase of restoration, leveling, has been completed. We contracted the Arredondo Group to do this job, and they did it well. They came up with the idea of placing a concrete pad under each cedar pier, encasing the bases in concrete, and replacing the posts that have rotted. After all, those posts have been supporting the Rust House since it was built in 1917.

As it turned out, almost all the piers were rotted below ground level. We are lucky the house hadn't fallen! With some last minute scrambling by Park Ranger Greg Nash, project supervisor, and the contribution of the Tong family of Cordillera Ranch, we had more than enough cedar for new piers.

The leveling project took five days to complete and the repairs maintain the look of 1917 construction. The initial bids for the work came in at around \$12,000; however, the Arredondo Group generously cut their bid in half while still including all new piers where needed. The final cost of the project was \$6,878.00. Every dollar was well spent!

After the leveling, the front and back steps no longer match up to the house. The back porch has an extra eight inch drop down to the first step while the front porch step is about four inches lower than it used to be. Our next phase in the project will be to make porch repairs, replace rotted wood and finally re-paint the entire house. We will be looking for the donated services of a pressure washer to remove the old paint from the outside walls prior to starting the new paint job. Please call if you can help.

Much of this later work we hope to accomplish through Friend volunteers. Please watch for future notices as to when we will begin the next stage and be willing to contribute your time and talent to this worthwhile project. You are invited to come out to Honey Creek for a peek underneath and to take a walk through our now level Rust House. The chairs on rollers in the meeting room no longer collect in the corner!



**3rd Grade Educational Program & Specialty Hikes**

by Holly Camero

The Northeast ISD third grade program is currently underway and is running smoothly. Field trips will run Monday through Friday March 3 through 31.

Volunteers are needed to lead upcoming hikes. If you have attended the Interpretive Guide Program and are in need of completing your 4 hike guide requirement for certification, please call Holly and volunteer some time guiding these groups. *We really need your help!*

March 19- "Go Hike": From 9:00am to 3:00pm, 16 Friends are needed to oversee visitors who will be allowed to wander the trails without a tour guide. Visitors must however stay on trails and out of the water.

April 5- Rahe Primary students and parents will tour Honey Creek; 4 to 6 guides are needed

April 25 & 26-Arlon Seay Intermediate 5th grade: Honey Creek Tour: 4 guides are needed each day.

**Park Manager**

By Mark Abolafia-Rosenzweig

**FROM THE MANAGER'S DESK – March 12, 2005**

This is a season of change. Yes, it is spring. Golden Cheek Warblers are warbling, flowers are beginning to show themselves, people were frolicking all over the park and in the river today, and the Mexican Plumb in "the front" of the Rust House smells wonderful. But right now, my thoughts are primarily occupied with the people I have been working with and am about to work with. When you come to the park you will notice many new faces and may miss one or two familiar ones. J Erlanson started working as a Clerk in the headquarters today. Judy Scott and Edward Denard are scheduled to start as Maintenance Assistants in the coming weeks. Laura Cauley – remember her – is scheduled to graduate from the law enforcement academy and will rejoin us on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Chris Cook has accepted a transfer to Lake Livingston State Park and has already left. He was our Utility Plant Operator and that will be a difficult position to fill – though I have already been working very hard to recruit and hire a qualified individual. Jonathan Gibson, our Park Ranger III and Backup Utility Plant Operator, continues to be on medical leave due to an on the job injury he suffered last May. He had back surgery in February and has, unfortunately, had several complications from the surgery. I'm sure he and his family would appreciate any thoughts and prayers you can send their way. Finally, I know that you all will continue to send your thoughts and prayers to Ernie Lee and his family as Ernie continues his recovery journey. The work we do is great work and whether we get paid or volunteer we should all feel privileged to be part of conserving, interpreting, and helping people enjoy such a beautiful place. Most importantly, we should feel privileged to work among such great company.

**Mark Abolafia-Rosenzweig****Park Manager****Guadalupe River State Park and****Honey Creek State Natural Area****830-438-2656**

## More funding for state parks would be much-needed step.

By SHANNON TOMPKINS Copyright 2005 Houston Chronicle; March 10, 2005

€ **House Bill 1292** by Rep. Harvey Hilderbran, R-Kerrville, would remove the current cap of \$32 million in general sales tax revenue authorized to be annually allocated to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for use in funding state and local parks

The bill would increase the annual general revenue allocation for parks to \$85 million, with \$58.5 million going to state parks and \$25.5 million to local park funding. € **HB 2025** by Rep. Harvey Hilderbran, R-Kerrville, would transfer jurisdiction of the Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz Memorial Naval Museum in Fredericksburg from TPWD to the Texas Historical Commission.

The bill would also authorize, by interagency agreement, transfer of other historical sites currently under the jurisdiction of TPWD to the Texas Historical Commission. € **HB 2028**, by Rep. Harvey Hilderbran, R-Kerrville, would require the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to conduct a study of the use and maintenance of the the state parks account and the recreation and parks account. The purpose would be to identify ways to improve efficiency of use of the accounts, identify potential new revenue sources for both accounts and look for more innovative approaches to managing the accounts.

Texas state parks were not created to produce a monetary profit. That's good, because they don't. Only a handful of the 120-plus units in the state park system generate enough direct revenue through entrance and other user fees to cover the cost of running the parks. But that doesn't reflect the true value of parks. State parks and local parks are a lot like public roadways; they are government-administered, publicly underwritten paths allowing people access to things that contribute greatly to their quality of life.

In the case of parks, that improved quality of life includes access to fishing, hunting opportunities, boating, camping, hiking, birding, learning about the history of the state and its people, and all manner of ways to connect with, and become advocates for the state's natural resources. With the increased urbanization of Texas and much of the state's population severed from direct connection to wildlife and wild places, parks have become one of the most available portals through which Texans can build that important relationship.

"For a lot of people, parks are the only avenue they have to get exposed to the outdoors," said Joseph Fitzsimons, chair of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission. "That applies to local parks as well as state parks." Those initial experiences can, and often do, lead to a lifetime of learning about and enjoying the state's still-considerable wildlife and fisheries and

participating in outdoors-related recreational opportunities, Fitzsimons said. This is good for them and the resources. Unless the state's wildlife, fisheries and the places they live have a human constituency willing to demand those wild things and wild places be managed, protected and otherwise wisely handled, the future is grim.

The same dark road awaits those who find great benefit in the natural world. The Texas state park system is at a crossroads, many advocates claim. The parks are being loved to death as the state's population mushrooms and park visits increase. The state park system sees about 9.7 million visits a year, and that takes a toll on the parks.

Maintenance costs are staggering. The state needs new parks, particularly around urban centers. All this costs money, and lots of it. But the state parks system has been, and continues to be, chronically under funded.

Also, state administrations for at least the past decade have had tacit prohibitions on expanding state park acreage. Many Texans have always had a negative attitude toward expanding government ownership of land in this state, and that includes state parks. This public policy stand runs counter to what today's Texans say they want. Several studies over the past decade show the great majority of Texans say they support expansion of state parks and protecting more of the state's natural areas. Those same studies say most Texans are more than willing to pay for those things

### Show of support

A poll of Texas voters conducted this past December by Woodlands-based Hill Research Consultants indicated 69 percent of those polled said they would be willing to pay at least \$1 per month in additional state taxes "for new state and local parks, and to protect the state's natural resources, including our land, water and natural habitat." (The poll, which surveyed 503 randomly selected registered voters, was paid for by three conservation groups: Texas Coalition for Conservation, Trust for Public Land and The Nature Conservancy.) Almost the same percentage (68 percent) said they supported increasing the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's funding "to buy additional lands for conservation of natural resources and outdoor recreation." Over the next couple of months, the Texas Legislature gets the chance to weigh in on the issue. A proposal to greatly increase funding for state and local parks is on the table. House Bill 1292 by Rep. Harvey Hilderbran, R-Kerrville, would increase the amount of general tax revenue appropriated to the state and local parks funding accounts. Currently, the state tax code requires \$32 million in state sales tax revenue annually be appropriated to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for use in funding state parks and for local park grants. That \$32 million figure was set by the Legislature in the mid-1990s. The figure was about equal to what the park account had been receiving from its portion (a half-cent per

per pack) of the state tax on cigarettes.

Proponents of the switch from cigarette tax money to sales tax money justified the move by noting that income from cigarette taxes were decreasing. They were willing to take the \$32 million "cap" of general sales tax revenue instead of watching the cigarette tax revenue drop below that mark.

To make the appropriation of sale tax revenue more palatable, proponents labeled it a "sporting goods" tax. The idea was that sale tax generated through the sale of sporting goods — fishing gear, hunting equipment, camping stuff, even hiking shoes and basketballs and such — should go to support parks. Texas has no specific sales tax aimed at sporting goods, nor does it maintain records that could show exactly how much sales tax income is generated through sale of "sporting goods." The state comptroller's office calculates the amount of state sales tax generated through purchases of "sporting goods" by using data on recreational equipment provided by the National Sporting Goods Association. That formula indicates Texans now pay about \$100 million each year in sales tax on recreational equipment.

### Seeking \$85 million

Hilderbran's bill would remove that decade-old \$32 million cap and

increase the annual allocation to \$85 million. Currently, \$16 million of the \$32 million is allocated to the state park fund, with the other \$16 million designated to the local park funds. Under Hilderbran's bill, \$58.5 million of the proposed \$85 million would be dedicated to the state park fund, and \$25.5 million to the local parks fund. "I feel now is the time to raise or remove that (\$32 million) cap," Hilderbran said. "I think it's the right thing to do. Without some increase in funding, we're not going to be able to maintain the parks we have, much less increase the number of parks." A majority of Texas voters appear to agree with Hilderbran.

In that Hill Research Consultants survey conducted in December, 65 percent of the respondents said they are in favor of lifting the current \$32 million cap on sales tax revenue dedicated to fund state and local parks. Twenty-six percent said they opposed increasing sales tax revenue dedicated to parks. Without increased funding (including reinstatement of about \$60 million in voter-approved bond money the 2003 Legislature "suspended" to help address the budget deficit the state faced), state parks will continue deteriorating, no new state parks will be created and local park grants (along with the considerable federal matching funds they generate) will continue shrinking. Hilderbran's bill has been referred to the House Ways and Means Committee. No hearing date has been set.

## Saturday Evening Programs

by Ernie Lee



**April 2 - Steve Star -- Hill Country Snakes**

**April 9 - Doug Dalglish -- Strange and Amazing Facts about Hill Country Plants**

**April 16 - Bill Waldron -- Backpacking**

**April 23 - Bill Waldron -- Hiking**

**April 30 - Ernie Lee -- Fireflies**

**May 7 - To be announced**

**May 14 - To be announced**

**May 21 - Gaye Sekula -- Texas Medicinal Herbs**

**May 28 - To be announced**

**Please call park headquarters for current program information**

**If you or someone you know would be interested in presenting a Saturday Evening Program that would be of interest to both adults and children, please call Ernie Lee or JW Pieper to volunteer!**

# Friends of GR/HC, Inc. Membership

By Terry Urbanczyk

## Membership Renewal is January 1st of 2005.

If you are receiving this newsletter, but are not a current member of the Friends of Guadalupe River & Honey Creek, Inc., please consider joining this year.

### What do Friends members do?

Friends members are responsible for developing and providing educational programs that help the public use our public lands to their fullest while instilling a sense of stewardship in the visitors who participate in the programs. Our current projects are:

1. Saturday morning tours of Honey Creek SNA
2. Specialty hikes of Honey Creek
3. 3rd Grade education program
4. Saturday Evening Programs (spring through fall)
5. Honey Creek Trail maintenance
6. Rust House maintenance
7. Northside park use and trail development
8. GIS 8th grade education project
9. Halloween in the Park
10. Ashe-juniper removal
11. Certified Interpretive Guide Training

12. Newsletter information to members
13. Long term planning of an environmental education center

### How does the Friends group get funding?

All operating funds come from membership dues, donations during events and proceeds from vending machines in the park. All money received goes back into projects and activities that enhance Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek SNA.

### How can I help?

A \$15 family membership will help offset the costs of printing and mailing the quarterly newsletters. Other membership levels help out considerably. All projects need active volunteers who can help on occasion to accomplish many of the tasks we have undertaken. Members who have ideas for new projects, educational opportunities and fund raising are welcomed! There are great opportunities for newly graduated Master Naturalist to get involved and utilize your skills!

**Please, send in your membership form today, and help us spread the stewardship of the environment to everyone!**

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

(Membership Renewal date is January 1st)

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Best Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Type:     New Member     Renewal     Change of Address

Level of Membership:     \$5 Education or Youth Organization     \$50 Sustaining Member

\$5 Student (under 18)                                    \$Contributing Member

\$10 Individual (over 18)                                    \$500 Corporate Partner

\$15 Family    \$1000 Life Membership

### I would like to help the Friends by volunteering for:

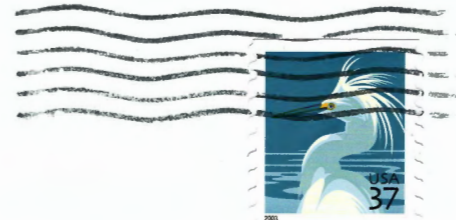
- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interpretive hikes | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Ed. Programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Trail Maintenance           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historical Drama   | <input type="checkbox"/> Evening Programs     | <input type="checkbox"/> South Island Beautification |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trail Ride Event   | <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising          | <input type="checkbox"/> 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](http://www.honeycreekfriends.org)

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*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  
Second Thursday at 7:00 pm.  
And bring a friend!*