

FRIENDS



OF GUADALUPE RIVER STATE PARK HONEY CREEK SNA



FALL NEWSLETTER 2020 A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

GRSP Service Project

by Dave Kibler

On Saturday, August 8, a group of six Scouts and four dads from Boy Scout Troop 285 in San Antonio completed a service project at Guadalupe River State Park (GRSP). The crew worked in the Honey Creek State Natural Area along the trail to Honey Creek. The project included brush cleanup along the trails, as well as clearing a tree that had fallen over and was blocking the trail. Small cedar trees were removed, and low-hanging branches over the roads were also cut. The Park Ranger was Gabriel Garza, and Scout Will Helmrick was the youth leader. Will made homemade oatmeal-raisin cookies for a snack which was enjoyed by all. Following the work, the crew visited the Honey Creek area at the conclusion of the project.



Come on out - the birding is GREAT

by Linda Glinder

Despite us humans being challenged with Covid-19 these past months, Mother Nature has taken it in stride and continued to do what Mother Nature does best – hatch, germinate, grow, bloom, take flight, and renew. The park's birds have certainly followed these steps. Birds have completed raising their young and are turning their attention to other endeavors. Those with a yearning for new feeding grounds are leaving. Fall migration at the park is not as dramatic as the spring, but it seems to last long by starting in July and continuing well into November. While the fall migration can bring new sightings each day, the Summer and Fall are also a good time to seek out some of the park's year-round residents – the woodpeckers.

The park is home to two year-round woodpecker species -- the Golden-fronted and the Ladder-backed. Both species are common within the park and the careful observer can find one or both during a visit. Most woodpeckers (including these two) spend most of their life in trees so a good place to start your search is the trees in the Day Use Area but looking along any trail with trees is good too. When looking, carefully inspect the trunk and larger branches where these two spend most of their day probing the bark for food. When you find a woodpecker, take time to watch and you will discover some of the woodpecker's special adaptations.

First, look closely at their feet and watch how they move about the tree. Most tree dwelling birds find hopping up a tree trunk to be a challenge. The reason is that most birds have three toes forward and one backward. A foot designed for perching not climbing. But most woodpeckers have four toes arranged in an x-pattern (two forward and two backward). This allows them to cling to tree bark and climb.

Second, and the adaptation that most people associate with woodpeckers, is their ability to rapidly strike with their beak to communicate, probe for food, and excavate for nests. Think about it, using your nose to repeatedly strike a door would make for a big headache, but the woodpecker seems to not be phased. The reason is that they have reinforced skulls structured to spread the impact and their brains are highly cushioned. In the Spring, male woodpeckers communicate to potential mates by drumming, but they might drum at any time of the year to advertise territory, sound an alarm or announce a food source. Listen to the drumming and see if you can count the taps – woodpeckers can tap up to 30 times per second.

The Golden-fronted Woodpecker is a park rock star because of its limited United States range. In fact, to see one without

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international travel, you must be in Texas or Oklahoma. Even in Texas, its territory is limited to a central strip from the Rio Grande Valley to the Panhandle. The Golden-fronted is a close cousin and similar in all respects to the Red-bellied Woodpecker which has a much larger distribution across the eastern half of the United States. The two species overlap slightly and will occasionally interbreed. Unfortunately, the Park is too far west for Red-bellied to regularly occur and consequently we only see them on rare occasions. The Golden-fronted is a medium sized woodpecker with a length of 8 ½ to 10 inches. It has black-and-white bars on its back and wings, a plain buffy breast, and a white rump. If you find one, take time to study the head and neck. The nape (or back of the neck) is yellow-orange. Males sport a red crown. Both sexes have a yellow spot in front of the eyes at the bill and hence the name – Golden-fronted. The Golden-fronted readily eats insects as well as fruits and nuts. They are mostly found in the trees but will visit prickly pear cactus in late summer and fall to partake in a favorite food – ripe prickly pear fruit. Some birds will consume so many that the front of their face becomes stained purple.



Male Golden-fronted Woodpecker (Photo by John Prentice)

The Ladder-backed Woodpecker is smaller than the Golden-fronted (at only 6-7 inches). The Ladder-backed occupies the same range as the Golden-fronted, but also parts of New Mexico, Arizona, and California. It too is a rock star for out of state visitors. Throughout its range they can be found in oak woodlands, cottonwood groves, desert scrub and mesquite savannahs. Their back is black-and-white-barred with a “ladder” appearance. Breasts are buffy with black spots. It has an interesting white and black face pattern. Both sexes are similar with males sporting a red crown and females black.



Male Ladder-backed Woodpecker (Photo by John Prentice)

Mostly, Ladder-backs eat insects, but they too will dine on fruits including cactus fruits. The Ladder-back has a similar body shape and size to the Downy Woodpecker which has an extensive range that begins just north of the park and expands over most of the United States and Canada. Occasionally a Downy will visit the park, so it is worth checking color patterns when you spot a small woodpecker. Downy's have a

white back and bold white spots on wings.

The Golden-fronted and Ladder-backed are the most common woodpeckers but Fall may also bring Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers or Northern Flickers. They are all fun to watch. And the best part is watching is typically in the shade! If you would like to learn more about birds, watch for one of Ranger Holly's bird postings on the Park's Facebook page. Or check the Park's schedule and join in on a birding program. You are always welcome at the Park's Woodland wildlife viewing blind located in the Day Use Area where you can get up close observations perfect for photography. So, visit soon and often – the birding is GREAT!

What's in a Name?

The Challenges of Early Texas Naturalists

by Charleen Moore and Mackenzie Brown

In spring and summer and even into fall, one can see fields full of wildflowers for which Texas is famous, from blue meadows covered with the state flower to red-orange pastures crowded with Indian paintbrush to yellow valleys flush with four-nerve daisy. A number of these flowers carry the names of early Texas naturalists and with them a history of the early exploration of the Hill Country. Samuel Geiser in his *Naturalists of the Frontier* (1937) lists over 150 naturalists in Texas in the 19th century. Many of the early explorers were educated, sophisticated Europeans. They led the way not only in scientific exploration but in bringing society and culture to Texas. These explorers faced exceptional hardships in collecting plants and shipping them to herbaria in the eastern United States and Europe. The five men described here are the most prolific early naturalists whose names are intimately associated with numerous hill country flowers.

One of the first flowers to arrive in spring is the purple or white windflower named for one of the earliest explorers, Jean Louis Berlandier (c. 1805-1851), *Anemone berlandieri* (Fabaceae).



Windflower

Photos: Charleen Moore

Berlandier was born in Switzerland and studied botany at the Academy of Geneva under Auguste Pyrame de Candolle. He sent Berlandier to join the Mexican Boundary Commission as a botanist and zoologist. The expedition (1828-1829) entered Texas at Laredo, passed through areas around San Antonio and Gonzales and moved east to San Felipe, with Berlandier constantly collecting along the way. The spring of 1828 was extremely wet with incessant rains, producing great swarms of mosquitoes and attacks of malaria afflicting many in the expedition.

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Berlandier collected thousands of species in spite of being frozen by swift "northers," soaked by torrential rains, tormented daily by gadflies, feasted on every night by mosquitoes, and weakened by malaria. Also, the specimens he collected and pressed during the day, along with his supply of botanical drying paper, were often soaked by rains during the night or occasionally carried away by floods. Once the specimens were prepared, more difficulties ensued. Transportation to the seacoast and shipment to Europe were treacherous with broken wagons, swollen creeks, marshes, and sickness and other obstacles to impede their journey. Even though many of the specimens Berlandier had collected were lost or ruined, he was still able to ship back to Geneva 188 packets of dried plants, 198 packets of plant seeds, 935 insects, 72 birds, 55 jars of specimens preserved in alcohol and over 700 specimens of mollusks (Geiser, pp. 64-65).

Many plants have been named for Berlandier. Besides the anemone, others are:

Texas Greeneyes

Berlandiera betonicifolia (Asteraceae)

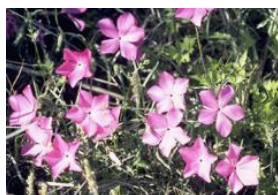
Berlandier's Sundrops

Calylophus berlandieri (Onagraceae)

Berlandier Acacia

Senegalia berlandieri (Fabaceae)

One of the most common wildflowers in Texas, Phlox drummondii (Polemoniaceae), was named for Thomas Drummond (c. 1790-1835), a botanist who was born in Scotland. He sent phlox seed to England in 1835 where it became one of the most popular plants for an English garden.



Drummond Phlox

Photo: Charleen Moore

Drummond sailed to America in 1825 to join a land expedition as assistant naturalist that was traveling toward the west coast. He later became interested in exploring the flora of Texas. However, when he arrived in Texas in 1833, he was immediately delayed by an attack of cholera. Recovering from this illness, he then started collecting along the Brazos, Colorado and Guadalupe Rivers, concentrating on the areas between Galveston and the Edwards Plateau. He spent almost two years preparing specimens that were sent to herbaria throughout Europe. He collected over 750 species of plants and 150 specimens of birds. He had planned to make a complete botanical survey of Texas but died in 1835 during a collecting trip to Cuba.

Plants named for Drummond include:

Evening Rain Lily

Cooperia drummondii (Liliaceae)

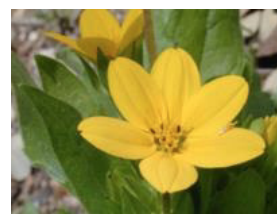
Drummond Turk's Cap

Malvaviscus arboreus var. *drummondii* (Malvaceae)

Texas Aster

Symphotrichum drummondii var. *texanum* (Asteraceae)

One of the plants that evokes Texas almost as readily as the bluebonnet is the Texas yellow-star or *Lindheimeria texana* (Asteraceae). It was named for one of the best known of the early naturalists, **Ferdinand Jacob Lindheimer (1801-1879)**, a German who settled permanently in New Braunfels. Lindheimer collected specimens in Texas from 1843-1852, primarily for Asa Gray at Harvard and George Engelmann at St. Louis. Together, they published a monograph, *Plantae Lindheimeriana*, in 1845 enumerating Lindheimer's collection of plants from Texas.



Texas Yellow-Star

Photo: Joseph A. Marcus

If anyone has pressed a flower, she will know how hard it is to prepare the paper, place the flower just so, then cover the flower without disturbing it, press the flower and paper together with a clamp, and let it sit for days or weeks to dry. Then imagine carrying the press with many pages full of pressed plants on a two-wheeled Mexican cart pulled by a pony through cedar brakes and oat motts. These were the challenges for Ferdinand Lindheimer. Not only that, but after obtaining property in New Braunfels and building a house, he had to take care of all the household chores as well. Lindheimer had a rather simple solution to the problem: he got married. His wife did the cooking, cleaning of the house and mending of the botanist's clothing, as well as helping with the drying, labeling and mailing of hundreds of specimens. Ferdinand von Roemer states in his Texas 1845-1847, "She should rightfully share in the praise which the botanists, who receive Lindheimer's plants from Texas, heap upon him on account of their keeping quality and their careful preparation" (Roemer, p. 122). Many of his plants ended up in collections around the world.

Although it is hard to choose from almost fifty plants that carry Lindheimer's name, here are some common ones:

Texas Prickly Pear

Opuntia engelmannii var. *lindheimeri* (Cactaceae)

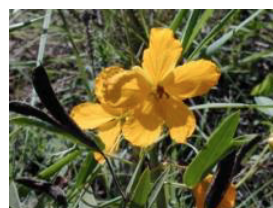
Lindheimer's Muhly

Muhlenbergia lindheimeri (Poaceae)

Lindheimer's Senna

Senna lindheimeriana (Fabaceae)

Several flowers also carry the name of **Ferdinand von Roemer (1818-1891)**, mentioned above, such as the twoleaf senna, *Senna roemeriana* (Fabaceae).



Twoleaf Senna

Photo: Alan Cressler

What's in a Name? The Challenges of Early Texas Naturalists

by Charleen Moore and Mackenzie Brown

Although Roemer is more famous for the geological studies he did in Texas, he also collected many flowers in his travels around the state from Galveston to Dallas to Fredericksburg with “a mule that turned out to be a very useful and faithful servant” (Roemer, p. 199). He was quite successful during his visit to New Braunfels and collecting trips with Lindheimer, where he received help from “the entire population of New Braunfels, especially the youngsters” (Roemer, p. 199). Flowers that carry Roemer’s name include:

Goldeneye phlox
Phlox roemeriana Scheele (*Polemoniaceae*)
Cedar sage
Salvia roemeriana Scheele (*Lamiaceae*)
Roemer’s mimosa
Mimosa roemeriana Scheele (*Fabaceae*)

One of the flowers that blooms from April through October is Wright’s penstemon, *Penstemon wrightii* (*Scrophulariaceae*), named for Charles Wright (1811-1885). In addition, a whole genus of small shrubs called wrightworts, *Carlowrightia*, bear his name, including *Carlowrightia texana*.



Wright’s Penstemon
Photo: Ray Matthews

A native of Connecticut, Wright graduated from Yale in 1835 and moved to Texas in 1837 as a surveyor and teacher. While he traveled throughout east Texas on his surveying trips, he began to collect plants for Asa Gray. In 1849, Gray arranged for Wright to join an army expedition to collect plants from Galveston to San Antonio and all the way to El Paso. He walked the entire distance of almost 700 miles in just over 100 days. Reminiscent of Berlandier and Lindheimer’s experiences, Wright also had collecting problems. In a letter he wrote to Gray while with the army, he vented his frustrations: “we had a violent norther cold and accompanied with rain. . . . My collections were nearly all wet and I have had no time to dry them so they will be much damaged. My paper is nearly all wet.” He continued, “You wrote to me of working like a dog. I know how you live—then call your situation dog-paradise and mine hog- and ass-paradise combined and you may realize my situation—sleep all night if you can in the rain and walk 12-15 miles next day in the mud and then overhaul [sic] a huge package of soaked plants and dry them by the heat of the clouds” (Geiser, pp. 243-244). Wright, however, recovered and in 1851 joined the US-Mexico Boundary Survey expedition, collecting at least 50 new plants from Texas, New Mexico and Arizona. Asa Gray used the many plants Wright collected and sent to Harvard for the publication *Plantae Wrightianae* (1852-53).

Other plants carrying Wright’s name include:

White Boneset
Ageratina wrightii (*Asteraceae*)

Catclaw Acacia
Senegalia wrightii (*Fabaceae*)

Wright’s Skullcap
Scutellaria wrightii (*Lamiaceae*)

Although there were numerous hardships in Texas, the excitement of the discovery of new lands and new species of plants inspired the early naturalists to persist in their collecting. The results introduced the world to the beauty and richness of the Texas flora and their names help us identify the various species today. The next time you are in the park or state natural area, see how many plants you can find that carry early naturalists’ names.

References

Geiser, Samuel Wood. *Naturalists of the Frontier* (1937). Southern Methodist University Press.
Roemer, Ferdinand. *Texas 1845-1847* (1849). Translated from the German by Oswald Mueller (2011). Copano Bay Press.
Photo of Texas Yellow-Star: Joseph A. Marcus
https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=lite3
Photo of Twoleaf Senna: Alan Cressler
https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=sero8
Photo of Wright’s Penstemon: Ray Matthews.
https://www.wildflower.org/gallery/result.php?id_image=30588

Hard Rains Bring Need for Erosion Control

by Barrett Durst

As spring and summer thunderstorms brought heavy downpours, soil erosion begins to rear its ugly head in the heavily used areas of our parks. Here at Guadalupe River State Park, we have been using these heavy rain events to help identify some of the most vulnerable areas to soil erosion caused by runoff. Using the time-tested method of manpower and hand tools, our maintenance rangers and park host have made great strides in fixing and preventing future erosion in our day use area by the river, primitive camping loop, and hiking trails. This work will enhance the visitors’ experience, both today and for years to come.



A Spring and Summer Like No Other at Guadalupe River State Park

by Holly Platz, Park Interpreter

I think we can all agree that it was a very weird spring and summer! Our interpretation and natural resources schedule was very full for the spring, with interpretive programs planned, field trips scheduled, and Golden-cheeked Warbler survey training already completed. Then COVID hit, and just like with everything else in our lives, everything changed! Here's a summary of the past few months, including what has changed, what we've been up to, and what we're planning for the future!

As you may know, Spring Break in Texas is a full two weeks. The first week is when most of Texas' larger school districts, including those in nearby Austin and San Antonio, have their spring break, so it tends to be the busiest. The second week is not as crazy, but it's still really busy! For state parks, this means two solid weeks (plus the sandwiching weekends!) full of families enjoying time outside. We had lots of interpretive programs planned, and just like last year, volunteers signed up for extra shifts in the Discovery Center so that we could keep it open 7 days a week during this busy time.

The first week of Spring Break was full of fun activities. San Antonio Astronomical Association volunteers held their monthly public Star Party, and Texas Master Naturalists helped with a special Honey Creek Night Hike, Archery in the Park, and more! The Discovery Center had an incredibly busy week as well, and we ended up having more kids and adults visit during one week of Spring Break, than we did during both weeks of Spring Break last year!

Then COVID hit. We shut down the Discovery Center and stopped doing face to face interpretive programs. In early April, all Texas State Parks were shut down. And with schools shut down, all spring field trips were canceled.

But in the park, spring went on. Wildflowers put on what seemed like one of the best shows in a long time, and birds sang brightly. For many of us, getting out in nature became not just a fun hobby, but a way to escape the sadness and fear of COVID, a way to refresh ourselves, and a place to connect--or reconnect--with our families.

Howell Pugh, our Park Operations Trainee, and I began to conduct Golden-cheeked Warbler surveys. A large number of volunteers had been interested in surveying Golden-cheeked Warblers this spring, and we had all attended a training a few months before, but with the current Coronavirus concerns, Howell and I felt it was not worth the risk to our volunteers to ask them to survey. Just a few of our concerns were how we would be able to social distance, and how we would loan out GPS units or binoculars or rangefinders--and currently the park was still closed.

Slowly parks began to reopen, with many safety measures put into place to protect both visitors, staff, and volunteers. Very cautiously, we invited volunteers to survey Golden-cheeked Warblers, again with new safety measures put into place, such as wearing masks, keeping survey teams very small, and not sharing any equipment. Most volunteers were unable to participate this season, but some were able to survey, and we know that next spring's survey season will build upon what we learned this year.

As spring went on and slowly moved into summer, we have found new ways to reach the public. Following statewide guidelines, we slowly began resuming face to face interpretive programs, but with very strict safety measures in place for everyone's protection. Due to its small indoor space and hands-

on nature, the Discovery Center remains closed for the time being. But we have found a way to take the wonders of nature outdoors, and online. Through Instagram Stories, and Facebook videos, we are reaching more people than ever before. Some are regular park visitors. Some have not yet been to the park. But we are bringing the park to them!

As we look towards the fall and winter, we know that we will continue to adapt. We will continue connecting with people on social media, and through carefully planned in-person programming. We'll continue offering online programs like our monthly library kids' program.

This spring and summer have been a roller coaster, and we know we're not at the finish line yet. But, like nature, we have learned to adapt. We have learned to work together in new ways. We have learned to think outside the box. And we will keep doing all these things! The way we interact with people may have changed, but our mission remains more important than ever -- to connect people with nature. Thank you for all you do to support the park and this mission.

A Note to All Park Volunteers: I know this time is incredibly frustrating for many of you. You volunteer because you love to work in nature, and to share nature with the public. Please know that we can't wait to have you back out to the park again, but please also know that your health and safety is the most important thing to us. For now, we look forward to working alongside each other in the future!

Current Park Programs and Ways to Connect:

- Check out the park's Instagram [Instagram.com/guadalupe_river_state_park/](https://www.instagram.com/guadalupe_river_state_park/) and Facebook [Facebook.com/guadalupe_river_state_park/](https://www.facebook.com/guadalupe_river_state_park/) to see park updates, as well as fun and educational videos, photos and stories! (Especially helpful if you're teaching the kiddos at home!)
- We partner with the local library in Bulverde, Mammen Family Library, to provide a children's program once a month. Currently we're doing it on Zoom and having a blast! It's open to the public and you can see details on our online calendar (link below).
- We are offering regular interpretive programs on weekends, but currently (as of mid-August) we are not advertising online as space is extremely limited, reservations are required, and the park is selling out of Day Use entrance permits in advance. Next time you visit the park, check in at the front office and ask if there are any upcoming programs! And keep watching our calendar of events (link below) because once we do start advertising online, they'll be posted there!

Check our calendar of events here: https://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/guadalupe-river/park_events -- we post our virtual programs here, and when we begin advertising face-to-face programs online, they will be posted here as well.

Meeting the Challenge During Challenging Times

by President, Thea Platz

We are so grateful that once again we are able to offer our Friends of Guadalupe River State Park / Honey Creek membership a newsletter. The facility we use to produce the newsletter was not available due to Covid 19 which delayed our usual quarterly schedule.

I want to commend our fine park leadership and staff members for meeting the covid 19 challenges with professionalism and caring during a time of crisis that had circumstances and protocols rapidly changing, sometimes in a matter of hours, and tensions high as they dealt with situations that could be potentially life threatening.

Although our programs and facility use had to be cut back drastically during this time we appreciate the volunteers that were able to step up and support the park in ways that they were able, as well as the many faithful volunteers that are anxious to get back to work as soon as we start to fully reopen.

During these during these unprecedented times people need nature more than ever before. People who have never sought out recreational experiences before are clearing store shelves of tents and hiking boots, binoculars and more; not only due to the offerings for safe experiences outside of our homes being limited, but also because nature is a stress reliever and I believe we are pulled to her for healing.

More and more research is confirming our need to connect with nature for our mental and physical health and wellbeing especially for children <https://www.childrenandnature.org/research-library/>

Reduced capacity at the park due to the pandemic and the new demand alongside the demand that has always filled our parks during the hot summer months has had our park reaching its reservation capacity days in advance for weekdays and weeks ahead for most

weekends. With schools in session this is likely to slow, however with the unusual return to school situation it may affect park usage differently than in the past. So help us spread the word that if you plan on visiting Guadalupe River State Park, or any other popular state park, plan on making day use and camping reservations as soon as possible to avoid disappointments and travel to a park that is not able to accommodate your visit. If you have a state park pass you do not have to pay the entrance fee, however you will still need to reserve a spot. As a courtesy to others who also want to visit the park and park staff, please cancel your reservations if plans change. Texas State Parks Reservation site

Your Friends board members have been meeting virtually during this time and discussing how to best navigate through this situation. We have decided to concentrate solely on park support at this time rather than events. We have cancelled the volunteer meeting scheduled for this month as well as the Monarch and Friends pollinator Fiesta that would have happened in October. We have been able to work alongside the park staff to have work done that will help protect the wonderful historic Rust House located in the Honey Creek SNA. There is still much work needing to be done on the house and these projects are made possible through your financial support. We are currently working out the details of resuming our Saturday morning hikes in the Honey Creek State Natural Area. In addition, we are making plans for a robust 2021 and your suggestions are always welcome.

As always, we truly appreciate your volunteer and financial support through membership and donations.

Thea Platz
President

Old Being Made New Again

by Barrett Durst

Guadalupe River SP is renewing its old picnic tables with longer aluminum tops. These new tops will better stand the test of time and help increase our visitors' experience. The upgrade left us with piles of lumber and a question of what to do with it. As proponents of recycle and reuse, our Maintenance Rangers knew just what to do, make something for our visitors. Taking the old lumber and giving it new life, they cleaned it up and created Leopold Benches to add to the interpretive experience at the historic Rust House in Honey Creek SNA.



2020 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

Student or Senior (over 62) Friend \$20.____, Individual Friend \$25.____,

Family Friend \$40.____,

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.

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Director / Co-Historian

Mackenzie Brown

Director at Large

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

3350 Park Road 31
Spring Branch, Texas 78070

We're on the web!

<https://friendsofgrhc.org>

**The Friends of Guadalupe River and
Honey Creek, Inc. is a
non-profit organization working with
Guadalupe River State Park and
Honey Creek State Natural Area.**

**The "Friends" meet monthly at the Park.
Please join us on the first
Thursday at 5:30 pm.
And bring a friend!**