

FRIENDS

OF GUADALUPE RIVER STATE PARK
HONEY CREEK SNA



FALL/WINTER NEWSLETTER 2022

A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

The Board of the Friends of Guadalupe River State Park/HCSNA invites you to the annual holiday gathering. This year the event will be held at the new Gathering Hall venue on the Herff Farm side (33 Herff Road) of the Cibolo Conservation Center in Boerne on Thursday, 1 December, from 6:30 – 9:00 pm.

A catered BBQ meal, beginning promptly at 7 pm, will be provided this year. Tea and water will also be provided. Guests are asked to bring holiday desserts to share. Guests may BYOB, if desired.

Please let us know if you and family members will be able to attend so that food quantities can be determined. RSVP to Dave Kibler at (djkib@gvtc.com) no later than 25 November or email if you have any questions.

Dave Kibler
830-336-3718

A Brief History of Early Texas and the Hill Country in 6 Maps – Pt. I

by Mackenzie Brown and Charleen Moore

You may have heard the expression, “A map is not the territory.” A map is only a representation, a reaction to, and an interpretation of a physical territory from various perspectives for diverse purposes. In this two-part essay, we shall look at six maps encapsulating significant phases in the early cultural, political, and natural history of Texas and the Hill Country that provide intriguing insights about Texas as well as the world views of the cartographers themselves.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, various European powers as well as Indigenous tribes were contending for control of territory and resources in North America. International wrangling saw Texas pass through Spanish, French, and Mexican hands before it established itself as an independent republic in 1836 and ended up as a state in the United States in 1845.

Our first map is Johann Baptiste Homann’s Latin-titled *Amplissimae Regionis Mississippi seu Provinciae Ludovicianae* (*Most Extensive Region of the Mississippi, or the Province of Louisiana*) (Fig. 1). While dating from 1720, it was based on the 1718 map of Guillaume de L’Isle that contained the name “Teijas” (Texas) for the first time on a printed map. Both maps reflected an aggressive French territorial claim of the entire Mississippi watershed and Texas, labeled “La Louisiane.” Such a claim challenged British and Spanish territorial ambitions: on Homann’s map English territory, in green, was confined to the mid- to upper-east coast; the Spanish, in pink, to “Florida” in the southeast and “New Mexico” in the southwest; and French “La Louisiane,” in gold.¹

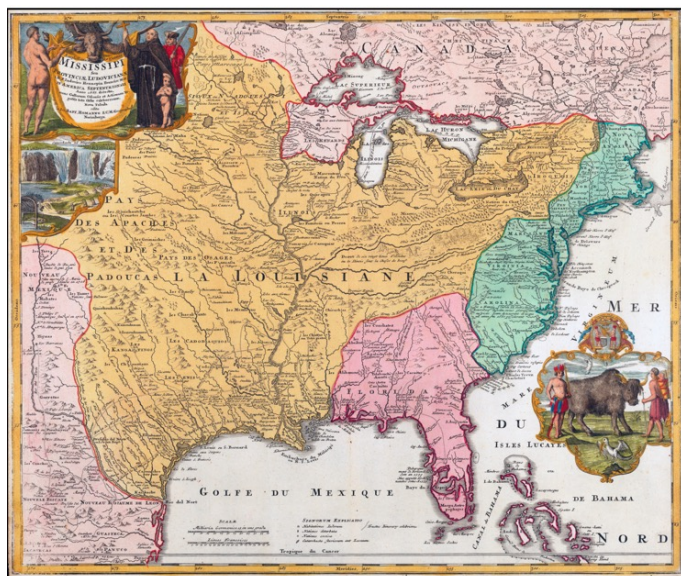


Fig. 1. J.B. Homann’s 1720 map, based on de L’Isle’s 1718 map.

These maps, promoting immigration to La Louisiane to improve mercantile prospects for the French Crown, were desperate attempts to revive flailing French prospects in the Lower Mississippi Valley, following La Salle’s disastrous colonizing efforts in 1684-85. Yet the failure still helped reinforce French claims to the Mississippi region.

Homann’s map, often referred to as the Buffalo map, depicts a bison in the lower right. Above the bison is the seal of the “Mississippi Company” that obtained a fur-trade monopoly. Chartered at the request of La Salle in 1684, it failed in the early 1720s due to wild financial speculation and deceptive representation of the wealth to be derived from La Louisiane. Another intriguing set of figures, in the upper left corner of the map, shows Louis Hennepin, a missionary who

had accompanied La Salle to New France in 1675. Hennepin’s hand rests paternalistically on the head of a naked native child, facing an equally naked native adult, both portrayed as European in build and character, a common conceit of Europeans at the time: natives were to be Christianized, Europeanized, their ethnicity erased. Behind the priest is a musket-bearing colonist.

The map itself showed routes of many Spanish and French explorers including La Salle, along with his fort on the Gulf Coast (yellow dot), established in 1685, as well as the “Mission de los Teyas” (red dot), established in 1716 (but begun by the Spanish in 1690 to counter La Salle’s incursions). The map indicates the general location of various Indian tribes, including the Caddoans and “wandering man-eaters” along the Gulf coast, and the names of various rivers, including the Guadalupe, also called the Madalene. Topography was only schematically represented, mostly in north and west Texas, with vegetation sparsely sketched in. Almost no information is given about the Hill Country, still largely unexplored by Europeans at this time.

Our second map is Alexander von Humboldt’s 1809 *Carte Générale de Royaume de la Nouvelle Espagne* (*General map of the Kingdom of New Spain*) (Fig. 2). Humboldt visited New Spain for almost a year in 1803-1804 as guest of the Spanish Crown, following four years of exploring South America as part of his effort to systematize and interrelate all scientific knowledge about the Earth. He is often considered the founder of ecological and environmental studies for his original approach to nature: “*Alles ist Wechselwirkung*” (“All is interconnected”), he wrote in his diary. His international reputation allowed him privileged access to Mexican archives denied to other foreigners. His map of New Spain, he tells us, was not simply a compilation of what already existed “in printed works or engraved maps,” but was based on his own astronomical observations and measurements, as well as on “plans and manuscript notes preserved in archives or buried in convents.” He states that “notwithstanding great imperfections, my general map of New Spain has two essential advantages” over previous maps: “It exhibits the situation of three hundred and twelve mines, and the new division of the country into intendancies [territorial-administrative divisions].”² The commercial and governmental aspects are clear.

Humboldt never reached Texas. While he had no ostensible political agenda, his publications had significant political repercussions for years to come in the international struggle in the New World. Maps may help resolve boundary issues but can equally foster border disputes.

The map itself is notable for its lack of accurate information about Texas and the Hill Country. It shows the Guadalupe River as debouching into the Bay of San Bernardo (Matagorda Bay), but a second river, the San Antonio, is shown following more or less the real route of the Guadalupe into the Hill country, but then gives its source in the Lago de las Yunta (purple dot), a mythical lake based on a misunderstanding of the Apache word *yuntas* for Comanche. The Presidio de Bejar (San Antonio) is noted, but the rich topographic elements drawn for Mexico and New Mexico are lacking for Texas, an area whose western part remained mostly unknown. Texas itself is shown as composed of the New Spanish provinces of Coahuila, New Santander, and Texas, the Rio del Norte (Rio Grande) forming no border..

As for Humboldt’s view of Texas, in a letter to President Jefferson (1804), he wrote: “The whole territory is equal to two-thirds the size of France, but its political value, before the return of Louisiana to the United States, is almost nil.... There are no more than 42,000

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inhabitants, mostly white descendants of European Spaniards, growing corn and grazing animals on scattered farms. The climate is brutal; the terrain is covered with limestone formations but very fertile, especially in Nuevo Santander.³ Ominously, near the right-hand border, is written: “Eastern limit of the Province of Texas or of the San Luis Potosi stewardship, not recognized by the Congress of Washington.” The Mexican-American War of 1846-1848 was already brewing.



in annexation of Texas by the U.S. In 1847 it was plagiarized and republished by John Disturnell, showing the northern boundary of Mexico at the Rio Grande. The 1847 map was used at the Treaty of Hidalgo to end the U.S.-Mexican War in 1848.



Fig. 3. White, Gallaher, & White's 1828 map.



Fig. 4. Detail of 1828 map, with inset of the map's decorative cartouche.

Our third map is the 1828 *Mapa de los Estados Unidos de Méjico* (*Map of the United States of Mexico*) (Fig. 3), published by the New York company of White, Gallaher, & White shortly after the U.S. and the newly independent (since 1821) Republic of Mexico completed an agreement validating the old boundary between the U.S. and New Spain. The map, a plagiarized copy of Henry S. Tanner's 1826 *Map of the United States of Mexico* translated into Spanish, affirmed the boundary agreement, showing the Rio Bravo (Rio Grande) as running through the Mexican states of Coahuila-Tejas and Tamaulipas (Fig. 4).⁴

The map's cartouche shows the imperial eagle of the “República Federal Méjicana” hovering over an opuntia cactus, each pad denoting a Mexican state; the top center paddle is “Coahuila y Tejas.”

Above the eagle is the Phrygian cap of “Libertad.” The map shows no Anglo colonies, and once again the Hill Country has minimal detail, with many inaccuracies.

The map was reissued in 1844 due to increasing interest

In Part II we shall look at Stephen F. Austin's maps of 1830 and 1839, and Ferdinand Roemer's geological map of 1846, which gave due notice of German immigration into the Hill Country.

Zoomable maps for Figs. 1-3 are here (all maps are in the public domain).

- 1) https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9a/Homann_Amplissimae_Regionis_Mississippi_c._1720_UTA.jpg;
- 2) <https://digitalcollections-baylor.quartexcollections.com/Documents/Detail/carte-generale-de-royaume-de-la-nouvelle-espagne-1809/674603>;
- 3) https://library.uta.edu/usmexicowar/collections/image/usmw-141_7_00640.jpg

Endnotes

1. <https://bostonraremaps.com/inventory/de-lisle-carte-de-la-louisiane-1718/>.
2. Alexander de Humboldt (1811), *Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain*, J. Black trans., vol. 1, pp. i, lxxxiii-lxxxiv.
3. <https://founders.archives.gov/?q=Correspondent%3A%22jefferson%2C%20Thomas%22%20Correspondent%3A%22Humboldt%2C%20Alexander%20von%22&s=1111311111&r=4>
4. <https://txglo.medium.com/mapa-de-los-estados-unidos-de-m%C3%A9jico-1828-81ff4c7ba88b>.

A Friends' Journey from Woodland to Savannah by Linda Gindler

The Friends of Guadalupe River and Honey Creek Board of Directors are proud to announce the opening of the Park's newest wildlife viewing blind—Savannah. Savannah, like the existing Woodland wildlife viewing blind is sponsored by the Friends, maintained by a volunteer Care Team, provides a rain-solar powered water feature, and offers exceptional views of the park's wildlife. Look a bit closer and you discover not only their history, but also their differences. It is those differences that first interested Park Staff and the Friends into pursuing a second blind.

Woodland, like its name says, is in a woodland. It is in the very popular Day Use Area where there is always a buzz of activity. A short walk down a wheel friendly path brings you to its beautiful shade trees offering up a wildlife buffet of acorns, berries, and nuts. Unless you are in the river, it is hard to find a cooler resting spot in the park. Plus, with its proximity to the Discovery Center, it offers a great venue for park programs. Woodland began its journey in 2009 when Boy Scout, Robert Laird, took on its planning and construction as his Eagle Scout project. By 2015 the Friends had adopted it as an ongoing project.

To free up park staff, a volunteer Care Team was organized to perform daily chores, routine maintenance, and to address refurbishments. A wide variety of birds, mammals, reptiles, and insects visit it daily seeking out its water, native plants, and feeders. Today, it is a frequent resting spot for many park visitors.



Savannah, takes a bit more effort to reach, requiring a 350-yard walk down a natural trail, but your effort is rewarded with sweeping views of the surrounding grassland and scrub. If you are looking for a quiet spot, then Savannah is the place to be. Located in the parks upland area and surrounded by the Painted Bunting Trail loop it is accessible from either of the Painted Bunting Trail heads. Or take the more scenic 1.25-mile hike and park at the



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Prairie Trail head. Savannah offers a different wildlife buffet as it sits in a sea of grasses and forbs. Plus, Savannah is a good distance to either Honey Creek or the Guadalupe River, so its water feature is a popular wildlife watering hole.



Savannah began its journey in 2017 when the park's biologist began exploring opportunities for a second viewing blind. He soon involved other Park Staff, Friends, and volunteers and together began to consider design, placement, and funding options. By 2018, ideas were consolidated into plans and involvement of TPWD department planners was sought out for further scrutiny and advice. From the beginning, everyone wanted Savannah to highlight different natural elements of the park than what was already viewed at Woodland. By late 2019, the Friends had the funds set aside and volunteer

labor commitments from local Master Naturalist chapters (Alamo, Lindheimer, and Hill Country) and Boy Scout Troop 285 of Coker Methodist Church. Soon thereafter, Troop 285 kicked off the first volunteer day by clearing the equipment and supply access trail. Volunteer construction days began in early 2020 and it was thought to be completed that year, but a little thing called Covid-19 changed scheduling considerably. There were other delays too along the way; much needed rains, big snow of 2021, and quiet time for breeding birds to name a few, but the volunteers remained focus on getting it done. On April 23, 2022, Troop 285 returned and completed the final task, clearing and shaping the last segment of trail for park patrons. The Care Team took on responsibilities the next day.

The two blinds represent park community efforts. They are areas set aside for visitors to learn more about the natural wonders that call the park home. If you have not yet visited Woodland or Savannah, the Friends' Board of Directors invite you to do so on your next park visit. In the meantime, checkout photos of the volunteer workdays and wildlife on the Friends website in the Galleries section.

Bowhunting

by Jessica Bergner

On Sept. 24, Guadalupe River State Park and the Community Archery Program teamed up to host “Explore Bowhunting” on National Hunting and Fishing Day. The event let participants learn about bowhunting through hands-on activities and workshops. Participants learned about deer processing with a live demonstration, took aim at 3D targets in an archery range, sampled game meat cooked during the event, and used hunting gear in fun activities all ages enjoyed. Along with the Community Archery Specialists and GRSP’s team, representatives from Game Wardens and State Park Police joined the event to answer questions participants had about hunting. We hope this event has kick started an interest in bowhunting and leads to participants joining in on upcoming seasons.

**Troop 285**

by David Kibler



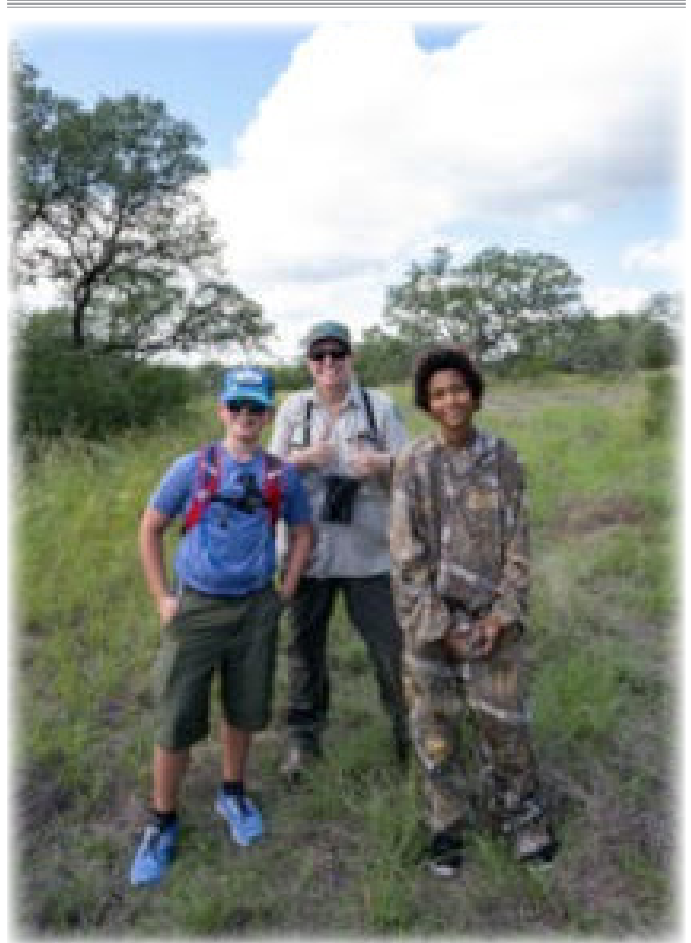
On the pleasant morning of Saturday, 22 October a group of Scouts and parents from Troop 285, based at Coker Methodist Church in San Antonio, arrived at 9 am to begin another in a long series of semi-annual service projects in the park. Actually it has been a troop tradition since 2007 to help the park in this way. This time the eighteen volunteers cleared brush and weeds around the numerous buildings at the



Troop 285

by David Kibler

historic Döppenschmidt House in the Honey Creek State Natural Area. In addition the Scouts painted the interior and exterior of a rebuilt hunting deer blind there to be used in the upcoming season. Park Ranger Nick provided the supervision for these efforts. And following completion of the service work the Scouts enjoyed an afternoon of learning Scout skills, followed by an evening campfire (propane fire) and an overnight campout at the site. Troop 285 now looks forward to continuing this tradition of service in 2023.



Come on out – the birding is GREAT

by Linda Glinder

After the summer's heat and drought, the park is beginning to give a sigh of relief with the arrival of cooler months. Summer avian residents have departed, but park visitors can delight in the wonders of the year-round avian residents as well as the daily surprises of fall migration and return of wintering species. Two fun to study year-round residents are the Carolina Chickadee and Black-capped Titmouse. Both are common at the park offering



Carolina Chickadee (photo by John Prentice)

good opportunities to learn more about feeding and flocking habits. As a bonus, migrating fall birds often seek safety in numbers and can be spotted feeding with these two residents.

The Carolina Chickadee is one of seven chickadee species in North America. They are the most likely chickadee in the park given the ranges of the other six are some distance away. Carolina's have a large range starting on the east coast and west thru the gulf states to central Texas and north to Oklahoma, Virginia, and Ohio.

Chickadee species are small plump-bodied big headed active birds. The Carolina distinguishes itself with a black cap and matching bib bordered by a bold white cheek. They also have gray wings and back, whitish underside and a small stubby beak. Spend time watching them and you will find them to be curious acrobatic birds sometimes hanging upside down in search of food.

The Black-crested Titmouse is one of five titmouse species in North America. They are all small grayish birds with a prominent crest and large black eye. The Black-crested Titmouse has a small range that includes the northeastern portion of Mexico going north to central and west Texas with a small finger extending into south Oklahoma. This small U.S. range makes them a rock star for birding enthusiasts visiting our area. A close cousin is the Tufted Titmouse whose range starts east of the park in Cadwell and Gonzales County and extends east to the Atlantic coast. The Tufted does hybridize with the Black-crested and occasionally their offspring are spotted in the park. When studying a Black-crested Titmouse look for a black-crest with a buffy pale forehead. The hybridized version has a dark gray crest and brownish forehead. When watching a feeding flock note how the titmouse tends to forage more upright with slower deliberate moves than the chickadee. And did you know, when

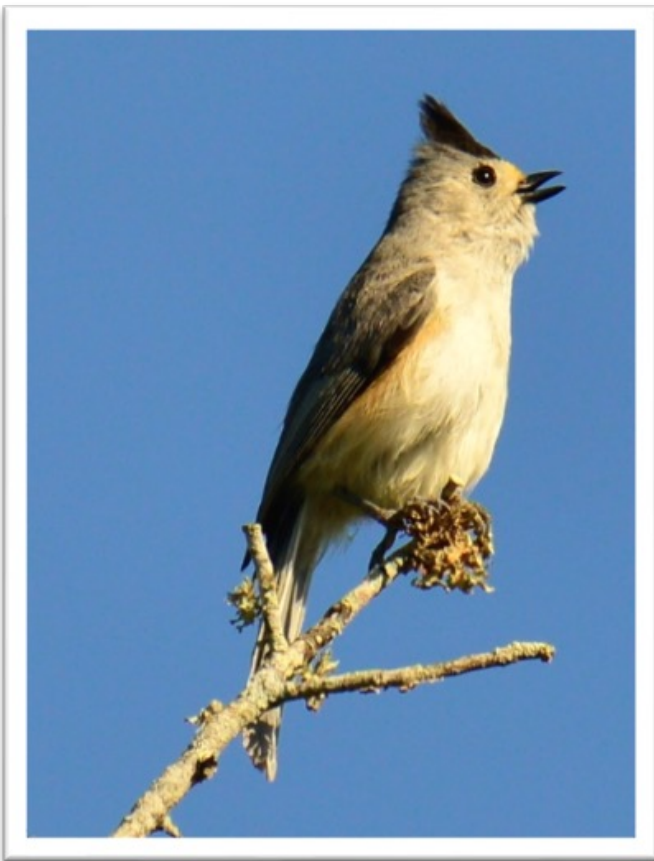
Come on out - the birding is GREAT by Linda Glinder

describing multiple titmouse, the proper term is “titmice”.

The Carolina Chickadee and Black-crested Titmouse like woodlands and both can be found throughout the park. A good place to start looking is the trees in the Day Use Area, especially near the Woodland Blind. Much of the diet of both species includes a variety of insects and larva which they glean from branches and bark. But they both like seed feeders

use abandoned woodpecker holes or a backyard nesting box. During the spring and summer, both species find mates and live in territories, but as fall approaches they seek out mixed feeding flocks so if you encounter one take time to watch for others.

If you would like to learn more about birds, watch the Park’s Facebook page and website for upcoming birding programs. Programs vary from month to month and include day as well as evening events. Or take a seat in one of the Park’s wildlife viewing blinds. The Woodland Blind located in the Day Use Area serves as a water and feeding station. The Savannah Blind is located within the Painted Bunting Trail loop and may be accessed via the new Persimmon Path. It serves as a watering hole for the surrounding area. Pick up a field checklist at either blind or the entry ranger station for additional information. Don’t forget your binoculars and camera before heading over – the birding is GREAT!



Black-crested Titmouse (photo by John Pentice)

(especially sunflower and suet). Sometimes taking a single seed to a nearby sheltered area to spend time cracking it open. Both species are cavity nesters and will readily

Interpreter Update

by Jessica Bergner

Howdy all!

I wanted to take a moment to thank the Friends' Group, volunteers and staff for being so welcoming during my first three months as the Park Interpreter. There is just something so refreshing about being back at Guadalupe River State Park/ Honey Creek State Natural Area.

While our visitation has been lower the past few months due to uncontrollable weather and river conditions, it has not been a slow time for staff at the park! We have been doing a hiring shuffle, performing natural resource work with different TPWD divisions and outside agencies, catching up on back-logged projects, preparing for the annual drawn hunts, having park programs, and participating in outreach events. I would like to officially welcome and congratulate Kaesey Brown as our new Office Manager, Benjamin Shook as our new Lead Ranger, and Timothy McGee as our new Maintenance Specialist III/ Site Safety Officer. While they are not new to the team, they are in well-deserved new positions. As of early November, we are still hiring for additional positions at the park.

2023 is going to be a big year not only for Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek State Natural Area, but to all Texas State Parks as we will be celebrating 100-years of Texas State Parks. There are a plethora of events that are scheduled to be celebrated across the state. We will start the new year off with the traditional Honey Creek Guided First Day Hikes as well as give visitors the opportunity to hike on their own and complete self-guided hikes. Additionally, the park will play an active role in supporting the Annual Pollinator Fiesta, put on a Birthday Bash celebration, and provide a unique RV "Camping in Style" event to our visitors.

I look forward to continuing getting more settled into my role here and what I can bring!

Interpreter Update

by Thea Platz, President

It has been a slow recovery, but events and activities are beginning to return to pre-pandemic levels. Visitation to the park has been down recently due to dry conditions keeping the river low and slow as well as the accompanying burn ban. There have been challenging staffing issues, as many organizations have experienced, and yet both staff and volunteers have stepped up to meet those challenges and to continue to offer the best experience possible for park visitors.

We are so fortunate to have a dedicated team of Board members constantly working behind the scenes to fulfill its mission to support the park, park staff and park visitors.

I have put together some highlights of what we have been able to accomplish only because of the generous contributions of your time and financial support.

Thank you for being a Friend!

- Every Saturday and some Sundays our Friends group interpretive guides lead cultural/ natural resource walks in Honey Creek State Natural Area. Special hikes, which are on a specific topic or to accommodate an organization or individuals attending as a group - such as Texas Master Naturalist in training, are also available.
- In partnership with North East ISD and park staff The Friends group offered a Story Trail for visitors to enjoy on a trail adjacent to the Discovery Center. Visitors can read the pages of a book as they walk along a family friendly trail.
- Friends members and volunteers regularly assist the park interpreter with programing and to man the Discovery Center. Our Discovery center has many hands on and interactive children's activities, but also serves as the hub to check out young explorers' backpacks and is the gathering point for many activities.

Interpreter Update

by Thea Platz, President

- School groups-The Friends along with other volunteers help with field trips requested by area schools. Additionally, The Friends group along with park staff, support a partnership with North East ISD in San Antonio that provides field trips in the Honey Creek SNA these programs reach 1000-1500 students yearly.
- A new wildlife viewing area - After many years of volunteer led fundraising, research, planning, and construction, the new state of the art wildlife viewing area, the Savanna Blind, was completed along with trail clearing and improvements needed to access the blind. Many dedicated Friends group members and volunteers worked in all facets of making this new area possible.
- Trail work for the new Savanna blind as well as vegetation removal and clean up was done in partnership with the scout troop from Coker Methodist. This troop has been active for many years assisting with similar clearing needs.
- A team of volunteers organized by Friends group members regularly cleans, maintains, and fills the bird feeding stations of the bird and wildlife viewing blinds.
- The Friends group raises funds to provide financial support for park, staff and programing needs in addition to volunteering in multiple capacities.
- The Friends group assists in the maintenance and cleaning of the historic Rust house.
- The Friends are currently organizing a family friendly 5K fundraising run for next year and are helping to assist with events for the 2023 100-year State Park celebrations.
- The Friends held a "Monarch and Friends Pollinator Fiesta" in March to increase awareness of the unique migrating Monarch and the importance of pollinators. This annual natural resource focused event provides visitors with a fun, enriching experience and offers community partners an outreach opportunity.
- The Friends offered a very special opportunity for the relatives of the original homesteaders that lived on property within the boundaries of the park to have a reunion and learn more about and celebrate the history of those families. This event was also a pilot project for a possible similar event for the public in the future.
- The Friends group continues to provide this quarterly newsletter to our members with timely items of information and interest and provides an outreach opportunity for park staff as well.
- The Friends group maintains a website. <https://Friendsofgrhc.org/>

Thank you again for the many ways that you support our beautiful Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek State Natural Area. Please continue to support the park with your membership donations. Memberships are due for renewal in January. Fees paid at this time will include the 2023 calendar year.

2023 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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Thea Platz

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Charleen Moore

Vice President

Holly Camero

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David Kibler

Director / Youth

Outreach/Fundraising

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Bob Gray

Director / Education and Community Outreach

Holly Camero

Director at Large

Bob Morris

Director / Honey Creek Hikes

Nancy Gray

Director at Large

Ed Van Reet

Director / Co-Historian/ Webmaster/ Water Monitoring

Mackenzie Brown

**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 third
Thursday at 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm.
And bring a friend!**