

FRIENDS



OF GUADALUPE RIVER STATE PARK
HONEY CREEK SNA



SPRING NEWSLETTER 2023

A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

A Message from the New President

by Bob Morris

Greetings to all and best wishes for the new year! I am humbled to become the President of the Friends of GR/HC and am excited about the opportunity to serve. I look forward to continuing the excellent work of the Friends in advancing the mission of the Park and State Natural Area. I want first to thank our outgoing Officers. After serving two terms and an extra year due to COVID, Thea Platz and Holly Camero have completed their outstanding service on the Board as President and Vice President, respectively. Look for the Tribute to them in this issue highlighting their service to the Friends in these roles. We are grateful for their past service and look forward to their continuing contributions on the Board as Directors at Large.

As the new President, I sent the following message to Park Superintendent Brandon Lopes-Baca: "I view the Friends Group as an adjunct to GRSP/HC. Our Mission is clearly to support you and your staff, bar none." Indeed, I along with the new Vice President Ed Van Reet, the continuing Officers, Secretary Dave Kibler and Treasurer Bill Beach, plus the other Directors at Large move into 2023 with excitement and enthusiasm for the opportunities ahead. (You can find a list of all current Board Members and their contact information within this Newsletter.)

Ed and I have a great deal in common. We share a love of the Hill Country and hiking its many trails. We are both certified Guides for the Honey Creek Nature Hikes and both volunteer at several state parks and state natural areas. I was born and raised in Bexar County. And though Ed was born in San Rafael, California, he was raised in Texas.

I received a B.S. at Texas A&M University and an M.S. at Louisiana State University, both in Forest Science. I am a retired industrial forester who worked for 25 years for International Paper Company. After my tenure at International Paper, I became involved

in real estate dealing with farmland, timberland, and recreational properties.

Ed received a B.S. and M.S. in Geology at the University of Texas at El Paso. His interest in nature began in high school and continued through college into a professional career as a geologist. Ed retired from Chevron Corporation after 36 years working as a petroleum geoscientist, project manager and supervisor. He likes to say his interest in geology did not stop, it just switched from the subsurface to the surface. With additional interest in hiking, biking and astronomy, since retiring Ed spends much of his free time outdoors. In addition to volunteering at Honey Creek and Guadalupe State Park, he serves on the Boards for the Cordillera Nature Club and the Hill Country Chapter of Chevron Retirees.

The Friends group gives Ed and me an opportunity to support the Park and its Staff and to advance its Mission. We are all aware of the rich biodiversity of the Hill Country. And the programs of the Park and State Natural Area gives us an excellent opportunity to educate the general public about the environment and how our daily activities can influence it in both positive and negative ways. There are many ongoing activities that need volunteers, from participating in the various plant and animal surveys to leading interpretive hikes to helping with the Friends website. Our Park Interpreter, Jessica Bergner, is also planning many new programs which will need volunteers. We look forward to hearing from all of you and having your support through both membership in the Friends (a membership form is in the Newsletter) and participation in one or more of its activities. We also look forward to seeing you at the Park enjoying this unique treasure. Contact me, bxxmorris@frontier.com, or any of the Board Members for further information.

Welcome and Thanks

by Thea and Holly

I would like to extend a heartfelt welcome to our new President Bob Morris. I look forward to continued teamwork, growth, and strong partnerships under his leadership.

I have thoroughly appreciated and enjoyed my time as the president of the Friends Group of Guadalupe River State Park / Honey Creek. We have such an amazing group of volunteers who give of their time in so many aspects to enrich the experience of our park visitors every day.

Our board members are second to none, each of them contributing their unique talents and always willing to step up to fill whatever need may arise. They are a dedicated group that generously gives their time and support beyond all expectations. It has truly been a privilege to work with each of you.

Celebrating Parks and Pollinators

This year marks a very special time in the history of Texas State Parks. It is the 100-year celebration of having state parks in Texas.

Each of our parks in the Texas Parks and Wildlife system, as well as the Department as a whole, will be holding special events and recognition of this milestone throughout the year with bigger better events, new events, free admission on special days, and much more.

One of the events that we will be having as part of this celebration is the

Monarch and Friends
Pollinator Fiesta.
Saturday, March 25, 10 am to
2pm at the Discovery Center.

This will be a bigger, better version of our usual event with speakers, information, and fun activities for the whole family. Plan on joining us!

Friends Group Recognized as Outstanding Park Partner

We were pleased to learn that The Friends of Guadalupe River State Park/ Honey Creek State Natural Area was chosen as one of the Friends Groups to be honored with the Outstanding Park Partner award from Texans for State Parks. The award will be given at the annual conference rescheduled to March 4th due to the ice storm in Austin Texas.

We are grateful and humbled to learn that we have been chosen for this award. Representatives are looking forward to attending the conference to receive the award in person, have the opportunity to congratulate other recipients, and meet with all of the attendees there to support each other and share successes and challenges.

We are so thankful and appreciative of the nomination and honored to be a recipient of this award.

Tribute: Thea Platz and Holly Camero

by Charleen Moore and Mackenzie Brown

In this issue we pay tribute to two outstanding Board Members of the Friends of Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek State Natural Area, out-going President, Thea Platz, and out-going Vice President, Holly Camero.

Thea has served on the Board of Directors since 2014, starting as Director at Large, becoming Vice President in 2016, and then serving as President from 2017 until the beginning of this year. Holly Camero has served on the Board continuously since 2002 in various roles, beginning as Director at Large, and serving as Vice President from 2006-2009 and again in 2019 until the beginning of this year. They both contributed greatly to the success of our Friends organization being nominated and selected this year for recognition as an “Outstanding Partner Group” by Texans for State Parks (see separate article in this issue).

During their tenure on the Board, Thea and Holly have had many challenges, including dealing with COVID restrictions and the Guadalupe River overflowing its banks and flooding the Park, but they also have had numerous opportunities, including development of the Environmental Outdoor Education programs at Honey Creek for the North East Independent School District in San Antonio, the Halloween in the Park event, and the Monarch and Friends Pollinator Fiesta to name just a few of the activities they helped develop that have made the Park such a special place. They have brought their expertise as Texas Master Naturalists and education specialists to the Friends’ activities, and through their interactions with the Park

and the Friends have introduced thousands of children, their parents, and other visitors to the outdoors, which has often been the first experience these individuals have had in a natural, non-urban setting.

Thea was the inspiration for the Monarch and Friends Pollinator Fiesta which was first offered in the Fall of 2018 and has grown into a community-wide celebration with many activities and exhibitors such as the Witte Museum, the San Antonio Zoo, and the National Park Service. Because of its great appeal, this is one of the events that was selected to be part of the 100-Year Celebration of Texas State Parks this year and will be presented at the Park on March 25, 2023.

Over the twenty years that Holly has been on the Board, she served as the director of the very popular Halloween in the Park and as the coordinator for the early Honey Creek interpretive walks. She is known for giving exciting “hands-on” nature talks on bugs, spiders and other “creepy crawlies”, inspiring squeals and fascination in the participants. Currently, Holly is a participant in the Golden-cheeked Warbler survey in the Park and State Natural Area each spring and has also spent many hours keeping the Rust House clean and in working order.

We extend our sincere appreciation to Thea and Holly for their dedication and devotion to the Friends and the Park and look forward to them continuing to contribute their expertise to the Board and participating in the new and continuing programs of the Friends in the years to come.

A Brief History of Early Texas and the Hill Country in 6 Maps – Pt. II
by Mackenzie Brown and Charleen Moore

Part I (see Fall/Winter 2022 Newsletter) dealt with three maps of the French, Spanish, and Mexican periods. Our last three maps document Anglo-American colonization in Texas during the Mexican, Lone Star Republican, and U.S. State periods.

Our fourth map (counting from Part I) is Stephen F. Austin's 1830 *Map of Texas with Parts of Adjoining States* (Fig. 1). Austin was one of the first Anglo empresarios, granted the right by Mexico to establish colonies in Tejas (Texas) dependent on recruiting a certain number of immigrants to settle the land within six years. Austin's earliest grant, in 1823, obliged him to create an accurate map of Mexico's northern territory. He spent over five years creating the map, studying older maps including von Humboldt's, hiring surveyors, conducting a few surveys himself, and utilizing the boundary surveys of Mexican General Mier y Terán, whose help is acknowledged in the map's title block. The Mexican government, suspicious of Anglo-American plans to annex Texas to the U.S., had sent Terán in 1828 to inspect the U.S.-Texas boundaries. Terán and Austin became friends, sharing cartographic information.

The resulting map showed the Rio Bravo (Rio Grande) running through the Mexican states of Coahuila and Tamaulipas, the Nueces forming the southern border of Tejas. In the lower right, the imperial eagle of the Mexican Republic hovers over an opuntia cactus with the top center pad representing the state of Coahuila y Tejas—the same cartouche decoration that appeared in White, Gallaher, and White's 1828 map (see Part I) and attesting to Austin's loyalty to his Mexican benefactors.



Fig. 1. Stephen F. Austin's 1830 map of Texas.

Beyond the settled frontiers the map showed vast areas occupied by "immense herds of buffalo," "large droves of cattle and wild horses," and "Comanche Indians." It outlined the three earliest colonial grants from the Mexican government: Austin's own of 1823 and 1827, and the 1825 grant of Green DeWitt. It plotted the first Anglo settlements, with plentiful sources of water and interlinked by a network of roads provid-

ing access to both Mexico and the U.S. Multiple editions of the map were published over the next 15 years, including several after Austin's death in 1836.¹

Our fifth map is "Austin's" pointedly-revised 1839 map (Fig. 2). It "proved to be a brilliant rhetorical device promoting Anglo-American settlement, and the cause of Texan independence."² The promotion of settlement is highlighted in the listing (lower left) of the number of families required to fulfill colonization contracts with the Mexican government: 1100 in Austin's colonies, and a total of 4150 in the major colonies. Boosting the promotion above all was notice of the grant of a league (4,428 acres) of land to each new family, and a quarter league to each single man, as established by the colonization laws of Mexico.³

As for advancing the cause of independence, the map draws the southern boundary of Texas at the Rio Bravo and highlights Texas as a distinct, largely Anglo entity. It tacitly legitimized Texas independence (despite the cartouche), earning for itself the sobriquet, "Cartographic Birth Certificate of Texas." Unlike previous maps, it names and outlines newly formed counties, heralding "the introduction of modern civil administration at the local level throughout much of Texas." Houston appears here for the first time in an Austin map, while the town of Austin, Texas' new capital, did not appear until the 1840 edition of the map.⁴



Fig. 2. Austin's 1839 map of Texas.

Our sixth and last map is that of Ferdinand Roemer's *Topographisch-geognostische Karte von Texas* (*Topographic-geological Map of Texas*) (1846) (Fig. 3), the first map of Texas by a professional geologist. Roemer was sent to Texas in 1845 by the Society for the Protection of German Immigrants (the Verein), and sponsored by Alexander von Humboldt and the Berlin Academy. His mission included exploring the suitability of the land in the Fisher-Miller Grant between the Llano and Colorado Rivers for settlement. The Verein had a contract on the land (never fulfilled), but the contractors, Fisher and Miller, had never seen it, nor had any naturalist ever visited it.

A Brief History of Early Texas and the Hill Country in 6 Maps – Pt. II
by Mackenzie Brown and Charleen Moore

It encompassed the San Saba Valley which, Roemer tells us, was an “unknown, almost mythical wonderland with which every Texas settler associated the idea of unsurpassed fertility and loveliness, and at the same time a wealth of precious metal...”⁵ From November 1845 to May 1847, Roemer explored thousands of square miles, traveling from the coastal plains into the Hill Country and lands of the Comanche, gathering information for his map.



Fig. 3. Ferdinand Roemer's Topographic-Geological map of Texas.

The subtitle of his map acknowledges that it was based on the 1845 geographical map of [James T.D.] Wilson, but revised according to Roemer's own observations and interests. Wilson's map, based only on the “Most recent Surveys & Authorities to the Year 1845,” outlined the counties in East Texas, showed various historical routes including the ill-fated Santa Fe Expedition of 1841 and route of the Texian prisoners following that sad misadventure from Santa Fe to Mexico City, all omitted in Roemer's map. Wilson's map also showed a “Rock 200 feet high” (Enchanted Rock), a silver mine just west of the San Saba River, and “Fisher & Miller's Colony.” As for German towns, Wilson only indicated a small “Dutch Settlement” (New Braunfels) at the intersection of Comal Creek and the Guadalupe River. While Wilson seems never to have entered Texas, Roemer visited several German settlements: New Braunfels, Sisterdale, and Fredericksburg, all marked on his map. Also marked was his route through the Fisher-Miller grant.

Roemer describes his own map as follows: “The geognostical map...is intended to serve at the same time as a geographical map for the reader not interested in geology; nor should the simple light color, with which the various rock formations are designated, offer any real obstacles.”⁶

The simple light colors of each formation are identified in the map's legend, from oldest to youngest: pink = granite (the Llano uplift, of Precambrian age); blue = Paleozoic Silurian rock of carboniferous limestone; yellow = chalk/limestone of Cretaceous age (Edwards Plateau north to the Red River); green = Tertiary rocks; and orange = diluvium and alluvium (Coastal Plains) of Quaternary age. He established the geologic ages by comparing the Texas fossils he found with those he knew in Europe. Roemer, apparently, was the first to identify Paleozoic rocks in Texas.⁷

As for the suitability of the Fisher-Miller lands for settlement, Roemer's verdict was not optimistic: “After careful deliberations I must declare, although with great reluctance, since so many exertions have

been put forth, that the land in question...is not the proper place for a settlement...,” citing the relatively poor fertility, distance from settled areas of Texas, and presence of Comanches.⁸ No more optimistic was his assessment of the fabled silver mines. After examining the rock formations around the old Spanish mission on the San Saba, he noted: “The presence of silver ore in unchanged horizontal limestone and marl of the cretaceous formation would be without precedent...,” although he did not deny the possibility of the ore elsewhere in the region.⁹ The mythical wonderland of San Saba vanished like a mirage under Roemer's discerning eyes.

Perhaps most remarkable on the map is Roemer's graphic demarcation of what became known as the Balcones Escarpment. This edge of the Edwards Plateau, he writes, “runs ... from southwest against northeast so that its beginning at Presidio Rio Grande on the Rio Grande at first follows the old Presidion route and crosses the San Antonio River above San Antonio de Bexar, the Guadalupe at the German settlement of New Braunfels, the Colorado at Austin, the Brazos at its falls, the Trinity river near the junction of its main branches and from there, it takes its course in the same direction to the Red River. On some places that border on the mountainous region against the hilly country [rolling hills east of the Hill Country] is very distinct and sharp. For instance, at New Braunfels [sic] where when ascending the mountain range in the north of the city you, all of a sudden, feel transferred into a region of a completely different physical character.”¹⁰

As a current writer for *Texas Monthly* observes, “The Balcones Escarpment...is geology's most fateful mark upon the surface of Texas....It is the Balcones that creates the Hill Country, that sets the stage for the Edwards Plateau and the High Plains beyond. The cotton economy, for our schematic purposes, ends at the base of the escarpment, where the rich blackland prairie that sustained the courtly reveries of the old South runs literally into a wall. Above that mass of limestone there is only a veneer of soil, and the country is hard, craggy, and scenic—cowboy country. The distinction is that sharp: farmers to the east, ranchers to the west.”¹¹ Roemer was the first to map it.

Thus we have a history of early Texas in six maps recording imperial ambitions, commercial aspirations, libertarian dreams, scientific quests, and, sometimes, the actual physical terrain and the beginnings of scientific investigation of the Hill Country.

Zoomable maps for Figs. 1-3 are in notes 1, 2, and 5 (all maps are in the public domain).

Endnotes

¹ <https://bostonraremaps.com/inventory/1830-stephen-austin-map-of-texas/> (text and map)

² <https://exhibits.stanford.edu/ruderman/catalog/jk304gh9549> (text and map). ³Ibid. ⁴Ibid.

⁵ Ferdinand Roemer (2011; orig. German version 1849), *Texas, with Particular Reference to German Immigration...*, O. Mueller, trans., p. 230. Map is here: <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph288615/m1/1/>

⁶ Roemer, *Texas*, p. 15.

⁷ Josiah Bridge & George H. Girty (1936), *A Redescription of Ferdinand Roemer's Paleozoic Types from Texas*, p. 239.

⁸ Roemer, *Texas*, pp. 300-301. ⁹ Ibid., p. 272.

¹⁰ Ferdinand Roemer (1852), *The Cretaceous Formations of Texas and their Organic Inclusions*, p. 7.

¹¹ Stephen Harrigan (Dec. 1987), “Texas Primer: The Balcones Escarpment.”

Come on out – the birding is GREAT

by Linda Glinder

Many people visit Guadalupe River State Park each spring for wildflower color. But because of its unique positioning on the migration flyway, the Park is also an eyeful of avian color. Some birds come by land through Mexico, while others take a shorter but more hazardous route over the Gulf of Mexico. They reach Texas ready to eat and rest. Mother Nature helps by timing an explosion of nectar, berries, seeds, and insects. Colorful warblers, buntings, and orioles begin arriving mid-March with arrivals continuing into May. Each week brings new birds to explore. Most will stay only a few days, but the rockstars of the park, Golden-cheeked Warbler and Painted Bunting, will set up territories, breed, and raise their young. They call the Park home until mid to late summer. It is easy to find these special birds if you know where to look and how to listen. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology All About Birds (<https://www.all-aboutbirds.org/>) is a good resource to become acquainted with visual and sound identification.



Male Golden-cheeked Warbler (photo by John Prentice)

Golden-cheeked Warblers are a federally endangered species that has a unique range in the birding world. That is, it is the only bird species whose population breeds entirely in the state of Texas. In fact, their breeding territory is limited to the Edwards Plateau of central Texas. Love-

struck males return starting mid-March with a song in their heart. Males are PROLIFIC singers making them easy to find if you know their song. Golden-cheeks are small (4.75" to 5.1") with bold markings. Males show a bright golden cheek with a black eyeline, jet black throat and white belly. Females and immature birds sport the same pattern only not as brightly. Listen to its song a few times at home and you will be ready for exploration. But please do not play-back recordings at the park. Recordings confuse the males and put them on the defensive. Something they don't need after their thousand-mile flight. Male Golden-cheeks start singing an hour or so after dawn and will continue until early afternoon. Sitting high in trees repeating their song over and over with short pauses intermixed. They favor mature Ashe-juniper and oak trees. Good hikes for exploration are the Discovery Loop, Barred Owl, Bamberger, Hofheinz, and Golden-cheeked Warbler Trails. They are known to visit the Woodland Wildlife Blind and are often reported in Turkey Sink and Cedar Sage camping loops. They forage in the trees by gleaning insect larva and flying out to catch insects.

Painted Buntings have a wider range but are still limited to only a few states in the south central (including Texas) and coastal southeast. Their vivid colors make up for their small size of 5" to 5.5". Adult males are unmistakable with their bright blue head, green back, red belly and red rump. Females and immature birds, while not as colorful, are still striking with their bright yellow-green plumage. They prefer semi-open habitat with scattered shrubs and trees intermixed with patches of grasses and wildflowers. Start your search along the park's Painted Bunting or Bamberger trails. In addition, they are often seen at either of the wildlife viewing blinds.

Come on out – the birding is GREAT

by Linda Glinder



Male Painted Bunting (photo by John Prentice)

They primarily eat seed but will catch insects while raising young. Look low for Painted Buntings as nests are typically six feet or lower and they forage on the ground. They are attracted to backyard feeders, especially if the feeder is not too high and has nearby low vegetation. While they are still common, the population has been dropping in recent decades due to habitat loss and illegal trapping for the cage bird market.

If you would like to learn more about birding at the park, pick up a birding checklist at the entry Ranger Station, Discovery Center, or one of the Wildlife Viewing Blinds. Follow the Park on Facebook to learn about upcoming birding programs with Ranger Jessica and Park Volunteers. Or take a seat in one of the Park’s wildlife viewing blinds. Both blinds offer shaded seating with views great for photography.

Don’t forget your binoculars and camera for your next visit – the birding is GREAT!

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.

President

Bob Morris

Vice President

Ed Van Reet

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David Kibler

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Bill Beach

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Dave Kibler

Director / Education and Community Outreach

Holly Camero

Director / Honey Creek Hikes

Nancy Gray

Director / Co-Historian/ Webmaster/ Water Monitoring

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Charleen Moore

Director / Membership

Brady Hansen

Director / Youth Outreach/Fundraising

Anthony Beverley

Director at Large/Natural Resources

Ryan Bass

Director at Large

Bob Gray

Director at Large

Thea Platz

Director at Large

Holly Camero

**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!**