

FRIENDS



OF GUADALUPE RIVER STATE PARK HONEY CREEK SNA



SPRING NEWSLETTER 2024

A Message from the President

by Bob Morris

Howdy Folks,

Wildflowers are beginning to pop-up in the fields and slopes along our trails. Bluebonnet rosettes (see photo in banner) are quite numerous in certain areas. If we get some decent rain in March and April, the Park and Natural Area will be full of color. You should plan a trip around mid-April to have a look-see, especially if you can take the guided hike to Honey Creek, or venture north to the Bauer Unit and amble along the beautiful and newest Park trail, the Curry Creek Overlook trail.

The Holiday Party and Annual Meeting was held on December 2, 2023, at our new venue, the Honey Creek Ranch Barn. This was the perfect place for the annual event and will become our regular location. The evening was enjoyed by over sixty members, staff, and guests. The live auction was a rousing success thanks to the efforts of Charleen Moore and Mackenzie Brown. The auction raised just over \$1,900.

The next Holiday Party / Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, December 7, 2024. The Board has decided to hold this event in the afternoon rather than at night, so that attendees will not have to drive home in the dark. Everyone thought this change such a good idea that we will now also hold our monthly Board meetings at 2 PM rather than 5:30 PM. Anyone who is interested is welcome to attend. We usually meet at the Rust House on the third Thursday of the month. (Contact us at friendsofgrhc@gmail.com for possible change of date or times.)

At the Annual Meeting, three new people were elected to the Board: Mary Habib, Pamela Lack, and Doug Starasinic. They're already making valued contributions to the Friends Group. Brief bios of these new board members can be found on our website, <https://friendsofgrhc.org/about/>.

Regarding the distribution of our Quarterly Newsletter, for greater efficiency and cost-savings, only members will receive the newsletter via email or USPS. Nonmembers will still have access to the Newsletter via our website.

March will be full of special events at the Park and Natural Area. These include a special presentation by Ken Butler at Honey Creek Ranch on March 16, a public tour of the Doepenschmidt-Weidner Ranch on March 23, and our annual Pollinator Fiesta on March 30. Details regarding these events can be found on pages 5 and 6 of this newsletter.

From the Superintendent's Desk

by Brandon Lopes-Baca

Guadalupe River State Park continues to set a good example with hiring practices by bringing in high character and value-producing team members.

In January, we said goodbye and good luck to two staff members. Our Assistant Superintendent, Ben Fleury, was promoted to Superintendent at Pedernales Falls State Park. And one of our Customer Service Representatives, Aaron Medina, was promoted to Assistant Office Manager at Lost Maples State Natural Area.

We will miss Ben and Aaron very much but wish them the very best in their personal and professional endeavors. It's a point of pride when team members are recognized for their successes and given the opportunity to shine and further the TPWD mission and core values: Stewardship, Integrity, Teamwork, Excellence, and Service.



Ben Fleury serving water to guests at farewell party for Barrett Durst leaving GRSP for Inks Lake SP on July 1, 2021. It looks like Barrett is having his cake and eating it, too. Photos by Mackenzie Brown.



Another cool situation concerns our former Superintendent Barrett Durst. After leaving here, then serving 3 years at Inks Lake SP, he's now Assistant Regional Director for Region 3!

Hey, if you're interested in a job, let us know. 😊

The park continues to shine, and our staff and volunteers are the best. No matter how big or small the concept, we have some great projects and improvements coming soon to the Park. There is always room for improvement, and we are not a team that likes to be complacent. With some water in the river, and no burn ban (knock on wood), this summer just might be a busy one again! Thank you to everyone who supports us. I can't begin to explain how proud I am of you all, and how amazing it is to be a part of this team.

A Review of the Archeological Sites in Guadalupe River State Park & Honey Creek State Natural Area

by Charleen Moore and Mackenzie Brown

In our last article we reviewed the type of projectile points found in Texas from the very earliest Paleoindian Period to the Late Prehistoric Period. In this article we focus on the archeological sites and discoveries that have been recorded in Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek State Natural Area, summarizing surveys that began in the 1970s. Many of the cultural developments—driven by environmental changes in climate and concomitant food resources that occurred in Texas over the last several millennia—are reflected in the findings at the Park and SNA.

Twelve sites have been identified and given exciting trinomial names such as 41CM227. At least archaeologists are excited by these names, since they immediately know the location and formal order of the recording of the site. In this case, 41 indicates the state of Texas, CM indicates Comal County, and 227 that this was the 227th archeological site recorded for this county. This particular site, surveyed in 2002, was a large, open campsite with two burned-rock scatters and various dart points and fragments made from fine-grained chert. The site also reflects the longest period of prehistoric use, with projectile points and artifacts from the Early Archaic through the Late Archaic, a period of some 7,500 years. The specific points and artifacts are given names derived usually from the name of the locale where first recovered, from the name of the person making the find, or from the shape, such as a swallowtail point. In the case of 41CM227, the projectile points belong, from oldest to youngest, to the Uvalde, Nolan, Marshall, and Ellis styles (see Table 1, next page). The youngest artifact in the Park is a Leon Plain pottery sherd from the Late Prehistoric Period, dated to just over 700 years ago and found at another large open campsite. There have also been several isolated finds of projectile points in the State Park and the State Natural Area that were not associated with campsites. These are indicated by solid black circles in the table, while white-filled circles represent finds in specific campsites.

Seven of the twelve sites have yielded points or other artifacts that have allowed dating, most falling into the Middle and Late Archaic Periods. A hallmark of the Archaic as a whole in central Texas, according to archaeologist Michael B. Collins, was the “extensive use of heated rocks, present archaeologically as various forms of hearths, ovens, middens, scatters, and other features” (Collins, 119). He then adds: “For more than seventy-five hundred years the basic Archaic mode of life prevailed in central Texas...[representing] a basic adaptation that was successful.”

The Early Archaic (8,800-6,000 B.P.), evidenced by two artifacts in the Park and Natural Area, began during a relatively wet period in the live-oak savanna of the Edwards Plateau. Collins summarizes the available food sources: “Acorns, deer, and turkey are conspicuous among live-oak savanna resources, but geophytes (e.g., onions, prairie turnip), other nuts (e.g., pecan, walnut), berries (e.g., agarita, hawthorn), fruits (e.g., grapes, plums, persimmons), and grass seeds, along with a host of small terrestrial, amphibious, and aquatic animals, round out a diverse and reliable subsistence base” (Collins, 120). Bison along with antelope, it seems from the evidence, were rare or absent. We also see the forerunners of rock ovens at this time, a technology later needed to cook tough xeric plants like yucca, sotol, and roots.

In the Middle Archaic (6,000-4,000), we see a significant development in lithic technology: the production of long, thin points that could be used as knives, or lance, spear, and dart points—a technology brought into the region from west of the Ozark area. The beginning of this period was wet, allowing for good grass growth that attracted bison, and thus inspiring the importation and creation of projectile points suited for hunting these large animals. But wet and dry periods ever oscillate on the Edwards Plateau, and the later Middle Archaic experienced increasingly dry conditions, xeric vegetation rebounded, and burned-rock middens/communal earth ovens became common. Bison no longer appear in the archaeological record. By the end of the Middle Archaic—the interval represented by the Nolan-Travis interval—there commenced “the most xeric conditions ever experienced by humans in central Texas” (Collins, 121).

The Late Archaic (4,000-1,300) started out dry, then wetter, before returning to xeric conditions. It was in this time that burned-rock middens reached their greatest popularity, and although wetter conditions reasserted themselves, such middens continued through the rest of the Archaic. Human population was increasing, which may well have contributed “to the emergence of kinds of human conduct without precedent in the area” (Collins, 122). At the same time, religious customs, as seen in burials, seem to have been imported from eastern parts of the continent. Points like those in Fig. 1 were representative.

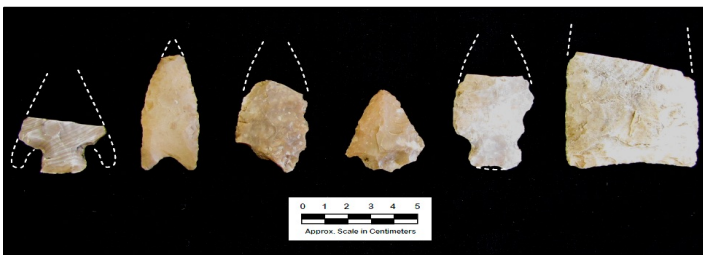

















Fig. 1. Selected artifacts found in 1992 at site 41CM203 in the State Park. Only a small number of artifacts have been collected and sent to the TPDW Archeological Laboratory in Austin, such as these to the left. From left to right: Marshall dart point fragment, Pedernales dart point, 2 Pedernales (?) dart point fragments, Williams dart point fragment, San Gabriel biface fragment. (Uecker, 2009, Fig. 3)

Table 1. Archaeological periods correlated with climate, technology, and artifacts from the Park and SNA.

	Periods and Subperiods	Climate		Food & Technology	Points/Artifacts Found in GRSP/HCSNA
		Wet Cool	Dry Warm		
250 B.P. →	HISTORIC			 bow & arrow	Leon Plain ○
1,300 B.P. →	LATE PREHISTORIC				Darl ● Elam ●
↑ ARCHAIC PERIOD ↓	LATE ARCHAIC			 San Gabriel ○ Frio ○● Fairland ○ Ellis ○	Marcos ○● Castroville
				 Marshall ○ Williams ○ Tortuga ●	
				 yucca, sotol, roots	
				 earth ovens	
4,000 B.P. →	MIDDLE ARCHAIC			 Nolan ○ Travis ○	
6,000 B.P. →				 Andice ●	
8,800 B.P. →	EARLY ARCHAIC		 	 nuts, acorns, deer, turkey, fish	Martindale ● Uvalde ○
10,900 B.P. →	LATE PALEOINDIAN			 atlatl	
11,200 B.P. →	EARLY PALEOINDIAN				

References

Collins, M.B. 2004. Archeology in Central Texas. In *The Prehistory of Texas*, ed. T.K. Pertulla, pp. 101-126. Texas A&M University Press, College Station.

Uecker, H.G. 2009. A Cultural Resources Survey for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Restoration and Fireland Project, Guadalupe River State Park, Comal and Kendall Counties, Texas.

Come on out – the birding is GREAT: Orioles

by Linda Gindler

Plentiful winter rain means spring color. Wildflowers may steal the show, but those looking a bit higher will be rewarded with colorful birds, too. Look for the returning vibrant summer residents—Golden-cheeked Warblers, Painted Buntings, and Summer Tanagers. But don't stop with these three, continue your exploration by looking for members of the Oriole family.

Orioles are yellow to dark-red colored birds with contrasting areas of black. They are members of the very large avian family called Icteridae (“golden-yellow ones” from their often brilliant yellow-orange feathers in some but not all species) that includes blackbirds, grackles, meadowlarks, and cowbirds. The Icteridae family is diverse in size, but they share some unique characteristics such as a tapered, sharply pointed bill, males being larger than females, and with an ability to open their bills strongly allowing them to force open gaps to find otherwise hidden food. Most show black in varying degrees. There are nine species of Orioles across the United States and five of the nine have been spotted within Park boundaries. Two are regular annual visitors (Orchard and Baltimore) while the other three (Audubon's, Bullock's and Scott's) only visit irregularly, often with years between visits. But the two that do visit annually are rock stars and worthy of the effort to see them.



Male Orchard Oriole (Photo by John Prentice)

The Orchard Oriole begins to arrive in late April. Some will only stay a few days while they rest and feed before continuing northward and eastward. For some, their journey will take them as far north as the Dakotas while others choose to go eastward to the Atlantic coast with many stopping points in between. For those opting to stay at the Park, it will be a quick-paced few months of nest building, raising young, followed by a frenzy of feeding before they depart in late summer heading back south. They are the smallest of the North American orioles measuring

7 ¼” inches, but what they lack in size is made up for with their loud clear song of lively warbling notes. Males sport a black back, head and throat contrasting against a dark chestnut breast and belly. Females are greenish yellow with two white wing bars and no black. By late summer immature males will also be around; they look like females but with black around the bill and throat. Orchard Orioles primarily eat insects but also fruit and nectar. Attract them to your backyard by planting fruit trees and shrubs or by offering orange slices set out on a tray. Orchard Oriole nests are a marvel in engineering, mostly built in deciduous trees or tall shrubs about 10-20' above ground. The nest is placed in a branch fork and is a hanging pouch woven with grass and plant fibers. At the Park, look for Orchard Orioles in the open woodlands, especially along the river. The trees in the Day-Use Area are popular places to find them.

The Park's other oriole is the Baltimore Oriole. Baltimores use the Park as a waystation on their long migration journey so they are not here long. Look for them to pass through from April to early May, then again as they return south in September. Their breeding territory in North America ranges from north Texas to Canada and east from Kentucky to New England. The Baltimore Oriole received its name because of the resemblance of the male's colors to the coat-of-arms of the 17th century Baron Baltimore, an English subject who founded the colony of Maryland (later to become the state of Maryland). The Baltimore Oriole subsequently became the state bird of



Maryland and the mascot of the Baltimore Orioles baseball team. They are larger than Orchard Orioles, measuring 8¾". Male birds sport the same black back, head, and throat of the Orchard Oriole, but their breast and belly are a flame-orange color. They have two bold white wing bars. Females and immature males have a grayish head and back and are yellow orange on the breast. They too have two bold white wing bars. Like the Orchard Orioles their diet consists of insects, fruit, and nectar. Look for them high in deciduous trees in open woodlands or forest edges. The Day-Use Area, River Overlook Trail, and Barred Owl Trails are good places to search.

If you are new to bird identification or an experienced birder, the Park has a lot to explore with two wildlife viewing blinds, over ten miles of hiking trails, and two miles of the beautiful Guadalupe River. During spring, things change daily with migrants passing through and resident males singing their best tunes. Learn more about the park's bird inhabitants by picking up a birding checklist at the Discovery Center or at one of the Wildlife Viewing Blinds. Follow the park on Facebook and learn about upcoming birding programs. Visit often and don't forget your binoculars and camera!



Male Baltimore Oriole (Photo by John Prentice)



There are two upcoming special events that will be of interest to Birders:

Birds of the Park, a special presentation by Ken Butler at Honey Creek Ranch — Saturday, March 16th, 2-4 p.m.

Butler, a published wildlife photographer, Texas Master Naturalist and obsessive birder, volunteers to help maintain the GRSP Woodland and Savannah bird blinds and has long participated in monthly bird surveys within Honey Creek SNA. In addition, Park staff will talk about Honey Creek Ranch and future plans.

To register, please send an email to friendsofguadalupeveriver@gmail.com, with your name, number of people in your group, and a phone number and/or email.



Ken Butler at Woodland Bird Blind. Photo by Mackenzie Brown.



Entrance to Woodland Bird Blind. Photo by Mackenzie Brown.

"Big Sit" at the Woodland blind — Saturday, April 20th, 9am – 12 pm

The park plans to participate in the Great Texas Birding Classic by holding a "Big Sit" – sometimes called a tailgate party for birders—at the bird blind. Join us and see how many birds we can see (or hear, so don't forget to bring your ears as well as binoculars and cameras) from within a 50-foot circle! Drop by anytime. You can borrow a set of binoculars if you don't bring your own, and join the park ranger and volunteers to discover the fun of birding!

So much to do, so many ways to connect, so much to savor

by Jessica Bergner, Park Interpreter

Greetings from Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek State Natural Area! As the park interpreter, I am delighted to share the latest news and upcoming events with our wonderful community of nature enthusiasts. Spring brings with it a sense of renewal and excitement as we dive into various outdoor activities and educational programs. Here's a taste of what's in store for park visitors this season (full calendar can be found here: https://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/guadalupe-river/park_events).

Natural Resources Surveys: This spring we will be conducting surveys for our Texas native, the endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler, that flies all the way from Central America to nest in the Texas Hill Country. Breeding bird surveys will take the place of monthly Honey Creek State Natural Area surveys, per the Region 3 Natural Resource team's guidance and new protocol. Brown-headed cowbird trapping practices will also continue.

Field Trips: Learning at the park is in full swing! In addition to local public and private school field trips, re-occurring monthly elementary-aged homeschool and weekly preschool classes are being offered. These classes are a big hit with the community!

Discovery Center: Bring your family out and take a closer look at the Park's nature through unique interactive exhibits and hands-on displays. Check out a no-cost Junior Ranger backpack, Night Sky backpack, or fishing pole to enjoy while visiting the Park. Feeling adventurous? Snag an updated geocache list or scavenger hunt! The Discovery Center is open from 10am - 2pm, Wednesday through Friday, and 10am - 4pm, Saturday and Sunday. *We are always looking for new, smiling faces to volunteer at the Discovery Center. Reach out to jessica.bergner@tpwd.texas.gov if you are interested in volunteering.*

Other Ways to Connect with the Park's Nature: Make sure to check out the Story Trail, our Park's version of a StoryWalk®. The Story Trail starts just behind and to the right of the Discovery Center, and once you walk the short trail and read the whole book it's just 1/4 mile round-trip—perfect for the littles! We change the book out seasonally, so you and your family can enjoy a new book as you walk along the trail this spring. If you have kids in your family, make sure to pick up their no-cost Junior Ranger activity book! This is a great way for your family to explore the nature of the Park on your own. Once a child has completed the number of activities based on their age, stop by the Discovery Center or headquarters and they will earn their Junior Ranger badge! (You can also download the Junior Ranger activity book—just type "TPWD Junior Ranger" into your favorite search engine and you'll find it right away).

Save the Date for These Special Events:

Birds of the Park, a special presentation by Ken Butler at Honey Creek Ranch —Saturday, March 16th, 2-4pm (see previous page for details and registration)

Doepenschmidt-Weidner Ranch Tour—Saturday, March 23rd, 10am - 2pm

The Friends of Guadalupe River State Park present the second public tour of the Doepenschmidt-Weidner Ranch in Honey Creek State Natural Area. Join them to explore the ranch site of the earliest settlers, learn about ranching in the early-mid 20th century, visit the grave of Jacob Doepenschmidt (d. 1872) and listen to Weidner descendants tell tales about their grandparents' ranch. Space is limited, so register early!

To register, please contact Mackenzie Brown at: mbrown@trinity.edu



Emile "Mutt" Rahe, Jr. on the Weidner Ranch, ca. 1930s.
Photographer unknown.

Monarch and Friends Pollinator Fiesta—Saturday, March 30th, 10am-2pm

We are so excited to continue our annual Pollinator Fiesta! Sponsored by the Friends of Guadalupe River State Park/Honey Creek State Natural Area, the Fiesta celebrates monarch butterflies as they return from Mexico. Along with monarchs, we'll be celebrating all things pollinator: bees and other insects; bats; hummingbirds; and the native plants that depend on them! Join us and our partner organizations on the trails behind the Discovery Center for crafts, activities, and much more!





Great American Eclipse: Exploring the Marvels of Total Eclipses—Saturday, April 6th, 8-9pm

Come join Joe Cheban, president of the Cordillera Ranch Nature Club, for a total solar eclipse presentation! Mr. Cheban will guide you through the mesmerizing spectacle, explaining the science behind the Great American Eclipse that will be occurring in our sky on Monday, April 8th, 2024. Additionally, learn about how YOU can participate in community science and help NASA.

“Big Sit” at the Woodland blind – Saturday, April 20th, 9am – 12 pm (see previous page for details)

Recurring Events:

Scenic Overlook Nature Walk: Join a Texas Master Naturalist to learn about local geological features, the importance of water, and local flora and fauna. This easy trail is less than 3/4 mile long and mostly level with some rocky areas. All ages and friendly dogs on leash are welcome! First three Thursday mornings. Winter start time continues through the end of March: 10-11:30 am. Beginning in April, we’ll switch to our “warm season” time: 9-10:30 am. No registration needed.

Honey Creek Interpretive Walks: Join experienced Honey Creek interpretive guides to discover the nature and history of Honey Creek State Natural Area. This hike is sponsored by the Friends of Guadalupe River State Park/Honey Creek State Natural Area. Come experience the beauty of this protected area and find out why it’s important. Saturdays at 9 am and the first four Sundays at 9 am—Registration is currently required for this program; check the park online calendar (link above) for details on walk dates and how to sign up. *We are always looking for new, knowledgeable guides. Reach out to Nancy Gray at grayabbott@aol.com if you are interested in becoming a certified interpretive guide.*

Star Parties with San Antonio Astronomical Association: Experienced and knowledgeable members of the San Antonio Astronomical Association come out to the park every month to share their knowledge and telescopes with park visitors. Join us as we look at the stars, moon, planets, nebulae, and more! Saturdays: March 16th, April 13th, May 11th, and June 15th. Drop in anytime during the 2-hour star party; no registration needed. Times vary based on sunset.

Archery in the Park: Join us for the safe and fun sport of archery! Last Sunday of the month. Drop-in any time between 12:00 pm and 2:00 pm. Note: time may shift before summer; check the park calendar (link on previous page) for details.

To submit articles for publication in the Friends Newsletter, email them to one of the Co-Editors:
 Mackenzie Brown, mbrown@trinity.edu
 Charleen Moore, mackandchuck@gmail.com
 Deadlines are the 20th of Feb, May, Aug, Nov.

2024 Membership Dues

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; Membership dues renew in January.

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) \$20 _____ Individual \$25 _____

Family \$40 _____ Lifetime \$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.

We will not share your information or clutter your inbox.

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Friends of Guadalupe River and Honey Creek, Inc.

3350 Park Road 31
Spring Branch, Texas 78070

**Visit us on the web:
<https://friendsofgrhc>**



**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, usually on the third Thursday
at 2:00 p.m. in the Rust House. Please join us and bring a friend!
For meeting venue and possible change of date or time, contact us at:
friendsofgrhc@gmail.com**