



BRAZOS BEND BUNCH BUGLE

VOLUME 24, NUMBER 7

JULY 2012

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Over the past several months great improvements have been made in our Gift Shop. New display shelving has improved the way our merchandise is displayed. The rearrangement makes the area seem larger. Now we have new software which interfaces with the software that is used to track our finances. We also are able to accept credit card purchases, which is improving our sales. Diane Carpenter has led in the

selection of the new software and in bringing it into operation. She has been assisted in setup and inventory by Beth Debenport, Kent Fewell, Linda Keltner, Leigh Allen, Bob Kowalewski and Anna Dell Williamson. Please extend your thanks to the wonderful Volunteers.

Texans for State Parks is a 501(c)(3) organization that was incorporated in 1997. It is a state wide organization open to individuals, organizations, and businesses that have an interest in preserving and improving state parks, state historic sites, and state natural areas in Texas. An invitation has been extended to this group to visit with us during our August 11, 2012 afternoon meeting. You can learn more about Texans for State Parks at: <http://www.texansstateparks.org/index.html>

July 14, 2012 is the date of the three meetings that will set the direction of our support of BBSP. The Budget meeting is at 3:00 followed by the Executive meeting and then the General meeting with a light meal at 5:00 PM and a 5:30 PM meeting start. All meetings are open to the membership. Any agenda items for the General Meeting must be submitted to the Executive Committee and placed on the meeting agenda by the presiding officer before any action can be taken in the General Meeting.

Remember that the August 11 meeting will be in the Dining Hall at 2:30 in the afternoon, preceded by desserts at 2:00.

Offie Walker

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JUNE MEETING NOTES

reported by Anna Dell Williamson

Offie Walker called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM on June 9, 2012. There were 20 Volunteers, 2 VIT, 2 guests, and 2 staff present. Offie thanked those who brought dinner: Christine Kovach Britain, Helen Wright, Hannah Meddaugh, Connie Waltrip and Lindsay Kahn. Judy Strauss moved to approve the May minutes as posted, seconded by Christine Britian. The motion carried.

David Heinicke and Jacob Dement brought their staff reports, and Cord Eversol reported on the alligator research project. These reports are elsewhere in the newsletter.

REPORTS:

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Bob Kowalewski reported we had a good month in May. Financial records are available to members. The Gift Shop has installed a new Point of Sale program to take credit cards. Forty percent of sales for the first week in June were due to credit cards. Diane Carpenter has put in a lot of time on this project.

Anna Dell Williamson moved to create a Petty Cash account of \$500 to make funds available from existing budgeted accounts to park staff for cash purchases from vendors that do not accept credit charges. This fund will be reviewed and replenished monthly. Chuck Duplant seconded the motion, which carried. Staff will turn in vouchers for purchases, and the treasurer will replenish the fund monthly.

We have a CD that will be cashed for the new building fund to be used for startup expenses.

Offie Walker reported that we are making preparatory steps toward the new building, to allow us to know what the building will cost. We will do core samples when we have the TPWD architect's approval.

COMPTROLLER:

Nancy Lynn Jones is working on a way to compare two months financials. She will wait until the GS changes become apparent.

GIFT SHOP

Beth Debenport:

- Thanks to committee members for their help working on the transition to the new Point of Sale software. They have put in very long days.
 - Diane Carpenter has stayed at the park for 2 weeks
 - Beth and Anna Dell stayed at the park four days
 - Kent Fewell drove out every day the first week.
 - Leigh Allen, Bob Kowalewski and Linda Keltner came out to help with inventory.
- The system generates several interesting reports, including one that tells the number and amount of hourly sales during the day.
- The University of Houston Small Business Department helped us do initial installation of the software, and a marketing expert gave advice on displaying.
- The GS was closed for 3 days, and reopened June 1, with no major problems.
- We are charging \$.50 for credit charges under \$5, we have increased some prices, and we are still replacing price tags, etc.

WOOD SALES:

Chuck Duplant reported that the wood yard is in good shape, and the maintenance crew may do some other jobs now. Sales are slowing down for the summer. We are running about 84% on sales.

BBEEC:

Chuck reported that Gordon Bohmfalk has been working on Sea Rim and Galveston Island projects and is hoping to meet with us in July.

OUTREACH:

Judy Strauss announced the following Outreach opportunities.

- Boy Scouts Jamboree Wednesday, June 13
- Rosenberg Night Out, merchants will be open in the evening, and there will be various booths open. Takes place the third Saturday in July and August.
- Library outreach in August

All these events will be on the Special Events Calendar. Put your name and the hours you can work. Any help is appreciated. We have not heard anything from Texian Market Days (in October).

TRAINING:

Anna Dell Williamson reported we have 15 applicants so far. Deadline is June 30.

OBSERVATORY:

Mary Lockwood reported that Barbara Wilson has resigned as director. The Observatory will be open to the public on Fridays as well as Saturdays, and they will also have Sunday afternoon programs, starting tomorrow, from 11-4, with a Planetarium exhibit and an emphasis on solar activities (eclipse and Venus transit). The NC staff requested information on the Observatory schedule to give to visitors.

AUGUST MEETING:

Offie announced that the August 11 meeting will be an afternoon meeting at 2:30, with desserts served at 2:00. Budget and Executive meetings will start at 12:30. All members are welcome to all meetings. We have several special activities planned for the meeting.

DISCUSSION:

Woody Scott questioned the decision to no longer sell ice in the GS. Some alternative ideas were suggested. Anyone interested in researching possibilities and taking charge of the project is welcome. This will be discussed at the next Executive Meeting.

Christine Britain moved that the meeting adjourn. Kathy Peterson seconded the motion, which carried.

STAFF REPORTS



DAVID HEINICKE INTERPRETIVE RANGER AND LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

David Heinicke reported that Sharon Hanzik will be out with foot surgery and recovery until the end of July or later. The Organization sends her best wishes. She is progressing as expected. David will be asking for help with some of the areas Sharon usually covers.

There are alligator nests around the park, one on 40-Acre between Hoots Hollow and the Observation Tower, near Duck Box 21. If you see a nest in plain view, let the staff know. There was a nest on Creekfield across the trail from the lake, and we salvaged 37 eggs. The nursery downstairs is in full swing, with 15 rat snake eggs from our pair on display, in addition to the alligator eggs.

The 14th Annual Independence Day Bicycle Parade will be June 30. Sign up to help on the web site. This event is always lots of fun.

Watch visitors and each other for heat problems. Carry water (an extra bottle is recommended) when you are out.

A new design for the Nature Center sign has been approved. The old sign is crumbling and is not in a good location to direct people into the parking lot. The exhibit shop at TPWD has agreed to pay for the new sign. It will be located where visitors turn in at the 2nd driveway, on the island, to help people see where to park. Staff will also remove the cement from the old walkway area, so it doesn't look like a driveway any more.

This past week, 9 volunteers paddled the lower Brazos River.

Several years ago, we helped the University of New Mexico with a project on dung beetles. We have been asked to help with this study again. We will be trapping dung beetles starting in late June.

Thanks for all the help volunteers give the park.



JACOB DEMENT (filling in for Steve Killian):

Jacob thanked the group for the warm welcome and for making him and his family feel at home. He and Angie appreciate it. He will bring Angie and the girls to the next meeting.

April 2012 was the highest revenue generating month ever in the history of the park. May 2012 was also the highest May ever. BBSP is breaking records, and it just keeps going. Summer may drop off a bit. The volunteers help it run smoothly.

We are getting good help with the TDCJ (Texas Department of Criminal Justice) work crew during the week, Monday through Thursday. It eases the work load of manual labor for the rangers. Tree trimming and chipping has helped the park look good overall. Crews are working on replacing benches, making it easier for people to purchase memorial benches and make donations.

Americorps was here last year, and will be coming this year for trail maintenance and to upgrade and build on to our trail system. We expect 8 or 9 people, the date is not sure yet.

A new intern has been brought in until September, who will be working on creating an interactive map through Google Earth.

We are developing some ideas to improve summer attendance (no firm plans yet). Considerations include trail racing events on the back trails as revenue generators, and car shows in the Elm Lake parking lot.

CORD EVERSOL: REPORT TO THE JUNE 9 MEETING



Cord reported on the alligator research project he is leading. They have tagged 150-160 alligators. It started out easy, but now it is more challenging. The next phase, beginning next week, will involve nightly surveys, taking different weather measurements and finding out what weather patterns dictate the highest alligator activity. This research will take place at night, once a week each month for a year.

The nesting survey will begin in July. Volunteers will walk the perimeter of lakes and creeks to get a good count of the nests in the park, find out how many females are reproducing, get information on optimum nesting habitat, and record data on plant species, cover over nest, slope of nest. There are plans to putting game cameras around the nests, to compare actual nest attendance based on size of the mother (i.e., do younger females attend as much as older, etc?) Pictures will give us data on nesting attendance. Cord left a sign-up sheet for those willing to helping out by spending a Saturday doing research.

They have recaptured quite a few of the hatchlings that started out in the Nature Center. One was released 12 years ago. Only a small handful actually had tags on them. This allows us to put together more long-term data. The alligator population at BBSP is not growing as fast as in coastal areas, which may be due to fresh water and having less to eat than in coastal areas. Armand Bayou is considered coastal; no growth studies have been done there. Many studies have been done in coastal Louisiana and Mad Island Wildlife Area. There are few studies on fresh water inland populations.

One question is “Could being in an aquarium the first year affect the growth rate?” In a year from now, we will be able to compare growth rate of those released with those in the wild. Cord pit-tagged all the babies in the aquarium. (You can feel a bump on the tail near the right side). Thursday radio transmitters were attached to 2 alligators at Armand Bayou. Trapping started out slow there, due to lower density than here, but it is picking up there now. Those finds affect data from here, also. The biggest alligator here is 12 foot long. Cord will send out pictures in an email to David.

He is also doing a survey of park visitors. They have hired an undergrad research technician, who is staying in a Fema trailer at maintenance. He will be studying the public opinion of alligators, to help TPWD with nuisance programs and to guide people to live with alligators more than they do. He may also do interviews in the Nature Center with volunteers and visitors.

CONGRATULATIONS



JULY BIRTHDAYS

Debra Baker	Drake Hacker
Diane Carpenter	Cynthia Morales
Jo Ann Davis	Susie Taylor (Staff)
Jacob Dement (Staff)	Barb Tucker
Jaci Elliott	Elizabeth Villanueva
Denise Wilks (Staff)	

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Eddy Grizzaffi
Frank Seay
Sylvia Carrillo (Staff)
Jim Gilliam (Staff)
Lara Malone

JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

Bruce and Anna Dell Williamson
Laszlo and Lexi Perlaky
Ray and Dana Anderson
Jim and Lorena Calvert
Frank and Stacey Seay

CONGRATULATIONS

Christine Kovach (volunteer) married her boyfriend, Mark Britain, at the Presidio La Bahia (or Fort on the Hill) in Goliad, Texas on April 21, 2012. The fort was an important part of the Texas Revolution and the first (though not the "official") Texas Declaration of Independence was signed in the chapel in 1835. Christine thought that Mark might be the "one" on their second date, when Mark went with her to BBSP, despite being worried that an alligator was going to sneak up behind him and bite him on the ankle! Luckily for their relationship, that didn't happen.

To Barbara Lilly on completion of her VIT traing requirements. Be sure to welcome her to the organization. She has already committed to working in the NC/GS regularly during the week.

GET WELL WISHES

Get well wishes are sent to Beth Debenport, who injured her left arm in a fall and will be unable to drive for a while.

Continued wishes to Sharon Hanzik for a speedy recovery from her foot surgery.

Thank you!

to Christine Kovach Britain, Helen Wright, Hannah Meddaugh, Connie Waltrip and Lindsay Kahn for their contributions to the June meeting supper.

to David Heinicke for the paddling trips he is leading for volunteers and others.

to Judy Strauss for coordinating the outreach program.

to David Heinicke for coordinating the dung beetle study for BBSP.

to Suzie Gann, Barbara Willy, Barbara Tucker, Jaci Elliot, Ethan Hoover, and Jerry Carpenter for their support of the Eco-Explorers Tadpoles program.

to Rebecca Sykes, Mary Lockwood, and Jerry and Diane Carpenter for their help with the Eco-Explorers program.

to Ted Stevens and David Heinicke, BBSP staff; and to Mary Anne Webber, Houston Audubon's Educational Director, for presenting programs for the Eco-Explorers.

ECO-EXPLORERS, 2012

by Carrie Sample

This program has started off with a total of 70 participants enrolled in both the younger program (Tadpoles) and the regular Eco-Explorers. We had one participant who has taken part in the program for her 4th year, several in their 3rd year and several more for their 2nd year.

Last Tuesday a grandfather was amazed that the program was staffed by all volunteers!

We had just started by the time of the deadline for the newsletter, so there may be some more volunteers who will help after this Sunday.

I would like to go ahead and thank those who have already helped.

The Tadpoles are supported by Suzie Gann, Barbara Willy, Barbara Tucker, Jaci Elliot, Ethan Hoover, and Jerry Carpenter. We have broken down into groups, so these people have led their group for the entire session.

The Eco-Explorers have been supported by Rebecca Sykes, Mary Lockwood, Jerry and Diane Carpenter. Ted Stevens, park ranger, led the first session, Mary Lockwood will lead the next session, and David Heinicke will lead 2 of the coming sessions.

Mary Anne Webber, Houston Audubon's Educational Director, will return again this year to do a program for each group.

Our feed back from parents has been good so far. I definitely feel that we are giving our community a needed program!

Thanks to all who have helped.

DUNG BEETLE PROJECT

by David Heinicke

Pictures provided by Barbara Keller

Some of you might remember several years ago a few of us were trapping dung beetles in the park as part of a research project at the University of New Mexico. Due to some new very interesting findings they would like to get some more specimens from Brazos Bend on a regular basis. Trapping the beetles involves going out on the trails in the morning and setting traps baited with pig poop. We will let the traps sit for a few hours, and check them in the afternoon. After we collect and preserve the beetles, we will clean and collect the traps. The trapping occurred on Wednesday, June 27, the Red Buckeye short loop. The plan was to collect about 200 beetles. We had six to eight volunteers show up to help. Temperatures were around 100 degrees and beetle trapping was pretty slow. We only caught 19 beetles. We are speculating that they stop flying when it gets this hot and dry.

Here's a link with a little more info about the project and the professor - <http://biology.unm.edu/Rowland/JMRowlandCV.html>. If you understand it maybe you can explain it to me.....

The pictures are from our last trapping activity.



JULY PADDLING TRIP

by David Heinicke

A group of paddlers took a trip along the Brazos River on Wednesday, June 6th, and July's trip is planned for Wednesday, July 11, to the mouth of the San Bernard River. We will meet at 9:30 am at the boat ramp at the end of F.M. 2918 in southern Brazoria County. F.M. 2918 dead ends into the intercoastal waterway (ICW) near the San Bernard River. We will launch from this boat ramp and paddle about .25 miles north/east on the ICW and then south/west past where they dredged the new mouth for the river in the spring of 2009 and on to where the old mouth used to be.

Our destination will be a sandy secluded beach about 150 yards wide with the river/lagoon on one side and the beach on the other side. There is no access to vehicles on this beach, so it is very pristine, except for some trash and lots of drift wood that floats in. It's about a 3 to 4 mile trip each way (6-8 miles total). We can paddle out to the end of the river and have lunch, swim in the lagoon or the beach, go beach combing, bird watching, relax or whatever for an hour or so and then head back.

This trip will pose a few new changes for those that are not too experienced at paddling. We will encounter a few motorized pleasure/fishing boats, but it shouldn't be too many on a Wednesday. We will be paddling down the ICW for about .25 miles so there could be some barge traffic, and wind on the coast can always be a factor. Based on what I've seen I don't think anyone should have a problem. Keep in mind that this will be a very remote area so be prepared to be self sufficient. I hope I haven't scared anyone off; I just want everyone to be prepared and have a great time.

Bring plenty of water, lunch and snacks, sunscreen and hat (NO SHADE ANYWHERE), your PFD (and wear it!) and kayak or canoe, and be prepared for a great time on the coast! There are usually lots of great birds out there!

Since we will be in open water a long way from cover we will not head out if the weather looks like it could turn bad. If you have any questions or if the weather is questionable that morning please give me a call.

See you on the water, Life's better outside!

TICK PROBLEMS

Unusually mild temperatures and precipitation over much of the state this past winter after a hot and dry summer and fall have created the perfect conditions for an explosion of tick activity this season according to Texas AgriLife Extension research. Ticks can carry disease like lime disease. To reduce the risk of tick and tick-borne disease, consider avoiding areas where ticks are plentiful, wear long pants tucked or taped into boots, wash clothes that may have been exposed to ticks, use repellents containing DEET to prevent tick attachment, conduct regular tick checks of yourself, children and pets, and remove ticks properly if they do attach to your skin. If possible you want to save the tick by placing it on a damp paper towel in a container in the refrigerator so you can then [submit it for testing](#). There is also a [tick app](#) available for your smart phone.

FAREWELL TO MELISSA

Message from Steve Killian

Brazos Bend's Assistant Office Manager and Gift Shop Manager, Melissa Moody, has accepted a position at Inks Lake State Park. We are having a party for Melissa on Tuesday, July 10, 2012, from 6:30 p.m. to ??? at my (Steve's) residence to wish her well on her new position. Melissa has done great things at Brazos Bend State Park. Our gift shop is one of the best in the system! Melissa will be missed. The invitation is below. Hope to see everyone for a fun evening! Please let all our Hosts and BBPSVO know as well. Please RSVP to me (Steve) so we can have a good headcount on which to base our grilling needs.

Let's show *Melissa* the door

Brazos Bend style!

Join us saying goodbye

&

Wishing her well with her new position at

Inks Lake

Tuesday, July 10th

6:30pm

At

Steve & Jennifer's

Hamburgers and Hot Dogs provided

Everyone please bring a dish and their favorite drink!

UPDATE FROM SHARON

Sent July 3, 2012

BBSP STAFF, VOLUNTEERS, AND TRAINEES:

First day of physical therapy today! So happy to get out of this house! The evaluation was good. I am now using crutches and while wearing the robo-cop boot I am allowed to put half of my weight on the foot. I also have about five stretching exercises to do and will be going back to physical therapy three times per week for at least a month. I cannot say when I will be able to drive and come back to work. I mentioned August to the therapist and she had a skeptical look on her face. We'll see

I am trying to visit. Much easier to get out now with the crutches.

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 10	Eco-Explorer Tadpoles, "To Eat and Be Eaten", 9:30 - 11:00
July 12	Eco-Explorers, "Reptile Relatives", 9:30 -11:30
July 14	Budget and Executive Meetings, 3:00 PM Regular Business Meeting, 5:30 PM (Supper, 5:00 PM)
July 19	Eco-Explorers, "Flying Wild", 9:30 -11:30
July 24	Eco-Explorer Tadpoles, "Wetland Wonders", 9:30 - 11:00
July 26	Eco Explorers, "Mammal Watch", 9:30 -11:30
July 31	Eco-Explorer Tadpoles, "Our Feathered Friends", 9:30 - 11:00
August 11	Budget and Executive Meetings, 12:30 PM
NOTE CHANGE	Regular Business Meeting, 2:30 PM (Desserts, 2:00 PM), Dining Hall
September 3	Labor Day, Nature Center open 9-5, busy day
September 8	Budget and Executive Meetings, 3:00 PM Regular Business Meeting, 5:30 PM (Supper, 5:00 PM)
October 6	Brazos River Pickers, 5:00 PM
October 7	17th Annual Brazos Bend Butterfly Count
October 13	Budget and Executive Meetings, 3:00 PM Regular Business Meeting, 5:30 PM (Supper, 5:00 PM)
November 3	Brazos River Pickers, 5:00 PM
November 10	Budget and Executive Meetings, 3:00 PM Regular Business Meeting, 5:30 PM (Supper, 5:00 PM)
December 1	Brazos River Pickers, 5:00 PM
December 8	Budget and Executive Meetings, 3:00 PM Regular Business Meeting, 5:30 PM (Supper, 5:00 PM)

ODE TO THE COOT

*By Grace Sherwood Winer, October, 2011
Naturalist/Geologist on the National Geographic Sea Bird*

Behold the intriguing
American coot,
Considered by few
To be very cute.

Consider the coot,
It nests among sedges;
When flying, its wings show
White training edges.

An interesting note
On the coot baby's head,
It's not only bald,
But also quite red!

Consider the coot,
A marvelous creature.
Its chalk-white bill
Is its prominent feature.



Brazos Bend State Park

Texas Parks and Wildlife

21901 FM 762

Needville, TX 77461

☆☆☆☆☆☆

NEXT MEETING

SATURDAY, JULY 14, 2012

5:30 PM, NATURE CENTER



FIRST CLASS MAIL

REGULAR VOLUNTEER EVENTS

Creekfield Hikes	Every Saturday and Sunday at 10:00 AM, led by volunteers
Photo Hikes	First Saturday of each month
Volunteer meeting	Second Saturday of each month at 5:30 PM, supper at 5:00 PM
Bird Hikes	See schedule in calendar

BRAZOS BEND STATE PARK VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION

VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION OFFICERS

President:	Offie Walker
Vice-President:	Mary Lockwood
Secretary	Belinda DiMarcello
Treasurer:	Bob Kowalewski
Past-President:	Carrie Sample
Comptroller:	Nancy Lynn Jones

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Editor	Anna Dell Williamson
Layout	Cynthia Morales
Production Assistant	Bruce Williamson
Distribution	Carol Ramsayer
Web Master	Anne Shelton

The **Brazos Bend Bunch Bugle** is the newsletter of the Brazos Bend State Park Volunteer Organization, A.K.A. The Brazos Bend Bunch. It is distributed monthly to volunteers through the BBSPVO web site. For further information on this newsletter or the volunteer program, contact David Heinicke or Sharon Hanzik at Brazos Bend State Park, phone 979-553-5101.

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are the opinions of the author of the article and do not necessarily reflect the official position of Brazos Bend State Park Volunteer Organization nor of BBSP administration. The deadline for Newsletter contributions is the Saturday following the monthly meeting, if mailed to Anna Dell Williamson, or at the meeting if delivered to the park. (E-mail address: <awilliamson4@comcast.net> or <newsletter@brazosbend.org>). Notify Anna Dell (281-485-2843) well in advance of any events you want announced in the newsletter.

**IN THE END, WE WILL CONSERVE ONLY WHAT WE
LOVE,
WE WILL LOVE ONLY WHAT WE UNDERSTAND,
WE WILL UNDERSTAND ONLY WHAT WE ARE TAUGHT.**

**BABA DIOUM, SENEGAL
AFRICAN CONSERVATIONIST**