



BRAZOS BEND BUNCH BUGLE

VOLUME 25

NUMBER 6

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE GOOD GUYS...AND GALS!!



The first thing a visitor sees when making the turn into the park is the great new park sign with an alligator 'eying' you as you enter. The second thing visitors notice is the beautiful inviting roadside grass areas carefully mowed to accent the tall prairie grasses, and the manicured shaded areas under the large old oak trees inviting photo opportunities.

This maintenance requires a lot of hard work, sweat and good humor. Our maintenance team, consisting of several hard working guys and gals, ride 'Gators, mowing the roadside areas and various gathering areas in the park. They help to maintain the trails, cutting up and clearing fallen trees. They help to keep the trails and other public areas safe and attractive for the thousands of yearly visitors. They assist the rangers and other park personnel in other important maintenance and environmental care-taking. When you consider that Brazos Bend State Park is within a one to two hour drive for about 4 million plus people, it is *immaculate!*

We owe a lot to these few guys and gals! Thank you!!...and the critters thank you too.

Mary Lockwood

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JUNE MEETING NOTES

submitted by Belinda Dimarcello, Secretary

Mary Lockwood called the meeting to order on June 8, 2013. There were 12 volunteers, 1 VIT and 2 staff members present. The minutes of the May meeting were approved as posted. Thanks to Mary Lockwood, Judy Strauss, Woody Scott and Mike Manley for the supper.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Bob Kowalewski brought the Financial Report for May. The following Purchase Requests were approved by the membership.

- Mike Manley: ECC Research Grant to obtain information about potential Corporate Sponsors who might work as a partner on donating towards the new building. This would be a grant for a college student to do the research.
- Diane Carpenter: New telephone with two handsets for Nature Center and Gift shop.
- Chuck Duplant: Hose reel and soil for monarch butterfly station, from the Carol Ramsayer /Exxon Account.
- Sharon Hanzik: New Laptop computer and software from the Carol Ramsayer /Exxon Account.
- Richard Taylor: Leveling jacks for scaffolding, from Park Maintenance Funds.
- 20 gallons Herbicide and 5 gallons Indicator Dye.
- Labor and materials costs for Creekfield water well maintenance. This pump keeps water flowing to Creekfield Lake.

Committee Reports:

Gift Shop: Beth Debenport reported that May was a very good month – the best ever. They have put together a project plan for the new building gift shop. We have seen greater than a 45% increased PROFIT over the last 11 months, since we started accepting credit cards.

Maintenance: The maintenance crew has been working in the wood yard, spraying tallow trees and fire ants, and they took down the old fence on the former property line.

Wood yard: Chuck Duplant reported that donations are dropping off due to warmer weather.

Outreach: Judy Strauss reported that Outreach activities have slowed down a little bit.

BBEEC: Mike Manley reported on the New Education Center planning.

Programs that have been developed or are in the planning stage now:

Water testing

Weather station

Compiling research that has been done at BBSP.

Future Program suggestion:

A program through the US Nature Phenophase (USNP) studies, which is a nationwide program of biological life cycle changes as it relates to climate since 2007 and is designed to include the public (citizen science). This program, as a hands on approach, could enrich learning opportunities for the school groups and scout troops visiting the park. Also, we can link with other groups nationally. The program is established. We would only need to decide what animals/plants we would need to monitor. The protocols are set and the public could monitor on visits. Expenses to implement here would be very low – printing of monitoring forms, perhaps some signage. We could also tie in with the butterfly waystation and TPW inventory teams, along with school /scout groups and even individuals. We wouldn't need to be involved since the people participating would input their information directly into the USNP website. Implementation of this program was approved by the membership.

Announcements:

The blood drive will be July 13.

Condolences were expressed to **Candace Kanak's** family.

We could use more volunteers to bring dinner items for the monthly volunteer meeting.

PARK STAFF REPORTS

DAVID HEINICKE, Park Naturalist and Law Enforcement Officer

- Be careful of the heat and look for visitors suffering from heat.
- The Independence Day Parade bike decorating and patriotic parade will be on Saturday, July 6.
- July 13 will be the weather day with weather related activities and special guests.
- Email addresses have changed for TPWD staff, but the old addresses will continue to work for an indefinite time.



JACOB DEMENT, Acting Superintendent and Law Enforcement Officer

- ✓ This was the best May ever.
- ✓ AmeriCorps is working on trails and other tasks.
- ✓ There is construction at Elm Lake, done by Ducks Unlimited, to better regulate water distribution.

CONGRATULATIONS!



Congratulations to
 Melanie Jahn and Calvin Walker
 for completing their VIT requirements.
 Be sure to welcome our newest volunteers.



JULY IS HOT - PLEASE WATCH VISITORS,
 VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF FOR SIGNS OF
 HEAT PROBLEMS. CARRY EXTRA WATER!

JULY BIRTHDAYS

Debra Baker
Diane Carpenter
Jo Ann Davis
Jacob Dement (Staff)
Jaci Elliott
Susie Taylor (Staff)
Barb Tucker

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Sylvia Carrillo (Staff)
Amanda Elsworth (Staff)
Jim Gilliam (Staff)
Eddy Grizzaffi
Beverly Lannou
Lara Malone
Frank Seay
Joe Southern

AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES



Ray and Dana Anderson
Jim and Lorena Calvert
Ron and Margaret Morrison
Laszlo and Lexi Perlaky
Frank and Stacey Seay
Veronika Vaneckova (VIT) and Martin Kroupa
Bruce and Anna Dell Williamson

GETTING TO KNOW YOU, ... GETTING TO KNOW ALL ABOUT YOU....

by Diane Welty

Victoria (Tori) Matta

One of the Brazos Bend State Park Volunteers has just graduated the George Ranch High School. She has the great honor of being the 2013 Valedictorian. Tori plans to study science or engineering at Northeastern University. She has been awarded a full tuition scholarship. Additionally, she has been honored to receive the National Merit Commended Scholarship and National Advanced Placement Scholarship.

Her high school activities include

Drum Major for the Longhorn Band, as well as a flutist.

Membership in the National Honor Society.

A trip to Costa Rica with her Advanced Placement Science class, a very memorable experience for any high school student.



The Brazos Bend State Park Volunteers have been very honored to have this woman serve with us. This is a woman who is going to go far. She plans to pursue her dreams while making a positive impact on the world. We all wish her continued success as she continues her studies and adventures.

(Information obtained from Lamar CISD website)

NATURE CENTER REPORT MAY 2013

Below are the totals of the various activities and attendance recorded for the Nature Center, hikes, and programs for May 1-31, 2013. There was one holiday, Memorial Day, May 27. We presented 45 programs and hikes.

PROGRAMS	TOTALS APRIL
NATURE CENTER ATTENDANCE May 2013 - 8,287 May 2012 - 8,366 May 2011 - 8,131 May 2010 - 8,939 May 2009 - 8,578 May 2008 - 7,060 May 2007 - 5,633 May 2006 - 5,387 May 2005 - 5,443	Saturdays (4) - 2,474 High, 860 (5/18) Average: 619
	Sundays (4) - 2,370 High, 845 (5/26) Average: 593
	Weekdays (23) - 3,443 High, 715 (5/27) Average: 150
CREEKFIELD HIKES (11)	162, Average: 15
SNAKE PROGRAM(5)	171, Average: 34
CHILDREN'S STORYTIME(6)	67, Average: 7
ALLIGATOR PROGRAMS(6)	116, Average: 19
BIRD HIKES (2)	17, Average: 9
OUTREACH (3)	742, Average: 362
WILDLIFE VIEWING (5)	91, Average: 18
GEOCACHING 101 (3)	41, Average: 14
OTHER PROGRAMS (4): Creatures of the night, Photo Hike, Wildlife Video(2)	32, Average: 8
TOTAL VISITORS SERVED IN HIKES AND PROGRAMS	1439
VOLUNTEER HOURS	Interpretation = 1571 Maintenance/ Other = 479 TOTAL = 2050
PARK ATTENDANCE (Percentage reflects the percentage of total visitors in each category.)	Total 26,150 Day use (82%) 21,515 Overnight (18%) 4,635 NC (32%) 8,287

CORRECTIONS TO THE MAY NL

VOLUNTEER HOURS

The volunteer hours reported in April were copied incorrectly. Here are the correct numbers:

Interpretation	879
Maintenance	182.5
TOTAL	1061.5

FLOWER IDENTIFICATION

Thanks to Maureen Goode for noticing that the Rattlesnake Master flowers in the article on Maintenance are hard to find. Photographer and Maintenance Crew member Akiko Noma sent this clarification: "There is one Rattlesnake Master blooming in the photo at the far left, but yellow flowers in the photo are mainly Coneflowers."



FUTURE VOLUNTEER



Jenny and her mom Veronika Vaneckova (VIT) made Jenny's first trip to BBSP in late June. She's already received a Junior Ranger patch, and she's ready to go.

SUMMER BLOOD DRIVE

Our next blood drive is scheduled for Saturday, July 13, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. If you can help with the Registration booth, sign up for a one-hour shift on the Special Events calendar. Contact Chuck Duplant if you have any questions.



MAY MAINTENANCE REPORT

The weekday Maintenance crew reported 272.5 hours in May for the activities below.

Wood Yard:

- Split and bundled wood
- Mowed wood yard
- Organized tool box



Spider Oak Tree
Before

Mowing and Landscaping:

- Trimmed and cleared around the Spider Oak Tree
- Planted grasses on the Pocket Prairie

Trail Trimming and Trail Maintenance:

- Mowed and trimmed Live Oak Trail, Pocket Prairie,
- Cleared downed trees by Maintenance, Creekfield Lake Trail

Spider Oak Tree
After



Equipment Maintenance:

- Removed and stored windshields
- Repaired 10-drawer tool box for Wood Yard

Pest Control:

- Treated Chinese Tallow Trees
- Treated for Fire Ants
- Set and checked hog traps
- Cleared an old property line filled with Chinese Tallow trees (in the prairie up front)



Chinese Tallow
Before



Chinese Tallow
After

THANK YOU

- ☺ to Ducks Unlimited, TPWD and BBSP staff for the successful completion of the water control structure in Pilant Slough
- ☺ to Rick Dashnau, Beth Debenport, Nelda Gay, Sharon Hanzik, David Heinicke, Richard Taylor and Diane Welty for articles, stories and photos for this issue of the NL
- ☺ to volunteers who are responding to requests for weekday coverage in the Gift Shop and Nature Center
- ☺ to Mary Lockwood, Judy Strauss, Woody Scott and Mike Manley for the June meeting night supper

TRAFFIC HEADS-UP

This isn't urgent news, but volunteers who approach the park from Hwy 59 could use an update now and then...

Per Commissioner Morrison's comments given in a Greatwood neighborhood update, the expansion of Crabb River Road is fully funded, has passed 80 percent of the environmental study and should be under way in 6-18 months. This will widen Crabb River Road to four lanes from Hwy 59 past George Ranch High School.

INDEPENDENCE DAY BICYCLE PARADE

from David Heinicke

On the afternoon of Saturday, July 6th, we are hosting our 15th annual Independence Day Bicycle Parade at the park. We still need some help with the food and helping kids decorate their bikes. If you would like to help, you can sign up on the Special Events Calendar on the website. Camping reservations indicate that we can expect a four-day weekend starting Thursday, July 4th. Thanks for the help!



WATER STATION DUTY PROCEDURES

from Sharon Hanzik

Please note and comply with the Water Station Duty procedures below:

Morning shift - after your shift please leave the JD Gator on the back porch by the garage door. We may need to make a trash run in the AM. Please leave key at front desk and check radio back in.

Afternoon shift - please put JD Gator away after NC trash has been loaded and you are done with the shift.

We would like to make sure all the trash the visitors, volunteers and staff make during the day gets emptied, and this is the most effective and efficient way to get it done. We appreciate your cooperation and commitment to teamwork. Thank you.

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY OUTREACH

by Diane L. Welty

I got a chance to do a presentation about the BBSP and all its wonderful things to see. Well, not ALL of its wonderful things, since this was a one hour presentation. The University Library is a two year old facility, located on University Drive in Sugar Land. There is a very nice building full of very nice people. They really made me feel welcome. There were 56 kids ranging in grade levels from first to fifth. Several of the employees stayed to watch the presentation, also.

I was excited to see a show of hands from half of the group, when I asked how many had been to BBSP. This was a very well-behaved group of interested children. There was a discussion of the three ecosystems at the park. They liked the large red-eared slider shell, stuffed purple gallinule, and pelts from a skunk, raccoon and coyote. Of course, the baby alligator was the biggest hit.

A librarian brought out many nature books. She put them up at the back of the room. It was nice to see that many of the books were picked up by the children to check out and take home. I am sure many of these kids will be coming to the park soon.

If you see one of these events listed on the special events calendar, sign up to give it a try. It was great fun.



JUST FOR GRINS

Ed. Note: Volunteers and Staff have some fun experiences with visitors, especially children. Below are a couple of recent events shared with us. Feel free to send me items like this to give us all a smile.

From Sharon Hanzik:

During a story time about trees we were having a discussion about the benefits of trees and what kind of foods come from trees. The girls in the brownie troop started naming different kinds of nuts, and then a little guy about 3 years old contributed proudly "doughnuts"!! I replied "If only, then they'd be good for us!"

from Beth Debenport:

A little boy ask Rich Jesperson in the Gift Shop for an alligator leash. Always trying to please the customer, Rich sold him a dog leash, which he promptly put around a stuffed alligator that he had purchased at George Ranch. He wanted to pretend he was walking the alligator around Brazos Bend.

THE LIVE OAK TREE'S SPECIAL SECRET

by David Heinicke

Holly Howell has been visiting Brazos Bend State Park since she was four years. No trip to Brazos Bend was complete without a trip to see the big Live Oak Tree just down the hill from the Nature Center. Holly insisted on climbing on or picnicking under this spectacular tree on every visit. Holly will be the first to tell you she has grown up with the tree and has probably climbed it a hundred times.

Fast forward almost 20 years to 2013. Holly, now in her early twenties, is an avid Geocacher. She and boyfriend Joe Nevarez geocache every chance and at every location they have an opportunity to visit, including Brazos Bend, where, you guessed it, she still visits the big Live Oak Tree at the Nature Center.

This is where the story gets good and Joe launches his plan. With a trip to the park the day before to set things up and to enlist the ladies from headquarters as accomplices, the plan was set. When Joe, girlfriend Holly and her parents entered the park on Saturday morning, they announced to the staff member working the front door that, "We are here to go geocaching". The staff member responded by handing them a piece of paper with coordinates to a "new and very special geocache".

With Holly believing they are just going to find the new cache, they were off to the Nature Center parking lot where they parked and powered up the GPS unit. With the GPS unit locked onto the coordinates, Holly was hot on the trail of this “new and very special geocache” with the rest of the family in tow. The coordinates seemed to be leading Holly right towards her favorite tree next to the Nature Center.

It wasn't long before they were at the coordinates and Holly had spotted the cache container stashed in this very special tree. Wasting no time, Holly opened the cache to see what sort of treasure was to be found inside. It seemed to be some sort of rolled up paper, a geocache journal perhaps? As she unrolled it, it revealed itself as a wedding proposal from her geocaching boyfriend Joe! Holly was completely surprised!

Joe had pulled it off and best of all Holly said “YES”. Joe has even had the GPS coordinates of the big Live Oak Tree engraved into the wedding ring. No doubt this was Holly's, and Joe's, best geocaching trip ever. Another magic moment at Brazos Bend!

I mentioned to the happy couple that at least two other couples had gotten married under this tree in the past.....I think they are still thinking about that. Everyone at Brazos Bend State Park wishes Holly and Joe many years of happiness and many more visits to the park and, of course, to see the big tree.



ABOUT THOSE FASCINATING SNAKES

Note: Sharon Hanzik has been emailing links, as continuing education, about some of the same snakes that we have in the Nature Center. By going to the www.tpwd.state.tx.us site, you can review the interesting and relevant information about the western cottonmouth, southern copperhead, canebrake rattlesnake, western pygmy, and coral snakes. Since these live snakes are included in our snake exhibits, this information could help prompt conversation there with our visitors and encourage their interest. This issue of the newsletter has general information about snakes, and future issues will contain articles about venomous snake bites and information on specific species in the Nature Center.

SNAKES: General information:

Cold blooded or ectotherms, do not have an internal heat source and must use the environment to heat or cool themselves

Reptile, has scales, is cold blooded, produces eggs, breaths air, has a three-chambered heart, is vertebrate (only alligators have a four-chambered heart)

Do not need to eat more than once a week but can go at least 3 weeks or more without food, especially in cooler months when their body systems become dormant

Virtually no sense of smell through nostrils

Gather scent particle on their tongues (smell with tongue)

Eyesight better up close (about 1 foot or less), but can detect movement at a greater distance (how far is not known), have only a clear eyelid

Cannot hear, but sense vibrations

Constrictors catch prey, wrap body around it and squeeze air out of lungs

Pit vipers have holes other than nostrils in which they detect warm-blooded animals – they strike, injecting enough venom to kill their prey. Their own venom can be ingested with no problem

Swallow food whole

All snakes make eggs-some hatch inside the body, some outside the body

All snakes have two rows of teeth in the upper jaw

Snakes shed their skin as they grow, the eye will become cloudy, then it will clear up, the snake will then shed

All snakes venomous/non-venomous can bite

Most all non-venomous snakes have a round pupil. Except for the coral snake, which has a completely black eye, all pit vipers (copperheads, cottonmouths and rattlesnakes) have an elliptical pupil.

Typically, venomous snakes have large, triangular shaped heads followed by a slender neck and a wider, shorter body.

All of the snakes in the Nature Center are fed mice

IDENTIFYING VENOMOUS SNAKES OF TEXAS

Pit vipers

Triangular, flat head wider than its neck, also has the appearance of eyebrows. The wideness is due to the presence of venom sacs. (copperheads, cottonmouths, rattlesnakes)

Not usually longer than 24" with the exception of rattlesnakes.

Elliptical pupils (e.g. cat's eye)

Heat-sensitive "pit" located between each eye and nostril.

Coral snake

Brightly colored red black and yellow bands; "red touches yellow will kill a fellow, red touches black is a friend of Jack". (No other North American snake has red touching yellow.)

POISONOUS VS VENOMOUS

Venomous snakes are often said to be poisonous, although this is not the correct term, as venoms and poisons are different. Poisons can be absorbed by the body, such as through the skin or digestive system (such as touching or eating something), while venoms must first be introduced directly into tissues or the blood stream (envenomated) through mechanical means (like a bite).

WATER HYACINTH?

Information and photos by Diane Welty



Water Hyacinth, a native of South America, has become abundant throughout the southern portions of the United States. Originally introduced in the 1880's for use in ponds, the leaves of this free-floating water plant are round and bright green, surrounding a beautiful violet flower.

Because of its attractive appearance, the water hyacinth initially appears to be a desirable plant. In residential ponds it can be very pretty. Unfortunately, this plant "escaped" control and is now, well, everywhere. The proliferating plant can quickly form large mats as it grows, completely covering the water surface and causing depletion of the oxygen supply that can result in fish kill. Although this plant has no direct food value to animals, the micro and macro invertebrates that live below the water surface benefit from the root system and also provide food for fish, reptiles, and ducks. When the plant dies, the resulting decomposition by bacteria and fungi then provides food for some invertebrates.

Left uncontrolled, the water hyacinth will take over waterways, thus resulting in decreased or totally stopped flow of water. In 2001, the Rio Grande virtually stopped flowing due to the over growth of the water hyacinth. Border Patrol could not get their boats down the river, and cities along the river had their city water intakes blocked. Fishing, swimming, and boat traffic was stopped. The Rio Grande was clogged.



Such exotic plant infestations impair water quality, impede water flow, disrupt fishing, displace native plants, and reduce biological diversity. It is illegal to possess or transport this plant in Texas. Boaters are urged to clean their boats to help stop the introduction of water hyacinth to other lakes and rivers. Luckily, various chemicals, as well as mechanical means (chopping), can be used effectively to eliminate or control these invasive plants. As you hike around the BBSP, you can see a great amount of water hyacinth. You will also notice areas that have died off as a result of being treated. Although we can appreciate its beauty, this is a difficult plant to control.

ALLIGATOR CHORUS

by Rick Dashnau

I thought this story would be interesting - even to those of us who have seen lots of alligators - because I got to see an alligator chorus from beginning to end:

Saturday, 4/27/13, David Heinicke saw a very large alligator crossing the grass near the Nature Center from Pilant Slough, probably on the way to Creekfield Lake, and he made sure it crossed safely. When I heard David's story the next day, 4/28, I went to Creekfield Lake at about 11 AM to see if the big alligator was there. It was. It was in the water not far from the long pier. I noticed a smaller alligator in the water about 10 yards in front of it. Both alligators were just resting in the water. The smaller alligator eventually turned and swam towards the far shore of the lake, towards where another alligator was already basking about 100 yards away.

I was taking pictures of the large alligator, when I heard a loud splash across the lake, in the direction that the other alligator had been swimming. When I looked, the alligator on the bank had its mouth open, and was doing a "slow thrash" with its tail. It was still out of the water--and I assumed it was the same alligator that had been on the bank. Another alligator was in the water in front of it, probably the one that swam across. There was also a large alligator on a small island about 113 yards away.

The displaying alligator moved off the bank, and swam towards the alligator in the water. That alligator turned, and swam straight away from it. The pursuit continued, slowly increasing in speed until both alligators produced a distinct wake. The pursued alligator swam straight, and moved into shallow water. The chase gator stayed a bit further out, then slowly moved in. The pursued gator finally "leapt" out into the shallow water, and moved out of sight to me (behind a tree). The pursuing alligator then started chasing a much smaller one which I hadn't noticed before. The small alligator moved into the deeper water, and eventually submerged and swam away.

The pursuing alligator then moved towards the BIG alligator, which had been lying quietly during all of the other activity--which had been at least 25 yards away. The alligator slowed down, and then eventually moved closer to the big gator. It moved until its snout was almost touching the big alligator's ear. Then it did some "chomping"--clamping its jaws together under the water. Then it raised its head and bellowed (long croak), right near the big alligator's head. After a few of these bellows, the big alligator lifted its head and started bellowing. A good bout of bellowing followed.

During the bout with the two closer alligators, the alligator out past the bird box started bellowing, too. After a couple bouts of bellowing, they stopped, and the "instigator" alligator swam back to the far bank.

I was very excited to capture this video footage. The conditions were almost perfect. The wind was relatively still, and although people were talking, they were in the background. Note the difference in volume when the alligators are turned towards me! The edited video of these events is here: http://www.rickubis.com/rick/creekfield_bellow_12.wmv

Alligators ARE COOL!



DUCKS UNLIMITED WATER CONTROL PROJECT

Information from Richard Taylor and Sharon Hanzik
Photos by Richard Taylor

Signs and closure stickers were posted around the park in late May, as Ducks Unlimited, in partnership with TPWD, installed a water control structure in Pilant Slough just behind the compost toilets on the back side of Elm Lake. Heavy equipment and dump trucks moving in and out and hauling numerous loads of material caused closure of Elm Lake Trail Head near the day use area), and the Pilant Slough Trail leading to Elm Lake where it splits off at Live Oak Trail. Most of the back side of the Elm Lake Trail was off limits during the construction.



On June 27 we received word that Elm Lake/Pilant Slough Trails are open and that construction on the water control structure is complete, other than the hydro seeding that was supposed to be done that day.

Lead Ranger Richard Taylor reports: "The area is neat and clean, and I guess DU is satisfied with the results. Upon exiting the site, we had the contractor use the dozer to back drag Elm Lake Trail, smoothing over some of the rough spots that were created by the heavy equipment and 100+ dump trucks of material brought in. The contractor also agreed to give us two full 18 wheeler loads of crushed limestone to patch the trail up with after we see what a good rain does to it. The material will be stock-piled over on the gravel road or the staging area. A lot of material was brought in and a lot was moved around that was originally there. The structure is basically a dam now (or levee as DU calls it) with a water control device in the middle of it. The aluminum flash boards are all in place with the lid locked."



TPWD NEWS

June 12, 2013

NEW STATE PARK DEPUTY DIRECTOR

from Brent Leisure, State Parks Division Director

As you might imagine, the loss of Dan Sholly to retirement creates a void in a critical leadership role in our division. We have known about and planned for this vacancy by seeking out the most experienced and qualified candidate to help Texas State Parks moving forward. I am very excited to announce that Russell Fishbeck has accepted the role of Deputy Director of State Parks, effective September 1st.



Russell has more than 29 years' experience in state park operations in a variety of roles and settings. Russell began his career with TPWD in 1981, working intermittently as a seasonal worker at Blanco State Park. In 1987, he accepted full time regular employment in state parks after graduation from Texas A&M to include stints at Brazos Bend SP, Cedar Hill SP, Lake Somerville SP, Ray Roberts Lake SP, and then for the last 13+ years, Regional Director of our South Texas parks. He is a proven leader with tremendous knowledge of the issues facing parks, and the skill to successfully advance our mission. We are fortunate to have very capable leaders in our ranks to fill the leadership gaps as they occur. Russell is uniquely qualified and the right person for the job.

June 20, 2013

STATEWIDE TEXAS BIRDING COMPETITION DEEMED GREAT SUCCESS

AUSTIN – The Great Texas Birding Classic resulted in donations of \$17,000 to Birding, Habitat Conservation, and Nature Tourism Projects. The two winning teams were allowed to select which habitat conservation projects receive \$10,000 of the \$17,000 awarded from this year's event. The Swarovski Optik Highway Hawks and The Swarovski Optik/ Houston Audubon Hawks donated \$5000 each to Corpus Christi's Hazel Bazemore Park and to the storm-battered Horseshoe Marsh Sanctuary on the western end of the Bolivar Peninsula in Galveston County. In addition, Texas Parks and Wildlife will receive a \$5,000 nature tourism grant for reprinting the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail maps for the first time in more than a decade. The maps, which are closely tied to the Birding Classic, guide visitors throughout the state to see Texas' best birdwatching and wildlife viewing sites first-hand.

The 17th annual Great Texas Birding Classic was held from April 15 to May 15, and attracted more than 300 participants who recorded 398 avian species during a host of regional and statewide daylong and weeklong tournaments. Fifty-six teams, the most in 10 years, entered by the new, more flexible format that allowed teams to choose from among 42 categories and select their competition day or days based on work schedules, weather and other variables.

See <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/events/great-texas-birding-classic/winnersreports/2013-final-results>, or http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/newsmedia/news_images/?g=great_texas_birding_classic_2013 for results or photos.

June 26, 2013

VOTING NOW OPEN FOR THE NEXT STATE PARKS LICENSE PLATE

AUSTIN – The bluebonnet became a common sight both on and off Texas roadways when a conservation license plate featuring the iconic wildflower was introduced 12 years ago. Since then, this specialty plate has generated more than \$1.3 million in critical funding for Texas state parks and there are currently 6,400 on the road.

Since wildflowers don't speak to every park supporter, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department officials plan to introduce a second license plate and are now calling on the public to help select a new design that will help bring in essential funding for the more than 90 state parks.

"The goal is to bring in new people that may want to support state parks, but who may not be comfortable putting a wildflower on their ¾-ton pickup truck," says Thomas Wilhelm, program coordinator for state parks.

The three designs that are in the running for being on the new plate are a campfire, a night-time tent scene, and hikers. The voting will run until August 31. To vote, visit www.texasstateparks.org/vote and cast a ballot.

The winning plate will be announced in September and will be available in spring 2014 for vehicles, trailers and motorcycles online or through local tax offices. The plate will cost \$30 a year in addition to regular vehicle registration fees, of which \$22 will go directly to fund Texas state parks.

The new license plate will join other available designs including the horned lizard, bluebonnet, largemouth bass, and white-tailed deer which benefit other TPWD programs. To date, the specialty plates have raised more than \$6 million dollars for conservation.

June 4, 2013

TAKE CARE OF TEXAS CAMPAIGN

In a shared announcement today, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and Texas Parks and Wildlife unveiled a statewide public service campaign to promote outdoor recreation and encourage personal responsibility in protecting our state's natural resources. Country music star Kevin Fowler donated his

talents for radio and TV spots, including writing and performing the campaign's jingle, "Take Care of Texas," which will be broadcast on Texas radio and TV stations throughout the summer.

"Kevin's jingle is not only a catchy song, but it's also a very noteworthy message," says TCEQ Executive Director Zak Covar. "Through this statewide campaign, we hope that everyone who enjoys the abundant outdoor recreation opportunities here will do their part to conserve and protect those natural resources."

"With the punishing drought our state has suffered in recent years, most people know how important it is to conserve water, and public education efforts like Take Care of Texas are absolutely vital to help get the job done," said Carter Smith, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department executive director. "In poll after poll, Texans have consistently ranked water resources near the very top of public priorities. It's important for people in cities, and it's important for fish and wildlife, state parks and natural habitats—everything is connected, and we all have a role to play. Take Care of Texas provides quick and easy practical guidance for people to do what they already know is right."

The PSA, as well as a video about the making of it, is available on the TakeCareOfTexas.org website. The website offers Texans easy ways to conserve water and energy, and includes an online calculator to estimate how much household water, energy, and money they can save by taking these conservation measures in their own home and garden. Everyone who takes an online pledge to help keep Texas clean will receive a free Texas State Park Guide in appreciation for their efforts.

SAFETY NEWS

TPWD Safety Program Manual (Revised 10/2012)

The TPWD Safety Manual is required reading and compliance for all BBSPVO members. The manual is on the website in the Members section. Please read the manual as soon as possible and comply with all the mandates. In order to help you become acquainted with the Manual, the newsletter will contain a summary of various portions of the manual over the next few issues. This summary does not take place of reading the entire manual, but it will provide you with an overview and where to find items of special interest to you. You are personally responsible for finding out exactly what is in the manual regarding safety for staff, volunteers and others.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY PROGRAM: The following sections are included in the safety program manual. Be sure to refer to these sections if you use a TPWD vehicle (including Gators), transport visitors, use power tools, or work with the public in any of the areas below..

- 6.0 Motor Vehicle Operations: seat belts, cell phone use, equipment, and responsibility for accidents.
- 7.0 Visitor Transport Guidelines: Operator Training; Safe conduct/operation; Communication; Emergency Procedures
- 8.0 Fire Protection
- 9.0 Hazardous Energy Control
- 10.0 Machine and Equipment Safety
- 11.0 Powered Industrial Truck Operation Plan
- 12.0 Welding, Cutting and Braising
- 13.0 Housekeeping
- 14.0 Office Safety
- 15.0 Slips, Trips and Falls
- 16.0 Playground Safety
- 17.0 Special Events Guidelines

BRAZOS BEND STATE PARK SITE-SPECIFIC EMERGENCY PLAN 2013

Note: BBSP has an emergency plan for park personnel to follow when needed. This document was emailed to the membership in early June. Please read it and be aware of what needs to be done by whom in case of an emergency. Below is a list of the contents of the document. As you can see from the contents list, this is a very long document with information on many events. Please take the time to read the document, especially areas that may affect you, as a volunteer, so you will be ready and able to assist park staff wherever your help is needed. Future editions of the newsletter will contain summaries of procedures for specific emergency events.

Contents:

Overview

Site Information:

Staff Roster & Contact Information, Emergency Contact Information, Facility and Equipment Inventory, and Site Incident Command System

Standard Operating Procedures for Specific Threats, such as Severe Weather, Fire, Medical Emergency, Violence, Haz-Mat Emergency, Missing Person, and Evacuation Plans or Shelter-In-Place

Emergency Contact Information for BBSP

Fort Bend Sheriff's Department 911 or 281-341-4617

Fire Department 911

Ambulance 911

Texas Highway Patrol 281-633-5401

Fort Bend County Emergency Mgt. 281-342-6185

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 6	Close-up photography Photo-walk, 5:00 PM, meet at Nature Center
July 9	Tadpole classes, 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM
July 11	Eco-Explorers 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM Freeport Library Outreach - 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM - <i>See Special Events Calendar</i>
July 13	Weather Day, TBA Blood Drive, 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM, NC Parking Lot Budget and Executive Meetings, 3:00 PM Regular Business Meeting, 5:30 PM (Supper, 5:00 PM)
July 16	Tadpole classes, 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM
July 18	Eco-Explorers 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM
July 23	Tadpole classes, 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM
July 24	Cinco Ranch Library Outreach - 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM - <i>See Special Events Calendar</i>
July 25	Eco-Explorers 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM
July 27	Freeport Library Outreach - 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM - <i>See Special Events Calendar</i>
July 30	Tadpole classes, 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM
August 1	Eco-Explorers 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM
August 3	Bird photography Photo-walk, 5:00 PM, meet at Nature Center
August 10	Budget and Executive Meetings, 3:00 PM Regular Business Meeting, 5:30 PM (Supper, 5:00 PM)
September 7	Amphibian and reptile photography Photo-walk, 5:00 PM, meet at NC
September 14	Budget and Executive Meetings, 3:00 PM Regular Business Meeting, 5:30 PM (Supper, 5:00 PM)

Brazos Bend State Park

Texas Parks and Wildlife
21901 FM 762
Needville, TX 77461

☆☆☆☆☆☆

NEXT MEETING
SATURDAY, JULY 13, 2013
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:	Mary Lockwood
Vice-President:	Glen Kilgore
Secretary	Belinda DiMarcello
Treasurer:	Bob Kowalewski
Past-President:	Offie Walker
Comptroller:	Nancy Lynn Jones

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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 : <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**