



VOLUME 18, NUMBER 8

AUGUST 2006

## JULY MEETING NOTES

*submitted by Bruce Williamson*

President **Judy Strauss** called the July 8 meeting to order. The minutes of the June meeting were approved as posted. Steve, David and Sharon brought their reports, which are printed elsewhere in the newsletter.

### Committee Reports:

**Outreach Report:** No report.

**Gift Shop:** **Beth Debenport** reported that the Gift Shop is selling Tarantula and Frog books in the visible body series. The Gift Shop cashier now has a rubber footprint stamp and a green inkpad. Stamping the green footprint on a price/inventory sticker means the item has been paid for. Now, when volunteers wonder if someone has forgotten to pay for an item, they just have to look for the image of the footprint.

**Maintenance:** **Bryan Leach** said the Maintenance report will be in the Newsletter. He also reported that the prairie platform has new decking and the trail on the west side of 40 Acre Lake parking area has been surfaced.

**President:** **Judy Strauss** reported that she received a complimentary email from Herb Mann. Herb is going to have to have one of his hips operated on again. Sharon added that, before she went on vacation, **Nancy Board** reported that **Richard** was doing very well.

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Meeting notes, p. 1-2  
President's Corner, p. 2  
Picnic, p. 2  
Staff Reports, p. 3-4  
Congratulations, p. 4  
Thanks, p. 5  
Volunteer Training, p.5  
Heat-related Problems, p. 6

Prairie News, p. 6  
Nature Center Report, p. 7  
Alligator Eggs, p. 8  
Gator Daze, p. 8  
Required TPWD form, p. 8  
Interpretation, p. 9  
Meeting supper, p. 9  
"Home to the Wilderness", p. 9

Photo Walks, p. 10  
BBSP Butterfly Count, p. 10  
Maintenance reports, p. 11  
Volunteerism, p. 12  
Calendar of Events, p. 13  
Change in Staff Hours, p. 13  
Get Well note, p. 13

**Training: Vice-president Anna Dell Williamson** reported that she needs a number of volunteers to sign up to help with the Fall volunteer training as speakers, mentors, road tour drivers, etc. (See article.)

**Treasurer's Report: Treasurer, John Bradford** reported the following: TPWD (Austin) says we are not to introduce new species into the park, including the prairies. Therefore, the previously approved funds for the prairie grass project will be returned to the budget.

Requests for purchase:

- (1) From **Sharon Hanzik**, a request to purchase Photo Gallery, which is software to create Web page photo scrapbooks. Purchase was approved.
- (2) As a follow up to the funds approval for a water well at the previous meeting, the Budget Committee proposed transferring money to add to the funding from the following accounts:  
Tina Blair Fund, Frog Study, Pris Memorial Fund, and Outreach

A donation was received from **Tom Kanak** for the water well fund. The transfer was approved.

**New Business: Judy** has appointed a nominating committee of herself and **Chuck Duplant**.

The meeting was adjourned.

## THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Well, it looks like we have finally been blessed with rain, rain, and more rain! Maybe soon our lakes will start looking like lakes again. As a reminder to all, if you are interested in running for any position of office in our Volunteer Organization, please contact either myself or Chuck Duplant as soon as possible so that we can get your name on the ballot. Nominations will be announced at the August meeting and nominations may be made from the floor. You must have the nominee's permission to nominate him or her. The Organization will vote in September, and the newly elected officers will take office at the annual Volunteer Picnic in October. Officers are elected for a one year term, with a two-year term limit, so all positions are always open each year.

And speaking of the annual picnic, I will be needing a few extra hands to help with setting up and decorating the Dining Hall for the picnic in October, so be thinking about if you will be willing to help or not. I will be asking for "names" as the time gets closer, but for now, please think about it!

It's been a long, hot summer, and we are only about half way through it. A great big "THANK YOU" to all that have ventured out to our Park to help with everything that needs to be done! Brazos Bend State Park would not be what it is without us Volunteers, and our Volunteer Organization would not be what it is without each of you! Thank you so much for your love and devotion to our Park.

Hope to see you soon.

*Judy Strauss* ♦

## ANNUAL VOLUNTEER PICNIC

The annual Volunteer Picnic and Awards Ceremony will be October 14 at 5:30 PM. It is open to all volunteers, VIT's park staff, and camp hosts. This is a family event. Bring your favorite dish to share and come prepared to enjoy lots of delicious food and friendly conversation. Paper goods are provided. More details to follow.

# STAFF REPORTS

## STEVE KILLIAN

Although he was off duty, **Superintendent Steve Killian** said he was glad to be able to attend the meeting. He is proud of the park. Visitors can reconnect with nature; engage in bicycle trails, hiking, and visiting the nature center.



The approximately 600 acres of prairie consume one full time staff of work. He plans to have a prairie burn in the Fall. They will have six or seven individuals who are trained for conducting a burn.

The park staff and volunteers are continuing to work on lake habitat recovery. Using a four wheel ATV, they can reach areas that the Kubota and Mule utility vehicles cannot reach. After another two weeks work, the park can tolerate a “flood” (i.e. heavy rain). They are making progress against vegetation encroachment. He plans to use herbicide this year and next year.

The TPWD paper work has been submitted for the proposed well to supply water to Creekfield Lake. The driller is working the subsidence district permit. David Heinicke will monitor the drilling work to prevent cultural and archeological damage. Steve has requested permission to pump nine million gallons of water per year, which is the equivalent of operating the well at full capacity 24 hours a day for eighty days.

The park has three temporary maintenance assistants working until August 31<sup>st</sup>, and then they drop those three positions. The park road-paving project has been slowed because the paving crew is waiting for the sidewalk crew to finish. Only 30% of the paving has been completed.

## DAVID HEINICKE



**David Heinicke** reported that the park received some rain, but not enough. There is some water in Creekfield Lake. [Secretary’s note: On Saturday, July 29<sup>th</sup>, Tom Prentiss led a Creekfield hike. His visitors spotted two alligators in Creekfield Lake.]

David announced that Sharon’s schedule is changing. Her days off will be Sunday and Monday. This will allow her to be available for more school group activities during the week.

Ron Morrison and his wife are helping prepare a grant request for a new Kubota utility vehicle. David is seeking the donations for a brand new patrol bicycle.

Again, David asked the volunteers to encourage visitors and other volunteers to drink plenty of water when outdoors and to carry water with them during hikes, etc.

David congratulated Diane Carpenter on her retirement. Her co-workers took up a collection and donated \$180 to BBSP in her name.

Park employees, camp hosts, and volunteers must fill out a form authorizing a minimal background check. This applies to existing staff and volunteers as well as new ones. David expressed thanks to the volunteers for their help, especially during the Summer.

# SHARON HANZIK

**Sharon Hanzik** reported on upcoming interpretive training opportunities: There will be a week day session in July and a Saturday session August 26<sup>th</sup> at the George Observatory. Enrollment for the August session is wide open. To become a certified interpreter requires completion of a four-day course and payment of a fee of \$130.00. Sharon is trying to arrange a course here in the park in October. For more information on the National Association for Interpretation and on the National Interpretation Workshop, go to the Internet site "<http://www.interpnet.com/>" (Omit the quote marks).



The park is having a "Gator Days" promotion during the month of August. Sharon asked for volunteer assistance to present alligator related programs, especially on the weekends.

She is interviewing candidates for the Fall volunteer training class. The park has a Summer volunteer, Jon Davis, age 17. He likes to be busy.

## BEST WISHES

### AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Rob Thacker  
Jim Gilliam (Staff)  
Tom Draper



### SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Gary Bialas (Staff)  
Ron Dearman  
Barry Eversole (Staff)  
Frank Gregg  
Linda Oden Heinicke  
Tina Ibarra (Staff)  
Mike Sharkey (Staff)

### AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

Ben Lohmer  
Ken and Beth Debenport  
Bruce and Anna Dell Williamson  
Lynne and Bill Ray  
Laszlo and Lexi Perlaky  
Ray and Dana Anderson  
Ron Morrison



### SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Jaci Elliott  
Jim and Patricia Hiett  
Don and Marilyn Vossler

## SHARON HANZIK RECEIVES 20 YEAR SERVICE AWARD

**Sharon Hanzik** received her 20-year service award from Texas Parks and Wildlife in a special ceremony in May. We have received the official photo. Chairman Joseph Fitzsimmons is on the left and Executive Director Bob Cook is on the right. Congratulations, again, Sharon!





- ☺ to **Dennis Jones** for the article on Volunteerism
- ☺ to **Chuck Duplant** for the article and picture on the prairie platform
- ☺ to **Al Childs** for the "Prairie View" article
- ☺ to **Sandy and Rich Jespersen** for the article and pictures on the butterfly count.
- ☺ to VIT **Candice Kenyan** for bringing supper for the July meeting
- ☺ to **Chuck Duplant** for donating alligator pictures for Gift Shop post cards
- ☺ to **Chuck Duplant** for laminating items for the bulletin board
- ☺ to **Joyce Blankenship** and VIT **Candice Kenyon** for cleaning the aquarium.
- ☺ JT, Carlos and Cord for help rescuing alligator eggs
- ☺ to Candice Kenyan for bringing supper for the July meeting.

## VOLUNTEER TRAINING NEEDS

*by Anna Dell Williamson*

Fall volunteer training begins on **Orientation Day, September 9**, from 10:00 - 2:00, and continues **September 16 and 23**, 9:00 - 5:00. We anticipate close to 20 VIT's, the largest class in a long time. Help is needed in the areas listed below. Sign-up sheets are in the entry to the lounge. Please sign up as soon as possible or contact me by phone or e-mail.

**Mentors:** Sign up to be a special friend and cheerleader to a VIT. One-on-one encouragement and assistance.

### **September 9:**

**Lunch, 11:15 - 12:15:** Introduction of volunteer mentors, bring items for the sandwich lunch, meet the VIT's, take one or two on an informal Nature Center introductory tour.

**Park Road Tours, 1:00 - 2:00 PM:** Small groups of VIT's (1-3 per vehicle) will be given road tours of the park by experienced volunteers. Indicate number you can take when you sign up. Each VIT should have a window seat. Driver will have written instructions on what to cover.

**September 16 and 23, 9-5.** Speakers to share their volunteer experiences, why they volunteer, what they enjoy most, etc. Five minutes, between training sessions. You will be assigned a time slot based on your availability on the sign-up sheet.

**Hands-on training, Phase 1 (September 23 - November 23):** Volunteers to assist VIT's in the Nature Center, the Gift Shop, firewood, water station, and Creekfield hike. VIT's will sign up for the events (except Creekfield), and the volunteer will sign them off on their record sheets. Check the web calendar to see if you have a VIT, or sign up when there is a VIT already on the schedule. Nature Center and Gift Shop are both weekdays and weekends.

**Hands-on training, Phase 2:** (Approximately October 1 to March 23, VIT has 4 months after completing Phase 1) VIT will contact volunteer from names on resource list in their manual.

**Trail Interpretation:** An experienced volunteer will accompany one VIT on the trails for one hour, modeling how we talk with the public and pointing out items of interest. You will have written instructions on what to cover.

**ATV tour:** An experienced volunteer will take a VIT on a two-hour ATV tour of park trails. Driver will have written instructions on what to cover.

**Training sessions are open to all interested volunteers.** The final schedule will be posted on the bulletin board in the hallway and sent in an e-mail to the membership.

# HEAT RELATED PROBLEMS

Please be on the lookout for **heat related problems** among volunteers and visitors to the park. Two important indicators are profuse sweating and lack of coordination. If these are evident, please **contact park staff immediately**.

## PRAIRIE VIEW

*by Al Childs*

Welcome again to Prairie View. On June 30<sup>th</sup> our prairie team was privileged to host a Seed Collection workshop at the George Observatory. It was taught by John Lloyd-Reilley and Shelly Maher of the Natural Resource Conservation Service, NRCS. Instruction included how to determine seed viability and to properly collect, label, store and ship seeds. The hope is that participants will collect seeds for the NRCS's Seed Increase Project which is vital to future restoration projects, especially here on the coastal prairie where less than one percent of the native grasslands remain. John and Shelly also brought many samples of different grass seeds for us to inspect. This gave us a much broader spectrum of experience than if we had only examined the seeds we collected that day. The whole experience was really a lot of fun, and we learned a lot at the same time. This workshop would not have been possible without the efforts of Lloyd and Shelly of NRCS and Barbara Wilson at the George Observatory. Our special thanks to them.

Activities like this remind us that the prairie is a wonderful and exciting place with sometimes very unusual surprises. Like the first time I ever saw Rattlesnake Master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*). It is truly awesome to behold. Although it resembles something from the Southwestern United States with its yucca-like foliage, it has an almost alien look about it. Its spherical, thistle-like heads are around 1" in diameter and the greenish-white of the individual flowers somehow reminds me of the planet Mars. It gets its name from Native Americans who claimed that drinking tea made from the roots was an effective antidote for rattlesnake venom. Even though there is no scientific evidence to support this, an 18<sup>th</sup>-century Indian trader by the name of James Adair was the first to document its medicinal uses. He reported that tea from the roots were supposed to have been a cure for venereal disease, impotence, worms, bladder problems, muscular pain, kidney trouble, and to induce vomiting. Whatever medical value it may have pales in comparison to actually seeing it. If you are interested, you can see stands of it on the right side of the road as you enter the park. Also, if you walk past the prairie platform and bear to the left along the pipeline you will see many more large stands.

Remember, every excursion in to the prairie is an adventure, just ask someone who has been there. Take care and have fun exploring. Take lots of water with you, it's hot out there.

## PRAIRIE PLATFORM COMPLETED

*by Chuck Duplant*

On July 2, John Bradford and James Blankenship built the benches on the Prairie platform, completing this project. John Bradford, Judy Strauss and Chuck Duplant had previously re-built the boardwalk and re-decked the platform.

Now all we need is water in the ephemeral pond.



# NATURE CENTER REPORT - JULY

by Anna Dell Williamson

Here is a breakdown of the various activities and attendance recorded for the Nature Center, hikes, and programs for July 1-29. This month included Independence Day and lots of rainy days, plus several school groups during the week. Numbers come from the calendar in the Nature Center and may not reflect all activities.

	2006	JULY
NATURE CENTER	SATURDAYS (5)	<b>1620</b> High, 342, 7/29
	SUNDAYS (4)	<b>717</b> High, 198, 7/9
	WEEKDAYS (21)	<b>1043</b> High, 118, 7/11
CREEKFIELD HIKES (6)		<b>71</b> High, 21, 7/29
BIRD PROGRAMS AND HIKES (3)		<b>28</b>
ALLIGATOR PROGRAMS AND HIKES (4)		<b>106</b>
OTHER REPTILE PROGRAMS (3)		<b>106</b>
FISHING PROGRAMS (3)		<b>77</b>
STORY TIME (3)		<b>27</b>
OTHER PROGRAMS (28)		<b>97</b>

Total Nature Center attendance for July 2006 was 3339. Be sure to report program attendance for all programs and hikes and be sure it gets on the calendar behind the desk.

## NATURE CENTER HAPPENINGS

The **Hog Nose Snake** died

The **glass lizard** broke off the end of its tail

One **baby alligator** went to church camp for a week

# ALLIGATOR NESTS AND FLOODING

On July 13, David wrote that staff that had been spraying tallow trees and wild rice found 4 alligator nests, one on Elm lake and three on 40 Acre Lake. One of the nests on 40 Acre Lake is located in plain view from the fishing pier (Carol Ramsayer found this one, too). It's located directly off of the left side (north) of the pier and will make an excellent interpretive exhibit and a great opportunity to watch a nest hatch.

Then, the rains came. Sharon wrote on July 25 that they finally needed to collect eggs from the nests on 40-Acre Lake. Runoff and rainwater had been drained from Pilant Lake into 40-Acre. Three gator nests were built at low water levels. Rising water caused us to investigate. The nest to the left of the pier (see paragraph above) had a few eggs underwater; they probably won't make it but who knows?

It was decided that the two remaining nests should also be collected. The nest by the pier was reached by walking, the other two by boat. A total of 97 eggs(!) were collected from three nests. Yes, we are going to go for the record! There was no trouble from any of the moms.

The eggs are incubating in their own nest material in the garage in an aquarium and plastic tub. The estimated time for hatching could be late August. We "rebuilt" the nest by the pier so it looks undisturbed but if we get more rainfall and runoff we may not be able to see it anymore. Thanks to JT, Carlos and Cord.

## GATOR DAZE

*by Sharon Hanzik*

To help boost attendance during August, we are conducting "Gator Daze." It's NOT a special event. The plan is to focus most of our weekend programming on alligators. We will keep the Creekfield hike on the schedule. My idea is to have several short programs, 30 minutes or less, on the following topics, to be repeated throughout the month. Of course, I'll need presenters. We have all the research materials you could possibly need and the experience to help with technique, but since we have narrowed down the subject, (except for hikes) it should be easy for seasoned pros such as yourselves.

**Show Super Croc DVD** (90 minutes) at 3:00 on Sunday afternoons. Origins of crocodilians. Hot time of day.

**"Walk with Gators"** - 40-Acre hike which can be started at 9:00 Saturday mornings

**"Alligators - The Ultimate Survivors"** - Steve will do his gator program probably on a Saturday

**Children's story time** - we have a few books - done early in the afternoon - best time for the little ones.

**"What's Love Got To Do With It?"** - mating and nesting habits, including hatching

**"Crunch n Munch"** - what they eat and how they feed

**"Peas in a Pod"** - baby gators, hatching and survival

**"Gotta Have Gators"** - my only "canned" program about the importance of alligators in the ecosystem.



Any other ideas? If you are interested, please pick a subject, a date and a time. I'll sign you up. All we do is not possible without you!

## TPWD REQUIRED PAPERWORK

*by Sharon Hanzik*

TPWD has mandated that ALL volunteers fill out and sign a form authorizing a criminal background check. These forms were due to Sharon by the end of July. If you have not signed the form, please do so immediately and take or send it to Sharon. All prospective volunteers must do the same from this day forward. Master Naturalists and others who have done this for other organizations must also fill out a form for BBSP. Your cooperation in a timely manner is greatly appreciated.



# INTERPRETATION WORKSHOP/TRAINING

*by Sharon Hanzik*

What is interpretation? Where did it originate? Why do we do it? How do we do it? Learn the answers to these questions and how to develop an interpretive program or hike. Participants will be asked to develop and present a program within 1 month. That is the challenge. Registration is required. Contact Sharon immediately if you're interested.

**When and where: Saturday, August 26th from 9:00 - 4:00, at the Observatory classroom.**

## INTERPRETATION IS THEMATIC

Every interpretive presentation should communicate a theme. The theme is the primary message you want to get across. A theme is different than a topic. A topic can be considered a broad, general category such as:

- ▶ Whales
- ▶ Wildlife habitats
- ▶ Historic houses

A theme narrows the focus of a topic and answers the question, "So what?" about the general topic. Themes are usually stated as complete sentences.

- Different whales use different methods to eat.
- We can help keep wildlife habitats healthy.
- Architecture styles influence lifestyles.

By stating your theme, you know where you're headed with your program, so the theme acts like a road map for you to plan the visitor's journey through your presentation. When you've reached your destination (the end of the presentation), your visitor should be able to tell you where you ended up (your theme) and how you got there (a few bits of supporting information).

## MEETING NIGHT SUPPERS

*by Anna Dell Williamson*

Thanks to VIT **Candice Kenyan** for bringing supper for the July meeting. Supper is at 5:00 PM, right before the meeting. If you are interested in providing a supper, sign up. Keep your receipts to give to Anna Dell and you will be reimbursed. We collect \$3.00 per person to cover costs. If you are willing to prepare a meal for a future meeting, please contact me by email (<awilliamson4 @houston.rr.com>) or by phone (281-485-2843). Thank you to all those who have already brought a meal.♦

## HOME TO THE WILDERNESS



I held a blue flower in my hand, probably a wild aster, wondering what its name was, and then thought that human names for natural things are superfluous. Nature herself does not name them. The important thing is to know this flower, look at its color until the blueness becomes as real as the keynote of music. Look at the exquisite yellow flowerettes in the center, become very small with them. BE the flower, be the trees, the blowing grasses. Fly with the birds, jump with the squirrel!

Sally Carrighan

# REPORT ON PHOTO WALKS

by Laszlo Perlaky

On July 1, Laszlo led his Close-ups Photo walk at BBSP in pouring rain. Together with five avid photographers we hung around the Nature Center and photographed raindrop-covered flowers, Spanish moss, butterflies, spiders, and a young Praying mantis. The tripod-attached tripobrella just worked fine in the pouring rain, protected our camera gear and partially the photographer. We photographed a couple of hours there, then we drove to an old fashioned BBQ place to eat some great food. I focused on softies and collected more images to my Nature's Softies portfolio. We shared our camera set-ups and talked about the dreamed images. We were happy.



## BRAZOS BEND BUTTERFLY COUNT

by Sandy Jespersen

Everyone interested in butterflies is invited to participate in the annual Brazos Bend Butterfly Count on Sunday, September 24. No previous experience is necessary. This is one of many counts held in our area and around the country under the auspices of the North American Butterfly Association. The purpose is to promote interest in butterflies and provide data for scientific monitoring of butterfly populations.

Each count area is a 15-mile diameter circle within which a one-day census is conducted. At Brazos Bend, counters will be divided into small groups and each group will count within a specified area in or near the Park. Beginners can be very helpful in spotting butterflies and veterans in the group will help with identification. This is a great way to learn to identify butterflies and it can be a lot of fun, too.

**Meet at the 40 Acre Lake parking lot at 8:30 AM** so we can be organized and begin counting by 9:00. We usually count until lunchtime and then meet at the picnic grounds to discuss our progress over lunch (bring your own). Those who still have the time and energy can cover additional territory in the afternoon. The Park entry fee will be waived for participants, but NABA charges a \$3.00 administration fee for each counter 12 years of age or older. Younger children with an adult can participate free of charge. Sometimes they are the best spotters!

Be sure to wear sturdy walking shoes and bring sun protection, plenty of water and mosquito repellent. A pair of close-focusing binoculars and a butterfly field guide are helpful, but not required. For additional information email Rich & Sandy Jespersen at [jespera@consolidated.net](mailto:jespera@consolidated.net).



Zebra longwing

# MAINTENANCE REPORTS

## JUNE / JULY 2006

*By Bryan Leach*

### **Woodyard:**

Split wood, tied wood, hauled tied wood to the wood racks in both camping loops

### **Mowing and landscaping:**

Mowed around and staked out 20 Pecan trees along the road to the Red Buckeye Trail

Mowed the area around the Gazebo on Hale Lake

Swept off the walks and deck at the Nature Center

Worked in the flowers around the Nature Center

### **Trail trimming and maintenance:**

Finished topping the Trail on the west side of the 40 Acre Lake parking lot

Cleared 2 blown down trees off the 40 Acre Lake Trail, cut down an overhanging willow tree off the Hale Lake Loop Trail, removed a dead Crepe Myrtle at the Nature Center, removed several dead Black Willow trees around the Bridge on the Creekfield ADA Trail, cut down an overhanging tree off the trail between the wood yard and the 200 camping loop, and cut up downed trees in the Hale Lake Picnic area and along the Hale Lake Loop Trail

Trimmed and hauled off the limbs from trees from the Red Buckeye Trail, the Hale Lake Trail, around the Nature Center, Red Buckeye Trail along Big Creek and the Brazos River, the Hale Lake Trail and the Red Buckeye Trail, the Hale Lake Picnic area, the South Trail of Elm Lake, the Trail between the water station and the Spillway, the Trail between the Spillway and the Observation Tower, the East Side Trail around 40 Acre Lake, and Hoots Hollow Trail

Treated the Cut overhanging trees off the Creekfield ADA Trail

### **General Maintenance and service:**

Removed the T post around the compost bin at the Nature Center

Repaired the rail on the foot bridge on the south part of the 40 Acre Lake Trail

Put roofing shingles on the wooden ramp to the Volunteer shed, to prevent slipping

Used our Kubota to assist the park staff in extracting their stuck Mule

### **Pest control**

Treated the area around the Nature Center, Headquarters, the Old Horseshoe Lake, Elm Lake picnic grounds, the Elm Lake Trail, the 40 Acre Lake Trail and the trail between 40 Acre Lake and Elm Lake, the 100 & 200 Camping Loops and restroom areas, Screen Shelters, the playground and the Dining Hall areas for fire ants

Sprayed the vegetation in and around the wood yard with Round Up

### **Equipment maintenance:**

Purchased a new rear Gator tire and had it mounted on the wheel; changed the engine oil and oil filter, both air filters, and greased the Tractor; purchased and delivered 2 new Kubota tires to the park; ordered a new fender for the 01 Gator and delivered it to the park; changed the engine oil & filter on the K1 Kubota; replaced the cooling fan relay on the K1 Kubota; changed the Trans axle fluid, engine oil & filter, the secondary air filter and greased the 01 Gator; changed the engine oil and filter, and the secondary air filter on the 00 Gator; replaced the driver's side fender on the 01 Gator; used fiberglass to repair the passenger's side fender on the 01 Gator; changed the engine oil and filter, transmission fluid and both filters on the K2 Kubota; changed the front hub fluid, the front axle fluid and greased the K2 Kubota; repaired the damage to the bucket indicator on the John Deere Tractor

Cleaned up 2 chain saws and the pole saw

### **Construction:**

Finished putting a new deck on the Prairie Platform, built new benches on the Prairie Platform

# VOLUNTEERISM

*(A personal commentary)*

*by Dennis Jones*

What is a volunteer? To begin, let's see what Webster has to say: "A volunteer is a person who enters into a service of their own free will." Yep, that's a volunteer all right, but to me that is just the place to begin to describe what volunteers and volunteerism are. If you are reading this you are probably a volunteer.

We are a nation of volunteers. It is engrained in our culture, and to some extent separates us from the rest of the world in many ways. "Remember the Minutemen of the American Revolution? Paul Revere earned his living as a silversmith."<sup>1</sup> But what do we remember him for? (All revolutions start with volunteers) Consider our all volunteer armed forces. Again, we are a nation of volunteers. Clearly not all volunteerism has to be political or militaristic, but service beyond self is a common thread that binds us all together. "Volunteering is also the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in."<sup>2</sup> Volunteerism is what makes our nation great.

Why do people volunteer? For a variety of reasons. Some folks volunteer for social reasons. Single people might volunteer to find a partner with similar interests. Some volunteer for authority and power or office. Some people volunteer because they look good in a uniform. Some individuals volunteer to learn and enjoy the perks that go along with their volunteerism. Notice something in common with all these reasons for volunteering? Where's the service beyond self?

Hopefully your volunteerism is an amalgamation of the above mentioned reasons and that missing element as well. Consider this: "I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I do know: The only ones among you who will really be happy are those who have sought and found how to serve [others]"<sup>3</sup> Without that essential component volunteerism is hollow and will not stand the test of time or have real value to anyone except one's self. "The best way to find your self is to lose yourself in the service of others".<sup>4</sup>

Why do you volunteer? I can't say. Only you can. Hopefully it is a blend of both personal and altruistic motivations. But ask yourself, "Why do I volunteer?", and see what your answer is. "Which is more subversive - and corrosive - to believe in altruism or to see it simply as a cloak of self interest?"<sup>5</sup> I am not the expert and I am far from perfect. but here's what I believe should be in every answer to the "Why do I volunteer?" question: two things; to serve others and make a difference in the world by doing so.

Volunteerism is your voice put into action. Many voices acting as one can make a difference. "Far better to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much. Because they live in the gray twilight that knows not victory or defeat".<sup>6</sup> I would suggest you volunteer "to laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know that even one life has breathed easier because you have lived".<sup>7</sup> That's what a volunteer is.

1 Susan J. Ellis.

2 Marjorie Moore

3 Deborah Stroup, Co-ordinator of Volunteers, Wolfner Library

4 Ghandi

5 Frank Prochaska, Schools of Citizenship Charity and Civic Virtue

6 T. Roosevelt

7 Ralph Waldo Emerson

# CHANGE IN STAFF HOURS

Sharon's work schedule has changed. She will have Sundays and Mondays off now through September. David will continue to be off Mondays and Tuesdays. We need to keep a full schedule for Sundays. David does not come on duty until noon. Although it is slower during the summer months we still need the Nature Center and Gift Shop staffed all day and volunteers on trails.

If you work the Nature Center or Gift Shop on Mondays, be sure you can get into the building and/or Gift Shop money. If you need any assistance on Sunday mornings or Mondays, remember that you can call headquarters either by phone or radio.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Reminder: Creekfield Hikes will start at 10:00 effective June 3 through the end of September.

August 12	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
August 26	Interpretive Training, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM
September 2	Amphibian and reptile photography Photo-walk, 5:00 PM
September 9	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
September 9	New Volunteer Training Orientation, 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM, lunch
September 16	New Volunteer Training, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
September 23	New Volunteer Training, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
September 24	BBSP Butterfly Count, 8:30 AM, 40-Acre Parking Lot
October 7	Bird photography Photo-walk #3, 5:00 PM
October 14	Annual Volunteer Picnic, 5:30 PM
October 28-29	Texian Market Days, George Ranch
November 4	Landscape photography Photo-walk #2, 3:00 PM.
November 11	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
December 2	Landscape photography Photo-walk #3, 3:00 PM
December 9	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM



## GET WELL NOTE

We send get well wishes to **Joe Carmichael**, **Richard Board**, and **Herb Mann**.

**Joe** wrote that he has been hospitalized for several days recovering from a brown recluse spider bite just above his right ankle. He is home now under care of a visiting nurse. He plans to have a friend drive him down through the park in a few days and hopes to see some of the volunteers there. We wish Joe a speedy recovery.

Wife Nancy reports that **Richard** is out of rehab, but was still homebound as of July 20. He hopes to get out to the park to try out the scooter when he is able.

As of the July meeting, **Herb** was facing another hip surgery. Has anyone heard from him lately?

## **Brazos Bend State Park**

Texas Parks and Wildlife  
21901 FM 762  
Needville TX 77461

### **FIRST CLASS MAIL**

→ **NEXT MEETING DAY AND TIME** ←  
**SATURDAY, AUGUST 12, 2006, 5:30 PM**



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### **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
Bird Hikes	See schedule in calendar

### **BRAZOS BEND STATE PARK VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION**

#### **VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION OFFICERS**

President:	Judy Strauss
Vice-President:	Anna Dell Williamson
Secretary:	Bruce Williamson
Treasurer:	John Bradford

#### **NEWSLETTER TEAM**

Editor	Anna Dell Williamson
Production Assistants	Bruce Williamson Terry Williamson

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@houston.rr.com](mailto:awilliamson4@houston.rr.com)). Notify Anna Dell (281-485-2843) well in advance of any events you want announced in the newsletter.