



VOLUME 18, NUMBER 10

OCTOBER 2006

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## SEPTEMBER MEETING NOTES

*submitted by Bruce Williamson*

**President Judy Strauss** called the meeting to order on at 5:30 PM on September 9. There were 13 volunteers and two staff members present. The minutes of the August meeting were approved as posted. Judy said thank you to Anna Dell Williamson for leading the Volunteer Training. The first of three Saturday sessions took place the day of the meeting.

**Steve Killian** and **David Heinicke** brought their reports, which are published elsewhere in the newsletter.

### Committee Reports:

**Gift Shop: Beth Debenport** reported that she and Ken were concerned because Gift Shop sales were down in August, so they did a comparison with previous years. After the analysis, including sales on Labor Day, they concluded that the unfavorable weather in August was to blame, and the Labor Day results show that people are still interested in the Park.

**Vice-president: Anna Dell Williamson** reported that new volunteer training went very well. Steve Killian's presentation was very good, and a number of other people participated in the training.

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**Treasurer: John Bradford** presented the following requests for funds, which were approved by the membership.

A request for purchase of a **State parks passport** to be donated to the annual Exxon-Mobile United Way Fund drive. This will be part of a package to be sold at a silent auction at the fund raiser. Glen will also donate a certificate entitling the purchaser to a private guided hike for his or her party at BBSP. Glen also did this last year. Exxon-Mobile grants, through their program to reward non-profit organizations at which employees donate volunteer time, bring in several donations per year to the BBSP Volunteer Organization.

A request to purchase a new **John Deere 'Gator utility vehicle**, subject to receiving a trade in allowance for the "00" 'Gator. The Budget Committee recommends using funds from the 'Gator Replacement Fund and from the Equipment Purchase/Rental Fund. Whatever trade in allowance is received will be credited back to the Equipment Purchase/Rental Fund.

**Old Business:** The October Volunteer Organization meeting, October 14, will be the **annual picnic**, at the Banquet Hall. Judy Strauss is in charge of set up, and she needs a number of volunteers to assist in decorating and setting up tables and chairs at 1:00 P.M. Judy has "self funded" the decorations. An anonymous donor is supplying the meat. If **John Bradford** doesn't have to work that day, he may be cooking. Additional cooks are desired. Check with John. Other volunteers and park staff are asked to bring side dishes, deserts, etc.

**New Business:** Judy reminded us that she needs volunteers to sign up (list in the foyer) for **Texian Market Days** at George Ranch. Volunteers usually get free breakfast and lunch and Saturday evening dinner, provided by the George Ranch. In addition to interpreting at the BBSP booth, the BBSP volunteers watch the bridge over the lake to discourage people from molesting the alligators, etc. The hours are 9:00 - 5:00 (or 6:00) on Saturday and 9:00 to 5:00 (or 4:30) on Sunday.

The meeting was adjourned.

## **RICHARD BOARD**

It is with much regret that I must inform you that our good friend and Emeritus Volunteer member Richard Board passed away Saturday, September 9, after heart and stroke complications that he had been suffering from for the past two months.

There will be a memorial service on Saturday, October 14, at 4:00 at the Amphitheater. After the service, family and friends will join us at the annual picnic. If you wish to contribute to a memorial gift, see Ken Debenport.

We offer our sincere sympathy to his family. You may send condolences to his wife:

Nancy Bailey  
11939 Brighton Lane  
Meadows Place, TX 77477

# THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Since this will be my last "President's Corner" (at least for a while, anyway), I would like to start this off by thanking all of the Volunteers and David & Sharon for making this a great two years. In the beginning, I was a bit skeptical about accepting this position, but I have learned so much (more than you could even dare to imagine), some, I must admit, that I wish I hadn't learned, but much more that I am grateful that I did learn.



Over the past two years we have had taken from us several very dear Volunteers and a Park Ranger, but their presence will forever remain with us here at Brazos Bend State Park, along with all the joy, happiness and friendship that they brought to each of us and to our Park visitors.

There have been a lot of changes here at Brazos Bend State Park, some good and some not so good; some hurdles to jump. But the opportunity to meet and interact with more and more visitors, volunteers, VIT's and Park Staff and to form those unbreakable bonds of trust and friendship are always in abundance here at BBSP.

So, again, thanks to each of you that have been at my side, and those of you that have always been there when needed throughout these past two years. I couldn't have done it without you! A big WELCOME to all of our new VIT's and our hopes that you will all soon be BBSP Volunteers. A big "CONGRATS" to all of the Volunteers for the wonderful job you are doing for our Park. Keep up the good work! But above all, please remember to stop once in a while to ENJOY YOUR PARK! I will be.

*Judy Strauss* ♦

## STAFF REPORTS

### STEVE KILLIAN

**Steve Killian** opened with a request that volunteers take a load of wooden disks in which to drill two holes, to make button spinners. TxDOT is finished with the ADA sidewalks in the 200 Camping Loop, continuing to work in other areas of the park. The well drilling crew is supposed to start within three weeks. The Park reclaimed a Big Creek access point across the road from Elm Lake. They are using this site to place the pump for filling Elm Lake. There is an existing pipe under the roadway that is being utilized.



### DAVID HEINICKE

**David Heinicke** said Thank You to everybody because there have been no heat related problems in the Park this year. Keeping an eye on visitors and each other is important!

The Park will need two leaders for Saturday **Creekfield Hikes** in October and November. Saturday and Sunday, October 28 and 29, are **Texian Market Days** at George Ranch. Judy Strauss is leading the Volunteer booth at that event. Set up will be at 4:00 P.M., Friday, October 27. October 28 is also **Astronomy Day** at BBSP and the George Observatory. That evening will also be the annual **Hallowe'en Classic Comedy Movie Night** at the Park. The movie will be "Abbott and Costello Go to Mars." **Glen**



**Kilgore** will also tell a story. The Park will need **all the volunteers** that can come to do trail patrol, guide visitors, staff the Nature Center and Gift Shop, lead hikes, run Water Station, etc.

The Park has announced the **deer hunt** dates for this year. Each week of the hunt, the Park will close to campers and visitors Sunday evening and re-open Friday morning. The dates are November 6 through 9, November 13 through 16, and December 4 through 7. The Park will be open the week of Thanksgiving.

David reported that the **alligator egg hatching** is finished. Out of 96 eggs collected, 47 survived. Most of the rest were not fertile. There was one baby with an extended belly, where his yolk sack was located. If someone touched him, he would spin around and try to bite them. They called him Chuck.

The Park is now pumping water from Big Creek into Elm Lake. The contractor is pouring sidewalks for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible camping and picnic sites.

August 31 was the end of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) fiscal year. David shared the following facts with the volunteers:

Number of visitors at the Nature Center	over 58,000 (up 4,800 over last year)
Number of visitors at scheduled weekend programs	12,000+ (up from 10,000)
Hikers on guided hikes (all types)	Over 5,000
Total number impacted by interpretive programs	80,000

David offered thanks to everyone who worked **Labor Day**. David has started the paperwork to transfer another **screech owl** to the Park from a wildlife rehabilitator. The paperwork to obtain **two more Kubotas** has been forwarded to TPWD headquarters and is expected back any day now.

**Noel Duncan** is going to handle the outreach program for the Texas Children's Hospital Safety Day. **TPWD Expo** in Austin will be the weekend of October 7 and 8. The Theme this year is "Gone With the Wind, Parks on the Mend." The **bluegrass band** is expected to return to the Park starting in October.

## DEER HUNT

Brazos Bend State Park will be closed on the following dates for the annual prescribed deer hunt. The park will close to campers and visitors Sunday night and reopen Friday morning each week of the hunt.

November 6 - 9  
November 13 - 16  
December 4 - 7

### VOLUNTEER PICNIC

for Members, VIT's, Hosts, Staff and their families

**Saturday, October 14**  
**5:30 PM at the Dining Hall**

**FOOD, FUN AND AWARDS**

**Bring a covered dish to share**  
**Meat, tea and paper goods provided**

# CONGRATULATIONS

## BEST WISHES

### OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

James Blankenship  
Buddy Franklin  
Mozelle Franklin  
Dennis Jones  
Diane Kerr  
Fletcher Morgan  
Nicole Olson



### NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Nelda Gay  
David Heinicke  
Linda Hite (VIT)  
Steve Killian  
Patricia Marshall (VIT)  
Curtis Parent  
Terry Williamson



### OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

Diane and Jerry Carpenter

### NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Janet and David Starr (VIT)



## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEWEST VOLUNTEER MEMBER: CANDICE KENYON

*Thanks*

- ☺ to **Frank Willett** for the sandwich makings for the September meeting dinner
- ☺ to **all volunteers** for their participation in the new volunteer training luncheon
- ☺ to the **volunteers who drove** for the VIT road tour at training orientation
- ☺ to the volunteer and staff presenters and helpers during a very successful new volunteer training session: **Sharon Hanzik, David Heinicke, Steve Killian, James and Joyce Blankenship, John Bradford, Glen Kilgore, Peggy Farley, Bruce Williamson, Judy Strauss, Bryan Leach, Willie Anderson, Ron Morrison, Ken and Beth Debenport, Al Childs, Chuck Duplant, Diane and Jerry Carpenter, Nelda Gay, Frank Willett**, maintenance member (please forgive me if I left anyone out – I had such wonderful help, Anna Dell)

- 😊 to **AI Childs** for the Prairie View article
- 😊 to **Chuck Duplant** for the cicada pictures
- 😊 **Rick Dashnau, Jerry Zona, Tom Prentiss and Nicole Olsen** for leading hikes for the French Alliance of Houston.
- 😊 to the **Williamsons** for donating a new flat panel monitor for the Gift Shop computer.
- 😊 to **Anna Dell Williamson** for a fantastic job on the September training session for our new VIT's. She has taken a lot of time and a lot of work and produced a very successful training program. We have a great group of VIT's whom will hopefully soon become Brazos Bend State Park Volunteers. Thank You, Anna Dell, from all of us! (Judy Strauss)
- 😊 to **all Volunteers** for doing what you do best - being a Volunteer! Each one of you serves a purpose, and, as I have said before, no matter what you do, and no matter how much time you are able to give, it is ALL so very important to our organization. And it shows! THANK YOU! (Judy Strauss)
- 😊 to **David and Sharon** for giving us guidance and strength, and for being there for us no matter what.
- 😊 to **Anna Dell Williamson** for producing a newsletter for us to read each and every month. You put so much of your time and love into this organization, never asking anything in return. Let it be known by all that all of your hard work and dedication is so greatly appreciated, Anna Dell. THANK YOU! (Judy Strauss)

# NATURE CENTER REPORT - SEPTEMBER

by Anna Dell Williamson

Here is a breakdown of the various activities and attendance recorded for the Nature Center, hikes, and programs for September 1-30. This month included a lot of hot weather and some rainy days. Numbers come from the calendar in the Nature Center and may not reflect all activities. Be sure to report program attendance for all programs and hikes and be sure it gets on the calendar behind the desk.

	2006	SEPTEMBER
<b>NATURE CENTER Total for September, 4286</b>	<b>SATURDAYS (5)</b>	<b>2211</b> High, 835, 9/30
	<b>SUNDAYS (4)</b>	<b>977</b> High, 396, 9/3
	<b>WEEKDAYS (23)</b>	<b>1098</b> High (Labor Day), 692, 9/4
<b>CREEKFIELD HIKES (8)</b>		<b>168</b> High, 91, 9/30
<b>SNAKE PROGRAMS (2)</b>		<b>65</b>
<b>ALLIGATOR PROGRAMS(2)</b>		<b>47</b>
<b>BIRD PROGRAMS, HIKE AND HUMMINGBIRD BANDING (5)</b>		<b>90</b>
<b>STORY TIME (3)</b>		<b>28</b>
<b>OTHER PROGRAMS</b>		<b>33</b>

# VOLUNTEER CAMPOUT

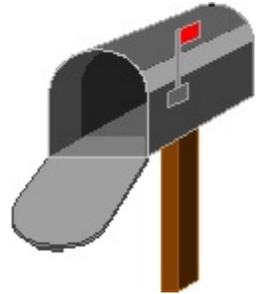
by Judy Strauss

Message to all Park Staff, Volunteers and VIT: Steve Killian has graciously granted us permission to use shelter #11 again this year for tent camping Friday and Saturday night for the October Picnic. We can use the shelter to house our food and belongings that we need to keep away from the "critters". We have had a great campfire and socializing in the past, and we hope that everyone can join us, if not for camping, then for the campfire after the picnic.

If interested, please contact me so that I can get a count on how many will be camping, but if you decide at the last minute, that's great, too. There is plenty of tent space in this area and it is right behind the Dining Hall. Bring your own food and gear.

## WE GET LETTERS

*(Ed. Note: Linda and John Kelly, volunteers at Varner-Hogg State Park, visited the Nature Center one Friday recently and told us about a group that is trying to get full funding for state parks from the sporting goods tax. They sent us this letter explaining their project. They are sending this information to papers/news media/etc., in an attempt to build awareness and to get one unified effort to save our parks which cannot be ignored by our state legislature.)*



## S P O R T - Save Parks or Repeal Tax

The citizens of Texas passed a tax on sporting goods to support and expand Texas State Parks and Historic Sites. Why then are state parks and historic sites in dire need, starving for income? The answer is that the state legislature has gone against the intent of the voters and has misappropriated the revenue from the sport tax for special pet projects and other state expenses

Texans are renowned for their pride in Texas. We rank 5th in population among the 50 states, yet we rank only 49th in per-capita spending on parks. That is not the voters fault. They passed a tax that would have enabled Texas to support and develop an exemplary park system.

Parks bring in tourism money and new jobs. Companies looking to locate industry rank quality-of-life high in their criteria. Texas has already lost major jobs to other states due to our lack of recreational land. One such example was when Boeing rejected Texas for their new corporate headquarters in 2002.

Senators and Representatives we have spoken with, or who have responded to our letters regarding returning the sporting tax to its intended use, have had one common remark, "We need to hear from the citizens of Texas so that we can act". Therefore, we are kicking off a state wide grassroots effort called SPORT (Save Parks or Repeal Tax) to save Texas parks and historic sites. We have no hidden agenda. We have no money backing this grassroots effort. Our only mission is to encourage Texans to send letters and make phone call to our State Legislature to save our parks by returning 100% of the tax revenue from the sporting tax to our parks and historic sites as voters intended.

We believe that as individuals we can make a difference, and our voices will count, but we must speak out! Vast numbers of Texans are needed to write their Texas State Representatives and Senators. Will you answer this call to action? It would be of great help if you circulated a letter regarding SPORT obtaining signatures from family and friends. The more signatures we can send to our legislature the more support we can anticipate on this issue. If you are busy, simply write SPORT on a postcard and send it to your State Representatives and Senators or pick up the phone and give them a call. You will find their mailing addresses and phone numbers at [www.capitol.state.tx.us](http://www.capitol.state.tx.us).

If you would like to know where you can obtain more information about the problems facing our state parks and historic sites, or if you have a park problem we can share with the legislature, you can reach us at [savetexasparks@yahoo.com](mailto:savetexasparks@yahoo.com).

Proud to be Texans  
Linda & John Kelly, State Park Volunteers

# PRAIRIE VIEW

*by Al Childs*

Hello prairie enthusiasts and volunteers. Welcome again to "Prairie View." September has been a very interesting month. We completed the transects for Prairie #3 on the 17<sup>th</sup>, but not before Mother Nature gave us a little shower. The sky was really pretty with white fluffy clouds that morning, so I decided to not carry my rain gear into the prairie. That was a mistake. We were just about to get started when some dark clouds came over and began to rain on us. Being the hardy souls we are, we decided to ignore the rain and do the transects anyway. It was well worth getting wet. We got to see Big bluestem and Side Oats Gramma, both with seeds ready to fall. The Big bluestem seeds were a light green and will turn to yellow as they mature. It was really exciting to see them both since they don't hold onto their seeds for very long. Because of the rain, I was unable to use my camera, so I went back last Saturday to take pictures of them (and the transect sections) and found their seeds were already gone. Hopefully, I will get another opportunity before the season is over.

While I was at the park, Dennis Jones showed me some interesting grasses. One in particular is Purple Top (*Tridens flavus*). This grass grows to about five feet. Its seed head (terminal panicle or inflorescence) is from six to fourteen inches long and droops at maturity. It is extremely easy to recognize at this time of year because the panicle is purple. If you are interested in seeing it, park in the 40 acre parking lot and cross the street as if you are taking the prairie platform trail. As you cross the street, look to your left and there you will find a small stand of Purpletop a few feet off the trail. If you continue up the trail to the large oak tree standing to the left of the prairie platform, you will find more Purpletop on your left. Pay close attention to this area because in the same location is a nice stand of Big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii* Vitman), which we will talk about in next month's column. The Purple Top seed head gets a little sticky as it matures and because of that it also acquired the nick name of grease grass. Purple Top is rated as fair for livestock and wildlife so it is a welcome addition to our prairies. Be sure to check it out as soon as you can because the seed heads will soon turn from purple to brown or bronze. Also, make sure you use lots of insect repellent, bring water, and enjoy yourself. Until next month, have fun and be safe.

# BRAZOS BEND BUTTERFLY COUNT

*by Sandy Jespersen*

The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Brazos Bend Butterfly Count was held in September. All previous counts were in June. Last year, our first attempt at a September count was cancelled by the threat of Hurricane Rita. Predictions of a cold front and heavy rain made us wonder if we would be washed out again this year.

Two inches of rain during the night, followed by a dark overcast sky, did keep the butterflies pretty quiet in the morning. But our eleven dedicated observers were determined to find them. We divided into five parties and spent the day scouring the various habitats within and near the park. By lunchtime, we had 41 species. In the afternoon, the sky brightened somewhat, and the butterflies became more active.

By the end of the day the species count had climbed to 51—our second highest total ever. The individual butterfly total of 838 was about average. Three species had not previously been seen on a Brazos Bend count: Southern Dogface, Painted Lady and White Peacock.

Observers were Karl Baumgartner, Gardner Campbell, Chuck Duplant, Bill Godley, David Heinicke, Phil Huxford, Rich Jespersen, Sandy Jespersen, Dianne Kerr, Warren Pruess and James Smith.

# FALL ACTIVITIES

## WEEKEND HELP NEEDED

David will not be at the park the next two weekends (October 7-8 and 14-15). Sharon will need all the support she can get and will need volunteers to cover all the bases and help with trail patrol/interpretation. Remember that we are also relying on you to help train VITs.

## OCTOBER 14 MEMORIAL SERVICE

In order for Richard's volunteer friends to attend the memorial service at 4:00, we are asking volunteers who did not know him well to take the 3:00 - 5:00 shifts in the Nature Center and Gift Shop.

## CREEKFIELD HIKES

As is typical, Creekfield Hikes are overflowing on fall Saturdays. You will notice on the calendar that we are encouraging more than one leader to sign up or at least be available should large groups arrive. THIS SATURDAY we already know that a large group will be coming so please sign up or be on standby if you can. Remember that the hikes start at 11:00 October through May.

## STAFF/VOLUNTEER LUNCHEON

Volunteer luncheon will be Thursday Oct 19th at the dining hall. Bring a dish for pot luck.

## OCTOBER 28 EVENTS - A VERY BUSY DAY

- Saturday, October 28th is **Astronomy Day** at the park. It starts at 3:00, and we will need all available volunteers, especially those who can help collect day-use fees at the headquarters.
- We will also be presenting our **2nd Annual Classic Comedy Halloween movie** "Abbott and Costello Go to Mars" that evening at 7:00 at the amphitheater. I hear that food vendors will be on site but I do not know the hours.
- It is **Texian Market Days at George Ranch**, and we will have a booth there. There is a sign-up sheet upstairs on the hallway bulletin board for two-hour shifts. While on the site, you may participate in the other festivities, such as visiting the pioneer village or the blacksmith shop, touring the old houses, or observing the Civil War battle re-enactment. Call Judy Strauss with any questions. This fun outreach event draws big crowds to our booth and gives you an opportunity to share the park with folks who may not have visited us yet.

# MEETING NIGHT SUPPERS

*by Anna Dell Williamson*

Thanks to **Frank Willett** for bringing supper for the September 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 a small amount per person to cover costs (\$3.00 or less). 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). We do not need anyone for October because that is the picnic. But from November on we have lots of openings. There is a sign-up sheet in the entry to the lounge. Thank you to all those who have already brought a meal. ♦

# SEPTEMBER 2006 MAINTENANCE REPORT

*by Bryan Leach*

### Wood Yard:

Tied wood

Split wood

Delivered tied wood to the wood racks in both camping loops

We cleaned up the wood yard area.

Unloaded 4 cords of purchased wood

### Mowing and Landscaping:

Mowed around the Old Windmill off the Riverview Trail

Mowed and trimmed around the Oak trees along the road to Elm Lake

Mowed the outer perimeter of the wood yard

Removed blown down limbs around the Elm Lake picnic area

Removed blown down limbs around the Hale Lake picnic area

Mowed the Hale Lake point area down to the waters edge

Trimmed under the Spider Tree

#### Trail Trimming and Trail Maintenance:

Cut up 3 downed trees on the Bluestem/Whiteoak Trail  
Removed 3 downed trees on the Trail between Elm Lake and the Observation Tower  
Put trail topping on the south east side of the 40 Acre Lake Trail

#### Equipment Maintenance:

Repaired the head light on the K1 Kubota  
Swapped the right front fender from the 00 Gator to the 01 Gator  
Removed brackets and hitch ball from the 00 Gator  
Changed engine oil & filter on the K2 and the K1 Kubota's  
Greased both Kubota's  
Changed the transmission fluid and filters on the K1 Kubota  
Changed the front axle and the steering knuckles fluid on the K1 Kubota  
Repaired the passenger side floor panel on the K1 Kubota

#### General Maintenance:

Installed car stops at the wood yard parking area  
Repaired the 017 chain saw  
Cleaned up the parking area at the wood yard pole barn for the new Gator  
Repaired the air compressor  
Moved a wooden foot bridge from the Hale Lake picnic area to the wood yard

#### Pest Control:

Treated the following areas for fire ants  
The 40 Acre Lake Picnic area, around the Headquarters building, the Prairie Trail, the Hoots hollow Trail, the 40 Acre Lake Trail, the Elm Lake Trail, the Elm Lake picnic area, the Primitive Camping area, around the Nature Center

## **NEW VOLUNTEER TRAINING**

*by Anna Dell Williamson*

First, let me thank each one of you for making the fall training, classroom section, a success. I had so much good help from so many people, and I'm very appreciative of all you have done and will continue to do to support the VIT's. The classroom phase of volunteer training ended September 23, but the work has just begun for the VIT's and for YOU. Each and every one of you is needed to help the VIT's be successful in meeting their requirements for full membership.

The VIT's are now working on Phase I of their training, which involves signing up for the Gift Shop (4 shifts), Nature Center (4 shifts), trail trimming class (2 hours), wood tying (1 hour) and water station (1 shift). Several of these activities require signing up on the web calendar. Please check the web sign up calendar, and if you see a VIT signed up without another volunteer signed up, add your name as trainer. They cannot work these activities without another volunteer. When they finish Phase I, they move immediately into Phase II, which involves working a shift alone in the Nature Center and Gift Shop, observing two Creekfield hikes and leading one, observing two alligator videos and leading one, attending a snake program, going on a bird hike, doing two hours of trail interpretation with a volunteer and one hour on their own, and taking an ATV tour of the trails with a volunteer. Phase II has a four-month deadline, final date depending on the date they finished Phase I. They will sign up on the web site for the NC, GS and to lead the Creekfield, and with Sharon for the alligator video, but the rest of the activities are whenever they are offered. They have a list of resource people to contact to accompany them on the trail interpretation hikes and the ATV tour.

There will be checklists on the NC desk and the Gift Shop Desk in a "Training Folder" for you to see what the VIT's need to learn and/or do. There are checklists for the Nature Center, the Gift Shop, Creekfield and Trail Interpretation, and Maintenance, Wood and Water. There are also ATV Trail Tour Guidelines and Trail Interpretation Guidelines. Please take one of these checklists when you're working with a VIT so the training has some consistency.

If you see a VIT working, be sure say HI and introduce yourself. We want the VIT's to feel welcome and to get acquainted with as many folks as possible. We don't all come out at the same time, so take the opportunity to let them know who you are. Anything you can do to support and encourage your VIT will be helpful and appreciated. If you need any information or become aware of a problem, contact Sharon or me as soon as possible.

# “THE WOODCHUCKS”

by Dennis Jones



Once upon a time there was a group of volunteers at Brazos Bend who were occasionally referred to as “the woodchucks”. They spent a good deal of their time handling wood in various incarnations, hence the name, “Woodchucks. I also recall from my classical training as a youth that Donald Duck’s nephews Huey, Louie and Dewey were “Junior Woodchucks” in the comic books. I think the volunteer’s name may also spring from these time-honored texts, but I cannot say with certainty. There is also a striking resemblance to the nephews and our woodchucks as well. Flat feet, big bottoms, fluffy tails, etc.

This particular group at best would have to be called “Senior Woodchucks” as the mean age of the group is about 207, but don’t let their average age fool you into thinking that this is just an ordinary group of volunteers. They are not. They do stuff. And lots of it. They are the fellows that get the volunteer wood ready for sale to the campers. Without the wood that they split, bundle, stack and distribute, few campers would have campfires. As a result of their unfailing efforts the Volunteer Organization has additional income they would not have otherwise, and the campers would be roasting their marshmallows and making “smores” over a can of Sterno or their Coleman stove. You should see the woodchucks swarm a downed tree like a plague of locusts. Chainsaws, log-splitters, wheelchairs, flying into the air in every direction, surrounded by a cloud of sawdust, arms, and elbows! It’s an awesome sight to see.

They also pride themselves in their trail building abilities, and well they should. Many of the trails that were once little more than muddy ditches after a rain are now well-drained, elevated, surfaced and a lasting testament to what hard work and determination can accomplish. Load after load of recycled road base is carried by their tiny Gator and Kubota ATV’s down the trail and dumped. The loads then have to be spread and then compressed. That’s backbreaking work. Week after week they push on and don’t give up until the job is completed and another trail bites the dust. I suspect few people that travel those trails will give much thought to what it took to surface them, but I know, and now you do, too. What a wonderful gift to the public! And they do it only for the camaraderie and the satisfaction of a job well done. You don’t hear too much complaining from this bunch and the reason is obvious; busy folks don’t have time for such talk.

Generally the woodchucks can only be seen on weekdays but their work can be seen year round. So if you bump into a woodchuck some weekend, tell him how much you appreciate what they do for the park, the public and the volunteer organization. But be careful not to bump into them too hard; they have been known to bite, if they have their teeth in. I hope to write a word or two about other volunteers as time goes on, but I just had to start with these stalwart fellows. They are a piece of work (Literally). Kudos to woodchucks! For the rest of us, we would do well to be more woodchuck-like. I know I would like to be. Thanks. dj

## DO’S AND DON’TS OF INTERPRETATION

1. Make your talk short and to the point. If you must err, do it by saying too little rather than too much.
2. Change your interpretation a bit each time you speak to visitors. If you memorize what you are going to say, like the salesman at the door who has to start all over again if he is interrupted, you may be painfully embarrassed if you “forget your lines”.
3. If you make a mistake, say so and laugh it off. Visitors identify with the human qualities of an interpreter who is not infallible. Besides, the heavens will not fall.
4. Speak confidently but never with an attitude of superiority. If you are nervous speaking before the group, remember that you probably know more about the subject than they do. After all, you have access to the information and they do not.
5. Do not preach: leave that to the pulpit. Say what you have to say as well as you can and hope for the best.
6. Keep some information for questions, rather than immediately telling all you know. Visitors like to ask questions and are often likely to come up with good ones.
7. Speak in a natural, informal way, never in singsong. Try to give the impression that you just happened to think of a particular point that visitors might enjoy hearing about.
8. Leave yourself and your personal opinions on controversial subjects out of your interpretation. Visitors did not come to hear about you, but about the site.
9. If visitors appear bored or indifferent, do evaluate what you are saying and how you are saying it. Cut it short and bring in a few of the most interesting points you have reserved for such occasions.
10. Remember that you are the site, as far as visitors are concerned-the front line. You can make or break visitors’

interest in the site and in what it has to say to the modern world.

11. When interpreting for a foreign group, speak slowly and distinctly, resisting the impulse to speak louder than usual.
12. Give foreign groups extra time to ask the questions that will help overcome language and cultural barriers.
13. Try to link the cultures of your site to that of foreign visitors, if possible.

## CICADA EMERGING

During volunteer training on September 16, the volunteers were led on a Creekfield hike by Peggy Farley and Glen Kilgore. Before the hike, they were sitting on the deck listening to some comments regarding how to lead a hike. Chuck Duplant and I were sitting on the deck listening, when Chuck walked over to the tree and started taking pictures of a small hump on the tree bark. He motioned me over, and there was a cicada emerging from it's shell. We stopped the volunteer program, and everyone came over and took a look. They returned to the program, and before they left on the hikes, they all came back by and looked again, this time noting how much the cicada had emerged. Chuck took a lot of pictures and sent us these to enjoy. The entire series of shots (in color) can be found at [http://www.pbase.com/desertbum/emerging\\_cicada](http://www.pbase.com/desertbum/emerging_cicada).



# NATURALPERL NEWS

by Laszlo and Lexi Perlaky



Laszlo Perlaky was in BBSP Nature Center helping the visitors on August 26, 2006. There was no photo walk on that day; however, Laszlo and Lexi explored a few hidden passages near Elm Lake. The low water level, and the dried up swampy areas there, gave us a chance to enter those areas, which are normally under water.

We spent some time there observing and photographing feeding behavior of White ibises. They moved fast in the shallow water, searched for food in the swamp, and sometimes seriously disagreed. An Anhinga just opened his wings and dried his feathers on a tree. We watched the bird more than half an hour. After that, we photographed several Snowy egrets and Yellow crowned night herons. The time just ran fast and we had to walk back to the Old Horse shoe Lake, then to the New Horse shoe Lake, where we photographed the magic light of dawn.

On the following weekend, September 2, 2006, Laszlo was again in the Nature Center, then led his free Naturalperl Photo walk from 5 - 8 PM. We met at the Nature Center, then with eight enthusiastic photographers, we walked on the Elm Lake trail to find and photograph American alligators or huge Texas size bullfrogs. After the last week's rain, the water level increased. The areas at the northwest side of the Elm Lake that were dry the previous week were swamp again. The birds and alligators were happy there. We just heard the bullfrogs from here and there, but we did not see them.

The ibises were there again, and the Anhinga dried his feathers on the same dried tree-trunk. Our group quietly watched the bird and was ready to photograph, when unexpectedly a noisy biker group arrived, and the bird silently took off. Only the experienced photographers were able to predict the action and catch the bird in flight. At the southwest corner of Elm Lake, we spent more than an hour to photograph about 3-4 feet long alligators in different positions. Later, a little bit farther, we observed 3 larger alligators. We all enjoyed the outing.

## QUARTERLY HOURS REMINDER

October begins a new quarter, the last one for the year 2006. Remember that you must have a total of 48 hours by the end of the year, and that 6 of them each quarter must be in the "required" areas: Nature Center, Gift Shop, Creekfield Hke, Wood Yard or Water Station. Be sure to report all of your hours, including meetings and travel time, in the volunteer logbook in the lounge.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Creekfield Hikes will start at 11:00 AM beginning the first of October.**

October 7	Bird photography Photo-walk #3, 5:00 PM
October 14	Annual Volunteer Picnic, 5:30 PM
October 27	Bird Hike, 40-Acre restrooms, 8:00 AM
October 28-29	Texian Market Days, George Ranch
November 4	Landscape photography Photo-walk #2, 3:00 PM.
November 6-9	Deer hunt, park closed Sunday PM to Friday AM
November 11	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
November 13-16	Deer hunt, park closed Sunday PM to Friday AM
November 17	Bird Hike, 40-Acre restrooms, 8:00 AM
November 23	Thanksgiving, Nature Center closed
November 26	Bird Hike, 40-Acre restrooms, 8:00 AM
December 2	Landscape photography Photo-walk #3, 3:00 PM
December 4-7	Deer hunt, park closed Sunday PM to Friday AM
December 9	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM



## Brazos Bend State Park

Texas Parks and Wildlife  
21901 FM 762  
Needville TX 77461

## FIRST CLASS MAIL

→NEXT MEETING DAY AND TIME←  
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2006, 5:30 PM  
ANNUAL VOLUNTEER/STAFF PICNIC

☆☆☆☆☆☆



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### REGULAR VOLUNTEER EVENTS

Creekfield Hikes	Every Saturday and Sunday at 11:00 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

### OFFICERS

President:	Bruce Williamson
Vice-President:	Anna Dell Williamson
Secretary:	Nicole Olson
Treasurer:	Chuck Duplant

### 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.