



BRAZOS BEND BUNCH BUGLE

VOLUME 21, NUMBER 4

APRIL 2009

PRESIDENT'S CORNER



How quickly nature adapts. The prairie which was recently burned is showing a profusion of wildflowers – in all colors!

The water level is so low, we see mud flats scattered throughout where water once was. Now there is an influx of shore birds that are not normally here; they are usually seen by our coastlines. I saw royal terns, sandpipers, yellowlegs - to name just a few. Our regular birds are still here.

Hope each of you get to come out to the park and enjoy this spring weather!

Take care,

Carrie Sample



Blue-eyed Grass
Photo by Jerry Zona



Lesser Yellowlegs
Photo by Jerry Zona

In This Issue:

President's Corner	1
<i>By Carrie Sample</i>	
March Meeting Notes	2
Staff Reports	3
<i>Steve Killian, Sharon Hanzik & David Heinicke</i>	
Maintenance Report	4
Nature Center Report	5
Outreach Report	5
Anniversary Celebration	7
Junior Volunteer Class	7
Checking in @ HQ	8
Anniversary T-Shirts	8
Volunteer Opportunity	8
Volunteer Hours	8
Galveston Island S.P.	9
My Lucky Day	10
Prairie Burn	10
Cool Tree Frog Video	11
<i>By Rick Daschnau</i>	
What's in the Garden	12
<i>By Joan Warren</i>	
Bird Hikes	12
Volunteer News & Notes	13
2009 Calendar of Events	15

MARCH MEETING NOTES

Contributed by Eddy Grizzaffi

Bruce Williamson called the March 14, 2009 meeting to order in the absence of President Carrie Sample. The minutes of the February meeting were approved as posted. There were three staff members and nine volunteers present.

Budget Report: Diane Carpenter gave the Budget Report for February and presented the following purchase requests, which were approved:

- **David Heinicke** requested button-making materials and supplies (a circle cutter and 1,000 pin-back sets). The purpose is to make buttons for the Gatorwise Club and special events.
- **Ron Morrison** requested a transfer of some of the El Paso/Morrison Fund to **Ken Debenport's** Memorial Fund.
- **Pam Tatge** requested funds for trees for the Creekfield Forest Trail from Mercer Arboretum March Plant Sale. The trees on the list are American Elm, Basswood, Black gum, Rough Leaf Dogwood, Mexican Plum, Parsley Hawthorn, and Rusty Blackhaw Viburnum.
- **Pam Tatge** requested funds for ten 25-gallon ooze tubes for watering the new trees on the Creekfield Forest Trail.
- **David Heinicke** requested 12 Snake Bags to replace existing bags and increase the number of bags available.

The scat replicas approved in February were purchased and additional money is needed.

David Heinicke presented a request for funding to be allocated from the restricted funds of McGovern, El Paso/Morrison, Bryan Leach Memorial, Kilgore Exxon Mobil, Ramsayer Exxon Mobil, Jespersen Chevron, and Kay Lewis Memorial Funds for construction of a viewing platform on Elm Lake. David will seek a matching grant from the George Foundation. Reports have been sent to Region. There will be a sign to acknowledge each donor. The platform will be posted "NO FISHING" for safety and to keep the alligators away.

Dave Alexander is working on the new sundial exhibit. We plan to have a Pavestone construction with engraved bricks in stabilized sand. There will be no grass. This is considered an archeological site, so excavation will be done carefully by sifting and shaking all dirt removed to be examined and documented by TPWD archaeologists.

The 25th park anniversary and the 20th volunteer organization anniversary will be held April 4, 2009. Five different posters, new pamphlets, band and song, and a pictorial presentation are all in the plans for the celebration.

Pam Tatge showed a mock-up of a new volunteer organization pamphlet. She also discussed the poster display for the organization. We plan to have a centerpiece poster and supporting side posters, which will be laminated for display.

Outreach: **Judy Strauss** reported on two completed events: Sea Center Texas (February 28) had over 500 people; Brazoria Heritage Center (March 7) had 1,013 present. Upcoming events include the Children's Festival at Fort Bend Museum, March 28; the Environmental Fest, April 18; and Creekside Church in Needville, May 9. **Chuck Duplant** and **Judy Strauss** will do the Ducks Unlimited on May 3 in Hempstead. Sign up to help on the Events Calendar on the web site.

Training Report: **Anna Dell Williamson** reported that the eleven VIT's are doing Phase 1 now.

Maintenance: **Bruce Williamson** brought the Maintenance report. The crew has been clearing approximately 100 feet of yaupon from along the front fence on FM 762 and replacing the broken fence posts.

Gift Shop: **Anna Dell Williamson** reported that help is needed. Sharon's new book is now available for sale. We've ordered necklaces and Wetlands t-shirts.

Wood Yard: We have had good wood sales with 85% average payments. **Chuck Duplant** has marked the racks. VIT's and others have been splitting and bundling wood. Volunteer wood is on a rack near #19, under the shed against the fence (where the splitter is).

NEW BUSINESS:

David Heinicke reported on two research projects we may be helping with. A professor at the University of New Mexico is doing a study on dung beetles. We previously collected 80 beetles for him, and the results of the study, published in *Science Magazine* changed his research. He has requested that we capture live beetles to do behavioral studies. He will send live beetle traps when he gets the required permits. BBSP will get its name published in the article.

The University of Texas Health Science Center is doing a study to see if West Nile Virus overwinters in alligators. They will get permits, catch alligators, draw blood samples to find the virus or antibodies. The theory is that it emerges in the spring, mosquitos get it and pass it to birds. We may need volunteer help for crowd control weekday evenings.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Sharon Hanzik reminded us that when we do things for the park at home, we should record the hours in the log book. It counts if it benefits the park.

Richard Taylor announced that 25th Anniversary t-shirts are on sale at the Headquarters gift shop. Anniversary flyers are available for distribution.

The meeting was adjourned.

STAFF REPORTS

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

STEVE KILLIAN



Lead Ranger **Richard Taylor** presented **Steve Killian's** report. February was another good month. Thanks to the Volunteer Organization for making the park a great place to visit. We are planning several improvements, such as new tile in the bathhouse, electrical panel, and New Horseshoe levee repairs. Shelters 3 and 5 will become simple cabins with new windows and door, bunk beds, painted gray with no plumbing. New visitors map information panels will be in 12-14 locations. They have a "YOU ARE HERE" indicator. A timeline will be made soon. The Elm Lake Pier will be of wooden design.

The Rangers explored other parks' programs during the recent Ranger Conference. The Prairie platform has been completed. The Nature Center has been power washed. Landscaping at Headquarters is finished. We installed two new commodes in the restroom at the Nature Center. Mowing and debris cleanup are ongoing and it will soon be time to spray. Clearing 10 feet of Yaupon at the front fence. The Anniversary Celebration agenda is close to being finalized but subject to change.

INTERPRETIVE STAFF REPORTS



SHARON HANZIK

Spring break is next week, cover the Nature Center first 11am-3pm, then the Gift Shop. A big thank you to **Tom** and **Carrie** for the consistent covering of programs. We can do "Ask the Ranger" programs on the trails with spotting scopes. **Teresa Jones** and her junior volunteers have been making Gator-wise buttons.

DAVID HEINICKE

School groups are listed under the Volunteer Events Calendar. Easter comes early this year. Chuck's willow planting went well. The trees have red ribbons on them and are planted at 40-Acre, Elm, Creekfield and on the banks of the Brazos River by the sand bar. We hope to create wild pockets for wildlife. Plans are being made to go to Goose Island to see the Grand Champion Oak Tree. I have my new truck now.

MARCH MAINTENANCE REPORT

Contributed by Ron Morrison

Wood Yard: Split, tied and delivered wood to the camping loop kiosks.

Mowing and Landscaping:

Planted, mulched, and watered 36 trees on Creekfield, Elm and 40 Acre Lake trails.

Staked the 24 trees planted on Elm Lake trail.

Trimmed a portion of the front entrance to the park fence line.

Delivered 19 trees for planting to the wood yard.

Trail Trimming and Trail Maintenance:

Cleared blow down tree debris on Red Buckeye trail.

Trimmed portions of the Creekfield Forest, Bayou, White Oak/Bluestem trails.

General Maintenance:

Repaired 12 benches at the playgrounds and other locations.

Treated the wooden bridges, platforms, piers, decks, patio, benches and picnic tables in key locations in the park.



Ron Morrison drives the Chipper across the newly finished Creekfield Forest trail bridge.

Photo by Pam Tatge

NATURE CENTER REPORT

Contributed by Anna Dell Williamson

Here are the totals of the various activities and attendance recorded for the Nature Center, hikes, and programs for March 1-31, 2009. Attendance was very high weekends and during Spring Break.

PROGRAMS	TOTALS
NATURE CENTER ATTENDANCE March 2009 - 9,669 (high 980, 4/7) March 2008 - 10,684	Saturdays (4) - 2,666; High, 980, 3/7 Average: 666
	Sundays (5) - 2,077; High, 590, 3/22 Average: 415
	Weekdays (22) - 4,826; High, 776, 3/19 Average, 219
CREEKFIELD HIKES (12)	317– High, 3/7–92
ALLIGATOR PROGRAMS (5)	254 - High, 3/28-80
BIRD PROGRAMS/HIKES (3)	61-- High, 3/15-46
SNAKE PROGRAMS (6)	293 – High, 3/19-110
CHILDREN'S STORY TIME (5)	52– High, 3/28-18
OUTREACH (6)	1,803– High, 3/7-1,013
OTHER PROGRAMS (4) includes videos, Pond Life, Photo and Ask the Ranger	107
TOTAL VISITORS SERVED IN HIKES AND PROGRAMS	2,887
TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS	470

OUTREACH REPORTS

Various Contributors

BRAZORIA HERITAGE DAY OF CELEBRATION by Jerry Zona

On Saturday, March 7, BBSP participated in an outreach opportunity at the "Brazoria Heritage Day of Celebration" in Brazoria. We had over 1,000 visitors. It was a great day, even though the wind was over 20 MPH most of the time. It was great to see the Andean Condor; this bird is the largest flying bird in the Western Hemisphere. It is one of the longest living birds, with lifespans up to fifty years in the wild. The wing span can be over 10 feet wide and it's weight can reach 33 pounds.



Andean Condor

Photo by Jerry Zona

FORT BEND MUSEUM CHILDREN'S DAY *by Judy Strauss*

On Saturday, March 28, we had an Outreach for "Children's Day" at the Fort Bend Museum in Richmond. The day started out very cold and windy, but turned out to be a beautiful day! We had about 647 people come by our booth, many of whom were frequent visitors to the Park, and quite a handful that had never been to Brazos Bend State Park, nor had ever heard of it.

It is so wonderful working with these children. Their eyes light up when we bring out the baby alligators and the snakes, and they are always so full of questions. Many of the children, along with their parents, seem to find their way back to our booth more than a few times.

And something that we discovered quite by accident: There was a magnifying glass that I had taken out of the Outreach container, and had forgotten to put away when we started. The children loved it! It didn't matter that most of the time they couldn't even see what they were looking at; it just seemed to make everything "more better". From now on, I will make it a point to have several of them out on the tables for anyone to use.



Carol Ramsayer shows off a baby alligator.
Photo by Jerry Carpenter

Thank you to **Jane Minard** for arriving early to help me set up, and for staying much later than she had planned. Also to **Carol Ramsayer** for helping and working much longer than she had planned. **Jerry Carpenter** arrived earlier than scheduled, and he and Diane also stayed much longer than they had planned and helped me "take down" and clean up. Kinda sounds like we were really having a great time, doesn't it? Well, we were, no doubt about it! And we also reached a lot of people. It was a fun and eventful day, but it could not have been done without your help.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE *by Diane Carpenter*

On Saturday, March 28, BBSP volunteers took the outreach tent to the Fort Bend Museum Children's Day. This event in Richmond was a great reminder of what makes outreach so much fun. The kids were so excited to see a snake and baby alligator and all the touch table items; they even inspected everything with the magnifying glass. The beautiful day gave five volunteers a chance to educate 647 visitors.

One of my best experiences was an interesting six-year old girl who I had provided with many of our standard facts about the alligators. When the next visitors stopped to see the baby alligator, the girl proceeded to answer their questions and tell them all the information she had just learned.

Another 13-year old girl was so excited about what volunteers do that she was asking her parents to let her become one. It was a great day for letting everyone know about Brazos Bend and our programs.



Judy Strauss

OUTREACH REACHES OUT *by Judy Strauss*

This year has been a wonderful year for Outreach! We have had so many events, and have "reached out" to so many people. The word about Brazos Bend State Park is spreading, and we're having so much fun doing it!

We have another Outreach opportunity in April at the Brazos Mall in Lake Jackson: Envirofest 2009. It is a short event, and even though I have asked for four volunteers, it would be nice if we could have six to attend. And on May 9, the Creekside Expo, 2009, will be held at the grounds of Creekside Church in Needville. Both of these events can be found on the "Events Calendar" for you to sign up. Please help if you can. It would be greatly appreciated.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO ALL!

A big thank you to all who participated in our anniversary event on April 4. It was a special day to celebrate the Park's 25th anniversary and the Volunteer Organization's 20th anniversary. There were many programs and hikes led by volunteers throughout the day. The volunteer booth with animals from the Nature Center was a popular attraction, as were the owl pellet and bird exhibits and the pond life activity. There was a display of five posters depicting the activities of the volunteer organization over its 20 year



Dignitaries at the 25th Anniversary Celebration.

Left to right: Park Manager Steve Killian; Fort Bend County Judge Bob Hebert; Senator Joan Huffman; State Park Division Director Walt Dabney; State Representative Dora Olivo; TPWD Executive Director Carter Smith; BBSP Volunteer Organization President Carrie Sample; Region 4 State Park Director Justin Rhodes. *Photo by Richard Taylor.*

history. We also handed out our new volunteer brochure, designed by Pam Tatge. Sea Center of Texas, Operation Stop Thief and the Battleship Texas all brought exhibits to the event. Headquarters had an information booth and sold commemorative anniversary T-shirts.

The anniversary program under the big tent was attended by staff, volunteers, and the public. Ft. Bend County Judge Bob Hebert, State Representative Dora Olivo, and State Senator Joan Huffman spoke about the importance and impact of the park. Justin Rhodes, Region 4 Director, introduced the speakers, and Walt Dabney, State Park Division Director, and Carter Smith, TPWD Executive Director spoke about BBSP and the future of state parks in Texas. Former and present Park Superintendents were recognized.

Volunteer Organization President Carrie Sample was presented proclamations from both the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate Proclamation for the volunteer organization is on display in the Nature Center, and the other proclamations from the House of Representatives will

be framed for us. Carter Smith presented Park Superintendent Steve Killian with the Silver Alligator plaque commemorating the park's anniversary. The Needville High School Choir opened and closed the program with music, and volunteer Frank Seay and his band sang the "Alligator Song" that Frank wrote for use with the alligator video program.

After the program, Frank Seay and the band continued to entertain visitors. He sang the newly composed "Ballad of the Brazos Bend Volunteer" and Jaci Elliott sang her rendition of "Down in the Swamp", a book used for children's story time.

The Nature Center and Gift Shop were open except during the ceremonies. More than 800 visitors came in the Nature Center and over 1000 visited our booth outside.

Ed. Note: Watch for additional photos from the anniversary celebration in the next issue.

JUNIOR VOLUNTEER CLASS

Contributed by Carrie Sample

We are trying to start a junior volunteer class. If you have a grandchild or relative or a friend that you could sponsor, who would like to be a junior volunteer, please let me know. One of our guidelines is that you must always work with this junior volunteer. If you have any questions or would like to sign someone up, please e-mail me at csample0@comcast.net or call me at 281-937-7075. The ages are 8-12 years old.

CHECKING IN AT HEADQUARTERS

Just a reminder that all volunteers should receive a Business Pass at park headquarters when coming in to work. The pass should be placed on the windshield to identify you as a Volunteer. If you have an annual Texas Parks pass, you can just show it and go on through without waiting for the business pass. Headquarters can provide a case to hang the pass from your rear view mirror. If you don't have an annual pass, have your car license number ready for staff to put on the business pass to speed things up.

ANNIVERSARY T-SHIRTS

Contributed by Sharon Hanzik



The anniversary t-shirts proved to be quite popular. The Headquarters gift shop has fewer than half (approximately 30) of the anniversary t-shirts available. It is a tan shirt with an alligator logo on front and anniversary emblem on the back. The cost, not including tax, is \$21 for adult sizes small to extra large and \$23 for sizes 2 - 3x. Volunteers will get a 10% discount. When these are gone, more will not be reordered. If you want one put on hold YOU must contact HQ at 979-553-5101x0.

VOLUNTEER HOURS

This is just a reminder about reporting your volunteer hours. First, **all hours must be reported** in the volunteer log book kept on the table in the volunteer lounge, including travel time and meeting time. If hours are not reported, they will not be counted. You need to record your hours each time you are at the park. All hours for a month should be recorded by the end of that month.

The Standard Operating Procedures for the organization define active membership and membership requirements. See the SOPs in the Members section of the website for more information.

REPORTING HOURS: You must report 48 hours per year to maintain active membership, not counting travel time and meeting time. Of those 48 hours, 24 are "required" and 24 are "general."

REQUIRED QUARTERLY HOURS: Twenty-four (24) hours must consist of six (6) hours per quarter in any combination of these required areas: Nature Center Information Desk, Gift Shop, Water Station/Trail Patrol, Creekfield Hike/Trail Patrol and Firewood Work Projects. That means that from January to March, from April to June, from July to September, and from October to December, you must report at least six volunteer hours in any combination of these 5 areas.

GENERAL HOURS: The general 24 hours can be counted in any of the required areas, or any other area where volunteers help. They can be spread over the year in any way that fits your schedule. General hours include activities such as preparing for and presenting programs, helping with maintenance or outreach, trail interpretation, serving on committees, personal study, attending park programs, newsletter, special programs and projects, helping at Headquarters, making authorized purchases, etc. Any time you spend on park activities, even hours at home, may be counted in this second 24 hours.

SIGN-UP CALENDAR ON WEBSITE:

Nature Center. You must sign up in advance on the website calendar. Up to three volunteers may sign up at one time for a Nature Center shift and record their hours as required hours. Others may work in the Nature Center and report their time under interpretation. If you did not sign up in advance, but you are at the Nature Center and it needs staffing, you can sign in on the schedule behind the counter if there are not three people already signed up. Up to two VIT-1's may sign up for a Nature Center shift.

Gift Shop. You must sign up in advance on the website calendar. Only one volunteer may sign up for the Gift Shop at a shift. One VIT-1 may sign up for a Gift Shop shift, to train with the volunteer who has already signed up..

Creekfield Hike. You must sign up in advance on the website calendar. A Creekfield Hike counts as two hours of service. If more than one person signs up, the first person signed up gets the hours if there are only enough people for one group. If there is a request on the calendar for several leaders, everyone signed up gets credit for the hike. If you show up and no one is there for the hike, you may record your two hours. VITs do not sign up when they want to observe a Creekfield.

VOLUNTEER EVENTS: There is a separate calendar on the web site for signing up for school groups, outreach programs, and other special events. The needs for each event are listed on the calendar. The signup procedure is the same as on the regular calendar. Be careful not to erase someone else's name when you add yours.

REPORTING HOURS: Report the required quarterly hours (6 per quarter) in the appropriate column of your sheet in the log book. Simply record the number of hours in the space for that date, and then write the total hours in the first "total" column. The middle part of the sheet has 3 columns for reporting "general" hours. Select the label that best fits what you did. Remember that work at home on volunteer business (newsletter, hike preparation, personal study, etc.) and work at the park on committees and interpretation all count. Attending or leading training classes also counts, whether it's new volunteer training or specified training for school groups, programs, etc. It also counts if you attend a program. We want to report all of the hours we work, including training. Most of the general hours are recorded in the center section. Write the total of the quarterly hours plus the general hours in the second "total" column. Then put in monthly meeting hours and travel time and write the total of both previous columns and the travel time column in the last column. That is the hours that are reported to Austin.

If you have any questions about reporting hours, please check with **Sharon Hanzik**.

GALVESTON ISLAND STATE PARK REOPENING

Galveston Island State Park, which shut down for six months due to extensive damage from Hurricane Ike, welcomed day users to the bay side of the coastal park on Saturday, March 21. The beach side of the park, which sustained significant damage, remains closed to the public for facilities demolition and debris removal.

Hundreds of volunteers have pitched in to clean up storm damage and remove considerable debris on the bay side of the 2,000-acre park, and to convert the Nature Center into a Welcome Center. The bay side of the park will be open from sunrise to sunset on Saturdays and Sundays through November. The Welcome Center, which will be operated by the Friends of Galveston Island State Park, will be open weekends from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. No entry fees are being charged. For the time being, there is no overnight camping at the park, but visitors can enjoy bird watching, hiking, fishing, crabbing, paddling and other outdoor activities. No license is required to fish inside the state park.



MY LUCKY DAY

by Sharon Hanzik

Spring Break 2009. I do believe that in all my years at the Nature Center, this has been our busiest spring break week. Yes, I know, you've heard that before, but it's true! Just to back it up, our slowest day was 454 visitors through the center. Our busiest was 776. Monday through Friday's visitation totaled 3,413 visitors!

Having fun with visitors, introducing natural wonders to people of all ages, etc. etc. — we all know why we either work or volunteer in a state park. Then, occasionally, there's that one thing that makes you stop and realize just what it means to our visitors. Late in the day Wednesday, the middle of a week when it seems like a week has already gone by, I had only recently finished up a 1.5-hour stint at the gator tank interpreting the lives of baby alligators. A young lady, roughly age 12, who had spent quite a bit of time intrigued by the alligator, walks up to me and shows me a four-leaf clover. I told her that she was a very lucky young lady today. She looked at me and said, "No, it's for you! I had so much fun today. My grandmother found it for me and I said I wanted to give it to the ranger who let me touch the baby alligator." She took off before I could get her name. But I won't forget her. Guess we were both lucky that day. Lucky to be in a place with so many treasures - treasures of the natural world and the human world. That four-leaf clover is now laminated and has earned it's place among the other various "items of appreciation" given to me by visitors over the years.

PRAIRIE BURN

In early February, park staff burned a portion of the prairie across from 40-Acre Lake parking lot. The ground was black, with a few stalks of taller burned grass and some mounds of black dirt (fire ant mounds?). February 14, **Chuck Duplant** led a prairie hike for the Volunteers in Training, and we could already see life coming back. He explained to the VIT's the function and importance of fire in a prairie. Within another week or two it was almost impossible to tell that the prairie had been burned. Below are pictures taken by Pam Tatge of the burn and the after effects.



"Dancing Flames"



"Remains"

COOL TREE FROG VIDEO

Story & Photos by Rick Dashnau



Barred Owl

Some neat stuff at the park last Sunday, April 5. After seeing the usual band of critters (which is our fortune every weekend), Chuck DuPlant informed me and two visitors about a Barred Owl over by the Spillway Bridge. It sat there, almost close enough to touch, while we shot pictures. I stayed back a bit, waiting for it to fly off so I could capture some slow motion. No luck there. I got some photos, though.

The front came through some time later, and it seemed to threaten rain, so the two visitors and I headed back towards the 40 Acre parking lot. Along the way, we saw a large snake on the trail (I believe it's a Mississippi Green Snake — the scales are there under the eyes).

Up near the parking lot, I saw something jump off the trail. It was a small tree frog (I think it was a Squirrel Tree Frog). Some antics ensued when it jumped back onto the center of the trail, and THREE of us were shooting photos... and it suddenly disappeared. From the center of the trail. With three people watching. I found it again on a large tree. More pictures. And then it started to climb the tree (after all, it is a Tree Frog). This time I shot some high speed video. Slowed down, the climbing is pretty dramatic. I'd assumed that the pads on the toes worked like suction cups...but that wood is dry. I've got the edited video clip online: <http://rickubis.20m.com/squirreltreefrog210fps.wmv>.



Squirrel Tree Frog



Five-Lined Skink

After a little while, the sun came back out, and I returned to the trail alone. I found a nice Five-Lined Skink (I believe the male's head gets red during courtship), and then got to watch a Spoonbill for a while near Elm Lake.

I also have a couple more interesting videos, one of an alligator eating a nutria on one of the islands by the Observation Tower at 40 Acre Lake, and the other of a Tricolor Heron going after fish and demonstrating some interesting strategies while doing so. http://rickubis.20m.com/tricolor_hunt.wmv.

The alligator video shows in detail how the alligator can break something merely by slinging it around. It's a bit gross, but very interesting. <http://rickubis.20m.com/alligatorpreytearing.wmv>



Roseate Spoonbill

WHAT'S IN THE GARDEN?

By Joan Jackson

Scarlet Milkweed

Asclepias curassavica

Other common names: Bloodflower,
Silkweed, Indian Root



© 2004 Floridata.com

Scarlet milkweed is an erect, evergreen perennial subshrub, often grown as an annual. Like most milkweeds, it has opposite leaves and milky sap. The leaves are about five inches long, narrowly elliptic, and pointed at both ends. Scarlet milkweed gets about three to four feet tall and usually has a few pairs of symmetrical branches. The flowers are orange and red and borne in terminal and axillary clusters that are two to four inches across. It blooms continuously from spring until autumn. The fruits are spindle-shaped pods, three to four inches long, that eventually split open to release little flat seeds that drift away on silky parachutes. Easy to grow in full sun, it does not require much water. If winter is very cold, it may freeze, but will come back in the spring. Easy to propagate from seed.

Monarch butterflies lay their eggs only on milkweed plants. Milkweed contains an alkaloid substance in the milky sap. When caterpillars ingest milkweed they also ingest the toxins, which are stored in the caterpillar and passed on to the adult. Vertebrate predators avoid Monarchs because they learn that the caterpillars and adults taste bad or even make them sick. All milkweeds are poisonous if ingested, and the milky sap is a skin irritant.

It is interesting for children and adults to watch as the butterfly goes through the four stages of its life: the egg, laid on the underside of the leaves; the larva or caterpillar as it feeds on the leaves and flowers; the pupa, beautiful pale green color with gold band around the top rim; and the final stage, a colorful orange and black adult Monarch.

Look for milkweed in the garden on the right outside the back door of the Nature Center.

Source: www.floridata.com

BIRD HIKES SCHEDULED

Scheduled bird hikes on either Fridays or Sundays are led by **Bill Godley** and **David Heinicke**. Four new "Migration Madness" hikes have been added this month. After the normal hike beginning at 8:00 AM here, there is an optional trip to Quintana led by **Bill Godley**. Those who are interested will carpool to Quintana for more bird watching and lunch (it is recommended that you take your lunch). Carpoolers will then return to BBSP. Following are the dates for hikes through May 17. VIT's, remember that your Phase II requirements include a bird hike! All hikes start at 8:00 a.m. at the Forty Acre Lake restroom building.

Regularly scheduled hikes:

Friday, May 8, 2009
Sunday, May 17, 2009

Friday "Migration Madness" Hikes with Bill Godley (Start at BBSP, Optional Trip to Quintana)

Friday, April 24
Friday, May 1

VOLUNTEER NEWS & NOTES



A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED IN OUR ANNIVERSARY EVENT! IT WAS A SPECIAL DAY.

. . . to Pam Tatge for creating the five beautiful posters of the volunteer organization activities, which was displayed at the anniversary celebration and to all who contributed pictures and information for the posters.

. . . to Pam Tatge for designing a new volunteer organization brochure and to all who contributed photos and did proof-reading and editing of the text.

. . . to Frank Seay and his band for performing at the program.

. . . to Frank and band and Jaci Elliott for performing after the regular program for the entertainment of visitors.

. . . to Rich Jespersen, who made the video of the anniversary program and singing afterwards.

. . . to Chuck Duplant and Richard Taylor for their pictures of the anniversary celebration

. . . to Judy Strauss, Jane Minard, Carol Ramsayer, and Diane and Jerry Carpenter for help at the Ft. Bend Museum Children's Day outreach program. It was a fun and eventful day, but it could not have been done without your help.

. . . to those who repaired the boardwalk to the ephemeral pond platform. Job well done, it looks great.

. . . to everyone who helped with wood during and after Spring Break. You made a lot of campers happy (no pun intended).

. . . to the tree planting crew that planted the hardwoods around Elm and 40 Acre lakes

. . . to Dennis Jones for organizing and working with the scouts in planting rushes and emergents among the willow plantings at Elm and 40 Acre lakes.

. . . to Teresa Jones, Jose and Vicki Velasquez, and Maria Orozco for making Gator-wise buttons.

. . . to Judy Strauss for the meeting night dinner.



Volunteers in Training **Zoe Boyer, Belinda DiMarcello, Nancy Dobbs, Shanay Kapadia, Christine Kovach, Mary Lockwood and Connie Waltrip** have advanced to Phase II. They will be needing assistance from current volunteers to complete their requirements. Please be ready to accompany them on some fun activities, such as trail interpretation and ATV tours of the park trails. Welcome them as they follow along on Creekfield hikes and bird hikes and attend alligator and snake programs. Encourage them when they present their solo Creekfield and alligator program. VIT-2's have four months to complete their membership requirements.

MEETING NIGHT SUPPERS

Don't forget to take your turn and sign up for the meeting night supper. You will be reimbursed your expenses, and you will help your fellow volunteers enjoy a time of visiting and refreshment before the meeting. May 9, June 13 and July 11 are open so sign up now.

VOLUNTEER NEWS & NOTES *Continued*



April Birthdays

Joyce Blankenship
Joyce Giese
Karen Hale (Staff)
Richard Taylor (Staff)

May Birthdays

Rose Aden
Dennis Keppta (Emeritus)
Suzie Gann
Virginia Harrison
Dawn Tejero
Carrie Sample
JT Kalina (Staff)



April Anniversaries

Virginia and Charlie Harrison
Jim and Jacqueline North

May Anniversaries

Rose and Elmer Aden (Emeritus)
Linda and David Heinicke
Patricia and Steve Marshall

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY!

Joan Jackson is looking to hand over the ordering of volunteer t-shirts to another



Hurricane Ike's Wrath
Photo by Jerry Zona

Jerry Zona is a regular photographic contributor to the Brazos Bend Bunch Bugle. You can see more of his photography at : <http://www.pbase.com/jerryzona/root>.

2009 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 24	Migration Madness Bird Hike; start BBSP 8:00 AM, optional to Quintana
April 25-26	Texas Outdoor Family Workshop
May 1	Migration Madness Bird Hike; start BBSP 8:00 AM, optional to Quintana
May 8	Bird Hike, 40-Acre Lake, 8:00 AM
May 9	Bird photography Photo-walk #2, 5:00 PM
	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
May 17	Bird Hike, 40-Acre Lake, 8:00 AM
May 25	Memorial Day Holiday
June 13	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
July 4	Independence Day
July 11	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
August 8	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
September 7	Labor Day
September 12	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
October 10	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
October 12	Columbus Day Holiday
October 31	Halloween
November 14	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
November 26	Thanksgiving
December 5	Simple Christmas
December 12	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
December 25	Christmas



Brazos Bend State Park

Texas Parks and Wildlife
21901 FM 762
Needville TX 77461

FIRST CLASS MAIL

→ **NEXT MEETING DAY AND TIME** ←
SATURDAY, May 9, 2009 at 5:30 PM



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:	Carrie Sample
Vice-President:	Suzie Gann
Secretary:	Eddy Grizzaffi
Treasurer:	Diane Carpenter

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Editor:	Anna Dell Williamson
Layout:	Jenn Mantei
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@comcast.net). Notify Anna Dell (281-485-2843) well in advance of any events you want announced in the newsletter.