



# BRAZOS BEND BUNCH BUGLE

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JUNE 2009

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

We are still setting records!!! This Memorial Day we had 1000+ visitors at the Nature Center. Sharon had sent out an e-mail asking for more volunteers for the holiday, and sure enough, we answered that call. Thank goodness we did. People of all ages and with all types of disabilities came to enjoy our park. We had a good representation of volunteers in the center and on the trails to answer their questions and point them in the right direction.



There were so many people on the trails, Dawn and I had to do a third water run. My favorite question of the day happened during the water run. We were asked, "Are you on the way to feed the alligators?" My favorite question before that one was, "How do you gather up all the alligators at night?"

Volunteering at Brazos Bend State Park is such an enriching part of my life. We owe a big thanks to our Park Naturalists, David and Sharon. Not only are they a wealth of information, but they are fun to be around, and they make us feel appreciated. As I have said before, I am so proud to be a part of this organization!

*Carrie Sample*

**Killdeer**  
Jerry Zona  
April 2009



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# MAY MEETING NOTES

*Submitted by Eddy Grizzaffi*

**Carrie Sample** called the May 9, 2009 meeting to order. The minutes of the April meeting were approved as posted. There were 2 staff members, 10 volunteers, 1 VIT-2 and 3 Jr. Volunteers present.

Thank you **Cindy Peterson** for our meal tonight!

**Staff Report: Carrie Sample** reported for Sharon Hanzik. **Eco Explorers** will be held on Thursdays, June 12 through August 6. We need volunteers to run the gift shop each Thursday during this event. On July 23 the Sea Center will give the presentation. We are looking into having a **first aid class** for volunteers in the summer. Other staff reports are elsewhere in the newsletter

**Gift Shop: Beth Debenport** reported that the inventory has been updated. Sales have been going very well. Thanks to all who help in the Gift Shop.

**Outreach: Judy Strauss** reported that this has been a very good year for Outreach. We have had many good events and good volunteer participation. **Chuck Duplant** and **Judy Strauss** went to the **Ducks Unlimited** event at Dewberry Farm on May 3. There were 248 people in 3 hours. **Judy Strauss, Pam Tatge** and **Chuck Duplant** went to **Creekside Expo 2009** (Hunting & Fishing Expo) at Creekside Church in Needville, May 9 There were 163 people from 8:30-3:00 PM. This was the last event scheduled for this spring.

**Budget : Diane Carpenter** stated that the income tax was ready to submit and presented the Budget report.

The following purchase requests were presented and approved:

**David Heinicke** requested new batteries and software to update the AED's at Headquarters and Nature Center.

**Ron Morrison** requested funds for root starter and vitamins that will be added to the water when watering the new plants that enhance the Creekfield Forest Trail. This trail is an interpretive trail with identification of trees and other plants native to the Park. This product will give the trees a much better chance of thriving on the highly competitive nature trail.

Installation of the HughesNet has given David, Sharon and volunteers **high-speed access** to the Internet. We would like to proceed with wireless router and adapter. Additional funds are needed to finish the wireless installation. This will allow wireless access to the high-speed Internet, instead of installing wires throughout the building.

There was a request to fund the **monthly internet service** from HughesNet from the quarterly funds provided to the Park Supervisor.

## **Important Information:**

At the April volunteer meeting, the organization voted to allocate funds toward the construction of the **Elm Lake Viewing Platform** and to proceed with a grant request to the George Foundation for additional funding for the project. The George Foundation did not approve our grant request. A new plan was presented, and the details will be emailed to the membership. At the June meeting, we will discuss whether and how to finance the project.

The meeting was adjourned.

# STAFF REPORTS

## STEVE KILLIAN

Superintendent Steve Killian reported that this has been the biggest April yet. The Anniversary celebration had a very good representation. Fox 26 was live on the spot. David was interviewed by Channel 39 to be presented Sunday at 9 PM. This is better than paid advertisement.



The next printing of the State Park guide will have Brazos Bend on the cover. A major project is underway to build up the Horseshoe levee. This will include a monetary investment in clay. The rains have helped the lakes, but we will pump water into Elm Lake next week.

Pilant Slough is a primitive trail for foot traffic only.

We're looking for a corporate sponsor for 20,000 maps.

We will do lake spraying by airboat or Mud Buddy operated under licensed operator. Weed eating operation help is needed.

Premier Primitive sites are ready for \$8.00 per night.

The state legislature has waived entrance fees for all school groups entering the state parks. However, we can still charge the activity fees. The State's goal is the education of children.

There are Maintenance funds that have to be spent by the end of May, 09'.

The Mini cabins project should have one ready in 2 weeks. Shelter #3 will rent for \$45 with bunk beds, ac/heat, and no water.

The Trail Head signs have been ordered.

We received a framed honor from State of Texas Representative Dora Olivo of District 27. Steve will keep it in his office until the new building is built. We are still #1 on the building list.

## DAVID HEINICKE



Interpretive Ranger David Heinicke reported that the George Foundation did not approve our grant request. In the current financial climate, they are funding more "human" needs.

### Important Dates:

Thursday, **May 14**, there will be a Safety meeting at 8:30AM. Volunteers are invited.

**May 19** is the field trip to paddle on the San Bernard River at Bates Allen Park in Fort Bend Country and see what might be the largest Cypress tree in Texas

**June 6** is National Trails Day; press release will be next week. Events will include hiking and biking programs and a bird hike.

Be on the lookout for alligator nests.

# **DON'T MESS WITH BRAZOS BEND**

**BY RICHARD TAYLOR, LEAD RANGER**

The "Don't Mess With Texas" slogan has sort of been playing in my head lately. Except I have been thinking "Don't Mess With Brazos Bend". Have you ever wondered what it takes to keep 5000 acres trash free? Well, let me give you just a bit of the details. First of all, the park has dispensed with the little trash cans and opted for large dumpsters. Our friendly four legged bandits (Raccoons) know how to open a trash can faster than I can. In addition, every Monday morning and several times through the week our Park Hosts put forth a united effort to pick up trash in the park from front to back.. This entails hitting the roadways, day use areas, trails, playgrounds, etc., etc., plus the trash cans near the piers. They do an exceptional job of removing litter from the grounds.



It has been found that most visitors will see the big dumpsters and gather their trash up and dispose of it before leaving. In the absence of trash cans, most picnicking visitors will have a bag or a box to put their trash in or can feel free to stop any Ranger and ask for a trash bag. Please encourage others to do their part in "Don't Mess With Brazos Bend" and use the large dumpsters for trash from their picnics or camping. It sure makes our job a lot easier. We want to provide the best and cleanest Park we can so all can enjoy what nature is all about. I'm sure our Hosts will thank you too.

The Rangers have been helping out our comrades at Galveston Island State Park in their rebuilding process. Jimmy Watson, Region 4 Maintenance Specialist, has put together teams of Rangers from various parks to aid in the rebuilding of the facilities there. Recently, Rangers Kyle Petkus, Blake Flessner, Gary Bialas, and Jeff Orsak have assisted by providing their much-needed skills. Martin Dies Jr., Village Creek, and Lake Texana State Parks are also participating in the work effort.

The rains sure helped the Park. We received much needed rainfall to our lakes, and the foliage is definitely greening out. Our prairies that were burnt are really popping with growth and wildlife. I see new fawns daily that are chasing after their mamas. Twin fawns, and even triplets have been reported. With all of this, the grass has been growing at an astonishing rate. Ranger Jim Gilliam, our Mowing Master, has his hands full directing where to start mowing next. For those of you who don't realize it, Brazos Bend State Park mowing is a massive task. If you start at the highway on Monday morning, it takes all the way to Friday to get the mowers to the back of the Park. (You notice I did not say DONE.) Because once you get to the back, the front has already grown 2-3 inches, and we start all over again.

Our Park Host Capt. Gene on the back trails, Assistant Manager Dennis Jones in the Prairies and on the fence lines, and Resource Ranger JT Kalina and Game Warden Barry Eversole in our lakes have been working to control overgrowth and invasive species. Summertime is definitely filled with a multitude of Resource Management tasks consisting of mowing, spraying, pruning (big thanks to our Volunteers for trail trimming), weed-eating, etc.

Lately, Jeff and I have been concentrating on our fleet of vehicles and equipment, maintenance and much needed repairs. The Shelter to Cabin Conversion Project is coming along great and the first cabin should be completed soon. The Loop Restroom/showers have been repainted and more work is to come to them and other restrooms within the park.

All the help from everyone, whether it be Visitor, Volunteer, Host, or Staff, makes Brazos Bend State Park what it is. So when you see or hear the slogan, "Don't Mess With Texas", remember, "Don't Mess With Brazos Bend". It's not all trash talk, it's about our Team and what we believe in! Take care and thank you for all you do.

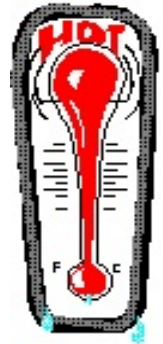
# HOT WEATHER PRECAUTIONS

from Mayo Clinic website, by Mayo Clinic staff

**Heat Exhaustion:** <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/first-aid-heat-exhaustion/FA00020>

Heat exhaustion is one of the heat-related syndromes, which range in severity from mild heat cramps to heat exhaustion to potentially life-threatening heatstroke. Signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion often begin suddenly, sometimes after excessive exercise, heavy perspiration and inadequate fluid intake. Signs and symptoms resemble those of shock and may include:

- \* Feeling faint or dizzy
- \* Nausea
- \* Heavy sweating
- \* Rapid, weak heartbeat
- \* Low blood pressure
- \* Cool, moist, pale skin
- \* Low-grade fever
- \* Heat cramps
- \* Headache
- \* Fatigue
- \* Dark-colored urine



If you suspect heat exhaustion:

- \* Get the person out of the sun and into a shady or air-conditioned location.
- \* Lay the person down and elevate the legs and feet slightly.
- \* Loosen or remove the person's clothing.
- \* Have the person drink cool water.
- \* Cool the person by spraying or sponging him or her with cool water and fanning.
- \* Monitor the person carefully. Heat exhaustion can quickly become heatstroke.

If fever greater than 102 F (38.9 C), fainting, confusion or seizures occur, dial 911 or call for emergency medical assistance.

**Heatstroke:** <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/first-aid-heatstroke/FA00019>

Heatstroke is the most severe of the heat-related problems, often resulting from exercise or heavy work in hot environments combined with inadequate fluid intake. Young children, older adults, people who are obese and people born with an impaired ability to sweat are at high risk of heatstroke. Other risk factors include dehydration, alcohol use, cardiovascular disease and certain medications.

What makes heatstroke severe and potentially life-threatening is that the body's normal mechanisms for dealing with heat stress, such as sweating and temperature control, are lost. The main sign of heatstroke is a markedly elevated body temperature — generally greater than 104 F (40 C) — with changes in mental status ranging from personality changes to confusion and coma. Skin may be hot and dry — although if heatstroke is caused by exertion, the skin may be moist.

Other signs and symptoms may include:

- \* Rapid heartbeat
- \* Rapid and shallow breathing
- \* Elevated or lowered blood pressure
- \* Cessation of sweating
- \* Irritability, confusion or unconsciousness
- \* Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- \* Headache
- \* Nausea
- \* Fainting, which may be the first sign in older adults

If you suspect heatstroke:

- \* Move the person out of the sun and into a shady or air-conditioned space.
- \* Dial 911 or call for emergency medical assistance.
- \* Cool the person by covering him or her with damp sheets or by spraying with cool water. Direct air onto the person with a fan or newspaper.
- \* Have the person drink cool water, if he or she is able.

### **Volunteer Precautions during Hot Weather**

During the summer season, we need to keep all available water coolers full at the water stations. It's also a good idea to use the gators to patrol on the 40-acre and Elm Lake trails as well as other, more remote trails, as people walk longer distances and either run out of water or did not bring any with them. Be sure to carry extra water when you are on the trails. There is a smaller cooler that can be carried on the back-country patrol. Make sure you take a radio with you when you are use the vehicles.

### **Volunteer Action Regarding First Aid / Emergency Situations**

Volunteers who feel competent at administering first aid should feel free to do so. If not, immediately consult any available park staff or call park staff on phone or radio. Your first words should be that you have an emergency. Visitors often dial 911 from their cell phones but at times may not be able to get a signal. After collecting necessary information we will dial for them from our cell phones, if we have a signal, or from the Nature Center or Headquarters. Park Staff will follow up with an incident report.



# **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

## **ECO EXPLORERS SUMMER PROGRAM**

*by Carrie Sample*

The **Eco-Explorers summer program** will be held on Thursdays at 9:30-11:30, from June 11 through August. 6. We anticipate greater attendance than last year, because of both word-of-mouth publicity and great publicity in several newspapers. We will need 4 volunteers for each eco-explorers session. Please sign up on the special events calendar on the web site. Contact **Carrie Sample** if you have any questions.

## **MEETING NIGHT DINNERS**

*by Judy Strauss*

Thank you to **Cindy Peterson** for the delicious Meeting Night supper for May. It was absolutely wonderful! Don't forget to sign up for the meeting night suppers each month. As of my writing this, we still do not have anyone signed up for June. Please help if you can; or team up with someone else and split the meal up. It would be nice to have some "new cooks" on board....I do believe that everyone is getting tired of my meals!

Thanks, again, Cindy. We all enjoyed the meal very much!

# VOLUNTEER NEWS AND NOTES



## **JUNE BIRTHDAYS**

Anna Dell Williamson  
Glen Kilgore  
Jacob Ramirez

## **JULY BIRTHDAYS:**

Barb Tucker  
Susie Taylor (Staff)  
Martin Gay  
Diane Carpenter  
Debra Baker  
Joan Hebert  
Jaci Elliott

## **JUNE ANNIVERSARIES:**

Joe and Sue Carmichael (1953) (Emeritus)  
Nelda and Martin Gay  
Joan and Warren Jackson (Emeritus)  
Joyce and Darrell Giese

## **JULY ANNIVERSARIES:**

James and Joyce Blankenship

## **IN THE SPOTLIGHT**



Congratulations to **Zoe Boyer** and **Nancy Dobbs** on completing their VIT requirements and becoming full volunteers. Be sure to make them feel welcome. They are the first two to complete requirements from the February class.

## **JUNIOR VOLUNTEER TRAINING**

Junior Volunteer Training will be Saturday, June 20. The program is for children ages 8-14 who have an active volunteer sponsor, usually a parent, grandparent, or special friend. The Junior VITs for this training will be **Embry Morrison**, son of **Lyz** and **Jeff Culpepper**; **Kylie Kramer**, granddaughter of **Carrie Sample**; and **William Dobbs**, grandson of **Nancy Dobbs**. Be sure to give these young people a warm welcome to the BBSP Volunteer Organization.

## QUARTERLY HOURS

Just a reminder that June is the **last month of the second quarter**. You need to have 6 required quarterly hours reported by the end of June to maintain active status. Those hours may be in any combination of Nature Center, Gift Shop, firewood preparation, water station, or Creekfield hike. The 6 required quarterly hours can be completed in just one day a quarter, if you so choose.

By the end of the year, you will need to complete at least 48 hours to maintain active status, 24 in the required quarterly hours, and 24 general hours in whatever areas you choose. Remember that anything that benefits the park and the organization count, including hours put in at home, attendance at programs and hikes, and outreach. Report all your hours in the log book in the lounge.

## PADDLING TRIP AT ARMAND BAYOU

*by David Heinicke*

The May 19th paddling trip on the San Bernard River was so popular that we thought we would try to organize one every month. On **Monday, June 15**, at 9:00 AM, we will meet at Bay Area Park and paddle on Armand Bayou. Here's a link to TPWD paddling information about Armand Bayou - [http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fishboat/boat/paddlingtrails/coastal/armand\\_bayou/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fishboat/boat/paddlingtrails/coastal/armand_bayou/) Bring your canoe or kayak, PFD, water, snacks or lunch and anything else you might need. We'll paddle for a few hours, take a break and all that are interested can head out again. Please feel free to forward this to anyone that might be interested. All are welcome!

Note that we are meeting at the canoe/kayak launch at Bay Area Park (7500 Bay Area Boulevard) , not Armand Bayou Nature Center. If you have any questions please let me know.

Life's better outside!

## VOLUNTEER T-SHIRTS

*by Joan Jackson*

In the future you will be ably assisted by Cindy Peterson in handling your volunteer T-shirt orders. You may retrieve an order envelope from the plastic box hanging on the wall between the refrigerator and the door into the volunteer lounge. Consult the chart on the wall by the box, then fill out the envelope with your choice. Place payment (check made out to BBSP Volunteers preferred) and give it to one of the people: Diane Carpenter, Beth Debenport, Judy Strauss, Anna Dell Williamson, or Cindy Peterson. If none of these people is in the Center, then and only then, give it to Sharon or David. Please note the prices on the shirts. Larger sizes such as 3X are a little more. Cindy cannot process an order to our supplier until she has orders for 12 items or more. Please be patient in this regard.

WELCOME CINDY TO YOUR NEW POSITION FOR THE VOLUNTEERS. WE THANK YOU FOR TAKING THIS TASK.

## GOING WILD AT BRAZOS BEND STATE PARK

Justin Horne, meteorologist for KIAH, channel 39, interviewed David Heinicke recently and produced a news clip about the park and the alligators. The clip may be seen at: <http://www.39online.com/news/local/kiah-alligators-story,0,4508380.story>



## WHO'S IN THE GARDEN?

*by Joan Jackson*

This month we would like to introduce a new gardener, who has been working diligently in the garden since last fall. Her name is **Pam Tatge**, and she is a "master gardener" in more ways than one. She has been filling the garden with mostly native plants that are sure to do well at Brazos Bend; that is, barring any nibbling by deer and digging by the armadillos. She has done a marvelous job keeping the garden thriving and providing food for butterfly larvae and nectar for the adult butterflies. When it is time for the hummingbirds in the fall, they are sure to find nectar flowers to help them prepare for their journey south.

I'm sure if you have any questions about any plant that you see in the garden, Pam can fill you in with the information you seek. I hope she will have the time to add to the continuing education about the native plants and butterfly and hummingbird gardening that appears in our newsletter. Pam has many talents and she puts them all to good use in our volunteer organization.

I was delighted when she accepted this responsibility when I had to retire from the garden. THANK YOU PAM for your time and talent that you so willingly share with all of us. Give Pam a thank you and an encouraging pat on the back for all of her efforts the next time you see her.

## OUTREACH REPORT

*by Judy Strauss*

The last scheduled Outreach for the season was the Creekside Outdoor Expo at the Creekside Church in Needville. This event gives several scholarships and offers hunting demos and fishing tournaments for all ages. The attendance was small, but we were able to make contact with 163 visitors. We could not have asked for more beautiful weather.

Thank you so much to Jerry Carpenter, Dave Armstrong, Doris Dahse, and Debra Baker for all of your help during this event. We had a great time and got to enjoy some of the other activities and "going-ons" of the event.

I would like to offer a huge Thank You to each of you that helped me with all of the Outreach events this season.. I really think that we had at least twice as many this year (or at least it seemed like it) as we have had in the past, and this means that we ARE getting out the word about Brazos Bend State Park. I can't thank you all enough!

So to each of you that helped, take a deep breath and relax....they will be starting up again soon!



Volunteers **Dave Armstrong** and **Doris Dahse** at the Creekside Outdoor Expo

# VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

by Rick Dashnau

On Mother's Day I was riding my bike down the Spillway Trail towards Elm Lake. As I usually do, I was looking far ahead to see what some park visitors were up to. As I did, I saw two of them looking at me. One was looking through binoculars, and one was looking through a camera. At that distance, I couldn't be one hundred percent sure, but I couldn't think of anything near me that they could see at that distance. So...I smiled and waved. I usually do this if I can tell someone is looking through some device at me. What else is there to do?

When I got near to the people, I recognized one as a frequent visitor, but two other folks I hadn't met before. I talked to one for a while, and talked a bit about animals (you know how I am if given an opening). One visitor seemed quite interested, so I pointed them towards the VC, and also gave them the address of my website. Then I moved on.

I got a copy of a picture of me on the bike that evening in an email from Lynn Cole. Then, I got another email from him with this link:

[http://jjsmart.com/home/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=69:early-morning-at-brazos-bend-state-park&catid=20:walking-photos&Itemid=20](http://jjsmart.com/home/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=69:early-morning-at-brazos-bend-state-park&catid=20:walking-photos&Itemid=20)

That's some goober on the bike, eh? But, what's important is that he identified me by name...and posted the picture on a website. We can never know who's watching us, and how visitors ultimately bring their impressions of us away from the park. We wear name tags so they know \*who\* gave them these impressions. I think we all hope that those we share experiences with will have their day enhanced by that time. Here was an object lesson for me. It could have been a worse picture...and a worse impression. Then, that could influence their recollection of the entire day at the park. It was just a reminder to me that we can't ever know where our actions may have an effect.

## POISON IVY

The information below comes from the Poison Ivy, Oak and Sumac Information Center, web site: <http://poisonivy.aesir.com/view/fastfacts.html>

Urushiol Oil, which is the substance in poison ivy that causes the rash, is potent.

- \* Only 1 nanogram (billionth of a gram) needed to cause rash
- \* Average is 100 nanograms for most people
- \* 1/4 ounce of urushiol is all that is needed to cause a rash in every person on earth
- \* 500 people could itch from the amount covering the head of a pin
- \* Specimens of urushiol several centuries old have found to cause dermatitis in sensitive people.
- \* 1 to 5 years is normal for urushiol oil to stay active on any surface including dead plants
- \* Derived from urushi, Japanese name for lacquer

When the Japanese restored the gold leaf on the golden Temple in Kyoto, they painted the urushiol lacquer on it to preserve and maintain the gold. Guess you could say that you would be caught red handed if you stole it.

\*Poison Ivy, Oak, and Sumac

- \* Most common allergy in the country claiming half the population
- \* Sensitivity to urushiol can develop at any time
- \* Solutions or cures are those that annihilate urushiol



- \* Everyone appears to react slightly different to all the remedies.
- \* Covered by workers compensation in some states (CA, for example)
- \* First published records of poison ivy in North America date back to 1600s
- \* Poison Ivy coined by Captain John Smith in 1609
- \* Western Poison Oak discovered by David Douglas (1799-1834) on Vancouver Island. Douglas fir also named after him.
- \* People with serious deficiency in cellular (T-cell) immunity such as AIDS patients may not have problems with dermatitis.

\*Myths vs. Facts

**Myth:** *Poison Ivy rash is contagious.*

**Fact:** Rubbing the rashes won't spread poison ivy to other parts of your body (or to another person). You spread the rash only if urushiol oil -- the sticky, resinlike substance that causes the rash -- has been left on your hands.

**Myth:** *You can catch poison ivy simply by being near the plants*

**Fact:** Direct contact is needed to release urushiol oil. Stay away from forest fires, direct burning, or anything else that can cause the oil to become airborne such as a lawnmower, trimmer, etc.

**Myth:** *Leaves of three, let them be*

**Fact:** Poison sumac has 7 to 13 leaves on a branch, although poison ivy and oak have 3 leaves per cluster.

**Myth:** *Do not worry about dead plants*

**Fact:** Urushiol oil stays active on any surface, including dead plants, for up to 5 years.

**Myth:** *Breaking the blisters releases urushiol oil that can spread*

**Fact:** Not true. But your wounds can become infected and you may make the scarring worse. In very extreme cases, excessive fluid may need to be withdrawn by a doctor.

**Myth:** *I've been in poison ivy many times and never broken out. I'm immune.*

**Fact:** Not necessarily true. Upwards of 90% of people are allergic to urushiol oil, it's a matter of time and exposure. The more times you are exposed to urushiol, the more likely it is that you will break out with an allergic rash. For the first time sufferer, it generally takes longer for the rash to show up - generally in 7 to 10 days.

## ARMADILLO TRIVIA

*by Anna Dell Williamson*

*Smithsonian Magazine* for June, 2009, has an article on a brain neuron found only in humans, great apes, elephants, and whales that may be a factor in these animals being social creatures. However, as interesting as the article is, what caught my attention was this one sentence: "[The scientists] have found none [of the neurons] in the elephant's closest kin: the anteater, armadillo and rock hyrax." Now I have something else to say about the armadillo!



# NATURE CENTER REPORT

## MAY 2009

*Here are the totals of the various activities and attendance recorded for the Nature Center, hikes, and programs for May 1-31, 2009. There was one holiday, Memorial Day, with record breaking attendance.*

PROGRAMS	TOTALS
<b>NATURE CENTER ATTENDANCE</b> May 2009 - 8,578 (high 1026, 5/25, Memorial Day) May 2008 - 7,060	<b>Saturdays (5) – 2,491 -</b> <b>High, 604, 5/16</b> <b>Average: 498</b>
	<b>Sundays (5) – 2,171</b> <b>High, 654, 5/24</b> <b>Average: 434</b>
	<b>Weekdays (21)– 3,649</b> <b>High, 1026, 5/25</b> <b>Average, 174</b>
<b>CREEKFIELD HIKES (11)</b>	<b>165– High, 5/2–33</b>
<b>ALLIGATOR PROGRAMS (13)</b>	<b>375 - High, 5/9-105</b>
<b>BIRD PROGRAMS/HIKES (4)</b>	<b>61-- High, 5/8-20</b>
<b>SNAKE PROGRAMS (5)</b>	<b>152 – High, 5/2-49</b>
<b>CHILDREN’S STORY TIME (6)</b>	<b>98– High, 5/16-25</b>
<b>OUTREACH (1)</b>	<b>353</b>
<b>OTHER PROGRAMS (10)</b> includes videos, pond life, photo, ask the ranger, spotting scope and skulls	<b>158</b>
<b>TOTAL VISITORS SERVED IN HIKES AND PROGRAMS</b>	<b>1247</b>
<b>TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS IN INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS</b>	<b>511</b>

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 6	Close-up photography Photo-walk #1, 5:00 PM
June 13	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
July 4	Independence Day, NC open 9-5, Bicycle Parade 6:00 PM Photo-walk: Close-up photography #2, 5:00 PM
July 11	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
August 8	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
September 5	Photo-walk: Amphibian and reptile photography, 5:00 PM
September 7	Labor Day
September 12	New Volunteer Training, 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM Volunteer Orientation Potluck Lunch, 11:45 AM Regular meeting, 5:30 PM

# THE WISE GUYS

by Dennis Jones

Night hikes are significantly different from day hikes and the difference goes beyond light and dark. Walking in the “wilds” at night engages all the senses. Eyes strain to see through the darkness; smells gone unnoticed in daylight float in the air at night; sounds in the shadows come from everywhere and out of nowhere; you can feel the trail beneath your feet and the breeze against your cheek. It’s a mysterious place because it’s unfamiliar, different, dark, and maybe even a bit scary.

When you guide a night hike you never know what to expect. There’s no guarantee you will see wildlife, in most cases that’s about being at the right place at the right time. When leading a dozen or more people down a darkened trail the likelihood of being in the right place diminishes; especially when you’ve got some “Wise Guys” on the hike.

I begin each night hike with a talk to get everyone’s eyes adjusted to seeing in the dark. Bless their hearts, they reminded me so much of myself when I was a 9-year-old Cub Scout out on a lark with my pals. Having said that, the five of them were a handful from the get-go. I tried to get “cosmic” with them and encourage them to engage their senses, I should have known better, but some of the other participants appreciated what I was trying to say. You have to lead a hike for everybody, even if the wise guys want to lead it instead. I talked about how white light damages one’s ability to see in the dark and how on many nights a flashlight is not even needed. I immediately got a double shot of white light in my face by the “wise guys”. I did my “disappearing stick trick”, where I make a stick disappear into the darkness, hoping to impress them into attention. Nope, no deal; been there, done that, nothing I did could reach them.

We started down the trail and the parents of the “wise guys” had persuaded them to take up the rear of the hike and keep their white light to a minimum. Everyone else was walking the trail by moonlight. About halfway down the trail I had a surprise for my hikers. Above us in the trees was a vulture roost. As we approached they began to stir, raspy sounds came from above and the rustle of feathers could be heard. Suddenly scores of vultures took to the air with a thunderous clamor. We weren’t at risk of being pooped on, as vultures are inclined to do when disturbed, thank goodness, but our nearness made the silhouettes of the birds look huge as they resettled. It was wondrous and amazing to my hikers, except for the wise guys. They were terrified.

We stopped a while later and used a predator call of an injured rabbit to see if any animals would approach. The “wise guys” were clutching their mother’s legs as if they were baby opossums on a mama ‘possum’s back. The sound of the call was blood curdling, and it seemed to unnerve the wise guys even more. I cut the session short because the guys were really frightened and prolonging their agony would be cruel. We headed back to the trailhead and safety. Hopefully they were not permanently traumatized by their experience, and I certainly hope they will give the outdoors and the dark another try, but I would be willing to wager that next time they venture out into the darkness they won’t be “wise guys”. Take care. dj



Photo taken by visitor, May 2009

“It’s Hard to Get Ahead These Days”

## Brazos Bend State Park

Texas Parks and Wildlife  
21901 FM 762  
Needville, TX 77461

**FIRST CLASS MAIL**

→ **NEXT MEETING DAY AND TIME** ←  
**SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 2009, 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, supper at 5:00 PM
Bird Hikes	See schedule in calendar

### BRAZOS BEND STATE PARK VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION

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