



# BRAZOS BEND BUNCH BUGLE

VOLUME 21, NUMBER 11

NOVEMBER 2009

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Hope each of you has had time to enjoy the great weather outside! How unfair it is to have beautiful weather, but you are forced to stay inside. Only wish those commercials about allergy medicines were true...



A great big thanks to **Dave Armstrong, David Heinicke, Chuck Duplant** and **Mary Lockwood** for the completion of the sundial. Dave has spent many hours planning out (and worrying about) this project. Dave, take a deep breath — the sundial looks fantastic!

Two visitors recently mentioned to me how disappointed they were that the old sundial was not as great as the son had remembered from years ago at the park. Being the great volunteer organization that we are, we did not let this disappointment go unnoticed. He is presently attending A & M, but I am sure that when he does make it back to the park, he will have a big 'WOW' waiting for him! (See photo on Page 6).

Hope to see each of you at the park sometime soon!

*Carrie Sample*



### Thanksgiving Fun

If the Pilgrims were alive today, what would they be most famous for?

Their AGE!

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## STAFF REPORTS

### LEAD RANGER REPORT

*Contributed by Richard Taylor*

After many months of searing heat and drought, we have rain upon us. The great thing about it is our lakes are getting much-needed replenishment. You might occasionally see our new Resource Specialist **Dennis Jones** and Resource Ranger **JT Kalina** out in the air boat making close inspection of the lakes. Now that some of the summer plants have died out, they can get back in and see how the lakes are doing and what needs to be done to manage the invasive aquatics.

Much of our work over the summer was mowing, light pruning, and general maintenance. Ranger **Jim Gilliam** has done an excellent job managing our mowing plan to keep the grounds groomed. Park hosts **Randy Teague** and **Capt. Gene Schwantes** also contributed countless hours on the mowers and shredding the back fields of the park. We are now starting to slow down on the mowing due to all the rain we've had.

I would like to thank **Host Bobby Moore** for being ever-so-skilled with his hammer and nails and Skil saw. Bobby has been our guest carpenter for several months now, and whether he considers himself a "carpenter" or not, he's pretty good at it. Bobby has been working at the Assistant Manager's residence doing remodeling, mending wood problems throughout the park, and building new sign panels for our banners. Maintenance volunteer **Robert Tullas** comes out two or three times a week to assist Bobby. They have added an addition to the paint storage area inside the Maintenance Yard so we can set up to repaint park signs. Recently, Hostess **Charen Teague** repainted some of the back country trail signs. Charen unbolted the signs and brought them back to the shop, cleaned them up, repainted the brown color, and spent many hours repainting the yellow letters. We've gotten most of the gray signs repainted to brown and yellow. (NOTE: State Park regulations on sign colors allow for only two different colored signs — either brown with yellow lettering or white with red lettering. We are adding some green color throughout the park, just not on signs.) Charen has also repainted the water stations green and power washed various other things such as the "Ask the Ranger" station on the southwest side of Elm Lake and numerous benches. Hostess **Debbie Moore** has been edging the sidewalks around the park. The grass has been growing fast and keeping our edging up helps the Rangers. Debbie has also been very helpful ensuring the dining hall and shelters have been kept clean.

UPO Ranger **Blake Flessner** and UPO Backup Ranger **Jim Gilliam** recently passed the tests and achieved their Class C water licenses. A big hand to these two Rangers! They keep our water drinkable and our waste water in compliance.

You might see the loss of several trees in the park. Some of the larger oaks and a lot of the soapberry trees are dying. We've had to cut down a few that were posing dangerous conditions. Many thanks to the Volunteer Maintenance group for assisting in the cleanup.

Maintenance Tech V Mechanic **Jeff Orsak** has been busy keeping our equipment going, especially the lawnmowers. Jeff has been changing blades on our shredders and oil in everything. We recently had the backhoe in the shop for some transmission repair. Ranger **Gary Bialas** assisted Jeff in numerous repairs on equipment while helping out in the prairies spraying evasive plants. Gary is also our early morning Ranger who comes in and looks over the park first thing in the morning, making sure we stay on top of problems. With the recent high winds, Gary has done a great job keeping blown down limbs picked up.

Ranger **Devin Elster** has been doing an excellent job maintaining janitorial duties on the weekends, plus patrolling and answering frequent calls pertaining to park matters.

As for me, I handle a lot of behind-the-scenes activities. I'm involved with the daily work schedule for all the rangers and park hosts, record keeping, scout contact, purchasing supplies and materials, meeting with vendors, setting up repairs and assisting with them when I can, working on electrical problems, coordinating events and meetings, acting as liaison between the park and regional office on maintenance matters and equipment, reports, etc.

On November 6 I celebrated my one year anniversary at BBSP. The year went by fast and I can honestly say it has been enjoyable. I have the best co-workers in the world; they all are truly devoted to their job. The volunteer group and hosts are great to work with, and I look forward every day to making BBSP the best it can be.

## NATURE CENTER REPORT OCTOBER 2009



*Below are the totals of the various activities and attendance recorded for the Nature Center, hikes, and programs for October 1-31, 2009.*

PROGRAMS	TOTALS
<b>NATURE CENTER ATTENDANCE</b> October 2009 - 6258 (high 1100, 10/17) October 2008 -3759 (21 days)	<b>Saturdays (5) 3704</b> High, 1100, 10/17 Average: 741
	<b>Sundays (4) – 1455</b> High, 548, 10/18 Average: 364
	<b>Weekdays (22)– 1099</b> High, 305. 10/16 Average, 50
<b>CREEKFIELD HIKES (8 days)</b>	<b>396– High, 147 - 11/24</b>
<b>ALLIGATOR PROGRAMS (2)</b>	<b>88 - High, 46 - 10/10</b>
<b>BIRD PROGRAMS/HIKES (2)</b>	<b>91- High,52 - 10/10</b>
<b>SNAKE PROGRAMS (6)</b>	<b>117 – High, 29 - 10/17</b>
<b>CHILDREN’S STORY TIME (6)</b>	<b>90– High, 27 - 10/24</b>
<b>OUTREACH (1)</b>	<b>232</b>
<b>POND LIFE (1)</b>	<b>146</b>
<b>ASK THE RANGER (3)</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>OTHER PROGRAMS (8)</b> includes Halloween programs (3), photo walk, mammals, videos (2)	<b>129</b>
<b>TOTAL VISITORS SERVED IN HIKES AND PROGRAMS</b>	<b>1354</b>
<b>TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS IN INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS</b>	

# SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER MAINTENANCE REPORT

*submitted by Ron Morrison*

**Wood Yard:** Split 6 cords of wood.

**Mowing and Landscaping:**

Helped the rangers clear a dead oak tree at the entrance to the 200 Loop  
Cleared two blown-down limbs on the Hoots Hollow trail  
Cleared a blown-down pecan tree at the entrance to the 200 Loop

**Trail Trimming and Trail Maintenance:**

Trimmed the east side of the Creekfield Lake Trail (almost finished)  
Filled in trail topping on the Prairie trail, volunteer maintenance shed  
and around the approaches to the crossover bridges at overflow camping  
Cleared blown-down limbs from the Red Buckeye and Creekfield Forest trails  
Mowed the wood yard, Red Buckeye and Creekfield Forest trails



**Equipment Maintenance:**

Replaced the air filters on the MS200 & MS260 chainsaws  
Replaced the broken straps for the hydraulic hoses on the tractor  
Repaired the broken tailgate on the Kubota  
Repaired a loose handle on a lopper  
Repaired the broken handle on the small sledgehammer in the chainsaw toolbox  
Replaced the broken hood on the John Deere tractor  
Replaced the lost latch on the '06 Gator's tailgate  
Replaced the front tire on the Gator

**General Maintenance:**

Started hammering down protruding nails on bridges  
Cleared some debris left by HL&P when they cleared the power line right-of-way

**Pest Control:**

Treated Chinese tallow trees  
Treated fire ants at the nature center, wood yard, Creekfield Lake trail, 100 and 200 camping loops, and shelter camping areas

**Special Projects:**

Excavated the sundial as an archeological site. It took two 8-hour days with six to eight people to dig and sift and record the material.

## VEHICLE MAINTENANCE PROCEDURES

*Contributed by Ron Morrison*

Thanks to **Jeff Orsak** and his helpers, there is now a procedure in place for getting vehicles serviced when needed. There are maintenance stickers on each vehicle (Gator, Kubota). When you check out a vehicle, compare the vehicle's hour meter with the next service sticker to see if it needs service. If it does, leave a note in the vehicle, and leave the vehicle in the Maintenance area by the double doors in front of the maintenance garage. (One way to attach the note is to place it over the key and put the key in the ignition.)

## VOLUNTEER NEWS & NOTES

# Thank You!

... to **Jerry Carpenter, Sandy Jespersen, Rich Jespersen, Ray Anderson, Doris Dahse, and Eddy Grizzaffi** for their help with Texian Market Days on Friday, and **Jane Minard, Connie Waltrip, Jim North, Marilyn Vossler, Debra Baker, Jerry Zona, Christine Kovach, Glen Kilgore and Joan Hebert** for their help with Texian Market Days on Saturday!

### NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Ray Anderson  
Nelda Gay (Emeritus)  
David Heinicke (Staff)  
Linda Hite  
Steve Killian (Staff)  
Patricia Marshall  
Curtis Parent  
Terry Williamson



### DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Robert Aaron  
Beth Debenport  
Melissa Moody (Staff)  
Jeff Orsak (Staff)  
Frank Willett

## GHOSTS ALONG THE BRAZOS

*Contributed by Sharon Hanzik*

Thank you to those who helped out Halloween weekend, although it wasn't terribly busy (that can happen when Halloween falls on a Saturday and every community has a special event, and then there's recovery the day after). The pond life program was a success (146 visitors) and my fellow storytellers stayed later than usual to help me out. Fifty visitors attended the Friday night movie organized by the Watson family, 13 attended the Halloween storytime, and 14 completed the Creepfield Scavenger Hunt.

### Thanksgiving Fun

The pro football team had just finished their daily practice session when a large turkey came strutting onto the field. While the players gazed in amazement, the turkey walked up to the head coach and demanded a tryout. Everyone stared in silence as the turkey caught pass after pass and ran right through the defensive line. When the turkey returned to the sidelines, the coach shouted, "You're terrific!!! Sign up for the season, and I'll see to it that you get a huge bonus."

"Forget the bonus," the turkey said, "All I want to know is, does the season go past Thanksgiving Day?"



# OUTREACH REPORT: TEXIAN MARKET DAYS

*Contributed by Judy Strauss*



Texian Market Days at the George Ranch is always our largest Outreach, but this year we really outdid ourselves. The weather could not have been more beautiful, and, although we did not get a chance to "visit" on Friday, Saturday was a bit slower and we were able to take turns seeing what else was going on at the Ranch.

Friday was geared towards the school kids, who started arriving about 10:00 and never stopped until about 2:00. There were times when we had 60 to 80 people at our booth at one time, but I can't remember any time when we had fewer than 20. Not too much interpretation going on, but a lot of touching the alligator and snakes! When they were gone, they were gone! We saw 2,740 visitors, mostly school children, on Friday.

Saturday started a bit earlier than planned, about 8:30, and we started breaking down at 5:00. The crowds were lighter in volume (they didn't come 60-80 at a time), and seemed to be full of questions, which was a relief after Friday's hustle. A lot more one-on-one going on and many more smaller children, which is always enjoyable. We "clicked in" 1,979 on Saturday.



**Texian Market Days at the George Ranch**  
Photo by Judy Strauss

I've always said that we can never have "too many" Volunteers at these events, and this weekend was truly proof of this. Thank you to each and every one of you who helped with this event. For some of you this was your first time at TMD, or even your first time with an Outreach program, and I really hope that you enjoyed it and were not too overwhelmed. And to my "pros", I hope you enjoyed it too. As always, I could never have made it happen without you! (See list of names in the Thank You column).

## SUNDIAL

*Contributed by Sharon Hanzik*



Photo by Chuck DuPlant

The Sundial is complete! Thanks to Dave Armstrong, Mary Lockwood, Chuck DuPlant, and a host of volunteers who participated in the cultural excavation that took place prior to it's construction.

*From **Anna Dell Williamson:***

Sunday was a very cloudy day. When I passed the new sundial, I couldn't help but think, "We have this beautiful new sundial, and it's already broken." Bruce says its battery is dead.

# A SIMPLE CHRISTMAS

*Contributed by Sharon Hanzik*

Now that Halloween is behind us, we are on to a bigger special event. Our Simple Christmas event is just a month away — December 5th. We won't have any changes this year because what we currently do is still a success. We will need help before the event in the following areas:

S'more Making: Coordinator **Glen Kilgore** needs help melting chocolate into thin layers. This works better than a thick piece of candy bar. Please notify Glen if you will be able to do a few days before the event. He will be out of town and will not have time to do it. I'm sure Glen can give you the particulars. hgkilgo@yahoo.com

Refreshments: Coordinator **Beth Debenport** is looking for several people to help her prepare and serve the refreshments. Cookies are store bought but wassail and hot chocolate mix need to be prepared in advance. Contact Beth at debenports@yahoo.com

Corn shuck dolls: **Joan Hebert** will coordinate a group to help children make these dolls. Please contact Joan at jhebert53@yahoo.com

The above activities need advanced preparation, so if you can help with prep but not be at the event, that's okay. If you cannot help with prep but can assist in the event, sign up on the Special Events Calendar (see link below). If you can do both, contact the coordinator and then sign up. <http://www.brazosbend.org/calendar/christmas1.htm>

## VOLUNTEER FIELD TRIP



San Jacinto Monument  
*Photo by Jerry Zona*

October 21, 6 BBSPVO members and two grandsons were treated to a private tour of the San Jacinto Monument and Battleship Texas. Our tour guides took us on a marsh walking tour, then took us up in the San Jacinto Monument for a view of the battlegrounds, Ship Channel and more. After a movie about the Battle of San Jacinto, we had a picnic lunch on the Battleship Texas grounds. The afternoon was spent on the Battleship Texas, looking at everything from the big guns to the brig. Thanks to **Sharon Hanzik** for organizing the tour. Everyone had a great time.



Battleship Texas  
*Photo by Jerry Zona*



Aboard the Battleship Texas  
*Photo by Judy Strauss*



## Thanksgiving Fun

Q: Why can't you take a turkey to church?

A: Because they use such *FOWL* language.

## RAT SNAKE EXPERIENCE

*Contributed by Jerry Zona*

Earlier this year our two resident rat snakes got together and produced about sixteen eggs. They were incubated and most hatched. I brought two home. My intention was for it to be a learning experience and not to keep the snakes as pets. I bought a supply of "pinkies", baby mice (quite pricey). Right off the bat the snakes were not very nice. They would strike every time I went into the cage. I lost one shortly due to my makeshift cage. I went and purchased a proper snake cage. I know that we should not name our animals, but I started to call the remaining snake, "Miss Piggy". Every third day I would present a pinkie which she would strike and shortly after she would swallow.

Sharon e-mailed me one day and asked to give my snake to another park. I said OK. On the last night when I fed Miss Piggy again, I did not properly close the cage, and she got out that night. The next morning when I went out to feed her, I saw the cage was not closed properly and the snake was gone. My stomach dropped. I let Sharon down. I'll do better the next time. Hopefully the snakes will produce another litter this coming year, and I'll get another chance.

Anyway....

For Sharon:

I'm Sorry, So Sorry  
Please accept my apologies  
I lost the snake  
You promised to donate  
What can I say





# OTTER SIGHTING

*Contributed by Rich Dashnau*

On Sunday, October 18 I had been out at Creekfield Lake since about 8:00 a.m., hoping to see an otter. I didn't have any luck, so I decided to go back to the Nature Center. I met Sharon entering the trail as I was walking out, so I decided to turn back and talk to her for a while.

As we were crossing the footbridge, I caught a quick glimpse of something in the water off to my left, towards the long pier. It was rounded, greyish, and about 4 inches thick. As I turned to look at it, it submerged. It was about 15 feet from the bridge. I looked around, but didn't see whatever it was break the surface again. But I thought I saw a couple of disturbances in the duckweed moving towards the bridge. Meanwhile I was thinking (as many of us do), "was that an otter? No way that could have been an otter that close."

We stayed on the bridge for a few minutes, and as we talked, I kept looking around. I noticed ripples right next to the bridge, but when I looked over the rail, I only saw a closing clear spot in the duck weed. Then I saw some groups of bubbles moving away from us, indicating something under the water was disturbing weeds. An otter surfaced about 20 feet away! It immediately dove, and kept moving away from us, surfacing briefly.

It seemed to be moving towards the center of the lake, so Sharon and I hurried to the long pier with the hope the otter would pass us. It didn't, but as we stood on the pier, Tom and his Creekfield Hike appeared near the bridge. Apparently someone on the hike saw the otter moving back towards the bridge. And that was it.

I did get some video clips, which I've edited and put online.

Here's a link to it: [http://rickubis.20m.com/otter\\_crkfld10182009.wmv](http://rickubis.20m.com/otter_crkfld10182009.wmv)



With the cool weather, and all the rain, I hope otters will be popping up all over!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

November 13	Bird Hike, 8:00 AM, 40-Acre Lake restroom building
November 14	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
November 16-19	Deer Hunt, park closed
November 26	Thanksgiving
December 4	Bird Hike, 8:00 AM, 40-Acre Lake restroom building
December 5	Simple Christmas
	Photo-walk: Landscape photography #3, 3:00 PM
	Bird Hike, 5:00 PM, Observation Tower
	Brazos River Pickers, 5:00 - 7:00 PM, Amphitheater
December 12	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
December 13	Bird Hike, 8:00 AM, 40-Acre Lake restroom building
December 14-17	Deer Hunt, park closed
December 19	25th Christmas Bird Count, 6:30 a.m.
December 25	Christmas
December 26	Bird Hike, 5:00 PM, Observation Tower
2010	
January 2	Brazos River Pickers, 5:00 - 7:00 PM, Amphitheater
January 8	Bird Hike, 8:00 AM, 40-Acre Lake restroom building
January 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, DECEMBER 12, 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

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.

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

#### **VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION OFFICERS**

President:	<b>Carrie Sample</b>
Vice-President:	<b>Suzie Gann</b>
Secretary:	<b>Eddy Grizzaffi</b>
Treasurer:	<b>Dave Carpenter</b>

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

#### **NEWSLETTER TEAM**

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