

BRAZOS BEND

BELLOW

November/December 2014



From our Superintendent, *Jason Castle*

A Home for the Holidays

“The holidays are right around the corner, and we want to highlight our furry friends this season. “A Home for the Holidays” will be our special event coming up on December 14th from 10-2pm and we’re inviting our community animal shelters to bring homeless dogs out and interact with the park visitors to hopefully find their forever home. There will be activities such as “Walk a Homeless Dog,” programs, crafts, and a blood drive with the Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center. We’re hoping to get at least 15 people signed up to donate blood and appointments can be made through this link, https://www.commitforlife.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/394073

There will also be a donation drive for the shelter animals. This is the list of approved items to donate... **Ziploc bags (gallon size), Peanut butter (xylitol-free), Milk Bones/Treats, Chuck It! ball dog toys (medium), Paper towels, Towels/Blankets, and Hand Sanitizer.**

Please be on the lookout for the calendar to sign up and help make this a fun filled day!”

Jason Castle, continued

“Brazos Bend is rich in wildlife and one of the aspects of managing these resources is population control. Aside from hiking, biking and camping, hunting is another avenue of recreation that helps to manage these resources. During the week of November 18th, the park was closed to facilitate a drawn hunt for managing White-Tailed deer populations, as well as feral hogs. The reason for this management tool is that over population of deer result in unhealthy populations, and this opportunity ensures that we’re in line with our mission. Lots of prep work went into making this hunt a positive experience for all that participated, even if they weren’t successful in harvesting a deer. A big thank you to everyone involved with this preparation because the true success is the visitor experience.

Congratulations to Our New Volunteers



Sharon Gavin

Linda Caldwell



Patricia Cabraerae

From our Volunteer Coordinator,

Jessica Bullard

While December does not have lots of school groups or any out-reach events, it will be busy with larger events. The first event will be December 7th with the Brazos Bend 100 foot race. Anyone wishing to volunteer for this event, please contact me (Jessica). The week of Dec 9 through 12th the park will be closed for a public hunt, so no volunteer activity through those dates. However, the Saturday after, December 14th, we will have the Home for the Holidays, shelter dog holiday event. This will be from 10-2 and will also have a few programs to go along with the dog hikes. Both events will be lots of fun and I am excited to be able to participate. But don't forget, January 1st is approaching, and First Day Hike will be happening! And of course, I want to wish everyone a happy holiday season!

I was thinking of making an Alligator Stew for dinner, but then I realized I only have a croc pot.



Notes from our November Meeting

Jason Castle reported that they will be checking on prices for future purchase of boards to replace / repair seating at the amphitheater. Jason is looking at \$1,600 for this project but he is still pricing and will present to board once finalized.

Funds are needed to purchase Awning structure to cover amphitheater as this should provide protection from elements and allowing for more programs to be offer. Awning would be constructed of heavy metals and sails of heavy sturdy fabric. Cost is projected at \$10,040, and this lead to an open conversation of “why not metal building”? Soliciting donations by individual I volunteers will be looked into.

Wood Yard: Volunteers completed resurfacing the roadside trail which runs from NC to beyond Pilant Slough Bridge, hoping to complete resurfacing Elm Lake trail, completed resurfacing roadside trail from NC to old Wood yard and beyond 200 loop road. Future materials are needed to complete roadside trail to Elm Lake and resurface northern leg of Elm Lake trail. Stockpile of granite base material is now expended. Materials used were recommended per Park Staff

Conducted an initial clearing of Red Buckeye trail short loop and portion of the long loop, this will allow easier access to personnel and equipment. *Continued of next page.*

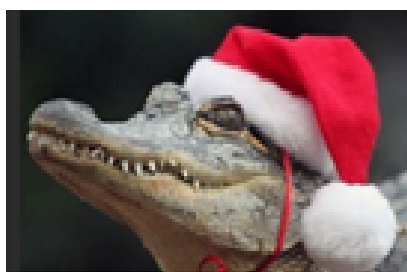
Notes from November Meeting *continued*

Conducted an initial clearing of Red Buckeye trail short loop and portion of the long loop, this will allow easier access to personnel and equipment.

Split and bundled from log stockpiled and have 19 cords of bundled wood and ready for sales once burn ban is lifted. Wood yard personnel involved in all of this work generally consisted of 3 to 5 people. They worked each Tuesday and Thursday for 4 to 5 hours each day.

Linda Heinicke reported that items are selling as fast as they are order, great!!! Gift shop is being kept open more as new volunteers come aboard. New shelves ordered for just stuff animals. Dana is assisting with food orders, Susie assisting with t-shirts, and Linda is assisting with the other many tasks.

David Heinicke stated that last group of VIT are in process of completing their needed hours, and with new Volunteer Class to start January 11th and 18th 2025, at this time we have 13 enrolled.



Alligators can grow up to 15 feet, but most only have 4.

Never play cards with an alligator; it's a sure way to lose a hand.

Alligator philosophy: If it moves, it's food.



HATS OFF TO VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH!!!

Anne Shelton

Congratulations to Anne Shelton for being selected as our Newsletter Volunteer for the Month! Anne became a volunteer (along with her husband, John) in 1975. As a side note, David Heinicke was also a volunteer then and actually led their training classes. Her favored activity was leading scheduled bird hikes with her husband and the our most recent Emeritus volunteer, Rob Thacker. Later on Bill Godley* started leading the hikes, followed by various people now. Anne became the webmaster in 2011 and served in that position for 13 years. We teasingly called her the 'Queen of the Web'. Her favorite memory at the park was seeing the Vermillion Flycatcher in a scope with the help of Beth and Ken Davenport*. She also enjoyed take her granddaughter, Leah, to the park. Leah became a junior volunteer.

She retired from the United Space Alliance where she worked for 28 years. (*Bill Godley and Beth and Ken Davenport were long time volunteers who have passed away.)



Thanks to Jerry Carpenter for sharing his pictures with us. The top two pictures were taken when Jerry and Diane took their 2 grandsons to watch David's hummingbird banding and walk around Creekfield Lake.



Northern Shoveler



Blue -Gray Gnatcatcher



Green Winged Teal



Bald Eagle



Great Blue Heron
with a Broad Banded
Water Snake



Wood Duck

Howdy folks.

11/10/2024 I was on the North loop of 40-Acre Lake in Brazos Bend State Park. Since the light was bad, I practiced taking pictures of a Great Blue Heron.

I shot one burst, and lost the Heron. Then it walked onto the trail near the wire marking an old alligator nest. I had just raised the camera and refocused on the Heron when it bent over and speared something from the other side of the trail. I was at least 50 yards away, but I could see the red, black, and yellow bands. Holy cow! A Coral Snake! I shot 2 quick bursts, but the Heron wouldn't turn towards me.

Then I swapped to a camera with more range. I took one photo and caught some video. I lost the Heron after that. The colors of the snake stood out in the dim morning light (it was about 8am). In the video, the Heron may have shaken off the snake's attempt to bite its bill. Some folks may recall the short rhyme about coral snakes. But for Herons, it's probably:

"Red touch yellow--eat that fellow. Red touch black--another snack." This was probably a Texas Coral Snake (*Micrurus tener*). After spending many years taking pictures outside, this is only the second time I've seen a Coral Snake out in the wild. I was really happy about this, even though it didn't go well for the snake.

The video: http://www.rickubis.com/rick/gbheron_coral_111024.mp4
One picture shows how far away I was when the Heron walked off the trail. This is another example of why I consider Great Blue Herons an apex predator in this environment. They can eat almost anything. There are examples on my Great Blue Heron page. <http://www.rickubis.com/rick/brazbird6b.html>

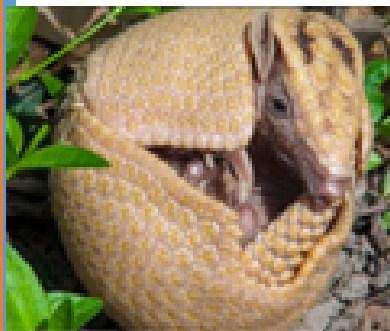
This article was written by Rick Dashnau. Rick has been a volunteer since 2001. He does roving interpretation on Sundays. His pockets are full of props to show visitors about life at the park.

FUN FACTS ABOUT ARMADILLOS



Scientists have concluded that Armadillos evolved from the Glyptodont. They ranged from Southern United States to the Patagonia region of South America 12,000 years ago and was the size of a Volkswagen Beetle.

There are 21 species of Armadillos. Our armadillo is the 9 banded armadillo. They cannot not



roll into a ball like the 3 banded armadillo pictured to the left.

The Giant Armadillo species is five feet, weighs about 72 pounds, and lives in South America.

Our 9 Banded Armadillo:

Has a sticky tongue that aids catching ants and termites.

They are omnivores, eating both plants and animals, although they prefer bugs.

Can jump 3 to 4 feet high when frightened.

Uses his claws to quickly dig borroughs when being chased by a predator. Often has several borroughs and tunnels that offers refuge.

Has very poor eyesight.

Can smell 8 inches under the ground to help locate insects.

Has 2 choices for crossing a waterway. He can swim on top of the water, or he can walk on the bottom of the water to the other side.

Mother armadillo always has 4 babies which are either all boys or all girls.

BBSP Volunteer Organization

Elected Officers

President: Carrie Sample

Vice President: David Heinicke

Secretary: Susie Taylor

Treasurer: Linda Caldwell

Position 1: Randy Kepner

Position 2: Brenda Tuntland

Last President Mike Emmons

Comptroller: Bob Kowalewski

Webmaster: Doug Stewart

Gift Shop: Linda Heinicke

Woodyard: Alan Gradet

Newsletter Editor: Carrie Sample

Notes from the Newsletter Editor

Carrie Sample

This newsletter is a new challenge.

Please *Bear* with me...

