



BRAZOS BEND BUNCH BUGLE

VOLUME 22, NUMBER 5

MAY 2010

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

I hope everyone has been able to enjoy this beautiful weather. Once again, I drove six hours to look at birds and could have seen more birds 20 minutes away at Brazos Bend!

I was so excited to see a large turnout for our new Building Committee meeting. We will be meeting again on May 8th, so send your ideas for the building to Chuck DuPlant and come to the meeting. Personally I would love to see a wrap-around wide porch with benches to enable visitors to watch the natural scenery (with a bird feeder or two hanging around).

We will miss **Elmer and Rose Aden** very much as they move to San Angelo. Elmer always gave such good advice at the monthly volunteer meetings. It seemed to me that he always let us 'youngsters' toss around the topic pretty well before he stepped in to give his most logical advice.

Glad to see **Jerry Zona** able to take pictures of the park again!

The Eco-Explorers program is currently taking registration. We are limiting participants to 25. For outdoor activities I would like to break them down into groups of five. If any of you has extra time on Thursday mornings this summer, come out and give us a hand!

I recently visited two state parks and the friendly atmosphere doesn't even compare to ours at Brazos Bend. Thank you, volunteers, for making our park so special. I have to include the park personnel, also, who support and lead us in our endeavors. It has been great getting to know our new VIT'S as they are finishing their training. They seem to fit in so well.

Thanks for all that you do!

Carrie Sample

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APRIL MEETING NOTES

Contributed by Anna Dell Williamson

Vice-President **Suzie Gann** called the meeting to order. There were 13 volunteers, 3 staff members and 2 VITs present. The minutes of the March meeting were approved as posted. Staff members brought their reports, which are published elsewhere in this issue.

BUDGET REPORT: **Dave Armstrong** brought the financial report, which is filed in the book in the lounge. Dave presented the following requests for funds, which were approved:

- **Chuck DuPlant**, Building Committee Chairperson, requested that we set aside an amount per month from Funds Available for the Building Fund.

Dave also reported that the Annual Report is being sent to Steve and TPWD, to tell our story, and discuss the good things we've done. The report will be available for potential donors. The Income Tax statement has been completed.

GIFT SHOP: **Beth Debenport** thanked people for working weekdays and weekends. We are busy keeping up with inventory. We have had good sales in March and April. We have new guides for southeast Texas snakes, butterflies and birds which are very good publications.

WOOD SALES: **Chuck DuPlant** reported that sales are going fast. We have a new supplier and will be getting wood in soon. We went through 7.5 cords of wood in March. **Chris Bishop** expressed his appreciation for the help from the volunteers in this area.

BUILDING COMMITTEE: **Chuck DuPlant** reported that the first meeting went well. Eighteen members discussed ideas. The next meeting will be May 8 at 1:00 PM. If you have any ideas, send them to Chuck or come to the meeting.

Suzie Gann mentioned having some sort of groundbreaking and grand opening celebrations for the Elm Lake Platform Project. Suggestions are welcome. Contact Chuck or Suzie with ideas.

OUTREACH: **Anna Dell Williamson** reported for **Judy Strauss**, who was at an outreach program today in Katy. 1,335 visitors came by our booth at the Katy Folk Festival today. **Cynthia Morales**, **Elizabeth Villanueva**, **Jim North**, and **Diane Kerr** assisted. April 17 is the Greatwood Spring Fling, and April 24 is the Rosenberg Railroad Museum Hobo Day. Sign up for these programs on the events calendar and call Judy Strauss with questions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: The Williamson's visited **Rose and Elmer Aden** last week in the nursing home. **Joe Carmichael** visited the park today.

The meeting was adjourned.

STAFF REPORTS



CHRIS BISHOP, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

March 2010 was a record revenue month, Spring Break produced record revenues, and Easter Sunday was a record revenue day. During Spring Break I saw the best in staff and volunteers. When I visited the Nature Center I was thrilled to see volunteer hosting and interpretive skills.

Elm Lake Wetlands: The Corps of Engineers have the permit in hand, and after some clarification questions it should be approved soon.

Mowing season: **Chuck DuPlant** asked that the mowers let the flowers go to seed so we can have more flowers next year.

Weekend staff: There has been a change in staff operations. There will be a Maintenance Ranger on duty every weekend until summer.

Programs: Youth Conservation Crew and the Texas Family Outdoor programs are both going on this weekend.

TV program: April 7, KHOU aired a program on Texas State Parks. Filming was done at BBSP, and **Justin Rhodes**, **Steve Killian** and **David Heinicke** are all shown, along with a visitor to the Nature Center who was very enthusiastic about the park. To view the clip, go to the KHOU website and key in BBSP.

Park presentation: At the Texas State Parks Conference, a template for PowerPoint presentations was demonstrated which can be customized for a park to present information to community groups and grant organizations to let people know of the park, how funding has helped, and what needs we will have if funds are cut. The BBSP presentation is almost ready.

TxParks: TxParks is a new software system that is custom-designed for TPWD, and may help with some of the rigorous fiscal control requirements. It will be online soon, and office staff and administrators will attend training in April.

Equestrian trails: The trails are all open, and we have had visitors during the last few days.

Funding: BBSP has submitted a list of needs to the Regional Office, if any additional funds come to us.

Front Gate: **Dave Armstrong** asked if there is any progress toward a system to get volunteers through the front gate faster. Staff is working on ideas, perhaps to set up a second lane to screen folks with permits through faster.

New position: The Park Operations Trainee position will be filled by mid May. There is a strong applicant pool and interviews will be held in the next week or so.

Headquarters: Sunday office hours are changing to open at 8:00 AM instead of 7:00 AM.

SHARON HANZIK, INTERPRETIVE RANGER



School groups: We are booking more than we did last year, and all available days through the second week of May are booked. We need help and you can sign up on the events calendar.

Brazos Pickers: April program was rescheduled for May 8.

May 15: the authors of *Texas Crawdads* will give several presentations about crawfish.

Eco-Explorers: Schedule and information will be on the Web soon. There will be 2 classes, the older group on Thursdays and programs on alternate Tuesdays for the younger group (Tadpoles). It will take place from early June through early August, by reservation only.

New volunteers: **Rebecca Sykes** and **Kevin Brantley**, VITs from our current training class, are present tonight at the meeting. Both have completed Phase 1. **Jo Ann Davis** is also in Phase 2. **Carl Franke** has finished his training. **Nancy Lynn Jones** from the September class will finish Sunday after she presents her alligator program.

Bobcat exhibit: **Jo Ann Davis** helped us get a bobcat donated by Sparks Taxidermy. It will be put in a protected area.

DAVID HEINICKE, PARK NATURALIST AND LAW OFFICER



Thanks for all the help over the three-day Easter weekend. We were very busy and all the help was appreciated. Volunteers were busy helping out everywhere — Nature Center, Gift Shop, trails, wood bundling.

Eagle Scout Project: There is a new Orienteering course in the Hale Lake area. Maps are in a folder behind the desk, and also will be scanned and placed on the web site. This course is slightly more advanced than the one near the NC.

Wilderness Houston, Mission Possible: When a visitor asks for the Nature Challenge worksheet, you will find it in the mail box under the AED machine behind the NC counter. All answers can be found around Creekfield and in the Nature Center. When it is returned, there are stickers available to put on the form.

Student Conservation Corps: The group is working today and tomorrow, trimming on Live Oak Trail. **Chuck DuPant** did a Prairie Hike with them.

Migration Celebration: This will be held in Brazoria County next week. David will be assisting at this event. The following weekend, we will have several bird programs here.



RICHARD TAYLOR, LEAD RANGER

Mowing: The Spring flowers are almost gone. We are now mowing in most of the areas that were set aside for flowers. The tall grass is hard on our mowers. Park Mechanic **Jeff Orsak** has been busy trying to keep them going.

New residence and host sites: All of the underground work is completed and the contractors will be out to install the overhead electrical and service panels soon. The Rangers have been doing a good job constructing the sites.

Headquarters Expansion: Work is ongoing and will progress soon.

Trail trimming: As the foliage comes out we are finding a lot of trees encroaching onto the trails and roadways. We are trying to trim them up so they don't interfere with campers and hikers. This also includes trail maintenance by mowing, shredding, patching, and weed eating. Please advise staff members when hazards exist so we can get on them quickly.

Ike cleanup: Next week Rangers **Jeff Orsak** and **JT Kalina** will be assisting in a team effort to cut down dead trees at Galveston Island State Park. Rangers from all over the Region will assist in this effort. The trees were killed from all the salt water that came in during Hurricane Ike.

New bath houses: Remodeling of the BBSP 100 and 200 Loop restrooms and showers will begin in July this year. We ask everyone to be patient during this process. Plans are to bring in portable showers and restrooms. Planned completion is November 2010. These are much-needed renovations to our 26 year old facilities.

Spring fawns: We ask everyone to be cautious when driving thru the park. These little fellows are new to the world and will dart out into the roadways chasing after their mothers. And please remember, if you see a fawn, view from a distance and don't try to pick it up.

Facebook: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department – Brazos Bend State Park is now on Facebook. We encourage everyone to become a “fan” and write in on your experiences at BBSP and post your pictures. Our fan club is growing fast — in just over a month we've gained 500 members.

Trails: Live Oak Trail remains closed and is too wet to open to the public. It will remain closed until further notice. The Equestrian trails were opened recently but had to close again due to the recent rainfall.

Have a good time and stay safe. Enjoy what the park has to offer. Tell your friends and family to come see us.

BBSP IN THE NEWS

HAPPY CAMPERS: Todd Frantz of the Fort Bend Herald related a recent camping trip with his wife and 5-year-old daughter at BBSP. For the complete story, click on or type the URL below:

<http://www.fbherald.com/articles/2010/03/23/opinion/doc4ba8e62df26cb471339072.txt>



NATURE CENTER REPORT

March 2010

Contributed by Anna Dell Williamson

Below are the totals of the various activities and attendance recorded for the Nature Center, hikes, and programs for March 1-31, 2010. In spite of a few cold, wet days, we had record park attendance and record Nature Center attendance during Spring Break.

PROGRAMS	TOTALS
NATURE CENTER ATTENDANCE April 2010 - 8300 (high 1054, 4/17) April 2009 - 5739 April 2008 - 6387 April 2007 - 7399	Saturdays (4) 3504 High, 1054, 4/17 Average: 876
	Sundays (4) – 1952 High, 600, 4/4 (Easter) Average: 611
	Weekdays (21) – 2844 High, 783, 4/2 (Good Friday) Average, 257
CREEKFIELD HIKES (3 days)	131– High, 72 - 4/24
ALLIGATOR PROGRAMS (2)	46 - High, 34 - 4/3
BIRD PROGRAMS (7)	285- High, 161 - 4/24
SNAKE PROGRAMS (4)	153 – High, 57 - 4/17
CHILDREN’S STORY TIME (5)	80– High, 30 - 6/9
OUTREACH (2)	1675
POND LIFE	60
OTHER PROGRAMS (5) includes photo hike, hummingbirds, prairie, poison ivy, owls	281
TOTAL VISITORS SERVED IN HIKES AND PROGRAMS	2521

JUST FOR GRINS . . .

You’ve probably noticed that roadkill never includes crows, though they spend plenty of time in the road. This is because they help each other out. When one is in the road, there’s always another one up a tree yelling, “Car! Car!”

OUTREACH REPORT

Contributed by Judy Strauss

The Katy Folk Festival, April 10, started off extremely wet, but after a couple of hours turned into a beautiful day! This was my first time attending this event, and, I must say, I was really impressed! It was held on the grounds of the Katy ISD Outdoor Learning Center, which, to my understanding, is only opened to the public this one time a year. The Learning Center has a barnyard area, barn, science classroom building, history classroom building, caretakers Cottage, ponds and a small garden, all tucked away amid beautiful trees and trails.

Besides our BBSPVO booth, there were draft horses, cheese making, quilting, weaving, soap making, clay play, blacksmith area, beekeeping, Texas cowboy camp, Native Americans, wildlife rehab, TCP Master Naturalists, Katy Prairie conservation, doll making, and many other activities.

My sincere thanks to **Jim North, Diane Kerr, Cynthia Morales** and **Elizabeth Villanueva** for their help with the BBSPVO booth. We clicked 1,335 visitors — even after two hours of pouring rain!

Saturday, April 17 took us to the Greatwood Spring Fling in Sugar Land. This was their third year hosting this event, and our first time attending. There was a lot of concern about the weather, but it turned out to be a beautiful day and brought out lots of visitors. This event included a live band with various singers (all were great), pony rides, face painting, moonwalk, a magician, martial arts demos, costumed characters, fire truck, rock climbing wall (I almost tried it), petting zoo, putt-putt golf, and various food vendors (including an ice cream stand), and other vendors that I am sure I missed! We clicked in 1,173 at this event

My thanks to **Diane and Jerry Carpenter** for bringing out the tables and critters from the Park, and for coming out early to help me set up. They also worked the afternoon shift. The morning crew included **Marty and Nelda Gay** and **Susie Gann**. Thank you all so much for your help with this event.

Saturday, April 24 took us to the Rosenberg Railroad Museum Hobo Day in Rosenberg. Again, the weather was extremely doubtful Friday night, but Saturday brought another beautiful day! The Railroad Museum had "real" hobos and a hobo camp with both the "real" hobos and the hobo re-enactors. There is a very interesting story behind the hobos, past and present. This was a fundraiser event for the museum, so I was not really expecting a huge crowd. However, we did log 502 visitors.



**Booth at Rosenberg Railroad Museum
Hobo Day**



In addition to the tours of the Museum, the business car, Quebec, the caboose, the switching tower, and the model train center, there was a clown, face painting, trackless train rides, two moonwalks, various games and crafts, Mickey and Minnie Mouse costumed interpreters, re-enactors, "speeders" exhibit, and various food vendors. Local businesses were open, and fun was had by all! My thanks to **Christine Kovach, Connie Waltrip, Anna Dell** and **Bruce Williamson, and Glen Kilgore** for their help with this event.

There are only two more events scheduled for this season: Saturday, May 1st in Needville, and on Sunday, May 2nd at Dewberry Farms in Brookshire. Please check the events calendar and sign up if you can help to promote our Park!

VOLUNTEER NEWS & NOTES



... to **Judy Strauss** for coordinating the Outreach Program. Judy has had several weekends in a row of outreach activities. We appreciate your hard work, Judy.

... to **Cindy Peterson** for the April meeting supper and to **Diane Carpenter** for the chocolate cake.

... to all the wood bundlers and the weekday work crews for splitting and bundling. **Jim Calvert, Ed Waley, and Jennifer and Curtis Parent** have spent a lot of time working in the wood yard, as have many others.

... to **Cynthia Morales, Elizabeth Villanueva, Jim North, and Diane Kerr** for helping with the Katy Folk Festival outreach program.

... to all who contribute articles and photos for the newsletter. We couldn't do it without you.



Nancy Lynn Jones has completed her training and is now a full volunteer. Be sure to welcome Nancy Lynn to the organization.

REPORT ON MEMBERS

Rose and Elmer Aden are moving to San Angelo on May 4. Their new address has been sent to members via email. They would love to get mail from the members. If you didn't get the address, contact Sharon or the Williamsons.



May Birthdays

Mikki Kilgore, VIT
Rose Aden (Emeritus)
Kevin Brantley (VIT)
Dennis Keptra (Emeritus)
Suzie Gann
Virginia Harrison
Dawn Tejero
Carrie Sample
JT Kalina (Staff)

June Birthdays

Anna Dell Williamson
Glen Kilgore
Rebecca Sykes (VIT)
Pat Mahoney (VIT)
Jacob Ramirez



May Anniversaries

Rose and Elmer Aden (Emeritus)
Linda and David Heinicke
Patricia and Steve Marshall
Ed and Cathy Waley
Jo Ann (VIT) and Chuck Davis

June Anniversaries

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

NINE-BANDED ARMADILLO

(Dasypus novemcintus)

Contributed by Sharon Hanzik



Photo by Jerry Zona

Description – Upper body parts are encased in a bony carapace with nine bands between shoulder and rump shields. It has long, strong claws, a narrow, almost pointed snout and a tapering armored tail. Head and body length 38 – 43 cm. (15 – 17 in.); tail 36 – 41 cm. (14 – 16 in.); wt. 4 – 8 kgs. (8-18 lbs.)

Distribution in Texas – Statewide, except western Trans-Pecos region.

Habits – Usually nocturnal and solitary, this mammal prefers areas with loose soil, such as forest floors and waters' edge. Often jumps when startled. Its excellent sense of hearing and smell make up for its very poor eyesight. It can smell insects underground up to eight inches deep. It digs dens under-ground, usually at the base of trees, and with more than one opening. The armadillo may have more than one den. Since the armadillo is not a very fast runner it will escape to a nearby den. If it has wandered away from a den, it will simply dig itself a new one in a hurry to escape predators! Nine-banded armadillos, contrary to popular belief, cannot roll themselves into a ball, only the three-banded armadillo can do that. (There are about 20 species of armadillo, all cousins of the nine-banded armadillo, that live in Central and South America.)

Since armadillos have no fat-storing ability, they tend to inhabit warmer climates. Diet consists mainly of insects but is supplemented with crayfish, eggs and various small reptiles and amphibians.

Breeding season is usually in June and July. Delayed implantation allows the egg to float in the uterus until November and then be born the following spring. Armadillos always have identical quadruplets that are born fully formed with eyes open. Life span in the wild is 7 to 10 years. Armadillos are good swimmers, which may have attributed to the fastest known mammal migration from Mexico to the U.S. in the twentieth century. Nine-banded armadillos are the only species of armadillo found in the U.S. There are several other different species that inhabit South America.

The gene that causes leprosy can be found in armadillos but the occurrence is extremely low and no contraction to humans has been recorded. Scientists are studying this mammal in hopes of finding a treatment or cure for the disease in humans.

ECO EXPLORERS COMING SOON

Information for the summer youth program is now on www.brazosbend.org on the home page under the "coming programs" menu on the right side of the page. Please direct all inquiries to the website.

\$2 AND A GALLON OF GAS

Contributed by Carrie Sample

This past spring break, my grandsons called me and asked if I would spend a day with them. We had previously gone to the zoo and the Museum of Science, so we saved the best for last, Brazos Bend. They have gone to the park numerous times with their parents and their bikes, but never with just their 'Mimi'.

We started the day with the Beginner Bird Hike around 40 Acre Lake. They were not that attuned to the birds, but they enjoyed being with the other boys that were on the hike.

Next came the Nature Center where they had to hang out while I helped out showing the various critters to the visitors. They did, however, enjoy feeding the mouse to the Kestrel. A picnic followed under one of those large oak trees. That is where the \$2 came in – a Hershey bar for them to split and a Diet Dr. Pepper to give their grandmother more energy. And What would a visit to the park be without climbing on those low hanging limbs of the oaks?

Then on to the wood yard. Guess I could be charged with child labor – those two helped pile the wood on while I tied the bundles. Then, of course, we had to deliver the wood to the wood kiosks.

Next came the playground near the kitchen (the favorite playground of all my grandchildren). There they joined other children in a rendition of 'Space Invaders'.

Finally off to Creekfield Lake and on to the Observatory. No, the observatory wasn't open, but those hills to roll down sure were!

Six hours had flown quickly by and while one of them was still wanting to do more, their poor ol' "Mimi" was done for! Their parents reported that they went to bed early that day, and I should report that I became a couch potato for the rest of the day! It was a great day for enjoying the outdoors and each other. (I did wear my volunteer uniform. While I shared my day with the boys, I also answered questions and gave assistance to other visitors along the way).

Brazos Bend is a great place for all ages, and what a bargain – six hours of entertainment for \$2 and a gallon of gas. (Yes, I drive a Hybrid...)



Pied-bill Grebe chicks, taken at Creekfield Lake by Jerry Carpenter

DID YOU KNOW?

What was the first product scanned with a barcode?

- A. A king-size, milk chocolate Hershey's bar
- B. A 10-pack of Wrigley's Juicy Fruit chewing gum
- C. A box of Kellogg's Corn Flakes breakfast cereal
- D. A box of Kleenex Tissues

Hint: Come work in the Gift Shop where we sell a similar product.

Answer on page 13.

MYSTERY FISH

Story & Photo Contributed by Carrie Sample



A visitor showed me a picture of this fish and was wondering what it was. I couldn't see his picture very well, so I went to find it. He had been gutted by some animal – all that was left was his outside scales, skin, and fins. I took my own pictures and asked **David Heinicke** what it was. The answer was a big surprise.

This is not a native fish. Someone released it in Pilant Slough, and the fish likes that environment very much. David told me they had found several. It is much bigger than the ones that I normally see. Any ideas??? *Hint:* If you have an aquarium at home, you just may have one in it... It's a Plecostomus!

RED-TAILED HAWK

Story & Photo Contributed by Jerry Zona

While driving along the roads you might notice a large hawk in trees, on telephone cross-bars, fence posts, and sometimes on telephone wires. Most likely, this is the red-tailed hawk. This hawk is the most common on our continent. They range from northern Canada and Alaska through Central America. In Texas we see more of them because the hawks that live up north migrate to our area for the winter.

The red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) is one of three species also know as the “chicken hawk,” although it rarely feeds on chickens. There are 14 recognized sub-species of the hawk, and the appearance varies widely. Add to it the differences between adults and juveniles and identification can be difficult. Some of the hawks don't display the red tail. The more common variations are the southwestern, western, and Krider's. The most common variety we see in Texas is the southwestern. Typically the back is darker and the breast is light colored with pale streaks.



Red-tailed hawk at Davis Estate.

Their main diet is small mammals, but they will eat rabbits, jackrabbits and squirrels. They will also eat insects, reptiles, bats, crustaceans, birds, and waterfowl. There is some competition with Great-horned owls, especially during the twilight hours. Both take similar prey. A group of crows will sometimes steal the hawk's prey.

For most of its life the bird is solitary, but when breeding is monogamous and will remain with its mate until one dies. The clutch size is usually 1 to 3 eggs, laid every other day. The female primarily incubates the eggs, but the male will also incubate to give the female a break. The male will bring food to the female during incubation and after the eggs are hatched. The females tear the food into small pieces for the nestlings. There is some competition for nesting sites with Great-horned owls; owls can't construct a nest so they take over nests built by the hawks. Since the owls start nesting earlier than the hawks, the hawks have adapted to building a new nest when they lose the previous year's nest.

When leaving the park earlier this year, I noticed 6 or 7 crows, each occupying a fence post. When I passed, I saw the one in the middle was a Red-tailed Hawk with a snake in his talons. The crows were intent on “helping the hawk with his catch.” I turned around to take a picture, but the hawk took off, with the crows right behind him. Ain't nature great?

TPWD NEWS

from the TPWD website

NEW ONLINE RESERVATION SYSTEM

TxParks, our new and improved online reservation system, will provide free online camping reservations, eliminating the \$3 online reservation fee previously charged. In addition it will offer a more customer-friendly experience and the opportunity to buy a State Park Pass and gift cards.

While we set up this new system we'll have to temporarily suspend online and call center reservations starting April 27 at 6:00 p.m. until 9:00 a.m. May 12, 2010. Please contact the individual state park directly to make your reservation during this time. We regret the inconvenience but we think you'll find it worth the wait when it launches May 12th.

For more information, visit the Web site at <http://www.texasstateparks.org/>

ANNUAL DRAGONFLY DAYS TO BE HELD MAY 14-16

Explore the amazing world of dragonflies and damselflies at the annual Dragonfly Days, being held May 14-16 at the Valley Nature Center and Estero Llano Grande State Park. Attendees can look forward to live music, arts and crafts and learning more about these fascinating winged creatures.

The Rio Grande Valley is known as one of the most biologically diverse areas in North America. More birds and butterflies are found here than in most parts of the country, as well as many different species of odonates, dragonflies and damselflies. Many of these species are found nowhere else in the United States, and Dragonfly Days will offer a chance to discover some of these rare insects. For more information visit the Valley Nature Center Web site, <http://www.valleynaturecenter.org/>, or call (956) 969-2475 or (956) 565-3919.

EARTH DAY TREE PLANTING CEREMONY

To celebrate the 40th Earth Day, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Executive Director Carter Smith will be planting a 15-gallon Cedar Elm at the agency's Austin headquarters at 10 a.m. on April 22. The event will mark the donation of 65,000 trees made by the Apache Foundation Tree Grant Program to the agency.

The trees will be planted at TPWD properties across the state, including six wildlife management areas, four state parks and one Fisheries Division site. All trees are native and include many different species, including various oaks, the Longleaf Pine, Pecan, Texas Ebony, Bigtooth Maple, and other varieties indigenous to Texas. These trees will aid in restoration of habitat, provide forage and cover for wildlife and enhance trails or facilities on agency sites.

The Apache Foundation is the charitable arm of the Apache Corporation, a multinational independent oil and natural gas company headquartered in Houston. The tree grant program was developed by the Apache Foundation to offset carbon foot-printing, bring nature back to cities, restore native plant communities and provide habitat for wildlife.

GOLDEN ALGA IMPACTS TWO CENTRAL TEXAS RESERVOIRS

Golden alga (*Prymnesium parvum*) has once again impacted two very important reservoirs and fisheries on the Brazos River system. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department biologists have been monitoring golden alga blooms and resulting fish kills on both Possum Kingdom Reservoir and Lake Whitney.

Golden alga is a naturally-occurring, microscopic alga that, under certain environmental conditions, can

cause massive fish mortality by releasing a toxin that inhibits fishes' ability to breathe. Golden alga was first identified in Texas in the mid-80s in the Pecos River. Since then, golden alga blooms have affected numerous public water bodies in Texas including 33 major reservoirs, numerous community fishing lakes, and two state fish hatcheries.

The effects of toxic golden alga blooms can be devastating to fisheries. The department has made it a priority to manage and enhance the fisheries at both of these reservoirs as well as others impacted by golden alga.

STUDENTS BEGIN WORK ON HEALTHY HABITATS GRANTS ACROSS TEXAS

Schools and organizations across the state have begun service-learning projects to benefit wildlife and the environment with the help of Texas Healthy Habitats Grants. A total of \$225,000 in Texas Healthy Habitats Grants were awarded to 15 different schools and non-profit youth organizations across the state.

The students are addressing priorities in the Texas Wildlife Action Plan, a blueprint to "keep common species common" and avoid more species from becoming threatened and endangered. Texas is believed to be the first state offering grants for student service projects to support a state wildlife action plan. Student projects are to research and define a local environmental issue, investigate public and organizational policies related to the issue, design and implement a service-learning project in collaboration with at least two community partners (including TPWD staff), evaluate and publicize the results to public officials and community members, and develop Web profiles for each project that will be integrated into the TPWD and TxCSL Web sites. Students started planning projects this fall and are continuing their field work throughout spring.

SPRING BRINGS HOST OF TEXAS STATE PARKS REPAIR PROJECTS

Texas state park visitors will soon be benefitting from a full slate of major repair projects getting under way this year that are designed to rejuvenate the aging Texas state park system and greatly improve customer service, thanks to bond funding authorized by the Texas Legislature and approved by statewide voters. General obligation bonds have been sold to fund more than \$44 million in repairs and renovations to state park cabins, bathrooms, electrical and water systems, and other state park infrastructure.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 7	Bird Hike, 8:00 AM, 40-Acre Lake restroom building
May 8	Outdoor Skills Workshop Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
May 16	Bird Hike, 8:00 AM, 40-Acre Lake restroom building
May 31	Memorial Day Holiday, Center Open all day
June 12	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
July 3	Fourth of July Parade
July 10	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
August 14	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
September	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
October 9	Annual Volunteer Picnic, 5:30 PM
November 13	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
December 11	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM

*Answer to **DID YOU KNOW?*** A 10-pack of Wrigley's Juicy Fruit chewing gum. On June 26, 1974, a pack of Juicy Fruit became the first product with a bar code scanned at a checkout counter. From Smithsonian.com, March 10, 2010.

Brazos Bend State Park

Texas Parks and Wildlife
21901 FM 762
Needville, TX 77461

FIRST CLASS MAIL

**NEXT MEETING DAY AND TIME
SATURDAY, MAY 8, 2010, 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 (Acting):	Anna Dell Williamson
Treasurer:	Dave Carpenter

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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.