



VOLUME 19, NUMBER 5

MAY 2007

APRIL MEETING NOTES

reported by Nicole Olson

The April 21 meeting was called to order by **President Bruce Williamson**. There were eleven volunteers and two staff members present. The minutes of the March meeting were approved as posted. Next month's meeting will have a pro-temp chairman because the President and Vice-president will not be present. The Secretary or Treasurer can run the election to elect a pro-temp chairman.

Reminder: Please remember that the password to the website is only for internal use (members of the organization and staff) and not for outside access.

Steve Killian and **Sharon Hanzik** brought their reports. They are published elsewhere in the newsletter. **David Heinicke** is helping at the San Jacinto Day Festival with law enforcement today.

Treasurer's Report:

Chuck Duplant brought the March Treasurer's report. Copies are available in the volunteer lounge. There were several budget presented, all of which were approved.

- **Electrical work** at the Nature Center to be done by a master electrician. Change out outlets/plugs in safe room, the new display, behind the snake cage, on the counter upstairs in the program room, and cabinetry in the break room. Also fix upstairs plugs, replace exit sign, remove old exit sign, and one octagon cover for exit sign. The electrician will contract with the park, and the BBSPVO will provide the funding.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

April Meeting Notes, p. 1-2
President's Corner, p. 3
Staff Reports, p. 4-5
Congratulations, p. 5
Outreach Report, p. 6
Naturalperl News, p. 6

Next Major Holiday, p. 6
Comment Cards, p. 7
NC: The Place to Be, p. 7
Nature Center Report, p. 7-8
Earth Day, p. 8
Pond Life Program, p. 9
April Maintenance, p. 9-10

Comments on New Pier, p. 10
Snakes in the Wood Yard, p. 11
Eastern Coachwhip, p. 11
Volunteer Field Trip, p. 12
Happy Fishermen, p. 12-13
Chris Hofferber, p. 13

- A **broadcast spreader** with 'Gator mounting brackets and a variable rheostat to change width of application. This is to enhance our method of treating fire ants and optimize the use of our chemicals. The money will come from the equipment purchase/rental fund.
- **Two chainsaws:** a STIHL MS 200 Chainsaw with a 12" bar and a STIHL MS 260P Chainsaw with a 16" bar. This is to replace two old chainsaws. The money will come from the equipment purchase/rental fund.
- A **John Deere Gator** 4x2 with a bed lift kit to replace the 2001 gator. The money will come from the gator replacement fund and the equipment purchase/rental fund.
- Items to **improve parking lot** at Nature Center, paint all curbs, stripe off the no parking areas, and add reflective tape.
- New **cork board** to fit three panels of the bulletin board outside the Nature Center plus three metal handles.

Doris Dahse won the raffle for the quilt.

Outreach

Judy Strauss attended the **Children's Museum** in Richmond/Rosenberg. She also attended the **Creekside Outdoor Expo** - the weather was terrible but the people were nice.

Carol Ramsayer visited the Houston Zoo and presented a program on owls.

Gift Shop

Beth Debenport reported that we are doing very well, but we need all the help that we can get.

Maintenance

Bryan Leach reported the Pier project was started last week and should be finished next week. We are putting a cover on Pier #4 on Elm Lake. We need all the help that we can get on that project, too.

Training

Anna Dell Williamson presented an suggestion for **Junior Volunteer training**. In the SOPS, there is a provision for Junior Volunteers under age 14, and we are proposing a program for children under 14 with limited things that they can do at the Nature Center. The training will consist of an orientation, tour of the park, park rules and regulations, demonstrations, interpretation in VC, and trail interpretation. Parents are required to accompany their child on all volunteer activities. Do we want to pursue this? Do we have membership support to pursue this? The consensus was that we will pursue developing a training program for younger children.

Old Business

Ken Debenport thanked various people for help on Earth Day with programs and wood sale work. He also mentioned that non-members (such as spouses) can volunteer without being in the organization. They just need to sign a waiver.

New Business

The Executive Committee approved emeritus status for **Don Nelson**, a stalwart member of the work crew; he has health problems.

Bruce Williamson commented on how pleased he is with the new volunteers that have come on board! The meeting was adjourned.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The year 2007 continues to be very successful. We have just concluded one of the most successful Nature Center visitation weeks ever in the history of the park! This happened without any holiday or obvious motivating event, other than balmy weather. The camp hosts and members of the BBSPVO really came through to keep the Nature Center open for the public, both weekdays and weekends. But that is not news, you have been doing that, rain or shine, for a long time now. Still, I want to say Thank You! Not for myself, but for the thousands of park visitors who have enjoyed their visit a little more because you were on the trail, leading a hike, filling the water station, returning a child's lost baseball cap, presenting a program, interpreting in the Nature Center or behind the scenes improving the trails and splitting the wood.



There is another side to our Volunteer Organization, which I will refer to as the infrastructure side. This means, broadly, whatever it takes to keep the organization and its programs going. We always need people to serve on committees, to chair committees, to work the fund raising (firewood, gift shop, fetching ice), to take care of some very unhappy duties when we lose a volunteer to that other Great Park. All of these things continue to be accomplished, also. However, the group of volunteers who provide these services is much smaller than the group who do the things I mentioned in the first paragraph.

We need people to be willing to run for elected office. It is always a chore just to get one person to run for each office, and often we do that by twisting the arm of an incumbent to run for the same office they have just served for a year, or possibly a different office. We also need members to attend the monthly business meeting (usually the second Saturday of each month at 5:00 P.M. (dinner) and 5:30 P.M. (meeting)). These business meetings make a number of very important decisions that set policy for the whole organization. We approve the annual budget, make spending decisions on additional tens of thousands of dollars each year, and maintain and update all the legal documents governing the organization.

We have been very fortunate that the small group of people who attend the business meetings are dedicated, sincere, honest, and compassionate. But, increasingly, this duty falls to the elected officers, the committee chairs, and a very small group of other volunteers, some of whom have served the organization for many, many years, and, in spite of their emeritus status, continue to help us make our organization function! On the bright side, a select group of recent recruits to the BBSPVO have been participating also (Thank YOU!). But we need more people to attend the meetings, observe how our business is conducted, and learn how to take over these roles in a few years.

On the personal side, this is my first year to serve as VO president. Dennis Jones reminded me recently that he tried to recruit me for this job back in 1989. I have served in every elected office except vice-president, and I have also served on several committees. It has been wonderful! That is why I am still here. But my health is going to require a good deal of attention over the next several months, and I doubt that I will run for an elected office next year. So the line starts here: Who will stand up and volunteer?

Bruce Williamson



STAFF REPORTS

STEVE KILLIAN



Brazos Bend State Park is one of the best parks in the U.S. with continued dedication of the volunteer organization. We now have a **satellite facility!** Joseph Dillinger, in 2001, discovered a minor planet. As a result of a close working relationship, we were given the opportunity to name the discovered object. A press release will be produced to promote the discovery and park.

Resource Management:

- ▶ **Aquatic** - We are spraying Chinese Tallows and unwanted aquatic weeds in Old Horseshoe, Creekfield, 40-Acre, and Elm lakes.
- ▶ **Prairie** - We are continuing prairie management spraying for woody vegetation.
- ▶ **Pilant Slough** - We opened gate to Pilant Slough to dewater the Green Tree Reservoir.
- ▶ **Hog trapping program** - Carlos Torres is in charged of the project. Forty-one hogs have been removed so far the year.

We have a **TXDOT meeting** to discuss the final punch list. Fort Bend County installed **stop signs** at the entrance to the camping loops for public safety on our request.

We are working closely with **Mark Webb, District Fisheries Biologist**. Over the past month we stocked bluegills in New Horseshoe and Elm Lakes. Six hundred three-pound catfish were stocked in New Horseshoe Lake.

In *Texas Parks & Wildlife*, the April 2007 issue, there is a picture of Brazos bend State Park Volunteer, James Blankenship. There were more photos in the *Houston Chronicle* about the park. Steve distributed copies of the newly updated Texas Parks guidebook with BBSP information. We are known as the "alligator park" within the park system.

Brazos Bend State Park Volunteer Organization was presented a **Certificate of Appreciation** plaque from the TPWD for National Volunteer Week on April 15-21, 2007. (photo of the certificate was taken)

The **red mule** has a serious engine mechanical problems - Jeff Orsak, mechanic, is working to solve the problem.

Ken Debenport asked about **electrical work** on the Nature Center. The electrician doing the work at the NC will be working for the State of Texas. The BBSPVO can approve the money, but the request must be put into the system in order for the process to start.

Bruce Williamson gave thanks for the plaque. Steve Killian mentioned that BBSP is special within the state park system. Bruce Williamson stated that we appreciate the recognition that we get.

SHARON HANZIK

Earth Day - Approximately 1,050 folks visited the Nature Center, and there were 3,078 visitors who paid to enter the park. At the children's booth, we made 300 coral snake bracelets.



School groups - There are not many groups on the calendar this month due to TAKS testing.

BBSP is out there **in the papers**, especially the *Houston Chronicle*, and even the *BBC Wildlife* in England, due to Phillippe Henri.

National Trails Day is June 2, and there will be extra programming and beefed-up trail interpretation.

Heads up - Sharon is on vacation June 3-13.

Space Day Today - **Frank Willet, Peggy Farley, and Tom Prentiss** clicked 471 people at the Observatory display.

Thanks for being here during the months of April/May.

CONGRATULATIONS

Teresa Jones and **Virginia Harrison** are our newest members. Be sure to give them a friendly welcome to BBSPVO.



BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES



MAY BIRTHDAYS

Rose Aden
Suzie Gann (VIT)
Virginia Harrison (VIT)
Dennis Keppta

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Anna Dell Williamson
Judy Huber
Glen Kilgore
Jacob Ramirez

MAY ANNIVERSARIES

Rose and Elmer Aden
Linda and David Heinicke
Patricia and Steve Marshall (VIT)
Susan and Rodney Walther

JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

Joe and Sue Carmichael (1953)
Nelda and Martin Gay
Joan and Warren Jackson
Chuck and Jane Minard

*Photo by Jerry Zona
April 2007*



OUTREACH REPORT

by Judy Strauss

Not always is the weather cooperative for an outdoor event and this certainly was the case for the **Creekside Outdoor Expo** on Saturday, March 31 in Needville. Despite the wind, rain, flooding and cold, the event did happen, and we had a fun and interesting time interacting with many new and interesting people. Did you know that you could tell the sex of a snake by touching its tail? And you should have heard the "true" story about the "miniature" alligators. Amazing! There were quite a few of these fascinating stories, including MANY snake stories.

And we don't want to forget the little boy, about 8 or 9 years old, who talked and talked and talked, non-stop, for over 20 minutes (unfortunately we can't remember about what). Seriously, you could walk away to go do something and when you returned, he was still going on and on and on. They never cease to amaze me! And not only do children have a great imagination, but adults do also! It really was fun, and we did reach quite a few people who had not "yet" been out to BBSP.

I would like to thank **Willie Anderson, Carol Ramsayer, Teresa Jones** and **Anita** and **Gene Mitey** (camp hosts) for all their help with this event. And a special Thank You to **Jerry Zona**, who stayed the entire time from set-up to take-down, despite the rain, wind, lightning and flooding. Thanks, Guys -I could not have done it without your help!

P.S. We are still in need of an Outreach Coordinator, or maybe even "several" Outreach Coordinators who could work together on "splitting up" events so that not just one person has to do all the work. These events are really a lot of fun, and require very little "effort" to get them set up. Please contact me if you feel that you might be interested. This is the one big way that we can let the public know about our fantastic park and what we have to offer. It is really amazing how many people had never heard about BBSP until they came to our booth. Think about it! With several of us working "together" on these events, we could get a lot more done, reach a bunch more people, and have fun at the same time!

NATURALPERL NEWS

by Laszlo Perlaky

A photo hike for landscapes was held on March 3, 2007. We drove to the New Horseshoe Lake parking lot, and then walked to the Old Horseshoe Lake area to photograph landscapes at the scenic New Horseshoe Lake and the Wilderness area of the Old Horseshoe Lake.

After some images from the New Horseshoe Lake Peninsula, Laszlo led his large group of avid photographers to the swampy area of the Old Horseshoe Lake. We set up at one of the best spots there and waited for the light, which was just perfect about 30 min after sunset. The sky turned reddish orange and dark blue, which reflected in the swamp, and large old tree silhouettes made the pictures pop. We walked back to the Parking lot in the dark and enjoyed the lunar eclipse at New Horseshoe Lake.

NEXT MAJOR HOLIDAY

Remember that the next major holiday will be Monday, May 28, Memorial Day. We usually have a very active day with lots of visitors in the picnic area and on the trails. Alligators are still active. Also remember that the entire month of May is one of our busier months. Please come to the park when you have a chance, and sign up in advance for the Nature Center, Gift Shop, Creekfield Hike and Water Station.

COMMENT CARDS FROM VISITORS

Visitors sign the guest register and fill out comment cards when they visit the NC. Here are some of the answers to the question, "What keeps you coming back?"

everything (twice)
great state park
all of the animals
vacation
its awesome
because I like nature and Tom is very nice
the kool animals

I am visiting my son and he will probably take me
here again
having fun and excitement
the animals
everything, but mainly the alligators
the cleanliness and fun

NC: THE PLACE TO BE

(Ed. note: We received the letter below from David Heinicke. Following the letter is a note from Susie Taylor, Headquarters.)

I'd like to take this opportunity to brag on our Nature Center and all the great volunteers and staff that help run it, maintain it, and fund it.... Over the last 7 days, April 22 - 29, (with no holidays or special events) we had 2432 people through the Nature Center!

Ken Debenport once said, "The Nature Center used to be just a place to pick up a park map." Obviously it has become the "hub" of park activities and a destination for more and more park visitors. Thank you for all your efforts and dedication. We couldn't come close to doing it without you.

We'll keep improving! Great work! Thanks. **David Heinicke**

(Susie's response)

You are right, it used to be that the Nature Center was only open on the weekends. Now, with dedicated Volunteers and Hosts who are willing to learn and help in this area, it is possible for the Nature Center to stay open year round. What a difference this is for the public. **Susie**

NATURE CENTER REPORT APRIL 2007

by Anna Dell Williamson

*Here is a breakdown of the various activities and attendance recorded for the Nature Center, hikes, and programs for April 1-30. This month included Easter, Earth Day and lots of cold rainy weather. About halfway through the month, the weather improved and numbers increased. Numbers come from the calendar in the Nature Center and may not reflect all activities. Be sure to report Nature Center and program attendance for all programs and hikes and **be sure it gets on the calendar and report sheet** behind the desk.*

	PROGRAMS	TOTALS
NATURE CENTER Total for April, 7399	SATURDAYS (4)	2971 - High, 1124, 4/14 EARTH DAY
	SUNDAYS (3)	1859 - High, 477, 4/29
	WEEKDAYS (21)	2569 - High, 531, 4/26
	CREEKFIELD HIKES (9 days, 14 groups)	156 - High, 64 (4 hikes), 4/14
	ALLIGATOR PROGRAMS (5)	61
	BIRD PROGRAMS, HIKES (5) includes hikes, and bird programs	46
	SNAKE/REPTILE PROGRAMS (3)	119
	CHILDREN'S STORY TIME (2)	28
	OTHER PROGRAMS (4) includes vol hike, pond life, photo, spotting scope and nutria	159
	OUTREACH PROGRAMS (1)	471

Remember to report all Interpretive programs on the new form on the clipboard next to the calendar behind the front desk. The form asks for the date, name of program, presenter, type of program, and total number of visitors, plus a breakdown of the approximate number of adults and of children at the program

A GLANCE BACK: Total Nature Center attendance April 2006 - 7168; April 2005 - 7027

EARTH DAY

by Anna Dell Williamson

The BBSP **Earth Day Celebration** on April 14 was a great success. There were 1,050 folks who visited the Nature Center, and there were 3,078 visitors who paid to enter the park, in spite of the cold, windy weather. The visitors were greeted with a good selection of scheduled activities and programs, including a bird hike, alligator hikes, Creekfield hikes, bird demo and owl pellets booth, pond life exhibit, insect and spider demo, volunteer booth, climbing wall, and kid's activity booth, as well as booths from outdoor and conservation organizations and businesses. The Boy Scouts had a food concession. It was great seeing so many volunteers all out at the park on the same day. Everyone pitched in and did their part to make the day very successful. Caps off to a great organization!

One of the special activities for Earth Day was the raffle of a quilt donated by Ruth Dalrymple. The winner is our own volunteer from the February 2007 class, Doris Dahse. Doris sent us this picture of the quilt with the following note:

"Thought you might enjoy this picture. Good thing I took it before riding 5 miles around the lakes. Also, thank you for your help and support during my training. I just love working at the park especially with all the wonderful friends I've made. And.....a special thank you to Ken for selling me the winning ticket. I love the quilt. Since I've gotten it home, I'm not sure if my granddaughters in Sweden will get to take it back with them at Christmas. God bless you all, Doris"



POND LIFE PROGRAM

by Glen Kilgore

The **Pond Life Program** on Earth Day was a great success, thanks to the many volunteers and others who helped out with it. We caught some really neat stuff, like water scorpions, giant water bugs with eggs on their back and a green darner larva that was at least 2 inches long. But the real stars of the show were the 5 baby Lesser Sirens that showed up in our buckets while we were collecting. They were about 2 inches long, with feathery red gills.



After the program, I discussed with David whether we should try to grow them in a separate aquarium or put them in the main pond life aquarium. David thought that they would have a better chance to find food in the big aquarium, even though they might end up being somebody else's food there. So I dumped them in with the others. About an hour later, I looked for them and couldn't find them. So they are either very good at hiding, or they were unlucky. I hope it is the first. At any rate, if anyone sees them in the pond life aquarium, please let me know.

APRIL MAINTENANCE REPORT

by Bryan Leach

Wood Yard:

Tied, split, and delivered tied wood to the wood racks in both camping loops
Sprayed the wood yard with Round Up
Unloaded 4 cords of purchased wood

Mowing and Landscaping:

Used a weed eater under and around the Spider Tree and around the Nature Center, including the Windmill
Edged the sidewalks at the Nature Center and the Nature Center parking lot
Trimmed several low hanging limbs at the Nature Center and around the benches at the windmill on Bluestem Trail

Trail Trimming and Trail Maintenance:

Cut down two trees at the trail head of the Bluestem trail by the youth camp area

Equipment Maintenance:

Changed the engine oil and filter, transmission fluid and both filters, power steering fluid, front hub and front axle fluid on the K2 Kubota
Changed the engine oil and greased the 06 Gator



Thanks to El Paso Corporation
who donated this Mule
to the Volunteer Organization.

General Maintenance:

Adjusted the gate on the wood rack in the 100 camping loop
Cut down and removed 4 trees from the 121 camp site
Assisted the park rangers by loading and hauling 10 Kubota loads and 5 Gator loads of fill to the Slave Ditch
Put up the cup holders and doggie bowls making the water stations ready for operation
Cut up a downed tree and removed it from the 218 camp site
Disinfected the trash can holder at the Nature Center

Pest Control:

Treated for fire ants on the lake side of the Elm Lake picnic area and at the Nature Center three times, getting ready for Earth Day

New Projects

Built a cover over Pier #4 at Elm Lake



Finished pier



View from lake

COMMENTS ON NEW PIER

From Steve Killian

I was out on Elm Lake yesterday morning and took several photos of the newly upgraded observation pier (see view from lake, above, right). This adds value to the “visitor experience”. Continue the good work improving our wonderful park. Thanks,

From David Heinicke

As I rode my bike along the back side of Elm Lake this afternoon I noticed every single pier was empty, not a single person fishing, watching wildlife or resting, until I got to the pier where you all put the cover. That pier had 12 people under it from at least two separate groups. I stopped and visited with them, and they said how much they appreciate the hard work of the volunteers. The rest of the piers all the way around the lake were also empty.

The cover looks great and is a great place to relax and get out of the sun! We might want to consider doing one or two more? I'm looking forward to hanging out under it in a rain storm....
Thanks for all your hard work and dedication. We (the staff and the visitors) really appreciate it!

SNAKES IN THE WOOD YARD.

by Chuck Duplant

Recently we have been finding snakes in the bundled wood. Ken has found several Copperheads in the past 2 months, and Sunday Chuck found 2 Broad-banded Water snakes and a Coachwhip. Most of these snakes are being found in loosely bundled wood. Evidently it gives them just the amount of space to feel at home.

Please make sure when bundling wood to tie the bundles as tightly as possible. Hopefully this will discourage them from getting inside the bundles. They will probably start holing up between the bundles, but that will make them easier to spot.

If you find a snake while working there, use reptile tongs and snake bucket in the wood yard building for safe removal of the snake. As taught in the snake programs, if you watch where you put your hands and feet, you greatly reduce the chance of getting bit, and never handle venomous snakes by hand!



EASTERN COACHWHIP SNAKE

by Rick Dashnau

Sunday April 29, 2007, Chuck found an Eastern Coachwhip snake in the wood yard. He caught it and brought it to the NC. I was lucky enough to be in when he brought it out for a photo shoot. He, Jerry, and I shot pictures, as it mostly cooperated. I'd never seen this type of snake before.

Later, I was able to use the snake during my "Is it Venomous?" snake program at 1:30, where it was a big hit. It acted perfectly, only trying to escape once when I first removed it from the bucket. It relaxed quietly while I lectured, and I was able to point out various aspects of the snake in relationship to my presentation (shape of head, pupils, etc.). I also emphasized that I'd never seen one before, so this was a rare occasion for me. Some of the visitors shot pictures (I forgot to ask for some), and I stressed that this was a freshly-caught snake and I would not be allowing people to touch it for that reason. I brought out our Mexican Milksnake for that after I put the Coachwhip away.

It was great! 25 people attended, and I think they had a pretty good time. Many thanks to Chuck for catching the snake and allowing me to use it. I think it added a lot to the program Sunday.

Above are two shots of the snake I took during our "photo shoot" outside.

VOLUNTEER FIELD TRIP

by Jerry Zona

(Ed. note: On May 2 seventeen volunteers attended a special field trip at Houston Museum of Natural Science. **Carol Ramsayer** organized the trip and arranged for special tours of the butterfly garden, including "back stage" work areas, a tour of the frog exhibit led by a curator, and a viewing of the 3-D I-MAX, Deep Sea . Jerry Zona shares his impressions with us.)

"Field trip", the mere mention invoked deep primordial memories. My last field trip must have been in the 5th or 6th grade. We visited a chocolate factory in Tours, France. We had fun that day even though Madame Ombert was strict.

Back to the future.

"Field Trip". All right! No better reason to burn a day of vacation. And spend time with a group of people whose company I truly enjoy. First stop, the butterflies: We observed how they are bred and propagated. It's amazing to me how such fragile creatures can be handled. We then entered their inner lab (an area where they prevent the release of exotic species to our local environment) and observed a number of large insects from all over the world. We were allowed to handle a number of these creatures, including the giant cockroaches. Yuk. We then spent time in the open area allowed for the butterflies. Over 1500 butterflies, around 15 different species of butterflies. It was impressive to observe them. It was also impressive to observe the fauna there.

Next, the Frog exhibition. Our Interpreter was well-versed and passionate about his study. It was enjoyable to listen to him about the perils that amphibians face these days. It is sad that a number of amphibian species have become extinct due to an incipient species of worms that prey upon them.

Lastly, the IMAX movie. "Deep Sea" was the venue. The photography was unbelievable. The details are so clear that I jumped out of my seat several times. I enjoyed watching creatures I'm used to observing. Also, I learned about different creatures whose locomotion was very interesting.

Thank you, Carol, for setting this trip up, and also whoever helped.

HAPPY FISHERMEN

by Rick Dashnau

Sunday afternoon, about 4:30 or so, I left the NC to go look for what a park visitor described as a "wounded animal, maybe a nutria" that he saw near the two benches on Old Horseshoe lake. He even showed me a picture of it that he snapped with his cell phone, but even with my glasses I couldn't see much except a grayish dot surrounded by plants. Anyway, on the way out, I walked by some people fishing on New Horseshoe lake, and told them that it had been recently stocked with fish.

Did you know that if you walk to the two benches (one of which was standing in water) and look to the right (opposite of side of the trail from the lake), you will see large seed pods on upstanding stalks scattered in the field? Furthermore, these seed pods, when they burst open, put forth a large tuft of fibers or greyish hairs (at least the size of my fist), and that perhaps 20 yards away, one such pod might look like some kind of animal's head.

I couldn't find an animal, wounded or otherwise, so I returned. As I was passing New Horseshoe lake again, I saw that one fisherman happily showing off a channel catfish to his family. A few steps further on, I saw another group, and they had 2 more catfish. This second group asked me what to do about the alligator that was watching them. I suggested that the best thing to do was to move further down the shoreline, and reminded them that the lake had been recently stocked. I also stressed that they should NOT put the fish stringer into the water, and suggested that they put their fish into the 5 gallon bucket that they had with them or to put the fish in an ice chest (In hindsight, I now realize that the alligator probably was aware of the fish they had lying on the bank. Dang it...should have thought of that, especially since I just saw a gator

walk much further from the water looking for food about a week ago. I should have stressed further that they need to hide their fish, and their bait. (Perhaps this is a good idea for posting on signs around fishing areas?)

Oh...as we were talking, a woman came over with another fish, which looked like a bass--maybe a black bass (the fisherman called it a crappy, but I don't think so. It was longer than that.), that was also a good size. This second fisherman called over to the other and asked, "Why isn't he hanging around YOU?". "He WAS.", came the answer. Laughter helps in these situations.

Around this time, I called David and then HQ, to find out what kind and how many fish were stocked. Dennis informed me that 699 channel catfish were stocked in New Horseshoe lake, to the best of his knowledge. I passed this on. Then returned to my car and headed home. Anyway, I wanted to pass on that we've got some visitors who like to fish that were probably pretty happy Sunday.

(Ed. note: *Dennis Jones responded to Rick's article (originally an e-mail) with the following:*)

Thanks Rick, Nice note. It's refreshing to hear good stuff. Steve informed me that bass have been stocked in several of the adjacent lakes. They were fingerlings however, and the fishermen will have to be patient until they grow.

On a related note, as the lakes improve and fish return to the lakes...so will the fishermen. Because of the nature of fishing and alligators, we will need to redouble our efforts to be "out there" having contact with the people to keep a lid on alligator/human interactions. For quite a few years now we have had it pretty easy with the alligators, primarily because of the condition of the lakes. This will likely change as the lakes continue to improve. Thanks for all the good work, Rick. Keep it up. Please encourage others to walk about more as well, if they can.

MESSAGE FROM CHRIS HOFFERBER

(Ed. Note: *Chris is a former BBSP President and active member. We are sorry to see her go. For those of you who know Chris, you can get her address and phone number from Anna Dell Williamson. The letter is also posted in the volunteer lounge.*)

By the time you read this, I will be a resident of Arkansas. Last May, Jim and I reached a compromise on our retirement location, and we bought a house in Bella Vista, AR. It's in the far northwest corner of the state, smack-dab in the Ozarks. Yes, I will be a hillbilly! I will be alone until the first of September, when Jim will finally retire. Well, I won't be completely alone – Wendi bought a house about three miles from us and will be up there by the first of May. She will be working at her same job, just working from home. We still haven't decided how we feel about her moving so close to us - ask me in six months!

Even though I haven't been a volunteer for a couple of years, I did have 15 years of wonderful experiences and memories at BBSP. It was a continual learning experience and many great times with some fantastic people. I was in the second training class, and the organization was small and not very organized. A lot of changes have taken place since, but the heart of that little, struggling group still lives. It's the effort to make the park better and to do it together, as a group. It's the ideas to improve programs, maintenance and public interaction. And it's the friendships that are formed and bonded as a result of working hard together for a common goal. Keep it alive.

I have a lot of people to thank for many reasons. I have one that I can't forget – Dennis Jones. I didn't always agree with his methods, but he was my first teacher, and I learned a lot from him. As a result, I came to love doing educational programs. Rose and Elmer became my park "Mom and Dad". Rose sent me many encouraging notes over the years that I still keep. They are moving with me. I had a lot of Park buddies that were just like family to me. A lot of volunteers come and go, but a few have persevered and are still giving of themselves to fulfilling "the mission". To you all, thanks for working with me, tolerating my ideas, and being such a big part of my life for many years.

I'm hoping many of you will come and visit us. We have a great guest area that needs breaking in. I am saying "farewell" to the park and the organization, but not to my friends. You'll be a part of me - always!

Chris

Brazos Bend State Park

Texas Parks and Wildlife
21901 FM 762
Needville TX 77461

→ **NEXT MEETING DAY AND TIME** ←
SATURDAY, MAY 12, 2007, 5:30 PM

☆☆☆☆☆☆



REGULAR VOLUNTEER EVENTS

Creekfield Hikes	Every Saturday and Sunday at 11:00 AM, led by volunteers
Photo Hikes	First Saturday of each month
Volunteer meeting	Second Saturday of each month at 5:30 PM
Bird Hikes	See schedule in calendar

BRAZOS BEND STATE PARK VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION

VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION OFFICERS

President:	Bruce Williamson
Vice-President:	Anna Dell Williamson
Secretary:	Nicole Olson
Treasurer:	Chuck Duplant

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Editor	Anna Dell Williamson
Production Assistants	Bruce Williamson Terry Williamson

FIRST CLASS MAIL

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@houston.rr.com). Notify Anna Dell (281-485-2843) well in advance of any events you want announced in the newsletter.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 8	Weekday work crew, NC, 8:15 AM
May 10	Weekday work crew, NC, 8:15 AM
May 12	Photo-walk, Birds #2, 5:00 PM Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
May 15	Weekday work crew, NC, 8:15 AM
May 17	Weekday work crew, NC, 8:15 AM
May 22	Weekday work crew, NC, 8:15 AM
May 24	Weekday work crew, NC, 8:15 AM
May 28	Memorial Day Holiday