



VOLUME 20, NUMBER 1

JANUARY 2008

DECEMBER MEETING NOTES

reported by Secretary, Nicole Olson

Vice President Anna Dell Williamson called the December 8, 2007 meeting to order. **President James Blankenship** was unable to attend. There were eleven volunteers and three staff members present. The November 2007 meeting minutes were approved as posted.

Steve Killian, David Heinicke and **Sharon Hanzik** brought the staff reports, which are published elsewhere in this newsletter.

Maintenance Report – **David Heinicke** brought the Maintenance report, which was compiled by **Ron Morrison**. The report is elsewhere in the newsletter.

Treasurer's Report, November 2007 –

Diane Carpenter presented the budget report and led the discussion. (See Financial Report in lounge for Complete Information.)

The following budget requests were presented and approved:

Steve Killian - request to replace the engine on the 2003 Kubota tractor due to failure of either the injector or valves.

Steve Killian - request to carry forward the 2007 trail maintenance funds into the 2008 budget.

The **2008 Budget presentation** is planned for next month.

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Gift Shop Report – Beth Debenport

Inventory is planned for 12/10 to 12/11/07. There will be a lot of restocking.

Outreach – Judy Strauss

Nothing new but there will be a program at the Children's Museum in Richmond, Texas, after the first of the year.

Training – Anna Dell Williamson

Training starts in February 2008. We will need help with mentoring.

Executive Committee. The **Executive Committee** approved the following new members for the Budget Committee. They will take office January 1, 2008.

Comptroller – **Ken Debenport**

Outreach – **Judy Strauss**

Education/Interpretation – **Carrie Sample**

Maintenance – **Noel Duncan**

Anna Dell Williamson was reappointed Newsletter Editor for the next year.

Prairie Platform: Judy Strauss reported on the prairie platform. Posts were set (with **Chuck Duplant, Sid Jones, Rick Dashnau** and **Judy Strauss**). By the end of day, 12/9/07, the platform will be accessible.

New Business

Diane Carpenter reported that it was agreed upon to publish the newsletter in the public part of the web site and not have it password protected. It will be moved from the Members Only area to the Education area on the website. Newsletters will be archived from 2004 to present. **Martin Gay** has been asked to post a new header for the website. There's more work to revamp the website.

Meeting Night Dinners: **Judy Strauss** expressed concern that the same people are preparing meals for meetings over and over again; we need more help. Persons bringing the meal and you will be reimbursed upon presenting receipts.

Sharing

From **Ken Debenport** – a week ago coming from the wood yard, I saw a truck with a tent on top of it. I spoke with a young couple from Sweden traveling the U.S. for a year – a unique experience.

From **Elmer Aden** – has anyone kept track of how many people attend the meeting when meals are served? There was a problem heating the food at one time. Perhaps let's discontinue the meals.

From **Jenn Mantei** – not everybody knows about the dinners; have it mentioned in the newsletter.

From **Bruce Williamson** – enjoy talking with people for a few minutes during the dinner before the meeting. Also dressing in uniform is important. You may be asked "Are you a ranger?" I met up with 2 boys who discovered a copperhead snake, and they wanted to report the snake.

From **Rose Aden** – met their friends from Germany and Holland at BBSP; they come and visit each year.

Meeting adjourned.

Female Cardinal
Jerry Zona, 12/07



STAFF REPORTS

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

STEVE KILLIAN

Steve Killian reported that November was another good month for us. The annual deer hunt starts on December 10, 2007. The park will reopen at noon on December 14, 2007. Next year there will be a different schedule for the deer hunt – 2 hunts will be spread across 2 weeks and then the following we will make a determination as to what worked the best. New Park Ranger II is Kyle Petkus. There was a promotion within for Gary Bialis from Park Ranger I to Park Ranger II. The new Parks Police Officer/Resource Management Specialist is in training for the next 3 months.



Facility type maintenance is now going on – just routine stuff. We are writing a business plan for the state auditors on how to generate revenue for the park. Some ideas include:

- a. wetland tours at Pilant and Elm Lakes
- b. Backcountry tours
- c. Conference event center
- d. Interactive/interpretive education (fun complex)

This is a 5-year business plan (FY 2013).

We purchased a 4 gig IPOD for the organization and use it for a weekly media program. We will play it Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays at Headquarters.

Kyle Petkus and Blake Flessner were a big help at Simple Xmas (from Judy Strauss) and did a really good job of driving and maintaining safety for the riders. (from Bruce Williamson).

INTERPRETIVE STAFF REPORTS

DAVID HEINICKE



We are still looking for more ideas on the Bryan Leach memorial – please let David know if you have any suggestions.

Upcoming events include:

David will be out of town all next week (12/10/07 to 12/14/07)

Christmas Bird Count – meet at 6:30 am at Nature Center, Saturday, December 15

House tour at Varner Hogg for volunteers – Friday, December 21

Starting in January 2008 David will be taking some vacation time

Staff/host/volunteer Christmas party, Dining Hall, Thursday, December 20

Christmas Eve – If there are volunteers available, the Nature Center will be open 11-3

Christmas Day – Nature Center closed

New Years Eve – Nature Center open 11-3 pm

New Years Day – Nature Center open 11 – 3pm; David and Sharon will not be there

Late January – annual school group training (David and Sharon)

Birds of Prey – 2/6/08 to 2/12/08; Doris Mager the bird lady will be doing bird of prey programs

Thanks for your help and support; we can't do it without you! Can't imagine doing it without you!

SHARON HANZIK

Sharon Hanzik mentioned that the Simple Xmas was a success! Next year we will start using tickets; everybody was busy the whole 4 hours.

The *Houston Chronicle* will do a spotlight article on BBSP on December 16, 2007.

If you have a community newsletter, we need to get BBSP news in them. Sharon wants to collect a list of publications/newsletters.



Volunteer training – We received 12 applications, 6 were accepted and still 6 to interview.

Glen Kilgore went to the hospital for a second heart catheterization operation this week.

Our new junior volunteers are Joseph and Molly Watson, and Madeleine and Mallory Warren (twins). Brian and Rachelle Watson are almost finished with their regular membership requirements.

PHOTOWALK REPORT

by Laszlo Perlaky



Laszlo helped the Visitors at Brazos Bend State Park Nature Center on December 1, 2007, and after that we looked for landscapes nearby New Horseshoe Lake and Old Horseshoe Lakes, hoping for fall colored remaining leaves. The fall colors are not very intense in this year, but we got few nice images at New Horse shoe Lake, where the Bald cypresses were very intense brown and some of the other trees there were yellow or bright green, mixed with the jungle of leafless bushes. The weather was windy and overcast, but we were happy when we saw some fast passing clouds to make drama in our landscapes. The Park had a wide variety of programs on that day, celebrating the Season just like the old timers, dressed up as trappers, hunters or farmers and cooked in cast iron pots on open fire... those were the days. There will be no photo-walk in January. The next photo-walk at Brazos Bend State Park will be on February 9, 2008.

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Joe Carmichael	Ron Morrison
Sharon Hanzik	Jim North
Jim Hiatt	Laszlo Perlaky
Warren Jackson	Marilyn Vossler
Jane Minard	Bruce Williamson



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Jerry Carpenter	Johnny Hite
Noel Duncan	Mandy Hite
Peggy Farley	Sid Jones
Bill Godley	Judy Strauss

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Fletcher Morgan

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Linda and Rod Hite
Suzie and Rick Gann



MEETING NIGHT SUPPERS

by Judy Strauss

Just a note to thank all of you who have signed up in the past for the Meeting night Suppers, and to those of you that have signed up for future meeting suppers. This is not a mandatory event, but it is a big "convenience" to those of us who are at the Park all day and are staying for the meeting, or even for those who come only for the meal and the meeting.

We try to keep the expense of the meal around \$30-\$35, and the person preparing the meal is reimbursed fully when they present the receipts for the items to me. The number of people eating determines the cost of the meal to each individual, usually between \$1 to \$3. Generally any leftovers are left for the Sunday "crew", unless items are "bought back" by the persons preparing the meal.

The meal gives us opportunity for a bit of socializing, a chance to sit back and "relax" after a long and sometimes hectic day, and to share a little time and laughter with friends and family. Anyone is invited and asked to sign up for a month, and the meal can be as simple as you decide that you want to make it. We still have many remaining "Meeting Night Suppers" with no name attached to them, so please feel free to pick a date. Without your support, the meals could be cancelled.

Again, thank you to everyone who has brought us all dinners in the past and for those who have signed up for future meetings. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions or concerns.

NATURE CENTER REPORT DECEMBER 2007

by Anna Dell Williamson

Here is a breakdown of the various activities and attendance recorded for the Nature Center, hikes, and programs for December 1 - 31, 2007. Visitation numbers reflect a week of deer hunt and the effects of the Christmas holidays. It is interesting to note that there were two Sundays with more visitors than the preceding Saturdays, December 23 and 30. Monday, Dec. 31 had more visitors than 6 weekend days during December.

	PROGRAMS	TOTALS
NATURE CENTER TOTAL: NOV. 2007, 4577 DEC. 2007, 4285 DEC. 2006, 4286	SATURDAYS (5)	1977 - High, 690, 12/1
	SUNDAYS (5)	1193 - High, 521, 12/30
	WEEKDAYS (22)	1115 - High, 326, 12/31
	CREEKFIELD HIKES (6days)	100 - High, 57, 12/8
	BIRD PROGRAMS (5)	128
	ALLIGATOR PROGRAMS (5)	65
	SNAKE/REPTILE PROGRAMS (5)	152
	CHILDREN'S STORY TIME (3)	41
	OTHER PROGRAMS (3) includes photo hike, pond life	28

Thanks

to **Chuck Duplant, Judy Strauss, Sid Jones and Rick Dashnau**, for the work on the prairie platform.

to **Joan Jackson** for taking care of the volunteer t-shirt and sweatshirt orders.

to **Kyle Petkus** and **Blake Flessner** for their help with the hayride for Simple Christmas

to **Judy Strauss** for the December meeting night supper

MAINTENANCE REPORT

prepared by Ron Morrison

Wood Yard:

Tied wood, split wood (4.16 cords were split), and delivered tied wood to the wood racks in both camping loops

Mowing and Landscaping:

Filled in some holes at Hale Lake

Trail Trimming and Trail Maintenance:

Trimmed Hoot's Hollow trail
Installed a bench at Creekfield Forest trail and rerouted the trail
Scraped mud from White Oak and Buckeye trails
Applied toppings and smoothed out the washouts

Equipment Maintenance:

Routine Maintenance on gators done by Noel Duncan

General Maintenance:

Winterized the water stations
Reset some leaning benches and interpretive signs at 40 Acre and Hale lakes

Pest Control:

Treated for fire ants at Creekfield trail and Nature Center



Almost an alligator
Jerry Zona, 11/07



Blue-winged teals and American coot
Jerry Zona, 12/07

INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

by Sharon Hanzik

We now have outlines and interpretation guides for many of our interpretive programs filed in our office. We can also send a program outline to you via email. The outlines are a "plan" for you to follow and can certainly be altered by the presenter - TAKE IT AND MAKE IT YOUR OWN. We also have many props, handouts, puzzles, games, etc. Programs range from alligators to owls, to turtles and many in between. They include all formats, including videos, slide shows and speaking presentations only. The volunteer's HP laptop has the slide shows loaded. We also have them on CD. You will need Power Point on your home computer if you plan to view them at home.

We encourage you to give formal interpretation a try. NEED TRAINING? Please contact Sharon. If we have enough interested volunteers, we will schedule a weekend training class.

SCHOOL GROUP LEADERS

Interested in leading school group hikes? Please contact Sharon. If we have enough interested volunteers, we will schedule a weekday training class in February.

MEDIA CENTER AT HQ

by Sharon Hanzik

We now have a **slide show presentation** at Headquarters. The slide show will introduce new visitors to the park and inform regular visitors of activities they may not be aware of such as the nature center, weekend programs, special events, park hosting and volunteering. The program lasts approximately 7 minutes and will run continuously. **Thank you to the organization** for the monitor and the I-pod. Another thank you to **Rick Dashnau** for his suggestions and valuable assistance in getting the program up and running. Check it out!

VOLUNTEER SHIRTS

by Joan Jackson

An order for volunteer shirts is now being compiled. If you are interested in ordering one or more of the shirt choices, the deadline is **January 13**. This date is the Sunday after the January volunteer meeting. Fill out your choice on one of the order envelopes in the green file box found in the gift shop office. Put a check made out to BBSP volunteers or cash in the envelope. If using cash, please notify or give it to Ken or Beth Debenport or Sharon or David. If you cannot make it to the park before the deadline, you may call Joan Jackson at 713-649-3581 or send an email with your choices to warjack@sbcglobal.net We will discuss payment at that time.

For available choices for shirts and sweats, see the notice about T-shirts for the volunteers below. VITs: You may order, but please remember that you may not wear these items until your training is complete and you become an official member.

IMPORTANT NOTICE CONCERNING VOLUNTEER T-SHIRTS

Please note that shirt color changes have been made in the volunteer shirts. White and the darker colors (in the zip hooded long sleeve sweatshirts) have been eliminated. This is in keeping with more uniform dress for our volunteers. If you have already purchased these items, of course you may continue to wear them at the park, but they will not be available in the future. Children's shirts are now available. Below is the updated chart:

ADULT CHOICES

SHORT SLEEVE T-SHIRTS

Colors: ash---light steel---stonewashed blue---stonewashed green

Sizes: small, medium, large, X-large, 2X-large---price \$7 3X-large---price \$8

LONG SLEEVE T-SHIRTS

Colors: ash---light steel---stonewashed blue---stonewashed green

Sizes: small, medium, large, X-large, 2X-large---price \$8 3X-large---price \$10

LONG SLEEVE SWEAT SHIRTS

Colors: natural---ash---light steel---stonewashed green

Sizes: small, medium, large, X-large, 2X-large---price \$11 3X-large price \$13

FULL ZIP HOODED LONG SLEEVE SWEATSHIRT

Colors: sports grey(medium grey), birch (light grey)

Sizes: small, medium, large, X-large, 2X-large---price \$25 3X large price \$27

CHILDRENS CHOICES

SIZES MEDIUM(10-12), LARGE(14-16)

SHORT SLEEVE T-SHIRTS

Colors: ash---natural---sport grey---stonewash blue---stonewash green Price \$7

LONG SLEEVE T-SHIRTS

Colors: ash---sport grey Price \$8

LONG SLEEVE SWEAT SHIRTS

Colors: ash---sport grey Price \$11

FULL ZIP HOODED LONG SLEEVE SWEATSHIRT

Colors: sports grey (medium grey), birch (light grey) Price--\$20

MURPHY'S LAWS OF PARK SERVICE

submitted by Dennis Jones

- As soon as the restrooms are cleaned, they are reported to be filthy.
- If it is not locked up or guarded it will be stolen or destroyed.
- Speed limits are for sissies
- Litter is like rust...it never sleeps
- If there is no one to collect fees, fees will not be paid voluntarily.
- Closing hours are for everybody else.
- It takes a degree in mechanical engineering to operate a combination padlock.
- Everybody wants a discount.
- If the gate is locked, push on it with your car

PRAIRIE PLATFORM

By Chuck Duplant

The elevated Prairie Platform was removed last spring due to carpenter bee damage making it unsafe for use. On December 1 and 2, Sid Jones, Judy Strauss and Chuck Duplant set the posts for the new platform. Post holes were hand dug so that we did not have to use lots of concrete around the posts.



The following weekend, December 8 and 9, Judy and Chuck hung the support beams, decking and some of the railing. This was a lot easier than the post hole digging.



Rick Dashnau and Chuck attached the steps but more work was needed on them so there is no photo. On December 15, Judy and Chuck completed the steps and handrails. A bench and roof are planned to be installed in January.



Enjoy the new platform

JUST FOR GRINS

What do bears who live in the Arctic teach their cubs?
To Polar Skate

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 11	Bird Hike, 40-Acre Restroom, 8:00 AM
January 11	Night Hike, meet at HQ, 7:00 PM
January 12, 2008	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
January 13	Bird Hike, 40-Acre Restroom, 8:00 AM
January 18	Night Hike, meet at HQ, 7:00 PM
January 19	Bird Hike, "Sunset at the Tower", Observation Tower, 5:00 PM
January 21	MLK Day, NC open 9:00 - 5:00
January 24	Night Hike, meet at HQ, 7:00 PM
February 1	Night Hike, meet at HQ, 7:00 PM
February 2	Junior Angler Workshop, 9:00 - 11:00 AM, Nature Center
	Brazos River Pickers, 5:00 - 7:00 PM, Amphitheater
February 6-12	Birds of Prey, Doris Mager, programs TBA
February 8	Bird Hike, 40-Acre Restroom, 8:00 AM
February 8	Night Hike, meet at HQ, 7:00 PM
February 9	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
February 9, 16, 23	New Volunteer Training
February 10	Bird Hike, 40-Acre Restroom, 8:00 AM
February 15	Night Hike, meet at HQ, 7:00 PM
February 22	Night Hike, meet at HQ, 7:00 PM
February 29	Night Hike, meet at HQ, 7:00 PM
March 7	Night Hike, meet at HQ, 7:00 PM
March 8	Junior Angler Workshop, 9:00 - 11:00 AM, Nature Center
	Brazos River Pickers, 5:00 - 7:00 PM, Amphitheater
March 9	Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
March 14	Bird Hike, 40-Acre Restroom, 8:00 AM
March 16	Bird Hike, 40-Acre Restroom, 8:00 AM
March 17-21	Spring Break for most local school districts - Nature Center open 9:00 - 5:00.
March 23	Easter Sunday



JUST FOR GRINS

An assortment of seemingly crazy state driving laws exists and can be found easily across the Internet. Most of these examples are sourced from newspapers and come from the site www.dumblaws.com. One interesting Florida law states that if an elephant, goat or alligator is left tied to a parking meter, the parking fee has to be paid just as it would for a vehicle.

<http://www.cnn.com/2007/LIVING/wayoflife/12/26/unusual.laws/index.html>

Black vultures
Jerry Zona, 12/07



DON'T CONFUSE ME WITH THE FACTS; I ALREADY MADE UP MY MIND

commentary by Dennis Jones

During my travels and exposure to many people in the name of nature interpretation I have found that prejudice is alive and well in the minds of many. No, not the human kind; another kind, the critter kind. It usually has to do with what I call "the creepy crawlies"; snakes, spiders, etc. During "snake" programs I have asked if anyone there hated snakes. More often than not someone would acknowledge that they didn't like snakes. Upon asking them why, they either didn't know, or they offered reasons such as: they are slimy, they are dangerous, they are ugly, or a similar reason.

Most of these answers are not based in fact. Slimy? I've met a lot of snakes, and I have yet to meet a slimy one. Ugly? Isn't beauty in the eye of the beholder? If snakes could talk they might say that we're pretty grotesque in our own right. Appendages: ears, legs, arms, fingers, toes; we are just one mass of appendages. And who could deny the beautiful colors snakes come in as well. Recall the emerald boa or the corn snake. Dangerous? Yes, some snakes can be dangerous if they are venomous and if they bite you. That's a lot of ifs. Cars are probably more dangerous than all our venomous snakes combined, but I don't see anyone running away in terror from the prospect of riding in a car. And yet we, in some cases, say we hate them (snakes that is.)

I believe people use the term hate to mean fear. It's not as embarrassing or revealing about yourself to say you hate something as much as it is to say you fear something. It's been my experience that if I have an unreasonable fear or loathing of something it is because I haven't taken the time to learn about the thing that makes me frightened or repelled. I have "prejudged" that thing without having facts and knowledge.

As an interpreter you can be the light that shines on the unknown and allows some of your audience to rethink their stand on things such as creepy crawlies. There are some who, no matter what you say, are going to continue to feel you should not confuse them with the facts because they have already made up their minds. If that's the case, then so be it. Don't push the issue. It won't do any good. You may be happy to know that sometimes, upon reflection, they soften their attitudes when no one is looking.

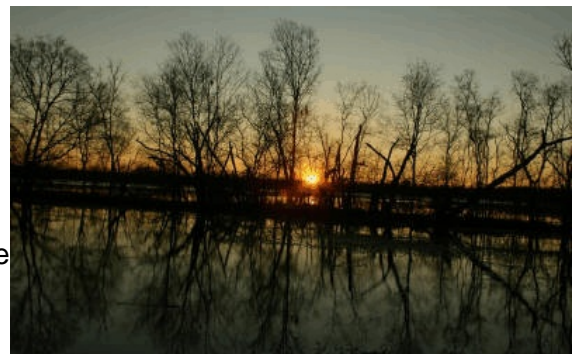
You have to be careful about doing too good a job dispelling fear. I met a young lady on the trail years back who was almost trembling with fear about our alligators. I asked her where she lived and she replied Houston. I told her she was safer here from predators than she probably ever was in Houston, and the most dangerous part of her visit was riding in a car. I went on to tell her everything she never wanted to know about alligators. As we parted she felt relieved and confident. I had done my job and felt pretty good about myself, when suddenly I heard a scream and turned around to see the woman running away from an 8 foot alligator. Was she still afraid? Had I failed in my discussion with her? No. She had tried to touch the basking alligator on the tail and when it splashed into the water it got her wet!

Knowledge should not translate into foolhardiness. From that point on, I always qualified that difference to my audience. By the way, I hate cauliflower. dj



Red-bellied woodpecker

Jerry Zona, 12/07



Sunrise at 40-Acre Lake

Jerry Zona, 12/07

Brazos Bend State Park

Texas Parks and Wildlife
21901 FM 762
Needville TX 77461

First Class Mail

→ **NEXT MEETING DAY AND TIME** ←

SATURDAY, JANUARY 12, 2008, 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
- Bird Hikes See schedule in calendar

**BRAZOS BEND STATE PARK
VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION**

VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION OFFICERS

- President:** James Blankenship
- Vice-President:** Anna Dell Williamson
- Secretary:** Nicole Olson
- Treasurer:** Diane Carpenter

NEWSLETTER TEAM

- Editor** Anna Dell Williamson
- Production Assistants** Bruce Williamson
 Terry Williamson

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.