



BRAZOS BEND BUNCH BUGLE

VOLUME 22, NUMBER 9

SEPTEMBER 2010

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

On August 26 I was honored to represent the Brazos Bend Volunteers by presenting the State Parks and Wildlife Commissioners Court with a check to pay for the Elm Lake Viewing Platform. (I felt like I had won the U. S. Tennis Open because they had a large cardboard copy of the check - but wait a minute... I was giving them the check, not receiving it.) Each of us got to tell the commissioners how proud we were to be able to build this for Brazos Bend. Sharon gave David the credit for designing the platform. Brazos Bend was very warmly received with congratulations from all.



This will be my last "Letter From the President". Being your president was a very rewarding experience. As I have mentioned before, it was actually very little work because the organization is so well organized, and you, the volunteers, are such fantastic people! Part of the pleasure of volunteering at the park is visiting with other volunteers as well as the public. Your new slate of officers will be great. Offie Walker already has some great ideas that he wants instigated, but I will let him tell you about those!

Hope everyone has marked your calendars for our picnic on Oct. 9. I will be asking for help (setting up tables, food, etc.) in a few weeks. Besides the annual picture of all the volunteers, Offie will be taking individual pictures of us for our roster. One of his great ideas is to have our picture next to our names. What a great way to refresh our memories of the other volunteer's names!

Last month in thanking those who helped with Eco-Explorers, I forgot to mention Pam Tatge and Marilyn Vossler's husband Don, who took pictures of the programs and made a CD of them.

Even though I will not be your President, if there is any way I can be of help to you, please don't hesitate to call or e-mail me. With the cooler weather approaching, I hope each of you can find the time to enjoy the great out of doors.

Carrie Sample

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AUGUST MEETING NOTES

submitted by Anna Dell Williamson, Acting Secretary

Vice President Suzie Gann, in the absence of President Carrie Sample, called the meeting to order on Saturday, August 14, 2010. There were 21 volunteers, 2 JR volunteers, 2 VITs and 5 staff members present. She thanked everyone for coming, and thanked Nelda Gay for the meal. The July minutes were approved as posted.

REPORTS:

BUDGET REPORT: Treasurer **Dave Armstrong** brought the report. (See attached.)

We have had good donations for the Elmer Aden fund, and from Randalls and Krogers. Gift Shop gross profit was excellent. Under Expenses, he noted that depreciation is low because we gave a lot of equipment to the park. Now we have liability protection when we're using park equipment. The Treasurer's Report was accepted.

The following budget requests were approved:

From Steve Killian: Replacement of the refrigerator/freezer for dining hall. This would be one unit and more energy efficient. Funds will come from George Foundation money mostly.

From Steve Killian: 205 tons of crushed limestone for maintenance of 40-Acre Lake, Elm Lake spillway. Funds will come from the Trail Maintenance Budget.

From Steve Killian: New "See You Later Alligator" signs at the front exit past Headquarters. The current one is becoming run down. Funds will come from the Supervisor Fund.

From Sharon Hanzik: Badge-a-minute button-making supplies. Consumable items are on sale, and we will be making more Gatorwise buttons, plus buttons for outreach, etc.

Fund Raising:

Cynthia Morales presented a fund raising suggestion to involve other people who love the Park and would like to contribute, but don't have time to work out here regularly. She suggested a type of Friends group to supplement our work financially. This program would allow people to become aligned with the park without becoming full-fledged volunteers. Cynthia suggested a BBSP Conservancy and presented one possible template on how we might accomplish this. This might be aimed at business people in Ft Bend Co area.

The BBSP Conservancy supports the volunteer organization with activities. It will grow over time to establish a network of people who will help the park outside of the volunteers themselves. It will create a natural base for a capital campaign. She presented categories of membership with suggested donations, and some perks that would be given to supporters.

A committee is needed to flesh out the proposal and determine details, prepare brochures, determine marketing efforts, link thru our website, and structures for publications/ communications. It was moved, seconded and passed that we appoint a committee to follow through on this proposal.

Ric Rincon suggested that we need a study of what we can project as our financial condition. For example, we need to foresee spending expectations, and project what to spend and how, based on past history. Currently we are not projecting future spending.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE: **Glen Kilgore** brought slate of officers nominated for 2010-2011. The following people have agreed to run for office:

President:	Offie Walker
Vice President:	Mary Lockwood
Secretary:	Linda Heinicke
Treasurer:	Dave Armstrong

There were no nominations from the floor. The nominations were accepted. The election will be in September. Since there are no contested offices, there will be no ballots, and the slate will be accepted at the September meeting. Officers take office October 1.

Eco-Explorers: The program went very well, in spite of several rainy days. The tadpoles program for younger children was OK.

Wood Sales: **Chuck Duplant** reported that wood sales are slow. Wood has been delivered, and bundling has been going on. Plan on working early morning or late afternoon due to the heat. Diane Carpenter collected money, and Dawn Tejero restocked the kiosks during Chuck's vacation.

Gift Shop: **Beth Debenport** reported that the Gift Shop is trying to keep up with inventory. We have new books and t-shirts. We appreciate all the help from the volunteers. Reminder: When working in the Gift Shop, it is very important to put Driver's License numbers and phone numbers on checks.

Training: **Anna Dell Williamson** reported on new volunteer training. She will be sending emails for help with activities. Suzie Gann is in charge of the sandwich lunch. Welcome all the new volunteers, bring food for the lunch, and please sign up.

Outreach: **Judy Strauss** reported on two Outreach dates:
Prairie Heritage Days, Nov. 6,
Texian Market Days Oct. 23.

The meeting was adjourned.

BRAZOS BEND BUTTERFLY COUNT

by Rich and Sandy Jespersen, Count Compilers

The 15th annual Brazos Bend Butterfly Count was scheduled for Sunday, September 19, 2010. However, rainy weather forced the postponement of this event. Watch the emails and newsletter for announcement of the new date. When it is rescheduled, everyone is invited and no experience is required. Beginners will be paired with experienced counters. The extra eyes are very helpful, and it is a fun way to learn to identify our local butterflies.

This citizen science project is one of several annual butterfly counts in the Houston area (and many more nationwide). Participants divide into small groups and patrol areas within BBSP and vicinity counting all species and individual butterflies they see. There is a \$3.00 per person North American Butterfly Association fee to participate. The Park entry fee will be waived for participants who stop at headquarters, identify themselves as participants in the count and receive a pass.

The first count in 1995 tallied 392 butterflies of 30 species. The record count of 2001 found 5340 butterflies of 57 species. Last year we saw 1592 individuals of 41 species, including 940 Gulf Fritillaries, photo right (plus some eggs, caterpillars and a chrysalis) and a record number of 55 Turk's-cap White-Skippers.



For additional information contact the Jespersens at richj@consolidated.net or cell phone 832-454-2127.
(Ed. Note: Sorry, I do not have credits for the two photos to the right. Please contact me if you took the pictures.)



Great Purple Hairstreak
Chuck Duplant



STAFF REPORTS

STEVE KILLIAN



July was a good Month. It has been extremely hot, but there has been lots going on. Ted Stevens, Management Trainee, will be serving as Acting Assistant Manager in Chris Bishop's absence. Chris will be gone for several months for law enforcement training.

1. Elm Lake Viewing Platform. David has done a good job of pushing this project through. The official plans have been finalized, and we are ready to transfer volunteer money to the department. TPWD will bid out the project. We will transfer the funds at the August TPWD Commission meeting in San Antonio, and also promote the volunteer organization and the park, and all we do together. Carrie Sample, Sharon Hanzik, and Steve Killian will attend. Dave Armstrong will mail a check to TPWD, and the department will have an oversized check for Carrie to present. The Volunteers will get a lot of recognition.

Once the money is transferred, there will be a 4-5 month process for bidding and selection. Weather is the next consideration. Bidders will not know how much money is available, and can negotiate for the lowest bid. We don't get any money back if the bids come in lower, but any excess will be applied to the project. The price bid will not be exceeded.

2. Walt Dabney, TPWD Director for 11 years, is retiring at the end of August. The interview process for a successor will begin soon.
3. There is a *National Geographic* article on the best state parks in the US, and we're one of top parks in the United States. We were allowed to edit the copy. The BBSP article is 2 pages, with a picture of the prairie.
4. We are now part of a three year archaeological project. Penetrating radar will be used around the NC yard. They will survey a large portion of BBSP and can go back for further research if needed. We can direct work to where the new camping loop will be behind Maintenance and pre-clear the area for development of 50-60 new sites.
5. TxDot is doing a survey of erosion area in the campground loop. We received 20.96 inches of rain in July. Creekfield overflowed and water rolled down the drainage area and undercut the road and trail. The road still safe. TxDot will start work end at the of this month to repair the roadway.
6. TxDot replaced all road reflectors, which makes a great difference at night.
7. The lakes are full, and we didn't need to pump water into them.
8. The Volunteer Organization will fund 75,000 copies of the BBSP color-coded trail map. Tina, Diane, and others have developed a draft version of the back side, and we will have a firm cost in a week or two. The Kroger barcode will be on the back, and we hope to be funded through donations.
9. In July, due to rain and the softness of the ground, we lost several trees on the road and in the campgrounds. We have been cleaning up from that.
10. Capital repair project will begin Monday. It includes renovation of the HQ bathroom, and the 100 and 200 loop bathhouses. They will be re-tiled, and all new fixtures and new dividers will be installed throughout. The inside will be gutted and ventilation will be improved. The outside will be left the same. The project will run from now through November 1. Portable showers and restroom facilities with running water will be installed for camper use. There will be air conditioning in the portable buildings, but not in the new ones.

11. Prairie management is in full force, spraying exotics and woodies, and maintaining prairies in transitional zones.
12. Lake management involves spraying exotics.
13. For the upcoming legislative session, we need to contact legislators and sell the idea that state parks are a good investment, BBSP especially, for the Houston area and Fort Bend County. We need to maintain our funding strength. Talking points have been sent out involving economic multipliers on local economies, how many school children are educated each year, etc. We have to get the word out to legislators who make decisions on how money is spent. We make half of our money by park income. The rest is a portion from sporting good taxes to parks. There are no general funds to state parks. The legislative session starts in February, and decisions will be made in the fall. Interim committees are meeting now. Find out which one is focusing on the parks. Individuals can voice their opinion, and so can the group. Be sure to mention economic aspects in addition to recreation - parks provide jobs for individuals in the surrounding areas. Texans for State parks, the umbrella volunteer group, can give us information. Arrange opportunities to take our show out to civic groups in the area. Contact Steve for speakers for KPB groups, community and business leaders, etc. August 31 is the end of the fiscal year.

There was a question regarding Live Oak trail. The trail has been improved, then closed due to flooding and fallen trees. It needs to be cleared starting next week.

DAVID HEINICKE

David introduced Ted Stevens, Management Trainee, who grew up on a farm outside of Nacogdoches. His degree from North Texas College in Denton is in Communication and Management. He worked in a park north of Dallas and with the Outdoor Family Program for the past year. Now he is here as a park management trainee.



Upcoming events:

August 18, 9:00-4:00, Flying Wild training, open to interpretive staff and volunteers.

September 29, The 15th Annual North American Butterfly Count

November 6: Prairie Heritage Days. We will have a volunteer tent outside the Nature Center.

January 6: Fun Run: Ted and David are coordinating with a running club from Pearland to have an event here. The run will be 13 miles, and will draw 400 runners at the most. The club will handle registration. They will have a team of their volunteers to help provide hydration stations. This is a fund raiser for their running club, and the Volunteer Organization will receive funds from the event.

February 11-13: Doris Mager and her raptors will be back to present several programs.

We have gathered 25 alligator eggs from the edge of Pilant Lake, and left 14-15 with the mother. Hatching should occur at the end of the month, Tell the public that the eggs were taken from the nest for educational purposes and the babies will be returned to the mother afterwards.

Question: Did we get a count of alligator nests? We counted 13 nests on Elm Lake.

Trivia: Lantern Click beetles can be seen on the prairie between 40-Acre and Headquarters. Their two lights stay lit instead of flickering. A third light may be seen when they are landing.

SHARON HANZIK

We are planning for 16 VITs in our **New Volunteer Training** on September 11, 18, and 25. Most have confirmed.



Gatorwise Weekend will be August 28 and 29. We will have 5-6 programs each day. Contact Sharon if you can present a program.

VIT Mikki Kilgore will finish training tomorrow with the alligator program presentation. **Veronique Sweerts** will finish next weekend with her alligator program. There are two left from spring training to finish. **Kevin Brantley** and **Pete Hart** have finished.

Volunteer Campsite update: Volunteers are still able to use the volunteer campsite, but new TxPark system requires some changes in reserving the site. Procedures will be sent to members. We need to update the SOP on the volunteer campsite and we will be discussing what changes need to be made. This does not affect camp host sites. Check with HQ on any questions.

Thanks for all the volunteers. We are getting some regular weekday help, and the Gift Shop is being opened more.

Sharon introduced **Tina Ibarra** from Headquarters who was attending the meeting.

NATURE CENTER REPORT AUGUST 2010

Below are the totals of the various activities and attendance recorded for the Nature Center, hikes, and programs for August 1-31, 2010.

NATURE CENTER ATTENDANCE August 2010 - 4683 August 2009 - 4298 August 2008 - 4484	Saturdays (4) 1135 High, 361, 8/7 Average: 284
	Sundays (5) – 1110 High, 256, 8/8 Average: 222
	Weekdays (22) – 998 High, 93, 8/6 Average: 47
SNAKE PROGRAMS (3)	41
CHILDREN’S STORY TIME (6)	61
BIRD & OWL PROGRAMS (4)	55
ECO-EXPLORERS/TADPOLES (2)	48
OTHER PROGRAMS (7) includes spiders, spotting scope, tracks, pond life, skulls, and crunch ‘n munch	151
TOTAL VISITORS SERVED IN HIKES AND PROGRAMS	458
VOLUNTEER HOURS	Total in NC and programs:538



VOLUNTEER NEWS AND NOTES

GET WELL SOON:

Nelda Gay stumbled on uneven sidewalk while on her way with a friend to an Astros game recently. She suffered a very bad fracture of her right arm and underwent surgery. She is on the mend, but will be out of circulation for some time during her recuperation. We all wish her a speedy recovery.



Congratulations to new volunteers **Mikki Kilgore, Veronique Sweets, Kevin Brantley** and **Pete Hart**. Be sure to welcome these new members to the organization.

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Gary Bialas (Staff)
Jim Calvert
Ron Dearman
Barry Eversole (Staff)
Frank Gregg (Emeritus)
Linda Oden Heinicke
Tina Ibarra (Staff)
Ed Waley



OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Buddy Franklin (Emeritus)
Mozelle Franklin (Emeritus)
Pete Hart
Dennis Jones (Staff)
Tom Kanak
Nicole Olson
Ric Rincon
Veronique Toussaint-Sweets

SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Dave and Gay Armstrong (1967)
Jaci Elliott
Eddy and Sam Grizzaffi
Jim and Patricia Hiatt
Don and Marilyn Vossler (1966)



OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

Justin and Kate Bower
Diane and Jerry Carpenter

ANNUAL VOLUNTEER PICNIC

The Annual Volunteer Picnic will be October 9 in the Dining Hall at 6:00 PM. Prior to the picnic, at 5:30, we will have a picture of the entire organization taken, so wear your dress uniform and be there early.

Annual Volunteer Rewards and Recognitions will be presented after the meal. There will be no business meeting.

Families are invited, so come and enjoy the food and fellowship. Bring a meat dish and a side dish or dessert to share. Some meat will be provided. Contact Carrie Sample if you will be able to help with set up, food presentation, or clean up, or if you have photos of volunteers in action for a slide presentation she is preparing.



NEW VOLUNTEER CAMPSITE PROCEDURES



If you use or plan to use the volunteer campsite, be aware that there are some changes coming out that may affect your reservation procedure or use. The reservation procedure has changed, but those details are not completely available. The Standing Operating Procedure (SOP) will soon be updated to reflect the reservation procedure. Along with this update, it has come to our attention that other updates and clarifications need to be made. You will find below some of these needed changes. If you have any opinions or suggestions about the use of the site, please send them to a member of the Executive Committee as

soon as possible. This will be a topic of discussion at either the November or December meeting (yet to be determined).

The current SOP reads as follows:

ARTICLE X - VOLUNTEER GROUP CAMPSITE

1. The Volunteer campsite is provided only for Volunteers and their immediate families for the time they are doing actual volunteer work in the Park.
2. The Volunteer campsite is available on a first come basis and is shared with up to eight people. Use of the site should be coordinated with a feeling of mutual cooperation and trust.
3. Volunteers must reserve the site with Headquarters by Wednesday 5 p.m. prior to weekend reserved.
4. If the site has been previously reserved, contact that person to coordinate camping arrangements.
5. The first Volunteer to arrive must register at Headquarters.
6. If the Volunteer site has not been claimed by 6:00 p.m. Friday or 2:00 p.m. Saturday, the park may release the site to the public, unless Headquarters has been notified of late arrival.
7. Volunteers may use the site once a month maximum, unless no other Volunteer claims it.
8. Any abuse of this system will result in the termination of the group site benefit for that Volunteer

Here are some considerations of changes and clarifications we need to think about:

1. We need a minimum of hours worked per each night's stay. Staff requests at least 4 hours of any of the following – maintenance, wood yard, gift shop, nature center, water station or interpretive programs or hikes. (Hosts have an hourly requirement for their stay and we feel all volunteers should as well. Can the required minimum number of hours be accumulated during the week?)
2. Unchanged
3. Edit to reflect new procedure when that is clarified.
4. Unchanged
5. The volunteer who reserved the site must be the first one to claim the site.
6. Edit to reflect new procedure when it is clarified.
7. Clarify once a month - one day, one weekend??
8. Unchanged

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Check out the Volunteer Events Calendar on the website to sign up for school group hikes, Texian Market Days, National Prairie Day and future events.

Thanks

...to **Sid Jones, Curtis and Jennifer Parent, Dawn Tejero, Diane Carpenter,** and **Jim Calvert** for work in the wood yard splitting, bundling, delivering and collecting money while Chuck was out of town.

...to **Nelda Gay** for the August meeting night supper

...to **everyone who brought items** for the Volunteer Training Lunch and who stayed to meet the VITs.

...to **Dave Armstrong, Nancy and Bear Dobbs, Carl Franke, Christine Kovach, Cindy Peterson, Tom Prentiss, Judy Strauss,** and **Pam Tatge** who are serving as mentors to the VITs.

...to **Steve Killian** and **Sharon Hanzik** for their presentations at Orientation.

...to **all the volunteers** who served as guides or backups for the Park Road Tour with the VITs

...to **David Heinicke, Sharon Hanzik, Jerry Carpenter, Chuck Duplant,** and **Offie Walker** for their presentations and hikes for the VIT training.

...to **all the volunteers** who helped over Labor Day weekend. "Put Name Here" especially appreciated the weekend off.

...to **Rick Dashnau** for the articles for the newsletter.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 9	Annual Membership Photo, 5:30 PM, Dining Hall Annual Volunteer Picnic, 6:00 PM, Dining Hall
October 22	Bird Hike, 8:00 AM, 40-Acre Lake Restrooms
October 24	New Volunteer Open House, 3:00 - 5:00 PM
November 12	Bird Hike, 8:00 AM, 40-Acre Lake Restrooms
November 13	Budget and Executive Meetings, 3:00 PM Regular Business Meeting, 5:30 PM (Supper, 5:00 PM)
November 22-26	Thanksgiving Break, lots of visitors, Nature Center closed Thanksgiving Day
December 3	Bird Hike, 8:00 AM, 40-Acre Lake Restrooms
December 4	Simple Christmas
December 4	"Bird Blizzard at Sunset" program, 5:00 PM, Observation Tower
December 11	Budget and Executive Meetings, 3:00 PM Regular Business Meeting, 5:30 PM (Supper, 5:00 PM)
December 12	Bird Hike, 8:00 AM, 40-Acre Lake Restrooms
December 20-31	Christmas Break, lots of visitors, Nature Center closed Christmas Day
December 24	"Bird Blizzard at Sunset" program, 5:00 PM, Observation Tower



NEW STATE PARK DIRECTOR

Brent Leisure has been named as the new **State Park Director** to replace Walt Dabney, who retired from Texas Parks and Wildlife effective August 31, 2010. Brent's long tenure with the agency coupled with his proven track record, most recently as Regional Director, will serve him well in continuing the quality operations of state parks focused on natural and cultural stewardship and recreational opportunity for all our constituents. Brent assumed this leadership role effective September 1, 2010.

FROG LEGS: A DELICACY FOR ALL

by Rick Dashnau

I was walking down the Spillway Trail with a friend I met at the park. I'd stopped to look at some Golden Silk Spiders. While I looked at them, my friend looked elsewhere. Then she pointed and said, "Look at that big one!" I looked, and it was a big female--but she was REALLY big. Distended. Then my friend said, "I think she has something." I picked up my binoculars, and looked. And looked again. And a third time. I saw something green, with two large black eyes. It was a FROG! The spider was still eating it, and it appeared to be working just behind the head. Beyond that, there was just the vertebral column. The rest of the frog's body was already gone. While I crouched to get a close picture, I bumped a log, which bumped the web. This scared her off the frog. I was disappointed, but it was still a good photo opportunity.



While we watched, this hugely distended female suddenly ran to the edge of her web, and grabbed something else! When she brought it to the center of the web, I saw that it was a horse fly. She wrapped it, which I filmed a bit, and then, to my surprise, she began eating!



I've read about what these large spiders can catch with their webs. I've read that birds might sometimes be caught. I've seen large insects ensnared. I suppose that anything that the spider can overpower, and then render into drinkable slurry with its digestive juices, is potential food. But I'd never considered that frogs could be on the list. I can't imagine how it got caught in the web.

For those who work at the park, here's something else to capture the interest of our park visitors!

Here's a link to the video clip: http://rickubis.20m.com/spider_frog_fly.wmv

2010 STATE OF THE PRAIRIE CONFERENCE

Jaime Gonzalez, Steering Committee, Coastal Prairie Partnership

I am pleased to tell you that the 2010 State of the Prairie Conference registration is now available online. The Conference will be held November 4 and 5. This is shaping up to be a great event with both national and local prairie experts and two opportunities for field trips to restoration sites and high-quality prairie remnants around Houston. There is something for everyone with presentations focused on restoration techniques, educational resources, and protection through the use of conservation easements. We'll cap the week on November 6 with Prairie Heritage Day at Brazos Bend State Park just south of Houston. So, whether you live in coastal Texas or call the Cajun Prairie home, this event is for you!

For more information, please feel free to contact Jaime Gonzalez at jaime@katyprairie.org. Visit Coastal Prairie Partnership at: http://www.coastalprairiepartnership.org/?xg_source=msg_mes_network

BRAZOS BEND STATE PARK TALKING POINTS

Ed. Note: As volunteers, we can contact our legislators regarding the value of BBSP to the area and to the state. We can request that state funding include State Parks and their many programs. We can speak out and promote BBSP and State Parks to get the recognition and financial support that is necessary to carry out our mission. Use the talking points below to contact your local and county legislators and your state officials about the need for state support of Texas State Parks, and specifically Brazos Bend State Park. Remember, State Parks receive no general tax funds and must support themselves by their entrance fees and a portion of the sporting goods taxes. Fees are going up, which limits the accessibility of parks to some of the population. Contact your local officials and encourage their support of state-wide funding for State Parks. We are in a critical time period when funding decisions will be made. Now is the time to make our case for Brazos Bend State Parks and Texas State Parks as a whole for continued strong State support that makes Good Economic / Quality of Life sense.

- State parks as a group and Brazos Bend State Park specifically are great investments and more than pay for themselves each year. State parks are economic engines for tourism dollars in their respective communities.
- An economic study completed in 2005 by Texas A & M University concluded that Texas State Parks (2004) generated \$863 million in sales, \$469 million in personal income and created almost 13,000 jobs in Texas annually. This numbers should be significantly higher due to the increased park revenue and visitation since 2004.
- An economic study completed in 2005 by Texas A & M University concluded that Brazos Bend State Park (2004) generated \$2.9 million in sales, \$1.6 million in personal income and created 62 jobs in Fort Bend County (specifically) annually. This numbers should be significantly higher due to the increased park revenue and visitation since 2004.
- Over the past five years (2004 – 2009), Brazos Bend State has doubled its revenue to over \$1 million per year.
- Brazos Bend State Park generates revenue for the state over and above the park's operating costs.
- Over the past five years, overall state park revenue has increased by 37%. The 2009 revenue generated by Texas State Parks was nearly \$38.5 million.
- Brazos Bend State Park has been innovative in making the most of its appropriated dollars by leveraging its budget with grant monies and partnerships with local community and conservation organizations. The park has a cooperative relationship with the largest State Park volunteer organization in the state. The number of hours of labor contributed by volunteers each year is nearly equal to the hours worked by the park's paid staff. This allows Brazos Bend State Park to be a leader in partnerships and leveraging limited State of Texas resources.
- Brazos Bend State Park partners with the Houston Museum of Natural Science to offer the services of the George Observatory to visitors and neighbors.
- Brazos Bend State Park receives over 8,000 school children per year visit on educational field trips or BBSP provide environmental educational programming.
- Brazos Bend State Park's infrastructure is aging (over 25 years old) and in need of replacement. The key park improvements most essential to continuing to improve the quality of public use are capital projects, which must be funded with appropriated dollars specifically designated for capital improvements.
- Brazos Bend State Park enhances the quality of life for residents of the Houston Metro Region. The park is a significant selling point for nearby master planned communities. Brazos Bend State Park has received local, national and international attention as a tourism destination, wildlife refuge and recreation area.
- Brazos Bend State Parks hosts over 200,000 visitors and over 50,000 campers each year. The park attracts visitors from throughout Texas and from across the globe. Brazos Bend State Park provides some of the most accessible wildlife viewing opportunities available. The park provides habitat for over 300 adult alligators and thousands of younger animals, over 300 species of birds and both large and small mammals.
- Brazos Bend State Park offers abundant high quality outdoor recreation opportunities within an hour's of downtown Houston. The park has a system of over 35-miles of trails for walking, hiking, trail running and bicycling. Over a third of that trail mileage is also available for horseback riding. Brazos Bend State Park also offers opportunities for camping, angling, stargazing, wildlife viewing, geocaching, and resting, recreating and relaxing.

Texas Elected Officials Contact Websites

Governor's Office – <http://governor.state.tx.us/about/>

Lt Governor's Office - <http://www.ltgov.state.tx.us/contact.php>

State House - <http://www.house.state.tx.us/members/welcome.php>

State Senate - <http://www.senate.state.tx.us/75r/Senate/Members.htm>

Elected Officials Contacts for Brazos Bend State Park

Texas House of Representatives (outgoing)

Representative Dora Olivo

P.O. Box 2130
Missouri City, TX 77459
(281) 208-8806
(281) 208-8826 Fax

Representative-elect Ron Reynolds

6565 West Loop South
Suite 115
Bellaire, Texas 77401
(713) 334-2667 (office)
(713) 334-6768 (fax)

Texas Senate

Senator Joan Huffman

129 Circle Way, Suite 101
Lake Jackson, Texas 77566
(979) 480-0994
(979) 480-9122 (Fax)

Fort Bend County Judge

Robert Hebert

Fort Bend County
301 Jackson Street
Richmond, TX 77469
(281) 342-3411

WEIRD MOTHS

by Rick Dashnau

Some of you might have noticed the odd-looking moths on some of our buildings (I saw some on the 40Acre Lake bathrooms, and we had them on the door to the breezeway on the VC.). I thought they looked sort-of like honeybees wearing fur coats.

Anyhow, they appear to be *Megalopyge Opercularis*; aka the Southern Flannel Moth (among other things). These are the adult form of one of our nastier critters--the asp caterpillar. So, for those who have been asked what the adult asp looks like--now we can say. This might also mean that we'll have another "bloom" of them this year. Last year, I only knew of them on a single tree by the Observation Platform at 40 Acre Lake. Here's my webpage talking about them, with several images: <http://67.15.110.101/asp.html>



Adult asp



Asp

TAKE ME OUTDOORS HOUSTON

Media Contact: Heidi Rao, TPWD/Houston, (713) 829-1377, heidi.rao@tpwd.state.tx.us

At a time when people in big cities are becoming increasingly disconnected from the world of nature and the outdoors, Take Me Outdoors Houston on Oct. 2 at Discovery Green will offer Houston's 2nd annual free, family-oriented festival of the outdoors. Exhibitors will provide hands-on activities, booths and opportunities to engage audiences who haven't ever or don't often get exposure to the great outdoors – especially the resources located right in Houston's big backyard.

“By introducing Texans, especially urban adults and kids, to outdoor recreation, our woods and waters and natural places become more relevant and important to them,” said Heidi Rao, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department hunter education specialist in Houston. “We believe recreation leads to conservation. If they're out there enjoying the natural world, they come to care about it and finally to care for it.”

Take Me Outdoors Houston will take place from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Sat. Oct. 2 at Discovery Green, a 12-acre park created by a public/private partnership between the City of Houston and the non-profit Discovery Green Conservancy. The park's mission is to provide a beautiful, urban green space in the heart of Houston that serves as a village green for the city. It is located across Avenida de las Americas from the George R. Brown Convention Center and the Hilton Americas Hotel, sitting between the Toyota Center and Minute Maid Park. Since the park opened in April 2008, it has welcomed more than 1 million visitors and hosted more than 800 public and private events.

For more information about Take Me Outdoors Houston, see the calendar of events on the Discovery Green website: <http://www.discoverygreen.com/en/cev/eb/7868634/> or call (713) 400-7336. For general information about ways urban families can reconnect with nature and the outdoors, see the Life's Better Outside Web site.

REGISTER FOR THE BIG SIT 2010!

submitted by Anne Shelton

I have participated off and on for years and would like to encourage other in the volunteer organization to do the same. Last year Texas had 20 circles and was second and fifth in the top ten circle species counts. The simplicity of the concept makes The Big Sit! so appealing. Find a good spot for bird watching -- preferably one with good views of a variety of habitats and lots of birds. Next you create a real or imaginary circle 17 feet in diameter and sit inside the circle for 24 hours, counting all the bird species you see or hear. That's it. Find a spot, sit in it, have fun.

The 16th annual Big Sit! will take place on Sunday, October 10, 2010. This year many National Wildlife Refuges will be participating. Will your bird-watching group join the fun? We hope so.

What is the Big Sit? Some people call it a tailgate party for birders. The Big Sit! is an annual international birding event hosted by Bird Watcher's Digest and founded by the New Haven (CT) Bird Club. It's a non-competitive, stationary, one-day birding event that is serious fun. We hope bird watchers from around the globe will unite on this special day by participating in this event (it's free!). Every team that observes this year's "Golden Bird" has a chance to win \$500.

Don't delay! Participating teams must register prior to October 10, 2010, by visiting the Bird Watcher's Digest website, <http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/connect/bigsit/index.php>

Brazos Bend State Park

Texas Parks and Wildlife
21901 FM 762
Needville, TX 77461

FIRST CLASS MAIL

**ANNUAL PICNIC
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2010
VOLUNTEER GROUP PHOTO, 5:30 PM
PICNIC, 6:00 PM, DINING HALL**



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:	Offie Walker
Vice-President:	Mary Lockwood
Secretary	Linda Heinicke
Treasurer:	Dave Armstrong

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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.