



BRAZOS BEND BUNCH BUGLE

VOLUME 23, NUMBER 12

DECEMBER 2011

BBEEC REPORT

by Chuck Duplant



The Brazos Bend Environmental Education Center Committee met on November 9 with Bill McDonald, Landscape Architect, and Gordon Bohmfalk, head of Planning and Design, from Texas Parks and Wildlife. The meeting went great, and they have offered to help with design and a schematic drawing of the new building. Their enthusiasm for

this project was infectious, at least to me.

Our needs and wants for the new building were discussed and other ideas thrown around. With their help, knowledge and skills, we are on our way forward. To help us move forward, Dave Armstrong and Mike Manley have put together a business plan that will give us more structure and direction. They presented this plan to the Building Committee, and it was approved. They will present it to the Volunteer Organization at the General Meeting on January 14. The meeting will be held at the Dining Hall (time yet to be determined)

Hope to see as many of you there as possible.



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

The BBSPVO wishes each and every member, host and staff at BBSP a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful 2012. Here's hoping your Christmas stocking is full of all good things.

In this issue:

BBEEC Report.	1
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.	1
General Meeting.	2
T'was the Night before Christmas at Brazos Bend.	3
Staff Christmas Party.	4
Staff Reports.	5
Moving Up the River.	6
Congratulations.	7
Thank you.	8
Gator Run.	8
TPWD Posts Videos.	8
Nature Center Report.	9
Maintenance Report.	10
You Make a Difference.	10
Christmas Bird Count.	11
Upcoming Events.	11

GENERAL MEETING

NOVEMBER 12, 2011

President Offie Walker called the meeting to order. There were 15 volunteers, 1 VIT, 3 guests, and 3 staff present. Guests were Austin Hager, and Chris Bishop's parents. Offie thanked those who brought dinner: Nancy Lynn Jones for ham, Diane Carpenter for salad, and the Volunteer Organization for the cake of recognition to Chris Bishop.

The minutes of the September meeting were approved as posted.

Steve Killian, Chris Bishop and Sharon Hanzik brought staff reports.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Bob Kowalewski brought the Treasurer's report. He discussed the monthly report for October and funds available for purchase.

The following budget requests were approved by the general membership:

1. Replacement battery on the John Deere Gator, to be paid out of Volunteer tractor supplies and maintenance.
2. 10,000 Outreach stickers to be given to visitors at events .
3. Herbicide for bottomland forest, to treat Chinese tallow trees
4. Feral hog bait corn, to bait traps for hogs.
5. Deer corn for November and December hunts
6. Panels for bird ID on Elm Lake Viewing Platform from platform account
7. Chain saw, from Tools and Equipment.
8. Lumber and hardware for observation deck on west end of Live Oak Trail, from funded sources, Eco- explorers, and Ramsayer and Kilgore Exxon-Mobil .
9. 37- ton log splitter.
10. Two John Deere gators with 2 windshields, bed liners, and lifts.

Chuck Duplant discussed putting money aside for 2012 for BBEEC. He will propose a regular appropriation to increase the restricted fund at the December meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

COMPTROLLER: Rachelle Watson is resigning as Comptroller as of January. Nancy Lynn Jones will take the job in January. Thanks to Rochelle for what she has done, and thanks to Nancy Lynn for accepting.

GIFT SHOP: Beth Debenport reports that committee members are looking at redoing the display shelves for the Gift Shop. We have increased sales and need to keep inventory on hand. New doors for the GS have been purchased and installation will be completed soon.

MAINTENANCE: Pete Hart reported that the work crew put in 185 hours in October. There are 5-8 volunteers working Tuesdays and Wednesdays. They have been helping put in a trail in the prairie, completing lots of tree trimming, and splitting wood.

OUTREACH: Judy Strauss reported that she will be doing a special outreach program for Kids Unlimited, children with cancer, on December 10. Dave Armstrong has been doing nursing home outreaches. We appreciate his help with this.

NEWSLETTER: Anna Dell Williamson reported that the November newsletter will be on the web in a couple of days.

WOOD YARD: Chuck Duplant thanked the Tuesday/Wednesday work crew, who split and bundled 9 cords of wood in 2 months, much of the time with a broken splitter.

BBEEC BUILDING COMMITTEE: Chuck Duplant reported that the new NC is becoming a reality. On November 9, we met with 2 representatives from TPWD infrastructure, Bill McDonald, Landscape Architect, and Gordon Bohmfaulk, head of Planning and Design and talked about the new building. They will soon work up a building scope with schematic drawings, and take us up to construction drawings. They will fund the drawings, which will save us a lot of money. We will meet again in December to go over plans.

Dave Armstrong and Mike Manley have a project plan to add structure to the building committee and volunteer organization as to how we do fundraising and get everything in line. At the general meeting in January, we want as many people present as possible. It will take all of us to get the building built. This is the grandest thing we have ever tried to do. In January we will approve the plan as an organization, and discuss fundraising. We are looking into online donations and other projects, and beefing up our programs. The structure designed by Dave and Mike for us to do this will be presented at the meeting in January. The Dining hall has been reserved. We might meet earlier in day, and we will have a dessert tasting instead of a dinner.

TPWD has asked us to hold off on fund raising, probably a year. They have 2 other projects in the Houston area and want to get that fund raising done before we start. It will take about a year to be ready to do any fundraising. The Austin folks were impressed with our work and excited about this project. Another consideration is getting some grant writer training. If interested, contact Chuck.

Offie reported that the annual volunteer picnic was a great success. There were more than 100 attending. There was seating for 80.

OLD BUSINESS: Sharon presented awards to those who missed the picnic: Jaci Eliot (Excellence for all-around service), Bruce Williamson (Emeritis), and Anna Dell Williamson (Teamwork for Gift Shop).

T'WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS AT BRAZOS BEND

By David Heinicke

T'was the night before Christmas at Brazos Bend Park,
all the creatures were stirring, soon after dark.
The Gators were nestled, all snug in their dens,
to avoid foul weather and December's cold winds,
With the fire getting low and just about out,
I slid into my bag, and quickly passed out.
When up from the creek there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my tent to see what was the matter.





Off toward the creek, I started to hike,
 Through the bushes and briars and brambles like.
 By the light of the moon, I could see where to go,
 It lit up an object, in the creek down below.
 I saw what it was with a lump in my throat,
 It was eight alligators, pulling a flat bottom boat,
 With a jolly fat man in red overalls,
 I knew in an instant it was old Santa Claus.

More rapid than otters, his gators they came,
 And he whistled and hollered and called them by name,
 "Now Stimpie, Now Stumpie, Now Bumpie, and Cruiser,
 On Tanker, On Tonka, On Bonker, and Bruiser,
 To the edge of the creek and on up the draw,
 Pull it up, Pull it up, Pull it up, Ye Haw!!"
 So up to the campsite, making all sorts of noise,
 Came old Santa Claus, with a boat full of toys.



He was dressed all in red, with a big cowboy hat,
 And mud on his pants that had splattered and splat,
 The beard on his chin was as white as a goose,
 And his tummy so fat, t'was bout to bust loose.
 He set out the toys by the light of the moon,
 Why, I think he even had toys for the coons,
 He put out some toys in each campsite,
 Then off to the next one, in the dark of night.

He finished most quickly, all 90 campsites,
 By the time he returned, his bag was quite light.
 He jumped in his boat and called to his gators,
 Smiled back at me and yelled, "See ya'll later,
 I've got a busy night, with many stops to make,
 So I better keep moving, cross river and lake",
 But I heard him holler as he floated away,
 "Merry Christmas to all, and enjoy your stay".



40-Acre Lake, Brazos Bend S.P.
 October 18, 2010
 Matthew Sabo, Flagstaff AZ

STAFF CHRISTMAS PARTY

Volunteers are invited to the staff Christmas party, which will be a POT-LUCK supper at the DINING HALL at 6:30 pm on DECEMBER 22nd (a Thursday night). We understand that it is not always convenient for everyone but it's the best we can do since the building may be rented on a weekend, and office staff does have to work late on weekends. There will be no gift exchange this year - your gift will be your presence. NO RSVP REQUIRED.

STAFF REPORTS



PARK SUPERINTENDENT STEVE KILLIAN

October was another record month. There was only one bad weekend when we received 6 inches of rain. We needed the water more than the revenue.

The new entrance sign has been installed at the front of the park. It is not completely finished, because we are having to put a fence around it, which still needs painting. The first weekend, a group climbed on it and slightly damaged it, so the fence is for protection. A press release will announce the grand opening and ribbon cutting soon.

We need new signage for the Nature Center and the George Observatory, more in line with what we have in front. The NC sign needs to be moved to a more visible place and needs to be more eye-catching.

Staff has been busy with general grounds maintenance, mowing, shredding trails, (trails take lots of time from volunteers, hosts, and staff). Drought work includes removing trees, etc., over the next 6 months. Facility work has included some plumbing issues. The new restrooms are finished with heaters replaced. We need to add lighting.

Deer hunt preparation is underway. We have a large healthy herd because we manage the population by the hunts. We hope to harvest 60-70 deer this year, and to remove 15-20 feral hogs. The hunt starts this Tuesday and ends Thursday at noon, when the park will reopen. Volunteers are welcome to come and help. The second hunt is scheduled December 13-15.

Steve announced that Assistant Superintendent Chris Bishop will be leaving to become Superintendent at Lake Whitney State Park. Chris will benefit the entire division and park in this position. He will continue to provide assistance here thru November, helping us out. November 26 is his last day. The park is better because he was here. There will be a big hole to fill. We are developing a hiring committee and will begin the search process in December. Chris has been awesome, and we wish him well.

Chris reported that he and his wife chose Lake Whitney for its size and its proximity to Waco and Ft. Worth. He will start there on November 28. He has written a letter to staff and volunteers, which is printed below.

Steve was asked about the internet installation for the Nature Center. We have 2 towers, and Ted Bishop is tasked with contacting Ft. Bend County about the County installing our towers, which they can also use for communication.

We also asked about finding a solution for a faster entry into the park for staff and volunteers when visitation is high and headquarters is crowded. Steve will look into options.



SHARON HANZIK INTERPRETIVE RANGER AND VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Sharon welcomed VIT Leigh Allen.

We had a good turnout for Halloween weekend activities and for Prairie Heritage Day.

The lounge storage closet was cleaned by Beth Debenport, Diane Carpenter, and Anna Dell Williamson. Please help keep it clean and orderly.

A press release has gone out about the new volunteer training in February. Applications will be accepted on line through November 30. Everything to apply is on line, and information brochures are on the wall in the NC.

Ted Stevens is hoping that those interested in conducting geo-caching programs will attend public programs presented every weekend in November to learn how to lead the class, which is very popular.

Thanksgiving week is a very busy time. The NC will be open every day 9-5, except Thanksgiving Day. Help is needed.

Simple Christmas is the first Saturday in December. We may not have Dutch oven cookers, and the face painters need more help. Sign up times are on the events calendar. We are here 3:00 PM to dark, and the Brazos Pickers will be here 5-7. It is also a Texas Outdoor Family weekend.

The Halloween movie was attended by over 100 participants. This activity is presented by the Watsons, who may need help next year.



MOVING UP THE RIVER . . .

by Chris Bishop

If I had my preference, I would deliver this news in person. However, news seems to be traveling quickly, and I'd much prefer you hear it from me--even if it's through a letter to everyone.

I just accepted the park superintendent position at Lake Whitney State Park in Hill County, just northwest of Waco. I am very excited about the opportunity, and I am comforted by the fact that Lake Whitney is just a hundred or two miles up the Brazos River from Brazos Bend. Lake Whitney has some nice features, and it has a bunch of untapped potential. The proximity to Waco and Fort Worth makes it suitable for Sarah's business. And I confess that the fact that a new Relson

Gracie Jiu-Jitsu school opened in Waco on October 1st only adds to the appeal.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have worked with you here at Brazos Bend. I am honored and humbled by the opportunity that I was given here. I learned a lot and enjoyed my time at Brazos Bend. In addition to the professional value of this experience, the past two years have been among the most personally gratifying and happiest times of my life. I will miss you dearly.

One of the things about working for Texas Parks & Wildlife that I love is the fact that it is a small community. I am thrilled to run into colleagues with whom I worked at Lake Houston and Purtil Creek, and I know it will be the same with you. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Thank you again and keep in touch.

(Ed. note: Chris's email will remain the same: christopher.bishop@tpwd.state.tx.us)

CONGRATULATIONS



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Robert Aaron
Katy Childs
Beth Debenport
Melissa Moody (Staff)
Kathy Nevotti
Jeff Orsak (Staff)
Reyes Torres

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Dave Armstrong
Justin Bowers
Joe Carmichael (Emeritus)
Sherida Carpenter (VIT)
Nancy Dobbs
Sharon Hanzik (Staff)
Jim Hiett
Nancy Lynn Jones
Rosemary Kennedy (VIT)
Jane Minard
Ron Morrison
Jim North
Laszlo Perlaky (Emeritus)
Marilyn Vossler
Bruce Williamson (Emeritus)



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Troy and Patty Henry
Dennis (Emeritus) and Dorothy Keprta

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Cathy (VIT) and David Nevotti



Congratulations to Woody Scott for completing all the training requirements to become a full volunteer. Be sure to welcome Woody to the organization.

Thank you!

Meeting Supper: to Nancy Lynn Jones for ham, Diane Carpenter for salad, and the Volunteer Organization for the cake of recognition to Chris Bishop.

Officers: to Rochelle Watson for serving as Comptroller for the past 3 years.
to Nancy Lynn Jones for accepting the position of Comptroller.

Gift Shop: to Judy Strauss and Chuck Duplant for purchasing and installing new doors for the Gift Shop.

Maintenance: to Pete Hart for serving as spokesman for the maintenance group.

Outreach: to Dave Armstrong for Outreach programs to nursing homes.

Wood Yard: to the Tuesday/Wednesday work crew, who split and bundled 9 cords of wood in 2 months, much of the time with a broken splitter.

GATOR RUN

by Carrie Sample



The Brazos Bend Gator Run sponsored by Pilates Powerhouse was held on October 23, starting and ending at the Elm Lake Pavilion. The following volunteers were on the route or at the Pavilion assisting with the race: Mike Manley, Pete Hart, Woody Scott, Judy Strauss, Noel Duncan, Maureen Goode, Jaci Elliott, Reyes Torres, Frank Seay, Jerry Carpenter, Eddy Grizzaffi and Carrie Sample. BBSP Volunteers were given Brazos Bend Gator Run T-Shirts and were provided with breakfast, lunch and drinks.

BBSP volunteers Linda Heinicke and Kat Hosek took part in the event. Linda and her daughter, Crystal, came in third in the relay.



The sponsors will hold another racing event in January.

TPWD POSTS VIDEOS TO YOUTUBE

Texas Parks and Wildlife has posted two new video news releases to its YouTube page. 'Quail Quandary' talks about the drought toll on Texas wildlife and specifically the bobwhite quail. 'Animal Rehabilitators' showcases a Houston mall where injured and orphaned animals go for rest and rehabilitation. The quail video can be accessed at <http://youtu.be/AhM8bDBeOnY>, and the animal rehabilitation video can be accessed at <http://youtu.be/4plujcGyZto>. To visit the TPWD YouTube channel for more video news releases and content go to <http://www.youtube.com/user/TexasParksWildlife>.

NATURE CENTER REPORT NOVEMBER 2011

Below are the totals of the various activities and attendance recorded for the Nature Center, hikes, and programs for November 1-30, 2011. The NC was closed for 4 days - 3 for the hunt, plus Thanksgiving Day. Attendance was high except for a couple of much-needed rainy days. Black Friday brought us more visitors than some weekend days - not everybody was out shopping. The Creekfield hike on November 5 had 157 participants. That was done by 2 volunteers. The snake programs attracted big crowds, requiring the leader to do 2 programs on November 19.

PROGRAMS	TOTALS
NATURE CENTER ATTENDANCE November 2011 - 6,091 November 2010 - 5,338 November 2009 - 7,488 November 2008 - 6,312 November 2007 - 4,577 November 2006 - 4,286 November 2005 - 4,306	Saturdays (4) - 2764 High, 1032 (11/5) Average: 691
	Sundays (4) – 1239 High, 382 (11/6) Average: 310
	Weekdays (18) - 2088 High, 621 (11/25) Average: 116
CREEKFIELD HIKES (11)	312
ALLIGATOR PROGRAMS (6)	98
SNAKE PROGRAMS (6)	241
CHILDREN'S STORYTIME (5)	131
SUNDIAL (1)	99
TRAILSIDE INTERPRETATION (4)	83
HUMMINGBIRD BANDING (3)	118
SPECIAL HIKES (2)	57
OTHER PROGRAMS (12) include birds, geo-caching, photo hike, venom, sundial, skulls, insects, beaks and feet, tracks, mammals.	146
TOTAL VISITORS SERVED IN HIKES AND PROGRAMS	1233
VOLUNTEER HOURS	Interpretation 787 Maintenance 140

MAINTENANCE REPORT

Wood Yard:

Split wood
Cleaned up woodyard

Mowing and Landscaping:

Started clearing blowdown tree on Elm Lake Picnic Area.

Trail Trimming and Trail Maintenance:

Put trail material on new Prairie Trail
Trimmed trees on Prairie Trail (road to platform)

YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Whether you're working in the Nature Center or Gift Shop, trimming trails or helping park staff with projects and maintenance of the park, your efforts are appreciated by our visitors. Check out the latest comments from our visitors near and far.

Ontario, Canada	Great place – hope to be back soon
Houston & Spain	Very nice place and people
Hamburg, Germany	Thanks for the explanation
China	Like this visitor center a lot!
England	Great park, great staff
Venezuela	It's amazing
California	Thanks for keeping the alligators wild and alive
Adelaide, So. Australia	Very interesting exhibits
France	Good work rangers!
India	Well maintained; keep it up

And Texans reporting on why they keep coming back:

So much information and I love the animals
Atmosphere, nice and friendly people; great explanations
Nice walking and biking paths
Great programs, knowledgeable volunteers and staff
Friendly people at gift shop – educational for children
Beautiful and clean bathrooms
Nice staff; great park and very clean
It is so eye popping!





Carolina Wren, J. Zona

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

by Bill Godley, BBSP volunteer, hike leader and CBC co-compiler



Blue Jay, J. Zona

Hi Enthusiasts!

Whether you were able or not to participate in the past, please join us Saturday, December 17, 2011 for the 27th Annual Brazos Bend Christmas Bird Count. Last year, we set records for participants, species identified (159) and Swinging Door BBQ consumed! No leftovers yet again!

Skilled leadership for each team assures good fun for beginners and experienced birders alike. An enjoyable day for each of you is our top priority.

Visit www.brazosbend.org <<http://www.brazosbend.org/>> and click on the "27th Annual Christmas Bird Count" link to view our 2011 CBC flyer. Contact compilers Bill Godley (fribbish@msn.com 281-341-6684) or Justin Bower (jbower47@hotmail.com 281-293-7389) for assistance and preassignment if desired. Otherwise, simply show up at the BBSP Nature Center at 6:30 a.m. for assignment and a day of enjoyment and good companionship. And don't forget the coveted "Big Bird Award!"

Thanks to all of you for your continued support to Brazos Bend State Park and participation in any of over 2000 CBC events throughout the hemisphere. Their importance is significant to all of us.



Common Wren, C. Sample



Ruby-Crowned Kinglet, C. Sample



Common Yellowthroat, C. Sample

UPCOMING EVENTS

- December 10 BBEEC (New Building) Committee, 1:00 PM, open to all interested members
Budget and Executive Meetings, 3:00 PM
Regular Business Meeting, 5:30 PM (Supper, 5:00 PM)
- December 11 Bird hike, 8:00 AM, 40-Acre Lake restroom building
- December 13-15 Park closed for Hunt
- December 17 27th Christmas Bird Count, 6:30 AM to dusk
- December 19-31 Christmas break, lots of campers. NC closed Christmas Day
- December 30 "Bird Blizzard at Sunset", 5:00 p.m. at the Observation Tower

- 2012
- January 6 Bird hike, 8:00 AM, 40-Acre Lake restroom building
- January 7 Brazos River Pickers, 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM
- January 8 Keep on Truckin' Trail Races, 7:15 AM
Bird hike, 8:00 AM, 40-Acre Lake restroom building
- January 14 BBEEC (New Building) Committee, Time TBA, open to all interested
Budget and Executive Meetings, Time TBA, 3:00 PM
"Bird Blizzard at Sunset", 5:00 p.m. at the Observation Tower
Important Membership Business Meeting, Time TBA, dessert sharing, Dining Hall

Brazos Bend State Park

Texas Parks and Wildlife
21901 FM 762
Needville, TX 77461

NEXT MEETING
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2011

FIRST CLASS MAIL



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	Belinda DiMarcello
Treasurer:	Bob Kowalewski
Past-President:	Carrie Sample
Comptroller:	Rachelle Watson

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Editor	Anna Dell Williamson
Layout	Cynthia Morales
Production Assistant	Bruce Williamson
Distribution	Carol Ramsayer
Web Master	Anne Shelton

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> or <newsletter@brazosbend.org>). Notify Anna Dell (281-485-2843) well in advance of any events you want announced in the newsletter.

**IN THE END, WE WILL CONSERVE ONLY WHAT WE LOVE,
WE WILL LOVE ONLY WHAT WE UNDERSTAND,
WE WILL UNDERSTAND ONLY WHAT WE ARE TAUGHT.**

**BABA DIOUM, SENEGAL
AFRICAN CONSERVATIONIST**