



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### TIME PASSES



For the past four years I have had the pleasure and privilege to be an officer of the park volunteer organization. During that time I have met and worked with many fine individuals that I have grown to know and respect. As the exiting president I would like to recognize the cohesiveness of the volunteers as they work together.

There is strength in numbers and that is one of many reasons that Brazos Bend State Park is a great place to visit, explore, learn and share. You present 'our home' with cheerful enthusiasm, helpful information, nature awareness, and environmental education. From the front gate to the trails and campgrounds, the beauty of the park is maintained by a great bunch of volunteers and camp hosts.

Recently we celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our organization. Wow! How time flies! Hopefully we will have a new environmental education center built sometime in the near future. Many volunteers have contributed a lot of time and energy to reach that goal.

Lastly, I'd like to say "Thank you." to the park staff and rangers for being great partners, leaders and advisors during my term in office.

Have fun, Glen! I'll still be there for the 'pond scum'!

*Mary Lockwood*  
(Where are the rocks?)



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# MEETING NOTES

JULY 12, 2014

*reported by Melanie Jahn*

**Presiding Officer:** Mary Lockwood, President.

**Attendance:** 14 members, 2 staff.

Minutes of June meeting approved as posted.

Staff reports from Superintendent Chris Bishop and Interpretive Ranger David Heinicke follow meeting notes.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS:

**Budget Committee:** Treasurer, Woody Scott presented the financial report for June.

The following **Purchase Requests** were presented and approved:

- Library Book- Guide to Texas Grasses

- Dry Marker Boards, erasers and markers

- Hose booster, nozzle TFT w/pistol

- Park lawn mower parts and weed eater string

- Fuse holder for small John Deere Tractor 4110

- Stihl HT 101 Pole Saw

- Mower for new tractor

- Membership renewal for the Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce

**Wood Yard:** Chuck Duplant reported that sales are low, but we are still making money.

**Gift Shop:** Beth Debenport reported we are doing ok, and we need help filling shifts.

**Outreach:** Judy Strauss reported that we had 2 small Outreach opportunities recently:

- Heritage Learning Academy - 32 children

- University Branch Library- 63 children from K-5<sup>th</sup> grade. The library made a donation to the park.

**Maintenance:** Pete Hart reported that 52 volunteers put in 170 hours. Projects included:

- A culvert on Live Oak Trail.

- AC in wood yard.

- Work on Pocket Prairie on Fridays

- Trapping 4 large hogs and 5 small hogs.

- Spraying tallow trees.

**Blood Drive:** At the recent Blood Drive in July, 35 people attempted to give blood; 33 units were collected, plus 15 units of whole blood. The 33 units exceeded the goal of 21. Seven park staff and six volunteers gave blood. The next drive is on November 8<sup>th</sup>.

## Announcements:

The Kroger Card tied to BBSP needs to be renewed in August.

Be sure to look at the Amazon Smiles program to contribute to the park.

AUGUST 9, 2014

*reported by Anna Dell Williamson*

**Presiding Officer:** Glen Kilgore, Vice-President.

**Attendance:** 7 members, 3 staff, 1 visitor.

Minutes of July meeting approved as posted.

Staff reports from Superintendent Chris Bishop, Assistant Superintendent Jacob Dement and Interpretive Ranger Sharon Hanzik follow meeting notes.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS:

**Budget Committee: Treasurer,** Woody Scott presented the financial report for July. He announced that the organization is changing banks.

The following **Purchase Requests** were approved:

1. Belts, blades and bolts for lawn mowers.
2. Solenoid for little JD tractor
3. Lawn mower repair

**Gift Shop: Anna Dell Williamson** reported that we had the best July ever in the Gift Shop

**Maintenance: Pete Hart** reported that 78 volunteers put in 205 hours. Next month they will be working on a new project - raising Live Oak Trail 6 to 8 inches to avoid flooding.

**Training: Anna Dell Williamson** reported that we have 20 prospective trainees for the September training class.

**BBEEC: Offie Walker** reported that Justin Rhodes has suggested a trip to Austin to meet with Carter Smith about approval of the BBEEC project.

## OLD BUSINESS:

**Anniversary Picnic:** Dasu Baregala and Anna Dell Williamson will be working on a presentation of the history of the BBSPVO, including a slide program and possibly a memory book.

## NEW BUSINESS:

**Election:** It is time for the election of new officers. We need a Nominating Committee to prepare a slate of officers to be announced and voted on by the membership. Offices include President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and 2 at-large members. Glen Kilgore will ask for members for this committee.

# STAFF REPORTS

## CHRIS BISHOP, SUPERINTENDENT

- June was a great month, with a record revenue for June.
- Law Enforcement officers issued 220 verbal warnings for the month of June.
- Ranger JT Kalina is back to work at 100%.
- Chris reminded volunteers that private citizens should not be on ATVs - volunteers or employees only.
- Six weeks ago there were three alligator attacks at two separate state parks. At Sheldon Lake State Park, a fisherman was involved, and at Huntsville State Park, swimmers were involved. BBSP has only had to remove 2 alligators in 22 years.
- On July 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Jerry Patterson of the Texas General Land Office visited the Nature Center.
- The *Ft. Bend Herald* will be doing a story on the park, with Rick Dashnau's photos as part of the story.
- BBSP is number 12 in *Texas Highways Magazine*, and Chris is very proud of the work done here.
- There will be a warm burn in units 6 and 11.
- Cord Eversole is working on an alligator nesting survey.
- There are currently two other studies going on in the park - native bee study and tick research.
- Funding for the front gate should be on-line next month.



- On January 15<sup>th</sup> there will be CPR training with 30 spots available.
- Chris shared a letter from a visitor with the organization, thanking us for our work here.
- BBSP has participated in a crowd-funding proposal through gofundme, the agency and the park website and Facebook. We received a nice amount in the first week.
- The Park is considering a site-based recycling program with Waste Management Service.
- We are considering building a profile on Meetup.com to promote interpretive programs and special events. The Davis Mountains State Park used this to promote interpretive programs.
- Alan Elster retired, and his position has been posted.
- Devin Elster's weekend maintenance position will be filled soon.
- New trail maps will go out soon, with the new trails on them.
- We have new rack cards in press for updated information.
- *Houstonia Magazine* recently published an article on BBSP.
- Central Ft Bend Chamber Alliance will be setting up a ribbon cutting for BBSP being a new member.



**DAVID HEINICKE, INTERPRETIVE RANGER**

The annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade through the campsite went very well. There were 50 riders participating. Volunteers have met with Justin Rhodes. Carter Smith should be meeting with the Wildlife Foundation in regard to BBEEC. July 26<sup>th</sup> the American Diabetes Association will be at NRG Exhibit Hall. David will be there going through the bicycle obstacle course.

**JACOB DEMENT, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT**

- Law enforcement officers issued 244 verbal warnings, 12 citations, and made 1 arrest in July.
- This was the best July ever for both the park and the store.
- The Park Store has many new items, including big stuffed alligators and Brazos Bend honey. Volunteers get a 20% discount. The new park store manager is Barbie Swanson.
- Thanks to BBSPVO for help with the emergency water station repair. The support meant a lot and was appreciated.



**SHARON HANZIK, INTERPRETIVE RANGER AND VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR**

- Arts in the Park program will be held on Thursdays in June and July. Melanie Jahn, Chris Bishop, Mary Lockwood, Nina Pederson, and Suzie Gann will be leading sessions.
- The February VIT class is nearing completion. Two will be finishing in the next 2 weeks, and there have been 2 extensions. Nine or ten have finished.
- Reminder: Report your hours. It hurts the organization in the long run if you do not report what you do.
- We had a surprise visit 2 weeks ago from Joan Jackson, who is doing well.

BBSPVO was saddened to learn of the passing of Emeritus member **Bob Haynes**.  
 Bob was a member since 2005.  
 Our sympathy goes out to his family and friends.  
 He will be missed.

# NATURE CENTER REPORT

## JUNE / JULY / AUGUST, 2014

Below are the totals of the various activities and attendance recorded for the Nature Center, hikes, and programs for June 1-30, July 1-31 and August 1-31, 2014. Summer is generally a slower visitation time, but this year we broke some attendance records. Volunteers and staff offered 116 on-site programs and hikes and 7 outreach programs during the summer.

PROGRAMS	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
<b>NATURE CENTER ATTENDANCE</b> <b>JUN    JUL    AUG</b> 2014 5,654 5,992 4,979 2013 6,012 5,751 4 086 2012 5,881 4,771 3,591 2011 4,939 5,469 3,000 2010 6,070 4,683 3,243 2009 6,068 4,298 4,542 2008 5,109 4,484 3,985 2007 4,025 2,825 2,788 2006 N/A    3,339 2,415  <b>2014 NC THRU 8/31</b> 56,132	Saturdays (4) 1909 High, 564 (6/7) Average: 477	Saturdays (4) 2081 High, 540 (7/19) Average: 520	Saturdays (5) 1806 High, 482 (8/2) Average: 361
	Sundays (5) 1722 High, 395 (6/22) Average: 344	Sundays (4) 1460 High, 393 (7/20) Average: 412	Sundays (5) 1696 High, 630 (8/3) Average: 339
	Weekdays (21) 2023 High, 264 (6/25) Average: 96	Weekdays (23) 2451 High, 234 (7/4) Average: 107	Weekdays (21) 1477 High, 136 (8/4) Average: 70
	<b># of Programs/ # of attendees</b>	<b># of Programs/ # of attendees</b>	<b># of Programs/ # of attendees</b>
<b>CREEKFIELD HIKES</b>	11 / 94	8 / 70	8 / 46
<b>SNAKE PROGRAM</b>	4 / 123	4 / 71	5 / 96
<b>CHILDREN'S STORYTIME</b>	5 / 80	3 / 42	6 / 55
<b>PONDLIFE</b>	2 / 55	3 / 54	2 / 46
<b>ALLIGATOR PROGRAM</b>	6 / 125	5 / 85	5 / 79
<b>OUTREACH</b>	3 / 79	2 / 71	2 / 118
<b>PROGRAMS</b>	<b>Birds</b> 4 / 61	<b>Spiders</b> 3 / 70	<b>Birds</b> 3 / 41
<b>GEOCACHING</b>	3 / 43	3 / 39	2 / 37
<b>OTHER PROGRAMS:</b> Mammals (4), Bike Ride, Special Hikes (2), Video, Wildlife Viewing, Designs for Defense, School Group, Prairies, Armadillos (2), Photo Walk, Bats, Sundial, Pollination, Creatures of Night, BBSP, Spiders	11 / 129  <hr/> <b>TOTALS</b> 49 / 2417 ave: 49	3 / 39  <hr/> <b>TOTALS</b> 34 / 541 ave: 17	7 / 106  <hr/> <b>TOTALS</b> 40 / 624 ave: 176
<b>VOLUNTEER HOURS INTERPRETATION + MAINTENANCE</b>	801 + 170 = 971	734 + 270.5 = 1004.5	Not Available
<b>PARK ATTENDANCE</b> (Percentage reflects the percentage of total visitors in each category.)	Not Available	Not Available	Park Total = 15,618 Day use (81%) = 12,615 Overnight (19%) = 3,003 NC (31%) = 4,979

# MAINTENANCE REPORT

## JUNE, JULY, AUGUST 2014

June: 52 volunteers, 170 hours  
July: 70 volunteers, 235.5 hours  
August: 49 volunteers, 182 hours

### Trail Trimming and Trail Maintenance:

Clear blowdowns, including Elm Lake and 40-Acre Lakes; Red Buckeye, Blue Stem and White Oak trails  
Trim trees at NC, Creekfield Forest trail and other sites

### Equipment Maintenance:

Repair chain saw, bike, shredder, gator, Lawn Boy, tractor, trailer floor  
Clean John Deere gators  
Service wood splitter and chainsaws

### Wood Yard:

Split and bundle wood  
Work on wood yard shed door  
Install fan, wire fan and A/C

### Mowing and Landscaping:

Mow spider tree

### Construction Projects

Install culvert  
Install peg board and shelf  
Build workbench

### Pest Control:

Treat tallow trees and clear blowdowns  
Pull weeds in pocket prairie  
Bait hog traps

### Special Projects:

Install cash drawer stop in gift shop  
Collect and plant seeds for prairie  
Clean water station

## HELP BBSPVO WHEN YOU BUY FROM KROGER, RANDALLS AND AMAZON.COM

BBSPVO is enrolled in share account programs at Randalls and Kroger that return a percentage of your purchases to the organization. Now you can also contribute to BBSPVO when you make purchases on Amazon.com. Be sure to take advantage of this way of supporting BBSPVO.

Randalls: Link your Randalls Remarkable Card to BBSPVO through their share account. Ask in the store for details.

Kroger: Go to [www.kroger.com](http://www.kroger.com) and on the menu, click on Community> Community Rewards, or in the search box type community rewards. There you can either open a new account or renew an existing one and link your Kroger card to BBSPVO. Accounts must be renewed every year starting in August.

Amazon.com: BBSPVO now has an Amazon Smile charitable account. Go to <https://smile.amazon.com> to link your Amazon account to BBSPVO, and we reap the rewards from Amazon whenever you make a purchase.

## SEPTEMBER 2014 VIT CLASS



# CONGRATULATIONS

to Dick Lovell, Gary Mefford, Chuck Nelson and Carol Pawelek upon completion of their VIT training. Welcome to the BBSPVO to all of you. This completes the VIT Class of February 2014!



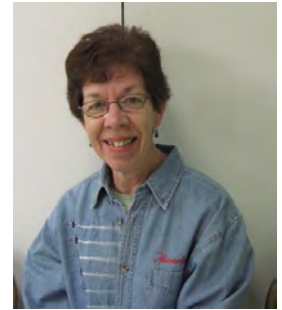
Dick Lovell



Gary Mefford



Chuck Nelson



Carol Pawelek

## BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

### SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Gary Bialas (Staff)  
Jim Calvert  
Barry Eversole (Staff)  
Holly Haynes  
Linda Heinicke  
Mike Manley  
Sammie Miller  
Paige Norwood  
Alex Pedersen (VIT 9/14)

### OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Debbie Fewell  
Buddy Franklin (Emeritus)  
Mozelle Franklin (Emeritus)  
Pete Hart  
Tom Kanak  
Nicole Olson  
Bob Schwartz  
Nancy Stockwell (VIT 9/14)

### NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Ray Anderson  
Jennifer Carns (VIT 9/14)  
Nelda Gay (Emeritus)  
David Heinicke (Staff)  
Lonnie Hoffman  
(VIT 9/14)  
Curtis Parent



### SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

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



### OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

Justin and Kate Bower  
Diane and Jerry Carpenter

### NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Holly and Gene Haynes  
Mike & Paige Manley

### LATEST ADDITION TO THE VOLUNTEER FAMILY



Congratulations to Paige & Branson Norwood on the birth of **Lindsey Allyson**, August 29, 2014.  
Weight 6 lbs 14 oz., length 19.5 in.  
And best wishes to Paige for a speedy recovery from emergency surgery.

# WHAT KEEPS OUR VISITORS COMING BACK?

*(Here are some comments from the comment cards in the Nature Center, compiled by Noriko Utsuzawa. Similar comments are lumped together. Countries of origin are noted when given. These statistics were taken in May, 2014. One comment card may reflect several visitors, and not every visitor fills out a card. Photos by Chris Bishop.)*

Staff very knowledgeable and extremely nice.  
The fun and adventure we get.  
I like alligator. Amazing American Alligator.  
Should be called alligator park.  
15 boys, great experience. Kids love the hands-on.  
Super cool. Awesome. Wonderful. Great.  
Very well maintained park. Best park in the state.  
Great snakes!  
We loved the Nature Center. People working are so good with kids.  
Bird watching, 1<sup>st</sup> time, great.  
Wonderful park, great volunteers. Great volunteers, energy!  
Thank you, volunteers!



Debra Walker



Jennie Carns

## WHERE OUR VISITORS ARE FROM

USA 139	Germany 3	Ukraine 1
England 6	Netherlands 2	Belgium 1
Denmark 6	Italy 2	Hungary 1
France 6	Spain 2	Poland 1
Japan 4	South Africa 2	Norway 1
Canada 3		



Natalie Thorsland

## THANK YOU

To EVERYONE who helped with volunteer training. Planners, preparers of manuals and other advance materials, mentors, drivers, presenters, lunch and refreshment servers, the list goes on. I will mention one person by name, Anne Shelton, because she took on my role at the last minute during two training days, when I was unable to attend. I sent her the schedule and a few notes, and she carried on the program like a pro. Many others stepped up to the plate to assist Anne for a very successful training program. We have 9 VITs who are now working on Phase I (some are nearly finished), and we are looking forward to a great group of new volunteers in a few months. From Anna Dell Williamson, who is so grateful for all the wonderful volunteers who make things happen.

to outgoing officers Mary Lockwood, Glen Kilgore, Mike Sanderson and Diane Welty, for their service to the BBSPVO this past year.

To 2014-2015 officers Glen Kilgore, Mike Sanderson, Melanie Jahn, Woody Scott, Offie Walker, Hannah Meddaugh and Mary Lockwood for agreeing to take a leadership role in the BBSPVO.

to Anna Dell Williamson for her guidance during Mary's presidency. From Mary Lockwood, who says, "Enjoy your 'emeritus' status and continue to enjoy the park."





## WE GET LETTERS

The first letter is from Park Superintendent Chris Bishop, who received the second letter from a visitor and asked that it be shared with the volunteers

Subject: BBSPVO Compliment

Folks,

One of the best parts of my job is when I have the opportunity to hear compliments on the outstanding service that you provide. I attached a letter to this message that made my day.

Park visitor Janet Helma describes the stellar service that she and her party received at our Nature Center in mid-July. Ms. Helma's account is of dedicated volunteer staff going above-and-beyond to ensure that park visitors have a safe and memorable experience at Brazos Bend State Park.

I'd like to extend my thanks to Debbie, Mary & Judy for the exemplary service described in this letter. This is one of the many examples of the commitment that you all bring to the table every day.

Thank you, and keep up the good work.  
Chris

from our visitor:

July 23, 2014

Dear Park Ranger,

Last week my sister was visiting me, here in Houston, from her home in Denver. We visited Brazos Bend and had a wonderful time. During the afternoon, we got caught in a thunderstorm. We, and several other visitors, crowded into the Gift Shop. Even though it was after 3:00, Debbie, Nancy, and Judy were so kind to us. They made us feel welcome, even though their obligation at the Gift Shop ended at 3:00.

When the rain did not let up, Debbie offered to drive my sister and me to our car. What a huge help that was to us! She really saved us from being so soaked. I know we are not supposed to accept rides from strangers, but someone in a park uniform conveys safety. All three women were welcoming, wonderful and very knowledgeable about Brazos Bend.

Thank you!  
Janet Helma

## BBSP BLOOD DRIVE

The next BBSP blood drive is Saturday, November 8. If you/family/friend can donate that day please pre-register by emailing Chuck Duplant at [cduplant@msn.com](mailto:cduplant@msn.com) with Name, Email and phone number for each donor.

Thanks, Chuck D.

# BUTTERFLIES AND MORE

## THE 19<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL BRAZOS BEND BUTTERFLY COUNT

*by Rich Jespersen*

The 19th Annual Brazos Bend Butterfly Count was held on Sunday, October 5, 2014. 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.

Our first count in 1995 tallied 392 butterflies of 30 species. The record count of 2001 found 5340 butterflies of 57 species. Last year, a gorgeous Great Purple Hairstreak and a Great Southern White, both uncommon for our count, were among the 1934 individuals of 45 species reported.

It was a beautiful day for a walk in the park, with sunshine, mild temperatures and lots of flowers. The 46 observers far exceeded our previous high of 33. There was a good mix of experience, with 25 newcomers, several families with children (some repeating from past years), 14 Brazos Bend Volunteers, several Master Naturalists, and other enthusiasts.

We divided into 8 parties and searched varied habitats within the park. Although butterflies were not as plentiful as we might have liked, 36 species had been recorded by lunch time. Several observers scouted other areas in the afternoon, finding 4 additional species. Carolina Satyr and Gulf Fritillary were most abundant by far, followed by large numbers of Tawny Emperors.

As always, the youngsters proved to be good butterfly spotters. The most notable butterfly of the day was a Julia Heliconian spotted by young first-timer Wesley Brown, who had lingered behind his group to watch some deer. Barbara Willy, who was co-leading the group, recalled:

“Wesley was the only one who spotted it. I had walked ahead, and his mother was behind me. He lingered a moment to keep watching the deer and called out ‘There’s one’ as it flew overhead. I turned around to identify but would have missed it had he not been there. He was bored when we first started as we saw little, but after the Julia he was excited! After he matched the photo in the book to the butterfly, he told his mom they had to get that book to be ready for next year, so I think we’ll see him again.”



Just one other Julia had been seen on count day in the previous 18 years.

A Clouded Sulphur was seen for only the second time since we began counting in the fall. Also, despite low numbers for most species, 11 Silvery Checkerspots represented the largest number ever. One species notable for its absence was the Broad-winged Skipper, which was missed for the first time in 9 years of fall counts.

Though our purpose was to count butterflies, it was impossible to ignore the many other attractions of the Park. A few of those I saw or heard about included: a huge “kettle” of 200-300 Wood Storks rising on an early-morning thermal, a Bald Eagle soaring over the prairie, several species of dragonflies, which seemed to outnumber the butterflies, colorful flowers and grasses painting the landscape, numerous dew-covered spider webs and their occupants of several species, deer tame enough to show themselves near Headquarters, a water moccasin, and a copperhead curled around the stem of a frostweed three feet above the ground.



A total of 678 individuals in 40 species were sighted during the one day event:

SWALLOWTAILS		BRUSH-FOOTED		SKIPPERS	
1	Pipevine Swallowtail	131	Gulf Fritillary	37	White-striped Longtail
2	Black Swallowtail	1	Julia Heliconian		
7	Giant Swallowtail	4	Variegated Fritillary	3	Long-tailed Skipper
1	Eastern Tiger Swallowtail	11	Silvery Checkerspot	1	Horace's Duskywing
		19	Phaon Crescent	7	Common Checkered-skipper
		5	Pearl Crescent		
WHITES & SULPHURS		4	Painted Lady	4	Tropical Checkered-skipper
1	Clouded Sulphur	12	Common Buckeye		
27	Cloudless Sulphur	7	Viceroy	13	Checkered-skipper species
36	Little Yellow	1	Goatweed Leafwing		
4	Sleepy Orange	29	Hackberry Emperor	2	Neamathla Skipper
2	Dainty sulphur	62	Tawny Emperor	26	Clouded Skipper
		26	Emperor species	1	Southern Skipperling
		2	Gemmed Satyr		
HAIRSTREAKS		137	Carolina Satyr	2	Fiery Skipper
10	Gray Hairstreak	2	Satyr Species	1	Southern Broken-Dash
2	Red-banded Hairstreak	1	Monarch		
9	Dusky-blue Groundstreak	3	Queen	1	Sachem
				8	Dun Skipper
				9	Skipper species
				4	unknown butterfly

Observers were Steve Abbey, Michelle Acosta, Marie Asscherick, Wesley Brown, Leah Schlater-Brown, Amanda Carey, Chris Carey, Janet Clemenson, Susan Conaty, Chuck Duplant, Jerry Eppner, Marianne Feeney, Debbie Fewell, Kent Fewell, Bill Godley, Adam Hampton, Dana Harper, Linda Heinicke, Richard Hlinsky, Laura Hodges, Kiet Huynh, Rich Jespersen, Sandy Jespersen, Cassidy Johnson, Aaron Ladner, Julie Morgan Lock, Patricia Lock, Cassandra Lock, Karen McCormick, Candy McNamee, Gary Moore, Kathy Moore, Durand Nguyen, Kelly Shield, Clare Schoene, William Schoene, Robert Schwartz, Jenny Shuffield, James L. Smith, Denise Snyder, Jim Snyder, Pam Tatge, Barb Tucker, Noriko Utsuzawa, Barbara Willy and Rosie Zamora. Thanks to all of you for making the count such a success.

With thanks to all the enthusiastic participants who made the count such a success. The next count will be held on October 4, 2015.

A list of the butterflies of Brazos Bend State Park can be found at [www.Brazosbend.org/florafaua/Butterflychecklist.pdf](http://www.Brazosbend.org/florafaua/Butterflychecklist.pdf).

## HICKORY HORNED DEVIL CATERPILLAR

*by Anna Dell Williamson*

Sharon Hanzik sent a quick note with information on the Hickory Horned Devil Caterpillar. Some of the rangers had called her down to the dining hall to identify it. When Bruce and I were new volunteers, I saw one of these on the road in the camping loop and never had it identified. Now I know. (I learn something every day at the Park.) Thanks, Sharon and curious Rangers. Check out the web site below for an interesting description of the caterpillar and pictures of both the caterpillar and the Royal Walnut Moth.

[http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/ENTO/ENTO-20/ENTO-20\\_PDF.pdf](http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/ENTO/ENTO-20/ENTO-20_PDF.pdf)

# ASP CATERPILLAR

by Rick Dashnau

I don't know where the time goes these days, but I haven't had much time to do online research. However, I had a day off recently (celebrating having collected nearly 60 birthdays), so I had a wild time researching online.

In late July (7/27/14), I found an "asp" caterpillar on one of the Water Oak trees on the Live Oak Trail at the park. (See image to the right.) At the time, I thought this was a few months early, since my recollection was that we would see these caterpillars around October. Then on August 3, I found one (just one) on an Oak Tree near the Observation Tower at 40 Acre Lake. I also saw what appear to be many cocoons made by these insects. I decided to look again for more detailed information on this caterpillar.



As a reminder, the caterpillar called an "asp" in Texas is the larva of the Southern Flannel Moth (*Megalopyge Opercularis*). There are a number of references to this insect online--but I found 3 very good ones this time. The links I have here refer to pdf files that can be downloaded for free.

1) An early study of the asp, from 1922 (Foot NC. Pathology of the dermatitis caused by *Megalopyge opercularis*, a Texan caterpillar. *Journal of Experimental Medicine* 1922; 35:737–753) gives a detailed description of the physiology of the poison-delivery system, and details observed effects of evenomation to human skin. From the detailed drawings and photos in this study, one can see the general shape of the venom-bearing hairs. They are hollow, with a bulbous base which contains the venom sac. Some of these hairs have had the tip broken off, but apparently they can still penetrate human skin. The study can be found at this link: <http://europepmc.org/backend/ptpmcrender.fcgi?accid=PMC2128124&blobtype=pdf>

2) A later study, "*Envenomation by the asp caterpillar (Megalopyge opercularis)*", by David Eagleman, gives more details on the evenomation by the asp. Some interesting things from this study include photos showing the distinctive "grid" pattern, or rash, produced by the contact of the caterpillar spines with human skin. There is also an effort to define the geographical distribution of these caterpillars. This is generally southern states from Texas east up to Maryland, as well as Arizona, Arkansas, North and South Carolina. Envenomations had been reported for almost all 12 months, with February being the low spot. It also showed 2 peaks of reported incidents--one in July, and one in October. This study also describes some treatments.

<http://www.eaglemanlab.net/papers/Eagleman%20Asp%20Caterpillar%20Clinical%20Toxicology.pdf>

3) Finally, I found this information: Puss Caterpillar (Larva), Southern Flannel Moth (Adult), *Megalopyge opercularis* (J. E. Smith 1797) (Insecta:Lepidoptera: Zygaenoidea: Megalopygidae, by Donald W. Hall)--published in 2012. This article features some very good color photographs showing the life cycle of the Southern Flannel Moth. These include macro photos of the eggs, and the various instars of the caterpillars as they grow to the final familiar "wooly slug". ALL of the stages are venomous. There are also references to some of the habits of the caterpillar (for instance the larva (caterpillar) eats its molted exterior as it grows--including the poisonous spines). It also "propels its fecal pellets". The asp has some natural enemies, including some species of wasps and flies that use the caterpillars to incubate their eggs. Consumption of their molts and projection of the pellets may make the caterpillars harder for these potential parasites to track them. This study may be found here:

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/IN/IN97600.pdf>

I have previous images on my own web page here (but if you follow the links above, you won't need it.):

<http://www.rickubis.com/rick/asp.html>.

That's my story. From what I've read on those links, it appears that we've just seen the end of the first seasonal appearance of the asps; and in a couple more months, we may see them again.

# CURIOUS ABOUT THE CREATURE?

*From Nelda Gay*



Recently, Sharon Hanzik sent a link to us about the return of a rather fascinating form of life in the park. Also, we have a lengthy article at the Nature Center desk for your reading. However, if you are more interested in having a brief summary of the example in the picture for a quicker review, here it is.

This Bryozoa, an aquatic invertebrate, lives in colonies and mostly performs its function of feeding and filtering the waters in its environment. There are several classes of its phylum with varying methods of feeding, mobility, and reproduction. This moss animal is recognizable by its exoskeleton protecting the internal organs.

Visitors have shared experiences of seeing these in Brazos Bend, so as you are walking along the trails, add this fellow to your list to find. [http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bryozoa#cite\\_note-Brusaca-5](http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bryozoa#cite_note-Brusaca-5)

## PARK CLOSINGS FOR HUNTS

*from Sharon Hanzik*

In addition to the two deer hunts in November and December, BBSP also hosted a **Youth Hunt** the weekend of October 18 and 19. Hale Lake, surrounding back trails of the Park and equestrian camping were closed over the weekend. The rest of the park remained open.

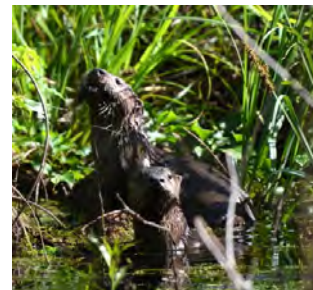
The two **annual deer hunts** will be held from 12:00 pm, Monday, November 17, until 2:00 pm, Friday, November 21, and from 12:00 pm, Monday, December 15, until 2:00 pm, Friday, December 19. Brazos Bend will be CLOSED from noon on the Monday before each hunt until 2 p.m. on the Friday following the hunt. We are choosing the leave the park closed on the Thursday night following the hunts to allow us the option of doing some resource management work. You will need to ask permission of the park manager if you need to enter the park for any reason.

## VISITORS SIGHT OTTERS AT BBSP

*by Michele Fregia Hogan*



My husband (John) and I were hiking the Live Oak Trail back in May (5/18/14) when we came upon a group of otters swimming, playing, and eating crawfish and frogs. We watched for about 45 minutes, and it was one of the most exciting experiences we have had at the park, and we have been hiking there every weekend since January.



We were on the Live Oak trail across the road from the lake. It was between the two bridges just past where the tree had fallen on the trail and had to be cut. Some of the photos show the legs of frogs or crawfish sticking out. We counted 4 smaller heads and an adult. We saw this activity from around 9:30 to 10:15.

# REEL TO REAL, RACCOONS HAVE AN ADVENTUROUS SPIRIT

by Joe Southern

If you have seen the new *Guardians of the Galaxy* movie, or even just the advertisements for it, you can't help but notice one of the central characters is a talking raccoon with some serious anger issues. Rocket Raccoon is a humanized critter, the result of some Frankensteinian experimentation. He roams the galaxy with a walking, talking tree named Groot. We know his name is Groot because all he is capable of saying is "I am Groot."

Rocket, however, is raising interest in raccoons. Perhaps I should more accurately say that my fascination with raccoons has piqued my interest in Rocket. I had never heard of Rocket Raccoon or Marvel Comics' *Guardians of the Galaxy* before the movie was put into production. Raccoons have been of interest to me since elementary school when every kid had a favorite animal. I even briefly had a baby coon as a pet, but it would never tame, and we had to let it go.

Now that the masked bandits are back in the spotlight, I thought it would be good to share some interesting facts about them. One of Rocket's lines in the movie is "Aw, I don't have that long of a lifespan anyway." That's true. Raccoons in captivity can live up to 20 years, but in the wild their life expectancy is about one to three years. Hunting and automobiles are largely responsible for the difference.

It is widely held that raccoons always wash their food. That comes from the observation that most of what they eat is caught in or along the water. Trust me, raccoons aren't that tidy. They are naturally curious creatures and have a thing for bling. Bright, shiny objects and noisemakers are very attractive to them. Food is also attractive, which is what makes them such a nuisance to campers. Even though they have the dexterity to undo latches and zippers, they tend to take the more direct approach to getting what they want. Unless you want a mangled cooler or a torn tent, it is unwise for campers to leave food outside their vehicle at night.

Raccoons are generally nocturnal animals but not always. They are very opportunistic. There is a place in Richwood down by Lake Jackson where raccoons will come out by the dozens in the evening and be hand fed by people. This practice is frowned on by health and wildlife experts, but it doesn't stop people from doing it. As long as there are cute, fuzzy animals and food scraps, people will always be tempted to feed them. Don't do it!

In addition to being opportunistic, they are very adaptable. Raccoons range across North America from the coldest parts of Canada to the Mexican deserts. You'll find them high in the Rockies down to the marshes and swamps of South Texas. They'll make homes in anything from a hollow tree to the attic of your house. In the spring the female will give birth to two to six kits. By the fall they generally leave mom and forge for themselves.

One thing real raccoons have in common with the reel one in the movie is a penchant for mischief. That goes with being incredibly curious. While Rocket Raccoon had a more macabre sense of humor and a knack for scheming, the real life critters do their best to live up to the masked bandit nickname. So beware, once these furry urchins learn to take advantage of you, there will be no guardian in the galaxy that can stop them.

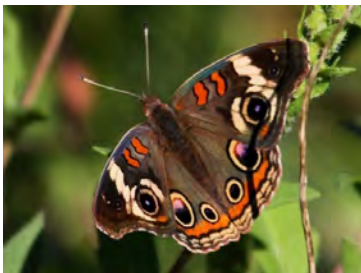
As for the movie, it's a little violent for my taste and it gets to be hard to follow in some places. Still, it was enjoyable and has a lot of humor in it. I have a plan to see it again. That is, I have part of a plan...

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- November 1 Bird Photography Photo-walk, 5:00 PM, meet at Nature Center  
Brazos River Pickers, 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM
- November 8 Blood Drive, NC Parking Lot, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM  
Budget and Executive Meetings, 3:00 PM  
Regular Business Meeting, 5:30 PM (Bring Your Own Eats, 5:00 PM)
- November 22-30 Thanksgiving Week. Need leaders for Creekfield Hikes, workers for Nature Center and Gift Shop shifts (fill 11-3 first, then others)
- November 23 Sunday Creekfield Hike may need extra leaders
- November 27 Thanksgiving Day. Nature Center closed, need volunteers for trail interpretation
- November 28 Friday, busiest day of the week, fill 11-3 NC/GS shifts first, then others
- December 6 Simple Christmas, 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM, volunteers sign up on events calendar
- December 6 Landscape Photography Photo-walk, 5:00 PM, meet at Nature Center  
Brazos River Pickers, 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM
- December 13 Budget and Executive Meetings, 3:00 PM  
Regular Business Meeting, 5:30 PM (Bring Your Own Eats, 5:00 PM)
- December 20 30<sup>th</sup> Brazos Bend Christmas Bird Count (tentative)
- December 25 Christmas Day, Nature Center closed
- 2015
- January 3 Brazos River Pickers, 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM
- January 10 Budget and Executive Meetings, 3:00 PM  
Regular Business Meeting, 5:30 PM (Bring Your Own Eats, 5:00 PM)
- February 7 Brazos River Pickers, 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM
- February 14 Budget and Executive Meetings, 3:00 PM  
Regular Business Meeting, 5:30 PM (Bring Your Own Eats, 5:00 PM)

## ATTENTION ALL VOLUNTEERS

The lock combinations have been changed in the park, including the Nature Center and wood yard. Ask a staff member or another volunteer if you need to know the new combo.



Common Buckeye  
Jerry Eppner



Jim Calvert and  
friends



Red Winged Blackbirds  
Jerry Zona

## Brazos Bend State Park

Texas Parks and Wildlife  
21901 FM 762  
Needville, TX 77461

### UPCOMING MEETING DATES

SATURDAY, November 8, 2014

SATURDAY, December 13, 2014

5:00 PM Dinner: Bring Your Own Eats

5:30 PM, General Meeting, Nature Center



## 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:	Glen Kilgore
Vice-President:	Mike Sanderson
Secretary	Melanie Jahn
Treasurer:	Woody Scott
Past-President:	Mary Lockwood
Members-at-Large:	Hannah Meddaugh Offie Walker
Comptroller:	Bob Kowalewski

### NEWSLETTER TEAM

Editor	Anna Dell Williamson
Editorial Assistant	Nelda Gay
Production Assistant	Bruce Williamson
Distribution	Carol Ramsayer
Web Master	Anne Shelton

## *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@comcast.net](mailto:awilliamson4@comcast.net)> or <[newsletter@brazosbend.org](mailto: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**