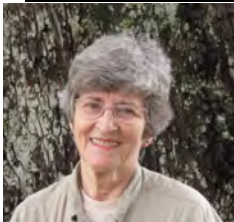


VOLUME 26, 2014

NUMBER 2



2013...ONE OF THE BEST YEARS EVER!

This past year almost every month at the volunteer meeting, Steve or Jacob would start out stating that we had 'the best month ever'! And that is what the yearly stats show...243,492 visitors! Many campgrounds and picnic areas were spruced up with new fire-rings and trails received fresh limestone. The 'gators' received flags, seatbelts, and windshields. Progress was made on the plans for the new BBEEC and architectural drawings were presented and displayed at monthly meetings.

Spring was better to us with the year starting out having lakes full or nearly full of water, plentiful bird counts, and downed trees due to the previous year's drought. We had blood drives, guest wildlife presenters, marathon runners. The new weather station was installed, hummingbirds were banded, Butterfly Waystation (Girl Scouts) was set up at the windmill at the Nature Center.

The gift shop was set up with a new computer program and the acceptance of credit cards. The merchandise selection was expanded and better displayed. Yes, with the acceptance of credit cards the gift shop had the best year ever!

The outreach programs were well attended and six of the volunteers 'outreached' themselves to Costa Rica. The EcoExplorer summer program was filled with many happy youths.

Sadly we lost four of our volunteers. Candace Kanak, Jennifer Parent, Ron Dearman and Frank Gregg passed away this past year. Joyfully three of our volunteer families had babies.

Steve Killian was appointed to a different park, and the search for a new park superintendent resulted in the return of an old friend...Chris Bishop.

Mary Lockwood

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*This issue edited by
Anna Dell Williamson.*

MARCH MEETING NOTES

Vice-President Glen Kilgore called the March 8, 2014 general meeting to order, in the absence of President Mary Lockwood. There were 16 volunteers, 4 VITs and 3 staff members present. Glen thanked those who brought supper. The minutes of the February meeting were approved as posted.

Jacob Dement and **David Heinicke** brought their staff reports.

Reports:

Treasurer, **Woody Scott:**

Financial report – January 2013 was a good month, but February was not as good.
Annual report summary - 2013 was better than 2012.

The following **requests for purchase** were approved:

1. **2 Xcelerator High Speed energy efficient hand dryers** for Nature Center restrooms. Basic white, to be installed by park maintenance.
2. **Clutch to fix Park Gator**
3. Various **parts to repair Grasshopper**
4. **Parts to repair edger, Chain Saw blades**, 2-cycle oil for edger
5. Change date on **banner** for next blood drive

Gift Shop, **Beth Debenport:**

Thanks for all of the Gift Shop help

Outreach, **Judy Strauss:**

All outreach activities are listed on the Special Events Calendar.
March 12, Rosenberg Exchange Club is coming to the park
March 20, University Branch Library Outreach
March 29, Children's Day Festival, Ft Bend
April 5, Katy Folk Life Festival, lots of help is needed.
April 11-12, Rosenberg Railroad Festival
April 26, Sugarland Earth Day Celebration

Maintenance, **Pete Hart:**

The Volunteer Maintenance Crew put in 150 hours in February. They split wood, packaged wood and cleaned up trees. The limo gator is repaired, and the new splitter cover is almost finished.

Wood, **Chuck Duplant:**

We are low on wood and may purchase some soon. We need to bundle more. Wood is sold as a donation, and we are getting a return of 83% sold.

Blood Drive, **Chuck Duplant:**

The next blood drive will be April 12. You may sign up to help from 9 AM to 2 PM at the registration booth on the special events calendar. We also need donors.

Volunteer Training, **Anna Dell Williamson:**

There are four VITs attending tonight's meeting: Adreia Harden, Jim "Murph" Murphy, Mike Matta, and Carol Pawelek.

BBEEC, **Chuck Duplant:**

We are working on setting up a meeting with TPWD and the Parks and Wildlife Foundation. We are still moving forward and haven't lost ground.

Texans for State Parks, Offie Walker:

Offie attended the annual meeting at LBJ State Park in January. The objective of Texans for State Parks is to improve state parks, and to interface with TPWD as a group of groups. There is an annual meeting each year, and BBSP has been a member for 2 years. Brent Leisure, Director of State Parks gave a report on the system. This has been a record year in visitors and revenue, and we have better funding. Volunteers are necessary for State Parks. He listed the challenges we face: the expansion of urban areas, repair of infrastructure, develop emerging parks, property with no plans or funds. Texans for State Parks has a website where you can find out more about this group: www.texansstateparks.org

APRIL MEETING NOTES

reported by Anna Dell Williamson

Vice-President Glen Kilgore called the April 12, 2014 meeting to order in the absence of President Mary Lockwood. There were 14 volunteers, 3 VITs and 1 staff member present. Glen thanked those who brought items for dinner. The minutes of the March meeting were approved as posted.

Sharon Hanzik brought her staff report.

Committee Reports:

Treasurer, Woody Scott:

This was our best March. Our profit to date is better than last year.

Hand dryers will be installed when the staff has time to do it.

The following **requests for purchase** were approved:

1. **Fire Ant Poison**
2. **20 sacks deer corn** for hog bait.
3. **5-18v battery 2-pk, 5-18v battery chargers**, for tools
4. **Repair parts** for Weed eaters and Chainsaws
5. **Repair parts** for Chainsaws, \$272.96 (Richard Taylor)
6. **Miscellaneous charges** by park supervisor from the petty cash fund,

The **4-seat Gator** is down again, and we waiting for a tool to do the repairs.

Cindy Peterson asked for a new ice chest for the water run, Mike Sanderson volunteered to donate one.

Gift Shop, Beth Debenport:

We had a very good March, but not the best. We need to find managers for the Gift Shop who will be able to keep up with inventory and help in other ways. Sales have doubled since we started accepting charge cards, and we need more help.

Outreach, Woody Scott:

Judy Strauss is at our outreach at the Rosenberg Railfest. There is nothing planned at Easter, there may be some activities after that. Check the Special Events Calendar for dates and needs. We can always use help.

Maintenance, Woody Scott:

The **maintenance crew** has done most of the wood splitting the last couple of years. By the end of Spring Break, we had sold all bundled wood. Pete Hart and Woody will start splitting wood, and we will need help bundling. We need volunteers to bundle stacked wood. The maintenance crew will split what we have, and we will buy some unbundled wood. We will publish our need for people

to bundle wood on weekends. Training or a refresher course will be available to those willing to come on weekends for an hour or 2. Remember that working on the firewood preparation counts as required quarterly hours.

Training, Anna Dell Williamson:

Both the September and February classes are coming along well.

NEW BUSINESS:

Meeting Night Dinner: It was proposed that, since it is getting difficult to get folks to bring meeting night dinners, we discontinue served dinner. Volunteers are still encouraged to bring their own dinner, and meet at 5:00 for a social time to eat and visit. The organization will continue to provide coffee and tea and paper and plastic dishes and utensils.

New Superintendent: At the May meeting, we will have a “welcome back” cake for Chris Bishop.

25th Anniversary of the BBSPVO. It was suggested that we have a special celebration at the October picnic to celebrate this anniversary. We need a volunteer to chair a committee to plan this celebration for the picnic. **Jaci Elliott** volunteered to serve as co-chair. If you are willing to help with the picnic, please contact Jaci soon.

STAFF REPORTS MARCH

JACOB DEMENT: Acting Superintendent, Park Peace Officer

It was not a record February, but February was a very good month. We are continuing our campaign to eradicate feral hogs. You may notice some state troopers in the park. One is serving as a park host for a while, and he and some of his buddies are patrolling the roads.



Staff announcements:

Barbie Thompson was introduced at the meeting. She has worked as host and maintenance worker at Palmetto, was assist office manager and park store manager at Stephen F. Austin State Park and is now at BBSP as park store manager. She is also certified as an interpretive guide and a firefighter.

We are hiring another seasonal position to begin in March, to work in the office and in the field. We are working on ways to help get visitors into the park and keep the entrance lines at a minimum.

We will be hiring a full-time customer service representative next month.

New campsites:

We have developed new campsites at Hale Lake, to the left of the restroom building. This will be used by Texas Outdoor Family, and we hope to get approval to open the site for visitors. Vegetation to the right of the restroom building will be allowed to grow up to separate the camping area from the day use area. The Hale Lake area is under-utilized as day use, and plans are to convert part of the space to group use. One group may rent the entire area. If not rented, it will be open to walk-ins. There will be tent sites, some ADA accessible. Parking will be in the Hale Lake lot, and we may be able to add some showers at the back of the restroom building. It was originally designed with showers that have not been developed.



DAVID HEINICKE, Interpretive Ranger, Park Peace Officer

Mar 29 we will host the Earthquest Birds of Prey program at the Nature Center lawn at 11:00 and 3:00.

April 26 we will host a trail race, and we will need helpers for parking, trail assistance, and set-up.

Sharon will be in Hawaii during Spring Break. We will need lots of Spring Break help. David will be off two weeks in April, including Easter. At this time we have no announcement on the new manager.

STAFF REPORTS APRIL

SHARON HANZIK: Interpretive Ranger, Volunteer Coordinator

Thanks to everyone here who makes things happen. This group responds to all requests. Weekdays are busy with random school groups, and we often need more than one person in the Nature Center in the mornings, until school is out. The events we know about are noted on the calendar, but we don't always know what to expect.



The **Birds of Prey programs** in March were very well attended, with about 300-400 visitors at each one. The **Trail Race** is set for Saturday, April 26. David has sent an email recruiting helpers. The **blood drive** reported receiving 18 units of blood. Thanks to all donors.

For **Good Friday**, we currently have 5 shifts on the calendar. It is up to the volunteers to sign up and determine how many shifts will be opened.

Easter Sunday is traditionally our biggest visitation day of the year. If you are coming out to work, please plan to arrive before noon. Entrance lines are very long.

Today we had 1485 visitors in the **Nature Center**.

Carrie Sample will no longer be presenting the Eco-explorers summer classes. David and Sharon are looking into another type of offering.

There is a **Great Horned Owl** nest on a tree at 40-Acre picnic area, between the playground and the tree line near the double picnic table. It is in a big pecan tree on the corner, and a baby owl can be seen along the branch.

New Volunteer: Dasu Baregala completed his training requirements and received his cap and patch. Thanks to **Glen Kilgore**, who was the mentor for Dasu and his family. **Magda, Prakriti** and **Nikita** will finish next Saturday.

NATURE CENTER REPORT FEBRUARY / MARCH 2014

Below are the totals of the various activities and attendance recorded for the Nature Center, hikes, and programs for February 1-28 and March 1-31, 2014. Both months had some cold and rainy days. March contained 2 weeks of Spring Break, our busiest month of year. Volunteers and staff offered 96 programs and hikes in February and March.

PROGRAMS	TOTALS FEBRUARY	TOTALS MARCH
NATURE CENTER ATTENDANCE 2014 Feb. 5,371 / Mar. 11,229 2013 Feb. 4,468 / Mar. 14,361 2012 Feb. 4,468 / Mar. 11,252 2011 Feb. 5,340 / Mar. 12,427 2010 Feb. 4,320 / Mar. 11,816 2009 Feb. 5,950 / Mar. 9,669 2008 Feb. 4,827 / Mar. 10,684 2007 Feb. 2,247 / Mar. 6,835 2006 Feb. N/A / Mar. N/A 2005 Feb. N/A / Mar. N/A NC TO DATE 2014 25,248	Saturdays (4) - 2,744 High, 845 (2/15) Average: 686	Saturdays (5) - 4,176 High, 1,174 (3/29) Average: 835
	Sundays (4) - 1,532 High, 717 (2/16) Average: 383	Sundays (5) - 1,687 High, 791 (3/30) Average: 337
	Weekdays (20) - 1095 High, 215 (2/5) Average: 55	Weekdays (21) - 5,366 High, 833 (3/14) Average: 256
CREEKFIELD HIKES (7 & 18)	121, average: 17	344, average: 19
SNAKE PROGRAM (4 & 8)	181, average: 45	253, average: 32
CHILDREN'S STORYTIME (N/A & 2)	N/A	48, average: 24
BIRDS (1 & 3 - 2 Birds of Prey)	21, average 21	768, average: 256
ALLIGATOR PROGRAM(5 & 5)	77, average: 15	160, average: 32
OUTREACH (3 & 3)	828, average: 276	408, average: 136
WILDLIFE VIEWING (6 & 6)	435, average: 73	577, average: 96
GEOCACHING (2 & 4)	56, average: 28	118, average: 30
OTHER PROGRAMS (13): Photo Walk (2), Pondlife (2), Mammals (1), Special Hike (3), Animal Tracks (1), Bike Ride (1), Creatures of Night (1)	55, Average: 27	344, average: 38
TOTAL VISITORS SERVED IN HIKES AND PROGRAMS	1774 in 30 programs, average program, 59	835 in 35 programs, average: 24
VOLUNTEER HOURS	Interpretation = 1455 Maintenance = 412 TOTAL = 1867	Interpretation = 1700 Maintenance = 272 TOTAL = 1972

MAINTENANCE REPORT

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2014

Reported hours: February 2014, 193
March 2013, 207.5
TOTAL: 400.5

Photos of new splitter shed by Pete Hart.

Wood Yard:

Clear barrel debris from wood yard
Split and bundle wood
Build shelf in tractor shed for windshields

Mowing and Landscaping:

Clear blowdown trees
Collect 81 native prairie plants
Plant prairie grasses

Trail Trimming and Trail Maintenance:

Push off debris with tractor
Trail trimming

Equipment Maintenance:

Repair chain saw
Maintenance on splitter and tractor

Construction Projects

Take wood splitter cover down
Design setup for new wood splitter cover
Build new cover and attach cover to new shed
Spread gravel under new shed



ALLIGATOR FACTS

Wild gators have a 2,000 pound per square inch bite. That's the weight of a small car.

READ THE SIGN

photo by Jerry Zona



CONGRATULATIONS

Please welcome nine new volunteers to the Organization from the September 2013 class: the Baregala-Lopez family, Dasu, Magda, Prakriti and Nikita; Michael Matta, James “Murph” Murphy; Nina Pederson; Cynthia Peet; and Amanda Roby completed their volunteer training requirements. We are happy to have them aboard.



Dasu



Magda



Prakriti



Nikita



Michael



Murph



Nina



Cynthia



Amanda

JOSEPH WATSON

Super big congratulations to Joseph Watson who was 3D Class Champion at the Houston Livestock and Rodeo Show! His dynamic sculpture, Nose Dive, was auctioned for a winning bid of \$60,000! Out of the over 300,000 artworks that are judged from schools all around the greater Houston Area and beyond, six are considered best in their class. Alvin High School Graduating Junior Joseph Watson's sculpture Nose Dive is #1 in the 3D Class. Here he is with his giant trophies and his proud teacher, Anne Mabry.

taken from Alvin High School eNews

Mom Rachelle says “Joseph gets to keep \$6,000. We are very proud of him!!!”



BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

TO BRAZOS BEND STATE PARK:
HAPPY 30TH BIRTHDAY
4/4/14

The BBSP VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION will celebrate its 25th anniversary at the October 11 annual picnic. Contact Jaci Elliott if you are interested in helping her plan the event.

MAY BIRTHDAYS

Suzie Gann
Virginia Harrison
Ethan Hoover
JT Kalina (Staff)
Dennis Keppta (Emeritus)
Krista Ledman
Gary Mefford (VIT 2/14)
Carrie Sample
Dawn Tejero



JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Kent Fewell
Zachary Guess
Linda Keltner
Glen Kilgore
Michael Sanderson
Rebecca Sykes
Veronika Vaneckova (VIT)
Anna Dell Williamson



MAY ANNIVERSARIES

Jo Ann and Chuck Davis
Linda and David Heinicke

JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

Joe and Sue Carmichael (1953) (Emeritus)
Linda & Don Keltner

SPRING BREAK AND EASTER

by Sharon Hanzik

Thank You all for your participation in making our 2-week spring break a success! The second week we had spring breakers from other states.

Thank you for spending part of your Easter holiday weekend serving park visitors! We had a very successful weekend. Good Friday's Nature Center visitation = 748, Saturday = 915 and Sunday = 594. Saturday's park visitation beat last year's Easter visitation, and this year's Easter visitation broke an all-time revenue record. See? We can't do it without you!

THANK YOU

to Rangers **JT Kalina** and **Jeff Orsak** for installing the new "Xcelerator" (or Xfoliator as I like to call them) hand dryers at the Nature Center. *Sharon Hanzik*

to **Rick Dashnau**, **Carl Franke**, **Sharon Hanzik**, **Pete Hart**, **David Heinicke**, **Mary Lockwood**, and **Jerry Zona** for articles and photos for this issue of the newsletter.

to **Noriko Utsuzawa** and **Diane Carpenter** for compiling visitor information for the Nature Center.

SPRING OPPORTUNITIES

Spring also brings school groups to the Nature Center (our reservations and those on their own). During April and May it will be a good idea to have at least two volunteers in the Nature Center each day. If you can only work one shift, 11-1 is best as most groups need to be on their way out by 1:30. Some days we may have requests to open early for a school group. These early opening requests will be listed on the regular calendar. Thanks again! We can't do this without you!

MEETING NIGHT SUPPER CHANGE

For quite a long time now we have been having a light supper together, brought by various volunteers, before our monthly volunteer meetings. However, it is getting harder to find people who can bring the meal, but we don't want to give up the social time. So beginning with the May meeting, you are invited to join us at 5:00 for a BYOE (bring your own eats) supper. Tea will be provided. If you don't want to eat, just come early to visit. The meeting will begin at 5:30.

Thanks to Jaci Elliott,, Melanie Jahn, Bob Schwartz, Carol Pawelek and Anna Dell Williamson for bringing items for the March and April suppers, and to all the others who have been so helpful in bringing the meals.

BLOOD DRIVE REPORT

by Chuck Duplant

Here are the final numbers reported from the **Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center** for our blood drive held in the Nature Center parking lot on April 12. Fifteen donors yielded 20 blood components. Of the 15 donors, there were 5 visitors, 4 staff, and 6 volunteers. The next blood drive is scheduled for July 12. Thanks to everyone who donated, worked or supported the drive in other ways.

BBSP WATER TESTING REPORTS

by Hannah Meddaugh

Below are the results of the water tests performed in January and February, 2014.

Sampling Date/Time: Sat. Jan 18th, 8:00-10:00AM

Tester(s): Cindy Peet, Hannah Meddaugh

Weather: Warmer, sunny, low to mid 50s.

Water body	Temp (°F)	Dissolved O ² (mg/L)	pH	Nitrates (mg/L)	Phosphates (mg/L)
Elm Lake	52.9	8.5	7.6	0	0
New Horseshoe	52.4	7.5	7.6	0	0
40 Acre	51.8	6.1	7.6	0	0.2
Pilant Lake	47.8	1.8	6.8	0	1.0
Creekfield	51.4	6.8	7.6	0	0

Notes/Comments:

- Water was clear and held very little duckweed in any of the water bodies, which was surprising given the high levels last month, but a lot of cold weather over the last few weeks probably killed it off.
- No sulfurous smell from Pilant Lake this month; probably due to lower anaerobic bacterial action in the colder temperatures.

Sampling Date/Time: Sat. Feb 22nd, 8:00-10:00AM

Tester(s): Mike Manley, Hannah Meddaugh

Weather: Warmer, sunny, low to mid 50s.

Water body	Temp (°F)	Dissolved O ² (mg/L)	pH	Nitrates (mg/L)	Phosphates (mg/L)
Elm Lake	61.2	7.7	7.7	0	0
New Horseshoe	60.6	9.3	8.0	0	0.1
40 Acre	60.6	4.8	7.6	0	0.5
Pilant Lake	55.7	0.6	6.8	0	2.0
Creekfield	59.5	6.8	7.7	0	0

Notes/Comments:

- Water temperatures have increased about 5 degrees since last month. pH has become more basic, possibly due to several months' low organic breakdown activity.
- Slight sulfurous smell from Pilant Lake this month; an increase over last month
- Lots of hair algae in Creekfield lake; a big change from last month's clarity. However no nitrates or phosphates were detected. Dissolved oxygen levels are the same as last month in this lake, though water temperature is about 8 degrees warmer.

OTTERS

by Rick Dashnau

When I got to BBSP at 8 it was foggy, overcast, cold, and damp. Visibility was limited, and I walked from the 40 Acre-Lake parking lot to the Observation Tower, walking on the north side of the lake. I climbed to the top of the tower, intending to catch the view as the sun burned through the fog and lit up the park (as was predicted by the meteorologists).

The sun never appeared. At about 8:43, I noticed a wave moving West in Pilant Slough. It was a strong wave, caused by something large moving quickly under the water. As I watched, an otter surfaced, then continued moving west. I watched through my camera as the otter climbed ashore, then ran under the wooden bridge near the tower.



Because of my position in the tower, I couldn't see the otter immediately after it entered 40 Acre lake, but I was able to catch a glimpse of it as it moved near one of the islands. I was, of course, quite excited, and after I lost sight of the otter, I turned away from the lake, and looked down at my camera. I intended to review what I'd filmed.

I saw movement in the slough again. ANOTHER otter was swimming west in Pilant Slough! (about 8:46) And it was taking almost exactly the same path as the first one had. It also made landfall and ran under the wooden bridge. This was also visible swimming out towards one of the islands in 40-Acre lake.

With the 2 otters out of sight, I stayed atop the tower, and started reviewing my video clips. With the fog and the speed of the otters, I couldn't catch everything I'd seen--but I did catch quite a bit. As I was looking through the files on the camera, movement below caught my eye again. One of the otters had returned, and it ran down the trail towards the tower (north), and reentered Pilant Slough near the wooden bridge. It briefly swam east, then stopped and moved around in the water near the pier. While I was trying to get that in focus, the other otter ran down the trail (moving the same way the first one had), and started to enter the slough near the footbridge.

The otter that was already there sped towards the otter on land--which turned and ran back along the trail, moving south, away from the bridge. The otter in the Slough also left the water, and ran down the trail; apparently chasing the other one. They both entered 40-Acre Lake, and once again moved towards the islands. I could see their wakes moving in the gap between the islands, so I hurried down to the trail. I thought that they might chase each other out of the lake, and maybe on the north leg of the trail.



I got to the trail and moved west. I was hoping to see the otters again. I wasn't disappointed. One of the otters appeared on the island, then entered the water at the edge of the hyacinth, and it began swimming east -near the island. It passed me, then moved towards the corner of the lake, near the Observation Tower. I could hear the otter making a kind of "chuffing" noise as it swam. It seemed agitated. It swam to the bank, then left the water and ran onto the trail. About halfway across, it turned and looked at me, then ran towards me a few steps (I was at least 30 yards away); then turned and ran back into 40-Acre lake. It swam past me again (moving west), and moved towards the island. By then a couple of park visitors were also able to see the otter, which was still "chuffing".

Then we all discussed what we'd seen. As we were looking for the otter(s) to reappear, another park visitor walked over. He had come from the Spillway Trail. This visitor told me he thought he'd seen some otters. I assured him he probably had, because two had just come from that direction. Then this visitor told me that he'd watched 2 otters that he'd thought were mating. He said that one was holding tightly to the other, above and behind, and that they also were moving in the water together--sometimes submerging. He said the he didn't think they were fighting or playing; and that it looked like they were mating. He told me he moved on so he wouldn't disturb them.

One of the otters appeared once more on one of the islands, then entered the water, and moved towards the north side of the trail. I thought it would cross, but it turned around and went into the deeper water again. By the time of this last sighting, it was about 10 AM, so the otters were visible (on and off) for about an hour and a half!

Great day for me!

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY

by David Heinicke

As you may know National Trails Day is on Saturday, June 7th. Brazos Bend State Park will be celebrating with an expanded schedule of programs and trail oriented activities. These might include guided hikes, programs on the trails, demonstrations on the trail or setting up the spotting scope at a certain time and location. If you would like to participate please let me know what you would like to do and when and where you would like to do it. If you're not interested in leading an activity we can always use help with programs, staffing for the nature center and assistance on the trail. Thanks for your help and I hope to see you on National Trails Day, June 7th!

RAPTORS

HAWKS AND EAGLES AT BBSP

by Rick Dashnau

This was the morning of March 9, 2014. I'd missed the previous weekend at the park because I moved to a new apartment. This was the first weekend in almost 2 months that I was able to relax (no more packing/unpacking/moving), and BBSP gave me a couple treats.

I was walking on the north side of the 40 Acre Lake Trail at about 8:45, when I noticed a pair of Red-Shouldered Hawks in a tree over the trail. I noticed them just before they took off (this happens to me often). But they only flew a few yards, and landed on the trail, near a pile of dark material that was in the center of the path. I moved slowly towards the pile, and the hawks. One took off and flew past me on my left, and went west. The other one flew up into a tree near the trail and stayed there. I got a little closer, when the hawk flew back down towards me and landed on the trail near the pile. By then, I could see that it was a pile of water hyacinth.

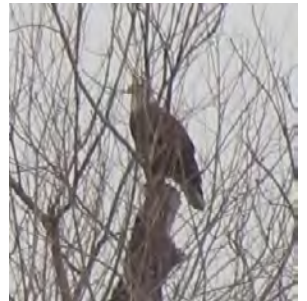


I took one more step, then watched the hawk through the camera. The hawk hopped into the grass, where it stared intently at something there. I started shooting high-speed video. The hawk seemed to be grabbing at something with its talon. Finally, it grabbed, then took off and landed in a tree directly above the trail. There, it started eating whatever it had caught. I shot through the camera, hoping to be able to identify the prey. The hawk finally took off and flew west at about 8:54, going the same way that the other hawk had. Review of the video revealed that the hawk had pulled a live crawfish from the grass!

I continued walking on the north side of the 40-Acre Lake trail, heading east, towards the Observation Tower. At about 8:57am (just a few minutes after the hawk had flown away), I noticed a large bird on top of a broken tree near the Observation Tower. The tree was on the east side of the trail, south of the tower. I was about 200 yards away from the bird in the tree.

When I looked through my binoculars, I could see that it was a Bald Eagle! I quickly changed the settings on my camera and used full zoom to look closer at the eagle. I started shooting video. The eagle was eating...something, but there was no way I could tell what it was. I stopped filming, and walked about 20 steps down the trail, hoping that I'd get be able to eventually get closer. When I filmed again, the eagle had stopped eating, but I shot some video anyway--along with a zoom shot to give some sense of how far away I was.

I took a few more steps, and the Eagle took off--still over 100 yards away. However, it looked like it flew further east on the Spillway Trail, so I hurried over to the Observation Tower. When I got there, I could see that the Eagle had landed in a tree about 100 yards east of the tower, right near the trail.



I quietly climbed to the top of the tower and watched the eagle. It was just below the top of the tree, so my view of it was partially obscured by branches, but I took some pictures and video clips anyway. During the time that I watched, crows (or maybe the same crow) made some half-hearted attempts to harass the eagle, but it was only one crow at a time. At about 9:30, the Eagle took off, and I tried, but failed, to get good shots of it as it flew. The eagle flew west into the misty air until it flew out of sight.

The attached pictures showing the Eagle are also screengrabs from the video clips I shot. Since I was using full digital zoom for that, the still images are very "fuzzy". But the video isn't bad. I've edited the clips into a single file, with this link: http://www.rickubis.com/rick/red_shlder_crawfish_eagle7.wmv I've been going to BBSP usually at least once every week for over 10 years, and I am still amazed at something every time I go.

NATURE CENTER NEWS

The female Rat Snake has passed and was given back to nature.
(Sharon Hanzik)

We had an unidentified visitor in the Nature Center recently.
Be on the lookout, he may cause trouble. (Photo by Carl Franke)



VISITATION STATISTICS AND VISITOR COMMENTS

We have lots of visitors from all over the world spend some of their travel time at BBSP. Many leave comments on the comment cards or on the sign-in sheets in the NC. **Noriko Utsuzawa** and **Diane Carpenter** compiled the following information for February, 2014. Thanks to both of them.

Visitors from 17 states besides Texas signed our guest book. The states of California, Colorado, Minnesota and Washington had the most visitors after Texas. Other visiting states included Arkansas, Arizona, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Utah, and Wisconsin.

Fifteen foreign countries were represented in February. Norway and Germany had the most February visitors from outside the US, and other countries included Canada, China, Cote d'Ivoire, Denmark, England, France, Holland, Hungary, Netherlands, Poland, Scotland, Slovenia, and South Africa.

Comments varied from "Great", "Very nice," "really wonderful," "awesome," and "amazing". Visitors from Colorado had a "shrieking good time", and "ran 10 miles and saw 60 gators." Several visitors said "Thanks," or commented on the "Fantastic volunteers."

REMINDER ON REPORTING VOLUNTEER TIME

Remember that there are 2 places to report your volunteer hours for BBSP. First, send in the spreadsheet reporting sheet every month when you complete your hours for that month. Use the categories given on the spreadsheet.

Report your hours to TPWD on the TPWD website. If you need a refresher on how to do this, contact Sharon. You have up to 45 days to report TPWD hours, so don't miss out on that reporting.

It is very important to report ALL of the time you serve BBSP. This includes the quarterly requirements; maintenance; preparation time for hikes and programs, as well as presentation time; independent study/continuing education to gain more knowledge about the park and its plants, animals and birds; time at home working on BBSPVO projects; administrative duties; outreach; and anything else that benefits the park. Please turn in your reports on time and help us show just how much the volunteers do for BBSP.

HYPNOTIZING CARDINALS

by Sharon Hanzik

At least two volunteers recently attended the bird banding at the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory in Lake Jackson and told me about this. I did a search and found this recent upload. Enjoy!

<http://youtube/ea9EN3RSu-I>

WATER STATION, LITTER CONTROL AND TRASH CANS

from Sharon Hanzik

With so much to remember about procedures, it's easy to forget a few things. Please review the instructions for Water Station operation, which are posted inside the chaseway and in the garage, to remind you of the procedures. These were also emailed to you recently. If you need another copy, contact Sharon.

Please review the procedures and practice them when you do the Water Station. And remember that litter control and trash pickup are a part of the water station run.

Although not mentioned in those instructions, it is a great help when the afternoon water station shift stops back by the Nature Center to take trash from all areas. We normally have it bagged and ready, but sometimes we are too busy. We need to empty both cans from the lounge and classroom, offices, lobby, gift shop and outside cans. Take the bags to the dumpster at the dump station on your way back to the wood yard.

Life is messy! Let's clean it up! Thank you for your cooperation.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| May 16 | Bird Watching Hike, 8:00 AM, 40-Acre Lake restroom building |
| June 7 | Bird Photography Photo-walk, 5:00 PM, meet at Nature Center |
| June 14 | Budget and Executive Meetings, 3:00 PM
Regular Business Meeting, 5:30 PM (Supper, 5:00 PM) |
| July 5 | Close-up Photography Photo-walk, 5:00 PM, meet at Nature Center |
| July 12 | Blood Drive, NC Parking Lot, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
Budget and Executive Meetings, 3:00 PM
Regular Business Meeting, 5:30 PM (Supper, 5:00 PM) |
| August 9 | Budget and Executive Meetings, 3:00 PM
Regular Business Meeting, 5:30 PM (Supper, 5:00 PM) |
| September 6 | Amphibian and Reptile Photography Photo-walk, 5:00 PM, meet at Nature Center |
| September 13 | New Volunteer Training Orientation 9:30 - 3:00. Lunch served.
Budget and Executive Meetings, 3:00 PM
Regular Business Meeting, 5:30 PM (Supper, 5:00 PM) |
| September 20 | New Volunteer Training, 9:00 - 5:00 |
| September 27 | New Volunteer Training, 9:00 - 5:00 |

SCHOOL GROUP AND OUTREACH HELP NEEDED

by Sharon Hanzik

We need support for an outreach in Beasley on Saturday, May 17.

We also need one more hike leader on Thursday, May 22 at 9:30 at 40-Acre.

These events are listed on the special events calendar and ready for you to sign up.

Thank you!

Brazos Bend State Park

Texas Parks and Wildlife
21901 FM 762
Needville, TX 77461

NEXT MEETING

SATURDAY, June 14, 2014

5:00 PM Bring Your Own Eats

5:30 PM, General Meeting, Nature Center

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:	Mary Lockwood
Vice-President:	Glen Kilgore
Secretary	Melanie Jahn
Treasurer:	Woody Scott
Past-President:	Offie Walker
Members-at-Large:	Mike Sanderson Diane Welty
Comptroller:	Nancy Lynn Jones

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Editor	Anna Dell Williamson
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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 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**