



VOLUME 20, NUMBER 3

MARCH 2008

FEBRUARY MEETING NOTES

Reported by Secretary Nicole Olson

President James Blankenship called the meeting to order on February 9, 2008. There were 14 volunteers, four new VITs and three staff members present. The January 2008 meeting minutes were approved as posted.

Gift Shop Report:

Beth Debenport reported that we had good sales today. We are looking at adding Frisbees and a tote bag with a BBSP symbol, along with alligator pins.

Maintenance Report:

Noel Duncan presented the Maintenance report (see complete report elsewhere in this newsletter). A lot of wood was cut in January.

Treasurer's Report for the month of January 2008:

Diane Carpenter brought the budget report for discussion (see copies of the report in the volunteer lounge.)

The following budget requests were presented and approved:

- Beth Debenport requested a wet mop (Swiffer) to mop the classroom and kitchen floors.
- Ron Morrison requested lumber and materials to replace the boardwalk on Creekfield forest trail. The money will come from designated funds.
- Sharon Hanzik requested two 8-gig flash drives for use as a hard drive backup. An external hard drive was added to the request.
- Sharon Hanzik requested a bobcat pelt and a skunk pelt.

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The following request was presented, discussed, and not approved. Another proposal will be presented at a later date:

- David Heinicke requested funds for a fire escape ladder for the classroom in the nature center.

Ken Debenport mentioned that it is now 14 cents a mile for mileage for volunteers for tax purposes.

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Training Report:

Anna Dell Williamson reported that there were nine Volunteers in Training (VITs) and a total of about 30 people for lunch. Thanks to everyone for their help! It was greatly appreciated.

A special thank you from Bruce Williamson to the people who are willing to serve in this organization!

Thanks to Jenn Mantei for the dinner.

The meeting was adjourned.

STAFF REPORTS

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

STEVE KILLIAN

January was a good month. The annual conference, where all of the state park management comes together, was in Wichita Falls, TX. The new Executive Director, Carter Smith, has a strong conservation background. Previously, he worked with the Nature Conservancy. There was talk about strategies and working overtime to accomplish goals. Also there was discussion on a new visitation plan – an electromagnetic counter to be buried in the asphalt to count people coming into the park, and a new business plan with ways to help make the parks better.



The Zero Based Budget report, due February 24, 2008, captures all the tasks that occur in the park. It includes all hours, whether by volunteers, hosts or park staff, and will be used to set the budget for the future.

We are hiring a new employee – a Park Ranger 1. There are 17 currently on staff; in addition, volunteers and hosts contribute hours to equal 13 people. This shows that we need at least 30 people to manage the park.

A lot of good things will be happening in the future. It was a very good January. Aaron Anderegg is doing well at Wharton Junior College and should be at the park mid to late May.

Noel Duncan asked: Can we have DSL at the maintenance yard? Steve Killian answered that we can have it there, but nowhere else. We might need to invest in a satellite dish. Headquarters has the LAN system which is fast but the Nature Center does not, and the maintenance yard has extended DSL, much better than it was. The State of Texas serves the connection to headquarters for approximately \$500, \$40 per month for DSL at the maintenance yard. We will need to look at the options for high speed internet service to the Nature Center. Satellite may be our best bet here.

Thanks! Continue to do good work!

INTERPRETIVE STAFF REPORTS

DAVID HEINICKE



Upcoming events:

- February 29 – annual school group training to help out with school groups, all day training
- March 9 – 2:00 PM, group to get together to discuss the new classroom versus fixing the amphitheater versus a covered pavilion, to consider the pros and cons
- March 21 – Good Friday, a big day, need some help during the March 17-21 spring break
- March 23 – Easter Sunday, a very busy day, a massive day

Doris Mager's birds of prey program drew approximately 324 people. Thank you guys for your help!

We need political support from our state representatives and senators for fund-raising and the new classroom. We are getting close to a full-blown run, and need to involve some parks and wildlife commissioners. There's \$15,000 of seed money for design of the classroom.

SHARON HANZIK

Some new VITs are here tonight: Clara Pultar, Cindy Peterson, Joan Hebert, and Dawn Tejero.

On March 22 there will be interpretive training to teach you how to present a program. We need to increase the programs developed and presented by volunteers.



Upcoming outreach opportunities include the Sea Center Texas on March 1 from 10-4 p.m. and the Richmond Children's Festival – March 29 from 12-5 p.m. Please contact Judy Strauss if you can help.

Thank you all, thank you very much!

Congratulations

. . . to **Jenn Mantei** and **Rob Wolfinger** on finishing their training and becoming full volunteers.

(Ed. note: This happened in January, but I missed getting the announcement into the February newsletter.)

NATURE CENTER REPORT FEBRUARY 2008

By Anna Dell Williamson

Here is a breakdown of the various activities and attendance recorded for the Nature Center, hikes, and programs for February 1 - 29, 2008. Numbers come from the calendar in the Nature Center and may not reflect all activities. Be sure to report Nature Center visitation on the calendar, and attendance for all programs and hikes on the form behind the front desk.

	PROGRAMS	TOTALS
NATURE CENTER	SATURDAYS (4)	2035 - High, 694, 2/9
TOTAL: FEB. 2008: 4827	SUNDAYS (4)	1890 - High, 650, 2/24
FEB. 2007: 2247	WEEKDAYS (21)	902 -High, 165, 2/18 (President's Day)
	CREEKFIELD HIKES (5 days)	71 - High, 28, 2/23
	BIRDS OF PREY (3 days)	324
	SNAKE/REPTILE PROGRAMS (3)	92
	ALLIGATOR PROGRAMS (4)	33
	SPOTTING SCOPE (4)	38
	OTHER PROGRAMS (5) includes bird hikes, story time (3), owl program	47

SPRING SATURDAY CREEKFIELD HIKES

More than one leader may be needed for most Saturday hikes from March through May. We may need 3, 4 and sometimes more! Sometimes groups notify us in advance of how many will be attending, most of the time we do not know. All who lead a hike will get credit. However, if all are not needed, first choice goes to those who are signed up first and so on.

SPRING BREAK NEWS

by Sharon Hanzik

Most school districts in Texas are taking Spring Break this year from March 17 to March 21, which is the week before Easter. It will be a particularly busy time for the park. The spring break schedule on the web calendar is posted for 9-5, M-F for the week of March 17 - 21. PLEASE FILL THE 11 - 3 NATURE CENTER TIME SLOTS FIRST. If you sign up for a Gift Shop shift and there is no one signed up for that same shift in the Nature Center, you may be operating the Nature Center instead.

We will need all available staff to keep the Nature Center and Gift Shop open and to be out on the trails. We want to have a Creekfield Hike each day, as well as present at least one more afternoon program. If you would like to present a program please let me know very soon as I want to post a Spring Break program schedule on the web page. If you want to lead a Creekfield Hike Wednesday or Thursday, please sign up for that right away. We'll schedule as many programs as we can each day.

So far I have these programs scheduled:

Monday, March 17

10:00 am — **CREEKFIELD NATURE HIKE**

11:30 am — **CHILDREN'S STORY TIME** (*Stellaluna*, and echolocation game)

1:30 pm — **WILDLIFE PARADISE**

Tuesday, March 18

10:00 am — **CREEKFEILD NATURE HIKE**

11:30 am — **CHILDREN'S STORY TIME** (*Owl Moon*)

1:30 pm — **THE MYSTERIOUS LIVES OF SNAKES**

Wednesday, March 19

1:30 pm — **IT'S ALL IN YOUR HEAD!** (How to identify skulls, Sharon)

3:00 pm — **CHILDREN'S STORY TIME** (*Johnny Longlegs* and hike to find blue heron)

Thursday, March 20

8:00 am — **GATORS IN THE MIST** - (Hike at 40-Acre Lake)

1:30 pm — **CATCHING CRITTERS** (Program: How Birds Capture Their Prey, Carol Ramsayer)

3:30 pm — **THE MYSTERIOUS LIVES OF SNAKES** (Program)

Friday, March 21

9:00 am — **CHILDREN'S BIRD WATCHING HIKE**

10:00 am — **CREEKFIELD NATURE HIKE**

11:30 am — **CHILDREN'S STORY TIME** (*Izzie, Lizzie Alligator*, Carrie Sample)

1:30 pm — **ALLIGATOR SLIDE SHOW** (taken at BBSP)

David will be off Monday and Tuesday, and Sharon will be off Thursday and Friday.

Spring 2008 VITs - You may sign up for training requirements during spring break as if it were a weekend. There will be a volunteer available to train you in the Nature Center or Gift Shop all shifts.

EASTER SUNDAY

Easter Sunday is March 23. It is one of the busiest days at the park every year. We need lots of volunteers in the Nature Center and on the trails. Be here early for whatever you are doing because there will be a long entrance line. Get here before noon if at all possible. In addition, this year it is right at the end of Spring Break, which may make it even busier. Plan to help us out if at all possible.

Volunteer News & Notes

WEEKDAY HIKE

by David Heinicke

On Wednesday, March 12, at 9:00 AM, I will lead a hike around the Red Buckeye trail. Hopefully the Buckeyes will be at the peak of their bloom then. The hike will be about 3 - 4 miles long and should take about 3 hours. We will meet at Hale Lake restrooms at 9:00 AM.



INTERPRETIVE WORKSHOP

by Sharon Hanzik

To all who may be interested, I will be conducting an interpretive workshop on Saturday, March 22 at the George Observatory classroom. Yes, it is the Saturday before Easter. Another workshop is planned for May or early June, date to be determined later. The workshop is from 9:00 a.m. sharp to 12:00 p.m. Sharon will train you in the following for hikes and programs: choosing a subject and theme; program outline; making it relevant/meaningful to the audience; tips and tricks; dos and don'ts; voice and presentation skills; handling disruptions; keeping it simple.

Please keep in mind that this workshop is designed for those who wish to start presenting programs and hikes at the park. We want more on the schedule each weekend, especially in the busy months and will rely on volunteer help in order to accomplish this goal. Therefore, those taking the class will be expected to be ready to present a program/hike this spring. Sharon will work with you to help you accomplish this goal. You may create your own or follow one of our outlines. Either way, the program will still be *your* program, done the way *you* would like to present it. If you are interested, contact Sharon immediately.

OUTREACH UPDATE

by Judy Strauss

There is an upcoming **Outreach Programs** for the BBSPVO. Anyone interested in helping with this event, please let me know ASAP. You can reach me at work at 281-980-4104 or at home at 979-793-7392. Thank you all for your help and support.

Children's Festival is March 29th in Richmond, from Noon - 5:00 p.m. We had a wonderful time last year, and made a lot of "happy faces". Most of these children don't get much exposure to the outdoor world and it is really a treat talking to them about Nature and the Park.

BBSP TOUCHES A VISITOR



One of the visitors to BBSP returned to the park on Sunday, February 10. He enjoys photography, and had taken a number of close-up photos of the animals we display at the Nature Center. He brought an envelope with ten 8" x 10" prints, which he donated for display or whatever use we have for them. They include photos of the Mexican milk snake, a corn snake, the tarantula, etc.

PHOTO SHOW

Laszlo Perlaky has invited the volunteers to his "On Wings" (birds in flight) portfolio exhibition at the Fill Your Cup Coffee Shop Gallery (1410 East Hwy 90A Suite 100, Richmond, TX 77469) from February 15 until April 18, 2008.

CAMP HOSTS HELP OUT

If you are able to work in the Nature Center and/or Gift Shop on weekdays, you've probably had the chance to meet a Camp Host. The hosts stay in the park in their RV's for an extended period of time and help with maintenance, headquarters, campground patrol, and the Nature Center. Although they are not required to help with the Nature Center, many of them enjoy that type of work and are very good at it.

Sometimes we would not be able to keep the Nature Center open if it were not for the hosts. If a volunteer scheduled to work cannot make it at the last minute, staff asks for a host to fill in. If we have a day where there are no volunteers available, hosts step up and fill the vacancy. Remember, we are committed to keeping the Nature Center open from 11:00 to 3:00 on weekdays. Be sure to thank a host for the service they give us when they work weekdays in the Nature Center.

MAINTENANCE REPORT

by Ron Morrison

Wood Yard:

Unloaded and cut firewood material to length for splitting
Split Wood - wood yard is cleared of wood to split
Moved ¼ cord of cut wood to the wood yard to be split
Unloaded 1½ cord of Jeff's wood
Split ¾ cord of wood

Mowing and Landscaping:

Cleared Chinese Tallow trees endangering shelter and 100 loop campground

Trail Trimming and Trail Maintenance:

Designed Creekfield Forest bridge
Trimmed Creekfield Lake trail head
Remove Blowdown from Creekfield Forest trail
Trimmed Hale Lake Trail (Big Creek bridge to the fishing Pier)

Equipment Maintenance:

Serviced Pole saw and small chain saw
Repaired flat tire on Gator
Replaced Battery on Kubota
Serviced Tractor
Replaced broken belt and service the DR Trimmer

General Maintenance:

Built water station cup holder brackets
Picked up new water station cup holder from Grainger's
Moved two fire rings and concrete debris in campground
Repaired loose hinges on Nature Center bathroom door
Trimmed limbs off Hale Lake restrooms
Trimmed Hale Lake Trail (Fishing Pier to the Viewing area by the picnic grounds)
Add trail topping to Hale Lake washouts
Replaced 16 BBQ Grills
Replaced light bulb and repaired light at 100 loop wood rack
Cut a blowdown by the shelter playground
Installed volunteer room cabinet door latch



BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Elmer Aden
Willie Anderson
Rita Cooper
Joan Jackson
Herb Mann
Jennifer Parent

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

Glen and Maureen Kilgore
Dawn (VIT) and Oscar Tejero

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Joyce Blankenship
Ken Debenport

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

Virginia and Charlie Harrison
Jim and Jacqueline North



☺ to **Carol Ramsayer** for arranging the field trip to George Ranch

☺ to **Dennis Jones, Sharon Hanzik, Staci Hobbet,** and **Chris Hofferber** for articles for the newsletter

☺ to **Doris Dahse, Teresa Jones** and hosts **Bev DeGarmo** and **Ruwal Freese** for keeping the Nature Center open all day President's Day - 165 visitors!

☺ to **Jenn Mantei** for the February meeting night supper

☺ to **Ron** and **Margaret Morrison** for matching grant from **El Paso Corporation**

😊 to **Dr. John P. McGovern** and **Katherine G. McGovern** for an unrestricted donation

😊 to **Jenn Mantei** for doing the layout for this issue of the newsletter

😊 to **all the people** who are willing to serve in this organization!

😊 to **Anna Dell Williamson** for the new volunteer training

😊 to **all the members** who helped with new volunteer training. Here is a list, but I'm sure I've forgotten someone. Please know that all of your work is appreciated: **Carol Ramsayer** for preparing the training manuals for the VIT's; **Sharon Hanzik, David Heinicke,** and **Steve Killian** for participation in the presentations and for all of their support given the program; all the **drivers** for the park road tour; **James** and **Joyce Blankenship, Ken** and **Beth Debenport, Noel Duncan, Chuck Duplant, Glen Kilgore, Ron Morrison, Tom Prentiss** (who stepped in at the last minute), and **Bruce Williamson** for presentations and hikes; **everyone** who attended and brought food to the orientation luncheon; and to the **mentors** and the members on the **resource list** for support during hands-on training.

We Get Letters..



A Letter from “Tex Critter” Hofferber

Hello, BBSP Volunteers!

Some of you may not know me, but my name is TEX, and I'm the adopted cat of Chris Hofferber. I was named TEX because I'm long and tall like a Texan, and that's where I lived when Chris took me in.

Last April, we moved from Sugar Land to northwest Arkansas. It sure is different. We moved from flat land to big hills (actually the Ozark Mountains), from hot weather to a more cool climate, and from everyone being in a hurry to everyone taking their sweet time. I went from being a mostly outdoor cat to being an indoor cat, due to the short life span of outdoor cats here. But I have a deck high on the back of the house where I take lots of naps and do a lot of wildlife watching.

My mom, Chris, isn't a big bird watcher, but I am. Our house is surrounded on three sides by trees, mostly oaks, and they are very close, so you can see birds all the time. Right now, we have snow, so the Cardinals really show up on the snow-covered branches. Hundreds of little Carolina Chickadees are flying from the ground to lower limbs and back. Normally, we don't have Bluebirds in our yard, but they are here for the cover right now. Many, many tiny Sparrows are coming and going all day long.

Woodpeckers of many kinds abound here, especially in the summer, but right now the Pileated Woodpeckers are here, and they're busy making really big holes in the trees. (When they're doing that, I make sure they don't get near my head. They scare me!) Dennis Jones told my mom that the male makes several holes and his wife picks her favorite for her nest. Thus, there is an excess of large holes, especially when there are several pairs. Well, when left to Nature, everything has a purpose. The gray squirrels use those holes for acorn storage for the winter. We haven't seen an Ivory-billed Woodpecker, and we don't plan on that, even though one was reportedly spotted in Arkansas. I see Hawks almost daily. They don't bother me, though.

It must have something to do with my weighing almost 14½ pounds. (I'm too big for a snack, I guess.) Turkey are our largest bird, but we haven't seen any on our property. They're smart and have moved out to the more remote areas of town.

As for mammals, there are large white-tail deer. Daddy Jim was out getting the mail late in June, and a fawn almost ran over him, evidently trying to catch up to his mom. It was almost the size of the adult does at BBSP, and it made Daddy realize that you have to stay alert, even close to the house. We have groundhogs, armadillos, fox and coyotes. Groundhogs and armadillos are very common road-kill, so we have lots of both.

There are black bears in the area. No one usually sees them until late spring, when the mama bears get the urge to breed. They send the young bears, just over a year old, out on their own. The young bears know how to hunt and what to eat, because their mama taught them, but they're unsure of their abilities. So the easiest thing for them to do is to go into the neighborhoods and raid trash cans. There were five caught here last year by the Arkansas Wildlife Department. They took them to the remote area of the Boston Mountains to our south. My mom doesn't put her trash out until the morning of trash pick-up day, so as not to tempt any cubs looking for an easy meal. And we have the other normal trash bandits—possums, raccoons, and skunks.

There are alligators in southern Arkansas, but we don't have any this far north. We have lots of turtles that are very visible in the spring when they're on the move. The box turtles are abundant and many are hit on the roads. We have lots of harmless snakes and our venomous snakes are copperheads, timber rattlesnakes, and pigmy rattlesnakes.

Mom said she misses her friends at the park. I try to comfort her by being there for her, as her friend, to pet and pamper, but she says it's not the same. I guess a cat can only do so much.



I feel a nap coming on, but I wanted to tell you what I see from a cat's eye view and what else lurks up here. I'll try to get Mom to write next time. Y'all keep up the good work. Come pet me sometime. I need the attention.

~ TEX

YOU ARE IN CHARGE

INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS AND HIKES

by Sharon Hanzik

You are in charge of your program or hike. You set the rules and expectations.

CLASSROOM - Youth groups

Do not separate children from adults - who'll keep an eye on conduct?

Classroom size: **The size limit is 50.** We should keep it close. If it's a youth group, ask for an appropriate number of adult chaperones. Not all adults with the group may be able to attend.

HIKES - Rules of the trail:

"I am the leader – stay behind me at all times."

Youth groups or school groups – "I am not in charge of discipline."

"Stay on the trail."

"A quiet hike is the best hike."

"When I am speaking, I expect respect." Inform the group that you will come back to the middle of the group before speaking.

CELL PHONES!!

Yes, we will need to remind our audience members that they need to have phones set on vibrate, and if they must answer, to please leave the classroom or distance themselves from the hike.

DO NOT BE AFRAID TO HANDLE A SITUATION

Whatever the problem – restate the particular rule that they are breaking. The right “look” directed at the right person says volumes. Persistent disruption? **STOP!** Stop walking, stop talking until you have their full attention. If you feel you need to, you may restate your rule – again.

YOU MAY ASK ANYONE TO LEAVE YOUR PROGRAM OR HIKE. You do not have to tolerate unruly conduct. You will be the hero in the eyes of the rest of the group.

REMEMBER TO BE TACTFUL. KINDNESS GOES A LONG WAY. Always remember that when it comes to rules, it's easier to START OUT TOUGH and LIGHTEN UP than it is to TOUGHEN UP!

CARTER SMITH NAMED TPWD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

(Information taken from *Currents, The newsletter of the Coastal Conservation Association*, Feb/Mar 2008)

Carter Smith is the new Executive Director of the TPWD. He is the former leader of the Nature Conservancy of Texas. Smith has been with the Nature Conservancy of Texas since 1998 and has been the state director since 2004. Prior to becoming state director, he served as Director of Conservation Programs where he was responsible for conservation, external affairs and science programs. Before working at the Nature Conservancy, he was the first executive director of the Katy Prairie Conservancy and continues to serve on their Advisory Board.

Smith began his TPWD career in 1992 as a management intern. He has a wildlife management degree from Texas Tech and a master's degree in conservation biology from Yale University.

Smith has served on numerous science, conservation, land trust and advisory councils. He has served on the Texas Land Trust Council and advisory boards for Texas Tech, Texas A&M and Texas State University. Most recently he served on TPWD's State Parks Advisory Committee.

Smith replaced Robert Cook, who retired in August, 2007.

FIELD TRIP TO GEORGE RANCH

by Staci Hobbet

Carol Ramsayer has done another great job of putting together a field trip for the vols. About twenty of us gathered at George Ranch on February 6, a bright and brilliant winter morning, for a custom tour by Program Director Bryan McAuley. The day started at 9:30 with an introductory talk by Bryan about the history of the ranch and the George Foundation, which is the largest philanthropic force in Ft. Bend County and behind much of the development in recent decades of churches, schools, parks, and community organizations. He then showed us a short film following the same arc through the ranch's four generations of development.

Ironically, the founder, Henry Jones, was a ne'er do well of the very sort Stephen F. Austin had said was not to be admitted into the new colony: He'd never held a real job; had no special training, and wasn't a tradesman. But he was given a land grant nevertheless and proved that he had what it took to be a successful settler: good instincts. He invested in cattle and – less to his credit – slaves.

Bryan took our group on a chronological tour of the ranch, spinning family tales as he went, including the surprising passage of the land to the females of the family, a change that was protected by a prenuptial agreement at the early date of 1845 between a woman of the original line and her fiance.

The first stop was a replica of the cabin the Jones family would have lived in during the 1820's, where we were fed tender, steaming-hot cornbread straight from the log fire by a living-history volunteer. What Bryan called the 'second generation' house was built in the mid 1850's. The original house burned down in the 1880's, so the house that represents that era was brought to the site from a ranch near Fulshear. "The ranch houses back then were almost cookie-cutter," he said, ensuring us that the original house was much the same. The third generation house, the fine Victorian so visible from the road, is the most lavish of the three, and the history of its residents is better known.

The residents whose name the ranch now bears, Albert and Mamie George, built a fourth-generation house, which we didn't tour. Instead, we enjoyed its oak-shaded yard and climbed up into the great treehouse the Georges built for their favorite niece and heir in the 1920s. Tragically, the niece, pregnant with her first child, was killed in a car accident at the age of 22, leaving the Georges bereft. In her memory, they established the George Foundation, endowing it with \$10,000. Today, the Foundation is worth more than \$100 million and benefits many people, including a satisfied bunch of volunteers from Brazos Bend State Park.

Vols who attended: James and Joyce Blankenship, Jim Calvert, Diane and Jerry Carpenter, Noel Duncan, Ken and Beth Debenport, Sharon Hanzik, Staci Hobbet, Rich and Sandy Jespersion, Jeff McMullan, Jane Minard, Carol Ramsayer, and Marilyn Vossler.



Thanks, Carol, for arranging this trip!

I FOUND A BABY BIRD, WHAT DO I DO?

by Dennis Jones

From time to time baby birds fall from their nest. If you find a bird that has fallen from a nest and is too young to fly, what do you do? Here are some tips that will help the little guy have a second chance at life.

The first thing to do is protect it from predators. That may mean taking possession of the bird to prevent cats, dogs, other birds or even fire ants from killing it. Then ask yourself the following question: Does it have feathers yet? If it doesn't have feathers, it is a nestling, and you need to return it to its nest or make an artificial nest for it out of a small box, basket, or old gallon milk jug with the top cut out of it. Place the container as close to the original nest as is realistically possible. The parents will take it from there. That's all you have to do. Parental care is the absolute best care the baby bird can receive. But WAIT! Won't the parents reject the baby because you have touched it? The answer is no. Birds have practically no sense of smell; besides, most parents wouldn't reject their offspring just because it got a bit smelly would they? (Don't answer that.)

If the baby bird has feathers, it is a fledgling. That means it's too big for the nest and ALMOST ready to fly. Fledglings hop from limb to limb testing their wings and learning to fly short distances. As young ones often do, they slip and fall. All you need to do is place them in a tree or bush to protect them from dogs, cats, etc. (turning on a lawn sprinkler will deter cats). The parents will return to their begging calls to feed them.

If the parents are not around to help the baby after you keep an eye on the little guy through periodic observation, it may be time to intervene again. Parents usually attend to their babies about every 15 minutes and will search for as much as 24 hours for a missing baby. Collect the “box” and/or bird and call a wildlife rehabilitator (also known as a “rehabber”). These are folks that are specially trained and permitted by the State to rear and return baby animals to the wild. The Texas Wildlife Rehabilitation Coalition (www.twrc-houston.org), Friends of Texas Wildlife (www.friendsoftexaswildlife.org) are local, or you may consult the Texas Parks & Wildlife web page (tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/rehab/list) that lists licensed rehabilitators by county.

Don't put the baby bird in a birdcage, as it ruins their feathers as they bang against the bars. This will set back their release as they will have to grow new feathers before they can be returned to the wild. Now here's what to do until the baby bird gets to the rehabilitator. Keep it out of direct sunlight, but keep it warm. You may use a heating pad set on low and place the container half on and half off the pad. Another method is to heat a washcloth for 30 – 40 seconds in the microwave and slip it into a ziplock bag and place it under the container. In other words, keep it out of extremes in temperature. Give it some tissue paper, etc. to snuggle up in to keep warm if need be.

If you keep the bird in a quiet dark place it will probably go to sleep. DO NOT feed or water a baby bird. First of all they don't drink water when they are young; they get all the moisture they need from their food. Water can drown the baby bird or give it breathing problems. Secondly, the wrong food can plug the baby bird up and ultimately kill it. No bread (especially no bread), cookies, worms, insects, fruit - no nothin'; the rehabbers will give it the proper nutrition when they receive the bird. If you ask, the rehabber may be able to return the bird once again to your yard for release when it is ready.

Lastly, remember that the parents are the best care givers; also, it is against the law to keep wild birds as pets, and you wouldn't want to do that anyway.



Baby Bluejay

That's about everything you never wanted to know about rescuing baby birds. Good luck with your baby bird rescues. Let's hope you never have to rescue one, but now you will know what to do if it happens to you.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| March 7 | Night Hike, meet at HQ, 7:00 PM |
| March 8 | Junior Angler Workshop, 9:00 - 11:00 AM, Nature Center
Brazos River Pickers, 5:00 - 7:00 PM, Amphitheater |
| March 9 | Regular meeting, 5:30 PM |
| March 14 | Bird Hike, 40-Acre Restroom, 8:00 AM |
| March 16 | Bird Hike, 40-Acre Restroom, 8:00 AM |
| March 17-21 | Spring Break for most Texas school districts - Nature Center open 9:00 - 5:00. |
| March 23 | Easter Sunday, very busy day |
| April 4 | Bird Hike, 40-Acre Restroom, 8:00 AM |
| April 5 | Junior Angler Workshop, 9:00 - 11:00 AM, Nature Center
Brazos River Pickers, 5:00 - 7:00 PM, Amphitheater |
| April 6 | Bird Hike, 40-Acre Restroom, 8:00 AM |
| April 12 | Regular meeting, 5:30 PM
Junior Volunteer Training, 9:00 - 5:00 |



Brazos Bend State Park

Texas Parks and Wildlife
21901 FM 762
Needville TX 77461

FIRST CLASS MAIL

→ **NEXT MEETING DAY AND TIME** ←
SATURDAY, MARCH 8, 2008, 5:30 PM



REGULAR VOLUNTEER EVENTS

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Creekfield Hikes | Every Saturday and Sunday at 10:00 AM, led by volunteers |
| Photo Hikes | First Saturday of each month |
| Volunteer meeting | Second Saturday of each month at 5:30 PM |
| Bird Hikes | See schedule in calendar |

**BRAZOS BEND STATE PARK
VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION**

VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION OFFICERS

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

NEWSLETTER TEAM

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Editor | Anna Dell Williamson |
| Layout | Jenn Mantei |
| Production Assistants: | Bruce Williamson
Terry Williamson |

The **Brazos Bend Bunch Bugle** is the newsletter of the Brazos Bend State Park Volunteer Organization, A.K.A. The Brazos Bend Bunch. It is distributed monthly to volunteers through the BBSPVO web site. For further information on this newsletter or the volunteer program, contact David Heinicke or Sharon Hanzik at Brazos Bend State Park, phone 979-553-5101.

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are the opinions of the author of the article and do not necessarily reflect the official position of Brazos Bend State Park Volunteer Organization nor of BBSP administration. The deadline for Newsletter contributions is the Saturday following the monthly meeting, if mailed to Anna Dell Williamson, or at the meeting if delivered to the park. (E-mail address: awilliamson4@comcast.net). Notify Anna Dell (281-485-2843) well in advance of any events you want announced in the newsletter.