



Pines and Prairies

Bastrop Caldwell Fayette Lee Counties

Hey Buddy, Can You Spare A Habitat?

In Central Texas and nationwide, our open meadows, lush forests, wetlands, fertile green fields, and free-flowing creeks are growing fewer and more precious. We all live in many environments—home/family/church/school/work/shopping/entertainment/internet-etc—but, perhaps you know a special outdoor place that always refreshes you when you can spend time there. What if that grove of mighty oaks became a parking lot in front of a big mall? What if that gurgling creek you loved to listen to and dangle your feet in dried up?

Many thousands of people are moving into Central Texas, and they'll not close the door behind them. They will live, work, shop, study and play in buildings that don't even exist yet. Regional planning should direct this growth, but the decimation of larger ranches and farms has already changed the character of our communities. Landowners may fool themselves that their property will stay the way they have made it after they are gone, but that can only be accomplished with careful planning.

That's one way Pines & Prairies Land Trust can help landowners. PPLT protects private open space—farms, ranches, forests, wetlands, scenic views, and other lands—with conservation easements and other

estate-planning arrangements. PPLT carefully negotiates these contracts only with landowners who want their property to remain forever wild, or to keep it country from now on. PPLT monitors and defends those agreements forever.

PPLT's volunteer board of directors pours time and energy into identifying and saving our region's "special places." We leverage our scarce Land Acquisition Funds by engaging new partners and benefactors when we apply for grants.

But, we need you to make this work! Volunteering with PPLT takes time, thought, energy, and love for the land. But it's exhilarating and rewarding work! We need you as a volunteer, member, or supporter who can check out pieces of land, talk with landowners, research county records, help on bird, flora and fauna surveys, observe water flows and soil types. We need your knowledge, spirit and energy.

We need board members from Fayette, Caldwell, and Lee Counties. **We need you.**



Tree Tops and Grass Roots

Looking After the Lost Pines Toad

In May, PPLT wrapped up our 2003 grant from the National Wildlife Federation's *Keep the Wild Alive* Species Recovery Fund for Lost Pines toad (*Bufo houstonensis*) habitat enhancements in Lee County. The grant allowed us to construct two new breeding ponds for the endangered toad on private lands last winter. Heavy rains this spring have filled those ponds and the native grasses and wildflowers planted by the owners are coming in thick. The landowners will maintain the ponds and allow biologists to monitor them for five years.

Dr. Mike Forstner of Texas State University advised fencing off the 3-acre pond on the Yegua Knobbs Preserve to keep cattle out during toad breeding season and NWF allowed us to use remaining grant funds to do it.

These enhancements will benefit a great variety of other wildlife, as well.



Calves inspecting YKP pond fence

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notes from Director Tom Dureka

Field Day at the Knobbs

Over 90 PPLT members, neighbors and naturalists enjoyed our first "Field Day" at the Yegua Knobbs Preserve in April. The mild weather and magical landscape made this a delightful experience. Roy and Delores Knippa, who owned and cared for the land for the last 40 years, came with their children. They enjoyed showing visitors some of their favorite "special places." Botanists, entomologists and biologists graciously reported the plants, birds, insects and other wildlife they observed. More field days are being planned.

Austin-Bastrop River Corridor Partnership

This coalition of local, state, and federal agencies, citizens' groups, developers, individuals and riverfront landowners is dedicated to raising public awareness about issues affecting the future of the river over the next 20 years of expected development. Other important goals are promoting economic and recreational uses that support the river corridor's long-term ecological health and social equity, and to maintain or restore riparian habitats along the river.

The Colorado River runs for 58 miles between Austin and Bastrop. The importance of this stretch of river to Native Americans and early Anglo settlers cannot be overstated. Today it is a significant natural and recreational resource and it is consistently rated excellent for water quality. However, housing developments, new highways, sand and gravel mining and other encroachments pose major threats to this valuable ecosystem.

If you or someone you know lives on or loves the river and can provide ideas or energy for this partnership, please contact PPLT or Kevin Anderson at the Center for Environmental Research in Austin (512/972-1960).

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Conservation Corner

American Electric Power invested \$5.5 million in reforesting 17,000 acres in Brazil, which will extract approximately one million tons of carbon a year. They saved money by avoiding a hefty "pollution permit" fee through this mitigation project.

Each nation has its own stock of natural capital, the native ecosystems providing services to society. Forests that are pulped for pennies per tree are worth much more. They absorb heavy rainfall and keep soil in place, helping prevent floods and mudslides.

We're very good at managing assets such as homes, cars, and employees. The task now is to apply those management skills to ecosystems. There is no greater challenge confronting society today.

Stanford ecologist Gretchen Daily, interviewed in *Sierra*, July/Aug. 2004

Pines and Prairies Land Trust Organization Structure

Executive Committee

President Carrie Knox 830/839-4628
Vice-President Bill McPherson
Treasurer Jim Wither
Secretary Joan Russell

Staff

Executive Director Tom Dureka 512/306-3045
PPLT Office 512/308-1911

Acquisition

Chair Jim Wither
512/360-3681

Board Development

Chair Jeremiah Jarvis
512/281-2762

Community Relations

Chair Joan Russell
512/321-2718

Finance Committee

Chair Jim Wither

Fundraising Committee

Chair Tom Dureka

Membership Committee

Chair Priscilla Jarvis
512/281-2762

Newsletter

Chair Jeremiah Jarvis

Standard Operating Procedures

Chair Priscilla Jarvis

Stewardship

Chair Bill McPherson
512/481-3347

Message from the President

The people and places touched by Pines and Prairies Land Trust continue to evolve and increase. We are actively seeking board members from Lee, Fayette and Caldwell Counties to better serve the needs of all communities. If you or anyone you know is interested in learning more about our activities and how we are working to protect our precious open lands, please call me or send an email cknox@gvtc.com. With a few more board members from these counties, PPLT will be able to take on wider-ranging land conservation projects and spread the word about how folks can protect their land.

Our newest project is to find a special piece of land in Bastrop or Lee County to acquire and protect forever. Please think of us if you wish to sell or donate your beautiful place. Be assured that your special land will be protected forever, and all the critters and people who come in contact with the land will thank you today and tomorrow.

Remember, land conservation is forever and for all. **Carrie F. Knox, president PPLT**

Help us maintain our region's quality of life! Your tax-deductible membership and donations support our educational programs, information distribution, and direct land preservation.

___\$20 Individual ___\$30 Family ___\$40 Business

_____ \$\$\$ Extremely Generous!

Name _____

Address _____ Email _____

City/State/Zip _____ Tel. _____

Please make checks payable to Pines & Prairies Land Trust. Thank you.

P.O. Box 1526 Bastrop, Texas 78602



Here is one of the new breeding ponds constructed in Lee County last winter with National Wildlife Federation funds. Pictured is the landowner in the snow with one of her humans.

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“The mission of The Pines and Prairies Land Trust is to protect significant open space and natural, historic, and cultural resources, and to preserve the quality of life for current and future generations, through educational programs and through owning and protecting easements and land.”

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