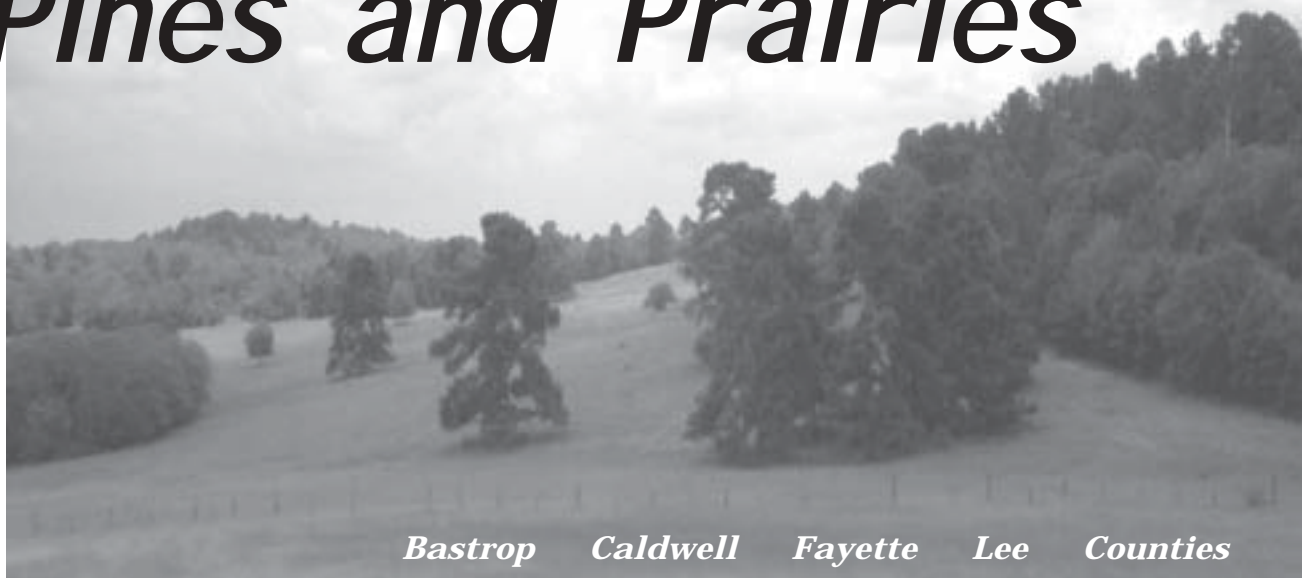


Pines and Prairies



Bastrop Caldwell Fayette Lee Counties

Colorado River Refuge Becomes a Reality!

PPLT has acquired from the Bastrop County Water Control and Improvement District #2 60 awe-inspiring acres on the Colorado river for a wildlife sanctuary, free daytime public hiking trail and outdoor classroom. Although located just two miles from downtown Bastrop, visitors to the Colorado River Refuge will see no houses and hear no road noise!

This serene stretch of river is adorned with majestic old-growth forest--trees over 80 feet tall form a cathedral-like canopy where visitors can stroll past interesting rock outcrops amidst a wide variety of birds and other wildlife. Even before interpretive signs are in place, schools and youth groups will find the Refuge a wonderful learning experience and a beautiful setting for healthy exercise.

So far, only about 3/4 of a mile of trail is walkable, and even that will need some work to make it accessible to handicapped visitors and small children. But you're welcome to check out that section, beginning .7 mile from the intersection of Riverside Drive and Kahana, upstream from the Pine Forest Golf Course.

Pines and Prairies intends to manage the Refuge as a family-friendly, non-motorized asset to the community. This stretch of the riverside in Tahitian Village has long been abused by ATVs, dirt bikes and four-wheel-drive pickups, as well as trash dumpers, woodcutters and folks firing guns. The land trust will prohibit these activities with gating, clear signage, direct outreach to the public, and through the establishment of a "neighborhood watch" program.

Many partners have already pitched in to help get the Refuge started, including federal and state agencies (especially the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program), city and county officials, non-profit organizations, area businesses, and individual citizens.

We are actively seeking individuals and group partners to help in cleanups, trailbuilding, drive-by inspections, and biological inventories. Please join your neighbors and participate in some aspect of this exciting new "wildscape" project.

Meadows Foundation Challenge Grant

PPLT is now working to raise \$100,000 as the "local match" to a \$100,000 challenge grant from the Meadows Foundation. Please contact us at 512/308-1911 or go to our web site at www.pinesandprairieslandtrust.org to volunteer time, energy or money or otherwise support the Colorado River Refuge.

Our next big cleanup effort will occur during the week of the City of Bastrop's "Clean Sweep", May 12-16, 2005. From time to time, we will announce activities at the Refuge on our website and in local newspapers. If you would like to be informed of these events, please be sure to send us your email address.

But most important, come walk in these woods by the river for a spiritual lift. Find your special place to sit quietly and contemplate the natural beauty of the ever changing, always constant flow of Central Texas' majestic Colorado River.



Dennis and Eva Jean Kestner signed the agreement January 20, 2005 with PPLT establishing the conservation easement on their 214 acre Double D Ranch in northeast Caldwell County.

Below is a beautiful stretch of Buck Branch the spring-fed creek forming a portion of the south boundary of the Kestner's property.

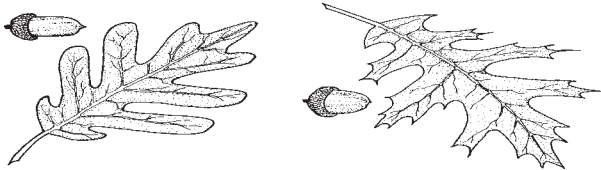
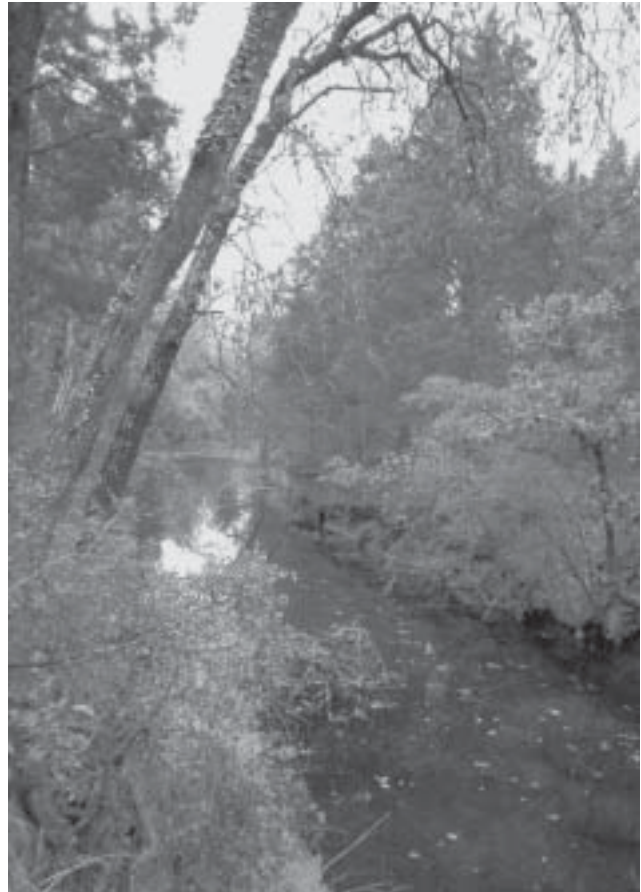
Our Second Conservation Easement is in Caldwell County

Dennis and Eva Jean Kestner have owned their 214 acre Double D Ranch near the small Delhi community in northeast Caldwell County since 2000. They have 13 head of longhorn cattle, two "mixed" calves and a couple of friendly donkeys. They are members of the Tri-Community Wildlife Association and have been managing their land for their cattle as well as the white tail deer and other wildlife inhabiting the 40 acres of open pasture and the 174 heavily wooded acres.

This area has been intermittently grazed by domestic livestock since the 1600s and intensively grazed since the 1800s. The Double D is in the Guadalupe River watershed atop the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer.

It's in the Texan Biotic Province in the Claypan Prairie Vegetational Area. Native grasses making a comeback include little bluestem, switchgrass, indiagrass, silver bluestem and ladies tresses.

The Kestners have established food plots for the wildlife, including turnips, rye grass, rye, arrow leaf clover, crimson clover, soybeans, vetch and cow peas. They are proud of their land and now count on PPLT to maintain it in perpetuity.



Conservation Corner

Compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs) use only one-fourth the energy of a comparable regular incandescent bulb. A 27-watt CFL lights up a room as well as a 100-watter and lasts ten times longer! But they shouldn't be disposed of by tossing them into the trash, take them to a household hazardous waste collection site. Visit the government's EnergyStar website for more information: www.energystar.gov

PPLT Wins Excellence Award

The Texas Land Trust Council gave their first annual Excellence Award to PPLT at the annual conference in Austin in February. The award recognizes conservation organizations who demonstrate not just a commitment to the natural, cultural, and historic resources in Texas, but who constantly strive to improve their standards and practices in the protection of those resources.

"Pines & Prairies is unique among young Texas organizations in their establishment of an easement enforcement and defense fund to ensure their ability to be good stewards of the resources they protect far into the future."

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**Sustainable
Agriculture for
Bastrop County**

Steve Bridges, president of the Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association and co-owner of Kimas Tejas Nursery in Bastrop, is working with a group of folks who want to establish local production of foods to supply area schools, restaurants and grocers.

The idea is to keep local farms and ranches producing food using sustainable organic methods--foods that can be sold and consumed locally.

As fuel prices soar, transporting produce long distances will become too expensive. Nor can our environment survive the continued use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides.

If you are interested in joining this discussion, contact Steve at 303-4769 or by email at:

steve@texasgrown.com
or contact Sheril Smith:
sherilsmith@evl.net

Message from the President

I'm trying to think of the best way to invite you to invest even more of your time, attention and energy in saving as much as we can of the remaining open spaces--farms, ranches, wildlife habitat, and air-cleansing forests--in Central Texas.

When life seems overwhelming or too fast to keep up with, having a peaceful serene place to go to or a pastoral view to look at can effect how my entire day goes. Everyone can feel enriched experiencing the beauty and sweep of open land around them. We all are nourished living in a beautiful, green, alive environment.

But farms and ranches, forests and open spaces are rapidly being subdivided and developed, disappearing at an alarming rate. We must persistently, deliberately act to protect these precious natural resources. Making sure that happens is the mission of the Pines and Prairies Land Trust and the passion of the entire board.

That is why PPLT is asking for funding for our various projects. I believe with all my heart that our work to save the natural environment of our region will benefit our community now and long after we are gone. If you believe that keeping our lovely country green, alive and beautiful is a worthy goal, please join me in supporting PPLT. We welcome your donations of money, time and services. **Carrie Knox, President**

April 9 Field Day at the Yegua Knobbs Preserve!

Make a note on your calendar to enjoy another field day at our 302 acre preserve nestled in the center of the infamous "Yegua Knobbs." Saturday, April 9 from 10AM until 4PM you can enjoy the mystery and majesty of this storied area. Our two previous invitations to the public to experience the fields, creeks and thick woods of the YKP attracted more than 100 people. We'll supply cool drinking water and a primitive latrine. Bring binoculars and cameras. Bring a lawn chair and a picnic if you like. You can hike up to the top of the fourth "Knobb," across a field to the north pond, or through the woods to the beautiful south pond. Explore, examine and above all, enjoy this wonderful piece of beautiful Central Texas.

Please help us maintain our region's quality of life! Your tax deductible donation will support our educational programs distribution of information and direct land preservation.

\$20 Individual \$30 Family

\$50 Business \$\$\$ Generous Other

Name _____ Address _____
City _____ State _____ zip _____

**Make your check to Pines & Prairies Land Trust and mail to:
P.O. Box 1526
Bastrop, Texas 78602**

Directions to Yegua Knobbs Preserve for April 9 Field Day

Saturday, April 9, 2005 10AM to 4PM

Eight miles southeast of Elgin on Highway 290 turn onto Loop 223, which is Waco St. You'll pass the Post Office and come to a stop sign at the main street of downtown McDade. Go straight on Waco, which becomes Knobbs Springs Rd. when it turns left out of town. From the stop sign it is five miles to Private Rd. 3051. Just before you come to the turn off onto PR 3051 you'll see a red brick "Southern mansion" on the left. Drive slowly along the gravel road for about 1.5 miles, at which point you'll go straight as the road curves around to the left. A sign will point the way to YKP, another .5 mile to the gate.

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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www.pinesandprairieslandtrust.org

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