

# *Pines and Prairies*



*Bastrop Caldwell Fayette Lee Counties*

*Newsletter of the Pines & Prairies Land Trust Vol.3, No.3 October 2005*

## **Come Enjoy Third Annual Yegua Knobbs Field Day**

Here's another opportunity for you to get on your hiking gear and traipse around in woods and fields where the outlaws hunkered down between forays into bustling McDade more than a century ago.

Saturday, October 22, from 10 to 4, the beauty and serenity of this 302 acre preserve will be yours to enjoy. Bring a picnic lunch and lawn chair if you wish. Bring binoculars and your camera, be prepared to study the birds and other creatures that make their home in the woods and hills and ponds of this natural preserve. We'll have cool drinking water and our composting toilet is in a..."rustic" shelter.

For you scientists interested in more precise study of the flora and fauna, please bring instruments or whatever devices you need to document what you see. We want your help in establishing a complete biological and botanical record of the various habitats in this diverse environment. You might just find a Navasota Ladies' Tresses!

But the main reason for the "field day" is to allow you to enjoy this unique natural setting. We want you to experience the essential joy of being in one of the remaining open, natural spaces that are becoming increasingly rare.

The two largest ponds are spring fed, but their characters are completely different. One doubles as a source of water for cattle and a breeding habitat for the Houston toad. The other is back in the woods, with a scattering of lily pads. It is fed from a tiny stream that originates somewhere up in the thicket of greenbriar, farkleberry, yaupon and cedar.

We are beginning to accumulate a record of the flow of this stream and to identify the source of the "seep" that feeds it.

If you plan to explore this area, bring rubber boots and be prepared to squish around in a boggy tangle of underbrush.

Be sure to hike up to the top of the "knobb." It's not quite as high as the three visible from the road, but it's cool and pleasant up in the tall pines and the only sounds you hear are from nature.

Pines & Prairies Land Trust exists to protect pristine natural areas such as this, as well as to preserve farm and ranch lands in our four county area. With your help we will keep more of our natural treasures from being paved over or developed.

But, for this day, simply come out and enjoy the sights and sounds and smells of nature.



## Austin-Bastrop Colorado River Partnership Meeting

The Pines and Prairies Land Trust hosted the meeting of the Austin-Bastrop Colorado River Partnership (ABCRP, or Partnership) on September 28 at the Tahitian Village Conference Hall in Bastrop. This was the first time ABCRP had met with another regional effort known as the Texas Colorado River Floodplain Coalition (TCRFC, or Coalition). We were delighted with the full house of 45 landowners, officials, and agency staff.

ABCRP members are landowners, agencies, corporations, and non-profits (including PPLT) that meet monthly so that the widest variety of river-users (everyone from ranchers to developers and paddlers to aggregate companies) can cooperate in sustaining high water quality and aesthetic values on the 60 miles of river between Austin and Bastrop for decades to come. The Partnership also holds annual meetings to bring in greater public participation.

The TCRFC is made up of representatives from over 50 communities—from Goldthwaite all the way to the coast—to encourage comprehensive management of the Colorado River floodplain and tributaries by providing a forum for data exchange and a structured approach to managing those complex issues.

ABCRP's Kevin Anderson began the meeting by detailing issues and opportunities identified in our public workshops and monthly meetings.

### Conservation Corner

A survey conducted in August 2004 by Tuerff-Davis EnviroMedia, Inc. underscores the challenges facing all those trying to address Texas's future water needs. **1.** 42% of Texans cannot identify the source of their own drinking water. **2.** Only 14% of Texans think farmers and ranchers use the most water, whereas irrigated agriculture is by far the largest user of water in the state, taking about 2/3 of the water consumed annually in Texas. **3.** Of those polled, 78% are not aware of any local groups or organizations involved with water conservation. **4.** 48% believe either there will probably not be enough water in their area in 25 years or there will be a considerable shortage of water at that time. More information can be found at [www.water-IQ.org](http://www.water-IQ.org).

*This is from the Lone Star Sierran Spring 2005 newsletter*

TCRFC presentations followed--Bastrop County's Vickie Box and David Jenkins, LCRA's Suzy McElroy and Lochen Wood, and TCRFC Vice-Chairman Robert Lindsey, Mills County Judge.

They illuminated the tremendous work and cooperation TCRFC has accomplished in its first few years to help prevent flood disasters in the river basin. By the way, Bastrop County will be first in the state to receive the new digitized FEMA maps. For more information visit <http://www.tcrfc.org>.

We were honored by the presence of Bastrop Mayor Tom Scott, Bastrop County Commissioner David Goertz, BISD Trustee Carol Schumacher, and Judge Lindsey. Sandy Edwards from U.S. Senator John Cornyn's office and Susan Weems Wendle of the Bastrop Chamber of Commerce were also welcome participants.

The meeting ended at noon, then 18 hardy souls car-pooled to PPLT's Colorado River Refuge for a half-hour hike in 100 degree heat—yet all enjoyed the deep shade, cliff faces, and awoke to the opportunities of this serene stretch of river.

The next ABCRP meeting will be at McKinney Roughs on Wednesday October 26, from 10-noon. If you are interested in the river, you will be welcome to join this diverse, interesting group. Come and find out something you didn't know about the Colorado River.



## President's Message

Well, time certainly flies by. Seems like just yesterday I was writing to you all for the previous newsletter. Time is not the only thing moving fast as our rural communities transition into the 21st century. Change is occurring at a rate that makes my head spin! One change that we all need to pay attention to is the increasingly dry and hot conditions that Bastrop and the surrounding counties are experiencing. We must all be thinking about protecting our precious water because we are going to need it!

PPLT is working hard to make people aware of options for water quality and quantity protection. We prioritize riparian habitat for protection and we write water marketing prohibitions into conservation easements. Our refuge on the Colorado River is another example of steps we are taking to protect our precious water resources. PPLT would like to purchase more land with abundant riparian habitat. If you know of a suitable tract in Bastrop or Lee County, we would like to talk to you about it. If you would like to protect the water flowing through or under your property, we can help you do that as well. Please don't think there's nothing you can do. You can take steps to protect what is precious to you. PPLT is here to help you do just that. Give us a call, and remember, land conservation is for all, forever.

Carrie Knox, PPLT president



### Thanks Dani and Jim

Dani Schumacher, a Bastrop HS senior, and BHS grad Jim Blodgett have volunteered hours of their time in the last several weeks working in the PPLT office. They stuffed information packets into our Tree Planting Guides and worked on our mailing list to bring it up to date. We appreciate their hard work and enthusiasm. They have helped us do our job.

### 2005 Board of Directors

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Make your check to Pines & Prairies Land Trust and mail to:  
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**Directions to Yegua Knobbs Preserve for the October 22 Field Day**  
**Saturday, October 22 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.**

*printed on recycled paper*



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