



Newsletter of the Pines & Prairies Land Trust Vol. 6, No. 2 Summer 2008

Say, We Could Use Some Good Advice About Now

Pines and Prairies is well into its seventh year as a land trust and we're very proud of our accomplishments so far. More than 1800 acres are now permanently protected from fragmentation and subdivision. We own two properties and are responsible for five conservation easements with several more landowners currently considering easements for their property.

We're pleased and proud of the fact that we have acquired and set aside sufficient funds to defend these conservation easements against any future challenges. With the money we received from the Alcoa settlement and proceeds from our sale of South Shore Woods we have established a substantial fund that will only be used to pay for the legal defense of the easements.

And there's still so much more to do. Right now there's more fertile farmland, lush ranch pastures and beautiful wildlife habitat under threat of subdivision and development. Our ten board members are doing what we can, but we need some serious help.

For years we've talked about having an official advisory board, asking a commitment of availability from a variety of folks who have offered their advice or assistance or skill to help us with a problem. Now Kay Rogers has agreed to actually make it happen.

We're particularly interested in engaging folks who live in Lee, Caldwell and Fayette counties, but primarily we want anyone who is interested in our mission and willing to participate at some

level in one of our projects. It will be a way to become more involved in saving our countryside without making the more demanding commitment of being a board member.

An advisory board member will have an interest in preserving some natural, agricultural, historical or archeological aspect of the environment in one of our four counties. He or she will be expected to be either actively involved in one of the PPLT board committees or be available for consultation on specific subjects or projects.

Ideally, they will want to be an active participant in managing/maintaining one of our properties or monitoring one of our conservation easements. However, their participation may be limited to being a supporter of the work of PPLT in an advisory capacity only.

Our intention is to have just one meeting of the advisory board each year, with additional meetings as they and/or the PPLT Board deem necessary.

Being an advisory board member will give you an opportunity to get a closer look at what we do and how and why we do it. You could also help us do it better.

If you want to know more about what being on the advisory board would entail, call Jeremiah (512/281-2762), Kay (512/924-5912) or Tom at the PPLT office (512/308-1911).

We'll have a meeting at the Bastrop Library on November 12 for folks interested in learning more.

Fall Field Day at The YKP

Our next Yegua Knobbs Preserve Field Day will be Saturday, October 11. Once again we'll have a bird census, with Mark McClelland and maybe Dr. Stan Wellso leading hearty bands of birders or just ordinary folks.

As always you'll be welcome to come out to hike and explore the storied hills, deep woods and the mysterious, secretive bog. You'll want to have some rubber boots or crummy shoes for that last bit of whimsy, of course.

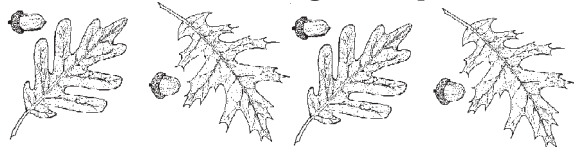
If you're less adventuresome just come out and bring a comfy chair, some snacks and plenty to drink and just hunker down in the shade for a spell. Be sure to bring water and some sunscreen, although we'll have some of each on hand.

Early birders will probably show up by 8:30 or so. Come then or later and stay until late afternoon if you wish.



Lost Pines Native Plant Society

Bill Brooks invited a group from the LPNPS to enjoy a morning at the YKP on Saturday, June 28. He and Master Naturalist Mark McClelland and about a dozen others examined plants and chronicled passing birds, including a majestic group of wood storks flying high overhead. Thanks to them for adding to our plant list.



Texas Parks and Wildlife Class

TP&W biologist Jason Singhurst taught a class for his Parks and Wildlife Dept. co-workers at YKP on June 20. The bog has several species of plants unusual for the area and is an excellent classroom. Also of interest to the botanically inclined are the "sandhill communities" of plants that flourish in some of the more remote areas on the slopes of the sandstone hills.



Our Last CRR Nature Class Until October

This summer's last Nature Lesson at the Colorado River Refuge was actually *in* the river. A group of homeschoolers and their teachers came to the river in July in old tennis shoes and wading sandals to cool off in the shallow water and explore the rocks, water plants and sand for interesting animals and objects.

Bill Brooks, an accomplished local herpetologist, was there to inspire and explore with the dozen or more children and a half dozen adults. The lesson started in the morning while the shore and most of the river's edge were still in the shade of the tall cottonwoods and sycamore trees that line the banks.

Mr. Brooks explained that native fresh water mussels live in the Colorado and that some flying insects such as the lovely dragonflies start out underwater as ugly gray/brown nymphs. Bill also brought underwater viewers, lengths of large diameter PVC pipe outfitted with clear plastic on one end and soft, face fittings to exclude glare. These were used by the students to walk along and look into the clear water without ripples obscuring the view. The students and parents enjoyed using these and shared them.

Most had never viewed the bottom of the riverbed and were surprised at how many interesting things there were to see.

Children caught minnows, nymphs and different kinds of tiny invertebrates to observe under the magnifiers in their bug boxes and then release.

The lesson was held where the river is shallow for about 100 feet and the children moved farther out into the water as the morning progressed. By 11:00 am they were still quite interested, some had "fallen" into the knee deep water and were completely wet, the younger children were getting hungry and the sun was almost overhead.

Time to go.

We are very thankful to Bill Brooks for bringing his viewers and taking time to come to the river for the lesson. Everyone, children and teachers alike, enjoyed it.



Events of Interest

September

10 PPLT Board meeting 2-4 PM
contact Jeremiah 512/281-2762
13 Lexington Market Day contact
Jean Dowdy 979/773-2763
15 Master Naturalists contact
Mark McClelland 512/281-5516
16 Bastrop Co. Audubon contact
Priscilla Jarvis 512/281-2762
17 L.P. Groundwater Dist.
contact Joe Cooper 512/581-9056
20(?) Colorado River
monitoring trip led by Allan
Kugler 512/581-2631
?? L.P. Sierra Club meeting
contact Phil Cook 512/321-4964
27 NatureFest Fisherman's Park
contact Steve Box 512/300-6609

October

4-5 Texas Parks/Wildlife Expo
contact Mark McClelland
512/281-5516
7 L.P. Native Plant Soc. meeting
contact Bill Brooks 512/581-0377
10 PPLT Board 2-4 PM contact
Jeremiah 512/281-2762
11 Field Day and Bird Census
on Yegua Knobbs Preserve
contact Jeremiah 512/281-2762
21 Bastrop Co. Audubon contact
Priscilla Jarvis

President's Message

This is my first column as president and I promise to be as serious as my nature allows. Carrie Knox firmly and graciously handled the job for our first seven years of existence. She began with four earnest board members and no money in the coffers and handed off to me a ten-member board of directors, a paid staff member and sufficient funds to defend our five conservation easements protecting more than 1500 acres of fine Central Texas real estate.

We're still mostly volunteers and we're still trying to figure out how to raise enough money to pay our Executive Director a decent salary and cover monthly expenses without having to tap into our Conservation Easement Defense Fund.

This would be a good time for you to start thinking about why you've received this newsletter and why you're concerned about the farms and ranches and wooded hills and other valued landscapes that are becoming swallowed up by Bulldozed Creek Country Estates and other developments.

From there it's not too far to the realization that you could do something to help us with our financial worries.

Apparently my concern about being serious was a bit premature. I'm already hip deep into flogging you for not bankrolling the operation. But, that's the unfortunate nature of things. We're getting requests to consider taking on more easements, our ED is in dire need of office help and our volunteer board is approaching whelmedness.

Please send us a check or volunteer some time or give us an item on our wish list. If you don't feel the urge, work on it. Maybe go for a stroll on the beautiful trails in the Colorado River Refuge and realize you'd be walking in a garbage dump if it weren't for us. Or go out to the Yegua Knobbs Preserve and hike the hills and woods, wade into the bog and marvel at the water bubbling up from the ground, try to sneak up on the family of beavers in the spring-fed pond.

We're keeping those places pristine and available forever, because that's what we do.

Help us, it's fun.

Jeremiah Jarvis, President

Board of Directors

Jeremiah Jarvis *President*
Joan Russell *Vice-Pres.*
Dennis Kestner *Treasurer*
EvaJean Kestner *Secretary*
Lee Fritsch
Alan Jaeger
Priscilla Jarvis
Carrie Knox
Kay Rogers
David Vogel

Tom Dureka *Exec. Director*

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

___ \$25 Individual ___ \$35 Family
___ \$50 Business ___ \$100 Steward
___ \$500 Sponsor ___ \$1000 Champion

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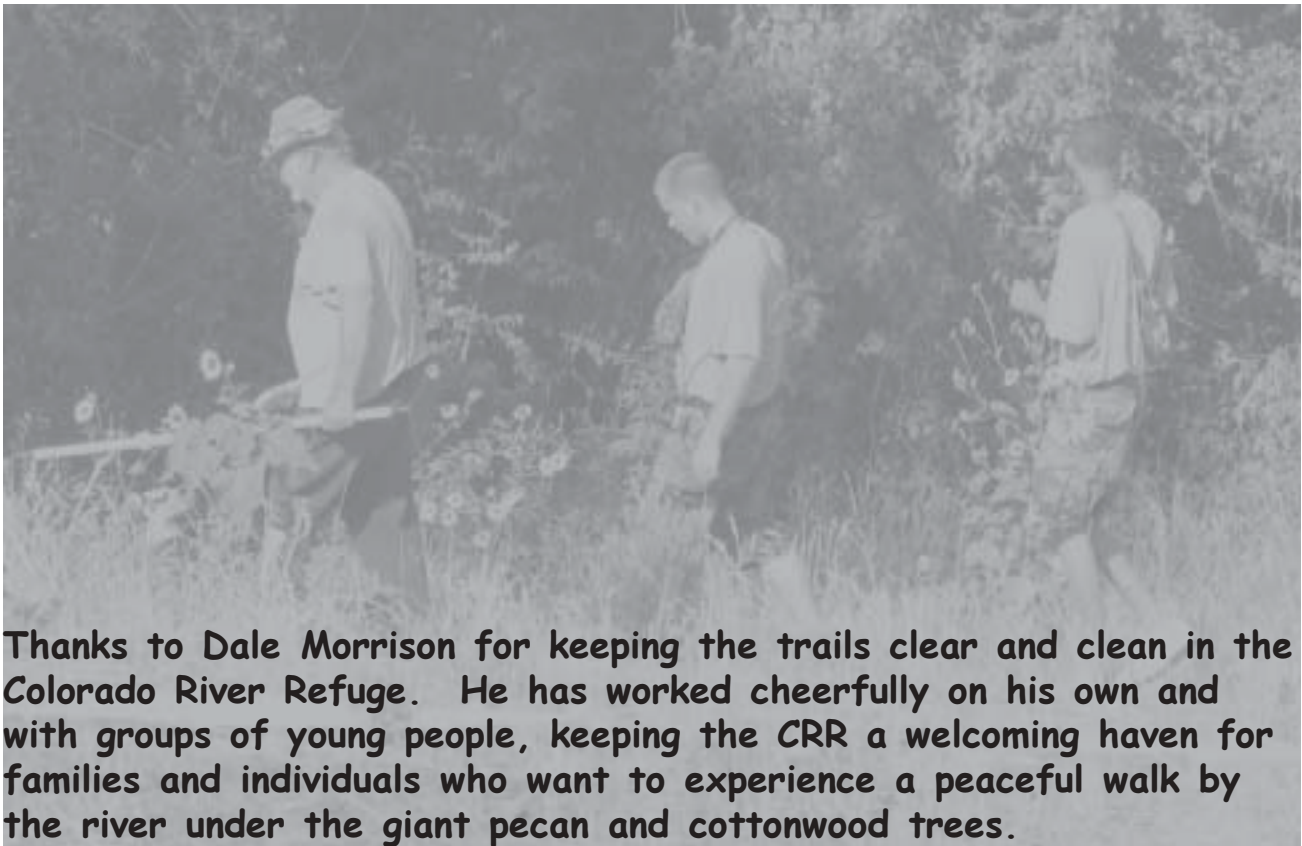
Tel. _____ E-mail _____

Make your check to Pines & Prairies Land Trust and mail to:
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We appreciate an exceptional volunteer: Dale Morrison



Thanks to Dale Morrison for keeping the trails clear and clean in the Colorado River Refuge. He has worked cheerfully on his own and with groups of young people, keeping the CRR a welcoming haven for families and individuals who want to experience a peaceful walk by the river under the giant pecan and cottonwood trees.

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