



Bayou Foliage

Vol. 17 No. 8 August 1999

A Publication of the
Armand Bayou Nature Center Volunteers
"Interested + Informed + Involved"

August Calendar

Aug. 1	Volunteer Board Meeting (4:00 p.m.)
Aug. 7	Stewardship Saturday (Start at 8:30 a.m.)
Aug. 12	Volunteer Meeting (6:30 - 9:00)
Aug. 21	Stewardship Saturday (Start at 8:30 a.m.)
Aug. 21/22	Scaly & Slimy Weekend

ABNCV MEETING

Thursday, August 12, 1999
Nature Center Auditorium

6:30 - Snacks and Conversation

7:00 - Program

8:00 - Volunteer Meeting

9:00 - Adjourn

This month's speaker will be Jamie Schubert, who is working on the marsh restoration project at ABNC. He'll be talking about his project and the science behind it, with an emphasis on marsh plants. Come learn about volunteer opportunities in the marsh, as well. Please join us for a very informative and interesting presentation.

FALL MIGRATION RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER

It's hard to believe but fall migration is almost upon us; by the beginning of August, fall migrants will begin showing up here at ABNC. With purple martins already well underway in migration, those warblers, vireos, orioles, hummingbirds, hawks, and others can't be far behind. So please be sure and report those bird sightings to the front desk.

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CONTINUING EDUCATION

WADING BIRDS OF ARMAND BAYOU

Saturday, August 28th, 10 a.m - 12 p.m.

ABNC Auditorium

Join George Regmund as he talks about Herons, Egrets, Gallinules, Spoonbills, and Rails of Armand Bayou. Identification, general biology of wading birds, and natural history of individual species will be covered.

UPCOMING SPEAKERS

September - "Geology and Paleontology of the Gulf Coast", with Ephriam Dickson.

December - "Moths and Butterflies of Houston" with John Tveten.

The sign-up sheets for these programs can be found in the breakroom.

Eric Duran

FALL FESTIVAL COMMITTEE

Fall Festival 99' is coming very soon. The Fall Festival Planning Committee met July 11 and currently has several activity chair positions filled. However we still need a lot of help.

If you would like to chair an activity or volunteer at the event on November 13th & 14th, please call staff chair George Regmund at ABNC, or volunteer co-chairs Judy Huston (281-337-7420) or Becky Brignac (713-947-0216).

The next meeting of the Farm Festival Planning Committee will be held on August 22 at 2 p.m., at ABNC. We encourage you to attend and help with this important and fun event.

VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

The volunteer of the month this month is Joan Henderson. Joan moved to the Houston area 2 years ago from Huntsville, Alabama. On her second day here, she saw the nature center's entrance and came in thinking that ABNC was her kind of place. She has been volunteering for 1 1/2 years helping out mainly at the front desk and additionally at major events and prairie burns.

Joan feels places like ABNC are very important to our community and that there should be more protected natural areas where wildlife can live.

Thank you, Joan, for caring so much about wilderness and for all that you do for ABNC.

MINUTES: THURSDAY JULY 8, 1999

Susan Williams introduced our speaker, Cheryl Creelman of the Texas Marine Mammal Stranding Network. Cheryl gave information on what to do if you should come upon a stranded marine mammal. Important phone: 800-9-MAMMAL. There are volunteer opportunities. See WWW.TMMSN.ORG.

The business meeting was called to order by Susan Williams; the minutes of the May meeting published in the *Bayou Foliage* were approved. Georgia Colyer gave the Treasurer's Report: the current checking balance is \$1985.97, and the current savings are \$614.20, for total assets of \$2600.17. Susan announced future CE classes: Amphibians Class by Eric Duran and Jonathan Perez on 7-10-99, Tracks and Traces by Jonathan Perez on 7-24-99, Wading Birds by George Regmund on 8-28-99. Ephriam announced that the Volunteer of the Month is Joan Henderson.

Mark Kramer announced that Jamie will talk next month about the marsh restoration project. The Petro United Mitigation Project will restore the prairie between the parking lot and Red Bluff. In two to four weeks, the summer burn program will begin. The Marsh Bash, in partnership with the Galveston Bay Foundation will be held on 8-28-99; we will work on restoring tidal marsh sites at ABNC. Mark announced a need for deck hands for the pontoon boat trips.

ABNC received another Prairie Restoration Grant to restore 80 more acres of the prairie; it will start in September 1999.

Ephriam introduced the new Director of Education, Linda Sumner. Linda, who held a position at the Houston Zoo for the past two years, asked for input on front desk scheduling.

Ephriam outlined some of the staff changes: Mark is Stewardship Coordinator. Eric is Education Curator; he will create teaching collections. Eric and Linda will change the Interpretive Building to the Education Building. George's office and the Volunteer office will be in the Hyman House. Ephriam's office will be in the Kaneka building.

Susan asked for volunteers for the Nominating Committee. Thanks for the refreshments go to Hanna Drago and Eleanor Haskew.

Becky Brignac asked for volunteers for the Fall Festival Planning Committee. George Regmund will chair it. We will meet Sunday, 7-11-99 at 2pm in the auditorium.

Ephriam opened the floor for open discussion. Ephriam said, for legal reasons, he couldn't go into details of the recent staff replacement, but that he and George anguished over it a long time before making the decision. Ephriam said that we need to grow the Volunteer organization and increase visitation, look at marketing at the corner of Red Bluff and Bay Area, commit to improving relations with Commissioner Fonteno, take a look at how we do the member newsletter, give hearings in different parts of the community. We will have an open house this fall for

members. We are hoping to get funding from the Foundation Board for the construction of a new visitor center. We may go to a bimonthly or quarterly member newsletter.

When the issue of the postponement of Travel Study was posed, Ephriam said that the Board of Trustees Travel Study Committee unanimously decided to do away with Travel Study at this time. The immediate focus will be the use of showmanship to reconnect the public to environmental education. ABNC is working in partnership with a UHCL class who is doing a marketing study this fall. The focus will be a new visitation center and trail upgrades. We are not interested in getting farm animals out here at this time. We want to have a 50-acre, high-impact area that would attract visitors. Ephriam wants to increase the volunteer group. We hope to have a volunteer coordinator, part-time, next year. The Staff has restroom cleaning duty once a week. Volunteer training has not been organized yet. The volunteer office will, sometime in the future, have a computer to record volunteer time. We may look at volunteer stats in the last three years and ask former volunteers why they are not here. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Hamlett, Secretary

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

My apologies for not listing the birthdays last month, that was my mistake! The birthdays for both July and August will be listed below, and a very happy birthday to everyone.

JULY BIRTHDAYS

Jim Callan	7/01	Cherre House	7/02
Kristen Knoedler	7/03	Jody McKinney	7/05
Leslie Edmondson	7/06	Ruby Dilgren	7/08
Joan Burt	7/10	Carol MacGregor	7/12
Ken Russell	7/15	Paula Kennedy	7/17
Katerina Grundy	7/19	Chris LaChance	7/22
Tom Scarsella	7/25	Wanda Hayden	7/26
Pat Doerr	7/26	Dan Pelletier	7/30

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Eric Duran	8/01	Kathleen Helmore	8/02
Chris Santiago	8/03	Cathy Jett Searcy	8/05
Autumn Holland	8/10	Susan Hesley	8/14
Helen Burton	8/15	Judy Sharp	8/16
Robert P Dell'osso	8/20	Shawn Mazzetti	8/20
Carl Cognata	8/22	Bob Smither	8/26
Brian Phillips	8/28	Marsha Goss	8/30

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Well, it's time again to begin thinking of the vacancies which will occur on the volunteer board in January 2000. Our bylaws require that a nominating committee present names to the membership to fill these positions. Please contact me (281-487-3033) if you are interested in serving on this very important committee. There will be at least seven vacancies on the board: Treasurer, Interpretation, Admissions, Weekend Demos, Weekend Trail, Weekday Farm, and Weekday Trail. The volunteers who take on these responsibilities play a vital role in fulfilling the mission of the nature center. Please give some thought to helping out by taking on one of these important jobs.

RECORD YOUR HOURS

Don't forget to record the hours you work in the volunteer logbook! There are some of you who are working, but don't even have pages in the book yet for 1999. Remember, too, that you should record one hour of administrative time and one hour or continuing education time when you attend our general meetings.

TO THE VOLUNTEERS OF ABNC

I would like to share with all of you some concerns that I have had recently and that perhaps many of you have had as well. These concerns go right to the heart and continued viability of our organization, which we all love and enjoy.

I would ask each of you--and also the staff and the members of the Board of Trustees--to reflect on the mission of Armand Bayou Nature Center. It exists for the education of the citizens of our area in the beauty, ecology, and preservation of our natural resources. Beyond that, by its very nature it provides the opportunity to learn appreciation for the tranquility, peace, and beauty of this wonderful creation, which is our world, and of our small part of it, which is Armand Bayou Nature Center.

I feel that many of us have been troubled by the diversion of our attention in recent months from the enjoyment of our Center's wonderful qualities. We must remember that we are not an ordinary business; we are mostly volunteers--including the Board of Trustees who also give of their time and talents to preserve this place of beauty and pleasure for all of us and for our guests. Whether this diversion of our attention, then, is due to a lack of understanding of our mission or of the motivations or roles as members of our organization, we must all work together to bring back the harmony and joy of our association, that was so noticeable to me when I joined your ranks four years ago.

I am confident that if we all cooperate to move forward with enthusiasm and with respect for the value and contributions of each of us, we can achieve this harmony again.

Susan Williams, Chair

STEWARDSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

The long-awaited marsh restoration/enhancement work finally got started on June 26, and will probably be scheduled every weekend for the rest of the summer. Work was initiated on the largest of 5 planned sites with the installation of slightly over 1000 feet of fencing and was continued on July 3 with some grass planting accomplished. The weather has been great, and the water is fine. Come on in!

I have been asked to be the volunteer representative on the Board of Trustees Stewardship Committee. This committee will meet once a month and is responsible for reviewing and recommending policies for the protection, enhancement, and management of ABNC's natural resources. This can include management strategy and techniques to be utilized, review of proposed mitigation projects, and monitoring the progress of stewardship activities. Mr. Ron Jones of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is the current Chairman. We have met once and have a preliminary set of goals for 1999 under review. I will periodically try to communicate work by this committee that will influence upcoming stewardship activities and the volunteers involved.

If anyone is building a plant-oriented natural history library, Texas Parks & Wildlife has an excellent new illustrated book entitled Aquatic and Wetland Plants of the West Gulf Coast (I think I have the title correct; if not, it's close). It's available in local bookstores.

Ken Russell

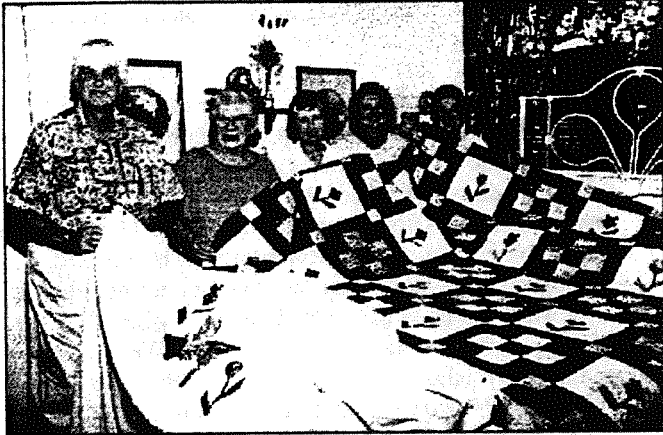
To the Armand Bayou Nature Center Volunteers

After 12 wonderful years, it is with deep regret that I submit my resignation as a volunteer at the nature center. As you know, since I joined the staff in 1994, I have maintained my volunteer status by contributing my "excess" hours of comp time to the volunteer organization each year. I am doing that again this year by donating my comp time accrued through June 15. The amount is 67.5 hours. However, after that, I will no longer be able to volunteer because of recent events. I treasure the years I spent there and value the immense knowledge I have gained because of it. More importantly are the friends I have made while there. All of my best friends are people I met at ABNC. I am proud of the work we have done as volunteers, as well as the growth of the Education Department while I was its director. I have always had dreams of great things for the nature center, and I know progress will continue to take place. I'm only sorry I won't be there to see it happen. My sincere thanks to all the volunteers who have sent cards and called with good wishes and concerns about my no longer being at the nature center. I can't begin to tell you how much that has meant to me. I will miss all of you and wish only the best for the volunteer organization.

Mary Alice Trumble

Calling All Quilters

The quilting circle is now meeting on Thursdays and alternate Saturdays in August, from 10 – 2. Bring a lunch if you would like. Meet us in the Kaneka building. No previous quilting experience is needed. Contact Mary Ann Tucker for further information. (281-488-0796)



From left to right: Mary Anne Tucker, Wanda Hayden, Carol MacGregor, Colleen Ecord, and Marjorie Borey hold up the 1999 Raffle Quilt.

The Changing Face of ABNC

Over the last few months, change at the Nature Center has become very evident in many ways, from new policies and goals being set, to people leaving and programs ending. Whether you agree or disagree with everything happening, it's definitely a lot to take in, with things occurring so quickly.

When I first came to the nature center about four years ago, I came in mainly looking for a place to go birding. After going on my first early morning dawn hike here, I was hooked and knew this is the place for me. I never would have guessed though, just a few years down the road, the nature center would become such a big part of my life. I was new to the hobby at the time and owe a lot of initial interest in birding and later involvement in other activities at the center to Paula Kennedy, George Regmund, and so many other volunteers and staff. Aside from the beauty and uniqueness of the nature center, the people here are a very important part of it as well.

Change is not always an easy thing to accept, and with a lot of the change going on at the center as of late, I find myself sometimes asking, "Why and what's the point?" One of the things I will mention is the recent action of the Board of Trustee's Travel committee deciding to suspend or postpone the nature center's Travel Study program. In my opinion, the program does fit in with the nature center's mission of connecting people with nature. I know people who as a result of a trip have come back to become more active birders and become more involved with the center. It does, I

believe, help people learn a better understanding of nature: whether they learn it here or somewhere else. They learned it through and because of the nature center. I myself have been on one of the extended travel study trips to Concan, Texas and several day trips. Every trip I've been on has been very educational, informative, and unique in helping me learn more about birding and nature, not to mention that I always had a great time. You couldn't have two better guides. One thing I don't understand is why the nature center would do away with a successful, profitable, and very popular program that meant so much to so many people, without at least conducting a survey from the members and people who have been on the trips. I believe then there would be strong support for keeping this program. All of the ABNC travel study participants with whom I've spoken agree that they had a wonderful time and learned a lot about nature in the process. I don't believe it was right the way it was done, it's as if we were saying that they're input doesn't matter.

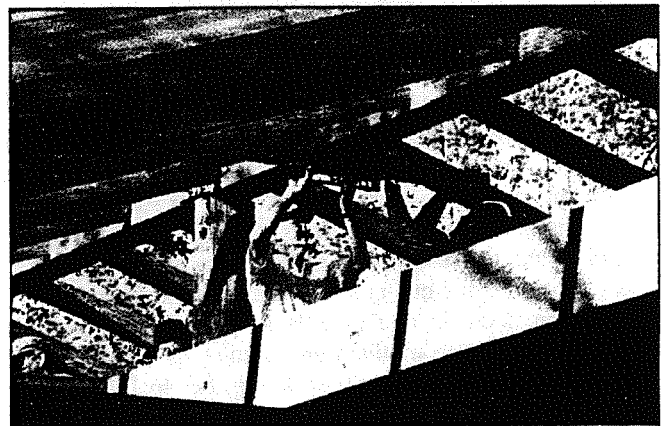
My sincere hope is that this place does not move away from the principles on which it was founded. We have a very special and unique place here -- not a business, but a nature center, a place where we can come out to enjoy beauties of nature and get away from the hustle of our everyday lives.

There are lots of changes going on at the nature center, and whatever your opinion of them may be, I encourage you to be vigilant and involved with what's happening. See them for what they are and what they'll do as a result, not just what they're promised or said to do.

I always wish the best for the nature center, and hope it will continue to be the very special place that attracted me and will continue to attract others. Thank you for reading.

Andrew Hamlett

Volunteer Spotlight



Volunteers have been working hard to complete the new building in the maintenance yard. Pictured left to right: Merle Bunde, Joe Clem, Jim Edwards, and not pictured, Roland Borey are just a few of the many volunteers working on this important project.

VOLUNTEER DUTY SCHEDULE - AUGUST 1999

In an attempt to take some of the load off the Coordinators, and to help cut down on our "no show" rate, a list of the persons who have volunteered for various assignments will be printed in the Bayou Foliage each month. If you are scheduled for a particular duty and are unable to attend, please use this schedule to try to find your own substitute. You may be able to trade weekends, or swap a Saturday for a Sunday with someone who has the same duty another time during the month. If you do trade, please be sure to call the appropriate coordinator and the ABNC desk to inform them.

DATE	11:00 TRAIL	2:00 TRAIL	INFO. SERVICES	FARM INTER.	FARM DEMO	NAT. HISTORY DEMO
Sun. 8/1	--	Martha Hood	Mary Barton	Eleanor Stanley	Stephania Rogers (Stereopticon)	--
Sat. 8/7	Ramon McKinney	Ed & Nora Robert	Christine Naspinski	Susan Hesley	Jane Bingel (Corn Husk Dolls)	Ruby Dilgren Butterflies & Moths
Sun. 8/8	--	Merle Bunde	Ken Russell	Polly Swerdlin	Mary Ann Tucker (Basket Weaving)	Ed Adams (Pond Life)
Sat. 8/14	Jim Crabb	Cris Santiago	Danny Yancey	Christine Ribeiro	Tom Scarsella (Woodshop)	Anne Tincher (Sea Shells)
Sun. 8/15	--	Ray Parker	Paul Brunkow	Cathy Jett Searcy	Ann Brinly (Weaving)	Christine Ribeiro (Mammals)
Sat. 8/21	Louise Peck	Joe Bryan	Patsy Cashion	Susan Williams	Dan & Jen Pelletier (Rope Making)	Eleanor Stanley (Reptiles)
Sun. 8/22	--	Stan Krauhs	Merle Bunde	Marsha Goss	Irene Ward (Butter)	Ruby Dilgren Polly Swerdlin (Reptiles) (Amphibians)
Sat. 8/28	Susan Hesley	Anne Tincher	Martha Hood	Jane Bingel	Larry Veale (Indian Crafts)	Pat Doerr (Hummingbirds)
Sun. 8/29	--	Stan Krauhs	Joe Bryan	Jen & Dan Pelletier	Emily Egan (Spin or Weave)	Zel Arbuckle (Snakes)

IF YOU CAN FILL IN ANY OF THE BLANK SPOTS, PLEASE CALL THE APPROPRIATE COORDINATOR. THANKS!

1999 VOLUNTEER BOARD

	Home	Office
Susan Williams	Chair	281-487-3033
Eric Duran	Vice Chair	281-286-6764
Linda Hamlett	Secretary	281-487-1268
Georgia Colyer	Treasurer	281-996-7888
Ken Russell	Stewardship	281-488-0390
Ruby Dilgren	Interpretation	281-488-1727
Jane Bingel	Outreach	281-554-5069
Hanna Drago	Admissions	281-326-4149
Polly Swerdlin	Weekend Demos	281-488-8193
Cris Santiago	Weekend Trail	281-471-0979
--Vacant--	Weekday Farm	
Ed Adams	Weekday Trail	713-946-2754
Andrew Hamlett	Newsletter	281-487-1268
email: bachwbltr@aol.com		
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	281-487-3033	281-283-8430

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