

Guadalupe Blanco River Trust Newsletter | April 2020, Issue 16



The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in responding to the new coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) that is causing an outbreak of respiratory illness worldwide. There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person. Between people who are in close contact with one another (within 6 feet). Please take steps to protect yourself by simply washing your hands and avoid touching your face. Practice social distancing for the sake of your health and others.

To learn more about this virus COVID-19, please visit www.CDC.gov.



A WORD FROM OUR TRUSTEE CHAIRMAN W.A. "Bill" BLACKWELL

We are all in uncharted waters as individuals, families, churches, businesses, non-profits and the world in general during this COVID-19 Pandemic. Where do we go from here? Hopefully, we are all staying safe and observing best practices as recommended by the Federal and State Government.

A silver lining with the many restrictions is that it has caused the world to slow down and, in many ways, people are appreciating the small things in life that we often overlook, miss or take for granted. We actually have time and hopefully making the effort to smell the roses, enjoy the beautiful wildflowers after a great spring rain and are looking for ways to help family members, senior citizens or people in need of help.

The mission of the Trust is protecting the beautiful Guadalupe River and its precious springs starting at the Guadalupe River headwaters and at Johnson Creek. Many of these springs come from the Blanco River and Comal River tributaries that eventually feed into Guadalupe River. There are also a number of important creeks including Plum Creek, Sandies Creek and Coletto Creek that feed into the Guadalupe River. Many folks do not realize the San Antonio River is also a tributary of the Guadalupe.

Right now, hopefully everyone reading this article will consider how they can help the Trust achieve its goals to protect and conserve our land. You can help by making a monetary donation to the Trust by check, credit card or using PayPal by going to the Trust Website. Some of you may be in a position to consider a conservation easement or a legacy gift (also known as "planned gifts") and take advantage of tax benefits associated with charitable giving as well as protecting your land forever. In addition, gifts can also be made through wills and living trusts. These are just a few options that are available. As we are confined to our homes, please take the time to reflect and ponder what you can personally do to preserve the future of this land. Please know your gift is appreciated by the Trust and those that come after us.

— Bill Blackwell



"Out of all those millions and millions of planets floating around there in space, this is our planet, this is our little one, so we just got to be aware of it and take care of it." - Paul McCartney

2020 GUADALUPE BLANCO RIVER TRUST
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Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust Staff Attends the 2020 Whooping Crane Festival



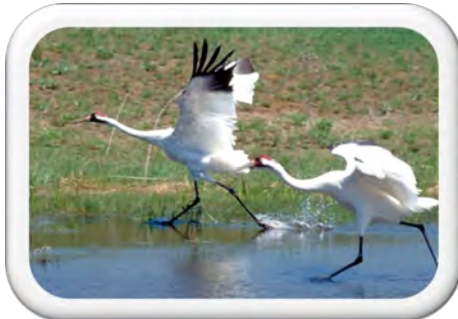
This festival is a one-of-a-kind event, focused on the Whooping Crane, the rarest of cranes and one of the most endangered birds in the world. The


festival is open to birders, photographers, families, and anyone who loves the outdoors and nature-related activities. The Whooping Crane Festival celebrates the annual return of the cranes to their wintering habitat at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. The Texas Coastal Bend is the only place where you can see the world’s last naturally-occurring population of Whooping Cranes. Mark your calendars for February 25, 2021 in Port Aransas, Texas!



“Journey of the Whooping Crane” is a one-hour natural history documentary produced for Georgia Public Broadcasting illustrating the remarkable life story of Whooping Cranes.

View the trailer at <https://youtu.be/uG9KoZABefU>.



 Due to the unfortunate outbreak of COVID-19, our 2020 fundraiser, Operation: Hats Off For Veterans featuring Roger Creager, has been re-scheduled to Sunday, April 11, 2021.

For more information, please visit our Facebook at www.Facebook.com/OperationHatsOffForVeterans.



A WORD FROM THE GBRT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TYLER SANDERSON

Keeping Your Distance: A Natural Resource Response to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic is currently all one can take in, likely for good reason. Experts say the virus is unlike anything anyone has seen before. GBRT responded to the recent concern by directing staff to work remotely and refrain from leaving the house to a public interface. We will not be holding in-person meetings for the foreseeable future, so the best communication with staff is through email. "Social Distancing" may perhaps become the phrase of the year for 2020 and the result of a global shock that will be remembered in perpetuity. GBRT's show will still go on, if for no other reason than to aid in connecting our community to natural spaces.



If you have taken similar measures as GBRT, you may be feeling cooped up and going a little stir crazy. There are still things you can do to get out of the house. Nature is a great way to do so while keeping your distance. Research continues to show evidence that time in nature reduces stress, improves mental and physical health, and improves self-esteem; all things that are critical in this time of isolation.

Spring has sprung here in Texas, providing more for us to see and do when distancing in nature. I have a 2-year old and my family is fortunate enough to live in a neighborhood with many large trees, nearby farm animals, and minimal traffic. Our favorite way to get out of the confines is going for a walk and wagon ride around our neighborhood. We like to pick up leaves and sticks and talk about the shapes, textures and colors. We open seeds, splash in puddles, and have recently made friends with a family of hawks. Even watching the outdoor cats in your area could help. After all, connecting with animals may relieve that empty social life. You can even have your own little conversation with them.

Here's a list of other suggestions many can do to help make the best of this time.

Exercise outdoors – your gym is likely closed, so move your activity to the porch, yard or driveway.

Play in the dirt – research suggests it can boost your immune system.

Plant a garden – even a windowsill garden will help. Watching something grow and the satisfaction of caring for something may help.

Go camping – public campgrounds may not be best, but your yard or porch will do.

Pick a spot and stick with it – find a place that you like and frequent it. Sit and observe at all times of day and follow the changing world. You can even write about or photograph it.

Eat outside – dinner on your porch, deck or yard can be an outlet, provided you can combat the mosquitoes.

Watch it digitally – there are many resources for watching nature digitally. The US Fish and Wildlife Service and other resources on the web offer the view of live nature cams. I like to take a train ride on Pluto TV, a free TV service app. A channel called SlowTV is 'round the clock video of trains traveling the countryside as seen through a roof mounted camera. The app also has a channel called NatureVision.

With these suggestions, and other ideas, in mind, remember not to attend crowded parks and spaces. Additionally, some of these suggestions are not accessible to all. Hopefully our work to conserve open space in the Guadalupe River watershed will help alleviate some of the inequity of nature access distribution. GBRT wishes safety, health and happiness in the coming months.



Tyler



Will Nelson (GBRT TXST Intern) and Chris Adams (Volunteer), Tyler Sanderson

The Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust joined forces with the San Antonio Bay Partnership for their 2020 Abandoned Crab Trap Removal Program. GBRT’s Executive Director, Tyler Sanderson, and Development Director, Lisa Adams, volunteered for a day and pulled 50 abandoned crab traps from the San Antonio Bay.

“It is through partnerships like these that help to make a difference and to get the word out about the importance of keeping our coastal waters clean,” says Sanderson.

Thanks to GBRT’s Board Trustee, Mr. Ronnie Luster, a founding member of the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA), he and other partners concerned about the abandoned crab traps, lobbied for legislation to make it easier for anybody to help remove derelict crab traps from the water.

The Abandoned Crab Trap Removal Program (ACTRP) was created by Senate Bill 1410 during the 77th (2001) Legislative session. This bill granted the Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD) Commission authority to create a ten-day crab trap closure that begins the third Friday of each February. Crab traps left in the water during this time are considered litter and may be disposed of appropriately. Before this law, only law enforcement officials could legally remove abandoned crab traps from Texas’ marine waters.



Thanks to these efforts, several organizations have collaborated every year to collect these traps. Some are lingering in the ocean while a number have washed up on the mangroves. A mangrove is a shrub or small tree that grows in coastal saline or brackish water. Crabs caught in these abandoned traps are released back into the ocean. According to TPWD’s website, since 2002, volunteers have removed 32,705 abandoned traps from Texas waters. GBRT staff were able to collect 50 abandoned traps during their visit. In the ten days of the closure, volunteers collected 843 traps in the San Antonio Bay. To learn more about the Abandoned Crab Trap Removal Program, you can visit the TPWD website at www.tpwd.texas.gov.

For more information about volunteering in 2021, please email inquiry@GBRTX.org or call 830-560-3981.

Texas Traps Removed

- 2018 — 1103**
- 2019 — 838**
- 2020 — 1632**



Special thanks to our friends at the San Antonio Bay Partnership for asking GBRT to team up! See you in 2021!



The Great American Outdoors Act (S. 3422) was introduced on March 10th with 59 bipartisan Senate cosponsors, including both the Majority and Minority Leaders of the Senate. Once the Senate considers S. 3422, it will go to the House. Every branch of the U.S. government has members stating their support, including the President.

The Texas Land Trust Council explains that “this Bill will permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund [ensuring that all monies deposited in the Fund will be spent only for their intended purpose] and fund Billions to restore our National Parks and public lands. It is the largest and most amazing conservation legislation package to come around in a generation.”

Please share this with your friends and contact your representatives, letting them know how important the Great American Outdoors Act is for the future of our open spaces. More information can be found by following the Texas Land Trust Council on social media.

The Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust was awarded two grants supporting the Abandoned Crap Trap Removal Program in 2020. One grant was from Texas-owned grocery store, H-E-B, and the other was awarded from CITGO’s Caring for Our Coasts Gulf Region Grants Program, who partnered with Restore America’s Estuaries (RAE). Thank you to all who helped make this happen!



For over 110 years, H-E-B has contributed to worthy environmental causes throughout Texas and Mexico, and continue to support their communities as strongly as ever. The funding from this grant provided gift cards to be given to all the boat captains, offsetting their fuel expenses. It also allowed GBRT staff to travel to the coast and purchased sun protection hats for all program participants. To give back to our friends at H-E-B, GBRT encourages you to visit your nearest H-E-B store for your next shopping adventures.

The Caring for Our Coasts Gulf Region grant is intended to provide groups with funding to host clean-up, restoration, or other educational events. The grant provided GBRT funding to purchase aerial reconnaissance and GPS units, allowing volunteers to efficiently locate and remove abandoned traps. The CITGO Caring for Our Coasts Gulf Region Grant also helped purchase trap removal tools and much needed safety equipment.



Thank you H-E-B, CITGO and RAE for helping! Together, we can all make a difference!





HOW DO I DONATE TO GBRT?

SMILE AMAZON GIVES BACK TO THE GUADALUPE BLANCO RIVER TRUST

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support GBRT every time you shop at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you will find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to GBRT. To learn more about Smile Amazon and giving back to GBRT, visit www.Amazon.com.



GUADALUPE-BLANCO RIVER TRUST GENERAL FUNDS

The Guadalupe Blanco River Trust is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit land trust organization that was developed to conserve land in the Guadalupe River Watershed for its natural, recreational, scenic, historic and

productive value. Click the donate button to help support GBRT's mission.



PLUM CREEK WETLANDS PRESERVE

The purpose and mission of the Plum Creek Wetlands Preserve (PCWP) is to conserve water quality with responsible management of wetlands, to protect wildlife habitat and to promote an appreciation of the natural world through meaningful educational, recreational, and research opportunities. We fully expect the PCWP to be an asset to the school districts, local clubs, and the general public. Our plans are to use this property to advance the mission of the PCWP by providing a space that can be utilized as an outdoor classroom, recreation site, and natural habitat for all to enjoy. Our hope is to have a fully staffed education center where all can come and learn about nature and the value of preserving and conserving land. Trails will be used for walking, hiking, birding, and other low-impact activities. Your contribution to support the PCWP is appreciated and needed.



To donate to any of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust programs, please visit our website at www.GBRTX.org and click on *Ways to Help*. We made it easy and simple by clicking on a few buttons. We accept major credit cards, cash, checks and PayPal payments.

You can also mail a check to: GBRT, PO Box 1343, Seguin, TX 78156.



GUADALUPE-BLANCO
RIVER TRUST

Preservation Matters



Thank you to all the volunteers, partners and organizations who support the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust and our mission. Although there are several to thank, we want to recognize a few organizations who have recently worked with GBRT and our programs.

Thank you to Kevin Patteson and his staff at the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority. Your support for the Trust and our staff is appreciated and should not go unnoticed. We look forward to continuing our work with GBRA.

GBRT also want to recognize and thank the San Antonio Bay Partnership, the Local Coastal Conservation Association Chapters, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mid-Coast Chapter Texas Master Naturalist, International Crane Foundation, the Dallas Zoo, Texas A&M University Texas Sea Grant, Texas Parks and Wildlife and Texas State University.

Look for GBRT on Social Media.

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Executive Director Tyler Sanderson scaring off hogs on GBRT's Plum Creek Wetlands Preserve off SH 130.



To be added to this electronic newsletter, please email Inquiry@GBRTX.org or call 830-560-3944. Thank you.