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**BEXAR  
TRACKS**

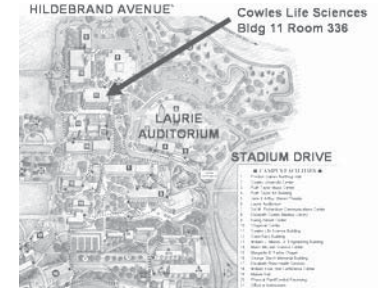
**BEXAR  
AUDUBON  
SOCIETY  
SAN ANTONIO, TX**

# Best Laid Plans: How San Antonio Grew

**Thursday, January 12, 2006 — Chapter Meeting**

**6:30 p.m. — Social Time; 6:45p.m. — Announcements; 7:00 p.m. — Program**

**Free and open to the public**



Cowles Life Sciences Bldg 11 - Room 336 - Trinity U., Corner of Hwy 281 & Stadium. Take Hildebrand exit from Hwy 281 N, turn left onto Hildebrand, then left (south) at first light west of 281 & Hildebrand.

Using maps, drawings, and photographs, dating from the eighteenth century to the present, we will explore how the dusty frontier town of San Antonio grew to its present massive size, and discuss some of the environmental and social consequences of that growth. Among a number of questions that the talk will address are these: How and why did the Spanish establish a walking face-to-face, community? How and why did the railroad, and then the automobile, transform this once pedestrian-friendly community into a place where walking is so dangerous? Why is that when it rains, we flood? And what have been the long-term consequences of living within a flood basin? Join us for an engaging conversation about the context of life in this sprawling south Texas metropolis.

Char Miller is professor of history and director of urban studies at Trinity University. His talk to Bexar Audubon is drawn from his most recent book, *Deep in the Heart of San Antonio*, a result of his more than 20 years of observing and writing about our town. He is also author of the award-winning *Gifford Pinchot and the Making of Modern Environmentalism*, and editor of *On the Border: An Environmental History of San Antonio* and *50 Years of the Texas Observer*. Char will have his latest book available if anyone wants an autographed copy.

## **TREE ORDINANCE**

City Arborist, Debbie Reid, will do a brief presentation with handouts on three proposed tree preservation ordinance amendments prior to Char Miller's presentation.

**Thursday, February 9, at 6:30 p.m. (see above for details)**

# Medina River Natural Area

## Past to Present: Jewel of the South Side

Medina River Natural Area is a new — just opened on April 9, 2005 — 364-acre natural area located south of downtown on Highway 16. It is on the site of the old proposed Applewhite Reservoir. It consists of two distinct areas that can be accessed north and south of the Medina River. On the north side is a large covered pavilion, park headquarters, and 2.5 miles of trails lined by large pecan, cypress and cottonwood trees. The south end consists of picnic and camping areas. The hiking trails have varying degrees of difficulty and accessibility, from eight feet to four feet wide and from concrete to natural trails. If all goes as planned, the park will eventually lead past another large natural area, the new Toyota plant, the Land Heritage Institute, Mitchell Lake and the

future home of Texas A & M in San Antonio, before ending at Mission Espada. Gail Dugelby will discuss the history and natural history of this gorgeous and peaceful place.

Gail was born and raised in Kerrville, Texas. She has a B.S. in Biology and an M.S. in Environmental Science with emphasis in Ecology from The University of Texas at San Antonio. She has worked for the Natural Areas of the City of San Antonio for three years, working closely on all aspects of the City's Natural Area and Edwards Protection activities, including tree surveying, bird habitat assessment and surveys, and as educational interpreter and field guide. She is also a Certified Master Naturalist. In her current position, she directs the City's first Natural Area on the south side, the Medina River Natural Area.

## BEXAR AUDUBON SOCIETY

Chapter of the National Audubon Society

P. O. Box 6084, San Antonio, TX 78209

### GOALS

The Chapter's primary goals are to promote species and habitat conservation and environmental education in the community.

### OFFICERS

President	Tony Wood .....	(tonywood@sbcglobal.net)	493-4684
Vice Pres.	Harry Noyes .....	(harrynoyes@satx.rr.com)	490-3124
Treasurer	Caryl Swann .....	(cjswann1@earthlink.net)	653-2860
Secretary	Susan Hughes ..	(susan@wordwright.com)	532-2032

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dean Bibles .....	(dbibles@aol.com)	698-9264
Joe Orr .....	(josephorr@aol.com)	377-0621
Kara Ryf .....	(kararyg@hotmail.com)	

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Aud. Adven.	Betty Minyard .....	(mink@texas.net)	344-6128
Birdathon	Marge Lumpe .....	(birdwatcher@msn.com)	545-1822
Conserv.	Harry Noyes .....	(harrynoyes@satx.rr.com)	490-3124
Program	Patty Pasztor .....	(pasztor@ix.netcom.com)	824-1235
Membr.			available
Publicity	Harry Noyes .....	(harrynoyes@satx.rr.com)	490-3124
SAEN Coord.			available
Bexar Tracks	Content editor .....		available
Editors	Jill Sondeen .....	(jls2003@gytc.com)	830-980-3277
Mailing	Blair Richter .....	(barkisrichter@sbcglobal.net)	832-0522

**Bexar Tracks** is your newsletter.  
We welcome your contributions.



Printed on  
recycled paper.

Visit **Bexar Audubon's**  
Web Site:

<http://www.BexarAudubon.org>

Up-to-date environmental events and  
calendar can be found here  
— check often for news!

Visit **San Antonio Environmental**  
Network's Web Site:

<http://www.sa-naturecenter.org>

Suggestions and contributions are welcome.

Please contact Harry Noyes at  
harrynoyes@satx.rr.com

## CHAPTER NEWS

### September, October, and November 2005 Meeting Recaps

If you missed the September, October and November chapter meetings of Bexar Audubon Society, you missed some good'uns, presented by three top-drawer local experts.

**The bats of September.** In September, Kim Hoskins talked to us about bats. Kim has worked extensively with Bat Conservation International, the premier group defending bats all over the world. BCI is based in Austin and owns the Bracken Cave north of San Antonio, home to up to 40 million Mexican free-tail bats, the largest assemblage of mammals on Earth.

Why those bats are so terribly important to us—they eat a couple of hundred tons of crop-threatening moths nightly—was one of the things Kim explained. But she also explained the other important roles played by bats, from spreading rainforest seeds to pollinating plants such as the agave, used in making tequila (bats = margaritas!).

Unfortunately, many bat species are highly endangered. It's not as bad as a few years ago, because BCI has made tremendous progress in educating people on the value of bats and on the falsehood of many bat myths. As a result a number of concrete steps to protect bats have been taken, especially in the U.S. Nevertheless, on a global basis, there is still a lot of work to be done. Help by supporting BCI!

**The butterflies of October.** In October, Joanne Wells, aka the Butterfly lady, told us about butterflies in a program entitled "Gardening for Butterflies and Other Wildlife." It was a suitable timing, as October is a great butterfly month with the monarch migration going on. One of the main threats to migrating animals, whether six-legged or feathered or furred, is human-caused loss of "stopover habitat" where they can rest and feed. Wildlife gardening can make up for some of the damage we humans have done to the natural environment and

help our animal friends. Joanne gave a wonderful slide show and talk, showing us how to identify many of the local butterflies. She also brought along some live butterflies and some live local caterpillars for display on their host plants—gulf fritillary on passionflower, pipevine swallowtail on pipevine, and monarch on milkweed.

**The parks of November.** In November, we heard from Eric Lautzenheiser, superintendent of San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department's natural areas. He described the history of the Proposition 3 initiative, which temporarily raised San Antonio sales taxes to finance purchase of critical terrain over the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone and along certain vital waterways like Leon Creek. He described the careful scientific process that was followed to ensure optimal use of the resources.

Then, using a large map, Eric showed the results—a virtual necklace of "crown jewel" lands across key stretches of the northside, showing an amazing amount of contiguity between key parcels. Not only do these parcels protect some 6,000 acres of recharge zone from development, but most areas are or will be available to the public for low-impact recreational use such as hiking, wildlife watching and photography. The names to look for include Crown Ridge Natural Area, Rancho Diana, Cedar Creek, Iron Horse Ranch and Windgate Ranch.

The best news is that voters recently approved an expanded revival of the tax called Prop 1. Under Prop 1, the city can protect lands critical to the Edwards Aquifer even if they lie outside city's extra-territorial jurisdiction. To maximize the effectiveness of the funds, Prop 1 money will mostly be used to buy permanent conservation easements, which cost much less per acre than buying land.

-Harry Noyes



# SECOND SATURDAY PROGRAM

by Peggy Spring

January 21, 2006 — 6:30pm - 8:30pm:

(Note this is the third Sat. since there is a full moon on the 14th):

## Winter Skies Eisenhower Park

Presented by the San Antonio Astronomical Association ([www.sanantonioastronomy.org](http://www.sanantonioastronomy.org))

Are the stars at night really big and bright in Texas? Ever seen the 'man in the moon'? The City of San Antonio Parks and Recreation Natural Areas and the Bexar Audubon Society invite you to satisfy your curiosity about these and other night sky questions. This program, facilitated by the San Antonio Astronomical Association, is designed to give people with little knowledge of astronomy an opportunity to view features of the winter sky through telescopes operated by their knowledgeable owners.

For this event, it is recommended that participants observe a few suggestions:

- The use of white light is highly discouraged. Please bring flashlights with red bulbs or covered with red cellophane. Cellophane may be provided if you do not have your own.
- Children are welcome but must be attended at all times.

- No smoking or insect repellent near telescopes — the smoke and sprays can damage the expensive optics of the telescope.
- Please ask permission before touching telescopes — they are very expensive!
- Reservations are recommended for this event. Please call Natural Areas 210.698.1057. This will insure your spot at this event. Walk-ins will be accepted on a limited basis. There is a suggested individual donation of \$3.00 per individual or \$5.00 per family.

Eisenhower Park, Harris (Mass Pavilion), 19399 NW Military Hwy. Take FM 1535/Military Hwy/Shavano Park exit off Loop 1604 on the city's northwest side. Go north on FM 1535/Military Hwy about 2 miles. Park entrance is on the left, just before Camp Bullis. The Pavilion is the gated one to the right. Special Parking Area may be indicated. Gates open 6:00pm.

Nov 2005 recap:

### Caves and More

Texas Caves captured the attention of 36 participants during the Second Saturday program at Eisenhower Park from 7 to 8:30 p.m. on November 12th. The Bexar Grotto, a chapter of the National Speleological Society, hosted the program. The NSS was founded to advance the study, conservation, exploration, and knowledge of caves. Joe and Evelyn Mitchell of Bexar Grotto started the evening with an engaging power point presentation of local, state and national caves and the relationship of caves to aquifers, majoring on the Edwards Aquifer. Displays and demonstrations of caving equipment and a working model of the Edwards Aquifer enhanced their informative portion of the program that also emphasized caving safety and environmental concerns. Then Mr. Cowen, also of Bexar Grotto, explained his slides of bats from around the world while sharing about the ecological role of bats and their economic value as pollinators and insect consumers. The entire program was very popular with the children as well as the adults!

## FIRST SATURDAYS INTERPRETIVE NATURE HIKES

Jan. 7, 2006 — 9:00-11:00 am — WALKER RANCH HISTORIC PARK — 12603 West Ave

Join us for a January walk in the brisk winter air at Walker Ranch and work off some seasonal calories while learning about the plants, animals and geology of this historic site.

Future hikes will be conducted: Feb. 4 - Crownridge Canyon Natural Area; Mar. 4 - Friedrich Wilderness Park; Apr. 1 - Walker Ranch; May 6 - Crownridge Canyon Natural Area; Jun 3, 2006 - Friedrich Wilderness Park

Generally, reservations are highly recommended, as the hike will not be conducted if there are no pre-registered participants. Call (210) 698-1057 for particular park events. Meet at the restrooms near the parking lot. A donation of \$2 per person is suggested. Participants are limited to 15 per hike. For groups of 8 or more please call to schedule a separate hike. See [www.sanaturalareas.org](http://www.sanaturalareas.org) for more information.

## RECURRING EVENTS

San Antonio Audubon Society's Beginners' Birdwalk is held at 8 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month. Visitors are welcome. There are binoculars to lend.

Meet at the Judson Nature Trail next to the Alamo Heights Swimming Pool on Viesca St. From the 5900 block of Broadway, turn west on Ogden to Greeley St., turn left one block, then right again to the parking lot on the left. More information at 210-342-2073.

## MITCHELL LAKE ACCESS



Call the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center at 210-628-1639 for information for birding and other events.

Earth Share of Texas represents the Audubon Foundation of Texas and the National Audubon Society in payroll deduction plans for charitable giving. For information, call 1-800-GREENTX or email <estx@earthshare-texas.org>.

### Membership Form

### Chapter Donation Form

National Audubon Society  
Bexar Audubon Society

Membership rates are:

Student/Senior \$15      Basic \$35  
Introductory 1-year \$20 (2-year: \$30)

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For a new membership, mail this coupon and your check—payable to "National Audubon Society, Chapter W19" to:

**Bexar Audubon Society**  
P. O. Box 6084  
San Antonio, TX 78209

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Opt out for other mailings

By using this form, 100 percent of your first year's dues will benefit the chapter.

For Contributions to BAS: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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### Bexar Audubon Field Trips

## WINTER BIRDS OF THE GRASSLANDS & CANYONS OF GOVERNMENT CANYON STATE NATURAL AREA Saturday, January 7, 2006, 8:30 am

Join Master Naturalists Steve Hawkins and Bob Kurtz in exploring the wintering bird life of two different habitat types at Government Canyon SNA. Open to all who can handle four hours of hiking and birding on rough terrain. Group size is limited. 8:30 a.m.-noon; suggested minimum donation of \$10 per person includes entry

permit and benefits the Friends of Government Canyon; reservations required and may be made beginning at 7:30 a.m. December 28. Please include your name, e-mail address and telephone number for each reservation. E-mail [educmte@hotmail.com](mailto:educmte@hotmail.com) or call (210) 688-9055.

## WINTER BIRDS ON THE MEDINA RIVER Saturday, Feb. 11th, 8 am

Join naturalists Gail Dugelby and Daniel Silvas for a leisurely walk to bird and explore this wonderful new natural area on the Medina River. Enjoy a winter hike in this riparian habitat and discover what this jewel on the south side has to offer. Call Patty Pasztor for reservations and

carpool information at 824-1235. Directions: From South Loop 410, drive 4.4 miles south on Hwy 16; the park entrance is on the East (left) side just before the Medina River bridge. You cannot see the brown sign from this direction. Medina River Park office - 624-2575.