

August 2008



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PERMIAN BASIN OUTING CLUB

# Trails

## Gila Wilderness Has Been Changed!

Well, in reality the Gila Wilderness probably hasn't changed all that much but our trip to it over Labor Day weekend has changed. After many, many emails from members expressing their dismay at the 1,000 mile round trip stretch and the current fuel prices we have decided to change the one trip to two shorter trips. Our illustrious, regal, gallant, intelligent, educated, and sometimes constipated club president Sammy Hunnicutt (he can't reach me here) has come up with another plan. We are moving the October trip to Caprock Canyon State Park to September. What are we going to do in August you ask.....we've received permission from Helen Cutrer, the ranch owner at Castle Gap, to

have another outing there. More on that below.

Sammy has been working with an employee of Texas Parks and Wildlife to gain us access to the official Texas State Buffalo Herd. These are the genetic descendants of the original herds found in Texas before they were wiped out. Caprock Canyons State Park became the repository for the herd several years ago and the general public is relegated to occasionally seeing a few of them when they wander near the outer perimeter fence. As I understand it from Sammy, we'll have access to the herd directly. We are also talking about doing the

"rails to trails" bicycle ride that sports a 3% grade (easy ride), goes over many bridges over deep canyons and goes through the old railroad tunnel where bats reside. I've done this trail many times when I lived in Plainview and it's a hoot. On top of that, we're talking about doing it my favorite way, at night under a near full moon. It's an experience! The date is the weekend of September 12-14nd. Don't pass up the chance to experience a great trip! Details later.



## August Castle Gap/Star Party-August 23rd

As I mentioned above, the August trip has been scheduled for August 23rd. That's a Saturday and one day only. We'll cook and wait for the stars to come out. Weather permitting I'll have my 10 inch telescope there and show you

some really cool things in the night sky. The moon is several days past full so shouldn't rise, ruining our view, till well past midnight. Castle Gap is an historic area where the old Comanche War Trail and the Goodnight-Loving

Trail went through. There's lot to see there and it's only 60 miles from Midland, 40 miles from Odessa....you do the math. It's a few miles south of Crane. We've done this trip before and had a ball. More info later on this trip.

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- *The 2008 Calendar has changed! Read all about it.....*
- *Opportunity to see the Texas State Buffalo herd*
- *Star party planned*

## Pat and Sharon Barber's Ranch a real blast....

If you missed it, you missed a great trip to Pat and Sharon Barber's ranch. We actually had over 30 members go on this trip which I believe is probably more than last year. For the uninitiated, Pat and Sharon have a large ranch near Colorado City and much of the ranch is covered by a private lake. The water comes from the Colorado River and though it wasn't as full as last year there was a LOT of water to canoe and kayak, fish, swim, and generally make fools of ourselves in (I have a PhD in tomfoolery.....I think Tom has one too...which seems appropriate). Anyway, Frank Gray volunteered to bring his enormous wok....somehow that sounds dirty.....anyway Frank brought his camping wok....still sounds dirty...and cooked up enough fajita meat to feed a small army. On top of that, Sharon Barber once again cooked chicken bits and provided an enormous amount of chicken for the aforementioned wok which Frank also cooked. Everyone else brought a variety of side dishes, tortillas, salads, desserts, dips, pastries,.....you get the picture. I can't speak for anyone else but I didn't have to eat again until Monday and the feast was Saturday night.

I want to be serious enough for just a moment (really hard for me) to thank Pat and Sharon for being most gracious hosts, as always, and for working so hard before, during, and after the club came to make this a GREAT trip. I also want to thank Frank Gray who showed up with all of his equipment and fixings despite

being up all night the night before. He actually looked just fine through the entire day (though the autopsy results might indicate otherwise.....I told you I can't stay serious for long). Thanks to everyone that brought all of the goodies and especially for being such a great group.

Several members decided to come down to the ranch on Friday night to camp and some stayed Saturday night, as well. The "Friday nighters" treated themselves to a full moon kayak tour Friday night which several of us repeated on Saturday night. There was the usual "tournament" of horse shoes which Bill Lupardis and Charlie Burke ran away with (though I understand that Virgil, Charlie's wife, and Kathy, Bill's wife, took their trophy away on a subsequent game.....thanks for upholding the gender dominance thing guys!) Ronna Porter purchased a new kayak and got it wet the first time at the ranch. All of us kept seeing a figure scooting all over the lake like a water bug and found out only much later that it was Ronna with her new toy. Charlie and I managed to recall our old football days with a slightly smaller version of the old J5V NCAA football....okay, it was a much smaller rubber version of the J5V....but we looked great! Steven Schafersman just about took an impromptu ride into the lake when his new shade tarp went airborne with a large gust of wind.

The last time we saw Gae, Steven's wife, she was flying somewhere over Snyder. The other "colorful" event was the discovery of a horned lizard (horny toad) at camp which was followed by an uproar that would have rivaled the unexpected appearance of Jennifer Aniston in camp. There had to be a dozen people standing around in awe of the tiny creature. Only later did I find out that there were several members of our Master Naturalist class in the crowd and they had learned how to check the DNA of the lizard and were part of a study. That poor little guy is probably still telling his family about all of the crazy two-legged creatures that picked him up and did all kinds of crazy things to him. I'm sure they look at him the way we look at people that claim to have been picked up by UFOs and probed in all kinds of weird ways.....that's the way I see it anyway....

Most of the folks left Saturday night but we still had a few campers staying for the entire weekend. I had the pleasure of kayaking with Pat and Sharon and Sandy Elms and her husband on an absolutely flat, calm lake. The moon was up and I paddled into the middle of the lake and.....just sat. It was beautiful..... If you haven't experienced something like that you need to.

*"There is an island of opportunity  
in the middle of every difficulty.  
Miss that though, and you're  
pretty much doomed."*

## October Trip

Since we are traveling to Caprock Canyons in September we've got to come up with an idea for the October trip. It has been suggested by David and Kay Crum that we consider coming back to their country in the Davis Mountains. There is a lot to do in the Davis Mountains including rappelling, sightseeing, star parties, and David has offered many times to get us onto some lands that aren't open to the general public. The

weather in the Davis Mountains in October is generally great. Leaves are changing at altitude and the scenic drive (the 86 mile loop) is outstanding. Then there's the Marfa Lights. The most prominent comment that I've received is "keep it close with gas prices at the current rate." A couple of members suggested dropping the number



of trips to 8 instead of 11 per year but the majority prefer to keep it at once a month allowing members to pick and choose which trips they want to attend. Anyway, be thinking about where you'd like to go and what you'd like to do. There are a lot of opportunities nearby.



**Sherri, Janie, and Candy cooling it under the shade—photo by Tom Cooper**



**Sherri can kayak! (say that several times real fast!) - photo by Tom**



**Janie can kayak....oh.....you know....  
photo by Tom**

*"If we really cared about our members we'd send them somewhere better."*

## August Meeting

Since our 2008 Calendar is all over the place and we had to cancel our previously scheduled August 26th meeting at Casa Lopez, it would be easier to simply meet at the Sibley Nature Center, our home base, on Tuesday, August 19th at 6:30 p.m. I will send out a general email to everyone when that time gets closer. Again, that's Tuesday, August 19th at 6:30 at the Sibley Nature Center at 1307 E. Wadley in Midland. I'll have maps to

Castle Gap and we can finalize plans for food, etc. Incidentally, there has been quite a bit of interest in creating shirts with the PBOC logo on them. I'll try my best to have a sample of what we're talking about at the meeting. The old PBOC club had t-shirts and golf shirts made and they sold like hotcakes. I still have a couple of the old shirts and they still look great....though, sadly, I don't.



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**Pre-feast discussion—photo by Tom**



**Aforementioned horn toad being  
interrogated—photo by Tom**



**Bill Lupardis basking in the glow of his near  
undefeated horseshoes season—photo by Richard**



**Frank Gray checking out.....the back of his chair?  
photo by Richard**