



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PERMIAN BASIN OUTING CLUB

Special points of interest:

- Substitute June trip a blast
- New opportunities for Outing Club
- July trip to Pat and Sharon Barber’s ranch
- Conservancy trip a new experience

June trip to Mike Rush’s Ranch didn’t make but some members still camped

As you probably know, the trip to Mike Rush’s ranch didn’t make for whatever reason (I suspect high gas prices and the heat index) but 3 long standing and one new Outing Club member still made a camping trip. Tom Cooper, David Crum, new member Steve Elfring, from Alpine, and I, made it to the Texas Nature Conservancy land near Mt. Livermore in the Davis Mountains to do a little trail development.

Tom and I left Odessa around 5 p.m. and made it to Ft. Davis in time to meet David Crum for supper at the Chuckwagon... (though I was the only one to end up eating.....I highly recommend their BLT sandwich). We caught up on what we would be doing the next day and Tom and I proceeded to the Texas Nature Conservancy land around the Scenic Loop to find the gate unlocked. We met Johnny (sorry..I have forgotten Johnny’s last name). Johnny was the adult leader of about 15 youth members of the St. John’s Episcopal Church out of Austin, Texas. The program that he led is a really cool opportunity for youth to

“experience new things.” To interpret this, his group was stationed at the TNC for almost a whole month to help Greg, the TNC manager, to clear land of fire hazards and to build new trail. They were truly a fun group and hard workers to boot. Tom and I camped on the grounds while the kids stayed in the lodge. David came in on Saturday morning and we all met at Greg’s barn to distribute tools (pick axes, hoes, rakes, etc.) and to provide everyone a ride in 4x4 vehicles for the climb to the trailhead. I got a chance to get to know our new member Steve Elfring. Steve lives in Alpine and is retired from Conoco where he worked in the marketing department. Steve is a member of the Master Naturalists in Alpine and has been working with Greg for some time in developing the land at the TNC. When we arrived at the trailhead Johnny took a large portion of his group up the continuing road (the same road that the club took to the summit of Mt. Livermore last year) and the rest of us went up the other direction to begin trail work. When we arrived at our destination (some 1,000 to 1,500 feet in total elevation gain...around

the 7,500 elevation range), Greg gave me 5 guys and the 6 of us started laying out the widening of the “path” which, with later grooming, would become the new loop trail designed to meet up with the other groups trail work. I’ve got to say, if you want to burn some calories.....this is the way to do it. Between the climb and the effort at 7,500 feet, you’re burning some fat! We worked fairly solidly for about 6 hours and finally met up with the other group that met up with us to provide a little more “trail lengthening.” After another hour or so we called it a day and hiked back down to the vehicles for our 30 minute ride back down to the headquarters. Tom and I met back up with David in Ft. Davis for supper. After a great last visit with David Tom and I made our way home. All together, this was a great, if not really tiring, experience. I renewed my faith in the future of the country with working with a great group of kids and, in the process, met many other great individuals.....oh, and by the way, despite getting soaked to the skin in a short shower, the weather was superb in the tall cool pines!

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July Trip—Pat and Sharon Barber’s Colorado City Ranch



The club is, once again, planning to visit Pat and Sharon Barber’s ranch this month. We will be traveling to Colorado City on the weekend of July 24-26 for our “fun in the sun” weekend. For those of you that haven’t been to Pat and Sharon’s ranch in the past, we usually participate in canoeing/kayaking (though Pat says that the water level is pretty low this year) and do a little cooking out, horse shoe pitching, football tossing,, fishing, and generally enjoying a relaxing weekend of car camping.

I haven’t talked to Pat in a while so I’m not sure what the water level is at his lake but I’m sure that

there’s still plenty of water to get in a little swimming and boating. Pat has two lakes that both have fish in them (though the smaller of the two lakes contains an albino catfish that Frank Gray says is really good to eat). You won’t have to have a fishing license in that the lake is on private land. This has always been a well attended trip and is a short drive for most of the club members. We usually have some shelter put up to get out of the sun if it is a hot weekend and the food has always been great. The first year that we went to the Barber ranch, Pat had provided a feral hog for

the spit and last year everyone brought their own “meat of choice” for the cookout. I’ve not heard any different so I will assume that this is the plan for this year. Everyone brought other foods as well and we made a buffet line that was out of this world. I’m sure that I’ll have more information regarding the food arrangements by the July 21st club meeting. This is a great opportunity to introduce potential new members to the club so make plans to attend. We will provide maps and directions to the ranch at the next meeting.

“Much work needs to be done before we can we can announce our total failure to make any progress.”



Looking across the road from out campsite at the Nature Conservancy—photo by Richard



Campsite at Nature Conservancy –photo by Richard

July Meeting

The club will meet at our usual hangout, Casa Lopez, at 4411 W. Illinois in Midland at 6 pm. on Tuesday, July 21st to make final plans for the July 24th weekend trip to Pat and Sharon Barber’s ranch in Colorado City. We will provide maps and directions to the ranch and will discuss activities and food, etc at that time. This has always been a well attended trip and we’d like to see this

year’s trip meet or exceed the numbers of the past. Again, this is a great opportunity to introduce new members to the club and to the Sibley Nature Center and its activities so try to not only attend but to bring in potential new members.....and come visit and have a great meal even if you don’t plan to attend the trip! We haven’t seen some of you in months! It’s important to attend

functions of the club just to show that you’re still interested and it provides stability and longevity to the club when you show interest in the activities.....(I’ll get off of my soap box now.....for a while).



“Please Don’t Litter”

I’ve been meaning to put this into the newsletter for some time now....and I’m embarrassed to say that I can’t remember who brought me this information so identify yourself when you see this and I’ll credit you in the next newsletter (plus I’ve been saving it for when I don’t have enough material to fill a newsletter so...here goes:

We’ve all seen litter scattered alongside a roadway. Do you know how long it will take to decompose to a non-recognizable form?

Styrofoam	Never
Aluminum	90-100 Years
Plastic Bags	10-20 Years
Plastic coated cartons	5 Years
Plastic containers	50-80 Years
Cigarette butts	10-12 Years
Leather shoes	25-40 Years
Vibram soles	50-80 Years
Wool socks	6-24 Years
Orange Peels	up to 6 Months
Paper containers	2-5 Months



(This is the best example I could find of someone littering.....give me a break...)

Club opportunity

On a related topic to the June Trip Report, the Texas Nature Conservancy is planning to continue their work on completing the loop trail that several of us worked on this past weekend with the Austin based youth group. They are planning another work session next month and yet another session later on until the trail is complete. A group called the “Trailbusters” will complete the “fine” work of putting in water check dams and other related technical aspects of finishing the trail when all of the rough work is complete. In visiting with Greg, the Texas Nature Conservancy on-site manager, we learned that he always welcomes additional help and said that he would schedule a special work weekend if a group was willing to come out and provide labor for the project. I

think that this would be a great opportunity for the club to volunteer their services, see some incredible country, and (I can say this from personal experience), lose a little weight....my jeans slipped on a LOT easier this morning!) They provide a great campsite (see pictures) and would probably even allow us access to the lodge, (showers, etc.). I know that David would coordinate the effort from Ft. Davis since he has already been working with the organization. Greg was a pleasure to work with and I know that he would appreciate all of the help that he could get. He will provide all of the necessary tools and expertise on what needs to be accomplished and the area is a photographer’s paradise! The camping area is huge and the scenery is unparalleled. For those of you that are worried about the

summer heat, the work area is around 7,500 feet in elevation and the temperatures are moderate to cool. The temperature in Ft. Davis was pretty warm but the work area on the trail was nothing but pleasant....and you work at a comfortable pace and take a breather whenever you get a little tired. It’s not a competition so the work is steady but at a reasonable rate for anyone.

If you have an interest in helping the Nature Conservancy out and having a fun time while doing it, let me know by phone or email and we’ll try to put something together. I personally thing that, sometime in the future when the club is hiking the trail, it would be neat to say “I helped build this section.” Let me know!

“When you earnestly believe you can compensate for a lack of skill by doubling your efforts, there’s no end to what you can’t do.”



The Sibley Nature Center

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