

The Newsletter of the Permian Basin Outing Club

Trails

February 2010

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Special points of interest:

- *Buffalo Trail Scout Ranch trip a bit windy but very successful*
- *Plan for Alamito Creek Preserve trip scheduled for March 26th*
- *March meeting announced*

Trip Report—Buffalo Trail Scout Ranch—Richard

If my memory isn't faulty, we had 26 PBOC members attend this past weekend's trip to the Buffalo Trail Scout Ranch...an unusually large number for a February trip! The popularity of the site is becoming apparent if you use the current and past number of attendees as an indicator (46 last September, a new record for attendees on an outing club trip). We have the ranch scheduled again for the weekend of September 24th.

Pat Dearen and I got to the ranch around 5 p.m. (we were attending a board meeting for the La Junta Heritage Center in Marfa earlier in the day) and we found Malcomb McElvaney and Sammy and Valarie already there. Most of the folks chose to camp past the bathrooms and showers so I set up camp at the old spot (being the hermit that I am) and finally went down to visit with all of the members as they came in. We got permission to build a campfire Friday night and we had quite a large number warming themselves around the fire. Friday was a

beautiful day but the mountains do get cool when the sun goes down so the fire was a welcome sight. The sky was clear and the stars were absolutely beautiful. The Trans-Pecos region is world renown for its clear skies and this weekend didn't disappoint.

On Saturday morning everyone had their breakfast before setting out on various hikes. Most of the crew hiked the Green Trail which took them to the First Gate where there was a beautiful water area full of fish, to the Needle Rock which is a 165-foot pinnacle, and on to the Notch which is a series of waterfalls ending up in a large pond full of trout and other varieties of fish. Bob Templeton and his crew of MC students took the longer Black Trail which follows a mountain path all the way to Tricky Gap Park where it meets the Green Trail. If you have the time and energy you can make an all-day loop and see some of the most magnificent country in the Trans-Pecos region. We found the creek had much more water than we saw last

September and the sound of gurgling water was great! Pat Dearen extended his hike all over the place (which is his habit) working on his next book as he hiked. On Saturday night we gathered more firewood and started another group campfire early as everyone was preparing their evening meals. Several other campfires sprung up around camp but as the wind whipped itself into a frenzy we had to douse the fires early. To say that Saturday night/Sunday morning was windy would be an understatement! As the night got longer, the frequency and intensity of the wind gusts got pretty hairy. Several members gave up and left camp in the middle of the night and those of us that stayed spent a good part of the night trying to keep our tents intact and in place. The wind effect in the horseshoe shaped canyon was incredible! When I got up Sunday morning a large number of our group was gone. We had a wonderful, scenic trip but Mother Nature got her pound of flesh!

March 26th trip to Alamito Creek Preserve



Goofy graphic meant to take up space usually reserved for witty commentary....

"If at first you don't succeed.....failure may just be your style."

Our March trip is planned for the Alamito Creek Preserve and it should be a well attended trip! David Crum just told me that the Alpine Master Naturalist class wants to attend so, with our group, we should be a healthy size group.

Let me tell you a little about the Alamito Creek Preserve. David's organization, the Trans-Pecos Water Trust, was given almost 1,200 acres of live creek (Alamito Creek) which is lined by enormous cottonwoods and perennial water and fish along 3 to 4 miles of creek bed. We did a surface archeological survey a couple of weeks ago and the place is alive with Indian history and pre-history. We also established a campsite that just about any vehicle can get to. There is abundant firewood and if the wind isn't a factor, we should be able to have a campfire both nights. An abandoned railroad goes through the property and two weeks ago we walked

along the railroad bed to access some of the property. Another item of note is the abundance of wildlife. I got ahead of our small group two weeks ago and was resting along the creek bed under a cottonwood. I heard what sounded like a cat off in the distance and waited until Rick Day caught up with me to ask if there was any breed of bird that made such a sound. He assured me that there wasn't. We crossed the creek a few hundred yards from that site and immediately found very fresh cougar tracks....I mean **fresh** cougar tracks! We didn't see him but he undoubtedly saw us! Diane Post just loaned us a couple of game cameras that we plan to install along the trail in hopes of catching one of those rascals.

Alamito Creek Preserve is located southeast of Marfa, Texas. When you pass through Marfa on the way to Presidio, Highway 169 takes off to the east about a mile

south of the Border Patrol station just south of Marfa and then goes about 18 miles to the entrance gate to the preserve. The gate will be well marked and we will provide maps at the next meeting. The weather there 2 weeks ago was great and it should.....*should* be good by March 26th (being several days past the calendar version of Spring). I can't tell you how beautiful this area is! A great campsite, a large variety of beautiful trees, and wildlife galore. I know that David is really looking forward to showing everyone his agency's new addition. I've been there a couple of times and I've got to tell you, it's a trip well worth the taking. There's more land there than you can see in a mere weekend but you can get a good start at getting a feel for the area. I'd like to take an opportunity to thank David now for making the preserve available to us! You really don't want to miss this opportunity to see some beautiful country!



More of the same.....

March PBOC meeting

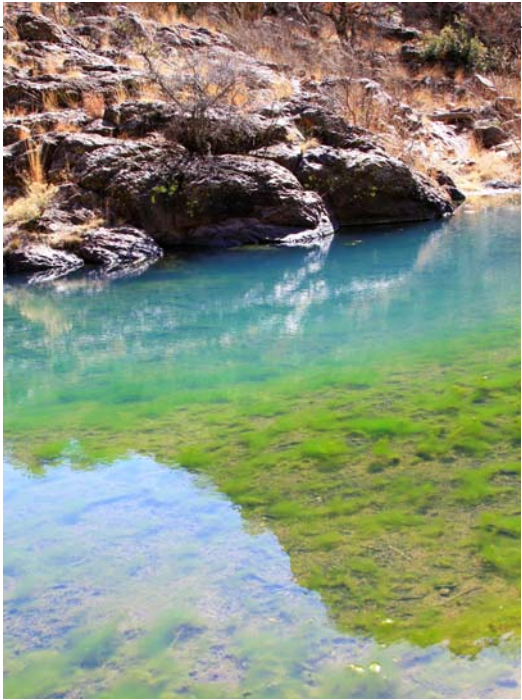
The March PBOC meeting to make final plans for the Alamito Creek Preserve trip and to hand out maps and instruction (and you will need both) is set for Tuesday, March 23rd at 6 p.m. at Murray's Deli at 3211 W. Wadley in Midland. As always, you certainly don't have to be attending the trip to come to the

meeting and get some of the best deli food in West Texas. Because of the large number of expected attendees on the March trip, we probably should have some sort of nose count (or ear count and we'll divide by two) so that Murray's can set up enough tables and chairs. We usually can pretty well guess the numbers but I think that

this trip will be unusually large so, if you think that you'll be at the meeting either to plan the trip or just to visit, please let me know by phone (684-6827) or by return email. Let me know by...let's say Monday, March 22nd so that we can give Murray's an estimate. See you at the meeting!



Pond at "First Gate" - photo by Richard....and no Photoshopping....these colors are real



....same area—photo by Richard



Tom, Megan and Malcomb at the Notch



Infrared shot of group campfire—photo by Malcomb McElvaney

"The future isn't *that* hard to predict. My worst fears keep coming true."



My obligatory panorama submission—Creek at Scout Ranch—photo by Richrd

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