

# GORGE NEWS

[www.canyongorge.org](http://www.canyongorge.org)

July-September, 2008

Greetings to members of the Gorge Preservation Society  
(GPS)

*In this newsletter,  
you will find the following information.*

Chairperson's Letter  
National Award for the Gorge Master Plan  
Ongoing Research  
State of the Gorge  
The Lagoon—How Deep Is It?  
Membership Update  
Meet the GPS Board  
New Canyon Lake Office—  
Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting-You're invited!  
Docent Training and Other Volunteer Opportunities



Photo courtesy Wanda Extrom

## FROM THE CHAIR

“Life comes at you hard.” Isn’t that what the Nationwide commercial claims? The sad part is that it took a national advertising campaign such as this one to remind us of the obvious! We get so wrapped up in our busy lives...Well, “hard” is probably an understatement.

The Gorge has been under serious magnification since last October. The Gorge Preservation Society continually tries to reduce the number of fans standing in line to view this treasure. The most recent docent training class brings eight more dedicated volunteers to the tour docent rolls. More tours are being added as we add more docents.

The Gorge is a magical revelation of hydrogeology, geology and just plain history. It is also a natural area. As such, Mother Nature continues to exhibit her influence. Natural biological progression will eventually try to reclaim this area unto its own. Our dedicated volunteers work continuously to retain key areas in their original uncovered state. They also work to maintain a safe journey for our visitors.

These volunteers deserve our utmost ‘Thanks’ and because they are volunteers they may never feel fully appreciated. We had a Volunteer Appreciation gathering to correct that and they are appreciated.

The latest addition of a Natural Resource Specialist for GBRA brings to the Gorge the energy of Jaynellen Ladd. As President of the Canyon Lake Area Chamber of Commerce for the past three plus years, she has a proven track record of personal dedication and all-absorbing energy. We welcome Jaynellen and look forward to greater progress toward our goals. Join us.

Become a Member, a Docent, a Volunteer, a Benefactor, a Fan.

The Gorge Rocks! Valerie Schroller

# GBRA, Gorge Preservation Society and Halff Associates receive national "Excellence in Planning Award" for the Canyon Lake Gorge Master Plan

The National Association of Recreation Resource Planners (NARRP) has awarded its 2008 "Excellence in Planning Award" to the Guadalupe Blanco River Authority (GBRA), Halff Associates Inc., and the Gorge Preservation Society for the Canyon Lake Gorge Master Plan. This national award, presented in May at the organization's annual meeting, is awarded annually to not more than four eligible recipients, including not more than two individuals and two agencies or organizations, public or private. It is awarded primarily for professional achievement in the field of parks and recreation planning. The determining factor is the degree of sustained proficiency or excellence made by the nominated entity, and is given to achievements that further recreation planning.

The Master Plan, developed by Halff Associates in conjunction with the Guadalupe Blanco River Authority (GBRA) and the Gorge Preservation Society Board, established goals for the gorge, strategies for preservation, and cost estimates for features needed to enhance visits to the Gorge.

The plan proposed low impact steps and cable guide railings to assist with guided tours along the bottom of the Gorge, and a series of rocky "overlooks" along the rim for unguided tours. Each overlook received a "name" to describe its unique characteristics. In essence, the plan was crafted around the notion of doing as little as possible to impact the beauty of the Gorge.

"We understood the significance of the wonders unveiled in the gorge from the beginning and wanted very much to be part of its preservation and development," William "Bill" E. West, Jr., GBRA general manager said. "GBRA appreciates the care and consideration that Halff Associates took in understanding the issues, as well as their skills in developing an appropriate and environmentally suitable design for the gorge," West added.

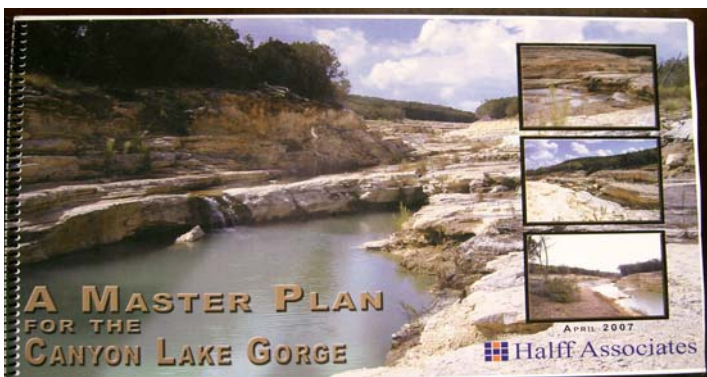
"This kind of project requires as much heart as it does technical expertise," said Tommie Streeter-Rhoad, GBRA economic development manager, who enlisted Jim Carrillo of Halff Associates to submit a proposal on the gorge. Rhoad said, "Jim and his colleagues at Halff Associates brought all of those things to the table and delivered a stellar development plan for the Canyon Lake Gorge."

The Canyon Lake Gorge, located below the Canyon Lake Spillway, was created over a two day period during record breaking floods in July 2002. The GBRA, which oversees operations along the Guadalupe River which feeds into and out of Canyon Lake, immediately recognized the importance of the newly formed gorge as an incredibly unique geologic resource, and has been working since to consider how best to preserve the Gorge and yet allow access to its one-of-a-kind scenery.

NARRP is a nationwide organization comprised of outdoor recreation professionals and others interested in recreation resource planning. The mission of the Association is to advance the recreation resource planning profession.

The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority is a recognized leader in managing water resources that benefit both people and the environment. GBRA provides stewardship for the water resources in its 10-county statutory district includes Kendall, Comal, Hays, Caldwell, Guadalupe, Gonzales, DeWitt, Victoria, Calhoun and Refugio counties.

Halff Associates is a Texas-based design firm with area offices in San Antonio and Austin, and the firm's team was lead by San Marcos resident Jim Carrillo, a park planner and landscape architect.



## ONGOING RESEARCH

# A Texas flood's aftermath reveals an unprecedented view of geologic faults

Even during the blistering summer heat, Dr. David Ferrill, Dr. Alan Morris, and Ronnie McGinnis of Southwest Research Institute continue their field work on the portion of the Hidden Valley Fault that is so well exposed in the Gorge. Their comprehensive study is relating details of the faults, fractures, and folds to the composition of the various rock layers. Data they gather in the Gorge are being used to build models for interpreting subsurface fault zones, which may be critical controls on fluid movement in hydrocarbon reservoirs and aquifer systems in several parts of the world. GPS board member Bill Ward is assisting the Southwest Research Institute geologists by providing details of the geologic sequence that crops out in the Gorge.



A paper on the faults of the Balcones System, including the Hidden Valley fault, by David Ferrill and Alan Morris was published in the March issue of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists Bulletin. Title of the article is "Fault-zone deformation controlled by carbonate mechanical stratigraphy, Balcones fault system, Texas." The cover of this issue is a high-resolution aerial photo of fracture systems in a portion of the Gorge. The highly respected AAPG journal has a worldwide readership. Ferrill and others also published a paper on "Geologic controls on interaction between the Edwards and Trinity Aquifers, Balcones Fault System, Texas" in the Bulletin of the South Texas geological Society, April issue. Cover photo for April bulletin shows some of the multiple small faults which crop out in the Gorge.

In April, David Ferrill and other Southwest Research Institute geologists led a large field trip into the Gorge in connection with the international meeting of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists in San Antonio. For that same meeting, Bill Ward, Carter Kearins and Cassie Otero led a geologic field trip to the Gorge for K-12 science teachers as part of the AAPG Teacher Program.

Dr. Bill Ward

## Special "Thanks" to the Tour Guides & Docents

"Thanks" to  
Alternative Pest Control for spraying the new Canyon Lake office!

## Canyon Lake Gorge Docent Training Upcoming Class

The Gorge is a remarkable site, and there has been a tremendous interest from the public, with more requests for tours than we can currently accommodate. Ideally, the upcoming docent training will help out with the need for adding additional dates to the tour calendar. In order to qualify as a docent, you should be physically able to walk the Gorge and be willing to lead or assist one tour a month for at least a year.

The training comprises: 1) General knowledge of the Guadalupe River/ Canyon Reservoir and Dam/ and the Flood of 2002; 2) Scientific information (general Geology and Biology) about the Gorge; 3) How to interpret and communicate with varying groups; and 4) First aid and emergency procedure training.

Docents are expected to complete at all five training classes.

The training class will be held at the CRRC of Canyon Lake below Canyon Dam, from 12-5pm. Notebook and materials will cost \$10. If you are interested in attending a training, contact Jaynellen Ladd at [jladd@gbra.org](mailto:jladd@gbra.org) or 830-964-5424.

Fall Schedule: September/October 2008

# STATE OF THE GORGE

The second quarter of 2008 has seen some noticeable changes in the Gorge. Our hard working trail workers have put in 113 hours just in the last few months. Those who are very familiar with the pit can say goodbye to the willows and cottonwoods that were there and almost 30' tall. We have been focusing on the removal of the invasive species and clearing out the high value geologic features as requested by Bill Ward. The gorge was choked with *Baccharis Neglecta* as well as a large population of other invasives such as Chinese tallows and Chinaberry trees. Our volunteers have cut and treated with herbicide thousands of these and the difference is very noticeable from the spillway to the pit and around the large pool.



We still have a lot of work ahead to remove invasives but that has not been the only accomplishment in the Gorge this quarter. There is a new wooden walkway in the lower part making the crossing of a waterway much easier and safer. The trail going down to the faulted area was at risk and we rerouted the course by making steps of available stones. As to the Gorge itself, there is a lot of new fresh-fall along the edges and some areas I suspect will fall in soon.

There are examples of succession everywhere you look. We have a population of rock squirrels and there may be swallows nesting. I have been doing plant surveys every few weeks and have added to the original list. This month we will have divers exploring the large pool for interesting geologic features and spring flow. More on that in the next newsletter.

We must give credit to our trail workers who put in the sweat equity that makes the Gorge a safer and more wonder filled place. The following people deserve much thanks for their efforts: Van Green, Coco Brennan, Frank Stiles, Susan Bogle, Lois Ricci, Haskel Hart, Eva Fromme, Charles Tubbs, Allen and Sheila Bertram and Barry Brupbaker. I, as their fearless leader want to attest to their dedication and really hard work.

Jamie Kinscherff, Land Management Committee

**"THANK YOU"  
CANYON LAKE**

**ACE  
HARDWARE  
FOR THE STEPPING  
STONES**



Read the Texas Parks & Wildlife June 2008 Issue Story "**Birth of a Gorge**". The floods of 2002 unearthed a geologic wonder in Central Texas. Written by E. Dan Klepper.



**In the Chute**

**DALLAS, OUR DALLAS**

Dallas in Austin; base ball in Buffalo Gap; gorging in Canyon Lake.

by [Jordan Breal](#)

Get your July issue!  
**"Sudden Exposure"**

## How Deep is It?

This question is asked by almost every tour group that goes through the gorge when they reach the pool that we call The Lagoon. Although there have been many guesses, educated and otherwise, no one knew for certain, because the depth had never been measured.

Last Spring Cinde Thomas-Jimenez approached the G.P.S. Board with the idea of having divers explore the lagoon. The board agreed to the idea, and all the necessary approvals were obtained.

On June 10, a preliminary scouting trip was made to determine the best route for getting the necessary gear and equipment into and out of the site. Then on June 17 the actual exploration of the pool was conducted.

Jaynellen Ladd of GBRA organized the effort and furnished her Jeep to haul the equipment as near to the site as possible. The actual exploration of the pool was done by two divers, Mose Johnson and Barry Brupbacher, who are both Dive Instructors with many years of diving experience. Barry is also a member & docent of the Gorge Preservation Society and the Comal County Master Naturalists. Also assisting were Jamie Kinscherff, Susan Bogle, and Judy Brupbacher, who are all members of GPS and Master Naturalists.

The divers started out by doing a swim along the bottom of the lagoon from the upstream end to the downstream end, noting the depths, bottom features and composition, and visibility. On this first pass, it was noted that the bottom was generally 7 feet deep in the upper 2/3 of the lagoon, one spot being found that was 8 feet. The Lagoon runs roughly East Northeast to a point approximately 120 feet downstream of the waterfall, and then it makes a turn toward the North. About 10 feet upstream of that point it begins to get gradually shallower, finally reaching only a few inches or less of depth at the end.

Water temperature was measured at 23°C (73°F).

The bottom is covered with a thick layer of very fine silt. There are also numerous boulders and some tree branches or entire small trees. Visibility on this day was 1 foot or less. If the silt is disturbed in any way, the visibility goes essentially to zero. The silt is extremely light and does not resettle easily. No evidence of spring flow was noted, but this could have been missed because of the poor visibility.

After the initial swim-through, the divers worked upstream along the wall under the high cliffs. This side appeared that it might be deeper than the other side, but nothing deeper than 7' was found. The small grotto at the upstream end was probed, but it only extends a few feet under the rock, there is no evidence of a spring or other flow coming out of it.

The divers then did a series of traverses across the lagoon at 10-foot intervals, starting at the center of the waterfall and progressing downstream. The max depth at the waterfall was 5 to 6 feet. 10 feet downstream it was 7 feet, and it was 8 feet at 20 and 30 feet downstream. From that point on, the max depth was 7 feet until the point previously mentioned where the lagoon starts getting shallower.

There are definitely fish in the lagoon, but because of the poor visibility, the divers weren't able to identify anything. One small sunfish was seen and numerous minnows or shiners.

Those who had envisioned a deep pool full of Guadalupe Bass will be disappointed, but now we know what's there, and we can answer the question – "How deep is it?"  
Barry Brupbacher



Divers:  
Mose Johnson and  
Barry Brupbacher



Photo courtesy Bob Phillips

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP...HELP US GROW!

146 GPS MEMBERS

75% Membership Renewed for 2008!

42 New Members for 2008!

Members are from: Texas Cities: Austin, Blanco, Boerne, Boyd, Bulverde, Canyon Lake, Cibolo, Dripping Springs, Fair Oaks, Fair Oaks Ranch, Fischer, Floresville, Fredericksburg, Frisco, Ft. Worth, Garden Ridge, Glenview, Gonzales, Harper, Helotes, Houston, Kerrville, Kingwood, Lubbock, Manchaca, McQueeney, New Braunfels, Port Aransas, Round Rock, San Antonio, San Marcos, Schertz, Seguin, Spring Branch, The Woodlands, Victoria, Waco and Wimberley and Glenview, Illinois.

**Do you have friends or family who should be members of GPS?**

**Please feel free to forward this newsletter to them.**

Membership information, including a printable membership form, is available at the GPS website.

Also, to make additional tax-deductible contributions to our efforts, checks may be sent to:

*Gorge Preservation Society*

### GPS Board Members

Chair: Valerie Schroller

Secretary: John Guenzel

Treasurer: J. W. Pieper

BOARD MEMBERS

Bill Ward

Dave Skinner

Donna Eccleston

Jamie Kinscherff

Susan Bogle

Tommie Streeter-Rhoad—GBRA

Jaynellen Ladd—GBRA

### OPEN HOUSE

AND

*Ribbon*  
CUTTING

Join Us!

**JULY 10th, THURSDAY**

*4-5PM (4:30 Ribbon Cutting)*

*Refreshments & Door Prizes!*

*2075 FM 2673 Suite D*

*Copper Canyon Plaza—Sattler*

Gorge Preservation Society

2075 FM 2673

Canyon Lake, Texas 78133

830-964-5424

[www.canyongorge.org](http://www.canyongorge.org)

The Gorge Preservation Society is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote the enjoyment and conservation of a unique natural phenomenon by encouraging responsible, quality access opportunities through academic partnerships, economic initiatives and citizen involvement.



GUADALUPE-BLANCO RIVER AUTHORITY

Since the Gorge opened in October 2007, we have taken approximately 2,000 visitors through the Gorge.

Recent waiting list of 470 people are now scheduled for 3rd qtr. tours. Open tours are available on the website and the fall waiting list has begun.



G O R G E  
Preservation Society