



Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust
933 E. Court Street
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A Personal Perspective From Robert Thornton, Former President

by Lauren Bradshaw

Robert Thornton, past president of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust, has been a member of the board since 2003. After retiring from a long and distinguished career with the United States Air Force, Thornton returned to San Marcos and began working on watershed issues.

“It was an honor to be offered a place on the Trust board and to get involved in the issues that are dear to my heart,” Thornton said. Like many Texans, Thornton grew up hearing stories about water and its importance to the future of our watershed and the people who live in it.

The Trust was created by William E. West, Jr., General Manager of the GBRA, and is a working extension of the GBRA. “Our goal is to work to protect the natural resources, water and land, within the Guadalupe River watershed,” stated Thornton.

It is important for people to understand the importance of the work that the Trust does. Thornton explained that anyone who has an interest in or is involved in any aspect of water management and protection realizes that if we as a nation don’t protect our most valuable resource, water, we will have a very difficult future. As the population grows, more and more pressure is being put on a limited resource and without protection and sound management, our environment will disappear.

“The Trust is a small part of an effort to insure that our children will have waterways to enjoy and use,” Thornton said.

When asked where he sees the organization in the next five or ten years, Thornton replied, “I think the Trust will grow and strengthen as long as the landowners find value

in its efforts.” The Trust has been gaining strength in the past two years and is currently trying to secure recurring funding to enable financial independence. Thornton said the Trust is also making great strides in reaching landowners who have undeveloped land that can be protected through the organization.

“In five years I expect the Trust to have a secure funding flow,” Thornton said, “and through its information endeavors and personal contacts, most of the landowners within the watershed will be aware of the Trust’s abilities to help protect their land.”

Trust Guided Tours and Events

February 10, 2010

Guided bird hike during peak migration period at the coast, Calhoun County.

February 10, 2010

Visit the first Trust Preserve for a close up look at Hog and Schwing Bayou Preserve, Calhoun County.

March 2010

Witness the effects of an area in the Texas Hill Country after it was cleared of cedar, Kendall County.

April 2010

Tour a 100-acre conservation easement where the land has been restored to a native grassland; Hays County.

More details to follow, please visit www.gbrtrust.org.

Trust Lands New Preserve



Photo by Janáe Reneaud

by James Elkins

The Guadalupe Blanco River Trust Hog and Schwing Bayous Preserve (Preserve) is 646 acres of wetland that is a key area for breeding, stop over and wintering migratory birds in the Guadalupe River Delta. Located near the small town of Tivoli, the wetlands consist of over four miles of riparian streams and are located near 147,377-acres of conserved lands.

On one of the hottest days of the summer, Trust Executive Director, Janaé Reneaud, invited the Trust interns and volunteers (Lauren Bradshaw, Ryan

Ramsey and James Elkins) to take part in a workday trip to the wetlands. The group started the day at sunrise and headed off to Tivoli near San Antonio Bay. After a three-hour drive through ranches and farms of Texas the group arrived at its final destination.

The assignments were simple: install a sign at the entrance of the Preserve with the assistance of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) staff and assist the G & W Engineering survey work crew to mark the boundaries of the Preserve.

The sign would notify the public the property is protected for wildlife and their habitats. Work required digging four-foot holes near the front gate. Upon completing the sign installation, the group began installing a T-post and mounting a 15-foot PVC pipe on top. This process included sanding the top portion so purple paint would adhere to the pipe. These marks and the color purple signify “No Trespassing” in the State of Texas.

After a long day of extreme heat with the potential for encounters with alligators, snakes, killer bees, and other hazards, the group finished its job and returned to central Texas. It was rewarding to have been able to work with the Trust on this project, and the group looks forward to more adventures.

Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust And Local Community Form Partnership to Conserve Park Land



Photo by John Schmidt III

Officials of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust and the City of Martindale recently signed an agreement to preserve nearly two acres of land with river frontage along the San Marcos River in Martindale. Fundraising for \$50,000 to buy this prime 1.59 acre tract will begin immediately.

City of Martindale officials have been considering the tract for new parkland - doubling the size of the existing Allen Bates Park. The larger park would provide an opportunity for Martindale residents to experience longer trails, more river frontage, as well as relax and play spaces.

The partnership between the two entities provides several advantages for the community. As funds are raised for the land purchase, the Trust

would oversee the funds, explained Janaé Reneaud, the Trust's Executive Director. "When the fundraising goal is reached, the funds would be redirected to Martindale officials to complete the purchase of the land."

Martindale City Administrator Jeff Caldwell said, "This arrangement works out well for us because donors can take advantage of tax deductions available through the Trust." More importantly, he added, "Contributors will know that their gift is part of a project that will exist in perpetuity for future generations to enjoy."

Anyone interested in supporting the park project and the river is encouraged to contact Janaé Reneaud to make a donation, at (830) 372-5077 or email jreaneud@gbrtrust.org

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Trust News

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Trust retains the right to determine the editorial content and presentation of information contained herein. Articles or opinion written by guest writers do not necessarily reflect official views of the Trust or its Board of Trustees.

The Trust is a charitable, non-profit 501(c)3 organization that was founded to conserve the land and water of the Guadalupe River watershed for its natural, recreational, scenic, historic and productive value. The mission of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust is to promote and encourage the conservation, stewardship and enjoyment of the land and water resources of the Guadalupe River watershed, while maintaining its unique and irreplaceable natural heritage.

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The Benefits of Conservation Easements

by Lauren Bradshaw

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, between 1982 and 2001, more than 2.6 million acres of Texas rural land were converted to urban use, and the rate of conversion continues to accelerate annually. Because 94 percent of Texas land is privately owned, maintaining open space is ultimately up to the public.

About 80 percent of Texas farms and ranches are now smaller than 500 acres. As these open lands shrink, the issue raises how to maintain the natural lands that sustain the water resources as well as native plants and animals.

One way citizens can help conserve green land is by donating a conservation easement to the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust, ensuring that the land will be protected and preserved in its natural state.

A conservation easement is a voluntary, legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values, while allowing the owner to continue to own that property and to sell it or pass it on to heirs.

The Trust and the landowner(s) work together to write a conservation easement that reflect both the landowner's desires and the need to protect conservation values. A conservation easement restricts development to the degree that is necessary to protect the significant conservation values of that particular property. Every conservation easement is uniquely tailored to the landowner's goals for the preservation of the land.



Photo by Janet Thome

Conservation easements offer great flexibility and benefits to both the landowner(s) and the public. If the donation protects important conservation resources and meets other federal tax code requirements, it can qualify as a tax-deductible charitable donation.

Most conservation easements are attached to the land, binding the original owner and all subsequent owners to the conservation easement's restrictions. The conservation easement is recorded

at the county or town records office so all future owners and lenders will learn about the restrictions.

The Trust is responsible for enforcing the restrictions that the easement document spells out. The Trust monitors the property once a year to determine that the property remains in the condition prescribed by the easement document and maintains written records of these monitoring visits.