



## Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust

933 East Court Street 9 Seguin, Texas 78155

www.gbrtrust.org

Change Service Requested

## Board of Trustee Updates

GBR Trust would like to welcome the following Board of Trustees:

- Todd Merendino, Ph.D. is the Manager of Conservation Programs for Ducks Unlimited (DU) in Texas, and oversees DU's conservation efforts on private lands and public lands in Texas.
- Denis Mueller is Wells Fargo's Community Banking President, South Central Market.

• Chris Hale is in private law practice with an emphasis on business law at the law offices of Hale and Hale.

These new Trustees offer diverse skill sets that will assist the GBR Trust to grow and expand efforts for water and land preservation in the Guadalupe River Watershed.

## Upcoming Trust Events

- **October 15, 10 to noon; come enjoy a tour of an active ranch that was placed under a conservation easement in Goliad County. Enjoy seeing the effects of a controlled burn on 200 acres; learn about management of quail habitat, or enjoy a bird walk along a section of the San Antonio River. To RSVP and location contact GBR Trust.**
- **October 15, 1 - 5 p.m., GBR Trust, DU, and USDA will be hosting a conservation easement workshop in Goliad County. Come learn how a conservation easement works and the benefit to the landowner. A conservation easement is a restriction landowners voluntarily place on specified uses of their property to protect natural, productive or cultural features. The landowner retains legal title to the property and determines the types of uses to continue and those to restrict. Presenters will be David Hartman with Smith/Robertson Attorney at Law and Don Graham with Graham and Associates, Inc. In addition learn more about the DU and USDA programs they offer. To RSVP and get location contact GBR Trust.**

For more detail call: Janaé Reneaud at 830-660-3486 or email [jreneaud@gbrtrust.org](mailto:jreneaud@gbrtrust.org)

### Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust

#### Board of Trustees

Roger F. Welder - President  
 John P. Schneider, Jr. - Vice President  
 W. A. "Bill" Blackwell - Treasurer  
 Anne Holt - Secretary  
 Jack C. Jones - Trustee  
 Claudell S. Kercheville - Trustee  
 Grace G. Kunde - Trustee  
 Oscar H. Fogle - Trustee  
 Todd Merendino, Ph.D. - Trustee  
 Denis Mueller - Trustee  
 Chris Hale - Trustee

#### Staff and Volunteers

Janaé Reneaud - Executive Director  
 Todd Votteler - Executive Director Emeritus

#### Preservation Matters

Fall 2010

#### Design

Connie Rothe - Board Relations and Publications Specialist

GBR 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.

#### Contact Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust:

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# Preservation Matters

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## Trust Garner National Accreditation

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, announced in August that the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust (GBR Trust) was awarded accredited status, making the GBR Trust the first accredited land trust in the state of Texas.

"Accredited land trusts meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever," said Commission Executive Director Tammara Van Ryn. "The accreditation seal lets the public know that the accredited land trust has undergone an extensive, external review of the governance and management of its organization and the systems and policies it uses to protect land."

"Accredited status demonstrates our commitment to permanent land conservation," says Janaé Reneaud, Executive Director. "Our land trust is a stronger organization today having gone through the rigorous accreditation program."

GBR Trust Board President Roger Welder said, "Being accredited shows that the GBR Trust is a professional and transparent organization that is working to put the best product forward for its landowners and supporters. It also shows that we are leading the way in Texas for meeting the national standards for excellence."

Questions and Answers about the Accreditation Process

**Q:** What does the accreditation seal mean to GBR Trust and the public?

**A:** The accreditation seal is a mark of distinction in land conservation. It recognizes organizations for meeting national standards for excellence, upholding the public trust and ensuring that conservation efforts are permanent. The accreditation seal provides the assurance of quality and permanence of land conservation, landowners and supporters are looking for and publicly recognize a land trust's ability to protect important natural places and working lands forever.

**Q:** Why did you go through the accreditation process if it was so challenging?

**A:** The answer is easy--for you--the landowners, donors, and supporters! Accreditation will increase public awareness, provide confidence in the GBR Trust as landowners consider with what land trust to work, and enable the GBR Trust to better preserve the land in perpetuity. Accreditation provides recognition that the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust is engaged in the long-term protection of the land for the public's interest. The process gave the GBR Trust the opportunity to review and implement policies that will help streamline their

operations and lead to more effective land conservation.

**Q:** What was it like going through the accreditation process?

**A:** The accreditation process has been a long and laborious process for a small staff, volunteers and a volunteer Board of Trustees. The work was tedious and overwhelming, but the process provided an examination of our organization as we have never done before.

**Q:** What is the significance of being the first accredited land trust in Texas?

**A:** Roger Welder, GBR Trust Board President, stated being an accredited organization shows that the GBR Trust is a professional and transparent organization that is working to put the best product forward for our landowners and supporters. It also shows that we are leading the way in Texas for meeting the national standards for excellence.

*Attaining national accreditation through the Land Trust Accreditation Commission gives the GBR Trust the right to bear this seal on its publications and printed materials.*



## Trust Receives 665 Acre Conservation Easement on the Old Glory Ranch in Hays County

Mr. and Mrs. Charles McCord, owners of the Old Glory Ranch near Wimberley, on the Blanco River placed 665 acres of their 2,200-acre ranch in a conservation easement December of 2009 with the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust (GBR Trust). The property consists of Blanco River frontage that is home to giant cypress trees and Shelton Hollow, which runs through the property to the Blanco River. Off in the distance, the elevation of the land quickly rises until one is looking at the highest point in Hays County located on the Devils Backbone near Ranch Road 32.

Charles McCord and GBR Trust officials started to discuss a conservation easement several years ago. Janaé Reneaud, executive director of the GBR Trust, worked through the conservation easement process with the McCord's, who kept their children

well informed throughout the process regarding the restrictions that were being placed on the land. Reneaud said, "this is the best case scenario when dealing with multiple generations. We want the future owners to understand what they will be inheriting."

The property has a diverse landscape ranging from waterfalls to steep rounded hills that drop quickly into valleys far below. Before the McCords purchased the property in 2007, the previous landowner had been fastidious about clearing the cedar from the land. The McCords are continuing that management practice and follow a wildlife management plan prepared by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Landowners near the McCords are considering various conservation plans for their land that range from

federal, state and local conservation programs to donation of conservation easements to a non-profit. Together the landowners in this area are protecting the views of the Devils Backbone, allowing water to recharge the Edwards Aquifer, and protecting open natural areas for wildlife and plants to grow.

As the population of Hays County increases more and more open land is being developed.

"The McCords are conservation leaders," states Anne Holt, GBR Trust Board of Trustee. This is seen through Mr. McCord's encouragement of other landowners in the area to consider a conservation easement to assist in preserving the Guadalupe River watershed. The McCords are now working to place additional land in a conservation easement that will further preserve the Edwards Aquifer.



Photo by Janaé Reneaud

## GBR Trust Forges Partnership with Ducks Unlimited

A partnership can accomplish amazing work in the field of wildlife habitat restoration. In the winter of 2008, a landowner in Calhoun County donated a conservation easement on part of his land to the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust. A few months later Ducks Unlimited (DU) approached the GBR Trust to discuss working together to use the value of the donated easement for restoration work in coastal counties, as the value of the easement represented "conservation value" that could be leveraged to obtain grant funding for conservation work. The landowner, DU and GBR Trust collaborated and have submitted two grant applications through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA).

The first grant, totaling \$1 million, was awarded in March 2009, and will provide for more than 3,200 acres of private lands, wetland restoration and

enhancement throughout the Texas Coast via the Texas Prairie Wetlands Project. It also will provide for wetland enhancement work at Mad Island Wildlife Management Area in Matagorda County and the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge in Cameron County. A second \$1 Million grant is in the selection process. If approved, it will provide for 3,000 acres of private lands wetland restoration and enhancement. That grant also could facilitate a topographical survey and 25 acres of wetland enhancement on the GBR Trust Preserve in Calhoun County.

Successful conservation on a landscape scale is a collective effort that benefits from the involvement



Photo by Janaé Reneaud

and commitment of many partners. One person can make a difference, and in this case, the desire and effort of one landowner to preserve his land, united 13 conservation partners that provided more than 7,600 acres of conservation work throughout the Texas Coast.

## Guided Hikes Show Benefits of Brush Management & Native Texas Grasses

• Shane Kiefer, senior wildlife biologist with Plateau, Land and Wildlife led a tour on a privately held

GBR Trust conservation easement, at the Linda Dean Ranch in Kendall County. Visitors saw first hand the effects of clearing



Photo by Janaé Reneaud

cedar and leaving the slash on the ground. It was noticeable that the plants that were growing up through the slash were well protected from deer, but the landowners are aware if they want to keep the cedar at bay they need to continue cedar removal. To

learn more about water enhancement through brush management, please contact the Upper Guadalupe River Authority at 830-896-5445.

• Julie Johnson led a small group of landowners and nature lovers through her restored property, which has thick native grasses that help rainwater soak deep into the soil. Johnson has a 100-acre ranch in Hays County. She has worked hard to restore the area where visitors can see a spectacular spread of big bluestem, plantain and other native grasses that have sprung up over the land since it was restored.