

NAPA NEWS

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NAPA MEMBERS ATTEND TCO NR ANNUAL MEETING

The Texas Committee on Natural Resources annual meeting was held in Nacogdoches on October 30-31. Since six of the NAPA preserves are in the Nacogdoches area, NAPA members were invited to attend. Our gracious hostess was Mrs. Roger Montgomery.

HICKORY RIDGE. The field trips began on a cold, misty Saturday morning when Kay Humphreys led us on a tour of the forested slopes and woodland creek of her Hickory Ridge preserve. What a joy it was to see that jewel of a property again! We scrambled down the slope, marveling over first one huge hickory and then another, nibbling the acorns of the Nutmeg hickory, debating the characteristics of the leaves of Chinkapin oak and Swamp chestnut oak, calling out the identification of a Florida maple or an Overcup oak to people farther back and crinkling the leaves of a Blackjack oak to hear the delightful parchment sound. Brilliant red dogwood berries seemed to be everywhere. At the base of a particularly large hickory was the temporary home of Young Squirrel, an orphan whom Kay rescued, nurtured and is now introducing to the wild. What an exhilarating morning!

BANITA CREEK. Saturday afternoon, after the business meeting, Heinz Gaylord led us on our first visit to the Banita Creek Reserve. In 1986, Mrs. Roger Montgomery gave NAPA a conservation easement on this 17 acres just four blocks north of downtown Nacogdoches. This year she deeded NAPA full title to the western section of the reserve.

What a wonderful surprise it was! A marvelous melding of native plants and urban species introduced by birds and squirrels. This Southern red oak/Loblolly

pine/Sweetgum community also has River birch, Swamp red maple, Water oak, Willow oak, Shumard oak, Black walnut (we found one walnut leaf with 25 leaflets on it!), and the most gigantic Hackberry trees that any of us had ever seen. The understory is luxuriant with Carolina buckthorn, Sassafras, Yaupon and Dogwood. A good mixed forest.

The iron rich, moss covered rocks of the creek contain many small fossils and have eroded into weird, intriguing shapes. Longleaf chasmanthium and liverwort grow along the banks. While walking through Charlotte Montgomery's back yard we saw the fall Ladies tress orchid which had been spotted and saved by an alert Kay Humphreys.

GRASS LAKE. Sunday morning, in spite of a 23 degree chill, Larry Shelton led us through the Grass Lake Overlook and down to the Grass Lake preserve. The Overlook, which spreads from the highway to the lake, is magnificent with big oaks, hickories, gums and pines. Every time I see the huge Post oak at the top of the slope, I simply gasp in disbelief. It is a 100 year old monster! Down the slope we gingerly stepped around the orchid seep and tried to imagine how it would look in the spring.

Larry explained that the whole area is in the process of progressing to a hardwood climax forest. Even in open areas where there have been blow downs of large trees, there is no evidence of juvenile pines. The real surprise was the number of Pawpaw trees, some with trunks to four inches in diameter and 25 to 30 feet high. One section of the lower slope had a whole colony of young Pawpaws.

Grass Lake now covers 17 acres, having expanded from four acres some 20 years ago. The enlargement is probably due to the clearcutting of slopes to the south to open

TCONR MEETING - Cont.

up pasture land. Studies have shown that clearcutting on hilly areas doubles the amount of run-off water. This is a favorite haunt of Wood ducks and herons. Many of the Water tupelo showed early signs of hollowing at the base, which should make good nesting places for Wood ducks in the future. Several especially large old pines were probably passed by in earlier logging because of the steepness of the slope. Some nutria have moved into the lake, and across the lake we could see many representatives of the roost of 400 Black vultures.

Many, many thanks and our grateful appreciation to Charlotte Montgomery, Kay Humphreys, Larry Shelton and Heinz Gaylord for providing this memorable weekend.

NED'S NEW BOOK

The revised edition of Ned Fritz's book, **REALMS OF BEAUTY**, has hit the bookstores. The publisher is The University of Texas Press.

It has three new chapters, with some additional photographs and tackles the contested issue of how old the groves in our East Texas Wildernesses are. Some were old before the Forest Service bought the national forests in 1936.

Another new chapter covers the Scenic Bend of the Neches River, nominated by a Forest Service committee for designation as a Scenic Area. Fritz describes the picturesque Old Aldridge Trail and how to enjoy it.

A third new chapter tells all about Walking in Wilderness, with a thrill for those who walk in only 100 feet, as well as those who walk through for several miles.

If you order your book from TCONR, they get a commission like any bookstore, and Ned will autograph it for you. The price is \$14.95 plus mailing costs. You may order one or more copies from Texas Committee

on Natural Resources, 5934 Royal Lane, Suite 223, Dallas, 75230.

(A GREAT GIFT IDEA - PUT REALMS OF BEAUTY INTO THE HOLIDAY STOCKING OF YOUR FAVORITE LOVER OF THE BIG OUTDOORS.)

A SAD FAREWELL

Dr. Louis Paradies, long time NAPA member and husband of NAPA director, Pat Paradies, died in late October when the leaves were turning golden. Louis is beloved and esteemed. We remember him fondly. Louis and Pat wanted NAPA to be a recipient of memorial gifts for those who want to give. Many have already given.

Jenny Wier of Beaumont, member of NAPA, has contributed in behalf of her family \$1,000 in memory of her mother, Frances A. Wier, a great lover of Mother Earth. Frances long preserved Wier Woods and then donated this beech-magnolia forest by conservation easement to The Nature Conservancy. Ned Fritz, as acquisition chairman of TNC and later in the same capacity for NAPA, assisted The Nature Conservancy for decades in lining up this significant land preservation. Frances will be greatly missed and appreciated for many years to come.

Linda Tays Dunn, mother of Genie Fritz, died on November 13 at the age of 100 after a long illness. This active lady had lived in Mexico and in many countries of Latin America as a foreign service wife. What great changes she must have seen in the land during her life! Our love and sympathy go to Genie and her family.

ARCO MAKES LAND DONATION

ARCO of Houston has given NAPA five acres of land on the northern outskirts of Houston. This land was given to us for resale. The income from this sale will be a welcome addition to funds slated for other purchases. We are very grateful for this gift. Thank you, ARCO!

