

Natural Area Preservation Association, Inc.
4144 Cochran Chapel Road
Dallas, TX 75209

(214) 352-8370

Katherine Goodbar, Editor

NEW NAPA TRACT ON NACONICHE CREEK

As the News goes to press, arrangements are being completed to acquire an 8.5 acre tract along Naconiche Creek in Nacogdoches County. This property will connect with Grass Lake Overlook and Grass Lake Preserve. The upland supports large oaks, elms and gums with younger land between there and the creek.

As these parcels are connected, they will conserve biological diversity and habitat integrity by reducing habitat fragmentation, increasing habitat for various plant and animal species and providing protected cover for wildlife to move from the uplands to water.

PROSPECTS FOR NEW ADDITIONS

In the June 1995 edition of NAPA News we had the pleasure of announcing the addition of five new NAPA land preserves. This was an unequaled experience for us! Never before had we had that many acquisitions in a six month period. What we didn't mention was the fact that some of these had been pending for more than a year. One we had been working on for over five years.

Even though people love their land and are convinced that it must be protected, it is often hard to feel that they are giving up even a small amount of control.

Often, in the case of either a conservation easement or a fee simple gift, many calls, letters and meetings are necessary to explain that the donor still has all of the uses and property rights that he had before. The only requirement is that the donor not do anything to alter the condition of the land when the donation was given.

Sample easements are sent, reviewed and returned. New ones are written to the landowners satisfaction...often several times.

With a purchase there are offers, counter offers, new offers, more counter offers. It takes time.

At present, negotiations are in progress on several highly desirable properties:

(1) One of these is 200 wooded acres in Northeast Texas on the Western edge of the Post Oak Savannah. It contains, along with an impressive list of desirable trees and other flora, shagbark hickory and possibly nutmeg hickory. There are questions about grazing leases.

(2) There is a 3 acre tract across the road from Marysee Prairie that we have wanted for many years. It was part of the original prairie and still contains many of the original grasses and at least seven of the characteristic pimple mounds. The land is privately owned, and up until now was not for sale. It is now on the market. We are definitely in the bidding.

(3) The probable donor of a 7 acre tract in Southwest Travis County is now looking over the conservation easement that NAPA has sent for his property to see if any changes are necessary. These are canyonlands and beautiful with a view that goes on forever.

(4) The appraisal is complete and the conservation easement is in the hands of the owner of 250 acres of truly wonderful land in Dallas County. There are stream banks lined with huge trees and fields of grasses and wildflowers.

(5) We have been approached by a man who lives near Amarillo who has land that he says has Prairie Dogs on it. We need to know more about this -- there might even be a Blackfooted ferret there!

(6) We are considering the purchase of an area near Jesus Canyon in Bander County. If you would like to know more about this or make a contribution, call Ned at 352-8370

NAPA LAND STEWARD IS HONORED

Maxine Johnston, Stewardship and Restoration Committee chairman for NAPA's Marysee Prairie, was honored at a banquet in Albuquerque on May 19 when the National Parks and Conservation Association awarded her the Margery Stoneman Douglas award as Citizen Conservationist 1996 for her commitment, persistence and special talents in making the Big Thicket National Preserve possible.

Maxine says, "Knowing the achievements of Margery Stoneman Douglas, that staunch defender of the Everglades, one could only feel honored, humble and unworthy to receive an award bearing her name."

Along with the citation, Maxine was presented a 2 1/2 ' x 3' color photograph of pitcher plants, club moss and snowy orchids which she says is magnificent. Along with this, Maxine was also presented a check. She is not saying how much it was, but with typical humility, she says it was TOO much...but she's not complaining.

In the remainder of an article in the Big Thicket Reporter, she pays tribute to at least 30 individuals and over 30 organizations whose names should also have been on the award because of their dedication and hard work.

To sum it up, Maxine says, "Lordy, I'm lucky! To have worked with and enjoyed a legion of special, talented people with a common, consuming goal is reward enough for anyone. Among them are some especially good enduring friends. And now comes the Margery Stoneman Douglas award! It doesn't get any better than this!"

Last year the energetic Maxine Johnston applied for and received a \$1,000 grant for the restoration of Marysee Prairie. For the second year, Entergy (formerly Gulf States Utilities) has awarded Natural Area Preservation Association \$1,000 for the restoration project.

For several years, dedicated volunteers have worked to clear invading species at the prairie and have made significant progress. This year's award with matching funds will be used for brush-hoggers and chippers. The Prairie is

located in Liberty County between Moss Hill and Batson north of SH 105.

CONSERVATION EASEMENT CONFERENCE

Representatives of land trusts, lawyers and advisors, land owners and interested individuals - about 300 in all - met in Austin on April 11-12 for a conference on Maintaining Private Lands With Conservation easements sponsored by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The conference was designed as a property owners guide for protecting land values.

As one of the largest land trusts in the state NAPA was well represented both on the program and in the audience. President Joe Pumphrey spoke on the advantages of conserving your land with an easement and steps necessary in implementing them on Thursday. Friday morning Janice Bezanson presided at a table discussion on Easement Stewardship while Claude Albritton led the discussion on Preserving Family Lands at his table. Later in the morning Ned Fritz spoke as a panelist on a session called "Your Next Steps..."

Separate sessions were held for landowners and advisors. The landowner sessions were primarily to clarify what a conservation easement is and the extreme flexibility possible in writing them. The advisor sessions addressed such topics as charitable contributions and income tax and estate tax benefits.

Some ranchers who were remembering the inflexibility of government regulations in the past remained skeptical of the fact that they can delineate their own terms in writing the easement and that these terms will be binding forever. However, many landowners expressed an interest in further conversations with us about preserving their land.

Other NAPAites who attended were David Bezanson, Steve Barclay, Katherine Goodbar, Sharon Reed, and Susan Peterson.

