

# The Prairie Dog

Newsletter of the Native Prairies Association of Texas  
Winter 2006 Vol. 19 No. 1

## Prairie Advocacy in the Austin Area Leads to \$5 Million Recommendation

NPAT and area Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT) chapters partnered to advocate prairie conservation to the City of Austin, which has led to a proposal for \$5 million in open space bond funding for prairie protection in the area!

To support the goals of the Envision Central Texas (ECT) regional planning group, the City of Austin formed a Bond Election Advisory Committee (BEAC) to seek public input and make a recommendation to the City Council for a bond issue. Included in the overall plan was funding for open space, mostly for Edwards Aquifer water quality protection land.

NPAT and the Austin and Williamson County NPSOT chapters saw the potential for preserving the known prairie remnants in the Austin area as part of the open space plan, so the groups partnered to advocate prairie and native plant conservation. The groups concentrated on Blackland Prairie, Grand Prairie (specifically the Lampasas Cut Plains area of the Cross Timbers and Prairies), and Edwards Plateau savanna remnants that occur in Travis and Williamson Counties.

Members of NPAT, NPSOT, Travis Audubon, and the Sierra Club gave public comments at the BEAC meetings, and many members who could not attend emailed comments in support of prairie conservation to the committee.

Jason Spangler, NPAT treasurer and NPSOT Austin secretary, and Lisa Spangler, NPAT and NPSOT member, created a presentation with many appealing prairie pictures full of flowers and grasses. Jason gave the presentation at two Bond Election Advisory Committee meetings, and also met with officials in local

park and recreation departments and provided GIS information for the known prairie remnants. NPAT board members Lee Stone and Marcia Hermann also spoke in support at several meetings.

Our presentations and advocacy also led to an in-depth article, "Dreaming of Buffalo", written by Rachel Proctor May in the Austin Chronicle weekly newspaper that highlighted the plight of the prairie and NPAT's involvement in conservation efforts.

Due to our combined efforts, the BEAC's bond recommendation to City Council included \$5 million for native prairie protection, and another prairie remnant may be included as part of another park contained in the bond recommendations! We estimate the \$5 million could be enough to protect about 15% of the known remnant acreage in the Austin area. The recommendation now goes to the City Council, and the bond issue is planned to go before Austin voters in November.

We may need to further advocate prairie preservation to the City Council and Austin voters, and give input about priority of specific prairie remnants if the bond issue passes. The City Council may reduce the overall bond issue total to \$500 million so we may need to advocate keeping the \$5 million for prairie preservation in the bond issue to the City Council soon as part of their hearings into the bonds.

We will send email to the NPAT-announce email list when this is needed, so help Austin area prairies by joining the email announcement list if you haven't already! To join, send an email to [NPAT-announce-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:NPAT-announce-subscribe@yahoo.com)!

*Contributed by: Jason Spangler*



Blackland Prairie Grasses

## Who We Are And What We Do

We care about Texas prairies  
 We teach prairie importance  
 We encourage prairie conservation  
 We manage & restore prairies  
 We advocate protection of prairies  
 We study and visit prairies  
 We practice prairie restoration  
 We supervise prairie easements  
 We maintain prairie gene banks  
 We protect Texas prairies directly

## Board of Directors 2005-2006

### John Pickett, President

1157 C.R. 2001  
 Glen Rose, Tx 76043  
 254-897-3646  
 john.pickett@texasprairie.org

### Jim Varnum, Vice President

14524 Tamerisk Lane  
 Farmer's Branch, Tx 75234  
 972-243-4098  
 241-543-0748 (m)  
 jim.varnum@texasprairie.org

### Pat Merkord, Secretary

902 Pine Shadow  
 Conroe, Tx 77301  
 936-788-2919 (h)  
 936-827-7973 (m)  
 pat.merkord@texasprairie.org

### Jason Spangler, Treasurer

8521 Foxhound Trail  
 Austin, Tx 78729-7280  
 512-249-7868 (h)  
 512-736-4199 (m)  
 jason.spangler@texasprairie.org

### Georgia Prakash, Membership

1905 William Brewster  
 Irving, Tx 75061  
 georgia.prakash@texasprairie.org

### Marcia Hermann

P.O. Box 1055  
 Del Valle, Tx 78617  
 512-247-4269  
 marcia.hermann@texasprairie.org

### Randall Schoen

1607 Lost Crossing  
 Arlington, Tx  
 817-417-4492 (h)  
 214-392-0025 (m)  
 randall.schoen@texasprairie.org

### Lee Stone

2002 - A Guadalupe St. PMB 290  
 Austin, Tx 78705-5609  
 lee.stone@texasprairie.org

## The Prairie Dog

This newsletter is published quarterly. Submit articles to:

Editor Nicole Merkord  
 editor@texasprairie.org

3014 William Cannon Dr. #425  
 Austin, Texas 78745

The Native Prairies Association of Texas is supported by volunteers. Material appearing in The Prairie Dog may not be reprinted or otherwise reproduced without written permission of the editor or the Board of Directors.

## Presidents of the Past

David Diamond, Ph. D.  
 Arnold Davis (deceased)  
 Lee Stone  
 Lynn Pace  
 Dr. Geoffrey Stanford (deceased)  
 Paul Mezynski, Ph. D.  
 James Alderson  
 Eugene Heinemann

## LIFE MEMBERS

Leonard Anderson  
 Jim Apken  
 Col. Delbert M. Bassett  
 Jim Bayless  
 Keith Benson  
 Catherine Brown  
 Mark B. Chapin  
 Rosetta & Prentiss Fatherree  
 Marian Fleming  
 Hugh B. Garrett  
 Marcia Huffman  
 Edith Hoytt  
 David Huffman  
 Clint Josey  
 Scott & Dona Lenharth  
 Alfred E. Maddin  
 Evelyn Merz  
 Katie Northup  
 Bob O'Kennon  
 Lynn & Twyla Pace  
 Mary T. Parker  
 Georgia Prakash  
 Charles & Jesse Price  
 Bob & Annette Rasmus  
 Brian Rowe  
 Judith Sear  
 Charles R. Snakard  
 Jason & Lisa Spangler  
 S. Lee Stone  
 Mr. & Mrs. C.J. Thomsen  
 M. Jeannine Tinsley  
 Stephen & Suzanne Tuttle  
 James H. Vance  
 Don W. Verser  
 Michael Williams  
 Rusty Yates  
 Loueen Peters

## Prairie Conservation Easements & Land Holdings of NPAT

### ***Maddin Ranch Preserve***

This 1,114-acre property, located in Mitchell County near Colorado City, lies in the Rolling Plains region of Texas and was donated in 1996 by Alfred Maddin. A major prairie restoration project to mixed grass prairie is in progress on this property, and NPAT is seeking volunteers interested in participating in native prairie restoration.

### ***Simpson Prairie***

Located in McLennan County near Crawford, Simpson Prairie is a terrific 50 acre Grand Prairie remnant in the Lampasas Cut Plains portion of the Cross Timbers and Prairies. Owned and restored by Mike Williams, who purchased the property and sold a conservation easement to NPAT at a generous price.

### ***Riesel Prairie***

A beautiful five-acre tallgrass prairie remnant generously donated to the NPAT by Dr. Paul and Virginia Mezynski. This property, located in Falls County, lies in the heartland of the endangered Blackland Prairie. Each year NPAT finds more prairie species at this tallgrass prairie remnant, making it one of our most diverse sites.

### ***Falls County Conservation Easements: Dragoo Prairie, Wieting Prairie, and Drews Prairie***

NPAT holds conservation easements on three remnant Blackland Prairie sites totaling 32 acres in Falls County. These tallgrass prairie remnants were hayfields of German farmers that protected the native grasses and plants for their superior quality hay.

### ***Peters Prairie***

This four acre Blackland Prairie remnant in Collin County was purchased from Loueen Peters at a generous price.

### ***Tanglewood Prairie***

This excellent 31 acre Post Oak Savanna remnant in Lee County is a partnership between the Natural Area Preservation Association (NAPA) and NPAT. NAPA purchased the remnant with a grant from the Magnolia Charitable Trust, with a conservation easement held by NPAT.

### ***Prairie Projects***

Granger Lake Gene Bank/Prairie Restoration at Granger Lake in Williamson County, in partnership with the Army Corp of Engineers and the Native Plant Society of Texas  
Brodie Wild: 4 acre savanna remnant/restoration in Austin/Travis County, in partnership with the City of Austin Water Utility - Wildland Conservation Division and the Austin chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas

### **About this Newsletter**

If you wish to submit articles, send to editor@texasprairie.org. We welcome reports, articles, literature reviews, and announcements related to native prairies. Please submit photos via e-mail.

### **Deadlines for Submission:**

Spring 2006: April 5th  
Summer 2006: July 1st  
Fall 2006: October 1st

## ***Did You Know ?***

There are a pair of Bald Eagles nesting off Highway 71 between Burnet and Llano, Texas. These rare local residents draw hundreds of people to this beautiful hill country site. So slow down the next time you're passing through and look towards the west!

# Who's Who of Prairie Animals

Also known as the "prairie wolf," the coyote belongs to the dog family. The coyote's natural habitat is the grassland but has extended its range from Alaska and Canada down to Central America. These intelligent mammals live in pairs or alone. They have highly developed senses of smell, hearing, and vision.

Vocalizations are also commonly heard by these social animals. The four vocalizations that can be heard include howling, yelping, barking, and huffing. If you live near the edge of a town or in the country, you are sure to have heard these sounds at night and in the early morning when coyotes are most active.

Coyotes are omnivores and feed on small mammals such as rabbits, gophers and prairie dogs, to in-



## The Coyote

### Taxonomy

Class: Mammalia  
Order: Carnivora  
Family: Canidae  
Genus: Canis  
Species: latrans

### Vital Stats

Height: 15-20 in.  
Weight: 15-45 lbs.  
Lifespan: 15 yrs.  
Top Speed: 40 mph  
Range: 10-12 miles

sects, birds, reptiles, and fruit. Like dogs and most other mammals, coyotes are "digitrade," meaning they walk with only their toes touching the ground. Coyotes can also mate with domestic dogs as well as wolves. These mixed breeds are commonly called a "coydog."

Although there is much controversy over the issue, the increasing human encroachment does pose serious problems. With the expanding population and urban sprawl, contact between coyotes and humans is inevitable. Not only can coyotes be dangerous to humans, they can also eat pets and livestock.

Many environmentalists believe that healthy coyote populations preserve the balance of nature. On the other hand, many sportsmen believe that these adaptable and interesting creatures are responsible for the decline in game species.

### Bibliography

[http://www.desertusa.com/june96/du\\_cycot.html](http://www.desertusa.com/june96/du_cycot.html).  
Accessed 1-11-2006.

## NPAT NEEDS BOARD MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

NPAT needs members willing to serve on the Board of Directors, and also needs volunteers to help with prairie restoration and advocacy! Please contact NPAT via email at [info@texasprairie.org](mailto:info@texasprairie.org) or via postal mail if you are interested.

# Loueen Peters

Loueen Peters always knew her land in North Texas was special. And she agonized over her need to sell it, hoping to find someone who could care for it as much as she did. Our part of her story began in the hot summer days of 1999. In late August of that year, Loueen contacted The Nature Conservancy's Jim Eidson, who was the Land Stewart of the Conservancy's premier Texas Tallgrass Prairie Clymer's Meadow. She asked him to come to her prairie and give his evaluation of it. A week after his visit, Jim wrote, confirming that "the real treasure on your land is a two to three acre prairie which is part of a larger, possibly 9 - 10 acre remnant. This appears to be an Austin chalk or Mollisol prairie type which is quite rare in the Blackland Prairie. Given the rarity of any of the Blackland Prairie, this is the rare of the rare types."

Loueen doubled her efforts to find the right buyer, resisting any offers from those she knew would only plow it up for cropland. By 2002 she found that buyer when NPAT purchased 4 acres from her with

## FUN FACT

*Prairies are one of the most recently developed ecosystems in North America*

<http://www.campsilos.org/mod1/students/index.shtml>

fund- ing pro-  
v i d e d by Buzz

Avery and Lee Stone of Austin. So that it would be safe long into the future, Loueen assisted this conservation purchase by selling the land for less than she desired.

The Board of Directors thanks Loueen for this assistance. Recently the Board honored Loueen Peters with a Life Membership for her diligence in finding a conservation-minded buyer and for placing conservation of Tallgrass Prairie above higher profits.

# NPAT HAS A NEW ADDRESS!

Native Prairies Association of Texas  
2002 - A Guadalupe St. PMB 290  
Austin, TX 78705-5609

We are changing the mailing address because the Post Office box at the old address had repeated problems and resulted in some mail returned to the sender. If you have received any returned mail sent to the old address (such as membership renewals), we apologize and recommend you resend the mail to the new address instead.

FYI: You can also renew your membership online or donate online at <http://www.texasprairie.org/donate/> via credit card or direct debit!

## Protect Your Prairie Forever!

Do you own a prairie or savanna remnant or restoration? Consider protecting it forever via a conservation easement with the Native Prairies Association of Texas!

NPAT is especially interested in tallgrass and similar prairie remnants in the Blackland Prairie, Coastal Prairie, and Grand Prairie (of the Crosstimbers and Prairies) regions of Texas.

The tallgrass prairie of Texas is almost gone, with less than 1% remaining. The Blackland Prairie is considered the most endangered large ecosystem in North America. Help us protect Texas' prairie heritage together by considering a conservation easement with NPAT.

For more information, please contact NPAT via email at [info@texasprairie.org](mailto:info@texasprairie.org) or via postal mail.

.....  
 • *Donate to NPAT to help protect Texas prairies. Many employers will match donations, so check with your employer to make your donation go farther!* •  
 .....

## THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

Thank you to our donors who have supported NPAT during the past 18 months!

**\$10,000 and up**

Jason & Lisa Spangler

Suzanne Tuttle

Patricia Merkord

Alfred Maddin

Evaline & Mike Woodrey

Native Plant Society of

Texas

**\$5000 to \$9999**

Brian Rowe

TCEQ

Clint Josey

Electronic Arts

**Up to \$100**

Randy Schoen

Ann & Don Connell

John Pickett

Janet Miller

Paul Baldon

W.W. Isle & P.J. Walker

Dagmar Higgins

Mary Thorpe Parker

Carolyn Fannon

Stephen Wood

Marcia Hermann

Paul Montgomery

Coby Dinges

Loueen Peters

Michael Mizell

William Bennett

Jim Weatherly

David & Elizabeth Smith

Doyle & Pat Spitzer

Randy Rosiere

**\$1000 - \$4999**

Lee Stone

Judith Sear

Robert Ramus

**\$100 - \$999**

Jeannine Tinsley

Jim and Stephanie Varnum

Hershey Foundation

Georgia Prakash

Christine Rawlinson

D.W. Verser

Kirk and Judy Pate

Evelyn Merz

Catherine Ross Bolton Brown

Paula Roberts

John Hirschi

David & Linda Knowles

Winfred Simon

## Websightings...

*"Prairie Ecosystem"*

<http://www.blackfootedferret.org/prairie.html#top>

As part of the Black-footed Ferret Recovery Program website, this webpage provides a detailed description of the history and geography of the prairie ecosystem. After checking out the "Ferret Facts," be sure to read up on the background of the BFFRIT. For the educators among us, try the links for kids and teachers which includes lesson plans.

If you have a website you'd like to be highlighted in a future *Prairie Dog* issue, simply e-mail: [editor@texasprairie.org](mailto:editor@texasprairie.org)

## Prairie Plant Highlight

### Texas Bluebell, Prairie Gentian or Lisianthus

#### *Eustoma grandiflorum*



*This lovely blue or purple flower is a native prairie plant that is becoming increasingly rare due to over collecting and loss of prairie habitat. There is, however, a healthy population that bloomed beautifully last year at Granger Lake Seed Bank/Prairie Restoration. Although there are a number of cultivars that are now cultivated and sold by nurseries, locally collected seed is better for a restoration than using a cultivar or garden variety. It enjoys a high degree of popularity among gardeners because of its long bloom period and beauty of cut flowers. Although it is slow to germinate, it can be easily grown from seed in a cool 55 to 60 degrees indoors. Gardeners often*

**You can help save prairie habitat for Texas Bluebells by putting your prairie land in a conservation easement and joining the Native Prairies Association of Texas today!**

#### **Native Annual of American Prairies**

#### **Growth & Requirements:**

**Sun to partial Shade, Average water  
Heat tolerant, Propagated from seed  
Well drained loam, 5.6 to 7.5 pH**

**Blooms from late spring  
Throughout summer to late fall**

**Propagated from seed indoors**

**Rare & threatened in the wild**

**Grows easily in gardens**

*refer to it as Lisianthus. Montgomery, Texas, uses its native Texas bluebells in advertising the beauty of the city and surroundings. In 2001, the country of Israel chose the prairie gentian as one of four flowers featured on a special edition of stamps. It is susceptible to plant viruses, mold, stem cankers and Fusarium wilt. Whiteflies, mites, aphids and thrips can also be a problem. Many bees, birds and butterflies love this plant so it is an excellent choice for wildlife gardens. The name Eustoma means open throat and describes the open corolla of the flower. If you see this plant in the wild, please don't pick this most beautiful wildflower of Texas prairies.*



# Putting It All Together

The Native Prairies Association of Texas Annual Meeting,  
The Holistic Resource Management Annual Meeting, and Texas Wildlife Association Event

## **Friday, April 21, 2006: Prairies Field Day - Washington County Fairgrounds Event Center**

10:00 am	HRM of TX Annual Meeting
11:00 am	NPAT Annual Meeting
12:30 pm	Registration
1:00 pm	Welcome, Introductory Remarks - Richard Sechrist, HRM of TX president Introduce Workshop Leaders - Larry Pierce, Washington County Extension Agent
1:15 pm	Bus to Quebe native prairie for walkabout with team leaders for plant ID, etc.
2:45 pm	Bus to Dr. Bill Eikenhorst's prairie restoration site
3:00 pm	<i>Dr. Bill Eikenhorst &amp; others</i> – land manager overview, history and value of prairie restoration efforts <i>Split into groups for plant identification walk-about with team leaders</i>
4:15 pm	NATURE BREAK
4:30 pm	Regroup for discovery summary & game found in native prairie habitat
5:30 pm	Wrap-up & Bus back to Fairgrounds

## **Friday, April 21, 2006: Fish Fry & Social at the Lake**

6:30 pm	Caravan leaves from Fairgrounds for social gathering at Larry Joe Doherty's place
6:45 pm	Eat, drink, visit, and enjoy the great outdoors
7:30 pm	<i>Larry Joe Doherty</i> - official welcome; new landowner passion for stewardship <i>Joseph Fitzsimons</i> , Chairman, Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission - acknowledging cooperative & individual landowner stewardship efforts <i>Blair Fitzsimons</i> - Agricultural Land Trust

## **Saturday, April 22, 2006: Conference on Putting it All Together**

7:30 am	<i>Registration/Visit Trade Show &amp; Silent Auction/Mix &amp; Mingle</i>	
8:30 am	Welcome	<i>Richard Sechrist, Larry Pierce, Keith Goodwin</i>
8:45 am	Creating Your Future Through Holistic Planning	<i>Richard and Peggy Sechrist</i>
9:45 am	Texas Landowners Which kind are you?	<i>Jenny Sanders – Texas Wildlife Association</i>
10:05 am	<i>Break/Visit Trade Show &amp; Silent Auction/Mix &amp; Mingle</i>	
10:25 am	Successes and Challenges Habitat restoration in the Post Oak Savannah	<i>Clayton Wolf – Texas Parks and Wildlife</i>
10:55 am	Landowner Panel	<i>Richards Ranch, Reed Family Ranch, Treadwell Brady Ranch, 5M farm, Spirit Springs</i>
12 noon	<i>Lunch/Visit Trade Show &amp; Silent Auction/Mix &amp; Mingle</i>	
12:45 pm	Keynote Speaker	<i>Wayne Hanselka; HRM of TX, TAMU, TCE, TSSRM</i>
	From the ABC's to A to Z: Plan-ting Seeds for Successful Stewardship	

## **How to and What's Hot Sessions: Choose 2 - offered at 1:30-2:30 and 3:30 to 4:30 pm**

- Write your own management plan
- Build your own bird box
- Update on Land Fragmentation study
- Start your own Wildlife Management COOP/  
create good wildlife habitat on small acreage
- Trap feral hogs and help feed the hungry
- Agricultural Conservation Easements
- Wildlife Exemptions
- Create your own backyard habitat

2:30 pm	Break/Visit Trade Show & Silent Auction/Mix & Mingle
4:30 pm	Wrap-up, announce silent Auction winners, adjourn

# REGISTRATION

This is a conference held JOINTLY with Holistic Range Management of Texas. Your Board of Directors strives to work with like-minded organizations to accomplish our goals of prairie conservation. You are invited to attend this joint conference and enjoy socializing with like-minded folks! We hope to see you there. There will be no other large conference offered by NPAT this year.

While there are registration fees for the conference, Prairies Field Day and the Fish Fry & Social, there is no charge for only attending the NPAT ANNUAL MEETING ON FRIDAY AT 11 AM at the Washington County Fairgrounds Event Center. The HRM Annual Meeting is at 10 AM.

-----  
**Full Conference Registration -**

\$110 (\$200 couple) - includes Prairies Field Day, Fry & Social at Doherty's Lake, plus Saturday Conference with lunch included.

**Friday Prairies Field Day only -**

\$40 (\$70 couple)

**Friday Evening Fish Fry & Social only -** \$25 (\$45 couple)

**Saturday Conference & Lunch only -**

\$75 (\$130 couple)  
-----

If you join Holistic Range Management for \$35 basic membership, the fees for the various activities drop: Full Conference Registration - \$90 (\$160 couple), Friday Prairies Field Day only - \$40 (\$70 couple), Friday Evening Fish Fry & Social - \$25 (\$45 couple), Saturday Conference and Lunch only - \$75 (\$130)

There is no discount for NPAT members as this is HRM of Tx main fundraiser for the year. There will be an interesting trade show and silent auction in addition to our annual meeting, the field day, social and conference.

HRM of Texas is handling the registration for both organizations.

You may register on-line at [www.hrm-texas.org](http://www.hrm-texas.org) or send your check to HRM of Texas, 5 Limestone Trail, Wimberley, TX (512-847-3822) with name, address and options chosen.

**IMPORTANT:**

Motel/hotel rooms will be limited as there are other activities that weekend! Get your room registration as soon as possible. There are B&B's available. We will list all the options on our website [www.texasprairie.org](http://www.texasprairie.org). If you don't have internet service, call Lee Stone at 512-535-4994 for a list of the options.

## Other Important Organizations

Texas Parks & Wildlife  
<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/>

National Wildlife Federation  
<http://www.nwf.org>

Prairies Forever  
<http://www.prairies.org>

The Nature Conservancy  
<http://www.nature.org>

## PRAIRIE SURVEY OF LIMESTONE COUNTY BEGINS

NPAT has begun a survey of Limestone County for tallgrass prairie and savanna remnants. Limestone County is approximately 50% in the Blackland Prairie and 50% in the Post Oak Savanna according to the Illustrated Flora of East Texas.

The Property Acquisition and Management (PAM) committee chose Limestone County for the next survey because it is adjacent to Falls County (where we have found a large number of tallgrass prairie remnants kept as native haymeadows) and because we have no data at all on the county from past data sources.

NPAT is contracting with Jay Kane to perform the Limestone County survey. Jay will locate

potential prairie remnants using aerial photography and ground searches, survey the potential remnants, locate property owners, contact all locatable owners about interest in conservation easements, and prepare a full electronic report for the NPAT board.

NPAT is seeking funding to hire surveyors to complete the remaining prairie remnant surveys of the Blackland, Coastal, and Grand Prairie regions. If you would like to support this effort, please contact the Fundraising Committee at: [donate@texasprairie.org](mailto:donate@texasprairie.org).

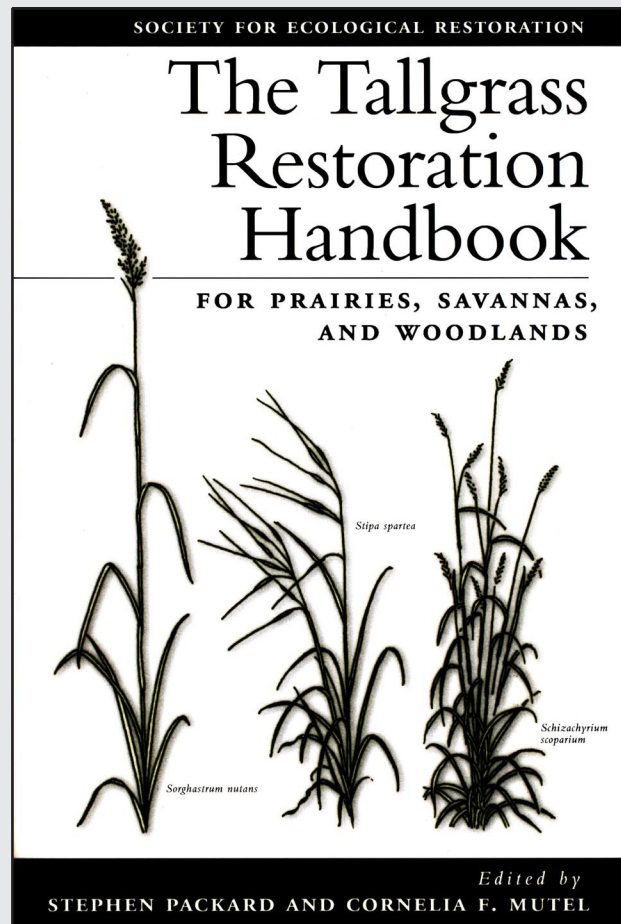
Contributed by: Jason Spangler

### The Tallgrass Restoration Handbook FOR PRAIRIES, SAVANNAS, AND WOODLANDS

Edited by Stephen Packard & Cornelia F Mutel  
Society for Ecological Restoration  
463 pages, ISBN: 1559633204 Paperback

Book Review by Pat Merkord

If you are interested in ecological restoration of any type this book is a must. What is unique about this handbook is its focus on diversity, population genetics, gene pools, communities, competition and succession. Multiple authors with field experience in restoration contributed to the book. The authors approach restoration as an evolving craft that applies to much more than prairies although prairie restoration has been leading the way in this emerging science. Particularly useful is the section on plant and seed selection which takes into account the genetic makeup of seeds and plants and the parameters of the habitat they will be placed in. It also includes extensive appendices of plant & seed sources, equipment, plant names and lists for restoration. It is an essential guide for restorationists.



# BOARD MEETS AT GRANGER LAKE IN NOVEMBER

On November 12, 2005, NPAT board of Directors gathered at the Granger Lake Army Corps of Engineers Office for field trip to the adjacent restoration site and gene bank and subsequent meeting. Board members looked on as Scott Lenharth showed how the gene bank was being increased and maintained. The site showed evidence of a successful restoration with little bluestem, indiagrass, gamagrass and big bluestem thriving. All present admired the Texas bluebells growing profusely along the prairie edge. One observer was taking a picture of the bluebells when he was surprised by a feral pig that was doing its own observing of the situation.

Later at the meeting, Jason Spangler reported



on efforts to get prairie land aquisition funds in an upcoming bond election in Austin. He initiated the Texas Prairie Coalition of organizations that save prairies and urged NPAT to be the first to join which was approved. Registration of prairie remnants in cemeteries and railroad right of ways and signs to mark them was approved. It was also decided that the remaining grant funds for Granger be spent on a brochure with a trail map and prairie information for West Taylor Park at Granger Lake. Another motion approved the recognition of Bob and Mickey Burleson for their prairie restoration efforts. Their prairie remnant contains many rare prairie plants.

The treasurer reported the general fund is low due to mesquite tree removal at Maddin preserve but



Board members viewing prairie restoration site and gene bank at Granger. From left to right are pictured Jason Spangler, John Pickett, Pat Merkord, Lee Stone, Scott Lenharth, Georgia Prakash.

income from membership and donations exceeded the projected amounts. More funds will be required to pay the last Coastal Seed Increase Program installment. NPAT acquired an \$1800 mitigation fee from TCEQ to be spent on prairie land in Wharton county. Since there is no land available for that amount, NPAT is requesting the money be applied elsewhere. Funds will also be needed for a financial review by a CPA. Due to the need for increased revenues, a Fundraising Committee was approved and members will be Jason Spangler, Pat Merkord & Lee Stone.

Nicole Merkord, a teacher at San Marcos High School and daughter of secretary Pat Merkord volunteered to be our newsletter editor. Members should send items to her at [nicole@merkord.com](mailto:nicole@merkord.com).

It was approved to change the current mailing address and Lee Stone agreed to be the mail volunteer and to keep two file cabinets at her home dedicated to NPAT records.

Jason Spangler was added to the Property and Aquisition committee at his request and it was agreed this committe would pursue further county surveys. A report was given on the monitoring of Falls County Easement and their maintenance. The meeting ended with a discussion of upcoming events and members were asked to review Core Practices for land trust accreditation.

# ~ NPAT 2006 CALENDAR ~

**March 4.** *NPAT board meeting.* Time and location TBA in Austin, TX. Board meetings are open to NPAT membership.

**March 25.** *NPAT workday at the Riesel Prairie Land Preserve.* Begins at 9:00 am. Tasks include control of invasive plants. The 5-acre preserve is a native prairie remnant located near Riesel on Falls County road 149. For directions contact Jim Varnum at [jevvarnum@aol.com](mailto:jevvarnum@aol.com) or 972-243-4098.

**April 8.** *Parker County and Wise County Natural Areas and Botanical Treasures Fieldtrip.* Led by Jeff Quayle. Begins at 8:00 am in Fort Worth. Carpool or caravan. This is an all-day trip stopping at various natural areas in Parker and Wise Counties to see rare and uncommon north Texas plants. Opportunity to see the rare Quayle's Ragwort (*Senecio quaylei*) in Parker County. Bring water and lunch. For information, directions and to register, contact Jeff Quayle at [s-quayle@ev1.net](mailto:s-quayle@ev1.net) or 817-729-0283.

**April 15.** *Field trip to Brodie Wild in Austin. 10:00 am to 12:00 pm.* Brodie Wild is a 4-acre savanna prairie remnant that lies in the transition area of the Edwards Plateau and Blackland Prairie. The effort is being conducted by the Austin chapter of NPSOT and NPAT in partnership the City of Austin Water Utility - Wildland Conservation Division. This Field Trip is part of Austin Nature Day, an area-wide event of many nature related activities. Location is the southwest corner of Brodie Lane and Slaughter Lane in Austin. For more information, contact Jason Spangler at [Jason.spangler@texasprairie.org](mailto:Jason.spangler@texasprairie.org) or 512-736-4199.

**April 15.** *Spring Wildflower Walk.* Breckinridge Park, Richardson, Collin Co. 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm. A prairie is a wonderful microcosm of grasses and wildflowers and the animals, birds and insects that live there. Bring your wildflower books, binoculars and cameras. Led by Jim Varnum of NPAT. For information, directions and to RSVP, contact the Jim at [jevvarnum@aol.com](mailto:jevvarnum@aol.com) or 972-243-4098.

**April 21-22.** *NPAT Annual Members Meeting & HRM of Texas Annual Meeting.* Brenham, Washington County. 10:00 am. For more information contact Marcia Hermann at 512-247-4269 or [maradan@isp.com](mailto:maradan@isp.com) or visit HRM web site at [harmofox@earthlink.net](mailto:harmofox@earthlink.net)

**April 29.** *NPAT Field Trip and Conservation Easement Inspection to Simpson Prairie.* 9:00 am. Preserve is a 50-acre prairie remnant near Valley Mills, McLennan County. For more information, contact Jason Spangler at [Jason.spangler@texasprairie.org](mailto:Jason.spangler@texasprairie.org) or 512-736-4199.

**May 6.** *Fieldtrip to Isle du Bois State Park at Ray Roberts Lake.* Denton County. Led by Jeff Quayle. 9am to 1pm. Bring lunch and water. For information and directions and to register, contact Jeff Quayle at [s-quayle@ev1.net](mailto:s-quayle@ev1.net) or 817-729-0283.

**July 23-26.** *2006 20th North American Prairie Conference.* Kearney, Nebraska. Early registration ends April 15th. For more information contact Dr. Paul Twigg at [twiggp@unk.edu](mailto:twiggp@unk.edu) or 308-865-8315. Visit the Conference website at <http://www.napc2006.org/>

Events in the calendar are subject to change. Visit the NPAT web site [www.texasprairie.org](http://www.texasprairie.org) for up-to-date details.

# Research Review:

## *Coastal Prairies and Prescribed Fire*

A recently published 2005 Open-File Report by the U.S. Geological Survey and U.S Department of Interior titled *Effects of Prescribed Fire in the Coastal Prairies of Texas* gives new data on the effectiveness of fire as a management tool. The purpose of the study was to analyze historical records, to establish methods to monitor prescribed burns and investigate the effects on invasive species of interest. It also documents fire effects on prairies birds threatened from loss of habitat.

Two invasive species targeted in this study were native *Baccharis halimifolia* and non-native Chinese tallow tree. Their investigation of historical records told of prairies with dense growth of tall grasses and thick cane brakes along rivers and streams but little shrubs or trees present in the prairie regions. *Baccharis* is a tall, fast growing shrub that moves quickly into disturbed grasslands. It has been introduced in Europe and Australia where it is now considered a serious pest. In areas where it invades, it reduces species diversity. An even greater threat comes from the Chinese tallow tree because it produces a large amount of seeds and seedlings can sprout and grow under a variety of conditions. It is easily spread by birds and water, and can dominate an area in as little as five years, eliminating native species. It also suppresses the fuel species beneath the canopy and thus decreases the effectiveness of fire.



The major findings of the study suggest both species can be somewhat controlled by prescribed fire but not entirely eliminated. The response of *Baccharis* was variable and control was best achieved by burning during the growing season and under drought conditions. Chinese tallow tree often becomes immune to burning because of lack of fuel under it and because of its tremendous ability to resprout after burning. The recommendations of the study were repeated burning of *Baccharis* until grassland dominates and frequent monitoring. Once under control burns every 3 years may be more desirable. Without burning, tallow trees will quickly dominate but burning does give some suppression if trees are burned when small. Larger tree stands are much less susceptible and are much more difficult to control or eliminate by burning.

In conclusion, this report (46 pages) gives a detailed historical review of past habitat character and addresses the response of invasives in detail. It also describes the response of threatened grassland birds to prescribed burning as a management tool. The article can be read in its entirety at: [www.nwrc.usgs.gov/factshts/2005-1287-fire-in-coastal-texas-report.pdf](http://www.nwrc.usgs.gov/factshts/2005-1287-fire-in-coastal-texas-report.pdf).

Review by Pat Merkord

**FUN FACT**  
 Over 100 plant species can occur in a prairie of less than 5 acres.

### ***NPAT Email Announcement List***

A moderated, low traffic email list for announcements of NPAT field trips, conferences, meetings, and volunteer activities has been created. Opportunities to help protect prairies will also be emailed to this list.

To subscribe, send an email to [NPAT-announce-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:NPAT-announce-subscribe@yahoogroups.com), go to the NPAT web page at <http://texasprairie.org/>, or include your email address on your next renewal form.



*Also known as the Blazing Star, the Gayfeather is a native of Texas prairies.*

### **Back Issues of the Prairie Dog Available Online**

Past issues of The Prairie Dog, the newsletter of the Native Prairies Association of Texas, are available online at: <http://texasprairie.org/newsletter/>.

Some past newsletters may have articles removed if online distribution was not permitted by the author. A PDF reader such as Adobe Acrobat Reader is required to view the newsletters, and can be downloaded via a link on the newsletter web page.

For webpage information or problems e-mail:  
Scott Lenharth, Webmaster  
[webmaster@texasprairie.org](mailto:webmaster@texasprairie.org)

### **Need Information on Prairie and Savanna Remnants and Restorations**

**NPAT is looking for prairie and savanna remnants and restorations throughout Texas, especially in the Blackland Prairie, Coastal Prairie, and Grand Prairie (of the Crosstimbers and Prairies) regions of Texas.**

**Knowledge of prairie remnants will greatly assist conservation planning, and help us identify land owners so we can inquire about their interest in protecting their prairie.**

**If you know of any existing remnants (even drive-by sightings or just rumors), own a prairie remnant, or are restoring prairie on your land, please contact NPAT via email at [info@texasprairie.org](mailto:info@texasprairie.org) or via postal mail.**

This could be  
your Ad!!!

## Ad Price List

Full Page	\$100
Half Page	\$50
1/4 Page	\$25

Mail check to:  
Native Prairies Association of Texas  
2002 - A Guadalupe St. PMB 290  
Austin, TX 78705-5609

E-mail Ad description to:  
editor@texasprairie.org

## *Bluestem Environmental Consultants*

### **Quality Consulting for Environmental Projects**

BEC specializes in habitat restoration, Wildlife management , endangered species, compliance, native plants and landscaping, water resources, and educational services.

See our website at [www.bluestem-env.com/](http://www.bluestem-env.com/)

Our consultants can offer years of experience and knowledge of state and federal permit requirements, tax assessments for conservation programs, environmental assessments, mitigation plans, wetland delineation, endangered species permitting and NEPA compliance. We operate in all areas of Texas. Contact us at 936-788-2919



# **BECOME A MEMBER OF THE NATIVE PRAIRIES ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS (NPAT)**

## **Membership and Information Form**

Use this form to request information or to join NPAT. If you are joining, please mail a check to:

**The Native Prairies Association of Texas  
2002 - A Guadalupe St. PMB 290  
Austin, TX 78705-5609**

Membership Categories: \$350 Life, \$35 Group, \$30 Family, \$20 Individual, \$10 Student

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home/Office Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I'm interested in prairies because: \_\_\_\_\_

Life Memberships benefit the NPAT Endowment Fund. Please consider adding an extra \$5 or \$10 to your membership dues. It really helps us out! <http://www.texasprairie.org>

Please check one: I  *decline*  *would like* to be listed in a future member's directory.

**Native Prairies Association of Texas**  
2002 - A Guadalupe St. PMB 290  
Austin, TX 78705-5609  
<http://www.texasprairie.org>

<p><b>NON PROFIT ORG. U.S. POSTAGE PAID PERMIT NO. 3367 AUSTIN TX</b></p>
---

**\* 2006 Annual Members Meeting/Prairie Field Day & Conference:  
April 21-22 in Brenham!!**