



# Go Outside!

The Summer e-newsletter of  
Kendall County Partnership for Parks

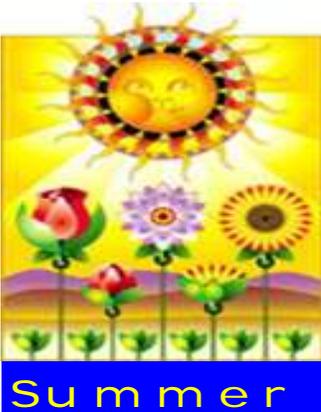
*Conservation and Recreation*

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SUMMER EDITION

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## KCPP Report

What a notable spring for KCPP. On a beautiful Memorial Day afternoon, we dedicated the first county park, James Kiehl River Bend Park. Over 200 citizens attended and the patriotic, moving ceremony was featured on the evening news and in area newspapers. What a great day and a great reward for the taxpayers and volunteers who have worked diligently for the last five years to reach that day! **Our first park!** KCPP donated over 8000 volunteer hours and contributed over \$140,000.00 to help James Kiehl River Bend become the appealing and useful park you now see.

Our dedication continues - monthly service mornings are scheduled to help maintain the park and assist the Parks Department. We began in June with a good turnout of fun-loving folks, made new friends, and had a thoroughly enjoyable time. KCPP is grateful for the support of hardworking volunteers. **Volunteers transform interest into action!** Come out and join us, just email to receive the schedule. We visit the park each month to survey visitors and have received very positive responses! What do people like best about the park? "It's quiet." We will continue our surveys for two years - if you see a KCPP member on a Saturday afternoon say "Hi" and take a moment to chat. Your comments are important.

KCPP participated in the Cibolo Nature Center's Living History Festival in May. The day started with lots of enthusiasm and an early crowd, but torrential rains flooded the event, ending our fun. We'll be back; we are looking forward to next year and are already planning our old-time outfits to wear.

The annual Adventure Fest at Joshua Springs Park and Preserve (our second county park) was a success for KCPP. An estimated 2000 visitors attended and we talked about parks with almost all of them! Adventure Fest showcases the natural beauty of Joshua Springs and provides a convenient chance to try out a variety of recreational activities. It is a **perfect opportunity for KCPP to promote conservation and recreation** and reach a large number of folks interested in supporting our parks.

Soon we will begin working with the Parks Department on our third county park, 117 acres on the Guadalupe River. It will be a wonderful location for river recreation, birding and wildlife observation, exercise, native plant study, and peace and quiet. KCPP will contribute volunteer hours, grant funding, and donations to help improve the new park. **Another naturally awesome destination for county residents!**

As a non-profit, we are dependent on the community for our success. **Please support our good work.** It's easy and worthwhile to do. Become a member - membership has its benefits. Buy a KCPP cap or shirt - they look great! Make a donation - cash and services are essential to our operations. Dedicate a feature at James Kiehl River Bend Park - honor or remember a loved one, group or business. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Have a terrific summer! *Kristie*



## Recreation Review

### Cycling from James Kiehl River Bend Park

By Kristen Scheller

The number one reason my husband and I moved to Kendall County instead of San Antonio is that we wanted to be able to roll our bikes out of the garage and immediately be in a great place to ride.

All three Kendall County parks lie in areas where one can roll out the bikes and be on scenic low-traffic roads. I think the best park to bicycle from is James Kiehl River Bend Park (JKRB Park). It is a good place to drive to and then ride a bike. After the bike ride, it is nice to jump into the Guadalupe River to cool off.

The bicycling from JKRB Park is fabulous for at least moderately fit adults and children about eight years or older. This area is part of the Hill Country for a reason and every route has some short and sometimes steep hills to tackle.

Below are a few suggestions for bike rides starting from JKRB Park.

Please note there is no drinking water at the park. Another note of caution: almost all river crossings along the described routes are in disrepair. Watch for loose gravel and potholes. RR473 has a modest amount of traffic with a speed limit of 60 mph. Other country roads are less traveled and have 45 mph speed limits.

Two short interesting rides begin by turning either left or right from the park entrance and riding to RR473. River Bend Road has little traffic.

If one turns right, stop at the well-kept Brownsboro Cemetery founded in 1870. The cemetery is notable for the graves of five Civil War veterans and is maintained by the Comfort Heritage Foundation. Look for the spectacular and noisy peacocks across the road. Continue past the cemetery turning left onto North River Bend Road. It is about 1.6 miles to RR473 - a modest climb with a few bumps - but well worth the fabulous view of the Guadalupe River



Valley. From 473 it is practically all downhill back to the park!

Probably my favorite bike ride from JKRB Park begins by turning left and completing a loop of approximately 21 miles. Turning left one passes the Insall Family Cemetery and approximately 0.7 miles from the park reaches the Guadalupe River and the historic San Antonio and Aransas Pass railroad bridge. Keep riding to RR473 and turn right heading towards Sisterdale then ride approximately 1.1 miles. RR473 makes a sharp right and Old No. 9 Hwy. continues straight ahead. Continue onto Old No. 9 Hwy. This road roughly follows the abandoned San Antonio, Fredericksburg & Northern Railroad Company railway.

The first three miles on Old No. 9 gently rise through a pretty valley lined with hand built stone fences and views of Block Creek's limestone cliffs.

The grade begins to increase as one climbs to the top of the pass, approximately 7.9 miles from RR473. Old Tunnel Wildlife Management Area is located at the top of the pass. A 920 foot railroad tunnel was built through the "Big Hill" in 1913. Trains stopped running in 1942 and Mexican free-tail bats made the tunnel their home. Between May and October watch the bats leave the tunnel in the evenings - a spectacular sight. From Old

Tunnel WMA have fun riding all the way back down to RR473! \*Turn left at the intersection of Old No. 9 and RR473, continue east on RR473 for 0.7 miles and turn right onto North River Bend Road. Continue downhill for another 1.6 miles, turning right onto River Bend Road, pass the Brownsboro Cemetery and cross the Guadalupe River to JKRB Park. \*Note: to cycle farther, Old No. 9 becomes Old San Antonio Road in Gillespie County and continues to Hwy 290, east of Fredericksburg.

A shorter loop ride, approximately 16 miles, starts by turning either left or right from the park and then turning right on RR473 heading towards Sisterdale .  
*Continued on page 3.*



## Outside Now - 10 Reasons To Go Outdoors This Summer

*From our members*

1. Get away from the air conditioner, so that the air feels real and I'm more a part of my surroundings, not holed up inside a man-made building.
2. Lie under the pecans trees and watch them make their own breeze.
3. Explore James Kiehl River Bend Park.
4. Pick fresh vegetables from the garden.
5. Watch the county parades.
6. Escape the honey-do list.
7. Watch meteor showers.
8. Play in the water.
9. Get a sno cone.
10. Go fishing.



## The Picnic Basket

Melon and Grape Salad for four

Combine the following fruit (or any other fruit) and refrigerate.

- ½ of a seedless, medium-sized watermelon, rind removed and cubed
- ½ of a cantaloupe or honey dew melon, rind removed and cubed
- 1-2 cups of seedless grapes, if large, may be cut in half
- Lime syrup - Mix 1/8 cup sugar with 1/8 cup hot water, stir until sugar dissolves and add 1/8 cup lime juice
- 1 heaping teaspoon lime zest

Refrigerate until cold.

As close to serving as possible, add 1 tablespoon or more of finely chopped mint to lime syrup and pour syrup over cold fruit.

*Kristen Scheller, KCPP Secretary*



*Continued from page 2.*

About 3.5 miles down RR473, turn right onto Zoeller Lane and enjoy the long downhill ride. Zoeller Lane makes a 90-degree turn to the right and shortly thereafter follows a shaded and gorgeous portion of road along the Guadalupe River. Turn right onto Waring-Welfare Road and cross the Guadalupe River. Or, if refreshments are needed, turn left onto Waring-Welfare Road and stop at the historic Waring General Store, 0.4 miles up-river. Now it's all uphill on Waring-Welfare to RR473. Reaching RR473, turn left towards Comfort. After 0.3 miles, turn left onto North River Bend Road, then turn right onto River Bend Road back to JKRB Park.

Another option for those willing to brave RR473 is to ride your bikes to Sisterdale, located 9.3 miles from JKRB Park. While in Sisterdale, try one of my

favorite Texas wines at Sister Creek Vineyards or stop by the Sisterdale Roadhouse for a drink.

An alternate 22 mile loop from JKRB Park starts with the 16-mile loop ride described above. After completing Zoeller Lane, turn left onto Waring-Welfare Road and ride into Waring. Continue straight onto FM1621. 1621 has a 60 mph speed limit and is a part of the Boerne Triathlon route. Ride to the IH-10 frontage road, turning right towards Comfort. Stay to the right at the Chevron station (yummy homemade tacos may be purchased here) and a tenth of a mile later, turn right onto RR473. Continue 3.5 miles on RR473 towards Sisterdale and turn right onto River Bend Road heading towards JKRB Park.

Any of these routes can be mixed and matched and all of the routes show off the fun biking in Kendall County. 



## Our Parks

### James Kiehl River Bend Park

- 25 acres of natural habitat - riparian, woodland & prairie
- 1,634 feet of Guadalupe River frontage
- 3,200 feet of nature observation trails
- 500 ft of old San Antonio and Aransas Pass rail bed
- Birding, wildlife viewing, and native plants
- River recreation, fishing, and paddling
- Part of the historical Brownsboro Community
- Picnic tables and benches
- Nature and historical interpretive signs
- Wildlife cover brush piles
- Blue bird trail
- Hours 7am to dusk



Kristie Denbow

### Joshua Springs Park and Preserve

- 405 acres of natural habitat and maintained areas
- Active and passive recreation zones
- Hiking and mountain bike trails
- Birding, wildlife viewing, and native plants
- Scenic views
- Picnic tables
- Little Joshua and Allen Creeks
- Ring Mountain
- Conference Center
- Parks Department Head Quarters

*Opening 2009*



Dan Denbow

### New Natural Area - to be named

- 117 acres of woodland and riparian habitat
- 1,700 feet of Guadalupe River frontage
- Nature observation trails
- Birding, wildlife viewing, and native plants
- River recreation

*Opening 2009*



Jonah Evans

Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass under trees on a summer's day, listening to the murmur of the water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is by no means a waste of time.

Sir John Lubbock



The  
Fabulous  
Reality  
Show  
by  
Ruth McArthur

**Day 1:** *I notice copious amounts of bird poop on the driver's side of my car. While in town I run it through the carwash.*

**Day 2:** Bird poop is back, plus more. Has the carwash gone downhill?

While standing at the kitchen sink in the afternoon, I see a male cardinal swoop down from the oak tree, swan dive onto the roof of my car, roll off and slide down the hood onto the ground. He flutters and then flies around to the mirror where he spies "another" cardinal. He goes wild flying into the mirror. Again. Again. Head-butting the mirror with a bit too much

vigor, he stuns himself and wallows in the dust. He flies to the mirror housing, poops on it, flies around to see if the "other" cardinal is still in the mirror. It is. Head-butting continues.

**Day 3:** *Have lunch with friends, then a carwash to get cardinal poop off the hood of my car. Return home to find cardinal in tree above my parking spot - he makes his first attack before I have my foot off the brakes. Repeats yesterday's bombing of the hood, taunting, and pooping on the "other" cardinal.*

**Day 4:** Take the dogs walking in the fields across the creek. On our return walk along the creek, cardinal is waiting at the edge of the forest and follows us along the creek through the trees. We cross the creek, he perches in the oak, dive-bombs my hood, rolls down, falls under the car....off to the vegetable garden to plant some more lettuce, can't wait to see what he does.

**Day 5:** *Cardinal is on the fence singing his tiny heart out. His throat warbles as if it might burst. He swoops from the fence to my car. Please refer to above descriptions of bombing, swooping and pooping. I wonder why he can't go mate like a normal bird. My niece overhears me pondering this and thinks I'm talking about my husband. My best friend suggests that perhaps he can't mate until he destroys the "other" cardinal and perhaps I don't want his genes being passed on to other cardinals anyway.*

**Day 6:** Got to go out again. Scout the fence and tree for cardinal. He's nowhere to be seen. Turns out he is under the car (think twilight zone theme music). Due to numerous washings, the undercarriage gleams and the "other" cardinal is now clinging to it. Actual cardinal flies up to the undercarriage, stuns himself, falls into the dust, ad nauseum. How can a bird be that driven and not even crack his beak?

**Day 7:** *Assassin cardinal is perched on my fence, beady eyes trained on the side mirror of my car. Please refer to description one of attacking the mirror and description two of attacking the undercarriage.*

**Day 8:** Return home from meeting around 7:30 pm. The little fella is sitting on the fence by my parking spot. He dive-bombs my hood before I even have the key out of the ignition. Gonna have to consider a restraining order.

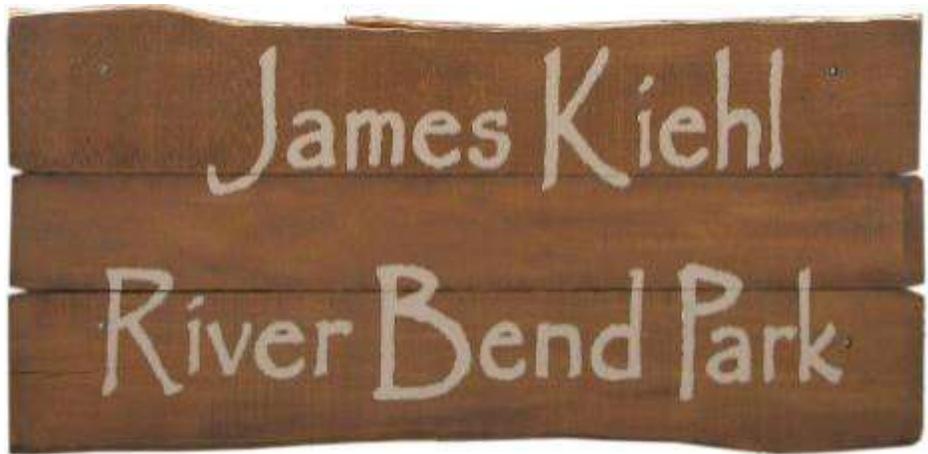
**Day 9:** *My husband thinks there is a deeper spiritual lesson in the little guy's behavior. Something about how we as human beings keep running ourselves into walls by not realizing things aren't what we think they are and that it's not what God intended for us. His buddy thinks the bird needs a 12-Step program.*

**Day 10:** I'm back in the veggie garden planting lettuce, escarole and edamame - cardinal spends his time attacking the undercarriage. Once I'm in the house he circles said house singing his tiny lungs out.

**Day 11:** *I'm on the patio sipping coffee. Cardinal's thumping against the front bumper is soft and soothing, regular as a heartbeat. How he can do this for hours on end without a headache or bent beak is beyond me. Meanwhile, other male cardinals are encroaching - one looks like he may be claiming the creek, another the horse lot, and yet another the far corner of the front field.*

**At press time, cardinal continues to assault author's auto.**





118 River Bend Road ☆ Comfort ☆ Kendall County

## Summer Service Morn-

Regularly Scheduled Service Mornings

7:30 am

Saturday July 11

Tuesday August 11

Saturday September 12

We will complete our general tending  
and special tasks.

If you can spare an hour or two,  
please join us at the park.

As always, bring hat, gloves, and water.



Volunteers are the heart of our parks!

Thank you!



# MAKE A MEMORY Leave a legacy

Dedicate a feature at  
James Kiehl River Bend Park

Remember or recognize loved ones, groups or events.  
Your donation is an exceptional way to show your appreciation.

### Picnic Tables

Shaded by native pecan trees and placed along the river bluff to catch cool breezes, the picnic area is a pleasant place to enjoy lunch. Our picnic tables are specially designed for the park's river side location. \$1,565.00 each



### Benches

Strategically placed along the park's trail system, benches will furnish a place to rest, delight in the view, and observe wildlife. \$585.00 each



### Kiosks

#### Informational Kiosk

This kiosk is constructed by hand from cedar and houses display cases to hold postings of Information and activities. \$993.00



### Nature Observation Trails

#### Picnic Loop

Approximately 480 feet of red granite trail leading to the James Kiehl monument. \$2,650.00



#### Pecan Loop I

Approximately 720 feet of natural surface trail meandering under the shade of native pecan, mesquite, and persimmon trees. \$1,980.00



#### Pecan Loop II

Approximately 960 feet of natural surface trail curving along the river bluff, crossing a wildlife meadow, and following the historic San Antonio and Aransas Pass rail bed. \$2,650.00



#### Prairie Trail

Approximately 960 feet of natural surface trail winding through the park's native grass and wildflower prairie. \$2,650.00

Contact [KCPP](http://KCPP) for a complete list of items available.



Outdoors  
With  
Duane  
*Mountain lions  
and other  
Texas kittens*



### ***Felis Concolor.***

There are 25 native North American names for *Felis concolor* or “cat of one color.” Mountain lion, cougar, and puma are the most common. We will use cougar for this article.

*Cougar* is an amalgam of two native Brazilian words, *cuacuara* and *guacuara*, which became distorted over time to reach the current spelling. In Peru, Quechua Indians called this cat, *puma*, meaning “a powerful animal.” The name remains unchanged in Spanish and English. American Indians had their own names for

cougars. The Cherokee called them *klandaghi*, “lord of the forest;” the Cree, *katalgar*, “greatest of wild hunters;” and in Chickasaw, *ko-lcto*, “cat of God.”

### ***One species survives***

About two million years ago cougars first appeared in North America, later there were a number of cougar species, but only *Felis Concolor* survives. It is believed they crossed the Panama land bridge into South America about one million years ago.

These big cats originally roamed from the southern tip of Chile to northern British Columbia and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. In 1502, Christopher Columbus saw a cougar on the shore as he sailed up the eastern seaboard of the United States. He would need to sail up the western coast line of the U. S. to see a cougar today.

With the exception of Florida, this cat’s range has been pushed to the twelve western states, including Texas. Researchers claim cougars will soon be east of the Mississippi River; unlike most cats, cougars readily take to water and are very good swimmers.

Cougars can survive in many environments, from lofty mountains to low lying deserts. Increasing numbers are being reported in urban areas as people move into big cat habitat. Cougars prefer isolation, but they will roam many miles for a meal.

### ***The hunt for food***

A cougar’s life is a long search for food. Their main diet is deer, but urban areas have created super market like conditions, placing pets on the menu. Anything catchable and edible will provide a meal. Cougars kill only to survive. Once a meal is completed, the remnants of the kill are covered with dirt and grass helping to prevent spoilage. Very little food is wasted; a few bones, hooves, and skull are all that remains.

Nocturnal by nature, this big cat does most of its hunting at night - its night vision is six times that of a human. Cougars are sprinters, not long distance runners, doing a majority of hunting by ambush. A cougar can leap over twenty feet in one bound and vertical jumps of sixteen feet have been recorded.

R.D. Lawrence, author of *The Ghost Walker*, describes a caribou kill, “*He sailed through the air... (covering) thirty two feet in his first enormous leap... hitting the cow on the shoulder with both forepaws. The blow was devastating. The cow’s long neck was snapped violently to the right...The cow had been killed by that first mighty, whiplashing blow.*”

### ***A dangerous life***

Although cougars are very skilled predators, their life is also very dangerous. Injury can impede ability to hunt and make a kill. It is not unusual for a cougar to meet its death by their intended prey. Utah researchers once found a cougar that they believed died during a thrashing battle with a deer or an elk - a tree branch pierced its skull. Another cat died of a broken neck while battling a mule deer. Both were found lying together. During an attack on a bighorn sheep, the momentum of the attack carried both cat and sheep to their deaths by falling over a ninety-foot cliff. An Idaho cougar suffered a broken jaw and two broken canine teeth in a battle with a bull elk, making the cougar’s death an almost certainty.

Cougars are vulnerable during three periods: as kittens, as young juveniles, having left their mothers without fully learning hunting skills and not yet fearful of humans, and when they are very old.

### ***The struggle***

Few cougars in the wild reach the age of twelve years. The last few years of a cat’s life can become a struggle for survival due to many ailments including arthritis and cataracts. By the age of eight or nine, teeth are almost worn to the gums, and by ten

the canines have worn down by half. A study in California's Diablo Range found that the average age of resident cougars was five to six years. This study also concluded that very few kittens reached adulthood - seventy five percent died before the age of two. Females breed successfully about every other year; during this short breeding life only four or five kittens may reach adulthood.

Beliefs, folklore, lack of understanding, and the mystery of the cougar have put this predator in peril. Most "problem" cats are either very old or curious young juveniles. There have been reports of cougars involved in mass killing of penned up sheep or goats. This has been cited as evidence of the cougar's "bloodthirsty" nature. However, these big cats are obeying a predatory chase instinct under unusual conditions. Running triggers the chase instinct in almost all predators and in the wild, prey are not penned up. In Nepal, goats and sheep are kept in leopard proof pens at night to avoid attacks. Considering the number of cougars in North America, attacks on livestock in this country are very low.

### ***Competing with humans***

Solutions to problems involving cougars can become very complex. Housing developments in canyons and mountainous regions have created a host of difficulties in areas that for centuries have been the big cat's domain. Somehow, cougars, bears, and any other "nuisance" animals are expected to move out when humans and their pets move in. Under these conditions, it is not only the cougar, but animals in general, that lose their fear of man. This is also true in wilderness areas where the influx of hikers, campers, and use of all-terrain recreational vehicles is on the rise. For joggers, running in parks where cougars are known is asking for trouble. To minimize risk of human/cougar interactions, it is unlawful to hike or jog before 9:00 am in the Palo Alto Hills of California. Although attacks on humans are very rare, with appropriate precautions most attacks could have been avoided. If you are planning on hiking in cougar country, it is wise to talk with the local ranger and read up on the behavior of these cats.

So, are there cougars in Texas, in the Hill Country? Yes. I met a person from Hondo in fall 2008. He had set up an infrared camera to take night pictures of deer. To his surprise he also got a photograph of a cougar. According to the Texas

Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD), the cat is expanding its range into central Texas and cats have been sighted in all 254 counties. Visit the [TPWD website](#) for [additional information](#) on cougars.



### ***Leopardalis albescens.***

Ocelots are smaller cousins of leopards and are a state and federal endangered species. They once ranged in the United States throughout parts of Arkansas, Louisiana, and east, central, and south Texas.

Ocelot habitat occurs in a vegetation zone known as the Tamaulipan Biotic Province, a dense thorny scrubland containing Texas ebony, lotebush, brasil, granjeno, snake-eyes, crucita, fiddlewood, and desert olive.

### ***Habitat loss***

During the 1930s, the Rio Grande valley experienced a large scale brush clearing operation to make room for cropland farming. Today only five percent of the original habitat of the valley remains and is largely fragmented, leaving the ocelot stranded. It is estimated only about 100 of these beautiful cats exist in the U.S. Thirty to forty have been recorded in the [Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge \(LANWR\)](#) north of Brownsville and the remaining cats live on a handful of privately owned lands in the valley.

Loss of habitat is the major cause of ocelot decline. More cats die while crossing roads to find new territory than from any other cause.

Little accessible habitat makes it difficult for these small cats to establish subsequent generations. Inter-breeding is becoming a problem at LANWR, making the ocelot vulnerable to localized extinction.

### ***More to learn***

Ocelots are a night hunters; days are spent in heavy grass or brush dens. They weigh from fifteen to thirty-five pounds and have an average length of three feet nine inches. Diet consists mainly of rodents and rabbits, but they will also eat birds and reptiles. Females become sexually mature after three years and give birth to one or two kittens. Ocelots have been known to live to be over ten years of age.

There is still much to learn about this small beautiful leopard and work continues with local farmers to provide additional habitat.



### ***Herpailurus yaguarondi.***

The jaguarundi is much smaller than the ocelot, weighing only eight to sixteen pounds. This cat is so elusive that numbers in the wild are unknown and little information exists on

their habits. Jaguarundi habitat is the same as ocelot habitat and these small cats face many of the same problems. The jaguarundi was placed on the [endangered species list](#) in June 1976.

Their diet, like the ocelot, is mainly rodents, rabbits, birds and reptiles, but these cats have also been known to feed on fish trapped in small puddles. Jaguarundis are notorious for raiding domestic poultry and can become a nuisance to farmers.

Most hunting is done in the early mornings and evenings and jaguarundis have been known to spring from trees to catch prey in mid air. Movement occurs during the day to drink water.



### ***Village pets***

Central American natives reported that jaguarundis were easy to tame and kept the rodent population down, protecting stores of grain.

These cats have a solid color coat - charcoal gray, rusty-brown or black and a bushy tail measuring two feet in length. The darker colors are generally found in South American rain forests. Jaguarundis have short legs, move in a quick weasel like manner, and are good swimmers.

Females attain sexual maturity in two to three years and give birth to one to four kittens. Like cougars and lions, the kittens are born with spots which soon disappear.

### ***Vocal cats***

Thirteen distinct calls have been documented, giving these cats a wide variety of vocalizations.

Jaguarundis are found in the Rio Grande valley of Texas, but there are few in captivity or in zoos.

*Duane Peterson*

## Conservation Nation



51 new game wardens will enforce Texas conservation laws - the class is the Texas Game Warden Academy's largest ever. [Game wardens](#) perform water rescue operations, respond to natural disasters, and conduct public outreach programs, in addition to enforcing traditional hunting, fishing, and water safety regulations. Game wardens are the primary law enforcement off the pavement in Texas.



[Selah-Bamberger Ranch Preserve](#) in Blanco County received the 2009 Leopold Conservation Award for Texas from Sand County Foundation and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), part of the Lone Star Land Steward Awards program. David Bamberger's innovation, passion and success have made him a legend in land conservation circles. The 5,500-acre ranch is known as a place where rocky and eroded pastures became lush and green and dry creeks and springs began to flow again.



Boerne Independent School District won the [Texas Environmental Excellence Award](#) for water conservation. The water harvesting network at Champion High School combines two elevated storage tanks and heating, ventilating, and air conditioning condensate. The system can hold more than 224,000 gallons of water, with the potential of saving the school district an estimated \$48,000 per year.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service received the Rachel Carson Award for encouraging young people to spend time with nature. Its [Let's Go Outside](#) program inspires kids, parents, and educators to build outdoor learning spaces called nature explore classrooms at schools and in neighborhoods across the U.S.



[Caddo Lake](#), the only naturally formed lake in Texas, has been designated as a wetland of international importance. It supports an ecosystem found nowhere else in Texas. The lake is under attack from a South American floating fern first found in Texas a decade ago: giant salvinia or *Salvinia molesta*. TPWD launched an offensive against giant salvinia on June 1. Experts say, "We will never eradicate it. This is going to be an on-going fight."

### Wish List

KCPP works to secure an outdoor legacy for all to enjoy. As a non-profit, we are dependent on the community for our existence. Your donation is greatly appreciated and fully utilized to achieve our mission.

We need:

Website sponsor

Office Supplies

Printing Costs

PO Box sponsor

Grant Writing assistance

Promotional items

New Members



When I go biking, I repeat a mantra of the day's sensations: bright sun, blue sky, warm breeze, blue jay's call, ice melting, and so on. This helps me transcend the traffic, ignore the clamoring of work, leave all the mind theaters behind and focus on nature instead. I still must abide by the rules of the road, of biking, of gravity. But I am mentally far away from civilization.

The world is breaking someone else's heart.

Diane Ackerman



James Kiehl River Bend Park



### CAN YOU NAME IT?

Be the first to identify this feature from one of our parks and win the KCPP prize of the season! [Enter to Win!](#)



The National Park Service has developed a web site to help inform visitors about what's new in national parks this year and the many ranger led programs, activities, and commercial services available. Find out what is waiting for you in your National Parks by visiting "National Parks: The Place to be for Family Fun" website: [http://www.nps.gov/pub\\_aff/parks2009/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/pub_aff/parks2009/index.htm).



## Magueys In May

by Steve Lowe

While the month of April is florally linked to the emergence of the Easter Lily, May welcomes another flowering lily, the *Agave* or maguey (ma-gay) in Spanish.

Along with *Yucca*, these dominant landscape specimens are sometimes referred to as “woody lilies” and are botanically kin to other true lilies. However, to most of us, *Agaves* look more like succulent cactus or artichokes on steroids.

Another common name for magueys is “Century Plant” referring to its latent flower habit. Magueys are monocarpic, flowering only once, so it may seem like a 100 year event. Most species require only eight to ten years to mature and send up a mast-like flower spike. For some reason, perhaps our recent drought, I have noticed more magueys blooming this year than ever before.

*Agaves* are native from the southwest United States to Mexico and Central America. Over 200 species are known ranging in size from ten to twelve foot giants to pot-sized dwarfs. Most are easily grown in sunny xeric conditions with good drainage. In Texas, only four to five species are thought to be native.

Magueys have been valued and transplanted by man prior to historic cultivation. Young plants form basal shoots which can be broken off and transplanted. Carbon dating has suggested maguey processing for food, drink, and fiber by pre-Columbian settlements in Sonora and Arizona. Prior to colonizing Mexico’s Central Valley, Aztecs consumed *aquamiel* (honey water) and the fermented version, *pulque*. Later, the Spanish refined the process to produce mescal and tequila. These beverages are extracts from the terminal leaf bud. Of greater economic importance, the fiber from the leaves, sisal, was found to make the finest rope known before synthetics. In the 1800s, *Agave sissalana* was exported to East Africa and the Philippines to expand its cultivation base.

*Agaves make fine landscape subjects, keeping two design basics in mind:*

1. Scale and placement – most species grow to considerable size and are armed with spines. Place these away from high traffic areas, removed from pets and children. Clip spines with stout pruners.
2. Select species for cold tolerance or plan to shelter tender subjects.

Plants suitable for landscapes:

<i>A. americana</i> (several varieties)	<i>A. parryi</i> (several varieties)
<i>A. bracteosa</i>	<i>A. salmiana</i>
<i>A. filifera</i>	<i>A. scabra</i>
<i>A. harvardiana</i>	<i>A. schidigera</i>
<i>A. lechuguilla</i>	<i>A. striata</i>
<i>A. lophantha</i>	<i>A. victoria-reginae</i>
<i>A. neomexicana</i>	<i>A. weberi</i>
<i>A. ochahui</i>	

Plants useful as container subjects:

<i>A. attenuate</i>
<i>A. bracteosa</i>
<i>A. demettiana</i>
<i>A. geminiflora</i>
<i>A. ocahui</i>
<i>A. parrasana</i>
<i>A. schidigera</i>
<i>A. victoria-reginae</i>



Kristen at the KCPP Adventure Fest booth

KCPP's featured partner in conservation



Earth DiVine  
Local Food  
Co-op  
2009 Season

Earth DiVine Food Co-op is a partnership between Sechrist Homestead and Wild Boar Farm working in cooperation with consumer members who participate in a local food system for nutritional, economical, and ecological benefits.

Wild Boar Farm grows organic fruits and vegetables and offers eggs, honey, homemade goodies, and organic grains. Sechrist Homestead raises organic grass-fed beef.

Membership Benefits:

- A weekly selection of freshly harvested nutrient dense produce.**
- Local and homemade products.**
- Supporting local food production and long-term sustainability.**
- Keeping your dollar in the local economy.**
- The fun of participating in a community, sharing recipes, etc.**

Please contact Peggy Sechrist, Manager  
830-456-5587 or [peggysechrist@gmail.com](mailto:peggysechrist@gmail.com)



Ruth and Dan at the Living History Festival



Kristie at the JKRB Dedication



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VISIT US ONLINE!  
[KENDALLCOUNTYPARKS.ORG](http://KENDALLCOUNTYPARKS.ORG)

We need your financial support, but there are free things you can do to help as well.

*Simply spread the word.*

We want to add subscribers to our e-news. Please send an email asking your family and friends to subscribe to our newsletter. Thank you!

[kendallcountyparks.org](http://kendallcountyparks.org)

*Kendall County Partnership for Parks promotes the preservation of the county's natural heritage and the development of recreational opportunities.*

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JUST CALL OR EMAIL  
WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!