

Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation
Issue No. 41

On the Edge!



Bill Voelker, Co-Director SIA
Photo by Sherry Adkins

SIA
The Comanche Nation
Ethno-Ornithological Initiative

On December 4, 2021, Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation held its Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting and Banquet. The featured speaker was Bill Voelker, Co-Director of SIA. Mr. Voelker presented the purpose of the organization and the spiritual significance of the eagle to the Comanche Nation: “Preservation Through Cultural Understanding of the Eagle in History, Science, and Spirit.” The following is taken from Mr. Voelker’s talk:

The eagle displayed in the discussion is a six-year-old female Golden Eagle. She has a wing spread of seven and a half feet and weighs about fourteen pounds. She is a third-generation offspring from grandparents who were captured in the 1970’s. Eagles that are injured and cannot fly are kept for breeding in captivity. Female eagles are more aggressive than males. Eagles from five continents are at SIA.



Photo by Mary Fowler
The albino Hawk in this photo is held by Jaclyn Hamburg and has spiritual meaning to Native Americans.

According to the SIA brochure, “The essence of the Eagle in traditional life is the basis for SIA’s commitment to the culturally based, spiritual need of indigenous people.”

“SIA is the Comanche Nation Eagle and Raptor program named for the *Numunuh* (Comanche) word meaning feather.” *Cf; Mf*



Photo by Mary Fowler

Displayed in this picture along with the golden eagle is an albino red-tailed hawk.



Photo by Mary Fowler
Editor’s note: Mary Fowler contributed to this article.



**Photo Provided
Bradley Kliemann
Park Interpreter**

Hello, I'm Bradley Kliemann. I'm so happy to be saying that I'm the new Park Interpreter here at Palo Duro Canyon State Park. Before introducing myself more thoroughly, I want to thank everyone for the Texas-sized welcome I've been given since coming here.

While originally hailing from Dearborn, Michigan, I've spent the last seven years exploring around the Southwest, eventually settling in Flagstaff, Arizona, for three years. There, I obtained my bachelor's degree in Parks and Recreation Management from Northern Arizona University and began volunteering with the National Park Service at Walnut Canyon, Sunset Crater, and Wupatki National Monuments.

After school, I began working as an Aquatic Nuisance Species inspector for Colorado Parks and Wildlife at both Vega and, later, Steamboat Lake State Parks. While there, I gained an appreciation and a passion for interactions with our visitors,

leading me towards pursuing interpretation as a career choice.

While my career in interpretation has been short up to this point, I'm so excited to experience all the joys and challenges of being the Park Interpreter at Palo Duro Canyon. While my position here entails giving programs and outreach, don't hesitate to say "hello" if you see me out there doing our agency's work. I'm happy to spend my shift getting to know the people that give Palo Duro Canyon State Park its unique character.

Bk



**Photo Provided
Juliette Garza
Park Operations Trainee**

I relocated to the Panhandle for the Park Operations Trainee position here at Palo Duro Canon State Park. I have a deep appreciation for the outdoors and love how unique this park is.

I recently graduated from Texas State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Wildlife Biology. I worked in a lab during my time there where I did genetic

work on water snakes around Northeast Texas.

I transferred to Palo Duro State Park from Lockhart State Park where I was the Customer Service Representative. Before that, I had two internships with Texas State Parks. One was with Texas Outdoor Family in Central Texas, and the other was that of the Operations Intern at Brazos Bend State Park.

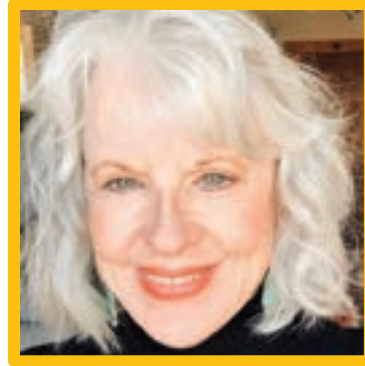
I am so happy to now be a part of the Palo Duro State Park team and am excited to spend my next few years here. Please feel free to stop and say “hi” if you see me in the Park or see me hiking on the trails. **Jg**



Photo by Eddie Tubbs

Laramy Estel

At the annual banquet, Laramy Estel, Park Police Officer, received an award from Partners for rescuing a woman from her automobile during the May 2021 flood in Palo Duro Canyon. **Cf**



Finding Water in a Drought

**by
Ann Coberley**

*I feel no right to be happy,
surrounded as we are
by fires, floods, disease and war.*

*But there's a flock of geese
Outlined against the morning sun, wingtips
dipped in gold,*

*Happy honks a rebuke
to my melancholy mood.*

*They land in Sunday Canyon Creek,
dry except for shallow pools
that dot the sand like mirrors,
reflecting wisps of roving clouds.*

*Rejoicing in each puddle,
they flap and settle
as if they'd found a stream.*

*And I find myself smiling,
not immune
to the lesson before me,*

*the joy of finding water
in the midst of a drought.*

Editor' note: Dr. Ann Coberley is on the Board of Partners in Palo Duro.



Photo by Sherry Adkins



Photos by Eddie Tubbs

Located near the Trading Post in Palo Duro Canyon State Park is a bird blind erected several years ago by Park staff. Over the years the blind has entertained visitors to the Park, but, as with most things, it was in need of much upgrading.

Recently, Rodney Hess, along with wife Barbara, have done major work on the blind building a fence and totally reworking the stones in the water feature. For a unique Park experience, visit the birds but remember that you are a visitor in their playground.

Editors note: Rodney Hess is on the board of Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation.





Memories of Palo Duro Canyon
by
Mary Fowler

Our memories are as unique to us as our fingerprints or our shadows. Memories or photographs are what we have left of any experience of our childhood and of the collective moments we have shared with others. Palo Duro Canyon has preserved a communal place that is already rich with the history of peoples that lived several centuries before us. A beautiful canyon with a diverse ecosystem of nature is a place where we can bring our children and students to teach them of other different cultures from bygone days. It is a place where a child may experience, for the first time, all that nature has to offer us. It is a place well worth protecting so that generations to come can enjoy the beauty of the Canyon.

My first memory of Palo Duro Canyon was attending a picnic-and-fun day with our small community church at the Canyon. It was quite a special day to a young child who had never been anywhere. That was the start of a lifelong love of a place that has been interwoven through my life with some of my fondest memories happening there.

When I was in junior high school, our church youth group, once a year, had an

overnight campout/slumberless night of fun. We cooked hamburgers, made smores, told ghost stories, and played hide-and-go-seek under a canopy of stars as our laughter echoed off the Canyon walls.

When I was in high school, I hung out with a group of kids that mostly came from lower socioeconomic households. Since money was scarce, instead of going to the movies or out to eat, we spent time at each others' homes or hanging out in a park talking and playing some kind of ball. But many times, when the weather was good, we could pull together the five-dollar-a-car admission into Palo Duro Canyon State Park. That was before wearing seatbeats was the law. You would be surprised how many teenagers can be crammed into one car. We brought food and water from home. We spent the day hiking, playing in the waterholes and water crossings, crawling through caves, and climbing Devil's Slide because of the sheer challenge of sliding down it and emerging with the butts of our pants still intact.

As a youth, my final crowning memory of Palo Duro Canyon was spending my senior all-day-trip with the other 365 seniors from Caprock High School who would be graduating in a week. We took three school buses loaded with students, and our sponsors followed in trucks with our bicycles, enough food to feed an army, because, of course, teenagers eat like an army, and whatever else they deemed necessary for our survival. We were pretty much free to wander all over the Canyon as long as we checked in every so often at the adult stations set up throughtout the Canyon. We did all the things we had previously done as teenagers in the Canyon. But there was also a new seriousness about us as we walked the trails discussing what it would be like to transition from the safety of our youth into

the adult world with the Vietman War still raging.

As I raised my three sons, I made sure they spent time in the Canyon and loved the Canyon that had been so much a part of my youth. We went to the Canyon several times a year. We rode horses, we hiked the trails, and, yes, even climbed Devil's Slide. As teenagers, my sons spent many a day at Palo Duro Canyon doing all the things that I had enjoyed doing. Many of the caves I had crawled through had collapsed by then, but my sons found other adventures in the Canyon that I had not experienced. And, of course, when the grandkids arrived, Carl and I made sure that they too enjoyed many adventures in our beloved Palo Duro Canyon.

Whether I was functioning as a den mother of my sons' cub scout group or as a classroom teacher or sponsor of a GT group, I have taught the history of the Canyon and the peoples that have inhabited the Canyon and called it home. My students and I have sat on the rim coloring the rock strata on our papers as we discussed the era in which each particular rock strata was laid down. We have spent afternoons identifying the plant life and birds, looking for and making molds of paw prints, discussing the wildlife that lives in the Canyon and the fragile ecosystem that survives. We have discussed how the ecosystem must be preserved so that the generations to follow will still have a beautiful Canyon to explore.

It thrills my heart to see so many families, school groups, college groups, and tourists being able to utilize the facilities that Palo State Canyon State Park offers. That is why I belong to Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation. *Mf*

Palo Duro Canyon
by
Ann Coberley

*My words
are never quite enough,
though I wish they could settle
in the cracks and crevices
of these cherished canyons,
become a permanent record
of my love for this land.*

*At sunrise
I walk the shallow creek
beneath steep and rocky walls,
rose colored as they catch the sun,
and watch ravens circling
in homage to another day.*

*Each hour is a meditation,
another reason to love
this peaceful place of refuge
in a world alienated from nature,*

*out of touch with silence
and suppression of self,
rarely content
to be only a small part of all that is.*



Foggy Morning
Photo by David Townsend



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