

Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation

On the Edge!



Photo by David Townsend
Pottery by Rose Pacheco, Santo Domingo



Santo Domingo Pot

The Santo Domingo pot displayed on the cover page and above is one of two large pottery pieces that David Townsend, Canyon Gallery manager, recently acquired. The Gallery contains pottery, as well, from the Acoma, the Navajo, Zuni, Hopi, and Jemez peoples, all original and all authentically Native American.

Horsehair pottery, Painted Desert pottery, pinon-pitch pottery, Mata Ortiz pottery, and other variations of pottery styles decorate the shelves in the Gallery, and all are for sale.

In addition to Native American pottery, the Gallery contains Native American jewelry from the Zuni and Navajo nations, leather and bead work from Sioux, Comanche, and Kiowa artists as well as paintings from these tribal artists.

Western art prints by Jack Sorenson are for sale, as well as original art by Mike La Fleur. Photographic images by Jim Livingston are available.

Objects which represent the western heritage of the region, such as hand-made hunting knives and ranch artifacts are

proffered. And the museum displays! Not for sale, but educational and enlightening. We'll be waiting for you. *Cf*



**David Townsend
Canyon Gallery Manager**

A few years ago on a trip to Zuni, New Mexico, I was offered some pieces of antique pottery from the 1920's and 1930's. In the mid twentieth century, a priest started his mission work in the old church built in the 1600's. He immediately ordered the pottery in the church thrown out and broken. He believed the pottery to be symbols of pagan worship.

Some of the pottery was rescued by a few of the parishioners and hidden. I was able to acquire a few of these pieces which are on display and obtainable in the Canyon Gallery. The rescued pottery is shown below.

Dt





Laramy Estel
Interim Superintendent

Laramy Estel is currently serving as the interim Superintendent at Palo Duro Canyon State Park. He earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Wildlife Management from Tarleton State University and started his career with Texas Parks and Wildlife as an intern at Caprock Canyons SP in 2011. He served not only at Caprock Canyons SP but also at Lake Arrowhead SP before coming to Palo Duro Canyon. He was commissioned as a State Park Police Officer in March, 2014.

Laramy is married to Laura, and together they have two children, Logan and Lillian. Upon Laramy's accepting the Assistant Park Superintendent position, the family moved to Palo Duro Canyon State Park in May, 2015. Since that time, he has worked under the mentorship of former Park Superintendent, Shannon Blalock.

Together Shannon and Laramy worked diligently to improve the overall visitor experience and to improve and foster a sense of pride and teamwork in the staff of Palo Duro Canyon SP. In November, 2017, Shannon was promoted to the Regional Director of Region 5 State Parks. At this point Laramy was appointed to his present position as Interim Superintendent and is

continuing those same principles of improvement to Palo Duro Canyon State Park. *Le*



Jeff Davis
Park Interpreter

Palo Duro Canyon State Park is full of hidden treasures. From out-of-the-way sites like the stand of spring fed Rocky Mountain Juniper Trees that straddle the Comanche Trail to Native American rock art, there is much out there that few or none know exist. Despite their visibility, many folks are not aware that Palo Duro Canyon has several historic cabins within its boundaries.

In 1929, a massive stock market crash led to the Great Depression. This event was compounded across the breadbasket of the United States by the Dust Bowl when millions of tons of topsoil dried up and blew away into days-long dust storms.

In response, President Franklin Roosevelt created his New Deal and an alphabet soup of agencies to provide jobs, create infrastructure, and conserve soil across the nation. Most important to Palo Duro Canyon and the state park system of Texas was the Civilian Conservation Corp, or the

CCC. The CCC, also known as “Roosevelt’s Tree Army,” would, from 1933 to 1942, employ more than three million people, plant more than three billion trees, and build over 800 state parks across the United States.

Palo Duro Canyon is one such park, and the work of the CCC is evident everywhere one looks. In no place is the work more obvious than in our seven historic cabins. Four of the cabins, known as Cow Camp Cabins, sit on the floor of the Canyon near Mesquite Camping Loop. These are our more primitive cabins, primitive because they don’t feature running water or linens. However, they do have full-size bunk beds, refrigerators and microwaves, as well as brand new heating and air conditioning systems. In terms of comfort, they are a big step up from sleeping on the ground. Water and bathroom facilities are available across the road at the Mesquite Camping Loop.

Interestingly, the Cow Camp Cabins were not cabins originally. Those who visited Palo Duro Canyon before the year 2000 may remember them as open-sided shade shelters with no doors or windows.

For those who want an even more full-service experience, the three Rim Cabins may be more to their liking. These three cabins, perched on the rim of the Canyon near the Canyon Gallery/Visitor Center, feature stunning views, full bathrooms and showers, and all linens are provided. They also have new heating and air conditioning systems.

These three cabins were named for features and people important to the Park. Lighthouse Cabin was named for our famed Lighthouse rock formation which can be seen through the telescope in the Visitor Center, by a round-trip hike of six miles, or on several shorter hikes throughout the Canyon.

The Sorenson Cabin was named after the family of well-known western artist Jack

Sorenson, whose artwork can be seen in the Visitor Center/Canyon Gallery, and in the cabin itself.

Finally, the Goodnight Cabin is named for Col. Charles Goodnight, Texas Ranger and one of the best-known cattlemen of the High Plains. Col. Goodnight established the first ranch in Palo Duro Canyon. His ranch, the JA, once spanned huge swaths of Palo Duro Canyon and encompassed 1.3 million acres of the Texas Panhandle.

The cabins are an easy way to take a step back in time, and they make a great base from which to explore this amazing canyon and the area around it that it has so greatly influenced. *Jd*



Photo by Jeff Davis



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Photo Provided by Jeff Davis

Text by Jeff Davis

"To those devoid of imagination, a blank place on the map is a useless waste; to others, the most valuable."

Conservationist, Aldo Leopold

We live in a time of great uncertainty. As of this writing, Palo Duro Canyon State Park hasn't had measurable precipitation for a record 125 days. Some days one wonders if it will ever rain again. Funding for state parks and other public lands is, as usual, uncertain. The Park's visitation continually grows, which provides us the great opportunity of a new generation of stewards to safely usher Palo Duro Canyon into the future. But it also puts into question whether our aged infrastructure can continue to handle those growing numbers. The news is filled every day with tragedies and sadness.

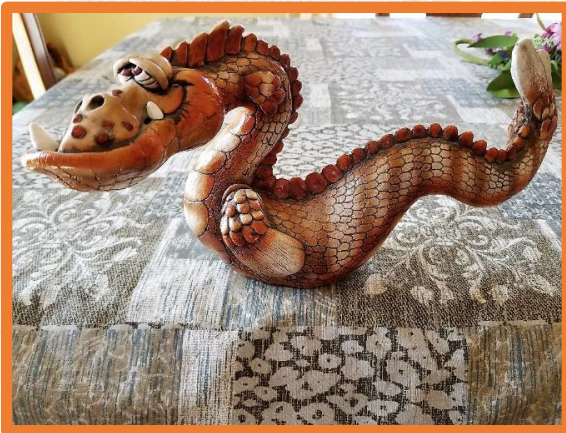
But the truth is that these very unknowns, this laundry list of challenges, is a big part of what makes us human. With no challenges to face, what are we? With nothing to strive against or toward, what would we do with ourselves?

Maintaining a park of this size is sometimes a daunting task, but the staff at Palo Duro Canyon State Park wouldn't have it any other way. It gives us the chance to work alongside our volunteers in pursuit of a most noble goal—the preservation of one of our nation's most precious places for the sake of the children of tomorrow. We are given the gift of a choice each day when we rise.

Do we see the world in stark black and white? Or do we choose to accept that there will be gray areas where things aren't so easy? Are the challenges we face each day a simple matter of good versus bad? Or can we learn to see that there is value in the unknown?

Embrace the gray. Face those "most valuable parts" of Aldo Leopold's map with the belief that the obstacle that stands in your path is also the way to success.

If you find your map marked "here be dragons," just remember that those dragons are usually made of opportunity. Join us in our mission of stewardship, accept the uncertain, and give the gift of this amazing place to your children's children. *Jd*



From Whence Do They Come?

The four men came into the Canyon Gallery/Visitor Center. After walking around for a while, they came to the counter with items they wanted to purchase. Each item was priced at \$100 or more. They each

pulled out their wallets, opened them, and made no effort to conceal the contents. Each wallet contained several \$100 bills.

"Where are you from?" I asked.

"Russia!" one said. And so it goes.

Locally, we think of Palo Duro Canyon State Park as being visited primarily by Panhandle residents and those who call Texas home. No doubt, most visitors do come from Texas; but an amazing number of visitors come also from all fifty states and many foreign countries. And this is one reason it is such a pleasure to work as a volunteer in the Canyon Gallery/Visitor Center.

When the euro was first introduced as a Continental currency in Europe, a family from France entered the Gallery. The father walked immediately to the counter and handed me a euro. "Here," he said, "a souvenir from France. It is yours."

After thanking him, I continued our conversation. I told him that I had visited Paris on leave when I was stationed in Germany at an American military base. "Ah, but you don't know France," he told me. "Paris is to France what New York City is to the United States. Neither represents the real country."

"I understand," I said and nodded in agreement. He and his family explored the Gallery and small museum and left. I don't recall whether they bought anything. But I received a wonderful gift, a memory that money cannot buy.

And I still have the euro as well.

Australia, New Zealand, Germany, England, France, Ireland, Scotland, Italy, Romania—and the list goes on. No experience can be more valuable. *Cf*





And Long May She Wave
Photo by David Townsend



Replica of Charles Goodnight Cabin
Photo by Editor



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