

## Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation

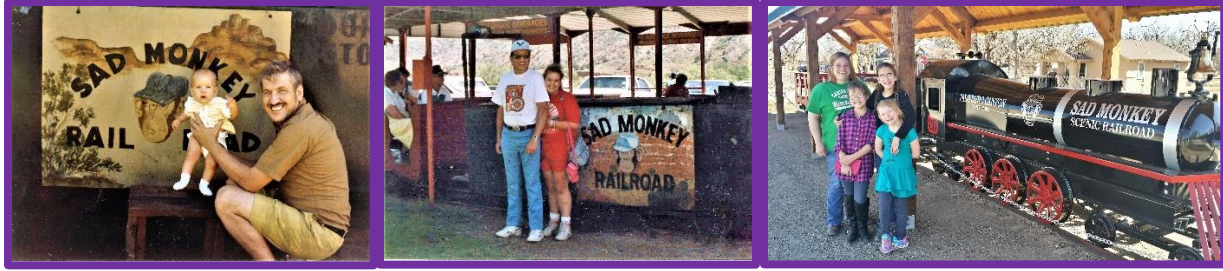
*On the Edge!*



## Spring in Palo Duro Canyon

Photo by Editor





**Dear Mr. Townsend,**

We stopped by your Gallery about two months ago and struck up a conversation with the lady working there by the name of Carol Williams. We talked about how our family is originally from Louisville, Kentucky, and have visited Palo Duro Canyon many times since I was a baby.

Then we got to talking about one of my favorite photos taken of me when I was a child with my dad in front of the Sad Monkey Railroad sign. It was taken in July, 1977, when I was just six months old. Both my mom and dad loved Palo Duro Canyon, and we always visited anytime we were traveling through the area.

Ms. Williams said that you all have been talking about how it would be nice to have personal stories and photos from the families that have been truly moved by Palo Duro. My family and I have returned many times over the years and gone hiking, picnicking and just overall sightseeing. In recent years I have been able to bring my husband and three girls to Palo Duro Canyon in hopes of passing on the wonderful experiences I have had here. We were overjoyed to hear that even though the Sad Monkey Railroad no longer runs through the Canyon that it has been restored and placed in the town of Canyon for future generations to see.

I have enclosed in this email three photos from over the years. After talking to Ms. Williams, I wanted to share our story with you and how much Palo Duro means to our family. The photos are of me and my dad, Owen Bailey, in July 1977 by the Sad Monkey Railroad Sign. The second one is of me and my dad when we returned in the 1990's to Palo Duro to try to recreate me "holding" him in front of the Sad Monkey Railroad Sign. The third photo is of me and my three girls in front of the Sad Monkey Railroad cars in Canyon recently taken in February 2018.

As I said, I wanted to share this with you and how big of an impact Palo Duro has played in our family. Feel free to use the information I have talked about and the pictures I have attached for any publications about Palo Duro. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me anytime.

Thanks for taking the time to share in my story about Palo Duro.

Miranda Luppino







**Jeff Davis**  
**Park Interpreter**  
**Conservation Begins with You**

Each day, the staff at Palo Duro Canyon comes to work in this beautiful place, not knowing what to expect. Will it be a calm day when a lot can be accomplished on the maintenance, repair, customer service, interpretation, and management side of things? Or will it be a day of barely controlled chaos with water tanks, disabled vehicles, and multiple visitor rescues?

Of course, we hope for the former. We need all hands-on-deck to ensure that the Park operates smoothly and that we can hand this amazing place off to future generations in tip-top condition. Sadly, all too often, the latter is the case; and we spend our day going from emergency to emergency. Such is the life in an operation as big as Palo Duro Canyon State Park.

But our visitors are more than helpless bystanders in the existence of Palo Duro Canyon. They are a vital part of the operation in so many ways.

Our visitors have the opportunity to act as an army of volunteers: they can serve as park hosts; become members of our friends group—Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation; speak out as advocates of the

state parks to their representatives; or simply pick up litter along a trail while encouraging others to do the same.

They can act also as the eyes and ears of our staff by letting us know if they see something in need of maintenance or repair and telling us if they have a suggestion as to how we can improve.

Most importantly, in the hot spring and summer months, they can conserve their own health and safety while having fun in the Canyon.

Remember: always dress right for your activity; drink lots of water before, during, and after you hike, bike, or ride your horse; do your activities in the cool of the morning or evening; slap on some sunscreen, either from home or from one of our dozen new dispensers located throughout the Park; keep a close watch on your feet for snakes along the trails, in the shade, under brush—anywhere really; closely monitor your family, friends, and other visitors—and remember that pets need cool temperatures and water as much or more than we do.

Together, the staff, volunteers, and visitors of Palo Duro Canyon State Park can work to keep ourselves and each other safe while conserving this natural gem for generations to come. (Jd)







### **Chef Jeff Davis**

Palo Duro Canyon State Park hosted a cookout for Park volunteers on the evening of May 23. Partners provided the hamburgers for the occasion, Park Interpreter Jeff Davis, fulfilling one of his many duties, served as chef. To be invited to other cookouts, as well as to enjoy a rewarding experience, become a volunteer for the Park. (Cf)

To volunteer for Park,  
Contact Jeff Davis.

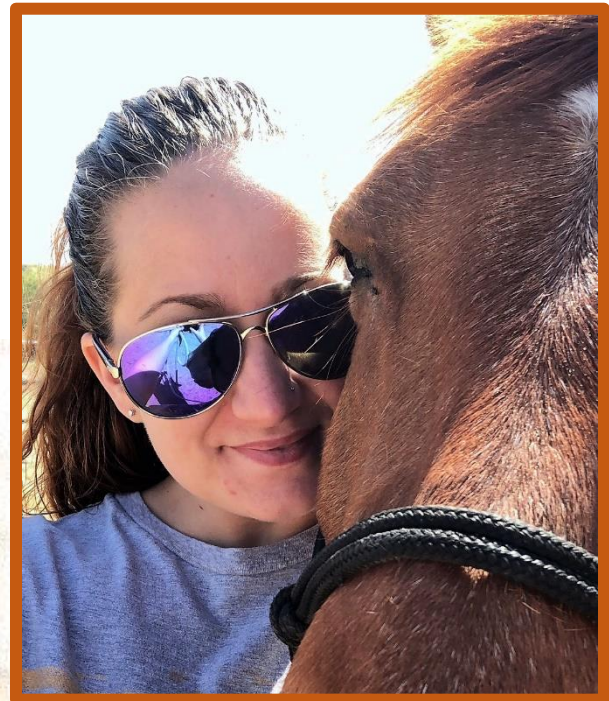
Phone: (806) 488-2727. Ext. 2007

Email: [jeff.davis@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:jeff.davis@tpwd.texas.gov)

To volunteer for Canyon Gallery,  
Contact David Townsend

Phone: (806) 488-2506

Email: [partners@midplains.com](mailto:partners@midplains.com)



### **Erika and Friend (Her Horse)**

**Photo provided by Erika McGee**

In February, 2010, my grandmother, one of the founding members of Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation, Maggie Johnson, called me to offer me a job opportunity. I had just quit my previous job. In March, 2010, I started a job at one of the most amazing places in the entire world.

I worked at the Visitors' Center/Canyon Gallery/Partners in Palo Canyon Foundation for a little more than eight years. I came to the store not knowing anything about the in's and out's of running a Native American art and bookstore, much less knowing anything about the Canyon. All I knew at the time was "this sounds fun." I don't think I was wrong at all.

In the past eight years, I've learned a ton of life lessons and knowledge that I will cherish for the rest of my life. I've shared



stories of love and loss, heart breaks and laughs, and even the occasional tears with nearly every single volunteer and Park staff, with all of them being nothing short of wonderful memories. I learned the difference between a real piece of turquoise and a fake; it's harder to tell than you think. I learned more Texas history working in the Canyon than I ever did in school, and that's something I really appreciate and won't find anywhere else.

I've also seen some pretty odd things coming into the store, such as one time a lady bringing in her "service parrot," or the time I tried to get a couple to understand that turkey buzzards and wild turkeys were not the same bird. But the experience has not always been funny.

There have been some serious times too, such as the big fire in the summer of 2011 that threatened the Park's livelihood, or the huge hailstorm that happened the summer before in 2010 that damaged every Park vehicle and building. It's been nothing short of an exciting, fun, and, sometimes, hectic ride—kind of the time President George W. Bush came to ride in the Park.

By far, one of my favorite and best memories is getting to grow and know every single person in the Park of the past, present, and future. I've met some life-long friends and mentors throughout my eight years, and I am forever grateful to have that experience with each of you. (You think I could pick just ONE memory?)

Some of you know that I also worked for a local equine rescue, or what I called "The Ranch," on the west end of the town of Canyon for eight years. Like the Park, the Ranch has held my heart near and dear; and in March of this year, I was offered a job opportunity to which I just couldn't say "No!"

While I love the Park, the Gallery, the volunteers and staff, and the travelers with their stories, the Ranch and the horses are my passion. I have the chance to follow my dreams while getting to help, not just the horses, but the people too.

I've been at the Ranch fulltime for almost two months now, and it's been nothing short of great and amazing. I miss the volunteers and staff, the lunchtime breaks at the gatehouse with my friends, the drives through the Park on slow days, and the burgers and onion rings from the Trading Post. I miss it all, and I will come back for visits and drives when things slow down. In the words of a wise four-year-old I met in the Gallery one day, "Enjoy the mountains of the Canyon!"

Thank you all, volunteers, Park staff, Board/Partners members, and the many, many travelers that have allowed me to be a part of beautiful Palo Duro Canyon and Palo Duro Canyon State Park.

Yours truly,  
Erika McGee (Former Assistant Manager of the Visitor Center/Canyon Gallery)



**Native American Pottery in the Gallery**  
**Photo by David Townsend**



**Photo by Jeanna Lilley**

**(Editors Note:** Jeanna Lilley is the new Assistant Manager of the Canyon Gallery. The following is Jeanna's column to introduce herself to Partners members.)

Attached is my photo of me and my husband of twenty-one years, David and my kids. We have two beautiful children: Mattisyn is 19, and Jeratt is 15. I was born in Pampa, Texas, and raised in the Amarillo/Canyon area. I currently reside in Canyon, Texas.

I am a preacher's kid and grandkid. I have spent my life in the church and currently assist with my parent's ministry through singing, event coordinating, and secretarial work at Canyon First Assembly of God.

My favorite hobby is fishing, although anything outdoors is great. As long as the sun is shining and the temperature is warm, I am a happy girl.

My favorite color is green, and my favorite food is all food. I also enjoy cooking and baking. I love meeting new people and trying new things. I would say that I am pretty adventurous.

I love to ride horses and motorcycles, and I enjoy water sports. Camping is a big favorite pastime of mine. Almost anything to do with the outdoors will make me smile, but

time spent with my family makes me the happiest of all.

Oh—the extra guy in the photo is my daughter's soon-to-be fiancé. I guess he is family too. *(GI)*



**Partners in Palo Duro Canyon  
Foundation  
Board of Advisors**

**President  
Cindy Meador**

**Recording Secretary  
Carol Williams**

**Treasurer  
Don Max Vars**

**Lynda Barksdale  
John Chandler  
Dr. Ann Coberley  
Pebbie Comer  
Carl Fowler  
Jerrie Howe  
Georgia King  
Eric Miller  
Lea Nelson  
Phyllis Nickum  
Frannie Nuttall  
Mel Philips  
Art Schnieder  
Dr. Gerald Schultz  
Susan Smith**





**Photo by David Townsend**



**Photo by David Townsend**

**Native American Jewelry Available in the Canyon Gallery/Visitor Center  
Palo Duro Canyon State Park**



Partners in  
Palo Duro Canyon  
Foundation  
11450 Park Road 5  
Canyon, TX 79015  
806.488.2227

NON-PROFIT ORG  
US Postage  
PAID  
Amarillo, TX  
Permit No. 664



***On the Edge!***

***June 2018, Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation, Editor: Carl Fowler***