

Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation

On the Edge!



Carol Williams and Cindy Meador-Stayton Work on the Rock Garden

Coronado Lodge Visitor Center

Photo by Eddie Tubbs

The Rock Garden

Not to be confused with the Rock Garden Trail which is located down canyon from the Visitor' Center/Canyon Gallery, located inside the Coronado Lodge built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in 1934, the informally-named Rock Garden, recently came into being.

Members of the board of Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation, with assistance from Palo Duro Canyon State Park personnel, renovated and renewed the area in front of the Coronado Lodge. Several loads of rocks were brought to the Lodge and deposited in the space, the rocks to be spread over the ground and plants to be added. As seen on the cover of this publication the Rock Garden began to take shape.

Members of the board planned the project, and several worked on its creation, especially the women of the Board, including Frannie Nuttall, Pebbie Comer, Lea Nelson, Jerrie Howe, Georgia King, and Ann Coblerley, Jeanna Lilley, assistant manager of the Canyon Gallery, worked on moving the rocks as well. Cindy Meador-Stayton, Partners President, and Carol Williams, Recording Secretary, both depicted on the cover, obviously were there. David Townsend, Gallery manager, and Mel Phillips and Eddie Tubbs, board members, represented the men. Essentially, however, the Rock Garden is a Partners' project.

From time to time, as recounted to me, Eddie Tubbs used the excuse that he had to stop work to take pictures. We're glad that he did! As for me, I used the time-honored excuse that I had a bad back and could not move rocks. I did pick up a rock and toss it to another place just to say that I had contributed.

To begin the weighty work, Park personnel brought heavy machinery to help distribute the rock, and then the work with shovels began. All of this took place in the intense heat of a summer's July.

Jerrie, Georgia, and Lea brought cookies. Georgia, Vice President of Partners, forever enterprising, "conned" a couple of visitors and some kids to help. The kids enjoyed throwing rocks from one place to another. One man and one woman pitched in, the man saying he didn't mind being asked to help and seemed to enjoy the work. I suppose we could broaden the enterprise and say that it was, to a degree, a community project. After all, it is the community, the broad community of Texans and other visitors who will enjoy the Rock Garden for many years. *Cf.*

(Editor's note: Cindy Meador-Stayton contributed to this article)

**To volunteer for the Visitors'
Center/Canyon Gallery,**

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**On the Way
Photo by Eddie Tubbs**



**Park Personnel Working on Rock Garden
From left to right: Jeff Davis, Evan Bailey
Jack Determan, Chris Looney. Inside Backhoe:
Corbin McGill, David Fischer
Photo by Eddie Tubbs**



Photo by Eddie Tubbs



**Spectacular Finish
Photo by Eddie Tubbs**



Joseph Allen
Park Superintendent

Big Plans for the New Year

With the end of the summer and the legislative session comes the time to start planning to rest and repair the staff and the Park. We had to say goodbye to Emily and Lexi, our fantastic operations interns that we hosted this summer, and we will welcome two new field rangers sometime this fall. We finish one fiscal year and begin another, this time with an actual budget increase to slowly march the Park towards the path of being adequately funded—a first in many years. The Park is also finishing several projects and starting or planning many more.

As we wrap up the year, we will be working with contractors to wrap up projects to upgrade the wastewater systems at the Trading Post and the Lonestar Amphitheater restrooms—finally bringing the Amphitheater restroom back online after nearly an eighteen-month hiatus.

Other contractors are about to begin the long process of building a new wastewater treatment facility to replace our old and failing plant.

The Park team plans to remodel the Mesquite restrooms and campsites in the

spring to refresh and modernize that entire loop. The historic cowboy dugout will also get a remodel this fall. The Park is continuing with our capital projects that are in the planning phases, including a park-wide waste-water upgrade and a new headquarters and visitor contact station.

As we begin the new year, the Park will continue to grow. We will be growing our team in capacity with two new field rangers. We will be growing our capabilities by sending many in our team to wildland firefighting training and conducting many staff development seminars among other upcoming trainings.

We will be growing our standards by the remodels of the rim cabins with the help of Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation, the remodel of our Cow Camp cabins and the Mesquite Loop, among many other projects. To say we have big plans for 2020 would be saying a lot! ***Ja***

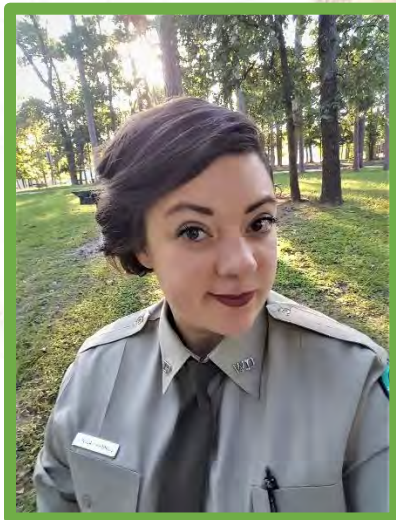


Park Staff
Photo by Eddie Tubbs





Another View
Photo by Eddie Tubbs



Lindsay Pannell
Park Interpreter

Rangers Afire

“No wonder, he thought, that the panhandle people were a godly lot, for they lived in sudden, violent atmospheres Weather kept them humble.”—Annie Proulx

The plains are notoriously dry and windy—until they aren’t. Our spring and early summer in Palo Duro Canyon has been filled with an uncommonly high amount of rainfall. The peculiar precipitation brought a banner wildflower year, a thriving bat colony, and safer conditions for tourists hiking to the Lighthouse. Yet, those violent atmospheres took a turn to the more traditional baked Texas we Panhandle natives are used to in the summer. Six weeks of high temperatures and wind left our wildflowers crisped, drove the

bat colony to a different water source, and reinstated our strict burn ban for the park. Park Rangers have faced the heat dozens of times this summer to ensure the continued safety of our guests. Soon, they may be facing heat of a different kind.

Our natural resources in Texas State Parks are held in balance by numerous methods, one of which is prescribed burns. Periodic burning in an area will restore nutrients to the soil, help keep the ecological balance, and preserve viewsheds. Palo Duro Canyon has struggled to find the right conditions to perform a burn, but now, staff will be trained for when that day comes.

In August, many of the rangers will be attending a first-time-ever, on-site Fire

Academy. After completing an intense, week-long course, each ranger will then take a pack test to prove his or her endurance. Each Arduous Pack Test is a three-mile walk under forty-five minutes with a forty-five-pound pack. We are excited to have wildland firefighters on staff for prescribed burning and in the event of an emergency. The weather might be sudden and violent at times, but the beauty of teamwork and Palo Duro Canyon makes it all worthwhile. *Lp*



**Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation
Members of the Board
Photo by Lindsay Pannell**



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