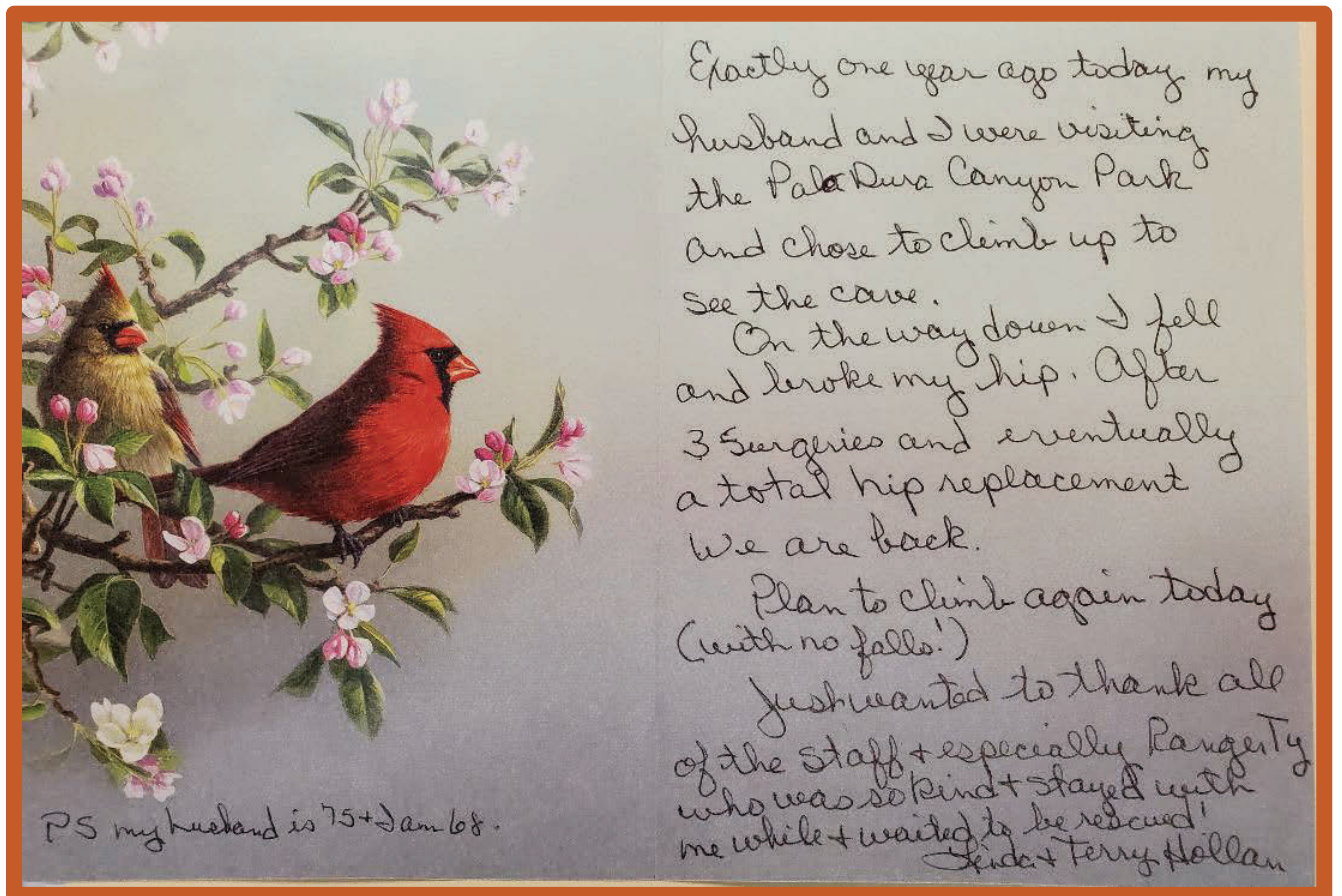


Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation

Issue No. 42

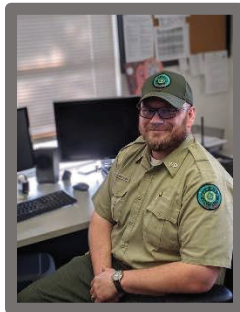
On the Edge!



Anonymous Note Left in the Visitor Center/Canyon Gallery



Coming Together for the Canyon



Joseph Allen
Park Superintendent

On Friday, May 13, 2022, a great group of state and local leaders came together for a tour of Canon Cita. Attendees included local mayors, commissioners, West Texas A&M, Randall County and State representatives, among others. State Park and Regional Office Staff facilitated this field trip to experience the Gilvin Education Center at Canon Cita and to discuss the current state of Palo Duro Canyon State Park.

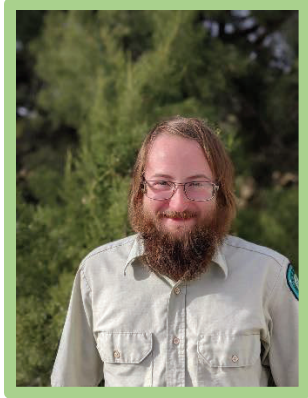
After a short tour of the facilities, the group explored some Park maps and discussed current visitation, staffing, and capital projects. Everyone was excited to hear about the many improvements the Park will soon be experiencing. The projects are

much needed and include the new water and wastewater improvements throughout the Park, the new headquarters and CCC interpretive museum, projects, and equestrian areas to name a few. The group also discussed how the entire region can best serve the growing visitation in coming years and how all parties can work together.

Regional Director Blaylock and I discussed our upcoming plans to initiate the Public Use Planning process that will help direct future development within the Park through vetting with internal and external stakeholders, including Park visitors. This process will take some time but should update portions of the 2003 Park master plan to provide guidance on future Park projects.

After the tour, the group took some time to take in the beautiful scenery at the overlook and take photos. The discussion continued during the drive back to the Park Headquarters, where the City of Canyon and Creek House Honey Farm provided lunch. Everyone left the tour with lots of excitement for the many good things on the horizon. ***Ja***





Bradley Kliemann
Park Interpreter
Summer is upon us

Summer is upon us here at Palo Duro Canyon State Park. With the summer comes increasing temperatures, visitor and, unfortunately, heat-related illness and rescues. Over the last few months, my goal has been to educate the public on the dangers of heat-related illness and some of the potential dangers of visiting our Park in the summer months. The message I've been aiming to get across is the following:

1. Visit our Park and begin hiking our trails early; plan on starting any outdoor activities by 10 a.m. or wait until after 7 p.m.
2. Bring and drink plenty of water and eat salty snacks to restore electrolytes.
3. Choose indoor activities, such as visiting the Visitor Center during the afternoon hours.
4. Use caution when hiking with pets. Bring a way to get water to them (bowls, etc.) and feel the ground with your hands before taking them out. If the ground is too hot for your hands, it's too hot for your pets' "hands."

5. Choose a short and shaded hike during hot days. While hiking to the Lighthouse may seem alluring, hike within your limits. Try choosing a shaded trail, like Paseo Del Rio, to beat the heat, or choose an alternate trail to see the Lighthouse.
6. Know the symptoms and differences between heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Our Facebook Page

(<https://www.facebook.com/PaloDuroCanyonSP>), traditional TV outlets, signage, and word of mouth have been incredibly helpful in getting our message to the public, but I've found the most effective method is to live by example. I do that by scheduling my programs in early morning or in the evening, scheduling indoor programs, (such as our Van Tour which should be in rotation by the time you're reading this), and by staying hydrated when I'm on our trails.

Despite our educational efforts, there will always continue to be rescues during hot summer days. Since rescues will always be a constant, I'd like to take a moment to recognize our exemplary staff and volunteers who assist on rescues and save lives every day on our trails and outdoor spaces. While hearing the blare of a siren meant for an ill-prepared visitor is expected, a personal nightmare of mine is hearing that whine meant for one of our staff or volunteers. To keep that nightmare from becoming reality, I implore all of our staff, volunteers, and readers of this newsletter to know your limits, follow the heat safety principles outlined earlier, and remember that **you** are our most important resource at Palo Duro Canyon State Park. **Bk**





Saving the Night

By

Art Schneider

Have you seen the Milky Way lately, that band of starlight which stretches from the N.E. to the S.W. horizons on a late evening summer sky? We are some of the lucky ones that can see the expanse of billions of stars from the numerous dark-sky locations in the Texas Panhandle. If you visit Palo Duro Canyon State Park, Buffalo Lake Wildlife Refuge, Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument, or the darkest location, Caprock Canyons State Park near Quitaque, you can see the Milky Way in all its glory.

Only two out of ten people on Earth can see the Milky Way. Ninety-nine percent of the U.S. and Europe live under light-polluted skies. This figure is increasing with the population explosion and poor lighting practices.

Light pollution comes in three main categories: 1). Skyglow—misdirected lighting from cities and the atmosphere itself, 2). Glare-bright light blinding our vision, such as bright headlights or streetlights, and

3). Light trespass—unwanted lighting from neighbors, businesses, or electronic billboards.

All of these taken on a worldwide basis have detrimental effects on birds which collide with buildings at night, sea turtles which cannot find the sea when they hatch, to even the simple firefly, confusing its mating practice.

Humans are also effected, since our circadian rhythm depends on the proper hours of dark for resting and regulation of the hormone melatonin in the brain.

So what can be done? First, a simple solution is to turn light off when and where lighting is not needed. Where lighting is required, the proper shielding and direction is important—aim the light downward. Next, the color of the light should be amber-yellowish and not bright white or blue. These colors easily scatter in the atmosphere, lighting up the night sky. The lumens are also important—how bright the lighting is related to the wattage of lamps.

The International Dark Sky Association was incorporated in 1988 in Tucson, Arizona, by an astronomer and physician advocating proper lighting and dark-sky places around the globe. To date, the I.D.A is in 70 different countries and has 7000 members with one chapter in Texas and 700 members on the rolls. There are four regions around the state with managers. I am the Panhandle Regional Manager for I.D.A.

To date, there are 50 Dark Sky Parks around the world, 4 in Texas. A Dark Sky Park is a private or public space protected for natural conservation, good lighting, and dark-sky programs. The Texas Parks are as follows in order of dark-sky quality: 1). Big Bend Ranch State Park—a Bortle rating of 1; 2). Copper Breaks State Park—Bortle 2; 3). Enchanted Rock State Natural Area—

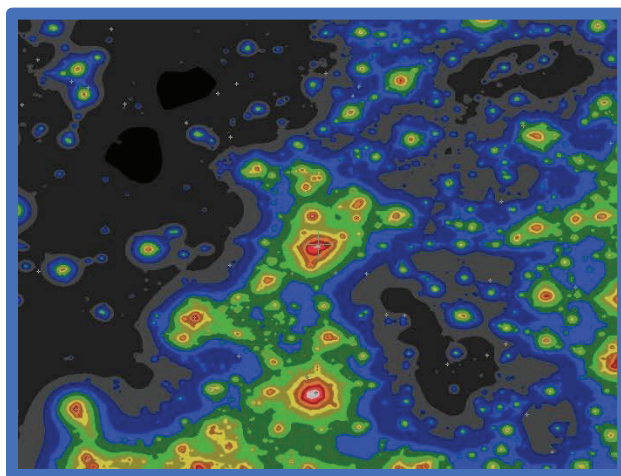
Bortle 2; 4). South Llano River State Park—Bortle 2.

The Bortle scale was devised to help amateur astronomers understand the darkness of a particular observing location. A number 1 is the best with a 9 the worst. For example, a Bortle 1 sky will have the Milky Way casting a shadow at night, while 9 will only allow seeing a few of the brightest stars at night. Currently, PDC State Park is rated as a 4, but at the Wolfberry Astronomy Observing Site, the rating is more like a 3. A Sky Quality Meter measures the dark-sky conditions at Wolfberry and is giving promising results. The Milky Way can be easily seen from this location as well as many other external galaxies. Future plans call for making an application to the I.D.A. for some type of status for the Park.

The other designations are Dark Sky Reserve—a dark zone surrounded by populated areas. Dark Sky Communities—these are cities or towns adopting good lighting ordinances and education about dark skies. Urban Night Sky Places—are sites surrounded by large urban environments and the darkest places on Earth. Dark Sky Sanctuaries—the darkest and remotest places in the world, 15 globally with one in Texas.

Any additional information can be found at I.D.A.Texas@darksky.org.

Editor's note: Art Schneider, I.D.A. Texas Panhandle Regional Manager, is a board member of Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation. He is a retired faculty member of Amarillo College and still teaches astronomy as a part-time instructor. *As*



Art and Scopes





Photos by the Editor

Several years ago, the photos above were taken of Cita Canyon from Canonicita, the former home of Pete Gilvin, whose home is now the Gilven Education Center, a part of Palo Duro Canyon State Park. Upon his death, Mr. Gilvin bequeathed his home to the Park. Cita Canyon is part of the greater Palo Duro Canyon.



Toward the Canyon

**By
Ann Coberley**

At dawn,
a black sky fades
to blue,

and stars retreat
behind the curve of
a dimming moon.



Dogs stir
as the teapot sings,
and I lace my boots
for a sunrise walk
toward the canyon's ridge.

Beyond flower beds,
Pergola and patio,
the path turns wild,
rocky and rife
with cactus and thistle.

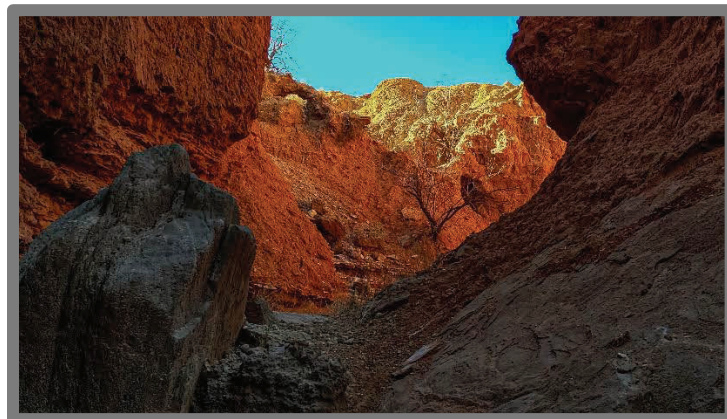
**Editor's note: Dr. Ann Coberley, an
anthropologist, is on the Partners Board.**

White tail deer are waking,
coyotes howl,
and ravens soar overhead,
riding the wind,
raucous against
the stillness of morning.

And then I'm there,
standing at the canyon's edge,
its rim a band of gold
above the purple rocks,
rose colored plateaus
emerging from darkness,
the aura of eons
transcending time.



Canyon Dew
Photo by David Townsend



Late Afternoon Hike
Photo by Eddie Tubbs



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On the Edge!

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