

**Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation**

*Issue No. 48*

*On the Edge!*

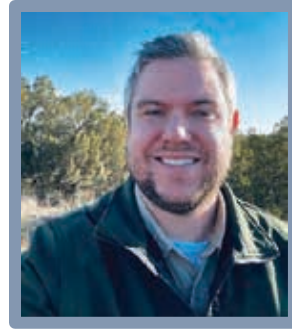


mkf photography  
September 16, 2023 12:24 PM

**Photo by Mary Fowler  
2M Wagons  
Kim Colorado**



**David Fischer**  
**Park Superintendent**



**Thomas Milone**  
**Assistant Park Superintendent**

**Welcome to David Fischer**  
**by**  
**Thomas Milone**

After months of searching, Palo Duro Canyon State Park has found its new Park Superintendent. Please join me in welcoming David Fischer “back” to PDS

David began his TPWD career here in the Canyon in 2014 while attending West Texas A&M University. Through mission focus and a great work ethic, David climbed the PDC ranks exhibiting from volunteer to Seasonal Maintenance Assistant, Maintenance Specialist III, Maintenance Specialist IV before heading to Possum Kingdom State Park in 2020. David served as Possum Kingdom’s Park Superintendent for a number of years and most recently as Purtil Creek’s Park Superintendent,

In addition to his experience and love of the Canyon, David brings a wealth of knowledge with him, excelling in areas, such as partnerships, interpretation, project planning, and fostering work environments.

David officially took his new role on November 1<sup>st</sup> and is excited to join and support such an awesome State Parks’ Team. *Tm*



**Five D Ranch**  
**Texarkana, Arkansas**

**A Lollapalooza of a Prairie Palooza**

It was a lollapalooza at the Prairie Palooza in Palo Duro Canyon State Park on September 16<sup>th</sup> to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of Texas Parks and Wildlife. The staff of Palo Duro Canyon State Park and Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation sponsored the event. Fifteen chuck wagons serving chicken fried steak complete with the traditional

peach cobbler were the centerpieces for the celebration.

Canopies covering the booths spread out over the parking area which is usually used by the patrons of the outdoor musical “Texas.” The occupants of the booths demonstrated various wares for sale or exhibited Native American artifacts with explanations of their use. The parking lot was filled with the canopies and the wagons, some of which had to be pulled off the pavement and situated among the trees to make room for the displays.

On one side of the area was a Native American flute player and drummer entertaining the onlookers. On the opposite side was a demonstration of the assembly of a Plains-Indian tepee complete with poles. Performers from “Texas” treated the crowd to selections from the play to end the day.

Fourteen hundred people attended the event with around four hundred enjoying the chuck-wagon dinners. Those who did not eat toured the booths under the canopies and had fun doing so.

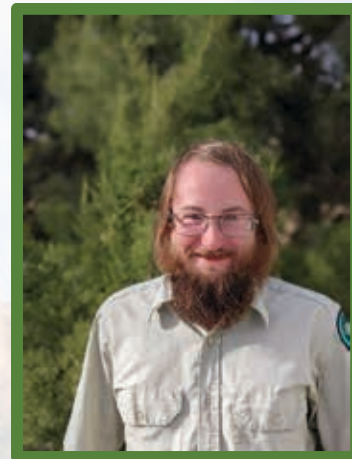
Attending the festivities were Rodney Franklin, Director of Texas Parks and Wildlife, and Shannon Blalock, regional director. Regional Director Blalock oversees seventeen Texas state parks, including Palo Duro Canyon State Park. Director Franklin demonstrated his culinary skills by slicing the birthday cake for the Park.

It doesn’t need to be said that Prairie Palooza was a great success. The owners of the chuck wagons expressed their desire to return next year. Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation along with Park staff will once again sponsor the event which will be moved to October in order to avoid competing events in September. We hope the attendees to those events will join us for a delicious chicken fried steak dinner and

participate in the other fun events. Come one; come all. *Cf*



**The Grunts Have It**  
**Photo by Eddie Tubbs**



**Bradley Kliemann**  
**Park Interpreter**

### **Native American Heritage and Culture at Palo Duro Canyon**

Native American Heritage Month has come to us again, and although we as an agency highlight the contribution of Native American individuals and culture during November, anytime of year is a great time to celebrate the heritage of the lands we stand

on and the contribution of Native American and indigenous peoples on the places we live and work in. Through my programs as the interpreter at Palo Duro Canyon State Park, I always try to ensure I'm paying homage to the people who inhabited and continue to inhabit the Canyon and the High Plains.

Most of my programs start with an opener question to loosen people up—an ice breaker if you will. For example, our Van Tour, which changes themes every month, begins with “What is one way Native American culture has impacted your life?” For many, this can be a tough question, and sometimes forces them to think outside of their comfort zone of what it means to be impacted by a potentially different culture than their own. We hear many responses about living on indigenous land, exploring the open frontiers of the West, and respecting people who were here; but these answers lead back to Native American culture being something of the past. I try to dispel these misinterpretations and remind our guests that Native American peoples and their culture are still alive and well in the Canyon. Groups such as the Comanches still visit the Canyon today and are an important part of our daily tour conversations. Other answers to my icebreaker are more personal. Occasionally, for instance, the question will remind guests of family and loved ones or where they grew up or live today.

Through my programs, I always try to incorporate and highlight the importance of Native American culture by breaking down preconceived notions by giving my participants a way to express themselves and their own experiences.

When I'm asked the same question, my response is an easy one: I owe a lot to Native American culture, as it gave me the

drive to be a steward of places like Palo Duro Canyon. At the end of the year, I hope you take a moment to reflect on the ways that Native American and Indigenous cultures have impacted your life. The answer you come to just might surprise you. *Bk*



**Visit by Quanah Parker's Descendants**  
**Photo by David Townsend**

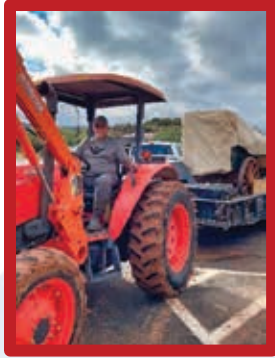


**Eddie Tubbs**  
**President of**  
**Partners in Palo Duro Canyon**  
**Foundation**

### **Volunteer Values**

Each year hundreds of thousands of people visit Palo Duro Canyon State Park. Every

visitor experiences the grandeur of the Canyon because of staff and committed volunteers. Three of those committed volunteers are members of the Hess family who live in Amarillo. Rodney, Barbara, and their daughter, Bailey, have devoted years to caring for the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest canyon in the United States.



**Rodney**

Rodney, before and after retiring from forty years with ASARCO in Amarillo, has been deeply involved with the work in Palo Duro Canyon State Park. His years of maintenance experience at ASARCO and his natural talent have been an invaluable aid for the benefit of the Park. In the past few years, he has worked with the trail team in maintaining the miles of biking, horseback riding, and mountain bike trails. Add to that numerous other projects, including the renovation of the wildlife viewing area, organizing the Prairie Palooza and other projects have kept him busy.



**Barbara**

Barbara and Rodney not only support each other in their work at Palo Duro Canyon, but Barbara is responsible for painting essential signs throughout the Park. This is a very involved process, requiring specific guidelines established by Texas Parks. Rodney has stated, “Barbara is a natural when it comes to volunteering at the Canyon. She quietly works behind the scenes, taking on Tasks that are vital to the function of the Park.” At this time, both Barbara and Rodney are campground hosts at the Sagebrush Campground.

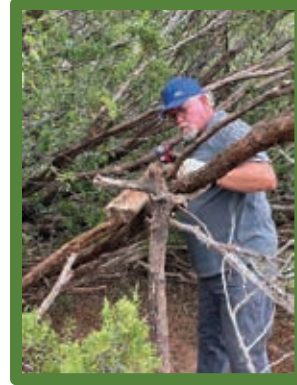


**Barbara and Bailey**

After graduating from Midwestern University, Bailey returned to Amarillo and has become an essential volunteer in the Park. A number of years ago, Bailey and her mother initiated the water station at the Lighthouse Trail to aid hikers who often come unprepared for this unique hike. Both can be found summer weekends handing out water and giving instructions for the hike which, round trip, is a little over five miles long. The Park staff have stated, that the water station has reduced rescues and life threatening issues due to the heat in the summer.

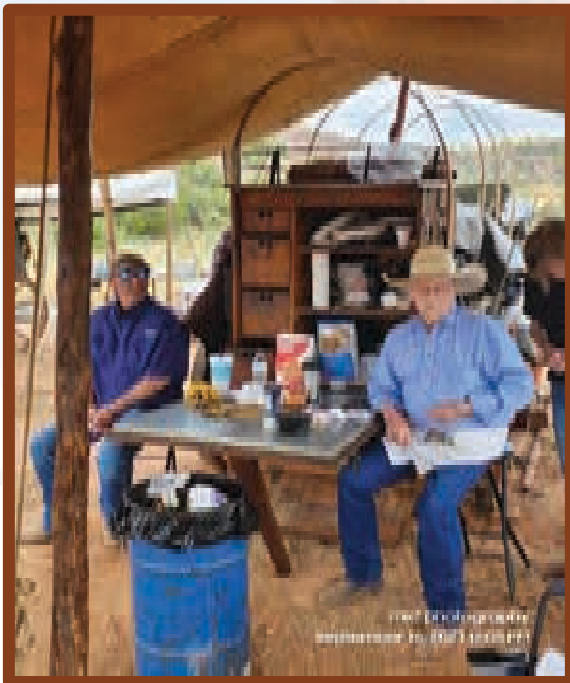
Bailey coordinated as well the 5k run for Veterans Suicide Prevention in cooperation with the Veterans Administration.

A special thanks to the volunteer work of Rodney, Barbara, and Bailey for all they have given and continue to give to Palo Duro Canyon State Park. *Et*



(Editor's Note: The photos for this article are provided by Eddie Tubbs.)

## Prairie Palooza



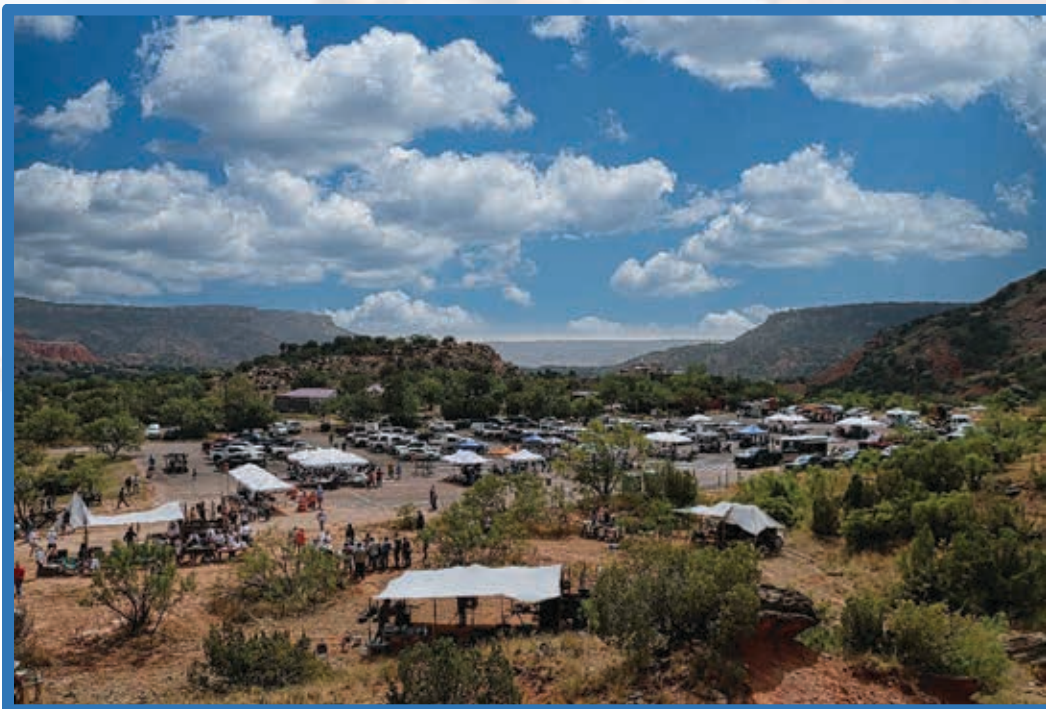
Photos by Mary Fowler  
Chicken Fried Steak and Peach Cobbler  
Comin' up



**Photo by Mary Fowler  
Thomas Milone and Mark Woomavov,  
Comanche Nation Chairman  
One Hundred Years**



**Photo by Mary Fowler  
Dutch Oven Expert**

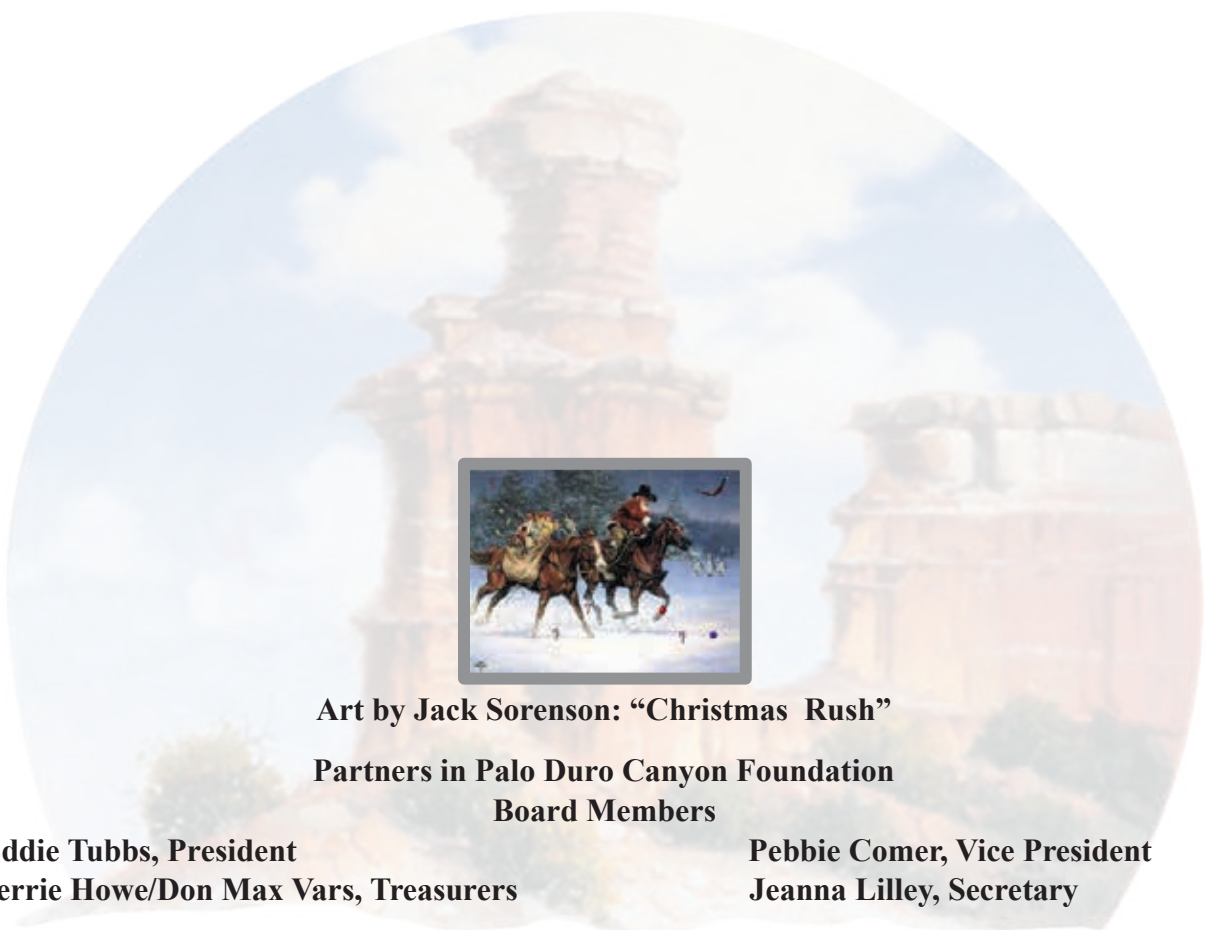


**Photo by Eddie Tubbs  
Overview of Prairie Palooza**



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**Art by Jack Sorenson: "Christmas Rush"**

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***On the Edge!***

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