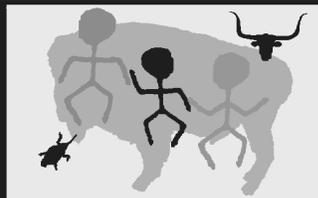


# Friends of San Angelo State Park



VOL. 17

SPRING, 2019

NO. 1

## TRAIL RIDE EVENT **SUCCESS**

By Linda Ashton

Another successful trail ride is in the books. Postponed because of weather, the rescheduled Monarch Ride took place April 6-7 and brought in about eighty-five riders from all over Texas. All the camping sites with electricity in North Concho and Bald Eagle Campgrounds were full as were and most of the primitive sites of both campgrounds.

Saturday afternoon activities were on schedule with **Ranger Bonnie** leading a nature hike and **Gaylon and Sherry Hall** providing wagon rides with their beautiful mules. At four o'clock the auction was ready for shoppers. At six o'clock **Dorothy Douthit of Fiddle Fire Catering** was ready to feed all the hungry folks a chicken-fried steak dinner with cobbler for dessert. Dorothy then entertained the with fiddle music.

Fifty-eight folks, more than ever before, signed up for the Poker Run. Thanks to **Gail Metcalf** and her crew, the Poker Run ran smoothly and everyone had a great time.

Sunday was a beautiful day for a long ride. After delicious breakfast by Fiddle Fire, riders were ready to hit the trails. The long ride led by **Larry McMurtry and Linda Ashton** along with outriders Shawn and Bull had twenty-four riders. The short and gaited riders lead by **Judy Hight and Cindy Middleton**, along with outriders Dennis and Houston, had thirty-four riders.

Chairpersons Judy Hight and Linda Ashton would like to thank all who helped make this event a success. Registration: **Sharon Olson, Sarah Howell, Brownie Roberts**. Auction: **Terry Wallace, Liz Jones** and crew. Also appreciated are **Jerry Middleton, Steve Nelson, Gwen Watkins and her friend, ASU student Kellen Rowe, Elaine Lee, and Kathy Osbourne**.

Thanks also to **ALL the park staff** for their hard work in preparing and grooming the park, cleaning up, mowing, moving things, taking care of folks checking in and giving tours.

**The end result for this event is that we made \$6,700. That will be spent for improvements in OUR Park.**



### TRAIL RIDE SPONSORS

Nationwide Insurance-Lisa Copeland Agency - Chuck wagon Sponsor

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Legends Jewelry • Texas Bank - Cowboy Devotional Sponsor • Mary Golder

**Donors:** Mayfield Paper • Sonic • Mrs. Baird's Bread • Culligan Water • Concho Valley Electric Company

## Two of Our Own Honored at Statewide Conference.

Texans for State Parks annually selects persons to be honored for their service and dedication to a state park. This year, SASP won two of those titles.

**Jim Cisneros** is 2019 Distinguished Park Superintendent "Since his assignment to SASP in 2017, Jim's presence, enthusiasm, dedication and staff management have brought about a dramatic increase in visitors and regional awareness and appreciation of the valuable resource we have in the park," Quoted from the nomination document.

**John Talley** is 2019 Distinguished Park Volunteer. "This volunteer helped to develop the trails when the park over twen-

ty years ago and has had a significant hand in the continued development and maintenance. He has an expertise in mechanical repairs and has assisted the staff to repair everything from tractors to chainsaws. Quoted from nomination document.

**Linda Ashton and Bill Guffey** were also nominated and declared Honored Park Volunteer and Honored Park Ranger.

Announcement was made at the annual TfSP Conference at Brazos Bend SP.

**Laurel Scott, FoSASP Board member and volunteer guide,** attended. (See her comments on page 7.)

The world is full of willing people;  
some are willing to work,  
the rest willing to let them.

~ Robert Frost



## Friends of San Angelo State Park

### Board of Advisors 2018-2019

The Board of Directors is elected by the members to a three-year term.

Directors meet every two months to plan and coordinate activities and provide oversight of funds.

Linda Ashton	Steve Nelson
Carole Holbert	Robbie Overstreet
Sarah Howell	Brownie Roberts
Laurel Scott	Sandy Pedersen
Liz Jones	Amanda Razani
Ruth Jordan	John Talley
Gail Metcalfe	Terry Wallace
Larry McMurtrey	
Cindy Middleton	Jim Cisneros, Park Supt.
Deola Mitts	

The Newsletter is a quarterly publication produced by Friends of San Angelo State park, a non-profit corporation organized for the purpose of

- ensuring the future of the park by preserving it for future generations
- enhancing the quality of educational, interpretive and recreational opportunities in the park
- recruiting volunteers
- promoting regional support
- soliciting finances and resources for the perpetration of the park and
- soliciting and receiving gifts for endowments for the benefit of the park.

Ruth Jordan - Editor

**Friends of SASP**  
**3900-2 Mercedes**  
**San Angelo, TX, 76901**  
**ruthjordan@suddenlink.net**



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# From the Park Superintendent

Jim Cisneros

## Welcome to the Park

The entire staff is eagerly waiting to serve you.

In the last year we have seen our visitation numbers increase and we hope to see them continue to rise. We have also seen many changes to the way we do business both with the public and behind the scene.

We have had the opportunity to send some of our staff to different types of training and hope to increase what we have to offer. In the future look for continued hikes to include safety hikes. We hope to add archery shooting

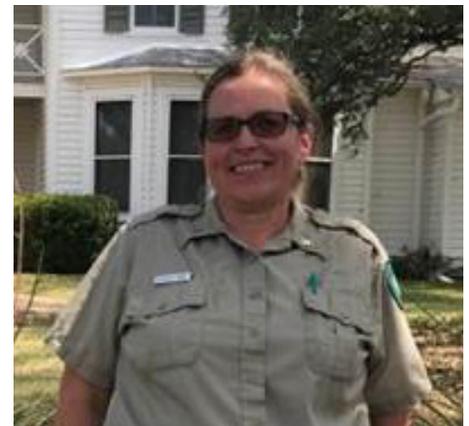
We have a new reservation system that now allows you to book a specific site. It is so much easier and faster, will also allow you to purchase your day pass permit on-line. Having used this system myself I found that it sped up the time it takes for me to get through the line and to my activity. To make a online reservation please visit <https://texasstateparks.reserveamerica.com/>. Once you make your first on-line reservation and breeze through the line I don't think you will ever go back to the old way.

And last but not least we wish to say goodbye to one of our park rangers that has been an integral part of our operation since his arrival. Anthony "Tony" Wheeler has moved on to take the superintendent position at Village Creek State Park. He was a true asset to the park and helped us grow. We wish him the best and will always keep a special place in our hearts for him. If you are ever in East Texas be sure to stop by and say hi to him and his family.

Thanks to all of you for allowing me to serve as your superintendent. If I can ever be of assistance to you please do not hesitate to call the office at 325-949-4757 or my cell phone at 325-277-6348.

## San Angelo State Park

**Please help us welcome** the newest member to San Angelo State Park! Lorianne Pink was born in Middlebury, Vermont. While living in Vermont, she worked for a U.S. Customhouse Broker for many years. She moved to New Mexico in 2001 and was able to build a part-time bookkeeping business and worked with children who have behavioral issues. She met and married Fred Pink in 2013 who introduced her to camping and visiting State Parks in New Mexico, Colorado, and for the last 2 1/2 years, Texas. Lorianne became part of the TPWD family in July of 2018 when she started working at LBJ State Park & Historical Site. She fills the position of assistant office manager at SASP. The staff is very excited to have her to the park family and look forward to the great things she will do here.



# SPOTLIGHT ON PARK STAFF

Jim Cisneros, San Angelo State Park Superintendent

By Laurel L. Scott



**“I always end up in the places I need to be, when I need to be there,” says.** Jim Cisneros, superintendent of San Angelo State Park since May 2017. This simple philosophy has taken him a long way down a winding road.

Jim grew up in the tiny South Plains town of Muleshoe, Texas, and, like many of his high school peers, didn’t know what he wanted to do next. So, in 1989, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy.

“I wanted to see the world and to serve my country the way my grandfather did during World War II,” he said.

He served a decade, based mostly in South Carolina and San Diego, as a submarine sonar technician. Then he took one of the turns on his road. He enrolled in college to become a registered nurse, working a variety of jobs while pursuing his education full time. In 2001, he was hired by the hospital where he had worked as an intern. But almost a decade in, he realized this was not the life he wanted.

“Getting a nursing degree was one of the hardest things I’ve ever done,” he said. “Walking away was the next hardest thing.” Jim moved back to Texas and found an entry-level job in a hotel.

“I still wanted to help people, to work with people,” he said.

He rapidly rose to hotel management and ended up with a lucrative career and running a hotel in Abilene.

“It was a lot of hours and a lot of money,” he said. After five years in the hotel industry, he decided that, too, was not the job for him. Jim found a job as a part-time clerk position at Abilene State Park.

“I knew I was in the right place on the very first day,” Jim said. “There was a big line of campers and nobody yelled at me. Everyone was happy and joking. They were where they wanted to be and so was I.”

At a New Employee Orientation, he met two women who worked for Indian Lodge, a full-service hotel within the boundaries of Davis Mountains State Park.

“With my background at hotels, I thought it would be a good fit but different, not all about profit,” he said. Jim was hired as the assistant superintendent.

But the divorced father of two adult children was a long way from home. After a year, Jim decided to try

to get closer to his childhood home, the Lubbock area. There were superintendent openings at two locations, Copper Breaks State Park and San Angelo State Park.

“Copper Breaks is a beautiful park, it had a lot to offer, but the nearest town was Quanah,” Jim said. Quanah has a population of less than 3,000 and is 8 miles from the state line with Oklahoma. “It was just as isolated as Fort Davis.”

He visited San Angelo State Park, met the staff and found them very welcoming.

“The whole town is welcoming,” Jim said. “But honestly, what got me here is when I walked into HEB and saw all the fresh produce. Then I went to Market Street, which is just like the stores at home in Lubbock.”

Since he took the San Angelo State Park helm in 2017, Jim has led a coordinated effort to raise its profile locally and nationally. He found partners in Diann Bayes and Suzanna Aguirre of the San Angelo Convention & Visitors Bureau, among others. “They have embraced the park and all that it has to offer,” he said. “They are our champions for the park outside of San Angelo.”

The Friends of San Angelo State Park group is our champion in San Angelo.”

Jim has been recognized for his efforts already with Texas Parks & Wildlife Department statewide honors for Outreach and Leadership. He latest honor was being named Distinguished Superintendent by the Texans for State Parks at its annual conference.

“The staff and the Friends, they make me look good,” he said.

For Jim, it’s all about the experience for the park visitors. He relates meeting a woman who emailed a cherished photo of herself at the park as an 8<sup>th</sup>-grader.

**“The most important thing we do is create these memories for our park visitors,” he said. “This needs to be a park that brings people out to make those memories.”**



**Donations total over \$2,000.**

*Thank you.*

# SPOTLIGHT ON A VOLUNTEER

## John Talley

By Laurel L. Scott

**John Talley may know San Angelo State Park trails better than anyone.**

The Dallas-area native took up mountain biking in 1990 to get in shape and met another avid cyclist, Don Ickles. Then in 1995, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Corps of Engineers signed an agreement that established

San Angelo State Park.

“Don and I would travel and ride, travel and ride,” John said. “He and I started going out when the area was still a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers park. We were allowed to go up to ranchlands, too, as long as we closed the gates.”

“We started exploring and we made a few of the trails by ourselves,” John said. “Then Don worked a deal with Rob Junell, who was our state representative. We’d flag where we wanted a trail and low-risk inmates from state prison would come out to clear the trail.

“So we created that whole system, from the playground up the east side to the north end of the park,” John said. “Don cut Shady Trail himself.”

The San Angelo Bicycle Association would help by holding races to break in the new trails, he said. SABA members also helped clean up the park.

“We hauled out trash, mattresses, washing machines, no telling how much,” he said. “We even came across a burned-out motorhome.”

John moved to San Angelo in 1978, following the woman who would become his wife, Cathy, who was hired by Angelo

State University.

He fell in love with the city.

“Like Will Rogers, I never met anybody (here) I didn’t like,” he said.

He launched a dual career in the auto repair and music, tuning engines and pianos and performing country and rock in bands. He and Cathy have two adult children.

But the state park became another passion. Don moved away but John kept going, helping to create the more than 50 miles of trails crisscrossing the nearly 8,000-acre park.

“A couple of the trails are named after some of the people who designed them, like Lanky Lackey, for George Lackey,” John said. And there’s a Talley Valley trail, of course.

“Back then, we’d be riding among the buffalo,” he said. “You’d look at him and he’d look at you and we’d just ride around.”

In 2012, he sold his auto repair business, Talley Services, and retired because of health issues. For a while, he had to cut back on mountain biking but he just increased his time at the state park, volunteering at the Southshore Gatehouse and joining the Friends of San Angelo State Park. He manages soda vending machines and firewood outlets provided for park visitors that raise funds for the Friends.

He also has the use of two tractors to help maintain those miles of trails, one for mowing. The other he has rigged with a dragging tool to smooth spots where longhorn cattle have trampled the trail or trucks have created deep ruts. His machine repair skills are especially handy.

“In the summer, I spend 20 to 30 hours a week in the park, on chores or riding a bike,” John said.

Most recently, he helped the park rangers create new maps, complete with GPS points. He also helped decide where 168 new trail signs, funded by a state grant, will be going in.

“We spent two weekends riding the trails and Jeep roads on a Gator,” he said. **“I guess I am the granddaddy of the trail system.”**



Visit the Friends of San Angelo State Park gift shop to see our new additions.

We have stuffed animals, t-shirts with a new logo, aluminum water bottles, hats, coffee mugs and other fun items.

FoSASP members receive 10% discount on all gift shop purchases.

All proceeds support FOSASP and our park.

# Texans for State Parks Annual Conference

By Laurel L. Scott

Texans for State Parks, a statewide nonprofit organization made up of park Friends groups, individuals, organizations and businesses to advocate for the Texas state parks system, historic sites and state natural areas, held its annual conference at Brazos Bend State Park the weekend of April 12-13. I attended as a representative of Friends of San Angelo State Park and presented a short Photoshop program prepared by SASP Ranger Bonnie Wallace.

The highlight of the weekend was keynote speaker Rodney Franklin, State Parks Director. He discussed an important bill in the Legislature (which has since passed) that will allow voters to decide on a state constitutional amendment requiring all income from a tax on sporting goods to go to the parks system. Currently, the Legislature has the authority to dip into that fund for other purposes, even as the park system has a growing backlog of needed repairs. Our job, as Friends and supporters, Franklin said, is to help the voters make the right choice at the election in November. In addition, Franklin related that Balmorhea State Park has been repaired and reopened, thanks to a \$1 million challenge grant. He also said a similar effort is in the process of raising the tens of millions needed to develop the 4,000-acre Palo Pinto Mountains State Park.

Texans for State Parks also presented the 2019 Distinguished Volunteer Award to Friends of SASP Board Member John Talley. SASP Superintendent Jim Cisneros was named 2019 Distinguished Park Superintendent. Amigos of Goliad and Friends of Cleburne State Park tied for Distinguished Friends Group and Thuy Kim Tran of McKinney Falls State Park was named Distinguished State Park Ranger. The 2020 Texans for State Parks conference will be held at Fort Parker State Park, 45 miles east of Waco.



Mysterious gravesite at Macey Ridge.



A Longhorn



North Concho River at Brown's Crossing.

## View Between Ears

By Cindy Middleton

If you haven't gone riding at our state park, you are missing out! There are trails galore: official park trails and trails made by the Longhorns. And then there are those you just blaze yourself when you get brave and confident out there.

A lesser traveled trail is on the other side of FM 2288 from the north shore equestrian gate entrance. It is called Area 6/7 and has a place called Macey's Ridge where there is the mysterious grave of Dave Macey, a great view of the Grape Creek area and Brown's Crossing where 'back in the day' the old Butterfield stage crossed the North Concho river.

A couple dirt roads in this area are easy to follow. Otherwise it's follow the cattle trails or blaze your own, but it is well worth the ride.

You might see some of the Texas Longhorn Herd, deer, armadillos, a javelina or two, and, very possibly, some feral hogs. Gotta watch for those javelina and feral hogs as they tend to get your horse a little spooky. They can be aggressive. Hang on and keep your distance.

So, load up your horse, call a friend to meet you out there.

## Go ride our park.

Ruth Jordan and Sandy Pedersen attended awards banquets for three Angelo State University Honor Students, Chatta Russell, Keller Rowe, and Parker Adamson.

The students served as ex-officio FoSASP board members and volunteered at events during their academic year.



# Happy Bike Trails

By Steve Nelson



Rick Ogan and volunteers gather for a morning of trail work.

I began riding a bike on the trails at San Angelo State Park soon after the park was opened in 1995. Some trails were laid out by local bike riders, motor cyclists and horse riders. It took a long time before I began to meet other people in the park. The land had been maintained by the US Corp of Engineers as a Recreation Area. In the late 90's. I would see occasional work crews from the Department of Corrections maintaining the park trails. Now, leased to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the park's trail system has evolved, mapped, with new signs posted, and is maintained by park staff and volunteers.

The trails go through beautiful, rugged terrain. Hard packed sand transitions to exposed rock, up the sides of small mesas and into usually dry creek beds. Mesquite trees and prickly pear cactus thrive. Chopping back the cactus, mesquite branches and grasses is vital. Some people would carry machetes or branch loppers while riding to chop back the brush when they rode. Work by TPWD is underway to remove or control these plants. From the north entrance and adjacent to the north Concho River, large pecan trees grow.

One guy that I know and followed on some of the volunteer trails cleanups at least five years was Kyle Olson. Another who was vital to the park's trails, was John Talley. About two and a half years ago, Kyle and SABA president asked if I would take over leading the volunteer trail clean up. I agreed to the position, already knowing how much work it would be. I have continued using the

second Saturday of the month unless other events on the park required use of the areas. Cycling, running races on the trails and large horseback rides can cause me to reschedule or cancel a date. We clear trails unreachable by tractors or trucks. Some of the trails are fairly flat. Those were not the trails we would work. Getting volunteers to come do this is hit or miss. On beautiful 80 degree mornings, we have had zero people then on cold wet mornings, 20 people have come.

Trails are open for individual riders at any time. Guided group bike rides in the park are led by members of the Friends of San Angelo State Park and the San Angelo Bicycle Association. Check those groups' websites or Facebook pages for info on upcoming rides or for finding local individuals to ride with. Be sure to get a map of the park online or from the gate host or ranger.

A bike helmet is required when riding the parks trails or roads. Make sure to hydrate before your ride and to take plenty of fluids with you. Drinking water

can be hard to find in the park.

When I met FoSASP president, Ruth Jordan, she was recruiting new members for the support club from a more varied type of visitor, specifically the bikers. I joined and have become a member of the Board of Directors. The club has provided work gloves, repairs for equipment, and free lunch for the workers. My employer, San Angelo Electric Motors, donates safety glasses and a cooler of iced bottles of water and sports drinks. I really push fluids in hot weather. Bug spray and sunscreen are important. We have had volunteers from Angelo State University, Goodfellow Air Force Base, and others. Friends' members have gone on local TV interview shows and asked viewers to come out

I post schedules on my own Facebook page, on the SABA page and the FoSASP. Also, the San Angelo State Park will post scheduled dates and put it on a message board at the gate house.

Some of the tools we use to maintain trails are shovels, branch loppers, rakes and heavy duty hoes. Gas powered weed whackers and wheeled trimmers are used to cut grasses along the trails.



Volunteers working on rocky bike trail.

# December 22<sup>nd</sup> Full Moon Hike @ San Angelo State Park

by Sandy Pedersen

*Waiting in the stillness...*

*The setting sun over my shoulder begs me turn  
to capture*

*and enjoy the ever changing colors.*

*A gentle breeze ruffles my hair  
as fading colors and shadowy silhouettes  
replace fiery oranges with inky blues.*

*Turning back to gaze east I discover  
a sliver of light, peeking over the dam,  
has appeared in my absence.*

*Growing slowly in size and intensity,  
the full moon is revealed,  
enormous and golden*

*Rising over the dam  
echoed in the lake's  
calm mirrored surface.*



Sunset



Moonrise

Participants hiked with Ranger Bonnie from Chaparral Pavilion to Isabel Hart Day Use Area overlooking the lake and dam. There they were treated to information and demonstration using equipment from the new Astronomy Education trunk.

The trunk holds instruments and information for the dark sky tour including two telescopes purchased by the FoSASP.

## FRIENDS OF SASP

Linda Ashton  
Lea Beyerlein  
Bryant Better Hearing  
David Busker  
Sean Buss  
Johnnie Caskey  
Jerry and Christi Chambers  
Carol Ann Chidlaw  
Nationwide Insurance Copeland Agency  
Charlie and Marsha Crabtree  
Martha Dollivar  
Mary Ellen Douthit  
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John and Mary Eades  
Dennis and Glenna Friedrich  
Holly Green  
Norma Green  
Dolores and Frank Gully  
Jackie and Judy Hight  
Carole Holbert  
Sarah Howell  
Liz Jackson  
Liz and Jeannie Jones  
John and Ruth Jordan  
Jake Landers  
Jack and Frances Matthews  
Dean and Lisa McInturff  
Larry McMurtry

Pete and Sandy Pedersen  
Gail Metcalf and Wade Potts  
Jerry and Cindy Middleton  
Steve Nelson  
Rick and Velma Ogan  
Katherine Osborne  
Kay Pierce  
Jackie and Kenneth Prescott  
Amanda Razani  
Shirley and Bob Read  
Marilyn Russell  
San Angelo Garden Club  
Laurel Scott  
Lisa Tumlinson  
Terry Wallace

Gwendolyn Watkins  
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Zesch and Pickett Insurance

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PLEASE RENEW  
OUR FRIENDSHIP**

### FRIENDS OF SAN ANGELO STATE PARK Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Friends of SASP, 3900-2 Mercedes, San Angelo, TX 76901

\_\_\_\_\_ Regular Member (\$25)

\_\_\_\_\_ Senior Member (\$20)

\_\_\_\_\_ Organization (\$35)

\_\_\_\_\_ Business Bronze (\$50)

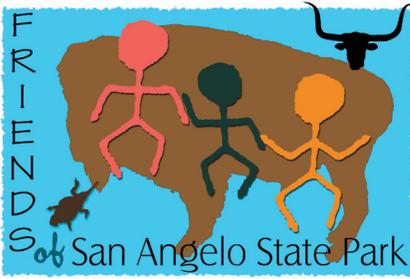
\_\_\_\_\_ Business Silver (\$100)

\_\_\_\_\_ Family (\$40)

\_\_\_\_\_ Senior Family (\$30)

\_\_\_\_\_ Student & Military (\$15)

Additional Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_



**FRIENDS OF SAN ANGELO STATE PARK**

3900-2 MERCEDES  
SAN ANGELO, TEXAS 76901

A good crowd, weather, good friends and food made for a successful Silver Bluebonnet Day.

Linda Ashton, coordinator, reported over sixty seniors enjoyed the free outing.

Many of them return every year for the free lunch, tours and entertainment.

Photos by Judy Hight and Sandy Pedersen



**HAPPY MOTHERS DAY!!**

Photo by Mickey Lanty

**2019 SCHEDULE EVENTS**

- July 6** Longhorn & Bison tour, 9:00 AM at the South Side gate. Learn about the history of the Longhorn & Bison, why they are important to Texas, and why we love them at San Angelo State Park.
- July 27** Permian Tracks Hike- Event will start at 10:00 AM. Meet at Gate 8-3 located on FM 2288. We will explore Little Foot Draw where foot prints left behind by creatures that roamed the earth 250 million years ago.
- July 16** **FoSASP Board of Directors Meeting. Park Headquarters 6:30**

**For additional events see San Angelo State Park on Facebook or follow us on Instagram.**

**Silver Bluebonnet Day Sponsors**

**Bryant Better Hearing**

Sonic #2 • Water Tree • Mrs. Bairds Bread • Donut Palace

*Thank you*