



# Water Works

*A monthly newsletter for friends of Jacob's Well Natural Area*

February 2011

## Water Works for you!

Welcome to Water Works! This electronic newsletter is for everyone involved in creating the nature preserve at Jacob's Well and educating the public about the importance of water conservation. Jane Dunham is offering her high level media skills to the JWNA Volunteers, after doing the same for the Wimberley Players for five years.

We are very lucky to have her. Her office is impressive – it is lined with all makes and models of computers and printers, to be sure that each communication can be read by all. Anne Child will be reporting on the projects and antics of the trail working group, and we need the rest of you to send in your stories and photographs. Tap into the writer inside - we need articles for these categories:

- The plants and wildlife in our waters and watershed
- Interviews with members
- Stories about schools and groups that visit
- Any poetic, enlightening, or amusing encounter you have with nature

Please send these and any ideas or announcements to Jane: [jane@wimberleyart.com](mailto:jane@wimberleyart.com).

The newsletter will be volunteer run, and will show up in your inbox approximately once a month. If you know someone who would like to receive this, please write to [mail@jacobswellspring.com](mailto:mail@jacobswellspring.com).

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

*Margaret Mead*

## JW Bi-Weekly Workday Crew

*Anne Child*

Last spring Jacob's Well trained volunteers and docents. From this sprouted an every-other-Friday work crew. Others have joined since -- from Hays County Master Naturalists, the community, and from a fall training session.

We have built new trails and improved existing ones, worked at eliminating invasive species such as bamboo and Johnson Grass, cleaned up unused structures, thinned junipers to invite grass growth, beautified the entrance and built a new bridge to the weir.



*Garry Child and Darren work on the new bridge for the JW weir.*

Expected projects for 2011 include fence and trail maintenance, invasive species and non-native plant removal on the new property, clean-up and erosion control. Land restoration projects are likely after the Master Plan is complete.

Benefits from last year's hard work were visible in short order as visitors enjoyed the trails, native grasses filled clearings and invasives were harder to find. Join us this year to see what we can create together.

# Jacob's Well Surges Forward

Barbara Attwell

A new chapter has started for Jacob's Well. The Board of the Wimberley Valley Watershed Association (WVWA), which had originally organized to buy the Well, spent the fall working late nights and long days to protect the adjacent land from development pressures. The threat involved the proposed construction of 60 condos and a hotel just north of the present site, along with a road that would lead directly to the well. By partnering with Hays County and the Nature Conservancy to purchase and protect this land, they have succeeded in a magnificent way.

With the help of the Friends of the Well (an events and fundraising group that all volunteers are automatically members of), a celebration is being planned for the community, Hays County and the Nature Conservancy. Hold June 4 - we will need many volunteers. If you would like to be involved in the planning, let Linda Lang know: [lelang1@verizon.net](mailto:lelang1@verizon.net)

The staff and board have also been undergoing a strategizing process with the help of volunteer Roger Grace, a brilliant Strategic Planner. With countless hours of work on all fronts, the way is being paved for the implementation of many of the ideas and inspirations that have been waiting in the wings. When we plan events or have news, there is now a media roll-out in place that puts that news on the website, in the papers, and on Twitter and Facebook. We now have two new staff members: Chrystal Kubala, who is helping with administration, and Dana Carmean, who is in charge of PR and land trust accreditation. Dana is also helping with outreach.

Along with the speakers series, "Passport: Jacob's Well," we have committed to many ways to dialogue with our community. Plans are being made for a Haunted Trails Event and a Solstice Fire, and we will have a presence in the July 4 Parade and at Wimberley's Yule Log.

The work of the volunteers was mentioned many times in the negotiations with the county, as being one of the WVWA's best assets! You are a vital part of this organization and JWNA can't do what they do without you.

Thanks for all that you bring to the Well!

# Wishing Well



- **Models Manager** – The tubs for Rainfall Simulator need to be planted and maintained, and the others need to be periodically checked for supplies and cleaning.
- **Newsletter** – We need writers, reporters, poets, artists, and photographers. Contact Jane Dunham: [jane@wimberleyart.com](mailto:jane@wimberleyart.com)
- **Saturday Docents** – We ALWAYS need tour guides and "Camp Sitters" from 10 – 12 on Sat-

*News and Announcements*

## Fresh Water

- ◆ Congratulations to Jeff Vasgaard, who was voted President of the Hays County Master Naturalists and was invited to join the Wimberley Valley Watershed Association at about the same time. Jeff will soon be searching for any bit of spare time he can find.
- ◆ Becky Northcut has quite successfully launched a speaker's series, "Passport: Jacob's Well." The first one was January 29 and was attended by 21 visitors – all of whom had not been to the Well in many years, if ever. The goal of "Passport: Jacob's Well" is to create an opportunity to share the community's vast array of knowledge and experience – sort of a chance for neighbors to gather around the well. The topic choices are aimed at reaching varied audiences – from scientists to those interested in chicken farming (see the schedule below). Becky has been with Jacob's Well for over a year and very instrumental in developing the volunteer programs and handling our communications. Thanks to Becky for her dedication and talent.
- ◆ Garry Child has gotten a commitment from LCRA Natural Resources Conservation Department for the donation of 50 5-gallon trees for next fall. Way to go Garry. Line up for some digging.
- ◆ JWNA just launched a new website. Under the Volunteers Tab, we soon will be able to keep a total of work hours, sign up on the calendar to help, and retrieve past newsletters - similar to the Master Naturalist's site. **[www.Jacobswellspring.org](http://www.Jacobswellspring.org)**

## Fresh Water (cont'd)

◆ The Hays County Master Naturalists have again chosen JWNA to be one of their three Featured Projects. By highlighting the work we are doing, we gain volunteers. This really helps us to get our feet off the ground. Gary and Anne Child, along with staff member Barbara Attwell, will be giving a presentation to the new class this month. Thank you, HCMN!



◆ The Friends of Jacob's Well (which includes volunteers) are invited to attend our first annual May Member's event. Our first trip is to Canyon Gorge, a stunning landscape near Canyon Lake, revealed by



the 2002 floods. You will see dramatic views, geologic formations, the Hidden Valley fault, dinosaur tracks, lagoons, waterfalls, seeps and springs. These tours are awe-inspiring and fill up quickly so please reserve a place on the tour. Our own Deb Bradshaw is a trained tour guide at Canyon gorge, and will be our group leader. Please RSVP to [deerlakedeb@gmail.com](mailto:deerlakedeb@gmail.com) by April 14. RSVP'S are a must and groups are limited to 23. [www.canyongorge.org](http://www.canyongorge.org)

◆ David Baker is a finalist for the Texas Environmental Excellence Award 2011, which celebrates the bold efforts of citizens, communities, businesses, and organizations to preserve and protect the Texas environment.

◆ The award-winning programs chosen reflect the goals of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) itself: to protect our state's human and natural resources and ensure clean air, clean water, and the safe management of waste. Results will be in by April. Congratulations, our fearless director!

◆ Through a grant from the LCRA, JWNA now has its own educational models – an Aquifer Simulator, a Watershed Model, and a Rainfall Simulator. Thanks to HCMN and, in particular, Mimi Boelter and Ray Franklin, for transporting their models to our site all last year. Ray Franklin has looked over and approved our new Rainfall Simulator, built by Jamie Kinscher of Canyon Lake. It is a lighter weight model with wheels, so it should be easier to transport.

◆ When Education and Outreach Coordinator Barbara Attwell called to see if she could apply to the Austin American Statesman for wildflower seeds for the school program, she was surprised to hear that they had run out. Instead, she was offered 1,000 seed packets through their “Newspapers in Education” program. We now have seeds to teach with and hand out to both the public and schools. Many thanks to the Statesman for their generosity.

◆ The Nueces River Authority Riparian Landowners' Network is putting on Riparian Workshops for Landowners and Land Decision Makers. Learn from leading experts the hows and whys of rivers and riparian function. This information has been successfully used in many locations to promote cooperative riparian management among landowners. Leading riparian experts Kenneth Mayben, James Smith and Steve Nelle team teach these half-classroom, half-field workshops that are sure to change the way you look at creeks and rivers forever. The all day workshop is presented several times at differing locations, on March 18th and May 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th, 2011.

There is no registration fee. Registration will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis as space is limited. If you register, your participation is expected. Contact Sky Lewey: [slewey@nueces-ra.org](mailto:slewey@nueces-ra.org) or 830-278-6810. [www.nueces-ra.org/CP/LS/index.php](http://www.nueces-ra.org/CP/LS/index.php)

◆ Know any water babies? Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer Conservation District (BSEACD) sponsors Youth Scholarships to raise awareness about groundwater - a \$1500 college scholarship essay contest and several summer camp scholarships for kids aged 9 and 15 years old. Their summer camp is the Edwards Aquifer Research and Data Center's Aquatic Science Adventure Camp.

<http://www.bseacd.org/events/scholarships>

## *Invader or Invasive Species?*

# **Bamboo: How Cute Seeing Pandas Gnaw on It!**

The Washington Zoo is running out of bamboo for its most famous denizens, but Jacob's Well volunteers have been working hard to reduce that plant's pernicious spread at the natural area.



Did you know that the definition of "Invasive Species" was established by Executive Order 13112, signed by President Clinton in 1999? Dr. Barron Rec- tor, Extension Range Specialist at AgriLIFE, says an Invasive Species is "an organism that is not native or is alien to the area of consideration and causes harm to the natural environment or the goals of humans."

He continues the clarification. "Both invasive and invaders can ultimately be classified by humans as 'pests,' meaning they get in the way of what humans think the land should look like. As with many parts of the English language in Texas, these terms often get used one for the other. We have around 1500 species of plants in Texas that could be classified as 'invasive' under one land use or another as they are all from Europe, Asia, Australia, Africa and South America."

Plants such as honey mesquite, common broomweed, ragweed, huisache, dewberry, green briars, persim- mon, prickly pear and others tend to be seen as inva- sive species, he says. "They are not invasive plants (as they are native to your area) but in ecological classification are 'invaders' or 'noxious.' As part of the natural ecology and change in the landscape, they are supposed to be here."

Bamboo is native to Asia and is classi- fied as an "invasive species." The JW Trailblazers have been working hard at eradicating it, under the leadership of Hays County Master Naturalist presi- dent Jeff Vasgaard. The next issue of "Water Works" will feature an article about characteristics of this species.



## **Want to be a Volunteer?**

Educating the community about water may be the single most effective tool we have to save the spring. Come join us in our task to insure clean, clear and flowing water. Current volunteering opportunities include school education, public tours, booth partici- pation at local festivals, trail and prairie restoration, a rainwater-harvesting program, newsletters, and event coordination. The 2-day trainings happen twice a year.

*Come be a part!*

### **The Third JWNA Volunteer Training April 9 and 16**

Barbara Attwell and Garry and Anne Childs did a pre- sentation for the new Hays County Master Naturalist Class in early February about the work being done at the Well. At least 20 expressed interest in taking the training, or helping the trail team. Our training serves as advance training hours for HCMN.

Contact Barbara (battwell@earthlink.net) if you know of someone who is interested, or if you would like to help out. We need food, nametags, and overall help with organizing. It is a great way to meet the new class, and learn even more marvelous things about our natural world.

### **Spring 2011 JWNA Volunteer Training**

**Dates: Saturday April 9 and Saturday April 16**

**Time: 9am – 3pm**

Presenters confirmed so far:

#### **Chad Norris, Texas Parks and Wildlife**

"Groundwater Use and Springs: What we know about them, What lives in them, and Why they are important"

#### **Doug Wierman, Geologist**

"Aquifer 101"

#### **Jason Pinchback, Texas State University**

Cypress Creek Watershed Protection Plan and Texas Stream Team

#### **David Baker, Executive Director, Wimberley Valley Watershed Association**

"Who we are"

## Upcoming Events at Jacob's Well

# Water Cycle

To volunteer at these events, please sign in on our JWNA Volunteer Calendar  
Or email Barbara: battwell@earthlink.net



*Jacob's Well cake*

## Volunteer and Advanced Training Opportunities

March 20	Tour: Mosaic, a Jewish Outdoor Group 1pm (note this is a Sunday)
April 2	Master Naturalists Work Day Picnic (contact Jeff Vasgaard for this one)
April 9 & 16	3rd Volunteer Training (date yet to be set)
April 13	Practice for Jacob's Well Elementary visit (9am - 10am)
April 14	School: Jacob's Well Elementary 5th 150 graders 9am – 1pm (This takes at least 6 volunteers)
May 14	Canyon Gorge trip
June 4	Water Celebration
July 4	Wimberley Parade



*Canyon Gorge Trip, 2010*

## Passport: Jacob's Well

Conversations of Land and Water

Like to cook? Please sign up to bring snacks for these events.

February 26	Cypress Creek Protection Plan with Adrian Vogel (2pm)
March 26	Farm Natters/Chickens 101 with Deborah Vatalero (2pm)
April 30	Bird Walk with Tom Toporowski of the Wimberley Birding Society (8:30 am)
May 7	Evening Walk/Talk with Lee Ann Linam
September	Juried Art Show Opening/Photography & Art Contest
October	Haunted Trails Event
November	Trail of Lights
December	Solstice Fire, 1 night presence at Yule Log



*Teaching at Jacob's Well*

## Volunteer and Advanced Training Opportunities

# Water Aid

March	3rd Volunteer training (dates yet to be set)
March 20	Mosaic, a Jewish Outdoor Group (1pm – 3pm) Note this is a Sunday
April 2	Master Naturalists Work Day Picnic (contact Jeff Vasgaard:)
April 13	Practice for Jacob's Well Elementary visit (10am – 11am)
April 14	Jacob's Well 150 5th graders (8:30 – 1:30)
May 14	Friends of the Well Members (includes volunteers) Canyon Gorge trip
June 4	Water Celebration
July 4	Wimberley Parade

Fridays are usually **Trail and Restoration Workdays**.  
Contact Jeff Vasgaard: jvasgaard@verizon.net



*Friday work crew*

*Waterside Chat*

## **Meet a Water Worker: MARGARET BAKER**

*Linda Lang*

Who is this small, sharp dynamo named Margaret Baker? Wimberleyites catch her passionately volunteering all over the Valley, especially when it comes to "saving the outdoors."

This Master Naturalist spruces up the Square through Keep Wimberley Beautiful and monitors water quality of the Blanco, Lone Man Creek, and Jacob's Well as a member of the Texas Stream Team. At places such as Blue Hole and Cypress Creek Nature Trail, she teaches young people about being environmentally responsible through Wimberley Outdoor Educators.

Currently, Margaret is spending the bulk of her volunteer time at Jacob's Well Natural Area. As a member of SpringBoard, she helps plan the projects around the Well. Prairie and wildflower restoration, trail building, and various forms of community outreach emanate from this small group of talented, dedicated individuals. Margaret is happiest implementing the plans in the field, such as digging up invasive plants and cultivating native seeds and plants.

It is no wonder that so many groups in the Valley love to have Margaret as a member. Not only is she a hard worker and fun to be around, with her dry sense of humor, but she freely shares years of experience and education.

Margaret describes herself as a city kid from Houston who found her passionate connection to nature through Girl Scout outings and church camp in the Bastrop area. One of her fondest memories is of the time her church camp required her to go each morning alone into the outdoors. It was there, either sitting on a rock or log under trees, that she found her sense of place and love of earth.

During high school Margaret's chemistry teacher encouraged her to continue her education. She graduated cum laude from the University of Houston with a B.S. in Chemistry.

After twenty years as a chemical engineer, Margaret and her husband moved to Madison County near College Station. There she embarked upon a new career,

attending Texas A & M, specializing in horticulture design. With new knowledge, this bundle of energy started and ran Texian Country, a landscape and nursery business for seventeen years. It specialized in native plants and xeriscape design before this was common in Texas.

In 2006, Margaret and Richard, her recently deceased husband, moved to Wimberley and "actually retired," as she puts it. Maybe she is "retired," but she is tireless in her devotion to conservation issues in water, wildlife management, wildflowers, and native plants. She enjoys gardening and reading at her home in River Mountain Ranch with her two dogs, two adopted cats and visits from her "four fabulous grandchildren," who are 6th generation Texans.

In summing up, Margaret does it best by saying, "I believe that 'retired folks' have both time and experience to contribute in a worthwhile manner toward many environmentally responsible efforts directed to sustaining our planet. We can make a difference "one volunteer, one neighborhood, one community at a time!"



Garry Child, Jean McMeans, and **Margaret Baker** restoring native plants. *Photo by Jeff Vasgaard.*

## **Jacob's Well Calendar Online**

Want to see what is coming up at Jacob's Well? Click on the online calendar [here](#) and save it as a bookmark!



That's all for this month, Friends! Watch for next month's issue of "Water Works" -- and send items you think should be shared to Jane Dunham ([jane@wimberleyart.com](mailto:jane@wimberleyart.com)).