

## THE PRAIRIE PERIODICAL

Summer 2018

## **Our New Strategic Plan**

by Melanie Pavlas

Can you believe we've already hit our first 100 degree + days?!? I can. Over the past few months I've gotten to personally witness the beauty of the changing landscape and wildlife around me as winter ended, spring sprung and summer shines ahead of us. We have a lot to be excited about here at Pines and Prairies Land Trust and I'm thrilled to share with you some of the reasons why!

Over the past four months, a team of (self-dubbed) superheroes came together to help plan for PPLT's future. Three years ahead to be exact- covering 2019-2021. The experience was incredibly rewarding, and we ended with what I know is a solid plan to build on our foundation of land conservation.

To continue our work in land conservation, Pines & Prairies Land Trust must be a strong organization with committed leadership, talented management, and sustainable funding. We believe that Pines & Prairies Land Trust is a vital resource and go-to organization when it comes to conserving and stewarding land in Southeast Central Texas. It is our intent to connect to the community to better understand their interests which will allow us to attain our goals. We hope you will join us in our journey to be the successful, outstanding land trust we have always strived to be.

**New Vision**: During the Strategic Planning process, we updated our vision statement to better pinpoint our focus. Everything we work to do is represented here:

**Protecting Land** ° **Connecting People to Land** ° **Inspiring a Land Legacy** 

#### PPLT Strategic Plan Focus Areas

To accomplish our mission, the new strategic plan identifies four specific focus areas:

1. Land Conservation: PPLT continues to evolve in its protection and stewardship of natural resources through education and preservation of open space in Central Texas.

Leader: Melanie Pavlas-PPLT Executive Director

2. Community Engagement: PPLT is a vital "go-to organization" with an educated and engaged base of support that participates in land conservation efforts throughout the five-county area which includes Bastrop, Caldwell, Fayette, Lee, and East Travis counties.

Leader: Courtney Young- NEW PPLT Stewardship and Volunteer Manager

3. Board Development: PPLT is working to establish refined board of directors' policies, procedures, and infrastructure to ensure long term sustainability.

Leader: Maria Alonso- PPLT Board Chair and Carolyn Vogel- PPLT Stakeholder

4. Development: PPLT will continue to raise funds to meet its land conservation goals, perform Its stewardship duties and support annual operations.

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Leader: Nikki Krueger- NEW PPLT Development Director

Are you interested in supporting any of PPLT's strategic focus areas as a volunteer? Please contact Melanie Pavlas at <u>melanie@pplt.org</u> or 512.308.1911.

### **PPLT Gratitude**

- Thank you to David Vogel for over 10 years of service as a board member and officer. He will be missed!
- Sincere appreciation to the Strategic Planning Team for their time and commitment to lay the foundation for a successful roadmap for PPLT: Maria Alonso, Board President; Donna Benson-Chan, Strategic Plan Consultant; Nikki Krueger, Development Director; Melanie Pavlas, Executive Director; Carolyn Vogel, Founder/Stakeholder. And to Luci Cook (Board Secretary), David Vogel (former board member) and Courtney Young (staff) for joining the Team for the planning session.
- Tons of thanks to Louise Ridlon, Roberta Coffin, Melanie Pavlas and Nikki Krueger for creating fundraiser pages for us during Amplify Austin!
- PPLT Trailblazers- we've launched a new volunteer program to help us maintain trails at the Colorado River Refuge. Huge thanks to Scott Cheek and Patrick & Rachel Duer for providing much needed mowing!
- Thank you to Arlene Kalmbach for her year of service as a board member. She will be leaving in June.
- We just hosted our last nature class with our Homeschool partners on May 17. Thank you to our teachers Louise Ridlon, Bill Brooks (former Board Member), Marianna Hobbs, Kim Iberg and Alysa Jaoquin for providing these fun, educational opportunities for over 50 kids in our area.
- Loads of thanks to over 30 Austin Adventurers for volunteering 140 hours since February. If you convert that to dollars, this team has donated service time worth \$3,500! This group should feel incredibly proud.

Thank You Donors!

<\$50 Advocates Julia Akin Keith Andren Aviel Belinko **Bill Brooks** Karen Cudzilo Elizabeth Freedman Rachel Halls **Jackie Hardee** Kim Iberg Diana Jones Nikki Krueger Ron Laby Cynthia Leigh Jeanne McConnell Marc Miller Celine Osborn Melanie Pavlas Sally Scott Michael Speck **Margo Sutton** Mary Zeitler

\$50-\$200 Patrons Donna Benson-Chan Elizabeth Dailev Antonio Hernandez **Roxanne and Elvis Hernandez** Alan Jaeger Janice Kiker Leroy Knippa Harold Kutschke **Rev. Robert Long Ronald Martin** Albert Pecore John and Elizabeth Thrift Judy Turner **Carolyn Vogel** Linda Welsh \$200+ Partners **Clay Imports Roberta Coffin** Shawn and Melissa Cooper **Rachelle and John Cyrier** Elizabeth Pullman Louise Ridlon

#### <u>Board</u>

Maria Alonso, President

Luci Cook, Secretary

Wilynn Formeller, Treasurer

Arlene Kalmbach, Board Member

#### <u>STAFF</u>

Melanie Pavlas, Executive Director

Nikki Krueger, Development Director

Courtney Young, Stewardship and Volunteer Manager

## **NOTES FROM THE PRESERVES**

#### Yegua Knobbs Preserve

- PPLT welcomed a group of ranchers from Down Home Ranch for a field day this past January. An educational hike was led by Lost Pines Master Naturalists.
- Students from Texas State University continue research at YKP on a vegetation census and Tufted Titmouse songs (also being conducted at Billig).
- Volunteers Kathy McAleese, Louise Ridlon and Anna Stalcup performed breeding and wintering bird surveys for us at both YKP, CRR and Billig. A huge "tweet out" to them for gathering this important data!
- Interested in visiting the Knobbs? Groups may send requests to <u>melanie@pplt.org</u>. Individuals are encouraged to check our website for field days when the preserve is open to the public. At this time, we unfortunately do not have the human resources available to open the preserve up for individual requests.

#### **Billig Ranch**

- We have started preparing the seed bed for our next native prairie restoration project on 145 acres. This Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program project will benefit our native pollinators, like the Monarch butterfly. We will plant seed this Fall. Our previous two prairie restoration projects are supporting large stands of Indiangrass, little bluestem and other natives. We are excited about these successes!
- UTSA continues its research on native milkweed at Billig, including vegetation transects set up in our previous and current prairie restoration areas that will provide data on that progress.



Anna, Kathy and Louise counting birds at YKP



#### Colorado River Refuge

This spring the Colorado River Refuge is full of vines, visitors, and volunteers.

- Over 50 local students and families joined us for Pines and Prairies sponsored nature classes at the CRR where we investigated native species and practiced observation and recording skills. See Page 5 for more photos.
- Mitigation of the Two Bridges Trail Head is underway! You can see check dams, contour markings,



water cuts and overflowing fill as you hike by. Please be mindful of the work and walk along uneroded paths. We are looking for volunteers to help with this project, see our request below.

• A 'Trail Blazer' program has begun at the CRR. Friends and neighbors are signing up to help maintain trails and keep an eye on the refuge. If you love the CRR or live nearby please consider joining!

# **Volunteer With Us!**

Work with the land you love

We are growing our volunteer program this year and are offering varied opportunities for groups and individuals. If you are interested in trail building or maintenance, outreach, teaching, land stewardship, or anything else- let us know, we would love for you to join us! Email courtney@pplt.org for more information.









# **2018 Spring Nature Classes**







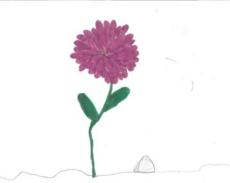








Birds and their Amazing Adaptations





The 100ft Hike

Texan Amphibians and Bugs



1018 MAIN STREET, STE B BASTROP, TX 78602





#### OUR VISION: Protecting Land Connecting People to Land

## Inspiring a Land Legacy

#### **OUR MISSION:**

To protect natural and cultural resources and promote sustainable agriculture through education and the protection of open space in Central Texas.

#### Get involved

- Interested in becoming a volunteer with PPLT? Contact Courtney Young @ <u>courtney@pplt.org</u> or 512.663.3893 for more information.
- Purchase a gift at our online store @ pplt.org/pplt-store/
- Help PPLT conserve open space, family lands and wildlife habitat, and provide educational tools and assistance for the benefit of people in our communities by making a financial contribution @ www.pplt.org