



PO BOX 737
1018 MAIN STREET, STE B
BASTROP, TX 78602



Our mission is to protect natural and cultural resources and promote sustainable agriculture through education and the protection of open space in Central Texas.

PPLT and Hurricane Harvey:

**All sales of our 2016 Bands for Lands Ts and bags will go to the
La Grange Rotary Club's Hurricane Relief Campaign.**

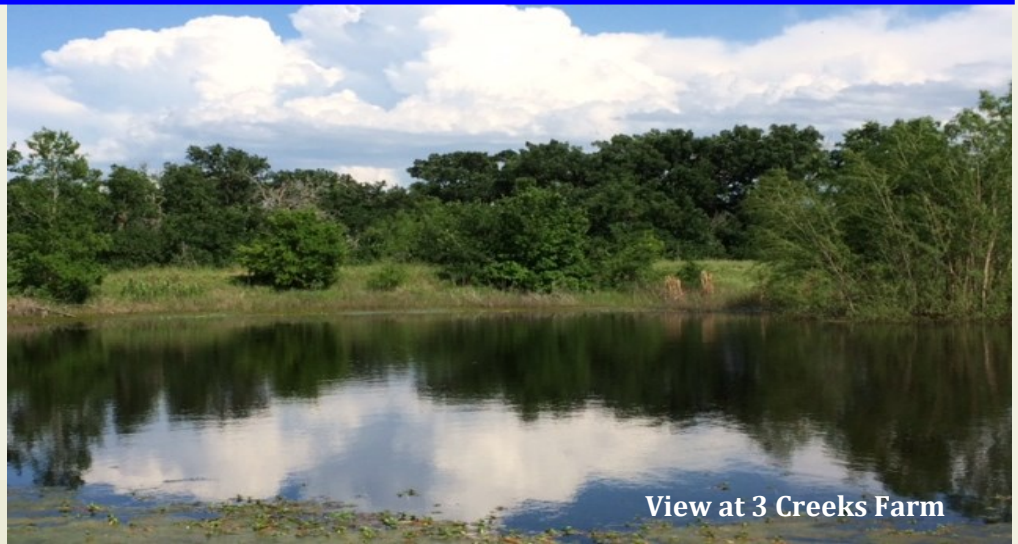
**You can also make a donation specifically for our flood damage repairs
at the Colorado River Refuge.**

Shop or donate online at: www.pplt.org





315 Acres Conserved in Eastern Travis County!



View at 3 Creeks Farm

In June, Pines and Prairies Land Trust (PPLT) closed its 7th conservation easement (CE). The land is located in the Freedman's Town of Littig, in eastern Travis County. Jonathon Beall owns the 315 acre property called "3 Creeks Farm." The Farm hosts a small organic farm (Guinea Hill Farm), prime farmland soils, wildlife habitat, historic resources and over 1.5 miles of Wilbarger, Willow and Dry Creeks. It has been farmed for over 100 years. The first African-American post master and his niece owned the property before Mr. Beall.

PPLT now protects over 2,500 acres of land. Land in the Wilbarger Creek Conservation Alliance's (WCCA) care also increases to over 1,000 acres. WCCA protects land in the Wilbarger Creek watershed and the effects are landscape wide. PPLT received funding to purchase the easement, but also paid some of the costs ourselves. This includes staff time over the past 5 years.

Conservation Easements are voluntary agree-

ments between land trusts and private landowners. The landowner agrees to limit some uses of their property to protect its natural, agricultural or historical features. While many landowners donate the easements, a land trust can also buy them. PPLT received funding from the USDA Farm Bill's Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (now

Sharon Crow, owner
Guinea Hill Farm



called the Agriculture Conservation Easement Program) and the Travis County Conservation Easement Bond Program, as well as the bargain sale of the easement from the landowner. These four parties came together with one goal in mind — forever protecting 3 Creeks Farm. PPLT also received a grant from the Texas Land Trust Council to cover some of the costs of the project. Although not used on this project, Texas Parks and Wildlife grants funds for projects all over the State under the Texas Farm and Ranch Lands Conservation Program.

This area is close to Austin, Manor and Elgin so development pressure is high. The new Formula One racetrack was located in this area, taking over 1,000 acres of agriculture land out of use. New toll roads also bring fast growth. There are many good aspects of growth. But protecting linked, open space means protecting water quality and quantity, beautiful views, wildlife habitat and our own health and happiness.

USDA-NRCS Agriculture Conservation Easement Program: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/easements/acep>

The Travis County Conservation Easement Bond Program is up for renewal in November. **Please support the bond program if you are a resident:**

<https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/tnr/cep>

Texas Farm and Ranch Lands Conservation Program: <https://tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/land/private/farm-and-ranch/>



Jon Beall (center), hosting volunteers gathering data for a baseline report that is used to describe the property at the time the easement is done.

**PROUD
MEMBER**



www.texaslandtrustcouncil.org

SATURDAY

November 4th

5-10 pm



Oskar Blues
10420 Metric Blvd
Austin

Free
Admission

Come and help us celebrate land conservation with some Live Texas Blues!

We're planning our **3rd Annual Bands for Lands™** event and you'll notice some changes this year. We will be hosting a smaller, friend-raising concert at Oskar Blues in Austin. Our lineup includes the Jamie Krueger Group (www.thejamiekruegergroup.com), Greg Izor (www.gregizor.com) and special guest John Inmon (www.johninmon.com).

Bands for Lands is an event to raise support and awareness for Pines and Prairies Land Trust. All proceeds will directly benefit land conservation efforts and outdoor education programs sponsored by PPLT in the communities we serve in Bastrop, Caldwell, Fayette, Lee and Eastern Travis Counties.

Check our website for more details: www.pplt.org/events/.

Riparian Habitat - Its Role in Times of Hurricanes and Flooding by Luci Cook



In the wake of such natural disasters as the recent hurricane and tropical storm Harvey focusing on the future is essential to moving forward to recovery. While many individuals will be going down the long road to recovery, so too will the affected natural environment.

Although this may seem like an uphill battle for some, the path to ecosystem recovery is one that is well traveled. Our natural landscapes, from barrier islands to bays and estuaries and further inland to the heart of our river systems, are always in a state of natural recovery from smaller scale floods, impacts from urban activity, invasive species and poor land management practices. The keys to success in these recovery endeavors, at least for our river systems, is intimately tied to the health of their riparian habitats.

Healthy riparian habitats are the best insurance a water body can have when it comes to withstanding the test of time through drought, flood and all the land management practices that come in between. The term "riparian" is defined as vegetative habitats or ecosystems associated with water bodies such as rivers and lakes. These vegetative zones have a wide variety of plant life such as grasses, shrubs and trees. Each vegetative "type" has a stability rating associated with it which indicates how strongly the root systems will hold soil in place and keep a river bank together during

times of flooding and high flows. Maintaining bank stability through strong root systems is a key function of riparian habitats and goes a long way in preventing bank degradation from erosion and sediment suspension and deposition in the water way. The above ground vegetation of a healthy riparian zone can actually dissipate flood energy and reduce the intensity of flooding downstream.

It might be obvious how maintaining bank stability, preventing erosion and dissipating flood energy for lessened impacts downstream during flood conditions could be an invaluable service of a healthy riparian habitat to any waterway. But a healthy riparian habitat is truly the gift that keeps on giving even during normal flow and drought conditions. Overhanging trees and other vegetation will keep surface waters cooler and maintain a more consistent temperature for aquatic life. Overall water quality is improved due to the filtering effects of riparian vegetation on debris and excess nutrients that wash in from the flood plain. Base flows in a stream or river are improved and can be more easily sustained, even during times of drought, because a healthy riparian vegetative zone will store and slowly release water back into the adjacent water body.

The list of valuable services a healthy riparian habitat provides are as important to a land owner as they are to the ecosystem they support. Reducing erosion protects ownership boundaries, healthy plant diversity attracts a variety of beneficial wildlife and the dissipation of flood energy can help protect against property damage. The road to recovery from devastating impacts of natural disasters will always be fraught with difficulties. Keeping our riparian habitats healthy and intact will serve us well as we prepare for the journey ahead and look to the future.



Wildflower Tiles

benefitting Pines and Prairies Land Trust

Art by Robin Lively • Tiles by Clay Imports

We have teamed up with Clay Imports, www.clayimports.com, to create a set of four tiles for both traditional use as well as gifts. Robin Lively, Bastrop area artist, beautifully painted the masters and Clay Imports will make the tiles and paint them by hand. Check our Facebook page to learn when they will go on sale.

NOTES FROM THE PRESERVES

NATURE CLASSES ARE BACK!

We will be offering a free, nature-based class this October and November for children of all ages! Check our website and Facebook page for more details. **RSVP required.** Sign up at <http://signup.com/go/izpfMov>



Colorado River Refuge

- ♦ **TRAILS:** Most of the trails at the CRR have re-opened! We will continue to work with the National Park Service on the trails that need repair and rerouting. Check our website for the latest trail changes.
- ♦ Two Bridges Trailhead has had significant erosion problems since the last flooding events, including Hurricane Harvey. Please take care when parking and walking in this area. PPLT is working with Bowman Consulting to develop a plan to permanently fix the erosion and we are accepting donations to support this project.
- ♦ The Bridge Maniacs volunteer group upgraded the picnic table at the Overlook for us, making it more accessible to those in wheel chairs. Their expertise and regular care on our properties is so much appreciated!



- ♦ **LOST PINES NATURE TRAILS:** Our neighboring park was recently turned over to the Bastrop County Parks Department! Positive changes are already happening and PPLT will continue to work with the County to offer outdoor recreation and share resources at both properties.

- ♦ We are in need of a volunteer steward for the CRR. Duties include walking the trails, identifying maintenance needs and organizing volunteers to carry out maintenance projects, all following the management plan for the property. The steward can be one person or a group. Contact Melanie for

more info: melanie@pplt.org

Yegua Knobs Preserve

- ♦ We hosted our first ever, group campout this past June for the Lost Pines Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists. The weekend was a huge success and attendees were offered training and recreational activities. Attendees also cleaned up "The Easy Knobb" and built a beautiful bench for visitors to sit and take in the view (right).
- ♦ YKP's steward, Robert Vaughn and the Bridge Maniacs have completed a year



long project of selectively hand clearing and trimming woody vegetation along our eastern fenceline. We used this method to have the least amount of impact to Houston toad habitat as well as the creek and erosion-prone soils in that area. Repairs on the fenceline itself will be in partnership with our neighbor. Those Bridge Maniacs are amazing!

- ◆ YKP will be making its film debut soon! It will be included in a locally produced film and filming starts in September.
- ◆ Interested in visiting the Knobbs? Groups are encouraged to send requests to melanie@pplt.org. Individuals are encouraged to check our website for field days when the preserve is open to the public. At this time, we simply do not have the human resources available to open the preserve up for individuals wanting to hike, etc.



Billig Ranch

- ◆ Not much to report at the ranch except that the native grasses are trying to do their thing in the two pastures we restored over the past two years (see cover photo). We also supplemented one pasture with 10 lbs of wildflower seed. Many thanks to our “Plant Nerd” volunteers for sowing seeds for our native pollinators! (pictured right, at YKP)
- ◆ This Fall we plan to start preparing the seed bed for our next restoration project as part of a native pollinator target program with the USFWS’ Partners for Fish and Wildlife program. This additional 145 acres will be in addition to the 100 acres we have already restored.
- ◆ Both Billig and YKP are enrolled in TPWD’s Public Hunt program. Both properties will be open during the first split of dove season (September 1—November 6) for youth only hunts or for permit holders wanting to hike. Feral hogs may also be hunted during this time.

Thank You Donors!

***Our natural heritage
depends on you.***

*Help us preserve family lands and
wildlife habitat and provide
educational tools and assistance
for the benefit of people and
communities.*

You can send your tax
deductible donations to:

PO Box 737
Bastrop, TX 78602

or go to

PPLT.ORG
for more options

\$25 Advocates
Smithville Garden Club

\$50+ Patrons
Marcia Erickson Ernest Honig

\$250-\$500 Partners
Jeff Crouch
Janice and Gene Rampy (Centex Mechanical)

\$1000+ Benefactors
Jonathan Beall

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