Work Begins on Preserve Wetland Project  
by Jeff Crosby

The Hog and Schwing Bayou’s Preserve that is owned by the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust in Calhoun County is the site of a new wetland development project in partnership with Ducks Unlimited. Upon completion, 25 acres of improved wetland habitat will be created, further improving the quality of the preserve for waterfowl and other wetland dependent species. The 646-acre preserve is located in the floodplain between the Guadalupe River and Hog Bayou, and is dominated by riparian forests and wetland habitats that are typically found in areas with periodic, yet unpredictable flooding. Portions of the preserve contain wetland shrub plant communities that provide minimal benefit to wetland species. A 25-acre portion of this shrub area will be excavated to gradually lose water naturally through evaporation and percolation into the soil. The new wetland feature is a simple depression with no ditches, canals, or artificial means of managing water levels.

Biologists and engineers at Ducks Unlimited, who also is managing the construction of the wetland, provided all of the technical oversight and site assessment of the project. The GBR Trust continues to be excited about the partnership with Ducks Unlimited, as the premier wetland conservation organization in the country.

The Hog and Schwing Bayou’s Preserve contains wetland and coastal sites throughout the lower portion of the Guadalupe River Basin. This project was made possible through funds from the North American Wetland Conservation Act. The Hog and Schwing Bayou’s Preserve was developed to conserve the land and water of the Guadalupe River watershed for its natural, recreational, scenic, historic and productive value. The mission of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust is to preserve the unique natural heritage of the Guadalupe watershed for future generations, by protecting open landscapes, working farms and ranches, and wildlife habitat through conservation easements, education, and outreach that connects people to the water and the land.

Trust Taps Crosby as Executive Director  
by Abigail Nebb and Travis Tindell

SEGUN, TX — The Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust (GBR Trust) Board of Trustees hired Jeff Crosby as the new executive director for the organization. As a graduate of the University of Oklahoma with a bachelor’s degree in environmental design, Jeff brings over a decade of experience in land conservation to the GBR Trust.

Crosby has spent the last nine years at Oklahoma's only state wide land trust, and most recently filled the position of Director of Conservation for Land Legacy. He has conducted several studies on land conservation and has been involved in projects ranging from land use planning, farmland preservation, and water quality protection. He was the program director for the Eucha-Spavinaw Watershed Protection Initiative whose goal is to protect the drinking water source for a quarter of the population of Oklahoma.

"I am honored to have been selected as the next executive director of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust and I am looking forward to the opportunities and challenges of working to protect such diverse and unique landscapes in Texas. The organization has done tremendous work over the years and I am eager to contribute to this growing success and to the advancement of conservation in the region," Crosby said.

Members of the GBR Trust and the San Antonio Bay Foundation will be exploring opportunities to collaborate on projects throughout the region. "Jeff brings a wealth of knowledge and skill in land conservation and water quality preservation," said Todd Votteler, Ph.D.

The GBR Trust is a charitable, non-profit 501(c)3 organization that was developed to conserve the land and water of the Guadalupe River watershed for its natural, recreational, scenic, historic and productive value. Its mission is to promote and encourage the conservation, stewardship and enjoyment of the land and water resources of the Guadalupe River watershed, while maintaining its unique and irreplaceable natural heritage.

More information about the Trust is available at www.gbrtrust.org.

Thank You!

The Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust has been extremely fortunate to have Roger Welder serve as the President of the Board of Trustees from September 2009 through August 2013. His efforts and guidance over this nearly four-year period have led to numerous successful conservation projects and new strategic partnerships throughout the Guadalupe River Basin. Please join the GBR Trust in recognizing Welder’s profound impact and contributions to conservation not only in the Guadalupe River Basin but for the state of Texas.
New Interns Contribute to the GBR Trust
by Abigail Nebb and Travis Tindell

A partnership between Sewanee: the University of the South and the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas created an internship program to provide unique opportunities for six Sewanee students who have interests in environmental studies to study and work in Texas. The Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust and Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) were able to connect with that partnership to land two of those interns for environmental-related work at the organizations.

A summer internship can play an essential role in a student’s career.

Tindell will graduate in December with a bachelor’s degree in natural resources. His focuses are on the science of forestry, geology, and hydrology, and has interests in management, policy, and local agriculture. Tindell is from Saint Cloud, Fla., and lives in Sewanee, Tenn.

This type of internship program offers the opportunity to gain experience and discern specific interests within the vast fields of surface and ground water management. Nebb and Tindell have attended several meetings involving the Edwards Aquifer, feral hog population control, and the operations of the GBRA. Their field work has included exploring the region through the installation of a storm water sampler, bio assessments of several streams (Nebb held her first fish!), and a tour of San Antonio Bay along the Texas coast.

“A summer internship can play an essential role in a student’s career. We hope the experience these students get through their work with GBRA and the Trust is quite unique,” Votteler explained.

The internship program, now in its fifth year, has been sponsored by donations from the Diocese of West Texas and Sewanee alumnus Gregg Robertson.

Under the mentorship of Todd Votteler, Ph.D., GBRA’s executive manager of science, intergovernmental relations and policy, Travis Tindell and Abigail Nebb have been exploring the diverse subject of water resources and policies through field work and meetings that involve both water policy and land management.

A native of Lubbock, Nebb is a rising senior at Sewanee who will graduate in May 2014 with a bachelor’s degree in natural resources and a watershed sciences certificate. Her primary scholastic interests lie in environmental policy, with studies in both forestry and geology. She hopes to attend law school after graduation to further her interests in natural resource management.

Introduction Letter from Jeff

As I headed south down Interstate 35 out of Oklahoma with my family in tow, it quickly became apparent what type of challenges awaited our new conservation efforts in Texas. These challenges range from the parched, arid landscape, to the rapidly growing and spreading population, both of which have profound impacts on the Texas landscape. I say “our” conservation efforts because that is exactly what it is: a collaboration between landowners, citizens and other partner organizations to effectively protect what we all cherish. Whether it is the land, the water, the wildlife, or just the wide open spaces, working together is the only way to reach our conservation goals while ensuring that our state can still prosper.

I am excited to be leading an organization that balances the conservation values and the economic values. In a state like Texas, voluntary conservation efforts with private landowners must be the cornerstone of any effective conservation efforts. The Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust has had tremendous success over the years and I am excited to continue these conservation efforts from the Hill Country to the San Antonio Bay.

Photo by Janet Thorne