



# VIP2VIP



Season 10, Volume 5

Big Bend National Park's Volunteer Newsletter

March 1, 2011

## Current Volunteers

### Castolon

Ron & Jane Payne—Visitor Center (3rd)  
 Danny & Diana Edwards—Visitor Center (3rd)  
 Tina & Steve Ehrman—Backcountry (5th)  
 Phil & Margaret Hodgens—Camphosts (2nd)  
 Bob & Ruthine Hennessy—Camphosts (5th)

### Chisos Basin

Jim & Mary Lynn Murrell—Camphost (new)  
 Bill & Patti Marvin—Camphosts (new)  
 Jim & Jan Allen—Visitor Center (3rd)

### Persimmon Gap

Jim & Marlene Hufford—Visitor Center (new)  
 Mark Kirtley—Visitor Center (15th)

### Panther Junction

Elaine & John Jonker—River Rangers (4th)  
 Rick Bradbury—ScRM (1st)  
 Bud Frankenberger—ScRM (8th)  
 Bob Wirt—ScRM (11th)  
 John Pfistner—Maintenance (new)  
 John Rech—Maintenance (new)  
 Dana Crites (SCA)  
 Jennifer Goucher (SCA)  
 Elton & Esther Homan—River  
 Barney Ghim & Paula Jampsa—Backcountry  
 Bill & Mary Clark—ScRm

### Rio Grande Village

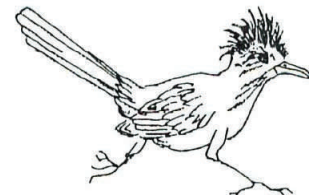
Roy & Aletha Ellis—Camphosts (5th)  
 Bill & Jane Berry—Camphosts (2nd)  
 Linda Sutton—Visitor Center (5th)  
 Mick & Linda Comstock—Visitor Center (new)  
 Kenn Sutton—Backcountry (5th)  
 Mike & Nancy Coe—Backcountry (2nd)

### Part-time

Jim Bishop—BBNHA  
 Steve Harper—Resource Management

## Bob and Ruthine's Excellent Adventure

By Bob and Ruthine Hennessy



*Our first trip to Big Bend* was for Spring Break in April 1969. We had a red Volkswagen Beetle and five children, ages two to seven. We piled luggage 30 inches high on a portable car top carrier. The back seat folded down to make a flat area for the kids. Layers of unfolded sleeping bags covered the back area. There was enough room for all of them to sit and play or to lie down and nap.

We left Houston with a Humble credit card (predecessor to Exxon) and a twenty-dollar bill. A Humble credit card was good for gasoline purchases only - no tires and no snacks. Therefore, our luggage included everything we needed for each meal for a week. The seats in the Beetle were high enough to stack cans of food under them.

After driving all night, we arrived in the Basin campground during dawn hours. Since the campground was full, we kept

circling around and around looking for someone to leave. At the time, we called it "vulturing".

We were so excited to find people leaving site #44. Although it had no table or

trees, it was big enough for our 9 by 20 foot tent. Today this one of the last campsites filled because it is so plain and barren. But we still have very fond memories every time we see it.

(continued on page 2)



Reine Wonite— Interpretation

Georganne Bradbury—Admin (new)

Cynta deNavares—ScRM

Reine Wonite—Interp

Joey Cain—Maintenance

\*Number in ( ) indicates years of service at BBNP

## Bob and Ruthine's Excellent Adventure continued...

We were out every minute hiking and driving the park. The two year old rode Bob's shoulders on the hikes. After coming down from Lost Mine trail the four older kids ran ahead on the last ten yards to the car. They were so enthusiastic and they kept asking, "Can we climb it again? Where is another hike?" Bob was so hot and tired that the best he could do is to give them his "daddy look".

One day, we all piled into the Beetle, took off on River Road East, and headed for Castolon. It was a long, slow, hot, and fun filled trip. There was no air conditioning in the Beetle. We had our little orange back-road guide and enjoyed the adventure until we ran over an eighteen-inch rock. You could feel it rolling under the Beetle until it reached the back. It became stuck under the motor and the back wheels lifted off the ground. So, we piled rocks high enough to put the jack high enough to lift the car off the rock.

Several miles later, as the temperature rose, we reached a point near the river. The temptation to take a dip was overwhelming. We all stripped down to our underwear and waded in. After just a few minutes, we heard men talking. It was a group of men fishing from a campsite less than ten yards through the brush.

Our neighbor, in campsite #43 was a couple who were full timers. We had never heard of that before. They had an aluminum teardrop shaped trailer. It was barely tall enough to stand in. They had been on the road for seven years - from Alaska to Guatemala. They planted the seed. For the rest of our life, we knew that we would do that someday.

It was early to bed on the night before we left. It was a long drive. We had to get home and prepare for work and school. The sun was still up and we saw the silhouette of a skunk on the tent. Our heads were about six inches from the tent wall and the skunk was about the same distance outside. We were terrified that the skunk would spray our tent, so we just lay there quietly. After a few minutes, some kid started throwing rocks at the skunk. We were furious. But the skunk just started meandering off. - no physical damage.

The next morning, we were up and packing. There were a couple of nearby campers enjoying their coffee while we dropping the tent and loading all the gear on top of the Beetle. After everything was done, we all piled in and started the engine. When we looked around there were about fifteen people standing in their campsites around us applauding. One of them hollered, "We didn't think that you would get it all in there".

Over the years, we came back as tent campers about every three years. This seemed like holy ground to us. Eventually, this was our first volunteer location.



### *Hiking Club*

The "hiking club" will be scheduling periodic hikes in the upcoming months for volunteers and anyone else who wants to come along. I have done a lot of solo hiking and it really is a lot more fun and safer to hike with others. These hikes will not be Olympic events, but rather moderate exercise with time to smell the flowers along the way. We will be taking a radio with us.

**Thursday, March 31—We are going to try a late afternoon hike to Cattail Falls.** We will leave Panther Junction parking lot at 3:00 pm. If you are coming from Castolon, meet at the gravel road turn-off to Cattail Falls at 3:30 pm. This is fun to do because the photo ops in the early evening are spectacular coming out of this area. Trying to find something cool enough to do in March, short of a hike into the Chisos is tricky. It would be helpful if you could let me know if you are going to come on this one. Email Jane at [jane\\_Brown@nps.gov](mailto:jane_Brown@nps.gov) or call at 432-477-1195.

**Fueling up the Government Vehicles - Guidance from Joe DeMonte, Administrative Official (AO)**

There appears to be some confusion within the park regarding the fueling of government vehicles, so I want to take this opportunity to clarify the policy.

There are three factors that need to be considered when fueling a government vehicle:

The location you will be obtaining your fuel at: Inside the Park (Panther Junction, Rio Grande Village, or Castolon) or Outside the Park.

Is the vehicle a GSA vehicle (license plate starts with a “G”) or a Department of Interior owned vehicle (license plate starts with an “I”).

Type of Fuel Needed (Gasoline or Diesel)

<u>Area</u>	<u>Vehicle</u>	<u>Fuel</u>	<u>Location</u>
Panther Junction	GSA*	Gasoline	PJ Concession Gas Station
Panther Junction	Interior	Gasoline	PJ Maintenance Tanks
Panther Junction	GSA*	Diesel	PJ Concession Gas Station
Panther Junction	Interior	Diesel	PJ Maintenance Tanks
Rio Grande Village	GSA*	Gasoline	RGV Concession Gas Station
Rio Grande Village	Interior	Gasoline	RGV Maintenance Tanks
Rio Grande Village	GSA*	Diesel	RGV Concession Gas Station
Rio Grande Village	Interior	Diesel	RGV Maintenance Tanks
Castolon	GSA*	Gasoline	PJ Concession Gas Station (preferred) or Castolon Maintenance Tanks
Castolon	Interior	Gasoline	Castolon Maintenance Tanks
Castolon	GSA*	Diesel	PJ Concession Gas Station (preferred) or Castolon Maintenance Tanks
Castolon	Interior	Diesel	Castolon Maintenance Tanks
Outside of Park	Either	Either	Any station that accepts gov fleet card*

## **Fueling up the Government Vehicles - Guidance from Joe DeMonte, AO**

Fuel procedures for GSA vehicles will change upon the installation of the new fuel system at PJ.  
A new procedure will be issued at that time.

Under **NO CIRCUMSTANCES** should you fuel a privately owned vehicle or rental vehicle at a maintenance tank, nor use a government charge card of any type to purchase fuel for a privately owned vehicle.



Fleet cards are only to be used for the vehicle they are assigned to (the license plate number will appear on the card). Government purchase or travel cards are **NOT** to be used to purchase fuel for government vehicles.

\*If you experience a problem using a fleet card, **DO NOT** pay cash or use another charge card (government / personal), but call the toll free number on the back of the card using the directions below. (It is your responsibility as the driver of a government vehicle to verify you have the assigned fleet card in the vehicle if you are going to need to purchase fuel.)

### **I Vehicles**

#### **888-297-0781**

After calling it will go to an automated system that will give you the card balance and limit. The card limit on all of our "I" vehicle cards is \$5,000. The automated system will then give you other options and if you press "0" it will take you to a customer service representative that will assist you. The representative will ask you for your 4 digit account pin--which is pin you enter for fuel purchases (last 4 numbers of the license plate)--and the card limit.

### **GSA Vehicles**

#### **866-WEX-4GSA (866-939-4472)**

This customer service number is for assistance with fuel purchases and maintenance less than \$100.

#### **866-400-0411**

This customer service number is for pre-authorization for maintenance or body work more than \$100.

The Administrative Office will not approve any request for reimbursement for fuel purchased unless the above guideline have been exhausted and a memorandum is attached to the SF-1164 outlining the steps taken (i.e. used 24 hour unattended pump and no phone was available). Please insure a copy of this memo is placed in all BIBE government vehicles.

Volunteers: If you have any further questions, please ask your supervisor.



## March Events in the Area

**March 2 - Annual Rabies Clinic** to be held at the Emergency Services Building, 12 pm until 1 pm.

**March 3 Retirement Party for Jeep (the horse)**, 1:30 pm at the Panther Junction Ramada.

**March 12-19 Chihuahuan Desert Research Center 7th Annual Cactus & Succulent Festival** Fort Davis— Tour the greenhouse, take a stroll along the ethnobotany trail, learn to cook dinner with hot rocks, learn about the desert, and bring the kids for some fun with plants! There will also be a cactus and succulent sale. On March 12 at 9:00 am. The majority of our cacti are seed-grown in our greenhouse or from Sul Ross State University's native Plant Propagation Program in Alpine.

**March 11 Texas History Day** at the Annie Riggs Museum in Fort Stockton.

**April 2—Green Scene in Terlingua**—check out this eco-friendly festival, all day long at the Ghosttown.

### Davis Mountains Preserve Open Days

Open Day: March 12

Open Day: April 16

The Davis Mountains Preserve, a Nature Conservancy site, will be sponsoring “open days” on March 12 and April 16. During open events visitors may participate in self-guided hiking, horseback riding, picnicking, photography, birding, stargazing and other activities at their leisure. On open days, the preserve will be open on Saturday from 9 am to 4 pm. Guests will be required to sign in and out at the McIvor Conservation Center. Only high-clearance vehicles will be allowed past the Center. Restroom areas are available at the McIvor Conservation Center. Horseback riding is allowed on the roads and the preserve provides a corral and water. No pets of any kind are allowed. Davis Mountains Preserve is located approximately 25 miles northwest of Ft. Davis on Hwy. 118 (about 10 miles past McDonald Observatory and about ¼ mile past the Lawrence E. Wood Picnic Area). For further information, email DMP Director Chris Pipes [cpipes@tnc.org](mailto:cpipes@tnc.org) or call 432-426-2390.



*Editorial comment: this is a cool place and well worth a visit! jane*

*The volunteer office has daypacks, two sets of hiking poles and two sleeping bags that are available. Just come by the office and sign one out to use while you are here volunteering at Big Bend!*