

Borderlands Research Institute hosts Trans-Pecos Wildlife Conference for first time in 6 years

By MARY CANTRELL
mkcantrell@bigbendsentinel.com

ALPINE — Landowners, natural resource professionals, wildlife enthusiasts and more met last week for the Trans-Pecos Wildlife Conference at Sul Ross State University, co-hosted by the Borderlands Research Institute (BRI), Texas Wildlife Association and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD).

The conference, which occurs irregularly and last took place in 2016, was originally founded over 20 years ago with the goal of educating private landowners and the general public on the need for natural resource management for the Big Bend region. This year’s programming included a full day of presentations followed by a day of field trips to ranches in the Marfa and Fort Davis areas for demonstrations of grassland and riparian restoration.

Over 150 people — including West Texans as well as visitors from Mexico, Arizona and East Texas — attended the first, lecture-focused day, with fewer returning the following day for excursions onto local ranches. Topics covered were diverse, ranging from how to live with bears in West Texas — including best practices for securing trash — to antler progression in mule deer and pronghorn restoration updates to conservation of grassland bird species, and how to raise bird-friendly beef.

“Historically, most of the interest for our conference stems from game animals. We had some great presentations on nongame topics like bird diversity, raptor behaviors and ecotourism. The audience really enjoyed those presentations, which is an indicator of shifting interests that our audience has,” said Dr. Louis Harveson, founder and director of the BRI.

The conference sought to make attendees aware of the multitude of cost-share opportunities offered by entities such as TPWD and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for both small and large landowners looking to implement conservation-focused land and wildlife management strategies on their property. Ongoing environmental challenges faced by the region — such as rising populations of invasive aoudad and their role in spreading disease to bighorn sheep as well as Chronic Wasting Disease, drought and land fragmentation — were also touched on. Land fragmentation refers to the parceling out of relatively small acreages, a practice that is ultimately more threatening to species and habitat management than larger ranches, per organizers.

“We do our best to make sure the information we share includes the newest scientific information that is available, whether that is updates on the latest techniques to combat brush encroachment, modifying your management plan during drought, or recent updates on wildlife disease issues,” said Harveson.

Madge Lindsay, vice president of the Trans-Pecos Bird Conservation group based in Fort Davis, a three-year-old organization, had a booth at



Photo courtesy Borderlands Research Institute

Trans Pecos Wildlife Conference attendees visited local ranches last week to view and discuss successful riparian and grassland restoration efforts.

the conference and was sharing pamphlets on the area’s bird species, such as the Montezuma Quail, with passersby. Trans-Pecos Bird Conservation hosts the biennial hummingbird festival in Fort Davis to celebrate the many species of hummingbirds in the Davis Mountains and recently announced the dates for next year’s festival — August 17-20, 2023. The organization also helps link up landowners who want to build bird habitats on their property with potential funding sources, said Lindsay.

“We wanted to have an active bird conservation organization so we can get information not only to people coming here, but also to people that are on the ranch, who want to start a hummingbird garden, are going to improve their habitat or put in a nice water feature for birds. As it dries out, we’re gonna need more and more people doing that,” said Lindsay.

Rachael Connally, who has been working as Presidio County’s Wildlife Biologist for TPWD for over two years, said the conference offered a valuable chance to share information across entities and further connect with local landowners.

“I do think it’s nice to be able to all get together,” said Connally. “Not only just us as professionals, but also with landowners, and then just people in general, in the public, to come in and see what is going on.”

Connally and her fellow county-specific wildlife biologists work with private landowners, helping them understand which wildlife species inhabit their property, what their habitats are and how to achieve their

conservation goals — how to attract more pronghorn onto their ranch, for example. Through their Landowner Incentive Program (LIP), TPWD provides funding for landowners for certain habitat work, including riparian restoration and more. Connally, in addition to working closely with landowners, performs regular surveys of pronghorn, mule deer, quail, dove and Texas horned lizards.

She said right now, TPWD is primarily focused on helping conserve the Marfa grasslands and areas of riparian habitat along Alamito Creek. And while she works with a number of landowners in those areas, she is always open to establishing more relationships.

“If there’s particular parts of the county that are identified as good target areas where the department would like to do some kind of restoration, we may reach out to landowners and say, ‘Hey, you know, this really important part of Alamito Creek is on your property, and we’re kind of trying to do some restoration. Would you be interested in working with us?’” said Connally.

Connally said TPWD is always gathering data on wildlife sightings and asks Presidio County residents to report bear and mountain lion sightings to her via email rachael.connally@tpwd.texas.gov or by calling 432-244-8121.

Practical how-to first day presentations on fencing and desert riparian restoration, which has the potential to increase groundwater recharge and preserve bird habitat, prepped audiences for what they would witness in person on the second day of the conference. Harveson said the opportunity to leave the conference room and get out onto local lands to see progress updates from ranchers who are on the ground working toward various conservation goals is a special part of the event.

“It allows us to show prescriptions that work and even those that don’t work. Ultimately, we want a dialogue with the land owner/manager, so that we can all learn from one another,” said Harveson. “We rely on them for clean air and clean water and to provide food, cover and water for the wildlife we love, and they rely on us for information to manage those resources successfully.”

Many striking statistics were shared at the conference, including how 2.2 million acres of land in Texas was converted away from agricultural use from 1997 to 2014, and 1.2 million acres converted in just the last five years. Harveson said as Texans have shifted away from rural life, the majority now living in urban areas, and with the state’s population increasing, land use is rapidly changing.

“This disconnection has serious implications on how Texans value the wild things and wild places of Texas. This demographic shift can also have serious implications on how Texans vote about natural resource issues,” said Harveson. “If Texans don’t value dark skies, scenic vistas, ranching heritage and wildlife habitat, then the beauty, splendor and quaintness of the Big Bend region, and all of rural Texas, is vulnerable.”

Come worship with us

First United Methodist Church

Do not fear, for I am with you,
do not be afraid,
for I am your God;
I will strengthen you,
I will help you,
I will uphold you with my
victorious right hand.
Isaiah 41:10

Sundays 9 am
Pastor Stephen White
110 W Washington Steet
Marfa 432-729-4534

DRAWING OF THE WEEK

Vanessa Diaz
Oil Pastel

Sudoku & Crossword puzzles:

UNIVERSAL Sudoku Puzzle

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

2	3	1	9					5
1				6				3
		5		7				
	5			1	3			
	8		7	3	5		4	
		2		4			6	
				2	7			
	2			8				9
9				5	7	6		2

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution from last week's puzzle:

SOLUTION:

2	1	8	9	6	3	4	7	5
3	7	6	2	5	4	9	8	1
4	5	9	1	7	8	6	2	3
7	2	4	6	8	1	5	3	9
9	3	1	4	2	5	8	6	7
6	8	5	7	3	9	1	4	2
1	9	2	8	4	7	3	5	6
8	6	3	5	1	2	7	9	4
5	4	7	3	9	6	2	1	8

☺ MARFA SCHOOL LUNCH MENU ☺					
AUGUST	Thu, Aug 11	Fri, Aug 12	Mon, Aug 15	Tue, Aug 16	Wed, Aug 17
BREAKFAST	NO SCHOOL	NO SCHOOL	NO SCHOOL	NO SCHOOL	POWER BREAKFAST
LUNCH Menu courtesy of Celebrating 70+ years of serving our customers. 432-729-4375 www.myporters.net	NO SCHOOL	NO SCHOOL	NO SCHOOL	NO SCHOOL	PIZZA, BABY CARROTS, FRESH BROCCOLI FLORETS, GRAPES

CELEBRATION LIQUOR MARFA

Mon - Thu 11:30 am - 9 pm
Fri - Sat 10 am - 9 pm
432-837-7479 • Marfa

Mon - Sat 10 am - 9 pm
432-729-4682 • Alpine

RAUL LARA
CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

Cell# 432-249-1189
councilmemberlara@cityofmarfa.com

Post Office Box 787
432-729-4315 / fax 432-729-3158

CONVENIENCE WEST BBQ

Friday • Saturday
www.conveniencewest.com
Order in advance online
1411 W San Antonio/Hwy 90

PRESCRIPTION SHOP MARFA

A full-service pharmacy. Now accepting many insurance plans for service while you wait.
105 East Oak Street,
next to Marfa Country Clinic
432.729.4244
rxshopmarfa@gmail.com

MARFA SHORTHORNS SPORTS CALENDAR

THU - SAT, AUG 11 - 13: Varsity Volleyball Tournament at Wink
FRI, AUG 12: Football Scrimmage in Grandfalls
MON, AUG 15: Meet the Shorthorns at Martin Field, 6:30 pm
TUE, AUG 16: Volleyball vs Fot Hancock/Fort Stockton in Marfa
WED, AUG 17: FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL!!

EMAIL ADS@BIGBENDSENTINEL.COM FOR ADVERTISING RATES

Universal Crossword

Edited by David Steinberg August 8, 2022

ACROSS

1 Play a guitar lightly

6 Freeway exit

10 Unit of power

14 Rub out

15 Youngest daughter of Tsar Nicholas II

17 Type of naval ship in "Top Gun"

19 Marie Curie's title: Abbr.

20 Ignited

21 Accumulate, as expenses

22 Quarter-back's shout before long pass

25 2021 award for Simone Biles

26 What a paper jam may cause

31 I, for Aristotle

32 Something borrowed

33 Item lugged by a roadie

36 Sticky note

39 Certain hockey or soccer player

41 Pigpen

42 Speaker's platform

45 Pepsi Max, for one

46 Bram Stoker or Stephen King, e.g.

50 Old-timey wizard

53 Was jealous of

54 Toad sound

56 Text paired with "thx"

57 "How cute!"

60 Railroad container for perishables

65 Out of it

66 Stove-top/oven combo

67 Prankster in "The Simpsons"

68 Vehicle with treads

69 Preadoles-cent

DOWN

1 Fabric-to-fabric border

2 Cut back a little

3 Like many valuable stamps

4 School near UCLA

5 Red wine that lost market share after "Sideways"

6 Roof support

7 Industrious insect

8 Computer since 1984

9 Ad Council spot, for short

10 Surname of studio co-founders Harry, Albert, Sam and Jack

11 Japanese rival of Nike

12 Secure with ropes

13 Dawdle

16 Prefix for "color" or "cycle"

18 -de-camp

22 Swarming pest

23 Long fish jelled in England

24 Upside

26 Domino spots

27 Cube (3, for 27)

28 Teeny

29 Use for an old T-shirt

30 Yoko heard on "Revolution 9"

33 Scads

34 5,280 feet

35 Bulbous-bottomed fruit

37 Nuptial agreement

38 Goo from coal

40 LSD

43 Fury

44 Thor, to Odin

46 Media baron who inspired "Citizen Kane"

47 Motor home campsite

48 Droop like a daisy

49 Word after "last" or "summer"

50 Elusive fast-food pork sandwich

51 Athletic stadium

52 Succeed at a high level

55 Snakebite

— (hiker's safety set)

57 Benzoyl peroxide target

58 Earnings per hour

59 Bird on South Carolina's quarter

61 Home to your microbiome

62 Clean Air Act org.

63 Oregon senator

Wyden

64 Like carpaccio or ceviche

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

L	S	D		C	O	B		A	C	T	C	O	O	L
A	H	I	T	U	N	A		D	R	H	O	U	S	E
R	O	B	O	T	I	C		B	E	E	R	R	U	N
D	E	S	P	I	C	A	B	L	E	M	I			
			S	T	E	R	O	I	D		S	M	S	
E	B	A	Y		D	S	T		C	U	T	I	E	
M	E	N		F	R	I	E	Z	E	F	R	A	M	E
O	L	D	B	O	Y					W	O	N	T	O
P	I	E	R	R	E	V	I	E	W	S		U	S	A
O	Z	A	R	K		I	N	A		S	E	A	S	
P	E	N			O	N	T	R	I	A	L			
			P	L	A	Y	O	F	F	B	I	R	T	H
P	A	P	R	I	K	A		U	N	O	C	A	R	D
C	R	E	O	L	E	S		L	O	V	E	S	I	T
S	T	A	M	I	N	A		S	T	E	H	O	V	

8/7 © 2022 Andrews McMeel Universal
www.upuzzles.com

Five TimeRs Club by Jon Pennington

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14						15				16				
17					18									
19				20						21				
			22					23	24		25			
26	27	28							29	30				
31								32				33	34	35
36				37	38				39		40			
41				42		43	44				45			
			46						47	48	49			
50	51	52				53								
54				55					56			57	58	59
60						61	62	63				64		
65											66			
67					68						69			