

WILD WAYS

A Newsletter for **Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve**

Vol. 30 • No. 2

Get Wild About Summer Camps

by Hans Christianson



Student visitors learn about Wild Basin during a summer program.

Looking for an interactive, fun and fact-filled alternative to the dull summer days spent indoors for your children? Wild Basin is now accepting applications for the 2009 Summer Camps. Open to children entering first through fifth grade, the camps each last one week and are guaranteed to show kids the fun side of nature. Each morning, campers will hit the trails to explore Wild Basin through hands-on activities and games. Campers should be prepared for outdoor hikes, and wear closed-toe shoes, weather-appropriate clothing, and bring a water bottle to carry on the trails every day. Campers should also bring their own lunch.

“Our camps are a wonderful opportunity for children to spend a week outside, exercising in nature and experiencing what makes Wild Basin wild,” says **Mitch Robinson**, education coordinator. For more summer camp info, turn to page 2.

**Application deadline is
Friday, May 15. Each
camp costs \$160. Get details
at www.wildbasin.org.**

CELEBRATE EARTH DAY ALL YEAR

In honor of Earth Day 2009, Wild Basin is looking for ways to conserve resources. One way to help with paper costs is to distribute Wild Ways electronically in PDF format. If you are interested in receiving Wild Ways in your e-mail inbox, please contact us at mitch@wildbasin.org. Thanks for everything you do for Wild Basin and the environment.

PROFILE OF A VOLUNTEER

by Hans Christianson

Jim Letchworth

came to Wild Basin as a volunteer through the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, which provides people age 55 or older the opportunity to apply their life experience to meet community needs through volunteer service. He recently shared his thoughts about the experience with *Wild Ways*.

Why do you volunteer at Wild Basin?

I wanted something to do where I could be useful and get in some outdoor time as well. I started off answering the phone and working in the gift shop. After a few weeks, I increased my hours so I could help out doing a variety of things on the trail and around the center.

How is Wild Basin important to the community?

Wild Basin is a convenient place to quickly get away from the rat race. Most folks in the city can get there in 30 minutes or less, hike for an hour, and be back at work or home in another 30 minutes. It is also a treasure trove of practical, hands-on educational opportunities for all ages.

Why is it important to volunteer at Wild Basin?

Wild Basin provides the public with opportunities for exercise, interaction with nature, and hands-on education in a variety of subjects, such as astronomy, zoology, geology and anthropology. I don't believe it would be possible to maintain the current level of community service without volunteers to assist the staff in their duties.



Get WILD

SUMMER CAMP

Under the Wing • June 1–5 • 8:30 a.m.–noon

Discover all things that fly! Observe and study our winged friends around the basin. Learn about what they eat, where they live and where they come from.

Bugs, Bugs, Bugs • June 8–12 • 8:30 a.m.–noon

Do you like things that crawl and buzz? Meet some of our smallest inhabitants — insects, arachnids and more — we have them all! Discover our wonderful display of bugs and don't forget to bring your walking shoes.

The Web of Life • June 15–19 • 8:30 a.m.–noon

Wonder how nature is connected? Learn about the web of life and about how the smallest decisions can have big impacts. Discover how you can be a positive influence in preserving our wonderful planet.

Environmental Education Notes by Mitch Robinson

Summer is approaching. The weather is getting nicer, students are finishing the school year and Wild Basin is implementing several changes to the education programming. Here's a preview of our expected changes.

We are developing a new curriculum to incorporate TAKS learning for elementary, middle and high school students who visit Wild Basin. In addition, through our affiliation with St. Edwards University, we hope to continue our internship program in the Wild Basin Environmental Education and Land Management programs. Over the past year, we had had several interns from St. Edward's (read about our most current intern below). Students from the Community Psychology classes continue to participate in our volunteer program and have been a tremendous asset to the basin.

The Education Committee is currently planning logistics for the new classroom space, which will replace the present gift shop. The new space will include lab tables and microscopes, as well as a projector and screen, to further research and education at Wild Basin. The committee has also recruited new member **Melanie Meyer**, an associate principal with AISD Liberal Arts and Science Academy High School. And I am pleased to be joining Wild Basin as the new education coordinator.

From all the staff here at Wild Basin, we want to thank all of the volunteers, trail guides and people from St. Edwards who continually go above and beyond to keep the dream of this preserve alive.

Wild About Internships by Hans Christianson



Noel Chapi '10, an Environmental Science and Policy major at St. Edward's University, has spent the past four months learning the ins and outs of Wild Basin as an intern. In this role, he has worked on a variety of projects at the preserve, from cleaning up trails and conducting land surveys with land manager **Mike Powers** to performing administration and planning duties with executive director **Ebby Green**. In all, it has given him a chance to branch out and gain new experiences with environmental policy and management. "It's been a great experience," Chapi says. "Every day is different. There's always something new to do."

To learn more about internship opportunities at Wild Basin, contact executive director Ebby Green at 512-327-7622 or ebby@wildbasin.org.

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve, in its role as an interdisciplinary laboratory of St. Edward's University, exists to protect and maintain its urban wilderness, and to promote the importance of environmental education, research, conservation and preservation. Collaboration between Wild Basin and St. Edward's enables the creation of programs and initiatives that serve to fulfill the mission.

The Committee for Wild Basin Wilderness, Inc. is a nonprofit 501(c) 3 organization.

WILD WAYS

Wild Ways is distributed three times a year to members and friends of the Wild Basin community.

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Young Artists Discover Outdoor Medium

by Hans Christianson



REBECCA MARINO '10
St. Edward's University students Kelly Waquespack and David Vaught construct an environmental art sculpture.

What do you get when you combine tree limbs, clumps of mud and scattered rocks? If you're local artist and sculptor **Amy Gerhauser**, you have the foundation of an outdoor, environmental art piece.

Gerhauser, an adjunct instructor in Art at St. Edward's, has been creating

environmental art projects for the past decade, and on Friday, April 3, she and 10 students from her Environmental Art course went to Wild Basin for a class project.

The students were divided into pairs and constructed their own sculptures over a period of three hours. The only requirement? Everything the students used had to be readily available and part of nature. The last hour of class was spent photographing and documenting the different projects.

"The idea was to have the students work on a one-day project using natural resources," said Gerhauser. "They could alter or rearrange what they find to suit their project. When we left, some of the works may have lasted for an hour or for days. In the end everything goes back to nature, and we haven't left a footprint."

Enjoy an Adventure ... With a Purpose

by Mitch Robinson

Wild Basin offers several opportunities for youth organizations through the Wild Afternoons program and volunteer conservation projects. Wild Afternoons provide enjoyable and educational nature experiences for organized children's groups after school, on weekends and throughout the summer. Girl Scout, Boy Scout and Campfire groups can fulfill nature-related merit badge requirements, or request guided tours that correspond to the group's current studies.

Groups ranging in size from eight to 25 children hike through the preserve with trained trail guides while exploring themes such as insects and arachnids, forestry, native plants and more. Programs are available by request on weekday afternoons and weekends. The cost is \$5 per child and accompanying adults are free. This includes admission to the preserve and a guided hike.

Wild Basin is always looking for volunteers to help with trail maintenance, particularly as we enter the high-traffic summer season. Volunteer conservation projects can be established for youth organizations or individuals, such as Eagle Scouts.

For more information about Wild Afternoons or to discuss a volunteer conservation project, contact Mitch Robinson at 512-327-7622, ext.14 or mitch@wildbasin.org.

EVENTS

Indian Lore

May 2: 10–11 a.m.

July 18: 10–11 a.m.

Jewel Pollard will mesmerize you with tales of Central Texas Native American history and a display of artifacts. Learn how to start a fire by rubbing sticks together, how to grind meal between stones and what types of arrowheads are used for hunting. For all ages.

Fee: \$4 adults, \$2 for ages 5–12 and seniors, members are always free

Reservations required: 512-327-7622 or hike@wildbasin.org

Moonlighting

May 3: 8 p.m.

June 5: 8 p.m.

Enjoy a spectacular view of the full moon rise from the overlook at Wild Basin. Learn about the different moon phases, science, legends and lore with the knowledgeable volunteers of the Austin Astronomical Society. Please bring a small flashlight, water and a cushion.

Fee: \$5 adults, \$3 for ages 5–12 and seniors

Reservations required: 512-327-7622 or hike@wildbasin.org

Mother's Day

May 10: Mothers hike for free all day

May 16: 8 a.m. Balcones Canyonlands Preserve Lecture Series: Land Preservation

Wild Basin Walk

May 17: 9:30–11:30 a.m.

June 20: 9:30–11:30 a.m.

July 5: 9:30–11:30 a.m.

Aug. 22: 9:30–11:30 a.m.

This two hour walk is a great introduction to Wild Basin. Learn about the plants animals and geology of the hill country. Bring a water bottle, sunblock, bug spray and wear closed toe shoes.

Fee: \$4 adults, \$2 for ages 5–12 and seniors, members are always free

Reservations required: 512-327-7622 or hike@wildbasin.org

Flintknapping

June 6: 10 a.m.–noon

Aug. 8: 10 a.m.–noon

Make your first arrowhead with J.C. Pollard. Learn how to safely work stone into points of varying styles. Tools, safety glasses and knapping materials provided. For ages 13 and older.

Fee: \$6 per person

Reservations required: 512-327-7622 or hike@wildbasin.org

Concerts

June 13: Caroline Aiken

Aug. 15: Sweet Jazz

Tickets available online at www.wildbasin.org

Fee: \$15 in advance; \$20 at the door

Stargazing

July 24: 8 p.m.

Aug. 16: 8 p.m.

Learn about the planets, stars and constellations as you gaze into the night sky from Wild Basin's overlook. Peer through telescopes and learn fun astronomy facts from the knowledgeable volunteers of the Austin Astronomical Society. Please bring a small flashlight, water and a cushion.

Fee: \$4 for adults; \$2 for ages 5–12 and seniors

Reservations required: 512-327-7622 or hike@wildbasin.org



Wild Basin Wish List

Wild Basin needs your help.
Please consider donating any
of the following items:

- Portable gas-powered generator
- Weed-eater (gas-powered)
- Handles for picks and sledge-hammers
- Copy machine
- Laser printer
- Scanner
- Computers
- "Bug Bingo"
- Battery-powered megaphone
- Crushed limestone
- Support from a metal shop for tool repair
- Microphone cable
- Flat-screen monitors

Support Wild Basin

The St. Edward's University Collegiate Academy of Science, a student chapter of the Texas Academy of Science, will donate \$2,000 to Wild Basin to provide educational equipment and supplies for the new learning classroom. If you would like to make a gift to Wild Basin, contact executive director Ebby Green at 512-327-7622 or ebby@wildbasin.org. All gifts, regardless of size, make a difference. To sign up for a Wild Basin membership or to renew your membership, visit www.wildbasin.org.



Whole Earth Provision Company is sponsoring the Banff Mountain Film Festival on Monday, May 4, and Tuesday, May 5, at the Paramount Theatre. On May 4, the World Tour will be showcased, while the May 5 event will feature Radical Reels. The Film Festival will feature award-winning films about remote cultures, the world's last great wild places, and the people who go to these places. The event will also include door prizes, giveaways and vendor booths.

Proceeds from this event will benefit
the [Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve](#).

For tickets, contact the Paramount Theatre
at 866-443-8849 or www.gettix.net.

**Banff Mountain Film Festival to
Benefit Wild Basin:** May 4–5
7 p.m. (Doors open at 5:30 p.m.),
The Paramount Theatre,
713 Congress Ave.