

The Alamo City Rivermen

Babbler

Issue MMCCXLIII

June 2003

The monthly newsletter of the Alamo City Rivermen

Padding the fine line between geek and Bubba.

Next Meeting

May 14, 2003, Barbeque Station, 1612 N.E. Loop 410, near the intersection with Harry Wurzbach. See the [linked map](#). 6:30 to 8:30.

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Llano River - Junction

Lets Hear it for the Red, White & Blue, July 3 thru 6

We have reserved the large patio pavilion area at Morgan's Shady Park. The phone number for the campground is 915-446-2580, day or 915-446-2071, night. The patio cost us 40 dollars per day to use and is situated on river left about 1 mile upstream of the bridge leading into Junction.

There are showers and restroom accommodations and we have a nice grassy area for tent camping plus there are several other sites immediately available around the patio area.

The patio lends itself extremely well to dutch oven or barbeque cooking as it is approximately 30 by 30 feet. Inside the patio is a raised up area 10 by 10 feet about waist level filled with dirt that allows placement of dutch ovens and small barbeque pits. In the center of this area is an oak tree which provides lots of nice shelter. We have reserved the patio for Thursday, Friday and Saturday night, July 3 thru July 6 and I am planning on arriving Thursday on the 3rd around 9 or 10 pm.

There are various options for canoeing. The segments vary from 14 miles to 3 miles. Last year we had several different groups going on different sections of rivers. You can even just hang out at the campsite and do nothing at all.

The cost of this trip is based on the following carefully constructed algorithm: (Total cost of patio for days rented)/total number of people plus 2 dollars per day per person

When arriving at the campground check in with the office and let them know you are with the Alamo City Rivermen. Lavern Harden is the owner and she is expecting us. We will collect all money at the campsite on and then turn it over to her. She actually likes our group as we are pretty well behaved plus we pay her for our group. So be nice and polite when visiting with her.

The Address for the Camp is as follows: 600 South 6th Street / Junction, Texas 76849

(Continued)

Directions:

1. From San Antonio take I-10 west to Junction, approximately 110 mile.
2. Exit IH-10 at the 456 marker.
3. Turn on to Hwy 377 / 83 to come to Junction. This becomes Main Street in Junction.
4. Follow Main Street to the Kimble County Courthouse.
5. Turn right on Sixth Street. (There is no marker to tell you that this is Sixth Street until you go one block. And as Laverne points out, "Well, you wanted to come to a small town!")
5. Stay on Sixth Street until you enter the park on the banks of the South Llano River.

Hope to see you there

Gib Hafernack, 210-822-8901 or Gibguy@Compuserve.com

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San Marco River Day Trip – June 21

Enjoy the crystal spring fed rivers of the beautiful and lush San Marcos River for a relaxing and leisurely 6 mile paddle from Westfield Crossing to Zoeler Crossing. Meet at Westfield Crossing at 10:00 am for unloading canoes and then run shuttles. We will plan on having lunch on the river, be prepared for some **really serious lawn chair surfing**. Hope to see you there.

Gib Hafernack, 210-822-8901 or Gibguy@Compuserve.com

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Upcoming Events

June 11, 2003	Monthly meeting	Barbeque Station, 1612 N.E. Loop 410, near Harry Wurzbach, 6:30 to 8:00 P.M.
June 14-18, 2003	Texas Water Safari	GibGuy@compuserve.com , 822-8901
June 21-22, 2003	Free Kids' Kayak Clinic, Nueces River	Tom Goynes, goynes@centurytel.net
June 21, 2003	San Marcos River	GibGuy@compuserve.com , 822-8901
July 4-6, 2003	Llano River at Junction. Morgan's Shady Grove.	GibGuy@compuserve.com , 822-8901
July 9, 2003	Monthly meeting	Barbeque Station, 1612 N.E. Loop 410, near Harry Wurzbach, 6:30 to 8:00 P.M.
July 19, 2003	Padre Island National Seashore–Bird Island	GibGuy@compuserve.com , 822-8901
July 26 to August 2, 2003	Mississippi River Rumble, from Savanna, IL to Burlington, IA	Chris Vogeler, 210-863-8622, AlamoChris@aol.com
August 13, 2003	Monthly meeting	Barbeque Station, 1612 N.E. Loop 410, near Harry Wurzbach, 6:30 to 8:00 P.M.
August 30-September 1, 2003	Labor Day Trip	To be determined
September 10, 2003	Monthly meeting	Barbeque Station, 1612 N.E. Loop 410, near Harry Wurzbach, 6:30 to 8:00 P.M.
September 20-28, 2003	Pecos or San Juan Rivers	GibGuy@compuserve.com , 822-8901

October 8, 2003	Monthly meeting	Barbeque Station, 1612 N.E. Loop 410, near Harry Wurzbach, 6:30 to 8:00 P.M.
November 12, 2003	Monthly meeting	Barbeque Station, 1612 N.E. Loop 410, near Harry Wurzbach, 6:30 to 8:00 P.M.
December 2003	Christmas Party	



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River Rumble 2003

Hello Rivemen, I'm contemplating doing the River Rumble again this year. The dates are July 26th to Aug 2nd. The stretch is on the Mississippi River from Savanna, IL to Burlington, IA - 133 miles. This is a very organized low cost trip which includes your canoe/kayak shuttle at the start of the trip, campsite each night with shower, transportation of your tent and gear each day by truck (you only paddle with your lunch in the boat), T-shirt and already cooked food (hot meals) to buy each day for breakfast & dinner. The meals are usually prepared by local fire departments, church groups, Lions Clubs etc. The camping is usually at local parks on the waterfront in small towns on the river with showers at local schools or swimming clubs etc.

We walk the towns at night and explore the local taverns. They also have a large Trade Canoe that holds about 10 paddlers if anyone wants to ride in that. You can do the whole trip in your personal boat, the Trade Canoe if you don't want to bring a boat, or paddle the Trade Canoe 1 day for a day out of your boat or just to try out a big canoe. It's really a very cool canoe. You can also take a day off if needed and help/ride in the shuttle gear truck.

Wenonah is a sponsor of this event and also has boats for people to try out for a day. This is an excellent way to paddle a boat for a day to see if it may be one to add to your fleet. Wenonah also sells these new boats during the trip at a steep discount so it's a great way to get a fantastic deal (which I've done). If you have a Wenonah boat you're thinking about purchasing you can call the Wenonah factory and they'll bring one down for you to paddle for a day and then if you like it you can buy it at the discount price so you can set yourself up for a purchase with no obligation to buy in advance if you like.

E-mail me if you are interested: AlamoChris@aol.com It would be fun to have a group of us go up and I look forward to hearing from some of you. Chris Vogeler 210-863-8622

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Llano River Trip Report

The Alamo City Rivemen floated the Llano River in an overnight club trip May 3 south of Mason. Don't get the impression we did our usual load the boat to the gills with camping gear thing, rather, we did our bit to support the local tourism bit by renting out a cabin and a ranch place on the river (the local campground being full for the weekend). Splitting the cost among everyone it wasn't too bad, most electing to camp rather than stay inside. It's not bad to occasionally live the high life, but we had this place and ranch completely to ourselves down by the river, cabin fully equipped, a real bathroom and shower (the biggest luxury), deck with river view, no crowds, solitude, a great grassy swath of riverbank, a pioneer cemetery, a sizable covered shed down by the river perfect for dutch oven cooking king ranch chicken and telling stories into the night, and longhorns and donkeys wandering in adjacent pastures. Sweet! Ghost stories that night were traded between Carly and Randy, including the Thing That Wouldn't Die and Donkey Lady. The Blue Mist almost got Gib because he didn't sleep in a tent.

The river was flowing at 115 cfs, and was actually on a slight but meaningful rise from storms in the area the few days before. At this level it was floatable, although in some spots you really had to pick your way to keep from walking. We put in at the CR 1723 or Sommersville Road Crossing 4 river miles west of Highway 87. It's a one lane low water crossing. There is a gravel bar access only on the south side, with a dubious downed fence nearby. The river is wide, rocky sometimes channeled and often braided in spots, mostly floatable in this

section, although at this water level you might occasionally grind to a halt on the grabby granite boulder ledges if you pick the wrong channel, takes concentration. At higher flow level this would be a fun rock garden run. But though the water was low, any day in a canoe is still enjoyable. There are many small drops and there was one memorable long twisty chute type channel rapid that was fairly fun and challenging from a boat maneuvering standpoint.

We stopped for about an hour at one rapid and enjoyed God's own jacuzzi with refreshments in hand, the kids (and big kids) plastering themselves with a pump water gun. The water quality is excellent, some remarking on the lack of any river mud. Bass could be seen darting around in the crystal clear water, fly fishing country for sure. We surprised two wayward Canadian geese in some rushes on a small island, which startled everyone as they blasted out honking at us. The proprietor of the ranch told us there were beaver on the river, and up Beaver Creek, but while not seeing any we did see some beaver chew (stripped limbs) on the banks.

The locals warned us that there would be walking, we shook them off until we came within a half mile of the Highway 87 bridge. From the entry point all you can see is jumbles of rock. There was water in there, somewhere. Best I can say it was like the Devils at low water, a real puzzler demanding intense study to pick what channels there were, often just a boat width across, with lots of stops, walks, starts, walks. Reiko in the sit on top faired best and scooted right through. We left a lot of green on the rocks. Everything was fine on this river till we got here. Be ready for it.

Warning! The river right of way access under the Highway 87 bridge has now been fenced across. This was open on our trip last year. You will hear more about this as Russ Cason and Gib Hafernick are doing some research on the matter and will report on the situation on canoetx. Looks like another dubious deal by our public servants.

Past 87 the river has long pools and the drops are further apart than above. A strong crosswind came up and was a problem on the flat water, until we pulled into our place. The next morning we had our usual riverman epic breakfast, with the world's longest line of two burner stoves cranking out the tasties. Biggest hit in my book was Joe Brewer's Truck Stop Texas Toast. Yum!! A good trip, but look for those rises to juice this river up before you go.

Randy Hohlaus

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Texas Water Safari Road Trip – June 14 through 18

We have in the state of Texas a unique endurance race that is one of the most challenging in the country. That race is the Texas Water Safari, which is a 265 mile nonstop ultra marathon canoe race.

Billed as the “World’s Toughest Boat Race”, the event begins at Aquarena Springs in San Marcos at the headwaters of the San Marcos river and travels 90 miles on the San Marcos via Martindale, Fentress, and Luling and then joins with the Guadalupe River near Gonzales. The Guadalupe then continues approximately another 165 miles via Cuero and Victoria and enters San Antonio Bay near Tivoli. After that it’s 10 miles across San Antonio Bay, finishing at Seadrift.

Contestants are required to complete the race in under 100 hours **plus carry all provisions and equipment in the canoe**. The only outside assistance they may receive is ice and water from a designated Team Captain.

The record for completing this race is about 33 hours but most of the entries finish in the 50 to 80 hour range with a few that get in just under the wire of 100 hours. Each year over 130 canoes enter the event, and the teams can vary from a 50 foot 8 man canoe to one person going solo.

I have volunteered to be the team captain for Zoltan Maraz of Sugarland, Texas. He is registered as Boat Number 939 and is planning on entering the race in the solo class, unlimited division. I will be following him along the way providing him with water and updating Safari Race Officials as to his position and condition and estimate that he will finish this race in the 60 to 70 hours.

You are welcome to join me and follow along as we travel from bridge to bridge along with several hundred other team captains and spectators as we watch the race. We will be basically living and sleeping in lawn chairs while living off the land as we travel south to the coast. The first day can be pretty exciting as boats jockey for position while trying to get as far down the river in daylight before entering

the more treacherous logjam infested sections in the evening. As the day goes on, boats become severely damaged or destroyed, and exhaustion starts to take a toll on the contestants. As a rule the race has an attrition rate of about 50 percent.

The race starts at 9:00 am, Saturday on June 14. Try to arrive at 8:00 am just to look around and inspect all the different boat and the teams; it is really pretty interesting. Should you need to get back home, you are welcome to cut loose and head back home whenever you want. Things to bring:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Comfortable lawn chair | Windbreaker |
| Sleeping bag | Poncho or rain suit |
| Swim suit | Ice chest with beverages or lunch |
| Change of clothes | Flashlight or headlight |
| Sunscreen | 1 or 2 citronella candles |
| Towel | |

Gib Hafernack, 210-822-8901 home, 210-355-1726 cell, or Gibguy@Compuserve.com

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Roll Call for Pecos Expedition with San Juan Option: Sept 19 - 23

The Pecos Plan

This will be an Alamo City Rivermen Trip with the launch point being Pandale and the takeout Pecos High Bridge with a maximum this number of 6 to 8 canoes or about 12 to 16 people. This will be a well provision expedition and as such a trip requirement will be that you have a canoe for carrying community equipment and food. Community gear can be specific to include food, stoves, ice chest, charcoal, tables, toilet system etc. One of the intents of this expedition is to have a healthy food menu with a well managed beverage program.

Boat Requirements:

The requirement for this trip is that you have an open canoe capable of safely carrying your gear plus community gear for this expedition. ABS is the preferred boat but Aluminum will work as well although I would not recommend it for low water conditions if carrying (2) people.

The Commitment & the Option

As Option we have a permit for the San Juan River in Utah from Mexican Hat to Clay Hills Canyon, for logistical reasons **if you commit to the Pecos you commit to the San Juan.**

Deposits or Let Me See the Money

For the San Juan Option we need to have 18 dollars per person to the Bureau of Land Management 30 days before September 19.

The Schedule

The Pecos Schedule: The plan would be to leave on a Saturday and get to Seminole Canyon State Park some time on Saturday.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| September 20, Saturday | -Travel to assembly point |
| September 21, Sunday | - Run shuttles and launch on river at Pandale |
| September 22, Monday | - on river |
| September 23, Tuesday | - on river |
| September 24, Wednesday | - on river |
| September 25, Thursday | - on river |
| September 26, Friday | - on river |

September 27, Saturday - Exit from river at Pecos High Bridge & travel time back
September 28, Sunday - Travel time back

The San Juan Schedule: The plan would be to leave on a September 19, Friday.

September 20, Friday - Depart from San Antonio
September 20, Saturday - Travel
September 21, Sunday - Travel
September 22, Monday - Put In at Mexican Hat
September 23, Tuesday - on river
September 24, Wednesday - on river
September 25, Thursday - on river
September 26, Friday - Exit From Clay Hills Canyon
September 27, Saturday - Travel back
September 28, Sunday - Travel back

Go or No Go

The minimum flow rate for a no go on the Pecos will be 175 CFS at Pandale. The decision for a NO GO on the Pecos will be some time in September 12.

The People

The following people that have indicated a serious commitment for going on the Pecos Expedition, their names are as follows:

Boat No 1 - Gib Hafernack & Randy Hohlaus, 20 foot Tripper ABS

Boat No 2 - Chris Vogeler

Total 3 people

Note: I need to get a pretty serious commitment from you guys, your partners names, plus the type and size of your boat that you will be in as I have a feeling this trip will fill up.

If you have any further questions give me a call. Gib Hafernack, 210-822-8901 or Gibguy@Compuserve.com

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Cibolo Creek Trip Report

When wandering afar looking for good paddling, consider what is near, if unfamiliar. Most San Antonians know Cibolo Creek at the IH 35 crossing on the way north to Austin. It is wide, rocky, and generally dry. But Cibolo Creek picks up water as it meanders south, eventually joining the San Antonio River between Karnes City and Helena.

Many years ago I put my canoe in at the IH 10 crossing on the way to Seguin and paddled upstream for a short way. I remember it as pleasant enough, but it's been too long to recall the details. Based on that memory, I recently drove out that way again and put in my boat at the Ulrich Road crossing. You can reach Ulrich Road by taking exit 593 off IH 10 and driving south on Trainer Hale Road (FM 2538). For those of you with water gardens, this is the same exit as for Water Garden Gems. Zuehl is in the area, and I drove past the flying community while exploring.

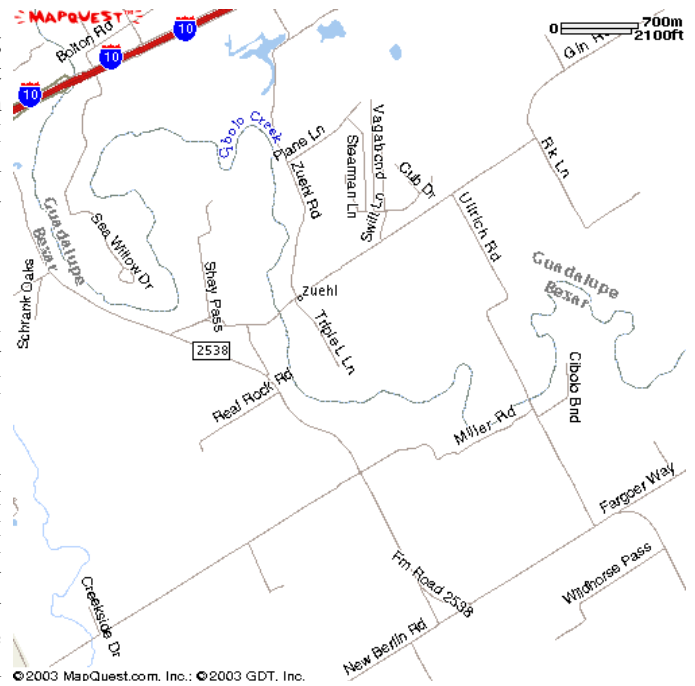
Ulrich crossing is a low water bridge, and there is a small place to park on the Guadalupe County side (river left). I used my long neglected pole to work upstream. The current was weak, so the going was easy despite my lack of facility with the pole. I could have as easily paddled upstream.

A long pool extends upstream from the crossing, and it quickly became too deep to use the pole to push off the bottom. Fortunately, poles can be used as kayak paddles from a standing position. I windmilled up the creek.

Like most streams in our area, Cibolo Creek alternates between long pools and narrow spots with faster water. The pools show little current and some are covered in duckweed, which is often sold as an aquarium plant. I encountered an occasional log blocking the creek, and I generally had to get out and drag at the fast water. Of course, I was in my 17 foot aluminum canoe. A smaller boat would be better for such a stream.

I could find only two Cibolo stream gauges online. One is at Selma, which is useless, because it will show the creek dry under normal conditions. The second is at Falls City, which is quite a way downstream, but is the best available. It showed 104 CFS the day I paddled.

Cibolo Creek is beautiful. Its banks are lush and wildlife is plentiful. I saw two water snakes, which I do not believe were moccasins, but I steered clear out of caution. I was surprised both at how little litter I encountered, less than I often see on the upper Guadalupe, and how few other indications of human activity were apparent, mostly a few droplines. I saw no buildings at all. Because I had started late in the day, I traveled only a little more than a mile upstream, but it was an enjoyable experience. Someone who knows how to use a pole would have enjoyed playing in some of the narrow spots with tight water. I did not push my luck on tipping over.



Because the stream is small, it is probably not suitable for large groups. It does require dealing with occasional downed logs and dragging at tight spots. Even so, it is a delightful stream close to home and should not be overlooked.

Ken Bennight

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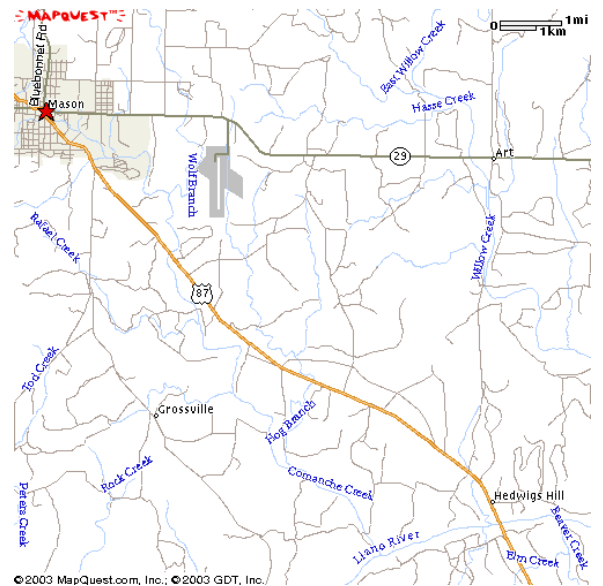
Highway 87 & Llano River (Cattle Pass)

The Problem

On river left of Hwy 87 and the Llano River there is a recently installed cattle pass that does not allow access to the Llano River. This has traditionally been a point of entry to the river and used by others as well to access the river for fishing. It is also in some people's opinion the better location to access the river.

This cattle pass consist of two barbed wire fences parallel with each other by about 25 feet and is perpendicular to Hwy 87 and running directly under the Hwy 87 bridge. On each fence there is a gate directly across from one another and on each gate is a lock that prevents no access to this side of the river now. There is no sign on the gate to indicate who is responsible for the gate or the lock. The pass is open with no fence and allows livestock to migrate freely from one side to the other side of the property.

The access road that leads from Hwy 87 to the first locked gate now creates a congested vehicle situation as it is extremely difficult for a vehicle to turn around and virtually impossible if pulling a trailer. Prior to the installation of



this pass vehicles could travel under the bridge with ample room for parking and turning around.

I climbed both gates with great difficulty. Both gates are your typical light weight aluminum construction, rather shaky and do not offer much room to place your feet for securing a foothold, as a side note both fences have a numerous high tensioned barb wires which make it extremely difficult to crawl under. An elderly person or small child, (example: Grandfather with grandchild to go fishing) would have difficulty in crossing this obstruction.

My Conversations:

Initially in my inquiries about this gate, I am being directed by TxDot to contact the landowner to have the gates opened if we wish to enter from this side of the river. In my conversations with Robert Norment of TxDot, I was told that the department did not even need to address the issue of the public accessing the river for his investigation as there was no specific policy in their policy manual. If that is the case conceivably under a worst case scenario we could see the very same thing happen on the other side of the river with a person having to call two private landowners to access fishing from both sides of the river.

Later on as my inquires went further up the chain of command, TxDot realized that they may have erred in allowing a lock gate on this side of the river. TxDot is now having their General Council investigate the issue of how they should proceed.

Texas Parks & Wildlife has stated they have no authority to have the gates unlocked but you would think it would be in their best interest for the public as they do sell a number of Fishing Licenses out there.

Here are a list of people you can address your concerns to:

Texas Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 387
Mason, Texas, 76865
Attn: Larry Cavaness (Hwy Superintendent in Mason County)
915-347-6447

Texas Department of Transportation
P.O. Drawer 15426
Austin, Texas, 78761
Attn: Mr. Robert Norment (Ran site assessment on approving this cattle crossing)
512-832-7067, E-mail: bnorment@dot.state.tx

Texas Department of Transportation
125 E. 11th Street
Austin, Texas, 78701
Attn: Mr. Zane Webb P.E. (Both Larry Cavaness & Robert Norment report to him)
512-416-3034
E-mail: zwebb@DOT.Stae.Tx.US

Texas Department of Transportation
125 E. 11th Street
Austin, Texas, 78701
Attn: Joanne Wright (General Council or Legal Department)
512-463-8630

Texas Parks & Wildlife
4200 Smith School Road
Austin, Texas, 78744
Attn: Melissa Parker (Taking Complaint on this issue pertinent to TPWD)
800-792-1112, 512-389-4589
E-mail: Melissa.Parker@TPWD.State.Tx.US

Mr. Crocket Keller
(Land owner to the Cattle Pass)
9760 U.S. 87 South
Mason, Texas, 76865
915-247-0055

Possible Conflicts of Interest

I have indirectly confirmed that the property owner may reside on at a residence at the corner of river left and directly west of Hwy 87. At this location there is a sign advertising for canoe shuttles and rentals. If that is the case we might have a situation where an individual may indirectly benefit from the closing of a preferred traditional access point on the river. I have not confirmed this angle yet but if someone wants to check it out I could use some help.

The Long Term Concern

My long term concern here is how a popular river and access point could be arbitrarily closed in this manner without addressing the needs of people (canoeist and fishermen) who access that side of the river. Presently for permit like this there are no specific guidelines in their policy manual to address the general public such as us. The only thing that really matters to TxDot is a legal agreement with the landowner. As a worst case scenario we could see the very same thing happen on the other side of the river with a person having to call two private landowners to access fishing from both sides of the river.

Need Some Help

Running all this down can be a bit time consuming, but the list of names that I have come up with are essentially most of the key players. As of May 13, I was told by one TxDot person in Austin, that I am the only one that has complained about this cattle pass, even though I find that a bit hard to swallow. Any assistance on raising this as an issue to the above people (e-mail, phone call or letter) would be appreciated.

Gib Hafernack, 219-822-8901 or Gibguy@Compuserve.com

Editorial Note: A landowner can legitimately need a cattle pass, and the law ought to allow for that. But in so doing, the law ought not to disregard the interests of the public in accessing public streams. All cattle passes should be designed to permit human ingress and egress by means of turnstiles, steps over the fence, or other reasonable means satisfactory to the landowner and TxDOT. The reason for TxDOT's existence is to facilitate people getting from one place to another. Navigable streams are among the places people need to get. The cattle pass is an accommodation to the landowner. It ought not to preempt entirely the rights of the public. (Kenneth Bennight)

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The leaf floats gently in the pool;
A breeze stirs, almost cool;
The leaf drifts on in the shade
That covers most of the secluded glade.
Now and then a beam of light
Proves the day's not turned to night.
A bird choir sings in the trees,
Ah, another breath of breeze.
A butterfly alights and dragonflies mate.
The leaf's path becomes straight
As the stream narrows, and the leaf is tossed
Amid the rocks and soon is lost.
The luxuriant banks are still and green,
And across the water willows lean.
A downed log's branch sticks up like a pole;
Tranquility and beauty still the soul.

Alamo City Rivermen Membership Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Home Telephone: _____

Business Telephone: _____

The Alamo City Rivermen try to keep their activities safe, but risk is inherent in water sports. We cannot and do not guarantee safety. The Alamo City Rivermen disclaim liability for accidental injury or death in any sponsored event. As a condition of membership and participation in club sponsored events, I release, acquit, and forever discharge the Alamo City Rivermen and its officers, agents, and members from all liability arising out of or relating to a sponsored event, even if negligence of the club or its officers, agents, or members is a cause, and even if I die or am injured. This release includes not only actual paddle trips but also all other club events and driving or riding to and from club events.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Signature: _____

Membership dues are the same for an individual or a family. As a member of the Alamo City Rivermen, you are automatically entitled to our monthly newsletter, NOC Outfitter store discounts, a \$10 discounted membership in the American Canoe Association through the Paddle America Program, and subscription to our email list. Details on these benefits are available in our newsletter.

I prefer to receive the newsletter: (Please circle the one you choose)

Dues if newsletter sent by email \$15.00 Dues if newsletter sent USPS \$20.00

(Note: Newsletter copying and mailing has been our biggest expense; using email frees up money for other activities, including our website.)

Mail this completed form, together with a check, to:

Alamo City Rivermen Canoe Club
P.O. Box 171194
San Antonio, Texas 78217