



The Alamo City Rivermen Babbler

Issue MMCCLXIII

January 2006

The monthly newsletter of the Alamo City Rivermen

Paddling the fine line between geek and Bubba.

Alamo City Rivermen 19th Annual Freeze Trip Colorado River-Island Camping January 28-29, 2006

Next Meeting

January 11, 2006, Hungry Horse Rest.,
12333 West Avenue, near the
intersection with Rhapsody. 6:30 to
9:00.

-o0o-

Club Officers

President Kathy Cusick
kmcusick at junos.com
830-885-5324

Vice President David Plylar
wavegrazer at lycos.com

Sec./Treas. Marie Searight
marie at wireweb.net
830-625-0604

Editor Kenneth Bennight
bennight at alumni.utexas.net
210-826-7071

Mailings Kevin Longin
klongin at gvtc.com

In the Beginning

Perhaps our most popular trip, after the club's formation in 1987, the club's first event was the Freeze Trip, and it keeps on going and going.

The Theme

The theme of this year's trip is "Let Me See the Vista," celebrating the San Marcos City Council's decision to convert Rio Vista Dam to a runnable rapid. If we all have a wine grog or two, we may have visions of what the rapid will look like.

The Technology

Once again the Alamo City Rivermen will push the limits of Dutch Oven Technology. But you must commit, no half-hearted "well maybe" or "I'm thinking about it". We have to buy food, arrange for dutch ovens, etc. to feed 50 to 60 people. This boat ride is a **Go or No-Go** kind of trip, as in **Yes/No, One/Zero and On/Off**.

The menu is as follows:

Roast Beef Shoulder Clog
Baked Potatoes with Onions
Green Beans
French & Sour Dough Bread
Peach Cobbler
Cowboy Coffee

Cost for the above is \$ 6.00 per person.

Upcoming Events

January 11, 2006	Monthly Meeting	Hungry Horse Rest., 12333 West Avenue, near Rhapsody. 6:30 to 9:00.
January 28-29, 2006	Freeze Trip, usual place on Colorado between FM 969 and Bastrop	gibguy at compuserve dot com
February 8, 2006	Monthly Meeting	Hungry Horse Rest., 12333 West Avenue, near Rhapsody. 6:30 to 9:00.
March 8, 2006	Monthly Meeting	Hungry Horse Rest., 12333 West Avenue, near Rhapsody. 6:30 to 9:00.
April 12, 2006	Monthly Meeting	Hungry Horse Rest., 12333 West Avenue, near Rhapsody. 6:30 to 9:00.
April 21??, 2006	Caddo Lake Trip ?????	
May 10, 2006	Monthly Meeting	Hungry Horse Rest., 12333 West Avenue, near Rhapsody. 6:30 to 9:00.
May 27-29, 2006	Memorial Day Trip ????	
June 14, 2006	Monthly Meeting	Hungry Horse Rest., 12333 West Avenue, near Rhapsody. 6:30 to 9:00.



(Freeze Trip, continued)

Wine Grog is optional. It is a delicious mixture of simmering red wine, brandy, sugar, cloves, and cinnamon sticks. If you want some, bring a bottle of dry red wine or any flavor of brandy. We will provide the other ingredients.

A Few Individuals Can Help

I need people to buy the following items or help attend to details. Food item volunteers must buy one of the groups listed below and bag it in white trash bags, labeling each bag with a permanent marker. The bags should be only partially filled so they can easily be packed or placed in a canoe or kayak. Please don't tie them too tightly, so we can use them for carrying out trash. I will give you quantities based on RSVPs. We must wait till the last minute, in case we must postpone. If you would like to help or team up with another person, let me know. Hang on to your receipts and or have a rough estimate, and you will be reimbursed on the island.

Person No. 1	Baking Potatoes with Onions	Label PO
Person No. 2	Green Beans	Label GB
Person No. 3	Sour Dough Bread	Label SB
Person No. 4	Peach Cobbler	Label PC

Person No. 5A & 5B	Collecting Money	Don't Lose it
Person No. 6	Collecting Signature Release Forms [†] & Distribution of maps	At launch Point

[†]Release forms are contingent on the club lawyer not leaving them on his kitchen counter as he did last year.

Bring your own eating utensils.

To help cooking & serving, consider bringing the following:

Dutch Ovens	If You Have One, Bring it & Let Me Know
Fire Starter Stacks	If You Have One, Bring it & Let Me Know
Cutting boards & knives	
Large pans or plastic bowls (for holding cut up vegetables)	
Portable tables	
Serving Spoons	

Raincheck & Postponement of Trip

If weather conditions are too hazardous for driving, meaning snow and ice on roads and overpasses, we will postpone the trip one week to February 4 & 5. This decision to postpone will be made Wednesday, January 25 at 7:00 PM. Watch the weather for the Austin/Bastrop area, and stay in touch with me if weather conditions are deteriorating or unpredictable. Monitor your email for a notice over the Yahoo group.

Some Details on Plan B

If the weather is inclement but not hazardous, we will still go. We have one large tarp approximately 30 by 20 feet, to help with a group shelter for our cooking and social area. Consider bringing the following:

- Rope, stakes, twine
- Tent Poles or Double Bladed Paddles
- Duct tape
- Extra Tarps

Note: This would be a group survival thing. Its what we train for.



Some Details on Plan C

In case of absolutely miserable conditions, such as continuous rain or extremely strong winds we are planning on doing the cook out and campout at Pecan Park (512-392-6171) in San Marcos. Tom Goynes has granted the Alamo City Rivermen a Temporary Special Dispensation on the Wine Grog since it involves Acts of God in conjunction with water and wine. The decision to move the location to Pecan Park will be made at FM 969 about 10:30 AM by all paddlers present on January 28, Saturday morning.

Optional Sunday Brunch the next day. Bring your own breakfast and contribute to the community breakfast.

Where to Meet and When

Meet at Hwy 969 and the Colorado River at 9:00 am, Saturday, January 28. We will unload canoes and then coordinate to run small group vehicular shuttles of 2 to 3 vehicles. Some one will be passing out maps showing where the takeout point in Bastrop. You can run your own shuttle or coordinate with anyone you can find to make the return shuttle back to the put in. Neal Cook of Cooks Canoe will also be running a shuttle at 10 dollars per person.

Note be extra careful on running the shuttle on hwy 71. The traffic has become extremely heavy and congested in the last couple years. Take your time but try not to waste time. Unload your boat as quickly as possible and then move out of the launch area. Hint: Some people arrive around 8:00 am.

Someone will be collecting the money at the put in while we are running the shuttles, otherwise you can pay your money on the island.



When all dutch ovens & cooking ingredients are evenly loaded among the canoes we will depart. I would like to launch around 11:00 AM. Plan on stopping and having a short lunch break at 12:00 PM. We should arrive at the island between 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM.

Once we arrive at the island I need help with the following critical items:

- 1. Immediately bring your dutch ovens, dutch oven stacks, and food items to the cooking area so we can start getting dinner ready. Only then set up your tent.**
- 2. We need to get a fire going to have a heat source for browning the meat. This is why we need the stacks.**
- 3. We need cutters to help with cutting up vegetables and making up dishes for each dutch oven. The sooner it gets cut and cooking, the sooner we eat.**
- 4. We need to get the wine grog heated up and on line, as it is critical to morale. The sooner it is sooner, then it will seem sooner.**

And Now for the No-Shows

Every year I have a few no shows. Depending on how many, we may have too much food and too little money. For those who have been reliable, your verbal RSVP is OK, but if you are new or are in that exclusive circle of no-shows, I may require a full, non-refundable deposit on your total party. Of course, there's keel-hauling

Your active and positive participation is what always makes this a very different and fun trip.

For further info contact Gib Hafernack @ 210-492-7517 or Gibguy at Compuserve dot com

-o0o-

In the Heart of the Big Thicket

Nedra Foster

(Editor's Note: Nedra Foster is a Licensed State Land Surveyor, of which there are fewer than 100 in the state. Having become acquainted with her when I worked for the Texas General Land Office, I asked if she would consent to reproducing this article in this newsletter. This is her account of survey work associated with creating the Big Thicket National Preserve. I have edited for length, mostly cutting out the more technical surveying discussion. If anyone wants the full article, let me know. I have it in pdf format.)

The most interesting project I've ever worked on began with the question, "Are you sure you want to be a part of this? It will be hot, dirty work and long hours!" Indeed, it lived up to its billing, even adding a few of the usual snake experiences for good measure. Our mission was to survey 82 miles of the beautiful Big Sandy and Village creeks, which wind their way through the lush, semi-tropical climate of Southeast Texas and range from 20 to over 200 feet in width. The area is a major source of recreation for residents of the region—offering fishing, canoeing, swimming and sunbathing, all in a setting that includes one of the world's most biologically diverse ecosystems.

It had long been a dream of Texas Congressman Charles Wilson to include a corridor adjoining Village Creek in the Big Thicket National Preserve. His dream finally came to fruition in 1993 after legislative battles that spanned seven years.

82 Miles of Back Line

A corridor approximately one-quarter mile on each side of the creeks and extending through Hardin, Tyler, and Polk Counties was to be included in the National Park System. It begins at the mouth at the Neches River and extends up into Polk County. Tracts belonging to private citizens at that time would be excluded from the park. Timber companies owned the remaining lands and were willing to work out a land swap with the U. S. Forest Service. To determine exact tract sizes, we had to determine the creek boundary, as well as the lines extending back. The Cadastral/Geographic Sciences Division of the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, supplied



crews to survey the 82 miles of back line, which in some places strongly resembled tropical jungle. The department was also responsible for establishing the first-order surveying control from which everyone worked.

In Texas, the state retains ownership navigable stream beds. Land rights may have been granted by any of four different governments: Spain, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, and the State of Texas. The early Spanish influence still prevails, with the result that Texas has a metes and bounds system instead of the more common U. S. Public Land System. And beginning under Spanish law, the sovereign retained ownership of stream beds. Darrell Shine, a noted water boundary surveyor, was chosen to perform the gradient boundary survey.

The gradient boundary is a method of determining water boundaries that is unique to Texas. The boundary was determined from seven qualified banks scattered throughout the project. The banks met the characteristics set out by Colonel Arthur Stiles, who developed the gradient boundary method of surveying water boundaries in 1923. A

datum was established on the creek in 1993, when it was at a very low stage and had been flowing at a stable level for a week. Benchmarks were set at each point where we planned to set a gauge. When we were ready to begin the project, simple gauges were constructed from two-by-fours and old tapes, then installed at each location on a common datum. This enabled us to read the gauge in the vicinity of our work and to use the flowing water as the datum for meander shots on the gradient boundary. For example, we knew that gradient boundary on the gauges was 4.25. If the water was flowing at 4.00, then meander shots would need to be 0.25 feet above the water surface.

159 Miles of Meander Lines

When faced with the formidable task of meandering 159 miles of creek bank, Shine began to research available technology with the goals of accuracy, speed, and ease of operation. He wanted GPS equipment but needed models that would operate in dense vegetation. The Big Thicket is aptly named; there was dense foliage over the entire project. After testing various products, he found that Trimble Navigation's Pro XL System could operate under the canopy with sub-meter results. For the creek meanders, this level of accuracy was acceptable; but all incoming property lines were established as first-order positions.

Laser Coupled With GPS

Coupled with the GPS, we chose the Criterion Laser Walkabout. It operates with a laser that, when aimed at a solid surface and using proprietary software, gives azimuth, distance, slope, etc. This let us set up in one spot (often in the middle of the creek) and choose the meander points to depict the sinuosities of the stream.

The weakest feature of the laser equipment was the magnetic azimuth, which had a digital readout to one-tenth of a degree. We found it to be sensitive to metal attractions. This was not a significant problem on this project due to the rural setting. Any metal present was usually being worn by the people. On measurements of 100 feet or less, it made practically no difference. On measurements of several hundred feet, it would make some difference.

Magnetic azimuth was adjusted to read grid azimuth. Since the project lay mainly in an east/west direction, grid azimuths were adjusted throughout the project.



The laser gun measures to any solid surface—such as a twig, leaf, or limb—so it was important to be sure the shot had no obstructions between the laser and the target. Though this instrument will read up to 1,500 feet, it was sometimes difficult to discern small obstructions on long shots, so we kept meander shots short.

9,632 Meander Points

We began just below the Alabama Coushatta Indian Reservation, from which the waterway derived its early name, Big Alabama. As time passed, the same creek was called Big Sandy on the upper end and Village Creek on the



lower end. No one seemed to be sure where the dividing line was between the two, and it was unclear on the quad sheets. Shine settled the question for posterity, setting the line at the intersection of Kimble Creek.

The water boundaries measured 159 miles, including both banks, and required 9,632 meander points (not to mention the shots on control points, survey corners, etc.) The creek meanders were accomplished between February and July 1996 in 89 field days. Luckily the weather cooperated. Even so, that this amount of work was completed in this time by two people required a plan and the new technologies used. The project was mapped at a scale of 1" = 1,000' and covered eight 24" X 36" map sheets, with eight additional sheets for listing the creek meanders.

This project involved the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, three timber companies, real estate appraisers, and private sector surveyors. Any time this many federal agencies and private sector entities are involved in a project, there's room for contention and delay. But once past the legislative process, this project proceeded with notable smoothness and speed. The addition of this beautiful creek into our National Park System should be a source of pride and gratification for everyone.

-o0o-



**YOU FORGOT HIS
LIFE JACKET.....**

Alamo City Rivermen Mileage Log Sheet

Date: _____ River: _____ Put in: _____ Take Out: _____

Estimated Miles: _____ Comments: _____

Date: _____ River: _____ Put in: _____ Take Out: _____

Estimated Miles: _____ Comments: _____

Date: _____ River: _____ Put in: _____ Take Out: _____

Estimated Miles: _____ Comments: _____

Date: _____ River: _____ Put in: _____ Take Out: _____

Estimated Miles: _____ Comments: _____

Date: _____ River: _____ Put in: _____ Take Out: _____

Estimated Miles: _____ Comments: _____

Date: _____ River: _____ Put in: _____ Take Out: _____

Estimated Miles: _____ Comments: _____

Date: _____ River: _____ Put in: _____ Take Out: _____

Estimated Miles: _____ Comments: _____

Date: _____ River: _____ Put in: _____ Take Out: _____

Estimated Miles: _____ Comments: _____

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