

CHIHUAHUAN DESERT RESEARCH INSTITUTE

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

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FEBRUARY THROUGH OCTOBER, 2011

P.O. BOX 905  
FORT DAVIS, TX 79734

# PLANNING

**Goal: Take a close look at our operations and programs through the planning process to identify strengths, weaknesses, and develop strategies to take CDRI to the next level.**

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## STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETINGS

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Using the material produced during the board retreat in January, Suzette Ashworth, Martha Hansen, and Cathryn Hoyt met twice to refine the ideas presented and develop a written strategic plan. The process was interrupted by the fires, special events, and construction projects but resumed again in October.

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## INTERVIEW WITH ARCHITECTS

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In late September, Facility Subcommittee members Larry Francell, Martha Hansen, Martha Latta, and Cathryn Hoyt interviewed four architectural teams that expressed interest in our Request for Qualifications concerning the design of our new building. The teams included:

- Tom Greenwood/Mike Green of Alpine and Marfa
- Alvidrez Architecture, El Paso
- GGO Architects, Dallas
- Rhotenberry-Wellen Architects, Midland

All are well-qualified for the project, making the decision very difficult. We are waiting the formal response to the RFQ (which is due October 28) and will choose an architect by November 18<sup>th</sup>. The architect will then begin working with CDRI staff, board, and stakeholders to develop a conceptual plan and preliminary budget for the building so that we can put together fundraising materials and launch the capital campaign.

# INFRASTRUCTURE

**Goal: To provide appropriate, safe, attractive facilities for researchers, visitors, staff, collections, and programs.**

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## FREEZE, FIRE, & FLOOD

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FREEZE (FEBRUARY 2 THROUGH FEBRUARY 15)

A severe freeze occurred in February, dropping temperatures into the single to negative digits. In addition, high winds kept the wind chill at -20 to -23°F. Numerous plants in the garden and on the Nature Center property suffered damage (see a full report of freeze damage loss in the horticulture section of this report).

By February 2 the water system had frozen, resulting in closure of the Visitors' Center for several days. When temperatures rose above freezing, burst pipes were discovered in the pressure pump house, in the botanical gardens, and seals in the wellhouse were broken resulting in flooding.

Unexpected expenses were incurred because of numerous visits from plumbers to repair leaks as they appeared. In addition, the pressure pump near the Visitors' Center ran dry for too long and burned up. Volunteer Reid Farley helped purchase and then install the new pump. This pump kept shorting out and having to be manually reset. Reid eventually rewired the pumphouse building and replaced a fitting on the new pump. The water system was fully operational by mid-April.

#### FIRE (APRIL 9)

On the afternoon of April 9<sup>th</sup>, a fire started in Marfa and swept towards Fort Davis. At approximately 8:30 p.m. the fire jumped Highway 118 and burned the grasslands on the north side of the CDRI road from the highway to the back fence line. None of the buildings, botanical gardens, or hiking trails were damaged.

Emergency response to the fire included:

- Fire lines bulldozed around buildings and the mining exhibit by crews from the U.S. Forest Service.
- Half of the cactus collection moved to a safe haven in Alpine.
- Removal of the back-up drive to the server.
- Hard wiring the generator into the pump house so that it could be used to power the water system. This task was undertaken by volunteers Reid Farley and A.J. Skinner the morning after the fire.

The fire burned the north fence line. Jessica Glasscock coordinated a group of volunteers to replace the corner post and install t-posts in critical areas to prop the fence up. Joe Duncan spoke with Curtis Evans about completing the fence repairs. We were to purchase the t-posts and the work crew from Evans' ranch would install the posts. This was not done until August when a flood knocked the fence down and cattle from the ranch moved to the CDRI.

A request for reimbursement of the fencing materials was submitted to the Jeff Davis County Relief Fund on July 18<sup>th</sup>.

#### FLOOD (AUGUST 13)

The rains have been slow in coming this year, but the day it rained, it poured. Without good ground cover to hold the water in place, the grasslands flooded. With approximately 45 minutes of heavy rain, the stock tank filled with water, poured over the spillway of the earthen dam, and created a river approximately 25 ft. wide flowing to the highway.

Water washed over the entrance road in several places, and water running alongside the road downcut through the caliche to a depth of about 8 inches. Large caliche cobbles washed onto the road. After the floods subsided, summer intern Mark Foreman shoveled and swept the caliche off the road and repaired areas where the flooding undercut the asphalt.

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## NEW CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

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### RECEPTION AREA REMODEL

Visitors entering the Visitors' Center were often confused. Because of the design of the atrium and entrance, a visitor could not see where to go once they entered the building and weren't greeted by CDRI staff or volunteers. In the fall of 2010, we were fortunate to have a professional cabinetmaker come to the CDRI looking for volunteer work. As he got to know how the CDRI operated, he noticed the problem with visitors and began working with Cathyn Hoyt and Melissa Brady to design a reception area that would be more visitor-friendly, provide much-needed storage space, and be efficient enough that one person could provide visitors' services and assist people in the gift shop.

Our volunteer, Mark Foreman, produced a set of shop-drawings for the new reception area and sent out requests for bids. We chose Searcy Woodworks in Albuquerque because of the quality of their work and their reasonable bid.

The cabinets were picked up in late May and installed by Mark over a long weekend when the Visitors' Center was scheduled to be closed due to road construction. Once installed, Melissa Brady did a wonderful job rearranging the shop and replacing merchandise that were packed up during the construction process.

The new reception area is a tremendous success.

### CDRI ROAD PAVED

Without the funds or the equipment to maintain it properly, the mile-long road into the Visitors' Center has been a problem for decades. At the February board meeting, funds from the Gloyd Estate were set aside to pave the road. In February, a request for bids was mailed to regional roadwork companies. Two proposals were received and Jarratt Dirt Work and Paving, Inc. was contracted to build the road. Road construction began in late May and was completed in early June. A caliche roadbase was laid, compacted and bladed. The base was primed and covered with asphalt and #3 gravel. This material was then compacted with a 35 ton pneumatic roller.

The cost of the road was \$88,000.

### MAINTENANCE BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

A contract with JBS & Co. of Hermleigh, TX was signed in May, 2011 for the construction of a maintenance building. As per plans, the building is a pre-engineered metal building structure with three offices and a bathroom. Interior covered space is 40 ft. x 48 ft. with a 12 ft., roofed extension on the south side of the building.

Mark Hannon of Nectar Computers installed the phone system and wireless internet in the building. Mark was able to use a relay system that wirelessly interfaces with the system at the Visitors' Center.

CDRI staff spent several weeks cleaning up before construction began. Compost, brick, 55-gallon barrels, and pots were moved below the garden restrooms and over 11,000 lbs of garbage was hauled to the Alpine dump. In addition, a large wood pile near the construction area was removed by Buster Mills as part of the JBS & Co. contract.

Construction was completed on August 31, 2011. The building was paid for with funds from the Gloyd Estate. The budget for the building was \$150,000. Total expenses to date are: \$145,283.23 with all major construction bills paid.

#### OFFICES CONSTRUCTED DOWNSTAIRS

After the reception area remodel was completed, Mark Foreman proposed a way to enclose two offices downstairs. These spaces would provide private offices for the new office manager and volunteer coordinator. Mark designed and installed the office walls and wiring for telephone and internet. Cathryn Hoyt, Blaine Hall, Masa Ohnishi, and Estefana Galindo helped with sanding drywall mud and painting.

This project was not budgeted, but has been needed for years. The total cost of materials was \$2,696.19 (labor was volunteered). Over \$1100 of that cost was to pay Gilbert Valenzuela to attempt to fix the TalkSwitch phone system. An additional \$600 was spent to purchase file cabinets.

#### TRAIL TO THE TOP

With assistance from a Texas Parks and Wildlife trail grant, work continued this spring on the new trail from the Visitors' Center to the geology exhibit on the top of Clayton's Overlook. An AmeriCorp crew spent approximately two weeks under the supervision of Masa Onohishi and volunteer Steve Elfring clearing new trail, installing waterbars, and building retaining walls.

The new trail is much more accessible and opens up new areas of the property for hikers. Additional work to finalize the grant includes the development of interpretive panels at the trail head.

#### PROGRESS MADE ON ENTRANCE DESIGN

Progress was made this summer with the design of a new entrance. Melissa Brady and Mark Foreman worked on the project. The goals are to make the highway entrance more visible and inviting. In addition, a method of promoting CDRI events at the highway is being investigated. This project is budgeted for the 2011 calendar year.

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## INSPECTIONS

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#### CDRI DRAWS GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

This has been the year of government inspections. The inspector from TCEQ spent several hours here investigating the water system approximately two weeks after the freeze. We did not receive any warnings, but were asked to bring our record-keeping system into compliance and to fix various problems related to the freeze. Many of these problems still need to be addressed.

Following the water inspector was an inspector from the Department of Agriculture. He investigated the greenhouse and our propagation program and did not find any problems.

The propane inspector found weeds growing around the propane tank near the greenhouse. The weeds were removed and a report submitted to the Railroad Commission.

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## EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

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**Goal: To acquire and maintain the technology and equipment needed to provide quality, efficient, safe, and effective service.**

### EXPANSION OF WIRELESS INTERNET SYSTEM

Wireless internet is now available throughout the Visitors' Center and in the new maintenance building. Wireless coverage extends into the greenhouse and is available to interns and volunteers camping in trailers on the RV pad near the maintenance building.

### PROBLEMS WITH THE PHONE SYSTEM

Our TalkSwitch phone system continues to be a problem. There seems to be disagreement among the professionals about whether the problem stems from the TalkSwitch software, the lines coming to the building, or the lines within the building (all of which are handled by different entities). Big Bend Telephone checked the incoming lines and determined that there was no problem with them. We've spent several days upgrading the software and working with the TalkSwitch service department and they say that there is no problem with the system. We hired Gilbert Valenzuela to work on the interior lines and the problems got worse. Mark Hannon was then hired to investigate the interior lines and work on the programming of the system. He was able to fix many of the problems we were having.

### NEW XEROX MACHINE

Our contract with Xerox for our photocopier expired in July. We chose to upgrade the machine to one that has the ability to fold and staple in order to decrease expenses related to hand folding and stapling the newsletter and other publications. This decision was influenced by the fact that our borrowed 1940s foot-powered stapler was reclaimed by its owner this summer. New staplers cost approximately \$800 to \$1500.

# PROGRAMS

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## MEMBERSHIP

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**Goal: To recruit new members, retain current members, and provide quality programs and services to all members.**

### MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR RESIGNS

Cynthia McAlister, our membership coordinator since 2008, resigned in March to focus her efforts on finishing her Master's thesis and pursuing a career in entomology. We appreciate her efforts and wish her the best of luck in the future.

### THE FUTURE OF THE MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

We have had difficulty in replacing the membership coordinator. For most of the year, membership was being handled by the Executive Director, a student intern, and the receptionist. This system did not work well. Part of the problem is that the membership database was kept on a program not designed for the task and that is difficult to work with.

After much research, we upgraded our GiftWorks program and added a second license. Giftworks is currently being used to track donations and will now be used to handle membership and volunteer recruitment and documentation. This allows us to track our supporters in a single program. Giftworks will also process labels for bulk mailings.

We will be transitioning from the old membership program to the new program for the rest of the year.

#### MEMBERSHIP MAILOUTS

Mailouts to the members include:

- Green Fire event invitation
- Life-Long Learning Quarterly brochure (1<sup>st</sup> , 2<sup>nd</sup> , and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter)
- Plant sale invitation
- 2010 issue of the *Chihuahuan Desert Discovery*.

#### CDRI JOINS AMERICAN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY'S RECIPROCAL ADMISSIONS PROGRAM

A major member benefit was added this year when the CDRI joined the American Horticultural Society's Reciprocal Admission's program. As part of the program, CDRI members have the opportunity to visit over 200 gardens throughout the U.S., Canada, the Cayman Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands admission free!

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### EDUCATION PROGRAM

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**Goal: Continue to expand the scope and maintain the high quality of our education programs.**

#### EXHIBITS

##### *Mining Exhibit*

Another meeting was held in February with the exhibit designers from MuseumScapes. We revised the original plan that came from the planning meeting held in 2010 to better reflect what could be done with the exhibit. There was general consensus that many of the artifacts needed to be removed from the display and pared down to focus on the following topics:

- Panel I (under proposed shade structure over stone bench): Happy Jack Mine Exploration, Shaft Cross-Section, Exploration Shaft and Windlass, Dynamito
- Panel II: Geology of the Chihuahuan Desert
- Panel III: Geology (Flourescent minerals)
- Panel IV: Assay (Geiger counter activity, scale, ores, and smelting/ingots)
- Panel V: Process (Blasting plungers, blasting caps)
- Panel VI: People (Photos and stories)
- Panel VII: Development (Discovery, Exploration, Operation. Safety, Lighting)
- Panel VIII: Transportation (Chutes, railcars, wagons, railroad)
- Panel IX: Beasts of Burden (Donkey/harness, natural resources needed, photos, illustrations)
- Panel X (under new structure with extended roof): Evolution of mining tools and artifacts that interpret process).

MuseumScapes is now waiting for material to be supplied by CDRI so that they can begin the design work for the panels. Little progress has been made.

### Mining Exhibit Artifacts Cataloged

Board member Linda Roberts spent a week at the CDRI cataloging artifacts from the mining exhibit using a museum program called PastPerfect. Joyce Mussey provided a CD of photographs that can be incorporated into the digital catalog. The digital catalog will greatly enhance our ability to track artifacts, donors, and paperwork associated with having such a large collection.

### *Grass Exhibit*

As part of his summer internship, Mark Foreman began designing the grass exhibit that we've been discussing for several years. He produced a working plan with drawings, researched other locations that had grass exhibits (very few), and looked into the use of Smart Tags on the interpretive panels that would allow smart phone users to access webpages that would have more information about specific grasses.

A small amount of funding is available for the project. With Mark's proposal we can begin to budget out the project and look for major funding.

### *Grassland Bird Exhibit*

Melissa Brady and Cathryn Hoyt designed an exhibit for the Visitors' Center atrium featuring information about grassland bird conservation. The emphasis of the exhibit is on the CDRI's grassland restoration project and the breeding bird surveys being conducted by citizen scientist's Josh Burns and Laura Belkin.

### *Welcome to the CDRI Exhibit*

Melissa Brady designed and hung a new exhibit at the front door that welcomes visitors to the CDRI and provides information about what there is to see and do at the Nature Center. The exhibit features beautiful photographs provided by a number of local photographers.

### *Pollinator Week Exhibit*

In celebration of National Pollinator Week, Melissa Brady developed an exhibit for the hallway that features posters and information about the importance of pollinators and pollinator conservation.

## YOUTH GROUPS

### *Education Programs*

Education Coordinator Jessica Glasscock continues to provide excellent programs to youth groups statewide. During the period of this report she provided programs to the following groups:

- March 11 Royce City High School, 12 students
- March 15 Girl Scouts of San Antonio, 6 students
- March 28 Alpine High School, 21 students
- March 29 Alpine High School, 21 students
- March 30 Alpine High School, 25 students
- April 1 Alpine Pre-School, 88 students
- April 19 St. Marks El Paso, 19 students
- April 27 Montessori Children's Home, Dallas, 20 students
- May 2 Dewey Jr. High, Odessa, 50 students
- May 5 Heritage School, 24 students
- May 6 Midland ISD, 68 students
- May 13 Little Rock, Arkansas Montessori School, 6 students
- May 26 Pecos Jr. High, 38 students
- June 7 Davis Mountains Education Center group, 8 students

- June 16 Alpine Science Camp, 24 students
- June 21 Davis Mountains Education Center group, 20 participants
- June 23 Prude Ranch group, 30 participants
- June 28 Presidio ISD, 32 students
- August 27 Cub Scout Volunteers, 25 scouts and parents
- September 21, St. James Episcopal School, 18 students
- September 14, Pecos 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade (Insect Field Day), 184 students

#### *Mission Possible Nature Challenge*

In conjunction with the Texas Forest Service, the CDRI hosted the West Texas Mission Possible Nature Challenge this year. The goal of the program is to get families to explore the parks and natural areas in the Chihuahuan Desert region. At each location, they are given a “mission” to accomplish with the overall goal being to find the “coolest place in the Chihuahuan Desert.” During their explorations, they keep a journal with descriptions of where they went, photographs, and other documentation of their mission.

Approximately 20 people attended the kickoff event in May and signed up to participate in the program. Unfortunately, only two families returned for the wrap-up event in August. Mission Possible was funded, in part, by a grant from the Texas Parks and Wildlife COOP program. Prizes for the closing program were donated by a number of businesses and parks in the region.

Because of the labor-intensity of the program and the low yield we are unsure whether we will host the program in 2012.

#### *Summer Camps*

Jessica Glasscock held two successful summer camps this year. The Critter Club in June had 9 children aged 3 to 7 and the Desert Rat Club in July had 14 students aged 7 to 14. During the Critter Club, the students participated in field excursions, nature crafts, hands-on reptile and amphibian viewing, and many more nature-inspired activities.

The Desert Rats participated in hummingbird banding with ornithologist Kelly Bryan, field excursions, nature crafts, hands-on reptile and amphibian viewing with herpetologist Buzz Ross, and even got up close and personal with a live bobcat. Our neighbor, Randy Liddell had captured the bobcat in a live-trap and was moving it away from their household. He knew that we had summer camps going on and stopped by to show the children the bobcat.

#### *Insect Field Day (September 14)*

As part of the Outdoor Kids, Outdoor Families, Outdoor Fun program, Jessica designed an Insect Field Day that was attended by 184 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students from Bessie Haynes Elementary School in Pecos. As part of the program, Jessica wrote curriculums for 12 stations and trained 25+ volunteers to help. The stations included:

- Build-A-Bug
- It’s Creepy, It’s Crawly, and Hisses by Golly
- Cricket A la Mode
- Color Me Crazy
- Bizzzzzy Bees Don’t Always Live in Colonies
- Insect Gardens/Seedballs
- Pollination Nation
- My, My What Big Eyes you Have
- Butterflies Alive

- Self Pollination/Greenhouse Tours
- Here’s a Bug, There’s a Bug, Everywhere a Bug, Bug, Bug

Some of the favorite stations included the live hissing cockroaches, the edible insects table, and the butterfly house where the children got to interact with over 50 Painted Ladies.

The program was a great success. The squeals and screams of “Whoa” and “Ewww!” that resounded throughout the Nature Center that day pleased Victor Tarin, principal for Bessie Haynes Elementary Principal in Pecos. “I’m a science guy,” said Mr. Tarin. “So that’s music to my ears.”

The Insect Field Day was funded by a COOP grant from Texas Parks and Wildlife.

#### *The Earth Rocks!!!! (October 11)*

Our 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Earth Rocks!!! event was a huge success. Over 340 schoolchildren from San Antonio, Wink, Alpine, Marfa, Fort Davis, Pecos, and San Vicente ISD attended the event. With the help of dozens of volunteers the children dug for fossils, hiked the upper loop, panned for minerals, painted rock art, made soil, toured the solar system, viewed solar flares and participated in 11 other activities as they explored the theme of “Our Ever-Changing Earth.”

Although the kids may think The Earth Rocks!!! is all about fun, the teachers are impressed by the educational value of the event.

“It taught our students things that we cannot even come close to teaching them in school now that the state has cut the educational budget so much,” said teacher Janay Pasqua from Alpine Middle School. “This provided our Gifted and Talented students an opportunity to be challenged mentally and physically. Each on learned something at each station, and given the opportunity, we would bring them to every program CDRI offers for schools, because they learn so much. But it was fun as well. When a student can have fun while learning, it is my experience in 21 years of teaching, they seem to retain it better.”

#### ADULT GROUPS

We continue to offer guided tours and lectures to adult groups. The following groups were given programs during this reporting period:

- March 16 Rockport Tour Group
- April 19 Leadership Big Bend
- May 13 Little Rock Tour Group
- July 30 McDonald Observatory Board of Visitors
- September 10 Texas Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers group, 44 participants
- August 21 All-day training for Master Naturalist class
- August 25 Lions Club in Fort Davis
- September 9 Lunch and Learn program at Big Bend Regional Hospital

#### LIFE LONG LEARNING

##### *Field Trips*

- Pictographs of Big Bend Ranch State Park (13 participants, 2 staff members, and CDRI Director Blaine Hall as the guide)
- Birding the Devils River (15 participants and three guides—Jessica Glasscock, Dr. Selma Glasscock (Welder Wildlife Foundation), and CDRI Director John Karges.
- International Migratory Bird Day: Alamito Creek Preserve Field Trip (7 participants. Led by Carol Edwards)
- Climbing Mount Livermore (15 participants. Led by John Karges and Chris Pipes)

### *Lectures*

- Black Bears of the Big Bend. Lecture by Raymond Skile, BBNP
- Water Conservation Issues in West Texas (approximately 60 attendees)
- Talks at Two. Presented each day during the Annual Cactus Festival (see Special Events for details)
- Who's Helping Whom? A lecture about native bees and pollination by Dr. Jack Neff. Program held during National Pollinator Week.
- Recent Taxonomic Changes Relating to the Chihuahuan Desert Herpetofauna by Dr. Jerry Johnson, UTEP (approximately 20 attendees).

### *Workshops and Demonstrations*

- International Migratory Bird Day (May 14). Activities included: hummingbird banding with Kelly Bryan, a birdhouse construction workshop, and a beginners birding tour of the botanical garden.
- Hummingbird Banding (August 6 and 20; September 10 and 24)

### *Tours*

- Guided tours of the botanical gardens and the mining exhibit were given on May 7<sup>th</sup> in celebration of National Public Garden Day.

### *Summer Night Programs*

On Saturday nights in July, we kept the Nature Center open until midnight for night-time hikes and stargazing. Approximately 68 people took advantage of this opportunity to explore Modesta Canyon in the dark and learn about the stars from David Oesper and the Big Bend Astronomical Society. Guided hikes were led by CDRI staff members Masa Ohnishi, Mark Foreman and Master Naturalist volunteer Randy Ersch.

### SPECIAL EVENTS

#### *Cactus and Succulent Festival*

The Annual Cactus and Succulent Festival was extended over a seven-day period in March this year. Activities and special publications included:

- Daily guided hikes at 10:00 a.m.
- Labeled ethnobotany trail, ethnobotany exhibit in the Visitors' Center, and an interpretive ethnobotany brochure.
- Snack food made with cactus products.
- Book signing with Ad & Gertrud Konings.
- Talks at Two (short lectures given by staff and CDRI Board Member Jennifer Jordan)
  - Native Bees (given twice)
  - Welcome to the Desert (given twice)
  - Chihuahuan Desert Cacti
  - Adaptations to the Desert
  - Cochineal
- Garden Walks (each day following the Talk at Two)
- Ethnobotany demonstrations with Reeda Peel

Plants for the sale portion of the festival were grown in the CDRI greenhouse and purchased from Patty Manning at Sul Ross State University and Mesa Gardens in New Mexico.

*Texas Premier of Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time* (April 9)

The CDRI hosted the Texas premier of *Green Fire*, a film about legendary environmentalist Aldo Leopold. The event was sponsored by Birds in Flight and the Thinking Like A Mountain Foundation. Ironically, the screening was held at the Crowley Theatre in Marfa the night that the Rock House fire burned. Even with the fires, approximately 40 people attended the Marfa showing.

Many people were unable to make it to Marfa, so a second showing was held at Sul Ross State University on April 19. Dr. Patricia Harveson arranged for a room to be made available for us in the Natural Resources building on campus. Approximately 50 people attended the second showing.

Income (including sponsorships, ticket sales, book sales, and in-kind contribution for food): \$3,942

Expenses (including movie rights, bartender, sound man, & advertising): \$3,770

Net profit: \$172

*To BBQ or Not to BBQ?*

The annual member's BBQ and fundraising auction was originally scheduled for August 6<sup>th</sup>. Due to our being extremely short-staffed, we sent out a call for help and held a planning meeting for the BBQ in late June. Only two people came to the meeting. After some discussion, we decided to postpone the BBQ until a later date. Our decision was based on:

- Fire danger. At that point, the area was still extremely dry and we were still under a fire ban.
- Lack of community support. Jennifer Jordan and Cathryn Hoyt had been talking to local merchants and supporters about auction items. Few people would commit to providing an auction item because sales were down for the year and money tight.
- Feeling of donor exhaustion. In the months leading up to the BBQ, donors had been asked to give, give, give.

#### TEACHERS WORKSHOPS

*Conservation Across Boundaries 2011*

Hosted in conjunction with Dr. Selma Glasscock of the Welder Wildlife Foundation, the West Texas Conservation Across Boundaries (CAB) program took place in June and July this year. CAB is designed to teach educators how natural resource conservation issues are tightly linked to the biology, ecology, history, and culture of North American landscapes. Thirty-one teachers from the Texas A&M University/Corpus Christi Region 2 Science Collaborative started their CAB experience by traveling to the Davis Mountains where they stayed at the Mitre Peak Girl Scout Camp. During their week here, they visited the CDRI, Davis Mountains State Park, Balmorhea State Park, and Mims Ranch. Presenters included Dr. Selma Glasscock, Mandy Corso, Jessica Glasscock, Cathryn Hoyt, Robert Potts, Mark Lockwood, and David Oesper.

In July, the second half of the CAB program took place in south Texas. Based out of the Welder Wildlife Foundation near Sinton, 38 teachers participated in activities such as aquatic sampling, vegetation sampling, bird identification, soil analysis, herp trapping, small mammal trapping, and many more ecology-related activities. Presenters include Dr. Selma Glasscock, Dr. Terry Blankenship, Mandy Corso, Ashley Whaley, Liz Bates, Sarah Kahlich, Steven Goertz, and Jessica Glasscock.

#### NATURE NOTES

The Meadows Foundation/Dixon Water Foundation funding for NATURE NOTES, our weekly radio program broadcast on Marfa Public Radio ended on May 31. Megan Wilde, our NATURE NOTES writer, editor, and producer and CDRI staff were able to compile enough completed scripts to take the program through mid-August.

Since February, 28 episodes of NATURE NOTES were written and produced. Our writers (and number of scripts produced) include:

- Megan Wilde (10)
- Cathryn Hoyt (4)
- Kay Wilde (2)
- Melissa Brady (2)
- Jessica Glasscock (2)
- Martha Hansen (2)
- John Seebach (1)
- Mark Foreman (1)
- Anne Marie Hilscher (1)

*Future of Nature Notes*

After four years of producing weekly scripts for NATURE NOTES, we have decided to step back from the program. The Dixon Water Foundation has offered funding for the 2012 year, but Megan Wilde, our writer, has a new baby girl and is unable to put more than 15 hours a week into the program. Last year, she was working 40 to 60 hours a week to research and write the program, capture digital interviews and sound bites, and produce the program at the radio station. With our current workload, no additional CDRI staff members are available to pick up the extra hours.

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**HORTICULTURE PROGRAM**

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**Goal: Further develop the Living Plant Collection and gardens so that they are attractive and informative for visitors, accessible to researchers, and meet the standards specified in the CDRI's Plant Collections Policy.**

PLANT SALE (APRIL 22 AND 23)

We had an uninspired plant sale this year. Three major events—the freeze, the fires, and the drought—had an impact on the sale. The February freeze affected many of our growers resulting in fewer plants of poorer quality. The fires were also still burning during plant sale weekend, causing people to be hesitant about putting in landscape plants. But the greatest impact was felt when deer, porcupine, and other creatures came past the barriers and up on the porch to strip the leaves from the trees and nibble the tender forbs down to the soil line in the pots.

PLANT SALE WEEKEND	2011	2010
<b>Income</b>		
Cactus	229	979
Plants	10,604	11,041
Memberships	425	400
Shop Sales	863	950
<i>Subtotal for weekend</i>	12,121	13,370
Plants sold after the sale weekend	2450	920
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>14,571</b>	<b>14,290</b>
Expenses		
Plants		

Mountain States	4370	1469
Sul Ross State University	510	632
Plants of the Southwest	527	
Native Ornamentals	1248	2058
Native Texas Nursery	3128	2071
Food	154	
Marketing	600	772
Sign materials	139	150
Staff time	3887	4300
<i>Total expenses for weekend</i>	<b>14,563</b>	<b>11,452</b>
<b>Net for Plant Sale</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2,838</b>

#### *Materials Produced for Plant Sale*

Melissa Brady and Cathryn Hoyt worked on several publications for plant sale. These include:

- Plant Sale Catalog (full-color with images and growing information about each type of plant being sold)
- Plant Sale Mailer (list of plants sent to our members)
- Pdf of plant sale list posted to our website
- E-newsletter sent out after the plant sale advertising plants that were left after the sale weekend.

#### YANK AND YAK

Susan Penney has successfully revived the Yank and Yak crew of volunteer gardeners. Each Thursday morning, approximately 7 volunteers come out for two hours to help weed the gardens and maintain the living plant collection. The gardens are greatly benefiting from their efforts.

#### VOLUNTEER HELP IN THE GREENHOUSE

Jimmy and Ann Black of the San Antonio Cactus and Xerophyte Society spent two weekends early this spring helping to clean up the greenhouse, repot, and prune plants. They trained Cathryn Hoyt and Mark Foreman in preparing soil mixes and potting techniques.

#### DIRECTOR OF HORTICULTURE SOUGHT

Following the departure of Marc Goff—our head gardener for many years—the decision was made to hire a Director of Horticulture that could develop the gardens into a well-respected research and display garden. Applicants were sought nation-wide through the American Public Garden Association, Texas Nonprofits, and other websites.

A number of applicants were interviewed by phone and then short-listed. The people on the short list were brought to Fort Davis for a formal interview with their way being paid by the CDRI. Dr. Philip Gonsiska of Wisconsin was offered the job but turned it down because he did not want to live in such a rural area. Clayton Newberry of Arizona was then offered the job, but he decided that he didn't want to leave his extended family in Arizona.

Due to increasing budget restraints, we decided to seek a head gardener and work up to a Director of Horticulture in the future. Susan Penney accepted the head gardener position and began working in August but after several months in the position has decided that she would prefer to take on responsibility for membership and volunteer coordination. We will again be looking for a head gardener.

#### NEW PLANTS ADDED TO THE GARDEN

Two Texas Pistache (*Pistacea texana*) trees were added to the botanical gardens early this summer. Both trees were large boxed trees purchased for the plant sale in April. Unfortunately, the night before the sale, the deer stripped them of all their leaves and buyers were not interested in paying the amount being charged. After planting in the garden, one tree is doing well, the other is resprouting from the ground.

Steve and Valerie Lewis of Native Plant Ornamentals donated a quaking aspen tree (*Populus tremuloides*) to the gardens. This tree was planted near the pine grove and is doing moderately well.

#### PROBLEMS IN THE GARDEN

##### *February Freeze*

The extreme freeze in February caused problems with the living plant collection. Many of the legumes (such as the huisache, white thorn acacia, kidneywood etc.) had to be pruned down to the ground. The good news is that many of them are resprouting.

The greatest loss occurred in the greenhouse. Even with the heaters running, temperatures dropped too low for many plants. Masa Ohnishi prepared a report of the plants that died, were in serious condition, or severely damaged.

- Dead adults: 26
- Dead immature cacti: 19
- Serious condition: 3
- Damaged (damaged tips with purple coloration but have healthy meristems and ribs): 35

##### *Drought Damage?*

Additional problems include the death of three madrones in the gardens. We're not sure of the cause of death but it may be related to the drought (and not watering deep enough) or a thick layer of hot compost that was laid around the roots. The leaves of the plants quickly dried up, turning brown but staying on the trees for months afterward. I've been told that this problem with madrones is occurring throughout the region, so it may not be due to the application of too much compost fertilizer.

#### WORK BEGINS ON THE IRRIGATION SYSTEM

Susan Penney, Mark Foreman, and Masa Ohnishi began working on the irrigation system this summer. The system, as installed, is inefficient and in need of major repairs. A knife had been used to cut slits in the delivery system tubing to deliver water--sometimes to individual plants, other times to no plant at all. This results in uneven application of water to plants along the line. Many plants, placed in the garden within the last few years, did not have irrigation lines laid to them when planted and need to be hand watered.

The goal is to begin to gradually reinstall the irrigation system with the proper type of hoses and emitter systems. Long stretches of line will be buried to protect it from sun and freezing temperatures while emitters at each plant will be left on the surface in order to monitor water delivery and have access to the emitters for repairs.

Susan is also starting to cover exposed lines with wood-chip mulch obtained from the Alpine Recycle Center. This will improve the appearance and retain moisture in the ground.

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## RESEARCH & CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

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**Goal: Actively promote, facilitate, and support research in the Chihuahuan Desert region.**

### BIRD SURVEYS

#### *Quarterly Counts*

Citizen scientists and CDRI staff participate in regular bird surveys throughout the year. All data is publicly accessible on the eBird website. During this report period, the following counts took place:

- February 19 Great Backyard Bird Count
- May 14 International Migratory Bird Day
- September 24 Fall Bird Count

#### *Grassland Bird Transect*

Are our efforts on grassland restoration having an effect on overwintering grassland birds? This question was the theme of a paper produced by SRSU student Mark Foreman for his graduate course in ornithology. Beginning in January, Mark began conducting weekly bird counts along an established transect through the center of the grasslands. His research question changed slightly when the fire of April 9<sup>th</sup> burned through the grasslands reducing all grass cover and juniper slash piles to ash. A paper with the results of his study is on file at the CDRI.

#### *Breeding Bird Survey*

Volunteers Josh Burns and Laura Belkin and CDRI staff members Cathryn Hoyt and Mark Foreman began the Breeding Bird Survey in May. This survey is conducted every fourth day throughout the breeding season. Singing or nesting birds are mapped using a GPS, rangefinder, and compass. This information, along with species counts help to determine species density, and territorial patterns.

Unfortunately, due to the loss of cover during the fire and to the extremely dry conditions, breeding activity diminished quickly. By early June, few—if any—birds were singing and the survey was discontinued until the start of the rainy season. Which never arrived. By early September less than 3 inches of precipitation had fallen at the Nature Center.

### BUTTERFLY RESEARCH

#### *Butterfly Recovery in a Burned Grassland*

The James A. “Buddy” Davidson Charitable Foundation provided almost \$8,000 in funding to conduct a study of butterfly and plant recovery in the burned portion of the Nature Center grasslands.

The objective of the study is to determine how the butterfly community and vegetation composition change in response to a wildfire. To date, 13 100-meter transects have been established in the burned and unburned grasslands. Data on vegetation—including biomass, species, proportion of grasses to forbs, and canopy cover—is currently being collected. Butterfly surveys are conducted weekly.

#### *Pollard Transects*

Weekly butterfly counts began in January and have continued through the summer. The counts take place along a 2.5 mile transect that starts at the Visitors’ Center and loops up to Clayton’s Overlook, down into the canyon, and through the botanical gardens. The species and number of butterflies are counted along with data such as host plant selection and nectaring choices. The Pollard protocol is used for the counts.

#### *Citizen Science Events*

In addition to the weekly Pollard transects, CDRI staff and volunteer citizen scientists conducted two regional butterfly counts on March 12 and July 1. These counts include the Nature Center, the town of Fort Davis, and extend into the mountains as far as the Observatory. Based on protocols established by the North American Butterfly Association, all count data is submitted online to the NABA database.

#### *Imperiled Butterfly Conservation and Management Workshop*

Cathryn Hoyt attended the final IBCM workshop in June this year. The workshop, sponsored by the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum in Chicago, covered topics such as using fire as a conservation tool for restoring butterfly habitat and the components of a recovery plan for at-risk species.

The Chicago workshop was the culmination of a 3-year program that was funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and coordinated by the Florida Museum of Natural History's McGuire Center for Lepidoptera and Biodiversity. Twenty-five individuals from across the United States and Canada were chosen to participate in the program. Week-long workshops were held in Toledo, Ohio; Gainesville, Florida; Miami, Florida; Portland, Oregon; San Diego, California, and Chicago.

#### *Images and Sightings Accepted*

Images and data collected during the various butterfly counts have been accepted for inclusion on the Butterflies and Moths of North America website. BAMONA is an ambitious effort to collect, store, and share species information and occurrence data for butterflies and moths across North America. However, data for the northern Chihuahuan Desert is scarce. The efforts of CDRI staff and volunteers will help fill that data gap.

#### JUNIPER SURVEY

Juniper trees are turning brown across Texas. Whether due to the February freeze, the drought, or the high temperatures, the junipers appear to be dying. In order to document these phenomena as it happens, summer interns Mark Foreman and Estefana Galindo mapped the dead or dying junipers on the Nature Center property.

Mark will analyze the data this fall using GIS to look for patterns to the die-off. Are the affected plants of a certain age class? Do they grow on certain soil types? Are trees growing on south-facing slopes more affected than those on north-facing slopes?

#### STUDENT RESEARCH

##### *Student Groups Visit the Nature Center*

Several university groups visited the Nature Center recently. These include:

- Dr. Chris Ritzzi's entomology class from Sul Ross State University
- Dr. Jackie Denson's microbial ecology class from Sul Ross State University
- Dr. Van Auken's desert ecology class from University of Texas at San Antonio

##### *Hydrology Project*

In fulfillment of a hydrology class requirement, SRSU graduate student Mark Foreman produced a report on the feasibility of restoring the stock tank in the grasslands of the Nature Center. The report included a map of the drainage basin, an estimate of the amount of water the tank could hold, suggestions for improving the tank so that it would hold water for longer periods, and a budget. The report is on file at the Nature Center.

##### *Draft of Thesis on Bees of the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center Submitted*

SRSU student Cynthia McAlister submitted a draft of her thesis on the bees of the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center. This research project is a product of the What's The Buzz: Pollinators of the

Northern Chihuahuan Desert project conducted in 2006 and 2007 and funded by the CDRI and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

#### *Recovery from Fire Studies*

The fire through our northern grasslands provided numerous opportunities for students. Ongoing studies include:

- Vegetation transects on the burned and unburned portions of the grasslands
- Comparison of bee diversity and density in the burned grassland and botanical gardens.
- Return of bird species to a burned grassland.
- Butterfly recovery.
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## MANAGEMENT

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### STAFFING AND BENEFITS

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**Goal: to attract and retain qualified paid and volunteer staff for all services and activities.**

#### AMERICORP VOLUNTEERS ASSIST WITH TRAIL BUILDING

A collaborative project between the Fort Davis National Historic Site, the Nature Conservancy, and the CDRI led to an AmeriCorp team being assigned to the Fort Davis area. The crew was housed at the TNC's Davis Mountains Preserve and traveled to various worksites.

They spent two weeks at the Nature Center (April 4 through April 18) working primarily on the TPWD-funded Trail to the Top project. Under the supervision of Masa Ohnishi and volunteer Steve Elfring the crew broke new trail, and built water bars and retaining walls along the trail.

Several crew members had fire experience and were able to help local fire crews when the Rock House fire burned through the area.

Chris Pipes of The Nature Conservancy served as the chief liaison with AmeriCorp, arranged to have the crew housed at no cost to the partners at the Davis Mountains Preserve, and coordinated compilation of the original grant application and the follow-up reports. We are extremely grateful to Chris for all the work that he did to make this project happen. The crew of 11 put in approximately 1200 hours of work at the CDRI—an in-kind contribution valued at \$24,578.

#### STAFF RESIGNATIONS

##### *Melissa Brady*

Melissa Brady announced her resignation early this summer. After many years in various positions at the CDRI, Melissa decided to return to school and work on a graduate degree in psychology. Her goal is to open a hospice center in Alpine that incorporates her interest in interpretation. During her tenure at the CDRI, Melissa greatly improved the quality of the gift shop. Her thoughtfulness and skills as a graphic artist will be greatly missed. We wish her the best of luck with her future career.

##### *Cynthia McAlister*

After approximately two years as our volunteer and membership coordinator, Cynthia McAlister resigned at the end of March to focus on finishing her Master's thesis and pursuing her career as an entomologist. She has a passion for native bees and a gift for interpretation and teaching. We wish her the best of luck with her new career track.

### *Masa Obnishi*

After a three-year break from school while working for the CDRI, Masa returned to Sul Ross this fall to work on a graduate degree in Range Management. Masa first came to the CDRI as a summer intern and then continued working as a gardener, special projects manager, and general go-to person. His goal is to acquire a Ph.D. and return to Japan to work on wildlife issues in his home country.

### NEW HIRES

#### *Summer Interns*

Three students—Mark Foreman, Estefana Galindo, and Nate Armstrong—were hired during the summer to assist with a wide variety of tasks.

Mark Foreman worked on a number of construction and research projects, the grassland exhibit, wrote a grant proposal, assisted in the garden, and assisted with a variety of education programs. Mark is staying on through the fall, exchanging 10 hours of work per week for a place to put his RV. This arrangement provides the CDRI with 24-hour care of the landsite.

Estefana Galindo worked primarily in the botanical gardens weedeating, pruning, and watering. She also assisted Jessica with the summer camps, delved into the intricacies of the TalkSwitch phone system, and assisted with various research projects.

Nathan Armstrong was hired in the spring with funding from the Texas COOP grant. His job was to coordinate the Mission Possible Nature Challenge and to help put together an educational program focusing on pollinators. Unfortunately, Nate had a family emergency and had to return home for the summer.

#### *Permanent Staff Positions*

Two new positions were hired this summer. Dianna Lannom accepted the job of office manager. She assists with the day-to-day administration of the office, manages the gift shop, and supervises office personnel.

Susan Penney joined us in August as the head gardener and volunteer coordinator. Susan has a degree in horticulture and a love of native plants. She has reinvigorated the Yank and Yak volunteer crew (see Horticulture section above) and is working to develop her volunteer contacts.

Megan Wilde briefly rejoined the CDRI staff as our public outreach person. She worked on maintaining and improving the website, maintaining a digital presence on FaceBook and other social media, and preparing press releases about events and happenings at the CDRI. She was initially scheduled to work approximately 15 hours per week, but found that being a new mother was more challenging than she thought it would be and that even working 15 hours per week was too much. She resigned in late October.

#### *Positions Available*

We are in the process of hiring additional positions. These include a part-time groundskeeper/maintenance person and a head gardener.

### EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

The employee handbook was updated and distributed to staff.

### STAFF AND BOARD DEVELOPMENT

*West Texas Rural Philanthropy Conference (June 8 through 10)*

CDRI Executive Director Cathryn Hoyt and Board Members Martha Hansen, Martha Latta, and Sal Salazar attended the West Texas Rural Philanthropy Conference in June. The conference included a series of lectures on grantwriting, technology for rural nonprofits, the relationship between the board and the executive director, marketing basics, and accountability indicators. The second day was reserved for roundtable discussions in which various organizations were given a short amount of time to pitch project and funding needs to specific funders. Interest in funding of a LEED certified building was expressed by two foundations.

*Range, Brush, and Beef Cattle Workshop*

Summer intern Mark Foreman attended the Range, Brush, and Beef Cattle Workshop at Sul Ross State University this summer.

*Rural Philanthropy Follow-Up Meetings*

Following the Rural Philanthropy conference in June, a group of staff and directors of local nonprofits decided to continue with the exchange of information through informal luncheons held monthly. Three lunches have been held to date: one at the Humane Society, the second at the CDRI, and the third at the Jeff Davis County library.

The lunches are an opportunity to network and exchange ideas. To date, Cathryn Hoyt and Susan Penney have been attending the meetings.

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## RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

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**Goal: To acquire stable, broad-based financial and non-financial resources to support the programs and growth envisioned in this strategic plan.**

**CAPITAL CAMPAIGN**

New life has been breathed into the capital campaign. Two subcommittees were created to focus on fundraising and the design of the new building.

*Design of the education/research building*

A subcommittee consisting of Larry Francell (chair), Joe Duncan, Martha Hansen, Martha Latta, Vic Morgan, Cathryn Hoyt, and Tom Bruner was created to focus on selection of an architect and development of plans and a construction budget for the new building.

Larry Francell produced a Request for Qualifications that was sent to 5 regional architectural firms. Preliminary interviews are being scheduled for September. Phase I for this committee is to select an architect and work with them to produce plans, schematic drawings, and a rough order of magnitude budget for our fundraising plan and materials.

*Fundraising*

A subcommittee to coordinate the fundraising aspect of the capital campaign was formed under the leadership of Robert Potts. Other committee members include Joe Duncan, Rob Dunagan, Tom Bruner, Martha Hansen, Cathryn Hoyt, and Larry Francell. The goal of this committee is to identify prospects and begin developing a case for support.

To date, a number of prospects have been identified with many more needing to be reached. Tom Bruner coordinated an appeal to the Board of Directors. To date, 100% of the directors have responded to the appeal with \$51,130 pledged for the project and \$9,750 in-hand.

In addition to board donors, strong expressions of interest have been shown by the Meadows Foundation and the Hillcrest Foundation. Both encouraged us to submit proposals as we near our fundraising goal.

#### GRANTS RECEIVED

##### *Brown Foundation*

The CDRI received a \$3,000 grant in support of the education program in June. The grant, recommended by Brown Foundation Board Member Mr. Travis Mathis, was an unexpected and very pleasant surprise. Funds will be used to provide scholarships and materials for *The Earth Rocks!!!* in October.

##### *Outdoor Kids, Outdoor Families, Outdoor Fun*

In December, 2010, the CDRI received a TPWD COOP grant of \$22,000 to fund a program called Outdoor Kids, Outdoor Families, Outdoor Fun. The grant supported our Mission Possible: Nature Challenge program, Nature Day Camps, and Bug Day—a special education program held in September. Over 180 children from Pecos ISD attended the Bug Day program.

The grant provides funding for equipment and staff.

##### *ESRI Grant*

The American Public Gardens Association and ESRI (the producers of ARC GIS) teamed up to provide grants to public gardens in need of a GIS program. ARC GIS is an extremely powerful mapping tool that we can use in both our operations functions (emergency response, mapping utilities, infrastructure, trails, plants in the gardens) and for our research programs (mapping information collected from plant and animal transects, hydrology, and climate data). Mark Foreman and Cathryn Hoyt submitted a proposal to the grant program this summer and were awarded a GIS grant.

The grant pays for 3 licenses to the \$25,000 GIS program, a library of books, and invitations to attend GIS online-university classes.

Mark Foreman is taking a GIS class this fall at SRSU and will be working with CDRI to develop some of the baseline maps needed. The infrastructure maps of our structures, water wells, irrigation systems, hose bibs, water supply lines, septic systems and underground electrical and communication utilities will facilitate our long-term development plans.

#### PROPOSALS SUBMITTED

##### *James A. “Buddy” Davidson Charitable Foundation*

A proposal was submitted to the James A. “Buddy” Davidson Charitable Foundation for \$4,012 in support of a long-term study designed to determine how the butterfly community and vegetation composition change in response to the wildfire that swept through the Nature Center the night of April 9<sup>th</sup>. The proposal was funded with a contribution of \$7, 925.34—nearly double what was requested! The grant will pay for a student intern to collect data and any equipment needed for the study.

##### *Union Pacific Foundation*

Jessica Glasscock sent a proposal to the Union Pacific Foundation requesting \$5,000 in assistance to enhance our Life-Long Learning lecture series. If successful, we will be able to offer our speakers a speaker’s fee and money to offset the cost of food and travel—an important goal as budgets are tightened everywhere.

## UNSUCCESSFUL PROPOSALS

### *Stripes Community Support Grant*

Jessica Glasscock wrote a small grant to the Stripes Foundation for support of educational events during the Cactus Festival in March. Unfortunately the proposal was turned down.

### *IMLS Grant*

A \$300,000+ proposal to the Institute of Museum and Library Services was turned down this year. The grant was to help fund a Director of Horticulture and purchase expensive software to curate and map our Living Plant Collection. The reviewers felt the project was worthwhile and needed, but were uneasy because we had not completed our strategic plan nor received feedback from our stakeholders at the time the grant was submitted.

### *In-Kind Contributions*

Contributions of professional in-kind services have saved us over \$10,000 this year. Many thanks are owed to Curtis Evans, Mark Foreman, Reid Farley, and A.J. Skinner for their help with our fire and freeze recovery and with our construction projects. In-kind contributions included:

- Reception area installation
- Reception area design
- Construction of new offices in the Visitors' Center
- Construction of shelving in the new maintenance building (and additional \$500 was saved by recycling old metal shelves that were part of the Conant Estate)
- Construction management
- Rewiring of pump house for new water pump
- Rebuilding of old water pump so that we now have a spare.
- Installation of outlet for the generator. This allows us to pump water during a power outage.
- Installation of an RV outlet near the greenhouse
- Replacement of the thermostat in the greenhouse.
- Repair of northern boundary fence by fence crews from Curtis Evans' ranch.

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Goal: To develop and maintain an effective, active, informed Board of Directors whose governance and support roles promote the achievement of the CDRI mission.**

## MEETINGS

### *Board Meetings*

- February 26 Board Meeting
- April 3 Board Orientation Meeting
- May 23 Executive Committee Meeting
- September 12 Executive Committee Meeting

### *Planning Meetings*

- Strategic Planning Meeting (March 11)
- Strategic Planning Meeting (April 1)
- BBQ Planning Meeting (June 30)
- Mining Exhibit Planning Meeting (February 25)
- Mining Exhibit Planning Meeting (April 12 Cancelled)

### *Committee Meetings*

- Botanical Garden Committee (February 25)
- Permanent Endowment Committee (February 25)
- Collections Committee (February 25)
- Development Committee (June 28)
- Development Committee (April 7)
  - Facilities subcommittee (April 11)
  - Facilities subcommittee (July 5)
  - Fundraising subcommittee (July 13)
  - Facilities subcommittee (July 25)
  - Fundraising subcommittee (August 1)
- Finance Committee (October 13)
- Strategic Planning (October 17)
- Finance Committee (October 18)
- Facility subcommittee (October 20)

### BOARD COMMUNICATION

#### *Email News*

Board members have received 15 board and member e-newsletters since February. This service is intended to keep board members up to date on meetings, news about the CDRI, and upcoming events. A little over 50% of the board members open these digital updates.

#### *Website*

The “Board Only” section of the website is regularly updated with information necessary for board service. In the spring, the website was populated with a number of documents about the organization. A security issue is being addressed in which pdf files posted to the password-protected section of the website appear to be visible through a Google search.

### BOARD MATERIALS

#### *Board Manuals*

Board member Martha Hansen and Cathryn Hoyt updated and prepared board manuals for the new board members. The manuals were distributed at the Board Orientation Meeting. While preparing the printed board manuals, much of the material was digitally prepared and posted on the website.

#### *Welcome to the Board of Directors*

This full-color document outlining a board members duties and responsibilities was edited, updated, and reprinted with the assistance of Martha Hansen.

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## ADMINISTRATION

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### REPORTS FILED

Routine, but time-consuming, administrative tasks were completed in the first half of the year. These tasks included:

- Filing 401k annual audit and report
- CDRI Form 990 completed and submitted to the IRS by the May 15<sup>th</sup> deadline
- Tax reports for the Gloyd Estate filed.
- Workman’s Comp audit completed and filed.

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## PUBLIC RELATIONS/MARKETING

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**Goal: Increase the visibility of the CDRI and its facilities by promoting our achievements, resources, and programs.**

### PRESS & ADVERTISING

- Press releases were written by Jessica Glasscock and Melissa Brady for each upcoming event of the year.
- Melissa Brady and Cynthia McAlister published a press release about the new reciprocal garden admission agreement through the American Horticultural Society.
- Melissa Brady designed posters about CDRI events that were hung in public areas of Marfa, Fort Davis, and Alpine.
- In June, CDRI contracted with L&L Distribution of Terlingua to distribute our rack card advertising the Nature Center. L&L Distribution maintains brochure racks in 35 to 40 locations in the Big Bend region. The racks are restocked two to three times a month as needed. The cost of this service is \$600 per year.
- Melissa Brady designed a new rack card to be distributed through L&L Distribution and to regional Chambers of Commerce and Texas Highway Department visitor centers. Approximately 10,000 copies of the new rack card were printed.
- Two advertisements—one promoting upcoming events and the other promoting the Leapin' Lizards Nature Shop—are published in each issue of the quarterly *Cenizo* journal.

### PUBLIC OUTREACH & COMMUNITY EVENTS

#### *Alpine Middle School Science Fair*

Jessica Glasscock served as a project judge for the Alpine Middle School Science Fair. Over 300 students participated in the science fair this year.

#### *Earth Day Celebration in Alpine*

Nathan Armstrong manned the CDRI booth at the Earth Day Celebration in April. He handed out general literature about the CDRI and promoted the Nature Challenge program to area families.