

DIRECTOR'S REPORT
FEBRUARY 2010 THROUGH JANUARY 2011

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.

MUSEUM ASSESSMENT PROGRAM: GOVERNANCE ASSESSMENT

In late 2009, the CDRI was awarded a grant to participate in a Governance Assessment sponsored by the American Museum Associations' Museum Assessment Program. The initial part of the program included completion of a self-study workbook. The Executive Committee took on the responsibility of completing the self-study with other board members invited to participate on what was known as the MAP committee.

Following completion of the self-study workbook, a peer reviewer made a site visit to meet with board members and staff. Following her visit, a report detailing our board strengths and opportunities was presented to MAP and to the CDRI. This report and the self-study workbook will help us move into the future.

The following activities took part during the spring of 2010 as part of the governance assessment project:

- M. Hansen and S. Ashworth reviewed resumes of peer reviewers and chose one for the site visit.
- MAP Committee meetings held on the following dates:
 - February 5
 - March 13
 - March 19
 - April 16
- "Running Better Board Meetings" survey was prepared and sent to board members.
- Governance Assessment survey was prepared and included in the February Board Meeting packet.
- MAP Committee completed the Governance Assessment Self-Study Workbook. This document was posted on the website for review and comments, and submitted to the Museum Assessment Program.
- A large notebook of documents and literature was compiled by C. Hoyt and M. Hansen and sent to the MAP surveyor.

- Trip organized for MAP peer reviewer, Anne Haskel. Included:
 - Reception on June 10. Board members and regional stakeholders invited.
 - Meeting with Executive Committee, MAP Committee, and Committee Chairpersons.
 - Meetings with Executive Director and staff members.
- Follow-up from A. Haskel’s visit included numerous emails and additional documents sent at her request.
- The final report was submitted and posted in the “Board Only” section of the website on October 19, 2010.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

One of the recommendations that came out of the governance review was the need for strategic planning that involved stakeholders, board members, and staff. Dr. Jim McDonald was hired as a consultant to guide us through the process. Dr. McDonald’s experience base includes expertise in operational risk management, human resource development, management controls, coaching, ethical leadership, and change and conflict management. He has worked extensively in the industries of manufacturing, financial services, health care, technology, and professional service.

Through the process of strategic planning, Dr. McDonald will help us:

1. Clarify and focus Vision and strategic planning process
2. Identify all Key Stakeholders, their needs & interests with respect to CDRI
3. Clarify roles of Board Members & Executive Director
4. Identify significant opportunities and risks to the success of CDRI
5. Develop specific objectives for moving towards the Vision (one-year)
6. Develop specific short-term actions and expected outcomes, with responsibility and due date, to accomplish each objective

Accomplishments to date:

- 1) Identify key stakeholders:
 - a) Members
 - b) Board members and staff
 - c) Visitors to the Nature Center
 - d) Nonmembers/nonparticipants
 - e) Business/tourism community
 - f) Educators
 - g) Research & conservation community
- 2) Surveys developed or conducted
 - a) Survey given to people that attended BBQ

- b) Email survey sent out to members
 - c) Paper copy of member survey to members without an email address.
 - d) Survey questions for educators developed by Jennifer Jordan, C. Hoyt, and Jessica Glasscock and distributed by Jennifer Jordan to teachers and administrators.
 - e) Survey developed for visitors to the Nature Center. Survey promoted during Thanksgiving Open House.
- 3) Strategic Planning retreat for the entire board held January 15th.
 - 4) Summary report of meeting submitted to CDRI.

INFRASTRUCTURE

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

GENERAL MAINTENANCE

Road Maintenance

Inadequate staffing and reluctance on the part of the Executive Director to accept a board-approved loan from the permanent endowment without a plan to repay the loan, has led to delays in large-scale maintenance and resurfacing of the entrance road.

The winter snows left the road in a mess and the fear was that summer rains would cause additional problems. Although significant rainfall occurred in June, the rains do not have the same negative effect on the road as the snow did. Marc Goff did minor repairs with the tractor and blade. We purchased a load of road base from Skelton Trucking to use in maintaining the road.

A bid was recently received on paving the road with cold mix. This would cost approximately \$76,000 and require an estimated \$10,000 in maintenance every 4 or 5 years. This option is being explored by the Capital Campaign Committee with additional bids being requested.

Odd Jobs

Blaine Hall, Reid Farley, and Mark Foreman were a tremendous help this year doing various odd jobs and repairs.

- This spring saw toilets that were hopelessly clogged or that ran constantly. Volunteer and board member, Blaine Hall worked to repair leaks, but professional help was needed for the clogs.
- Both rainwater catch systems were out of service for many months. B. Hall repaired pipes cracked due to freezing and installed hose bibs that would allow us to use the captured water to irrigate the gardens.
- Reid Farley repaired lights and switches in the women's restroom and repaired the chlorine pump that maintains the chlorine level in our drinking water supply.
- Volunteer Mark Foreman spent his winter break from school at the CDRI repairing water pumps, irrigation systems, replacing light bulbs and many other odd jobs.

The Great Freeze of 2011

Temperatures dropped from the 70s to single digits overnight in February—and stayed that way. The Nature Center was without water for 14 days due to frozen and busted pipes. Plumbers, well-repairman, and contractors were scrambling throughout the region to get parts and answer the many calls they received. We were fortunate in having Barmore Plumbing, Jay Jarrett, and several volunteers answer our calls for help. After all the pipes were repaired, we discovered that the jet pump providing water to the Visitors' Center had burned up. Volunteer Reid Farley spent two days at the CDRI installing the pump and getting the water system running again.

GENERATOR PROVIDES POWER TO THE PAVILION

Following the board discussion about power to the pavilion—and a generous donation from Rob Dunagan—the following actions were taken:

- Electrical power to the pavilion was disconnected. The electrical cables were cut off at ground level so they could not be reconnected in the future.
- Reid Farley conducted an audit of our energy needs at the pavilion and made a recommendation about the size of generator that we would need.
- Reid negotiated with Bob Ward of Morrison's True Value to purchase the generator we needed with the funds we had available. Bob sold us a generator at less than \$100 above his wholesale cost.
- Reid prepared the cables and wired the Discovery Building to accept the generator.
- A few things still need to be done:
 - A concrete pad for the generator needs to be poured.
 - A box to protect the generator and reduce noise needs to be constructed. With a protective casing, the generator can be installed on the pad and used as needed. Currently the generator is stored near the greenhouse and must be moved down each time power is used at the pavilion.

NEW TRANSFORMER AND ELECTRICAL JUNCTION INSTALLED AT GREENHOUSE

With the anticipated addition of a new greenhouse, the 100 amp power coming into the main powerpole was inadequate. Volunteer Reid Farley worked with AMP to have a new transformer installed and increase our power from 100 amps to 200 amps. Reid installed a new junction box capable of handling the increased power useage.

TRAIL TO THE TOP: NEW TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

All biological and archeological regulatory compliance was completed and the new trail project funded through the Texas Parks and Wildlife Recreational Trails Program began in the summer

of 2010. The new trail will offer visitors to the CDRI a less strenuous hiking path to the geology exhibit making the exhibit more accessible to a wider range of visitors. The trail project includes improvements to the existing trail network as well as new and updated interpretive signs orienting visitors to the grounds of CDRI.

The project got underway in August. Colin Shackelford, Marc Goff, Masa Ohnishi, and about 11 volunteers completed roughing out the new trail. With the dismissal of Colin and Marc in October, trail work has slowed considerably. Finish work, such as building retaining walls, steps, and water bars was begun in the fall with a volunteer Environmental Corp team that spent one day working on the trail. The project will be completed by trained AmeriCorp trail crews in the spring of 2011.

CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Glen Perkins and Tom Greenwood were contracted as the construction manager and architect to develop plans and budgets for two buildings: a maintenance facility and a building that will house staff and have a large, open space that can be used for lectures, meetings, and other types of education programs.

- Maintenance Building. After numerous meetings, the decision was made to focus on the maintenance building. The large, metal building will offer storage space, a covered shed for vehicles and maintenance work, and offices for the maintenance, horticulture staff, and a seed bank.
 - Plans are drawn and are being submitted for construction bids.
- Administration/Education Facility. Much work was done on this building, including development of preliminary drawings. However, planning stopped because the committee does not have a clear vision of what this facility should be: three separate buildings to house our three functions (administration, education, research) or one building to provide space for all. Planning work for this facility continues.

OTHER CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

- Scudday Memorial Bench Constructed. The stone and wood memorial bench was constructed in the memorial grove. The bench will be dedicated to Dr. James Scudday, one of the cofounders of the CDRI. Wording for the memorial plaque was approved by Mrs. Scudday and the cast bronze plaque was installed on the bench.
- Construction of the New Greenhouse. Construction on the new greenhouse has stopped until new staff are hired and able to pick up that project again.

- Renovation of current Visitors' Center. The current Visitors' Center is not welcoming to our visitors. Visitors come through the front door but, because of the layout of the atrium, cannot see a staff person and often do not know where to go. For many years, we have discussed the possibility of taking out one of the exhibit spaces in the atrium to install a visitor services desk. Volunteer Mark Foreman has extensive experience with designing and constructing cabinets and was able to design a reception area that would allow staff to greet visitors and assist them in the Nature Shop. Plans for the reception area were bid out. We are working with a cabinet maker in Albuquerque to construct the cabinets. Mark Foreman has volunteered to install them.
 - Plans are completed.
 - Three bids were received and a contractor chosen.
 - Final decisions are being made on wood types and laminate colors.
- Road Upgrade. The road continues to be a maintenance problem for us. It costs approximately \$36,000 every three or four years to have road base added, graded, and compacted. A recent bid from Keith Jarrett indicated that we could pave the road with cold mix for approximately \$76,000. Maintenance would include chip-sealing the road every 4 or 5 years for approximately \$10,000. We are looking into this option and trying to get bids from at least two other sources.
- Photo Blind Construction. A young man from Midland is interested in building a photo blind at the Nature Center for his Eagle Scout project. We have potential funding from two sources and are working with a professional photographer from South Texas to develop plans for the photo blind.

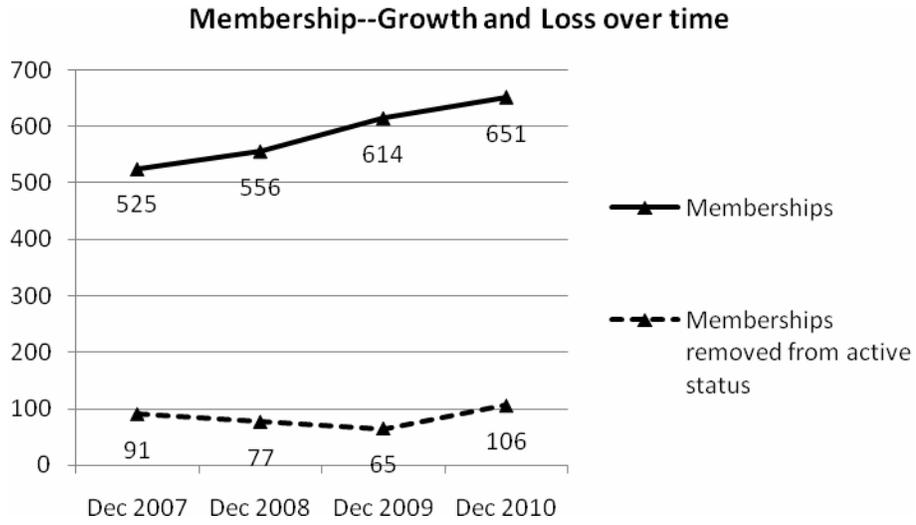
PROGRAMS

MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

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

Membership

- At the end of January 2011, we have 651 memberships.



- Membership **renewal rates** fluctuate throughout the year. At the end of 2010 our overall renewal rate for the year is 77%.

Membership renewal rates				
	2010	2009	Last quarter 2010	Last quarter 2009
1st notices	502	419		
Removed from AM	106	71		
Renewal rate	77%	83%	70%	78%

- Each month a certain number of first time renewal notices are sent to members. In 2009, 419 first notices were sent out, in 2010, 502 first notices were sent out. An increased number of first notices reflects the increase in membership. Additionally, each month a certain number of members who have not renewed (after receiving four mailed reminders) are removed from active membership. In 2009, 71 memberships were removed from active status, in 2010, the projected total removed from active status is 116 memberships. As membership increases, it is to be expected that a proportionately larger number of members will choose not to renew, however, it would be enlightening to find out members' reasons for not renewing. The membership coordinator has received notification from a handful of non-renewing members who have cited economic hardship as their reason for not renewing, but reasons for the majority of membership loss is unknown.
- New and renewing members come to us through a variety of ways, however, the **most important** are via **mail** and our **website** for renewals, and **walk-in** visitation for new members. Additionally, new memberships in particular come to us via our Events, and especially in 2010, as gifts.

	Renewals & Rejoins	New memberships
Via mail , in response to a mailed reminder	263	0
Via website , in response to a mailed reminder	95	26
Walk in	25	44
Other (totals; see detail below)	33	59

Other (detail)		Renewals & Rejoins	New memberships
In response to an appeal		4	0
At an event (total)		9	12
	Cactus Festival	3	6
	Plant Sale	3	6
	BBQ	3	6
Via an outreach effort (total)	0	0	6
	BBRSP Fiesta	0	1
	TMN Meeting	0	1
	CDEEC	0	4
In response to LLL activity (total)		0	3
	Orchid Lecture	0	1
	Critter Club	0	1
	Chuparrosa workshop	0	1
Gifts		5	11
Miscellaneous		5	6

- During the holiday season, C. McAlister worked with the Nature Shop Manager to send a bulk mail picture postcard to the local membership (approximately 550 memberships) reminding everyone about the unique shopping opportunities in the Leapin’ Lizards Nature Shop.
- When the new issue of *The Chihuahuan Desert Discovery* was published this fall, an attempt was made to recruit lapsed members by sending an issue to the 75 members who had been removed (to date) from active status in 2010, along with an opportunity for them to rejoin the membership for 15 months for the price of a 12 month membership. Again, the reasons members choose not to renew or rejoin remain unknown; only two lapsed members accepted our offer and rejoined the membership.

Membership Benefits

NEW for 2011: Reciprocal Garden Admissions. This year the CDRI is expanding our reciprocal admission program. Prior to 2011, we offered our members reciprocal free admission to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, TX. Also, we waived admission fees for

visitors who produced valid membership cards from the Wildflower Center; though only a handful of visitors have taken advantage of this opportunity.

This year, we are greatly expanding this membership benefit by joining the American Horticultural Society's Reciprocal Admission Program (RAP). The RAP "promotes horticulture across America, encouraging people to visit gardens while traveling." All CDRI members will have access to the 2011 RAP Directory via a link on the CDRI website (or directly at www.ahs.org/rap). Also, memberships at the \$100, \$250, \$500, and \$750 levels will receive a color booklet as a CDRI membership benefit. This enhances our membership package, and is a beautiful way to both expand visitation to public gardens as well as highlight their importance. Additionally, the CDRI was able to take advantage of a promotional opportunity by placing an advertisement, with color photos and an events calendar, in the RAP Directory.

Additional Membership Benefit

From March 15 through June 15, new and renewing members received a coupon for a free subscription to Better Homes & Gardens, thanks to a program from the American Public Garden Association.

Chihuahuan Desert Discovery

The *Chihuahuan Desert Discovery* is well behind the optimum publishing schedule. The Fall 2009 was completed and mailed in August, 2010. The Spring 2010 issue is in production and should be completed soon. Because of the delay in production this will be a "double issue" which would allow us to catch up and get back on a reasonable production schedule.

Currently, publication of *Discovery* (including everything from writing, editing, photo acquisition and editing, and design work) is primarily the responsibility of the Executive Director. While she treasures this job, increasing responsibilities make it difficult for her to keep publication on a timely schedule. Production of *Discovery* is a time-consuming task that should probably be done by an additional staff member.

EDUCATION PROGRAM

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

Exhibits

Chihuahuan Desert Mining Heritage Exhibit

Progress is slowly being made towards interpretive panels for the mining exhibit.

- MuseumScapes, a professional exhibit design company was hired to provide guidance and develop graphics for the exhibit.
- On April 29, 2010 a full-day meeting was held with MuseumScapes design staff, Joe and Joyce Mussey, Jack Burgess, Tom Bruner, Cathryn Hoyt, and Melissa Brady to develop interpretive content for the exhibit.

- MuseumScapes submitted a report on the meeting with a summary of the priority “ideas.” The report was disappointing and did not provide the guidance that we need for the project. MuseumScapes staff said that the report was just a beginning and that they needed direction from us.
- Report submitted to Joe Mussey and Jack Burgess in September. Jack Burgess sent a memo in November suggesting that MuseumScapes be released from the project and that Joe and Jack would:
 - Lay out a plan for signage, including list, location, review of text proposals, and obtaining cost quotes.
 - Determine if there is sufficient money in the Mining Exhibit account to pay for signage.
 - Review existing displays to see if they can be improved and better organized to reduce clutter.
 - Proceed on the specimen display of minerals of the Chihuahuan Desert.
- Volunteer Mark Foreman produced a scaled plan view of the mining exhibit to use for planning purposes.
- January 14, 2011. J. Mussey, J. Burgess, C. Hoyt, and T. Bruner met about the mining exhibit. Consensus was reached to keep MuseumScapes in the loop because they can help with exhibit labels and can do the graphics work. They can’t develop content. Joe and Jack are working on an exhibit plan that will indicate where panels are to be placed, create an outline for each panel, and a list of the resources (artifacts, images, etc.) that can be used to illustrate the panel content. This plan is to be presented at a meeting on February 25th.

Our Dynamic Landscape: Geology, History, Culture

The panels for the new geology exhibit deteriorated after being installed for a little more than a year. Fossil (the producers of the panels) admitted that they had received a bad batch of material and willingly produced new panels and shipped them to CDRI at no cost. Fort Davis Stables was hired to pack the panels (10 panels weighing between 30 and 50 lbs. each) to the top of the hill where Blaine Hall, Tom Greenwood, and Steve Elfring volunteered to reinstall them. The old panels were packed down the hill by the horses.

Grassland Restoration Exhibit

Melissa Brady has been working on an exhibit to install in three exhibit spaces in the atrium. The exhibit will focus on the need for grassland conservation, CDRI’s juniper removal project, and the results of a bird survey done by citizen scientists Josh Burns and Laura Belkin. Their census data shows the shift in breeding bird populations from when the junipers covered the grasslands and this summer, after the junipers had been removed.

Traveling Exhibit Designed

A traveling exhibit titled “At the Nature Center” was created for the Chihuahuan Desert Education Coalition’s Chihuahuan Desert Conference. The exhibit consists of photographs of activities and programs at the Nature Center, a CD player featuring selected Nature Notes episodes, and numerous handouts. Jennifer Jordan staffed the booth with assistance from Nature Notes coordinator Megan Wilde.

Youth Programs

School and Youth Groups

Programs were given to the following school groups and youth groups since March, 2010:

- Marathon Elementary: 28 students, Feb. 17
- Junction ISD: 14 students, Apr. 9
- El Paso: 18 students, Apr. 19
- Amble Side San Angelo: 14 students, Apr. 20
- Marfa High School: 40 students, Apr. 30
- Heritage Fredericksburg: 16 students, May 6
- Pecos Middle School: 36 students, May 14
- Alpine Christian School: 15 students, May 19
- Marfa Elementary: 28 students, May 21
- Yes Prep: 100 students, May 27
- Alpine Montessori School: 16 students, Jul. 6
- St James Episcopal: 36 students, Sept. 26
- Radford: 7 students, Sept. 30
- Saint Theresa: 20 students, Oct. 6
- Saint Theresa: 21 students, Oct. 8
- Applied Learning Academy: 100 students, Nov. 20
- Sul Ross Biology Club: Dec. 4
- Woodlands Christian Academy: 23 students, Jan. 25

Summer Camps

- Critter Club: June 21-25, 12 participants 4-6 years old
- Desert Rat Club: July 12-16, 14 participants 7-10 years old

The Earth Rocks!!!

The theme was “Exploring Energy” this year. Over 270 schoolchildren from Pecos, Wink, Fort Davis, and Marathon attended our annual 5th annual *The Earth Rocks!!!* event. One teacher told us that all of her children passed the state-mandated science test—and she attributes much of that success to their coming to *The Earth Rocks!!!*. Based on the results from pre- and post-tests, the children that attended Exploring Energy improved their test scores by 20%—even when the post tests were given a week or more after the event.

The Earth Rocks!!! is a big production for the CDRI. Nearly 50 volunteers helped with the tremendous task of setting up, implementing, and cleaning up. Volunteers included Tierra Grande Master Naturalists, members of the community, professionals from Sul Ross State University, and CDRI Board members. Most volunteers attended the pre-event orientation session, which turned out to be a great way to help the event go more smoothly, mainly by allowing volunteers to have a better idea of the tasks they were assigned. All feedback from volunteers was overwhelmingly positive, volunteers were excited to be involved in this splendid educational events.

We're able to offer The Earth Rocks!!! free of charge due to the generous support of member and corporate donors.

TXPrep Program

C. Hoyt spoke to approximately 25 TXPrep students about her education background and career.

Life Long Learning Program

Lectures

- *Orchids in the Desert* (Feb. 18) Lecture by Betty Alex. Approximately 30 attended.
- *Conservation Challenges for the Wintering Grassland Sparrow* (Mar. 4) Lecture by Greg Levandowski. Approximately 25 attended.
- *Sustainable Development 101* (Apr. 11) Lecture by Bennett Jones. Approximately 15 attended.
- *Horned Lizard Conservation* (May 13) Lecture by Richard Kazmaier. Approximately 30 attended.
- *Pollination Rules* (Jun. 24) Lecture by Karen Little. Approximately 10 attended.

Hikes and Field Trips

- *Early Spring at Cattail Falls*: led by Joselyn Fenstermacher
- *Nature Tracking at Monahans Sandhills State Park*: led by Jonah Evans
- Top of Texas Hike Series: Mt Livermore: Aug. 28, participants 18
- Top of Texas Hike Series: Emory Peak: Sept. 4, participants 7
- Top of Texas Hike Series: Guadalupe Peak: Oct. 2, participants 9
- Marc Goff and Masa Ohnishi arranged to take a group of cacti enthusiasts from the Houston Cactus and Succulent Society to a private ranch on the Caballos Novaculate south of Marathon.
- On Saturdays in July, the CDRI offered extended open hours—the Nature Center was open 9 am to 9 pm. Additionally, guided night hikes into Modesta Canyon were offered. While the hours between 5 pm (normal closing time) and 8:30 pm are not heavily utilized by visitors, the guided night hikes were quite a success. Over the four Saturdays we offered the hike, we had 54 participants, and on the Saturday (July 24) that the hike was rained out, we still had four visitors take advantage of extended hours. Texas

Master Naturalists George Pitlik and Randy Ersch helped with a couple of these hikes, but most of the guidance was provided by staff members Marc Goff and Masa Ohnishi.

Teacher Workshops

Rangeland Ecology: 8 participants, July 24-25. This workshop was conducted with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and was designed to introduce participants to the ecology of the Chihuahuan Desert region. Guest speakers were from NRCS, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and Sul Ross State University. A field trip to the Mimm's Ranch, Dixon Water Foundation, wrapped up the workshop. Support for the workshop came, in part, from the River Systems Institute in San Marcos.

Agenda for workshop:

- Travis Roberts "Introduction to the Chihuahuan Desert"
- Lynn Loomis "Rangeland Soil Types" & field demonstrations
- Michael & Shirley Powell "Introduction to Grass and Forb Identification" & field demonstrations.
- Jared Schniers "Range Practices"
- Group "Rangeland Vegetation Inventory Protocols"
- Johnny Arredondo "Wildlife/Rangeland Practices"
- Robert Potts, Aimee and Griffin Danch "Range Science in Practice: Tour of the Mimms Ranch"

Conservation Across Boundaries: Jul. 23-31. Conservation Across Boundaries (CAB) was a collaborative teacher's workshop held by the Welder Wildlife Foundation-Sinton, UTT Center-Junction, and the CDRI. Nine formal and informal educators participated in the CAB workshop. Starting in west Texas, the workshop took them nearly 1,000 miles across Texas. CAB is a hands-on-field course designed for science teachers. Comparisons of topics and issues associated with conservation on local and regional levels and across political and ecological boundaries were emphasized. Projects were geared toward specific science disciplines but time was also taken to demonstrate how conservation related activities can be enhanced in classrooms. CAB is sponsored by the Boone and Crockett Club and the Welder Wildlife Foundation. Grants were provided by the Dixon Water Foundation and the Harvey Wiel Foundation.

We are indebted to our west Texas partners that made this such an enjoyable and educational event. Our partners include:

- John Karges and Chris Pipes of The Nature Conservancy who provided lodging for the teachers and served as guides for our hike up Mount Livermore.
- Dr. Louis Harveson, Sul Ross State University
- Robert Potts, CEO and President of the Dixon Water Foundation
- David Crum, Executive Director of the Trans-Pecos Water and Land Trust
- Robert Potts and David Crum facilitated use of the Alamito Creek Preserve for the water-testing portion of the workshop.

See attached report for more information about the CAB program.

Region 18 Teacher's Workshop on Pollinators. Jessica Glasscock and Cynthia McAlister partnered with Region 18 to put on a teacher's workshop focused on pollinators. The workshop was held at the Nature Center and included a PowerPoint presentation, hands-on pollinator activities to use in the classroom, and a pollinator awareness walk through the botanical gardens. Twelve teachers participated.

Partnership Contract Signed with Region 18

CDRI signed a partnership contract with Region 18 to provide teacher's workshops in 2011. The schedule, topics, and number of workshops are still under negotiation.

Other Workshops & Programs

- Chuparrosa Workshop: Aug. 5-7
22 participants enjoyed this 3-day workshop led by Kelly Bryan and Carol Edwards. Kelly Bryan presented a lecture on the hummingbirds of the Davis Mountains at Sul Ross State University and held hummingbird bandings at the Nature Conservancy's Davis Mountain Preserve and the CDRI. Carol Edwards conducted a birding hike along Road Canyon at the Davis Mountains Preserve.
- Native Bee Workshop Series (Three-part workshop)
Three participants learned about the private lives of native bees. Participants also investigated which garden components attract native bees and learned how to build a bee house for their own garden.
- Amphibian Watch Training: Aug. 20
Twenty individuals attended this full-day training in TPWD-sponsored Amphibian Watch and Texas Horned Lizard Watch programs. The training was organized by the River Systems Institute and was conducted by Texas Parks and Wildlife employees with CDRI serving as the host for the event. Training was held at Sul Ross State University and the CDRI.
- Mission Possible Closing Party: Sept. 11

Our first Nature Challenge wrapped up on September 11th. Participating families attend the closing event at CDRI. Scrapbooks were displayed and awards were given out to all attending Mission Possible participants. Awards were donated by participating park and recreation areas and the CDRI.

- What Lurks in the Dark of Night: October 28
Halloween program for families with children under 10. Approximately 15 individuals, parents and children attended for storytelling and a night walk into the botanical gardens.

Programs for Adult Groups

- “The Color Red” program given to Senior Circle at Big Bend Regional Health Center.
- “Welcome to the Chihuahuan Desert” program given to Elderhostel group at the Davis Mountains Education Center, February 21
- PowerPoint Program on the CDRI programs and goals and tour of botanical gardens for Leadership Big Bend.
- Austin Cactus and Succulent Society. Gave them tour and took them on a hike.
- Andrew Garden Club: Apr. 13
- University of Texas: Apr. 16
- DMEC: 24 participants, June 23
- DMEC: 29 participants, June 30
- DMEC: 30 participants, Apr. 20
- DMEC: 20 participants, Apr. 27
- Rio Grande Basin Initiatives Conference: 44 participants, May 20
- “Texas Women Naturalists” program given to Senior Circle at Big Bend Regional Health Center.

Tierra Grande Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists

CDRI staff, board members, and volunteers continue to be involved with training of each new class of Texas Master Naturalists. This year, the Nature Center served as a training site on two different weekends in August. On August 1, presentations were given by:

- Cathy Hoyt (“Introduction to the CDRI” and “Weather and Climate in the Northern Chihuahuan Desert.”)
- Cynthia McAlister (“Native Bees of the Nature Center”)
- Blaine Hall (Guided hike to the geology exhibit).

On August 21, Cathy Hoyt gave a presentation on “Texas Women Naturalists.”

Nature Notes

Meadows Foundation and Dixon Water Foundation Support Nature Notes

Earlier this year, Marfa Public Radio and the CDRI collaborated to put together a proposal that would fund Nature Notes, our weekly radio program. The proposal was submitted to the Meadows Foundation. The staff and board of the Meadows Foundation were interested in the project, but were not willing to fund the entire proposal themselves. They requested that we find matching funds.

Robert Potts, Executive Director of the Dixon Water Foundation and CDRI board member, was contacted about the project and pledged \$25,000 in matching funds. With the Dixon Water Foundation pledge, Meadows approved the grant in June.

Grants were requested to fund the hiring of a Nature Notes Coordinator, purchase equipment, and reimburse Marfa Public Radio for overhead expenses. The Nature Notes Coordinator would be a CDRI staff member and take over writing, editing, and recruitment and coordination of volunteer writers. In addition, they would be responsible for developing a companion website targeting educators and create podcasts that would be available as audio files in a Nature Notes archive.

Megan Wilde Hired as Nature Notes Coordinator

With funding from the Meadows Foundation and the Dixon Water Foundation, Megan Wilde was hired to coordinate and produce NATURE NOTES, our weekly program broadcast on Marfa Public Radio KRTS 93.5 FM.

Programs Produced Since September

Thirty new episodes of NATURE NOTES have been produced since September: 5 written by CDRI staff, 7 by volunteer writers, and the rest produced by Megan.

Improving the Broadcast Quality & Appeal

One of the goals for NATURE NOTES was to improve the broadcast quality and interest by adding clips of field-recorded nature sounds and interview clips with experts. Megan successfully began this part of the program using her own personal microphone and then with a high-quality field microphone that she arranged to have donated to the program (Marfa Public Radio eventually ordered another field microphone as specified in the grant).

Megan's "sound bites" of interviews, the whirl of the helicopters bringing desert bighorn to their release site, and Patty Manning demonstrating the sound of seed dispersal have definitely added an element of interest to the program. In addition to field recordings, Megan is also working with established sound libraries to add bird songs and frog and toad choruses to appropriate broadcasts.

Now Playing

Beginning in late January, Nature Notes is now broadcast five times a week on Marfa Public Radio. It plays on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8:35 am during Morning Edition and 4:45 pm during All Things Considered, and again on Thursdays at 7:06 after the evening news. Episodes premier on Thursdays and are replayed on Tuesdays.

Nature Notes Picked Up by Other Public Radio Stations

As part of the grant, Marfa Public Radio was to promote Nature Notes to other stations in the Chihuahuan Desert region. Megan Wilde put together a letter of introduction and worked with station personnel to create a sample CD with five programs. These packets were distributed throughout the southwest.

To date, Eastern New Mexico University has expressed an interest in broadcasting the program through their public radio network that reaches throughout the eastern half of New Mexico and into the far western half of the Texas panhandle.

Nature Notes on the Web

Web Page

As part of the Meadows Foundation grant requirements, Meagan Wilde created a new NATURE NOTES web page on the CDRI site. Visitors to the site can find full scripts with illustrations and additional resources for past NATURE NOTES episodes. The episodes are filed under nine general categories:

- Animals
- Plants
- Pollination
- Evolution & Ecology
- Water
- Geology
- Weather & Climate
- People, Places, & Activities
- Conservation & Sustainable Development

Marfa Public Radio Website

In addition to the CDRI website, Megan worked with Chris Ruggia of VastGraphics, to produce a NATURE NOTES website for Marfa Public Radio. Chris Ruggia produced the basic template and Megan developed and added all the content, photographs, and podcasts.

NATURE NOTES on FaceBook

NATURE NOTES also has its own FaceBook page. Each week, Megan posts “teasers” about the upcoming episode. The FaceBook page currently has 129 fans and is a great place to get feedback from listeners. We’re hoping that this will also develop into a place where listeners can share their comments or observations about the different NATURE NOTES topics.

Podcasting

Many people are not able to hear NATURE NOTES due to the time that it is broadcast on Marfa Public Radio. Podcasts are now available on the CDRI and Marfa Public Radio websites and can be listened to by anyone with web access.

Nature Notes in Print

For several years, *The Skyline*—Sul Ross State University’s newspaper—has been publishing episodes of NATURE NOTES every other week. Megan successfully pitched the program to three additional West Texas newspapers.

Promotion of NATURE NOTES

- NATURE NOTES is now available via a PRX account. Other public radio stations can review, download, and broadcast episodes from the PRX account.
- Promo CD's featuring five of the best NATURE NOTES episodes were distributed in January to public radio stations throughout the northern Chihuahuan Desert region.
- A promotional bookmark was created to be distributed at the Chihuahuan Desert conference in El Paso. The bookmarks will also be used to promote NATURE NOTES to classroom teachers.

Memorandum of Understanding with Marfa Public Radio

With acceptance of the Meadows Grant, a member of the MPR Board of Directors suggested that a Memorandum of Understanding be developed between MPR and the CDRI.

Unfortunately, the document produced by an attorney representing MPR is unacceptable. The document misrepresents the role that CDRI plays in production of NATURE NOTES and claims copyright to all NATURE NOTES programs and spin off products that may result from NATURE NOTES. While copyright of the program is important to protect the interests of both CDRI and MPR, I do not feel that MPR can claim copyright to the work of CDRI staff and volunteers. Negotiations on this matter continue.

Special Events

Cactus Festival (March 9, 20, & 21, 2010)

Eight programs ranging from activities for kids, to identification of cacti were offered during the three-day event. Wind and snow impacted attendance although attendance at the event was higher in 2010 than it was in 2009.

	2010	2009
Attendance	159	125
Sales	\$4,739.28	\$3,673
Memberships	\$1,575	\$900
Admissions	\$416	\$266
Ave. sale per customer during festival	\$29.81	\$29.38

Plant Sale (April 23 & 24, 2010)

The cold, long winter had its greatest impact on the Plant Sale in April. Windy, cold weather resulted in poor turnout and the lack of blooms on plants (due to cold winters at our wholesale

nurseries) resulted in poor sales. Income from the two-day event was \$13,409 (down from \$16,720 in 2009).

- Plants ordered from five vendors. One did not make a delivery.
- M. Brady designed, wrote, and produced a Plant Information Catalog for the sale. This booklet featured color photographs (provided by C. Hoyt) and growing information (common name, botanical name, habit, sale (pot) size, growing size, needs, characteristics, wildlife & pollinator benefit) for 194 plants available at the plant sale.

Mission Possible Kick-Off Party

Mission Possible is a collaborative effort between the Texas Forest Service and the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute to get families outside during the summer. Each family registered with the Forest Service to receive their “missions” at each of 10 cooperating parks, nature centers, and publicly accessible wilderness areas. The general mission for the West Texas region is to “Find the coolest place in the desert.”

Nine families attended the Kick-Off Party at the Nature Center on June 12. Each received a packet with their missions and snow cones to get them started. At the end of the summer, the families will gather again to share their scrapbooks, stories, and adventures.

Annual BBQ and Benefit Auction

The Annual BBQ and Benefit Auction was held on September 18th. A number of changes were made to try to accommodate the number of people that are now coming to the event. Major changes included:

- Moving the BBQ and auction from the pavilion area to the east side of the Visitors Center.
 - Pros of this move include: more space, access to the Visitors Center for bathrooms, gift shop, and food preparation.
 - Cons include: parking access and lack of BBQ pits for cooking. The parking area in front of the Visitors Center was reserved for handicapped parking. The rest of the visitors were asked to park up near the pavilion. This caused some problems with people that did not want to walk that far and for people that needed to load auction items.
- The live auction was set up under the tents and the silent auction was placed on the porch.
 - Pros:
 - When it rained we didn’t have to rush around moving auction items.
 - The silent auction had plenty of room to display auction items nicely and they were well protected.

- Cons:
 - Martin Stringer, our auctioneer, found auctioning “in the round” difficult and requested that we rearrange the auction setting next year.
 - The silent auction was too far away from the live auction. Once the live auction started, there was very little action at the silent auction. We also need to announce the closing of the silent auction earlier so that people have a chance to get their final bids in.
 - Because of the increased space, people attending the auction were spread out further. Several people commented that this made the auction harder to work and that they had trouble hearing the auction because of people talking over the auctioneer.
- Simplification of the menu. We purchased pre-cooked smoked brisket rather than sirloin steak and offered fewer sides as choices.
 - The choice of brisket rather than steak was made because of the move from the pavilion. The new site didn’t have BBQ pits and we don’t have enough portable pits to cook all the meat. The brisket was good and tender although there were some problems getting it thawed and warmed up enough to serve. Jerry Pittman felt that we should continue to serve sirloin steak rather than brisket.

Although there are definitely things that we will do differently, the staff feels that moving the BBQ and auction worked well and should be tried again next year.

BBQ and Auction At A Glance

	2010	2009
Ticket sales	\$2,180	\$2,550
Auction		
Unrestricted	\$22,217	\$12,689
Restricted	\$800 (rockwork)	\$2,700 (greenhouse construction)
	\$5,800 (education)	\$5,600 (education)
Fort Davis State Bank donation	\$1000	\$1000
Shop Sales	\$787	\$389
Admissions	\$71	\$48
Memberships	\$400	\$275
Donations	\$120	\$815
Total	\$33,375	\$26,066

Thanksgiving Open House

CDRI held its traditional open house the Friday and Saturday after Thanksgiving. These two days are designated as “admission free” days. Snacks and warm drinks are available for visitors and volunteers from the Texas Master Naturalists lead guided hikes into the canyon.

This year, we had 288 visitors and had \$2,213.26 in income. This was significantly lower than income during the 2009 Open House (\$5,112.35).

HORTICULTURE PROGRAM

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.

Drip irrigation Installed in Pollinator Garden

A drip irrigation system was installed in the pollinator garden during the spring. Materials for this project were purchased several years ago with funds from the IMLS pollinator grant.

Berming, Weeding, and Planting Goes On

The tremendous rains that came in June and July led to an explosion of growth in the botanical gardens. M. Goff and his crew worked hard to add berms to capture the water and send it into the root zones of the plants rather than down the road. With rain, come grasses and forbs. The endless summer task of weeding and weedeating went nonstop through the growing season. Cacti from the rescue program have been planted out in the gardens.

Compost Quandary

For two years now, the CDRI has worked with the Mouse Factory in Alpine to create a rich, organic fertilizer for the gardens. Each week, the CDRI takes the truck and trailer to Alpine to pick up bags of aspen shavings that are cleaned from the mouse cages. The bags are emptied and the shavings are watered and worked to create compost.

While the compost is a great addition to the gardens, it has some serious drawbacks—namely flies. As the shavings are composting, they create a perfect breeding environment for flies. One of the reasons that we moved the BBQ this year was because the pavilion area (within a few hundred feet of the composting operation) had become unusable because of the flies. Walking through the botanical gardens during the day became unpleasant because of the number of flies that would swarm a visitor.

We have discussed ways to continue working with the shavings including moving the composting operation to another area of the landsite. With recent staffing changes, we have

suspended the collection of the mouse shavings until the new Director of Horticulture can be hired.

Director of Horticulture

A job announcement for the Director of Horticulture position was posted on the CDRI's website, the Texas Nonprofits website and the American Public Gardens Association website. The announcement was forwarded to members via a Desert NewsFlash e-newsletter and posted on the CDRI's Facebook page. C. Hoyt also promoted the position at the Texas Arboreta and Botanical Gardens annual meeting in Austin.

We've had numerous applicants for the position. Interviews will begin the first week of March.

RESEARCH & CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

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

Imperiled Butterfly Conservation and Management Program

Cathryn Hoyt continued to participate in the Imperiled Butterfly Conservation and Management Program, attending a workshop in Miami, FL in March and a second in Portland, OR in June. The program includes another workshop California during March, 2011 and will wrap up in June, 2011 at the Chicago Academy of Science.

Butterfly Monitoring Program

A formal butterfly monitoring program for the Nature Center was launched in March, 2010. A 2.5 mile monitoring transect was established through the grasslands, up to the top of Clayton's Overlook, down into the canyon, and through the botanical garden. This transect is monitored at least once a week. Species, numbers of species, and weather data are recorded. In addition, data are collected on nectar sources and host plants for individual species of butterflies.

The project has resulted in seven new species being added to the Nature Center's butterfly list (Tailed Orange, Zilpa Longtail, Longtail Skipper, Taxiles Skipper, Delaware Skipper, Eufala Skipper, and an Ursine Giant Skipper) bringing the total up to 105 species documented on site.

The sighting and photograph of an Ursine Giant Skipper caused a stir in the butterfly world. This rare giant skipper is seldom seen as an adult and rarely photographed. Images taken by C. Hoyt were requested and posted on the Butterflies of America website (www.butterfliesofamerica.com).

Grassland Restoration Project

The US Fish and Wildlife funded grasslands restoration project was wrapped up in July, 2010. Although funding for the project ran out before the project was completed, we will finish juniper removal as staff are available. A great deal of swamping remains to be done so that the piles can be burned. The final product will provide visitors and over-wintering grassland birds the broad vistas of a true Chihuahuan Desert grassland.

Research at the Nature Center

C. Hoyt is working with several researchers conducting studies at the Nature Center. These include:

- Daniel Johnson, a crayfish specialist from Houston, is working on a book about the crayfish of Texas and will be describing the crayfish found in Modesta Canyon.
- Bart Kensinger, Ph.D. student at Oklahoma State University, is studying two species of katydids that are found in the Davis Mountains. He collected specimen for his research from the Nature Center landsite. An article about his research will appear in the next issue of *Discovery*.
- Dr. Doug Whitman, a grasshopper specialist from Illinois State University, is conducting a study of horse lubber grasshoppers. This summer, CDRI staff facilitated his research by sending out an email to local members, volunteers, and Master Naturalists asking them to send living grasshoppers to Dr. Whitman.
- Dauna Hodnett, graduate student at Sul Ross State University, is putting together a proposal to use the Nature Center as the focus of her MS thesis. She is investigating land management techniques for small landowners.
- Kelly Bryan, a hummingbird researcher living in Fort Davis, continues to use the Nature Center as a banding station. His studies will continue in 2011.
- Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory. Researchers from the RMBO continue to census the CDRI grasslands as part of their Chihuahuan Desert grassland bird study.
- Steve Cary, author of *Butterfly Landscapes of New Mexico*. Steve is interested in partnering with the CDRI to study the Poling's Hairstreak, a little-known butterfly of the sky islands.
- Dr. Dale Kruse, Curator of the S.M Tracy Herbarium at Texas A&M University. He visited the CDRI recently to collect herbarium samples of mosses and byrophytes in Modesta Canyon.
- Mark Foreman, graduate student at Sul Ross State University. He is investigating the effect juniper removal has had on the vegetation and bird fauna of the Nature Center grasslands.

University Classes Use the Nature Center as a Laboratory

Professors from Sul Ross State University brought the following classes to the Nature Center for field studies:

- Dr. Chris Ritzi, Environmental Quality Class (conducted water testing in canyon)
- Dr. Steven Platt, Herpetology class (hiked into canyon at night to study amphibians at the spring)
- Dr. Jim Zech, Plant taxonomy class (studied ferns in Modesta Canyon).

Citizen Scientist Projects

Breeding Bird Census

Josh Burns and Laura Belkin completed the summer, 2010 breeding bird census in the grasslands. They monitored the grasslands every four days to count species and numbers of breeding birds and to learn more about breeding bird territories and environmental requirements. Preliminary data shows that the lark sparrows utilized the juniper piles for nesting and, although the black-throated sparrows no longer nested in the grasslands, there was an increase in cassin sparrow breeding. A full report will be published in the *Discovery*.

Quarterly Bird Counts

Josh Burns and numerous citizen science volunteers conducted bird counts at the Nature Center for the Great Backyard Bird Count (Feb. 13), International Migratory Bird Day (May 8), and a fall count in November. Data from these counts are submitted to EBird and to the sponsors of each of those events.

Quarterly Butterfly Counts

Citizen scientist volunteers, led by Cathryn Hoyt, have continued to document butterflies within the Davis Mountains Count Circle using North American Butterfly Association protocols. These counts take place in March, July, and September.

MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

STAFFING AND BENEFITS

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

Staffing Changes

Temporary Hire

Lucas Clark, a student from Sul Ross was hired to work 16 hours a week on the Grassland Restoration Project. His position was temporary and ended when the grant funds were depleted.

Resignations and Terminations

Marc Goff (Head Gardener) and Colin Shackelford (Special Projects Manager) were dismissed in October after failing to comply with a verbal and written notice of a safety violation.

At her request, Cynthia McAlister, the public outreach coordinator, reduced her hours to two days a week. She is trying to complete her master's thesis and needs time to focus on her writing. She has stated that she is no longer interested in serving as the public outreach coordinator as she considers this position a job and she wants to focus on a career as a bee researcher. I fully support her decision, but this leaves us without a membership coordinator and volunteer coordinator.

New Positions

We are currently advertising for two new positions: The Director of Horticulture and an Office Manager. Applications have been accepted and interviews are being scheduled.

Benefits

Due to the unexpected bequests from the Gloyd Estate and the Francois Estate and the fact that staff have not received a raise in two years, staff were given a 3% Holiday Bonus at the end of the year.

Volunteers

Volunteers continue to help with all of CDRI's programs. A few of the programs and activities they assisted with in 2010 were:

- Cactus & Succulent Festival. At least 23 volunteers helped with this two-day event. Volunteers helped with event set up, food preparation and service, offered advice and helped sell plants, helped in the Nature Shop, and, led activities including children's programming and container garden building. Additionally, board members Dr. A. Michael and Shirley Powell presented Learn Your Cacti, and Dr. Jim Weedin presented Cold Hardy Cacti and Identifying Cacti and, Ad and Gertrude Konings, authors of *Cacti of Texas in their Natural Habitat*, did a book signing and talked to visitors about cacti.
- During March, the CDRI offered extended open hours, meaning the Nature Center was open 7 days a week in order to capture as much Spring Break traffic as possible. Also in March, each Saturday we offered two guided hikes into Modesta Canyon. Master Naturalists Dave Mainz and Steve Elfring were our main guides. They were occasionally assisted by other Master Naturalists.
- 25th Annual Native Plant Sale. At least 31 volunteers helped us manage this tremendous two-day event in April. Volunteers helped with pre-event tasks, event setup, Members' Night food prep and service, plant consulting and selling, transporting plants to

customer's vehicles, and in at least one case, transporting a large rescued cactus to the customer's home, and helping in the Nature Center.

- The Joint Rio Grande Basin Initiatives Annual Conference, held May 17-20, brought their field tour to the Nature Center to discuss igneous aquifers and Davis Mountains geology. Staff members, board member Blaine Hall, and seven Master Naturalists helped lead the participants through the Botanical Gardens, into Modesta Canyon, through the Grassland Restoration/Juniper Removal project, and up Clayton's Overlook for a visit to the Interpretive Geological Exhibit.
- Stalwart volunteer and Master Naturalist Gary Freeman was the lone volunteer that showed up to help each week with the Grassland Restoration Project. On March 7th, several volunteers and staff gathered to stack juniper that had been previously cut.
- In preparation for our seasonal Hummingbird Banding Demonstrations, (presented by volunteer Kelly Bryan), volunteer Liz Miller came to the Nature Center each week to clean and refill the eight hummingbird feeders around the Visitors' Center.
- Master Naturalist Randy Ersch and volunteer electrician and carpenter Reid Farley have continued to help with the new greenhouse project. Reid also secured a generator so electricity will be available at the Pavilion.
- Volunteer Jennifer Jordan continues to work in the Nature Shop every Wednesday. Additionally, she has participated in numerous programs for the CDRI, including, exhibiting at Fort Davis' July 4th event; helping prepare for BBQ 2010, including taking on the organization of the silent auction; helping at Amphibian Watch; and helping to staff the Nature Center during July's extended hours.
- In August, work began on the new trail to Clayton's Overlook. During the two trail-work days a week, staff members Colin Shackelford, Marc Goff, and Masa Ohnishi, were accompanied by a crew of volunteers; a total of eleven volunteers have helped with this project.
- In preparation for our seasonal Hummingbird Banding Demonstrations, (presented by volunteer Kelly Bryan), volunteer Liz Miller came to the Nature Center each week to clean and refill the eight hummingbird feeders around the Visitors' Center.
- Volunteer Maurine Pendleton helped with Kite Making Day during the Desert Rat Club in July.
- Volunteers Jennifer Jordan and Laura Bell helped prepare a hamburger cookout for the August 20th Amphibian Watch Training (TPWD and River Systems Institute collaboration with CDRI), which was attended, and extremely well received, by twenty CDRI volunteers and Master Naturalists. Additionally, staff members Marc Goff and Masa Ohnishi led the participants on an evening hike into the CDRI's rarely visited quarry area to look for amphibians.
- At least fifty volunteers helped with the tremendous task of preparing for, doing, and cleaning up after, the 2010 BBQ and Auction. This number includes eight board members. Additionally, the CDRI received community help from the Nature Conservancy (loaned extra chairs), the Fort (loaned extra tables and chairs), the Jeff

Davis County Food Pantry (loaned extra tables), as well as, board member Kimball Miller who loaned an extra tent.

Envirocorp Volunteers Assist with Trail Work

A team of expert trail builders spent one day at the CDRI in November, building retaining walls and water bars on the new trail.

AmeriCorp Team to Work at CDRI in Spring of 2011

Colin Shackelford submitted a proposal to AmeriCorp in the fall of 2010 requesting an AmeriCorp team to work at the CDRI, the Nature Conservancy, and Fort Davis National Historic Site. Although all three partners were under the impression that Shackelford had submitted a finalized proposal, this turned out not to be the case—it was just a preliminary proposal. Chris Pipes of the Nature Conservancy picked up the ball and shepherded us through the formal proposal. The project was accepted by AmeriCorp and an AmeriCorp team will join us this spring to spend two to three weeks completing the new trail, repairing the old trail, and helping with general clean-up around the greenhouse.

Staff and Board Development

- C. Hoyt, Joe Duncan, Joe Mussey, Marty Hansen, and Tom Bruner attended a Lunch and Learn workshop on Fundraising for Capital Campaigns. Workshop speaker was Rosalind Redfern Grover.
- C. Hoyt was accepted to participate in The Lepidoptera Course at the Southwestern Research Station in Portale, Arizona. This course took place in August.
- C. Hoyt attended a 3-day workshop on Plant Collections Management sponsored by the American Public Gardens Association. Over 100 people from botanical gardens throughout the United States, Canada, and Britain attended the workshop. The focus was on accessioning systems, labeling, and curating living plant collections. Hoyt met with the North American Plant Conservation Consortium about nominating the CDRI's cacti collection to the consortium.
- C. Hoyt is taking a "Nonprofit Leadership" online course through the Texas Association of Nonprofit Organizations. The course consists of seven modules:
 - Budgeting for Nonprofit Organizations
 - Fundraising for Nonprofit Organizations
 - How to Read a Nonprofit Financial Statement
 - Leadership for Nonprofit Organizations
 - Nonprofit Board and Volunteer Development
 - Principles of Marketing
 - Strategy for Nonprofit Organizations
- M. Brady was recognized as a Certified Interpretive Planner by the National Association of Interpreters.

- Masa Ohnishi attended the Rangeland Ecology Workshop and completed his Texas Master Naturalist Training.
- C. Hoyt, C. Shackelford, and M. Ohnishi attended the Chihuahuan Desert Climate Change workshop.

Board Changes

Robert Bybee and Bill MacLeod Pass Away

Within weeks of each other, Robert Bybee (Emeritus Board Member) and Bill MacLeod (current Board Member) passed away. Both were strong supporters of the CDRI and will be greatly missed.

Board Member Resignations

Board members Mike Powell, Joyce Mussey, and Martin Terry resigned from the Board of Directors. Their many years of service are greatly appreciated. Mike Powell has accepted Tom Bruner's appointment to the Emeritus Board.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

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

\$10,000 Challenge

With the launch of our new website in March, 2010, an anonymous donor offered to match up to \$10,000 contributed through the website. The \$10,000 challenge was met in September and our anonymous donor made their very generous contribution. The donor has issued another challenge: who will issue the next \$10,000 challenge for 2011? Many, many thanks for all the support and for this amazing gift.

Kathryn Howard Gloyd Estate

Kathryn Howard Gloyd, wife of Roger Conant, passed away on May 25. Kathryn Hoyt was named as the personal representative for her estate—all of which was given to the CDRI. Hoyt made two trips to Albuquerque to meet with Mrs. Gloyd's attorney and CPA and to pick up furniture, jewelry and personal items from Mrs. Gloyd's apartment.

C. Hoyt and Sal Salazar spent many hours this summer transferring funds from the Gloyd Estate to the CDRI. Many thanks to Sal for his patience, expertise, and willingness to help me navigate the intricacies of settling an estate. The status of the estate is as follows:

- Gloyd Estate Account: \$49,288.99 (cash in Fort Davis State Bank. This fund is being used to settle final bills. The only bill left to pay is for the income tax statement being prepared by Mrs. Gloyd's accountants in 2011.)
- Gloyd Estate Account: 3-month CD \$200,000
- CDRI Account: 3-month CD \$116,000
- CDRI Account: 6-month CD \$504,920.62
- Vanguard Transfer into CDRI Vanguard Account: \$9,213.49
- Arizona Missing Money Claim
 - Received \$1158.46 in December
 - Transfer of 109 shares of Monsanto Company stock. Monsanto Company is a U.S. based multinational agricultural biotechnology company. As of 15Feb11 the stocks were worth \$8,189.17. The stocks are being held until the finance committee decides what to do with them.
- Outstanding Accounts:
 - Jewelry. Suzette Ashworth and Martha Hansen have inventoried and photographed the jewelry from the estate. It now needs to be taken to Odessa so that Martin Stringer can do an appraisal.

Jim Francois Estate

Alpine philanthropist and long-time CDRI member, Jim Francois provided for the CDRI in his will. To date, we have received \$52,750. Part of this gift was used to retire the 2009 operating funds loan from the permanent endowment.

Chihuahuan Desert Foundation Finally Dissolved

The Chihuahuan Desert Foundation, an independent foundation established to handle the CDRI's endowment, was finally dissolved in 2010. Although paperwork to dissolve the

organization was filed with the Secretary of State several years ago, the CDF was still listed as being active in 2010. According to the Secretary of State's office, the paperwork had been returned for additional information. We never received it on this end and assumed that the paperwork had been accepted.

Status of Grants

Grant Proposals Received

Texas Parks & Wildlife Community Outdoor Outreach Program Grant. (\$22,061 state funding; \$21,467 CDRI match from cash, volunteers, and in-kind services)

Outdoor Kids, Outdoor Families, Outdoor Fun is designed to encourage families to reconnect with nature through exploration of state parks and other natural areas and by participating in focused, hands-on experiences at the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center near Fort Davis. The three major components of this program include:

- Mission Possible: Nature Challenge
- Nature Day Camps for Children
- What's Zooming, What's Blooming: The Wonderful World of Pollinators

Bridgestone/Firestone Grant for Education (\$1,000)

Bridgestone/Firestone has supported our education program with gifts ranging from \$500 to \$1500 for several years now. A request letter for \$1,000 was submitted for support in 2011.

Meadows Foundation (\$25,000 requested)

A joint proposal with Marfa Public Radio was submitted in support of Nature Notes, our weekly radio broadcast. The proposal was approved and MPR is serving as the grant administrator.

Dixon Water Foundation (\$25,000 requested)

The Meadows Foundation required a match before approval of the Nature Notes grant. The Dixon Water Foundation generously agreed to the match. These funds, in support of Nature Notes, were provided to Marfa Public Radio.

Texas Rivers Institute Grant (\$6,000)

Subcontract for \$6,000 awarded by Texas Rivers Institute for education programs focusing on water. Deliverables include:

- Range Management Workshop (conducted June 24 and June 25).
- Development of a range ecology protocol for high school teachers.
- Development of a companion website with photographs of important range plants.
- Hosting Amphibian and Horned Lizard Watch training program in the fall.

Grant Proposals Pending

Institute of Museum and Library Services Grant. (\$128,931.63 IMLS funding; \$189,176 CDRI match from cash, volunteers, and in-kind services)

The overall goal of this 3-year project is to create a plant collections management system, train staff in the importance and use of the system, accession and label the plants within the Living Plant Collection, and make information about the plants more widely accessible to the public. We should hear whether the proposal was accepted in June or July.

Grants & Funding Requests Denied

Potts and Sibley Foundation

A request for road improvement funds was sent to Potts and Sibley Foundation this spring. The project was not funded due to the volume of requests received by the foundation and their decision to send all discretionary funds for 2010 to Haiti for earthquake recovery.

Texas Education Agency Grant

Responding to a Request for Proposals, a grant proposal was submitted to the TEA in the spring to support classroom learning in an informal environment. When the deadline for notification passed and we hadn't heard from the TEA, Shirley Powell was asked to contact Representative Pete Gallego's office to see if they could find out what was happening. They reported that the program had fallen victim to state-wide budget cuts and that none of the proposals were funded.

Contribution from Clayton Williams for Memorial Grove Enhancement project.

In the spring, Clayton Williams was asked to fund an enhancement to the Memorial Grove that would include a wall to shelter the area and provide space for memorials, benches, and a water feature. Ferne Scudday asked him not to fund the project because she was afraid that it would ruin the view.

Annual Appeal Letter

The annual appeal letter was mailed in December. Sixty five donors responded with contributions totaling \$6,240. In 2009, 83 donors contributed \$5,570 in response to the annual appeal.

In response to some of the tips given at the fundraising seminar earlier this year, the annual appeal letter was personally signed by the Executive Director and previous contributions were noted in a handwritten note on the letter.

2009 Audit

C. Hoyt, Laura Lannom, and Jerry Pittman worked on the audit of the 2009 books. The auditor selected was Ron Kirby of Odessa. Hoyt and Pittman met with the auditor and reviewed his report in September. Some changes were suggested, but overall Pittman felt that the report was acceptable. The final audit was received November 24.

Form 990

The CDRI's Form 990 was prepared and filed with the IRS by the May 15th deadline. This was the first year that we had to file the new form that is in accordance with the Sarbanes-Oxley Act. The form was posted for Board member review on the CDRI's website.

OPERATIONS

Insurance

Liability, commercial building, auto policies reviewed and renewed. Liability insurance increased to \$1,000,000 as per instructions from the board.

Requests for bids for Directors and Officers Insurance submitted to several companies, but no responses were received.

Health insurance continues to rise and remains a major problem for the CDRI. C. Hoyt attended a webinar on health reimbursement accounts and has been investigating group health insurance accounts. Unfortunately, the time necessary to sort out the different options and find something that will work to the benefit of both staff and the organization has not been available and we struggle along with our current, individual health insurance plans.

Water Testing

For years, our monthly water samples have been sent to a lab in Midland. This lab lost its license for testing and a new contract with an Odessa lab was negotiated by C. Hoyt and M. Ohnishi.

PUBLIC RELATIONS/MARKETING

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

New Website Launched

After many years of struggle, the CDRI finally launched a new website that more accurately represents what we do. The new site also offers the ability to take money online for memberships and donations although we still don't have online shopping capabilities.

The site is updated on an irregular basis with features such as "This Week At the Nature Center" and "What's Flying". We have blogging capabilities but no one has the time to be able to blog on a regular basis yet.

Website Updating and Improvements

The website continues to be a work in progress. Major additions to the site include:

- Auction page. This year a sample of auction items were displayed on the webpage with a form that could be used by bidders unable to attend the auction.
- Megan Wilde created a Nature Notes section of the website. See “Nature Notes” above for more details.

On-Line Shopping

Our ability to take money on-line continues to be a weakness. C. Hoyt met with another webdesigner that specializes in shopping sites. He seemed able to help with this situation, but no contract or further progress has been made.

Publications and Design

Enewsletters

In 2010, 80 enewsletters were sent, keeping our various audiences up to date on what’s happening at the Nature Center. Enewsletters are used to communicate with board members, CDRI members, teachers, the scientific community, volunteers, and the media.

Print Publications

- Brochure created for Cactus Rescue Program. Explains the source of the cacti and how to plant for growing success.
- Three Quarterly Events Brochures created and mailed to the membership. This brochure replaces the monthly calendar of events that was mailed in the past thus saving time, money, and printing costs.
- Fall 2009 issue of *The Chihuahuan Desert Discovery* produced.
- Plant Sale list and invitation mailed to members and posted on the website.
- 32-page Plant Information Catalog produced for distribution at plant sale.
- M. Brady designed and produced four matching tri-fold brochures for Membership, the Chihuahuan Desert Field School, the Corporate Partnership Program, and the Research and Conservation Program.
- Invitation to BBQ produced and mailed to membership.
- Auction catalog written and printed.
- Posters and handouts designed, printed, and distributed for all CDRI events.
- Life Long Learning catalog produced and distributed in January, 2011.

Branded Merchandise

M. Brady designed three new types of branded merchandise. These include a magnet made of a slice of agate with the Nature Center logo etched onto the agate; a denim shirt with the logo embroidered over the pocket; and a mug featuring the logo.

Press & Advertising

Press Releases and Advertising

J. Glasscock and M. Brady are primarily responsible for putting out press releases and radio advertisements for upcoming events. In addition to this routine advertising, the following promotions were run:

- Two advertisements in each issue of the *Cenizo Journal*. This free quarterly magazine is widely distributed throughout the Trans-Pecos. The Nature Center is featured in a black and white advertisement while a small color ad highlighting the Leapin' Lizards Nature Shop is featured in the shopping section.
- Weekly promotion of the Nature Center on Marfa Public Radio during the month of June.

Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center Featured in Texas Highways

The Nature Center received great coverage in the July issue of *Texas Highways* magazine. In an article on Fort Davis, the Nature Center was featured in two large photographs and a section on hiking. In the same issue, an article on hummingbirds (unfortunately) promoted the Hummingbird Festival. Although we haven't held the Hummingbird Festival in several years, it was nice to have our name mentioned. We've been able to divert enquiries about the festival to some of our other hummingbird-related events.

Clayton Williams mentions the CDRI in Texas Monthly Magazine.

In a full-page advertisement by the NRA recognizing the Williams for their million-dollar donation to the NRA, Mr. Williams mentions his role in the founding of the CDRI.

Article on Nature Center appears in Wildflower: The Magazine of the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center.

Titled "High and Dry: West Texas institute and botanic garden showcases desert plants", this 2-page article about the CDRI and Nature Center gardens appeared in the Winter 2010 issue of *Wildflower*.

OUTREACH

Serving as a Resource

- Worked with Australian 7th grader answering questions about the Chihuahuan Desert.
- Provided editing assistance for article on west Texas to be published by Travel and Leisure magazine.
- Provided editorial assistance for articles in *Texas Highways* magazine.
- Worked with freelance writer doing a story on our grassland restoration project.
- Attended rededication of Sibley Nature Center in Midland.
- Worked with landscape architects designing new landscaping at Sul Ross State University.
- Worked with landscape architects designing a native plant project near the El Paso airport.
- Provided signs and advice to architect designing garden at Blackwell School in Marfa.
- On Saturday, August 7 freelance writer Andrea Abel met with Cynthia McAlister and Marc Goff. Andrea was writing a travel article for *Wildflower*, the LadyBird Johnson Wildflower Center's magazine. Andrea was taken on a tour of the botanical gardens, cactus greenhouse, and the Visitors' Center. After the tour, she observed the hummingbird banding demonstration that was going on that day and hiked into

Modesta Canyon and up to Clayton's Overlook. At the end of the interview, she expressed surprise at how much is going on at the CDRI and regret that her article was just a travel article. She would like to do a feature article on the CDRI as well.

- On Saturday, August 28, freelance writer , Lynn Margolis visited the Nature Center. She was working on an article for *Austin Monthly* magazine. At her request, she toured the Nature Center on her own.

Public Outreach Events

- The Terlingua Green Scene, (our first time there) April 10. Staff member Marc Goff, Master Naturalist Gary Nored, and volunteer Karen Nakakihara, talked about our new cactus rescue program, gardening with cacti, and the CDRI.
- Sul Ross State University's Outdoor Expo, (our second year to participate) April 7th, where board member Jennifer Jordan and Master Naturalist Randy Ersch did an ethnobotany demonstration, and talked to visitors about the CDRI.
- The Earth Day Event in Alpine, (our third year to participate) April 22. Native Plant Society president, Master Naturalist, and long-time volunteer and CDRI member, Pollyanne Melton handed out our literature and talked to visitors about the CDRI.
- The Sibley Nature Center's Rededication Event, May 22. Executive Director Cathy Hoyt, board member Blaine Hall, and staff member Marc Goff took a collection of rescued cacti to exhibit and offer for sale, as well as CDRI literature.
- The CDRI exhibited at Fort Davis' Coolest 4th. On July 3rd, we set up the 10x10 tent, a display table with CDRI literature, and our new bright red logo table cloth. Volunteer Jennifer Jordan staffed our exhibit. Many visitors stopped by the table although time was cut short by lightning, wind, and a torrential thunderstorm.
- The CDRI hosted Smithsonian Museum Day on September 25th. Although no visitors took advantage of the opportunity for free admission to the Nature Center, the CDRI continues to benefit from participating. Benefits include the opportunity to get our name out on a national level, and use of a mailing list of Smithsonian magazine subscribers that could be used to recruit CDRI members.
- In November, the CDRI exhibited in El Paso at the first annual Chihuahuan Desert Environmental Education Conference (CDEEC). Volunteer Jennifer Jordan and Nature Notes coordinator Megan Wilde attended, exhibited for the CDRI, and recruited five new memberships. In addition, numerous useful connections for the CDRI were made.

