

CHIHUAHUAN DESERT RESEARCH INSTITUTE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

FEBRUARY THROUGH SEPTEMBER, 2012

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 and opportunities, and develop strategies to take CDRI to the next level.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

BUILDING COMMITTEE MEETS

Following a presentation by Alvidrez Architects at the February board meeting, the building committee and CDRI staff met 3 times over the summer to discuss the Alvidrez design and to review designs that had been submitted in the past. Committee members expressed disappointment in the Alvidrez plans due to the size (footprint) of the buildings, the anticipated cost of the two buildings, and the apparent disregard to our interest in having the buildings LEED certified. Additional concern was expressed about the lack of responsiveness by the architects to our repeated requests for additional information.

Committee chairman Larry Francell wrote a letter to Alvidrez Architects offering them the opportunity to come answer questions about their design and see whether they are responsive to working with another plan.

Land and Site Manager Mark Foreman presented a conceptual design that he drew that would combine all three functions (administration, research, and education) into a single building with a much smaller footprint. The building would provide natural light and air flow to the building, block the wind (providing protected outdoor space for education and special events), and provide the flexibility and functionality needed. Committee members were asked to submit comments to Mark on the new design so that he could redraw the building if necessary.

The plans were approved by the committee and Mark took them to El Paso to meet with the Alvidrez team. He returned from the meeting feeling very positive about their interest in the project, their willingness to work with us, and their qualifications to put together a structure that would meet our needs.

In August, Alvidrez Architects submitted another design that was much smaller and addressed some of our concerns. The building committee met to discuss the plans, but had additional questions about how the building would function. A teleconference is scheduled for November 9 to allow the architects to address the questions submitted by the committee.

INFRASTRUCTURE

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

TECHNOLOGY

FIBER OPTICS CABLE

This spring, Big Bend Telephone provided an upgrade of service to the CDRI by laying a fiber optics cable to the Visitors' Center. We were spliced into the system in June.

Fiber optics will provide crisper communications and be more weatherproof. In addition, it provides a larger bandwidth that will allow us to stream and receive data much quicker. This will become important as we develop our research and education programs.

EPILOG MINI LASER ENGRAVER

The engraver is used to cut signs, name badges, and plant labels, however for several years now, the quality of the engraving has gone down. Working with the tech crew at Epilog, Mark Foreman was able to clean it up, make critical adjustments, and get it back to working like new.

PHONE SYSTEM

The phone system has been a problem for a long time. Mark Hannon, owner of Nectar Computers, and Scott May reconfigured the phones, updated the phone software, and created a "roll over" system that now works.

MAINTENANCE & SITE IMPROVEMENTS

MAINTENANCE PROJECTS

- With the use of a 20-ft. extension ladder, Mark Foreman braved a windy day to replace the broken lanyards and pulleys on the flag poles.
- Repair of the fiberglass siding on the Houston Shed. This small building, built with funds from the Houston Cactus and Succulent Society many years ago, was the first CDRI greenhouse. Over the years, termites have eaten away the wooden posts, gradually lowering the building and causing the fiberglass sheathing to buckle. The damage to the building is severe and it will probably have to be removed soon before it falls over. The building is currently used for garden equipment storage.
- After several months of calling, Mark was finally able to motivate Herman Acosta to fix the leaks that continue to plague the maintenance building.
- Prior to spring break in March, the trails were pruned of low-hanging branches and clothes-snagging catclaw. Additional work on the trails continued through the summer and fall.
- Two small, metal storage buildings were moved to the north side of the maintenance building this summer. By moving the two buildings, we were able to consolidate all the storage areas into a single place that is out-of-sight to visitors.
- The fence at the end of Modesta Canyon was damaged during last year's flood events. The extent of the damage was not noticed until cattle from the neighboring ranch made their way up to the spring (and even beyond). They trampled the springs and damaged the seeps where

the maidenhair ferns grow. Mark Foreman and a crew from the Beal Ranch repaired the downed fence line and removed the cattle from the CDRI property.

FLOOD DAMAGE

Almost exactly a year from the last flood event, the CDRI was hit by intense rain and wind. Over 2.5 inches of rain fell in approximately 45 minutes. Again, rocks and juniper debris were washed onto the road, but this year the damage was significantly worse. Dirt covering a culvert under the road was completely washed away, a scour hole approximately 6 feet wide and 3 ft. deep was excavated near the culvert, and flood waters peeled up sections of the asphalt road leaving it looking like a rumpled rug.

Keith Jarrett was called to repair the road. He came out and told Mark what needed to be done, but did not return to do the repairs. Mark was able to hand-fill the scour hole, bury the culvert, and repair the asphalt by lifting and pressing it back into place. We are still working on getting Keith out to patch the road.

The flooding is caused by a number of factors:

- The intensity of the storms.
- Lack of vegetation to reduce overland flow.
- Juniper slash that was spread through the grasslands rather than stacked. The slash floats downstream and blocks the entrance to the culverts resulting in flooding.
- Poor drainage patterns. Major dirtwork will be required to keep the water away from the road and reduce the damage caused during flood events.

FIRE ARM INCIDENT

On March 30, law enforcement personnel were called to the CDRI when a motorcyclist came through the gate from the Beal's property, took out a hand gun and started shooting at a "stump" (actually an iron wellhead) in the CDRI grasslands. He was within approximately 100 ft. of the maintenance building and greenhouse complex. According to the sheriff, the motorcyclist (one of Barry Beal's nephews) said that he was lost, thought that he was still on the Beal ranch, and was waiting for someone to come pick him up because his motorcycle had a flat tire. He said that he didn't know anyone was around although at the time two staff members, a volunteer, and a family with children were in the area.

The sheriff said they believed his story and would give him a warning.

In response to this incident, a lock was put on the back gate. The combination was given to the ranch foreman who was asked not to share it with Beal visitors.

TRAILWORK

NEW SIGNS INSTALLED

In response to increasing complaints from visitors about getting lost on the trails, the trail system was mapped with a Trimble GPS and new trail signs were installed at all trail junctions. An additional trail sign was installed on top of Clayton's Overlook near the geology exhibit. Unfortunately, within two weeks of the installation at least one of the new signs was vandalized by someone scratching through the plastic with a sharp object.

NEW TRAIL CONSTRUCTED

A short trail descending from the Geology Exhibit was constructed this summer to provide visitors with a loop trail that would take them to the exhibit and back down without having to retrace their steps or make the complete 2.5 mile journey.

FINISHING THE TRAIL GRANT

Mark Foreman has been working with TPWD trail staff to complete the trail project and finish the grant. He is cleaning up areas of the new trail, installing properly constructed water bars, and working with Cathryn Hoyt to design and put together content for the interpretive signs.

Funds from the grant will be used to produce four signs: two new trailhead signs with updated maps and information, one sign that will provide interpretive information about the Rock House Fire and a second sign that will provide information about wildlife at the Nature Center and encourage people to participate in the “50 Species Challenge.”

The wildlife sign will be placed on the trail section overlooking the quarry. We have received permission from TPWD to use part of the grant funds to purchase a fixed binocular that will overlook the quarry in an area where aoudad, deer, javelinas, and other wildlife are frequently seen.

The trail grant will be completed by February, 2013. We have been encouraged to apply for another grant that would provide funding to develop a short loop trail that would extend to the west of the visitors’ center and go to an area that overlooks the canyon. This trail would be accessible to those with mobility impairments.

MAINTENANCE BUILDING

It may be called the maintenance building, but the new structure near the greenhouse has proven to be versatile and amazingly useful. Since August, 2011 when the building was completed it has been used as:

- Meeting space for board meetings and numerous committee meetings
- Office space for staff
- Living space for the Executive Director after her home was destroyed in a fire
- Shop space for various woodworking projects
- Space for the Fort Worth Cactus and Succulent Society to enjoy lunch on a blustery day
- Space for education programs
- Storage and maintenance of equipment
- Storage for archived paperwork
- A place for a photography workshop
- Headquarters for a desert ecology class from the University of North Carolina-Asheville
- Space for a cactus repotting workshop and weekend of work

LODGING FOR VISITING RESEARCHERS AND SPEAKERS

The middle office in the maintenance building is now outfitted with a bed, bedside table, lamp, clothesrack, worktable, and chair to accommodate visiting researchers and speakers.

CDRI OBSERVATORY

Mark Foreman and Cathryn Hoyt spent a significant amount of time this summer working with Sul Ross State University and San Antonio Community College on developing plans for the installation of an observatory at the CDRI. Sul Ross State University has a telescope and other equipment that isn't being used and was looking for a place to construct an observatory where the skies were dark and the viewscape open. They were also working with another private partner that wanted to donate remotely controlled equipment that could be used by San Antonio Community College for their astronomy classes. San Antonio Community College also had a grant that would help fund some of the construction and maintenance of the observatory.

Following many meetings to determine costs and how the observatory would be used, the idea was presented to the Executive Committee. Several concerns were expressed by the committee:

- How would the observatory be paid for?
- How would the long-term maintenance of the facility be handled?
- How would night-time access to the property be controlled?
- Is an observatory within CDRI's mission?
- Would we be competing with the UT McDonald Observatory?

Based on these concerns, the Executive Committee voted to back out of the project completely.

PROGRAMS

MEMBERSHIP & VOLUNTEER

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

IMPROVING OUR MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

Susan Penney continues to work on improving the membership program. This spring she clarified the membership categories and added several new benefits:

- Clarification of Benefits: The Living Lightly membership category provides free admission to the Nature Center for one person.
- New Benefits: Memberships in the Friend and above categories now include complimentary guest passes and complimentary Living Lightly memberships to give as a gift.

Next year, Susan hopes to reintroduce the reciprocal garden benefit/incentive to membership.

TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM TO GIFTWORKS

The transfer of our membership database to the Giftworks program is completed. The learning curve has been fairly steep, but Susan is learning how to process mailings and customize the program so that it provides the information that we need. In order to ensure accuracy, Susan and Marty have gone back through all the 2011 membership forms to make sure that all members are listed.

OUTREACH TO MEMBERS

Members received the following outreach materials this year:

- Quarterly Life Long Learning brochures
- Desert NewsFlash (digital newsletter): 9 issues

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

The year, Susan went back to our 2009 records in preparation for sending a “We Miss You” letter to all lapsed members. This required more data entry into our Giftworks database, but has made our database more complete than ever. Susan wishes that she could say that the membership drive was a great success; but, from the 360 letters mailed, we only had 28 renewals and a couple of upgrades in member level—no matter how you look at it, an 8% success rate doesn’t give cause for bragging.

As an additional push, the gift shop staff are offering a membership brochure to every visitor, as well as putting one in the bag of every customer.

VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

What would we do without our volunteers? This great group of people helped with the following projects:

- Leading hikes during spring break. Two new volunteers, Joe Skinner and Jim Glendenning, were trained to lead Modesta Canyon hikes.
- Preparation for the Cactus Frenzy event. This included preparing and repotting cactus, sorting plants for the sale, labeling, removing mealy bugs from plants, and top-dressing pots. We even had a couple of volunteers (also cactus experts) come all the way from San Antonio to offer their help, guidance and instruction with our cactus collection.
- Brochure design. Heather Gully of Sanderson redesigned the Nature Center brochure. This brochure includes a color map of the hiking trails (produced by Mark Foreman using our GIS program) and general information about what there is to see and do at the Nature Center.
- Modesta Canyon Trail Guide pamphlet. Volunteer Mary Lou Saxon, together with staff member Scott May, have been busy revamping our wonderfully instructional guide book to our Modesta Canyon trail. This is not as easy as it sounds – because (after the freeze, fire, draught and floods) many of the plants described at the numbered trail signs no longer exist. We hope the updated pamphlet will be completed this fall/winter.
- CDRI’s Annual Plant Sale requires a tremendous amount of volunteer assistance. Once all the work of ordering has been done, then the volunteers come along to help set up the sale, which includes making signs, plant lists, plant name tags, unloading plants from trucks, moving the plants at least 4 times each (though it feels like 20) before their resting place on the porch, updating plant information guides, preparing food for Member’s Night, working as sales clerks during the sale and wrapping the porch to prevent any remaining plants from being munched by night time critters.
- 4th of July Booth in Fort Davis. Four volunteers along with staff answered questions, handed out brochures, sold CDRI-branded merchandise, and encouraged people to visit at the 4th of July event in Fort Davis.
- Night Hikes – every Saturday evening during the month of July - were very popular with families. Three new volunteers—Kathryn Busby, Kurt Mannchen and Rich Gatchell—

were all trained to lead Modesta Canyon hikes and became our night hike leaders with a staff member serving as the “tail”. Following the 3rd Night Hike in July, 5 volunteers with the Big Bend Amateur Astronomy Club, set up some telescopes in the parking lot by the Visitor Center. After the evening hike, the viewing of our beautiful night time sky could not have been more inviting. Everyone had a wonderful time and may have stayed until daylight, had they not been urged to go home.

- Transporting cactus. We wanted some landscape-sized cactus and succulents from a wholesale grower in Arizona. Unfortunately, to ship the plants would cost more than the plants themselves. At the time, Ken Smith was living in Arizona and planning a trip back to Alpine. He graciously offered to load up his trailer with cactus and bring them to us in time for the cactus sale.
- Yank and Yak, our weekly volunteer group, continue to weed the gardens, clean up flower beds, prune, and clean up slash from the botanical gardens. This is a great group of volunteers who love CDRI almost as much as we do!
- Bug Day! Twenty+ volunteers came to stand in the rain and teach 170 children about bugs. A volunteer group of this size, who works all day long, deserves a lunch provided - and, of course, we count on a volunteer to put the lunch together. A big event like this always requires setting up all of the tents, tables and chairs. Set up (and take down), in itself, requires at least 6 volunteers. See a complete report on this program in the education section.
- BBQ/Auction required 45+ volunteers make this event a success. This includes volunteers to put up the tents, volunteers to chop and dice, volunteers for the silent auction, volunteers for the live auction, volunteers for registration, volunteers for dispensing beverages, volunteers to do the cooking, volunteer for the photo contest, volunteers to help serve the food and even volunteers to assist parking. Then, of course, we also had all the donors, who donated both their time and their ingredients to make food for the event. Wow!
- Earth Rocks! Forty+ volunteers come together to teach the 390 children about earth science. Getting ready for this event required volunteers to help prepare and stuff bags for the 390 children. We introduced another new volunteer trail hike guide/leader to our ranks, Logan Schoolcraft. Once again, a volunteer group of this size, who works all day long, deserves a lunch provided by CDRI and, of course, there was a volunteer behind the scene putting the lunch together. As usual, a big event like this requires setting up all of the tents, tables and chairs. Set up (and take down), in itself, requires several volunteers – especially when the wind, like we had this year, wants to treat the tent canopy as a huge kite. See a complete report on this program in the education section.
- Our next big event will be, December 8th, our Volunteer Appreciation Potluck. Even though this event requires volunteers to help make it a success - it is always popular and always fun. So mark your calendars!

STUDENTS FROM HIGH FRONTIERS PARTICIPATE IN SERVICE PROJECTS

The High Frontier is a residential program for children ages 12 through 18 that have experienced significant trauma in their lives and have been involved in traditional psychological treatment for a number of years. Using a Positive Peer Culture model, the High Frontier works with the children to build their self-esteem and give them hope. Part of this experience is to work outside the school system on service projects.

This summer, Jessica Glasscock, worked with the counselors at the High Frontier to develop a series of service projects at the CDRI. With staff assistance, 8 to 10 students helped with each of the following activities:

- 7/12 Mining Exhibit weed removal
- 7/17 Slash pickup in the grassland
- 7/24 Russian thistle removal along the roadside
- 7/26 Mining exhibit clean up
- 7/31 Loading slash to be removed and Russian thistle removal
- 8/7 Helped replace shade cloth on greenhouse

This community service program ended on August 8th with the beginning of school. Each group consisted of willing, hard workers and were more help than we ever expected. The counselors have expressed an interest in continuing to bring the students for volunteer work on weekends after the school year begins.

EDUCATION & INTERPRETATION

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

EXHIBITS

Chihuahuan Desert Mining Heritage Exhibit

The mining heritage exhibit was in need of routine maintenance. Mark Foreman and Joe Skinner worked with Joe Mussey this summer to do some sprucing up. CDRI staff applied wood preservative to all the raw wood in the exhibit, primed and painted display boxes, replaced signs that had faded badly in the sun, and made signs for new displays. Many thanks to Tom Bruner who donated the wood preservative for this project.

Signage

The Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center is one of the feature destinations on the Far West Texas Wildlife Trail Map. The map was produced as a cooperative project between the Texas Mountain Trail organization, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and the Texas Pecos Trail region. The map features 10 driving loops and 57 sites extending from El Paso to the Permian Basin to the Big Bend.

Each of the 57 feature destinations was given a large sign with the destination number and logo of the Wildlife Trail. Mark Foreman constructed a sturdy mount for the sign and installed it near the flagpoles at the highway. For more information about the trail system, visit the Texas Mountain Trail website at <http://www.texasmountaintrail.com>.

Summer Monsoon Exhibit

Scott May designed a display on the summer monsoon season for the atrium. Cultural, scientific, and ecological concepts are addressed in a colorful, educational placard presentation.

YOUTH GROUPS

Programs

Programs were provided to the following youth groups:

- Prude Ranch group (46 students)
- Woodlands Christian Academy (20 students)

- Roysel City (12 students)
- Radford (10 students)
- Ambleside School, San Angelo (15 students)
- St. Marks School (28 students)
- Alpine High School (10 students)
- Heritage School (8 students)
- St. Paul Lutheran School (30 students)
- Terry County 4H (34 students)
- Alpine Christian School (7 students)
- Permian Basin Jr. ROTC (14 participants)
- Upward Bound
- St. Stephens Episcopal School

Bugs, Bugs, Bugs Field Day! May 8

Bug Field Day dawned cloudy and rainy (yes, in early May). Despite the damp, cool weather 170 children from Bessie Hanes Elementary in Pecos and Dirks-Anderson Elementary in Fort Davis arrived full of enthusiasm and curiosity. Staff and volunteers were quick on their feet to get all stations moved and set up out of the rain. Clustered around the porch, under tents, and in the greenhouse and maintenance building, 20 willing and eager volunteers dished out chocolate-dipped crickets, taught children about pollination, and exposed them to the wonders of metamorphosis.

The following stations were available for exploration:

- Here a Bug, There a Bug, Everywhere a Bug: Garden walks and bug collecting
- Pollination: Greenhouse tours and pollination demonstrations
- Life Cycles: Viewing a real chrysalis and learning the butterfly life cycle
- My, My, What Big Eyes You Have: Using microscopes for bug identification
- Forensic Entomology: How bugs are used in science
- Bugs on Critters: The bugs that live on cats, dogs, etc.
- It's Creepy, It's Crawly, and Hisses by Golly: Live worms, hissing cockroaches, larvae, and crickets for students to learn about and touch
- Seedballs: Making seedballs that will attract pollinators to a garden
- Cricket a la Mode: Real edible bugs to taste
- Build-A-Bug: Learning the basic anatomy of an insect by building one out of found materials. (Some were real works of art!)

Nature Camps

Jessica conducted two nature camps for children ages 4 through 10 this summer: The Critter Club and The Desert Rat Club. With the help of Susan Penney and Leslie Spicer the children participated in activities such as:

- Hummingbird banding
- Reptile & Amphibian viewing
- Mining exhibit tours
- Skulls, antlers, and pelts wildlife demonstration
- Hikes to Modesta Canyon and Clayton's Overlook
- Botanical garden & greenhouse tours
- Building bird blinds and bird watching
- Photography

- Nature journaling
- Paper making
- Gardening and potting
- Arts & Crafts

The Earth Rocks!!!!

Planning for *The Earth Rocks!!!!*, our annual earth science event, was well underway by September. Nearly 400 students from the following schools are scheduled to arrive for a day of fun and learning on October 17th:

- Fort Davis
- Pecos
- Alpine Elementary
- Alpine Christian School
- Marfa Elementary
- Marfa International School
- Wink-Loving ISD
- Homeschool group

The Earth Rocks!!!! is sponsored by grants from The Brown Foundation and the Permian Basin Area Foundation as well as donations from CDRI members.

New Program: Toddle on the Wild Side

CDRI staff member and mother of a toddler, Megan Wilde, created a new program for young parents and their preschool children this fall. Toddle on the Wild Side brings parents and children 0 to 5 out to the Nature Center for an hour of exploration, story time, and crafts. The program is being tested this fall on Monday mornings and may become part of our regularly scheduled programs in the spring.

ADULT GROUPS

Conservation Across Boundaries Teacher's Workshop

Jessica Glasscock spent a great deal of time this spring preparing budgets, site locations, developing the agenda and curriculum, and arranging for catering for this summer's teacher's workshop. Brochures advertising the workshop were taken to all the local schools and an email promoting the workshop was sent to all the Regional Science Coordinators and science teachers in school.

Unfortunately, the minimum of nine teachers was not reached by the deadline for registration and the program was canceled for 2012.

Teachers Workshops

Although Conservation Across Boundaries didn't make in 2012, Jessica did receive interest in the program for 2013. She is working with the Welder Wildlife Foundation again to develop a program for next year. They are trying to get the program and fees set early enough that the workshop can be advertised well in advance.

Jessica is also working with Mark Klym of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to put together a teacher's workshop for next year that would utilize three TPWD programs: the Hummingbird Roundup, Nature Trackers and Wildscapes Garden training.

Tours & Site Visits

Tours and hikes were given to the following groups this year:

- Wildlife and Native Vegetation: Rainwater for Landscapes (23 participants)
- Retired historians (group guided by Jim Glendenning) (26 participants)
- Leadership Big Bend
- Fort Worth Cactus & Succulent Society
- Central Texas Master Naturalist group
- Rio Grande Institute conference
- Davis Mountains Trails Lodge (three groups brought out in June)
- Davis Mountains Fitness and Training Camp, August
- River of Life Church

Art at the Nature Center

We've always known how beautiful the nature center is. Now, the Nature Center is being discovered by art groups. This spring, photographer Jake Lorring (www.goslophotos.com) of Austin brought a group out for a workshop on contemplative photography. They started the day down in the quarry area and then reviewed their photos during an afternoon session in the maintenance building. Jake said that everyone had a wonderful time and that they would definitely be back.

Renowned western artist Edgar Sotelo (www.soteloart.com) spent a day painting at the CDRI. Later that week, he and Bill Davis of Fort Davis brought a group of painters out for a landscape painting workshop sponsored by The Gallery at the Fort Davis Drugstore.

Presentations

The following presentations were given during this reporting period:

- *Education Programs at the CDRI*. Talk given to Delta Kappa Gamma members.
- *Earth Science Education at the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center*. Presentation at the South-Central Section of the Geological Society of America.
- *Overview of the CDRI*. Presentation to the 2012 class of Leadership Big Bend.
- *Overview of the CDRI*. Presentation to the Tierra Grande Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists.
- *Weather and Climate of the Chihuahuan Desert*. Presentation to the Tierra Grande Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists
- *Fire and Recovery*. Presentation given to the Texas Association of Cactus & Succulent Societies
- *Introduction to the Chihuahuan Desert*. Presentation given to the Phoenix Cactus & Succulent Society.
- *Education at the CDRI*. Presentation given to the Rotary Club of Alpine.
- *Welcome to the Davis Mountains*. Presentation given to the Davis Mountains Fitness & Training Camp
- *Introduction to the CDRI*. Presentation given to the Alpine Lions Club.
- *Research at the CDRI*. Program given to strategic planning committee, staff, and board members.

LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Lectures

- Bears, Fire, and Drought. Lecture by Dr. Diana Doan-Crider (35 attendees)
- Outdoor Lighting. Lecture by Bill Wren, UT McDonald Observatory (14 attendees)
- Geology at the Crossroads by Blaine Hall, TPWD (40 attendees)
- The Roadrunner: Almost Human by Jim Cornett (15 attendees)
- Dung Beetles of the Big Bend by Dr. David Edmonds, retired California State Polytechnic University-Pomona
- Dragonflies & Damselflies by Dr. John Abbott, University of Texas (14 participants)

Fieldtrips & Workshops

- Pruning workshop with Oscar Mestas, West Texas Urban Forester.
- Chaa Ranch: Exploring the Chinati Mountains (7 participants)
- Field Trip to the Potrillo Volcanic Field, New Mexico. Cancelled due to lack of participants.
- Birding at the Circle DUG Ranch. Cancelled due to lack of participants.
- Hiking Mount Livermore (15 participants)
- Dragonfly & Damselfly workshop (9 participants)

Night Hikes

The Desert After Dark night hikes into Modesta Cayon given every Saturday night in July. The hikes were led by volunteers and tailed by staff members. On one Saturday, David Oesper and the Big Bend Astronomers gave a star gazing party after the hike. Approximately 60 people participated in the hikes.

PUBLICATIONS

Land of Lost Borders on YouTube

Back in the 1980s, the CDRI produced a series of award-winning films about the Chihuahuan Desert region. For years, we sold the films on video tapes but technology finally caught up with us and the films went out of production because we didn't have a copy of high enough quality to convert it to DVD.

Rick LaBello of the El Paso Zoo contacted me about converting the films to YouTube productions. He is working with the El Paso Community Foundation to make all of Harry Gordon's films available on YouTube. The first film—*Land of Lost Borders*—is now online and available for viewing. Copies of the rest of the films were sent to Rick and he will continue to upload them to our YouTube account.

Land of Lost Borders has had 160 views since it was uploaded 2 months ago.

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.

MAINTENANCE PROJECTS

Greenhouse

Leslie Spicer, our new gardener, tackled some big jobs in the greenhouse. These included:

- Getting a mealy bug infestation under control. Mealy bugs and spider mites are a continual problem in the greenhouse. In addition to our routine spraying of the plants with an organic pesticide, Leslie is using a systemic pesticide to knock back the infestation to a level where it can be controlled with our organic mix.
- Cleaning up from the freeze of 2011. Leslie removed dead cactus, empty pots, and weeded in the greenhouse.
- Installation of two more black barrels for passive solar energy and shelving under the tables to maximize space for seedlings.
- Numbering the tables for easier reference.
- Moving seedlings from shelving under the table to temporary tables where they receive more light.
- Salvage of two stems of Mexican Lime Cactus. These are the largest of our barrel cactus and were planted in a half-barrel in the corner of the greenhouse. Over the years, the wooden barrel rotted away. The rotten wood was removed and the cacti were propped up with a stone retaining wall. This spring, two stems of the cacti rotted at the base and fell over. Mark Foreman and Leslie were able to remove the rotten stems, cut off the bad part of the plants, and let the healthy tissue callous. The stems were then planted in the in-ground cactus bed at the end of the greenhouse. Although it will be awhile before we know, the stems appear to be putting out roots.
- Working with Patty Manning from Sul Ross State University to learn more about raising cactus and to develop a watering schedule for our collection.
- Renumbered cactus pots so that they could be read and placed number on labels. Replaced many of the plastic labels that get brittle in the sun and break easily.

Garden Maintenance

In addition to the greenhouse, Leslie—with the help of the Yank and Yak volunteers and CDRI staff—has been working on garden maintenance. Some projects included:

- Tons of weedeating. Leslie and crew are weedeating and hand weeding the garden areas to better highlight the specimen plants.
- Repairing and replacing the drip irrigation system.
- Removing plants that did not survive the 2011 freeze and/or the drought.
- Taking piles of slash from the garden to Alpine Recycle where they are chipped and shredded for reuse in landscaping projects.
- Establishing compost piles in the garden to be used for the soft green material removed during pruning and weeding operations.
- Major pruning. The garden is shaping up due to some major pruning efforts.

- Removal of feather grass in the gardens and around the Visitors' Center. This attractive grass has proven to be quite invasive in the gardens. We are removing as much as possible.
- Slash removal. Several volunteer days have been dedicated to removing the piles of woody removal created when the fire crews came through last year to prune and create fire breaks. Piles of slash have also been discovered hidden behind trees by former staff members. These piles are also being picked up and recycled.
- Repair of trails through garden after flood event washed out the water bars.

PROBLEMS IN THE GARDEN

Madrones

Several of our madrones have died within the last year and two more appear near death. Discussions with Oscar Mestas (West Texas Urban Forester) and the head horticulturalist at Texas A&M have shown that this is a range-wide problem. Madrones are dying through their range due to the severity of the drought and the spread of a fungal disease similar to oak-wilt disease. Leslie is paying more attention to the watering schedule and trying to gradually increase the soil moisture content.

Arizona Cypress

Due to drought stress, conifers throughout west Texas are being attacked by beetles. Unfortunately, we lost three Arizona cypress in the botanical gardens before we realized what was causing the rapid death of the trees. Leslie worked with Logan Boswell (Texas Extension Service) and Oscar Mestas (Texas Forest Service) to diagnose the problem, determine how to treat the trees, and learn how to protect the rest of our conifers.

The main solution to the problem is to water, water, water. Leslie put many trees that have not ever been irrigated onto a drip system and has diligently been deep watering.

Greenhouse

Leslie has been monitoring the high temperatures in the greenhouse and discovered that our greenhouse gets much too warm—even for a cactus collection. Temperatures routinely reach 118°F (the maximum temperature on our thermometer) during the day. To help this situation, Mark Foreman removed the levered screens over the fan boxes and replaced them with 1/4inch hardware cloth in a wooden frame. This allows for better air flow when the fans are on. In addition, levered screens near the ceiling of the greenhouse at the far end were removed. This reduced the temperature of the greenhouse by about 5 °F within a few minutes. Mark reports that the fans in the greenhouse now turn off about 6:00 in the evening rather than running well into the night.

Even with better ventilation, the greenhouse gets too warm during the summer. After extensive research and discussion with commercial greenhouse growers, the old shade cloth that covered the greenhouse was replaced with a white (rather than black) 50% shade cloth. Unfortunately, this solution had little real effect on the temperature inside the greenhouse.

This winter, Mark and Leslie will create ventilation panels in the sides of the greenhouse to encourage cross ventilation. These panels must be closeable during the winter so that the greenhouse can be kept warm enough.

The current greenhouse has served its purpose over the past 30 years, but it is time to seriously consider constructing a new facility. The current greenhouse is hard to cool, hard to warm, and has a fiberglass shell that blocks UV light that is critical to the growth of the cacti. In addition, we have run out of space for the plants.

Mark and Leslie have researched greenhouses with the features that we need and estimate that the cost will be approximately \$150,000. This includes construction costs.

Drip Irrigation System

The drip irrigation system continues to be a maintenance nightmare. During the summer, Leslie spent a significant amount of time repairing fittings, replacing old lines, and constructing drip irrigation circles to go around larger plants that need more water than they've been receiving. A proposal is being written to replace—and bury—the drip irrigation system in 2013.

CACTUS REPOTTING

Cactus in a greenhouse situation should be repotted approximately every 2 years. This has not been the case with the CDRI cactus collection—many of which have not been repotted since 2002 or even earlier. Leslie has been carefully working through the collection repotting older plants and separating and potting seedlings. The entire collection should be repotted by next spring.

SEED COLLECTION

Seeds from the cacti collection are being collected, cleaned, and cataloged. Until the current batch of seedlings can be repotted and space found, no additional plants are being grown from the seed collection.

DATABASES AND INVENTORIES

With more staff and more volunteers, tracking what's been done and when things need to be done is becoming more important. This spring, databases were created to track the watering schedule for plants in the garden and greenhouse and to monitor the temperature in the greenhouse.

In addition, garden staff and volunteers inventoried the plants in the garden and created a database indicating the watering needs of each species represented. This database is proving very useful as we begin designing the new irrigation system.

CACTUS RESCUE IN MARFA

Leslie Spicer and volunteer Candice Covington, removed and repotted a number of cacti from a yard in Marfa. The owner of the property had planted an extensive cactus garden, but then found that she could no longer take care of the garden as she got older. She called the CDRI and offered to give us any cactus that we wanted. Although most of the plants were too big to safely remove, Leslie and Candice “rescued” some prickly pears that were potted up and sold at the plant sale.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE CACTUS FRENZY!

Each spring, we host an event focused on cactus and succulents to coincide with spring break and the spring bloom in the greenhouse. To help prepare for this event, Jim and Ann Black of San Antonio came out for a weekend of training for staff and volunteers. During the training event, hundreds of young (and old!) cactus were repotted. Before the weekend, staff and volunteers spent several days unpotting seedlings, washing the roots and setting them out to callous, and sterilizing pots.

RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION PROGRAM

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

BIRD RESEARCH

Bird surveys continue to be conducted at the Nature Center as part of four major projects:

- As part of his MS research, Mark Foreman is conducting weekly bird counts to compare bird diversity in the burned and unburned portions of the Nature Center property. His study will continue through the year and will be presented as a thesis project in the spring of 2013.
- Volunteer Josh Burns continues his baseline bird surveys of the CDRI property. So far in 2012, he has submitted 9 reports to eBird and documented 34 species at the Nature Center. Josh has submitted 148 reports and documented 126 species since he began surveys at the Nature Center in 2008.
- Breeding Bird Census. Every four days in the summer, CDRI staff and volunteers census breeding bird activity in the grasslands. Data collected include number and species of birds engaged in breeding behavior (singing, interacting, visiting an active nest) and the location of the activity (using a GPS, rangefinder, and compass direction). The locational information is used to create maps of breeding bird territories. The breeding bird census is now in its fourth year and is producing interesting information about the shift in breeding bird populations since the juniper removal project, the fire, and the drought. A report on the project will be published in the next newsletter.
- The CDRI continues to participate in national birding initiatives such as the Great Backyard Bird Count held each February. During this citizen scientist event, birders of all levels are encouraged to come to the CDRI to participate in a census of our 500 acres. In 2012, 8 participants documented 12 species of birds during the 2.5 hour survey. The bird count data was submitted to the national database maintained by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.
- Fall Bird Count (September 22). 7 participants

BUTTERFLY RESEARCH

Data collection for three butterfly research projects began again this spring when the weather warmed and the winds quit blowing quite so hard. These projects include:

- Pollard Walk. Butterfly species and numbers are documented once a week along a 2.5 mile transect. This project is designed to collect baseline data for butterfly populations on the Nature Center property as part of a larger project using butterfly populations as indicators of climate change.
- Butterfly Recovery. After the fire last spring, a grant was received from the James A. "Buddy" Davidson Foundation to study the rate of recovery of butterflies in the burned section of the CDRI grasslands. The project is examining the impact of the fire and drought on butterfly populations that overwinter as eggs or pupae and could not escape the early spring fire. The project includes weekly counts and documentation of vegetation using 14 permanent transects established in the burned and unburned grasslands.
- Fort Davis Butterfly Count Circle. The CDRI organizes three annual butterfly counts in a 15 mile count circle centered on the Jeff Davis County courthouse. This project is part of the North American butterfly counts coordinated by the North American Butterfly Association (NABA). Count results are uploaded to the NABA website.

PERMANENT TRANSECTS MARKED

To aid in studies being conducted on the burned and unburned portions of the grasslands, posts marking transect lines were placed marking the beginning and end of each 100 meter transect. This spring, the posts were labeled with a sign that has the transect number and lat/long position.

The transects are being used for a vegetation recovery project, the butterfly recovery project, and a repeat photography project visually documenting changes to the grasslands.

RESEARCH PAPERS PUBLISHED

A number of papers on research conducted at the CDRI were published this year:

- Farallo VR and Forstner MRJ (2012) Predation and the Maintenance of Color Polymorphism in a Habitat Specialist Squamate. PLoS ONE 7(1): e30316.doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0030316
- McAlister, Cynthia (2012) An insect pollinator survey at the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute (CDRI), Jeff Davis County, Texas, and a comparison of the native bee diversity of the CDRI's Botanical Gardens to that of the surrounding grasslands using pan traps. M.S. thesis, Department of Biology, Sul Ross State University.
- Hillen, Chris (2012) Conservation and Sustainable Use of Rio Grande Basin Water Resources. M.A. thesis, Department of Communications, Sul Ross State University.
- Foreman, M. (2012) Literature Review for Proposed Thesis on Avifaunal Use of Burned and Unburned Habitat. Unpublished paper, Natural Resource Management 5304, Sul Ross State University.
- Foreman, M. (2012). Prescribed Fire Plan for the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute. Unpublished paper, Fire Ecology MRM 5303, Sul Ross State University.
- Foreman, M. (2012). Linear Regression Analysis of Number of Birds Observed at Different Times of Day. Unpublished paper, Biostatistical Analysis II, NRM 5313, Sul Ross State University.
- Wander, Sharon (ed.) (2012) NABA Butterfly Counts 2011 Report.

REVIEW OF A VEGETATION CLASSIFICATION AND PRELIMINARY MAP

Dr. Cathryn Hoyt was asked by the National Park Service to review the vegetation classification and preliminary map technical report for Fort Davis National Historic Site.

PROCEEDINGS SYMPOSIUM

At the strategic planning meeting about research, the committee decided that publication of the 2004 symposium proceedings was imperative. In order to get the proceedings published as quickly as possible the following actions have been taken:

- Megan Wilde was hired to develop a symposium website.
- Megan uploaded all of the abstracts from the meeting.
- John Karges and Cathryn Hoyt met for a full day to plan the technical details of publication of the symposium proceedings.
- John Karges wrote the first draft of the introduction and acknowledgements.

We hope to make the website live by the end of the year.

VISITING RESEARCHERS

Weatherford College Department of Physical Sciences

In May, students and instructors from the Weatherford College Department of Physical Sciences spent the day at the Nature Center. The focus of their visit was the interpretation of the volcanic and

tectonic history of the area, the age and order of geological events, as well as the paleontological history of the area.

University of North Carolina-Asheville

University of North Carolina-Asheville professor Dr. Jonathan Horton brought his desert ecology class to the Nature Center in late May. The group camped for four days at the pavilion and used the maintenance building as their center of operations. In teams of two, students conducted various research projects (such as basking behavior of lizards on different types of igneous rock, pollination ecology of yuccas, and an investigation of bird diversity in the burned and unburned grasslands) during their stay. Several students participated in the long-term bird and butterfly surveys being conducted by Mark Foreman and Cathryn Hoyt. Papers produced for the class will be submitted to the CDRI library.

Sul Ross State University

- Dr. Jim Zech and plant taxonomy class (June)
- Dr. Chris Ritzi and environmental biology class (October)
- Anne Marie Hilscher and General Zoology class (October)

SPECIAL EVENTS

CACTUS FRENZY (MARCH)

The focus was on cactus during the annual Cactus Frenzy event scheduled for the week of spring break in March. Preparation for the event included updating the Cactus Care brochure, repotting thousands of cactus seedlings, and ordering plants for the sale. This year we were forced to purchase plants from cactus nurseries because our plants were too small and Patty Manning lost many of her cacti in the 2011 freeze.

In addition to the cactus sale, guided hikes into Modesta Canyon were led by CDRI staff members and volunteers each morning and a brief presentation, followed by a garden tour, was given each afternoon. The Talks at 2 included:

- The Many Uses of the Agave
- Cooking with Desert Plants (given twice)
- Recovery from the Rockhouse Fire
- Adaptations to the Desert
- Cactus Care & Potting Tips.

ANNUAL NATIVE PLANT SALE (APRIL)

The Annual Native Plant Sale was held in late April. Due to high fuel costs, one of our major suppliers would not deliver to us so we drove to Austin, rented a UHaul truck, and picked up the plants ourselves.

The figures below reflect income and expenses of plants only. The expense budget does not include staff time, advertising, food for Member's Night or any other non-plant related expense. In order to save some money on this event, the full-color, 4-page brochure that is usually produced and mailed to members was not sent out. Instead, members received a half-sheet postcard announcing the date of the sale and directing them to the website for more information on the plants.

Income	2012	2011	2010
Cactus	5,924*	5,312**	10,456**
Non-succulents	10,220	13,267	11,961
Total	\$16,144	\$18,579	\$22,417
Expenses			
Cactus			
Miles to Go	190		
Mesa Garden	109	280	
Arizona Wholesale Nursery	687	0	0
Sul Ross	541	953	632
Plants			
Mountain States Nursery	1,855	4,370	1,469
Native Ornamentals	1,663	1,248	2,058
SRSU	563	510	632
Native Texas Nursery	2,036	3,128	2,071
McNeal Growers	522	0	0
Total	7696	10,489	6,862
Net	\$8,448	\$8,090	\$15,555

* Through the end of May, 2012

** Through the end of the year.

For the past two years, Melissa Brady was responsible for putting together a beautiful 32-page, color, plant information catalog with images of each plant that we would carry and information about light and drainage requirements, the size of the mature plant, and the common and scientific name. Each catalog cost about \$2.00 to print and was distributed free-of-charge to plant sale visitors.

Although the catalogs were beautiful and informative, they were time-consuming and expensive to produce. This year we chose to make the catalog web-based. By visiting the CDRI website, visitors could see images of the plants and a link would take them to another website (usually the LadyBird Johnson Wildflower Center) where extensive information about the horticultural requirements for the plant could be found.

ANNUAL BBQ AND BENEFIT AUCTION

In 2012 the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute once again threw a BBQ in appreciation for our members.

Our goals included fund raising, raising public awareness of locally sourced food products, and membership awareness. The event was held on Saturday, September 15, 2012. Even with a drenching rain all morning and a chill wind in the afternoon and evening, more than 150 people attended the event.

We tried several new things this year, including:

- Charging for a dinner ticket.
- Opening the event to the public. The BBQ was broadly advertised in the newspaper and with radio advertising.
- Serving locally sourced food. This was an adventure, but resulted in an excellent meal.
- A children's auction. We think the grandparents had more fun than the kids, but it worked!

- A photography contest. Photographs had to be taken at the Nature Center. The winning photograph was determined by the amount of money that it raised with one vote being purchased for a quarter. This was a fun and competitive event. If we do it again next year, we would probably attract more entries if we had prizes for the winning photographer.

Comparisons between the events held in 2010 and 2012 are approximate, but here are highlights

1. The number and amount received from tickets sales was roughly the same for the two years
2. Leaping Lizards sales (the retail shop) were higher in 2010
3. The amount of monies donated for Education in 2012 was about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the amount donated in 2010
4. The amount of Unrestricted donations in 2012 was roughly $\frac{1}{2}$ of the amount donated in 2010

The following table can be used for comparison purposes:

Income Category	2010	2012	Change
Shop Sales (Profit)	\$430	\$140	(\$290)
Tickets			
Number Sold	109	126	17
Amount Made	\$2,220	\$2,110	(\$110)
Donation: Education	\$5,800	\$4,250	(\$1,550)
Donation: Unrestricted	\$22,080	\$12,265	(\$9,815)
Other*	\$800	\$750	(\$50)
Totals	\$31,330	\$19,515	(\$11,815)

Other includes

2010 – Donation Restricted, Project funds

2012 – Funds from Kids auction and sell of photographs

MANAGEMENT

STAFFING AND BENEFITS

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

STAFFING AND BENEFITS

Staff Changes

Leslie Spicer was hired as our head gardener this spring. She brings a great deal of energy and enthusiasm to the position and has made remarkable changes in the garden and greenhouse since she arrived.

Mary Lou Saxon was hired to work part-time in the Visitors' Center. Unfortunately, she found the commute from Marfa to be too expensive and time-consuming and found another job closer to home.

To replace Mary Lou, Joe Skinner was hired in late May. Joe will cover visitor's services on Thursday and Friday afternoons and all day on Saturday. All day Monday and in the mornings on Thursday and Friday, Joe will assist Mark and Leslie in the gardens doing various maintenance tasks.

Staff Development

CDRI staff have participated in a variety of professional development opportunities this spring:

- Mark Foreman completed a CPR and First Aid class.
- Susan Penney and Jessica Glasscock attended the Invaders of Texas workshop at Big Bend National Park. The Invaders of Texas is a citizen science program committed to recognizing species of invasive plants and insects and building a database that documents their locations across the state. Susan and Jessica attended to learn more about the program and access whether we should promote it as a citizen science program.
- Leslie Spicer spent time with Patty Manning in the Sul Ross greenhouses to learn about cactus care, potting, pollination, seed collection, and specific potting needs for our cactus collection.
- Leslie attended a two-day workshop at the Albuquerque Botanical Gardens to learn about cactus taxonomy. The workshop included classwork, fieldwork, and a trip to Mesa Gardens Cactus Nursery in Belen, NM.
- Jessica Glasscock successfully passed her oral exams and graduated in the spring with a Masters of Agriculture from Sul Ross. Congratulations, Jessica!

MEETINGS

- February 17 Committee Meetings
- February 18 Board of Directors Meeting
- May 23 Building Committee Meeting
- May 30 Garden Committee Meeting
- June 6 Building Committee Meeting
- June 7 BBQ Meeting
- June 18 Executive Committee Meeting
- July 30 Strategic Planning meeting about research
- August 1 BBQ Meeting

- September 17 Executive Committee Meeting
- October 1 Finance Committee meeting
- October 5 Building Committee Meeting

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

GRANTS-IN-HAND

James A. "Buddy" Davidson Foundation Grant. The CDRI received an \$8,000 grant in 2011 to study the effects of the drought and fire on butterfly populations at the Nature Center. A preliminary progress report was submitted in March and a second progress report submitted in September. The remainder of the grant will be used this year for data collection (butterflies and vegetation) and analysis.

Parks and Wildlife Trail Grant. This trail improvement grant was received several years ago to construct a more accessible trail to the geology exhibit on top of Clayton's Overlook. The trail was completed last year with the assistance of an AmeriCorp team, leaving us with about \$27,000 of grant funds left to develop interpretive panels and do some "touch-up" work on the trail. Mark Foreman is working on doing the final trail work and putting together the interpretive panels. The grant must be completed by February, 2013.

Parks and Wildlife COOP Grant. Work in fulfillment of the goals of the COOP grant is completed. Jessica sent in the final report in June.

Brown Foundation Grant. The CDRI received a generous contribution of \$3,000 last year in support of our educational programming from the Brown Foundation. A final report was submitted in May showing the Brown Foundation trustees how their funds were used to sponsor *The Earth Rocks!!!*, support our first Bug Day program, and support operation expenses for our youth programs.

In response to this final report, Brown Foundation trustee Travis Mathis, arranged for the CDRI to receive another \$2,000 grant in support of education programs in 2012.

Permian Basin Area Foundation. A proposal requesting \$35,000 in funding to provide informal science programs to at least 75% of the elementary, middle-school, and junior high students within five regional school districts was submitted in May. Although not fully funded, we did receive a contribution of \$5,000 from the PBAF. The grant will be used to support *Earth Rocks!!!!* and other educational events.

PROPOSALS SUBMITTED

Green Mountain Energy

In response to a grant RFP forwarded to us by Martha Latta, a proposal was written and submitted to Green Mountain Energy for the installation of solar panels at the Visitors' Center and the greenhouse. The CDRI is now on the short list (155 proposals were received and 15 selected for the short list) and has been asked to submit a more in-depth proposal on how the funding would be used and how we would promote Green Mountain Energy and the use of solar power. Approximately 8 of the 15 projects will be funded. Mark Foreman is taking the lead on the proposal and will have it submitted by November 1st.

DIXON WATER FOUNDATION CHALLENGE GRANT

In the spring of 2012, the Dixon Water Foundation offered a \$25,000 challenge grant to support program funding. Gifts of \$1,000 or more from new donors would be matched dollar for dollar by the foundation. The challenge was to encourage the CDRI to develop relationships with donors capable of giving large gifts.

A letter was sent to each board member asking for the names of at least 5 people that they would be willing to contact about the challenge grant. Two board members responded. One board member, Blaine Hall, has asked for and received four gifts of \$1,000 each.

Gifts received in response to challenge grant and actions taken

Gifts Received

Tom Bruner \$1,000
Estate of Richard Sykes \$1,000
Estate of Dr. Louis B. Glass \$1,000
Dr. Frank and Marilyn Stanonis \$1,000
Mesteño Draw Ranch, NM \$1,000
Dr. Phillip Zeeck, Odessa \$1,000
Anonymous \$1,000 (pledged)

Gifts Requested

Big Bend Telephone \$5,000
Porters Thriftway \$5,000
Firestone/Bridgestone Trust \$2,000
Verizon Wireless (declined)

PROPOSALS IN PROGRESS

Meadows Foundation

A major proposal is being prepared for the Meadows Foundation. Funding is being requested to replace the drip irrigation system, replace toilets with dual flush toilets and waterless urinals, and add a water catch system to the maintenance building. These water conservation measures will be promoted through interpretive signage.

CONTRIBUTIONS

The Family Crisis Center moved into smaller quarters at the new Alpine Library. Unfortunately for them, their 12 ft. conference table and 12 executive chairs would not fit in their new quarters. They called us and asked if it was something that we could use. An enthusiastic “yes!” later, we found ourselves with a conference table, chairs, wooden desk, and a filing cabinet.

NEW BRANDED MERCHANDISE

Scott May worked with Hogeye Inc. to design and produce a hiking medallion and pin with the Nature Center logo. The medallion and pin are custom packaged featuring a photograph of the Nature Center and a description of the CDRI on the back.

ADMINISTRATION

It's no fun, but it's got to be done. Major tasks this year included:

- Completing and filing the final Gloyd Estate tax report with the IRS.
- CDRI Form 990 completed, submitted to the board for review, and submitted.

- Arranged for Ron Kirby to conduct the 2011 audit.
- Completed and submitted the annual 401k plan audit.
- Arranged for Directors & Officers Liability Insurance for the Board of Directors. The insurance is afforded by Darwin National Assurance Company with a policy term of March 7th, 2012 to March 7th, 2013. The limits of insurance consist of \$1,000,000 each occurrence with an aggregate of \$1,000,000. The policy is on file at the CDRI.
- Adjusted and finalized liability and property insurance policies according to directives from the Board of Directors.
- Working with Ron Kirby and Laura Lannom on the audit.
- Finalized Gloyd Estate contributions. The last CD was cashed out in the summer and all funds (not earmarked for projects or operating support) were transferred to the Vanguard Investment accounts.
- A detailed report on income and expenses from the Gloyd Estate was prepared and presented to the Executive Committee in response to questions from board member Jerry Pittman.
- Negotiated contract with West Texas Disposal for dumpster service.
- Filed tax exemption forms with WTU.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Talk at Ten (Aired May 9th)

Jessica Glasscock and Susan Penney were interviewed on Marfa Public Radio for one of their Talk at Ten segments. During the interview, Jessica and Susan were able to promote volunteer and education opportunities at the CDRI and the upcoming special programs for spring break.

Earth Day Event (April)

Board Member Jennifer Jordan did another great job representing the CDRI at the SRSU Conservation Biology Club's Earth Day Event in Alpine. Jennifer and Jessica put together a display and gathered materials about the CDRI's education programs to be handed out to parents and children attending the Earth Day Event. Thank you, Jennifer, for being such a great CDRI ambassador.

Article for the Cenizo Magazine

Cathryn Hoyt was invited to write an article on butterfly gardens for the fall issue of the *Cenizo Magazine*. The article and several photographs were accepted for publication.

Birds and Butterflies of the Big Bend

Cathryn Hoyt and Jennifer Jordan staffed a CDRI booth at the first *Birds and Butterflies of the Big Bend* event in Marathon in July. Jessica Glasscock put together a CDRI display board and the booth was well-stocked with literature about the CDRI. Unfortunately, the event was poorly attended, but Jennifer and Cathy had a great time visiting with other vendors and each other!

ADVERTISING

CDRI staff continue to promote the Nature Center and CDRI programs through a variety of media. This spring promotional outreach included:

- CDRI events promoted on the Texas Events Calendar and the Texas State Travel Guide

- A brochure advertising the Cactus Frenzy! event and spring break activities was designed and printed in-house. Copies of the brochure were then distributed to hotels and motels in Alpine, Fort Davis, and Marfa.
- 400 rack cards were distributed at the Texas Academy of Sciences meeting held in Alpine.
- Several hundred rack cards were provided to organizers of the Texas Star Party for distribution during their event.
- Press releases promoting CDRI events were distributed to regional newspapers.
- Photographs of our botanical gardens were requested for publication in AAA Magazine.
- Advertisement for the next addition of the Big Bend Travel Guide.
- Two advertisements in the quarterly *Cenizo* Magazine.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Jessica Glasscock and Cathryn Hoyt have tried to be more diligent about posting upcoming events, activities, and observations to our FaceBook page. We currently have 807 people that follow our posts.