

**Bright Leaf T-Shirts, Caps, & Patches  
in Vibrant Colors**



**Caps \$20**



Friends of Bright Leaf  
**Patches \$5**



**T-Shirts \$15**

To order, contact Sally Scott at 453-2289

**Calendar of Events**

**February Event—Work Day**

Saturday, February 10th, 9:00am—1:00pm

**Docent Training**

Saturday, March 3rd, (see page 3)

**March Board Meeting**

Tuesday, March 13th, 6:30 pm

**Austin Nature Day / Earth Day**

Sunday, April 22nd, 9:00am—1:00pm

**May Board Meeting**

Tuesday, May 8th, 6:30 pm

**Monthly Interpretive Hikes**

Interpretive Hikes are scheduled for the second Saturday and second Sunday of every month. Meet at the parking lot at the north entrance to the park.

**February Interpretive Hikes**

Saturday, February 10, 9:00 - 11:00 am  
Sunday, February 11, 9:00 - 11:00 am

**March Interpretive Hikes**

Saturday, March 10, 9:00 - 11:00 am  
Sunday, March 11, 9:00 - 11:00 am

**April Interpretive Hikes**

Saturday, April 14, 9:00 - 11:00 am  
Sunday, April 15, 9:00 - 11:00 am

**May Interpretive Hikes**

Saturday, May 12, 8:30 - 10:30 am  
Sunday, May 13, 8:30 - 10:30 am

**Thanks to our 2007 Sponsors**



Friends of Bright Leaf  
P.O. Box 27921  
Austin, Texas 78755-7921

**Friends of Bright Leaf**



Friends of Bright Leaf

Winter 2007

**All Texas Cats: Large and Small**

March is coming!!! And with it, the return to Bright Leaf of the Golden Cheeked Warblers. This endangered bird nests only in the Ashe Juniper and Oak woodlands of the Texas Hill country. The male comes north from Mexico first, and establishes a territory. The females follow about two weeks later.

To observe this elusive bird, hike to one of the steep ravines or canyons and listen for its buzzy descending song. If you spot a



black and white bird with a yellow cheek marked by a black eye line you have found it!

This bird, smaller than a hand, is quite smart. She uses the stringy bark of the mature Ashe Juniper (also called cedar) to build her nest. The eggs hatch at the same time as those pesky "caterpillars on strings" (also called oak rollers).

These bugs are the primary protein along with some spiders that she feeds her babies.

The fledgling Golden Cheeks mature quickly and by late June are usually ready to accompany their parents back to their home in Mexico or Central America.

Bright Leaf had several nesting pairs of birds last year. Here's hoping for another good year for this endangered bird.

Sally Scott. Photo from the Travis County, BCCP website

Saber-toothed tigers roamed the earth for more than 30 million years! They are now extinct, but when they roamed the Western Hemisphere, they ate camels, giant bison, horses, and mammoths. The last ones died around 10,000 years ago. The earliest evidence of cat and human remains together comes from about 8,000BC on the island of Cyprus. From that time until 200BC the cat became domesticated and made their way from Egypt, where they came to be associated with the goddess Bastet, to Rome on ships. From there they spread with the Roman Empire to Europe and Asia. Cats traveled around the world serving as mousers on ships and when Europeans came to North America, they brought the domestic cat with them.



There were already cats here, of course, the native big cats. In Central and South America, the jaguar was important to the Mayan and the Aztec cultures. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Catholic  
*(Continued on page 4)*

**Next Event:  
February Work Day**

Saturday, February 10<sup>th</sup> from  
9:00 am until 1:00 pm  
*(Details inside)*

**Do you want to become a Docent at Bright Leaf?**

Learn about plant and animal life and help others enjoy Bright Leaf by leading hikes.  
*(Get details, page 3)*

# Letter from the Board President

Dear Friends of Bright Leaf,

Here we are at the beginning of another New Year and it looks like it is going to be a very good new year for Bright Leaf. The Austin Community Foundation has supported the Friends group in every step of the transition and I look forward to a very positive relationship with that organization. Many of our other supporters and volunteers came out in December for our annual appreciation party. At the party we enjoyed the music of the Bright Leaf Consort made up of Lesley Hubbard, Alex Mourelatos, Olive Forbes, and Hope Rider. And we once again enjoyed the beautiful home of Cleigh Nease, our neighbor and friend extraordinaire.

whether it's pulling out Nandina, leading children on hikes, keeping track of volunteers, or in a myriad of other ways. Volunteers are needed to help out on our February work day on Saturday the 10<sup>th</sup>. The park has no shortage of invasive plants that need removal and the trail needs some sprucing up after recent drought, high winds, and thunderstorms. While you are marking February 10<sup>th</sup> on your calendar, let us know if you are interested in the docent training class on March 3<sup>rd</sup> and mark April 22<sup>nd</sup> for our spring open house. This year our open house is on Earth Day. Come out and celebrate our special place on Earth called Bright Leaf all year!

Make a resolution this year to support Bright Leaf. There are lots of opportunities to help pitch in,

Nancy Woolley  
Friends of Bright Leaf

## Life Members (>\$1000)

Greg & Mary Crouch  
Ben & Joan Bentzin  
Kent Hickson  
Laurel Foundation  
Georgia B. Lucas Foundation Fund  
Jane Smoot  
Barbara Ruud  
HEB  
Ralph & Patricia Ladd

## Sponsors (\$100 to \$250)

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Janet Delaney & Jack Morrison  
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Susan Kleinman  
Margaret Menicucci & Michael Whellan  
Alex P.D. Mourelatos  
Cleigh Nease  
Cindy and Jim Phillips  
Robert Michael Rogan  
Anne Woolley

## Patrons (\$250 to \$500)

Beck Runte

## Supporter (\$50 to \$100)

Ross Bee  
Tom Delaney & Kim Patterson

*(This list reflects contributions received since the start of the fiscal year: September 1, 2006)*

# Letter From the Park Manager

## Happy New Year!

What a difference a year makes. Last winter the preserve experienced record heat and aridity. This winter we are blessed with rain that could be the foundation for beautiful wildflowers and other flora this spring.

I wish to thank Cleigh Nease for his gracious hospitality for our volunteer appreciation party in December. Good company and music were much

enjoyed.

Special thanks to Nancy Woolley for her efforts as President of FoBL.

I look forward to seeing you at our workday in February and at other events in the coming months. Again, thank you for efforts on behalf of the Bright-leaf Preserve.

Thank you,  
John Mahan

# Membership Application

New Member  Renewal

Annual memberships to **Friends of Bright Leaf** provide funds to help preserve, protect and make accessible this treasure. Become a member and help assure that Georgia Lucas' dream will last many lifetimes.

Individual \$25  Family \$35  Supporter \$50+  Sponsor \$100+   
Patron \$250+  Corporate \$500+  Life Member \$1,000+

I would like to help with the following activities: [Please circle all that apply].

Trail/Brush Work      Clean ups      Lead Hikes      Train Docents  
Membership Recruitment      Bookkeeping      Publicity      Event Planning  
Fund-Raising      Desktop Publishing      Educate Children      Educate Adults  
Educate on Plants      Educate on Birds      Educate on Geology      Scientific Studies  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME(S): \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ WORK PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ ( for reminders of hikes and other events)

CHECK #: \_\_\_\_\_

As a member of the Friends of Bright Leaf, I will support the decisions of the management of the park. My signature releases Friends of Bright Leaf and its members from any responsibility for accidents or death as a result of use of the Bright Leaf property. I understand that the Friends of Bright Leaf will not sell or loan my membership information to any other entity.

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Friends of Bright Leaf**  
P.O. Box 27921  
Austin, Texas 78755-7921  
(512) 459-7269

(Continued from page 1)

Church outlawed the use of jaguar images and costumes because of the association with native religions. The imagery survived and blended with Catholic traditions. Even today, festivals with participants wearing masks representing jaguars coincide with Catholic holidays. In the Zuni culture in North America, the small carved animals or fetishes were often of the most powerful animal, the puma, also known as the mountain lion or cougar. They also carved the bobcat and today even carve fetishes of the domestic cat. Many other examples can be found of the high regard Native Americans had for the big cats.

In Texas, the big cats found here were the ocelot, the jaguar, the jaguarundi, the puma, and the bobcat. Perhaps the least known of these is the odd looking jaguarundi which is almost weasel-like in appearance. It has a long body, short legs and a small head and ears. It is native to Central and central and northern parts of South America. It is also seen in Texas, although very rarely, and is on the federal and state endangered species lists. It is not sought after for fur, so its main threats are deforestation and loss of habitat.

try and save that population. Pumas can live in a variety of habitats and feed on a variety of small animals and even deer. The bobcat is also widespread in the United States and may be the most numerous. It ranges from the Canadian border down into Mexico. It is a species in the lynx genus. It is one of the smaller large cats and is easily identified by its short tail. Rabbits may be its favorite food, but it will eat many small mammals and in winter may even prey on deer when other food is less common. The domestic cat, *Felis catus*, arrived with colonists several hundred years ago. As travelers settled down and began to farm, cats proved their worth as mousers in barns used to store grain. Today there are probably over 100 million domestic cats in the United States. These cats display a resemblance to the behaviors of their larger relatives. This instinct that makes them useful as good mousers also makes them one of the major reasons for the extinction of many bird species. They also prey on other small mammals and compete with the native predators for food. Domestic cats that live outdoors can catch feline leukemia virus, feline distemper, and feline immune deficiency disease. These diseases can also be transmitted to wild animals including the remaining large cats. Free ranging domestic cats are also prey to such dangers as coyotes, dogs, and automobiles. For the safety of domestic cats that are kept as pets and for the safety of wildlife in our backyards, indoors is the best choice. Spaying and neutering to stop unwanted breeding is also a wise decision since far too many unwanted or untamed cats have to be euthanized each year. Keeping the large cats as pets is never a good choice. Even though they may be cute and playful when young, the large cats may eat up to 20 pounds of meat a day and have other special dietary needs. The Austin Zoo ([www.AustinZoo.org](http://www.AustinZoo.org)) is a 'rescue zoo' that provides a home for several of the big cats after their owners discovered just how difficult it is to keep these magnificent animals. It is a fine place for all ages to go and appreciate some of the big cats and other rescued animals as well. Ms. Lucas loved her cats and they were provided for in her will. Fluffy, the last of her cats, passed away of old age in the fall of 2005.



The jaguar could be confused with the leopard except that they live on different continents. The jaguar can be spotted or all black. Jaguars used to roam from the southern United States all the way to the tip of South America. Now it lives in the north and central parts of South America. It has been much sought after for its fur and during the 1960's and 70's about 18,000 a year were killed for their coats. Today, the major threats are deforestation and the fragmentation of the remaining populations.

The ocelot is another large cat that is much prized for its fur. The Aztecs hunted it and prized its fur. The ocelot ranged from southern North America though much of South America. Today it can be found in Central America and northern South America but is very much at risk from hunting for its fur and trapping for the pet trade. There is a subspecies that may be found in Texas, but the numbers may be down to 120 or less. The ocelot is a federally listed endangered species.

The puma is also known as the mountain lion or cougar. It ranges from Canada in the north to the southern tip of South America. Its population is fairly stable except for a subspecies in Florida which is endangered. There is a program in place to breed pumas from Texas with these Florida pumas to

Article & Photos by Nancy Woolley  
Photos are of a jaguarundi in a Cost Rica rescue zoo and Nancy's indoor cat, KiKi.

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# February Event

## Work Day at Bright Leaf (Non-Native Plant Removal / Trail Maintenance)

Saturday February 10<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 am until 1:00 pm

(Rain date is the following Saturday, February 17<sup>th</sup>)

Food: Sandwiches will be provided at 1:00 pm. Water and snacks will be provided throughout the day, sponsored by: Friends of Bright Leaf

Notes: Wear hiking boots or sturdy shoes. No special training is required beyond what will be given that morning when we gather in the parking lot.

What to bring (if you have them): water bottle, shovels, loppers, tree saws.

### Directions:

Take RR2222 west from Mopac.

Go one block west of the traffic light at Mesa.

Go left (south) onto Creek Mountain.

When it dead-ends in two short blocks, turn right onto Old Bull Creek.

The parking lot is on the left.

### Friends of Bright Leaf

#### 2006-2007 Board of Directors

Nancy Woolley, President	323-0544
Steve Gerson, Vice President	452-9887
Philip Russell, Secretary	458-4518
Michele Morrison, Treasurer	306-9300
Joseph Beach	342-0588
Bruce Bigelow	327-4748
Marshall Johnston	335-9525
Kurt Hill	343-5550
Sally Scott	453-2289

#### Park Manager

John Mahan

#### Newsletter Editor

Steve Gerson

### Special Thanks to:

- The **docents** who lead hikes for the public every month.
- Contributors to **Friends of Bright Leaf**

The mission of the **Friends of Bright Leaf** is to conserve and enhance Bright Leaf and promote the public's enjoyment, understanding, and appreciation of this urban jewel.

Our budget is posted on the Friends of Bright Leaf web site --

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/fobl/>

### Docent Training

There will be a docent training class held on Saturday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> at Bright Leaf. We need volunteers who can lead hikes, help out at open house events, and/or assist the site manager in numerous ways. There is a limit on how many people can be trained at one time, so please let us know as soon as possible if you are interested. Call 459-7269 or email [nwoolley@austin.rr.com](mailto:nwoolley@austin.rr.com) for more information or to sign up.

Check out our web site: "www.brightleaf.org"