



## Texas Brigades: Wildlife Leadership Development Camps

The Texas Brigades' mission is to empower high school youth with the necessary skills and knowledge in wildlife, fisheries, habitat conservation, land stewardship, team-building, communication, and leadership to become ambassadors for conservation in order to ensure a sustained wildlife and fisheries legacy for future generations.

The Texas Brigades is a combination of four educational programs: Bobwhite Brigade (quail), Buckskin Brigade (deer), Feathered Forces (quail and turkey), and the Bass Brigade. An understanding of the importance of this program is represented by its cooperating partners, including Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas Wildlife Association, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, Texas Chapters of Quail Unlimited, and the National Wild Turkey Federation.

Dr. Dale Rollins, Extension Wildlife Specialist with Texas Cooperative Extension, initially established the Brigades as a way to expand the Extension's educational efforts by developing wildlife ambassadors. Since the initiation of the Brigades the Bobwhite Brigade has been cloned in five other states through collaborations with Quail Unlimited. In Texas, the Bobwhite Brigade has expanded from its original camp in the Rolling Plains (initiated in '93) to East Texas (initiated in '96) and finally to South



Texas (initiated in '98). The Buckskin Brigade (South Texas), an offshoot of the Bobwhite Brigade, fledged in June 2000, and a second Buckskin (in North Texas) held its first Battalion in 2002. The latest addition is the Bass Brigade, launched in 2004. Additionally, the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society models its own summer camp (initiated in 1996) after the Brigades.

Each camp consists of 4 ½ days of intense, interactive, fun learning from some of the top wildlife and natural resource professionals in Texas. Subjects covered include everything from biology, habitat management, watersheds, population dynamics, ecology, and botany, to photography, journalism, firearm safety, fishing, communication, critical-thinking, team building, and leadership.

The remaining camps to be held in 2009 are:

Bass Brigade - July 13-17 - Ft. Parker State Park, Mexia, TX

North Texas Buckskin Brigade - July 29-23 - Stasney's Cook Ranch, Albany, TX

Feathered Forces - July 28-Aug. 1 - Hill Top Camp & Conference Center, Nacogdoches, TX

For additional information, please see [www.texasbrigades.org](http://www.texasbrigades.org), or contact Helen Holdsworth at [h\\_holdsworth@texas-wildlife.org](mailto:h_holdsworth@texas-wildlife.org).

## New Employee Profile: Matt Neuman

Matt began his career with Advanced Ecology, Ltd. in June of 2009 after graduating from Texas A&M University in 2008 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Geosciences. In this degree program, his coursework emphasized the theme of human interaction with the land. While at Texas A&M University, Matt gained experience with cartography and technical proficiency with GIS and GPS technology. Additionally, Matt was involved in research projects within the Geography Department at A&M; he was awarded the Gathright Scholar Award as a senior for the College of Geosciences.

A Shell-sponsored internship with the Hermann Park Conservancy in Houston sparked Matt's interest in GIS technology applied to natural resource management. During this summer internship, Matt worked on the establishment of a comprehensive inventory of trees and structures in the park to aid in conservation and management purposes.

Matt was raised in Beasley, Texas and has since transitioned to Nacogdoches, where he currently resides. Matt enjoys spending his free time hiking, canoeing, kayaking, camping, and enjoying the great outdoors.



## Wetland Plant Identification Course August 13-14, 2009

This is a 2-day field and laboratory class located in Center, Texas designed for professionals with or without a working knowledge of wetland vegetation. Participants will learn to identify wetland plants that commonly occur throughout the state, with an emphasis on our state's most diverse region, East Texas. The course will utilize technical keys to compliment practical field identification. Dr. Stephan Hatch from Texas A&M University will teach the skills necessary for basic keying, and give participants a fundamental knowledge of floristic keys for more exact identification. Participants will work with descriptive vocabulary and unique characteristics while learning field identification of a number of families and genera. Participants will learn general plant identification principles and field characteristics of each species to enable quick assessment of species with similar appearances. The course will be comprised of 1 ½ days in the field and ½ day of keying. The cost for the course is \$375. A signed copy of *Trees, Shrubs, and Woody Vines of East Texas* by the illustrator Bruce Cunningham is also offered for an additional \$55. If you are interested in attending, or have additional questions, please contact Courtney at 936-598-9588 ext 18 or [cgreer@advancedecology.com](mailto:cgreer@advancedecology.com).

**We only have 8 spaces left! Call today to reserve your spot!**



## 12th Annual National Mitigation & Ecosystem Banking Conference

The AEL Ecological staff recently attended the National Mitigation Banking Association's (NMBA) 12th Annual National Mitigation & Ecosystem Banking Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. This year's theme centered around Banking Under the New Rule with break-out sessions including the Business of Banking, Emerging Markets, Stewardship and Sustainability, and Species and Conservation Banking. The conference was attended by 350+ private industry, and agency personnel involved in mitigation banking in some capacity.

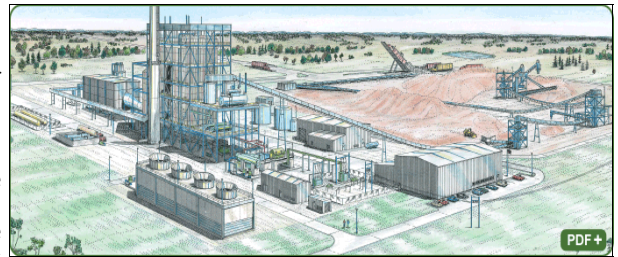
Founded in 1998, the NMBA is actively involved in Washington, DC and at the state and local level to insure that high-quality mitigation is applied consistently within the scope of both the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act. In 2009, the NMBA continues to be active in Washington DC, focusing their efforts on educating the new Administration and Congress about the ecological benefits of mitigation banking. For more information on the NMBA, please see <http://www.mitigationbanking.org>.



Galena MB, Salt Lake City, UT

## Project Profile: Nacogdoches Power, LLC Update

Advanced Ecology began working for American Renewables in 2005, conducting the first fuelwood study for the Nacogdoches



Power, LLC 100 MW wood-fired biomass power plant located in Sacul, Texas 20 miles northwest of Nacogdoches. Since that time, Nacogdoches Power has secured all necessary permits and purchased the land for the project site. Construction is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2009, and is anticipated to be commercially operable by late 2012. When completed, Nacogdoches Power will be one of the largest biomass-fueled electric generating facilities in the U.S.

The project will consist of a wood fuel handling system, a bubbling fluidized bed boiler, a condensing steam turbine generator with an evaporative cooling tower and auxiliary support equipment. The project will employ the latest in boiler and emissions control technology to achieve the best available emissions.

The Project will be fueled by biomass materials, including forest residue from the surrounding, heavily wooded areas of East Texas, wood processing residues, and clean municipal wood waste. The project will require approximately one million tons of fuel annually, which will be procured within a 75-mile radius of the project site.

Nacogdoches Power has recently entered into a 20-year power purchase agreement with Austin Energy, the municipal utility owned by and serving the City of Austin to utilize the power generated by the Sacul plant. American Renewables is currently developing two identical wood-fired biomass plants in Florida in Gainesville and Hamilton County. For additional information on American Renewables, please see <http://www.amrenewables.com/>.

## Forest Landowner Highlights

This month's forest landowner highlight is the Collier Farm located in Rusk County, Texas. The 130-acre plus property has been in the Collier family for multiple generations, and is currently held by Colonel Robert Collier and his brother Loring Collier, both of which are retired from the U.S. Air Force. The property has had a rich agricultural history of farming and cattle grazing. The passing of their uncle Colquitt Milstead in 1990, the last operator of a cattle and hay operation on the tract, played a significant role in their decision to convert the farm into a forestry operation. The Colliers were referred to consulting forester Mark Brian by friends of the Collier family for advice and guidance in this process.

By this time much of the property, except for where grazing occurred, had grown up in a mixture of upland pine and hardwood forests. On behalf of the Colliers, Mark conducted a timber sale of these areas, which was sold to Champion International. Following the harvest, the property (including the pasture areas) was site prepared and hand planted with loblolly pine, with the majority of this work being done by Mark's future Advanced Ecology / Bird Forestry partners Mike Bird and Terry Anderson. The plantings were a success, and in 2007 the Collier's conducted a first thinning harvesting operation under the direction of Advanced Ecology Forestry Operations Manager Chris Adams.

As with most of our forest landowners, the Collier's have taken a very active role in the management of their property. In June, we made an enjoyable trip to the property with Colonel Collier to look over the pine plantation and discuss what the future holds. Pictured in front of their pine plantation is Colonel Collier, his wife Christine, and their dog Penny.



On behalf of AEL/BFS, we would like to thank the Collier's for entrusting us with the management of their forestland and look forward to many more years.

Contributor: Chris Adams, and Mark Brian