

Friends of Fort Davis

Welcome to another newsletter!

In addition to continued support of various projects, this year our annual work plan includes placing several park benches and interpretive exhibits around the park grounds. These are to assist the fort visitors in their comfort and knowledge of the fort during their visit. We are also exploring the possibilities of using an audio format of interpretation that can be used with a cell phone.

Any donation you would like to make to support these projects will be appreciated. All that the board has done for preservation and restoration could not have been accomplished without generous donations from our membership.

As always we appreciate your membership and support.
Jerry Johnson, President, Box 1023, Fort Davis, TX 79734

Social Media

The group's new and improved website and Facebook pages have been actively spreading park news and encouraging philanthropy in the parks. If you haven't checked them out yet or the new signs about the pre-civil war "First Fort", please do!



www.fofdnhs.org
<https://www.facebook.com/fofdnhs/>



FORT
DAVIS NHS

READ ALL ABOUT IT!:

- The newsletter is back and your feedback will keep it coming
- Is it Spring, Summer, Autumn or Winter? Jacket one day, shorts the next!
- 2 weeks of Spring Break in 2019
- Look for the new rack cards at local visitor centers
- Independence Day events July 4-6



Hospital

Extra! Extra!

Our facilities division have been hard at work with carpentry at the post hospital. There is now a ceiling in the administrative wing complementing the area as if the post surgeon were still walking the hallway. It is painted white so that historical cleanliness can be scrutinized with a white glove. In addition the ceiling installation will keep our flying mammal friends from defecating on the floor and exhibits. (See Welcome Spring Friends Section)

All the current renovations have used entrance fee monies, these are your direct dollars going to work.

Signs have been made to depict the north ward and what it was used for. Also, a temporary

interpretive panel has been made to depict the future dispensary which would have been like a modern pharmacy giving out medications such as acetylsalicylic acid for pain and fever and mint oil and licorice for upset stomachs and ulcers.

The dispensary project is being fabricated and installed by Mark Meacham and Roy Catano, these two have amazing skills as historic tradesmen!



Come see the renovations!



Civil Rights Video Project

From the "Auction block" to the "Voting box", African Americans have participated in all U.S. military engagements since the Revolutionary War. It was during the U.S. Civil War that African Americans firmly established their citizenship and eventual rights to become presidents of business, education and the country itself.

The park received funding to

produce short webisodes about the Buffalo Soldiers and their influence on civil rights for African Americans in the country. One video will focus on the Buffalo Soldiers here at Fort Davis and how they faced prejudice and gained respect on the frontier. The second video will highlight the National Parks which discuss this important period for this group of Americans such as Birmingham Civil



Rights, Frederick Douglas, Tuskegee, and Little Rock just to name a few.



Fort Davis NHS

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We're on Facebook!

www.facebook.com/FortDavisNHS

A key post in the defense system of west Texas, Fort Davis played a major role in the history of the Southwest. From 1854 until 1891, troops stationed at the post protected emigrants, freighters, mail coaches, and travelers on the San Antonio-El Paso Road.

Historians today regard Fort Davis NHS as one of the best surviving examples of a southwestern Indian Wars era frontier military post.

It is a vivid reminder of the significant role played by the military in the settlement and development of the western frontier.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

Spring Break & Events

This year spring break was a steady 2 weeks with visitation in the multiple hundreds. Most of the staff agree this was much better than a couple years ago when all schools in Texas were out the same week. That year we saw 1200 visitors in one day and only a small percentage could find lodging in the area. This year we topped at around 650, but the second week saw much more visitation than in the past. We believe this

was a boost to the local economy since there was steady heads in beds and food in bellies throughout a two week period. It was a great spring break with our 4th annual Cannon Ball Run, numerous demonstrations, guided tours and hikes. Speaking of runs, the fort also hosted the Southwest Ultra by Ultra Expeditions! On March 30, runners from all over took part in six races which included a 5K, 10K,

marathon, half-marathon, 50 mile and 100 mile.

Coming up are a few other events including the Easter sunrise service.

National Park Week is April 20-28 with the 20th being a fee free day. The theme for the 27th is Bark Ranger Day so bring out your puppies and explore the site and hiking trails! (On a leash of course)



Evening Primrose in bloom

"Spring break was a pleasure to be involved in, look for pictures in the upcoming issue!"
-Superintendent
Barney Riley

Welcome back Spring Friends!!!

Turkey Vultures (which we call volunteer TxDOT employees) are back cleaning up our roads of roadkill. These amazing creatures migrate to central and south Texas every year and with their return signifies the start of spring.

Another migratory animal will also be returning, but

from Mexico this time, the bats! We host the little brown bat (Myotis), the Mexican free-tailed bat, and a very cool one that lives off blooming agaves, the Mexican Long-nosed bat.

Speaking of flowers, have you seen the vibrant Primrose or smelled aromatic Mountain Laurels? Just come on a hike



through the fort to see the many blooms of claret cup, also known as a hedgehog cactus.



International Dark Skies

It's no secret that the Big Bend region has some of the most spectacular night skies.

Along with Davis Mountains State Park we are working to submit paperwork to become an International Dark Sky Park. Bill Wren of the McDonald Observatory is going to assist us with

required data and documents. This stewardship includes having a lighting management plan detailing the lighting we have at the park. Each group of lights will be cataloged according to luminescent, color and times lit. They will be photographed to show dark sky friendly lighting.

Eventually (without stepping on the Observatory toes) we will hold sky programs at the state park amphitheater and our parking area through out the year.

This is a prestigious endorsement from an organization that wants to preserve the night skies for future generations.



Troopers Clark and Manson greeting Spring Breakers!

Superintendent's Corner

I have accepted a new position with the National Park Service. I have been selected to be the next Chief of Facility Management at Yosemite National Park, and will report for duty there in early June. These moves are always difficult, the sadness of leaving a community of friends and at the same time looking forward to new adventures and new friends. I cannot overstate my respect and

admiration for the staff at Fort Davis. These are truly some of the finest people working in the National Park System and we are blessed to have them at Fort Davis. Their dedication to the mission is what makes this a special place. I will miss many things about the Fort and the area; the scenery, the people, but mostly I will miss the staff.

Come visit me out west!



What is something you are excited to see at Fort Davis this year?

Staff Here and There

We want to welcome David Harding to Fort Davis NHS! He will be working in the facilities division. He came from Rocky Mountain NP where he improved trails with a team of llamas. The staff here may not be as cute as his former furry friends, but we hope he feels welcome to the park. Come by and give him a big Texas Howdy!

We also welcome Erik Walker who is heading up the Facilities Division for a 4 month detail. He is coming from Big Bend NP.

Sebastian Flores has been asked to assist the Manhattan Project site with a special project. The Behind the Fence tours at Los Alamos in April is a chance for the public to experience the site of some of the most secretive atomic science in the world!

Volunteers Richard Martin and newbies Bill & Susan Sliva will be here through May so come by and let them regale you with their enthusiasm and knowledge from travels across the country!

Floy Healer has completed his 23rd volunteer season at the fort. This summer we have hired Rick Keith and Paul Peterson for the Interpretation division and Jaron Olivarez for the maintenance division.



After 30 years with the NPS, Chief of Facilities John Lowe has retired! During his career John also worked at Big Bend NP and Chickasaw NRA in Oklahoma. Always willing to give a hand and put in that extra work with a smile on his face, John has been such an asset to Fort Davis and will be missed greatly.

His plans are to build a house in Terlingua, TX and ride his motorcycle as often as possible! Also, he will work on his chili and black eye pea recipes so that he can take home the gold at each of the cook-offs.

Two of our volunteers have moved on to other parks this spring, Mimi McLemore and Barbara Curry. Mimi is back in the Fort Worth area and Barbara is working with sea turtles at



Padre Island as well as the Texas White House at LBJ's ranch. They each had a wonderful fall/winter season here and promise to be back later in the year!