

Saturday, June 19, 2010

Refuge volunteers spruce up trails

The Colorado River Refuge has some new volunteers who have jumped into the poison ivy with both feet. Pines and Prairies Land Trust welcomes Jim Estes and J.J. "Nick" Nichols into our group of wonderful supporters who care for the refuge. Jim and Nick have generously agreed to keep the entire Colorado River Refuge trail system free of weeds and poison ivy for 2010.

They have taken on this project to help provide community service as graduates of the Lost Pines Master Naturalist program. Along with trail master Dale Morrison, and many others, Estes and Nichols have cut, clipped and sawed their way through grapevines, ragweed, poison ivy, grass, downed trees and brush to keep over two miles of trails easily walkable. Their work at the new Lost Lake section of the refuge has been particularly valuable because these are new trails and not as well established as the river-side trails.

The Lost Lake trails are located on the upstream end of the CRR. The trailhead is on Riverside Drive, just east of Lovers Lane. Hikers have a choice of the Cliffhanger Trail, which runs along the high bank of the river or the Dragonfly Trail which runs north from the Riverside Drive trailhead to Lamalooa Lane.

The Dragonfly Trail offers a very different experience than the Cliffhanger Trail. On this trail, hikers will walk along a large creek



Contributed photos

Nick Nichols, left, and Jim Estes operate the big weedeater at the Colorado River Refuge. The two men are helping to spruce up the refuge's trail system.

through fields of wildflowers and into a woodland before coming out on Lamalooa Lane. It is possible to circle down to the Riverside Drive trailhead by turning right or left and heading south down the gravel roads that run on both sides of the Lost Lake trail system. You may pick up trail maps at the Cliffhanger Trailhead kiosk located just south of Riverside Drive. Trail maps are also available at the Two Bridges Trailhead and Handicapped Accessible Trailhead on Riverside Drive east of the railroad bridge.

The Colorado River Refuge is free and open to all. The refuge is a project of Pines and Prairies Land Trust that serves to educate our commu-

nity about the natural world and the importance of preserving wildland. The trust also maintains a preserve near McDade and a working ranch near Paige. All trust properties are open to the public by appointment and for field days throughout the year. Properties are maintained to help protect clean water and air and to keep the rural character of Bastrop County intact.

For more information about PPLT please call 512-308-1911 or check the web site at www.pplt.org. For more information about the Lost Pines Master Naturalist program please call 512-589-3438 or check www.lostpinesmasternaturalist.org.