



January 2019 Newsletter

Welcome to the Friends of San Antonio Natural Areas (FOSANA) e-newsletter! We share natural areas news, the Friends' efforts, and opportunities to get involved in volunteering or educational programs at San Antonio's natural areas parks. Please check our website, www.fosana.org, for periodic updates and program information.

Happy New Year

Trail Closures and Maintenance

Over the past couple of years, San Antonio has experienced some severe rainstorms with over six to ten inches of rain falling in less than 24 hours. Heavy rains cause the Friedrich Wilderness Park (FWP) Water Trail spring to gush, and sometimes even make springs and waterfalls appear in places where they have never been seen before. However, the resulting significant flooding can also wash out trails, scour hillsides, and leave debris everywhere. Unfortunately, when there are prolonged periods of wet weather, the trails cannot dry, and we are limited in what repairs we can make. Staff cannot work on wet trails without the risk of doing further damage.

There are several factors that contribute to the magnitude of the impact of rain on FWP trails. The terrain is hilly with many steep slopes and the soils are thin. Moreover, most of the trails are more than 30 yrs. old, heavily used, and already significantly eroded. Some trails run straight up or down hills, so-called fall line trails. Water naturally follows the path of least resistance, so when it rains, these fall line trails become little streams. Even where the trails are built into the contours, there is still water that flows down the slope and across the trail, leaving debris berms that disrupt sheet flow.

Sustainable or not, all trails are impacted by traffic, and the impact on natural-surface trails is magnified when they are wet. It is just a law of physics that people (and animals) leave depressions and ruts on wet trails. These ruts, like the berms on the trail edges, impede sheet flow so that the trails become conduits for water. Instead of water flowing across the slope and down the hill, the water is essentially trapped on the trail. The results are erosion and debris berms.

Slips and slides, exacerbated by slick trails, result in trail widening, and clumps of soil that stick on shoes essentially "walk out" of the park. Also when trail users try to avoid a puddle or a muddy spot, they often go off the trail, and the trail then splits into smaller trails, a condition called 'trail braiding'.

Best management practices as well as a concern for patron safety require that trails be closed when they are wet. Friedrich Wilderness Park is joining the San Antonio River Authority, Government Canyon State Natural Area, and other state and national parks, in implementing a policy of closing wet trails. In an

effort to make this as easy as possible on patrons, Water and Forest Range trails are left open. All the trails are reopened as soon as they are considered safe. Please help limit trail damage by obeying trail closure signs and if you see brush or tree branches on trails, do not cut any branches, but please notify park staff.

If you have questions, feel free to contact Natural Areas Assistant Manager
Kelsey Scherschel (210.207.3718, Kelsey.Scherschel@sanantonio.gov).



Upcoming Natural Areas Events

- **Starting Out Wild: Pokies & Pricklies (ages 1-3)**
 - 10:00-11:00 a.m. | Friday, January 4 | Friedrich Wilderness Park classroom
 - Learn about the parts of a cactus including the tuna, pad, flower, spine! These high energy, engaging programs are a perfect way to foster an appreciation of the natural world. It is recommended that a child be walking and a parent or caretaker attend with each child. Most classes take place outdoors.
- **First Saturday Hike: Winter Fitness Hike (recommended ages: 10 & up)**
 - 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. | Saturday, January 5 | Friedrich Wilderness Park
 - Feel the calming effect of nature with a two-hour fitness hike along Main Loop and Vista Loop trails at Friedrich Wilderness Park. This hike will cover approximately 2 miles of picturesque trails across canyon tops and through meadows and woodlands. Be sure to bring adequate water!
- **Urban Beekeeping & Rescue (recommended: ages 6 & up)**
 - 10:00-11:30 a.m. | Saturday, January 12 | Friedrich Wilderness Park classroom
 - Learn what it takes to be a beekeeper, the tools you need, and how to harvest the honey. Laura Salazar of Honey Love Bee Removal will share her knowledge and stories about honeybee rescue. Hands-on activity included.
- **Starting Out Wild: Pokies & Pricklies (ages 1-3)**
 - 10:00-11:00 a.m. | Friday, January 15 | Friedrich Wilderness Park classroom
 - Learn about the parts of a cactus including the tuna, pad, flower, spine! These high energy, engaging programs are a perfect way to foster an appreciation of the natural world. It is recommended that a child be walking and a parent or caretaker attend with each child. Most classes take place outdoors.
- **Growing Up Wild: Spider Web Wonders (ages 4-7)**
 - 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. | Wednesday, January 16 | Friedrich Wilderness Park classroom
 - Learn why spiders are beneficial to the environment in this fun, hands-on class! Growing Up Wild builds on a child's sense of wonder about nature and invites them to explore wildlife and the world around them.

All Programs: RSVP required. Visit fosana.org to reserve your spot. Suggested donation: \$3 per person, or \$6 per family. For more information, call 210-207-3782 or email nicole.mcleod@sanantonio.gov.

Are you connected to San Antonio Natural Areas on social media?

You can like us on [Facebook](#).
Find us on [Instagram](#) @sanaturalareas.

Are you a member of Friends of San Antonio Natural Areas (FoSANA)?

Please support FoSANA on the preservation and educational outreach of natural areas around San Antonio by joining or renewing your membership [online](#) today.

Your membership this year will help us continue to

- offer over 400 environmental programs for families and adults at the Natural Areas.
- serve over 14,000 families and adults through education and outreach programs.
- coordinate over 400 volunteer programs and 7,500 volunteer hours supported trail maintenance, habitat conservation and restoration, and native landscapes and gardens.

Plus, when you renew your membership, you'll receive our monthly newsletter that provides updates on natural areas happenings and timely information on upcoming events.

Should you need any assistance or have any questions or comments about your membership, please feel free to email us at friendsofsanaturalareas@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
FoSANA Board

Friends of San Antonio Natural Areas is dedicated to promoting stewardship of San Antonio's Natural Areas, and to the understanding and appreciation of nature through educational and scientific programs.

For the latest updates and more activities, please see the calendar on the FOSANA website.

[Friends of San Antonio Natural Areas Website](#)
