A Place Close to My Heart

I have been working at the Fort Worth Nature Center for almost 9 years. It is an amazing place! If you have not been here, you need to visit! One can explore the 3,621-acre refuge via more
than 20 miles of hiking trails through various habitats. You will walk through prairies, along the river, and through the woods.

Before becoming employed, I volunteered with a program at the Nature Center called Natural Guard. Natural Guard volunteers help Nature Center staff with all kinds of projects, from trail maintenance to feeding the bison herd. (I even used a pick axe to help dig a trench one day!) These volunteers meet at the Refuge Service Center on Thursday and/or Saturday mornings from 9 a.m. to noon.

I have also helped with the canoe/kayak programs as a guide. Miles of river adjacent to the Nature Center offer excellent opportunities to see wildlife overhead and along the shores. In addition to wildlife, there is also much to learn about the Trinity River itself. Our guides are well versed in the history of the area. We even provide the equipment: canoes, floatation devices, and paddles at no extra charge. If you have never paddled a canoe, Canoe Fest is for you! Once a month, the Nature Center hosts this event at a price of $5 per person (with paid admission). A guide will show you the most important elements of paddling and safety. He/she will help you into the canoe, and you will be observed over the short course close to shore. There will also be experts on the water to assist you should you encounter any difficulty or just have questions.

Other volunteers help maintain the plants in the greenhouse and gather seeds to start new ones.

Volunteers at the Hardwicke Interpretive Center are trained in many activities, including animal care, guided hikes, clerical duties, etc.

I urge you to come for a visit. Do some exploring. Ask questions of our friendly, knowledgeable staff. Take a hike. We offer a free guided hike every Saturday from 10 a.m. to noon. Join a naturalist as he/she surprises you with little tidbits of information … especially about the insect world!

Many other exciting events are occurring at the Fort Worth Nature Center. Take the time to check out our informative website at www.fwnaturecenter.org, or call 817-392-7410 to schedule your participation in an event of interest to you. We are looking forward to your visit!!!

Nina Francis, Customer Service Assistant