

Show Committee Field Trip Report--November 15, 2004

by Scott Singleton

As announced in the October BBG and via the HGMS e-mail distribution list, the Show Committee held a fall field trip for the entire Club to show our appreciation for the fine job everyone did during our annual Show. The field trip was held Saturday, November 15 and was at College Station. Fifteen Club members and guests attended along with seven Show Committee members. The weather was very pleasant for this November trip.

We met at an Exxon station on 2818 (the loop around the south side of town). From there we journeyed to our first stop, White Creek. We spent the entire morning wandering down the creek gathering all shapes, sizes, and types of petrified wood. Several people on the field trip had not been to this locality before and were quite happy to see relatively large quantities of wood just waiting for someone to pick it up, and they were more than happy to oblige (see photos). I remember seeing at least two individuals (one being Rick Rexroad) walking back from somewhere downstream totally soaked. I guess some people like swimming anywhere and at any time of the year!

After lunch, we hit a few localities that Carol Thompson had scouted out near Hwy 6 and Hwy 21 in Bryan. These areas are construction sites that have had the ground surface plowed. There was no shortage of material. For an encore, we decided to head back to Turkey Creek, which is a popular location due to the proliferation of material to be found. We started at the Traditions Golf Course on Villa Maria where we found a huge Legume log (see photo). Temptation proved too great, so we went to a creek on the golf course that we had been to before but were chased out. This was a great call because the creek obviously had not been visited since the last heavy rainfall only a week or so before, and there was an abundance of material including several large pieces in the 20-30 lb range. We finally were forced to stop when the sun set and we could no longer see.

Most of the specimens we found were related to Juniper, the Legume family—either Sequoia or Cypress (I have to investigate this), and tropical species of Alangium, Rhamnacinium (Buckthorn), and Walnut (Engelhardia group). Specimens of Palm and Snakewood were found at each stop.

Dr. Tom Yancey (A&M Geology Professor) feels the Yegua is similar to the overlying, upper Eocene Jackson Group in that it consists of a series of transgressive/regressive episodes. The marine facies are muddy in the maximum transgression and become more sandy as the shoreline approached during the regression. Lignite coal was deposited as the sea started transgressing again, flooding the low-lying coastal plain. Petrified wood is found below the lignite and sandy shoreline facies. In this zone, leaf-bearing shale strata are plentiful and wood occurs generally as logs. Dr. Yancey feels that the Yegua at College Station represents an estuarine environment where a large river fed abundant woody material to the shallow marine muds near the shoreline. These muds were anaerobic below the mudline, so that the waterlogged wood was protected from oxygen and microbes as it rapidly became buried.

The two creeks in College Station (White and Turkey) are eroded into the muddy marine facies but have sandy facies (along with wood) on their flanks. The wood slowly erodes out of the formation and breaks up into relatively small pieces as it is transported into the streams. Therefore, the fact that we see so many specimens of a small number of species only indicates that logs of that heritage are eroding out nearby.

A great time was had by all on this field trip. The Show Committee plans to repeat the fun this spring when we will host another trip for the benefit of the Club. We hope to see you all then.





