

Wellness Retreat

April 3-5, 2025



- Yoga, Meditation and Sound Bath by Humbling Blooms
- Art House Café
- Social Club
- Native Garden
- Retro-Luxury Cabin

14349 Highway 16N, Medina, TX 78055
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- West Prong Cemetery, Medina
 - Tuff, Texas (now Medina)
- Lost Maples State Natural Area, Vanderpool TX

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West Prong Cemetery aka Sheppard Cemetery

Lured in by the resident Vermillion Flycatcher pair, this scenic spot always offer great discoveries for both birds and local history.

Many pioneer families are buried here including: Sheppard, Humphrey, Teggart, Coleman, Lackey, Norris, Carpenters and

- Brown and Maude Stokes, the founders of Medina River Oaks Courts. That interesting story is detailed at www.medinariveroaks.com/history
- R. E. Love, namesake of the Love Creek, and later orchards and Nature Conservancy Preserve
- Ernesto Carino, recently passed co-founder of Medina Garden Nursery which installed the native garden at the Courts. Ishmael still actively keeps the garden so wonderful.



The cemetery is on Coal Kiln Road; well marked but approach slowly as the intersection has a quick, steep decline



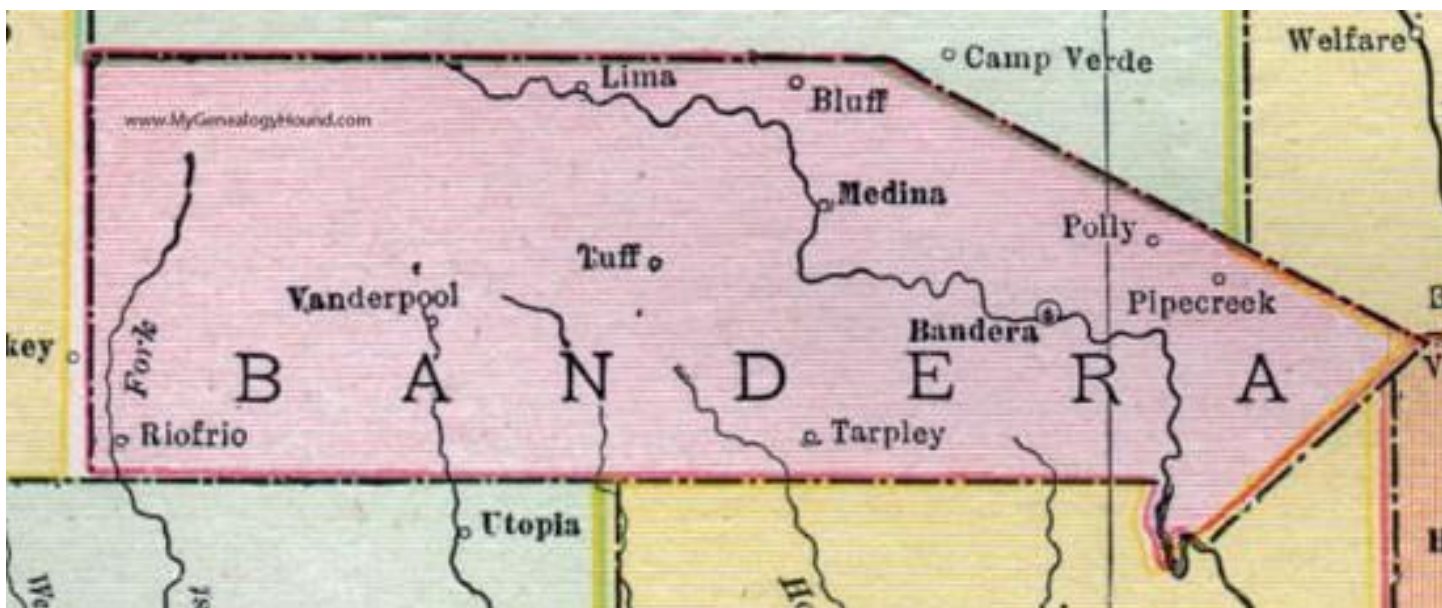
1805, one of the earliest dates seen

The Medina Community Library has a map, names and info for many of the local cemeteries. There is also much information to be found online.

Frontier Times Museum is actively photographing Bandera County cemeteries. Contact Bill Pannebaker. Much of this info, including service records for Capt. George Humphreys and many others who served as far back as the Civil War, is posted on the Medina, Bandera, TX History and Heritage Facebook page.



Capt. Humphreys is honored with 2 separate headstones



1911 map of Bandera County area

Tuff, Texas aka. Crockett

Enroute to Lost Maples, we made a small detour down Jackson Creek Road to view the Special Post Office at Tuff, Tx. "Special" designates a location that offers specific services or extra services beyond standard mail handling. It is unclear what these services were then. Makes one wonder what would their modern day equivalent of 'Priority Mail' might have entailed?

From the web –

Tuff was established in the early 1880s, as a workable midpoint between Medina to the east and Vanderpool to the west. In 1883 one of its first settlers, Andy Crockett, donated land for a school, and the village was called Crockett in his honor. However, at the same time locals were also calling it "Tuff." (The origin of this name is lost to history, though the best guess we could find was that it was a simplified spelling of the word "tough," which you'd certainly need to be to survive as a settler in that era!) What's more, there was already an established town named Crockett in Texas, about 100 miles north of Houston. By the turn of the 20th century, Tuff was agreed upon as the village's name. Tuff had a school, and in 1901 it reached another milestone toward becoming a town: a post office. Ola Adams would serve as Tuff's one and only postmistress, doing so until the office closed in 1926. At its population peak in 1914, Tuff had 50 people living there, though a mere decade later there would only be ten. Their school consolidated with Medina's in 1930, and Tuff started disappearing from maps.

Despite online claims as per below, the buildings on the adjacent to the Siesta Valley Ranch did NOT come from Tuff. Within the property is the Adams Cemetery that can be accessed with permission from John McGarr. His contact info is posted at the property entrance.



TUFF, TX. Tuff, also known as Crockett, was located twenty-five miles west of Bandera in western Bandera County. A school was built there in 1883 on land donated by Andy Crockett. A post office called Tuff was established in 1901 with Ola Adams as postmistress. In 1914 the community had a general store and fifty residents, but by 1925 the population had fallen to ten. When the Tuff post office was discontinued in 1926, mail for the community was sent to Medina. The school at Tuff was consolidated with the Medina district in 1930. The community was not marked on county highway maps in the 1940s, but in the early 1990s development began on an open-air museum of log cabins collected from the area and reconstructed at the site of the old Tuff school. By 2000, other than the renovated cabins, Tuff was virtually a ghost town and was not shown on maps.

Lost Maples State Natural Area, Vanderpool

As soon as we parked at the bird blind, we were greeted by the unbelievably happy and clear song of a Scott's Oriole. We quickly locate him singing directly above us. There could be no better welcome to Lost Maples!

A beautiful Yellow-Throated Warbler posed for us on the peanut butter log – a very unlikely spot for a warbler – and we knew it would be a great day. The previous day's rain made the trailhead crossing too slippery to venture so we pivoted to the Day Use Area and enjoyed a leisurely stroll to the rock ledge just past Monkey Rock.

Lost Maples SNA (HOTW 061), Bandera, Texas, US

Apr 5, 2025 10:30 AM - 2:00 PM

Protocol: Traveling 2.5 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: Bird Blind and parking lot.

Day Use Area slightly past Monkey Rock and return.

Overcast clouds, Temperature: 59 - 60°F

Wind: Mostly calm - fresh breeze, Wind Direction: NW

Cloud Cover: 92 - 93%, Humidity: 75 - 80%

BIRDS : 24 species

White-winged Dove 12

Ruby-throated Hummingbird 2

Black-chinned Hummingbird 6

Turkey Vulture 8

Swainson's Hawk 6 Seen as group soaring above bird blind area

Ladder-backed Woodpecker 2

Ash-throated Flycatcher 2

White-eyed Vireo 4

Hutton's Vireo 1

Yellow-throated Vireo 2

Common Raven 3

Black-crested Titmouse 4

Barn Swallow 6

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 3

Cedar Waxwing 10

House Finch 6

Chipping Sparrow 6

Clay-colored Sparrow 1

Lincoln's Sparrow 1

Rufous-crowned Sparrow 2

Scott's Oriole 1

Black-and-white Warbler 6

Golden-cheeked Warbler 4

Northern Cardinal 4

View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S223252204>



Molting? Or more likely still very wet from the previous evening's 2.5 inches of rain plus hail. Either way, makes for great abstract, natural art in this Common Raven

PLANTS

While Busy-Birding is obviously focused on birds, it is hard not to be drawn into all of nature's beauty. This is why our motto is "Nurture Your Love for Nature."



Annual crossvine plant reaching for the sky near the creek crossing by headquarters



The start of this year's agarita jelly



Actually, this Leafy Brain Fungus is neither plant nor animal.....it's one of the fungus among us



Smooth Hook Moss

Plants (not already mentioned/pictured)

Ashe Juniper – Golden Cheeks nesting material, aka Cedar

Condalia – evil-looking spikes

Escarpment Cherry

Frostweed – makes ice sculptures when freezes

Pearl Milkweed – seen but not yet bloom

Snapdragon vine

Sycamore – virus-looking pods equals ‘sick-a-more’

Texas Redbud – already bloomed

Texas Mountain Laurel – Will it ever bloom this year ?

Uvalde Bigtooth Maple – Lost Maples namesake



Texas Redbud,
a smaller and heartier
version of Eastern Redbud



Mexican Buckeye is really a horse chestnut.
Which is why botanists prefer scientific over
common names...and why I am not a botanist



Texas Hill Country Yellow Buckeye – a local variety
of Red Buckeye



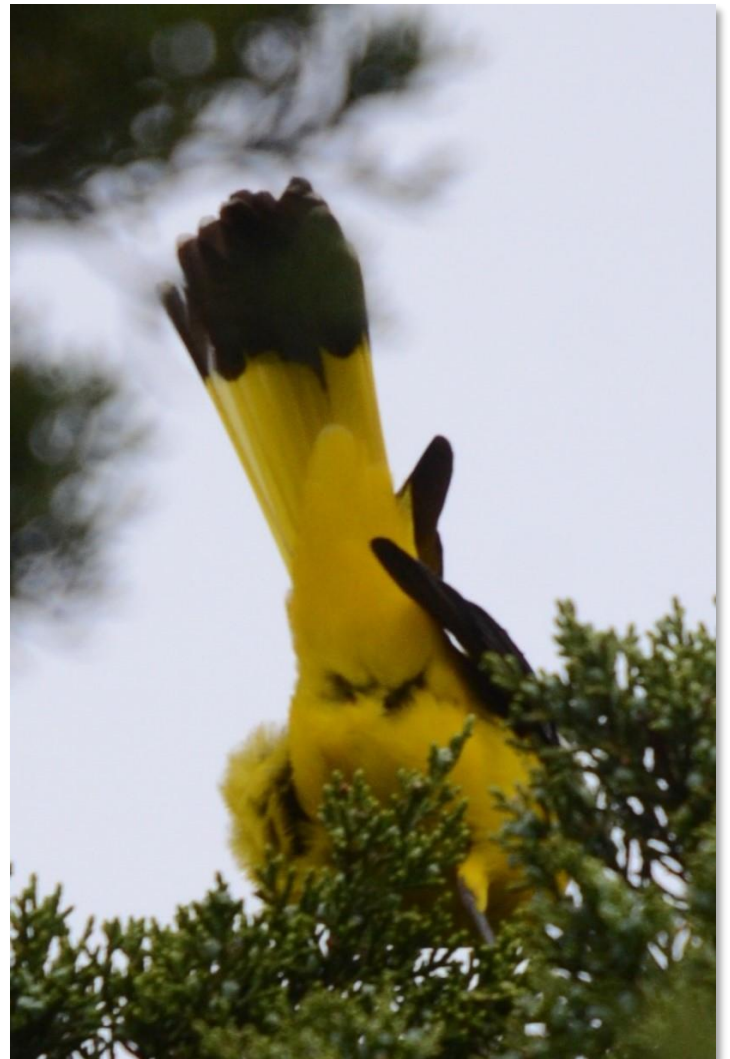
Saving the best for last : 2nd only to
pearl milkweed vine, I love Roemer's
Spurge for its funny faces it seems to
make – perhaps the same you'd make
it you ate something this neon
lemony-limey in color.

Day Use Area

We closed our trip with a short walk down to 'secret' part of Day Use Area where we saw the reason for the otherwise mysterious 'Beware of Falling Rocks' sign. The hanging garden is beginning to bloom this year as well. This photo is from a previous year.



The End



THANK YOU for choosing to spend your days with
Medina River Oaks Courts, Humbling Blooms and
exploring Medina and Lost Maples with me.

Sincerest Regards,
Laura @ **Busy-Birding.com**