

Alamo Area Chapter News

November 2014

txmn.org/alamo



EVENTS, VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING

VOLUME 18, ISSUE 11

BOARD MEETING

November 11
5:30 PM
AgriLIFE Extension
Classroom 208

GENERAL MEETING 7-8PM

Peter Bella, recently retired from the AACOG where he was the Director of Natural Resources, will speak on air quality in our region.

OFFICERS

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Vice-President
Aubrey George
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Treasurer
Nancy Thoss
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Secretary
Camille Gong
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Immediate Past President
Anton Hajek
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President's Message

2015 YEARLY DUES: A few years ago TPWD requested that we send a more accurate account of our membership. Up until that time, we were sending in a list of all the members that had taken the training, whether they participated, and whether they sent in hours or not.

At the same time, both TWPD & AgriLife began to enforce the background check for all members, which are required every 3 years; so in order for the chapter to know who was active and had a current background check, the general membership voted that the chapter collect dues of those who were actively volunteering and sending in their hours. In return, the chapter would pay for that member's background check and receive a few extra funds for its everyday operations.

You will soon be hearing from Nancy Thoss, AAMN treasurer, requesting that you update your info and send in your dues. I hope all of you will comply and continue to remain active members. Our progress depends on you!

If you've been away for a while, please consider coming back. Our door is always open. If you have any concerns pertaining to this topic, please do not to hesitate email liz.robbs.44@gmail.com to discuss.

Honoring ALICIA HOOVER for serving as Hospitality Chair since December 2012. Alicia returned to work this year as a middle school teacher. Her classroom duties, as many of us know, require lots of time and dedication to the students and the lessons. We wish to thank Alicia for her time and efforts as AAMN Hospitality Chair. We will miss you, Alicia, but know that those middle schoolers are one lucky bunch! Alicia's replacement as hospitality chair will be SHARON KILMER. We thank both of you for your time & service to the chapter.

Class #35 Graduation – Nov. 8 – 11:AM at the Auld House

You are all invited to the graduation celebration for Class 35. If you'd like to assist or share one of your favorite side dishes, please contact Sharon Kilmer at sakilmer@me.com.

AAMN Officers Election Day – November 11 - 6:45 PM - AgriLife Extension classroom. For more info, check out the email sent by Pam Ball morning of September 13.



Photo of a Rusty blackhaw viburnum taken by Liz Robbins, just north of Camp Bullis.

COMMITTEES

Activities Information

Chair Pam Ball
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Newsletter Policies

Though we try to publish all material we receive, space is limited in each month's newsletter. Long articles may be published on the website instead of the newsletter, or they may not be published. Event notices must go through Pam Ball; and only the Activities Information Committee is authorized to declare whether an event is approved for Advanced Training or Volunteer Service Hours.

PINS AND AWARDS

Congratulations to all our pin recipients! Those who haven't received their pins may pick them up at the next chapter meeting.

Initial Certification Dragonfly

Julie Cornelius - 34

2014 Recertification Armadillo

Richard Adams – 27

Deb Balderaz – 30

Nancy Brown – 21

Jennifer DiCocco – 33

Diane Fey – 23

Kathryn Gilson – 34

Barbara Harder – 25

John Geoff Leech – 31

Roy Leslie – 24

Ling Yin Liu – 20

Janice Potter – 29

Emily Weiner – 32

Rhonda Wise - 30

500 Hours Dragonfly

Richard Adams – 27

Susan McDevitt – 31

Jody Ruhl - 27

1000 Hours Dragonfly

Howard Homan - 26



AAMN volunteers Greg and Jana Gibbons engaged young visitors with games about bats, turkeys, and spooky birds during a rainy FALL FEST at Medina River Natural Area on October 11.

Congratulations to Lonnie and Judith Shockley

The Native Plant Society of Texas recognized Alamo Area Master Naturalists Lonnie and Judith Shockley on October 18th at the Awards Ceremony of their Annual Fall Symposium.

Lonnie and Judith received the Nancy Benedict Memorial Award, which is presented to an individual or individuals for a specific act of conservation or public service. They received the award for their work with the Invaders of Texas program.

Lonnie and Judith have worked tirelessly during the past five years in identifying and eradicating invasive plants and educating individuals and groups as to the negative impacts of invasive plants on native ecosystems. As master naturalists and leaders of the Balcones Satellite of the Invaders of Texas, they have trained over a hundred citizen scientists and written numerous articles about invasive plants. They have inspired more than 150 individuals to donate 2700 volunteer hours in the eradication of more than 32,000 plants in the Greater San Antonio area. With their leadership, the Balcones Satellite has contributed more than 50% of the total volunteer hours eradicating invasive plants in the entire state of Texas. They have offered educational workshops to numerous groups and have shared their accomplishments at three Texas Invasive Plant & Pest Council conferences.



Note: Lonnie and Judith are fourth and fifth from the right. Photo by Robert Kamper.

CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

Class 25 & State Rep.

Ron Tullius
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Class 26

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Class 35

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November Training and Volunteer Events

Mission REACH Field Trip (VSH)

Mon, November 3, 9:00AM – 2:30PM

Mission San Juan, 9101 Graf Road, San Antonio, TX
Field Guides will conduct Flora/Fauna Nature Walks at Mission San Juan along Yanaguana Trail for East Central High School (11th & 12th Grade). Walks will be approx. 30 minutes in length and focus of the native vegetation along the San Antonio River. 140 students will be separated into 6 groups and rotate among activities. Training (AT) and lunch will be provided. Partial participation (i.e. if you can't volunteer for entire duration) and shadowing is acceptable. Contact Kayla Gasker at 210-302-3259 or kgasker@sara-tx.org for more information!

Boerne NPSOT - Green Fire movie (AT)

Tue, November 4, 7PM – 8PM

Cibolo Nature Center Auditorium, 140 City Park Road, Boerne, TX

Movie night to be held Tuesday, November 4, 2014 in the Cibolo Nature Center Auditorium, 140 City Park Rd. Boerne, Texas. Presentation begins at 7PM, but everyone is invited to socialize at 6:30! Questions or for details: Please contact Emily Weiner, NPSOT - Boerne Chapter at www.meetup.com/Boerne-Native-Plant-Society-of-Texas/ or emily.a.weiner@gmail.com or 210-259-7009.

Friedrich Park Wednesday Workday (VSH)

Wed, November 5, 9AM – 11AM

Friedrich Wilderness Park, 21395 Milsa Dr, San Antonio, TX

Every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month, volunteers are needed to maintain the Wildflower Area and Picnic/Pond Area; trim branches overhanging pathways; remove plants in pathways; limit growth of native invasive plants such as Turk's Cap and Inland Sea Oats; remove seedlings of Cedar Elm, Hackberry, & Mexican Buckeye where appropriate; and eliminate seasonal nuisance plants such as Tickweed, Speargrass, Bedstraw, False Ragweed, Malta Star Thistle, and Sand Spurs. Bring gloves, loppers, clippers, handsaw, rake, scuffle hoe. Restrooms and water fountain available. Please contact Gail Cooper at 210-749-8826 or gatocooper@gmail.com for more information.

Growing up Wild (VSH if assisting)

Wed, November 5, 10:00AM – 11:30AM

Phil Hardberger Park East, 13203 Blanco Rd, San Antonio, TX
Volunteers needed to help with Growing Up WILD-Pre-K children classes for the fall. Contact Susan.Campbell@sanantonio.gov or call 210-207-3280 for information.

SABOT Volunteer Orientation (AT)

Fri, November 7, 9AM – 10AM

San Antonio Botanical Garden, 555 Funston Pl, San Antonio, TX

Find out about current volunteer opportunities by attending volunteer orientation. Orientation is in the administration library at SABOT. Contact: volunteer@sabot.org.

Native and Special Trees of South Central Texas (II) with Paul W. Cox (AT)

Fri, November 7, 14, 21, 9AM – 12PM

San Antonio Botanical Garden, 555 Funston Place, San Antonio, TX

Get acquainted with the trees, shrubs and woody vines in our region; learn to recognize the traits that make them unique. Learn how to identify various species of woody plants, with the emphasis on native and adapted species. This series builds on the presentation of this topic last spring. Previous attendance is not required. The first session meets at the SoL Center at University Presbyterian Church. Sessions two and three meet at the San Antonio Botanical Garden. For the two field trips at the Garden, wear walking shoes; bring a hat, water, sunscreen and snacks. Participants pay the entrance fee to the Botanical Garden. Tuition: \$45 for all three sessions. Registration: now open, 16 participants maximum. To register, call 210-732-9927 or register at www.upcsa.org/sol_center.

Where Have All the Bees Gone? Hope for the Future Webinar (AT)

Fri, November 7, 1PM – 2PM

Any location from which there's a computer and internet
Why do we have fewer honeybees these days? What caused the decline? What can we do to help? These questions and more will be answered in this webinar presented by Dr. John Skinner. For more information, copy and paste the following URL to your browser. <https://learn.extension.org/events/1375#.VDa15PldW0I>

November Training and Volunteer Events

Owl Prowl (AT)

Sat, November 8, 6PM – 8PM

Medina River Natural Area, 15890 Highway 16 South, San Antonio, TX

Come and help us with an upcoming 2nd Saturday programs at Medina River Natural Area: If interested please contact Susan.Campbell@sanantonio.gov or call 210-207-3280.

Riverwalk Garden Workday (VSH)

Fri, November 14, 9AM – 1PM

Corner of Aubrey and Old Guilbeau, San Antonio, TX

Volunteers are needed to cut, trim, and plant at the San Antonio Riverwalk Wildscape Garden. Bring cutting tools such as shears, rakes, and clippers and also gloves and water for this workday. The intersection is located north of Cesar Chavez, (formerly Durango) on the west side of the San Antonio river on the River Walk. Contact Evelyn Penrod at epenrod58@gmail.com or 830-438-2290 for parking and specific information about this month's work day.

Birding by Ear (AT)

Sat, November 15, 8AM – 9AM

Mitchell Lake Audubon Center, 10750 Pleasanton Road, San Antonio, TX

Wondering what bird you are hearing in your backyard? Looking for a way to add to your birding prowess? Join Jason "the Birdnerd" St. Sauver for tips on how to identify more birds by sound. For more information call 210-628-1639. \$15/non-members \$10/members.

Texas Native Trails Guided Tour (AT)

Sat, November 15, 10AM – 11AM

San Antonio Botanical Garden, 555 Funston Place, San Antonio, TX

East Texas Piney Woods. Contact person: Ron Tullius at rvtullius@sbcglobal.net or 210-739-2566.

Sierra Club: Impact of Drought on Wildlife (AT)

Tue, November 18, 6:30PM – 7:30PM

Witte Museum, 3801 Broadway, San Antonio, TX
Alamo Area Master Naturalists are invited to attend Sierra Club monthly meetings. These meetings are scheduled for 6:30 PM the 3rd Tuesday of every month.

Wildlife for Lunch Webinar - Wildlife Photography (AT)

Thu, November 20, 12PM – 1PM

Any location from which there's a computer and internet
The Texas Wildlife Association and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service sponsor lunchtime webinars the third Thursday of each month. If you are not able to attend the live webinar, each presentation is archived on the TWA website. It's Easy! On the day of the webinar, simply go to texas-wildlife.webex.com, and click on the title of the webinar you wish to attend. The webinar series provides sound, science-based wildlife management options delivered by experts to you in the comfort of your own home or office. For more information contact Clint Faas at 210-826-2904 or cfaas@texas-wildlife.org.

Fall Starting Out Wild at Hardberger Park (VSH)

Fri, November 21, 9:45AM – 11:00AM

Phil Hardberger Park, 8400 NW Military Hwy, San Antonio, TX

Starting Out Wild is a toddler environmental education class for 1-3 year olds. No experience necessary. Please arrive before 9:45AM. If you have not filled out a SA volunteer release waiver in the last year or a criminal background check form in the last three years, please fill out these forms and bring them with you. For information, contact Susan Campbell at 210-207-3280, 210-207-3106, or email susan.campbell@sanantonio.gov.

Weed Wednesdays (VSH)

Wed, November 26, 8:30AM – 10:30AM

Phil Hardberger Park West, 8400 NW Military Highway, San Antonio, TX

For information, contact Wendy Leonard at 210-207-3292 or wendy.leonard@sanantonio.gov.

Westcave Preserve Public Tour (AT)

Sat, November 29, 10AM – 11AM

24814 Hamilton Pool Road, Round Mountain, TX

The tour takes visitors from an arid savannah through a limestone crevice into a sheltered canyon of lush plant life. Registration: Call Westcave at 830-825-3442 or e-mail info@westcave.org. Fee: \$5 adult, \$2 child or \$15 family. Directions: highway 281 north to Round Mountain, east on RR962. Travel 17miles on RR962. Gate to preserve is on the left.

The Satisfaction of Rejuvenation after Eradication

Our group of dedicated volunteers has spent the past five years eradicating invasive plants in northwest San Antonio. Why do our volunteers show up week after week? It is not just about the camaraderie, the volunteer hours and a job well-done. Instead, we return because we see first-hand the positive changes in the ecosystem as a result of our efforts.

Take the Arundo patch, for example. We have been eradicating Giant Reed (*Arundo donax*) intermittently since last February. We are now at the point where we are pulling and spraying the regrowth. The original light-blocking, dense, monoculture is gone.

Native plants are filling the space faster than you can say Jack Robinson! One of the first plants to appear was Lindheimer's Senna (*Cassia lindheimeriana*). Next, came Alamo Vine (*Merremia dissecta*) with its lovely pink flowers. Wild Four-o-Clock (*Mirabilis nyctaginea*) has also grown in the new, open space.



Along with the emerging native plants, the arthropods returned, including the lovely female wolf spider with spiderlings that was pictured in last month's newsletter. We observed a red velvet ant (*Dasymutilla occidentalis*), a large, hairy, orange, and black insect that is actually a parasitoid wasp. We watched a group of Milkweed bug nymphs (*Oncopeltus fasciatus*). Multiple species of butterflies have returned to their host plants.

One of our volunteers spotted a very large Texas Spiny Lizard (*Sceloporus olivaceus*) on the bark of a hackberry tree.

A recent visit to the Frank Madla Natural Area revealed a plethora of emerging native plants that were previously suppressed by large Glossy Privet (*Ligustrum lucidum*) and Chinaberry (*Melia azedarach*) monocultures. We were delighted to find Western Soapberry (*sapindus saponaria* var. *drummondii*), Texas Walnut (*Juglans microcarpa*), and Flameleaf Sumac (*Rhus lanceolata*).



In San Antonio, local volunteers are needed for eradication of invasive plants. No prior experience is required. Wear sturdy shoes, long-sleeved pants and shirts and gloves. Bring water. We have a supply of tools, but welcome anyone who brings their own. For details of exact location and directions, contact Lonnie at lonnieshockley@satx.rr.com.

Those on the mailing list will receive notification of the location of the eradication area and cancellation for severe weather conditions.

November schedule: Tuesdays 8:30 to 10:30 AM on the Leon Creek Greenway.

News and Volunteer Information from Headwaters

We have three events again this week—two volunteer days and a Headwaters welcome table during Founders Day at The Alamo. We're invited to be a part of Founders Day because we represent the headwaters that gave birth to our river that attracted the Spanish missionaries and the early founders of our city.



During Wednesday's work day, we chipped up a brush pile, then created another bigger one to replace the pile we just chipped.



Tom Smith 'saved' a spiny lizard from under the pile. (We leave some of our brush piles for wildlife habitat.) You see us here enjoying conversation and end-of-workday snacks. Check out all the blue volunteer t-shirts earned after four workday visits to the Sanctuary.



And finally, on Saturday down at the Alamo, Richard, and Howard manned the Headwaters table and worked to educate folks who stopped by. They spoke to about 140 visitors about the vision for the Sanctuary at the headwaters of the San Antonio River. They let children "collect water" from the Blue Hole in a sort of pretend pilgrimage to one of the Great Springs of Texas. These water samples were of spring water from the Blue Hole that was actually collected in the year 2011, when the Blue Hole was still flowing. (Keep praying for rain!)

Thanks, everyone, for your hard work and dedication to this special place!

Volunteering is not limited to the dates on our Volunteers' Calendar. The Headwaters Land Steward, Richard Duarte, welcomes volunteers when he is working in the Sanctuary. Contact Richard richard.duarte@amor meus.org to make an appointment.



San Antonio Parks and Recreation Natural Areas Stewardship Activities

November can be just “gourdeous,” as our native gourds ripen. With names like meloncito (*Melothria pendula*), stinking gourd (*Cucurbita foetidissima*), and snake apple (*Ibervillea Lindheimeri*), these plants are a sensory cornucopia. The leaves of meloncito have a roughness akin to sandpaper, stinking gourd really does have a fetid smell, and the snake apple fruits ripen into bright red globes. I hope you get to experience some of these wonderful gourds, and I wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving. Thank you for the work you have done for our Natural Areas.

We still need volunteers to assist with trail construction on the properties that adjoin and now are considered part of Friedrich Wilderness Park. Like last month, the contractor can only give me enough information to plan a week at a time. The good news, though, is that most weeks volunteers are needed on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings and afternoons, as well as Friday mornings. If you want to be on a list of people who receive weekly email updates, please email Jayne Neal at Jayne.Neal@sanantonio.gov.

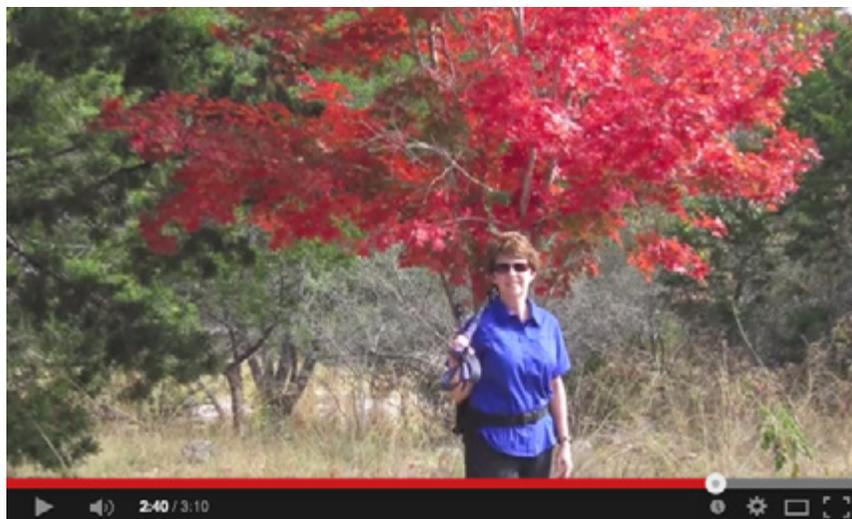
Because we can only accommodate a limited number of volunteers at any one time, you must have a confirmed reservation in order to participate. You can sign up for morning or afternoon or both. If you plan to work a full day, please bring a lunch. To make a reservation, please send an email to Jayne.Neal@sanantonio.gov.

We will provide tools and equipment; and although I have gloves to loan, they are size large, so please bring your own if you have them. The work will be done in areas where there are no amenities (no water, no restrooms), so come prepared to work in the wilderness. I suggest long sleeves, long pants, closed shoes, and plenty of water.

If you have questions, feel free to contact Jayne Neal at Jayne.Neal@sanantonio.gov, 210-207-3785. And remember to contact Jayne to stay informed on exact times and locations for trail builder work.

AAMN Dawn Hatch's Winning Video

Congratulations to Dawn Hatch-Class #33 for winning second place in the TMN Annual Meeting video contest held at Mo Ranch this past weekend! Both Dawn and the chapter were awarded some nice honorariums by the state coordinator, Michelle Haggerty. To see Dawn's award winning video, just click on the picture below or visit youtu.be/ifEk931rnZY. Thank you Dawn for the wonderful video. We are all very proud of you and look forward to the next video.



AAMN Annual Holiday Party

Tuesday,
December 9, 2014
from 6-9 PM
PHP/UEC Gathering
Hall

**SAVE THE
DATE!**