

Alamo Area Chapter News

November 2014

txmn.org/alamo



EVENTS, VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING
VOLUME 18, ISSUE 1

ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

December 9

6-8:30 PM

Phil Hardberger Park
Gathering Hall, 8400 NW
Military Highway

The Alamo Area Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist cordially invites you and your guests to the Annual Holiday Party.

OFFICERS

President

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Treasurer

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Secretary

Camille Gong

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Immediate Past President

Anton Hajek

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

AAMN Holiday Party

Tuesday, December 9th at the PHP/Gathering Hall, 6-8:30 PM

Pork, Chicken, and Vegetarian Tamales

Served with Holiday Refreshments

RSVP to Sharon Kilmer; sakilmer@me.com or 210-274-7987

Please help with meal planning by indicating side dish or dessert when contacting Sharon.



Fall 2014 Class #35 Graduation



Twenty-five out of the 28 students completed the class. Of those, eight were awarded their first certification pin. In addition, Thomas J. Smith was also awarded the 2014 re-certification pin. Congratulations Tom and all of Class #35. Hope to see you all out on the trails, at the parks and at our monthly gatherings.

\$12 YEARLY DUES for 2015: 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! For more information, please go to <http://txmn.org/alamo/newsletters> and click on the link for the November 2014 newsletter.

ANNUAL JANUARY LASAGNA DINNER: Tuesday, January 13 after the monthly business meeting. What a great time to bring your updated membership paperwork and pay your dues. More details to come. **SAVE the DATE!**

AAMN Executive Officers for 2015: President, Liz Robbins; Vice President, Aubrey George; Treasurer, Nancy Thoss; and Secretary, Camille Gong.

COMMITTEES

Activities Information

Chair Pam Ball
pball12@satxrr.com

Community Outreach

Chair Matt Carley
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Historian

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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 December 9 Holiday Party at PHP.

Initial Certification Dragonfly

Jacqueline Bliss – 35
Kaye Cosby – 35
Alan Davis – 35
Sarah Galvan - 33
Kayla Gasker – 34
Janet Ledbetter Ferrill – 35
Rowena Ochiagha – 35
George Ozuna – 35
Peter Ravdin – 35
Thomas Smith – 35
Fran Tomsett - 34

2014 Recertification - Armadillo

Raquel Barba-Garza - 31
Rocio Bomberg – 31
Kay Cage - 25
Mary Campobello – 31
Valerie Carter-Cole – 34
Julie Cornelius – 34
Michael Countryman - 33
Lisa Franz - 29
Josie Gonzales – 13
Cristina Gonzalez – 33
Pamela Gottschalk - 33
Janie Henry – 19
Laura Labbat - 32
LeLynn Koch – 28
Carolyn Martin – 4
Linda Myers – 32
Rowena Ochiagha - 35
Lynn Richards – 27
Camilla Ritchey – 12
Catherine Rose - 22
Thomas Smith - 35
Sandra Strother – 31
Betty Sutherland - 30

250 Hours Dragonfly

Bob Cage – 26
Richard Duarte - 33
Aubrey George - 29

1000 Hours Dragonfly

Diane Fey - 23

San Antonio Parks and Recreation Natural Areas Stewardship Activities

Happy Winter Solstice!

I often hear people say that we need cold weather in winter so that there will be fewer insects the following spring and summer. Actually, insects have a number of adaptations that allow them to survive cold, even freezing, weather. For example, some (think monarch butterfly) migrate, and thus avoid the cold. Those that do not migrate have other ways of coping with cold temperatures, and these strategies fall into two main categories, freeze avoidance and freeze tolerance (<http://goo.gl/EqURmf>).

Northern hemisphere insects generally use freeze avoidance, which includes hibernating underground and overwintering as eggs or pupae. Other avoidance strategies involve biochemical and physiological mechanisms (<http://goo.gl/ImWMyQ>). For example, some insects produce cryoprotectants which, like antifreeze in cars, lower the temperature at which freezing occurs. Others rid themselves of ice-nucleating agents (INAs). Normally, water needs a particle (an INA) such as a speck of dust or food around which to crystallize. Freeze-avoidant insects eliminate INAs by not eating, clearing the gut, or removing specialized INAs from the circulatory system.

According to Board Certified Entomologist Molly Keck, rainfall may be a better predictor than freezing temperatures when it comes to how winter weather affects insect emergence in the spring. Some insects have higher populations following dry winters (because there's less fungus in the soil to kill them).

Our trail contractor will not be working during the first week of December volunteer schedule, but there are other projects on which we can work. See the schedule below (note we will be meeting at two different locations), and feel free to contact Jayne Neal at Jayne.Neal@sanantonio.gov, 210-207-3785, if you have questions.

Thurs., Dec.4, 7:45-11:30 AM (VSH) Small juniper management and tree protection repair at Friedrich Park. Meet at Jayne's Friedrich Park office.

Thurs., Dec.11 & Dec.18, 7:45-11:30 AM (VSH) Various projects including trailwork, small juniper management, and tree protection repair at Friedrich Park-West. Meet at the gate at 7645 Heuermann. There are neither restrooms nor water at this location.

CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

Class 25 & State Rep.

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Class 26

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Class 35

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December Training and Volunteer Events

PHP Field Guide Training (AT - VSH for guide work)

Mon, December 1, 9:30AM – 11:30AM

Phil Hardberger Park Urban Ecology Center, 8400 NW Military Highway, San Antonio, TX

Please join us for PHP Education Field Guide Training (AT) for leading field trips with children. Snacks included. No experience necessary. Free training.

Upcoming Field Trips and class (VSH) opportunities:

Monday Dec. 8 – Arrive by 9:15am-PHPUEC Gathering Hall- 3rd Grade Eloff Elementary, Judson ISD-60 students-need 4 field guides

Friday Dec. 12 – Arrive by 9:15am-PHPUEC Classroom-3rd Grade Eloff Elementary, Judson ISD-60 students-need 4 field guides

Saturday Dec. 13-6pm-8pm-Medina River Natural Area-Star Party- need two volunteers

Tuesday Dec. 16-PHPUEC Gathering Hall- Explorer Elementary- Astronomy 101 plus hike-9:30-11:30am. Need 3 volunteers.

Please email Susan.Campbell@sanantonio.gov or call 210-207-3280 if you are interested in attending the training.

Volunteers Needed at Extension Desk (VSH)

Tue, December 2, 2PM – 5PM

Weekly on Tuesday, until Dec 23, 2014

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Bexar County office, 3355 Cherry Ridge, Ste 212, San Antonio, TX

You'll answer phones, transfer calls, and/or welcome office visitors, directing them to the appropriate agent.

No experience needed. We're a relaxed, easy-going bunch. Our office assistants or agents are always available to help you with questions. To sign up please call Aurelia Hovell at 210-467-6575. You'll be scheduled on a first come, first served basis. December 2nd, 16th, 23rd, & 30th, - 2pm – 5pm.

Texas Native Trails Guided Tour (AT)

Friday, December 5, 10-11AM

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

Seasonal highlights of the native trails. Contact person: Ron Tullius at rvtullius@sbcglobal.net or 210-739-2566.

Bird in the Hand (AT)

Guadalupe River State Park, 3350 Park Road 31

Spring Branch, TX 78070

Sat, December 6, 9AM-noon

Join the Park Ranger for a morning of up-close beak-to-nose looks at our native songbirds. Meet at the Discovery Center between 9 am and noon to learn about bird banding and how you can participate. This program is free with a Park Pass or a \$7 daily pass (children ages 12 and under are free).

Twas' the Night at the Guad (FUN)

Guadalupe River State Park, 3350 Park Road 31

Spring Branch, TX 78070

Saturday, December 6, 2014, 6-8 PM

An evening of holiday fun awaits at Guadalupe River State Park as we welcome the holiday season. We'll begin the evening with the classic "Twas the Night Before Christmas", read by that jolly old elf himself, Santa Claus! You'll then get to enjoy the movie "The Grinch" starring Jim Carrey, along with hot cocoa and cookies. This family friendly event will be held outdoors so be sure to dress for the weather and bring a blanket or two to bundle up in for the movie. Please note that regular entrance fees of apply (Free for anyone 12 and under, \$7 per person 13 and above; free with a current park pass).

Winter Grassland Survey (VSH)

Thu, December 11, 9AM – 1PM

Monthly on the second Thursday, until Feb 12, 2015

Kreutzberg Canyon NA, 143 Mark Twain Dr., Boerne, TX
Kendall County Partnership for Parks will be conducting a Winter Grassland Survey at Kreutzberg Canyon Natural Area and James Kiehl Riverbend Park. This involves walking several 100-yard transects at each park and noting what birds, if any, are flushed. Information gained is valuable for determining health of the land. Both parks will be covered each day. Dates are Thursday, Jan. 15 and Thursday, Feb. 12, 9 am until about 1 pm. We will start at KCNA and travel to JKRB. All levels of expertise are welcome - we need a couple of people who are good at sparrow ID (we count other birds as well, but sparrows are the focus), a couple of people to flush the birds and a recorder. You are welcome to participate in just one survey or all three; let me know your preference. For information or to volunteer, contact Ruth McArthur at ruth.f.mcarthur@gmail.com.

November Training and Volunteer Events

Who Goes There? (AT)

Guadalupe River State Park, 3350 Park Road 31
Spring Branch, TX 78070

Saturday, December 13, 10-11:30 AM

You and your child(ren) are invited to join the Park Ranger on a nature hike in search of the clues of wildlife activity. We'll take binoculars and magnifiers and use all of our senses to figure out who's out and about along our trails. We'll meet at the amphitheatre behind the Discovery Center. We'll even break out our Junior Ranger Books for everyone. This program is free with a Park Pass or a \$7 daily pass (children ages 12 and under are free).

Prowlin' for Owls (AT)

Guadalupe River State Park, 3350 Park Road 31
Spring Branch, TX 78070

Saturday, December 13, 7-8:30 PM

We're heading out for a hootin' good time as we call and listen for Barred and possibly other owls that inhabit the park. Join us at the Amphitheatre behind the Discovery Center to first learn about owls and their amazing adaptations as well as who's whooooo among the owls of Texas. This program is free with a Park Pass or a \$7 daily pass (children ages 12 and under are free).

Middle School: Is There No Way? (VSH if assisting)

Dec. 18, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Phil Hardberger Park Urban Ecology Center, 8400
NW Military Highway, San Antonio, TX

PHP West- PHP UEC Classroom: Where do recycled materials and trash go? What can we do to reduce the amount going to landfills? What can we do to reduce the impact to the environment? Guest speaker, Lakysa Couch, Outreach & Education Administrative Assistant with the City of San Antonio Solid Waste Management Department, will help provide some of these answers.

Registration required- e-mail Susan.Campbell@sanantonio.gov or call 210-207-3280.

Midnight First Day Hike (FUN)

Guadalupe River State Park, 3350 Park Road 31
Spring Branch, TX 78070

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 to Thursday, January 1, 2015, 11:30 PM -1:30 AM

Get a jump on the new year by joining Ranger Craig for a midnight hike to welcome the new year (complete with a cup of warm cider)! We'll meet at the park headquarters at 11:30 p.m. and head to the river to take a walk and welcome the new year with our best coyote (or whatever critter you feel like) calls. If you plan to join us, please email Craig at craig.hensley@tpwd.texas.gov. Dress for the weather!!!

First Day – First Birds – Hike (AT)

Guadalupe River State Park, 3350 Park Road 31
Spring Branch, TX 78070

Thursday, January 1, 2015, 7:30-9 AM

Join Park Ranger and birder Craig Hensley for a sunrise walk to welcome the new year. We'll meet at the front gate at 7:30 a.m. sharp and head out in search the first birds of 2015. Be sure to dress for the weather and bring binoculars if you have them (we do have a limited number for loan). This hike is for ages 12 and up. Please email Craig at craig.hensley@tpwd.texas.gov to reserve a spot.

Honey Creek First Day Hike (AT)

Guadalupe River State Park, 3350 Park Road 31
Spring Branch, TX 78070

Thursday, January 1, 2015, 9-11:30 AM

Join Friends board member and trained Honey Creek guide Tom Anderson for a special First Day hike through Honey Creek State Natural Area. This guided hike will give you the opportunity to view beautiful Honey Creek and learn about the cultural and natural history of this unique area. To participate in this hike, please be at the Rust House inside the park by 9 a.m. Please dress for the weather and wear sturdy hiking shoes. No reservations necessary.

News from the Balcones Satellite of the Texas Invaders

Wanted: Enthusiastic Youth as Future Citizen Scientists

Five years ago, my younger son Jon asked me “How much longer will you be eradicating invasive plants?” Without pausing, I answered, “For the rest of my life!” We know that even after we clear a particular area of invasive plants, constant monitoring and removal of regrowth is necessary to prevent their return.

Our citizen scientist volunteers realize that our task will not end during our lifetimes. There are billions of invasive plants around the world. Invasive plants in the United States alone cover an area the size of California.

So, what do we do? How do we keep from getting discouraged? The answer lies with educating and training our youth. In November, the Balcones Satellite had the pleasure of working with two volunteer youth groups.



Students from the Keystone National Honor Society met us on Saturday morning, November 1st at the Mainland Trailhead of the Leon Creek Greenway. For the next two hours, they learned about invasive plants, pruned chinaberry resprouts with loppers, cut new chinaberry trees with reciprocating saws, and hand-pulled emerging plants. After the session, student leader Asma Syed emailed, “Thank you so much for Saturday. Keystone NHS had a wonderful time working with your team and we learned so much! I hope you and your group continue to educate many others about the importance of invasive species.”

The very next morning, students from the Trinity University Phi Sigma Pi Academic Honors Fraternity joined us at the Madla Natural Area to eradicate Ligustrum, Chinaberry, Chinese tallow, Nandina, Johnson Grass, and Giant reed. Experienced Balcones citizen scientists worked side-by-side with the young volunteers. We were assisted by local Grey Forest volunteers and Grey Forest maintenance personnel with a chainsaw and chipper. Traffic safety was provided by the Grey Forest law enforcement personnel. Together, we eradicated more than 1,500 invasive plants! It was gratifying to realize how much can be accomplished when groups of dedicated people work together!



The Balcones Satellite leads the state of Texas in the number of volunteer hours spent eradicating invasive plants. Because of this, we were recently invited to share our strategies with the Early Detection Rapid Response subcommittee of the National Invasive Species Advisory Committee. This subcommittee includes a group of invasive species managers and decision makers from across the country. Among other strategies, our efforts to reach out to youth groups are an example of how to provide critical training to a new generation of citizen scientists.

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 lonneshockley@satx.rr.com. Those on the mailing list will receive notification of the location of the eradication area and cancellation for severe weather conditions.

December schedule: Tuesdays 8:30 to 10:30 AM (VSH) at the Madla Natural Area except for Tuesday, December 23rd.



Educator Workshop
Saturday January 10, 2015
Medina River Natural Area
9:00am - 12:00 noon
15890 Highway 16 South
San Antonio, TX. 78264

This is an excellent outdoor learning curriculum for pre-K teachers, volunteers and parents. The "*Growing Up WILD*" curriculum book is filled with resource information, nature activities, songs, art, music, math and much more to help children 3-7 years old learn to appreciate and enjoy nature. Please join us!

For questions about this workshop please contact:
susan.campbell@sanantonio.gov or call 210-207-3106.

To register please go to:

<http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=t7fgmrfab&oeidk=a07e9ycuxknbe47cf5e>

and as a hyperlink:

[Growing Up WILD Registration](#)

www.sanaturalareas.org

Exploring Nature with Young Children

Message from Anna Martinez-Amos, Park Ranger for Community Outreach

I wanted to express my gratitude to the Alamo Area Master Naturalists for your part in making Farm Day at Mission San Juan a success! Even with horrid weather, we had close to 400 participants at our inaugural Farm Day! (The official count is 375.) The weather made it a challenge, but that did not stop us from having a great time sharing knowledge and culture of the missions. Everyone who helped was all the more appreciated for their willingness to tough out the wet and the cold for many hours. These events are impossible without the skills and energy of the wonderful volunteers who helped on Saturday.

The Master Naturalists helped us in many areas, and we were very glad to have such knowledgeable and flexible volunteers to call upon at such short notice. We hope to benefit from the skills and experience of environmental stewards like Master Naturalists as we develop the garden and farm around Mission San Juan in the near future.

We would like feedback from you and any AAMNs who helped out on that day. We'd like to know what went well, what can we improve upon, and any other comments you would like to share with us. We want to make sure we give our visitors and our amazing volunteers the best experience possible. This being a new event we are prepared to grow to meet the needs of those who help us.

You can call 210-534-8875 ext 258 or 210-825-0206, mail (2202 Roosevelt Avenue, San Antonio, TX 78210), or email me at anna_martinez-amos@nps.gov with your feedback. If you can get your comments to me by Tuesday Dec. 9, that would be most helpful. I am compiling everyone's comments to develop a plan for Farm Day 2015!



Newsletter editor Cristina Gonzalez's resident checkered garter snake (*Thamnophis marcianus*) sunning itself after a recent downpour.