

Alamo Area Chapter News

March 2014



EVENTS, VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING

VOLUME 18, ISSUE 3

BOARD MEETING

March 11
5:30 PM
AgriLIFE Extension
Classroom 208

General Meeting 7-8PM
Monika Maeckle reports
on the state of Monarch
butterfly migration

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: WELCOME CLASS #34

The AAMN 2014 Class #34 is being held at the PHP Urban Ecology Center (UEC)! We welcome all the new Master Naturalist trainees and look forward to a great spring session. The total enrollment for Class 34 is forty-five students; we are still trying to finalize some late entries. AAMN and the training committee are very excited about this new move to the UEC and look forward to a wonderful training session at the park. Keep in mind that this would not have been possible without the support of Xavier Urrutia, Director of Parks and Recreation, his staff, and the PHP Conservancy. We thank SAPAR and the Conservancy. Additionally, we wish to thank the members of AAMN Class #34 for their interest in the program.



Master Naturalist – A Title: Please capitalize the title “Master Naturalist” when referring to you or any other Master Naturalist in writing. The Master Naturalist name and logo are registered trademarks. When being interviewed for a newspaper story, or similar situation, please impress this upon the writer/interviewer. For more information on this, click on the TMN state’s website link: http://txmn.org/files/naturalist-trademark_04.pdf

Your own stories and pictures spur interest in Alamo Area Master Naturalist. This newsletter is one way that we reach interested citizens, so when you volunteer or attend a training, please consider sending an email to your friendly editor at clealgonzalez@gmail.com. We can usually use your stories and pictures. You might even want to send a picture and brief message on your smart phone while you are out and about. And don’t forget that writing an article for the newsletter is another way to earn volunteer service hours.

COMMITTEES

Activities Information

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PINS AND AWARDS

2014 Annual Recertification-Armadillo

James Griffin - 31

Patsy Inglet - 8

Tom Inglet - 8

5000 Hours Dragonfly

Ron Tullius - 25



MN Josie Gonzales, representing AAMN at the Stock Show and Rodeo giving an interactive presentation on Texas State Symbols, the Monarch Butterfly, Texas Horned Lizard, Puluxasaurus jonesi - the Texas state dinosaur, and the Armadillo.

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, so please do not include such a notice within your article or event. For ease of formatting, editing, and publication, please keep submissions as simple as possible. Text, pictures, and PDFs are best. Tables and block indents do not work for reformatting and print. Though the editor maintains the right to edit or exclude any article, several AAMN members provide valuable feedback on the newsletter prior to publication.

San Antonio Parks and Recreation Natural Areas Stewardship Activities

March—the month of the vernal equinox, arrival of golden-cheeked warblers, shedding and immediate replacement of live oak leaves—a great time to be outside and part of the cycle of life. My own celebration of spring this year is tempered by the invasion of oak wilt fungus at Friedrich Wilderness Park. The good news is that the diseased trees are all at the front of the park, on or near the Milsa frontage.

Once a live oak is infected, the disease spreads to neighboring oaks via root connections, so the potential impact to Friedrich Park is significant. The Natural Areas team has done the research, consulted experts, pondered alternatives. In order to save the rest of the park (which is largely a live oak-juniper community), we have to cut a continuous line deep enough to sever all the live oak root connections between the symptomatic trees and those which are believed to be disease free. Then, to increase the likelihood of stopping the disease, we have to kill all the live oaks within the cut-line. (For more information on oak wilt and its management, visit <http://texasoakwilt.org/>.)

One of the take-home messages for me is the importance of not taking nature for granted. Several times a month I walk among the trees we are losing. They hold our soil and provide habitat for countless organisms, large and small. They sequester carbon, moderate our temperatures, and offer respite from daily stress. I hope you will join me in educating yourself about oak wilt and resolving to do all you can to prevent this disease.

Thurs., March 13 and 27, 8:30-11:30 AM (VSH)

Meet at Friedrich Wilderness Park covered pavilion, 21395 Milsa. Our work will include trail maintenance and closing unauthorized trails. We may also do landscape maintenance, remove herbaceous exotics, and build tree protection. Useful tools include loppers, pruners, trowels, 5 gallon buckets, square shovels, leaf and stiff rakes, wire cutters. Gloves are a must. I have tools to share. If you have questions, feel free to contact me (jayne.neal@sanantonio.gov or 210-564-6405). [Babcock remains closed between Camp Bullis Rd and Heuermann Rd, so take an alternate route or be prepared to follow a detour.]

CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

Class 25 & State Rep.

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March Training and Volunteer Events

Landscape for Life - Five Class Series (AT)

Tue, March 4, 10 AM – 12 PM

Weekly on Tuesday, until March 18, 2014

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

The Landscape for Life™ educational series instructs homeowners on how to create and maintain beautiful landscapes that benefit their family and the surrounding community. Comprised of 5 classes, this program explores the role of soils, water, vegetation and materials in sustainable landscape design. This course uses a combination of instructor led presentations, class discussions, exercises, and field trips to illustrate sustainable landscape design methods. This workshop is based on the principles of the Sustainable Sites Initiative™.

Presenters: Ginny Frederick & Shanna Cianno. Tuition: \$75.00 per person. For information, contact Cibolo Nature Center.

Golden-cheeked Warbler Survey Training and Volunteer Opportunities (VSH or AT)

Thu, March 6, 10 AM – 12 PM

The following is what is planned for Golden-cheeked Warbler surveys for Spring 2014 at Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek State Natural Area. The goal is to conduct five surveys at each site. A training event (AT) for the surveys will take place Thursday, March 6 from 10 AM to Noon at the Discovery Center at the Park. If you are interested in participating, please notify Craig Hensley at craig.hensley@twpd.texas.gov.

Thursday, March 6, 10 AM-noon: Training session for volunteers and interested staff (AT)

Survey Dates: (VSH)

Sunday, March 16, 7:30-11 AM – Bauer Unit

Wednesday, March 19, 7:30-11 AM – Bauer Unit

Sunday, March 23, 7:30-11 AM – Honey Creek SNA

Friday, March 28, 7:30-11 AM – Honey Creek SNA

Sunday, March 30, 7-11 AM – Honey Creek SNA

Sunday, April 6, 7-11 AM – Bauer Unit

Friday, April 11, 7-11 AM – Bauer Unit

Sunday, April 13, 7-11 AM – Bauer Unit

Friday, April 18, 7-11 AM – Honey Creek State Natural Area

Sunday, April 20, 7-11 AM – Honey Creek State Natural Area

Sunday, April 27 – Rain Out Date.

Martinez Park Tree Planting (VSH)

Sat, March 8, 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM

AAMN volunteers are needed to assist other volunteers in correctly planting the trees. A gardening component may also be added. Volunteers should report no later than 8:30am; the event begins at 9AM. For information or to volunteer, please contact Meredith Ruiz Tilley at 210-207-8603 or Meredith.Tilley@sanantonio.gov.

Leave No Trace Volunteers (VSH)

Sat, March 8, 8:30 AM – 11:30 AM

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

Three volunteers are needed for children's program at Medina River Natural Area Pavilion: Leave No Trace Promoting Environmental Awareness in Kids (PEAK). Call Arless Lenz at 210-219-4731 if you want to volunteer or need more information.

Wildflower Walk: Spring Has Sprung ! (AT)

Sun, March 9, 1:30 PM – 4:00 PM

Government Canyon State Natural Area, 12861 Galm Rd, San Antonio, TX

Come see early bloomers and coming attractions of Spring! Moderate intensity hike; participants must be able to walk over rocky, uneven ground. Open to ages 8 and up; minors must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. No pets please. Sturdy shoes, sun protection, and at least 1 liter of water per person strongly recommended. Registration required and will be accepted from noon February 9 until noon March 8. Reserve your spot online at <http://friendsof-gc.org/events/>. Sorry, no group reservations. Include name, age if under 18, e-mail address and telephone number for each reservation. Subject to cancellation. For more information, e-mail fogcsna@gmail.com. 210-688-9055, ext 289. Natural Area entrance fees apply.

Native Plant Walks (AT)

Fri, Mar 14, 10 AM - noon

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

Explore our 11-acre Texas Native Trails area with a Master Naturalist! This walk will be on the Hill Country Trail. Contact person: Ron Tullius at rvtullius@sbcglobal.net or 210-739-2566.

Events, continued

Malta Star Thistle Removal (VSH)

Fri, March 14, 8:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Eisenhower Park, 19399 NW Military Highway,
San Antonio, TX

Malta star thistle (*Centaurea melitensis*) is an exotic invasive plant that can compete with and exclude our native vegetation. We will meet in the parking lot and work our way up Cedar Flats Trail where we will hand pull and bag the thistle. If we have time we will also trim back vegetation in the parking lot islands. Please contact Wendy Leonard (210-207-3292; wendy.leonard@sanantonio.gov) for more information and to confirm a reservation.

Youth Honeybee Education Training for Volunteers (VSH)

Fri, March 28, 2:00PM – 3:30PM

Bexar County AgriLife, 3355 Cherry Ridge Dr, San Antonio, TX

During the month of April, Extension will be providing educational programs on honeybees and their importance to K-5th graders in NISD after school programs. The dates are April 1, 2, 3, 8, 10, 15, 16, 17, 22, 24, and 29. If you are interested in helping us with these programs, there will be a training on March 28th from 2-3:30 PM to discuss the lesson that we will be using and activities we will be trying to accomplish. If you are interested in attending (or interested in helping with the lessons, but cannot attend the training), please let Molly know at mekeck@ag.tamu.edu

Amazing Adaptations (AT)

Sat, March 29, 10:00AM – 11:30AM

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

From hard shells to the ability to hide in plain sight, animals (and plants) have a wide variety of adaptations that help them survive. Join the Park Ranger at Guadalupe River State Park for a look at the amazing adaptations of our local plant and animal life followed by a nature walk to discover firsthand how they do it. This program is free with a Park Pass or a \$7 daily pass (children ages 12 and under are free). For more information, call 830-438-7653.

Opportunity to get involved with ABKS-NA and help hunt for the Tobusch cactus! (VSH)

Albert and Bessie Kronkosky State Natural Area (ABKSNA) is planning to do several Tobusch cactus hunts between March 3 and 16. Some of the hunts will be scheduled on weekends.

You do not need any prior Tobusch hunt experience. This is a great opportunity for those of you have been wanting to get “out in the field” at ABK but have not yet had the opportunity to do so. If you are interested, send your name and phone number to Tom Riordan, ABK Projects Manager at tomr63@wildblue.net. Tom will contact you to find out when you will be available - and will work to get you on a team that will be hunting at a time that will work for you.

Each Tobusch Search Team will have a seasoned ABK volunteer who understands the “lay of the land” at ABK and will serve as your Tobusch Guide, so you don’t have to worry about finding your way around ABK’s 3,800 acres.

If you do not have Tobusch cactus hunting experience, it would be helpful for you to educate yourself about this tiny and elusive cactus. Please note the distinctive bloom. I have also created a familiarization page on Tobusch, available at <http://goo.gl/qBXjsP>. On that page you will find links to images, slide shows, research studies, articles and other information that will help you to be able to recognize Tobusch in the field.



News from Headwaters

Last Saturday, we hosted the annual Basura Bash cleanup at the Headwaters of the San Antonio River. We've been a "trib" (tributary) for the last six years, although our cleanup involves the main stem of the San Antonio River as well as two tributaries that feed into it: Olmos Creek below the dam, and Miller Creek, once a spring-fed creek large enough to power a mill. This year, about seventy fantastic volunteers removed trash from all these waterways in the Sanctuary.

In addition to the usual trash of cans and bottles, volunteers found a shopping cart, a pair of crutches, and about ten baseballs.

These Texas Master Naturalists led Basura Bash volunteers along the Sanctuary waterways. Thanks.

And thanks to ALL our Basura Bash volunteers for coming out to the Headwaters to pick clean our beautiful sanctuary.

By the way, 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 at richard.duarte@amormeus.org to make an appointment.



Basura Bash "headquarters" at Headwaters Sanctuary

ACORN Project teams with Master Naturalists to collect native tree and plant seedlings at Botanical Garden

On Saturday, February 15, Project ACORN volunteers collected seeds and seedlings from the grounds of the San Antonio Botanical Garden. ACORN is expanding from one school to six schools thanks to more funding, but there is a severe shortfall of native tree seeds available for propagation by the teachers and their students. The SABG Director Bob Brackman and Director of Education Sasha Kodet generously allowed ACORN teachers to harvest a variety of native plant seedlings to overcome the shortfall.

Led by Master Naturalist Ron Tullius and ACORN leader Kent Page (AAMN), we visited the Texas Native Trails in search of viable tiny plants to transfer into the ACORN growing chambers. It was loads of fun searching and selecting plants with the teachers who are starting the ACORN program on each campus. Ron knew which plants grew where, and we learned how to remove seedlings from the ground successfully, without too much damage. We also learned to transport the seedlings in moistened soil, to safeguard them until they are put into a growing chamber. Kent demonstrated his method of creating a sturdy growing chamber using empty 2 liter beverage bottles.



The teachers have taken seedlings to several school campuses where they will be monitored in their growing chambers by the student growers until next fall. On some campuses, more than a hundred seedlings will be propagated. In November, these native species will be planted by students, parents, and teachers with the help of Master Naturalists. The ACORN Project grew in Kent Page's classroom, but to propagate to the six new NISD campuses well, we are looking for more Master Naturalists to offer help to teachers as they learn about native species and develop their own classroom activities. In the fall, we can help plant trees, but this spring, we can help teachers determine basic things, like what to grow and where on their schools to plant.

Several teachers have already asked if a Master Naturalist could visit their campus to select ACORN planting sites. Meanwhile, Kent Page and another veteran ACORN teacher in the Judson ISD would appreciate help with their well established programs, as well.



It is our hope that we can find a Master Naturalist for each ACORN campus and that the Master Naturalists will coordinate and learn from each other as well. As a group, we can combine our own talents and help accelerate the success of the ACORN curriculum, creating a new community of tree growers in San Antonio schools. Please contact AAMN Kent Page (kent.Page@nisd.net) or AAMN Lissa Martinez (lissa@satx.rr.com) if you are interested in helping.

Lissa Martinez

Here's proof! Volunteering = Happy Genes!

Steven Cole, a UCLA professor of medicine, has been examining how the human genome responds to stress, misery, fear, and all kinds of negative psychology. In addition, Dr. Cole and his fellow researchers recently studied the biological dimensions of how positive psychology impacts human gene expression. According to Dr. Cole, individuals with eudaimonic well-being (having a deep sense of purpose and meaning in life) “showed a much more favorable gene profile, with less inflammation and better antibody and antiviral activity.” Our invaders volunteers are deeply committed to making a difference now, and for future generations; so in addition to eradicating invasive plants, they are also building stronger immune systems!

You, too, can join us in our ongoing efforts. March is a wonderful time to be outside in nature, as the trees are budding and spring wildflowers are beginning to emerge. Volunteers are needed for eradication of invasive plants in the Leon Creek Greenway. We expect to be tackling a large stand of *Arundo donax* (giant cane) and this is much easier (and more fun) with a larger group, so please consider sharing the efforts.

No prior experience or invasive plant recognition expertise is required – just bring gloves and water. We have a supply of loppers and saws, 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 specific working site locations and cancellation for severe weather conditions. March schedule: Tuesdays 8:30 to 10:30 am on the Leon Creek Greenway.



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Return Service Requested