



# The Tracker

The Central Texas Master Naturalist Newsletter December 2016

## Inside This Issue

President's Pen	2
In Memory of Katherine Bedrich	3
The MN Outdoors	4
Conference Fun	5
Night Fest continued	6
Interesting Tidbits	8
Season's Greetings	9
October Awards	10
On the Horizon	11
Where have all the birds gone	11

Two of the activities at Night Fest. Photos by Luca Dora.

## Calendar at a Glance

- December 5, hours due.
- December 9-11, CTMN Camping trip at Colorado Bend
- December 13, CTMN Annual Potluck/Holiday party 6:30 p.m.
- See page 10 for more info

## 2016 Central Texas Night Fest

# Exploring Life Under the Sky

**-Rehanon Pampell**

On October 15th, people gathered at Bend of the River Park to search for nocturnal movement, listen for night sounds, and learn how to use our smart phones to help scientists learn more about the night



sky. Due to the amazing response we had last year at the Night Hike (the event held the night before Nature Fest), we decided to separate Nature Fest and Night Hike

(renamed 'Night Fest') and alternate years. So this year we held our second Night Fest. It was a free event that ran from 7pm-9pm at Bend of the River Park.

Continued on page 6...

*Chapter Motto*

**Earth Day,  
Every Day**



## From the President's Pen

As I write my last installment as President for the Tracker, I can't help but think back over the last four years.

I was a bit nervous at my first board meeting in January 2013. Everyone sat around the table looking at me in anticipation. My parliamentary procedure was a bit rusty, but with a little nudge or two, I made it through. I may have had you all fooled (or not), but at almost every meeting that I preside over I am nervous.

I have been honored to serve as your President. The support and friendship you have extended has been amazing. Whenever I was unsure about something, I could always reach out and

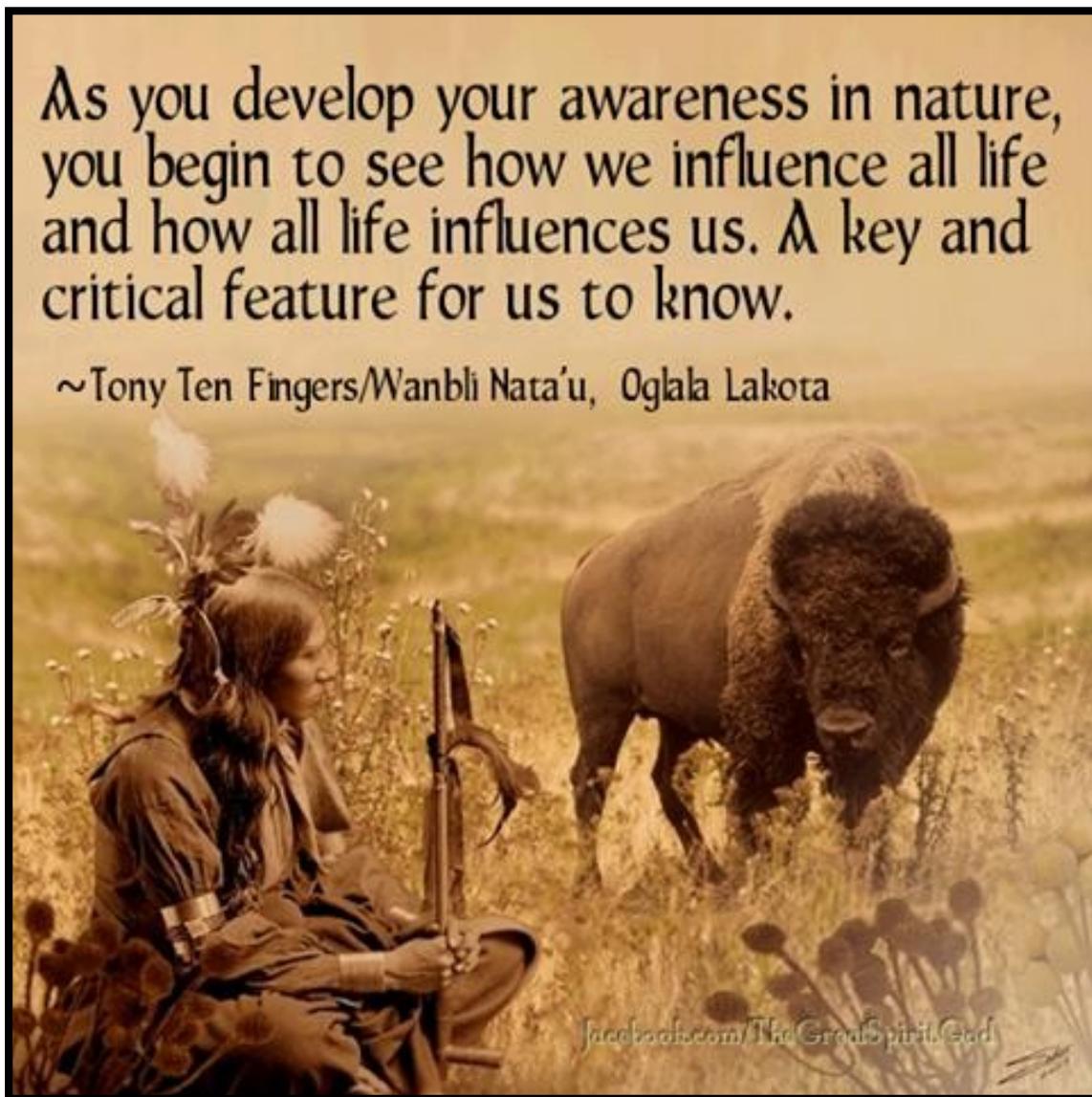
get help, talk things through or just get reassurance.

Our membership is truly a diverse group and I have enjoyed meeting every one of you. Learning about different members' interests has encouraged me to expand what I know. I now look at moths in a whole new light (literally). It has been wonderful not being the only Nature Nerd in the room!

Thank you all for your support, guidance, words of advice and encouragement over the years. I could not imagine a better group to be associated with...Lynn

As you develop your awareness in nature,  
you begin to see how we influence all life  
and how all life influences us. A key and  
critical feature for us to know.

~Tony Ten Fingers/Wanbli Nata'u, Oglala Lakota



facebook.com/TheGreatSpiritGod

## *In Memory of Katherine Bedrich 1951-2016*

Katherine Bedrich was a founding member and first President of the El Comino Real Master Naturalist Chapter in Milam County which received its charter in 2008. Our chapter, cleverly named Central Texas, was conceived the following year and graduated our first class to charter in 2010. Central Texas



Chapter was an off-shoot of the multi-county Heart of Texas Chapter based in Waco and although they were helpful in our efforts to form a separate chapter, it was Katherine in Milam County who had very recently gone through the process and eagerly provided guidance and suggestions to get our Chapter up and running as quickly as possible.

I remember taking many members of our first cohort of trainees in 2010 to Milam County's two day Nature Festival for Advanced Training credit. It was where we first interacted with the rest of ECRMN crew and saw a Nature Festival designed and produced locally. Katherine grew up in Temple so said she never minded making a trip over from her home in Cameron. And many trips she made indeed. Katherine was a regular in our early years at our Chapter Meetings and attended most of the special advanced training opportunities hosted by CTMN and helped with our big events, including this summer's Moth Night at Mother Neff State Park. She was an important source of advice and data as we began work on holding a Nature Fest of our own. Katherine had a booth at our first Nature Fest getting everyone she could to fold an origami

passenger pigeon to bring awareness to the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the loss of that species. She even had the newspaper reporter folding a pigeon. Well before Nature Fest the following year, she sent us a photo of what she was going build for her next booth: a Soil Tunnel. And she did! She periodically sent drawings and then photos and it was a great attraction at Nature Fest 2015 where people of all ages crawled through her "underground" tunnel to learn about the soil under our feet.

Katherine was a learner and a teacher and she clearly loved nature. She always seemed to have a smile on her face if she was outdoors or even indoors talking about our natural world. In all of that volunteering over the years, she had garnered the Texas Master Naturalist 4000 hour service award in early 2014 that came with a US President's Volunteer

Service Award and received the TMN 5000 hour award at last year's state conference.

Losing Katherine in November was unexpected and we know she will leave big hiking boots to fill in Milam County but she has helped train up a strong Master Naturalist chapter there to carry on, and we know she left a mark on our chapter as well. I appreciated her "let's do this!" attitude, her upbeat demeanor and the advice and knowledge she shared so willingly. I would have never known about rabbit tobacco, if not for Katherine stooping down and telling me there was something down there I needed to see. She will be missed.

- Zoe Rascoe

# The Master Naturalist Outdoors

By Marilyn Whitworth

One of the courses I took at the Texas Annual Master Naturalist Conference was “Outdoor Ethics for the Master Naturalist” presented by Andre Houser. His talk was on the TREAD Lightly and Leave No Trace Behind programs run by the Forest Service. TREAD is based on 5 principles: Travel Responsibly, Respect and Rights of Others, Educate Yourself, Avoid Sensitive Areas and Do Your Part. There are 1600 of these programs covering 49 states. I forget which state doesn't have a program.



Some actions to take while in the forest are: stay on designated roads, go over an obstacle rather than around to prevent widening the trail, share the trail, yield the right of way to people passing you or traveling uphill, remember pack animals have the right of way over all other travelers. Take time prior to your trip to obtain maps and regulations from public agencies about the area you plan to visit, take some recreation skills classes, know how to use and repair your equipment you take with you.

Leave No Trace is a non-profit organization that originated in the early 1960's following passage of the Wilderness Act of 1964. In the 1980's it was developed further by the U.S. Forest Service. The first course was taught in 1991. It was called Leave No Trace Inc at first and later changed its name to Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. It partnered with land management agencies, outdoor equipment manufacturers, retailers, outfitter/guide services, youth servicing organizations and education institutions.

The 5 main partners of Leave No Trace are Federal Land Use United States Forest Service, National Park Service, Federal Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the Army Corps of Engineers. There are 7 main principles: Plan Ahead and Prepare, Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces, Dispose of Waste properly, Leave What You Find, Minimize Camp Fire Impacts, Respect Wildlife, and Be Considerate of Other Visitors.

The phone number and website for Leave No Trace is 1-800-332-4100 and [www.LNT.org](http://www.LNT.org). The phone number and website for Tread Lightly is 1-800-966-9900 and [www.treadlightly.org](http://www.treadlightly.org). These phone numbers and websites can give you more in-depth information about their programs and how to follow their main principles.

Photos from the Conference taken by Zoe Rascoe include: Marilyn and Richard, Cutest Couple Award, and below: most of the 2016 TMN Conference attendees.



# TMN Conference Fun

- Zoe Rascoe



Above, clockwise: Dale Hughling and the rest of the VMS team recognized - *NOT HIS FAULT!* President Lynn Fleming and President Elect, Rene Berkhoudt; Linda Mahaffey, 1,000 milestone award! New TMN curriculum wins national award; sunrise on Lake Conroe at the Conference Center.

Photos by Zoe Rascoe



# Night Fest...continued



This year, stations included: Night-time Bugs (Fort Hood Natural and Cultural Resources/Central Texas College); Night Sky (Mayborn Planetarium/International Dark Sky Association); Bat Basics (Good Water Master Naturalists); Aquatic Plants (Native Plant Society



of Texas); What's that Sound? (Central Texas Master Naturalists); Nocturnal Critters (Central Texas Master Naturalists); Constellation Stories (Central Texas Master Naturalists); Telescopes (Central Texas Astronomical Society); Using Sky Map (Boy Scout Troop 153); and a Lighted Toy Vendor. We hope visitors found a new understanding and appreciation of the local night life through the exploration of the Night Fest stations.



Our goal was to help people recognize the diversity of critters that thrive in the darkness and the importance of protecting our night skies. People learned that light pollution can disrupt ecosystems; some bugs start their

lifecycle in the water; and stars have some interesting stories to share – just to name a few. It seemed the guests left very happy and informed. What a great event! Thank you CTMN for all your hard work and great ideas!



Photos for the Night Fest story were taken by Luca Doro and Zoe Rascoe.

# Night Fest...continued



# Interesting Tidbits

## A Little Help from our Friends

*Editor's note: I found this photo posted by Patricia Sauve on the face book page, Gardening 101 in Central Texas and another face book member recommended the following site for information on this interesting tid-bit.*

According to Galveston **Master Gardener, Betty Gray** on the website: [http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/beneficial/beneficial-04\\_braconid\\_wasp\\_on\\_hornworm.htm](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/beneficial/beneficial-04_braconid_wasp_on_hornworm.htm):

“Meet the Braconidae, a wasp family that is a friend to the home gardener. The female wasp uses her ovipositor to lay eggs just under the skin of an unlucky hornworm. As the eggs hatch, the larvae feed on the hornworm's viscera, literally eating a hornworm



alive. Larvae chew their way out through the host's skin when they mature. Individual species tend to be specialized to a particular host. A good example is the *Cotesia congregatus* (older name, *Apanteles congregatus*). Less than 1/8 inch long, black with yellowish legs and clear wings, this tiny wasp considers the tobacco hornworm (*Manduca sexta*) and the tomato hornworm (*Manduca quinquemaculata*) meals on wheels. So, if you see a bright green hornworm carrying what looks like a clutch of white-colored insect eggs on its back, leave it there! The hornworm is not only feeding its own destruction, it is also carrying potential destroyers of hornworm brothers, sisters and descendants. That means we get those wonderful, luscious tomatoes right off the vine, the braconids get a meal and a future, and the hornworms get GONE! ”

## Mother Earth News Fair Coming to Expo Center!

Feb. 18-19, 2017  
Bell County Expo Center  
301 W Loop 121  
Belton, Texas 76513

Saturday: 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
Sunday: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

With more than 150 workshops, there is no shortage of informative demonstrations and lectures to educate and entertain you over the weekend. Fun, Informative workshops and demo's! Go to: <http://www.motherearthnewsfair.com/texas/>

# Season's Greetings!

Central Texas Master Naturalist Chapter

## *7th Annual Holiday Party*

Tuesday, December 13th

6:30pm

Potluck Dinner

Home of Zoe Rascoe

1900 N. 13th Street, Temple



Please RSVP by Monday, Dec. 12<sup>th</sup> to Zoe at 254-913-1013 or [trascoe@hotmail.com](mailto:trascoe@hotmail.com)

Bring your favorite dish to share. Spouse or special other guest is invited to join you for an evening of food, fun and fellowship.

Our chapter will gather for Food, Fellowship and Fun as 2016 draws to a close for the 7th Annual Holiday Potluck Dinner on Tuesday, December 13th at 6:30pm. Bring a spouse or friend and a favorite dish to share and we'll all feast like kings!

Once again we will have our popular Chinese Auction fundraiser where the more tickets you purchase and put by an item, the more likely you are to win it! At least theoretically. Items for raffle are donated by our members - things like handmade crafts, field guides, plants, purchased items, things from nature, or anything decorative or festive. Tickets are only \$1 and you can put as many tickets on an item as you like. Buy a lot of tickets and put it all on one thing and you just might go home with it! Please look around and see if you have something to donate in the auction, then just bring it to the event. All money collected will go towards our chapter projects and activities. Thanks to our generous members, we usually raise a few hundred dollars in one night!

Please note the RSVP is a week from Monday (although Sunday would be better.)

As a reminder while I have you, we will also have elections for President and Treasurer at the event.

Hope to see you here!

Zoe

254-913-1013

# October Awards

- Zoe Rascoe

At our October Meeting, Travis Jez spoke about the Texas Roadside Wildflower Program.

Lynn Williams, Shirley Watts and Joe Dorn all received their 500 Hour Silver Milestone Pins. Joe and Dale Hughling recertified and Ben Clement received his Certification.



And below, Yvonne, Rehanon, Mary and Jerry finalized plans for Night Fest.



# On the Horizon

(V) [12/8/2016](#) - 8:30 am **Miller Springs Workday @ [Miller Springs Park Nature Center](#)** -- for more information contact [Mary Ann Everett](mailto:everett.maryann4@gmail.com)(everett.maryann4@gmail.com).

(Priceless) [12/9-11/2016](#) - **CTMN Colorado Bend Backpacking/Camping Trip @ [Colorado Bend State Park](#)** -- for more information or RSVP contact [Nichole Smith](mailto:kittyrock2000@gmail.com) (330-988-5139 or kittyrock2000@gmail.com).

(Priceless) [12/13/2016](#) - 6:30 pm - **7th Annual Holiday Potluck Party @ [Zoe's House](#)** -- to RSVP or for more information contact [Zoe Rascoe](mailto:trascoc@hot.rr.com) (254-913-1013 or trascoc@hot.rr.com). **RSVP by 12/11.**

(V) [12/18/2016](#) - **Colorado Bend State Park Interactive/Interpretative Activity @ [Colorado Bend State Park](#)** -- for more information contact [Lynn Williams](mailto:lindawi@embarqmail.com) (lindawi@embarqmail.com).

## Where Have the Birds Gone?



- **Terrie Hahn**

The last couple of months, I've noticed a sharp decline in the number of birds in the yard and coming to the feeder. The yard is quieter and doesn't have near the bird activity. I was going to ask my go-to person, Mary Ann Everett, but decided to attempt to figure it out on my own.

I discovered in looking at the Audubon Society of Rhode Island webpage and the Travis (county) Audubon page that I needn't be worried. The birds are finding many more natural food choices out there since we had decent rain. Audubon Society of Rhode Island naturalist, Kim Calcagno explains that it is part behavioral and part nutritional. "During the spring and summer, birds are focused on breeding. They come out to find a mate. They search to find nesting material. They forage endlessly for all those mouths to feed," she explains. "The birds you see are constantly taking risks by coming out in the open and exposing themselves to predators to get these things done. Once breeding is over for the season, they have some time before the winter comes to 'lay low' a bit, staying out of the view of predators and keeping out of the open areas. This behavior is normal and comes with the season."

Another reason is the seed we put out is only a percentage of the birds' complete diet. The birds take advantage of it, but don't require it. "In late summer and early fall, the forests and fields are simply burgeoning with trees and shrubs that are full of ripe fruit, berries, seed pods and other fresh, highly nutritious and easily obtainable food," adds Calcagno. "The birds are foraging in these trees, thickets and meadows in search of these treats. Whether a bird will migrate or will stay in the area and face the cold of winter, this fall harvest helps them build up the necessary fat and muscle for the work ahead. They take advantage of the food sources while they can. It will be winter soon enough and they will once again have to work harder to find food."

**CHECK US OUT ON FACEBOOK!**

<https://www.facebook.com/Central-Texas-Chapter-Texas-Master-Naturalists-116648718373317/timeline/>

(V) Approved for Volunteer Hours  
(AT) Approved for Advanced Training  
(MA) Must Apply for approval of hours

## *Newsletter Mission Statement*

*"Our mission is to inform and educate Master Naturalist members and the general public about our local environment and resources, and what we, as caretakers, can do to protect them."*

### **Board of Directors**

**President:** Lynn Fleming

**Past President:** Mary Ann Everett

**Vice President:** Rene Berkhoudt

**Secretary:** Sarah Byrd

**Treasurer:** Don Wyatt

**Web Master:** Dale Hughling

**Membership:** Linda Mahaffey

**Historian:** Dana Hazelwood

**Host:** Mary Odom

**Training:** Sue Valdez

**Newsletter:** Gail Hughling

### **Chapter Advisors:**

Heidi Prude,  
County Extension Agent, Natural Resources

Derrick Wolter,  
Wildlife Biologist, Texas Parks and Wildlife

### **Newsletter Staff**

**Editor:** Terrie Hahn

**Proofreader:** Werner Hahn

**Contributing Writers and Photographers:** Lynn Fleming, Rehanon Pampell, Zoe Rascoe, Marilyn Whitworth, Luca Doro, Betty Gray, Terrie Hahn

**Please send any news of events, articles or photos of what you're doing or what's going on in your yard or area to:**

**Terrie Hahn at [moompie45@hotmail.com](mailto:moompie45@hotmail.com)**



Plentiful berries on a Yaupon tree in our yard are protected by a Mockingbird who watches carefully every time we come near. - Terrie Hahn

### **The Central Texas Master Naturalist Chapter:**

Holds member meetings the 2nd Tuesday of February, April, June, August, October and December at 6 p.m. at the Belton Church of Christ at 3003 N. Main. Location exceptions are in December and June.

**PACE** meetings are at the Church location at 6 p.m. the 2nd Tuesday of January, March, May, July, September and November. **THE PUBLIC IS WELCOME AT ALL OF OUR MEETINGS.**

**Programs      Activities      Committees      Everything else**

The Board of Directors meet the 1st Tuesday of January, March, May, July, September and November at 3 p.m. in the Board Room at the Agrilife Extension Center at 1605 Main in Belton.