

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™



HIGHLAND LAKES CHAPTER



Highland Lakes Steward

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MISSION

The Texas Master Naturalist program is a natural resource-based volunteer training and development program sponsored statewide by Texas AgriLife Extension and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

The mission of the program is to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers who provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the state of Texas

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President's Message

Phil Wyde

Who and What is a Texas Master Naturalist?

I am a certified Texas Master Naturalist. The responses that I get when I tell someone this are usually very interesting. I swear that some people think that I take off my clothes in the woods. You can tell that these people do not have any naturalist inclinations. If they did, they would know that there are usually a lot of mosquitoes and other biting or stinging insects in woods (to say nothing of thorns, burs and poison ivy). Other people wonder if Master Naturalists are "tree huggers." Although I think that all naturalists do have a love of trees and the outdoors, the appellation, "tree hugger," is far from accurate. For example, would a "tree hugger," favor the harvesting of deer in areas where they are over abundant; support the reduction of English house sparrows, cowbirds or starlings; or advocate the ruthless removal of Chinese tallow trees, chinaberry trees and many nandina varieties?

In fact, the Texas' Master Naturalist Program began as a statewide initiative in 1998. It is jointly sponsored by the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) and the Texas AgriLife Extension Service. In practice, the organization is directed by a steering committee responsible for providing training guidelines, program marketing and promotion, curriculum resources, and advanced training opportunities. The program has been hugely successful in meeting its goals of developing a body of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach and service dedicated to

the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities. To date, there are more than 40 recognized local chapters with more than 5,000 volunteers. Texas Master Naturalist volunteers have dedicated more than 1,000,000 hours of service worth more than \$20 million dollars to their communities and to the State of Texas. As important, Texas Master Naturalists directly reach over 180,000 youths, adults and private landowners each year through their outreach and education efforts. Many of these contacts are above and beyond what the TWPD, the Texas AgriLife Service or other involved agencies could make on their own.

So what does it take to become a certified Texas Master Naturalist? An individual gains the designation of Texas Master Naturalist after participating in an approved chapter training program with a minimum of 40 hours of combined field and classroom instruction, obtaining eight hours of approved advanced training and completing 40 hours of volunteer service. Following the initial training program, trainees have one year in which to complete their 40 hours of volunteer service and eight hours of advanced training. To retain the Texas Master Naturalist title during each subsequent year, volunteers must complete eight additional hours of advanced training and provide an additional 40 hours of volunteer service coordinated through their local chapter.

Sounds like a lot, right? From my point of view, and I think virtually all of my fellow Master Naturalists, it is a trifle to the satis-



faction gained from our increased discovery and appreciation of nature and our surroundings; from the wonderful interactions that we have with land owners, young children, state park interpreters and rangers, and community leaders. Indeed, the youth, nature and conservation education programs; the projects to enhance local parks, schools and playgrounds; the Inks Lake State Park, Blanco State Park and Balcones Canyon Land Preserve and countless other projects have been nothing but FUN! How many of you get to count and band humming birds, butterflies or set up wood duck, bat or owl habitats? Sure, sometimes we have to cut, pull and haul. But it is always with enthusiasm and camaraderie. Even better there are often big rewards afterwards (e.g., food right off a grill, drinks, and exotic desserts). That brings up the best thing about the Master Naturalist Program. Texas Master Naturalists, no matter what their backgrounds, are really down to earth. I have yet to meet one that I did not like!

Maybe you think that the classes and Advanced Training are tough and tedious? Far from it! There are no tests and there is something for everyone. There are classes and lectures on geology, weather, hydrology, ecology, plants, birds, bees, and much more. You take away what you want.

If you are interested in becoming a certified Texas Master Naturalist, there is a flourishing chapter serving Burnet, Llano and Blanco counties — the Highland Lakes Master Naturalists (HLMN). They conduct training classes every spring. For more information, go to masternaturalist.tamu.edu/tmn/hl where you can get more information and see what Master Naturalists look like. Or you can call Phil Wyde (present president of the HLMN chapter) at (325) 388-8692 or Ray Buchanan (present Training Class Coordinator) at (325) 379-1455.

I would like to end this article with a quotation taken shamelessly, but with pride, from the WEB site of the Texas Master Naturalists and Aldo Leopold's book, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There* (Oxford Press University Press, 1949, available at Amazon.com). "There are some who can live without wild things, and some who cannot. ...Like winds and sunsets, wild things were taken for granted until progress began to do away with them. Now we face the question whether a still higher 'standard of living' is worth its cost in things natural, wild, and free. For us of the minority, the opportu-

nity to see geese is more important than television, and the chance to find a pasque-flower is a right as inalienable as free speech."

Conservation Award for Marvin Bloomquist

Ray Buchanan

What a thrill it is to have a friend, a colleague, a teacher, and a mentor recognized at a public occa-



Carol Buchanan presenting to Marvin Photo by Sue Kersey

sion for all those things you always admired and wanted many times to say! And how we appreciate Marvin Bloomquist as a "walking, talking, doing, thinking, organizing, learning" conservationist. In the past he was an energy person by profession; but now he energizes us all with his own unique way of "sharing the wonders of our natural environment." Thanks to the Llano Uplift Chapter of the DAR for presenting to Marvin their first "Conservationist of the Year" Award. And thanks to them for highlighting a moment in our lives as Master Naturalists in which we can focus our appreciation on Marvin's many endeavors and accomplishments.

Well Done, Marvin!! You Inspire Us All!!

Let us be good stewards of the Earth we inherited. All of us have to share the Earth's fragile ecosystems and precious resources, and each of us has a role to play in preserving them. If we are to go on living together on this earth, we must all be responsible for it.

Kofi Annan, 7th Secretary-General of the United Nations

Programs from the Oatmeal Cowboy

Billy Hutson

Our last meeting went well at the Kingsland library with Robert Lindsey speaking about Reptiles and Amphibians with an array of interesting creatures. Robert is a true naturalist that does this exchange as his means of socializing in the subject that he has self taught himself and enjoyed all his life.



Robert Lindsey with a pet.

Photo by Jerry Stone



The Star—Billy's Snapping Turtle

Photo by Jerry Stone

Next month we will have our meeting at the Kingsland Library again and the speakers subject will be Texas Weather by Paul Yura who is the "warning coordination meteorologist" for the National Weather Service. I hope everyone will find it interesting. Meteorologists don't get much respect for their often incorrect predictions but when you consider that they're dealing with an unpredictable woman (mother nature) you have to give them some slack. And she can't even cook!!!!- - unless you get caught in a volcano.

Just one of the interesting subjects of the meeting was the new volunteer category of Land Mngmnt

Assistance. This is a new long overdue, much heralded program in it's infancy in our chapter. One other chapter that we know of has had this program since 2005 and has been successful in serving an average of a property a week since inception and over 17,000 acres to date. This is acreage potentially saved from the ravages of improper land use because of lack of available knowledgeable conservation help. I'm pleased to be heading this up and hope for support from all in the chapter that decide to be involved.

We will keep support teams to a minimum of our presently most knowledgeable members per subject with one or two chapter members that want to learn from the subject in question in order to get anyone that wants to be involved included. There will be future training involved and I look forward to guidance from our sister chapter (Hill Country Chapter) over the next several months starting the week of May 16th with a hands on class in Kerrville that I will attend. Wade will provide some guidelines and I will try to follow the successful path that the H.C.Chapter has established. There is a host of reference referral lists, classes and websites to use as a hand out package that I will be working on in the next several months along with a chart of knowledgeable, trained and interested chapter members.

For any questions or suggestions please call or email me.

Field Trip: Old Tunnel Wildlife Management Area

Mike Harris

We had a great field trip to the Old Tunnel Wildlife Management Area Tuesday 20th April 2010. Our Guest Speaker was Biologist Nyta Brown - WMA Manager who provided an interesting and thorough presentation on the history and ecology of this prime bat observation and study area. I have detailed much of what was said below:

In the early 1800's the German Farmers and Craftsmen, of what is now known as Fredericksburg, had to travel by wagon to the nearest city, San Antonio to sell their produce. This 75 mile journey over the Hill Country took them up to 11 days, if the weather was kind to them. During this time the farmers produce was well past their 'sale-by-date'. So a bunch of entrepreneurs banded together to see if the San Antonio and Aransas Pass railway line

from San Antonio could be extended to go to Fredericksburg. Due to the lack of funding, the terrain, which was too steep for trains to haul goods and passengers, and other factors, the railway line was never built in that century.

It wasn't until 1912 that a number of rich businessmen from Fredericksburg joined with others from San Antonio and were able to raise \$200,000 and employ a well thought of engineer by the name of Foster Crane. With this

money they took out a charter and the San Antonio, Fredericksburg and Northern Railway Company was formed.

In January 1913, Comfort, a town 13 miles south of where the tunnel is now, workers, with their mules, plows, scrapers, pick axes, shovels and horses started to build the railroad. They were paid \$0.5/day or \$2.0/day if they furnished a mule or a horse.

It was decided that the 'Big Hill' or 'Mt Alamo' as it is called, (the main stumbling block of previous proposals), would be straight bored through to a length of 920 feet. Two teams, working in 8hrs continuous shifts started from both ends and met in the center. Dynamite was used but restricted to reduce tunnel collapse. On the 15th July that same year both teams met and the Tunnel was completed. The engineers calculations were so accurate that there were only a few inches difference between

the two bores when they met. During the excavation 14,222 cu.ft of material was removed.

The first train passed through the tunnel on

August 16th 1913 and the rails reached Fredericksburg on October 20th, under eleven months from the time the charter was signed. The train operated for 29years and it was sold in 1942 and the tracks removed.

Local residents reported that shortly after the removal of the railroad tracks in 1942, bats moved into the tunnel. Ruffians, however, used the bats as target practice; fires were lit in the tunnel and other cruel practices were enjoyed. In 1991, however, the Old



Biologist Nyta Brown

Photo by Jerry Stone

Tunnel was acquired by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to protect the bats and was given to the WMA to manage. The WMA Old Tunnel is the smallest Wildlife Management Area in Texas, containing only 16.1 acres of land. Despite its small size, this is the most visited WMA. Besides the bats, over 100 species of birds have been sighted in the area and numerous plants and trees have been carefully labeled for walkers to enjoy.

In July and August there are over three million Mexican Free-tailed bats (*Tadarida brasiliensis*) and one to three thousand Cave Myotis (*Myotis velifer*) in the Old Tunnel. The Mexican Free-tailed bat is a medium-sized bat, weighing about 12-15 grams. They are named for the tail that hangs free from the uropatagium (skin between hind legs and tail). The title "Mexican" is added to their name because they migrate to Mexico in the winter months.

Old Tunnel bats usually leave the tunnel in late October, and fly to Mexico. During this migration, radar tracking have shown that when they leave the



cave they flew up to an altitude of 10,000 feet and speeds of 60 mph before dispersing to their feeding grounds. At their dawn return, individual bats have shown to fly as high as 15,000 feet before diving into their cave.

While in Mexico, these bats mate during February and March when the females are most fertile. Bats returning to Texas in late March or early April include pregnant females, who give birth to one single pup during June. The pups are not born in the tunnel, but in other nearby caves or under bridges where the temperature and humidity levels are more stable. The tunnel being only 920 feet long and open at both ends, the temperature and humidity therefore will vary greatly. The Old Tunnel is considered a pseudo-maternal colony because there are both pregnant and lactating females in the tunnel, but there are no pups. Pups usually fly within four to six weeks after birth and are considered juveniles when they travel to the tunnel with their mothers. Bat populations in the Old Tunnel increase substantially when the females return from maternity colonies along with the juveniles in late July and early August. Joining the Old Tunnel population in September and October, are bat that have migrated south from further north in the United States. This process of "staging" occurs when bats group together before flying to Mexico for the winter.

When the Sun Goes Down on Summer nights, these bats usually emerge within an hour before or after sunset. Most bats exit through the south end of the tunnel, spiraling in a counter-clockwise direction in order to gain altitude over nearby trees Red-tailed hawks are sometimes seen feeding on the bats as they emerge, however these and other predators do not impact the bat population. The large serpentine column travels southeast towards the Guadalupe River. If the wind should veer north the bats will exit from the north end of the tunnel,



and fly either north towards the Pedernales River, or south over the Old Tunnels' observation deck. After getting water from local water supplies, the colony disperses to feed in smaller groups. Eighty percent of the Free-tail's diet includes agricultural pests such as the cutworm, cornborer and web-worm moths. These statistics have been made by scientists sampling the bats feces. Each can eat its weight in insects nightly, and the whole colony may devour over 25 tons of moths per night. The bats return to the tunnel between midnight and day-break, having traveled an average 25 to 30 miles to forage.

Huge deposits of droppings in the roosts of Mexican Free-tails have earned them the common name, "Guano bat". Bat guano (droppings) from insectivorous bats was an important source of fertilizer, and is still sold as an expensive, organic fertilizer. Before the oil boom, guano was Texas' number one mineral export. The height of the guano in the Bat Tunnel is approximately four feet. Many have tried to harvest the guano from the Old Tunnel but natural

springs within the tunnel have made the operation too difficult. Many Free-tailed colonies consist of at least one-million bats, and the resulting concentration of ammonia is extremely high.

The Mexican Free-tailed bat has long narrow wings of between 11.3 to 13.4 inches and the tail extends beyond the membrane by about a third of its length. The fur is gray in new molt and then turns rusty brown. It has long rounded ears and a fore arm of between 1.5 - 1.8 inches. The adults weigh between 12 - 15 grams.

Other bats that can be seen around the WMA are:

Silver-Haired Bats - *Lasionycteris noctivagans*: Eastern Red Bat - *Lasiurus borealis*:

Northern Yellow Bat - *Lasiurus intermedius*: Evening Bat - *Nycticeus humeralis*

Eastern Pipistrelle - *Pipistrellus sublevels*.

Artists Among Us - Sue Kersey

I have been an artist all of my life and often find inspirations from nature and the beautiful places we have lived. I have done oil paintings of the beautiful Palos Verdes Peninsula and the ocean in California. I learned to do basket weaving with dried native plants, grasses and ocean kelp along with many other mediums and created many really unusual baskets. The love of the natural world also led me to many years of gourd art. I enjoyed studying jewelry design in California. After years of using paint and other mediums to express my love of nature, color and design I discovered I could paint with fabric also. I have been making traditional and art quilts most recently and love the entire creative process. Photography is also a way I have learned to enjoy the art here in Texas.



The dragonfly quilt was created for our HLMN chapter to use and enjoy at our meetings. This quilt received a 1st place Blue Ribbon and Best of Show award at the TMN annual meeting in 2008. It also received a viewer's choice award at another show.



Last year my love of the whooping cranes while staying near the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge inspired me to design a large wall hanging for our 2009 TMN Annual meeting and I was lucky to again win 1st Place Blue Ribbon and Best of Show.

The Owls and a Stranger

Sondra Fox

About six months after moving to my present home in the Texas Hill Country, I hung a Screech Owl nesting box in a tree near my back deck. To my great pleasure, an owl showed up in the late fall and spent the winter in my box. He/she sat in the opening most of each day, and I loved to watch him and admit to even talking to and naming him.

My new friend left in early February. Then in early March, a new screech owl appeared. Because his behavior was different, I assumed it was a different owl. However, in the late evenings shortly before he left to hunt for food, I began to hear very soft Screech Owl calls (whinnies) coming from inside the box. Hurray! I hoped I had a nesting pair.

One night, I moved off my deck and down to the edge of a raised flower bed that surrounded it so that I might have a better view of the nest box since it would be almost dark before Dad left to hunt for food. While sitting there, I heard a faint rustle behind me and thought I was just brushing against a shrub in the bed. I glanced over my shoulder and found I had another visitor who had come out from under my deck and was going out to hunt for food also. He walked along the bed about 2 feet behind me, hopped down, and off he went. For about 2 weeks, I had the pleasure of watching two new friends leave for the night shift.

Finally, after many days of my constant evening vigil, a young owl appeared in the box opening. The next night there were two with a 3rd peaking out occasionally. They were so fluffy and cute, with really large legs for their size. Each seemed to have his own personality, behaving differently when other birds came near the box or an airplane flew over. However, all seemed content to allow me to watch at a fairly close range. The dad, and sometimes Mom, were dutiful in their feeding; and I actually had the honor of seeing two fledge. All the while, friend number two was also making his nightly appearances.

Once the three young owls (I named them Wynken, Blynken, and Nod) had fledged, they stayed in the same area for about three days and were fed nightly by Mom and Dad. Then they were off into the big, wide world and I saw them no more. My under-the-deck friend left about the same time. It's been pretty lonesome ever since!



Wynken and Blenken

Photo by Sondra Fox



The Stranger

Photo by Sondra Fox

The Buntings

Sherry Bixler

There are fourteen bunting species in North America but eight of them are found only in the far north. Of the six found in the southern United States, the Blue Bunting is a rarity found only in extreme south Texas and the Varied Bunting is a southwestern inhabitant not seen in the hill country. Four of the buntings are possibilities here and watchers eagerly await their return each spring.

The black and white male Lark Buntings are conspicuous. These buntings do migrate through our area but I have seen only one since moving here. The Lark Bunting is Colorado's state bird.

The Lazuli Bunting is also a rare migrant, although several were reported in the spring of 2009 and at least



Lark Bunting



Lazuli Bunting

one has been spotted this year. The Lazuli is a beautiful combination of peach, white and sky blue.

Indigo Buntings are more numerous and can be confused with the similar but larger Blue Grosbeak. Both are mostly deep blue with rust markings on their wings. The female is a dusty brown with only a tinge of blue. In good light the male Indigo may appear turquoise blue.

The Painted Bunting is just about impossible to misidentify with his red, blue and chartreuse colors. His song is similar to that of a house finch although softer. Female Painteds are pale gray-green.

Buntings prefer to feed on the ground next to some kind of cover and will eat mixed seed as well as safflower seed.

These last three buntings often travel together and it is possible to see all of them feeding in a group. Painted Buntings prefer thickets and streamside woodlands but males often sing from the tops of trees, as do the Indigos and Lazulis. Both



Painted Bunting

Painted and Indigo Buntings nest in the hill country and while Indigos may have two broods, Painteds can have up to four.

Indigos have a more varied diet since they consume berries as well as seed. Both species must catch insects to feed to their young, as do other seedeaters.

Buntings are frequent cowbird hosts but the Indigo seems to have learned to build a second floor over the cowbird's egg.

All three of these buntings are in the finch family and there are occasional reports of hybridization between Indigo and Lazuli Buntings where their breeding territories overlap.

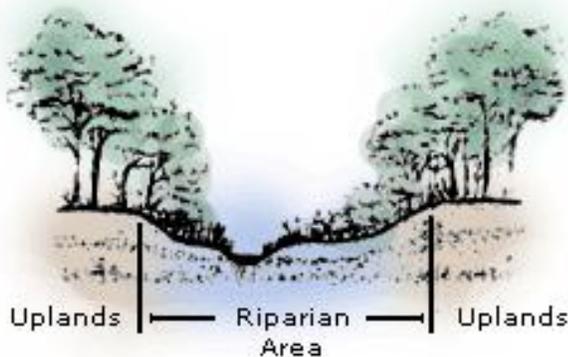


Indigo Bunting

What Is a Riparian Area?

Sammye Childers

Riparian literally means of, or pertaining to, the banks of a river or lake. The riparian area is defined as the part of the landscape adjoining rivers and streams that has a direct influence on the water and aquatic ecosystems within them. The area consists of perennial and seasonal streams, lakes, reservoirs, wetlands and the adjacent lands with soils, vegetation and landform indicative of high soil moisture or frequent flooding. A riparian area includes the body of water along with the associated soils, vegetation and hydrology. It extends down into the ground water, up to the top of the canopy, outward across the floodplain, up the near slopes that drain into the water, laterally into the terrestrial ecosystem and along the water's course at a variable width. The variable widths are determined by significant boundaries rather than arbitrary distances. Riparian areas are often referred to as "ribbons of life" since they are considered the most productive habitats in North America.

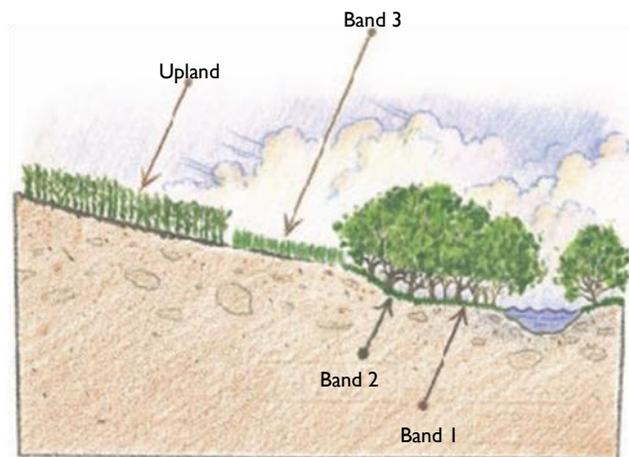


Riparian areas are plant communities connected to and affected by surface and subsurface hydrologic features of perennial or intermittent, lotic (moving) or lentic (still or boggy) water bodies. They are usually transitional between wetland and upland. All riparian areas have one or both of the following characteristics: (1) A distinctively different vegetative species than adjacent areas, which is the norm or (2) Have species similar to adjacent areas but exhibit more vigorous or robust growth forms.

Vegetative growth in riparian areas is not random but organized in a natural structure consisting of three roughly parallel ecosystem bands, each containing species adapted to survive in specific moisture

conditions and able to perform specific ecological function. These conceptual bands are sometimes easy to identify but often they are muddled, run together and are difficult to identify.

The first band at the edge of the water often consists of deeply rooted, water-loving sedges and rushes. These plants form a protective band that stabilizes the banks against erosion.



The second band is the ground near the banks. Vegetation often consists of a variety of trees, shrubs, grasses and broadleaf plants adapted to period flooding. The third band is drier and edges along the uplands. Vegetation in this band is a mixture of more dry tolerant riparian plants and plants suited to the uplands. The function of these two bands of plants is to catch or slow water, facilitate absorption, take up nutrients and contaminants and provide critical habitat for terrestrial wildlife.

If land management practices reduce the riparian area to only one or two of these bands, some or all of the environmental benefits of these areas will be lost. The first band is both the most ecologically important and requires the greatest protection against degradation. Dominance of water loving plants in the first band is critical for promoting water recharge and increasing the water table height.

Identifying and mapping the riparian area involves aerial photography combined with field checking to accurately determine boundaries. It needs to address a range of issues including the need for environmental corridors and open space linkages, terrestrial and aquatic habitats, bed and bank stability

and water quality. Vital features of function and condition for a healthy riparian area include:

1. Sources of large organic debris, such as fallen trees and tree roots
2. Areas for stream migration
3. Vegetative cover to help moderate water temperatures
4. Provision for food, nutrients and organic matter to the stream
5. Bank stabilization
6. Buffers for streams from excessive silt and surface runoff pollution.

As our population increases, there will be increased pressures to use riparian areas for a variety of commercial, residential and recreational purposes. It is vital that we all become involved in the conservation and restoration of these areas.

The accuracy of this article was reviewed by Steve Nelle, wildlife biologist with NRCS.

Collecting Bluebonnet Seeds

Don't cut back the bluebonnets or mow until the seed cases are brown and you can hear the seeds rattling inside. If you tap the seed case and it pops open, you know they're ready.

You can let the seeds reseed on their own (a bunch will anyway, as long as you don't mow). With this method, some will be lost to birds, fire ants, and hot weather. Or you can collect the seeds, store



Brown hard seeds are ripe. Mushy green seeds are not ripe yet.

them in a cool dry place, and sow them where you want them in August before the fall rains. If we have a rainy early summer, some bluebonnets will sprout now but, unless you baby them through the long, hot summer, they probably won't survive until fall.

Bluebonnets naturally sprout in the fall, grow all winter, and flower the following spring.

You'll find all sorts of advice for nicking the hard seed coats or rubbing them with sandpaper. This might be necessary with old dry seeds that you



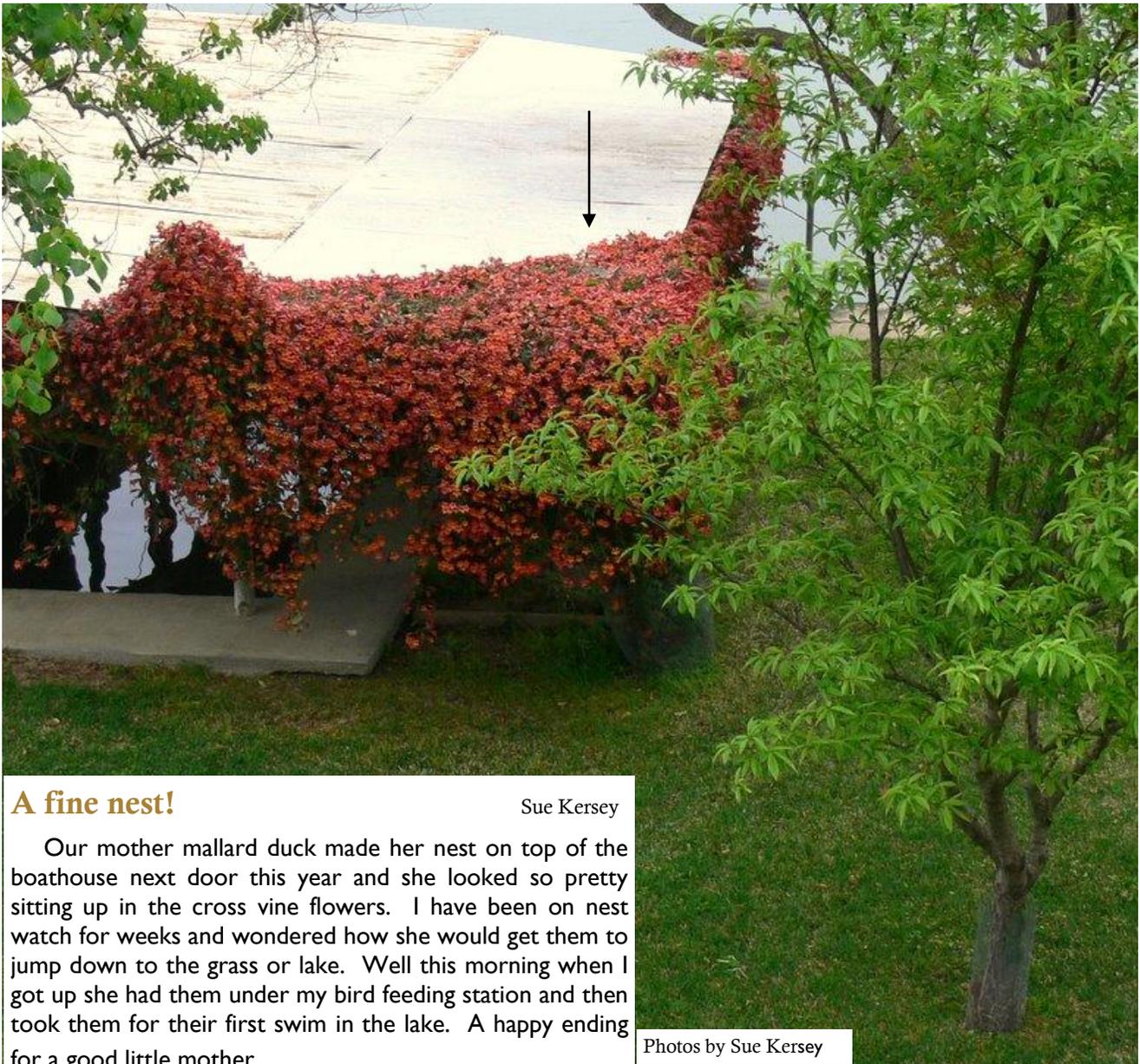
To release their seeds, bluebonnets pop open with a little twist.

buy. I never do it because my own seed is fresh. Sometimes I soak them overnight or until they plump up. I did this the first couple of years to get started but now I have more sprouts than I can deal with so I don't need to go to any extra trouble. I let them sprout and transplant them where I want them.

Bluebonnets have hard coats so that they don't sprout all at once if it rains. In Texas, it might rain and some sprout, and then die off in a long dry spell. But since they don't all sprout at the same time, some are kept in reserve until more favorable conditions present themselves.

by M Sinclair Stevens in Austin, Texas 2007

<http://www.zanthan.com/gardens/>



A fine nest!

Sue Kersey

Our mother mallard duck made her nest on top of the boathouse next door this year and she looked so pretty sitting up in the cross vine flowers. I have been on nest watch for weeks and wondered how she would get them to jump down to the grass or lake. Well this morning when I got up she had them under my bird feeding station and then took them for their first swim in the lake. A happy ending for a good little mother.

Photos by Sue Kersey



First graders say: Great Outdoors Program at Inks Lake State Park Rocks!

Laurie Connally, Park Interpreter; Photos by Sue Kersey

For fifteen years, children and adults have come together for the primary focus of outdoor education at a beautiful location called Inks Lake State Park. Although none of us today were here at the beginning, we each benefit from their previous challenges and obstacles, accomplishments and celebrations. 2010 was a stellar year, with the highest number of volunteers in attendance, as well as record numbers of children (770), and adults. Formally staffed completely by TPWD employees, the Great Outdoors Program has grown tremendously and is now one of



Playing the Ecology Game



the Highland Lakes Master Naturalists yearly projects, allowing volunteers to gain many hours of volunteer service, and intrinsic rewards beyond measure.

The Great Outdoors Program offers every single first grade student in all of Burnet County exposure to an awesome outdoor classroom, filled with well educated "teachers", exciting hands on experiences, and dedicated men and women who truly value the great outdoors and the natural world they live in. It's an opportunity to see children get excited about the outdoors, scream when a bullfrog is placed in front of them, race to avoid pollution, watch a blue heron soar across the sky in front of them, touch the skin of a wild animal, hear the sound of a Native American drum beat, and share all of this with their friends!

Thank you again to all of you who worked tirelessly to make this program one of the best yet, and thank you for touching the lives of these young people who so need to recognize and understand the importance of our great outdoors!!!!

Here's what some of the kids had to say:

"I was the pollution> We had to run away from him. It was fun to touch the alligator. We did not catch any fish with the net. Thank you." Michael

"Dear Inks Lake staff and Volunteers. Thank you for letting us come to your park for our field trip. I loved the Indian Teepees. Thank you." Love Maxine



"I like the pllutoin game" from John

"I loved that the alligators death roll..."

"I loved putting the minnos in the bucket.."
You rock, your friend Toni

"Thank you for showing us the bull frog and
Cat fish. I loved the Indian stuf." Your
friend Madison

"Thank you for showing us the animal and
birds. I learn so much that I cant tal all of
it. My favorite part was seeing the big Cat
fish and the bullfrog." Your friend Kyla

"I loved looking in the teepees. I love to feel the anmls."

"My favorite part was looking in the binoculars. I like the bullfrog. You rock" from Annie

"Thank you for showing us deer sjull. You are my best frin. You rock." Raymond

"I saw a bluebonnet. My favorite was all of it." Your frind Dallas

"Thank you for showing us the wood ducks, animals skins, the alligator, bullfrog, the deer-
skull the teepee the drum and the rocks." Your frind Linda

"Bullfrogs are slimy and gross. Leopard frogs are slimy and cool. We saw lots of birds. We
were delighted to come. Thank you." Unknown

"It was very fun when we went to the t-pee.
We walked in the t-pee. We also took a pic-
ture by the t-pee."

"I really liked the bass. When the men lifted
the net up the bass splashed water all over
me."

"We all saw lots of birds . I liked putting on
the binoculars. We saw a bird house."

"If was fun at Inks Lake. Thank you for
teaching us."

"I tuched a turtle. I had a wunfl time. It
was aoslm day."

"We also had fun playing the pollution game. We loved doing everything! Even lunch.
Thank you."

"I had so much fun petting the alligator. IT felt like solid. We loved petting it. The owner
put a little basket on tis mouth. Thank you."



Flora recorded on an Inks Lake State Park hike 4/24/2010

Mike Harris

Leader Mike Harris

Recorders Sharon Drake and Melanie Huff

Walkers 15 Parents 26 Children

Drummond Skullcap	White Prickly Poppy	Drummond Phlox
Bluebonnet	Agarita	Blue Phacella
Giant Spiderwort	Indian Blanket	Deer Pea Vetch
Granite Spiderwort	Brown Bitterweed	Low Milk Vetch
Beggar's Ticks	Rain Lilly	Antelope Horn
Yellow Flax	Texas Groundsel	Oxeye Daisy
Indian Blanket	Sow Thistle	Wild Onion
Wild Garlic	Winecup	Texas Paintbrush
Yarrow	Wood Fern	Maidenhair Fern
Green Briar	Yellow Flax	Slender-stem Bitterweed
Wild Geranium	Yellow Wood-Sorrel	Claret Cup Cactus
Tasajillo Cactus	Prickly Pear Cactus	Lace Cactus
Cut leafed Evening Primrose	Widow's Tear	Pink Mimosa
Square Bud Primrose	Wild Garlic	Catclaw
Texas Thistle	Texas Star	Goats Beard
Prairie Larkspur (White)	Blue-Curls	Peppergrass
Straggler Daisy	Laxy Daisy	Bull Nettle
Pink Vervain	Dacota Vervain	Texas Vervain
Dodder	White Evolvulus	Dew Berry
Water Pennywort	Stonecrop	Catclaw
Bee Brush		

Another large *Antheraea Polyphemus* was seen on the path and very lucky not to have been trodden on.

Name the Newsletter!

Mike Childers

Our newsletter still needs a proper name. We didn't get many suggestions. Please send suggestions to chili865@gmail.com for consideration by the board and HLMN. It is hoped that a selection can be made soon, so put your thinking caps on! Names submitted thus far:

- Odonata Pond Skimmings
- The Dragon Flyer
- Naturally
- News Naturally
- Naturally, News
- The Dragonfly
- The Highland Lakes Guardian
- The Highland Lakes Advisor
- The Highland Lakes Steward

Note that the name "The Dragonfly" is already used by another Master Naturalist Newsletter.

Blanco State Park Bird Blind Competed!

Shirley Winslow

The Bird Blind at Blanco State Park is completed! Come on out and enjoy this great new addition!

Many of the volunteers responsible gathered Friday, April 30 for dinner and celebration.

Have a look at Shirley Winslow's photos of the final work session. Click on or enter the web address below:

<http://tinyurl.com/BSPFbirdI>

Event Calendar

Mike Childers

May		May (cont'd)	
Stumpy Hollow Hike	15th	Bridges to Birding	27th
Inks Lake Park	0930-1030	Doeskin Ranch	1000-1330
Canoeing Skills/Tours	15th	Full Moon Hike	27th
Inks Lake Park	0900-1200	Inks Lake Park	8-9:30pm
Electric Boat Excursions	15th	Romper Rangers	27th
Inks Lake Park	0730-0930	Blanco SP	10-11:30am
LCRA Conservation Easement WkShp	15th	Going Buggy Program	27th
Johnson City HQ Auditorium	0100-0415	Doeskin Ranch	10am-1:30pm
Guided Hike - Vireo Habitat Thru Time	15th	Fishing with a Ranger	28th
Balcones Canyonlands	9am-noon	Inks Lake Park	1800-1900
Birding in Bandera	15th	Twilight Paddle	28th
Birding and Wildflower Society	All Day	Inks Lake Park	7:30-9:30pm
Bus Trip - San Antonio Botanical Garden	18th	Stumpy Hollow Hike	29th
Master Gardeners	All Day	Inks Lake Park	0930-1030
Home School Field Trip	19th	Canoeing Skills/Tours	29th
Blanco SP	10-11:30am	Inks Lake Park	0900-1200
Canoeing Skills/Tours	20th	Electric Boat Excursions	29th
Inks Lake Park	0900-1200	Inks Lake Park	0730-0930
Romper Rangers	20th	Nature Trail Hike	29th
Blanco SP	10-11:30am	Blanco SP	2-3pm
Fishing with a Ranger	21st	Volunteer Day	29th
Inks Lake Park	1800-1900	Blanco SP	9-11am
Electric Boat Excursions	21st	Canoeing Skills/Tours	30th
Inks Lake Park	0730-0930	Inks Lake Park	0900-1200
Hiking to Gorman Falls	21st	June	
Colorado Bend State Park	9:30am to		
Canoeing Skills/Tours	22nd	Celebrate the Stars	2nd
Inks Lake Park	0900-1200	LBJ Ranch	7:30-10pm
Electric Boat Jaunts (3 1hr jaunts)	22nd	Regional Native Plant Conference	2nd-5th
Inks Lake Park	2-5:30pm	NPSOT Nacagdoches, TX	
Kids Corps	22nd	TAS/FOB Field Trip	6th
Blanco SP	10-11:30am	Balcones Canyonlands	6:30-12:30pm
Fish with A Ranger	22nd	Burnet County Fair and Rodeo	11th
Blanco SP	2-3pm	Burnet, TX	3-8pm
Field trip to Sustainable Growth Farm	22nd	Burnet County Fair and Rodeo	12th
Native Plant Society	10am-	Burnet, TX	9am-8pm
Learning to Bird by Ear	23rd	Angler Ed	18th
Balcones - Peaceful Springs	8-noon	Inks Lake Park	

Please submit pictures, articles, reports, stories, etc. to chili865@gmail.com. Photos should have captions and appropriate credits. The deadline for submissions to each months newsletter is the 10th of the month and publication will be by the 15th.