

The Steward

Summer 2024 Highland Lakes Master Naturalists Volume 15 Issue 2



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Cover Photos by Stephanie Jones & Paula Richards.	1
Message from our President By Jill Goff	2
Class of 2024	3
Certifications	4
A Selah Moment by Patty Harrell	6
LMAP –Land Management Assistance Program	7
Spring Field Trip by Karen Stewart	8
Watercolors by Gary Hampton	10
Where in Texas	11
Some Thoughts on Pollinators by Courtney Williams	12
Balcones Canyonlands by Cathy Houston	14
Blanco State Park by Al Lillis	16
Hatchery Outdoor Program	21
National Free Fishing	23
Great Outdoor Project by Lori Greco	26
Fun For All by Lori Greco	29
Dodder by Karen Stewart	32
Photo Gallery	33
The End	36

Cover: young explorers learning about Making Nests, and cheering with glee for a fun day at Balcones Canyonlands National Refuge.

Please submit pictures, articles, reports, stories, announcements, etc. to

becky_breazeale@yahoo.com

Photos should have captions and appropriate credits. We will announce the deadline for submissions two weeks prior to the deadline. Or contact Becky and Martelle.

Thank y'all for ALL!!

Message from our President

By Jill Goff

Coming soon to a city near you: TMN Annual Meeting 2024!

This time of year brings plans of summer vacations, keeping the garden alive and thriving, and generally relaxing from the completion of many harried spring volunteer efforts. It feels too early to think or plan for the Fall—we just need to relax and do our usual summer rain dance.

But wait just a Master-Naturalist minute! Do you have the dates of the Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting on your calendar? Do you realize this year's Annual Meeting is right on our doorstep in San Marcos? And registration is starting the first week in August?

There will be presentations on topics we all want to know more about, like bats or screech owls, native plants and watertopics. Plus, guided field trips are planned to places such as the Meadows Center. No matter what your naturalist interests, many presentations and learning opportunities will be available for you to choose from.

And... wait for it... gatherings of all the Texas chapters for a welcome dinner at the convention hotel, San Marcos Embassy Suites. Plus, awards will be given on newsletters, photos, chapter projects, art and more. The Annual Meeting is a way to meet other chapter members while learning about the things we all love as master naturalists. For example, Paula Richards will be a presenter at the conference! Our chapter is one of the chapters that has helped plan the annual meeting, thus, it would be great to have many HLMN members attend!

The Annual Meeting is budgeted to be a break-even event. Registration costs are calculated to cover the cost of the event - food and beverage, printing, registration system, AV set up, speaker fees, etc. We do request sponsorships from partner organizations to help supplement the costs of the event to lower registration fees as much as possible. TMN Chapters are not obligated to provide sponsorship though many do. Others use chapter funds to provide scholarships for their members to attend. Both are greatly appreciated ways to support the event.

In the case where we do have additional unexpected revenue generated beyond the net cost of the event, those funds are applied towards the following year's Annual Meeting budget including the deposits required

In the case where we do have additional unexpected revenue generated beyond the net cost of the event, those funds are applied towards the following year's Annual Meeting budget including the deposits required for many contracts.

Please plan to attend the TMN Annual Meeting!

October 24 -27
 San Marcos Embassy Suites
 Registration begins the first week of August.



Congratulations Class of 2024



The New Members at Graduation, May 16th (back) Bill McCartney (Class co-director), Eric Norman, Butch Williams, Steve Marshall, Ron Hardiman, Travis Williams, Courtney Williams, Carol Guthrie, Cassie Oberhaus (middle) Jill Goff (HLMN President), Chris McCartney (Class co-director), Celia Merrill, Dee Hardiman, Charlotte Willis, Dannaille Clayton, Kim Jungkind, Margaret Schelde (front) Robin Miskimins, and Rebecca Larkin posed for a Highland Lakes Master Naturalists Class of 2024 graduation photo Thursday May 16. Graduates not pictured Josh Moore, Annette Raver, Betty Secret, Larry Secret, Deerick Shyrock, and Gwen Shyrock who were unable to attend.



(front) Dee Hardiman, Robin Miskimins, Margaret Schedle, and Jill Goff (HLMN President) (back) Rebecca Larkin, Carol Guthrie, Diannialle Clayton, Travis Williams, Courtney Williams **not only graduated but certified by completing an additional 40 hours of volunteer service and 10 hours of advanced training.**

Congratulations Members on your Achievements June 2024

2500 TMN Hours

Ray Buchanan

1000 TMN Hours

Patty Harrell , Al Lillis

500 TMN Hours

Jim Howell

Ingrid Hoffmeister

Krista Paul

250 TMN Hours

Cathy Houston
Madeleine Manigold
Charles Powell

Initial Certification

Eric Norman
Dannielle Clayton (grad)
Dee Hardiman (grad)
Carol Guthrie (grad)
Rebecca Larkin (grad)
Robin Miskimins (grad)
Margaret Schelde (grad)
Courtney Williams (grad)
Travis Williams (grad)

2024 Recertification

Roy Appleton
Reed Armstrong
Sherry Bixler
Beth Blankenship
Marvin Bloomquist
Karen Brents
Pam Butler
Pat Campbell
Betty Cruikshank
Lyn Davis
Melissa Duckworth
Bill Edwards
Sondra Fox
Lori Greco

MJ Hansen
Patty Harrell
Stephen Harrell
Cathy Hill
Jim Howell
Beth James
Chris Landherr
Beth Lillis
Karen Lundquist
Holly Morris
Karyn Parker
Krista Paul
James Reimer

DJ Sanders
Stephen Scheffe
Jerry Stacy
Karen Stewart
Lisa Stripay
Gary Sullivan
Pam Sullivan
Becki Vavrek
George Vavrek
Janie Watson

A Selah Moment

By Patty Harrell

Recently, Kim Dein (Hays County Master Naturalist) sent me some pictures after a workday on the Bamberger Ranch. I knew I wanted to use them in a newsletter but I wasn't quite sure how I would use them. Then it hit me... I needed a Selah Moment.

For those of you who don't know, the full name of the ranch is the Selah, Bamberger Ranch Preserve. Selah is a word from the Psalms and it means to pause and reflect. So that is exactly what I did while looking at these pictures and then a few things came to mind.

My first thought was just how nice it was to see folks from three Texas Master Naturalist chapters working together. In one shot, Charley Dein (Hays County Master Naturalist) and Mary Barr-Gilbert (Lindheimer Master Naturalist) are taking a close look at one of the creeks. In the next picture, Becky Larkin (Highland Lakes Master Naturalist) is pruning a shrub. Finally, in the last photo, Becky Larkin and Charley Dein are looking back over the creek they just crossed. My Selah Moment revealed to me how very lucky we all are to be part of a larger program whose mission is to provide for the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas. Photos by Kim Dein



Charley Dein and Mary Barr-Gilbert

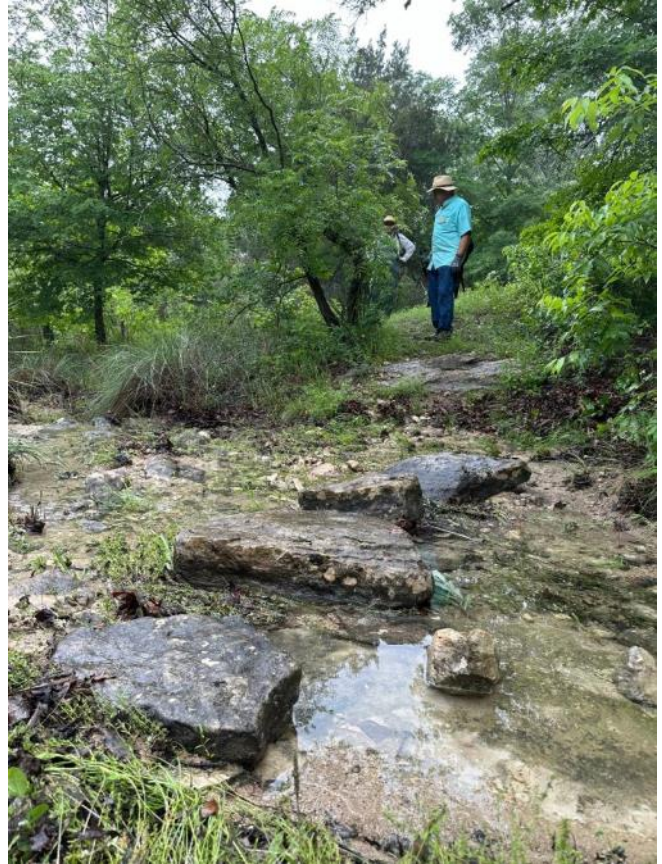


Becky Larkin

I also remembered that these pictures were taken the day after the ranch had experienced about 3.5 inches of rain in an hour. Thus, there was water in the creek beds for the first time in a long time. It is no small wonder that everyone took a moment or two or maybe even three to see what they could see... These pictures showed they were experiencing their own special Selah Moments.

Of course, pictures of people and water are not the only reason to have a Selah Moment... You can pause and reflect just about any time or any place on the ranch to take in all the sights, sounds, and smells that can come together to become a special memory. While Selah Moments may not be rare if you just take the time to experience them, these moments are indeed precious.

Becky Larkin and Charles Dein pictured at right.



Land Management Assistance Program-LMAP



Site Visit in Llano County. Jerry Stacy, Reed Armstrong, Roy Appleton, Melissa Duckworth, Steve Scheffe, and Linda O'Nan—not in photo, members Marvin Bloomquist & Fredi Franki.
Photo provided by Linda O'Nan

Land Management Assistance Program-LMAP

A valuable service of the Highland Lakes Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program is the Land Management Assistance Program. The Program consists of the LMAP Team which visits properties typically of 100 acres or less in Blanco, Burnet, Lampasas and Llano Counties. The Team identifies trees, shrubs, wildflowers, and grasses including "invasives" on the property. Goals, plans, and concerns about the land including good land management practices are discussed with the landowner. After the site visit, the landowner receives an written assessment which includes a list of plants identified on the property.

Spring Field Trip - Big Thicket State Park

Photos by Karen Stewart





White top sedge, *Rhynchospora colorata* or Starrush



Grass Pink orchid, *Calopogon tuberosus*



Pitcher Plant



Sundial



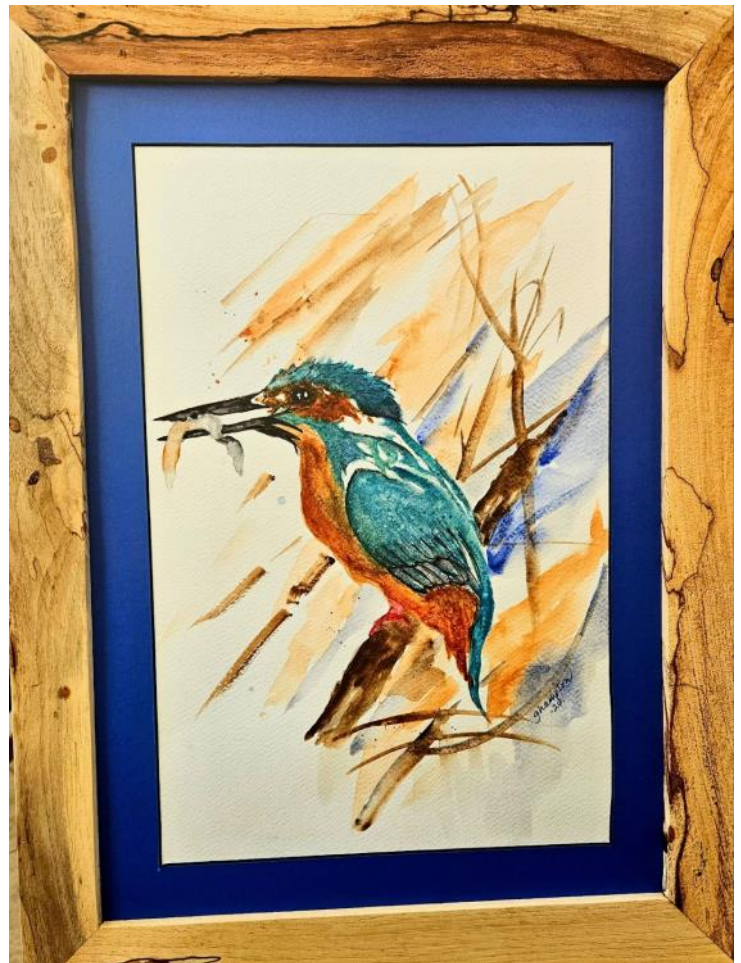
Editor's note: For more information on the Bamberger Ranch Preserve manmade Batcave follow these links

[World's First Artificial Bat Cave - Merlin Tuttle's Bat Conservation](#)

[Bamberger Ranch Preserve- Bat-Watching Sites of Texas](#)

Watercolor paintings by Gary Hampton

"I wonder how many know that kingfisher is our chapter mascot?? Also, Bamberger Preserve has one of the largest manmade bat caves in the world. This painting was a demo I did at Bamberger Preserve Open House." Gary Hampton



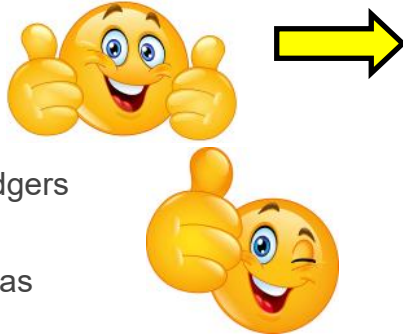
Where in Texas ?

Who: Karen Stewart- Haven't seen one since I was a child

Where: Caprock Canyons State Park

What: a little guy or gal aka Texas Horned Lizard, Horny toad

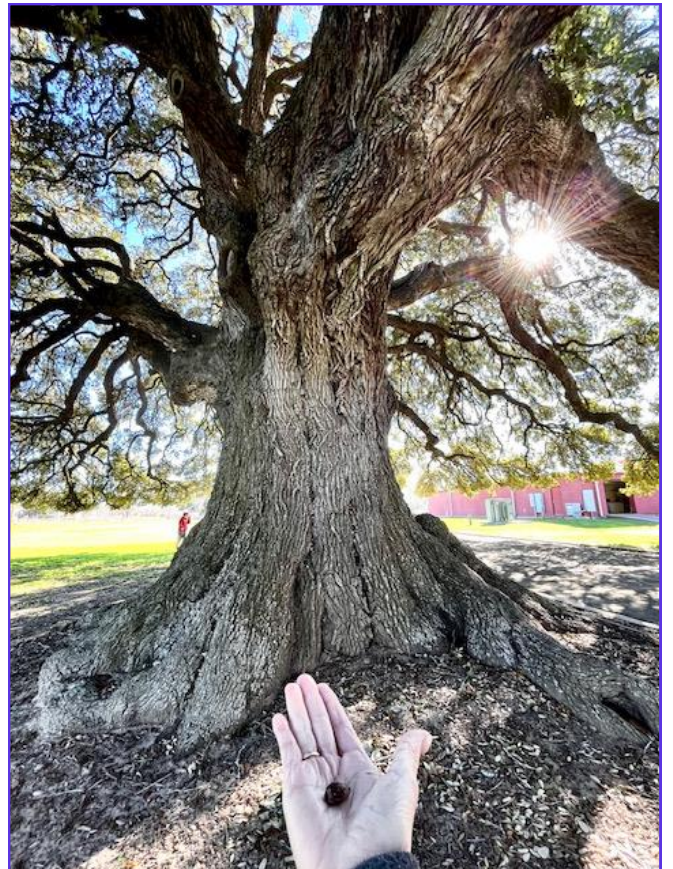
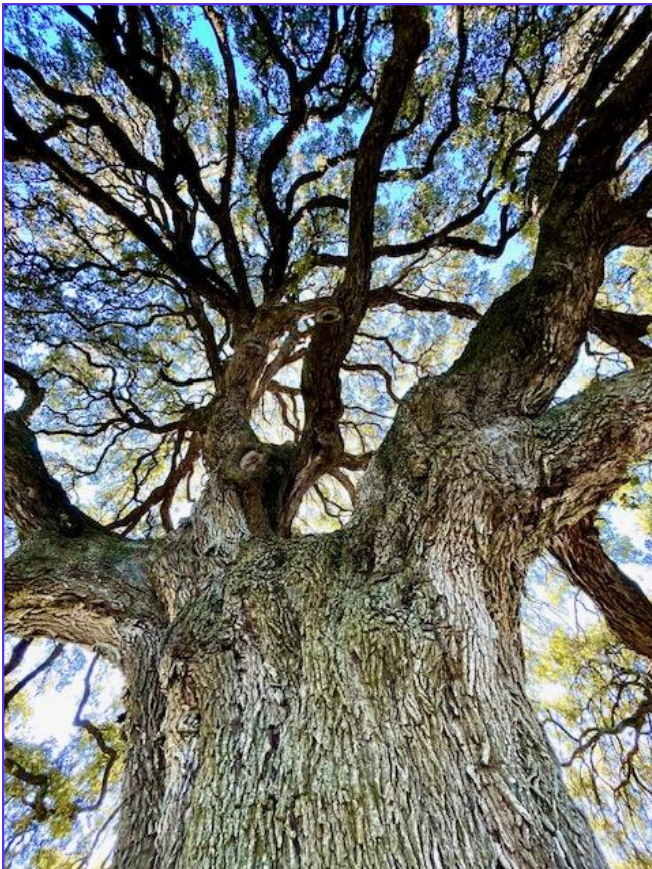
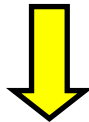
When: June, 2024



Who: Sheryl Smith-Rodgers

Where: Columbus, Texas

What: One of the city's many, many ancient live oaks. From a single acorn can grow something as magnificent as this oak!





Who: Becky Breazeale

Where: Horseshoe Creek Hiking Trail

When: June 1, 2024

What: a hiking trail along Horseshoe Creek that meanders through undeveloped areas of Horseshoe Bay. Don't wear nice shoes



Some thoughts on pollinators, plants, and HLMN...

By Courtney Williams, Class of 2024

Photos by Courtney Williams

I was playing around with my camera this weekend and took photos of pollinators on my blooming crepe myrtle. My husband and I spent the last 18 months or so preparing to have honeybees and installed our first nuc about five weeks ago. "A "nuc," short for nucleus, is essentially a starter kit for establishing a new bee colony. It includes a small, functioning colony with its own queen bee, a few frames of bees (typically about five), brood (developing bees), honey, and pollen. This setup helps the new colony get off to a good start with all the essential elements they need to grow and thrive. It's like a mini bee colony that can expand into a full-sized hive over time." We built a top-bar hive ourselves and have worked to plant many native plants to support them. Discovering HLMN during this time was a joy as we took the course this year, had LMAP out to survey our property, and are starting to learn more

about native bees and how to support them. We also joined the Texas Native Plants Society and took the first course in the Native Landscape Certificate Program in late April.

It has been a lot of fun.

We also have neighbors who are serious garden enthusiasts, so I am pretty sure the bees are quite happy :)

Having the HLMN has opened so many doors to all the things we love about being outside. We're just getting started too, and that's quite exciting.



Balcones Canyonlands National Refuge

By Cathy Houston

Members from Highland Lakes, Goodwater and Capitol Area Master Naturalist Chapters, along with Friends of Balcones volunteers, participated in Bridges to Birding Field Trips at Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Reserve in March. Third through fifth grade students learned about birds by participating in activities at Doeskin Ranch. These activities included bird calls, habitats, migration, nesting, how to use a field guide, how to use binoculars and a lesson on the basic biology of birds. Students were also able to participate in a short hike. The students all seemed to have a great time enjoying being outside and learning about nature. All of the field trips are greeted by Goldie the Golden Cheeked Warbler upon their arrival at Doeskin Ranch. Several additional field trips were scheduled for April and May.

Photos were taken by Stephanie Jones from BCNWR and Paula Richards.



Pictured Left :Hiking at Balcones Canyonlands National Refuge.

Pictured Below: Learning bird habitats at Balcones Canyonlands National Refuge.





Photos by
Cathy Houston





(left) Adult Golden Cheek Warbler

The Golden-cheeked Warbler (*Setophaga chrysoparia*) is a small, strikingly colored song-bird endemic to central Texas. Recognizable by its bright yellow cheeks contrasting with its black and white plumage, this species inhabits mature juniper-oak woodlands. It relies on the unique habitat for breeding, building nests from the bark of Ashe juniper trees. Unfortunately, the Golden-cheeked Warbler is listed as endangered due to habitat loss and fragmentation. Conservation efforts focus on preserving and restoring its critical breeding grounds to ensure the survival of this vibrant and melodious bird.

Blanco State Park

Blanco ISD Third Graders in the Park Program

By Al Lillis
Photos by Al Lillis

On May 3rd, 2024, Blanco S.P. hosted a great outdoors program for the BISD 3rd graders, sponsored by the Friends of BSP. All the stations were on HLMN chapter plus the Bats station presenters were from Lost Maples SP. This was held in BSP for several years until Covid disrupted the event for several years. This is a memorable event that is the end of the school year highlight that the upcoming 2nd graders always look forward to.





(left)

Students arrival at the Park, standing on the CCC Table .

(right)

Blanco State Park Rangers
Rena and Nicolette



(left)

Susan Adkinson and Lisa Stripay .

(right)

Bill McCartney and
Rebecca Larkin



(left)

MJ Hanson and Sheryl
Smith-Rodgers and James

(right)

Lost Maples State Park
Rangers Amanda and
Lorissa





(left)
Karen Stewart and Sharon
Drake

(below right)
Ray Buchanan and Becki Vavrek



(above)
Ranger Nicolette blowing the “horn” to
change stations





(left)
Ranger Rena Beyer, MJ Hansen, Sheryl Smith Rodgers and husband, James



(above)
George Vavrek and Annette Raver



(left)
Wendy Cambridge and Suze Jernigan

Ink Dam National Fish Hatchery

Hatchery Outdoor Program

The Annual Hatchery Outdoor Program was held May 7th and 9th with 4th grade students from Marble Falls and 5th grade students from Llano. The event was a fantastic opportunity for students to explore and learn about the natural world. The different stations that the students explored were:

1. **Fish Production:** Students discovered how fish are raised and cared for in the hatchery. They learned about life cycles and the importance of healthy aquatic ecosystems.
2. **Master Casting:** This station taught students the art of casting fishing lines. They practiced their skills and learned about fishing techniques.
3. **Overlook Trail:** The $\frac{1}{4}$ mile trail provided a scenic view of the surrounding area. Students observed local flora and fauna while enjoying the outdoors.
4. **Pollinators and Wildflowers:** At this Station, students explored the vital role of pollinators. They also learned about native plants.
5. **Bird Observation:** Students had the chance to observe birds using binoculars in their natural habitat from a bird blind. They learned about bird identification and behavior.



Fish Production
Photo by Linda O'nan



Master Casters
Photo by Linda O'nan



Overlook Trail
Photo by Linda O'nan



Pollinator Garden
Photo by Linda O'nan

Pollinator Garden Pavilion -
Importance of Pollinators
and Native Plants
Photo by Linda O'nan



National Free Fishing Day

Friends of Inks Dam National Fish Hatchery hosted a free fishing day on June 1st which was a huge success. The event was scheduled to start at 8:00 am and there was a line of cars waiting to get in before 7:30. The volunteers had prepared for 200 visitors but over 400 showed up. Volunteers were able to accommodate the crowd as a couple of volunteers had to make a run to H.E.B. to get more bait (hot dogs).



Betty Secret, Paula Richards and Sherry Bixler preparing bait for Anglers. Photo by Linda O'nan



Robin Miskimins, Al Lillis, and Carol Hamilton are fixing rods and tackle. Photo by Linda O'nan





Photos by James Reimer





(above) Photo by DJ Sanders



(above) Photo by DJ Sanders



(above) Photo by James Reimer

(right) Photo by DJ Sanders



Inks Lake State Park

Great Outdoor Project

Photos by Lori Greco and Cathy Hill

As school buses arrived at the Park in mid April, Great Outdoor Program 2024 commenced. The classes were greeted by the Park Interpreter, Jamie Langham and were divided into smaller groups. The small groups traveled throughout the park from station to station. These stations included learning about spiders, vertebrates, birds, aquatics, monarchs and trees. One of the most favored stations is Aquatics. Volunteers used seine nets to collect samples from Inks Lake. These samples were placed in aquariums for students to observe. The Great Outdoor Program 2024 reached 461 students and 227 adults from eight area schools.

(right) Trees



Birds with Krista Paul and DJ Sanders



Vertebrates with Sharon Drake



Tree Hug



Vertebrates with Lori Greco

(top)

Snakes with Ja-
mie Langham

(middle)

Monarchs with
George Barr,
Cathy Houston,
and Karen Stew-
art

(bottom) Guide



Fun For All

A day of activity adapted to suit a range of abilities. Activities included kayaking with a transfer bench, fishing in derby ponds, archery with wheelchair accessibility and transfer equipment, and GRIT chairs. GRIT chairs were available for off pavement trial and a challenge course.



(left)
Kayaker with Nathaniel Nouri ILSP Assistant
Superintendent
Photo by Lori Greco



(right)
Fishing with Jerry Stacy and Wei Wei ILSP
Law Officer
Photo by Lori Greco



(top left) Wei Wei ILSP Law Officer and Angler
(top right and below)
Archery
Photos by Lori Greco And Karen Stewart





Archery and volunteers
Photos by Karen Stewart



DODDER

By Karen Stewart ; photos by Karen Stewart

You may have seen this orange hue in the bluebonnets. Dodder, *Cuscuta* is a parasitic plant. Looking like orange silly string, for some reason, it really likes bluebonnets. Dodder is able to pick healthy plants and avoids not healthy plants, maybe that's why it likes healthy bluebonnets. It has little hooks that invade the plant's vascular system, and it starts sucking the host plant dry. Dodder is often an agricultural pest as well.



Gallery

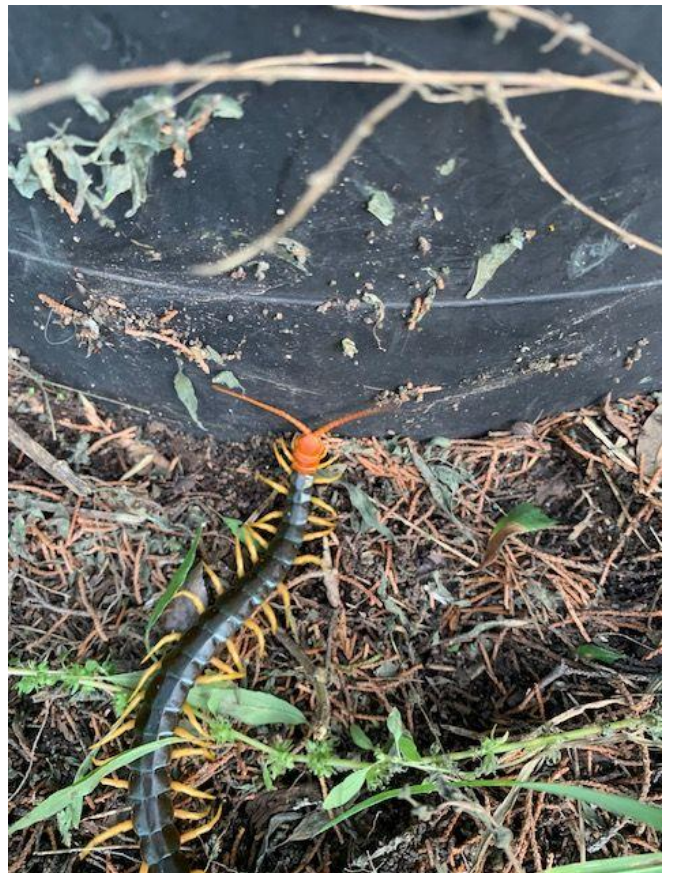
Photos taken by James Reimer were taken at a ranch three miles south of Marble Falls



5 banded Thynnid wasp on Spotted leaf Horsemint 5-5-2024
Photo by James Reimer



Texas red-headed centipede 6-3-2024
Photo by James Reimer





Bordered Patch caterpillars on Cowpen daisy 5-6-2024
Photos by James Reimer
Western Diamondback Rattlesnake 5-7-2024



(below) Photo by Meghan James April 27, 2024



Photos by Meghan James

(right) Painted Bunting
May 1, 2024

(bottom right) Roadrunner
May 2, 2024



"See you real soon..." Mickey

T E X A S

MISSION



The Texas Master Naturalist program is a natural resource-based volunteer training and development program sponsored statewide by Texas A&M 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

Officers:

- President:** Jill Goff (817) 773-7711 cell
- V.P.** Cathy Houston (281) 467 3822 cell
- Secretary** Bill Edwards (210) 274-4496 cell
- Treasurer** Krista Paul (281) 513-7312 cell

Charles Powell explaining the mystery of bees at Candlelight Ranch (below)
Photo by Paula Richards

