

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the Master Naturalist, Hill Country Chapter

T E X A S



HILL COUNTRY CHAPTER

Rare, Endangered,
and Threatened
in the four counties.



Plains spotted skunk
Spilogale putorius interrupta
Bandera County

"long-time friend,
well-loved teacher,
enthusiastic volunteer"
page 7.

January
2011

Let the past go,
Look to the Future.



Volume 9
No. 1

JANUARY MEETING ... WILDLIFE LAWS AND CONSERVATION ETHICS

Richard Heilbrun, Urban Wildlife Biologist with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, will lay the groundwork for an interactive discussion of the evolution of conservation in Texas, followed by a lively discussion of the dynamic beliefs and attitudes we hold as Master Naturalists and as Texans.



Mr. Heilbrun provides technical guidance to landowners, city officials, and conservation groups on topics ranging from game management to regional land planning. He is particularly interested in the factors guiding our conservation ethics and priorities.

Join us Monday, January 24 at 7p.m. in the UGRA Lecture Hall. Our social half-hour begins at 6:30p.m.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE ... Phyllis Muska

Happy New Year!

2011 marks our tenth year as a chapter of Texas Master Naturalist, and over 225 individuals have completed our training. We have an enthusiastic group of recent graduates who could hardly wait to dive into our projects – some of them have already certified – and we also have a number of seasoned and dedicated members who are an inspiration to us all.

At our holiday party last month, about seventy of us plus our guests got together at Kerr Wildlife Management Area to celebrate the season, and I was glad to see the interaction between "old" and "new" members. We have a successful mentoring program to provide guidance as needed through the initial training period, but I know there is also lots of informal mentoring going on all the time. Whether you are new to the chapter or have been around a few years, you

should always feel free to take advantage of the expertise we have within our membership.

Looking forward to 2011, I would like to issue a challenge to all of you: Let's all try out a new project this year. Take a look through our list of nearly 100 projects and pick one that appeals to you in some way. Maybe you have thought about it before, but felt like you did not have the requisite knowledge, or you weren't sure what kind of commitment was called for, or you would not know any of the other volunteers, or... we can always find some reason to postpone our involvement. Maybe a call to the project coordinator is all it would take to feel better informed and ready to try something new. Take a look at our project list (<http://txmn.org/hillcountry/volunteer-projects/volunteer-project-list/>) and get acquainted with the wide variety of opportunities.

THIS MONTH WE HONOR

<u>Milestones</u>	<u>2010 Re-Certification</u>	<u>Special First Year Re-Certification</u>	<u>First Year Certification</u>
<i>Diamond 5,000 Hours</i>	<i>Wood Duck</i>	<i>Wood Duck</i>	<i>Dragonfly</i>
Ronald Hood	William Lange	Valeska Danielak	Richard Adams
<i>Gold 1,000 hours</i>	Annie Rendon	Ken Dexter	Debra Bond
Bob McKinley	Howard Platte	Garry Speir	Valeska Danielak
<i>Brushed Silver 500 hours</i>	Peggy Robinson	Laura Baker	Bernadette DeShields
Karen Millikan	Nina Wagner	Linda Ross	Eileen Gotke
Mary Frances Watson			Barbara Thomas
<i>Bronze 250 hours</i>			Mark Tresselt
Fane Downs			Floyd Walling
William Lange			F.E. Baxter
Karla Trefny			
Nina Wagner			

kristie

Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land. By land is meant all of the things on, over, or in the earth. Harmony with land is like harmony with a friend; you cannot cherish his right hand and chop off his left. That is to say, you cannot love game and hate predators; you cannot conserve the waters and waste the ranges; you cannot build the forest and mine the farm. The land is one organism.

Aldo Leopold

Do you know?

Conservation is the sustainable use and management of natural resources including wildlife, water, air, and earth deposits. Conservation depends upon human activities to sustain ecosystems and resources.

Preservation attempts to maintain in present condition areas of the Earth that are so far untouched by humans. Preservation does not depend upon human involvement, but rather the opposite.

President's Message continued.

I want to recognize and thank departing board members Gracie Waggener, Jim Stanley, Laura Baker, Priscilla Stanley, Sandy Peña, and Steve Dodge. And in case you missed that great holiday party and the opportunity to meet our 2011 board, we have returning members Cathy Downs (Treasurer), Susan Longacre (Communications Director), Koy Coffey (Membership Director), and John Huecksteadt (Past President). Joining the board are Bob McKinley as VP, Anne Cassidy as Secretary, Steve Clyburn as Director of Advanced Training, Reidun Hilleman as Volunteer Projects Director, Lisa Williams as 2011 Class Director, and Vern Crawford representing the Class of 2010.

Thanks to all these hard workers for doing what it takes to keep our chapter running smoothly!

ADVANCED TRAINING

AT 11-007 MAKING GOOGLE EARTH WORK FOR LAND MANAGEMENT

Wednesday, January 19, 11a.m. – 1p.m.

<http://www.forestrywebinars.net/upcoming-webinars-1>

Google Earth (GE) is an easy-to-use but powerful tool land managers can use to assist landowners to see their land and understand it better. This webinar will discuss and demonstrate basic GE setup, exploration, navigation, menus, data creation, and production.

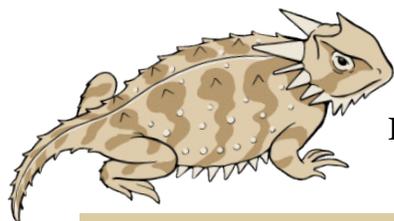
AT11-003 BIRD BOX MONITORING TRAINING

Wednesday, February 2, 10a.m.-Noon, CNC Library, Free

CNC has cavity nesting bird boxes that have been monitored throughout breeding seasons for five years. Volunteer teams check them weekly. We need your help! Get close to the birds and enjoy a weekly outing while gathering important information. February training session is required. Call Jane Henry, 210-690-2267, to register.

AT 11-005 THE 2nd TUESDAY "BROWN BAG LUNCH AND LEARN"

Tuesday, February 8, 11:30a.m.-12:45p.m., RNC, Adults \$6, members/children under 12 \$3
Donnie Frels, KWMA manager, will discuss exotic game animals, specifically Axis deer, and their effects on whitetail population. Bring your lunch.



**2011
Re-Certification Pin
Announced**

The 2011 re-certification pin is the Horned Lizard. Earning the pin certifies that a Master Naturalist volunteer has reached the annually required 40 hours of approved volunteer service and 8 hours of advanced training in the 2011 calendar year.

Re-certification pins are retired at the end of each calendar year.

Be sure to report your volunteer and AT hours at the end of each month in 2011 to earn your Horned Lizard re-certification pin.

It's easy to report your hours.

Fill in the Activity Report form, electronically sign and date it, and email to Database Manager Sandy Leyendecker, sandy325@windstream.net.



Hello, my name is Koy Coffey and I live in Kerrville. I work as an Education Specialist for the Texas Wildlife Association and have been a member of the Hill Country Chapter for two and one-half years.

After finishing my Texas Master Naturalist (TMN) training class in 2009, I was asked to join the board of directors and serve as Director of Membership. Even though I did not know the full scope of the job, I gladly accepted as it was a GREAT opportunity to get involved and learn more about my community and the Master Naturalist program.

I quickly learned the job has many facets:

- Recruit the best trainees possible which will help ensure the future of our chapter.
- Assist trainees who missed classes and/or field trips to find make-up classes to complete their training.
- Maintain records on make-up classes.
- Address questions from members so they feel listened to and are treated fairly.
- Be available to help members understand TMN rules and considerations that apply to our chapter.
- Maintain an accurate listing of chapter members and their contact information.
- Determine active and inactive members in the chapter
- Contact members who have been less active or have not reported hours to see if there are concerns that may be addressed.
- E-mail all chapter members reminding them to submit their volunteer hours by the 5th of every month.

- Provide support to the Chapter Database Manager to help determine awards earned by members.
- Maintain records on members' awards and orders.
- Recognize members' volunteer service efforts by giving awards/certificates at each chapter meeting.
- Prepare sign-in sheet for monthly meetings.
- Prepare the Chapter Annual Report for the state office in late December to early January from data provided by chapter records.

There are many things to do when serving as Director of Membership.

From time to time people ask, "What is the most challenging task you have to do?" Without a doubt I can say it is trying to get ALL chapter members to turn in their hours on a monthly basis.

Why is this so important?

Texas Master Naturalist chapters can obtain federal funding from our conservation partner, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. We must submit our hours with signatures attached to obtain these funds. To facilitate this procedure, we send a reporting form to each member every month that can be used to record volunteer hours. By turning in your form by the 5th day of each month, you will get into a good habit, help our chapter, and not have to worry about rushing later to get it done.

As we begin another journey together in 2011, I want to thank each and every one of you for all the GREAT work you have done this past year. I am looking forward to another successful year!

Koy Coffey

The 2011 Hill Country Chapter Board of Directors met with departing board members in December and welcomed new members: Phyllis Muska, Bob McKinley, Anne Cassidy, Steve Clyburn, Reidun Hilleman, Lisa Williams and Vern Crawford. The board thanked retiring members: Sandy Pena, Jim Stanley, Priscilla Stanley, Gracie Waggener, Steve Dodge, and Laura Baker for gracious and much appreciated service to our chapter. Members of the board continuing service in 2011 include John Huecksteadt, Cathy Downs, Koy Coffe, and Susan Longacre.

WE WELCOME THE 2011 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Phyllis Muska - President

Bob McKinley - Vice President

Anne Cassidy - Secretary

Cathy Downs - Treasurer

Steve Clyburn - Director of Advanced Training

Lisa Williams - Director of Class Training

Susan Longacre - Director of Communications

Koy Coffe - Director of Membership

Reidun Hilleman - Director of Volunteer Service Projects

Vern Crawford - 2011 New Class Representative

John Huecksteadt - Immediate Past President



Left to right: front row: Koy Coffe, Cathy Downs, Reidun Hilleman, Lisa Williams, Priscilla Stanley, Vern Crawford. Middle row: Laura Baker, Steve Clyburn, Steve Dodge, Phyllis Muska, Sandy Pena, Susan Longacre, Gracie Waggener, Anne Cassidy. Back row: Bob McKinley, John Huecksteadt, Jim Stanley.



Kip Kiphart, Linda Smith, Tom Hynes, Ron Hood, Marilyn Knight, and Sharon Rodriguez received awards at the November meeting.



Lars Nielsen

Show us your sign!



Callie the Catahoula dog inspects her new sign.
Eileen Gotke
Kerr County

Groundbreaking ceremonies were held at the 117 acre Kreuzberg Canyon Natural Area (KCNA) on December 13, 2010. KCNA is the third park in the new Kendall County Park system. Wildlife viewing blinds, other amenities, and volunteer services are donated by Kendall County Partnership for Parks (KCPP). For volunteer opportunities at KCNA or to learn about KCPP contact Kristie Denbow, denbow@gvtc.com.

We remember:

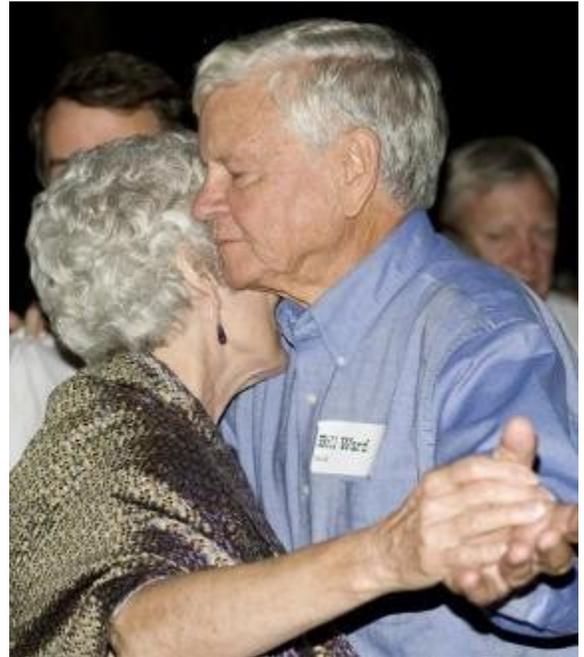
Dr. Bill Ward

“long-time friend, well-loved teacher, and enthusiastic volunteer”



In 1995 Bill retired from the University of New Orleans as an Emeritus Professor of Geology and with his wife, Kathy, returned to their native Texas, where he was an enthusiastic and well-loved volunteer teaching Texas Hill Country geology for Master Naturalist chapters, Cibolo Nature Center, Gorge Preservation Society, and other groups.

Bill was active in the Native Plant Society of Texas, wrote a native plants column for the Boerne Star, and was an avid birder. He was an invaluable resource on topics related to conservation.



Field Camp Saltillo, Mexico, 1980



Canyon Lake Gorge, 2005



Bill Ward

Bill was a long-time friend of our chapter and we will miss him greatly. The chapter made a contribution to the Gorge Preservation Society to honor Bill's memory.



Phyllis Muska
President
Texas Master Naturalist,
Hill Country Chapter

Website Tip of the Month

We welcome new webmaster, Dean Schmelling, Class of 2010. If you have questions or comments about our chapter's website, txmn.org/hillcountry, please contact Dean, schmelling_d@indian-creek.net.

We thank former webmaster, Phyllis Muska, for creating and maintaining the chapter's informative, attractive, and useful website. Phyllis is now our chapter president.

iphone apps for naturalists



WildObs Naturalist



BirdsEye



Geocaching

What's your favorite app?
Share it with us at denbow@gvtc.com.

from IRS.gov

CHARITABLE-RELATED MILEAGE

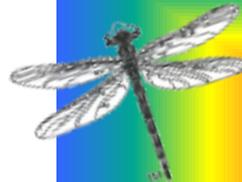
For 2010, the standard mileage rate is 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations.

HEY, WHAT IS THAT ?

Be first to identify the natural substance rare to the Hill Country in the image below and you will be featured with the psychedelic dragonfly. [ENTER TO WIN!](#)



November



- #1 Steph Perry
- #2 Sharon Hixson

Honorable Mention
 Lars Nielsen
 Carolyn Bean
 Marilyn Pease
 Ken Dexter

Wild bee honeycomb at James Kiehl River Bend Park



MOMENTS from the CLASS OF 2010
COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY
Photographs by Harry Gartrell



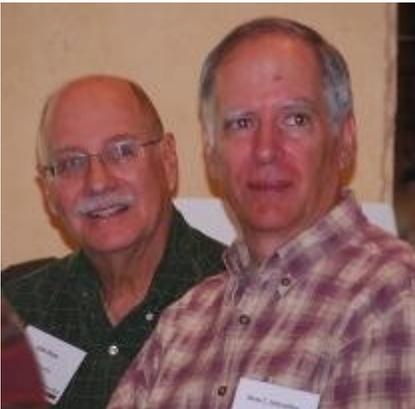
Cathy Downs, Class Director



Sharon Hixson



Cathy Downs, Harry Gartrell, and Mary Frances Watson



John Sloan and Dean Schmelling



Steve Clyburn



Vern Crawford



Paul and Faye Stafford



Joe Mike Johnson and Julie



Lenore Langsdorf, Jim and Cynthia Burgin



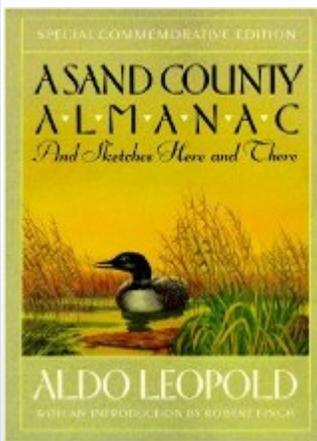
Renee Skwara



Jim and Donna Jones



Donna and Robert Howell



Class of 2010 received copies of *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold during commencement ceremonies. Each member of classes 2006 through 2010 have received a copy of this influential natural history work. This chapter tradition has been made

possible by Sand County Foundation (SCF) of Madison, Wisconsin, which donated the books.

SCF board member, David K. Langford of Comfort, coordinated the book donation.

Our chapter, again, thanks Sand County Foundation and David Langford for generous support.

sandcounty.net
westernphotographycompany.com/index.html

Chapter members are welcome to attend Board of Directors meetings. Board meetings are held in the Riverside Nature Center Science Lab at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesdays before monthly chapter meetings. Check the online calendar for dates. Support your board members as they guide and grow the chapter.



TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST ANNUAL MEETING
October 21-23, 2011
Mo Ranch
Hunt, Texas

October 26-28, 2012
 Camp Allen, Navasota
 Hosted by Cinco Tierra Chapter

October 25-27, 2013
 T bar M Ranch Conference Center
 New Braunfels

The Reverchon Naturalist

Recognizing the work of French botanist Julien Reverchon, who began collecting throughout the North Central Texas area in 1876, and all the botanists/naturalists who have followed ...



CALLING ALL MASTER NATURALISTS INTERESTED IN WRITING

Natural Resources Conservation Service Texas staff are interested in expanding their resources to include more information from various areas across the state.

Texas Master Naturalists interested in writing items of interest related to native plants, animals, and the great outdoors - or who have written articles that could be re-purposed and re-published - please contact Rickey Linex, Ricky.Linex@tx.usda.gov.

tx.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/bio/reverchon.html

Advanced Training Suggestions Needed

The State Office is requesting suggestions for Advanced Training for the next statewide annual meeting.

What training and education do you need to be more successful in your volunteer efforts?

Please send AT suggestions to State Coordinator Michelle Haggerty, mhaggerty@ag.tamu.edu.

Deadline for suggestions is March 1.

A good time was had by all...

Chapter Holiday Party 2010 - A Cowboy Ceilidh

Susan Longacre, Director of Communications, declares, "The Holiday Party was the best one I remember."

She reports the new 2300-square-foot Lee and Ramona Bass Conference Center at Kerr Wildlife Management Area (KWMA) was a fabulous venue and MO Ranch catering provided a delicious lunch - so good, in fact, that the chapter should use them again.

Susan says, "A long table of deserts tempted all of us as we waited in the serving line for the entrée. Desserts were made by many Gillespie County chapter members, and we do thank them."

Eleven party-goers went home with door prizes - suet bird feeders - and each received the recipe for homemade suet. (see recipes, page 12.)

Susan tells us, "The Party Committee spent the night at KWMA in order to have time to do all the decorating - very festive and very Texan." Now, that's a committed committee.

Jane Crone led the Holiday Party Committee and committee members were: Mary Francis Watson, Sharon Rodriguez, Linda Ross, Jackie Huecksteadt, John Huecksteadt, Rhoda Reynolds, and Phyllis Muska.

Thanks to all!

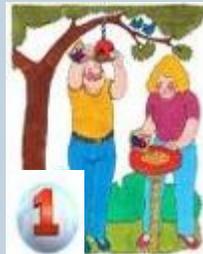


Lee Haile, a talented storyteller, had chapter members and guests rolling on the floor and holding their tummies from laughing so hard! Mr. and Mrs. Rufus Stephens enjoy the show.

Project FeederWatch

Embrace the winter. Count feeder birds for science!

Helping birds is as easy as



Put up a feeder.



Count the birds that visit.



Join Project FeederWatch.

www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/index.html



United Nations General Assembly declares 2011 as International Year of Forests

www.un.org/esa/forests/2011.html

Bill Lindemann's Best Bird Suet

3 cups/parts cornmeal

1 cup/part whole wheat flour

1 cup/part lard (not Crisco or shortening)

Mix ingredients together until they form a ball. Too sticky? Add more dry ingredients. Too crumbly? Add more lard. Be careful not to add too much wheat flour. The suet becomes too dense if you do so. Peanut butter and wild bird seed optional.

Suet may be stored in large zip-close storage bags. If it will be used in a fairly short time, it would be okay to keep in the garage, especially in winter months; otherwise it should be kept in the house. Can be frozen and held over summer for use the following fall.



Pat Beecher's Bird Mix

4 cups cornmeal

1 cup flour

1 cup peanut butter

1 cup lard

Mix dry ingredients together and then add lard and peanut butter. Microwave on high for 2 minutes; stir well. Microwave again for 2 minutes and stir again. There is no need to refrigerate this mix.



The Tom Collins Bird Buffet

I use the same basic recipe with the following modifications:

1 cup peanut butter

1/2 cup white millet seeds

A small amount of sunflower seeds

1/2 cup mixed crushed pecans/walnuts

Toss in some raisins or dried blueberries

Consider experimenting with anything that birds will eat and add it in.



An Invitation to Chapter Members

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to contribute to our newsletter!

Have an experience to share with members - write it down.

Took a great photo in your backyard, on the trail, or on a trip - send it in.

Read a terrific nature-inspired book or article - let us know.

Made an observation - we're interested.

Involved with a super project - tell us about.

We have a great newsletter because we have great members who contribute each month.

You can be one of them!

You don't have to be a professional - you just have to be willing to help inform, educate, or amuse fellow chapter members.

I want to hear from you soon.

Kristie

denbow@gvtc.com

Thank You, Contributors!

A thank you to a short list of contributors to the Texas Star since January 2009.

John Huecksteadt

Jim Stanley

Myrna Langford

David K. Langford

Janet Csanyi

Kate Villarreal

Priscilla Stanley

Tom Collins

Bob McKinley

Jane Crone

Kip Kiphart

Sharon Corley

Ruth Coffey

Gracie Waggener

Cathy Downs

Mary Frances Watson

Sharon Rodriguez

Julie Clay

Ginny de Wolf

Steve Lowe

Martha Miesch

Phyllis Muska

Ruth McArthur

Harriet Warren

Cynthia Johnson

Bill Ward

Mike Mecke

Charles Smith

Ward Miller

Tom Schall

Sharon Walling

Barbara Lowenthal

Diane McMahon

Garry Speir

Cynthia Burgin

Koy Coffey

Sandy Leyendecker

Jim Gardner

Floyd Trefny

Karla Trefny

Christina Williams

Sandy Peña

Robert Spencer

Steve Dodge

Susan Longacre

Stephanie Perry

Virginia Sawin

Paul Stafford

Alexis McRoberts

Mike Quinn

Laura Baker

Lars Nielsen

Eileen Gotke

Dan Denbow

YOUR NAME HERE!

Newsletter Notes

- Deadline for newsletter submissions is the 8th of each month, excluding December. Please email articles, news, information, and photos to denbow@gvtc.com.
- The publication schedule does not allow mention of all AT and volunteer opportunities. Watch your email for announcements and check the calendar and project lists on the chapter's website, txmn.org/hillcountry.
- Current and past issues (back to 2003) of *The Texas Star* are available on our website.
- Our newsletter is not published in December.



Richard Heilbrun's presentation at our monthly meeting will examine legal and ethical aspects of conservation issues, like the border fence, shown here in Hidalgo County. Photo courtesy Steve Benn/TPWD.

From Myrna Langford

Understanding The Trinity Aquifer in Kendall County

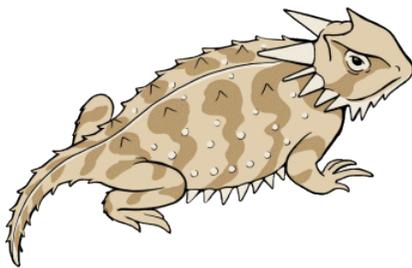


This is a great new video explaining our Trinity Aquifer and water conservation by Cow Creek Groundwater Conservation District

<http://www.ccgcd.org/?page=education>



Kip Kiphart



Show your chapter spirit!

HANG OUR SIGN AT YOUR PLACE!

24"x18" chapter sign,
only \$45.00

Email Gracie Waggener
at gwaggener@flow-apps.com
to get your sign today!



Show us your sign!

As soon as your chapter sign is in place, take a photo of it and send to denbow@gvtc.com. Look for your sign featured in the newsletter.

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™



Hill Country Chapter

FIND MORE INFORMATION ON
OUR WEBSITE!

TXMN.ORG/HILLCOUNTRY

Board of Directors 2011

Phyllis Muska - President

Bob McKinley - Vice President

Anne Cassidy - Secretary

Cathy Downs - Treasurer

Steve Clyburn - Director of Advanced Training

Lisa Williams - Director of Class Training

Susan Longacre - Director of Communications

Koy Coffey - Director of Membership

Reidun Hilleman - Director of Volunteer Service Projects

Vern Crawford - 2010 New Class Representative

John Huecksteadt - Immediate Past President

Our chapter meets the fourth Monday of each month (excluding June and December) at 7:00p.m. in the Upper Guadalupe River Authority Lecture Hall at 125 North Lehmann Drive in Kerrville.

We gather at 6:30p.m. for a fun social half-hour. Please join us.

We welcome anyone interested in our monthly topic or the Texas Master Naturalist program.

Questions about our chapter?

Contact Koy Coffey

Director of Membership

kcoffer@texas-wildlife.org

Texas Master Naturalist mission:

To develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities.



Texas Star
Lindheimera texana

The Texas Star is a monthly publication of the Hill Country Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program. News, comments, information, and ideas are always welcome. Please contact Kristie Denbow, denbow@gvtc.com.

Hill Country Chapter does not recommend or endorse items of interest published in *The Texas Star*. Items of interest are for information only. Opinions expressed are those of the authors.



TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE

