

# The Texas Star

Newsletter of the  
Texas Master Naturalist Hill Country Chapter

SEPTEMBER 2013

Volume 11

Number 9

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University of Texas, Austin map collection

SEPTEMBER 23 MEETING:

EARLY TEXAS NATURALISTS

T E X A S

Master  
Naturalist™



Lonnie Childs, current President of the Native Plant Society of Texas, will recount tales of early Texas naturalists and adventurers, who risked their lives in pursuit of scientific data while examining and documenting our diverse natural history. Attention will focus on some of the better known Texas explorers, including Ferdinand Roemer and Ferdinand Lindheimer, both of whom spent time in the Hill Country pursuing their scientific studies.

Everyone is welcome to join us Monday, Sept. 23, at 7 p.m. in the Upper Guadalupe River Authority's lecture hall, 125 Lehman Drive in Kerrville. Arrive at 6:30 to chat with members and guests.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE . . . Vern Crawford

It's with great pleasure that I join with our entire membership in welcoming Texas Master Naturalists from the counties of Edwards, Kimble, Mason, Menard, Real, and San Saba into the Hill Country Chapter.

Our service area has expanded to provide a home for Texas Master Naturalists that were part of the six counties that comprised and were served by the Western Edwards Plateau Chapter. The former Western Edwards Plateau Chapter members recently voted to formally dissolve their chapter and passed a resolution to transfer their membership, projects, and training opportunities into the Hill Country Chapter.

After several months' deliberations, in order to allow time to ensure that all concerns and considerations were properly addressed, motions were made and unanimously passed at our August Board meeting to accept the additional counties that formerly comprised the Western Edwards Plateau Chapter into the Hill Country Chapter service area, as well as to update our Chapter Operating Handbook to reflect those changes.

The Hill Country Chapter Board of Directors further affirmed its commitment and pledge to the current Master Naturalists in the new counties to integrate them into the fabric of all of our chapter activities.

We look forward to their selection of a member from their group to participate as an *ex officio* member of our Board. We welcome their energies and talents, along with additional volunteer and advance training opportunities, into our chapter.

Welcome aboard,

Vern

## This Month We Honor



### Initial Certification

Margaret Carter Junior Hilburn Marion Worthington

### 2013 Recertification

Sharron Jay Koy Coffe Linda Ross

### Milestones

Ann Dietert Sarah Hilburn Bob Wiedenfeld - Bronze Dragonfly, 250+ hours

Warren Ferguson Eileen Gotke - Gold Dragonfly, 1000+ hours

from Koy Coffe and Valeska Danielak

Cathy Downs will be receiving her 5000 hour Texas Master Naturalist pin at our September 23 meeting. Cathy is a 2005 graduate of the Hill Country Master Naturalist Class and has been continually involved in many projects since that time. To name a few, she:

- works tirelessly with Texas Wildlife Association as a L.A.N.D.S. volunteer and instructor (state wide) and Distance Learning Presenter (state wide);

- sets up butterfly tents and teaches youth and adults about Monarch butterflies at Wings Over The Hills (Fredericksburg), Camp C.A.M.P. (Center Point), and many other events;

- is a Canyon Gorge docent (Canyon Lake);

- teaches and takes part in the Texas Monarch Watch and tagging program (state wide);

- is the project lead at Schreiner Park Butterfly Garden (Kerrville);

- helps Cibolo Nature Center with their Discovery Boxes (Boerne);

- participates in butterfly counts for the NABA and bird counts for Audubon Society;

- has lead numerous classes at the TMN Annual Conference;

- served on the HCMN Chapter Board of Directors;

- served as HCMN New Class Director.

As you can tell, Cathy stays very busy and doesn't let much grass grow under her feet. The 5000 hour milestone is the second highest honor available in the Texas Master Naturalist Program. Cathy Downs joins just 29 other Texas Master Naturalists who have attained this milestone pin in our program's fifteen year history to date. Join us in congratulating her on her awesome achievement!



## *Fourteenth Annual Statewide Texas Master Naturalist Meeting*

ALL Master Naturalist participants are invited to attend our 14th Annual Texas Master Naturalist Meeting and Advanced Training. All Master Naturalist affiliates are invited to attend. This includes those certified, in training, administrators and advisors of local chapters, and your local chapter partners, sponsors, or special guests.

The 2013 Annual Meeting and Advanced Training will offer new opportunities and incorporate many of your suggestions and ideas provided during our previous events. This year's gathering has several chapter enhancement and Advanced Training topics to choose from. The social time, chapter project fair showcase, and roundtable discussions will offer great opportunities to meet your fellow Master Naturalist peers from our 44 chapters across the state and share new ideas from the past year. Hear what projects your peers are contributing their volunteer time towards and make new acquaintances at the same time. The Master Naturalist Store and some surprises also are on the agenda. Come out for a weekend filled with fun, fellowship, and learning in a beautiful October Hill Country setting at the T Bar M Resort. .

Early, discounted registration prices run from now through September 30<sup>th</sup>; full conference cost is \$160. On October 1<sup>st</sup> the majority of conference prices increase by \$40 each; full conference cost will be \$200.

Registration will close on October 7<sup>th</sup>; no additional registrations can be taken after that date.

ALL meals ARE Included with your registration from Friday supper through Sunday lunch.

Spouses and guests who are not TMNs may attend but will need to register as well.

Lodging/accommodations ARE NOT included in the conference registration fee this year.

You will need to make your own lodging arrangements.

Register on-line at: [http://www.regonline.com/TMN\\_14th\\_annual\\_meeting](http://www.regonline.com/TMN_14th_annual_meeting)

## The Class of 2013



Andrew Robinson was a long-time Austin resident and earned a Masters degree in Government from The University of Texas, Austin. He worked for the State of Texas, managing automation for several different agencies, and retired in 2004. He lives on the Rusty Bend Ranch near Comfort with his wife, Lucy. Their families care for the River Bend Natural Area--a cooperative dedicated to wildlife management adjacent to the Guadalupe River. In writing the wildlife management plan, Andy was drawn into the interaction between the land and river, along with the plant life and animals they support.

Ann Schneider moved from Houston to Kerrville eight years ago. She was a petroleum geologist for 14 years and later, for five years, a middle-school science teacher. Along with being a family caregiver, she has been active in the Kerrville community with the American Association of University Women, League of Women Voters, Riverside Nature Center, and Hill Country Geoscientists, and has frequently attended Master Naturalist public programs. Our program fits her interests on local geological structures and fossil sites and her strong belief in educating others about the care and conservation of our natural resources.



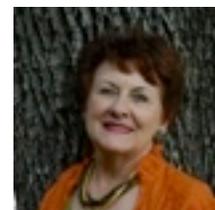
Audrey Hamel is a native of Washington State who moved to the Hill Country last summer. When growing up she loved catching snakes, helping her father rehabilitate birds, camping, and playing in the woods. She graduated from The Evergreen State College where she studied women's studies and alternative medicine. Most of her working life has been in event organization, including concerts, plays, and boat shows. She learned a lot as the assistant manager of a marina, particularly as it underwent a superfund cleanup. She now is a homeschooling mom, organizes the nature education activities for her son's homeschool group, and looks forward to sharing her new knowledge about the Hill Country with her son.

Bob Stevenson was born in New York City, raised in Victoria, and has lived in Kerrville for eight years. Previously he lived in Concan, Hunt, and Boerne. He attended college at Notre Dame, medical school in San Antonio, psychiatric training at Duke University, and worked as a psychiatrist until his recent retirement. Bob has been married to his high school sweetheart for 44 years; he is the father of two and the grandfather of two. He has owned 108 acres on Hondo Creek near Tarpley since the early nineties and now that he is retired he hopes to have time to better understand and care for the land and wildlife on this property. He enjoys climbing around the hills and enjoying the scenery as well as wade fishing at the Texas coast.



Cay Russ was born and raised in Tallahassee, Florida and then lived in West Virginia, Arizona, California, and New York before moving to Texas in 1999 to be closer to her first grandchild. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Fashion Merchandising from Florida State University and was employed as a computer systems engineer. Cay lives near Bandera, loves the outdoors, and has been interested in birds, creeks, butterflies, native plant landscaping, and water-wise gardening for a long time. She is an active volunteer at the Cibolo Nature Center and the Albert and Bessie Kronkosky State Natural Area.

Cynthia Thomas was raised in a farming family in northern Oklahoma. As a child she always enjoyed being outside in nature. She moved to Mason 40 years ago to ranch and teach high school, and continued to ranch until she and her husband, John, moved to Kerrville after selling their ranch near Fredericksburg last year. She has a Bachelor's degree from Oklahoma State University, a Master's degree from Dallas Theological Seminary, and studied interior design at Texas State University in San Marcos. As a real estate broker for the past 10 years, Cynthia has enjoyed finding rural properties for buyers and sharing her knowledge and enthusiasm for the Hill Country with them.





Dale Bransford lives in Boerne with his wife Pam. He is a native of San Antonio and earned a Bachelor of Science in Park Administration from Texas A&M University. For the next forty years, he worked in planning, developing, and managing parks in the jurisdictions of the City of San Antonio and the San Antonio River Authority. Now retired, Dale is in his second year of volunteering at Old Tunnel State Park, and first year at the Albert and Bessie Kronkosky State Natural Area, where he is able to pursue his primary interests of resource stewardship, conservation, and interpretation. He is enthusiastic about learning from and serving with the members, programs, and community opportunities offered by the Hill Country Chapter.

David Hopf is a fifth generation resident of Gillespie County and fourth generation steward of the Hopf Ranch. He has lived in Gillespie County for 69 years and is currently self employed as a cattle rancher and wildlife manager of the Hopf Ranch. David received his doctorate in chemistry from Texas A&M University and taught high school science for thirty-eight years in Fredericksburg. He often led his students on field trips to study the geology of the Edwards Plateau/Llano Basin confluence and was involved for years with the Boy Scouts of America. David's primary passion is being a good steward, along with his wife, for their ranch.



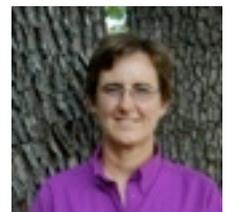
Homer Stevens is a life-long resident of Bandera County whose ancestors came to the Hill Country in the mid 1850's. He graduated from Texas A&M with a degree in Animal Husbandry and received a Masters degree in Biochemistry from Incarnate Word University. He was an Agri-Life Extension Service county agent for two years and taught biology and chemistry at Bandera High School for 24 years. While teaching he developed a private party business, an RV park, and a restaurant on the family farm. Recently, he leased the business and restaurant, but he still lives on the 365-acre property and operates the RV park. He currently serves on the Region J Water Planning Commission and the Bandera County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Joy Rice is a native Australian who has lived in the Hill Country for 30 years. She has had a broad career background, including air stewardess and legal secretary, and presently is employed as the host and assistant to the volunteer coordinator at Cibolo Nature Center. She enjoys assisting others and has helped her son build a tepee. Joy has a great interest in the historical background of the Hill Country and is an avid nature lover. She enjoys photography, and especially, photographing nature. She is looking forward to becoming an interpretive guide for nature trails and sharing her passions with others.



Karen Burkett is a retired elementary school counselor who has lived in Kerrville for a year and a half. She is a native Texan who was born and raised in Dallas, went to college in Sherman and Denton, and lived in Austin and, for 43 years, in Fort Worth, where she and her husband Mike raised their two sons. Karen volunteered at the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT) for 12 years, with the Alzheimer's Association, and with the Fort Worth Herb Society. Now she and Mike deliver Meals on Wheels and are active church members. She volunteers at Riverside Nature Center and is in a creative writing group and Kerr County Poets.

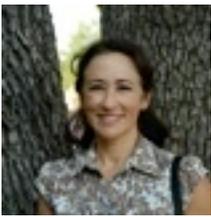
Kay Tally-Foos was born and raised in Kerrville, moved away and back a few times, and finally settled in Kerrville in 1998. Currently, she's the executive director of Tecaboca, Marianist Center for Spiritual Renewal and Boys Camp. She holds certifications in Elementary Education and Administration and Masters degrees in Elementary Education and Outdoor Recreation, with an emphasis in Outdoor Education and Youth Camps. Kay and her siblings are stewards of 30 acres of land north of Kerrville; professionally, she is responsible for 100 acres of land for Tecaboca. She believes that it is important to care for the land from an informed position that can enable her to interpret and communicate responsible management and stewardship.





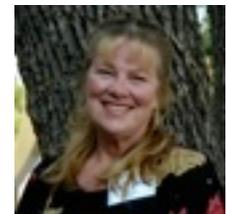
Kris Bobbitt grew up in Arizona, graduated from the University of Arizona, and taught high school English for four years before becoming an FBI Special Agent in 1979. She and her husband Jim, who was also an FBI agent, lived in San Diego, Washington D.C., and Dallas. After 23 years, she retired from the Bureau and worked as a government contractor for over 10 years before moving to Kerrville a year ago. Jim said that he was never moving again and she decided to learn as much as possible about her new home. She especially loves the Hill Country's "no dress code." She volunteers at the Kerrville Humane Society Thrift Shop and the Utopia Rescue Ranch in Medina.

Lisa Flanagan was born in Massachusetts and started traveling at the age of two weeks with her Air Force father. She landed in Texas in 1969 and attended Southwest Texas State to study elementary education. After working mostly in banking, she escaped from Houston in 1988. Lisa has had a massage therapy practice since 1995 and is active in a number of civic organizations. She's very interested in native plants and soils and working with kids to help them appreciate our environment. Hiking Big Bend and enjoying its geology and plant and animal life are a special love; she has property in Terlingua.



Liz Ross is from Corpus Christi (where she has a friend who's starting Master Naturalist training there). She lived in Austin for the past 30 years and moved to Kerrville a year ago. Liz earned a Bachelor's degree in Nursing from The University of Texas, Austin and worked as a chemotherapy nurse and oncology educator for 17 years. Already a volunteer at the Riverside Nature Center as well as Hospice and having fun as a Big Sister, Liz has tremendous enthusiasm for nature and loves "the most impressive spring wild flowers I have ever seen." She is motivated to help preserve "what we've got" and keep "these rare gems."

Lori Jean Persyn is a native Texan who was raised in Hawaii and has lived in Orlando, Dallas, and San Antonio. She studied physical education at Texas Woman's University, received a Radiological Technology degree from St. Phillip's College in San Antonio, and holds certifications in massage therapy, first aid, CPR, and TABC. She lives in Fredericksburg and enjoys bringing up her granddaughter, Lindsay (age seven) who loves babies, snakes, and the smell of rain. Lori Jean is a personal assistant, maintains a massage business, offers bartending services seasonally, and sells homemade jams, salsas, and barbeque sauce at market days. She enjoys welding, hiking, hot springs, swimming, and plans to attempt water board sailing.



Lucy Griffith lived in Austin before moving to the Hill Country; she now lives on the Guadalupe River near Comfort. When she is not on her tractor, she practices clinical psychology. She received her doctorate from the Fielding Graduate Institute in Santa Barbara. Lucy was inspired by her father to be a steward of the land; she and her husband (Andy Robinson) were further motivated by other Kendall County Master Naturalists (Sharron Jay and Myrna Langford) to convert their Livestock Valuation to a Wildlife Valuation. Her passions are enhancing riparian environments and decimating invasive species.

Mary Peeples and her husband, Mike, moved to the Kerrville area about eight weeks ago. Mary is a Minnesota native who moved here from southern California. Mike is a native Texan and Mary had lived in San Antonio, where she earned her B.A. in communications. She worked in advertising and sales and is a retired divorce attorney. She expects that making presentations will be a strong point in her volunteer work. In California, Mary was a successful food gardener; she realizes that gardening is different here, and wants to learn which native plants to add to their seven-acre homestead.



Mary Lee Stewart is a member of an endangered species: native Kerrvillian. After college, she was employed by Shell Oil as a mathematician, but specialized in being mother and wife. After the obligatory exile in Houston, she returned to Kerrville with her husband when he retired and became involved in community activities in a more focused way after he died last year. Mary Lee is particularly interested in water conservation and looks forward to becoming involved in programs that encourage the careful use of our Guadalupe River and Edwards-Trinity aquifers and the wider use of native plants.

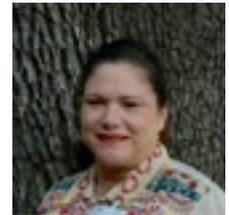
Mason Howerton has been spending his summers volunteering as a counselor at Camp C.A.M.P. (Children's Association for Maximum Potential) in Center Point since he was a teenager. He is now the Assistant Facilities Manager and lives there. A lifelong lover of everything outdoors, he is thrilled to be involved in the stewardship of their land. He was first introduced to the Master Naturalist program by his friend and co-worker Bob Tanner, who early on encouraged his work at their Nature Center. His passion in life is "helping kids successfully do things that they had before only dreamed of doing."



Morgan Williams and his wife, Lyneen, recently retired and moved to the Hunt area from Corpus Christi where they both were teachers. He was born and raised in England and met Lyneen, who was originally from the Austin area, when both were teaching in Stockholm, Sweden. In 1988 they moved to the United States to be closer to Lyneen's family. While teaching, he took his students on field trips to explore the Waelder Wilderness Management Area, Goose Island State Park, Padre Island National Seashore and a TPWD fish hatchery. He is a member of the Audubon Outdoor Club of Corpus Christi, the Nature Conservancy, and was awarded a Backyard Wildscape certification for his Corpus Christi home by TPWD.



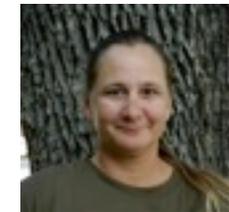
Nancy Person was born and raised in Houston and graduated from Texas State University with a Bachelor's degree in Industrial Arts. After living in San Antonio for 20 years, she, her husband Paul, and their sons Keller and Casey moved to Fredericksburg in November, 2012. Nancy worked in retail, was a PTA president and Cub Scouts Cub Master, and volunteered with the San Antonio Conservation Society for ten years. She has always loved growing plants and wants to learn about growing native plants of the Hill Country.



Nancye Drukker was born and raised in Dallas, and lived in Atlanta, New York City, and Placitas, NM before moving to San Antonio and Boerne 16 years ago. She has degrees in Clinical Nutrition and worked as a Nutrition Support Dietitian. She and her husband have two children. For the last 17 years, she has volunteered with the Bible Study Fellowship as a teacher and area advisor. Nancye has always loved nature and learned much from her grandfather, Charles Ford, who founded Kickapoo Kamp for Girls in Kerrville. She has passed this love on to her children and now wants to share it with others.



Nina Stieler lives near Center Point on a ranch with her husband, Grady; they have one son and she works at the Montessori School in Boerne. She moved to Texas about ten years ago from Botswana where she worked as a guide, so she knows quite a bit about African wildlife. She has a love of nature and the outdoors, and wants to improve her knowledge of Texas flora, fauna, and land management practices. Nina plans to use her knowledge to improve natural habitat for wildlife at her school, and she is interested in a wide variety of volunteer activities from educational activities to any kind of outdoor activities.



Oscar Durham was raised in Houston and has lived with his wife, Sherrill, in Fredericksburg for more than 20 years. He graduated from Sam Houston State University with a Bachelor's degree in Science (Biology and Chemistry) and served in the Marine Corps. Sherrill, a Master Gardener, was the principal encouragement for him to become a Master Naturalist. Oscar is a realtor who has practiced in the Hill Country for over 18 years and looks forward to using his knowledge to assist others through his real estate practice. His passion is improving ranch pasture habitat and preserving natural resources through conservation methods--including rainwater capture systems and incorporating methods of watering select oak tree roots to offset drought, thus preserving them for future generations.



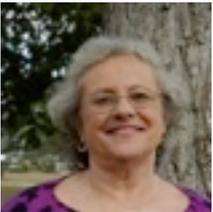
Pat Hopf is a resident of Fredericksburg who moved to Gillespie County from Johnson City when she was five years old and her father, who was Superintendent of Schools in Johnson City, transferred to the same job in Harper. She graduated from Texas A&M University with a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics; she was the first woman graduate of A&M from Gillespie County. Pat taught high school math and science in Harper and Fredericksburg for thirty-one years. She is a rancher's wife and mother to three grown children. Her primary passions today are growing plants, walking, admiring God's creations on the ranch property, reading, and quilting.





Pattie Boertje was born in Chicago, went to high school in San Diego, and lived in Alaska for the next 32 years. She graduated from the University of Alaska with a Bachelor's degree in Biology and received a Masters in Education and a National Board Certification for Professional Teachers. Her first teaching job was in a remote Yupik village, called Nunapitchuk, which was a highlight in her life. More highlights include her marriage to Rod, watching their daughter Jessa grow, and teaching grades K-8 in North Pole, Alaska, for 25 years. Pattie has always been happiest when she is outdoors, discovering new hiking trails and enjoying nature.

Paul Person was born in Luling and graduated from Texas State University with a degree in Geography with a concentration in natural resources and conservation. He and Nancy have been married for 32 years and have two sons, Keller and Casey; they moved to Fredericksburg in November, 2012. Paul volunteered in Boy Scouts for 10 years and for the San Antonio Rodeo Hospitality Committee for 19 years, served on the Kelly Air Force Base Restoration Advisory Board, and is an instructor for hazardous materials at the Texas A&M Fire School. He retired as an environmental consultant for the Union Pacific Railroad.



Peggy Crate is a native Texan who was born in Kerrville and lived here most of her life. She and her husband raised their three daughters in Austin, and she earned her Bachelor's degree in Nursing from The University of Texas, Austin. In 1984 they moved into his paternal grandparents' 2.8 acre homestead on the Guadalupe between Ingram and Hunt, which was built in 1984. Now that she's retired from 30 years as a nurse, she wants to learn more about the flora and fauna of the Hill Country so that she can use her new knowledge for the care of the environment.

Phyllis Ripkin, from Beaumont, lived in Plano for 20 years before moving to Boerne 10 years ago. The daughter of avid gardeners and volunteers, she was taught to care for people and nature. She and her husband, Joe, have three grown sons; two in Seattle and one in D.C. Phyllis taught middle school science and math for 27 years, most recently at Geneva School of Boerne, from which she retired five years ago. Her present volunteer activities include teaching an Adult Sunday School class, block captain for community watch, and various positions with Bible Study Fellowship, International. She is passionate about studying and learning all she can about "our little blue planet." In doing so, she hopes to promote, teach and participate in preserving our natural resources.



Richard Busbee was born and raised on a ranch near Comfort and has resided in Texas all of his days. He was a welder, mechanic, and businessman before graduating from St. Mary's Law School and settling in Boerne as an oil and gas attorney. He read about the Master Naturalist program four years ago now has the time to gain a deeper understanding of all things wild in Texas. He would like to share his vision of conservation with others and "do all I can to ensure that no children grow up as I did, only able to identify a buzzard and ignorant of our place in the natural world."

Rod Boertje lived in various parts of Iowa until moving to New Orleans for high school. He went on to earn a Bachelor's degree in Forestry and Wildlife from LSU in 1978 and then a Masters in Wildlife Management from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks in 1981. Rod just concluded a 31-year career, primarily as a research scientist and pilot, with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. He has published over 20 papers on his Alaska studies, including papers on carrying capacities for moose and caribou as well as the effects of wolf control on moose and caribou. He and his wife, Pattie, live in Kerrville; they have a daughter, Jessica, who is at the University of North Texas.





Sarah Cline was born in Waxahachie, raised in Denton, and lived in New York and Georgia before moving to Fort Worth, where she lives now. She earned a Bachelor's degree in University Studies at the University of Texas, Arlington. Her sister is a member of the Elm fork Master Naturalist chapter in Denton. She enjoys working with natural environments and looks forward to learning all that she can so that she can work with the Land Management Assistance Program.

Shirley Nedry moved to Texas at 17, earned a Bachelor's degree from Pan American University and a Master's degree from Texas A&M Corpus Christi, and enjoyed 39 years as a teacher, technology coordinator, and school administrator. She recently retired to spend time with her husband Bill on their property adjacent to the Albert and Bessie Kronkosky State Natural Area, where she volunteers. She is motivated to become a better land steward by memories of her family farm, carved out of virgin timber and blessed with rich delta alluvial soil; it produced bountiful harvests for years, thanks to liberal use of pesticides and fertilizers. Today, the soil is depleted, forests gone, and wildlife is only a faint memory. Shirley wants to create a balanced ecosystem on her property and be a more productive ABK State Natural Area volunteer.



Ward Moothart recently moved from the Rio Grande Valley to a small cabin in Hunt, where he enjoys the sounds and smells of nature all around him, and especially enjoys kayaking on the crystal clear North Fork of the Guadalupe River. His keen interest in nature originated in his first elective botany class at the University of Texas, Austin. Ward first heard about Master Naturalist training from Lydia and Susan while volunteering at Riverside Nature Center. He earned an Accounting and Finance degree from the University of North Texas, is retired from a career in finance and auditing, and looks forward to participating in many of the Advanced Training opportunities and volunteering with other Master Naturalists at RNC.



thanks to Sally Garrett for the Class of 2013 photos

## Native American and Pioneer Uses of our Native Plants

The Native Plant Society of the Kerrville Area is planning a program to be given by Patty Leslie Pasztor on Native American and Pioneer Uses of our Native Plants. Patty is the co-author of *Texas Trees – A Friendly Guide*.

Discover the uses of our native plants for food, medicine, fiber, dyes, basketry, and more! Patty will give a slide presentation on the human uses of our plants by Native Americans and early settlers. She will also discuss their benefit for birds, butterflies, and other wildlife.

The meeting will be held at the Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street, Kerrville on Tuesday, October 8th at 3:00 p.m.

For more information, please contact Melinda Wasson, NPSOT Kerrville Area Outreach, at [melindaw@windstream.net](mailto:melindaw@windstream.net) or 830-895-2521.

## Recent Hill Country Naturalist Columns by Jim Stanley

7/5/2013 - 9/13/2013, "Guide to Tree and Shrub Identification: Parts I to IX"

8/9/2013, "Surviving Another Hot, Dry Summer"

8/23/2013, "Are Our Trees Dying? What Can We Do?"

These and all other previous Kerrville Daily Times columns can be found at [www.hillcountrynaturalist.org/columns.htm](http://www.hillcountrynaturalist.org/columns.htm).

How-to From the Webmaster

Kristie Denbow

I need your help.

**Send me news.** We have a special page on the website, "Our Naturalists in the News," listing chapter members who appear in articles or images in local, state, or national publications. I don't have online access to all of the local newspapers, so if you see a member mentioned in your paper, please send me the link to the article or the PDF or image. If the article is not available online, just write me a note about it including the date and pertinent information. We need to share our members' accomplishments with everyone.

**Your images are needed** to showcase chapter activities and locations from events, service days, or anytime chapter members gather. Be sure to identify chapter members and tell me what's going on in the image. Images may be used on the chapter website, in the newsletter, and in chapter and/or TMN publications.

Send contributions, comments, and questions to [hillcountrywebmaster@gmail.com](mailto:hillcountrywebmaster@gmail.com).

## Birding by Rear: International "Big Sit" to Help Fund a Riverside Nature Center Oasis



Each year people interested in bird watching gather in 17 foot diameter circles for a day to participate in the International Big Sit!™ event being held this year on Saturday, Oct. 12. The Big Sit is hosted by Birder's World Digest and sponsored by SWAROVSKI OPTIK. Riverside Nature Center will host one of the Big Sit sites. The rules are simple, and anyone can participate. It's free. For bird species to be counted the participants must see or hear a bird while remaining in the circle.

The circle sitters, registered as "Riverside Birding Blast," will be led by local birder Thomas Collins. According to Collins, "Anyone can participate. This is a great time to introduce children to bird watching. We'll teach you what to look and listen for, and you don't even need to supply your own binoculars. Bring a chair and sit in our circle to help us identify as many birds as we can during the 24 hour event. Master Naturalists can earn volunteer hours using the RNC Fauna Census code KR-02-G."

The Riverside circle is down by the banks of Town Creek just off the new river trail. Signs will direct you to the location. According to Collins, "Some of the early risers will get there before daylight, but participants may join in anytime and stay as long as you like. I'm hoping that a large number of people—including children!—will show up around noon so we can have a large group picture taken in the circle. That won't take but about 15 minutes of your time."

For the past five years, Collins and a dedicated group of like-minded locals have conducted fauna census work at the nature center. Kerrville's drought emphasizes that animals—birds, dragonflies, amphibians, butterflies, and others—would greatly benefit from a water oasis created on their behalf. He recently spoke with Mary Muse and Susan Sander, both of the nature center, and they agreed that funds raised from this Big Sit event will go into creating just such a haven within a wildscape that is already under development. Wildscape, a deliberate adaptation of landscape, is an urban habitat created to provide all three basic needs for wildlife—food, shelter, water—in a way that fauna can readily use and easily access.



Collins' own Ranch Oasis has drawn in over 90 species of birds that he's photographed, plus numerous other animals. Painted Buntings are regular spring and summer visitors to the Oasis. "I'm asking folks to pledge some amount of money," Collins said. "This could be a set amount, upward from \$5, or it could be a certain amount for each species of identified birds. For the month of October, the RNC census has shown that about 65 species of birds are seen. I'm hoping we ID at least 50 species. I'm pledging \$1 a species, but a dime or a quarter per species is also welcomed."



Joining the "Riverside Birding Blast" team: To make a pledge, please contact the nature center via email, or by calling 257-4837, or by stopping in. It is reported that a number of people have already signed the pledge, and are "looking forward to the fun of it all." If you want to participate, either just show up or e-mail Collins (towhee@hctc.net) so he can have a rough head-count in case some refreshments happen to show up. Be sure to bring a kid! Collins indicated that there is a possibility he might even conduct a few short programs on Birding by Ear (while on your rear). Another way to support the oasis is to subscribe to one of the periodicals published by Birder's World Digest. ([www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/connect/birdclubs/subshareprogram.php](http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/connect/birdclubs/subshareprogram.php)). "I'm not here to promote this magazine," said Collins, "but the publisher will donate about 50 percent of each subscription and will also help advertise the event."

Collins has challenged other Hill Country nature centers to join the fun as they chase "bragging rights" for which nature center can pack the most people in their respective circles. For general information, go to [www.riversidenaturecenter.org](http://www.riversidenaturecenter.org). RNC is located at 150 Francisco Lemos St., Kerrville.

## 100th Anniversary Celebration of Railroad, Train, and Tunnel at Old Tunnel State Park



Beautiful Butterfly Storybook Character  
HCMN member and OT volunteer Diane McMahon

On Saturday, August 17th, Old Tunnel State Park Superintendent Nyta Brown and several of the OT volunteers hosted a celebration extraordinaire. They invited the public to visit and participate in the 100th anniversary of the first train trip through the tunnel.

The tunnel is now occupied by approximately one million Mexican Free-tailed Bats. But 100 years ago on that date there was a huge crowd of locals cheering on the new train as it passed through the tunnel, heading from Fredricksburg to Comfort.

To celebrate this historic day, Nyta planned children's events including face painting, bat cave crafts, storybook nature characters in full costumes, and plenty of prizes to be won.

Also on tap were the Boerne Historical Society with the Friends of the Railroad and several other Texas parks presenting flint knapping, a full size teepee, information booths, and much more. By the end of the event there had been over 165 visitors who came by OT during the afternoon. That number swelled when The Boerne Historical Society presented a program about the railroad's history to end the event.

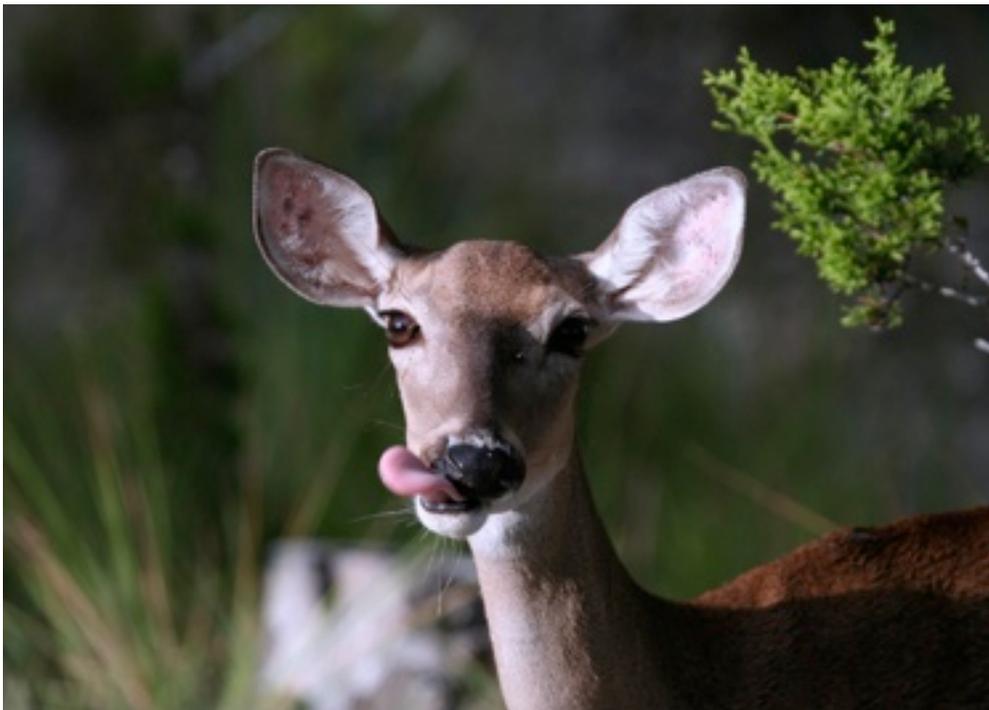
Immediately afterward, Nyta and her team of volunteers packed in over 400 visitors for the Saturday evening bat emergence. The OT celebration was a great success and lots of fun for those who came out to help Nyta, Old Tunnel volunteers, other Texas Parks and Wildlife staff and the Boerne Historical Society/Friends of the Railroad celebrate this historical occasion.



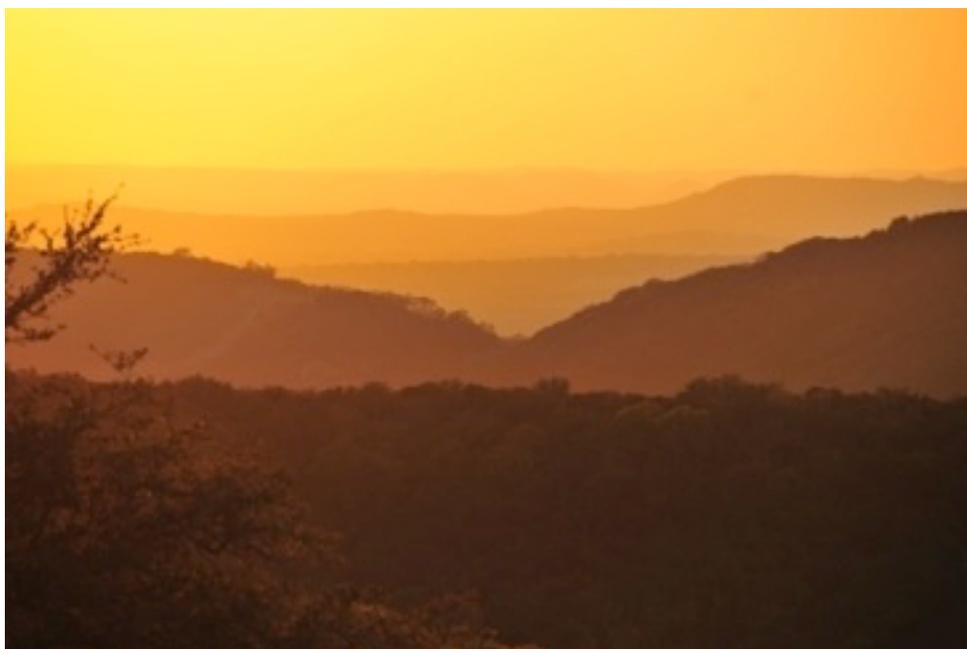
Scaredy Squirrel Storybook Character  
HCMN member and OT volunteer  
Valeska Danielak

photos by Warren Ferguson

Two members of the chapter have won awards in the 2014 Texas Hill Country Calendar competition; The calendar captures the spectacular beauty and treasures of the Texas Hill Country. The stunning photography featured throughout this calendar was chosen from nearly 500 entries in the 7th Annual Hill Country Alliance Photo Contest. The 2014 HCA calendar also provides inspirational quotes and information regarding Hill Country conservation -- addressing groundwater resources, scenic beauty, habitat conservation, land stewardship, and several other topics that are important to keeping the natural resources of this and other beautiful and fragile regions intact.



Deer Lick by  
Cynthia Burgin



End of Time by  
Paul Stafford

from Lucy Griffith

## The View from Rusty Bend

While August in the Texas Hill Country may appear to be all heat and humidity and searching the skies for rain, there are still subtle pleasures to savor.

Here on our cliff above the Guadalupe River, each summer day warms up like a symphony. Just before dawn the bats from the Old Tunnel silently snag mosquitos at the edge of the cliff. If there is dew, they swoop up to the porch roof and take a sip from the edge. A quiet choreography. The next early risers are the ravens, who fly in from the east to pounce on grasshoppers in the neighbor's field. Bacaw, bacaw. The Canyon Wren then greets the day with his lyrical descending aria. The juvenile Canyon Wrens miss a note or two; just learning, you know.

The special pleasures of summer focus on the young'uns. The young turkeys bring up the rear in each flock, taking their cues from their elders as to foraging skills when it is so dry. One morning a young turkey cocked his head comically, watching his elder strip the seeds from a sideoats grama. Bottom to top, gulp, next clump, repeat. How does she do that?

Our colorful songbirds had a fertile spring. We are inundated with juvenile Cardinals, who look like they just got out of a spin cycle: ratty and frayed and splotched with odd reddish colors. Bossy, too; don't know how to share space at the feeders. The young Black-crested Titmouse has a hairdo that is a work in progress. His mohawk is off center and prone to lay flat in a breeze. Unafraid of people, he hangs out on the porch rail and ponders my coffee cup.

The male juvenile Painted Bunting is colorful in a sort of sloppy way, no yellow yet though. The star of the morning show has to be the Summer Tanagers. Usually busy hunting bees and wasps down on the river, when they come up to the birdbath, their golds (hers) and cherry reds (his) really shine. Their long beaks reveal an elegant Egyptian profile. The Cardinals get hostile. Jealous?

An hour after sunrise, the symphony is warmed up and there is a wild chorus of Lesser Goldfinches (dwee? dwee?), Carolina Chickadees, House Finches, Mourning Doves, Titmice, Cardinals, and various sparrows. The Carolina Wrens call to each other across the river. The ongoing battle for river frontage between two mated pairs of Red-shouldered Hawks is noisy and can go for hours. The Great Blue Heron slides by below us, his grays and blues gaudy from above. He croaks a greeting.

Around a second cup of coffee, we might get a visit from the gray foxes. One is more robust and the other one is light and delicate. One hops up and drinks from the bird bath. The other lands on an overturned trough, plops down and hangs her head off the side. Resting. Listening.

Perhaps she is sharing the lesson of these hot summer days. Rest. And listen.

Lucy Griffith, Ph.D. co-manages the Rusty Bend Ranch with her husband, Andy Robinson. When she is not on her tractor, she practices Clinical Psychology. When the tractor is broken, Andy is fixing it. Lucy and Andy are in the 2013 Hill Country Master Naturalist Class.

## One World--One Health: Texas A&M Initiative Unites Human, Animal, Plant, and Environmental Health

It is said that no man is an island, and those words ring especially true at Texas A&M University where students, faculty and staff are engaged in the "One Health" initiative, which seeks to attain sustainable, optimal health globally for humans, animals, plants and the ecosystem.

"We're all residents of Earth and we all have to coexist," says Bhanu Chowdhary, Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. "The wellness of humans, animals and plants are vital to one another and there are a number of factors that are common to each other's health. There has to be greater awareness of these factors so that a balance can be maintained and everyone can thrive." Such common factors include disease susceptibility, similar needs for disease prevention and treatment, and a shared environment that impacts health in a similar manner.

Chowdhary says that traditionally, research disciplines have followed a focused path with limited efforts to find connections between human, animal and environmental health. "Over the past few decades, we've inadvertently created silos that have created an excellent knowledgebase within a discipline, but haven't reached out to gain from developments in another discipline," says Chowdhary, himself a researcher in animal genomics, studying the causes of genetic diseases, the role of genes in disease progression, and exploring ways to target genes for disease prevention and treatment.

"Researchers may just think about the specific species they're working with, as that's where their expertise lies," explains Chowdhary. "But we are all--humans, animals, plants and the environment--interconnected and dependent on one another for health and survival."

Chowdhary says there are many diseases that affect both animals and humans, and treating the disease in animals can often help with treating the disease in humans, and vice-versa. "Cancer, for example, is seen in both humans and animals," he points out.

He says that with increased awareness, communication, and interdisciplinary research that breaks traditional species-specific barriers, we can improve the understanding of a disease in several species.

In his own research, Chowdhary studies diseases in horses, including lameness and COPD. He adds, "A major part of my research focuses on male fertility, specifically the genes responsible for male reproduction, fertility, sexual development, and spermatogenesis." Such research holds promise for translation to humans, says the researcher, and transcends the species boundaries among animals.

### **The World Around Us**

For One Health to be complete, human and animal wellness must be linked to the health of plants and the environment. "If we forget the environment, our existence is threatened," Chowdhary contends. "Reviewing and protecting the health of the ecosystem is critical in preserving our health."

Part of maintaining a healthy ecosystem is the monitoring, prevention, and treatment of infectious diseases, and Chowdhary says that in the modern era, the challenges on this front are many and varied.

"We could be just one airplane flight away from a global health crisis," he warns. "One person with an infectious agent gets on a flight and can spread the illness to other passengers; each of those passengers takes it to a dozen different countries, and it can spread all over the world within 24 hours."

"We're fortunate not to have malaria here in the U.S., but as near as southern parts of the continent, they do. Just because the problem doesn't exist here now doesn't mean it won't ever. We have to think beyond our borders and collaborate globally to study such diseases and protect ourselves with awareness and preparedness."

*continued on next page*

Chowdhary says if there are infectious diseases in other parts of the world, the U.S. must get engaged with people there to understand the situation. “It’s a preemptive strike--a way of stopping infectious diseases from coming here,” he notes. “But if it does reach our soil, we’ll know better how to deal with it promptly and effectively, not just in humans, but also in animals and plants.”

Chowdhary says monitoring what crosses international borders is vital to ensuring a healthy ecosystem – but it can only do so much.

“Animals don’t know national boundaries; birds and insects don’t need passports,” he emphasizes. “But we must do all we can to closely monitor their health and movements and be vigilant in the control and containment of a range of ‘carriers’ on which these agents can piggyback.”

Global awareness of the threads that connect us in the One World-One Health framework is paramount to the initiative’s success, and Chowdhary says it’s possible through cross-disciplinary research, education, and healthy practices.

### **Texas A&M Poised To Lead The Way**

One-Health demands a multidisciplinary approach and Chowdhary notes that Texas A&M is in a unique position to take a leading role nationally and globally.

“The diversity in expertise we have on this campus and sister institutions is quite unique,” he states. “Engineering, architecture, education, agriculture, Mays Business School, the Bush School, geosciences, liberal arts, the medical and vet schools, seven state agencies, and more, make it ideal for extraordinary cross-pollination and interaction.”

“The College of Architecture, for example, has a program in Health Design where the design of health facilities can promote One Health. At the Bush School, policies can be developed that are in line with the initiative. Our engineering students and faculty can design new technologies to help medical researchers diagnose and treat disease. We have policymakers and communicators that can take the research and relay it to the people in a way they can understand. Moreover, Texas is a border state and therefore we have an even greater responsibility in preserving the health of the ecosystem.”

The One Health initiative was started at Texas A&M in 2011 at the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences by Dean Eleanor Green, along with Dean Thomas Shoemaker of the Texas A&M Health Science Center College of Medicine, Chowdhary, and Clinical Professor and Physician Dr. Suzanne Yandow as coordinators in their respective colleges. In 2012, Dr. Michael Chaddock was hired as the Assistant Dean for One Health and Strategic Initiatives.

Since its inception, the initiative has morphed into a university-wide Grand Challenge with goals to enhance interdisciplinary research, educate students, and impact communities in Texas and beyond.

Texas A&M students play an important role in the One Health movement, Chowdhary explains: “We have to make them aware about One Health – what it is, why it’s important, and how we all can be partners. They can be ambassadors to convey that message back to their families and communities.”

“We can’t hide on Mars,” he concludes. “There is one world and one health. We must find the connections between entities so it’s a healthy world for everyone.”

*Published in the TAMU Times, August 12, 2013, and reprinted with permission of the Texas A&M University Press News & Information Services*

# Garden Fest

**Free & Fun  
For The Whole Family!!!**



**10am**

Seed Ball Making  
Broadbeck & Herff History  
Tour the Inspiration Garden

## Gardening Workshops

We even have Plants & Worms for Sale!



**11am**

Worm Boxes  
Native Plants for the Fall  
Tour the Inspiration Garden



**12pm**

Fall & Winter Gardening  
Backyard Chickens  
Tour the Inspiration Garden



**Farmer's Market**

**Crafts for Kids**



**AT THE CIBOLO**

33 Herff Road  
Boerne, TX 78006



**Saturday, September 21**

**10am - 1pm**

**[www.Cibolo.org](http://www.Cibolo.org) 830-249-4616**

## Advanced Training

### **MONDAY, SEPT. 26 7PM UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUTHORITY LECTURE HALL, KERRVILLE**

AT 13-220 EARLY TEXAS NATURALISTS

Lonnie Childs, current President of the Native Plant Society of Texas, will recount tales of early Texas naturalists and adventurers, who risked their lives in pursuit of scientific data while examining and documenting our diverse natural history. Socializing begins at 6:30 p.m. and the program starts at 7:00.

### **SATURDAY, SEPT. 28 9AM-3PM GUADALUPE RIVER STATE PARK (GRSP)**

AT 13-195 MONARCH MANIA CELEBRATION

The monarchs are on their way to Mexico, and here's your chance to learn about them as well as our other scale-winged wonders. We'll have crafts, games and other opportunities to capture, study, and release butterflies of all kinds. In addition, you'll learn what you can do to encourage butterflies in your yard, including what native plants are best for monarchs and other species.

### **WEDNESDAY, OCT. 2 1:30-3PM TEXAS LIONS CAMP, KERRVILLE**

AT 13-184 FORBS ID CLASS

The fall plant identification classes will be held again this year after the New Class meetings on Wednesdays at the Texas Lions Camp. If you have taken the classes before, but feel you will learn more by repeating, you can earn Advanced Training hours. Presenter is John Huecksteadt.

### **FRIDAY, OCT. 4 1-5PM KERR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA (KWMA)**

AT 13-149C ADDRESSING RESOURCE CONCERNS IN THE EDWARD'S PLATEAU, PART 3

This third of three seminars is entitled "Ecosystems Approach to Wildlife Management: Putting it All Together--Finding a Cure Rather Than Treating a Symptom." Topics include white-tailed deer management, grazing management, prescribed burning, brush control, and endangered species. The seminar also will include over 30 years of nutrition and genetics research conducted in the Donnie E. Harmel White-tailed Deer Research Facility. An outdoor tour of sites relevant to topics covered indoors will follow. Reservation required; call 830-238-4483.

### **THURSDAY, OCT. 10 12-1PM WEBINAR**

AT 13-135 BASICS OF MAKING AND ARCHIVING WEATHER OBSERVATIONS

Stephen Burt is the presenter on this CoCoRaHS Webinar. The topics will include choosing and using weather stations, how best to expose your instruments for best results, and specific guidance on measuring air temperature and humidity, precipitation, atmospheric pressure and (if time permits) wind speed and direction. The session will close with a few pointers on how best to collect and make use of your weather station data. To register, go to <http://www.cocorahs.org/Content.aspx?page=wxtalk>.

### **FRIDAY, OCT. 11 8:30AM-3:30PM MASON MOUNTAIN WILDLIFE AREAS (MMWA)**

AT 13-150 C ADDRESSING RESOURCE CONCERNS IN THE EDWARDS PLATEAU, PART 3

This seminar (the third of three) is entitled "Ecosystems Approach to Wildlife Management--Putting It All Together: Finding a Cure Rather Than Treating a Symptom." Topics include whitetaileddeer management, grazing management, prescribed burning, brush control, and endangered species. The seminar also will include over 30 years of nutrition and genetics research conducted in the Donnie E. Harmel White-tailed Deer Research Facility. An outdoor tour of sites relevant to topics covered indoors will follow. Reservation required; call 325-347-5037

### **FRIDAY, OCT. 25-SUNDAY, OCT. 27 T BAR M RESORT AND CONFERENCE CENTER, NEW BRAUNFELS**

AT 13-196 TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST 14TH ANNUAL MEETING

See full page of information on p. 3 of this newsletter; for complete information and advance registration go to [http://www.regonline.com/TMN\\_14th\\_annual\\_meeting](http://www.regonline.com/TMN_14th_annual_meeting).

**WEDNESDAY, OCT. 30 12-1PM TEXAS LIONS CAMP, KERRVILLE**

AT 13-185 GRASS ID

The fall plant identification classes will be held again this year after the New Class meetings on Wednesdays at the Texas Lions Camp. If you have taken the class before, but feel you will learn more by repeating, you can earn Advanced Training hours. Presenter is Jim Stanley.

**FRIDAY, NOV. 1, 8AM - SAT., NOV 2, 9PM TEXAS TECH UNIV. LLANO RIVER FIELD STATION, JUNCTION**

AT 13-182 THE NEW ECOLOGY: MANAGING FOR RESILIENCE IN A CHANGING WORLD

Field trips, workshops and presentations on topics related to restoration, management and conservation issues in Texas; opportunities to network with fellow environmentalists; delicious meals; a social and poster session; and awards for lifetime achievement in the field and for student posters and presentations. Keynote Speaker: John Zak, Associate Dean & Professor of Soil Biology, Texas Technical University. Plenary Speakers: Jacquelyn Duke, Senior Lecturer in Biology, Baylor University; Christine Hawkes, Associate Professor of Integrative Biology, University of Texas,, Austin. To register or for updates on field trips and program information, go to <http://txser.org> or <http://texasriparian.org>.

**Riverside Nature Center Events**

**Saturday, Oct. 5, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Fall Native Plant Sale and Festival.** Co-sponsored with Texas Master Naturalists Hill Country Chapter, the plant sale presents an opportunity for free consultation(s) with experts on what grows best in the Hill Country, and how to plant and take care of these plants. The festival offers lectures, "Native Americans of the Texas Hill Country," by archeologist Bryant Saner and "Making Your Landscape a Wildscape," by meadow supervisor Barbara Lowenthal and RNC founder and naturalist, Susan Sander. Lectures and experts, exhibits and information, and children's activities and crafts, with Angelo Falzarano leading a nature walk, round out the agenda. Food and beverages will be available for sale. Free admission.

**Tuesday, Oct. 8, 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m., 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday Brown Bag Lunch & Learn.** Paul Fleming, fish biologist and chief of the Guadalupe bass research and science center for Texas Parks & Wildlife, speaks on the state fish of Texas, the Guadalupe bass, and the recently concluded DNA study of the species.

**New Chapter Merchandise**

It is that time of year again: an exciting new class joining the Chapter, and looking forward to the TMN State Meeting coming up in October. So now is the time to order Chapter merchandise. Check out the large selection of caps and bags, all with the TMN logo. There are a few of the Chapter Anniversary T's left, so get one soon. Don't miss out on this collectible fashion statement!

We are lucky enough to have a local supplier that works with our Chapter, so we can custom order the style, size and color requested without having to invest in a large inventory. Just remember, each order is a custom order, and cannot be returned.

The gate signs are back in both sizes, and we have window decals for your car.

Look for the merchandise table at the Chapter meetings and at the new class sessions. Show your loyalty and pride of being a Texas Master Naturalist Hill Country Chapter member!

Dr. Clark Wernecke, Executive Director of the Gault School of Archaeological Research, will speak at the October 28 monthly meeting on "Old Story, New Finds." He will examine various theories of the "peopling of the Americas." His own work at the Gault site, located northwest of Austin, has unearthed evidence of older settlements than that of Clovis strata.

T E X A S

Master  
Naturalist™



We meet on the fourth Monday of most months at 7:00 PM. in the Upper Guadalupe River Authority Lecture Hall at 125 North Lehman Drive in Kerrville.

Join us at 6:30 for our social half-hour.

Everyone is welcome.

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.

**Board of Directors 2013**

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The Texas Star is a monthly publication of the Hill Country Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program. News stories, comments, and ideas are welcome.

Please email them to:

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LenoreLangsdorf@gmail.com

The Hill Country Chapter does not recommend or endorse organizations or commercial sources mentioned in our newsletter. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and editor.



*Questions about our chapter?*

Email Valeska Danielak,  
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