

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the

Texas Master Naturalist

Hill Country Chapter

November 2016 Volume 14 Number 11



ABK photo by Nancye Drukker



November 28 Meeting: ABK State Natural Area

James Rice, Superintendent at the Albert and Bessie Kronkosky State Natural Area, will speak on the history of ABK and plans for the property--including future public use and the volunteer program.

The monthly meetings of the Texas Master Naturalist Hill Country chapter are free and open to the public. We meet in the Upper Guadalupe River Authority's lecture hall, 125 North Lehmann Drive in Kerrville. Socializing begins at 6:30; the program starts at 7:00.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE . . . Brenda Fest

Hello fellow Master Naturalists!

Recent rains have made it a perfect time to plant native trees and shrubs. Don't forget to cage them to keep the deer from munching on them. It's also a great time to spread those seeds you've been saving. We collected and planted some Lindheimer senna pods, golden eye and bush sunflower. I also found several others we collected earlier. Gary has been doing some "roadside relocating" of small shrubs, to try to give those plants a better chance to thrive. That way we get to look at them and help restore our land.

The monarchs have slowly made their way to Mexico. We didn't tag as many this year as last; it was a bit sporadic. Other butterflies are slow to leave. The warm temperatures and abundant nectar keep them fluttering around. I appreciate that. The season is beginning to change; soon many things will be dormant. But I see the bluebonnets already preparing for spring as they pop their seedlings up. The little brown birds are on their way as they migrate south to stay warm. I hope they find enough food on our place to help them find their way.

Don't forget to RSVP with a \$15 check by December 1 for the December 10 Holiday Party, to be held at the Riverhills Country Club in Kerrville. This is a great time to relax and enjoy each other's company. We'll have great food and entertainment, so come and join the fun.

Congratulations to the class of 2016. This is a great group that has begun their journey as Hill Country Master Naturalists. By the end of training, their total number of volunteer hours was 623 and they attended 347 advanced training hours! Welcome aboard, Class of 2016! As I listened to Jim Stanley's presentation in the last class about the importance of succeeding in our mission I am reminded just how important the work we do with our organization is. Take a break this holiday season and then get ready for another great year of volunteering. We make the Hill Country a better place.

I hope to see everyone at the Nov. 28 chapter meeting, when James Rice will give us an update on the progress at Albert and Bessie Kronkosky State Natural Area. We will also be voting for our 2017 chapter officers.

Brenda Fest

This Month We Honor



Special Recertification

Jim Bobbitt, Nancy Grimes, Becky Leal, Gabrielle McCrae,
Bobbin Phelps-Gredell

Recertification

Betty Clyburn, Vern Crawford, Kris Bobbitt, Cathy Downs, David Hopf,
Tyra Kane, Lenore Langsdorf, Ron Lehman, Cay Russ

Milestones

Dan Carabin, Betty Clyburn, Ray Dutton - Brushed Silver Dragonfly, 500 hours
Sharon Hixson - Gold Dragonfly, 1000 hours

From Michelle Haggerty

A special THANK YOU to Jim Bobbit, Lisa Flannigan, Clarence Reed, Dale Williams, and Françoise Wilson for their assistance at the state office helping me prep for the 2016 TMN Annual Meeting, and to all others who volunteered to help!



Congratulations to members who received awards at the October meeting:

From left to right: Claire Mitchell, Clarence Reed. Bob McKinley,
Nancy Person, Paul Person

Recent Hill Country Naturalist Columns by Jim Stanley:

10/1/2016	Our Late Summer Rains Were Great for Our Fall Bloomers
10/8/2016	Learning the Names of Our Native Plants
10/15/2016	Our Most Common Hill Country Trees
10/22/2016	Will Our Parks Become Obsolescent?
10/29/2016	Some of the More Common Hill Country Shrubs

These and all other previous Kerrville Daily Times columns
can be found at www.hillcountrynaturalist.org

Chapter members are welcome and encouraged to attend and contribute to Board of Directors meetings. The board will meet this month at the Riverside Nature Center at 1:00 on Monday, November 28.

*Our 2016 Holiday Party will be held on
December 10, 2016 11:30 to 2:30
at the Riverhill Country Club in Kerrville
\$15 is all-inclusive for your meal*

Menu

*Cranberry Stuffed Chicken, Butternut Puree, Balsamic Roasted Vegetables;
Salad: with Bacon, Walnut, and Bleu Cheese Dressing
or, Vegetarian/Vegan -- Speckled Quinoa, Balsamic Roasted Vegetables,
Salad of Mixed Greens with Cranberry Vinaigrette*

Dessert: Spice Cake with Apples

(indicate choice of entrees at time of Payment)

There will be a lively and entertaining game to be revealed at the party. See you there!

Please make your reservation by December 1. You may pay at the Chapter meeting on November 28, or mail it to our PO Box 293972, Kerrville 78029, to be received by Dec. 1. Cash or check only, no refunds



Kip Kiphart, of our Hill Country Chapter, and Tom Solomon, of the Galveston Bay Area Chapter, are initial recipients of the new award for 15,000 volunteer hours. They're pictured here with their award tiles at the annual state meeting in October, when the awards were announced.

NPSOT Boerne Chapter Monthly Meeting

Our Holiday Pot Luck is on December 6.
 Bring anything that goes with ham; we provide plates, cups, and cutlery.
 Arrive at 6:30 to set out food; dinner begins at 7.
 On Tuesday, January 3, our speaker: will be Ben Eldredge, Director of Adult Education and Stewardship at Cibolo, on the negative environmental impacts of conventional agriculture and the alternative provided by practical ecosystem-based approaches.
 Socializing at 6:30pm, program at 7pm
 Cibolo Nature Center, 140 City Park Road, Boerne

NPSOT Fredericksburg Chapter Monthly Meeting

We do not have regular meetings in November and December.
 In January, Jennifer Lorenz will be our speaker.
 She will provide an overview of the Hill Country Land Trust mission and approach, tag-teaming with an area landowner who has done an amazing job of bringing back native grasses.
 Tuesday, January 24; social at 6:30 pm, program at 7pm
 Fellowship Hall of Memorial Presbyterian Church,
 601 North Milam Street, Fredericksburg.

NPSOT Kerrville Chapter Monthly Meeting

Our holiday party is on Tuesday, December 13, 1:30 pm.
 Marilyn Butcher will lead the group in making seed balls.
 Refreshments will be served.
 On Tuesday, January 10, at 1:30, Leanne Beauxbeannes will speak about the Hill Country State Natural Area near Bandera
 Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street, Kerrville

All of these programs are free and open to the public.



From Eileen Gotke

Testing for Chronic Wasting Disease in the Hill Country

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a neurological disease in the Cervidae family (deer family), which includes white-tail deer, mule deer, elk and moose. CWD is a concern because there is the potential for decline within susceptible cervid populations. CWD can impact the economic benefits derived from big game hunting.

Unfortunately, eradication of CWD is thought to be impossible. In June 2015, Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. (TPWD) received the first confirmation of a CWD positive deer in a Medina County breeding facility, and there have been more identified. TPWD and Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) have developed a CWD management plan for addressing risks, developing management strategies, and protecting big game resources from CWD in captive or free-ranging deer populations and other cervid populations.

TPWD recommends voluntary sampling of hunter harvested deer in the Medina area CWD Surveillance Zone. Therefore, Deer Check Stations have been set up during hunting season to collect specimens to be tested for CWD from harvested deer; there are several locations in the Hill Country.

Rufus Stephens, District Leader, Edwards Plateau Wildlife District, headed up the Tarpley location on the first day of hunting season, November 5. Two HCMN members, Paula Harley (Class of 2016) and Eileen Gotke (Class of 2010), along with Jeanne Beauxbeannes, assisted him.

This information on CWD is taken from the TPWD website, tpwd.texas.gov.



Rufus Stephens measuring antlers as part of the reporting process



Paula Harley, Jeanne Beauxbeannes, and Rufus Stephens gathering data



Rufus Stevens discussing CWD with a hunter

photos by Eileen Gotke

From Lydia Jetson

Learning About Snakes at the Kroc Center

Karen Millikan answered questions and showed the students many things about snakes during our session this month. We handled snakeskins, looked at pictures of many kinds of snakes, and learned the difference between a venomous snake and a poisonous snake. There were so many questions and comments that when we started the activity to assemble snake bracelets, the Master Naturalists who assisted (Richard and Teresa Coleman, Lydia Jetson, Pam and Chris Lienhard, Alexis McRoberts, Martha Miesch, and Karen Millikan) continued to clarify points made in the initial presentation, in response to particular interests voiced by the students.



photos by Martha Miesch

The View From Rusty Bend



Guadalupe glow

Cinnamon River

*October light lays an amber caress
upon the landscape,
gentling the spirit.
Giving respite, quiet, time to go deep;
go deep, and linger in stillness.*

*October awakens, and the
rusty luminescence of the cypress
slowly works its way up,
from water to sky;
as if the river were breathing light.*

At Rusty Bend, October is for paddling. The angle of the sun is gentle and forgiving and I meander the pasture with lopping shears and fire ant bait. October light invites small chores, chopping small regrowth cedar, laying slash in a spot prone to erosion, filling the feeders for feathered migrants.

Something happens when persimmons drop their leaves, making a space to see what needs doing, and in this quiet season, just a little bit. Hmmm, the drainage points right to that low spot. Is this a good place to plant that Burr Oak? Does it have room to spread its mighty shade? Durn, those bucks are rubbing a healthy Cedar Elm. It needs protection, a cage to discourage those wounds. I linger in my wanderings to trace the crimson of a vine, yes, Virginia Creeper, peeking from the brush. The acorns crunch underfoot.

October means long days outside in the mild weather with an ear out for the magic bugle of Sandhill Cranes, and an eye out for a swirling vortex of Swainson's Hawks. We see new butterflies each day; binoculars and field guides decorate our breakfast table. Seed heads on the fall grasses also keep us busy. They are virtually weightless and beg patience to gather. On the other hand, the *Guide to Texas Grasses* weighs about five pounds.

The Rusty Bend version of a 24-hour news cycle keeps us entertained. We have surprises at the bird bath: Bullock's Orioles and Pyrrhuloxia. Those desert cardinals have prodigious beaks. We call one of the regulars "Durante."

It is also lambing time and entertaining sounds rise from across the river. Our neighbor's old ewes sound like ancient men with tobacco throats. After the ewes rattle, they are answered by tiny lamb voices in all timbres. Mommmy! The refrains echo up and down the river.

The sky flourishes its fluctuations throughout the day. Clouds, shadows and angled sun vary minute to minute. You can practically see the colors change. At night, the stars and Milky Way continue the show, with tree frogs and owl songs as a soundtrack. For percussion, the dry leaves of the cottonwoods clatter in the wind, like old bones.

At some point, the paddling is done. Life goes on with all its craziness. Then, when it seems the "world has grown too much with us," we pause. Andy and I look at each other and sigh. "Let's lock the gate," we joke. Let's lock the gate, sit on the porch, and watch the leaves tumble, one by one.

continued on next page

Poem, essay and images by Lucy Griffith
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Lucy Griffith, PhD co-manages the Rusty Bend Ranch with her husband, Andy Robinson. She also writes poetry and her muse is a tractor named Ruby. Both Lucy and Andy are certified Master Naturalists from the Class of 2013. Comments welcome at doctorluz@hctc.net



Cypress needles

Enchanted Rock Star Festival

Saturday, December 3, 4 - 11 p.m.

Hill Country Land Trust is proud to partner again with The Friends of Enchanted Rock and staff of Enchanted Rock State Natural Area for the second annual "Rock Star Festival."

The event will take place at the Enchanted Rock State Natural Area, 16710 Ranch Road 965, 18 miles north of Fredericksburg. Regular park admission applies; \$7 per adult, children under 12 free, and includes access to all activities which start in the afternoon and run into the night.

The Rock Star Festival is a celebration of the beautiful starry nights supported by Enchanted Rock's International Dark Sky Park designation in 2015 and Texas Parks and Wildlife's ongoing Dark Sky Initiative.

HCLT works diligently with private landowners around Enchanted Rock to help protect the views of the skies and is one of the few places in the country to see the Milky Way! Come and enjoy a great evening of presentations and activities for all ages.

- The event will start off with Brent Leisure, Director of State Parks, and his talk, "A Not So Bright Future for Texas State Parks," and will include dark sky-friendly lighting information from McDonald Observatory's Dark Sky Ambassador, Bill Wren, and information on astrophotography from Ken Kattner of the Putman Mountain Observatory.
- Solar and star viewing with the Hill Country Astronomers
- Learning constellations activity with Peter van Bavel of the Austin Astronomers Association
- Texas State Parks Dark Sky slide show featuring Austin photographer, Rob Greebon, and more.

"We are teaming up with star enthusiasts from all over the state to share activities for kids and adults alike, experience the magical world of a star-filled night, and leave the event inspired to preserve dark skies in their own backyard," says event spokesperson Robert Deming, FOER Vice President.

Advanced Training

MONDAY, NOV. 21 8:30-10:40AM HILL COUNTRY STATE NATURAL AREA, BANDERA

AT16-229 BIRDS OF A FEATHER

Ranger Leanne Beauxbeannes and Texas Master Naturalist Scott Magee lead this guided birding walk for both beginners and experienced birders. Bring binoculars, comfy/sturdy shoes, layered clothing, and water. If you wish, bring a picnic lunch and stay after the walk to enjoy our 5000-acre natural area. Come early to register; regular day-use fees apply: Texas State Park Pass, no charge for everyone in the vehicle; Seniors (65+), \$3 with Bluebonnet Pass, kids 12 and younger, always free.

MONDAY, NOV. 28 7PM UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUTHORITY LECTURE HALL, KERRVILLE

AT16-220 ABK UPDATE

James Rice, Superintendent at the Albert and Bessie Kronkosky State Natural Area, will speak on the history of the property, our volunteer program there, and plans for its future use.

SATURDAY, DEC. 3 4-9PM ENCHANTED ROCK STATE NATURAL AREA, FREDERICKSBURG

AT16-217 ENCHANTED ROCK STAR FESTIVAL

The Rock Star Festival is a celebration of the beautiful starry nights supported by Enchanted Rock's International Dark Sky Park designation in 2015, and Texas Parks and Wildlife's ongoing Dark Sky Initiative. Regular park admission applies: \$7 per adult, children under 12 free; includes access to all activities which start in the afternoon and run into the night. The event will start with Brent Leisure, Director of State Parks, and his talk, "A Not So Bright Future for Texas State Parks" and will include dark sky-friendly lighting information from McDonald Observatory's Dark Sky Ambassador, Bill Wren, information on astrophotography from Ken Kattner of the Putman Mountain Observatory, solar and star viewing with the Hill Country Astronomers, a learning constellations activity with Peter van Bavel of the Austin Astronomers Association, a Texas State Parks Dark Sky slide show featuring Austin photographer, Rob Greebon, and much more.

TUESDAY, JAN 3 7PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER, BOERNE

AT17-TBA CONVENTIONAL AND ALTERNATE APPROACHES TO AGRICULTURE

Ben Eldredge, Director of Adult Education and Stewardship at Cibolo, will be the speaker at the January meeting of the Boerne chapter of NPSOT.

TUESDAY, JAN. 10 1:30 PM RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER, KERRVILLE

AT17-TBA THE HILL COUNTRY STATE NATURAL AREA

Leanne Beauxbeannes will speak about the Hill Country State Natural Area near Bandera at the January meeting of the Kerrville chapter of NPSOT.

MONDAY, JANUARY 23 7 PM UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUTHORITY LECTURE HALL, KERRVILLE

AT17-TBA DESALINATION OF BRACKISH GROUNDWATER

Roberto Macias, Manager for Production and Treatment, San Antonio Water System, will be our speaker.

TUESDAY, JAN. 24 7PM FELLOWSHIP HALL OF MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FREDERICKSBURG

AT17-TBA THE HILL COUNTRY LAND TRUST AND BRINGING BACK NATIVE GRASSES

Jennifer Lorenz and an area landowner will be our speakers at the January meeting of the Fredericksburg chapter of NPSOT.

**The newsletter's publication schedule does not allow listing all AT events in each issue.
Check the chapter calendar on our website for additional AT.**



We meet on the fourth Monday of most months (but not in December) at 7:00 PM in the Upper Guadalupe River Authority Lecture Hall at 125 North Lehmann 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.

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

Please email them to:

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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?

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