

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the
Texas Master Naturalist
Hill Country Chapter

January 2016 Volume 14 Number 1



T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™



JANUARY 25 MEETING: SOIL--WHAT IT IS AND HOW TO CARE FOR IT

Soil is home to a vibrant community of bacteria, fungi, nematodes, protozoa, and micro-arthropods. Trees and soil microbes are interdependent. By knowing more about the physical, chemical, and biological properties of soil, the arborist and gardener are better equipped to manage trees and plants in the urban environment. David M. Vaughan, an arborist in San Antonio since 1978, will speak to us on what we need to know about the soil community.

The monthly meetings of the Texas Master Naturalist Hill Country Chapter are free and open to the public. Meetings are held at 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

2015 was a great year for the Texas Master Naturalist Hill Country Chapter. I am excited and honored to serve as President for 2016. I am proud of what we have accomplished in 2015 and look forward to new challenges in 2016.

Our holiday party was fun and exciting, thanks to the great planning of Judith Gausnell and Nyta Brown. We enjoyed a lively game of Jeopardy with wonderful bits of Hill Country trivia. It was great to be in the presence of such a wonderful group of involved and dedicated folks.

We have begun to record our service hours using the online Volunteer Management System (VMS). It was my pleasure, as the 2015 New Class Director, to guide that class as they accomplished the beta testing for VMS. Their participation was extremely valuable to us as we learned to use this system. They then helped to facilitate the VMS training workshops that began in December and are continuing this month, and assisted other chapter members in using this new system to enter their hours. Our VMS administrators are Kristie Denbow, Brenda Fest, Lisa Flanagan, Sandy Leyendecker, Claire Mitchell, and Liz Ross. This VMS Team will be working together to assist our chapter members as they record their service hours.

Here are some highlights of other accomplishments during 2015. Our chapter trained 35 new Master Naturalists, for a cumulative total of 451 since our chapter's inception in 2002. The Class of 2015 began volunteering and completed 1,294 service hours and 501 hours of advanced training. They had 100% participation in service projects or advanced training. Their volunteer and advanced training hours was greater than any other training class. What a great group of new volunteers!

There were 260 Advanced Training opportunities within our chapter, providing 3,469 hours of educational enhancement to Master Naturalists last year. We participated in 377 outreach events. We celebrated important milestones for many of our members: 20 members completed 250 hours, 19 members completed 500 hours, six members completed 1,000 hours, three members completed 2,500 hours, and two members completed 5,000 hours.

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What a wonderful contribution we make as we participate in various area service projects. This year our members provided 37,117 volunteer service hours, which at a value of \$23 per hour represents over \$853,000 in in-kind service to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Recording our hours is vitally important.

Many thanks to our outgoing board members, Judith Gausnell, Sarah Hilburn, Pat McCormick, Paul Person, and Bob Weidenfeld. Remember that our board meetings are the third Wednesday of the month at Riverside Nature Center and are open to the membership. We welcome your input.

Thank you for all that you do. We do a good thing. Happy 2016; here we go!

Brenda Fest

This Month We Honor

The following members earned awards in November 2015:



Initial Certification, Class of 2014

Robin May Jay Munson

Special Recertification

Lee Burton Barbara Marquer

Initial Certification, Class of 2015

Craig Childs Rick Harter Colette Nicholl

Special Recertification

Larry Eskridge Kay LaRue

2015 Recertification

Betty Clyburn Steve Clyburn David Hopf Pat Hopf Marilyn Knight
Susan Longacre Ruth McArthur Liz Ross Paula Smith

Milestones

Susan McKinley - Bronze Dragonfly, 250 hours
Gary Fest, Kay Harter, John Sloan - Brushed Silver Dragonfly, 500 hours

The following members earned awards in December 2015:

Initial Certification, Class of 2014

Heather Harris

Special Recertification

Diane Gierisch

Initial Certification, Class of 2015

Nancy Grimes Debbie Windham

2015 Recertifications

Leanne Beauxbeannes Stephen Dodge Betty Gardner Sally Garrett Roger McRoberts
Tony Plutino Melissa Seymour Mary Lee Stewart Nina Stieler Joe von Rosenberg

Milestones

Judy Gausnell, Junior Hilburn, Bridget Langdale - Bronze Dragonfly, 250 hours
Paul Person - Brushed Silver Dragonfly, 500 hours
Richard Adams, Dale Bransford, Anne Cassidy - Gold Dragonfly, 1000 hours



Congratulations to these members of the Class of 2015 who completed the requirements for initial certification before the class ended and received their certificates at the November meeting:

From left: Craig Childs, Gabrielle McCrae, Heather Barnes, Bobbin Phelps-Gredell, Pamela Lienhard, Chris Lienhard, Larry Eskridge.

In front: Lisa Barrett, who also received special first year recertification.

Congratulations to these members who received their recertification pins and milestone awards at the November meeting:

From left: Brenda Fest, Lenore Langsdorf, Kay Harter, Barbara Marquer, Gwynn Groggel Jackson, Kris Bobbitt, Sharon Jay.

In front: Donna Dutton, Vern Crawford, Tyra Kane, Phyllis Muska, Paul Stafford.



WELCOME

Chapter members are welcome and encouraged to attend and contribute to Board of Directors meetings. The board meets on the Wednesdays prior to the monthly chapter meetings at 1:30 PM at Riverside Nature Center.

Recent Hill Country Naturalist Columns by Jim Stanley:

11/6/2015	Plants Less Likely to be Eaten by Deer
11/13/2015	Observations on a Year of Extremes
11/21/2015	Two Common, but Strange, Hill Country Critters
11/28/2015	An Example of Good Land Management
12/5/2015	Listening to the Experts
12/12/2015	Some Truly Amazing Things About Mother Nature
12/19/2015	A Visit with County Extension Agent Roy Walston
12/26/2015	The Underground World of Roots

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



Wings Over the Hills Nature Festival

It is time for planning to begin for the Wings Over the Hills Nature Festival, which will be held at Lady Bird Johnson Park in Fredericksburg. The dates this year will be April 29, 30, and May 1.

Our guest speaker will be Cecelia Riley, who is the former Executive Director of the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory in Lake Jackson, Texas. Festival volunteers and attendees will have the opportunity to meet and visit with her during receptions and field trips.

The Festival Committee is looking for volunteers to help in all areas of the festival, so if you are a gardener, teacher, computer geek, birder, or butterfly fan we have a spot for you. To volunteer, contact Gracie Waggener at gwaggener@flow-apps.com, or look for our table at the chapter meetings for the sign-up sheet. This is a great volunteer opportunity to both learn and educate.



Blanco River Restoration Forum: Resources for Landowners

January 23, 2016

1:00 - 5:00 pm

Wimberley Community Center – Blanco Room

Please join us for an overview of restoration resources available to Blanco River watershed landowners. Presentations will cover reforestation timelines, planning tools, recommended restoration activities for winter/early spring, and plans for invasive species management. A question and answer session will follow. This forum is a precursor to a more intensive workshop in March, at which restoration techniques will be discussed and riparian grasses and sedges distributed to participants for transplanting.

RSVP appreciated. Please email ryan.mcgillicuddy@tpwd.texas.gov



Texas Night Sky Festival at Dripping Springs Ranch Park

On Saturday, March 5, 2016, the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA), the City of Dripping Springs, and the Hays County Chapter of Texas Master Naturalist will host the Texas Night Sky Festival, a free celebration of the Texas Night Sky.

Participants will join in fun citizen science activities, learn from engaging speakers and exhibits, see examples of good lighting for their homes or businesses, view school projects and competition entries focused on protecting the night sky, feast at the food trucks, take home books or works of art inspired by the night sky, earn related scouting badges, or explore the stars.

The intent of the Festival is to increase the appreciation of the night sky and the world around us. This goes hand in hand with increasing awareness about the type of lighting that provides needed light while it reduces glare, saves money, eliminates light trespass, protects the health and safety of living things, and saves our view of the night sky.

Vendors and exhibitors will be sharing displays and demonstrations related to the night sky, things inspired by the night sky, and how to protect the night sky. Displays of shielded outdoor lighting, light pollution reduction efforts, educational materials about our natural world, literature relating to the night sky, astronomical equipment, and other items relevant to the night sky are just a few of the exhibits.

Save the date to join us for a fun family event! If you have any questions, please call 512-858-4725.

Pride, Passion, and Vision in the Hill Country

There's a lot of love and pride in the Texas Hill Country. It's a place of rugged beauty, cool, clear swimming holes, and passionate people. Putting that love, pride, and passion into action toward a common vision is what the Hill Country Alliance (HCA) is all about.

For past generations, this vast region of wide-open spaces may have seemed invincible and untamable. Caring for a Hill Country ranch has never been easy. Every drop of water must count, and the limited carrying capacity of the land is a challenge. We have seen best practices for taking care of this land evolve over the years, and it's encouraging to note the Hill Country's natural landscape today is more beautiful and healthier than it was years ago when heavily grazed.

Central Texas is experiencing some of the highest rates of growth in the country, creating a whole new set of issues for the landowner community. We are losing working lands and wide-open spaces at an alarming rate—partly because of development pressure and partly because the family ranch is not easy to hold on to these days. Even the most thoughtful, resourceful, well-intentioned private land stewards face a very vulnerable situation wondering how and when a development, infrastructure, or industrial project might impact their land.

People here have fought hard for generations to protect private property rights. Government regulations are seen as a burden, and, sometimes, rightfully so. However, more than 90 percent of the Hill Country landscape is in unincorporated areas where development regulations are minimal or nonexistent. A truck stop or sand operation upstream, a commercial or industrial project on the other side of the fence, a water export deal taking water out from under the land, or a road or transmission line carving a path across the landscape—all are common threats and realities for every Hill Country landowner.

Once one of these threats becomes real, it is often a surprise to landowners and citizens that local governments have no authority to deal with what can be devastating financial, emotional and ecological impacts and the long-term consequences of these degrading actions for the landowner and surrounding community.

It has become clear to us that there is a common and strong desire among Hill Country landowners to hold on to the region's unique natural qualities, heritage, character and beauty. For many landowners, protecting the value and special qualities of this region is what "protecting property rights" really means. However, simply protecting private property rights without examining more carefully what that means to our region has made thoughtful, reasonable rules for new development almost impossible.

"Property rights" advocates with only development interests in mind have been formidable opponents of attempts to establish and enforce rules proposed to protect land and water resources.

Hays County, the fastest growing county in this region, is a great place to take a closer look. County planners and elected officials, following the demands of development-driven growth projections, are investing huge amounts of public time, money, expertise and advocacy trying to convince landowners and constituents about the need for major road and water infrastructure projects. But there is tremendous resistance to these proposals—landowners are telling their elected officials that these plans work against a consensus of broad community desires for quality of life, water supply, land protection, and long-term property values. This story plays out in community after community; it's a cycle we can't seem to break.

HCA, working alongside a network of regional partners, has been vetting elements of a shared regional vision for years. Our Collaborative Strategy identifies several critical actions that must be taken in order to protect our beloved Hill Country.

Rethink our water policies

First, we need to rethink our water policies.

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Texas barely manages groundwater, springs are declining, and the water from our rivers is over-allocated to water rights holders under the first in time first in right doctrine. We do not have a regulatory system in place to manage water resources in a way that keeps springs flowing and water catchment systems healthy for the long term.

Resolving this situation is paramount, and there are a number of good people and organizations such as the Texas Living Waters Project and the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment working hard toward consensus and best ways to change the system we have today.

Despite the volume of important work underway related to water policy, the discussion rarely includes land use issues. Everything that happens on the land—conservation, stewardship, and development—has everything to do with our future water supply.

Strategic land conservation

Secondly, we need a significant, strategic land conservation movement. Currently less than four percent of the 11 million acre region is permanently protected. It will take a mix of conservation easements on private lands, public open spaces, and the protection of critical habitat, water features and natural areas to be successful. Eight local land trusts working with state and national land trusts have greatly increased awareness and acceptance for conservation easements. Progress for land conservation has grown significantly in the last decade, but we have a long road ahead, and while it will be expensive, the net economic benefit will be significant.

Land well stewarded

Thirdly, all land, permanently protected or not, will need to be well stewarded for the long-term health of the region. Vegetation and soil management in the uplands, healthy riparian zone stewardship, strategies for invasive species, brush control, and proactive strategies for dealing with wildfire and prolonged drought are all essential components of a successful Hill Country action plan. Land stewardship is an evolving science, and we have to get it right in order to protect the land's life-giving properties.

Thoughtful development

Fourthly, it's a given that population growth will occur in the region, therefore the intensity and location of future development must be thoughtful and planned. This makes sense not only from an ecological and quality-of-life perspective, but from an economic perspective as well. Investing in a rail corridor from Austin to San Antonio and encouraging more density along this transit system makes perfect sense. A vision for how and where we develop will give us a blueprint for guiding infrastructure investments. Rather than committing the region to massive debt to pay for roads, waterlines, and other infrastructure projects "as demanded," we could concentrate these investments where development priorities emerge and avoid these investments where we have consensus for a conservation focus.

Take action now

And, finally, while we know these strategies are extremely challenging and will require political champions, funding sources, and new ways of thinking, we can and must take action today.

With assistance from the Cynthia and George Mitchell Foundation, HCA has launched a number of outreach programs to educate the Hill Country community about protecting the night sky, harvesting rainwater, and the importance of keeping riparian areas natural. We are building a network of organizations that work collaboratively in this region and we provide regular educational programs to engage and empower the public to participate in regional decision-making.

The Hill Country provides economic benefits to the entire state of Texas. People relocate to, do business in, and visit the Hill Country because of the quality of life and unique beauty of the region. We can accommodate new growth and development in ways that are compatible with our fragile landscape—but we need to help gather people around the campfire, educate and open minds, and work together to make it happen—and the sooner, the better.

Christy Muse is the Executive Director of the Hill Country Alliance, a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to raise public awareness and build community support around the need to protect the natural resources and heritage of the Texas Hill Country. For more information, follow Twitter @NewsHCA or visit www.HillCountryAlliance.org.

This article is republished with permission from the author and the Mitchell Foundation Blog.

From Kay Harter

Albert and Bessie Kronkosky State Natural Area workshop

This all-day workshop concentrated on identifying fossils found at ABKSNA (known as "ABK") near Pipe Creek. Morning classroom time presented an overview of the Hill Country limestone that formed in shallow seas as the water level rose across Texas. An afternoon hike on-the property took a group of 25--lead by geologist Kathy Ward--across rock formations, a running creek, fossil beds, and worked chert findings. Laminated guide sheets and classroom notes helped to identify fossils as old as 120 million years.

Although open now only to surveys and guided teaching hikes, this beautiful Hill Country ranch, donated by Albert and Bessie Kronkosky for a Texas State Natural Area, will eventually be open to the public for hiking and education. Surveys open to Master Naturalists, among others, investigate populations of birds, bugs, butterflies, bees, fossils, plants, water critters, and more. There are volunteer opportunities to help with trail maintenance, surveys, and other needs on the property.



photos by Carla Brady and Kay Harter

From Pam Lienhard

The Emerald Ash Borer

A representative from the United States Department of Agriculture spoke of the danger that the emerald ash borer poses to ash trees in the nation. The November 19 program was part of the monthly After-School Nature Program which Master Naturalists sponsor at the Kroc Center in Kerrville.

Joyce Blasizzo, from the USDA, told students that the beetle has already been found in Arkansas and that steps must be taken to protect ash trees in Texas. The beetle is native to Asia, and was first detected in Michigan in 2002. It has already caused the loss of millions of ash trees in North America.



Blasizzo told the students of ways to help stop the movement of this beetle and other exotic pests, such as not bringing firewood or any exotic agricultural products into the state. She gave them additional information to share with their families and showed a video on the dangers of the beetle. They viewed insects through microscopes and received an emerald ash borer beetle tattoo as a reminder of what to look for. Then Blasizzo showed the 24 first and second grade students how to make an origami beetle to take home.

For more information on this insect pest, call 1-866-322-4512 or visit www.emeraldashborer.info

Assisting with the program today were Master Naturalists Jill Bowen, Chris Lienhard, Pamela Lienhard, Robin May, Gabrielle McCrae, Martha Miesch, John Sloan, and Mary Frances Watson,

Before the program started today, one student excitedly told me all about Shucks the RNC snake and the bracelet he had made at the September program. If you ever think you're not making a difference when you bring nature to children, please think again.



photos by Martha Miesch

Become a Citizen Scientist and Help Your River

The Llano River needs you to become a water quality monitor.



Why?

The Llano River is considered a healthy stream, having only the occasional water quality problem. However, as pressures increase on the river – people, fragmentation, wildfires, hogs, and exotic species – we need to be able to identify potential water quality changes so that we can manage our efforts to correct them.

When: Saturday, January 30, 9a.m.-3p.m.

Where: Llano River Field Station, Junction

What to bring: sunscreen, a hat, and writing materials

For more information and to register, go to <http://www.southllano.org>

Volunteer Activities at Old Tunnel State Park

For those who haven't yet visited, or maybe just need a reminder to visit, Old Tunnel State Park is located in northern Kendall County at 10619 Old San Antonio Road (aka Old #9 Highway), about midway between FM 473 and US 290. The 16.1 acre site lies on the ridgeline separating the watersheds of the Guadalupe and Pedernales Rivers. It was acquired by Texas Parks & Wildlife in 1991 for the protection and management of a seasonal colony of up to three million Mexican Free-tailed Bats (the official flying mammal of Texas). Accomplishing this purpose also brings with it the care and management for segments within the park boundaries of an abandoned historic railroad tunnel and rail bed that was active with train traffic from 1913 to 1941.



Bob Wiedenfeld presents an informal evening program talk.

At Old Tunnel the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department relies extensively on volunteer involvement. A dedicated volunteer corps of 39 members has been trained to provide support for both on- and off-site activities, including:

natural and historical resource interpretation at evening programs

park visitor management

park maintenance and improvement

quarterly bird surveys

Adopt-a-Road litter cleanups for a two-mile section of Old San Antonio Road

off-site school and group educational presentations emphasizing bats' ecological significance

off-site special event participation

It's likely that you know of at least one Hill Country Chapter member in this volunteer corps, since 26 are certified Texas Master Naturalists! In 2015, these volunteers contributed 4,114 volunteer hours.



Eileen Gotke staffs an information booth at an off-site special event.

Old Tunnel State Park is open daily January through December for you and your friends and family to experience its scenic vistas, tunnel and rail bed views, picnic units, one-half mile nature trail, and natural and historical signage. During May through October, evening formal and informal interpretative programs are offered. For more park information and bat emergence details, please call toll-free 866 978 2287, visit www.tpwd.state.tx.us/oldtunnel, or "like" Old Tunnel State Park on Facebook. Come out and see us soon at Old Tunnel State Park!

The View From Rusty Bend



Essay and images by Lucy Griffith Copyright 2016

There is a privacy about it which no other season gives you.... In spring, summer and fall people sort of have an open season on each other; only in the winter, in the country, can you have longer, quiet stretches when you can savor belonging to yourself.

~Ruth Stout

Winter is bare and spare at Rusty Bend. From above the river, here on the cliff, the neighbor's sheep seem snuggled in the limbs of the cypress, like tufts of creamy snow. The river is so clear, catfish are exposed, nestled in their limestone grooves.

Spotted Towhees are everywhere and amuse us with their bathing in the trough. Even on chilly days they play like two-year-olds splashing in a playpool. They do their Hokey-Pokey dance in the water, putting their whole self in and their whole self out.

But it's turkeys that thrill us. We watch one afternoon while the "How to Cross the Highway" class is in session. With one large adult monitoring from a fencepost, a large group of young turkeys is flummoxed by the sheep and goat wire on each side of the road. They somehow crossed one fence to get on the road and they peer at their buddies on the other side. They can't get through. They poke and prod and return to the pavement. That tight fencing is a puzzle. They cock their heads comically. Finally, a large hen gives a hint. She gets a running start and flies over the fence into the pasture. Ah ha! You can practically see them thinking. Oh yeah, we can fly. Bold souls first, then the more nervous ones and finally all land safely in the pasture. Ta da! Farm road traffic resumes.

Closer to home, another large flock comes by at least once a day, drawn perhaps by my efforts to control erosion with winter grass seed. I'm happy to share. They do a far statelier version of the Hokey Pokey than the Towhees: peck right, peck left, scratch right twice, scratch left twice, backstep, harvest. Slowly, and with feeling. Flap widely, fluff those feathers. And repeat.

The Merlin has returned again this winter. If I go outside and all is eerily quiet and still, I know he is near. Fear at the feeder. Mr. Zone-tail Hawk has also made his annual appearance. He conceals his hunting by flying with the vultures. And vultures are everywhere. With hunting season in full swing, the Annual Festival of the Carrion-eaters has begun. Along with the vultures, Crested Caracaras and ravens fly in from all directions, gathering at the gut-piles and cleaning things up. A public service.

With the landscape pared down to its bones, I am summoned to reflect. What will be my theme for 2016? Imperfection? Staying in the moment? Paying attention? In what ways will I savor "belonging to myself"? One thing's for sure, I plan to put my whole self in.

Lucy Griffith, PhD co-manages the Rusty Bend Ranch with her husband, Andy Robinson. When she is not on a tractor named Ruby, she practices Clinical Psychology. When the tractor isn't running, Andy is fixing it or building something straight and true. Both Lucy and Andy are certified Master Naturalists from the Class of 2013. Comments welcome at doctorluz@hctc.net



Hoarfrost on Agarita

Advanced Training

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 20 11AM WEBINAR

AT16-013 GRAZING STRATEGIES FOR RIPARIAN AND WET MEADOW IMPROVEMENT

Partners in the West are investing unprecedented resources to conserve the ecosystems they depend on. Although the ecosystem in West Texas is unlike that in the Hill Country, their work may be of interest. Go to <http://www.conservationwebinars.net/webinars/grazing-strategies-for-riparian-and-wet-meadow-improvement-in-the-sagebrush-steppe> for connection information.

THURSDAY, JAN. 21 10AM-2PM RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER (RNC), KERRVILLE

AT16-017C VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (VMS) TRAINING

Hill Country Chapter members are now using this system to report volunteer hours. Bring your laptop or use our laptops to get a hands-on experience in logging in and entering your hours. Come any time during the workshop hours and stay as little or as long as you like. One-on-one assistance will be available.

FRIDAY, JAN. 22 10AM-2PM BANDERA PUBLIC LIBRARY

AT16-017D VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (VMS) TRAINING

Hill Country Chapter members are now using this system to report volunteer hours. Bring your laptop or use our laptops to get a hands-on experience in logging in and entering your hours. Come any time during the workshop hours and stay as little or as long as you like. One-on-one assistance will be available.

MONDAY, JAN. 25 7-8PM UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUTHORITY AUDITORIUM, KERRVILLE

AT16-016 SOILS: A VIBRANT COMMUNITY

David M. Vaughn, an arborist, will speak on the physical, chemical, and biological properties of soil.

TUESDAY, JAN. 26 7-8PM MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FELLOWSHIP HALL, FREDERICKSBURG

AT16-018 OAK WILT AND OTHER TREE DISEASES

Robert Edmondson, Texas State Forester, will speak at the monthly meeting of the Fredericksburg NPSOT Chapter. He will discuss preventive steps homeowners can take to mitigate the effects of these diseases.

THURSDAY JAN. 28 12-1PM WEBINAR

AT16-012....WEATHER UNDERGROUND: PERSONAL WEATHER STATIONS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

How did a student/faculty project at the University of Michigan evolve into a network of more than 100,000 personal weather stations (PWSs)? And how can you and your own weather station participate in the WU network? Join us for this look at the colorful history and global reach of Weather Underground. Go to <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1133368160323169281> to register.

THURSDAY JAN. 28- FRIDAY, JAN. 29 8:30AM-6:30PM LADY BIRD JOHNSON WILDFLOWER CENTER, AUSTIN

AT16-015 GOLDEN-CHEEKED WARBLER AND BLACK-CAPPED VIREO SYMPOSIUM

Biodiversity Works is sponsoring this symposium with the goal of facilitating dialogue and discussion regarding the latest research, management, and conservation efforts pertaining to the golden-cheeked warbler and black-capped vireo. For more information, go to <http://biodiversityworks.org/>.

SATURDAY, JAN. 30 9AM-1PM RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER, KERRVILLE

AT16-006A WILDLIFE TAX VALUATION WORKSHOP, SESSION 1

This three-part, in-depth workshop is especially for landowners with 20 or more acres. It emphasizes wildlife management strategies that improve native habitat and increase species diversity. Our presenters will help you gain land management knowledge, understand the history of the Texas tax valuation law, and fulfill requirements to qualify for a wildlife management tax valuation. Many participants complete this workshop with a concrete plan and are ready to apply. Cost: \$90/person or \$110/couple (members); \$110/person or \$130/couple (non-members). Coffee and water provided. Feel free to bring a sack lunch or snack. The class is limited to 35; preregistration is required by Jan. 23. Call 830-257-4837 for more information; go to www.riversidenaturecenter.org to register. This first session provides an overview and discussion of property inventory. See below for information on the second and third sessions, to be held on Feb. 6 and Feb. 13.

SATURDAY, JAN. 30 9AM-3PM LLANO RIVER FIELD STATION, TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY, JUNCTION
AT16-021 CORE AND ADVANCED STREAM TEAM WATER QUALITY TRAINING

Become a Citizen Scientist who collects water quality data on our Hill Country Rivers. For more information and to register, go to <http://www.southllano.org> .

SATURDAY, FEB. 6 6AM-6PM FLYING X RANCH, BALCONES CANYONLANDS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
AT16-014 SPAROWFEST 2016

Birders of all levels will meet before dawn for a light breakfast and then break into groups for a workshop or disperse to usually off-limit areas of the Refuge with experienced leaders. Birders will meet back at "the X" for lunch and a talk by Dr Byron Stone, President of the Texas Ornithological Society. The afternoon will be another series of workshops and field trips. The day will end with dinner at the Flying X while birders exchange their day's experiences. Cost: \$100; includes meals. For more information and to register, go to <http://www.friendsofbalcones.org/event-2063421> .

SATURDAY, FEB. 6 AND SATURDAY, FEB. 13 9AM-1PM RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER, KERRVILLE
AT16-006B & AT16-006C WILDLIFE TAX VALUATION WORKSHOP, SESSION 2 & SESSION 3

This three-part, in-depth workshop is especially for landowners with 20 or more acres. It emphasizes wildlife management strategies that improve native habitat and increase species diversity. Our presenters will help you gain land management knowledge, understand the history of this Texas tax valuation law, and fulfill requirements to qualify for a wildlife management tax valuation. The second session is on Management Practices and Habitat Assessment. The third session is on WTV History and Update on the Law, Application Procedures, and Putting It All Together. For more information, see Session 1, Jan. 30.

MONDAY, FEB. 15 8:30-10:30AM HILL COUNTRY STATE NATURAL AREA, BANDERA
AT16-229 BIRDS OF A FEATHER, THIRD MONDAY OF MONTH BIRDING WALK

This guided birding walk will be with Ranger Leanne Beauxbeannes and Texas Master Naturalist Scott Magee. Beginners and experienced birders are welcome. Come to learn or teach. Bring binoculars, birding guides, comfy/sturdy shoes, hats, layered clothing, and water. Plan on a two-hour guided walk and then bring a picnic and stay for as long as you like to enjoy our 5000-acre natural area for the day, on your own. Come early to register. Regular day-use fees apply: Texas State Park Pass - no charge for everyone in vehicle. Seniors 65+, \$3 with Bluebonnet Pass. Adults, \$6; kids 12 and under always free. RSVP is appreciated; call 830-796-4413.

SATURDAY, FEB. 27 9:30AM-2:30PM RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER, KERRVILLE
AT16-005A LANDSCAPE FOR LIFE: A THREE-PART SERIES

Sustainable landscapes can have a positive impact on human well-being as well as the environmental health of an entire region. Landscape for Life™, a national program, focuses on sustainable landscapes, working with nature to provide clean air, clean water, and fertile soils. The three-class series will explore soil and water: their role & sustainable practices; plants: benefits and selection; and materials and sustainable landscape design. This course uses a combination of presentations, classroom discussions, and exercises to illustrate sustainable landscape design methods that will enable participants to develop their landscape plan. The second and third classes are on March 5 and 12. Cost: \$90 per RNC member; \$110 per non-member. Register by Feb. 20; call 830-257-4837 or go to RNC.kerrville@gmail.com .

**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 information.**



We meet on the fourth Monday of most months 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.

Board of Directors 2016

- Brenda Fest -- President
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