

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the
Texas Master Naturalist
Hill Country Chapter

March 2016 Volume 14 Number 3



photo by Vern Crawford

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™



MARCH 28 MEETING: CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

Bob Dittmar, DVM, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department Veterinarian, will explain the nature of this neurological disease in deer, elk, moose, and other members of the deer family and address questions that arise in relation to human contact. Also, Mitch Lockwood, Texas Parks & Wildlife Big Game Program Director, will provide current information on the prevalence of the disease in Texas and how TPWD is responding to it.

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

Hello fellow Master Naturalists!

Spring has blessed us with both warm weather and also with some much needed rain. Bluebonnets, paintbrushes, anemones and even some prairie verbena are just a few of the wildflowers that are starting to make their appearance. Redbud trees are blooming, which for me is a signal that spring is really here. The trees are budding and leaves are opening. Perennials are reemerging from the ground. Birds are beginning to build nests in our bird boxes. Gary thinks they are probably Bewick's Wrens. We're hoping some Eastern Bluebirds will come again this year. It's not too late to put out bird boxes. So many things are coming back to life after resting or migrating for the winter.

There are an increasing number of interesting projects and events to attend. Be sure to check the Hill Country Master Naturalist Chapter online calendar frequently for additional advanced training and volunteer events. Also, remember to check the list of volunteer projects under the volunteer tab online for project descriptions. We have several new volunteer projects: the Kerr County Pollinator Gardens, Peterson Pollinator Gardens, Lost Maples State Park, and the new Bandera Museum of Natural History. So many things going on that it's hard to decide which ones to participate in!

Thank you all for your diligence and patience as we successfully made the change to reporting our service hours in the online Volunteer Management System (VMS). We reported 2,670 volunteer hours and 256 advanced training hours for the month of February. Remember that you can report your hours as you go along--daily, weekly, or monthly. Just remember to report them within 45 days of doing them. Sandy Leyendecker, our data manager, will continue to run her report on the fifth of each month to determine certifications and milestone awards. Keep up the great work!

Join us at our March chapter meeting to learn more about Chronic Wasting Disease from TPWD's Dr. Bob Dittmar and Mitch Lockwood.

Brenda Fest
President

This Month We Honor



Special Recertification (Class of 2015)

Ray Dutton, Chris Lienhard, Deborah Windham

2016 Recertification

Stephen Bishop, Eva Broad, Daneshu Clarke, Jim Clarke, Julie Clay, Tom Collins, Mike Foulds, Bridget Langdale, Sandy Leyendecker, Mary Thomas, Kathy Ward

Milestones

Lucy Griffith - Bronze Dragonfly, 250 hours

Nancy Person, Mary Thomas - Brushed Silver Dragonfly, 500 hours

Bob Hanson - Gold Dragonfly, 1000 hours

Tom Riordan - Ruby Dragonfly, 4000 hours

Chapter members are welcome and encouraged to attend and contribute to our Board of Directors meetings. The Board meets at the Riverside Nature Center at 1:30 on the Monday of the chapter's monthly meeting.



Congratulations to members who received awards at the February meeting:

From left to right: Barbara Jansen, Tony Ciezkiwicz, Jill Bowen, Diana Armbrust, Rheda Boardman, Brenda Fest, Kathy Ward

Recent Hill Country Naturalist Columns by Jim Stanley:

2/6/2016 What do we Want to Happen to Rainwater and
What Does Cedar Have to do with it?

2/13/2016 A Visit with Laura Broyles of the Natural Resources
Conservation Service

2/20/2016 Winter Butterflies

2/27/2016 Hill Country Squirrels

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

The Third Bennett Trust Stewardship Conference will be held in Kerrville at the Inn of the Hills Resort and Conference Center on April 14-15. Cost is \$75 and includes all meals for the classroom activities on April 14 and meals and charter bus transportation to the field tours. Choose from one of three tours: legacy ranch tour of the famous Hillingdon Ranch, wildlife tour at the Kerr Wildlife Management Area, or the Wine and Roses tour of Fredericksburg.

For more information, go to <http://bennetttrust.tamu.edu/> .

To register online, go to <https://agriferegister.tamu.edu/BennettTrust> .

Spring Native Plant Sale & Festival

Saturday, April 23, 2016, 9am - 2pm

Co-sponsored by

Native Plant Society of Texas - Kerrville Chapter & Riverside Nature Center

Our expert volunteers are gathering beautiful species of plants native to our region. These wildflowers, shrubs, grasses, and small trees are sourced from local growers. Native plants require lower maintenance – saving you time and money. Plus, they create a habitat for a host of native wildlife – including songbirds, butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds. Come early for the best selection! Experts will be available to answer questions and to help you select plants that will thrive in your particular landscape conditions.

All net proceeds benefit the RNC and NPSOT education efforts. Enjoy tax free shopping at this special event. Members of RNC and NPSOT can enjoy a preview sale on Friday April 22 from 5-6:30pm. Nonmembers can join either or both of these organizations at the pre-sale.

Check back next month or on our website as we confirm plans for free talks, displays and fun kids' activities. We could not do this without our wonderful volunteers. If you want to help, contact Sharon Hixson at sharonhixson859@yahoo.com or call the RNC office, 830-257-4837.

From Pam Lienhard

Pollinator Garden at the Courthouse

Local pollinators scored a big victory in February when the Kerr County Commissioners' Court unanimously passed a resolution in their support. On February 8, 2015, Brenda Fest and Pamela Lienhard presented the resolution:

"...the Kerr County Commissioners' Court declares Kerr County a Pollinator Friendly County and hereby authorizes departments within the county to take appropriate measures to protect pollinators such as establishing a pollinator garden on the grounds of the courthouse and at various parks throughout the county, and encourages citizens, businesses, schools and other entities to do likewise."

Many Master Naturalists volunteered to help with the initial planning and implementation of the garden at the courthouse. Working with Tim Bollier, county maintenance head, they chose a site on the southeast corner of the grounds and worked up a plant selection for the garden. Jill Bowlin surveyed the area. Donna Dutton designed the garden layout. Ray Dunton submitted a paper documenting the necessity of the habitat to protect the docile native bees. Bob Moore created a schedule for implementation. Lisa Flanagan, Martha Miesch, Clarence Reed, Chris Lienhard, Ron Curry, Mary Frushour and others helped solidify the plant list, work on the budget and gather necessary materials. Julie Clay added invaluable advice on plant choices.

The project received a grant from Bring Back the Monarchs to Texas to aid in the purchase of plants especially milkweeds for the migrating butterflies.

Master Naturalists were asked to return to the Commissioners' Court on March 14 with our garden plans. Brenda and Pam presented plans for the courthouse garden and the commissioners approved the plan. Unfortunately, they stipulated that no taxpayer money be spent on the project--an incredible decision because this is exactly the kind of project I would like my tax dollars spent on instead of on mowing down wildflowers to extinction. Nonetheless, the project will go forward; the project team is soliciting donations.

In addition, Tom Moser, county commissioner for Precinct 2, had requested that we submit other sites designated as no-mow zones at Flat Rock Park. These areas would later be restored to their former status as a pollinator-friendly, nectar- and host-plant-filled, bee and butterfly habitat.

Maggie Tatum submitted a letter to the commissioners stating that it has been "so disappointing to watch a beautiful 'native' area degrade over the years. This could have been a show place for what is beautiful here in the Hill Country." With the support of the Kerr County commissioners, we hope this area can once again be an area that reflects the beauty of the Hill Country. No action was taken on project members' recommendations at this time.

There is still much work to be done for the protection of butterflies and pollinators. Please consider volunteering your time for either of these two projects or starting a project of your own. For more information, contact me at plienhard@gmail.com.



The Big Bend Nature Fest is scheduled for August 25 - 27, 2016, and is headquartered out of the Chisos Mountains Lodge in Big Bend National Park. Often called "three parks in one," Big Bend's variety of habitats supports more species of ants, bats, birds, butterflies, cacti, reptiles, and scorpions than any other national park in the United States.

The cost of the Big Bend Nature Fest is \$100 per person. Participants are responsible for entrance fees to the park and their lodging and meals. Registration is limited and now open.

For information, go to www.bigbendnaturefest.com/home.html

From Virginia Sawin

Bluebonnets – Not Just Another Pretty Face!



In a month or so, when we are knee-deep in bluebonnets, it may be hard to think of what is going on underground. But these beautiful plants are working hard underground, too. If you happen to dig one up and look at the root system, it will look as if the plant has a major disease! The roots have lots of “growths”—rather ugly lumps and bumps—called nodules. But they are as important, maybe more so, as the beauty of the flowers.

Bluebonnets, along with other lupins—alfalfa, clover, peas, beans, and a number of other plants—are members of the family Fabaceae. They form a symbiotic relationship with bacteria (rhizobia) in structures called root nodules that are able to “fix” nitrogen. All plants require nitrogen to grow, but they cannot use the nitrogen gas that is in air.

The rhizobia bacteria are able live in the roots of the Fabaceae plants and convert the nitrogen in air, which is almost 80% nitrogen and 20% oxygen, to a form that plants can use. When the plants die, the fixed nitrogen is released and is then available to other plants. So these plants, in combination with the bacteria, are able to fertilize the soil in your backyard and gardens.



photos by Virginia Sawin

A Positive Monarch Report

According to the Mexico National Commission of Protected National Areas, the monarch butterfly population in Mexico has increased 255 percent this season. At 150 million butterflies, the annual overwintering count of monarch butterflies released in late February shows an encouraging population rebound from last year's second lowest-ever count of 42 million butterflies, but still a decline of 78 percent from the population highs of the mid-1990s.

During their international migration, monarch butterflies breed along the way, and their northward journey is ultimately finished by their offspring. Dwindling amounts of milkweed habitat - vital as food for egg-laying monarchs- as well as erratic weather patterns, use of some pesticides, and illegal logging in Mexico have led to a serious decline in the monarch population.

"We are seeing the beginning of success," said Daniel Ashe, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "Our task now is to continue building on that success." The United States is trying to replace about 7.5 million acres of milkweed - either by planting or by halting pesticide use, Ashe said. He said that areas of milkweed increased by about 250,000 acres last year.

Creating and sustaining this kind of habitat not only provides food for monarchs, it also supports other pollinators such as honey bees, homes for other important insects, and, yes, provides habitat and nesting material for grassland birds.

Indeed, there are multiple winners here.

Reprinted from *The Birding Community E-bulletin*, March 2016 issue; <http://conta.cc/1W1drv4> .

The 2016 Hill Country Photo Contest Has Begun -- Be The First To Enter! Contest Runs March 1 - May 31

2015 was a year that put into stark relief the extremes of our region. We saw the wettest spring in recorded history, destructive and devastating floods, the return of



2015 Grand Prize: Rob Greebon

drought, resilient riparian recovery, a growing movement to protect our dark skies, growth and development alongside stewardship and conservation. These extremes reveal what makes this region so unique, and what we stand to lose if we develop in a 'business as usual' scenario.



2015 First Place: Todd Winters

HCA is seeking photographs that illustrate the dramatic contrasts of the Hill Country – picturesque creeks and swimming holes, dark night skies, breathtaking views and iconic



2015 Second Place: Jim Olive

cultural experiences like dance halls, charming towns and heritage ranches— but also captivating photos of drought, flood, development pressures and the changing nature of our region. The story of the Hill Country is not complete without both.



2015 Third Place - Michelle Michel

Winning Photos and Prizes: Thirteen winners will appear in HCA's 2017 Texas Hill Country Calendar. Other photos will be featured throughout the calendar in cameo appearances. In addition to a full page photo feature, winners will receive a cash prize.

Grand Prize: \$300
First Place: \$200
Second Place: \$150
Third Place: \$100

All other full calendar page winners: \$50

New this year, People's Choice Honoree: This year's photo contest will provide an opportunity for the public to view the photos that have been entered into the photo contest and vote for their favorite. The photo that receives the highest number of votes will be named the *People's Choice Honoree*. The People's Choice recipient will receive a \$100 prize and the honoree's photo will be featured in HCA's 2017 Texas Hill Country Calendar. Make sure you get your photographs in early to ensure plenty of time for people to vote on your photos. The voting period will end one week after the photo contest ends.

For more information and to enter photos,
go to www.hillcountryalliance.org/PhotoContest2016

Peterson Pollinator Garden

Join us for the initial planting of the Peterson Pollinator Garden at 1 pm on April 6, 2016 at the Peterson Regional Medical Center, 551 Hill Country Drive. The garden is located behind the hospital close to the outside patio. There will be several more planting sessions and a formal dedication at a later time. If you are interested in volunteering, have plants to donate, or have ideas or opinions about pollinator gardens please contact us.

Tyra Kane (tkane @hctc.net)

Nancy Grimes(nfgrimes@gmail.com)

From Martha Miesch

Native Americans' Life in the Hill Country 10,000 Years Ago

Dr. Steve Stoutamire, a geologist who is a member of the Hill Country Archeological Association, introduced



explaining the metate and mano

first and second graders to the subject of what life was like for the early tribes of Apache and Comanche Indians who lived in the Hill Country. He showed them pictures of mastodons, lions, and buffalo as well as deer, which were a major source of food. He had a replica of an atlatl, a very effective weapon that they used used to hunt these animals. He also had a bow and arrow and asked the students to describe the advantages of each, which they successfully did.



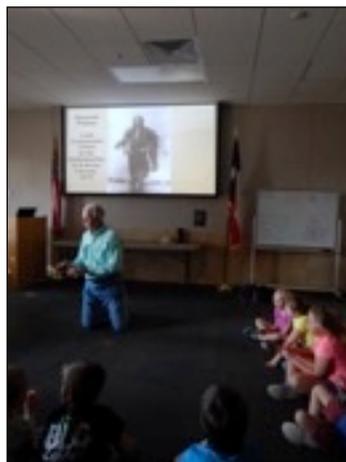
students grinding with the metate and mano

Dr. Stoutamire also described the ovens in which the butchered meat as well as edible plants were cooked. Some of the native plants they collected required grinding before being placed in the oven. He set a grinding slab, called a metate, on the floor and the students took turns at using a stone, called a mano, to grind beans, so that they could get the feel of applying pressure with these tools.

The students lined up eagerly to go outside to a field on the side of the building to take turns throwing the atlatl before the program ended. No doubt they went home with a better understanding about what life was like many years ago in the Hill Country. The Master Naturalists who also learned from the program were Jill Bowen, Chris Lienhard, Pam Lienhard, Martha Miesch, and John Sloan.



explanations of ovens and middens



telling about Quannah Parker



explaining the use of the atlatl

photos by Martha Miesch



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

April 29, 30, & May 1

Ladybird Johnson Municipal Park, Fredericksburg,

Volunteer opportunities include: Registration, Garden/plant Stations (fielding questions), Computer help, Clean up on May 2, and things we haven't even thought of...

To volunteer contact Gracie Waggener (gwaggener@flow-apps.com) or see Jane Crone at the Chapter Meeting to sign up.



Great Texas Birding Classic



Join Us for the 20th Annual Birding Classic

The world's biggest, longest and wildest birdwatching tournament is statewide!

Registration deadline: April 1, 2016

Tournament dates: April 15 – May 15, 2016

What is the Birding Classic? Who can join the fun?

- All levels and ages of birders are welcome to join this Texas birdwatching event during the amazing spring migration.
- Registration fees raise money for Texas bird and birding conservation project grants.
- There's a tournament category for everyone - from the beginning backyard birder to the competitive lister.
- Gather your team, register, and go birding - it's truly that simple.

For more information, go to . <http://tpwd.texas.gov/events/great-texas-birding-classic> .

Stay informed on Birding Classic registration deadlines, conservation grant proposal due dates, tips leading up to the big event, and more.

Mission Statement

To increase appreciation, understanding, and conservation of birds through education, recreation, nature tourism, and conservation fundraising.



2016 Official Artwork by Craig Farquhar



From Mary Pearl Meuth (Extension Associate, Texas Master Naturalist Program,
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service)

For all you Monarch enthusiasts – or anyone who is a biking enthusiast – the Monarch ButterBike tour is kicking off!! A team of bicycling naturalists will be taking a NINE month tour of the states following the monarch's migratory route. Check it out below:

Greetings Texas Master Naturalists,

I am currently organizing ButterBike, a bike tour that will follow the Monarch butterflies from Central Mexico to Canada and back; and I am looking for Monarch enthusiasts (or folks wanting to learn as they go) to help connect my adventure to schools.

I will be leaving Mexico in March 2017 with the Monarchs as they head north. Along the route, I will connect my adventure and the story of this epic migration to students with classroom visits, field trips, and school butterfly gardens. My goal is to encourage schools to plant butterfly gardens to create hands-on learning experiences that help protect Monarchs. I can't think of a better way to learn about Monarchs than to have them visit a school!

In order for these butterfly gardens to be successful, each school needs a local leader to help advocate for the gardens, choose the right species, determine the right location, and ensure continued maintenance. I am writing to Master Naturalists to find these advocates to help me connect with schools and plant gardens for the arrival of the butterflies and myself.

I won't be arriving with the Monarchs this season, but instead am using this year to find Monarch advocates and interested schools, and connect both to the resources they need to begin their gardens so they are ready in 2017 when I bike through. I would be very grateful if you could pass my info along and help me find people willing to talk with local schools about my project, advocate for a butterfly garden, and help with the planting and the maintenance. I will be available for any support I can offer, whether it is connecting folks to needed resources, talking directly with potential school administrators or teachers, or helping spread the world about local efforts during my tour.

You can learn more about my project at www.beyondabook.org/butterbike including my [tentative route and timeline](#), [school programing](#), and my [past education-linked adventures](#). I also love ideas, so if this email has sparked an idea let me know about it!

Thanks in advance, I can't wait to begin!

Sara Dykman
sara.dykman@gmail.com



Texas Prairies and Pollinators

Saturday March 26th, 2016
8:30 AM – 2:00 PM San Antonio, Texas

For information and to register, go to
www.texasprairie.org

Presented by

TEXAS Master Naturalist, COASTAL PRAIRIE PARTNERSHIP, TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE, The Nature Conservancy, Native Prairies Association of Texas

The View From Rusty Bend



Cypress pollen explodes on the Guadalupe

*Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul.
And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all...*

--Emily Dickinson

Live Oaks are dropping their leaves early and the landscape is barren. Too cold and dry for hints of spring at Rusty Bend. As if to compensate, we are gifted with rare sightings. Coffee cups in hand, Andy and I gaze over the river each morning. We startle a bit as a raptor swings by the window, a big one, white tail, white head, unmistakable. The Bald Eagle fishes the clear waters of the river as we watch. Swooping lower and lower and finally off downstream. Putting the rapt in raptor.

Another day I am washing dishes and see a large roadrunner high up in the tree next to the house. He fluffs up and makes his characteristic call, the sad puppy sound. Over and over. From the river and up the cliff, there is finally a response and a large female appears. She strides across the yard, climbs the tree step by step, oozing elegance. They dance on a limb. Courtship commences.

We have cut the juniper at Rusty Bend and are rewarded with lovely open views and mobs of sparrows who hide in the downed trees. As I walk the pasture, I see an upturned cedar bench at the base of an old tree blind. One of my father's hideouts. I remember him carrying that bench to our fishing pond for a young guest. Daddy believed in fishing. Good for young folks. He always had me on the lookout for bamboo to cut for poles. He liked an assortment of sizes and asked for a six-footer, an eight-footer, and a ten or so. There was always a cardboard container of worms around in a cool place. On a warm day, there was a notable look of satisfaction as he sat behind a towheaded five-year-old with a cane pole and a red and white cork. We continue the tradition with our granddaughters. Now we call that pond the "Self-esteem Tank". The perch bite quite dependably and build confidence in anglers of all ages.

Below the Self-esteem Tank is an area we have named the Shed Corner. The Axis bucks leave piles of their long, heavy antlers for young explorers to find. An antler graveyard. I see a Buckeye butterfly on an agarita and nearby a Carolina Buckthorn shows its shiny leaves. Bucks are the theme.

Not all is happiness, though, as I walk. I see porcupine damage to our largest Gum Bumelia. Located in an area we call Bumelia Boulevard, that tree is a beauty. Arrrgh. If I could send those suckers back to New Mexico, I would. Our poor trees have enough enemies as it is.

It seems Andy has made friends with the male roadrunner. If they are out together, Andy can stand six feet away from him and talk to him in a soft voice. The creature raises his crest. He peers one way, pauses, listens to Andy. Then peers another direction, listens, tail up, tail down. Sharpening his hefty beak on a piece of granite by the garden. A unique kinship; I watch with envy from the porch.

continued on next page

One night at dusk, there is movement outside the window. A large Bobcat bounds into the yard! He pauses and we can see his rich multicolored fur and tufted ears, backlit by the sun. He's a leggy thing. Then, with lightness and grace, Bobcat lopes up the driveway. Did that really just happen? This explains the recent rabbit scarcity. Apex predators, healthy habitat.

February may be bleak, but right here, Rusty Bend is opulent with life.

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



Stashed lunch of lizard and wasp for the Butcher Bird

Essay and images by Lucy Griffith Copyright 2016



BIRDS, BATS, BEES, BUTTERFLIES and more! Come learn about Texas plants and their pollinators, the conservation challenges they are facing, and how YOU can help! The TEXAS POLLINATOR POWWOW brings you topics ranging from native plants and bees, to hummingbirds and butterflies, to urban and rural land management best practices by experts from around the state and beyond. We are pleased to present to you some of the best and brightest of minds and committed professionals in pollination conservation today.

It is our desire that the general public be educated, edified, and entertained, and that conservation staff and volunteers be enabled to network with others outside their own narrow focus while being provided with a venue to share their popular missions with the community at large. We will have a fantastic group of EXHIBITORS on hand both days to answer questions, provide resources, and showcase their organizations. There will be TWO BEE ID WORKSHOPS and TWO MILKWEED PROPAGATION WORKSHOPS offered to a limited number of people, and A FIELD DAY for all conference participants led by botanist/entomologist/wildlife biologist teams at the unique and diverse, never-plowed, native shortgrass prairie and playa lake at TAHOKA.

When: Friday through Sunday, April 22 - 24

Where: April 23 - 23: Museum of Texas Tech; April 24: Tahoka Lake Pasture

For more information, go to www.texaspollinatorpowwow.org/registration.html

Advanced Training

TUESDAY, MARCH 22 7PM MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FELLOWSHIP HALL, FREDERICKSBURG
AT16-065 SNAKES IN OUR GARDENS

Jared Holmes, Biologist at the Bamberger Ranch, will address the NPSOT Fredericksburg chapter on the role of beneficial snakes in the garden ecosystem and how to distinguish them from potentially dangerous species.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23 1-2PM WEBINAR
AT16-054 LANDSCAPES FOR BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION

Participants will learn best management practices for butterflies at site and landscape scales. Pre-registration is not required; to join the webinar, go to <http://www.conservationwebinars.net/webinars/landscapes-for-butterfly-conservation>.

SATURDAY, MARCH 26 9AM-6PM RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER, KERRVILLE
AT16-066 HONEY, I'VE GOT THE BEES

Dr. Don Fraser of the Alamo Area Beekeepers will present a full day of learning for the novice backyard beekeeper. The program is comprehensive, interactive, and supplemented by detailed handouts on every aspect of beekeeping. Cost: \$100. Registration is limited to 35; register by March 24 by calling 830-257-4837.

SATURDAY, MARCH 26 8:30AM-2PM PHIL HARDBERGER PARK URBAN ECOLOGY CENTER, SAN ANTONIO
AT16-071 TEXAS PRAIRIES AND POLLINATORS

Learn about monarch butterflies, their host plants, milkweed, and how to include monarch and pollinator conservation as part of your property management and restoration, including conservation easements and 1-d-1 wildlife management plans. Cost: \$20; lunch is included. To register, go to info@texasprairie.org

MONDAY, MARCH 28 7-PM UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUDITORIUM AUDITORIUM, KERRVILLE
AT16-062 CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

Bob Dittmar, DVM, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department Veterinarian, will explain the nature of this neurological disease in deer, elk, moose, and other members of the deer family and address questions that arise in relation to human contact. Also, Mitch Lockwood, Texas Parks & Wildlife Big Game Program Director, will provide current information on the prevalence of the disease in Texas and how TPWD is responding to it.

SATURDAY, APRIL 2 9:30AM-11:30AM HILL COUNTRY STATE NATURAL AREA, BANDERA
AT16-060 TREES, BUSHES, AND AGAVES

This scenic walk with Ranger Leanne Beauxbeannes will identify trees, bushes, and agaves in the beautiful Hill Country State Natural Area. Bring water, camera, note pads, reference books, hiking shoes and a walking stick. Dress for the weather and meet at the headquarters building. The walk starts at 9:30 so check in prior to start time. Regular entry fees apply: \$6 day use (all day), \$3 with Bluebonnet Pass (age 65+ with ID). No entry fee with annual pass. Kids 12 and under welcome and always free entry. Bring a picnic and stay all day on your own. An RSVP always is appreciated; call 830-796-4413.

FRIDAY, APRIL 8 10AM-3PM UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUTHORITY LECTURE HALL, KERRVILLE
AT 16-064 CONSERVATION EASEMENT WORKSHOP

The Hill Country Alliance will present this workshop on what a conservation easement is and the benefits of donating one. Cost: \$20; lunch is included.

MONDAY APRIL 18 8:30-10:30AM HILL COUNTRY STATE NATURAL AREA, BANDERA
AT16-229 BIRDS OF A FEATHER

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 the vehicle. Seniors, 65+, \$3 with Bluebonnet Pass; kids 12 and under always free.

**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 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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- Rheda Boardman -- Secretary
- Diane McMahan -- Treasurer
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- Diana Armbrust -- 2016 Class Director
- Lisa Barrett-- 2015 Class Representative
- Kathy Ward -- Immediate Past President

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:

Lenore Langsdorf, Editor
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 Lisa Flanagan,
Membership Director
hillcountrymembership@gmail.com

