

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the
Texas Master Naturalist
Hill Country Chapter

April 2016 Volume 14 Number 4



photo by Cathy Downs

APRIL 25 MEETING: MONARCH BUTTERFLIES

Cathy Downs, Hill Country Master Naturalist and Monarch Watch Conservation Specialist, will speak on the past, present, and future of the Monarch Butterfly population, which once had overwintering populations of up to one billion butterflies--and now is in the low millions. Cathy will explain the reasons for that decline, what is being done currently to sustain the population, and what we can do in the future to ensure the migration phenomenon.

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.

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Brenda Fest

Hello fellow Master Naturalists!

Spring continues to reveal the beauty of the Hill Country. We are now seeing an increasing number and variety of wildflowers. I mentioned to someone the other day that since I became a Master Naturalist I have become a lazy gardener. I get so much pleasure at seeing wildflowers in their natural habitat that sometimes it seems silly to try to keep them neatly in beds. But as I look at my mealy blue sage that is beginning to take over, I am reminded that what I truly love is diversity. So when I have the time I will have to remove a bunch of mealy blue sage to make way for other plants. I tell people that I don't garden for me; I garden for my pollinator friends, and they love the diversity of Gregg's blue mist, Engelmann's daisy, various salvias, and other flowering perennials that inhabit my pollinator gardens. Gary tells me that we have several bird families in our bird boxes. I am reminded that we also need to provide enough native plants and insects to provide adequate food for our feathered friends and they too appreciate the diversity. So maybe I'm not such a bad gardener after all.

I was reading an article the other day by an entomologist, Mike Quinn, about the contributions made by citizen scientists. He discusses the growing importance of scientific research that has greatly been enhanced by volunteers such as master naturalists. I am so proud to be a part of an organization that participates in citizen science research in addition to all of the many other worthwhile volunteer projects we are involved in. We include ten counties in the Hill Country and do much to improve the quality of our natural resources. Thank you all for everything you do as Hill Country Master Naturalists.

We have successfully transitioned to reporting our hours using the online Volunteer Management System (VMS). Michelle Haggerty, our chapter advisor and the state coordinator, tells us that we are not on the list of chapters with problems. Whew; that's a list we don't want to be on.

We are now accepting applications for our 2016 Training class. Encourage your friends and neighbors to join our band of educated and dedicated volunteers. Applications and information are on our website.

Join us at our April chapter meeting for Cathy Downs' presentation on the Past, Present, and Future of Monarch Populations.

Brenda Fest

This Month We Honor

Recertification

Chris Anderson, Dale Bransford, Karen Burkett, Ginny de Wolf,
Ann Dietert, Gary Fest, Merrily Labarthe, Ruth McArthur,
Susan McKinley, Katherine Peake, Floyd Trefny,
Gracie Waggener



Milestones

Ray Dunton, Larry Eskridge, Carl Luckenbach - Bronze Dragonfly, 250 hours
Ann Dietert, Ruth McArthur, Russell Vowell - Gold Dragonfly, 1000 hours
Stephen Bishop - Ruby Dragonfly, 4000 hours

WELCOME

Chapter members are welcome and encouraged to attend and contribute to 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 March meeting:

Standing, left to right: Bridget Langdale, Deborah Windham, Ray Dunton, Julie Clay, Tom Collins, Mike Foulds, Mary Thomas, Nancy Person. In front: Kathy Ward

An Invitation to Apply for Membership in the Hill Country Master Naturalist Chapter Class of 2016

I lived in Houston for over 35 years. My yard was lovely. The St. Augustine lawn was manicured and tightly edged, rectangular ligustrum hedges provided privacy, Asiatic jasmine covered the ground beneath Live Oak trees where grass would not grow, and dozens of pink and white and purple hybrid azaleas bloomed every spring. The yard was labor, water, fertilizer, and herbicide intensive. . .and it was beautiful.

At least, I used to think so.

Fast forward to retirement and 43 overgrazed acres in the Hill Country. My husband and I did not want to worry about livestock so we converted our agricultural tax valuation to a wildlife management valuation. Then we got to work. We hired a crew with a bulldozer to remove cedar and mesquite as well as the willow baccharis that lined the edges of our creek. We dug gravel out of the creek bed to construct a road. We scraped soil from the field to use as a pad for our new house. We killed 20 acres of Bermuda grass with herbicide. My husband and I joked that our property was like a nuclear waste site because we never saw a bird.

Are you cringing yet?

With the first flood, our creek severely eroded. In the spring our fields exploded with wildflowers, but thistles and broomweed and croton soon followed. The only good thing we had done was to cut down a Chinese tallow tree.

Our plan to magically re-create our “ideal” of a Hill Country landscape by applying techniques that we had used to manage our Houston urban landscape had gone tragically awry. When we bought our property it had already suffered from decades of abuse. Through our “best intentions” we compounded that abuse in just a few months with a bulldozer crew. Now, I realized I had to figure out how to repair the damage.

I needed to learn about the land! Better late than never, I hoped.

I walked our property for hours, looking at every blade of grass; collecting samples and poring through books on grasses to try to identify what I found. My husband and I took a class on Riparian Management and another on Ornithology. We consulted an oak wilt specialist and an LMAP survey was conducted.

And I applied to become a member of the 2015 Hill Country Master Naturalist class!

That was the best thing I could possibly have done. Never, *EVER*, could I have imagined the knowledge I would gain from the Master Naturalist class. The lecturers and presentations were more engaging and more instructive than any I had ever had, even in graduate school.

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I not only learned about land management and the flora and fauna of the Hill Country, but geology, hydrology, history, and even the ecology of darkness. Field trips to the Kerr Wildlife Management Area, Selah Bamberger Ranch, and the amazing Canyon River Gorge brought classroom studies to life. The scope of information was outstanding and the opportunity to continue to learn through Advanced Training programs is endless. As a very pleasant and unanticipated side effect, I made new Hill Country friends. Many of my classmates were walking in the same uncharted land restoration territory as we were, so it wasn't even too embarrassing to share the horror stories of our mistakes.

The privilege of sharing our knowledge, contributing to research, and improving the natural world around us through volunteering is, of course, the primary purpose of a Texas Master Naturalist. There is an opportunity for every type and every level of interest. Those of you who are already Master Naturalists know the panorama of opportunities and the rewards of volunteering. The joy derived from opening a child's eyes to nature at Cibolo, helping to save our Monarch butterfly population by tagging or by protecting milkweed, monitoring the bluebirds as they fledge from your nest box, volunteering at the bat cave, or leading a hike up Enchanted Rock--this joy is therapeutic and addictive. On a less subtle basis, one of my Master Naturalist colleagues volunteers to cut cedar at a state park--with a chainsaw, not a bulldozer! His eyes actually gleamed as he said "give me a Kubota chainsaw and I am a happy man!"

One day, recently, I was driving around Dallas. The impeccably manicured lawns looked very much like mine did when we lived in Houston. But something was wrong. I felt very uncomfortable. I realized that those fancy yards were, as the yard in Houston had been, just a decoration; like make-up on my face. But my 43 acres in the Hill Country, the land we almost destroyed and to which I am now trying to make amends... this land is my soul.

If you are already a Master Naturalist, encourage your friends and family to join you.

The last date for receiving applications is July 13. Classes begin on August 24, and continue every Wednesday from 8:30 a.m. to about 1:00 or 1:30 p.m. Commencement is Wednesday, November 16.

For more information, go to <http://txmn.org/hillcountry> or contact me at frau.crossbow@swbell.net.

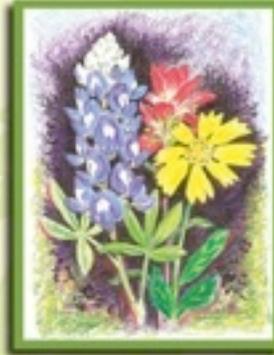


Native Plant Society of Texas - Kerrville Chapter
&
Riverside Nature Center invite you to...

SPRING

2016

Native Plant Sale & Festival



Saturday
April 23rd
9am - 2pm

Free
Family
Fun

Native Plant Sale

- Native Plants selected to thrive in our climate & soil
- Plant experts to answer questions & offer advice
- Save! One day tax-free shopping for plants & gifts

All net proceeds benefit RNC
& NPSOT education efforts.

10:30am NPSOT Dedication of Carroll Abbot Garden



BEE TALK



"From Plants to Honey &
the in Bee tween" 11am

A three in one presentation! **Mary Hays**, a passionate pollinator naturalist, will discuss bees and how to provide a healthy habitat for them. **Sandra MaGee**, a native plant Master Naturalist, will give a power point on plants and wildflowers that pollinators need. Also, Master Naturalist **Deb Windham**, a bee keeper, will describe how she collects honey. Come learn, ask questions about BEES!

Informative Displays

Texas Master Naturalist Hill Country Chapter
Ask the Plant Expert * Butterfly Display
Native Plant Society of Texas - Kerrville Chapter
Public Radio * Riverside Nature Center Association
Hill Country Master Gardeners * RNC's new Riverscape
Wild Birds Unlimited * Landscape Design by The Ridge
UGRA - Water Quality & Conservation



Kids' Activities

Check
Website
for Details



9am-1:30pm

For More Details: 830-257-4837
www.riversidenaturecenter.org

150 Francisco Lemos Street • Kerrville, Texas 78028

Recent Hill Country Naturalist Columns by Jim Stanley

3/5/2016 Land Fragmentation
3/12/2016 Hill Country Wild Turkeys
3/19/2016 Exotic Animals and the Problems They Cause
3/26/2016 It is Great to Be in the Hill Country on a Day Like This

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

Wings Over the Hills Nature Festival

April 29 - May 1

The Wings Over the Hills Nature Festival is happening soon, so don't miss out on all the fun. Registration is now open, and the full schedule is at www.wingstx.org.

Check out the field trips! The Hummingbird Banding is always very popular with attendees, and there are birding trips for all, experts to beginners, with our great guides.

We have a photography workshop with Ruth Hoyt, whose work appears in many national magazines, so you can improve your photo skills.

There is a talk on Chronic Wasting Disease--in case you missed the Chapter Meeting or have questions on that topic.

The Pollinator Garden is beginning to bloom with spring flowers and butterflies, and should not be missed.

On Saturday there are activities and educators in the children's area; ring the kids and grandkids. Be sure to visit the vendor area in the Pioneer Pavilion.

Our guest speaker this year is Cecilia Riley from the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory. She is the founder of the Tropical Forest Forever Fund.

Check out her biography at (gcbo.org/about-us/meet-our-team/). There will be a reception at which she'll speak on Saturday night.



Pollinator Garden, Lady Bird Park

As always, a huge Thank You to all who have volunteered to help.
We could not make this happen without you.

Wildlife Field Research

May 9 - 14, 2015

Citizen Science For Everyone



Ant Survey

Amphibian Watch

Aquatic Survey

Butterfly Survey



Bird Counts

Dragonfly & Damselfly Survey

Prairie Vegetation Photo Points

Prairie Vegetation Survey

Riparian Woody Plant Survey

Small Mammal Trapping

Water Snake & Reptile Search

NEW iNaturalist Bioblitz



Join the **Cibolo Nature Center's**
Citizen Science Research Team!

WildlifeFieldResearch.org

CONSERVATION EASEMENT WORKSHOP

FRIDAY,
MAY 13, 2016

\$20 REGISTRATION

UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUTHORITY
Kerroville, TX

WORKSHOP • 10-3 PM
Lunch provided

WORKSHOP TOPICS

- What is a Conservation Easement (CE)?
- Donation of a Conservation Easement
- Landowner income and estate tax benefits
 - Donor/ Donee Relationship
 - Discussions with CE donors

REGISTER ONLINE @

WWW.HILLCOUNTRYALLIANCE.ORG

*For information, please contact:
Workshop Coordinator Carolyn Vogel
Texas Conservation Connection
carolyn@texasconservationconnection.com*

Photo by Todd Winters

Presented by: Sponsored by:



From Cathy Downs

Kerrville-Schreiner City Park Butterfly Theater

The Kerrville-Schreiner Park Butterfly Theater was designed and installed in 2000 by the Friends of Kerrville – Schreiner State Park. In 2003 the park was transferred to the City and the Friends group disbanded. The maintenance of the garden was taken up by remnants of the Friends group including HCMN, NPSOT and other butterfly and native plant volunteer enthusiasts. It may well be one of the longest ongoing volunteer projects in the chapter.

The garden is approximately 104' x 104' and is enclosed by a deer-proof fence. The vegetation consists almost entirely of Hill Country native plants including trees, shrubs, annuals and perennials. Plants have been donated by the Texas Master Naturalists, the Native Plant Society of Texas, local nurseries, and private citizens. In addition to the butterfly population one can expect to see a variety of other pollinators and wildlife including hummingbirds, bees, and dragonflies being drawn to the habitat. It is one of the goals of the garden to attract and sustain a butterfly and pollinator population by using only native Hill Country host and nectar plants that supply both food for the larval and adult stages of the butterfly and for other insect life cycles.

In 2008-2009 a TMN member, Bob Tanner, built a kiosk for the Butterfly Garden. The materials were paid for by a grant from the Kerrville NPSOT chapter. Sandra Magee, another TMN member, uses the kiosk to highlight information about monarch conservation, display photos and information that help visitors identify butterflies, advocate for the use of native plants in the Butterfly Garden, share an educational brochure she created, and post notices of related events in the surrounding area.

The Kerrville-Schreiner Park's Butterfly Garden became a Monarch Larval Monitoring Project (MLMP; <http://www.mlmp.org/>) site in 2007. The Monarch Larval Monitoring Project began in 1997 at the University of Minnesota. This citizen scientist project involves volunteers from the United States and Canada in Monarch research. The focus of the MLMP is to collect long-term data on milkweed habitat and larval Monarch populations, especially during the breeding season. Volunteers meet weekly from mid-March until mid-December to find, mark, and inspect milkweed plants for Monarch eggs, caterpillars, and adults. This data is then sent to the MLMP website for compilation with other data from the United States and Canada. The core group of volunteers for this project are Anne Cassidy, Ginny de Wolf, Pam Lienhard, and Alexis McRoberts.

Participating in the MLMP increased our interest in the various butterflies we saw at the Garden and we decided to learn more about the other butterflies that inhabit this area. After our MLMP activities are done we walk around the Butterfly Garden and its perimeter to collect data on all butterfly species that we see. If you are interested in working with us on the MLMP project, please contact Ginny de Wolf at dewolf@ktc.com or call 830-896-2545. If you would like to participate in the butterfly count, please contact Cynthia Johnson at carljohn@ktc.com or call 830-895-5173.

As the garden has aged along with the maintenance group we were faced with an ever increasing encroachment of invasive species and grass, depleted soils and a reduced workforce. With the help and enthusiasm of HCMN new class students and some generous donations from veteran volunteers and individuals we have been able to see a renaissance in the garden recently that we would like to share.



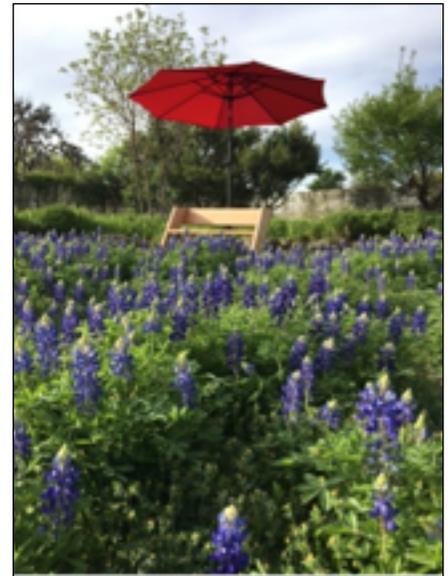
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Chris Lienhard and Larry Eskridge bringing in Chris' first Leopold bench

The old seating area has been replaced with six Aldo Leopold design benches and brightly colored umbrellas. A labor force was brought in to remove invasives, root sprouts, and vines from the garden beds. The depleted soils in the beds were then laid down with new compost. Hardware, fencing, and lattice work have been repaired and/or replaced. The irrigation system was updated and improved. New spring plantings and seeding then began.

In the summer we give workshops for children who are attending KSP's day camp. We have given classroom tutorials and led field trips during which the children can view butterflies up close. Also, we have provided MLMP workshops, tours for NPSOT and other organizations, and hosted receptions.



One of the new seating areas

We hope that you will visit the garden. There is almost always a group there on Thursday mornings, which is our usual workday.



Standing left to right: John Sloane, Jan Grimes, Chris Lienhard, Larry Eskridge, Ray Dutton, Seated: Lisa Flanagan, Gracie Waggener. Front Row: Sandra Meineke, Jill Bowen



Finished spreading 50 cu.yards of compost; standing left to right: Sandra Meineke, Bob McKinley, Dan Meineke, (unidentified), John Sloane, Larry Eskridge, Chris Lienhard, Karla Trefny, Barbara Jansen, Sarah Hilburn. Seated: Cathy Downs. Photographer: Pam McKinley

From Martha Miesch

KROC Nature Study Program on Water Quality and Aquatic Invertebrates

Tara Bushnoe and Travis Linscomb from the Upper Guadalupe River Authority were leaders for this program. They did an outstanding job of helping second graders in the after-school program at the KROC Center learn more about why we need good quality water and what can pollute water. Tara, with the assistance of the Master Naturalist volunteers, began the program by passing out examples of rain drops that are important for life. Then they distributed examples of various pollutants that contaminate clean rain drops.

Tara and Travis used power points to illustrate aquatic insects and explain some important features of these insects and the species found in rivers and streams that will only survive in clean water.



Three learning stations were set up on tables with subjects that were fascinating to the students. They were divided into three groups and had eight minutes at each station. One station had many live specimens in small water containers that Travis had identified with labels. The students studied these aquatics closely with magnifying glasses and a microscope.



Another station had larger specimens to watch in a water bucket and sheets of paper with drawings of the most common aquatics, which they could color. The third station had many colorful and attractive craft materials use for making models of aquatic invertebrates. The students were very creative; many gave their creations names. Chris Lienhard, Gabrielle McCrae, Martha Miesch, and John Sloan were the Master Naturalist volunteers for this program. We all learned much about water quality and aquatic invertebrates that day.



The View From Rusty Bend

Sandhill Spring



Spring cold front

*I hear them.
At first, as if a memory of melody.
Then, a lilting herald.
The refrain ebbs and flows,
Comes and goes.*

*The song elongates
As their gentle V appears.
An undulating calligraphy of cranes,
A skein of peach and gray,
Gathering angled light.*

*Their teamed flight stretches and contracts,
A gentle taffy pull.
Surge after surge drifts north,
Circling to hitchhike a thermal
Then, launch upon a highway of wind.*

*These antedeluvian beings.
Embarking upon the same voyage for eons.
Perfect harbingers.
The silky robe of spring
Floats down upon my shoulders.*

Tis' March and Rusty Bend is in a family way. It's as if you can see, smell, and hear the quickening of fresh life. The gobbling of the tom turkeys is our morning laugh track. A turkey hen, solitary now that nesting has begun, drops by the turkey feeder each day for a quick bite of protein scratch. She strides with purpose to the feeder and then returns to the brush; her nest must be nearby.

Two ravens have chosen a cypress tree near us for childrearing. Living twenty years or more and mating for life, their teamwork is captivating. When one brings in a branch for this huge nest in the crotch of the tree, the other raven squawks, and there is muttering and guttural glottals for some minutes, as if they were decorating and consulting, branch by branch. This goes on for a week or more.

Now, she is sitting on the nest and he brings her food, in an oddly tender gesture. Primarily though, he functions as guard dog. Red-tailed hawks cruise by often and Papa Raven ambushes them with loud squawks. We watch as he whacks one hawk behind the head, on the fly. Sometimes, Papa sails back and forth over the nest and flips upside down to see who's above and threatening his family. He makes flying upside down look easy.

At the other end of the size spectrum, Canyon Wrens have set up house on our new porch: their nest a comically high pile of sticks, lined with fluff and string, the odd Q-tip discarded from touch-up painting. Four white eggs with freckles hide in the deepest part of the nest.

The bluebird boxes Andy monitors at the park are busy, too, not always with bluebirds. He catches Mexican Free-tail bats snoozing, spread-eagled on their backs in empty boxes. Dark, quiet, just the spot for a nap. I wonder, do bats snore?

Bewick's Wrens have claimed Andy's old boot, nailed to a tree. Eastern Phoebes have built their mud-wattle nest on a floodlight in the dogtrot of the barn. Very Mesa Verde. Carolina Wrens own the eaves of the carport. Male Carolinas serenade with twenty or more songs, loud enough that you look for tiny megaphones. Titmice are loud too, but maddening in their perseveration.

All of this fecundity is against a backdrop of wild greenness. The Hill Country needs its own dictionary for green in the spring. The lime of the Cedar Elms is adjacent to the chartreuse of the Elbow Bush. Hackberry leaves are avocado green, and fresh leaves of persimmon are asparagus green. Early leaves of Spanish Oak are a funny pink-green and the Escarpment Cherry has fresh leaves of emerald, lined with scarlet. Cottonwood leaves are olive-y underneath when the wind flips them over. New Agarita leaves look gold before they mature into their blue-green prickliness. "Green" doesn't begin to cover it.

And above us, Sandhill Cranes soar, on their way north to start their own families, singing us into spring.

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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

Poem, essay and images by Lucy Griffith Copyright 2016

Please note the change in topic for this month.

Wildlife for Lunch Webinar Series

Pond Management

Please Join TWA and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension for the next *Wildlife for Lunch* webinar.

When: Thursday, April 21st, 2016, from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm CDT. **Cost:** FREE!

Topic: "Pond Management"

From small farm ponds to large private lakes, this webinar will walk the landowner through the necessary management steps to assess their goals, habitat, and fish populations in order to maintain a sustainable fishery guaranteed to shorten the time between bites.

Presented by: Dr. Billy Higginbotham, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Where: Anywhere with a computer, smartphone, or tablet and internet access

How to sign on: Simply point your browser to <https://texas-wildlife.webex.com> on the day of the webinar and click to join the Wildlife for Lunch webinar. Each web-based seminar is fully interactive and allows you to engage the experts, make comments, and ask questions during the course of the presentation.

New This Year: The WFL Webinars are now available for viewing on your smart phone or tablet. To sign on, download the WebEx app and either follow the link above or key in the meeting number (665 003 007) to access the event directly.

If you cannot participate in the live webinar: Each webinar is archived and available for viewing following the initial air date at the TWA website: www.texas-wildlife.org

For more information: Contact TWA's Clinton Faas at cfaas@texas-wildlife.org or call 1-800-839-9453.

Advanced Training

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20 6-8PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER (CNC), BOERNE

AT16-078 ESTATE PLANNING IN THE HILL COUNTRY

Thomas Hall, Estate Planning Attorney, will present the best practices for legally protecting and preserving the legacy of your land and being eligible for tax relief. Cost: \$15, CNC and/or Cibolo Conservancy members; \$20, non-members. To register, go to nature@cibolo.org.

THURSDAY, APRIL 21 12-1PM WILDLIFE FOR LIFE WEBINAR SERIES

AT16-096 POND MANAGEMENT

This live webinar presentation by Dr. Billy Higginbotham, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, will explain the management steps needed for maintaining a sustainable fishery. To sign on, point your browser to <https://texas-wildlife.webex.com> on the day of the webinar and click to join the Wildlife for Lunch webinar. Each webinar is fully interactive and allows you to engage with the experts during the presentation. These webinars are also available for viewing on your smart phone or tablet. To sign on, download the webex app and either follow the link above or key in the meeting number, 665 003 007. The webinar will be archived at www.texas.wildlife.org.

FRIDAY, APRIL 22 8:30AM-4PM WIMBERLY COMMUNITY CENTER

AT16-076 KENT BUTLER SUMMIT 2016: TOWARD A REGIONAL PLAN FOR THE HILL COUNTRY

Learn about the study conducted by the Hill Country Design Studio in collaboration with the UT School of Architecture and Hill Country Alliance, which addresses threats to the water resources, scenic beauty, and cultural heritage of the Hill Country, in the face of rapid population growth. Cost: \$20, including lunch. Go to www.kentbutlersummit.org to register by April 20.

FRIDAY, APRIL 22 10:45AM HILL COUNTRY STATE NATURAL AREA, BANDERA

AT16-090 WILDFLOWER WALK (ALSO ON APRIL 24 AND APRIL 29)

Discover the great diversity of wildflowers that bloom in April. Learn to ID the common and the rare, the tiny and the tall that thrive in the limestone soil of the Hill Country. Ranger Leanne Beauxbeanes will lead this easy walk. Meet with her at the headquarters; dress appropriately and bring water. 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.

SATURDAY, APRIL 23 10:45AM-12PM RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER (RNC), KERRVILLE

AT16-083 FROM PLANTS TO HONEY AND THE IN BEE-TWEEN

Mary Hays, a passionate pollinator naturalist, will discuss bees and how to provide a healthy habitat for them. Sandra Magee, Master Naturalist, will give a power point talk on native plants and wildflowers that pollinators need. Master Naturalist Deb Windham, a bee keeper, will describe how she collects honey.

SUNDAY, APRIL 24 10:45AM HILL COUNTRY STATE NATURAL AREA, BANDERA

AT16-090 WILDFLOWER WALK

Also on April 22 and April 29; see Friday, April 22, for details.

MONDAY, APRIL 25 7PM UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUTHORITY AUDITORIUM, KERRVILLE

AT16-085 THE MONARCHS: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Cathy Downs, Hill Country Master Naturalist and Monarch Watch Conservation Specialist, will speak on the Monarch butterfly population, which once had overwintering populations of up to one billion butterflies--and now is in the low millions. Cathy will explain the reasons for that decline, what is being done currently to sustain the population, and what we can do in the future to ensure the migration phenomenon.

TUESDAY, APRIL 26 10AM-12PM 2318 HILLIARD ROAD, SAN MARCOS

AT16-099 NPSOT-BOERNE FIELD TRIP TO MADRONE NURSERY

Madrone Nursery is a family-owned and operated Texas native plant resource that is open by appointment only. They grow over 300 species of trees, shrubs, grasses, yuccas, vines, and perennials in containers. No cost, but RSVP to Veronica at Veronica.hawk@gmail.com, or call/text to 830-515-9823 and provide your email or phone number, so that you can be notified in the event of a last minute cancellation.

**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 opportunities.**

TUESDAY, APRIL 26 6:30-7:30PM MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FELLOWSHIP HALL, FREDERICKSBURG
 AT16-081 RAIN WATER AND SOIL HEALTH
 Peggy Seachrist, Hill Country Coordinator for the Soil for Water Initiative, will speak at the monthly meeting of the Fredericksburg chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas.

FRIDAY, APRIL 29 10AM-12PM 13417 Tx 16, MEDINA
 AT16--098 NPSOT BOERNE FIELD TRIP TO MEDINA GARDENS
 Ernesto Carino and Ysmael Espinoza own and operate this native-plant nursery and have created a teaching garden. No cost, but RSVP to Veronica at Veronica.hawk@gmail.com, or call/text to 830 515 9823 and provide your email or phone number, so that you can be notified in the event of a last minute cancellation.

FRIDAY, APRIL 29 10:45AM HILL COUNTRY STATE NATURAL AREA, BANDERA
 AT16-090 WILDFLOWER WALK
 Also on April 22 and April 24; see Friday, April 22, for details.

FRIDAY, APRIL 29-SUNDAY, MAY 1 7AM-3:30PM LADY BIRD JOHNSON PARK, FREDERICKSBURG
 AT16-077 WINGS OVER THE HILLS NATURE FESTIVAL
 The festival includes talks by Bill Lindemann, Sheryl Smith Rogers, Nyta Brown, James Lasswell, Patty Leslie Pasztor, Jan Dunlap, Kent Rylander, Ruth Hoyt, Jared Holmes, Robert Dittmar, Paul Meredith, Nathan Rains, Cathy Downs, and Cecilia Riley. Also, there are exhibits, a trade show, birding and nature walks, hummingbird banding, and trips to Enchanted Rock SNA and Lost Maples. For more information and to register, go to www.wingstx.org.

SATURDAY, APRIL 30 1-4PM KERR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA, HUNT
 AT16-087 FROM OUR UPLANDS TO OUR RIVERS AND SPRINGS
 Join Jim Stanley to explore firsthand how what we do on the land can help (or hinder) our rivers and springs. Free; go to southllanoriver@gmail.com to reserve your place.

TUESDAY, MAY 10 9AM-12PM ABK STATE NATURAL AREA, PIPE CREEK
 AT16-094 PRAIRIE VEGETATION SURVEY TRAINING
 An introduction to the materials and methods for the prairie vegetation survey that begins in the classroom and moves to hands-on practice in the field. Wear sturdy shoes or boots, long pants, and a hat, as well as sun and bug protection. Water and ice will be available but please bring your own water bottle. There is no charge for the training; however we request that those taking the training sign up for at least one survey date in May or June (Tuesdays and Thursdays). A signup sheet will be available at the training. Go to aadams@wildblue.net or carostanwalden@earthlink.net to register, or for additional information.

FRIDAY, MAY 13 10AM-3PM UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUTHORITY AUDITORIUM, KERRVILLE
 AT 16-064 CONSERVATION EASEMENT WORKSHOP
 The Hill Country Alliance will present this workshop on the what, why, and how of Conservation Easements. Cost: \$20, including lunch. To register, go to www.hillcountryalliance.org.

SATURDAY, MAY 14 10-11:30AM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER, BOERNE
 AT16-097 SNAKE TAGGING 101
 Join citizen scientists for a PIT-tagging demonstration provided by herpetologist Dave Barker. Naturalists, enthusiasts, and even whole families will be fascinated as they learn about snake anatomy and snake behavior. Some may even choose to get hands-on and help pit-tag the snakes with tiny microchips. Free.

MONDAY, MAY 16 8:30-10:30AM 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.

**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 opportunities.**



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.

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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?

Email Lisa Flanagan,
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