



# Texas Master Naturalist Lindheimer Chapter



Spring 2014

A publication of the Lindheimer Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program through Texas AgriLife Extension in Comal County, 325 Resource Drive, New Braunfels, TX 78132

Volume 10, Issue 1

## Greetings from Rich

Hello to all of you in the Lindheimer Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists. I was told that this is one more task that I am supposed to do as President of the LMN Chapter. Believe me I am not complaining. You are a wonderful group of people who do some amazing things with your spare time.

When I started this undertaking the end of December, I thought it might be overwhelming, and January proved to be a rather busy month. February was less so, and now that March is almost over I am wondering what I have forgotten to do as I am starting to have time for my own projects.

This year, as always, we are loaded with projects, both new and ongoing. Probably the biggest of the new is our new partnership with GBRA and their planned Environmental Learning Center to be located between Tye Preston Memorial Library and the Gorge. Initially we will be building trails and as things progress we will be moving into other positions with the center.

This year we are also going to attempt to upgrade our communications system within the chapter. We have set up emails for the officers which are accessible through the website. The monthly calendar is slowly

making its appearance on the web page and we will be converting all of our scrapbooks into digital form and link them to the web as well.

There are lots of exciting things happening in LMN, so come on out and join in the fun. I hope I will see you at the next Chapter Meeting.

Rich Bradley  
LMN President

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**2014 Lindheimer Master Naturalist Officers:** Past President, Henry Hahn; Treasurer, David C. Reel; Vice President, W. D. Bryant; Secretary, Theresa Frasch; President, Richard Bradley.

# Mesquite Creek WHA Nest Watch Bluebird Boxes

Submitted by Julie Crouch



Bluebird eggs

Mesquite Creek Wildlife Habitat Area (MCWHA) is located east of Creekside Shopping Center with an entrance past FM 1101 and Kohlenburg Rd. Lindheimer MN are assisting Waste Management in developing this nature preserve for future outdoor education. Past accomplishments have been trail development, a butterfly garden, Domino Pond and habitat development, invasive species control, regular bird census surveys and nest boxes for bluebirds.

This MCWHA nest box trail attracted and successfully hosted bluebird fledglings in only its third year. Last year a black-crested titmouse nest was monitored and bluebirds visited the nest box site where they previously nested.

Volunteers are needed to help monitor and maintain the nest boxes from March through approximately early July. Optimally monitoring should occur every four days. Julie Crouch (LMN class of 2010), a Nest



Carolina Chickadee nest with one egg

W a t c h  
C o o r d i n a t o r  
c e r t i f i e d  
b y  
t h e  
N e s t  
W a t c h  
p r o g r a m  
a d m i n i s t e r e d  
b y

Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, has helped with bluebird box monitoring for four years.

If you can volunteer an hour once or more, you will receive training in monitoring a nest box. We will watch for eggs, prevent predating house sparrows, estimate hatch dates, and monitor for fledgling birds. You will learn the difference between the nests and eggs of several commonly box nesting bird species. A monitor's kit available at the MCWHA site, will supply everything you need to monitor the boxes. A monitoring visit would require about 45-60 minutes.

The MCWHA entrance is on FM 1101, 4.2 mi, 5 minutes from Creekside Shopping Center

on I-35 N in New Braunfels via Kohlenburg Rd., the next street north of FM 306 and I-35 Creekside.

Your participation is invited and encouraged, even if you can come only once or twice. Please contact either Julie Crouch at [dipper2c@gmail.com](mailto:dipper2c@gmail.com) or Monta Zengerele, our MCWHA Program Manager, at [zengerm@sbglobal.net](mailto:zengerm@sbglobal.net) for more information.



Barn Swallow with nestlings

## NSPOT Lists 2014 N.I.C.E. Plants

The Native Plant Society of Texas Lindheimer Chapter has announced its choices of N.I.C.E. (Natives Instead of Common Exotics) plants for 2014. Those chosen for Spring are:

Texas Persimmon (*Diospyros Texana*), a small tree which can grow 10-15' tall and flowers March through April and has fruit July through September. It will grow in sun to part shade, is drought tolerant and moderately deer resistant, attracts butterflies and birds and is a butterfly larval host.

The Barbados Cherry (*Malpighia Glabra*), a shrub growing 3-6' tall, thrives in part shade, has flowers from April through October and produces edible berries. Both birds and butterflies are attracted to it and it is a butterfly larval host. It is not deer resistant. (Pictured on masthead and on pg. 11).

Mealy Blue Sage (*Salvia Farinacea*) grows 1-3' tall, loves sun and blooms April through October. It is drought tolerant, highly deer resistant and attracts hummingbirds and butterflies.

Crossvine (*Bignonia Capreolata*) will vine 35-50', likes sun to part shade and is drought tolerant but not deer resistant. Its flowers in March through May attract hummingbirds.





# Lighting Assessment is New LMN Chapter Project

The Lindheimer Master Naturalist Chapter participated in the Lighting Assessment Retrofit Project (LARP) for the first time in 2013. The coordinator who trained us is Cindy Luongo Cassidy, our chapter meeting speaker in July. Our group has completed lighting assessments at Guadalupe River State Park and Palmetto State Park so far.

LARP is part of a larger initiative where Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) has partnered with both McDonald Observatory and the Texas Section of the International Dark-Sky

number of LMN Chapter members, including Brian and Cheryl Trock, Henry and Janet Hahn, Skip Johnson, Charlie Thomas, Ron Butts, Mark Sewell and Leslie Dunn. Each participant attended the three-hour LARP workshop to be trained to meet the following volunteer expectations:

- Communicate with park leadership
- Do a site visit
- Inventory existing outdoor lighting at TPWD facilities
- Determine recommended changes to reduce light pollution
- Create a written assessment of the park's lighting situation
- Follow up and coordinate with park superintendent

In addition to the volunteers for each park or facility, the LARP team has selected Brian and Cheryl Trock to be the volunteer coordinators. They have kept a database of information about what the



Palmetto State Park

volunteer is working on, which park, contact information for each park and each volunteer, an electronic copy of the completed lighting assessments, and retrofits status as reported by the volunteers.

The LARP support team currently consists of the following: Cindy Luongo Cassidy, LARP Training Coordinator, Hays County Master Naturalist ([cindy@greeneearthlighting.com](mailto:cindy@greeneearthlighting.com)); Steve Bosbach, Section Leader of the Texas Section of IDA ([sbosbach@austin.rr.com](mailto:sbosbach@austin.rr.com)); and Bill Wren, McDonald Observatory ([wren@nexus.as.utexas.edu](mailto:wren@nexus.as.utexas.edu)).

*(Information submitted by Henry Hahn)*



Entrance Guadalupe River State Park

Association (IDA). McDonald Observatory has developed a Texas State Park specific program to train TPWD interpretative rangers to deliver night sky programs. The LARP will train volunteers from all over the state to do lighting assessments for parks near them and be there to follow up with the parks to assist them in the implementation of best practices in night lighting. The LARP project helps the parks protect the night sky, reduce energy expenditures, and enhance the visitor experience. It's exciting work in partnership with TPWD!

The project recruited a



Amphitheater Guadalupe River State Park