



Texas Master Naturalist Lindheimer Chapter



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.

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In This Issue:

- Message from Jim
- Reporting Vol. & Training Hours
- Approval for Vol. & Training Hours
- TMN Hits 1 Million Hours
- Elder Hostel Tours
- Earth Day Reminder!
- Tye Preston Library Granite Block
- Mesquite Creek Wildlife Habitat
- Drought in the Hill Country
- Homeowner Ecosystem Pond
- The Amazing Little Hummingbird!
- Texas Wildscape Certification
- Best of Texas Certification
- RavenStar Opportunities
- Community Naturalist Recognition

Folks,

This issue of our newsletter is a goldmine of information on what's going on within and around our chapter. I encourage you to review it in detail. From advice and guidance (whether about habitat development, or submitting projects and volunteer hours) to listings of a broad range of exciting events and opportunities...the roadmap is laid out in the next few pages. Our chapter continues to grow and expand its impact in service to Texas' natural resources; witness the State organization's announcement of reaching the million hours of service milestone. The chapter's board members have developed new partnerships that have the potential to multiply the chapter's influence on habitat creation and restoration. I hope you find some things here that spark your interest. Best wishes for the spring renaissance, and don't forget that Earth Day is coming up...

Jim

OFFICERS - 2009

- President:
Jim Dougherty
- Vice President:
Arthur Williams
- Past President
Diane Schaule
- Secretary:
Kim Wright
- Treasurer:
Earl Dittman
- Volunteer Council
Representative
Diane Schaule
- COMMITTEE CHAIRS**
- Training Coordinator:
Ray Laxson
- Website Coordinator:
Ray Laxson
- Membership & Records:
Diane Schaule
- Volunteer Projects:
Skip Johnson
- Out and About:
Lydia Dougherty
- Community Recognition
Ann Tubbs
- Publicity
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- Historian
Sally Stile
- Class Representative:
Kerry O'Neal
- Texas AgriLife
Extension Service
Advisor:
Glenn Avriett
- Quarterly Newsletter:
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REPORTING VOLUNTEER AND ADVANCED TRAINING HOURS - Diane Schaule

On January 1, 2009, Art Williams relinquished his role as Membership/Records Committee Chair and turned the honor over to me! This means I am the official record keeper of all volunteer and advanced training hours earned by our Chapter members. To date, 56 members have reported their hours to me for the month of January and February, for a total of 279.2 volunteer and 235.5 advanced training hours! At the end of January, we already had one Chapter member eligible to re-certify for 2009. This is an incredible amount of data to post and my folder with member emails continues to grow!

As a reminder, please include only the following information in your emails to me:

Advanced Training - Date, Speaker, Subject, Location, and Time Spent (# hours)
 Volunteer Hours - Date, Activity, Time Spent (hours with travel time) I use Chapter and Class sign in sheets to account for these training events, but it won't hurt if you include it in your monthly report to me. Please keep your own personal record of what you report to me in the event we disagree. Lindheimer Chapter prepares a monthly report of hours for Glenn Avriett at AgriLife to help him account for our activities. So I would appreciate getting your information on a monthly basis in order to get an accurate picture of Lindheimer involvement.

Please don't wait until December to report your hours!

Contact me if you have any questions. Thanks! *Diane* schaules@gvtc.com

Visit our Website at
 TMN - Lindheimer
 Chapter

Remember to Report
 your hours to Diane!

APPROVAL PROCEDURE FOR VOLUNTEER AND ADVANCED TRAINING HOURS

Lindheimer Chapter Members and Students are encouraged to participate in activities throughout the year that are dedicated to the "beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities and surrounding area." They are also encouraged "to focus on subjects that interest them" and to pursue continued learning, education, and development in those subjects.

Members and Students can concentrate their volunteer hours and advanced training on the activities that are listed in the "Lindheimer Chapter TMN Resource List" and the "Approved Volunteer Projects List" that are presented in the Lindheimer Chapter website. These lists maintained by the "Out and About Committee" do not always include all the possible activities in the area and may be supplemented with other projects and training opportunities that will meet the mission of the TMN program.

Unlisted volunteer activities and advanced training possibilities may be submitted for approval by contacting the "Project Committee" and requesting consideration for the specified activity. One of the smoothest methods to request approval for an unlisted activity is to complete the "Submission for Activity Approval" form found on the Chapter's website, and to submit it to the "Project Committee."

This form reminds the participant to identify the description of the project or activity, to explain the intended activities, and to give the details of time, place, and expected benefits. Although this is not the only way projects or activities can be approved, it is the way to have all details and questions covered within a smooth and efficient format. If supplemental information is considered to be pertinent, it may be attached when submitting the form.

Members and Students of the Lindheimer Chapter of TMN are strongly encouraged to use this process to develop new volunteer activities and training opportunities.

TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM HITS 1 MILLION SERVICE HOURS

AUSTIN, Texas – The [Texas Master Naturalist program](#) has reached 1 million volunteer service hours. This major milestone marks the 10th anniversary of the program, which began in Texas but has since given rise to a growing national movement. The 1 million hours of service were achieved by more than 5,306 volunteers in 39 recognized local chapters throughout Texas. In the past 10 years during which these service hours were achieved, Texas Master

Naturalists were on hand to help with resource recovery after natural catastrophes such as hurricanes and droughts. Volunteers were also ready to serve when the economy took a turn for the worse, making the value of their donated time even more precious. The monetary worth of the 1 million hours of service is valued at approximately \$19.58 million. In addition, the impact of the Texas Master Naturalist volunteers has been seen in more than 90,000 acres of land across Texas.

TMN HOSTS ELDERHOSTEL TOURS-Diane Schaule

With its scenic countryside, picture-perfect weather, rich heritage, and gateway to Hill Country, New Braunfels is a popular destination for Elderhostel tours. As a non-profit world-wide organization, Elderhostel provides educational travel opportunities for adults. The organization sponsors two tours to New Braunfels each year to learn about the history of the area and visit local attractions. Canyon Gorge and Canyon Lake are must-visit places of interest for this group. On February 19 and March 12, the Lindheimer Chapter hosted thirty-six Elderhostel participants (only four in the group were native Texans!) and 40

participants, respectively, at the CRRC below Canyon Dam. I welcomed the group and explained the TMN purpose and shared with them the many projects in which our Chapter is involved. Judy Scott presented a slide-show and discussed the flood of 2002 and formation of the Gorge. The group was very intrigued with the details of the flood and asked many questions. At the conclusion of our program, they departed the CRRC for Overlook Park to view Canyon Lake and to get a glimpse of the Gorge before returning to New Braunfels.

EARTH DAY REMINDER - Ray Laxson - TMN Earth Day event coordinator, 2009

An Earth Day celebration will be held on Saturday, April 25, 2009 at Landa Park in New Braunfels from 1 to 5 PM. The event is being sponsored by the Lindheimer Chapter of Master Naturalists, RavenStar, Roots and Shoots, and the New Braunfels Parks and Recreation Department (PARC). The event will be located near the Landa Park Dance Slab and is free and open to the public. The Lindheimer Chapter of TMN plans to have 10 or more events ranging from a face painting booth for the kiddos to a soil erosion and aquifer recharge system for adults. Also included will be a fish casting class and replica bat cave for youngsters. The other three sponsors will have exhibits as well. Landa Park is a great place to spend some quality time with the family on an afternoon outing. On April 25 a visit to the park will be especially entertaining. Come out and celebrate Earth Day with us.

TYE PRESTON LIBRARY

The TMN – L Board has voted to approve that the LMN purchase a granite block for the Tye Preston Library. We will be getting the larger brick that has our chapter name on it, and getting the logo engraved on it.

MESQUITE CREEK WILDLIFE HABITAT POLLINATOR GARDEN

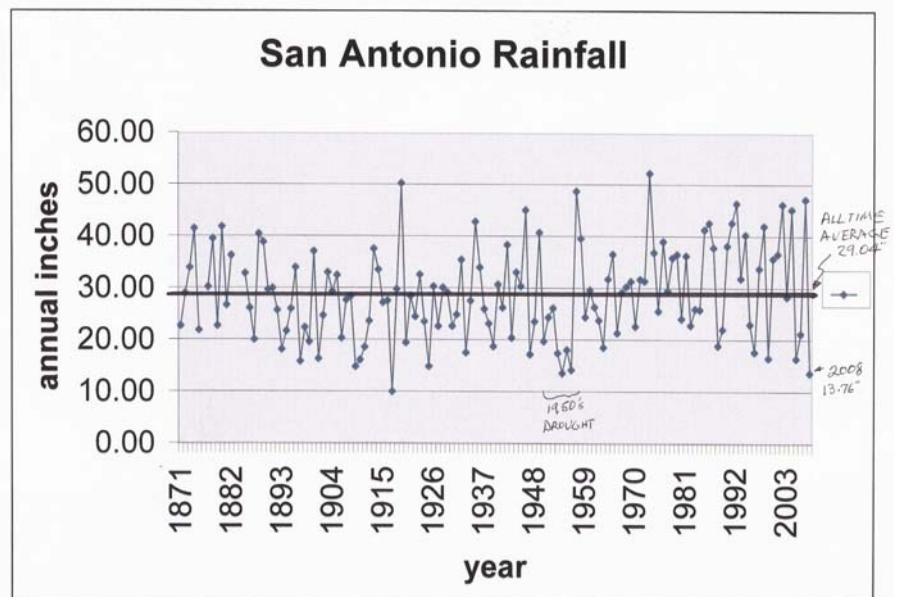
In mid February, Lindheimer Chapter master naturalists met with Victoria Manning, consultant for Waste Management, and David Garcia, site manager of the disposal operation at the Mesquite Creek Wildlife Habitat in the Freiheit agricultural community of Comal County. The main focus of the visit was the Pollinator Garden project, but the MNs were also shown the 'cattle barn', an old homestead/outbuilding. Waste Management also is planning on establishing some "basking logs" for turtles at some of the ponds and possibly adding some wood duck nesting boxes. As of that time, the size of the Pollinator Garden was not fully defined. Currently the area has some mesquite trees and miscellaneous grasses. It was suggested that the Pollinator Garden be planted with drought tolerant plant species native to that area (Black Land Prairie) and that Waste Management should move forward with the definition of the garden site quickly, since there will be several opportunities to purchase native plants during April, and the site will need to be prepped for planting in that time frame. The need for a reliable water source to keep the new garden going during the first year was also discussed, as well as planning for the possibility of rain water harvesting in the future. This is a great opportunity for our chapter to be involved with what looks like a worthwhile undertaking.

DROUGHT IN THE HILL COUNTRY - Ray Laxson - Rocking L Ranch - Spring Branch

Our property is operated with a 1-d-1 wildlife management classification and we have experienced a severe drought for the past 15 months. We keep records of our rainfall, and for the last 5 months we have received 1.2" compared to a historical average of about 13.0" for the same period. Most of the rain events were very slight, 0.1" or less, and did little good. We have several rainfall catchment systems that provide water for wildlife – all would be dry except for water that is hauled from our water well. According to the weather bureau, in 2006 San Antonio rainfall was about 13" below normal, 2007 was about 15" above normal and 2008 was about 15" below normal. Average historical annual rainfall in San Antonio is about 30". A graph of historical rainfall back to 1871 clearly illustrates the 'yo-yo' characteristics of Hill Country rainfall.

Seems we have either a flood or a drought every year – and sometimes both events in the same year! The severe drought of the 1950's is readily apparent on the graph – for 5 years rainfall was only about half the historical average. Sure hope we don't do a repeat of the '50's but we are on our way.

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The 137 year graph of San Antonio rainfall has some interesting features. A 30-year average shows that the average rainfall was 27.93 for 1921-1950, 27.84 for 1931-1960, 27.54 for 1941-1970, 29.13 for 1951-1980, 30.98 for 1961-1990, and 32.92 for 1971-2000. Based on these 30-year periods, it might appear that our average rainfall is increasing. Another interesting feature is that since about 1970 the year-to-year variations is very pronounced – seems annual rainfall is either 20" or 40" but rarely near the annual average of 30". The wide variation in annual rainfall makes planning for livestock carrying capacity or rainwater catchment systems a real challenge.

Many of our agarita plants are turning a light pink color and are dying. Even the prickly pear, with pads only half their normal thickness are also turning pink and are showing signs of stress. Neither species of plant produced any fruit last year. The live oaks look a little scruffy but most of them have survived drought before. And, of course, the cedars are busy creating all that cedar pollen as they do every year. Cedars apparently shut down any growth during periods of drought in order to survive.

Since August, lack of rainfall has resulted in lack of fall grass growth and a lack of forbs that contribute to our livestock and wildlife. Few of our native grasses produced any seed, the exception being little

bluestem that produced seed heads early on. With no new grass growth our cattle are on the last pasture that still has grass and are being fed some supplemental feed. We also have supplemental feed for our wildlife. Hay prices are about double what they have been during non-drought times. Cattle prices are down because so many ranches are reducing their herd size. Purchasing hay to sustain the cattle over a long period is an economic failure. We sold our calf crop earlier and if we don't get some rain in the next couple months, the rest of the cattle are going to market.

Earlier in the year we had a potential wildfire hazard with tall dry grass. We followed recommendations learned at the CWES Program and believe we have our outbuildings, well house and residence protected. As our cows continue to deplete the grass, the fire hazard is reduced.

But, not all is doom and gloom – our water well, producing from the Cow Creek Limestone of the Trinity aquifer, has maintained a constant fluid level for the last 10 years. This well is our only source of water. Other well owners in the county have not been so fortunate, and some folks have experienced well problems. Knock on wood!

THE HOMEOWNER ECOSYSTEM POND - Lydia and Jim Dougherty



When we bought our 1.5 ac home a few years ago, there was a distant vision that eventually it would become a modest wildlife habitat. Several amateur plantings and one greenhouse later, it

was clear that the deer had other plans...so we needed a fence around the property. While that was being built, we studied the books on how to develop a habitat.

Well, wildlife need water, food, cover, nesting materials, host plants, and a number of other resources. We decided to start with a pond, since that would be a dominant feature, and the possible locations were limited. Once that was in place we could add on from there. Anything from a small tray with a trickle faucet, to "pond-less" water features, to a stock tank are possible...but we wanted something big enough to have intrinsic esthetic appeal, but also manageable and wildlife-friendly.

We had few clear pictures in our minds, but foremost was that we wanted the pond to look like it belonged there, a natural seep or spring leading to a pool

bordered by the materials one would normally find in our area. We saw pictures in the magazines of pools that looked like in-ground swimming pools, with waterfalls that looked like staircases. That was exactly what we didn't want. We had a slope, and like everybody else, plenty of rocks.

What would a spring that spontaneously arose look like under these conditions?

Enter the landscape designer: her concept captured the idea of water trickling down a slope of limestone and river rock, cascading randomly over ledge stones mined from the hole we had dug for the pool. The pool itself would be an asymmetric kidney shape with several layers of depth for water plants, and caves and hidey-holes for fish, finished off with plantings that looked like they grew up around the shore.

Great, but how does the mechanical part work, with pumps, filters, underground lines, liner, and the rest? The first decision is the liner, and people have different opinions about this. Some "experts" say to use only concrete...synthetic liners can be punctured.

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Others say the reverse: plastic/rubber are cheap to repair, cracked concrete is not. We decided that concrete wasn't necessary: we were living on top of a rock anyway (limestone)...not much settling was going to happen. And the liner was thick, weighing about 500 pounds.

Next were pumps, filters, and skimmers. Since we were looking to build a small ecosystem, that's the type of company we went with. Ecosystem ponds use no "chemicals" except beneficial bacteria. Additives are limited to things like barley straw (more about this later). As water enters the skimmer at the low edge of the pond, a coarse filter removes debris and a pump sends the water up to the hidden box at the top of the fall. There, bio-filters become coated with the bacteria that condition and clean the water before re-entering the stream. The fall itself aerates the water, adding oxygen. All these elements are essential to good pond health. Once stabilized, an ecosystem pond is much less prone to wild swings in water quality, algae overgrowth, and the like. Plus the bugs, butterflies, birds, frogs and fish like it better. There are a number of companies that offer ecosystem kits.

As the construction began, the backhoe work unearthed some huge stones that were incorporated right into the pond border. Other stones (best are the "holey" rocks, that water can flow in and through) could be used in the water to create an esthetic effect. One caution: Limestone in contact with the water will leach out bicarbonate and minerals that can make your first fill with water too alkaline. The pond needs to be filled and drained at least once to "condition" any limestone.

Once the liner is in place, rock and stone added, mechanical elements installed, it's time to fill the pool and see if it works. Voila - a natural spring! Except... the water level kept dropping daily. Unless you're interested in irrigating the countryside to the tune of several hundred dollars a month in water bills, the leak (and so it was) needs to be found and fixed. Leaks are almost always to be found in the fall, not the pool: in this case, a flap of liner was allowing the stream to splash over its edge and into the ground.

But this created another problem, and is a good illustration of why you should let the pump run 24 hours a day, year round. Since our pump had to be turned off for over a day to fix the leak, the water stood still, and quickly became a pea soup (suspended algae). The path to recovery in these situations is not to shock the pool with algacides or other chemicals, but to add bacteria frequently, and patience, patience, patience. It's disconcerting to put fish in this cloudy water, and then not see them again. In our case it took 2 months, until the first cold snap. Then, Poof! Overnight, it cleared. Since then, string algae have appeared--and disappeared, by tying barley straw in old panty hose and stuffing the tube into the top filtration box. The barley straw

decomposes releasing peroxide which increases oxygen content and suppresses the algae. It also turns the water tea-colored, but having a bluish tinge was not high on our list of priorities.

Be sure to keep trapped debris from building up in the pool. Organic material becomes a culture medium. Your skimmer box will filter out most of the leaves. The slope had to be built up with soil in some places, and we knew that in this area of drought/deluge it wouldn't be long before the soil headed for Seguin, so we put in buffalo grass...a native that just goes dormant when dry, but provides a strong root system.



The last things are water, plants, and fish. Water lilies cover the surface and shield the pool from the sun, reducing algae growth. Most experts recommend that ~60% of the pool surface be covered with plants.

To get that much coverage you need multiple plants. Be sure to place them early in the spring so they have time to grow and spread before the summer heat. You also need sub-surface oxygenators like hornwort, which will float freely in the water and anchor on the bottom. This also keeps down the algae. We also have umbrella palm (very aggressive, hack it back severely), Canna lilies, and other potted plants stationed in the water for color and diversity.

And finally, the fish! We got pond-quality goldfish, about 6\$ apiece, a mixture of 6-inch red comets and shubunkins (calico-colored, but in a camouflaged way). We don't recommend buying fish that are worth anything (e.g., large koi), at least at first. The first heron, fish crow, or kingfisher will make you wonder where the fish went. I bought one white comet that I haven't seen in the last month. Oh, well...

The fish, who don't really eat much algae, also contribute to the balance of the system. Ours are doing well after six months--building in underwater hiding



places was key to their safety from birds and raccoons. The frogs and tadpoles will spring up in the hundreds; strings of frog eggs appeared within the first week, the cacophony of croaking began within a month. Most of these were Rio Grande Leopard Frogs (*R. berlandieri*).

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Before winter set in, visitors included many species of sulphurs, swallowtails, skippers, darners, skimmers, and damselfs. We're optimistic that as we add native plant hosts and food sources, the diversity will grow.

Taking care of the fish is a whole, new kettle of...well...fish. Throw in enough food until they quit scrambling for it. Once a day is enough for an ecosystem pond—they scrounge a bit—2-3 times a day for a formal pond. The fish will start to hide out when the water consistently gets below the 50-60 degree range. Cut down on the feeding, and then stop at 50 degrees (water temp); their digestive system slows down and it can kill them if fed. Our fish are pretty good about this; they don't show themselves when it's too cold to be eating.

Seasonally, sensitive plants need to be brought into the greenhouse; the water lilies will just die back and can be left in place. Also, the pond needs to be drained about once a year and cleaned. In season,

plants need to have a couple of food pellets pushed into the pea gravel over the top of the soil in the pot every 2-3 weeks. Add bacteria about 1-2 times a month once the water is stable.

This overview only scratches the surface of how this all came together...so far: there's much more to do. The planning and building of the pond was a learning experience that was fascinating. Now almost every day we make some observation about how the water system interacts with the other elements of the surrounding area: plants, trees, grasses. I find myself drawn down there frequently with binoc.'s or a book, to just...enjoy.

THE AMAZING LITTLE HUMMINGBIRD! - Compiled by Janet Siemssen



Spring is here and so is one of the most anticipated birds of the spring migration - the amazing little hummingbird! This northbound migration is complete by the end of May.

Banding studies seem to show that each bird tends to follow a set route year after year, often returning to the same place it hatched, even feeding at same feeders. Trapping individual birds and wrapping a tiny numbered aluminum strip around one leg is currently the only way to identify individual birds and to gather data on large numbers of individuals.

For a hummer that just hatched, there's no memory of past migrations, only an urge to put on a lot of weight, fly in a particular direction for a certain amount of time, then look for a good place to spend the winter. Once it learns such a route, a bird may retrace that same flyway every year as long as it lives.

But before embarking on its incredible migratory journey, a hummer must eat great amounts of insects and nectar to increase their fat reserves. This tiny bird will gain 25-40% of their body weight to be ready to start migration. This could explain why you will see so many hummers around your feeders in the late summer and early fall. A larger bird species might not be able to take flight after putting on that much weight!

Soaring alone over mountains and oceans when they migrate, they usually do not stay very high off the surface. In fact, it has been reported that hummers fly just above treetops making it easier to spot food sources for the long journey. They fly during the day and sleep at night. However, the Ruby-throated Hummingbird, the only hummer species that breeds in eastern North America - must keep on flying without a break on its northward migration from Central America while journeying over the Gulf of Mexico!

Many years ago, fishermen and oil rig workers started reporting seeing song birds and hummingbirds low over

the water out 200 miles from land year after year. We now know that these little birds may travel over 450 miles of water, sometimes facing a 20 mile an hour headwind during their more than 20 hours of travel over water. And this is not to mention the fact that they may run into more severe weather - all to make it to their desired breeding areas in North America or back to their winter homes. The number of hummingbirds migrating south may be twice that of the northward trip, since it includes all immature birds that hatched during the summer, as well as any surviving adults.

There is some evidence that fewer Ruby-throats cross the Gulf in fall than in spring, most instead following the Texas coast back into Mexico. Perhaps the hurricane season is a factor, and the gene pool was cleansed of those birds that had flown over water and which were lost at sea during storms.

There still are many more questions than answers about hummingbird migration. Until technology provides radio transmitters small enough for a 3-gram hummingbird to carry safely, banding is the best tool to collect data on individual birds. Since there are only a few dozen people in North America - almost all of them amateurs - licensed to handle hummingbirds, progress is slow and the odds of recapturing a banded bird are very low.

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Hummingbirds migrate south at the time of greatest food abundance, so when the bird is fat enough, it migrates. It's not necessary to take down feeders to force hummingbirds to leave, and in the fall all the birds at your feeder are already migrating anyway. If you remove your feeder, birds will just feed elsewhere, but may not bother to return to your yard the next year. Leaving a sugar water feeder up in autumn will not keep hummingbirds from migrating. Nearly all hummers that stay behind are those that are ill or "genetically inferior," and it's likely they would die in migration. It is suggested that you maintain one half-full hummingbird feeder through the winter for as long as you wish, changing the artificial nectar weekly. You may need to bring the feeder in for those nights that we're expecting a freeze and then put it out the next morning when you fill your seed feeders. Red food coloring is NOT necessary. Experienced, licensed wildlife rehabilitators have reported seeing disturbing damage in hummers that were known to use dyed syrup, including tumors of the bill and liver. Here is a basic hummingbird syrup recipe: 1 part cane sugar/ 4 parts water (no chlorine or fluoride). Measure and add sugar, at the rate of 1/4 cup of white sugar to 1 cup of water. Syrup can be boiled/micro waved for 3-4 minutes to help sugar dissolve. Let cool and store excess in refrigerator for about a week or so as refrigerated syrup will also sour eventually. Fill one-third of the container and be sure to change the mixture twice a week. You will need to clean your feeder every few days, with hot water and a mild (10%) bleach solution to inhibit bacteria/mold. Rinse thoroughly before refilling with water syrup. Remember to keep feeders clean and to change the sugar nectar every 2-3 days in the heat of the summer. Cloudy, sour or moldy nectar can cause the hummers health problems. Also, never substitute sugar with honey or artificial sweeteners. Honey, if ingested, will produce dangerous, lethal fungal infections that attack the hummingbirds' livers and tongues. Hang feeders in shady locations and in places where they are not visible from the other hummer feeders. Remember that a hummingbird friendly garden is the place to start!

CERTIFICATION AS A "TEXAS WILDSCAPE" – Courtesy of Texas Parks and Wildlife

This is a basic level certification program – Certification will require the following:

- At least 50% native plants
- Food for the wildlife year round. A feeder alone will not be considered, but if at any time there is not food available for the wildlife from plants, a feeder would then be required.
- Shelter for the wildlife. This might include various plant features, should include plants in each of the tall trees, understory, shrubs, bushes and wildflowers; may include nest boxes, brush piles, rock piles, toad houses and other shelter projects.
- Water in a useable, reliable form for the wildlife.
- Wildscapes certification fee is \$15.00.

Flowering native plants, such as the Red Yucca, attract wildlife like hummingbirds



Your application will be reviewed and we will contact you as soon as possible with the results. Should you be successful, you will be given an opportunity to purchase the "Certified Backyard Wildlife Habitat" sign.

CERTIFICATION AS A "BEST OF TEXAS BACKYARD HABITAT"

Courtesy of Texas Parks and Wildlife

"The Best of Texas Backyard Habitat" program is a joint effort of the [National Wildlife Federation](#) and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department that allows Texans to certify under both programs with a single form. Best of Texas Backyard Habitat took the better of the two individual programs and pushed the bar a little higher, challenging Texas wildlife gardeners to create a habitat that seeks to maximize wildlife benefits and highlight sound conservation stewardship within the bounds of urban restrictions. Does your garden meet the challenge? If so, Best of Texas Backyard Habitats may be just the program for you!

To become certified as a "Best of Texas Backyard Habitat", complete the application and mail it with the certification fee (\$30.00) to:

**Best of Texas Backyard Habitats
National Wildlife Federation
Gulf States Natural Resource Center
44 East Avenue Suite 200
Austin, TX 78701**

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To be certified you will require:

- An obviously native plant habitat. Volunteers will not count plants to see if you have a majority of native plants. If there are more than two plants listed in the Invasive Exotic Species section of this webpage, we will reserve the right to deny certification as a Best of Texas Backyard Habitat.
- Food must be available year round. Feeders alone will not be accepted but should there be a time period when food is not available from plants, feeders would then be required.
- Water MUST be provided in a way that is useable and reliable for the animal. Water should be kept fresh.
- You must be taking active measures to control cats, House Sparrows and English Starlings on your property. This could include, but is not limited to:
 - Keeping your cat indoors and encouraging your neighbors to do the same.
 - Monitoring nest boxes for evidence of House Sparrows or English Starlings.
 - Using feeds that sparrows and starlings dislike, etc.
- You must be participating in at least six of the following resource conservation measures:
 - Establishing a rain garden or buffer to filter storm water
 - Using drip soaker hose instead of sprinkler
 - Xeriscape plantings
 - Irrigating sparingly and only in early mornings or evenings
 - Planting deciduous trees along the southern exposure of the house
 - Eliminating chemical use
 - Capturing roof rainwater
 - Mulching
 - Reducing or eliminating lawn areas
 - Removing invasive exotics
 - Keeping your cat indoors
 - Composting yard and food waste



Purchase of a certification sign for a Texas Wildscape is available through the [Application and Certification Fee Process](#). Best of Texas Backyard Habitats does not offer a sign, but you will be given an opportunity to purchase the "Certified Backyard Wildlife Habitat" sign." (Fees changed as of January 1, 2008 to \$30.00.)

RAVENSTAR OPPORTUNITIES - Spring/Summer 2009

Lindheimer Master Naturalists are RavenStar's favorite partners! Check out these volunteer opportunities and contact Theresa Frasch, RavenStar's Education Director, at (830) 214-5221 or education@ravenstaroutdoors.org to find out more and sign up to volunteer. (Continued on next page)

Note: canoeing and swimming are not eligible for TMN volunteer hours, and as always, neither are paid positions.

Wednesday Park-Schooling programs at Torrey Park - Nature programs presented at Torrey Park every 1st and 3rd Wednesday morning from 10:00 to 11:00. Volunteers needed to do program presentations and to provide assistance with programs and learning activities. (Be there 9:00 – 11:30)

- March 25th – "Owl Pellets" – TPWD Craig Hensley presenting
- April 1st – "Don't be Fooled – Nature's Camouflage" – RavenStar staff presenting
- April 15th – "Wild About Wildflowers" – visiting a local wildflower field – RavenStar staff
- May 6th – "Butterfly Magic" – LMN Caroline Carpenter presenting
- May 20th – "Homing Pigeons – How do they do it?" – NB Pigeon Racing Club presenting

Special Events

April 4th – International Astronomy Day – 2 part program in partnership with NB Astronomy Club. 2:00-5:00 PM at Landa Park Rec. Center – 4 astronomy learning activities for children and RavenStar's StarLab Planetarium presentations. 8 volunteers needed to man the learning activities; instruction provided. (Be there 1:00-5:30 PM)

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Evening Star Party at Cypress Bend Park, 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM lead by NB Astronomy Club. Volunteers needed to help kids with telescopes; instruction provided. (Be there 6:00 – 11:00 PM or any part)

April 18th/19th – **New Braunfels Folkfest** at Heritage Village/Conservation Plaza -

Volunteers needed to man RavenStar booth, explaining worm-composting demonstration and describing aquatic life specimens in mini-microscope viewers. Volunteers needed on 18th, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM and 1:00 PM - 6:00 PM. Volunteers needed on 19th, 10:30 AM – 2:00 PM and 2:00 PM - 5:30 PM. Free admission to Folkfest provided.

- April 25th – **New Braunfels Earth Day** at Landa Park – Volunteers needed to man RavenStar booth, explaining worm-composting, describing aquatic life specimens in mini-microscope viewers and 2 other learning activities. (Be there noon to 5:30 PM)

- May 2nd – **Tour de Parks** – RavenStar family bicycle rally – Volunteers needed to man nature learning activity at each of 5 NB parks on bike route, including Torrey and Cypress Bend. (Be there 8:00 AM – Noon.)

- June 6th – “Last Chance Forever Flying Raptor Demonstration” - Free event at Torrey Park to celebrate the end of the school year. Volunteers needed to “docent” the nature center and answer general nature questions from the public. Two-hour event – time not yet set.

- June 1st – June 5th - “Water for All?” program for Communities in Schools to teach at-risk kids the importance of conserving water and the many wonders it offers. Project includes rainwater catchment demonstration, aquatic life in creek and bog habitats. One hour program each morning at Torrey Park. Volunteers needed to assist with demonstrations and presentation.

- June 8th – June 12th – second of week of “Water for All?” program for Communities in Schools to teach at-risk kids the importance of conserving water and the many wonders it offers. Project includes rainwater catchment demonstration, aquatic life in creek and bog habitats. One hour program each morning at Torrey Park. Volunteers needed to assist with demonstrations and presentation.

Summer Science Camps – RavenStar is offering 4 one-week science day camps at Torrey Park for kids ages 8 through 11 (maximum enrollment per week = 45 kids.) Programs run from 9:00 to 4:00, Monday – Friday, and include a special field trip (by charter bus) each Wednesday, a day at Landa Park for instruction, canoeing and swimming (Note: canoeing and swimming not eligible for TMN volunteer hours), and a day at Cypress Bend Park with special nature activities. Volunteers needed for half and full days to assist with the nature presentations and activities. One or two presenter positions (open to LMNs) will be paid each week at \$50 per day (8:30 AM to 3:00 PM.)

- June 15th - June 19th - Contact Earth - Uncover the events that shape our planet; learn ways to protect precious resources and explore the spectacular geology of central Texas at Enchanted Rock State Natural Area.
- June 22nd - June 26th - Water World - Observe the water cycle in action, examine aquatic environments, understand how this vital resource shapes our lives and discover the scenic wonders at Westcave Preserve.
- June 29th - July 3rd - Native Wonders - Learn about the species that make the ecosystems of central Texas so amazing and search for native plants and animals as we visit Honey Creek Natural Area.
- July 6th - July 10th - Eco-Explorers - Navigate an exhilarating eco-race; investigate the archaeology of the Texas hill country and journey through beautiful McKinney Falls State Park.

JOIN RAVENSTAR FOR NATURE FUN IN THE PARK AND AN EXCITING SUMMER CAMP ADVENTURE!

www.ravenstaroutdoors.org (830) 626-1776
director@ravenstaroutdoors.org (Kelley Clifford)
education@ravenstaroutdoors.org (Theresa Frasch)

COMMUNITY NATURALIST RECOGNITION – Ann Tubbs

Do you need to be a Master Naturalist to protect or conserve our natural resources? Of course not. Last fall, the concept of recognizing a Comal County business or group or individual for their unsolicited good stewardship of our natural resources was conceived. The Community Naturalist Recognition Committee (Ann Tubbs, Art Williams, Elizabeth Bowerman, Charles Tubbs, and Caroline Carpenter) has been at work since November of 2008 discussing that. What is the Community Naturalist Recognition all about? A GOOD question! Who could be recognized? What types of projects that were being done actually embodied the ideals of LTMN? How would our chapter decide on the “best” applicant project? After some direction from the Board and many drafts, the light bulbs started to turn on and the committee moved rapidly forward after the first of the year. And we are all still smiling and speaking to each other! The Board approved results are for you to see below. We will need *all of you* to help spread the word so that applicants/nominations will flow in! Watch for publicity in the local media. There are many entities out there doing super good things for our environment that deserve this recognition. One will be chosen for 2009.

(Continued on next page)

Community Naturalist Recognition Procedure

The Lindheimer Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists will honor a single particularly outstanding act by a *business, group, organization or individual* involving a property in Comal County which:

- 1) results in the preservation or restoration of an area or its flora and fauna
or
- 2) results in measurable conservation, protection, or waste reduction of an important natural resource
or
- 3) applies unique skill or creative imagination to the solution of a problem affecting our natural world


This recognition shall be given to a non-member of Lindheimer Master Naturalist who has contributed to the achievement of the ideals of Texas Master Naturalists by aid and conservation of our natural resources including, but not limited to water, native plants, animals, birds, insects, and land.

Selection shall be made upon review of applications which have been submitted to the committee either by Lindheimer Master Naturalist Members or from the community at large.

Nominations are evaluated by the Community Naturalist Recognition Committee on the following criteria:

- Impact on environmental stewardship
- Ecological significance
- Long-term benefit
- Impact on the community

This recognition will occur as frequently as annually only if a suitable recipient is identified. **E-mail form below to: extjls@co.comal.tx.us or Mail to: Comal County AgriLife Extension Office, 325 Resource Dr, New Braunfels, TX 78132-3775**

 **Community Naturalist Recognition Nomination Form**

Nominee: _____

Address: _____

Nominee Contact person_____

Nominee Telephone_____


Nominee E-mail address: _____

Name of person submitting nomination: _____

Telephone of person submitting nomination: _____

E-mail address of person submitting nomination: _____

Description of act which prompted nomination: _____





Texas AgriLife Extension Service programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color sex, religion, disability or national origin. Individuals with disabilities who require an auxiliary aid, service, or accommodation in order to participate in meetings are encouraged to contact the Extension Office at: 830 – 620 – 3440 for assistance. The information given herein is for educational purposes only. References to commercial products or trade names are made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service is implied. The Texas AgriLife Extension Service forbids discrimination on the basis of race, color sex, religion, disability or national origin in any term, condition or privilege of employment.

