

# Lost Pines Master Naturalist's



Volume 12, Issue 3

APRIL 2012

## SPRING IS HERE

On 26.03.2012 19:43, Robert Vaughn wrote:

KEYE, Austin's CBS affiliate, is filming a show about Bastrop and is highlighting some of the recreational opportunities. Today, they filmed at the CRR and the Lost Pines Nature Trails. They interviewed Joan Russell about the background of the CRR, Shorty about handicap access, and Steve Box and Dale about river recreation. Rob and I were filmed riding mountain bikes on the trails and they went downriver to an island where Bo's group had set up a canoe camp.

I'm sure we'll be nominated for an Emmy! -Robert

This is another wonderful interlude for the CRR. Thanks to all for that you all do! When will it air?





# FISHING PROGRAM

Please respond directly to Bill at [bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu) if you can help or have questions about the fishing program or the Smithville exhibit. His phone number is 581-0377.

On Tuesday, Feb. 21, KLRU TV World News Tonight had a story about how fishing helps kids. For those of you who have helped with the TPWD GO FISH! program, we already know that. Since 2005, more than 2,000 people have gone through the TPWD's Lost Pines learn to fish program.

The 2012 Learn to Fish Program in Bastrop and Buescher State Parks starts Spring Break, March 10th. It is now less than three weeks away. Due to the repair and restoration efforts in Bastrop State Park, both Spring Break classes will be held at the pond in Buescher State Park, Saturday May 10th and 17th.

Knowing how to fish is not a requirement. There are registration stations and 5 learning stations on knots, habitat, safety, TX fishing laws, and casting. Kids get a Fishing Diploma and gifts, then get to go fish. Equipment and bait are supplied for this free program. (The only cost is park entrance fees.) Volunteers pay nothing, of course. Set up and training is from 8am until 9pm. The public arrives at 9am. We have a raffle at noon and are all done by 12:30pm. This is a very fun, very worth while program. It counts as LPMN volunteer hours. If you can help out either the 10th or the 17th, please email me.

The rest of the 2012 schedule is as follows:

June 9 - Bastrop State Park  
June 16 - Buescher State Park

July 14 - Bastrop State Park  
July 21 - Buescher State Park

All classes are on Saturdays from 9 until 12:30.

Meredith Longoria, has asked me to be in charge of a casting/ Back Yard Bass booth for kids at the Smithville Wildlife Extravaganza, March 31. If you can do an hour long shift sometime that Saturday, please let me know.

I can't do these programs without you. Thanks for your kind consideration.

- Bill Brooks  
[bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu)  
581-0377



## The Road to Becoming a Master Naturalist

By Raymond Butler

Having been retired for a while I began to search for something to occupy my time and help my community at the same time. Finding the Sierra Club's Trail Tamers in February 2011 was a great place to start. My first three volunteer locations were Buescher State Park and Bastrop State Park. I had volunteered at the Bastrop State Park on a few occasions repairing trails, this day I was helping a group of homeschooled children remove pine tree saplings for replanting in an area of the park where a prescribed burn had already taken place. One of the other helpers that day was Jane Russell, who referred me to the Pines and Prairies Land Trust (PPLT) and Carrie Knox. I caught the bug from being out on the trails and took a trail building course at Mc Kenney Falls State Park where I met Dale Morrison. Dale is an older gentleman who has been working trails for decades. During the trail building course Dale and I discussed volunteer options. I told him of my trail building experience and he wasted no time putting me to work cleaning up the Colorado River Refuge (CRR), then building a short multi-use trail from the handicapped picnic area to the beach below.

One day while working on the beach, Dale told me of the Master Naturalists organization and a group of Master Naturalists that gathered each Wednesday to work in the CRR maintaining the trails and building bridges. Meeting up on the Dragonfly trail, I found that they had that bridge almost complete; little did I know that this was the first in a line of bridges to be built. During breaks there was the normal cutting up, but there was something else, someone would see a plant they didn't know, ask what it was and off we'd go on a plant tour. That is when I realized that the road to becoming a Master Naturalist is not only educating you, but in part educating others as well. In my short time with this group 4 bridges have been built, the CRR trail system has been maintained, in the neighborhood of ¼ to ½ mile of new trail has been introduced and the seating area expand for the homeschooled children's nature classes.

What is my purpose of becoming a Master Naturalist? My goal for many years has been to reach through time and shake the hand of my ancestors. Some have asked "What does that even mean?" I want to know how our ancestors lived day to day, what chores did they have and how did they perform them. The Master Naturalists will help me to know the plants and animals of our natural world. Some study flowers, while others fish, still others trails and plant identification, but it seems as though all are willing to teach in their own modest way. As an example recently while doing a property survey with the PPLT among them were a number of Master Naturalist, after being divided into groups we came upon a plant we were not familiar with and out come the books. They learn from each other, teach each other and when they go amongst their friends and other groups they take that knowledge with them, passing on that knowledge as they identify a plant, explain how it may be used, where it is from. Experiences from the Yegua Knobbs Preserve where I have experienced the fantastic sight of the springs, as well as the bog, beaver pond and the creek, to the Colorado River Refuge where I work with a group of Master Naturalists building bridges and maintaining trails, to the Billig Ranch Preserve where I was able to work with Jeremiah Jarvis cleaning up and observing the mini orchard on that property. All of these experiences have lead me to realize that I have a passion for preserving our natural world as well as appreciating how the natural world can provide me with a place to find solace. In this short time they have all been my teachers, they are my friends and the more I am around them the more I realize that my path through this life lies in being a Master Naturalist.





## Fire Comes to The Knobbs

By Raymond Butler

18 January, 2012 “The Bridge Maniacs” at the Yegua Knobbs Preserve Rob Southerland (PPLT), Bruce Nichols (MN Lost Pines), Dale Morrison (MN Lost Pines), Larry Gfeller (MN Lost Pines), Raymond Butler (PPLT), Gene Moulden (MN Lost Pines), Ronnie Lanier (MN Lost Pines), Jim Estes (MN Lost Pines) and Robert Vaughn (MN Lost Pines & PPLT). Photo by Miriam Vaughn

This past summer was a hot and tragic time for Central Texas. With record breaking temperatures to record breaking wildfires to a drought that broke records across the nation. We have not, unfortunately, figured out how to turn down our furnace temps of summer time, nor have we come up with any ideas of how to add water to a drought. However, we have come up with a plan to help protect our beloved Yegua Knobbs Preserve (YKP) from such horrific devastation that dry and built-up underbrush can bring. Pines and Prairies Land Trust (PPLT) and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have surveyed the property for solutions to the underbrush problems and have developed a burn plan. Carefully eliminating sections of underbrush will aid in eliminating food for future wildfires. The first of these burns, planned for 6 February, 2012, will be the Lee County area of the YKP, with burns at later dates. These burns will provide fertilizer to the soil in the form of ashes, open ground for new growth of more food for our wild inhabitants, and aid in the propagation process of certain native species in the area. Due to the rain in the area the burn has been put off until the area has had time dry enough to provide a sufficient burn.

In preparation of this upcoming burn, on 18 January 2012, volunteers of the Master Naturalists Organization from The Lost Pines and The Capitol Area chapters and PPLT Volunteers began to clear the County Line Trail as a fire break. Starting at 9 am they took on the task with chain saws, limb pruners, pole saws and good old fashioned elbow grease, preparing the way for the USFWS to conduct the burn. This group of volunteers has become known as the Bridge Maniacs from their bridge construction on the trail system at the Colorado River Refuge (CRR) another of the PPLT preserves. As a group they are a jovial crew, cutting up and getting the job done. First comes the rough cuts, clear the debris and pull the sides back making it ready for a dozer to clear the trail in a timely fashion.



Miriam Vaughn (MN Capitol Area) a member of “The Bridge Maniacs” crew. Photo by Jim Estes





Marcy Youngman

Attached are pictures of the Emerald Ash Borer Trap set-up at the Lockhart State Park. Walt Elson said he would write an article for the TMN newsletter.





## THOSE CARRIZO SANDS

Liz Pullman

While working on the Caldwell plant lists the spring and summer of 2011 using the printout from Plant Resource Center (PRC) the descriptions of the specimen locations very frequently included the terms "loose, deep Carrizo sands" along with the other information. First I took a little side trip to USGS to see what they had to say about Carrizo Sands which are listed under the Reklaw Formation (Eocene) with the rather daunting comment that "from the top down: about 30 - 40 feet of quartz sand and silty clay, about 50 feet of quartz sand, about 700 feet of silty and sandy clay containing local beds of clay, lignite, silt and quartz sand; about 500 - 600 feet of clay". Loose, deep sands, no kidding!

Knowing that the eastern end of Caldwell County is famous for sandy soil, I began to look closer at all the herbarium entries. Most notable was the fact that although several people collected from the eastern end of Caldwell County, one person seemed to be dominant. Guy Nesom (and his cohorts) collected extensively in 1966, and even more astonishing, he was apparently there only twice - once on April 24 and once on May 5. The weather was noted on April 24 as "blue sky with a few high thin clouds and a moderate cool breeze from the Southeast." (Sounds great!). After tracking down bits and pieces of information I realized that Nesom had concentrated on just a few areas in eastern Caldwell. The road numbers and general locations may be familiar to some of our Caldwell Master Naturalists.

Check this out:

1. FM 713 3.8 miles east of the junction with FM 86, 4.7 miles west of the junction with FM 304 (Delhi)  
There were quite a few specimens (> 50) taken from up and down this one stretch of FM 713 with the distances east of FM 86 varying from 2.2 to 5 miles.

Here is another:

2. South side of Interstate 10 (along service road) one mile east of junction with US 183 near Luling.

And two more:

3. Caldwell County Road 151, near Bear Gulch, approximately 2.7 miles southwest of intersection with Caldwell County Road 153.

4. Along Caldwell County Road 151 at crossing with Big Sandy Branch 0.4 miles west of Caldwell County Road 153, 4.8 miles SW Delhi.

A word of caution - having tried to relocate plants by the descriptions on herbarium specimens, I have concluded that many botanists are not too swift at estimating distances, particularly in off-road situations.

Looking at a map of the county, these four locations are clustered in the Carrizo Sands area of the county. I was able to dig out Latitude/Longitude data for general (not specific) sites noted in more recent records.

1.	29 50 39N	2.	29 39 10N	3 & 4.	29 46 10N
	97 25 58W		97 34 30W	A	97 28 37W

Guy Nesom went on to make a name for himself as a botanist but in 1966 he had a year to go before finishing his degree in Psychology/Biology at Davidson College in North Carolina. He is currently a research affiliate at the UT Herbarium as well as an independent contractor for the Flora of North America Program. A few other collectors who were active in Caldwell County were W.R. Carr, S.L. Orzell, M.H. Mayfield, Matt Turner, B.L. Turner and James McBryde but no one collected so prolifically as Guy Nesom on his two day spree.

As a footnote, in the very early 1930's, James B. McBryde collected in Caldwell and in 1933 published "Vegetation and Habitat Factors of the Carrizo Sands" in Ecological Monographs 3:247 - 297. Yes, I am thinking about a search for this paper.

An idea here! A field trip to a couple of these hot spots in springtime for checking out the rich assortment of plants - are they still there???





Two invasive plant species are in abundance this year - bastard cabbage (*Rapistrum rugosum*) and milk thistle (*Silybum marianum*). Preventing these species from getting an edge, especially in the areas affected by the fire, will help to ensure that our native plant species will thrive.

<http://www.kxan.com/dpp/news/local/austin/bastard-cabbage-attacks>

[http://www.texasinvasives.org/plant\\_database/detail.php?symbol=RARU](http://www.texasinvasives.org/plant_database/detail.php?symbol=RARU)

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## **Reclaiming the Land** **by Larry Gfeller and Robert Vaughn**

Excellent volunteer opportunities exist for LPMN members at the refuge. The PPLT runs nature education classes there for home schooled children. The classes cover topics such as mammals, bees and spiders, river ecology, geology, and food chains. These classes have become so popular, we've had to add more benches for the students. LPMN members who teach these classes include Susan Crone, Carol Reidy, Bill Brooks, Louise Ridlon, and Anna Stalcup. The children are the future young citizens who will someday frequent the banks of the refuge in 15-20 years—and look after it because they appreciate it and love it. This is what investment in our future is really about!

A cactus garden is currently being developed in an old gravel pit on the Dragonfly Trail. This garden project has been adopted by the Bastrop Outdoor Women, which includes several Master Naturalists in its membership. Each Wednesday morning, a group of Master Naturalists known as the “Bridge Maniacs” show up to do whatever needs to be done. This includes everything from general trail clearing and maintenance to grubbing stumps to building foot bridges. . . .it can be hard, physical work! Most of these guys are over 60 and make a significant sacrifice for the privilege of making the Refuge special. Neither sleet nor snow nor the heat of August will keep these guys from their chosen duty—however, a little rain will! These LPMN members include Dale Morrison, Jim Estes, Nick Nichols, Gene Moulden, Ronnie Lanier, Robert Vaughn, and Larry Gfeller. A few guys routinely travel up to two-hours round trip for the love of this place.







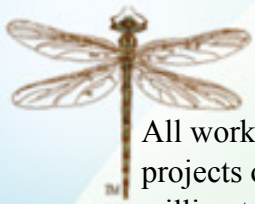
## **Reclaiming the Land** **by Larry Gfeller and Robert Vaughn**

The Colorado River Refuge (CRR) is evolving into one of the most exciting natural areas in this part of Texas. It doesn't yet have the draw of an established public park, but that is quickly changing as the *personality* of the place unfolds. People who used Bastrop State Park will be without walking trails for some time to come. With a little publicity, the CRR may be just the ticket. It already has a following of local residents who walk the trails, enjoy the scenery or simply look for a little quiet time alone.

As more and more citizens discover the recreational opportunities, the refuge is bound to grow in popularity. These visitors will never question how this place came to be, but it is quite a story—and we want to try to tell some of it here. The CRR represents the coordinated vision of the Pines and Prairies Land Trust (PPLT, the owner of the Refuge), and a lot of motivated individuals and groups. It is an amazing testament to cooperation among different, but like-minded, constituencies with different motives, talents and convictions. In truth, it is a successful restoration story, still in its early chapters. In 2003, the area was used as a shooting range, a gravel pit, an off-roading circuit, and an illegal dump site. Today, we have an emerging wildlife refuge comprised of two distinct habitats with over four miles of hiking trails currently connecting some 65 total acres. Along the Colorado, we have an old-growth riparian habitat that has the look and feel of a primeval prehistoric forest. The canopy is tall and cathedral-like, with giant Sycamores, Cottonwoods, Black Willows, and Box Elders—some of which have trunks five or more feet in diameter near their base.

The flora on the forest floor is rich and diverse—like a temperate jungle—with tangled vines, tall grasses and Elderberry, all straining for the sun. The rock formations suggest powerful geologic upheavals revealing an ancient seabed. Moving away from the river towards Bastrop, the habitat changes into wildflower meadows and upland woods. In these woods, Cedar Elms, Gum Bumelia, Eastern Juniper, Texas Persimmon, and Western Soapberry predominate, interspersed with perennial ground cover like Turk's Cap and Flame Sumac. As hikers approach the meadows, they are greeted by Bull Thistle, Mexican Hats and Rain Lilies sprinkled among the Wildrye and waving Little Bluestem. In this relatively high and open area, a cactus garden will eventually adorn the trail. The natural beauty is, well, . . . natural; but a relatively new network of walking trails have opened it up for all to discover. To see it today is to assume it always was this way, and to overlook the huge collaborative effort that made it happen. It's come a long way from the trash dump days!

The Refuge was created when original PPLT board member (and LPMN member) Joan Russell was looking to create a fire wise landscape in Tahitian Village in 2003. She was looking for un-used lots that could be used for demonstrations. Long story short, the Bastrop Water Control and Improvement District #1 wanted the trashed out area cleaned up anyway, so a few negotiations later (Dec 2004)—and the Colorado River Refuge was born with the PPLT acquisition of a 65 acre tract that co-joined land already owned by Environmental Stewardship. A major setback occurred in 2007, when much of the initial work was lost to a flooded Colorado River—another one of Mother Nature's difficult but necessary renewal mechanisms. The area stayed under water for 30 days! Organizations that have provided volunteers and financial support include Texas Parks and Wildlife, LCRA, City of Bastrop Parks Department, The Tahitian Village Property Owners Association, local Boy and Girl Scouts, The Trull Foundation, Bastrop Audubon and, of course, the Lost Pines Master Naturalists.



All work at the Refuge is pre-approved for Master Naturalist volunteer hours. There are enough projects on the drawing board to meet most everyone's annual requirement. If you are interested and willing to contribute, contact Louise Ridlon regarding nature classes ([flridlon@hotmail.com](mailto:flridlon@hotmail.com)), Dale Morrison regarding trails and the regular Wednesday work group (512-629-3345), or Robert Vaughn regarding other volunteer opportunities ([vaughnrobertj@gmail.com](mailto:vaughnrobertj@gmail.com)). Even if you're not interested in volunteering, do plan to visit the Refuge for an enjoyable outing—you'll be glad you did—and want to come back for more.

## **HELP WANTED**

### **NEED VOLUNTEERS FOR THE WHOLE MONTH JUNE TO SUPERVISE THE BOOT CAMP BOYS AND GIRLS**

**The project this year is to work the BEDC property.**

**There will be a guard or Sheriff with them and Shorty will be there this will be to much for one person and since I may be gone by then I do not want to leave this yearly project to fate.**

**Please contact Dale Morrison 629-3345 to coordinate this Thank you**

### **DALE & ANGIE MORRISON WILL BE LEAVING BASTROP**

**SOMETIME IN MAY. We have purchased a new house in Cedar Park, we have been waiting for it to be completed. We close in 10days. We are very excited and a little nervous. This will be our retirement home.**

**We will miss all the dear folks we have met in Bastrop it has been a wonderful experience. Dale will miss the great group of Texas Master Naturalists and the good times and hard work they have shared.**

**I will be sorry to go. I should have done something before the News Letter.**

**I am sorry to say the May edition will be my last.**

**I expect you will see Dale once in a while I don't know if he can stay away from the river very long. We bid you all a fond farewell. The Morrison's**





# ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

## for Lost Pines Texas Master Naturalists

The Texas Wildlife Association provides monthly webinars to cover topics of specific interests to individuals in our chapter. As far as I know, no one in our chapter has successfully completed any of these webinars to give us any hints how to get the connection done. I will post the next 3 months of subjects each month. If you have any interest in working together and have a video streaming internet access, give me a call and we can work together to see how and if this webinar works.

General instructions are to log on to the live webinars. <https://texas-wildlife.webex.com> . For more information, attendees can contact: Courtney Brittain, Texas Wildlife Association, Education Program Coordinator, at (210) 826-2904 ext. 122 (office), (210) 393-3467 (mobile), [www.texas-wildlife.org](http://www.texas-wildlife.org) , or [cbrittain@texas-wildlife.org](mailto:cbrittain@texas-wildlife.org)

The next 3 monthly topics that would be considered advanced training are  
March 15 - Pond Management, Michael Masser;  
April 19 - Riparian Management 201, Sky Lewey; and  
May 17 - Integrating Cattle and Wildlife on Small Acreage, Larry Pierce

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AWU-CER Lunchtime Lectures occur at noon at Austin Water Headquarters Downtown (Waller Center ,Room 104 or 105 [625 East 10<sup>th</sup> Street – between I-35 and Red River). Lectures will be given the first Wednesday of each month. These lectures are free and open to the Public – bring a lunch and learn! The first series addresses **The History of Natural History [March – April]**. The remaining lectures are **March 7:** The History of Natural History: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Science and Literature [Room 105] and **April 4:** The History of Natural History: Contemporary Natural History. The second series addresses **Natural History and Ecological Change – Americas, Texas, and Austin [May – July]** and begins on **May 2:** The Natural History of the Americas: Discovery and Transformation.

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Walt Elson contacted the Gault School of Archeology about a tour of the Gault Site. May 26th fits their schedule and we are penciled in for that date. The site is located near Florence, Texas which is about 82 miles north of San Marcos off of I-35 (6-10 miles west of Jarrell).

They are very familiar with TMN program and will tailor the tour for our interest. The program is generally 2 hours long and covers about 1 1/4 miles. Topics covered include:

- Hypotheses regarding the peopling of the Americas
- The geology and history of this area of Central Texas
- Cultural history of Central Texas
- Primitive technologies
- Important finds from the Gault site
- Observing current excavations

Our tour must have at least 10 people and the cost is \$10 each. A sign-up list will be provided at the March and April chapter meetings.

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Let me know of any upcoming offerings that you think might work as advanced training.

Ronnie Lanier  
Vice-President  
(512)581-8117  
[nxplgr@wildblue.net](mailto:nxplgr@wildblue.net)



## Lost Pines Master Naturalist Monthly Meeting Schedule

MARCH 19 2012 6:30 - 9:00 pm Red Rock Community  
Center Topic TBA

APRIL 16 2012 6:30 - 9:00 pm Red Rock Community Center  
Topic TBA

## NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

FOR NEXT ISSUE MARCH 31ST. We welcome relevant contributions, photos, announcements, or other material relating to the mission of the Texas Master Naturalist program, particularly those pertaining to our local area. Please send information to Angie Morrison 512-629-3344 ([angie.morrison@studiosdallas.com](mailto:angie.morrison@studiosdallas.com).)

PLEASE send text either in an email or in doc format. I cannot open any other form! Pictures should be sent as attachments of jpegs as big as you can send them. Please do not embed images in the email. Doing so greatly helps in the newsletter creation! Thank you!

## STATE PROGRAM CONTACTS

Website: <http://txmn.org/>

State Coordinator: Michelle Haggerty,  
[mhaggerty@wfscgate.tamu.edu](mailto:mhaggerty@wfscgate.tamu.edu); (979) 458-2034.

The Texas Master Naturalist program is sponsored by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

### SPONSOR CONTACTS

Caldwell Co. Extension Office: Position vacant;  
[Caldwell-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:Caldwell-tx@tamu.edu); (512) 398-3122.

Bastrop Co. Extension Office: Rachel Bauer, CEAAG/  
NR; [Bastrop.tx@tamu.edu](mailto:Bastrop.tx@tamu.edu); (512) 581-7186.

Bastrop/Caldwell Co. TPWD Wildlife Biologist: Meredith Longoria, 804 Pecan, Bastrop,  
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Basic Training	Louise Ridlon	512-985-5064
Advanced Training	Ronnie Lanier	281-382-5593
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Outreach	Jim Estes	512-620-0322
Chapter History	Bill Brooks	512-581-0377

