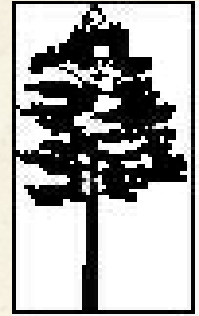


Lost Pines Master Naturalist



Volume II, Issue II

November 2011

Annual Elections!

The annual board elections for the Lost Pines Master Naturalist chapter will be at the monthly meeting and Christmas party on Dec. 19 at McKinney Roughs (Details on the party on page 9.) A very busy nominating committee, comprised of Paulette and Marcy have shaken the branches of our group to come up with some great folks who are willing to serve this coming year.

This year, there are multiple candidates per position, so please be sure to read the bios of each candidate so that you can make an informed decision when it comes time to vote. And remember, in order to vote and help decide who makes the decisions next year, you need to be a current member - which means you have paid your annual \$10 dues. Not sure of your status? Ask either Rik Martinez (martinez_rik@hotmail.com) or Gene Moulden (GeneorMarie@Austin.rr.com).

Below is a list of positions up for election and the people willing to serve should you vote them into office. Interested in a position? Please be sure to contact the Nomination Chair, Marcy Youngman, at fhyoungman@hotmail.com.

President:	Grace Pratt Al Hoerig
Vice President:	Ronnie Lanier
Secretary:	Joan Estes
Treasurer:	Rik Martinez



Image of [Palafoxia sp.](#) a wildflower common in sandy areas that grew up in a burned yard after the Bastrop Complex fire.

Grace Pratt

- President candidate



I was born in McAllen, Texas in the lower Rio Grande Valley. I love being in the outdoors and have always loved learning and reading. To this day I like to read 3 to 4 books a week. In the seventh grade I started playing tennis. I grew to love playing 8 to 10 hours a day on the weekends and 4 to 5 hours every evening during the week. I won District in the 9th grade for women's doubles with my partner Danielle.

My dad taught me to shoot a rifle at a very young age, but I really prefer to shoot a picture with a camera. My dad taught me to appreciate nature and all its beauty. From my mother I learned that reading held the key to another world. Through books I learned that through knowledge the world could become a larger place. My parents taught me that you were always there for family, served within the church and volunteered throughout the community.

When I graduated from McAllen High School in May of 1976 I continued with summer school before attending the University of Texas at Austin. I walked on to campus with 28 hours and after about a year of

college I quit with 68 hours. I decided that some day I would come back and finish what I knew was an important part of my life.

Over the next 25 years I joined the military, became a Staff Sergeant, was recognized as "Airman of the Year" for the 22nd Air Force, married my husband, Wally, and had 4 kids. In 2003 my husband and I adopted our grandson, Christian. We now have 5 kids.

In 2000 I went back to UT and received a B.A. in English, and a B.S. in Mathematics. After attending Texas State University I received a Masters in Developmental and Adult Education completing a promise to myself.

I have volunteered with the Boys and Girls Club, the Hispanic Faculty/Staff Association, South Texas Youth Soccer Association, the St. Elizabeth Ladies Club, KidSafe program, Cub Scout Pack 406, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Bastrop T.O.W.N. to name a few.

I joined the Master Naturalist in the class of 2011. During my first year I have volunteer for over 170 hours and completed 12.5 hours of advanced courses. Over the last year I have become a Hunter's Education, Boater's Education, and Angler's Education Instructor with the Texas Parks and Wildlife in order to teach others to take care of our natural resources and preserve habitats.

I enjoy working with folks to make visions come true. I know that I can contribute to the Master Naturalist and look forward to contributing if given the opportunity.

Al Hoerig

- President Candidate

Paul Simon, in his Graceland album, has a song which contains this line: You can call me Al/and I'll be your pal. Well, that's me. Al, not Paul. Perhaps you are as surprised as am I that I have written this and that you are reading it! I have been asked to introduce myself and tell what are my plans for LPMN in 2012 should you, fellow members of this chapter, elect me president. Frankly, being nominated was quite a surprise, second only to the honor of nomination, and the following is pretty much from the top of my head (and there may not be too much there).

I am Al Hoerig, LPMN class of 2009. My wife Patty and I live in Elgin, and were in the Elgin area for 16 years, then in Cuero for 10, and 3 in Thorndale. We have been Elgin in proper since August of 2001 after my retirement from ministry in the Lutheran Church. I am presently serving Grace Lutheran in Giddings on a part time basis. I strive to be an environmentalist because of my faith convictions and the Master Naturalists seem to be an excellent way to be that kind of person.

It seems to me that the Bastrop Complex fires give our chapter a unique opportunity to learn and to assist in reestablishing vegetation that is native to this area and thus also providing habitat suitable for insects and animals whose historical home is here. Perhaps something like the biodiversity study in the LCRA McKinney Roughs Nature Park will be a part of what our chapter can do somewhere in the burned areas. I would like to see more canoe/kayak activities on our river. This is not meant to slight our partner Caldwell County, but where I see the greatest need at this time. Our chapter would do well to be active in projects that help keep the importance of Lockhart State Park in the public eye, especially if and when the state considers more budgetary cut-backs.

Ronnie Lanier

- Vice President Candidate

Hey, you guys. I would appreciate your consideration as Vice President of the Lost Pines Chapter of Texas Master Naturalist. I retired from NASA in Jan 2006 after 38 years of training astronauts and flight controllers. My wife Melinda and I moved to the Upton area around Labor Day 2006. I took the TMN class in fall of 2007. I help Bill Brooks each year with the Angler Clinics he coordinates at Bastrop and Buescher State Parks during the spring and summer. Until around July, I have been part of the Colorado River Refuge trail and bridge building team that Dale Morrison has been challenging... After the labor Day Fire this year and the blistering presentation by Lexie Maxwell, I have been spending as much time as I can making our property more fire resistant...There are still things to do; sometimes they are hard to do but necessary. I hope to rejoin the Bridge Maniacs soon.

Joan Estes

- Secretary Candidate

I have been married to Jim Estes for 51 years and we have three children. Jim and our oldest boy Bryan took the Master Naturalist course in 2007. As members they participated in programs and attended meetings and I could see the enthusiasm they shared for the services they were involved in. Our daughter-in-law also became a Master Naturalist in 2010 in Lewisville, TX and she is also very active in Master Naturalist projects. In January of 2011 I enrolled in the Lost Pines Master Naturalist course. We've become quite a family implementing the Master Naturalist mission in our areas.

Jim and I attended the 2011 annual Master Naturalist Convention in Hunt, TX in October. It was quite an experience and we enjoyed it very much. At the convention I learned that there is no limit to the projects and volunteer services that are available to members. The courses offered provided wide range of interests and it was great meeting so many enthusiastic Master Naturalists.

My specific interests for Master Naturalist volunteer services include land and natural resource management, native culture/archeology, bird and wildlife conservation and native plant and resource assessments. I have enjoyed being a Lost Pines Master Naturalist member with plans to become an active member.

Sonny Arnold Retirement

Our chapter contributed \$100.00 toward a retirement gift for Sonny Arnold. We also signed a card (from the Arbor Day Society) indicating that a tree was being planted in a National Forest in his honor. We received the following note from Sonny:

Lost Pines Members,

Thank you so much for the retirement gift. Having a tree planted in a national forest is surely an honor.

I have enjoyed the TMN program and always getting to meet the new class each year. I regret that I fell two classes short of getting two more LP coffee cups to complete a set.

I admire each of you for the good work you have done and wish you the best as you recover from the tragic fire you have dealt with. Best wishes to all,

Sonny

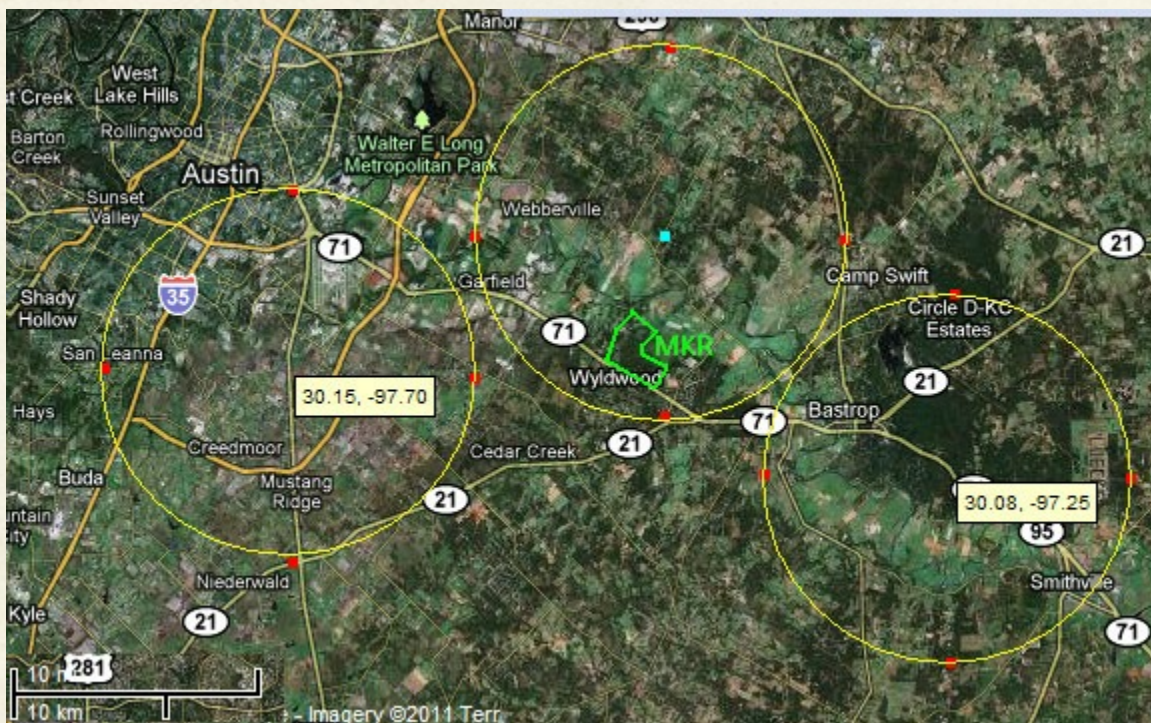
A New Christmas Bird Count in Our Backyard

By Louise Ridlon

Each December, birders and nature lovers from across the nation take part in an annual census of wintering birds known as the Christmas Bird Count. The count was begun in 1900 as an alternative to the Christmas "Side Hunt", a contest of shooting as many birds and other critters as possible. National Audubon Society has organized volunteers to count birds on a given day between December 14 and January 5, within designated count circles having a 15-mile diameter. Many Texas Master Naturalists take part in the CBC, as it generally results in eight to ten hours of volunteer service! Texas had 106 count circles in 2010, with 2756 birders tallying a total of 392 species. Our local count circle, centered in Bastrop, is held annual-

ly on January 1, with Travis County's count usually two weeks prior to that.

This year a new count circle is being added in our local area. Beth Banks, a supervisor at LCRA/McKinney Roughs, has petitioned Audubon to create the Lost Pines CBC. The center point of the circle is near the intersection of FM 1704 and FM 969 in the



Utley/Webberville area. The count will be held on December 17. Beth has designed a program to market the Bastrop/Lost Pines region an eco-travel destination. Guests at the Hyatt Lost Pines Resort will have an opportunity to hear speakers on birds and birding, and participate in activities leading to the new bird count. Beth has requested that volunteers from LPMN and Bastrop County Audubon assist in introducing folks to the birding possibilities in our area through the Christmas Bird Count. The count circle includes 35 river miles along the Colorado, with bird-rich areas including Big Webberville Park, McKinney Roughs, and the Hyatt Resort, as well as crop/rangeland and Post Oak/Juniper woodlands. Participants in CBCs don't need skill or experience in identifying birds; counters go out in teams, each of which needs people to spot birds, identify them, and tally the numbers.

Kathy McAleese and I both are included as party leaders for the new bird count, and we'll be updating chapter members on potential opportunities of volunteers. If you're interested, contact me or Kathy, or Beth at Beth.Banks@LCRA.org, and let her know you're with the Lost Pines Master Naturalists. .

Volunteer Opportunities

Ongoing Volunteer Activities

Colorado River Refuge Work Group. If you like making a direct impact on improving the environment for boating, picnicking, fishing, hiking and enjoyment of the great outdoors, this will be for you. Pines and Prairies Land Trust (PPLT) owns a beautiful stretch of land along the Colorado River with contiguous property and depends on LPMN volunteers to help improve/maintain it. This is where the Home School Nature Studies sponsored by PPLT are conducted, and there is no terrain like it in Texas available to the public for free. Usage and popularity are growing as the area develops and word spreads of the breathtaking natural beauty found there. We are looking for LPMN volunteers who have interests in identification of flora and fauna; trail layout, building & maintenance; sign-making & illustration; landscaping with native plants; wetlands ecology; or just simply helping cement the relationship between man and nature. This is gratifying work, as there are no government restrictions and results are immediate and obvious. We work every Wednesday morning (except during July & August) from 9:00 o'clock till noon, so if you need volunteer hours, this can fix you up in no time. Other dates/times may be arranged, depending on the project. If interested, contact Dale Morrison (angie.morrison@studiosdallas.com, 512-629-3345), Jim Estes (jestes@ionet.net, 512-620-0322) or Robert Vaughn (vaughnrobertj@gmail.com, 512-237-1148) for details.

Colorado River Monitoring Project. First Saturday of every month. 8 am. cgmorris@flash.net
Contact Claude Morris to participate or for more

information call Kevin at 972-1960. You must have your own canoe! For more information about the project, go to:

<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/water/downloads/coloradofinal2.pdf>

Outreach Booth Volunteer. Motivated individuals have a wonderful opportunity to meet people, discuss the Master Naturalist program, and the personal satisfaction gained by being a member. Explain the many and varied volunteer projects and the ways they support conservation, education, and recreation in our communities. Demonstrate the chapter's rainfall absorption simulator and discuss the importance of proper land cover in water conservation. Discuss the CoCoRaHS program and its benefits to science, the public, and to the individual volunteer. No previous experience is necessary. Training is available. For more information and to volunteer contact Jim Estes at jestes@ionet.net

McKinney Roughs Nature Survey – Kathy McAleese is coordinating a long-term project to survey trails through the burned-out areas of McKinney Roughs. Plans call for at least two surveys per month, one during the week and one on a weekend. Actual days and times will vary based on the weather and Kathy's schedule. Please contact her at (512) 718-1313 or kathrmac1@gmail.com if you are interested in leading or participating in either week-day or weekend surveys, or both.

Hornsby Bend – Ecological Literacy Days – Last Saturday of every month, 9 am - 1 pm. Combining volunteer work with learning about local ecology, the Ecological Literacy Day at Hornsby Bend begins with several hours of outdoor work - ranging from trail maintenance to habitat restoration to work in the native plant nursery - and ends with at least an hour of learning about local ecology – birds, bugs

and more! Wear boots and work clothing and bring your binoculars. For more information, contact Kevin Anderson at coordinator@hornsbybend.org or 512-972-1960.

Hornsby Bend – Monthly Bird Survey – Second Saturday of each month. Meet at the Center for Environmental Research at 7 am for the morning survey (coffee and donuts at 6:30 am) and 4 pm for the afternoon survey. All levels of birders are welcome – the survey is a great way to improve your skills since we form teams matching experienced and novice birders. For more information, contact Eric Carpenter at ecarpe@gmail.com.

Advanced Training

Due to lack of programs during the holiday season, there is no new advanced training available. The column will return for the January issue.



Burned tree in the Circle D area with white bacterial or fungal growth. Orange mark made by officials. Image by Jeannie Jessup

Just For Fun

Drought Impact on Monarch Butterflies

The Texas Climate Journal headlines read: "A drought for the centuries. It hasn't been this dry in Texas since 1789." Dr. Brower took a recent trip to check on the monarchs migrating through that drought-stricken state:

"The purpose of our research was to assess the potential effects of the severe 2011 drought on the well being of the monarch butterfly," explains Brower. "Overall, this part of Texas is scorched... However, as we realized, there are nectar havens in bottomland forests along the river flood plains. It is likely that this riverine habitat plays a key role in allowing monarchs to fuel up on their way to Mexico... Here are images that bear on our findings, and capture some of the highlights of our trip."

<http://www.learner.org/jnorth/monarch/fall2011/update102711.html#research>

iTrack Wildlife Now in the Apple app store, this program is a digital database of wildlife tracks and was created by Texas Parks and Wildlife biologist Jonah Evans. Only for Apple products and retails for \$15.

<http://itunes.apple.com/app/itrack-wildlife/id478516226?mt=8>

Holiday Party!

The December chapter meeting will be at McKinney Roughs dining hall at 6:30 pm. This is a **PARTY**. There will be holiday music, drinks (wine and non-alcoholic beverages) and food (turkey, ham). Papergoods will also be provided.

Members should bring their favorite appetizer, side, dessert, salad, bread-whatever and BYOB.

Bring gift for exchange - preferably nature related. There will be a fun (I promise) mixer, and a new way to divy up the gifts.

We will also be electing next year's officers. So, please come and make your opinion count for the coming year!

In order to be able to purchase an appropriate amount of food and drinks, we need you to RSVP by December 12. Please include what dish you will be bringing. RSVP at the Evite invitation that was sent to your email address. Didn't get it? Contact Caroline Easley at 512-332-0851.

President's Column

By Louise Ridlon

It was my privilege to attend the Texas Master Naturalist State Meeting and Advanced Training at Mo Ranch in October. This was the first state meeting I've attended; I hope to make it a regular habit! What fun to be in the company of Master Naturalists from across the state and hear what other chapters are involved in. Our state is so diverse ecologically that each chapter's mission and service is quite unique, although many of us have similar projects. I especially enjoyed the round table session I attended on Children in Nature, where I picked up some new ideas as well as resources. Other AT sessions we attended were very in-depth studies on Understanding Creeks and Rivers and Texas Bryophytes: Mosses, Liverworts, and Hornworts.

The presidents' breakfast included practical information to pass on to our chapters: changes in the county AgriLife programs have resulted in funding being cut, so many AgriLife programs are now fee-based. There will be no charges to TMN chapters for training, but we are encouraged to help cover travel costs for speakers who come from outside our local area. Individuals can contact their legislators (as private citizens, not TMNs) regarding funding for TMN and wildlife conservation.

The end of the year is coming up quickly. Please be sure to report all volunteer and AT hours for 2011 to Scott Moore by the end of December. He needs to submit the annual report to TMN by January 16. Remember to report all volunteer hours, whether or not you intend to re-certify. Our volunteer service is valued at TPWD at \$10.50 an hour, and is used to obtain matching funds and grants for programs.

A highlight of the state meeting was honoring the service and retirement of Sonny Arnold. We will miss his presentations at our training classes, although he promises to stay connected!

Our November meeting will feature Rob Schmidt of the A.E. Ward Fish Hatchery in San Marcos. We'll meet in the recreation hall at Lockhart State Park. Don't forget to be on the lookout for nature-related gifts for our annual holiday potluck and gift exchange coming up on December 19 at McKinney Roughs.



Lost Pines Master Naturalist Monthly Meeting Schedule December 19, 2011. 6:30 - 9:00 pm. McKinney Roughs Dining Hall. Annual elections and holiday party.

Newsletter Deadline

Deadline for the next issue is **December 30, 2011**. 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 Jeannie Jessup: magicgenie@gmail.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 jpps as big as you can send them. Please do not imbed 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; (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; (512) 398-3122.

Bastrop Co. Extension Office: Rachel Bauer, CEA-AG/NR; Bastroptx@tamu.edu; (512) 581-7186.

Bastrop/Caldwell Co. TPWD Wildlife Biologist:
Meredith Longoria, 804 Pecan, Bastrop,
Meredith.Longoria@tpwd.state.tx.us; (512) 332-7280.



All pictures in this newsletter from [Wikipedia](http://Wikipedia.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/) are released under CC-BY-SA.
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>



Officers

President

Louise Ridlon
(512) 985-5064
flridlon@hotmail.com

Vice President

Walt Elson
(281) 382-5593
Walt.elson@gmail.com

Secretary

Susan Crone
(512)-303-1884
smcrone48@gmail.com

Treasurer

Rik Martinez
(979)-236-0994
martinez_rik@hotmail.com

Past President

Mark McClelland
(512) 281-5516
markmcc@prodigy.net

State Representative

Michal Hubbard
(512) 303-5976
michal_photog@yahoo.com

Committees

Hospitality
Volunteer Services
Newsletter
Web Page
Basic Training
Advanced Training
Membership
Outreach
Chapter History

[Caroline Easley](#)
[Scott Moore](#)
[Jeannie Jessup](#)
[Andy Butler](#)
[Paulette Boudreaux](#)
[Walt Elson](#)
[Gene Moulden](#)
[Jim Estes](#)
[Bill Brooks](#)

512-332-0851
512-589-3098
512-772-3654
512-321-1308
512-589-3438
281-382-5593
512-985-5823
512-620-0322
512-581-0377