

LOST PINES CHAPTER

Texas Master Naturalist



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Prometheus' Redemption

by Larry Gfeller

The early morning horizon, painted pink and orange by the rising sun, expanded into a flotilla of clouds slowly crawling across the sky. Overhead, a hawk circled soundlessly. It rode a thermal down, floating with its wings outstretched, its face turned to watch something in the grass. Suddenly it cut left and flared wide, its talons held forward, and dropped out of sight in the long grass. It did not rise again, and there was no sound, no cry before the kill. Nearby, seven mounted Indian braves, gaunt and sinewy, surveyed the fire intently from opposite sides as the flames devoured the understory. White smoke spiraled in sync with the lazy breeze, first this way and then that, the flames hungrily consuming the grass and underbrush as it moved through.

The mighty oaks towered above the blaze, seared but unhurt. In a month or two, the Great Father would coax the buffalo from the Edwards Plateau into the revitalized savannah and, once more, there would be meat for the tribe. Few things could stay forever the way they were when the spirits made them. Even the great plains of grass, the home of the People, would not be always as it had been. The whites would bring their plows and scar the earth; they would put their cattle on it and the cattle would bring the ugly mesquite trees. The grass that had been high forever would be trampled and torn.

In those days our land looked much different: vast expanses of native bunch grass punctuated by standing groves of black hickory and oak trees, rich with wildlife and sustenance for all who lived there. American Indians had been using fire for thousands of years before our European ancestors came. They

knew if they used fire to keep out the woody brush and invasive plants, the natural grassland prairies would thrive and buffalo would return. There was no comparison between hunting the ponderous, life-sustaining bison and filching a basket of squirrels out of a densely brushed forest, tangled by scrubby trees and yaupon. Since our ancestors didn't care about buffalo and were focused on forging a different future, they didn't learn about the benefits of fire and its restorative powers. They missed a great chance to learn about this land,



Spring prairie burn

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Prometheus, cont.

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as a fire culture never really did develop within the white man's ranches and farms. That missed opportunity and loss of culture has plagued our ecosystems and local economies ever since.

Our Lost Pines region is unique. It represents a point of convergence among different soils, geology and plants natural to this part of Texas. Superimposed over the main ecosystem in our area—the Post Oak Savannah—so too was our magnificent pine forests subject to being choked out by brush, vines and invading thickets of yaupon. The purposeful burning of the land more or less disappeared with the Indians. Today few true examples of old-growth Post Oak Savannah still exist, replaced by invasive, thick underbrush and groves of undesirable trees. As our geography became divided, crisscrossed by roadways, developed and fenced off into ever smaller parcels, fire suppression was viewed as necessary to protect our homesteads, and the fuels built up. A natural response perhaps, but dead wrong when it comes to coexisting with wildfire.

Remember the oppressive thickets of mixed hardwoods, eastern red cedar and yaupon in our area before the fire? It still exists in areas the fire never reached. This buildup of natural fuels only intensified the horrific Bastrop County Complex fires of September 2011. Today, when we do have wildfires, they're catastrophic and very intense, and they do a lot more damage than they otherwise might. The 2012 wildfire season in the western states set records for destruction and mayhem. In 2011 Texas had one of the largest wildfire seasons we've ever had when 4 million acres burned statewide. Wildfires have burned this area before and they will do it again, so long as fire is suppressed and fuels are allowed to build.



Aerial view of the aftermath of the Bastrop County Complex wildfire. The density of the understory contributed to this wildfire's severity.

Fire, of course, is a natural phenomenon—part of the earth we inhabit. Where you have forests, there will be fire. We so desperately need to understand this. While fire threatens wildlife and humans, it revitalizes and replenishes the land. Nutrients are released, the leaf litter and duff are burned away along with downed trees and brush, and sunlight can once again bathe the forest floor. Seeds that have been laying dormant and new seeds that can now reach the forest floor sprout and flourish, providing a more diversified and better quality plant life. This supports a wider population of insects, birds and mammals and provides better access for wildlife. New life, in a stronger, more vigorous succession virtually explodes as nature presses the reset button. If you've paid attention, you've witnessed this yourself during the springtime. Fire is how nature clears her clutter and restores balance and good health. It's what happens when she needs a good cleaning. The Indians understood how fire works. We are only just now beginning to grasp its essence.

Fortunately, the tide may be turning. With each wildfire catastrophe, government agencies and large landowners are acknowledging that the best way to prevent out-of-control fires is to burn it yourself. Such "prescribed burns" have been used in Bastrop State Park, McKinney Roughs Nature Center and

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2014 Basic Training Curriculum Schedule

*Classes count as Advanced Training for certified members

All classes start at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

February

10th — *Ecosystem Management*, Greg Creacy — Buescher State Park

17th — *Ecological Concepts & Ecological Regions of Texas*, Barron Rector — Bluebonnet Electric

24th — *Weather & Climate*, Paul Yura; *Archaeology*, Clark Wernecke — Lockhart State Park

March

1st — 9am-1pm, *Lost Pines Ecosystem & Management, Volunteers as Teachers Field Trip*, Tara Humphries — Bastrop State Park

3rd — *Geology & Soils of Texas*, Chris Mathewson — Bluebonnet Electric

17th — *Texas Naturalists Pri-*

or to World War II, Mark Klym — Red Rock Community Center

24th — *Ornithology*, Carroll Moore; *Ichthyology*, Gordon Linam — Red Rock Community Center

29th — 9am-1pm, *Birds & Habitat Relationships Field Trip*, LPMN Members — Hornsby Bend

31st — *Nature of Naming & Plants*, Minette Marr — Lockhart State Park

April

7th — *Wetlands Ecology & Management*, Chris Harper; *Aquatic Ecology & Management*, Bryan Cook — Red Rock Community Center

12th — 9am-1pm, *Aquatic Ecology Field Trip*, Aquarena Staff — Aquarena Springs

14th — *Forest Ecology & Management*, Daniel Lewis; *Urban*

Systems, Kelly Bender Simon — Bluebonnet Electric

19th — 9am-1pm, *Post Oak Savannah Ecosystem & Management Field Trip*, Nicholas Cowey — McKinney Roughs Nature Park

28th — *Mammalogy*, Pamela Owen — Red Rock Community Center

May

5th — *Rangeland Ecology & Management*, Bob Lyons — Bastrop State Park

10th — 9am-1pm, *Blackland Prairie Ecosystem & Management Field Trip*, Dalton Mertz & Bonnie Dredla — Luling Foundation Farm

12th — *Entomology*, Don Tuff — Lockhart State Park

19th — *Herpetology*, Bill Brooks — McKinney Roughs Nature Park

February Speakers

Ecosystem Management—Greg Creacy



Greg obtained a B.S. in Wildlife Conservation at Southeast Oklahoma State University and a M.S. in Biology at Sam Houston State University. His thesis research involved ponderosa pine forest restoration to benefit wildlife in northern Arizona. Greg worked as a wildlife technician and research assistant for the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, Texas Research Institute for Environmental Studies and U.S. Forest Service prior to employment with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. He has spent the past 16 years with TPWD, managing and conserving natural resources on public and private lands across numerous ecoregions of Texas. Greg currently works as a Natural Resources Coordinator for the State Parks Division where he coordinates natural resource monitoring, restoration, management, research, and mitigation for 17 state park properties within central Texas.

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February Speakers, cont.

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Barron S. Rector—Ecological Concepts & Ecological Regions of Texas



Barron is a native of San Angelo, Texas. He was educated at Angelo State University, receiving a B.S. in Biology/Chemistry in 1972, a M.S. in Biology/Plant Taxonomy/Chemistry in 1976, and at Texas A&M University where he received a Ph.D. in Range Science in 1983. Dr. Rector currently holds the position of Associate Professor and Extension Range Specialist and has been in this position since 1981. He was previously employed with the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station dealing with range animal nutrition research from 1973-1981 in both San Angelo and College Station. He is responsible for Extension range programming in grazing management, watershed management for small acreage landowners, range animal nutrition, range plant identification, ecological principles and ecosystem function, weed and brush ecology, range seeding, poisonous plant management, invasive organisms on rangelands, rangeland monitoring and the 4-H and youth and urban educational programs in range and natural resources.

Paul Yura—Weather & Climate



Paul was born and raised in Austin. He went to school at the University of Texas before transferring to the University of Oklahoma where he received his B.S. in meteorology and attended graduate school. While going to school, he worked summers at the Austin Weather Service Office and the Norman Oklahoma National Weather Service office. After graduation, Paul began his full time career with the NWS in Brownsville, TX as a forecaster. Paul transferred to the NWS office in Charleston, SC in 2002 where he was a Lead forecaster and then Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM). In 2008 Paul accepted the Warning Coordination Meteorologist position at the Austin-San Antonio weather office. As WCM, his primary job is to be the liaison between the National Weather Service and local media, citizens, county, state, and federal agencies, as well as conducting storm damage surveys and community outreach.

Clark Wernecke—Archaeology



Clark is the Project Director for the Gault Project at Texas State University and Executive Director of the Gault School of Archaeological Research, a nonprofit dedicated to research and education regarding the earliest peoples in the Americas. Dr. Wernecke brings a unique blend of scholarship and experience to the project with degrees in history, business and anthropology. He has considerable experience in business and has specialized in the management of large archaeological projects. Dr. Wernecke has worked in the Middle East, Mesoamerica, the American Southeast and Southwest, and Texas. He is researching the history of the famous Gault site in Bell County and is the lead researcher on the incised stones from Gault, the earliest provenienced art in the Americas. When not working on paleoindian materials he is working on a book about the Battle of Resaca de la Palma, the second day of the Mexican-American War.

Meet Liz Pullman

by Larry Gfeller

In the grilling sun of a late August afternoon, I consulted one of my plant identification references to nail a plant species growing on my property. This was a famed tome, held out as a consummate source of impeccable stature. I located a line drawing that bore what I thought to be a reasonable similarity to the sample before me, and then I began to read:

“Generally similar to *S. comate* but ligules less than 1.5 mm long, glumes to 4 cm long, lemmas mostly 15-18 mm long and terminal awn segment pubescent with hairs 0.5-1.5 mm long. Chromosome number, $2n=44$.”

Say what? Clearly, over my head! Shrinking from such experiences, today I fumble through simpler plant books with color photographs, continuing to struggle with a different form of confusion. It’s still disheartening to realize how many varieties of daisies exist, for example—many of which appear virtually identical in a photo. Then there are multiple common names for the same plant . . . might as well be playing the lottery.

The complexity of the natural world forces many of us to cleave to the safety of being generalists. Everyone loves a train in the distance. This is a comfortable place to be. We’re not expected to know a lot about anything in particular. Admiration, therefore, comes easily when we make acquaintance of a specialist, someone whose passion for a subject burns deep and hot. Every TMN chapter has its theme experts, but for ours Liz Pullman towers over all others in her understanding and love of flora. This is not someone exiled and hidden behind library stacks and research papers, although she certainly is no stranger to academia. If you spend time outdoors in our chapter, you have likely run into Liz already. Clipboard in hand, day-pack slung over her shoulder—you should not be surprised when she shows up at a Maniac workday, an outing at Yegua Knobs, exploring any of the state parks, or along some obscure county road—collecting, categorizing or cataloging the details of Texas plants.

For many of us, just learning to identify regional plant life by common name is difficult enough, but Liz works within the regimented confines of non-contradictory identification (taxonomy). While her world is driven by discipline and exactitude, her connections to people are easy and sincere. She never preaches or lectures. Offering encouragement, mentorship and a readiness to share knowledge with real people, Liz easily switches into flesh and blood language. This is what makes her such a prize for our chapter. If you’ve ever struggled with taxonomic tables, flower parts and shapes, venation, leaf and stem configuration, *ad vomitorium* . . . having a sympathetic, informed guide through this bewilderment is like basking in a never ending, fascinating conversation. Even so, answers don’t always come just because you want them to. Liz is the first to admit that sometimes we must be willing to accept that the most accurate classification possible on any given day might just be . . . NYC (damned yellow composite).

Enthusiasm, eagerness, fire . . . where does this come from? Regardless of the treasures found deep within the human soul, such spirit is often sparked by unexpected encounters. Once in North Carolina in the early 70’s, Liz was accompanied by a photographer named Jean on a bird banding trip. There was more to this lady than met the eye. Jean was struck by the beauty of a flower on the trail. “Oh look . . . It’s a little orchid,” Jean exclaimed, and proceeded to easily offer up the Latin name, like an unassuming gift. The photographer’s knowledge of plants seemed infinite. Liz was infected. From that moment on, Jean accepted Liz as a plant protégé. For years they traded information on birds and plants. Jean eventually provided Liz a copy of “Key to Spring and Summer Wildflowers of the Chapel Hill Area,” which Liz still uses today. Further cementing the bond, Liz tagged along with some of her bird banding colleagues as they attended various botany courses. There was no turning back. She was hooked alright—deeply and irreversibly.



Day tripper in Big Bend

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Truth is, Liz has been infatuated by plants from the age of 6, when she first transplanted violets and dandelions in Sevierville, Tennessee—entrenched deep in the Great Smoky Mountains, a very Eden; what many botanists like to call the finest mixed mesophytic forest in the world. The Smokies harbor an astonishing



Pressed, dried specimen of Spiderwort (*Tradescantia tharpia*, hopefully) from Yegua Knobs, 2012

range of plant life: wildflowers, shrubs, mosses, lichens, fungi. They are home to 130 native species of trees. The whole of Europe has just 85. This was much more than a little girl amusing herself in the back yard. Liz wanted to master the underlying structure of things and made early acquaintance with the Scientific Method. Her educational grooming includes high school years at a private academy (boarding school), which provided a solid foundation in the language of science (Latin), literature, advanced math, grammar and history. Later at the University of Tennessee, she completed a double major in Home Economics and Secondary Education (the killer combination for ambitious young women of that time) but continued post-grad classes in chemistry, physics, and biology—her authentic interests. Thus began a lifetime relationship with education. As the fast-moving waters of life swept her up, Liz always managed to find her way into classes at whatever university was nearby, taking courses in ecology, zoology, ornithology, botany, geology, and statistics. In Austin as recently as last year, Liz enrolled in an arduous plant taxonomy course and is now looking forward to a 2014 lecture series on “Nature and the American Mind.”

In the working world, most everyone has to spend time as a low-class mule before being elevated to the status of high-class mule . . . Liz certainly paid her dues. Her first job was preparing and packing peanut butter crackers for a local bakery. She also spent time in a canning factory—first as a conveyor belt inspector; later in back-office work like payrolls, time cards, etc. Driven by necessity, these jobs were intellectual prison. After finishing her formal education, Liz escaped the assembly line to feed her fervor for science. Her first “real” job was as a research technician for the Textile Research Institute in Princeton, N.J. Later, after picking up a husband who was a graduate student at TRI and subsequently worked at Research Triangle Park in North Carolina, Liz moved there and worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service banding birds—first as a cooperator (no pay) and later (with pay) in a grant supported 2-year study of bird movement in a suburban habitat. She was teaching volunteers and grad students in trapping, marking and taking physiological measurements. This eventually led to a position as a departmental research tech in Poultry Science where she finished out her career overseeing research in several labs—and permanently tagged her as a bona fide lab rat. As these years passed, Liz worked in animal nutrition, poultry breeding, genetics, DNA research, and agricultural waste management; she also divorced and remarried. Today, Liz happily resides in an Austin condo with her sister. She moved here in 2008. By 2009, she had sought out LPMN, graduated and quickly became certified as a Texas Master Naturalist. With over 650 volunteer hours under her belt, there’s no letting up.



Weighing a Brown Thrasher. North Carolina, 1997

Liz has enjoyed varied interests and hobbies throughout her life. Some have been home and hearth-related (sewing, knitting, crocheting, spinning and weaving—she owns her own spinning wheel); others have involved conservation and environmental work. Before moving to Texas, this included working with city/county committees and commissions, several appointments to small area planning groups and involvement with the Triangle Land Con-

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KUDOS CORNER

Bridge Maniacs Receive Stars in our Park Award

On January 23, 2014, the LPMN Bridge Maniacs were invited to the Buescher State Park staff meeting to receive a "Stars in our Park" award from Texas Parks and Wildlife. This is a recognition award given to employees and volunteers who go above and beyond to make our state parks better places. The Bridge Maniacs were nominated and recognized for the hard work and dedication put into the trail/bridge work done at Buescher.

This team of volunteers has played a critical role in the trail renovation project at Buescher State Park to make the trails multi-use mountain bike accessible. Due to the work of this team, the renovation project went quickly and efficiently, with completion coming months prior than anticipated. These volunteers provided 292 hours of service constructing new trails, renovating existing trails, cutting trees, removing brush, hauling materials, building bridges and protecting low water crossings in the extreme summer heat. This was all done with a positive attitude. Due to their efforts, park visitors for many generations will be able to experience Buescher State Park through a new recreational opportunity. This team has agreed to continually volunteer at the park for trail maintenance and improvement through other areas of the park.

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TPWD's Cullen Sartor presenting the Stars in our Park plaque to LPMN member Rick Gast



Dave Hill, a Maniac volunteer, Cullen Sartor, and LPMN Bridge Maniacs Rick Gast, Cat May, Frank May and Audrey Ambrose



Preparing for culvert installation in Buescher State Park



The second culvert, part of the bridge construction and culvert installation project

KUDOS CORNER, cont.

Larry Gfeller Garner's LPMN Donation for Guided Hike

What would you do if you received an email out of the blue from a perfect stranger asking if you'd lead a private hike through the Lost Pines? If you're Larry Gfeller, you'd be honored that you were asked to be part of a celebratory family weekend, put on your boots and head to Bastrop State Park.

To commemorate their 50th wedding anniversary, Jerry Gaston and his wife brought some of their extended family down from Dallas to spend the weekend in the Bastrop area among the Lost Pines. Although they stayed in the luxury of the Hyatt Lost Pines Resort, he wanted his "citified" kids and grandkids to experience a taste of the local ecology through the eyes of someone who lives here. Jerry himself has extensive history as a guide/naturalist at Yellowstone National Park and other areas, so he can appreciate the value of an unscripted trek through the woods.

Larry spent nearly two hours with the family, explaining the day-to-day Lost Pines experience. He emphasized how the Bastrop County Complex fires changed the forest, immediately and for its future.

As thanks for Larry's time and attention to the family, Jerry sent a thank you note and donation to our chapter of Texas Master Naturalists. In expressing his appreciation, Jerry wrote that the family voted their hike with Larry to be the highlight of their weekend!



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LOST PINES MASTER NATURALIST CHAPTER MEETING SCHEDULE

The monthly business meeting is an opportunity to hear first hand about volunteer and advanced training opportunities. The chapter's project leaders update members on their work and recruit volunteers if needed. In addition, chapter administration issues are discussed: brief committee reports, financial decisions, and news from our state organizers. *One hour volunteer time is awarded for attendance at qualifying business meetings.*

UPCOMING CHAPTER MEETINGS:

February 17, 2014—Bluebonnet Electric Headquarters

March 17, 2014—Red Rock Community Center

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

New Activities

2014 Training Course. The LPMN chapter is looking for 2 volunteers to assist with each training class. If the scheduled speaker is unable to attend, volunteers will help lead a prepared exercise in which trainees will review, summarize and present information on a variety of topics. See [page 3](#) for the curriculum schedule. Contact Audrey Ambrose at klcj2@flash.net to sign up.

Texas Bluebird Society Season Kickoff in Bastrop. Help the Bluebird Society set up for its season kickoff at 11:50 am on Fri., Feb. 28 and/or help with take down on Sat., Mar. 1 at 3 pm. Contact Audrey Ambrose at klcj2@flash.net to sign up.

Ongoing Activities

Erosion Control. Erosion is one of the biggest issues in the park following the wildfire. We can mitigate some of these effects by installing straw logs, or wattles, on steep and eroding hillsides. This work is difficult and involves walking up and down steep, rocky hills, carrying bulky straw logs, bending and using hand tools. It is appropriate for ages 14 and up only.

Bastrop State Park Trail Work. This is moderately difficult work and involves hiking long distances, bending, and carrying and using hand tools. Contact the Friends of

the Lost Pines at volunteer.flpsp@gmail.com for more details and to sign up. Contact Reagan.Faught@tpwd.texas.gov to be notified of work dates.

Buescher State Park Trail Work Wednesdays. These are the third Wednesday of each month from 9am-1pm. On this day, park staff will be performing trail work from maintenance to construction to tree and brush removal and everything in between, depending on what is a priority at the time. Show up at the walk-in/trailhead parking at 9am. No need to RSVP. Contact Cullen.Sartor@tpwd.texas.gov with questions, 512-332-6683.

Trail work at Bastrop and Buescher State Parks. If you are interested in being notified about those opportunities, please contact Resource Specialist Regan Faught at Reagan.Faught@tpwd.texas.gov.

Colorado River Watch Network. Colorado River Watch Network monitors complete an 8-hour training provided by LCRA (eligible for LPMN Advanced Training credit), then regularly provide data to the LCRA. Visit the [LCRA volunteer web page](#) for more information.

Hornsby Bend Monthly Bird Count. Usually held the 2nd Saturday of each month. Meet at [Hornsby Bend, Center for Environmental Research](#) at 7am for the morning survey or 4pm for the afternoon survey.

Bridge Maniacs—every Wednesday, location TBD—contact LarryDGfeller@yahoo.com for details or stay tuned to Meetup.

McKinney Roughs Biosurvey. This is a regular series of plant, bird and other wildlife monitoring at LCRA's McKinney Roughs Nature Park. Kathy McAleese coordinates these. The schedule varies, depending on weather and other factors. Usually there will be two outings (one during the week; one on the weekend) each month. Contact Kathy McAleese at kmcaleese@austin.rr.com or Louise Ridlon at fridlon@hotmail.com for more information.

Bastrop State Park Nature Surveys. Surveys can be done ad hoc on your own schedule. Please make sure to use the proper reporting form for your results. Contact Louise Ridlon at fridlon@hotmail.com for details and information on reporting your findings.

McKinney Roughs Volunteer Activities. McKinney Roughs has a variety of activities available to volunteers. Contact Jana Hellbusch, 512-303-5073.

Friends of the Yegua Knobs. Volunteers are needed to survey plant and animal life, identify and clear camping areas and trails, plus other fun and rewarding tasks. Contact Jeremiah Jarvis at jjfrog@flash.net to volunteer.

ADVANCED TRAINING

Specialty Gardens in the Landscape

Sat., Feb. 8, 9am-4pm, New Braunfels—\$49

Featuring:

- Container Gardens
- Succulent Gardens
- Herb Gardens
- Pollinator Gardens
- Rose Gardens

(5 CEUs for Certified Master Gardeners)

For more information, visit <http://txmg.org/comal/event/spring-seminar-2/>

Prescribed Burning Training

Feb. 1, 8:30am, Luling

M.O. Neasloney WMA, 20700 SH 80 North Gonzales

This workshop is designed to give landowners and managers a basic understanding of the use and application of prescribed burning for quail, other ground nesting birds, other

wildlife species and livestock management.

RSVP by Jan. 31 to Brendan Witt at 830-424-3407 or Brendan.witt@tpwd.texas.gov

Bring: Your lunch/drinks, leather gloves, leather boots, cotton outerwear.

Participants will conduct a burn if conditions permit.

Feb. 3-7, full days, Sinton—\$350

Coastal Bend, Region 5, Texas Prescribed Burn Manager Certification Training

Lodging, food, and learning materials included in the fee. Lodging is bunk house style.

For more information visit www.prescribedburn.org

Feb. 3-7, full days, Bastrop—\$100

Pineywoods, Region 4, Texas Prescribed Burn Certification Manager Training

For more information visit <http://www.texasagriculture.gov/Home/ProductionAgriculture/PrescribedBurnProgram/PrescribedBurningTraining.aspx>.

Feb. 20-24, full days, Sonora—\$395, plus \$45 facilities use fee due upon arrival

Edwards Plateau, Region 2, Texas Prescribed Burn Manager Certification Basic Training

This is the basic prescribed burning workshop. The workshop provides information on the history of fire, weather, planning a burn, fuels and fuel moisture, equipment.

Note: The Advanced Prescribed Burning School below is also required to meet certification educational requirements.

Visit <http://www.ranchmanagement.org/> for more information.

March 6-8, full days, Sonora—\$395, plus \$45 facilities use fee due upon arrival

Edwards Plateau, Region 2, Texas Prescribed Burn Manager Certification Advanced Training

Stay connected!

The Lost Pines Master Naturalists uses Meetup.com to stay current on volunteer and advanced training activities. Use Meetup to RSVP and comment on upcoming events and those you've attended.

It's easy to sign up – just visit <http://www.meetup.com/Lost-Pines-Master-Naturalist/>

ADVANCED TRAINING, cont.

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This workshop builds on the previous school providing more information on fire behavior, fire effects, and planning and conducting a prescribed burn.

Visit <http://www.ranchmanagement.org/> for more information.

Feral Hog Management

Feb. 4, 8am, Luling—\$15

Luling Foundation, 523 S. Mulberry Street

Topics include:

- Basic biology of feral swine
- Population dynamics
- Laws & regulations for hunting hogs
- Agricultural regulations
- Feral hog safety & disease concerns
- Feral hog control

Pre-register by Jan. 31 with the Caldwell County Extension Office, 512-398-3122 or Caldwell@ag.tamu.edu

Beef & Brush Focus

Feb. 5, 8:15am, Austin—\$70

Travis County AgriLife Extension Office, 1600 B. Smith Rd.

Topics include:

- Feral hog & predator control
- External parasites in beef cattle
- Brush control

Register by sending an email to Sue Carrasco at sacarrasco@ag.tamu.edu or by calling 512-854-9610.

Olive and Pomegranate Field Day

Feb. 5, 8:30am, Smithville—\$15

Meet at Smithville City Council Chambers, 317 Main Street, and then caravan to David Corry's orchard on Highway 95 South. Bring your own lawn chair, as part of the meeting will be held in the olive orchard.

Program includes a discussion by Dr. Larry Stein, AgriLife Extension Horticulturist, of the establishment and management of orchards, olive and pomegranate varieties for the area and production economics.

In the case of inclement weather, call the Extension

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WHO'S WHO

OFFICERS

President, Julia Akin
juliaakin@mac.com

Vice-President, Audrey Ambrose
kc1jc2@flash.net

Secretary, Joan Estes
joan.estes@earthlink.net

Treasurer, Holly Sutherland
holly_rob1999@yahoo.com

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Hospitality, Lori Baumann
lbaumann@sbcglobal.net

Volunteer Services, Audrey Ambrose
kc1jc2@flash.net

Communications, Roxanne Hernandez
roxanne.m.hernandez@gmail.com

Basic Training, Julia Akin
juliaakin@mac.com

Advanced Training & Programs, Audrey Ambrose
kc1jc2@flash.net

Membership, Scott Moore
lpnmhours@gmail.com

Outreach, Jim Estes
jestes@ionet.net

Chapter History, Bill Brooks
bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu

PLEASE remember to complete an **Activity Reporting Form** for all Advanced Training taken and volunteer service performed.

NO report = NO credit!

Send reports to
lpnmhours@gmail.com

ADVANCED TRAINING, cont.

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office at 512-581-7186 to determine whether the field day will go on as scheduled.

RSVP by Feb. 4 by calling the Extension office.

Pests/Plant Selection

Feb. 13, 11:30am, Austin—\$65

Travis County AgriLife Extension Office, 1600 B. Smith Rd.

Topics include:

- Pests in our pecan orchards
- Plant selection
- Best practices for Integrated Pest Management

Register by sending an email to Sue Carrasco at sacarrasco@ag.tamu.edu or by calling 512-854-9610.

Texas Riparian and Stream Ecosystem Workshop

Feb. 25, 8am, Hallettsville

Knights of Columbus Hall, 321 U.S. 77 South

Workshop includes indoor classroom presentation and outdoor stream walk.

- Introduction to riparian principles
- Watershed processes
- Basic hydrology

- Erosion/deposition principles
- Riparian vegetation
- Potential causes of degradation and possible resulting impairments
- Available local resources, including technical assistance and tools that can be employed to prevent and/or resolve degradation

RSVP by Feb. 19 at <http://watershedplanning.tamu.edu/training/>

For more information or questions, contact Nikki Dictson at 979-458-5915 or n-dictson@tamu.edu.

Texas Bluebird Society 2014 Season Kickoff & FUNdraising Auction, Bastrop

Fri., Feb. 28, Bastrop Hampton Inn

Friday Night Buffet with Paul & Georgean Kyle presenting “Chimney Swifts”

Sat., Mar. 1, 9-3, Bastrop Convention Center

- Dr. Patricia A. Gowaty, UCLA (via Skype) – bluebirds
- Robyn Bailey, Cornell Lab of Ornithology – NestWatch
- Bill Lindemann – planting for bluebirds

- Sara Harrod, Texas State – bluebird research project
- David Pruitt, BSA – nestbox trail at Mitchell Lake Audubon
- Linda Crum – House Sparrow Control

Sun., Mar. 2, Chatura Canyon

Morning field trip to see Chimney Swift towers and more— Limited to 12

Presentations, Lunch, and FUNdraising Auction still only \$15.

- Early Bird Registration (10 door prize chances & lunch) closes Feb. 1
- Advanced Registration (2 door prize chances & lunch) closes Feb. 15
- At the door registration available – Neither lunch nor door prize chances if registering at the door.

Register online at register.texasbluebirdsociety.org

2014 Basic Training

*Counts as Advanced Training for members already certified

See [page 3](#) for curriculum schedule.

Liz, cont.

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servancy. Liz and her husband Jim worked for TLC for over a decade and managed to help preserve over 2,000 acres of wild space through management of easements and charitable gifts. The couple also traveled extensively, using their personal time to do bio census work in places like the Monongahela National Forest, Jefferson National Forest, Croatan National Forest and forays along the Blue Ridge Parkway, Skyline Drive . . . the list is long. In Texas, Liz is particularly fond of refuges in the Valley, South Padre Island, High Island, Big Bend and the mountains of West Texas. She continues to explore favorite natural areas outside the state . . . Cameron Prairie, La., Dauphin Island, Ala., Zion National Park in Utah, the North Rim of the Grand Canyon in Az. Places like New York City, L.A. and Chicago do not compute!

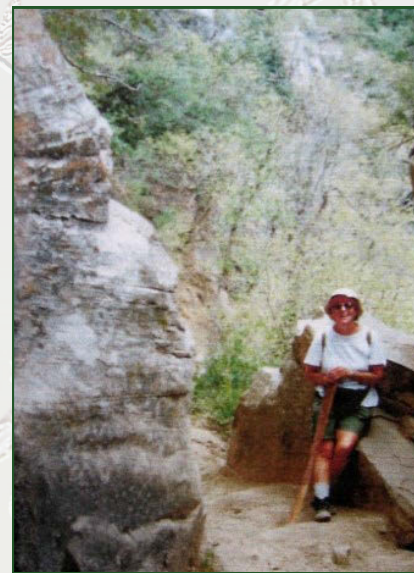


Top (at last) of Pine Canyon Trail, Big Bend, 2001

So what does a retired scientist do to keep the juices flowing? Currently, Liz dedicates her efforts to perfecting comprehensive plant lists for Bastrop and Caldwell Counties. It's not so much that she's still finding new species as it is keeping pace with the shifting tectonic plates of vascular plant family nomenclature. Apparently, the world of plant taxonomy has recently undergone significant lumping, sifting, splitting and moving around of genera. A minor revolution. Liz's work feeds into a larger database at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center and, despite the re-shuffling, the new categories are allegedly now DNA linked. This should mean less change in the future. Liz also likes to write, having published for the North Carolina Botanical Garden, Chapel Hill N.C., various bird and technical

journals. In 2001, Liz published an essay for a North Carolina journal entitled "From Lewis' Heartleaf to Yellow-Flowered Trillium. The Nature of the Little River." She has been a prolific contributor to our own LPMN newsletter. Liz enjoys working with private landowners who want to know "what is on their property." She likes working with LPMNs, appreciates the Colorado River Refuge, and enjoys a close relationship with the Pines and Prairies Land Trust.

As master naturalists, we all probably share, to some degree or another, an interest in what grows naturally in our highland meadows, our pastures and ranchland, the woods and riparian areas that make our state unique. The gap between knowing and wanting to learn can be immense. Role models are important, but the real essence is found deep within. Like any worthwhile endeavor, it's simply hard work. What does it take to become an accomplished plant detective? If you have the curiosity, the dedication and the desire to learn about the plants that make all life possible, here's a little advice from Liz: "Learn well what you have within a quarter of a mile of where you live, then start branching out. Try to learn a plant and then follow it through the seasons. Don't totally depend on the color of the flower—try to see similarities in leaf types and arrangement. Try to see family characteristics."



North Rim of the Grand Canyon, 2003

It's overwhelming to try to fully comprehend someone else's life experiences—especially the failures, the mistakes—the false starts that contribute the polish, the patina of a lifetime of significant accomplishment. They play just as important a role as successes and triumphs. But in the grand scheme of things, Liz Pullman has managed to do what she loves—and do it with conviction, professionalism and abundant enjoyment. Everyone's life must follow its own unique flow, taking turns here, making detours there. If Liz's inexhaustible list of interests and accomplishments makes your head hurt; at age 80 she's not done yet! When asked what might remain on her "bucket list," Liz responds, "I would like to master the plant family formulas as taught by Flo Oxley (formerly of the Wildflower Center), visit a few new types of habitat in the Far West and Pacific Northwest. I want to continue to learn more about this planet Earth." You go, girl!

KUDOS CORNER, cont.

Member Milestones

Thank you all for your dedication to furthering the management of natural resources and natural areas within our community through education, outreach, and service!

1,000 Volunteer Hours

Walt Elson

Rick Johnson

500 Volunteer Hours

Larry Gfeller

Miriam Hall

Grace Pratt

Rob Sutherland

250 Volunteer Hours

Julia Akin

Audrey Ambrose

Al Hoerig

Anna Stalcup

Congratulations to our newest certified Texas Master Naturalists!

Kelly Aleaci

Laura Clancy

Julie Erlon

Roxanne Hernandez

Peggy Jo Hilburn

Cat May

Frank May

Pat May

Steve Moredock

Carroll Moore

Jim Sherrill

Jan Walter

Kelly Ward

Susie Ward



Prometheus, cont.

(Continued from page 2)

numerous other large tracts of land in our region. As you may imagine, there is considerably more involved than just striking a match and setting the land afire. Advance planning is required and a written plan is critical. Fuels need to be segregated and built up in planned areas by cutting down and collecting dead trees and brush into smaller pieces for dispersal, reducing large accumulations. Adequate help (labor) must be

arranged, fire guards (streams, strips of bare soil, water impoundments, etc.) must be built and the right equipment must be in place beforehand.

Most burn plans require power-driven sprayers, drip torches, matches, radios, rakes, chainsaws, pickups or tractors, proper protective gear and plenty of drinking water. Weather plays a pivotal role; multiple dates for the burn must be planned. Relative humidity, wind speed and direction are

the key components. There are, of course, local laws and ordinances to be followed and local fire departments, sheriff departments and neighbors all need prior notification. Smoke management is a major consideration. This all takes special training and experience. Next time, in Part II, we'll take a look at how a prescribed burn is arranged and accomplished. We'll also consider some common sense fire-wise mitigation solutions all landowners, large or small, can do.

Newsletter Deadline

Deadline for the next issue is February 21, 2014. Relevant contributions, photos, announcements, or other material relating to the mission of the Texas Master Naturalist program, particularly those pertaining to our local area are welcomed. Please send information to Roxanne.M.Hernandez@gmail.com.

STATE PROGRAM CONTACTS

Website: <http://txmn.org>

State Coordinator: Michelle Haggerty, 979-458-2034, mhaggerty@wfscgate.tamu.edu

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

SPONSOR CONTACTS

Caldwell County Extension Office: Michael Haynes, 512-398-3122, caldwell-tx@tamu.edu

Bastrop County Extension Office: Rachel Bauer, 512-581-7186, bastroptx@tamu.edu

Bastrop/Caldwell County TPWD Wildlife Biologist: Meredith Longoria, 512-332-7280, Meredith.Longoria@tpwd.texas.gov

