

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the
Texas Master Naturalist Hill Country Chapter

NOVEMBER 2013

Volume 11

Number 11

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™



NOVEMBER 18 MEETING: VERNAL POOLS OF ENCHANTED ROCK

Nita Hazle, Hill Country Chapter-Texas Master Naturalist and Austin Community College Biology teacher, will be our speaker. She will focus on the diversity of life forms in the vernal pools, which are weathered pits on the rock's crest. Everyone is welcome to join us on Monday, Nov. 18, at 7 p.m. in the Upper Guadalupe River Authority's lecture hall, 125 Lehman Drive in Kerrville. Arrive at 6:30 to chat with members and guests.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE . . . Vern Crawford

As we reap the bounty of Autumn in the Hill Country, in our Chapter it is also time to celebrate this year's harvest of new Master Naturalists!

How fortunate we are to have this enthusiastic group of folks who have made up this, our Chapter's twelfth class. What a privilege it will be to congratulate each one of these thirty-three Master Naturalists as they receive their official green chapter badges at commencement ceremonies.

I've had the opportunity of serving on the Class Committee for the past three years. In addition to enjoying hearing the lectures again, I've been able to get a sense of the uniqueness of each year's class.

Virtually every class has been an impressive group of gifted and talented individuals, adding to our chapter's "corps of well-informed volunteers" who "provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within our communities."

The Class of 2013 promises to nourish our chapter with dedicated volunteers; most members are already involved in chapter projects, and several are embracing leadership opportunities. In addition to perfect attendance at all classes, three of this group have completed all of the necessary Advanced Training and annual volunteer hours needed to qualify for certification and presentation of their dragonfly pin at our November Chapter Meeting.

It has been impressive to see a very large contingent from the class at each of the past two monthly meetings. The great attendance is also a testament to the quality of speakers at those meetings, thanks to Vice-President Tom Hynes' programming.

Clearly, this class is all fired up and ready to go!

Join me in welcoming the Class of 2013.

Vern

This Month We Honor



Initial Certification

Dale Bransford Shirley Nedry Morgan Williams

Special Recertification

Jackie Huecksteadt Shirley Nedry

2013 Recertification

Steve Clyburn Vern Crawford Gwynn Groggel

Lenore Langsdorf Bob McKinley Jack Millican

Milestones

Ric McCormick Tara Randal - Brushed Silver Dragonfly, 500+ hours



Congratulations to members who received awards at the October meeting.

Left to right: Valeska Danielak, Becky Etzler, Jim Clarke, Jim Jones, Steve Dodge, Scott McGee

Join us for the Hill Country Master Naturalist

Holiday Party

December 7, 2013

*Camp C.A.M.P.
515 Skyline Drive in Center Point*

10 am - socializing, trail walks, appetizers

11:30 volunteer achievement awards

12 p.m buffet lunch and raffle



*Respond, if you're coming, to Linda Ross by Friday, November 22
(lindalross@hilconet.com)*

P.O. Box 2627, Fredericksburg, TX 78624

Indicate whether you would like a beef brisket or vegetarian meal.

The cost for lunch is \$11 per person (may be paid at the party).

*Gillespie County members: Please bring desserts
All other members bring appetizers*

The raffle will be for an Aldo Leopold-style bench.

Tickets, \$10 each or three for \$20.

from Cynthia Burgin

Muleshoe, This Year and the Next

The most important accomplishment for all of us working at Muleshoe this year was the purchase, planting, and watering of our new trees. This might have not been the best year to plant trees, but with the help of everyone we have actually seen them put on new growth. Best of all, our Burr Oak put on several of its huge acorns. We plan to plant them for the future generations as a symbol of what can be accomplished with team work. This year Daneshu Clarke spent many hours, with the help of Rheda Boardman, on a new Healing Garden. Rheda and Ann Dietert monitored the new Blue Bird boxes and we are now a registered Monarch Way Station. The trees and gardens brought about the need for a new and higher fence. The complete front and sides now have an eight foot high fence. We can call this the "Tom Hynes fence," although he had help from Jim Clarke and Jim Burgin.



We hauled 250 gallons of water every week throughout the summer to keep the trees and the gardens alive. We were rewarded with many butterflies and birds stopping by. Work is underway to repair the roof to install the large water catchment tank. That should be completed soon. Mike and Sharon McLaughlin have been working on the house interior throughout the heat of the summer. This is a huge contribution that couldn't be afforded without them. Last Chance Forever has received a grant for a new well which hopefully will be working soon. So many people have had wells go dry this year that we have been on a waiting list for the entire summer; we're now moved to the second place.

There is also a conservation grant to restore native grasses to some of the large fields on the property. Ann Dietert is leading a group who will soon start removing the small cedars and replanting native grass seeds. The farmer leasing the property has been instructed that he must contain his sheep to certain areas, which will help all of the native plants on the property. Now that the front is fenced we are planning raised beds in that area to demonstrate vegetables and plants that would have been planted in the early days of the farm.

This year we decided to not have the holiday event at the farm. We were so busy hauling water as our first priority that it was decided to have other events later in the spring. We hope we can host the chapter picnic sometime again. Several training events and Raptor Days are planned in the coming year, so watch for the announcements.



So many people have helped continue the dream this year that I can't thank everyone. Dan Carrabin comes each Wednesday when no one else is there to water and mow. Sharron Jay has worked all year behind the scenes getting donations for items needed. Diane McMahon and Nina Wagner alternate Mondays with Old Tunnel. Others come as often as they can to the work days and to enjoy the land and the company. John Karger has opened the property to any Master Naturalist event. We hope that our chapter will take advantage of this centrally located site for events and training.

Recent Hill Country Naturalist columns by Jim Stanley

10/11/13 "Americans Before Columbus"

10/18/13 "Landscapes Like Mother Nature Grows"

10/25/13 "My Favorite Fall Flowers"

11/1/13 "Lessons from the Old Timers"

These and all other previous Kerrville Daily Times columns can be found at
www.hillcountrynaturalist.org/columns.htm.

November is election time for our chapter.

We'll vote during our chapter meeting on November 18.

The candidates for office are:

Vern Crawford for President
Kathy Ward for Vice President
Sarah Hilburn for Secretary
Diane McMahon for Treasurer

Nominations also may be made from the floor.

Website News

Kristie Denbow, Webmaster

Do you know our chapter is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization?

Contributions to the Master Naturalist Hill Country Chapter are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. Your contributions improve our education and service activities in our ten counties.

To donate to the chapter simply click the green piggy bank on our website. You will be directed to the donation page where you can choose to donate with PayPal or by check.

Questions or comments about the chapter site? Email HillCountryWebmaster@gmail.com



Two of Cynthia Burgin's photos won first prizes at the Texas Master Naturalist Statewide Annual Meeting

In the "Scenic" category, "Oak Wilt" was first in the popular vote. In the "Nature" category, "I'm Better Looking Than You Are" was first in the judges' vote.

Congratulations to Cynthia!

"Oak Wilt": The ravages of oak wilt are witnessed all over the acreage of Muleshoe. Almost all of the huge oaks have been killed. By a miracle of nature several of the oaks were passed by. The ones affected are now falling and will have to be removed before they become a hazard to the buildings as well as the people visiting the farm. It was a really difficult choice to choose which picture to enter in the contest of all the ones I have taken but this one best illustrated the devastation left by oak wilt moving across the Hill Country.



"I'm better looking than you are": A year or so ago my husband and I went for a weekend to Victoria and stayed at a wonderful Bed and Breakfast run by a couple from Scotland. They told us about a place to eat in Port Lavaca that had fresh fish every day. When we arrived for lunch the fishing boat was just unloading the fish and the pelicans were ready for a free handout. Most were so intent on their lunch that I could just walk up to them on the pier. Again I just kept clicking and captured these two side by side in the water. They almost seem to be twins; I guess there isn't too much difference between pelicans.



Fall Colors at the Kroc Center

Leanne Beauxbennes from Texas Wildlife Association, who is a Texas Master Naturalist, made her annual visit to the Kroc Boys and Girls Club on October 17 to energize these children about nature. Leanne always brings an innovative program and this time her focus was getting the boys and girls outside and looking at the different colors in nature. She let each child choose a green and brown color swatch from the local paint store. Armed with their colors, they were to go outside and find those colors in nature.



The children were divided into four groups. One student in each group was the scribe, who wrote down the group's findings and the appropriate color. The names of the colors, such as devoted and mushroom cap, brought lots of laughs as well as a good exercise in reading. Finding examples of the colors brought excitement as children ran from deer scat to grasshoppers to leaf fronds--all of which were a different shade of their brown or green swatches. The young naturalists were surprised at the numerous shades of color as well as the different kind of objects they found just on the Kroc grounds.



The conclusion of the exercise was to read each group's list of objects and the colors assigned, which again brought laughter. Master Naturalists Betty Clyburn, Pat Nelson, and John Sloan worked with the children. Each was assigned to a group of children to help them identify their objects with the correct names. This was an easy exercise; the children loved being outside, and the lesson in diversity was learned in an exciting and cheerful way.

Hill Country Chapter Members in the News

The Fall issue of the *Texas Hill Country Magazine* has an article on Kip Kiphart that's entitled "Milkweeds and Monarchs." The article and accompanying photos tell of Kip's activities as a Master Naturalist and, in particular, his longstanding interest in monarchs.

The View From Rusty Bend



image by Lucy Griffith

*You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
For a hundred miles through the desert, repenting
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
Love what it loves.
Tell me about your despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
Are moving across the landscapes,
Over the prairies and the deep trees,
The mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
Are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
The world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting-
Over and over announcing your place
In the family of things.*

-
Mary Oliver

Journeys have begun here at Rusty Bend. Many evenings are sung to sleep with the calls of the Sandhill Cranes gliding south overhead. Long skeins of them, a calligraphy of birds, their haunting bugles a lullaby of fall.

When the wind from the north drops a bit, and the sun is just right with its soft fall tone, the lightest of journeys is revealed as the spider webs drift south. Strand after amazing strand, long filaments twist and gently drift along. On these soft days we see the Monarch butterflies high, so high flowing home to Mexico. They have stopped to roost in the Cedar Elms on the river for several nights. Walking below these travelers gathered in the trees is otherworldly.

On my early morning runs in the pasture, the Striped Skunks are on the move. I keep my distance but watch them pounce on bugs with alacrity. One stopped hunting bugs to roll over on his back in the grass and have a good scratch, or perhaps gaze at the clouds. He lay there quietly. I was transfixed.

One cold morning, we awoke to see almost 40 Swainson's Hawks, perched on the trees near the river bottom. In such abundance, they resembled huge ornaments. They preened for over an hour, then one by one hopped into the neighbor's field for a travel breakfast of grasshoppers. Curious fare for a voyage to Argentina.

The acorns are migrating too. Their short trip to earth has attracted squirrels, birds and deer claiming much needed protein for winter.

Lastly, the leaves. The Cottonwoods were the first to turn, and the sound of them scrubbing against each other in the wind is a song of autumn. The bittersweet color of the Cedar Elm is next, as if nature is redecorating for fall. The Texas Ash reveal themselves in sienna and ochre. Lastly, the Bald Cypress rims the Guadalupe in rust and gold. An old horseshoe. Rusty Bend lives up to its name.

Something happens to the soul when you take the time to watch the leaves drift to earth. Preparing for our own winter journey perhaps; hibernating, resting. Seeing a world behind the flames in the fireplace. "Finding your place in the family of things."

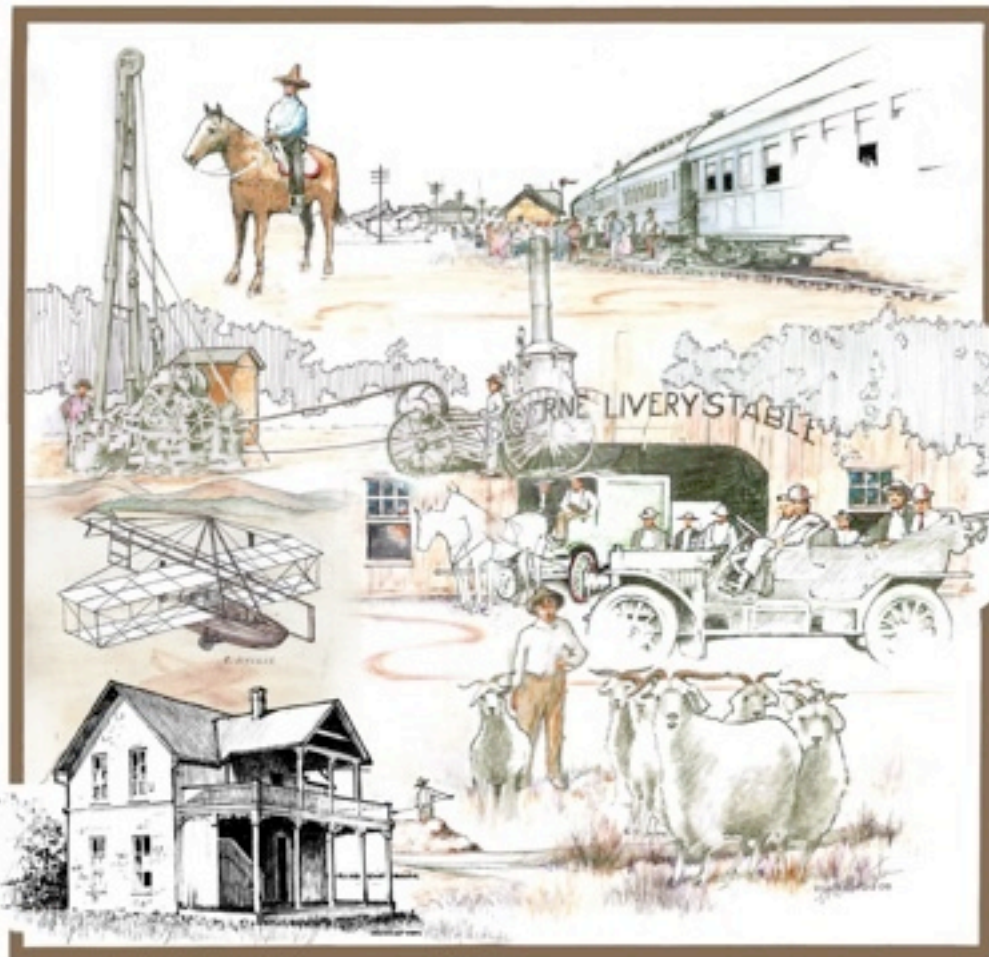
Lucy Griffith, PhD, co-manages the Rusty Bend Ranch with her husband, Andy Robinson. When she is not on her tractor, she practices Clinical Psychology. When the tractor is broken, Andy is fixing it. Lucy and Andy are in the 2013 Hill Country Master Naturalist Class.

FREE For
the Whole
Family

Living History Festival

FUN &
Fascinating

NOVEMBER 16, 2013



Local Story Telling, Oral History & Re-enactors

CELEBRATING OUR LOCAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

"BRING YOUR STORIES!"



Herff Farm
33 Herff Rd., Boerne
10 AM - 3 PM
830-249-4516 www.cibolo.org



Advanced Training

THURSDAY, NOV. 14 12-1PM WEBINAR

AT 13-236 REVIEW OF SIGNIFICATION WEATHER EVENTS IN 2013

Greg Carbin, the Warning Coordination Meteorologist at NOAA's Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Oklahoma is the presenter. This special webinar is limited to 500 participants. We will contact the first 500 registrants with instructions on how to attend. For those unable to get in under the limit, the Webinar will be recorded and available for viewing shortly afterwards. To register, go to <https://www3.gotomeeting.com/register/572784326>.

THURSDAY, NOV. 14 5:30-7PM ALBERT AND BESSIE KRONKOSKY STATE NATURAL AREA (ABKNSA)

AT 13-237 GPS BASICS

Randy Randle, ABK Volunteer, will teach GPS basics. We will meet in the conference room at the Regional Headquarters Building, 7690 Highway 46 West, Pipe Creek. This class will provide an opportunity to learn how to use a hand held GPS to collect and record data about locations and routes while surveying an area. We will focus on the Garmin GPS devices available to ABKSNA volunteers, but the information will be valuable for anyone with a hand held GPS of most common brands. We will cover basics for reading topographic maps and how to upload the data to a PC.

SATURDAY, NOV. 16 10AM-3PM HERFF FARM, BOERNE

AT 13-238 LIVING HISTORY FESTIVAL

Speakers on local history will include Keith Amelung, Daneshu Clarke, Brent Evans, and Brydon Moon. There will be historical wares, demonstrations, and re-enactments. Free.

MONDAY, NOV. 18 7PM UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUTHORITY LECTURE HALL, KERRVILLE

AT 13-239 VERNAL POOLS OF ENCHANTED ROCK

Nita Hazle will speak on the diversity of life forms in the vernal pools on the crest of Enchanted Rock. Free. Socializing begins at 6:30 and the program starts at 7:00.

Riverside Nature Center Events

Herbs at Twilight, Thursday, Nov. 14, 6-7:30 p.m. 'Herbal Treasures for the Holidays.' Includes workshop materials and samples. Led by certified herbalists Amy Coward, R.N., and Sally Garrett, M.S. Cost is \$20 for RNC members; \$25 for nonmembers.

Native Healing Garden, Thursday, Nov. 21, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Plant and tend this unique medicinal garden. Led by certified herbalists Amy Coward, R.N., and Sally Garrett, M.S. Bring a healthy dish to share in the potluck. Donations fund the garden.

Recurrent Events

GROUNDS AND BUILDING MAINTENANCE, Wednesday mornings. Volunteers are needed to keep the grounds and improvements in working order and looking nice.

FAUNA CENSUS, 1st Fridays, 9 a.m. Walk the property for about an hour, recording the fauna census, particularly of birds. Meets 2nd Friday in January. ALWAYS check for date changes.

MEADOW TENDING, every Wednesday, 9-11 a.m. The RNC meadow is undergoing a renovation with the help of dedicated volunteers. Demonstration garden to be tended.

NATIVE HEALING GARDEN, 3rd Thursday, 11:30 a.m. Learn about native medicinal herbs; then plant and tend the garden. Bring a healthy dish to share.

TOWN CREEK CLEANUP, quarterly, Saturday a.m. Work with Upper Guadalupe River Authority on quarterly cleanup of Town Creek. Must register at least a week in advance.

These events are open to all Kerrville-area residents and visitors. No reservations required for most, but RSVPs are appreciated. Please check for changes/cancellations: drop by, or call 257-4837.



We meet on the fourth Monday of most months - but not in December - at 7:00 PM. in the Upper Guadalupe River Authority Lecture Hall at 125 North Lehman Drive in Kerrville.

Join us at 6:30 for our social half-hour.

Texas Master Naturalist mission:

To develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities.

Board of Directors 2013

- Vern Crawford -- President
- Tom Hynes -- Vice President
- Carolyn Bean -- Secretary
- Floyd Trefny -- Treasurer
- Daneshu Clarke -- Advanced Training Director
- Paula Smith -- Communications Director
- Valeska Danielak -- Membership Director
- Stephen Bishop -- Volunteer Service Projects Director
- Becky Etzler -- 2013 Class Director
- J.D. Clarke -- 2012 Class Representative
- Priscilla Stanley -- Immediate Past President



The Texas Star is a monthly publication of the Hill Country Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program. News stories, comments, and ideas are welcome.

Please email them to:

Lenore Langsdorf, Editor
LenoreLangsdorf@gmail.com

The Hill Country Chapter does not recommend or endorse organizations or commercial sources mentioned in our newsletter. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and editor.

Questions about our chapter?
Email Valeska Danielak,
Membership Director
imatxn10@yahoo.com

