

# The Tracker

The Central Texas Master Naturalist Newsletter February 2013

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## Calendar at a Glance

- February 4, 9 am, Workday at Salado Sculpture Garden
- February 8, 9:30 am, Bird House Building
- February 9, 9 am, SkyWarn class
- February 11, 8:00 am, Killeen Hike & Bike cleanup
- February 12, 6 pm, General Meeting
- February 22-24, Home and Garden Show
- February 28, CTMN dues due
- March 2, 9 am, Angler Ed Instructor Training
- February 26, New Class Orientation

## CTMN Inauguration of New President and Treasurer

- Zoe Rascoe

Lynn Fleming, pictured above, was sworn in as President at the Central Texas Master Naturalists' December meeting/ Christmas party held at Zoe Rascoe's home on December 4th. Lynn is taking over the presidency from Mary Ann Everett, one of the Chapter's founding members. Also being sworn in was

Continued on page 4...

*Chapter Motto*

**Earth Day,  
Every Day**



# From the President's Pen

Winter is a time of change, but with it comes the promise of renewal in the spring. Another thing that comes with winter is the sightings of raptors that come to visit this time of year.

Photo by Lynn Fleming

From the smaller kestrels to the red tailed hawks and caracaras, they are all more visible during the winter. Posted on poles, sitting on power lines or perched high in defoliated trees, they are easily spotted as they go about their hunt for prey.



Another one of my favorites are the loggerhead shrikes or butcher birds as I grew up calling them. Starting in the fall, the barbed wire fence that goes down our driveway starts filling up with grasshoppers, crickets, spiders and even an occasional mouse or small frog. All placed on the barbs by shrikes stocking the pantry for future meals. Nature's version of MRE's.

Even during the winter time there is always something to enjoy out in nature. So grab your coat and gloves and head outside, spring will be here before you know it.

- Lynn Fleming

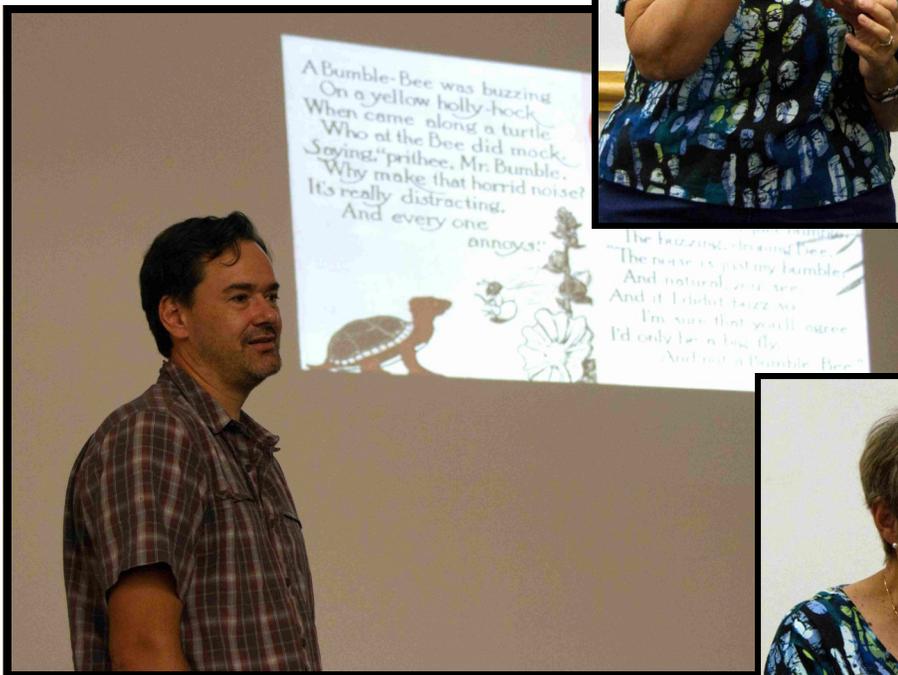


Loggerhead Shrike

Photo by [Gerrit Vyn](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide) from <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide>

# Awards Presented in October

- Zoe Rascoe



October's General meeting brought us awards and Michael Warriner, entomologist for TPWD, pictured above, speaking on the plight of the Bumblebee. Top right, Lynn



and Zoe receive 2012 certification Bat pins. Above, Yvonne Eele receives her CTMN name badge. Left, Marilyn Whitworth and Richard McCarthy receive 250 hour milestone awards.

Photos by Zoe Rascoe

# New Officers Sworn In...continued

new Treasurer, Don Wyatt, replacing past treasurer and founding member, Gail Hughling.



Above, Don Wyatt gives his acceptance speech. Left, Lynn Fleming had a packed agenda and a packed room with 13 board members in attendance at her first Board meeting as CTMN's new President.

Photos by Zoe Rascoe

# 2012 TMN State Conference

- Zoe Rascoe



The Texas Master Naturalist Conference held in October of 2012 was well attended by CTMN's. Above right, the Firewise training instructors: Linda Young, Mary Ann Everett and Louann Hight. Left, some of our members attending the conference: (front row) Gerrie Johnson, Marilyn Whitworth, Richard McCarthy, Zoe Rascoe,



(back row), Lee Johnson (Gerrie's husband along for the fun), Sandy Summers, Tom Olsen, Dale Hughling, Lynn Fleming.

Right, Dale Hughling (back row center) was honored with others from across Texas in achieving the 250 hour volunteer milestone. Congratulations! Below, Marilyn Whitworth (3rd from left) and Richard McCarthy (back row center) were acknowledged with others who reached the 500 hour volunteer milestone. Many of their service hours focus on our important water resources. Good job!



Photos by Zoe Rascoe

# Spotlight on Natives



## What's Under Your Feet?

### - Sandy Summers

The next time you are out for a walk or nature hike look down. There are tiny plants called bryophytes, which are mosses, liverworts, and hornworts living on trees, rocks, or soil waiting patiently for the next bit of moisture.

Bryophytes are non-vascular plants that are also referred to as “cryptogams”, that are somewhat unique to ecology and biology. This group does not include lichens, fungi, and algae.

The best time to observe bryophytes is after a rain in the winter or spring when we tend to have more precipitation. If you have a magnifying glass or a “loop” you will be able to observe leaves usually low spreading to form a mat like structure. These plants have no roots or stems, instead depending on the surface they grow on, or directly from the air. Mosses, liverworts, and hornworts generally depend upon water for sexual reproduction so look around sources of water, damp places, and moist soil.

This October I attended the state convention in Navasota. I looked over the session offerings’ and saw a session by Dale Kruse, Curator of the S.M. Tracy Herbarium located in Bryan, College Station. I didn’t know

what a bryophyte was or even if I cared. Following two sessions with Mr. Kruse I saw something in nature that was an interest. He has a passion for this small group of plants and has a dream of putting dots on the Texas map showing locations by counties where they can be found. After spending time with him at the Herbarium and out in the field I too have



taken up the call to go out and see what’s under my feet!

If you want to read more about the Herbarium look back to the October 2012 Tracker and read the article “Out and About with Master Naturalists.”

[photo by Sandy Summers](#)

*The banner photo on page one of this issue of The Tracker is a Bryophyte pictured on the Big Thicket Association website.*

# Boy Scout Merit Badge College

- Richard McCarthy

The Baylor Boy Scout Merit Badge College was held on November 17 and December 1, 2012.

The College offered 57 Merit Badges, with 109 Classes, 71 Instructors and 938 Scouts attending.

The College provided an opportunity for Boy Scouts to accomplish some or all of the requirements for a specific badge. The instruction is broken down into requirements that

are conducive to classroom instruction, practical exercises and requirements that the scout must do between class dates.

I had the privilege of instructing the "Environmental Science Badge", with the able assistance of Marilyn Whitworth and Ursula Nanna. There were three sessions each day consisting of 20 or more scouts each session for a total of 131 Scouts participating in the two day program.

For the Environmental Science Badge requirements the classroom work on November 17, consisted of: the history of conservation and environmental accomplishments since 1500; Boy Scout program development and contributions; and environmental definitions.

During the interval between the first day's instruction and the second presentation day; each scout had the opportunity to complete the requirements that required outdoor observations and scientific method re-

search. The scout's observations, data collection, analysis, written report or other visual evidence of completing the requirement were reviewed and approved.

The second training day the scouts learned about pollution hazards, prevention and clean-up methods. They participated in a hands on experiment of an oil spill on water; the effects and containment and clean-up methods.

The requirement and importance of an



"Environmental Impact Statement" (EIS) was discussed and each scout prepared an EIS utilizing a project scenario and map of project area provided.

Between the instruction and completion of homework requirements 16 (sixteen) scouts completed all requirements for the Environmental Science Merit Badge. Nearly all the scouts attending completed four (4) or more requirements.

Photo by Richard McCarthy

# Texas Sized Training Event at Messer Ranch

- Zoe Rascoe

On October 30th, about 30 people descended on Bill and Ann Messer's ranch near Nolanville. This was a day all about Texas! Beautiful central Texas scenery on the high ridge over Nolan Creek with an amazing Texas stone home modeled after a fort sitting near the middle of the property.



Bill has participated in the TPWD Wildlife Management Program since its inception about 15 years ago. He has worked with Wildlife Biologists, TAMU graduate students and other experts to bring his ranch back to a balanced state of nature. And that is no easy task! In an effort to help fellow Master Naturalists understand the natural resource conservation, protection and restoration work he has undertaken over these last years, an Advanced Training event was held on his property and experts speakers were brought in to enlighten the group.



Derrick Wolter, TPWD Wildlife Biologist and Advisor to our chapter - you met him at your first trainee class - was out first speaker. Derrick was familiar with Messer Ranch and spoke to us about TPWD's Private Lands and Habitat Program. To demonstrate how the process works, Bill and Derrick walked through a landowner request for assistance to evaluate habitat and wildlife conditions, discussed landowner goals and the development of a Wildlife Management Plan.

After Derrick's presentation, the group walked down through junipers and oaks to a secluded spring that had been restored. There were many signs of wildlife in the area, rock outcroppings and fall wildflowers were scattered about. Back at the house, Travis Jez, with NRCS and who has conducted our Soils Class for trainees, provided attendees with an overview of Range Management conservation practices and discussed current issues including the effects drought is having in central Texas.

Ann Messer provided us all a scrumptious Texas-style lunch with pheasant and butternut squash pot pie and venison chili along with a colorful salad served from an old wagon in the backyard. Dessert was mini pumpkin-shaped cakes to match the fall season. It had been carefully planned that the afternoon session would be in the field and not sitting in comfy chairs on a back porch with a breeze!

After lunch we moved down the ridge to a beautiful rocky beach on a bend in Nolan Creek. There, Dr. June Wolfe and Tony Owen from Blackland Research Center provided hands-on opportunities to practice collecting measurements in a stream to determine flow and other waterway parameters. Nolan

Continued on next page...

## Messer Ranch...continued

Creek is a important ecosystem in our region and we were fortunate to have instruction right down in the water. A number of our chapter members are Texas Stream Team certified and will help keep our chapter's skills honed in water monitoring techniques.

By afternoon our brains were full of information and tummies were full of good Texas food and it was time to let the Messer Ranch return to its quiet state.

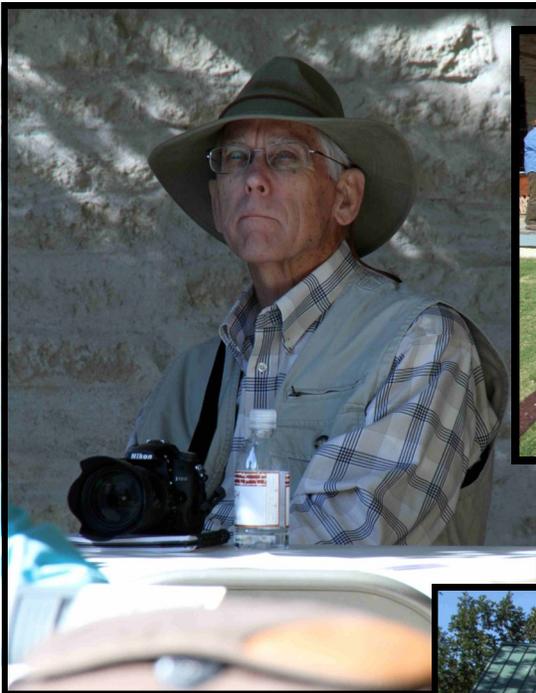
Many of our Master Naturalists will now better understand the TPWD's Private Lands and Habitat

program and can help spread the word about the technical assistance available to property owners who want to put good conservation practices in place. And we also have

a great appreciation for the work and commitment of folks like Bill Messer that have such a positive impact on our natural resources. A great big Texas thank you goes to Bill and Ann for sharing their treasure with us!



Photos by Zoe Rascoe



# 3 R's or 5 R's or more?

- Ursula Nanna

In the December 2012 Tracker we discussed the 1st 2 R's which are Refuse and Reduce. Here we will go into the remaining 3 R's of Reuse, Repair, Recycle. There is actually talk of a 6th R but it remains to be seen.

**R 3 = REUSE** - items you don't want. Sell them on the internet; pass them along to someone else who can use them. Hand-me-down's are an excellent example of reusing clothing. There are reusable cups and mugs and some stores will refill ( hummm....a 6th R?) the mugs for you. Instead of tossing plastic utensils, bring your own washable ones. Have a 'bring your own' party.

Please remember that there are A-Z things we throw away, not just plastics, that can be reused. Donate old washers, driers, furniture, bedding, to Salvation Army and other Good Heart stores or have a yard sale. Re-use certainly implies lengthening the life of items. All this contributes to re-use or as it is now called....'repurposing.' Even old jeans can be made into a skirt or place mats or pot holders. Make a denim quilt or use the jacket pockets to hold items like mail or coupons or small tools, perhaps holding grocery lists. [www.squidoo.com](http://www.squidoo.com) says reuse it all - zero waste. They have a web page on how to be creative in waste re-use. Search "repurposing." Gardeners...use toilet paper and hand towel rolls cut into 4" lengths to start seeds. You may enjoy this site as I have.

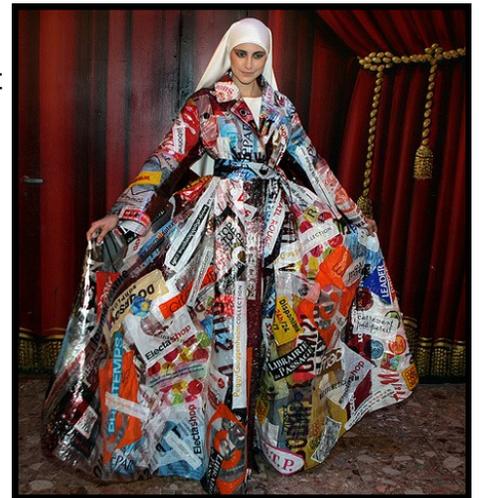


Quoting Annie B. Band in her *Why Re-use Beats Recycling book*, she says "Re-use 1. Keeps goods and materials out of the waste stream, 2. Advances source reduction, 3. Preserves the 'embodied energy' that was originally used to manufacture the item, 4. Reduces the strain on valuable resources like fossil fuel, forests, water supplies and safeguards wildlife habitats, 5. Results in less hazardous waste, 6. Saves money in purchasing and disposal costs. 7. Regenerates new business and employment opportunities, 8. Creates an affordable

supply of goods often excellent in quality. Unique to re-use is that it also brings resources to individuals and organizations that might otherwise be unable to acquire them. The best case of re-use is the 1,000 of examples of individuals, businesses, government and charitable re-users". This has been a wonderful book. She says that we have been duped into thinking **recycling** makes us special when it is really the most expensive and ineffective and fuel-wasting step of all.....get to that later.... RE-USE has, of necessity, come to the fore-front again.

The EPA has a new program called "Responsible Recycler". It is an organization that takes the **4th R- REPAIR**- able items of good quality and ships them to places that do nothing but repair and refurbish. Many companies pay top dollar for repairable equipment.

We have all had that old refrigerator or 20 year old TV that costs more to repair than re-place. Since most of us today don't take care of our things, and since 'planned obsolesce' is a built-in factor, many repairable items are tossed into landfills and take forever to break down. These materials also leach toxins into the landfill and the surrounding soil. When it rains, these toxins are then washed into our water ways polluting all sorts of other life and the water itself. Buy quality to get years out of it. There are many times, for the want of a screw or a bolt, an item can be repaired.



Recycling will be covered in the April Tracker.

Above, reused plastic in a dress and right, recycling screens from windows or is it reusing them?

Photos from Ursula Nanna



# Andy K. Wells News

## Adopt-A-Park Sign Dedication

- Richard McCarthy

Five brave souls took to the Andy K. Wells Hike & Bike Trail on a **COLD** November 12th to clean up the trail. The ordeal was made tenable by having a photo op at the completion of the work. The City Parks & Recreation Department had erected a sign honoring the efforts of the Chapter for adopting the trail for clean up. The sign is located at the trail head at the parking lot on the west side of the Community Center Building. Thanks to all members who have participated in this project.

The Schedule for 2013 is : February 11, April 8, June 10, July 8, September 9, and November 11.

## Wrap Up for 2012

- Richard McCarthy

Thanks to all who helped out on the trail clean up throughout the year. A special thanks to those that braved the BLUE NORTHER in December (Temperature around 26 Degrees) with a real raw wind. It has been a successful year and am looking forward to a great 2013.

The total numbers of hours and participants for 2012 are:

Number of hours: 47

Number of naturalists: 28

Thanks,

Richard

Pictured above are: Ursula Nanna, Marilyn Whitworth, Mary Ann Everett. Darla Menking was unable to remain for the shoot.

Photo by Richard McCarthy



## Announcements

### CTMN Chapter Needs Mentors

- Mary Ann Everett

#### Primary Responsibilities of Mentors:

Provide encouragement

Help new member discover areas of interest and how their talents and skills can be used

Mentors are to enable and encourage student to want to become more involved

#### Duties:

Get to know student's or students interests and background. Do they have any questions before class starts?

Make sure phone numbers of students are correct, and that the students can reach you as well. Encourage them to call you about any questions they may have about classes, trips, etc.

Come to orientation and as many classes as possible.

Contact student during training to see how things are going. Help guide student to volunteer opportunities and advanced training that match their interests or to develop an area of interest. Encourage student to attend the Chapter meeting.

After class ends, follow up with student, until they are either certified, there is no further interest in the Chapter or a year after they complete training.

# Announcements

## Class of 2013 Open

The Class of 2013 is now open for registration! The Central Texas Master Naturalist Chapter is accepting registrations for the Master Naturalist Class of 2013. Last date to submit registration materials is **February 15, 2013**. Orientation is scheduled for February 26, 2013, 7:00 - 8:30 pm with classes scheduled weekly on Saturdays beginning April 6, 2013, 9 a.m. and running through early June (excluding major holidays and Spring Break.) Spread the word!

## Killeen Hike and Bike Trail

- **Mary Ann Everett**

Andy K. Wells Hike and Bike Trail in the Killeen Community Center Complex is one of our parks to clean up. Location for the start is the parking lot on the East side of W.S. Young Drive about a quarter mile north of the intersection of Business 190 and W.S. Young Drive. Come **February 11th** at **8 am**.

Bring: gloves, hats, sunscreen, insect repellent **V**

## Work at Salado Sculpture Garden

- **Becky Denton**

Regular gardening time is here again for the Salado Sculpture Garden every 1st Monday.

On **February 4th** and **March 4th** we'll begin at 9am.

Please come if you would enjoy digging and fellowship while earning volunteer hours.

Any questions contact Becky at 718-5374 or [becky-denton@embarqmail.com](mailto:becky-denton@embarqmail.com). **V**

**V** Approved for Volunteer Hours  
**AT** Approved for Advanced Training  
**MA** Must Apply for approval of hours

## Building Bird Houses

- **Zoe Rascoe**

Have you been itching to build something? I have just the thing for you!



CTMN will have a Birdhouse Build Day on Friday, **Feb 8th** at 9:30 at the woodshop of Dale and Gail Hughling. Those who can will build wren and butterfly houses which we will sell at the Home and Garden Show later that month. Last year we cleared nearly \$500! Money we collect in fundraisers such as the Home Show allows us to put funds toward chapter projects.

We will work until the inventory is completed or the workers are pooped. Any level of expertise is welcome and all efforts count as Volunteer Service hours.

Please contact Dale Hughling to let him know if you can help: [dalehughling@aol.com](mailto:dalehughling@aol.com)

If you can't make the workday but are willing to donate money for materials (we need about \$100), we would appreciate that help as well!

Although we can't give you volunteer service hours for that...

Hope to see you on the 8th! **V**

## The Bees Wake Up

- **Terrie Hahn**

I put my gingerbread house out for the critters when it got so warm out. The honeybees feasted on it for three days before other critters ate it.



# Announcements

## Work at the Upcoming Home and Garden Show

- **Zoe Rascoe**

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS: **February 22-24**, 2013 Bell County Home and Garden Show - The Expo in Belton.

Last year Master Naturalists had a booth at the Home and Garden Show and we not only worked hard to raise awareness for our upcoming spring training course, but it was also our first attempt to sell our handmade nature goods as a fundraiser. We snagged a significant number of folks who took the spring training, and sold enough goodies to clear nearly \$500 - which for our first fundraiser was a lot!

Therefore, being the intelligent creatures we are - Master Naturalists are going to have a booth at the Home and Garden Show again this year!

The Temple Area Homebuilders Association has donated a booth in a prime location for us again this year (please thank them if you know one!) It's going to take quite a few of us to be effective - we had so much traffic at our booth last year that even with 4-6 people we would all be busy all the time.

Please consider helping with this event. **V**

## Angler Education Instructor Training

- **Ursula Nanna**

Some really good news for those Master Naturalists who expressed interest in becoming an Angler Education Instructor. There is a course close to home this time, in Austin...**March 2**, 2013, 9am-2pm, TPWD at Airport Commerce Pk. This is a free course and lotsa fun...it could make you a more interesting parent/grandparent too. Remember, Angler Education Outreach needs YOU!!! Please call Caleb or email him for specifics and to register at:

caleb.harris@tpwd.state.tx.us or 512-247-4472

Please let me know that you are attending.

Ursula Nanna, Angler Education Instructor

fishingpole16@gmail.com **AT**

## Dues are Due!

- **Lynn Fleming**

Dues of \$24.00 are due by **February 28th**.

You may either take them by the Extension office or mail them to Don Wyatt: 153 Autumn Circle, Belton, TX 76513

Please print and complete the Volunteer Policy Renewal form in the January 9th email I sent to you to enclose with your dues. Those of you who completed this form at the board meeting will need to resubmit the form because it lacked page two.

## February General Meeting

- **Zoe Rascoe**

**February 12**, 6 pm at Belton Church of Christ, we have Jennifer Rawlings, Environmental Protection Specialist at Ft Hood scheduled to speak about the comprehensive sustainability program that Ft Hood has undertaken. **AT**

## Skywarn Class

- **Lynn Fleming**

The 2013 Skywarn class is on **Feb. 9** in Belton. Here is a link for the entire schedule. <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/fwd/skywarnsch.php?file=sptrsch>

This counts for Advanced Training. **AT**

**V** Approved for Volunteer Hours  
**AT** Approved for Advanced Training  
**MA** Must Apply for approval of hours

# Announcements

## Texas Bluebird Society 2013 Season Kickoff

- Jeri Porter, Bluebird Society

Kerrville, Texas **Advanced Training**

**Saturday, Feb. 9, 2013 9:00 am - 2:30 pm**

**Kerrville, Texas 1001 Junction Hwy, Kerrville,  
Texas 78028**

***This event is past the Advance Registration Deadline-no lunch or door prize chances for at the door registrations.***

**Volunteer help needed to help host this event. See below to contact Jeri Porter**

### **Featured Speakers:**

Mark Klym - Wildlife Biologist and author with Texas Parks and Wildlife

---Wildscaping Options for Bluebird Enthusiasts ---  
Seasonal Movement of Bluebirds

John English - Photographing Cavity-Nesting Birds  
Additional Presentations - Bluebird Basics, House Sparrow Control, Nest Watching, and more

FREE Nestbox to members who pledge to "NestWatch" at least two nestboxes  
Complete information available for this event: <http://www.texasbluebirdsociety.org/Events.php>  
On-line registration: <http://www.rsvpbook.com/event.php?429794>

**For More Info:** Jeri Porter  
[jeripster@gmail.com](mailto:jeripster@gmail.com) (512) 773-1076 **AT**

## 2013 Whooping Crane Festival

- Zoe Rascoe

Richard McCarthy and Marilyn Whitworth will be attending the Whooping Crane Festival in Port Aransas Feb 22-24, 2013 and sent the information along to share with the rest of the chapter members. This event is approved for Advanced Training hours. The

schedule and registration for the festival can be found at [www.whoopingcranefestival.org](http://www.whoopingcranefestival.org). Should be a full immersion in unique Texas nature!!

### **From the website:**

A Very Special Welcome to The 2013 - Annual Whooping Crane Festival in Port Aransas, Texas! Thank you for joining us in celebrating the return of the endangered Whooping Cranes to their winter home in South Texas during our annual Festival February 21-24, 2013. We've added to the festival activities to provide additional trips and workshops, bringing a fresh new approach to our celebration. We look forward to hosting you on our island paradise where conservation and preservation rank among our top priorities. Check out the Festival Highlights for activities you don't want to miss. Review the Schedule and Register early to reserve your spot, as our activities fill up quickly. **AT**

## Whoopers and Hummers

- Michelle Haggerty

A Day for the Birds

**Saturday, February 16, 2013, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm**

United Cooperative Services Bldg., 3309 N. Main (Hwy 174), Cleburne, TX 76033

This event is FREE. Whoopers are in the morning from 9-12, and Hummers are from 1-4. Bring a sack lunch/drink and your morning coffee. Come for all, or come for one. Parking is in the back of the building on the west side. RSVP required due to the popularity of the content. Please contact the event coordinator: Carrie McLaughlin, TX Master Naturalist, [carrie.mclaughlin58@gmail.com](mailto:carrie.mclaughlin58@gmail.com) (682-459-1684)

See Michelle Haggerty's email of January 11, 2013.

**AT**

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## *Newsletter Mission Statement*

*"Our mission is to inform and educate Master Naturalist members and the general public about our local environment and resources, and what we, as caretakers, can do to protect them."*

### **Board of Directors**

**President:** Lynn Fleming

**Vice President:** Zoe Rascoe

**Secretary:** Louann Hight

**Treasurer:** Don Wyatt

**Web Master:** Dale Hughling

**Membership:** Sandy Summers

**Historian:** Liz Poole

**Host:** Marilyn Whitworth

**Newsletter:** Gail Hughling

### **Chapter Advisors:**

Randall Rakowitz, Lyle Zoeller  
County Extension Agent, Natural Resources

Derrick Wolter,  
Wildlife Biologist, Texas Parks and Wildlife

### **Newsletter Staff**

**Newsletter Committee Chair:** Gail Hughling

**Editor:** Terrie Hahn

**Proofreader:** Werner Hahn

**Contributing Writers:** Lynn Fleming, Mary Ann Everett, Sandy Summers, Richard McCarthy, Zoe Rascoe, Ursula Nanna, Becky Denton, Michelle Haggerty, Jeri Porter

**Contributing Photographers:** Lynn Fleming, Zoe Rascoe, Ursula Nanna, Richard McCarthy, Sandy Summers, Terrie Hahn

**Please send any news of events, articles or photos of what you're doing or what's going on in your yard or area to:**

**Terrie Hahn at [moompie45@hotmail.com](mailto:moompie45@hotmail.com)**

Front page banner is from the Big Thicket Association website, [www.btatx.org/thicket-of-diversity](http://www.btatx.org/thicket-of-diversity)

