



# The Tracker

The Central Texas Master Naturalist Newsletter

April 2014

## Inside This Issue

From the President's Pen	2
North American Kestrel	3
What a Group	3
Cold February Meeting	5
Training Course Kicks Off	5
Announcements	6
CTMN Events	7

Signs of Spring photos from Jerry Lewis taken by his daughter Karla McGinnis.

## 2014 Home and Garden Show

- Zoe Rascoe

To kick off the spring season, twenty Master Naturalists volunteered to work two booths at the Home and Garden Show at the Expo Center. It was a great opportunity to interact with hundreds of central Texas visitors interested (or not!) in how we can all better interact with the natural world around us. Master Naturalists are also the best people to recruit trainees for our upcoming 2014 Training Course - the only way to join the ranks of Master Naturalists. And indeed, as in years past we were successful in attracting



Louann Hight and Dale Hughling could both give away information and sell birdhouses.

folks to the class who love the outdoors and are interested in learning more about our natural resources. The Home Show

Continued on page 4...

## Calendar at a Glance

- 1st day of class, April 8, 9 am-3:30 pm
- Membership meeting, April 8, 6 pm, Belton Church of Christ
- Milam County Nature Fest, April 12
- More information on pages 6, 7, 8

Chapter Motto

**Earth Day,  
Every Day**



# From the President's Pen

## Spring is Here – Take a Bite

Sow thistles, prickly lettuce, chick weed all making their appearance in mass right now. Most of us run for the hoe to end their lives as fast as we can. A knee jerk reaction in the quest for beautiful yards and an area that doesn't look "seedy". I'm sure we are all guilty of the assassination attempts on these early arrivals on the spring scene.

But before you start heading for the tool shed, think about these greens in a salad or cooked and on your plate. Edible you say? Why yes, and they have been enjoyed by humans for a long time before H.E.B. came on the scene. When they are tender, they are actually good eating.

When I was a little kid, I remember my granddad pulling off the buds of sow thistles and prickly lettuce and popping them in his mouth. Then he would pick the most tender leaves and chew them too. I still like to eat the buds on prickly lettuce occasionally. Pretty tasty.

A lot of the plants that we consider weeds are edible. Some you have to be careful with like poke weed. It can be enjoyed when properly prepared and deadly if not. Foraging is an ancient practice that is just about lost now. Our foraging forays are now done by driving to the local food mart and cruising the aisles squeezing avocados and sniffing cantaloupes in a quest for perfectly pristine produce.

There are still folks that practice the art of foraging. Merriweather is a guy who lives in Houston and teaches classes on edibles and foraging. <http://www.foragingtexas.com/> is his website....an interesting fellow. Another website for native edibles that I have stumbled upon is: <http://www.oldthingsforgotten.com/nativeplants/plants.htm>

I'm not suggesting that we all go back to living off what grows in the wild, but the next time you see a sow thistle that is putting on buds, tweak one off and give it a taste. You might be surprised. - Lynn



Chickweed



Sowthistle

Photos above from Merriweather's Foraging Texas



Prickly lettuce courtesy of Common Sense Homesteading

# North American Kestrel

By Marilyn Whitworth

While Richard and I were on vacation in St Pete Beach, Florida, we visited Boyd Nature Pre-



serve. At the preserve, one of the staff members was giving a talk about the North American Kestrel. He had a male Kestrel on his hand. The Kestrel is the smallest falcon found in North America. It is a very colorful bird. It is about the size of a Mourning Dove. The female is larger than the male. Its habitat ranges from deserts and grasslands to alpine meadows. It hunts insects and other small prey in open territory. It will also eat bats, frogs, small reptiles and small birds. Kestrels regurgitate "pellets" (mass of undigested parts of its food consisting of fur, feathers, bones, bills, claws, and teeth of small mammals and birds it has eaten) just as owls, hawks, and eagles do. While we were listening to the staff member talk, the Kestrel cast a pellet.

A raptor must cast a pellet before it eats its next meal. By examining the pellet, one can figure out just what the Kestrel had for its meal.

Kestrels take well to artificial nest boxes. Kestrels are migratory. Their numbers have declined in the Northeast. Expanded establishment of nest boxes along highways seems to have encouraged recovery.

Photo by Richard McCarthy

## WHAT A GROUP !!!

- Ursula Nanna

The Founding Mothers of Angler Education within CTMN, Kathy Cantu, Liz Pool, and Ursula Nanna, participated in 15 sessions of S.M.A.R.T. Day at Saegert Elementary in Killeen.

What a day!!!! What a pace!!! We found out that Ursula can't keep time....dare I to say Liz might not be too far behind??? We began at 9 am and continued on with a lunch break to begin again until 2:45 pm. We had the 3rd grade and they were curious and asking lots of questions. We have participated in this activity now for years.

We talked with 122 youth and taught Knots and

Tackle, Fishing Safety, and Marine Debris. We have a new and large Safety poster that was very well received and left an impression not soon to be forgotten !!! Kathy has some ideas to add some computer input to her dock, and Ursula has moved Freddie the Fish to show his teeth !!!

## 2nd CIS Graduation

On January 23rd and January 30th, 2014, 2 classes were held graduating 15 CIS students by Michelle Champlin. She is one of 65 CIS teachers to be Angler Education Instructor certified and the only one to complete 2 separate graduations....Hats Off to Michelle!!!

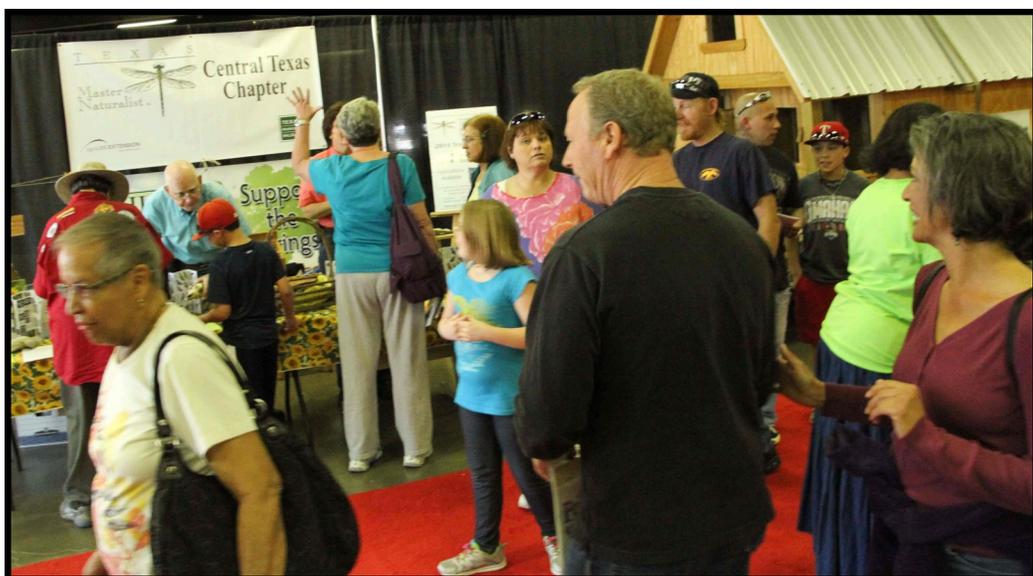
# Home and Garden Show...continued

visitors are also out to buy, and we have met the challenge! Chapter Work Days (with great prep by Dale Hughling) resulted in piles of animal houses for wrens, bluebirds, butterflies and bats that we sold at reasonable prices but considerable profit (our labor is cheap!) Laminated Nature Guides and beautiful new nature-themed coasters made by members were also flying off the tables. The funds raised will be used

to help purchase supplies for projects that we might not otherwise be able to accomplish. Thanks goes to all those who helped on the Work Days and to the following volunteers at this year's Home Show (in order of appearance): Mary Ann Everett, Ray Hughes, Dale Hughling, Gail Hughling, Yvonne Eele, Lynn Fleming, Nancy Kozusko, Zoe Rascoe, Sandy Summers, Rehanon Pampell, Don Wyatt, Lou Hight, Kathy Cantu, Sue Valdez, Richard McCarthy, Ursula Nanna, Patty Wyman, Carolyn Stewart, Shirley Watts, Sam Priori.



Above: Mary Everett with sidekick Nancy Kozusko entertain visitors; left: Richard McCarthy wields one of his many bio props used to attract visitors to our booth; below: Kathy Cantu can sell!



Great opportunity to talk to the Public about nature.

Photos by Zoe Rascoe

# Cold February Meeting

- Zoe Rascoe

At our chilly February meeting, some CTMN's heard Park Superintendent Leah Huth speak about Civilian Conservation Corp projects at Mother Neff State Park in the 1930's which still remain today. And Linda Mahaffey and Rehanon Pampell received their 2013 Monarch recertification pins.



Photos by Zoe Rascoe

# 2014 Training Course Kicks Off

- Zoe Rascoe

Fifteen trainees are registered for the 2014 Training Course that begins Tuesday, April 8th. Most all were able to attend Orientation on March 25th to get information on the class format (what to bring, how to prepare, where to park!), tell us about their areas of interest and any applicable experiences they will bring to our organization, and to meet 19 of our members who came to offer support and get to know the recruits. The next newsletter will provide some information on the trainees so you can get to know the newest additions to our chapter. Please plan to attend any of the training classes you can - even if you can just stop by for a little while. It is a wonderful show of support for the trainees (and the trainers) and will help them assimilate into the chapter more quickly when they know familiar names and faces. And it's volunteer service hours for you! The training schedule and locations are on the home page of our website. Hope to see you!



# Announcements

## Stream Team Core (Basic) Training

- Richard McCarthy

**Saturday, May 17, 2014**

*Register Now*

Email:

rgm3372010@live.com

### Where

Bob Gilmore Senior Center

2205 E. Veterans Memorial Blvd

(across the parking lot from the

Killeen Community Center

### When

10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

The morning session will be indoors, learning the process. The afternoon session will be conducted at S. Nolan Creek with practical exercises. A schedule will be provided.

### Student Needs

There is no cost for this training.

Students will need to bring a sack lunch, dress for the weather, and be prepared for a great training experience.

## Spring Prairie Walk

- Lynn Fleming

### Burleson Prairie

Join us on an exploration of a Blackland Prairie site restored by Mickey & Bob Burleson located east of Temple, Texas. Mickey will be the tour guide on our adventure into nature.

**Where: See directions below**

**Date: Friday April 25th**

**Time: 9:00 a.m. until 12 p.m.**

RSVP: [lynn.fleming99@gmail.com](mailto:lynn.fleming99@gmail.com)

Bring a sack lunch and chair so we can picnic on the prairie.

Please wear closed toe shoes, bring hat, water, sun-screen, usual outdoor gear.

From I-35 North: Take Exit 305 Berger Road. At stop sign take right over RR tracks. Follow Berger Road approximately 4.6 miles. You will make several 90 degree turns and run out of pavement ~ keep going ~ this is the country.

Mickey's address is **5101 Berger**, but go past her driveway about 0.3 mile. On the left there is a metal gate (it'll be marked) and gravel drive, turn in there and you should see cars parked down by a group of trees.

*Welcome to the Prairie!*

## Interesting Video

- Mary Ann Everett

This is an interesting look at the changes that have occurred since wolves were reintroduced into the ecosystem in Yellowstone National Park in 1995.

<http://biggeekdad.com/2014/02/yellowstone-wolves/#.UwzFL9jbYD4.gmail>

# CTMN Events for March 25- April 1

- Yvonne Eele

Ongoing Volunteer opportunity: We are still in need of committee chairs for various Nature Fest Committees. If you would like to be a chair or would like to suggest someone either from CTMN or one of the surrounding chapters please contact Lynn Fleming. If you would like to be on a committee but not chair please also contact Lynn. [lynn.fleming99@gmail.com](mailto:lynn.fleming99@gmail.com)

## Standing monthly events

**Salado Sculpture Garden Workday: 1st Mondays at 8:30 a.m.** (contact Miriam Jordon, [micom@gmail.com](mailto:micom@gmail.com) or Becky Denton [beckydenton@embarqmail.com](mailto:beckydenton@embarqmail.com)) **V**

**Mother Neff State Park Workdays: 3rd Thursdays at 9:00 a.m.** (contact Yvonne Eele, [yeele@ymail.com](mailto:yeele@ymail.com)) **V**

**Nolan Creek Trail Maintenance: 5th Thursdays at 8:30 a.m.** (contact Mary Ann Everett, [everett.maryann4@gmail.com](mailto:everett.maryann4@gmail.com)) **V** *There has been some confusion as to the days our chapter does Nolan Creek trash clean-up. We have changed from the months with 5 Mondays to those months with 5 Thursdays. The dates for Nolan Creek trash clean up are **May 29, July 31, and October 30.** If you would like to help at Nolan Creek, please arrive at Harris Community Center at 8:30 a.m. as that is where everyone is to congregate. Please let me know if you will be coming. Thank you. - Mary Ann Everett*

## On the Calendar

**April 5, March hours due.** If you didn't put in any volunteer hours or do any advanced training hours please send an email letting Linda know so that your name can be crossed off the list.

Contact: Linda Mahaffey [ctmn.bell@gmail.com](mailto:ctmn.bell@gmail.com)

**April 5, 8:00- until finished (V)** Nolan Creek Hike and Bike trail clean up and Community Trash off.

Contact: Mary Ann Everett [everett.maryann4@gmail.com](mailto:everett.maryann4@gmail.com)

**April 5, 8:00 until done (V)** Killeen Trash Off

Contact Richard McCarthy [rgm3372010@live.com](mailto:rgm3372010@live.com)

**April 8, 9:00-3:30 (V)** First day of class for Central Texas Master Naturalist class of 2014. Blackland Research Center. Contact: Zoe Rascoe [trascoc@hot.rr.com](mailto:trascoc@hot.rr.com) or Mary Ann Everett [everett.maryann4@gmail.com](mailto:everett.maryann4@gmail.com)  
If interested in mentoring the new class please contact Yvonne: [yeele@ymail.com](mailto:yeele@ymail.com)

**April 8, 6:00 (AT)** Central Texas Master Naturalist General Membership meeting, Belton Church of Christ.

Contact Lynn Fleming: [lynn.fleming99@gmail.com](mailto:lynn.fleming99@gmail.com) or Jerry Lewis [lewis1@hot.rr.com](mailto:lewis1@hot.rr.com)

**April 10, 8:30 until finished (V)** Miller Springs workday

Contact Mary Ann Everett [everett.maryann4@gmail.com](mailto:everett.maryann4@gmail.com)

**April 12, 9:00-3:00 (V)** Bell County Earth Day at Yettie Polk Park

Contact: Yvonne Eele [yeele@ymail.com](mailto:yeele@ymail.com)

Continued on next page...

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

## On the Calendar...continued

**April 12, 10:00-12:00 (V)** Mother Neff Easter Egg Hunt  
Contact: Yvonne Eele yeele@ymail.com

**April 12, 9:00-2:00 (V)** Milam County Nature Festival, Rockdale Fair Park  
Contact Kathrine Bedrich happyhoer51@gmail.com

**April 18, 2:00-3:00 (AT)** The State of Springs video presentation, Lions Club Park Senior Center, Killeen  
Contact Richard McCarthy rgm3372010@live.com

**April 22, 6:00-8:00 (AT)** Rainwater Harvesting for Homeowners Preregister at 254-774-6008  
contact: Lisa Prcin 254.774.6008 or lprcin@brc.tamus.edu

**April 25, 9 a.m. - noon** Spring Prairie Walk. See page 6 for details.

**May 5, April hours due.** If you didn't put in any volunteer hours or do any advanced training hours please send an email letting Linda know so that your name can be crossed off the list.  
Contact: Linda Mahaffey ctmn.bell@gmail.com

**May 8, 8:30 until finished (V)** Miller Springs workday  
Contact Mary Ann Everett everett.maryann4@gmail.com

**May 10,11, 9:00- 4:00 (V)** Noble Woman-- Worthy Cause exhibit about Mother Neff  
Contact: Yvonne Eele yeele@ymail.com

**May 13, 6:00 (V)** CTMN PACE Meeting

Contact Lynn Fleming lynn.fleming99@gmail.com or Jerry Lewis lewis1@hotmail.com

**May 16, 2:00-3:00 (AT)** The State of Flowing Water video presentation, Lions Club Park Senior Center, Killeen  
Contact Richard McCarthy rgm3372010@live.com

**May 17, 10 a.m - 3 p.m. (AT)** Stream Team Core Training. See page 6 for details.

**June 5, May hours due.** If you didn't put in any volunteer hours or do any advanced training hours please send an email letting Linda know so that your name can be crossed off the list.  
Contact: Linda Mahaffey ctmn.bell@gmail.com

**June 7, 9:00-4:00 (V)** American Hiking Society's National Trail Day at Mother Neff State Park  
Contact: Yvonne Eele yeele@ymail.com

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

## *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:** Linda Mahaffey

**Historian:** Liz Poole

**Host:** Marilyn Whitworth

**Newsletter:** Gail Hughling

### **Newsletter Staff**

**Editor:** Terrie Hahn

**Proofreader:** Werner Hahn

**Contributing Writers:** Lynn Fleming, Zoe Rascoe, Marilyn Whitworth, Ursula Nanna, Yvonne Eele, Mary Ann Everett

**Contributing Photographers:** Zoe Rascoe, Jerry Lewis/Karla McGinnis, Richard McCarthy

**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)**

### **Chapter Advisors:**

Lyle Zoeller,  
County Extension Agent, Natural Resources

Derrick Wolter,  
Wildlife Biologist, Texas Parks and Wildlife



**Above: one of Terrie and Werner Hahn's regular guests; left: some of the wildflowers in the yard.**