



Gideon Lincecum Chapter Texas Master Naturalist™

August
2009

NEWS

HOUSTON TOAD TRAINING

Saturday, August 8

Kathy Milenki

I thoroughly enjoyed our first Toad Training session at Larry Joe and Joanne Doherty's spectacular Long Star Ranch in Longpoint. I learned a LOT about frogs and toads that night, and especially about the endangered Houston toad!

Jaime Gonzalez, from the Katy Prairie Conservancy, taught us about frog and toad calls and several of us purchased the frog call CD to take home. He encouraged MNs to take part in the [TPWD Amphibian Watch Program](#). There are different levels of participation from easy to more involved. The coordinator of the program in our area is [Leeann Linam](#).



Paul Crump, Amphibian Conservation Manager, Department of Conservation and Science, Houston Zoo, discussed the way we could participate in the Houston toad audio survey program, which is a collaboration between USFWS and TPWD.

The volunteer survey work will require a significant commitment in the spring. Paul and USFWS representative Ron Jones demonstrated some of the field equipment we will use to help identify the toads by their call. (*See photo at left*)

The zoo personnel introduced us to four live Houston toads which had been bred in captivity.

Houston toads are a remnant population from the last ice age, 11,000 years ago, as are several other endangered Texas species. The only way the toads could survive our hot summers was to dig deep into sandy soils to stay cool. They have been found in Bastrop and Austin Counties, but there are other possible locations where they could survive.

Additional training sessions will be planned for the future. (*See page 4 for more details about the project.*) Thank you to the Katy Prairie Conservancy, TPWD, USFWS, Houston Zoo, and the Dohertys for making our training session possible!

*For more information about the
Houston toad, visit:*

[TPWD Endangered Species—Houston Toad](#)
[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—Houston Toad](#)



Bufo houstonensis
Houston toad



Dave, Martha and Ed at pond side, observing the creatures of the night. Ed is ever hopeful of sighting the rare flying frog.

PRAIRIE PROJECT UPDATE

Charlotte von Rosenberg,



*The more you know,
the more you know
you don't know, and
need to know. . .*

The July 10 Native Prairie Symposium in Cat Spring was well-attended and informative. I saw many of you there. At the TMN booth, hopeful owners of nine prairies signed up to be evaluated. To date, the committee has visited two of them. Although they have wildlife management potential, neither contains an actual native prairie remnant.

Evaluation of a site begins with the USDA/NRCS Soil Survey, available [online](#). This site contains vast information on soil types and composition, depth, disturbance, vegetation, and much more.

Plant identification on site was very difficult due to the drought. We will revisit these sites at bloom time in September to continue plant identification. Native prairie remnants are very rare because by definition they have no soil disturbance from cotton plowing, terracing or over-grazing. We are using Dr. Fred Smeins' rigorous standards for identifying native prairie remnants.

We are close to ordering our recognition signs and certificates for landowners of native prairie remnants. At least two of our members own native prairies that will be certified. Each will receive a metal sign to display on a gate or fence, and a certificate.

Landowners are very interested in prairie restoration as were so many people at the symposium. We can connect the landowner to the management resources in their areas, such as NRCS. These agencies are the landowner's best advisors for prairie restoration. You can read our brochure and prairie identification form on the Resources page of our web site at <http://gideonlinecum.org>.



COMPUTER SKILLS CLASS

Dave Redden

Wednesday, September 9, 7 – 8 pm
[Winedale Meadows conference room](#)

In response to several requests, we will offer classes on introductory computer skills training for our members

The first class on September 9 will cover how to use Yahoo! Groups listserv. Other topics in the future will include using Outlook for e-mail, making simple Power Point presentations and Excel spreadsheets, using the chapter web site, and an introduction to Google Earth.

The instructors for this series of training will NOT be professional computer instructors. I will be doing most of the training; Randy Reddemann, Judy Deaton, Kathy Milenki, and any others are invited to assist in instructing. None of us claims to be a computer software expert. The intent is to show you that you can learn to use almost any program or web site available to you if you are

- Not afraid of doing something wrong
- Read the directions usually provided
- Use the HELP feature liberally

We will go slowly. Please let me know if you will attend and if you have specific problems you want addressed. Depending on the interest, we can repeat the session at another time and location.

Bring a laptop computer, if you have one, that can connect to WiFi (that is, you can connect to the internet without plugging into something other than power). We will have a couple of extras for those who do not have laptops.

Bring something to write on or some way to make notes. I do not plan to make printed hand-outs.





The Allure of Butterflies

Presented by
Gideon Lincecum Chapter of Texas
Master Naturalist™

Saturday, September 19, 1-3 PM

Open to the Public

Free!

**At the Winedale Historical
Complex**

Dan Hardy, butterfly enthusiast and Program Chair for the Austin Butterfly Forum, will present a slideshow talk in the Conference Center at Winedale Historical Complex. Dan will share his fascination with butterfly identification and the relationship between caterpillars and their food plants. He will also reveal some butterfly survival strategies, such as mimicry.



**For more information about
*The Allure of Butterflies***

call Gene Luhn



WINEDALE HERB GARDEN CELEBRATION

Thursday, September 10

At the McGregor Historic Herb Garden
Winedale

In honor of the Founders and the
Garden Volunteers

Herb Society meeting in the morning, at the
Winedale Conference Center:

9:30 am—Meet and greet

10:00 am—"Taking all the Right Paths to a
Perfect Garden - Farce in Many Episodes,"
by Mary Anne Pickens

Lunch—Bring your own, or a salad lunch
can be ordered from the Winedale kitchen.

1:00 pm—Reception at the McGregor Herb
Garden

RSVP Winedale office, 979-278-3530
before August 28



WINEDALE HERB GARDEN WORK DAY

Wednesday, September 9, 9:00 am

In order to prepare for the Celebration we
will set up a tent for the refreshments and fix
up the garden beds. Please bring your garden
tools and a hat; we will provide some
cool water.

Thank you for all your help in the past, and I
hope to see you at the Celebration on the
10th! Verena Aeschbacher 979-865-8814



***NEXT MEMBERS'
BUSINESS MEETING***

***Saturday, September 19
9 am at Winedale***

Volunteering

HOUSTON TOAD PROJECT

*Help find endangered
Houston toads*

Audio surveys will take place from February to early May of 2010, primarily in Austin and Colorado Counties. However, if volunteers are available, routes will be planned in other areas, too.

USFWS will assign routes to us with approximately 12 predetermined stops. We should work in teams of 2 or 3, just after dark. It will take 2 hours to conduct a survey. We will sit for five minutes at each stop and listen for the toads and then record weather data. The training will help us recognize our target toad and learn to use the equipment to record data.

Sign up for this volunteer activity by contacting [Dave Redden](#).



Ribbit

Christmas at Winedale

**December 12, 12 noon
Save the Date!**



2010 TRAINING CLASS

Our next Training Class will be in February, 2010. Mary Jones will be our Training Coordinator. If you would like to help with the next class, contact [Mary](#) to let her know you'd like to serve on the Training committee.

Yahoo Group

Sign up for our chapter's Yahoo Group so you can post your photos, chat about nature, ask for plant and animal ID help. To join, visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/glmasternaturalists/>

What are You Gonna Do When the Well Runs Dry?

South Central Texas Water Conservation Conference

Planning for the Future

**Saturday, October 3
All Day**

**Washington County Fairgrounds
Event Center**

This program will be a combined effort of several organizations: TPWD, Texas Wildlife Association, Master Gardeners, Washington County Wildlife Society, Texas AgriLife Extension, Native Plant Society and Gideon Lincecum chapter of Texas Master Naturalist.

Topics will include

- *The Coming Water Shortage*
- *Who Owns the Water?*
- *Creating Water and Good Land Stewardship*

Presenters will be experts in hydrology, law, civil engineering and environmental science.

The cost for the all-day program is \$25 before September 15, and \$35 after that. So visit our [web site](#) to download the registration form and see more details about the program and speakers.



Gideon Lincecum *NEWS*

Published every other month

Contact [Jan Redden](#) with your story ideas
and news items