

THE TEXAS STAR

HILL COUNTRY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

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T E X A S



Hill Country Chapter

JANUARY PROGRAM: "WEED OR WILDFLOWER?"

Susan Sander, with the aid of Julia Campbell and Gwynn Jackson, will present a program on identifying what is sprouting in our yards and fields. Learn to recognize weeds and wildflowers as tiny sprouts. This presentation will be complete with visual aids. As many of you know, Julia and Gwynn are long-time members of the Gleaners at Riverside Nature Center. This group gathers seeds of native plants, plants some at the Nature Center and sells the rest to the public at minimal cost to further interest in and growing of our native plants. Susan, Julia and Gwynn all have extensive native plantings around their homes. These native plants are both lovely to view, and provide a year-round outdoor classroom for daily observation and learning

CALENDAR

January 27 Master Naturalist, Hill Country Chapter meeting "Weed or Wildflower" and more...at 6:30 PM at Riverside Nature Center in Kerrville (*see above*)

January 28 "Butterfly Gardening" by Mike Quinn of Texas Parks and Wildlife at Native Plant Society of Fredericksburg at **7 PM** in the Gillespie County Cooperative Extension Building.

February 4 "The Alien Invasion" (aka "Come to Hill country and See the World") by Susan Sander at Native Plant Society of Texas - Kerrville Chapter meeting at **2 PM** at Riverside Nature Center.

February 6 "The Alien Invasion" by Susan Sander at Native Plant Society of Texas – Bandera Chapter meeting at **7 PM** in the Silver Sage Corral in Bandera.

March 1 "Historic Flora of Texas", the 2003 Spring Symposium sponsored by the Native Plant Society of Texas and Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Research Center. (*see article below*).

VOLUNTEER PROJECT OF THE MONTH: CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

We have reports from several of our participating members. We hoped that this information on what really happens on a bird count, and the skills required for the various jobs, might encourage more of our members to participate next time.

There is a definite niche for the novice participant in the Christmas Bird Count. One could be tally keeper (thus freeing the experienced birders for binocular juggling and all important bird book work), bird spotter, and less often, tentative bird identifier. The birders in our assigned area of Waring took me "under their wing" sharing their knowledge for my benefit/education. I do believe I now know the difference between the Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets. The beautiful day, the quiet countryside – a thoroughly enjoyable first experience, and I'm still looking up at the trees! – *Myrna Langford*

I was on the John Hoogerheide team which was responsible for Tierra Linda and parts of west Kerr county.. On the ranch the special bird we saw was the snipe - a rather elusive and secretive bird. The bald eagle was a special treat to see in west Kerr County. He apparently likes to perch in a prominent sycamore and winters most every year in this particular area. – *Julia Campbell*

We participated in the Kerrville Backyard Bird Count which involved watching our 6 feeders all day, and keeping track of the highest number of each species observed at any one time. It was really rewarding to just sit with binoculars and a pile of bird books and watch birds that closely. We were disappointed that some of our favorite birds (*e.g.* roadrunner and raven) did not come by on the Bird Count day. – *Priscilla and Jim Stanley*

Other Chapter members who participated were Jane Crone, Gay Gilbert, Kay White, Barbara Lowenthal and Sandy Pena.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY SANDY PENA

Thanks to the enthusiastic efforts of our members serving on various committees and the board, our chapter has gotten off to a running start in 2003! These great volunteers were recognized and thanked at our December social, but there is one other group vital to our success, which I would like to introduce to you now—our chapter advisory committee. These four people have volunteered to assist the chapter and its board in maintaining the goals, mission, and operational framework established for our chapter. I am very proud to introduce them to you:

Chairman, Kip Kiphart, Certified Master Naturalist.

Kip has been with us from the very beginning, offering the steering committee invaluable advice and support as we put together the chapter application and the initial training course. Kip is a retired thoracic and cardiovascular surgeon, who's also a nationally ranked racquetball player. At this year's state meeting, Kip was honored for attaining 1,000 volunteer hours as a Master Naturalist! He will continue to be an inspiration to us.

Rufus Stephens, Wildlife Biologist, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Rufus was instrumental in organizing the Alamo Area Chapter in San Antonio where he worked as an Urban Biologist for TPWD. He is also a member of the Texas Master Naturalist Statewide Steering Committee. Recently, Rufus relocated to Boerne, where he serves as the Wildlife Biologist for Kendall and Comal Counties, and is very active in the programs of the Cibolo Nature Center, where he offices. We are truly fortunate to have his knowledge and expertise available to our chapter this year.

Scott Loveland, Hydraulic and Environmental Resources Manager, Upper Guadalupe River Authority.

Scott has already endeared himself to us as an enthusiastic supporter of our chapter's mission. He not only taught our class about aquatic ecosystems, but he entertained us with a wonderful field trip of discovery about the Guadalupe River and its aquatic life. UGRA intends to continue its active partnership with our chapter, and Scott will be invaluable in helping us develop cooperative projects that address our area's critical water resources.

Marti Swanson, Regional Interpretive Specialist, Region VII, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Marti has responsibility for interpretation and exhibits at all twelve state parks in the Hill Country region. She has extensive experience in creating informative and educational resources for visitors to the parks, and will be working with our chapter to develop projects that help us to spread the word about the importance of protecting and managing our area's natural resources.

With such a remarkable group of advisors, our chapter is truly in good hands. This is going to be an outstanding first year for the Hill Country Chapter!

OUR CHAPTER WEBSITE IS NOW OPERATIONAL!

We are pleased to announce that our Chapter now has a website thanks to many hours of challenging work by Kim Whitaker. Please visit our website at its temporary address of <http://www.meds-inc.com/TMN/>. Our goal is to have the website foster communication within our Chapter by serving as a repository for the most current data on meetings, Advanced Training Opportunities, Volunteer Projects and our newsletter. The website also provides convenient links to many other authoritative websites with naturalist information, such as the sites provided by our class lecturers, state and university resources etc. which will be educational both to our members, prospective members and the interested public.

We would be interested in any comments or suggestions that you might have on our website. Please understand that the website is still under construction, so not all links have been completed, and additional content will be added. If you would like to help write some of the content, or have suggestions for additional links, please contact your Webmaster, Kim Whitaker at kim@meds-inc.com; and your Internal Communications Chair, Priscilla Stanley at jpbstan@ktc.com.

Do you want to contact BOARD MEMBER or COMMITTEE CHAIR? These names, phones numbers and e-mail addresses are available on our website at <http://www.meds-inc.com/TMN/>.

A MOST GENEROUS DONATION TO OUR CHAPTER FROM FRIENDS OF KERRVILLE-SCHREINER STATE PARK

Our Chapter has received a check for \$1,000 from the Friends of Kerrville-Schreiner State Park. As many of you know, the Friends of Kerrville-Schreiner State Park (the Friends) have been active in maintaining the Park in its natural state in a wildflower meadow, have installed and maintained a Butterfly Garden - Campfire Circle, and have provided the public with a series of educational presentations in the Park on a broad range of naturalist topics. The City of Kerrville is making plans to assume ownership of the Park later this year. At that time, the Friends will disband. They are distributing funds to a number of organizations who have similar goals or will continue some of their efforts at the Park.

The Friends have asked us to use their donation to provide naturalist education programs that are open to the public, which we could do through our Advanced Training programs. Because the Friends have a continued interest in the Park being used by a cross-section of the area's population, they are asking that at least twice a year, we use the park (either the recreation center, the amphitheater or the butterfly garden-fire circle) as the venue for these training sessions. Barbara Lowenthal of our Chapter was integrally involved in the Park education programs and will be able to assist us in these programs. Several other of our Chapter members, including Barbara and John Quinby, Gwynn and Jack Jackson and Kay White, are also very active in the Friends organization.

The Park is a unique resource for the greater Kerrville community since much of it remains in its natural state. The Friends have loved and cared for the Park so that others might learn about nature and enjoy the Park. They hope that our Chapter can help tend and preserve this wonderful resource and continue to educate our community about its natural attributes.

2003 SPRING SYMPOSIUM, "HISTORIC FLORA OF TEXAS."

The Native Plant Society of Texas and the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center are pleased to announce the 2003 Spring Symposium, "Historic Flora of Texas." The event will be held March 1st at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin and will feature:

- **Dr. David Schmidly**, President Oklahoma State University, and author of Texas Natural History: A Century of Change;
- **Dr. Billie Turner**, Director Emeritus of the Plant Resource Center at the UT Austin and lead author of Atlas of the Vascular Plants of Texas;
- **Dr. Vaughn M. Bryant**, Director of the Center for Ecological Archaeology at Texas A&M University and editor of Through the Looking Glass: Readings in Anthropology;
- a presentation on Vegetational Change at Big Bend National Park; and
- workshops including Plant Identification, Seed Care, Landscaping, Madrones, and Butterflies.

For more information and to download a registration form, please visit: <http://www.wildflower.org>. This promises to be an entertaining and educational day of lectures and workshops. Space is limited, so register early. If you have any additional questions email ksternberg@wildflower.org or call (512) 292-4200. Our Chapter has determined that Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center naturalist presentations qualify as Advanced Training (see the e-mail from Jim Stanley on 1/10/03 on Advanced Training Opportunities).

Please send any comments or suggestions that you might have on this Newsletter to the Editor: Priscilla Stanley at jpbstan@kvc.com.



Your **Texas star** seeds from our graduation ceremony may be spouting! Watch for them.
See you at our meeting!