

October Program:

Lichens and Fungi

Our October program will be “Lichens and Fungi” by Patsy Anne Newbolt and Loine Fatheree of the Hunt Garden Club. They will provide background information and ways to identify these interesting life forms using specimens and slides. There will also be discussion of where lichen and fungi are found and how they are used.

Patsy Anne Newbolt is a retired school teacher with a life-long interest in biology and botany. She attended the University of Texas in Austin and the University of Texas at Arlington for her Master's degree. A trip to the Galapagos Islands and the Amazon Rainforest greatly enhanced her interest in environmental preservation, an interest she encouraged in her students every year. Her classes contributed to preserve the rainforests in various locations in Central and South America.

Loine Fatheree is a retired legal secretary who attended the University of Texas at El Paso. She has always been fascinated with the woods and botany which she learned from her parents. She used her knowledge to encourage this interest in her own children as well as the many scout troops, both cub and girl scouts, she led. Loine enjoys working with the children in the Hunt School Discovery gardens.

This program will be held on Monday, October 25th at Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos St, in Kerrville, beginning with a social time at 6:30 PM. The meeting and program begin at 7:00 PM. The meeting is free, and the public is invited to attend. We hope that you can join us.

President's Message

by Sandy Peña

Despite early morning rain, our first chapter fundraiser was a great success. The 10th annual Down By The Riverside festival on Oct. 2nd, which we co-sponsored with the Riverside Nature Center, drew parents and kids of all ages to enjoy the many exhibitors, speakers, and workshops we offered. We sold lots of plants and lots of food, and nearly every child sported a cute face-painting. The Haile family, minus Lee, put on a great story-telling hour for kids of all ages. Bill Lindemann's presentation on Big Bend filled the Visitor's Center with an audience of 85!

The keys to such a successful event are always the volunteers, and our Chapter members were out in force: we had 38 volunteers, including three of our advisory board members! Every one of you deserves a big hug for all the time and effort you donated before, during, and after the main event. Thanks to the following members for the great team effort:

Jim and Priscilla Stanley spent a whopping amount of time organizing the tree/plant sale, and then working at it both Friday night and most of the day Saturday. Maggie Tatum (bats), Ed Gage (insects), Kip Kiphart (monarch larval monitoring), and Rufus Stephens (TPWD mammal skins) shared their expertise with folks. Scott Loveland put the UGRA aquarium on display. Scott Magee and Angelo Falzarano helped with parking. Scott May made the beautiful, hand-lettered event sign out front. Howard Platte, Bob Richie, Tracy Garofano, and Ken Ruark manned the admission table. Alice Bulechek, George Tinsley, Bobbie Livingston, and Jane Crone took care of our Chapter display and signed in the volunteers. Among the plant sale cashiers were John Rogers, Kim Whitaker, Milby Moore, Betty Gardner, Sharon Corley, and Bob Wehmeyer. Other members who served as plant sale docents were Gwynn Jackson, Julia Campbell, and Phyllis Muska. Taking care of the coffee, hot dogs and cold drinks were Edna Platte, Maggie Tatum, Dan Behringer, Joan Murphy, and Sandra Magee. Angelo also helped paddle the canoes, while Doug Bresler and Adele Junkin sold canoe ride tickets. Martha Kuper helped out with the Nature Fair and kid's activities. Jim Stanley manned the Plant Questions

table all day, and never got stumped, I bet! Julie Campbell and Barbara Lowenthal helped put together the great workshop on native seeds. And a special thanks to John Rogers for helping recruit these great volunteers.

Of course, there were lots of RNC volunteers, and others, who worked equally hard to make the day a success; altogether we had over 80 folks helping out. Both organizations can be extremely proud of the cooperation and camaraderie shown by their members. Thank you each and every one for the outstanding volunteer effort!

CALENDAR

“Approved AT” indicates that an event has been approved as Advanced Training for our Chapter.

For [Cibolo Nature Center events](#), contact Cibolo at (830) 249-4616 or by e-mail at nature@cibolo.org, or online at www.cibolo.org under “Learning”. **Class sizes are limited, so it is important to pre-register. Fees apply to some events.**

October 19: Land Management Assistance Program training Session 5 at the Kerr County Cooperative Extension Office

9 AM – Noon [Oak Wilt](#) by Mark Duff, Texas Forest Service; (bring your lunch)

1 - 4 PM [Riparian Areas, Erosion Control and Ponds and Streams](#) by Scott Loveland, UGRA at. Any TMN - Hill Country Chapter member may attend. **“Approved AT”**

October 20: Master Naturalist - Hill Country Chapter- Board Meeting - Noon at Riverside Nature Center. Chapter members may attend.

October 22 – 24: [Texas Master Naturalist 5th Annual Statewide Meeting & Advanced Training](#) See <http://masternaturalist.tamu.edu/pdf/2004MeetingInfo.pdf> for more information.

October ?: “[Fall Wildflowers & Prairie Restoration](#)” by Janis Merritt, San Antonio Natural Resources Dept (previously at the San Antonio Botanical Garden) **9 AM - Noon** at Cibolo Nature Center. Learn how to start and maintain a wildflower meadow or a native grass and wildflower prairie on your property. **Cost:** \$10/member; \$15/member couple; Non-members: \$12/person; \$18/couple. *(Call Cibolo for date and availability; their website has not been updated. See top of Calendar section for Cibolo contact information for Registration.)*

October 25: Texas Master Naturalist - Hill Country Chapter, “[Lichens and Fungi](#)” at **6:30 PM** at Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos St, Kerrville *(see article above)*.

October 26 Land Management Assistance Program training Session 6 at **Kerr Wildlife Management Area:**
9 AM to Noon: [Grazing, Animal Units, Animal Requirements, Ag Tax Evaluation](#) by Joe Franklin, Natural Resources Conservation Service (bring your lunch)

1 – 4 PM [Restoration of Damaged/Overgrazed/Overbrowsed Areas](#) by Roy Walston, Kerr County Extension Agent for Agriculture & Natural Resources and Bob Lyons, Range Specialist, Uvalde Research Station. Any TMN - Hill Country Chapter member may attend. **“Approved AT”**

October 26: 7 PM “[Native Evergreens of the Edwards Plateau](#)” by Mike and Jennifer McBride at the Native Plant Society of Texas – Fredericksburg Chapter at the Gillespie County Historical Society (see www.npsot.org/Fredericksburg) for more information.)

November 2nd: 6:30 PM: “[Ecological Footprints](#)” by Dick Richardson, Ph.D.. Professor of Integrative Biology, University of Texas at Austin, at the Native Plant Society of Texas – Boerne Chapter at Cibolo Nature Center (see www.npsot.org/Boerne) for more information.)

WESTERN COTTONMOUTH

Akistrodon piscivorus leucostoma



Photo from University of Texas , Herps of Texas

A Western Cottonmouth (*shown above*) has a thicker, heavier body than the common nonvenomous water snakes that are often misidentified as cottonmouths.

This venomous snake has a formidable reputation, and is the subject of numerous urban myths. Despite its alleged ferocity, very few people are bitten or seriously injured by a Cottonmouth. Throughout the United States, the mortality rate is less than one person per year.

Angst over the much-feared Cottonmouth leads many folks to report nearly any snake they find in the water as a “cottonmouth”. Most often, especially in the Hill Country, these dark heavy-bodied snakes in the water are actually large nonvenomous water snakes. Sadly, some of these nonvenomous water snakes are mistakenly killed as Cottonmouths. The highest concentrations of Cottonmouths in Texas occur in East Texas and along the Gulf Coast. While folks associate Cottonmouths with water, in fact they also can live in dry forest, grassland and cornfields. The scientific name for the Western Cottonmouth (*shown above*) can be translated as a “forward-fanged, white-mouthed, fish-eating serpent”, which is quite descriptive.

The Cottonmouth behaves quite differently from the common Texas water snakes, which neither give open-mouthed threats nor vibrate their tails in agitation. **The Cottonmouth swims in a leisurely way with its whole body floating buoyantly and its head held high.** Common nonvenomous water snakes swim by squirming rapidly along, with their bodies dropping below the surface when they stop. Enjoy your snakes!

Reference: Tennant, A., *A Field Guide to Texas Snakes*, Second Edition, Gulf Publishing Company

MASTER NATURALIST CERTIFICATIONS for 2004

At our September meeting, **Barbara Lowenthal** attained her 250 Volunteer Hour Milestone, and will be recognized with a Bronze Dragonfly at the State TMN meeting this month. **Gwynn Jackson** achieved re-certification as a Texas Master Naturalist for 2004.

At our October meeting, **Julia Campbell**, **Myrna Langford** and **Maggie Tatum** will be recognized for attaining their 250 Volunteer Hour Milestones. **Bob Ritchie** will achieve his first certification as a Texas Master Naturalist and receive his Dragonfly pin. This will make **34%** of our 47 members that have been certified so far in 2004.

Congratulations to our newly certified and re-certified members! Gwynn and Bob have provided over 80 hours of volunteer service to their communities in 2004.

Congratulations also go to our four new Bronze Dragonfly members! This award is for cumulative service over one's years of membership. The Bronze Dragonfly Milestone awards to Barbara, Julia, Myrna and Maggie jointly represent over 1000 hours of volunteer service to our communities, including projects such as working with the public at the Old Tunnel Wildlife Management Area (affectionately known as the “Bat Tunnel”),

working at Nature Fairs, teaching school children as a Nature Guide, developing a native wildflower meadow, and being a Wildflower Docent at Riverside Nature Center, monitoring Monarch larva at Cibolo Nature Center and many other worthwhile projects. We celebrate these Milestones for the personal commitment they represent by our members. We also celebrate them for the tangible evidence the Milestones provide that our members are fulfilling the objectives of the Texas Master Naturalist program through so many excellent projects to share our knowledge and appreciation of nature with the folks in our communities. We hope that with our volunteer work, we are starting small ripples of interest in our natural resources that will spread through our communities.

REFRESHMENTS

Thanks go to **Bob Ritchie** and **Kim Whitaker** for the great refreshments at our September meeting.

Refreshments for our October meeting will be provided by **Maggie Tatum** and **Betty Thomas**.

Please send newsletter contributions and comments to your Editor, Priscilla Stanley at jpbstan@ktc.com