

NOVEMBER PROGRAM:

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT TAX VALUATION

Our November program will be “**Wildlife Management Tax Valuation**” by Kathy Leifeste, Appraiser for the Kerr Central Appraisal District for agricultural property. She will discuss the qualifications for, and the restrictions on, Wildlife Management Property Tax Valuation. Ms. Leifeste will also discuss the seven management practices that can be part of a Wildlife Management Plan. There will be plenty of time for questions after the presentation.

Ms Leifeste has lived in Kerr County for twelve years, and has served as the Kerr Central Appraisal District Appraiser for three years.

This program will be held on Monday, **November 22nd** 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.

ELECTION OF 2005 OFFICERS AT NOVEMBER MEETING

Our Chapter Nominating Committee has proposed the following slate of candidates:

President	Jim Stanley
Vice-President - Programs	Sharon Corley
Secretary	Kathryn Harrison
Treasurer	Bob Richie

At our November meeting, nominations will also be taken from the floor. Officers will then be elected.

Our 2004 Board of Directors voted to modify the Board Structure to appoint Directors for various standing committees. The Past President is also a member of the Board. These changes are being made under the new State TMN Program By-laws, which were described more fully in Sandy Peña’s “President’s Message” in our September newsletter. The following members have accepted positions on the Board as described below.

Past President	Sandy Peña
Director of Advanced Training	Betty Thomas
Director of Class Training	Nancy Vaughan
Director of Communications	Phyllis Muska
Director of Membership	Priscilla Stanley
Director of Volunteer Projects	Ron Hood
New Class Representative	To be selected by the Class of 2004

The proposed Board has good representation from each Class. The Class distribution would be 5 members from the Class of 2002, 3 members from the Class of 2003, and 2 members from the Class of 2004.

The proposed Board distribution by county would be 50% from Gillespie, 30% from Kerr and 20% from Bandera. This compares favorably with our Chapter distribution of 32% from Gillespie, 33% from Kerr, 24% from Bandera, and 11% from Kendall (half of whom are in the Class of 2004).

Thanks go to our Nominating Committee, comprised of Myrna Langford, Bob Ritchie and Sandy Peña, for their diligent search to identify the proposed slate of new officers.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY SANDY PEÑA

This year's fifth annual TMN State meeting and Advanced Training at Mo Ranch was the largest one to date, with over 225 MNs who came from all over Texas. Our Chapter had 25 members in attendance, one of the largest Chapter groups there. We were the "host" Chapter, and I'd like to thank the members of our planning committee: Kathryn Harrison, Bob Ritchie, Mike Johnson, and Julia Campbell. In addition, a number of our members volunteered throughout the meeting, helping with registration, room hosts, speaker assistants, photo contest organizers, and anything else that was asked of us. The array of Advanced Training topics was terrific, everything from GPS training to Flying WILD. Each evening we had excellent roundtable discussions to share ideas and experiences among the Chapters on such topics as building camaraderie within the chapter, creating exemplary volunteer projects, developing Chapter applications for prospective members, and volunteer liability issues. Several of our members also participated in the State meeting's new volunteer project of installing a wildscape: you can see it at the TPWD's district office (in the same building as the DPS office) across from Albertson's on S. Hwy. 16.

At the awards ceremony on Sunday morning, our Chapter's members did us proud: eight members received bronze dragonfly pins for achieving 250 cumulative volunteer hours (Maggie Tatum, Julia Campbell, Barbara Lowenthal, Angelo Falzarano, Sandy Peña, Myrna Langford, Jim Stanley, and Priscilla Stanley). Priscilla was recognized again with a silver dragonfly pin for achieving 500 cumulative volunteer hours. And Kip Kiphart, chairman of our Board Advisory Committee, was one of only four people state-wide to earn a pin for 2,500 cumulative volunteer hours. Congratulations to all!

The highlight of the weekend was the keynote presentation and nature journaling session by Dr. Fred Gehlbach. Dr. Gehlbach, who is Professor Emeritus of Biology and Environmental Studies of Baylor University, talked about suburban sprawl and its effect on the nesting birds he has been studying for decades near his home in Waco. In fact, he has been studying the Eastern Screech-Owl for 40 years, which is now the longest continual study of a raptor species anywhere in the world. He was very engaging and spoke with a great sense of humor and a twinkle in his eye, but he made it clear that we humans need to come to terms with what we're doing to the planet and ourselves. Here in Texas, we have the highest rate of urban sprawl in the U.S., some 670 acres a day. So we Master Naturalists have our work cut out for us to educate the public about the benefits of responsible management of our natural resources. Dr. Gehlbach's nature journaling session was standing room only, and with good reason. He told us how he organizes his journals (he keeps two kinds: one for daily observations like weather, temperatures, other seasonal changes, and the other for specific projects like his Eastern Screech-Owl studies.) He recommended that we select a focus for our journaling such as birds, other wildlife, nest boxes, etc. or perhaps do seasonal records (early-late, first-last). But in all cases, he emphasized that we search for the repeated patterns, and watch for comparisons that will give us some sense of trends we are seeing on our land. His newest book is *Messages From The Wild: An Almanac of Suburban Natural and Unnatural History* (University of Texas Press, 2002). I highly recommend it!

As this year comes to an end, so does my time as President of this remarkable Chapter. It has *truly* been a privilege and an honor to have that responsibility, and it has enriched my life in so many ways. Thank you ALL for your friendship and support along the way. Best wishes to the Officers and Directors of the new Board—I'll be there to cheer you on!

YEAR-END POT LUCK DINNER

IN THE "COWBOY CAPITAL OF THE WORLD"!

Who: Master Naturalist and Spouse/Guest
What: End-of-Year Pot Luck Dinner.
When: **Friday, December 3rd, 6:00 PM** Social time: **6:30 PM** Dinner

Where: First United Methodist Church at 404 Eleventh St in Bandera

Our Chapter will hold its annual Pot Luck Dinner on **Friday, December 3rd with the social time beginning at 6:00 PM, and dinner at 6:30 PM**. The purpose of this event is to celebrate all that we have collectively accomplished over the past year with our learning about the natural world around us, the service we have provided to our communities, and the graduation of our Class of 2004. It will also be a wonderful time for socializing with members and their spouses or guests, and catching up on everyone's news. **All Chapter members are invited**, whether you are certified, working on becoming certified, or thinking about working toward certification, and especially our new Class of 2004.

Please contact Betty Thomas at 830-796-4279 or e-mail her at bettyneil@78063.com to sign up to bring a dish, or to volunteer your talent to help with the entertainment. The meat main course will be provided.

This will be our Chapter's third Pot Luck Dinner. Each year we hold the event in a different one of the four counties within our Chapter area. This year's event will be at the **First United Methodist Church at 404 Eleventh St. in Bandera.**

Coming from the north on Route 173: Follow Route 173 (the main street in Bandera) to Cedar St. (which is 2 blocks after you pass the Court House).

Turn right on Cedar St, and go one block to the Church at 404 Eleventh St (at the intersection of Cedar St and Eleventh St). *****Good Food & Good Friends ***YALL COME*****

CALENDAR

November 18: Master Naturalist - Hill Country Chapter- Board Meeting - Noon at Riverside Nature Center. *Chapter members may attend.*

November 22: Texas Master Naturalist - Hill Country Chapter, "Wildlife Management Tax Valuation" at **6:30 PM** at Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos St, Kerrville (*see article above*).

December 3: TMN - Hill Country Chapter Year-End Pot Luck Dinner (*see article above*)

LAND MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM UPDATE

Jim Stanley reports that the new Land Management Assistance Program (LMAP) training has been completed. Between 17 and 21 Master Naturalists attended each session of lectures and field trips with 10 different experts on a variety of topics. A total of 624 Advanced Training hours were earned. We hope to begin making site visits to landowner's properties early next year.

MASTER NATURALIST CERTIFICATIONS FOR

2004

At our October meeting, **Jim Stanley** attained his **250 Volunteer Hour Milestone**. At the State TMN meeting in October, our Chapter had **8** members recognized for reaching their **250 Hour Milestone** by receiving a Bronze Dragonfly, including **Julia Campbell, Angelo Falzarano, Myrna Langford, Barbara Lowenthal, Sandy Peña, Jim Stanley, Priscilla Stanley** and **Maggie Tatum**. Our Chapter was proud to have more members reaching this Milestone this year than any other of the 23 TMN Chapters at the State meeting. A Silver Dragonfly was received by **Priscilla Stanley** for reaching her **500 Hour Milestone**. Our TMN Advisor, **Kip Kiphart**, attained his **2500 Hour Milestone!** This is a new award this year represented by a **polished Silver Dragonfly**. Congratulations to all Milestone celebrants.

At our October meeting, **Teresa Lynn** achieved her **first Certification**. At our November meeting, **Angelo Falzarano** and **Howard Platte** will achieve their **first Certification** as Texas Master Naturalists and will receive their Dragonfly pins. Five of our members will achieve **Recertification**, including **Jane Crone, Barbara Lowenthal, Barbara Quinby, John Quinby,** and **Wilma Teague**, and will receive their 2004 Frog pin. Congratulations to all our newly Certified members.

This will make **49%** of our 47 members that have been certified so far in 2004. The Annual State meeting may have contributed to this surge in certifications since it offered both Advanced Training and Volunteer opportunities.

Please Submit Your Volunteer & Advanced Training Hours As Soon As Possible!

It's November and time's approaching to total our Chapter's data for the year 2004

In order for:

- each member to receive certification and/or recognition so **justly** deserved
- each volunteer project to reflect **impact** with accurate annual totals
- Chapter's annual report to reflect the **awesome** work done this year in the Hill Country
- Texas MN Program to show to the world the **magnitude** of volunteer work in natural resources in the state this year

It is **VERY, VERY IMPORTANT** that each member, who has not previously done so, report and send in the following by e-mail or mail:

All Volunteer hours for the year (to Tracy Garofano, travy78884@yahoo.com P.O.Box 455, Utopia, TX 78884)

All Advanced Training hours for the year (to Tracy)

All Training Class Make-up forms for Board approval (to Myrna, mfl@omniglobal.net P.O.Box 1059, Comfort 78013)

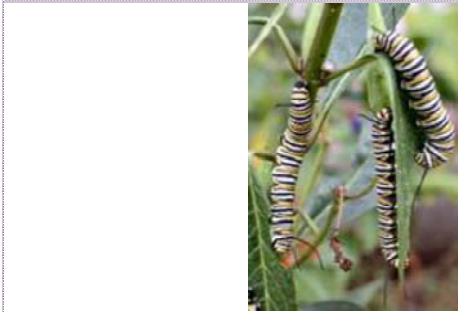
Please let me know if you have any questions, or need forms. Forms are available on the Chapter's website, and paper copies will be available at the November meeting. Thanks, Myrna Langford, Membership Chair

BOUNTIFUL FALL BUTTERFLIES

This year I have noticed for the past month that there have been an incredible number of butterflies in our gardens blanketing the late fall flowers. One possible explanation is that the butterflies are lingering to take advantage of our moderate fall and the bonanza of late-blooming flowers, fostered by our above-average rainfall and cooler-than-usual summer. At the TMN State meeting, Mark Klym, of Texas Parks and Wildlife, emphasized the importance of having a large variety of native (or "near native") plants blooming over as long a period as possible to attract and sustain

butterflies and hummingbirds. These flowers are especially vital to support the Monarchs and hummingbirds during their spring and fall migrations. Some plants having abundant, highly-visible, fall blooms include Gregg's Mist Flower, Mexican Milkweed, Copper Canyon Daisy, Texas Betony, Indigo Spires and Cherry Sage.

Recently our Gregg's Mist Flower (*Eupatorium greggii*) was orange-spangled with over 45 Queens nectaring on their favorite fuzzy blue flowers, sometimes with two or three Queen's sharing a single small flower. Another butterfly magnet is the brightly-colored red and yellow Mexican Milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*). Predictably, this plant attracted a steady procession of Queens and migrating Monarchs, two related butterflies that help ensure their survival by dining on milkweed which contains a chemical that makes them unpalatable to predators. The early Monarch migrants laid eggs which hatched into 17 larvae, who proceeded to devour all the leaves on several four foot tall milkweed plants. Remarkably about two weeks after the plump larvae pupated, the resilient milkweed plants not only re-leafed, but then began flowering as well to sustain additional eager butterflies. The larva of the related Monarchs and Queens are similar in pattern and color. The Monarch larva has one pair of black filaments at its head and a second pair at its tail. The Queen larva has three pair of black filaments, at the head, the tail and in the middle as well.



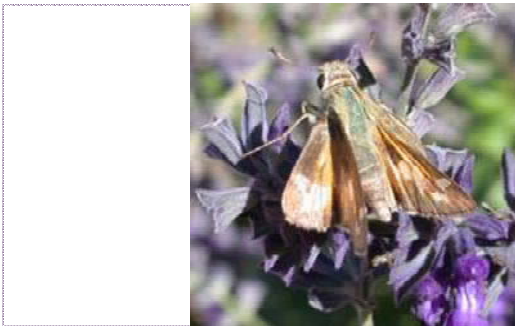
Monarch larvae devouring Mexican Milkweed



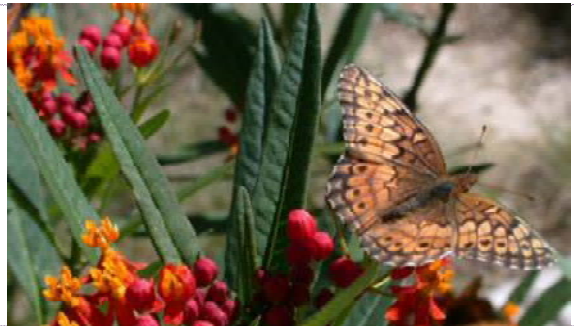
Monarch nectaring on Mexican Milkweed

Photos by Priscilla Stanley

The specificity of flower preferences by certain butterflies is remarkable. A large Indigo Spires Sage (*Salvia x 'Indigo Spires'*) with many blue flower spikes had about 45 butterflies enjoying its nectar. The remarkable observation was that nearly every butterfly on this plant appeared to be a Grass Skipper, with only an occasional Sulfur. Furthermore very few Grass Skippers were found on any of the other flowers in the yard. Certain Skippers can be identified by a characteristic position of their wings at rest; the hind wings are completely open flat, and the forewings are held upward in a V-shape, giving them a very unusual appearance (see below left). Similarly, a determined Black Swallowtail exhibited a repeated preference for the red tubular flowers of Texas Betony (*Stachys coccinea*), even though it had difficulty holding on to this tubular flower in a brisk breeze.



Grass Skipper on Indigo Spires



Variegated Fritillary on Mexican Milkweed

Recently we planted a one foot tall Lime Prickly-ash (aka Toothache Tree) (*Zanthoxylum hirsutum*) in our yard. I was at first perplexed to find it totally devoid of its shiny dark-green leaves. The only thing left on the little tree appeared to be a large bird dropping, which is actually the clever disguise of the Giant Swallowtail larva. I had seen some adults in the area earlier, and Giant Swallowtails are well-known to prefer plants in the citrus family (including Toothache Tree and Wafer Ash) as larval plants.

The Variegated Fritillary (*above right*) and Sulfurs appear to be somewhat less selective in their nectar preferences. Some plants, such as the Copper Canyon Daisy, attract the full spectrum of butterflies, from large Monarchs to tiny Hairstreaks. Many of the butterfly books have far more data on landscape plants as nectar sources and larval plants than on Hill Country native plants. In the spirit of nature journaling, it would be interesting to track the preferences of the butterflies we enjoy in our gardens or in the wild. Since cold weather will be upon us soon, perhaps a more realistic goal for this year is to be sure to take a walk on a warm sunny day just to marvel at the sheer numbers of butterflies and the diversity of species that we can enjoy, even in November, in the Hill Country.

REFRESHMENTS

Thanks go to **Maggie Tatum** and **Betty Thomas** for the great refreshments at our October meeting.

Refreshments for our **November** meeting will be provided by **Lonie Childs** and **Lee Haile**.

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