

THE TEXAS STAR

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HILL COUNTRY CHAPTER

MARCH PROGRAM

Our March program will feature some of our chapter members as presenters. A representative from each county, as well as one cross-county project sponsor, will talk about a project or two they are involved in, giving other chapter members an idea of the available volunteer opportunities near them. It should be fun and informative for all of us.

Cross-County – Jim Stanley will present details on the Land Management Assistance Program. In this program the chapter provides trained volunteers who help land owners identify trees, shrubs, wildflowers, and grasses. The program also provides information on good land stewardship practices and restoration methods where needed.

Bandera County – John Rogers will describe the work being done at the Bandera Library's Native Plant Garden and the Native Plant Society's Native Plant Trail in Bandera Park. **Sandra Magee** will discuss cover current and potential projects at the Hill Country State Natural Area.

Gillespie County – Jane Crone will discuss the new bluebird trail at Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park. Volunteers built the bluebird boxes and will monitor the boxes during the spring.

Kerr County – Barbara Lowenthal will describe the work done at Kerrville-Schreiner Park's butterfly garden, filled with native plants that attract both hummingbirds and butterflies. She will also talk about volunteer activities at the Riverside Nature Center, including: the children's programs that focus on nature discovery; a meadow managed by volunteers interested in studying wildflowers, collecting seeds, and increasing the diversity in the meadow; and the virtual herbarium, a new project creating a photographic database of native plants that will be used for plant identification.

Kendall County – Kip Kiphart will have information on the Cibolo Nature Center's Wildlife Field Research project. Citizen scientists conduct field research on a wide variety of topics in May and October, including surveys of prairie vegetation, songbirds, insects, small mammals, fish, and aquatic invertebrates.

The program will be held on **Monday, March 28** at Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos St, in Kerrville, beginning with a social time at 6:30pm. The meeting and program begin at 7:00pm. The meeting is free, and the public is invited to attend. We hope that you can join us.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY JIM STANLEY

The State Master Naturalist Office has changed the "Hold Harmless" agreement that we all signed when we first applied to take the Master Naturalist course. The reasons given were not clear. The State Office is strongly encouraging, but apparently not absolutely requiring, all of us to sign the new form. For the next few months we will have copies available at our monthly meetings, field trips and other MN gatherings for you to sign. After that, we can e-mail the new form to anyone who has not signed it. Sorry for the hassle, and thanks for your cooperation.

We – Priscilla and I – now have a web site that has a number of articles on various Hill Country ecology topics that might be of interest to MNs. Most of these articles were written to help educate the residents of Tierra Linda Ranch on various ecology and range science issues, but should apply to most of our four-county area. There is also a collection of photos to help folks identify some common Hill Country trees and shrubs. The address is www.hillcountrynaturalist.org, not to be confused with our Chapter web site which is www.hillcountrymasternaturalist.org.

We have just begun to publicize our new volunteer project, the Land Management Assistance Program. Below is a copy of the text of a flyer that has been distributed to a few places in Kerr County so far. By the time you read this, there should have been an article in the Kerrville paper about the program. If you know of anyone (including yourselves) who would be interested in having volunteers come visit their property, please have them call Riverside as directed below.

LAND MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Hill Country Chapter of the TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS will provide trained volunteers to visit your property to help you identify trees, shrubs and grasses, and to discuss your goals, plans and concerns. We can help you identify potential land use problems, discuss good land stewardship practices that might apply to your property, and recommend restoration methods if needed. We can also provide you with lists of various government experts and additional sources of information.

For a FREE volunteer consultation on your property, in Bandera, Gillespie, Kendall or Kerr Counties, call Riverside Nature Center at 830 257 4837 and ask for the Master Naturalist Land Management Assistance Program.

RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER ANNOUNCES BROWN BAG LUNCH AND LEARN SERIES

Just bag it! The Riverside Nature Center introduced its *Brown Bag Lunch and Learn* series with a program on *Why Birds Need Native Plants* by Kay Charter, Executive Director of Saving Birds through Habitat, on Thursday, March 10.

The *Brown Bag Lunch and Learn* series schedule will continue throughout the year with the following programs:

April 7, 12:00 noon – 1:00pm	Landscape Math: How to Plan the Materials Needed for a Garden or a Bed
June 9, 12:00 noon – 1:00pm	Amphibians of the Hill Country
August 11, 12:00 noon – 1:00pm	Bats and Their Behavior: Just what are they doing in the belfry?
October 6, 12:00 noon – 1:00pm	Capturing the Moment: Photography of the butterfly life cycle
November 3, 12:00 noon – 1:00pm	Archeology: Reading the Hills of the Hill Country

Bring your lunch – drinks and dessert will be provided. Admission is \$3 for the public and free for Riverside Nature Center members.

Riverside Nature Center (RNC) is located at 150 Francisco Lemos Street in the heart of Kerrville, on the Guadalupe River at the junction of Town Creek. This former small farm has been transformed into an urban wildlife and native plant sanctuary. It features a unique arboretum with over 140 species of trees as well as cacti, glorious wildflowers, shrubs, native grasses, birds, insects and other animals. Meandering walking trails lead you through the Nature Center and down to the banks of the beautiful Guadalupe River. For more information about Riverside Nature Center or the *Brown Bag Lunch and Learn* series go to www.riversidenaturecenter.org or call 830 257 4837.

MASTER NATURALIST MILESTONES/ACKNOWLEDGMENTS/KUDOS

Jim Stanley reached his 2005 certification in March. Congratulations, Jim!

Thanks to **Jim** and **Priscilla Stanley** for bringing refreshments to our February meeting. **Barbara Lowenthal** and **Marilyn Murrman** will be bringing refreshments to the March meeting.

CALENDAR

March 23: Texas Master Naturalist - Hill Country Chapter board meeting – 2:00pm at Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street, Kerrville – chapter members may attend.

March 26: Native plant sale – 8:00am – noon at Bandera Plaza Park. Sponsored by the Madrona Garden Club in Bandera.

March 28: Texas Master Naturalist – Hill Country Chapter monthly meeting – 6:30pm at Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street, Kerrville – member presentations (*see above*).

March 29: Native Plant Society, Fredericksburg Chapter – 7:00pm, Gillespie County Historical Society building, 312 W San Antonio Street in Fredericksburg.

April 1: National Park Service Night Sky Investigator – LBJ National Historical Park – 7:00pm in the Visitor Center –program on dark skies, starry nights, and light pollution, including telescope viewing in partnership with the Austin Astronomical Society.

April 2: Plant sale – 9:00am at Fredericksburg Marktplatz. Sponsored by the Fredericksburg Native Plant Society and the Fredericksburg Garden Club.

April 5: Native Plant Society of Texas, Kerrville Chapter – monthly meeting at 2:00pm at Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street, Kerrville. Slide presentation on the plant families of wildflowers by Lottie Millsap, a Master Naturalist and Benny Simpson Fellows Award recipient.

April 5: Native Plant Society of Texas, Bandera County Chapter – monthly meeting at 6:30pm in Medina

Community Library Meeting Room.

April 7: Riverside Nature Center Brown Bag Lunch and Learn – 12:00 noon – 1:00pm – **Landscape Math: How to Plan the Materials Needed for a Garden or a Bed** (*see above*).

April 13: Fredericksburg Garden Club – 2:00pm at The Garden Shed, 112 N Crockett, Fredericksburg. Contact Bobbie Schonaerts at 830 990 8379 for more information.

April 16: Mostly Native plant sale – 9:00am – 3:00pm at the Kendall County Fairgrounds. Sponsored by the Cibolo Nature Center.

April 23: Native plant sale – 9:00am at Riverside Nature Center. Sponsored by the Kerrville Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas.

Please send newsletter contributions and comments to Phyllis Muska at pmuska@omniglobal.net.



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