

THE TEXAS STAR

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HILL COUNTRY CHAPTER

AUGUST PROGRAM

The August program of the Texas Master Naturalist – Hill Country Chapter will be *Bird Behavior* by Dr. Kent Rylander, an ornithologist and retired Professor of Biological Sciences at Texas Tech University.

Kent Rylander grew up on a farm near Denton, where he and his brother Rod spent their spare time observing and identifying birds, wildflowers, butterflies, and other plants and animals in the area. Kent majored in biology at the University of North Texas in Denton, served two years in the Army, then entered Tulane University in New Orleans, where he completed his doctorate in biology in 1965. After graduating he joined the faculty at Texas Tech and taught there until he retired 38 years later.

Two years before retiring, Rylander and his wife moved to a farm near Junction so he could teach at Tech's newly established Fredericksburg and Marble Falls campuses. Currently he teaches occasional short courses in animal behavior and ornithology at Tech's Junction Campus and works at the Field Research Station located on campus.

Dr. Rylander was the founding editor of the *Bulletin of Texas Ornithological Society*. His book, *The Behavior of Texas Birds*, was published by University of Texas Press in 2002. In 2001, he was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of the Americas in Cholula, Mexico.

The meeting and program will be held on Monday, August 22, at Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street in Kerrville, starting at 7:00pm.

Note that this month's social, beginning at 6:30pm, will honor our new fall class members. Please plan to come early so you'll have an opportunity to meet these folks and welcome them to our group!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY JIM STANLEY

During the State Master Naturalist Meeting at the Mo Ranch last October, there was a state meeting project to landscape the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department building (on Route 16 in Kerrville, across from Albertsons) with native plants. MNs from around the state worked all afternoon on this project and planted a lot of native shrubs and flowers, and it looked quite nice. A sign was also erected noting that the work had been done by the Master Naturalists. Unfortunately, that was the last thing done with the area, period, until a couple of weeks ago. You might imagine that the garden is not in great shape now, and that it is somewhat of an embarrassment to Master Naturalists and to our chapter.

We have had similar problems with other projects that require ongoing work, in that people are excited to do the initial project, but then become less enthusiastic about maintaining the project. The Board has decided we will no longer

approve any volunteer project that will require ongoing volunteer hours unless there is a plan to provide the appropriate level of volunteer effort. Like many other things in life, it is not the glamorous, showy one-time activities that really matter, but the day-by-day routine effort that really makes a difference.

Once the garden is brought back into shape, it should require only occasional (but regular) maintenance. If you would be interested in working in this garden occasionally, please e-mail Priscilla at jpbstan@ktc.com. You will not only save the garden, but also our collective Master Naturalist face.

Just so everyone knows, in spite of moving the new class meeting room to the Lions Camp, a larger facility, and expanding the class size from the previous 25 to 36, we still had more applicants this year than we could accommodate. So it looks like we are on the road to significantly increasing our chapter membership, thanks mainly to all of you talking to friends and serving as good examples and role models. Anyone interested in acting as a mentor to be available when a new class member has questions or needs information, please call Priscilla at 830 257 2094.

LET'S WELCOME OUR CLASS OF 2005!

BY PRISCILLA STANLEY, MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

Our new training class is an impressive group of 36 people selected from a record number of qualified applicants. I hope you will join me in welcoming them at our reception for the Class of 2005 before our August 22 meeting at 6:30pm. (See details above.) Just to give you a quick glance at our newest members before you meet them (and they meet each other), here's a bit of background:

From Bandera County: **Debra Boutwell** is an executive assistant from Utopia with a strong interest in preserving and maintaining our natural resources and natural areas. **Ruth Firsching** is also from Utopia, but from Uvalde County. A retired hospital middle manager, Ruth recently moved to the Hill Country to her family's 600-acre ranch.

From Bexar County: **Lars Nielsen** is a retired agricultural engineer who volunteers over 100 hours each year at Cibolo Nature Center. Lars wants to preserve and rehabilitate native flora and fauna, and promote environmental issues through education. **Rich Olivieri** owns an on-line publishing and computer services company and is a photographer and writer on wildflowers. He is restoring his property in Kendall County and wants to support and encourage efforts to help maintain the beauty of the natural Texas Hill Country.

From Gillespie County: **Dorothy Akers**, a retired analyst for a petroleum/chemical company, expressed "a passion to work with nature and to contribute to the conservation of wildlife species and habitats." **Gary Akers** is a retired police officer who has been interested in plants, wildlife and ecosystems since he was a Boy Scout. **Brenda Boenig** is a retired teacher and nurse who saw that the TMN program offered her a means to expand her personal efforts to conserve our natural resources through structured and educational outreach. **Steve Dodge** is a retired airline pilot who moved to the Hill Country and wants to learn more about the native plants and animals. **Ann Kinney** is a retired classroom teacher who wants to learn more to help her maintain and preserve our natural environment and share this learning with youngsters. **John Pardue** has a PhD from Texas A&M University in systems ecology and has taught range science and agriculture economics at Texas A&M and the University of Idaho. **Jerri Workman** is a retired social worker, teacher, and owner/manager of a gift shop who is eager to learn more about the Hill Country so she can do her part to preserve its magnificent resources.

From Kendall County: **Nyta Brown** is a graduate student in an environmental education Masters program, and a TPWD summer intern. Nyta believes that giving kids and adults the opportunity to learn about nature will give them a sense of oneness with the world that might inspire them to want to protect it. **Cathy Downs** is a retired regional manager and owner-operator of several retail businesses, and new resident of the Hill Country. As a nature lover, bird watcher and gardener, maintaining the natural environment is very important to Cathy. **Dawn Fidaleo** is a retired US Coast Guard officer and a Master Gardener with extensive volunteer experience in land use planning and grounds maintenance at a Montessori school. **Robert Keiser** is a retired CEO and board chairman who volunteers as a trail guide and bluebird monitor at Cibolo Nature Center. **Lad Mingus** is a retired attorney who after 35 years in the office is eager to devote himself to nature study and volunteer work. **Nan Ryman-Mingus** is a retired high school counselor and teacher, and co-chaired a housing repair team along the same lines as Habitat for Humanity.

From Kerr County: **Otis Fox** is a retired petroleum geologist and an active Hill Country Master Gardener. Otis volunteers at the Native Plant Society of Texas, the Gardeners of Kerrville and Riverside Nature Center. **Bill Frodyma** retired from the US Postal Service and has volunteered at Cibolo Nature Center. Bill is looking forward to learning more about natural habitats so that he can

volunteer as a TMN. **Jim Gardner** is a ranch broker who wants to volunteer helping teach folks new to the Hill Country how they can protect and improve their land. **Guy Harrison** is a retired professor of pediatric pulmonology at Baylor College of Medicine who volunteers in conservation activities at UGRA and TPWD. He is interested in stream preservation and restoration, and education of youth. **Maeve Elliot Hughes**, a former civil engineer and cost analyst, has recently moved to the Hill Country and is now a stay-at-home mom. She has joined a family business based on sustainable agriculture and responsible land and animal management. **Barbara Kana** has been a steward of a hunting/cattle operation for 13 years and volunteers on the TPWD Whitetail Advisory Committee and in youth activities for the Texas Wildlife Association. **Michelle Kana**, who works in accounting and information systems, wants to further her knowledge of land stewardship and give back to her community. She is a co-owner and operator of a ranch that received the "Lone Star Land Steward Award" in 1999. **Clarise Kehoe** is a district field representative for the American Cancer Society who has expertise in beekeeping, fundraising and children's education. **Susan Longacre**, a recently retired oil company research geologist, has a PhD in geology from the University of Texas at Austin. **Diane McMahon**, who recently retired as a NASA Payload Integration Specialist, has a MS in biological sciences. Diane has been very active in the Galveston Bay Foundation, including serving as a water quality monitor for 6 years. **Barbara Terry Noblin** is a social worker with the Peterson Hospice. Barbara has a keen interest in environmental issues and would like to work with children to help them understand that our planet needs our care. **Courtney Qualtrough** is employed as a registered nurse, is a member of Riverside Nature Center, and was quite active in the Galveston Bay Foundation and the Sierra Club. **Donald Robinson**, a retired university professor, wants to learn more about the environment to enable him to share his knowledge with others to help preserve the environment. **Donna Snow Robinson** is a freelance writer and editor who wants to make a difference by committing to a proven program where she can use her professional skills in service to the environment. **Peggy McClain Robinson** is a retired high school and junior college math teacher who has volunteered at Riverside Nature Center as a nature guide. Peggy is a member of the Nature Conservancy, the Sierra Club and several other environmental organizations. **Janice Sue Ross**, a retired licensed vocational nurse, loves nature and is looking forward to learning more and sharing it with others. **Rebecca Shupp** is a ranch hand and animal and bird caretaker who recently moved to the Hill Country. Rebecca has led wilderness trips for youth and nature hikes in the Sierra Nevada mountains. **Bob Tanner**, the facilities manager of Camp CAMP on 57 wooded acres, is also new to the Hill Country. Bob was a member of a naturalist program in another state and is looking forward to continuing this work as a TMN. **Nina Wagner**, a retired insurance underwriter, has a BA in landscape architecture from UC Berkeley. Nina wants to learn more about native plants and the Hill Country environment so that she can volunteer.

NEW BIRD FEEDING STATION AT LADY BIRD JOHNSON MUNICIPAL PARK

The *Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center* announced the installation of a new bird feeding station in Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park this summer. The project includes several different types of bird feeders and a water drip system, further enhancing the opportunities to view wildlife while visiting the park.

Eagle Scout Josh Baker and his fellow scouts built the station using materials donated by Parker Lumber and Glen Thompson. The *Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center* group is responsible for buying seed for the station, and Hill Country Master Naturalist **Jane Crone** has been working with the project and is keeping track of the feeders. Future scout projects will include the installation of a bench and other improvements as the project continues.

While winter was the best time for the feeders, the water dripper has been the big attraction over the summer. The bird feeding station is located next to the butterfly habitat, both across the street from the park headquarters building. Stop by next time you're near the park!

NEW VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES!

Looking for a new way to earn more volunteer hours? We currently have openings for two important chapter functions:

- a historian to maintain the chapter scrapbook, and
- someone to do updates of the database repository for volunteer and training hours.

No experience is necessary for either position, although a working knowledge of Access would be helpful for the

database position. Training will be provided as needed.

If you are interested in taking on the scrapbook project, please contact Phyllis Muska. If you would like to be our database manager, contact Tracy Garofano.

ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

There will be a land stewardship seminar at Cibolo Nature Center in Boerne on Saturday, September 10, 8:30am–4:00pm. The seminar will emphasize *Land and Water Conservation* and feature fourteen speakers on a variety of topics, including Texas Hill Country geology, hydrology, native plants, landscaping, cedar management, livestock management, urban and suburban wildlife, oak wilt, rainwater catchment, water legislation and wildlife tax valuation. The speaker lineup features **Bill Carr, Mark Duff, Robert Edmonson, Brent Evans, Richard Heilbrun, David Langford, Bob Lyons, Pat McNeal, Michael O'Brien, George Ozuna, Mark Peterson, David Pipes, Rufus Stephens,** and **Bill Ward.**

Cost of \$15/person includes box lunch. For complete agenda and to register, call Brenda at 830 249 4616.

Our chapter plans to have a table set up at the seminar, with our chapter display and Land Management Assistance Program information. If you can help staff the booth for a two-hour shift, please contact Jim Stanley.

The Texas Wildlife Association and Texas Extension Service are sponsoring a seminar on *Fire as a Tool for Managing Wildlife Habitats in Texas*. The sessions will be held September 14–16 at the YO Ranch Hotel in Kerrville.

Topics include history and use of fire in Texas, fire ecology in various ecoregions, species case studies, adoption by management agencies, fire as a tool for ecosystem restoration and other items related to fire management and wildlife habitats.

Registration for the symposium is \$50 before September 1, \$75 after September 1.

For more information, call Dale Rollins at 325 653 4576, or visit the Kerrville Texas County Extension website at <http://kerr-tx.tamu.edu/>.

MASTER NATURALIST MILESTONES/ACKNOWLEDGMENTS/KUDOS

New certifications from the class of 2004 include **Dan Behringer** and **Doug Bresler**.

Julia Campbell, Myrna Langford, and **Maggie Tatum** have all recertified for 2005.

Priscilla Stanley reached her 1000-hour milestone for a **gold dragonfly**. **Barbara Lowenthal** and **Ron Hood** are both receiving **silver dragonfly** awards for attaining their 500-hour milestones.

Congratulations to all this summer's achievers!

Edna and Howard Platte and **Maggie Tatum** have volunteered to provide refreshments for the August meeting and social. Because we will be welcoming our new class, we expect a large group and could use extra help. If you're able to assist at the meeting and/or bring extra refreshments, or if you can sign up to bring refreshments to one of the next few meetings, please contact Wanda Mattarocci before August 19.

CALENDAR

August 17: Texas Master Naturalist – Hill Country Chapter board meeting – 2:00pm at Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street, Kerrville – chapter members may attend.

August 18–20: 9th Annual Davis Mountains Hummingbird Festival – Fort Davis. Hosted by the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute and the Fort Davis Merchants Association.

August 22: Texas Master Naturalist – Hill Country Chapter monthly meeting – 6:30pm, Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street, Kerrville. (*See above for details.*)

August 30: Fredericksburg Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas monthly meeting – 7:00pm, Gillespie County Historical Society building, 312 W San Antonio Street, Fredericksburg.

September 6: Kerrville Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas – 2:00pm, Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street, Kerrville.

September 10: Bandera County Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas – 2:00pm, Medina Community Library Meeting Room. Paul Cox, horticulture director of San Antonio Botanic Gardens, will be the featured speaker. Contact Susan Tracy 830 589 7124 for more information.

September 10: Land and Water Conservation Seminar – Cibolo Nature Center, 8:00am – 4:00pm. **AT hours available.** (*See above for details.*)

September 13: Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center – 7:00pm at the Gillespie County Ag Extension Building, 95 Frederick Road, Fredericksburg. A beekeeper presentation will cover a wide range of topics related to bees and their place in our natural world. For more information, contact Jane Crone at 830 669 2639.

September 14-16: Texas Plant Conservation Conference – Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Austin. Three-day conference on the future of plant conservation in Texas. Speakers will discuss ongoing rare and endangered plant research and update conference participants on the status of these projects. Featured speakers include **Peggy Olwell**, Bureau of Land Management, **Jill Parrish**, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, **Dr. Sue Gardener-Sill**, NABA International Butterfly Park, and Dr. **Tom Wendt**, Plant Resources Center at UT Austin. Conference participants will review and comment on a draft of a proposed statewide Comprehensive Plant Conservation Action Plan. Sponsored by Texas Parks & Wildlife, Texas Department of Transportation, Horizon Environmental Services, and the Native Plant Society of Texas. For more information, contact Flo Oxley at (512) 292-4200, X160, or oxley@wildflower.org. Details also available on-line at <http://www.wildflower.org/?nd=tpcc>.

September 14-16: Fire as a Tool for Managing Wildlife Habitat in Texas – symposium at YO Ranch Hotel, Kerrville. For more information, see <http://texnat.tamu.edu> or contact Dr. Dale Rollins, drollins@tamu.edu, 325 653 4576. **AT hours available.** (*See above for details.*)

September 17: Hill Country Archeological Association monthly meeting – 1:00pm, Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street, Kerrville. Jennifer Thompson from the Center for Archeological Research, University of Texas at San Antonio, will discuss findings from a TXDOT excavation site in Junction. Meetings are free and visitors are welcome.

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



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