



HILL COUNTRY CHAPTER

THE TEXAS STAR

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OCTOBER PROGRAM

Our October program will be on *Texas Water Issues and an Overview of Hill Country Water Resources* by Michael Mecke.

Mr. Mecke will talk on key water issues facing Texas. With rapidly expanding urban population, water marketing and other stresses, our local and state water planners have a full plate! Throw in the ever-present Texas droughts and slight reductions in available drinking water for some regions and there is a recipe for concern. But, with an informed populace, new technology and some old technology put back in place, we will strive to meet the new demands while maintaining our lifestyle.

In addition to describing key water issues, he will provide an overview of the water resources in our Hill Country region of Central Texas. Handouts on water and conservation will be provided.

Mr. Mecke retired from the San Antonio Water System in 2002 and stepped into a new position as Extension Water Programs Specialist for the Texas Water Resources Institute at Texas A&M University. He is stationed in Fort Stockton and works with county extension agents and other specialists to conduct educational programs in West Texas counties from San Angelo to El Paso and south to Del Rio. The program areas emphasize water conservation, rainwater harvesting, low water use landscaping, riparian and watershed management, water quality protection and water resources planning. He cooperates with irrigation districts, groundwater districts, local municipal, county, state water planning groups, state and federal agencies, as well as conservation non-profit organizations across West Texas and adjoining New Mexico, in a wide variety of water and natural resource issues. The Rio Grande River basin is a special priority area, including the contributing Pecos River region.

He is one of the founders of the Texas Riparian Society. He has authored numerous water-related and rangeland watershed and riparian articles that stress the importance of rangeland stewardship and water.

This meeting will be held on **Monday, October 23** at 7:00pm at Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street in Kerrville. We hope that you can join us. For more information, contact Bob Richie at 830-257-8939 or brichie@ktc.com.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY JIM STANLEY

Reflections on 4 years as Master Naturalist: Part I

Throughout most of my adult life I have contributed to and paid dues to numerous conservation/environmental/wildlife

organizations, but that was essentially the extent of any active involvement on my part. Indeed, most of these organizations are national or international in scope and rely primarily on money raised from members and foundations to pay professionals who do most of their work, so that volunteers tend to be a minor part of their efforts. What sets Master Naturalists apart is the total reliance on volunteers and the emphasis on local projects and local issues, so that individuals can see the effects of their efforts in a real way.

I have been involved in several categories of volunteer efforts, all enjoyable, useful, and for the most part, effective. There are the garden construction/maintenance and nature trail activities which we all hope serve as examples and educational resources for those who view the results of our work. And, I have certainly done, and continue to do, my share of that kind of work. Then there are the projects that involve data collection, whether counting birds or butterflies, collecting water samples, identifying locations for exotic species or surveying the flora and fauna of a given area. Having spent my working life as a research scientist, I have a certain fondness for this kind of project. And, then there are the projects that involve committee or board work to keep the Chapter going – essential work but hopefully not too much of the total effort, either individually or collectively.

But by far the work that has given me the greatest satisfaction and sense of accomplishment, and which I believe best exemplifies the goals of the Texas Master Naturalists, has to do with sharing what I have learned with others. Specifically, teaching classes for Chapter members, making presentations and writing articles and papers, and making Land Management Assistance Program (LMAP) visits to landowners' properties have been by far the most rewarding activities I have ever been engaged in. Of course, before you can share knowledge, you have to learn the subject well. I have discovered that the learning is so much more fun now than it was back in college, and indeed it is never-ending.

The reason for this discussion is to try to inspire others to find something within themselves and the natural world that they are passionate about, to become knowledgeable about, and to share that knowledge and passion with others. Next month I will elaborate a bit on some of these ideas. In the meantime, remember: "in the end, we will conserve only what we love, we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught."

DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE THANK YOU

Our *Down By the Riverside Nature Festival & Native Tree and Plant Sale*, co-sponsored with our partner, Riverside Nature Center, on Friday and Saturday, October 13 -14, was a huge success. We met all of our goals, thanks to the terrific support of our members.

Our goal of having a successful fundraiser to support our chapter activities for the coming year was met by the Plant Sale selling the vast majority of its plants by 2:30pm Saturday. Our second goal was to share natural resources information with our visitors and help them know more about our TMN program. Both **Sandra Magee** and **Tom Collins** gave excellent presentations on *Native Plants to Attract Butterflies* and *Know Your Hill Country Butterflies*, respectively. TMN plant docents talked about native plants with our customers for over 8.5 hours. Our chapter members volunteered for 77 two-hour shifts in every volunteer category, including staffing our TMN chapter display, parking, greeting, plant sale and food cashiers, children's activities, canoe paddling, event setup/cleanup, and more. We know that some folks who see us in action become interested in our program and become TMNs. For others we have provided information that will help them better achieve their goals on their property and in their gardens. Hopefully we also had fun and were able to get better acquainted with other chapter members.

We want to sincerely thank all of our members who worked so long and hard to make this event such a success. Without you, it never would have been possible.

A PAGE FROM THE HERBARIUM

THIS MONTH'S PLANT:

COWPEN DAISY

Scientific Name – *Verbesina encelioides*

Family – *Asteraceae* (Aster Family)

By SANDRA MAGEE

Cowpen Daisy, also called Golden Crownbeard, is a long-blooming annual, covered in yellow flowers from summer through fall. The plant reaches four feet in height with silver-green foliage. Toothed leaves can reach 4" long and are mostly opposite with upper leaves alternate. Blooms measure 2 – 2½ " across.



Rarely, if ever, eaten by deer, Cowpen Daisy is drought tolerant and a prolific seed producer. Seeds sprout readily and result in an increasing number of plants year after year. While considered invasive by some, the blooms are an important nectar source for several species of butterflies. In addition, it is a larval plant for the Bordered Patch butterfly.

The Texas Hill Country Virtual Herbarium is a project dedicated to creating a photographic database to be used for identification of plants native to the Texas Hill Country area.

*For more information, contact **Barbara Lowenthal**.*

LAND AND WATER CONFERENCE

THE FUTURE OF TEXAS LAND AND WATER IS IN YOUR HANDS

On November 18, come to the Cibolo Nature Center in Boerne to learn how you can conserve land and water. The conference will feature numerous presentations focusing on water conservation, deer management and native plants. The conference will run from 8:30am to 4pm at the CNC auditorium, library and ecology lab. Admission is \$20/person, including a box lunch. Pre-registration is required.

The conference keynote address will be *The Future of Land and Water Conservation in Texas* by Kirby Brown, president of the Texas Wildlife Association. Other speakers will include **Bill Carr, Robert Edmonson, Andrea Delong-Amaya, Mark Peterson, Donnie Frels, William Haas, Mike Krueger, Steve Nelle, Nathan Riggs, Rufus Stephens, Feather Wilson** and **Clayton Wolf**, covering topics such as

- Deer management and hunting regulations
- Deer overpopulation
- Hydrological research on Trinity Aquifer
- Kendall and northern Bexar County water supply
- Land manager role in water conservation
- Cedar biology and management
- Landscaping for conservation
- Hill Country native plants in the natural world

For complete agenda and to register, call Georgia at 830 249 4616 or email nature@cibolo.org.

MASTER NATURALIST MILESTONES/ACKNOWLEDGMENTS/KUDOS

Seven of our chapter members have earned awards that will be presented at our October 23 meeting.

Bill Frodyma, Don Robinson, Donna Robinson and Bob Tanner of our Class of 2005 have achieved certification as Texas Master Naturalists. They will receive their certificates and their dragonfly pins. They are involved in several volunteer projects including the Old Tunnel Wildlife Management Area (the Bat Tunnel), Monarch larval monitoring, the annual Butterfly Count and the Butterfly Garden in Kerrville-Schreiner Park.

Diane McMahon of our Class of 2005 has earned her special first year recertification by completing over 80 hours of volunteer service and 16 hours of advanced training. She will receive the 2006 TMN pin, the Texas Prickly Pear. Diane volunteers at the Old Tunnel Wildlife Management Area and at the Butterfly Garden in Kerrville-Schreiner Park.

Nancy Vaughan of the Class of 2003 achieved her 2006 re-certification as a TMN and will receive her Texas Prickly Pear pin. Nancy leads land management projects at Los Rincones, a land trust property in Kerrville managed by the Natural Areas Preservation Association.

Scott Magee of our Class of 2004 will receive his Bronze Milestone award recognizing 250 cumulative hours of volunteer service since he became a TMN. Scott is active in our Land Management Assistance Program (LMAP), visiting landowners' properties to identify their trees, forbs and native grasses and discuss issues such as invasive plants, erosion control, and more. Scott also teaches programs on native plant identification.

Some members of our Class of 2006 have asked about the impact of missing training classes. Certification as a Texas Master Naturalist has three requirements:

- Completion of all training classes and field trips;
- A minimum of 40 hours of volunteer service within 15 months; and
- A minimum of 8 hours of advanced training within 15 months

Members who miss classes are still TMNs and can still participate in all chapter activities, including earning hours for awards. They cannot, however, receive these awards until all three of the above requirements are satisfied.

In September, **Nyta Hensley** and **Bob Keiser** of the Class of 2005 made up a missed class and thus earned certification as Texas Master Naturalists as well as their special first year recertification with an additional forty volunteer hours and eight hours of AT. They received their certificates and their dragonfly pins, as well as the 2006 TMN pin, the Texas Prickly Pear, for their 2006 recertification.

Congratulations to all our chapter's achievers this month!

CALENDAR

October 16–17: Plant ID and Ranch Management – 5:30pm–7:30pm, Fredericksburg High School, Room 235. Class sponsored by Fredericksburg ISD Continuing Education and taught by **Willard Dearing**. \$30.

October 19–22: Native Plant Society of Texas Annual Symposium – Workshops and field trips related to this year's theme of *Convergence and Diversity: Native Plants of South Central Texas*. San Antonio Marriott Northwest, 3233 NW Loop 410, San Antonio. See www.npsot.org, e-mail symposium@npsot.org, or call 830 997 9272 for more information.

October 20–22: Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting – Mo Ranch, Hunt.

Early/Discounted Registration ends September 24. All Registration ends October 4.

Advanced Training topics for the weekend include:

- Texas Wildfire History and Preparedness
- Volunteer Work Just Got Easier!
- Leopold Education Project
- Rainwater Harvesting
- Entomology and Its Field Laboratory
- Invaders of Texas
- Science & Civics
- Texas' Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Program
- Planning and Running Effective Meetings
- Basic PowerPoint Skills for the Master Naturalist Communicator
- Tracking Mammals

Details at <http://masternaturalist.tamu.edu/pdf/TMNAAnnMtgReg2006.pdf>.

October 21: Rainwater Catchment Workshops – 9:00am–noon and 1:00pm–4pm. Presentation by **John Kight**, engineer and rainwater catchment owner, on design and materials of his household system. Cost \$20/person, \$30/couple for CNC members; \$30/person and \$40/couple for nonmembers. Meet at the Cibolo Nature Center parking lot in Boerne to carpool to the Kight residence. Limited to 30 people. Pre-registration is required. Call 830 249 4616 or e-mail nature@cibolo.org.

October 24: Rangeland Monitoring Seminar – 8:30am–4:00pm, Hill Country Youth Exhibition Center, Kerrville. Sponsored by the Texas Cooperative Extension and the Kerr County Soil, Water and Conservation District in Kerr County. Program will include a range site tour and a catered meal. Extension Range Specialist **Dr. Bob Lyons**

of Uvalde and **Dr. Allan McGinty** of San Angelo will discuss how to develop a rangeland monitoring system and different tools to use in rangeland monitoring. Livestock grazing management strategies will also be discussed. For more information, call 830 257 6568 or e-mail Kerr-TX@tamu.edu.

October 25: Tree Identification Workshop – 1:00pm–4:00pm, Lions Camp meeting room, Kerrville. Presentation by **Jim Stanley**. *Starting time may be slightly later if the MN class runs late. AT credit available.*

October 31: Fredericksburg Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas – 7:00pm, Gillespie County Historical Society Building, 312 W. San Antonio Street, Fredericksburg. Presentation on *Agaves, Yuccas, and Other Alien Species of the Hill Country* by **Lonnie Childs**, NPSOT–Fredericksburg chapter president and Gillespie County naturalist.

November 1: Grass Identification Workshop – 1:00pm–4:00pm, Lions Camp meeting room, Kerrville. Presentation by **Jim and Priscilla Stanley**. *Starting time may be slightly later if the MN class runs late. **AT credit available.***

November 7: Kerrville Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas – 2:00pm, Riverside Nature Center, Kerrville. **Susan Sander** with the Texas Forest Service will talk about native trees.

November 7: Boerne Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas – 7:00pm, Cibolo Nature Center, Boerne. **Baxter Adams**, owner of Love Creek Nursery in Medina, will discuss *Bigtooth Maples and Why There Aren't More of Them in the Hill Country*.

November 11: Guadalupe Bass Restoration Initiative – Riverside Nature Center Adult Learning for Living Program Series. Presentation by Guy Harrison, President of the Hill Country Fly Fishers, 10:00–11:00am.

November 15: Texas Recycles Day – Statewide public awareness campaign that aims to educate Texans on the environmental and economic benefits of waste reduction and recycling. Coordinated through the Recycling Alliance of Texas and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. See <http://www.texasrecyclesday.org/> for details.

November 18: Land and Water Conference – 8:30am-4:00pm, Cibolo Nature Center, Boerne. **See above for details.**

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

