

THE TEXAS STAR

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HILL COUNTRY CHAPTER

Chapter Website: <http://www.hillcountrymasternaturalist.org>

AUGUST PROGRAM WELCOME, CLASS OF 2007!

This month, the Class of 2007 will be attending their first official class session at our regular meeting time, giving us a chance to welcome them. The meeting will be held at Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street, Monday, August 27. Many thanks for planning this program go to the hard-working and dedicated *Class Planning Committee (CPC)*. The committee will introduce the new class, and Virginia Sawin will speak about "What is a Naturalist"? There will be refreshments (courtesy of the CPC) beginning at 6:30. This is always a fun session, so plan to be there.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This morning I happened to look out and see a Queen butterfly flailing in the web of a garden spider up in the corner of our front porch. As I watched – and, I must admit, contemplated freeing the butterfly – the butterfly suddenly broke free and flew off. I couldn't help cheering for the little guy, but then I had to stop and think: Good day for the butterfly, Bad day for the spider.

Nature is full of ironies, and frequently in our work as Master Naturalists we make judgments in determining the destiny of other creatures: we hunt deer to manage the white-tail population to give forbs a chance; we chop down cedar in favor of our grasses and other trees; we trap and 'dispatch' cowbirds to save the black-capped vireo and other songbirds. Good day for the vireo, Bad day for the cowbird.

We have to assume that – most of the time, at least – we are making the right choice, and that our 'destructive' activities are in fact benefiting our natural resources. But

I think it's important to try to balance these judgment calls with more obviously constructive activities such as caging trees, installing bat boxes and bird nest boxes, and planting native wildflowers, grasses, trees and shrubs.

It's also important to help others understand the reasoning behind our 'destructive' activities. As part of our outreach and education efforts, we need to do what we can to explain actions which may be misunderstood by others who don't necessarily see or appreciate the big picture.

And, of course, one of the most constructive of all our activities is the training of a new group of would-be Master Naturalists each fall. Our new class is starting up at the end of this month, and we'll have a chance to meet the trainees on our usual meeting night, August 27. Please make plans to be there and welcome this new group. See article below for details on the new class members.



Phyllis Muska

INTRODUCING... THE NEW CLASS:

Bandera County

Margaret Byrum works for Texas Parks & Wildlife at the Hill Country State Natural Area in Bandera, where she has an opportunity to share her love for nature every day. She also finds time to volunteer at Brighter Days Horse Refuge in Pipe Creek.

Jay Gartlan-Mabry is an office manager for Texas Parks & Wildlife at Hill Country State Natural Area in Bandera. Jay is interested in developing his knowledge of Hill Country nature in order to help educate others through interpretive programs. In fact, he volunteers some of his time to the National Association of Interpreters.

Julie Gibson lives with her husband in Pipe Creek where they enjoy their acreage and gardens. She is a retired digital photography teacher, still working part-time in that field, who would like to broaden her understanding of our Texas heritage in order to help pass it along to others.

Leroy Kneupper lives in Bandera and has a lifelong, deep, and abiding interest in the Texas Hill Country which has been home to his family for five generations. Retired from the Petrochemical industry as a project manager, he hopes to help people learn to recognize and use native plants in their landscapes, and to lend his computer and training skills to the efforts of our chapter.

Bexar County

Maura E. Osborne is a Freelance film Producer and researcher for TV. She wants to help protect, preserve and restore the nature of the Hill Country. She has experience in performing, including with a bilingual education troupe, and hopes to further use her educational skills through the TMN program

Gillespie County

Bill Burns worked as a hospital administrator before retiring to Fredericksburg with his wife, Charlene Randal, also in this year's class. His love of the outdoors and nature has drawn him to learn more about it so he can tender his appreciation into protection and management.

Charlene Randal is a former R.N. currently working as an artist. She enjoys volunteering in the winter at Sauer-Beckman Living History Farm at LBJ Park in Stonewall. She and her husband, Bill Burns, have started a garden from scratch on their property "out in the country" where they are building. "The garden was my priority," she says.

Sharon Rodriguez is a retired accountant living in Fredericksburg. She loves the Hill Country and now that they are retired and "somewhat settled," looks forward to exploring more of its natural beauty. Her volunteer interests include archaeology, geology, bird counts, nature walks and wildflowers and native plants.

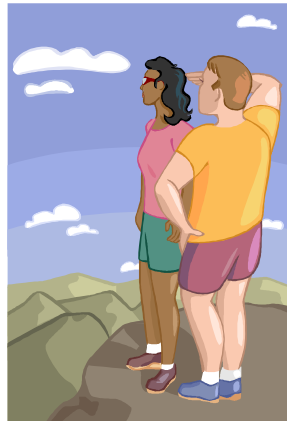
Maureen Lisa Savickas recently moved to Fredericksburg and was looking for a meaningful volunteer experience when she discovered Old Tunnel. She has been volunteering there ever since; she says it fulfills her interest in wildlife conservation and bats. She hopes to lend her interests in public speaking, writing, and photography to the program.

Mary Frances Watson is an energetic and involved volunteer, living in Fredericksburg. She has given time to her church, and held offices in PTA. She loves nature and carries a shovel, gloves, boots, pots, and water in her car in case she encounters "something interesting that can be collected without breaking a law." She says, "everything interests me---except liver"

Kendall Country

Janet Csanyi recently moved to the Comfort area with her husband after working as a Technical Writer. Her skills and interests include writing, photography, and computers. Janet would like to volunteer her time and energy to do what she can to ensure the rehabilitation and conservation of our natural resources.

Sandy Freeman is a retired rancher and desktop publisher. Sandy is passionate about the environment and wildlife and would like to pass along that love and respect. She is also an artist, specializing in painting animals.



Sharon R. McLaughlin retired to the Hill Country to 13 acres of “trees, rocks, grasses, and wildlife,” and she wants to learn more about her surroundings. She enjoys photography, teaching children, working with her hands, and exploring. She hopes to help preserve the beauty of our part of the world.

Mary H. Morton is a self-employed photographer. As a member, friend and supporter of the Cibolo Nature Center, she learned about TMN from other CNC members who had taken the course. She hopes to gain a better knowledge of the local environment, and to use her photography and organizational skills in passing on that knowledge.

Jean Parreira recently moved with her family from California to Boerne. As a former teacher and librarian, she hopes to share with young people her family’s encounters on their new property with deer, turkeys, wild pigs, foxes, rabbits, skunks, raccoons, and a multitude of birds.

Audrey Charlene Tausch is a retired business office manager. She has been interested in the natural resources and wildlife of the Hill Country since grade school. She has experience speaking to school and business groups, and hopes to use those skills as a TMN volunteer.



Sara L. Hendricker was the director of research for the Ohio Municipal League before retiring to Kerrville. She was active in the initial stages of the Japanese Teagarden restoration project in San Antonio. In addition to using her computer and teaching skills, she is particularly interested in volunteering at the Kerr Wildlife Management Area.

James H. Holt, Jr. is the pastor of Comfort Baptist Church. Since moving to Comfort 30 years ago, he has become concerned about the population growth of the Hill Country and the resulting stress on natural resources, particularly water sources and native plant species. He loves the outdoors and taking his 3-year old grandson to the Cibolo Nature Center.

Steven King is the Camp Director of the Texas Lions Camp. He feels that a better understanding of the environment will make him more effective working with his organization. Beyond that, he would like to provide education on land management, sharing the outdoors with children, and protecting it for the future.

Carol Ann Neunhoffer brings skills in writing, photography, public speaking, and teaching to the program. She finds relaxation in going to the top of the hill on her ranch and listening to the birds, insects, and other wild life, and identifying their species. She hopes to learn more about the flora and fauna of Texas and Hill Country.

Elaine G. Payne brings skills in public speaking, teaching, and writing to the program. She says, “My husband and I are working hard to encourage diversity on our own formerly overgrazed, cedar-covered land,” and expects the TMN course to help them understand more, and to share that knowledge.

Kevin Pillow and his wife are the owners of Wild Birds Unlimited in Kerrville. They came here from California where he was the president of Redlands Morning Kiwanis Club, and regional advisor for an area Key club “overseeing about 4500 great kids!” He hopes to become more knowledgeable about local wildlife, and “it also sounds like a blast!”

Gracie Smith Waggener has been a florist and floral designer for 35 years. She understands that “more people need to know about the native plants, and not the ‘nursery plants’ that are invading the area.” She lives on the river and hopes to help protect it as a precious resource.

Kerr County

Julie Clay retired from HR management and moved very recently to Kerrville. One of her hopes is to use the knowledge she gains in the TMN program to help develop and deliver programs for school children to garner their interest.

Sherry Egloff will be underlining a lifelong interest in plants and animals with the TMN Program. She volunteered extensively at the Chicago Botanical Garden as a docent and doing plantings and maintenance of the perennial garden there.

Barbara Gaddis is a retired paralegal and new Master Gardener who recently retired to Kerrville from Bexar County. She hopes to help balance her “burden” on the Hill Country environment through the TMN volunteer program. Among others activities, she envisions herself involved in environmental advocacy with local officials.





AWARDS, CERTIFICATIONS, AND MILESTONES...

500 Hours (Brushed Silver) – Virginia deWolf

Special 1st Year Recertification – Martha Miesch



COMING UP...

TMN ANNUAL MEETING AND ADVANCED TRAINING, OCTOBER 12 – 14, 2007

This year is the 10th anniversary of the founding chapter of Texas Master Naturalist—***Congratulations, Alamo Area Chapter!***

In their honor, the meeting will be in San Antonio with the Hilton San Antonio Airport as the host hotel. As always, there will be many advanced training sessions from which to choose during the weekend. On Friday night, there will be a special field trip to *Bracken Bat Cave and Nature Preserve*, summer home to some 20 million Mexican free-tailed bats, the largest known bat maternity colony in the world.

Other programs will feature the *geology and the botany of the Canyon Lake Gorge*, the *Texas Oak Wilt Suppression Project*, *Wildfire history and Preparedness*, *Whooping Cranes – endangered Texas Treasure*, and a crash course on *Aquatic Ecosystems*.

Special events include:

“A Natural Taste of Texas” BBQ and Cook-Off – chapters can sponsor a food booth highlighting a signature dish from their area. (Venison chili or sausage? German potato salad?)

A Silent Auction and Raffle –for each item donated to this fundraising event, you will receive a free raffle ticket to increase your chances of winning.

Online meeting and reservation information will be available beginning August 20. Watch for the notice in your email.

Meanwhile, you can make your room reservation now. Be sure to use the group code : **TPWD-TMN**. Room rates (\$85/night for king OR double room) are guaranteed if reservation is made by September 14th, 2007. Phone: 1-888-728-3031. Online: www.sanantonioairport.hilton.com



ADVANCED TRAINING

Waterwise Gardening for Birds, Plants and People

Saturday, September 22, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the Fredericksburg United Methodist Church, 1800 N. Llano Street. Sponsored by the Fredericksburg Chapter of the Native plant Society of Texas, this program includes sessions on Ecological Restoration as a Model for Garden Design, Gardening to Attract Birds, Waterwise Landscaping, and Building Attractive Garden Enclosures. Cost is \$25 for NPSOT members, \$30 for non-members. There is a \$5 discount per couple. For details and a registration form, go to <http://www.npsot.org/Fredericksburg>.



Our annual TMN Chapter fundraiser is coming up on **Friday, October 12** and **Saturday, October 13**.

All volunteering at this event is approved as Volunteer Hours under Project # KR-02-A for Youth & Adult Educational Programs at Riverside Nature Center.

This event benefits the community by helping them select the native plants that will grow well on their property. It also helps our chapter and *our nature partner, Riverside Nature Center*.

We have many opportunities to volunteer. You can be a **Plant Cashier**, either on **Friday afternoon** (4:30 – 6:00 pm) for the “Members Only” Sale, or on **Saturday** for the public sale for all shifts (7:30 – 9 AM, 9 – 11 AM, 11 – 1 PM, 1 – 3 PM).

VOLUNTEER PROJECT OF THE MONTH

Down By the Riverside Nature Festival & Native Plant Sale

This event attracts attendees from all four of the counties served by our Hill Country Chapter and beyond. So, consider volunteering for our **TMN information booth** on Saturday. This is our opportunity share with the public all the *interesting and beneficial services provided by TMN volunteers in our communities*.

On **Saturday**, you can volunteer for a two-hour shift to help with **parking**, at the **greeting** table---giving out information on all the event's activities to our visitors, assisting the **Nature Speakers**, **selling drinks & snacks**, assisting with **children's activities**, or with **canoeing** on the Guadalupe River.

The more members we have volunteering, the more fun we can have. Please e-mail, or call Priscilla Stanley and tell her the job(s) and shift(s) that you prefer: jobstan@kctc.com or **830-257-209**.



FROM THE HERBARIUM



Thoroughwort or Fragrant Mist Flower

Eupatorium havanense von Humboldt, Bonpland & Kunth

Thoroughwort is a perennial rhizomatous shrub, 1 to 5 feet tall with many slender, light colored stems arising from the base. The light green deltoid leaves are somewhat serrated, are opposite and have short petioles.

A fairly ordinary-looking plant until September, Thoroughwort is then covered with tight clusters of strong-smelling, fuzzy white flowers that attract a profusion of butterflies, moths and other insects. Blooms last until November and are very fragrant. A few blooms have been seen on this plant in the spring - at the Butterfly Garden at Schreiner City Park and in personal gardens.

Thoroughwort / Fragrant Mist Flower can be found on limestone terrains, showing a preference for hills, ravines, edges of bluffs and canyons across the Edwards Plateau and down into the northern tier of Mexican states. Although the plants will grow in a wide

variety of situations, including partial shade, it will bloom more profusely where it gets at least a half day of full sun.

Propagation can be via seeds indoors in the early spring or by transplanting year round, if it is carefully cut back by 1/3 and given water in its new site. Since Thoroughwort blooms only on new wood, the plant should be sheared back by about half its height to encourage a well-shaped form and more abundant blooms. Alternatively, left unsheared, this plant can be attractive when it cascades over walls and rocks.

Deer will nibble on the plant in some situations, but they are passing it by at Riverside Nature Center.

(Enquist, Marshall, 1987, *Wildflowers of the Texas Hill Country*, p. 209. Nokes, Jill, 2001, *How to Grow Native Plants*, p. 264-266.)

Photographer: Raul Peña



Lindheimeria texana: Texas Star

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