

THE TEXAS STAR

NOVEMBER 2008 VOL. 6 No 11

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist



HILL COUNTRY CHAPTER

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

NOVEMBER MEETING

Our speaker will be Dr. John E. George, recently retired Director of US Dept of Agriculture's Knippling-Bushland U.S. Livestock Insects Research Laboratory in Kerrville, TX. His topic will be **bee hive decline**, a topic that has aroused interest and concern among naturalists and others who are observing ecological changes. Dr. George is an expert on the epidemiology of insect-borne viruses,



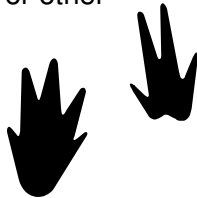
and the control and management of pesticide-resistant populations of ticks.

The meeting will be held at Riverside Nature Center in Kerrville at 7:00 p.m. Beginning at 6:30 there will be an opportunity to meet and chat with members and guests. The public, as always, is cordially invited to attend. Plan to attend, and bring a friend!

A NEW VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY!

Volunteering at **Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation** in Kendalia (located in Kendall County) has been approved as a Volunteer Project for our Chapter. This non-profit organization has been working for 30 years to rescue and rehabilitate wildlife. Our Chapter's project includes working only with **Texas wildlife** and not with the sanctuary farm animals, primates, big cats or other exotics.

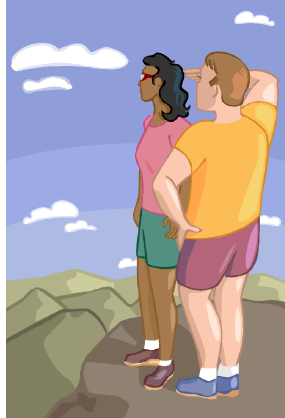
The Project Number is **KL-06-A** and the Project Coordinator is **Ruth Coffey** in our Class of 2008 who can be contacted at coffeegrounds@gvtc.net or 830-816-2172 for more information. Ruth has volunteered at Wildlife Rescue for several years feeding injured or orphaned young animals. You can also visit their website at <http://www.wildlife-rescue.org/>.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This will be my final President's Message. I want to first thank all of the members of the current Board and the committees for all of their hard work and dedication to better our Chapter. I think a special thanks needs to go to Phyllis Muska for all of her service over the past few years, but especially for undertaking several special difficult tasks which she performed superbly.

I also want to commend everyone in our Chapter who volunteered in any of our many projects that further the cause of habitat conservation and restoration, and to all of those who attended advanced training events to further your knowledge of the Hill Country ecology. I want to urge everyone to continue to be involved with our Chapter and to continue your contributions to our Chapter and to the "beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas". Through your efforts, we will continue to make a difference.



become more and more scarce, the condition of the land will become more important. Good land management is essential for the quality of life we love in the Hill Country, and Master Naturalists are uniquely suited to contribute to the "beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas". Some of our current projects have a much more direct and significant effect on land management than others. I urge everyone, when thinking about how to spend your time as a Master Naturalist, to consider what you can do to have the greatest impact on current and future land management in the Hill Country, and to then pursue those activities. The result will be the satisfaction of knowing you did your part to preserve the heritage of the Hill Country.

So stay involved, keep learning, keep working, and I hope to see you all at many future gatherings.

Jim Stanley

When our Chapter was newer and smaller, most of us knew everyone else and were friends with many other members. As the Chapter has grown in size (we now number about 175), more and more of our members are strangers to one another. This lack of familiarity can sometimes lead to friction between people as they interact in various capacities. We need to remember that whether or not we know the other person, we are all volunteers in a common cause, working toward the same goals with very similar values. We can have disagreements as to methods, procedures or priorities, but we should never lose sight of the fact that we are all working for the betterment of the Chapter and the ecology of the Hill Country, and none of these disagreements should ever become personal. Older members should share their experiences with newer members while still being open to new ideas. Newer members should endeavor to improve on past practices without discarding them. Compared to the general population of the Hill Country, those of us who share the values and goals of the Texas Master Naturalists are a very small minority; we need everyone we can get.



As the population of the Hill Country continues to increase, and open land and useable water



IT'S TIME FOR THE HOLIDAY PARTY!

RSVP by November 25

Where: Cibolo Nature Center
When: Saturday, December 6
Time: 11:00 a.m. till 2:00 p.m.
Cost: \$5.00 per person
Menu: Tamales, rice, beans, chips, salad, drink, holiday cookies

Social hour is from 11:00 a.m. till noon. Lunch and awards ceremony from noon till 2:00 p.m. Members may bring a guest. Make checks payable to HCMN. You may pay Martha Miesch in person or mail your payment to Martha at 345 Twin Springs Rd. N., Kerrville TX 78028.

Please make sure Martha receives your payment by November 25th.

Directions: From I-10 in Boerne, take the Hwy 46 East exit and follow Hwy 46 to Main Street and then east toward New Braunfels. Go through the stoplight at Esser Road and then turn right on City Park Road (first right after Esser Road). On City Park Road, continue past the Agriculture Museum and City Park before arriving at the Cibolo Nature Center.



THIS MONTH WE HONOR...

Initial Certification: Julie Gibson, Bill Burns

Milestones: Gracie Waggener – Bronze (250 hours)

2008 Certification: Angelo Falzarano, Sandra Magee, Scott Magee, Howard Platte, Bob Tanner, Nancy Vaughan

Special Recertification: Julie Gibson

Dear fellow Naturalists:

This issue will be my last as editor for this newsletter, and while, after two years at the computer I am looking forward to taking on other volunteer activities – outdoors – I will miss the monthly interactions with so many of you.



It has been a very rewarding experience. I couldn't have done it without the cooperation of the Board and the individual members who sent features, e.g., "field notes," "from the herbarium," etc. The many supportive comments from readers are the icing on the cake.

The incoming editor, Kristie Denbow (class of 2008) brings to this effort her own way with words, an enthusiasm for the natural spaces of the Hill Country, and a wonderful willingness to carry this communication effort forward. I know you will be here for her, as you have been for me.

Before I go, I want to extend special thanks to the hardworking staffs at the State TMN office; the state and local offices of AgriLife Extension and Texas Parks and Wildlife; as well as these good people in our chapter:

Dan Behringer
Norma Bruns
Tom Collins
Sharon Corley
Jane Crone
Janet Csanyi
Ginny de Wolfe
Cathy Downs
Warren Ferguson
Betty Gardner
Jim Gardner
Nyta Hensley

Ron Hood
John Huecksteadt
Kip Kiphart
Lee Kneupper
Myrna Langford
Susan Longacre
Barbara Lowenthal
Sandra Magee
Martha Miesch
Phyllis Muska
Barbara Noblin
Sandy Pena

Don Robinson
Susan Sander
Rebecca Shupp
Jim Stanley
Priscilla Stanley
Bob Tanner
Nancy Vaughan
Gracie Waggener
Kim Whitaker
Jerri Workman

What a great team ... Thanks for everything...Onward!

Donna Snow Robinson (dsr)

LEST WE FORGET.....

By Elena Tucker - Staff Writer , *The Boerne Star* , July 8, 2008

(used by permission)

Levels of the Trinity Aquifer, key groundwater source for the Boerne area, are dropping alarmingly, according to the Texas Water Development Board.

A computer model developed by the TWDB projects that aquifer levels in terrain around the Cibolo



Creek will drop as much as 100 feet within the next two years and could be utterly depleted in some places by the year 2030. ...

Cow Creek Groundwater District Board President Tommy Matthews said "We have some deep concerns

for both the short term and the long term.” Without remedial action, certain portions of the groundwater supply are expected to completely dry up within 10 years.

The TWDB predictors are being used both to assess water-management strategies and to understand declines in water level as increasing demands and potential drought exact their toll. Subsequent implementations, intended to protect the future and present health of area groundwater, are providing a guarded sense of optimism.

But Matthews confesses that his hopefulness, even in view of best-case scenarios, is shaky.

“All it takes,” he said, “is one big developer with deep pockets who wants to sue the water board.” Such a developer, Matthews continued, doesn’t have to be “right,” just well-funded and tenacious. “We’re like David against Goliath without a stone to put in the sling,” Matthews said.

But however helpful the computer model, nobody can be sure just how the Trinity Aquifer will respond to a drought that has, within the past few months, begun to overshadow historically significant dry epochs.

“Since October (2007), we’ve had less rain than during the worst drought on record,” Matthews said. It’s not even known how long it might take for the aquifer to regain normal levels once rains begin to fall again. Although Trinity Aquifer limestone provides southern Kendall County with some of the best water around, the very quality of that rock also means that the aquifer may be slow to reabsorb water.

While the nature of the aquifer may be hard to predict, habits of area residents are more easily prophesied — Kendall County

citizens are still using water as a perpetually abundant resource.

One man recently called a local drilling company to report that after filling up his swimming pool, his well had gone dry.

“I wanted to tell him that he’d better get some buckets ready to haul water out of his pool,” the drilling company employee said. “He’s going to need it to flush his toilets and wash his dishes.”

This is just one of the consumer perspectives that, according to Matthews, must change.

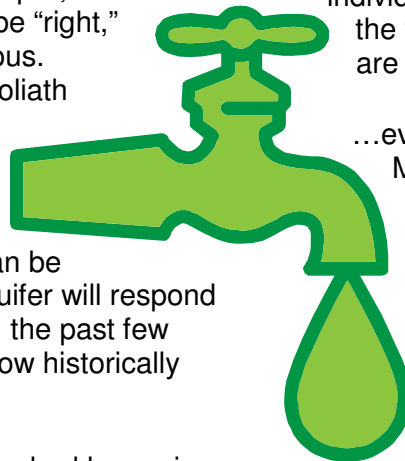
“There will be limits,” he said in regard to the future.

Those limits include the manner in which individuals and businesses use water, and the way in which permits for new wells are issued.

...even the water board directors like Matthews don’t and can’t have all the answers in the face of the many variables affecting south Kendall County water and its purest source, the Trinity Aquifer. But what Matthews does know is that the Hill Country is essentially an arid place that often pretends to be otherwise.

“By 2015, south Kendall County is projected to have serious, serious problems unless brakes are put on with the intentional objective of avoiding a calamity,” Matthews said.

This “calamity,” he clarified, means private and public wells with no water. “Not dry for just a few hours,” he said. “Just dry.”



And what is (a) weed? A plant whose virtues have not been discovered. "
- Ralph Waldo Emerson



There are some who can live without wild things, and some who cannot. ...Like winds and sunsets, wild things were taken for granted until progress began to do away with them. Now we face the question whether a still higher 'standard of living' is worth its cost in things natural, wild, and free. For us of the minority, the opportunity to see geese is more important than television, and the chance to find a pasque-flower is a right as inalienable as free speech."

- Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac

Editor, The Texas Star
431 Timber Ridge
Kerrville TX 78028



Lindheimera texana: Texas Star