

THE TEXAS STAR

JUNE 2008 VOL. 6 No 6

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist



HILL COUNTRY CHAPTER

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

JUNE MEETING

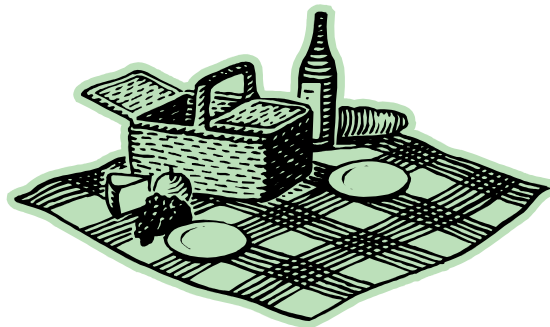
Instead of our regular meeting on the fourth Monday night in June, we are going to have a picnic for all members and spouses/significant others on **Sunday, June 22**.

The Picnic will be at the Hill Country State Natural Area (which is similar to a State Park) about 10 miles from Bandera. It is a 5000+ acre natural area that caters to folks with horses where they can camp and ride the many miles of trails, but it is open to anyone. Two of our members work at the park, Leanne Beauxbeannes and Reynaldo Guevara.

We will be in a shady area near an old farm house and barn, not far from the entrance. There is a creek nearby and trails for hiking along the creek. (If you want to wade in the creek, you might want to bring appropriate footwear.)

Our plans are to have a guided walk along the creek where some of our plant experts will identify the plants and discuss their characteristics. This walk will begin at 3:00 pm for those who are interested, and it will count **as one hour of AT (08-063)**. For those not interested in the hike, you can arrive any time between 3 and 5 pm.

We plan to have a short discussion by Leanne about the park and possible volunteer opportunities, and then have dinner. Everyone is requested to bring their own food, drinks and utensils. There will be picnic benches set up, but if you prefer your own chairs or a blanket to sit on, please bring that too. We will be in a grassy area, and I can assure you that chigger season has begun, so plan accordingly. There is a park restroom near the picnic site. After we eat, people can stay and visit, take their own hikes, or drive some of the park roads, and leave whenever they choose.

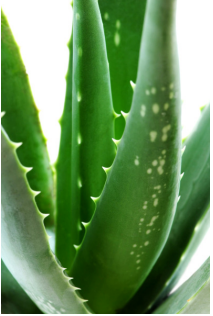


Driving directions: From Bandera, take TX 173 toward Hondo. Just outside Bandera you will cross the Medina River and about ¼ mile further you will see the sign for the HCSNA and take a right on FM 1077. Follow that road to the end (about 10 miles). It will become a dirt road at the park. About a mile or less into the park the main road will turn to the right and go over a low water crossing, but **just before the low water crossing there is a road that goes straight. Take that road**, and about a half mile or so along you will come to the picnic site.



CLASS OF 2008

Applications due July 17



How much do you enjoy being a Master Naturalist? Was your training valuable? Do you find your volunteer projects rewarding? It's time to recruit the class of 2008 and you are an important part of that process. Think about those conversations with friends and acquaintances you have had in the last year about the TMN program, the projects, and the gratification you have experienced. If you were talking to an interested prospect, be sure and let them know of these dates and how to sign up.

Classes will be held in Kerrville on Wednesdays from 8:30 am to 1:00 pm beginning September 3 and ending November 12. Any adult in Bandera, Gillespie, Kendall or Kerr County may apply for this annual training. To obtain more information or an application packet for the 2008 Master Naturalist Hill Country Chapter training classes, contact John Huecksteadt at 830-997-4843 or johnh@beecreek.net.

Completed applications must be postmarked by Thursday, July 17.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What is our Mission?

Having spent 25 years working for a multinational, multidivisional corporation, I am well acquainted with "mission statements". They were almost always full of platitudes and meaningless words and phrases, and were changed with every change in upper management, so I pretty much ignored them. Then, sometime after I became a Master Naturalist I became aware of our mission statement; ***"To provide a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities"***. And the more I think about it, the more I like it.

To me it represents the guiding principle of our organization and the benchmark by which all of our



activities should be measured. We can ask ourselves, does this or that activity *"provide education, outreach and service"* and is it dedicated to *"the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas"*? The more directly and significantly an activity conforms to those standards the more it contributes to our "Mission". Applying those standards was what led me to organize our Land Management Assistance Program, which some of us believe is second only to New Class Training as being the most significant and important activity that we do as a chapter. I urge everyone to think about that statement and think about what you can do to best contribute to our Mission.

See you at the picnic on Sunday, June 22 at the Hill Country State Natural Area, and be sure to encourage any of your family and friends to apply for our next training class starting this September.



THIS MONTH WE HONOR...

TMN Certification: Sara Hendricker

Special 1st Year Recertification: Gracie Waggener, Mary Frances Watson

Milestones: Robert Keiser – Bronze (250 hours), John Huecksteadt – Gold (1000 hours)

2008 Recertification: Priscilla Bailey, Warren Ferguson, Jack Millikan, Karen Millikan, Charles Smith



AND WE SAY "THANK YOU" TO:

Lee Kneupper
Bill and Pat Perkison
Janet Csanyi
And an anonymous donor

For donating their tuition refunds back to the chapter.



WHAT'S COMING UP?

ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES...



Rainwater Harvesting Seminar

Jul 19, 2008 Repeat - August 9 & September 13

This is the place to get the latest technological information and the most practical advice. Presenter John Kight, engineer and rainwater harvesting system owner, will teach about design and materials from 1st hand knowledge. The Kights' home is in a traditional development. They have no well or outside water source and their system comfortably supplies the most delicious water for all household and landscape needs. Bring your questions.

CNC Member \$20/person and \$30/couple
Non-member \$30/person and \$40/couple
Pre-registration required Call 830-249-4616 Limit: 30

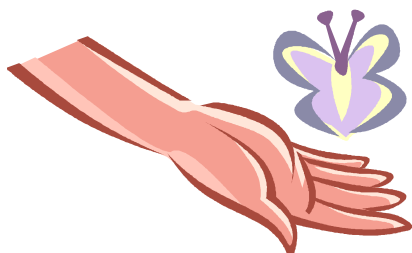
Time: 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Location: CNC Auditorium, 140 City Park Road, Boerne, TX

This seminar will qualify for HCMN Advanced Training. Report hours under AT code # 08-070.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

North American Butterfly Counts (CC-09-A)



The 34th North American Butterfly Count continues through June and July. If you are interested, there are still two opportunities coming up. The count occurs over a 1 day period and is conducted in a 15 mile diameter circle. Volunteers count all the butterfly species and individuals seen during the day in the circle. A donation of \$3 is requested to participate unless the individual is under the age of 12 or will only watch butterflies in their home garden area. If you wish to participate, please contact the compiler for the counts (see below). Be sure to bring a lunch, drinks, and sun protection. Groups will

meet for lunch and to review the morning species list. Afternoon time spent will vary based on additional areas to census, weather and butterfly species still needed to be found. For more information, go the WWW.NABA.ORG.

Master Naturalists will use code to report volunteer time.

Local Counts and compilers:

June 28	Center Point	Bob Tanner	830-370-3201	bintense@hotmail.com	Meet 8am
at Camp CAMP in Center Point					

July 12	Boerne	Cathy Downs	830-377-1632	mzdowns@hctc.net	Meet 8am
at Cibolo Nature Center in Boerne					



Texas Horned Lizard Watch Goes On (CC-02-A)



Everyone loves horny toads, but for many Texans the fierce-looking yet amiable reptile is only a fond childhood memory. Now, through participation in Texas Horned Lizard Watch, you can take part in an effort to better understand why our official state reptile is doing well in some locations and what factors may have contributed to its decline in other areas.

Once common throughout most of the state, the horny toad (or Texas Horned Lizard) has disappeared from many parts of its former range over the past 30 years. Its disappearance has been blamed on many factors, including collection for the pet trade, spread of the red imported fire ant, changes in land use, and environmental contaminants. For the most part, however, the decline of the Texas Horned Lizard has remained a mystery with little understanding of the management actions that could be taken to restore it.

As a participant in Texas Horned Lizard Watch, you will be "on-the-ground" – collecting data and observations about populations of horned lizards in your area, their food sources, their potential predators or competitors, or their habitat characteristics. From young to old, Ph.D. to hobbyist, there's a way for everyone to participate!
http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/learning/texas_nature_trackers/horned_lizard/

Source: Texas Parks and Wildlife

CELEBRATING THE SPIRIT OF TMN SHARING

I would like to share an interesting story with our members which tells us a fair amount about what makes our TMN program special. In late March, a request came to Janet Csanyi, our Communications Director, via our website from Mike Mitchell, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Advisor to the new El Camino Real TMN Chapter in Cameron, TX. In Mike's TMN Advisor training, he learned of the Texas tradition of passing a mesquite bean to another person to keep in their pocket to bring them good luck. His problem was that Texas mountain laurels, which provide the large, hard, red bean known as the "mesquite bean", were not native in Cameron in East Texas. Thus he hoped that our chapter would be able to help him find a source for a Texas mountain laurel red bean for each of his 24 trainees who would be the first graduating class of the El Camino Real Chapter. Since the query involved plants, Janet sent it to me since I have well-known fondness for native plants.

The challenge was that while Texas mountain laurels are grown in our area, they were just finishing blooming and certainly would not have made mature red beans by the new chapter's graduation. Thus I made an e-mail appeal to our members who responded promptly with great generosity. Thanks go to **Norma Bruns, Ginny deWolf, Bill Frodyma, Marilyn Knight, Sharon McLaughlin, Phyllis Muska, Maura Osborne, Sandy Pena, Rebecca Shupp and Mary Frances Watson** who donated their red beans saved from

2007 for growing, crafts or jewelry-making to this worthy cause. In e-mail discussions with Mike, we learned that half of their 24 members were Master Gardeners as well, so a new idea was born. We provided 24 red beans for their graduation for the traditional passing of the red bean to bring good luck to the new TMNs, and we provided more red beans with growing information so that the members could have the pleasure of growing their own luck from more red beans.



Mike was amazed, but quite pleased, with the outcome of his blind request to a website. He even told Michelle Haggerty, the TMN State Program Coordinator, how remarkable the Hill County Chapter members' response had been. Michelle responded to Mike that "I think you will find that most if not all of our Master Naturalist volunteers and chapters have a really big heart and want each and every one to succeed!"

As we reflect back on this adventure the day after the graduation of the El Camino Real Chapter's first class, we recognize that we not only passed along the good luck of the red beans, but we shared the spirit of our TMN organization where we enjoy working together to support each other and our communities. The fact that we take this caring and sharing by TMNs for granted is what makes our TMN program so rewarding.

Priscilla Stanley





Walk Softly ... Reducing our Carbon Footprint

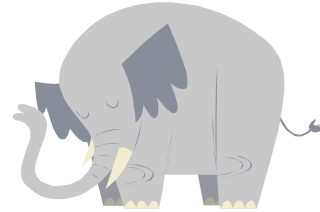
Elephant Poop Paper?

According to the website *greenlivingtips.com**, approximately one out of every three trees harvested today ends up as pulp for paper products. *Rainforestweb.org* says that while the U.S. has less than five percent of the world's population, we consume more than 30 percent of the world's paper. In light of these facts, we can be pleased that, for most TMN members, this newsletter is distributed and read online.

There are a number of alternatives to wood pulp for producing paper, including:

Kenaf – a type of hibiscus, originating in Africa,
bagasse – the pulp that remains after extracting juice from sugar cane, *mango*, *banana* – from the bark of the banana tree, *cotton*, *jute*, *elephant poop*

(the website says it's bacteria-and odor-free)!,
hemp – Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence on hemp paper, *straw*, *tamarind*, and *coconut*.



*Michael Bloch

[Green Living Tips.com](http://GreenLivingTips.com) Green Living Tips is an online resource powered by renewable energy offering a wide variety of earth friendly tips, green guides, advice and environment related news to help consumers and business reduce costs, consumption and environmental impact on the planet.



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