

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the
Master Naturalist, Hill Country Chapter



Lindheimeria texana
Texas Star

T E X A S



Hill Country Chapter

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JANUARY MEETING *Water Policy 101*

David Langford, former CEO and current Vice President Emeritus of Texas Wildlife Association, will present **Water Policy 101**.

Mr. Langford says the most important challenges for the conservation and stewardship of the natural environment are, "water, water, and water." His talk will focus on where our state's water policy decisions are made, who makes them, and



how citizens can get involved. He said, "The opportunities for public involvement are many and varied because Texas' water policy-making is designed to be a grass-roots process."

Join us at 7:00 pm, Monday, January 26, at Riverside Nature Center in Kerrville. Beginning at 6:30, we will meet and chat with members and guests. Come early and bring a friend.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A friend who edited the State NPSOT newsletter for a number of years recently told me that the President's Message should never talk about organizational things. "People don't want to hear about the government," she said. In that case, I've failed miserably this month.

How can we not acknowledge and thank the outgoing members of the board? These include Phyllis Muska, Warren Ferguson, Dan Behringer, Jerri Workman, and Lee Kneupper.

Phyllis, in particular, took on three insomnia-inducing tasks facing the chapter this year, writing the Chapter Operating Handbook and the New Class Planning Guidelines, as well as heading up the nominating committee for this past fall's election.

Then there's Donna Robinson, who has provided us such an enjoyable newsletter over the past several years.

Bill Burns and the Class Planning Committee did an exceptional job providing another top-notch training program for our new members.

Oh, yes, what about the Jim and Priscilla Stanley, who spent countless hours organizing and executing the biannual plant sales? So many chapter members gave their time and energy that it is impossible to name them all here.

Thanks to everyone in the chapter who helped make the past two years successful and, hopefully, fun.

John Huecksteadt

THIS MONTH WE HONOR

<u>Milestones</u>	<u>2008 Re-Certification</u>	<u>Special First Year Re-Certification</u>	<u>First Year Certification</u>
Diamond 5000 hours Tom Collins	Sharon Corley Angelo Falzarano Jim Gardner	Julie Gibson Jean Parreira Charlie Randal	Sherry Egloff Julie Gibson Sharon McLaughlin
Gold 1000 hours Phyllis Muska	Barbara Lowenthal Sandra Magee Scott Magee		
Bronze 250 hours Karen Millikan Gracie Waggener	Diane McMahan Howard Platte Donna Robinson Peggy Robinson Bob Tanner Nancy Vaughan Nina Wagner		

The frog does not drink up the pond in which he lives.
Lakota Proverb

Do you know?

Water is the "universal solvent."
It dissolves more substances than any other liquid. Wherever water goes it carries valuable chemicals, minerals, and nutrients.

LOOK

Guadalupe River State Park
Honey Creek State Natural Area

New Project ID **KL-03-B** replaces KL-04-A

Kip Kiphart, project coordinator for GRSP, has announced exciting new Volunteer Opportunities. Choose from: Full Moon Nature Walks, Owl Prowls, Kids in Nature programs, and Astronomy programs or train for song bird banding research.

Anyone is welcome to observe and participate in bird banding programs on January 24, February 14 and 28, and March 14 and 28. Report under AT code 09-008. The special training session for bird banding assistants is January 31st from 8:30-11am.

Interested in establishing a volunteer corps to work on land management issues at [GRSP](#) and [HCSNA](#)? An organizational meeting will be held in late February or early March.

For reservations and more information, please contact Craig at craig.hensley@tpwd.state.tx.us.

ADVANCED TRAINING Your chance to learn more

**> Bird Banding AT code 09-008**

Saturday, January 24, 8:30 -11 am, Rust House, [Guadalupe River SP](#), Hwy 46 W
Presenter: R. Craig Hensley, Park Specialist I, Guadalupe River SP/Honey Creek SNA
Observe songbird banding. Those interested may train to assist with banding research. This will entail setting up and taking down nets, taking birds from nets, assisting with data recording and bird release. Contact Craig for details, craig.hensley@tpwd.state.tx.us

> Tree Management ALL NEW AT code 09-001

Saturday, February 7, 9 am - noon, [Cibolo Nature Center](#), CNC Members \$15, non-members \$20
Presenter: Texas Forest Service forester Paul Johnson
Limited to 30. Pre-registration required. Call 830-249-4616.

> Increase Your Backyard Birds AT code 09-006

Saturday, February 7, 10 - 11:30 am, [Riverside Nature Center](#)
Presenter: Kevin Pillow, Wild Birds Unlimited
Learn how to encourage and attract a large variety of birds by using simple habitat enhancers.

> Rainwater Harvest Workshop AT code 09-002

Saturday, February 14, 9 am - noon, Cibolo Nature Center and site visit to Kight installation
CNC Members \$20/person, \$30/couples, non-members \$30/person, \$40/couples
Presenter: John Kight, engineer and rainwater catchment system owner
Limited to 30. Pre-registration required. Call 830-249-4616.

> Bird Banding AT code 09-008

Saturdays, **February 14 and 28**, 8:30 -11am, Rust House, Guadalupe River SP, Hwy 46 W
Presenter: R. Craig Hensley, Park Specialist I, Guadalupe River SP/Honey Creek SNA
Observe songbird banding. Those interested may train to assist with banding research. This will entail setting up and taking down nets, taking birds from nets, assisting with data recording and bird release. Contact Craig for details, craig.hensley@tpwd.state.tx.us

> Composting Made Easy ALL NEW AT code 09-004

Saturday, February 21, 10 am - noon, Cibolo Nature Center, CNC Members \$15, non-members \$20
Presenter: Master Gardener Chris Seifert
Limited to 30. Pre-registration required. Call 830-249-4616.

> Habitat for Birds AT code 09-005

Part I: Attracting Birds to Your Property
Saturday, February 28, 9 am – noon, CNC Members \$15/person, non-members \$20/person.
Location: Old Daley Ranch, carpool from CNC parking lot promptly at 9 am
Presenter: Dick Park, local birder and landowner
Limited to 30. Pre-registration required. Call 830-249-4616.

> Bird Banding AT code 09-008

Saturdays, **March 14 and 28**, 8:30 -11am, Rust House, Guadalupe River SP, Hwy 46 W
Presenter: R. Craig Hensley, Park Specialist I, Guadalupe River SP/Honey Creek SNA
Observe songbird banding. Those interested may train to assist with banding research. This will entail setting up and taking down nets, taking birds from nets, assisting with data recording and bird release. Contact Craig for details, craig.hensley@tpwd.state.tx.us

FOUR COUNTY FACTS

BANDERA

Bandera County was formed from Bexar and Uvalde Counties in 1856. In 1913 part of Bandera, Kerr, and Edwards Counties went to the formation of Real County. The county seat is Bandera.

GILLESPIE

Gillespie County was formed from Bexar and Travis Counties in 1848. Blanco, Burnet, Llano, and Mason Counties were all carved from Gillespie. The county seat is Fredericksburg.

KENDALL

Kendall County, originally an area included in Bexar County, was formed in 1862 from portions of Kerr and Blanco counties. The county seat is Boerne.

KERR

Kerr County was formed from Bexar Land District No. 2 in January, 1856. The county seat was moved from Comfort to Kerrville when Kendall County was formed.

Land Management Assistance Program

The Hill Country Chapter provides trained volunteers to visit your property to discuss your goals, plans, and concerns.

We will:

- help you identify trees, bushes, and grasses
- review good land stewardship practices
- help determine potential land use problems
- outline possible restoration methods
- provide lists of government experts and additional sources of information

For more information about **LMAP volunteer** consultations contact [Jim Stanley](#), 830-257-2094

Very interesting

Water has a very high surface tension causing it to clump. Surface tension is responsible for capillary action, allowing water and dissolved substances to move through the roots of plants and through the tiny blood vessels in our bodies.



Texans use about 711 million gallons each day, with 60 percent going to agriculture, 15 percent to industry, and 25 percent directly to the state's 23.5 million citizens. — TWDB

MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS *Porky and the Garden*

We first saw Porky in July as he/she was wandering aimlessly along the back porch, poking his nose into every potted plant. He (for the purposes of this discussion I will assume it was a he) was clearly a juvenile, maybe only half the size of an adult porcupine, having almost certainly been born earlier in the spring.

I grabbed my camera and crept out on the porch to record the event. While he seemed to be aware of my presence, his motions did not give the impression of being overly concerned about my being there. At one point he seemed to be approaching me as though he didn't see me, somewhat like an armadillo would. But when I moved to get a better camera angle, the quills on his back shot straight up almost instantaneously and he froze for a moment before waddling off with a bit more purpose than before, down the steps, out by the barn and finally through the fence.

We saw him another time or two in the next week or so, and then discovered some significant damage he had done to the flame leaf sumac by the driveway. We didn't see him again until around Thanksgiving.

I had planted a fall garden and we were enjoying the cauliflower, cabbage, beets, tomatoes, and romaine lettuce. Then just before Thanksgiving I noticed one of the lettuce plants looked like something had been eating the top out of it. In all the years I have been planting gardens, none of the animals we see often



"Porky"

(raccoons, possums, skunks) had shown any interest in my garden, and the low fence has always kept the rabbits and armadillos out, so it was a mystery to me. Then a couple of nights later something ate the tops off several more lettuce plants, then a day or so later the entire row was attacked. None of the other plants in the garden showed any damage at all! The next night I went out with a spotlight and found Porky climbing the garden fence.

Having solved one mystery only raised other questions. Why would a porcupine, which normally eats twigs, buds and bark, be interested in lettuce? Any why not any of the other veggies? After I pulled up the remains of the lettuce, no further damage occurred in the garden.

Around 1900, porcupines were known in only one Panhandle county and two Trans-Pecos counties in Texas and were considered uncommon even there. Today, they are known to live in the entire western half of the state. Armadillos may be the only mammal that has increased its range to a greater extent.

Since then I have heard from a neighbor about a half mile down the road who said he saw a porcupine climbing his fence one evening. His response was to shoot it! He claims it was a very large one, so perhaps it wasn't Porky.

Why people who have so little tolerance for the most minor inconvenience caused by native animals choose to move to the country will always be a mystery to me.

Jim Stanley

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*, 1949

For the last three years our TMN Hill Country Chapter Training Class members have been the fortunate recipients of copies of **A Sand County Almanac** donated by Sand County Foundation in Madison, Wisconsin.

The books were awarded to all class members upon completion of the 40-hour training session.

David Allen, SCF Vice President and SCF board member, David K. Langford of Comfort, coordinated the book donation effort.

Founded in 1965, Sand County Foundation has expanded from caretaker of the 1,500 acre Leopold Memorial Reserve, site of the original homestead and “shack” of Aldo Leopold, to advising managers of millions of acres in several countries.

The Foundation works with private landholders to improve the quality of their lands through science, ethics, and incentives inspired by the Leopold Land Ethic.

Additionally, through programs such as TPWD’s Lone Star Land Stewards, Sand County Foundation awards the major stewards with the prestigious Leopold Conservation Award in ten states and growing.

Our Chapter expresses its gratitude to Sand County Foundation for this generous support. We look forward to a continued association with Sand County Foundation.



Advancing the use of ethical and scientifically sound land management practices and partnerships for the benefit of people and the ecological landscape.

Visit an interesting website with land management information, <http://www.sandcounty.net/>.

New Volunteer Project - Canyon Gorge

Project ID KL-07-A

Canyon Gorge was carved out below the spillway of Canyon Lake by the Guadalupe River in the flood of 2002. The gorge is up to 40 ft deep and has abundant fossils in layers of limestone allowing you to read history from 65 - 115 million years ago. Volunteer at Canyon Gorge to:

- Lead public tours
- Maintain and improve trails
- Remove invasive plants

Special training is required to become a Gorge Docent or a Gorge Tour Guide. This training is approved AT for our Chapter. The next class is expected to be in fall of 2009. No training is required for other volunteer opportunities.

Contact Project Coordinator [Cathy Downs](mailto:Cathy_Downs) at 830-995-5864 for more information or visit www.canyongorge.org.



RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER

RNC will host two training events for prospective volunteers who would like to be part of a team providing nature-related educational programs for children.



Star Party Volunteer Training - Saturday, January 17, 10 - 11 am
Learn how to provide fun and educational astronomy programs for children, grades kindergarten through 5th. Learn techniques for working with different ages and basic concepts for conducting successful Star Parties. Our teacher will be Adrienne Grubb, experienced RNC volunteer and Vice Principal at Hunt Elementary School.



Girl Scout Wildlife Badge Training - Saturday, February 21, 10 - noon
RNC provides an excellent Girl Scout program which enables 4th grade Girl Scouts to earn their Wildlife Badge. Included in the program are classroom activities, a nature habitat hike, microscope examination of gathered specimens, and arts and crafts. Our teacher is Donna Falzarano, developer of this excellent program, RNC volunteer, and retired educator. Volunteers who work in this program have the opportunity to guide nature hikes, assist with classroom educational activities, puppet shows, and arts and crafts.

Master Naturalists who assist with educational activities at RNC work as part of a team and earn volunteer hours for these programs.

Please call the RNC office at 830-257-4837 to register for these training programs.

Look around

Write it down

Send it in

OPPORTUNITIES THAT COUNT For good and For volunteer hours

Great Backyard Bird Count
A citizen science project that all our members can participate in.

February 13, 14, 15, 16

Volunteer code CC-06-A

www.birdsource.org/gbbc/

**Boerne Birders and CNC
Great Backyard Bird Count**

Saturday, Feb 14, 8 -10 am

Meet at the Cibolo Nature Center pavilion. Free

Call 830-230-5551 or

210-710-3981

HERON ROOKERY MONITORING Project ID KL-02-B

You are invited to the Heron Rookery Monitoring Project start up meeting
Tuesday, January 20, 1-3 pm at the Cibolo Nature Center Library.

Jan Wrede says, "New folks are always welcome, particularly Master Naturalists, but to be included in the program, everyone MUST attend this meeting on January 20th."

Contact Jan to reserve your seat at the meeting, wredel@mac.com

**Monitoring will be Tuesday mornings:
Through March 31, 9-11 AM
April 7 through end, 8-10 AM**

Monitoring is in pairs. Beginners are teamed with experienced monitors.
Each team monitors for 4 - 5 Tuesdays in a row.

Jan tells us, "We are looking forward to another interesting heron breeding season. Each one has been full of surprises!"

[Bob Keiser](#) is Project Coordinator.



I believe that water is the only drink for a wise man. Henry David Thoreau

Our front page banner photograph is courtesy of David K. Langford of Comfort.

He has graciously donated this

beautiful Hill Country photograph for our use in the chapter newsletter.

Mr. Langford is the husband of chapter member Myrna Langford.

To see more photography by Mr. Langford visit

www.westernphotographycompany.com



Artesian well in San Antonio circa 1895. Photo from R.T. Hill and T.W. Vaughn's 1896 report on the geology and underground waters of the Edwards Plateau. The water is shooting over 25 feet high. These wells and others reduced spring flows to a trickle. edwardsaquifer.net



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Hill Country Master Naturalist

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WE'RE ONLINE!

hillcountrymasternaturalist.org

We meet the fourth Monday of each month (excluding Dec.) at 7:00 pm at Riverside Nature Center
150 Francisco Lemos St. in Kerrville.
Our meetings are open to everyone.

Texas Master Naturalist mission:

To develop 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.

The Texas Star newsletter is a monthly publication of the Hill Country Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program.

News, comments, information, and ideas are always welcome.

Please contact [Kristie Denbow](mailto:kristie.denbow@tpwd.texas.gov), Editor, 830-755-8179.

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TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE

AgriLIFE EXTENSION
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