

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the
Master Naturalist, Hill Country Chapter



Lindheimeria texana
Texas Star

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist



Hill Country Chapter

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Green At Heart



March 2009
Volume 7, No. 3

MARCH MEETINGRiparian Management

Steve Nelle, Ranch Wildlife Biologist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), will discuss **riparian management**.

His presentation will include basic riparian dynamics and interaction of hydrology, vegetation, erosion, and deposition.

Nelle has been with NRCS for 33 years. He helps landowners integrate wildlife management into

their livestock ranching operations and actively promotes a better understanding of riparian resources and the importance of taking care of our creeks and rivers.

Join us at 7:00 pm, Monday, March 23, at Riverside Nature Center in Kerrville. Chat with members and guests

before the meeting during our "social half hour."



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGEJohn Huecksteadt

I recently had a conversation with an "ex-Master Naturalist." "Ex" because this person, although still very involved in volunteering and stewardship, was no longer active in the chapter partly due to discomfort with our name "master naturalist." This caught me short. It has never occurred to me that using that title might be presumptuous.

While trying to resolve my feelings about this challenge, I began thinking about all the people who call themselves "master" - those with master's degrees, Masters Tournament golfers, Zen masters, Master Gardeners, master chefs, or Master Carpenter Norm Abrams. "Wow," I thought, "Maybe we *are* overstating ourselves, I have never felt that my learning about nature compares to any of these." My sense of unease continued.

Then I stumbled upon an article on an unrelated subject. It suggested that too often we *take* our identity and sense of value from our titles rather than *giving* value to those titles. It is not what we take from the name "master naturalist;" it is what we bring to that name. I began to feel a little better.

Desperate for resolution I resorted to Merriam Webster. I found little solace until reaching, at the very bottom, the etymology of the word "master." The root meaning is from the Latin *magister*... teacher. The dilemma evaporated.

Never shrink from calling yourself a Master Naturalist, but do so with a sense of giving to the name, as a teacher, with humility and a profound sense of gratitude.

THIS MONTH WE HONOR



Milestones

Silver 500 hours
Martha Miesch
Bronze 250 hours
Kristie Denbow

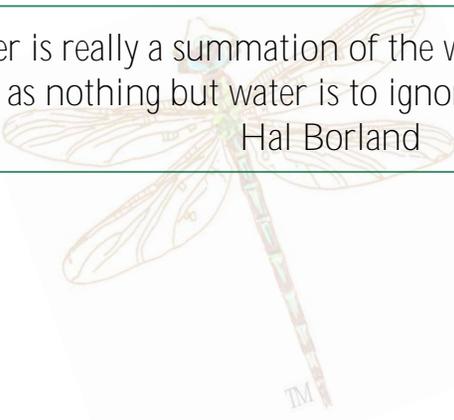
2009 Re-Certification

Julie Clay
Stephen Dodge
Cynthia Johnson
Jim Stanley
Priscilla Stanley

Special First Year Re-Certification

Kristie Denbow
Bob McKinley

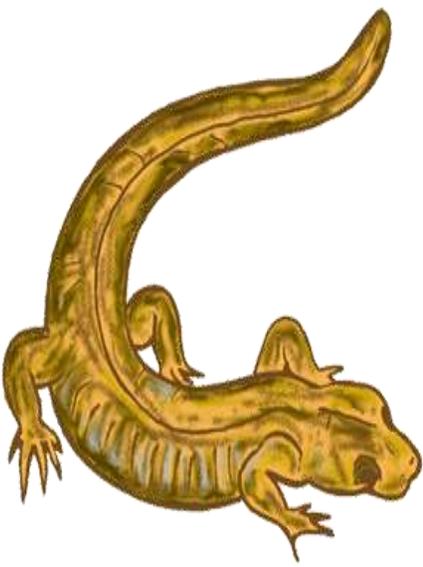
Any river is really a summation of the whole valley. To think of it as nothing but water is to ignore the greater part.
Hal Borland



Do you know?

The House recently passed the Clean Water State Revolving Fund reauthorization which included sewage right-to-know notification provisions requiring that the public is notified of sewage spills in their local rivers and streams.

From the desk of Michelle Haggerty, State Coordinator



It's a Salamander!

“This year’s Re-Certification Pin is the 8th in our on-going series of specially designed logos and Re-Certification pins for the Texas Master Naturalist Program. The 2009 pin is the Salamander. Based on the artist’s rendering, it is believed to be of the Plethodon spp. and possibly the Southern Red- backed salamander. We like to affectionately call him “Sal” for short,” Michelle said.

The salamander pin is available only to certified Texas Master Naturalist members who also complete forty hours of service and eight hours of advanced training during 2009. This pin will only be available for 2009. Curious to see the whole suite of service pins developed for the state program? Visit the state website at <http://masternaturalist.tamu.edu/>.

ADVANCED TRAINING Your chance to learn more



- **Hill Country Archeological Association Meeting** **AT 09-036**
 Saturday, March 21, 12:30pm, Riverside Nature Center
 Steve Tomka will give a presentation on atlatl's and bow and arrows.
- **Natural Landscape Design Workshop** **AT 09-023**
 Saturday, March 21, 9am - 1pm, CNC Auditorium and Park, CNC Members \$15; non-members \$20
 Presenter: Judit Green, TPWD urban biologist
 Design, installation, and maintenance tips on using native and adapted plants.
 Limited to 30. Pre-registration required. Call 249-4616.
- **2009 Old Tunnel Volunteer Training** **AT 09-016**
 Sunday, March 22, Old Tunnel WMA, Old #9 Hwy
 Contact Nyta Hensley, Natural Resources Specialist, at nyta.hensley@tpwd.state.tx.us
 or 830-990-2659. Training class size is limited, call for an invitation.
- **Habitat For Birds Part 2: Managing for Game Birds and Song Birds** **AT code 09-024**
 Saturday, March 28, 9am – noon, CNC Auditorium and Park, CNC Members \$15, non-members \$20
 Presenter: Rufus Stephens, Texas Parks and Wildlife biologist
 Limited to 30. Pre-registration required. Call 830-249-4616.
- **Bird Banding** **AT 09-008**
 Saturday, March 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: setting up
 and taking down nets, removing birds from nets, assisting with data recording, and bird release.
- **Monarch Larval Monitoring Project Training** **AT 09-030**
 Wednesday, April 15, 9am -3:30pm, Riverside Nature Center and Kerrville-Schreiner Park
 Presenter: Kip Kiphart, Cibolo Nature Center MLMP coordinator
 Learn how to conduct MLMP data collection.
Free. Registration is necessary. Registration deadline is April 3rd.
 Email Virginia de Wolf or 830-896-2545.
 From *March 21 to March 26*, contact Cynthia Johnson or 830-895-5173.
- **Riparian Workshops for Landowners** **AT 09-033**
Saturday, May 2, 8am-4pm, River Tree Estates, on the Frio River south of Leakey
Tuesday, May 5, 9am-4pm, Dos Chemeneas Ranch on the Picoso Creek near Eagle Pass
Wednesday, May 6, 8am-4pm, Myane Ranch on the Nueces River near La Pryor
Thursday, May 7, 8am-4pm, Choya Ranch on Pulliam Creek and the Nueces near Barksdale
Friday, May 8, 8am-4pm, Burns Ranch on the Frio River near Dilley
Friday, May 8, 7:00 pm, Riparian Function Talk, R.L.White Ranch on San Geronimo Creek
 Presenter: Nueces River Authority's Headwaters Stewardship – Riparian Network, National Riparian
 Service Team
 "Assessing the Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) of Riparian Areas." Participants will learn basic
 riparian dynamics: the interaction of hydrology - vegetation - erosion/deposition.
 Free. Registration required. Space is limited. If you register, your participation is expected.
 Contact Sky Lewey at slewey@nueces-ra.org or call 830-278-6810.

Volunteer Projects

FOUR COUNTY FACTS

BANDERA

The county consists of 793 square miles, with elevations ranging from 1,200 to 2,300 feet. Western Bandera County is drained by the Sabinal River and the eastern part by the Medina River.

GILLESPIE

Gillespie County spans 1,061 square miles with elevations from 1,100 to 2,250 feet above sea level. The Pedernales River flows from west to east across the southern width of the county.

KENDALL

With elevations from 1,000 to 2,000 feet and 663 square miles, most of Kendall is drained by the Guadalupe. The Blanco River rises in the county's north and Cibolo Creek rises in the south.

KERR

Drained by the Guadalupe River and its tributaries, Kerr County comprises an area of 1,107 square miles and has elevations ranging from 1,500 to 2,000 feet above sea level.

We have 63 opportunities for service available in our four county region.

5 projects in Bandera	9 projects in Gillespie
8 projects in Kendall	15 projects in Kerr
25 projects Chapter Support and Cross-County	

This month let's see what's going on in Gillespie.

➔ Keep Gillespie growing naturally. Choose one or more of these individual opportunities to tend native plant gardens.

Lipe Garden GL-02-A
Pioneer Museum GL-02-C
[Jane Crone](#)

Native Plant Garden for School Children GL-05-A
[Sharon Corley](#)

Golden Hub GL-06-A [Sharon Rodriguez](#) and [Charlie Randal](#)
Good Samaritan Center GL-02-E [Ward Miller](#)

➔ Learn to be N.I.C.E. - help nurseries with "Natives Instead of Common Exotics" GL-02-D [Sharon Corley](#)

➔ Visitors to the Fredericksburg Nature Center need your guidance. Become a trail guide and help with trail upkeep. GL-04-A [Jane Crone](#)

➔ Happy Little Bluebirds. Help tend their homes at Lady Bird Johnson Park. GL-04-C [Jane Crone](#)

Our thanks to *Bob McKinley* for graciously donating his class tuition refund to the Chapter.

If other 2008 class members would also prefer to donate their tuition reimbursements back to the chapter, please contact [Martha Miesch](#).

Scott Gardner's presentation on the CL Browning Ranch, given at the Feb. 23 chapter meeting, is approved Advanced Training.

AT code 09-032



Flameleaf sumac (*Rhus lanceolata*) is a large shrub or small tree that is native to the Hill Country. It grows rapidly to 20 ft tall and once established is quite indifferent to our droughts and occasional floods. It provides the most dependable, fiery-red, autumn foliage in the Hill Country which has led to its use in informal landscapes. Flameleaf sumac tends to root sprout to form an open thicket favored by wildlife, but not by homeowners seeking a formal landscape.

When we moved into our new home in 2001, we built a one-acre, homestead high fence and began our landscaping. I planted a small flameleaf sumac and waited for it to grow. In the interim, at least a dozen flameleaf sumacs grew elsewhere within our fence. Birds probably dined on the berries (drupes) of the nearest flameleaf, a very old native specimen 400 yards away, then visited our trees and deposited scarified seeds below, ready to grow.

In summer, flameleaf sumac blooms with large clusters of delicate white flowers that are incredibly attractive to hungry bees and butterflies. These flowers also provide sustenance to our praying mantis which turns a cream color to match the flowers where it sits and eats the bees and butterflies. The flowers are followed by brilliant red drupes highly favored by mockingbirds, northern flickers, and other fruit-eaters.

Although flameleaf sumac is moderate preference browse for white-tailed deer, most areas in the Hill Country have such a high deer population that the deer have to eat the even less-preferred plants. The land does, however, have a remarkable ability to recover once it is protected from overgrazing and over browsing.

Identification: Flameleaf sumac has a pinnately-compound leaf with 11 - 17 paired lanceolate leaflets with an end leaflet. The upper leaf surface is shiny. Flameleaf sumac is easily differentiated from other Hill Country trees and shrubs with pinnately-compound leaves by its “winged” rachis (the central stem running the length of the compound leaf which has narrow green “wings” on both sides of the stem). The smaller branches are reddish and densely covered with fine hairs.



Growing conditions: Full sun preferred to half sun.
Xeric, once established.

Availability: Flameleaf sumac is easy to find in most native nurseries.



Look around

Write it down

Send it in

Native Plant Sale and Earth Day Celebration at Riverside Nature Center

Saturday,
April 18
8am-3pm

The plant sale will offer Hill Country native plants that thrive in our climate and soil. These plants have been especially selected by native plant experts who can help you choose the best plants for your needs - from trees and shrubs to perennial flowering plants.

RNC/NPSOT
Members Only
Presale
Friday, April 17,
5 - 6:30pm

Sandy and Raul Pena present "ABCs of Rainwater Harvesting" at 10:30. Children will enjoy fun Earth Day activities and barbecue will be available.

Contact [Riverside Nature Center](#) for more information at 830-257-4837

RNC and NPSOT memberships may be purchased on Friday.

Guidelines for Donation of Plants for Plant Sales

Your donated plants are very important for the success of the spring and fall plant sales at Riverside Nature Center. It also gives you the opportunity to easily share your extra plants with others.

Please review these guidelines before donating your plants.

1. Native plants are preferred, but we also sell well-behaved, adaptive plants and a few house plants as well.
2. Please put your plant in a pot at least several months before the plant sale so its roots have time to fill the pot before it is sold.
3. Please keep your plants healthy and happy. Healthy plants make buyers happy so they will return for our next sale.
4. Please write down the name of the plant if you know it and attach it firmly to the pot.
5. Please bring your plants to the RNC pavilion from Tuesday through Thursday before the Saturday, April 18 Plant Sale. There will be a sign up sheet on the table by the pavilion entrance. If you leave your name and address and list your plants, RNC will send you a donor letter.

Thank you very much for helping our Plant Sales.

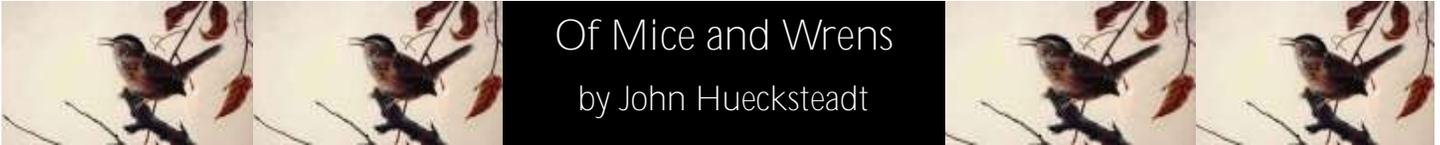
Plant Sale Co-chairs,

Edna Platte

Priscilla Stanley

platte@ktc.com

jpbstan@ktc.com



Of Mice and Wrens

by John Huecksteadt

One of my favorite Adam Sandler movies, a movie that always makes me put down the remote and sit back to watch, is "The Waterboy." I can clearly hear Mama Boucher, played by Kathy Bates, telling her son, Bobby, "*Foosball is the Devil!*" and strictly forbidding him to play football. What doesn't fit Mama Boucher's worldview becomes "*the Devil*" - Ben Franklin, college, and Bobby's girlfriend. I submit another candidate for "*the Devil*," glue board traps.

When the weather turned cold last fall, the field mice gnawed through the rubber seal at the bottom of our garage door to get some of that delicious-smelling bird seed stored inside. I was actually okay with this, the mice might even nourish a Screech Owl or two, and I would have residents for the handsome new owl house I'd bought at Wild Birds Unlimited. The mice and my family were at a truce. The DMZ was every door into the house. Unfortunately, the mice broke the armistice, within days we discovered them scurrying across the family room.

If the mice discovered my cache of Krusteaz Buttermilk Pancake mix in the cupboard it would mean thermonuclear war, so I purchased a package of glue board traps to scatter around the house and ... the garage.

Now, Jackie and I have this ongoing dispute about keeping the garage door shut. Back in Georgia we closed it to keep the copperheads out. Here we do it to keep the raccoons, possums, ringtails, hummers, and wrens out. When your arms are full of groceries it's easy to forget to go back and close the garage door. I've forgotten legion times myself. Sadly, you know where the story is going.

I was getting the garbage ready to take out to the road when I came upon a glue board lying outside the garage. At first glance it appeared I had caught a mouse and Jackie had forgotten to tell me after she took it outside. The reality was much, much worse. A Bewick's wren looking for seed had stuck to it and flown outside in an effort to escape. I can't imagine the horrible death this beautiful little friend died while struggling to free itself. I was sick at heart for days and still get weird when I think about it.

Glue board traps are, indeed, "*the Devil*." The garage door is now only open momentarily when we come and go and glue boards are *verboten* anywhere in our house. They no longer fit my worldview. The garage will never see another trap ... of any kind. 🌻

Chapter Member Announcements

Members who would like our chapter family to know about the loss or illness of a loved one please e-mail Jean Parreira at jparreira@ballstate.bsu.edu.



Monarch Larval Monitoring Project Training



AT code 09-030

The Monarch Larval Monitoring Project (MLMP) began in 1997 at the University of Minnesota. The project utilizes citizen scientists who collect data to help explain the distribution and abundance patterns of monarch butterflies in North America. Visit <http://www.mlmp.org>.

Kip Kiphart, MLMP coordinator at Cibolo Nature Center, will teach a two-part MLMP training course on Wednesday, April 15, from 9am to 3pm.

Riverside Nature Center will host the morning session. *Monarchs, Milkweed, and MLMP* will cover the monarch life cycle, milkweed ecology, monarch migration, and how to conduct MLMP.

After a lunch break the afternoon session will move to the Kerrville-Schreiner Park Butterfly Garden. *Back Porch Review of MLMP at KSP* will be a practical review of the egg to butterfly cycle.



The KSP Butterfly Garden is the only MLMP site in Kerr County. The KSP MLMP was designed by Kiphart in 2007. KSP data can be found [here](#).

The training will provide enough knowledge to conduct MLMP at a nature center, park, school garden, or even in the home garden. Help is always needed to collect data at KSP or CNC.

This program is Free, but Registration is required. Registration deadline is April 3rd.

To register, email [Virginia de Wolf](mailto:Virginia.deWolf) or call 830-896-2545.

To register from March 21 to March 26, contact [Cynthia Johnson](mailto:Cynthia.Johnson) or 830-895-5173.



Jane Crone tells us about her Gillespie County projects:



Lipe Garden GL-02-A

"The Lipe Garden was named after John Lipe a former Extension Agent who started the garden as an example of Native Plants usage. It is a Demonstration Garden sponsored by the Fredericksburg Chapter of NPSOT and is located at the corner of Llano Street and Frederick Road."

Pioneer Museum GL-02-C

"The Native Plant Garden at the Pioneer Museum has a work day the First Monday of each month (except for holidays.) Check with me prior to each Work Day to double check the schedule."

LOOK Fredericksburg Nature Center GL-04-A

"We will need folks to help with the *3rd Grade Day on May 15*. Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center host all Fredericksburg Elementary School Third Graders to a day in the park with stops along the trail to learn about various nature areas: bats, birds, turtles, dragonflies, etc."

Lady Bird Johnson Park GL-04-C

"We need folks to help with the Bluebird Boxes at Lady Bird Johnson Park in Fredericksburg."



James Kiehl River Bend Park to Open March 21

Project ID KL-04-B

Kendall County's first county park is planned to open Saturday, March 21. James Kiehl River Bend Park is located at 138 River Bend Road approximately five miles east of Comfort.

- The park consists of 25 acres of riparian, woodland & prairie habitat with 1,627 feet of Guadalupe River frontage
- 3,200 feet of nature trails encourage birding, wildlife viewing, native plant identification, and exercise.
- Volunteers have built six wildlife brush piles and placed a bluebird trail.
- Picnic tables, benches, and latrines are provided. Please bring drinking water; no potable water at the park.
- A Texas sandstone monument has been dedicated to Army Spc. James M. Kiehl, a young soldier from Comfort who perished in the first days of the Iraq war.
- The park was once a part of the historic Brownsboro Community and contains 500 feet of old San Antonio and Aransas Pass rail bed.

James Kiehl River Bend Park is truly a product of grass roots effort.

- Volunteers created a Parks and Open Space Master Plan.
- Voters passed a \$5 million bond to purchase parkland.
- The volunteer staffed non-profit Kendall County Partnership for Parks received grants and donations to fund and build park infrastructure.
- KCPP and Texas Master Naturalist volunteers labored diligently to prepare the park for opening.

Visit James Kiehl River Bend Park to see what can be accomplished by dedicated volunteers.

Future TMN service opportunities will be scheduled. For information contact our Project Coordinator and KCPP president Kristie Denbow at Kristie@kendallcountyparks.org or call 830-755-8179.





Enter the 2009 Photo Contest

March 1 - May 31

It is time to enter your best photographs in the HCA's third annual photo contest.

This year's theme is "Celebrating the Treasures of the Hill Country." What makes the Hill Country valuable, a treasure to those of us who live here and to visitors passing through? What treasures of the Hill Country do you want to preserve for the future?

The photo contest is free. A cash prize of \$250 will be offered in each category. This year, the contest features four categories that explore the richness, the value, the treasures of the Hill Country:



- 1) Hill Country People: individuals, children and families
- 2) Working the Land: gardening, agriculture, ranching, farming
- 3) Hill Country Enterprise: wineries, tourism, festivals, towns
- 4) Natural Treasures: wildlife, plants, springs, parks, rivers, special places in nature

Entering the contest is easy. After agreeing to the contest rules you will be able to create a user account and begin uploading your photos. [Preview the Rules, Terms and Conditions.](#)

Questions and inquiries about the photo contest can be emailed to info@hillcountryalliance.org.

Sharon Corley describes her Gillespie County projects:



"The **NICE program, GL-02-D**, is an ongoing project that I chair for NPSOT. NICE is "Natives Instead of Common Exotics." Committee members help make yearly plant selections, pick up and deliver signs and plant info sheets, and check in with participating nurseries. There are four nurseries in Fredericksburg and two in Kerrville. We recently chose plants for 2009, but the season has just begun and we would welcome any TMN interested in helping for the remainder of the year."

"**Fredericksburg Elementary School Native Plant Garden, GL-05-A**, is a project that I coordinate for TMN. The 10-year-old garden is about 10' x 20' and is tended on an "as needed" basis. This year I've scheduled a "workday" to introduce the garden to other TMNs. The garden needs to be mulched, weeded, cleaned- up, and replanted from time to time. A school secretary helps with the watering but the rest is left to us. Three to four volunteers would be ideal for this project. *I have been the coordinator for five years and would like to find another TMN to fill this position.*"

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Hill Country Chapter

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Hill Country Master Naturalist

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WE'RE ONLINE!
grovesite.com/tmn/hcmn

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**, Editor, at denbow@gvtc.com.

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TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE

AgriLIFE EXTENSION
Texas A&M System