

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the
Texas Master Naturalist Hill Country Chapter

APRIL 2014

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Jessica Womack photo

APRIL 28 MEETING: NATIVE BEES OF TEXAS

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™



Michael Warriner, who is Program Supervisor of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Nongame and Rare Species Program and the curator of the Texas Bumblebees website, will be our speaker. He will focus on native bees' role in natural ecosystems, as well as their economic value.

Everyone is welcome to join us on Monday, April 28, at 7 p.m. in the Upper Guadalupe River Authority's lecture hall, 125 N. Lehman Drive in Kerrville. Arrive at 6:30 to chat with members and guests.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE . . . Vern Crawford

As we are celebrating Earth Day this month, it brings me great pleasure to pass along the following announcement:

The Texas Master Naturalist Program has been named the winner of the TCEQ Texas Environmental Excellence Award in the Civic/Community Category for 2014!

"The mission of the TEEA program is to honor the state's most outstanding waste reduction and pollution prevention projects. These award-winning programs reflect the goals of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) itself: to protect our state's human and natural resources and ensure clean air, clean water, and the safe management of waste."

"In the spring, the Governor's Blue Ribbon Committee works with TCEQ staff and the Office of the Governor to recommend winners based on a set of award criteria. The committee is composed of leaders in public and private industry with expertise in environmental policy and practices."

On May 7, 2014, The TCEQ will host a banquet honoring the award winners in Austin. "As part of the Environmental Trade Fair and Conference, this celebration of environmental achievements is hosted by the Commissioners of the TCEQ, with special recognition from Governor Rick Perry."

Beginning in 1993, the Texas Environmental Excellence Award program has honored more than 190 successful environmental projects and efforts. For more information on the awards go to <http://teea.org/2014-winners>.

Huge thanks to all chapter members for your individual efforts that have made this state-wide award possible, and special thanks for the outstanding leadership of Program Director Michelle Haggerty.

Meanwhile, I hope to "bee" seeing you at this month's Chapter meeting,

Vern

This Month We Honor



Initial Certification

Rod Boertje

Special Certification

Dale Bransford

2014 Recertification

Ann Dietert Cathy Downs Fane Downs Becky Etzler Mike Foulds
Tom Hynes Sandy Leyendecker Ruth McArthur Diane McMahon Donna Oliver-Leep
Tom Riordan Cay Russ Jim Stanley Priscilla Stanley Floyd Trefny

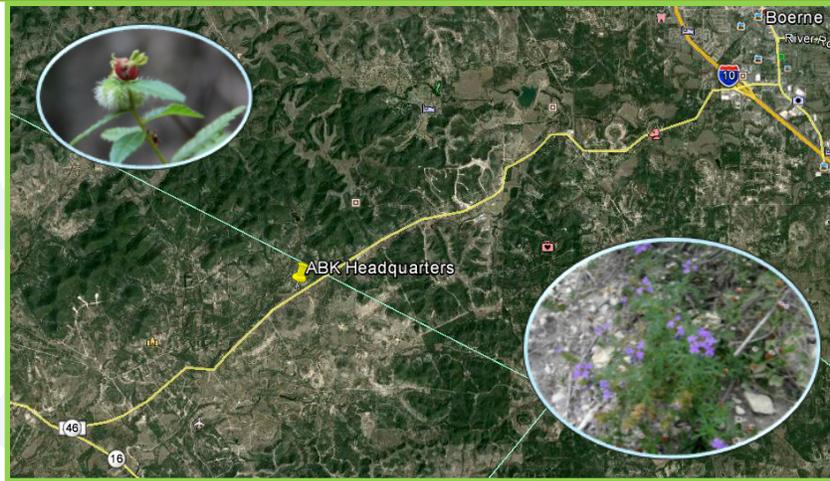
Milestones

Donna Oliver-Leep - Brushed Silver Dragonfly, 500 hours
Lenore Langsdorf, Kathy Ward - Gold Dragonfly, 1,000 hours



Congratulations to members who received awards at the March meeting.

From left to right: Kathy Ward, Ron Hood, Jane Crone, Paul Person,
Nancy Person, Pat Hopf, David Hopf, Morgan Williams



HILL COUNTRY MASTER NATURALIST SPRING PICNIC

SATURDAY, MAY 17 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

ALBERT AND BESSIE KRONKOSKY STATE NATURAL AREA

7690 HIGHWAY 46 WEST, PIPE CREEK, TX 78063

Online map services and GPS units may locate ABK incorrectly. The correct location is:
FROM INTERSTATE 10: The total drive is 7.1 miles west from the Interstate 10/Hwy 46 intersection in Boerne. A 10 ft. high fence will appear on the right side of Hwy 46 just past the Tapatio Springs sign. Continue on Hwy 46 across the Bandera County line; the fence will become a 4 ft. hurricane fence with two gated entries. Turn right into the second gate and drive into the parking lot.

FROM HIGHWAY 16: The total drive is 3.9 miles east from the Hwy 16/Hwy 46 intersection between Pipe Creek and San Antonio. Drive past Madrona Ranch Road which appears on your left about 1.6 miles before you reach ABKSNA. You will see two gates on the left side of Hwy 46. Drive through the first gate into the parking lot.

You are cordially invited to the HCMN 2014 Spring Picnic. Guests are welcome.

Bring your picnic lunch; ABKSNA will provide water.

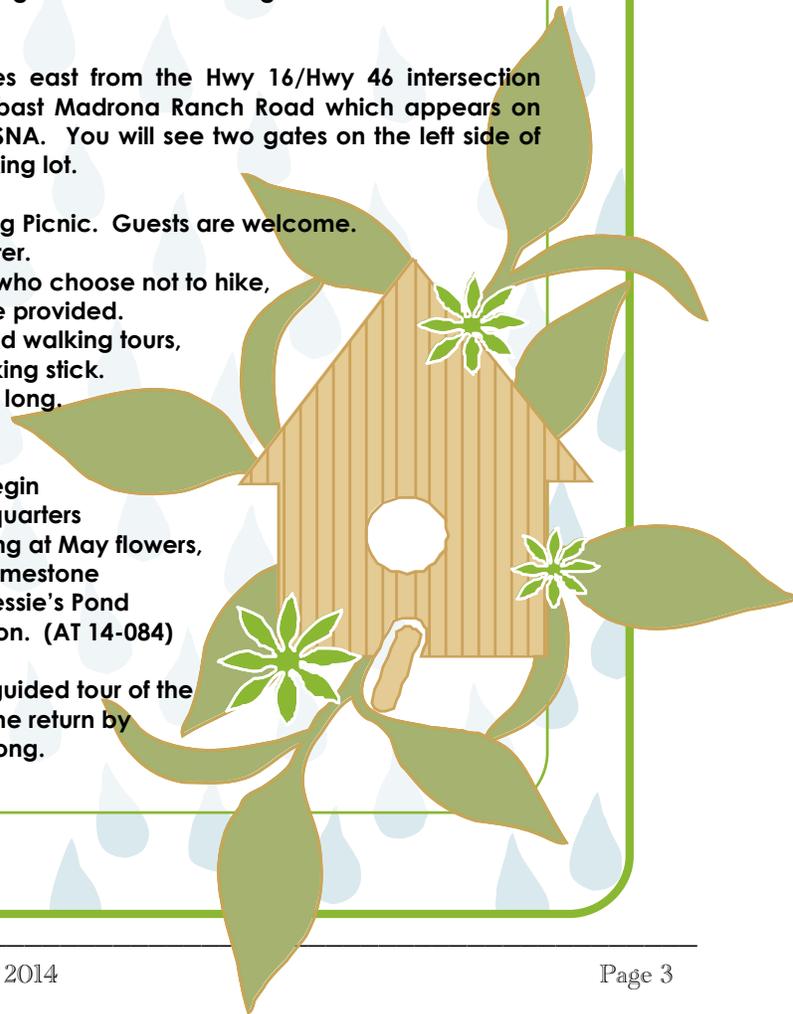
Guided hiking tours will be available. For those who choose not to hike, transportation to and from the picnic area will be provided.

For those who choose to participate in the guided walking tours, wear comfortable shoes, a hat, and bring a walking stick.

The guided walk is on a moderate trail, one mile long.

Walks will be guided by ABKNSA volunteers with specific stops at identified waypoints. We will begin the Advanced Training Hiking Tour at ABK headquarters at 10:00 AM and hike along Bessie's Road, looking at May flowers, birds, and the geology of the Upper Glen Rose Limestone and its associated fossils. The walk will end at Bessie's Pond where we will stop for a picnic lunch at 12:00 noon. (AT 14-084)

Those who choose to do so may continue on a guided tour of the birding path that leads back to headquarters. The return by birding path is a moderate trail about one mile long.



April 25-26-27, 2014

4th Annual **WINGS**
OVER THE
HILLSTM
FREDERICKSBURG, TEXAS
★ NATURE FESTIVAL ★

A CELEBRATION OF NATURAL FLIGHT

**Bring the whole family for
educational and entertainment activities
focusing on the unique wildlife features
of the Texas Hill Country.**

Golden-cheeked Warbler



Black-capped Vireo



Photos by G. Lasley

**LECTURES • DEMONSTRATIONS
NATIVE BAT TOUR • DRAGONFLY CHASE
TRADESHOW • HUMMINGBIRD BANDING
CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES • WILDFLOWERS**

wingstx.org

from Tom Collins

Local Butterfly Counts Need Your Help

Butterflies are one of the most beautiful elements of the natural world, and scientists now recognize that they can also serve as one important indicator of the health of ecosystems. Local butterfly enthusiasts will soon be both enjoying their beauty and contributing to a nationwide program that conducts long-term monitoring of butterfly populations – the North American Butterfly Association census. Anyone can participate, and while knowledge of butterflies is a plus, it is not necessary. This is a great opportunity to introduce children to butterflies, plus they have the eyes that can find the butterflies faster than the adults – so bring kids.



Queen on Blue Mist Flower

Butterfly counts follow a standard protocol. Each count occurs within a 15 mile diameter circle. This circle remains the same each year so data can be compared over time. Participants will be counting both species of butterflies and how many of each species is seen – called the individual counts. So each Gulf Fritillary seen will be counted, but only one species is counted. A typical count will have somewhere between 30 to 50 species and perhaps hundreds of individuals. The Texas Hill County is home to over 150 species of butterflies. Participants also search for eggs, larva (caterpillar) and chrysalis (pupa). The count must occur in a 24-hour-day period. The compiler of the count will set a start location and time. On the count day participants will register, pay the \$3 fee, and then be divided into groups and set out to work their designated area in the circle. Each group will have a knowledgeable leader and will be carrying a Field Guide to help new participants see pictures of a species. A pair of binoculars can help bring the butterfly up close to facilitate identification, such as *Butterflies of North America* by Jim P. Brock and Kenn Kaufman.



Fiery Skipper on Frog Fruit

There are five local counts so there should be plenty of opportunities to participate. This is an excellent opportunity for members of the Native Plant Society, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, and local garden clubs to get out with the experts and learn about the local butterflies, what they nectar on, and their host food plants.

Kerrville June 6 (Friday) – Tom Collins (towhee@hctc.net)

Love Creek June 10 (Tuesday) – Rebecca Flack (rflack@TNC.ORG), Tom Collins

Guadalupe River SP June 12 (Thursday) - Craig Hensley (craig.hensley@tpwd.state.tx.us)

Boerne June 27 (Friday) - Cathy Downs (mzdowns@hctc.net)

Center Point July 18 (Friday) – Bob Tanner (bintense@hotmail.com), Tom Collins

To participate or request more information, contact one or more of the compilers listed above. Compilers will add you to their list and send out exact date, time, and start location information as the count approaches.

The North American Butterfly Association (NABA) Butterfly Count program has been held annually since 1975, when only 29 counts were held. In 2013, 451 counts were held in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. The counts are usually held in the few weeks before or after early July (Called the July 4th Counts), but the best timing for butterfly observation in each count circle varies. There is also a fall count that some areas do instead of the summer counts. In 2012, the Love Creek Count (Bandera County) had the highest count of the 27 counts in Texas. This past year Love Creek (58 Species) came in 2nd to the Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley Count (71 species). The count program is intended to promote interest in butterflies and provide results useful for scientific monitoring of this beautiful and fascinating group of insects. The North American Butterfly Association organizes the counts and publishes their annual reports. For more information on NABA and the count program, check out the website at www.naba.org.

photos by Tom Collins

Recent Hill Country Naturalist Columns by Jim Stanley

3/14/14 "First Observations Along the Nature Walk"

3/21/14 "New Public Land for the Hill Country"

3/28/14 "Oh! The Joys of Early Spring"

4/4/14 "World Water Day—It Should be Everyday"

These and all other previous Kerrville Daily Times columns can be found at

www.hillcountrynaturalist.org

BENNETT TRUST
STEWARDSHIP OF THE EDWARDS PLATEAU

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

"Protecting the Legacy of the Edwards Plateau"

April 23-25, 2014

Inn of the Hills Resort & Conference Center
—1001 Junction Highway
Kerrville, Texas 78028

Keynote Speaker
~WYMAN MEINZER~
State photographer of Texas, award-winning author, and noted historian will speak about conservation and the legacy of the Edwards Plateau

Conference Agenda

Conference includes presentations, discussions, and choice of one "behind the scenes" tour:

- Tour A: Hillingdon Ranch
- Tour B: Sustainable Vineyards and Orchards
- Tour C: Wildlife Management and Hunting

For more information and to register, please visit:
BennettTrust.tamu.edu

From Pat Nelson

Live and Not So Live Critters at the Kroc Center Program

Hill Country Master Naturalists volunteers assisted Angelo Farzarano who presented a program discussing live and not so live critters. Julie Clay, Betty Clyburn, Pat Nelson, Mary Frances Watson, and Martha Miesch were available to lend a helping hand when needed. Angelo retired from his enjoyable career at the Ft. Worth zoo a few years before moving to the Hill Country. He began his program discussing and illustrating the unique attributes of bird feathers that facilitate flight. He and Carl, his assistant and friend, brought live and stuffed animals and illustrations to demonstrate certain animal attributes. Angelo explained some of the laws in the United States regarding protection of animals, such as African elephants and rhinoceroses who have been hunted almost to extinction for their ivory. They emphasized the importance of protecting endangered species. A stuffed mammal head and a flying Mallard duck were on exhibit and available for close examination.



Carl brought his pet live corn snake, an alligator lizard, and a black rat which moved in the owner's grasp. The children were not allowed to touch the animals but had a good close look. They learned about the animals and their environment and their need for protection. Looking closely at these creatures gave them an opportunity to see their beauty and distinctive features. Each student took home three special cards with a picture and description of an animal they found interesting.



Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos St., Kerrville

Calendar of Events

Our events are open to the public. RSVPs/reservations are strongly recommended. ALWAYS check for time changes/cancellations/weather delays. Call 830-257-4837 or email info@riversidenaturecenter.org. We look forward to your visit!

"Wildflowers & Other Natives: Keeping Texas Looking Like Texas" 9 a.m.-4 p.m. weekdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturdays, 1-4 p.m. Sundays. Through Memorial Weekend. Co-sponsored with Kerrville's Native Plant Society of Texas and Junction's Native American Seed, this glorious RNC exhibit shows the beauty of wildflowers and other native plants, as well as their role in how people think about Texas' most colorful season. Exhibit includes the story of early Texas botanists and naturalists of note.

Native Plants Pre-Sale Friday, April 25 5-6:30 p.m.

This is an opportunity for RNC and NPSOT members to purchase native plants before the Saturday sale. OK to join either group at the pre-sale.

20th annual Spring Native Plant Sale & Festival Saturday, April 26 8 a.m.-3 p.m.

Co-sponsored by Kerrville Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas. Experts are available for free advice in the purchase, planting, and caring for plants that are best for an individual's particular environment. Presentations by Barbara Lowenthal, "Gardening for Pollinators," with Susan Sander speaking on "Two Decades of Growing Natives." Both talks complement the exhibit "Wildflowers & Other Natives: Keeping TEXAS Looking Like TEXAS." Informational displays by area organizations, such as UGRA, NPSOT, TMN, and the Native Healing Garden. Meet Texas Public Radio's Mikie Baker. Children's nature craft activities. Breakfast and lunch by Cal-Bob's Smoke House available for purchase. No charge to attend or to participate in the plant sale and festival, but donations won't be refused.

Donna Gable Hatch book-signing, fundraiser Saturday, April 26 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

At the spring festival, meet author Donna Gable Hatch, who is also the features editor at The Kerrville Daily Times, and have a copy of her novel, *For Every Goodbye*, personally autographed. No charge to attend the signing. Books are \$13 each. Ms. Hatch is generously donating half of the sales to benefit RNC. Credit cards accepted.

Conversation with the Conservationist: J. David Bamberger Tuesday, April 29 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Once a vacuum-cleaner salesman, then a fried-chicken king, later an internationally recognized conservationist... J. David Bamberger speaks on "Habitat Restoration and the Quality of Life." Bamberger took the "sorriest" piece of land in Blanco County, turning it into the famed Saleh Bamberger Ranch Preserve. He will speak about his four decades of conducting the largest habitat restoration project ever undertaken on private Texas land. Bamberger is the subject of the Jeffrey Greene biography, *Water from Stone*. Copies are available for purchase. Workshop cost is \$15 RNC members, \$20 non-members; complimentary wine and appetizers. Seating limited; RSVP a must.

Native Grasses in the Landscape Wednesday, April 30 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Susan Sander, Susan Tracy, and Julie Clay conduct a workshop on the role of native grasses in the ecosystem and how to include these natives in landscape design. Bring a lunch. RSVP by 4/23, please. \$30 RNC members, \$35 non-members.

Herbs at Twilight, Class 1 Thursday, May 1 5-9 p.m.

Evening classes at RNC, first and third Thursdays until June 19. Learn the basics of medicinal and culinary herbalism in seven, four-hour evening classes. Led by certified herbalists Amy Coward, R.N., and Sally Garrett, M.S. Cost is for entire course: \$575, until April 15 for RNC members, \$675 non-members; \$595/\$695 afterward. Drop-ins, \$100/\$110. Credit cards accepted. Contact sally@earthlightenergies.com or call 830-562-3682 to register.

WICKED Bugs Saturday, May 3 9-10 a.m.

Learn what "bugs" a plant. .Some may call them "insects" and turn up a nose, but RNC Naturalist Susan Sander, while on a garden tour, will explain the joys of BUGS, along with the serious side of insects. Cost is \$10 family, \$5 individuals.

Tex-Mex Connection: Cinco de Mayo Monday, May 5 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Wild things ignore political borders. Susan Sander, RNC Naturalist, teaches how connected both sides of the Rio Grande really are, with Texas' native plants turning up South of the Border and vice versa. Then there are the birds, butterflies, and bats. Cost is \$10 family, \$5 individual.

continued on next page

2nd Tuesday Brown Bag Lunch & Learn Tuesday, May 13 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m.

Jackie Poole, TPWD botanist, Kerrville native, and lead author of *Rare Plants of Texas*, will speak on “What Makes the Hill Country/Edwards Plateau Unique? Plants!” Cost is \$5 RNC members, \$8 nonmembers; free if joining RNC at the meeting.

Native Healing Garden Thursday, May 15 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Join certified herbalists Amy Coward, R.N., and Sally Garrett, M.S. in tending medicinal herbs. Learn the herbs' healing properties. Next is a presentation on spotlighted herbs. Bring gloves, a trowel and a healthy potluck dish to share. Donations fund the garden.

Herbs at Twilight, Class 2 Thursday, May 15 5-9 p.m. Evening classes at RNC, first and third Thursdays until June 19. Learn the basics of herbalism from certified herbalists Amy Coward, R.N., and Sally Garrett, M.S. See May 1 above for costs. Contact sally@earthlightenergies.com or call 830-562-3682 to register.

WICKED Family Fun Monday, May 19 7-8 p.m.

Susan Sander's WICKED Family Fun series is filled with the excitement of nature that is geared to families. No family? Not to worry. Join ours. Topic TBA. Suggested donation is \$5 individual, \$10 a family.

Wildflower ID Tuesday, May 20 10-11:30 a.m.

Riverside's meadow holds more than 200 wildflower species. The mix varies by season and is blooming now. Wildflower masters Barbara Lowenthal and Marion Worthington show how to identify the different species, along with how to create a personal “field guide.” Cost is \$15 RNC members, \$20 non-members.

Conversation with the Conservationist: Bill Neiman Tuesday, May 20 5:30-7:30 p.m.

In the “Conversation with Conservationists” series, Bill Neiman, founder of Native American Seed, Junction, will talk about “Bringin' It All Back Home: 40 Years from Landscape Construction to Ecological Restoration.” A believer in the holistic approach to effective land management that combines natural elements and organic cultivation whenever possible, he is well known for restoration projects and for pioneering the field of native-plant seeds. His company sells more than 180 species of native seeds and has supplied them for such august landscapes as the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin; the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum in Dallas; and the Botanical Research Institute in Fort Worth. Cost is \$15 RNC members, \$20 non-members.

Monarchs in the Garden Saturday, May 24 9-10:30 a.m.

Monarch educator Cathy Downs leads classroom study on the Texas state insect, the Monarch butterfly, and then field investigation to ID milkweed, to monitor larva, and to ID adult butterflies. Proper netting techniques, plus tagging, included. Class will plant milkweed and nectar plants in the meadow. Program is suitable for children and adults. Cost is \$15 RNC members, \$20 for non-members.

New Volunteer Opportunity at the Riverside Nature Center

What: Educational event for KISD 4th grade students at the Riverside Nature Center.

When: May 2, 7, 8, & 9

Time: 8:30-2:15

Needed: The students will be divided into four main groups and will rotate through six different learning centers. At least one teacher will be in charge of each group and will travel with that group, but there will be times when the large group will be divided into two, resulting in groups of 8-12 students per subgroup. Responsible adult volunteers are needed to travel with the groups as they go from station to station to make sure that the presenters can focus on the lesson. Your responsibilities would be to accompany your group through the rotation, redirect a student if needed (especially if there is a safety issue), possibly escort a student to the restroom, and most importantly: to take advantage of any learning opportunities that you can share with the students. Misbehavior can be directed to the teacher if a student is disruptive.

Preference will be given to volunteers who commit to an entire day (8:30-2:15), but if your schedule will not allow that, we can work with volunteers for a morning (8:30-11:15) or afternoon (11:15-2:15). There will be a 1 hour training session for all volunteers at the RNC on April 23rd at 11:00 am. Call 830-257-4837 to volunteer.

Lost Ladybug Project

The Lost Ladybug Project is seeking citizen scientists and naturalists to take photos of ladybugs to help us understand the recent decline of native species. Please help to build a North American map of ladybug species. You can upload into our database using this easy form: <http://www.lostladybug.org/form/page-1-form-558.php> Thanks!"

We very much appreciate your help. We have free materials online and will send bookmarks, handouts, and posters to anyone interested, particularly 4H leaders, Master Naturalists, and Master Gardeners.

Dr. Leslie Allee
Lost Ladybug Project
Department of Entomology, Cornell University
4128 Comstock Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853
<http://www.lostladybug.org>
607-227-0495 cell 607-255-8486 lab
LLA1@cornell.edu



Native Plant Society of Texas, Boerne Chapter

May 6, 2014 meeting in the auditorium of the Cibolo Nature Center

The presentation will begin at 7 p.m.; everyone is invited to socialize at 6:30 p.m.

David K. Langford: "Water Policy 101"

David will increase our awareness of the complex web of policies, policy makers, and jurisdictions that determine--usually with little input at all from us--how water flows from its source to our faucets, and who makes the decisions during this journey. He intends for us to walk out of the meeting armed with the knowledge we need to get answers to our water questions, to understand what we read about water issues, and, most importantly of all, to advocate effectively for sensible management of our most crucial natural resource. He will provide a detailed reference handout that will extend his comments and offer points of contact for engaging in water-related advocacy.

David has served in the leadership of the Texas Wildlife Association since 1986. He was TWA's Executive Vice President from 1990 until his partial retirement in 2002, and now occasionally serves TWA by working on water issues and other special educational projects.

David is an award-winning photographer (www.westernphotographycompany.com) of western, cowboy, wildlife, landscape, and nature images, and is published worldwide. Langford's current book, co-authored with Lorie Woodward Cantu, features his family's six-generation ranch. The book, *Hillingdon Ranch: Four Seasons, Six Generations* (www.hillingdonranchbook.com), was released in early October 2013. This book is published by Texas A&M University Press and is part of the Conservation Leadership Series, sponsored by The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment, Texas State University. He and his wife of 46 years, Myrna, live on their part of Hillingdon Ranch, near Comfort.



Texas Master Naturalist Gideon Linsecum Chapter

INVASIVE PLANTS OF TEXAS WORKSHOP

Gideon Linsecum Invaders

announces a training workshop on
Saturday, May 17th from 9am to 4pm
at the
Meadows Conference Center of the
Winedale Historical Complex near Roundtop

The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center initiated the Invaders of Texas Citizen Scientist Program to detect the arrival and dispersal of invasive plant species in Texas. We have all seen our ranches and gardens dominated by K.R. bluestem and Bermuda and Johnson grass, the towering corridors of Giant reed like this along the roads and highways or the Texas lakes and ponds choked with Water hyacinth – but it may come as a surprise that some species we accept as native are introduced species.

Our volunteer groups have grown quite a bit in the last few years and it would be a good time to launch an Invaders satellite group - for Austin, Colorado, Fayette, Lee and Washington Counties - to help with this effort.

If you would like to know more about the Invasives Program visit www.texasinvasives.org.
Any volunteers willing to help with the workshop are welcome.
Contact – judithdeaton@gmail.com
936 878 9900



English ivy - Hedera helix

Giant reed – Arundo donax

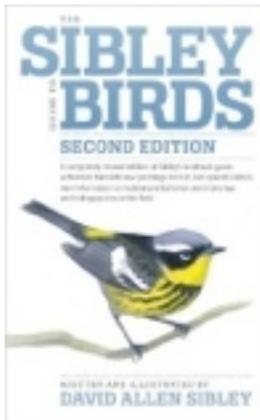
From Koy Coffe

The Texas Wildlife Association Education Team is looking for people who enjoy working with students and are willing to help at a L.A.N.D.S. Field Investigation Day.

If you are interested in earning volunteer hours, enjoy seeing beautiful Texas landscapes, want to help leave a legacy for our next generation, and like to learn new things while having fun, contact kcoffer@texas-wildlife.org, or call one of the numbers below for more information. Approximate time: 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. *We guarantee it'll be a GREAT day!*

These are the dates and locations of our upcoming L.A.N.D.S. events:

- * April 28 - Rockwall (east of Lake Ray Hubbard)
- * May 9 - Crosby (in the Crosby area)
- * May 13 - Hitchcock (in the Hitchcock area)
- * May 19 - Mtn. Home (west. of Kerrville)
- * May 21 - Hockley (east of Waller)
- * May 28 - Paige (northeast of Bastrop)



The Second edition of *The Sibley Guide to Birds*, written and illustrated by David Allen Sibley, has just been released. There is an extensive review article on Sibley's career and the writing of this edition in the March 12, 2014 edition of the *The Wall Street Journal* (http://online.wsj.com/news/article_email/SB10001424052702303795904579433123870241020-1MyQjAxMTA0MDEwNzExNDcyWj)

How To From the Webmaster

Kristie Denbow

Want to participate in a volunteer activity or locate an AT opportunity? Looking for interesting events?

Check the **Chapter Calendar** frequently to find Volunteer Project Activities, AT Classes, and Events for Master Naturalists.

Volunteer service activities can now be found easily on the calendar. Look for **VP** followed by the project code prefacing the activity description. Here are examples: "VP KL-04-D, KCNA Volunteer Service Morning" or "VP KR-02-D, Native Healing Garden @ RNC." Find VP and you've found an opportunity to earn volunteer hours!

Add your project activities to the calendar with this form txmn.org/hillcountry/add-project-activities-to-calendar/ .

The View from Rusty Bend



Image by Lucy Griffith

Every day
I see or hear
something
that more or less

kills me
with delight,
that leaves me
like a needle

in the haystack
of light.
It was what I was born for -
to look, to listen,

to lose myself
inside this soft world -
to instruct myself
over and over

in joy...

from "Mindful" by Mary Oliver

Rusty Bend. Building zone. Each night the watercolorist of spring washes another layer of green across the hills. So much lushness triggers a spree of animal activity. The skunk, whose extra wide stripe runs from stem to stern, canters the cliff like a rolling snow capped mountain. Two Great Blue Herons chase each other from cypress to cypress, crash landing over and over again in all their nuptial gawkiness.

Yellow dollops of goldfinch hang in the live oaks. Sparrows ride stems of lovegrass to the ground, stripping them of tiny seeds. They bounce like popcorn in the pasture. A couple of Cooper's Hawks haunt the cowbird cage. Processions of Sandhill Cranes ease north in their graceful Vs, filling the warm air with their bugling calls. A signature of spring. One day a Zone-tailed Hawk preens on a branch near the house for several hours. An elegant gunmetal cape flows down his back. His golden beak looks burnished in the sun.

If there was a wren cam, the Bewick's Wrens would be on fast forward. They have claimed Andy's old boots that we nailed to trees. Packing them to the brim with sticks and string, they have already fledged their first clutch. At dusk, five fluffy wrens line up near the boot to beg for bugs from mom and pop. At Rusty Bend, a collective of Bewick's is a "bootfull."

At the other end of the spectrum, the ravens glide by with huge sticks to weave a nest several feet across, cradled in a tree fork. They seem to work as a team, one muttering glottal encouragements to the emburdened mate. One swoops by with a golf ball in her beak. Her mate follows with a flour tortilla.

Back on the ground, the Elbow Bush earns its nickname "spring herald," as the first to bloom. The lavender Windflower is next, with the golden Fournerved Daisy close behind. On sunrise runs, Western Primroses look like happy face buttons strewn across the pasture.

One morning a turkey hen arrives for Spa Day. For more than an hour, she dusts herself in a pile of ashes from winter's fires. She fluffs and nestles, wiggles, pecks all around herself, and fluffs again. Ridding herself of mites and getting ready for randy courtship rituals. When she finishes, her shaking sets off a mammoth powder bomb.

In the evening, several Great Horned Owls chorus in several timbres near the house. "Whoo, whoo, whoo-s whoo?" The Barred Owls compete from the river bottom, with a muted "Who cooks for you?" The big guys resume their serenade and sing us to sleep.

One night I step outside to say my habitual goodnight to the moon and the stars. I am enfolded in a hill country perfume of agarita blossoms and wet limestone. I feel, as I have ever since I can remember, that I have agarita in my veins, and limestone in my bones. And I wonder: Do I inhabit this singular landscape, or does it inhabit me? Hmmm, both.

Lucy Griffith, PhD co-manages the Rusty Bend Ranch with her husband, Andy Robinson. When she is not on her tractor, she practices Clinical Psychology. When the tractor is broken, Andy is fixing it. Both Lucy and Andy are members of the Master Naturalist Class of 2013. Comments welcome at oodie1950@gmail.com .

Advanced Training

TUESDAY, APRIL 22 7PM NPSOT FREDRICKSBURG CHAPTER MEETING, 601 NORTH MILAM STREET AR 14-085 MEET THE WINNERS: NATIVE PLANTS FOR SPRING AND SUMMER
Chapter members will present their choice for native plants that thrive during the drought and heat. The presenters have grown these plants and recommend them.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, APRIL 25-27 7:30AM-4PM LADY BIRD MUNICIPAL PARK, FREDRICKSBURG AT 14-055 WINGS OVER THE HILLS NATURE FESTIVAL
This is the 4th annual festival, which features talks, children's activities, hummingbird banding, a raptor program, and both 3K and 5K nature walks. For general information, schedule, and cost, go to www.wingsoverthehills.org.

SATURDAY, APRIL 26 8AM-3:30PM LADY BIRD JOHNSON WILDFLOWER CENTER, AUSTIN AT 14-065 NATIVE PLANT SPRING SYMPOSIUM
Dr. Doug Tallamy, author of *Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens*, will deliver the keynote address at the center, which is located at 4801 La Cross Avenue in Austin. Cost, before April 18: \$55; for members of NYPSOT and LBJWC, \$50; includes light breakfast and a box lunch, plus full access to the Wildflower Center gardens. Register now at <http://www.npsot.org/springsymposium2014>. Call 830-9997-9273 for more information.

MONDAY, APRIL 28 7-8PM UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUTHORITY LECTURE HALL, KERRVILLE AT 14-065 NATIVE BEES
Michael Warriner, Program Supervisor of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Nongame and Rare Species Program, will speak on the significance of native bees for natural ecosystems.

TUESDAY, APRIL 29 6-10PM THE ODEON THEATER, MASON AT 14-083 MASON STAR PARTY
Join Kevin Manning of "Look Up to the Stars" for a presentation called "Curiosity: Mission to Mars and the Deep-Space Search for Another Earth." After his presentation, there will be viewing through large telescopes provided by Kevin and local amateur astronomers. Free; rain or shine, but the star viewing could be limited or cancelled by cloud cover. For further information, contact Tony Plutino, 512-496-2020 or tonyplutino@gmail.com.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30 1-2PM WEBINAR AT 14-075 PREPARING A SEEDING PLAN FOR CONSERVATION PRACTICES
Dr. Ramona Garner will discuss issues to consider when planning and implementing critical area seedings and other conservation plantings. Choices made in planning a seeding for critical area stabilization, conservation plantings, or a restoration will be highlighted. Emphasis will be placed on issues such as the use of natives, spread of invasives, and selecting, purchasing, and installing plant materials. Go to <http://www.conservationwebinars.net>.

THURSDAY, MAY 1 5-9PM RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER, KERRVILLE AT 14-062 HERBS AT TWILIGHT: SEVEN CLASSES FROM MAY 1 - JULY 24
This is the first of seven classes in basic herbalism, focused on using native medicinal and wild edible plants for family health. The class will begin with a "Food as Medicine" potluck meal. Cost for the series: by April 1, \$595; \$575 for RNC members. After April 1: \$695; \$675 for RNC members. For drop-in guests, \$110 per class; \$100 RNC members. Instructors are Sally Garrett, MS and Amy Coward, RN, Certified Traditional Herbalists. For more information, go to sally@earthlightenergies.com.

FRIDAY, MAY 2 10AM-4PM LOCATION TBD.

AT 14-061 BASIC HERBALISM, HILL COUNTRY STYLE: 12 CLASSES FROM MAY 2 - SEPT. 26

This is the first of a twelve session (plus field trip) in-depth basic herbalism course focused on using native medicinal and wild edible plants for family health. The classes will include a "Food as Medicine" potluck lunch. Cost for the series: by April 1, \$1195. After April 1: \$1395.. For drop-in guests (only some classes open for drop-ins), \$110 per class. Instructors are Sally Garrett, MS and Amy Coward, RN, Certified Traditional Herbalists. For more information, go to sally@earthlightenergies.com .

TUESDAY, MAY 6 7 PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER, BOERNE (CNC)

AT 14-086 WATER POLICY 101

David K. Langford will speak on the complex web of policies, policy makers, and jurisdictions that determine how water flows from its source to our faucets. His goal is to enable us to advocate effectively for sensible management of our most crucial natural resource.

TUESDAY, MAY 6 10AM-NOON LOVE CREEK APPLE ORCHARD, MEDINA

AT 14-082 FRUIT TREE MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

Dr. Larry Stein, AgriLife Extension horticulturist from Uvalde. will address planting and establishment, training and pruning, insect and disease control, and grafting. This will be an outdoors, hand-on program; bring a lawn chair. Cost: \$20; includes lunch. Register in advance at the Bandera County AgriLife Extension office, 830-796-7755.

THURSDAY, MAY 8 8AM-5PM PHIL HARDBERGER PARK URBAN ECOLOGY CENTER, SAN ANTONIO

AT 14-981 URBAN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

The workshop focus is on common wildlife species you may encounter in the city. The theme of this workshop focuses on the challenges faced with urban wildlife management. Attendees of this workshop will be presented with the best management practices for dealing with wildlife in urban areas. Cost: \$30; includes lunch and snacks. Contact Jessica Alderson (210-688-6444) for further information. Register by May 5th at <http://txmn.org/alamo/urban-wildlife-workshop/> .

SATURDAY, MAY 17 10AM ALBERT AND BESSIE KRONKOSKY STATE NATURAL AREA, PIPE CREEK

AT 14-084 HILL COUNTRY CHAPTER PICNIC - OPTIONAL GUIDED WALKS

The walk on Bessie's Road is a moderate trail, one mile long, from headquarters to Bessie Lake where we will picnic with those who chose transportation. You can also choose a guided tour after lunch back to headquarters along the birding path. Walks will be guided by ABKNSA volunteers with specific stops at identified waypoints to look at May flowers, birds, and the geology of the Upper Glen Rose limestone and associated fossils. Wear comfortable shoes and a hat; bring lunch and a walking stick.

ARCHIVED WEBINAR

AT 14-080 THE TRUTH ABOUT WEEDS

Dr. Baron Rector will cover management practices that can positively or natively affect weed production and discuss resources for controlling weed problems. Go to <https://texasrangeclassroom.adobeconnect.com/rangeweb/>

The newsletter's publication schedule does not allow listing all AT events in each issue.
Check the chapter calendar on our website for additional AT.



We meet on the fourth Monday of most months at 7:00 PM. in the Upper Guadalupe River Authority Lecture Hall at 125 North Lehmann Drive in Kerrville.

Join us at 6:30 for our social half-hour.

Everyone is welcome.

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.

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The Texas Star is a monthly publication of the Hill Country Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program. News, essays, comments, and ideas are welcome.

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Questions about our chapter?
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