

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the
Texas Master Naturalist Hill Country Chapter

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T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™



JULY 22 MEETING: WHO OWNS THE WIND?

Ernest Smith, University of Texas, Austin Law Professor, will explore the issue of deeds by Texas landowners to convey rights to wind on their properties for the generation of electrical power. He will examine whether wind can, or should, be treated as a natural resource analogous to oil and gas--which are quite often severed from surface ownership--and more importantly, why landowners are attempting to separate wind rights from the rest of the land.

Everyone is welcome to join us Monday, July 22, at 7 p.m. in the Upper Guadalupe River Authority's lecture hall, 125 Lehman Drive in Kerrville. Arrive at 6:30 to chat with members and guests.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Vern Crawford

Our board is in the process of determining whether our chapter should expand its boundaries to include the six counties previously served by the former Western Edwards Plateau Chapter.

On June 9, the Western Edwards Plateau Chapter voted to dissolve and passed a motion in favor of consolidation with the Hill Country Chapter. This consolidation has the recommendation and support of our State Program Director, Michelle Haggerty.

At the June monthly chapter meeting, we had a presentation that outlined the opportunities and challenges involved in adopting this proposal. The discussion that followed clarified many questions and concerns. Members with concerns were encouraged to bring them to the entire board at the July board meeting. Your Board of Directors is addressing topics that remain, and expects to make a final determination on whether or not to move forward at our August board meeting.

Any members with concerns or comments regarding the proposed consolidation are invited to share them with any member of the Board, and also, to bring them to the Wednesday, August 21st board meeting, to be held at Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos, in Kerrville. Board meetings start at 1:30 pm.

In my last email to everyone I attached the proposed revised version of the Chapter Operating Handbook. The only change to this handbook is adding the Western Edwards Plateau counties to those already served by our chapter. The change would expand our chapter so that it will be comprised of Bandera, Gillespie, Kendall, Kerr, Kimble, Mason, San Saba, Menard, Edwards, and Real counties.

Looking forward,

Vern

Recertification Awards:

Betty Clyburn Merrily Labarthe Kathleen Mundy
Robert Hansen Alexis McRoberts Garry Speir Marion Worthington

Special Recertification, Class of 2012

Pat Nelson

Milestone – Bronze Dragonfly, 250+ hours

Louis Giusti Robert Hansen Merrily Labarthe Donna Oliver-Leep



Milestone – Brushed Silver, 500+ hours

Sally Garrett Tom Riordan Ken Weber



photo by Paul Stafford

Congratulations to members who received awards at the June meeting:

Front row, from left: Terri Criswell, Julie Clay, Kathleen Mundy, Becky Etzler, Jackie Huecksteadt, Phyllis Muska, Mary Frances Watson, Cathy Downs, Jane Crone
Back row, from left: Glenn Randow, Tom Riordan, Ward Miller, Floyd Trefny, Pat Nelson, Martha Miesch, Louis Giusti, Garry Speir, Michael Foulds

Texas Master Naturalist
15th Anniversary T-shirt Design Contest
Deadline is July 30, 2013

The year 2013 is our Statewide Texas Master Naturalist Program's 15th Anniversary! To celebrate and commemorate this important milestone, we're looking to you to help us develop a limited-edition 15th Anniversary t-shirt. We know there are some talented Texas Master Naturalists out there to design the winning artwork! The winning design will become the 15th Anniversary limited edition t-shirt for the TMN program, and will become available later this year. In addition to being named the contest winner, the artist will have his or her name on the design wherever it appears in program materials and will receive five of the limited edition shirts.

All submitted designs should include the following:

1. Reference to TMN program's 15th anniversary
2. Must include, but is not limited to, the official TMN program state logo
3. In the event any specific species are depicted, they should be species that can be found in all natural ecological regions of Texas.
4. T-shirt design (back) dimensions must fit within up to a 12 in. x 12 in. square
5. Consider developing a slogan or quote for the design and our 15th Anniversary year
6. Designs can be in pencil, crayon, felt tip, or paint, or can be done using photos and/or computer drawing or design software.
7. Design must be easily scannable to a high resolution file (at least 300 dpi, and preferably higher).
8. Designs must be the artist's own original work and must not contain any third-party logos, trademarks, or copyright material outside of the TMN program.
9. Submitted designs should be signed (original or electronic) by the artist in the lower right hand corner.
10. Designs must be **submitted by July 30, 2013** for consideration in the contest.

Send designs to:

Nadia Gaona
Texas Master Naturalist Program Intern
Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
12861 Galm Rd
San Antonio, TX 78254
E-mail: ngaona24@gmail.com

Other helpful things to know:

- Only one winner will be selected for the 15th Anniversary limited-edition t-shirt design contest.
- Minor modifications may have to be made to the design for screen printing. In that event, the artist will be able to review the final version of the image to ensure the integrity of the design.
- Remember, fine detail such as sketching can be done, but some of the detail could be lost through the digitizing and screen printing process.
- If original artwork is mailed, please take care to protect the piece during transfer. The Texas Master Naturalist Program is not responsible for damaged, lost, or missing artwork.
- Final t-shirt color may be selected by the TMN State Program office in coordination with the screen printer to allow for best imprinting/image transfer possible. A screen printer has been lined up for this project.
- Final digitized winning image becomes property of the screen printer, with permissions for use on other than screen printable items for the Texas Master Naturalist Program on a case by case basis.
- The Texas Master Naturalist Program reserves the right to utilize submitted images for future program marketing and advertising with notification and credit given to the artist.

Nature's Clean-Up Crew: Vultures Help Mother Nature Recycle

I have recently written about the nitrogen cycle and the water cycle as illustrations of how Mother Nature recycles matter. One of Nature's helpers in this regard are vultures. This may not make for the most appealing discussion, but it is important to understand this essential process.

I recently came upon what appeared to be a rather fresh jackrabbit carcass in the middle of the road not far from our house. I moved it under a tree in the pasture where I could watch from my window. It was less than an hour later that I noticed the first turkey vulture on the carcass. Only a few minutes later he had the company of four or five black vultures. A little later a crested caracara came down to try his luck, but quickly felt he was out-numbered and took off. A little more than an hour after the first vulture was seen, all the vultures had departed, and a search of the area found only a couple of leg bones identifiable.

Here in the Hill Country we have two species of vultures: black vultures and turkey vultures. Black vultures have a shorter wing-span and shorter tail than turkey vultures, and they are heavier and less-agile flyers than turkey vultures. Black vultures have black or dark gray heads while turkey vultures have red heads. Black vultures are year-round residents of the Hill Country, while turkey vultures are most often seen in the summer.

Both vultures find their food by soaring over the landscape looking for dead animals. Black vultures tend to spend more time higher above the tree-level than turkey vultures because the latter are better flyers and can maneuver around trees better. Interestingly, turkey vultures are unusual in the bird world; they can find food by their sense of smell as well. This frequently results in turkey vultures finding a carcass first, but then being chased off by a group of heavier black vultures. We have noticed more than once that when we fire up the barbeque outside we see turkey vultures appearing overhead; they're apparently attracted by the odor.



Crested caracaras are not related to vultures, and are in fact raptors in the same family as falcons. While carrion is their main food, they are perfectly capable of catching live prey. The Hill Country is probably about the northern extent of their range.

Other raptors, including bald eagles also eat carrion, but usually in much smaller amounts than caracaras. And many small omnivorous animals also eat carrion when they find it. And many small omnivorous animals also eat carrion when they find it.

continued on next page

I expect it is probably safe to assume vultures are not on your “favorite-bird” list. The service these animals provide places them in a biological category as detritivores, species that decompose organic matter, and so make the nutrients contained therein available to plants and other soil organisms. In so doing, they help to maintain or increase soil fertility and aid the growth of all vegetation.

It doesn't take much imagination to think of what things would be like without species that perform these services, so maybe vultures should be on your favorite-bird list.

So what happens to the material the vultures eat? With apologies for a less-than-appealing discussion, what they eat gets degraded and decomposed in their digestive tract. Some of the nutrients are used in the bird's body to maintain temperature and provide energy, some become part of the bird's tissues, some is fed to their young, and some becomes excrement and is spread around as the bird moves about. And when the bird dies, its tissues will be eaten or decomposed by other organisms and the cycle continues.

A healthy ecosystem is one that has healthy recycling processes taking place, the overall result is more fertile soils and a more productive landscape. We humans would probably be better off if we did a better job of recycling everything possible, and would be better stewards of the land if we helped Mother Nature take care of our land.

Remember the law of conservation of matter (or atoms) from your high school chemistry: Matter is neither created nor destroyed, just transformed from one form to another. The nitrogen in the air and carbon in carbon dioxide are transformed into proteins and carbohydrates which are in turn transformed into other forms of nitrogen and carbon, and so on and so on.

Until next time...

Jim Stanley is a Texas Master Naturalist and the author of *Hill Country Landowner's Guide*. He can be reached at jstmn@ktc.com. Previous columns can be seen at www.hillcountrynaturalist.org

From Sandy Leyendecker
Hill Country Chapter Data Base Manager

Congratulations to our chapter members for working so hard to fulfill the mission of our Texas Master Naturalist organization. I've turned in the second quarter reports to Michelle Haggerty at TPWD and our numbers look good. We reported 1743.2 hours of Advanced Training and 14,873.17 hours of volunteer work for the first six months of this year. This reflects the efforts of your hard work and dedication. We increased our AT by 445.35 hours and our volunteer hours increased 958.07 over the same reporting time for 2012. Wow!

Finding The Documents You Need

The **Activity Report** may be found under the Volunteer tab. Hover over Volunteer, move down to Activity Report and click. Scroll down and choose the Word or Excel version by clicking the WORD or EXCEL icon. The majority of members use the Word version to submit hours each month. Help the chapter by e-mailing your activity report to our Database Manager Sandy Leyendecker at sandy325@windstream.net by the 5th of each month.

The **Volunteer Projects List** is also located under the Volunteer tab. Hover over Volunteer, move down to Volunteer Projects List and click. Scroll down and click the PDF icon to download the listing of approved projects as a pdf. This list is updated as new projects are approved or project details change.

A list of monthly **Meeting Topics** from 2003 to present can be read by downloading the meeting topics archive from the monthly meeting description page - click Learn More under the meeting announcement on the home page, then scroll down and click on the list, or hover over Learn, then Resources; then click Meeting Topics, then click the Meetings icon.

Interested in reading the **Minutes** from our monthly board of directors meetings? In the right side bar click About, then click Board Meeting Minutes. Minutes from 2005 to present are available for download as pdfs. Treasurers reports from 2005 to present may be downloaded by clicking **Treasurer's Reports** under the About tab. The chapter's **Annual Reports** are also located under this tab.

Chapter Documents include the Chapter Operating Handbook, New Class Committee Guidelines, Projector and Laptop Use Policy, Bylaws, and the Texas Master Naturalist Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct. Under the About tab, click Chapter Documents. A page listing each of these documents with their revision dates opens.

Our **Member Directory** is password protected. In the right side bar click Members, then Member Directory. Submit the password to gain access to members' contact information in pdf or Excel format. Need the password? Members in good-standing should email our Membership Director, Valeska Danielak, at hillcountry13@rocketmail.com. While you are in the members area remember to update your contact info so that our chapter records are current. Use the handy Update Contact Info form on the website.

Feel free to email me at HillCountryWebmaster@gmail.com with comments or questions about our chapter's website.

Chapter members are welcome and encouraged to attend and contribute to Board of Directors meetings. The board meets on the Wednesdays prior to the monthly chapter meetings at 1:30 PM at Riverside Nature Center.

Last Chance Forever, the Bird of Prey Conservancy showed their patriotic spirit for the 4th of July parade in Comfort.



Photo by Rheda Boardman

Riding in the parade : Kelly Raynor - staff, John Karger - Master Falconer, and Dr. Melissa Hill - Veterinarian. John is holding a juvenile bald eagle.



JULY 23: Family Nature Night, 'WICKed: CSI': Tuesday, 7-8 p.m. Become a nature investigator in "Critter Scene Investigation." Led by Koy Coffey, Texas Wildlife Association. Suggested donation \$10 per family.

JULY 25: 'Herbs at Twilight': Thursday, 6-8 p.m. "A Moment of Relaxation, Herbs for the Nervous System," presented by Amy Coward & Sally Garrett. Cost, \$20 RNC members, \$25 nonmembers. RSVP recommended.

AUG. 6: Family Nature Night: Tuesday, 7-8 p.m. Final in the series, this evening is geared to families who love nature or want to learn more about it. Suggested donation \$10 per family.

AUG. 22: Herbs at Twilight: Thursday, 6-8 p.m. "Wild Edibles" are the topic of this month's program, presented by certified herbalists Amy Coward & Sally Garrett. Cost, \$25 per class, \$20 RNC members. Reservations suggested.

AUG. 24: Walk the River Trail: Saturday, 9 a.m. End the dog days of summer with a stroll along the Kerrville River Trail, with naturalist Susan Sander. Meet at RNC's Town Creek overlook. Suggested donation \$3 or \$5 family.

All events at Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos St., 257-4837,
www.riversidenaturecenter.org



The time has come to introduce a new license plate to support Texas State Parks, and we need your input on the design! Three designs have made the final cut: 1) a campfire, 2) a nighttime tent scene, and 3) hikers.

Vote for your favorite design at www.texasstateparks.org/vote!

Don't keep it a secret – make sure your family and friends cast a ballot too! We are eager to know what everyone thinks.

The winning plate design will be announced in September and will be available for your vehicle, trailer or motorcycle through your local tax office or online at www.conservationplate.org in the spring of 2014! The plate will cost \$30 a year in addition to your regular vehicle registration fees, and \$22 will go directly to fund Texas State Parks. If you choose, you will be able to personalize the plate with five characters for an additional \$40 a year.

Don't forget, the Bluebonnet license plate also supports Texas State Parks, and there are three other specialty license plates that benefit the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The Horned Lizard plate supports wildlife conservation, the White-tailed Deer plate benefits the big game hunting, and the Largemouth Bass plate helps Texas fishing. Get yours for \$30 a year at your local tax office or online at www.conservationplate.org *today* – you don't have to wait until you renew your vehicle registration.

Advanced Training

SATURDAY, JULY 20 2PM WILDBIRDS UNLIMITED, KERRVILLE

AT 13-167 BATS

Nyta Brown, who works at the Old Tunnel and is our area expert on bats, will talk about our local bat population. Seating is very limited, call the store, 830-895-7393, to make your reservation.

MONDAY, JULY 22 7PM UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUTHORITY LECTURE HALL, KERRVILLE

AT 13-166 WHO OWNS THE WIND?

Ernest Smith, University of Texas, Austin Law Professor, will explore the issue of deeds by Texas landowners to convey rights to wind on their properties for the generation of electrical power. He will examine whether wind can, or should, be treated as a natural resource analogous to oil and gas--which are quite often severed from surface ownership--and more importantly, why landowners are attempting to separate wind rights from the rest of the land. Socializing begins at 6:30pm and the program starts at 7:00.

TUESDAY, JULY 23 RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER (RNC)

AT 13-159 FAMILY NATURE NIGHT: "CRITTER SCENE INVESTIGATION"

Koy Coffer, Texas Wildlife Association, shows how to conduct a "Critter Scene Investigation." Suggested donation, \$10/family.

THURSDAY, JULY 25 11AM-NOON WEBINAR

AT 13-148 RAINWATER HARVESTING - CATCHING IT AND USING IT

This CoCoRaHS Webinar will discuss the process used to collect rainwater from a rainbarrel to commercial size installations. We will discuss all aspects of collection and delivery and both potable and non-potable use. To register, go to www.cocorahs.org

FRIDAY, JULY 26 9AM-3PM TEXAS CITY PRAIRIE PRESERVE, TEXAS CITY

AT 13-164 PRAIRIE RESTORATION ROUNDUP

The 2013 Restoration Roundup will offer practical, hands-on information, with a focus on which methods work best for a variety of situations. Prairie plants are drought resistant, don't need large inputs of fertilizer, and can be a boon to both cattle and wildlife. Cost: \$35 for general public and professionals and \$25 for students and Texas Master Naturalists; includes light breakfast and box lunch. Advance registration is required; go to <http://prairiepartner.org/page/heartland-series-1>

SATURDAY, JULY 27 8:30-9:30PM GUADALUPE RIVER STATE PARK AMPHITHEATER

AT 13-161 BATS OF TEXAS

Texas is home to more species of bats than any other state. Join our park ranger for a presentation on their amazing diversity and adaptations, and learn who's who among the bats of our area.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 2 1-5PM KERR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA (KWMA)

AT 13-149 A ADDRESSING RESOURCE CONCERNS IN THE EDWARD'S PLATEAU, PART 1

This first of three seminars will focus on the central components in management of any wildlife species: food, water, and cover. Programs address the diets of native and exotic species, water use, development strategies, and cover requirements. An outdoor tour of sites relevant to topics covered indoors will follow.. Reservation required; call 830-238-4483.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7 8AM-12NOON CIBOLO NATURE CENTER, BOERNE (CNC)

AT 13-151 NATURE BOX WORKSHOP

Nature Box founders Kathy Ward and Kathy Wilson and their team will provide hands-on instruction on the construction and use of Natural Resources of Texas and Snakes of Texas boxes, along with information on other Nature Boxes. Cost: \$15 per person. Limited enrollment; pre-registration is required. Go to www.cibolo.org or call 830-249-4615.

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 8 6-8PM GUADALUPE RIER STATE PARK AND HONEY CREEK, SPRING BRANCH
AT 162A-D HONEY CREEK INTERPRETIVE GUIDE TRAINING**

This four-part training course, to be held on August 8, 15, 22, and 29 from 6-8 pm, will prepare you to be a Honey Creek Interpretive Guide. This first session will introduce the training and include a short hike led by our current guides, so that you'll have a first-hand look at what the hike entails. We're seeking volunteers who can commit to attending all four sessions and leading a minimum of six hikes per year. Cost: \$35, which includes a one-year membership in the Friends of Honey Creek. Registration required; contact Nancy Gray at grayabbott@aol.com for more information or to register.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 9 8:30AM-3:30PM MASON MOUNTAIN WILDLIFE AREAS (MMWA)

AT 13-150 A ADDRESSING RESOURCE CONCERNS IN THE EDWARDS PLATEAU, PART 1

This seminar (the first of three) will focus on the central components in management of any wildlife species: food, water, and cover. Programs address the diets of native and exotic species, water use, development strategies, and cover requirements. An outdoor tour of sites relevant to topics covered indoors will follow. Reservation required; call 325-347-5037.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6 1-5PM KERR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA (KWMA)

AT 13-149 B ADDRESSING RESOURCE CONCERNS IN THE EDWARD'S PLATEAU: PART 2

This second of three seminars will focus on natural history and research concerning collared peccary and feral swine. An outdoor tour of sites relevant to topics covered indoors will follow. Reservation required; call 830-238-4483

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13 8:30AM-3:30PM MASON MOUNTAIN WILDLIFE AREAS (MMWA)

AT 13-150 B ADDRESSING RESOURCE CONCERNS IN THE EDWARDS PLATEAU, PART 2

This seminar (the second of three) will focus on natural history, behavior, and research concerning collared peccary and feral swine. An outdoor tour of sites relevant to topics covered indoors will follow. Reservation required; call 325-347-5037.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4 1-5PM KERR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA (KWMA)

AT 13-149C ADDRESSING RESOURCE CONCERNS IN THE EDWARD'S PLATEAU, PART 3

This third of three seminars is entitled "Ecosystems Approach to Wildlife Management: Putting it All Together--Finding a Cure Rather Than Treating a Symptom." Topics include white-tailed deer management, grazing management, prescribed burning, brush control, and endangered species. The seminar also will include over 30 years of nutrition and genetics research conducted in the Donnie E. Harmel White-tailed Deer Research Facility. An outdoor tour of sites relevant to topics covered indoors will follow. Reservation required; call 830-238-4483.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11 8:30AM-3:30PM MASON MOUNTAIN WILDLIFE AREAS (MMWA)

AT 13-150 C ADDRESSING RESOURCE CONCERNS IN THE EDWARDS PLATEAU, PART 3

This seminar (the third of three) is entitled "Ecosystems Approach to Wildlife Management--Putting It All Together: Finding a Cure Rather Than Treating a Symptom." Topics include white-tailed deer management, grazing management, prescribed burning, brush control, and endangered species. The seminar also will include over 30 years of nutrition and genetics research conducted in the Donnie E. Harmel White-tailed Deer Research Facility. An outdoor tour of sites relevant to topics covered indoors will follow. Reservation required; call 325-347-5037



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

Board of Directors 2013

- Vern Crawford -- President
- Tom Hynes -- Vice President
- Carolyn Bean -- Secretary
- Floyd Trefny -- Treasurer
- Daneshu Clarke -- Advanced Training Director
- Paula Smith -- Communications Director
- Valeska Danielak -- Membership Director
- Stephen Bishop -- Volunteer Service Projects Director
- Becky Etzler -- 2013 Class Director
- J.D. Clarke -- 2012 Class Representative
- Priscilla Stanley -- Immediate Past President

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

Please email them to:

Lenore Langsdorf, Editor
LenoreLangsdorf@gmail.com

The Hill Country Chapter does not recommend or endorse organizations or commercial sources mentioned in our newsletter. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and editor.



Questions about our chapter?

Email Valeska Danielak,
Membership Director
imatxn10@yahoo.com

