

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the
Texas Master Naturalist Hill Country Chapter

MAY 2014

Volume 12

Number 5

Tom Schall photo

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™



Hill Country Master Naturalist Annual Family Picnic
Saturday, May 17, at Albert and Bessie Kronkosky
State Natural Area
See Page Three For Details

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE . . . Vern Crawford

Many of you were present for the fascinating visual presentation and talk given by James Rice at our March monthly meeting. If you were there, then I'm sure you are already making plans to attend the May 17 Chapter Picnic.

James is the Superintendent of the Albert and Bessie Kronkosky State Natural Area, one of the several Texas Parks and Wildlife properties that are not yet open to the public.

Since it was acquired in early 2011, James has been working closely with a dedicated group of volunteers who are conducting baseline flora and fauna surveys, with an eye to protecting the area's uniqueness and the diversity of rare and endangered species on this 3,800 acre property.

ABKSNA volunteers include many Master Naturalists, and we have been hearing exciting reports about this natural treasure. Abundant old growth cedar provides excellent habitat for Golden-cheeked Warblers. Low white tail deer impact has allowed sycamore-leaf snowbell to thrive in parts of the canyons. Bigtooth maple is also present.

Although it may still be several years before it is opened to the public, the picnic will provide a special chance for our members and their guests to experience first hand a portion of this beautiful natural area. ABKSNA volunteers will be our trail guides and docents, pointing out features along the way to and from our picnic area at Bessie's Pond.

Vern

This Month We Honor



Initial Certification

Lisa Flanagan

Special Certification

David Hopf Nancy Person

2014 Recertification

Stephen Bishop Julie Clay Vern Crawford Ginny DeWolf Sally Garrett
Eileen Gotke Bob Hanson Reidun Hilleman John Huecksteadt
Lenore Langsdorf Sandra Magee Scott Magee Jack Millikan
Phyllis Muska Barbara Oates Paul Pedersen Evelyn Vittone
Russell Vowell Harriet Warren Mary Frances Watson
Bob Wiedenfeld Marion Worthington

Milestones

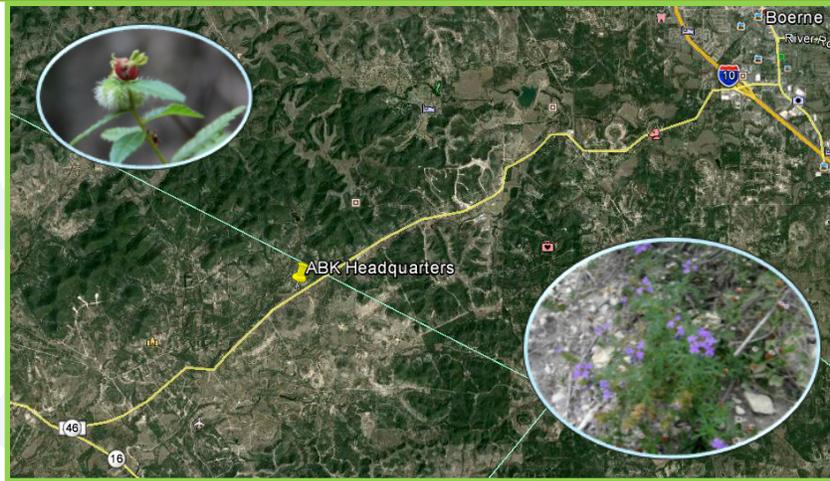
Dale Bransford, Betty Clyburn, Cay Russ, Evelyn Vittone - Bronze Dragonfly, 250 hours
Louis Giusti - Brushed Silver Dragonfly, 500 hours
These awards will be presented at our June meeting.



Congratulations to members who received awards at the April meeting.

From left to right, front row: Priscilla Stanley, Becky Etzler, Fane Downs,
Donna Oliver-Leep, Lenore Langsdorf

Back row: Floyd Trefny, Jim Stanley, Tom Riordan, Sandy Leyendecker, Tom Hynes,
Mike Foulds, Diane McMahon, Ann Dietert, Cay Russ, Rod Boertje



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.

from Martha Miesch

Wildflower Day at the Kroc Center Program

The students learned about various pollinators, types of wildflowers, seed dispersal, photosynthesis, and effects on the environment. We used pictures, charts and actual wildflowers. The students were interested and asked many questions. In addition to the presenters shown, Julie Clay discussed loss of habitat due to cutting native trees, development, and lack of awareness. She also pointed out some characteristics of native survivors. Martha Miesch and Susan McKinley assisted throughout the session.



Betty Clyburn (pictured) and Susan McKinley brought various flowers that are in the meadows and roadsides and discussed their features.



Mary Frances Watson explained how seeds are dispersed by birds, animal scat, wind, and collections on critters' sides and feet.



Pat Nelson explained photosynthesis and used a chart to demonstrate why we need plants in our environment.



Rheda Boardman discussed and showed pictures of types of bees and other pollinators.



The students especially enjoyed looking at the various wildflowers on the grounds. They were introduced to the varieties that are blooming now and identified samples of them.



pictures by Rheda Boardman and Martha Miesch

The View from Rusty Bend



Image by Lucy Griffith

*When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives
may be
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great
heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.*

-Wendell Berry

Full on spring at Rusty Bend. Our breakfast table is strewn with binoculars and bird books. The Painted Buntings have arrived. The males look like someone got after them with seven rattle cans. The raven rows by the window with his obsidian wings, shiny in the sunlight. The Summer Tanager comes up from the river to show off his amazing reds. An opulence of birds. And dinner: the Cooper's Hawk cruises by repeatedly, the shark of the sky.

Monarch butterflies nectar on Button Daisies, and no wonder, they sport a lovely perfume. The Horse Crippler cactus reveals itself from its ground level hiding place with a feathery pink bloom, a striking counterpoint to its hefty spines. Ripe crimson Agarita berries are devoured by mobs of Cedar Waxwings. They seem wild with hunger.

We find a tiny nest in ball moss high in a live oak; delicate walls of cedar bark. A Lesser Goldfinch, with her buttery rump, works on it for a week. In the next tree over, a Canyon Wren has now claimed Andy's boot, while above her a Mourning Dove is porcelain-still on her nest. Her mate hangs above her, a vigilant sentinel.

New baby birds entertain us. Young Bewick's wrens look to be made of fine china; they are so slick and clean. Unafraid, they land nearby and bounce around. One lands on Andy's outstretched finger. The next day, he holds out his arm and she lands on it again, and bops on up to his shoulder and across his back. Hello to the Wren Man.

Before sunrise, the chorus begins. The turkeys gobble on their roost, and the Chuck-Will's-widows make their refrain. Call and response. Call and response. Then a wild flurry of gobbles and a crashing limb. Much muttering ensues.

As I walk the pasture, I hear my father's soft Virginia accent: "Mighty dry. Mighty dry." I remember seeing him out in a barren, goat-nibbled field when we first bought this place many years ago. It was storming with a much needed rain, and he was out there in his fedora, white business shirt, and wingtip brogans with an ancient seed broadcaster. A dusty sack of prairie grass seeds was slung over his shoulder. He turned a crank that spun a big fan hanging from his chest. The seeds flew. The sky rumbled.

My father could not own a piece of property without doing what he could to capture every drop of water, add native plants, and grow good grasses. He planted a "Wildflower Trail" at the edge of that old barren field. The Cenizo, Scarlet Salvia and Mealy Sage have not only survived, but flourished. The heavy grasses testify to his persistence. The lives of his children and grandchildren have been shaped by his vision. He was a steward of the land before it was cool. We miss him.

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 are welcome at oodie1950@gmail.com.

Advanced Training

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.

SATURDAY, MAY 17 12:30PM RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER, KERRVILLE
AT 14-097 HILL COUNTRY ARCHEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION MEETING

Michael Collins, Professor of Research Anthropology, Texas State University, will speak on the Gault and Franklin sites, which are an important part of an emerging mosaic of seven distinct older-than-Clovis archeological records of North America more than 20,000 years ago. He is a prehistorian specializing in the study of the earliest cultures in the Western Hemisphere from the perspective of geoarchaeology, stone tool technology, and diverse archaeological approaches.

TUESDAY, MAY 20 10-11:30AM RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER, KERRVILLE
AT 14-103 WILDFLOWER IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOP

Barbara Lowenthal and Marion Worthington will be the instructors. They will select several common wildflowers from specific plant families and examine the identifying characteristics of each. Part of the class time will be held in the Nature Center meadow. Cost: \$15, RNC members; \$20, nonmembers. Call 830-257-4837 for further information.

TUESDAY, MAY 27 7-9PM 601 NORTH MILAM STREET, FREDERICKSBURG
AT 14-095 AN EVENING WITH OUR LEPIDOPTERA FRIENDS

The May meeting of the Fredericksburg chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas will bring together two speakers with extensive backgrounds in the fields of butterflies and moths, which are members of the order Lepidoptera, which means "scaled wing." The discussion will focus on the partnership between these winged insects and native plants. Geyata Ajilvsgi is known for her extensive knowledge of both butterflies and native plants and is a renowned photographer. She is the author of several books on Texas butterflies and wildflowers. Delmar Cain is a past president of the Boerne chapter of NPSOT and has also been the director of the Friends of Cibolo Wilderness Area (Cibolo Nature Center) in Boerne. He will speak about some of the fascinating and little-known facts about moths. We will conduct a Q&A session at the meeting, so bring your wildflower, butterfly, and photography questions.

THURSDAY MAY 29-SATURDAY JUNE 1 FORT WORTH
AT 14-092 PRAIRIES IN A CHANGING WORLD

This is the Fifth Annual State of the Prairies Conference. Presenters will provide practical methods to restore, conserve, manage, enjoy, and educate about our valuable and vulnerable prairies. Indoor presentations will be augmented by field trips to some of the best public and private prairie sites in and around the historic Fort Worth/Dallas Metroplex. For detailed information, including agenda, costs, and registration, go to <http://prairiepartner.org/page/2014-sop-conference>.

The newsletter's publication schedule does not allow listing all AT events for this and next month. Check the chapter calendar on our website (<http://txmn.org/hillcountry/>) for additional AT opportunities.



We meet on the fourth Monday of most months--but not this month--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.

Please email them to:

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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?

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