

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the

Texas Master Naturalist

Hill Country Chapter

February 2015 Volume 13 Number 2



photo by Jonah Evans

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™



FEBRUARY 23 MEETING: ANIMAL TRACKING

Jonah Evans, Texas Parks and Wildlife Mammalogist, will speak to us on the art and science of animal tracking and sign identification.

Everyone is welcome to join us on Monday, February 23 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 Kathy Ward

Hi!

We have had lots of wonderful rain this winter so our spring should be beautiful with wildflowers. It is time to walk outside and observe your local ecosystem, if you haven't been outside all winter. Check the HCMN calendar and see all the opportunities to volunteer this spring: surveying for birds, butterflies, and flowers in your county. If you want to learn more about the Hill Country, look at the available advanced training.

Please come to our next chapter meeting and you will learn about animal tracks and signs from Jonah Evans, TPWD Mammalogist. Bring a friend who might be interested in joining the 2015 Master Naturalist Class.

Enjoy the Hill Country!

Kathy Ward
President 2015



This Month We Honor



Initial Certification

Susan McKinley

Special Recertification

Mary Thomas

2015 Recertification

Jim Clarke and Tom Collins

Milestones

Karen Burkett and Morgan Williams - Bronze Dragonfly, 250 hours

Nancy Drukker - Brushed Silver Dragonfly, 500 hours

Sarah Hilburn - Gold Dragonfly, 1000 hours

Daneshu Clarke - Polished Silver Dragonfly, 2500 hours

Gracie Waggener - Diamond Dragonfly, 5000 hours



Congratulations to members who received their December awards at our January meeting.

From left to right, kneeling: Chris Keating, Linda Ross, Nina Stieler

Middle and back row: Tom Riordan, Gary Fest, Cay Russ, Pam McKinley, Mary Thomas, Bridget Langdale, Eva Broad, Nancy Person, Stephen Bishop, Mary Lee Stewart, Kay Tally-Foos, Rose Ellis, Jim Clarke



Congratulations to members who received their November awards at our January meeting.

From left to right: John Walker, Tom Hynes, Jim Jones, Peggy Crate, Andy Robinson, Barbara Lowenthal, Chris Anderson, Nina Stieler, Lee Burton, Kris Bobbitt, Steve Dodge

Recent Hill Country Naturalist Columns by Jim Stanley

1/2/2015	“Society Has an Indoor Kid Issue”
1/9/2015	It Ain't What We Don't know, That Pains Us So
1/16/2015	Living with Native Wildlife
1/23/2015	The Big Four Native Perennial Forbs of Texas
1/30/2015	The Backyard Creek

These and all other previous Kerrville Daily Times columns
can be found at www.hillcountrynaturalist.org

RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER

150 Francisco Lemos St., Kerrville

** RSVP to 257-4837 **

www.riversidenaturecenter.org ∞ RNC.Kerrville@gmail.com

'Gardens of American History' Tour Preview, Tuesday, Feb. 17, 10-11 a.m.

Mike Sprute, from Collette Gateway Guest Experience, will show a slide presentation and provide details of a guided tour featuring historical botanical gardens in D.C., NY, PA, MD, & VA. The tour will be this fall, and for each person that signs up through Riverside Nature Center, we receive \$100 donation.

“Hill Country ROCKS,” Exhibit Opening, Thursday, Feb. 19, 4:30-5:30 p.m.

ROCKS—it's all about the geology of our part of the Texas Hill Country. No Charge. Recently, Ted Schulenberg assembled a geological exhibit at Kerr Arts & Cultural Center. Ted also offered his resources and material to use for an RNC exhibit. We brought on board one of our resident geologists—Susan Longacre, Ph.D., retired sedimentary rock specialist. She joins with Ted, Mary Muse, Judy Ferguson, and Susan Sander on what-is-what in the world of Texas Hill Country rocks. The result is a topnotch exhibit. It is only fitting that this geological exhibit be dedicated to the memory of a very special rock hound and geophysicist, a life and charter member of Riverside Nature Center whose support never wavered throughout our 25+ years.

This one is for you, WILLIAM E. 'BILL' LAING.

RNC Grounds Beautification, Part 2, Saturday, Feb. 28, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Please RSVP to join the various teams for cleanup and/or repair of grounds & buildings. Feel free to bring a favorite rake, pruning shears, and gloves.

2nd Tuesday Brown Bag Lunch & Learn, March 10, 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m.

Nate Smith, Texas Parks & Wildlife, speaks on the alligator gar. Cost is \$5 for RNC members; \$8 for nonmembers; free if you're joining RNC at the meeting. RSVP.

Native Healing Garden, Thursday, March 19, 1:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Join the herbalists to learn about native medicinal plants, and then tend the garden. Led by certified herbalists Amy Coward, RN, and Sally Garrett, M.S. No charge to attend, but donations fund the garden.

RNC Grounds Beautification, Part 3, Saturday, March 21, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Please RSVP to join the various teams for cleanup and/or repair RNC grounds and buildings. Feel free to bring a favorite rake, pruning shears, and gloves.

Spring Native Plant Sale & Festival, Saturday, April 18, 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. Annual rite of spring offers for sale a large selection of hand-picked native plants and trees, free expert planting/tending advice, two workshops, vendors representing the area's nature-related organizations, kids' free activities, and more. No charge to attend.



Landscape For Life™

The Landscape for Life™ educational series instructs homeowners on how to create and maintain beautiful landscapes that benefit their family and the surrounding community.

Comprised of 3 classes, this program explores the role of soils, water, vegetation and materials in sustainable landscape design, including:

- *The Role of Soil in Gardens & Successful Soil Practices*
- *The Role of Water in Gardens & Successful Water Practices*
- *The Role of Plants in Gardens & Successful Plant Practices*
- *Selecting Materials for Sustainability*
- *Exploring Sustainable Design Strategies*

This course uses a combination of instructor led presentations, class discussions, exercises, and field trips to illustrate sustainable landscape design methods.

WEDNESDAYS

February 25, 9am – 3:30pm

March 4, 9am – 3:30pm

TUESDAY

March 17, 9am – 12pm

\$75

Register Online



CIBOLO
Nature Center & Farm

WWW.CIBOLO.ORG

140 CITY PARK Rd | BOERNE | 830.249.4616

Hill Country Veterinarian Joins Wildlife Division Ranks

Blood samples, stomach contents, internal abnormalities, organ tissue collections, viruses, bacteria, field necropsies, clinical symptoms – specimens and trade-words in the fast-paced, dynamic world of wildlife veterinary medicine. In an effort of preparedness to diagnose, recognize and analyze the complexities of health and disease issues that bombard our Texas wildlife species on a daily basis, TPWD is pleased to announce that on July 1, 2014 Dr. Robert Dittmar was selected as our first-ever Wildlife Division Veterinarian. While Dr. Dittmar will primarily deal with big game animals, he will also be involved with health and disease issues of small and non-game species, statewide.

A fifth generation Texan raised on a working livestock ranch in Gillespie County, Dr. Dittmar still actively ranches with his family partnership. He is a 1979 graduate of TAMU College of Veterinary Medicine and has worked in mixed animal practices in Weslaco, Hondo and Kerrville. He is active in the Texas Farm Bureau, Texas Wildlife Association, Texas Brigades, Texas and Southwest Cattle Raiser's Association, and has served in various officer positions and directed both the Doss and Harper Wildlife Management Associations.



photo by Scott Jacques

“Dr. Dittmar joins TPWD with over 30 years of professional experience and is no stranger to TPWD,” acknowledges Clayton Wolf, Wildlife Division Director. “Bob has served on the Kerr WMA Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, TPWD Wildlife Health Working Group and White-Tailed Deer Advisory Committee, TPWD/TAHC CWD Task Force, and has assisted with multiple bighorn sheep and pronghorn antelope translocation projects. Bob has a keen awareness of the work we do to ensure the long term sustainability of healthy wildlife populations in Texas and the critical role of healthy habitats. His knowledge of our constituents, the state’s wildlife health issues, the professionals who comprise the Wildlife Division, and his strong technical knowledge, skills and abilities make him best suited for this challenging position.”

As Dr. Dittmar sees it, “The job will have many duties, one of which is assessing disease in free-ranging wildlife species. I will be conducting training sessions throughout the state to allow our biologists to become more comfortable doing field necropsies. One of my primary goals is to enable our biologists to answer landowner and hunter questions about sick animals or abnormalities seen in harvested animals.” Biologists receive lots of questions and sometimes pictures of parasites or carcass parts, but often the carcass or part in question has been disposed of before being reported, and it can be difficult to make a diagnosis with limited information. “I would like to encourage landowners and hunters to help us with this by not only taking pictures of abnormalities but by saving pieces of that tissue or whole worm or insect specimen if possible, so that it can be examined and possibly submitted to a lab for testing. The part in question could be placed in a plastic bag and refrigerated, not frozen, until a biologist could be contacted. This will help us to better assess potential disease threats to our wildlife.”



photo by Ryan Schoenberg

If you have a wildlife health issue, you may contact Dr. Robert Dittmar at his office in Kerrville at 830-896-9045 or through your local TPWD wildlife biologist. Dr. Dittmar affirms, “I’m looking forward to not only working with the great folks in TPWD but the dedicated landowners of the State that are the stewards of our wildlife resources.”

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From Tony Plutino

Mason Mountain Wildlife Management Area – A New Volunteer Project

On the kind of winter day that Texans fantasize about during the summer, seven Hill Country Chapter members gathered at the Mason Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA), five miles north of Mason, for the first orientation session of a new chapter volunteer project. We were warmly welcomed by Mark Mitchel, WMA Manager, and Dr. James “Jim” Gallagher, TPWD Biologist. After brief introductions by group members, Dr. Gallagher provided an overview of WMA before presenting to us the purpose, scope and methods of the WMA’s Quail Management Study. He highlighted the ongoing, rotational burn regimen of 72 experimental plots and explained the role that we will have in capturing data on each of these plots.



Volunteers gathering data at a transect line

After that presentation, Jim and Mark took us into the field for a hands-on data gathering and data entry exercise that involved laying out a segmented transect line and acquiring, at one meter intervals, data on plant structure from the tree canopy on down to ground level and then entering that data into a handheld tablet. The data gathered was not specific plant species, but rather what the structure of the flora is, as that is the critical factor in establishment and maintenance of quality quail habitat. While our field lesson took less than an hour, in practice, each plot may take two-three hours to survey--it will take less time as our familiarity with the process improves.



Chris Keating displays a plot marker

The plan at this point is for at least three teams of two people to work together on each plot, with a goal of three plots per day until we have surveyed all 72 plots. This plan would have the data collection completed in eight work days. While a final schedule has not been devised at this time, the scenario we are pursuing is to create a two week block that straddles June and July, with a core group of volunteers that can commit to from one to four full days in each of those weeks. Volunteers will be given accommodation at the WMA lodge if needed.

This is a great opportunity to experience a Wildlife Management Area that few get to visit, learn a great deal about the science of habitat management and about the flora and fauna (some exotic) of this amazing area, experience the town of Mason and, of course, have a terrific opportunity for volunteer and advanced training hours. The next orientation session is scheduled for February 20 from 1-4 p.m. If needed, additional orientation dates will be set. It is necessary to attend an orientation session before volunteering. Volunteers can commit to as many data collection days as desired with a grand ideal being a commitment of four consecutive days. This is Volunteer Project Number MS-02-A. Interested members should contact me at 512-496-2020 or tonyplutino@gmail.com for further information.



The first orientation group. Pictured left to right: WMA Manager Mark Mitchel, Diane Gierisch, TPWD Biologist Dr. James "Jim" Gallagher (kneeling), Bobby Gierisch, Bridget Langdale, Lee Burton, and Chris Keating. Not pictured, taking photo, Tony Plutino.



The scenic man made lake at the Mason Mountain Wildlife Management Area is a fine place for a swim after an afternoon in the field.

The Native Plant Society of Texas Fredericksburg Chapter

The NPSOT Fredericksburg Chapter monthly meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 24 will be a broad overview of the factors and limitations influencing restoration of native plants in Texas, including a primer on native seed sources, native seed quality, and considerations to guide practitioners' selection and successful use of various native seed products to meet restoration goals. Also, there will be an outline of South Texas Natives & Texas Native Seed Projects and others efforts that are aimed at facilitating additional restoration successes in Texas.

The meeting will begin with a social gathering at 6:30 p.m., followed by the program at 7:00 p.m. The location is the Fellowship Hall of Memorial Presbyterian Church, 601 North Milam Street, Fredericksburg. The meeting is open to the public, and there is no charge to attend. For more information about this program and the Native Plant Society of Texas, please contact Kathy Lyles, Fredericksburg Chapter President, at 830-997-0724. or klyles@beecreek.net

The Second Annual Bennett Land Stewardship Conference April 23-24, Inn of the Hills Resort and Conference Center in Kerrville.

The conference is funded by the Ruth and Eskel Bennett Endowment and hosted by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, said Dr. Larry Redmon, co-chair and Bennett Trust AgriLife Extension specialist.

Redmon said the Bennetts posthumously provided an endowment that will support land stewardship education in the Edwards Plateau for generations to come. The Bennetts retired to a ranch just outside Dripping Springs and established this endowment by generously gifting a portion of their estate to AgriLife Extension.

Dr. Rick Machen, AgriLife Extension livestock specialist from Uvalde, said the conference will include "the best and wisest, accomplished stewards, visionaries and legacy-leavers together as educators for this conference. Those with a passion for natural resource stewardship and a love for the Texas Hill Country will want to be there."

Cost of the two-day conference is \$75 and includes all meals, break refreshments, and tour transportation costs. Register by going to <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/BennettTrust> or by calling 979-845-2604.

For more information regarding the Bennett Trust Land Stewardship program, contact Dr. Redmon at l-redmon@tamu.edu, or Dr. Machen at r-machen@tamu.edu, or an AgriLife Extension agent in the region.

From Rheda Boardman

The Native Plant Society of Texas Boerne Chapter Announces Our Youth Photo Competition

The "Texas Native Plant Photo Contest" is a collaborative effort between the Native Plant Society of Texas Boerne Chapter, Cibolo Nature Center and Farm, and Patrick Heath Public Library. Our goal is to challenge amateur shutterbugs of all skill levels to use their cameras as tools to learn more about native plants and pollinators of the Texas Hill Country.

The contest has three age groups (elementary school, middle school, and high school) and three categories (close-up of native plant, scenic view with native plants, and native plant with a pollinator). The contest is open to all youth who attend school within the Boerne ISD boundaries.

The photo submission deadline is September 18, 2015. A special reception, program, and announcement of winners event is planned for Tuesday, Oct. 6, 2015 at the Patrick Heath Public Library. All photographs will be exhibited at the library in October.

As a kick off to the contest the public (all ages) is invited to attend a presentation by three of our Native Plant Society members during the March 3 meeting of the Native Plant Society of Texas Boerne Chapter. Chuck Janzow, Wilt Shaw and Delmar Cain all have an incredible knowledge base and take wonderful pictures of native plants. In their presentation they will discuss some of the methods that they use to take pictures and process images and also share some easy tips for nature photography.

The NPSOT meeting will be held at the Cibolo Nature Center & Farm Auditorium. Socializing begins at 6:30 p.m., with the program starting at 7. For questions regarding the contest or presentation contact Rheda Boardman, Photo Contest Chairperson, at rhedaboardman@yahoo.com.

From Betty Clyburn

Talking Trash at the Kroc Center Program

As 22 fourth and fifth graders sat on the floor of the classroom in the Kroc Center surrounded by mounds of “clean” trash (washed by the Master Naturalist volunteers and ready for recycling) the question asked was, “What are we going to talk about today?” The answer was a resounding Chorus of “TRASH!” David Barrera, Solid Waste and Environmental Specialist from the City of Kerrville, started us off with a brief explanation of the difference between waste and recyclables. From there he took us through a tour of the recycling loop Reduce-Reuse-Recycle and asked the students for examples of each. Reuse your plastic cups, Reduce the number of plastic bags by using reusable bags for grocery and shopping and finally, Recycle. David passed around examples of recyclables that the students use every day and reminded them to wash out recyclables, because clean recyclables can be contaminated by dirty plastic bottles and containers.

Next the students were entertained with pictures made from discarded plastic bottles, stacks of aluminum cans, and plastic cups used in airplanes every day. Did you know that one million cups are used and discarded in airplanes every six months?

Our final activity was to reuse all the trash they were standing in to fashion a costume or musical instrument. The designs were outlandish and the students loved the exercise in imagination. Did you know you could tape together aluminum cans to make a xylophone? At the end of the afternoon the trash that was not part of a costume was recycled in the appropriate bins labeled: cardboard, aluminum, plastic, paper, and cans. We hope that these students will take home the reuse, reduce, recycle lesson to help our environment.

Master Naturalists who assisted in this presentation were Julie Clay, Betty Clyburn, Susan McKinley, Martha Miesch, John Sloan, Mary Thomas, and Mary Frances Watson.



Port Aransas Bans Single-use Plastic Bags by David Sikes

CORPUS CHRISTI - The Port Aransas City Council voted this week to ban the use of plastic bags at most retail stores within the island community.

The council also urged shops to voluntarily stop providing the thin plastic bags to customers beginning Jan. 1, 2015. The outright ban goes into effect Jan. 1, 2016. Vendors who sell fishing bait, seafood and other raw foods may continue using the single-use bags indefinitely, said City Manager Dave Parsons.

The vote was 5-1, with local restaurant owner Edwin Myers casting the dissenting vote.

The ban puts Port Aransas on a growing list of Texas cities that have adopted some form of plastic bag restriction. The list of at least 10 cities includes Austin, Dallas, Freer, Brownsville, Laredo and South Padre Island. In addition, two states and 20 countries have regulated the single-use bags to curb littering, according to Neil McQueen, president of the local chapter of the Surfrider Foundation, which campaigns for bag bans through its Skip the Plastic program.

City leaders in Rockport, Corpus Christi and other area communities have entertained similar ordinances that would curb the use of plastic bags.

"We plan to continue advocating bans in Rockport, Corpus Christi and other surrounding communities so we have a more comprehensive and effective ban to help protect the entire Coastal Bend," McQueen said. "We've seen an increase of people using reusable bags, but unfortunately its not enough. It's encouraging, but not enough."

McQueen said curbing the use of the ubiquitous, lightweight bags that litter the landscape goes beyond aesthetics. Wildlife, especially birds and marine animals such as sea turtles, suffer as well. He said Tony Amos, a renowned researcher at the University of Texas Marine Science Institute and founder of the Animal Rehabilitation Keep for injured animals, made this assertion during several public meetings leading up to Thursday's vote.

McQueen said Amos again addressed the council at Thursday's meeting, which attracted a near capacity crowd. In a compelling argument, McQueen said Amos described details of injured or dead birds and marine animals that either consumed the plastic or became entangled in the discarded bags left on the beach, in the dunes, and in the bays and gulf.

A total of eight people addressed the bag issue during the meeting. Six favored the ban, Parsons said. The council considered allowing bags made of material that would break down in a composting process. But this clause was removed from the final draft. McQueen said the council was not convinced the compostable material would degrade underwater or over time in the dunes.

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Welcome

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.

The View from Rusty Bend

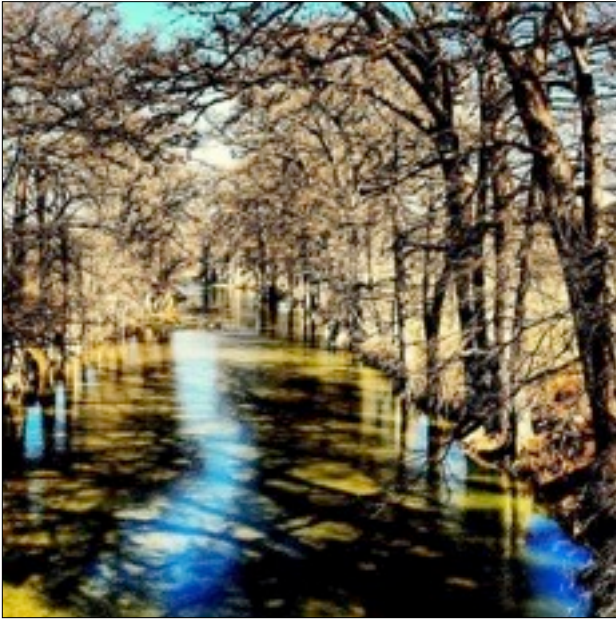


image by Lucy Griffith Copyright 2015

*The sun crawls around the low horizon,
drip-torching flames...
A tiny silhouetted sapling,
whipping in the winter wind,
makes a mile-long shadow,
across the creek, over the clearing,
and far into the woods...
Deep trails flood and fill
with violet blue.
Sunny valley bottoms
are squeezed up into the starry sky,
until all the shadows touch,
and the world is still.*

- Ruth Hill

Winter stillness at Rusty Bend. A landscape of long shadows silently waits for spring.

Pickings are slim in January. The scarcity of food concentrates the action, as raft after raft of migrants float into the river. In icy weather, the Guadalupe thrums with activity. As if to a soup kitchen, the hungry have come for sustenance. We learn these visitors by their patterns of flight. Robins fly in a stuttering way, then fold their wings and fall like dark leaves to the ground. Cedar waxwings dart madly like kids just let out of school. Wild and chaotic. Flocks of Red-wing Blackbirds are all male or all female. Cooper's hawks strafe the doves in the ash tree.

Our game is now "Spot the Raptor: Extreme Edition." The leafless trees are a sea of sepia and any large bird stands out like a stop sign. Red-tailed Hawks perch side by side for hours at a time. Crested Caracaras teeter into the trees to perch and show off their goofy hairdos. The aquarium clear river draws in an Osprey to fish for dinner.

On an especially frigid day, I see a huge bird fly into a cypress. His wingbeats are strong and sure; he flares his white tail as he lands and I see the white head of a Bald Eagle. A mottled brown partner perches above him, much larger. A juvenile Bald Eagle? Word of good fishing must have spread. Such a rare, welcome winter visitor.

The river is just as alive after the sun goes down. One night, as we say goodnight to the moon and the stars, Andy and I hear Great-horned Owls on the river below us. One downstream calls "Who-who- whooo?"; then one just below us answers. Another, far upstream, chimes in. A winter evening chorus.

After some longed-for rains, winter oat fields beside the river are irresistible to the deer. Muddy fields. Very muddy. The deer sport black stockings of clay. They lope around like polo ponies, swinging their heavy legs.

In the pasture, trees tremble with smaller birds, searching for shelter. Meadowlarks float out into stubbled grass, like a net cast over water. Small birds seem so vulnerable in the cold. One Carolina Wren has just one foot. She waves her peg leg in the air for balance at the feeder. We see her regularly for a time, then she is gone. A titmouse, being harried by a Merlin, hits the porch window and lays stunned. Andy carefully picks him up to provide protection during his recovery. His tiny eyelashes are a wonder.

On bitter mornings, the birds are quiet. Three young foxes trot the perimeter of the yard. So light, they seem to float by. Not much later, turkeys come up the cliff after foraging for pecans on the river. They scratch for bugs, then stop. Motionless. For minutes. Are they listening, as I am, for spring?

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 certified Master Naturalists from the Class of 2013. Comments welcome at oodie1950@gmail.com

Advanced Training

FRIDAY, FEB. 20 1-4PM MASON MOUNTAIN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA, MASON
AT 15-030 VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

This class focuses on the history and purpose of the Mason Mountain WMA along with training on gathering and processing data along transect lines located within MMWMA experimental plots and a great opportunity to experience Mason Mountain WMA's beauty while learning. Contact Tony Plutino at 512-496-2020 or tonyplutino@gmail.com for further information.

SATURDAY, FEB. 21 9AM-12PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER, BOERNE (CNC)
AT 15-006 ATTRACTING BIRDS: FEEDERS, FOOD, WATER FEATURES, AND PLANTS

Learn the techniques that have resulted in over 190 species of birds recorded at a single home. Dick Park, local birder and landowner, will show us how he attracts nesting, migrant, and wintering birds to his land. After a presentation and discussion on attracting birds, we will go outside to see practical examples of habitat enhancement, including recommended bird feeders, water features, and nest boxes. For more information, go to nature@cibolo.org.

SUNDAY, FEB. 22 2-3PM ENCHANTED ROCK STATE PARK, FREDERICKSBURG
AT 15-038 WHAT'S IN THE PUDDLE? VERNAL POOLS

Whether you would like to be a "Lifeguard" for the pools or just want to know more about these special places, this presentation is for you. The presentation will start at the pavilion and then take a short hike to the summit to tie in with what we've learned. Nina Hazle is the presenter. Free; call 830-685-3030 for more information and to register.

MONDAY, FEB. 23 6:30-9PM UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUTHORITY LECTURE HALL, KERRVILLE
AT 15-051 ANIMAL TRACKING AND WILDLIFE RESEARCH
TPWD State Mammalogist Jonah Evans will speak at our monthly meeting.

TUESDAY, FEB. 24 9AM-2PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER, BOERNE
AT 15-021 BIRD BOX MONITOR TRAINING

This workshop will identify common birds that use nest boxes and will teach monitors how to determine which species are using their nest boxes, based on nest structure and materials. Monitors will also learn how to count and scientifically document egg and hatchling numbers and to predict hatch dates and fledge dates. Training is also good for Wildlife Tax Valuation reporting. Register now; suggested donation \$10.00. To register or for more information, go to nature@cibolo.org or call 830-249-4616.

TUESDAY, FEB. 24 6:30-8:30PM MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FREDERICKSBURG
AT15-050 FACTORS AND LIMITATIONS INFLUENCING RESTORATION OF NATIVE PLANTS IN TEXAS
The monthly meeting of the Native Plant Society Of Texas Fredericksburg Chapter will be a broad overview of the factors and limitations influencing restoration of native plants in Texas, including a primer on native seed sources, native seed quality, and considerations to guide practitioners' selection and successful use of various native seed products to meet restoration goals. Also, there will be an outline of South Texas Natives & Texas Native Seed Projects and other efforts underway that are aimed at facilitating additional restoration successes in Texas. Free.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 25 9AM-3:30PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER, BOERNE
AT 15-049, A, B, C LANDSCAPE FOR LIFE

This three-part series (full day Feb. 25 and March 4; half-day, March 17) instructs homeowners on how to create and maintain beautiful landscapes that benefit their family and the surrounding community. The five classes focus on the role of soils, water, vegetation, and materials in sustainable landscape design. This course uses a combination of instructor led presentations, class discussions, exercises, and field trips to illustrate sustainable landscape design methods. Tuition: \$75; bring a sack lunch and beverage for the Wednesday sessions. To register now, go to <http://cibolo.org>; for more information, call 830-249-4616.

THURSDAY, FEB. 26 10:30-11:15, 12:45-1:30PM; 2-2:45PM WEBINAR
AT 15-043 ANIMAL SKULL INVESTIGATION

Videoconferencing style programs are offered through Connect2Texas. Each program is 45 minutes long, designed for grades 1-6, TEKS aligned, and free. Go to www.connect2texas.net to register.

continued on next page

SATURDAY, FEB. 28 2PM-5:30PM LADY BIRD JOHNSON WILDFLOWER CENTER, AUSTIN
AT 15-037 TEXAS POLLINATOR POWWOW, PART TWO

Learn about Texas plants and their pollinators, the conservation challenges they are facing, and how you can help. Topics range from native plants and bees, to monarchs and bats, to urban and rural land management best practices by experts from around the state. Exhibitors will answer questions, provide resources, and showcase their organizations. Attendance is limited; register by Feb. 24 to have light breakfast and light lunch included with your \$25 registration fee. For more information and to register, go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/texas-pollinator-powwow-part-two-p2-tickets-15334660382>.

SATURDAY, FEB. 28 9AM-12PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER, BOERNE
AT 15-039 ATTRACTING BIRDS: CREATING BIRD HABITAT

TPWD biologist and land management specialist Rufus Stephens will explore the behavior and habitat preferences of numerous bird species as well as management techniques that attract more birds. The indoor portion of the workshop will convey a systematic approach to management that increases bird species diversity through habitat enhancements. During an outdoor walk, Rufus will explain how native plants provide food and cover in the nature center's habitats and native plant gardens. Cost: \$20 for CNC members; \$25 for non-members (per person). To register now, go to <http://cibolo.org>; for more information, call 830-249-4616.

TUESDAY, MARCH 3 7-8PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER, BOERNE
AT 15-056 NATIVE PLANT DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Three members of the Native Plant Society of Texas Boerne Chapter--Chuck Janzow, Wilt Shaw, and Delmar Cain--will discuss methods that they use to take digital pictures and process images, along with sharing some tips for nature photography at the society's monthly meeting. Free.

TUESDAY, MARCH 10 11:45AM-1PM RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER, KERRVILLE (RNC)
AT15-055 A FISH OUT OF TIME: THE ALLIGATOR GAR

Dr. Nate Smith, TPWD Fisheries Biologist, will be our speaker. The cost is \$5 for RNC members; \$8 for nonmembers; free if you're joining RNC at the meeting. Call 830-257-4837 to RSVP. Cost: \$5 for RNC members; \$8 for non-members; free if you're joining RNC at the meeting.

MONDAY, MARCH 23 6:30PM UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUTHORITY AUDITORIUM, KERRVILLE

AT 15-054 IT AIN'T EASY BEING GREEN: THE NATURE CONSERVANCY AND CONSERVATION IN TEXAS

John Herron, Director of Conservation Programs for the Texas Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, will present an overview of The Nature Conservancy organization and programs at our monthly meeting.

THURSDAY, MARCH 26 WEBINAR

AT 15-052 STREAM CHANNEL REPAIR AND RESTORATION

Following extreme flooding damage, there is often a demand to quickly address damaged stream banks. This can lead designers to miss fundamental stability issues and implement projects which do not function as intended. A systematic and sound approach is needed to assure that the proper treatments are implemented. While expertise and input from many disciplines can be required, this one hour webinar will present an overview of geotechnical and fluvial considerations. Please join the session 15 minutes prior to the start of the webinar; go to <http://www.conservationwebinars.net/webinars/stream-channel-repair-and-restoration-following-extreme-flooding-damage-part-2>.

SATURDAY, MARCH 28 9AM-12PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER, BOERNE

AT 15-020 INTRODUCTION TO BIRDING

Avid birders and Master Naturalists Tom and Patsy Inglet share tools, tips, and techniques that allow you to start birding like a pro. Cost: \$20 for CNC members; \$25 for non-members (per person).

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.

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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