

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the

Texas Master Naturalist

Hill Country Chapter

May 2015 Volume 13 Number 5



photo by Tyra Kane

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™



Hill Country Master Naturalist Annual Family Picnic

Saturday, May 16, at the LBJ State Park

See Page Three For Details

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Kathy Ward

Hi!

What a beautiful spring! There are so many opportunities for us to volunteer as Master Naturalists. Please take advantage of them and always report your hours. Be sure you have the May 16 HCMN Picnic on your calendar to attend.

Those of you who are talented with a video camera should think about entering the Texas Master Naturalist Video Contest in the fall. See the announcement in this newsletter.

Our Board has formed a committee to figure out the best way to educate all our members about the new Texas Master Naturalist- Volunteer Management System. Beginning in January 2016, all who have computers will be listing their volunteer hours through this system. Those who do not have a computer will still have an option to continue to send in their data for entry by the data manager. All the Texas Master Naturalist Chapters will be on this Texas Parks and Wildlife System. The committee will soon send out the simplest instructions they can design on how to set up your account.

Remember to encourage interested persons to apply for the HCMN class of 2015 by July 13.

Happy volunteering and continued learning about our wonderful Hill Country Nature.

Cheers!

Kathy Ward

This Month We Honor



Initial Certification

Diane Gierisch

Special Recertification

Chris Anderson

2014 Recertification

Norma Bruns, Jane Crone, Lisa Flanagan, Bob Hansen, Tom Hynes, Kip Kiphart, Merrily Labarthe, Scott Magee, Ric McCormick, Roger McRoberts, Martha Miesch, Ward Miller, Phyllis Muska, Cay Russ, Marion Worthington

Milestones

Rose Ellis - Bronze Dragonfly, 250 hours

Roger McRoberts and Paul Pedersen, Brushed Silver Dragonfly, 500 hours

Virginia Sawin, Gold Dragonfly, 1000 hours

Congratulations to members who received awards at the April meeting.



Glenn Randow (left) received the Diamond Dragonfly pin, which recognizes 5000 volunteer hours.

Ann Schneider (center) and Russell Vowell (right) received Brushed Silver Dragonfly pins, which recognize 500 volunteer hours.



From left to right, back row: Bob Wiedenfeld, Floyd Trefny, Ann Dietert, Gary Fest
center row: Morgan Williams, John Walker, Susan McKinley, Julie Clay,
Bridget Langdale, Nancy Person, Paul Person, Russell Vowell
front row: Donna Oliver-Leep, Rose Ellis, Brenda Fest



The Texas Master Naturalist Hill Country Chapter annual picnic will be on Saturday, May 16, from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., at the LBJ State Park Dining Hall / Picnic area adjacent to Ranch Road 1 and Highway 290, two miles east of Stonewall

The Sauer Beckmann Living History Farm tours are available at no cost to the public from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on the day of our picnic. Tours of the LBJ home, which is a National Park, are available for \$3 per person from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4:30.

Bring your picnic, including whatever you would like to drink, and join us on the banks of the Pedernales River for food, bocce ball, horseshoes, fishing, and fellowship with our group. If you would like additional information regarding the two available tours, go to <http://www.visitfredericksburgtx.com/attractions-activities/sauer-beckmann-living-history-farm---lbj-state-historical-park/> and <http://www.nps.gov/lyjo/planyourvisit/visitlbjranch.htm> .

If you have questions, or if you would like to help with this event, please contact Paul Person at 210-275-4522 or email pkperson@live.com .

From Jennifer Buratti

Announcing the Second Annual Texas Master Naturalist Video Contest

Spring has filled the outdoors with new life and activities.

Take advantage of this time to **Create a New Video**, highlighting
an experience as a Trainee
an experience as a Master Naturalist (what I get out of the program, why I like being involved, etc.) or
a Chapter Project.

Upload the video to YouTube or send an mp4, or a YouTube-ready video file, to jmburatti@gmail.com .

Deadline: Sept 18, 2015. Judging will take place from Sept. 18 to Sept. 25. The three top videos will be announced and receive awards at the 2015 Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting, Oct. 23-25.

Length: Set your goal for 1 minute, 30 seconds to 3 minutes max.

The videos will be posted on the Texas Master Naturalist Playlist on YouTube. See samples of last year's winners at <https://www.youtube.com/user/txmnnaturalistprogram/videos>, including the First Place winner, "North Texas Chapter's Love our Native Prairies & Plants Day Project" and the Second Place winner, Dawn Hatch's "On Becoming a TMN."

Find tips and resources in the Guide, <http://txmn.org/event/2nd-annual-video-contest/>, on our TMN state program website, <http://txmn.org.event/2nd-annual-video-contest> , and on our TMN Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/TexasMasterNaturalistProgram> .

Call for Training Workshops & Session Presentations

Texas Master Naturalist 16th Annual Meeting

October 23 -25, 2015

Horseshoe Bay Resort, Horseshoe Bay, Texas

(Proposal Abstracts deadline June 5, 2015)

Now Accepting Proposals:

<http://txmn.org/2015-annual-meeting/>



Meeting Overview

The Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting is geared toward Texas Master Naturalist volunteers, their chapters, agency advisors, representatives of partner organizations and supporters of the statewide TMN program. The meeting provides an opportunity for our volunteers and affiliates to receive all of their Advanced Training requirements for the year within one weekend. It's also an opportunity for program participants and supporters to network, share new ideas and projects and to learn from one another.

As a workshop presenter, you would have the opportunity to inform and train TMN members from across the state on various natural resource topics providing more in-depth information than their initial core training and curriculum. You are also encouraged to make this an opportunity to enlist and train our program volunteers to assist you, your program, and your work as part of their annual volunteer service commitment.

Annual Meeting Themes, Advanced Training Workshops & Sessions

Proposals for workshops are requested for the Texas Master Naturalist 16th Annual Meeting. All training workshops relevant to the Texas Master Naturalist mission will be considered. Special consideration will be given to proposals that address one or more of the following themes:

- **Special topics for 2015, including** *Developing and utilizing social media resources, Non-game diversity, the importance and implementation of the Texas Conservation Action Plan, the value of nongame regulation and the importance of the Texas With Wildlife (TWW) Coalition and diversified funding for nongame wildlife, and How-to workshops on developing short educational social media videos.*
- **Citizen Science programs:** *Hands-on, train the trainer type workshops are strongly encouraged. Workshops covering iNaturalist, other apps, and technology resources for volunteer monitoring programs also are strongly encouraged, as are those on taking the next step with citizen science tools and linking them together.*
- **Program and Chapter Management topics,** *including marketing, branding, local program evaluation and assessment, building and maintaining effective partnerships, leadership skills, volunteer and group management techniques, and educational technology relevant to natural resource conservation, education, and outreach.*
- **Interpretation and communication,** *including working with diverse audiences, techniques and developing interpretive programs for all ages, incorporating storytelling as an interpretive tool, and targeting non-traditional audiences for natural resource programs.*
- **Traditional disciplines of a naturalist:** *botany, entomology, ornithology, mammalogy, herpetology, paleontology, geology, archaeology, ichthyology, etc.*
- **Ecological concepts and/or Eco-regions of Texas:** *regional landscape issues and management techniques; historical aspects of an ecoregion .*
- **Management of natural systems and systems management tools,** *including forest, rangeland, wetland, aquatic and urban ecology & management, hunting and prescribed fire, and other management tools.*
- **Historical perspectives of naturalists in Texas**

continued on next page

Advanced Training Workshops provide training on a specific skill, technique, or process and may involve one or more instructors. Workshops are intended to emphasize learning through participation, discussion, and “hands-on”, in-the-field activities, where possible. Advanced Training workshops should also aim to provide participants with new skills to apply in their area of service or better prepare them to provide service in the topic area you are teaching. Training workshops typically are scheduled to run concurrently with other conference sessions. Training workshops may range from four hours in length to a total of 12 hours in length spanning the course of the weekend. Typical workshop attendance ranges from 15 to 50 while the conference attendance ranges between 300 and 400 total registrants.

Advanced Training Sessions may include presentations introducing a natural resource topic or program to solicit the interest of TMN volunteers or to present resources and partnerships that may assist Master Naturalist chapters in their communities. They are also typically shorter, hands-on and interactive presentations on natural resource topics that model good interpretive methods. Sessions are scheduled to run concurrently with other conference events and topics and are open to all meeting registrants on a walk-in basis. Training sessions may range from one-hour to four-hour blocks. Typical attendance at sessions can range from 10 to 50 registrants

Information required for a Proposal:

- Session Type: Advanced Training Workshop or Advanced Training Session or Chapter Project Presentation
- Length of time (in hours) requested for presentation
- Session Title (make it catchy!)
- Environmental needs for presentation: Indoors classroom? Outdoors? Offsite/Field Trip?
- Technology needs for presentation and participants where applicable (i.e. bring your own device): WiFi? Projector? Laptop? Microphone?
- Contact Information for primary presenter/training team lead: Organization, email
- Additional Trainer(s)/Presenter(s) names, titles, and organization(s)
- Maximum class size
- A short description of the session--a three to five sentence paragraph (about 100 words) describing the session, what volunteers will learn, what they will need to wear and/or what they should bring with them. (This information will be included in our registration materials to describe your session)
- Would you be willing to repeat the presentation?
- Would you be willing to moderate another session, if needed?
- Are there additional needs you have for your presentation?

Submission Requirements:

The Texas Master Naturalist program welcomes your proposals as contributions to our agenda! Individuals wishing to present are invited to submit their proposal on the Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting website: <http://txmn.org/2015-annual-meeting/>.

The deadline for submissions is June 5, 2015. A notice of receipt will be automatically generated and sent by e-mail. If you do not receive notification of receipt within 10 days or have any questions about proposal submission, please contact Mary Pearl Meuth (mpmeuth@tamu.edu). Proposals received after the deadline and before registration opening may be considered if space is available.

Proposal Evaluation and Notice of Decision:

All training proposals will be considered and evaluated on timeliness of the subject, importance of the training to a broad range of TMN volunteers and their further contribution to our program’s mission. Applicants will be notified whether their proposals are accepted or not.

Each of our 109 volunteer projects has a **project ID and name** to be used on your Activity Report. Please check the current list for changes; some project names have been updated. Please use the **project name as highlighted in blue**. If you report hours for "Board Work" for organizations other than the chapter, look for **Board Work** in **blue** in the project description, and specify "Board Work" on your Activity Report.

Volunteer Projects Director Pat McCormick, Database Manager Sandy Leyendecker, and I have revised our Approved Volunteer Projects List to make it easier for you to find projects and report your volunteer hours.

Please help Sandy keep accurate records by using the **project ID and correct project name** on your Activity Report.

Our Approved Volunteer Projects List is available for download on our website in Excel and PDF formats: <http://txmn.org/hillcountry/volunteer/volunteer-projects-list/>.

The Activity Report is offered in Word and Excel formats: <http://txmn.org/hillcountry/volunteer/activity-report/>.

Eight new projects have been approved and added to the list, and several more are in process. You can always email me with questions at hillcountrywebmaster@gmail.com.

Native Plant Society of Texas - Fredericksburg Chapter: May Meeting

On Tuesday, May 26, the speaker at our chapter meeting will be Rufus Stephens, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department biologist, who will present a program on how to create a wildscape that provides nectar for hummingbirds, fruits for songbirds, and protective cover for a variety of wildlife.

The meeting is at the Memorial Presbyterian Church, 601 North Milam Street, and is open to the public.

The social gathering begins at 6:30 and the program begins at 7. There is no charge.

From Susan McKinley

Animal Habitat Study at the Kroc Center

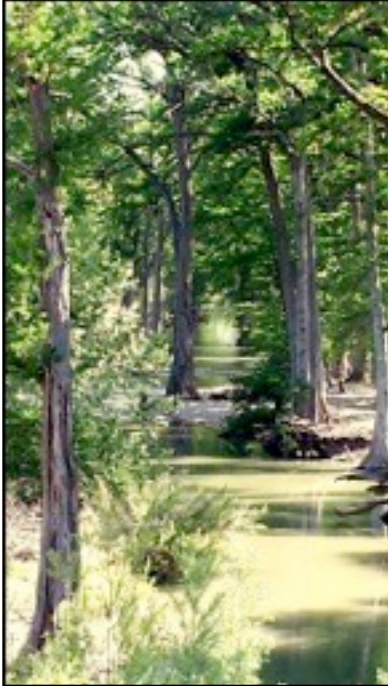
The fourth and fifth graders in the Kroc Center's after-school program were not discouraged by a thunderstorm as they learned about the components of habitat: food, water, shelter, and space. While the planned outdoor scavenger hunt had to be scrapped due to some much-needed rain, the budding naturalists used pictures and real objects to make inferences about the varied habitats of different types of plants, insects, birds, reptiles, and mammals.

Three tables were loaded with samples of rocks, fossils, snails, insects, nests, feathers, seeds, acorns, lichens, fungi, grasses, vines, and the always popular scat. As they moved among the tables, the students made observations about the objects and then inferred what function each item had within a habitat. They also discussed the type of habitat to which the items might belong. At the end of the session, all came together for a game of "Critter Bingo", where they were given descriptions of animals and had to match the correct pictures to the descriptions.

Guiding the students were Master Naturalist volunteers Julie Clay, Susan McKinley, Martha Miesch, John Sloan, Mary Thomas, and Mary Frances Watson.



The View from Rusty Bend



Guadalupe River bathed in green

April, come she will

When streams are ripe and filled with rain.

- Paul Simon

At Rusty Bend, all is still this fine April. After the mad bounteous push of March, the landscape is tranquil, allowing little details to come to the fore.

Each morning, the dark silhouette of a raven adorns a far cypress tree. He stands sentinel over his mate as she sits quietly on a huge nest of sticks. Hours pass under his vigilance. Later, I see him fly by. Is that a marshmallow in his beak? A present to take to the nest-sitter, perhaps.

Closer to home, a male cardinal solicitously offers his partner a sunflower seed. Mourning Doves nuzzle. Bewick's Wrens have started a second clutch in Andy's boot. Families everywhere.

The rewards of standing still are in the particulars. At ground level there are tiny spots of color: the Blue Gilia that is really violet, the balls of Pink Mimosa that crawl along the path, Blue-eyed grass nodding in the breeze, white and blue Celestials that really do look like stars. Baby Blue Eyes garland the banks of the river. When I step on Dutchman's Breeches, the scent of lemon peel fills the air.

April is abundant in many things, not all of them welcome. My hands are calloused from using my favorite hoe, called a Tomahawk. A proper weapon. Invasive Musk Thistle and Malta Star Thistle are my avowed enemies. I do battle with them daily, working to eradicate them before those nasty seed heads explode. It's easy to hate the Malta especially. There's a sticker hidden at the base that gets you "right sharply" when you pull it. Makes me mad. I need thicker gloves.

As trees leaf out, we see which Live Oaks have succumbed to Oak Wilt. In the face of so many dead trees, we have become philosophical. Our cavity nesting birds now have a thousand condos from which to choose, and their numbers are growing. We are also reminded that this land used to be a savannah with widely scattered oak mottes. Perhaps the oak wilt enables a return to a former landscape. Prairie grasses are always welcome.

The rain gods are with us this April. On cool, moist mornings you could be in bonny Scotland. After rain, bugs follow. Ant Lions season the road with their little peppery mounds. June bugs don't wait for June, but even now pummel our screens. Andy watches a young fox chase a grasshopper through the grass. A comical sight, the fox jumps as high as his prey.

Each evening, wet logs release their bounty of fireflies. They float and dance and ease the heart. How does something so simple convey such peace and comfort?

At bedtime, the trills and whinnies of the Screech Owl begin. Nothing at all screechy about these gentle songs. I hear a tremolo lullaby outside my window. I smile. I hear it again. I drift. Sung to sleep by owls.



Blooming Nipple Cactus

Lucy Griffith, PhD co-manages the Rusty Bend Ranch with her husband, Andy Robinson. When she is not on a tractor named Ruby, she practices Clinical Psychology. When the tractor isn't running, Andy is fixing it or building something straight and true. Both Lucy and Andy are certified Master Naturalists from the Class of 2013. Comments welcome at doctorluz@hctc.net

Text and images by Lucy Griffith Copyright 2015

Advanced Training

TUESDAY, MAY 12 1:30-3PM RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER, KERRVILLE (RNC)

AT 15-103 TOUR OF THE NEW ADDITIONS TO THE GROUNDS

The Kerrville Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas will tour the new garden that will be dedicated to honor Carroll Abbott, founder of the NPSOT chapters. Garden tenders will describe the native plants chosen for this garden and the new composting project. Joyce Blasizzo, a plant health specialist with the USDA, will describe her research project and Naturalist Susan Sander will describe the Riverscape project.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13 2-3PM WEBINAR

AT 15-124 WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT: SUPPLEMENTAL WATER

This webinar will cover all you need to know about this essential summer activity. To pre-register or to join the webinar, go to <http://plateauwildlife.webex.com>.

THURSDAY, MAY 14 6-8PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER & FARM, BOERNE

AT 15-121 SNAKES OF TEXAS

Dave Barker, snake expert, will discuss the fascinating anatomy and behavior of snakes. He will highlight the common snake species of the Texas Hill Country and discuss the venomous snakes found here and the dangers that they present. Cost: Free to Wildlife Field Research Participants, all others: \$7. To register, go to <https://ciboloorg.presencehost.net/experience/events/calendar.html/event-form/snakes-of-texas/11429/tickets>. For further information, contact Ben Eldredge, ben@cibolo.org; 830-249-4616.

TUESDAY, MAY 19 9-9:45 WEBINAR

AT 15-046 BATS-A-MILLION

On-demand webinars are free and require registration before downloading. Videoconferencing style programs are offered through Connect2Texas. Each program is 45 minutes long, designed for grades 1-6, TEKS aligned, and free to join. Go to Connect2Texas (www.connect2texas.net) to register (registration for a program can only take place through Connect2Texas).

SATURDAY, MAY 23 1-3:30PM HONEY CREEK STATE NATURAL AREA, SPRING BRANCH

AT15-063 NATURE HIKE

The diverse geology, flora and fauna make Honey Creek a special place for a two mile nature hike. Wear sturdy shoes. There is a \$7 entry fee unless you have a State Park Pass.

THURSDAY, MAY 28 7:30-9:30PM CNC

AT 15-108 OWLERS AND GROWLERS

Craig Hensley, TPWD's "Wizard of Wildlife," will give a brief presentation about the fascinating anatomy, diets, and lives of owls, including the opportunity to dissect an owl pellet. After the presentation we will refill our glasses and head out on an "Owl Prowl," during which Craig will call and converse with the owls along Cibolo Creek. Cost: \$10 for adults; kids are free.

FRIDAY, MAY 29 8AM-5PM TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENT CENTER, SAN MARCOS

AT 15-091 URBAN DEER WORKSHOP

This workshop addresses onflict with deer in our communities. Register at www.bit.ly/urbandeer.

SATURDAY, MAY 20 2-3PM MASON MOUNTAIN MANAGEMENT AREA, MASON

AT 15-030 VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

Orientation will include the history and purpose of the Mason Mountain WMA, and an overview of current projects and training specific to the gathering and processing of data in support of the Quail Management Study. This is a great opportunity to learn and to experience Mason Mountain WMA's beauty and diversity. Contact Tony Plotino at 512-496-2020 or tonyplotino@gmail.com for further information.

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 (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.

Board of Directors 2015

- Kathy Ward -- President
- Paul Person -- Vice President
- Sarah Hilburn -- Secretary
- Diane McMahan -- Treasurer
- Liz Ross -- Advanced Training Director
- Bob Wiedenfeld -- Communications Director
- Lisa Flanagan -- Membership Director
- Pat McCormick -- Volunteer Service Projects Director
- Brenda Fest -- 2015 Class Director
- Judy Gausnell-- 2014 Class Representative
- Vern Crawford -- Immediate Past President

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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