

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the
Texas Master Naturalist
Hill Country Chapter

July 2015 Volume 13 Number 7



Mike Murphrey explaining the Texas A&M Forest Service Emerald Ash Borer display

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™



JULY 27 MEETING: DO YOU KNOW WHO'S TAKING OVER YOUR YARD?

Michael Murphrey, East Texas Invasive Species Coordinator for the Texas A&M Forest Service-Forest Health, will speak to us about the exotic invasives that are moving into our yards and some of the techniques we can use to fight these alien invaders. Everyone is welcome to join us on Monday, July 27, 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

Greetings!

Can you believe it is July and at least in my part of the Hill Country we have not reached a temperature of 100 degrees F. Unfortunately, the rain has created havoc in many areas. But we certainly have a green Hill Country now, with the creeks running.

If you want to be a mentor for the new class and have not notified Lisa Flanagan, you need to email her immediately. Mentors help to introduce new members to our Chapter. Liz Ross set up a HCMN table at the Kerrville trail opening on June 13. It was encouraging to see how many people were interested in HCMN.

I viewed the Fourth of July parade in Comfort. It was great to see some Hill Country Naturalists parading as bats to educate about the bat tunnel. I think I recognized the bat woman riding the bat mobile as our Treasurer. Last Chance Forever, where many of our members volunteer, was represented with an American eagle at the beginning of the parade.

Remember to come to the July 27 meeting to hear Michael Murphrey about the plants and bugs that are invading Texas. Do not forget that there is a cool field trip into Cave Without a Name on Saturday, July 25, so register soon if you want to be included.

Enjoy the summer!

Kathy Ward, 2015 President

This Month We Honor

Initial Certification

Peggy Carnahan, Robin Graham, Tim Graham, Tyra Kane



Special Recertification

Peggy Carnahan

2015 Recertification

Ann Carabin, Dan Carabin, Warren Ferguson, Sarah Hilburn,
Sharon Hixson, Katherine Peake, Virginia Sawin

Milestones

Kay Harter, Katherine Peake - Bronze Dragonfly, 250 hours

Brenda Fest, Michael Foulds, Sharon Rodriguez, Liz Ross - Silver Dragonfly, 500 hours

Karla Trefny - Polished Silver Dragonfly, 2500 hours



Congratulations to members who received awards at our June meeting.

From left to right, standing: Richard Adams, Marion Worthington, Diane Gierisch,
Karen Burkett, Cay Russ, Ric McCormick, Scott Magee, Phyllis Muska, Carla Brady,
Judy Gausnell, Mike Leep, Charles Smith, Lisa Flanagan

Front row: Alexis McRoberts, Myrna Langford, Tom Hynes, Koy Coffer

Recent Hill Country Naturalist Columns by Jim Stanley

6/5/2015	Yes, We STILL Have to Conserve Water
6/12/2015	Storm Damage Along Your Creek? Don't Rush to Clean Up Too Much.
6/19/2015	The Universal Beneficence of Grass
6/26/2015	Some of the Most Common Wildflowers of the Hill Country

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

Statewide Quail Symposium - September 16-18 in Abilene

This event will feature leading professionals and experts in quail research, conservation, and management. For more information and to register, go to <http://statewidequailsymposium.com/>.

Cibolo Nature Center Nature Box Program -- A Volunteer Opportunity

Do you like to share the nature knowledge you have experienced through Master Naturalists? Do you like to see elementary-age children become excited about bats, spiders, butterflies, or some other fascinating object of nature?. Do you want to see children laugh as they learn about adaptations of a frog by "Dressing like a Frog" or learn about the plant parts and functions by "Dressing like a Plant"?

Every Wednesday and Thursday from October to May teams of volunteers present programs to individual classes in the five elementary schools of the Boerne Independent School District. The teachers request the boxes, which are based on science standards and written for each grade level.

What do the volunteers do? At least three docents take a themed Nature Box requested by grade-level teachers (K-6 in Boerne) and make a presentation to each individual class that includes a story and hands-on learning,

Docents choose when and what time they participate. When? From October - May on Wednesdays and Thursday. Planning meetings are every other Monday from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. in the CNC Library, beginning on Sept. 21. Docents are not required to attend all of the meetings.

How can you participate? Attend a planning meeting and shadow a docent during a presentation, or attend a Workshop like the one on August 13. The workshop is free to those who plan to volunteer with CNC Nature Boxes. For more information, contact Kathy Ward (kathyollu@aol.com).



RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER
150 Francisco Lemos St., Kerrville
www.riversidenaturecenter.org RNC.Kerrville@gmail.com

Riverside Nature Center Events

July 28, Tuesday, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Walk on the Wild Side with Shucks. Our corn snake, Shucks, is going to demonstrate the reasons snakes are valuable to our biosphere. His interpreter, Karen Millikan, will be taking our serpentine ambassador out for a walk, and they would like you to join in learning about snakes while slithering through the gardens at Riverside Nature Center. Please call ahead (830-257-4837) the day before to be sure Shucks is ready. A "Free Summer Fun for the Family" activity; donations are appreciated.

August 11, Tuesday, 7:00-8:30 pm.

WICKED Family Nature Night RES Turtles in the River! Did you know that there are eight species of turtles in Kerr County? Or that turtles have been around for 200 million years (before dinos)? Some turtles can live 100 years! Turtle biologist, Diana Solis, will share her work on the red-eared slider, one of the most common turtles found in the Guadalupe River, and how rising sea levels could impact its future along the Gulf Coast. Learn how to identify the other turtles as well what they do in the wild. Preregister by calling RNC at 830-257-4837. Suggested donation (per family): RNC members \$8, non-members \$10.

September 12, Saturday, 8 a.m.

Riverside Nature Center is hosting a 5k run/walk along the new, paved trail along the scenic Guadalupe River! We will start and finish at the Riverside Nature Center and have refreshments, awards, music, and door prizes. Both runners and walkers, as well as our dogs (on leashes) and baby strollers, are welcome. The proceeds will benefit the Riverside Nature Center, a non-profit nature center providing community education programs for the public. Cost: \$25, Aug. 12th; \$30, Aug. 13-Sept 10th; \$35, Sept 11-Race Day. Awards: Overall 1st, 2nd, 3rd Male/Female and top 3 male/female in age groups (10 and under, 11-14, 15-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70-79 and 80+). T-shirts to all registrants.

To register, go to www.athleteguild.com

Please help share the news! We still need sponsors and volunteers to help on race day.

For further information, contact Valeska Danielak, 830-370-2464, or run4riverside@gmail.com.

Native Plant Society of Texas - Fredericksburg Chapter: July Meeting

Emergence of Vegetation after the 2011 Bastrop Fire

Bill Carr will discuss changes in the vegetation and flora of Bastrop State Park in response to the 2011 fire. Bill was with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and later with The Nature Conservancy of Texas. Currently he works with private landowners to help identify the special plants and habitats on their properties. Also, since spring 2015, he has been one of the part-time assistant curators of the herbarium at the Plant Resources Center at the University of Texas.

The social gathering begins at 6:30 and the program begins at 7:00 in the fellowship hall of Memorial Presbyterian Church, 601 North Milam Street in Fredericksburg. There is no charge.

Texas Comptroller Announces Partnership With The University of Texas at San Antonio to Study Monarch Butterfly

(AUSTIN) — Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar today announced funding for a \$300,000 research proposal by The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) to study the monarch butterfly. The research will address key questions about the monarch butterfly in Texas and fill important data gaps in determining its need for protection as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) considers whether to place the butterfly on the federal endangered species list.

“In Texas, the monarch butterfly migration runs from the Red River to the Mexico border. There are economic concerns if the butterfly is listed because many industries important to our state’s economy could be affected, from agriculture to land development to energy production,” Hegar said. “This crucial research will help us develop voluntary best management practices to conserve the monarch butterfly while minimizing the impact on economic activity.”

The research will evaluate the abundance, species type, and distribution of milkweed — an important food source for monarchs — in Texas. It also will examine land management approaches to enhance the abundance of milkweed if necessary. “Promoting the overall health of the monarch population and other pollinators is an increasingly important topic for our state and nation, and UTSA is proud to lead this study,” said John H. Frederick, UTSA Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. “This project is a prime example of how research being conducted at Texas universities can inform both policy decisions and industry practices.”

The research will support the development of voluntary best management practices by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and other program partners through a collaborative stakeholder process. Research and related outreach activities will be coordinated with many program partners, including TPWD, Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust, San Antonio River Authority, and the U.S. Forest Service.

TPWD is taking a leading role in the state and nation on monarch butterfly conservation efforts. “As the official state insect, the monarch butterfly holds a very special place in the hearts of Texans, both young and old,” said Carter Smith, TPWD executive director. “Texas is situated at the center of the biannual monarch migration through North America, and its declining population should be of great concern for everyone. We at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department are honored to represent our great state on the national working group, and we look forward to working with Comptroller Hegar and our interagency partners to do all that we can to ensure this iconic species will be around for future generations of Texans to enjoy.”

The 2013 Texas Legislature appropriated \$5 million to the Comptroller’s office to contract with state universities for high-quality research on species under review for listing. The monarch butterfly research is being funded by that appropriation. The recently gaveled 2015 legislative session appropriated an additional \$5 million for this research.

To keep the Texas economy running in the face of existing federal Endangered Species Act regulations, the 2009 Legislature appointed the Comptroller to serve as presiding officer of the Interagency Task Force on Economic Growth and Endangered Species. The task force is intended to assist landowners, industries, and local communities in working with endangered species issues and assess their economic impact on the state. “We look forward to working with our partners on the task force to balance species protection with protecting the Texas economy,” Hegar added.

For more information about the ongoing status of endangered species listing and other environmental actions affecting Texas, visit www.KeepingTexasFirst.org.

The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts sent this bulletin On June 23, 2015

The View From Rusty Bend



Fresh Fawn

*you shall above all things be glad and young
For if you're young, whatever life you wear
It will become you; and if you are glad
whatever's living will yourself become.*

-e. e. cummings

At Rusty Bend, June wanders in on wobbly legs. On our pasture walks, we stumble upon White-tail fawns, so fresh they are wet. Their mothers run into the brush, leaving these tiny ones to follow the best they can, staggering on pencil legs. A portrait of fragility.

Our world is now inhabited with young things. Their parents are busy teaching, coaching, nudging the little ones toward emancipation.

A papa Cardinal teaches a row of ratty youngsters on the porch rail how to find their way around a sunflower seed. The juveniles do the feed-me flutter and he feeds each one a husked seed. After a few days, they have learned to husk the seeds themselves. Still, if any red bird comes near they tremble, begging for food. Red must mean Papa and Papa means food.

A mama Phoebe hangs out with her brood in a liveoak, near a blooming Scarlet Salvia. As butterflies come to nectar, she models how to nab them one by one. Their early attempts are comically clumsy and butterflies rejoice.

Baby Canyon Wrens follow their parents to favored feeding spots like the front porch wood pile. They quickly learn which perches they can hang on to, and which will result in a slip and slide. "I meant to do that." A Summer Tanager strafes the oak tree, nabbing bees and wasps. Did his Papa teach him to rub off the stinger on a branch?

On a larger scale we have "Raptor v. Raptor, The Mini-Series." The series opens with a juvenile Red-tailed Hawk doing a huge and noisy version of the feed-me flutter. He screeches and screeches for hours from one of the Bald Cypress trees on the river. Parental supervision is minimal: from 1500 feet or so. A mated pair of Red-Shouldered hawks are infuriated. They have claimed this part of the river for years. They complain loudly with their kee-reeers, and spin wildly above him. At this point, raven fledglings join in, cawing roughly, "Hey, we're here, too!" The harassment continues for hours, until the young Red-tail wanders off down river. This scene is repeated over several days until a détente is achieved, and all is quiet.

Our two-legged young ones are learning as well. Granddaughters are visiting from Denmark. To hear the "Oh my goodness" and gasp of a child seeing her first hummingbird is unforgettable. Our long walks in the pasture are punctuated with exclamations: "Bad ants! Good ants! Mexican Hat! Mountain Pink! Heliotrope! Slender-stem....bitterweed!" They have named the biggest Axis buck "Hat-Rack", and they no longer jump when the lizards scurry into the brush. Their enchantment is infectious.

With all the creeks running, we join friends one hot afternoon to soak in their cool water, serenaded by the melody of their waterfall. Delicate maidenhair ferns quiver in the drafts. I lay back in the water and watch the cobalt skies and wet, thick clouds. I am hypnotized by the slow arcs of the vultures so very high above.

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I concur with Edward Abby; “Let us praise the noble turkey vulture: No one envies him; he harms nobody; and he contemplates our little world from a most serene and noble height.” Do the vultures sense all the young things upon “our little world”? Do they watch these small creatures so endearing in their clumsy and curious attempts to learn the ropes, to survive these vulnerable early days?

As weather warms, I’ve taken to wandering out in the gloaming after dinner. Jackrabbits now pay me no mind. I see the wide white back of the skunk we call Snow-Cap slip into the brush. The Bob-White whistles and I am struck with a memory. I used to sit on the porch here with my father after a warm summer day. I whistle back, like my Papa taught me. I once was a young thing too.

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
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Guadalupe River in flood, limestone watering hole



Advanced Training

FRIDAY, JULY 24 8:30AM-3:50PM 8400 NW MILITARY HWY., SAN ANTONIO

AT15-155 ECO SUMMIT ON TEXAS CONSERVATION

Want to find out more about the Texas Conservation Action Plan? Learn about the role of Teaming With Wildlife: True To Texas in conserving our natural heritage. Learn about pressing conservation issues in your ecoregion and how to voice your concerns about local wildlife and conservation issues, inform others of your wildlife projects, and connect with others involved in similar projects. To register, go to <http://www.teamingtxwildlife.com/index.php/get-informed>.

SATURDAY, JULY 25 9AM-2PM 325 KREUTZBERG ROAD, BOURNE

AT15-150 CAVE WITHOUT A NAME

The cave is filled with spectacular formations of Stalactites, Stalagmites, delicate Soda Straws, Cave Drapery, magnificent Flowstones, Rimstone Dams, and more. Enjoy a tour of the six major rooms in comfort; 66 degrees year-round, easy walkways, brilliant lighting. We can picnic on the grounds and take the surrounding trails to see above-ground karst geology. RSVP to Kathy Ward at kathyollu@aol.com. \$16 per person is the reduced price with a minimum of 12 visitors; the group is limited to 30. For directions and pictures, go to <http://www.cavewithoutaname.com>.

MONDAY, JULY 27 7PM UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUTHORITY, KERRVILLE

AT15-162 DO YOU KNOW WHO'S TAKING OVER YOUR YARD?

Michael Murphrey, East Texas Invasive Species Coordinator for Texas A&M Forest Service-Forest Health, will speak at our chapter monthly meeting on the exotic invasives moving into our yards. He will explain techniques that can be used to fight these aliens and free your yard from the invasion.

TUESDAY, JULY 28 7-8PM MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FREDERICKSBURG

AT15-158 EMERGENCE OF VEGETATION AFTER THE 2011 BASTROP FIRE

Bill Carr will discuss changes in the vegetation and flora of Bastrop State Park in response to the 2011 fire. Bill was with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and later with The Nature Conservancy of Texas. The social gathering at this monthly meeting of the Native Plant Society of Texas Fredericksburg chapter begins at 6:30 and the program begins at 7:00 in the church fellowship hall, 601 North Milam Street in Fredericksburg. There is no charge.

TUESDAY, JULY 28 WEBINAR

AT15-151 SILVICULTURE FOR NON-FORESTERS

Learn the art and science of establishing and tending trees and forests for multiple landowner objectives. Silviculture has been described as "imitating nature and hastening its work." The presenter is Karen P. Bennett, Extension Forestry Professor and Specialist, University of New Hampshire. For further information and to register, go to <http://www.conservationwebinars.net/webinars/silviculture-for-non-foresters>.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 7, SEPT. 4, OCT. 2 1-5PM KERR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA, HUNT

AT15-157 WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SEMINARS

For specific information on each seminar and registration, contact the KWMA headquarters, 830-238-4483.

MONDAY, AUGUST 10 9AM - 4PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER (CNC), BOERNE

AT15-163 FLYING WILD EDUCATOR TRAINING

Participants gain experience in hands-on activities from the activity guide that teaches basic biology, identification and ecology, bird conservation, and service learning activities. For further information about Flying Wild, go to <http://www.flyingwild.org/aboutus.htm>. Cost for the seminar: \$25; registration is required. To register, go to <https://ciboloorg.presencehost.net/experience/events/calendar.html/event-form/flying-wild-educator-workshop/11553/tickets>.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 13 8AM-12PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER, BOERNE

AT 15-154 CIBOLO NATURE CENTER NATURE BOX WORKSHOP

Learn to present Elementary Nature Boxes on Monarchs and Migration, Buffalo and Prairies, and Tracks and Adaptations. Limited to 24 participants; pre-registration is required: 830-249-4616. The \$15/person charge is waived if you are planning to join as a Nature Box Docent. If so, email Kathy Ward kathyollu@aol.com.



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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