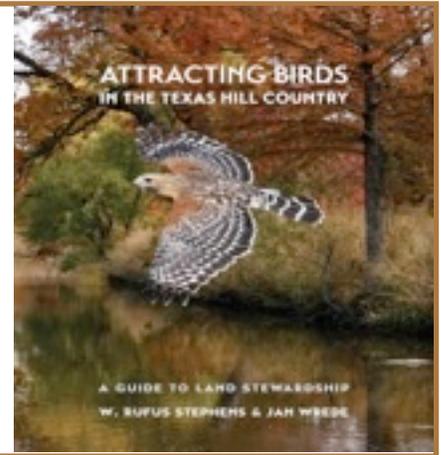


The Texas Star

Newsletter of the
Texas Master Naturalist
Hill Country Chapter

November 2017 Volume 15 Number 11



November 27 Meeting: Attracting Birds in the Texas Hill Country

Wildlife biologist Rufus Stephens and educator Jan Wrede teamed up to write a practical guidebook on how to improve habitat for birds throughout the Hill Country. They will discuss common problems and possible solutions for developing optimum habitat. Their goal is inspiring and enabling effective bird conservation in the Texas Hill Country.

The monthly meeting of the Texas Master Naturalist Hill Country Chapter is free and open to the public. We meet in the Upper Guadalupe River Authority's lecture hall, 125 N. Lehmann Drive in Kerrville. Socializing begins at 6:30; the program starts at 7:00.

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Brenda Fest

Hello fellow Master Naturalists!

I hope everyone is enjoying the mild weather. In spite of a brief freeze, we are enjoying the beauty that the fall brings us. There are enough flowers to keep the butterflies fed and enough insects and seeds to provide food for the birds. I will miss them during the winter but know they will return in the spring.

Are you planning on attending our December 9 Holiday Party? To reserve your spot, bring a \$15 check to our November 27 chapter meeting or send it to our Membership Director by December 1. Our party will be held at the YO Ranch Hotel in Kerrville. This get together is always a good time to relax and enjoy each other's company, so join us for great food and entertainment.



*Bordered patch butterfly
on Gregg's Blue Mist*

The members of the Class of 2017 have completed their training. We welcome this enthusiastic group of Hill Country Master Naturalists as they begin their journey. As educated volunteers they will provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources within our communities for the State of Texas. You probably recognize that I quoted the Texas Master Naturalist Mission Statement. I believe so strongly that what we do is important and by repeating our Mission Statement as often as I can, I promote that message. The Class of 2017 is definitely on their way. By the end of training, the total number of volunteer hours was 596 and members attended 256 advanced training hours! Eight members from this class have already completed the requirements for their initial certification. Congratulations, Class of 2017!

Rufus Stephens and Jan Wrede will discuss their new book, *Attracting Birds in the Hill Country--A Guide to Land Stewardship*, at our last monthly meeting of the year on November 27. We will also be voting for our 2017 chapter officers. I hope to see everyone there.

Brenda Fest

This Month We Honor

Initial Certification

Catherine Gauldin, Kathy Daleo, Vivian Fink, Veronica Hawk, Katy Kappel,
Jerry Kerr, Amanda Martin, Margaret Reed, Maura Windlinger



Special Recertification

Cathy Binney

Recertifications

Lisa Barrett, Carla Brady, Vern Crawford, Ray Dunton, Bobby Gierisch,
Sharron Jay, Jim Jones, Bob McKinley, Liz Ross, Charles Smith,
Janice Unger, Joe von Rosenburg, Nina Wagner, Greg Walton

Milestones

Richard Coleman - Bronze Dragonfly, 250 hours

Francoise Wilson - Brushed Silver Dragonfly, 500 hours

Tom Harrigan, Deborah Windham - Gold Dragonfly, 1000 hours



Congratulations to members who received awards at the October meeting:

From left to right: Greg Walton, Clarence Reed, Sandra Haldeman,
Koy Coffey, Tara Randle, Chris Lienhard, Carl Luckenbach, Susan Clark

Milestone Highlights:

Chapter Members Who Received Recognition of Milestones at the October Meeting



Susan Clark is a member of the Class of 2016 who has accrued 250 hours of volunteer service. She is a Riverside Guide at the Riverside Nature Center, where she greets visitors and provides them with assistance and information. As a Hill Country Archeological Society volunteer she sifts earth for shards or other traces of human habitation. Susan also monitors water for the Texas Stream Team, is a CoCoRas rain collector, does a backyard bird count for the Cornell Ornithological Lab, and is a member of the Monarch Larval Monitoring Program team at the Kerr Wildlife Management Area.

Clarence Reed is a member of the Class of 2015 who has accrued 250 hours of volunteer service. He has worked at the Pollinator Garden located on the grounds of the Kerr County Courthouse since its inception. Clarence is a Team Leader of the Monarch Larval Monitoring Program at Kerr Wildlife Management Area. He has participated in day-long projects at South Llano River State Park and helped at Plant Sales for the Kerrville chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas. Most recently, Clarence alerted the Chapter to the Apache Tree Grant Program, from whom the Chapter will this year receive 80 native Texas trees for distribution through the Hill Country.



Greg Walton is a member of the Class of 2014 who has accrued 250 volunteer hours since certification. Greg was originally certified as a Master Naturalist in the Capital Area Chapter (Austin) in 2002. There, he worked many hours on projects in the Austin area, including service on the Board of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center and participation in tree-planting and restoration activities. Since becoming a member of the Hill Country Chapter, Greg's primary focus has been on projects at Lost Maple State Park (LMSP.). He is a member of the Board of the Friends of Lost Maples State Park organization and has organized and participated in many work projects and training opportunities there for our Chapter.

The C.A.R.E. committee invites you to join fellow Master Naturalists for an informal social hour prior to our monthly meeting. Gather at Mamacita's in Kerrville at 4:30 and order dinner if you wish.

Chapter members are welcome and encouraged to attend and contribute to Board of Directors meetings. The board meets this month at the Riverside Nature Center at 2:30 on Monday, November 27.

Reflections of a First Year Master Naturalist
by Paula Harley

I have thought about my homestead for half of my life. In as many years, I have worked against its natural riches. Where once the “ big four” dominated the perimeter of my hilltop home, now rests deeply disturbed soil, overrun with Horehound, Grass burrs and Silver leaf nightshade.

I cannot recall when exactly these interlopers arrived, nor do I anticipate their eventual demise. They are hardy and have scarce competition.

Many a tree has fallen by my trusty red chainsaw’s gripping teeth. Some, selectively chosen as the result of Oak Wilt and drought. Others the victims of ignorance.

As a result, the firewood is always fairly well stocked, and winter is just a bit warmer for the sacrifice.

It has often been a pleasant tradition to gather with friends ‘round a bonfire over the holidays, when not too cold and wet, or bone dry. Now the burn piles wait. As they have become a complex dwelling for the feathered and four footed. Matches and fuel are no longer needed.

My role on earth is much clearer now. As understanding and respect for the natural world have deepened within me.

The giant Hackberry, once threatened by ill advice, standing stately in the Cowpen meadow, need no longer fear for its life.

You see. . . .I am a Master Naturalist now. And that changes everything.



Craig Hensley was the Commencement speaker



The Class of 2017

Recent Hill Country Naturalist Columns by Jim Stanley:

- 10/7/17 What the Experts Are Saying About Taking Care of the Hill Country
- 10/14/17 Random Thoughts about Rain
- 10/21/17 Invasive Exotic Plants to Avoid
- 10/28/17 How Many Deer Are Too Many?

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

NPSOT Boerne Chapter Monthly Meetings

Holiday Potluck on Tuesday, December 5 at Cibolo Nature Center from 6:30 - 8:30 pm. The Chapter will provide ham and drinks; bring a side dish to share. Also, the Board requests that we bring non-perishable food items for donation to the Kendall County Women's Shelter.

On Tuesday, January 2, Susan Sander, founder of Riverside Nature Center, will be our speaker.

Her topic is "What Birds Have Taught Me About Plants."

Socializing at 6:30pm; program at 7pm.

Cibolo Nature Center, 140 City Park Road, Boerne

NPSOT Fredericksburg Chapter Monthly Meeting

On Tuesday, January 23, Dr. Hans Landel, Invasive Species Program Coordinator at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, will speak on "Combating Invasive Species Affecting Your Native Habitats" at our monthly meeting.

Social at 6:30pm; program at 7pm.

Fellowship Hall of Memorial Presbyterian Church

601 North Milam Street, Fredericksburg

NPSOT Kerrville Chapter Monthly Meetings

The December meeting will be a combined holiday party and 25th chapter anniversary celebration on Tuesday, December 12, at 1:30 pm. Visitors are welcome!

On Tuesday, January 9, at 1:30pm, Scott Whitener will be our speaker. His topic will be "Get to Know South Llano State Park." He is the Superintendent at the Park.

Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street, Kerrville

All of these programs are free and open to the public.



From Brenda Fest

Hill Country Master Naturalists Partner With Apache Corporation

The Hill Country Master Naturalists have been awarded a grant for 80 native trees from the Apache Corporation tree giveaway program. This grant is to promote the use of native trees to enrich habitats and increase diversity in the landscape. As such, we are able to offer each member of the Fall Training Class of 2017 two free native trees paid for by the Apache Corporation.

These native trees in five gallon pots were purchased from three local vendors: Love Creek Nursery, Medina Garden Nursery and Mosty Brothers Nursery. These species are included: Big Tooth Maple, Anacacho Orchid, Desert Willow, Mexican Plum, Texas Redbud, Cedar Elm, Black Escarpment Cherry, Texas Red Oak, Eve's Necklace, Chinkapin Oak, Possum Haw Holly, Lacey Oak, and Goldenball Lead Tree. Our chapter provided the wire and stakes to make cages to protect each tree from deer and other possible damage. A week before the trees were distributed, trainees and mentors worked together to pick up the trees from the nurseries and build the wire cages. Planting instruction handouts were provided in class. Mentors worked with their mentees to suggest appropriate places for planting.



Lorraine Popp, with her tree, and Brenda Fest, with clipboard.

On Wednesday, November 1, we met at the Riverside Nature Center and the trees were distributed to their proud owners. Since then, many of the trees have been planted in various locations. Everyone is excited to be a part of doing their part in "Keeping the Hill Country Native."



Catherine Gauldin receiving her tree from Teresa Coleman; Cindy Harrington and Rick Edwards waiting to receive their trees.



Vivian Fink, Maura Windlinger, and Katy Kappel making wire cages; Gary Fest preparing materials.

Cherry Creek Ranch Pasture Walk

On October 18, Lisa Barrett, Kay Harter, Sarabeth Mayfield, Barbara Oates, and I participated in the Grazing, Wildlife, and Plant ID Pasture Walk at the Cherry Creek Ranch in Comfort.

The ranch is located south of Highway 27, occupies about 6000 acres, and has been in the family of Jonathan Letz, Kerr County Commissioner, Precinct 3, for over 80 years.

Commissioner Letz and Kason Haby of the United States Department of Agriculture led the program. They demonstrated how good land management techniques, such as selective clearing of Ashe Juniper and prescribed burning, have resulted in increased production and diversity on the ranch. We also learned how livestock, wildlife, and endangered species can coexist and benefit a ranching enterprise when good land stewardship practices are followed. During the walk, we were able to identify key plant species that benefit livestock and wildlife, including Yellow Indiangrass, Big Bluestem, Little Bluestem, Uvalde Big Tooth Maple, and Sycamore Leaf Snowbell

The program, AT 17-244, was sponsored by Texas AgriLife Extension, Texas Grazing Land Coalition, United States Department of Agriculture, and Kerr County Soil and Water Conservation District.



From Martha Miesch

Learning About Insects at the Kroc Center After School Program

Master Naturalists Teresa Coleman, Chris Lienhard, Pam Lienhard, and Martha Miesch brought a lot of information about different species of insects in the Hill Country to the students. Teresa came wearing a bit of Halloween fun: At the start of her talk about tarantulas she wore a spider-like headdress. She had an exoskeleton that had been shed by a tarantula and the children had an interesting time--scary for some, and enlightening for all--examining it and learning facts about it. Pam chose to talk about beetles, the most populous insect on the planet. She had a treasure trove of examples of different types of beetles, which fascinated the students. Martha had several specimens from her collection--a centipede, a red wasp, and a butterfly--that the students could handle. The stinging scorpions she thought were dead were not. Fortunately, just before the students arrived, Teresa discovered two specimens that could not be safely touched because they were moving.



We ran out of time before anyone could win Bug Bingo but everyone had fun. Each participant was given a plastic ring of a bat or spider or a scary window decoration creature for the soon to arrive Halloween trick-or-treaters, and each of the students offered a polite thank you.



Wildlife Tax Valuation Workshop



Presented by
Riverside Nature Center



Session 1: Overview and Property Inventory

Saturday, January 6
9AM to 1PM

Session 2: Management Practices and Habitat Assessment

Saturday, January 13
9AM to 2:30PM

Session 3: WTV History and Update on the Law, Application Procedures, and...

Putting It All Together

Saturday, January 20
9AM to 1PM

What You'll Need At The First Session

- Agricultural tax valuation
- Map of your property

► Have you had agricultural tax valuation on your land for at least five years, and are you interested in managing wildlife?

► This in-depth workshop is especially for landowners with 20 or more acres - it emphasizes wildlife management strategies that improve native habitat and increase species diversity.

► Our presenters will help you gain land management knowledge, understand the history of this Texas tax valuation law, and fulfill requirements to qualify for a wildlife management tax valuation.

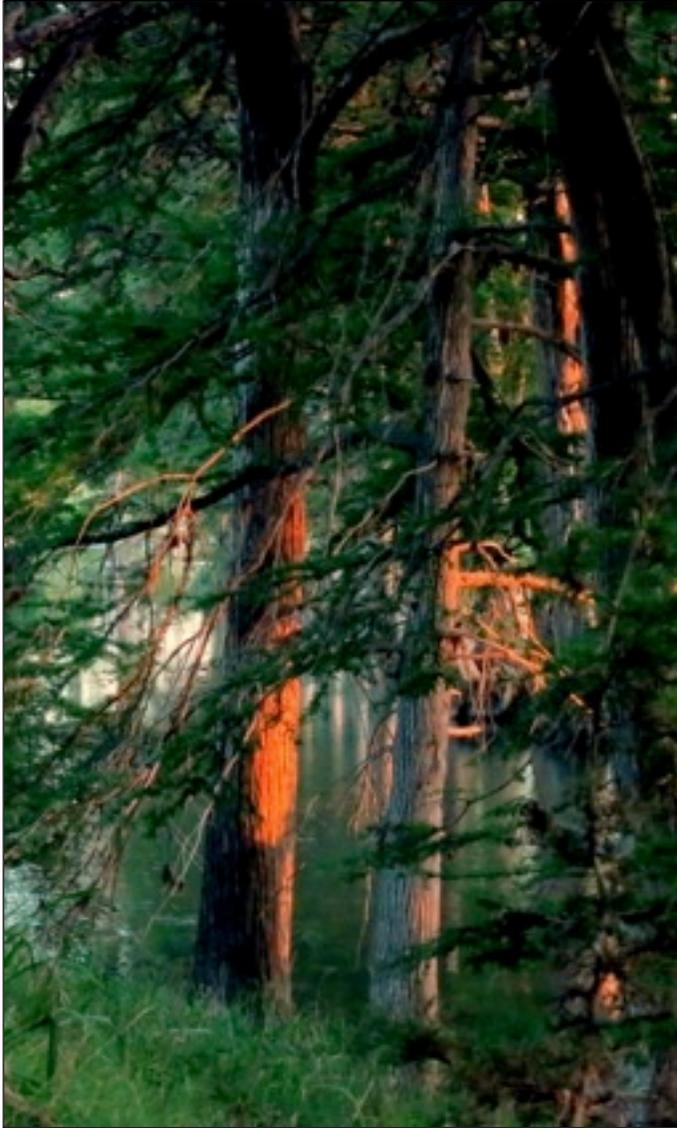
► Many participants complete this workshop with a concrete plan and are ready to apply.

- 90\$/person or 110\$/couple (members)
- 110\$/person or 130\$/couple (non-members)
- Class limited to 10-35. RSVP absolutely essential
- Preregistration required by Dec. 22, 2017
- Credit cards, cash, or checks accepted.
- Coffee and water provided.
- Feel free to bring a sack lunch or snack

Location

Riverside Nature Center
150 Francisco Lemos St., Kerrville
www.riversidenaturecenter.org
830-257-4837 | RNC.kerrville@gmail.com

The View From Rusty Bend



October light

Two Grey Foxes

*Both of us
crave the crepuscular—
that crack in time,
at the edge of dawn.*

*We emerge from our foxholes.
Yours, carpeted with dry leaves,
the scent of your kits.
Mine, a nest of down,
fragrant with soap.*

*You trot your route,
reading the morning with your nose.
I wander mine,
listening for woodpeckers
tapping their drums.*

Our trails cross.

*You crouch, stare at me,
your ruff glazed with gold, backlit by sunrise.
So close, I watch you smell me.
A deep breath, you breathe me in again.
My breath joins yours—
swells, falls in rhythm.
I jump the track of my life—
into your slim body.*

You into mine.

*You take on my day,
return to the den for
another cup of coffee—
window-side.*

I step onto your path.

*Leap,
weightless
into the brush.*

October at Rusty Bend always manages to surprise. The light, of course. The sun has lost its bite and the long angles of illumination soften not just the heat, but the edges—the edges of everything. Dappled light, shadows of leaves are smeared, and fuzzy. The cypress have turned down the urgent green of summer and the reds and rusts rise from the roots. At last the arcing curve of the river is rimmed like an old horseshoe, giving Rusty Bend its name.

The fall grasses are heavy with seed, bending, drooping. They smooth the look of the pasture, as if a puffy golden comforter was thrown into each meadow. Morning fogs change each minute, from thick buttermilk to haunting wraiths. Cattle egrets swirl amid the trees on the river, waltzing through the fog in a chevron of white dashes. Dews are hearty enough to settle dust. They smell of a longed-for freshness, like a lost love letter from spring.

continued on next page

October sometimes brings the Zone-tailed Hawk up from Mexico. He masquerades as a Turkey Vulture, hiding in their kettles, to sneak in some hunting. Hog-nosed snakes costume themselves as cobras, puffing up to ward off unwanted intrusions. Trick or treat.

Foxes are on the move, grabbing end-of-season monster grasshoppers. Their hidey holes follow rocky ledges, with several openings. A lair and a spare. We hear them marking territory at night with their strangled cough-barks. The Axis buck are calling too. Over in a canyon, one grizzled old-timer bugles just twice, as opposed to the three or four bugles of the younger bucks. We call him "Two Hoots in a Holler".

The leaves are sifted by the wind. I stand, caught in their movement. I feel a loosening, and know—something caged in my chest has been released.



Damp sunset

Poem, essay and images by Lucy Griffith Copyright 2017

Lucy Griffith, PhD co-manages the Rusty Bend Ranch with her husband, Andy Robinson. She also writes poetry; her muse, a tractor named Ruby. She is currently working on the story of the Burro Lady of West Texas, told in poems. Both Lucy and Andy are certified Master Naturalists from the Class of 2013. Comments welcome at doctorluz@hctc.net.

Advanced Training

MONDAY, NOV. 27 7-8PM UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUTHORITY LECTURE HALL, KERRVILLE
AT17-250 ATTRACTING BIRDS IN THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY

Rufus Stephens and Jan Wrete, authors of *Attracting Birds in the Texas Hill Country*, will be our speakers and will sign copies of their new book at the last monthly chapter meeting of this year

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 29 7-9PM PARAMOUNT THEATER, AUSTIN
AT17-261 HOT SCIENCE - COOL TALKS

In the 21st century, our region is projected to undergo a doubling of its population and a shift to a more drought-prone climate. This poses synergistic challenges for our state's resources, economy, cities, and public health. 21st Century Texas is a lively discussion of Texas's challenges and potential solutions by leading experts in their fields. Instructors: Majora Carter, Urban Revitalization Strategist; Dr. Katharine Hayhoe, Director, Climate Science Center; Dr. Michael Webber, Deputy Director, Energy Institute; Evan Smith, CEO & co-founder, Texas Tribune (moderator); Guy Forsyth, Musician..For more information and to purchase tickets, go to <http://www.esi.utexas.edu/talk/planet-texas>.

**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.**

**The newsletter is not published in December; the January issue will be published
on or about January 15.**



We meet on the fourth Monday of most months (but not December) 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 2017

- Brenda Fest -- President
- Craig Childs -- Vice President
- Kris Bobbitt-- Secretary
- Ann Dietert -- Treasurer
- Tom Harrigan -- Advanced Training Director
- David Davies -- Communications Director
- Lisa Flanagan -- Membership Director
- Claire Mitchell -- Volunteer Service Projects Director
- Reggie Cox -- 2017 Class Director
- Paula Harley -- 2016 Class Representative
- Kathy Ward -- 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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LenoreLangsdorf@gmail.com

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



Questions about our chapter?
Email Lisa Flanagan,
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