

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the

Texas Master Naturalist

Hill Country Chapter

July 2017 Volume 15 Number 7



USDA Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program photo

July 24 Meeting: The Cattle Fever Tick

Dr. Brodie Miller, D.V.M., will address the history of the Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program, the biology of the cattle fever tick, and the basics of the eradication process, along with an update on the current status of cattle fever tick outbreaks throughout South Texas.

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 North Lehmann Drive in Kerrville. Socializing begins at 6:30; the program starts at 7:00.

T E X A S

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Brenda Fest

Hello Fellow Master Naturalists!

Summer in the Hill Country brings changes and challenges. Birds hunt to find berries, seeds and insects. Butterflies search for flowers to nectar. I love watching our Black-chinned hummingbirds as they compete for food at the feeders. I realize that the food we provide is only a supplement to their insect diet. But I am happy that we have so many of them; they are such beautiful creatures and so entertaining. The heat and limited rains remind me how important it is to conserve water. Regardless of whether you use a well, municipal water source, or harvest rainwater: please realize how precious this resource is. Using native plants in our landscapes helps to save water and also provides habitat.

We have selected the Class of 2017 and are excited to meet them. After reviewing the applications from this class I am amazed at the talents, skills and attitudes this class will bring to our chapter. Each trainee will be matched with a mentor. We are always looking for dedicated chapter members to serve as mentors. If you are interested, please contact Lisa Flanagan (hillcountrymembership@gmail.com). Mentor training will be held on July 28. The new class reception will be August 21 and training starts on August 23.

This fall we will be celebrating our fifteenth anniversary as a Master Naturalist Chapter. We are in the process of designing a T-shirt to commemorate this event, and will be taking orders at our next chapter meeting. In addition to the T-shirt, we would like to make a great showing at this year's annual meeting in Corpus Christi, October 20 – 22. This meeting provides a great variety of advanced training and is a great opportunity to represent our chapter and mingle with other Master Naturalists across the state. Get in touch with a fellow Master Naturalist and begin to make room arrangements. It's more affordable to room with someone or a group of four. Registration should begin in early August.

Join us at our July 24 chapter meeting for an update on the Texas Cattle Fever Tick from Brodie Miller, DVM, Texas Animal Health Commission.

Brenda Fest

The Texas Star is a monthly publication of the Hill Country Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program.

This Month We Honor

Recertification

Richard Adams, Larry Altman, Tyra Kane, Marilyn Knight,
Lenore Langsdorf, Mary Thomas,



Milestones

Reggie Cox - Bronze Dragonfly, 250 hours

Liz Ross - Gold Dragonfly, 1000 hours



Congratulations to members who received awards at the June meeting:

Bob Binney, Regina Wheaton, Alexis McRoberts, Sharon Hixson, Gloria Costello, Bob Wiedenfield,
Norma Bruns, Morgan Williams, Larry Eskridge, Bridget Langdale, Cecilia Fuentes, Paul Person



Michelle Haggerty presenting President's Award certificates and 4000-hour pins to Floyd Trefny and Kathy Ward.

Floyd Trefny is a member of the Class of 2009 who has contributed more than 4000 hours. He volunteers at Old Tunnel State Park, the Butterfly Garden at Kerrville-Schreiner Park, and doing maintenance work on the road at Love Creek Nature Conservancy. He has served on the administrative side of our organization: on the Hill Country Chapter Board for three years, is an active state committee member, and assisted in writing up the memorandum when the Edwards Plateau Chapter became part of the Hill Country Chapter. Floyd is also the Treasurer of the Hill Country Land Trust. Every few days, Floyd finds himself doing some sort of volunteer activity for the chapter.

Kathy Ward is a member of the class of 2012 who has contributed more than 4000 hours. At Cibolo Nature Center she leads the Nature Boxes program, which works at Boerne elementary schools. With a degree in Geology and a husband and son with PHD's in field geology, she uses her life experiences and knowledge at the Albert and Bessie Kronkosky State Natural Area as the team leader in Geology. She also contributes to surveys on birds, plants, and butterflies at ABK. Kathy is a founding member of the Native Plant Society of Boerne, the current past President, and assists in demonstration gardens in the area. She is also the current Past President of the Hill Country chapter.



Recent Hill Country Naturalist Columns by Jim Stanley:

6/3/17	The Evolution of Thinking about Cedar
6/10/17	Native Hill Country Vines: Sometimes Forgotten Parts of the Landscape
6/17/17	Aldo Leopold's Five Tools of Land Management
6/24/17	Some Light, Airy Small Native Trees For Your Landscape

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

T E X A S
MASTER NATURALIST™
18th Annual Meeting



OCTOBER 20-22, 2017
OMNI CORPUS CHRISTI HOTEL

This year's event will mark the Texas Master Naturalist Program's 18th Annual Meeting and will be the 19th year of the program. This year's meeting will be held at the **Omni Corpus Christi** the weekend of **October 20 through 22, 2017**.

We are pleased to extend an invitation to ALL Texas Master Naturalist Program volunteers, along with all other program affiliates. This includes those certified volunteers, those still in training, program administrators and advisors of local chapters, and your local chapter partners, sponsors, or special guests. This year's gathering has several chapter enhancement and Advanced Training topics to choose from. Our social times, chapter project fair showcase and round table discussions will offer great opportunities to meet your fellow Texas Master Naturalist peers from our 48 Chapters across the state and share new ideas from the past year.



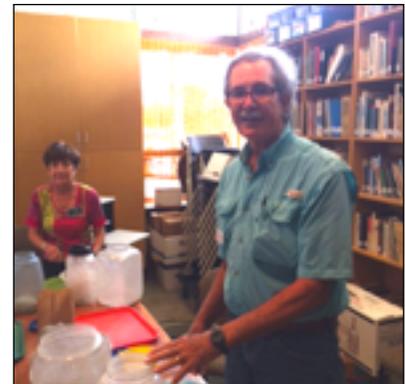
Boerne NPSOT Seed Gleaners Collect and Clean Antelope Horn Milkweed Seeds

The Boerne NPSOT seed gleaners have collected and cleaned a large amount of Antelope Horn milkweed (*Asclepias asperula*) seed. We collected from May 29 through June 4 in seven different locations in Bandera, Kendall, and Comal Counties. Volunteers Claire Mitchell, Gary Fest, Cecilia Fuentes and I picked large amounts of pods. These pods were carefully spread out to dry in large boxes.



Once dried, we began the tedious process of cleaning the seeds. This involves removing the fluff. To do this, we used 2 gallon plastic jars with medium size pebbles. We vigorously shook the jars to separate the fluff. We then placed a vacuum cleaner at the mouth of the jar. With one hand to agitate the pebbles and the other hand to hold the vacuum hose, the fluff rose to the top and was removed. We then placed the remaining seeds and pebbles on trays where we further removed any debris from the seeds.

This process took place over two weeks with the following volunteers: Melba Jacobson, Rheda Boardman, Veronica Hawk, Sandra Haldeman, Pam McKinnley, Nancy Scoggins, Regina Wheaton, Sue Mellard, Ben Eldridge, Tyra Kane, Cay Russ, Betty Proneke and Jody Ruhl. We spent a total of 90 hours and managed to clean 34 ounces of seed. This is an incredible amount of cleaned seed. We are so proud to donate these seeds to the Bring Back the Monarch Campaign at Monarch Watch. This will contribute to the seed bank that's needed to increase available native milkweed population. Without the seeds, the production of native milkweed plants is not possible. This is an important link in our efforts to bring back the Monarchs.



From Teresa Coleman

Exosystem Scavenger Hunt at Kroc Center

The final Nature Study monthly meeting for the After School Program at Kroc Center on May 18th was quite an exciting afternoon for 27 students and the Master Naturalist volunteers. Leader Martha Miesch, along with Teresa Coleman, Chris Lienhard, Pam Lienhard, Clarence Reed, and John Sloan, brought examples of Hill Country ecology--bones, snake skins, feathers, acorns, plants, rocks, and footprints--to the meeting.



Then we hid them outside in the “wild” area behind the Kroc Center’s main building. Martha printed a page with black and white drawings that matched what we brought as well as things that the students could find in the natural setting such as seeds, lichen, scat, vines, frogs, lizards and sounds. The students then took off to find the hidden objects and mark them off their lists as they found specific items. It was fun for the volunteers as well as the students, and gave us an opportunity to talk about the things they were finding.



Clarence Reed, John Sloan, Chris Lienhard, Pam Lienhard, and Martha Miesch.

Advanced Training Still to Come in July

THURSDAY, JULY 20 1-2PM WEBINAR

AT17-169 THE THREE PILLARS OF HIGH QUALITY POLLINATOR HABITAT MANAGEMENT
Pete Berthelsen (The Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund, Partnership Coordinator.) will speak on the three main requirements. To register, go to <https://goo.gl/forms/Xcmy9PFgvtb7E86M2>

MONDAY, JULY 24 7PM UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUTHORITY LECTURE HALL, KERRVILLE

AT17-158 THE CATTLE FEVER TICK
Dr. Brodie Miller will speak on the biology, history, and status of the Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program and provide an update on cattle fever tick outbreaks throughout South Texas.

TUESDAY, JULY 25 6:30-8PM MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LECTURE HALL, FREDERICKSBURG

AT17-172 THE IMPORTANCE OF NATIVE GRASSES
Dr. James Stanley, Master Naturalist, author and weekly columnist for the Kerrville Daily Times, will focus on how native grasses are essential to the fertility and health of the soil.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 26 1-5PM GILLESPIE COUNTY FARM BUREAU, 237 EQUESTRIAN DR., FREDERICKSBURG

AT17-168. WATER WELL OWNERS EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP
For more information and to pre-register, go to <http://twon.tamu.edu/training/> or call 979-845-1461.

THURSDAY, JULY 27 7-9PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER (CNC), BOERNE

AT 159 THIRST FOR NATURE: BIRDS OF PREY
A discussion of these predator birds that are characterized by keen eyesight. . For more information, contact Joely Cifre, volunteer@cibolo.org, or 830-249-7230.

The View from Rusty Bend



Summer on the Guadalupe

A Bunkhouse Called Paradise

*The last time I slept in this old bunkhouse
I was eight years old. Batwing shutters channeling southerlies,
the screen door squealing shut.*

*Green metal cots lined up on one wall. Thin-ticked mattresses,
swaybacked as a picket line of old mares.
Limp pillows with a sheet and a towel. Quilts folded over the bottom rail.*

*The sounds are the same: the music of the rapids,
turkeys whomp, whomping to the roost. The chitter of the kingfisher,
a jeep climbing to the back pasture, scattering rocks.*

*We swam in the stream down the hill till we had raisin fingers and blue lips--
and our hair smelled of creek. The wide plank floors looked painted
with small wet footprints.*

*We always nodded off in the yard of the big house,
on a gentle hill, counting shooting stars. The daddies carried us to Paradise
to sleep in the kindness of a summer Texas night.*

*I would awaken and look down the row:
caliche crusted kids, tangled in the covers,
sweetly drunk on long days outside.*

*What once held a tribe of feral children, tonight holds me—
cradled in a sanctuary of solitude, with my favorite pen
and notebook, my broke-in hat, and my creek-smelling hair.*

continued on next page

Rusty Bend in June. The air is warm and creamy on the skin, laden with moisture from the Gulf. Andy and I sit on the porch, mesmerized by the feeding behavior of our various visitors. In wanders an elderly armadillo with a white nose, frequently out of joint as he takes offense with younger armadillos in his space. He charges and cracks against their shells, bouncing them off the yard like bumper cars.

A skunk dives for pill bugs, his tail fanned straight up like a feathery flocked Christmas tree. Behind him, stretched between two oaks hangs the tough web of the Orb Spider, ready to snarl and snag dragonflies or even a hapless hummingbird. But the most entertaining has been the cottontail, who seems never to sleep. Besides the usual fare of yard salad, he fells big grasses like a logger. Timber.... and nibbles them from base to their seed crusted tops. Then, for no apparent reason, he sprints from one side of the yard to another. Next, he practices diversionary tactics. Sprint, turn 90 degrees, sprint into the bushes. Back to the starting place, he digs tiny pockets in the dirt. Snuggles down into them like starting blocks, and away, he goes. We imagine Papa Rabbit's injunction. "Don't get soft, son, you are lunch for many a critter."

Lastly, Canyon Wrens are running the Bug Brigade to the second nest on the porch. We see them snag bugs from cracks in the live oak, whack them on the wood until they hang limply, take them to the woodpile, sing a song of triumph, and deliver them to the nestlings. Cheep, cheep, cheep. Pant a moment. Then it's time for nest cleaning. Pick up the "diapers," fly out, bombs away! Repeat. Dawn to dusk.

When it gets really steamy, I am flooded with memories of summer days at the Hillingdon Ranch, home of Paradise bunkhouse. Growing up with no air conditioning, we spent weeks there hiding from sultry San Antonio heat. The fathers would come up on weekends while the moms and kids stayed at the ranch. We were constantly in a little pool fed by Block Creek. There was a round valve with a worm drive that would close a sluiceway. Clean, clear creek water backed up behind the gate for a nice swimming hole. If no one was looking, we'd lead an old white mare named Sugar into the water and use her sweet wide back for a diving board. We even swam between her legs. She didn't mind, but we knew not to tell. When we got too wrinkled, we'd lay out on the limestone with thin towels around our shoulders, and watch the vultures glide high in the clouds. Such stillness.

So, when it's hot this summer, collect a child you know, get them in the water. Let them catch little gold frogs, lay on warm rocks and watch the birds. Perhaps, like me, they will turn out to have agarita in their veins, limestone in their bones, and creek-smelling hair.

Poem, essay, and Guadalupe image by Lucy Griffith .
Canyon Wren nest image by Andy Robinson
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Lucy Griffith, PhD co-manages the Rusty Bend Ranch with her husband, Andy Robinson. She also writes poetry; her muse is 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



Canyon Wren Nest



We meet on the fourth Monday of most months (but not in August) at 7:00PM 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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- 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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Questions about our chapter?
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