

# The Texas Star

Newsletter of the  
Texas Master Naturalist  
Hill Country Chapter  
August 2017 Volume 15 Number 8



photo by Vern Crawford

T E X A S

Master  
Naturalist™



## AUGUST 21 MEETING: RECEPTION FOR THE CLASS OF 2017

Each of the new trainees will be introduced at this reception on Monday, August 21, 6:30 p.m., at the Kerr Arts and Cultural Center in Kerrville. Classes begin on Wednesday, August 23, at the Upper Guadalupe River Authority Lecture Hall. Our regular monthly chapter meetings will resume on September 25.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE . . . . Brenda Fest

Hello Fellow Master Naturalists!

Recent rains have helped to give a much needed break from the summer heat. Our rain collection tanks are half full. Little bluestem is emerging and getting taller and the cowpen daisies have produced more blooms. There seems to be more food for the birds and butterflies now. Fall is not too far away. I noticed that our humming birds are already headed south. I hate to see them go.

We are excited to meet the members of the new fall training class. Much thanks to our Class of 2017 Director, Reggie Cox, and her class committee. They have worked all year to put everything together for another great year of training. Mentors have met with their trainees and given them the curriculum and training notebooks. The new class reception will be August 21 and training starts on August 23.

A reminder: If you haven't already ordered your fifteenth anniversary T-shirt, send your order to Gracie Waggener. See the order form in this newsletter. The deadline for placing your order is August 30.

Registration is now open for this year's annual meeting in Corpus Christi, October 20 – 22. As always, this meeting provides a variety of educational and inspirational sessions and a great mix of Master Naturalists from all over the state. Contact Lisa Flanagan if you would like to find someone to room with. The deadline to register is September 29.

Join us at our September 25 chapter meeting for a presentation by Mo-Ranch's President and CEO, Dick Powell. He'll discuss the ranch's history, natural resources, environmental initiatives, outdoor education programming, and volunteering opportunities.

Brenda Fest

## This Month We Honor



### Recertification

Anne Cassidy, Steve Clyburn, Becky Etzler,  
Warren Ferguson, Tom Hynes, Tony Plutino, Glenn Randow

### Milestones - Bronze Dragonfly, 250 hours

Jill Bowen, Paula Harley, Sarabeth Mayfield,  
Tony Plutino, Francoise Wilson

(These award pins will be given at  
our September monthly meeting.)



*Congratulations to members who received awards at the July meeting:*

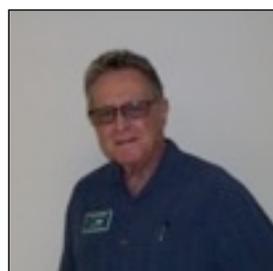
Reggie Cox, Larry Altman, Marilyn Knight, Liz Ross

Milestone Highlights:  
Notes on Contributions of Chapter Members Who Reached Milestones in June and July



Cecelia Fuentes is a member of the Class of 2016 who has contributed more than 250 hours. She is particularly interested in birding, and helped in starting Muleshoe's birding activities. She maintains the bird blinds and counts at Kruetzburg Canyon Natural Area, helps private landowners with bird surveys, and assists with monthly county park birding surveys. She also volunteers at the Albert and Bessie Kronkosky State Natural Area (ABK), monitoring milkweed and Monarchs. Cecelia is the secretary of the Boerne chapter of NPSOT.

Claire Mitchell is a member of the Class of 2015 who has contributed more than 500 hours. At the Albert and Bessie Kronkosky State Natural Area (ABK) she works with Ray Dunton's bee survey and has helped with the butterfly, deer, fish, and Maple tree surveys. She also volunteers at Riverside Nature Center. Claire is the Volunteer Projects Director for our chapter, who works with Kristie Denbow to approve new volunteering opportunities; she serves on our Board, and is one of our VMS entry approvers.



Larry Eskridge is a member of the Class of 2015 who has contributed over 1000 hours. He was a member of the 2016 class committee, working as the "coffee guy" and the gifted expert in creating maps for all the field trips. He has been involved at the Riverside Nature Center, the butterfly garden at Kerrville-Schreiner Park, and at the Cibolo Nature Center, where he created lesson plans for a project on weather. Larry served on our Board in 2016 and set up a new system of rubrics for the 2017 class application process. The new volunteer opportunities at Lost Maples are now added to his list of activities.

Liz Ross is a member of the Class of 2013 who has contributed more than 1000 hours. As the Class Director for the Class of 2014 she recruited speakers, organized materials for the students' books, and worked with her Class Team Members to prepare the sessions. She has served on our Board for a total of three years--first as Class Director, and then two years as Advanced Training Director. In her current volunteering at the Riverside Nature Center she serves on their Board, works on fundraising events, recruits speakers, and is the Brown Bag Coordinator and a nature guide.



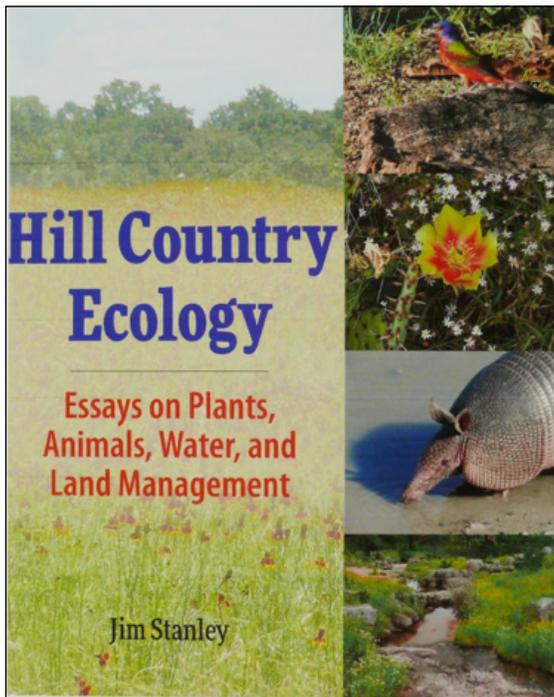
Reggie Cox is a member of the Class of 2016 who has contributed over 250 volunteer hours. She started volunteering at the Kerrville-Schreiner Park Butterfly Garden before she learned about the TMN Program while talking with her neighbor, Gracie Waggener, who encouraged her to apply for the class. She's now the Class Director for the upcoming Class of 2017, working with the Class Committee team, coordinating the speakers, and attending the monthly TMN Board meetings. She continues to volunteer in other projects--still and including, the Butterfly Garden. She encourages others to try various projects to discover what they most enjoy doing. "It's all about the people," she says.

"If you like a group of people and enjoy being with them, then chances are you will return again and again to volunteer on that project."

Recent Hill Country Naturalist Columns by Jim Stanley:

7/1/17	The Backyard Creek”
7/8/17	Rainwater Harvesting: The Basics of Why and How
7/15/17	What Do Our White-Tailed Deer Think About All These Exotics?
7/22/17	Do Plants Have Calendars? What About Insects?
7/29/17	How to Conserve Water AND Save Your Plants This Summer

These and all other previous Kerrville Daily Times columns can be found at [www.hillcountrynaturalist.org](http://www.hillcountrynaturalist.org)



Jim’s new book is a collection of over 200 of his Kerrville Daily Times columns, written over the past seven years, and collected into eight major sections and 25 subsections based on their topics. It is not a collection of long detailed chapters, but a series of brief, easy-to-read essays to be read in whatever order the reader chooses. It is twice as long as his previous books (285 pages, 8 x 10 paperback) with over 70 photos.

*Hill Country Ecology* is available from: [Hugohousepublishers.com](http://Hugohousepublishers.com), [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com), and [Barnsandnoble.com](http://Barnsandnoble.com). It is also available at Riverside Nature Center, which will help them. If ordered from Hugohouse publishers, use the coupon code “TMN25” for a 25% discount. Jim will have copies to sell at various meetings.

*continued on next page*

*"There are some who can live without wild things, and some who cannot. These essays are the delights and dilemmas of one who cannot."*

—Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*

The Texas Hill Country is a special place. It is its ecology—the combination of the climate, the topography, the creeks and rivers, the plants and animals—that make it so.

This book describes the Hill Country ecology for current, as well as for new and prospective, residents. It seeks to teach readers about the Hill Country, including the native habitat, the land, the water, the plants, the animals, the people, and the myriad interactions among them. It is a series of brief, easy-to-read essays that have originally appeared in the *Kerrville Daily Times* under his weekly column, "Hill Country Naturalist," for the past seven years.



From discovering the lyricism in the grasslands and picturesque creeks to discussions of the issues and concerns of managing rural lands so as to preserve and improve the native habitat, *Hill Country Ecology: Essays on Plants, Animals, Water, and Land Management* instills a greater love and respect for nature for anyone who cares to read even one essay.

Readers will experience the joy only one can find in observing and interacting with nature—and they'll find they're delightfully entertained along the way.

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*"Jim Stanley's longtime experience makes his book the ideal resource for factual, practical, and dependable wisdom about the Texas Hill Country's ecology, and how we should understand and care for all our natural resources." Hill Country Ecology is a pleasurable read, and a valuable resource to everyone who appreciates this special region of our state.*

—David K. Langford, Vice President Emeritus, Texas Wildlife Association

*"This book is an interesting and informative collection of essays about the Hill Country from a highly qualified and deeply committed conservationist. It will give you a greater understanding and deeper appreciation of nature and how we can become better stewards of the lands, waters and wildlife of this region."*

—Steve Nelle, Natural Resource Specialist, USDA/NRCS, Retired



Jim Stanley is a retired chemist and a Master Naturalist in the Hill Country Chapter. He lives with his wife, Priscilla, near Kerrville, and has spent the past fifteen years studying, learning, and teaching about Texas Hill Country ecology and land stewardship.



[www.fugofohousepublishers.com](http://www.fugofohousepublishers.com)

\$29.95

NATURE  
Ecology Ecosystems & Habitats

ISBN 978-1-936449-74-3



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From Lisa Flanagan

## 15<sup>th</sup> YEAR CELEBRATION T-SHIRTS

We recently held a contest for a haiku or saying that could become part of a t-shirt to commemorate our 15<sup>th</sup> year as a chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists. We had numerous submissions, and the Board voted on our favorite as the design for a shirt we could be proud of.

Our winner is Chris Anderson! His submission:

Water meets stone and

life wriggles, runs, flowers, soars.

Explore, learn, teach, give.

This will be on the back of the t-shirt with our dragonfly logo. The front is a compilation of our 15<sup>th</sup> year logo and ideas, old and new.

Chris receives a free t-shirt for his winning haiku!

Congratulations to Chris!

continued on next page

Celebrate Our Success

Be sure to get your 15<sup>th</sup> year anniversary t-shirt!

The shirts will be kiwi green with dark green print.

\$15 Price includes all state taxes.

Order yours today!

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

EMAIL ADDRESS

SHIRT SIZE (CIRCLE ONE)    S    M    L    XL    1X    2X    3X



MAIL THIS ORDER FORM WITH YOUR CHECK MADE OUT TO HCMN (HILL COUNTRY MASTER NATURALISTS) TO:

GRACIE WAGGENER  
2703 BANDERA HWY  
KERRVILLE, TX 78028

**Fall Native Plant Sale & Festival    Saturday - October 7, 2017 - 9am-2pm**

We know it's hot, but we are thinking about Fall. **Texas Master Naturalists Hill Country Chapter and Riverside Nature Center** are making plans for a fun day at Riverside Nature Center.

**Native Plant Sale:** Volunteers are working with local growers and nurseries to bring you the best selection available for our Native Plant sale. It begins at 9am, so come **early** for the best selection! *A pre-sale will be held 4:30pm - 6pm Friday, October 6, for RNC and HCMN members only. Non-members can join either or both of these organizations at the presale and start shopping. All net proceeds benefit the RNC and TMNHCC education efforts.*

**Informative Talks and Exhibits:** Scott Wahlberg and Ashley Tubbs will speak at 11am on "Snakes in the Garden: Myth Busting & Fact Finding." They have extensive experience with public outreach, focusing on native Texas wildlife education, and in particular on native reptiles and amphibians.

As always, we could not do this without our wonderful volunteers.  
If you can help us please contact the RNC office.



### **NPSOT Boerne Chapter Monthly Meeting**

On Tuesday, Sept. 5, Pablo Teveni, Professional Horticulturist, will speak on "The Balcones Canyonlands of the Edwards Plateau: Where Southeast Meets Southwest"

Dr. Teveni will discuss the unique diversity of endemic plants found in the Hill Country.

Socializing at 6:30pm; program at 7pm

Cibolo Nature Center, 140 City Park Road, Boerne

### **NPSOT Fredericksburg Chapter Monthly Meeting**

On Tuesday, August 22, George Cates of Native American Seed Company in Junction will speak on

"How to Grow Native Plants From Seeds"

Social at 6:30pm; program at 7pm

Fellowship Hall of Memorial Presbyterian Church  
601 North Milam Street, Fredericksburg

### **NPSOT Kerrville Chapter Monthly Meeting**

On Tuesday, Sept. 12, at 1:30pm, Dr. Jim Stanley will speak on the role and importance of native grasses for enhancing soil, preventing erosion, and capturing water.

Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street, Kerrville

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



This year's event will mark the Texas Master Naturalist Program's 18th Annual Meeting and the 19th year of the program. The meeting will be held at the **Omni Corpus Christi Hotel** 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 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.

From Larry Eskridge

## Kerrville-Schreiner Butterfly Garden Update – August 2017



*Queen, Blue Mist, and Invasive Vine*



*Pipevine, Swallowtail, and Turk's Cap*

Overall, the plants in the garden are growing like crazy, thanks to the working irrigation system and recent rain. Managing the garden continues to be a challenge, especially with the unwanted invasive plants. The balancing act is to make the garden inviting to visitors while not appearing overgrown and untended. I think that our dedicated group of volunteers is corralling the bad guys, but some weeks it is tough to tell. All too often the plant growth overwhelms the previous weeks' efforts and puts us in an Einstein-like definition of insanity, i.e., doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. We need more volunteers.

I grant you that KSP Butterfly Garden is not the easiest place to pick up volunteer hours. It isn't as fun as working with kids, as fulfilling as presenting an educational activity, or as easy as doing chapter administrative or computer work. It is sweat equity; equity that goes into the overall appearance and function of the site. We need to improve maintenance of the area so that eventually we can better manage desired plant areas and control or eliminate the undesirable invasive species. With more volunteers, the garden can be subdivided so a group of Master Naturalists can maintain a specific section rather than the weekly shotgun approach to the entire 10,000 square foot garden.

### Updates from Kerrville Park Maintenance:



*KSP Jungle--two volunteers went missing last week; search continues*

Park attendance for this summer is about 26% higher than in the past, and as a result the overhaul (new siding) of the garden shed is on hold (again, still, etc.).

The earlier proposed irrigation replacement plan does not appear feasible because of the density and height of much of the vegetation in the garden. Mounting commercial impact sprinkler units high on the fence posts would not work because water pressure is not sufficient to cover the needed areas. The fall back plan is to extend the current risers from two to three feet tall to about five feet and continue with the current five irrigation zones. Additionally the current irrigation lines would be replaced with more durable/weather resistant material and would be buried.

Earlier this summer the city mowed the area outside the garden and managed to wipe out much of the milkweed, mostly Antelope Horns. The plan going forward is to not mow until at least November to preserve milkweed and allow native wildflowers to complete their blooming cycle.

I have requested a small dumpster for Landscape Debris. Right now all of the weeds, their seeds, etc., etc. are dumped outside the garden area and eventually mowed/mulched. Putting the debris in a dumpster would stop our inadvertent practice of planting weed seeds outside the garden and send them instead to the landfill. Request is pending.

In addition to an increase in the level of volunteer activity at the Butterfly Garden, ideas for improving the maintenance, appearance, and function of the garden would be appreciated. To the small group of faithful volunteers: THANK YOU! YOUR SWEAT EQUITY HAS GREATLY IMPROVED THE BUTTERFLY GARDEN! Now if I can just get you some more assistance and support. Contact me at [el\\_e@swbell.net](mailto:el_e@swbell.net) to volunteer.

From Tony Plutino

## For the Birds

Fifteen volunteers--members of the Hill Country Chapter and Highland Lakes Chapter and members of the San Saba Birding and Nature Club--spent eight mornings in July at the Mason Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) assisting TPWD staff with vegetation data collection and other WMA projects.

The Vegetation Data Collection Project was in support of the WMA's Small Scale Quail Management Project and involved gathering plant structure data along transect lines within 72 study plots. This year, with the help of ample volunteers, the data collection project was finished three days early. Dr. Jim Gallagher, the TPWD Wildlife Biologist in charge of the project, had this to say about TMN efforts over the past three years: "TMN volunteers have made it possible for us to complete our surveys in less than half the time it took us without them. The extended time involved threatened to bias our data collection, so their help has been vital to the project. Having fun people to interact with is just a bonus!"



*Looking northwest from the Lodge*

Finishing the collection project early allowed volunteers time to also assist with a search for Texas Horned Lizards and to prepare a xeriscape garden area for future planting. This is the third year for TMN and other volunteers to assist with the data collection project. Hill Country chapter members volunteering were Bridget Langdale, Chris Keating, Donna Dutton, Doug Gray, Eva Broad, Kay Harter, Kim Ohrt, Rick Harter, Tony Ciesczkiewicz, Tony Plutino, and Hal Zesch. Barbara Baruch and John Ackerman from the Highland Lakes Chapter lent a hand as well, as did Billy Mohr and Johana Huff from the San Saba Birding and Nature Club.



*The lake is surrounded by pink granite.*

Volunteers spent some time after each volunteer morning lounging at the WMA's Lake House and swimming in the lake, and even had a cookout one evening. It was all great fun and a way to celebrate a lot of hard work. An added feature this year were a couple of Advanced Training sessions offered by TPWD staff that involved cruising around the WMA in ATVs and learning about the flora of the Llano Uplift.

The Small Scale Quail Management Data Collection Surveys occur annually during July. It is a great opportunity to get immersed in the field, building, reinforcing, testing, and sharing your naturalist knowledge. For more information or to volunteer, contact Tony Plutino at 512-496-2020 or [tonyplutino@gmail.com](mailto:tonyplutino@gmail.com).



*Using meter sticks, Donna Dutton and Jeff Forman (TPWD) call out data to Kim Ohrt, who transcribes them onto a data sheet that will be entered into the project's main data base.*



*Chris Keating and Donna Dutton running a transect line with Jeff Forman (TPWD). In the foreground is the central stake common to all plots. Transect lines are run from this 34 meter north, 33 meters southeast, and 33 meters southwest.*



*Bridget Langdale, Tony Ciesczkiewicz, and Jeff Forman (TPWD) pause from their data collection to pose. Notice that everyone is wearing snake gaiters. Not many snakes were seen, but gaiters are a good precaution.*

*photos by Chris Keating, Kay Harter, and Tony Plutino*

# Run for RIVERSIDE 5K



2017

## Run & Walk

September 9th @ 8am

### Registration prices:

- \$25 until Aug. 13th
- \$30 Aug 14 - Sep 7th
- \$35 Sep 8 - 9th Race Day

### Contact:

Valeska Danielak for info

830-370-2464

run4riverside@gmail.com

 run4riverside

Registered entrants are guaranteed a race T-shirt!

Yoga, Refreshments, Music, Awards, and Door Prizes!

Strollers and dogs are welcome

Proceeds will benefit the Riverside Nature Center, a non-profit, member supported organization. RNC's mission is to develop public awareness and stewardship of the Texas Hill Country's environmental and natural resources through education, information, and example.



Riverside Nature Center

150 Francisco Lemos Street Kerrville, TX 78028

Registration link @

[riversidenaturecenter.org](http://riversidenaturecenter.org)



## Boerne Workshop Will Provide Landowners With Information On Conservation Easements

The Cibolo Conservancy Land Trust, in partnership with the Hill Country Alliance, is hosting a landowner workshop from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., Friday, August 25, 2017, at the Cibolo Nature Center Auditorium, 140 City Park Road, Boerne, TX 78006. This workshop will focus on conservation easements—a tool available to help landowners steward and protect their land investment in the long term.

Conservation easements are one of the most flexible and effective means to protect private property. A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement that ensures a property will forever be conserved according to the landowner's wishes. No public access is required. This agreement is negotiated between the landowner and the land trust organization which is responsible for monitoring and enforcing the terms of the conservation easement agreement.

Many landowners are concerned about conserving those special natural features on their family-owned property and maintaining the productivity of their land. Landowners face the challenge of increasing tax burdens associated with land ownership, including the potential impact of estate taxes on their heirs.



This seminar is designed to provide farmers, ranchers and other landowners with effective tools and resources to help them deal with the issues inherent in passing family land on to future generations.

Workshop topics include: *My Dream for My Land* video, narrated by Bob Webster; *Conservation Easement Basics and Income and Estate Tax Benefits of Donating a Conservation Easement*; *The Land Trust Role in the Conservation Easement Process*; and *Discussion with Conservation Easement Donors*.

The workshop cost is \$20 per person which includes refreshments and a social following the workshop. Registration begins at 1:30; walk-ins are welcome and pre-registration is advised to ensure your seat. Register and find the full program agenda online at <http://www.hillcountryalliance.org/upcomingevents/>.

More information is available by contacting the workshop coordinator, Carolyn Vogel, at [carolyn@texasconservationconnection.com](mailto:carolyn@texasconservationconnection.com) or 512-633-4995.

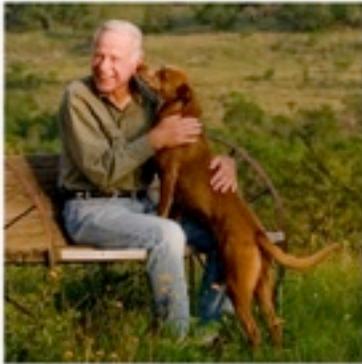
*The Cibolo Conservancy was formed in 1998 as a sister organization of the Cibolo Nature Center. Their mission is the preservation and conservation of the cultural and natural resources of the Cibolo Creek Watershed and surrounding areas in the Texas Hill Country. [www.ciboloconservancy.org](http://www.ciboloconservancy.org).*

*The Hill Country Alliance is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to raise public awareness and build community support around the need to preserve the natural resources and heritage of the Central Texas Hill Country. [www.hillcountryalliance.org](http://www.hillcountryalliance.org).*



# HILL COUNTRY ALLIANCE ANNUAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

**REGISTER  
NOW!**



FROM LOCAL TO REGIONAL:  
**The Shared Story**  
— of the —  
**Texas Hill Country**

**FEATURED KEYNOTE ADDRESS:**

**Hope in Shared Stories:  
Building Futures Together**

*Betty Sue Flowers, Professor Emeritus, UT Austin and  
Former Director, LBJ Presidential Library and Museum*

**OTHER PRESENTATIONS:**

**How the Hill Country Landscape Affects  
Monarch Butterfly Populations**  
*Cathy Downs, Monarch Watch*

**The Stars at Night, Deep in the Heart of Texas**  
*Bill Wren, McDonald Observatory*

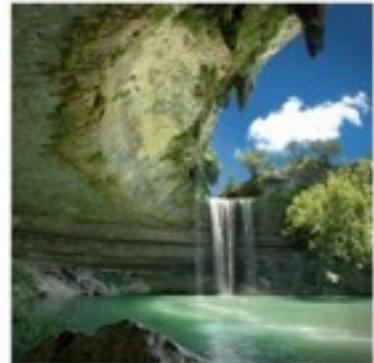
**Linking Land and Water Protection: Stories  
of Conservation Success in the Hill Country**  
*Francine Romero (moderator), UTSA  
Blair Fitzsimons, Texas Agricultural Land Trust  
Susan Courage, Edwards Aquifer Protection  
Program (City of San Antonio)*

**Protecting the Surface Water of the Hill Country**  
*Jim Blackburn, Trinity Edwards Springs  
Protection Association (TESPA)*

**Building Strong Hill Country Communities:  
A Real County Case Study**  
*Garry Merritt, Real County Judge*

**Landscape Scale Collaborative Networking**  
*Katherine Romans, Hill Country Alliance*

**Telling the Story of the Blanco**  
*Wes Ferguson, Author*



**Thursday,  
September 21**

**Camp Lucy**

3509 Creek Road  
Dripping Springs TX 78620

**8:30am to 4pm**

with Reception  
from 4-6pm

**REGISTRATION \$65 (CLOSES SEPTEMBER 15)**

**Please join us! [Click here to save your place.](#)**

Inquire about student discounts to [info@hillcountryalliance.org](mailto:info@hillcountryalliance.org)



The View From Rusty Bend



*Guadalupe Cypress Vault*

*Guadalupe River, July 4*

*Folding chair, rod and reel.  
Red, white, blue.*

*A crimson parade marshall:  
Summer Tanager,  
chuckle calls from a barren limb.*

*For a flyby, Belted Kingfisher,  
blue-white, blue-white,  
a chattering monkey.*

*Cicadas march in a rhythmical swell,  
Carolina Wrens  
trill their piccolos.*

*On a half-submerged log,  
turtles line up lesser to major,  
slide off, drift in the sun.*

*A lazy golden flag  
waves above the water,  
the amber fin of a carp guarding a nest of eggs.*

*Dragonflies, mammoth, burnt orange, dive.  
A miniature air show above the ripples,  
rusty bi-planes.*

*Above me, clouds glide between the cypress branches.  
Huge floats, pewter and silvery white,  
a soft passage, framed in reflected sky.*

*I lean back in my chair, forget to fish.*

*continued on next page*

July at Rusty Bend. A season of purple fruits, white flowers and baby birds. Prime time is early mornings on the porch; a stiff breeze from the southeast helps us forget how crazy hot it will be in a few hours. We savor the coolness on our skin, sit still, watch and listen.

We watch. The mockingbird wars have begun. Showing off for the females, they do their loop-de-loops from the highest branches, then trot out their repertoire of songs. We listen, ha, there is a new one. The mocker mimics our new resident, the Pauraque. A wolf-whistle, long and slow.

We watch. Scissor-tail Flycatcher babies, almost tailless, play tag along the fence, honing evasive maneuvers. We listen, they chitter in a sing-song way. We watch the white-nosed armadillo ruin our pathway, his nose, a root plow. We listen as he surprises us with a sneeze.

When it gets around 80 degrees, we watch our step. Snakes love the 80s, it seems. I see a hognose by the planter. He tries to make up for being so short by puffing up like an adder. I talk to him; gradually he returns to a normal size. Go get them mice, mister!

The turkeys struggle with the heat. Texas in July is no time for down jackets. They pick the densest shade and stand still, their wings held away from their bodies. Beaks open, panting. As it cools, they grab ripe persimmons from the bushes. Sproing! Putting the gobble in gobbler.

One afternoon, the second clutch of Canyon Wrens decides to fledge. We watch from all the porch windows as the drama unfolds. They crash land onto the deck. Do tiny deep knee bends to celebrate all the new space they have. Their feet are big, their beaks small, and their tails the size of a thumbnail. They preen, or try to, falling over. No balance. The parents hover, demonstrate. "Get off the ground! It's getting dark! If you can't fly up to safety, climb up these rocks!" Finally, just as darkness falls, all three baby wrens have hopped, flown, or scurried to the safety of bushes on the cliff.

We cross our fingers. The next day, all three return and spend the night on top of a porch column. It's been weeks now and they still snuggle together every night in some safe corner of our porch.

We hang out there too, safe, quiet, waiting for fall.

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 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](mailto:doctorluz@hctc.net)*



*Ruellia nudiflora, Metzae, wild petunia*

## Advanced Training

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 22 6:30-8PM MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FELLOWSHIP HALL, FREDERICKSBURG**  
AT17-180 HOW TO GROW NATIVE PLANTS FROM SEEDS

Based on his experience in planting, maintaining, and restoring native prairies in his work with Native American Seed in Junction, George Cates will tell how to successfully prepare, plant, and maintain our beautiful native wildflowers & grasses – and why it is important.

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 24 7-9PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER, BOERNE (CNC)**  
AT17-195 THIRST FOR NATURE EVENT: DRONES FOR CONSERVATION

Justin Moore of Airborne Aerial Photography will explain how drone technology helps with conservation and environmental protection and show aerial footage of the Texas Hill Country. Register at <https://ciboloorg.presencehost.net/experience/events/calendar.html/event/2017/08/24/cnc-a-thirst-for-nature-event-drones-for-conservation/154039>.

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 25 1:30-5PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER, BOERNE**  
AT17-197 CONSERVATION EASEMENT WORKSHOP

What is Conservation Easement (CE), Landowner Income & Estate Tax Benefits, The Role of the Land Trust Organization, and discussion with CE Donors. Learn more and register on line at: [https://salsa3.salsalabs.com/o/1891/p/salsa/event/common/public/?event\\_KEY=95966](https://salsa3.salsalabs.com/o/1891/p/salsa/event/common/public/?event_KEY=95966). Cost: \$20, Walk-ins welcome. Contact Carolyn Vogel, workshop coordinator, [carolyn@texasconservationconnection.com](mailto:carolyn@texasconservationconnection.com) for more information.

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 26 11AM-12PM NATURE EDUCATION CENTER, 857 JUNCTION HWY., KERRVILLE**  
AT17-190 DANNY'S REPTILE ADVENTURES

Danny Conner has been keeping and caring for reptiles for over 30 years. He will be bringing his "friends" for you to see, touch, and learn about. For more information, see his website at [www.reptileadventures.net](http://www.reptileadventures.net). Seating is limited; call 830-895-7393 or email [gotseed@windstream.net](mailto:gotseed@windstream.net) to reserve your spot.

**SATURDAY, SEPT. 2 9AM-12PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER, BOERNE**  
AT17-196 BIRDING SKILLS WORKSHOP

Tom and Patsy Inglet present the techniques that have helped them progress from amateurs to expert birders. Register online at <https://ciboloorg.presencehost.net/experience/events/calendar.html/event/2017/09/02/cnc-birding-skills-workshop/167585>. Cost, CNC Members: \$20, Non-members: \$25

**TUESDAY, SEPT. 5 6:30-8PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER, BOERNE**  
AT17-192 THE BALCONES CANYONLANDS: WHERE SOUTHEAST MEETS SOUTHWEST

Dr. Pablo Treveni will discuss the unique diversity of endemic plants found in the Hill Country at the monthly meeting of the Boerne NPSOT chapter.

**TUESDAY, SEPT. 12 1:30-2:30PM RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER, KERRVILLE (RNC)**  
AT17-191 NATIVE GRASS PLANTS

Dr. Jim Stanley will explain how native plants enhance the soil, prevent erosion, and capture water at the monthly meeting of the Kerrville NPSOT chapter.

**THURSDAY, SEPT. 14 1-2:30PM WEBINAR**  
AT17-187 DROUGHT AND INVASIVE SPECIES

Cynthia West will explore current issues related to the effects of drought on invasive species, examples of drought-related impacts on ecosystems, and management options for increasing resilience. Join the session 15 minutes beforehand: <http://www.climatewebinars.net/webinars/drought-invasives>.

**MONDAY, SEPT. 25 6:30-8PM UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUTHORITY LECTURE HALL, KERRVILLE**  
AT17-198 MO-RANCH: A NATURAL RESOURCE FOR ALL

Mo-Ranch's President and CEO, Dick Powell, will discuss the ranch's history, natural resources, environmental initiatives, outdoor education programming, and volunteer opportunities.

**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 in August) 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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*Questions about our chapter?*  
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