

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the
Texas Master Naturalist
Hill Country Chapter

February 2018 Volume 16 Number 2



T E X A S



FEBRUARY 26 MEETING: THE HILL COUNTRY MASTER NATURALIST LAND MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Jim Stanley will discuss the need for such a program, the history, the procedure for visits, and the accomplishments of this 14 year old program.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE . . . Lisa Flanagan

Hello fellow Master Naturalists!

Can you believe January is already behind us? And it dealt a cold blast we are not accustomed to. Hopefully, now we can look forward to Spring and all the beautiful things it brings. A little rain along the way wouldn't hurt!

Another thing we have to look forward to is the application process for the 2018 class. It seems to come around pretty fast, here before you know it!

As we go through each day, how many times do you find the opportunity to spread the word about Texas Master Naturalists? Sometimes in the most unlikely places, like the line at the grocery store. Are you wearing your Master Naturalist shirt or jacket, or your nametag? Do you get asked, "What is that?"

What is your elevator speech? An elevator speech is a clear, brief message or "commercial" about you or your organization. Typically it's about 30 seconds, the time it takes for people to ride from the top to bottom of a building in an elevator. Not that we have that many elevators in Kerrville!

A good place to start is our mission statement:

"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."

This is a good start, but not everyone has the same story to tell. You want to be able to share your love of the organization in the way that means the most to you. What are your volunteer projects? How does what you do impact our area and the people who live here? What will you say that will peak the interest of a possible trainee? Give it some thought and be prepared. Your next opportunity may be in the next line at the grocery store!

Lisa Flanagan

This Month We Honor

Initial Certification

John Adams, Allan Howard, Rachel Thompson



Special Recertification

Katy Kappel

Recertification

Tom Harrigan

Milestones

Lucy Griffith - 500 hours, Brushed Silver Dragonfly

Sandy Leyendecker - 2500 hours, Polished Silver Dragonfly

Congratulations to members who received awards at the January meeting:



Initial Certification:

From left to right:

Pam Bird, Matt Farmer, Rick Edwards, Charleen Moore, Mackenzie Brown, Bob Lodowski, Lisa Carter, Laurence Doxey



Recertification:

From left to right:

Nancy Grimes, Steve Dodge, Mary Frushour, Ann Schneider



Milestones:

From left to right:

Reggie Cox, Teresa Coleman, David Davies, Robin May, Randy Fuentes, Craig Childs, Barbara Marquer, Mary Thomas

From David Davies

Milestone Highlights:
Chapter Members Who Received Recognition of Milestones
at the November and January Meetings

Barbara Marquer, Class Of 2014, was recognized for her contribution of 500 volunteer hours. The native plants and flowers of the Texas Hill Country are the focus of much of Barbara's service. Currently, she is the Treasurer of the Kerrville Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT.) Barbara was instrumental in the development of the Carroll Abbott Garden at the Riverside Nature Center (RNC,) participating in its design, planting and maintaining the selected varieties of plants, and helping develop the plant identification markers and plant information. Also at the Riverside Nature Center, Barbara participated in the design and planting of the NPSOT Demonstration Garden, and also helped prepare the plant identification markers for that garden. Barbara is an official "garden tender" at the RNC, helping maintain the two NPSOT project gardens at the RNC.



Craig Childs, Class of 2015, has been recognized for attainment of the 500 volunteer-hour Milestone. Craig has devoted much of his time to the Albert and Bessie Kronkosky State Natural Area (ABK), where he is the Team Leader for the feral swine project. He also volunteers with the white-tailed deer management project at ABK. Craig, a retired hemopathologist, utilizes his skills and training at the Tarpley and Hondo Chronic Wasting Disease check stations where he helps sample lymph nodes of harvested white-tailed deer for evidence of the disease. Craig is now serving his second term on the Hill Country Chapter board, where he serves as Vice-President. Amongst the many duties of that office, Craig is responsible for engaging expert speakers for presentations at monthly Chapter meetings. Craig also devoted much time and energy in 2017 developing training to address how one can advocate for environmental issues: Finding Common Ground and Advancing Positive Conservation Outcomes in Environmental Issues. This effort resulted in a full-day workshop in Boerne

and a seminar Craig hosted at the annual Texas Master Naturalist Program conference. Craig has also recently become a member of the YMCA Roberts Ranch Advisory Committee, a group helping with the development of the property into a nature preserve.



David Davies, Class of 2016, was recognized for reaching the 250 volunteer hour milestone. He has participated in bird counts at Kendall County sites including James Kiehl River Bend Park, Kreutzberg Canyon Natural Area, Camp Capers, and Joshua Springs Park & Preserve. David is also a volunteer at Old Tunnel State Park, sharing information with visitors about the bat inhabitants of the tunnel. He also joined in a River Cleanup Day at South Llano River State Park. For a second year, David serves on the Chapter Board as Communications Director. His duties include developing Press Releases regarding Chapter Events and distributing them to newspapers and media outlets, developing and distributing Chapter and Class brochures, and coordinating the CARE Committee, which focuses on recognition and retention of Chapter members.



Debbie Windham is a member of the Class of 2015 who has been recognized for 1,000 hours of volunteer service. Debbie is a volunteer at Enchanted Rock State Natural Area. She worked on cedar-clearing efforts and in establishing their campground for volunteers. Currently, she serves as a Summit Trail Guide, leading visitors on hikes. Debbie served on the 2016 Class Committee and provided introductions of new class members at the Class Receptions in 2016 and 2017. She is the Vice President of the Kerrville chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas. Recently, she has been assisting a TPWD instructor in teaching the art of flint-knapping to teachers and students.

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Milestone Highlights (continued)

Mary Thomas, Class of 2014, was recognized for her 1,000-hours of volunteer service. Mary's interest in Hill Country plants and birds has been the focus of her service. She is a member of the Kerrville Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT), has served on its Board, and has been the Chapter Webmaster for the last three years. Mary has also participated in the Demonstration Garden and the Carroll Abbott Garden, the two NPSOT project gardens at the Riverside Nature Center (RNC). She helps maintain and re-plant the specimens growing there, and has also helped with development and upkeep of the plant identification labels and plant information references. Also at RNC, she has catalogued available signs, documented which plants are labeled, and then reviewed and updated the signage on a seasonal basis. Mary estimates that a third of her volunteer hours have been in bird counts at several sites in Kendall County.



Randy Fuentes, Class of 2016, was recognized for achieving 250 hours of volunteer service. Randy has a keen interest in birds and, so, has dedicated many hours to birding activities. He regularly participates in bird counts at five Kendall County sites. In addition to documenting species and their numbers, Randy also documents findings with photographs, which are submitted to E-birds, along with census data. Randy has also taken part in other activities at Albert and Bessie Kronkosky State Natural Area, including the Golden Cheeked Warbler survey, a Butterfly Watch, a Fish Survey, monitoring Bluebird Nesting boxes and stocking Bluebird Feeders. He also monitors Bluebird Nesting boxes at Muleshoe Farm & Trust. Additionally, Randy conducts plant surveys for property owners interested in land management.



Reggie Cox, Class of 2016, was recognized for her contribution of 500 volunteer hours. Reggie has participated in bird surveys at multiple sites in Kendall and Kerr Counties. Every week, she helps with maintenance of the Pollinator Garden at Kerrville-Schreiner Park. She is also a team member for the Monarch Larval Monitoring Project at Kerr Wilderness Area and participates in monthly monitoring of Monarch instars and the forbs and wildflowers that sustain them. Reggie was the Director for the 2017 training class, which required overall supervision and coordination of the 12-week training program, obtaining presenters, developing the schedule of classes, preparing Class Notebooks and ordering texts, as well as participation on the Chapter Board. Reggie has now moved into the position of Membership Director for the Hill Country Chapter. Reggie's enthusiasm and appreciation for the Master Naturalist program is boundless. She says the opportunity to meet so many people with similar interests and concerns for our Hill Country environment has been "fabulous!"



Richard Coleman is a member of the Class of 2016 who has accrued 250 hours of volunteer service. He is a Riverside Guide at the Riverside Nature Center, where he is a "jack-of-all-trades" who greets visitors and provides them with assistance and information. He also assists with office duties, even picking up a brush to help repaint the RNC conference room. Additionally, Richard helps to maintain the Pollinator Garden at the Kerr County Courthouse and the Butterfly Garden at the Kerrville-Schreiner Park. In conjunction with other Master Naturalists, Richard is developing a "small plot gardening" model for planting native plants that encourage the proliferation of pollinators in urban gardens.



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Milestone Highlights (continued)

Robin May, Class of 2014, was recognized for contributing 250 hours of volunteer service. In Fredericksburg, Robin stocks bird feeders at Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park on a monthly basis. She also writes articles featuring Hill Country wildlife for the monthly newsletter of the adult community where she resides. She also provides Master Naturalist "expertise" to community members who raise questions about the Hill Country's natural environment. Robin also volunteers for many duties at Cibolo Nature Center, including weekly monitoring of Bluebird Nesting boxes. At Cibolo, Robin is also a member of the team which monitors the Blue Heron Rookery on a restricted area of the property. Robin has always been interested in "critters," and was drawn to the Master Naturalist focus on wildlife. She reports that an unexpected but fortunate benefit of the Master Naturalist training was that it exposed her to the complexity of factors which interact in nature, above and beyond its creatures.



Teresa Coleman, Class of 2016, was recognized for reaching the Milestone of 250 volunteer hours. Much of her service has been at the Riverside Nature Center (RNC,) where she serves in a number of capacities. She is there to welcome visitors and provide guidance and information to them. She helps the RNC staff with office duties, answering calls, and helping with a number of projects there. Teresa is also a team member of the Monarch Larval Monitoring Project at the Kerr Wilderness area, where she documents flowers and forbs favored by Monarchs, and monitors the presence of Monarch Larvae and assessing their developmental phase. Teresa also helps with the planting and maintenance of the Pollinator Garden, a Hill Country Chapter Project, located at the Kerr County Courthouse

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 at the Riverside Nature Center at 2:30 on the Monday of the chapter's monthly meeting

From Jim Stanley

Fellow Master Naturalists,

We are planning to hold an AT event this spring on some member's property which will essentially be an LMAP visit conducted in a way that 20 to 25 Master Naturalists can attend to observe what is involved and learn what we do on an LMAP visit and why.

What I am looking for is a suitable property of one of our members on which to hold the event. The conditions I am looking for are listed below. If you have such a property and would be willing to host the LMAP event there, please email me (jstmn@ktc.com) or call me (830-257-2094).

In order to have some diversity of vegetation in a suitable size acreage, I would like the property to have at least two of the following ecological habitats: grasslands, savanna, woodlands, riparian, contained in at least 10 but probably less than 20 acres. The property can be larger, but between 10 and 20 acres is probably as large as can be easily covered by a large group in a couple of hours of walking and talking.

I think April is the best time of year to do this.

The total area should be relatively easy walking; it doesn't have to be flat, but easily accessible for most of our members.

The property should have easy, safe parking for 10 to 20 cars.

Since the visit will probably last at least two hours, some might appreciate an available bathroom.

The property can be either grazed or not, in Ag or Wildlife valuation. Ideally, It shouldn't be in either severely overgrazed condition or in pristine native habitat, as neither are particularly common for LMAP visits.

Jim Stanley
jstmn@ktc.com
830-257-2094





NPSOT Boerne Chapter Monthly Meeting

On Tuesday, March 6, Cathy Downs will be our speaker.
The title of her talk is "Milkweeds are Tricky Business"
Socializing at 6:30pm, program at 7pm
Cibolo Nature Center, 140 City Park Road, Boerne

NPSOT Fredericksburg Chapter Monthly Meeting

On Tuesday, February 27, John Huecksteadt will speak on
"Early Spring Blooms in the Hill Country.",
Social at 6:30pm, program at 7pm
Fellowship Hall of Memorial Presbyterian Church
601 North Milam Street, Fredericksburg

NPSOT Kerrville Chapter Monthly Meeting

On March 13 at 1:30, Ann Brown will be our speaker.
Her topic is "Propagation of Natives."

Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street, Kerrville.

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

From Gracie Waggener

The Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Series
invites you to the second Nature Series Workshop

Birdsongs - Nature's Sweet Tweets (AT 18-043)
March 5, 2018, 10:00 - 12:00
at the Tatsch House
Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park, Fredericksburg

Come and explore our local birds and their songs with our speakers,
Patsy and Tom Ingle who are active volunteers in San Antonio, and at the
Cibolo Nature Center where they are docents, outdoor classroom instructors and citizen scientists.
Birding that started as an interest has now become a passion and focus of their educational and
conservation efforts.

Following their presentation, there will be a hands-on workshop to
learn how to make different suets and bird feeders to take home.

Due to room size, this workshop will be limited to 50 people.
To register, please contact Nancy Person at
nancykperson@gmail.com or 210-913-2443

Recent Hill Country Naturalist Columns by Jim Stanley:

- 1/6/2018 Winter Has Arrived!
- 1/13/2018 Why Birds Matter
- 1/20/2018 Soil: Too Valuable to be Called Dirt
- 1/27/2018 Native Evergreens Help Soften Our Winter Landscape

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

From Scott Richardson

South Llano River State Park to Hold First Annual Birding Festival



South Llano River State Park is excited to announce its First Annual Birding Festival, sponsored by the Friends of South Llano River State Park, to be held Friday, April 27 through Sunday, April 29th, 2018.

The Festival will feature guided bird walks, including Golden-cheeked Warbler walks and Birding the Riparian, and will also offer guided photography sessions in the park's four popular bird blinds. On Saturday afternoon, the festival will offer a live birds of prey presentation by Last Chance Forever, a Bird Call presentation by a young birder, a Beginners' Bird Walk, and vendor and information tables. Sunday morning will include more bird walks and a Big Sit as part of the Great Texas Birding Classic.

More than 250 species of birds have been observed at the park, including sought-after species such as the Golden-cheeked Warbler and Black-capped Vireo, both federally endangered birds which nest in the park. "We are so excited to showcase the terrific birding at our park and its beautiful bird blinds during one of the busiest bird migration weekends of the year," says Park Interpreter Holly Platz. "The park is very unique for birding, because it offers such varied habitat."

During the Festival, guided walks will offer participants a chance at spotting new bird species for their lists, and ample "free time" between walks and presentations will provide visitors with a chance to enjoy the park's popular bird blinds, each meticulously cared for by park volunteers and staff.

"We hope that bringing a festival like this to the park and the city of Junction will highlight the area's biodiversity," says Park Superintendent Scott Whitener. "Birding along the South Llano River is top notch and attracts visitors from all over the world."

Festival registration is \$65 per person, with a maximum of 80 participants. Registration fees will go towards supporting future birdwatching events at the park. For more information about this event and how to register, please see the Festival's Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/slrspbirdingfestival>, or email southllanoriverbirdingfestival@gmail.com for a registration packet.



photo by Dr. D. Hunt

Birding Beyond the Basics

Boost Your Bird Watching Skills!

Learn from some of the best birders in the Alamo region as they present the techniques that have helped them progress from amateurs to expert birders.



Saturday, February 24, 2018

9 am - 12 pm

\$20 members /

\$25 non-members

www.CIBOLO.ORG

140 CITY PARK RD | BOERNE | 830.249.4616



Register
Online!

BIRDS IN THEIR HABITATS

Birds need food, water, and shelter in the spaces they call home. During this workshop you will learn about Hill Country birds and their natural habitats and understand how their basic ecological needs must be met throughout their lives.

Taught by a wildlife biologist, native plant experts and bird enthusiasts, this two-day class includes colorful presentations, lively discussion and field trips on private property. The book "Attracting Birds in the Texas Hill Country" is required for this workshop.



TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY, 9am - 3pm

2/20/18 Bird Ecology and Birds of the Live Oak Savannah with field trip to the Circle J Ranch on the Guadalupe River

2/21/18 Birds of Hill Country Rivers and Creeks and Old Fields with field trip to the Cibolo Preserve.



Rufus Stephens & Jan Wrede, authors of "Attracting Birds in the Texas Hill Country"

Patsy Inglet, bird educator and winner of the William Dutcher Award from the National Audubon Society

Anne Adams, botanist and ecological researcher

Register
Online!

\$60

Limited to 25 attendees

WWW.CIBOLO.ORG

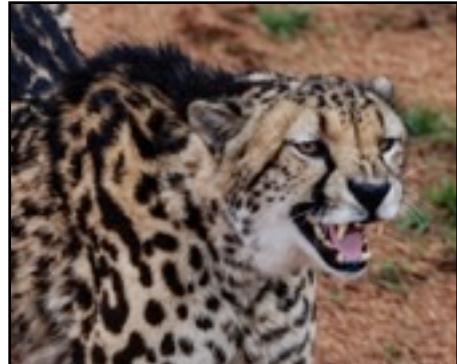
33 HERFF RD | BOERNE | 830.249.4616



From Tiffany Dowell

Texas Landowner's Guide to the Endangered Species Act

Do you have questions about exactly what the Endangered Species Act is and how it applies to you as a private landowner? We've got a fact sheet for that! Dr. John Tomacek, Kathryn Smith-Hicks, and I recently wrote a publication to help landowners get up to speed on the basics of this important, and complex, federal law. Although the title focuses on Texas landowners, since this is a federal law, the fact sheet should be applicable to use and useful for landowners across the country. You can download your copy here!



From Pam Bird

Raptor Rescue

Jan 9, 2018: Matt and I were enjoying our drive home near dusk when WHAM THUNK—a large bird struck the right edge of the windshield. At that speed (50 mph) he had likely died on impact, but we decided to turn around and check. To our surprise, we found a beautiful large red-tailed hawk sitting at the side of the road. As we stared at him, he stared fiercely back but made no attempt to fly. We stopped and pulled off the road opposite the bird, and I got out and approached him slowly. When I got three feet away he spread both wings and jumped once but fell back onto the ground. We knew he was hurt but had no idea how badly.

I approached him again from behind and placed 3 towels over his head and body. He made no further efforts to escape, so I carried him gently to our pickup and placed him in the rear which has a camper shell. The hawk was protected there and confined.

Once we got home, we called a wildlife rescue/rehab 24 hr hotline we found on the internet: Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation, Inc. (WRR) near Kendalia. They agreed to care for the hawk. We delivered him to their facility by 10pm that night. Their initial assessment was hopeful. The bird had suffered no obvious broken bones but did have an abrasion and bruising to the central breast region.

We waited for further news and after 8 days were advised the hawk was recovering well and would likely be released in another 2-3 days. Much to our delight we were allowed a key role in the release. Since we knew exactly where the hawk was injured, we were able to return him to the same area--the ideal of rehabilitation.

So 11 days after the injury, we picked up the hawk, and accompanied by a lovely woman, Charmaine Ganson, who agreed to act as photographer/videographer, we returned the hawk to his natural surroundings. I'll never forget the speed that bird shot out of the crate once I opened the door. He ran about 8 feet then stopped and looked back at me for several seconds before taking flight: a slow 180 degree loop landing in the top of a tall cedar. He rested a few more seconds then flew off again and out of sight.



Of course we'll never be certain of the outcome of our intervention, but I believe the bird had a better chance of recovering from his injuries because of our help and the care given by the WRRI volunteers and staff. His recovery was complete, so he had no reason not to have a good, long life.

Cooperative efforts, individual as well as communal, can lead to positive outcomes and can reinforce continued efforts to support and improve our world.



Schools in Mason and Center Point Win Rainwater Revival Grants to Fund Water Conservation Projects

Managers of the Rainwater Revival School Grant Program were happily overwhelmed with six grant applications from Hill Country schools this year. Though all projects had merit, the three judges made difficult choices and picked two deserving high schools in Mason and Center Point to receive a combined \$4,000 of grant funds.

The school grant program is run in association with the *Rainwater Revival + Hill Country Living Festival*, a daylong educational event that takes place every fall at a Hill Country venue. The festival brings together knowledgeable speakers, demonstrations, products, music, food and children's activities to help citizens and businesses learn how to harvest rainwater, protect the night skies, grow native plants, and steward our region's land and water resources.

At each year's festival, a silent auction of Hill Country-related goods and outdoor experiences generates funds for the school grant program. Since the school grant program began in 2010, 22 school projects for rainwater capture and water conserving projects have been funded. "Water conservation projects give students opportunities to apply the math, science, and economics they are learning in class to real world, practical projects that directly benefit their fellow classmates and communities," said Katherine Romans, executive director of the Hill Country Alliance. "The future of water in the Hill Country will depend on conservation, and by partnering with students and schools we can instill that lesson early."



In Center Point, the High School Agriculture Science class will use their \$1000 to complete a project they began in 2015 to irrigate the community vegetable garden and a planned greenhouse that will serve as a living lab for the entire school district. According to Center Point agriculture science teacher Ryan Balser, "This project was initially funded during the last drought, when the need for rainwater catchment was clear to everyone. When the rains returned, the funding dried up. This Rainwater Revival grant will help us finish the project so that it is in place when the next drought hits. Our students know that droughts are a part of life in the Hill Country and they are thrilled that our gardens and animals won't go without water when the next one hits."



At Mason High School, the Pioneers Youth Leadership class will put their \$3000 grant towards a 40,000 gallon rainwater catchment system that the students have developed to irrigate the school's practice fields, reducing the demand on the community's potable water by an estimated 1 million gallons each year. "In addition to the water savings themselves," added Mason ISD Pioneers teacher Megan Bierschwale, "this project gives our students the opportunity to make a lasting impact on the stewardship of our environment, for the benefit of the whole community. The satisfaction of contribution and responsibility this imparts on the students will stick with them as they grow into adults."

The Rainwater Revival + Hill Country Living Festival is an annual celebration of collection, conservation and common sense. The free event is sponsored by the Hill Country Alliance, and the next event will be held on Saturday, October 20, 2018, at Dripping Springs Ranch Park. For more information: www.rainwaterrevival.com.

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. Visit us at www.hillcountryalliance.org.

reprinted from HCA Neighbor to Neighbor News, January 30, 2018

Attracting Birds

Learn the techniques that have resulted in over 190 species of birds recorded at a single home.

Dick Park, local birder and landowner, will show us how he attracts nesting, migrant and wintering birds to his land.



Saturday, March 3, 2018 9 am - 12 pm
Members \$20 / Non Members \$25



WWW.CIBOLO.ORG

140 CITY PARK RD | BOERNE | 830.249.4616

Monarch Workshop "Train The Trainer"



Saturday, March 17, 2018 9am - 4pm

Learn to speak publicly with confidence to diverse groups on the topics of Monarch conservation and Monarch habitat at a one-day intensive Workshop.

TOPICS INCLUDE

- Milkweed ecology, nectar plants, Monarch Waystations
- Monarch anatomy, biology, lifecycle, and migration
- Monarch threats: parasites, disease, land use, pesticides, etc.
- Citizen Science, communication skills, interpretation, role play.

Each participant will receive a travel drive (a portable USB thumb drive) loaded with a Powerpoint presentation, supporting handouts and resources.

PRESENTERS

Cathy Downs: Monarch Watch Conservation Specialist and Hill Country Master Naturalist

Dr. Kip Kiphart: Monarch Watch Conservation Specialist, Monarch Educator since 2002, Texas Master Naturalist and member of Bring Back the Monarchs to Texas Committee.

Craig Hensley: Park Interpreter / Resource Specialist at Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek State Natural Area with a lifelong passion for monarchs and other things natural.

Registration Required - Space is Limited - \$30

Register Online www.Cibolo.org

Bring Your Own Lunch



MONARCH
JOINT VENTURE



www.Cibolo.org

140 City Park Rd, Boerne TX 830-249-4616



From Martha Miesch

Planting Seeds, Up Close and Personal

Master Naturalists volunteers Chris Lienhard, Martha Miesch, and John Sloan helped our program leader, Julie Clay, set up the classroom and listened to her explanation about collecting seeds, how seeds are distributed in nature, and gleaning seeds from frostweed, cowpen daisy, and standing cypress. Julie had a collection of various teaching tools in a box that was fascinating to us.

When the students entered the classroom, Julie started the lesson on seeds by beginning with showing them various types of seeds. She had a jar that contained what she called "helicopter seeds," like antelope horn that become air born and fly away when the shell containing seeds cracks open. Another jar contained acorn seed that she called "stowaway seeds"; we see them on walnut and pecan trees. Another jar contained a "hitch-hiker"; that could be any kind of seed that you could pick up on your shoe. A "hidden treasure" might be a Gregg's Mist Flower.



Each of the students got a pile of sample seeds on a paper plate and a folded paper packet to carry their collection of seeds home. We talked to them about a good way to distribute seeds at their home and be sure they made contact with soil.

From Lucy Griffith

The View From Rusty Bend



Sepia Guadalupe

Midnight Games

Orion is

winter's gymnast, his

handsprings

span the vault of heaven—

his saltos plant starry kisses

on the beam of the ecliptic—

east to west each night, he hurls an aerial,

then sticks a landing—

At the other edge of earth,
the sun rises, applauds—
awards a perfect score

In January, Rusty Bend is held in winter's trance. As if a wand was waved, a color extractor, leaving behind a landscape barren, washed in tones of sepia and gray. I find myself "stalking the gaps" as Annie Dillard would say, looking for newness in the big reveal. The river is one place to look. A fish-full aquarium, each rock is edged with light and clarity. After calling to them for months, at last the ravens know my walks and "be-caw" back to me. I see them stalking the dry bushes, hoping to flush a late season grasshopper. The Frostweed decorates the ground like so many rolls of toilet paper before a high school game.

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This time of year my relationship to the sun seems to change. No heat in the air, no warmth in the dirt, it becomes a more intimate affair. The rays of the sun feel like an arm around my shoulders, thawing me on each hike. Heat that helps me let go of January's less pleasant accompaniments: taxes, flu, cedars that need to be lopped. The neighbor's horses must feel the same, after each frigid night, they nap in morning sun, great puddling mounds of vulnerability.

When the sun goes down, however, the stars at night are big and ...well, you know the rest. I step outside each evening, padded with down, to say good-night. Constellations roll across the sky like stories waiting to be told. The rise and set of big moons are punctuation. In clear air, the stars belly up to the bar of the horizon. Early morning coffees are a simple pleasure shared with streaking meteors. The nighttime landscape is full, as if to balance the bare and spare views of a winter's day.

January is a time for contemplation, to tend my inner world a bit, come home to myself. In the quietude of deep winter, at the end of the year's cycle of growth and decay, January rings a bell inside my ribs.



Frostweed on a VERY cold morning

Poem, essay and images by Lucy Griffith Copyright 2018

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 .

Save the Date!
Spring Native Plant Sale & Earth Day Festival
Riverside Nature Center, Kerrville
Saturday, April 21, 2018, 9am - 2pm

Co-sponsored by
Native Plant Society of Texas Kerrville Chapter
and Riverside Nature Center

Native wildflowers, shrubs, grasses, and small trees will be available.

Plants are sourced from local nurseries.

Earn TMN volunteer hours by helping with the event.

Email Sharon Hixson if you would like to volunteer –

sharonhixson859@yahoo.com

Watch for more information in the March and April newsletters.

Advanced Training

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21 1-2:30PM WEBINAR

AT18-040 WCS CLIMATE ADAPTION FUND: SUPPORTING PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS
The fund supports innovative approaches to help wildlife and ecosystems respond to climate change.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21 -1-2:30PM WEBINAR

AT18-051 IT'S NOT A DISEASE (OR IS IT?)

Dr. Carrie Harmon will address managing tree and forest health in palms, pines, and more.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21 10-11AM WEBINAR

AT18-054 USING PROVENANCE TEST DATA TO GUIDE SEED MOVEMENT IN A CHANGING CLIMATE
Dr. Laura Leites will discuss how new analyses can inform seed movement in a changed climate.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22 1-5PM KYLE CITY HALL, KYLE

AT18-022 RAINWATER HARVESTING AND TURF MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Design and installation of residential rainwater harvesting systems and appropriate turf and landscape species based on local conditions. The same program will be given the following day in San Antonio. Seating is limited; preregister at <https://hlhw.tamu.edu/workshops/2018/kyle/>.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24 9AM-2PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER, BOERNE

AT18-025 BIRDING BEYOND THE BASICS

Tom and Patsy Inglet will present the techniques that have helped them progress from amateurs to expert birders. Cost: Members: \$20; Non Members: \$25. For more information, contact Ben Eldredge ben@cibolo.org or 830 249 8616. To register, go to <https://cibolo.org/presencehost.net/experience/events/calendar.html/event-form/birding-beyond-the-basics/26742/tickets> .

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24 8AM-3PM LADY BIRD JOHNSON WILDFLOWER CENTER , AUSTIN

AT18-019 NPSOT SPRING SYMPOSIUM

Pre-registration is required; for more information, go to state@npsot.org or call 830-997-9272. Cost, \$60; \$50 for members; includes a light breakfast, box lunch, and Wildflower Center gardens access.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26 7-8PM UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUTHORITY LECTURE HALL, KERRVILLE

AT18-050 HILL COUNTRY MASTER NATURALIST LAND MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Jim Stanley will discuss the need for this 14-year-old program, its history, the procedure for visits, and its accomplishments at our chapter monthly meeting.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27 6:30-8PM MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FELLOWSHIP HALL, FREDERICKSBURG

AT18-046 EARLY SPRING BLOOMS IN THE HILL COUNTRY

John Huecksteadt is the speaker at this monthly meeting of the Fredericksburg Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27 1-2PM WEBINAR

AT18-057 ON THE WINGS OF MONARCHS: A 10,000 FOOT VIEW OF SPECIES CONSERVATION

Wendy Caldwell, Monarch Joint Venture Coordinator, will describe the conservation goals for monarchs in North America and a broad scale approach for engaging partners to help achieve those goals, from the perspective of the national Monarch Conservation Implementation Plan.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27 6-7PM WEBINAR

AT18-035 GROUNDWATER/SURFACE WATER AND FRESHWATER INFLOW

The TX Waters Certification Training session relates to material from Chapter 8: Human Caused Instruments of Watershed Change and Chapter 9: Texas Water and Planning, of the textbook *Texas Waters: Exploring Water and Watersheds* textbook.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28 7-8AM WEBINAR

AT18-041 THE LATEST ON THE CARBON MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION TOOL

Kari Cohen and Adam Chambers will speak on the latest news about the COMET suite of tools and how to implement this technology into the conservation planning process.

WEDNESDAY - FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 2 3:30-5PM AUSTIN

AT18-044 TEXAS LAND CONSERVATION CONFERENCE, AUSTIN

This is the meeting for persons interested in learning more about land and water conservation. Cost: \$375.00 Register online at <https://www.regonline.com/builder/site/default.aspx?EventID=2026082>.

THURSDAY, MARCH 1 12-1PM WEBINAR

AT18-016 NATIVE VEGETATION INVESTMENTS PAY CONSERVATION DIVIDENDS

Jef Hodges, National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative's grasslands coordinator, will address scientific research applied throughout the tall grass prairie and southeastern grasslands regions.

FRIDAY, MARCH 2 9-11:30AM ALBERT AND BESSIE KRONKOSKY STATE NATURAL AREA, PIPE CREEK

AT18-061 GOLDEN-CHEEKED WARBLER SURVEY TRAINING

This training is for those who will be surveying at ABK SNA for the 2018 season. Field training will follow the classroom portion. Please wear clothing appropriate for the weather and hiking the trails. To register, email Tara Randle at tmrandle@swbell.net.

SATURDAY, MARCH 3 9AM-12PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER, BOERNE (CNC)

AT18-056 ATTRACTING BIRDS WORKSHOP

Dick Park will show how he attracts nesting, migrant and wintering birds to his land. Cost: Members, \$20; Non Members, \$25. Register at : www.cibolo.org or at the door.

MONDAY, MARCH 5 10AM-12PM LADY BIRD JOHNSON MUNICIPAL PARK, FREDERICKSBURG

AT18-043 BIRDSONG, NATURE 'S SWEET TWEETS

Tom and Patsy Inglet discuss and conduct a hands-on workshop on bird feeders and making suet. Limited class size; contact Nancy Person at nancykperson@gmail.com or 210-913-2443.

TUESDAY, MARCH 6 7-8PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER, BOERNE

AT18-058 MILKWEEDS ARE TRICKY BUSINESS

Cathy Downs will discuss local milkweeds and how to take the mystery out of propagating milkweed at the monthly meeting of the Boerne chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas.

FRIDAY, MARCH 9 8:30AM-4:30PM MCKENNA EVENTS, NEW BRAUNFELS

AT18-047 SECRETS IN THE GARDEN: NATIVE PLANTS AND POLLINATORS

Dr. Benjamin T. Hutchins, Craig Hensley, Cathy Downs, and Nyta Brown are the presenters at the Seventh Annual Spring Gardening Seminar. Cost, \$55, includes lunch. Register online at the Comal Master Gardeners Website: <http://txmg.org/comal/events/seminar> by February 22.

THURSDAY, MARCH 15 7-9PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER, BOERNE

AT18-012 THIRST FOR NATURE: BATS

Fran Hutchine of Bat Conservation International will discuss the more than 1300 species of bats that are vital to the health of natural ecosystems and human economies. Tickets: Adults: \$10, CNC&F Members: \$8, Children: \$5, Kids 6 & Under: Free. Purchase online or at the door.

SATURDAY, MARCH 17 1-2PM RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER, KERRVILLE (RNC)

AT18-060 CULTURAL LEARNING AND THE CLOVIS COLONIZATION OF NORTH AMERICA

Dr. Michael J. O'Brien, Provost, TAMU-San Antonio will speak what's been learned through models grounded in evolutionary theory and modern analytical methods.

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.

T E X A S



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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Questions about our chapter?

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