

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the
Texas Master Naturalist
Hill Country Chapter

November 2018 Volume 16 Number 11



November 26 Meeting: Volunteer Opportunities in Wildlife Management



Jeff Forman is a wildlife technician who was raised in West Texas and has been with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for 13 years. He now lives and works on the 5300 acre Mason Mountain Wildlife Management Area and will focus on volunteer opportunities there. The monthly meetings of the Texas Master Naturalist Hill Country chapter are free and open to the public. We meet in the Upper Guadalupe River Authority's Lecture Hall, 125 North Lehman Drive in Kerrville. Socializing begins at 6:15; the program starts at 6:45.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Lisa Flanagan

Hello everyone!

I think Fall and approaching Winter are actually in our sights. We have experienced some cooler temps that have me smiling!

At the end of October the Texas Master Naturalists held our Annual Meeting in Georgetown. It was special, as Michelle Haggerty, State Coordinator, AND our chapter sponsor, as well as Mary Pearl Meuth, Assistant State Coordinator, set up and successfully executed a memorable experience for us all. We saw the history of the MN organization unfold, and shared this with most of the 48 chapters in the state. It was great to see others from all over, and see the enthusiasm of their members, and see what some of their projects have been. There were around 150 opportunities for field trips and lectures on a wide variety of subjects (ATs, ATs!) There were photo and art contests, and video and project contests. One of our own, Amanda Martin, won third place for one of her photos. No small feat; you should have seen all of the many entries that were voted on by the Master Naturalists present. Kip Kiphart was recognized for 20,000 hours of volunteering! Congratulations, Kip! We are proud to claim Kip as one of our own.



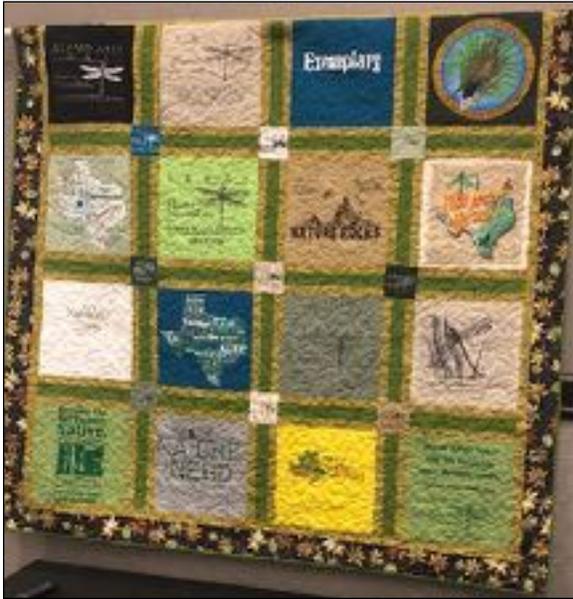
Next year, October 18-20, 2019, our Annual Meeting will be held in Rockwall, Texas, near Dallas. Start planning now, save your pennies, set up your roommates and carpools. We had 19 of our own in Georgetown...we would love to have double that in 2019! This meeting had over 700 in attendance—the most ever. Let's watch it grow!

Remember to put our Holiday/Volunteer Recognition Party on your schedule. December 8, 2018 from 11:00 to 2:00 at the YO Hotel in Kerrville. Cost is \$25 per person. I will have a table at the November chapter meeting where you can pay for your reservation, and remember to let me know if you need a vegetarian/vegan meal. You can also send your check to our PO Box 293972, Kerrville, TX 78029, made out to HCMN, to be received by November 30th. This is always a fun time, so please plan to attend.

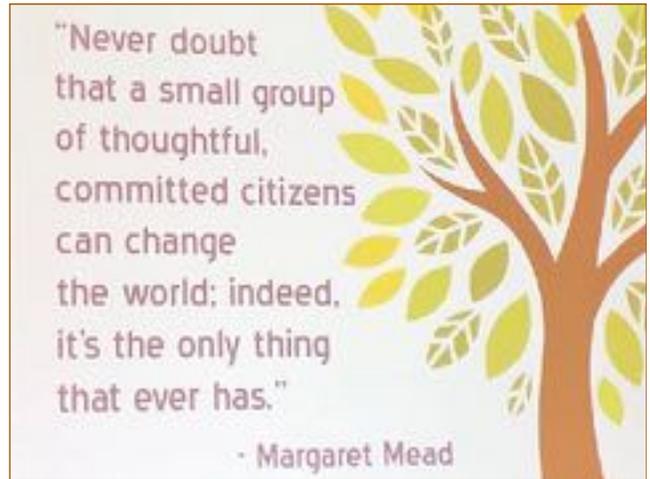
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This year we are including a silent auction as part of the festivities. Katy Kappel is heading up this effort, so please call her with any contributions at 512-589-1498. Of course, there will be door prizes. We want to make the season merry. I look forward to seeing you at the Chapter Meeting!

Here are some of my photos from the annual meeting.



A quilt crafted from chapter t-shirts was on display; ours is on the bottom left.



A large version of this poster was also on display.



Michelle Haggerty, Kip Kiphart, and Mary Pearl Meuth



Amanda Martin, with prize-winning photo



We couldn't get quite all of our members together, but here are most of us.

This Month We Honor



Initial Certification

Anna Orsak

Recertifications

Kris Bobbitt, Rick Harter, Sarah Hilburn, Sharron Jay, Jim Jones, Jerry Kerr, Lenore Langsdorf, Becky Leal, Nancy Person, Linda Ross, Charles Smith, Nina Wagner

Milestones

Cathy Binney, Catherine Gauldin, Dora McDaniels, Linda Myers, Joyce Studer - Bronze Dragonfly, 250 hours

David Davies - Brushed Silver Dragonfly, 500 hours

Kris Bobbitt - Gold Dragonfly, 1000 hours

Robert Binney - Polished Silver Dragonfly, 2500 hours

Julie Clay - President's Volunteer Service Award, 4000 hours

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 El Sombrero, 303 S.Sidney Baker St. in Kerrville, at 4:30 and order dinner if you wish.



Congratulations to members who received awards at the October meeting:

From left to right:

Laura Grant, Nancy Grimes, Nancy Kerr, Carl Luckenbach, Barbara Marquer, Roger McRoberts, Greg Walton, Regina Wheaton, Amanda Martin, Martha Miesch

Edwards County Resident Honored for Volunteer Service



Edwards County resident Amanda B. Martin received recognition for achieving the Milestone of 250-hours of volunteer service at our October chapter meeting. Amanda, a member of the Class of 2017, has volunteered in multiple projects and activities in the Hill Country area. At Lost Maples State Park in Vanderpool, she has assisted with traffic coordination during peak season hours. She has also worked on maintaining the pollinator gardens at the Fredericksburg Nature Center, has helped students and faculty at the Texas Tech University (Junction) Outdoor School, and has served as an interpretive guide for Mexican Free-Tail bat emergencies at both Devil's Sinkhole Natural Area in Rock Springs and at Old Tunnel State Park in Kendall County. Amanda says she is pleased to be able to contribute her time to the worthwhile projects that help to keep our Hill Country beautiful and appreciated.

Recent Hill Country Naturalist Columns by Jim Stanley:

- 10/6 What Happened to All the Critters I Used to See?
- 10/13 Musings About Changes in the Way We Farm, Ranch, and Eat
- 10/20 Galls: Strange Growths on Trees and Other Plants
- 10/27 Feral Hogs: A Growing Problem in Texas

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

Fall's Bounty of Butterflies

We tend to think of butterflies as creatures of the spring and summer. But occasionally, fall brings us spectacular displays. One fine autumn afternoon in early November after our abundant rains and before our first freeze, I passed by a single clump of cowpen daisies and was stopped dead in my tracks. In addition to the loud buzzing of dozens of honey bees, carpenter bees, and mason bees, there were no less than nine different species of butterflies (Order: Lepidoptera) nectaring on the flowers! I stood transfixed as they darted from flower to flower, and then from clump to clump of the luscious bright yellow flowers. I began to count the distinct kinds of lepidopteran visitors.

There was one lovely female (1) Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*), fueling up before continuing her flight down to Mexico to spend the winter. Just above her, an (2) American Snout (*Libytheana carinenta*), with his distinctive elongated mouthparts, dined—almost in the shade of a hackberry tree, the host plant for its young. They had recently been seen in small swarms in the area, though at times their swarms are so dense it is hard to drive through them. A diminutive (3) Gray Hairstreak (*Strymon melinus*) rubbed its wings together in anticipation of the fine nectar awaiting it, while a (4) Common Checkered-Skipper (*Pyrgus communis*) greedily defended its flower. A stunning moth with wings of shimmering white organza edged with dark gray (5) (*Diaphania hyalinata*) made an early appearance at the feast and was joined by a beautiful friend with an ugly common name, who had creamy alongon lace insets setting off the pearl gray of its wings (6) (*Spoladea recurvalis*, the Hawaiian Beet Webworm Moth). A (7) Queen (*Danaus gilippus*) drifted over from the nearby Gregg's mistflower and was joined by a pair of (8) Red Admirals (*Vanessa atalanta*), who shared a single flower for a while. One of my personal favorites, the (9) Common Buckeye (*Junonia coenia*), whose looks are anything but common in my opinion, made an appearance. A tiny (10) Pearl Crescent (*Phyciodes tharos*), with its intricate pattern of orange, cream and gray-brown made room on its bloom for a (11) Clouded Skipper (*Lerema accius*). Meanwhile, two fine fat caterpillars, one a yellow and black horizontally striped owlet-moth youngster (12) (*Basilodes chrysopis*) and the other a three-inch-long blackish-green fellow with two yellow stripes running the length of its body (13) (the Yellow-striped Armyworm Moth, *Spodoptera ornithogalli*) dined on the buds and the leaves, respectively.

I followed a (14) Variegated Fritillary (*Euptoieta claudia*) to another clump of daisies, close to a wide swath of scarlet sage. There I found its cousin, the (15) Gulf Fritillary (*Agraulis vanilla*), letting the late afternoon sun illuminate the silvered patterns of its hind wings. Amongst the brilliant red flowers of the sage, another group of winged beauties awaited me. The yellow and black of the dancing (16) Southern Dogface (*Zerene cesonia*) butterflies made a beautiful contrast. Smaller (17) Sleepy Oranges (*Eurema nicippe*) drifted dreamily from flower to flower, while two larger (18) Cloudless Sulfurs (*Phoebis sennae*) floated by, joined together. To my amazement, 5—yes, really—5! (19) Pipevine Swallowtail (*Battus philenor*) butterflies visited the nectar-rich sage flowers. Two females concentrated on nectaring, while three males fluttered around them attempting to capture their attention. Since many butterflies pass the Texas winters in caterpillar form, fall is a time for romance! I know you probably think that I am making all of this up, or at least giving you a composite of several days or weeks, but I promise you that this all happened on November 5, 2018 at my place in southern San Saba county. I can show you the dates of the photos on my phone. Let me get go get it—oh look, there's a butterfly... gotta go!



Female Monarch & American Snout



Diaphania Moth



Owlet Moth Caterpillar



Interested in volunteering at Lost Maples State Natural Area this fall? The Friends of Lost Maples is looking for Master Naturalists to help out in the park during the busy fall season. Opportunities include greeting visitors and handing out maps, watering and fertilizing trees, trail maintenance and cleanup, recycling, assisting and informing visitors about the park's many features, and many other tasks. This is a chance to see and assist at one of Texas' most beautiful and best-loved parks, located on the Sabinal River in Vanderpool. For more information contact Greg Walton, Friends of Lost Maples at gregwalton12345@gmail.com, or contact the park directly at 830-966-3413. See you there!

WELCOME

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 Richard Coleman, PGARP Coordinator

Pollinator Garden Assistance and Recognition Program

As a Hill Country plant novice I followed the “wrong plan” due to lack of knowledge and understanding when I started landscaping our new home in early 2016. We’ve all heard the tales of folks moving to the Hill Country, bringing their Houston or Dallas landscaping mindset, removing existing native plants, and replacing them with invasive or tropical species from home—only to have them fail because of different water, soil, or sun conditions.

My first volunteer hours were spent at the Kerrville-Schreiner Pollinator Garden with Cathy Downs and Larry Eskridge. This exposed me to a new variety of plants. My wife Teresa and I also volunteer at the much smaller Kerr County Courthouse Pollinator Garden under the leadership of Pam Lienhard.

The garden is at the east side entrance to the courthouse and is viewed by everyone coming and going through that side of the building. It never fails that some folks will stop to inquire about the plants and pollinators as they come by. Everyone seems curious and complementary of our efforts. I discovered that NPSOT members and Master Naturalists really love to talk to people about plants and pollinators.

I wanted to find a way to harness all that knowledge and promote and recognize people's contributions to making sure we had pollinators to keep our food sources thriving, even in a small way, and assumed this type of program existed already. I discovered there were all kinds of programs out there but they were usually local and fragmented. The Monarch Waystation and Monarch Corridor were the closest programs I found, but they are solely focused on Monarchs and more rigorous than I envisioned. The Wildscape program was similar to what we envisioned but had gone dormant after state funding cuts. I was particularly drawn to the pollinator corridor concept, even though I-35 has claimed that title. The plan that we developed uses small plots of native plants, and includes homes and home owners associations as well as schools, apartment complexes, and businesses.

Our courthouse team—Donna Dutton, Mary Frushour, Elaine Horobec, Alan Howard, Pam and Chris Lienhard, Clarence and Margaret Reed, and Maura Windlinger—started talking about ways to use that garden to inspire local folks to plant for pollinators. Our plan was to establish a network of volunteers in our chapter area that could advise urban and suburban gardeners about which native plants might thrive in their gardens, attract local pollinators, and provide an attractive, low maintenance, and low water consumption garden year round. We also wanted to recognize gardeners who had already established plots of native plants that provide nectar and habitat for native and migrating species of bees, butterflies, moths, birds, beetles, and other insects.

Our secondary goal was to provide knowledgeable volunteers who reach out to local groups and institutions to educate people about the importance of native plants and habitat in our unique Hill Country environment. The program could also recruit for our local organizations. After hours of group meetings, email discussions, and data collection, we had a program outline and our website content established.

The next step was to go before the boards of each of the four entities for approval and request funding. We received modest funds from the Kerrville, Boerne, and Fredericksburg NPSOT chapters. Our Webmaster, Kristie Denbow, used our content for a website and designed a rack card and banner for printing. Chris Anderson, Diana Armbrust, Brenda and Gary Fest, Lisa Flanagan, Veronica Hawk, and Clarence Reed were instrumental in championing the program and getting their respective boards' approval. We designed a Certificate that would be presented at local chapter meetings and produced an attractive Garden Plaque that could be purchased for garden fences for \$25.00.

Since this type of program would be most successful in growing urban and suburban areas where new people are relocating, we wanted to focus our attention on the three largest cities in our chapter area. Rachel Thompson in Boerne and Joyce Studer in Fredericksburg are the Volunteer Coordinators for those two cities and have recruited volunteers to go out on site visits. We are still looking for someone to take up the torch for Kerrville. Since the website went live in May, we have received 22 Site Visit requests in six counties and presented or had a table at 14 events, with two presentations already scheduled for next year. Overall the program has been a modest success.

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With the cooler temperatures we predict everyone's attention will turn towards family and the holidays. We plan to have a group meeting in January to review the program and see what areas need to be tweaked or modified to improve the program and expand our volunteer network. At last month's State Conference I met with members of the South Texas Border Chapter who have expressed interest in adapting the PGARP program for their very different, but equally important, region. We are hoping to get other chapters around the state interested in molding the program for their own area as well. For complete information go to <https://txmn.org/hillcountry/pgarp/> . Or, contact us at PollinatorChampion@gmail.com .

From Martha Miesch

Nature Study at the Kroc After School Program

On a rainy day, Marsha Baumann, Teresa Coleman, Chris Lienhard, and Martha Miesch collectively helped the second and third graders to look carefully at leaves of native trees and shrubs that had been collected earlier at the Riverside Nature Center and at a Master Naturalist's home. All had been identified as Burr Oak, Chinquapin, Anacacho Orchid, Elm, Pistachio, Desert Willow, etc.

The students were provided with sheets of leaf shapes and actual leaves and a large sheet with the names of some of the leaves they chose to place on their sheets. What the students came up with, using crayons, colored pencils, and felt pencils, was amazing.

Our goal was to emphasize the distinctive differences in species of native trees. One of the clever young artists placed a leaf under the art sheet and went over the grains of the leaf with a crayon to create a beautiful image of the leaf. Nature can be artistic if we open our eyes to it.



The View from Rusty Bend



Fog web view, river on the rise

Kaleidoscope

{kaleidoscope: a group of butterflies}

*Lemony plankton in the wind,
a thousand sulphurs
ride the trades.
Cliff swallows—
seals of the sky, swim
against the tide,
gulping bits of gold*

At Rusty Bend, October was bookended with butterflies. First, snowy clouds of sulphurs, then wild swarms of Snout-nose blew about in their dried-leaf mimicry. They revealed the shape of the air, so that I am reminded that atmosphere is habitat as much as the pasture, the woods, the ponds. As the butterflies rode the wind, I could see its speed and direction. If I were a migrating bird, I could also see magnetic fields. How fine to “see” north and south. I find myself wondering about the Sandhill Cranes and what they see, hitching a ride south, surfing the bow wave of a blue norther.

One morning after a storm, we wake to Swainson’s Hawks perched, bedraggled in the tops of trees around the house. They are a longed-for sight every year and I love it that they find Rusty Bend a welcoming rest stop. They nap in the sun for hours, then drop to the neighbor’s field to pack in some grasshoppers. Next stop—somewhere between here and Argentina.

With great drama, our other habitat makes itself known: the Guadalupe. The river had one of its fastest rises, trapping a friend’s sheep herd and eventually washing them away. Heart-rending to watch. A few survived, but 27 feet of water proved a hostile habitat.

At the railroad bridge, we watch the power of the flood water pounding the edge of the bridge. Two raccoons have evidently hitched a ride on debris, Huck Finning down the river. When the logs catch on the guardrail of the bridge, they hop off, rope-walk the rail to safety. Lends new meaning to riding the rails. Raccoons are smarter than seems reasonable; maybe it’s because they have taste buds in their hands. The water receded as fast as it rose, trapping sunfish in puddles on the bank, a quick meal for critters displaced from their dens.

One night, I hear a fox marching around the house reclaiming her habitat from visiting canines. Cough-bark, 1 2 3 4 cough-yip, 1 2 3 4. Mama and kit circled the house, barking and yipping. Message received..

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Now at last the sun has returned and with it the Monarchs. Many more than last year, which is hopeful. They nectar on Boneset and thrill us with their deep color. A fog of Queen butterflies hovers in the Greg's Mist at the front of our house. There's always a Queen at the door. The Gulf Fritillary caterpillars have decimated the Passion Vine and now in their twisted leaf cocoons, hide from sight.

I am ready to cocoon as well. I'll watch the leaves twist and fall, imagine my worries dropping to rot, to feed the habitat beneath my feet.



A mackerel sky after sunless weeks

Poem, images and essay 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 Mabel. She has just completed the story of the Burro Lady of West Texas, told in poems. Both Lucy and Andy are certified Master Naturalists. Comments welcome at doctorluz@hctc.net.



Advanced Training

TUESDAY, NOV. 20 1-3PM RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER, KERRVILLE

AT18-305 TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR TRANSCRIBING BRIT HERBARIUM SPECIMENS

This workshop provides Hands-on Training for participation in BRIT's digital herbarium project. BRIT (Botanical Research Institute of Texas) has several projects involving citizen scientists. This project is an effort to digitize a very large historical collection of Texas native plant specimens. Bring your laptop and learn how to transcribe digital herbarium specimens. Limited to 15 participants. RSVP to Brenda Fest, the instructor, at brendafest@gmail.com or 830-688-1021.

MONDAY, NOV. 26 6:45-8PM UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUTHORITY, KERRVILLE

AT18-302 MASON MOUNTAIN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Jeff Forman, Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. wildlife technician, will speak on opportunities for volunteers at MMWMA at our monthly chapter meeting.

TUESDAY, NOV. 27 1-2PM WEBINAR

AT18-200 MONARCH CONSERVATION

Where are the Monarchs and Milkweeds? Crowd-sourcing, modeling, and surveying across the West. The presenters are Emma Pelton, Conservation Biologist and Candace Fallon, Senior Conservation Biologist, the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. The Webinar Website is <https://monarchjointventure.org/news-events/news/announcing-the-2018-monarch-conservation-webinar-series>.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 28 1-2PM WEBINAR

AT18-308 STANDARD METHODS FOR SOIL HEALTH INDICATOR MEASUREMENTS

This technical note consists of a group of recommended standard methods for soil health indicators selected by a collaborative multi-organizational effort. The presenters are Bianca Moebius-Clune, PhD, Director, USDA NRCS Soil Health Division, Washington, D.C. and Diane Stott, PhD, National Soil Health Specialist, USDA NRCS Soil Health Division, West Lafayette, IN. The Webinar Website is <http://www.conservationwebinars.net/webinars/recommended-standard-methods-for-use-as-soil-health-indicator-measurements?sr=wp~mkt-whenPub>.

SATURDAY, DEC. 8 9AM-12PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER AUDITORIUM, BOERNE

AT18-TBA WINTER PRAIRIE BIRDS WORKSHOP

Sparrows, wrens and other birds of the prairie can be among the most challenging to identify. Tom and Patsy Inglet will present the techniques that they use to identify prairie birds by sight and in flight. Cost: members, \$25; nonmembers, \$30. Register in advance at www.Cibolo.org.

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.

From Katy Kappel

Donations Needed

The Hill Country Master Naturalists Holiday/Volunteer Recognition Party will be a luncheon on Saturday, December 8 at the YO Hotel. There will be good food, door prizes, music, skits, and a silent auction.

If you are crafty, please donate a piece of your work or art. If you eat out, please ask your favorite restaurant manager to donate a dinner for two. Or, donate something that is seasonal or nature-related.

Email katykappel@yahoo.com and I will collect the items. All proceeds will go to the HCMN operating account.

T E X A S



We meet on the fourth Monday of most months (but not December) at 6:45 PM in the Upper Guadalupe River Authority Lecture Hall at 125 North Lehmann Drive in Kerrville.

Join us at 6:15 for our social half-hour.

Everyone is welcome.

Texas Master Naturalist mission:

To develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities.

Board of Directors 2018

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The Texas Star is a monthly publication of the Hill Country Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program. News, essays, comments, and ideas are welcome.

Please email them to:

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



Questions about our chapter?

Email Reggie Cox,

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