

# The Texas Star

Newsletter of the  
Texas Master Naturalist  
Hill Country Chapter

October 2019 Volume 17 Number 10



photo by Robert Potts

## October 28 MEETING: RIPARIAN HEALTH - OUR 21ST CENTURY CHALLENGE



Robert Potts, President and CEO of the Dixon Water Foundation, a private foundation supporting healthy watersheds through good land management, will focus on how understanding riparian systems can lead to the restoration of their functionality—to the benefit of landowners, downstream neighbors, municipal water users, and the environment.

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 Lehmann Drive in Kerrville. Socializing begins at 6:15; the program begins at 6:45.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE . . . . Lisa Flanagan

Hello everyone, and happy Autumn!

As our 2019 classes progress, I am reminded of how I felt going through the class in 2013. Wonderful speakers, awesome field trips, great classmates, good food...the list goes on. At the end of classes, many of us felt a void on Wednesdays, no longer having the schedule of great educational experiences. Good news! It doesn't stop there. We learn more as we participate in some of the many projects available to us. Hopefully, many of the new class are already busy doing exactly that. Advanced Training opportunities (AT) come up every week. It's great to take advantage of ATs to learn even more, or to refresh your knowledge in different areas. Never stop learning. Who knows, you may find new interests.

This is a good time to ID grasses, now that they have seed heads that help distinguish them. Grasses are not my strong suit (sorry Jim) and I can only identify a few of them for sure. It is my quest this Fall to do better on that.

The monarchs are coming through. I'm keeping my eyes open in the late afternoons for monarchs that want to spend the night in the leaf clusters of my oak trees. Quite a sight to see when they congregate on flowers by the river and spend time nectaring. I lingered after an outdoor lunch to watch them recently. Please put milkweed and nectar sources in your yard to help this beautiful creature along for its Spring and Fall migrations.

Now that the temperatures are coming down, this is the perfect time to get outside for outdoor projects, planting trees, and enjoying trails and camping, etc. As Texas Parks and Wildlife says...

LIFE'S BETTER OUTSIDE

## This Month We Honor



### Special Recertification

Travis Linscomb, Amy Zesch

### Recertifications

John Adams, Jill Boyter, Koy Coffey, Teresa Coleman, Stephen Dodge,  
Kay Harter, Martha Miesch, Joyce Studer, Francoise Wilson

### Milestone Awards

Donna Dutton, Wendi Leonard - Bronze Dragonfly, 250 Hours  
Catherine Gauldin, Carla Stang, Hal Zesch - Brushed Silver Dragonfly, 500 hours  
Paula Harley, Kay Harter, Susan McKinley - Gold Dragonfly, 1000 hours

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



Mark Richardson, Cecilia Fuentes



Jeanne Bodine, Bob Wiedenfeld, Marion Worthington



Nancy Huffman, Robin Hale, Bridget Langdale, Laurence Doxey

Recent Hill Country Naturalist Columns by Jim Stanley

9/7/19 Coyotes: Rural and Urban

9/14/19 We Need to be Better Citizens of the Earth

9/21/19 Can the World Continue to Feed Everyone?

9/28/19 When is a Bug not an Insect?

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



**NPSOT Boerne Chapter Monthly Meeting**

On Tuesday, November 5, Dr. Norma Fowler, plant ecologist and professor in the Department of Integrative Biology at UT Austin, will speak on "Central Texas Savannas: Fire, Grazing, and Invasive Species. Social, 6:30; presentation, 7:00.

Cibolo Nature Center, 140 City Park Road

**NPSOT Fredericksburg Chapter Monthly Meeting**

On Tuesday, October 22, Dr. David Winningham will speak on "How to Plant a Madrone Tree." Social time with light refreshments begins at 6:30; program at 7.

Memorial Presbyterian Church, 601 North Milam Street

**NPSOT Kerrville Chapter Monthly Meeting**

On Tuesday, November 12, Matt Thurlow will present a demonstration of proper tree trimming. Social time begins at 1:00; the meeting, at 1:30.

Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street

**These chapter meetings are free and open to the public.**





Comfortable talking about the dark night sky and how to protect it? Come to a TRAIN THE TRAINER event on November 14, 8:30-12:00 at Riverside Nature Center. Learn a Dark Night Sky Presentation and leave ready to give one. A full presentation will be given while you take notes. Then, in small groups, you will practice giving the presentation. Leave with a PowerPoint Presentation on a USB drive. Facilitators will be Bridget Langdale, IDA Delegate and Cliff Kaplan, Hill Country Alliance Dark Sky Manager. Registration is needed; limited to ten participants. Contact Bridget at [bsl@rabbit66.com](mailto:bsl@rabbit66.com) or text 325-805-1176.



## Volunteer at Lost Maples

### *The Friends of Lost Maples*

are seeking volunteers to help out in the park this fall. Come help us greet visitors, patrol the trails, answer basic visitor questions, water and fertilize maple trees, or help with the recycling program.

If you're Interested, contact Greg Walton at [Gregwalton12345@gmail.com](mailto:Gregwalton12345@gmail.com) or 512-557-7211 OR Lisa Fitzsimmons, Park Superintendent at 830-966-3413

## The View From Rusty Bend

### *Sky Dancer*

*Texas bird of paradise,  
Scissortail Flycatcher parades his salmon pinks  
announces the end of frosts  
with a two-pronged flash of feathers.*

*Talkative in flight  
as a busy outdoor market,  
they chitter and bargain  
as they fly in groups—a zipper of scissortails.*

*Short-tailed juveniles  
crash mid-air as they hone  
their skills, wild acrobatics  
required for sky dances,*

*where males recruit mates,  
plunging a hundred feet  
trilling and cackling  
to crescendo with back flips just before an auger in.*

*Nest botherers, ravens and hawks, beware.  
These dog fighters will land between your shoulder blades  
adept as jets on a carrier  
with no-one to call the ball.*

*I watch them each spring  
and murmur a prayer—  
if I come back as a bird,  
I'll be one with a footlong scissored tail,*

*writing poems in the sky.*



Scissortail Flycatcher

Image courtesy of Ken Butler

A dry September at Rusty Bend. It seems we live in a donut hole and what little rain there is flows on either side of us. The grass looks like burnt toast and the pasture has a strange smell of desiccated leaves and old straw. Nevertheless, we are entertained. Cedar elms are turning, getting a tinge of turmeric. I walk by two near the house and I hear a waterfall of sound. I check the pump. No, it's the trees. They are so full of pollen and bees they sound like they are about to take off and fly away. Likewise, the cenizo is a symphony of hums, mostly Sonoran bumblebees, as fluffy as kids toys. The spiky spires of Silver Bluestem shine in the sun.

We have plenty of time to observe and hypothesize. Why are ravens acting so differently this year? Usually we see them in pairs, but now whole squads arrive each morning to descend upon the grasshoppers in the neighbors field. Where do they sleep? They squawk at each other and cover the ground in a grid like a search party. Cooperative hunting? Later in the day they will be up riding thermals with the vultures, perhaps poaching some roadkill?

On Andy's bike ride one morning a Red Fox lopes along beside him, with his characteristic white tip of a tail. How do the Gray Foxes feel about this interloper? Is he also surviving on persimmons and their purple fruit?

Another afternoon as I sit quietly, a roadrunner strolls right by me on the porch. A barcode with wings. Looking for water? Lizards? A welcome sight but puzzling in his proximity.

*continued on next page*

If there is a theme it is acrobatics. Lesser Goldfinch put on a performance worthy of Cirque de Soleil as they ride long stems of Zexmenia and Greg's Blue Mist in the wind, twisting, dipping. Their leotards are yellow and black. Dirt Daubers are busy and we watch as sweat bees follow them, hovering like drones. What are they up to? At the other end of the size spectrum, two Great Blue Herons crash land in the cypress. I imagine them discussing the weather or maybe the fishing forecast; then they lift and glide down river. The osprey thinks the fishing is just fine and he lets us know with his loud "scree." One windless day, it is quiet enough to hear a black vulture fly past and weirdly "meow."

I try to save what's left of my crispy garden. Watering one day, I lean over to weed and a fat frog flings himself out from under the bluebells and lands sticky on my chest. Sprong! For a moment, both of us airborne.

As we leave the aerial shows to the critters, Andy and I sit on the porch and speculate, watching old White Nose the armadillo root plow the yard in his wide, armored skirt.

Priscilla's Corner (In Memory of Priscilla Stanley)



*Senna bauhinioides*

*Two-leaved senna*

Poem, second image and essay by Lucy Griffith  
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*Lucy Griffith, PhD co-manages the Rusty Bend Ranch with her husband, Andy Robinson. She also writes poetry; her muse, a tractor named Mabel. The story of the Burro Lady of West Texas, told in poems, We Make a Tiny Herd, has just been published by Main Street Rag. Both Lucy and Andy are certified Master Naturalists. Comments welcome at [doctorluz@hctc.net](mailto:doctorluz@hctc.net).*



**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,.**

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.

## Advanced Training

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22 10:30-11:30AM RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER, KERRVILLE**  
AT19-210 ANOTHER WORLD: VISITING BIG BEND AND GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS PARKS  
Kevin Hartley, a Sierra Club Outings Leader and Wilderness First Responder, will present favorite pictures and maps taken on hikes and drives. Suggested donation for this NEd Talk: \$5.00.

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22 1-2PM WEBINAR**  
AT19-223 ROADSIDE MANAGEMENT FOR MONARCHS  
Alison Cariveau, Monarch Joint Venture Science Coordinator, will discuss the potential for habitat provided by roadside areas. The link for this webinar will be sent via email to registered participants the day prior to the webinar. To register, go to <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSenMfksHrhtxdmn8wgKH5bYjzGcObdy4U3ssfYaAdBzImW51A/viewform>.

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22 6:30-8PM MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FREDERICKSBURG**  
AT19-205 MADRONE LORE AND MORE: HOW TO PLANT A MADRONE TREE  
David Winningham, owner of Natives of Texas Nursery, will share knowledge of how to plant and grow a Madrone tree, although he cautions that nature really is in change of the latter process.

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25 9AM-1PM CASTELL GENERAL STORE, CASTELL**  
AT19-229 WATER QUALITY CITIZEN SCIENTIST TRAINING  
The instructor, Alexander Neal, will show how to use a Probe Core water quality kit to perform tests such as conductivity, pH, dissolved oxygen depth and field observations. All supplies will be provided and no prior experience is necessary. For further information, go to [southllanoriver@gmail.com](mailto:southllanoriver@gmail.com).

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26 10AM-4PM YMCA ROBERTS RANCH PAVILION, COMFORT**  
AT19-226 TEXAS STREAM TEAM CORE TRAINING  
Devan Green will provide the training needed for certification as a Core Water Quality Citizen Scientist. RSVP to [txstreamteam@txstate.edu](mailto:txstreamteam@txstate.edu). For further information, contact Craig Childs at [craigg@ymcasatx.org](mailto:craigg@ymcasatx.org).

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 28 6:45-8PM UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUTHORITY LECTURE HALL, KERRVILLE**  
AT19-221 RIPARIAN HEALTH - OUR 21ST CENTURY HEALTH CHALLENGE  
Robert Potts, president of the Dixon Water Foundation—a private foundation supporting healthy watersheds through good land management—is the speaker.

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5 6:30-8PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER AUDITORIUM**  
AT19-225 CENTRAL TEXAS SAVANNAS: FIRE, GRAZING, AND INVASIVE SPECIES  
Dr. Norma Fowler, plant ecologist and professor in the Department of Integrated Biology, UT Austin, is the speaker.

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14 8:30AM-12:00PM RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER, KERRVILLE**  
AT19-222 TRAIN THE TRAINER ON DARK NIGHT SKY  
Bridget Langdale and Cliff Kaplan will give a Dark Sky presentation and provide instruction on how to give that presentation. Advance registration is required; contact Bridget at [bls@rbbt66.com](mailto:bls@rbbt66.com) or 325-805-1176.

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20 7-8PM SCHREINER UNIVERSITY CCAC BALLROOM, KERRVILLE**  
AT19-214 "SHAKE ALERT": THE EARTHQUAKE EARLY WARNING SYSTEM  
Robert deGroot, a Senior Seismologist with the U.S Geological Survey and ShakeAlert National Coordinator for Communication, Education, and Outreach, will speak live, via Skype.

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 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 2019**

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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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[hillcountrymembership@gmail.com](mailto:hillcountrymembership@gmail.com)

