

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the Texas Master Naturalist Hill Country Chapter

April 2021 Volume 19 Number 4



Image by Vern Crawford
Kerrville-Schreiner Park Pollinator Garden



The April Hill Country Chapter meeting will be a virtual meeting on Monday, April 26, beginning at 6:30.

Go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88596485278?pwd=NWV5NFcwREFDL3hiR1Bnc1A3ejcQT09>

Steve Stoutamire, a retired petroleum geologist and active avocational archeologist, will be our speaker. His topic is "The Rich Archeology of the Hill Country."

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Elsa Roberts

Hopefully, everyone and everything is beginning to recover from the effects of winter storm Uri. The TMN Tuesday presentation on April 13 gave us insight into the tragedies and the triumphs brought about by this uncommon event. The speakers presented post storm data on birds, bats, fish, sea turtles, mammals, plants, and insects. We also learned about the heroes on the coast that rescued and revived over 7000 cold stunned sea turtles. Our Master Naturalists played a significant part in ensuring their survival. If you missed this presentation, you can view it on the State website and still get credit for the 3.25 hours of AT.

Our Covid-19 guidelines have been updated. The main changes are:

1. Face Masks can no longer be required but we still strongly encourage their use. For projects being conducted on sites under the jurisdiction of organizations outside of Texas Master Naturalist authority, volunteers are required to adhere to those organizations' mask requirements. Examples: State Parks, Nature Centers, Schools, etc.
2. Chapters may not develop more stringent policies for their local operations requiring face masks. Example: If you work on a project at a Nature Center and the Center does not require masks, the team leader cannot mandate that the volunteers wear masks if they choose not to. We still strongly encourage their use but individual volunteers have the right to refuse to wear them unless it would violate the Nature Center's (or other locations') rules.
3. Due to HIPAA laws, the TMN Program and local chapters may not restrict, encourage, or deny any chapter members or members of the public from attending functions based on personal medical conditions or treatments, including vaccination status. The vaccination status of any individual (public or internal) shall not be the basis of discussion or determination of procedure or attendance at TMN events, activities and meetings. TMN leaders and volunteers cannot ask members if they have been vaccinated, cannot discourage attendance until vaccination, and cannot change a member's engagement in activities based on vaccination status.
4. We are to follow all federal, state, county, and local Covid guidelines/restrictions before conducting TMN activities. Occupancy limit for in-person meetings shall not exceed one person per 100 square feet of indoor public space to allow for 10 feet of social distance. For outdoor activities, masks are encouraged and social distancing by at least 6 feet.

continued on next page

2020 Against All Odds Pins

The Against All Odds Pins are here. **If you had 8 hours of AT and 1 hour of volunteer service in 2020**, one of these pins belongs to you. Membership Director Carla Stang has made arrangements to distribute these pins along with your certification and milestone pins at various locations. Please see her message in this newsletter explaining where and when you may pick up your pins. The dates and locations can also be found on the HCMN website (<https://txmn.org/hillcountry/>).

Be The Change

Be The Change webinar will be on April 20. You must register for this AT. The link to the registration page can be found on our website's home page. See information on this program on page 4 of this newsletter.



TMN License Plate

We have received word that our TMN license plate will be released soon. We will notify you as soon as we have the release date and instructions on how to obtain them. Please consider purchasing these beautiful plates. ANYONE can purchase this plate and \$22 of each \$30 annual plate fee comes directly back to the Texas Master Naturalist Program for continuing our mission.

2021 Annual Meeting

Mark your calendars. The annual meeting plans are moving forward. The dates are October 21 – 24 at the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport Marriott.

New Organization being formed

Kerr Area Partnership for Preservation (KAPP)

The Mission: To engage our community to protect and restore the natural Hill Country environment.

Kerrville Mayor Bill Blackburn has taken the initiative to convene a coalition of Kerr County organizations and individuals committed to the restoration and preservation of the natural beauty of the area. The current participant organizations are Riverside Nature Center, Kerrville Convention & Visitors Bureau, UGRA, Pint & Plow, KUTS, Kerrville Chapter – NPSOT, HEB Foundation, Kerr County Friends of the Night Sky, Schreiner University, Hill Country Chapter – TMN.

So far, we have developed a name for this organization and a mission statement. A Facebook page is in the process of being set up and a logo will be decided on.

Our next KAPP meeting is coming up, so I will be able to share more information with you next month as we plan how to accomplish our mission.

This Month We Honor

Recertifications



Janis Arterbury, Stephen Bishop, Larry Eskridge, Gary Fest, Cecilia Fuentes,
Sarah Hilburn, Molly Hauk, Nancy Huffman, Chris Keating, Bridget Langdale,
Sandy Leyendecker, Pat Lucas, Kim Ort

Recent Hill Country Naturalist Columns by Jim Stanley

- 3//6/21 Riparian Areas: Sensitive, Fragile, Beautiful, and Vital
- 3/13/21 Mighty Oaks From Little Acorns Grow
- 3/20/21 The Natural Food Web: All Things Are Interconnected
- 3/27/21 Which is More Important, Plants or Animals? Answer: Both

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

From Sheryl Pender, 2021 Class Director

We are in Week Eight of the New Class Training Course. Pat Lucas, Class Committee Photographer, and Catherine Gauldin are posting photo stories of almost every session on our chapter's Facebook page. Those pictures are worth thousands of words to those who might be curious about what goes on in the training classes.

To access the FB photos, you do not have to have a personal FB account. There is an icon on our website (<https://txmn.org/hillcountry/>) that is a direct link to our chapter FB page.

From Carla Stang, Membership Director

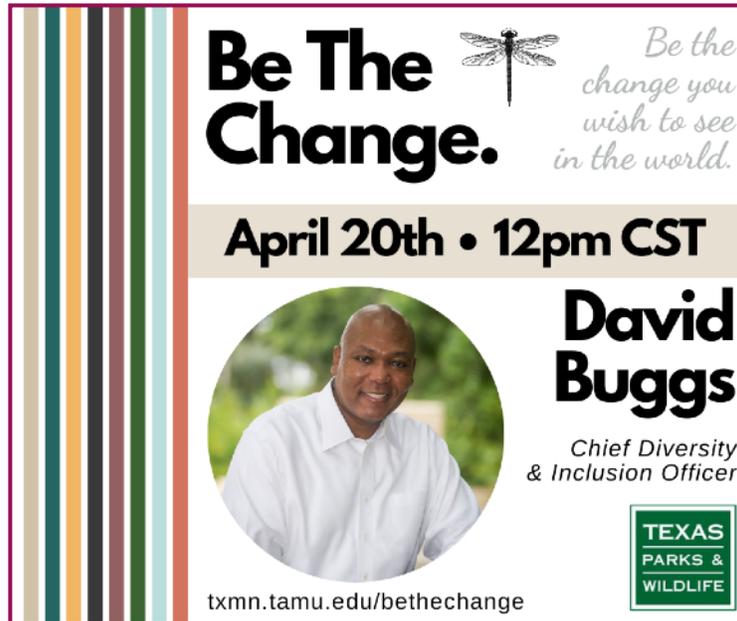
Thanks to those members who have come out to the TMN outreach tables and/or the Plant Sale and got your pins. Over 66 pins were distributed in just two events. Yay! Only 177 more to go...until next month. This number is a moving target and it's my pleasure to have a lot of volunteer pins to give out. It's great to see you all again! There's so much awesome work being done. Watch for email updates and check the HCMN website (<https://txmn.org/hillcountry/>) for updates on TMN Table locations. Lastly, I want to give a shout out to Dot, Anne, and Carra (all from the Class of 2021) for stepping up to help with the TMN outreach efforts.

From Michelle Haggerty, Texas Master Naturalist State Program Coordinator

If you missed the April webinar in our #TMNTuesdays Advanced Training series yesterday – don't worry! The recording of the “**Impacts of Winter Storm Uri on Texas Fish and Wildlife**” is now posted and available on our website, <https://txmn.tamu.edu/tmntuesdays/#april>. You can watch the recording at your leisure.

This “three hour + tour” through February's winter storm event and its effects on Texas fish, wildlife, and other species and resources was a whirlwind of information gathered and presented all in one place at one time with timely, informative, and comprehensive information for all!

From Mary Pearl Meuth, Texas Master Naturalist Program Assistant State Coordinator



The poster features a vertical bar of colorful stripes on the left. The main text reads "Be The Change." in large, bold letters, with a dragonfly icon to the right. Below this, it says "April 20th • 12pm CST". A circular portrait of David Buggs is shown, with his name and title "Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer" next to it. The Texas Parks & Wildlife logo is in the bottom right corner. The URL "txmn.tamu.edu/bethechange" is at the bottom.

Be The Change. *Be the change you wish to see in the world.*

April 20th • 12pm CST

David Buggs
Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer

TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

txmn.tamu.edu/bethechange

Mark your calendars for April 20th, 12pm CST for our next installment in our Be The Change mini-webinar series. We are very excited to host David Buggs, the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer with Texas Parks & Wildlife Department.

The End of Outreach: Recognizing Unmet Conservation Audiences

Tuesday April 20th, 12:00 – 1:30 central

[Register Now](#)

[Register to receive an email with the event link!](#)

The conservation community has come to realize that broadening the audience of people who care about our Natural Resources is important to the relevance, support for, and sustainability of, our ecosystems. Outreach programs have long been a staple of conservation organizations for recruiting new users and creating interest in the outdoors. In recent years, the landscape of our population has become more diverse and more urban. While the broad support for conservation has increased, active conservation supporters have decreased and remained dominated by a mostly white and predominately male constituency. How do we create a paradigm shift to increase the support for conservation without forcing assimilation and without losing current supporters at the same time? The recorded session will be available following the event.



From Kim Keese, Kerr County Extension Office

Beekeeping 101

Did you know:

If you own between 5 and 20 acres & are interested in raising bees, you may qualify for an ag exemption?

Take the course & learn what it takes to become a beekeeper in Texas.

<https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/product?catalog=ENTO-025>

From Leah Cuddeback, Online Outreach & Communications Manager

Hill Country Alliance Fifth Annual Photo Contest

“Solace and Strength: Portraits of Resilience in the Texas Hill Country”

The last year has been unimaginably difficult for so many of us. We have missed milestones and family members, traded neighborly potlucks for Zooms, and seen our worlds upended time and again. Through it all, the rugged beauty of the Hill Country has been restorative, offering calm and solace in a growing din of uncertainty. For the 15th annual Hill Country photo contest, HCA asks photographers to take out their cameras and share their view of “*Solace and Strength: Portraits of Resilience in the Texas Hill Country.*”

This year’s photo contest challenges photographers of all abilities to capture the calm tranquility, gritty resilience, and persistent beauty of the Texas Hill Country. Whether the Hill Country has been a place of solace, solitude, inspiration or comfort for you, all of us have grown in our appreciation for the natural world and its ability to persevere through adversity in the past year. We particularly encourage photographers to consider submitting shots that feature the diversity of the Hill Country, its people, and its future.

HCA’s annual photo contest spotlights the Texas Hill Country’s unique region of pristine springs, sprawling landscapes, diverse wildlife, star-filled skies, multi-generational land stewards, historic towns, and hidden oases. With a rapidly growing population and increasing development coming into the region, many of these special qualities are at risk of being lost forever. As always, we hope the photo contest will allow photographers to share images of the Hill Country they want to capture and protect forever.

The Photo Contest runs from **March 15 through May 31, 2021**. Photographers of all ages and skill levels, from amateurs to professionals, are invited to participate. Winners will receive cash prizes and their photos will appear in HCA’s 2022 Calendar. HCA’s annual Texas Hill Country Calendar features stunning photography from each year’s photo contest. Both the photo contest and the calendar aim to highlight the beauty of the region, provide an informative resource on Hill Country conservation, and inspire folks to learn more and become involved in keeping the natural resources of this unique region intact.

Entering the photo contest is easy. Photos can be submitted online in just a few minutes on our website:

www.hillcountryalliance.org/PhotoContest

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.

From Liz Coon-Nyugen, TAS President-Elect



If you are new to the TAS Field School this year, please tune in!

The Texas Archeology Society has planned an awesome inaugural Virtual Event that is free and open to everyone on Thursday, April 22 at 7pm.

This “Intro to TAS Field School: A Guide for Newcomers” will familiarize viewers with the upcoming TAS Field School that is going to be held June 12-19 in Kerrville. Tiffany Osburn, professional archeologist, long time TAS Member, and Chairman of the Field School Committee, gives a short presentation and leads a panel discussion designed to help prospective first-time Field School Attendees know what to expect in June. She will briefly discuss the archeology, the camping situation, how to prepare, the organized chaos that always is “Day 1,” and the various evening programs planned for the group. Bring your questions—whatever it is you are wondering, someone else probably is as well!

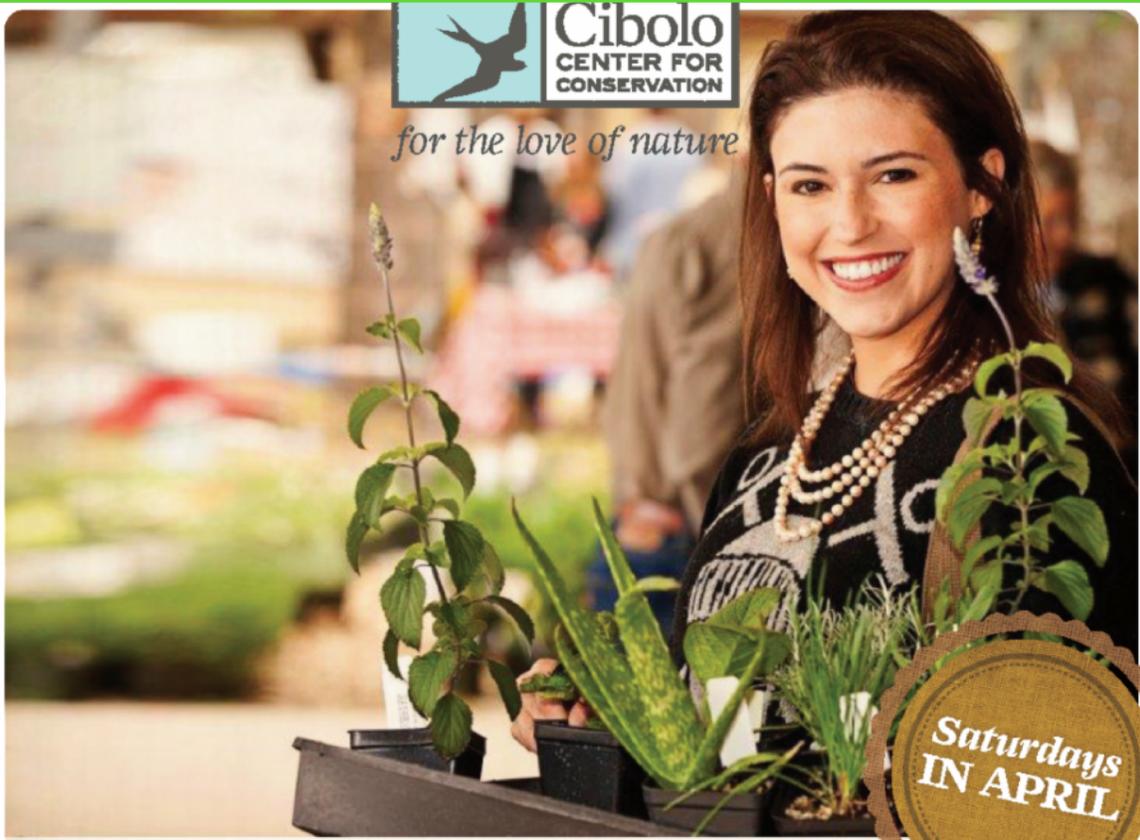
This virtual talk is open to TAS Members as well as the General Public (aka Future TAS Members), and is free of charge. Access is open to all via a LiveStream link on You Tube, and it will be available for viewing after the live presentation has finished.

Hope you can make it -- we look forward to meeting some first-timers and answering those burning questions! If you want to, pull up the You Tube link on Big Screen Smart TV.

<https://youtu.be/DP1x2VTkUtU>



for the love of nature



Native Plant Month at Herff Farm

Buy your native plants and learn all about their many benefits!

DURING THE FARMERS MARKET

April 24 Birds Need Native Plants

April 3
Why Native Plants?

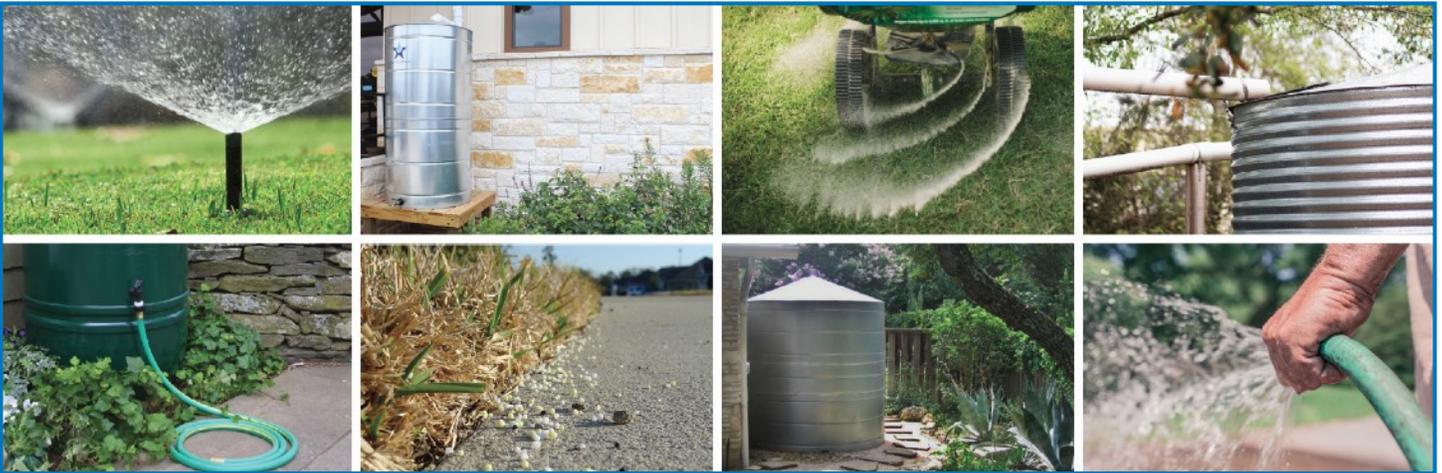
April 10
Creating a Pollinator
Garden Assistance and
Recognition Program

April 17
Starting a Pollinator
Garden

April 24
Birds Need Native
Plants

For more information

www.cibolo.org | nature@cibolo.org | 830.249.4616



Healthy Lawns and Healthy Waters

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's Healthy Lawns and Healthy Waters Program will host a residential rainwater harvesting and turf management training on May 11 for Gillespie, Kendall and Kerr counties.

The free event will be online from 10 a.m.–2:30 p.m. with a half-hour lunch. Online registration is required. Attendees can RSVP online or contact John Smith, AgriLife Extension program specialist, College Station, at johnsmith@tamu.edu or 979-204-0573. Those who RSVP to the event will receive updates, instructions to join the online meeting and materials related to the meeting via email.

The training is offered in collaboration with the Upper Cibolo Creek Watershed Partnership. Attendees can submit a soil test by picking up and dropping their soil sample and Urban Information sheet at the AgriLife Extension offices in Gillespie, Kendall or Kerr Counties prior to or by one week after the meeting. The training will include information on how to understand soil test results and nutrient recommendations so residents can interpret results once the analysis is mailed to them.

RSVP: <https://hlhw.tamu.edu/workshops/2021/may-11-upper-cibolo-creek-watershed-gillespie-kendall-and-kerr-counties/> .

Advanced Training

WE HAVE MORE THAN 45 ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FROM APRIL 20 - MAY 20.

To read the list of dates and titles, go to the Advanced Training calendar at <https://txmn.org/hillcountry/chapter-calendar/>. Chose "Agenda" at the top, right, of the calendar. This will bring up a list of the dates and titles for these events. Then click on any title to bring up complete information on that event.

The View From Rusty Bend



Image by Ken Butler

Wingbeat Atlas

~ at the intersection of biology and metaphor dwell the class Aves

Living sans hands. Light enough
to lift, strong enough to weather
the weather. Hollow-boned,
every feather an airfoil
of hooks and barbs and ridges
defining their dominion.

You will know them by their moves.
Five flaps before each drift
defines Black Vulture.

Cedar Waxwings with their wild
twists tame the air.
Ravens don't fly. Up and over,

and again, they row across the sky.
Meadowlarks stroke madly, then
skid into stubble.

The flit of robin marks him at his perch,
shrugging at interlopers.
Mockingbird herds bugs from the grass
with a winglift and a shoo. Kestrels hover
over voles. The awkward gawk
of Caracara precedes each crashland.

A swoop says woodpecker.
Note the queen of glide, Northern Harrier
as she traces her country with grace.

continued on next page

March at Rusty Bend sends reassurance. From the small but tall nest of Canyon Wrens on the porch to the ravens' armchair-sized bundle of sticks in the cottonwood tree across the river, life's persistence is right in front of us. Regardless of wild weather, the smell of death from frozen deer, bare trees and broken branches, new life is on the way—won't be stopped.

Windflower, in all its purple glory, is the first to pop up. Agarita bushes push forth silky new growth. Salvias green up from dead brown sticks and Live Oak catkins sing of their survival. The bottom branches of Bald Cypress press out their limey needles. As for the Evergreen Sumac and Mexican Elder, we still have doubts and a bit of hope.

A few Monarch butterflies arrive and wander, but there is scant sweetness to feed them. We go down to the river and there they are, sharing nectar with Sonoran Bumblebees on the dependable Mexican Buckeyes. They are wild with pink blossoms.

The welcome songs of White-eyed Vireo and the coach's whistle of Ash-throated Flycatcher announce their arrival. Bluebirds gather strands of grass. The raven courtship has flip-overs mid-air to monitor for raptors.

After a two-year absence, the Screech Owl we call Athena, is back in her nest box. We feel like we've won the lottery, this privilege to observe her every day. Her eyes drift open with each new sound or movement. We're hoping for owlets.

Some days hold good weather for ranch chores, repairing birdboxes, chopping thistle, painting the front gate, even fence work. The right tools, the right temperature, the right company make for satisfaction in troubled times.

After the fierce winds of early March, the poor Canyon Wrens lose their nest. It literally vanishes. A day or two of reconnoitering, and they are back in business, in a protected corner this time. They deep knee bend and sing and gather and sing. We watch as they back each twig into place in their high-rise nest. Their tower of interwoven sticks crowned with cotton is a triumph.

So nature sends her messages. After rough times, we remember her secrets: Find what is blooming. Sing a song of arrival. Green from the bottom up, and if you have to start over, find a safe place.



Poem, second image, and essay by
Lucy Griffith Copyright 2021

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 been awarded the 2020 Willa Literary Award for Poetry as well as the Wrangler Award by the Cowboy Hall of Fame. Both Lucy and Andy are certified Master Naturalists. Comments welcome at lucy@lucygriffithwriter.com.

T E X A S



We meet on the fourth Monday of most months (but not during pandemic) 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 2021

- Elsa Roberts -- President
- Katy Kappel -- Vice President
- Jeralyn Hathorn-- Secretary
- Nancy Scoggins -- Treasurer
- Deb Youngblood -- Advanced Training Director
- Catherine Gauldin -- Communications Director
- Carla Stang -- Membership Director
- Tom Burke -- Volunteer Service Projects Director
- Sheryl Pender -- 2021 Class Director
- Billy Guin -- 2020 Class Representative
- Lisa Flanagan-- Immediate Past President
- Vern Crawford -- State Representative

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:
Lenore Langsdorf, Editor
LenoreLangsdorf@gmail.com

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 Carla Stang
Membership Director
hillcountrymembership@gmail.com

