

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the
Texas Master Naturalist
Hill Country Chapter

January 2022 Volume 20 Number 1



image by Laurel Zydney



The January Hill Country Chapter meeting will be a virtual meeting on Monday, January 24. Kevin Wessels, the Assistant Director of Property Planning and Stewardship at the H.E.B. Foundation, is our speaker. He will discuss the benefits of a dark sky and how to implement night sky friendly lighting on an individual scale as well as at the community level.

Go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86855304074?pwd=UHhWOC9qK1Nqbml2aGZWW0M1TXlWZz09>

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...CARLA STANG

Happy 2022 to One and All!

A big thank you to the outgoing Board members who finished their two-year term (thanks to Covid) and probably are eager to get back to volunteering that may not involve a computer or a meeting: Elsa Roberts, Katy Kappel, Jeralyn Hathorn, Nancy Scoggins, Catherine Gauldin, Deb Youndblood, Billy Guin, and Lisa Flanagan.

And thank you in advance to all the new Board members who have agreed to serve in a Board capacity. 2022 will be an exciting year! Our chapter celebrates its 20th anniversary and there are several others things on the docket to share with you later.

By the time the February Texas Star is published, the Class of 2022 will be underway! The New Class Committee is currently approaching the final leg of executing plans for the course and we're all excited to kick off another class. The class starts on February 22. You will "meet" the students in this issue via their mini biographies. Please welcome them when you see them as they get started volunteering. Also, thanks to the mentors who answered the call (again, for many of them) to help get the students off to a great start as our newest Hill Country Master Naturalists.

On the technology front, I want you to know that several of your board members are working hard to crack the "how to do a hybrid session" nut so we can have high quality simultaneous in-person and virtual chapter meetings. Whether we are dealing with Covid restrictions or not, having a hybrid option is welcome for those who have long distances to travel, especially after dark. If you have talent/skills in technology and would like to help, contact Vice President Frank Garcia (vicepresident@hillcountrytmn.org).

I hope to see many of you out and about on various projects! Thanks to all of you for your continued volunteerism and making this chapter what it is.

This Month We Honor



Special Certification

Alice King

Recertifications

Lisa Center, Richard Coleman, Jane Crone, Laurence Doxey, Laura Grant,
Nash Hardeman, Jeralyn Hathorn, Sharon Jay, Susan Longacre,
Lars Nielsen, Joyce Towers, Kevin Wessels, Bob Wiedenfeld

Milestones

Patrick George - 250 hours, Bronze Dragonfly
Becky Leal - 500 hours, Brushed Selver Dragonfly
Robert Shock - 1000 hours, Gold Dragonfly

From Billy Guin, LMAP Director

The Land Management Assistance Program (LMAP)

The Hill Country Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists offers a land information program to landowners in Gillespie, Bandera, Kendall, Kerr, Menard, Mason, Edwards, Real, Kimble, and San Saba counties. The Land Management Assistance Program (LMAP), is designed to help area landowners manage their land and the plants and animals thereon in a way that is both sustainable long term and consistent with the landowner's goals. Since the program's inception in 2005, TMN volunteers, led by LMAP founder Jim Stanley (now retired), have visited and evaluated more than 44,000 acres in the Hill Country area and assisted landowners with their land use studies.

This free program involves a team of two or three specially trained Master Naturalists visiting a landowner's property, identifying native and invasive plants and grasses, discussing the landowner's goals, ideas, and concerns, touring the property with the landowner, and finally writing a report for the landowner documenting the team's observations and recommendations. In addition, the landowner will be provided with information listing various state agencies and other organizations that can provide further information and services.

Anyone interested in having volunteers from the Land Management Assistance Program conduct a survey of their property can call Billy Guin, the new LMAP Director, at (318) 455-3180, or go to the Texas Master Naturalist-Hill Country Chapter website and request a Master Naturalist Land Management Assistance visit.

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



Texas Master Naturalist Program Temporary Advanced Training Guidelines for 2022

Timeframe: January 1 – December 31, 2022

Conditions: Applies to all Texas Master Naturalists (not just new trainees)

Current 2021 Policy – Continued through 2022 Calendar Year

All eight (8) Advanced Training (AT) hours can be earned through LIVE virtual training sessions where there is a live speaker and open chat/Q&A for student- presenter interactions. This policy will continue through 2022 CY.

Temporary Policy: AT hours can be earned via pre-recorded sessions if there is a follow-up LIVE Q&A with the same speaker(s). Hours for both watching the recording and the live speaker interaction will count as AT.

Not Allowed: NO fully recorded videos with NO speaker interaction. The goal is to allow group discussion with speakers where Q&A happens in a group setting or audience for group learning.

Exception to the Rule – State Office Offerings:

2021 Annual Meeting: Recorded sessions can be watched through April 2022 for AT hours.

2022 TMN Tuesdays & Be The Change: Recorded sessions can be watched for AT hours through the 2022 CY.

Volunteer Service Guidelines for 2022

Volunteer service requirements are NOT changing for 2022.

From Janis Jay Arturbury, Event Coordinator

**LIGUSTRUM REMOVAL DAY AT THE
BANDERA NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM**

January 22, 2022 — Volunteers Needed

DINOSAURS AND INVASIVES! What do they have in common?

11am – 12pm, Bandera Natural History Museum, we are all invited to attend a **Presentation on INVASIVES OF THE HILL COUNTRY:** Environmental and Economic Impact, given by Cheryl Hamilton, co-founder of the Balcones Chapter of the Invaders of Texas Program. (AT will be posted in Jan.)

That same day, a specialist Invasives' Removal team called the SALSA SQUAD (the first job they ever did as a team involved removing a field of Chile Piquin, so just imagine that ongoing work day dialogue!) will be coming in from San Antonio – all Master Naturalist volunteers – **to work 9am – 2pm**, removing a thousand small Ligustrums growing on the Museum grounds' Medina River Tributary bank.

HILL COUNTRY MASTER NATURALIST VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED TO COMPLEMENT THE SALSA SQUAD AND WILL BE WORKING UNDER THEIR DIRECTION, 9am – 2pm. VMS hours will apply.

The beautiful Bandera Natural History Museum is offering free same-day Museum entrance and tour to all MN volunteers, a \$15 value. Please register with the event coordinator at janisjayarterbury@gmail.com.

2022 Great Texas Birding Classic Register Your Team Today!

Now is the time to gather your team and register for the 26th Annual Birding Classic! The event will continue with some of the pandemic-friendly categories developed over the past two years and will also offer some participant favorites that haven't been offered since 2019. So, gather your friends, family, fellow bird or nature club members, and colleagues to join your team.

Registration deadline: April 1

Tournament Dates: April 15-May 15 (your choice of day).

Novice birders, expert listers and everyone in between are welcome! There are many categories to choose from based on your birding ability and region of the state. There are half day, full day, and weeklong tournaments and categories for a "dispersed flock" or an "intact flock" to allow you to bird solo or in a group.

REGISTER TODAY!

Questions?

Email (shelly.plante@tpwd.texas.gov), Nature Tourism Manager, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

From Katy Kappel, Project Leader, 512-589-1498, intheseam@gmail.com

Become an Outdoor Woman (BOW)

TPWD has various programs to encourage participation of underserved populations in the outdoors. BOW, Become an Outdoor Woman, presents workshops at various locations several times a year, by reservation only. Activities include:

- shooting sports (shotgun, rifle, handgun, muzzleloader, archery)
- fishing (rod-and-reel, fly fishing) and water (boating, kayaking, sailing)
- nature and other outdoor activities (birdwatching, astronomy, plant identification, camping, backpacking, survival, etc.)
- Additional classes like horseback riding, boat handling, geocaching, mountain biking, land navigation, trapping, and flytying, may be offered.

The Texas Outdoor Woman Network Kerrville (CC-01-A-DO) was begun in November 2021 to offer many of these activities in our multi-county area, with regular monthly meetings and scheduled activities for women. The mission is: To provide all women the opportunity to experience outdoor activities in a safe, non-threatening, and supportive environment. Master Naturalist volunteers can provide instruction and leadership to the 48 women who have joined the group. Events are posted on the Facebook group: Texas Outdoor Woman Kerrville.

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

TMNT Tuesdays

Welcome to 2022!

The Texas Master Naturalist Program invites you to join us this month, and each month this year, to continue our webinar series - [#TMNTuesday!](#)

On the Second Tuesday of each month at the noon hour (12pm Central Standard Time), the TMN State Office will offer an hour-long virtual advanced training event (sometimes including some fantastic new and returning guest speakers). These will be recorded each month and shared to the [TMNTuesday website](#) by the following day of each month. TMNTuesdays are open to the public – all are welcome to attend. Each person will need to register via the [WebEx registration link](#) listed for that month. Keep in mind that EACH month will have a different registration link & password.

Attending a [#TMNTuesday](#) webinars as a live attendee or watching it recorded post-event can count for AT Hours under AT: TMN Tuesday in VMS. Please work with your local chapter's VMS Admin to log these hours. In order to stay within the 45-Day rule for logging AT hours, please log your hours within 45 days of watching the video. Because [you can view the video after the live event](#), please report the day you view the video, not the original date the video aired.

The TMN Program State Office hosted a "State of the Program" webinar as the opening for the 2022 series. Michelle Haggerty and Mary Pearl Meuth, state coordinators, discussed the program accomplishments of the past year and goals for 2022. Registration link and information below.

Date and time for initial program: Tuesday, Jan 11, 2022 12:00 pm Central Time

Register link:

<https://tpwdevents3000.webex.com/tpwdevents3000/j.php?RGID=rcc77cc4b2dbfd570d20fc428ee4f9bff>

Thanks and see you online!

From Billy Guin, LMAP Director

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From Susan Myers, Monarchs Across Georgia Committee

Journey North: Your Help is Needed in 'Reporting Winter Monarch Citings

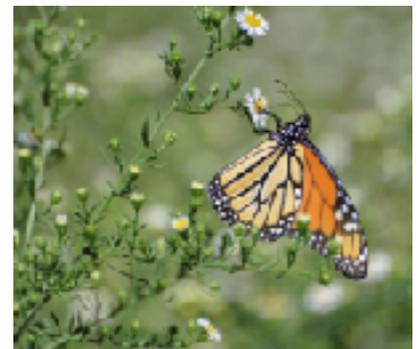
Last winter, volunteers from across the Southeast and Gulf states provided more than 5,800 observations of monarch butterflies. This winter, the partnership of universities, agencies and other organizations called Monarchs Overwintering in Southeastern States is requesting the public's continued involvement in reporting sightings.

The public is encouraged to report monarch sightings from Dec. 1-March 1 in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas.

Observations are entered in Journey North's online data portal, where they are transformed into real-time mapping visualizations of monarch migration and breeding. Journey North is an organization designed to engage people across North America in tracking wildlife migration and seasonal change.

For more details on how to participate, read the full [Press Release](#) from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

Thank you for your efforts.



Texas Master Naturalist Hill Country Chapter Class of 2022



Diana Adams I live in Medina, Texas and am a newcomer to this beautiful Hill Country. I am a retired nurse who worked for 30 years in the surgical service department. I'm happily married to the most wonderful man who is thrilled about me taking this class. I have two amazing sons who are both married and two grandchildren who absolutely love coming out to visit us at our ranch. I have always lived in the big cities but am really excited about this new chapter in our lives. That's why I'm so interested in this class and learning all about our wildlife and our environment. I also look forward to meeting new people and sharing my knowledge and experiences with others.

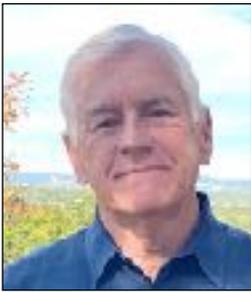
Karolyn M. Andrews I moved to Kerrville in January, to live closer to my father who retired here 30 years ago from the army. Moving often as an army brat, I learned a lot about people and the world, lessons which led me to a BS in psychology at Texas A&M and a doctorate at the University of Chicago. While research proved interesting, I was drawn to teaching and taught science at a preparatory school in Washington, D.C., followed by English in Warsaw. While there, I co-founded an internet company which brought me back to the States, after which I moved to Prague where I ran a diner/bakery and again took up teaching. I was then hired by the State University of New York to run their undergraduate programs offered in Lebanon, and then eventually in Athens, Thessaloniki, Tirana, and Prague. In 2017, I returned to the US and moved to California to work for the UC campus in Riverside. Four years later, I upped sticks again to come to Kerrville, where Schreiner University hired me to implement a STEM grant. As a Master Naturalist, I hope to bring what I learn to as many people as possible, so we can all live in balance with the beauty of the Hill Country.



Ramon Baez I have lived in Boerne for my whole life. I grew up near Cibolo Creek and studied equestrian science and robotics. I became a realtor and I really enjoy exploring the Hill Country as well as other parts of Texas. Fortunately, I acquired five acres in Bandera County at the top of a hill that is decorated with a few Madrone trees that I hadn't been familiar with at lower elevations. I hope to learn how to identify and promote native vegetation around the Hill Country and how to harvest and or repurpose natural resources abundantly available. I also look forward to volunteering whenever possible.

Kathryn Courtney I prefer to be called Kathryn. I live in Ingram. I have a Bachelor of Science in Biology, worked in the oil and gas industry, and then stopped work to raise my daughters. I'm an avid organic gardener and love anything nature related; everything from rocks to birds and butterflies to plants. Because I recently moved to the Hill Country from the Gulf Coast, I need to learn about my new home. The climate, environment, and everything is so different. Our new home is on a hilltop within an almost desert climate. I have a lot to learn and am really excited to begin learning. I love to write and still write for the newsletter of a Seabrook, Texas nursery where I used to work.





Jack Davis In 2020, we moved from Arlington, Texas to our ranch in Bandera County, which we have owned since 1982. I have resided in Houston, College Station, and Corpus Christi. I've been married for 45 years, and have two children. I graduated with a degree in Horticulture from Texas A & M University. I enjoyed a 50-year career in the nursery industry—including growing, retail, and supplier of custom plant marketing programs to support national plant brands such as Monrovia, Lowe's, and Southern Living. I retired in October, but plan on doing some consulting. Our 350-acre ranch and home is in northern Bandera County and contains high limestone bluffs, caliche hills, and bottom land that runs along Mason Creek as well as a seasonal creek that contains numerous year-round springs. My property has wildlife exemption status and I actively practice wildlife management. My particular interest is in the protection and re-establishment of the flora that has disappeared or is disappearing from the Hill Country. I believe this is due to poor land management, invasive species, and of course an overpopulation of specific native wildlife species. It is a challenge, but headway can be made.

Laurie Fondren (she/her) I go by Laurie, although I answer to almost any pronunciation or derivative of Laurie (just because there are so many!). My permanent residence is in Houston, but we spend half of our time (and more and more now that I've retired early) out on our property between Utopia and Vanderpool. We have 148 acres with a house on it that I inherited from my mother. We are planning to switch from an Ag exemption to a Wildlife exemption this spring. I have a good friend who just got her master's degree from A&M in Texas Native Grasses and used my property as one of her thesis projects. My husband and I both grew up spending most of our recreational time on the water but are now loving being on the land and learning more and more about good stewardship and helping others to learn how to adapt to our changing climate.



Kimberly Gardiner I have lived in Bandera County cumulatively for 12 years and in Kendall County for 13 years. I have been a Registered Nurse in the Emergency Room/Post Anesthesia Care Unit/Pre-operative Unit for 26 years. I have been a San Antonio Fire Department Fire Fighter as well. I have four kiddos and three grandkids. I finished my Master of Science in Nursing at UTHSCSA and currently am having fun working as a waitress at Zs Pizza in Boerne. I am excited to start the TMN course as I want to preserve and manage our own Ranchita acreage for wildlife and soil preservation in Bandera on 30 acres. I also want to provide this knowledge to members of my local community.

Patricia Higgins I live on 24 acres in Center Point Estates, two miles east of Center Point. My parents moved here in the 70's and my dad built the house I live in now. I moved here to help my parents and when they died, they left me the house and property. My dad was in the Air Force, so we moved often. I have lived here for about 12 years, which is the longest I have ever lived in one place. I was a librarian, first in Montgomery County, then in San Antonio, and lastly in Austin before I moved here. I have attempted to grow a garden almost every summer, and, I think, I get a little better every year. I am not really knowledgeable about the land, but I have learned about land stewardship from extension classes and have visited and taken classes at the Selah, Bamberger Ranch Preserve near Johnson City. My goal with the TMN is to learn more and apply and share that knowledge, especially as it applies to water resources.



John Hornung I practiced General Surgery at Spohn Hospital in Corpus Christi from 1978 to 2000. In 1993, I sailed from Corpus Christi to Key West and on to Bermuda. After two weeks in Bermuda, I sailed to the Azores islands, and then on to Morocco. From there I sailed to the Canary Islands. I then returned to continue my surgical practice for two years, returning periodically to sail among the Canaries. I then crossed back across the Atlantic to the British Virgin Islands, where the boat remained for two years. Then I sailed to the Cayman Islands for two years before leaving for the Yucatán of Mexico. From there, I sailed back to Corpus Christi in 2000. Since then, I have made multiple sailing trips to Vera Cruz and Progreso Mexico. I completed the Master Gardener course in Corpus Christi during the 1980's and was certified until sometime in the 1990's.

(William) Mark Hults Call me Mark. I am a retiree from Ford Motor Company and United Services Automobile Association (USAA). I graduated from Eastern Michigan University with a BBA, Statistics major. I have lived in Bandera County for 35+ years on property that has grown to 13 acres. Obviously, I am an older fellow (I do not like the word “old”). I have been accused of being an engineer, cowboy, carpenter, plumber, computer geek, and preacher. I am a husband, father, grandfather, and creator of what the family calls the Hults Homestead. While studying the history of Bandera I have learned that the settlers called the land we live on Oak Savanna. I am interested in managing the land in a way that is beneficial and natural. I spend most of my time outdoors being EL MANUAL, MOWERMAN, and/or WEEDWACKER MAN. Sometimes I just explore, discover, and appreciate the beautiful plants and critters that live here at the Hults Homestead. To sum this all up, here is one of my favorite quotes: “God is great, beer is good, people are crazy” - Billy Currington.



Jane Jamison I'm a farmgirl from Merville, Iowa. I have an MBA from University of South Dakota, and lived and worked in Omaha for 20 yrs. I've been a Nanny Granny for 12 years. I moved to Boerne in June 2021 from Biloxi. I love the idea of planting my entire front yard in native flowers for butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds. I placed gutters and reservoirs on my house to catch rainwater for the plants I have and want to learn all I can about this great state and how to care for the land.

Laura King I've lived in Gillespie County since March 2020. Raised in the Dallas area, I lived most of my adult life in Austin. Now I live five miles southeast of Fredericksburg on land that has been in my husband's family for more than 100 years. I've worked with children and families in various settings — psychiatric hospitals, juvenile probation, community outreach etc. I earned my master's degree in social work from UT at Austin. Transitioning to “less stressful” bicycle safety education, I helped develop SuperCyclist Bicycle Safety curriculum for elementary schools across the state. As coordinator for Austin Cycling Association, I fitted hundreds of helmets ACA donated to local children's groups because “a helmet is only as good as its fit.” Since retirement I explored interests in native plants at the LBJ Wildflower Center and in community theater. After my move to the Hill Country, I volunteered with the FredericksburgNative Plant Society and the Fredericksburg Nature Center, where I learned to say “Gracie, what's this plant?” One of my goals is to learn and remember names of flora and fauna. I hope to learn sustainable land management practices for my personal acreage and also advocate good land stewardship in the public arena.



Susan Baker Logrbrinck I currently live in Hondo, Medina County. I'm from Southmayd, lived in San Diego for 22 years, and moved here November 2020. I have an MFA in set design for theatre, television and film and have been working as an artist, specializing in textiles, for the last 10 years. I want to use the beautiful Hill Country as new inspiration. I adopted my two boys, who are now 8 and 12, which was a whole other journey! My father worked for the State Department and by the time I was eleven I had lived in six countries. Traveling like that has always driven my interest in cultures, art, color, plants, and people. In February, my husband and I bought a dome home on 25 acres north of Hondo at the beginning of the Hill Country. I immediately became interested in how to make the property beautiful, restore a lot of the native plants and how to gain an appreciation of all the critters that share the land with us here. I feel inspired to use all of these things in my art as well. But mostly, I want this property to be all that it was meant to be.

Kathy Loring I live in Kerrville outside the city limits on Upper Turtle Creek Rd South. We recently moved from Bellaire, but have owned our acreage since 2014. I am a retired Acute Care Nurse Practitioner; I specialized primarily in solid organ transplant, heart failure, and cardiovascular surgery. For the last seven years, I provided medical care in the geriatric population. I retired in December 2019. My goals in becoming a master naturalist are to be a better land steward and hopefully restore some of my land back to native prairie and woodland. With this knowledge, I would teach others, especially the young about improving our natural environment, conservation of our land and natural resources



David Matthews After teaching in Austin ISD for 31 years, my wife and I retired to our 10 acres near Leakey. Rita had already been diagnosed with MSA and passed last year. Our three children and four grandchildren live in Austin. I also played percussion professionally for 20+ years. In 2000, I marched in a Mardi Gras parade, right behind Brittany Spears. Among my former students are my three kids and Houston Astro Lance Berkman. I have a coonhound named Jed, love to read, solve crosswords, play congas, and work on our land (which we named TreeSong). I'm hoping TMN will connect me with others passionate about our natural world and provide opportunities to work with them on nature centered projects.

Randi Mellon I recently moved to Bandera with my husband, Allen, and dog, Butter, to have a simpler life, be closer to family, and surround ourselves with nature. Since moving to our property, I have become obsessed with learning about native plants and how to make our land friendlier to pollinators and birds. I have always sought out ways to learn more about nature. I earned my open water scuba certification at age twelve, graduated with a degree in zoology from Texas Tech University in 2010, and feel that becoming a Texas Master Naturalist is an amazing next step in my knowledge about the world around us. When we lived in the city, I loved traveling to locations and learning about their ecosystem. I am excited that I now get to learn in-depth about my own backyard.



Keith Miears I was born and raised in Kerrville. I left in 1988 to pursue my education and start a career. After being away for 32 years, I returned full time in 2020 to enjoy the Texas Hill Country. While I was away, I raised two kids with my wife Angela, lived in Asia for more than a decade, and was a professional in the IT industry, running Supply Chains. I have a track record of volunteering. Most recently, I led the Texas Covid-19 Strikeforce reporting to the Governor with a mission of securing critical supplies and resources for the state. Governor Abbott commissioned me as an honorary Admiral in the Texas Navy for my service. I retired from Dell Technologies in 2021. I'm joining the TMN Program to learn about and support our natural resources and ecosystems. I have a passion for being outdoors, and you will often find me in the garden or fishing the Guadalupe or Texas

Intercoastal. The program is a great opportunity to connect my goals and my enjoyment for being outdoors.

Karen Ozer I was born and raised in San Antonio. After completing my degree in accounting from UTSA, I married, moved to Dallas, passed the CPA exam, and began my fifteen-year career at what was the largest telecommunications company in the world. I held various positions in finance and marketing. My last position was senior manager of commercial marketing for the wireless division. In 1999, my late husband accepted a four-year assignment in Hong Kong. My job required me to work many hours and my husband was frequently traveling abroad. I took a leave of absence from my job so I could spend more time with our son, who is currently an engineer for Texas Instruments in Dallas. I never returned. After my husband's assignment was finished, we moved to San Antonio. In 2018, we moved from San Antonio to our property in Medina. Unfortunately, in October 2020 my husband died unexpectedly. I decided to stay in Medina and take care of our property. My dear friend and neighbor, Diana Adams, told me about the TMN class and we decided to apply. Before my husband's death, he took care of our property and animals, and I managed the household and finances. Now I have responsibility for everything, so I am excited and anxious to learn more about my habitat.





David Plueneke I am quasi-retired, and I currently split my time between my home in Austin and the ancestral Plueneke Ranch in Mason County — which sounds a lot fancier than it actually is. My family has lived in the Hill Country since the 1840's and was one of the first immigrant families to settle north of the Llano River. I worked as a Network Administrator for a variety of companies in Austin – including Intel and the City of Austin. I finished my career as a Network Administrator with the J. Paul Getty Trust in Los Angeles. I have always been interested in Natural History and since retiring, I have spent much of my time studying botany and gardening with native plants. I am a member of both the Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT) and the California Native Plant Society (CNPS). I enjoy hiking, birding, gardening, and playing the guitar. I am especially interested in ecological restoration, and I look forward to learning more about this subject as a Texas Master Naturalist.

Patricia Poore I prefer to be called either Patricia, or P.A. I recently moved to Ingram, Kerr County, after spending the last two years living in a van, primarily off grid, mostly out west, with my service dog. Prior to that, my husband, my mother, and I lived in Central Florida, on a 10-acre plot, and had an organic hobby farm, growing both vegetables and fruit trees. My new home is built on rock, and after 20 years of high humidity, incredible rainfall, and sandy soil, I am anxious to understand this environment and the native plants that will thrive here. I am looking forward to building an environment to encourage and support indigenous animal and avian populations, both at my home and at my job (a 65-acre campground in Kerrville). I marvel at the incredible views, and love commuting and working by the Guadalupe River. I believe we are all stewards of the earth, and my goal is to learn, and share that knowledge with others.



Amy Purcell I have spent most of my adult life in Houston, Texas working as an Executive Recruiter. Moving to the Hill Country in 2008 was a bit of a shock but I was in love and getting married. So I tried overlooking the critters and snakes that completely freaked me out. Eventually, I began to meet people who were deeply interested in the natural world, who helped educate me and encouraged my curiosity. My husband and I have a 10-year-old daughter and we love to travel to places where we can hike and explore different environments. Spending two weekends every month at the H.E. Butt Foundation property and having family members and mentors involved in conservation efforts created the desire to train as TMN. My goal as a TMN is to be a resource to children, visitors, and friends about the unique ecosystem of the Hill Country.

Nancy Roberts Even though I was born in Syracuse, New York, I consider myself a true Texan. We have been blessed to live in this great state for 35 years. I received my master's degree from the State of New York and taught elementary school for 12 years. Using my skills, I then instructed foreign military officers at the Defense Language Institute. I also became the Regional Trainer for the Texas Dept. of Rehabilitative Services. After retirement, I have been involved in facilitating Bible Studies at St. Peter's Church in Boerne. I participate in many charitable organizations. The many joys in my life are my husband, daughter and son-in-law, our dog Bella, golf, bird watching and traveling. My adventures have taken me to 15 European countries and 47 U.S. states.



Sam Roberts I currently live in Fair Oaks Ranch with my wife for the past 26 years, Nancy. I was born and raised in Indiana and graduated with a degree in Biology at Ball State University. I entered the USAF after college and became a USAF Navigator and Electronic Warfare Officer. I did two tours in Vietnam and flew over 100 combat missions in support of US Forces. I became a staff officer in AF Intelligence and Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon in D.C. and retired after 22 years of service. I currently collect antique radios from the 1920's to 1960's timeframe. I enjoy astronomy and golf as my hobbies. In addition, Nancy and I are heavily involved with St. Peter's Catholic Church in Boerne. I am excited about attending the TMN course. My wife and I have been joining other TMNs over the last couple of years at several locations in Kendall County, identifying and taking census information. I'm looking forward to joining the TMN cadre and volunteering in our program.



Patrick Scoggins Call me Patrick (my mother would call me Patrick when she really wanted me to pay attention). So, if one wishes to call me Patrick one will have all of my attention. I moved to Bexar County in 2004. My mailing address is Boerne but that's because our post office is there. Born in Grand Prairie, heart of the Metroplex (between Dallas and Fort Worth) and graduated from NTSU in Denton, the top of the Golden Triangle (Dallas, Fort Worth and Denton), spent 27 years in Austin, (capital of Texas) raising two sons before moving to San Antonio area (vacation capital of Texas). I retired in 2019 after an accidental, unintended career as a Toyota parts manager that lasted 40 years. I prefer retirement over working, and consider learning to be a lifelong endeavor to be treasured.

I find subject matter that discusses indigenous peoples and our connection to the natural world interesting. I am looking forward to the education to be gained by my participation in the TMN program. I cannot think of a better way to learn than with a group of like-minded individuals and to be guided by knowledgeable, passionate instructors.

Rebecca Spurlock Snyder Call me Rebecca or Reb or Rb but not Becky. My husband, Fritz, and I moved to Fredericksburg two years ago after living in the Houston area for the past 30 years. His parents used to live here many years ago. My mother was from Eldorado, my father from Brownwood, and I was born in San Marcos. My father – and my step-father – were both helicopter pilots in the US Army, so we moved a lot when I was a child. I have one sister who still lives in Houston, so we go back to visit often. I have one son and two grandkids who live in Gulf Shores, Alabama. Fritz and I have three miniature donkeys, two dogs, one cat, and goldfish. I did my undergrad work in Mobile, Alabama and did my graduate work in New Jersey and in Boulder, Colorado. I was a Human Resources Manager for several international companies in the Houston area and was able to travel – on business – to Italy, Norway, Denmark, The Netherlands, Amsterdam, and Belgium. My sister lived in Perth, Australia so I got to go there, too. I am a new beekeeper and want to help my bees flourish. I am also a Master Gardener and am very interested in native and pollinator plants.



Fritz Snyder I was born and raised in Corpus Christi. After college I went to work in the oilfield service industry in 1975. Two years later, I started my own service company in Corpus Christi, which became Geological Services, Inc. The company performed well site formation evaluation analysis and provided the data in the form of a graph to our clients. By 1993, I moved to Houston. There I met my wife Rebecca (also a member of this year's class) and we were married in 1994. We lived in the Houston area until 2015, when I retired. Rebecca and I owned 23 acres on the Pedernales River in Blanco County from 1993 to 2005. We had acquired the property from my father after he passed away. Rebecca and I made a big decision to come back to the Hill Country. In 2019, we bought 24 acres four miles west of Willow City. My interest in the TMN program stems from my

interest in the outdoors. Being an avid saltwater fisherman most of my life and having owned three beautiful pieces of property I wanted to learn more about the flora and fauna of our area. I want to leave it in better shape for future generations.

Hope Waggoner I currently live in Leakey and am originally from Houston, but spent most of my childhood in Corpus Christi. I am a coastal child. I love the primrose that grows in the dunes and the yellow rose of Texas is what I'll always strive to be! I was raised by my grandmother who hailed from Colima, Mexico. So, I have been blessed with the gift of a bilingual tongue and speaking, reading, and writing fluently in Spanish. I live with my son who also loves ecology. We love that we are blessed to be able to live around nature! Since I first heard of the TXMN program while at the Real County Library in 2014, I have had it in my heart that this is what I have been called to do. I am grateful to finally have the chance to earn the pin and will strive to attain it. My goal as a Texas Master Naturalist is to continue on in my life to appreciate nature as it is and preserve what surrounds me. This program is a steppingstone that I will use to continue learning about the unique ecology of Texas and present it to the world in order to help preserve it. Thank you all for this opportunity!





Chris Walton I was born and raised in Virginia. My sister was living in Texas, and I decided to move, continue my education, and then move back to Virginia. Then I married a Texan, Greg Walton. I have been a registered nurse for a very long time and have worked in just about all areas of nursing before starting a career in nursing education. I have taught nursing full-time and now very part-time at Austin Community College for over 20 years. I have two sons, Ben and Brian. My animals include a dog and a horse. I am hopeful Master Naturalists will introduce me to many new ideas, passions, and friends.

Kathy Webster I am a retired speech-language pathologist living in Boerne. I was born and raised in the San Antonio area and attended Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos, the University of Memphis, and Trinity University. I worked in elementary schools in Northside I.S.D. for 22 years. Then in 2006, I opened a private practice providing speech therapy to children. I sold that business in 2019, and now my husband and I like to travel, camp in our travel trailer, hike, and birdwatch. As a birdwatcher, I have worked to attract birds to my backyard. I learned the importance of landscaping with native plants, and joined the Boerne Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas. This led to my interest in becoming a Texas Master Naturalist. I strongly believe that children should be taught to love, respect, and enjoy nature. If provided with interesting and enjoyable experiences in nature, children are more likely to grow up and engage in conservation activities. Plus, I believe that being active in nature leads to improved mental health and emotional well-being for adults as well as children. As a TMN, I hope to volunteer in educational activities with children.



Felicia Zeitman We live in Boerne. I grew up in Devers, (Liberty County), and moved from Houston to Boerne in 2019. Graduated from University of Texas at Austin (Hook'em) where I earned a BA in English. My family moved from the big city of Liberty to the small country town of Devers (Pop 300+). We (I have two younger brothers) grew up with cows, horses, cats, dogs and all sorts of pets. For as long as I can remember, I've been interested in bugs and spiders, lizards and birds, dirt and plants. At one time, I wanted to be an "earth" scientist. Since college, I've had numerous jobs ranging from Motor Sports Marketing at Texaco to Realtor to Account Director of the Texas Medical Center's Magazine, TMC Pulse. My volunteer duties include chairing the Centennial Celebration for the Woodland Heights neighborhood in Houston and charter board member of the Friends

of Woodland Park (second oldest park in the City of Houston) to being the President of the Boerne Chapter of the Native Plant Society. I want to be a better Texan by becoming a Texas Master Naturalist and fulfilling a life-long love of Texas' habitat.

Russell (or Russ) Zink I've lived in Boerne since 2014. I grew up on a farm/ranch in central North Dakota. Aside from watching my two children grow up, I spend daylight hours designing, planting, redesigning, and replanting my piece of the Hill Country in Boerne. After dark, those efforts go towards propagating stem cuttings, dividing root masses, and starting both purchased and collected seeds. Dinger the Rescue Dog recently joined the team and loves his new position as Vice President of Squirrel Management. I look forward to expanding my knowledge of the Hill Country flora and fauna.



The View from Rusty Bend



Rusty Bend shows off Little Bluestem prairie grasses

Dry Winter

our wet spring succumbed to dry
what few leaves remain

wave ballpark mustard flags
sumac berries beckon in neon

tall grasses on the river still
smell of summer yield fistfuls

of auburn seeds to drift as I stroll
red-tailed hawk claims her real estate

with a harsh slurred squeal
to raise alarm on my neck

still it's the trees that speak to me
leafless their bones vascular

against the gunmetal sky
I don't think *ruined choir*

continued on next page

I don't care that they are bare
I see a certain rectitude

I don't think death or sorrow
but watch for injury

the lightning strike
a shove of flood

the ice storm break
integrity built of wounds

to teach me on
this dry winter walk

We are deep in winter at Rusty Bend and I am learning to embrace this fallow time with its spareness. I love the idea of wintering and dormancy as a skill, a necessary balance to productive times. The writer Katherine May is eloquent in her description of the ways that we can use this time to do all the “re” words. Replenish, return, restore, reconstitute. Now I don't fight it anymore but lean in to this need to rest and reflect.

As usual when the leaves fall, we see more raptors. Indigenous peoples believed that hawks were messengers. In the raptor-rich biome of the Guadalupe River, messages proliferate. Zone-tail Hawk flies by after any dead tree has fallen, as if to say “Where's my perch?” Osprey cruises along saying “That's my fishing hole.” Northern Harrier glides over the neighbor's field each morning to catch a careless vole sunning after a cold night. “Here mousey, mousey.” A juvenile Bald Eagle traces the length of the river and gets everyone's attention. The Red-shouldered pair still dance noisily together in the mid-day sky. Mostly though, we watch the construction zone where Red-tailed Hawks are building their nest again. They started it last year, then stopped, like so much construction around here. Now they are back on project.

If my father was still with us, he would exclaim with pleasure “*Mighty fine!*” at the prairie grasses he lovingly sowed, that are everywhere in the pasture thanks to the rains last spring. Little Bluestem, Plains Lovegrass, Silver Bluestem, waist-high, many shoulder-high and heavy with seed. The Chipping Sparrows slide down the stems like Cirque de Solei. Seeds scatter!

So many morning fogs. Some are level as a pale tablecloth, some swirl like clouds at sunset. Some seem like they would go on forever but they do end, edged with the smudges of trees. We watch fog TV with our coffee until the sun turns the channel.

With the leaves down, each pasture walk is a sound expedition. Dead leaves crunch underfoot, the wind shakes dry frostweed heads like castanets. Dove wings whistle, but that “whomp, whomp” signals turkeys going to roost. That rustle in the leaves is Spotted Towhee doing his hokey-pokey. A rustle with thumps spells a.r.m.a.d.i.l.l.o , the smallest of back-hoes. Carolina Wren's winter song sounds like a car alarm. Rufus-crowned Sparrow sounds like a raygun. *Pa-chew, pa-chew, pa-chew!*

One of the things I love most about living in this magical space is knowing all the sounds as I walk, but what I love even more—is NOT knowing what I'm hearing. Must be a message.

Poem, images 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. A joint project of bird poems and images, with wildlife photographer Kenneth Butler, Wingbeat Atlas, can be preordered from www.flowersongpress.com

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.

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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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