

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the
Texas Master Naturalist
Hill Country Chapter

March 2022 Volume 19 Number 3



image by Mark B. Lee



The March Hill Country Chapter meeting will be a virtual meeting on March 28.

Go to [zhttps://us02web.zoom.us/j/82249403388?pwd=cy9VOWk1L3BLbTBadzJVb0JOTmdYUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82249403388?pwd=cy9VOWk1L3BLbTBadzJVb0JOTmdYUT09)

Meeting ID: 822 4940 3388 Passcode: 136989

Our speaker, Billy Kniffen, is a Water Resource Associate for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and lives in a home that is totally dependent on rainwater. He will focus on our history and ability to capture rainfall, with particular reference to the practices at his own family's home and farm.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...Carla Stang

Spring is in the Air! I feel like I should follow this phrase with the word "Finally!" By the time you read this, we will have marked the first day of spring this year, on March 20; also known as the vernal or spring equinox, which is the astronomical first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere.

Maybe it's just me, but I find myself feeling a little impatient for the warm days of spring this year...feeling a bit antsy to be able to be outdoors and getting on with spring tasks. I will find consolation by earnestly searching for the subtle spring signs of sprouting forbs, grasses, and budding trees to get me over the humdrum hump. Afterall, we all know that nature has cycles that are unstoppable, so I will take heart.

While I was looking up when the first day of spring was, I came across a few phrases (authors unknown) about spring that made me smile and reflect on the notion of spring renewal.

- "All the flowers of all the tomorrows are in the seeds of today."
- "The deep roots never doubt spring will come."
- "Finally, my winter fat is gone. Now I have spring rolls."

Here are just a few of the wonderful spring appropriate activities happening in April that are blooming with opportunities to get outside to experience nature and to volunteer.

- April 2: "Celebrate Natives" educational event at Riverside Nature Center (RNC). This is a great educational function for the public, almost like a primer before our Spring Native Plant Sale. Volunteers from RNC, TMN, and NPSOT will be involved.
- April 8 – 17: "iNaturalist Youth Photo Contest!" Sponsored by NPSOT (Boerne Chapter) and the Cibolo Nature Center & Farm (CNC&F). Go to website details: <https://npsot.org/wp/boerne/photo-contest/>
- April 19: "Spring Native Plant Sale" (Kerrville RNC, TMN, NPSOT sponsored). We're finally able to embed education and outreach into this event again. Great opportunities to interact with the public.

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- April 23: “Boerne Spring NPSOT Plant Sale”. For details, go to <https://npsot.org/wp/boerne/>
- April 12: Earth Day – Look for activities at your local libraries, nurseries, and nature centers.
- April: Entire month is National Volunteer Recognition
- Activities from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department: Spring is Coming - Get Outside and Go Wild! Check out website: <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/TXPWD/bulletins/30d6372>.

As a reminder, the selection of our 20th Anniversary celebration logo and/or slogan will be announced at the March 28 chapter meeting. Submission deadline is March 21.

Thanks to all those who have already submitted.

This Month We Honor

Recertifications



Janis Arterbury, Dale Bransford, Tom Collins, Trudy Floremce, Bob Hansen,
Molly Houck, Lisa Marler, Gracie Waggener

Milestones

Cara Milikien and Dot Maginot - 250 hours, Bronze Dragonfly

Lucy Spade - 500 hours, Brushed Silver Dragonfly

Lucy Griffith, Andrew Robinson, Deb Youngblood - 1000 hours, Gold Dragonfly

Susan Longacre - 2500 hours, Polished Silver Dragonfly

From Dot Maginot, Chapter Membership Director

If you have earned a pin in 2019 and have not picked it up, please contact me so I can arrange to get it to you.

If you have pins earned in other years and don't want them, I need to know that also, so I can put them back into inventory.

Due to the increasing number of pins earned but not picked up, we will only be holding pins for two years. If I don't hear back from you regarding your 2019 pins, I will put them back in inventory on June 30, 2022.

Thank you for your cooperation!

Dot Maginot
membership@hillcountrytmn.org
(830) 377-0902



Our volunteers are ready to volunteer! Our Texas Master Naturalist Volunteers are dedicated to natural resource conservation work. With health and safety restrictions persisting, we're thinking outside of the box for how Texas Master Naturalist volunteers can assist our partner conservation organizations in their communities. At the height of the pandemic, due to extreme circumstances, our members were limited in conducting many of their typical outreach projects, technical guidance, and community stewardship service projects. Thus, our program transitioned to offer virtual and distanced service projects. This new feature of our program has been so popular, now our volunteers have asked for more similar projects to conduct during the hottest months of the year.

The TMN Virtual Volunteer Fair (VVF) is an opportunity for our partner conservation organizations to present service projects that need volunteers from a distance or virtually. After three successful TMN VVF events our members are asking for more. This time, the intent is to provide virtual service during the hottest months of the year, when there is a typical lull until cooler months come around.

The Virtual Volunteer Fair will be an opportunity for our partner conservation organizations to present volunteer service projects that need volunteers from a distance or virtually. Plan to join us on May 4 and 5 for a series of project presentations showcasing opportunities from across the state and across the spectrum of natural resource topics.

Call for Proposals

Have a project idea but need help doing it? Do you have field data to collect? Computer research to do? If it can be done by volunteers, we can help!

We are seeking your “**Virtual**” and “**Distance Based Service**” project opportunities to add to our Texas Master Naturalist Program’s “Virtual Volunteer Service Fair”! You will present your project(s) online to our statewide membership of Texas Master Naturalist volunteers on **May 4th and May 5th, 2022** with short 5-10 minute spotlight presentations to highlight the tasks, expertise and help you need. We will offer time during the event to answer questions and opportunities for volunteers to sign up too!

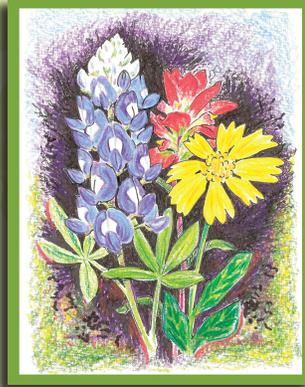
Consider this when developing your project ideas – How could a natural resource trained volunteer help ease your workload or fulfill virtual tasks? Master Naturalists are spending more time at home and online during this time. Try to connect their training and skills with your project needs that can be completed by volunteers working remotely 3 to 5 hours a week.

<http://www.event.com/c/abstracts/f20f91e9-5c97-4930-ac3c-be2109580fie>

The deadline for submitting your project proposals is March 25.

Riverside Nature Center
Native Plant Society of Texas - Kerrville Chapter
Texas Master Naturalist - Hill Country Chapter
invite you to...

Spring Native Plant Sale



Saturday, April 16th
9am-2pm

Tax Free on
All Purchases



At Riverside Nature Center

-  Knowledgeable plant docents to answer questions
-  Personal shoppers to assist in selecting plants and navigating the sale
-  See many of the sale plants in mature form in the garden

Native Plants selected to thrive in
our climate & soil.



Native plants offer many benefits for your landscape and family.

-  Smaller Carbon Footprint
-  Water Conservation
-  Low Maintenance once established
-  No Fertilizers
-  No Herbicides or Pesticides
-  Increase Biodiversity
-  Healthy Natives = Healthy Habitats

830.257.4837 or www.riversidenaturecenter.org
150 Francisco Lemos Kerrville, Texas 78028

From Sandi Kennedy, NPSOT - Fredericksburg Chapter Board Member

“Going Green – Refusing Plastics” by Karen Taylor

On Tuesday, March 22, the Fredericksburg Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas will be hosting an in-person presentation by Karen Taylor at Gilbriar Gazebo, 208 Danos Drive in Fredericksburg. Social gathering starts at 6:30; the presentation begins at 7:00. Guests and area newcomers are always welcome.

Join us to learn more about the delights of living with nature in the beautiful Texas Hill Country. Our speaker, Karen Taylor, is presently teaching at the Environmental Studies School in Groesbeck. Ms. Taylor will explain how plastics are affecting our Hill Country air and soil. They are an all-encompassing part of our lives and environment – from the micro-plastics in sea water and the food we prepare to the containers we have sitting on the counter. Through “Going Green – Refusing Plastics” she provides pertinent, practical, and local resources to encourage us to “refuse” bringing plastics home in the first place.

Upper Guadalupe River Authority &
Riverside Nature Center present

EduScape Talk & Tour

The UGRA EduScape is an award winning demonstration garden that contains numerous examples of water conservation and storm water detention practices that you can incorporate into your own landscaping. The EduScape Talk and Tour will feature presentations by leading experts, followed by a tour of the Eduscape.

Talks & Tours are FREE to All

April 6 - 10:30am

Land Restoration in Cedar Regrowth

Pete Van Dyck, Owner at Van Dyck Earthworks & Design LLC & Drought Proof Texas Land Designer discusses regenerative property design.

May 4 - 1pm

Urban Riparian & Watershed Protection Planning

Lucas Gregory, PhD, Texas Water Resources Institute, Texas A&M AgriLife Research explains how a healthy riparian area functions in an urban setting.

June 8 - 10:30am

Native Plants & Waterwise Gardening

Veronica Hawk, Native Plant Society of Texas & PGARP, discusses the importance of using native plants in our landscapes.

To Register:

rnc.kerrville@gmail.com or 830-257-4837

UGRA classrooms: 125 Lehmann Drive, in Kerrville

From Becky Leal, NPSOT - Kerrville Communication Director

The Native Plant Society of Texas – Kerrville Chapter has three field trips scheduled in April, **for members only**. It's a great time to join! Please visit our website, <https://npsot.org/wp/kerrville> to join and to view our newsletter post for more information about the field trips!

April 2 - NPSOT-Kerrville and Riverside Nature Center are partnering for Celebrate Natives! - a celebration of Native Plant Month. Exhibitors, kids activities, garden tours and a special presentation "Native Plants 101."

April 12 – This will be a presentation from Dinah Zike and a tour of her “carbon sink” garden.

April 23 – We will have a native plant garden tour of an urban home in Kerrville.

April 30 – Our last tour will be of an old family acreage homestead site that is being preserved.

From Cindy Luongo Cassidy, Texas Night Sky Festival® Association Executive Director

The **Texas Night Sky Festival® Association** is inviting you to a Zoom Event.
When: Tuesday, March 22, 2022 07:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Dr. Travis Longcore will be speaking on the Impact of Artificial Light on Life

Since the invention of the electric light bulb in 1879, a significant portion of the planet has been transformed from experiencing a natural pattern of light and dark determined by the sun, moon, stars and occasional other transient lights to being subjected to intermittent and perpetual illumination from human civilization that is unprecedented in the history of Earth. The pervasiveness of this phenomenon and its exponential growth has measurable and significant consequences for living organisms. The results of recent research have extended knowledge about the geographic scope and specific impacts of artificial night lighting on animal behavior, physiological processes and ecological interactions across a range of taxa and its broader ecosystem effects. Our selection of area and street lighting will be specifically addressed. The program is designed to allocate a significant amount of time to specifics and dialog with the attendees.



Dr. Longcore is an Associate Adjunct Professor at the UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability, Science Director of The Urban Wildlands Group, a Los Angeles-based conservation nonprofit, and an independent ecological design and environmental policy consultant. He was one of the keynote speakers at the 2020 Texas Master Naturalist State Meeting. Additional details about Dr. Longcore may be found here: <https://travislongcore.net/>

Register in advance:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAsdu2vrjMoHNGf_ZVj5Psb24Mu41aqPEh

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email with information about joining the meeting.



MARCH 30, 2022 | 10 - 11:30 AM CST
FREE webinar with great door prizes!

WHAT'S THAT? PLANT ID FOR EVERYONE!

- Major Clumping: How to look smart with common characteristics
- Perennial vs. Annual Forbs: How to know the difference
- The Family Breakdown: Taking an unknown plant down to family
- Genus *Paspalum* in Texas
- Using Seek and iNaturalist for Plant ID

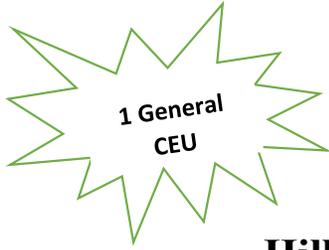
To Register (Virtual Event): <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6N7YVCB>

For more information:

Megan.Clayton@ag.tamu.edu, Tim.Siegmund@tpwd.texas.gov, Charles.Kneuper@usda.gov



The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.



Hill Country Pecan Grafting Clinic

Wednesday March 30, 2022

William Rector's Orchard

1425 Harper Rd Kerrville TX 78028

10:00-12:00

- Come out and learn about Pecan Tree Grafting and Tree Health Management with Dr. Larry Stein, Horticulture Specialist with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
 - **Registration Fee: \$20**
 - **Please RSVP to the Kerr County Extension Office by Friday March 25**
- For more information or to RSVP please contact Justin Klinksiek at the Kerr County AgriLife Extension Office at 830-257-6568



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

The View from Rusty Bend



Ravens gather

A Storytelling of Ravens

The pungent allure of deer carcasses
must have drawn them yesterday—
dozens of juvenile ravens,
feasting at the gutpiles.

This gusty morning
as if they called an after party—
there's a show out each window.

Whirling, chasing, fold-n-dive,
flip overs to practice flying
upside-down as only ravens do.

Riding thermals off the cliff like
hang-gliders, over and over.

Not to anthropomorphize
but it sure looked like play.

Aerial tag, and catch—
grabbing moss and sticks from trees
to drop midair and grab.

Noisy, too, gurgling in all registers
quork, cam, warble, knock

Within these groups, lifelong bonds
form, as their dark wings,
sharp as obsidian, cut the wind.

Monogamy built on play.

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As the days grow longer at Rusty Bend, the birdsong grows stronger. It's time to prune the deadwood from the perennials, opening them to sun and spring growth. The last work of wintering, this pruning is rife with metaphor, letting go of what is bitter and barren.

So I set aside my chores, walk the pasture and open myself to musings. I wonder, what does this land remember? Along the cliff, scores of burnt rocks tell of indigenous peoples. Does that oak bowing low to the ground mark a most excellent spot to camp? With water and shade and a sunset scene? Flakes of chert and flint decorate the best views above the river, a prime place to work a point.

The bear grass flourishes, evergreen, ready for weaving. Now I smell the fires, toasted hearts of sotol, scraped like leaves of artichoke. I wander back further in time to find the fossils crumbling off the cliff after each rain. Sea creatures all. I look for lessons. Lessons that teach a sense of place.

I wonder if, each winter, the people before us watched for Cedar Waxwings and their frantic flight, their voices like little girls at play. Did they see them land in the ash trees and dribble down like raindrops on a windowpane? Did it make them want to sing?

Then, there is so much to learn about thirst. The waxwings bob rhythmically to scoop water from the birdbath, like musical notes or a child's toy. The bees sip from the edges. White-wing doves dip their whole heads in the water, even their eyes. Mockingbird scribes an elegant S, to scoop a mouthful. Armadillo trots to the pond and siphons for many minutes, his rhino ears wiggling. So many ways to quench.

The Red-tailed Hawks are brooding already and for the rest of the avian crowd, nesting will soon begin. Family time at Rusty Bend. I've put out the basket of materials. Cotton and angora prized by the wrens. We look forward to watching them wiggle out a beakful, then carry it away, streaming behind like a banner. Pruning is done, building has begun. Soon, babies.



New moon at Rusty Bend

Poem, images and essay by Lucy Griffith Copyright 2022

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 ordered from [Wingbeat Atlas — FlowerSong Press & Juventud Press](#).

Comments welcome at lucy@lucygriffithwriter.com.



Our chapter meetings are held on the fourth Monday of the month. The in-person option for attending is in the auditorium at the Upper Guadalupe River Authority (UGRA) Building at 125 Lehmann Drive in Kerrville. Doors open at 6pm for socializing. The business meeting begins at 6:30 and the Advanced Training session is from 7 to 8. Members and the public are welcome to attend in-person or through any of the virtual options; links are available on our website. There is no cost to attend.

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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- Alice King -- Secretary
- Ron Scoggins -- Treasurer
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- Carra Milikien -- Class Training Director
- vacant - Communications Director
- vacant - IT Director
- Trudy Eberhardt -- New Class Representative
- Dot Maginot -- Membership Director
- Tom Burke -- Volunteer Service Projects Director
- Elsa Roberts -- 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:

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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?
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