

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the
Texas Master Naturalist
Hill Country Chapter

July 2022 Volume 20 Number 7

image by Lucy Griffith



The July Hill Country Chapter meeting will be a hybrid meeting on Monday, July 25. Doors open at 6 for socializing; the business meeting is at 6:30, and the AT presentation will be from 7-8.

Our AT speaker will be Justin Foster, who has served as Research Coordinator at TPWD's Kerr Wildlife Management Area since 2008. Much of his professional effort has gone to investigating the use of toxicants and delivery systems for wild pig control. The title of his presentation is "Wild Pigs: Masterful Invaders of Our Nature."

Pre-registration is required to attend the chapter meeting/AT session via Zoom. Go to https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYvc-CsrjgpEtnjsTPvgKHlbEnNz0Wf_GF. You will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. You can log into Zoom at 6pm on July 25.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...Carla Stang

Hi everyone!

I hope you are enjoying your summer and staying cool. I want to remind everyone about the 2022 TMN Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting is an event to gather, learn, and celebrate another year of the Texas Master Naturalist Program. This year's meeting is an in-person event at the Omni Houston Thursday, October 20nd to Sunday, October 23rd. The registration period is from August 1st through September 28th.

I mentioned at the business meeting in June that the Hill Country chapter is a Conservationist Level sponsor of the Annual Meeting. This level of sponsorship is possible because the Board voted to donate \$500 and we had a very generous member make a matching donation to combine with our chapter donation for a total of \$1000. Chapters make donations to defray the costs of putting on meetings such as this so that more people can participate. It'll be a great time to visit with existing and new friends...other "nature nerds"!

A standard activity at the Annual Meeting is that participants review and vote to recognize individual chapters in the following categories: 1) Photo, Art Media; 2) Video Contest; 3) Project. I KNOW for a fact that we have many very talented artists, photographers, crafters, and project leaders. Go to the TMN State site ([link](#)) and scroll down approximately 2/3 of the page to see the criteria for submission of information.

Don't be shy! Show and tell others about the amazing things you have seen and done in nature. I am happy to help with submissions – contact me at president@hillcountrytmn.org.

This Month We Honor



Initial Certifications, Class of 2022

Laura King, Patricia Poore

Special Recertification, Class of 2022

Mark Hults

Recertifications

Jill Boyter, Jane Crone, Gary Fest, Vivian Fink, Pamela Goolsby, Bob Lodowski
Carl Luckenbach, Tara Randle, Laurel Rhodes, Charles Smith, Sherry Wilson

Milestones

Nancy Kerr - 250 hours, Bronze Dragonfly
Billy Guin, Jr. - 500 hours, Brushed Silver Dragonfly
Ron Childers - 1000 hours, Gold Dragonfly
Stephen Bishop - 10,000 hours, Polished Gold Dragonfly with Emerald

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.

Congratulations to members who received awards when in person at the June meeting:



Patrick Scoggins, Mark Hults, Jane Jamison



Ron Scoggins, Frank Garcia, Lisa Flanagan, Ann Dietert

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

Wild at Work: A Stewardship Series

Wild at Work: A Stewardship Series is a new webinar series from Texas Wildlife Association which covers all things wildlife and land stewardship. These quarterly seminars will feature a variety of guest speakers to address topics of interest for stewards of our open spaces and native species. These free webinars, held during the work week at noon, are a perfect way to learn during your lunch break.

In this episode, we're answering a question asked by many Texas landowners: What is a Conservation Easement? [Brittany Wegner of the Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute](#) will cover the basics of conservation easements and share her own experience as a landowner with a CE property. Also joining us will be Mr. Howard Hicks, Brittany's grandfather and 5th generation rancher and owner of the Pike Davis Ranch, with further insights on the CE process. Tune in live to participate in the Q&A at the end.

VIRTUAL EVENT

Date: Thursday, July 28

Time: Noon to 1 PM

Registration Fee: FREE

<https://www.texas-wildlife.org/resources/events/wild-at-work-a-stewardship-series-july2022>

Webinars will be hosted and recorded on the Zoom platform. Look for a follow-up email immediately after registration with the details needed to sign on (check your spam folder if you don't see it). While registration is 100% free, *we would greatly appreciate a \$5 donation* to help us cover the costs of hosting.

For assistance please contact Amanda Gobeli at agobeli@texas-wildlife.org.



Every Friday 10am-12pm
@ Riverside Nature Center

Naturalist, author, and columnist, Jim Stanley and Texas Master Naturalist and native plant enthusiast, John Hucksteadt will be available to meet one on one to answer questions, discuss various topics, or listen to ideas about nature.

830.257.4837 • riversidenaturecenter.org • 150 Francisco Lemos St. Kerrville Tx



Save the Date
September 10th @ 8:00am

Watch riversidenaturecenter.org
for more details!

 Awards  Raffle
 Silent Auction  Food

Fun for All Ages!

830.257.4837 • riversidenaturecenter.org • 150 Francisco Lemos St. Kerrville Tx



TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST
2022 ANNUAL MEETING
HOUSTON, TX
OCTOBER 20-23

Put it on your calendar now as we prepare for our **23rd Texas Master Naturalist Program Annual Meeting**, an event to gather, learn and celebrate another year of the Texas Master Naturalist Program. We're preparing this year's meeting as an in-person event at the Omni Houston this fall **Thursday, October 20th to Sunday October 23rd**.

This year's Annual Meeting will be hosted in the heart of one of the most ecologically diverse urban centers in the nation. Houston is nestled in the Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes ecoregion of Texas, inviting a wide variety of wildlife and vegetation. With a temperate climate and abundant rainfall, more well-known species include the Houston toad and the whooping crane. The conference, held at the Omni Houston, sits on the shores of Buffalo Bayou, creating 160 acres of greenspace in the heart of downtown Houston, and re-introducing the natural world to those who call the city their home.

For more information go to: <https://txmn.tamu.edu/2022-annual-meeting/>

From Katy Kappel

More Focus on our Environment

On June 16, Becky Etzler, Director of the Riverside Nature Center, and I met with Rain Thoreson, the newly hired Tourism and Event Coordinator for the City of Kerrville. Her job involves increasing tourism to city-owned facilities. We would like to see more emphasis on our natural environment, which is what brings people to Kerrville.

The current city comprehensive plan lists collaborative efforts with the Riverside Nature Center, including events/workshops/giveaways/general awareness of promoting native flora and fauna. The 2022/23 budget is already in place, but we could work on something for 2023/2024.

TOWN Kerrville is scheduling hikes and other outdoor activities for women and would like to see upgrades to Kerrville Schreiner Park. Because it is no longer a state park, it lacks many features common to state parks, like license-free fishing and rental tackle, a store, and evening programs led by park rangers or Master Naturalists. Improvements would attract more campers and promote understanding of nature. These could include bird blinds with water features, trail improvements and signage, educational events for campers, fishing piers and cleaning facilities. An archery range is in the planning stage now.

Singing Wind Park has a deteriorated trail and could use signage and a bird blind also. Knapp Park and Cypress Park have picnic tables and boat ramps but no water faucet to wash off your boat. "Get Outdoors Day" has been discontinued and the Riverfest is dedicated to beer and music. The city is planning an "End of Summer Shindig" on August 6. We discussed the possibility of an event centered on the upcoming eclipse.

Representatives of the City, Schreiner University, and TPWD have met to explore an application to become a "Bird City." More about this: Bird City Texas — Texas Parks Wildlife Department. If you are a birder, your input will be needed.

There are many opportunities for Master Naturalists to be involved in promoting access and appreciation of the beautiful area we live in. How would you like to help? Contact me at katykappel@yahoo.com or 512-589-1498.

From Lucy Griffith

The View from Rusty Bend

A Bunkhouse Called Paradise

The last time I slept
in this old bunkhouse
I was eight years old.
Batwing shutters channeling southerlies,
the screen door squealing shut.

Green metal cots lined up on one wall.
Thin-ticked mattresses,
swaybacked as a picket line of old mares.
Limp pillows with a sheet and a towel.
Quilts folded over the bottom rail.

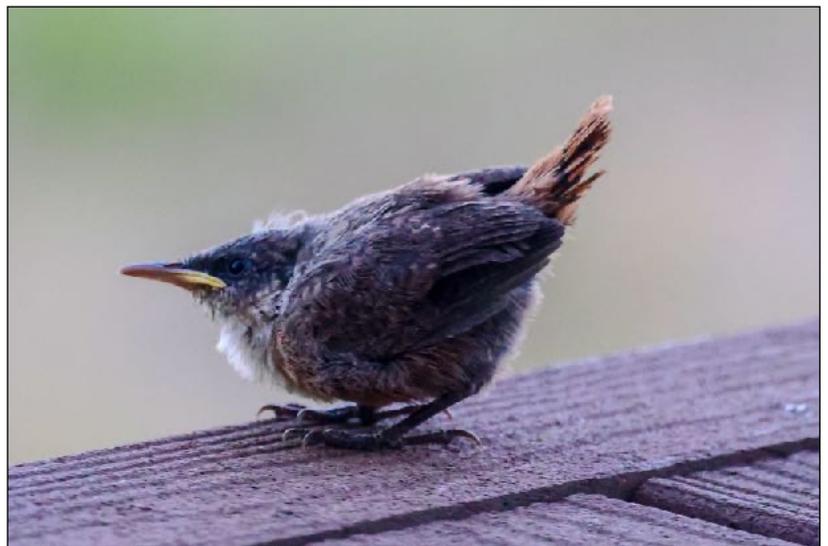
The sounds are the same:
the music of the rapids,
turkeys whomp, whomping to the roost.
The chitter of the kingfisher,
a jeep climbing the back pasture.

We swam in the stream down the hill till we had
raisin fingers and blue lips--
and our hair smelled of creek.
The wide plank floors shine, painted
with small wet footprints.

We nodded off
counting shooting stars
in the yard of the big house, on a gentle hill.
The daddies carried us to Paradise.

I would awaken
and look down the row:
caliche-cruste kids,
tangled in the covers,
sweetly drunk on long days outside.

What once held a tribe of feral children,
tonight holds me—
solitude cradled, with my favorite pen
and notebook, my broke-in hat,
my creek-smelling hair.



Canyon Wren fledgling (look at those feet!)

continued on next page

When I step outside this June at Rusty Bend, I smell dust, old hay and a whiff of goat. I am transported back in time when it was my job as a child to open the gate at Hillingdon Ranch. Same smell, same reasons—drought and hundred-degree days.

In the 1950's, with no air-conditioning, we escaped the heat in San Antonio by traveling to the Beckmann Ranch most weekends and sometimes weeks-long stays. Several families of assorted kids and their moms tumbled from station wagons. The daddies would come up after work on Fridays.

The stone house at the Beckmann ranch smelled of winter fires and wet limestone, like a cave. Piles of groceries from Handy Andy were heaped on the dining table. The kids threw little cardboard suitcases on cots in the bunkhouse and went immediately to the pens to lean on the ranch horses: Sugar, Whitey, and Lady.

I woke early and loved the chore of getting fresh milk from Mr. Clubb up the hill. Such a heavy pail, some would slosh into my boots. Once, he let me try to milk, and I could squeeze some, mostly in my face. The barn cat rubbed my leg, hoping for a squirt.

The moms knew the trick to staying cool was to get wet. We closed the sluice on a little dam on Block Creek and waited impatiently for the “pool” to fill. We might swing up on Sugar, the kid-broke mare and ride her bareback to a pond in the pasture. We would wade her in and she would paw the water. Huge splashes, bam, the water rippling across the pond with her earthquake. We'd hold on for dear life when she shook, then dive off her back and swim between her legs. Feats of bravery we knew not to share.

Or we might climb up a ravine in the cliff above the creek, learning the hard way to avoid the stinging leaves of Noseburn. There was a seam of clay threading the cliff and we would dig it out with our fingers and make pinch pots for hours. Muddy and wild. We'd rinse off in the creek and lay on warm rocks, watching Turkey Vultures tracing lazy thermals above us, like a lullaby in the sky.

This hot and dry summer, take a page from those old days. Get up early, have a glass of cold milk, get wet if you can. Then, lie back, watch summer's lullaby.



Canyon Wren demolishing the nest

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.



Chapter meetings are held on the fourth Monday of the month (except in December). Members and the public are welcome to attend in person or virtually. There is no cost to attend.

In-person: We meet in the auditorium at the Upper Guadalupe River Authority (UGRA) Building at 125 Lehmann Drive in Kerrville. Doors open at 6PM for socializing. Business Meeting begins at 6:30PM. Advanced Training session is 7-8PM.

Virtual: Links are available at txmn.org/hillcountry.

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 2022

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- Frank Garcia -- Vice President
- Alice King -- Secretary
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- 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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membership@hillcountrytxmn.org

