

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the
Texas Master Naturalist
Hill Country Chapter

January 2023 Volume 21 Number 1



Dragonfly image by Lucy Griffith



The January Hill Country Chapter meeting will be a hybrid meeting on Monday, January 23. Doors open at 6 for socializing, the business meeting will begin at 6:30, and the AT presentation will be 7:10-8:10. To register for virtual attendance, click [HERE](#).

Our speaker, Molly E. Keck, is an Integrated Pest Management Program Specialist with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in Bexar County. Molly is a graduate of Texas A&M University and has been with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service since 2005. The title of her talk is "Beneficial Insects." For a link to the handout that she will supply, go to <https://bexar-tx.tamu.edu/want-to-request-a-program/>.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.... JEFF SCHWARZ



Welcome to 2023 and your chance for a fresh start with these new year resolutions:
find a volunteering niche in which you and the organization are energized;
reach your 40 hours of volunteer hours by the end of March;
reach your 10 hours of Advanced Training by the end of June;
lead at least one volunteer project.

(Note: these represent stretch goals, not the official minimum of 40 + 10 hours by Dec. 31.)

I've stepped in with both feet on the first two of those resolutions: I'm your new 2023 Hill Country Texas Master Naturalist chapter president! I know, keep the applause down. You're just happy it's not you, but come talk to me in October and we can get you lined up for a leadership role in 2024. They really don't take that much time and are quite gratifying.

By way of introduction, like many of you: I recently moved to the Hill Country. This move, in 2013, was a return to my roots. I am a sixth generation Kendall County resident: grew up in Boerne, left to get a Chemical Engineering degree from Texas A&M, then spent 37 years in the upstream oil and gas industry in Anchorage, Alaska; Midland and Houston, Texas; Lafayette, Louisiana; Denver, Colorado—and finished up in San Antonio. My home is now 3000 ft. away from the original Schwarz homestead built in 1855 near Bergheim. Coincidentally, my two acres of heaven are part of the 10,000+ acres that the Schwarz family amassed in the late 1800's – most of it at less than \$1/acre – but sold by the early 1900's to move to town where they could make a living.

My wife and I had always talked of retiring back here in the Hill Country. Getting here happened a little quicker than we'd expected. I did retire, in 2019, but then had to figure out how I was going to spend my spare time. I've always enjoyed the outdoors, getting my toes in the water and hands in the sand limestone. I became a HCTM Naturalist with the class of 2021 and started volunteering at a couple of favorite spots (Cibolo Nature Center, Albert and Bessie Kronkosky State Natural area); then in November, took the call to leadership when the opportunity presented itself.

I look forward to this new year in the outside. . . it will be wetter, I hope. Find your own inner voice and let it guide you to new adventures in the wild! Where will you go to make that connection with people, with an organization, with a project that warms your heart or challenges your intellect? What will be your story?

This Month We Honor



Initial Certification

Karen Ozer, Nancy Roberts, Sam Roberts

Special Recertification - Class of 2022

Laura King

Recertifications

Diana Armbrust, Jana Baxter, Nancye Drukker, Larry Eskridge, Nancy Grimes, Nash Hardeman, Lenore Langsdorf, Wendi Leonard, Susan Longacre, Kathy Loring, David Matthews, Lars Nielson, Lonnie Phillips, Tony Plutino, Scot Powell, Mark Richardson, Bill Sewell, Louisa Stone, Joyce Towers

Milestones

Mark Hults, Sharon Noack - 250 hours, Bronze Dragonfly
Lois Gaines, Debbie Thompson - 500 hours, Brushed Silver Dragonfly
Catherine Gauldin, Hal Zesch - 1000 hours, Gold Dragonfly

Congratulations to members who received awards in person at the November meeting.



Jane Jamison, Kathy Loring



Alice King, Robin Hale, Terry Lashley



Jeanne Bodine, Patricia Poore, Robin May, Jeff Schwarz, Jane Jamison, Terry Lashley



1 on 1 with a Naturalist

Every 1st & 4th Friday | 10am - 12pm

A Certified Texas Master Naturalist will be available to meet 1-on-1 to answer questions, discuss various topics, or listen to ideas about how to advance the stewardship and conservation of our environment.



RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER ASSOCIATION
riversidenaturecenter.org | (830) 257-4837



BIRD WALK & TALK

SATURDAY, JANUARY 21, 2023
9:00 - 10:30AM
LOCATION:
FLAT ROCK DOG PARK
125 REDEMPTION RD, KERRVILLE, TX 78028



Join Paul and Deloris Sellin for a morning bird walk along the River Trail. You will learn life histories of our avian residents and migratory feathered friends. All ages and levels of experience are welcome.

EVERY 3RD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH
PLEASE RSVP TO RNC.KERRVILLE@GMAIL.COM OR 830-257-4837



The Boerne Chapter meeting on February 7 will be at the Cibolo Nature Center Auditorium at 6:30. A presentation by Ken Butler will follow the meeting. He is an avid photographer, Texas Master Naturalist, and member of the Board of the Bexar Audubon Society. He will present "Butterflies of the Kendall County Area," a photographic summary of the identifying field marks and basic behavior of the common butterflies (and a few rare ones).

The Kerrville Chapter meeting on February 14 will be at Riverside Nature Center from 1:30-3:00pm. Our speaker, Peggy Sechrist, provides training and coaching in Holistic Management throughout Texas. Currently she is the Hill Country Advisor for the Soil for Water Initiative, a project of the National Center for Appropriate Technology focused on educating landowners on increasing the water holding capacity of their soils. She will discuss the magical relationships between soil microbes and plants and the importance of increasing organic matter in your soil.

The Fredericksburg Chapter meeting on January 24 will be at St. Joseph's Hall at 6:30. Go to [website](#) for further information.

From Katy Kappel

More Opportunities to Promote the Appreciation of Nature

The Riverside Nature Center, Schreiner University, TPWD and the City of Kerrville are working together to enhance our bird population and become Bird City Kerrville. We are working on a wildlife management plan and will need to survey the plants and animals of many of the parks. We are also forming a community group to work on a mural depicting the importance of WATER in Kerrville. This effort is in cooperation with the Hill Country Alliance and UGRA. I am looking for likely locations and there are other tasks besides the actual design and painting, including publicity, fundraising, and discussion groups. Let me know (katykappel@yahoo.com) if you would like more information.

Wildlife Tax Valuation Workshop 2023

3 Classes | Jan 21, Feb 4th, & Feb 11th
140 City Park Rd.



Instructed by Rufus Stephens, wildlife biologist, ecologist, and author of *Attracting Birds in the Texas Hill Country*. This comprehensive program guides landowners through the requirements for Wildlife Tax Valuation and promoting healthy ecosystems. Attendees will complete the workshop ready to apply for a Wildlife Tax Valuation.

Day I: What Wildlife Can I Manage on My Property?
Jan 21st, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Day II: What Do I Need to Do to Manage Wildlife?
Feb 4th, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Day III: How Do I put It All Together?
Feb 11th, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

COST for 3 sessions:
\$120 Member
\$150 Member Couple
\$140 Nonmember
\$170 Nonmember Couple



SCAN HERE TO REGISTER

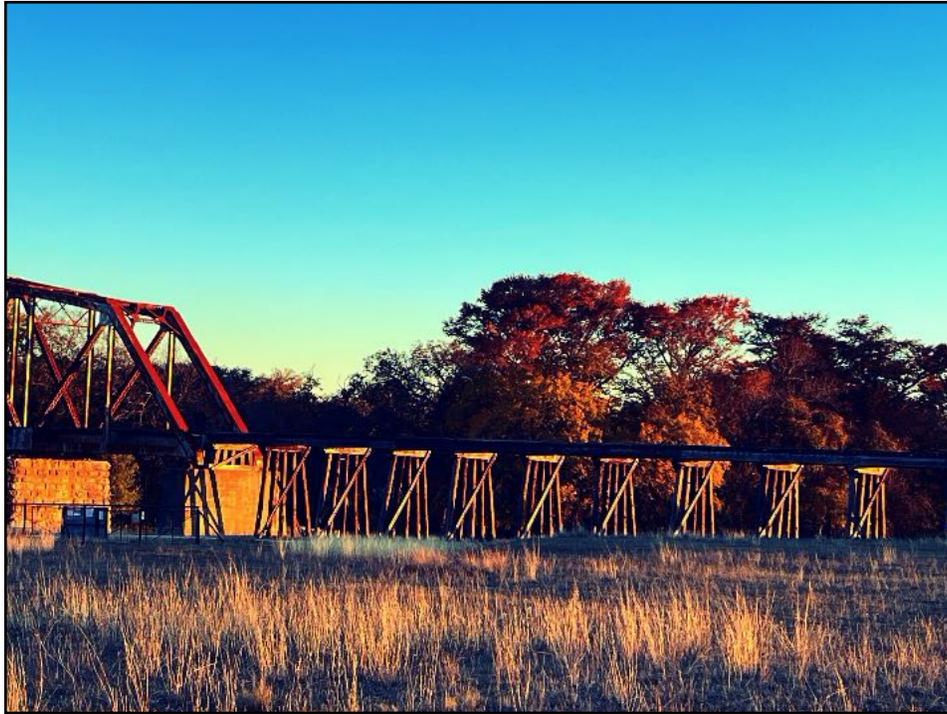


Contact Ben Eldridge with inquiries:
benacibola.org
(210)633-7150

WELCOME

Chapter members are welcome and encouraged to attend and contribute to Board of Directors meetings. The board meets at the Riverside Nature Center at 2:30 on the Monday of the chapter's monthly meeting.

The View from Rusty Bend



Solstice sun lights the trestle marching into the bridge

Why I don't read the news with my oatmeal

I miss my father.
The veil between us has thinned to a breath
with each decade. I awaken each day
held within this curve of river
that he knew by heart.
I crave to see the same birds he saw,
feel his smile at Roadrunner,
welcome Towhee, note
departure of Scissortail.
I don't want to miss
the essence of any morning,
or armadillos jousting below the window.
I count monarchs for him
as they sift down the limestone cliff
to rest and roost in a glory of orange.
And today, he's ever close.
A raptor flew near
snowy head, white tail,
wings as long as I am tall,
Bald Eagle, eye to eye.
In his draft, I hold tight
to a dream of father.

continued on next page

The fall colors at Rusty Bend have faded. No longer do I burst from bed to see how the trees have changed overnight. Winterscape slid in to slow me down. Not the foxes though, they are busy to and fro-ing. Watching them is a balm. I notice that foxes don't trot, they float, like thoughts alive with hope. I take the lesson.

A certain scurrying is happening if you pay attention. Acorns rat-a-tat on the roof. Red-breasted Nuthatches are in residence and also busy, defying gravity, hanging upside down, then stashing sunflower seeds in cracks and crevices. Hundreds of robins decorate the possumhaws as they strip the crimson berries, then carol their songs.

Ravens always seem purposeful in their comings and goings, especially following the sounds of hunting season. We know that long-attached mates usually fly side by side, but I think we have a new couple. One will leave her perch, then a minute later the other will follow in her exact wake, up, down, between two trees. As if she carved a tunnel in the air, the mate traces it right to her.

We have several days of deep freeze. Here's the weather report: all the birds put on their puffer jackets and sat on their feet to keep their legs warm. Plates of ice shifted in the bird bath. Our fireplace smoke smells like cinnamon. The cypress needles now crunch underfoot like potato chips. Color extraction complete.

Once the color is gone though, the bones of the landscape are laid bare. Look beyond the greys and browns. See how the smaller hills come to life. The limbs of the trees lie dark and pulsing, arterial against the winter sky.

If wintering is a skill, I want to master it. This is the season for radical rest and reflection, time to go inward. Time to incubate what is next, to dwell in a space between knowing and not-knowing, a space where plans and poems can grow. I'm pulled into a slow dance with torpor. Everything is being put to rest, for now is the time to fall in love with darkness.



Partnership in progress

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 preordered from www.flowersongpress.com . Comments welcome at lucy@lucygriffithwriter.com.

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.



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.

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 7:10-8:10PM.

Board of Directors 2023

- President.....Jeff Schwarz
 - Vice President.....Kim Ort
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 - Chapter State Representative...Vern Crawford
- Chapter Advisor: Michelle Hagerty



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.

Questions about our chapter?

Email Membership Director Dot Maginot
membership@hillcountrytmn.org

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.

