

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the
Texas Master Naturalist
Hill Country Chapter

October 2023 Volume 20 Number 10



photo by Deb Youngblood



The October Hill Country Chapter meeting will be a hybrid meeting on Monday, October 23. Doors open at 6pm for socializing. The business meeting begins at 6:30 and the presentation by Ryan Caesar, who is a biology professor at Schreiner University, will begin at 7:10. He will focus on Hill Country Dragonflies and Damselflies.

Prior registration is required for attending the meeting/AT session via Zoom. To register for virtual attendance, click [HERE](#). You will receive a confirmation email with information about joining the meeting, and can log into Zoom at 6pm on October 23.

This Month We Honor

Recertifications

Karolyn Andrews, David Drake, Larry Eskridge, Dot Garlow, Patricia Higgins
Terry Lashley, Lisa Marler, David Mathews, Linda Myers, Lonnie Phillips
Tony Plutino, Nancy Roberts, Sam Roberts, Bernard Warren



Milestone Awards

Kathy Webster, Phil Youngblood - 250 hours, Bronze Dragonfly
Jeff Schwarz - 500 hours, Brushed Silver Dragonfly
Janis Aterbury - 1000 hours, Gold Dragonfly

Annual Membership Appreciation Event

Mark your calendar for **Saturday, December 9 from Noon to 3:00 p.m.**
The party is being held at the Texas A&M Agrilife Center in Fredericksburg.
The party is free. Hors d'oeuvres will be served.

Thank you to all of you for your dedication even through the heat, drought,...
We will have a silent auction because

1. It's fun.
2. Holiday shopping!
3. Raise money for the chapter (we do not have a membership fee).

Katy Kappel, Carra Milikien, and Alice King are organizing the silent auction for this year's Member Appreciation Event. Please consider donating items such as baked treats, hand-made items, art, native trees/plants, seeds, nature-themed clothing and jewelry, books, tickets to sports events/plays/musical events, etc. If you would like to solicit merchants for items, let one of us know. We will coordinate so that we don't approach the same merchants multiple times. Please let Alice know (Alice_king@att.net) if you have donations or have a plan to approach a merchant. Thank you!

Congratulations to members who received awards at the September meeting.



Dot Maginot



Patricia Poore



Nancy Kerr, Brenda Fest, Catherine Gauldin



The Friends of Lost Maples are seeking volunteers to help out in the park this fall. Come share your knowledge at the Visitor Information Table, talking to park visitors about Lost Maples' facilities and trails, plants and animals, geology and human history. We need volunteers mostly on weekends from mid-October thru November.

**If you're interested, contact Greg Walton at Gregwalton12345@gmail.com
OR contact the park directly at 830-966-3413.**



The speaker at the Boerne chapter monthly meeting on October 23 will be Andy Blair, who will focus on heat/drought resistant plants and strengthening the soil. The meeting will be at 5:45 at the New Braunfels Public Library Meeting Room.

The speaker at the Fredericksburg chapter monthly meeting on October 24 will be Lonnie Childs, President of the chapter. He will present an overview of the Nature Center along with future plans. The monthly meetings are on the fourth Tuesday of the month at St. Joseph's Halle. Social time, 6:30; meeting at 7.

The Kerrville Chapter monthly meeting will be on Tuesday, November 14 at 2:00 at the Riverside Nature Center.

From Rachel Thompson

The Boerne Chapter of the Native Plant Society has received an Apache Corporation tree grant of 50 five gallon trees to be planted at the Boerne City Campus Natural Area. This restoration work behind the library in Boerne is a joint project of our Boerne NPSOT chapter and the Hill Country TMN Chapter.

We are planting understory trees in areas where ligustrum has been removed, to increase biodiversity and improve the bird habitat. We plan to plant in 10 "plots" of five trees each. The City is digging the holes for us, but this is still a big job and we are looking for volunteers for two days. On October 26, we will be cutting fence material, setting T-posts for the plots, watering the holes, and clearing some small cedar and weeds from the 10 areas. On October 27, we will plant the trees, water them in, spread mulch, and complete the fences.

This is a big job and we need a lot of help. We want to start at 8:30 both days, but welcome anyone who can give us even a little time on either or both days. If you can help, please let me know (rjat@alumni.rice.edu). T-post drivers, wire cutters, nippers for cedar, shovels, rakes, wheelbarrows, etc. are needed, as well as people!

KENDALL COUNTY WATER TALK MANAGING OUR GROUNDWATER

Date: Nov 1, 2023

Location: Herff Farm, 33 Herff Rd, Boerne, TX

Time: 6:00pm-7:30pm

From providing drinking water to sustaining our springs and rivers, groundwater is the lifeblood of Kendall County. In the last year, we've seen drought threaten the health of our aquifers. At the same time, growth in the county means more people will rely on groundwater than ever before.

Please join us for a presentation with Natalie Ballew, Groundwater Division Director at the Texas Water Development Board, to learn more about Kendall County's groundwater, how it is managed, and how you can get involved.

Presentation will cover:

- Groundwater 101:
- Aquifers in Kendall County
- Roles in Groundwater Management
- Groundwater Planning & How to Get Involved

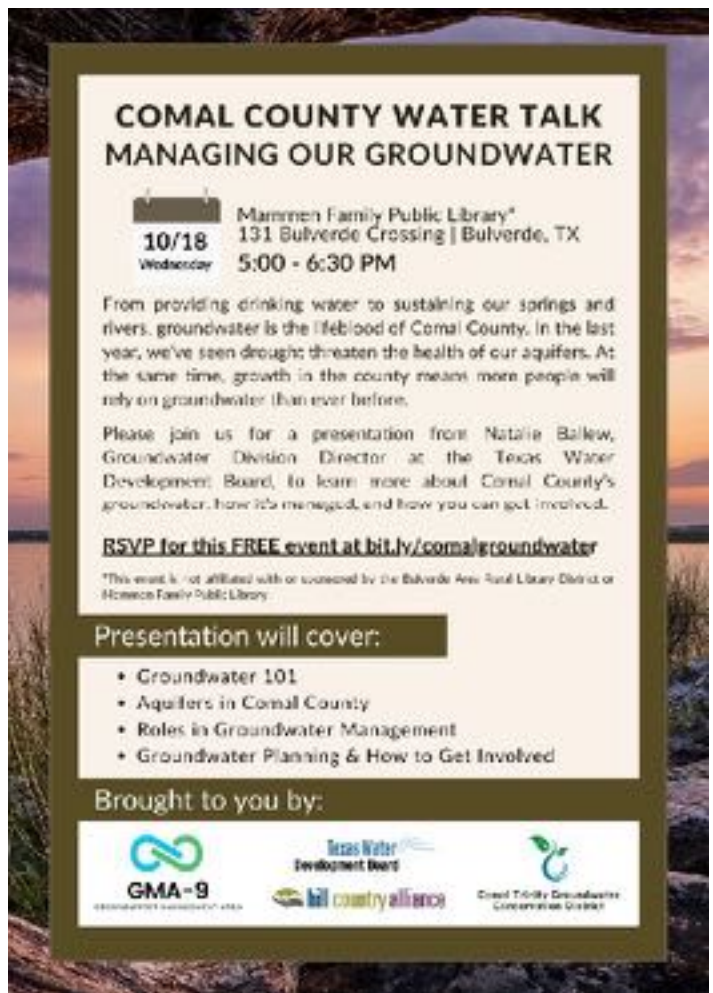
Register to save your spot.

To Register:

[Click here to RSVP at bit.ly/comalgroundwater](https://bit.ly/comalgroundwater)

[Click here to RSVP at bit.ly/kendallwater](https://bit.ly/kendallwater)

[Click here to RSVP at bit.ly/kerrwater](https://bit.ly/kerrwater)



**COMAL COUNTY WATER TALK
MANAGING OUR GROUNDWATER**

10/18
Wednesday

Mammen Family Public Library*
131 Bulverde Crossing | Bulverde, TX
5:00 - 6:30 PM

From providing drinking water to sustaining our springs and rivers, groundwater is the lifeblood of Comal County. In the last year, we've seen drought threaten the health of our aquifers. At the same time, growth in the county means more people will rely on groundwater than ever before.

Please join us for a presentation from Natalie Ballew, Groundwater Division Director at the Texas Water Development Board, to learn more about Comal County's groundwater, how it's managed, and how you can get involved.




RSVP for this FREE event at bit.ly/comalgroundwater

*This event is not affiliated with or sponsored by the Bulverde Area Rural Library District or Mammen Family Public Library.

Presentation will cover:

- Groundwater 101
- Aquifers in Comal County
- Roles in Groundwater Management
- Groundwater Planning & How to Get Involved

Brought to you by:



**KERR COUNTY WATER TALK
MANAGING OUR GROUNDWATER**

11/6
Monday

UGRA Lecture Hall
125 Lehmann Dr | Kerrville, TX
4:30 - 6:00 PM

From providing drinking water to sustaining our springs and rivers, groundwater is the lifeblood of Kerr County. In the last year, we've seen drought threaten the health of our aquifers. At the same time, growth in the county means more people will rely on groundwater than ever before.


Please join us for a presentation from Natalie Ballew, Groundwater Division Director at the Texas Water Development Board, to learn more about Kerr County's groundwater, how it's managed, and how you can get involved.

RSVP for this FREE event at bit.ly/kerrgroundwater

Presentation will cover:

- Groundwater 101
- Aquifers in Kerr County
- Roles in Groundwater Management
- Groundwater Planning & How to Get Involved

Brought to you by:



EXOTICS IN KERR COUNTY & THE HILL COUNTRY

**THE HISTORY, THE INDUSTRY, AND THE
FINANCIAL IMPACT OF EXOTIC ANIMALS**

FEATURING:

**DR. JACOB DYKES, TEXAS A&M EXTENSION
WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST * DR. YURI CALIL,
TEXAS A&M EXTENSION ECONOMIST * MR.
MARK MITCHELL, TWPD, MANAGER MASON
MOUNTAIN WMA * MR. DOUG SMITH, EXOTIC
WILDLIFE ASSOCIATION * MR. CHRIS
HUGHES, BROKEN ARROW RANCH**

**NOVEMBER 16, 2023 8:00AM-3:00PM
HILL COUNTRY YOUTH EVENT CENTER
KERRVILLE, TX**

Register by November 10 at the Kerr
County Extension Office (830) 257-6568
\$10 Program Fee. Lunch Provided

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 2:00 on the Monday of the chapter's monthly meeting.

The View from Rusty Bend



No rain but a rainbow

Drought Report

Hardy greenbrier looks slammed by a rogue freeze
Possumhaw sacrificed its berries, all leaves now brown and dry.
Persimmon called foul and dropped all leaves overnight.
Turkeys are hiding. The sky oddly quiet.
Armadillos finetune their taste for ants,
excavating their mounds.

Covert tales hide in the dirt.
Dirt fine as talc, each track unique as a fingerprint.
Bobcats four-lobed pads tell of thirst quenched at the pond.
A donut swirl signals bath of rabbit.
The steady story, all the way up the road,
a sure broomstroke, a long sine wave—
signed by porcupine's tail.

Dear Papa,

How I wish you were here. I have so many unanswered questions for you, especially about the drought of the 1950s. Though I grew up in it, I was too young to imagine the enormity of a state-wide drought. I know now the difference between a dry spell and a drought. I wish I didn't. The drought monitor shows Rusty Bend right in the middle of the worst.

I am watching what it does to the deer, how we seem to lose one every few days. I see how the armor on the 'dillo hangs on his hips. I see the neighbors' cows eating trees. The other trees tell their tales each day as another descends into dormancy or death, as you would say *only time will tell*. Patches of brown stain the landscape.

continued on next page

Now I know the source of your saying *mighty dry, mighty dry*. I want to ask if all the pools in the Guadalupe dried up back then or just the shallow ones. Did ALL the fish die? I want to know if every pasture turned into a hard-packed dry lot. I remember you taught me that bare ground has lost its sponge, it can't catch and drink the rain, making muddy streams that carry away the strength of the land. So hard not to worry.

Most of all I want to know how to manage this precarity. Having just come out of years of fear and anxiety over a virus, now how do we handle this uncertainty about what happens next? How many critters will die? Will they come back? Will our well run dry? Will the powers that be take steps to manage growth?

I imagine walking the river with you. Pointing out how the turtles congregate in the shade, how the shrub trees are growing in the middle of the gravel bars. How the Great Blue Herons seem to like fishing in a barrel. We still have some deep pools. I wonder if the catfish and gar have enough oxygen. We could wonder together as we wander.

Then when we get home we could look up the answers to our questions. There aren't answers to all of them. We can stay curious, we can befriend uncertainty. We can be kind to what is struggling. We can conserve each drop. Perhaps most of all, we must perfect our waiting skills. We can put on our stoic hats, try to catch that rainbow hanging like a scarf.



Staying friendly to pollinators

Poem, images and essay by Lucy Griffith Copyright 2023

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

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 Guadalupe Basin Natural Resources Center (GBNRC) 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
Secretary.....Patti Guin
TreasurerRon Scoggins
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Communications Director.....Mark Hults
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Past Class RepresentativeJane Jamison
Past PresidentCarla Stang
Chapter State Representative...Vern Crawford
Chapter Advisor: Michelle Hagerty



Questions about our
chapter?

Email Membership Director Dot Maginot
membership@hillcountrytmn.org

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.

The Hill Country Chapter does not recommend or endorse organizations or commercial sources mentioned in our newsletter.
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