

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the
Texas Master Naturalist
Hill Country Chapter

April 2024 Volume 21 Number 4



Spring Nectar Harvesting
photo by Vern Crawford



The April Hill Country Chapter meeting will be a hybrid meeting on Monday, April 22. Doors open at 6pm for socializing. The business meeting begins at 6:30 and the presentation at 7:00. The presenter is Hill Country artist and journalist Nancy Huffman, who became a member of the Coastal Prairie Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists in 2014 and of the Hill Country Chapter in 2018. She has served as the President of the Kerrville Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas. Join us on this Earth Day for an inspirational talk about nature journaling, a centuries-old practice that strengthens observation skills, memory, curiosity, and appreciation for the natural world.

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. You can then log into Zoom starting at 6pm on April 22.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...JEFF SCHWARZ

Time is slipping away to apply for the 2024 Hill Country Chapter New Class! April 22 is the deadline for submission, though there's still four months before classes start in August. As of April 10, there were 17 applicants submitted on the way to our target of 30 class members.

One of those applicants is my next door neighbor! She's been involved with nature activities and organizations throughout her life; in Houston, in the Rio Grande Valley, and most recently here where she is a former Chair of a Nature Center board. She resides outside of Boerne and has a weekend spot in Hunt on the northern branch of the Guadalupe.

I'm excited to have a neighbor and friend join the chapter! What about you? Do you have a friend or neighbor who might be interested in becoming a Texas Master Naturalist? There's still time to get an application in. Refer your neighbors and friends to our chapter website, txmn.org/hillcountry, for more information on the new class.

More details on the 2024 New Class can be found further in this edition of the newsletter.

Don't forget – Saturday, April 20 is our co-sponsored Native Plant sale at Kerrville's Riverside Nature Center! It sells out quickly and there's usually a long line waiting for the gates to open at 9am, so get there early for your opportunity to pick up some natives for your yard.

P.S. as you recruit your friends, remember our Mission Statement and what we do:

OUR MISSION: The Texas Master Naturalist mission is 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 for the State of Texas.

VOLUNTEER SERVICE IS THE REASON FOR OUR EXISTENCE: Chapter members must contribute 40 hours of volunteer service annually to retain certification in the Texas Master Naturalist program. Our chapter members make a difference in more than 115 chapter-approved volunteer projects across our ten-county service area and contribute thousands of hours each year towards the preservation of our Hill Country environment.

From Carra Milikien, 2024 New Class Training Director

2024 NEW CLASS COMMITTEE is on the MOVE!

“On the MOVE” means this group (aka, NCC) has laid the foundation for the style, the model, the content, and the fall schedule for the Hill Country chapter’s 2024 basic training program.

IF you have had the honor of serving on a New Class [Training] Committee in the last 20+ years in our chapter, then you understand why this group of new Hill Country TMN members meets twice a month to kick-start planning which began in January of this year.

For chapter members, here are “good to know” points the Committee wants to share about its work so far:

Basic training is an open conversation about our natural resources, their identification, history and needed efforts to conserve. Q & A and personal inquiry are encouraged.

2024 training follows a recommended Texas Parks and Wildlife systems approach to habitats and environments and inclusion of the “ologies” (the sciences).

Critical Hill Country issues - urban ecology, dark skies and water resources-to be keynoted by presenters who offer the research, the science, and the practice of conservation.

NCC adheres to established responsibilities and roles, timelines for tasks, and working documents written by previous Directors/Committee members.

Fall 2024 class schedule and details will be continuously updated on our chapter website, <https://txmn.org/hillcountry/2024-class-schedule/>

Wednesday classes are “live” and may be attended via Zoom. Class locations will rotate between Boerne, Fredericksburg and Kerrville for ease of access to our mentees and mentors.

Saturday Field Trips will be ‘on location’ and include lectures as well as treks.

2024 basic training class is from mid-August through mid-November.

Members!

- Spread the word about the Fall Training Class. Call your friends. Use social media.
- Like theater or stage performance? Volunteer for a fun new approach to the Early Naturalist class
- Wannabee an Historic Naturalist? We want you on the set! Contact Randee Thompson, 830-377-6353.
- Consider being a mentor....a guide and a TMN friend to support a new member through the training.
- Contact Phil Roberson, Membership Director, membership@hillcountrytmn.org

Check Out Our Team!

Carra Milikien, New Class Director 2024 (class of 2021)
Karolyn Andrews (class of 2022)
Vicki Andrews (class of 2023)
Mildred Dworsky (class of 2018)
Mark Hults Communication Director (class of 2022)
Jane Jamison, Advisor to NCC (class of 2022)
Selina Keeton (class of 2023)
Laurie Fondren (class of 2022)
Lou Hugman, New Class Representative (class of 2023)
Julie Lewis (class of 2023)
Sheryl Pender, Advisor to NCC (class of 2019)
Phil Roberson, Membership Director (class of 2023)
Jeff Schwarz, President (class of 2021)
Aimee Tenet (class of 2023)
Randee Thompson (class of 2023)

Apply Now for the Class of 2024!

The Hill Country Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists is now accepting applications for our annual training course. Learn about the natural world around us. Birds, bees, clouds, soil, trees, native grasses and more. For application information visit our website and look under Course Info > 2024.

This Month We Honor



Initial Certification - Class of 2023

Susie McCalla

Special Recertification - Class of 2023

Rae Raiford, Barbara Romano, Randee Thompson

Recertification

Mackenzie Brown, Ron Childers, Jane Crone, Kristie Denbow, Trudy Eberhardt, Tom Harrigan, Molly Houck, Nancy Hoffman, Alice King, Sandy Leyendecker, Charleen Moore, Lucy Spade, Aimee Tennant, Kathy Webster

Congratulations to members who received awards at the March meeting.



Virginia de Wolf, Jeff Schwarz



Deb Youngblood, Gracie Waggoner, Patricia Poore, Bob Binnney, Lisa Flanagan, Frank Garcia



Phil Roberson, Randee Thompson



Debbie Thompson



Aimee Tennant, Phil Roberson



**Join Us for a Unique Learning Experience About the
Natural History of the Texas Hill Country!**

**“THROUGH THE EYES OF EARLY
NATURALISTS, SETTLERS AND ARTISTS”**

Friday, May 17, 2024 – 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.

AgriLife Extension Office

38 Business Court – Fredericksburg, TX

Guest Speakers: Lonnie Childs & Katherine Peake

Sponsored by: Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center

RSVP to: gwaggener@flow-apps.com

Approved for Two (2) Hours of TMN Advanced Training Credit

JOIN US FOR A UNIQUE LEARNING EXPERIENCE! On Friday, May 17, 2024, from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M., the Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center invite you to a unique learning experience about the natural history of the Texas Hill Country as seen through the eyes of early naturalists, settlers, and artists. Texas is the state with the greatest wildlife heritage in the United States and has attracted many important explorers and naturalists throughout its history. Lonnie Childs, President of FFNC, will take you on a journey to explore the background, lives, and work of some of the most important naturalists whose extensive efforts provide a legacy of exploration and a basis for understanding our modern fauna and flora. Katherine Peake, historian and former Fredericksburg Municipal Judge, will provide you with a history of the natural landscape of the Hill Country through the art of early German-born artists Julian Onderdonk, Richard Petri, Hermann Lungkwitz and Captain Seth Eastman. Additionally, the human landscape of women's experiences will be explored through letters and memoirs of early women settlers. You do not want to miss this unique historical program about the Texas Hill Country. This presentation will be held at the Gillespie County AgriLife Extension Building located at 38 Business Court in Fredericksburg and has been approved for two (2) hours of TMN advanced training credit. **Please RSVP to gwaggener@flow-apps.com.**

From Katy Kappel

Bird City Kerrville Progress Report

For the last 18 months, a coalition of local nature groups have been working on achieving certification in the Bird City program. Texas Parks and Wildlife has partnered with Texas Audubon to promote better habitat and community awareness of the needs of birds. “Where birds thrive, people prosper.” www.birdcity.org/texas for more information.

Nearing the application deadline of June 1, here is what we have accomplished. When we are certified, activities will continue for the next two years.

1. Worked together as a collaborative body and recruited partners.
2. Promoted native plants, developed a recommended plant list (see Native Plant Society or Riverside Nature Center websites), and will have plants available for sale April 20.
3. Educated the public regarding invasive species and removed *Arundo donax*.
4. Promoted the Cats Indoors program and distributed information to every veterinarian and animal rescue group in Kerrville.
5. Documented the removal of invasive animals in Kerr County (14,000 hogs to date).
6. Developed informational brochures for builders on bird-friendly designs and low light options.
7. Supported the “Lights Out Texas” program.
8. Will celebrate World Migratory Bird Day on May 11 at the Ridge Café and Garden
9. Provided numerous workshops on environmental issues, conservation, and birds.
10. Developing a web presence for birding opportunities in Kerrville
11. Maintain numerous pollinator and native plant demonstration gardens.
12. Participated in multiple bird surveys.
13. Schreiner’s Dr. Chris Distel has constructed a new bird blind on campus and has another planned.
14. www.texasbynature.org envisions up to fifteen blinds.
15. Working with Kerr County to build a blind in Flat Rock Park near the Veterans Pathway, which adds an
16. additional two miles to the River Trail
17. Obtained a Resolution of Support from the Kerrville City Council.

Coalition members to date include Hill Country Master Naturalists, Riverside Nature Center, UGRA, Native Plant Society of Kerrville, Wild Birds Unlimited, Schreiner University, Kerrville Master Gardeners, Kerrville Pets Alive, Kerr County Friends of the Night Sky, Center for Fitness, Peter Lewis Architects & Associates, Habitat for Humanity.

This is a Master Naturalist project and more help is needed — everything from outreach to carpentry. Talk to Alice King, Kathy Loring, Becky Etzler, or Katy Kappel (512-589-1598).



Chapter members are welcome and encouraged to attend and contribute to Board of Directors meetings. The board meets at the Riverside Nature Center from 2-4pm on the Monday of the chapter's monthly meeting.

From Becky Etzler, Executive Director, Riverside Nature Center

Riverside Nature Center
Part-time Visitor Center Naturalist



Status: Hourly/Non-Exempt
Hours: Part-time, 1 day/week, Saturday

Riverside Nature Center is looking to hire a weekend Naturalist.
This is a perfect opportunity for a Master Naturalist.
For more information: Director@RiversideNatureCenter.Org or (830) 257-4837.

From Susan Walther, President, Texas Master Naturalist Coastal Prairie Chapter

Seeing the Natural World from Space:
How It Inspired Me to Become a Texas Master Naturalist

Fellow Texas Master Naturalists, those of you who were at the 2022 Annual Meeting will remember Dr. Lindgren's inspirational presentation to us just a few days after his return to earth from serving as Commander on a 170-day mission on the International Space Station. We welcome you to see him speak again, and hope that many others can join us for your first viewing of this unique and thought-provoking program.

About Our Presenter: Dr. Kjell N. Lindgren was selected by NASA in 2009. Growing up in an Air Force family, he spent most of his childhood abroad and returned to the U.S. to complete his education with an undergraduate degree from the U.S. Air Force Academy and a Doctorate of Medicine from the University of Colorado. He is residency trained in both emergency and aerospace medicine. He joined NASA as a flight surgeon in 2007 and served as the Deputy Crew Surgeon for STS-130 and Expedition 24. He was selected as an astronaut in June 2009 as one of 14 members of the 20th NASA astronaut class. In 2015, Dr. Lindgren flew on Expedition 44/45 and logged 141 days in space. He participated in two spacewalks and in more than a hundred different scientific experiments. Dr. Lindgren served as commander of NASA's SpaceX Crew-4 mission. Crew-4 launched on Apr. 27, 2022 to the International Space Station joining Expedition 67 for an additional 170 days on orbit, returning home on Oct. 14, 2022. Dr. Lindgren has spent a cumulative total of 311 days in space. He currently serves as the Deputy Director of the Flight Operations Directorate (FOD). (Intro from [Nasa.gov](https://www.nasa.gov)).

In-Person Meeting: Texas Master Naturalist - Coastal Prairie Chapter programs are free and open to the public. All ages are welcome. This program will be held in-person at the [Rosenberg Civic Center](#). During our social hour from 6:00-7:00pm, light refreshments will be available. To reduce plastic waste, please bring your own refillable water bottle or cup. Water will be available.

Zoom Attendance: You may also attend by Zoom. Use the link below to register in advance for Zoom attendance.
https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUoduiurjMjHtRXVs_GrcrMu3zwDTgMKZkk
After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.



Nature & Art
SUMMER CAMP
at The Cibolo


Weekly Sessions
June - August

Ages
5 - 12

Register Here:
cibolo.org/camp

The Boerne NPSOT Chapter Spring Native Plant Sale will be at the Teaching Garden at Herff Farm on Saturday, April 20, 9am - 1pm.

The Kerrville NPSOT Chapter Spring Native Plant Sale will be at Riverside Nature Center on April 20, 9am - 12pm.



Native Plant Society of Texas

Paula Stone, Vice President of the Fredericksburg Chapter, will share her extensive knowledge about landscape design at the monthly meeting of the chapter on April 23 from 6:30 - 8pm at St. Joseph's Halle.

John Benedict, retired Texas A&M Entomology professor, will speak on Native Plants Used by Prehistoric Peoples of Texas on May 7, 5-8pm at the Boerne Chapter Meeting at Cibolo Nature Center Auditorium.

The Kerrville Chapter Monthly Meeting will be May 14 at the Riverside Nature Center.

The View from Rusty Bend



Foggy bridge over the Guadalupe

Spring Training

Like the plum's bloom,
I am practicing change.
Little cloud, now blossom

turns to bud,
a promise of fruit.
Like the blushing

petals of redbud
that pave the earth
I am practicing a scattering.

I feel unruly as bluebonnets
choosing cracks in the walkway
to thrust their azure spikes

towards the sky.
What parts of me
remain unopened?

This March at Rusty Bend the early spring is leaving its mark. We have fresh bluebirds spreading their delight, so early and so welcome after suffering in the deep freezes. Chickadee snags some alpaca down and dashes to her nest. Two nests of titmice have babies. Not sure how many. When Andy checks the nest, Tiger Mom roars and hisses at him and refuses to budge.

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A turkey hen leaves her paramour each morning down on the river. He is puffed up as a dandy in court. She has her breakfast of high protein scratch and then does a pill bug search of the yard. It is pure pleasure to watch her. My heart rate slows.

She is a fine study of ochres and umbers in perfect scallops. Then the rising sun catches her feathers, tracing each one with a copper rainbow. Like J. Frank Dobie opined, there is nothing more beautiful "than Wild Turkey in the sun." Our little rains have refreshed the wildflowers and some we haven't seen for years are poking up. Indian Paintbrush, Blackjack Daisy, acres of Prairie Verbena.

These spring scenes are good for the soul. I'd forgotten the joy of a sudden rainbow. Now I see them doubled. Some mornings feel like breakfast in Jurassic Park. After a stormy night ground fog swells like buttermilk soup that smells of herbs and birth. Then from the mist, one by one, emerge five Great Blue Herons like Pterodactyls lofting their fine wings shining with pewter and sky. They glide across my view, rookery duties done. They drop their legs to slow, drift down to settle. Now it's time to fish. Armadillos excavate the yard for grubs.

Sometimes a walk in spring is enough, noticing up, noticing down. Sometimes in each day's paintbrush of green across the view, a world glows in soft focus. Sometimes a fistful of asparagus, sometimes the aria of wren. Sometimes the citrus crush beneath my feet. Sometimes a walk in spring changes everything.



White-crowned Sparrow spends the winter with us.

Poem, images and essay by Lucy Griffith Copyright 2024

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 Guadalupe Basin Natural Resources Center (GBNRC) 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 2024

- President.....Jeff Schwarz
 - Vice President.....Alice King
 - Secretary.....Lisa Flanagan
 - TreasurerDot Maginot
 - Advanced Training DirectorPatricia Poore
 - Class Training DirectorCarra Milikien
 - Communications Director.....Mark Hults
 - Membership Director.....Phil Roberson
 - Volunteer Service Director.....David Drake
 - Past Class RepresentativeLou Hugman
 - Past PresidentCarla Stang
 - 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](mailto:Lenore.Langsdorf@hillcountrytmn.org).

Questions about our chapter?

Email Membership Director Phil Roberson
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.

