

August 2024

Vol 21

Number 8



# The Texas Star

Newsletter of the Texas Master Naturalist  
Hill Country Chapter

T E X A S



## AUGUST CHAPTER MEETING

The August Hill Country Chapter meeting will be held on Monday, August 26. Doors will open at 6:00 pm for light refreshments and socializing. The business meeting will begin at 6:30 and the presentation at 7:00.

Our speaker will be Daniel Oppenheimer, Land Program Director for the Hill Country Alliance. For more information on this topic, please see Alice King's article on page 2.

Zoom attendance: Prior registration is required for attending the meeting/Advanced Training 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 6:00 pm on August 26.

If you are attending in person, the location is at Guadalupe Basin Natural Resource Center (GBNRC) 125 Lehman Dr. Kerrville. There is no need to pre-register.

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President's Message ... Jeff Schwarz

## New Beginnings

(August 14, 2024) This evening, the chapter welcomed 31 new students and three transferees from other chapters to the class of 2024 training class on their journey to becoming Hill Country Texas Master Naturalists! Carra Milikien, our most capable Class Director, recognized the also very capable class committee, mentors and board members as part of the welcome. Aimee Tennant and Randee Thompson introduced all of the Members-in-Training and recognized their varied backgrounds. We have a very talented and excited new class joining us!

If my math and guess of chapter history is right, this should be our 22nd class. It is the chapter's 23rd year but we had to skip 2020 due to Covid. Over 800 members have gone before this class. 220 are active members and over 600 are now inactive or moved away.

If you see an unfamiliar face or name at an upcoming chapter meeting or a volunteer activity, please introduce yourself. Let's get to know the new class members and make them feel at home and special, because they are, very special, just like you and me.

Our Newsletter Team is putting together a Special Issue of *The Texas Star* focusing on the Class of 2024 that will be released in September. I am very confident that you'll enjoy reading it. My hope is it will take you back to your own introduction to your TMN class and you will recall fondly your hope and excitement. That hope and excitement is still there for many of you, but the butterflies in your stomach have turned into real monarchs, swallowtails, red admirals and juniper hairstreaks in your backyard. If you need to reengage your role as a Master Naturalist, take a breath and jump back in. Volunteering and Advanced Training opportunities await you!

Keeping THE HILL COUNTRY NATIVE 

**\*\* IMPORTANT \*\***

**AUGUST 31st**

**is the last day to enter hours in VMS to be recognized for September awards**

# LAND STEWARDSHIP IN THE HILL COUNTRY

By Alice King

**DANIEL OPPENHEIMER OF THE HILL COUNTRY ALLIANCE  
WILL PRESENT AT OUR CHAPTER MEETING ON AUGUST 26.**

Daniel will be presenting on land stewardship in the Hill Country, specifically how to restore and preserve landscapes. He will discuss the unique natural resources present in the Hill Country along with the importance of healthy soil in supporting biodiversity and the incredible surface and groundwater interactions that occur here. Daniel will also highlight different approaches and considerations for enhancing the health of a property including erosion management, invasive plant control, riparian stewardship, and more.



**About Our Speaker:** Daniel Oppenheimer is the Land Program Director at the Hill Country Alliance. Since 2017, Daniel has worked with hundreds of private landowners, dozens of agency and non-profit partners, and communities across the Texas Hill Country to support private land stewardship and conservation. Prior to joining Hill Country Alliance, Daniel coordinated the Dolores River Restoration Partnership in southwestern Colorado and eastern Utah for six years. He is a fifth-generation Texan.

The mission of the Hill Country Alliance is to bring together a diverse coalition of partners to preserve the open spaces, starry night skies, clean and abundant waters, and unique character of the Texas Hill Country.

Click [here](#) to visit their website:



# This Month We Honor:

## Initial Certifications– Class of 2023

Mary Alice Hendricks

## Recertifications

Donna Dutton, Laura Grant, Patti Guin, Patricia Higgins, Barb Jansen, Ric McCormick, Sharon Noack, Lynn Scoggins, Patrick Scoggins, Rachel Thompson, Morgan Williams

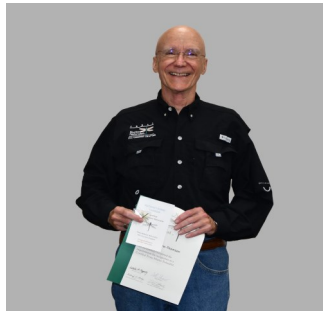
## Milestones

2500 Hours: Mackenzie Brown

4000 Hours: Sarah Hilburn

5000 Hours: Dale Bransford

**Congratulations to members who received awards at the July chapter meeting:**



**INITIAL CERTIFICATION:**

Fletcher Thorne-Thomsen



**RECERTIFICATION:**

Selina Keeton

## Master Naturalists Volunteer in Bandera



By Janis Arterbury

The Bandera Natural History and Art Museum Pollinator Garden team finished fulfilling their Native Plant Society of Texas “Bring Back the Monarchs to Texas” project grant by installing the first phase of the project, plant identification signs; a first in the Museum gardens. Three team members: Mark Hults, Jack Davis, and myself, all worked on this project; with Mark taking the lead.

Proud participants from left to right:  
Mark Hults, Janis Arterbury, and Jack Davis.

# MO RANCH JOINT PROJECT

## TMNs and North East Independent School District

### P.A.L.S. (Peer Assistance Leadership and Service)

By Phil Youngblood

Hi All!

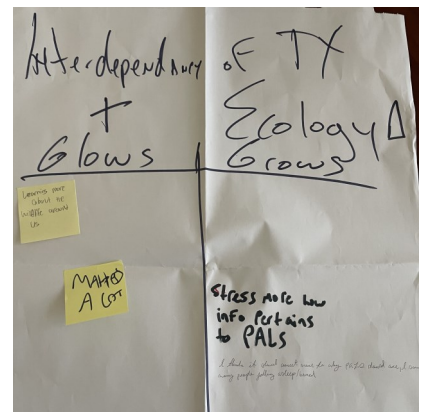
I think I speak for everyone on our team in saying that we had a lot of fun at Mo Ranch representing the Texas Master Naturalists Hill Country Chapter and getting to know the students from North East Independent School District, San Antonio.

Tasked with introducing Habit #6-Synergy, we shared an introduction to the diversity of species that comprise Texas Hill Country ecosystems and illustrated how the delicate balance found in 'natural teams' corresponded to the importance of every member of the human teams of which they are a part learning their strengths and playing their part to make the whole successful, as well as how their one-on-one role with mentees will lead to individual success. We combined this with an interactive, fun, group activity that demonstrated how a well-functioning team can do things that individuals cannot, plus a physical activity at the end where they got to get outside the classroom to practice finding evidence of nature in their midst.

I think I can also speak for the group in saying that we believe from their questions and feedback that the students learned some valuable lessons about their natural environment and about their own role in P.A.L.S. It was a pleasure to share a little of what we have learned to be so important with such bright, polite, and attentive kids. I have not worked with this age group in a long time but came away personally feeling better about this next generation who will be stepping out there to engage with the world as adults.

Thank you for thinking of the Texas Master Naturalists program and the invitation to help make a difference in these lives,

TMN Team - Lorri Kendrick, Heather Schoenfeld and Phil Youngblood



By Gilberto Avila, Advanced Academics and Student Leadership Specialist, North East ISD

Thank you TMN Team!

I would like to extend deep gratitude to y'all for volunteering your expertise and dedication to our student leadership group, P.A.L.S.. Many of our students walked away from your session with a new appreciation of our natural environment and with an understanding of what it means to Synergize.

LeaderinMe (7 Habits) refers to it as a Plus/Delta Convo – our students created a Plus/Delta Chart for all of our sessions.

Again, Thank you so much for your intentional work and dedication to our youth!



# THE HORNED LIZARD'S HOMECOMING

## Reintroducing the Horned Lizard to the Texas Hill Country

Sponsored by *The Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center*

**Saturday, September 21, 2024 1:00 to 2:00 p.m.**

**Fredricksburg AgriLife Extension Office  
38 Business Court, Fredericksburg, Texas**



Did you know that the Texas Horned Lizard, also known as a horny toad, is the official state reptile of Texas and was once found in large numbers throughout the state? Everyone loves horny toads, but for many Texans the fierce-looking yet good-natured reptile is only a fond childhood memory. Currently, the Texas Horned Lizard is listed as a threatened species, but thanks to the efforts of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and other interested organizations, this beloved reptile is being reintroduced in areas across the state where it has disappeared in recent years. But we need YOU to help in this conservation effort! To learn more about the plight of the horny toad and find out what you can do to ensure the return of this beloved reptile to the Texas Hill Country, make plans to attend this one-hour presentation sponsored by the Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center. **[RSVP to Gracie at gwaggener@flow-apps.com](mailto:gwaggener@flow-apps.com)**. **This presentation has been approved for one hour of Texas Master Naturalist advanced training credit.**



Guest speaker Nathan Rains is a Regional Wildlife Diversity Biologist for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. He obtained a B.S. degree in Wildlife Biology in 1994 from Texas A&M University, and an M.S. degree in Wildlife Biology in 1998 from Louisiana State University. Upon graduation, Nathan began his employment with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries as a Wildlife Biologist. From 2000 to 2008, he worked as a Private Lands Biologist with the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, and from 2008 to present he has served as a TPWD Regional Wildlife Diversity Biologist, working primarily with threatened and endangered species as well as species of greatest conservation need. Rains also specializes in research and conservation of reptiles.

# PGARP Kerrville Update for 2024

By Catherine Gauldin

The Pollinator Garden Assistance and Recognition Program (PGARP) is on a roll! Since the last native plant sale in April 2024 our volunteer team in Kerrville has visited seventeen gardens and has recognized six of them as Pollinator Champions. That makes twenty-two individual site visits since the beginning of the year and four more pending in August. This number has increased by eight over the last year. We are growing and new organizations and businesses such as 4H, The Boys and Girls Club of Comfort, The Gardens at the Ridge and a commercial business called “Simply Comfort” are finding their way into the program.

The Kerrville team has expanded from four at the beginning of the year to six and our group consists of both Texas Master Naturalists and Native Plant Society of Texas members. We have gotten a lot of media attention through social media, presentations given at Homeowners’ Association meetings, *The Texas Star* newsletter, as well as affiliated websites and the webcast called the *Kerr Lead*.

These initiatives have created awareness about our program and what we do. We all love our work because we get to meet incredible people who have a “Naturalist” heart and often receive follow-up photos as they share the joy of watching their native plants bloom. Some of the people we visit are new to the idea of gardening for pollinators while others are established native plant lovers who want to be recognized as Pollinator Champions. In addition to the Kerrville team, there are one more each in Boerne and Fredericksburg. Their stats will be reported next month in *The Texas Star*.

## About PGARP

The Pollinator Garden Assistance and Recognition Program is a joint project with a network of Texas Master Naturalist and Native Plant Society (NPSOT) volunteers who educate local homeowners, groups, institutions, and organizations about the importance of native plants and habitat in our unique Hill Country environment. For more information click [HERE](#).



PGARP Kerrville volunteers presented a Pollinator Champion plaque to Kerrville resident Jeanelle Guerriero in May 2024.

Pictured from left to right are Jean Nunnally, Catherine Gauldin and Patricia Poore. Jeanelle Guerriero is seated.



**Native Texas Plants need Native Texas Pollinators to thrive**



## Upcoming Events



# Native Plant Society of Texas

**August 21:** Butt-Holdsworth Library, Kerrville: NPSOT Book Club, 12:00-1:00, This month the book club will discuss the *Hill Country Landowners Guide* by Jim Stanley. Free and open to all interested readers. This event has been approved for one hour of Texas Master Naturalist Advanced Training credit.

**Fall 2024:** Various locations. Native Landscape Certification Program. Registration is now open. Fees apply. This program has been approved for Texas Master Naturalist Advanced Training credit. Click here for more information: <https://www.npsot.org/our-work/class-schedule/>.

## TEXAS A&M NATURAL RESOURCES INSTITUTE LAUNCHES THE LAND STEWARD PODCAST



**CLICK HERE**   
to play on Spotify.

**Written by Brittany Wegner, NRI Program Manager, and Abigail Holmes, NRI Project Coordinator Texas A&M National Resources Institute**

Small but mighty: Small acreage landowners—land stewards who own about 100 acres or less—represent more than half of the operations in Texas (and counting!). In this episode, we chat with Chase Brooke, a small acreage wildlife management program specialist, whose role is to help new and small acreage landowners develop strategies for their land and get connected with the resources and expertise they need to succeed. We hope this thoughtful, funny conversation is encouraging to land stewards who are seeking out help from experts like Chase, looking to fulfill the lifelong dream of caring for a slice of Texas. The NRI podcast crew, Brittany Wegner and Abigail Holmes, recently had an opportunity to sit down with Chase Brooke, an AgriLife Extension Small Acreage and Wildlife Management Specialist, to shed some light on the little bit of grit and luck it takes to steward your small slice of Texas and the wildlife that thrive because of healthy working lands. This comical and very relatable episode dives right into Chase’s take on his state-wide travels, where he says, in Texas, “shade is for the weak and the rocks are for rattlesnakes.” Chase is passionate about his work, so from the moment he walked through the door into the recording studio, it was delightful to hear him share his diverse and dynamic interactions with new-to-the-land and small-acreage landowners.

# MARK YOUR CALENDARS



AUGUST

**August 31**

Last day to enter hours in VMS to be recognized for September awards



SEPTEMBER

**Week of September 9**

Special Issue of *The Texas Star* newsletter, featuring the Class of 2024

**September 21**

The Horned Lizard's Homecoming  
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Fredericksburg



OCTOBER

**October 5**

Fall Native Tree and Plant Sale  
Riverside Nature Center, Kerrville

**October 23-27**

TMN Annual Meeting, San Marcos



NOVEMBER

**November 16**

2024 Class Launch and Volunteer Appreciation Day  
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Fredericksburg



# BIRD CITY KERRVILLE

## BIRD BLIND PROJECT

By Katy Kappel

The Kerrville Parks and Recreation Department has approved work with the Hill Country Master Naturalists to construct an accessible bird blind within the Kerrville-Schreiner Park. A committee of Master Naturalists and birders are working together to determine the exact location, construction plans and daily maintenance. There will be a trickling water feature, native plants and bird feeders. Our hope it will be as great of an attraction as the bird blinds in the state parks!

We estimate the total cost for materials at approximately \$5,000. We are seeking donations of wood, metal roofing, guttering and a water collection tank. Later this year, construction volunteers will begin building the blind.

If you are interested in planning, construction, or landscaping, please contact me at (512) 589-1498 or [birdcitykerrville@gmail.com](mailto:birdcitykerrville@gmail.com). You can also find us on Facebook by searching "Bird City Kerrville" or clicking [HERE](#).

We are also accepting tax deductible donations. Checks may be made payable to:

Hill Country Master Naturalists  
Bird City Kerrville Account  
P.O. Box 293972  
Kerrville, TX 78029



**BIRD  
CITY**  
TEXAS  
KERRVILLE  
COMMUNITY





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

# FALL NATIVE TREE & PLANT SALE

Tax-  
Free  
Day

**October 5, 2024**  
**9:00 am to Noon**

Nature  
Book  
Sale

Come early for the best selection! Experts will be available to help you select plants that will thrive in your specific landscape conditions.



- Native Trees
- Shrubs
- Perennials
- Grasses



WATCH: [RiversideNatureCenter.org](https://RiversideNatureCenter.org)



For More Details



## The View from Rusty Bend



Saharan sand colors the close of day

## Broken Sonnet to Sandy Sunsets

Snagging some fire  
a shine of tangerine  
framed by an inkblot of cloud,  
curling as an infant storm,  
nuzzled on the breast  
of blue velveteen hills  
where birds and bobcats hide.  
When will the air clear?  
Will we miss those painterly strokes,  
traded for sore eyes and throats?  
I claim this punctuation  
to end my day,  
ask how many  
then ask for more.

July at Rusty Bend and by weathering the weather, we find our own version of breaking news, inventing headlines for the tiny pleasures of close attention.

**And now from TPN (TINY PLEASURES NETWORK)**

**News from the oak savannah:**

\*GONE TO SEED! Warm weather grasses have seeded out, each weighing heavy. The all-stars in the line-up are Meadow Dropseed, Side-oats Gramma, and Silver Bluestem.

\*SNOWING IN JULY? Dainty Heliotrope is scattered like snowflakes among the other forbs, like Navajo Tea, Rain Lilies, Frog Fruit and Doveweed.

\*PURPLE MANIA: Persimmon are dropping ripe purple fruits, shedding leaves as their bark coils off like a carpenter's curls. Persimmon are an important food source for foxes, turkeys, deer and roadrunners.

**What's happening in your neighborhood?**

**TPN News close to home:**

\*HAVE YOU SEEN THE BUTTERFLY EXPLOSION? Queen butterflies have claimed territory on Gregg's Blue Mist, while Eastern Tiger Swallowtails fly by, yellow as canaries.

\*FROM THE MENTAL HEALTH CORNER: The best way to start your summer day: Lindheimer's Morning Glories welcome the sun, pale purple horns on the garden fence. They carol a morning song.

\*BOLO! Be on the lookout: In addition to the usual family of grey foxes, a red fox juvenile trots by regularly with his white-tipped tail. Also, our first Rock Wren has been by for a bath, escaping the drier weather in West Texas. He's a big 'un!

\*GOLD RUSH!!! The golden flowers of the Zexmenia have gone to seed and are plundered daily by the Lesser Goldfinches, hanging upside down like a yoga class on inverted postures.

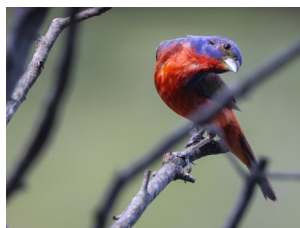
\*FOOD FIGHT! Painted Buntings are binging on white millet as if it were chips and salsa. Watch them get fat to fly to Mexico next week. Their movements score a notation of the season.

\*ALERT THE MEDIA! Armadillos seen cavorting! So many roly-pollies to find!

**JUST IN! TPN Newsflash!  
from the Guadalupe River:**

\*FLOOD, FLOOD, FLOOD! Copious rainfall birthed a 17.5-foot rise, a river of chocolate milk that lasted for days, smelling of perch and musk. The debris should make for the return of fireflies. Already, burnt orange dragonflies are sweeping the skies like tiny biplanes.

And that's the news from Rusty Bend this month. Get outside, early if you can. Slow down. Look. Listen. Touch. Smell. Forget the heat. Ignore the humidity. Go awe hunting. Share your report. Celebrate the minor joys.



Painted Bunting, with his unique POV

Poem, images and essay by Lucy Griffith Copyright 2024

*Lucy Griffith, PhD co-manages Rusty Bend 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 new collection celebrating the brush country is forthcoming from FlowerSong Press and can be pre-ordered from this link: [The Place the Spiders Waved by Lucy Griffith \(Coming in the Fall of 2024\) — FlowerSong Press & Juventud Press](#)

Comments welcome at [lucygriffithwriter@gmail.com](mailto:lucygriffithwriter@gmail.com)



# About us

## 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—2024

- President.....Jeff Schwarz
- Vice President.....Alice King
- Secretary.....Lisa Flanagan
- Treasurer.....Dot Maginot
- Advanced Training Director .....Patricia Poore
- Class Training Director .....Carra Milikien
- Communications Director .....Mark Hults
- Membership Director.....Phil Roberson
- Volunteer Service Director.....David Drake
- Past Class Representative.....Lou Hugman
- Past President.....Carla Stang
- Chapter State Representative .....Vern Crawford
- Chapter Advisor.....Michelle Haggerty

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 6:00 pm for socializing. Business Meeting begins at 6:30 pm. Advanced Training session begins at 7:00 pm.

Learn more on our website:

[txmn.org/hillcountry](http://txmn.org/hillcountry)

*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:

[newsletter@hillcountrytmn.org](mailto:newsletter@hillcountrytmn.org).

## QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR CHAPTER?

**ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS**  
**Email Membership Director, Phil Roberson**  
[membership@hillcountrytmn.org](mailto:membership@hillcountrytmn.org)

See our Facebook Page!

Search Texas Master Naturalist, Hill Country or click [HERE](#)



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.

