

Hays County Master Naturalists NEWSLETTER



-- right here at home -- in the Hill Country

April, 2008

APRIL EVENTS

Executive Board Meeting

The Executive Board will meet at 6:30 pm, April 16, at the residence of Susan Nenney, 820 Red Hawk Road, Wimberley. ✨

April 12 and 13 Field Trips

We have two days reserved for this year's field trip to Canyon Gorge because the size of our 2008 Training Class exceeds the number permitted by safety regulations.

Dr. Carter Keairns leads both trips under the auspices of the Gorge Preservation Society, which has been chartered to conduct public tours by arrangement with the US Corps of Engineers and the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority.

CHAPTER MEMBERS: There are 12 extra spaces for the Saturday, April 12 trip and 3 spaces for the Sunday, April 13 trip. Chapter members who would like to visit or re-visit this amazing place must email Jean McMeans at jcheath42@msn.com to reserve a spot. This is a FIRST COME BASIS opportunity.

Participants must be at the Overlook Park by 12:40 pm in order to leave at 1:00. The trip should last until about 4:00 pm. The cost is \$10 per person, and each person must also have a waiver that can be downloaded from www.canyongorge.org. Jean is managing the reservations list and will let each person know if he or she will be included. ✨

THE PRESIDENTIAL VIEW

April showers? Well, we have had some rain anyway and the greenery abounds. The MN Chapter is "abounding" also. As we move towards a more cohesive system of approving and advertising volunteer service and advanced training, I hope you will take advantage of our efforts and participate in these events. Herb

HAYS COUNTY MASTER NATURALISTS *Board of Directors*

President	Dale Shively
Vice President	Dixie Camp
Secretary	Susan Nenney
Treasurer	Winifred Simon
Past-President	Tom Watson
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Web Master	Herb Smith
Newsletter Committee & Editor	Richard Barnett 512-847-6941 news@haysmn.org
Outreach Committee	vacant
Host Committee	Margaret Baker
Historian	Laurel Robertson
Volunteer Service	Walt Krudop
AgriLife Agent	Bryan Davis
TP&WD Rep	Lee Ann Linam

Smith has been diligently working to setup the Google communications site where members can converse with each other on a variety of natural topics.

In other areas, Dixie continues to put together some outstanding learning experiences for Chapter meetings, while Susan is interested in promoting the Chapter through more outreach and public relations events. The training class is busy moving through its curriculum and field events. More to come on these topics as the year progresses. Remember, you are invited to attend any of the classes offered to the 2008 Training Class (although no dinner is provided for non-trainees). I hope everyone has a great month and can attend the next Chapter meeting.

Naturally speaking,

Dale ✨



Members in the News

Austin Nature Days with Dr. Tom Watson

The City of Austin's Nature Day programs at Onion Creek Preserve again feature our Dr. Tom Watson on April 12 and 13. Tom's nature hike on April 12 will introduce participants to spring flora, and his Sunday hike will focus on the native plants that occur in different habitats on the property.

In addition to these Nature hikes, Tom will be offering an introductory grasses field class one morning in early May (date TBA) and one or two sections of an advanced grass identification class (lecture and field) in May (Spring grasses), with a follow up for the Summer/Fall grasses in late September or early October. The introductory class will be about 3 hours long and the advanced classes will be a full day each. ✂

Chapter News

HaysMN Forum

If it hasn't happened by the time you read this, our new **HaysMN Forum** Google Group will be announced very soon. The forum is an online discussion group where we can interactively exchange and distribute information among our members. Forum participation is restricted to members and students of the Hays County Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program, and is by invitation only.

When the forum is ready, you will receive an email from Herb Smith, the Haysmn.org webmaster, explaining the forum and its features. Shortly thereafter, you will receive an email invitation from googlegroups.com inviting you to join the HaysMN Forum group. All you will need to do is to create a free Google account (not email) if you don't have one already. This will then allow you to access the site. Once on the site, if you click the "Edit my membership" link, you'll see that you have a number of options for receiving postings to the group via email, if you so choose. There will be links to the forum on the haysmn.org website.

This communications tool can be a valuable tool if we get good participation.

Please take a look at the site, and think about ways you can use it. There already are few items there that serve as examples.

Please let Herb (web@haysmn.org) know if you have any questions or suggestions. Better yet, use the forum to discuss the forum.

Herb Smith, Webmaster
<http://www.haysmn.org>, 512-847-2006

March 27 Chapter Meeting Conserving Local Wildlands amid Urban Growth

Gail McGlamery, Conservation Program Coordinator for the City of Austin's Wildland Conservation Division hosted the meeting and presented the program about Austin's Wildlands Conservation Program.

The City of Austin manages more than 30,000 acres of wildlands as a result of citizen-approved bond elections in the 1990s. The lands are dedicated to two programs with separate missions—the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve conserves habitat for eight endangered species while the Water Quality Protection Lands program conserves land to provide for the optimum amount of high-quality recharge into the Barton Springs segment of the Edwards Aquifer. As Austin and surrounding communities expand, these conserved lands are even more valuable for what they protect yet are also increasingly targeted for public access. Gail's presentation gave a virtual introduction to these irreplaceable natural resources, their management, challenges on the urban interface, and provisions for educational access.

Dixie Camp ✂

Guidelines for Requesting Approval and Hours for Advanced Training and Volunteer Service Projects

1. First, please check the approved volunteer service project list (for volunteer hours) or the advanced training list (for training hours) to see if the event was previously approved and assigned a code.

2. If the code has been assigned, check with Betty Finley (Advanced Training Chair) or Walt Krudop (Volunteer Service Projects Chair) to verify the number of hours that can be claimed for the event.

3. If the event is new and not on the approved lists, then apply on line (www.haysmn.org) or send to Betty Finley (bettyfinley@yahoo.com) or Walt Krudop (walt@krudopinds.com) directly.

4. Once the event is approved, Betty or Walt will assign a number (code) to it and establish the acceptable number of hours one can get from attending or volunteering.

5. The Secretary will then forward the notice to all members with the proper code and hours (if appropriate) for their use. 🦋

Reporting Reminder

Reports for March, 2008 are due by April 7. Please email your reports of Volunteer Service hours and Advanced Training hours to Beth Ramey, preferably by using the friendly report forms on our website at www.haysmn.org. 🦋



CALENDAR

(The dragonfly logo 🦋 identifies official HCMN events)

Wednesday, April 2, 7:00 to 9:00 pm.

Plant Biodiversity on Granite Outcrops.

Free admission. Reception at 7:00 pm. at the Wildflower Center Visitor Gallery. Lecture 8:00 pm. at the LBJ Wildflower Center Auditorium, Austin.

Tuesday, April 8, **Texas Archaeology**. Dr. Britt Bouseman. **Identifying Hill Country Birds & Habitat**, Jane Little & Cara Wernli. Holy Spirit Episcopal. 🦋

April 11-13, **Spring Plant Sale & Gardening Festival**. LBJ Wildflower Center. Members only, Friday, 1:00 to 7:00 pm. Public sale Saturday and Sunday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Saturday, April 12 & Sunday, April 13: **Canyon Gorge Field Trip & Hill Country Geology**, Dr Carter Keairns. 🦋

Saturday, April 12 and Sunday, April 12. **Austin Nature Days** with Dr. Tom Watson
Saturday, 10:00 am to 12:30 pm. "More than Onions on Onion Creek"
Sunday, 2:00 to 4:30 pm. "Knowing your Natives."

For more information and registration, please don't delay going to <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/water/wildland/online/registration/ecowebevents.cfm>. 🦋

Saturday, April 19, **Wimberley MN Earth Day** celebration in conjunction with the Emily Ann Butterfly Festival. For more info on ATC and Volunteer Hours see below and contact Karen Hulene Bartell, 512-894-0105, hulene1@austin.rr.com 🦋

Sunday, April 20. **Second Annual Earth Day Festival**, Aquarena Center, San Marcos, noon to 7:00 pm.

The event is free to the public and will include educational activities for all ages; recycling and green building displays; live music entertainment; food and vendor booths; nature-based entertainment; and blessing of the Springs. HCMN will have a booth at this event. email if you can help in the booth for an hour or two.

Tuesday, April 22. 2008 Class Meeting, Freeman Ranch. **Nature Walk**, 4:00 to 6:00 pm, Dr. Barron Rector. **Impact of Man, Interpretation, Land Management**, Dr. Barron Rector. 🦋

Saturday, April 26. **SMRF water hyacinth removal**, Aquarena Center, 9:00 am to noon.

Tuesday, May 6. 2008 Class Meeting. **Forest Ecology & Management**, Eric Beckers. **Plants & Identification Using Keys**, Dr Marianne Reese & Sarah Holland. Holy Spirit Episcopal. 🦋

May 15-18, **Dragonfly Days 2008**. Estero Llano Grande State Park and Valley Nature Center (Weslaco). More info below

Saturday, May 17. 2008 Class Meeting, Freeman Ranch. **Insects & Butterflies**, Dr.

Chris Nice. Freeman Ranch, 9:00 am to 1:30 pm.

Tuesday, June 17. 2008 Class Meeting, Aquarena Center. **Aquifers and the Birth of a River. Wetlands, Riparian Areas, & Restoration.** Dr. Ron Coley, Minette Marr. ✨

July 4. **Independence Day Parade,** Wimberley.

Tuesday, July 15. **Water Resources in Texas & Hays County,** Ms. Velma Danielson. Holy Spirit Episcopal. ✨



ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Plant Biodiversity on Granite Outcrops

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 7:00 TO 9:00 PM.

Free admission. 8:00 pm. at the LBJ Wildflower Center Auditorium, Austin. Reception at 7:00 pm. at the Wildflower Center Visitor Gallery

Dr. Stephen Hopper, director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, United Kingdom, will talk and provide illustrations during "Life on the Rocks: A Global Review of Plant Life on Granite Outcrops." These isolated, mostly barren rocks produce diverse microhabitats and are havens for plant biodiversity. Hopper will review research on these outcrops, such as Enchanted Rock, which are model systems for exploring evolutionary and ecological processes. He will highlight current research projects and future possibilities, and ways to educate communities about these outcrops to promote their conservation.

Sponsored by the Jean Andrews Lecture Series, School of Biological Sciences, University of Texas at Austin, and the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.

Butterfly Day and Earth Day

SATURDAY, APRIL 19.

Join the fun at the Emily Ann Theatre's Butterfly and Wimberley MN Earth Day. We need volunteers to staff our booth and meet the public during two shifts: 9:00 am to noon and noon to 3:00 pm.

(HCMN Project 602) The nature walk and birds of prey discussion are eligible for AdvanceTraining hours.

For more information or to sign up for any of these activities, contact Karen Hulene Bartell 512-894-0105 hulene1@austin.rr.com ✨

Hays County Wildlife Management Workshop

SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 9:00AM TO 3:30PM.

Veterans' Park on Jacob's Well Road (FM 182), Wimberley. Registration \$25 until April 8. \$30 at the door. Lunch provided.

For more info contact KayBeth, Miletus or Kim, 512-268-2522, kwilliams@hayscad.com 6.5 hours Advanced Training credit.

Docent Training for Canyon Gorge

HCMN PROJECT 705

The Gorge Preservation Society announces its third training class for docents at Canyon Gorge. Classes begin on April 12 and run consecutive Saturdays through May 10. All classes start at 9:00 am with a 2-hour classroom session followed by a hike through the Gorge. For registration, find the application at <http://www.canyongorge.com> or contact Cinde Thomas-Jimenez at cthomas-jimenez@gbra.com. ✨

Writing a Wide Land: A Conference on Texas Nature Writing

APRIL 11, EESAT BUILDING, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

The 2008 Writing a Wide Landscape: A Texas Nature Writing Conference will bring together for the second time major writers, editors, and interested groups from the region. This literary symposium is designed to reach out across multiple fields of study: creative writers, journalists, scientists, and those studying community outreach and/or environmental policy. It will also include workshops which highlight positive environmental change and work that has been done recently in writing and outreach across disciplines in order to engage the largest

audience in communities. This conference will focus on the potential and possibilities of this intersection of ideas and how it may benefit Texas, its environment, and its citizens as well.

Registration for this event is free; however, all those attending must register with Jenna Ledford. Please send her your name, address, phone number, email, and status (student or non-student) at: jd10126@unt.edu.

When you arrive you will need to pick up a ticket and conference materials from the registration booth.

For general information about the conference, please contact Dr. David Taylor at: jdtaylor@unt.edu or see the conference website at: <http://www.efec.unt.edu/David%20Taylor>



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Elephant Ear Removal at River Center, San Marcos

HCMN PROJECT 408, HABITAT RESTORATION

Removal of the invasive Elephant Ears at the River Center is an on-going project that also affords an opportunity to talk to visitors to the wetlands about non-native species and their impact on the sensitive environment at the springs.

The following times have been set as workdays at the River Center in San Marcos for removing Elephant Ears in the wetlands: Every first and third Wednesday from 4:30 to 7:00 pm from April 2 until September 17.

Please direct any questions to Leah Laszewski, laszewski@yahoo.com ✨

2nd Annual San Marcos River Springs Fest

APRIL 5 AND 6

A celebration of the San Marcos River held at Rio Vista Park, San Marcos. 10 am to 6:00 pm on Saturday and 10:00 am to 4:00 pm on Sunday.

We need volunteers to lead, organize, and staff our HCMN information booth. Last year our table was across from the River Pub on the grassy area. We talked to people and passed out literature. For contact information and to

volunteer, please contact Susan at sec@haysmn.org. ✨

2nd Annual Aquarena Earth Day Festival

SUNDAY, APRIL 20, 2008

San Marcos Springs. Sponsored by The River Systems Institute, National Association of Environmental Professionals, and Aquarena Center.

The purpose is to raise awareness of nature's virtues, the role of community members in the environment, and have fun! And of course spread the word about Hays County Master Naturalist, how we can help.

We need volunteers to lead, organize, and staff our HCMN information booth. For contact information and to volunteer, please contact Susan at sec@haysmn.org

Dragonfly Days 2008

MAY 15-18

Estero Llano Grande State Park and the Valley Nature Center (Weslaco) will host Dragonfly Days 2008. Since this event began in 2000, a combination of illustrated talks and field trips have acquainted visitors from Texas and other states with the rich dragonfly and damselfly fauna of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. This event serves as an introduction to these fascinating insects; you need no background beyond an interest in natural history to attend. Information on the festival including a schedule of talks and a registration form may be obtained by visiting:

<http://www.valleynaturecenter.org/dragonflydays/2008/dragonfly2008.html>

For more info, please contact: Estero Llano Grande State Park, Contact: Jennifer Owen, 956-565-3919:

Jennifer.Owen@tpwd.state.tx.us,

www.worldbirdingcenter.org/sites/weslaco/ Or Valley Nature Center, Contact: Martin Hagne, 956-969-2475

info@valleynaturecenter.org

www.valleynaturecenter.org

Birding Contest for Schools

The National Biodiversity Parks (NBP) has recently launched the National Schoolyard Birding Challenge. The event is part of the NBP's Fledging Birders Program. The contest has been designed to promote awareness of

local bird life for youth through the use of an interactive format.

The Challenge is a monthly birding contest open to students in all public and private schools in the contiguous United States. Student participants will work together to observe, identify, and record various species found on their school grounds. The main objective is to get more young people outside and exploring nature through a birding portal.

Sharing birds with youth is an invaluable service to the birding community, and, hopefully, an investment for the future of birds in North America.

For more information, visit:

<http://www.fledgingbirders.org/challenge.html>

Wildscape Garden, San Marcos Nature Center

HCMN PROJECT #405

The display of bluebonnets this year is only a quarter the extent and luxuriance of last year. The dry weather has stunted the growth of our other wildflowers but the invasive plants are as vigorous as ever. The *Salvia greggi* bushes are doing their best to make up for the lack of bluebonnets, and there are pink evening primroses and golden corydalis but no Texas Stars (*Lindheimera texana*). The Mexican Buckeye bush was beginning to flower on March 28, but the redbuds were behind schedule.

We welcome contributions of seeds or seedlings of annual and perennial wildflowers to improve the diversity of our garden. Indian paintbrush, phlox, larkspur, Zexmenia, gayfeathers, standing cypress, and even Texas prickly poppy would be welcome, but we have not been able to grow them from seed.



CONTACT: Richard Barnett,
news@haysmn.org.



State News

AgriLIFE Blog Debut

Dr. Jim Cathey and Dr. Shawn Locke invite you to visit <http://www.wild-wonderings.blogspot.com> and learn about projects and activities of Texas AgriLIFE Extension's Wildlife and Fisheries unit.

Monarch Watch Blog Debut

The Monarch Watch program has introduced its official Monarch Watch Blog for 2008: <http://www.MonarchWatch.org/blog>.



Local News

Start Shooting now for Naturescapes!

Master Naturalists are invited to enter the 4th annual Naturescapes Photography Contest co-sponsored by the San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance and the Hill Country Photography Club.

We have expanded the contest this year to include photographs taken in natural areas throughout Hays County, and have eliminated categories. Suggested subjects include scenery, wildlife, plants, people and pets.

We hope that the contest and exhibit will increase public awareness of how much our natural areas enrich our lives, and how important it is to preserve them. A \$200 prize will be awarded for Best in Show, and up to four \$100 Awards of Excellence will be presented for the next most outstanding photographs. Additional Awards of Merit will be presented at the discretion of the contest juror, Laurence Parent.

Deadline for entering photos is July 21st. The exhibition in the San Marcos Activity Center Walkers Gallery will run September 5 through October 31, 2008, with an awards reception on the opening night.

More information can be found at <http://hcphotoclub.org/naturescapes.html>.

Wimberley Butterfly Watch

Butterfly diversity and numbers continued to increase in March with the appearance of the more flowering shrubs, though annual and perennial wildflowers were sparse.

We saw our first Monarch of the year on March 26 and numerous Carolina Satyrs on March 30.

	1-10	11-20	21-29
Giant Swallowtail	x		
Pipevine Swallowtail		x	x
Black Swallowtail	x	x	x
Eastern Tiger S'tail	x	x	x
Checkered White			
Southern Dogface	x	x	x
Cloudless Sulphur	x	x	x
Little Yellow			
Sleepy Orange		x	
Dainty Sulphur			
Great Purple H'streak	x	x	x
Dusky Blue Groundstrk			
Henry's Elfin			
Juniper Hairstreak	x	x	x
Gray Hairstreak		x	x
Reakirt's Blue			
American Snout			
Gulf Fritillary			
Variegated Fritillary			
Red Admiral	x	x	x
American Lady	x	x	x
Painted Lady			
Common Buckeye			
Carolina Satyr			x
Monarch			x
Northern Cloudywing	x	x	x
Juvenal's Duskywing	x	x	x
Funereal Skipper		x	
Checkered Skipper			x
Fiery Skipper		x	x

If you spotted something we missed, please email your editor at news@haysmn.org



Links to Chapter Sponsors and Partners

Sponsors:

Texas Master Naturalist - State Website - masternaturalist.tamu.edu
 Texas Cooperative Extension – agextension.tamu.edu/
 Texas Parks and Wildlife Department – www.tpwd.state.tx.us/

Agencies of Interest:

Bamberger Ranch -- <http://www.bambergerranch.org/workshops.htm>
 Native Plant Society of Texas – www.npsot.org/
 San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance -- <http://www.smgreenbelt.org>.
 San Marcos River Foundation – <http://www.sanmarcosriver.org>.
 Texas Outdoor Women's Network - <http://www.townsanmarcos.org/>
 Texas Cooperative Extension – Sea Grant Program – texas-sea-grant.tamu.edu/
 Texas Forest Service – txforestservice.tamu.edu/
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – www.usace.army.mil/
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – www.fws.gov/
 U.S.D.A. Natural Resource Conservation Service – .nrcs.usda.gov/
 Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority -- www.gbra.org

Partners

Austin Nature Day -- <http://www.austinnatureday.org/>
 LBJ Wildflower Center -- <http://www.wildflower.org>
 San Marcos Nature Centre -- <http://www.smgreenbelt.org>
 Gorge Preservation Society -- www.canyongorge.org