

Hays County Master Naturalists NEWSLETTER



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

August, 2007

AUGUST EVENTS

August 23 Chapter Meeting

Mark Klym of TPWD will present a program on Hummingbirds at the Wimberley Community Center.

Mark is a wildlife biologist in the Wildlife Diversity Program of Texas Parks and Wildlife. He coordinates the annual Hummingbird Roundup and participates in other TPWD nongame programs, including wildscapes, butterflies, and the Attwater's Prairie Chicken Project. He is a co-author of *Hummingbirds of Texas* (2005, Texas A&M University Press).

Wimberley has enjoyed a wealth of hummingbird diversity the last few years. The program will show us how to attract these birds using some of the basic principles of wildlife habitat, and how to recognize some of the rarer visitors when they show up!

The program begins at 7:00 pm and is open to the public at no charge. Refreshments of tea and cookies will be served. Donations for meeting expenses will be accepted. ✨

THE PRESIDENTIAL VIEW

"Robber Flies and Other Things" -- That is what I should call this month's comments. Other than the rain, and rain, and rain, there are actually other things that have happened, naturally speaking.

Two weeks ago, my wife Rebecca was thinning out some plants in our asparagus garden when a large "bumble bee" landed on one of the plants. Upon closer examination, it turned out to be something much different. This was the elusive *Mallophora leschenaultia*, one of the largest Asilids in the US. In other words, one giant robber fly that was over two inches in length.

HAYS COUNTY MASTER NATURALISTS

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Being an astute scientist, I grabbed my scientific collection system (old mayonnaise jar) and captured it for identification. After some internet research, I located Chuck Sexton, a biologist at Balcones Canyonland Wildlife Preserve near Austin. I was pleased to find that this was a rare find in Texas. Chuck has been a wildlife biologist for over 40 years and has only seen two of them, both captured and brought to him. He had keyed out a specimen submitted several years ago from another Master Naturalist in Austin. For several years, she had them appearing from her compost pile, but only for a few weeks each year. These flies are rarely seen in Texas and more abundant in Mexico and South America. How did it get here? One theory is that a hurricane pushed them north. However, some older documents from the early 1900's reported them in states farther to the north.

On another topic, the San Marcos Bee Wranglers have been extremely busy this year collecting wild swarms of honey bees. Networking with the public has improved and more people know whom to call when they have wild swarms of bees on their

property. In fact, I removed one last week from the Salt Lick BBQ in Dripping Springs.

The point of these comments is simple. By being more observant in nature, we gain insight into things we would normally miss. The additional knowledge we gain by participating in the Master Naturalist program is beyond value. The networking we do with each other, professionals in various wildlife fields, and the general public increases awareness and knowledge in the community at large. Just as the Bee Wranglers are beginning to become more noticeable to the public and local government officials, the Hays County Master Naturalist Program continues to be a source of learning and outreach for the County.

As we know, one of the purposes of the Program is to provide outreach to the public and we have seen many examples of this within our Chapter. Who else but the Hays County Master Naturalist Chapter could have had such a turn-out of support at the Wimberley July 4th Parade that we won best spirited and best float? (It had to be because of the kazoo band).

You are all a terrific group of naturalists and serve the Chapter well in so many ways. As we come into the final months of this year, the Board will be asking for nominations for next year's leadership positions and input into setting up the new Trainee Program (stay tuned for future announcements). While staying focused on your activities, volunteer hours, and advanced learning, please remember above all else, to have fun. You never know when a robber fly may show up on your property!

Keep up the good work!

Dale ✨



MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Meet the Mayor

Master Naturalist Jane Little took the oath of office as Mayor of Woodcreek on July 18. The Woodcreek City Council appointed Little to will serve out the unexpired term of Mayor Gloria Whitehead, who resigned recently.

Little has previously served on Woodcreek's Traffic Advisory Committee. She moved to

Woodcreek in 2004 after a career in education in the Cypress Fairbanks School District, where her last position was assistant superintendent of elementary education.



CHAPTER NEWS

Fourth of July Parade

Hays County Master Naturalists Take Grand Prize in Wimberley July 4 Parade

Thirty slightly damp but very enthusiastic Hays County chapter members brought home two blue ribbons in the Wimberley July 4 parade as Mother Nature kept the almost-traditional holiday downpours at bay long enough for the 60-plus float parade to finish its route.

The chapter float won the Parade Grand Prize as well as 1st Place in the Most Creative category.

Responding to this year's parade theme "The Spirit of Wimberley," the chapter float was dubbed "The Spirit of Wimberley: *Preserve What You Love.*" Float slogans encouraged parade-goers to conserve water, reduce pesticide use, prevent erosion and buy local produce. Mother Nature was represented by a costumed Ella Hetherly. The float was accompanied by the Hays County Master Naturalist Marching Kazoo Band. The band's new percussion section included Susan Godfrey and Dixie Camp from the Hill Country Community Band. Dixie is also chapter vice-president. Chapter members on the float tossed environmentally friendly (roasted, *unsalted*) peanuts to the crowd and waved a lot. Cynthia and John Cassidy distributed chapter and educational materials along the way. Many thanks to Hays County Extension sponsor Bryan Davis who provided the trailer and hay bales and powered the float with his Extension truck.

Eyewitnesses reported that this chapter outreach project was enthusiastically cheered along the route, and parade goers were glad to receive chapter brochures and Texas Parks and Wildlife literature. It was also noted that the kazoo band sounded great as it hummed "This Land Is Your Land," "American the Beautiful," and "Home on the Range."

This was the chapter's second year as a participant in the parade. Last year the chapter

won an Honorable Mention ribbon in the Most Creative category.

A good time was had by all. 🦋

Abby Linam update

JULY 30 SURGERY UPDATE

I can't believe that I find myself once again posting a blog update from the family-access computer in a hospital hallway, but I am....This time, however, there is much less fear in the air.

Abby did have her surgery today. Everything went well; however, the "missing piece" (a plastic cupped disk about an inch in diameter) managed to elude the doctors for about two hours. It had migrated significantly from its original site in the abdomen and was hiding under a thin layer of fat (has to be thin on Abby!) near the pelvis. Anyway, because the doctors thought that Abby might be fairly sore (they had to make two small incisions and did quite a bit of poking around), they suggested that she remain here at the hospital overnight. We really appreciate the extra concern and capability of Dr. Maxson (her ICU trauma surgeon) in overseeing the surgery, and, boy, was he finally glad to fish out that elusive disk after two hours! (Some of us with a little more hiding area in our bellies thought that they would have never found it if we had been the patient...)

So, thanks for your prayers--pray now that healing will go quickly, and Abby will enjoy the rest of her summer!

Love, --the Linams 🦋

For latest information about Abby's progress, please check <http://www.hillcountryschool.net/index.php>.

Volunteers Needed for Committee Assignments

Dixie Camp needs volunteers to assist her with the Chapter Programs for our bi-monthly meetings. She needs assistance in finding and coordinating speakers and working with the

Host committee on arranging chapter meeting locations and accommodations.

If you would like to help on this committee and earn volunteer hours, please contact Dixie or Susan Nenny. 🦋

Reporting Reminder

Please use the online reporting forms available on the website to report Volunteer and Advanced Training hours immediately. You also may email your information to recordscom@haysmn.org, or mail it to 2303 E. McCarty, San Marcos, TX 78666.

-- Judy Telford 🦋

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CALENDAR

(The dragonfly logo 🦋 identifies official HCMN events)

July 29-August 3. **11th Annual GLOBE Conference**, San Antonio. More info below.

August 7, **Wimberley Valley Water Issues**. "Major Wimberley Valley Suppliers" by David Glenn. Wimberley City Hall, 6:00-8:00 pm.

August 14, **Wimberley Valley Water Issues**. Water Wimberley Water Supply Corp. by Kent Acord. Wimberley City Hall, 6:00-8:00 pm.

🦋 August 9, **2007 Class Site Visit**

🦋 August 11, **The Ecology of Caves**, Balcones Canyonlands Lecture Series with Dr. Jean Krejca, 9:00-11:00 am, Towne Square Community Center, 12550 Country Trails Lane. More info below.

🦋 August 14, **2007 Class Meeting**. Wildlife, Mammals & Habitat, Chapter 15. Wildlife Ag Exemptions: Why & How.

August 14, **Wimberley Valley Water Issues**. "Major Wimberley Valley Suppliers" by Kent Acord & David Glenn. Wimberley City Hall, 6:00-8:00 pm. #3 in a series of 7 public meetings sponsored by Wimberley Valley Water Issues Subcommittee of the Wimberley Planning & Zoning Commission.

August 21, **Wimberley Valley Water Issues**. "Cypress Creek Watershed Protection" by David Baker & David Glenn. Wimberley City Hall, 6:00-8:00 pm.

✧ August 23, **Chapter Meeting**, "Hummingbirds" with Mark Klym, Texas Parks & Wildlife, Wimberley Community Center, 7:00 pm.

✧ August 25. **2007 Class Field Trip**, LBJ Wildflower Centre. Native plants, seeds, prairies & restoration.

September 11. **Wimberley Valley Water Issues**. "Water-related Demographics" by Village of Wimberley and TSU. Wimberley City Hall, 6:00-8:00 pm.

September 18. **Wimberley Valley Water Issues**. "Water Regulatory Authority Matrix" by Greg Ellis. Wimberley City Hall, 6:00-8:00 pm.

✧ September 27. **Chapter Meeting**. "Water Supplies in Hays County" by Andrew Backus, Hays-Trinity Groundwater District. Wimberley Community Center, 7:00 pm.

✧ August 28. **2007 Class Site Visit**

✧ September 6. **2007 Class Site Visit**

September 11, **Wimberley Valley Water Issues**. "Water-related Demographics" by Don Ferguson. Wimberley City Hall, 6:00-8:00 pm.

✧ September 15, **2007 Class Meeting**, John Knox Ranch. Water Quality & Fish, Chapter 12. Amphibians, Chapter 13.

September 18, **Wimberley Valley Water Issues**. "Water Regulatory Authority Matrix" by Gregg Ellis. Wimberley City Hall, 6:00-8:00 pm.

✧ September 20. **2007 Class Site Visit**

✧ October 2. **2007 Class Meeting**. Urbanization & Land Fragmentation, Chapter 20. Volunteers as Teachers, Interpretation, Chapter 21.

✧ October 6-7. **WILDLIFE EXPO 2007**, TP&WD, Austin. More info below.

✧ October 12-14. **TMN Statewide Annual Meeting**, San Antonio. More info below.

✧ October 18-21. **The Blackland and Grand Prairies and Grasslands of the Edwards Plateau**. NPSOT Symposium, Sun City/Georgetown. More info below.

✧ October 27, **2007 Class Graduation**.

October 25. **Texas Bluebird Society Annual Meeting**, McKinney Falls State Park.

✧ November 3, 10, and December 1. **Certification Program for Citizen Wildfire Ecology Specialists**. Comal Co Extension Office. More info below.



ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The Ecology of Caves

SATURDAY, AUGUST 11, 9:00-11:00 AM

Balcones Canyonlands Lecture Series with Dr. Jean Krejca. Towne Square Community Center, 12550 Country Trails Lane, (within Steiner Ranch), <http://www.steinerranch.com/>

This slide presentation will feature images from caves in several North American states, as well as Central America and Borneo. These images will be used as a backdrop to discuss the relationship between caves, cave fauna, and human development. Local fauna that occur in the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve and nearby caves will be highlighted. Finally, some recent scientific studies on biogeography, behavior and ecology of these fauna will be summarized.

Dr. Jean Krejca, a cave biologist working around the globe, received her undergraduate degree at Southern Illinois University and her Ph.D. in Evolution, Ecology and Behavior from the University of Texas. Her dissertation field work focused on cave-adapted aquatic fauna, biogeography and hydrology of Texas and North Mexico. She started caving in 1990 and soon thereafter combined her passion for exploration with her interest in biology. In 2003 she co-founded Zara Environmental LLC with business partner Peter Sprouse that

specializes in rare and endangered species issues including land management for landowners with endangered species, endangered species permit consulting, and custom research projects.

No pre-registration required.

Directions/Parking:

From Austin, the northern route is to take FM 2222 west to RR 620. Turn left and drive south on RR 620 for 2 miles to Quinlan Park Road where you take a left. The central or southern route from Austin is to take either FM 2244 or Hwy 71 west towards the town of Bee Caves and from Hwy 71 turn right onto RR 620 heading in a northerly direction. Continue on RR 620 for 10.8 miles to Quinlan Park Road and turn right. **Follow Quinlan Park Road 2.3 miles to Country Trails Lane and turn right. Follow signs for Community Center.

To download a map or find out more about the Hike & Lecture Series, visit www.balconescanyonlands.org.

TMN Statewide Annual Meeting

OCTOBER 12-14, SAN ANTONIO

2007 is the 10th Anniversary of our founding Texas Master Naturalist Chapter--The Alamo Area Chapter! So come on for a Texas Master Naturalist Fiesta to celebrate this special milestone for this chapter and our state program.

San Antonio has more natural areas to see and Advanced Training field sessions than we can offer through just one weekend! You won't be disappointed! This year's annual meeting will be hosted by the Alamo Area Chapter and sponsored in part by the San Antonio Parks & Recreation Department.

Location: One major difference for this year's annual meeting is that we will use a hotel as our conference facility. The **Hilton San Antonio Airport** will be our host hotel and the primary location of our group events. We have planned an agenda with as much outdoor time as our past meetings. San Antonio has much to offer for the naturalist enthusiast wanting to learn about and conserve our ever-changing habitats, species and populations and the conservation of those resources faced with the numerous natural resource challenges of an urban or urbanizing area.

You can make your room reservations today at the Hilton. Room costs will be separate from your annual meeting registration costs.

However, the two costs combined will be comparable--if not the same as-- past years' fees of \$180 for the full event).

ROOM COSTS:

Rooms cost \$85.00 per night for a King sized room OR a double room. King sized rooms allow up to two people with a king-sized bed. Double Rooms allow up to four people per room with two double beds (roll-aways can be ordered at an extra cost if you so desire) You will need to make your room arrangements and payments directly with the Hilton. If needed, room rates may be extended three days prior to and after the event, based on availability.

BOOKING YOUR ROOMS

Attendees can book online or by phone today! You must mention the group code when booking the room. This will allow the reservations department to pull up the special group rate. It is vital you mention this code. There is also a spot online to input this code.

GROUP CODE: TPWD

Room rates guaranteed with Reservations made by September 14th, 2007. Phone: 1-888-728-3031. Online:

<http://www.sanantonioairport.hilton.com>

HIGHLIGHTED ANNUAL MEETING

AGENDA ITEMS: (Annual Meeting registration and information packet not yet available)

- Geology and Plants Training at the Canyon Lake Gorge
- The ever-popular Annual Meeting volunteer project
- Awards banquet (where you can bring your spouse and/or family members)
- Rainwater Harvesting Training
- many other regular Annual Meeting happenings.
- lots of new events being planned by the Alamo Area Chapter as the host chapter for this year's event!
- and several more surprises!

BRING THE FAMILY!

Given the affordable overnight accommodations and the space available to us at the Hilton San Antonio Airport, I hope that you will consider bringing your families and making this trip a family event. We're planning a banquet and meal Saturday evening that I hope you will attend with family to celebrate your accomplishments and awards as a Texas Master Naturalist volunteer! We are planning a special fee for non-registered family members wishing to purchase a banquet ticket when

attending with a TMN Member registered for the Annual Meeting.

RENT A VAN?

Your chapter might want to consider car-pooling or renting a van as a chapter to cut down on the gas costs (if this is something your chapter considers, let Michelle know, we might be able to figure out some cost-sharing if we can utilize the van for off-site field trips while on site at the Annual Meeting).

Please note that registration for the meeting is not yet available. We will send notices once it becomes available.

Looking forward to seeing you in San Antonio at this year's Annual Meeting!

Michelle M. Haggerty

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

Master Naturalist Program Coordinator

309 Sidney Baker South, Kerrville, TX 78028

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mhaggerty@wfscgate.tamu.edu

The Blackland and Grand Prairies and Grasslands of the Edwards Plateau

Efforts to Identify, Restore, Conserve and Celebrate a Natural Treasure.

NPSOT/NPAT SYMPOSIUM, OCTOBER 18-21.

You will have an opportunity to meet and visit with our members and guests who care deeply about our environment, especially native plants and plant ecosystems. Many of our combined 2000 members of NPSOT and NPAT will travel from cities all over Texas. These individuals promote the conservation, research and utilization of native plants and plant habitats of Texas through education, outreach and example.

Our speakers, including keynote speaker Matt White, author of the inspirational new book, *Prairie Time*, are already committed. They will address participants and answer questions in the newly enlarged Social Center Ballroom and other meeting rooms of Sun City Texas in Georgetown. The speaker list, schedule of events, and information about how you can participate in the symposium are described below, and on the event web site <http://npsot.org/symposium2007>. This

web site will be regularly updated with the names of sponsors and vendors.

To request a registration packet, please visit our website

<http://npsot.org/symposium2007>.

The caliber of our speakers and our central Georgetown location is expected to attract 400-500 registrations.

Conservation and restoration of our native prairies and grasslands has received a great deal of attention recently. More people are beginning to appreciate the beauty, and great loss, of the prairie habitat and the importance of the grassland ecosystem which captures and retains moisture, requires no fertilizers, pesticides or herbicides, develops extensive root systems which prevent soil erosion and does a fine job of taking in the carbon dioxide emissions implicated in global warming. Today, native, undisturbed, prairies in Texas are very rare and what remnants do remain continue to be lost to farming, grazing and development.

Every acre of high quality prairie habitat has 200 to 300 different kinds of wildflowers and grasses that are native to the American prairies. The Tallgrass Prairie is a proud part of our heritage. It is the original unchanged land that the ancestors of our community walked upon, the landscape of our pioneer heritage.

Please join us for an event that will help define a better future for all Texans.

Kerr WMA First Saturday Tours

In an effort to reach more landowners the Kerr WMA has moved its First Friday Tours to the first Saturday of each month.

First Saturday Programs will begin in July and run through October with each program starting at 1 pm and wrapping up around 5 pm.

The program is an ecosystems approach as it pertains to range and wildlife habitat management. Topics discussed will include white-tailed deer management, grazing management, prescribed burning, brush control, and endangered species. The program will also include over 20 years of nutrition and genetics research conducted in the Donnie E. Harmel White-tailed Deer Research Facility.

Dates are as follows: July 7, August 4, September 8 (to avoid Labor Day weekend), and October 6.

Please pass this information along to anyone that may be working with landowners and/or cooperators who are interested.

For more information or registration, please call Dale F. Prochaska, Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept., Kerr WMA, 2625 FM 1340, Hunt, TX 78024. Office 830-238-4483; Fax 830-238-4738
windy.altum@tpwd.state.tx.us
www.tpwd.state.tx.us

Certification Program for Citizen Wildfire Ecology Specialists

NOVEMBER 3, 10, AND DECEMBER 1.
COMAL CO EXTENSION OFFICE.

Texas Forest Service, Texas Extension Service, and Texas Master Naturalists present this 30-hour course to help citizens prepare themselves and their properties before wildfires strike. The course covers wildfire ecology and fire risk recognition, assessment, and reduction. It includes individual and group firewise planning projects and a hands-on field trip. For more information or registration, please contact Jan Fulkerson, Texas Forest Service, P O Box 1692, Wimberley, TX 78676; 512-847-7837; jfulkerson@tfs.tamu.edu. The registration fee is \$50.00



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Water Quality Protection Lands of the City of Austin

HCMN PROJECT #426:

The Water Quality Protection Lands at Onion Creek in Hays County consist of 4 tracts of land totaling approximately 3,500 acres of typical Texas hill country with brush and grasslands. These properties are only a short distance from Wimberley, Kyle, and Dripping Springs being located only 1.3 miles E of the Hays City Store at the intersection of FM 150 and FM 3237.

The city of Austin purchased these properties in 1999 with bond money from a 1998 election for the purpose of protecting the quality and enhancing the quantity of water recharging the portion of the Edwards Aquifer

that feeds Barton Creek in the city. The aquifer also serves to supply wells for thirsty rural dwellers. The properties and certain wildlife preserves are managed by a division within Austin Water Utilities dedicated entirely to that purpose and known as the Wildlands Conservation Division (WCD). The totality of properties managed is known as Water Quality Protection Lands, Onion Creek properties being one of those lands.

The properties are situated on karstified Glen Rose limestone, which has a multitude of caves and crevices through which surface waters pass on their way down to the aquifer. Onion Creek flows through the properties on their South perimeter. The creek was flowing in 2004 but dried during the droughts of 2005 and 2006. Today, thanks to the replenishing rains, its crystal clear water flows over limestone bedrock and tumbles over small waterfalls. At one spot on the creek there is a large whirlpool where water rushes into a cave formed under the creek bed.

This spring, the uplands were awash in color from the first succession stages following prescribed burning. Visitors found fields of Brown-eyed Susan, Lemon Beebalm, Phlox, Crow Poison, Celestials, Mealy Sage, Indian Blanket, Evening Primrose, Mexican Hat, and Rain Lilly amid a myriad of grasses. White, blue, purple, pink, red, and yellow colors form a mosaic upon a carpet of green.

To achieve the main objective of conservation management in the upland properties, WCD is reducing the woody vegetation, especially Junipers, and enhancing grass growth. In the bottom lands, the objective is to restore the riparian vegetation, apparently removed when the properties were actively ranched or perhaps by flooding, in order that the floodplains will better absorb and cleanse runoff from the uplands. Secondary objectives of management at Onion Creek are to eradicate invasive species where possible and to improve wildlife habitat.

The reduction of Juniper canopy in the uplands will allow more water to reach the soil surface and reduce evapo-transpiration loss, which draws water from the soils. A thicker grass cover will decrease surface runoff and promote infiltration of water into the soils, thereby increasing the amount of water reaching the aquifer.

In addition to increasing water infiltration and percolation, preserving the lands from residential and commercial development will

avoid the inevitable pollution. Restoration of the bottom lands along the creek and its floodplain will promote absorption of runoff from the uplands by the riparian ecosystem, regulate surface flow into the creek, and promote long-term storage of groundwater. As a result, sustained seepage should help keep Onion Creek flowing when the rains subside during the dry season.

Restoration of the native grasslands in the uplands should promote the return of indigenous wildlife. There already seem to be larger numbers of bobwhite and dove in the uplands. Restoration of the riparian area should encourage the return of aquatic species.

The pursuit of these objectives includes prescribed burning and removal of Junipers manually and by machine. Hydro-mulching and manual removal of the Junipers in the uplands has been extended to the floodplains of the creek. After prescribed burns and hydro-mulching, the cleared plots have been over-seeded with native grasses in an attempt to reintroduce lost grass species, such as Little and Big Bluestem, and to promote grassland restoration. Seeding with native grasses is standard because these grasses are better adapted for long-term survival and are preferred foods for native wildlife.

The manual removal of Junipers along the floodplains will be followed by planting of tree and shrub seedlings grown from seeds that were collected along the creek from plants currently growing there in order to restore the native riparian ecosystem. Plantings will begin when the seedlings have reached the appropriate growth stage.

Significant karst features have been mapped and cleared to enhance flow into the aquifer. Invasive trees, such as Retama and Chinaberry, are being located and mapped by GPS coordinates for later removal by WCD's pest control group. Currently 117 sites with invasive trees have been GPS mapped.

Beginning in 2004, Master Naturalists and MN trainees have been and are still involved in most all stages of the ongoing conservation practices at Onion Creek. Members of our Chapter have contributed more than 2000 volunteer hours. HCMN volunteers have cleared 3 to 5 acres of Juniper in the riparian zone, sowed seed in the burned and hydro-mulched areas, searched for karst features, helped install protection for archeological sites, monitored vegetation transects for plant succession in the treated areas, inventoried the flora, and mapped the locations of invasive trees.

To show appreciation for our involvement, WCD invites all volunteers to an annual

appreciation dinner. It is quite a gala affair with great food. If you are interested in volunteering for some of these activities where you will work in a relatively isolated, tranquil, beautiful, and interesting environment, please contact Tom Watson, a WCD Land Steward and HCMN, at twatson11@austin.rr.com. 🌿

Texas Outdoor Education Conference

The Texas Outdoor Education Association Fall Conference, October 5, 6, and 7 at the H.E.B. Foundation camp near Leaky, Texas will offer a Project Wild workshop and a Science & Civics workshop. The WILD workshop will be 6 hours and Science & Civics is a minimum of 2 hours.

Please let me know if you would be interested in conducting either or both workshops. I believe that you will be able to pick the date that best fits your schedule. TOEA will provide food and lodging at the HEB camp for the Facilitator. (We hear they have new cabins and the food is great. Fresh baked cookies every afternoon!)

Thanks for your consideration and keeping Texas WILD!

Windy Altum, Outdoor Learning Programs, Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept., 4200 Smith School Rd., Austin, TX 78744. 512-389-8183; Toll Free: 1-800-792-1112, ext 8183; Fax: 512-389-8042. windy.altum@tpwd.state.tx.us; www.tpwd.state.tx.us

Texas Parks and Wildlife Expo

OCTOBER 6 & 7

Mark Klym, TP&W's Design With Nature Coordinator, invites Hays County Master Naturalists to be a big part of the team for this event.

Mark will have 4 stations for EXPO this year, requiring 6 people per day per station (2 from 8 -12, 1 from 10 to 2, 1 from 12 to 4, and 2 from 2 to 6 (probably getting away a little earlier but can not be certain depending on traffic). Volunteers should contact Susan Nenny soon as possible with:

Area they prefer to work in (Wildscapes, Hummingbirds, Backyard Habitat Questions, Children's Area)

Shift(s) they would like

Shirt Size

Any special needs

Any special skills (Spanish would be ESPECIALLY Helpful)

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Wildscapes: will be located close to the actual wildscape. Will have a display that involves simulating the change over time (by doing a little each month) that can take place from the typical suburban development yard (two trees, one dead one alive and box hedges) to a wildscape.

Hummingbirds: will be under a canopy. They will have a game (Hummingbird Identification) and those that do well will probably get a poster (not confirmed yet). They will answer general questions about hummingbirds/hummingbird habitat, and refer any trickier questions to myself (Yes, Mark will be there this year!)

Backyard Habitat Questions: this is mainly to take some pressure off the Wildscapes area, but they will answer ID questions, what plants would we recommend, hand out wildscapes and Best of Texas literature, when can I expect the Bluebirds, etc. (Bluebird Society will be here so specific bluebird questions can be referred to them or me).

Children's Area: Will be close to the Wildscapes area designed to get the kids' attention so that we can talk to the adults. Two games - *Where Would I Nest* and *Am I A Native Texan*. Hand out prizes.

Mark is trying to get TPWD staff to man the literature and sales tables but if that falls through, may have to come to the Master Naturalists for additional staff.

Other groups with us this year in addition to other chapters: the Master Naturalists table; Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center (not confirmed); Texas Bluebird Society; Outdoor Connections (not confirmed)

For more information, please contact Mark Klym, Design With Nature Coordinator, mark.klym@tpwd.state.tx.us.



Wildscape Garden, San Marcos Nature Center

HCMN PROJECT #405

Unprecedented rains continued through July and created an overgrown jungle with an untidy understory tangle and few seasonal wildflowers. Pecan and elm seedlings pop up through the tangle, and passion vines are overgrowing parts of it. Gulf Fritillary butterflies thrive in such conditions, and they whirl around you while you work. Though Texan Crescents are still common, Bordered Patches are the butterflies of the month.

Sow thistles, black medicago, and pecan and elm seedlings thrive regardless of regular weeding.

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.



Jacob's Well

HCMN PROJECT #603

Walt Krudop and Dale Shively met with David Baker (Executive Director) and Michael Pape of the Wimberley Valley Water Association on May 21.

Discussions involved how the HCMN can play an organized role in the various phases of the Jacob's Well project. Volunteer work at Jacob's Well has been pre-approved but a new project leader and a strategic plan needs to be developed. Walt will work on a draft concept and will form a committee to get plans developed. Before volunteers begin work, the HCMN plan for the project will be drafted and then a call for volunteer work groups\dates arranged. This project will constitute a formal Chapter-sponsored volunteer activity. More to come.

Passionate Prairie People

Texas Parks and Wildlife is looking for some TMN prairie experts to assist with the Wildlife EXPO's "Settler's Prairie" exhibit, October 6-7, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

At the entrance to the Expo grounds is a small Indian and Little bluestem grass prairie. It sits across from Smith Elementary School where teachers use the prairie as an outdoor classroom. Each year at EXPO the students come to the prairie (in costume) and perform reenactments of life on a Texas prairie as Native Americans (with a tipi) or settlers (with a covered wagon). We also have a tent with a seedball activity and a few exhibits.

Visitors can make a few seedballs and take a few dry ones home. The exhibit draws many Hispanic and African American children, mostly from the urban areas of Austin, who probably know very little about Texas grasslands. For that reason we'd like to recruit some talented folks with a passion for prairies who like to work with kids.

Our tent includes all the materials to make and take seedballs, a display of live prairie plants and a photo exhibit of prairie animals. Volunteers are welcome to bring in their own exhibits and or outreach materials and activities. Teachers from Smith School manage the children doing the reenactments so volunteers would be working primarily with Expo visitors.

We need 4 to 6 volunteers for each day. If this sounds like something you'd like to do please contact: Pat Morton, 512-912-7020 or patricia.morton@tpwd.state.tx.us. We can offer you an Expo t-shirt, tickets to the Expo banquet on Saturday evening and an opportunity to enjoy the myriad of exhibits and activities that showcase the diversity of ways to be involved in the great outdoors of Texas! 🦋

Nature Conservancy Project Proposal

HCMN PROJECT #606

STARTING DATE: 9/1/2006

ENDING DATE:

TYPE OF ACTIVITY: Environmental conservation and education.

The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.

M.N. CONTACT: Rick Norwood, 830-693-5901; rnorwood@tstar.net

M. N. COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR THIS PROJECT: none at this time. 🦋



State News

Texas Monarch Watch

Monarchs are doing well. The overwintering monarch population in Mexico measured 6.87 hectares, a little below average but good numbers just the same. Last September I predicted that the number of hectares represented by all sites combined would be 6.5 hectares. So, I was close, closer than I've been before. My estimates are based on all the input we receive during the summer from observers around the country and from reading the environmental tea leaves; i.e., the temperatures and drought indexes recorded in different portions of the country. For xample, it was evident that the extreme temperatures and drought from the Dakotas to western Michigan in July and August were likely to lead to a decline in the population in those areas and that was the case. Extreme conditions such as these limit the longevity of the adult butterflies and therefore reduce what ecologists call the "realized fecundity". Butterflies are often nectar-limited, meaning that adult survival and reproduction is dependent on the availability of nectar. In drought conditions nectar can become quite scarce. Fortunately, the monarch population in the eastern portion of the country was excellent with many observers claiming that there were more monarchs than at any time in the last 30 to 40 years. Without the contribution of these eastern monarchs to the overwintering populations, monarch numbers in Mexico would have been quite low.

The monarchs wintered well in Mexico. There were few killing temperatures and the condition of the butterflies we observed in early March, as some of the monarchs began to move north, was excellent - perhaps the best I've seen. Returning migrant monarchs arrived in Texas on time. The temperatures experienced by the returning monarchs in March and early April appear to be important, with high temperatures usually leading to lower populations the next winter. The temperatures were high this March in Texas but April was much colder than normal and the conditions in April and May favored

survival and rapid dispersal of the first generation monarchs moving north during those months. The result has been an unusually large number of sightings in northern Minnesota and from Thunder Bay to Saskatoon in Canada. In fact, there were so many monarchs moving across Lake Superior in early June that some drown and washed up on the shore near Duluth.

Reports from the Michigan/Illinois axis eastward have been fewer and less positive. Evidently, relatively small numbers of monarchs moved into the northeast with the initial wave of first generation monarchs but they were so few that many observers missed them. Further, eggs and larvae proved to be scarce in most of this region, the one possible exception being western New York where good numbers of monarchs have been reported.

Given the spring conditions in Texas and the fact that the butterflies did not appear to get a good start in the eastern half of the northern breeding area it seems unlikely that the overwintering population this year will be greater than 8 hectares. Actually, it is more likely to be in the 5-7 hectare range and could be even lower if the temperatures in the East North Central region of the country (Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, etc.) reach into the high nineties and low hundreds as they did last year.

So, here is the monarch forecast for July: expect low to moderate numbers from eastern Ohio and eastward through New England; moderate to good numbers are expected from eastern Ohio west through Illinois and eastern Wisconsin; good to excellent numbers should be found in western Wisconsin to the Dakotas; numbers in the eastern Dakotas should be normal to above normal. Right or wrong, those are my predictions. If I'm wrong, I'll know I've read the environmental tea leaves incorrectly.

By Chip Taylor,
<http://www.MonarchWatch.org>,
monarch@ku.edu

New Monarch Website

A new website for monarchs has been created by the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service,

the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign, and Bureau of Land Management. Numerous monarch specialists and interest groups contributed to this endeavor as well. Check it out at:
<http://www.fs.fed.us/monarchbutterfly/>

Wildlife and Fish Management Calendar for Texas and the Southeast: a Landowner's Guide

This new publication, hot off the press, gives Texas landowners month by month management activities to conduct by species. Developed by Billy Higginbotham, Professor and Extension Wildlife and Fisheries Specialist, this publication provides wildlife managers with details on what they need to do monthly. It is also the perfect tool to strategically plan management activities for white-tailed deer, waterfowl, largemouth bass, channel catfish, quail, doves and more.

Need to learn about feral hog control? It's in there!

Aging deer by tooth wear and replacement or by field judging? It's in there!

Fish stocking rates and species composition for your farm pond? It's in there!

Attracting waterfowl to your wetlands? It's in there!

The publication is more than a management guide and more than a calendar. It takes the best of both formats and features beautiful color photos of Texas wildlife each month. It's a must have for landowners serious about managing their wildlife resources.

Landowners can order the publication two ways. Log on to the Texas Cooperative Extension Bookstore website at <http://tcebookstore.org> or call the TCE Bookstore toll free at 1-888-900-2577.

To find the calendar select "Animals" on the Bookstore home page then click "wildlife". The calendar appears on page 5 of the wildlife selections. You may also find it by selecting the search option and entering publication number B-6197.

The publication cost is \$7.95 plus tax and shipping. Cost is reduced to \$3.50 per copy for orders of 50 or more.



Local News

San Marcos Purchases Spring Lake

Thanks to the donors listed below and long hours spent behind the scenes by many individuals and organizations, including members of SMGA, the City of San Marcos will soon finalize the purchase of 251 acres in the Sink Creek watershed above Spring Lake. The most recent donation of \$360,000 by the Emmett and Miriam McCoy Foundation completed a \$5.1 million fund-raising campaign to purchase the land located over the Edwards Aquifer.

According to *The University Star*, 7/11/07 (<http://star.txstate.edu/content/view/3412/>), donors include:

- \$2 million approved by San Marcos voters in a 2005 bond election
- \$700,000 from the Hays County Parks Bond and Open Space funds
- \$1 million from the U.S. Department of the Interior
- \$355,670 from the Meadows Foundation
- \$400,000 from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- \$200,000 from the Lower Colorado River Authority
- \$100,000 from the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority
- \$1.13 million from former landowner Terry Gilmore.

Texas State University, the National Park Service, and the City of San Marcos will develop a master plan that emphasizes lowtouch recreational activities and natural resource protection. San Marcos Parks and Recreation will offer educational programs at the park for children and adults.

Be sure to note August 20 on your calendar for the city's celebration! Details to be announced.

-- SMGA *Kiosk*, Summer 2007.

Wimberley Butterfly Watch

Butterflies observed in and around Wimberley during July remained fewer in number of species and individuals. Estivation and the onslaught of summer heat, martins,

and swallows usually account for the seasonal change. This July, in contrast, had many wet days and temperatures 10 to 20 degrees lower than usual.

	1-10	11-20	21-31
Giant Swallowtail			x
Pipevine Swallowtail	x	x	x
Black Swallowtail		x	x
Eastern Tiger Sw'tail			x
Checkered White			
Orange Sulphur			x
Southern Dogface			
Lyside Sulphur	x		
Cloudless Sulphur	x	x	x
Large Orange Sulfur			
Little Yellow	x		x
Sleepy Orange	x	x	x
Dainty Sulphur	x	x	x
Great Purple Hairstr.		x	x
Dusky Blue			x
Groundstreak			
Henry's Elfin			
Juniper Hairstreak	x	x	x
Oak Hairstreak			
Soapberry Hairstreak			
Gray Hairstreak	x	x	x
Reakirt's Blue			
American Snout			
Gulf Fritillary	x	x	x
Variiegated Fritillary			x
Bordered Patch	x	x	x
Theona Checkerspot	x	x	x
Pearl Crescent		x	x
Phaon Crescent			x
Texan Crescent	x	x	x
Question Mark			
Eastern Comma	x	x	
Red Admiral			x
American Lady			
Painted Lady			
Common Buckeye	x	x	x
Tropical Leafwing	x	x	x
Hackberry Emperor		x	
Tawny Emperor	x	x	x
Empress Leilia			
Common WoodNymph			
Little Wood Satyr			
Carolina Satyr			x
Monarch	x		x
Queen	x	x	x
Silver-spotted Skipper			x
Northern Cloudywing	x	x	x
Juvenal's Duskywing	x	x	x
Horace's Duskywing	x	x	x

Funereal Duskywing	x			
Sleepy Duskywing				
Checkered Skipper				x
Orange Skipperling				
Fiery Skipper	x	x	x	
Dun Skipper	X	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 –
.nracs.usda.gov/

Partners

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