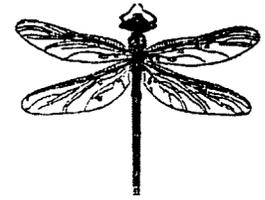


# Hays County Master Naturalists NEWSLETTER



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

July, 2006

## JULY EVENTS

### *Fourth of July Parade*

Susan Nenney, Jamie Kinscherff and an enthusiastic committee have launched a bold plan for Hays County Master Naturalists to march in Wimberley's Independence Day Parade. Their outreach project has an important purpose: to educate the community about our chapter and its resources, training program and services.

The HCMN float is one of 30 official entries in the parade. The Float Krewe will decorate Marion Couvillion's trailer and tractor with banners, signs and bunting proclaiming the theme "**Texas Hill Country – Restore, Preserve, Protect – for all!**" Preparations include the chapter banner, a kazoo band, and a tractor-drawn float with a load of HCMN bookmarks as handouts to publicize the Master Naturalist program.

The Kazoo Marching Band will make its public debut with the accompaniment of Tyler Carlson, guitar; Cara Wernli, cymbals, and Keith Keilly, trowels. Their repertoire includes ***This Land, America, Yellow Rose***, and the ***Caisson Song***. For uniforms, the band has T-shirts with the Master Naturalist logo, dark shorts or slacks, and decorated straw hats. The float will carry a supply of iced rainwater for the benefit of our intrepid musicians.

This project, and especially the band, needs you! The more participants, the better. To join the fun and get a T-shirt (\$12.00), please call Susan at [secretary@haysmn.org](mailto:secretary@haysmn.org). 

### *Cibolo Nature Center Field Trip*

**All 30 places are taken!**

JULY 15: Schedule of events:

Indoors, 8:30am – 9:30am

Overview of prairie management goals & management techniques

Research results from CNC prairie surveys)

Review CNC prairie survey techniques

Outdoors, 9:30am – 11:00pm

## HAYS COUNTY MASTER NATURALISTS

<b>President</b>	Tom Watson
<b>Vice President</b>	Dale Shively
<b>Secretary</b>	Susan Nenney
<b>Treasurer</b>	Winifred Simon
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<b>Extension Agent</b>	Bryan Davis

[Dirch6086@aol.com](mailto:Dirch6086@aol.com)

Demonstrate prairie survey techniques  
- show vegetation transects, demonstrate survey technique, some grass/plant ID  
Tour of prairie management plots

## THE PRESIDENTIAL VIEW

Greetings fellow Master Naturalists and Trainees,

The month of June has been rather hectic for me as I have had to spend a great deal of time out of town taking care of pressing matters there. I must say that I have not had much time to volunteer this month nor to keep abreast of happenings in the Chapter.

I was able to put in a little time at Onion Creek on the vegetation monitoring project that Jamie, Terry, and Bonnie have been working on. We are tracking changes in vegetation there as the Austin Water Utilities apply treatments to the lands to further water quality protection there. We use about 12 transects to record the kinds and abundance of vegetation over the properties. We count the number of plants and bare ground along the transects and measure the canopy covering where it extends into our plots. The land managers there have just finished removing over a hundred acres of juniper to promote grass growth and we will be monitoring to observe the effects of this

treatment in the uplands. We will soon be walking the property (2,500 acres) to locate and GPS-record the location of invasive woody plants that will be scheduled for removal at a later date. We will continue to help with the restoration of the riparian habitat along the creek floodplains by removing more invasive juniper trees and planting tree saplings in the spring.

Marion and I met again with the development committee for the Jacob's Well Natural Area to finish up the vision, goals, and mission statement for the project. We will now be moving on to the design stage which should be interesting as we will begin to plan for restoration of the grounds and the nature center, all of which I have high hopes for our Chapter members as I have explained to you many times before. I remain excited about our prospects and enjoy working with David Baker and the staff from LBJ Wildflower Center immensely. Marion is now working with David to bring a water conservation workshop to Jacob's Well and I applaud him for his hard work on the JWNA committee and the water workshop.

We will meet with Bryan Davis tomorrow to continue our planning for a range management workshop for small acreage landowners which we would like to schedule for the Fall of this year. We are tentatively planning to have the affair at Freeman ranch with invited speakers from around the area who will present various topics of interest to landowners. We will likely charge a small fee in order to raise some funds for our Chapter. We will be looking for volunteers to help us with the workshop and will keep you informed as it develops.

July 4<sup>th</sup> is upon us and the HCMN float and band, under the capable direction of Susan Nenney will be ready to march down the avenue in Wimberley to bring our message and organization to the attention of the citizens. This is going to be a lot of fun and great PR effort. We are grateful to all of those who have worked so diligently to bring this about.

I am going to attempt to get the Invaders of Texas program going next month by starting a pilot program with a couple of MNs to iron out the wrinkles before bringing it out for the entire membership. I hope to have it ready to go in August.

The world population at 9:55 pm on June 28, 2006 was 6,627,959,669 people and that represents 1,081,096 additions to the earth since this column

was written last month. The current amount of productive land is 8,556,164,107 hectares and decreasing worldwide. The current population of the USA is 299,088,104 with one birth every 7 seconds, one death every 13 seconds, one international migrant (net) every 31 seconds, and a net gain of one person every 10 seconds. You can easily see the pressing need and the basis for my enthusiasm for our MN program.

I look forward to seeing you at our next Chapter meeting on August 17<sup>th</sup>. Until next month when I hopefully will be more in tune with the happenings, I wish you the best of everything.

Thank you for all that you do for the Earth, for your neighbors, and for your chapter.

Tom. ✨

## CHAPTER NEWS

### *A Wonderful Wacky Wednesday with HCMN*

Ann Allen, Mary Arizpe, Dorothy Knight, Judy Telford, and Betty Watkins helped present children's summer activities at the Wimberley Village Library on June 21. Thirteen children and seven adults attended the library's Wonderful Wacky Wednesday summer program. Not the crowd we anticipated, but they were a lively bunch!

Betty challenged the children to take care of the environment by reading and discussing the book, ***This is Our Earth***, by Laura Lee Benson, with illustrations by John Carrozza. Ann, Mary, and Dorothy helped the children make wildflower seed balls. Judy demonstrated runoff of rainwater on various surfaces.

Everyone took home seedballs and pine cones to make bird feeders. ✨

### *Coming soon to HCMN: Invaders of Texas*

... a program to locate and report the invasive species of Texas plants.

An exciting volunteer opportunity is in the making to aid the LBJ Wildflower center, a consortium of nature and scientific organizations,

and federal and state government agencies in locating and cataloging invasive species of plants.

This is an important nation-wide program because costs attributed to invasive species in the USA run into the billions of dollars. The statewide program, "Invaders of Texas," is part of the LBJWC's citizen scientist program that asks local volunteers to help with scientific research studies.

Volunteers search for species on a target list of invasive plants occurring in the vicinity. After locating invasive plants, the volunteer will record their GPS coordinates, digitally photograph the plants, and take other pertinent information for submission to a website where the identifications will be confirmed. Following confirmation of the identification, the data and photograph will be entered into a national database hosted by the USGS.

This seems to be a project designed for Master Naturalists who have come through our training classes and understand diagnostic plant features sufficiently to take advanced training in identification of target species and reporting their occurrence. Once trained the volunteers will be asked to search for target species in their local area and to travel to specified sites for observations.

The LBJ Wildflower Center recently conducted a pilot program to iron out procedural wrinkles. HCMN's Delbert Bassett and Greg Carter were participants. LBJWC is now ready to decentralize the program by moving the coordination out to relevant organizations around the state. They have chosen MN chapters among others to train and coordinate local volunteers for the program. Your president, Tom Watson, attended the "Train the Trainers" session earlier this month to learn the program and to begin training volunteers in our Chapter. Tom will first train a couple of volunteers to assist him and adapt the program to our chapter's criteria. Tom will try to complete the initial training sequence in June and hold training sessions for volunteers in July or August.

Please stay tuned for more news about a volunteer opportunity that fits every Hays County Master Naturalist. 🦋

### *New Reporting Buttons*

Please note two new buttons on the online report form for Volunteer Hours, <http://www.hcmn.org>.

The first button is for 2006 trainees and the second is for active members.

Please be sure to click the correct button so that your report will automatically forward to the correct HCMN officer.

Please send Judy Telford your monthly reports of Volunteer Hours and Advanced Training Hours on the first of the month.

You may also email your reports to Judy at [records@haysmn.org](mailto:records@haysmn.org) or send them by USnail Mail to 2303 E. McCarty, San Marcos, TX 78666.

Your timely response helps the Board to monitor participation in Chapter activities and to plan future events that meet your interests. 🦋

## CALENDAR

*(The dragonfly logo 🦋 identifies official HCMN events)*

🦋 July 4: **Fourth of July Parade** in Wimberley. Meet at parking lot of First Baptist Church, 7:45 am.

🦋 July 11, **2006 Class Session 10**. Trees – Robert Edmondson; Ch 16 & 5. Texas Weather – Troy Kimmel

🦋 July 15. **Chapter Field Trip**, Cibolo Nature Centre, Boerne. More information below.

July 20. **Cactus Gardening** Workshop. San Marcos Nature Centre. 6:00 – 8:00 pm. <http://www.ci.san-marcos.tx.us> under "Parks & Recreation – Nature Centre."

🦋 July 22. **2006 Class Field Trip, Bamberger Ranch** (pre-pay \$10.00 per person)

🦋 July 22. **NATURE QUEST** at The Refuge. 9:00 - 11:00 am. The Wild Ones invite all 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> graders.

July 27: **2006 Earth Science Summer Lecture: Central Texas Floods: Flash Flood Alley**. Presented by Raymond Slade, Hydrologist and Central Texas Flood Expert.

Lecture, 7pm. TXDOT Auditorium, 200 Riverside Drive (across from Thundercloud). For more info, contact Sigrid Clift at 512-471-0140.

🦋 August 8. **2006 Class Session 11**. Wildlife (mammals and herpetology) and Habitat – Dr. Randy Simpson. Ch 14, Bats – Meg Goodman

🦋 August 17. **Chapter Meeting**. White Wings Ranch.

🦋 September. 12. **2006 Class Session 12**. Prairies – Bob Lyons; Ch 11, Insects – Noel Troxclair

✧ September. 23. **2006 Class Field Trip to Knox Ranch Field.** 9:00 am –12:00 noon. Fishes – Gordon Linam. Amphibians, Ch 12 & 13. Reptiles - Lee Ann Linam. Water Quality & Invertebrates – Cindy Contreras

✧ October 3. **2006 Class Session 13.** Livestock on Small Acreage – Dr. Rick Machem. Rev. Ch.19, Agricultural and Wildlife Tax Valuation – Kaybeth Williams

✧ Oct. 24, **2006 Class Session 14.** Land Fragmentation – Dr. Neal Wilkins. Ch 20 & 21. Land Stewardship & Interpretation – Texas Master Naturalist Program Coordinator

✧ November 7. **2006 Class Graduation** – Ch 2, Bryan Davis

## ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

### *Project WILD Aquatic Training*

TPWD is sponsoring a "Project WILD Aquatic" workshop at Westcave Preserve. The workshop will focus on how to teach aquatic resources and wildlife to school kids.

The training will introduce fun, hands-on, easy-to-use educational activities appropriate for education in our schools. The material is suitable for grades K – 12 and is aligned to the TEKS. Participants will receive 6 hours of SBEC and TEEAC credit if desired. Master Naturalists will earn Advanced Training credits. The number of AT hours depends on the length of the workshop.

This is a great opportunity for those interested in working with youth to take up educational outreach as a volunteer activity. Once trained, the Board of Directors and our Extension Agent will help you make connections with local schools of your choosing.

The workshop dates are to be announced soon. For further information please email [john@westcave.org](mailto:john@westcave.org) or phone (830)-825-3442.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### *Margaret's Nature Trail, White Wings Ranch*

HCMN PROJECT # 601

You may remember that last summer off RR12

near San Marcos a snake fatally bit a woman from Wimberley. It turns out that she was both a member of the Unity Church and very much a nature enthusiast. She bequeathed a small amount to the church for the creation of a nature trail on the 43 acres that is owned by the church. The money is to go for signage, a tri-fold brochure, interpretive material etc.

Pastor Mindy Audlin and her husband Shawn have made great headway in the actual layout and construction of the trail. Joe Piazza, myself and a few other Master Naturalists went for a visit and were well impressed with the progress thus far. They have asked for our help to complete the construction of the trail and ID the plants along the route. They have also asked us to help in the design and writing of an interpretive tri-fold brochure about the trail and Hill Country ecosystems. We have talked about planting a native grass garden and a butterfly garden. Once the trail is complete, besides helping maintain it, we are to be available to give guided walks to interested folks.

Unity Church has learned from their insurance company that they can allow non-members access to the trail and they want to open it up to the public for educational and outreach programs. This would include school groups and scouting groups as well.

The area where the trail has been located is very diverse, going from grasslands dotted with various trees and forbs to a lovely riparian zone with the associated flora and fauna. Its length is about 1/2 mile, with spots to sit and enjoy views along the way.

-- Jamie Kinscherff, HCMN Contact;  
[Jamie@kinscherff.com](mailto:Jamie@kinscherff.com) ✧

### *Wildscape Garden, San Marcos Nature Center*

HCMN PROJECT #405

May and June showers were sufficient to make Sunflowers, passion vines, blue mistflower, and tropical milkweed run wild. The passion vines support Gulf Fritillary larvae, and male adult Gulf Fritillaries are constantly searching for emerging females. Queens regularly haunt the blue mistflower. A luxurious stand of Frogfruit entices checkered skippers and a few Pearl and Texan Crescents.

As usual, there's no stopping invasive dandelions, sow thistles, wild geranium, medicago, red henbit, bermudagrass, and similar plants. We have to pull up these aggressive invaders to control them.

We welcome contributions of seeds or seedlings of annual and perennial wildflowers to improve the diversity of our garden. 🌸

## *Jacob's Well Nature Centre*

### HCMN PROJECT #603

HCMN Project Coordinator:

Tom Watson, [president@hcmn.org](mailto:president@hcmn.org)  
512-894-4822

Sponsor Contact: David Baker,  
Wimberley Valley Watershed Association  
P. O. Box 2534, Wimberley, TX 78676.  
512-847-1582 512-847-1582

Starting date: 4/1/2006; end date: open

Project Description: The project will be to help the Wimberley Valley Watershed Assoc. plan and restore the Jacob's Well surroundings to a natural condition using native plants, to conduct nature tours, to provide education classes at the completed nature center, to help with trail building, to plant native plants, etc.

Activity type: Habitat restoration, Restoration and Management planning, Direct outreach, Indirect outreach, Trail construction and maintenance, Data collection, Native plants maintenance

Comments: This will be a great opportunity to become associated with a nature center where we can apply our Master Naturalist training to benefit the public. 🌸

## **State News**

### *Texas Monarch Watch*

Last month I mentioned that I'm testing a predictive model that would, if validated, allow us to predict the numbers of hectares of monarchs at the overwintering sites in Mexico well in advance of the fall migration. Based on early spring conditions, the model predicts that the overwintering population will be lower in 2006-2007 than in the previous winter (5.91 hectares). However, all the bits of information

derived from the many people who report the first sightings of monarchs, the numbers of individuals seen, and first eggs to Monarch Watch and Journey North, suggest that the population will increase this year. If true, such an outcome would indicate there is a major deficiency in the model. As I pointed out in the April Update, more monarchs were reported through this April than for any year from 2000 to the present. I also suggested some ominous signs, such as too many monarchs too far North too early, as well as the similarities between the spring of 2006 and 2000, a year in which the population crashed.

In the past month the reports of monarchs have continued to soar and the number of first generation monarchs arriving and laying eggs in the northern breeding areas is impressive and exceeds the numbers of sightings recorded in the last three years. However, the number of reported sightings for May is lower than for the 2000-2002 and is remarkably similar to the number reported for 2000. But, the number of sightings reported is not the full story, since multiple sightings by the same person tend to be neglected. We have received more emails with reports of multiple sightings of monarchs in one day by individuals than for any spring I can recall. In fact, Gene Tiser reported to Dplex-L on 26 May that a substantial number (many 10s of butterflies) of monarchs washed up on the western shore of Lake Michigan after a spring storm a day or two earlier. Reports of monarchs being washed ashore from a spring storm are rare. When considering the abundance of spring reports this year, it is worth noting that the weather conditions (high temperatures and winds predominantly from the SW) in the Midwest were highly favorable for monarch sightings for the last 10 days of May. However, sightings from March through May have not correlated well with overwintering numbers in the last six years. Will this year be the exception or are these observational notations misleading?

The largest well-documented increase in monarch numbers occurred from the winter of 1995-1996 (12.8 hectares) to the winter of 1996-1997 (21.0 hectares), an increase of 8.4 hectares. The weather was cooler for the returning monarchs in the spring of 1996, but there was an extensive drought throughout Texas (like this year). Droughts appear to negatively affect fire ant populations, providing some reduction in the loss of monarch eggs and larvae to predation and therefore better survival of the first generation. Adult butterflies, however, may be negatively affected as drought may limit the availability of milkweeds and sources of nectar and water, thus limiting adult longevity

and realized fecundity. While these interpretations seem reasonable, it remains that we really don't understand if and how droughts affect the overwintering butterflies and the survival of their offspring. The Drought Monitor shows that much of the southern half of Texas is still experiencing a significant drought:

The flow of monarchs through eastern Kansas in the second half of May this year has been the best I've observed since 2001. I spotted my first "fresh" monarch on the 19th and continued to see 1-3 monarchs each day through the 28th, with the exception of the 27th, when it was so windy that the butterflies would have been well advised to seek shelter under rocks. An interesting question is: Where are these monarchs coming from? Presumably, they are coming from Texas, but where in Texas? We all know that Texas is a big place and that weather conditions and fire ants are not uniform in that state. Although much of Central and North Texas received rain in the second half of March, how this precipitation might have benefited monarchs is not clear. It is also the case that this is a region where the fire ant density is lower than in South and South Central Texas. Perhaps many of the monarchs originated from this region. We received two reports from observers near Dallas that may pertain to this point. Both observers mentioned finding large numbers of monarch eggs on milkweeds in pastures and gardens in April.

-- By Chip Taylor. The complete web version of this update is available at:  
<http://www.MonarchWatch.org/update/2006/0531.html>.

## Local News

### *Water Issues Survey*

#### PLEASE PARTICIPATE IN TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENT'S SURVEY

Because of your experience as a resident of south-central Texas, I am asking for your participation in a study of how the general public learns, or hears, about issues related to water resources.

I am asking participants to answer a questionnaire that will take about 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

Your responses will be confidential. I hope that you will agree to participate in this study; your help and that of other participants is essential to the study's success. Please use this link to begin the survey:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=539442196389>.

Thank you for your participation.

### ***Risk Communication Concerning Water Issues in South-central Texas***

Karen Bartell, Ph.D. Candidate

512-894-0105, Days. Cell: 512-585-9396

R. Denise Blanchard, Ph.D. Department of Geography and James and Marilyn Lovell Center for Environmental Geography and Hazards Research  
Texas State University – San Marcos ✨

### ***White-tailed Deer Harvest Project***

Howdy!

My name is Jennifer Garrett and I am a graduate student in the Wildlife And Fisheries Sciences Department at Texas A&M University, and I need your help.

For my thesis project I have created a white-tailed deer harvest model for the use of interested landowners and land managers. The model incorporates field data that is currently available or easily collected.

Unlike other population models specific for white-tailed deer, my simulation model has an easy to use interface and is available on-line via the Internet. Users simply answer questions about the land they are managing and then evaluate different harvest plans to reach their management goals.

The next part of my project involves the evaluation of the simulation model and website. This is where I need your help.

Please visit my website and evaluate it for me.

The website address is:

<http://deer.tamu.edu/deersim> .

To view the website you will need to create an account. I will use the e-mail address you provide to send you an invitation to participate in an online survey that will be used to evaluate my project.

As an incentive for filling out the survey we will be giving away a laser rangefinder, GPS unit, compass, and a Boone & Crockett scoring kit. The four lucky participants will be chosen by lottery.

Thank you in advance for your time. Your opinions will help us better the simulation model and website so that we may have a product that better serves you.

If you have any questions about this project please contact me at [jennifer-n-garrett@tamu.edu](mailto:jennifer-n-garrett@tamu.edu).

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Garrett

### *Wimberley Butterfly Watch*

Hummingbirds must be more abundant than butterflies this summer.

Butterflies observed during June include Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Giant Swallowtail, Pipevine Swallowtail, Black Swallowtail, Southern Dogface, Cloudless Sulphur, Orange Sulphur, Large Orange Sulphur, Little Sulphur, Sleepy Orange, Dainty Sulphur, Gray Hairstreak, Juniper Hairstreak, Great Purple Hairstreak, Reakirt's Blue, Buckeye, Gulf Fritillary, Variegated Fritillary, Pearl Crescent, Texan Crescent, Red Admiral, Painted Lady, American Lady, Hackberry Emperor, Bordered Patch, Monarch, Queen, Little Wood Satyr, Carolina Satyr, Cloudywing Skipper, Juvenal's Duskywing, Checkered Skipper, Dun Skipper, Sachem, and other little brown skippers.

Two Monarch sightings occurred on June 17, the first since May 25. Whites have been scarce and elusive, and the only one we could get close enough to identify turned out to be a white phase of the Little Sulphur. We have seen no Hackberry butterflies.

If you saw something we missed, please email your [editor@hcmn.org](mailto:editor@hcmn.org). 🦋

### **Links to Chapter Sponsors and Partners**

#### *Sponsors:*

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

#### *Agencies of Interest:*

Bamberger Ranch -- <http://www.bambergerranch.org/workshops.htm>  
Native Plant Society of Texas – [www.npsot.org/](http://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/](http://texas-sea-grant.tamu.edu/)  
Texas Forest Service – [txforestservice.tamu.edu/](http://txforestservice.tamu.edu/)  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – [www.usace.army.mil/](http://www.usace.army.mil/)  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – [www.fws.gov/](http://www.fws.gov/)  
U.S.D.A. Natural Resource Conservation Service – [.nracs.usda.gov/](http://.nracs.usda.gov/)

#### *Partners*

Austin Nature Day -- <http://www.austinnatureday.org/>  
LBJ Wildflower Center -- [www.wildflower.org](http://www.wildflower.org)  
San Marcos Nature Centre -- [http://www.ci.san-marcos.tx.us/departments/parks/Nature\\_Center.html?menu=DP13](http://www.ci.san-marcos.tx.us/departments/parks/Nature_Center.html?menu=DP13)