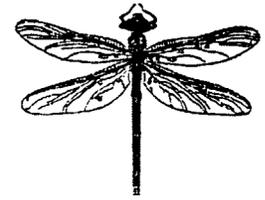


Hays County Master Naturalists NEWSLETTER



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

June, 2006

JUNE EVENTS

Chapter Meeting

JUNE 1, AT JACOB'S WELL PRESERVE
General Membership and members of 2006 Class.

Gil Eckrich speaking on "Land Management for Two Endangered Songbirds." Gill will review protection of the Golden-cheeked Warbler and Black-capped Vireo at Fort Hood. Qualifies for ATC.

Melinda Gumbert has arranged a dinner featuring a casserole at \$7.00 per person. Please contact Susan Nenney for your dinner reservations.



THE PRESIDENTIAL VIEW

Greetings fellow Master Naturalists and Trainees,

It has been a month of ups and downs for the Board. We scheduled a field trip to an apiary which was canceled by the bee-keeper and we attempted to coordinate a Bobwhite quail survey which was rained out. Such are the vicissitudes of scheduling in the great outdoors. On the bright side we had a successful work day on May 27th at Onion Creek, where we are helping the City of Austin with management of the Barton Creek recharge zone of the Edwards Aquifer. Eight volunteers cut approximately an acre of junipers that were invading the riparian habitat along the creek floodplains. We placed some of the downed trees to retard water flow in eroding ravines and scattered the others so that the grass and forbs could grow through the decaying branches. This riparian area at Onion Creek is being restored from the effects of earlier ranching operations which resulted in juniper encroachment. We will eventually plant trees there to restore the characteristic vegetation of the riparian habitat.

Marion Couvillion and I met on May 8th with the stakeholder committee for the development of the Jacob's Well Natural Area. The committee is

HAYS COUNTY MASTER NATURALISTS

President	Tom Watson
Vice President	Dale Shively
Secretary	Susan Nenney
Treasurer	Winifred Simon
Training Committee	Nancy Turner
Records Committee	Judy Telford
State Advisory Board	Walt Krudop
Web Master	Herb Smith
Editor	Richard Barnett,
	512-847-6941, editor@haysmn.org
Extension Agent	Bryan Davis

providing input towards developing a master plan for the site and is being lead by staff from the LBJ Wildflower Center (Steve Windhager, Heather Venhaus, & Marianne Shivers) with consultation from the Lake-Flato Architectural firm. This was the first in a series of meetings that will follow this month and next leading to a finalized plan. The first meeting was primarily a brainstorming session in which we developed a vision, mission statement, and goals for the natural area.

We were pleased to be invited to attend and submit our thoughts on your behalf and delighted to find that the ideas of the stakeholders in attendance were wholly compatible with the mission and goals of the Texas Master Naturalist program. We see bountiful opportunities for the participation of our chapter members from providing ideas for the development of nature demonstrations to native plant gardening and docent activities.

Jacob's Well can be a place where we put our Master Naturalist training to good use for the benefit and pleasure of the general public. I hope that you share our enthusiasm for this project and will join with us in helping David Baker and the Wimberley Valley Watershed Association to bring this wonderful project to fruition. I also hope that you will travel to Cibolo Nature Center with us next month to observe what can be done by Master Naturalists at a nature center - natural area such as Jacob's Well can become.

Our field trip to Cibolo Nature Center in Boerne is rescheduled for July 15th. Volunteers at the Center have restored 4 ecosystems, which are used to demonstrate conservation principles. Our field excursion will include a presentation from Rufus Stevens, a resident TPWD biologist, on prairie management goals & techniques followed by an outdoor demonstration of prairie survey techniques including vegetation transects and survey techniques with some plant identification. The excursion will conclude with a tour of the management plots around the center. You will be free to roam around afterwards and marvel at what has been done with 100 acres of neglected public lands.

On July Fourth, come and join Susan Nenney's float in the Wimberley parade. She and Jamie Kinscherff have organized an extraordinary fun event, including an honest-to-goodness kazoo band (volunteer musicians needed) that will march along with a hay bale-laden trailer hauling Master Naturalists and covered with theme signs. This should be an attention getter and give additional exposure for our program to the general public.

Judy Telford continues to deliver good reports to the board about volunteer hours sent to her from the members. We have vastly exceeded the hours total for the same time last year so we are encouraged that you folks are getting out there to make a difference. I wish you the very best in your volunteer endeavors and pledge the support of the board for what you do. Keep the Master Naturalist mission alive and spread the word – our planet and its people need your help. The world population clock at 9:24 pm, May 31, 2006 is 6,519,850 with a new baby born somewhere in the world every second (check out [Office of Population Research, Princeton University](#) for latest world population count).

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

Tom. 🌿

CHAPTER NEWS

Wild Ones Launch Project WILD

Eight Hays County Master Naturalists have successfully introduced a pilot project in their plan to bring environmental education into Wimberley's schools.

Seven Third Grade classes from Bowen Intermediate School, 140 students in all, hiked over

to The Refuge on May 4 and 5 for Project WILD activities. Their teachers, principal, and parents followed to observe the fun.

Jane Little explains that our Master Naturalists organized activities at four stations and divided the students into four groups so they could take turns at each activity. The group names were Cardinals, Chickadees, Wrens, and Doves.

The first activity began with learning about bird flight at the Chimney Swift Tower. The second activity showed children how birds exploit their habitats in different ways for food, water, shelter, and space. Students learned about the essentials of bird identification in their third activity. Fourth, children saw how bird anatomy varies according to what they eat. Finally, the children planted wildflower seeds.

The Master Naturalist team consists of Pat Davis, Karen Haywood, Cecelia Kelley, Dorothy Knight, Jane Little, Sandy Lucus, Jean McMeans, and Cara Wernli. All are also members of the Wimberley Birding Society and have teaching experience.

Cara Wernli adds that the team invites all 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students to NATURE QUEST at The Refuge from 9:00 am to 11:00 am on July 22. NATURE QUEST features activities and fun for all. 🌿

Fourth of July Parade

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

Plans include the chapter banner, a kazoo band, and a tractor-drawn float with a load of handouts to publicize the Master Naturalist program. The Kazoo Marching Band has begun rehearsals, with the assistance of Tyler Carlson, guitar; Cara Wernli, cymbals, and Keith Keilly, trowels. Their repertoire includes ***This Land, America, Old McDonald, Yellow Rose***, and the ***Caisson Song***. For band uniforms, Jamie will commission specially-designed T-shirts with the Master Naturalists logo. 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 contact Susan at secretary@haysmn.org. 🌿

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 will be out looking 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 radio 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 turn on 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 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)

🦋 June 1, 6:30 pm. **Chapter Meeting for General Membership and members of 2006 Class.** Gil Eckrich speaking on "Land Management for Two Endangered Songbirds." Gill will review protection of the Golden-cheeked Warbler and Black-capped Vireo at Fort Hood. Qualifies for ATC.

June 9-10. **Texas Nature Tracker Training Workshops.** Lake Waco Wetlands Research & Education Centre, Waco, TX. More information below.

🦋 June 13, **2006 Class Session 8.** Meet @ **Aquarena Center.** Wetlands – Doyle Mossier; Restoration Nursery - Dawnelle Malone; Glass Bottom Boat Ride; Hillside Nature Walk - Bryan Davis, Ray Franklin, & Tom Watson

June 17. **Backyard Habitat Planning & Certification Workshop.** San Marcos Nature Centre. 10:00 am – 1:00 pm. <http://www.ci.san-marcos.tx.us> under "Parks & Recreation – Nature Centre."

June 21, 10:00 – 11:00 am. Summer Events at Wimberley Village Library. HCMN volunteers with hand-on activities for children. Contact Judy at records@haysmn.org

✿ June 24, 9:00 am to noon. **2006 Class Session 9. Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center Field Trip:** 9-12 - Minnette Marr, Millennium Seed Project; Dr. Steven Windhager, tour research plots

✿ 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 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders.

✿ 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 or phone (830)-825-3442.

Texas Nature Tracker Workshops

Sponsored by the Heart of Texas Master Naturalist Chapter.

Approved Advanced Training Credit
Learn how to identify amphibian and freshwater mussel species. Participate in scientific research
Location: Lake Waco Wetlands Research and Education Center, 1752 Eichelberger Crossing Waco, TX 76633.

Friday, June 9 - Amphibian Watch, 5:00 p.m. - 8:15 p.m. Classroom Training (bring your own supper) 8:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. Field Trip - Bring a FLASHLIGHT

Saturday, June 10 - Mussel Watch, 10:00 a.m. - 2:45 p.m. Classroom Training (bring your own lunch)

3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Field Trip - Bring rubber boots or water shoes

Registration fee is \$10.00 per Workshop
Register for one or both Workshops - Enrollment Limited.

Call (254) 717-7692 or E-mail:

Melissa_mullins@baylor.edu

SBEC Credit Available for Teachers

Please Wear Comfortable Field Attire

Cibolo Nature Center Field Trip

RESCHEDULED FOR JULY 15

The trip to the Cibolo Nature Center trip at Boerne has been rescheduled for July 15th. Cibolo is one of the most enjoyable and active nature centers in our area. The center is surrounded by four ecosystems (riparian forest, tall-grass prairie, marsh, and live oak savannah) which have been restored by volunteers like you and me. The center is a pioneer in the volunteer citizen-scientists concept in which Master Naturalists (and others), in coordination with state and federal agencies, study the effect of land management practices and survey populations of plants, birds, small mammals, insects and reptiles.

Cibolo Nature Center represents a model for what the Jacob's Well Nature Center could become with our input. The tall grass prairie restoration is spectacular, a "must see" for all Master Naturalists.

There will be a presentation by Rufus Stevens, a biologist with Texas Parks and Wildlife, followed by outdoor demonstrations of vegetation survey techniques.

This trip is approved for Advanced Training Credit.

An announcement will be sent out by email early this month with details and requiring an RSVP by mid-June in order to meet the attendance requirements at the center.

Please watch for the announcement and reply promptly because seating is limited.

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

Demonstrate prairie survey techniques

- show vegetation transects, demonstrate survey technique, some grass/plant ID

Tour of prairie management plots

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 🦋

*Wildscape Garden,
San Marcos Nature Center*

HCMN PROJECT #405

May showers brought forth an abundance of Gaillardia, poppies, pink evening primrose, mealy blue sage, ruellia, and lizardtail guara. They have now gone to seed and Sunflowers, passion vines, blue mistflower, and tropical milkweed are taking their place. The passion vines support Gulf Fritillary larvae, and male adult Gulf Fritillaries are constantly searching for emerging females. Zebra Longwings returned on May 25 for the first time since 2004.

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
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

The monarch season is off to a hot start. The accumulated monarch degree days for March and April are shown for Austin and Little Rock in Table 2. Note that the accumulated degree days are substantially above the average for the last seven years for both locations. For directions on the calculation of degree days for monarchs, please see the [Teaching with Monarchs](#) section of the January 2005 Update. The high number of degree

days translates into faster development for most forms of life, including monarch caterpillars. It is for this reason that I expect the first generation butterflies from Texas and other southern areas to be moving north a bit earlier this year.

This has been an early spring for most plants and insects in eastern Kansas with many "first sightings" being 8-10 days earlier than normal. I sighted the first flowering *Asclepias viridis* (green antelope horn milkweed) in bloom on the 3 May and the first yellow sweet clover flowers on the 4th. Both are 4-5 days earlier than normal.

Table 2. Accumulated monarch degree days from 1 March through 30 April for Austin, Texas and Little Rock, Arkansas. These data were kindly provided by Janis Lentz.

	Degree Days	
Year	Austin, TX	Little Rock, AR
2006	816.4	578.7
2005	662.5	442.3
2004	716.4	586.8
2003	675.3	499.1
2002	799.4	488.4
2001	628.9	422.8
2000	609.9	423.0
MEAN	707.7	491.6

-- By Chip Taylor. The complete web version of this update is available at: <http://www.MonarchWatch.org/update/2006/0430.html>.

Local News

Wimberley Butterfly Watch

Butterflies observed during May include Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Giant Swallowtail, Pipevine Swallowtail, Black Swallowtail, Southern Dogface, Cloudless Sulphur, Orange Sulphur, Little Sulphur, Sleepy Orange, Dainty Sulphur, Oak Hairstreak, Gray Hairstreak, Juniper Hairstreak, Great Purple Hairstreak, Reakirt's Blue, Eastern Tailed Blue, Buckeye, Gulf Fritillary, Variegated Fritillary, Pearl Crescent, Texan Crescent, Red Admiral, Painted Lady, American Lady, Hackberry Emperor, Bordered Patch, Queen, Little Wood Satyr, Carolina Satyr,

Cloudywing Skipper, Juvenal's Duskywing, Checkered Skipper, Funereal Skipper, Dun Skipper, Sachem, and other little brown skippers.

Oak Hairstreaks appeared in numbers with the flowering of Antelope Horns and Ligustrum, temporarily replacing Junipers and Grays as the most common Hairstreaks. Little Wood Satyrs are more common in shaded riparian woodlands than in previous years.

Kidneywood bushes began flowering early in May. They don't bloom all at once, and some bushes bloom repeatedly through the summer. They attract wasps and bees above all, but hairstreaks and others do compete for nectar on the spikes of tiny white flowers. Flame sumacs began flowering in mid-May, but they attract fewer butterflies. Mealy blue sage are still in flower but declining and they attract fewer butterflies.

Reakirt's Blues were abundant early in May but became scarce by the end of the month.

Our last Monarch sighting was on May 16. Whites have been scarce, and we have seen no Hackberry butterflies.

If you saw something we missed, please email your editor@hcmn.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/

Partners

Austin Nature Day --

<http://www.austinnatureday.org/>

LBJ Wildflower Center -- www.wildflower.org

San Marcos Nature Centre -- http://www.ci.san-marcos.tx.us/departments/parks/Nature_Center.html?menu=DP13