

Hays County Master Naturalists NEWSLETTER



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

October, 2006

OCTOBER EVENTS

Land Stewardship Workshop

OCTOBER 28, 8:30 AM- 3:00 PM. TSU
FREEMAN RANCH, SAN MARCOS

Sponsored by Hays County Master Naturalists and Texas Cooperative Extension of Hays, Comal, and Guadalupe Counties, featuring speakers from TCE.

Schedule:

8:30 am: Registration
9:00 am: Welcome -- Freeman Ranch
9:30 am: Rainfall Simulator & Water Infiltration – Bryan Davis
10:00 am: Land Stewardship: A Historical Perspective – Dr. Barron Rector, Extension Range Specialist
11:00 am: Brush Sculpting – Dr. Bob Lyons
11:45 am: Lunch
12:45 pm: Concurrent Sessions 30 min.
 Brush Management Tools
 Livestock Forage Needs
 Wildlife Habitat Requirements
 Watershed Management on Rangelands
3:00 pm: Adjourn

If you have samples of range plants to identify, please bring them the day of the meeting.

Cost: \$15 per person including handouts and lunch. Registration fee by Oct 24 is \$15 or \$20 on October 28 to the Hays County Extension Office at 1253 Civic Center Loop in San Marcos, TX 78666.

Directions to Freeman Ranch: From San Marcos, take Ranch Road 12 west toward Wimberley. Turn north on CR 213 three miles west of San Marcos. Registration at the Freeman Ranch House.

This event qualifies for Advanced Training Credit.

Individuals with disabilities who plan to attend and who may need auxiliary aids, services or accommodations must contact Hays County Extension office at 512-393-2120 five days before

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 |
| TP&WD Rep | Lee Ann Linam |

the event so appropriate arrangements can be made.

THE PRESIDENTIAL VIEW

Greetings, fellow Master Naturalists and Trainees,

The year is rapidly winding down and the tenure of the current Board, including that of yours truly, is coming to a close. That means that elections for a new Board are coming up in November at our last Chapter meeting for the year.

The new bylaws require the nominations committee to produce a slate of candidates for you to vote on. The election is to be held by the membership in attendance at our final Chapter meeting. Although the committee will present a slate for your approval, any member may nominate additional candidates at our meeting. Once all nominations are in, we will have a vote for the new Board. I am excited that there will be a fresh set of officers with new and wonderful ideas to bring to the members. I strongly favor such turnover in all aspects of any organization as it brings new vitality and resources to the fore. I will be moving on to other endeavors as I am advancing in age, have had some health problems, and promised my dear wife that I would serve no longer than one year. In retrospect, I think that this Board and our membership have made great strides this year and, with a new Board, the best is yet to come.

In order to recognize your accomplishments and as a last act, I suggested to the Board that we have a Gala Chapter meeting for our final meeting in which we celebrate your many contributions to the mission of the MN program. The Board agreed to throw a party as the curtain comes down for this year. We have reserved the Wimberley Community Center for November 30th and will hold our gala event there. We are only in the beginning of the planning stages for this celebration and will likely need your help to carry it through. I solicit your ideas for this event. Just send me an email to let me know your thoughts. We send out further announcements on this subject in the near future.

The Board agreed that we should honor those who have made outstanding contributions to the Chapter in its endeavors to carry out the mission of the Texas Master Naturalist Program. We will be recognize all members who have made significant contributions. We have an awards committee presently working toward this goal.

On October 28th, the Chapter will join with Bryan Davis and the TCE Office to host a Landowner's Stewardship workshop at Freeman Ranch. You have already received Susan's announcement of this event. It will be a fund-raiser for the Chapter because our coffers are currently dependent entirely on your dues and with a little more money the Board could do much more for you. I will be seeking volunteers to help out in various ways and will contact you in the very near future. Also, October 20th through 22nd the Texas Master Naturalist Annual Statewide Meeting and Advanced Training will be held on the MO Ranch near Hunt, Texas. You will not want to miss this meeting, especially if you have never been. This will be your chance not only to complete your advanced training for the year but also to meet fellow MNs from all over the state. If you have any questions about the master Naturalist program, it will become readily apparent when you see what other state chapters in the state are doing. I had my epiphany there last year. And do not forget the TPWD EXPO on October 7 and 8 at TPWD headquarters in SE Austin. October will be a busy month as the last hurrah for this year nears.

November then beckons the final scenes for 2006 as we move into celebration mode. First we will celebrate the graduation of the current trainees as we welcome them as full-fledged members of our Chapter. We applaud their determination to complete their studies and to join with us as willing volunteers in conserving the natural resources of our only sustainable space ship. They will go forth with us to spread our message of conservation in Hays

County and beyond. The graduation ceremony will be on November 10th and the entire membership will be invited to join the celebration this year. Members of the training committee and the Board are planning the event as you read this paragraph. Please reserve that date in your schedule and mark your calendars. Following, our election and festival follows on November 30th, as described at the beginning of this column,. We will need volunteers to help us set up and break down so look for our call for volunteers before then. Please plan on attending this event to help us honor our fellow MNs and enjoy a good meal along with antics.

In closing, let me note as I have done so many times before, the population status of our precious orb. At 10 pm on Friday, September 29, 2006, the world population was 6,664,525,620. That represents a gain of 12,124,250 since my column last month, a period of only 30 days, as the growth curve continues to arc upward toward some unknown asymptote. The population of the Earth is expected to be 9 billion in 2050, a whopping increase of 50% from the year 2000. Some believe we will approach 10 billion before growth stops. Population demographers predict that 60% of the world's population will reside in Asia and 20% in Africa. Developed nations will have twice as many elderly people as youth and the population of many will be in decline. Now think back to training class remembering carrying capacity of ecosystems, nature's population controls, and the need for sustainable resources. Do those principles apply to *Homo sapiens*? Is our MN program pertinent?

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

Tom. ✨

CHAPTER NEWS

Election of HCMN Officers

The Chapter will conduct the election and installation of officers for 2007 on November 30 during our gala meeting at the Wimberley Community Center.

As you may know, Tom Watson will retire as President in November. The Nominating Committee, which Tom heads, is looking for a candidate to fill that position. The remaining positions are already

filled on the slate that the committee will present at our November 30 Chapter meeting. If you would like to serve or if you know someone who would like to serve, please contact Tom at twatson11@austin.rr.com.

The committee must complete its slate by the end of October, in time for publication in the November Newsletter.

The positions to be filled by election are President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. In addition to the slate submitted by the Nominating Committee, nominations will be taken from the floor at the November meeting. The vote for the new officers will proceed as soon as all nominations are received, in accordance with our bylaws.

It is an honor to serve the membership as President and it is an exciting and challenging endeavor. The President has the privilege of meeting many, many interesting people and making multitudes of new friends with diverse interests and talents. The President learns and grows in too many ways to recount by interacting with the membership and Board to further the mission of the MN program. There are many fun activities available for the President to enjoy with others of like mindset.

Your Board of Directors plans a festive evening at the new Wimberley Community Center for the election and installation. It will include a catered dinner, a PowerPoint slide show, and an awards ceremony.

Please save this date and watch the November Newsletter for full details. 🦋

Winters Mill Parkway Re-vegetation Update

I know many members are anxious to have some idea of when we can begin the replanting of the Wimberley by-pass, now officially dubbed the Winters Mill Parkway. I am just as concerned and would be delighted to have some firm plans to give you. I have discussed this several times over the past weeks with Bryan Davis and Precinct 3 Commissioner Will Conley. Will assures me that road construction will be done by the end of September at the latest, but this covers work only on the main road. Hays County has received a grant from the Capitol Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG) for the hike-and-bike trail that will run alongside the road, in the wide right-of-way. It's my understanding this will be on the inside of the curve of the by-pass, on the southern side. But construction on this will not begin until much later

this year. I've asked Will for maps or aerial photos showing the full by-pass, so that we can begin marking areas for priority attention.

But the over-riding issue to consider is the drought. We would be wasting our time, labor, and all the seeds and plants we have if we start any work without some reasonable assurance that something approaching normal rainfall will be available. Without any chance of sustained rainfall, the vast majority of seeds we put in now would probably be sparked into germination by the first 2-3 inches of rain we get -- and then if nothing happens for weeks after that they will shrivel up and die. So before I feel comfortable calling out volunteers to start this much-anticipated project, I want some assurance that at least some of the seed we put out will make it.

I know many chapter members have put in many hours of time collecting seed and caring for it over the past year, and I do appreciate all these efforts. We just need patience. If the equatorial Pacific is in fact warming and the chances for a wetter late autumn and winter are borne out, we will begin work sometime when the temperatures are also more to our liking. Hang in there, Naturalists - this is our test, to work with the natural system, not in spite of it.

Thanks, Dell J. Hood 🦋

Reporting Reminder

The Board of Directors will present service pins at our November 30th Chapter meeting in Wimberley. The Board of Directors will also recognize significant service to the Chapter and to the public at that meeting, in addition to conducting elections for next year's board.

To receive your service pins on time. Judy Telford must have your total volunteer hours by **November 13th** in order to process reports and place the order. If you have not yet sent in your hours, please report them now and keep them updated until the deadline. We appreciate your cooperation.

You may email your reports to Judy at records@haysmn.org or send them by US Mail to 2303 E. McCarty, San Marcos, TX 78666. 🦋

CALENDAR

(The dragonfly logo 🦋 identifies official HCMN events)

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

✧ October 7 & 8, **Texas Parks & Wildlife
EXPO.** Austin. More information below.

October 7, **TACSS Annual Fall Seminar,**
"East Meets West in the Alamo City." Marriott
Northwest Hotel, San Antonio, Texas. Hosted by the
San Antonio Cactus & Xerophyte Society. For more
information, please contact Ann Black at 830-336-
4471 or annblack@gvtc.com.

October 18, **Fall Vegetation Surveys** begin at
LBJ Wildflower Centre. See below.

✧ October 20-22, **Texas Master Naturalist
Annual Meeting,** MO Ranch, Hunt, TX. See
below.

October 21, **Third Annual Blessing of the
Animals,** Emily Ann Theatre, Wimberley. 11:00 am.
For more information, please call 512-847-6969
or click <http://www.emilyann.org/events.html>

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

✧ October 28, **Land Stewardship Workshop,**
Freeman Ranch. Sponsored by Hays County Master
Naturalists and Texas Cooperative Extension. See
above.

✧ November 10. **2006 Class Graduation** – Ch 2,
Bryan Davis. Silver Spoon Café, Pioneer Town at 7-A
Ranch, Wimberley. Dinner, 7:00 pm. \$8.00 per
person. November 1 is the deadline to contact Susan
Nenney for reservations. Please save this date and
act now.

✧ November 30, **Chapter Business Meeting** and
Awards, Election and Installation of 2007 Officers.
Wimberley Community Center. Please save this date
for our gala event and watch this space for details.

✧ December 10. **Regional Master Naturalist
Christmas Party** at Cibolo Nature Centre in
Boerne, hosted by Alamo Chapter. Please watch this
space for more details



ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting

OCTOBER 20-22

Register now to attend the Texas Master
Naturalist Annual Meeting at MO Ranch, Hunt, TX
Early/Discounted Registration ends September 24th

All Registration ends October 4th. (Please note: All
registrations after September 24th must be
completed on-line)

Advanced Training topics for the weekend include:

- * Texas Wildfire History and Preparedness
- * Volunteer Work Just Got Easier!
- * Leopold Education Project
- * Rainwater Harvesting
- * Entomology and Its Field Laboratory
- * Invaders of Texas
- * Science & Civics
- * Texas' Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Program
- * Planning and Running Effective Meetings
- * Basic PowerPoint Skills for the Master
Naturalist Communicator
- * Tracking Mammals

Registration Packets will be available at the following
places:

- * TMN State website:
<http://masternaturalist.tamu.edu>
- * From your chapter
- * The State Meeting On Line Registration
website:
<http://tti.tamu.edu/conferences/conferences.stm>

You may register on line (the preferred method), by
mail, or by fax.

All registrations will be entered and completed upon
receipt of method of payment. ✧

Land Stewardship Workshop

OCTOBER 28, FREEMAN RANCH

Please see page 1. ✧

Hill Country Foundation

The Austin Water Utilities/Wildlands
Conservation Division has some upcoming trainings

that qualify for MN Advanced Training. These events on Water Quality Protection Lands (WQPL) are offered by their partner, the Hill Country Foundation (HCF) for the Wildland Conservation Division (WCD).

The Hill Country Foundation is conducting the two-day training workshops to assist the WQPL in their efforts to provide conservation education as well as volunteer activities for the citizens of Austin and the surrounding areas. When volunteers have completed the training, the WCD program will manage and direct the activities of trained volunteers.

Three workshops will be offered this fall -- one interpretive guide training and two trainings for land stewards -- as detailed below. The city is seeking individuals who are experienced and comfortable in a wildland setting, either through participation in Wildland volunteer or other activities. Each of these trainings is a two-day commitment over a single weekend, 7-8 hours on Saturday and 4-5 hours on Sunday afternoon.

Tour Guide Training -- November 4 & 5, 2006
Building upon their previous success, HCF will conduct this training on one of the WQPL properties. Volunteers will be trained to lead an interpretive hiking tour in a wildland setting without facilities. The hike will be classified as challenging due to the length of the route and the sloped terrain.

Land Steward Training -- December 2 & 3, 2006 and again on January 13 & 14, 2007
This training will be conducted on a WQPL tract where classroom and hands-on field training will be provided. Training activities will include plant identification, seed collecting, reseeding, cave clean outs, tree planting, and others. Volunteers will be trained to lead groups of volunteers in performing some of the tasks mentioned on a recurring basis and with minimal supervision.

For more information on trainings and how to apply, please contact Mary Gay Maxwell at 472-5958, or by email at marygaymaxwell@sbcglobal.net.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Texas Parks and Wildlife EXPO

OCTOBER 7 & 8

The 2006 Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's EXPO will take place at Department headquarters in Austin. Volunteer opportunities are available for Texas Master Naturalist members who want to assist.

Our Hays County Master Naturalist chapter will give leadership to the Texas Master Naturalist exhibit and conduct several teaching activities during the two-day event. Other volunteers are needed to assist various Parks and Wildlife Department officials with additional exhibits. We need about 25 volunteers to assist with the teaching exhibits at the Master Naturalist display area.

Hays County members Dixie Camp and Betty Finley will coordinate the event. If you would like to assist, please contact Dixie at dixie_camp@yahoo.com. She will explain the plans and shift assignments to those who volunteer.

Members working at least 8 hours will receive a TPWD EXPO t-shirt.

This is a great activity and a good way to earn volunteer service time, meet other volunteers and spread the message about conservation and stewardship at an event attended by many.

Details about EXPO are available at: <http://tpwd.state.tx.us>. Select the **Experience Texas** link on the home page and you will find a link to EXPO. 🌿

Fall Vegetation Surveys

AT LADY BIRD JOHNSON WILDFLOWER CENTER, STARTING WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 18

Learn the Native Grasses and Wildflowers While Conducting Scientific Research! Hone your plant identification skills while contributing to research on Central Texas ecosystems.

Every spring and fall we train volunteers to collect data from our on-site research area, where plots are burned or mowed at different times of the year to examine the effects on plant communities. All experience levels are welcome -- the plant surveys will be conducted in small teams, with staff members nearby at all times. New participants in the surveys will attend one four-hour training class, and commit to at least two four-hour field sessions. Training is optional for those of you who have volunteered in the past.

Training: You may take the training on any one of four dates. Your training session will last about four hours. In the training we will present a brief overview of the research, and you will learn how to collect the data and receive a crash course on plant identification. Training dates are: Thursday, Sunday, (Oct. 5, 8) at 1 pm; or Friday, Saturday (Oct. 6, 7) at 9 am. Again, you need to attend only one of these sessions. Please e-mail or call to let us know which training session you would like to attend. We will meet in the classroom, which is downstairs in the Visitors Gallery. Dress for light hiking. You may want to bring a water bottle, a hat, sunscreen, and something to take notes with. You can sign up for survey sessions during training so you might also want to bring your calendar or appointment book.

The plant ID portion will focus on field identification of plants frequently encountered in the survey, and will largely take the form of a nature walk. Former volunteers who remember the data collection techniques, but would like a refresher course on plant identification may attend only that part of the orientation. The plant ID portion will be in the last 2 hours of the training session (11:00 am for morning sessions or 3:00 pm for afternoon sessions). If you show up only for the ID portion, you may need to find us on the grounds. We will leave a map with the receptionist or in the volunteer break room, but the best method may be to have a staff member call us on the walkie-talkie.

Surveys begin on Wednesday, October 18 and will continue on Wednesdays thru Sundays until we finish, usually about three weeks. On those days you can choose between a morning shift, 9 am to 1 pm; an afternoon shift, 2 pm to 6 pm; or both if you are feeling frisky. Tell the admissions person that you are coming to work on the survey: they will wave you in for free. You may park in the employee parking lot-go to the back of the visitor lot, and enter past the signs that says "No Parking" and "Authorized Parking Only", or you may use the visitor lot. We will usually be meeting in the volunteer room of the Administration Building, behind the Receptionist's desk. If we are not there, ask the receptionist. If you are late, it may be difficult to locate us in the field.

For more information or to sign up for one of the training sessions, contact Jeannine Tinsley at jtinsley@wildflower.org or call (512) 292-4200 x 213.

Blue Hole Project Proposal

Sponsor: Wimberley Parks & Recreation Board
Sponsor phone: 512-847-1231
Contact: Dell Hood, hood@alumni.utexas.net
Activity: Removing non-native plants from Blue Hole Regional Park, Wimberley
Starting date: August 1, 2006
End date: indefinite
Activity type: Habitat restoration

Description:

Blue Hole Regional Park, Wimberley, is owned by the Village of Wimberley. Large areas of the park are planned to remain natural and undeveloped. Non-native plants will be removed wherever possible in order to ensure the best possible diversity of Central Texas native plant species and to improve habitat for native fauna.

Comments:

Our immediate priority is removing an invasive plant, Asian marshweed (*Limnophila sessiliflora*), from Cypress Creek in the area of the riffles immediately downstream from the swimming area of Blue Hole. Minette Marr will give instruction on the procedure for removing the plant so as to prevent its further spread.

The initial project complements the Invader program to remove invasive species. Next year, we may work on trails or plan and plant habitat. After that, the park will need docents.

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

The sunflowers have withered, ruellias are bloomed out, and Gulf Fritillary caterpillars have all but eradicated the passion vines. Blue mistflowers continue to attract Queens, and lantana cultivars were attracting several Giant Swallowtails early in August. A luxurious stand of Frogfruit continues to entice checkered skippers, a few Pearl and Texan Crescents, and Ceraunus Blues.

As usual, there's no stopping invasive plants and bermudagrass. Elm and pecan seedlings pop up regularly. 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:

Marion Couvillion, marion@hcmn.org
512-858-1609

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

The first HCMN work Day at Jacob's Well was July 15.

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

Status of the Population

It has been an up and down summer. If you have been following the Updates, you may recall that the number of first generation monarchs that moved north from Texas, Oklahoma and southern Kansas, as well as other areas in the south eastern states, in late April through early June was nothing short of spectacular. From my perspective as one who receives reports from many correspondents, in addition to those sent to Dplex-L and Journey North, the size of the first generation was certainly the highest in the 14 years I've been following the spring migration. The surge of monarchs northward resulted in some unusual sightings such as substantial numbers of spring monarchs being washed up on the shores of Lake Michigan after a storm. Such events are uncommon but, prior to this report, I had only heard of fall monarchs being washed ashore.

The number of monarchs moving north in May and June produced reports of monarchs from eight Canadian provinces including some sightings in which monarchs appeared to be well beyond the known distribution of milkweeds. In fact, Don Davis received one report of a monarch being sighted in Newfoundland!

The large first generation encountered favorable conditions over much of the northern breeding range resulting in many claims that the observers had never seen so many larvae in late June and early July. Larvae seemed to be everywhere with many people finding 2-3 larvae "on every plant". Large numbers of these larvae reached the adult stage in mid to late July just in time to mate and lay the eggs that would develop into the butterflies of the migratory generation in mid to late August. However, the ability of the mostly second generation monarchs to give rise to a large migratory generation evidently varied greatly across the country. The critical egg laying period to produce adults of the last generation varies with latitude but usually encompasses the last two weeks of July and the first week of August. Broadly speaking, the conditions for reproduction were favorable in the East and much less favorable in the upper Midwest, one of the traditional monarch breeding hotspots. The drought monitor map for 1 August provides a possible explanation. July was extremely dry in the eastern Dakotas, Minnesota, and into central Wisconsin. In addition, the temperatures were much higher than normal for much of this area in July and early August. These conditions apparently decreased the "realized fecundity" of the last generation with the result that one tagger declared that the population moving through southern Minnesota was the lowest in the last 11 years. In contrast to most years, there have been no reports of large clusters of monarchs in the Dakotas, northern and western Minnesota, Wisconsin or Iowa, the exception being one sighting of a large cluster in southern Minnesota.

So, why might a drought cause the population in the upper Midwest to decline? There are several possibilities but here is a plausible scenario: 1. a drought reduces the availability of water and nectar needed by the adults for reproduction causing some females to die without laying the normal number of eggs, 2. higher temperatures result in higher metabolic rates, increasing the demand for carbohydrates (sugars) (perhaps even diverting some of the carbohydrates converted from fats that would normally be used in egg production to meet metabolic needs), and reduced longevity. 3. drought results in a rapid decline in the quality of the milkweeds and since females prefer to lay eggs on milkweeds with new growth, the search time (and distance) between egg-laying events increases resulting in fewer eggs laid per female. 4. survival of young larvae on senescing milkweeds might well be lower than on plants with newer leaves.

Conditions were consistently better throughout the eastern breeding area, i.e. east of central Wisconsin, and the number of migrating monarchs appears to be high in many regions yet not as high as I was expecting based on the reports of the second generation. Was the last generation somehow downsized in the East or were my expectations too high? I'm not sure. The information from the East is too fragmentary and there are no relative measures yet with which to compare this year's migration with those of previous seasons.

Fragmentary information or not, it's time for me to stick my neck out and predict the size of the overwintering population – with the stipulation that I have the opportunity to revise my predictions as more information becomes available over the next 8 weeks. Before I give my prediction I should mention that another factor under consideration is the drought in Texas and northern Mexico. Texas has been experiencing what some have characterized as a 50-year drought – meaning the kind of drought that only occurs once in 50 years. The conditions in northern Mexico are similar to those in Texas. At this writing (10 September) it would appear that the migratory population will encounter drought conditions for more than 1000 miles as it moves through Texas and northern Mexico. The lack of water and nectar on this route could take a significant toll on the monarchs.

My preliminary estimate of the overwintering population in Mexico is 5.5 hectares. If there are rains in Oklahoma, Texas, and northern Mexico over the next 6 weeks, I'll increase the estimate by at least 1 hectare and if there are indications of large numbers of monarchs moving through Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, in the next two weeks, I may go even higher. In July I had high expectations and was thinking of an overwintering population of 12 hectares or better but I have been down sizing my estimate ever since visiting Minnesota in the fourth week of August. The high numbers of monarchs seen in June and July for the western part of the northern breeding range has not resulted in the expected high number of migrants, perhaps due to the drought, and this region is a major contributor to the overwintering population. The number of migrants reported thus far from the eastern portion of the breeding range is also lower than expected but it's still early in the season. I'll have a revised estimate in the September Update.

-- by Chip Taylor,
<http://www.MonarchWatch.org/update/2006/0831.html#1>

Mike Quinn of Texas Monarch Watch has received reports of migrating Monarchs in small numbers. Migrants are expected to pass through Texas in large numbers during October.

Local News

Aquifer District Declares Critical Stage Drought for the First Time

At its September 14th Board meeting, the Board of Directors of the Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District voted unanimously to declare a Critical Stage Drought for the Barton Springs segment of the Edwards Aquifer. This declaration is the first of its kind for the aquifer district, which has been in existence since 1987. It requires a 30% mandatory reduction in the authorized monthly use from all its permittees and affects some 50,000 groundwater users, mostly in southern Travis and northern Hays County. The declaration came after the ten-day average discharge at Barton Springs fell below its critical level of 20 cubic feet per second (cfs) and the water level in the Lovelady Drought Indicator Well fell below its critical level of 192.1 feet. Either of those conditions would have been sufficient for the Board to consider a Critical Stage declaration.

On February 6, 2006, the District's Board of Directors declared an Alarm Stage Drought (formerly referred to as Alarm Status or Stage II Drought), which required permittees to implement steps in their User Drought Contingency Plans in order to achieve a mandatory 20% reduction in monthly usage from their authorized levels. While many exempt well owners, permittees, and their customers have made concerted attempts to achieve these reductions, water levels in the aquifer have continued to decline.

In 2005, Austin's Camp Mabry received only 22.3 inches of rain, an 11-inch deficit from average, and the contributing watersheds of the aquifer received even less. Despite the normal rainfall totals at Camp Mabry for 2006, again very little rainfall has occurred in the watersheds that contribute recharge to the aquifer. In addition, the summer of 2006 has also turned out to be one of the hottest on record, increasing the demand for groundwater. This increased demand has exacerbated the drought and has also contributed to declining groundwater levels and springflow. Meteorological forecasts by the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center

indicate that dry conditions may persist through November 2006.

Existing groundwater users in the District will now have to cut back their monthly water use another 10% and heed more stringent restrictions. Their water suppliers (and/or the District) will inform end-users as to what obligations they must follow under Critical Stage Drought. Generally, among other restrictions, groundwater users will no longer be able to water their lawns with unattended sprinklers, wash cars, or even top off swimming pools with groundwater. However, as a near-term benefit for domestic users, the Board of Directors unilaterally amended all permits so that **groundwater users may irrigate small lawn areas, shrubbery, trees and foundations, but only by using hand-held hoses with automatic shutoffs.** If the District area doesn't receive substantial rainfall, groundwater use might continue to exceed recharge and at some point this interim amendment may have to be repealed.

The District's staff is committed to ensuring that such sacrifices are as equitable as possible and will be taking steps during drought to ensure that:

- New water volumes will not be authorized by permit during this drought;
- The restrictions included in the User Drought Contingency Plans that are part of every groundwater use permit will be aggressively enforced;
- Rules that prohibit use by end users who are not conserving water but are instead using it in a wasteful fashion will be enforced; and
- Coordination and collaboration with the homebuilder community will strive to implement steps to reduce substantial water use during new house construction and marketing, regardless of their suppliers' water permit status.

In addition, the District will be proposing some important new changes to its Rules that will improve future drought management, water conservation, and enforcement during declared droughts. Town Hall Meetings are slated to be held in early October and will focus on these prospective changes. Please visit www.bseacd.org for more information on these meetings.

The District asks all of its constituents to continue their water conservation measures and be even better stewards of an increasingly scarce resource. A list of actions to save water in and around the home or office and the hydrographs for

various monitor wells are available on the District's website at www.bseacd.org. With continued lack of significant rainfall and high rates of pumping, water levels could drop to the extent that some wells could go dry and flow from Barton Springs could eventually decrease to the point where ecological, recreational, and aesthetic uses of Barton Springs would be harmed. The aquifer can no longer afford anything other than minimal use, and that may be the situation for many, many more months.

From Jennifer Galland, BSCEAD
[\[Jennifer@bseacd.org\]](mailto:Jennifer@bseacd.org), September 15, 2006

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.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Garrett

Wimberley Butterfly Watch

Rain on September 5 ended the outbreak of American Snouts (*Libytheana carinenta*). Their numbers dwindled rapidly after the rain and the passage of a cool front. Very few remained at the end of the month.

Large Orange Sulphurs remain relatively numerous wherever there are flame acanthus and golden lantanas, though the white-phase females have gone. The numbers of Giant, Eastern Tiger, and Black Swallowtails have fallen off, leaving Pipevines as the most numerous Swallowtails. Common Mestras remain relatively more common and widespread than in previous years, though still not numerous. Painted Ladies, Red Admirals, Variegated Fritillaries, and Southern Dogfaces reappeared during the month.

We observed one Ornythion Swallowtail (*Papilio ornythion*), a newcomer to our checklist, on September 28.

Butterflies observed in and around Wimberley during September include Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Giant Swallowtail, Pipevine Swallowtail, Black Swallowtail, Cloudless Sulphur, Orange Sulphur, Large Orange Sulphur, Little Sulphur, Sleepy Orange, Dainty Sulphur, Lyside Sulphur, Gray Hairstreak, Juniper Hairstreak, Scrub Mallow Hairstreak, Great Purple Hairstreak, Ceraunus Blue, Reakirt's Blue, Buckeye, Painted Lady, Red Admiral, Gulf Fritillary, Variegated Fritillary, Tawny Emperor, American Snout, Monarch, Queen, Common Mestra, Carolina Satyr, Red Satyr, White-striped Longtail, Cloudywing Skipper, Funereal Skipper, Juvenal's Duskywing, Horace's Duskywing, Checkered Skipper, Fiery Skipper, Dun Skipper, Sachem, Eufala Skipper, Ocola Skipper, and other little brown skippers.

Monarchs pass through regularly in small numbers. They pause to feed and roost in suitable habitat, which is principally riparian bottomlands where frostweed and boneset are in flower.

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

National Public Lands Day Photo Contest

The National Environmental Education & Training Foundation announces the Sixth Annual National Public Lands Day Photo Contest, open to all National Public Lands Day (NPLD) volunteers. The contest will allow you to celebrate the natural beauty of our country's public lands and show us why you have lent a hand for our public lands!

The winning photos will be published in the future NPLD newsletters, posted on www.publiclandsday.org, used in press releases and potentially featured in other national publications. In addition, the photos will have the opportunity to be incorporated into next year's NPLD publicity poster, brochure and certificates. An external review committee will judge the photographs. Prizes will be determined.

General Photo Contest Details

Please refer to the following guidelines to submit photos to the contest:

All photographs must be taken at a work site on National Public Lands Day 2006.

Prizes will be awarded for the best photos of

Volunteers in Action. Photos should reflect, in a visually interesting and creative way, volunteers working on a specific task at the project site.

Prizes will be given in the following age groups: A.) 17 years and under B.) 18 years and older. To be considered, we ask that you indicate your age group by letter (A or B) with your submission. The contest is open to amateur photographers only. Each participant may enter up to three photographs.

Photographs must be 4 inches by 6 inches and may be either color or black and white. (NEETF requests that all contest participants retain their photo negatives, as winners may be asked to send their negatives to NEETF for reproduction.)

Submitted photos will not be returned.

Enclose a 3 by 5- inch card containing the following information for each submission: photographer's name, address, phone number, and age group (see #3); name and location of the NPLD site; and a short description of the work being performed.

If you submit digital photographs, they must be high resolution. 300 dpi or higher and 4x6.

All entries must be accompanied by a photo release form.

All entries must be postmarked by November 1, 2006, and sent to:

The National Environmental Education & Training Foundation Attn: NPLD Photo Contest 1707 H Street, NW, Suite 900 Washington, DC 20006

Don't forget to Download a Photo Release Form
Contact Information

email: claudia@neetf.org

phone: 202-261-6478

web: <http://www.publiclandsday.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 – txforestservation.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.sanmarcos.tx.us/departments/parks/Nature_Center.html?menu=DP13