

Hays County Master Naturalists NEWSLETTER



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

August, 2008

AUGUST EVENTS

No August Executive Board Meeting

The next meeting of the HCMN Executive Board will be in September. Please watch for an announcement. 🦋

August 28 Membership Meeting *Mike Quinn: A Pollination Primer*

6:30 PM, THURSDAY, AUGUST 28. SAN MARCOS NATURE CENTER, 480 RIVERSIDE DRIVE, SAN MARCOS

Mike Quinn grew up chasing snakes around New Orleans and after chasing birds across Texas for a number of years, he started chasing butterflies and other insects in 1989.

Mike has a bachelor's and a master's degree in Wildlife and in Entomology, both from Texas A&M University. He is Texas Parks & Wildlife's state-wide Invertebrate Biologist where his duties are divided between conservation and outreach. A large component of his conservation-oriented duties involves the karst invertebrates (a.k.a. "cave bugs") that occur along the Balcones Fault Zone.

Mike coordinates the TPW's Texas Monarch Watch program and co-authored "Milkweed, Monarchs and More: A Field Guide to the Invertebrate Community in the Milkweed Patch".

He also maintains a personal Texas Entomology website that gets around 2000 page views per day and is co-owner of the TX-Butterfly and TX-Ento listserves hosted by the University of Houston.

Mike and his wife Gloria live on two and a half acres south of Austin. You can find photos of the bugs he found in his South Austin backyard during July at his BIMBY site, <http://texasento.net/backyard.htm>. There's close to 100 species now, and the total will be many hundreds by August. Mike says feel free to use any of these photos for non-profit purposes.

HAYS COUNTY MASTER NATURALISTS *Board of Directors*

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The San Marcos Nature Center fronts on IH-35 and is next door to the San Marcos Visitor Center on the north bank of the San Marcos River. From IH-35, take the Visitor Center exit. 🦋

THE PRESIDENTIAL VIEW

What do you say when temperatures typically range over 100 degrees for days on end? Go outside and enjoy nature--but take along the sun screen? Please continue to do your volunteer work? Well, if volunteer hours drop this month, I certainly can understand why. But even so, I do hope that you are thinking about our chapter and how you can continue to contribute to its cause.

The Board is now actively looking for individuals who would like to participate on the 2009 Board to carry us into another year. At the last Board meeting, Mimi Boelter was nominated and approved as Chairperson for the 2009 Training Committee. She will soon begin

planning for a new training class and will need everyone's help. If you would like to serve on the new training committee, please submit your name to our secretary (who is recovering nicely from her illness) Susan Nenney.

The 2009 Board will see many new faces, with Winifred (Treasurer), Susan (Secretary), Richard (Newsletter editor), Jean McMeans (2008 Training Committee Chair), and myself leaving (although I will still function as Past President). As with nature, the chapter and its members are continually changing. Change brings about new opportunities and we all know that it is how we approach change that counts. So as you are cooling your heels in the shade and sipping ice tea (or your favorite beverage), please consider your role in the chapter and if you would like to take on more responsibility! The pay "ain't" great but the people are fantastic, and our natural surroundings need you.

Stay safe.
Naturally speaking,
Dale



Members in the News

HCMN Secretary on Leave

Susan Nenney is taking personal time off from her duties as MN Secretary to care for her elderly parents. Please send any MN correspondence to President Dale Shively at pres@haysmn.org, who will distribute the information. ✨

Chapter News

July 31 Membership Meeting

Texas Wildscapes

After 20 years in big non-Texan cities, I've just escaped back to Texas. But this time, I wanted it to be whole other Texas from the North Texas one where I grew up—a whole other Texas with a whole other type of nature surrounding me and a whole other attitude

about living ecologically and responsibly within it. I stumbled upon Wimberley and Hays County and found both. Then I found a new church up Ranch Road 12 with a nature-imbued limestone sanctuary, a wildlife management program that's a Texas Master Naturalist volunteer project, and members like Ben Adair, Master Naturalist. Next thing I know he's invited me to a Master Naturalists chapter meeting to be held at the church. And that's how I found myself putting a checkmark under "Guest" on the sign-up sheet, nibbling on goodies, and listening to Texas Parks and Wildlife Urban Wildlife biologist Kelly Conrad Bender, author of [Texas Wildscapes: Gardening for Wildlife](#).

"Texas Wildscapes," she explained, is a program to help us nurture and attract wildlife in the most natural way. Offering the things wildlife need such as shelter, food and water is the key, she informed us, as is the use of native Texas plants. Just by making better choices in what we plant, we'll see a jump in the variety of birds, butterflies, frogs, and lizards around our homes. She showed us what many of those native choices looked like and which were best for what species.

Good chapter member questions kept the give-and-take nicely practical as well. How to keep common sparrows from eating all your birdfeeder seed? Don't use millet; stick with black sunflower seeds. How to keep hummingbirds healthy? Be committed to changing your hummingbird feeder solution every two days to keep from possibly exposing the hummers to a fungus that might ironically make them starve to death; 1 part sugar/4parts water/boiled can be stored in the refrigerator for a week for use. But better yet, plant flowers that would attract them naturally, such as Lantana and Turk's Cap. We then had a tour of the church's landscaping, irrigated by rainwater collection. The church's "water feature" she pointed out was a good one for a "Texas Wildscape" using native rocks with little mortar allowing for lots of little crevices for insects and amphibians to use as shelter. It also was "moving"—the fountain's movement creating oxygen and also keeping mosquitoes at bay. After the tour, she gave us a preview of the "Texas Wildscape" CD available free on the Texas Parks and Wildlife's website in August.

All in all, especially with the big red Texas sunset on the RR12 drive home, I loved the nature-focused night in the presence of all you Master Naturalists and hope to have that pleasure again one day. Thanks for the great work you're doing.

Lynda Rutledge Stephenson is a college professor and longtime freelance writer who's written books with such organizations as Habitat for Humanity and the San Diego Zoo and published articles in national publications such as *The Chicago Tribune*. Profuse thanks to our guest reporter Lynda for filling in without notice. 🌿

HaysMN Forum

Current Forum entries feature water monitoring, the falling water level of the Blanco River, and thirsty birds visiting birth baths.

To join the HaysMN Forum, simply go to the Haysmn.org web site and look for the Forum application in the menu.

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

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

Reporting Reminder

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



CALENDAR

(The dragonfly logo 🌿 identifies official HCMN events)

🌿 Tuesday, August 12. 2008 Class Meeting. **Wildlife, Mammals, and Habitat,**

Dr. Barcus. **Texas Weather**, Troy Kimmell. Plum Creek.

🌿 Tuesday, August 12. **Horned Lizard AT**, Rockdale, TX. More info below

🌿 Saturday, August 23. 2008 Class Field Trip, LBJ Wildflower Center, Austin. **Green Roofs, Native Plants, Seeds, and Habitat Restoration**, Steve Windhager and Minette Marr.

🌿 Thursday, August 28, 6:30 pm. Chapter Meeting: **A Pollinator Primer** by Mike Quinn, TP&WD. Arrangements TBA

🌿 Saturday, September 6. 2008 Class Field Trip, Bamberger Ranch. **Impact of Man, Range Management**, Ranch Staff.

🌿 Saturday, September 20. 2008 Class Meeting at Knox Ranch. **Water Quality, Fish, and Amphibians**, Gordon and Lee Ann Linam plus TP&WD staff.

🌿 October 4 and 5, **TP&WD EXPO 2008**, Austin. More info below.

🌿 Tuesday, October 7. 2008 Class Meeting. **Urbanization and Land Fragmentation**, Dr. Jim Cathey. **Volunteers as Teachers: Interpretation**.

🌿 Friday, October 24. 2008 Class Meeting. **2008 Class Graduation**, Bryan Davis. Arrangements to be announced.

November 5 to 7, **Texas Water Quality Conference**, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm (3 Days) Radisson Hill Country Resort & Spa, 9800 Westover Hills Blvd. San Antonio. More info below.



ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Wildlife Management

KERR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA, AUGUST 1, SEPTEMBER 5, AND OCTOBER 4.

Programs will cover an ecosystems approach as it pertains to range and wildlife habitat management.

Topics discussed will include white-tailed deer management, grazing management, prescribed burning, brush control, and endangered species. The program will also include over 20 years of nutrition and genetics research conducted in the Donnie E. Harmel White-tailed Deer Research Facility.

Programs begin at 1 pm and should be over by 5:30 – 6:00 pm.

Each session of this event is approved for 6 AT hours.

For information and registration, please contact Lisa Wolle at 830-238-4483. Directions: http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/hunt/wma/fin_d_a_wma/list/?id=12§ion=directions ✈

Watershed Stewards Workshop

AUGUST 6, LULING CIVIC CENTER, LULING, TEXAS

Presented by the Agri-Life Extension Service (Texas A&M), the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board, and GBRA. This workshop will apply lessons from the Plum Creek Watershed to other watersheds. In reality, the issues they are facing are very similar to ours and communities anywhere in the IH-35 corridor.

You can sign up through this link:

<http://tw.s.tamu.edu>

Hope to see you there!

Cinde Thomas-Jimenez, GBRA, Gorge Preservation Society

Linam Presents Horned Lizard Training

AUGUST 12, ROCKDALE, TEXAS

The City of Rockdale, Texas Parks & Wildlife--Wildlife Diversity Branch, and the El Camino Real Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists will host a Horned Lizard advanced training event.

Starting at 2:00 p.m. in Rockdale's Patterson Civic Center (609 Mill Avenue, Rockdale TX 76567), Lee Ann Linam of Texas Horned Lizard Watch and Hays County Chapter (http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/learning/texas_nature_trackers/horned_lizard/) will present an overview of the species, followed by specifics of a genetics project.

The goal of the project is to train Texas Master Naturalists in genetics sampling techniques in order to sample the genetic diversity. From this data it is hoped to better understand surviving pockets of horned lizards and devise way to ensure their survival.

Following the training, there will be a local field exercise looking at local Horned Lizard habitat.

Note that there is no fee for this advanced training event. However, if you are planning on attending this event, please let me know in order for us to have the necessary materials available. Technical questions should be directed to Lee Ann Linam on 512-656-1222.

Vivian Dixon, Horned Lizard Event Coordinator, El Camino Real Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist Program. 512-455-3190.

<http://grovesite.com/tmn/ecrmn>

Link to map and directions to the Patterson Civic Center:

<http://maps.google.com/maps?q3D609+mill+ave+rockdale+tx+76567&ie3DUTF8&oe3DUTF> ✈

Canyon Lake Gorge Docent Training Fall Class

The Gorge is a remarkable site, and there has been a tremendous interest from the public, with more requests for tours than we can currently accommodate. Ideally, the upcoming docent training will help out with the need for adding additional dates to the tour calendar. In order to qualify as a docent, you should be physically able to walk the Gorge and be willing to lead or assist one tour a month for at least a year.

The training comprises: 1) General knowledge of the Guadalupe River/ Canyon Reservoir and Dam/ and the Flood of 2002; 2) Scientific information (general Geology and Biology) about the Gorge; 3) How to interpret and communicate with varying groups; and 4) First aid and emergency procedure training.

Docents are expected to complete all five training classes.

The training class will be held at the CRRC of Canyon Lake below Canyon Dam, from 12-5pm. Notebook and materials will cost \$10. If you are interested in attending a training, contact Jaynellen Ladd at jladd@gbra.org or 830-964-5424.

FALL SCHEDULE: SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2008

Docent Training Classes-Noon to 5:00 pm. Held at the CRRC Rec. Ctr., below Canyon Dam
Sept. 29 Monday, River/Lake/Flood (Cinde & Jaynellen)

Oct. 6 Monday, Geology (Ward)

Oct. 13 Monday, Biology (Kinscherff)

Oct. 20 Monday, Interpretation (Skinner)

Oct. 27 Monday, First Aid (Korth) ✨



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Emily Ann Theatre Grassland

HCMN PROJECT #602 EAT

Friday, August 1, Marilyn Lumia and Mary Ann Whitt are meeting with Norm Rollings at the EmilyAnn Theatre (EAT) about having the MNs participate in the planning, development, and maintenance of the new grassland area. If anyone is interested in attending Friday or requires more information, please contact Marilyn at gus@vownet.net. People interested in getting involved in the project are welcome to contact Karen Hulene Bartell at hulene1@austin.rr.com. ✨

Fall at Onion Creek

HCMN PROJECT #426 - HABITAT RESTORATION

Hays County Master Naturalists and other volunteers have been working at the Onion Creek properties covering the Barton Creek segment of the Edwards Aquifer (this segment feeds Barton Swimming Pool) for 4 years, restoring the former ranchlands to a more original state. By reducing the Juniper canopy cover and encouraging grass growth, the land managers (Wildlands Conservation Division [WCD] of Austin Water Utilities) are aiming to improve water quality and quantity entering the aquifer below.

The WCD biologists have recently completed a prescribed burn of approximately 300 acres on the Rutherford tract of the Onion Creek properties. After such burns, WCD asks for volunteers to hand sow native grass seeds in burned areas that are inaccessible to the seed drill.

Volunteer opportunities will be coming in September and October with WCD on these properties, which are close to Wimberley, Dripping Springs, and Kyle. Please keep your eyes open for bulletins from Susan and notices in the newsletter to this effect. MNs have enjoyed their learning experiences at Onion Creek while contributing to a worthy project. ✨

Elephant Ear Removal at River Center, San Marcos

HCMN PROJECT 408, HABITAT RESTORATION

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

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

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

info@valleynaturecenter.org
www.valleynaturecenter.org

Wildscape Garden, San Marcos Nature Center

HCMN PROJECT #405

The plot has received enough rain to keep elm and pecan seedlings flourishing, and the ruellias are irrepressible. Goldenrod plants are surging, and lantanas, Turk's Cap and Rose Mallow are doing well but many sage bushes are dying back.

Gulf fritillary caterpillars are feeding happily on the passionflower vines, but the number of adults is noticeably smaller than last year. Queens and an occasional Janais Patch have wandered by.

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



CONTACT: Richard Barnett,
news@haysmn.org.



STATE NEWS



Local News

Edwards Aquifer Enters Alarm Stage Drought

At the June 23 Board meeting, the Board of Directors of the Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District declared an Alarm Stage Drought for the Barton Springs segment of the Edwards Aquifer, effective immediately. The drought area includes much of southern Travis and northern Hays Counties.

The wettest months for Central Texas historically are May and September; however, dry conditions have persisted since September 2007, with most months receiving well below average rainfall totals. The Manchaca Weather Station, maintained by the District, reports a deficit of nearly 9 inches of rain so far for 2008. Onion Creek and the other area creeks that provide a majority of recharge to the aquifer stopped flowing in September 2007.

The District makes drought declarations on the basis of water levels in the Lovelady Indicator Well in South Austin and spring discharge at Barton Springs. Either Barton Springs or the Lovelady Well can trigger a drought declaration by the Board. Barton Springs currently has a 10-day average discharge of 29 cubic feet per second (cfs), below its Alarm Stage Drought threshold of 38 cfs. The Lovelady well has a depth to water of 178.8 ft, very close its trigger level of 181.0 feet.

Declaration of an Alarm Stage Drought requires permittees to implement steps in their User Drought Contingency Plans to achieve a mandatory 20% reduction in usage. While many of the smaller, individual wells are exempt from District permitting, they are equally as vulnerable to falling water levels, and these users are also encouraged to reduce their use by 20% to conserve the resource. Without concerted attempts to achieve these reductions and without significant rains, water levels will drop further and will lead sooner to more restrictive declarations.

The District Board will continue to monitor groundwater use and aquifer conditions as indicated by its drought triggers and other indicators throughout the drought. The previous Alarm Stage Drought was declared in January 2006, and it was followed by a Critical Stage Drought declaration in October 2006, which lasted for more than four months.

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.

Wimberley Butterfly Watch

We saw no Monarchs during the month of July. Other butterflies remain scarce, though we saw fresh broods of Pipevine Swallowtails, Cloudless Sulphurs, Lyside Sulphurs, and Painted Ladies appearing in mid-July. Our observations since then, however, have been severely curtailed.

	1-10	11-20	21-31
Giant Swallowtail			
Pipevine Swallowtail	x	x	
Black Swallowtail	x		
Eastern Tiger S'tail			
Checkered White			
Southern Dogface			
Lyside Sulphur		x	
Cloudless Sulphur		x	x
Little Yellow			
Sleepy Orange			
Dainty Sulphur			
Great Purple H'streak	x		
Dusky Blue Groundstrk		x	
Henry's Elfin			
Juniper Hairstreak			
Oak Hairstreak			
Gray Hairstreak	x	x	
Reakirt's Blue	x		
Eastern Tailed Blue		x	
American Snout			
Gulf Fritillary			
Variiegated Fritillary			
Bordered Patch			
Theona Checkerspot			
Pearl Crescent			
Red Admiral			
American Lady		x	
Painted Lady			
Common Buckeye			
Tropical Leafwing	x		
Red Satyr			
Little Wood Satyr			
Carolina Satyr			
Monarch			
Queen			
Dorantes Longtail			
Northern Cloudywing	x	x	
Juvenal's Duskywing	x	x	
Horace's Duskywing			
Funereal Skipper			

Checkered Skipper
Southern Skipperling
Fiery Skipper
Dun Skipper

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



Links to Chapter Sponsors and Partners

Sponsors:

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

Agencies of Interest:

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

Partners

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