

# Hays County Master Naturalists NEWSLETTER



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

December, 2012

## Chapter Events

### *Chapter Board Meeting* *Chapter Board Meeting*

The next board meeting will be held on Thursday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, at the Camp Jacob Watershed Education Center at the Jacob's Well Natural Area, from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. A map is available [here](#). The meeting is open to members and the public.

If you have any questions or items for the agenda, please contact Art Arizpe, [pres@haysmn.org](mailto:pres@haysmn.org), by December 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### *Chapter Meeting*

**There is no chapter meeting this month.**

If you have announcements you would like to have presented at the chapter meeting or suggestions for topics/speakers, please contact Karen Archer, [vp@haysmn.org](mailto:vp@haysmn.org).

### *Board of Directors*

<b>President</b>	Art Arizpe
<b>Vice President</b>	Karen Archer
<b>Secretary</b>	Tracy Mock
<b>Treasurer</b>	Beth Ramey
<b>Past-President</b>	Larry Calvert
<b>State Representative</b>	Dixie Camp
<b>Training Committee</b>	Lin Weber
<b>Advanced Training Comm.</b>	Kim Ort
<b>Membership Committee</b>	Ben Adair
<b>Web Master</b>	Herb Smith
<b>Newsletter Committee &amp; Editor</b>	Lisa Kay <a href="mailto:news@haysmn.org">news@haysmn.org</a>
<b>Outreach Committee</b>	Leah Laszewski
<b>Calendar Committee</b>	Tom Hausler
<b>Host Committee</b>	Helen Bowie Eva Gomez
<b>Historian</b>	Charles Maxcy
<b>Volunteer Service</b>	Tom Hausler
<b>AgriLife Agent</b>	Richard Parrish
<b>TP&amp;WD Rep</b>	Lee Ann Linam



## A Naturalist's View

*Larry Calvert is our out-going Chapter President.*

I hope you had as much fun at Gala as I did. If you were there, you know I now write to you as your Past President. I want to thank all of you for honoring me with the opportunity to be your President for 2012. I had fun, learned a lot, got to know more of you much better, and I think accomplished a lot. I thought you might be interested in some of our accomplishments so far this year; I am proud of them and hope you will be too.

- The Gala attendance was 25% greater than last year and more than it has ever been.
- Membership continued growing. During 2008 and earlier, membership was in the 50s and 60s; since then membership has grown steadily to 118 for 2012 or by 84%. Well done folks.
- Through the end of October, we turned in 9,032 volunteer hours, which is fantastic. This is already 30% more than was turned in last year. When we total the hours for 2012, it will likely be about 10,500, which will be 2000 hours more than last year. Our

Texas Parks and Wildlife and Agrilife sponsors will use these volunteer hours to support grant funding requests from the Federal government. The 2012 hours will be worth over \$225,000. That is a lot of support for our sponsors. Again, well done folks.

- Through the end of October, we reported 1455 advanced training hours. This is 16% more than last year and shows how committed we are to continually improving our knowledge. Again, well done folks.

The key challenge I see is increasing the number of people recertified each year. We steadily run in the 50s year in and year out. With our increases in membership, volunteer hours, and advanced training, we ought to recertify more people. Often people miss recertification by a few hours of AT or volunteer work. Many of you could recertify before the end of the year by doing a little more of either or both. Also, some of you have actually worked the hours or taken the training and just haven't turned them in. Please do so before the end of the year.

This is a whole lot for all of you to be proud of. Thanks for all you've done and the chance to be there with you. I'm looking forward to an even better 2013 – I hope you are too.

- Larry Calvert



## Featured Project

The "Featured Project" will return in January.

If you lead or work on a project that you would like to see covered, please contact me with your ideas.

If you participate in or know of a project that you think we should feature, please contact me.

- Lisa Kay, [news@haysmn.org](mailto:news@haysmn.org)



## Chapter News

### *2012 Graduation and Gala*

The Class of 2012 Graduation and Gala was held on November 17<sup>th</sup> at the San Marcos Activity Center. The event was well-attended, with 117 members and guests, with a lively social time, a great dinner, the graduation, chapter award presentations and election of officers.

#### **Graduation**

Lin Weber was the excellent Master of Ceremonies for the graduation. Each graduate



*Early arrivers. Photo by Tom Hausler.*

walked on stage to receive his or her certificate, shirt, and pin.

Congratulations to the Class of 2012, the Texas Live Oaks!

***The Class of 2012***



***Kneeling (L to R):*** George Matthews, Peggy Wilfong, Ann Whitus

***Second Row (L to R):*** Suzanne Davis, Judy Elliott, Jonathan Clarkson, Merry Bateman, Susan Cook (hopes to graduate next year), Melody Kuhns, Blaine Nelson, Connie Boltz, Lindy Watkins, Alex Hewes

***Back Row (L to R):*** Alix Johnson, Paul Johnson, Ben Taylor, Jo Ellen Korthals, Mark Hammond, Dick Barham, Carolyn Howe, Bill Howe

***Not pictured (but present):*** Eva Doty

***Graduates unable to attend:*** John Boltz, Riley Booth, Joe Bowman, Katy Jordan, Ellie Loggins-Schuermann, Nate Morgan, Phillip Quast, Ashley Whittenberger

*Photo by Lance Jones.*

The complete list of graduates:

**Dick Barham  
Connie Boltz  
Riley Booth  
Jonathan Clarkson  
Eva Doty  
Mark Hammond  
Carolyn Howe  
Alix Johnson  
Katy Jordan  
Melody Kuhns  
George C. Matthews III**

**Merry Bateman  
John Boltz  
Joe Bowman  
Suzanne Davis  
Judy Elliott  
Alex Hewes  
Bill Howe  
Paul Johnson  
Jo Ellen Korthals  
Ellie Loggins-Schuermann  
Nate Morgan**

**Blaine Nelson  
Ben Taylor  
Ashley Whittenberger  
Peggy Wilfong  
Larry Foster (from last year)**

**Phillip Quast  
Lindy Watkins  
Ann Whitus  
Lisa Kay (from last year)**

## **Recognition of Previous Classes**

1999 – Roadrunners  
2000 – Red Hawks  
2001 – Wild Turkeys  
2002 – Ringtails  
2003 – Wild Things  
2004 – Dragonflies  
2005 – Cougars  
2006 – Falcons  
2007 – Madrones  
2008 – Roadrunners  
2009 – Dire Wolves  
2010 – Prickly Pears  
2011 – Painted Buntings



During the Awards segment, the Chapter recognized many members for their efforts.

## **Recertification**

The first members to be recognized were the HCMNs who completed the recertification requirements by the date of the Gala. Recertification requires completion, during the calendar year, of at least 8 hours Advanced Training and 40 Hours Volunteer Service.

Each HCMN who recertified received the 2012 Bat Certification Pin.

*Important: This list is incomplete because we have until the end of the calendar year to complete the requirements. These are the HCMNs who completed their recertification requirements by the November 5<sup>th</sup>.*

## **2012 Recertification Awards**

**Art Arizpe  
Helen Bowie  
M. Lee Brown  
Leo Butler  
Dixie Camp  
Anne Child  
Randy Garst  
Tom Hausler  
Helane Kennard  
Susan Kimmel-Lines**

**Richard Barnett  
Deborah Bradshaw  
Donna Browning  
Larry Calvert  
Steve Carter  
Garry Child  
Ginger Geist  
Steve Janda  
Lucille Trail Kirkham  
Brad Krimmel**

**Karen Bartell  
Marilyn Brister  
Judy Burdett  
Linda Calvert  
Cindy Luongo Cassidy  
Jim Donohoe  
LaRay Geist  
Lance Jones  
Linda Lands  
Leah Laszewski**

**Jacqueline Mattice  
Judy McBride  
Chris Middleton  
Jean Ohm  
Beth Ramey  
Leigh Sebera  
Bonnie Tull  
Don Wallace  
Cara Wernli**

**Charles Maxcy  
Dick McBride  
Tracy Mock  
Kim Ort  
Gordon Richmond  
Melinda Seib  
Terry Tull  
Tom Watson  
David Womer**

**Vicki Maxcy  
Jean McMeans  
Al Ohm  
Julia Osgood  
Jean Richmond  
Herb Smith  
Jeff Vasgaard  
Lin Weber  
Susan Zimmerman**

### **Cumulative Volunteer Hour Milestones**

The next members to be recognized were the HCMNs who achieved cumulative volunteer hour milestones. Each received a Dragonfly Pin.

- 250 hours, Bronze

**M. Lee Brown  
Helane Kennard  
Kim Ort**

**Cindy Luongo Cassidy  
Karen Langridge  
Jean Richmond**

**Steve Janda  
Jean Ohm**

- 500 hours, Silver

**M. Lee Brown  
Garry Child  
Beth Ramey**

**Donna Browning  
Jacqueline Mattice**

**Anne Child  
Judy McBride**

- 1000 hours, Gold

**Tom Hausler**

**Jean McMeans**

**Herb Smith**

*Important: This list is incomplete because we have until the end of the calendar year to report volunteer hours. These are the HCMNs who achieved their milestones by the November 5<sup>th</sup>.*

### **Tenure Awards**

The next group received the Tenure Award for 5 years of Recertification.

**Art Arizpe  
Brad Krimmel**

**Judy Burdett  
Leah Laszewski**

**Tom Hausler  
Beth Ramey**

Receiving the Tenure Award for 10 years of Recertification:

**LaRay Geist**

**Ginger Geist**

**Steve Janda** received the 2012 Outstanding Training Committee Volunteer Award.

**Tom Hausler** received the 2012 Outstanding Chapter Volunteer Award.

**M. Lee Brown** received the 2012 Special Achievement Award.

**San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance** received the 2012 Honorary Membership Award.

**Leah Laszewski** received the 2012 Significant Contribution to the Chapter Award.

**Larry Calvert** received the 2012 Outgoing Chapter President Award.

The chapter also held the 2013 Chapter Officer elections. Nominated and elected were:

<b>Art Arizpe</b>	President
<b>Karen Archer</b>	Vice-President
<b>Tracy Mock</b>	Secretary
<b>Beth Ramey</b>	Treasurer

Congratulations to our new chapter officers and please give them your full support!

Many thanks to the 2012 Graduation and Gala Committee for putting on such a great event!

### *New Chapter Committee Chairs*

Congratulations and thanks to our new Chapter Committee Chairs!

Membership	<b>Ben Adair</b>
Volunteer Projects	<b>Tom Hausler</b>
Advanced Training	<b>Kim Ort</b>
Training	<b>Lin Weber</b>
Outreach	<b>Leah Laszewski</b>
Host	<b>Eva Gomez &amp; Helen Bowie</b>
Newsletter	<b>Lisa Kay</b>
Historian	<b>Charles Maxcy</b>
Calendar	<b>Tom Hausler</b>
Web Master	<b>Herb Smith</b>

These committees are all very important to the Chapter's operation. Please make sure you thank these folks for serving!

### *2012 Annual Meeting*

The conference this year was held on the last weekend of October at Camp Allen near Navasota in East Texas. Hays County MN had 9 members there to represent us, including 2 presenters.

M. Lee Brown gave a talk developing a positive project partnership with a city. She explained how the Charro Ranch project in Dripping Springs coordinated with the city of Dripping Springs to plan the park and to continue the on-going work there.

Cindy Cassidy, gave a presentation on artificial light called "Save the Night! Mitigating Ecological Consequences of Artificial Light at Night on Flora and Fauna."

A few of the statewide accomplishments from 2011 – the 2012 data is yet to be completed – include over 281,487 service hours valued at \$5.489 million dollars, 7,389 new volunteers trained, 2.7 million public contacts made through volunteer service while spreading a conservation and natural resource message. Over 70% of Texas counties are now served by 44 recognized Master Naturalist Chapters.

A group of about 380 Master Naturalists with a very impressive list of presenters can only add up to a wonderful weekend. The weather was lovely, food was good and we all had a ball.

Next year the conference is coming back to the T Bar M in New Braunfels so carve out the last weekend of October on your 2013 calendar and let's have another great meeting.

- Leah Laszewski

### *Texas Book Festival*

The Texas Book Festival has something for everyone, including Master Naturalists. Former First Lady Laura Bush was the mastermind behind this annual event which now attracts more than 40,000 visitors for a weekend of author readings, book signings, panel discussions and musical entertainment on the grounds of the State Capitol. The first festival took place in November of 1996 and the event is still going strong.

The festival finally got on my to-do list this year and I would urge any Hays County reader to join me in 2013. Besides sessions with the authors, there were tents with vendors and exhibitors manned by a host of knowledgeable personnel. One of my favorites was a booth titled Useful Wild Plants, Inc. with a series of volumes called *The Useful Wild Plants of Texas*, the Southeastern and Southwestern United States, the Southern Plains, and Northern Mexico. Their website is [usefulwildplants.org](http://usefulwildplants.org).

Among the authors I visited with was Ralph Yznaga who published *Living Witness: Historic Trees of Texas* earlier this year. Ralph indicated that he has had such a wonderful reception for this first book that he is already researching and hoping to produce a second work. My companion purchased a copy of *Living Witness* which he gracefully signed. Besides good reading, it will make an enjoyable coffee table book or a great gift for this holiday season.

Ken Burns' collaborator Dayton Duncan was there promoting *The Dust Bowl: An Illustrated History*. His book chronicles the profound drama of the American Dust Bowl of the 1930's with gripping photographs and multiple eyewitness accounts. After our past couple of years of drought, I found this talk both profound and haunting.

The most popular authors are generally scheduled for the larger venues like the Senate and House chambers. One of those scheduled for the House was the trio of Jesse Griffiths, Lily Raff McCaulou and Steven Rinella. They were publicizing *Eat, Shoot, Love: Hunting and Gathering*, an odd title about the unexpected discoveries they made about the natural world and themselves while hunting, growing, and gathering their own food. The moderator was award-winning journalist Marla Camp who publishes *Edible Austin* magazine.

2012 Texas Book Festival Poster Artist Margie Crisp was there to talk about her new book *River of Contrasts: The Texas Colorado*. She chronicles her remarkable 680 mile journey from the source of the Colorado River in Dawson County near Lubbock to its mouth at the Gulf of Mexico at Matagorda Bay. She talked about its natural history, politics, and those who influence the fate of the river and the water it carries.

Former Managing Editor and Associate Publisher at Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine George Bristol was sponsored by The Hill Country Conservancy. He talked about his career serving public lands while marketing his book, *The Politics and Wonder of Parks*. Through his work on the National Park Foundation, he helped to elevate the image of the National Park Service and eventually came home to Texas to use his political expertise to serve as an advocate for public lands.

Hill Country writer Becky Crouch Patterson's memoir *The Ranch That Was Us* was a personal favorite. She connects all of us to whatever patch of earth we hold dear. She recreates the history of the Steiler Hill Ranch with personal stories and original artwork.

I didn't encounter any sessions promoting e-books but assume that most of these titles can be found as online selections. With shorter and colder winter days approaching, it may be time to curl up with a traditional book or tablet and collect some lofty new ideas to try out next spring.

Now, mark your 2013 calendars. See ya at next year's festival!

- Lucille Trail Kirkham

### *Musings from a Naturalist*

I've always been one to think of Autumn as a new beginning or a new year. Perhaps it is because I am a native Texan and have lived in various parts of Texas for my entire life. Fall brings such a much needed respite from the relentless heat of the summer. After the weather cools down and time marches on, I always manage to forget just how hot and miserable it can get here. Then, once again, Summer arrives (many times in April) and I start to feel somewhat hopeless as we endure day after day, month after month, of searing heat and often times with no rain. But at some point, Autumn finally breezes in. It may be in September or it may be in late October, but it does eventually get here. That is Mother Nature for you; the cycle of life.

And doesn't the cycle apply to just about everything? I've been thinking of butterflies lately; the Monarchs have been migrating. I can't go anywhere in my car without feeling like a butterfly killer as so many of them hit my windshield. Mother Nature also brought Hurricane Sandy. The juxtaposition of butterflies and hurricanes is staggering in and of itself - I can't even imagine butterflies trying to migrate through a hurricane! But, if they did, even that would be a cycle; a cycle of dead butterflies perhaps, but still a cycle in the grand scheme of things. And who knows? Maybe some of the butterflies would make it through. Mother Nature is so absolutely amazing that it just might be possible.

I've been watching this particular hurricane closely. The media have been speculating that this would be the "perfect" storm because of the size of the hurricane along with the collision of Sandy with a massive arctic front. I have friends and relatives on the east coast as well and have had them in my thoughts as I've watched so much of the media coverage. Yesterday, I saw a report on the internet as Sandy was hitting Lower Manhattan, saying, "Folks, this is not

good!" Today, I start looking at the media coverage again and see a gorgeous photo of rainbows in the skies of Manhattan. Ah, the cycle continues.

We, as humans, have made such an impact on our environment and Mother Nature. Not only do we affect the cycles, we sometimes eliminate them entirely in our ignorance or in our greed. We waste water, build pipelines through wilderness areas, cut down rain forests, and the list goes on. I believe that our actions have and will continue to affect our worldwide climate. But, on the other hand, just the other day, I heard someone talking about Hurricane Sandy and them attributing it to "the weather going crazy lately because of global warming". Hurricanes have been going on for eons. Catastrophic events such as hurricanes, fires, etc. are all part of nature. Just look at the area we call home! Native Americans used to set fires in our area to clear out what needed to be gone. Fire helped to keep things in balance. I am not a cynical human even though this paragraph may sound that way; rather, just an observer. I'm guilty of trying to "figure things out" and do my own attempts at controlling Mother Nature right here on my own property. We build berms and try to divert the water runoff so that it won't erode our entire property where our house sits. We are also trying to go native and plant only native grasses and wildflowers out and around our property. However, being a Naturalist, I consider our efforts to be of conservation and not of any other personal gain.

I'm so proud to be a part of the Master Naturalist program. We had a speaker at my very first class; she said, "Ladies and Gentlemen, you have found your tribe". I have found that statement to be so true time and time again. No matter what our political affiliations, religions, socio-economic statuses, we all DO belong to the same tribe! I find myself out and about among people sometimes and I will make a remark about something that I see in the natural world. For example, I was over at a friend's house recently and saw that they had just completed their landscaping. I noted all of the begonias they had in their flower beds. I started in (inserting feet in mouth as the conversation continued) about the fact that in our area there are so many beautiful NATIVE plants that they could put in their beds, cited some examples, explained how they were water wise, cited the wildlife they would attract, etc. The remark made back to me was, "Well, we like begonias". Sometimes I feel like Norm from "Cheers"..... "It's a little known fact that...." ..... then I see from peoples' expressions that they have no interest in what I am talking about. Fortunately though, a lot of times folks will actually listen and show some interest. Regardless, I will continue my own individual quest of Outreach in my personal time! Outreach is one of the things that I love about our program. So many people (and not just kids) have an interest in Nature and want to learn more. I love that we are some of the people who can educate them.

When I find myself stressed or worried, I find myself heading outdoors. Even during the horrible drought last year, I would walk my property and just try to be present and pay attention. I always find something interesting going on. It may be at ground level where I find ants moving in rows so efficiently gathering things to take back to their nests. Or, sometimes I hear a commotion going on out in the trees, only to walk over there and find a snake devouring nest eggs up in the higher branches. Sometimes, I just find a place to sit and observe. It has been during times like these that I've witnessed the sly foxes meandering through the tall grasses, or I've seen a group of turkey buzzards riding the thermals so lazily in the sky watching for their next meal. I also enjoy watching our little family of road runners doing their thing. In the spring and early summer, I have only to sit on my front porch to watch the cycle of life of barn swallows since they nest right under the eaves. Over this past

year, I have enjoyed watching the deer that make our area their home. We have witnessed additions to their herd this year; one set of twins and three other babies born to other does. Two different bucks have spent the summer with the herd this year which is something I had not seen before. Now that they are beginning their rutting season, I see that the bucks are no longer part of the herd and are on their own.

Nature is just so awesome! Whether on a grand scale such as a hurricane or the migration of monarchs or on a small scale watching ants do their thing, it all is such a miracle to me! Back in August, I kept a friend's nine year old daughter at my house for two weeks. The big meteor showers were going on during that time. She and I found some cardboard to use as "bedding" and laid down and watched falling stars for a few hours each night! I was surely nine years old again that night as we screamed with delight every time we saw a meteor sailing across the sky! Some of them had tails and looked like fireworks. My little nine year old companion started asking me lots and lots of questions ..... why, how, etc. I knew just about none of the answers but we had fun looking up the answers in an astronomy book that I have. That experience was good, clean fun for me and for her! Life doesn't get much better than that! Laying on the ground, feeling the warm earth beneath our cardboard, feeling the warm breezes, and watching meteors in the black night sky, shrieking with delight, and watching Mother Nature in all of her glory! I won't ever forget that.



*Snake in tree that just ate bird eggs. Notice the egg bulges in its body. Photo by Lisa Kay.*



*A young buck living among the herd. Photo by Lisa Kay.*

I hope you get outside and see what you can find ..... happy Naturing!

- Lisa Kay

## *Whooping Cranes*

Last month we featured a press release from the TPWD inviting Texans to join the Texas Whooper Watch in which sightings of rare and imposing whooping cranes are reported on their flights from Canada to wintering areas on the Texas coast in or near the Aransas Pass Wildlife Refuge. These extraordinary birds are making a remarkable comeback from near extinction over half a century ago and are expected to expand their wintering areas which could possibly include some inland sites in Central Texas.

Optimistic that I might see a whooping crane in Hays County someday, but pessimistic that it will be this year, I took off on a road trip from Wimberley to the Rockport/Fulton area in early November to find these impressive creatures. The drive takes a little over three hours but includes other observations of interest to environmentalists: a close look at South Texas land

where fracking is taking place, windswept motts of coastal live oak trees, the 1,000+ year-old live oak at Goose Island State Park, the tree behind the Fulton Mansion where a windmill lodged itself into a live oak in a 1919 hurricane and still rests peacefully above a 50's vintage house, and if you get lucky, you can visit with a member of the South Texas Master Naturalist program. I found that their work includes removing invasive, non-native plants just as we are interested in, but they have a component which we don't, and that is marine animal and plant specimens.

I chose the Aransas Pass Wildlife Refuge for my adventure because of its national reputation as a premier birding site, home to the largest wintering flock of whooping cranes in North America, conservatorship by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and sheer size at 115,000 acres. Visitors are required to register at the Visitor Center and a small recreational use fee is charged for hiking or driving the 16-mile tour loop. A boat trip can also be arranged from Rockport or Fulton. The best viewing time for whooping cranes, as well as giant blue herons, egrets, pelicans, ducks and geese, is early in the morning or late in the afternoon. If you forget your binoculars, the friendly staff will lend a pair in exchange for the keeping of your driver's license. The trails are relatively short, so a combination of driving and hiking worked well for me. Rail Trail where I saw a roving wild turkey and then an alligator taking a mud bath in an adjacent pond was about .3 of a mile while Heron Flats Trail with two observation platforms equipped with telescopes measured about 1.4 miles. Bug repellent was a must since voracious swarms of mosquitoes seem to come out of nowhere. I was also alerted to ticks and poison ivy. The 40-foot Observation Tower which is equipped with telescopes was my personal favorite site for looking out on the salt marshes and trying to ID the variety of birds. Mild winters, bay waters, and copious food provide the right combination for these water-loving birds. Hummingbirds and songbirds also use these desirable resources when they stop over on their annual treks north to south and back again.

One bit of advice: before you go, look at some pictures and read descriptions of whooping cranes. At 5 feet tall with a 7 foot wingspan, you wouldn't think they would be hard to identify. Here's the problem: you will be standing a long way off and even using binoculars, the appearance can be misleading. The first day out, I snapped a photo of a whooping crane, only to be told by a kindly visitor center staff member that I had photographed an egret, a beautiful white bird with muted grey on the neck and a mustard yellow beak. Off I went the next day with a more discerning eye. There were white swans with their long, extended necks straight forward in flight, but short legs; there were sandhill cranes with slightly grayish feathers and long necks; then there were snow geese with white feathers and black wingtips with a 3-4 foot windtip. At least the brown pelicans and blue herons stood out. So finally, the whooping crane is white with black wingtips and a bare touch of red on its head; its legs extend beyond the tail when in flight; the wingbeat is relatively slow; and they are often found with mates with whom they bond for life. They are known for their loud vocalizations and elaborate courtship rituals, neither of which I saw. They build nests on small islands in the marsh waters that provide frogs, crawfish, blue crabs, and other small aquatic life for consumption.

Whooping cranes symbolize man's struggle to keep our plant and animal species from becoming extinct. The day we sit in our backyards right here in Hays County and see a giant whooping crane swoop down on its journey between Canadian summers and Texas coastal

winters should light up Twitter, YouTube, and every other electronic media. Can we be so lucky?

- Lucille Trail Kirkham

### *HaysMN Forum*

The forum is a great learning resource. Be sure to check it out. To join the HaysMN Forum, simply go to the [haysmn.org](http://haysmn.org) web site and look for the Forum application in the menu.

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

### *Reporting Reminder*

Reports for November are due by December 5<sup>th</sup>. Please submit your reports of Volunteer and Advanced Training hours by using the friendly report forms at [www.haysmn.org](http://www.haysmn.org).

As a reminder, 8 hours of Advanced Training and 40 hours of Volunteer work are required each year to recertify. You have until the end of the year to complete these hours.

If you are uncertain about your status, please contact [hourshaysmn@gmail.com](mailto:hourshaysmn@gmail.com), and you will receive a report.

### *Newsletter Items*

Have you read a good book lately? Submit a short review and share with the chapter! Have some neat photos of a volunteer or training activity? Let us see them! Do you have news about yourself or another HCMN? Send it in!

Please send your comments, news items, and photos to [news@haysmn.org](mailto:news@haysmn.org).

### **Members News**

*This section is your opportunity to update the chapter about what you've been doing. Perhaps you went on an interesting field trip and took some nice photos; basically, anything you'd like to share.*

*Please send your news items to [news@haysmn.org](mailto:news@haysmn.org).*



### **Advanced Training Opportunities**

*Please watch your emails for upcoming Advanced Training Opportunities. You may also find information in the [Advanced Training Calendar](#) on our web page.*

*Reminder: Rather than replying to the Advanced Training e-mails which come from the Chapter Secretary, you should send questions about AT Opportunities to Kim Ort, the AT Committee Chair, at [atcom@haysmn.org](mailto:atcom@haysmn.org).*



## Volunteer Opportunities

Please watch your emails for upcoming Volunteer Opportunities. You may also find information in the [Projects Calendar](#) on our web page.



## State and National News

### *With drier forecast, LCRA staff suggests less water be released for rice farmers in 2013*

From [statesman.com](http://statesman.com), November 11<sup>th</sup>:

"After a month of below-normal rainfall and under pressure from Central Texas officials and businesses, Lower Colorado River Authority staff members are recommending that the utility release less water in 2013 to downstream rice farmers than the current state-approved water plan requires.

That's a reverse of its position from a month ago, when officials advised against asking for emergency powers, as it had in September 2011. That decision led to a water cut-off for most rice farmers this year."

You may read the full article [here](#).



## Local News

### *Blue Hole Regional Park continues to win awards!*

From the [Hill Country Alliance](#):

"The Texas Municipal League ("TML") has presented the City of Wimberley with the 2012 Municipal Excellence Award for Public Works for cities of less than 25,000 population. The award recognizes the City for the unique design and development of the Blue Hole Regional Park.

Peter Way, Director and President of Friends of Blue Hole, said that he could not be more pleased with the honor, noting that "support from the community was a key ingredient in this private-public partnership that resulted in saving a peerless natural resource from private development and exploitation."

Blue Hole Regional Park participates in an international project (SITES) to evaluate new systems for sustainable landscapes."

You may read the full article [here](#).



## Links to Chapter Sponsors and Partners

### *Sponsors:*

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

### *Agencies of Interest:*

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

### *Partners*

Austin Nature Day -- [www.austinnatureday.org](http://www.austinnatureday.org)  
Gorge Preservation Society -- [www.canyongorge.org](http://www.canyongorge.org)  
Hill Country Photography Club -- [hcphotoclub.org](http://hcphotoclub.org)  
LBJ Wildflower Center -- [www.wildflower.org](http://www.wildflower.org)  
San Marcos Nature Center -- [www.ci.san-marcos.tx.us/departments/parks/Nature\\_Center.html](http://www.ci.san-marcos.tx.us/departments/parks/Nature_Center.html)