

Hays County Master Naturalists NEWSLETTER



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

January, 2011

January 2011 Events

Chapter Board Meeting

The next board meeting will be held on Thursday, January 6th, 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 Jeff Vasgaard, pres@haysmn.org, or by January 4th.

Chapter Meeting

The next chapter meeting will be held on Thursday, January 27th, from 6:30pm to 8:00pm.

Please watch your email for information about the speaker and the location.

If you have announcements you would like to have presented at the chapter meeting or suggestions for topics/speakers, please contact Brad Krimmel, vp@haysmn.org.



A Naturalist's View

This month we hear from Jeff Vasgaard, our newly-elected Chapter President.

First, I would like to express my gratitude for your confidence in electing me to serve as President. This is an outstanding organization with many talented and dedicated members and I look forward to working with all of you during this year. Please feel free to express your ideas to help us continue to improve our programs and projects.

As a result of your efforts, 2010 has been another very successful year – through outreach, awareness and training, we continue to have a positive impact on the people we work with and the environment we live in.

Special thanks to the outgoing board and committee members for their hard work and service to the organization: President, Dixie Camp; Vice President, Tom Hausler; AT Committee Chair, Betty Finley; Outreach Committee Chair, Susan Nenney; and Volunteer Projects Committee Chair, Walter Krudop.

Board of Directors

President	Jeff Vasgaard
Vice President	Brad Krimmel
Secretary	Becky Northcut
Treasurer	Larry Calvert
Past-President	Dixie Camp
State Representative	Tom Watson
Training Committee	Jean McMeans
Advanced Training Comm.	Betty Finley
Membership Committee	Beth Ramey
Web Master	Herb Smith
Newsletter Committee	Art Arizpe
& Editor	news@haysmn.org
Outreach Committee	Susan Nenney
Host Committee	Vacant
Historian	Dale Shively
Volunteer Service	Walt Krudop
AgriLife Agent	Richard Parrish
TP&WD Rep	Lee Ann Linam

Another thanks to those board and committee members who are continuing in their position for 2011. We are fortunate to carry forward with a wealth of experience.

The new committees and committee chairs will be established at the first board meeting on January 6th (6:30 pm at Camp Jacob). Thanks to all of those who have offered to serve in these positions.

At that meeting, we will also develop organizational goals and priorities for the year. I encourage you to attend our board meetings and help this process along. Board meetings will be on the first Thursday of each month. Please contact me if you would like to add items to the agenda for discussion.

Brad Krimmel is our new Vice president and will coordinate the Chapter meetings. As we did last year, these meetings will be on the fourth Thursday of the month. I'm sure Brad would appreciate suggestions and comments about the program and locations; along with any announcements or updates for our members. These meetings are a great opportunity to meet and visit with other chapter members and earn some Advanced Training, at the same time.

We are a volunteer-driven organization and our continued success is dependent on those volunteers. Please get involved in an area that interests you so that we can continue to make a difference in our community.

The best way to reach any of us (board and committee chairs) is through the contacts link on our website: <http://haysmn.org/contacts.html>.

Here's to another great year in 2011!!

- Jeff Vasgaard



Featured Project

Jacob's Well Natural Area Project #603

The Jacob's Well Natural Area was the featured project in the December 2009 issue of the newsletter. If you missed the article, you may find it at the newsletter archives [here](#).

At that time the project was undergoing a restart under the leadership of Jeff Vasgaard and has many accomplishments in the past year.



Jacob's Well after the flood. Most of the vegetation has been scoured away. Photo by Anne Child.

The Wimberley Valley Watershed Association is the project's partner and Barbara Atwell serves as the training coordinator and oversees the outreach and education programs.

The JWNA has a web page, [here](#), as well as a Facebook page, [here](#), where you can learn more.

The project is divided into several distinct efforts including Habitat Restoration, Public Access, Public Outreach, and Outreach to Schools.

Habitat Restoration

The volunteer work group for habitat restoration meets on Friday mornings, bi-weekly. This busy team completed several significant goals in 2010. In the area of invasive species management, the team is working to get several invasive plants under control. Bamboo plants and any re-growth are removed on a bi-weekly basis. Malta star thistle plants are being removed prior to producing seed. Johnson grass plants are manually removed on a monthly basis.

The group has also been actively working on the Ashe Junipers. They've identified a primary area for thinning and removal of lower branches to promote the re-establishment of ground cover. Larger branches and saplings are being used for erosion control on slopes.



Native plant area at entrance. Photo by Jeff Vasgaard.

Several native species have also been re-introduced including Prairie-gentian seeding in the riparian area. They also established several areas for wildflower drifts and they were seeded in the fall. "Show-and-tell" native plant areas were installed near the entrance for public education and awareness.



Garry Child, Jean McMeans, and Margaret Baker restoring native plants. Photo by Jeff Vasgaard.



Jim McMeans, Mark Chonko, Garry Child and Bob Mobley attack a stump. This Bois d'arc tree stump has been sawed, drilled, injected with stump rot, burned and now beaten with axes and wedges (and another chain saw blade gave its life to the cause). The stump is winning. Photo by Jeff Vasgaard.

Public Access

The team has also been constructing and maintaining trails to improve public access.

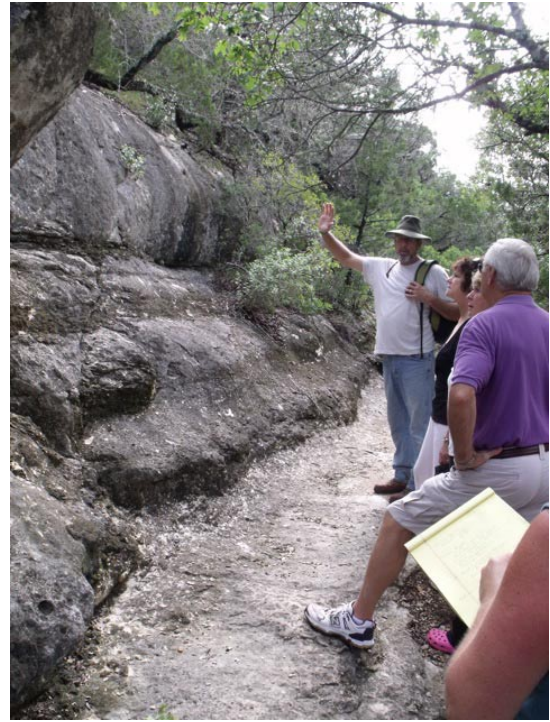


A new trail. Photo by Jeff Vasgaard.

They completed a link between the north and south trails, established trail access to the riparian area for public tours, and are conducting on-going trail access and drainage improvement.

Public Outreach

As part of the managed access efforts, the team has been conducting public tours. The effort was started by holding two training sessions for the tour guide volunteers. To date, more than 30 volunteers have been trained and are actively conducting tours.



Jeff Vasgaard conducting a public tour. Photo by Barbara Atwell.

Public tours are provided each Saturday at 10 am, except during holidays, and weather-permitting. The project also hosted a site visit for the HCMN class.

Outreach to Schools

The project has also helped the Jacob's Well Elementary School by providing demonstrations of the chapter's watershed and aquifer models and general natural awareness and education.

Volunteers

Work Day Volunteers (habitat, restoration, trails, seed cleaning, etc).

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Margaret Baker | Janette Barlow |
| Deb Bradshaw | M. Lee Brown |
| Anne Child | Garry Child |
| Mark Chonko | Jane Dunham |
| Sarah Holland | Linda Lang |
| Helen Marsh | Jean McMeans |
| Jim McMeans | Gordon Richmond |
| Jean Richmond | Glynn Schanen |
| Jeff Vasgaard | Chrissy Wise |

Outreach Activities Volunteers (tours, public education and awareness, School events).

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Barbara Atwell | Margaret Baker |
| Dave Boyd | Marcy Boyd |

M. Lee Brown
Dorothy Knight
Becky Northcut
Jeff Vasgaard

Mark Chonko
Linda Lang
Louis Parks

2011 Plans

The project plans to assist with the transition for the county purchase of 30 acres and the newly-acquired 50 acre parcel.

Also in the works for 2011 are to help with the updating of the JWNA Master Plan and to align the project activities with the updated plan.

The riparian area's habitat restoration will be a priority this year. Trail identification and marking and expanding the trail system to include the new acquisition are also planned. The project also plans to continue the support and significantly expand the outreach to schools.

Please contact Jeff Vasgaard, pres@haysmn.org, to learn more.



Chapter News

HCMN 2011 Chapter Dues

LAST MINUTE REMINDER

Please remember that 2011 dues are due by December 31, 2010. If you have not had a chance to get your dues in with all of the holiday activity please send them in as soon as possible. Send a check for \$15 per person made out to Hays County Master Naturalist and mail it to:

Larry Calvert
HCMN Treasurer
650 Red Hawk Rd.
Wimberley, TX

Chapter Host Committee

The Chapter's Host Committee Chair is still open. Perhaps you would be interested in serving on or chairing this committee. Please contact Jeff Vasgaard, pres@haysmn.org.

You may find a description of this committee in the [Chapter Operating Handbook](#), Section B, on our web page.

Newsletter Committee

I'm looking for several volunteers to help work on the newsletter. Working on the newsletter is a great

way to stay informed of chapter activities and only takes a few hours each month.

I've got some ideas for updating and improving the layout and need graphic design and/or photographic help.

I'm also looking for reporters and photographers to help with articles and photographs about our projects and chapter activities.

Please contact me, news@haysmn.org, if you're interested.

I've had quite a bit of informal help in the past two years and I really appreciate everyone's participation!

- Art Arizpe

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 web site and look for the Forum application in the menu.

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

Reporting Reminder

Reports for December 2010 are due by January 7th. Please submit your reports of Volunteer and Advanced Training hours by using the friendly report forms at 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 Beth Ramey, hourshaysmn@gmail.com, and she can send you 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.



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.



Advanced Training Opportunities

Hays County Invaders

The following workshop is approved for 6.0 Advanced Training Hours

Hays County Invaders

Location: Hays County Extension Office, 1253 Civic Center Loop (San Marcos, TX)

Trainers(s): Travis Gallo

Time: 9 am – 4 pm Saturday, Feb. 26th, 2011

Notes: Please bring a GPS and camera if available.

Lunch plans TBD.

Local Host: Hays County MN & San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance

Become A Citizen Scientist

Do you want to help slow down the spread of harmful invasive species and reduce their ecological and economic damage? The first step is to locate where invaders have arrived and get that information to those who can do something about it. That's where citizen scientists come in. Citizen scientists are volunteers who receive expert training to identify and track important invaders in our area.

The Hays County Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists and the San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance are hosting an Invaders of Texas Citizen Scientist Workshop at the Hays County Extension Office Saturday, February 26th, 2011 from 9:00 a.m to 4:00 p.m.

The workshop includes classroom training about invasive species, GPS use, digital photography and reporting observations.

If you are seriously interested in joining in helping slow the spread of invasives, download the attached Volunteer Interest Form and eMail the application to lancej1s@gmail.com.

You will receive a notice of acceptance and additional information approximately one month before the class.

Payment is not due until after you have received notice of acceptance into the class. Space is limited to 35 participants.

For more information about the Invaders of Texas program, visit <http://www.texasinvasives.org>

- Lance Jones



Volunteer Opportunities

Watch this space and your email for upcoming Volunteer Opportunities.



State and National News

Devil's River State

Natural Area Saved

From the December 20th Austin-American Statesman:

"AUSTIN, Texas — Environmentalists hailed a state panel's decision Monday to buy 18,000 acres of wilderness along a remote West Texas river without trading a pristine state natural preserve in the bargain.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission voted to buy the Devil's River Ranch in Val Verde County along 10 miles of the pristine river. The state will use \$4 million in state and federal money and more than \$10 million in private donations to close the purchase of the land from Dallas businessman Rod Sanders."

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



Local News

Commissioners approve Nicholson Ranch purchase for bird habitat

From the San Marcos Local News web page:

"Hays County commissioners voted unanimously Tuesday to buy 1,000 acres of Nicholson Ranch for \$5 million.

Nicholson Ranch is a 3,300-acre tract located in commissioner Precincts 3 and 4 near the Blanco County line.

Commissioners approved the Nicholson Ranch tract purchase pursuant to the county's regional habitat conservation plan (RHCP), though the RHCP has yet to be approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The RHCP may be approved soon after Jan. 1, said Hays County District Attorney Civil Division Chief Mark Kennedy."

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



Links to Chapter Sponsors and Partners

Sponsors:

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

Agencies of Interest:

Bamberger Ranch -- bambergerranch.org
Native Plant Society of Texas -- www.npsot.org
San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance -- www.smgreenbelt.org
San Marcos River Foundation -- www.sanmarcosriver.org
Texas Outdoor Women's Network -- 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 -- www.nrcs.usda.gov
Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority -- www.gbra.org

Partners

Austin Nature Day -- www.austinnatureday.org
LBJ Wildflower Center -- www.wildflower.org
San Marcos Nature Center -- www.ci.san-marcos.tx.us/departments/parks/Nature_Center.html
Gorge Preservation Society -- www.canyongorge.org