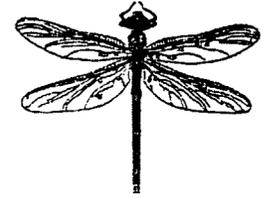


# Hays County Master Naturalists NEWSLETTER



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

May, 2008

## MAY EVENTS

### *Executive Board Meeting*

The Executive Board will meet at 6:30 pm, May 14, at the poolhouse of Winifred Simon, 500 Redhawk Road, Wimberley. ✨

### *May 29 Membership Meeting*

Trey Hamlett of Texas Parks & Wildlife will speak on "Managing and Retaining Volunteers" at the regular monthly membership meeting of the Hays County Master Naturalists on Thursday, May 29.

Our meeting place this month is the AgriLife Extension Office on Resource Drive in San Marcos. The meeting begins at 6:30 pm, and the presentation begins at 7:00 pm.

This meeting will be open to leaders of other volunteer organizations, and we will use the occasion to showcase a selection of HCMN projects.

For June, we are planning a field trip with Spider Man Joe Lapp! ✨

## THE PRESIDENTIAL VIEW

### ***Political Activism: Is it the Right Thing to do as a Master Naturalist?***

The question of should Master Naturalists be involved in political activism is not one of whether it is right or wrong, but how it is done. Master Naturalists become naturalists because they are interested in and concerned about the natural environment. When issues such as land development or water issues arise, naturalists are the first to voice their concerns. This is an admirable trait and one of which the Texas Master Naturalist Program supports.

However, this is where the concern lies. The Texas Master Naturalist Program as a whole is a non-profit, non-political organization. Our mission

## HAYS COUNTY MASTER NATURALISTS *Board of Directors*

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<b>AgriLife Agent</b>	Bryan Davis
<b>TP&amp;WD Rep</b>	Lee Ann Linam

is to educate the public and support the conservation of nature in the state of Texas. At no time can we as naturalists voice our opinions or promote a cause while representing the Master Naturalist Program. This means that during our Chapter, Board, or Outreach events, and/or when wearing any identifiable mark that we are Master Naturalists (hats, shirts, name tag, etc.), we are prohibited from making any type of political comment, statement, asking for a show of support on a political action, circulate a petition, etc. Simply stated, any action among members that would imply that the Master Naturalist Program itself is in support of any political action is prohibited and that person could be subject to an ethics violation and, in a worst-case scenario, lose their membership in the Master Naturalist Program.

So how can we be politically active and voice our concerns? By keeping activism activities totally separate from any work you perform or activities you attend for the Master Naturalist Program. Several Hays County Master Naturalist Chapter members are active in political activities, but

carefully separate what they are doing from the Master Naturalist Program so that it is perfectly clear that the Master Naturalist Program is not involved. This is the same principle we exercise when advertising business, in which we do not use the Master Naturalist name as a promotional tool for commerce or to claim some specialized qualification.

So, stay active and informed. Just remember which hat you are wearing at the time and how your actions or words can affect the public's perception of the Master Naturalist Program and its membership.

Naturally speaking,

Dale ✨



## Members in the News

### *HCMN Secretary on Leave*

Susan Nenny is taking some 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](mailto:pres@haysmn.org), who will distribute the information.

### *True Ranch Proposal Withdrawn*

Hays County Master Naturalists helped spark an attendance of over 200 people at the Wimberley Community Center on April 17 for a public hearing called by Hays County Commissioner Will Conley. The subject was a proposal for the so-called True Ranch development. The proposal's prospects for a sustainable public water supply were quickly shown to be so inadequate that the developers formally withdrew their proposal on April 18. You just don't mess with Texas or Texas Master Naturalists. ✨

### *MN Earth Day Event at the Wimberley Butterfly Festival*

Hays County Master Naturalists led the Earth Day activities at the EmilyAnn Butterfly Festival in Wimberley on Saturday, April 19. Ray Franklin gave nearly continuous rain-simulation demos to the community with the help of his newly trained MNs. Tom Watson and Judy

Telford guided groups on two Nature Walks through the new six-acre naturescape addition to the Emily Ann gardens. The hikers each earned Advanced Training hours.

For six hours, dedicated MN volunteers continuously gave demos, drew children in with a butterfly-coloring station, handed out Richard Barnett's butterfly pamphlets, answered questions, and provided information for joining our Chapter. As a result, numerous people have signed up for more information about how they can join the 2009 Training Class for Hays County Master Naturalists.

In preparation for the Earth Day Event at the Butterfly Festival, on March 29, twenty-one MNs earned Advanced Training and Volunteer hours in *Worm Wrangling* at Wild Connections, the native butterfly farm in Dripping Springs. They transferred 2000 butterfly larvae into tiny housing units for the community's children to raise and release.

The *Wimberley View* gave both events prominent coverage.

-- Karen Hulene Bartell ✨

## Chapter News

### *HaysMN Forum*

### *Talon Dancer's Favorite Web Sites*

Talon Dancer has contributed a list of some of favorite naturalists' websites for—

#### FREE MAPS AND AERIAL PHOTOS

<http://www.tnris.state.tx.us/>

[http://www.capcog.org/Information\\_Clearinghouse/](http://www.capcog.org/Information_Clearinghouse/)  
<http://datagateway.nrcs.usda.gov/GatewayHome.html>

[http://www.epa.gov/wed/pages/ecoregions/tx\\_eco.htm](http://www.epa.gov/wed/pages/ecoregions/tx_eco.htm)

<http://libremap.org/>

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/texas.html>

#### SOIL SURVEY & VEGETATION INFO

<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>

<http://gisdata.usgs.gov/website/ivm/viewer.php>

#### REAL TIME TEXAS STREAM FLOW AND PREDICTION, ETC. INFO

<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/tx/nwis/current?type=flow#w#tx12>

<http://ahps.srh.noaa.gov/ahps2/hydrograph.php?wfo=ewx&gage=wmbt2>

<http://txstreamteam.rivers.txstate.edu/About-Us.html>  
<http://www.oem.co.hays.tx.us/RoadClosures/>  
<http://haysgroundwater.org/>  
[http://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/huc.cfm?huc\\_code=12100203](http://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/huc.cfm?huc_code=12100203)  
<http://www.visitwimberley.com/water/>  
<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/landwater/water/habitats/rivers/>

#### OTHER STUFF

<http://www.hayscountyhcp.com/>  
<http://rainwaterharvesting.tamu.edu/>  
[http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/learning/texas\\_nature\\_trackers/amphibian ...](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/learning/texas_nature_trackers/amphibian...)  
<http://www.texasoakwilt.org/>

Talon Dancer promises to show why you will want to visit these sites in subsequent posts to the Forum.

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](mailto: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

### *April 24 Chapter Meeting* *Texas Springs: Leaking into* *an Uncertain Future*

Chad Norris's field work with TP&W's Water Resources Branch has enabled him to enlarge the catalogue of springs in the Hill Country of Texas. Their future remains uncertain because of the rising demand for groundwater that comes with population growth. Groundwater provided 63% of Texas's water supply in 2003. Lack of alternative sources means that a steady decline in groundwater levels will inevitably threaten the supply that sustains even large springs. Their failure threatens delicate ecosystems that support unique islands of life.

Conservation measures that Chad advocates for protecting ephemeral and permanent springs begin with identifying them all and establishing their locations by GPS technology. Then follow the collection of baseline flow data and hydrogeological information in order to determine how groundwater and surface water are connected in the area. This

knowledge should lead to holistic water management plans, public outreach and education, and the protection of groundwater recharge area. Finally, Chad urges the formulation of laws that supersede the "Rule of Capture" for groundwater by recognizing the realities of groundwater recharge, flow, and depletion. ✨

### *Reporting Reminder*

Reports for April, 2008 are due by May 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](http://www.haysmn.org). ✨



### **CALENDAR**

*(The dragonfly logo ✨ identifies official HCMN events)*

✨ Tuesday, May 6. 2008 Class Meeting. **Forest Ecology & Management**, Eric Beckers. **Plants & Identification Using Keys**, Dr Marianne Reese & Sarah Holland. Holy Spirit Episcopal.

✨ Wednesday, May 14, 6:30 pm, HCMN **Executive Board Meeting**, 500 Red Hawk Road, Wimberley

May 15-18, **Dragonfly Days 2008**. Estero Llano Grande State Park and Valley Nature Center (Weslaco). More info below

✨ Saturday, May 17. 2008 Class Meeting, Freeman Ranch. **Insects & Butterflies**, Dr. Chris Nice. Freeman Ranch, 9:00 am to 1:30 pm.

✨ Thursday, May 29. **"Managing and Retaining Volunteers."** HCMN Membership meeting with Trey Hamlett, TP&WD. 6:30 pm, AgriLife Extension Office, San Marcos.

✨ Wednesday, June 11, **Executive Board Meeting** at 500 Red Hawk Road, Wimberley.

✨ Tuesday, June 17. 2008 Class Meeting, Aquarena Center. **Aquifers and the Birth of a**

**River, Wetlands, Riparian Areas, & Restoration.** Dr. Ron Coley, Minette Marr.

✧ Thursday, June 26. **Field trip with Spiderman Joe Lapp.** Watch for more info.

✧ July 4. **Independence Day Parade,** Wimberley. Plans are cooking. Watch for more info.

✧ Tuesday, July 15. 2008 Class Meeting. **Water Resources in Texas & Hays County,** Ms. Velma Danielson. **Herps of Texas** (herpetology), Dr Randy Simpson. Holy Spirit Episcopal, Dripping Springs.

✧ Wednesday, July 16, **Executive Board Meeting** at 500 Red Hawk Road, Wimberley.

✧ Tuesday, August 12. 2008 Class Meeting. **Wildlife, Mammals, and Habitat,** Dr. Barcus. **Texas Weather,** Troy Kimmell. Plum Creek.

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

✧ 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.

✧ 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.



**ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

**Water Quality Monitoring of the Blanco Watershed**

VOLUNTEER PROJECT 802

The water quality data collected by this project will be submitted to the Texas Stream Team (<http://txstreamteam.rivers.txstate.edu/>) for inclusion in their statewide water quality monitoring program with the following goals.

- To produce quality-assured, usable information that government agencies, waste generators, and the public need to make environmentally sound decisions.
- To improve communication and facilitate education about the natural resources in Texas.
- To resolve conflicts over environmental impacts through positive cooperation."

The Nature Conservancy's Blanco Watershed Project is partnering with the Hays County Master Naturalists in this project. TNCT is providing the expensive water quality monitoring equipment and HCMNs will provide the volunteers for:

Phase 1 – Lone Man Creek (contact the Geists) at [pondscum@swbell.net](mailto:pondscum@swbell.net))

Phase 2 – Cypress Creek (contact Jackie Mattice at [jrm44313@yahoo.com](mailto:jrm44313@yahoo.com))

Phase 3 – future Blanco sites

**Introductory Advanced Training special**

- 1.5 AT hours for observing the monitoring procedure
- 1.5 Volunteer hours for assisting during a 2<sup>nd</sup> procedure

Then, we hope some of you will take the required training to continue as volunteers.

**Where we are**

**Phase 1 -**

The core LMC project consists of 4 sites.

Smith Creek @ Arrow Lake 80475 (Larry Calvert)

Lone Man Creek @ Red Hawk Rd (1st low water crossing) 80476 (Larry Calvert)

Lone Man Creek @ Geists' dam 80477 (Geists)

Blanco River @ RMR Waterpark 80479 (Margaret Baker)

3 additional sites

**Phase 2** – Cypress Creek Nature Trail (Jackie Mattice) and additional sites on Cypress Creek

**Where we want to be**

We need YOU!

There are additional sites on LMC, Cypress Creek and other creeks/river in the Blanco Watershed that need volunteers.

Monitoring volunteers are required to attend a full day training session by Texas Stream Team; if we can assemble a group of 8 people, we can arrange training in the Wimberley area rather than San Marcos. Trained volunteers can serve as a primary site monitor or a standby when the primary person is unavailable. Each location needs to be monitored at least monthly, at the same time of day.

Please contact us for more information or clarity.

Please help us in any way you can. Remember, this is your water and your future!

Ginger and LaRay Geist ✨



**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

***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](mailto:laszewski@yahoo.com) ✨

***Dragonfly Days 2008***

MAY 15-18

Estero Llano Grande State Park and the Valley Nature Center (Weslaco) will host Dragonfly Days 2008. Since this event began in 2000, a combination of illustrated talks and field

trips have acquainted visitors from Texas and other states with the rich dragonfly and damselfly fauna of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. This event serves as an introduction to these fascinating insects; you need no background beyond an interest in natural history to attend. Information on the festival including a schedule of talks and a registration form may be obtained by visiting:

<http://www.valleynaturecenter.org/dragonflydays/2008/dragonfly2008.html>

For more info, please contact: Estero Llano Grande State Park, Contact: Jennifer Owen, 956-565-3919:

[Jennifer.Owen@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:Jennifer.Owen@tpwd.state.tx.us),

[www.worldbirdingcenter.org/sites/weslaco/](http://www.worldbirdingcenter.org/sites/weslaco/) Or

Valley Nature Center, Contact: Martin Hagne, 956-969-2475

[info@valleynaturecenter.org](mailto:info@valleynaturecenter.org)

[www.valleynaturecenter.org](http://www.valleynaturecenter.org)

***Wildscape Garden,  
San Marcos Nature Center***

HCMN PROJECT #405

The bluebonnets and poppies have faded. The dry weather stunted the early wildflowers, but April showers brought enough moisture to stimulate the invasive plants. The *Salvia greggi* bushes are still doing their best to make up for the lack of bluebonnets, and there are mealy blue sage and pink rose mallows.

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](mailto:news@haysmn.org).



**State News**

***Texas Watch is Now Texas Stream Team!***

River Systems Institute Texas State University-San Marcos EPA Region 6 TCEQ Winter/Spring 2008

by Eric Mende/man, Texas Stream Team

Most of you are aware that Texas Watch has been exploring a new brand. We recently finalized our decision, and effective immediately, our new name is Texas Stream Team, with a tagline, "Caring For Our Waters."

The next six months in Texas will be a transition period in which we will refer to the program as "Texas Stream Team, formerly Texas Watch." By next fall, we hope that the new brand will be sufficiently recognized so that the name Texas Watch can retire from the volunteer monitoring world.

We understand that this will be a big change for many of you, as it is for us. I joined Texas Watch in 1991, six months after the program started at the Texas Water Commission. Like you, Texas Watch has rolled off my tongue so easily that it has been difficult making the switch even with something as simple as a phone greeting. Many of you may wonder, with such a tried and true name as Texas Watch, what would motivate the program to change it?

There are two major reasons. First, there are other organizations using the name Texas Watch that have different missions and constituencies than ours (try a Google search on Texas Watch to see some examples of this).

Second, in some circles the "Watch" component of the Texas Watch name has created the impression that the program targets suspected polluters. As we all know, however, the Texas Watch program's scientific and standardized protocols were established in order to prevent biased sampling and "vigilante science."

When Texas Watch moved to the River Systems Institute in 2006, we began working to identify a brand that was both unique in Texas and expressed more accurately the program's goals and mission. Texas Stream Team fits these criteria. The tag line, "Caring For Our Waters," expresses our understanding that streams are only one component of a life-sustaining system that includes aquifers, springs, rivers, lakes, estuaries, and oceans. It also reflects our programmatic mission to care for these water resources.

As an added benefit, we anticipate that the name Texas Stream Team will facilitate

opportunities for greater collaboration with the agricultural community as we all turn our focus increasingly to impaired and threatened water resources. Now, more than ever, it is critical that we work together for the sake of our future water resources.

I want to thank the many Texas Stream Team partners and volunteers who have been so supportive and encouraging through this big transition. I look forward to the next steps as we take on the immense challenge of water resource protection as members of the Texas Stream Team.

### *AgriLIFE Blog Debut*

Dr. Jim Cathey and Dr. Shawn Locke invite you to visit <http://www.wild-wonderings.blogspot.com> and learn about projects and activities of Texas AgriLIFE Extension's Wildlife and Fisheries unit.

### *Monarch Watch Blog Debut*

The Monarch Watch program has introduced its official Monarch Watch Blog for 2008: <http://www.MonarchWatch.org/blog>.

### *Texas Monarch Watch*

#### SIX NEW STATES — AND A SIGHTING IN SOUTH DAKOTA!

What a week! According to observers, the monarchs moved into six new states and a most remarkable sighting was reported from Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The monarch was spotted by an experienced monarch tagger who saw the butterfly outside his office window only 15 feet away. At latitude 43N, this sighting is more than 300 miles north of the monarchs that just appeared in Missouri and Kansas. If the butterfly came from Mexico it would have flown over 1,600 miles!

Another important observation was made this week by monarch expert Dr. Chip Taylor of Monarch Watch. He reported seeing the first monarch in Lawrence, Kansas, and added: "This spring is the first time that I can recall the monarchs being ahead of the milkweed. (Phenologically the plants are about 9 days slower to develop this year than normal). Yet, there may be a few hot spots in the region such as the edges of dirt roads where the milkweeds are up enough for the females to lay a few eggs." According to Dr. Taylor, if monarchs fly

as far north from Mexico as Lawrence, Kansas, they usually arrive during the 3rd week of April.

### *Spring Prairie Field Trips Around Texas!*

See spring prairie flowers, native grasses, grassland birds, butterflies, and other prairie wildlife on a native prairie field trip with the [Native Prairies Association of Texas \(NPAT\)](#) or other organizations!

1. **Simpson Prairie** – Saturday, May 3, Crawford (McLennan County, south of Waco)
2. **Maddin Prairie** – Saturday and Sunday, May 10-11, Colorado City (Mitchell County, west of Abilene)
3. **Nash Prairie** – Saturday, May 17, West Columbia (Brazoria County, south of Houston near Katy)
4. **Clymer Meadow (TNC)** – Saturday, May 17, Celeste (Hunt County, NW of Dallas)

Tallgrass prairie is the most endangered large ecosystem in North America, with less than 1% estimated to remain in Texas. In addition to beautiful prairie flowers and lush native grasses, our prairies are habitat for grassland birds, the most declining group of birds in North America, butterflies and other pollinators, and other prairie wildlife. We must protect these special places to save Texas' prairie heritage.

Tallgrass prairies also sequester large amounts of carbon, so tallgrass prairie restorations could be used to help fight global warming. Tallgrass prairie plantings on marginal cropland have been identified as the best source of low-input cellulosic biofuel that would not impact our food supply.

Check <http://texasprairie.org/> for an up-to-date listing of events or subscribe to the NPAT Email Announce list to receive current announcements from NPAT. Contact Jason Spangler, [jason\\_spangler@texasprairie.org](mailto:jason_spangler@texasprairie.org) or 512-736-4199, for more information



## Local News

### *River Systems Institute Undertakes Cypress Creek Study*

The River Systems Institute at Texas State University-San Marcos is in the process of coordinating a major study on the Cypress Creek watershed in and around Wimberley.

A three-year grant amounting to \$360,000 from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and numerous community partners will fund the research designed to sustain the health of the creek.

The creek, which ultimately flows into the Blanco River and serves as a significant recharge zone for the Trinity Aquifer, is undergoing change due to rapid land development for commercial and residential uses.

Andy Sansom, director of the River Systems Institute, says the organization will provide a sensible approach to the research through sound science and unbiased information.

"Everything is based on hard science and designed to get complete input from all stakeholders," Sansom said.

Sansom compared the importance of Cypress Creek to Wimberley area residents to that of the San Marcos River and its value to the students and citizens of San Marcos. "It's a defining part of the community," Sansom said.

"With sites like Jacob's Well and Blue Hole, it's incredibly beautiful. We're also really excited and invested in it because Cypress Creek is in our neighborhood."

Faculty from the Department of Geography and Department of Biology will manage the project. The Texas Stream Team will assist in compiling research with students and university personnel.

"It's an opportunity to work with the community as land uses change," said Jason Pinchback, grant specialist for the Texas Stream Team. "Together, we can act to keep the creek alive while also growing the region."

The multi-phase project seeks to define the current state of the watershed, gather input from community stakeholders, and develop a scientific tool chest for local decision-makers.

Vicente Lopes, professor in the Department of Biology, is creating a user-friendly computer interface to archive all data from the project and will train local stakeholders on the use of a

decision support system based on a complex set of models.

Pinchback says the public still has the opportunity to actively manage development on the creek and its environmental impact.

"The input from the community is the driving force for this project," said Pinchback. "We want leaders from groups across the Cypress Creek watershed to get involved."

One of those leaders is Jack Hollon, vice-president of the Wimberley Valley Watershed Association and director of the Hays-Trinity Groundwater Conservation District. He says spots along Cypress Creek dried up and stopped flowing in 1999 and in the summer of 2000. "That's when we knew we needed to look at this more seriously. It became vital to know the amounts we were pumping."

Hollon also says other concerns need evaluation such as impervious cover, amounts of silt that slow water flows, protecting sections of water with critical recharge zones, limiting chemicals such as pesticides and herbicides from flowing into the creek, and measuring numerous other water quality parameters.

"We need a different system to study the water and what is being done to it," said Hollon. "And we are very excited that the River Systems Institute is going to help make that happen."

The research is scheduled to end August 2010.

The River Systems Institute wants to hear input from the community concerning the direction of the study.

Co-sponsors of the project include Hays County, Hays-Trinity Groundwater Conservation District, Wimberley Valley Watershed Association, Village of Wimberley, City of Woodcreek, Texas Water Development Board, Nature Conservancy of Texas, and the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority.

For more information, contact Jason Pinchback from the Texas Stream Team at 512-245-9148 or via e-mail [atjp30@txstate.edu](mailto:atjp30@txstate.edu).

-- Marc Speir, Texas State University-San Marcos

### ***San Marcos City Council to Approve Protection of Endangered Warbler***

Everyone agrees that the stretch of land across which the Wonder World Drive Extension will be built crosses some spectacular property.

Even the little birdies know it, including the endangered Golden Cheeked Warbler. According to a survey by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the roadway construction area contains approximately 24 acres of potential habitat for the warbler.

And the City Council of course has taken notice. On Tuesday, council members will consider adopting a resolution to approve \$149,969.31 to go to the Nature Conservancy "for mitigation of harm to Golden Cheeked Warbler habitat related to the Wonder World Drive Extension Project" and declaring an effective date.

City spokeswoman Melissa Millecam said the money will allow the Nature Conservancy to purchase a "conservation easement" of 24 acres of suitable habitat somewhere in Hays County, though "it wouldn't necessarily be near" the actual route of the roadway.

She said the money is part of a fund the city has set aside for conservation easements related to the project.

"It's just one of the elements we're having to pay in order to move forward with the project," Millecam said.

The long-planned project will connect Wonder World Drive with Ranch Road 12, taking some of the heavy traffic out of downtown and residential San Marcos.

-- Staff Reports, San Marcos Record, April 12

### ***Start Shooting now for Naturescapes!***

Master Naturalists are invited to enter the 4th annual Naturescapes Photography Contest co-sponsored by the San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance and the Hill Country Photography Club.

We have expanded the contest this year to include photographs taken in natural areas throughout Hays County, and have eliminated categories. Suggested subjects include scenery, wildlife, plants, people and pets.

We hope that the contest and exhibit will increase public awareness of how much our natural areas enrich our lives, and how important it is to preserve them. A \$200 prize will be awarded for Best in Show, and up to four \$100 Awards of Excellence will be presented for the next most outstanding photographs. Additional Awards of Merit will be presented at the discretion of the contest juror, Laurence Parent.

Deadline for entering photos is July 21st. The exhibition in the San Marcos Activity Center

Walkers Gallery will run September 5 through October 31, 2008, with an awards reception on the opening night.

More information can be found at <http://hcphotoclub.org/naturescapes.html>.

### *Wimberley Butterfly Watch*

The trend of butterfly diversity in April followed last year's pattern as far as timing, though numbers were down despite the release of 1500 Painted Ladys on Butterfly Day .

We saw few Monarchs during the month.

	1-10	11-20	21-30
Giant Swallowtail	x		x
Pipevine Swallowtail	x		
Black Swallowtail	x	x	x
Eastern Tiger S'tail	x	x	x
Checkered White			
Southern Dogface			
Lyside Sulphur	x	x	
Cloudless Sulphur	x	x	x
Little Yellow	x		
Sleepy Orange	x	x	x
Dainty Sulphur			
Great Purple H'streak	x	x	x
Dusky Blue Groundstrk	x		
Henry's Elfin			
Juniper Hairstreak	x	x	x
Gray Hairstreak	x	x	x
Reakirt's Blue	x		
American Snout			
Gulf Fritillary	x		x
Variiegated Fritillary			
Bordered Patch	x	x	
Theona Checkerspot	x	x	x
Pearl Crescent	x		
Red Admiral	x	x	x
American Lady	x	x	x
Painted Lady		x	
Common Buckeye			
Tropical Leafwing			x
Carolina Satyr	x	x	
Monarch		x	
Northern Cloudywing		x	x
Juvenal's Duskywing	x	x	x
Horace's Duskywing	x		
Funereal Skipper	x	x	
Checkered Skipper			
Fiery Skipper		x	x
Dun Skipper		x	x

If you spotted something we missed, please email your editor at [news@haysmn.org](mailto:news@haysmn.org)



### **Links to Chapter Sponsors and Partners**

#### *Sponsors:*

Texas Master Naturalist - State Website - [masternaturalist.tamu.edu](http://masternaturalist.tamu.edu)

Texas Cooperative Extension – [agextension.tamu.edu/](http://agextension.tamu.edu/)

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department – [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/)

#### *Agencies of Interest:*

Bamberger Ranch --

<http://www.bambergeranch.org/workshops.htm>

Native Plant Society of Texas – [www.npsot.org/](http://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/](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 –

[.nracs.usda.gov/](http://.nracs.usda.gov/)

Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority -- [www.gbra.org](http://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](http://www.canyongorge.org)