

# Hays County Master Naturalists NEWSLETTER



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

May, 2009

## May 2009 Events

### Chapter Board Meeting

The next board meeting will be held on Thursday, May 14<sup>th</sup> at the new Precinct 4 county building in Dripping Springs, from 7:00 to 9:00 PM. The building is located at 195 Roger Hanks Parkway which runs south of 290 West about a mile west of the intersection of RR 12 and Hwy 290. 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 Dixie Camp, [pres@haysmn.org](mailto:pres@haysmn.org), or 512-517-3111, by May 8<sup>th</sup>.

### Chapter Meeting

The next chapter meeting will be held on Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup>, from 6:30pm to 8:00pm. The speaker and location will be announced later.

If you have announcements you would like to have presented at the chapter meeting or suggestions for topics/speakers, please contact Ben Adair, [vp@haysmn.org](mailto:vp@haysmn.org), or 512-773-3668.



### A Naturalist's View

*This month we hear from Susan Nenney, the Chapter Outreach Committee Chair. Susan was previously the Chapter Secretary.*

In the 2005 Cougars Training Class, I said I'd been looking for this program since I was about eight years old, when my Grandma had me bent over looking at bugs on her farm.

This year I am Outreach Chair. Educational outreach is about sharing the great info we have access to with others who can use it. Hays County is the 10<sup>th</sup> fastest growing county in the U.S., according to the U.S. Census. Boy! That factoid creates a sense of urgency!!! Can we move fast enough to encourage a Master Naturalist mindset among all the new arrivals?

Outreach is not new for our chapter. Many members organize booths, work with students, provide site visits, and the like. Their one-on-one, substantive encounters and "teachable moments" count as direct outreach contacts. We're now figuring out how to document those direct encounters on our web site

### Board of Directors

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<b>Outreach Committee</b>	Susan Nenney
<b>Host Committee</b>	Jean McMeans
<b>Historian</b>	TBD
<b>Volunteer Service</b>	Walt Krudop
<b>AgriLife Agent</b>	TBD
<b>TP&amp;WD Rep</b>	Lee Ann Linam

(stay tuned for more info later). Our committee will be scouting for additional ways we can reach our audience – primarily landowners – with our messages of conservation and responsible land stewardship. In March, for instance, we hosted our first booth at the Wimberley Home and Builders Fair, armed with print materials, the rain simulator, some of Ray Franklin's plant samples, and some friendly and knowledgeable chapter members. The volunteers' consensus was that it went very well; many people wanted specific information... and we could help them!

For me personally, outreach is a chance to boost my own knowledge by listening to other chapter members. (Please note: you don't need to be an expert to help with outreach. Let me know if you are interested.) We'll be developing a modest calendar of additional opportunities for the rest of the year to create opportunities to reach out and educate someone.

It is fun and meaningful to be part of this program and to learn from the great collective resource of our chapter. I have loved every minute of it since our first class. I think my grandmother would have loved it too!

- Susan Nenney



## Featured Project

### *San Marcos Nature Center, Project #405*

Have the deer destroyed your newly-planted garden? Do you have a shady spot where you can't get anything to grow? Head over to the San Marcos Nature Center and look at their demonstration beds for some great ideas to address these and other problems.

The featured project this month is the San Marcos Nature Center. Our chapter contacts are [Richard Barnett](#) and [Linda Keese](#). The HCMN chapter sponsors and maintains the Natural Butterfly Habitat as well as providing help in general for the Center's activities.



*Our chapter's Natural Butterfly Habitat.*

Julie Hulbert King is the Center's Coordinator. You may reach her at [jking@sanmarcostx.gov](mailto:jking@sanmarcostx.gov) or at 512-393-8448. You can also find more information at the Center's [web page](#).

The San Marcos Nature Center is located at 430 Riverside Drive in San Marcos at Crook Park, at the corner of IH-35 and Riverside Drive. It is also the birding trail head for the San Marcos River. The San Marcos Nature Center was originally a greenhouse on the grounds of the Texas State Capitol in Austin. The greenhouse was built in the 1940's and later moved to its present location.

Its mission is to inform and educate the public about the uniqueness and diversity of the San Marcos River Watershed ecosystem, in an effort to conserve and restore the watershed and its indigenous wildlife. The SMNC is a cooperative program of the City of San Marcos and Texas State University.

There are various animal exhibits in the main building, including a display of native ornate box turtles, a red corn snake, several lizards, and frogs.

Outside, there are a variety of native plant wildscapes and demonstration areas, including two ponds. This serves as an excellent learning center for all ages.



*Educational activities. Photo by Julie Hulbert King.*

Some of the plant areas demonstrate the kinds of native plants to provide animal habitat. Examples include the Natural Butterfly Habitat, the Hummingbird Habitat and the Hill Country Habitat.

Others showcase the wide variety of native plants available and how to tailor your landscape

depending on your needs. These include the Native Grass Bed, the Deer-Resistant Bed, the Shade-Tolerant Bed, and a Succulent Garden.

There is also a Bog Demonstration, a Native Niche greenhouse which provides nursery space for plant propagation and a Composting Area.



*Weeding in the Succulent Garden.*

The SMNC can always use volunteers to weed, mulch, plant, landscape, and maintain trails, work on exhibit areas and educational displays, assist with pond care and aquatic plant propagation and create plant and insect guides for the Wildscape.

Other volunteer activities include assisting in local fundraising events, youth activities and community outreach programs.

If you have trouble clearing larger blocks of time for volunteering, the SMNC offers a flexible schedule because you can work outside almost any time and

for as long as you can spare. Please contact Julie Hulbert King if you're interested in helping.

## Chapter News

### Class May Schedule

Ch. #	date	Location	Topics	Speaker
16 9	May 5	Holy Spirit	Texas Archaeology Plants and IDing Using Keys	Britt Bousman Marianne Reese, Sandy Lucas
12, 13	May 30 SATU RDAY CLAS S	Knox Ranch 9:00-12:00	Amphibians, Fish, Water Quality	Lee Ann Linam, Gordon Linam, TPWD employee

### Chapter Historian Position Open

The chapter has an immediate opening for the position of Historian.

The Historian maintains the historical records of the chapter. Historical records include but are not limited to: Training classes, projects, recognitions, events, elections, meetings, and Chapter Newsletter archives. Also included is keeping track of the chapter's tax info and files, photos, and compiling a scrapbook.

Here's your chance to help the chapter in an important record-keeping position! Please contact Dixie Camp, [pres@haysmn.org](mailto:pres@haysmn.org), or 512-517-3111, if you would like to help.

### EmilyAnn Theatre Butterfly Festival

The festival was a great success again this year and the chapter's activities were very well received.

Minette Marr conducted the Nature Walk and we showed the Rainfall Simulator and had a seedball making and butterfly coloring table.



Ray Franklin discusses the effects of rainfall at the Butterfly Festival.

### April Chapter Meeting

Dr. Archis Grubh, an Aquatic Ecologist with the Inland Fisheries Division of Texas Parks and Wildlife was our guest speaker.

Dr. Grubh graciously agreed to give the talk after a late cancellation by the originally scheduled speaker. He did a great job on very short notice and the chapter is very grateful.

His talk was on the "Role of Macroinvertebrates in a Stream".

Macroinvertebrates exploit various stream resources to obtain their food. The various functional groups, i.e., grazers, shredders, gatherers, filterers, and predators, occupy various niches in a stream ecosystem.

In turn, they serve as vital food source for numerous fish, thus forming an important link in the trophic relationship. In addition, some macroinvertebrates are sensitive to disturbed or polluted waters. Thus, macroinvertebrates provide information about the quality of a stream over long periods of time.

### Spring Lake Hike

The preserve at Spring Lake in San Marcos is a 251 acre section of land that overlooks the springs. At least half of the property is in the Edwards Aquifer Recharge zone. The land was historically ranched and hunted on but has been unused in recent years.

On April 25th, as part of the Earth Day celebration at the River Center, HCMN invited the public to hike the trails and enjoy a bit of the wide variety of flora and fauna that live there. Sixteen people turned out to walk with Lance Jones and Leah Laszewski and

learn about some of our native plants from Bonnie and Terry Tull and Minette Marr.



*Minette Marr giving an orientation. Photo by Lance Jones.*

At the very beginning of the trail was a large and beautiful Anaqua in full bloom. Most folks smelled it before spotting it. Some other plants that were at their best included the red buckeyes, blankets of rain lilies that were responding to the recent rains, shiny green Texas Mountain Laurel, and, of course, KR along with a wide selection of our more highly prized grasses. There were a number of shrubs that no one was able to identify so there are plenty of challenges on the trail for future hikes.



*Hot on the trail. Photo by Lance Jones.*

High points included the old stock tank which looks like a perfect spot for early morning birding and a number of wonderful views down into the valley from both north and south sides of the hill. The final surprise on the way down was a Turkey Vulture nest, with very young chicks in it, in the hollow of a large oak. Their mother didn't seem to be nearby so it was possible to have an up-close and personal look at the chicks.

Direct outreach is part of the mission of the Texas Master Naturalists and when the response from people is as positive as it was from this mixed group

of hikers, it is truly a rewarding experience.

For more information on the history of the property, see

<http://www.smgreenbelt.org/SMNaturalAreas.htm>

-- Leah Laszewski

### *HaysMN Forum*

Chapter members report spotting Painted Buntings, Indigo Buntings and Lazuli Buntings. It appears to be a very good year for Buntings!

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 April 2009 are due by May 7<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).

### *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

### *Art & Mary Arizpe's Rainwater Collector*

We built this collector, modeled after the one we saw at the Patsy Glenn Refuge in Wimberley. The collection surface is 8 ft. X 8 ft. of corrugated metal roof and the frame is built from treated 2X4s. A vinyl gutter and PVC pipes direct the water to a 550 gallon tank. An automatic pet-watering dish with a float valve provides the drinking water. Providing supplemental water for wildlife fulfills one of the requirements for the wildlife management exemption.



*Rainwater collector to provide water for wildlife.*

With the recent rains, we've already collected about 100 gallons!

- Art Arizpe



## Calendar

*(The dragonfly logo identifies official HCMN events)*

### *San Marcos Nature Center Class*

The San Marcos Nature Center is holding a Beginning Gardening Class on Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, from 6 to 7pm. Please contact Julie Hulbert King, the Nature Center Coordinator, 512-393-8448, for more information.



## Advanced Training Opportunities

*Please watch your email for notices of upcoming Advanced Training Opportunities.*



## Volunteer Opportunities

### *Volunteer with the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust!*

The Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust is looking for a creative and self motivator that loves to share knowledge and stories. The Trust works to promote and encourage the conservation, stewardship and enjoyment of the land and water resources of the Guadalupe River Watershed, while maintaining its unique and irreplaceable natural heritage. Currently the Trust is working to preserve 646 acres in the Guadalupe Delta, 200 plus acres in Comal County and implementing a Guadalupe River Basin Monitoring Network in partnership with the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the U.S. Geological Survey whom will provide technical assistance and oversee the on-site monitoring of the stations.



*A Blue Heron on Trust land. Photo by Janae' Reneaud.*

One of the goals of the Trust is education and outreach to the 13 counties that are located in the Guadalupe River Basin. The Trust wants to share the successes of the Trust, educate people on conservation easements, land management and inform about coming projects and events but what better way than with a personal story and photos in a newsletter. If you are interested in earning volunteer hours through assisting in writing a four page newsletter three times a year please contact Janae' Reneaud at 830-379-5822.

### *San Marcos Nature Center*

Hi everyone!

A few times a year we get requests for field trips from an entire grade level at the public schools. So, that means about 150 kids! We have a request from a second grade class and a

kindergarten class to come out to the nature center. About 75 kids would be here at a time, and then the next group of 75 kids would come. I'm trying to set up several stations so that the kids can rotate through in relatively small groups. There is a class visit on May 15<sup>th</sup> from 9am to 11:30am. Please let me know if you would like to help or if you'd like to teach at a station. Even though these groups are somewhat beyond our staffing ability, we really would like to expose as many kids as possible to conservation ideals and environmental education! I'll buy lunch!!!

Thanks,  
*Julie Hulbert King*  
*San Marcos Nature Center Coordinator*  
*City of San Marcos Parks and Recreation*  
*Office: 512-393-8448*  
*Cell: 512-738-1247*  
*Please Note New Email: [jking@sanmarcostx.gov](mailto:jking@sanmarcostx.gov)*

### ***San Marcos Nature Center Workday***

The SMNC is holding a "Workday in the Wildscape" for gardeners on Saturday, May 16. It's from 9 am to noon, and they 'll have coffee and snacks for everyone. Please contact Julie Hulbert King if you're interested.



### **State and National News**

#### ***2008 Value of Volunteer Time Announced***

The 2008 value of volunteer time was announced as being equivalent to \$20.25 per hour of service. This is the value that is most accepted by professional volunteer coordinators and their programs nationally.

Using this new dollar figure, last year's value of Texas Master Naturalist Service is valued at \$1.825 Million!!! The value of volunteer time is evaluated annually, with the figures released each spring and generally in April. The 2008 value is up 74 cents from last year's value of \$19.51 per hour. Read more about the value of volunteer time and how it is figured [here](#).

#### ***Spring Sale on 10th Anniversary T-shirts***

The Texas Master Naturalist program is now offering the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary limited-edition t-shirt at the reduced price of \$10.00 for all sizes. At the time of

print all sizes are available except mediums.

This t-shirt features a design created by Master Naturalist volunteer, Jerrell Geisler of the Gulf Coast Chapter and celebrates the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary with an explorer theme. Don't delay get one of these limited edition t-shirts today! They make great "TMN work-shirts".

See a sample of the great design on the TMN homepage at: <http://masternaturalist.tamu.edu>

These are available from the AgriLife Bookstore and proceeds support Master Naturalist activities and events. Order on-line at <http://agrilifebookstore.org> or call 979-845-6573.



### **Local News**

#### ***5th Annual Naturescapes Photography Contest***

Calling all photographers! Here's your chance to share your creativity and to showcase the natural beauty of Hays County.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Naturescapes Photography Contest and Exhibition, sponsored by the San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance and the Hill Country Photography Club is accepting entries starting April 1<sup>st</sup>. The deadline is July 6<sup>th</sup>. More information is available here: [hcphotoclub.org/naturescapes.html](http://hcphotoclub.org/naturescapes.html).



### **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)

LBJ Wildflower Center -- [www.wildflower.org](http://www.wildflower.org)

San Marcos Nature Center -- [www.ci.san-](http://www.ci.san-)

[marcos.tx.us/departments/parks/Nature\\_Center.html](http://marcos.tx.us/departments/parks/Nature_Center.html)

Gorge Preservation Society -- [www.canyongorge.org](http://www.canyongorge.org)