

Hays County Master Naturalists NEWSLETTER



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

October, 2008

OCTOBER EVENTS

October Executive Board Meeting

The date of the October meeting of the HCMN Executive Board is forthcoming. Please watch for an announcement. ✨

October 30 Membership Meeting

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2008. SAN MARCOS

Corky Kuhlmann of the Land Conservation Division of TPWD and a panel of his colleagues will provide a presentation and discussion on land conservation and conservation easements. Corky's panelists include Carolyn Vogel, Consultant, retired Director and Executive Director of the Texas Land Trust Council; Laura Sykes, Trust for Public Lands; and Rachel Houchin, Nature Conservancy, Blanco River Project Director.

The meeting will begin at 6:30 pm at the Hays Extension office, 1253 Civic Center Loop, in San Marcos. Refreshments will be served. ✨

It's Election Time!

No stump speeches necessary. The Nominations Committee will entertain any volunteer offers as it develops a slate of officers for election at the Annual Gala on November 21.

Officers are: President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. All volunteers will be forwarded to the Nominations Committee for consideration. Let me know what position you are interested in. Your note will be forwarded to the Nominations Committee.

Perhaps you would be interested in chairing a committee. Committee chairs will be sought and confirmed by the newly elected Board. Stay tuned for a call for those positions at a later date.

We appreciate your support.
Susan Nenney, Secretary ✨

HAYS COUNTY MASTER NATURALISTS

Board of Directors

President	Dale Shively
Vice President	Dixie Camp
Secretary	Susan Nenney
Treasurer	Winifred Simon
Past-President	Tom Watson
State Representative	Tom Watson
Training Committee, '08	Jean McMeans
Training Committee, '09	Mimi Boelter
Advanced Training Comm	Betty Finley
Membership Committee	Beth Ramey
Web Master	Herb Smith
Newsletter Committee & Editor	Richard Barnett 512-847-6941 news@haysmn.org
Outreach Committee	vacant
Host Committee	Margaret Baker
Historian	Laurel Robertson
Volunteer Service	Walt Krudop
AgriLife Agent	Bryan Davis
TP&WD Rep	Lee Ann Linam

THE PRESIDENTIAL VIEW

Dear Naturalists,

Déjà vu! October means Texas Parks and Wildlife EXPO time. I strongly encourage all Master Naturalists (and their family and friends) to partake of this annual event on October 4-5. As she has done in the past, Vice President Dixie Camp will man the Master Naturalist display with chapter volunteers. If you are interested in helping out on this event for volunteer hours, please contact Dixie. 40,000 people typically attend the 2-day event that is spread out on 40 acres of TPWD Headquarters and McKinney State Park land. It is a great way to introduce anyone to outdoor activities.

One item of extreme chapter interest is the graduation of the 2008 Trainee Class on October 24. For those not attending the State meeting, please show your support to the incoming graduates by attending this event at Pioneer Town in Wimberley. (Contact Jean

McMeans (jcheath42@msn.com) for more information).

Also, don't forget about the State Annual Master Naturalist meeting at Mo Ranch (Hunt, Texas) on October 24-26. Registration ends on October 7 and can be done on-line at <http://ti.tamu.edu/infofor/conferences/tmn08/>. This year's presentations look very interesting and the camaraderie shared by all who attend makes the trip very worthwhile (not to mention the number of advanced training hours available).

As happens this time each year, the Board continues to wrap up the year by reminding chapter members that we are still entertaining nominations for a slate of officers for the 2009 Board of Directors. If you have the desire and time to work within the chapter at a more detailed level, please consider being a nominee for Chapter President, Vice President, Treasurer, or Secretary. To submit a nomination for the Board, please contact me by phone (512-389-4686) or email (pres@haysmn.org). The deadline for putting the slate of officers out for review by our Chapter is October 20 (30 days before the general election and gala on November 21).

Have a great month and I will see you soon. Naturally speaking,

Dale ✨



Members in the News

Simon Wins Naturescape Award of Excellence

The winners of the fourth annual Naturescapes photo contest were announced at an awards ceremony in San Marcos on Friday, September 5th. HCMN Treasurer Winifred Simon received one of four Awards of Excellence for her photograph "Cypresses." The contest was jointly sponsored by The San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance and the Hill Country Photography Club.

Winifred's photograph and sixty-four other awe-inspiring photographs are on exhibit in the Walkers Gallery in the San Marcos Activity Center through October 31st. ✨

Chapter News

Save the Date!

HCMN Annual Gala

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21

Wimberley Community Center
More details to follow.

September Chapter Meeting

At the September 25 Chapter meeting, Hays County Master Naturalists strolled through deepening dusk into the lushness of Westcave Preserve's secluded grotto. Refreshed with sandwich suppers provided by the Chapter, thirty members followed Preserve Manager John Ahrns down the long narrow path ending at a 40-foot waterfall and a fern-fringed emerald pool.

Starting the tour at a platform overlooking the Pedernales River, Ahrns pointed out the two distinct ecosystems that meet on the Preserve: a grassland of wildflower meadows, ash juniper, liveoak and cactus surrounding the hidden limestone canyon that shelters rare plants and towering bald cypress trees. He described the geology that had formed the collapsed cave canyon and listed the flora and fauna that live there now. He pointed out porcupine scratch marks high in a nearby tree. The Preserve, Ahrns said, is home to ten mating pairs of Golden Cheeked Warblers and several species of exotic plants that flourish in its terrarium-like environment, 200 miles west of their natural habitats.

Following single-file down the stair-stepped path, members were treated to sights of lush maidenhair fern and understory trees canopied by +200-year-old cypress. Ahrns told how thirty years ago, this had been a very different sight. On a privately-owned ranch, it was a favorite spot for picnickers and trespassers who had devastated it with heavy foot traffic and littering, damaging the fragile flora and breaking the cave's stalagmites and stalactites. Since the nonprofit Westcave Preserve Corporation took ownership in 1976, careful restoration and close management has allowed a nearly complete recovery.

Members ventured underneath the deep cliff overhang behind the waterfall and oohed and aahed at the oyster fossils they saw embedded in the calcrete limestone there. They

followed Ahrns past fern-covered travertine columns into the depths of the cave where they saw (by flashlight) budding stalactites and stalagmites. In the fading glow of deep evening they made their way back up the path to the welcoming lights of the Warren Skaaren Environmental Learning Center.

The ELC serves as the Preserve's visitor center and classroom space for school programs. A model of sustainable building design, it includes features such as ground-source heating and cooling, a solar energy panel, constructed wetland water recycling, a composting toilet and a rainwater harvesting system. Displays in the classroom area describe the geology of Westcave, depict the animals and plants found there, and explain its water and weather cycles. A diagram of the Fibonacci sequence, exploring the pattern of numbers in nature, is inlaid in the terrazzo floor.

The group spent the last part of the tour marveling at the Solar Observatory inlaid in the floor of the ELC's main room. A small hole in the ceiling of the ELC allows a sunspot to be projected onto the floor of the solar exhibit. As the path of the sunspot changes over the year, it moves along an analemma (figure 8) inscribed on the floor, creating a precise natural calendar. A light-sensitive electronic tape running the length of the analemma plays a few bars of the Beatles' "Here Comes the Sun" each day at solar noon as the sunlight strikes it.

Master Naturalists interested in learning more about Westcave can visit their website, www.westcave.org. The Preserve is located in southwest Travis County on Hamilton Pool Road just west of the Pedernales River. Public tours are available every weekend and at other times by reservation. The canyon trail is by guided tour only to minimize the impact on this beautiful and fragile natural site.

-- Laurel Robertson ✨

Note: Westcave Preserve has just acquired an additional 44 acres.

September Site Visit

The Class of 2008 held their final site visit at the home of classmate Ann Connell and her husband Don. They have owned their 80-acre property since the '70s and are actively working on land restoration that includes some former cotton fields along a flood plain on Onion Creek. A walk through the property

offered a view of fields managed by controlled burning and Ashe juniper clearing, the ever-popular plant ID activity that is the hallmark of any MN outdoor gathering, and ended with a chimney swift count.

Until 2001, the Connells were actively involved with the Department of the Interior as a bird-banding station. Before taking an open-ended sabbatical from this activity, Don and Ann banded over 40,000 birds on their property. For the class, Don demonstrated proper bird-banding technique with the cooperation of a black-crested titmouse captured in his mist nets. In 1982, the Connell's helped form the Driftwood Wildlife Association, an all-volunteer organization dedicated to promoting research and providing community education in the areas of wildlife rehabilitation and avian natural history.

The Connell's son, David, described his management plan for the recent prescribed burn of an eight-acre meadow on the property. David used wind speed, wind direction, time of year, and time of day (late afternoon) to plan the most effective, yet safe time for the burn. The prescription for this burn was to knock down KR while the invasive grass is putting energy into blooming, to get rid of the huge biomass of dead grass thatch that had accumulated since their last burn 3 years ago, and to energize the soil to allow the already-present seed bank to thrive.

When asked about fire ants, Ann Connell said that the ants prefer open areas with short vegetation, therefore, tall, dense prairies have fewer mounds.

A key attraction is the Connells' success in creating well-used tower habitats for chimney swifts. While watching the nightly return of chimney swifts--birds that fly all day without perching, class members had fun using counters to estimate how many chimney swifts dropped tail-first into towers for a well-earned rest. The counts varied from 138 to 190.

This last site visit was well attended with 20 class members, 6 Training Committee members, and 6 spouses or other MN members--32 folks in all. Everyone came away with new information, motivation for personal goals (how many new chimney swift towers will be erected in 2009?), and heightened vigor for land stewardship.

-- Susan Nenney, Mimi Boelter, & others ✨

2009 Training Committee

The good news is that Mimi Boelter has been appointed as the 2009 Training Committee Chair. The other good news is that the application process for Training Committee positions starts now. The nine positions are listed below.

If you are interested in any of these jobs (we hope you are), please send the requested information to me (secretary@haysmn.org) to be forwarded to Mimi. The Board will approve the final committee list.

Susan, Secretary

1.2 Vice-Chair \ Assistant-Coordinator of Training Committee – (1 Position)

- Assist Chair in implementation of training program
- Assist Chair in determination of training needs, arrange for meetings, provide agenda and facilitate meetings in the absence of the Chair
- Assist in development of list of materials and submit agenda for printing to Texas Extension Office prior to class
- Facilitate training classes as directed by Chair
- Represent Training Committee at Board meetings in absence of Chair

1.3 Registration and Attendance: – (2 Positions)

- Greet and obtain signatures for attendees on official sign-in sheets
- Collect money, provide receipts and deposit funds with Treasurer
- Maintain file copy of registration and submit copies by fax or mail to Chapter Records Committee Chair and Texas Cooperative Extension Office contact
- Maintain accurate records of advanced training and volunteer hours for trainees
- Provide trainee's attendance, advanced training and volunteer hour reports at last three classes
- Receive, review and track class makeup reports for absentees
- Maintain and distribute hand-out packet for absentees
- Coordinate tape/DVD check out/in and make-up report records

1.4 Program:

1.4.1 Nature Watch Coordinator – (1 Position)

- Arrange for artifacts, materials and plant specimens for discussion at each class
- Facilitate 10 to 15 minute discussion at each class session

1.4.2 Logistics & Documentation: (videography) – (1 Position)

- Determine equipment needs
- Set-up, test and return equipment to secure location
- Set up tripod, camera, and record programs
- Make duplicate DVD, label each and file with Attendance Coordinator
- For classes not recorded, submit recommended alternative assignment for committee approval
- Set-up and breakdown tables and chairs
- Clean up and secure building

1.5 Field Trip and Site Visit Coordinator – (2 Positions)

- Contact field trip host and make necessary arrangements
- Provide sign-in sheet and submit completed form to Attendance Coordinator
- Obtain or prepare map and one page public relations flyer
- Distribute, collect and summarize evaluation forms, and report to Training Committee
- Site Visits: meet with Texas Cooperative Extension Agent, review suggestions and develop calendar
- Obtain map, directions, areas of interest and submit to Chair 10 days before each visit
- Meet host/hostess prior to visit, provide sign-in sheet and turn in to Attendance Coordinator at next meeting
- Facilitate tour to highlight areas of interest
- Determine if workday is appropriate as class volunteer project/education opportunity
- Oversee proposal, coordinate event and publicize event

1.6 Secretary – (1 Position)

- Maintain "Master Course " binder with a full set of handouts for each class
- Maintain class files, including applications and insurance waiver forms
- Create class directory with phone, e-mail, and addresses
- Match trainees and mentors; take digital pictures, match photos in chart format
- Record committee meeting minutes and e-mail draft to Committee prior to next meeting

- Make edits and provide official minutes to Executive Board and Texas Cooperative Extension Service

1.7 Speaker’s Contact (includes logistics, gifts and evaluation) – (1 Position)

- Contact speakers and discuss Master Naturalist course and needs: fill our *Speaker Data Form*
- As reminder, contact speakers one week before class to confirm engagement
- Obtain and present appropriate unique speaker “thank you” gifts
- Obtain PowerPoint handouts and provide to Coordinator 1 week before class
- Set-up equipment and assist speaker in connecting and testing prior to presentation
- Write personal *Thank You* note to each speaker and present speaker gifts
- Collect and tabulate evaluation forms for new speakers
- Distribute summary report to Training Committee as needed

2.0 AD HOC TRAINING COMMITTEES:

The Training Committee shall have ad hoc committees established by the Chair as determined necessary to fulfill the needs of the Training Class. Two such committees should include:

2.1 Meals: supported by Chapter’s Host Standing Committee – (Coordinator and helpers as needed)

- Develop menus and coordinate food donors for class meal
- Maintain stock of paper goods and essential supplies
- Provide reimbursement forms, review and get signature approvals before submitting to Treasurer
- Provide names of volunteers to be included in agenda
- Operate within a specified dollar amount per person for the meal budget as determined by the Chair

2.2 Graduation: (Chair and volunteers as needed)

- Arrange for graduation speaker
- Arrange for location
- Arrange for food (caterer) and associated needs
- Order, size, pick up and pay for shirts

- Obtain Certificates, State and County, and Dragonfly pins
- Order and pay for name tags
- Arrange for any extra event/activity if applicable
- Coordinate efforts with Chapter representatives

2.3 Other: Volunteers as needed and determined by Chair and Vice-Chair

HaysMN Forum

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

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

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

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

Reporting Reminder

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



CALENDAR

(The dragonfly logo 🦋 identifies official HCMN events)

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

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

Tuesday, October 7. **Groundwater Meeting**, 6:30 pm, in Wimberley City Council

Chambers, Plaza Del Sol, RR-12 in Wimberley.
More info below.

✧ Saturday, October 11. **San Marcos River Fall Cleanup**, sponsored by the City of San Marcos. Watch for more info.

Wednesday, October 15. **Moonlight in the Gorge**. Discover the Canyon Gorge under the full moon. Overlook Park at Canyon Lake Dam. Shuttle starts at 6:30 pm. For more info, please contact Jaynellen Ladd at jladd@gbra.org or 830-964-5424.

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

✧ October 24-26, **Tenth Annual TMN Annual Meeting**, MO Ranch, Hunt, Texas. More info below.

✧ October 30, Membership Meeting: **Land Conservation and Conservation Easements. San Marcos**. Corky Kuhlmann and colleagues, Land Conservation Division of TPWD. Arrangements TBA.

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

✧ Friday, November 21, **HCMN Annual Gala**. Wimberley Community Center. More details to follow.



ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Wildlife Management

KERR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA, OCTOBER 4.

The program will follow an ecosystems approach as it pertains to range and wildlife habitat management. Topics discussed will include white-tailed deer management, grazing management, prescribed burning, brush control, and endangered species. The program will also include over 20 years of nutrition and genetics research conducted in the

Donnie E. Harmel White-tailed Deer Research Facility.

Program begins at 1 pm and should be over by 5:30 – 6:00 pm. This event is approved for 6 AT hours.

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

Tenth Annual TMN Annual Meeting

OCTOBER 24-26, 2008, MO RANCH, HUNT, TEXAS

Everything you need to know about the conference can be found on-line or in the TMN Annual Meeting information and registration PDF packet. Don't wait to print it and look it over. Time's a-wasting!

<http://tti.tamu.edu/conferences/find.htm>

Registration can only be accomplished on-line. No mailed or faxed registrations can be accepted.

October 7th: **All Registration Closes!**

On-site registration on the days of the conference is not available.

Additional conference notes:

Scholarships are still available: Each chapter has a partial scholarship available to give to a member (or members) of their choice. Decisions made about how and who to award scholarships to are made at the chapter level. If you have an interest in the partial scholarship contact your chapter today! But Hurry, special registration procedures apply when registering with a partial scholarship and cannot be awarded or reimbursed after registration closes.

The 10th Anniversary T-shirt

I am pleased to announce that the winner of the 10th Anniversary T-shirt design contest is Jerrel Geisler from the Gulf Coast Chapter. Congratulations Jerrell! Jerrell's art will be on the back of the shirt, which has the TMN logo on the front left chest pocket area and the TPWD and Texas AgriLife Extension Logos on the left sleeve (the artwork will be placed on the State TMN website soon).

The limited edition 10th Anniversary t-shirt will be for sale for the first time at the upcoming Annual meeting. Bring your check or cash with you to get one of these hot items! T-shirts will be available for sale at the state

meeting for: Small through XL = \$10.00; XXL = \$12.00; XXXL = \$13.00

After the Annual meeting, the shirts will be available at an increased cost, plus shipping & handling.

Additional Annual Meeting items:

Project Fair: This event is planned for the annual meeting again this year. Each Chapter will have the opportunity to showcase an exemplary project of their choice at the fourth annual Project Fair. This will provide an opportunity to share a successful project and give other chapters ideas to take home and implement. Plan to exhibit an example of the service project work that your members have completed with pride! Contact Michelle Haggerty or Sonny Arnold for more information and display guidelines for this year's event at mhaggerty@wfscgate.tamu.edu or sarnold@ag.tamu.edu. There is award money at stake! This year's awards are being underwritten by the Magnolia Charitable Trust.

Annual Meeting Slide Show: Submit your photos today. Donna Cole has so graciously agreed to organize the Annual Meeting Slide show again this year. Please send your digital and/or scanned photos of Master Naturalist sights and activities to Donna at txmasternaturalist@tx.rr.com. Donna will compile all of the photos received into a nice slideshow presentation for various show times at the annual meeting. Since it's our 10th anniversary this year some historical program photos would be good.

Silent Auction items and donations:

We are again asking that all of our volunteers assist in seeking donations for the silent auction planned for this year's annual meeting. Our goal with the silent auction proceeds is to eventually be able to offer more and larger scholarships to the annual meeting; to be able to bring in nationally renowned guest speakers and trainers; and to support the project fair awards and other non-profit organizations who occasionally donate their services for the annual meeting with great expense to themselves. Special advance thanks goes out to the North Texas Chapter who will take leadership of the silent auction this year. The chapter is also celebrating their 10th anniversary this year!

Photo and Art Contest: Enter your favorite photo or artwork into the contest while at the Annual Meeting. Just bring your items or send them with a friend. Winners will be announced at the meeting. Judging will take place by popular vote of attendees during designated times. Photos should be brought to the meeting labeled on the back including the participant's name, chapter, category and a title for the work. Contest Rules: All entries must be submitted by a Master Naturalist. All entries must be the original photos and artwork of a Texas Master Naturalist volunteer. Photograph categories include:

1) Wildlife 2) Plants 3) Scenery 4) Chapter Projects and/or Master Naturalists at work or play. Photographs (black & white or color) will compete together in each category.

Photographs should be un-matted, unframed and be of a standard size up to 8"x10" and have no digital enhancements. Entries are limited to one per category per individual.

2) Art entries may include original drawings, paintings, carvings and sculpture. All art entries compete in one category. In the event there are less than five entries in a given photo or art category a placement ribbon will not be awarded.

Chapter Scrapbook Contest: Each Texas Master Naturalist chapter has the opportunity to enter their chapter scrapbook for this contest. Judging will be done by popular vote of meeting attendees. One scrapbook per chapter please. Each chapter setting up their book will automatically be eligible for the contest. Winners will be announced at the annual meeting

Register for the TMN Annual Meeting Today!
<http://tti.tamu.edu/infofor/conferences/find.htm>

Michelle M. Haggerty, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, Master Naturalist Program Coordinator. 309 Sidney Baker South, Kerrville, TX 78028

Ph: 830-896-2504; Fax: 830-792-61671
Mobile: 979-587-2627;
mhaggerty@wfscgate.tamu.edu. TMN
Homepage: <http://masternaturalist.tamu.edu>



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Texas Parks and Wildlife EXPO

OCTOBER 4-5, 2008

We need a whole gang of good volunteers to staff the **Texas Master Naturalist** booth at **Texas Parks and Wildlife EXPO October 4-5, 2008**. Dixie Camp is coordinating. She needs 24 people to help in five-hour shifts from 7:30 am to 12:30 pm and 12:00 pm to 5:00 pm each day. Please RSVP directly to Dixie at dixie_camp@yahoo.com with all questions and to sign up. Please include the following information:

Name; e-mail address; Cell #; Home #;
T-shirt size: S M L XL

We will have 3 stations at our booth including MN program information, the rainfall simulator, and native plants and grasses demonstration. Volunteers will have an opportunity to work at each station during the shift providing information to the Expo attendees. Directions to the booth and parking information will be forwarded to you as soon as it is received. ✈

HCMNs Monitoring Water Quality in the Wimberley Area

BLANCO WATERSHED WATER QUALITY MONITORING PROJECT (#802)

Over the past year, several Hays County Master Naturalists became concerned about maintaining the exceptional water quality in the Lone Man Creek watershed. The group decided to develop an understanding of the changes taking place in the region by participating in a Watershed Steward training from Texas AgriLife Extension Service (formerly Texas Cooperative Extension). Several attended the Texas Stream Team monitor training at Texas State University-San Marcos in February 2008, where they obtained their water quality monitoring certification for all core parameters plus *E. coli*. The Nature Conservancy- Blanco River Project generously donated a monitoring kit and supplies to the initial group that began monitoring in May 2008.

Although their vision was originally limited to monitoring the Lone Man Creek watershed, it

quickly expanded due to a flurry of interest beyond the creek to the broader Blanco River watershed. Additional volunteers were trained in July 2008 and assigned sites in August throughout the Wimberley area to monitor the Blanco, Cypress Creek and Lone Man Creek. Jackie Mattice completed her trainer internship by supervising the July class; she is now a certified trainer.

19 volunteers are currently monitoring 20 sites monthly. 12 are HCMNs: Larry and Linda Calvert, Margaret Baker, Lin Weber, Sherrie McGowan, Debi Bowers, Chuck Curtis, Leo Butler, Barbara Jacobson, Jackie Mattice, LaRay and Ginger Geist. Like-minded monitors, but not yet MNs, are Deb Bradshaw and Rachael Ranft of the Nature Conservancy.

The monitoring goal of this group is to document the baseline water conditions in the Wimberley area. All water quality data collected through this effort is submitted to Texas Stream Team for inclusion in the statewide database. In the future, monitoring data will provide valuable information regarding the effects of urbanization on water quality in the region. Documenting water quality changes will also provide local decision-makers with necessary information to protect the water resources.

The October 4 water quality class is full. The next class is not yet scheduled. We are not actively recruiting monitors at this time. The project is still open to anyone who takes the training and we will try to find them testing sites. Expansion is somewhat limited by availability of equipment.

The Texas Stream Team hosts water quality training at Texas State University-San Marcos several times a year. Please contact Heidi Moltz via email hm1079@txstate.edu <<mailto:hm1079@txstate.edu>> or phone 512-245-3461 (toll free 877-506-1401) if you would like information about future training.

Please contact Ginger Geist via email, pondscum@swbell.net, for information if you would like to volunteer for a site in the Wimberley area. ✈

Fall at Onion Creek

HCMN PROJECT #426 - HABITAT RESTORATION

Hays County Master Naturalists and other volunteers have been working at the Onion Creek properties covering the Barton Creek segment of the

Edwards Aquifer (this segment feeds Barton Swimming Pool) for 4 years, restoring the former ranchlands to a more original state. By reducing the Juniper canopy cover and encouraging grass growth, the land managers (Wildlands Conservation Division [WCD] of Austin Water Utilities) are aiming to improve water quality and quantity entering the aquifer below.

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

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

Elephant Ear Removal at River Center, San Marcos

HCMN PROJECT 408, HABITAT RESTORATION

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

The following times have been set as workdays at the River Center in San Marcos for removing Elephant Ears in the wetlands: Every first and third Wednesday from 4:30 to 7:00 pm from April 2 until October 31.

Thanks to the great team of volunteers who showed up on Saturday, September 27. We were ferried across the lake to the hillside where we worked on removing the clumps of elephant ears springing up in spots that Minette Marr cleared several years ago. Once we filled every bin we had, we headed back on the ferryboat.

Then several really devoted volunteers raked up a pickup truckload of blooming hyacinth from the golf course bridge, to fill out their full morning of volunteer work. That small clump of hyacinths is deceiving as you drive by it--we found it to be much bigger than we had expected. So we'll be working on that in coming sessions.

During October we'll take our canoes across the lake, to work on the same elephant ear areas again, but leaving the full bins on the old dock for the ferryboat to pick up. What a perfect cool sunny day we had to work, and everyone enjoyed their morning, being outside among friends, and the beautiful clear water.

Birders Gene Majors and Duane Berry report seeing a green kingfisher at the interior loop of boardwalk.

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



LOCAL NEWS

Groundwater Meeting

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 6:30 PM.

Wimberley City Council Chambers at Plaza Del Sol on RR-12 in Wimberley. A volunteer group of geologists and hydrologists will update the public on the Desired Future Conditions of springs and groundwater in our county. This important process has really become contentious because those who want springs flowing in the future are trying to defend groundwater from those who want to pump until springs quit flowing. This is the perfect meeting to attend to get an understanding of what is going on, and how we can help.

Wimberley Butterfly Watch

The Wimberley Butterfly Watch lapsed in July, and its return is problematic. But don't give up watching out for butterflies. If you keep your eyes open for other pollinators, you are bound to see a few butterflies.

While butterflies continue to be few and far between in Wimberley, they became more common in the vicinity of Gruene during September.

American Snouts may be on the verge of an outbreak. A few were present in Gruene throughout August, and they have become fairly numerous and ubiquitous during

September. They presumably flourish in the hackberry trees along the Guadalupe River.

Other butterflies observed in and near Gruene include Giant Swallowtail, Pipevine Swallowtail, Black Swallowtail, Orange Sulphur, Cloudless Sulphur, Southern Dogface, Little Sulphur, Dainty Sulphur, Sleepy Orange, Painted Lady, Gulf Fritillary, Tropical Leafwing, Hackberry Emperor, Tawny Emperor, Gray Hairstreak, Eastern Tailed-blue, Queen, Checkered Skipper, Lavinia White Skipper, Fiery Skipper, Ocola Skipper, Roadside Skipper, and Dun Skipper.

Apart from the American Snouts, only the various sulphurs were present in their normal abundance. We can guarantee that the New Braunfels area has no shortage of chiggers.

If you spotted anything you'd like to report, please email your editor at news@haysmn.org. Photos are always welcome at our Blog site.



Links to Chapter Sponsors and Partners

Sponsors:

Texas Master Naturalist - State Website - masternaturalist.tamu.edu

Texas AgriLife Extension – agextension.tamu.edu/

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department – www.tpwd.state.tx.us/

Agencies of Interest:

Bamberger Ranch --

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

Native Plant Society of Texas – www.npsot.org/

San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance --

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

San Marcos River Foundation –

<http://www.sanmarcosriver.org>.

Texas Outdoor Women's Network -

<http://www.townsanmarcos.org/>

Texas Cooperative Extension – Sea Grant Program –

texas-sea-grant.tamu.edu/

Texas Forest Service – txforestservice.tamu.edu/

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers –

www.usace.army.mil/

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – www.fws.gov/

U.S.D.A. Natural Resource Conservation Service –

.nrsc.usda.gov/

Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority -- www.gbra.org

Partners

Austin Nature Day --

<http://www.austinnatureday.org/>

LBJ Wildflower Center -- <http://www.wildflower.org>

San Marcos Nature Centre --

<http://www.smgreenbelt.org>

Gorge Preservation Society --

www.canyongorge.org