

Hays County Master Naturalists NEWSLETTER



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

September, 2008

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

September Executive Board Meeting

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

September 25 Membership Meeting Westcave Preserve

Our September 25 chapter meeting will be at Westcave Preserve located on RR 3238, also known as Hamilton Pool Rd. John Ahrns, the Preserve Manager, will give us a guided tour. He limits the group to 30 people. The fee is discounted by 50% so it is \$2.00 per person to be paid at the gate.

Directions can be found at www.westcave.org

Please contact Dixie Camp by Monday, September 22, 2008, dixie_camp@yahoo.com, to let her know you want to attend. If you would like a sack supper, please indicate that also. ✨

THE PRESIDENTIAL VIEW

Dear Naturalists,

Be careful for what you ask for! Last month I talked about scorching heat with little to no rain in site. Now, as anyone who has lived on the Gulf side of the US knows, we are in hurricane season with *Gustav* bearing down on the Gulf of Mexico. This will probably bring intense rain to much of the coastal areas and inland. As I write this, I am on my way to Mobile, Alabama to catch a Carnival Cruise that is "supposedly" traveling to Cozumel, Mexico the day *Gustav* is scheduled to be off Haiti. Timing is perfect! Be careful and prepared during this time of year for anything from hurricanes to flash flood events inland.

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 Boelster |
| 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 |

On the other hand, the rain we have received recently has caused everything green to grow again. I counted over 10 species of wildflowers in one small spot of my property, and wildlife is abundant. While we cannot control Mother Nature, we can still work with her by continuing our work with the Master Naturalist Chapter. The Board continues to actively recruit for individuals who would like to participate on the 2009 Board to carry us into another year. (Refer to the August newsletter for changes in the Board structure).

I hope to see you at a future Master Naturalist event and the TPWD **EXPO**, which is coming up on the first weekend of October.

Naturally speaking,

Dale ✨



Members in the News

HCMN Secretary Ends Leave

We are happy to report that Susan Nenney has resumed her duties as MN Secretary. 🦋

Chapter News

August 28 Chapter Meeting

Well, what can we say? Our speaker forgot about us. You can, however, still do something about attracting pollinators to your garden or ranch. We recommend reading "The Butterfly Effect" by Julie Bawden Davis in the Fall 2008 issue of WILDFLOWER, the Magazine of the LBJ Wildflower Center. Above all, luring butterflies is fun and easy when you plant natives. 🦋

2009 Training Committee

The good news is that Mimi Boulter 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 August, 2008 are due by September 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)

🦋 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.

🦋 September 25, **Chapter Meeting at Westcave Preserve**. 6:30 pm. Please see page 1.

🦋 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**.

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 Meeting. **2008 Class Graduation**, Bryan Davis. Arrangements to be announced.

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.



ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Wildlife Management

KERR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA, SEPTEMBER 5, AND OCTOBER 4.

Programs will cover 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.

Programs begin at 1 pm and should be over by 5:30 – 6:00 pm.

Each session of 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 🦋

FIREWISE WORKSHOP

Assessing Wildfire Hazards in the Home Ignition Zone

SEPTEMBER 9 AND 10, 2008. HILTON GARDEN INN DOWNTOWN (5TH AND IH-35), AUSTIN

16 hrs advanced training credit. Only 10 spaces left!! Free workshop – you just need to pre-register.

The development of this course was an undertaking of the Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Working Team of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). Much of the technical content of this course is based directly on wildfire home ignition research conducted by Jack Cohen, Research Scientist from the USDA Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Research Station in Missoula, Montana. His concept of the Home Ignition Zone and its application has guided the Firewise Communities efforts nationally, regionally, and locally.

This workshop was developed to: provide reference material and basic knowledge; increase understanding and competency in the wildland/urban interface fire mitigation; assist wildfire mitigation and prevention professionals regardless of organizational affiliation, in assessing risks to individual homes in wildland, forested, or grassland areas; and to encourage

and prepare residents and homeowner associations to participate in the Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program.

Participants will be able to confidently assess hazards and recommend appropriate mitigation measures to reduce the hazards on a house-by-house approach within an interface neighborhood, subdivision, or residential development. Individuals who learn the basic information about individual Home Ignition Zone assessment will be better prepared to conduct community assessments.

For more information and a registration form please contact Glen Gillman, Austin Water Utility Fire Management Specialist at glen.gillman@ci.austin.tx.us or call 512-263-6442.

Canyon Lake Gorge Docent Training Fall Class

The Gorge is a remarkable site, and there has been a tremendous interest from the public, with more requests for tours than we can currently accommodate. Ideally, the upcoming docent training will help out with the need for adding additional dates to the tour calendar. In order to qualify as a docent, you should be physically able to walk the Gorge and be willing to lead or assist one tour a month for at least a year.

The training comprises: 1) General knowledge of the Guadalupe River/ Canyon Reservoir and Dam/ and the Flood of 2002; 2) Scientific information (general Geology and Biology) about the Gorge; 3) How to interpret and communicate with varying groups; and 4) First aid and emergency procedure training.

Docents are expected to complete all five training classes.

The training class will be held at the CRRC of Canyon Lake below Canyon Dam, from 12-5pm. Notebook and materials will cost \$10. If you are interested in attending the training class, contact Jaynellen Ladd at jladd@gbra.org or 830-964-5424.

FALL SCHEDULE: SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2008

Docent Training Classes-Noon to 5:00 pm. Held at the CRRC Rec. Ctr., below Canyon Dam
Sept. 29 Monday, River/Lake/Flood (Cinde & Jaynellen)

Oct. 6 Monday, Geology (Ward)

Oct. 13 Monday, Biology (Kinscherff)

Oct. 20 Monday, Interpretation (Skinner)

Oct. 27 Monday, First Aid (Korth) ✨



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

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 September 17.

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

info@valleynaturecenter.org
www.valleynaturecenter.org



STATE NEWS



LOCAL NEWS

Big Texas Bugs

By Marilyn Lumia

She's a naturalist. So of course she loves nature. Then why does she go "eeeww!" every time she accidentally comes into contact with a bug? Well, that's me. But I am working to overcome my fear of bugs. Since moving to the Hill Country about 10 years ago I have found that relative to elsewhere, Texas bugs are BIG. You would think this would put me off even more. However, it has had the opposite effect. Texas bugs are so big they almost seem like little vertebrate animals. I kind of like them.

As a neuroscientist, I often trained medical students in laboratory work. I had a med student once who was afraid of touching rats (our research animal model) but he wanted to overcome this fear. So our solution was to anesthetize a rat and put it in his lap. He touched while it was asleep and then began petting it until it woke up. This technique worked very well. So I am thinking of trying it on myself.

I used to think bugs were generally ugly and icky. Now, I can see that some of them are actually pretty and all of them are really interesting to look at. So I have already improved my attitude. Now I just need to improve my behavior. I started collecting some of these bugs years ago (without touching them of course) and putting them in my freezer to preserve them. I would take them out and show them to visitors. Some people thought the frozen specimens were cool; most were repulsed. I thought my bug collection was quite interesting and that their repulsion was unfounded. For some reason it took me many

years to realize my own repulsion was unfounded as well.

So here is my plan. I am going to start touching dead bugs. I am going to get used to the feel of them. Then I will work my way up to live bugs. Beetles seem to be a good place to start. In the past I have touched bugs. One project in an Ecology class called for putting a small spot of paint on the backs of tribolium beetles (very small bugs) to track their movement in a box of flour. And I can't believe that as a child I caught and tore apart lightning bugs to make rings of their glowing lights. That's probably why you don't see too many lightning bugs anymore.

Have I made any progress? Yes. But beetles were not a good place to start. After I wrote this, I went and got my bug collection out of the freezer. I opened the stag beetle jar and decided I couldn't touch it--yet. So I pulled out the baggie with the walking stick instead. I walked around saying "eew" a few times (don't ask why), then I opened the bag and touched the leg of the walking stick. Then I pulled out the rest of the bug and held it in my hand. It looked and felt just like a stick; kind of neat actually. So next I tried the centipede--couldn't bring myself to touch it, and still couldn't touch the stag beetle. Okay, so then I tried the katydid. It was a little softer and its legs were like the stick's legs. So I went for the big green grasshopper. I thought they were really pretty when I saw them alive and now I was going to touch one. I pulled it out of its baggie and realized it felt just like a shrimp. Why can I touch and eat shrimp and have a problem with a grasshopper? More attitude progress.

One thing that has helped me tremendously is my bug books. My favorite is *The Texas Bug Book- the Good, the Bad and the Ugly* by Malcolm Beck and John Howard Garrett. It has good photos and gives interesting information about the bugs. The other book I like is *Texas Insects* by Bastiaan Drees and John Jackman. It is more comprehensive and also has photos and good information. Insects are an important and integral part of the life cycle of plants, animals and humans on this planet. They also outnumber us by far. I intend to get to know them better. 🦋

Wimberley Butterfly Watch

The Wimberley Butterfly Watch lapsed in July, and its return is problematic. But don't give up watching out for butterflies. Recent rains should encourage the return of fall migrants. The parade of late summer and fall flowering shrubs and perennials has begun. Kidneywood bushes, now beginning to blossom, attract all sorts of pollinators.

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 Cooperative 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 – .nrcs.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