

Hays County Master Naturalists NEWSLETTER



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

January, 2006

JANUARY EVENTS

BUSINESS MEETING

Hays County Master Naturalists Board of Directors
Thursday, January 12, 2006
White Wings Ranch, near Wimberley

The Board of Directors will conduct a Chapter business meeting of the Hays County Master Naturalists on Thursday, January 12, 2006 at White Wings Ranch (the site of the Cougar Class graduation), beginning at 7:00 pm and ending at 9:00 pm.

The Board invites all members to attend and comment on the items on the agenda. We invite you to submit additional items or comments before we finalize and publish the agenda on January 4, 2006. New items that arrive late will be carried over to the next business meeting.

The Board urges you to join us and participate in the meeting at White Wing. We hope to see you there and wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Preliminary Agenda for January 12 Board Meeting

Introductory remarks by President: vision and rules of order

Reports from committee chairpersons

Reports from officers

Old Business

- i. Changes to training curriculum, site, and schedule; further considerations.

New Business

- i. Adoption of state bylaws and operating manual
 - ii. Adoption of a chapter project
 - iii. Considerations for recognition of members for service to the chapter
 - iv. Improvement of Communications
 - a. External – Publicity, PR
 - b. Internal - email communication channels and content
 - v. Publication of meeting minutes on website
- * Website development

VI. WEBSITE

HAYS COUNTY MASTER NATURALISTS

President	Tom Watson
Vice President	Dale Shively
Secretary	Susan Nenney
Treasurer	Winifred Simon
Training Committee	Joe Piazza
Records Committee	Judy Telford
State Advisory Board	Walt Krudop
Web Master	Herb Smith
Editor	Richard Barnett,
	512-847-6941, richb6986@aol.com
Extension Agent	Bryan Davis

development

vii. Improvement of programs for membership meetings

viii. General membership meeting and trainee mixer, with invited speaker in February

ix. Review of solicitation for chapter volunteers



THE PRESIDENTIAL VIEW

Your Executive Board has outlined several goals for the Hays County Chapter in 2006:

- to increase retention of active members,
- to improve our programming for the membership, and
- to raise the visibility of the chapter to our members and to the general public.

With these goals, the board hopes we can do more volunteer work, provide a better experience for our member Master Naturalists and expand our offerings to the public.

If we are going to build the chapter (our retention is among the lowest in the state), provide our members with enjoyable educational experiences and volunteer opportunities, and increase the awareness the general public, then we are going to need your help.

I have a listed below a number of areas where we need help; I hope that you will carefully peruse the list. All of these functions earn credit for volunteer hours. Most will involve more time initially

and less time as the year progresses. Some are for administrative improvements in which you will contribute to the smooth operation of all aspects of the chapter so that we can prevent confusion and delay. Others are for outreach activities in which your team carries the Master Naturalist message to local schools, land owners, the MN state organization, and the general public. An important need is a telephone campaign to encourage our inactive members to rejoin us and to invite them and our current members to chapter activities.

Here's a list of our specific needs for volunteers:

Outreach and Education

1. Volunteers to develop and deliver a conservation/nature appreciation/sustainable land management program for local school children. Bryan Davis, our extension agent, will help you set this up and has resources available for such an undertaking.
2. Volunteers to work with the President and Bryan Davis to set up and serve on a Land Management Assistance unit which will perform site visits and range management advice to inquiring land owners. These volunteers will search for organizations (e.g., property owners associations, real estate firms, nature centers, etc.), place brochures that they have developed at those sites to solicit land owner inquiries, and arrange for appropriate advanced training.
3. Volunteers to work with our Secretary to publicize our chapter and its activities. This may include locating county newspapers and visiting their editor carrying the MN message, contacting reporters to cover chapter events, location of public bulletin boards, writing up announcements or articles for publication, and other similar activities.
4. Volunteers to set up a booth for Earth Day and perhaps other events.
5. Volunteers to prepare a poster(s) for display at the annual state meeting that will demonstrate chapter programs for the year.
6. Volunteers to explain their volunteer projects to trainees at training classes and/or social events.

Membership

7. Volunteers to set up and participate in a telephone campaign (chain) to contact inactive and active volunteers to encourage them to become active and/or to continue with chapter activities and

volunteering and to invite members to upcoming chapter events.

Administration

8. Volunteer to replace our Newsletter editor Richard Barnett who feels that someone else should take over this chapter function.
9. Volunteers (1) to develop volunteer project guidelines and an efficient procedure for approving project proposals, (2) to review submitted proposals for compliance to the guidelines, (3) to make recommendations to the board for approval, (4) to review the current list of projects for compliance with the chapter and state guidelines and make recommendations to the board for their continuance or deletion, (5) to develop a list of pre-approved projects, and (6) to submit the list to the webmaster for inclusion on the chapter website.
10. Volunteers to approve and notify chapter membership about Advanced Training using the State Master Naturalist guidelines and to review advanced training for approval by the board.
11. Volunteers to work with the Vice President to develop chapter programs and field trips and to help coordinate such.
12. Volunteers to help (1) maintain a roster of the chapter's member names and contact information, updating such as needed, (2) maintain records of volunteer advanced training for regular members and trainees, (3) providing trainee records on a monthly basis to the training committee, (4) order certificates and pins from the state as needed for graduation and advanced training hours for the regular membership and for trainees, (5) record/maintain/provide trainee volunteer hours and advanced training hours on a monthly basis to the training committee for distribution to the mentors, (6) insure members have current liability form on file, and (7) maintain a record of member expertise.
13. Volunteers to develop a program for and to research items that can be used to recognize outstanding contributions by members to the chapter MN program.
14. Volunteers to help host social activities and general membership meetings; you will be coordinating or aiding with setup, decorations, drinks, snacks, and/or food.

Please read the list carefully and consider what you would like to do. When you have made

your decision, please send me an email (twatson11@austin.rr.com) listing your choices by number. and I will get back with you.

I look forward to working with you in the coming year.

Best wishes for a glorious holiday season,

-- Tom Watson, President-Elect, Dec 18, 2005.

CHAPTER NEWS

Our Joint Christmas Party with the Master Gardeners featured tons of food, a gift exchange, and a presentation of Awards by President-Elect Tom Watson.

Members receiving their re-certification pins for 2005 were Ann Allen, Linda Anderson, Richard Barnett, Delbert Bassett, Camilla Bordie, Dixie Camp, Betty Finley, Melinda Gumbert, David Jones, Jamie Kinscherff, Joe Piazza, Marilyn Powell, Winifred Simon, Herb Smith, Judy Telford, Nancy Turner, Betty Watkins, Tom Watson, KayBeth Williams, and Susan Zimmerman. The 2005 pin features a blue Belted Kingfisher.

Under statewide MN rule changes authorizing chapters to present volunteer service awards directly to members without attending the annual meeting, members of our chapter received a bushel of awards.

Joe Piazza became the first Hays County Master Naturalist to earn the 1000 Hour Award, a golden dragonfly pin.

Members receiving their bronze dragonfly pins as 250 Hour Awards were Ann Allen, Linda Anderson, Richard Barnett, Delbert Bassett, David Jones, Jamie Kinscherff, Joe Piazza, Marilyn Powell, Winifred Simon, Judy Telford, Betty Watkins, and Tom Watson.

Members who earned silver dragonfly pins for 500 Hours of service were Ann Allen, Richard Barnett, Joe Piazza, Betty Watkins, and Tom Watson.

Tom added that members contributed over 3000 volunteers hours during 2005. The Cougar training class of 2005 graduated 35 people, of whom 21 have completed all requirements for certification as Texas Master Naturalists.

Annual Dues Time

It's time for your annual dues. Please send your \$12:00 check payable to "Hays County Master Naturalists" to your Treasurer, Winifred Simon, 600 Red Hawk Rd, Wimberley, TX 78676.

At the same time, please send your final report of volunteer and advanced training hours to Judy Telford, 2303 E. McCarty Lane, San Marcos, TX 78666.

CALENDAR

January 7. **SMGA Upper Purgatory Creek Hike**, 9:00 am. For information, please check <http://www.smgreenbelt.org>.

January 12, 2006. **Board of Directors Meeting**, White Wing Ranch, Wimberley. 7:00 to 9:00 pm.

January 14. **Birds of the Bible**: Wimberley Birding Society. 10:00 am at Senior Citizens Centre, Wimberley.

January 15, **SMGA Hike** at Spring Lake Hills, 2:00 pm. For information, please check <http://www.smgreenbelt.org>.

February 10-12. **Campout for Master Naturalists** hosted by Gulf Coast Master Naturalist Chapter at Brazos Bend State Park.

For all information about date, location, cost, registration and advanced training, please check <http://community.webtv.net/masternaturalist/EVENTSforTexasMNs>.

February 18. **Winter Botany**: Winter Tree Identification with Flo Oxley. LBJ Wildflower Center. More information at <http://www.wildflower.org>.

February. **General membership meeting** and trainee mixer with speaker. Details forthcoming.

February 25. **Retreat for Central Region Chapters**, to be hosted by Heart of Texas Chapter at the Lake Waco Wetlands. Chapters include Capital Area, Hays County, Highland Lakes, Hill Country, Heart of Texas, Lindheimer, Lost Pines, Tierra Grande, Trans Pecos and Western Edwards Plateau. Mark Klym will assist with the advanced training session. There will also be a tour of the Heart of Texas Chapter's project at the Wetlands.

February 25. **Native Plants as Habitat.** NPSOT Symposium at . LBJ Wildflower Center. More information at <http://www.wildflower.org>.

March 9. **Do-it-yourself Container Water Gardens** workshop. San Marcos Nature Centre. 6:00 – 8:00 pm. <http://www.ci.san-marcos.tx.us> under "Parks & Recreation – Nature Centre."

March 11. **Volunteer Representatives Council Meeting.** Parrie Haynes Ranch near Killeen. Agenda, directions and meeting details will be sent in early March.

April 5-7, 2006. **Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute 25th Anniversary Symposium** featuring "Frontiers in Wildlife Science: Linking Ecological Theory with Management Applications." Omni Bayfront Hotel in Corpus Christi and Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Center in Kingsville. For details of the symposium and registration information, please check www.ckwri.tamuk.edu or call 361-593-4025.

April 22. **Wildflower Fiesta Plant Sale & Gardening Festival**, San Marcos Nature Centre. 10:00 am – 4:00 pm. <http://www.ci.san-marcos.tx.us> under "Parks & Recreation – Nature Centre."

April 23-29. **National Volunteer Week.**

May 11. **Making Floral Crafts from Your Own Backyard** workshop, San Marcos Nature Centre. 6:00 – 8:00 pm. <http://www.ci.san-marcos.tx.us> under "Parks & Recreation – Nature Centre."

June 17. **Backyard Habitat Planning & Certification Workshop.** San Marcos Nature Centre. 10:00 am – 1:00 pm. <http://www.ci.san-marcos.tx.us> under "Parks & Recreation – Nature Centre."

July 20. **Cactus Gardening** Workshop. San Marcos Nature Centre. 6:00 – 8:00 pm. <http://www.ci.san-marcos.tx.us> under "Parks & Recreation – Nature Centre."



ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Arboriculture 101

The Texas Forest Service announces Arboriculture 101, an Advanced Training course for Master Naturalists.

Please see the Texas Forest Service website for a training description, agenda and registration info: <http://texasforests.tamu.edu/shared/article.asp?DocumentID=1175>.

The course is also listed under Events on our web page: <http://texasforests.tamu.edu>.

John R. Warner, CF, Urban District Forester
Conroe District Office, Texas Forest Service - TAMU System, 1328 FM 1488, Conroe, Texas 77384.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Wildscape Garden, San Marcos Nature Center

HMN PROJECT # 405

The extended dry weather has not kept bluebonnet seedlings from growing. Although their numbers appear to be fewer than last year, a timely rain should again give us the most colorful display in the Nature Center. We have a few pink evening primroses in flower. The hedge parsley, however, has also sprouted, and there's no stopping dandelions, sow thistles, wild geranium, medicago, red henbit, bermudagrass, and similar invasive plants. We have to pull up these aggressive invaders to control them.

We welcome contributions of seeds or seedlings of annual and perennial wildflowers to improve the diversity of our garden.



STATE NEWS

Presidential Volunteer Service Awards

Michelle Haggerty announces that the Texas Master Naturalist State Program Office has just been approved as the Official Certifying Organization for Texas Master Naturalist Chapters and Volunteers to certify our volunteers' service for recognition with the President of the United States Volunteer Service

Awards.

Volunteers reaching the Texas Master Naturalist 5,000 Hours of Service Milestone are automatically eligible for the President's Volunteer Service Award and will receive the following to commemorate their accomplishment and honors in addition to the TMN polished gold and diamond dragonfly pin:

- * An official President's Volunteer Service Award pin
- * A personalized certificate of achievement
- * A note of congratulations from the President of the United States
- * A letter from the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation.

The first two Texas Master Naturalists to receive these honors are Thea Platz, of the Alamo Area Chapter, and Dick Benoit, Galveston Bay Area Chapter.



TMN Bylaws Finalized

A template of uniform Bylaws for Chapters of Texas Master Naturalists has reached completion after three years of development, review and practice by Master Naturalist chapters across the state. The last review was held as a roundtable at the recent TMN State Conference held in October. The group in attendance there provided feedback on how the bylaws were working for their local chapter and any final changes that needed to be made. The template needed a minimum of updates before its completion this month.

Walt Krudop of the Hays County Chapter spent countless hours coordinating the efforts of the numerous volunteer and chapters that provided comment and review.



Texas Monarch Watch

The evidence continues to mount; the all-time low monarch population of 2.19 hectares in 2004/2005 will soon be a distant memory. Large numbers of monarchs began to arrive in the vicinity of the overwintering sites during the last days of October in time for the Day of the Dead (1 November). The arriving monarchs typically move from place to place for a few weeks before colonies are completely formed. New monarchs continue to arrive in the area through early December. Once the colonies are well established (mid December) Eduardo Rendon and his team from World Wildlife Fund Mexico will

begin to count the trees and measure the areas occupied by monarchs at each site. I'm still predicting that the total area for all colonies combined will be in the range of seven to nine hectares, with the lower figure being more likely.

Numerous reports of late monarchs were reported to our email list, Dplex-L, during late October and November. Mild conditions prevailed through much of the northern half of the monarch's range and killing frosts were late in many places. These conditions seemed to allow many monarchs, who otherwise might have emerged too late to join the migration, to attempt the long traverse south-southwest to Mexico. The proportion of these stragglers that reach the overwintering sites is probably quite low, but the tagging data suggests that a few of them do make it. Those of you who are curious about such late arrivals could search through our tag recovery database to establish the latest date that a tagged monarch from your area has been recovered in Mexico.

This year we issued 185,750 tags. Typically, only one third of the tags in a given year are actually placed on monarchs. This would suggest that 60,000 monarchs were tagged this fall; however, the rate at which datasheets are filling our mailbox each day leads me to believe that far more were tagged. If you haven't yet done so, please send us your datasheets so that we can process the information from the 100 or so recoveries within the United States and can prepare for the recoveries we will acquire from Mexico later this winter and in the spring.

If you have long dreamed of visiting the overwintering sites, you might give some thought to making the trip this year because the monarch viewing should be excellent. For those of you who wish to follow the weather conditions during the winter in Angangueo, the former mining town that lies between the two largest monarch overwintering colonies, El Rosario and Sierra Chincua, just click on the link to "Weather at the Overwintering Sites" on our homepage - or visit <http://weather.yahoo.com/forecast/MXMN0881.html> directly.

-- By Chip Taylor. The complete web version of this update is available at: <http://www.MonarchWatch.org/update/2005/1130.html>.



InterAct Debut

InterAct performed for a tri-chapter Master Naturalist Christmas party at the Cibolo Nature Center in Boerne on December 8. This improvisational group performed three scenes addressing bad behavior by the public and other Master Naturalists

Bad behavior is a touchy subject. As volunteers we want to think that everything that we do for the public is appreciated and that we behave with civility and kindness to one another. Many groups lose volunteers because they have not included a section in their training to prepare volunteers for the worst-case scenarios involving relationships with each other and the public. The Alamo Area Master Naturalists have commissioned a longer play that will be performed in February and used for a springboard for discussion on our many roles as volunteers.

The actors in December's debut at the Cibolo Nature Center included Kathy Kennedy, Cammy Ritchey, Roy Adell and Cindy Sims and three courageous children. InterAct prides itself on being an unusual form of theater. The acting company believes that bringing awkward situations to the foreground and then laughing about them is a way to open discussion. They address the issues that organizations would prefer not to talk about and give a theatrical dimension to these situations. They use improvisation techniques to write and perform their plays and prefer that members of the sponsoring group join in the performances.

To contact the group please call Cammy Ritchey at 830-980-8212.



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/

Partners:

Bamberger Ranch --

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

LBJ Wildflower Center -- www.wildflower.org

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 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 –

.nrca.usda.gov/