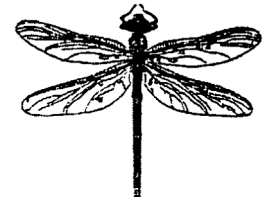


Hays Master Naturalists NEWSLETTER



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

December, 2005

DECEMBER EVENTS

DECEMBER 9

Regional Master Naturalists Party

The Alamo Area Chapter has organized a Regional Christmas Party for Master Naturalists at the Cibolo Nature Centre in Boerne on Friday, December 9, from 6:00 to 10:00 pm.

Chapter President Holly Camero announces that 6:00 to 7:00 pm is the social hour, followed by the buffet. There will be time for Chapter introductions, etc.

The Alamo Chapter will supply the main entrees, paper products, and basic beverages such as punch, lemonade, tea, and coffee. It is OK to bring beer wine and "adult beverages." We will also supply snacks.

Holly asks members of other chapters to bring sides and deserts and nature or native theme centerpieces for the tables.

The Alamo Chapter welcomes your assistance in decorating, set up, cleanup, or reception.

Please RSVP by December 1st to Tom Watson, Twatson11@austin.rr.com, who will forward our chapter attendance to Holly.

Holly adds, "It would be wonderful if musicians, songsters or other entertainers in your chapter would like to perform. If your members create outstanding specialties in food, by all means encourage them to bring them. This is a fun get together! Any suggestions will be appreciated."

The Alamo Area Chapter will buy a brick for the Nature Center in thanks for allowing us to host this party. Nothing is expected of anyone else.

If anyone wants to participate in the planning / set up part. Please contact Holly

HAYS COUNTY MASTER NATURALISTS

President	Randy Moss
Vice President	Tom Watson
Secretary	Nancy Turner
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

Camero, Alamo Area Master Naturalist President, at chcamero@aol.com, 210-490-4882; 210-861-5004 cell.



DECEMBER 15

Joint Master Naturalists & Master Gardners Party

The joint Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners Christmas Party will begin at 6:30pm on Thursday, December 15 at the Hays County Extension Office.

Like last year, we ask members with last names A-S to please bring salad or other side dish; and T-Z to bring a dessert.

Each member or guest will please bring a wrapped gift of \$5-\$10 value for our Gift Exchange. These will be put on a table, and each person will have a turn to choose one. The Master Gardners Association will bring a turkey. Master Naturalists will furnish another meat, such as ham or sausage.

In place of an outside speaker, we will have annual award presentations and reviews of the achievements and prospects of both the Master Gardener and Master Naturalist programs.



CHAPTER NEWS

Annual Chapter Business Meeting and Election of Officers

Following a potluck dinner at the Wimberley home of Susan Nenney, the Hays Master Naturalists convened their annual business meeting for the election of next year's officers. The directors submitted a slate of nominees that members elected by acclamation.

The new officers for 2006 are:

President	Tom Watson
Vice President	Dale Shively
Secretary	Susan Nenney
Treasurer	Winifred Simon

President-elect Watson outlined the following objectives for the growth of our chapter:

1. To move the center of chapter activities from San Marcos to the Wimberley area, where most members reside. To this end, Tom is negotiating with Wimberley ISD for the use of classroom space for board meetings and the 2006 class. Tom adds that the Curriculum Committee is also evaluating another site for class meetings. The White Wings Ranch has advantages for outdoor instruction that are not available at the school.
2. To improve communications within the chapter and with the public.
3. To expand internal and external public relations.
4. To increase the chapter's representation and participation in poster displays at state meetings.
5. To assemble a handbook of policies and procedures.
6. To complete the redesign of the chapter's web site.

7. To initiate an outreach program to schools.
8. To appoint a chapter historian(s) who will compile chapter archives.
9. To improve program offerings to the membership

The meeting concluded with a timely presentation on "Deer Populations: Landscape Damage Control and Human Health and Safety Issues" by Jacob Hetzel, Texas Coop Extension Service.



DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 25

2005 Re-Certification

Awards

To be recognized as a Certified Master Master Naturalist for 2005 and to receive your 2005 Re-Certification Pin at our December 15 Christmas party, please send your Volunteer Hours and Advance Training reports to Judy Telford (jtelford@txstate.edu, 2303 E McCarty Lane, San Marcos TX 78666) by November 25.

Our deadline for ordering Certification and milestone pins from state headquarters is December 1.

Members need to complete 40 volunteer hours and 8 Advanced Training hours annually to maintain their certification.

If you cannot attend the December 15 party to receive your Re-Certification Pin, please submit your reports by November 25 anyway. While the final date for recertification is January 5, 2006, it will be too late to order pins because the supply is limited.



Cougar Class Graduation

Thirty-five enthusiastic members of the Cougar Class graduated from the 2005 Master Naturalist Training Class in a ceremony at White Wings Ranch, Wimberley, on November 8. Training Officer Joe Piazza and Extension Agent Bryan Davis conducted the meeting, and Randy Simpson gave a lively presentation on the class's mascot, the cougar.

Joe Piazza reports that 20 of the 35 graduates have also completed the advanced training and volunteer hours needed for their State Certification. The class completed 1,215 class hours, 173.5 site visit hours, 624.5 advanced training hours, 320 field trip hours, and 1,173.25 volunteer hours.



CALENDAR

December 8. **Annual Meeting of Hays County Extension Program Council**, 6:30 p.m. at Hays County Extension Office, 1253 Civic Center Loop, San Marcos. RSVP to Extension Office, 512-393-2120, by December 6.

December 9. **Regional Master Naturalist Christmas Party at the Cibolo Nature Centre** in Boerne. 6:00 to 10:00 pm. *Details above!*

December 15. **Annual party and presentation of awards. Details above!**

February, 2006. **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, 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 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 11. **Volunteer Representatives Council Meeting**. Meeting place in central Texas TBA.

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.



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://texasforestservice.tamu.edu/shared/article.asp?DocumentID=1175>.

The course is also listed under Events on our web page: <http://texasforestservice.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

Remnants of the passion vines still supported a few Gulf Fritillary caterpillars until the freeze on November 16. Mexican milkweed flowers attracted an occasional Queen and Monarch. Despite the extended dry weather, bluebonnet seedlings are germinating.



STATE NEWS

2006 Re-Certification Pin

The 2006 TMN program re-certification pin made its debut at the 2005 Annual Meeting. The pin features a Prickly Pear Cactus—one of the program logos available on the current approved marketing and identity list.

Please remember that Master Naturalist volunteers qualify for re-certification pins by completing 40 hours of approved volunteer service and 8 hours of approved Advance Training during the 2006 calendar year. Service conducted in 2005 cannot be carried over, nor is it eligible toward 2006 re-certification.



Texas Monarch Watch

Well, it's an end of October Sunday and a beautiful day, and, though we had a killing frost last week, there are still many blooms on the butterfly bushes in the garden. The flowers are covered with late Painted Ladies, American Painted Ladies, Buckeyes, Orange sulfurs, Cloudless sulfurs, and a few skippers. Aside from the skippers, each of these species appears to be moving south. I saw a monarch, too - the first in two weeks. Imagine this - the first monarchs arrive in the vicinity of the overwintering sites during the last few days of October while others, as far as 1400 miles behind the leaders, are still on their way.

The fact is there just isn't much to say this

month. We all know that the monarch migration the past two months has been good. It was not outstanding, but it was quite good. I'm sticking with my earlier prediction that the overwintering population will be 7-9 hectares. Whatever the final numbers, the population has rebounded well from the all time low of 2.17 hectares last winter. If the population winters well and there are no major storms with freezing rain, there could be good numbers of monarchs moving north next spring. We are beginning to get some insights as to what determines the changes in numbers of monarchs from year to year. We expect to have something to say on this issue at the upcoming meeting at California Polytechnic State University (San Luis Obispo) in December.

The datasheets are arriving in our mailbox in good numbers suggesting that taggers did well. Last year the datasheets were just a trickle and a mere 25,000 or so monarchs were tagged, the lowest number since 1995-96: <http://www.monarchwatch.org/update/2005/0728.html#5>

In addition, there were numerous reports from Texas, as relayed by Mike Quinn, of clusters and flights of thousands of monarchs. The majority of reports and correspondents extolled the improved migration this year with a number claiming this migration to be one of the best in their experience.

Both September and October have been warmer than usual for most of the central portion of the country. The warm weather may have delayed the migration slightly and warm conditions allowed late emerging monarchs to join the migration. It seems likely that a higher proportion of the late-tagged monarchs will reach the overwintering sites this fall than occurs during most years. The number of late monarchs in Lawrence was extraordinary and they had trouble moving on because of unfavorable winds and low temperatures. At one point, it appeared that these late monarchs had been held up as long as 9 days. Monarchs are usually scarce in the Lawrence area after 4 October with collectable numbers only on big patches of fall asters. This year, monarchs were

quite conspicuous, and one might even say abundant, on the flowers around our building well into mid October. In fact, I collected 33 monarchs around the lab on 16-17 October. I saw three monarchs in Washington, D.C. the following week. However, I hadn't spotted any since my return, even though we've had some favorable conditions, until the one I spotted this afternoon.

BY CHIP TAYLOR, OCTOBER 30, 2005.

The complete web version of this update is available at:
<http://www.MonarchWatch.org/update/2005/1031.html>.



LOCAL NEWS

Proposition One Passes

San Marcos voters approved Proposition One by 68.4% in the November 8 local elections. This convincing voter approval will bring 251 acres of beautiful natural area and critical watershed above the headwaters of the San Marcos River into the city as parkland. It had been proposed for development.

Citizens were encouraged and supported in their choice by Yes Prop One, a special purpose committee that included friends of Master Naturalists in the San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance.