



Hays County Master Naturalist

September 25, 2003
Meeting Minutes

The meeting was held at the Extension Office and preceded by a Pot-Luck supper. Nine members were present.

PROGRAM: Meg Goodman, a bat biologist for Texas Parks and Wildlife and Bat Conservation International presented an informative program on bats. Bat species are very specialized in their diet. One bat found in West Texas eats only scorpions and centipedes and they are immune to the poison in their prey. There are three species of bats in Texas that eat nectar. One of the species that lives in the Big Bend area is the primary pollinator of agaves. Different species also have different habitats. Some live in caves or other crevices such as bridges and mines, others live in trees and in crevices of cliffs.

The major species found in Central Texas is the Mexican freetail bats that live in caves and eat major agricultural pests such as cotton boll worm moth and the corn earworm moth and save millions of dollars a year by controlling these pests. When the bats emerge from the caves in Central Texas in the evenings they are so numerous that they show up on Doppler radar.

BCI provides information for enhancing ecosystems for bats through building bat houses and other structures, attracting bats as part of plans for a Wildlife Tax Exemption, and providing information about appropriate times and ways to remove unwanted bats.

Two local sites, The Old Tunnel Wildlife Management area near Grapetown, southwest of Fredericksburg and the Congress Avenue Bridge in Austin, welcome Master Naturalist volunteers as Interpretive Leaders. E-mail Meg at meg.goodman@tpwd.state.tx.us if you are interested in volunteering.

Advanced Training: 1.5 hours.

BUSINESS MEETING: President Dell Hood announced the next Chapter Meeting. It will be held on Thursday, October 23 at 7:00 PM preceded by a Pot Luck supper at 6:30. The speaker will be Ken Saunders. His topic will be Riparian Areas.

Dell also noted that Annual Membership forms and Volunteer Project forms were available. These forms have been reconfigured to be compatible with the State Master Naturalist database system. Membership and Volunteer Project forms will be required annually due to liability issues.

Dell also noted that the slate of officers for 2004 will be presented at the October Meeting and voted on at the November meeting. He encouraged all members to actively participate in this process.

Joe Piazza announced that a volunteer is needed to maintain the plants in the Rain Water Simulator. He also noted that there are four Range Plant book available for \$21.00 each. Anyone who is interested needs to contact Julie Koscis. Joe also reminded members of the Master Naturalist picnic on Sunday, October 19 from 1:00 to 5:00 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Watkins, Secretary
Hays County Master Naturalist Chapter