



THE HAYS HUMM

MONTHLY NEWS, EVENTS & ARTICLES of the
HAYS COUNTY CHAPTER
TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS



March 2018

right here at home -- in the Hill Country

CHAPTER NEWS

CHAPTER BOARD

President – Anne Child
 Vice President - Mary O’Hara
 Secretary - Tracy Mock
 Treasurer - Larry Calvert
 Past President - Beth Ramey
 State Representative and Volunteer
 Projects Coordinator - Dixie Camp
 TPWD Advisor - Gordon Linam
 Training Coordinator – Mark Wojcik
 Advanced Training - Beverly Gordon
 Calendar - Beverly Gordon
 Historian – Dana Martensen
 Webmaster and Membership Chair -
 Jane Dunham
 Outreach & Marketing - Art Arizpe
 Outreach Events - Roxana Donegan
 Host Committee - Mary Dow Ross
 Newsletter– Tom Jones, Betsy Cross
 Willett Project - Candy Spitzer
 Agrilife Sponsor- Jason Mangold

CHAPTER MEETINGS

March 22, 2018

Joe Lapp aka SpiderJoe

“New Spider Discovery”

Lutheran Church of the Resurrection

101 West Spoke Hill Road, Wimberley

Dinner @6:30 Presentation @7:00

April 26, 2018

Dr. Steven Howard

“Finding Nature in Archaeology”

Lutheran Church of the Resurrection

101 West Spoke Hill Road in Wimberley

Dinner @6:30 Presentation @7:00

MN BOARD MEETING

When: Thu, March 8, 6:30pm – 8:30pm

Where: Agri-Life Extension office

200 Stillwater Drive Wimberley, TX 78676.

NEWSLETTER: Check out Betsy’s excellent article about a cool Bluebird Box Project: *Checking the Bird Boxes by Betsy Cross, See Page 4*

Advanced Training Calendar – Click the link below for more opportunities
<http://haysmn.org/calendar-at.html>

Projects Calendar – Click the link below.
<http://www.haysmn.org/calendar-projects.html>

List of Honorees & Graduates At 2017 Hays Master Naturalist Gala – See Page 7

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Anne Child



One of the perks of being President is that people share with you what excites them about being a Master Naturalist. Recently two people expressed almost the same sentiment in their stories.

First was my husband, Garry. He told me that he realized that since he retired his happiest moments were when we built the fence around the driveway and parking lot at Charro Ranch Park. This may not seem like a naturalist activity but there has been no ATV damage in the park since the fence was installed. I'm not sure, but I don't think the reason for his happiness was because he was trimming juniper posts while I was holding them steady inches away from his roaring chain saw.

Then Dick McBride shared his story. He was driving to go work on one of the many projects to which he is dedicated. He saw people out jogging and walking their dogs. They were enjoying the morning and getting healthy exercise. But he was going to get plenty of exercise lopping junipers, string trimming a trail, or whatever he was up to that day. As he drove, a feeling came over him. Dick realized how proud he was that he was "going to work!"

These two stories are of people who are contributing to their community. They have a vision of a better world that their actions will help achieve. Sure both Garry and Dick had rewarding professions. They worked hard for thirty or forty years making useful computer programs or fixing people's aching teeth. But now they were having fun, doing what they chose to do that day, being outdoors, feeling useful, and preserving special pieces of Hays County for future generations.

It doesn't get much better than that.



Sandhill Cranes on the Wing-Talon Dancer

MEET YOUR MASTER NATURALIST BOARD



MARY O'HARA - Vice President

About Myself – Mary is a 2015 graduate of the Cypress class. Degreed in Applied Biology and Respiratory Therapy, she is currently working as a Clinical Navigator for Warm Springs Rehabilitation Hospital in Kyle. Meanwhile, dreaming of the day she can retire to become a full-time nature geek!

You May Not Know - As a toddler, Mary learned to identify birds from her grandmother which inspired a life-long passion for all things in nature: trees, rocks, plants, stars, but especially wildlife. After 50 winters in Michigan, she was lucky enough to land in warm, sunny Texas. Ever-eager for adventure, the Master Naturalists program was a perfect jumpstart to experience a new ecosystem and discover like-minded souls.

FAV Master Naturalist Activity - Happily minting new MNs as a 3rd year member of the Training Committee and Site Visit Coordinator. But truly, anything outdoors and getting dirty is desirable!

JANE DUNHAM - Webmaster & Membership Chair

About Myself – I thoroughly enjoyed a career as an international student and scholar advisor at four Texas universities, and maintain contact and visits with many international friends. I love to travel and have spent time in 57 countries. I joined Hays MN in 2010 while living in Austin, and finally moved to Wimberley last year.

You May Not Know – I lived in Holland for four years and love almost anything Dutch.

FAV Master Naturalist Activity – Figuring out how to make technology keep us in better communication with each other.

About the Photo - The snake was 134 pounds and 12.5 feet long, which is why she draped on the floor. This was taken on the Mekong Delta in Vietnam. I first held a python at the nature center in San Marcos, and I knew they don't try to swallow human beings.





CHECKING THE BIRD BOXES

Betsy Cross



I arrive at Jacobs Well for the second weekend in a row to check the bluebird boxes. As I pull in, there is a host of cars parked at the Nature Center, and visitors have arrived with cameras and binoculars and water bottles attached to daypacks. I have brought my own camera and a small notebook to document the birds that I see, since today is also GBBC day! I've already made note of two

Red-tailed Hawks and one Great Egret on the drive over. What started out as a cool, misty morning has turned into a perfect mild day. I don't have a routine yet for making the rounds, but I decide to start at Box 4, then Box 3. I make my way toward "The Well" and across the dry creek bed to Boxes 1 and 2. I see no bird activity in or around the boxes.

On my way to Box 5, I notice what could be a male bluebird at the top of a dead tree. I stop quickly, trying not to disturb it. Then there's another in the same tree, most likely the female. I take a photograph and approach a little closer, then one more photo. Yes, it is a male bluebird! Both birds fly away and I continue my walk to all the other boxes. It takes a little over an hour to complete the full circuit. There is no further evidence of bluebirds or the other typical nest box occupants – no titmice, wrens, chickadees, or ash-throated flycatchers.



Back at the Nature Center, Quincy Kennedy is about to begin a tour of the Jacobs Well Natural Area for a group of visitors. Quincy coordinates the education and outreach programs at Jacobs Well. I speak to him briefly and share the photo of the bluebird. He knows of the dead tree where I saw the bluebirds. They are thinking about removing that tree. We discuss the benefits of leaving the tree in place for habitat purposes before he heads off to lead the tour. I wrap up my documentation and go to the car.

As I drive past the guard shack on the way out, I am thinking about the dead tree and how it might be the very place that the bluebirds have chosen for their first brood. I do a u-turn, park, and walk back to the dead tree. And there it is, about 18 feet up - a perfect hole. It looks like it's been cut out with a precision instrument, and



I feel certain if the bluebirds haven't moved in already, they are scoping it out! When I get home, I go to the Cornell website: "Eastern Bluebirds put their nests in natural cavities or in nest boxes or other artificial refuges. Among available natural cavities, bluebirds typically select old woodpecker holes in dead pine or oak trees, up to 50 feet off the ground..."

After exchanging several emails with Quincy, he informs me: "**The tree is now safe!**" So, I can rest easy. Maybe next weekend our young bluebird couple will have taken up residence in that beautiful dead tree with the awesome woodpecker hole!

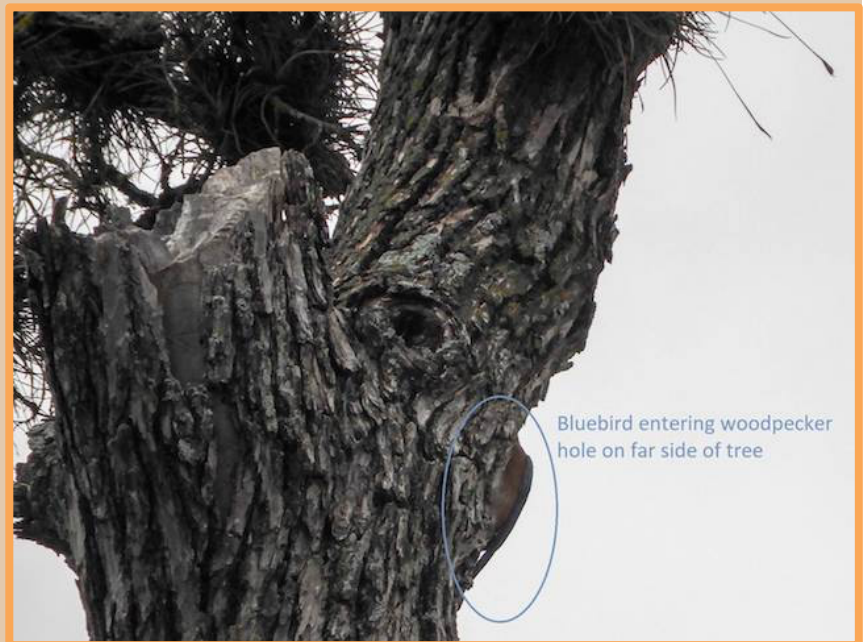
Part Two – February 24, 2018

I begin my walk. Almost instantly my brain starts to switch gears. The simple beauty of the day, the fragrance of damp weeds, the darkening sky in the west, I am slowing, being absorbed in the moment. Just like last week, I stop at each of the first four boxes, and just like last week, there are no signs of nesting birds. Moving on, I walk gently toward the dead tree. I am alert to all movement, fully present to the task at hand. I hear the wren, I see a mourning dove. I photograph a flycatcher sitting on a high branch in the dead tree – but it is not the bluebird. I wait without moving and survey the landscape. Quietly I make my way to the other side of the tree, there is no activity. I wait a bit longer and decide it's time to continue. I'm disappointed, but not discouraged.

I check the next two boxes and travel through the picnic grounds toward "The North 40". I walk under a canopy of juniper trees and find a flock of chattering chickadees and titmice in the branches. They are a fussy bunch. I check the trees for a predator, a snake maybe, but I suppose it's only my trespassing that causes the commotion. Walking along, I find a meadow of tiny purple, lavender, white, and yellow flowers. They were not here last week. I notice a large patch of bluebonnets which will bloom soon. I am fascinated by the diversity of grasses. It will be interesting to see how this landscape changes in the coming weeks. I finish checking the boxes. There is nothing to report today.

On my walk back to the Nature Center, I choose a path I've not taken before. It leads me through a secluded forest of juniper trees, moss, and agave. I advance quietly, then hear a leaf crunch. I turn and see a doe staring through the brush at me. She moves away calmly. When I emerge from the junipers, there in the mud are fresh tracks of a canine and a deer. I imagine a chase, coyote and deer. I soon find myself looking back at the dead tree.

I see a small bird on top of it. I carefully inch forward. I click a few photos. In the small viewing screen, the underexposed bird is visible in profile only. I cannot be sure what it is. I close in on the tree and keep clicking the shutter. Finally, the bird leaves its perch, flutters a bit on the other side of the tree, and I see blue wings. It appears to enter the woodpecker hole. Though I do not have a clear shot, I take one more photograph. I lose sight of the bluebird and stand as still as a statue, wishing and willing him to return, but he does not. The wren, perhaps a house finch, and maybe a field sparrow are the only birds I see now. I check the time, it's 1:15. I visit the bird blind and continue walking to the creek before going back to the Nature Center to document my day checking the bird boxes.



Interested in participating in the Bluebird Project at Jacobs Well? Want to get more experience in monitoring bird boxes? Please let me know – Betsy Cross betsy.cross@sbcglobal.net

CHAPTER MEETING FIELD TRIP TO THE TEXAS MUSEUM OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

February 23, 2018

Check out the highlights from the field trip to the Texas Museum of Science and Technology in NW Austin. We explored constellations, nebulas, black holes and wonders beyond our Milky Way with Sara Peterson. We journeyed back in time with Dustin Dutton and discovered how life evolved from simple single cells into the complex world of today.

Thanks to all who made our indoor adventure a success! - Mary O'Hara



HONOREES AT 2017 HAYS MASTER NATURALIST GALA

Recognition Awards

- Outstanding Training Committee Volunteer: Lauren Young
- Outstanding Chapter Volunteer: Beverly Gordon
- Significant Contribution to the Chapter: Roxana Donegan, Mary Dow Ross
- Retiring President: Beth Ramey
- Retiring Vice-President: Connie Boltz
- Retiring Training Committee Chair: Susan Neill
- President's Award, 2016: Estelle Murchison, Irene Bonde
- Texas Master Naturalists: Gordon Linam, Chapter Adviser of the Year

Service Awards

- 5000 hours: Tom Watson
- 4000 hours: Dick McBride
- 2500 hours: Lance Jones
- 1000 hours: Anne Child, Kenneth Dees, Todd Derkacz, Roxana Donegan, Steve Janda, Beth Ramey
- 500 hours: Ed Buresh, Linda Calvert, Keith Collignon, Robert Currie, Jane Dunham, Susan Kimmel-Lines, Susan Nenny, Gordon Richmond, Lauren Young
- 250 hours: Dick Barham, Merry Bateman, Karen Boden, John Cassidy, Mary Gilroy, Tracy Mock, Marianne Reese, Yolanda Reyes

Tenure Awards

- Recertification 10 years: Art Arizpe, Tom Hausler, Beth Ramey
- Recertification 5 years: Dick Barham, Merry Bateman, Connie Boltz, John Boltz, Randy Garst, Jo Ellen Korthals, Christine Middleton, Blaine Nelson

Great Horned Owl - San Marcos - Betsy Cross



**RECERTIFICATION IN 2017 (80 MEMBERS)**

Art Arizpe
 Barham, Dick
 Bateman, Merry
 Bell, Susan
 Boltz, Connie
 Boltz, John
 Bonde, Irene
 Bower, LeeAnn
 Bradshaw, Deborah
 Brister, Marilyn
 Brown, Linda
 Browning, Donna
 Buresh, Ed
 Byrne, Christine
 Calvert, Larry
 Calvert, Linda
 Camp, Dixie
 Carlisle, Sarah
 Cassidy, Cindy
 Cassidy, John
 Child, Anne
 Child, Garry
 Collignon, Keith
 Crowe, Art
 Currie, Robert
 Davis, Suzanne
 Dees, Kenneth

Derkacz, Todd
 Donegan, Roxana
 du Plessis, Shannon
 Dunham, Jane
 Evans, Susan
 Frost, Eva
 Garst, Randy
 Garthwaite, Jeanne
 Geist, Ginger
 Geist, LaRay
 Glover, Paula
 Gordon, Beverly
 Hausler, Tom
 Hood, Dell
 Hood, Gerin
 Janda, Stephen
 Jones, Julie
 Jones, Lance
 Kimmel-Lines, Susan
 Korthals, Jo Ellen
 Kluth, John
 Lalich, Dean
 Lang, Linda
 McBride, Richard
 McGraw, Karen
 Middleton, Christine
 Mock, Tracy

Murchison, Estelle
 Neill, Susan
 Nelson, Blaine
 Nenney, Susan
 O'Hara, Mary
 Peterson, Cyndy
 Peterson, Leigh
 Peterson, Michael
 Ramey, Beth
 Reyes, Yoland
 Richmond, Gordon
 Richmond, Jean
 Ross, Mary Down
 Schleede, Janet
 Seib, Melinda
 Sitton, Cate
 Tull, Bonnie
 Tull, Terry
 Waters, Coral
 Watson, Tom
 Weber, Lin
 Wilfong, Peggy
 Wojcik, Mark
 Womer, David
 Young, Lauren
 Zinn, Dan

Officers**Elected for 2018**

President – Anne Child
 Vice-President – Mary O'Hara
 Secretary – Tracy Mock
 Treasurer – Larry Calvert



2017 GRADUATES - THE NIGHTHAWKS

Barham, Beth*	Gordon, Scott David*
Bower, Mike*	Harris, Anita*
Castle, Jacqueline	Healy, Celeste*
Crittenden, Margaret*	Healy, Bill*
Cross, Betsy*	Jones, Tom*
Dahmus, John*	Martensen, Dana*
Dahmus, Loretta*	Miller, Jim*
Daniel, Kristy*	Payne, John*
Davis, Sheryl*	Payne, Laura*
Fealy, Barry*	Perez, Hiram*
Fealy, Lisa*	Rambo, Chris*
Forish, Anne*	Rambo, Mike*
Fuller, Venita*	Retzlaff, Carmen*
Gatto, Sun	Smith, Jeremy*
Gerard, Karen*	Turcotte, Kristin*
Goodrich, Susan*	

* Denotes initial certification as of March 1, 2018



Night Hawk

REGISTRATION FOR THIS YEAR'S GREAT TEXAS BIRDING CLASSIC - NOW OPEN!

Shelly Plante - Nature Tourism Manager - Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept.

[4200 Smith School Rd., Austin, TX 78744](https://www.tpwd.texas.gov/locations/4200-smith-school-rd-austin-tx-78744)

Phone: [512-389-4500](tel:512-389-4500) - Mobile: [512-241-9163](tel:512-241-9163)

Join this fun, friendly, bird watching competition. There are tournament categories for all ages and skill levels, so select the one that works best for you. This event is a great team builder for your chapter or could be an outreach event to get others birding in your region.

www.birdingclassic.com

Registration Deadline: April 1st

Tournament Days: pick any day from April 15-May 15

Register Your Team Now!



White-tailed Hawk - Betsy Cross

Quick Explanation of Tournament Categories:

- The Texas Two-Stop Tournament. Visit two sites only and see how many species you can tally in a 48-hour period (up to 24 hours per site).
- The Big Sit! Bird from a 17-foot diameter circle with your friends, family, or colleagues! This category is great for teams that have one or two “ringer” birders or large teams.
- State Park Tournament, Big Sit! or Sunrise-to-Noon Tournaments. Ideal for teams seeking a more laid-back day without too much traveling around and mixed age teams.
- Regional Big Day. Perfect for those who want to test their skills against others in a specific part of the state, while birding for most or all of a 24-hour period. Categories are separated by age groups: Roughwings (13&younger), Gliders (age 14-18), or Adults (19&up).
- Statewide Tournament. Take on birders throughout Texas for either the Statewide Big Day Tournament (one day) or the Statewide Weeklong Tournament (six consecutive days).
- Human-Powered Tournament. Go birding by canoe, on a bike, walking, or with any other non-motorized transportation and see how many birds you can count in a day!

For inspiration, check out this short video highlighting the Big Sit!

Tournament: <https://youtu.be/x6bSYNzP1wQ>. Go to www.birdingclassic.org for complete rules, registration fees, and more information. There are even tip sheets from past winners to give you pointers as you get started. Funds raised from registration fees and sponsorships go toward habitat conservation projects around the state that some winning teams help select. The more money we raise, the more grants we can award! Hope to see you join the fun this year!

PROJECTS UPCOMING IN THE NEXT COUPLE WEEKS

Lance Jones - lancej1s@gmail.com

Annual Great Texas River Clean Up

March 3 (HCMN Project #407) 9:00 – 12:00

Link to register with info:

<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f094aafad2ca5fd0-33rd>

River Planting Day at Crook Park

March 9 10:00 – 12:00 [#1704] Park in parking lot on corner of Riverside Dr. and Cheatham St. Planting site is near mill channel where invasive species have recently been removed. Wear pants and closed toed shoes. Tools will be provided.

Contact Eric Weeks eweeks@sanmarcostx.gov

Sessom Workday

March 17 10:00 – 12:00 [#1402] Remove and drag bamboo and construct brush dams in Sessom Natural Area – meet at Ella Lofts parking lot (817 Chestnut St). Parking at 6 designated park user spots in Ella Lofts parking lot or along street. Wear pants and closed toed shoes. Food and drinks provided afterwards at neighbor's house.

Contact Eric Weeks eweeks@sanmarcostx.gov

Golden-cheeked Warbler Survey of Purgatory Creek natural area

March 1 - May 31 -- [#424] Requires training. Follows USFWS protocols.

Contact Rebekah Rylander rebekah.j.rylander@gmail.com for additional information



WESTCAVE CONSERVATION EVENTS



WILDFLOWER WALKS

10:30am
April 21
April 28
May 12

BIRDS & BREW

May 5, 2018
5:30pm



SPRING BIRD WALKS

8:00am
March 26
April 14
April 23
May 7

WESTCAVE.ORG/EVENTS

REGISTRATION REQUIRED. \$15 PER PERSON. WEATHER PERMITTING.



WESTCAVE
OUTDOOR DISCOVERY CENTER

Westcave Preserve Contact

Amber Ahrens Gosselin
Conservation Director
Westcave Outdoor Discovery Center
24814 Hamilton Pool Road
Round Mountain, Texas 78663
830-825-3174
amber@westcave.org
www.westcave.org



Photograph of the sign
at Charro Ranch Park
that mentions the
HCMN Contribution

STEWARDS OF THE LAND

Garry Child – “I wanted to share this beautiful song, written by a dear friend of mine, Bruce MacKenzie, who I volunteered with for many years at Wild Basin. In addition to being a lover and steward of the land, he is an excellent musician and songwriter. I think it speaks well to all of us whom love and care for all of Mother Earth. Please listen and enjoy, and think about our role in this universe, and how we leave it.”

Editors Note: Permission granted by Garry Child & Bruce MacKenzie

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21_JzOxYRig

I walked where there was
once a stream
and
rested by its side.

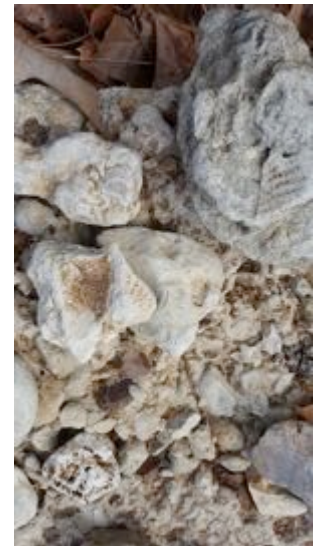


JACOBS WELL WATERSHED WALK

The 1.5 hour guided tour at Jacobs Well Natural Area (JW) is the first of 4 planned watershed walks. Fourteen adults attended including 7 Hays County Master Naturalists. The walk begins with a short introduction discussing what is a Watershed and introducing the geologic terms used during the hike. The first stop is in the Dry Cypress Creek examining the features of the creek bed and a discussion of why the creek is dry.

The hike proceeds to the cliff face and wall to review the geological setting and many interesting features. Stops are made at the multiple pools of water exposed upstream from the main spring. At each pool, we look at the possible water pathways. The hike continues up the stairs to the classic cliff face overlooking JW. This stop is a great opportunity to give the history of JW, how it was created and view

the large fracture downstream from the opening. The tour continues via the uplands trail examining items of interest along the way back to the nature center.



UPCOMING WATERSHED WALK SCHEDULE

SAT. MARCH 17, APRIL 28, MAY 19

Contact Tom Jones @ <mailto:wimberleytom@gmail.com> to Sign-up (AT Approved)





Friends of Blue Hole

supports Blue Hole Regional Park - *the natural place to be.*

Raptors in the Park
Saturday March 31, 10 a.m
Christopher Blab Basketball Court
Blue Hole Regional Park

Qualifies for one hour of Advanced Training.

Susan Nenney
Executive Director
Friends of Blue Hole
P.O. Box 1601, Wimberley TX 78676
snenney@gmail.com
[512.289.8166](tel:512.289.8166)



Alternate Finch Feeder – Talon Dancer



MEMBER PHOTOS



Fox on Jane's deck, checking out the bird feeder – Jane Dunham



Honey bee, sweat bee AND a leafcutter bee all on the same bunch of mustard green flowers – Hope Shimek



Bluebird Nest-chick emerging- Bonnie Tull



A good ole anole lizard–Hope Shimek



Turtle in Westcave Plunge Pool-Tom Jones



Orange-crowned Warbler

Eva G. Frost



Cedar Waxwing

Eva G. Frost



Great Purple Hairstreak

Photos by Eva Frost

HAYS MN ON FACEBOOK

Find us, like us, share with us! Click icon for HaysMN Facebook page.

**NEWSLETTER**

Do you have some awesome photos or want to share a volunteer experience? Let us know! We are looking for interesting items for the newsletter. Contact Tom Jones wimberleytom@gmail.com or Betsy Cross betsy.cross@sbcglobal.net

HAYS MN FORUM

Join the Forum! It's a great way to connect with fellow naturalists, ask questions, and learn from each other. Click the Forum link. <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/haysmn>

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Watch your e-mails for upcoming volunteer opportunities! Check out the Projects Calendar for more information. <http://www.haysmn.org/calendar-projects.html>

HAVE YOUR PROJECT ADDED TO THE CALENDAR

Send requests to calendar@haysmn.org



LINKS TO PARTNERS, SPONSORS AND SITES OF INTEREST

CHAPTER PARTNERS

[Hill Country Alliance](#)
[Hill Country Photography Club](#)
[Holy Spirit Episcopal Church, Dripping Springs](#)
[International Dark Sky Association, Texas Section](#)
[Texas State University Wildlife Society](#)
[YMCA, Dripping Springs](#)

PROGRAM SPONSORS

[Texas Master Naturalist Program](#)
[Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service - Hays County Office](#)
[Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Alamo Area Chapter Capital Area Chapter](#)
[Highland Lakes Chapter](#)
[Hill Country Chapter](#)
[Lindheimer Chapter](#)
[Lost Pines Chapter](#)
[Other Texas Master Naturalist Chapters](#)

OTHER SITES OF INTEREST

[Austin EcoNetwork \(calendar\)](#)
[Austin Nature and Science Center](#)
[Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge](#)
[Bamberger Ranch](#)

[Austin Watershed Protection Department](#)
[Canyon Gorge](#)
[Citizens Alliance for Responsible Development](#)
[Emily Ann Theatre Butterfly Festival](#)
[Hill Country Outdoor Guide](#)
[Hornsby Bend Bird Observatory](#)
[Jacob's Well Natural Area](#)
[U.S. Drought Monitor](#)
[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#)
[U.S.D.A. Natural Resource Conservation Service](#)
[Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve](#)
[Wild Wonderings - AgriLIFE Extension's Wildlife and Fisheries blog](#)
[Wimberley Birding Society](#)

[LCRA Parks and Recreation](#)
[Native Plant Society of Texas](#)
[The Nature Conservancy of Texas](#)
[San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance](#)
[Texas Forest Service](#)
[TP&W Posters, Maps & Publications](#)
[Texas Riparian Association](#)
[Texas Sea Grant Program](#)
[Texas Society for Ecological Restoration](#)
[TreeFolks](#)
[U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#)

