



Officers
2002

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President's Column

Greetings—

Please join us on September 23rd to meet Maron Finley, the new Bastrop County Extension agent. Maron has an exciting list of projects he would like to work with the Master Naturalists on.

Maron comes to us from Cass County in far North East Texas where he was the county agent for the past 8 years. Prior to that he was an Ag teacher in Amarillo for 17 years.

You might guess that our eco region is quite different and exciting for Maron. I know that by working together TMN and Maron have some productive and fun times ahead.

—Carol



Fire Wise workshop

Don't forget the Fall Fire Fest, to be held at Fisherman's Park in Bastrop, Saturday, Sept. 28, from 10:00 Am to 4 PM. Although we've had some nice late summer rains, the potential for wild fires remains high, and is a long-term problem at the wildland/urban interface. In the summer of 2000, 33 homes and 53 other structures were destroyed by wildfires in Texas. Most of those homes could have been saved if their landscaping would have provided a buffer zone, or survivable space to protect it from wildfire. Contact Joan Russell at 321-2718 (joanrussell@ev1.net) for information on how you can help develop "fire-wise" landscaping materials for distribution to the community (see Volunteer Opportunities, page 3)

Texas is second-most biologically diverse state in U.S.

The Nature Conservancy

While Texas harbors more plants and animals than almost any state in the country, more than 10 percent of those species are considered rare or at risk of extinction, according to a new study released by The Nature Conservancy.

The study, *States of the Union: Ranking America's Biodiversity*, ranked Texas second in the nation for the overall number of different plant and animal species with a total of 6,273 species. Specifically, the Conservancy-commissioned report found that Texas hosts more species of birds (477) and reptiles (149) than any other state, and that Texas has the second-greatest number of species of mammals (159) and vascular plants (4,509). According to the report, Texas ranks third in the number of endemic species, with 340 species found nowhere else in the world.

Texas ranks highly in diversity and endemism, in part because of its geography. Occupying a central position along the nation's southern border, this vast state overlaps several major ecological regions, including the southwestern deserts, the Great Plains, the humid Gulf Coast, and, at the state's southern tip, the Mexican subtropics. As a result, many species reach their limits of distribution in Texas, and a strange blend of eastern and western species commingle within the state. Certain unusual landforms contribute to the state's high rankings, including the Edwards Plateau, a limestone region that supports some of the rarest species in the nation.

Unfortunately, this biological richness is also under threat. Approximately 27 Texas species are believed to be extinct, ranking Texas as fourth in the nation in the number of species lost.

The Texas Master Naturalist program is sponsored by the Texas Cooperative Extension Agency and by Texas Parks and Wildlife.



"This study paints both a hopeful and disturbing portrait," said James M. Sulentic, state director of The Nature Conservancy of Texas. "Texans have long recognized the great biological diversity of our state, from red-cockaded woodpeckers in the Big Thicket to ocelots in the Rio Grande Valley. At the same time, the large number of our species that are at risk reminds us that we must significantly increase our conservation efforts to protect this diversity for generations to come."

On the positive side of the equation, Sulentic noted that the Leoncita false foxglove (*Agalinis calycina*), a plant believed to be extinct in Texas, was recently rediscovered at the Conservancy's Diamond Y Springs Preserve in West Texas.

A complete copy of the study and rankings can be found online at www.nature.org.

The ultimate test of a moral society is the kind of world that it leaves to its children.
—Dietrich Bonhoeffer, German theologian

MARK YOUR CALENDAR-

Regular meetings of the Lost Pines Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist, are the 4th Monday of the month.

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Monday, September 23, 2002

6:30PM

Sacred Heart Church

SPEAKER MARON FINLEY, BASTROP COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

October 5, 2002. Please send information to Andy Butler (butler@mdanderson.org). We welcome relevant contributions, photos, announcements or other material relating to the mission of the Texas Master Naturalist program, particularly those pertaining our local area.

CHAPTER WEBSITE:

www.lostpinesmasternaturalist.org

Volunteer Opportunities

Right Here at Home Opportunities

- **Fall Fire Fest /Fire-Wise Landscaping Development** Ongoing and September 28th. Joan Russell is working with several agencies including the U.S. Forest Service, an urban forester from TPWD, and local fire departments to develop landscaping techniques and landscaping plant materials which will make our homes “fire-wise.” She is looking for volunteers to help with this project which includes develop a list of fire-wise native plants. Call Joan at 321-2718.
- **Bastrop/Buescher State Park Volunteer Activities—** Ongoing; Sue Fischer will serve as our liaison with these parks to provide them with assistance in a variety of activities from trail maintenance to leading group tours. This opportunity is in the development stage. For further information, please call Sue at 321-1308.
- **Lockhart Demonstration Garden—**Ongoing; contact Lytle Arche for the specific time, and details of future work dates, at 512-398-3122 or by E-mail l-arche@tamu.edu.
- **Public Dove Lease Surveys—**First two weekends of September in both Bastrop and Caldwell County. Monitor attendance and activity. Call Len Polasek at TPWD at 332-7280 for forms, recommended locations and instructions.
- **TPWD Wildlife Expo—**October 4th & 5th. Mark your calendar now for this fun day of community education at the Austin TPWD Headquarters.
- **GIS Software Input—**Take a short training course on this software and help our TPWD Wildlife Biologist map wildlife activity in a three county area. Call Len Polasek at 332-7280.

Other Opportunities

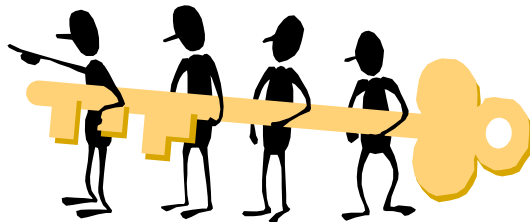
- **McKinney Roughs—**For information about our Chapter’s McKinney Roughs projects, contact Rick Johnson, 512-398-2357. For more information about volunteering at McKinney Roughs, call 512-303-5073, ext. 8040 (Bastrop Area) or toll-free, 800-776-5272, ext. 8040.
- **Wild Basin Preserve Trail Maintenance—**Second Saturday of each month (Sept 14; October 12), from 9:00 AM to noon. Volunteers are welcome to join Wild Basin Second Saturday crews, to help repair trails, control erosion, and make trails safer. Restoration projects and removal of non-native plants also help maintain the preserve. Wear sturdy shoes, bring water and dress for the weather. Tools and work gloves are available. For reservations, call (512) 327-7622, E-mail hike@wildbasin.org or visit the Wild Basin website, www.wildbasin.org .

- **Texas Horned Lizard Watch—**provides instructions for surveying the Texas State Reptile on your property or on public areas. Data from volunteers in the first year have helped biologists suggest possible relationships between fire ant distributions and the distribution of Texas horned lizards. Contact the Wildlife Diversity program at 1-800-792-1112, ext. 7011.
- **Texas Mussel Watch—**volunteers are helping document the presence or absence of native freshwater mussel species. To volunteer for Texas Mussel Watch, call the Wildlife Diversity Program at 1-800-792-1112, ext. 7011.
- **Texas Monarch Watch—**monitor the spring and fall migration of this familiar butterfly on your own property or public lands. Volunteers can call the Monarch Watch hotline at 1-800-468-9710 (in Austin, 326-2231) to report sightings of monarchs or hear a recorded message about the status of the migration in Texas. For more information about Texas Monarch Watch or to receive monitoring kit, call the Wildlife Diversity Program at 1-800-792-1112, ext. 7011.
- **Hummingbird Roundup—**provides instructions for monitoring hummingbirds, along with suggestions and supplies for improving hummingbird habitat on your property in Texas. For information, call the Wildlife Diversity Program at 1-800-792-1112, ext. 4644.
- **Texas Amphibian Watch—**a partner with the North American Amphibian Monitoring Program. Use field guides, web sites and audio tapes to learn to identify the various species of frogs and toads native to their area by sight and by listening to their calls. For more information about Texas Amphibian Watch or about related workshops, contact the Wildlife Diversity Program at 1-800-792-1112, ext. 7011.
- **Project Prairie Birds—**Answer questions about Texas’ wintering sparrows and their avian grassland neighbors. Project Prairie Birds can be conducted in any temperate grassland site. For more information, contact Cliff Shackelford, 512-912-7045 or by E-mail: clifford.shackelford@tpwd.state.tx.us.
- **Adopt-A-Species Projects—**Takes place on public properties that support populations of rare Texas plants or animals. Learn monitoring techniques. Volunteers agree to continue monitoring for a set period of time. Suitable for schools, club or civic groups. (Not available in all parts of the state). Contact the Wildlife Diversity Program at 1-800-792-1112, ext. 7011.
- **Remember—**Get approval *before* you begin a project for volunteer credit. Report your volunteer service to Janice Rampy (512-398-2357). Documenting your service hours helps you to become certified, and helps the Master Naturalist Program to justify support received from our sponsors

Advanced Training

Note: Please obtain **prior approval** for advanced training, and don't forget to **report** your hours!

- **Water Workshop**—September 28, Bamberger Ranch, Johnson City. Ranch personnel will show and explain Selah water development projects. Visit our lakes and dams and learn about their design and function, and how they were constructed. Identify soils, and learn their potential use in dam and pond construction, and also how to identify sites on your land that can hold water when ponds are properly constructed. Inexpensive projects, some that you can do yourself, to help you develop hidden water resources. Workshop includes some hiking, coffee breaks and lunch, dress for the weather. 8:30am-4:30pm, \$90/person (Discounts available for Master Naturalists). Contact selah@tstar.net or call (830) 868-4639.
- **Grasses Workshop: Range Management and Conservation**—October 6, Bamberger Ranch. An outdoor workshop at Selah learning about grasses. Whether you have springs, a well, or simply want a variety of healthy plants and trees growing on your land, grasses are your ally. We will be examining different rangesites, and ecological niches and discuss the role that grasses play in them. We will have demonstrations, "hands-on" collecting and identifying common grasses. A packet of information to take home, and some additional sources for help and information will also be provided. Includes some hiking, coffee breaks and lunch. Dress for the weather. 8:30am-4:30pm, \$90/person (Discounts available for Master Naturalists). Contact selah@tstar.net or call (830) 868-4639.
- **Monarch Watch Workshop**—October 8-10, Bamberger Ranch. Training to help with Texas Monarch Watch monitoring program. This workshop will take place at Bamberger Ranch. Contact Margaret Bamberger at selah@tstar.net or call (830) 868-4639.
- **Third Annual Statewide TMN Meeting and Advanced Training**—October 25-27, 2002, Mo Ranch in Hunt, Texas Numerous advanced training sessions. Mark your calendar! Details to follow.
- **New Chapter Coordinators Training**, November 14-15, 2002 at Welder Wildlife Refuge in Sinton, TX For details, call Michelle (979-458-2034; mhaggerty@wfsc.tamu.edu)



Events Around the State

Michelle Haggerty, State Program Coordinator

Chaparral Wildlife Management Field Day

September 19, 2002

Chaparral Wildlife Management Area, Artesia Wells, TX

9:00-9:30 a.m	Registration
9:30-12:00	Programs and Presentations
12:00	Lunch
1:00-2:00	Programs and Presentations
2:00-4:00	Tour of Chap. WMA

Major Topics:

- Brush Management for White-tailed Deer
- Quail Management and Population Monitoring - Getting Involved
- Wildlife and Livestock Diseases
- Range Plant Identification
- Habitat Management (burning and mechanical treatments)
- Ecology of Unique Non-Game Wildlife (Texas Indigo Snake, Horned Lizards)

\$10 REGISTRATION INCLUDES LUNCH

For more information, call Chip Ruthven at (830) 676-3413 or TWA at (800) 839-9453.

To reach Chaparral Wildlife Management Area (from San Antonio): Travel south on IH 35 and take Exit 56 at Artesia Wells. Go west on FM 133, approximately 8 miles to the main entrance on your right.

Leon River Restoration Project Field Day—Advanced Training

Wildlife Management Field Day—September 21, 2002 (8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.). Restoring Ecological and Economic Functions - "The Leon River Restoration Project" Gatesville High School, C-3 Ranch and Wolf's Den Ranch

Keynote Speaker: The Honorable Susan Combs, Texas Agriculture Commissioner

Topics to be highlighted:

- Cattle & Cowbirds, Water & Wildlife, Endangered Species & Brush Control - What is the Leon River Restoration Project?
- Landowner Incentives, From Brush Control to Cowbird Trapping
- Water Release - Can we restore Hydrologic Function with Brush Management?
- Plant I.D. and Vegetative Responses to Treatments/Planning Habitat Enhancements
- Fire as a Management Tool
- Integrating GIS and GPS Technology into Land Management Decisions

REGISTRATION INCLUDES LUNCH:

\$15 prior to September 15; \$20 after September 15. For more information, call Tamara Trail at (800) 839-9453 or Steve Manning at (254) 865-3225.