



## Officers

### President

Andy Butler  
512 321-1308

[butler@mdanderson.org](mailto:butler@mdanderson.org)

### Vice President

Alvin Cearley  
512 237-3021

[acearley@starband.net](mailto:acearley@starband.net)

### Secretary

Kathy McAleese  
512 321-2857

[kmcaleese@austin.rr.com](mailto:kmcaleese@austin.rr.com)

### Treasurer

Marie Medrano  
512 360-4172

### Past President

Elaine Cearley  
512 237-3021

[elainea@starband.net](mailto:elainea@starband.net)

### State Representative

Michal Hubbard  
512 303-5976

[michal@thecorporatecamera.com](mailto:michal@thecorporatecamera.com)

## President's Column

Andy Butler

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a great holiday season. As most of you know, I was elected your new chapter president in December, in a close, hard-fought campaign. I hope we can all continue to have productive and fun volunteer outings, and learn more about our natural environment during the coming year. However, I am in an unaccustomed position: after six years as newsletter editor, reminding the chapter president when it is time to write something for the newsletter, the hiking boot is now on the other foot!

First things first. Thanks SO much to Elaine Cearley for her OUTSTANDING two-term tenure as chapter president. The chapter accomplished a lot over that time, including two great groups of new Master Naturalist trainees (who are now increasingly active in the group), lots of certifications and re-certifications, outstanding representation at the state meeting, and new projects with our local partners and sponsors. Thanks also to last year's other officers, Jan Walter, Marie Medrano, Carol Reidy, and Michal Hubbard, and thanks to all the other board members and volunteers who made 2006 a successful year.

Expect familiar faces, as we have Marie back as treasurer, and Michal will again serve as our state representative. Kathy McAleese is our new secretary, and Alvin Cearley will be vice president.

So far, we have managed to put off a firm decision on the timing for our 2007 Class. So plan on this being a major topic for discussion at the January meeting (Jan 15, 6:30 PM at Bastrop State Park). It takes 2-3 months lead time (at least!) before the beginning of the course to ensure that we can find speakers for the appropriate dates. We already have information for contacting many speakers we've used before, so it's a matter of distributing the effort, and then following up to make sure that desired speakers are available. Obviously, there may be some instructors we haven't used before that would be good additions, so bring your ideas. We will also discuss other plans and chapter projects for the year ahead at the January meeting.

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## Individual Volunteer Projects

-Marsha Elrod

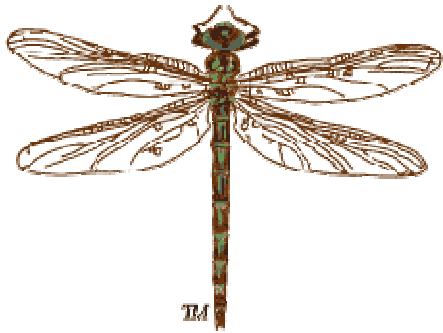
As our chapter grows, more of you are having ideas about volunteer projects and wondering what might be acceptable. I thought the first of the year would be a good time to address the topic as we start again on building hours toward yearly certification.

The state has established a set a guidelines for determining if a project can be considered appropriate for earning volunteer hours. Our chapter has incorporated these guidelines into our Request for Volunteer Project Approval form, which is

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## MISSION STATEMENT

To develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities.



## STATE PROGRAM CONTACTS

**Website:** <http://masternaturalist.tamu.edu>

**State Coordinator:** Michelle Haggerty,  
[mhaggerty@wfscgate.tamu.edu](mailto:mhaggerty@wfscgate.tamu.edu); 979 458-2034.

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

## SPONSOR CONTACTS

**Caldwell Co. Extension Office:** Rachel Bauer, CEA-AG/NR; [Caldwell-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:Caldwell-tx@tamu.edu); 512 398-3122

**Bastrop Co. Extension Office:** Maron Finley, CEA-AG/NR; [Bastrop-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:Bastrop-tx@tamu.edu); 512 581-7186

**Bastrop/Caldwell Co. Wildlife Biologist:** Meredith Longoria, 804 Pecan, Bastrop, [mltwpd@onr.com](mailto:mltwpd@onr.com); 512 332-7280.



## CHAPTER CALENDAR

Chapter meetings alternate between Bastrop State Park's Refectory and the Red Rock Community Center and are normally held at 6:30 PM on the third Monday of each month. Meetings are open to members, prospective members, and the general public.

### January

**Monday, January 15— Chapter Meeting:** Bastrop SP Refectory, 6:30 PM. This will be a planning and strategy meeting, with a focus on our next training class and ideas for volunteer projects. Unlike most of our regular meetings, this will count as volunteer time (Chapter Development).

### February

**Monday, February 19— Chapter Meeting & Advanced Training:** Red Rock Community Center, 6:30 PM. Stephen Clarke, Texas Forest Service, will give a presentation on insects of the area, including some collected specimens.

## Newsletter Deadline

Deadline for the next issue is **Feb 7, 2007**. We welcome relevant contributions, photos, announcements or other material relating to the mission of the Texas Master Naturalist program, particularly those pertaining to our local area. Please send information to Marsha Elrod: [melrod1@earthlink.net](mailto:melrod1@earthlink.net) 512 321-7400, or Vernon Berger: [vberger@austin.rr.com](mailto:vberger@austin.rr.com) 512 454-0840.

## CHAPTER WEBSITE

[www.lostpinesmasternaturalist.org](http://www.lostpinesmasternaturalist.org)

Please check our website for updated event information and for links to many resources about our region's natural history.

## LOST PINES CHAPTER YAHOO GROUP

Subscribe to our Yahoo Group to keep up with the latest Chapter happenings. Send an email to [LPMN-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:LPMN-subscribe@yahoogroups.com) or log on to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/LPMN/>.

## REPORTING TRAINING & VOLUNTEER HOURS

Send your advanced training and volunteer hours reports to Marsha Elrod: [melrod1@earthlink.net](mailto:melrod1@earthlink.net) or mail to

187 Billingsley Hts  
Cedar Creek TX 78612

# Volunteer Opportunities

- **Bastrop State Park Work Day**, Saturday, Jan 20, 9:00-Noon. We will do some light maintenance on the self-guided interpretive trail (trimming, etc.), and work on removing some of the invasive English ivy and Japanese honeysuckle that grows near it. Bring gloves, clippers, or loppers. Meet at 9 AM at the "Carrizo Interpretive Trail" (which used to be known as the Old Settler's Historic Trail). From Park headquarters, turn right onto Loop 1A and continue past the Creekside Camping area to the grassy clearing near the trailhead. Contact either Sue Fischer at [smfischer@mdanderson.org](mailto:smfischer@mdanderson.org) or Andy Butler at [butler@mdanderson.org](mailto:butler@mdanderson.org), 512 321-1308 for more information.
- **Colorado River Refuge First Saturday Monitoring**— Kathy McAleese leads monthly monitoring surveys at the Colorado River Refuge. The next one will be February 3 from 9:00-11:00 or so. This time of year, the focus will be mostly on birds, so bring your binoculars. Dress for the weather. The CRR is located in Tahitian Village. From the entrance (stop light at the intersection of Loop 150 with Highway 71), take Tahitian Drive about 1.9 miles until it dead ends at Riverside. Turn right on Riverside. The pavement ends after about a mile, shortly past the Pine Forest Golf Course clubhouse. Continue 0.7 miles on the gravel road to a clearing at the CRR. Contact Kathy at 512 718-1313 or [kmcaleese@austin.rr.com](mailto:kmcaleese@austin.rr.com) for more information.
- **Friends of the Colorado River Refuge Clean-up**, Jan 13, noon– 4:00. Meet at the CRR. Trash bags will be furnished. Some gloves and tools will be available, but bring your own if you have them.
- **Bastrop State Park Interpretive Hikes**— Ongoing: Saturday mornings (10:00 AM) "Discover the Lost Pines" interpretive hikes at Bastrop State Park. Hikes start again in February. To help, contact Sue Fischer at 512 321-1308; or email [smfischer@mdanderson.org](mailto:smfischer@mdanderson.org).
- **Great Backyard Bird Count** - Feb 16-19. The 10th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society. The GBBC site provides an on-line bird identification guide and tips on tricky ID's. In addition to submitting your check list, you can compete in the winter bird photo contest. For information on how to participate, go to [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc). It's easy and fun!
- **Earth Science Outdoor Laboratory**—Lockhart State Park and Lockhart's Clear Fork Creek Elementary School are collaborating in a series of monthly outdoor classroom instructional programs designed to increase the knowledge base of fifth grade earth science students. The program will be conducted at Lockhart State Park. Volunteers will work with Liz Larue, LSP interpretive ranger. Anyone who has an interest in the earth sciences, the natural environment, and our youths'

education is qualified to instruct a lab class, and three volunteers are needed each month. For more information and to volunteer, contact Liz LaRue at [Liz.Larue@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:Liz.Larue@tpwd.state.tx.us).

- **Hornsby Bend Monthly Bird Survey** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sat, 7:00 and 4:00. All levels of birders are welcome. The survey is a great way to improve your skills since teams are formed matching experienced and novice birders. For more information see <http://www.hornsbybend.org/>.

## —Individual Volunteer Projects. Continued

available on both our website and the Yahoo group site.

If you have an idea for an individual or chapter project, first review the guidelines, listed below. If they seem to fit your project, then download either the PDF or MSWord version of the form from either internet location, complete it, and send it to me. I'll share it with the other volunteer services committee members and notify you when it is approved.

You might also want to review the "Examples and Ratings of Actual Volunteer Service Project Requests" included with this month's newsletter for examples of what is and is not considered an acceptable project. On the reverse side is the new form to use for reporting your hours for 2007.

We are always looking for additional volunteer opportunities for everyone, so please don't hesitate to submit any requests you think might be appropriate. The purpose of the forms is not to discourage new projects, but to ensure we have a written record that a project has been approved for credit. It will take only a few minutes!

## State Guidelines For Evaluating Individual Volunteer Service Projects

1. Is the proposed service project representative of the goals, practices and teachings of the Texas Master Naturalist Program?
2. How does the project address a pressing naturalist, natural resource management, chapter and/or partner need for meaningful service or resources?
3. What is the scope of the project in terms of when it would need to be conducted, where, estimated time needed to complete or maintain per month, how many volunteers would be needed, etc.?
4. Is the project within the Chapter's service area and ecological training?
5. How does the project allow the chapter to focus and/or create visibility, identity and/or recruitment for the chapter?
6. How can the project's impact on the community and our natural resources be measured?

# Advanced Training

- **Texas Wildlife Habitat Workshop** – Sat January 13. 8:30-4:00, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. Kelly Bender of TPWD and Bill Stout of National Wildlife Federation are teaming up to provide a Wildlife Habitat Gardening Workshop. A nominal fee will be charged. Lunch is included. Learn all about how to create a vibrant, rich garden full of native plants and exciting native wildlife. This full day seminar provides in-depth tips and techniques for creating a Texas Wildscape/ Backyard Wildlife Habitat. Knowledgeable speakers cover everything from garden design and choosing the right plants, to providing food, water and shelter for wildlife. The program includes educational exhibits, hands-on activities, and a tour of the grounds with an eye for habitat. To register or for questions, contact Bill Stout at 512 476-9805 or [stout@nwf.org](mailto:stout@nwf.org) or Fax: 512 476-9810. For questions contact Kelly Bender at 512 308-0979 or [kelly.bender@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:kelly.bender@tpwd.state.tx.us).
- **Sparrow Workshop** - Feb 3, 7:30-6:30, Flying X Ranch, Balcones Canyonlands NWR, west of Austin. Led by sparrow experts Byron Stone, Bill Reiner, and Chuck Sexton. Class size: 30 - 35. Registration is limited, so apply ASAP. Classroom sessions will be held at the Flying X Ranch with field trips to Balcones Canyonlands NWR. Workshop Price: \$40 per person for Friends of Balcones Canyonlands NWR members; \$65 for nonmembers. Save \$10 - Join Friends and pay \$55 for workshop. Price includes breakfast and lunch. For registration and additional information: <http://friendsofbalcones.org/sparrowFest2007.html>
- **Go Native U** –starts Mar 17, LBJ Wildflower Center. Designed to teach gardeners of all skill levels to become certified native plant gardeners. Classes teach both the benefits and how-to of gardening native. Classes may be taken individually or as a series on Saturdays at the Wildflower Center. Sign up for the entire course at [Go Native U courses](#) and receive a \$30 discount.
- **Global Warming** - March 20, 7:30 PM, Paramount Theater. Tim Flannery and Elizabeth Kolbert, two of the leading voices on climate issues, discuss the causes and impacts of global warming as part of KLRU's Engaging Speaker series. Tickets are required and can be purchased on-line. For more information, go to <http://www.klrutv.org/spark/2007/flannery-kolbert.html>.
- **Bamberger Ranch Wildflower Field Day** – May 5, 9:00-12:30, \$15. Spend a morning with botanist Laura Sanchez in the fields and woods around Selah identifying wildflowers.
- **Bamberger Ranch Land Stewardship Workshop** – May 12, 8:30–4:30. \$100. A day on the Ranch with emphasis on "Stewardship" for the large or small landowner who wants to know how to improve land for all plant and animal species.
- **Bamberger Ranch Water Workshop** – May 19, 8:30-4:30, \$100. Learn about the design and function

of dams and lakes, how to identify sites on your land that can hold water when ponds are properly constructed, and inexpensive projects to help you develop hidden water resources. For more information on this and the 2 workshops listed above, go to <http://www.bambergeranch.org/tours/>.

- **Ecological Literacy Days** – Jan 27, Feb 24, & last Saturday each month, 9:00-1:00 at Hornsby Bend. Combining volunteer work with learning about local ecology, the Ecological Literacy Day begins with several hours of outdoor work - ranging from trail maintenance to habitat restoration to work in the native plant nursery - and ends with at least an hour of learning about local ecology - birds, bugs, and more! Wear boots and work clothing, and be sure to bring your binoculars. For more information contact Kevin Anderson at [Kevin.Anderson@ci.austin.tx.us](mailto:Kevin.Anderson@ci.austin.tx.us) or 512 972-1960
- **Land Steward Training on Austin's Water Quality Protection Lands** –Jan 13 & 14. The Hill Country Foundation is conducting a 2-day training workshop to assist Austin's Water Quality Protection Lands in their efforts to provide conservation education. The WCD program will manage and direct the activities of volunteers completing the classroom and hands-on field training. Activities will include plant identification, seed collecting, reseeding, cave clean outs, tree planting, and others. Volunteers will be trained to lead groups of volunteers in performing some of the tasks mentioned on a recurring basis and with minimal supervision. For more information, please contact Mary Gay Maxwell at 472-5958, or [marygaymaxwell@sbcglobal.net](mailto:marygaymaxwell@sbcglobal.net).

—President's Column, Continued

It's also time to reset the clock on your annual volunteer certification. The exception to this is that those in the 2006 class who have not yet been certified have until June of this year (1 year after the last formal class) to complete their initial 40 hours of volunteer time and 8 hours of advanced training. By the way, 2007 will be the year of the shrimp pin. Remember to submit your hours on the NEW volunteer activity forms (available on the chapter website), to Marsha Elrod.

## Nature Quotes

The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quiet, alone with the heavens, nature and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be and that God wishes to see people happy, amidst the simple beauty of nature.

—Anne Frank