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President's Column

-Andy Butler

Springtime is migration season. Everyday we see flocks of birds heading north. I saw only a single laggard American goldfinch at the feeder this weekend, so its cousins may be on their way north, too. It's also time for master naturalists to migrate into the outdoors for all the spring activities coming up. For those of you who like to bird or identify plants, I highly recommend Kathy McAleese's monthly Colorado River Refuge monitoring walks, which are usually held on the first Saturday of the month (e.g., April 7). I've been on a couple of these walks and am happy that plants are now popping up –and blooming. Most are stationary enough to give me a fighting chance to identify them, unlike the birds. Whatever your pleasure, birds or plants, it's a great way to spend a Saturday morning.

If you'd rather spend a couple of hours describing the beauties and significance of the Lost Pines region to visitors at Bastrop State Park, this is also a great time of the year. There are lots of visitors, and, with the leaves out, it's easier to distinguish those black jack and post oaks from one another. And I know Sue would welcome more volunteers to help out, between now and the end of May, with these interpretive walks (every Saturday, 10 AM). If you like activities that result in immediate gratification, join Pines and Prairies Land Trust on Saturday, March 17, to help with their spring cleanup of the Colorado River Refuge. Contact Joan Russell at 512-308-1911 if you plan to attend.

If you prefer a volunteer activity with less walking involved, we have events coming up for you, too. I hope some of you were able to help Bill Brooks this week (spring break) with his Junior Angler program at the Buescher State Park lake. If not, he will need volunteers again for his summer programs, beginning June 2. And you don't need to know how to fish. Bill teaches the kids about fish habitat, water safety, and knot tying. We also have various chapter service activities that need volunteers. Rachel Riffe is organizing our booth this year for Bastrop's Yesterfest on April 28. Please contact her if you'd like to help for a couple of hours. We also need one or more volunteers to update our chapter display, which we can use at community events, or at next fall's state meeting.

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Advanced Training Guidelines

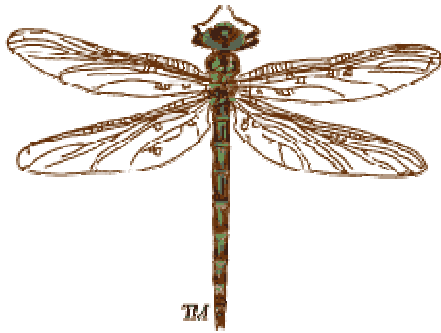
-- Marsha Elrod

As "Keeper of the Hours" and newsletter editor, I work closely with Andy, our other officers, and training committee members to identify and publish advanced training opportunities for our chapter. While we do our best to include what we think are relevant and convenient classes, you are certainly not limited to only what is published in this newsletter or what Andy may include in an e-mail announcement. Many times there are excellent training courses available that we either may not learn about or may find out about too late to include in the newsletter. So how do

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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; 979 458-2034.

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

SPONSOR CONTACTS

Caldwell Co. Extension Office: Rachel Bauer, CEA-AG/NR; Caldwell-tx@tamu.edu; 512 398-3122

Bastrop Co. Extension Office: Maron Finley, CEA-AG/NR; Bastrop-tx@tamu.edu; 512 581-7186

Bastrop/Caldwell Co. Wildlife Biologist: Meredith Longoria, 804 Pecan, Bastrop, 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.

March

Monday, March 19— 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).

April

Monday, April 16 -- Chapter Meeting: Red Rock Community Center, 6:30 PM. Speaker to be announced

Newsletter Deadline

Deadline for the next issue is **April 6, 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 512 321-7400.

CHAPTER WEBSITE

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 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 or mail to

187 Billingsley Hts
Cedar Creek TX 78612

Volunteer Opportunities

- **Colorado River Refuge First Saturday Monitoring** -- Kathy McAleese leads monthly monitoring surveys at the Colorado River Refuge. The next one will be April 2 from 9:00-11:00 or so. Bring your binoculars as we will be looking both for birds and new plant life. Dress for the weather. The CRR is located in Tahitian Village past the Pine Forest Golf Course clubhouse 0.7 miles beyond where the pavement ends. Contact Kathy at 512 718-1313 or kmcaleese@austin.rr.com for more information.
- **Bastrop State Park Interpretive Hikes** -- Ongoing: Saturday mornings (10:00 AM) "Discover the Lost Pines" interpretive hikes at Bastrop State Park. Hikes start again February 17 and continue through May. To help, contact Sue Fischer at 512 321-1308 or email smfischer@mdanderson.org.
- **Bastrop State Park Nature Surveys** – A leader and volunteers are needed to start a monthly survey at BSP similar to the CRR survey led by Kathy. Contact Andy if you would like to participate in or lead this survey.
- **TPWD Junior Angler Program** – Wed, Mar 14, Sat Jun 16, Jul 21, Buescher State Park; Jun 2, Jul 14, Bastrop State Park, 8:15 – 12:30. Volunteers are needed to assist with free learn-to-fish clinics for boys and girls ages 6 to 13. Parents must accompany their children. Park entry is free for volunteers, and training will be provided on site. At least 7 volunteers are needed for each clinic. For additional information and to volunteer, contact Bill Brooks at 512 581-0377 or Bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu.
- **Earth Science Outdoor Laboratory** -- Apr 13, May 11, 8:00 – 1:00, Lockhart State Park. LSP and Lockhart's Clear Fork Creek Elementary School are collaborating in a series of monthly outdoor classroom programs designed to increase the knowledge base of fifth grade earth science students. Volunteers 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. Three volunteers are needed each month. For more information and to volunteer, contact Liz LaRue at Liz.Larue@tpwd.state.tx.us.
- **Colorado River Refuge Clean-up** – Mar 17, 10:00 – 2:00. Meet at Bastrop County WCID#2 building at Tahitian Village (first left after entrance). The scheduled January clean up day was flooded out so has been rescheduled for March 17. Please come help pick up debris washed up by recent floods, construction trash, and other stuff dumped by trashy individuals. Pines and Prairies Land Trust will provide drinks, chips, fruit, cookies, and trash bags. Bring a sandwich or whatever for lunch. Hats and bandannas may be necessary or desirable. Please wear sturdy, snake proof shoes, long pants, gloves, and sunscreen. PPLT would appreciate any of you with pickups (and flatbed trailers) helping to haul the debris up to the County Waste Transfer Station

towards the end of the clean up. Please RSVP if you can come so they will know how many to prepare for. Contact Joan Russell at joanrussell@cebridge.net or call Pines and Prairies at 512-308-1911.

- **Training Class Committee** – A chair and volunteers are needed to plan and organize the 2007 LPMN training class. If you can't make this month's meeting and are interested in helping out, contact Andy Butler.
- **Hornsby Bend Monthly Bird Survey** – 2nd 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/>.

—Advanced Training Guidelines, Continued

you know if you can get advanced training credit for attending such courses?

First, have a look at the advanced training guidelines (page 5) developed by Mark McClelland and presented at our February meeting. They will soon be posted on our web site and the Yahoo group site. Mark has compiled 2 lists: "Generally Approved Advanced Training" and "Generally Approved Sponsors." Any course on a topic listed under "Generally Approved Advanced Training" is approved if taken through one of the "Generally Approved Sponsors." Simple! When reporting the training, please provide the names of both the course and the sponsor to assure you receive credit.

If you don't think your class fits neatly into one of the categories listed in the guidelines, then you should complete the "Request for Advanced Training Approval" form found on our website. This is a PDF file, but I will be creating an MSWord version for posting soon, so you can e-mail it in to either Alvin Cearley or me. It is included on the reverse side of page 5 in this newsletter.

The list of generally approved training topics and sponsors is a living document and will be periodically updated as needed, so always check the website first. Any questions? You can always get in touch with a member of the training committee, which includes me, Alvin Cearley, Bill Brooks, Mark McClelland, and Helen Parish.

Nature Quotes

Good heavens, of what uncostly material is our earthly happiness composed... if we only knew it. What incomes have we not had from a flower, and how unfailing are the dividends of the seasons.

~James Russell Lowell

Advanced Training

- **Lunchtime Lecture Series on Urban Ecology --** Center for Environmental Research, Mon Mar 19, Mon Apr 16, noon-1:00, Waller Center Rm 105, Austin. Kevin Anderson journeys into the urban wastelands and explores the marginal nature found there. Marginal nature is the focus of his dissertation in geography, and these free talks will examine both the ecological and the cultural significance of urban margins in American urban landscapes as well as within Austin. Waller Ctr is at 625 E 10th St, between Red River and IH 35. For additional information contact Kevin Anderson at Kevin.anderson@ci.austin.tx.us or 972-1960.
- **Texas Wildscapes: A Gardening For Wildlife Habitat Workshop--** Sat Mar 17, 8:30-4:00, Center for Environmental Research, Hornsby Bend. \$25. Kelly Bender of TPWD and Bill Stout of National Wildlife Federation are teaming up to provide a Wildlife Habitat Gardening Workshop. Designed especially for Texas Master Naturalists™ and Habitat Stewards™, this workshop will help participants learn how to create wildlife gardens where they live, work, and play. In addition, there will be a special session to learn how to spread the backyard habitat message. Deadline for early registration is Mar 9. To register or for questions, contact Kelly Bender at kelly.bender@tpwd.state.tx.us or 512 308-0979. Information flyer and registration form have been uploaded to our Yahoo group website.
- **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** - Mar 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.klr.org/spark/2007/flannery-kolbert.html>.
- **Project WILD Aquatic Workshop** -- Mar 23, 8:30-3:30, Austin. Learn how to teach young people about aquatic wildlife and ecosystems using fun, hands-on educational activities. Participants will sample activities and receive a curriculum and activity guide. Activities are adaptable for all grade levels, integrated with core subject curricula and aligned to the TEKS. Teachers, informal educators and youth group leaders may take the training. Held at the Region 13 Education Service Center; 5701 Springdale Rd, 8:30 - 3:30.; fee \$35; pre-registration required, contact Jennifer Jordan at Jordan@esc13.txed.net or call 512 919-5368.
- **Exploring Nature through Tracks and Signs** – Apr 19, 7:00 PM, Travis Audubon Society (TAS). Speaker is

Dwight Wilson. The meeting is free and will be held at LCRA, 3700 Lake Austin Boulevard, Austin 78703. For details see

<http://www.travisaudubon.org/meetings.html>.

- **Animal Tracking and Signs** -- Apr 21. This 8-hour class by Dwight Wilson will be held outdoors in the Austin. area. The class fee is \$45 for TAS chapter members and \$55 for non-members. Class size is limited. See <http://www.travisaudubon.org/classes.html> for details. To register, e-mail Roxie Roachat at tastrack@austin.rr.com or call 345-6935.
- **Balcones Songbird Festival** – Fri Apr 27 - Mon Apr 30, Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge: a celebration of nature through a collection of interpretive events to experience birds, butterflies and wildflowers. All Nature Tour (NT) events qualify as advanced training. All Family Events (FE) also qualify except for *Singing Like a Bird* and *Miss Poppy the Clown*. For information on the Festival, click on "Events" at <http://www.balconessongbirdfestival.org>.
- **Bamberger Ranch Wildflower Field Day** – May 5, 9:00-12:30, \$15. Spend a morning with botanist Laura Sanchez identifying wildflowers at Selah.
- **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. TMNs receive a 25% discount. For more information on these 2 events, go to <http://www.bambergeranch.org/tours/>

—President's Column Continued

And the March 19 chapter meeting, at Bastrop State Park will be a chapter development activity. We will use this time to make decisions concerning this year's basic training class: when it will begin, and who will help contact speakers and handle the details of the classes. There is quite a bit to do in putting on the class, but if we spread the workload no one person will be overwhelmed, and many of us will have a chance to contribute. Also, bring your ideas on potential group volunteer activities, speakers, and topics for future programs (advanced training). See you at Bastrop State Park. 6:30 PM, March 19.

A Murder of Crows

This month, see if you can come up with .the collective nouns for this group of critters...

1. hogs
2. hummingbirds
3. hippos
4. hedgehogs

See below for answers!

1. sounder 2. charm 3. bloat 4. prickle

LPMN 2007 GENERALLY APPROVED ADVANCED TRAINING

-- Mark McClelland

General Approvals: All "Generally Approved Advanced Training" is approved if taken through "Generally Approved Sponsors."

Training may include formal classes, lectures, workshops, guided walks, or other activities with specific learning objectives. It must be relevant to the Texas eco-system, and courses relating to our local ecological region are preferable. For instance, a lecture on "Flora of the Big Bend" would be acceptable; one on "Common Sparrows of Central Texas" would be preferable; a presentation on "Butterflies of Cost Rica" would not qualify.

Advanced training should not be confused with volunteer work. Training on techniques for conducting plant surveys would qualify as advanced training. Actually conducting a plant survey is considered volunteer work.

If there is any doubt regarding the proposed advanced training, a request for approval should be submitted prior to attending the training. Submit requests to Alvin Cearley at acearley@starband.net or Marsha Elrod at melrod1@earthlink.net.

Generally Approved Advanced Training

- Wildlife identification – includes mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, fish, mussels, butterflies, dragonflies/damselflies, insects and other invertebrates
- Plant identification – includes trees, shrubs, vines, wildflowers, grasses, fungi, lichens. Mosses, and other recognized plant types
- Wildlife/Plant survey training.
- Field trip leader and docent training.
- Native habitat evaluation, management, and restoration training.
- Native/Natural gardening techniques.
- Geology and soils
- General ecology and ecosystems
- Rangeland ecology and management
- Archeology and paleontology

Generally Approved Sponsors

- Texas Parks and Wildlife
- Texas Cooperative Extension Service
- University of Texas
- National Wildlife Federation
- Center for Environmental Research
- Hornsby Bend Bird Observatory
- Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
- Native Plant Society of Texas
- McKinney Roughs (LCRA)
- Wild Basin
- Friends of Balcones Canyonlands NWR
- Travis Audubon Society
- Bastrop County Audubon Society
- Austin Butterfly Forum
- Horned Lizard Conservation Society

Request for Advanced Training Approval
Texas Master Naturalist Lost Pines Chapter

Name: _____ Date: _____

Purpose: To request approval for an advanced training opportunity that has not previously been approved by listing in the newsletter or chapter documents.

Does the Advanced Training opportunity: (please check those applicable)

1. _____ **Promote continued learning and development of naturalist skills?**
2. _____ **Provide Master Naturalists with knowledge and skills to work in volunteer efforts?**
3. _____ **Provide Master Naturalists an opportunity to focus their interests in one or a few specific topics?**
4. _____ **Provide natural resource management issues and information applicable to Texas?**
5. _____ **Build on the core curriculum initially provided by the local chapter?**
6. _____ Provide practical information and training for application in volunteer efforts?
7. _____ Take advantage of local partnerships?
8. _____ Direct trained volunteers toward specific programs in need of their services?

Advanced Training opportunities must meet the following criteria: 1-5. It is suggested that the remaining criteria also be a part of the opportunity.

Describe this training event, including dates and location, speaker or manner of instruction:

Instructions: Present this form to a member of the Advanced Training Committee. After approval, attach this form to your hours report when submitting hours for this activity.

Approved by: _____ Date: _____