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President's Column

-Andy Butler

Spring is always a busy time of the year, and as usual there are many events of interest to Master Naturalists. Be sure to attend our May 21 chapter meeting at Bastrop State Park. Nicholas Cowey from LCRA McKinney Roughs will give a presentation on grass identification (advanced training credit) and may also have a few words about volunteer opportunities at McKinney Roughs. Carol Reidy and I represented the chapter at the Roughs's Earth Day festival and had some good discussions with the LCRA staff concerning both volunteer activities and use of the LCRA facilities for classes. Although I don't have specifics yet, I know that Alvin Cearley is planning to follow Nicholas's presentation with a grass ID field trip, perhaps the following weekend. We will also hear more from Louise Ridlon at the May meeting about our new Bastrop State Park monitoring activity. And, we will have a super top-secret surprise presentation, so be sure to attend!!

Also, coming up on June 2nd is the Bastrop County Health Fair at Smithville High School. We've had a booth at this event for the last several years, and it is a good place to recruit new members. If you would like to help with this booth, give me a call. Thanks to Rachel Riffe and Vernon Berger for presenting our display at Yesterfest. I understand that a number of folks indicated interest in our class, and that many people took home tree seedlings to plant.

If you've ever been to Bamberger Ranch, near Johnson City, you'll want to note the publication of "Water from Stone" by Jeffery Green, the story of J. David Bamberger and how he turned "the sorriest piece of land in Blanco County" into a model of land restoration (TAMU Press: <http://www.tamu.edu/upress/>). The book is illustrated by Margaret Bamberger, and there will be a book signing and exhibit of the artwork at Kingfisher Fine Art and Music in Elgin (116 Depot St) on May 19 from 4:00 to 8:00 pm.

For those of you who missed our April meeting, we finalized Monday, August 13, as

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A Walk in the Park

-- Louise Ridlon

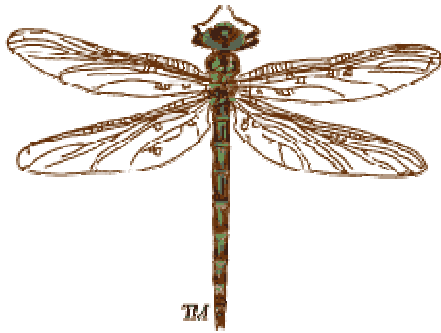
Turn a walk in the park into volunteer hours! Jamie Hackett, interpretive ranger for Bastrop State Park, is creating a database of month-by-month naturalist information to share with park visitors. She would like our help in making surveys of species seen each month along the park trails. This can be done by individuals or small groups, any time of month, any time of day. The more observations, the better.

Stop by the park office and obtain a free volunteer pass, pick a trail, and make notes on what you see and hear. You can focus on flowering plants, fungi, butterflies, odonates, herps, birds, mammals and their signs...whatever your area(s) of familiarity and interest.

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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. TPWD Wildlife Biologist:
Meredith Longoria, 804 Pecan, Bastrop,
mltwpd@onr.com; 512 332-7280.



Newsletter Deadline

Deadline for the next issue is **June 8, 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 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.

May

Monday, May 21 – Chapter Meeting: Bastrop State Park Refectory, 6:30 PM. Nicholas Cowey, Environmental Education Coordinator for McKinney Roughs (LCRA), will speak and offer tips on identifying Texas grasses.

June

Monday, June 18 – Chapter Meeting: Red Rock Community Center. Jason Spangler will speak on the Disappearing Tallgrass Prairies of Texas. Jason is a board member and treasurer of the Native Prairies Association of Texas (NPAT), and active in the Austin chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT). Jason is the NPAT co-chair of the NPSOT-NPAT 2007 Joint Symposium.

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 bird and plant monitoring surveys at the Colorado River Refuge. Time and day may vary from month to month, due to weather or other scheduling conflicts. The next survey is scheduled for June 2 from 9:00-11:00, or so. Bring your binoculars and field guides, as we will be looking both for birds and new plant life. Dress for the weather; boots are advisable. 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 continue through the end of May. To help, contact Sue Fischer at 512 321-1308 or email smfischer@mdanderson.org.
- **Bastrop State Park Nature Surveys** – Louise Ridlon has volunteered to lead nature surveys at Bastrop State Park similar to the CRR survey led by Kathy McAleese. Refer to her article “A Walk in the Park” on page 1 for details. Contact her at 512 985-5064 or fridlon@hotmail.com if you would like to participate.
- **Trans-Texas Quail Count** – Sat May 5 - Sat May 19. Texas Cooperative Extension Wildlife Specialist Dale Rollins is coordinating the second annual quail count during the 2-week window of May 5 - 19. A PowerPoint presentation, data sheets, and additional information on this effort are available at <http://teamquail.tamu.edu>. For questions, please check <http://teamquail.tamu.edu> or call Dale at 325-650-0311.
- **TPWD Junior Angler Program** – 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. You don’t need to know how to fish, so come out and help these enthusiastic angler-ettes learn the rules, as well as the techniques, of fishing. 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** –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.

- **Training Class Committee** – Our fall training class will start on August 13. If you would like to help with contacting speakers or arranging field trips, contact Andy Butler at 512 321-1308 or butler@mdanderson.org.
- **Friends of the Yegua Knobs** – Pines and Prairies Land Trust is starting a “Friends” group for the Yegua Knobs preserve. Volunteers are needed to survey plant and animal life, identify and clear camping areas and trails, plus other fun and rewarding tasks. Go to <http://www.pinesandprairieslandtrust.org/> for more information on Yegua Knobs. To volunteer, contact Jeremiah Jarvis at 512 281-2762 or jjfrog@flash.net.
- **FireCAP Facilitators** – Facilitators will make presentations to home owners on how to protect their homes against wildfire, through creating defensible space and instituting other protective measures. Please contact Michal Hubbard at 512-517-1416 or by email at michal@thecorporatecamera.com for details. If you have not received FireCAP Facilitator’s training, contact Michal.
- **Lockhart State Park prairie restoration project** – Native Caldwell County prairie species will be used to create an attractive, educational display for park visitors that will also be useful to wildlife. Volunteers are needed to assist with planting. To help, contact Muriel Lem at 512-398-9427.

—President’s Column, Continued

the date, and Bastrop State Park Refectory as the place, for the first session of our Fall 2007 new member training class. Also, mark your calendars for our summer social on Sunday, July 15. Jim Estes has graciously offered use of his place for our picnic; stay tuned for details.

One of the hallmarks of May in the Lost Pines is the blooming of *Alophia drummondii*, one of my favorite Texas wildflowers. This looks like a great year for these elegant little purple pleat-leaves, and they are now blooming along Park Road 1C in Buescher State Park. If we continue to have rain in late May and June, they may bloom through early July. But you have to get up in the morning to see them, as each bloom typically lasts only a few hours after sunrise. I hope you see lots of them!

Nature Quotes

Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature’s peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.

~John Muir

Advanced Training

- **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center** – Fri May 18, 6:00 - 9:00 PM. "If Looks Could Kill: Carnivorous Plants!" Plants that eat meat! Get up close and personal with these beautiful, hungry and often misunderstood carnivorous plants of Texas. Join Michael Pagoulatos, owner of Carnivorous Plants of Texas, and learn about their myths, facts, lovely allure and secret weapons. Michael will also break bread with some of his exotic friends! For more information see [http://www.wildflower.org/?nd=nature'](http://www.wildflower.org/?nd=nature)
- **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center** – Tue and Thu, May 22 & 24, 4:00 - 7:00 PM. "What's in a Name?" Free wildflower identification tours. Stephen Brueggerhoff will teach you plant characteristics, uses, legends, and lore. Pre-register at 512.292-4200 x 112. For more information see <http://www.wildflower.org/?nd=calendars>.
- **Bamberger Ranch Water Workshop** – Sat 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. TMNs receive a 25% discount. For more information, go to <http://www.bambergerranch.org/tours/>.
- **Bamberger Ranch Native Trees and Shrubs Workshop** – Sat May 26, 8:30 - 4:30, \$100. Learn how to identify trees and shrubs using the leaf form and leaf attachment as key characteristics. You'll collect leaves in a notebook for future reference, and learn what plants are good for wildlife food and how to care for them. Workshop includes some hiking, coffee breaks and lunch. Dress for the weather. TMNs receive a 25% discount. For more information, go to <http://www.bambergerranch.org/tours/>.
- **Tallgrass Prairie Field Trips** – Native Prairies Association of Texas. Sat May 19, 9:00 – 2:00, Texas Nature Conservancy's Wildflower Tour of Clymer Meadow and other nearby prairies, near Huntsville. Contact TNC Jim Edison at jeidson@tnc.org, or NTMN Jim & Stephanie Varnum at 214-543-2055 or jevvarnum@aol.com.
Sat May 19, 9:00 – 1:00, Plant Walk at LBJ Grasslands (Wise Co). Reservations required. Contact CTMN Jeff Quayle at 817-729-0283 or s-quaylei@earthlink.net. See native prairie wildflowers, grasses, butterflies, grassland birds, and native bees when you visit one of these rare and special native prairie remnants.
- **Austin Butterfly Forum** – Mon May 28, 7:00 pm. Monthly meeting at Zilker Botanical Garden Center. Program by Mike Quinn, president of the ABF and invertebrate biologist for Texas Parks and Wildlife: "Meet the Beetles: an introduction to major beetle families of Texas." For more information contact Mike Quinn at

512 577-0250 or Mike.Quinn@tpwd.state.tx.us.

- **Austin Butterfly Forum** – Mon Jun 25, 7:00 pm. Monthly meeting at Zilker Botanical Garden Center. Program by Dan Hardy, a club board member who enjoys butterfly identification (even skippers!): "Those Hard-to-Identify Butterflies." For more information contact Mike Quinn at 512 577-0250 or Mike.Quinn@tpwd.state.tx.us

Field Notes

Marcy Youngman passed along an article containing some important information from a local veterinarian about a potential hazard of loving nature TOO closely. Dogs and their humans, especially children, can easily become infected by raccoon parasites. I was reluctant to print the article without the author's permission, but was able to locate it on the internet at http://www.shadyhollow.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=46.

Thanks to Marcy for bringing this to our attention.

—A Walk in the Park, Continued

Take note of weather conditions, time, trail name, and hours spent. List the species you observe and their numbers or relative abundance. Record your sightings on the BSP monitoring form attached to this newsletter. It has also been posted to our Yahoo group site, and copies will be available at chapter meetings. E-mail the completed forms to Louise Ridlon at flridlon@hotmail.com. You can also send them via snail mail to Louise at 107 Timber Hill Cove, Cedar Creek, TX 78612, or turn them in at chapter meetings. Please try to submit each month's data by the 5th of the following month so we can keep current.

Jamie has made some laminated park passes for volunteers that are available at the park office. These can be kept and displayed on the windshield/dashboard when you're in the park doing volunteer work. I'll try to pick up a few of these and have them available at the next meeting, but do let park staff know when you arrive to do surveys, etc. Thanks for your help!

A Murder of Crows

This month's quiz focuses on Africa! What is the collective noun for a group of –

1. apes
2. leopards
3. monkeys
4. giraffes

See below for answers!

1. shrewdness 2. leap 3. troop 4. tower

