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President's Column

--Andy Butler

I'd like to give a big "thanks" to everyone who helped with our activities at the November 3 Nature Fest in Bastrop, particularly Rachel Bauer for obtaining the rainfall simulator and delivering it to us. It was a big hit! Also thanks to chapter members Miriam Hall, Lyn Favocchia, and Mark McClelland for organizing our display and the nature hikes, as well as Linda Presto, Brett Chandler-Finch, Walt Elson, Rick Johnson, Megan Lowery, Sue Fischer, Carole O'Toole, Marsha Elrod, Karen Sterling and Denis McGinness for helping out during the day, and Carol Reidy for her floral bookmarks and refrigerator magnets. This event gave our group great exposure in the community; estimates are that as many as 3000 people attended, with over 300 paddlers on the river.

Mark your calendar for our November 19 chapter meeting in Lockhart at the Caldwell County Extension office. The speaker, Valerie Bugh, will present an advanced training program on "Floral Fauna," a photographic exploration of flower-visiting creatures including identification of major groups, behaviors, pollination, mating, mimicry, and predation, all set within a colorful backdrop of blossoms. Also, you don't want to miss our December 17 meeting at Bastrop State Park. This will be our annual election of officers and holiday get together, as well as graduation for our trainees.

One aspect of our Master Naturalist chapter that I've enjoyed over the last several years is the opportunity to hear many high quality natural history and environmental presentations without having to drive into Austin in the evening. It's great! As most of you know, the majority of our speakers are representing agencies, such as TPWD, TFS, Texas Extension, etc., and the only way we have to pay them back for their time

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Holiday Newsletter Schedule

— Marsha Elrod

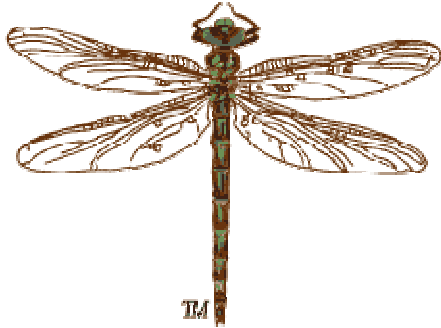
My sister called me earlier this week when she realized Thanksgiving was only 2 weeks away! With the weather we've been having, it hardly seems possible. I volunteered to bring my usual: mashed potatoes, fruit salad, dinner rolls, party favors, and wine. You may have divined that I am not a cook; I am a hunter-gatherer.

I mention this because the holiday season, with its flurry of activities, usually brings decreased training and volunteer opportunities, so the December newsletter may be abbreviated or absent altogether, depending on what is available. Therefore, I wanted to be sure to mention plans for our December meeting. It will be both important and fun, and you really need to be there!!

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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, mltpwd@onr.com; 512 332-7280.



Newsletter Deadline

Deadline for the next issue is **Dec 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 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.

November

Monday, Nov 19 - Chapter Meeting and Advanced Training: Caldwell County Extension Office, Lockhart, 6:30 pm. Valerie Bugh will be presenting "Floral Fauna," a photographic exploration of flower-visiting creatures, including identification of major groups, behaviors, pollination, mating, mimicry, and predation, all set within a colorful backdrop of blossoms.

December

Monday, Dec 17 - Chapter Meeting: Bastrop State Park Refectory, 6:30 PM. Chapter meeting, including election of officers and Christmas party! We will also be celebrating the graduation of our current training class. Come join the fun and meet our new members!

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/Sunday Monitoring** – Kathy McAleese leads monthly bird and plant monitoring surveys (and now, butterflies) at the Colorado River Refuge. Time and day may vary from month to month, due to weather or other scheduling conflicts; Kathy will send out an e-mail with exact times prior to the weekend. Bring binoculars, field guides, and water; 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 in October. To help, contact Sue Fischer at 512 321-1308 or email smfischer@mdanderson.org.
- **Bastrop State Park Nature Surveys** – Louise Ridlon is coordinating nature surveys at Bastrop State Park. Surveys can be done ad hoc on your own schedule, or contact Louise to coordinate a group hike. Contact her at 512 985-5064 or fridlon@hotmail.com for how to report your findings if you would like to participate. Reporting forms are available on the chapter website and Yahoo group site.
- **Bastrop Library Xeriscape/Native Plant Garden** – Volunteers are needed to help the Friends of the Bastrop Library plan and implement a native, xeriscape garden adjacent to the Bastrop Library. As a first step, a committee is being formed to prepare a plan for the space and a strategy for implementing and maintaining the garden. For further information and to volunteer, contact Rue Toovey at 512 237-2306.
- **Adopt A Highway** – Brett Finch, a member of our training class, has volunteered to lead an Adopt A Highway project for our chapter. It will involve four clean-ups a year, for which TxDOT provides all clean-up and safety equipment. Current plans are to adopt a section of Hwy 95. For details and to volunteer, contact Brett at goldweard@yahoo.com.
- **McKinney Roughs** – We now have a formal partnership agreement with McKinney Roughs! See Andy's article in this month's newsletter for details. Volunteer work can be performed during the hours the park is open: 8:00-5:00 Mondays through Saturdays and noon to 5:00 on Sundays. They do require volunteer forms be filled out, and a background check is done on each volunteer before they start. To volunteer, contact Jen Piland at jpiland@lcra.org or 512-303-5073.
- **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 jfrog@flash.net.

- **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/> or contact Eric Carpenter at ecarpe@gmail.com.
- **Agriculture and Tax Valuation Workshop** – Mon Feb 11, McKinney Roughs (all day; time TBA). Volunteers are needed to set up and work our chapter booth. Please let the chapter president know if you are interested.
- **Bastrop-Caldwell County WMA Extravaganza** – Sat April 12, noon - 7:00, Riverbend Park, Smithville. Volunteers are needed to work our information booth and distribute seedlings. Volunteers will receive free food and drinks, plus a T-shirt. If you would like to participate or coordinate this activity for the chapter, please contact the chapter president.
- **Lost Pines Garden Club** – LPGC is looking for a speaker for their May 12 meeting to give a 30 - 45 minute presentation on drying, pressing and preserving flowers and other plants. The meeting will be at 6:30 PM in the community meeting room of the Assembly of God Church at 609 Pecan Street in Bastrop. Contact Karen Sterling at good2go2k@aol.com if you are interested.

—Holiday Newsletter Schedule, continued

As Andy mentions in his article, we'll be celebrating the graduation of our training class as well as electing new officers. AND, we will once again be exchanging simple gifts with a nature theme. Just bring a wrapped gift to the meeting – nothing expensive – and we'll have some fun and, maybe, some surprises! See you there!!!

Nature Quotes

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar:
I love not man the less, but Nature more.

~George Gordon,
Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*

Advanced Training

- **Lost Pines Native Plant Society of Texas** – first Tuesday of each month, 7:00 PM (Learner’s Corner at 6:30), First National Bank, Smithville. Presentations count as advanced training. Contact Alvin Cearley at acearley@starband.net for program information.
- **McKinney Roughs: Ranger in the Roughs** – 3rd Thursday of each month from September 20 through February 21, 7:00-8:00 PM. Presentations are free and open to all ages. Nicholas Cowey will speak about the native animals that inhabit the land in and around the Colorado River, focusing on the natural and scientific history of one animal and its folklore per month. The schedule includes:
 - November 15 - White-tailed deer
 - December 21 - Raccoon
 - January 17 - American alligator
 - February 14 - Nine-banded armadilloThese presentations will be held in the outdoor amphitheater. No registration is required. Call McKinney Roughs Nature Park at (512) 303-5073 or email outdoorprograms@lcra.org for additional information.
- **Friends of the Lost Pines Park: Bastrop Area Native American Presentation** – Nov 15, 7:00 PM, Bastrop State Park Refectory. Richard B. Mahoney, Cultural Resources Coordinator for TPWD and a Registered Professional Archaeologist and author, will present this program.
- **Texas Watershed Steward Training** – The first training for the Texas Watershed Steward Program will be held Tuesday **December 4** at the Plum Creek Community Center at 459 Haupt in Kyle. Additional trainings will be held in Lockhart and Luling early next year. Anyone living in the Plum Creek Watershed or surrounding areas with a willingness to learn and a desire to help improve and protect community water resources is invited to become a Texas Watershed Steward. This includes homeowners, teachers, high school students, agricultural producers, decision-makers, and community leaders.

All program participants will receive a free day of education and training, a free copy of the Texas Watershed Steward Curriculum Handbook, free prizes and gifts, and a certificate of completion. In addition, the program will provide a total of 7 Continuing Professional Education credits for certified teachers in Science (5), Geography (1), and Career and Technology Education (1), 7 Continuing Education Units (Soil and Water Management) for Certified Crop Advisors, and 3 Continuing Education Units (General) for TDA Pesticide License holders. Texas Watershed Stewards is a great opportunity to get involved and make a difference in your watershed.

For more information and to pre-register, please visit the Texas Watershed Steward website at <http://tw.s.tamu.edu> or call/email Jennifer Peterson at 979-862-8072 or jlpeterson@ag.tamu.edu.

- **Wildlife Management Seminar** – Tue Dec 11, 9:30 at Cabela’s in Buda, sponsored by the Hays and Travis County Extension Services. Registration is \$20 per person which includes lunch. Topics covered include wildlife management on small acreages and predator management. Three hours of CEU’s will be offered- 1 in Laws and Regulations, 1 in General and 1 in Integrated Pest Management. To RSVP, call the Hays County Extension Office at (512) 393-2120 or the Travis County Extension Office at (512) 854-9600.

—President’s Column, continued

and effort is to perform volunteer service for their agencies. That is, after all, the point of the Master Naturalist program: to give *us* the training, knowledge, and opportunity to provide volunteer service “dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within our communities.” Not only does volunteering feel good, it’s also the currency by which we fund our educational programs.

Last month I mentioned new volunteer activities at McKinney Roughs. We have now signed a formal partnership agreement with McKinney Roughs, which will provide us use of their facilities in exchange for our volunteer hours there. For 15 hours of volunteer time each quarter, they will allow us to use their meeting room for an evening meeting. We will also have additional opportunities to make use of the McKinney Roughs facilities as part of this agreement. I encourage you to consider volunteering at McKinney Roughs. If you do, it is important that they know you are with the Lost Pines Chapter so that we get proper credit for your time.

Among the projects at McKinney Roughs is on-going maintenance of the gardens near the visitor center and classroom buildings. A second project is to audit the current landscape plan and propose updates and/or changes. Would anyone like to lead (with help of LCRA staff) this project? Down the road, they would also like us to help inventory natural resources in specific areas and then translate that information into interpretive material, and to assess a natural pond’s invertebrate and plant populations. To volunteer at McKinney Roughs, contact Jen Piland at jpiland@lcra.org or 512-303-5073

A Murder of Crows

Martens and tigers and bears...oh my!!! Just what is a group of...?

1. bears
2. martens
3. skunks
4. tigers

See below for answers!

1. sloth 2. richness 3. stench 4. ambush