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President's Column

--Mark McClelland

We're heading into an exciting time of the year! The days are growing longer, and the weather is showing signs of warming up for good. Trees are leafing out, wildflowers are beginning to bloom, and the first Purple Martins and Golden-cheeked Warblers have arrived in central Texas.

The club has several activities getting started and underway. Several members attended and assisted with the Wildlife Management Workshop at McKinney Roughs on February 25th. Not only did we learn a lot, but we also introduced dozens of folks to the Master Naturalist program. Members assisted with planting pine trees in Bastrop State Park and clearing grapevines (and it turns out some poison ivy...) at the Colorado River Refuge. A group has started work on our very own rainfall simulator, we've got a plant swap scheduled jointly with the Lost Pines Native Plant Society for April 10th, and planning continues for our upcoming Amphibian and Mussel Watch Workshops on June 13th and 14th. So many things to do, and so little time!

While all of these things are going on, we need to continue to take care of club business. With this in mind, I thought I'd discuss a few of the club committees. We have several standing committees that take care of ongoing needs, and, as with all committees, people come and go. So I'll discuss several of the committees in the coming months, and I hope you will see one (or two) that interest you.

Hospitality Committee – This group ensures that we have folks lined up to bring refreshments to each of our club meetings and special events. Keeping track of the signup sheets and calling or e-mailing reminders to these folks each month is a big part of this committee's work. When chapter training

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Advanced Training Update

– Marsha Elrod

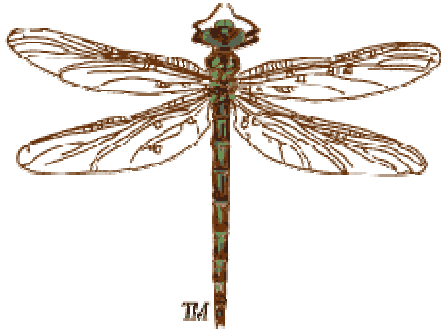
In last month's newsletter, I reviewed the guidelines for volunteer projects. This month I'll cover advanced training, what may and may not qualify, and how to determine if a class you heard or read about can count for credit.

Each month, I list upcoming training events in this newsletter, working with our officers and training committee members to identify and publish advanced training opportunities for our chapter. Training committee

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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: position vacant;
Bastrop-@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 **Apr 11, 2008**. 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.

March

Monday, Mar 17 – Chapter Meeting and Advanced Training: Red Rock Community Center, 6:30 PM. Tom Dureka, executive director of the Pines & Prairies Land Trust, will present a slide show program on land trusts and conservation easements, with a focus on the PPLT.

April

Monday, Apr 21 – Chapter Meeting and Advanced Training: Bastrop State Park Refectory, 6:30 PM. Mark Klym will present an overview of the TPWD Nature Tracker program and explain how we can participate.

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; use the on-line reporting form on our website; or mail to

187 Billingsley Hts
Cedar Creek TX 78612

Volunteer Opportunities

- **Bastrop State Park Interpretive Hikes** – Ongoing, Saturday mornings, 10:00 AM. “Discover the Lost Pines” interpretive hikes at Bastrop State Park. Hikes started again in February. 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.
- **Colorado River Refuge First Saturday/Sunday Monitoring** – Kathy McAleese leads monthly bird and plant monitoring surveys (and butterflies in season) 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 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 is leading the Adopt A Highway project for our chapter. It involves six clean-ups a year, for which TxDOT provides all clean-up and safety equipment. We have adopted a 2-mile section of Hwy 95 to the north and south of FM 2336. The next clean-up will be April 5. At least 3 volunteers are needed in addition to Brett, and clean-up should take about 2-3 hours. For details and to volunteer, contact Brett at goldweard@yahoo.com.
- **TPWD Junior Angler Clinic** – Fri Mar 14, 8:00 – 12:30, Buescher State Park. Volunteers are needed to assist with this free learn-to-fish clinic for boys and girls ages 6 to 13. This is a very basic clinic, and you don't need to be a fisher-person to

help out! Parents must accompany their children. Park entrance is free for volunteers, and necessary training will be provided on site. Additional clinics will be held June through August alternating between Bastrop and Buescher State Parks. A complete schedule will be provided in next month's newsletter. At least 7 volunteers are needed for each clinic. Contact Bill Brooks at 512 581-0377 or bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu.

- **Rites of Spring Festival** – Sat Mar 29, 9:30 – 3:30. Rick Johnson is coordinating this activity and needs volunteers for our booth from 9:30 to 3:30, as well as folks to conduct a nature walk around the town square at 11:00, noon, 1:00, and 2:00. Rick would also like to meet ahead of time with the nature walk volunteers to plan the route. 3-5 volunteers are needed. Contact Rick at rickjohnson718@sbcglobal.net or 512 398-4405 for details.
- **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.
- **Tallgrass Prairie Restoration** -- Muriel Lem is coordinating a tallgrass prairie restoration project at Lockhart State Park with Liz LaRue. The initial site to be planted is in an open area just beyond the Clear Fork Creek crossing near the camping area and the golf course fairway. Site preparation will be done by park personnel, with planting of prairie grasses and other native plants by our chapter scheduled for mid to late April. Muriel will notify us when the exact date has been determined. For additional information and to volunteer, call Muriel Lem at 512 398-9427.

Nature Quotes

I am not bound for any public place, but for ground of my own where I have planted vines and orchard trees, and in the heat of the day climbed up into the healing shadow of the woods. Better than any argument is to rise at dawn and pick dew-wet red berries in a cup.

~Wendell Berry

Advanced Training

- **Lost Pines Native Plant Society of Texas** – first Tuesday of each month, 7:00 PM, First National Bank, Smithville. Presentations count as advanced training. Contact Bill Brooks at bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu or 512-581-0377 for program information.
- **Bastrop County Audubon Society** – Tue Mar 18, 7:30 PM, First National Bank community room, Bastrop. Program by Dr. Keith Arnold, noted ornithologist and author of a new birding guide, [Birds of Texas](#). The new field guide will be available for sale at the meeting. For details contact Priscilla Jarvis at 512 281-2762 or e-mail Mary Ellen Brannan at mbranan@austin.rr.com.
- **Travis Audubon Society; Gull Identification Workshop** – Sat Mar 22, approx 8 hrs, including classroom and field trip. Byron Stone will focus on the 6 most common species of gulls occurring in Texas. Pre-registration required, \$60 for non-TAS members. For details and registration, go to <http://www.travisaudubon.org/classes.html>.
- **Austin Butterfly Forum: Passion Vines of Texas**– Mon Mar 24, 7:00 PM, Zilker Botanical Garden Center. Katie Hansen, who teaches the Native Plants of Central Texas course at the University of Texas at Austin, will speak on our native Passionflowers, the beautiful genus *Passiflora*, host plants for the *Heliconius* family (*Zebras* and *Julias*). Topics will cover which Passionflowers to grow, which to avoid, and the complex co-evolution that has been taking place between these butterflies and their host plants. For additional information, go to <http://www.austinbutterflies.org/Calendar/>.
- **Austin Butterfly Forum: Tales of Woe, Deception & Wonder; the Myriad Defenses of Texan Caterpillars** – Mon Apr 28, 7:00 PM, Zilker Botanical Garden Center. Author Dr. David L. Wagner will show splendid photographs that showcase the wonderfully varied and deceitful ploys that caterpillars employ to dupe birds and other would-be predators. Along the way he will touch on silk, spices, and other stuff you'd never associate with a bunch of bugs. His book, [Caterpillars of Eastern North America: a Guide to Identification and Natural History](#), will be available for sale at the meeting. Go to <http://www.austinbutterflies.org/Calendar/> for additional information.
- **Women of the Land: Workshop for Women Who Own or Manage Land** – Fri Apr 11 – Sun Apr 13, Camp Honey Creek, Hunt, and the Kerr

WMA. Pre-registration required, \$150; deadline Apr 2. For additional information and registration form, check our Yahoo site under “Files” and look for “WOTL Flyer.”

- **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center: Go Native U** – Go Native U is an informal adult education program on the use and conservation of native plants. All classes will be held at the Wildflower Center. Registration for Go Native U is arranged on-line through UT at Austin Informal Classes. For registration information go to <http://www.wildflower.org/gonativeu/>.

Upcoming classes:

- Native Garden Installation** – Sat Mar 22, 10 AM – 1 PM OR 2 PM – 5 PM
- Native Garden Maintenance** – Sat Mar 29, 10 AM – 1 PM OR 2 PM – 5 PM
- Pests 101** – Sat Apr 5, 10 AM – 1 PM OR 2 PM – 5 PM
- Container Gardening with Native Plants** – Sat Apr 26, 9 AM – 1 PM
- Floral Designs with Native Plants** – Sat May 24, 9 AM – 1 PM
- Botanical Adventures with Austin’s Native Plants** – Sun Mar 30, Apr 6, & Apr 13, 12 PM – 3 PM (includes classroom and field training)

—President’s Column, continued

classes are being held, the workload increases greatly, as there are three or four meetings a month instead of the usual one. And, the committee reserves and arranges meeting locations. Marie Medrano chairs this committee and does a great job. Marie is also the chapter treasurer, so her plate is pretty full. If you are interested in helping Marie out on this committee let me know.

Membership/Outreach Committee – This group has several tasks, including maintaining the chapter roster of names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses. The committee also tracks volunteer and advanced training hours, including certifications and awards, handles chapter outreach activities and the club’s display board, and assists with promoting the chapter in the community. These are big jobs, and, as the club grows and ages, keeping up with current, potential, and lapsed members is becoming an even bigger one. Several folks help with the roster and chapter outreach activities, as well as our display board and chapter promotions. Those of you who have been sending in your activity reports (hint, hint!!) know that

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members also periodically forward e-mails to the group on events that come to their attention. 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 may be included 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 you know if you can get credit for attending such courses?

First, have a look at the advanced training guidelines on page 6 developed by the chapter. They are also posted on our web site and the Yahoo group site. You will see 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. There is both a PDF version for printing and completion and a MSWord version that can be e-mailed. Send it to either Alvin Cearley or me.

The list of generally approved training topics and sponsors is a living document and will be periodically updated as needed, so be sure to check the website first. Any questions? You can always get in touch with a member of the training committee, which includes me, Andy Butler, Alvin Cearley, Sue Fischer, and Carol Reidy.

Marsha Elrod handles these, but you'll also recognize Marsha as the editor of our outstanding [sic] newsletter, so she stays busy. One big task for the year is getting our membership records updated, including contacting some lapsed members to see if they are still interested in participating with the group. If you think that you can help, let me know.

Newsletter/Communication Committee – This committee handles three big tasks: Producing the newsletter, maintaining the web site, and

generating press releases. These three forms of media are how most folks come to know that we exist and later stay in touch with our activities. These tasks are handled beautifully by Marsha Elrod, Andy Butler, and Kathy McAleese respectively. They are always looking for interesting content to include in the newsletter or on the website, and activities or accomplishments to include in news releases. Please contribute!! And, if you have an interest in assisting with these activities, let us know.

I'll cover other committees in the next two months, and you will notice the same names coming up again and again. You probably recognize these names as the leaders of the club and the folks who are most actively involved. As the club continues to grow we'd like to take advantage of the talents and energy of the new members and spread the work out a little. So pick a committee that interests you and join the fun! And remember, the time that you spend counts as volunteer hours.

I look forward to seeing you at our March 17th meeting at the Red Rock Community Center. Come and learn about land trusts and conservation easements from our friends with Pines and Prairies Land Trust.



Lost Pines Master Naturalists adopt 2 miles of Highway 95 north of Bastrop

Photo by Vernon Berger

LPMN APPROVED ADVANCED TRAINING

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 Costa Rica" would not qualify.

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

The topics listed as "Generally Approved Advanced Training" are not intended to be all-inclusive or limiting. If you identify an opportunity for advanced training that is not covered by this document, a request for approval should be submitted prior to attending the training. Submit requests to Alvin Cearley at acearley@starband.net, Marsha Elrod at melrod1@earthlink.net, or Mark McClelland at markmcc@prodigy.net.

Generally Approved Advanced Training

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

Generally Approved Sponsors

- ✿ Texas Master Naturalists & local TMN chapters
- ✿ Texas Parks and Wildlife
- ✿ Texas AgriLife Extension Service
- ✿ University of Texas, Texas State University, & Austin Community College - Formal Classes and Adult Education; or any other accredited state or community college or university
- ✿ National Wildlife Federation
- ✿ Center for Environmental Research
- ✿ Hornsby Bend Bird Observatory
- ✿ Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
- ✿ Native Plant Society of Texas
- ✿ Native Prairies Association of Texas
- ✿ McKinney Roughs (LCRA)
- ✿ Wild Basin
- ✿ Friends of Balcones Canyonlands NWR
- ✿ Bamberger Ranch
- ✿ Travis Audubon Society
- ✿ Bastrop County Audubon Society
- ✿ Austin Butterfly Forum
- ✿ Horned Lizard Conservation Society
- ✿ Texas Archeological Society