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## President's Column

--Mark McClelland

As we head in to the (hopefully) cooler, wetter months of autumn, a number of activities are starting up.

October 4<sup>th</sup> was the first interpretive hike of the season at Bastrop State Park. These hikes will continue through mid-December. Sue Fisher led the first hike and reports a good number of participants. It looks like the park is advertising these hikes more effectively, so we expect more folks than we've seen in the past. If you are interested in leading or helping to lead these hikes, contact Sue. You can also get onto our LPMN Yahoo group calendar and check the dates for the hikes. You will be able to see which hikes have leaders already, and which still need them. If you don't feel comfortable volunteering to lead a hike by yourself, consider signing up on a Saturday that already has a leader. They will be happy to have the help, and you can get more comfortable with the information being presented.

Zaina Farrar is the Interpretive Ranger at the park, and has asked us to assist with getting some "special" hikes going on closed tracts of the park. These tracts have been added to the original park acreage and are not normally open to the public. One of the public uses planned for these areas is occasional interpretive hikes. Several club members have explored the Alum Creek tract and planned an interpretive hike. The first hikes will be offered on Saturday, October 18, and Sunday, October 26. The Alum Creek tract has a wonderful mix of open pastures, pines, hardwood bottoms, and creek habitat. Some of the surprises on this tract are a Dogwood forest, the largest Loblolly Pine in the county, and a bog. We'll be working with Zaina to develop additional hikes in these areas, and will be looking for folks to assist with leading these hikes as well.

Another activity coming up at the park is the Fall Festival. This event will be held on Saturday, October 25, and runs from 11:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. Zaina has asked for our help with two activities. The first is helping kids to make "peanut butter pine cone" bird feeders. This is where you slather peanut butter onto a pine cone and then roll it in birdseed. This is a fun activity for kids and gets them involved in appreciating our feathered friends. Our assistance will consist of instructing the kids on what to do and trying to keep most of the peanut butter on the pinecones and out of their hair!! A couple of folks to assist with this activity would be much appreciated.

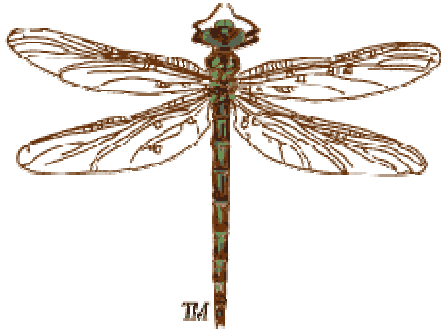
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## MISSION STATEMENT

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.

The Texas Master Naturalist program is sponsored by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service and by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

## SPONSOR CONTACTS

Caldwell Co. Extension Office: Jeff Watts; [Caldwell-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:Caldwell-tx@tamu.edu); 512 398-3122

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

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



### Newsletter Deadline

Deadline for the next issue is **November 7, 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](mailto: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.

### October

**Monday, October 20 – Chapter Meeting and Advanced Training:** Bastrop State Park Refectory, 6:30 PM. "Blacklights and Bananas: What comes out when the sun goes down" is a presentation and demonstration by Mark McClelland on using blacklights and banana baits to attract moths, beetles, butterflies, and other bugs.

### November

**Monday, November 17 – Chapter Meeting and Advanced Training:** Red Rock Community Center, 6:30 PM. Tentative topic: "Native Plant Landscaping & Propagation." Details TBA.

### 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@yahoo.com](mailto:LPMN-subscribe@yahoo.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); use the on-line reporting form on our website; or mail to  
187 Billingsley Hts  
Cedar Creek TX 78612

# Volunteer Opportunities

- **Colorado River Nature Park Site Development** – Mondays & Thursdays, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Dale Morrison has been working on trails and other improvements at the new nature park adjacent to the Colorado River Refuge since its designation as such. It is an ongoing effort, and he would welcome some assistance. He is there Mondays and Thursdays from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM and is also available to work with volunteers on Saturdays and Sundays. For details, call Dale at 512 332-0998 or 512 629-3345 (cell phone).
- **Bastrop State Park Interpretive Hikes** – Saturday mornings, 10:00 am. “Discover the Lost Pines” interpretive hikes started on October 4th, and volunteers are needed! Sue Fischer, our hike coordinator, reports neither she nor Andy will be available on the week-ends of October 18 and 25, so give her a call at 512 321-1308 or email [smfischer@mdanderson.org](mailto:smfischer@mdanderson.org) to sign up. The schedule for the hikes can be found on the Yahoo Group website calendar. Volunteers to lead hikes can sign up on the website but are also asked to notify Sue of any changes to the schedule.
- **Bastrop State Park Guided Remote Hikes** – select Saturdays and Sundays, TBA by park personnel. Public pre-registration is required for these guided nature hikes in a remote area of the park along Alum Creek not yet open to park visitors. The hikes will start this fall and pick up again next spring. The first hike, “*An Autumn Walk in the Woods,*” will highlight some of the changes that occur in the forest this time of year. Hikes are scheduled for October 18 and 26, from 9:00 AM until 11:00 AM. A maximum of 15 people per hike will be allowed. Contact Mark if you are interested in leading or helping to lead one of these hikes.
- **Bastrop State Park Fall Festival** – Sat Oct 25, 11:00 AM - 9:00 PM. Volunteers are needed to help kids make peanut butter pine cone bird feeders during the day and to assist with a spooky hike at 6:30 PM. See the President’s Column for details or go to <http://www.friendsoflostpines.org/>. Contact Mark if you are available to assist.
- **McKinney Roughs Nature Survey** – Sun, Oct 26, 1:00 PM. Nicholas Cowey has asked our assistance in documenting the flora and fauna of a section of McKinney Roughs over a 5-year period. Kathy McAleese has agreed to coordinate the project. An introductory session with Nicholas is scheduled for October 26 at the main building in

the Verbena room. This will be followed by a roughly 2-hour walk-through of the area to be surveyed. Kathy will be putting out additional information following this introductory meeting and hike. You can contact her at 512 718-1313 or [kmcaleese@austin.rr.com](mailto:kmcaleese@austin.rr.com) for details.

- **Project Feeder Watch** – The 2008-09 season of Project FeederWatch gets underway November 8 and runs through April 3. Participants count the numbers and kinds of birds at their feeders each week and send the information to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Participants submitted more than 115,000 checklists during the 2007-08 FeederWatch season, documenting unusual bird sightings, winter movements, and shifting ranges – a treasure-trove of information that scientists use to monitor the health of the birds and of the environment. There is a \$15 participant fee, which covers the costs of the project kit, web site, and other project expenses. Participants receive the FeederWatcher’s Handbook, an identification poster of the most common feeder birds in their area, a calendar, complete instructions, and the FeederWatch annual report, Winter Bird Highlights. Go to [www.feederwatch.org](http://www.feederwatch.org) or call 800 843-2473 to register.
- **Adopt A Highway** – one Saturday every 2 months. 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 in December. At least 3 volunteers are needed in addition to Brett, and clean-up should take about 1-2 hours. To volunteer, contact Brett at [goldweard@yahoo.com](mailto:goldweard@yahoo.com).

## Nature Quotes

In wilderness I sense the miracle of life, and behind it our scientific accomplishments fade to trivia.

~Charles A. Lindbergh, *Life*, 22 December 1967

After all, I don't see why I am always asking for private, individual, selfish miracles when every year there are miracles like white dogwood.

~Anne Morrow Lindbergh

# 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. Upcoming programs include:
  - Nov. 4 - Megan Lowery, local wildflower expert.
  - Dec. 2 - Dan Hardy, Austin's local butterfly and host plant expert.Contact Bill Brooks at [bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu) or 512-581-0377 for additional information.
- **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center** – Nature Nights, select Fridays, 6:00 – 9:00 PM.
  - ~Oct 10 - *Spiders!* Meet experts "Spider Joe" Lapp and Dave Moellendorf of Austin Arachnological Services and some of their friends for an engaging evening on spiders! In cooperation with [Joe Lapp](#) and [Austin Arachnological Services](#).
  - ~Nov 7 - *Astronomy*: Look to the stars and discover wonders of the night sky at the Wildflower Center. Take a tour of the evening skies for familiar and mysterious points of light and the wonder they provide.
- **Travis Audubon Society** – Thur, Oct 16, 6:30 PM, LCRA, 3601 Lake Austin Boulevard, Room 108 (downstairs), Austin. Bob Petersen, rancher, outdoorsman, and conservationist, will present an overview of the Images for Conservation Fund (ICF) and The Texas Hill Country Nature Photography Alliance, emphasizing the important role that private landowners play in conservation. ICF photo tournaments, programs, and economic incentives encourage private landowners to restore, preserve and enhance wildlife habitat. The Texas Hill Country Nature Photography Alliance is a group of conservation minded landowners who have opened their ranches up to guests for the purpose of nature photography, bird watching and eco-tourism. See <http://www.travisaudubon.org/meetings.html> for additional information.



## Hospitality Committee

Thanks and a gentle reminder to our hospitality committee volunteers for the September meeting. Carole O'Toole will be providing the snacks, while Ronnie Lanier will bring the drinks. Thanks to all of you for stepping up and pitching in!

- **Austin Butterfly Forum: Arachnids of Texas and the World.** Mon, Oct 27, 7:00 PM, Zilker Botanical Garden. Spider expert Dave Moellendorf ([Austin Arachnological Services](#)) will bring a zoo of charismatic arachnids from around the world, including a "bird-eating" spider from South America. He'll tell us about the natural history, behavior, and habitats of his animals. Dave is an expert on the tarantulas of Texas and will spend some time showing us our native tarantulas, telling us about them and his efforts to conserve them.

– President's Column, continued

The second activity will take place at about 6:30. Zaina plans to lead folks on a spooky nature hike, following the same trails that we use for our Saturday interpretive hikes. She is looking for several folks to be stationed in the woods near the trails to play scary pre-recorded nature sounds (Barred Owl, etc.) as the hikers approach. After the hikers calm down, the sound will be explained in the context of animals living in the park.

I hope that you will consider helping with one of these activities. It should be a great time to be in the park.

Our club participated in several activities in the past month. We hosted a Hummingbird Roundup at McKinney Roughs, participated in NatureFest at Fisherman's Park, and assisted with the Lockhart Town Branch Creek cleanup. Thanks to Louise Ridlon, Erin Barker, and Rick Johnson for taking the lead on those activities.

Finally, our spring 2009 class is coming together. We've got a couple of important activities pinned down and are ready to start filling in the remainder of the schedule. Stay tuned for more on this major effort.

I hope to see you all at our October 20th meeting at the Bastrop State Park refectory building. I will be talking about attracting insects by using bananas and blacklight. These are great techniques for attracting otherwise difficult-to-find butterflies, moths, beetles, and other insects. It concentrates them into a single area where they can be photographed, identified, and collected. I'll show pictures of and discuss the wide variety of critters that I've seen over the past two years. Weather permitting, I will set up a blacklight outside the building for us to check after the meeting.