



## Officers

### President

Mark McClelland  
512 281-5516  
[markmcc@prodigy.net](mailto:markmcc@prodigy.net)

### Vice President

Louise Ridlon  
512 985-5064  
[flridlon@hotmail.com](mailto:flridlon@hotmail.com)

### Secretary

Kathy McAleese  
512 321-2857  
[kmcaleese@austin.rr.com](mailto:kmcaleese@austin.rr.com)

### Treasurer

Marie Medrano  
512 360-4172  
[mmedrano@smithvilleisd.org](mailto:mmedrano@smithvilleisd.org)

### Past President

Andy Butler  
512 321-1308  
[abutler@mac.com](mailto:abutler@mac.com)

### State Representative

Michal Hubbard  
512 303-5976  
[michal\\_photog@yahoo.com](mailto:michal_photog@yahoo.com)

## President's Column

--Mark McClelland

Happy New Year! It is hard for me to believe that 2008 has come and gone. I truly enjoyed my "job" as president of the chapter, and look forward to another year. Each of last year's officers was re-elected for 2009, so we have a seasoned group of folks ready to go right to work.

The biggest event for the early part of 2009 will be a new Master Naturalist Training Class. The first class will be held at the Bastrop State Park Refectory on January 26<sup>th</sup>. Feel free to come to that kick-off meeting if you'd like to help welcome the new class. We're still looking for a couple of folks to help with refreshments that evening, so let me know if you can assist.

Our first club activity of the year will be on Saturday, January 17, 2009. We will be placing trail markers and doing general clean-up of the Carrizo Trail in Bastrop State Park. This project goes back many years with our chapter, and we are looking forward to getting it completed. We'll be setting some park-supplied signage in masonry bases, raking up debris on the trail, and pulling out some invasive Japanese Honeysuckle and English Ivy. Bring work gloves, rakes, loppers, and other general yardwork tools. We'll begin at 9:00 a.m. and plan to finish up around noon. We'll meet at the interpretive trail parking area. To get there, make a right turn on Park Road 1A just past the golf pro shop. Follow the road around for a short distance and you'll find the parking area. It is just before the turn-in for the Copperas Creek Camping Area.

We will be getting a similar project underway at Lockhart State Park on Saturday, January 31<sup>st</sup>. The folks at the park have asked our chapter to begin planning on a new Interpretive Trail for their park. This workday will be the initial walk-through to get the process of designing and installing the new trail underway. We'll begin at 9:00 a.m. and likely finish before noon.

Stay tuned for an announcement of a clean-up day at the Colorado River Refuge and adjoining property. Club member Dale Morrison has done an extensive amount of trail work out there, and notes that there are a few items that he could use help with. Things like clearing some brush, removing a few items of trash, and cutting some grapevine. This workday is tentatively scheduled for February 14<sup>th</sup>. More details to come.

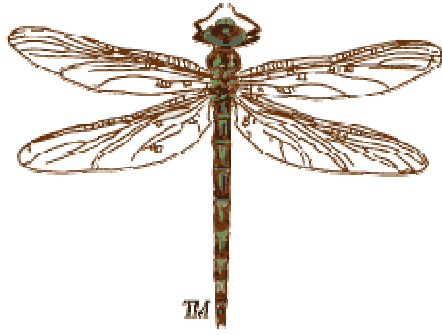
-- Continued on Page 3

## Inside This Issue

1	President's Column
2	Chapter Calendar
3	Volunteer Opportunities
3	Nature Quotes
4	Advanced Training

## 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 **February 6, 2009**. 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.**

### January

**Monday, January 19 – Chapter Meeting and Advanced Training:** Red Rock Community Center, 6:30 PM. Michele Gaston, a graduate student in aquatic resources at Texas State University, will speak on the Houston Toad: biology and ecology.

### February

**Monday, February 16 – Chapter Meeting and Advanced training:** McKinney Roughs, 6:30 PM. Meteorologist Troy Kimmel will speak on the drought and changing global climate. This will be a joint meeting with our 2009 training class members.

### 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

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# Volunteer Opportunities

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- **Bastrop State Park Carrizo Trail Improvement** – Sat Jan 17, 9:00 AM – noon. Meet at the interpretive trail parking area. We'll be setting some park-supplied signage in masonry bases, raking up debris on the trail, and pulling out invasive Japanese Honeysuckle and English Ivy. Bring work gloves, rakes, loppers, and other general yardwork tools. For additional information contact Mark McClelland at 512 281-5516 or [markmcc@prodigy.net](mailto:markmcc@prodigy.net).
- **Lockhart State Park Interpretive Trail Design and Implementation** – Sat Jan 31, 9:00 – noon. This workday will be the initial walk-through to get the process of designing and installing a new interpretive trail in the park underway. For additional information contact Mark McClelland at 512 281-5516 or [markmcc@prodigy.net](mailto:markmcc@prodigy.net).
- **Colorado River Refuge and Nature Park Improvement** – Sat Feb 14, time TBA. This will be a general clean-up day, including clearing brush, removing litter and trash, and cutting some invasive grapevines. For additional information contact Dale Morrison at 512 332-0998 or 512 629-3345 (cell phone).
- **McKinney Roughs Nature Survey** – Kathy McAleese is coordinating a long-term project to survey trails through the burned-out areas of McKinney Roughs. Plans call for at least 2 surveys per month, one during the week and one on week-ends. Actual days and times will vary based on the weather and Kathy's schedule. Please contact her at 512 718-1313 or [kmcaleese@austin.rr.com](mailto:kmcaleese@austin.rr.com) if you are interested in leading or participating in either week-day or week-end surveys, or both.
- **Great Backyard Bird Count** – Fri Feb 13– Mon Feb 16. A joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, volunteers take part by counting birds for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the event and reporting their sightings online. The data help researchers understand bird population trends

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## Hospitality Committee

Thanks and a gentle reminder to our hospitality committee volunteers for the January meeting. Karen Sterling is arranging for our repast, and Marie Medrano is brewing up some liquid refreshment. Thank you for stepping up and pitching in!

across the continent, information that is critical for effective conservation. For details go to <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>.

- **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. At least 3 volunteers are needed in addition to Brett, and clean-up should take about 1-2 hours. For information on the next clean-up date and to volunteer, contact Brett at [goldweard@yahoo.com](mailto:goldweard@yahoo.com).

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– President's Column Continued

Monitoring work continues at the LCRA McKinney Roughs Nature Park. Kathy McAleese is coordinating one or two counts each month. The LCRA folks are monitoring some areas that burned last year to chronicle the recovery of the plants and animals. This is an interesting area to walk through and explore, and you don't need to be any sort of expert to participate! We are identifying what we can, taking pictures of plants, animals and insects, and all helping each other to learn more about this fascinating area.

Carol O'Toole and Ronnie Lanier have worked up a design for a new club coffee cup that we'll be giving

– Continued on Page 4

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## Nature Quotes

...Where, twisted round the barren oak,  
The summer vine in beauty clung  
And summer winds the stillness broke,  
The crystal icicle is hung...

But still wild music is abroad,  
Pale desert woods! within your crowd;  
And gathering winds in coarse accord,  
Amid the vocal reeds pipe loud.

Chill airs and wintry woods! My ear  
Has grown familiar with your song;  
I hear it in the opening year, --  
I listen and it cheers me long.

~"Woods in Winter," HW Longfellow

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# Advanced Training

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- **McKinney Roughs: Ranger in the Roughs** – 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month through February, 7:00 – 8:00 PM. The schedule includes:
  - Jan 15 – Venomous Snakes of Texas
  - Feb 19 – Croakers & Trillers (Frogs & Toads)Call McKinney Roughs Nature Park at 512 303-5073 or e-mail [outdoorprograms@lcra.org](mailto:outdoorprograms@lcra.org) for additional information.
- **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center** – Sat Jan 24. Tree Talk Winter Walk. Walks are scheduled at 11:00 AM, 1:00, 2:00, and 3:00 PM, plus a noon demonstration on tree rehab. The annual Tree Talk Winter Walk is a perfect time to explore the beauty and benefits of native trees and shrubs. Get tips on landscape design and tree maintenance and learn about individual tree and shrub species with walks and talks led by staff and local tree experts. Admission free. For details go to <http://www.wildflower.org/ttw/>.
- **Travis Audubon Society** – Waterfowl Identification Class. The class will consist of 2 lectures followed by field trips plus a 3<sup>rd</sup> field trip on a different afternoon. Lectures will be on Saturdays, Jan 24 and Feb 7, from 8:00 to 10:00 AM at Hornsby Bend. The first 2 field trips will begin following the lecture sessions and will last until about 2:00 PM; locations will be announced at class time. A 3<sup>rd</sup> field trip will be held Saturday, Feb 21, from noon to about 7:00 PM. Participation in field trips is considered an important part of the class learning experience. Tuition is \$45 for Travis Audubon Society members and \$60 for nonmembers. The class will be limited to 14 participants. To register, e-mail [WATERFOWL](mailto:WATERFOWL) or call Jean Martin at 343-7053. Go to <http://www.travisaudubon.org/classes.html> for additional information.
- **Austin Butterfly Forum** – Mon Jan 26, 7:00 PM, Zilker Botanical Garden Center. Wasp Evolution, Biodiversity and Behavior, a presentation by Alan Hooke. Go to <http://www.austinbutterflies.org/calendar> for additional information.
- **Austin Butterfly Forum** – Mon Feb 23, 7:00 PM, Zilker Botanical garden Center. Heliconian Butterflies, a presentation by Catalina Estrada, Ph.D candidate at UT Austin. Go to <http://www.austinbutterflies.org/calendar> for additional information.
- **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center** – Nature Nights, 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM, select nights in

spring. Events scheduled are:

Fri Mar 6 - *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.

Thur Apr 16 - *Wildflowers*: Celebrate the beauty of the Texas Hill Country with an in-depth look at Spring wildflowers. More than just a familiar flower, learn the importance of their role in our ecology.

Fri May 29 - *Animal Tracking*: Investigate clues you can use to find out about animals that live in Central Texas.

Admission is \$1.00. For additional information go to <http://www.wildflower.org/nature/>.

- **Lost Pines Native Plant Society of Texas** – first Tuesday of each month, 7:00 PM, First National Bank, Smithville. Presentations count as advanced training. Some meetings this year will be held at member's homes to conduct plant surveys. Contact Bill Brooks at [bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu) or 512-581-0377 for additional information.
- **Bamberger Ranch** – Land Stewardship Workshop, Sat Apr 4, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm. 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. The subjects include cedar-management, water, grasses, tree planting, managing land for wildlife, endangered plants and animals, and wildlife agricultural exemption. Cost is \$100 per person; Master Naturalists receive a 25% discount. These workshops tend to fill up quickly. For additional information go to <http://www.bambergeranch.org/tours/#steward>.

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– President's Column Continued

away as a speaker's gift this year. We ordered some extras, so we'll have some for sale to club members as well. Thanks to Carole and Ronnie for seeing this project through.

I look forward to seeing you at our January 19<sup>th</sup> meeting at the Red Rock Community Center. Michele Gaston of Texas State University will give a program on Houston Toad biology/ecology. The Houston Toad is our local endangered species, and we can all benefit from learning more about this special amphibian. The meeting will begin at the regular time of 6:30.