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President's Column

--Mark McClelland

Spring has come, and most of our area finally got some much needed rains in March and April. It is amazing how quickly the grass greens up and the wildflowers bounce back into bloom. We've already started to see some very warm temperatures, and I hope that this is not an indicator of another hot, dry summer.

The 2009 class is in the home stretch. We enjoyed a great field trip out at Aquarena Springs and are looking forward to the class graduation on May 18th out at Red Rock Community Center. This will be a combined class session and club meeting, with Kelly Bender talking about the urban-wildlife interface. Kelly is a great speaker, and this is a topic that impacts each of us as well as the habitats where we live. After the presentation we will present nameplates and maybe even a few initial certifications to members of the class. This has been a great group, so come on out to the meeting and help cheer them on.

With the conclusion of the Training Class, this is the time to start thinking about other club activities. We have scheduled a couple of river trips to allow members and their friends and family to experience the Colorado River and all that it has to offer. This is an easy trip, with great scenery

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It's About Time

--Marsha Elrod

Wow! Time reports are pouring in from our training class members. What an active bunch! So I thought I'd review a few of the items that seem to be causing some confusion.

Let's start with our three categories of volunteer activities: Chapter Development, Community Service/Outreach, and Environmental Service.

Most of your volunteer hours will be either community or environmental service, unless you are an officer or perform other specific duties for the chapter, for example, arranging for our training classes or maintaining the chapter web site. Providing refreshments for classes or chapter meetings does count as chapter development. However, you may not claim the travel time to and from the class or meeting. Keep this in mind: the only beneficiary of chapter development time is the chapter.

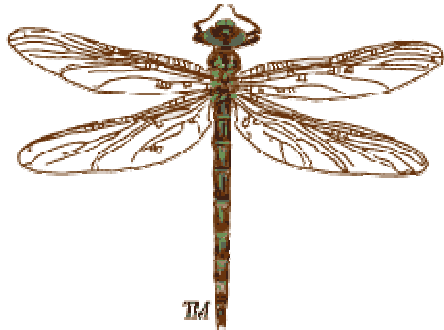
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MISSION STATEMENT

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 AgriLife Extension Service and by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

SPONSOR CONTACTS

Caldwell Co. Extension Office: Jeff Watts; Caldwell-tx@tamu.edu; 512 398-3122

Bastrop Co. Extension Office: Rachel Bauer, 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 **June 5, 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 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 18 – Chapter Meeting and Advanced Training: Red Rock Community Center, 6:30 PM. Kelly Bender, TPWD urban biologist, will present a program on the urban-wildlife interface. This will be a joint meeting with our 2009 training class members. Come help celebrate their completion of the class!

June

Monday, June 15 – Chapter Meeting and Advanced Training: Bastrop State Park Refectory, 6:30 PM. Tara Tucker, Regional Interpretive Specialist with TPWD, will present a program on creating interpretive presentations.

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

- **Horned Lizard Monitoring** -- Lee Ann Linam (one of our TPWD Amphibian Watch instructors) would like to get an effort underway to start some Horned Lizard monitoring and DNA sampling of the small population that still exists in the Smithville area. This will be a low-key undertaking with the city and the school district to start an educational process as well. At this point Lee Ann is trying to set dates. Choices would be a May weeknight beginning at around 5:00 pm or the afternoon of Saturday, May 30th. If you are interested in participating in this project, please contact Lee Ann at lalinam@txwinet.com and let her know what date(s) would work best for you.
- **Bastrop State Park Trail Work Party** – Sat Jun 6, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Want to meet like-minded people, learn new skills and find out why life is better outdoors? Join a Park Specialist for a short introduction to the park, trail building and restoration information, and several hours of hands-on experience. All ages welcome; however, volunteers should be physically able to carry tools and equipment, hike at least two miles and laugh for sustained amounts of time. Bring sturdy footwear, work gloves, a bag lunch, water, a hat and sunscreen. Meet at the Refectory parking lot. 9 AM-3 PM; reservations required, 512 321-3740 or 512 321-2101
- **TPWD Junior Angler Clinics** – Sat Jun 13 and select Sat's Jun – Aug, 8:00 AM – 12:30 PM, Bastrop and Buescher State Parks. 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. The kids really have a good time, and parents accompany their children. Park entrance

is free for volunteers, and necessary training will be provided on site. Clinics will be held on
June 13 at Buescher State Park
June 20 at Bastrop State Park
July 11 at Buescher State Park
Aug 1 at Buescher State Park

At least 7 volunteers are needed for each clinic. This is a fun project for kids, parents, and volunteers! Contact Bill Brooks at 512 581-0377 or bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu to participate.

- **Bastrop State Park Interpretive Hikes** – Ongoing, Saturday mornings, 10:00 AM. "Discover the Lost Pines" interpretive hikes at Bastrop State Park. Hikes are in full swing as spring approaches and volunteers are needed to lead them. You don't have to be an expert; join one of the hikes as an observer to learn what's involved. To help, contact Sue Fischer at 512 321-1308 or email smfischer@mdanderson.org.
- **BSP Alum Creek Tract Hikes** – Select weekends, Mar – May. This restricted portion of Bastrop State Park was untouched by the recent fire. The park is planning 2 hikes each month through May and requires hikers to pre-register. If you are interested in leading or assisting with these hikes, contact Mark McClelland at 512 281-5516 or markmcc@prodigy.net.
- **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 weekends. 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 if you are interested in leading or participating in either week-day or week-end surveys, or both.

Hospitality Committee

To celebrate the successful completion of the 2009 training class, everyone is asked to bring his or her favorite healthy snack or guilty treat to the joint final class, chapter meeting, and graduation. So knock yourselves out!

If you would prefer to bring the drinks and ice, the chapter will reimburse you for them. Please let Mark know so we can ensure there are sufficient beverages.

Nature Quotes

Now the bright Morning star, day's harbinger,
Comes dancing from the East, and brings with her
The flowery May...that dost inspire
Mirth and youth and warm desire.

~Milton

Advanced Training

- **Blackland Prairies: Managing Local Ecosystems** -- Sat May 16, 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM. The North Texas Chapter TMN is hosting a one-day conference in Seagoville. The conference will focus on the monitoring and management of the Blackland Prairies and other ecosystems and what role the Texas Master Naturalist and teachers can play in the conservation of these natural resources. You can visit the website for more information: <http://ntmn.org/RegionalConference/>.
- **Lost Pines Native Plant Society of Texas** – select first Tuesdays 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. Miriam Hall is hosting a survey on Sunday May 17. Contact her at HARanch@AOL.com or 512 303-0363 for information and directions. The June meeting will be a regular meeting on Monday the 2nd. Stephen Gibson from Stengl Research Ranch will be the speaker. Contact Bill Brooks at 512 581-0377 or bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu for additional information.
- **Bamberger Ranch: How to Get Water on Your Land Without Drilling a Well** – Sun, May 17, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM. Good land conservation begins and ends with water. Leroy Petri and other ranch personnel will demonstrate Selah water development projects. Visit our lakes and dams and learn about their design and function, and how they were constructed. Identify soils, and learn their potential use in dam and pond construction and how to identify sites on your land that can hold water when ponds are properly constructed. Inexpensive projects, some that you can do yourself, to help you develop hidden water resources:
 - How to box low volume seeps and springs
 - Storage and delivery of captured water.
 - Catchment devices for wildlife watering that will help you qualify for the wildlife exemption and save you tax dollars.
 - Grasses, an invaluable aid in good watershed management.This 8-hour workshop includes some hiking, coffee breaks and lunch, dress for the weather. Registration, \$100; reduced rates for Master Naturalists. For additional information go to <http://www.bambergerranch.org/tours/#water>.
- **Austin Butterfly Forum: Dung Beetles** -- Mon May 25, 7:00 PM, Zilker Botanical Garden

Center. A presentation by Peg Wallace. For additional information, see <http://www.austinbutterflies.org/calendar>

- **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center** – Nature Nights, 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM, select nights in spring. Events scheduled are:
 - 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/>.
- **Austin Butterfly Forum: Butterfly Identification** -- Mon Jun 22, 7:00 PM, Zilker Botanical Garden Center. A presentation by Dan Hardy. For additional information, see <http://www.austinbutterflies.org/calendar>
- **Travis Audubon Society: Shorebird Identification** -- Wed's Jul 22, Aug 5, & Aug 19, 6:30 – 8:30 PM, Hornsby Bend Center for Environmental Research. There will be local field trips on Saturdays Jul 25 and Aug 8, and an optional trip to the Texas coast on the weekend of Aug 29-30. Tim Fennell's Shorebird Identification Class is a great way for intermediate birders to learn how to distinguish the Least, Semipalmated, and Western Sandpipers, Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs, and other similar shorebirds. Tim teaches science at the Liberal Arts and Science Academy High School in Austin and has been teaching the Shorebird Identification Class for Travis Audubon since 1998. The tuition is \$75 for TAS members and \$85 for non-members. For those who go to the coast, there will be an additional fee to cover Tim's expenses. This should range from \$30 to \$45, depending upon how many sign up. Birders who want to take this class should register by sending e-mail to Tim at tfennell@flash.net. For more details, go to <http://www.travisaudubon.org/classes.html>.

River Trips Reservations

Be sure to contact Rising Phoenix Adventures to reserve a vessel for our river trips planned for May 24 and June 20. Rental prices range from \$40 for a single kayak to \$65 for a canoe. Call 512-677-2305 or 512-985-5057 or visit their website at <http://www.risingphoenixadventures.com>.

Contrast this with community service and outreach, where we are interacting with the public and, we hope, providing some benefit in the way of information, training, or other service. Interpretive hikes, “booth sitting” at festivals, community watershed clean-ups, school science labs, archeological digs – all these are examples of community service.

A separate section for community service is provided on the form because we are required to track our “impact,” i.e., how many people we reach out to or “touch” with our activities. We “directly touch” those folks we deal with one-on-one. So if you lead a group of 8 adults and 4 kids on a hike, you should report “direct” impact of 8 adults and 4 youths. If you give a presentation to a group of 50 adults, you should report 50 adults as “direct” impact.

“Indirect” impact is more a measure of potential contacts. For example, last year approximately 7500 people attended Nature Fest. We did not talk to all of them (thank goodness!), but they may have seen our booth or picked up one of our brochures. So those 7500 were indirect contacts. The ones we took on hikes, talked with about TMN, or gave a rainfall absorption simulator demonstration were all direct contacts. Most of what you report will be direct contact/impact. A “D” or “I” in the appropriate block will suffice to indicate “direct” or “indirect.”

Reporting impact is very important, as TPWD uses these figures as one of the measures for the TMN program’s effectiveness at reaching the public regarding their key issues. If you don’t have an exact count, please provide a reasonable estimate.

That leaves environmental services. This can and does sometimes overlap with community service, but, generally speaking, other members of the public are not present. Environmental service includes things like the McRoughs bio-census, the various TPWD “Watch” programs, bird counts, horned lizard surveys, etc. It also includes trail maintenance and prairie or wetland restoration. Impact here is reported in miles or acres affected, but only when there is a direct impact on the land, such as creating a trail, or conducting a prescribed burn. Also, only new projects need to be reported each year, so most of you will not have to be concerned about calculating miles or acreage.

I do hope this helps clarify what is needed on time reports and why. Reporting impact is critical to the success of the Master Naturalist program, so please do your best. If multiple chapter members are involved in one activity, only one person should report the impact numbers so that they are not inflated by duplicate

reporting. The event coordinator, if there is one, should assume this responsibility. Otherwise, please decide among yourselves who will report and note that person’s name on your time sheet.

As usual, call or write if you have questions. Now get out there and rack up some more hours!

and easy logistics. If you’ve ever thought about trying a canoe or kayak trip, but just weren’t sure how to do it, this is the trip for you. We have several experienced “river runners” in the club and the benefit of working with Rising Phoenix Adventures for folks who need to rent a boat. The dates are Sunday, May 24th, and Saturday, June 20th. I sent out all of the necessary information for folks to make arrangements in an e-mail on 5/4/2009 with a correction on the days going out 5/5/2009. If you didn’t get those e-mails or need additional information, let me know.

Several chapter members participated in the field day out at Yegua Knobs on Saturday, May 9th. We did a bird, butterfly, dragonfly, and plant survey of the property, and had a good visit with the folks from Pines and Prairies Land Trust. The high point for me was finally getting to see the bloom of our native pipevine, *Aristolocia erecta*, also known as the Swanflower. This is one of those plants that is very difficult to find, and even more difficult to find in bloom. After seeing literally dozens of Pipevine Swallowtail butterflies and caterpillars, and a few chewed up pipevines, we came across a group of plants in bloom and were able to enjoy several fresh blossoms. You just never know what you might run across on a hike in the country!

I hope to see all of you at the chapter meeting/graduation on Monday, May 18th at Red Rock Community Center. The meeting will begin at 6:30.



SWANFLOWER

by Mark McClelland