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2000-2001

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 From The President's Desk
- 2 Rachel Bauer
- 3 Meetings and Events
- 4 Volunteer Opportunities
- 5 Advanced Training Events
- 5 Plant of the Month

From the Desk of the President

We have had great attendance at our January and February meetings and I thank you all. Our chapter is still in the formation stage and any time that any of you spend on chapter development counts as volunteer hours for you this year.

The surveys you filled out last meeting showed the following preferences, including the number of times the selection was marked: McKinney Roughs, 6; demonstration plots in Lockhart, 5; Staffing information booths, 5; Restoring/Developing various nature habitats, 6; Rainwater Demonstration, 4; and Nature Trackers, 2. As our Chapter Projects we have then adopted 1) McKinney Roughs, with Rachel as liaison and 2) Demonstration plots in Lockhart with Lytle as liaison. We will also staff various booths at community activities in our two county area when the opportunity arises. Each one of us has to be aware of the local opportunities in our area then let me know so we can approve it for volunteer work hours. Now, as far as restoring/developing nature habitats there are several places in the Caldwell/Bastrop area that can become your own project. Or maybe 2 or 3 of you can get together to work on a specific project. Just let me know

what you have decided to do and who you have contacted. You can also look at the "Nature trackers" program through Texas Parks and Wildlife for an individual project. Be prepared to choose those projects that you want to work with at this next meeting.



Prof. Baron Rector will be here on April 7 (Saturday) for class and field work involving native ecosystems and plant succession as well as plant identification. This will be a make up for those of you that missed these subject classes last year and advanced training for the rest of us. Put this on your calendar!

The Lady Bird Johnson

...Continued on page 3

Reminder: Bring your volunteer service time sheets for the first quarter of 2001 to the March meeting, or send to Gerri Martinez. Remember to include your advanced training time, too. Sending in your hours helps **you** to become certified, and we need to have this record of volunteer hours and classes attended for our chapter.

New Class, Make-up and Advanced

Training Opportunity

by Rachel Bauer,

Bastrop County Extension Agent in Agriculture

Second Class Begins

Our second training class of Lost Pines Texas Master Naturalists begins March 26. There has been a lot of interest in Bastrop County, and if it follows through in Caldwell Co., we should have a full class of 25 participants.

Class Make-up/Advanced Training Opportunity

A make-up session has been scheduled for those of you who missed the training (which was most of you) in September with Dr. Bill Fox, Range Specialist from College Station. Dr. Barron Rector, also an Extension Range Specialist, will present the training session on **Saturday, April 7**. We will begin promptly at **9:00 a.m.**, so please be on time as there is a lot of material to cover. The classroom training session will be held at Bastrop County Commissioner's Courtroom on the east side of the Bastrop County Courthouse, and the field training session will be held at Bastrop State Park. Lunch will be served, and the training will conclude at approximately 1 or 1:30 p.m. The new TMN class will also be present at this training. *For those of you who did attend Dr. Fox's presentation, this class will be considered as 4 hours of advanced training for you*, as Dr. Rector will cover some areas which Dr. Fox did not cover in last year's class. Dr. Rector is a wealth of information on natural resources and ecology, and is extremely enthusiastic about his job. If you have questions, please call me, Rick or Lytle.

The April 7 schedule is as follows:

Classroom session:

- I. Native Ecosystems of Bastrop/Caldwell Counties
 - A. Definitions & significance of an ecosystem
 - B. Description of Post Oak Savannah & Blackland Prairie, & other ecological regions represented here; geology, soils climate, aquifers, watersheds, etc.

C. Vegetative communities of the area and their relation to geology, climate, soils, etc; Why a plant community is where it is. (Prairies, Woodlands, Riparian communities, Wetlands, Tanks, etc)

II. Plant Succession

III. Impact of Man on the Environment

IV. Plant I. D.

- A. Session on woody plants and grasses found in the area.

Field Session:

I. Soils/Geology

II. Plant Communities

Point out plant communities

Relate variations in plant communities to soils and other factors that cause them to vary

III. Plant Succession

Show Climax community (if any are present)

Illustrate degraded states (loss of diversity)

Show succession proceeding both towards and away from diversity

IV. Plant Identification



Toxic Plant Workshop

If you are a plant enthusiast, a Toxic Plant Workshop is being held at the Austin Convention Center on Saturday, March 24. Registration is from 7-8 a.m., and the workshop will conclude at 2:30 p.m. The workshop is sponsored by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association and the Texas Beef Council. Participants will get hands on training that stresses practical identification of important problem plants, how to spot critical conditions in a pasture, poisoning symptoms in livestock and integrated pest management strategies to minimize losses. You will also get a copy of a new book, Toxic Plants of Texas. You can register on line at www.texascattleraisers.org. Registration is \$60 per person, which includes refreshments, lunch and the Toxic Plant Handbook. Contact Rachel at 512-581-7186 for a complete schedule.

Wildflower Center has some excellent advanced training opportunities this month and next. For example: Sat Mar 17, Wildflower Watercolors Workshop; Sun Mar 18, Journal of Art and Nature Workshop; Sat Mar 31, and Sun Apr 1, Nature Photography Workshop; Thurs Apr 19 and Sat Apr 21, Edible Natives (identify, prepare, consume native plants); Sun Apr 22, Family Earth Day- Work Day. These are just a few examples of offerings at the Wildlife Center.

Also, the Bastrop County Audubon Society will be installing bird houses at Bastrop State Park on Sunday Mar 25. Call Richard Hulseley if you are

interested in this for volunteer hours. Finally, on Sat and Sun Apr 28 and 29, there is a festival in Bastrop that we could set up an information booth. Let me know if you would be interested.

By the way, I asked Gerri to give us an overview of the natural wildflowers, etc in Italy when she returns. She will miss our next meeting but agreed to discuss the “native wildlife” of that area when she returns. Exciting?! That is it for now, see you Monday, Mar. 26.

Rick Johnson

*Talk of mysteries! Think of our lives in Nature—
daily to be shown matter, to come in contact with it—rocks,
trees, wind on our cheeks! the solid earth! the actual world!*

—H. D. Thoreau, 1848

MARK YOUR CALENDAR-

Regular meetings of the Lost Pines Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist, are the 4th Monday of the month.

MARCH MEETING

Rockne Church

March 26, 2001

6:00 PM

Program—Michelle Haggerty, Texas Master Naturalist
Program Coordinator

APRIL MEETING

Rockne Church

April 23, 2001

6:00 PM

Program—To be announced

APRIL ADVANCED TRAINING/MAKE UP

Bastrop Commissioner's Court (classroom) and Bastrop State Park. The Commissioner's Court is on the East side of the Courthouse Complex.

April 7, 2001

9:00 a.m.

Dr. Barron Rector, Native Ecosystems & Plant Succession
(See Rachel's article on page 2 for details).

MAY ADVANCED TRAINING

May 12, 2001

1:00 p.m.

Bamberger Ranch (Selah). Selah is a 5500 acre ranch located near Johnson City. It has been described as the largest habitat restoration project on private land in Texas; owner J. David Bamberger has spent 30 years reclaiming and restoring what was once an over-grazed ranch. It now serves as a wonderful demonstration project to promote conservation and land stewardship.

MAY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

May 10, 2001. Send information to Andy Butler (butler@mdanderson.org) or Doyle Kolle (kolle@totalaccess.net). We welcome relevant contributions, photos, announcements or other material relating to the mission of the Texas Master Natural program, particularly those pertaining to the Lost Pines area.

Volunteer Opportunities

McKinney Roughs Volunteer Opportunities

Current Opportunities at McKinney Roughs. For more information, call 512-303-5073, ext. 8040 (Bastrop Area) or toll-free, 800-776-5272, ext. 8040.

- **Trails and Parks support**—Activities include monitoring trail activities, ecological restoration, trail maintenance & construction projects data collecting on native plants and wildlife
- **Education activities**—Serve as guides for student groups, give orientations, assist in preparation for student & teacher groups.

Bastrop State Park

- **Birdhouse installation and cleaning**—March 25, 9:30 A.M. (Meet at the picnic area near the pool). Join Bastrop Audubon and Friends of the Lost Pines State Parks to install new birdhouses and clean those installed last year. Bring a lunch, beverage, and binoculars for birding. Also bring tools and work gloves. Contact Priscilla Jarvis, 512-281-2762. (You may also sponsor a birdhouse in honor or memory of someone. Contact Priscilla for details.)

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

- Maintaining trails, watering gardens, collecting seeds, helping in the store. Contact Megan Murphy, Director of Volunteer Services, at (512) 292-4200 to arrange for a volunteer interview, or E-mail megan@wildflower.org

Texas Nature Trackers

Projects coordinated by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department or partner organizations. Some projects available:

- **Texas Horned Lizard Watch**—provides instructions for surveying the Texas state reptile on your property or on public areas. For more information, contact the Wildlife Diversity program at 1-800-792-1112, ext. 7011.
- **Texas Mussel Watch**—volunteers are helping us document the presence or absence of native freshwater mussel species. To volunteer for Texas Mussel Watch, call the Wildlife Diversity Program at 1-800-792-1112, ext. 7011. **Please** also note several Mussel Watch training workshops, listed under Advanced Training, below.
- **Texas Monarch Watch**—monitor the spring and fall migration of this familiar butterfly on your own property or public lands. Volunteers can call the Monarch Watch hotline at 1-800-468-9710 (or if you

are in Austin, 326-2231) to report sightings of monarchs or hear a recorded message about the status of the migration in Texas. For more information about Texas Monarch Watch or to receive monitoring kit, call the Wildlife Diversity Program at 1-800-792-1112, ext. 7011.

- **Hummingbird Roundup**—provides instructions for monitoring hummingbirds, along with suggestions and supplies for improving hummingbird habitat on your property in Texas. For more information, call the Wildlife Diversity Program at 1-800-792-1112, ext. 4644.
- **Texas Amphibian Watch**—a partner with the North American Amphibian Monitoring Program. Texans involved in this project will use field guides, web sites and audio tapes to learn to identify the various species of frogs and toads native to their area by sight and by listening to their calls. For more information about Texas Amphibian Watch or about related workshops, contact the Wildlife Diversity Program at 1-800-792-1112, ext. 7011. **Please** also note several Amphibian Watch training workshops, listed under Advanced Training, below.
- **Project Prairie Birds**—Answer questions about Texas' wintering sparrows and their avian grassland neighbors. Project Prairie Birds can be conducted in any temperate grassland site. For more information, contact Cliff Shackelford, 512-912-7045 or by email: clifford.shackelford@tpwd.state.tx.us.
- **Adopt-A-Species Projects**—Takes place on public properties that support populations of rare Texas plants or animals. Learn monitoring techniques. Volunteers agree to continue monitoring for a set period of time. Suitable for schools, club or civic groups. (Not available in all parts of the state). Contact the Wildlife Diversity Program at 1-800-792-1112, ext. 7011.
- **Remember**—Get approval before you begin a project that you want to count for volunteer credit. Record your volunteer service and hours and submit to Gerri Martinez (512-303-5936). Documenting your service hours helps you to become certified. In addition, it helps the Master Naturalist Program to justify support received from our sponsors.

Special Events

- **Fayette County Outdoor Expo**—April 28 and 29, La Grange, Fayette County Fairgrounds. Contact La Grange Area Chamber of Commerce, 979-968-5756 for information.



Advanced Training

Please obtain prior approval for advanced training, and don't forget to record your hours! (Events listed in chronological order).

- ▶ **Wildflower Watercolor Workshop**—The Wildflower Center, March 17, 10 A.M.-2:00 P.M. (Members, \$35, non-members, \$45). Class size limited. Pre-registration required (call 512-292-4200). Capture the beauty of the Hill Country spring! Join Austin artist Mary Curtis as she shares her user-friendly techniques to help you create realistic wildflower portraits. No formal art experience or training is necessary. You will learn in a positive, fun atmosphere with lots of encouragement. Plus, you'll take home a completed watercolor!
- ▶ **Journal of Art and Nature Workshop**—The Wildflower Center, March 18, 1 to 4:00 P.M. (Members, \$20, non-members, \$30). Join artist Carol Brown for a morning filled with walking, talking, drawing, and writing amongst the flora and fauna of the Wildflower Center. Carol will instruct beginners and encourage the experienced to translate their observations and appreciation of nature into journalistic creations. Fill those empty pages with your thoughts and images of the world that surrounds you, culminating in the creation of your very own Haiku.. Pre-registration at 512-292-4200.
- ▶ **Texas Amphibian Watch workshop**—Houston Arboretum, Monday, March 19, 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. This workshop will include a short hike to listen for amphibians calling. To register, call Jaime Gonzales at 713-681-8433.
- ▶ **Texas Amphibian Watch workshop**—Trinity, TX Saturday, March 24th. Held in conjunction with the Texas Assoc. of Environmental Education Conference at the Houston ISD Outdoor Education Center. This 4-hour workshop will include classroom time and a field trip to practice monitoring skills. For information or to register, contact Tom Cosper or Dorothy Chavez at 936-594-7074 or www.oecoly@lcc.net or Ann Miller at 512-912-7025 or ann.miller@tpwd.state.tx.us.
- ▶ **Wildlife Leadership Advanced Training**—Texas 4-H Center, Brownwood Texas, March 23-25. \$50 fee includes meals, lodging and materials. Training for motivated adults to help teach high school age youth about quail, deer, and human interactions with natural resources. For information, contact Helen Holdsworth, 210-467-6578; email: hholdsworth@hotmail.com; or visit <http://texnat.tamu.edu> (look under 'youth programs').
- ▶ **Texas Mussel Watch Workshop**—San Marcos, Friday, March 30th. Workshop held in conjunction with Texas Watch's "Meeting of the Monitors" conference. Workshop and field trip fee includes lunch. To register or for more information, contact Allison Moore at 512-

Plant of the month: Spiderworts (*Tradescantia* spp.)

Andy Butler

This time of the year, we have an embarrassment of beautiful plants to admire in Central Texas. One favorite is the Spiderwort, and their relatives the dayflowers (family Commelinaceae). The rose-pink to deep blue flowers of these plants grow in clusters. Individual flowers wither within a day or two, but others take their place and they may bloom over a long season. Distinguishing the dayflowers (genus *Commelina*) from the spiderworts (genus *Tradescantia*) requires close observation. Both have 3 petals, but in the dayflowers one of these is much smaller than the other two, while those of *Tradescantia* are essentially equal in size. Spiderworts are perennials, with straight or branching stems to 1-3 feet tall, and glasslike leaves. They can be propagated by root division or seeds and grow well in well-drained, xeric conditions. Probably the most common is *Tradescantia occidentalis*. On our lot, we also have another, short, spiderwort with wonderful cobalt blue flowers. Only about 6 inches tall, it's clusters of flowers are a welcome site in early March; they make a good informal ground cover. Both species are wonderful additions to a perennial garden.



245-7470 or am13@swt.edu or Ann Miller at 512-912-7025 or ann.miller@tpwd.state.tx.us.

- ▶ **Beyond the Blossoms: Nature Photography Workshop**—The Wildflower Center, Saturday, March 31, 9am to 5pm and Sunday, April 1, 1 to 3 P.M. Members \$65 /Non-members \$75 (includes slide film, film processing, and materials) Bring your own 35mm camera. There's no doubt wildflowers are beautiful and very photogenic, but what about the things we miss while we're dazzled by their beauty? Join nature photographers Brian and Shirley Loflin for a photographic foray to find the hidden beauty in nature. Learn to look at nature with a new eye and how to capture what you see on film in this one and 1/2 day workshop.
- ▶ **Edible Natives: The Power of Eating Locally**— The Wildflower Center, Thursday, April 19, 7 to 9pm and Saturday, April 21, 9am to 1pm. Members \$80/Non-members \$95 Dawn Black, Owner and Senior Instructor of the Natural Epicurean Academy of Culinary Arts teaches how to identify, prepare and consume native plants. Recipes will include wild herbal pate, sautéed dandelion greens with yucca flowers, Navajo tea, pecan

...Continued on page 6

bread, and more.

- **The Role of Predator Control as a Tool in Game Management**—YO Ranch Hotel, Kerrville, Texas, April 18-19. Registration, \$75 (before April 1; \$100 thereafter; does NOT include lodging). The symposium will focus on predator impacts on deer, quail, and turkey populations, with the emphasis being on Texas situations. For further information concerning the symposium contact Dr. Dale Rollins at (915) 653-4576 or e-mail him at: d-rollins@tamu.edu; or visit <http://texnat.tamu.edu>.
- **Raptor Rehab: Taking Care of our Birds of Prey**—McKinney Roughs, April 21, 2001, 9 a.m. - 11 a.m. Fee: \$5. Sallie Delahoussaye of Raptor Rehab in Austin presents an interactive program on understanding Central Texas birds of prey. Her one-hour presentation includes general information on birds of prey, the natural history of raptors, a slide show, and live demonstration. This presentation is followed by a question and answer session designed to inform the community on what to do in the case of discovering an injured raptor.
- **Texas Amphibian Watch workshop**—Brazos Bend State Park, Friday, April 27, 1:30 - 5:00 P.M., with an optional evening call count. To register or for more information, contact Ann Miller at 512-912-7025 or email: ann.miller@tpwd.state.tx.us.

- **Texas Mussel Watch Workshop**—Brazos Bend State Park, Saturday, April 28th, 10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. (includes mussel monitoring field trip) To register or for more information, contact Ann Miller at 512-912-7025 or ann.miller@tpwd.state.tx.us.
- **Wade into Wetlands Workshop**—The Wildflower Center, May 5, 2001 9am to 4:30pm Registration fee: \$25 includes materials and lunch. The National Wildlife Federation teams up with the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center to present workshops for educators. This workshop is designed for teachers in grades 3-8 and provides hands-on activities to teach the importance of wetlands as habitat, and the impact of pollution on wetland species. Plenty of background information will be provided, and teachers will learn to lead their students from awareness to discovery and finally action! Contact: Marya Frech, 512/476-9805; Fax: 512/476-9810; email: frech@nwf.org.
- **Texas Amphibian Watch workshop**—Wild Basin Wilderness, Austin. Wednesday, May 16th, 6:00 - 10:00 P.M.. Workshop price of \$16 includes box dinner. Dress comfortably for an evening hike and amphibian monitoring after classroom instruction. Bring a flashlight. To register or for more information, contact Carol Knepp at Wild Basin at 512-327-7622 or Ann Miller at 512-912-7025 or email: ann.miller@tpwd.state.tx.us.

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