



Officers
2002

- President Carol Brown
eve. 512-303-7271
day 512-332-2820
E-mail: carol.h.brown@att.net
- V. Pres Bill Watson
home 830-875-2941
- Secretary Susan Green
- Treasurer Janice Rampy

Committee Chairs

- Newsletter—Andy Butler; 512-237-9461, butler@mdanderson.org
- Program & Education—Sue Fischer & Joan Russell
- Volunteer Coordination—Janice Rampy
- Hospitality—Bonnie Shimek
- History—Susan Green
- Fundraising & Project Development—Gerri Martinez
- Policies & Guidelines—Bill Watson

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 President's column
- 1 Health Fair Report
- 2 Bass Virus in Lake Bastrop
- 2 Calendar
- 3 Volunteer Opportunities
- 4 Advanced Training
- 4 Web Site News

President's Column

Greetings—

I spent the weekend of May 30th at the Bamberger Ranch attending an orientation meeting for newly chartered or developing Master Naturalist Chapters. It was a fabulous meeting and I was delighted with both the quantity and quality of information I came away with!

Early in the orientation, we were asked to focus on the stated goals and objectives of the Master Naturalist program. Of the three program objectives—one word is key—VOLUNTEER. Unlike some other organizations whose goals are primarily educational or political, the goals of the Master Naturalist program can be paraphrased this way:

To develop a Network of knowledgeable Volunteers at the local level which enhances existing natural resources education and outreach activities within their communities.

This goal is served through local “partnerships” with organizations that can help us sustain our program, and at the same time provide a forum for our community efforts.

So who are our local partners? Well, at this time, we have two primary partners – The Texas Cooperative Extension Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife. While it is important to identify and develop new partners as our chapter grows, we owe a debt to these partners and should strive to focus our volunteer efforts on their behalf.

As such, I do hope you will review the list of current and upcoming Volunteer Opportunities—paying special attention to those which really are “Right Here at Home” and see where you can focus your efforts.

–Carol

Bastrop County Health Fair Report

Len Polasek, TPWD

Joan Russell, Linda Presto-Lenoch, and Rebecca Williams helped me man a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department booth at the Bastrop County Health Fair on Friday, June 7. We provided information on wildlife diseases, lyme disease, poisonous snakes, and poisonous spiders. Michael Hicks from the Capital of Texas Zoo brought a copperhead and a rattlesnake for display. The booth was a huge success and I thank the ladies for volunteering their time.



June Meeting

Sue Fischer

At the June 24th Chapter Meeting, Interpretive Ranger Todd McClanahan will present a slide show on Bastrop and Buescher State Parks, including their history, facilities, trails, flora and fauna. This will be followed by a discussion on volunteer opportunities in the Parks—Todd is ready to put us to work!

Bass Virus Making Way Through Lake Bastrop

Thanks to Len Polasek for this TPWD release

A virus responsible for killing largemouth bass on four popular Texas reservoirs in the summers of 1998 and 1999 and linked to almost 20 die-offs nationwide is making its way through Lake Bastrop, according to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department officials.

Dozens of dead and dying largemouth bass have been observed daily during the last two weeks of May on Lake Bastrop. Lab analysis at the A.E. Wood Fish Hatchery in San Marcos of several dead bass recovered by TPWD fisheries biologists confirmed the presence of Largemouth Bass Virus (LMBV). Biologists investigating the kill observed 122 dead bass on Lake Bastrop on May 31.

"This sounds pretty typical for a Largemouth Bass Virus outbreak," said Dave Terre, TPWD regional fisheries director in Tyler and Texas' representative on a multi-state team of researchers investigating the virus. "The public should expect it would continue for a time, maybe up to a month. This doesn't mean the bass fishing at Bastrop is going to crash because it's not. We've experienced this on some pretty major lakes in East Texas and we know the lake will recover."

LMBV is one of more than 100 naturally occurring viruses that affect fish but not warm-blooded animals. Its origin is unknown, but it is related to a virus found in frogs and other amphibians and almost identical to a virus isolated in fish imported to the United States for the

The Texas Master Naturalist program is sponsored by the Texas Cooperative Extension Agency and by Texas Parks and Wildlife.



aquarium trade. *The virus poses no human health risks and fish exposed to LMBV are safe for human consumption.*

Bastrop is the first active case of LMBV in Texas since 1999. The good news, Terre noted, is that there has never been a fishery lost because of LMBV. Although TPWD has confirmed LMBV in about 2/3 of the river sheds of Texas, typically only a few percent of the bass are infected, and virtually none of these are stressed. Bastrop is the first power plant reservoir to be hit by LMBV and Terre said biologists would be comparing water temperature with data collected in 1998 during the outbreak at Sam Rayburn Reservoir. "The water temperature at Rayburn was high during the virus," Terre recalled. "The Lower Colorado River Authority has been very helpful in collecting water quality data. We'll be looking for any clues." More information on Largemouth Bass Virus can be found at (<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fish/infish/lmbvfacts.htm>). Reports of dead or dying fish can be reported to your local TPWD fisheries biologist or game warden or by calling 512-389-4848.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR-

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

JUNE MEETING

Monday, June 24, 2002

6:30PM

Rockne Church (Old Parish Hall)

PROGRAM— TODD McCLANAHAN, "NATURAL HISTORY OF BASTROP AND BUESCHER STATE PARKS"

JULY MEETING

MONDAY, JULY 22, 2002

PROGRAM—CHAPTER POTLUCK

Rockne Church (Old Parish Hall)

6:30 PM

JULY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

July 8, 2002. Please send information to Andy Butler (butler@mdanderson.org). We welcome relevant contributions, photos, announcements or other material relating to the mission of the Texas Master Naturalist program, particularly those pertaining our local area.

Volunteer Opportunities

McKinney Roughs Volunteer Opportunities

For information about our Chapter's McKinney Roughs projects, contact Rick Johnson, 512-398-2357. For more information about volunteering at McKinney Roughs, call 512-303-5073, ext. 8040 (Bastrop Area) or toll-free, 800-776-5272, ext. 8040. Here are some current opportunities at McKinney Roughs.

- **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.

Lockhart Demonstration Garden

- Contact Lytle Arche for the specific time, and details of future work dates, at 512-398-3122 or by E-mail arche@tamu.edu.

Wild Basin Preserve

- Trail Maintenance—Volunteers welcome. Help repair portions of trails, control erosion, and make our trails safer for everyone to enjoy. For current schedule and information on other opportunities, call (512) 327-7622 or E-mail hike@wildbasin.org or visit the website, www.wildbasin.org.

Other Opportunities

Texas Nature Trackers

Ongoing projects coordinated by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department or partner organizations.

- **Texas Horned Lizard Watch**—provides instructions for surveying the Texas state reptile on your property or on public areas. Data sent from volunteers in the first year have already helped biologists suggest possible relationships between fire ant distributions and the distribution of Texas horned lizards. Each year, more volunteers are needed from all over the state to increase our knowledge about Texas horned lizards. For information, contact the Wildlife Diversity program at 1-800-792-1112, ext. 7011.
- **Texas Mussel Watch**—volunteers are helping 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. (**Note** the Mussel Watch Workshop listed under Advanced Training)

- **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 (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 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. (**Note** the Amphibian Watch Workshop listed under Advanced Training).
- **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 E-mail: 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 for volunteer credit. Report your volunteer service to Rick Johnson (512-398-2357). Documenting your service hours helps you to become certified, and helps the Master Naturalist Program to justify support received from our sponsors!

*Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher
—William Wordsworth, 1798*

Advanced Training

Note: Please obtain **prior approval** for advanced training, and don't forget to **report** your hours!

- **Lost Pines and Prairies of Central Texas Workshop**—Thursday June 13, 2002, 7-9 PM registration begins at 6:30 PM, at Texas Lodge LCRA Riverside conference Center (1405 Willow Street--parking lot at the north end of Fisherman's Park.) Training to be presented: Where did the Lost Pines come from? How do they survive in central Texas droughts? How are forests and prairies linked? What does it take to restore a native prairie? How can our native prairies and forests survive rapid development around Austin? These and other topics will be addressed by Texas A&M University researchers Dr. Fred Smeins and Mohammad Al-Rababah, MS. Admission is free. Sponsored by Pines and Prairies Land Trust.
- **Xeriscaping with Native Plants**—June 19 - July 31, 6-8 pm (6 Wednesdays total; will not meet July 3), at the Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Avenue, Austin. Participants will learn how to design, install, and maintain a native plant garden based on principals. This certificate course will introduce the concepts of xeriscaping with a native plants approach. This 6-week course will include classroom instruction and outdoor activities. Advance registration is required, and class size is limited.. \$90 members/ \$105 non-members. A printable registration form is available at: http://www.wildflower.org/registration_form.html

- **National Wildlife Federation's Creating Schoolyard Habitats® Educator's Workshop**—June 22-24, 8:30-4:00 (8:30 to 12:30 on the 24th). At this two and one half day workshop, you'll gain a better understanding of what your school offers as wildlife habitat, learn the how-to's of creating a schoolyard habitat, understand the importance of creating a habitat team, explore how to integrate outdoor classroom activities with required curriculum content, and participate in fun, hands-on activities. The last morning will be spent visiting and learning from existing schoolyard habitats in the area. (K-12) Space is limited. \$70 per person (includes lunch Saturday and Sunday) Contact Marya Fowler, National Wildlife Federation, 512-476-9805 x20 or email: fowler@nwf.org to register.
- **Monarch Watch Workshop**—October 8-10, Bamberger Ranch, Johnson City. Training to help with Texas Monarch Watch monitoring program. This workshop will take place at Bamberger Ranch. Margaret Bamberger at selah@tstar.net or call (830) 868-4639.
- **Third Annual Statewide TMN Meeting and Advanced Training**—October 25-27, 2002, Mo Ranch in Hunt, Texas Numerous advanced training sessions. Mark your calendar! Details to follow.



Lost Pines Chapter Website

Andy Butler

Please visit us on the web, at <http://www.lostpinesmasternaturalist.org> . (note you MUST include “www” in the address). On our web page, you will find up-dated volunteer opportunities and educational events that arrive after the newsletter deadlines. Have you moved, or do you have a new “911” address? You can update your contact information on the web site, too. Please send reports or photos of chapter activities for possible use on the web site (or newsletter) to me, at butler@mdanderson.org .

The eyes of the future are looking back at us and they are praying for us to see beyond our own time. They are kneeling with hands clasped that we might act with restraint, that we might leave room for the life that is destined to come. To protect what is wild is to protect what is gentle. Perhaps the wildness we fear is the pause between our heartbeats, the silent space that says we live only by grace.

Wilderness lives by this same grace. Wild mercy in our hands.

—Terry Tempest Williams, in “Red,” 2001
