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President's Column

Elaine Cearley

As you may know by now, we voted to accept the new Bylaws and Handbook at the last chapter meeting. They can be seen and copied off our web site <http://www.lostpinesmasternaturalist.org>. Please let me know if you do not have access to a computer and would like a printed copy. To see the complete picture of Chapter operations you need the "Bylaws", "Chapter Handbook" and the statewide "Chapter Management Guidelines".

For some really exciting news, I am happy to announce that Meredith Longoria, Wildlife Biologist with Texas Parks and Wildlife for our area, has agreed to be one of our chapter advisers. She is planning to attend our May 22 meeting. I invite all members to come and meet her. She will be a real asset to our group. Welcome aboard Meredith!

And for our class: you should be able to see that light at the end of the tunnel, you are over half way through, and some of the best classes are yet to come!

See you at the meeting,

—Elaine

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Chapter Happenings

Compiled from member reports and Chapter Meeting Minutes

As mentioned in Elaine's column, new Chapter by-laws and Operating Handbook were adopted at the May 1 meeting. These are available for download from our web site. Adoption of these governing documents puts our Chapter in accord with state guidelines and should clarify Chapter administration.

Vernon Berger and Rachel Riffe extend a hearty thanks to all the members who helped with the Bastrop Yesterfest booth. This is a great way to promote our Chapter to the public, and Rachel reported that 449 contacts were made this year.

Marsha Elrod reports that she, Kathy McAleese and Louise Ridlon participated in the first annual Trans-Texas Quail Call Count on May 6. Beginning at 7 AM, the group set up six listening posts on Watts Lane off Highway 21. They heard cardinals, woodpeckers, crows, mockingbirds, vireos,

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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 Cooperative Extension Agency and by Texas Parks and Wildlife.

SPONSOR CONTACTS:

Caldwell Co. Extension Office: Rachel Bauer, CEA-AG/NR; Caldwell-tx@tamu.edu; 512-398-3122

Bastrop Co. Extension Office: Maron Finley, CEA-AG/NR; Bastrop-tx@tamu.edu; 512-581-7186

Bastrop Co. Wildlife Biologist: Meredith Longoria, 804 Pecan, Bastrop, 512-332-7280.



CHAPTER CALENDAR

May & June

Saturday, May 13 Class: Field Trip & Advanced Training, LCRA Cooper Farm, 2001 Waldek Rd, near Ledbetter, TX. 9:30 AM-12:30 PM. The topic will be wildlife management options on acreage, presented by **Lee Fritsch**, Ranch Manager (a map to Cooper Farm is available on our Web site).

Monday, May 15 Class: Bastrop SP Refectory, 6:30 PM. Join Brian Cook, LCRA, to learn about aquatic ecology and management, and Gordon Linam, TPWD, to hear about Texas fishes.

Saturday, May 20, Geology Advanced Training, by Miriam Hall. See details on Page 4 and attached map.

Monday, May 22 Class: Red Rock Community Center, 6:30 PM. Learn about herpetology with Bill Brooks, and Mammals, with John Young.

Monday, June 5 Class: Bastrop SP Refectory, 6:30 PM. We will hear about Forest Management and tree identification from Jim Carse (TFS) and Wetlands Ecology with Jeff Raasch (TPWD).

Saturday, June 10 Class/Field Trip: Aquarena Springs, San Marcos. 9:30 AM-12:30 PM. Aquarena staff will provide a tour and hands-on opportunities to study aquatic ecology and learn about endangered species. Dress casually.

Monday, June 19 Class: Red Rock Community Center, 6:30 PM. Kelly Bender will teach us about the urban-wildlife interface, and Nick Morgan will talk about Texas Archeology.

Newsletter Deadline

Deadline for the next issue is **July 7, 2006**. 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 Andy Butler: butler@mdanderson.org; 512-321-1308.

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/>.

Volunteer Opportunities

► **Bastrop State Park Activities**

Interpretive Hikes—Ongoing: Saturday mornings (10:00 AM) “Discover the Lost Pines” interpretive hikes at Bastrop State Park. This is a great excuse to go to the park! Lead small groups on a short hike (about 1 1/2 hr), giving them an overview of the importance of the park, both historically and ecologically. **Volunteers are still needed for hikes in May and for next fall.** To help, contact Sue Fischer at 512-321-1308; email smfischer@mdanderson.org.

Monitoring, exotic removal and other activities—we are working with Todd McLanahan and the Park staff to set up a regular schedule for these activities. If you are interested, contact Andy Butler (butler@mdanderson.org; 512-321-1308).

► **Bastrop County Health Fair**—June 3, 2006 at Smithville High School. Help present our Chapter’s booth and display on toxic or hazardous plants. Contact Elaine Cearley if you would like to help out (ElaineA@starband.net; 512-237-3021).

► **Junior Angler Program**— This is the second year for the Texas Parks and Wildlife’s Junior Angler Fishing program and once again Bill Brooks is working with Bastrop and Buescher State Parks to bring this fun, free, program to teach boys and girls, 6 to 16 years old, how to fish. Many of you did this last year and you know what a great time it is. The kids have been a joy to work with. All programs are on Saturdays from 9 AM until noon for the participants. Bill asks the volunteers to be present from 8 AM until 12:30 PM. Dates this year are June 3, July 15 and August 5 at Buescher SP, and June 17, July 22 at Bastrop SP. For more information and to volunteer, please contact, Bill Brooks at BGBrooks@mail.utexas.edu or 581-0377.

► **Lockhart State Park Lecture Series**— A series of monthly presentations are planned. May 9 will be “Fauna of Lockhart State Park and Caldwell Country.” Further talks on the natural and cultural history of the area will be planned for the summer in collaboration with Park Staff. To volunteer, contact Rick Johnson (rickjohnson718@sbcglobal.net; (512) 398-4405).

► **FireCAP Facilitators**—Facilitators will make presentations to home owners on how to protect their homes against wildfire, through creating defensible space and instituting other protective measures. Please contact Michal Hubbard 512-517-1416 or by email Michal_photog@yahoo.com for details. If you have not received FireCAP Facilitator’s training, contact Michal; if there is sufficient interest a 4 hour training workshop (Advanced Training) will be scheduled.

► **Lockhart Demonstration Garden**—The Chapter Demonstration Garden now has a native wildflower plot and a tallgrass prairie plot. Some small trees have been planted so that a shade garden can develop. The garden is evolving to a demonstration of native plants for the home landscape. To help, contact Muriel Lem at 512-398-9427.

Monitoring Activities

► **Individual monitoring activities**—In addition to Chapter activities and events with our partners agencies, a variety of individual monitoring activities, such as those listed here, may qualify for Volunteer service, particularly when they involve reporting your results as part of a broader monitoring effort. Please get these activities approved by Chapter officers, preferably before you begin.

► **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. 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.

► **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.

► **See the TPWD “Nature Tracker” web page for detailed monitoring information**—
http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/learning/texas_nature_trackers/index.phtml.

► **Remember**—Get approval for volunteer activities not listed *before* you begin a project. Report monthly volunteer service to Sue Fischer at 144 Colovista Dr., Bastrop, TX 78602; email smfischer@mdanderson.org. Activity report forms are available on our website at <http://www.lostpinesmasternaturalist.org/volunteer.html>.

Advanced Training

- **White-Tailed Deer in Texas: Impact on People, Communities and the Land**—May 18, Texas State University, San Marcos. White-tailed deer are a valuable natural resource providing enjoyment for thousands across Texas and are very adaptable to life near people. However, when deer numbers escalate and they become overabundant, deer can threaten wildlife and plant diversity as well as cause economic, health and safety concerns. Some Texas communities are currently confronting these issues and others soon will be. This seminar will allow attendees to hear about the experiences of communities as well as hear from nationally recognized experts currently working with overabundant deer issues. Thursday, May 18, 2006, 7:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Topics include:

- * How did we get this many deer in Texas and what does the future hold?
- * Impact of overabundant deer populations
- * Current management tools
- * What has and has not worked
- * Overabundant deer as a planning issue
- * Building consensus among stakeholders

Registration is limited and is \$50. Fee includes all refreshment breaks and lunch on day one. Pre-registration by May 1st required for a guaranteed lunch! To register, contact Helen Holdsworth at the Texas Wildlife Association, 1-800-TEX-WILD or 210-826-2904, x. 120.

- **Rocks, minerals and fossils of Central Texas**—May 20, 9 AM to Noon. Join our own Miriam Hall for a hands-on discussion of how rocks and minerals are formed, their properties, identification of fossils, information on the geological periods they represent, and detailed information on collecting rocks or fossils. Participants will receive samples for reference. The class will be held at Miriam's workshop. See directions attached to this newsletter (page 5), or contact Miriam for details (MHALL@tceq.state.tx.us).

- **Lone Star Regional Native Plant Conference**—May 24-28, Nacogdoches. The Stephen F. Austin State University Native Plant Center is proud to host the 3rd Lone Star Regional Native Plant Conference in association with the Cullowhee Native Plant Conference at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, North Carolina. Join a unique blend of plant enthusiasts, nursery professionals, landscapers, botanists, and horticulturists to hear nationally known speakers address region-specific topics such as East Texas ecosystems, landscape use, invasive and exotic plants, and conservation efforts. Enjoy the local flora on fabulous field trips and learn from experts during hands-on workshops. There will be numerous field trips led by

noted botanists. Conference fees range from \$75 (single day) to \$175 (complete package). For details and registration form, see our web site www.lostpinesmasternaturalist.org/training.html.

- **Agricultural Pests Management Seminar: Hogs, Coyotes, Buzzards and Egrets**—May 25, 2006, 6:00 to 8:30 PM, at Rockne Sacred Heart Catholic Church. Agricultural Pests Management Seminar on Buzzard damage, coyote predation, hog damage, update on egrets. BBQ meal served at 6:00 p.m. RSVP to Extension Office by May 21: Maron Finley, 512-581-7186 or Email m-finley2@tamu.edu.
- **Project Learning Tree**—June 19-22. Janette Scott from the Region 12 Education service center in Waco will be facilitating three environmental education classes. "Food, Land & People," an agriculture based program will be June 19th at Mother Neff State Park. Project Learning Tree's "Exploring the Places We Live" will be June 21st at the Waco Wetland Education Center, and a general Project Learning Tree class will be June 22nd, also at the Wetland Education Center. For details and registration, contact Janette Scott at (254)297-1127 or jscott@esc12.net. All classes are open to the public and have been approved for advanced training for Master Naturalists.
- **Range & Habitat Seminar**—July 7 at Kerrville Wildlife Management Area, near Hunt, TX, 25 miles NW of Kerrville. (This event repeats on August 4). An ecosystems approach as it pertains to range and wildlife habitat management. Topics discussed will include white-tailed deer management, grazing management, prescribed burning and brush control. The program will also include over 20 years of nutrition and genetics research conducted in the Donnie E. Harmel White-tailed Deer Research Facility. 1:30-5 p.m.; reservations required, (830) 238-4483. or dale.prochaska@tpwd.state.tx.us.

See our Web site for more events! Note: For events not listed in the newsletter or web site, please obtain **prior** approval for advanced training credit (approval forms are available on the Chapter web site).

... Chapter Happenings, from page 1

cars, planes, dogs, frogs, & roosters; saw vultures, scissor tails, cows, horses, & butterflies; but, alas, no bobwhites.

Rick Johnson reported that the educational lectures at Lockhart State Park has been well-received, with the 3rd lecture on Caldwell County Fauna scheduled for May 9.

Check the Chapter calendar (page 2) and training and volunteer sections of this newsletter for upcoming events!