



Officers

President

Andy Butler
512 321-1308

butler@mdanderson.org

Vice President

Alvin Cearley
512 237-3021

acearley@starband.net

Secretary

Kathy McAleese
512 321-2857

kmcaleese@austin.rr.com

Treasurer

Marie Medrano
512 360-4172

mmedrano@smithvilleisd.org

Past President

Elaine Cearley
512 237-3021

elainea@starband.net

State Representative

Michal Hubbard
512 303-5976

michal@thecorporatecamera.com

President's Column

-Andy Butler

What a summer! It's August 3, and our purple pleat-leaves (*Alophia drummondii*) are still blooming. One of my favorites! This is the first time in the 14 years we've had our property that we've seen them bloom after early July.

I'd like to again thank Jim and Joan Estes for hosting our summer picnic at their place on July 15. The weather cooperated beautifully, giving us a chance to take a relaxing walk around their property to work up an appetite for all the great food that YOU all brought. We all enjoyed it!

Thanks also to Marcy Youngman, Marie Medrano, Miriam Hall, and Megan Lowery for their help with our chapter booth at Bastrop Garden's recent "Butterflies, Dragonflies and Summertime Things" event. We made some good contacts and enjoyed the festivities, despite rather oppressive humidity. Once again our chapter cleaned up in the photo contest, with Miriam taking 2nd place and yours truly winning, despite having my photo of a Queen caterpillar disqualified as "not a butterfly." Details!

We are now very near the beginning of our 2007 Master Naturalist class. As these things always seem to do, the pieces are falling into place, thanks to help of many of you. It looks like we will have close to 25 trainees in the new class. Please join me in welcoming them to our group. I **will** be looking for additional volunteers to help with some house-keeping details of the classes throughout the fall. You can find a complete (preliminary) schedule of the fall classes at our website, at http://www.lostpinesmasternaturalist.org/files/Preliminary_LPMN_07class.pdf.

Because of time constraints in scheduling these classes, we will *not* have our regular chapter meeting in August. We will meet again on September 17. This will be primarily a business and planning meeting for fall and winter projects, so please bring your ideas! We also plan to have "Advanced Training" presentations at our October and November meetings, so stay tuned for those.

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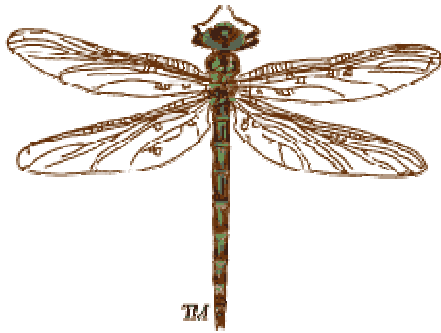
2007 State Meeting!

The Texas Master Naturalist statewide annual meeting and advanced training will be held in **San Antonio, October 12 - 14, 2007!** This is the 10th anniversary of the founding Texas Master Naturalist chapter – the Alamo Area chapter – who will be hosting the meeting, also sponsored in part by the San Antonio Parks & Recreation Department. For those of you thinking wistfully of beautiful and serene Mo Ranch, our program coordinator, Michelle Haggerty, assures us that "San Antonio has more natural areas to see and advanced training field sessions than we can offer through just one weekend! You won't be disappointed!"

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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 Department.

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/Caldwell Co. TPWD Wildlife Biologist: Meredith Longoria, 804 Pecan, Bastrop, mltpwd@onr.com; 512 332-7280.



Newsletter Deadline

Deadline for the next issue is **Sept 7, 2007**. 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.

August

There will be no regularly scheduled meeting in August, since we are starting our training class this month. All members are invited to attend the August 13 class orientation at 6:30 PM at Bastrop State Park refectory to meet and greet our new members-to-be.

September

Monday, Sept 17 – Chapter Meeting: Red Rock Community Center. This will be a business and planning meeting for fall and winter projects. Unlike most of our regular meetings, this will count as volunteer time for chapter development.

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 or mail to

187 Billingsley Hts
Cedar Creek TX 78612

Volunteer Opportunities

- **Colorado River Refuge First Saturday/Sunday Monitoring** – Kathy McAleese leads monthly bird and plant monitoring surveys (and now, butterflies) at the Colorado River Refuge. Time and day may vary from month to month, due to weather or other scheduling conflicts. We are considering alternating the surveys between Saturday and Sunday if that will allow for more overall participation. The next survey is scheduled for either Sept 1 or 2, from 8:30-10:30, or so. Bring binoculars field guides, and water; dress for the weather. The CRR is located in Tahitian Village past the Pine Forest Golf Course clubhouse 0.7 miles beyond where the pavement ends. Contact Kathy at 512 718-1313 or kmcaleese@austin.rr.com for more information.
- **Bastrop State Park Interpretive Hikes** – ongoing, Saturday mornings, 10:00 AM. "Discover the Lost Pines" interpretive hikes at Bastrop State Park. Hikes start again in October. To help, contact Sue Fischer at 512 321-1308 or email smfischer@mdanderson.org.
- **Bastrop State Park Nature Surveys** – Louise Ridlon has volunteered to lead nature surveys at Bastrop State Park. Surveys can be done ad hoc on your own schedule. Contact her at 512 985-5064 or flridlon@hotmail.com for how to report your findings if you would like to participate. Reporting forms are available on the chapter website and Yahoo group site.
- **Training Class Committee** – Our fall training class will start on August 13. We need some members to assist on the Sept 15 (Luling Foundation Farm) and Sept 22 (McKinney Roughs) field trips. If you're available, please, contact Andy Butler at 512 321-1308 or butler@mdanderson.org.
- **McKinney Roughs** – The Roughs is just gearing up its volunteer program and has not yet identified all areas of need. Right now they are looking for people to help weed and clean up the natural plant areas and beds around the visitor center, classroom building, dining hall, and parking lots, which need continuous maintenance. The demonstration trail and herb garden area are also being worked on. There are several ponds that need to have vegetation restored and bank work. Hiking and equestrian trails have been damaged because of the rain and high winds we have had. There are between 100-150 damaged or downed trees that need to be pulled off trails and for the most part left as natural habitats. Assistance in any of these areas can be coordinated to work with volunteers' schedules during the hours the park is open: 8:00-5:00 Mondays through Saturdays and noon to 5:00 on Sundays. They do require volunteer forms be filled out, and a background check is done on each volunteer before they start. To volunteer contact Jana Hellbusch at 800-776-5272, ext. 8041, 512-303-5073, fax 512-303-5277, or jana.hellbusch@lcra.org
- **Friends of the Yegua Knobs** – Pines and Prairies Land Trust is starting a "Friends" group for the Yegua

Knobs preserve. Volunteers are needed to survey plant and animal life, identify and clear camping areas and trails, plus other fun and rewarding tasks. Go to <http://www.pinesandprairieslandtrust.org/> for more information on Yegua Knobs. To volunteer, contact Jeremiah Jarvis at 512 281-2762 or jfrog@flash.net.

- **Texas Parks and Wildlife Expo** – Sat and Sun, Oct 6 and 7. Volunteers are needed to staff 4 stations (6 per station) at the Expo in staggered 4-hour shifts (2 from 8:00 to noon, 1 from 10:00 to 2:00, 1 from noon to 4:00, and 2 from 2:00 to 6:00) between 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM each day. The stations include exhibits on wildscapes, hummingbirds, and backyard habitat, plus a children's area with nature games and prizes. Volunteers will receive an Expo T-shirt. Contact Mark Klym at mark.klym@tpwd.state.tx.us to advise him of your area, day, and shift preferences, shirt size, any special needs, and any special skills (Spanish would be ESPECIALLY helpful). Mark may also need volunteers to help at the literature and sales tables.

—President's Column, continued

Keep in mind the 2007 Texas Master Naturalist state meeting and advanced training, October 12-14. This will be held in San Antonio this year. As usual, there will be many opportunities for advanced training and, no doubt, at least some volunteer activities as well. To be sure you receive the discounted room rate, make your room reservations by September 14!

Another opportunity for volunteering will be at the TPWD Expo the weekend of October 6. There is already one potential volunteer opportunity at Expo listed on our website "volunteer" page, the Settler's Prairie exhibit. There are often other needs for volunteers at either TPWD or TMN booths. You might check with Mark Klym (Mark.Klym@tpwd.state.tx.us) or Sonny Arnold (mr-arnold@tamu.edu) to see if they need anyone. And October will soon be here, so Bastrop State Park interpretive hikes will be starting again. Contact Sue (smfischer@mdanderson.org) if you want to help with these.

Nature Quotes

If the sight of the blue skies fills you with joy, if a blade of grass springing up in the fields has power to move you, if the simple things of nature have a message that you understand, rejoice, for your soul is alive.

~Eleonora Duse

Advanced Training

➤ **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center: Go Native U** – Go Native U is a new, informal, education program designed to teach adults about the use and conservation of native plants. All classes will be held at the Wildflower Center. Registration for Go Native U is arranged on-line through the UT at Austin Informal Classes. See <http://www.wildflower.org/gonativeu/> for detailed registration information. Upcoming classes:

Native Grasses for the Home Landscape –

Sat, Aug 11, 10:00-1:00 or 2:00-5:00. Celebrating the beauty of native grasses in the home landscape, this advanced topics class will explore grass function and habit, aspects of landscape design, foliage color & texture, dormancy, bloom period, native turf grasses and a sampling of the “top ten” native grass species for your home. For additional information and registration instructions, see <http://www.wildflower.org/gonativeu/>.

Certification in Native Plant Gardening –

Sat’s Sept 1 – Oct 6, 10:00-1:00 or 2:00-5:00. Through a series of fun and interactive classes students learn about the benefits of gardening with native plants. Classes may be taken individually for those wanting to build on their current gardening skills or as a series for those pursuing a certificate of merit in native plant gardening. Sign up for the entire sequence of Go Native U courses and receive a 15% discount on your registration (General: \$230, UT & WFC: \$184). For a certificate of merit in native plant gardening, participants must complete the entire sequence of Go Native U classes. Course schedule is as follows:

- Designing Your Native Plant Garden, Sept 1
- Native Plant Selection I, Sept 8
- Native Plant Selection II, Sept 15
- Native Garden Installation, Sept 22
- Native Garden Maintenance, Sept 29
- Pests 101, Oct 6

Individual sessions are \$45 for the general public, \$36 for Wildflower Center members. For additional information and registration instructions, see <http://www.wildflower.org/gonativeu/>

➤ **Austin Butterfly Forum** – Mon Sept 24, 7:00 pm. Monthly meeting at Zilker Botanical Garden Center. "Spiders on Video," a program by Joe Lapp, spider enthusiast and nature educator, introducing the world of spiders. See what spiders do not only during the day, but also late at night. This video camera has night vision. For more information contact Mike Quinn at 512 577-0250 or Mike.Quinn@tpwd.state.tx.us

➤ **Master Naturalist State Meeting** – Oct 10-12, San Antonio. See article on page 1.

➤ **Lockhart State Park: Animal Tracks** - Aug 11 & 18, 4:00-5:00. Learn about wildlife and their behavior first hand by identifying the tracks and other clues they've left behind as we hike along shady Clear Fork Creek. For additional information call 512 398-3479.

➤ **Bamberger Ranch: Land Stewardship Workshop** –

Sat Sept 15, 8:30-4:30. 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. \$100 per person; TMN's receive a 25% discount. For details see <http://www.bambergerranch.org/tours/#steward>.

—2007 State Meeting!, continued

The Hilton San Antonio Airport will be the host hotel and the primary location for group events, but the agenda includes as much out-of-doors time as past annual meetings. Room costs will be separate from your annual meeting registration costs. However, the two costs combined will be comparable to – if not the same as – past years' fees (\$180 for the full event).

A special group rate has been arranged with the hotel of \$85.00 per night for either a king sized room or a double room. You will need to make your room arrangements, including payment, directly with the Hilton.

You can book online or by phone, but it is vital you mention the **group code** when booking the room. This will allow the reservations department to pull up the special group rate. There is also a spot online to input this code. Rates are guaranteed for reservations made by **SEPTEMBER 14**. Don't delay!

Group Code: TPWD

Phone: 1-888-728-3031

Online: www.sanantoniopairport.hilton.com

The annual meeting registration and information packet is not yet available, but some of the planned sessions include geology and plants training at the Canyon River Gorge and rainwater harvesting stewards training. Since San Antonio is a popular vacation area, you are encouraged to bring family members. A special fee for non-registered family members will be arranged for the Saturday evening awards banquet.

Meeting registration material will be available soon, so watch your e-mail for more information on how to register!

(abridged and adapted from TMN Digest, Vol 49, Issue 2)

A Murder of Crows

This month we look at things that crawl, croak, and snap! So, what do you call a group of...?

- | | |
|-----------------|------------|
| 1. cobras | 3. toads |
| 2. rattlesnakes | 4. turtles |

See below for answers!

1. quiver 2. rhumba 3. knot 4. turn