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President's Column

--Andy Butler

October is one of the busiest months in the naturalist calendar. Fall migrations are underway, and the Zebra Longwings (*Heliconius charithonia*) are flitting about the yard. TPWD's Expo weekend is in progress, the annual Texas Master Naturalist state meeting is next, and the Native Plant Society of Texas/Native Prairie Association of Texas annual symposium is coming soon in Georgetown. Take advantage of these events to learn more about our natural Texas, and perhaps to complete your advanced training hours for the year.

Just to add some local flavor to the schedule, check out our 2nd LPMN Colorado River float trip, coming up on October 28. This trip is on a gentle section of river that is suitable for beginning paddlers. Come on out, have some fun, and get a preview of the 6 mile river segment that will soon be inaugurated as the "El Camino Real" paddling trail by TPWD. In recognition of this new designation, we will join the first Bastrop nature fest at Fisherman's Park on November 3. To volunteer for this event, see details elsewhere in this issue.

Our introductory class is nearing the half-way mark. We've had some great classes already, with more to come. It was exciting to hold one of our field trips at McKinney Roughs nature park for the first time in several years. I've had nothing but positive interactions with the current staff at the Roughs. This is a fabulous facility and a great resource for both teaching and volunteering. There are several distinct projects that the McKinney Roughs staff needs help with, and we've already had some volunteers. But what we really need are for some of our more experienced members to step into a leadership role to organize our activities at the Roughs, so don't be shy!

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On-line Time Reporting

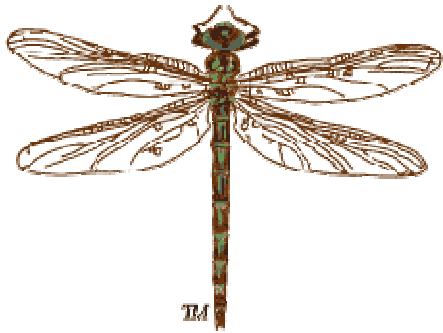
— Marsha Elrod

You asked for it...you got it! For those of you who don't have access to a word processing program, you can now input your training and volunteer hours on-line from our web site! Look for the new link on the "Our Chapter" page.

While the input document looks pretty much like the form you're used to seeing, the output I receive is in the form of text rows and is more difficult to read than the word processing document. So if you can use the Word version of the form and e-mail it to me, I'd really prefer that. But if you can't, or are tired of having to print the PDF version and snail-mail it to me, this is the way to go! Please let me know if you encounter any problems with the input.

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 **Nov 9, 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.

October

Monday, Oct 15 – Chapter Meeting: Bastrop State Park Refectory, 6:30 PM. Chapter meeting and advanced training session by Chad Norris, TPWD aquatic biologist, on “Common Aquatic Biota of Texas Streams.” Chad will discuss some of the major groups of fish and invertebrates, some common families and species, and their role in stream ecology.

November

Monday, Nov 19 – Chapter Meeting: Red Rock Community Center, 6:30 PM. Program to be announced.

CHAPTER WEBSITE

www.lostpinestaternaturalist.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. Also, surveys may alternate between Saturday and Sunday to allow for more overall participation. The next survey is scheduled for **SUNDAY, Oct 7** from 9:00-11:00, 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 is coordinating nature surveys at Bastrop State Park. Surveys can be done ad hoc on your own schedule, or contact Louise to coordinate a group hike. 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.
- **Bastrop Library Xeriscape/Native Plant Garden** – Volunteers are needed to help the Friends of the Bastrop Library plan and implement a native, xeriscape garden adjacent to the Bastrop Library. As a first step, a committee is being formed to prepare a plan for the space and a strategy for implementing and maintaining the garden. For further information and to volunteer, contact Rue Toovey at 512 237-2306.
- **Adopt A Highway** – Brett Finch, a member of our training class, has volunteered to lead an Adopt A Highway project for our chapter. It will involve four clean-ups a year, for which TxDOT provides all clean-up and safety equipment. Current plans are to adopt either a 2 mile section of FM 1441 just off of Hwy 21 or a section of Hwy 95. For details and to volunteer, contact Brett at goldward@yahoo.com.
- **McKinney Roughs** – The Roughs is 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 done. Hiking and equestrian trails need periodic clean up and maintenance, particularly following bad weather. 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 jifrog@flash.net.
- **Hornsby Bend Monthly Bird Survey** – 2nd Sat, 7:00 and 4:00. All levels of birders are welcome. The survey is a great way to improve your skills since teams are formed matching experienced and novice birders. For more information see <http://www.hornsbybend.org/> or contact Eric Carpenter at ecarpe@gmail.com.
- **Lost Pines Nature Fest** – Sat Nov 3, 8:00 – 4:00, Fisherman's Park, Bastrop. Volunteers are needed to work our booth and lead brief nature hikes along the river front. Contact Miriam Hall at HARanch@aol.com or 303-0363, or Linda Presto at lindapresto@att.net or 332-0294 for additional information and to volunteer.

Colorado River Trip Date Change!

Yikes! Somehow Rising Phoenix had our trip down for **Saturday the 27th** and is booked full for Sunday. So, let's go with the flow (get it...flow, river?) and regroup for Saturday the 27th, same time, same place! For details, see the attachment to this newsletter. And y'all come!

Nature Quotes

Civilization shouts, gives orders, writes rules, puts man in institutions, and intimidates him with a thousand irritating directives. In return it offers some protection, soul salvation, and a living if he can find it. Nature looks down on him and broods in silence. Its noises of running streams and wind in the trees are its own, not directed at but soothing to him because he heard them before he heard the noises of civilization.

~Walter Prescott Webb, 1888 - 1963

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:

Adventures in Native Plants – Sat's Oct 20 – Nov 3, 9:00 - 12:00. Learn the science and lore of native plants in a series of fun field trips. You will learn how to recognize and identify wildflowers and other native plants and learn which plants are edible or useful. The initial classroom meeting will provide basic information on plant identification. Then, we'll head out to the field and apply our knowledge. Hiking/walking shoes and outdoor clothing recommended. Expect light to moderate walking with occasional uneven levels.

Grow Your Own Native Plants – Sat's Nov 3 and 10, 9:00 - 1:00. This course is designed for gardening enthusiasts who want to learn how to propagate and cultivate native plant species. Emphasis will be placed on proper techniques to grow native plants from seed or cuttings. The course will also include demonstrations of propagation techniques and a tour of the greenhouses at the lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.

Courses cost \$60 for the general public, \$45 for Wildflower Center members.

➤ **Texas Prairie/Native Plant Conference** – Oct 18 - 21, Georgetown. At the 2007 joint symposium of the Native Plant Society of Texas and the Native Prairies Association of Texas, presenters will discuss efforts to identify, restore, and conserve the prairies of the region. Sessions and field trips are planned with an emphasis on native prairie plants, birds, geology, butterflies, gardening, and more. For complete information go to <http://npsot.org/symposium2007/home/index.shtml>.

➤ **Austin Butterfly Forum** – Mon Oct 22, 7:00 pm. Monthly meeting at Zilker Botanical Garden Center. The presentation will be "Raising and Photographing Butterflies" by Shawn Ashbaugh, a club member. Visit www.austinbutterflies.org/Meetings/ for additional information or contact Mike Quinn at Mike.Quinn@tpwd.state.tx.us.

➤ **Lost Pines Native Plant Society of Texas** – first Tuesday of each month, 7:00 PM (Learner's Corner at 6:30), First National Bank, Smithville. Presentations count as advanced training. Contact Alvin Cearley at acearley@starband.net for program information.

➤ **McKinney Roughs: Ranger in the Roughs** – 3rd Thursday of each month from September 20 through February 21, 7:00-8:00 PM. Presentations are free and open to all ages. Nicholas Cowey will speak about the native animals that inhabit the land in and around the Colorado River, focusing on the natural and scientific

history of one animal and its folklore per month. The schedule includes:

- October - Mexican free-tailed bat
- November - White-tailed deer
- December - Raccoon
- January - American alligator
- February - Nine-banded armadillo

These presentations will be held in the outdoor amphitheater. No registration is required. Call McKinney Roughs Nature Park at (512) 303-5073 or email outdoorprograms@lcra.org for additional information.

➤ **Wildscape Workshop** – Sat Nov 3, 1:00 - 5:00, Lake Waco Wetlands. Mark Klym, coordinator of the Texas Wildscapes program, is presenting this workshop sponsored by the TMN Heart of Texas chapter. For additional information, follow the link at <http://www.wacowater.com/w-workshops.html> or call 254-848-9654.

—President's Column, continued

Have you ever considered how much your volunteer time is worth? According to Independent Sector, a forum for charities, foundations, and corporate giving programs, in 2006 a volunteer hour was valued at \$18.77. Using this number, our chapter contributed over \$26,000 worth of volunteer time to our communities last year. Not bad!

Of course, this is just an average. How much is your own volunteer hour worth? What is it worth to spend an hour opening a child's eyes to the wonders of nature, if it leads to a lifetime of appreciation of the natural world? How about the value of helping a landowner understand how to be a good steward of the land? How about the value of planting a tree, or helping to keep a section of highway clean? Are these activities worth \$18 an hour? If they help to educate the public about the importance of maintaining natural habitat and biodiversity, if they encourage our neighbors to believe that even little things, done by millions of people, add up to a big impact on the environment, then these activities are worth far more than \$18 an hour. As volunteers, you are the lever. Don't let anyone tell you that your project is 'only' worth \$18 an hour!

A Murder of Crows

We turn to the shore for this month's quiz. What do you call a group of...?

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| 1. herons | 3. seagulls |
| 2. jellyfish | 4. sharks |

See below for answers!

1. siege 2. smack 3. squabble 4. shiver



It's happening again – the **LPMN Great Colorado River Canoe & Kayak Paddle Adventure!** The river's down, fall is in the air – somewhere, anyway, - and the great outdoors beckon. Reserve the afternoon of **Saturday, October 27**, for some aquatic R&R! Here's the scoop.

Reserve your kayak or canoe by October 12 if at all possible. Call or e-mail John Cline at Rising Phoenix Adventures at 332-1077 or jccline824@austin.rr.com. John is giving the LPMN's a discounted rate on rentals, so be sure to identify yourself as a member of the group. Prices are:

Single kayak:	\$28
Tandem kayak (2 people):	\$38
Canoe (two people and a small person):	\$33

Don't worry if you've never kayaked before. It's easy, safe, and fun; we haven't lost anyone yet! If you fall in, just stand up.

After October 12, our own Bill Brooks will be running the shop single handedly while John is away. You can still make reservations, but confirmation may be slower (no reflection on Bill; he'll just have his hands full!) and boats may become scarcer!

You need to be at the shop at 304 Industrial Blvd. in Bastrop by 12:30 pm on Saturday the 27th. That will allow time for everyone to pay and view the instruction video and for loading up the shuttle and boat trailer. We'll leave for the river by 1:00 pm. Rising Phoenix provides life vests, paddles, and transportation to the put-in point and back to the shop from the take-out point.



The trip is about 6 miles long and should take about 3 hours, depending on the river flow rate and how often we stop. Wear shoes that can get wet. Bring your binoculars for birding and, if you're really feeling confident, your camera for recording the event!

For those of you with your own kayaks, we will be putting in at Fisherman's Park and exiting at the old quarry area next to the Colorado River Refuge. Rising Phoenix will trailer your boats at a charge of \$20 per boat, or you can make your own arrangements.



Rising Phoenix accepts MC, Visa, AMEX, checks, debit cards, and the ever popular cash.

Don't miss out on the fun! This will be a great opportunity for our new training class and our "old" members to meet and mingle while taking advantage of our beautiful river and its environs.