



## Officers

### President

Mark McClelland  
(512) 281-5516

[markmcc@prodigy.net](mailto:markmcc@prodigy.net)

### Vice President

Louise Ridlon

(512) 985-5064

[flridlon@hotmail.com](mailto:flridlon@hotmail.com)

### Secretary

Kathy McAleese

(512) 321-2857

[kmcaleese@austin.rr.com](mailto:kmcaleese@austin.rr.com)

### Treasurer

Marie Medrano

(512) 360-4172

[mmedrano@smithvilleisd.org](mailto:mmedrano@smithvilleisd.org)

### Past President

Andy Butler

(512) 321-1308

[abutler@mac.com](mailto:abutler@mac.com)

### State Representative

Michal Hubbard

(512) 303-5976

[michal\\_photog@yahoo.com](mailto:michal_photog@yahoo.com)

## President's Column

--Mark McClelland

Hello all-

This will be a short column since I'm sitting at an RV park in west Texas on my way to the cool mountains of Ruidoso, New Mexico. We seem to be in the midst of a second consecutive brutal summer. Creeks and ponds are drying up, more trees are dying, and we're seeing temperature records broken day after day. I hope that the prediction of El Niño returning this fall is true. We really need some regular rainfall!

In spite of the less than hospitable weather, our chapter is participating in some interesting activities. The summer program at Bastrop State Park is well under way, with Kid's Fishing Clinics, Night Hikes, Frog and Toad Watches, and Buescher Bugs.

I participated in the first two night hikes with Katie Raney, and then led the third. We had a good turnout of club members for all three hikes. It is very interesting to see how different the hikes are in the dark. Folks really get their other senses tuned up! Demonstrations at the start of the evening tested our ears and noses, and the hike itself gave everyone a chance to walk along carefully and quietly in the dark, enjoying sounds and smells that aren't evident during the visual day hikes. Many of the participants have not had the chance to walk a trail in the dark. If you haven't tried one of these hikes, set aside a Friday evening and try it.

We hosted our first Frog and Toad Watch of the year. Again, several club members turned out to learn and assist, as did a couple of families and a group of scouts. After a quick review of our local frogs and toads, we headed off to two different ponds to listen and count. In spite of low water levels, the frogs and toads were still out there! There are two more of these programs scheduled for the summer. Check past newsletters and e-mails for the dates.

We also participated in the first Buescher Bugs program, which was a wonderful chance to introduce kids and adults alike to the wide variety of life that lives along the edges of the lake in Buescher State Park. We caught a few adult dragonflies and damselflies to display, and then netted quite a wide variety of their aquatic nymphs. Much like the transformation of a caterpillar to a butterfly, people are always amazed how different the nymphs of dragonflies and damselflies are from their flying adult form. We found several other forms of aquatic insects, and

-- Continued on Page 5

## Inside This Issue

1	President's Column
2	Chapter Calendar
3	Volunteer Opportunities
4	Advanced Training
5	Nature Quotes

## 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](mailto:mhaggerty@wfscgate.tamu.edu); (979) 458-2034.

The Texas Master Naturalist program is sponsored by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

## SPONSOR CONTACTS

Caldwell Co. Extension Office: Jeff Watts; [Caldwell-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:Caldwell-tx@tamu.edu); (512) 398-3122

Bastrop Co. Extension Office: Rachel Bauer, CEA-AG/NR; [Bastrop-tx@tamu.edu](mailto:Bastrop-tx@tamu.edu); (512) 581-7186

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



### Newsletter Deadline

Deadline for the next issue is **August 11, 2009**. 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 Wendy Sera: [wendy\\_sera@hotmail.com](mailto:wendy_sera@hotmail.com), (512) 652-8605.

## 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.

### July

**Monday, July 20 – Chapter Meeting and Advanced Training:** Red Rock Community Center, 6:30 PM. Steven Gibson, Manager of The University of Texas Stengl Lost Pines Biology Station, will present "An update on using parasitic phorid flies as a biological control for the red imported fire ant."

### August

**No regular meeting in August** - Join us instead for our annual summer social and potluck picnic at Lockhart State Park, **Sunday, August 23**. Details to come!

### September

**Monday, September 21 – Chapter Meeting:** Speaker and Venue TBA.

### Chapter Web Site

<http://www.lostpinesmasternaturalist.org/>

Please check our Web site 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 [mLPMN-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:mLPMN-subscribe@yahoogroups.com) or log on to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/LPMN/>.

### Reporting Training & Volunteer Hours

Send your advanced training and volunteer hour reports to Marsha Elrod: [melrod1@earthlink.net](mailto:melrod1@earthlink.net); use the on-line reporting form on our website; or mail to  
187 Billingsley Hts  
Cedar Creek TX 78612

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# Volunteer Opportunities

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- **TPWD Junior Angler Clinic** – There is one clinic left for this summer, **Saturday August 1**, 8:00 AM-12:30 PM at Buescher State Park. Seven volunteers are needed to assist with this free learn-to-fish clinic for boys and girls ages 6 to 13. This is a very basic clinic, and you don't need to be a fisher-person to help out. The kids really have a good time, and parents accompany their children. Park entrance is free for volunteers, and necessary training will be provided on site. Contact Bill Brooks at (512) 581-0377 or [bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu) to participate.
- **Buescher State Park – Buescher Bugs** – **July 25 & August 22** from 10:00 a.m. until about noon. This involves dip-netting in the lake vegetation and mud, then sorting out the various bugs that are found. Katie Raney is leading this program, but we'd like to have two or three LPMN volunteers to help out. If you are interested in participating, contact Mark McClelland at [markmcc@prodigy.net](mailto:markmcc@prodigy.net), (512) 281-5516) or Katie Raney at (512) 237-2241.
- **McKinney Roughs Nature Survey** – Kathy McAleese is coordinating a long-term project to survey trails through the burned-out areas of McKinney Roughs. Plans call for at least 2 surveys per month, one during the week and one on weekends. Actual days and times will vary based on the weather and Kathy's schedule. Please contact her at (512) 718-1313 or [kmcaleese@austin.rr.com](mailto:kmcaleese@austin.rr.com) if you are interested in leading or participating in either weekday or weekend surveys, or both.
- **Bastrop State Park** – Katie Raney, the Interpretive Ranger at Bastrop/Buescher State Parks, has asked for our assistance with a wonderful set of programs. The programs for the remainder of the summer are:

## July

**17, 24, 31** – Night Hikes (8:30 pm)

**18** – Frog & Toad Watch – Bastrop? (run)

**25** – Aquatic Life Monitoring – Buescher (help)

## August

**7, 14, 21** – Night Hikes (8:30 pm)

**15** – Frog & Toad Watch – Bastrop? (run)

**22** – Aquatic Life Monitoring – Buescher (help)

The **Night Hikes** are for the experience of walking around outside in the darkness, and will not be like our regular interpretive hike. LPMN will be

leading the hikes on **July 17 & 31** and **August 14**. Contact Mark McClelland ([markmcc@prodigy.net](mailto:markmcc@prodigy.net), (512) 281-5516) if you are interested in helping out.

The **Frog and Toad Watch** programs are tentatively planned as a brief program on toads and frogs, listening to a few calls, and going to one of the ponds to listen for calls. This will fulfill the requirements of our Amphibian Watch program, and give us a chance to help educate campers and members of the community about these creatures. Mark will be putting the presentation and calls together, so it will be ready for anyone who wants to utilize it.

The **Aquatic Life Monitoring** will be similar to the program that many of us have done at Aquarena Springs—dip-netting at the edge of a pond, then using identification cards to identify the critters and judge the water quality.

If you are interested in participating, contact Mark McClelland ([markmcc@prodigy.net](mailto:markmcc@prodigy.net), (512) 281-5516) or Katie Raney at (512) 237-2241.

- **Adopt-A-Highway** – One Saturday every 2 months. Brett Finch leads the Adopt-A Highway project for our chapter. It involves six clean-ups a year, for which TxDOT provides all clean-up and safety equipment. We have adopted a 2-mile section of Hwy 95 to the north and south of FM 2336. At least 3 volunteers are needed in addition to Brett, and clean-up should take about 1-2 hours. For information on the next clean-up date and to volunteer, contact Brett at [goldward@yahoo.com](mailto:goldward@yahoo.com).



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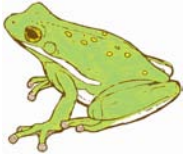
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# Advanced Training

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- **Lost Pines Native Plant Society of Texas** – Select **first Tuesdays of each month**, 7:00 PM, First National Bank, Smithville. Presentations count as advanced training. Some meetings this year will be held at member's homes to conduct plant surveys. Contact Bill Brooks at (512) 581-0377 or [bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu) for more information.
- **TPWD – Project WILD Facilitator Training** – **August 4–5**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. each day – **Austin, TX** – Join the corps of volunteer facilitators who teach Project WILD/Aquatic workshops to other adults. By attending this two-day workshop, participants will be certified to teach Project WILD and Project WILD Aquatic professional development workshops to formal and informal educators in their cities and communities. Must have previously attended a Project WILD or Project WILD Aquatic workshop and be willing to teach one workshop per year. SBEC credit available for teachers. Presented by the Texas Memorial Museum, but held at Townes Hall, Room 3.126, 727 E Dean Keeton St on the University of Texas Campus; preregistration required, register online at <http://www.utexas.edu/tmm/education/profdev/wild/index.html>. For information, contact Christina Cid at [ccid@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:ccid@austin.utexas.edu) or (512) 232-5509.
- **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center** – **Nature Nights**, 6:00-9:00 PM, select nights in spring. Events scheduled: Bees on **July 23**. Stream ecology on **July 30**. Admission is \$1.00. For additional information, visit <http://www.wildflower.org/nature/>.
- **Austin Butterfly Forum – Beetles (club meeting)** – Monday, **July 27**, 7:00 PM, Zilker Botanical Garden Center. Mike Quinn will talk about beetles. For additional information, visit <http://www.austinbutterflies.org/calendar>.
- **Travis Audubon Society – Shorebird Identification** – Wednesdays **July 22** and **August 5 & 19**, 6:30-8:30 PM, Hornsby Bend Center for Environmental Research. There will be local field trips on Saturdays **July 25** and **August 8**, and an optional trip to the Texas coast on the weekend of **August 29-30**. Tim Fennell's Shorebird Identification Class is a great way for intermediate birders to learn how to distinguish the Least, Semipalmated, and Western Sandpipers, Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs, and other similar shorebirds. The tuition is \$75 for TAS members and \$85 for non-members. For those who go to the coast, there will be an additional fee to cover expenses, ranging from \$30 to \$45 depending upon how many sign up. Birders who want to take this class should register by sending an e-mail to Tim at [tfennell@flash.net](mailto:tfennell@flash.net).
- **Travis Audubon Society – Hummingbird Identification** – Wednesdays **July 30** & **August 4**, 6:30-9:00 PM in West Central Austin (Tarrytown). A field trip to west Texas is scheduled for **August 14–17**. More specific information will be provided after registration. This class will introduce the 15 hummingbird species that have been seen in central Texas. Their ranges, habitat, and frequency of occurrence will be discussed, with emphasis on those characteristics that can be used for effective identification. Participants will receive a Hummingbird Roundup kit from TPWD, as well as other handouts. Tuition will be \$40 for TAS members and \$55 for non-members. In addition, class participants will share travel expenses on the field trip. For more information or to register for the class, contact Jane at [mljt@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:mljt@mail.utexas.edu).
- **Texas Stream Team – Bacteria Training** – The Landing (Aquarena Center) in San Marcos, **Saturday August 1**, 10:00 am-12:30 pm. This is the bacteria monitor training with a special emphasis on the Plum Creek watershed. There will be an introduction to the Texas Stream Team and general watershed and water quality background information will be provided. Monitoring procedures for bacteria training will be demonstrated and participants will practice the techniques. Texas Stream Team uses TCEQ and EPA approved methodologies to monitor and assess water quality parameters for *E. coli* monitoring. Completing this bacteria training will certify participants as bacteria monitors. This training is free for participants; however, advanced registration is required. Please contact Susan Moczygamba at [smoczygamba2@islander.tamucc.edu](mailto:smoczygamba2@islander.tamucc.edu) or (512-245-0324) if you plan to attend or for additional information.
- This year's **Statewide Annual Meeting and Advanced Training** will be held **October 23-25, 2009** at Mo Ranch in Hunt, TX. The annual meeting always offers great advanced training opportunities, volunteer activities, and a chance to meet and mingle with fellow Master Naturalists from around the state. Details in late August.



- *President's Column, continued*

two fat leopard frog tadpoles that stole the show. There are two more of these programs this summer as well.

Bill Brooks continues to coordinate and host the kids fishing clinics at the two state parks. I wonder how many hundreds (even thousands) of kids have gone through this program? These kids are certainly a tribute to Bill's commitment to this program, and the help that he has received from many folks over the years.

Finally, the group working on the Lockhart State Park interpretive trail is doing great things. I got a chance to look at the annotated plant list that they produced, and it is remarkable. The list itself would serve as a very useful reference to the plants of our two-county area, let alone for the park. Our August picnic will give us a chance to see the trail and congratulate those responsible for its creation.

I'm working on two more activities for the summer. One is a repeat of the Bracken Cave tour that we participated in last August. I've contacted Bat Conservation International about setting up another trip for our group. Stay tuned for an announcement.

After two successful trips down the Colorado River, several members expressed an interest in a night trip. Much as the night hikes have turned out to be very different from daytime hikes, we would like to experience the river in a nighttime environment. I'll be contacting Rising Phoenix about the logistics of a night trip, and then let everyone know what possibilities we have available to us.

I hope to see you all at the July 20<sup>th</sup> meeting at the Red Rock Community Center. If you love imported red fire ants as much as I do, you'll be interested in the ongoing research on beneficial insects that may offer some level of control. The meeting will begin at 6:30.

## Nature Quotes

Come forth into the light of things, let nature be your teacher.

~*William Wordsworth*



**TPWD Junior Angler Clinic** is a free fishing clinic run by the Lost Pines Master Naturalist Chapter and Bill Brooks in conjunction with TPWD. On Saturday, July 11, 62 kids attended at Buescher State Park. The last clinic will be on **Saturday, August 1**. Volunteers are needed! (Photo by Pamela Hohman.)