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President's Column

--Mark McClelland

Finally! A break in the 100+ degree heat, and a little rain here and there. I gave a program at Buescher State Park one evening this month and was amazed at how green things were between Bastrop and Smithville. My hometown of Elgin seems to be a good bit dryer, but we have enjoyed a shower or two as well.

I really enjoyed the chapter picnic at the Lockhart State Park Recreation Hall. There is no shortage of talented cooks in our group. We ate until we couldn't eat another bite. And then some of us ate a little more! This was my first time to visit Lockhart State Park, but it won't be my last. The Recreation Hall is a wonderful example of a nicely preserved CCC building. We are truly lucky to live in an area with three state parks, all displaying some great CCC history. The park Interpretive Ranger, Liz LaRue, was very gracious, and had nothing but praise to offer to the folks who planned and worked on the new interpretive trail. A group of chapter members walked the trail before our picnic, and enjoyed seeing the wide variety of plants, as well as the new signage that was provided by the chapter. Liz says that the next step will be to begin offering regular Saturday morning interpretive walks, similar to those offered at Bastrop State Park for the past several years.

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It's About Time

--Marsha Elrod

The dog days of summer are finally behind us now, regardless of how you choose to think of them. Named for the period of time when the brilliant Dog Star, Sirius, rises with the sun – thus adding, as the ancients believed, to the sun's heat – the exact timeframe has changed over the centuries.

Most sources report the contemporary dog days to be July 3 through August 11, while traditionalists may maintain the dates to be July 24 through August 24, as observed in ancient Rome. According to Wikipedia, popular belief held this to be an evil time, "when the seas boiled, wine turned sour, dogs grew mad, and all creatures became languid." I can certainly relate to that last symptom!

But to the point. I have to believe it will eventually get cooler and being outdoors will be fun again! Fall traditionally brings an increase in

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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,
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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; (512) 398-3122.

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

Bastrop/Caldwell Co. TPWD Wildlife Biologist: Meredith Longoria, 804 Pecan, Bastrop, Meredith.Longoria@tpwd.state.tx.us; (512) 332-7280.



Newsletter Deadline

Deadline for the next issue is **October 9, 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, (512) 652-8605.

Chapter Calendar

Chapter meetings generally 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 public.

September

Monday, September 21 – Chapter Meeting: *Red Rock Community Center, 6:30 pm.* Katie Raney, Bastrop/Buescher State Park Interpretive Ranger, will present a program on *Leave No Trace*, an international program providing information to outdoor enthusiasts on how to reduce their impacts.

October

Monday, October 19 – Chapter Meeting: *Buescher State Park Recreation Hall (NOTE LOCATION!), 6:30 pm.* LPMN'er Miriam Hall will present a program on fossils of the local area and how to collect and prepare them. She will bring samples and door prizes.

November

Monday, November 16 – Chapter Meeting: *Red Rock Community Center, 6:30 pm.* Kim Bacon of Texas Bee Watchers will give a presentation about native Texas bees.

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 e-mail to 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; use the online reporting form on our Web site or mail to:

187 Billingsley Hts
Cedar Creek TX 78612

Volunteer Opportunities

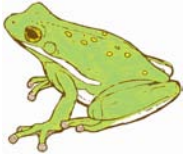
- **Cedar Creek Middle School Project** – The **big planting day** will be **Saturday, September 19** at **7:30 am** at the school, located on Voss Pkwy off of HWY 21 going south toward San Marcos. There is a stop light at Voss Pkwy. Turn right; the school is on the right. For planting, bring hand tools, wheelbarrows, etc. Bring water, hat, and gloves if you are going to plant. Plants needed: some succulents, herbs, perennials, and two *Esperanzas* for the entranceway. Also needed: mulch, landscape timbers, birdbath, bird feeders, birdseed, and hoses. Contact Susan Crone at bscrone@austin.rr.com or Marsha Elrod at melrod1@earthlink.net for more information.
- **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 if you are interested in leading or participating in either weekday or weekend surveys, or both.
- **Bastrop State Park Interpretive Walks** – We need volunteers each Saturday morning from October 3 through early December. Hikes are from 10 AM to about 11:30 AM. Remember, these hikes are literally a "walk in the woods": One leisurely mile. If you haven't led one of these walks before, or want a refresher, we will be conducting a walk-through **training/refresher session at 9 AM, Saturday, September 19**. Meet at the kiosk next to the playscape rest rooms (down the road from the Refectory and swimming pool). Please contact Sue Fischer to volunteer, or if you want to go through the training walk at smfischer@mdanderson.org or (512)321-1308.
- **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 goldweard@yahoo.com.
- **Hornsby Bend – Ecological Literacy Days – Last Saturday of every month, 9 am - 1 pm** – Combining volunteer work with learning about local ecology, the Ecological Literacy Day at Hornsby Bend begins with several hours of outdoor work - ranging from trail maintenance to habitat restoration to work in the native plant nursery - and ends with at least an hour of learning about local ecology - birds, bugs, and more! Wear boots and work clothing, and bring your binoculars. For more information, contact Kevin Anderson at coordinator@hornsbybend.org or (512) 972-1960.
- **Hornsby Bend – Monthly Bird Survey – Second Saturday each month** – Meet at the **Center for Environmental Research at 7:00 am** for the morning survey [coffee and donuts at 6:30 am] and **4:00 pm** for the afternoon survey. All levels of birders are welcome - the survey is a great way to improve your skills since we form teams matching experienced and novice birders. For more information, contact Eric Carpenter at ecarpe@gmail.com.
- **Pines and Prairies Land Trust – Teaching Nature lessons** to homeschooled children and their parents at the Colorado River Refuge. They are planning for the fall 2009 lessons and need teachers to plan and lead lessons and assistants to help children and answer questions. Two assistants are needed for each lesson. Need teachers and assistants for **October 8 & 22, November 5 & 19, and December 3**. All the lessons are on Thursdays from **10:00 am – 12:00 noon**. The lessons this fall will concentrate on trees and insects. If interested in leading or assisting with a lesson, please contact Joan Russell at joanrussell@suddenlink.net or (512) 321-2718. Small stipend **or** Master Naturalist volunteer credit available.

NatureFest

October 24 – 9:00 am–4:00 pm, NatureFest at Fisherman's Park in Bastrop. Family friendly experiential nature-based activities. Adults \$3 donation receive a bag, children 12 and under free. Photo scavenger hunts, rock wall climbing, archery, craft projects, raptor show, Big Bass Tub, food, vendors, and live music. For more information, visit www.VisitBastrop.org or call (512) 303-0904.

Advanced Training

- **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 for more information.
- **Gideon Lincecum Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists – *The Allure of Butterflies*** – **Saturday, September 19**, 1:00-3:00 pm. Location: Winedale Historical Complex near Round Top (3738 FM 2714). Dan Hardy is presenting the program. For questions, contact Gene Luhn at (713) 305-6443.
- **TPWD – *Project WILD Workshops*** – Numerous workshops across Texas. Workshops on **September 19, 22, & 24**, and **October 10** in San Antonio. For additional information, visit <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/newsmedia/calendar/?calpage=a0181>.
- **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center – *Nature Nights***, 6:00-9:00 PM, select nights in spring. Events scheduled: *Plants and People* on **September 18**. *Flight of the Monarch Butterfly* on **October 16**. *Hill Country Astronomy* on **November 16**. Admission is \$1.00. For additional information, visit <http://www.wildflower.org/nature/>.
- **Austin Butterfly Forum** (club meeting) – ***Darwin, Wallace, and Butterflies*** – Monday, **September 28**, 7:00 PM, Zilker Botanical Garden Center. Dan Hardy will present the history behind Charles Darwin's and Alfred Russel Wallace's discovery of evolution and natural selection, their explorations of the globe, and their view of the natural world. Wallace financed his travels by collecting the butterflies that buyers in England wanted. Darwin would use the surprising phenomenon of mimicry in butterflies as evidence for evolution and natural selection. For additional information, visit <http://www.austinbutterflies.org/calendar>.
- ***Austin Insect Class*** – **Saturday, September 26**, 9 am–12:30 pm; **Wednesday, September 30**, 8:00–10:30 pm, and **Saturday, October 3**, 9 am–12:30 pm – Valerie Bugh and Mike Quinn will take class participants on a fascinating and informal journey of exploration and understanding into the world of Central Texas insects. Cost: \$65 for Austin Butterfly Forum members, \$70 for non-members. Location: [Center for Environmental Research](http://www.texasento.net/InsectClass.html) (CER) at Hornsby Bend. A single day class, running from 9 AM to 5 PM on **September 26** has been added. For more information, visit <http://www.texasento.net/InsectClass.html>.
- **Travis Audubon Society – *Nestbox Workshop at Chaetura Canyon*** – **Sunday, October 4** from **1:00-4:00 pm** – Paul and Georgan Kyle will hold their annual workshop on building nestboxes (birdhouses). Each class member will construct his/her own nestbox during the class with a pre-cut kit. Participants will learn about the nesting needs of several cavity nesting birds and the proper placement and care of the boxes. Includes a hike through the Chaetura Canyon Bird Sanctuary, looking for nests and checking nestboxes. Registration limited to 12. Children age 8 and above welcome if accompanied by a parent. Cost is \$25. Additional kits for \$15. For more information or to sign up, contact Ann Donovan at ajdonovan@att.net or (512) 472-3030.
- **South Central Texas Water Conservation Conference – October 3** – Washington County Fair Grounds (1305 Blue Bell Blvd, Brenham). Texas we've got a problem - WATER! What are we gonna do when the well runs dry? Registration is \$25 (lunch included) **before September 15**; \$35 after September 15. For registration information and flyer, visit <http://texas-wildlife.org/files/SCTWCC%20Flyer.pdf>. For more information, call the Texas AgriLife Extension Service office in Washington County at (979) 277-6212.
- The statewide **Texas Master Naturalist's 10th Annual Meeting & Advanced Training** will be held **October 23-25, 2009** at Mo Ranch in Hunt, Texas. The weekend offers great advanced training opportunities, volunteer activities, and a chance to meet and mingle with fellow Master Naturalists from around the state. After September 27th, all registration rates will increase by \$40.00. **Registration closes October 11, 2009.** Register at: <https://www.regonline.com/TMNconference2009>



- *President's Column, continued*

We have some great events coming up. Our second annual visit to Bracken Cave has been rescheduled for Saturday, October 3 at 6:00 pm. Folks attending this trip will be treated to the largest bat emergence in North America. Literally millions of Mexican Free-tailed bats will take to the skies to feed on flying insects. At this time of year, the female bats will be joined by this year's offspring, so the number of bats should be really amazing. Thanks to Jeanne McConnell Pauley for offering to coordinate the trip for the chapter. There is a 30-person limit, so please let Jeanne (512-304-5374) know if you still plan on attending or now wish to attend as she will be organizing a new attendance list for the event. Please include your name and phone number.

Work continues on the Cedar Creek Middle School garden project. We had our first "bed preparation" workday on Saturday, September 5th, with the second scheduled for Saturday, September 12th. The cleanup starts at 8:30, and finishes up at 10:30. Things are looking good over there, and I'm sure that the students, teachers, and parents will all appreciate and enjoy their newly refurbished landscape.

NatureFest 2009 will once again be held at Fisherman's Park in Bastrop. The date is a bit later this year—Saturday, October 24th. With Texas Parks & Wildlife cancelling Wildlife Expo, it looks like they are planning to devote more resources to regional nature festivals like this one. The Lost Pines Master Naturalists have been asked to once again lead interpretive hikes along the river, and we'll also be hosting a booth with our Rainfall Runoff Simulator. This is a great event, and hopefully the later date will provide us with some pleasant weather.

Discussions are ongoing regarding the next Texas Master Naturalist class to be offered by our chapter. Several members are interested in getting a class going in Spring 2010, and it looks like this is the tentative plan. We will be discussed it at the September chapter meeting, so bring your ideas!

Two Important Announcements:

The October meeting will be held at Buescher State Park in their Recreation Hall. It turns out that the Refectory Building in Bastrop State Park was booked, and we appreciate Katie Rainey getting us into the Buescher Rec Hall on short notice. If you've not been

to this building, it is another great example of CCC construction.

The December meeting/Christmas party/gift exchange date has been moved up to Monday, December 14th. This will avoid having the party during the week of Christmas, when many folks are already busy or travelling.

Our September meeting will feature Katie Raney, Bastrop/Buescher State Park Interpretive Ranger. She will present a program on *Leave No Trace*. *Leave No Trace* is an international program providing information to outdoor enthusiasts on how to reduce their impacts when participating in recreational activities.

I will not be able to attend the September meeting, and thank Louise Ridlon for volunteering to run things in my absence. The September meeting is on Monday, September 21, at the Red Rock Community Center. The meeting will begin at 6:30 pm.



- *It's About Time, continued*

volunteer activities as well as training opportunities. I find that reporting training time still causes some confusion, so I am offering what I hope to be some clarification.

Creditable advanced training time is the time you are actually participating in some type of training exercise. It can be classroom or field, but there has to be an instructor instructing while students study. Travel time doesn't count.

For example, our meetings usually begin with a training session, followed by a break with assorted delectables, and conclude with a business meeting. Speakers are requested to give a one-hour presentation and generally oblige, so all in attendance receive one hour of advanced training. Snacks and the business meeting don't count. If the speaker goes over an hour, then training credit is extended accordingly. The same holds true for training offered by other organizations, such as Audubon and Native Plant Society.

Many off-site training sessions are scheduled from 9:00 to 4:00, with an hour for lunch. In this case, you

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- *It's About Time*, continued

may claim up to 6 hours. Lunch doesn't count, even if it is included in the cost of the session. It's not training time. If an extended period (usually 30 minutes) is specified solely for registration, this also does not count. And, if the session actually ends at 3:00 instead of 4:00, you guessed it -- that last non-hour doesn't count. If you're not sure about how to report something, please give me a call or zip me an e-mail.

Now, speaking of reports: I have posted all reports I received through the end of July, and there are some names conspicuously absent from my spreadsheet! You know who you are, so I urge you to do us both a favor and start putting those time sheets together and get them to me. Once the high temperature drops below 90°, I plan to be outside and not in front of this computer!

Thanks to all who faithfully and accurately report their hours. You are golden!

Bracken Cave Fieldtrip

Good news! Our second annual visit to Bracken Cave to view Mexican Free-tailed Bats has been rescheduled for **Saturday, October 3** at 6:00 pm. There is a 30-person limit, so please let Jeanne (McConnell) Pauley (512-304-5374) know if you still plan on attending or now wish to attend as she will be organizing a new attendance list for the event. Please include your name and phone number.

Nature Quotes

Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you.

~Frank Lloyd Wright

