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## President's Column

--Louise Ridlon

Just a look and a deep breath outside will convince you that Spring is in the air. Winter's challenges are largely past—there will soon be leaves and blossoms to help with identification of all those trees and forbs, as well as a new crop of butterflies, bees, and other critters. The Houston toads have been busy, as evidenced by strings of eggs that were collected for rearing at the Houston Zoo.

Our 2010 training class is about to the halfway point. It has been great getting to know our newest members and see so many of you beginning to put in some volunteer time already!

The February 20 workday at the Lost Lake tract of the Colorado River Refuge was a rousing success. About 22 LPMN members turned out to blaze and mark trails, putting chain saws, loppers, and clippers to work. It's a fascinating area, replete with artifacts left by creatures both 2- and 4-footed: tracks, scat, bones, antlers, tanks, and teakettles—not to mention a rich variety of native flora! Collectively, we put in at least 80 hours of volunteer time. Another workday is planned for March 20, and the Pines and Prairies Land Trust will host a wiener roast for all those who come out to lend a hand. Look for details elsewhere in this

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## Colorado River Refuge Work Day

### Dear Lost Pines Master Naturalist folks,

I am writing to extend a huge thank you to everyone for the excellent, copious amount of work ya'll did to begin our Lost Lake trail system at the Colorado River Refuge. It was a fun day and much was accomplished. We cleared almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of trail up the east side of the creek and some folks also explored the west side of the creek. We made a "hillbilly" bench at the Cliffhanger Trail overlook and made plans for a permanent, pretty bench, and a shelter there.

PPLT would like to have another workday at the Lost Lake on **March 20, 2010** to finish the work begun last week and work on the trail extension south of Riverside Drive that will go to the bottom of the railroad bridge. We also want to host a wiener roast and fun hike after the trail work. This

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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](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, [Meredith.Longoria@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:Meredith.Longoria@tpwd.state.tx.us); (512) 332-7280.



### Newsletter Deadline

Deadline for the next issue is **April 11, 2010**. 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 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.

### March

**Monday, March 15 – Chapter Meeting:** *Lockhart State Park Recreation Hall, 6:30 pm.* Dr. Bob Lyons will give a presentation on rangeland ecology and management. (Joint meeting with 2010 training class.)

### April

**Monday, April 19 – Chapter Meeting:** *Bastrop State Park Refectory, 6:30 pm.* Jeff Raasch from the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department will give a presentation on wetland ecology. (Joint meeting with 2010 training class.)

### 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](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 online reporting form on our Web site or mail to:

187 Billingsley Hts  
Cedar Creek TX 78612

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# Volunteer Opportunities

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- **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 two surveys per month, one during the week and one on a weekend. 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 Interpretive Walks** – We need volunteers each Saturday morning from **March 13 into June**. Hikes are from 10 AM to about 11:30 AM. Remember, these hikes are literally a "walk in the woods": one leisurely mile. 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 at [smfischer@mdanderson.org](mailto: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 three volunteers are needed in addition to Brett, and clean-up takes 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).
- **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](mailto: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](mailto:ecarpe@gmail.com).
- **Lockhart State Park – Lockhart Fifth Grade Outdoor Science Labs** – Interpretive Ranger Liz Larue at Lockhart State Park has set up five sessions in March and April to work with fifth graders from the local elementary school on outdoor science labs. The remaining planned dates are Thursday, **March 11**; Friday, **March 12**; Thursday, **April 1**; and Thursday, **April 8**. The labs run from 9:00 am-12:30 pm; volunteers should arrive by 8:30 am. If you'd like to volunteer, contact Liz Larue at [Liz.larue@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:Liz.larue@tpwd.state.tx.us) or (512) 398-3479.
- **Colorado River Refuge – Nature Education Classes** – Joan Russell has organized a series of nature education classes for homeschoolers. Master Naturalists can volunteer to assist with these classes, held on Thursday mornings from 10:00-12:00. Class sessions will be held at the Water District Building in Tahitian Village just off Hwy. 71 on Tahitian Drive. Dates for the upcoming classes are **March 11 & 25, April 8 & 22, and May 6 & 20**. Contact Joan Russell to volunteer at [joanrussell@suddenlink.net](mailto:joanrussell@suddenlink.net) or (512) 321-8618.
- **Texas Parks & Wildlife Department – Family Fishing Clinics** – Volunteers are needed to assist with learn-to-fish clinics for boys and girls ages 6 to 13. You don't need to be a fisher-person to help out. Park entrance is free for volunteers, and necessary training will be provided on site. Clinics will be held on:
  - March 13** at Bastrop State Park
  - March 16** at Buescher State Park
  - June 12** at Bastrop State Park
  - June 19** at Buescher State Park
  - July 10** at Bastrop State Park
  - July 1** at Buescher State ParkVolunteers should be there at 9:00 am. Contact Bill Brooks at (512) 581-0377 or [bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu) to participate.
- **Bastrop State Park – Activities for Kids** – Thursday, **March 18**, 12:00-3:00 pm, and Friday, **March 19**, 12:00-3:00 pm. Help lead kids in activities such as crafts, games, hikes, nature journaling, a community service project, and other camp-type activities. For more information, contact Park Interpreter Katie Raney at [katie.raney@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:katie.raney@tpwd.state.tx.us) or (512) 237-2241.

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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. Contact Bill Brooks at (512) 581-0377 or [bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:bgbrooks@mail.utexas.edu) for more information.
- **Lockhart State Park – Nature Hikes** – A hike is scheduled for **April 3**. It will begin at 1:00 PM. Learn about the plants in our area by taking a hike along Lockhart State Park's Interpretive Nature Trail. All along the trails are markers identifying some of the plants. Your guide will tell you about the plants' traits and intriguing points of interest. If you want to know more about the plant world, then please join us. The park is located at 4179 State Park Road, Lockhart, Texas 78644. For more information, call (512) 398-3479.
- **Travis Audubon Society** has scheduled workshops on **Chimney Swift Tower Workshop at Chaetura Canyon** and **Bird Songs and Vocalization**, starting in mid-March. Please go to their Web site for more information:  
<http://www.travisaudubon.org/classes.html>
- **Bastrop State Park Alum Creek Walks** – **Select weekends, March thru May**. Learn about the area on a nature walk led by a Master Naturalist. The walk will also serve as training if you wish to volunteer to lead one of these hikes in the future. Hikes are scheduled for **Sunday, March 14** (10 AM), and **Saturdays (2 PM) March 20, April 10 and 24, and May 8 and 22**. Meet at the parking area between the Refectory and the swimming pool. Dress for the weather, bring water and sunscreen; wear shoes or boots that you don't mind getting wet. The hike is not difficult, but is about 3 miles long (2-2 1/2 hours). **Please be punctual**, as the hike requires a short car shuttle and late comers may be left behind. Please contact Andy Butler to volunteer at [abutler@mac.com](mailto:abutler@mac.com) or (512) 321-1308.
- **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center** – **Nature Nights**, 6:00-9:00 PM, select nights in Spring. Events scheduled: *Butterflies* on Friday, **April 2**. *Endangered Species* on Friday, **May 21**. Admission is \$1.00. For additional information, visit <http://www.wildflower.org/nature/>.
- **TPWD – Project WILD Workshops** – Numerous workshops across Texas. Workshops on **April 24** and **May 8** in San Antonio. For additional information, visit

<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/newsmedia/calendar/?calpage=a0181>

- **Cibolo Nature Center (Boerne, TX) Auditorium – Texas Monarch Monitoring Project Training** – Friday (9 am -4 pm) and Saturday (9 am- Noon), **April 9-10**. Volunteers for Texas Monarch Watch, Cibolo Nature Center, and Texas Master Naturalists will present spring and fall Monarch Monitoring Workshops in collaboration with Monarch Larval Monitoring Project, Monarch Watch, and Journey North. This workshop trains teachers, youth leaders, citizen scientists, and park naturalists from throughout Texas to conduct monitoring activities at their own local sites. The training will enable participants to knowledgeably tag monarchs, monitor milkweed for monarch life stages, and collaborate with international monarch research. The training will be offered again on **September 24-25**. Cost: \$30. To register, call (830) 249-4616.



in this newsletter.

The “Discover the Lost Pines” and Alum Creek Tract interpretive hikes at Bastrop State park are under way. Feel free to join these at any time—as a refresher, if you would like to eventually lead a hike, or as a participant. Hikes led by our Master Naturalists are also going on at Lockhart State Park. The trail that our chapter developed there last year should be lush and lovely by now. Go check it out!

Spring Break in mid-March means additional kid-centered events. If you like working with children, the Junior Angler clinics led by our own Bill Brooks are great fun. Fishing experience is not a prerequisite! The dates are Saturday, March 13 at Bastrop State Park and Tuesday, March 16 at Buescher State Park.

Our March 15 chapter meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. at the Lockhart State Park Recreation Hall. Dr. Bob Lyons will present a program on Rangeland Ecology and Management. This is part of the initial training for the class, but also Advanced Training for the rest of us. I hope to be caught up with all the initial certifications, 2009 re-certifications, and service pins and recognition, as well!

As a reminder, whether or not you submit volunteer and/or Advanced Training hours (we hope you do!!), you remain an active member as long as your dues are current (\$10, checks payable to LPMN; submit to Treasurer Carole O’Toole).

As Spring *Marches* on, I hope you will all take advantage of the many opportunities to share your time, talents, and enthusiasm for our local environment in your own unique ways.



## Nature Quotes

In all things of nature there is the something of the marvelous.

~Aristotle



### Colorado River Refuge Work Day, continued

is scheduled for about 12:30 pm at the Lost Pines Recreational Trails complex downriver from the Lost Lake area and immediately next to the CRR. PPLT will provide wieners, chips, and drinks. There are a couple of picnic tables there, but you might want to bring chairs and a fishing pole, too. The plan, for those who want to after working all morning, is to hike the Cliffhanger Trail and then go onto the Two Bridges trail along the river all the way to the Lost Pines Rec Trails area. Of course, you can just drive there, too.

Please contact me, PPLT board member and leader for the workday, Joan Russell, or Dale Morrison with ideas, questions, or information that you gathered at the last workday. We definitely want to create a list of flora, fauna, and whatever else you all care to gather data on.

My phone number at the PPLT office is 512-308-1911; Joan’s home phone is 512-321-2718; and Dale’s cell phone is 512-629-3345.

Thanks again for you interest, expertise, and enthusiasm.

Sincerely,

**Carrie Knox**  
Executive Director  
Pines and Prairies Land Trust