

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the
Master Naturalist, Hill Country Chapter

T E X A S



HILL COUNTRY CHAPTER

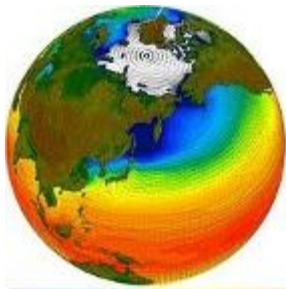
SEPTEMBER ... CLIMATE CHANGE AND CONSERVATION IN TEXAS

Rare, Endangered,
and Threatened
in the Four Counties



Longstalk heimia
Nesaea longipes
Bandera County

Dr. Wendy Gordon will present "What might climate change mean for conservation in Texas?" She will provide an overview of projected climate change in Texas, discuss tools and resources available to explore climate change, including a demonstration of Climate Wizard, summarize the types of changes already being



documented in the natural world, and talk about the implications for conservation in Texas. Dr. Gordon will discuss opportunities to get involved through programs like the National Phenology Network.

Join us Monday, September 27 at 7p.m. in the UGRA Lecture Hall. Arrive early to chat with members and guests.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE John Huecksteadt

Mexican Hat Has Its Day in Court

I always figured I was becoming a real Texan when I started to despise upright prairie coneflower, aka Mexican hat. For the first year or two I was just happy to know another forb called our place home. Diversity was important, but honestly, the forb count on our place inflated my forb-ego along with its bragging rights. After a couple of years, though, I noted in my journal that this stuff "really can take over a pasture when it gets going." I began to fear for the native grasses as I saw the "hat," as the local ranchers called it, take over otherwise grassy pastures.

Around the time I was waking up to the reality of this aggressive forb, I attended a Farm Bureau program entitled "Controlling Hill Country Pests." I learned a lot about the hordes of hogs about

to overrun over the Hill Country, about "pear" and mesquite, and, of course, Mexican hat. (I also learned the politically correct name appeared to be "upright prairie coneflower," but most of the people who talked that day just avoided the whole issue and called it "hat.")

At the same time I realized Mexican hat was spreading like crazy, I realized there was little I could do to stop it, short of applying massive doses of pesticides (yes, herbicides are actually considered pesticides). That solution was not acceptable. I tried pulling it. Wow. No way... and there was way too much. Eventually I settled into an uneasy truce that involved marveling at the endless variations in petal coloration in the spring and cursing an obnoxiously dead-looking plant the entire rest of the year.

continued, page two.

The new class.
Page 5.

September 2010



Volume 8
No. 9

THIS MONTH WE HONOR

Milestones

Brushed Silver
500 hours

Anne Cassidy

2010 Re-Certification

Wood Duck

Gloria Costello

Warren Ferguson

Lloyd Hemmert

Robert Keiser

Alexis McRoberts

Roger McRoberts

Jack Millikan

Karen Millikan

Pat Perkison

First Year Certification

Dragonfly

Sharon Walling

©Garry Speir

Fate rarely calls on us at a moment of our choosing.

Optimus Prime

Do you know?

Phenology is the study of recurring plant and animal life cycle stages, or phenophases, such as leafing and flowering of plants, maturation of agricultural crops, emergence of insects, and migration of birds. Many of these events are sensitive to climatic variation and change, and are simple to observe and record. As an USA-NPN observer, you can help scientists identify and understand environmental trends.

President's Message continued.

Jackie and I were fixing yellow-curry Thai chicken when we had a few minutes of waiting for things to cook. I wandered over to the French doors for a quick peek at the birds. What was all that activity just beyond the patio? A dozen or so lesser goldfinches (one of my favorites) were pigging out on what looked like silverleaf nightshade. But no... it couldn't be. I grabbed my binoculars. OMG! They were eating the Mexican hat seeds. The finches were mobbing them and fighting over them like they were candy. It was downright embarrassing. Mexican hat? C'mon...

Somewhere in all this there is a lesson to be learned. I think it has something to do with humility, but I have not quite figured out the connection yet. Maybe after a few more years of watching and wondering it will come to me.



John Hueck's lead

ADVANCED TRAININGYour chance to learn more



MOUNTAIN HOME SCIENCE AND RESEARCH CENTER AT 10-091

Tuesday, September 14, 11:30a.m.-12:45p.m., Riverside Nature Center, \$3 members, \$6 non-members.

Presenter: Dick Luebke, retired Texas Parks and Wildlife Research Program Director
Learn the history of the Mountain Home Science and Research Center, its role in the Guadalupe Bass Restoration Program, and the value of science in protecting our native species.

HILL COUNTRY BIRDS AT 10-093

Tuesday, September 14, 7p.m., Gillespie County AgriLife Extension Building, free.

Presenter: Bill Lindemann, Hill Country birder and naturalist; Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center

Bill Lindemann will share his knowledge of Hill Country birds. His presentation will focus on the region's significant species including their preferred habitat, behavior and status.

MONARCH MONITORING WORKSHOP AT 10-086.

Friday-Saturday, September 17-18, 9a.m.-4p.m., Cibolo Nature Center auditorium, \$30 per person

Presenters: Volunteers from Texas Monarch Watch, Cibolo Nature Center, and Texas Master Naturalists

The workshop is designed to train volunteers to aid scientists as part of the Monarch Larval Monitoring Project, Monarch Watch, and Journey North. This workshop is sponsored by USFWS, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Monarch Joint Venture, and Cibolo Nature Center.
Contact nature@cibolo.org to pre-register or call Cindy at 830-249-4616.

TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST STATE MEETING TRAINING SESSIONS AT 10-089

October 22-24, 2010

Report attendance at state meeting training sessions.

HILL COUNTRY LIVING 101 AT 10-094

November 1, 8, 15, 22; 5-8p.m.

Presenter: Texas AgriLife Extension Service

The program will include instruction by industry experts and Extension professionals.

Participants will work from the ground up to learn the what, why, when, where, and how of managing the Hill Country's natural resources.

Early registration (prior to November 1) will be \$25 per session, \$75 for all four sessions. Registration is limited. Call the Kerr County Extension office at 830-257-6568.



**NOW YOU CAN HAVE THE
BEST-DRESSED GATE IN TOWN!**

24"x18" metal gate sign - \$45.00

16"x 12" metal gate sign - \$30.00

The signs are made of .40 gauge aluminum with a baked enamel finish. They are pre-drilled with holes for easy attachment to stakes, fences, or gates.

Contact Gracie Waggener at
gwaggener@flow-apps.com

Down by the Riverside

Native Plant Sale
&
Nature Festival

SATURDAY OCTOBER 2 8 A.M. TO 3 P.M.

RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER

FREE ADMISSION

Don't miss our annual *Down By the Riverside* nature education event and fundraiser!

Family-friendly activities all day

- Texas Bats
- Rainwater Harvesting
- Butterfly Tent
- Kid's Crafts
- Nature Organizations

Our chapter co-sponsors this event with Riverside Nature Center. Members may shop for plants at the "Member's Only Pre-Sale" Friday, October 1 from 5p.m. to 6:30p.m.

Volunteer opportunities are available. Please contact Priscilla Stanley, jpbstan@ktc.com.

Hill Country Chapter Merchandise 2010

We have a terrific selection of hats, bags, and shirts in styles for men and women.



Check out our fantastic new ladies' shirt.
It can be worn all day, washed and dried, and never needs to be ironed!

Contact Gracie Waggener to place your order.
gwaggener@flow-apps.com



Master Naturalist, Hill Country Chapter Class of 2010

Richard Adams, a long-time resident of Boerne, retired from a thirty-year-plus career in data processing. He is a dedicated volunteer at the Southwest School of Art and Craft and the Institute of Texan Cultures, all indoor activities. He would like to move his activities from indoor to outdoor and add variety to his volunteer efforts.



F.E. Baxter (everyone knows her as "Baxter") moved to Mountain Home from New Mexico where she founded Southwest Llama Rescue. She moved 10 of her 55 llamas. She also raises exotic chicken breeds. Baxter taught at colleges in Colorado and New Mexico, and has children and grandchildren living in both states. She loves the land and wants to learn to be a good steward of her new property by encouraging native plants and animals.



Carolyn Bean is a retired business analyst who is interested in bird identifying and listing and in native plants. She and her husband recently completed building their home and she is now creating a bird haven on their five acres north of Comfort. She served as a docent for the Ventura County, California parks, where she led bird and plant identification field trips. Carolyn wants to know more about geology, erosion control, rain water harvesting, birding in Texas, and wildlife. Most importantly, she misses volunteering, and wants to become active through the Master Naturalist program.



Debbie Bond recently moved to Kerrville from Ohio. She has a biology degree from Youngstown State University and has always had a strong interest in birds and other wildlife. She enjoys sharing her knowledge with others, particularly children.



Since moving to Kerrville in 1969, **Jim Burgin** has become very interested in the nature, land, and animals of Texas. This interest and his willingness to volunteer are readily apparent. Jim and his wife, Cynthia (Class of 2009), volunteer at Last Chance Forever, Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation, and Riverside Nature Center.



“The most surprising thing I have learned in the Master Naturalist Program thus far has been that there are people as weird as I am who enjoy getting out with nature and love bugs, and creepy crawlies, “weeds,” and reptiles, and how it all works together.”

Jim Childress was born in Spur, Texas, but grew up in and went to school in Oklahoma. He graduated from Northeastern State University and immediately went to work for Standard Oil of Indiana as an accountant, and later as a CPA and auditor for ARAMCO in Saudi Arabia. Upon retirement in 1992, he moved back to Oklahoma and in 2003 he moved to Fredericksburg. Jim joined the Master Naturalist program to learn about native and drought tolerant plants and to meet and work on projects with others with similar interests. He is an avid reader, but most of all enjoys restoring his ten-plus acre prairie and riparian area along Palo Alto Creek in Fredericksburg.



Stephen Clyburn comes to us as a retired chemist from the Houston area. After serving in the United States Army, he completed his undergraduate degree at Southern Indiana followed by a graduate work at the University of Houston. He led the environmental group at Nalco-Exxon where he was part of the team that developed the dispersant recently used to disperse the oil from the blown out well in the Gulf of Mexico. His work took him to many areas in South America and Africa. Stephen has been working hard to restore his property near Harper.



Brandon Coyle grew up in the Hondo area and now lives in Medina. He is working toward a degree in Wildlife Management and has taken a break this semester to take part in the Texas Master Naturalist Program. He is particularly interested in waterscapes, waterfowl, and land management. Brandon's enthusiasm and energy for nature will be an asset to our chapter.



Vern Crawford and Lenore Langsdorf moved to Center Point in July 2009, but Vern has been involved with the Hill Country for decades. He has volunteered at the Kerrville Music Festival for the past thirty-two years. He understands the value of volunteering and was affiliated with The Lighthouse for the Blind. Vern loves the outdoors and is building terraces at home for native plants. Be sure to ask Vern about baking bread, he will tell you it is one of his passions!



Bernadette DeShields' love of nature came from her mother, a gardener, bee keeper, and wine maker, and her dad who preferred sitting outdoors. An organic gardener and avid birder, she also enjoys identifying butterflies and wildlife. Rita studied Native American spirituality and believes we are connected to God in nature and that every plant, insect, and animal has a purpose. She practices iridology at health fairs and presents workshops on maintaining good health. Rita says the Master Naturalist program fits her profile and she is ready to learn more, play in nature with new friends, and be of service.

Garri Dryden earned a PhD in Arid Lands Resource Sciences from the University of Arizona and is currently involved in independent research. She lives in Utopia, Uvalde County. Garri learned of our Master Naturalist chapter through association with Koy Coffey, our Membership Director, while working on the Project Wild initiative. Her volunteer interests include habitat restoration and land management projects as well as fundraising efforts. She is also interested in giving presentations in furtherance of our mission of education, outreach, and service.



Rebecca Flack grew up on a working farm in Illinois and earned a Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences degree from the University of Illinois. She worked seasonally for The Nature Conservancy at preserves in Illinois, North and South Dakota, Minnesota, and Florida before coming to Texas where she earned a Master's degree in Rangeland Ecology and Management from Texas A & M University. Rebecca is the Nature Conservancy of Texas' Western Rivers Project Director. Her territory includes much of the Hill Country (including Love Creek Preserve) and properties as far west as the Nueces River.



“I became a Texas Master Naturalist to have a good excuse to play outside and stop on the side of the road without questions from friends... ‘It’s just her being master naturalisty.’”



Mike Foulds, an enthusiastic outdoorsman, was born and raised in the Canadian Rockies and has been a resident of the Hill Country since 1980. He and his wife, Lynn, raise longhorn cattle on their Kendalia ranch. Mike is a retired pediatrician formerly associated with the Division of General Pediatrics at the Health Science Center in San Antonio. Mike learned of the Master Naturalist program while participating in a Wildlife Management class.



Richeanne Frauenberger decided to move to Kerrville 30 years ago. She spent most of her adult life doing what was needed in the workplace and now she is finally in Kerrville doing what she wants. Richeanne is an incorrigibly curious person with many interests including medicinal herbs, naturopathic medicine, permaculture, biodynamic farming, and rainwater harvesting. She recognizes the need for more intelligent and sustainable land management practices and looks forward to using her writing, teaching, and speaking skills to promote awareness of our dependence upon critical ecological systems and the strategies, programs, and personal actions that can sustain them.



Harry Gartrell, a native Texan and resident of Center Point, retired from working in sales of equipment used in small electronic devices. Harry and his wife, Vickie, a lovely, charming multigenerational Texan, work a small ranch near Harper. Harry, a photographer, is interested in land stewardship, water conservation, grassland ecosystems, plant and wildlife census, habitat restoration, and being a nature guide. He is also pursuing the Master Gardner program in Kerr and Gillespie counties.



Eileen Gotke moved to Kerrville three years ago after retiring from a career as a case manager for Georgia's Division of Family and Children Services. Wildlife research has always been an interest, and she currently volunteers at Old Tunnel Wildlife Management Area, where she learned about the Master Naturalist program.



Jim Hickey has always been drawn to the outdoors. Growing up on the headwaters of the Guadalupe River in Hunt instilled him with a passion and respect for rivers and their conservation. Jim began his outdoor training as a teenager with Outpost Wilderness Adventures, where he went alpine backpacking, climbing, and learned survival techniques. Years of kayaking honed his knowledge of rivers and oceans and snowboarding and skateboarding influenced his love for stand up paddle boarding (SUP). Jim's guide service, Guadalupe Paddle Sports, provides kayak/SUP tours. Jim looks forward to increasing his knowledge and understanding of Hill Country ecology and sharing his passion for the outdoors with his two sons and as many others as possible.



Sharon Hixson moved to Gillespie County just north of Kerrville two years ago with her husband, Mel, after a career as an administrative accountant for a large electric utility in southern California. Sharon has always been a "nature enthusiast" and "observer." In childhood, she collected bugs, lizards, snakes, and turtles, and spent many afternoons perched in her backyard mimosa tree watching hummingbirds! This led her to a degree in biology. Sharon worked at a raptor rehabilitation facility in California. She chairs the Rangeland and Wildlife Management Advisory Committee at Tierra Linda Ranch and serves as vice-president of the Tierra Linda Garden Club.



Donna Howell and her husband, Robert, recently moved to the Sisterdale area near Comfort. She is involved in community service activities and numerous improvement projects on her property, where she implemented native plant gardens and bird feeding stations. Donna is a former educator at Western Michigan University.



Robert Howell taught at several places including Western Michigan University, and later worked in health care administration. He is engaged in projects on his property near Sisterdale - planting native plants and developing a rainwater catchment system. He enjoys volunteering at Comfort non-profits, as well as photography and wood-working.



Tom Hynes is originally from Virginia, but after attending school in Texas he ended up working at Texas Instruments in Dallas. He retired after 30 years and he and his wife, Noreen, moved to Santa Fe where he was in home construction for six years. They moved to Fredericksburg in 2003 to be closer to their children. Tom would like to put his knowledge and skills in landscaping, detailed drawings of gardens, and practical erosion control; computers, electronics, video and photography; and woodworking, carpentry, and construction to use. He is interested in transplanting seedlings and nurturing monarch caterpillars to butterflies and plans to become involved in the LMAP program.



“The most gratifying volunteer project experience I have had has been inspiring the sense of wonder and watching the “ah-ha” moments as students discover something amazing outdoors.”



Joe-Mike Johnson, a Montana cowboy, came to the San Antonio area twelve years ago and now lives and works on a small ranch/bed and breakfast near Tarpley. For several years he volunteered and worked at Triple H Equi-therapy Ranch in Pipe Creek. Joe-Mike loves to ride horse at Hill Country State Natural Area and plans to volunteer there and learn more about the grasses and plants in the Hill Country. Joe-Mike has spent most of his life outdoors and considers himself a friend of nature.



Jim Jones, an avid outdoorsman, recently retired and moved from College Station to a property north of Medina which he has owned since the seventies. Jim is a hunter and fisherman who speaks eloquently of his love and appreciation for the natural world. He is eager to express that sentiment through good stewardship of his property and by active participation in chapter projects. Jim was a board member of the Brazos Valley Chapter of the Coastal Conservation Association and is active in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Chaplaincy Program.



Lenore Langsdorf and Vern Crawford moved to Center Point in 2009, but Lenore's involvement with the Hill Country goes way back. She has volunteered at the Kerrville Music Festival for twenty seven years and is president of the board of directors for Quiet Valley Ranch where the twice-yearly festivals are held. Lenore is an educator teaching philosophy at Alamo College in Kerrville and communications at UTSA in San Antonio. She shares her love of the outdoors and enjoys watching the ever-changing Hill Country landscape.



Mike Lundy's boyhood in Texas and California shaped his love for nature, especially plant and animal life. Journaling thoughts and experiences kept him connected to his interest and commitment to nature. Mike finds renewal in his annual Smoky Mountains hike, birding the Texas coast, and spending time in his landscape. Upon retirement in 2003 from a career in Dallas as a family life educator, Jan and Mike moved to Kerrville because of the beauty of the Hill Country, the wildlife, and the prospect of continuing a love for nature born in his boyhood. Mike enjoys "playing outside" whenever the opportunity arises and looks forward to learning and working with others who have a love for this good Earth.



Tom Nelson moved to Kerrville three years ago to pursue his career as a Radiology Technologist. He wants to increase his knowledge of Hill Country ecosystems and has a strong interest in preserving habitat and educating others. This year he was able to arrange his schedule to attend the training class and looks forward to finding an interesting volunteer project.



“The best tip I have to share with other Master Naturalists is all the knowledge in the world is useless unless you pass it on!”



Glenn Randow was born and raised in central Texas and now lives near Harper. He retired from coaching football and track in Georgetown, Bastrop, and other Texas towns. He has been spending time in the Hill Country since the early 1980s, and has lived here full-time since 2002. Glenn loves to be outdoors swimming or jogging or camping, and also likes country dancing. He has already volunteered at Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park in Fredericksburg and is anxious to check out other volunteer opportunities.



Rebecca Rogers, owner of The Garden Gate Cottage Bed and Breakfast in Boerne and a former Kendall County extension agent, grew up on a sheep and goat ranch in northwest Uvalde County, but she feels she learned little about her surroundings. To change that she became involved with the Native Plant Society of Texas and especially enjoys the Bigtooth Maples for Boerne program. Rebecca volunteers at the Agricultural Heritage Museum, where she worked to eradicate invasive plants, and at the Dienger Cultural and Heritage Center. For a recent birthday celebration, she and girlfriends had a picnic at James Kiehl River Bend Park, which spawned other “outdoor experience” birthdays in her circle of friends. Rebecca believes the class training makes us aware of how much we do not know!



Dean Schmelling was born and raised in California, but corrected the error of his birthplace by marrying a seventh generation Texan, the lovely, highly intelligent, witty, and charming Norma. They live on their Circle S Ranch in Bandera County. Dean served in the United States Army with duty in the infantry, logistics, intelligence, and Special Forces. He retired in 1998 and began a second career as a computer programmer. Dean’s interests include vegetable gardening, native plant propagation, ranchland management, and investigating political and philosophical subjects.



“I enjoy the Master Naturalist Program because I feel that I belong”



Renee Skwara, a Boerne landscape designer, studied horticulture at Texas A & M University. She is a member of the Boerne Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT) and learned of the Hill Country chapter training program from a fellow NPSOT member. Renee was excited to see geology and other subjects she did not get to take in college offered in the training class. Renee volunteers with the Boy Scouts of America and plans to choose children’s activities as part of her volunteer service with the chapter.



John Sloan is a retired Juvenile Probation Officer from Houston. He and his wife moved to the Hunt area about two years ago. John is very interested in learning more about the plants, animals, geology, and biology of the Hill Country. He is interested in butterflies and has created a butterfly garden. John enjoys photography and has taken photos of the wildlife that he sees daily. John would like to participate as a chapter speaker and serve as a nature guide or docent.



Paula Smith is an attorney, an Unclaimed Property consultant, and a sixth generation Texan. Her family owns a ranch in Edwards County, where she enjoys documenting plants and birds. Paula is a board member of the Hill Country Land Trust and is very interested in learning more about the botany, geology, and ecology of the Texas Hill Country to enhance her volunteer work with this group. The Hill Country Land Trust protects property with conservation value. Paula is especially interested in working with owners whose land may have endangered species habitat.



Paul Stafford recently retired as a Director of Communications Services for a major energy company and in that capacity he took many photographs. Since retirement, he has pursued nature photography. He and his wife lived in New Orleans for many years, but moved to the Hill Country before Hurricane Katrina struck that area. Paul hunted on a large ranch near Comfort for many years. He is interested in participating in field research and surveys.



Lisa Williams is a sixth generation Texan. She and her husband moved to Kerrville from the Houston area two years ago. Lisa is interested in landscaping with native plants and plans to enhance a natural seep that runs through her property. She uses a rain barrel and composter to help conserve our natural resources. Lisa volunteers with The Gleaners at Riverside Nature Center and at the Dietert Center, where she is a member of the ukulele band.



Dr. **Marion Worthington**, a resident of Kerrville, is originally from England and brings a global perspective to our program. She wants to encourage others to preserve and enjoy the Hill Country and enlighten her homeowners' association on conservation practices. Marion is interested in identifying and locating rare Texas orchids. She hopes to add volunteering at Bamberger Ranch and Love Creek Preserve to her current volunteer service with St. Vincent de Paul.



There are some who can live without wild things, and some who cannot. ... Like winds and sunsets, wild things were taken for granted until progress began to do away with them. Now we face the question whether a still higher 'standard of living' is worth its cost in things natural, wild, and free. For us of the minority, the opportunity to see geese is more important than television, and the chance to find a pasque-flower is a right as inalienable as free speech.

Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, 1949

HILL COUNTRY CHAPTER Website Tip of the Month

Along with launching our new web site, we are also changing the distribution of our newsletter.

At President John Huecksteadt's suggestion, we will now link to the newsletter posted on our website instead of sending a .pdf file to each member.

There are several good reasons for using this means of distribution:

- Bandwidth won't be used to upload to mail servers for chapter members who don't check their e-mail regularly.
- There is no risk of overflowing a member's mailbox.
- Downloads can be done at members' convenience.

If you have any problem accessing the newsletter this way, please notify Webmaster Phyllis Muska, pmuska@windstream.net.



1 Steph Perry
 Lars Nielsen
 Anne Cassidy
 Phyllis Muska
 Norma Bruns
 Marilyn Knight
 Cathy Downs

Last month's photo



Common Mullein *Verbascum thapsus*
 Known as "cowboy toilet paper" because of the thick absorbent leaves. The dried stems were dipped in wax and used as torches.



Helpful Information from Barbara Lowenthal

Cleaning hummingbird feeders.

Using a funnel, put about one tablespoon of dry white rice in the hummingbird feeder bottle.

Add water and a bit of detergent. Cover the opening of the bottle and swirl the rice mixture in all directions. In no time, the inside of the bottle is sparkling. Rinse well.



Click to learn more.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I understand John's frustration expressed in his President's Message on managing small plots of land. That is exactly a major part of the problem, here in the Hill Country especially. Too many of the former working family ranches and farms have been sold and chopped up into small homesteads or ranchettes. Whether like the small 1980's subdivision that I bought into with sixty homes on one-half to two acres, or ranches cut up into five to twenty acre tracts... these small properties are difficult to manage properly through grazing, prescribed fire, or other brush management techniques. So many came here from cities or even other states and have no idea of how to manage more than a home yard, especially in drier and hotter climates such as ours.

If they bought a tract and were told that it was a "horse property," and got one or more horses - then it is even worse. Twenty acres of the average Hill Country rangeland will not support one horse year around and stay in a desirable ecological condition. The range watershed and wildlife habitat will suffer. I worked much of my life advising land owners of small properties, as well as those with 100 sections of land. None of it is easy, but smaller is tougher.

There might be some techniques to help out if your neighbors are in those types of subdivisions. Some well-managed grazing by livestock (once a property has recovered and is in at least fair range condition) is desirable and can be a management tool. You might have a meeting with your neighbors over a Saturday BBQ or go around individually and talk to them and see if there is any interest in forming a "land management association." Years ago, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), in the Fredericksburg area I believe, started forming those types of loose coalitions of small ranches and ranchettes to improve both habitat management and game management. Perhaps with larger areas, prescribed burns could be held with the additional help of the association's residents and friends.

Selective brush management, mostly "cedar" in our area, is usually a good idea. Just by controlling some of the cedar, and maybe other species depending upon the situation, often releases the better range grasses and forbs. Develop a plan. On smaller tracts, hand cutting is often feasible and maybe the only choice. Clearing around homes and barns is a wise option as cedar is highly flammable and a danger. There are mechanical cutters on small tractors that can clear cedar very quickly. Often it is advisable to follow up with a prescribed burn two to three years later once the pasture has been rested and has grown enough fuel to carry a fire. This usually kills small seedling cedars and invigorates the rangeland. Deferment and then wise grazing practices are needed afterwards. You will never finish controlling brush - it is a tool to be used carefully from now on.

A grazing herd from an adjoining rancher might be rotated through properties for the prescribed time with the assistance of the local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), USDA, and/or the Kerr County AgriLife Extension Agent. Be sure the rancher providing the livestock is a part of the team and you are all on the same page as far as proper grazing use and herd management. Water will often be needed on small tracts and can be handled by building livestock rainwater harvesting structures in dry pastures - if they can be located in corners, and fenced to allow use by several pastures that is more efficient.

continued.

To get started, once you have a number of agreeable and adjoining property parties, TPWD, a regional Range Specialist, and a Wildlife Specialist might be brought in to help set up the coalition plan and to provide background information for all who want it or need it... (don't we all!) These professionals can help you analyze the quality and quantity of range vegetation on each property and estimate the number of grazing days available and what type of livestock would be best.

A drought management plan should also be developed to handle extremely dry situations such as '08 and '09.

Those who have horses on small tracts are really better off keeping the horses mostly in a corral and feeding them, rather than have the whole small tract overgrazed and abused - and buying feed anyway -keeping the larger tract available for occasional grazing and riding for exercise of the animals.

I think a combination of a range-trained and wildlife-trained resources professional would be the best resource. Some folks have a good handle on both fields, but not all. Here is the TPWD website for their management associations. <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/landwater/land/private/>

If you decide to investigate, I would imagine you would start at the local TPWD office, and then probably work with AgriLife Extension and NRCS. Most of our government agencies have been short handed for many years, so it may take a while for them to get to you - have patience. In the meantime, bring in local speakers to start improving the group's range, wildlife, and livestock management background.

Good luck, you folks are the types of new landowners we must have to properly manage the Hill Country lands and waters which we all love and want to pass on to future generations.

Keep fighting the good fight!

Mike Mecke

TRANSMISSION LINE SEMINARS OFFER INFORMATION AND OPTIONS FOR LANDOWNERS

The Texas Wildlife Association (TWA) and the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association (TSCRA) are teaming up to offer landowners educational seminars featuring expert information on the electric transmission line process (CREZ) and options for private landowners who may be impacted by the proposed transmission line routes.

Glen Webb, Abilene attorney and TWA secretary, and Judon Fambrough, attorney, Texas A&M Real Estate Center, will provide presentations at each seminar.

The seminar begins at 1:30 p.m. and concludes at 4 p.m.

The seminar is free and open to the public.

October 8 - Kerrville

1:30 p.m. - 4 p.m.

UGRA Lecture Hall, 125 North Lehman Drive

For more information visit www.texas-wildlife.org.



A full house at the new class reception.



The class of 2010 is welcomed by Director of Class Training Cathy Downs.



A new volunteer for the L.A.N.D.S. project. CC-12-A.



Excited committee members and mentors watch the first day of class unfold.



The Old Tunnel display helps recruit volunteers. KL-03-A.

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™



Hill Country Chapter

FIND MORE INFORMATION
ON OUR WEBSITE!
grovesite.com/tmn/hcmn

Board of Directors 2010

John Huecksteadt - President
Sandy Peña - Vice President
Gracie Waggener - Secretary
Cathy Downs - Treasurer
Steve Dodge - Director of Advanced Training
Cathy Downs - Director of Class Training
Susan Longacre - Director of Communications
Koy Coffe - Director of Membership
Priscilla Stanley - Director of Volunteer Service Projects
Laura Baker - 2009 New Class Representative
Jim Stanley - Immediate Past President

We meet the fourth Monday of each month (excluding June and December) at 7p.m. in the Upper Guadalupe River Authority Lecture Hall at 125 North Lehmann Drive in Kerrville. We welcome anyone interested in our monthly topic and the Texas Master Naturalist program. Please join us.



Lindheimeria texana: Texas Star

Texas Master Naturalist mission:

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.

Questions about our chapter?

Contact Koy Coffe
Membership Director
kcoffer@texas-wildlife.org
830-792-3070

The *Texas Star* newsletter is a monthly publication of the Hill Country Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program. News, comments, information, and ideas are always welcome. Please contact Kristie Denbow, denbow@gvtc.com.

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™



TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE

AgriLIFE EXTENSION
Texas A&M System