

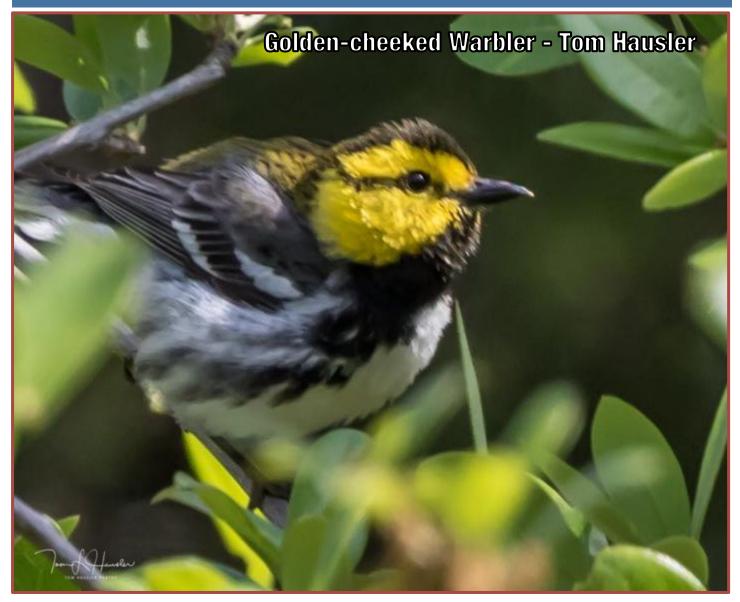


NEWSLETTER of the HAYS COUNTY CHAPTER TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS



May 2018

right here at home -- in the Hill Country



Welcome to the Newsletter

Check out Betsy's latest feature article reporting on the HCMN Training Class of 2018 Field Trip to Hornsby Bend. For a really cold and windy day, Betsy captured the scene and some amazing bird photos. Also the popular "Meet Your Master Naturalists" bios returns with Susan Evans and David Womer.

May 2018

CHAPTER NEWS

CHAPTER BOARD

President - Anne Child

Vice President - Mary O'Hara

Secretary - Tracy Mock

Treasurer - Larry Calvert

Past President - Beth Ramey

State Representative and Volunteer

Projects Coordinator - Dixie Camp

TPWD Advisor - Gordon Linam

Training Coordinator – Mark Wojcik

Advanced Training - Beverly Gordon

Calendar - Beverly Gordon

Historian - Dana Martensen

Webmaster and Membership Chair -

Jane Dunham

Outreach & Marketing - Art Arizpe

Outreach Events - Roxana Donegan

Host Committee - Mary Dow Ross

Newsletter- Tom Jones, Betsy Cross

Willett Project - Candy Spitzer

Agrilife Sponsor- Jason Mangold

MN BOARD MEETING

Thursday May 10, 6:30pm – 8:30pm Where: Agri-Life Extension office 200 Stillwater Drive Wimberley, TX 78676.

CHAPTER FIELD TRIP

Friday, 11 May 2018 - 6pm—8:30pm Bracken Cave Preserve

26101 FM3009

San Antonio, TX 78266

www.batcon.org

Donation suggestion \$10

Approved for 2.5 hours AT

Maximum limit: 50 HCMN members only.

See Page 3 for all the details.

NEWSLETTER: Tom shines a Spotlight on MN PROJECT 802 Blanco Watershed Water Quality Monitoring. See Page 8. Also, don't miss Betsy's report on the Raptors In the Park event at the Blue Hole Regional Part. See Page 11

Advanced Training Calendar – Click the link below for more opportunities http://haysmn.org/calendar-at.html

Projects Calendar -

http://www.haysmn.org/calendar-projects.html





May 2018

MAY CHAPTER MEETING AT BRACKEN CAVE

Mary O'Hara, VP

In lieu of a May chapter meeting, HCMN will have a tour of <u>Bracken Cave</u> to observe & learn more about the Mexican Free-tailed bats. The site can only accommodate a maximum of 50 people. All interested members can RSVP by email to Mary O'Hara at <u>vp@haysmn.org</u>. The details are below:

Friday, 11 May 2018 - 6pm—8:30pm Bracken Cave Preserve 26101 FM3009 San Antonio, TX 78266 www.batcon.org

Donation suggestion \$10 - Approved for 2.5 hours AT Maximum limit: 50 HCMN members only. Waiver required to attend.



A Mexican Free-tailed bat (Tadarida brasilliensis)

Bracken Cave is the summer home to the largest colony of Mexican Free-tailed bats in the world. An estimated 20 million Mexican Free-tailed Bats roost in the cave from March to October making it the largest known concentration of mammals. The emergence of these millions of Mexican Free-tailed bats, as they spiral out of the cave at dusk for their nightly insect hunt, is an unforgettable sight.







Bracken Cave Night

FUNGUS THAT CAUSES DEADLY BAT DISEASE SPREADS TO CENTRAL TEXAS

The fungus that causes white-nose syndrome (WNS) in bats, detected for the first time in Texas in early 2017 in the Panhandle, has now spread into Central Texas. Though no bat deaths have been attributed to WNS in Texas, the syndrome has killed millions of bats in the eastern parts of the United States, raising national concern. A coalition of groups in Texas is continuing work to monitor the spread of the disease. The fungus was detected at several sites in four new counties this year including: 2 sites in Blanco County, 1 site in Foard County, 2 sites in Kendall County, and 1 site in Wheeler County. This brings the total number of counties where the fungus has been detected in Texas to 10. The fungus was detected on cave bats, tri-colored bats, Townsend's big-eared bats, and on a single Mexican free-tailed bat. No signs of WNS were reported. Biologists say it usually takes a few years after detecting the fungus for the disease to manifest. The detection on a Mexican free-tailed bat was at Old Tunnel State Park in Central Texas. This is first ever detection of the fungus on this species.



MEET YOUR MASTER NATURALISTS

SUSAN EVANS

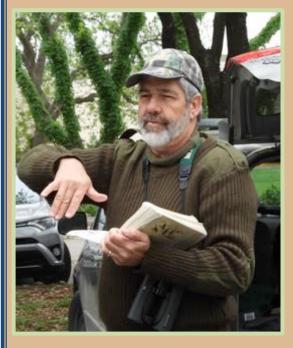
About Myself – Susan Evans spent thirty years as an art educator and has lived in Wimberley for the last thirteen years. She is an artist, Master Gardener, and has been a Master Naturalist for 15 years. She is an avid birder

You May Not Know – Susan is President of the Wimberley Birding Society

<u>FAV Master Naturalist Activity</u> Being a member of Outdoor Educators whose mission is to encourage enthusiasm and

interest in our youth for learning about the geology, animals, and plants that are a part of the environmental makeup of our beautiful Hill Country home.

Bird I Most ID With: "I love the Canyon Wren for his robust song and plucky personality"



DAVID WOMER

About Myself – David Womer has always loved nature and animals. He attended Stephen F. Austin State University with his heart set on pre-med, but went on to receive a BS and MS in Wildlife Biology. He has been an environmental educator and has captained, competed, and mentored several teams at various levels in The World Series of Birding and The Great Texas Birding Classic.

<u>You May Not Know</u> – David has owned his own business in nature education since 1994, <u>www.BackIntoNature.com</u>. He has traveled extensively leading tours.

<u>FAV Master Naturalist Activity</u> – "Although Back Into Nature is no longer my primary job, I still enjoy doing programs for kids of all ages and love to use all my experience and knowledge over the years to share with Hays County Master Naturalist classes."

<u>Bird I Most ID With</u>: "The bird I most identify with is the Painted Bunting, not only my master naturalist class name but a bird I always wanted to see as a kid and then finally did my thesis on and it usually comes back right about San Jacinto Day. (April 21st!! For the history lover in me)".





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Kudos to all the Hays County Master Naturalists who got up early and braved the cold, damp, WINDY day to attend the Hornsby Bend Bird Walk with David and Ann Womer and The Training Team on Saturday, April 7!

Despite the less-than-ideal weather, we observed a diversity of ducks, sandpipers, waterfowl, and other shore birds. There were also hundreds of Barn Swallows and Cliff Swallows, along with Chimney Swifts, Savana Sparrows, Red-winged Blackbirds, Franklin's Gulls, and others.

A full list of the birds from this trip was captured by Yolanda and is included.







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One of the more prominent and striking ducks on the pond was the Northern Shoveler. They use their extra-large bills, sweeping them from side to side, to filter out aquatic invertebrates and seeds from the water.







We had a few birders' delights, including several fly-bys from the lbis, a pair of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, and a flock of Marbled Godwits (pictured below).



David communicated with Cornell and shared this photo of the Godwits with them. They were quite surprised and said, "we are very lucky to see them at all, as they are quite rare!"





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David explained some interesting facts about Chimney Swifts. Chimney Swifts fly almost constantly except when roosting overnight and nesting. When they come to rest, they never sit on perches like most birds. Their long claws are suited only to clinging to the walls of chimneys and other vertical surfaces.



Thank you, David and Ann, for leading another awesome visit at Hornsby Bend and for also sharing your binoculars and an additional coat or two!!

Bird List for Hornsby Bend on April 7, 2018

American Avocet	Grebe	Rock Pigeon
American Widgeon	Green-winged Teal	Ruddy Duck
Barn Swallow	Ibis	Savana Sparrow
Black-bellied Whistling- Duck	Least Sandpiper	Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
Bluebird	Marbled Godwit	Solitary Sandpiper
Blue-winged Teal	Northern Shoveler	Spotted Sandpiper
Chimney Swift	Purple Martin	Turkey Vulture
Cliff Swallow	Red-winged Blackbird	Western Kingbird
Coot	Ring-necked Duck	Yellowlegs
Franklin's Gull	Rock Dove	



The Hornsby Bend Bird Observatory is a program of the Austin Water Utility's Center for Environmental Research at the Hornsby Bend Biosolids Management Plant. The 1,200-acre Hornsby Bend site is located in southeast Austin along 3.5 miles of the Colorado River. The birding checklist at Hornsby Bend includes over 360 species recorded over the years.

For more information on this unique setting, see the Texas Parks and Wildlife video, "Birding in a Natural Wasteland": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DV2g2LUFkx4&feature=youtu.be





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Article by Tom Jones, Photos by Tom Jones & Hiram Perez

Having worked as a hydro-geologist for a decade, I was fortunate to be involved in many significant water related projects. At the start the 2017 MN training class with the



Hiram Perez taking bucket sample in the Blanco River

Nighthawks, one of my early goals was to conduct water quality monitoring in the creeks and rivers surrounding Wimberley. I made a commitment to myself to do my part in improving the environment where I have lived since 2013. By the time I graduated with the Nighthawks, I also completed the AT required to join the Texas Stream Team as a Citizen Scientist.

MN PROJECT 802 Blanco Watershed Water Quality Monitoring

Started in 2008

Project Description:

Monitor the water quality in Hays County watersheds using approved Texas Stream Team methods and reporting.

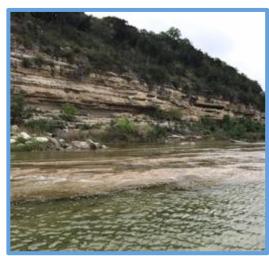


exas Stream Team-Blanco River Watershed Test Kit

Earlier this year I had the opportunity to join Project 802 and meet the goal I set last year. In April, Hiram Perez

and I started monitoring the Blanco River at River Mountain Ranch (RMR) Water Park. Project 802 was started in 2008, after several MN neighbors on Lone Man Creek attended a Watershed Stewardship advanced training and decided to put that information into action. For the past decade they, and other MNs, have been sampling, analyzing and reporting the water quality at several sites on the Blanco River and its tributaries in Hays c=County

This important data allows the Meadows Center and other Texas Agencies to monitor the health of the



Blanco River at RMR Water Park

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PROJECT 802 - Blanco Watershed Water Quality Monitoring



Tom Jones measuring dissolved oxygen



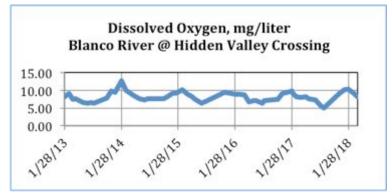


Blanco River and Cypress Creek. This is just another great example of how Master Naturalists impact the communities and counties where they live. The photos below show how water quality sampling and testing is performed on the Blanco River just downstream from the intersection with Lone Man Creek. Hiram and I share our fellow MN water quality monitor's commitment and love of the Hays County watersheds. Typical testing activities performed include:

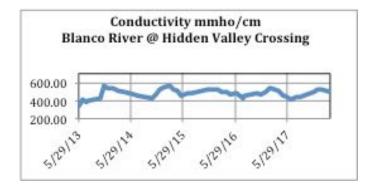
- 1. Obtaining representative water sample, avoiding contamination.
- 2. Measuring water and air temperatures.
- 3. Calibrating conductivity probe and taking measurement.
- 4. Measuring pH on 2 samples to verify accuracy.
- 5. Measuring dissolved oxygen on 2 samples to verify accuracy.
- 6. Making field observation of water clarity, flow and odor.
- 7. Measuring E.coli bacteria level after incubating sample for 28 hrs.



Hiram Perez measuring conductivity



Dissolved Oxygen - Adequate dissolved oxygen (DO) is necessary for good water quality. Oxygen is a necessary element to all forms of life. Natural stream purification processes require adequate oxygen levels in order to provide for aerobic life forms. DO levels in water below 5.0 mg/l stress, aquatic life.



Conductivity-Conductivity is a measure of water's capability to pass electrical flow. This ability is directly related to the concentration of ions in the water. These conductive ions come from dissolved salts and inorganic materials such as alkalis, chlorides, sulfides and carbonate compounds

YOU CAN SEE A MAP OF THE TESTING SITES

https://aqua.meadowscenter.txstate.edu/map.aspx?map=basin18 then zoom into Hays County. Clicking on a red "water droplet" will bring up the data for that site."





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RAPTORS IN THE PARK

Article by Betsy Cross - Photos By Betsy Cross and Tom Hausler



Susan Nenney, Hays County Master Naturalist and Executive Director of Friends of Blue Hole, introduces Ian Joplin and the Last Chance Forever birds of prey to a record crowd of 383 adults and children at Blue Hole in Wimberley on March 31.

The fourth annual Return of the Raptors featured a Harris's Hawk, a Goshawk, a Merlin, a Burrowing Owl, a Black Vulture, a Great Horned Owl, and a Golden Eagle. The mission of Last Chance Forever is to rescue, rehabilitate, and release injured, sick, and orphaned birds of prey. The non-profit conservancy takes in over 200 birds of prey per year. 60-70% of them are returned to the wild.

The impressive Harris's Hawk performed demonstrations, flying freely through the crowd between the two handlers, Ian Joplin and Kelly Raynor, and showing how young raptors are trained to hunt with leather lures that mimic prey animals. "This is a gift of nature to the whole community in a very engaging way. My favorite thing now is to watch the Harris's Hawk swoop in over the heads of unsuspecting first-timers," - Susan Nenney.

- Harris's Hawk -



Goshawk





— Burrowing Owl —

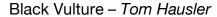






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Great Horned Owl -









Kelly Raynor with Golden Eagle -





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HCMN TPWD Advisor Gordon Linam

"The Chapter was really a groundbreaker from the beginning being the second chapter formed within the state. I have always, and continue, to be amazed at the dedication of its members. I truly believe the HCMN Chapter is the best one in the state and am honored to be associated with it."

GORDON LINAM,

A Partner and Friend of Hays County Master Naturalists from the beginning

Opportunities: June 13, 2000

- Start a prairie restoration at the TP&W fish hatchery in San Marcos. Gordon Linam 353-3480
- Need one to weed flower garden at DeZavala.
 Carol Fernendez 396-4056 Home 393-6265- School
- Help at the John Knox Camp with youth. Chris Holmes 830-935-3214
- Build grape arbor at Extension Office for 3 native grapes.
 Billy Kniffen
- Assist with registration/refreshments at July 22 Wildlife Management Program. Kay Beth Williams 268-2522

Excerpt from a list of HCMN Opportunities List in 2000 Ref: HCMN Historian Documents "Guadalupe Bass/Small Mouth Bass Introduction/Removal"
April 10th, 6:30pm-7:30pm CDT

Gordon Linam

Aquatic Biologist Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

Author of Texas Waters Specialist AT Webinar, 2018

For a audio recording and presentation slides use the link below. Link:

https://tpwd.texas.gov/education/watereducation/texaswatersprogram/texaswaterss pecialist





Blue eye Grass Flower-Eva Frost

Prairie Paintbrush Eva Frost

HCMN VOLUNTEER TIME (VT) 2017 - TOP 10 LIST

RANK	Project (by Site)	Volunteer Hours
1	1 Hays MN Training Committee	
2	Westcave Preserve	1287
3	Wimberley Parks & Recreation (Blue Hole)	1206
4	MN Board Work	1080
5	Jacob's Well	873
6	San Marcos Green Belt Alliance	775
7	Emily Ann Theater & Gardens	768
8	San Marcos Aquatic Resources Center	699
9	Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center	682
10	Wimberley Outdoor Educators	470
	Total	9473

Category	VT	% of 2017 Total
Total VT for Wimberley Projects	3318	24%
Total VT for Counties outside of Hays	1969	14%
Total VT for Training	1632	12%
Total for San Marcos Projects	1474	11%
Total VT for Board Work	1080	8%

6 TAKEAWAYS FROM TOP 10 LIST

- 1. The Top 10 represent 69% of the total VT hours (13,706) for 2017
- 2. Wimberley Projects made up the largest percentage of VT. This includes the Blue Hole, Jacobs Well, Emily Ann Theater & Gardens and Wimberley Outdoor Educators.
- 3. If you want to get a lot of VT join the Board or Training Committee.
- 4. Projects outside of Hays Co. account for 13% of VT. Westcave and Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center are in Travis Co.
- 5. 40 Projects not in the Top 10 accrued 4233 VT hours (31%) in 2017.
- 6. Close but not making the Top 10 List were #11 SM Discovery Center with 391 VT hours and #12 Charro Ranch Park with 379 VT hours



Westcave Preserve - TJ



Wimberley Parks & Recreation (Blue Hole) - TJ





May 2018

HCMN SUPPORTING THE BUTTERFLY FESTIVAL



A Message From Archis Grubh with TPWD

Dear Master Naturalists, I'd like to send a big thank you for your help in sorting the numerous invertebrate samples that I have been bringing in to the TPWD lab. We are done sorting through all the Blanco River and the Colorado River samples.

Which brings me to my next point, I will be getting another wave of samples from the Frio Rio - I need these samples to be picked and sorted quickly because of a fast timeline (deadline is in June/July). The samples will be ready for sorting the 2nd week of May. I will be identifying these inverts once you all are done picking through it. However, I will be away during the three weeks in May.

Alana Stevens is our TPWD Technician who will be assisting you with the samples in the Lab. Please coordinate with her by email (alana.stevens@tpwd.texas.gov) or phone 512-353-3480 Afternoons work the best for her - 1pm-5pm

Below are the preferred dates you can come to the lab: May 9th, 10th, 11th May 16th, 17th





May 2018



PHOTOS BY Eva Frost

White-eyed Vireo





Cute jack bird



May 2018

COMMENTS FROM THE NEWSLETTER TEAM

A few days ago the News Team received this wonderful email.

Hi Betsy and Tom - Just wanted to let you know how much I am enjoying the newsletter. You've certainly sparked it up! I was a member of HCMN from 2007 until 2016 when we moved to Arizona. I think it is a fabulous organization and am so pleased to be able to continue seeing what's happening. Photos are amazing, layout is nice and there seems to be more information in it. There are so many members who are so knowledgeable and willing to share that knowledge that I hope more of them will be submitting articles. Thanks for all your efforts, - Leah Laszewski

Leah brings up a good point about using the Newsletter to keep up with what's happening in the Chapter. Our goal for the Newsletter is to continue improving while expanding the variety of articles, photos and information about the Chapter. To accomplish this, we need Members to join Project 401which can be used for VT contributing to the Newsletter. By sending us photos, experiences and articles on what you are working on we can keep Leah up to date.

MN PROJECT 401 Administrative; Conducting Chapter Activities

Started in 2004

Project Description:

Inform the Newsletter Team of what's happening in Hays Co. This qualifies for VT associated with sending photos, writing articles and hopefully adding your bio.

Participants = all Members

Contacts: Tom Jones

wimberleytom@gmail.com or

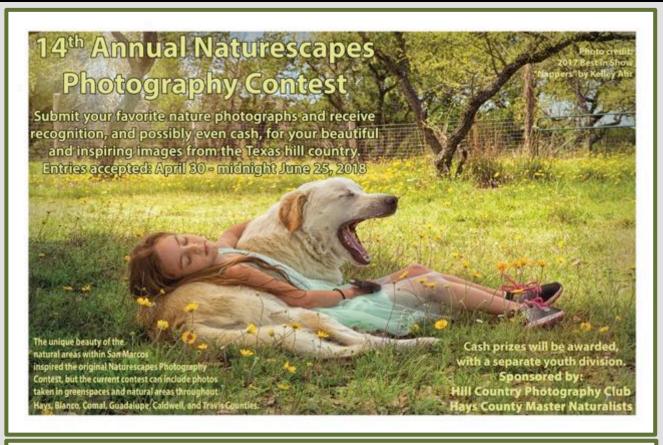
Betsy Cross

mailto:betsy.cross@sbcglobal.net





May 2018



14th Annual Naturescapes Photography Contest and Exhibition

The goals of this exhibition include increasing public awareness of the importance of protecting our natural world, and giving photographers at all levels of experience and all ages a chance to capture, share, and receive recognition for beautiful and inspiring images of our area.

The contest is open to all amateur and professional photographers.

CASH prizes awarded for: Best in Show: \$100.00 Best Youth: \$75.00

Best Natural Waterscape: \$75.00

Up to four \$50.00 Awards of Excellence will also be awarded. Additional Awards of Merit may be presented at the juror's discretion.

Naturescapes Exhibition

San Marcos Activity Center - Walkers Gallery September 8 - October 26, 2018

And the second second

Naturescapes Awards Reception

San Marcos Activity Center

Saturday September 8, 2018, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Rules, entry form, and details at http://naturescapes.hcphotoclub.org

Sponsoring Organizations

The Hill Country Photography Club is an informal group of enthusiastic photographers of all ages and experience who are interested in exploring photography as an art medium. HCPC strives to help members improve their individual styles, and to learn more about the art and science of photography. The club holds monthly meetings, periodic workshops and field trips.

www.hcphotoclub.org

The Hays County Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program is an educational, non-profit, volunteer organization dedicated to developing a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within Hays County.

www.haysmn.org





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TALES FROM THE HISTORIAN

Texas Master Naturalists, Hays County Chapter

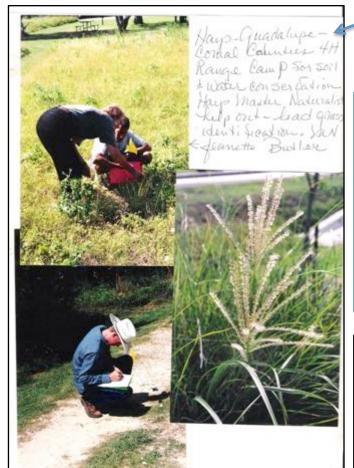


President: Linda Keese
Vice-President: Mark Fernandez
Treasurer: John Duguid
Secretary: Jeanette Butler
DragonFlyer Editor: Sherwood Bishop
Teacher & Guiding Spirit:
Billy Kniffen, CEA-Ag, Hays County
(512) 393-2120

Photo: Master Naturalist
Graduating Class



From the HMN Newsletter "The Dragon Flyer" April 2000.



Summer 1999
Hays-Guadalupe-Comal Counties 414 Range
Camp for soil & water conservation. Hays

Camp for soil & water conservation. Hays Master Naturalist help out – lead grass identification. MN Jeanette Butler



Aquatic Invasive Removal - 2005

Dana Martensen - Chapter Historian

Historian Committee Chair responsibility - a.

Maintain the historical records of the Chapter b.

Historical records include but not limited to: Training classes, projects, recognitions, events, elections, meetings, Chapter scrapbook and Chapter

Newsletter archives c. May assist the Chapter

Secretary





May 2018

CYPRESS CREEK WATERSHED WALK JACOBS WELL NATURAL AREA

WATERSHED WALK SCHEDULE SAT MAY 19 - 10-11:30 am

Contact Tom Jones to Sign Up mailto:wimberleytom@gmail.com
AT Approved





LINK TO WESTCAVE

https://westcave.org/

LINK TO EVENTS & BIRD WALKS

https://westcave.org/events

VOLUNTEER AT WESTCAVE PRESERVE

https://westcave.org/getinvolved/volunteer

HCMN PROJECT CALENDAR REMINDER TO PROJECT LEADERS

Beverly Gordon

The HaysMN Project Calendar is a great way to promote your project and recruit volunteers. There is another fantastic class of HaysMN trainees underway seeking volunteer opportunities. The Calendars are found at the bottom left of haysmn.org. If your project is not already on the Project Calendar, please forward the following information to calendar@haysmn.org:

- Project name and number
- Project date(s)
- · Start and end time
- Location
- Brief Description of work required & equipment needs



LINK TO JWNA WEBSITE:

http://www.co.hays.tx.us/jwna.aspx

FACEBOOK LINK:

https://www.facebook.com/Jacobs WellOfficial/

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

quincy.kennedy@co.hays.tx.us





May 2018



These two blue boys were eating millet in the courtyard late this afternoon. Note the overall blue color, darker wings and bicolored beak. Talon Dancer



This afternoon I heard our first Summer Tanager this year. Of course, he was singing his own praises at top of his lungs — "Hear, hear. I am a pretty bird. You better believe it!". A little later I saw him perched on the trellis in the courtyard checking out the neighborhood and looking for an insect snack/dinner. - Talon Dancer

PHOTOS BY Talon Dancer



FOS Painted Bunting-TD



This male Lazuli Bunting joined the cardinals, finches and sparrows for breakfast in the courtyard this morning. Of course they get their name from the gorgeous shade of almost iridescent blue on their heads. Talon Dancer





May 2018



A hungry Monarch Caterpillar



A happy little pollen covered honey

PHOTOS BY Hope Shimek



Bluebonnets



Got to add the Variegated Fritillary to my photo collection.





May 2018

HAYS MN ON FACEBOOK

Find us, like us, share with us! Click icon for HaysMN Facebook page.



NEWSLETTER

Do you have some awesome photos or want to share a volunteer experience? Let us know! We are looking for interesting items for the newsletter. Contact Tom Jones wimberleytom@gmail.com or Betsy Cross betsy.cross@sbcglobal.net

HAYS MN FORUM

Join the Forum! It's a great way to connect with fellow naturalists, ask questions, and learn from each other. Click the Forum link.

https://groups.google.com/forum/ -!forum/haysmn

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Watch your e-mails for upcoming volunteer opportunities! Check out the Projects Calendar for more information.

http://www.haysmn.org/calendarprojects.html

HAVE YOUR PROJECT ADDED TO THE CALENDAR

Send requests to calendar@haysmn.org

LINKS to Chapter Partners, Program Sponsors, Central Texas Master Naturalist Chapters and Other Sites of Interest

Link: http://www.haysmn.org/links.html

