

T E X A S



# THE HAYS HUMM

NEWSLETTER of the  
HAYS COUNTY CHAPTER  
TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS



*I am at home here, and I want not only to know about my home land, I want to live intelligently on it. I want certain data that will enable me to accommodate myself to it – J. Frank Dobie*

## NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS



Checking the Bird Boxes-Part Three  
B. Cross, Page 6



Birds & Brew - A birding & social event.  
T. Jones, Page 11



HCMN Class of 2018 – Freeman  
Ranch Butterfly Field Exercise  
A. Witkowski, Page 14

## 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 June 14, 6:30pm – 8:30pm  
Where: Agri-Life Extension office  
200 Stillwater Drive Wimberley, TX 78676.

### JUNE CHAPTER MEETING

Thursday, June 28, 6:30 - 8:30 pm  
Freeman Ranch - 2101 Freeman Ranch Rd  
Archis Grubh, TPWD Biologist  
"Stream Water Quality"  
"Benthic Macroinvertebrates as Bioindicators  
of Stream Water Quality"  
Specific Topics:  
"What Are Macroinvertebrates?"  
"General Habitat, Life History, & Adaptation"  
"Collection & Identification Methods"  
"Macroinvertebrates as Bioindicators"

**July 4 Parade:** Opportunity for Fun! pg. 19

**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>

### THANK YOU!

Betsy Cross  
Art Crowe  
Eva Frost  
Joe Halton  
Tom Hausler  
Tom Jones  
Dick McBride

### FOR SHARING YOUR PHOTOS

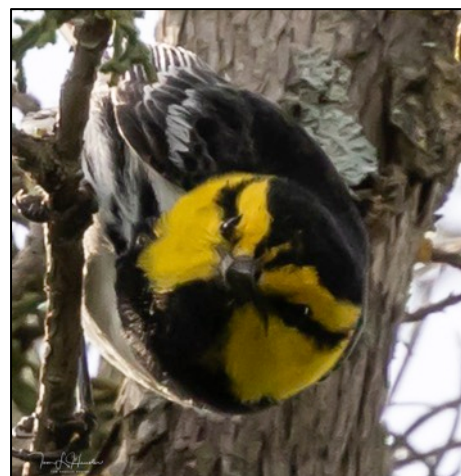


Photo by Tom Hausler





## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE THE IMPORTANCE OF MEASURING YOUR IMPACT ON OUR COMMUNITY

Anne Child



We have now flipped five pages of our 2018 calendars. What has HCMN accomplished so far? A lot! Over 1100 hours of Advanced Training hours have been completed. The Highlights include:

- ❖ Field trips to the Texas Museum of Science & Technology and more recently a trip to Bracken Cave.
- ❖ Chapter meetings where we have learned the impact of Hurricane Harvey on the Whooping Cranes and how to identify spiders by their genitalia.

That's just the chapter events. Many learning opportunities outside the chapter advanced both the knowledge and expertise of our members. So far this year, Hays County Master Naturalists have logged over 6600 hours working on over 40 different volunteer projects. Our work has a deeper impact than just the

hours tallied by our volunteers towards certification... trails and gardens maintained, aquatic bugs counted, visitors informed, thousands of butterflies released, plus, of course a new class half way through training and administrative needs met.

All of this information is important to capture... not only your hours but also the people and places impacted by your efforts. Impact Data should only be reported by one person involved with that particular activity. This is typically the project lead but in the absence of a lead, one of the volunteers present should let the others know that they will take care of it.

What to report? You've seen the tickler questions when you submit your hours. If you select "Yes" then the appropriate follow-on questions are presented for your responses. If it makes your data collection easier, print out the attached table of the impact questions to have handy at your events.

Here are a couple of tips.

1. The "attendees" in the first question are non-Master Naturalist participants. How many people were reached with your presentation or joined the workday. Even if these are the same people time after time, count them. Please do collect the demographics of the attendees.
2. Note that the questions about acreage and miles say "new." If those trails or acres were previously reported as being impacted, even in prior years, do not enter them again.

As of this writing, we have impacted 173 acres and 0.75 miles of new trails. We have reached 866 Adults and 920 Youth. 601 were attributed to being Male and 682 Female. The ethnicity counts reported are 806 White, 25 Black, 192 Hispanic, 44 Asian, and zero American Indian.



By taking time to add these data, important information is provided to Texas Master Naturalist Program funders. The state office is funded through a federal grant from the Pittman-Robertson Act. Originally the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937, it authorizes excise taxes on selected hunting and sporting equipment to fund Wildlife Restoration, Multistate Conservation, Wetlands Conservation and Firearm and Bow Hunter Education and Safety programs. When we collect demographic, acreage and trail mileage data, it helps Texas Parks and Wildlife, Texas Agri-Life Extension, and the federal administration know who and what has been impacted and show that these funds are being used accountably and effectively.

In another five months, this year’s class will be completed. Most of you will have enjoyed more time training and contributing to projects in our community. You will have removed countless invasives, improved the quality of our parks, and inspired hundreds of more people to appreciate their responsibility for preserving nature.

**Keep up the great work and remember to report your hours and your impact. ;-)**

|  |
|--|
| Do you have impact data to add to the opportunity?               |
| Please complete the following for the number of attendees:       |
| Adult:   |
| Youth:   |
| Male:  |
| Female:  |
| White:   |
| Black:   |
| Hispanic:  |
| Asian:   |
| American Indian:   |
| Do you have <b>new</b> acreage to report?                        |
| Total new acreage impacted during this event:                    |
| Do you have <b>new</b> trail miles to report?                    |
| Total new trail miles maintained or developed during this event: |





## MEET YOUR MASTER NATURALISTS



### Dick McBride

**About Myself:** Dick McBride grew up in Waukegan, Illinois graduating from the U. of Illinois with a Pedodontic certificate and received an Orthodontic certificate from U. of Missouri, Kansas City. He is currently a member of the US Army retired reserve. His civilian work included Orthodontic practice for 30 years in Lawton OK. Dick certified as a Master Naturalist in 2010 with the “Prickly Pears.” He has a long history with the HCMN Training Team working with the Training committee from 2011-2015 and he was Training Coordinator from 2014-2015. Dick is currently a member of the Training Committee

**You May Not Know:** In 2016 I cruised the Northeast Passage (11 time zones) in a Russian icebreaker from Siberia across to Svalberg, the Norwegian governed archipelago. In addition, I visited Murmansk, the home of the Russian Northern Fleet.

**FAV Master Naturalist Activity:** I’ve never met a project I didn’t like but my primary ones are trail work with the San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance, prairie restoration with the Austin Water Quality Lands and development of the 31 acres of land recently acquired by the San Marcos River Foundation.



### Tom Hausler

**About Myself:** I became a Hays County Master Naturalist in 2007, class of the Madrones. I have been active the last eleven years, serving as VP, head of committees, project leader, training committee and volunteering. My current projects include Jacob’s Well, Charro Ranch, Westcave Preserve and Balcones Canyonlands. I was honored in 2012 and 2014 as Outstanding Chapter Volunteer and in 2017 as Westcave Preserve Volunteer of the year.

**You May Not Know:** I grew up in the Texas Panhandle, mainly outdoors; my back yard was one

square mile. My current life pursuit is nature, wildlife and bird photography, which fits perfectly with my love of the outdoors.

**FAV Master Naturalist Activity:** My favorite activity is bird watching. This year I have focused on the Golden-cheeked Warbler. I have been very lucky and photographed many in their natural habitat.



March 24

### Circle of Life

Every week I walk the Bluebird Trail at Jacobs Well documenting the nest box activity at each of the nine bird boxes. All five Eastern Bluebird young fledged from Box 1 (pictured above in title photo) the week of April 14.



March 31



April 6



April 13



First Brood of Juvenile Bluebirds at Jacobs Well – May 12





In addition to the Eastern Bluebirds, four boxes of Black-crested Titmice and two boxes of Ash-throated Flycatchers have produced young. Here's a sampler along with a summary of activity in all nine boxes:

Black-crested Titmouse – Box 4



Ash-throated Flycatcher – Box 8



May Summary of All Boxes

| Box 1                        | Box 2                  | Box 3 | Box 4                  | Box 5                  | Box 6                   | Box 7                         | Box 8                   | Box 9                  |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Eastern Bluebird             | Black-crested Titmouse | Empty | Black-crested Titmouse | Black-crested Titmouse | Ash-throated Flycatcher | Black-crested Titmouse        | Ash-throated Flycatcher | Full Nest – Maybe Wren |
| 5 young fledged              | 5 fledglings in nest   |       | 6 young fledged        | 4 hatchlings in nest   | 4 young fledged         | 3 young fledged               | 6 young fledged         | No eggs, no young      |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> nest, 5 eggs |                        |       |                        |                        |                         | 2 <sup>nd</sup> nest, no eggs |                         |                        |

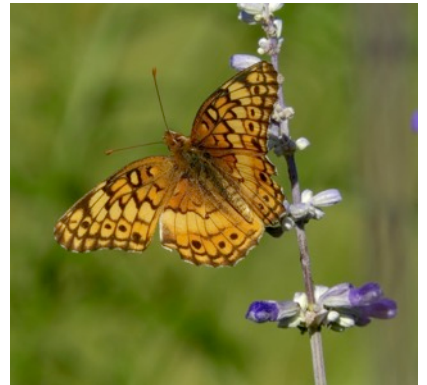
It takes about two hours to make the full circuit now when I check all the boxes - that is if I don't get distracted taking photos of turtles, frogs, lizards, armadillos, deer and the numerous species of birds and butterflies. Sometimes I find myself making repeat round trips just to get another look at the Ladder-backed Woodpeckers in the dead tree along the path or chasing a pair of Summer Tanagers through the ash juniper or returning to see if the Lesser Goldfinches and the House Finches are still munching on the mealy blue sage or checking to see if the male bluebird has returned to Box 1 to feed its five nestlings. I love to visit "The Well" early in the morning before the crowd arrives in hopes of catching a glimpse of the Canyon Wren that lives in the rock outcroppings and to hear its incredibly beautiful cascading melody.

In three short months I have come to know this property. It is constantly changing and revealing its latest surprises. And each week when I return home to organize my photos and documentation, I look forward to walking the boxes again to see what is new and beautiful in this Circle of Life.





Images at Jacobs Well Natural Area







SPRING BIRDING IN THE HILL COUNTRY



Black and White Warbler - Male



Nashville Warbler

Every year Joe Halton comes back to Texas to visit his sister, Bonnie Tull, and photograph the diverse bird population in her yard during the spring migration. Bonnie and Joe share a love of birds. They are deeply dedicated to attracting and documenting the migrants that make their way into Bonnie’s backyard wild-escape. In an effort to photograph and identify as many spring migrants as possible, Joe will shoot well over



1,000 photos – it's a tradition that has evolved over 15 years. Thanks to Joe and Bonnie for sharing these stunning photographs that Joe took during his visit at the end of April.

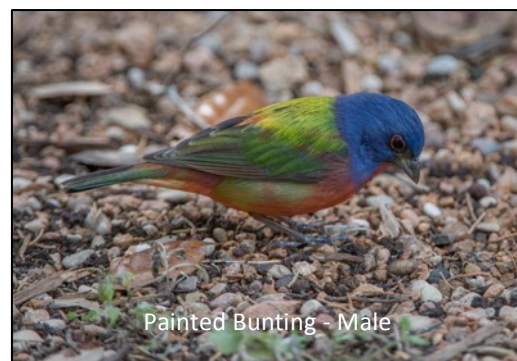
Joe, a native Texan, moved to Washington state in 2001 to escape the sultry Texas summers. With the help and support of his wife, he turned his backyard into a bird sanctuary. Birds are naturally drawn to the perimeter of their home from a greenbelt adjacent to their property. But to attract more birds directly into their viewing space, Joe designed a watercourse, constructed of native rock and circulating water, which runs like a natural stream through his carefully crafted yard. He uses natural props and perches to coax unsuspecting subjects into positions where they are more easily photographed. With the sun at his back, he is always ready to digitally capture the next colorful visitor in this strategic landscape. The result is an expansive library of extraordinary bird photographs and stories, which Joe shares with friends and followers on his personal blog. Joe has taught birding classes for Skagit Audubon Society and Anacortes Senior College and beginning photography and a memoir-writing class for Anacortes Senior College. Visit his blog at <http://www.wingsoverskagit.com/>.



Summer Tanager - Male

Bonnie Tull is a Hays County Master Naturalist and is Project Coordinator for Project 702: Bluebird Nestbox Monitoring. Bonnie regularly contributes stories, photographs, and expertise to our chapter via the newsletter and the Forum and through demonstrations at various events. She focuses on creating and maintaining birding habitat for maximum viewing pleasure.

**Photos by Joe Halton**  
**Article by Betsy Cross**



Painted Bunting - Male





BIRDS & BREW - BIRDING & SOCIAL EVENT



Article & photos by Tom Jones



Chimney Swift tower stop on uplands trail.

HCMNs attended the Westcave Preserve Birds & Brew, a birding and social event. This AT activity combined an evening Bird Walk with a social event. It was held Saturday May 5<sup>th</sup> at Westcave Preserve. I attended with my wife and HCMNs Chris & Mike Rambo. The weather was perfect. It was a clear cool evening after a much needed rain the previous day. First was the social, held in a pot-luck style and BYOB. As the sunset approached, we headed to the Uplands Trail under the guide of Paul Fushille.



Amber Gosselin & Paul Fushille

**Amber Gosselin**-Conservation Director Westcave Outdoor Discovery Center

**Paul Fushille** is a Natural Resources Specialist, focusing on the natural resource and preserve management of Travis County's over 11,000 acres of Balcones Canyonlands Preserve as well as the County's numerous parks. He currently chairs the Westcave Conservation Committee and is a Commissioner on the Dripping Springs Parks and Recreation Committee. He also is a member of the Travis Audubon Sanctuary Committee focusing on Blair Woods Preserve. Paul has been an avid bird-watcher since a teenager.



At the Murphy Bird Blind on the Uplands Trail

An expert birder, Paul was an excellent guide. He started identifying and finding birds immediately and continued non-stop for the next hour. Memorable stops included the Murphy Bird Blind, which was active with late evening birds, and listening to the baby owls inside the tree mounted box.



Tree mounted owl box

Back to the east patio of the Environmental Learning Center for a quick recharge of food and drink. We then took off down the Heinze Branch canyon trail. It was especially beautiful in the bright low sun angle. Very quickly Paul pointed out the location of the Golden-cheeked Warbler nest that was shown in the May newsletter. Some of the walkers were even treated views of the GCWA. A good time was reported by all. This is an innovative approach to bird walks and the next one is scheduled in the Fall. The most fun Advanced Training I have earned.



HCMN Mike & Chris Rambo (back) and my wife Shellie taking in the social scene.



Canyon Trail at sunset





**WESTCAVE BIRDS AND BREW - BIRD LIST**

|   |                         |                             |                         |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Golden-cheeked Warbler (including banded female tending to young) | Ash-throated Flycatcher | Yellow-throated Vireo       | Indigo Bunting          |
| Lesser Goldfinch  | White-winged Dove       | Turkey Vulture              | Grey Catbird            |
| Cedar Waxwing   | Eastern Phoebe          | Black Vulture               | Northern Parula         |
| Blue-grey Gnatcatcher   | Lark Sparrow            | Summer Tanager              | Black-and-white Warbler |
| Chimney Swift   | Northern Cardinal       | Red-eyed Vireo              | Chuck-will's Widow      |
| Bewick's Wren   | Blue Grosbeak           | Carolina Wren               | Canyon Wren             |
| Field Sparrow   | Rufous-crowned Sparrow  | Brown-headed Cowbird        |                         |
| Black-chinned Hummingbird   | Carolina Chickadee      | Barred Owl (2 counterings!) |                         |

**ABOUT WESTCAVE PRESERVE**

Founded in 1976 as Westcave Preserve, the mission of Westcave Outdoor Discovery Center is to inspire people to develop a lifelong practice of enjoying and protecting nature. We accomplish this through educational programs, collaborative alliances, and conservation of our beautiful 76-acre preserve.

While many places offer opportunities for self-led nature activities, Westcave has dedicated staff who partner with schools to teach 6,000 students annually. Students learn key scientific concepts in the best classroom of all: our 75-acre preserve in Southwest Travis County and our nationally renowned Warren Skaaren Environmental Learning Center.

At our preserve, you not only witness a place of extraordinary beauty, you observe a living laboratory. You walk through hundreds of thousands of years of geologic formations as you hike to the bottom of the canyon. And at the head of our canyon is a lush, wet grotto where you can see with your own eyes how the water cycle works.

Our preserve is located in Southwest Travis County, one of the fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the country. Protecting this beautiful land, which is home to the endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler and attracts birders from all over the world, has become more important than ever.

**LINK TO WESTCAVE**

<https://westcave.org/>





## HCMN Class of 2018 – Freeman Ranch Butterfly Field Exercise with Dr. Chris Nice

*Article by Andy Witkowski, Photos by Betsy Cross*

On a perfect early May morning following a generous rain from the night before, The Hays County Master Naturalist class met at the Texas States' Freeman Ranch to meet up with Dr. Chris Nice, Ph.D. for a talk on Insects and Butterflies. While Dr. Nice was quick to point out he is not an Entomologist, as a Geneticist his work focuses on evolutionary genetics and ecology in a variety of species but mostly butterflies. He has projects that work with endemic species of butterflies, which are threatened or endangered.



After a whirlwind indoor presentation regarding taxonomic classification, parasitism, life cycles and other critical background information on biological identification, the class moved out to the pasture with guidebooks and butterfly nets in hand.

Dr. Nice encouraged that we handle the Butterflies; a common myth being that the powdery dust from their wings is needed in order to fly, but doesn't hurt the specimen one bit.



Queen Butterfly



Sulfur Butterfly



Though the class was unable to catch a male Pipevine Swallowtail, Dr. Nice talked at length about these special creatures. Standing over a small clump of Pipevine identified in the pasture, he talked of the declining population of this specific type of pipevine endemic to the Hill Country (Having a problem identifying the Pipevine? Just follow a female Pipevine Swallowtail and she will ID it for you). Our Pipevine Swallowtail is able to sequester chemicals out of the plant, which are highly poisonous to humans and other critters. The sunny day allowed for a beautiful display of the refracted blues which make this particular butterfly a favorite and easily identifiable.



Pipevine Swallowtail



Butterflies on the road to Freeman Ranch

**Butterflies Identified May 5th, 2018, Pasture 1,  
Freeman's Ranch San Marcos Texas.**

- |                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Orange Sulfur        | Monarch-Male          |
| Southern Dogface     | Queen                 |
| Pipevine Swallowtail | Variegated fritillary |
| Red Admiral          | Goat weed leaf wing   |
| Eastern Painted Lady |                       |





**HCMNS HELP BUILD NEW TRAIL IN TOWN  
EMILY ANN THEATRE & GARDENS**

*Art Crowe*

Take a short walk to the best view In Wimberley! There’s a new walking trail in town, one that has a view. Take RR2325 to the back entrance of the Emily Ann Theatre and Garden where there are parking spaces for four to five vehicles. Enter the trail at the Master Naturalist sign and hike 0.1 miles to the overlook where there is a working view scope. Look South to Devil’s Backbone; look north to Lone Man Mountain, Lone Woman Mountain and Old Baldy. Take a switchback to the parking lot or hook up with other existing trails that wind throughout the garden. Thanks to Master Naturalists Mike and Chris Rambo, and Jeremy Smith who have worked on cutting cedar for the trail as well as planting wildflowers and antelope horn milkweed along the trail.



Emily Ann - New Trail



Emily Ann Trail overlook platform and telescope. One of the Little Twin Sisters in the background

**MN PROJECT 602RM  
Natural Resource  
Management**

**Emily Ann Theatre and  
Gardens, North Prairie**

**Project Description:**

Building and maintaining the trail, along with building and maintaining a pollinator garden that will be immediately adjacent to the new greenhouse

**HCMN Contact:**

Art Crowe      903-253-5794





Summer Solstice at Westcave Preserve Environmental Learning Center

**WELCOME TO SUMMER!**

**Eva Frost**





# Master Naturalists Tour The Headwaters At The Comal

Article & photos by T. Jones

Jeri Porter (CAMN) organized a May 17<sup>th</sup> field trip to the Headwaters at the Comal. I attended along with other HCMNs. Although I have spent a lot of time in or on the Comal River, I had never visited the headwaters. Upon arriving for our morning tour, we were greeted by our guide, Lauren Strack. She led the tour, which included the headwaters of the Comal Springs, the original water source for New Braunfels and a unique riparian habitat. The 16-acre site was used by New Braunfels Utilities (NBU) as a warehouse and facilities yard from 1940 until 2004. The site is being restored and is a living demonstration of sustainable practices.



**CAMN**

Jeri Porter

**HCMNs**

- Martha Barchfeld
- Linda Lang
- Deb Bradshaw
- Nancy Russell
- Donna Browning
- Christine Middleton
- Marilyn Brister
- Tom Jones

**Also attending**

Tanya Davison



Contact 830.608.8937

<https://www.headwatersatthecomal.com/>







## Opportunity for FUN! Wimberley 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade

**Wed. July 4 – 10am**

Be a part of the award winning HCMN Kazoo Band in the Wimberley 4th of July Parade! It's that time again and our HCMN chapter is participating. Chapter members will walk in the parade and play kazoos. We have had tons of fun doing this in the past. It increases our visibility in the community, and you even get volunteer time for being a part of this event!! As an added bonus this year, anyone in the parade will be given a free "T" shirt. Wear a fun sun hat, too.

For More Information contact:

**Dana Martensen**

[lapin@homie.net](mailto:lapin@homie.net) - text (415) 244 - 1987



### LINK TO WESTCAVE

<https://westcave.org/>

### LINK TO EVENTS & BIRD WALKS

<https://westcave.org/events>

### VOLUNTEER AT WESTCAVE PRESERVE

<https://westcave.org/get-involved/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](http://haysmn.org). If your project is not already on the Project Calendar, please forward the following information to [calendar@haysmn.org](mailto: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/JacobsWellOfficial/>

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

[quincy.kennedy@co.hays.tx.us](mailto:quincy.kennedy@co.hays.tx.us)



## 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](mailto:wimberleytom@gmail.com) or Betsy Cross [betsy.cross@sbcglobal.net](mailto: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/calendar-projects.html>

## HAVE YOUR PROJECT ADDED TO THE CALENDAR

Send requests to [calendar@haysmn.org](mailto: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>



Blanco River near Wimberley – T. Jones