



Barbara Stidham

## RIVERSIDE NATURE NOTES

### *From the Director*

Jeanne and George West were among the original creators and visionaries when RNC was just a dream. George died a couple of years ago, and now, after many years in Kerrville, Jeanne is moving to Austin. The Board of Directors wants to honor Jeanne as she starts a new chapter.

#### *Tribute to Jeanne West*

Jeanne West remembers the Riverside Nature Center's first days, when there was bamboo everywhere. Some of her friends told her she was wasting her time with that "trash heap over there". Jeanne told her friends that they needed to look at the property, not for what it is, but for what it can be.

Jeanne says that there were times when it was hard to envision the future. "I knew we had to have a Visitor Center but I couldn't see it. There was an old house on the place and I knew that until the old house was gone we could not go forward." Then a wonderful thing happened. As Jeanne and a group of the other original visionaries were standing in front of the old house, a fellow in a pick-up drove up, got out of his truck, and asked "do you want to sell that old house?" Jeanne immediately said "Yes, would you like to see it?" Susan Sander started leading him off to see the house and Jeanne ran after them, wanting to make sure the man would be sold on the building. After the tour the man made an offer, and Jeanne knew her dream was meant to be.

Once the old house was gone and the space opened up, Jeanne said she could "see the future, Visitor Center and all". In fact, "the whole community saw the place in a different way. So many people got involved to make it a better place." Jeanne says she has been pleased to see the progress, the changes over the years. "It has grown with the community and changed as it needed to change. But one thing has remained the same; education is still the primary purpose of the Riverside Nature Center, as it should be."

"Lucky Austin!" say Ann and Jim Laughlin who wish Jeanne the very best in her move from Kerrville to Austin. In fact, we all do. Jeanne has been a good friend to RNC for many years: serving on boards, planning for our growth and supporting us with donations. At the same time she has contributed to many other community activities. Jeanne will be missed.



## *River Clean Up*

The Upper Guadalupe River Authority has scheduled the 8th annual River Clean Up for Saturday, July 23, 2011. The Clean Up will be staged at one central location, Louise Hays Park in Kerrville. Volunteers will have the option of arriving at Louise Hays Park at 8:00 am for registration, instructions, and assignments, or you may pre register (before July 15th). If you choose to pre register, you can go directly to your assigned Clean Up location on the morning of the 23rd.

All volunteers should return to Louise Hays Park with their trash by 11:00 am for refreshments and the distribution of awards for the most unusual item and the biggest item. Additional garbage drop off locations will be at the Ingram Boat Ramp, Guadalupe Park, Flat Rock Park, and the Center Point Dam. All participants will be entered into a raffle for prizes and the first 100 pre registered volunteers will receive an official 8<sup>th</sup> Annual River Clean Up T-shirt. Additional t-shirts will be given away on a first come basis the morning of the clean up. Even though the Clean Up is being staged at one location this year, we anticipate that volunteers will spread out to clean up locations throughout Kerr County. Please see directions to Louise Hays park below.

### **What should you bring to the River Clean Up?**

Although the River Clean Up is a lot of fun, it is also hard work and you should plan accordingly. Wear a hat and light weight clothing to protect yourself from the heat and drink plenty of water to stay hydrated. Wear leather work gloves. UGRA will have a limited quantity of work gloves available for volunteers to borrow, but please bring your own if you can. Wear clothing and shoes that are appropriate for getting wet and dirty. Also, protect yourself from the sun and bugs by applying sunscreen and insect repellent as needed.

Groups and individuals are invited to participate in the River Clean Up. The Alamo Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America has selected the River Clean Up to be a part of its "Good Turn for America" program. The Good Turn for America Program is a national call to service by the Boy Scouts designed to improve young people, local communities and the nation.

As part of its "Keep Texas Beautiful" program, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality is providing supplies to aid in the Clean Up. Supplies are also provided by American Rivers.

The first River Clean Up Day took place on Saturday August 14, 2004 and was a tremendous success thanks to all the volunteers that turned out in full force. You can see photos and read about the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual River Clean Up held on July 24, 2010 at [www.ugra.org](http://www.ugra.org).

*If you have any questions, please contact...*

**Tara Bushnoe** at (830) 896-5445 or [tbushnoe@ugra.org](mailto:tbushnoe@ugra.org) or

**Travis Linscomb** at (830) 896-5445 or [tlinscomb@ugra.org](mailto:tlinscomb@ugra.org)

UGRA Annual River Clean Up  
July 23, 2011



# COMING EVENTS



## Riverside Nature Center

[www.riversidenaturecenter.org](http://www.riversidenaturecenter.org)

### Celebrating BIRDS in 2011 the "Year of the Bird"

#### JUNE

**14<sup>th</sup> Brown Bag Lunch and Learn; 11:30-12:45** presented by Jan Fulkerson, the program will be the "hot" topic of the day, Wildfire. Jan is with the Texas Forest Service, Wildfire Preparedness. With Texas burning all around us we can all use information on how to prevent wildfires and how to prepare to deal with them as well. FREE public service program.

#### JULY

**11<sup>th</sup> Outdoor Adventure Day Camp** for children entering 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade. July 11 through 15 enjoy the great outdoors in this licensed day camp. Campout, cookout, swim, and learn new outdoor skills such as orienteering. For more information and registration forms please call 257-4837. Must reserve your place before July 1<sup>st</sup>. \$160

#### SEPTEMBER

**TBA Annual Meeting and Volunteer Appreciation Event** - Watch for the date to be announced for this important members only annual event. September is the month for all RNC members and volunteers to come together and celebrate the year's accomplishments, elect Board members and officers, and **EAT! FREE**

**30<sup>th</sup> "Members Only Plant Sale" 5:00 – 6:30 PM** The huge native plant sale open to the public on October 1<sup>st</sup> will be open exclusively for members the evening before the big event. Not a member? JOIN so you can take advantage of our members only Down by the Riverside Fall Festival and Native Plant Sale pre-sale. Get your native plants while the selection is at its best! For membership information call 830-257-4837 or visit us on the web at [www.riversidenaturecenter.org](http://www.riversidenaturecenter.org)



## Coming events continued

### OCTOBER

**1<sup>st</sup> Down by the Riverside Fall Festival and Native Plant Sale-** Come enjoy the Hill Country's most popular Fall Festival. Select your fall trees and shrubs at our native plant sale; attend seminars on rainwater harvesting and on our local birds of prey; enjoy the family oriented activities, educational displays and more. **FREE admission**

**13<sup>th</sup> Under the Harvest Moon-An Enchanted Night-** Enjoy the beauty of the fall in the serene setting of the Riverside Nature Center's grounds under the light of the Harvest Moon. Wine and cheese will be served while Kevin McCormick fills the night with music. Put this special enchanted night on your calendar. Tickets on sale June 20<sup>th</sup>.



## VOLUNTEER VINE FOR NEWS AND NEEDS



Peggy Sechrist

Rain is coming! We just don't know when. We do know that weather patterns shift and one day rainfall will return. When it does, we have several new demonstration beds we are anxious to prepare and plant. There will be a caliche bed, a native medicinal plant bed, and a few other areas to be planted. We need volunteers to sign up for these projects so we'll be ready to act when the time comes. If you are interested, please call and leave your name.

One of the ways to meet our Mission, is to take educational programs out into the community. This has been done before; and we think it might be a good time to do it again. So we are developing a Community Outreach program and updating information. We need volunteers who like to do public speaking to help us develop talks and presentations that we can offer to civic groups, schools, churches, and any organization that would like to learn more about our natural resources. If this sounds fun and interesting to you, please give us a call.

Not surprisingly, we can always use more help with upkeep and maintenance. A small crew is usually here on Thurs mornings. If you have a few hours to join us, we would appreciate your presence.

One last request. When you contribute volunteer time, please remember to sign in and record your volunteer hours. This is important to us and helpful with fund raising. We have such an amazing volunteer family, we want to have a record of all that you contribute.

Peggy Sechrist  
Volunteer Coordinator



# Notes From The Meadow

## ***MORE THAN A DRY SPELL***

***By Pat Perkison***

Texas is being scorched by the worst drought in 50 years. The extension service has reported that Texas has experienced eight droughts in the last 13 years. It said the 2011 drought could become the worst ever. With little rain, unusually high temperatures and relentless high wind, Central Texas is now in the extreme to exceptional drought level. Our area is classified as semi-arid but the entire region is now suffering through a drought nearly as punishing as some of the world's driest deserts. Conditions are likely to deteriorate further. The weather service indicates that drought is likely to persist or intensify in Texas.

Soil moisture is very low and evaporation rates are high. This does not bode well for water levels, plants and the animals that depend on those plants. Much of Texas is "bone dry" with scarcely any moisture to be found in the top layers of the soil. The grass crunches underfoot, and plants that are not adapted are dying. But there is a silver lining in that far off cloud!

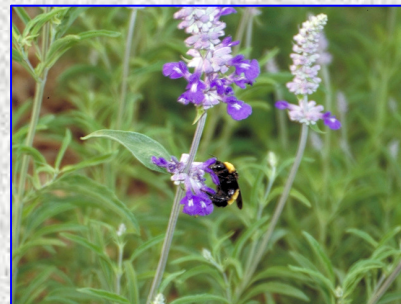
Native wildflowers and other native plants are actually surviving in the meadow. Others are dormant and will appear *when* (being optimistic) the rain does come. Drought tolerant plants survive long periods without moisture by storing water internally or by developing extensive root systems that sink deep into the soil. Some have additional protection through a waxy coating that reduces evaporation or hairs on the leaf surface that reflect light, insulating the plant. (Texas white poppy)

In the meadow, you can find a new appreciation for the plants that are surviving and even blooming under such challenging circumstances. Look for: Texas white poppy, Texas greeneyes, Mealy Blue Sage, Standing Cypress, Snake Herb and Mexican hat. These wildflowers do much more than add beauty to a bleak landscape. They help conserve water, provide habitat for birds, butterflies and other wildlife and are beautiful!

You can see Texas greeneyes, which is sometimes called Broochflower. It is in the Aster family and gets its name from the vivid green center. You will easily recognize the hardy perennial, Mealy blue sage. This plant is adapted to limestone based soil, is actually deer resistant, aromatic and provides nectar for butterflies and hummingbirds. Native plants are the silver lining. As Lady Bird Johnson said, "Native plants give us a sense of where we are in this great land of ours", and should give us renewed appreciation for their tenacity and adaptive qualities.



Texas Greeneyes



Mealy Blue Sage



## Gift Shop Gab

The Gift Shop at RNC had good sales during our Wine Share Event. We now have the Magic T-shirts in adult sizes. We will also be receiving a new shipment of RNC T-Shirts with our Heron and Moon logo in June. Numerous new toys and nature items for kids have been added to our inventory. We also have received some Tejas Hummingbird Feeders in 16 oz and 32 oz sizes. Please check out the shop for gifts for friends and family.

## Free Firewood

Recently we had several of our dead trees cut down. They were cut up and stacked along the back side of our parking lot close to our maintenance shed. If you want some free firewood, come by and take what you need. Some large pieces may need to be split to be usable for firewood.

**We now have the capability to accept donations and membership fees on-line at our website. You can submit your secure payment through your PayPal account or with a Credit Card. Visit our website at [www.riversidenaturecenter.org](http://www.riversidenaturecenter.org) for further information.**

Cut



RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER

## RNCA Membership Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Personal Levels

- ◇ Individual \$ 35.00
- ◇ Family 50.00
- ◇ Friend 100.00
- ◇ Supporter 250.00
- ◇ Sustaining 500.00
- ◇ Benefactor 750.00
- ◇ Patron 1,000.00

Please return to: Riverside Nature Center Association, 150 Francisco Lemos Street, Kerrville, TX 78028

Phone 830/257-4837

email: [office@riversidenaturecenter.org](mailto:office@riversidenaturecenter.org)



Susan Sander

## Summer Reading by Susan Sander

Summer is a great time to slow down and take a vacation, and explore, even if it's through a book. So here are a few suggestions for those inclined to dig deeper into the natural history of the world around us. My reading tastes are eclectic and I love to find books that give my brain cells a chance to rethink and finally come to understand how something came together/works.

Drought is one of those reality checks that confront Texans on a frequent basis and this year is challenging us on how we think about water or its seeming lack. Yet author Charles Fishman points out in his book, **The Big Thirst**, "Scientists don't agree on the precise age of the water on earth, but it's certainly 4.3 or 4.4 or 4.5 billion years old. It's one of the more astonishing things about water – all the water on Earth was delivered here when Earth was formed, or shortly thereafter. The water around us is original equipment.....there is no mechanism on Earth for creating or destroying large quantities of water. What we've got is what's been here, literally forever." Unlike all the other substances that we mine or drill for, water can be constantly be "recycled" without losing its fundamental properties of being H<sub>2</sub>O. And that's the good thing. The big problem for humans is, we use it faster than it can naturally recycle (in the quantity and quality we want) and it tends to not always be where we want it, when we want it. We aren't running out of water, it's stored all over the planet and in cities that includes the vast network of pipes and our own bodies. Fishman relates how Las Vegas has totally rethought its use of water in the past 14 years, taking into account, literally, all the water hidden places and uses in the city, and finding new ways to re-use the allotment they have from Lake Mead. The biggest problem that Fishman sees in the US is our ambivalence about water, how the water cycle works and what our role is in it. It's been free for so long that we don't treat as the most essential natural resource we need. (I'm only half into the book so you'll have to read it yourself.)

And droughts mean dust, lots of it, not to mention the occasional smoke and dust even volcanic ash that gets into our lungs and eyes to challenge our lungs and scratch our vision. For a history of the Dust Bowl and its impacts in the Panhandle region of Texas and Oklahoma there's Timothy Egan's history, "**The Worse of Hard Times**," and Elmer Kelton's novel, "**The Time it Never Rained**" (about the Texas drought of record, 1950s) But if you want the everyday view, then you must read Hannah Holmes', "**The Secret Life of Dust: From the Cosmos to the Kitchen Counter, the Big Consequences of Little Things**." As a science writer Holmes explores the ceaseless movement of particles as part of the planet's lungs. The fires of west Texas and northern Mexico and Iceland's volcanoes prove that when it comes to air borne particles there are no borders.

# RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER

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**We're on the Web**  
[www.riversidenaturecenter.org](http://www.riversidenaturecenter.org)

Dedicated to appreciation of the Texas Hill Country education, information, and example

Change Service Requested



## **Board of Directors**

### **Officers:**

**Jack Millikan, MBA—President**  
**Judy Ferguson, MA—Vice President**  
**Gloria Olsen, PHD — Past President**  
**Fane Downs, PHD—Secretary**  
**Taylor Scogin, CPA—Treasurer**

### **Board Members :**

**Kathleen Boyce, RN**  
**Greg Hayes**  
**John Quinby**

## **Facts and Figures (May)**

<b>New Members</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Rentals</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Rental Income</b>	<b>\$ 550</b>
<b>Donations</b>	<b>\$ 2,315</b>
<b>RNC Programs</b>	<b>\$ 190</b>
<b>School Programs</b>	<b>\$ 380</b>
<b>Girl Scouts</b>	<b>\$ 897</b>

# Welcome

## **New Members of RNC (May)**

**Barbara Bryan**

**Kevin & June Hartley**

**Pam & Glenn Johnson**

**Danette Vines**

**Paul & Patty Zohlen**