



Barbara Stidham

Riverside Nature Notes

From the Director

STEWARDSHIP

The word "stewardship", in our mission, implies consciously doing something; taking care of something. "Developing stewardship" further implies changing behavior. So, according to our mission, we want to change behavior through education. This is our primary objective, "for more people to practice stewardship of our natural resources by giving them good information, education, and examples. In a effort to accomplish our mission, over the course of the next year, we will expand our rainwater harvesting capacity, install a variety of new demonstration gardens, and install modern interactive, educational, and internet based models and displays.

With rainwater harvesting and additional demonstration gardens we will develop new educational exhibits, new curriculum and lesson plans that include exciting age appropriate activities to demonstrate and reinforce the lesson. For children our plan is to focus primarily on the fact that we can't make more water. There is not an endless supply of water flowing through the taps where they drink, shower, and brush every day. All the water there is, is already here (in the aquifers, clouds, oceans, etc.). Once they understand this concept, children of all ages can learn the importance of using water wisely and how "harvesting" rainwater for plants, animals and humans is a wise choice.

The issue of water conservation will be further addressed by adding additional demonstration gardens. Approximately 80% of the water used by a typical family goes on the yard. Therefore, the most effective way for a family to conserve water is by using native plants in the landscape. And children love to garden. Children will learn that gardens can be used in different ways and serve purposes beyond looking good in the yard or growing vegetables. For example, a rain garden will catch water and help recharge the aquifer; upright plants direct water into the ground; some plants thrive in our caliche soil. We will build these gardens to demonstrate these facts. Age appropriate lessons will be developed that teach the important aspects of each garden.

We will add interactive displays and signage that teach by using sight, sound, and kinetic experiences. The way people access information has changed. The internet is often the first tool people use when seeking knowledge. The nature center needs these tools to reach people today, especially kids. Children are schooled and entertained everyday by television and computers. Of course, we also understand that each child is different; learning styles are different; not all children learn best by reading or hearing or seeing. Some need touch and active experiences as well.

Learning also requires age appropriate curriculum materials and lesson plans. Good, sound, curriculum will be developed by professional educators who will be compensated to deliver a quality, complete, and timely product.

Accomplishing all this will cost nearly \$50,000. Where will the money come from? We are fortunate indeed to have been selected to be the beneficiary of the 2012 Charity Ball. Things we have needed/wanted to do for a long time will soon be happening. We will need all of you wonderful volunteers and more. Thank You to the Hill Country Charity Ball Association. It will be a busy and exciting year! For more information go to www.hillcountrycharityball.org.



Coming events



Riverside Nature Center

www.riversidenaturecenter.org

Celebrating BIRDS in 2011 the "Year of the Bird"

september

13th The 2nd Tuesday "Brown Bag Lunch and Learn" Series 11:30 AM to 12:45 PM The first of the fall series will be presented by Cathy Downs, an authority on the butterflies. Cathy will share information on the fascinating and beautiful insects, including migration patterns, habitats and concerns. Bring your lunch and learn about these lovely creatures. **\$3.00 members; \$6.00 non-members.**

14th Annual Meeting – All members: Please attend our annual business meeting and cast your vote for the Board members and officers who will lead us for the next year. We will have wine and other refreshments, review the accomplishments of the last year and visit with old and new friends. **FREE**

21st "Walk with Chunker" 9:30 AM- Karen Millikan will share some facts about snakes and show visitors how she cares for Chunker, Karen's California King Snake that resides at Riverside Nature Center. How does Karen make sure Chunker gets plenty of exercise? She takes him for a walk! Come learn about snakes while you enjoy a walk with Chunker. **FREE**

October

1st Down by the Riverside Fall Festival Come enjoy the Hill Country's most popular Fall Festival. Attend seminars on rainwater harvesting and on our local birds of prey; enjoy the family oriented activities, educational displays, and more. Note that there will not be a plant sale as we do not want to encourage new planting during drought conditions. **FREE admission**

13th 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. We will have gift baskets to auction. Put this special enchanted night on your calendar. **\$35**

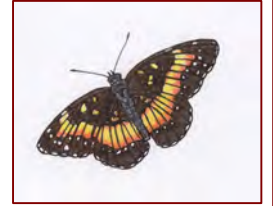
5th and 19th "Walk with Chunker" 9:30 AM- On alternate Wednesdays Karen Millikan will share some interesting facts about snakes and show visitors how she cares for Chunker, Karen's California King Snake that resides at Riverside Nature Center. How does Karen make sure Chunker gets plenty of exercise? She takes him for a walk! Come learn about snakes while you enjoy a walk with Chunker. **FREE**



Down by the Riverside Nature Festival

Saturday October 1, 2011

Sponsored by Texas Master Naturalists- Hill Country Chapter
and Riverside Nature Center



Plans are coming together for this year's Nature Festival here at our own Riverside Nature Center. This year, after careful consideration, the Native Plant Sale will be postponed until spring due to the extreme drought conditions that all of us are experiencing here in Texas. We want to stay true to our mission statement; "To develop public awareness and stewardship of the Texas Hill Country's environment and natural resources through education, information, and example." and our vision statement; "To be the leading resource center for effective environmental stewardship of the Hill Country". To host a plant sale in these conditions would not set a good example and would make it hard to be compliant with the watering restrictions. Although native plants are the best choice for these conditions, it is very difficult to establish any new plant during a severe drought. We hope to be able to have a successful native plant sale at our Earth Day Celebration next spring.

We will have More Free Talks this year!

10:00 AM - "Water Conservation in a Drought Environment"
Presented by Tara Bushnoe - UGRA

Tara Bushnoe is the Natural Resources Coordinator for the Upper Guadalupe River Authority. She coordinates all UGRA's water quality monitoring activities and assists in the collection and analysis of these samples. She also coordinates all UGRA outreach and education activities. Tara received her Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources from Cornell University and has 10 years of experience in the aquatic sciences. She has been an employee of UGRA since 2007.

DESCRIPTION: This talk will discuss our sources of water in Kerr County and the threats to water quality and quantity. Tara will also describe how the current drought impacts available surface water and groundwater and the steps that can be taken to protect our water resources, during drought and non-drought conditions.

11:30 AM - "Raptors, Those Awesome, Intriguing Birds of Prey"
Presented by John Karger A.H.T. of Last Chance Forever.

Certified Vet. Tech III, Texas A&M & Texas Veterinary Medical Assoc. Master Class Falconer. Wildlife Educator specializing in endangered species. Founder & Exec. Director of Last Chance Forever, The Bird of Prey Conservancy, receiving 240 to 300 sick, injured or orphaned raptors to be rehabbed and released. During his 35 years over 3,000 birds have been rehabilitated and returned to the wild. Among his recognitions he is the Recipient of Mutual Omaha Conservation award. He has written for Texas Parks and Wildlife magazine and been given their Outstanding Wildlife educator award and has current programs on Animal Planet and Discover Channels

DESCRIPTION; Mr. Karger will share his vast knowledge of raptors with us and his enthusiastic respect for these beautiful birds. This talk will be geared to all ages.

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(Continued from page 3)

1:00 PM Speaker - "Harvesting Rainwater—Why and How" Presented by Jim Stanley

Mr. Stanley is a Certified Texas Master Naturalist and a volunteer at Riverside Nature Center. He is also the author of the book, Hill Country Landowner's Guide and the *Hill Country Naturalist* column in the Kerrville Daily Times. He helped design the RNC rainwater harvesting system and has built his own 15,000 gallon system

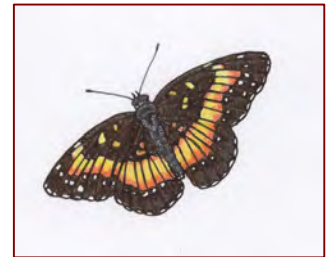
DESCRIPTION: The reasons for harvesting rainwater will be discussed as well as the basics of how to collect rainwater, the equipment needed and its availability. Details of the Stanley's own system will be discussed. Questions & Answers will be followed by a tour of the RNC Rainwater Harvesting system.

Informative Exhibits & Displays

Docents will be available at the Cactus, Butterfly and "Landscaping with Native Plants" Demonstration Gardens to discuss these attractive, water-thrifty plantings



Ask the Plant Expert: Plant Questions, Drip Watering System Model & Mulch Display
Riverside Nature Center Association
Texas Master Naturalist - Hill Country Chapter
Native Plant Society of Texas – Kerrville Chapter
Hill Country Master Gardener
UGRA – Source of our water and its quality



Live Monarch Larva, Butterfly & Migration Display 9am -1pm

Always fun and educational for all ages!

Fun, Free Kid's Activities

9 to 11:30 am & 12:30 to 2:30 pm

Craft projects to Birds of Prey and Water Conservation.

2:30 – 3:00 Nature Walk with Angelo

PawPaws BBQ for sale 11am-2pm

SO.....Members, friends, nature lovers....

Put it on your calendar and join us for this

Fun, Free Nature Festival Day at RNC!

As always, we could not do this without our wonderful volunteers.

If you can help, please contact the office.

office@riversidenaturecenter.org or 257-4837



Notes From The Meadow



Martha Miesch

Tricks we've learned in the Meadow

We've learned little tricks as we toiled away in the Meadow to help plants hold moisture and slow down the growth of weeds. Barbara Lowenthal chats with Ernesto at Medina Garden Nursery when she buys plants for the Nature Center. He has made a career nurturing native plants so his advice is worth heeding. One of his tricks to keep plants on display in his demonstration garden is to layer the ground with NEWSPAPER, then cover with mulch. Cut an "X" in the paper and install the seedlings. If adding paper and mulch to an existing bed, leave 3 to 4 inches free of newspaper at the central stem of the plant to

allow for growth. This helps to hold more moisture and retard unwanted grasses and weeds from competing with the plant you want to thrive. If you see an unwanted green that's found a way to poke up through these protective sheets, a quick yank will take care of that problem before it becomes pesky. It's also beneficial to create a mini berm around the plant and water directly into the cavity near the core of the plant. The magic of this method is to maximize time for the moisture to benefit the roots and slow down runoff and evaporation while increasing the absorption time. If you want to see this in the Meadow, look at the salvia bed that is to the side of the Deodor Cedar at the edge of the Butterfly garden. We had to pull out all our tricks this summer to get the most benefit from every drop of water put on plants. We strive to be good stewards of the limited resource, water.

If you read Susan Sander's article on Drought in July's newsletter, she pointed out one of nature's protective devices to seek protection from blistering heat is to curl up leaves and not expend moisture from the outer extremities. We've seen lots of this happening in the Meadow and in our home gardens. It's amazing how quickly you can see leaves unfurl after a rain.

This year's NABA survey of butterflies led by Tom Collins in Kerrville that began at the Nature Center in July was evidence of just one species of wildlife affected by drought this summer. In 2010, we surveyed 47 different species of butterflies and counted a total of 114 butterflies. This year's survey count of different species and the total count of butterflies was half that of last year. Less nectar equals fewer butterflies.

Excerpts from the little poem, "Ode to Texas," is a humorous look at this summer.

The devil picked Texas for his summer home.
 A place both wretched and rough
 Where the climate was to his liking
 And the cowboys hardened and tough
 He dried up the streams in the canyons
 And ordered no rain to fall
 He dried up the lakes in the valleys
 Then baked and scorched it all.
 Then over this barren country
 He transplanted shrubs from hell.
 The cactus, thistle and prickly pear
 The climate suited them well

(Continued on page 6)



(Notes from the Meadow cont.)

T'was summer now and the devil lay
 By a prickly pear to rest.
 The sweat rolled off his swarthy brow
 So he took off his coat and vest.

"By golly," he finally panted,
 "I did my job too well,
 I'm going back to where I came from,
 Texas is hotter than Hell."

Have to admit we love the Hill Country with its reliable weather of Drought with Intermittent Flash Floods.

Gift Shop Gab

We received a new shipment of Magic T-shirts in several new designs. We also have a new batch of Tuff totes that are touted as "the earth's most used bucket". They are USA made. Please check out the shop for gifts for friends and family.

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 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



**KERRVILLE AREA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF TEXAS
ANNOUNCES
CHANGE OF REGULAR MEETING DATE
and
FIRST MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 13**

For the year September 2011 to June 2012, the meetings of the Kerrville Native Plant Society of Texas will be held on the second Tuesday of the month. Socializing and refreshments will begin at 4:30 p.m., with the meeting following promptly at 5:00 p.m. As in past years, the meetings will be held at the Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street. There will also be one or two field trips during the year that may occur at a different time and date which will be announced as plans are finalized.

The first meeting of the 2011-2012 year will be held on September 13. The program will be presented by Cary Burgess, a knowledgeable and entertaining broadcast meteorologist. Cary graduated from Tivy High School and received a degree in Telecommunications from Texas Tech followed by a certification in Broadcast Meteorology from Mississippi State in 1997. His presentation will include causes of current climate patterns, a historical look at past weather, and a look to the future related to population issues, demand on water resources and shifts in vegetation and wildlife.

This free program is provided by the Kerrville Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT) as a part of its monthly series. Everyone is welcome!

The Native Plant Society of Texas is dedicated to the preservation of native plants and provides education in the selection and use of plants. Native plants minimize the use of water because they are adapted to our climate. For information about the Kerrville chapter, our website is www.npsot.org/kerrville. You may also call 830-238-3132.

We will be posting No Smoking signs at various places on the grounds and inside the visitor's center.

Although RNC has been smoke free for quite a while, we have noticed quite a few cigarette butts around the grounds lately.

The drought has made smoking a critical safety issue so RNC wishes to remind all visitors that smoking will not be allowed.



RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER

150 Francisco Lemos Street
Kerrville Texas 78028

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We're on the Web
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

(July & August)

New Members	3
Rentals	9
Rental Income	\$ 580
Donations	\$ 15,323
RNC Programs	\$ 615

Welcome

New Members of RNC (July & August)

Jean Hedrick

Ann Witherwax

Arthur Glover