



NATURE NOTES

Dedicated to the Enjoyment and Conservation of the Natural Beauty of Sun City Texas at Georgetown
VOLUME 23 Issue 1 January 2020

Tuesday, January 21, 2:30 p.m., SCB Earth from Space

Satellite imagery has given us a front row seat into our planet. Come see the amazing photos from space. Presented by Bob Jensen

Tuesday, February 18, 2:30 p.m., SCB Oak Wilt in Williamson County

We have Oak Wilt infestation to both the west and east of Sun City. Presented by Texas A&M Forest Service

MEMBERSHIP DUES: \$12 for 2020

Dues include our monthly programs and all Special Interest Group programs and activities.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs)

Nature Club activities are posted on the Nature Club website calendar. E-mails are sent to Club members only.

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES

SIG Chair: Steve Kelly



REPTILE ID, RELOCATION & MAPPING

FREE service, call:

- Steve Kelley 512-639-0539
- Jim Christiansen 512-868-3504
- John Leek 713-825-0145
- Joe Plunkett 774-226-0810
- City of Georgetown Animal Control 512-930-3592



We encourage residents to leave harmless, beneficial reptiles in their landscapes, but call us so we can identify and map all reptiles.

ASTRONOMY SIG

Watch for Special Viewing announcements.

Mon., **January 27**, 7:00 p.m. CC Florence Room. Join Greg Lawson, JPL Solar System Ambassador, topic TBA

Mon., **February 24**, 7:00 p.m. CC Florence Room. Topic is TBD.

SIG Chairs: Richard Wagoner & David Lingo



BIRDING SIG

No Meeting in January

Tues., **February 4**, 2:30 p.m., ACA. Join Karen McBride to present, "Jaguar Spotting: Gardens of the Amazon and the Patanal".



BIRD WALKS

Thurs. **January 2**, Wed. **January 15**, Thurs. **February 6**, & Wed. **February 19** All walks 8:00 a.m., meet at LHPP parking lot near the lake. Any changes will be emailed.

SIG Chairs: Ed Rozenburg & Martin Byhower

BUTTERFLY/MOTH SIG

Tues., **January 7**, 2:30 p.m., ACA, Topic TBA.

BUTTERFLY WALKS

SIG Chair: Ed Rozenburg



ENVIRONMENTAL SIG

Fri., **January 24**, ACA, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. Topic "How Food Choices Affect the Health of the Planet (and our own Individual Health)".

Fri., **February 28**, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. Topic "Water issues - pollution and growing scarcity."

SIG Chair: Pamela Tanner



GEOLOGY SIG

Tues., **January 28**, ACA, 4:00 p.m. Bob Jensen will present "Guilin – China's Karst Limestone Wonder."

Tues., **February 25**, ACA, 4:00 p.m. Bonnie Crail presents, "My Tour of the San Andreas Fault with Dr. Lucy Jones"

SIG Chair: Paul Swetland



NATIVE PLANTS SIG

Mon., **January 20**, 9:00 a.m. Meet at the Great Frontier Drive trailhead to explore Berry Creek Trail.

Mon., **February 17**, 9:00 a.m. Meet at the Retreat Amenity Center Parking Lot to explore the flora in the Hidden Ravine Nature Area.

SIG Chair: Larry Fowler



"Only by going alone in silence, without baggage, can one truly get into the heart of the wilderness. All other travel is mere dust and hotels and baggage and chatter."
— John Muir

"I would feel more optimistic about a bright future for man if he spent less time proving that he can outwit Nature and more time tasting her sweetness and respecting her seniority."
— E. B. White

"It is not enough to be busy. So are the ants. The question is: What are we busy about?"
— Henry David Thoreau

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

How I got hooked on nature.

I grew up in West Hartford, Connecticut. Although while growing up I spent a fair amount of time outdoors, often riding my bike through the wooded areas around the town's reservoirs, I did not have any particular interest in nature. My interest in nature came much later, by accident.

About 22 years ago I moved to the Bay Area of California for a new job. One weekend about 20 years ago a group from the church I had joined invited me to go hiking in the hills with them. So, we went to a hike sponsored by a nature organization which owned over 50,000 acres in the Santa Cruz mountains west of the Palo Alto area. It was the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District. Its lands are not developed, except for hiking trails and parking lots.

After the hike, the hike leader (called a docent) recruited me to become a docent in two different programs, both requiring training. The first program organized and led hikes through 24 different preserves. The second program taught children about nature. Well, I was looking for things to do, for new people to meet. So I signed up for both programs. The training sessions were about 16 weeks long for each program and covered everything from native plants, to birds, to Native American culture, and so on.

While I later participated in several hikes in the different preserves, most of my time was spent teaching children about nature. A third, fourth or fifth grade class would come up for a day to a cabin (the only one in all of the preserves) located adjacent to a pond. I got up at 5:00am to enjoy the beautiful scenery and to teach almost 100 different classes. We would take water from the pond, put it under microscopes for the children to see damselfly nymphs and other pond critters. One boy even told me "this is better than TV". We would teach them about different habitats. The cabin had a live garter snake for the children to touch. Then we would lead them on a hike of about 2 miles, showing them the different plants, wildflowers, birds, butterflies and animals in the different habitats. On those hikes we would talk with them about how nature recycles dead animal and plant life. We would talk about how the Native Indians would use different plants as medicine. An Indian grinding stone was popular, where the Native Indians would grind acorns, then wash out the bitterness for eating. So many of the other docents were experts in aspects of nature, as they had spent a lifetime of learning about native plants, birds and so forth, mainly in the Bay Area.

That is how I became hooked on Nature. I became especially interested in geology, with all of the different minerals and rocks in the Bay Area. For example, there are some rocks that 10 million years ago were about 500 miles south, in Santa Barbara, moved due to plate tectonics.

Bill Blodgett

Texas Master Naturalist Program

By *Charles Wait*

I recently became a Certified Texas Master Naturalist in the Good Water (Williamson County) Chapter. [Texas Master Naturalists](#) are people who still like to play in the dirt and are willing to get their feet wet and their hands dirty. We are a volunteer organization and with many opportunities to serve. Good Water Master Naturalists volunteer at many parks in Williamson County, provide nature education to children and adults in many different settings and participate in many Citizen Science projects such as Texas Stream Team Monitoring, Cornell's [eBird](#), and [iNaturalist](#).

A minimum of 40 hours of expert training is required to become a Master Naturalist Pledge. Subjects include almost every aspect of the natural world; soils, backyard habitats, prairies, rangeland management, forest ecology, birds, mammals, fish, insects, botany, climate, geology, and archaeology. Our last session was about interpretation and how to bring to life the world around us. This clip of [Karen Henker of Arches National Park](#) is a great example of being an interpretive leader.

To complete the certification process, each pledge completes 40 hours of service and an additional 8 hours of training. It is possible for a pledge to garner enough volunteer and training hours to be certified at graduation. To maintain their certification each year, Master Naturalists need to take their knowledge and volunteer for 40 hours and take 8 hours of additional training. My volunteer hours were split between eBird and being a Roving Interpreter at [Balcones Canyonlands NWR](#). Additionally, most guest speaker programs at the Nature Club meetings count as additional training for the Master Naturalist program as long as the subject is about Texas nature.



Good Water Master Naturalist Spring Training Class will start on Tuesday afternoon, March 3. The last class will be on May 26. The class will meet on Tuesday afternoons from 1:00-5:00 p.m. Approximately three classes and field trips will be on Saturdays. Cost is \$150 and includes the comprehensive Texas Master Naturalist Program manual as well as a one-year membership to the Good Water Chapter. For couples who plan to share the manual, there is a discount for the second student. Check back on the website below after February 15 for the link to the schedule.

Click here for online training registration: [Online Training Application](#).