**Riverside Nature Center**

**Riverside Nature Notes**

**Dear Members and Friends…by Becky Etzler, Executive Director**

It was a cold and wintry January day, not fit for man nor beast. A day best suited to sit by a fire, cozy and warm with your feet propped up. But for twelve hardy and passionate souls this day was spent huddled around a table, with pen in hand and in conference. They did not meet to solve the issues of climate change nor to develop a life-saving drug. Their meeting was not even noted by the local press nor did it trend in social media, but these facts do not diminish the importance of their task.

I am referring to the annual retreat of the Riverside Nature Center Board of Directors. Board President, Peter Lewis, set the agenda with a clear goal: to develop a strategy of financial sustainability for Riverside Nature Center. A three-pronged plan was quickly devised, with membership (both individual and business) holding the central position. Grants and corporate sponsorships are on the right flank and fundraising events on the left. Visualize an ancient Roman battle strategy with membership being the infantry with grants, sponsorships, and fundraising events as the cavalry. The cavalry are critical and often can turn the tide of a battle but the main fighting is done by the infantry.

Membership donations, and yes they are considered donations and are tax deductible, are the single most important revenue RNC receives. This income is the most predictable and reliable. Membership revenue is also unrestricted, which means it can be used for operating expenses. Grants and corporate sponsorships are generally restricted for a specific purpose may not allow for operating expenditures.

Think about the last time you attended a program at the nature center. Were the lights on? Was the room set at a comfortable temperature? Did you flush the toilet or wash your hands? Was a projector and laptop operating? Did you receive any printed material? Did you take into account the number of staff hours involved in the program preparation? Did you find out about the program from a newspaper ad? Did you check your email on your phone using the Wi-Fi? Did you notice the well-tended grounds as you walked into the nature center? Did you contemplate property and liability insurance? Probably not and understandably so. All of these things are daily operating costs; electricity, water, wages, telephone, internet, office supplies, office equipment, advertising, gasoline for grounds equipment, and insurance.

Perhaps now it is clear why membership income is the infantry in our battle of financial sustainability. If you are not currently a member or you have lapsed in your renewal, I encourage you to join the membership force. A basic family membership is only $60.00 a year. You are committing .16¢ a day to the support of Riverside Nature Center. Now I ask you, what can you buy for that today? The answer: A LOT.

Conveniently, you may use this link, no need for a stamp or an extra trip: [http://riversidenaturecenter.org/index/about-rnc/become-a-member/](http://riversidenaturecenter.org/index/about-rnc/become-a-member/)

Until next time... Becky
Saturday, February 4, 2017, RNC Wildlife Tax Valuation series workshop, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Must register

Saturday, February 18, 2017, RNC Wildlife Tax Valuation Workshop series workshop 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Must register

Saturday, February 18, 2017, Bird Walks & Talks 8 - 9:30 a.m. with Paul and Deloris Sellin. Meet in front of RNC to go birding with the Sellins. All ages welcome.

Tuesday, February 14, 2017, Native Plant Society of Texas, Kerrville Chapter 1:30 p.m. Native American Seed’s George Cates is guest speaker.

Tuesday February 14, 2017, RNC Brown Bag Lunch & Learn 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m. Steve Stoutamire, “Hall’s Cave, Kerr County, Texas: A Unique Paleo Environmental Site with Associated Archeology” $8 RNC Member. $10 Non-member. See page 5 for details.

Monday, February 20, 2017 Collette Tours Presentation “Colors of New England” 1:00 p.m. You are invited to view a splendid vacation offer sponsored to benefit Riverside Nature Center. Details on page 9.

SAVE THE DATE Saturday, March 11, 2017 Wildlife Habitat Miniseries Workshop Part 1: Water for Wildlife 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. $15 RNC Members $20 Non-member. Learn different ways to provide supplemental water for songbirds and small mammals. Susan Sander & Ann Brown. Details on page 3.

Saturday, March 25, 2017 Wildlife Habitat Miniseries Workshop, Part 2: Food for Wildlife 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. $15 RNC Member $20 Non-member. Wildlife have seasonal diets. Learn what plants provide food throughout the year for songbirds, insects as well as small mammals. Get ready for spring plant purchases! Susan Sander.

Wildlife Habitat Miniseries Workshop, Part 3: Shelter for Wildlife TBA.
Wildlife Habitat Workshop Miniseries 2017

If you are interested in being a better neighbor for wildlife, this series is for you.

For the past 25 years RNC volunteers have been transforming an old neglected farmstead from a mix of non-native plants to a unique wildlife oasis — all within its two-acre garden. By growing Hill Country natives, RNC has been able to document 160 species of birds and 90 species of butterflies in the garden, proving that “if you plant it, they will come.” RNC is a certified TPWD Wildscape Demonstration Garden and National Wildlife Federation’s Wildlife Habitat. The nature center is also a Monarch Waystation and a Certified Butterfly Garden with the North America Butterfly Association.

Each of the mini-classes will focus on one of the three main elements of Habitat: Water, Food, and Shelter. A variety of management practices will be highlighted/demonstrated.

**March 11: Part 1 WATER** is obviously essential for all living things. Many birds will come to water (such as cedar waxwings) but not necessarily to feeders. With summer around the corner this could become the most critical component of your wildscape. Water isn’t just for drinking, but also bathing — but not all “baths” involve water. Learn how to provide supplemental water for birds, even butterflies. This class will be led by **Susan Sander**, RNC naturalist, and **Anne Brown**, Master Gardener and Rainwater Specialist. We will do a hands-on project by building a wildlife guzzler for RNC.

**March 25: Part 2 FOOD.** You might view your garden as a thing of beauty but wildlife uses it to dine *al fresco*. From spring to summer songbirds are constantly searching for food to feed their nestlings. As the fall approaches, their food choices change as do their nutritional needs as they gear up for migration. Learn which plants can provide not only beauty but also multi-seasons of foods for the ever changing diets of birds. Many can multi-task. Don’t forget the role of insects and their plant needs as well. As a wildlife habitat your garden becomes an intricate web of interconnections. Led by RNC naturalist, **Susan Sander**, a tour of RNC is included.

**Part 3 SHELTER (TBA).** All critters need some form of shelter. Turtles may live in theirs but they still need a safe place to lay their eggs. Shelter can be a wide variety things and places, even different levels of plants or underground — many of you might already have in your garden. Take a look around: where could a bird hide a nest to raise its young; or lizards escape a predator. Protection from weather (wind, rain, cold but also the hot sun) as well as predators are important all year long. Learn tips to enhance a variety of natural shelters for a greater diversity of wildlife even in the city. While many birds have already staked out their territories, there is still time to be ready for the next generation, when this year’s fledglings seek to expand out for their territories. Safe stop-overs are important during migration, and wintering birds. Sometimes it’s how we do yard work that can create or destroy a potential shelter. Learn to see where wildlife hides in your garden.

See the Calendar of Events for times and registration details. All programs will be held at RNC. Get ready for RNC spring plant sale on April 22, 2017 by learning which plants provide a diverse menu, particularly for songbirds, or could be the best shelter.
The presentation for Tuesday, Feb. 14th
at the RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER will be

HALL’S CAVE, KERR COUNTY, TEXAS,
A UNIQUE PALEOENVIRONMENTAL SITE WITH ASSOCIATED ARCHEOLOGY

Presenter, STEVE STOUTAMIRE

Hall’s Cave is typical of many caves within the karsted limestones of the Edwards Formation of the Edwards Plateau. It is very atypical, however, in that its sediments have recorded a nearly complete history of at least the last 17,000 years. Within these sediments are remains of plants and animals which lived within the cave or whose remains were washed into the cave or were brought there by carnivores. The cave has been studied by numerous scientists including vertebrate paleontologists, paleobotanists, geologists and archeologists.

Native Americans used the cave and surrounding area intermittently from at least the late Paleo Indian period to the Late Prehistoric period. Studies of the floral and faunal remains within the cave sediments have enabled scientists to interpret Central Texas ancient temperatures and moisture levels, ancient soil cover and depths and, ultimately, past landscapes and floral coverage. Hall’s Cave is considered by some scientists to be the best site in Texas to study ancient environments. It is also considered to be one of the top sites in the United States and the world for these type of studies.

STEVE STOUTAMIRE

Stoutamire is a retired petroleum geologist with an MS in geology from Texas Tech University and a BA in Anthropology/Archeology from Florida State University. Since retirement in 2007 he has worked extensively with archeology in the hill country of Texas through both site work and public education. He is a member, current field committee chairman and past president, of the Hill Country Archeology Association (HCAA), member of the Texas Archeology Society and serves as a Texas Archeology Steward for the Texas Historical commission.
## THANK YOU, DONORS

**December 23, 2016 - January 24, 2017**  
*(Does not include renewals)*

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ed Wallace</td>
<td>Laura &amp; Harry Portwood</td>
<td>Barbara Oates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob &amp; Pamela McKinley</td>
<td>Janet Robinson</td>
<td>Sue &amp; Dean Mitchell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harriet Redwine</td>
<td>Harriet Redwine</td>
<td>Donise Hardy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathleen Boyce</td>
<td>Barbara Oates</td>
<td>Ron Cody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat &amp; Frank Nelson</td>
<td>Virginia de Wolf</td>
<td>David Langford</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### New Members:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Members:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ken &amp; Jeannie Berger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolyn Jones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat Wolters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Celebrating 25 Years & Still Growing**
Wildlife Tax Valuation Workshop

Presented by
Riverside Nature Center and
Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

Session 1: Overview and Property Inventory
Saturday, Feb. 4
9AM to 1PM

Session 2: Management Practices and Habitat Assessment
Saturday, Feb. 11
9AM to 2:30PM

Session 3: WTV History and Update on the Law, Application Procedures, and... Putting It All Together
Saturday, Feb. 18
9AM to 1PM

What You’ll Need At The First Session
☑ Agricultural tax valuation
☑ Map of your property

► Have you had agricultural tax valuation on your land for at least five years, and are you interested in managing wildlife?
► This in-depth workshop is especially for landowners with 20 or more acres - it emphasizes wildlife management strategies that improve native habitat and increase species diversity.
► Our presenters will help you gain land management knowledge, understand the history of this Texas tax valuation law, and fulfill requirements to qualify for a wildlife management tax valuation.
► Many participants complete this workshop with a concrete plan and are ready to apply.

Location
Riverside Nature Center
150 Francisco Lemos St., Kerrville
www.riversidenaturecenter.org
830-257-4837 | RNC.kerrville@gmail.com
SPECIAL TRAVEL PRESENTATION

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2017
TIME 1:00 PM
Riverside Nature Center
150 Francisco Lemos St S
Kerrville, Texas, 78028-5211

Please RSVP (830)257-4837

Riverside Nature Center presents...
Colors of New England
October 1 – 8, 2017

YOU’RE INVITED TO A SPECIAL TRAVEL PRESENTATION
See Back Cover

Book Now & Save $100 Per Person

For more information contact
Lydia Jetson
Riverside Nature Center
(830)257-4837
rnc.kerrville@gmail.com
Many native plant lovers do not get excited about their home landscapes or the grounds of the Nature Center until observation and study help them to identify infant plants. We call these infants rosettes. I believe some of the rosettes are almost as appealing as the blooming flower. Marilyn Knight has beautiful photographs of both stages of the plants, rosettes to flowers. Some favorites are listed below.

**Standing Wine Cup** is a gorgeous bloomer and seeing the rosette on the RNC grounds makes one smile for sure. You can see the purple blooms standing erect 1 to 3 ft. tall, March to May.

**Paintbrush** is a beauty that I wish I had in my home landscape and love to see it on the RNC grounds, March to May. It's a wonderful roadside plant. If you have time to contact county commissioners, remind them roadsides should not be mowed until seeding is history.

**Standing Cypress** is a unique plant which is a beautiful green rosette the first year but becomes a tall 2 to 5 ft. stem with lovely orange-red blooms the second year. The bloom stalk is loaded with tiny seeds that drop or replant by the wind so it’s a nice multiplier. It blooms in May and June.

**Prairie Verbena** is a handsome round head topped with small 1/4 in. flowers with 5 petal purple blooms. It's always a pleasant surprise to see it, March through October.

**Most people recognize Antelope Horn flower as the larva plant for Monarch butterflies. But many of us do not know what the rosette looks like. Marilyn Knight knows.**

**The Texas Bluebonnet** everyone recognizes in bloom. You also need to recognize the rosette. Trust me, it is almost as unique and pretty as the bloomer. You can see the bloomer as you drive past in your car. The rosette you see only when staring at the ground.
Awww! Shucks!

Our resident Corn snake, Shucks, will soon begin his 4th year with Riverside Nature Center. He continues to fascinate visitors, both old and young. In the summer, he delights those who attend the “Walks on the Wild side” presentations with his handler, Karen Millikan. They are also being requested as guests at birthday parties and other venues that Riverside Nature Center has been happy to provide.

But it is not all play for Shucks! Through these activities, he educates the public regarding venomous vs. poisonous, and how to recognize venomous snakes. Many are surprised to learn about his limited vision while he is preparing to shed his skin. These left over sheds are a hands-on demonstration of the growth and habits of snakes. Local children visit often with family and friends to check in and see his progress.

However, the price of his rodent diet has increased. He now requires 1 rat every two weeks. We are now able to purchase 2 for $12.98. Purchasing 10 at a time at $64.90 would provide a more steady diet for 3 months, costing roughly $20/month.

Also, we are planning a vertical vivarium enclosure to give Shucks more variety in movement in his habitat because corn snakes love to climb.

Due to budget constraints, we are looking for a sponsor, or sponsors to help fund his upkeep and allow us to continue his residence as a great resource and ambassador of snakes at the Riverside Nature Center.

For more information, please contact Jeanette (830)257-4837

Please volunteer for our Spring Festival & Plant Sale

Save the Date
Saturday, April 22, 2017
What is a Riverside Nature Center?

Located at the confluence of the Guadalupe River and Town Creek in the Hill Country town of Kerrville — 2010 population, 22,347 — Riverside Nature Center is a 501[c][3] nonprofit organization, owned by its members and primarily operated by volunteers.

Our mission is to foster greater public awareness and appreciation of the Texas Hill Country's natural resources through education, information, and by example. We provide quality educational experiences for the community’s children, adults and families; and we serve as a resource center for the community on native plants and nature related information.