We have been riding a wave of activity here at Riverside Nature Center, and having so much fun in the process! Our new exhibit, “Hill Country Rocks!” is a smash hit! Once again I shout out my thanks to Susan Longacre and Ted Schulenberg for all their technical support. And our Schreiner University Graphic Artist, Kat Johnston, did such a great job laying out the vinyl panels that complement the exhibit.

Our grounds – well they are looking better than ever! We had 24 volunteers show up for our first clean-up day. My husband, Bill, and I had so much fun making waffles and cooking bacon for the volunteer workforce that showed up for the second day, and – as I write this, I am anticipating our 3rd clean-up day which is slated for Saturday March 28th. And, another event on March 26 that will be past tense by the time you read this, is our evening of “Weed & Wine.” Just to be clear, this is PULLING weeds while sipping wine. Our wildflowers in the meadow are being intensely invaded by burr clover, so we are hoping to clear the way for the wildflowers to bloom soon. Thanks so much to Frank Dunlap’s leadership of the grounds crew and Barbara Lowenthal and her Meadow Tenders.

I’ve been telling you about Riverscape for a number of months now. If you have recently walked the River Trail, you have seen the work in progress. Thanks to the oversight of board members Wynn Kilgore and Lisa Williams, we will be celebrating its ribbon cutting soon. Wahoo!!

This month we hosted two great field trips. Tony Galucci, biologist with the Hill Country Youth Ranch, hosted 14 Riverside Nature Center guests at the privately-owned Big Spring Ranch near Leakey. This exploratory field trip included geologist, Susan Longacre and Riverside Nature Center naturalist, Susan Sander. I drew the short straw and stayed back at the Visitors Center. The looks of wonder and excitement were still on their faces when they returned. Susan Longacre discovered an amazing display of rudist. Now, if you do not know this term, you really must come to see “Hill Country Rocks,” because rudists are featured players in our rock show.

Our other field trip was so popular, we filled two tours and opened a third. President of the Board of Riverside Nature Center, Rick Ertel, and his wife Stephanie, opened their home to over 50 guests. Their house is 100% off the grid thanks to a passive solar power system, water supplied by rainwater catchment, and wood stoves used for heat and cooking. And, their home is built of sustainable materials and finishes. The day of the tour, the Kerrville Daily Times had a wonderful “Your Home” insert featuring the Ertel’s home as its front cover and inside spread. The blue heron rookery that is visible with binoculars from their place provided a special show as guests marveled at a hatchling emerging. This field trip was so popular, the Ertel’s have agreed to host another this fall.

Finally, it was nothing short of inspiring to hear Steve Nelle share his thoughts on “genuine land stewardship.” He talked about stewardship as a deeply held inner conviction that motivates landowners and land managers to care for the land. He defines stewardship as an ethic that generates, inspires and guides responsible and sustainable land management. According to Mr. Nelle, land stewardship is about who we are on the inside. His words moved me deeply, as have the words of each of our speakers in our series, “Conversations with Conservationists.” Barbara Oates has done amazing work scheduling and hosting this series. We are anxiously awaiting her announcements of additional installments this fall.

In closing, I want to share a comment my husband, Bill made about Riverside Nature Center when he walked out on the grounds while volunteers were scattered like Easter eggs across our grounds. He said, “The first time I saw this place, it looked tired.” Now, it looks energized. What a transformation!” I have to say, the board, the staff, and the volunteers all feel excitement, energy, and re-birth in the air. I do believe spring has arrived at Riverside Nature Center in more ways than one.
April 2015 EVENTS

RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER
150 Francisco Lemos St., Kerrville
** RSVP to 257-4837 **
www.riversidenaturecenter.org
RNC.Kerrville@gmail.com

April, 2015 Events

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Tuesday, April 14, 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m.
2nd Tuesday Brown Bag Lunch & Learn
“**A Brief Geological History of Central Texas: It’s Not All Limestone!**” Geologist **Ted Schulenberg** will discuss the wide variety of rock types that can be found in the Hill Country. Within 75 miles are rocks older than 1.3 billion years and younger than 1 million. Each rock type has a story to tell about the area’s natural history.

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Friday, April 17, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
Native Healing Garden
Bring your gloves.

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Friday, April 17, 5:00-6:30
Spring Native Plant Pre-Sale
Members of RNC and NPSOT can enjoy exclusive preview sale on Friday April 17 from 5-6:30pm. Non-members can join either or both of these organizations at the pre-sale and start shopping.

Saturday, April 18, 8:00-3:00
Spring Plant Sale & Festival
Bring your family and friends to enjoy the day at our Nature Center. As always, we could not do this without our wonderful volunteers. If you want to help, please contact the office, or send them an email.

Free Informative Talk, 11:00: (In classroom)
"Using Locally Native Plants in an Informal Landscape Design"

New this year: We will have ongoing Demonstrations and the Riverscape Project which is now under construction on our grounds. (See page 6 for Riverscape)


Page 3 for more Spring Plant Sale & Festival details
Spring Native Plant Sale & Festival
Saturday - April 18, 2015, - 8am-3pm - Free Family Fun
Speakers, Demonstrations, Displays, Kids' Activities & More

NATIVE PLANT SALE  Our expert volunteers have gathered beautiful species of plants native to our region. These wildflowers, shrubs, grasses, and small trees are sourced from local growers. Native plants require lower maintenance – saving you time and money. Plus, they create a habitat for a host of native wildlife – including songbirds, butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds. Come early for the best selection! Experts will be available to answer questions and to help you select plants that will thrive in your particular landscape conditions.

ONGOING DEMONSTRATIONS  (near Pavilion)
"Protecting Plants from Deer & Wildlife"
"Potting & Sharing your Native Plant Volunteers"

KIDS' ACTIVITIES  9:00 to 11:30 am – 12:30 to 2:30 pm
Craft projects in the Nature Lab. Bring your kids to create fun nature craft projects to take home. An adult needs to stay to help supervise.  8 am and 2:30 pm Nature Walk with Angelo

EXPERT SPEAKER  At 11 Marvin Hatter presents “Let It Go” - Using Locally Native Plants in an Informal Landscape Design.”

Whether you describe it as natural, relaxed or informal landscape design, using locally native plants in the proper setting can provide year-round beauty and preserve that unique “Hill Country” look. The decision to use natives in the landscape instead of introduced plants is a positive step towards the stewardship of our natural resources, but the overall design of the landscape and how these plants are used is equally important. The benefits of using natives in an informal design are many: reduced need for supplemental irrigation, chemical fertilizers and “bug sprays;” enhanced habitat for birds, butterflies and insects; reduced time required for pruning and other maintenance activities. Perhaps the best benefit of all is that these types of landscapes provide a place for learning.

Marvin Hatter has worked for 21 years as the San Antonio District Vegetation Specialist for the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). He holds a B.S. in Plant & Soil Science from Tarleton State, and an MS in Ornamental Horticulture from Texas Tech. See more details on the RNC website.

The festival is co-sponsored by Native Plant Society of Texas, Kerrville Chapter & Riverside Nature Center. All net proceeds benefit the RNC and NPSOT education efforts.
RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER  
150 Francisco Lemos St., Kerrville, Texas  
RNC.Kerrville@gmail.com

Exhibit open:  
Monday - Friday: 9-4  
Saturday: 10-3  
Sunday: 1-4

Note that there are a number of State Parks (SP) & State National Areas (SNA) in the first 11 listed areas.
“Hill Country Rocks” Stars

Susan Longacre, Geologist

Susan Longacre received her PhD in geology from UT Austin. Her career projects spanned the Permian basin of West Texas and New Mexico, Ireland, the Middle East, offshore U.S. East Coast, and Kazakhstan. As an emeritus member of the Chevron Fellows, Dr. Longacre continues to be actively involved in their group mentoring program, and she still serves as a Chevron consultant. Dr. Longacre enjoys sharing her knowledge of geology and the landscape as an active member of Riverside Nature Center, the Native Plant Society of Texas, and she is a Hill Country Master Naturalist. (And, she is an exceptional quilter!)

Ted Schulenberg, Geologist

Ted Schulenberg earned a BA in Geology from Colgate University & an MA in Geology from UT Austin. He worked as a petroleum geologist for Chevron in Texas, New Mexico, California, Spain and Egypt. Later, as an independent geologist, he worked as a technical advisor to the National Oil Corporation of Korea in Korea, Vietnam and Tunisia, and on a World Bank project in Kenya. For the past eight years Mr. Schulenberg has been teaching a course in geology twice a year at Club Ed. He recently produced a geology exhibit shown at the Kerr Arts & Cultural Center and made those materials available to Riverside Nature Center in producing this exhibit.

And we thank these contributors:
Kat Johnston, graphic designer
Ann Schneider, geologist/educator
Mike McGinnis, geologist
Kathy Ward
Judy Gausnell
What’s Going On Beside the Nature Center Classroom?  

By Morgan Williams

Not as dramatic as the Riverscape excavations, but a small corner of the Riverside Nature Center is undergoing minor changes to become the designated Composting Demonstration Area. The site has been gravel-covered and soon composting units will be installed.

On display will be examples of compost holding units:

A three-section stationary unit with removable doors will illustrate composting of fresh organics, maturing materials and finished compost.

There will be a simple wire enclosure to show that compost materials can be contained easily and inexpensively.

A turning unit will demonstrate how aeration can improve oxygen flow to aerobic bacteria and thus break down materials faster than a static unit.

A trench composting site will show how kitchen scraps can be easily be decomposed within one month to a year depending on soil temperature, the supply of microorganisms in the soil and the content of the materials. A three season rotation system will show how this concept can be extended over time.

The Riverscape Project is now under construction on our grounds. It begins at the water tanks and goes to the fence line along the edge of the River Trail. Riverscape was funded by a grant from the Peterson Foundation, along with many generous donations from our volunteers. The purpose of the Riverscape is to illustrate how the Guadalupe River is formed and makes its way through Kerr County as it makes the 400-mile journey to the Gulf of Mexico.

Riverscape will be plumbed with variable water controls so we can demonstrate how seeps and springs feed the river, and how drought and rains impact the river. The water used in this demonstration area will be supplied by our rain water collection tanks and recirculated, so our only water loss will be from evaporation.
Wildflowers are such hardy plants. They seemed not to have been phased by the numerous days and nights of below freezing temperatures in January and February and by the many sunless days. The seasonal rains have been very accommodating. As a result, the wildflowers should put on an amazing show. Already, from the new growth, we can tell the meadow will have a great diversity of native plants.

Early blooming plants can be spotted here and there in the meadow. The first to appear was the four-nerve daisy (*Tetraneuris scaposa*), which was actually blooming during the coldest time of January and February. In the early part of March, the tiny about 6” high) whitlow-grass (*Draba cuneifolia*) made an appearance, the first in many years.

Buds are ready to burst into bloom on the puccoon (*Lithospermum incisum*), the bluebonnets (*Lupinus texensis*) and many other spring bloomers. The native grasses are slowly coming out of dormancy. They will soon be complementing the wildflowers and providing additional color and texture to the meadow.

Please plan to visit often and enjoy what nature provides.
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.

We provide highly valued experiences for the community's adults, families, and children in order that they not only come to appreciate the region’s natural resources, plants, habitats, and wildlife, but also to become stewards of these resources now and in the future.

VISITORS CENTER & GIFT SHOP
9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Weekdays
10 to 3 p.m., Saturdays & 1 to 4 p.m., Sundays

RNC BOARD & OFFICERS:
Rick Ertel - President
Peter Lewis - Vice President
Judy Ferguson - Past President
Gwynn Groggel - Secretary
Kris Bobbitt - Treasurer

BOARD MEMBERS:
Valeska Danielak
Frank Dunlap
Wynn Kilgore
Barbara Oates
Peggy Thompson
Lisa Williams
Morgan Williams

MEMBERS JOINING FROM JANUARY 15 THRU MARCH 15, 2015
Becky Detamare and Clyde & Susan Biggs