Let us ring in the New Year with a hearty round of applause for our Board of Directors. Forgive me if this sounds a bit sycophantic. But honestly, we are fortunate to have a Board as dedicated to, and passionate about Riverside Nature Center as are these 11 people. Each one willingly shares their unique brand of expertise. It is not uncommon to see a member of the board ankle deep in dirt or mulch or standing on a ladder replacing a light bulb or leaning over a tablet researching YouTube videos for a new exhibit. Though they are policy makers and carry the responsibility of our mission, it is this hands-on approach that allows them to keep their finger on the pulse of the organization. With this intimate knowledge they are better equipped to project the goals and direction of RNC.

Earlier in December, the Board tapped into their experience and knowledge at the annual Board retreat. They asked themselves three questions:

What could we have done better?
What should be accomplished in 2016?
What else needs to be done?

I noted a recurring theme in the responses: In order to grow, we need to expand and enhance our outreach to include business partnerships and families with children.

The Board is dedicated to developing ways in which we can accomplish this goal. Some methods we will be implementing are the development of a Business Membership, increased advertisement both in print and radio, having evening hours and offering a family movie night. But let us not forget that you, the tried and true current member, are vital to this accomplishment. I encourage you to include RNC in your estate planning. Your gift will help ensure the future of RNC.

So, the next time you bump into one of our directors please take a minute to shake their hand. I think you both will find many reasons to say Thank You to one another.

Happy New Year and may 2016 find us all healthy, happy and filled with the joy of nature.

Until next time....

Becky
Save the Dates

Open: H₂O Lives, our new exhibit. The primary focus of this exhibit is to show how water is the one element that connects all life on this planet, hence the subtitle: “Connect the Drops.” Discover something new about water from the exhibit to the Riverscape. Then take a walk on the River Trail to enjoy the real thing.

January 9, 2016, Preparing Bird Nesting Boxes, Saturday, 9:30 am - 12 pm
Family Activity Workshop assembling a bird box, learning nesting habitats with monitoring and observing ideas. Make and take one bird box. Limit 10 families. RSVP Registration. $25

January 9 – Second Saturday Spiffy Up – 9:00-12:00. Bring your garden gloves and tools and join us. Breakfast goodies and coffee will be provided.

January 12, 2016, Brown Bag Lunch & Learn, Tuesday 11:30 am - 12:45 pm
Guest Speaker: Paul Yura, “Future Weather Patterns and our Future Water Forecasts.” See page 4 for details.

January 16 – Bird Walk – Saturday, 9:00 am. Join Richard Redmond to take a walk at the Nature Center and along the River Trail. All levels of birders are welcomed. This is a great opportunity to introduce a child to the world of bird watching.

January 23 – Town Creek Clean Up, Saturday, 9:00 am– Meet in the RNC parking lot for instructions. Bring a charged cell phone, dress for weather and bring trash tongs if you have them. For more information, please contact Tim Lewis at timlewis10@windstream.net

Coming Events

Wildlife Tax Valuation Series: 3 Sessions: January 30, February 6, February 13. The series are consecutive and must be attended from the first one in order to receive certification.

Landscaping for Life Series™: 3 sessions: February 27, March 5, March 12. $90/$110

Conversations with Conservationists are in the planning stages for the fall, and there is one in March and one in April, 2016.

Urban Wildlife Workshop, September 2016

These events will occur at the Riverside Nature Center.
Watch this space for the time of day and speakers and presenters announcements.
Tour the gardens at RNC!

Much has happened on site since the purchase in 1992 due to the sweat equity of a host of volunteers. Plan to walk the Nature Trail periodically so you can help us make notes about the changes that unfold through each season. Lend a hand if you can.

During 2016 we hope to have new story signs in place as well as develop a trail map.

**RNC is a certified Wildscape Demonstration Site, a Monarch Waystation, a Certified Butterfly Garden (North America Butterfly Assoc.) as well as a designated location with TPWD Heart of Texas Wildlife Trail-TW 073.** RNC has one of the largest collections of native Hill Country plants in its 2+ acre garden area.

**POINTS OF INTEREST at RNC**

1. Entrance island of xeriscape plants
2. Visitors Center: exhibits, gift shop, reference library and meeting rooms
3. Nature Trail winds through an arboretum of more than 90 species of native species of trees & shrubs that were planted in 1993
4. Butterfly Garden
5. The Meadow
6. Native Healing Garden
7. Stone Circle
8. Wildscape Demonstration
9. The Meadow
10. Demo gardens
11. Soil Making Factory & WICKED Underground (compost)
12. HC Loop of rare and endangered plants
13. NPSOT berm dedicated to Carroll Abbott
14. Nature Lab
15. Pavilion
16. Lawson Store
17. Rainwater Collection (5 tanks totaling 17,500 gallons storage)
18. Rainfall simulator
19. Promise sculpture

**Also to do: The River Trail** is part of the City of Kerrville’s Park and Recreation Department. RNC is the northern trailhead that starts in RNC parking lot. A section crossing Town Creek to Guadalupe Street will open in spring!
Squirrelock’s Wishes Come True

Thank you so much for making many of Squirrelock Holmes’ Christmas wishes come true.

Squirrelock need not worry about his buddy Shuck’s expenses for 2016 thanks to Karen Burkett and Hootie Redwine. He was also concerned about his many human friends always carrying heavy loads. With the new double-duty dolly gifted by Judy Ferguson, he can rest easier and so can his friends. Thanks Judy! Squirrelock’s feathered friends also benefited thanks to Edna Platte’s and Susan Sander’s gifts of seed and suet. He had many acorn wishes, and thanks to Julie Clay we will need to decide which one he most needs.

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January 12, 2016: Brown Bag Lunch & Learn, Tuesday 11:30 am. - 12:45 pm

Guest Speaker: Paul Yura, “Future Weather Patterns and our Future Water Forecasts”

Paul Yura is a Warning Coordination Meteorologist at the National Weather Service for Austin & San Antonio, Texas. Paul was born and raised in Austin, went to school at the University of Texas before transferring to the University of Oklahoma where he received his Bachelor of Science degree in meteorology and attended graduate school. While going to school, he worked summers at the Austin Weather Service Office and the Norman Oklahoma NWS office. After graduation, Paul began his full time career with the National Weather Service in Brownsville, TX as a forecaster and then Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM). In 2008 Paul accepted the Warning Coordination Meteorologist position at the Austin-San Antonio weather office. As WCM, his primary job is to be the liaison between the National Weather Service and local media, citizens, county, state, and federal agencies as well as conduct storm damage surveys and community outreach.

Bring your lunch and join us! RSVP 830 257-4837
$8 RNC Members - $10 Nonmembers - Free New Membership
Winter marks the arrival of a number of “introduced” plants at the Nature Center. These are non-native plants which can take root throughout yards, gardens and fields in competition with our native wildflowers. If left to propagate, they will utilize the water, soil and mineral resources that are normally required for our native plants. Some, such as the bur clover, will form such thick mats of vegetation that they “squeeze” out the young “warm season” native seedlings. It is important that these invaders are tackled as soon as you can recognize them and before they start with seed production. Take the opportunity to review the photos below. Becoming familiar with the plants will help prepare you for the spring weeding ahead, necessary to keep our gardens “native”.

**BUR CLOVER (Medicago polymorpha) – Pea Family (Fabaceae)**
- Also called: Yellow Clover, Bur Medic
- Origin: Introduced
- Longevity: Annual
- Season: Cool

**PIN CLOVER (Erodium ciclatinatum)**
- Geranium Family (Geraniaceae)
- Also called: Crane’s Bill
- Origin: Introduced
- Longevity: Annual
- Season: Cool

**HENBIT (Lamium amplexicaule) – Mint Family (Lamiaceae)**
- Also called: Deadnettle
- Origin: Introduced
- Longevity: Annual to Biennial
- Season: Cool

**PERSIAN SPEEDWELL (Veronica persica) – Figwort Family (Scrophulariaceae)**
- Origin: Introduced
- Longevity: Annual
- Season: Cool

**HEDGE-PARSLEY (Torilis arvensis) - Carrot Family (Apiaceae)**
- Also called: Begger’s Ticks
- Origin: Introduced
- Longevity: Annual
- Season: Cool

*Photos by Marilyn M. Knight*
Holiday Open House

Whether you are on team “Chilly Christmas” or “Hot Holiday” no one could complain about the beautiful day we had on December 17th. The Visitor Center was decked out in its holiday finest. Christmas carols could be heard in the background. The warm and spicy aroma of mulled cider filled the air. Several folks enjoyed their cider and assorted tasty treats on the back porch while watching the antics of the titmouse, cardinals and chickadees.

Meg Scott-Johnson was the happy winner of the drawing on that day. She will have free admission to one of any 2016 Brown Bag Lunch & Learn of her choice.

Thank you to all the exceptional bakers who provided the outstanding treats; Maggie Tatum, Joy Bradford, Barbara Lowenthal, Jeanette Watson, Martha Miesch, Kay Harter, Larry Altman and Susan Sander.
Need a resolution for 2016? Here are some suggestions that help keep things WICKED (Wild in the City of Kerrville Every Day).

1. Explore RNC’s Nature Trail
2. Plant native plants for birds & pollinators
3. Help clean up Town Creek with Tim (Jan 23 & April 23)
4. Use a re-useable bag instead of plastic
5. Walk the River Trail once a week
6. Watch birds with Richard Redmond (Jan 16)
7. Be a water steward, conserve & protect (UGRA’s River Clean-up is July 23)
8. Save rain water, buy a rain barrel from HC Master Gardeners and save with a rebate from UGRA
9. Volunteer for RNC Spiffy-up (2nd Saturdays)
10. Make a soil sponge (with compost)
11. Share Nature with a child
12. Build a bird nesting box with Morgan (Jan 9 – see calendar)

Wish List
Becky’s:
- External hard drive
- Britta water filter pitcher
- Remote camera for security and to monitor wildlife visits to Riverscape.

Frank Dunlap’s:
- New rain barrels! 200 more gallons we can harvest per barrel
- Continue spiffy up successes and number participating
- Institute “Adopt a Spot”

Riverside Nature Center is looking for volunteers with skills in graphics, web design and programming. Please call or come by the Visitor Center to extend your expertise and help.
830 257-4837
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.