Four..three..two..one..Happy New Year!!! With a clink of a glass and in a wink of an eye, the new year has begun. Many of you made resolutions for this new year. I certainly hope that one is to spend more time outdoors.


- It could improve your short-term memory
- It has a de-stressing effect
- Spending time outside reduces inflammation
- The outdoors helps eliminate fatigue
- Being outside may protect your vision
- Outdoor experiences may help fight depression and anxiety
- It could improve your ability to focus
- You may perform better on creative tasks after being outside
- Spending time outside lowers blood pressure
- Outdoor sessions may even help prevent cancer
- Forests also might boost your immune system
- Outdoor time is associated with a lower risk of early death

You don’t have to be an exercise guru, a world traveling bird watcher or an expert gardener to gain the many benefits available from time spent outdoors. Grab your lunch, a buddy, a book, and especially a child and spend 20 minutes amongst the trees and plants at Riverside Nature Center. Make this a weekly event and experience the wealth nature provides.

The only downside is that once experienced, it may become habit forming. The bright side is that you will be surrounded by a wonderful support group. We’re all nature junkies at RNC.

Speaking about wonderful groups, I hope to see you at the Annual Membership Meeting on Thursday, January 18th at 5:00 pm. We will be holding the election of board members and discussing the activities and financial status of the organization. Riverside Nature Center is a member supported organization and as such, your suggestions, comments, and input are welcomed and valued.

I predict this new year will hold many exciting adventures and I am grateful we will be experiencing them together.

Until next time….

Becky
JANUARY 2018 Riverside Nature Center Upcoming Events/Programs

Tuesday, January 9, 2018
11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.
**RNC Brown Bag Lunch & Learn “River Wild”**
Take a close look at the inhabitants along the river with Susan Sander, RNC naturalist.
RNC Members $8, non-members $10
Free with new RNC Membership

Thursday, January 11, 2018
7 – 9 p.m.
**“Dark Skies Over Kerrville”**
The Riverside Nature Center and the Hill Country Alliance conduct a community meeting to discuss and plan for the preservation of starry skies in and around Kerrville. Interested persons are invited to attend.
Please RSVP by calling (830) 257-4837 or Email Becky Etzler director@riversidenaturecenter.org

Thursday, January 18, 2018
5 – 6 p.m.
2018 Riverside Nature Center Annual Membership Meeting

Saturday, January 20, 2018
8 a.m. – 9:30 p.m.
**RNC Bird Walk & Talk**
Join Paul & Deloris Sellin in front the Riverside Nature Center to go birding along the Guadalupe River.

Saturday, January 20, 2018
8 a.m. – 12 p.m.
**RNC Spiffy Up**
Help the Building & Grounds Committee prepare the grounds for more winter weather.
'Tis the season of change – for me at least. Back in 1987 I became enthralled with a field of wildflowers, and an idea to do something to preserve that historic landscape took over my life. It’s been a wild ride ever since. Given that I had only moved to Texas in 1983, I can honestly say it involved a huge learning curve to not only discover the elements that make up the Hill Country environment, but to also develop ways that foster interest in others about its unique stories that inspire stewardship.

For the past four years I’ve been the naturalist at RNC due to the generosity of an unknown benefactor(s) (this is my very humble THANK YOU). It’s been a very rewarding time, especially with the new exhibit spaces to the opening of the River Trail. But like all things that are compelling and absorbing, there comes a time to step back, unclutter the brain and replenish the creative well, to see the bigger picture.

So starting in January I’ll move into the background as a volunteer and focus on exhibits: the Year of GRACE and another for 2019 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the arboretum. These two exhibits include so many themes that I feel are integral to the mission and future of RNC.

And with the host of Master Naturalists who now volunteer at RNC there is no shortage of enthusiastic and knowledgeable people to engage visitors, young and old. Long may you shine!

See you on the trails. (I can be reached by email at springrover@gmail.com).

Happy New Year. Keep up the good work.
On January 11th, 7pm, The Riverside Nature Center and the Hill Country Alliance will hold a community meeting to discuss and plan for the preservation of starry skies in and around Kerrville. The meeting will be held at the Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street, Kerrville. Please RSVP to director@riversidenaturecenter.org or (830)257-4837.

“The stars at night are big and bright...” but here in Kerrville, we are at risk of losing our view of the stars, and with it, part of our Texas heritage. As our city grows, it is important that we employ responsible, dark sky lighting to preserve the view of the stars in our corner of the Hill Country. At the January 11th meeting at the Riverside Nature Center we will begin to plan this community effort.

It is not inevitable that towns lose their dark skies as they grow. In fact, many Hill Country towns, including Boerne, Fredericksburg, Dripping Springs, Mason, and Llano, have already begun taking necessary steps to preserve their skies. It is a win-win proposition; night sky friendly lighting reduces energy costs, draws tourists, and improves safety and human health, all while preserving the night skies for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.

Over the last year and a half in Kerrville, there have been several public presentations about night sky preservation, including presentations to the Rotary Club of Kerrville and to City Council. At the January 11th meeting, we will review the current state of affairs for night sky preservation, including existing policies held by the City of Kerrville and the Kerrville Public Utility Board. We will identify near-term and long-term goals and begin forming an action plan to achieve those goals.

Your input is essential to the development and implementation of a mutually beneficial plan. Together, we can steward our starry nights.

Please RSVP to Becky Etzler at director@riversidenaturecenter.org or (830)257-4837.
RNC Won 1st Place in the Kerrville Area Chamber of Commerce 2017 Snowman Contest!

1st Place - Riverside Nature Center

2nd Place - Old River Road RV Resort

3rd Place - Community 1st National Bank
Bluebonnets - *Lupinus texensis*

We all love bluebonnets and it's nice to know where we can anticipate seeing the beautiful blooms in the spring. Marilyn can give us a 'heads up' with her great pictures of the life cycle of this bloomer.

If you look carefully at the ground in areas of the nature center, you can spot the beginnings of this native’s life cycle. Perhaps you can spot, as I did, one of the early bluebonnet rosettes of 5-7 leaves nestled in the rocks lining the Native Plant Society's landscape garden in front of the mature Pinyon pine. It's fun to spot an itsy bitsy bluebonnet that will produce a future bloom.

Check out Marilyn's life cycle pictures, I bet you will begin to look for features of the leaves of other native plant bloomers at the beginning of their life cycles. Certainly you don’t want to mistake or pull up something green that is not a weed but a desirable early spring bloomer.

Learn to be a close observer of nature.

More bluebonnets on next page
Why are some red and some blue?

Seed pods
I prefer a nice assortment of nuts.

Hey, I hear the ambience at The Riverside Nature Center Café is great.

The menu has been pretty meager lately.

Maybe some nice people will donate a few bags of delicious seed.

I hope it's sunflower seeds!

I prefer a nice assortment of nuts.

Please consider donating some seeds for our wildscape feeders this winter. And come by to enjoy the new patio to do some birdwatching!
NEW MEMBERS
11/22/17 thru 12/20/17
(Does not include renewals)

Ralph Carlson

RNC DONORS
11/22/17 thru 12/20/17

Judy & Warren Ferguson
Mollie & Frank Maresh
Patricia Harte
Ward Miller
Helen B. Green
Janet Spangler
June & Samuel Begeman
Karen & Mike Burkett
Louise & William Furbush
Virginia deWolf
Otis Fox

Janet & Kent McKinney
Charlene Werner
Paula & Ernest Smith
Julie Sentell
Angela Frank Santagata
Julie Clay
Pamela Laing
William Jack McAuliff
Katy & Carl Kappel
Kay & Rick Harter
Cindy Anderson
We enjoyed our guests during the holiday open house.
Lots of cookie decorating! Happy Holidays to all!
For a change of pace, starting this month we will do a full year exhibit on the Guadalupe River. A Year of GRACE (Guadalupe River – Arts, Community and Environment) will allow us to truly showcase and celebrate the most vital element of Kerr County.

The river begins its 280-mile journey to the sea as seeps and springs in western Kerr County. The Guadalupe River is not only the connecting thread of Hunt, Ingram, Kerrville and Center Point that grew up along its banks, it is also a source of water for the city of Kerrville as well as a major economic generator.

Learn where you are in relation to the river. What watershed connects you to the Guadalupe? What makes it unique? Please share your pictures and stories. To help with the exhibit please contact Susan Sander ([naturalist@riversidenaturecenter.org](mailto:naturalist@riversidenaturecenter.org)). We are in search of photographs of not only the different ecosystems along the river but the contributing creek watersheds, seasonal views and the wildlife that rely on it.
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.

RNC OFFICERS:

Peter Lewis - President
Rick Ertel - Past President
Barbara Oates - Vice President
Judy Ferguson - Secretary
Kris Bobbitt - Treasurer

BOARD MEMBERS:

Tara Bushnoe
Frank Dunlap
Wynn Kilgore
Malcolm Matthews
Liz Ross
Peggy Thompson