Dear Members and Friends...by Becky Etzler, Executive Director

I would like to thank those of you who attended the Annual Membership Meeting in January. Unfortunately, this meeting does not seem to be a draw for our membership. I would like to think that is because our members are satisfied with how the organization is being run and not a reflection of a lack of interest. For those of you who did not attend, here is a recap.

Congratulations to our newly elected Officers and Directors. Barbara Oates, President - Tara Bushnoe, Vice President - Peter Lewis, Past President - Judy Ferguson, Secretary - Jeff Gelsone, Treasurer Bryan Brown, Bernice Fishcher, Joe Hawkins, Malcolm Matthews, Liz Ross, Peggy Thompson, Jake Walther.

You will learn more about them in upcoming newsletters. I would also like to thank Rick Ertel, Kris Bobbitt, Frank Dunlap who fulfilled their terms and are no longer on the board but will remain committed volunteers and supporters of RNC.

Riverside Nature Center’s roots were firmly established by volunteers. There was no paid staff. Everyone volunteered their time, energy and expertise. Jump forward in time 30 years. Much has changed but what remains constant are our volunteers. I am not saying that the staff is superfluous – I like my job. But I want to impress upon you what it takes to run the nature center successfully. Last year 4,642 volunteer hours were logged. I stress the word “logged.” Countless hours go unreported but unnoticed.

Over 600 hours were reported in taking care of the grounds and gardens. Quarterly Clean Up Days were developed out of necessity but they are great community builders too. Folks who may not otherwise be able to volunteer can give a few hours on a Saturday. Our newest physical feature is the bird blind and viewing area. It was designed and constructed this past year by a long time and truly dedicated volunteer John Quinby. Once the feeding area is more established we hope to draw a diverse group of birds which will delight bird lovers and photographers.

Over 590 volunteer hours were reported in developing and facilitating educational programs.

- The Brown Bag Lunch & Learn was retired this past year and replaced by NEd Talks. A total of 64 programs or meetings geared toward adults were held at RNC with 1,540 people attending.
- The family oriented programs continue to be popular with 1,276 bigs & littles attending the 38 programs offered this past year.
- The monthly Bird Walk and Talk directed by Paul and Deloris Sellin is a much relied upon mainstay.
- Word of mouth and repeat visitors have really boosted the summer Nature Night series.
- This last summer we teamed up with the Hill Country Archaeology Association and put on a mock dig for the kids.
- Over 800 children were given unique opportunities to learn about their environment here at the nature center. The KISD 4th Grade Field Days celebrated its 7th year. This program continues to be a much anticipated field trip by teachers and students alike.
- We teamed up with UGRA this year to expand the 2nd grade science days. With UGRA funding we will be able to include in 2019, not just KISD but Ingram, Hunt, Center Point, the Divide and several private schools. That will equate to almost double the number of 2nd graders and parents with whom we will have an impact.

Here we rack up a lot of volunteer hours.

Continues next page:
According to the logs, 2,621 hours were spent answering the phones, greeting visitors, giving directions, helping with plant and animal identification questions, directing folks to land management resources and even calling AAA for stranded trail walkers. The Guides were also busy walking visitors through the year-long exhibit GRACE: Guadalupe River, Arts, Community & Environment. This was an exploration of our river and its many impacts on our lives.

Our environmental education doesn’t just happen here at the nature center. Volunteers take our mission on the road. You may find us at Louise Hays Park for the City’s Get Outdoors Day, or manning a water station for the Hill Country Bike Tour or taking selfies with a rather bony RNC volunteer during Fright Night. We could be found at the UGRA River Clean Up and at the South Llano Birding Festival.

Our volunteers are truly the best ambassadors.

There are a lot of tasks and duties to perform that are not very visible but are still very essential. We have volunteers managing our recycling, keeping the information kiosks updated, providing care for Shucks, painting, constructing and designing exhibit displays, composting all our organic waste and garden debris, recording rainfall data, and editing and publishing the newsletter. These are just a few but they add up to over 250 hours.

I have to be honest, the 425 hours recorded for special events and fundraisers, are hours that I just could not produce on my own. The planning, promoting, prepping and a bunch of other tasks involved are necessary for successful events. I am thankful for the volunteers who step up and make it happen, whether it was for the Big Give, An Evening in the Garden or the Fiesta de la Luna. Way to go!

And an even bigger “Way to Go!” to our 2018 Run for Riverside 5K Race Director, Liz Ross. This was our biggest race yet, with 262 registrants.

If our volunteers are our roots, then our members are the seeds necessary for our success. 2018 was the inaugural kick off of our newest corporate business membership drive. It is an invitation to all local businesses to become invested with us as Partners in Nature. As a partner the business owner is not only supporting our mission but demonstrating to the public that they have a “greener side” and are willing to take responsibility for our natural world. Our 2018 partners were BK Independent Production, LLC, Century 21 The Hills Realty, Crenwelge Motors, Davidson, Freddle, Espenhover & Overby, PC, La Quinta Real Ranch, LLC, Peter Lewis, Architect & Associates, & Ken Stoepel Ford.

Currently we have 191 active members. The dues associated with a membership are the foundation of our income. It is one of the few revenue sources that does not come with a designator. It is used for our daily operating expenses. If we can boost our membership numbers we are directly boosting our ability to pay the utility bills, purchase copy paper, have coffee and water on hand for volunteers, not to mention pay our staff. An increase in membership revenue would allow us to budget for additional staff, such as an Education Director or a Director of Development. Just think of the heights we could achieve if we had personnel solely focused on our growth. This is a part of our future success. Remember what I said earlier: Members are the seeds of our success.

Though we absolutely need unrestricted funds, such as our membership revenue. We still heavily rely upon the generosity of foundations and the grants they offer. This past year we installed new audio visual equipment purchased by way of a grant from The Community Foundation of the Texas Hill Country. We were able to provide comfortable and eco-friendly outdoor furniture for our visitors use also by way of a grant program of the Community Foundation. The Cailloux Job Program provides the salary to whom we pay Haley Larranga, our webmaster, graphic designer and social media guru.

More next page
Two noteworthy donations received this past year were from the Kerrville Junior Service Guild and the Honor Society of Our Lady of the Hills. The noteworthiness is not because of the amount of the donations but because they demonstrate the level of importance the community places on the work RNC achieves.

We’ve covered what we have accomplished this past year, but what’s on the agenda for this year?

- Expansion of 2nd Grade UGRA Science Days to include county, private & home schools
- Partnership with UGRA to promote EduScape through tours & lectures
- Facelift and general maintenance to outer structures of the Nature Lab, Lawson Store & Visitor Center
- Install low-mobility friendly substrate in portion of parking lot and entrance walkway
- Celebrate…
  ....the 25th anniversary of the planting of the arboretum. This year’s exhibit will be a year-long celebration of the arboretum and trees in general.

Let’s now talk about how you can ensure RNC’s future.

- Planned Giving
- Remember us in your estate planning
- Help us identify community resource business
- Help us identify community resource people
- Watch & listen for grants and other funding opportunities
- Share your support of RNC with friends, community leaders & Kerrville businesses

Until next time...

Becky

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**Adopt a Tree**

- By adopting a tree in our arboretum you will become a citizen scientist.
- You will visit your tree at least once a month and make observations and record them by way of photos or a journal.
- Observations may include when the leaf buds first appeared, when blossoms bloomed, or who is living on or in the tree.
- You will share your data with us so that we can include it in our comprehensive study.
- A marker will be placed at the base of your adopted tree with your name letting everyone know you are observing this tree.

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**What is Your Wish for Nature?**

Pick up your wish leaf at the front desk. Write out your wish and tie it to our Wishing Tree. Visit often to see how your wish fares.
Wednesday, February 6, 2019
Schreiner Star Party 6:30 p.m
Held at Loftis Observatory, if weather permits. The star parties goes on to about midnight and one can come and go at any time. Questions, information contact Dr. Kim Arvidsson, (830) 792-7249

Monday, February 11, 2019
The Texas Waters Specialist Training 4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Our Water is Precious  Learn more about Texas water resources and issues with a webinar by Dr. Andy Sansom of the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment. This is an introduction to the Texas Water Specialist curriculum developed by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The seminar earns AT credit for Master Naturalists but is open to all. For further information call Katy Kappel at 512-589-1498.

Saturday, February 16, 2019
RNC Bird Walk & Talk 8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
Meet Paul and Deloris Sellin in front of the visitor center to go birding along the river trail. All ages are welcome!

Tuesday, February 19, 2019
RNC NEd Talk 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Steve Stoutamire, geologist and archeology enthusiast presents “The Pleistocene Fauna of Kerr County & Central Texas” see more information on page 8.

SAVE THE DATE:
Friday, MARCH 8, 2019, in celebration of International Women’s Day we present
A TREATISE ON FISHING WITH AN ANGLE
A Look at the Enigmatic Dame Juliana Berners, Her Fish, Her Flies by Bob Howells

Friday, MARCH 22, 2019, HOME ON THE RANGE WORKSHOP REGISTRY
https://riversidenaturecenter.org/home-on-the-range-workshop/

MARCH 28, 2019 BIG GIVE SA
Saturday, APRIL 20, 2019, SPRING NATIVE PLANT SALE & FESTIVAL
I have been reading about when the arboretum was planted at the Nature Center about 25 years ago. It is amazing how many more native plants are on the grounds today, isn’t it?

Marilyn has some great pictures of early bloomers like a most aggressive Agarita. There was also a small area that we called the “Deer Diner” before it was fenced. They may have left Agarita alone, but you never know what hungry wildlife will eat. It likes to grow on dry land and there is plenty of that in the Hill Country. The early yellow blooms serve as great host plants for butterflies also. When the berries become bright red in early summer, clever cooks make jelly.

**Agarita** - *Mahonia trifoliolata*

Elbow Bush is another understory plant that can make a dense thicket. It also provides nutritional quality for browsing animals, and can be used for range management. It is sometimes considered a small tree at 15 ft. in height. A small yellow bloom will appear in February before the diamond shaped leaf. Bees, birds, and small mammals are attracted to this plant. The blue-black berries follow the bloom on the female elbow bushes.
What you may see this month at RNC - February 2019
Written by Martha Miesch         Photos by Marilyn Knight

The Mexican Plum has fragrant white blooms that start to show up in early spring followed by a yellow to red berry that attract birds and small mammals. Look for the blooms soon. Mexican plum - *Prunus Mexicana*

![Tree in bloom](image1) ![Blooms](image2) ![Fruit and bark](image3) ![Blossoms](image4)

Texas mountain laurel is definitely a favorite shrub or small tree that is drought tolerant and has a beautiful lavender cluster of blooms. It can be pruned into a small, elegant tree that deer do not touch. It protects the soil from erosion and provides a healthy environment. The shiny dark green leaves and the aromatic purple blue clusters of flowers are a welcome sight beginning in February. Watch for Sulphur butterflies and bees landing on this beautiful shrub. When the flowers go to red-orange hard seeds, they can be fatal to animals and humans.

![Texas mountain laurel - Sophora secundiflora Tree, blossoms, seed, leaves](image5)

*Enjoy what you see this month at RNC.*
Kerrville Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas
February Meeting:
Tuesday, February 12\textsuperscript{th} at 1:30 p.m.
Riverside Nature Center

Susan Tracy will present

“\textbf{Texas Native Ferns}”

Susan has dedicated over 100 acres of her ranch in western Bandera County to the protection, conservation, and restoration of plants native to the Edward’s Plateau. She initially discovered about 10 different species of ferns on her property. Thus began her interest in learning more about and collecting ferns native to Texas. She now has a collection of over 40 of the 107 species known in the state.

In the past, Susan has served on the State Board of the Native Plant Society of Texas. She designed and maintained a demonstration garden at the Medina Public Library using over 120 species of local native plants. She has written for local newspapers and the Texas Gardener magazine.

The program is free and open to the public.

For more information about the Kerrville Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas please go to our web site \texttt{npsot.org/Kerrville}
Riverside Nature Center Presents
February 2019 Ted Talk:
The Pleistocene Fauna Of
Kerr County & Central Texas
February 19, 2019   10:30am-11:30am
Suggested Donation $5.00
Presented by Steve Stoutamire
Thousands Of Years Ago There Were Some Big And Dangerous Critters

Many of the animals that became extinct at the end of the Pleistocene geologic epoch are preserved in world class sites within Texas.

In this talk we will discuss the Imperial Mammoth remains at the Waco Mammoth Site and the remains of extinct buffalo at the Bonfire Shelter site.

Also being discussed will be The Friesenhahn Cave in Bexar County which contains the most remains of one variety of saber tooth cat, as well as Hall’s Cave which has been studied for over 50 years.

The presentation will also discuss the association of the earliest Native Americans with the extinct animals preserved within these sites.
Pick up a Texas Hill Country Trail Passport and explore the Texas Hill Country Trail Region, a geographically diverse 19-county area that abounds with natural resources. Our region embraces the rich history of our forefathers who labored to preserve the past. We welcome you as you discover the history, the culture and the beauty that is the Texas Hill Country Trail Region!

Riverside Nature Center is now participating in Hill Country Trail Passport

The Texas Hill Country Trail Passport highlights thirty-four historic sites, attractions or destinations within our 19 county region. Upon visiting these sites, passport holders will obtain a stamp. When you have acquired twenty-four stamps or more you will receive a Texas Hill Country Trail prize and your name will also be entered in a quarterly drawing for a Weekend Get-A-Way in the Texas Hill Country!

The Texas Hill Country Trail Passport is available at no charge at any of the featured sites or log on to txhillcountrypassport.com and order one on-line.

We have passports available at Riverside Nature Center, and we are ready to stamp your passport at our visitor center, open Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

The Texas Hill Country Trail Region is a non-profit organization that helps communities within its region increase economic growth by stimulating visitor activity to cultural and historical attractions.

The Texas Hill Country Trail Region encompasses 19 counties in Central Texas including: Atascosa, Bandera, Bexar, Blanco, Burnet, Comal, Frio, Gillespie, Hays, Kendall, Kerr, Lampasas, Llano, Medina, Real, Travis, Uvalde, Williamson and Zavala.
Do birds warm their feet on telephone wires?

I think the main reason birds sit on high wires is because it’s a nice resting area. Power lines like trees, provide safe, high perches that allow smaller birds to survey the surrounding area for predators.

Why do the birds face the same direction?

Scientists believe the main reason that birds face the same way on a wire is due to the direction of the wind. Birds have an easier time taking off and landing facing the wind.

Birds sit on power lines, trees, roofs or any perch, facing into the wind. Any other direction would ruffle their feathers. It’s also easier to communicate.

How can birds sit on electrical wires and not be electrocuted?

When birds are only in contact with one power line, they are not forming a complete circuit, so the electricity does not flow through them. Unfortunately, some larger birds, like hawks and eagles, have been electrocuted when they stretch their wings into another power line, completing the circuit.

When you see lots of birds on the wires, is bad weather coming?

Most birds have a special middle-ear receptor called the Vitali organ, which can sense incredibly small changes in barometric pressure. So if the activity at feeders suddenly becomes much more intense a storm may be approaching. Also, birds flying low or lining up on power lines can indicate swiftly falling air pressure.

This information is reprinted from:

http://lansingwbu.blogspot.com/2011/03/do-birds-warm-their-feet-on-telephone.html
HOME ON THE RANGE
Rangeland Curriculum Workshop for K-5 Educators

March 22, 2019
9am - 4pm
Riverside Nature Center, Kerrville
Sponsored by the Welder Wildlife Foundation

The Home on the Range science workshops provide hands-on, active learning with outdoor activities to help teachers make real world connections to science.

Workshops provide engaging, student-centered activities that meet the needs of all students and require the use of higher order thinking skills.

- Receive the digital Rangelands guide containing 27 lessons that fulfill Texas state curriculum requirements. Science-focused activities include connections to social studies, language arts, math, and technology.
- Sample lessons that use a variety of teaching methods including models, journaling, science investigations, games, Internet and computer lessons, and hands-on inquiry.
- Explore concepts including habitat, adaptations, structures and functions, ecosystem interactions, stewardship and more.
- Earn 6 hours CPE credit.

Register by March 15
RNC.kerrville@gmail.com
(830) 257-4837
Fee: $20.00

What Teachers Say
“This workshop will affect my teaching for years to come.”
“Well done and well organized! Differentiated for different ages & Gifted and Talented. Lots of resources & extensions.”
“I love the Rangelands Educational Guide. I will be using this a lot.”
“The most fun I have had at a workshop in years!”

www.riversidenaturecenter.org
www.welderwildlife.org

Welder Wildlife Foundation
In January we had a lot of help during our Clean-up Day, and we want to thank all of the volunteers that came. Because of your help, the projects we had planned were carried out and we are ready for Spring growth.

Jacqui & James Partain  
Sharon Hixson
RNC DONORS
12/26/18 thru 1/28/19

Janet Spangler
Helen B. Green
Dorothy Leslie

Andy & Laurie Pesez
Mr. & Mrs. John Farmer
Celeste Hamman & Larry Smithers

RNC New Members
12/27/18 thru 1/28/19

Kim Berthold
Bryan Brown
Lois Gaines

Claire Nelms
Bob & Brady Hanson

Partners in Nature

Crenwelge Motors
Davidson, Freedle, Espenhover & Overby, PC

BK Independent Production, LLC
La Quinta Real Ranch, LLC

PETER LEWIS, Architect & Associates
Ken Stoepel Ford
Century 21 The Hills Realty
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 advance the stewardship of our environment. 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.