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

Summer vacation is coming to an end. Parents’ minds are preoccupied with what school supplies are needed and whether or not last year’s shoes still fit those ever growing feet. Kids are already lamenting the loss of carefree days at the pool and just hanging with their friends.

Don’t let the end of summer doldrums get you down. Back to school doesn’t mean outdoor fun stops. Parents and kids alike need to take at least 30 minutes of every day to step outside and recreate that carefree summertime feeling. This exercise is essential for both mind and body.

The nature center offers the ideal place to practice this remedy. A quiet stroll under the canopy of the arboretum can open a multitude of discovery opportunities. Tracking the call of a Carolina Chickadee until it is found in the upper reaches of the Mexican plum. Following a line of harvester ants carrying heavy loads of seeds and discovering their nest entrance. Sitting quietly in the pollinator garden and watching the butterflies nectar on the different flowers, then noticing which flower seems to be the favorite of a particular kind of butterfly.

Each of these activities require one thing: becoming unfettered from the constraint of time. Just allow yourself to enjoy this moment as if it were an endless summer day. Think of it as an awake catnap; refreshing and revitalizing.

That sense of connectivity that nature inspires is something we all need to experience on a regular basis. Whether you kayak on the river, climb up or sit under a tree, or sift through the leaf litter and observe all the hidden critters, what’s important is that you are in the moment and a member of the natural world.

Until next time…

Observe with a summer-time frame of mind
(Leaffooted bugs, nymphs and Twice-stabbed stinkbugs dining on American beautyberry)
August 2019 Riverside Nature Center Upcoming Events/Programs

Thursday, August 1, 6pm-7pm
RNC Nature Night
“Trash To Treasure”
Create a unique, artistic “treasure” using the “trash” collected during the Guadalupe River Clean Up. Free Family Fun. Donations are welcome.

Thursday, August 8, 6pm-7pm
RNC Nature Night
“It’s a Bug’s Life”
Join us in a hands on exploration of insects. Free Family Fun. Donations are welcome.

Thursday, August 8, 10am-12pm
UGRA Eduscape
Dr. Chrissie Segar, a turf grass specialist will talk about the benefits of using turf grass in your landscape and different ways they can help the environment.

Monday, August 12, 4pm-5:30pm
Texas Water Specialist Training
The importance of Playas in Texas High Plains with Don Kahl, Migratory Game Bird Specialist.

Save The Date:

Saturday, September 7, 8am Start Time
Run For Riverside 5K
Registration for our annual 5K is open! Visit our website for more information.
The Nature Center is looking for volunteers for this event. Please contact Becky Etzler at (830) 257-4837.

Saturday, October 5, 9am-2pm
Fall RNC Native Plant Sale
Join us for our annual Plant Sale and Festival.

Members only Pre sale: Friday, October 4, 4:30pm-6pm
Run & Walk
Sept. 7th @ 8am

Pre-Race Warm Up, Refreshments, Awards, and Door Prizes!

Registration Prices:
528 until Aug. 12th
530 Aug. 12th-Sept. 6th
535 Sept. 7th

Contact:
Liz Ross
runforriverside@gmail.com

To Register
go to:
riversidenaturecenter.org

This out and back course runs on the Kerrville river trail along the Guadalupe River with plenty of shade and water stops. All proceeds will go to benefit the Riverside Nature Center.

Strollers and dogs are welcome.
Registered entrants are guaranteed a race T-shirt!

Please mark your calendar and plan to join us:

**Fall Native Plant Sale & Festival**

**Saturday - October 5, 2019**

9am-2pm

We know it’s hot but we are thinking about Fall. Texas Master Naturalists – Hill Country Chapter & RNC are making plans for a fun day at Riverside Nature Center.

**Native Plant Sale**

Volunteers are working with local nurseries to bring you the best selection available for our Native Plant sale.

It begins at 9am so plan to come early for the best selection!

- A special pre-sale will be held
  - 4:30pm-6pm Friday October 4th, for RNC & HCMN members only.

- Non-members can join RNC at the presale & start shopping.
- All net proceeds benefit the RNC & TMN-HCC education efforts.

**Informative Exhibits & Displays**

As always, we could not do this without our wonderful volunteers.

If you can help us please contact the office.

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Riverside Nature Center Present:

**Nature Nights**

Thursdays 6:00pm-7:00pm

June 6: Life Underwater
June 13: Let’s Make Seed Balls
June 20: Life Underground
June 27: “Wings Of Life” Disney Film
July 11: Backyard Birds
July 18: Wildlife Forensics
July 25: Wild Nights
August 1: Trash To Treasure
August 8: It’s A Bug’s Life

Riverside Nature Center & UGRA present:

**EduScape Talk & Tour**

The UGRA EduScape is an award winning demonstration garden that contains numerous examples of water conservation & stormwater detention practices that you can incorporate into your own landscaping. The EduScape Talk & Tour will feature presentations by leading experts, followed by a tour of the EduScape.

- **April 15th *1 pm* Billy Knifffen**
  Join us to discuss how “Every Raindrop Counts.” Billy will also cover rainwater catchments & rain gardens, & how they can be used.

- **May 23rd *1 pm* Pam Linstead**
  As a member of the Master Gardeners program & a member of the EduScape design team, Pam will teach on pervious hardscapes & the benefits of xeriscaping.

- **June 25th *10 am* Zsobia Wooten**
  Using her knowledge from Native American Seed, Zsobia’s talk on native plants & wildflowers will help you to choose the perfect flowers for your landscape.

- **August 8th *10 am* Dr. Chrisie Segars**
  As a turf grass specialist, Dr. Segars will talk about the benefits of using turf grass in your landscape & different ways they can help the environment.

- **September 4th *10 am* Pete Van Dyck**
  Would you like to know more about permaculture or contours & swales? Pete will explain what these are & how to utilize them in your landscape.

All Talks & Tours will be held in the UGRA classroom
125 Lehmann Dr.

**RSVP to:**
Riverside Nature Center
(830)257-4837
rnc.kerrville@gmail.com
Spaces are limited
There are some “Great Whites” in the summer months and the Nature Center has such terrific diversity of native plants. You are sure to find some of the nicest of these whites like Beebrush, Daucosma, Kidneywood, Texas Bindweed, and Frog Fruit on the grounds.

**Beebrush** is a slender, diffuse shrub that can be 3–9 ft. tall and found in dry limestone soils throughout our area. The stems are usually sparsely covered with leaves. Sometimes you will see bundles of smaller leaves in the main leaves. Flower Spikes, sometimes 2 1/2 inches long, rise from the axis of the leaves and the actual flowers are tiny. You can see these bloomers from March to October.

**Daucosma** is another white bloomer that can grow up to 3 1/2 ft. tall and can be found on dry soils. The leaves can be 4 inches long in divided brackets. The individual flowers are about 1/8 inch in diameter. You can see them blooming in June and July.

**Kidneywood** is another potentially tall plant that can max at 10 ft. These plants are very fragrant and attract bees so they can be valuable pollinators. We can count on seeing this white bloomer from May to September.
Texas Bindweed with its small white bloom can be a disturbing vine that climbs and twists through other ground cover and is often considered a pest. You can see them from April to October. Many of the leaves are heart-shaped which is an attractive attribute.

Frogfruit has always been a personal favorite because of my granddaughter. It’s a low plant of 3 to 5 inches high and a common invader of yards so it was not a surprise to see it on the nature center grounds. The flower heads look unusually white next to a brown base and it blooms from May to October.

When Stella was a little toddler she liked to walk out in our country retirement home land and I would tell her what the names of blooms were of the wild flowers. When I spotted frogfruit she immediately chimed in “I don’t like frogfruit” thinking it was a fruit she was supposed to eat. I never see this bloomer without hearing her voice.

Check out the great whites at the nature center. It will be fun to boast that you found them all.
Porcupines Here?
By Katy Kappel, Master Naturalist & RNC Riverside Guide

In the last 6 months, I have had porcupines enter my life 7 times. My neighbor saw one in my driveway, near Harper and Jackson Rd. Another was up a tree on the other side of Harper. Animal Control said they “don’t deal with porcupines”, but to “bring your dog in the house.” Texas Parks and Wildlife has noted that they seem to be occurring more often in Central Texas, where they used to be more a West or Northwest Texas mammal.

A herbivore, they waddle slowly, looking for new sprouts on the ground. They are good climbers and can spend long periods in the trees, stripping bark off and eating it. Babies nurse for up to seven weeks, but are soon climbing, eating plants, and raising their quills when danger threatens. They have no predators now, except vehicles. Many of the 66 sighted in Central Texas this year were dead on the interstate. You can report sightings on iNaturalist. https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?place_id=18&subview=table&taxon_id=44026

It is difficult to remove spines, and if your dog gets it, it can be a $400 veterinary bill. They continue to work themselves in deeper if not removed. An animal best avoided.

More information: https://tpwd.texas.gov/publications/nonpwdpubs/introducing_mammals/porcupines/

Katy Kappel, Hill Country Master Naturalist and RNC Riverside Guide has a thirst for finding out as much as she can about the world around her, and shares her findings with us often. She originally sparked our recent short articles about “Why?” facts about nature.

July Nature Nights
During July Nature Nights visitors learned about the different birds you might see in your own backyard in a talk led by bird enthusiast Crystal Ledezma.

Johnny Arredondo with TPWD taught us how to identify animals by using their scat, tracks, skins, & skulls.

To finish off July, Susan Sander gave a presentation on the different sights and sounds of our nocturnal animals.
Hold your meeting or event at RNC

You may not know about the use of the nature center for meetings, seminars and presentations by other agencies and organizations. You may drive into our parking area and find most of the spaces already occupied; that usually means there is a group meeting in the classrooms. Since the remodeling of the nature center in 2012, many organizations have held their meetings or presentations with us.

Native Plant Society of Texas Kerrville Chapter has a monthly meeting and presentation on the second Tuesday of the month from 1 – 3 p.m. and the public are invited to attend.

The Hill Country Archeological Association meets on the third Saturday of every other month and invite all interested folks to come to their public presentations that begin at 1 p.m.

Different committees and sub committees of the Hill Country Master Naturalists regularly meet at the nature center.

These three organizations are Riverside Nature Center members. We encourage all organizations and clubs to consider joining as members. Annual memberships support our operational expenses, and gives groups a comfortable and interesting setting for their events and meetings. The rental fees are most reasonable and our audio visual equipment is quite impressive. Parking access and low mobility friendly walkways and restrooms are a plus. Also, light refreshments are conveniently served with our kitchen close by for preparation.

Other regular renters are the Philanthropic Education Opportunities Sisterhood local chapters. They have meetings, presentations, and get-togethers to socialize and inspire each other regularly and seasonally at the nature center. They enthusiastically reserve the classrooms in advance to accommodate their growing number of members.

Area homeowners associations have taken advantage of our meeting space as well as the Chamber of Commerce. Kerr Leadership holds part of their annual environmental day here at the nature center. Even the Sons of the American Revolution find the accommodations perfect for their annual social.

Riverside Nature Center is becoming a central hub in our community. We offer something for everyone. The next time you are planning an event for your family or your book club, you may want to consider Riverside Nature Center as your venue.

“We love the convenience and beautiful setting for our gatherings.”
What do you feed summertime birds?

Nectar For Hummingbirds
Attracting hummingbirds to your yard can be as easy as hanging a hummingbird feeder and filling it with a sugar water solution (1/4 cup sugar per cup of water). There’s no reason to add food coloring to turn the water red; you’re providing a substitute for flower nectar, which is clear. Don’t locate the feeder in direct sun, as the sugar water will spoil rapidly. In the shade your sugar water should last two or three days, except for very hot days, in which case it’s wise to change your hummingbird feeder water daily.

Because mold readily grows in sugar water and can attach to feeders, make sure to take the feeder apart when cleaning. To clean your feeder, take it apart and use a dishwasher on a hot setting or hand wash either with soap and boiling water or with a dilute bleach solution (no more than 1 part bleach to 9 parts water), and rinse thoroughly.

Oranges For Orioles
Flashy orange orioles are even simpler to lure in for backyard viewing pleasure. Just slice an orange in half and set it on a platform feeder or skewer it on your feeder pole. Other fruits will work too, such as cherries or grapes. Orioles seem to prefer dark fruit and will ignore yellow cherries or green grapes. They also LOVE grape jelly.

Sunflower Seeds For Grosbeaks
Grosbeaks are one of the best reasons to keep your seed feeders stocked in summer. The males are handsome, decked out in black-and-white formal wear with a pop of color (a red chest patch for Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, warm cinnamon–orange bodies for Black-headed Grosbeaks). Females of both species are drab mottled brown and may be confused with finches or sparrows. Grosbeaks are seed-eating machines. They’ll eat millet but their favorite is good ol’ black-oil sunflower seeds.

Mealworms For Bluebirds
Many people entice bluebirds to take up residence on their property by putting up nest boxes (also called birdhouses). If you have bluebirds in your neighborhood, you can get an up-close look at them by setting a few mealworms out on your platform feeder. Bluebirds are insectivores, and an offering of a few mealworms—alive or dried—is a protein boost that’s hard to resist, especially during the energy-intensive breeding season.

Go to https://www.allaboutbirds.org/heres-what-to-feed-your-summer-bird-feeder-visitors/ to read the whole article.
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Peterson Health
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 natural 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.

Riverside Nature Center
150 Francisco Lemos St.
Kerrville, Texas 78028
(830)257-4837
www.riversidenaturecenter.org

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http://riversidenaturecenter.org/index/about-rnc/donate/general-donation-form/

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