Thank you to all who attended our Annual Membership Meeting. It always excites me to look back and see all we have accomplished together at Riverside in the last year. Hats off to Judy Ferguson and Peggy Thompson for their years of service on the board and we look forward to their continued work with our school children.

We welcome our newest members to the board, Becca Bigott and Zoe Van Dyke. They bring with them new skills and energy that will serve Riverside Nature Center well. The board looks forward to 2020!

We move from the year of the tree to a year of the birds with the opening of the new exhibit, Alfred Woodcock and The Return of the Birds. We believe this is the year RNC will truly take flight! Becky has made membership and business partnerships a priority. The board is right there with her. If every member just brought in one new member, we would double in size, but the affects would far more than double our community impact. Think on that. Commit to it and continue to be ambassadors for RNC in the community.

Specifically, we need help in identifying businesses and resources both in this community and even statewide that would support our mission. Our flight to even greater heights will need financial support from resources we have not yet tapped into. These resources will allow us to continue to give the Nature Center a facelift by continuing the work on the Nature Lab, beginning the renovations of the Lawson Store and new resources will allow for the expansion of adult and youth educational opportunities. Speaking of new educational opportunities, we are excited about the funding of a new environmental educator to guide these new programs to success.

Thanks as always to Becky and our marvelous staff for leading the way in making Riverside Nature Center a powerful voice for the advancement of the stewardship of our environment. The sky beckons us to fly higher and with even greater success in 2020! Come fly with us!
RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER UPCOMING EVENTS & PROGRAMS

Saturday, February 1, 8am-12pm
RNC Winter Clean Up
Join the Building & Grounds Committee & help us clean up the grounds. Your help is appreciated!

Monday, February 3, 4pm-6pm
Texas Waters Specialist training

Saturday, February 8, 1pm-3pm
Do’s & Don’ts of Tree Care
Join ISA Certified Arborist, Karen Rockoff, as she explains the Do’s & Don’ts of pruning as well as proper equipment sanitizing. For more information visit page 3.

Tuesday, February 11, 1pm-3pm
NPSOT Chapter Meeting
“Native Plants for Native Wildlife” presented by Kelly Conrad Simon, TPWD

Saturday, February 15, 8am-9:30am
Bird Walk & Talk and Backyard Bird Count
Meet Paul & Deloris Sellin at the RNC Visitor Center for a birding adventure and Backyard Bird Count.

Tuesday, February 18, 1pm-2pm
NEd Talk: “Gleaning Wildflowers”
Susan Longacre & Barbara Marquer will be giving a presentation on how to glean wildflowers and why you should do it. For more information visit page 3.

Thursday, February 20, 6pm-8pm
Bird Trivia Night @ Pint & Plow
Show off your bird trivia skills. Register online: https://riversidenaturecenter.org/2020/01/23/bird-trivia-night/ or in person at Riverside Nature Center. For more information visit page 3.

Save The Date!
March 26
#BIGGIVE2020

For more information on upcoming events visit:
http://riversidenaturecenter.org/about-rnc/calander/
Bird Trivia Night!
Thursday February 20
6 to 8pm
@ Pint & Plow
332 Clay St.
Test your skills on everything from bird identification to birds in pop culture! This will be fun for birders of all skill levels.
Get ready for:
Fun prizes!
Funny team names!
A chance to meet fellow bird lovers in the area!
The night will be MC’d by Justin McClure of The Buck
Register your team at https://riversidenaturecenter.org/bird-trivia-night/ or visit Riverside Nature Center.
$30 per team
Maximum team size is 6 people
Registration deadline is February 13

Tree Do’s & Don’ts
Presentation by ISA Certified Arborist, Karen Rockoff
Saturday, February 8th
1pm-3pm
Have you ever wondered what is the best thing for your tree’s root system? Karen will show what goes on beneath the surface of your tree & give you a small glimpse into the things people can’t see until the soil has been removed.

NEd Talk:
Gleaning:
Collecting, Cleaning & Storing Seeds of Native Hill Country Plants
Tuesday, February 18
1pm-2pm
Want to know something about gleaning seeds? What do you do? How do you do it? When do you glean? How do you know when a seed is ready to be gleaned? How do you care for gleaned seeds before planting season arrives? And in the end- why do we glean seeds?

These are some of the questions that will be answered during the NEd talk in the classrooms at RNC. “SEEDS- the Fruit of the Matter” will be presented by Master Naturalists Susan Longacre and Barbara Marquer. This presentation marks the kick-off of the 2020 gleaning season.
The Gleaners Handbook is available on RNC’s website.
$5.00 Suggested Donation
In the early years, focus at the Nature Center was the planting of the arboretum. Aldo Leopold, famed environmentalist and father of American wildlife conservation was an inspiration for much of that early planting.

Leopold led generations to understand and appreciate wildscapes. The term wildscape is a deliberate adaptation of “landscape.” We learn that by altering and maintaining the habitat, refuge and food for wildlife is created.

Texas Parks and Wildlife encourages landowners to restore habitat for birds, butterflies, reptiles and even small mammals. Riverside Nature Center is a certified backyard habitat. To learn more, https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/wildlife_diversity/wildscapes/wildscape_certification.phtml
As you can see now, fallen leaves blanket the ground. This blanket provides a healthy winter environment that shelters and feeds not only the soil but many small creatures. Many of our insect pollinators overwinter in and on plant stalks, twigs and leaf litter.

Some may think our gardens are “messy” right now. But those in the “know” understand that all that “mess” is high in wildlife value. Besides, it won’t be long before the spring wildflowers emerge above the carpet of leaves.

If wildscapes are of interest to you, the Kerrville Chapter of the Native Plant Society has a guest speaker this month from Texas Parks and Wildlife, Urban Wildlife Biologist Kelly Conrad Simon. She will present: “Native Plants for Native Wildlife”. Ms. Simon and Noreen Damude authored the book Texas Wildscapes: Gardening for Wildlife, Texas Parks and Wildlife Press, 1999.
On Saturday, January 11th we welcomed nearly 100 people to the red carpet rollout and grand opening of our new exhibit, Return of the Birds. Guests enjoyed walking the red carpet, viewing the exhibit while conversing with the design team, viewing the beautiful canvas prints available for sale by local artists, snacking on popcorn, & listening to a very informative talk given by Dr. Chris Distel. If you missed the grand opening don’t fret! The exhibit will be up year round. A variety of bird-themed activities are planned throughout the year.
Thank you for your contributions

Our deepest appreciation and thanks are extended to the following for their generous contributions to this exhibit.

Lowe’s Home Improvement
River Oaks Framing Co.
Ziegler Glass
Randee and Grant Thompson
Carol DiQuilio’s Nature Photography
Julian Teal Graphic Design
Arlon Motsch
Dale Bargmann

A huge thank you to all the volunteers who brought this exhibit to life.

Paul Auten  Bridget Langdale
Richard Coleman  Crystal Ledezma
Teresa Coleman  Haley Maples
Frank Garcia  Susan Sander
Paula Harley  Matt Thurlow
Katy Kappel  Van Turner
Welcome Lisa Barrett
Environmental Educator

Last month we announced Gaylynne Robinson as our new Environmental Educator. However, due to personal reasons Gaylynne was unable to continue in her role. We are so thankful to Lisa for her willingness to step in & take over the position.

Greetings my fellow friends of nature out there!

I am honored to fill the role of Environmental Educator for Riverside Nature Center. I’ve been a life-long student and steward of nature and sharing it’s magic brings me great joy!

Some of my favorite subjects are: fossils, native plants and insects. I’m also very interested in ethnobotany, the study of how plants were used by Native Americans and I’d love to bring in speakers on this topic. I eagerly welcome your input on what topics interest you.

Another major focus of mine is encouraging people of all abilities to get outdoors. I hope to always offer activities that encourage inclusion by those with limited mobility. I’ve seen how being out in nature greatly improves one’s health and well-being, regardless of age.

Have you visited our new “Return of the Birds” exhibit yet? It’s an interactive display on our native birds and their habitats, with focus on the many birds that have been lost recently. It also prompts one to ask the questions, what happened to cause their disappearance and what can we do about it? Their loss impacts us all, beyond just having fewer birds to observe at our feeders. From insect and rodent control to fertilizing trees, birds play vital roles in ecosystems.

John Muir said, “In every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks.” Whether it’s inspiring you to plant your own pollinator garden, having fun in a workshop building mason bee homes or creating a birdbath, I’m energized to begin this journey together. I look forward to sharing the healing joy of nature with each one of you!
Become a Hill Country Master Gardener (HCMG)

The Hill Country Master Gardener (HCMG) program is a service organization helping the AgriLife Extension Service meet the horticultural needs of the community. Any resident of Kerr, Gillespie, Bandera, Medina or Kendall county, who wishes to become a Master Gardener will need to complete an application and a background check.

Get more information and download the application at the website (below)

Certification Includes:
50 hours of Gardening Education

- Earth-Kind Landscaping
- Plant Development
- Plant Propagation
- Soil Characteristics
- Composting
- Water Conservation
- Native Plants
- Hands on Workshops
- Master Gardener Manual
- Refreshments
- Garden Tours (March 5 & March 31)
- Landscape Principles
- Integrated Pest Management
- Plant Diseases
- Garden Safety
- Weed I.D.
- Lawn Care
- Vegetables & Herbs

“Texas A&M Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity”.

www.hillcountrymastergardeners.org
How to know the birds

By Susan Sander

How do you learn things? With the Internet literally at our fingertips on our cell phones or within a shout out to Siri (that body-less ‘intelligent assistant’) it’s easy to get information.

But knowledge is the “awareness or familiarity gained by experience of a fact or situation”. John James Audubon gained his knowledge about birds by actually shooting them, then posing and painting them – a bird in the hand does yields a great deal of information.

Florence A. Merriam used opera glasses to study and draw birds for her field guide in 1889 (one of the first such books).

Today bird feeders and baths bring birds closer for observation and help provide us a window into their behavior.

Take the winter appearance cedar waxwings now flying around the Hill Country. Watching a flock descend into a thicket of berry-laden ligustrums and stripping it bare in a very short time tells me it’s an important food source. But how many berries does each bird eat? Well that came from a Google search of biologists who actually observed the birds feeding in an aviary, and then counting seeds in their poop (probably done by a grad student). Answer: each cedar waxwing can eat about 600 berries a day! As they migrate north (after mulberry season here) they follow the hatch out of forest tent caterpillars and switch their diet!

Despite all the things I’ve learned about birds from a wide variety of watcher-authors, not everything is known about birds and how they live their lives. The more observers the more likely someone is going to spot a new bird in a strange place or a new behavior.

A field guide can easily have a paragraph of all kinds of details but since birds pass by quickly here’s an easy trick: just focus on 4 basic clues: Pattern, Area, Size, Shape.

Example: a bird landed in my urban area birdbath on January 4th with its back to me. Pattern of the colors was pale, reddish gray with red-orange feathers pointing up from the head – so I quickly assumed it was a cardinal. But something didn’t mesh with the 4 pairs of cardinals that fly in and out daily. This bird was certainly the same shape and size but something was different. Then it turned its head – and there it was: instead of a cardinal’s black mask and orange beak this one had a reddish mask and yellow beak (with a hook tip) that belongs to a pyrrhuloxia (cardinal cousin).

(Cont. on Next Page)
Not exactly a city bird, but occasionally they show up along the river – and a yard bird for me.

Field guides are handy – but when I’m out walking I opt for the Audubon Bird Guide app (it’s free and doesn’t require data to use). I still need to have a basic idea what bird I think I’m looking at but I really like being able play the calls. It was a great way to introduce my very young grand-niece and nephews to what birds were in their yard.

Nothing takes the place of personal observation. And I’ve learned to expect the unexpected. Birds don’t read the field guides; they are constantly adapting to an ever-changing world due to human land uses and weather shifts. So the more observers, the more we learn about the overall state of the birds’ world, and hopefully how we can be better bird-neighbors.

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**NOW HIRING**

**Custodial & Building Maintenance Attendant**

The Custodial and Building Maintenance Attendant is a part time position that is responsible for the implementation of daily tasks related to the care of the buildings, and equipment under direction of the Operations Manager and/or Executive Director. Work schedule may be flexible, totaling 20 hours per week. Occasional weekend and evening hours may vary due to special events.

Riverside Nature Center is a drug-free workplace. Prospective employees may be asked to undergo drug testing and background screening.

Full job description may be found at https://riversidenaturecenter.org/employment-opportunities/. Apply in person at 150 Francisco Lemos St.
Our Bird Walk & Talk will be **February 15th from 8:00am-9:30am**. However, this month we’re shaking things up a bit and will be participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count. Paul & Deloris Sellin will be leading the group on their usual walk along the Guadalupe River Trail, but all of the observations made that morning will be entered in and counted towards the count for this years Great Backyard Bird Count. Bird enthusiasts of all ages & experience are welcome & encouraged to join in on the free fun. Meet Paul & Deloris in front of the RNC visitor center at 8am to begin the walk.
RNC NEW MEMBERS
12/24/19 thru 1/21/20
Virginia Verdecanna
Christine Woods

RNC DONORS
12/24/19 thru 1/21/20
Bob & Brady Hansen
Carolyn Johnson
Dr. & Mrs. Sam Junkin
Claire Nelms
Vanessa Potter
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Marion Worthington

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CENTURY 21
The Hills Realty

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Real Ranch, LLC

Rockoff Tree Solutions
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

RNC OFFICERS

Barbara Oates - President
Peter Lewis - Past President
Tara Bushnoe - Vice President
Judy Ferguson - Secretary
Jeff Gelsone - Treasurer

BOARD MEMBERS

Liz Ross
Bryan Brown
Joe Hawkins
Jake Walther
Bernice Fischer
Peggy Thompson
Malcolm Matthews

We would love it if you will Like us on Facebook
(Riverside Nature Center Association)

and follow us on Instagram
(riversidenaturecenter)