



## Coordinators Corner

We will be learning about trees, Monarchs, caves and water in the months ahead between all the great hikes and outings. Guests are always welcome at meetings so invite a friend.

Let me know if you have an idea for a program for our April or May meetings. We have such adventurous and knowledgeable members, maybe one of you would like to share some of your experiences with the group.

Remember - if you coordinate an outing you will get your name entered in the drawing at the end of the year for a cash prize.

Kathy Rogers

Dues are due! Bring your \$20 membership dues to the January meeting to ensure you are on the Yahoo contact list.

## Meetings in Review

Here is what we've been up to lately.

**September meeting...** Planning meeting and potluck

**October meeting...** Kathy Rogers shared the history of scarecrows and then we created our own out of a variety of items.

**November meeting...** Melissa Porter from TPWD shared information on paddling trails and river etiquette for Texas rivers and lakes.

**December meeting...** Our annual holiday party celebrating the season with food, gifts donated to the Women's Shelter and good company.

### TOWN San Marcos Coordinators

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## Upcoming Outings

Put on your shoes, roll up your sleeves and come out with us!! Here are the events planned for the next few months. Please RSVP the event email if attending. Be sure to visit our website and calendar [www.townsanmarcos.org](http://www.townsanmarcos.org/)



**Weekly hikes-** Monday morning hikes led by Donna. Contact Donna at [dbrowning@centurytel.net](mailto:dbrowning@centurytel.net) to be added to the list to receive weekly notices.

**January 15 - MLK hike at Reimers Ranch** Carpool from San Marcos to the ranch, hike and stop for lunch on the way back. Contact Susan to RSVP. [susanporter-smith@hotmail.com](mailto:susanporter-smith@hotmail.com)

**May 24 - 28 - Camping & Kayaking at S. Llano State Park** - Hang out in a swimming hole, float through the park on a tube, fish in the river or in a pond, hike or mountain bike for miles, visit four great bird blinds, kayak the beautiful S. Llano River practice your Dutch oven skills, and visit with TOWNies. Contact Carrie at [cclass@verizon.net](mailto:cclass@verizon.net) for more details.

More to come as outings are planned.

## Plan an Outing, Win \$50 Cash!!

Send the details of your outing to our new Yahoo Group to reach all TOWN members.



It's simple! Include the Who, What, When, and Where and you will be entered in the \$50 cash prize drawing at the end of the year. If you need assistance in getting into the group, come to the next meeting for help.

## Community Events:

Free birding hikes occur on the first Saturday of the month led by Stephen Ramirez. For details, go to <http://birdsiview.org/>

Local Trail Work Volunteers needed: see <http://www.smgreenbelt.org/NewsEvents.htm> for locations. For more information visit <http://www.smgreenbelt.org/SMNaturalAreas.htm>

San Marcos Farmers Market: From 8 to noon every Saturday in the town square

## Scary Scarecrows - October 12

Scarecrow history (and there is one!) was shared and then we all got down to making our own. Kathy brought lots of items to help us build our scarecrows. Although they all showed lots of character, Carols was voted top dog or scarecrow.



## Disc Golf - October 5

This was so much fun in May, we decided to do it again. The course was fun and challenging, especially when the sun went down and we finished the last few holes in the dark.

The baskets are lit so we only had to find our way from one to the next and then follow where the discs went so we could find them in the dark. Next time, if we do a night course (which we all agreed would be fun), we will add glow in the dark tape to the discs and bring a flashlight!



## Outdoors Across the Pond

We have become an international site! I got a request from Will Tottle asking that a UK website be include on our Links page. Wonderful Wellies reviews and evaluates all types of outdoor gear, clothing, but especially Wellington boots. They even recommend the best bridal Wellingtons, for those of you planning a wedding.

From Wellies to guides on waterproof rucksacks, rigger boots, camp lanterns, sleeping bags and check lists (even glamping check lists), they have it all.

Check it out! - Judy T.

<https://www.wonderfulwellies.co.uk/>

[http://www.townsanmarcos.org/town\\_san\\_marcos\\_004.htm](http://www.townsanmarcos.org/town_san_marcos_004.htm)





## Exploring Pearl in San Antonio

A beautiful winter day was the perfect time for Townies to enjoy the riverwalk and the old Pearl Brewery complex in San Antonio.



Even though Pearl beer is no longer brewed here, the property has been transformed into a great place to explore with good food and beautiful grounds.



## Frostweed

Frostweed (White Crown-beard, Ice Plant, *Verbesina virginica* L.) is found in Texas growing in rich loamy soils near creeks or in the shade of very large trees of the Edwards Plateau.

It has an erect, unbranched stem that can be as tall as 3 to 6 feet. The leaves have a slightly toothed margin and the stem has 4 to 5 wings. The white to greenish white ray and disc flowers are found in heads which are about six inches across. Frostweed blooms from August to November. The name Frostweed is given due to the appearance of ice that can be seen when the stems split after a hard freeze.



This Frostweed was seen among many growing in the woods at the home of TOWN member, Judy A. when the temps dipped into the 20's in January.

## The Wildlands - You Tube video

I think many of you would enjoy this 22 minute film from Austin Water Quality. Most of what is shown is on their Water Quality Lands in Buda.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IbBZckzUovE>

If you google Austin Water Quality and look for their calendar, you will find hikes and volunteer opportunities. That giant whirlpool in Onion Creek one often sees on their hikes. Now would be a good time to see it.

These all affect the Edwards Aquifer and our river even though Austin is on another portion of the aquifer. I understand that the line between the portions is not as defined as once thought. - Donna B.

## Campfire and Wienie Roast - November 18

A minor cold front moved in just in time to enjoy an evening campfire and wienie roast. We gathered on the banks of the San Marcos river and enjoyed a game of bocce ball (new game to many) while the fire burned down to a good roasting temperature. Hot dogs and sausages were roasted and devoured. After dark, we roasted marshmallows and made smores.



## Christmas Party - December 14

Our annual Christmas Party was generously hosted once again by Ann A., at her home in Martindale. Judy T. and Kate C. volunteered to make gumbo and Bonnie F. made a vegetarian version. The eats were fantastic.

In lieu of a gift exchange we continued our tradition of donating items to stuff the Christmas Stockings (made by Ann and her sewing group) for residents at the Women's Shelter.



The winner of our annual drawing of Townies who planned events during the year was won by Susan McGee - congrats Susan!





## Benefits of Urban Trees

Research has linked the presence of urban trees to...

The Nature Conservancy

- REDUCING RATES** of cardiac disease, strokes, and asthma due to improved air quality
- PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY** including habitat for migrating birds and pollinators
- REDUCING OBESITY LEVELS** by increasing physical activity including walking and cycling
- MANAGING STORMWATER**, keeping pollutants out of waterways, and reducing urban flooding
- COOLING** city streets by 2-4° F, reducing deaths from heat and cutting energy use
- INCREASING** neighborhood property values
- FILTERING** up to a third of fine particle pollutants within 300 yards of a tree
- REDUCING STRESS** by helping interrupt thought patterns that lead to anxiety and depression

Come on Spring!



Photo by Judy A.

## A "Natural" Puzzle

Here is a nature puzzle for you. If you think you know the answer, email it to me [layne1120@gmail.com](mailto:layne1120@gmail.com) (Last puzzle answer: a big horn sheep)

My greek and latin names mean beautiful swimmer and savory. Yes, I am tasty. I put up a good fight when captured and can inflict a painful wound so beware!

I wear my armor on the outside with blue, red and orange colors. As I grow, I shed and regrow my exoskeleton about 25 times in my lifetime.

As a female, I carry my 2 million eggs in a spongelike mass and reproduce 2 or 3 times in a year.

My habitat ranges from Cape Cod to Argentina.

Now that I've told you all about me, can you guess who I am?