



# News of the WILD



A Newsletter of Project WILD, Communications Division

May 2008



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*Edited by Karen Marks*

## Kiki's Comments

You never know where a twisted path may lead. ... In the early 1990s a volunteer trail guide was taught to play *Oh Deer!* with schoolchildren in the parking lot of a nature preserve. The fire for science education was lit, and four years later that volunteer was a certified classroom science teacher. But the classroom couldn't contain her for long, and she found her way back to the same nature preserve, this time as education coordinator. Now she was teaching those volunteer guides and organizing the hikes and events where they worked their educational magic. The wind changed again and she traded the peace of the woodland for the university campus, resulting in a master's degree in science education. Now fully equipped with formal and informal education, having been a volunteer and a manager of volunteers, I find myself at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Back to *Oh Deer!* where it started. I am delighted to be the new Project WILD coordinator.

It the short three months since I started, I have had the pleasure of training two workshops full of new facilitators, meeting a few of the hard working long-timers, and corresponded with many of you out in the field. I keep expecting someone to pinch me and wake me up when I think about how strong and vibrant a network of volunteers we have here in Texas. I attended the national meeting of WILD coordinators at the start of May. When I compare how many workshops we offer all over our great state, compared with other states, it is amazing. And it is ALL YOU!

Other news from that national meeting you may be interested in. ...

- We are working on an early childhood version of Project WILD. I see it being presented much the way that Science and Civics is presented for high school, but at the other end of the age spectrum. Most of the activities will be variations on WILD activities, but with an emphasis on the precursor concepts and pre-reading skills. This will be field-tested in Texas with Head Start. I'll let you know when it is time for us to play with that.
- A revision of the WILD guide that includes technology and climate change is on the horizon. Technology will be included, not only in the form of suggestions for how the teacher may use it (like GPS in Habitracks), but also in terms of how it is being used in the field. The National Center for Atmospheric Research is a great resource for the most current information about climate change research. These ever-changing data will find a new way to be expressed in the guide so that it will stay current.

And in a strange twist of fate, a casual conversation about a dearly beloved rubber chicken revealed that the nature preserve educator who taught me *Oh Deer!* so many years ago was a Project WILD coordinator not too long ago in another state. It is a WILD world!

~Kiki

In addition to Kiki, we have two new WILD staffers!!! Please welcome Sara Wernicke, our new administrative assistant, and Robert Ramirez, Sr., our new warehouse inventory clerk.

Also, please note our NEW FAX NUMBER: 512-389-8673

~ Karen

Sara's bio:

I was born and raised in Salt Lake City, Utah, and moved to Pullman, Washington, to attend Washington State University. I graduated in 2002 with a B.S. in Agribusiness. After graduation, I got a job with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Moscow, Idaho (eight miles across the state line), as a program assistant and was then promoted to an administrative management assistant. Through NCRS programs, I learned the basic options agricultural producers could use to help conserve their land as well as the ins and outs of federal government processes. I was employed with USDA for nearly five years before moving to Texas to accept the position at TPWD. I have heard that TPWD is a great place to work and am excited to interact with the volunteers

involved with the Project WILD and Angler Education programs. Also, I love the warm weather of Texas!

While in Washington, I met my husband, Kurt, and will have been married for five years in November. This past December, he graduated and commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Army from Washington State University. He has been in the Army (both Active Duty and National Guard) for almost 10 years and has served in both Bosnia and Iraq. Currently he is working as an officer recruiter at Camp Mabry. We just bought a house in Lockhart with 8.5 acres. I have been an animal lover since birth and have a dog and horse.

Robert's bio:

Prior to joining TPWD, I was employed at UPS, and before that I was employed at Dell Inc. for over 13 years.

I was born in Madrid, Spain, but was only there for a few months before moving to California, where I grew up in Moreno Valley—a beautiful town that is surrounded by snow-capped mountains in one direction, desert sands in another, and the ocean 63 miles to the west. Falling in love with the great outdoors was easy in an environment like that.

To this day, I spend a great deal of time outdoors playing softball, mountain biking and camping with my family of four boys.

**Welcome, New Facilitators !!!**

TONY DAY	ALLEN
REBECCA BLAIR	AUSTIN
MARIA MAZZEI-TOVAR	AUSTIN
DENISE THOMPSON	AUSTIN
SUE WHISENHUNT	AUSTIN
LINDA CALL	BONHAM
MARY STRAUSS	BRYAN
SHELLY MORSE	CEDAR PARK
TINA BAKER	COYANOSA
KATHRYN MAJOR	DALLAS
KATHY MORRISON	DENTON
PEGGY MAINORD	DUNCANVILLE
DEBORAH TRUJILLO	DUNCANVILLE
TRACEY BRUCE	FORTH WORTH
JULIE DOOLING	FRISCO
MARCY FREIBERG	FRISCO
HOLLY GRANCE	FRISCO
MICKI KARLAN	FRISCO
LISA WHATLEY	GRANBURY
CHRISTINA MIDDLEBROOK	IRVING

KIMBERLY CUMMINGS	LITTLE ELM
ELIZABETH BIRDWELL	MANSFIELD
ANGELA BARON	MCKINNEY
DOROTHY LEACH	MCKINNEY
SUZETTE LUTHI	MCKINNEY
GENIA KLEIN	PFLUGERVILLE
LORI REEMTS	PFLUGERVILLE
JENNIFER ALLRED	PLANO
CHRISTOPHER PAULING	PORT ARTHUR
PAM ELMENDORF	ROUND ROCK
MELANIE HERBST	ROUND ROCK
KATIE MAYBAUM	ROUND ROCK
KIMBERLY MIDKIFF	ROUND ROCK
JENNIFER LOPEZ	SAN ANTONIO
JOHN MOORE	SAN ANTONIO
PATTY McLELLAND	TAYLOR
KELLY DUDLEY	TERRELL
SUMREEN ASIM	WATAUGA
LESLIE CUSICK-FERNANDES	WICHITA FALLS

## Connecting Resources with Project Wild Activities

Please share your classroom or workshop success stories with us. E-mail them to [Karen.Marks@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:Karen.Marks@tpwd.state.tx.us)

### TEKS and TAKS Online Database for Project WILD Activities

Teachers ... Don't forget to check out our searchable [online database](#), where you can search by TEK objective, grade level, subject or Project WILD activity to discover the connections!

### Adaptation Artistry (Project WILD) or Fill the Bill (Flying WILD)

When talking about different bird bills and their functions, check out this interesting, short article, graphic illustration and video from [The New York Times](#) entitled "Birds Rely on Surface Tension to Eat Dinner." After viewing videos and building a model of a beak, researchers from MIT discovered how the water defies gravity.

### Polar Bears in Phoenix?

Looking for a good background article for this Project WILD activity? Check out this



recent article in [Scientific American](#). [The U.S. Department of the Interior](#) recently listed the polar bear as a threatened species under the [Endangered Species Act \(ESA\) of 1973](#) based on evidence that the animal's sea ice habitat is shrinking and is likely to continue to do so over the next several decades. Listing the polar bear as "threatened" means the animal is at risk of becoming an "endangered" species--in danger of extinction--in the foreseeable future if its habitat continues to be destroyed or adversely changed. The listing does not protect the polar bear from being hunted by natives for food and other resources.

### The Hunter

Students read and discuss a story about hunting and compare their attitudes to others. For an additional resource, check out the National Geographic article entitled ["Hunters: For Love of the Land."](#) This article explores hunters as strong supporters of land and wildlife conservation. Hunters in the U.S. are in decline. Will a new generation take the field?

### Wildwork

When students are researching wildlife-related careers for this activity, check out these webcast resources:

- [Exploratorium's Ice Stories: Dispatches from polar scientists](#)
- [TPWD Career Day](#)

## Workshop, Conference and Continuing Education Announcements

Don't forget to check [TPWD's calendar](#) of events to find fun activities for you, your family and friends. Better yet, sign up for [automated e-mails](#) on specific subjects or activities.

### **L.A.N.D.S.—Aug 6-8—Talpa, TX Learning Across New Dimensions in Science**

For sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade teachers. Cost: \$100 (includes lodging, meals and workshop materials). Earn 16 SBEC credits. Workshop topics include Wildlife in Scientific Inquiry & Lab Investigations; Anatomy & Adaptations; Niches & Food Webs; Radio Telemetry & GPS, and more. Registration deadline is July 25. For more info or to register, contact Koy Coffey, 830-792-3070 or [kcoffer@twa-mail.org](mailto:kcoffer@twa-mail.org)

### **Coastal Waters Institute for Art, Science and Math—July & Aug— Galveston, TX**

A five-day workshop open to seventh- and eighth-grade teachers in Galveston, Brazoria, Chambers, Harris and Liberty counties. Earn 40 CPE hours while learning about the significance of Galveston Bay. Hands-on lessons from Artist Boat's Environmental Curricula (kayaking, vessel tours & habitat restoration). Two sessions, beginning July 7 and August 4. Each session limited to 20 teachers. For more information and application, contact Rani Henderson, 409-770-0722 or [rhenderson@artistboat.org](mailto:rhenderson@artistboat.org). Applying schools with a team of teachers will be given highest priority.

### **A Study in Conservation of Natural Resources—June 24-26— Franklin Family Ranch, Blanco, TX**

Sponsored by USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Pedernales Soil & Water Conservation District, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board & Holt Cat. Earn 16 CPE hours while learning about soils, prescribed burning, wildlife management, endangered species, plant identification, the water cycle and more. Cost: \$200 (includes lodging, meals and workshop materials). Registration deadline is June 2. For more info contact Katy Murrah, Perennials SWCD, 830-868-7237 / ext. 3, or [pedernalesswcd@tx.nacdnet.org](mailto:pedernalesswcd@tx.nacdnet.org)

### **Groundwater to the Gulf Teacher Institute—June 24-26—Austin, TX**

Sponsored by LCRA, TPWD, City of Austin, Keep Austin Beautiful, UT Bureau of Economic Geology, Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center and Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer Conservation District. Earn 22 CPE hours. For fourth- through eighth-grade teachers, learn about hydrogeology, groundwater, urban watersheds, water quality, water protection and water conservation, and explore a cave. Space limited to 50 teachers. Cost: FREE! For more info, contact Jennee Galland, 512-282-8441.

## Teachers Conservation Institute—July—Broaddus, TX

Sponsored by the Texas Forestry Association. A week-long workshop with activities led by foresters, educators, natural resource conservationists and industry professionals. Earn 45 SBEC hours. Cost \$100. Two sessions, July 6-11 and July 13-18. For more information, contact Cheryl Stanco, [sctanco@texasforestry.org](mailto:sctanco@texasforestry.org) or call 936-632-TREE.

## Get Growing Keep Growing: School Gardens and Nature Areas for Learning and Play—Oct 25—Austin, TX

A day full of expert speakers, hands-on activities and local resources. Learn about using outdoor spaces and gardening to fulfill educational requirements as well as to address development of the whole child. Topics cover everything from the basics of planting, to making the learning experience meaningful, to recruiting the resources you need to get it done. Held at Redeemer Lutheran School, 1500 W. Anderson Lane, Austin TX, Oct 25, 2008, 9am to 3pm. Earn 8 SBEC hours. Cost: \$30. For more information, contact Danna Keyburn, [dkeyburn@redemmer.net](mailto:dkeyburn@redemmer.net)

## In the News

### Let 9,000 People Know About Your Next Project WILD Workshop!

The Texas Parks and Wildlife [Calendar page](#) gets about 9,000 hits a month. If you send us your workshop information, we can post it on the calendar so that those 9,000 people will know about your workshop and organization. It's free advertising and a great way to reach a larger audience. We like to post workshops well in advance so it gives plenty of time for folks to plan to attend. So, as soon as you know when you want to do a workshop, let us know and we'll get it posted. Check it out!

### Lockhart State Park goes WILD!

Using Project WILD activities such as “Dropping In on Deer,” Project WILD facilitator and Lockhart State Park employee Liz LaRue conducted multiple fifth-grade-science outdoor labs for the Lockhart Independent School District.



Students conducted a simulated white-tailed deer census, counting the “droppings” in four designated study plots. Liz used coffee beans to simulate the deer droppings. The students conducted the observation, recorded the data and calculated the estimated white-tailed deer in the study area. Students also discussed wildlife management practices that would help sustain the deer with adequate food, water, shelter and space.

## **EarthCaching for Educators**

[EarthCaching](#), the exciting virtual adventure that helps you learn about the Earth while using your Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver, has just been updated for use by teachers! On the EarthCache site there is now a link for educator pages that allows teachers to upload and download lesson plans based on one EarthCache or general types of EarthCaches (for example, glaciers). This exciting development coincides with the release of an educators' guide to using EarthCaching in the classroom. The guide is now available online (main page, scroll down) and you can download for free the entire document or just the chapters you need. Learn how to teach a unit using GPS units and EarthCaching! Thanks to the National Geographic Education Foundation for their generous support in developing this new resource.

## **Texas Education Agency Best Practices Clearinghouse**

The Texas Education Agency has established an online clearinghouse of information related to best practices of high-performing and highly efficient campuses, school districts, and charter schools in instruction, dropout prevention, business/management practices, and public school finance and resource allocation. The goal of the clearinghouse is to provide information about best practices that is specific, actionable, and accessible to schools and interested members of the public.

Best practices may be submitted through a campus, district or charter school. For more information, visit [TEA's Web site](#).

## **NSTA Adopts New Position Statement: Principles of Professionalism for Science Educators**

In a newly revised position statement, Principles of Professionalism for Science Educators, NSTA establishes expectations and principles to guide the professional conduct of all preK–16 teachers of science. The statement emphasizes the need for science educators to “uphold the highest ethical standards of the profession to earn the respect, trust, and confidence of students, parents, school leadership, colleagues, and other members of the community.”

NSTA would like to thank the members of the position statement panel who worked over several months to develop this statement, as well as the NSTA members who provided feedback during its development. To view this and all NSTA position statements, go to [www.nsta.org/about/positions/professionalism.aspx](http://www.nsta.org/about/positions/professionalism.aspx).

## Grants and Awards

### **Community Outdoor Outreach Program (CO-OP) Grants**

The CO-OP grant helps to introduce underserved populations to the services, programs and sites of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. This is not a land acquisition or construction grant; this is only for programs. Grants are awarded to nonprofit organizations, schools, municipalities, counties, cities and other tax-exempt groups. Minimum grant requests are \$5,000 and maximum grant requests are \$50,000. The application deadlines are February 1 and October 1, with awards on April 15 and December 15.

There is a special onetime deadline of June 2, 2008 with award date July 25. Please e-mail Recreation Grants if you need a new application, and one will be sent to you.

### **The National High School Challenge**

Teachers can be among the biggest influences in a student's life. They have the power to inspire and encourage students toward healthy and responsible living--and that includes the environment. As a teacher, you can help cultivate a student's passion for the protection of our environment and planet.

The National Environmental Education Foundation, in partnership with The Weather Channel, is launching the National High School Challenge. The Challenge is the first phase of our new program, [Classroom Earth](#), a program designed to enhance environmental education in high schools. Through this program, we want to help teachers like you continue to inspire students about environmental issues so that they will have the knowledge to live by, that our planet needs to survive.

The National High School Challenge will provide teachers with an opportunity to secure as much as \$5,000 to \$10,000 in funding to bring innovative environmental themes into students' coursework and incorporate more environmental education into teaching overall! For more information, visit the [Course Integration grants page](#).

Professional Development Grants – for teachers who want to learn more about environmental education and how to teach about the environment in multiple subject areas and with engaging lessons. For more information, visit the [Professional Development grants page](#). Get started now. Submit your proposal by June 20, 2008.

### **Captain Planet Foundation Grant**

The [Captain Planet Foundation](#) funds and supports hands-on environmental projects for children and youth ages 6-18. Its objective is to encourage innovative programs that empower children and youth around the world to work individually and collectively to solve environmental problems in their neighborhoods and communities. Grant amounts range from \$250 to \$2,500. Deadlines for submitting grant applications are March 31, June 30, September 30 and December 31.

## General Announcements

### Test your Observation Skills

Small changes in photographs can be difficult to see. Unless you really study a photograph, you may miss them. Of course, spotting differences in pictures is a popular child's game. And it is a good way to teach children to be attentive to life's details.

With that in mind, check out [Eagle Eyes](#).

It's a game developed by Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. You're presented with five groups of two photographs. You have to spot five differences in between the photos in each group. It's easier than it sounds. As you may have guessed, the photos are mostly of birds. The photos themselves are impressive. You can choose from several timed versions of the game. Or, you can play without time restrictions. Good luck, eagle eyes! You will be scored!

### Water Science for Schools

The U.S. Geological Survey's [Water Science for Schools Web site](#) offers a broad range of information about water. Topics include basic background information, a breakdown of water use in the U.S., a glossary of terms, and much more. The Web site includes activities, graphics, data tables and more.

### BirdNote

This is a radio series, two minutes per episode, which you can listen to or read on the Web site. It's also available as a PodCast. All episodes are in the archives, both as a transcript and in MP3 format. Visit the [Web site](#) to find out more.

### Books:

#### ***Wetland, Drainage, Restoration and Repair*, by Thomas R. Biebighauser**

The book begins with an historical overview of wetland destruction and repair over the past 200 years and shows clearly how the effects on drained locations remain evident generations later. It also serves as a unique guide to aid anyone, from novice to engineer, who is engaged in the process of wetland restoration.

[www.kentuckypress.com/viewbook.cfm?Category\\_ID=1&Group=197&ID=1396%20](http://www.kentuckypress.com/viewbook.cfm?Category_ID=1&Group=197&ID=1396%20)

#### ***Using Forensics: Wildlife Crime Scene!* by Laura M. Sanders Arndt**

An ideal complement to middle and high school courses in biology, environmental science, general science, and criminology. It provides a high-interest, real-life format for learning a variety of scientific concepts and skills that correlate with the *Standards*. It also gives students reason to genuinely care about preserving the wildlife and ecosystems they're studying.

[http://www.nsta.org/store/product\\_detail.aspx?id=10.2505/9780873552707](http://www.nsta.org/store/product_detail.aspx?id=10.2505/9780873552707)

## Employment Opportunities

### **Regional Education Manager,** National Wildlife Federation, Austin, TX

NWF is seeking a dynamic and dedicated worker to join the award-winning education team as Regional Education Manager. This person will be responsible for advancing the NWF's education program work in the Gulf States region through: Implementation of programs aimed at protecting and restoring wildlife and habitat, confronting global warming and connecting people with nature; developing a network of committed and connected individuals and organizations to support habitat conservation in their communities; procuring new funding resources and maintaining funding relationships for education program's regional and national efforts. Qualifications: B.A. or B.S. in Education, Environmental Education, Science, Natural Resources or other, related field. Post-graduate degrees or work a plus. For more info: <https://secure.nwf.org/careergateway/index.cfm?fuseAction=view&positionID=10420>

### **Together Green Fellows, National Audubon Society**

Leaders are at the heart of any successful movement. Help lead the conservation actions needed to shape a greener, healthier future. Apply to become a TogetherGreen Fellow. Each year, 40 new Fellows will get broad-based training, assistance and opportunities to help them conduct their own innovative, results-oriented conservation projects, serve as conservation role models, inspire and engage diverse audiences and communities, build leadership skills, and connect with other U.S. and international conservation leaders. Applicants may be budding volunteer leaders or mid-career environmental professionals. They must have a passion for conservation, the desire to learn and grow, and a commitment to making a difference. The TogetherGreen Leadership Program is designed to complement an individual's full-time job or volunteer work, rather than serve as a full-time fellowship. The application deadline is June 27, 2008. For more information: <http://www.togethergreen.org/People/Fellows.aspx>

### **Nationally Syndicated TV Talk Show Seeks Teacher for Science Demos**

*Jimmy Kimmel Live* is looking for someone who is passionate and knowledgeable about science who would feel comfortable taking Jimmy through multiple unusual and entertaining science experiments for a new segment that they're hoping to have on *Jimmy Kimmel Live*. Ideally, if they find the right personality for the segment, they would like to make this a recurring bit. Anyone who is interested is welcome to submit a brief video introducing himself/herself, sharing some background information, mentioning a few potential experiments, and explaining why he/she would be a good candidate for this segment. The video should be no longer than five minutes and can be submitted via e-mail at [ftsikl@gmail.com](mailto:ftsikl@gmail.com) or mailed directly to: Tara Varilek, Jimmy Kimmel Live, 6834 Hollywood Blvd., 6th Floor, Hollywood, CA 90028. Deadline for submission: June 2, 2008.

## Contact Us

Kiki Corry, Project WILD State Coordinator  
Phone: 512-389-4369  
Email: [kiki.corry@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:kiki.corry@tpwd.state.tx.us)

Karen Marks, Outdoor Learning Training Specialist  
Phone: 512-389-8833  
Email: [Karen.marks@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:Karen.marks@tpwd.state.tx.us)

Sara Wernicke, Administrative Assistant  
Phone: 512-389-8183  
Email: [sara.wernicke@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:sara.wernicke@tpwd.state.tx.us)

Robert Ramirez, Warehouse Fulfillment  
Phone: 512-389-4528  
Email: [Robert2.Ramirez@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:Robert2.Ramirez@tpwd.state.tx.us)

Fax: 512-389-8673

Web site: [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/learning/project\\_wild/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/learning/project_wild/)

Executive Director  
**Carter P. Smith**

Editor, *News of the WILD*  
**Karen Marks**



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### FOR MORE INFORMATION

All inquiries: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Rd., Austin, TX 78744, telephone (800) 792-1112 toll free, or (512) 389-4800 or visit our Web site for detailed information about TPWD programs:  
[www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us)

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