

# THE WALKING STICK

JOURNAL OF THE UPPER HIGHLAND LAKES NATURE CENTER

WINTER QUARTER, 2015

VOLUME 1

NUMBER 1

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## NATURALLY SPEAKING

### (PRESIDENT'S NOTES)

After three years of planning, much membership labor and generosity of the site owner, we have decided to start a newsletter to bring members and others up to date with our continued progress.

We are fortunate to have our editor/ member Frank Caramanica with lots of ideas and experience to guide us along with the task.

This first newsletter is an attempt to list all of the progress we have made in the last 3 years and to outline the upcoming plans. See the construction and events update for the detailed story.

Billy

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George Brugnoli	Vice President
Pat Campbell	Secretary
Jerry Stacey	Treasurer

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## FROM THE PEAK

### (EVENTS AT REVEILLE PEAK RANCH)

#### Lori at Reveille Peak sends us the following list of activities at Reveille Peak Ranch

Every year we like to pause and reflect on all the people, events and stories that make Reveille Peak Ranch such a special place, and this year provided more than ever.

#### In fact, we couldn't limit our list to the top ten!

Whether you came out for an event, to use the mountain biking/running trails, for SCUBA diving, camping, training, or other special events, we are glad you were here.

### TOP HIGHLIGHTS OF 2014

1. The first-ever **Reveille Peak Bike Festival** was a huge success, bringing together riders of all skill levels, families, demos and an expo area.
2. The 2nd annual **Carry the Load-Austin** event brought together more than 1,000 participants for a Memorial Day to remember, with a 20.14 Memorial March and a Texas capabilities demonstration.
3. SCUBA groups from across the state enjoyed diving in our quarry lake and new dive improvements.
4. 1,400 people participated in the inaugural **Reveille Call Veterans Day** event to honor those who serve/have served in a noncompetitive 11-mile march and Tradition Games.
5. Thousands of racers and spectators came from across Texas and the nation to compete in the Spartan Sprint Texas and the **SUPER SPARTAN** races in May. Check out the four Spartan races in 2015!
6. We continued construction of the **Upper Highland Lakes Nature Center**, a 5-acre learning center where volunteers share their love, knowledge and appreciation for the natural world with groups.
7. Our nonprofit **Serve Who Serve** grew in its partnerships and events for military men and women, and our youth. We continue to provide training support for law enforcement/military and completed our new Readiness Complex.
8. The 4th annual **Reveille Peak 100 Mountain Bike Race** lived up to its promise as one of the toughest races in Texas.
9. We hosted a number of **scout troops**, including 19 Venture Varsity Scouts who received their open water scuba certifications as part of their **High Adventure Camp** at Reveille Peak Ranch.
10. We hosted the **Texas Tactical Police Office Assoc. Competition**, adding exciting new competition and training obstacles.

Race promoters and partners **Spartan Race, Terra Firma Racing, Rogue Running, Tejas Trails, Race Revolutions, Capt'n Karl's, Camp Gladiator, XTERRA, Burnet Cross Country Relays, Biggest Loser Run/Walk Off-Road Challenge** and more helped us make our fourth year incredible!

Whatever the New Year brings to you, we hope you'll come see us at Reveille Peak, and here's wishing you an adventure-filled 2015!

*Ed. Note: Pictures corresponding to above numbers on following page.*

PICTURES FROM THE PEAK  
(EVENTS AT REVELLE PEAK RANCH)





## CONSTRUCTION AND EVENTS UPDATE—A HISTORY

**2012-** The idea of a nature center was formulated and a location was found that met (actually exceeded our needs) with 60-plus miles of hiking trails, a pavilion that holds several hundred people, upper class bathrooms with showers and marble sinks, a generous property owner that supports the idea, a 30 acre lake with angler educational opportunities, and included in the lease was a dedicated 5 acre hill that is exclusive to UHLNC (and a few of the ranch cattle).

We formed a friends group with 114 members initially signing up, that included members from the local Master Naturalists, Birding and Wildflower Society, Native Plant Society of Texas, Llano Uplift Archaeology Society, interested Ph.D. professors, TPWD and National Forest Service employees and local citizens.

We also applied for our 501c3 non-profit status and made lots of plans for the future.

We did volunteer work at the Helping Center and met at Francescos for our December monthly meeting.

**2013-**In January we received notice that we were accepted into the 501c3 category from the IRS and we subsequently received our tax number from the state of Texas for the sales tax exemption.

A series of trails was established in our 5 acre area, which involved the clearing of considerable brush, and the cutting of 150 yards of Ashe Juniper for fencing to delineate the 5 acre site and assembly of the fence. We signed up 116 members this year with many new ones coming from the community.

During this year, we were able to provide several planned activities for special needs children, disabled veterans, and adults, hiking clubs with interpretive hikes, ISD classes, geology clubs, college classes and home school groups. All of our activities were in line with our mission to spread outreach to the public regarding some facet of nature. The ladies Mah Jongg club of Marble falls raised approx. \$2400 for our benefit.

**2014-**We moved two water tanks onto Nature Hill for use as future learning stations, built a beaver house for our habitat station, dug an exploratory excavation with LUAS members, and found an ancient hearth that will be our Archaeology station, and then started work on a Geology guidebook.

We applied for but didn't get a grant from Mueller Building Co. for a main building.

Once again, the ladies Mah Jongg club of Marble Falls raised approx. \$2400 for our benefit.

We did volunteer work at the Helping Center and met at Francescos for our December meeting.

## EVENTS UPDATE—A HISTORY—CONT'D

**2014-** We completed our Geology guidebook, applied for, but didn't get a grant from TPWD for a honey bee exhibit, started construction on a rain water collection building with recycled parts, planted the first of several native plant gardens with help from NPSOT, Master Gardeners, HLMN and UHLNC members, and began construction of a rock wall for the garden, installed 3 blue bird boxes, and enjoyed several guest speakers at our monthly meetings. We continued our tradition of having the December monthly meeting at Francescos Restaurant after doing some community volunteer work, this time at the Marble Falls museum pollination garden.

We signed up 120 members this year

We expect to have a quarterly newsletter to summarize our progress and bring everyone up to date with our plans. I would also like to thank all of the active members that made this possible. Without them, we would not be in existence. [*ed. Note: this is the first of the quarterly issues*]

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### TO SUBMIT ARTICLES FOR PUBLICATION

E-mail materials to the editor at:

**librarylady74@aol.com**

**THE WRITTEN WORD**—Articles must be submitted as a separate **.doc** file. Other file formats require too much repair work to prepare them for publication.

**A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSANDS WORDS**—Only pictures in **.jpg** format can be accepted for publication, and must be sent by e-mail as a zip file or as separate attachments. Albums at picture sites are unsuitable due to e-mail constraints at the editor's house (we're semi off the grid, messenger pigeons occasionally drop by, smoke signals work in good weather, and our hand cranked phone has limitations as to download speed).

## NATURE CALLS



**GEOLOGY**—The Geology guidebook has been updated with the acquisition of additional field data, particularly as regards the distribution of the granites and gneisses within Reveille Peak Ranch. It will be continually updated as new data and geological discoveries are encountered.

A cursory evaluation of the soils and patterning seen within a recently excavated site near the new building was made. The patterns were shown to be caused by drying of muds, causing a series of polygonal mud cracks. A short report was prepared for Billy and Vol Montgomery.

Future activities could involve selective cleaning of debris from the floor of the amphitheatre, protection of the garnet crystal from theft or vandalism, acquisition of a petrographic microscope, and preparation of petrographic thin sections of the rock types found at Reveille Peak.



## TAKE NOTHING FOR GRANITE



## A NEED FOR NEWS

We badly need news of the other disciplines within Reveille Peak: Contributions from our members will be the lifeblood of this newsletter.

- **BIOLOGY**—What is happening with our wildlife? New sightings, concerns, etc.,
- **BOTANY**—Newly discovered plants, concerns, etc,
- **ACTIVITIES**—Trails cleared, fences mended, bridges built, etc.
- **CONSTRUCTION**—What's going up, what needs to be painted,
- **PHOTOGRAPHY**—Pictures of events/wildlife, etc. at Reveille Peak.
- **ARCHAEOLOGY**—Artifacts, sites at Reveille Peak.

## MINUTES OF MEETINGS

Minutes of all meetings are available at our UHLNC website and can be read there:

UHLNC.org

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### EDITOR'S CORNER

Well, here we go!! This is the first issue of our Newsletter. We are still feeling our way as to how to construct a journal which will encapsulate all the activities at and features of our Nature Center at Reveille Peak. Current plans are to issue a Newsletter for Fall, Winter, and Spring, since there is little activity during the summer (besides, Billy will be up in the highlands of Colorado, enjoying the cooler climate, while many of us will remain here in the Hill Country, trying to keep cool). It will likely be published only on the internet, but we may make an exception here and there to keep interested parties, particularly our benefactors, up to date.

This Newsletter will be what we as members put into it. Articles and pictures will be the heart of it.

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### NATIVE BEE HOUSES

Ever wonder about the many insects that hover in and around your flowering plants? Well there's a whole plethora of honey bees, flies, multiple native bee varieties, butterflies, and wasps. With the downturn in honey bee populations we are relying more on the native variety of pollinators. There are several things we can do to help them with habitat and therefore increase their chance of survival, and they are all fun and rewarding.

First of all, we can plant native flowering plants and provide water for their consumption. The third and most creative is to create habitat. Most of our native bees are solitary. Most nest in the ground, but many nest in holes where they lay their eggs in a food supply to hatch on their own. We can build this habitat with very simple tools and recycled materials. *[Ed. Note, we need these bee habitats so we can have daughters and sons of bees].*

The two basic styles are a block of untreated wood with many drilled holes for their use and the other is a structure that will hold tubes for their nesting. They can be quite creative, and add a piece of art to your garden.

You can get lots of ideas and dimensions by googling how to build native bee houses. I particularly liked [Resonatingbodies.wordpress](http://Resonatingbodies.wordpress.com) out of Toronto, [Arups insect hotel-core77](http://Arupsinsecthotel-core77), and [foxleas.com/bee\\_house.htm](http://foxleas.com/bee_house.htm)

We at the nature center will be building bee houses at our February meeting on Thursday the 12<sup>th</sup>, so come and join us.

Billy

## RAIN WATER COLLECTION

Everyone all over the world knows the importance of water. It's one of the essentials of life wherever you are. Here in the hill country of Texas, we are especially aware of its importance as our water supplies dwindle during the current drought. There are many ways to conserve our supplies that all of us should be practicing but besides conserving, there is one way to increase it. That's by capturing rain water and using it in place of public water.

Here at the nature center, we have built a rain water collection system to water our nature gardens, and act as a demonstration unit to show the workings of the system to visitors. We have well water available, but rain water is much better than our slightly alkaline well water for native plants. After all, that's the water they evolved with.

The whole concept is very simple. All that is needed is a roof at any angle and rain gutters to channel the flow into storage tanks. Then if intended for watering a garden, you just need to pipe it into the garden area, ending in a dispersal system of your choice (IE; soaker hose, etc). If you intend to drink it, a pump for pressure and a filter system is required.

With the exception of a few boards, we constructed the entire system out of recycled materials (roofing, frame, gutters, water tanks, etc)

This article is not intended to be a lesson in itself. but it is a brief overlook at what we have done to interest visitors to our Nature Center. So come out and see what we have done there to conserve water. Below are pictures of the construction by volunteers.

Billy





## MONARCH WAYSTATION POLLINATOR GARDEN

The native pollinator garden at the Upper Highland Lakes Nature Center is now officially planted and growing! On a cool morning in November, a dozen hardy souls tackled the job of removing Bermuda grass and weeds from the soil, laying landscape cloth, and planting. By the time the day had turned sunny and pleasantly warm, 45 plants had been placed in their new home and mulched - just in time for soon-to-arrive cold winds and freezing temperatures. Quick thinking and action by Andrea Roach, who "dumpster dived" to find boxes and buckets to use as covers, helped save the tender new plants from freezing.

This garden is the first phase in a series of planned demonstration gardens at the site. These projects will be headed up by volunteers from the Highland Lakes chapters of the Native Plant Society of Texas and the Master Gardeners. Volunteers from these groups as well as the Friends of UHLNC and the Master Naturalists will install and maintain the gardens at the nature center.

This pollinator garden was intended to attract and sustain native pollinators, especially monarchs and other butterflies and bees. In fact, Monarch Watch, an organization that supports survival of monarchs through education, conservation, and research, has already certified our garden as one of their Monarch Waystations, which "are places that provide resources necessary for monarchs to produce successive generations and sustain their migration. Without milkweeds throughout their spring and summer breeding areas in North America, monarchs would not be able to produce the successive generations that culminate in the migration each fall. Similarly, without nectar from flowers these fall migratory monarch butterflies would be unable to make their long journey to overwintering grounds in Mexico. The need for host plants for larvae and energy sources for adults applies to all monarch and butterfly populations around the world."

Plants in our garden that will welcome all pollinators, and especially monarchs during their migrations next year, include tropical and native milkweeds, blue and white mistflower, purple coneflower, autumn sage, tall goldenrod, Maximillian sunflower, gayfeather, lantana, tall and fall aster, obedient plant, esperanza, rock rose, big red sage, and Mexican plum. Other plants and wildflower seeds will be added in the future. Stay tuned for updates and future photos.

[Thanks, Teri for the info and pictures]



## MONARCH WAYSTATION POLLINATOR GARDEN PICTURES



A shot of the garden in its completed stage



Left to right: Linda O'Nan, Terri Whaley, Sherry Bixler, Minnie Eaton, Lori Greco, Pat Campbell, MJ Hansen. And you know Billy.



A Highway Sign on the Route



Some Folks love to play in the dirt



## A Typical Geology Field Trip to the Amphitheatre



Preparing for a Field Trip



Off we go to the Amphitheatr



It's not granite, so be gneiss



A view of the Amphitheatre from above



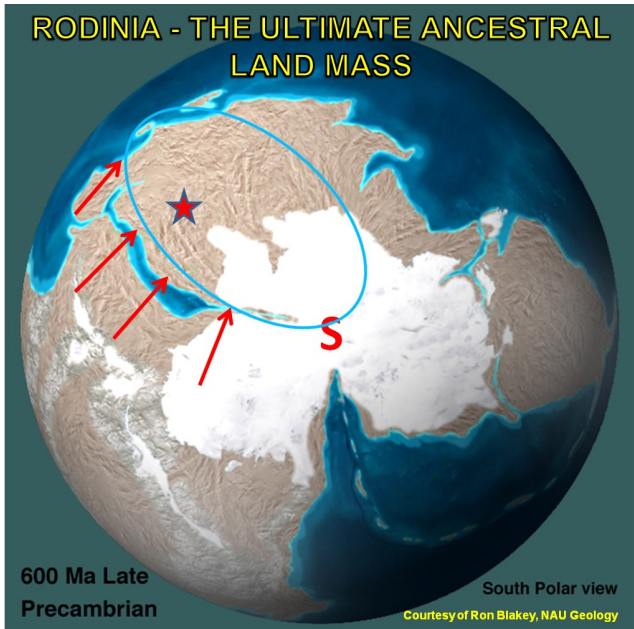
The Amphitheatre floor



Pegmatite Vein

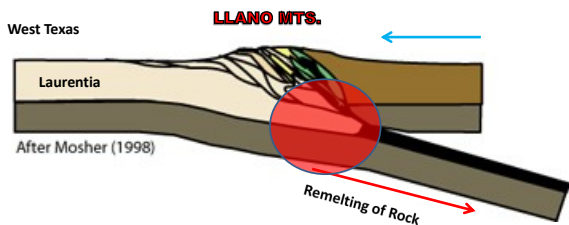


# THE MOUNTAINS OF REVELLE PEAK RANCH

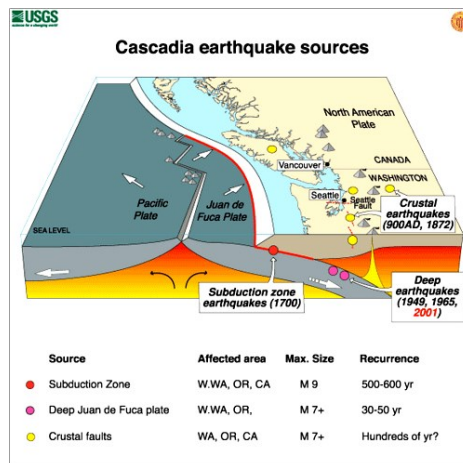


Plates in collision 600 million years ago  
We are at the star

Rodinia closes the gap on the ranch



**1.2 by. ANCIENT CONTINENTS COLLIDE, MOLTEN ROCK FORMED IN SUBDUCTION ZONE, DEEP WITHIN & BELOW ROOTS OF LLANO MOUNTAINS FROM MELTING OF DEEP CRUSTAL ROCKS**



One plate overrides the other, creating a mountain range & remelting of rock

A modern example of one plate overriding another along the Pacific Shore





# IN NATURE'S TIME

## January 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 <i>HLBWS</i> <i>A New Beginning</i>	2	3
4	5	6	7 <i>HLMN</i>	8	9	10
11	12	13	14 <i>IDNFH</i> <i>@ 9 AM</i>	15 <i>9 AM</i> <i>UHLNC</i> <i>Meeting @</i> <i>Hatchery</i>	16	17
18	19	20 <i>MG @ 3 PM</i> <i>FOIL @ 9 AM</i>	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

# IN NATURE'S TIME

## February 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 <i>Groundhog Day</i>	3	4 <i>HLMN</i>	5 <i>HLBWS</i>	6	7
8	9	10	11 <i>IDNFA @ 9 AM</i>	12 <i>UHLNC @ 9 AM @ G. Bognoli's Place</i>	13	14 <i>Valentine's Day</i>
15	16 <i>President's Day</i>	17 <i>MG @ 3 PM &amp; FOIL @ 9 AM</i>	18 <i>Ash Wednesday</i>	19	20	21
22 <i>Washington's Birthday</i>	23	24	25	26	27	28

# IN NATURE'S TIME

## March 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 <i>HLMN</i>	5 <i>HLBWS</i>	6	7
8 <i>Daylight Savings Time</i>	9	10	11	12 <i>UHLNC Location TBD</i>	13	14
15	16	17 <i>MG @ 3 PM &amp; FOIL @ 9 AM</i>	18 <i>IDNFH @ 9 AM</i>	19	20 <i>Spring Equinox</i>	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28 <i>Burnet Lawn &amp; Garden</i>
29	30	31				