



**Texas Master Naturalist Brazos Valley Chapter
Meeting Agenda for March 8, 2012
Brazos Valley Museum of Natural History**

I. Welcome

II. Officer and Committee Reports

A. President – Lisa Davenport

1. I recently received a letter from Mary Walraven at Bryan ISD requesting books for a new literacy project that the district is launching. I was hoping that our group could gather and donate books with nature themes. I think it would be a significant contribution to the program. So many young children are in awe of nature - it is a good time to inspire their love of the natural world.
I would like to invite everyone to bring one or two new or gently used books to our meeting at the BVMNH on Thursday, March 8th.
Since BISD will publicly recognize donors, this will also serve to make our group better known in the community.
For more information about the campaign, please go to the Bryan ISD website:
<http://www.bryanisd.org/featuredPhoto.asp?featuredPhotoID=495>
2. Melanie Redden-I am the librarian at the Robertson County Carnegie Library in Franklin, Texas. I am looking for speakers for kids and adults on archeology and anthropology, birds, and spiders. I am doing an Egyptian theme one week in June and would love to incorporate the anthropology aspect into it. I am also wanting to do something on spiders as people need to be aware of what a brown recluse and black widow look like. Please give me a call at 979-828-4331 so we can visit a little bit about what we can do for programming. Hope to hear from you soon! Email: carnegie@valornet.com
3. Megan Driver (megandriver@me.com)-Asking if there might be some volunteers who could help with an after-school program in North Zulch

B. Vice President – Janet Quiram

C. Secretary – Amanda Schwede

1. Sign in
2. Approval of February 2012 meeting minutes

D. Treasurer – Charlene Lusk

E. Outreach – Cheryl Lewis, Chair (cheryl77845@yahoo.com)

F. Training – Bruce Neville, Chair (b2neville@gmail.com) - Plans, implements and evaluates the chapter training curriculum and develops training calendar. Selects all presenters and makes

arrangements for their class/presentation including materials, handouts, and audio-visual equipment needed for the class/presentation. Recruits potential new class members and arranges for publicity (Newspaper, flyers, KBTX, Internet). Acquires/packages curriculum and related materials. Arranges for location and room seating and equipment for all classes and field trips. Manages registration- collects registration forms, enters data, transfers checks to Treasurer (Charlene Lusk), contacts and welcomes registered class members. Organizes hosts for classes and field trips. Assists Membership Committee to manage the on-going class through graduation. Arranges for speaker gifts and thank you letters. Conducts evaluation of classes and field trips at the end, analyzes the data, and provides evaluations to the next Training Committee Chair.

G. Membership – Betty Vermeire, Chair (bavermeire@suddenlink.net)

H. Advanced Training –Jim Anding, Chair - Advanced Training report is that the committee is sending out opportunities as you have noticed. I would appreciate all TMN members keeping their eyes open to possibilities for AT and notifying Jim.

I. Volunteer Service Project – Jay Pritchard, Chair (MoPWatcher@aol.com)

J. Host/Social – Olivia Ash and Kara Rosch, Co-chairs (eandoash@msn.com; kara.rosch@blinn.edu)

K. Historian – Terry Junek, Chair

L. Web – Amanda Chau, Chair (amanda.chau@blinn.edu) - 5 to 8 minutes overview of website changes

M. Program – Janet Quiram, Chair (janetqm@suddenlink.net)

III. Old Business

A. Texas Nature Trackers Program - been involved in Mussel Watch and Amphibian Watch in past. Perhaps it is a good time to have a refresher course

IV. New Business

A. Amanda Chau – Would also like to propose that our chapter opens a PO box under our chapter name and have all correspondence sent to our PO box rather than to member's private home address (for privacy as well as security reasons)

B. A. Chau-I would like to propose circulating a sign-up sheet and ask the members to volunteer AV equipment for our monthly meeting. We are having equipment compatibility problems for the past two meetings and I think it would be better to have someone provide both a project and a laptop that work well together. I plan to circulate an electronic sign-up sheet later next week to guarantee we have someone providing the equipment for March meeting. **L. Davenport**- The only thing that I would further stipulate would be that the laptop should have the ability to run PowerPoint and then Janet would just need to confirm with the speaker that this is the program they have used.

1. I am happy to report that the following people have agreed to bring a PC laptop with MS Office and a projector to our monthly meeting and set them up for us. Here is the list: 03/08 Dwight, 04/12 Steve, 05/10 Bruce (?), 06/14 Amanda C.

C. TMN background check – Amanda Chau (2/13) said nothing in bylaws. Should the chapter pay for this? Or, should individual members who plan to work with youth pay for this? This issue has been discussed at the meetings as well as via emails at least twice now. I think we need to make

a decision ASAP. Information on youth protection standard http://texas4-h.tamu.edu/agent_yps_Volunteer_application/background_check_form http://texas4-h.tamu.edu/files/2011/12/membership_vol_background_check.pdf

1. A. Chau-as a chapter we need to decide if we are going to try to get everyone to do the background check and how to collect the fee (as part of our due or part of the training fee).
- D. Applying for non-profit status - Is it time for TMN-BV to change our status from “not-for-profit” to “non-profit”? This will save us money when we have to purchase materials, supplies, equipment...etc. I understand that Jim Waldson has completed almost all the legal paper work to get our status change a number of years ago. The only problem back then was our financial records. Is it time for us to look into this again?
- E. Web Committee- New Calendars are now live and you can start updating them
As we decided at our 02/24 meeting, we will now be using multiple calendars (see descriptions below). These calendars are now available in the Member Area of our txmn.org/brazos/ site (see link below). Members can view all the events or select a particular calendar to look at. Our members can now view these calendars without logging into their own gmail accounts.
<http://txmn.org/brazos/calendar/>

Types of BV TMN Google Calendar:

BV MN Public Events- events that are open to the general public such as our monthly meetings, Earth day, Bioblitz, any outreach events that promote our chapter to the public will be posted in this calendar.

Leslie will be responsible for updating this calendar for Outreach Committee, Junior Master Naturalists program, and our chapter monthly meetings. Jim will be her standby.

BV MN Adv Trn- only approved advanced training opportunities will be posted on this calendar. Advanced Training Committee will be responsible for approving the training opportunities. However, announcements from Michelle Haggerty, Master Naturalists Program Coordinator, and TWPD are automatically approved for advanced training hours.

Linda will be responsible for updating this calendar for Advanced Training Committee and Amanda will be her standby.

BV MN Memb General- events that are open only to the members such as TMN Board monthly meetings and Social events will be posted in this calendar.

Jackie Palmer will be responsible for updating Social events on this calendar and **Amanda** will be responsible for the Board meetings on this calendar.

BV MN Vol- only approved volunteer opportunities will be posted on this calendar. Volunteer Service Committee will be responsible for approving the volunteer events. However, events from TCWC, TWPD, and BV Museum of Natural History are automatically approved for volunteer hours.

Mike will be responsible for updating this calendar for the Volunteer Service Committee and Jim will be his standby.

The "Brazos Valley TMN Calendar" has now been decommissioned and renamed to "Old Brazos Valley TMN Calendar". It is now archived under our bvtxmn gmail account. To minimize confusion, we have removed access to this old calendar from you. When you log into your gmail account, you should now see one or more of BV MN calendars above. You should also receive a link to a Google doc titled “Updating BV MN Google Calendar” which will show you how to update these calendars.

[Updating BV MN Google Calendar](#) I am hoping to do a short presentation on the changes we made at our monthly meeting next week

V. Announcements

A. Upcoming Programs Dates/Calendar Items

1. **TMN Spring Meeting Schedule:** (Second Thursdays at 6:30 PM, BVMNH)
 March 8, April 12, May 10,
 June 14, July 12, August 9
2. **2012 TMN State Conference**
3. **Monthly Meeting speakers:**
 - A. March 8—Dr. James Derr, Professor of Veterinary Pathobiology at TAMU will present “The North American Bison-A Survival Story”. He studies the genetics of large mammals. (Dwight made these arrangements---Thank you, Dwight)
 - B. April 12— Amanda Mancuso from Brazos Valley Recycling
 - C. May 9— John Nielson-Gammon "Scientific Basis for and Texas Consequences of Climate Change"
4. **2012 Wildlife for Lunch Webinar Series (count as Advanced Training credit)**
<https://texas-wildlife.webex.com> to log on to the live webinars. For more information contact Courtney Brittain, Texas Wildlife Association, Education Program Coordinator
 2800 NE Loop 410, Ste. 105; San Antonio, TX 78218
 (210) 826-2904 ext. 122, (210) 826-4933 – fax, (210) 393-3467 - mobile
www.texas-wildlife.org, cbrittain@texas-wildlife.org
 March 15 * Pond Management, Michael Masser
 April 19 * Riparian Management 201, Sky Lewey
 May 17 * Integrating Cattle and Wildlife on Small Acreage, Larry Pierce
 June 21 * Ranch Photography for Fun and Profit, John Martin
 July 19 * West Texas Wildlife Management, Louis Harveson
 August 16 * Rainwater Harvesting, Billy Kniffen
 September 20 * Deer Nutritional Requirements & Implications for Management, Dave Hewitt
 October 18 * Native Prairie Restoration, Forrest Smith
 November 15 * Endangered Species Management, Brian Hays
 December 20 * Forestry Management for Wildlife, Chris Comer
5. **Global Amphibian Crisis: Dr. Michael Lannoo @ the Houston Zoo- March 9, 2012! (This program has been approved for AT credit.)**
 Description: Michael J. Lannoo, PhD Friday March 9, 2012 at the Houston Zoo Brown Education Center
 A Window into the Global Amphibian Crisis: Discovering the Biology of North America's Most Secretive Frog as it Approaches Extinction. - Featuring Dr. Michael Lannoo. Indiana University School of Medicine
 Fellow Houstonians, the Crawfish frog is one of the most elusive and cryptic amphibians in our state, and little is known about them in Texas. Associated with crawfish burrows and tall grass prairies throughout their range, this species may be disappearing along with our vibrant Coastal prairies. If you are an amphibian, prairie, or environmental enthusiast you must not miss this presentation! Dr. Lannoo's love for this species shines through and his enthusiasm is truly infectious. Even the most hardened character cannot help but fall in love with this mysterious little frog.
 "Whether as author, university professor, muddied researcher in a marsh, featured Discovery.com expert talking with kids about amphibian declines, or opponent in the political arena with Minnesota Governor Jesse "The Body" Ventura regarding the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's plan to drop funding for most deformed frog research, Dr. Michael "The Thinker" Lannoo loses no opportunity to go to the mat for amphibians." -Chicago Field Museum
 Crawfish Frogs, a Texas native species, have been described as the most secretive frogs in North America. For the past three years Dr. Lannoo and his graduate students have been undertaking a variety of exciting and ground breaking projects designed to learn the important

aspects of the population biology and landscape use of this unusual animal in the grasslands of Indiana. The ultimate goal is to manage this species to prevent its extinction. In 2001, Dr. Lannoo was awarded the Parker/Gentry Award for Excellence and Innovation in Conservation Biology by the Field Museum of Natural History, in Chicago. This award honors “an outstanding individual, team or organization whose efforts are distinctive and courageous and have had a significant impact on preserving the world's natural heritage, and whose actions and approaches can serve as a model to others.”

Description: <http://www.houstonzoo.org/attachments/wysiwyg/50848/crawfishfrog.jpg>

Purchase tickets:

\$10 Students (ID required), Seniors (65 and over) and Children (12 years and over).

\$12 for Zoo Members

\$18 for non-members

Refreshments included in price of ticket.

BUY TICKETS NOW: <http://www.houstonzoo.org/lectureseries/>

Questions? Email us at conservation@houstonzoo.org

Photo courtesy of SFA student and herpetologist Scott Wahlberg, 2011.

One of only a handful of Crawfish frog sightings in Texas in the last couple of decades.

6. Spring 2012 Applied Biodiversity Science Seminar Series (This program has been approved for AT credit.)

The ABS Program sponsors a speaker series each semester that features practitioners and scholars in the field of conservation science from Texas A&M or invited from other institutions. As part of the series, we also organize Cross-Pollination Workshops that provide an open forum for ABS faculty and students to showcase their research and receive feedback from multidisciplinary perspectives.

Date and Time	Location	Title	Speaker
Mar. 23-24, 2012	213 NGLE	13th Annual Ecological Integration Symposium (website)	Visit the EIS website for a full list of speakers
Mar. 27, 2012 4-5pm	501 RDER	Personhood, Memory, and Elephant Management (more info)	Dr. Gary Varner, Professor and Interim Head, Department of Philosophy, Texas A&M University (website)
Apr. 11, 2012 4-5pm	TBD	*Earth Stewardship: Sustainability Strategies for a Rapidly Changing Planet (more info)	Dr. F. Stuart Chapin, III, Professor Emeritus of Ecology, Department of Biology and Wildlife, Institute of Arctic Biology, University of Alaska Fairbanks (website)
Apr. 27, 2012 12-1pm	TBD	Assessing Social Carrying Capacity on Texas Inland Waterways (more info)	Dr. Gerard Kyle, Associate Professor, Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Sciences, Texas A&M University (website)

7. Master Naturalists sought for assistance and support of Scout Programs

Hello Brazos Valley, Cinco Tierra, Piney Wood Lakes, Hays County, Coastal Prairie, Heartwood, Lindheimer and Gulf Coast Chapters:

Your local areas were specifically mentioned in the message below--Please contact Jerrel Geisler for more information on this opportunity in your local chapter area. (Contact info below)

As well as being a Master Naturalist, I serve on the Conservation Committee for the Sam Houston Area Council Boy Scout of America. One of the roles I am serving is a liaison for Master Naturalist Chapters for this committee.

I am sending this to you, to send out to a portion of the Texas Master Naturalist (TMN) Chapters. We may have made this request before but I am reinstating our efforts to seek help.

We are seeking TMN Chapters or members who have or would like to help at our Council owned properties and where available, to join our committee. While one role of our committee is to provide for the awarding of environmental awards to various levels of Scouts and Scout programs within the Sam Houston Area Council (SHAC), namely the William T. Hornaday Awards, we also deal with educating local camp and summer camp staff on Texas natural issues at SHAC properties and also range, wildlife and habitat conservation for those properties.

I am looking for TMN members who are seeking volunteer opportunities and may have been scouts themselves (Boy or Girl) in their youth, please forward this information to them and they may contact me to find what the various needs may be. We have had members from the Hays County or Lindheimer Chapters help us out a couple years ago with Summer Camp preparation. The assistance was well received and we are seeking more help for this summer and at some of our other camps, for various needs.

Potential needs for the SHAC Properties include; El Rancho Cima - near Wimberly, Texas, adjacent to Hays and Comal Counties; Camp Bovay - near Navasota, Texas; Camp Brosig - near Sealy, Texas and Camp Strake - near Conroe and the Woodlands, Texas. We also meet on a monthly basis at the SHAC Headquarters in Houston. Also, if there are members who are currently working with scouting units within these areas, we would like to know as well.

Please pass this along to members and Chapters on your listserv, or forward to someone who can. Thank you for your time,

Jerrel Geisler, CIG

Sam Houston Area Council Boy Scout of America, Conservation Committee

jerrelgeisler@sbcglobal.net

281-467-2259

Texas Master Naturalist Gulf Coast Chapter

8. Freshwater Unionid Symposium and Workshop, University of Texas at Tyler, Tyler, Texas, 16 - 17 March 2012 (This program has been approved for AT credit.)

TPWD and several mussel researchers are organizing a one day unionid (freshwater mussel) symposium for anyone involved or interested in Texas unionid research on Friday, 16 March 2012, 9:00AM to 5:00PM with a social following. The goal of this symposium is to share ongoing unionid research and discuss important issues. A Texas unionid identification workshop will be held the following day on Saturday, 17 March 2012, 10:00AM to 5:00PM.

At the symposium, there will be up to fourteen 20-minute time slots available for sharing research. If you would like to present your research, please send a description of your research in 200 words or less along with your contact information to Marsha.may@tpwd.state.tx.us by 5pm on 29 February 2012.

Space is limited, so registration will be required for both the symposium and workshop. There is no cost for the symposium but there will be a \$10 fee per person for materials for the identification workshop. This fee will be collected on the day of the workshop. The workshop will have beginning and advanced components.

Please contact me if you have any questions and to register.

Marsha E. May, Texas Nature Trackers, Wildlife Diversity Program, Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744, (512.389.8062), marsha.may@tpwd.state.tx.us, Texas Master Naturalist Gulf Coast Chapter

9. The Brazos Valley Earth Day Committee cordially invites you to participate in the 17th Annual Brazos Valley Earth Day Festival. This year's event is scheduled for April 21st, 2012 at Wolf Pen Creek. The event aims to celebrate and promote environmental programs and services throughout our community. In addition to numerous educational opportunities, the festival will include entertainment, children's activities, free refreshments, and this event's first *After Hours Concert* featuring **Vocal Trash!**

As a participant, area residents will have the opportunity to visit your booth to ask questions, gather information, and view demonstrations. **Each booth will include one 8-foot table and two chairs.** You will need to provide your own table covering and tent.

Your organization is welcome to distribute any business-related literature and/or incentives, but may not sell merchandise or solicit donations of any kind unless you have been approved as a *vendor by the committee. To apply as a *vendor (this includes food services), please notify Heather Qualls by replying to this email.

Your table will be available for set up at 9:00 am with the event beginning at 11 am. To save paper and time, register online > <http://cstx.gov/index.aspx?recordid=186&page=3086>

Please reserve your booth space by completing the online form by Friday, March 30, 2012.

*Vendor - Organization or business *selling* items *Exhibitor - Organization or businesses *not selling* items

Additional Earth Day information may be found online at www.brazosvalleyearthday.com, this website will be updated periodically as the event nears! If you are interested in being a sponsor of this year's event please let us know!!

Heather L. Qualls O 979.764.6229 | C - 979.561.6003

10. TEXAS BRIGADES TAKES CAMP IN NEW DIRECTION Waterfowl Presents New Possibilities For Future - Contact: Helen Holdsworth, 855-TXBRIG

San Antonio, Texas-The Texas Brigades is gearing up for the newest addition to their family, the Waterfowl Brigade. The camp will start this summer near Palestine, Texas. It will focus on teaching youth about managing land to benefit various waterfowl species and the importance of wetlands management.

The Texas Brigades hosts five camps each summer: two Buckskin Brigades, two Bobwhite Brigades, Bass Brigade and its newest addition, Waterfowl Brigade. The deadline for applying is March 15, 2012.

Participants must be between 13 and 17 years of age, and submit a complete application for consideration. Camp dates and locations are as follows: South Texas Buckskin located on the Southern Star Ranch in Uvalde, June 3-7; Rollins Plains Bobwhite located at Centennial Lodge in Coleman, June 16-20; South Texas Bobwhite located on the 74 Ranch in Campbellton, June 24-28; Bass Brigade located on the Warren Ranch in Santa Anna, July 15-19; North Texas Buckskin located on the Stasney's Cook Ranch in Albany, July 15-19; and finally Waterfowl Brigade located at the Big Woods on the Trinity in Tennessee Colony, July 22-26.

The Texas Brigades* mission is to educate and empower youths with leadership skills and knowledge in wildlife, fisheries, and land stewardship to become conservation ambassadors for a sustained natural resource legacy.

I feel that the launch of the Waterfowl Brigade is a great and needed step in expanding the reach of the Texas Brigades, said former Brigades cadet Josh Pearson. *It will open new doors for them to new ideas.*The Texas Brigades was established in 1993 by Dr. Dale Rollins, Extension Wildlife Specialist with Texas AgriLife Extension, who came up with the idea for the Brigades as a way to expand Extension's educational efforts by developing wildlife ambassadors. "I think waterfowl is a good way to reach more kids, and I think the Texas Brigades has a lot of

resources that can help make it a success,” said Sarah Coffey, former cadet, “Also, since they [ducks] require a different habitat, it is a good way to learn about another ecosystem.” Not only is the Texas Brigades looking for cadets this up and coming summer but they are also looking for adult volunteers who are interested in participating and would like to gain the Texas Brigades experience. For more information, call 855-TXBRIGS, 210-556-1391 or log on to www.texasbrigades.org.

11. TMN Chapters needed as TPWD Texas Nature Tracker Partners!

Contact Marsha May for more information marsha.may@tpwd.state.tx.us

Texas Master Naturalist Chapters needed as TPWD Texas Nature Tracker Partners!

Did you know that as a Texas Nature Tracker Partner, your chapter members would not only gain those much needed volunteer hours but also contribute to Texas wildlife conservation?

A Texas Nature Tracker partnership involves train the trainer workshops for monitoring amphibians, freshwater mussels, black-tailed prairie dogs, Texas horned lizards and turtles taught by TPWD biologists. Your chapter can choose which watch program/s you would like participate. These workshops also count as advanced training. Regional trainings for adjacent chapters can also be arranged.

Participating chapters are then asked to take this knowledge into the field and monitor local species as well as offer outreach opportunities for the local community. These outreach opportunities can be as simple as inviting folks in the community to join you during a monitoring event. Monitoring and other events that your chapter may choose to do as a partner would count toward your volunteer service requirements too.

Please contact me if your chapter is interested and I will send you more information. Our spring schedule is filling quickly.

I look forward to working with you.

Marsha E. May, Texas Nature Trackers, Wildlife Diversity Branch, Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744, (512.389.8062), marsha.may@tpwd.state.tx.us , <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/tracker>

12. Bioblitz will be April 27 & 28 The 15th annual BioBlitz is coming in April!

BioBlitz 2012 will be held on Friday, April 27th and Saturday, April 28th at Lick Creek Park and we need lots of volunteers!

BioBlitz is a 24-hour survey of all the plants and animals in an urban park. It is a two day event that involves professionals and volunteers teaming up to identify species and educate the public about the biodiversity of the area. Events at BioBlitz include: bird walks, herp walks, mammal walks, plant walks, insect lighting, booths and displays, children activities, and lots more.

Volunteering on a team is an opportunity to learn new techniques for discovering biodiversity as well as networking with professionals in the field. Each team has its own method for identifying species which can range from trapping to seining. All majors and classes are invited to volunteer. For more information about BioBlitz 2012 please visit scb.tamu.edu and click on the BioBlitz tab.

If you are interested in signing up to join a survey team or to assist with BioBlitz please email scbbioblitz@gmail.com with your name, email, phone number, T-shirt size and the top 3 teams of your choice.

A. My name is Monika Libson and I am the 2012 BioBlitz coordinator. I am so excited for this year's BioBlitz! There's going to be a lot of new and exciting changes, but hopefully it will still be the same event that we know and love. BioBlitz this year will be held on April 27th and 28th at Lick Creek Park so please mark your calendars.

One of my crazier ideas for this year is to have more booths with games (sort of like a carnival) but each with a conservation/biodiversity twist. (e.g. animal face painting, safari caricature artist, fishing with little magnets and explaining catch limits, ring toss with recycled materials) Games that are fun for both children and adults but that educate the public to what real conservation is all about and how this sustains biodiversity.

I am hoping that each organization participating will come up with their own carnival game for their booth. All games must be approved. If you have extra suggestions for other booths please let me know.

To register for a booth please send me the following information:

Organization Name:

Booth Game:

Contact person's name:

Contact person's email:

Contact person's telephone number:

Also please submit an electronic copy of your organizations logo for the t-shirt

All booth registrations must be submitted by March 9th. Registration for a booth is free.

If you have any questions please email scbbioblitz@gmail.com and we will answer your question as quickly as possible. -Monika Libson, BioBlitz Coordinator

13. Leopold Education Project Educator Workshop and Facilitator Training

See contact below for more information or questions...

When:

Educator Workshop: Saturday, March 24, 2012-9am to 4pm

Facilitator Workshop: Sunday, March 25, 2012-9am to 4pm

Location: Welder Wildlife Foundation, Sinton, Texas

For directions visit <http://welderwildlife.org/content/visitors/directions/>

Training conducted by Terry Bedford.

For more details please see www.welderwildlife.org

or contact Liz Bates, Conservation Education Program Coordinator, Welder Wildlife Foundation, P.O. Box 1400, Sinton, Texas 78387, 361.364.2643,

conservationeducator@welderwildlife.org , www.welderwildlife.org

14. MILAM COUNTY NATURE FESTIVAL PHOTO CONTEST IS BACK!

Get your entries in by March 30

Contact Don Travis, El Camino Real Chapter of TX Master Naturalists

(middleagespread@yahoo.com)

The El Camino Real Chapter of Master Naturalists is again sponsoring a Nature Photo Contest.

It will be held in conjunction with the Third Annual Milam County Nature Festival being held Fair Park in Rockdale on Saturday, April 14th.

The objective of the contest is to promote awareness and an appreciation of the natural world around us by encouraging participants to look for nature in their own back yards, around the county and throughout Texas. It is our hope that participants will help to spread this message throughout the county and beyond, by using and sharpening their photography skills while broadening their personal experience with nature.

There will be three age divisions: 18 and older; 12 through 17 years; and under 12 years old.

Participants again will have five categories in which to enter, including: People in Nature; Wildlife; Landscape/Scenery; Plants; and Funny Nature Photo. Entries will be judged prior to the festival and the DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES IS FRIDAY MARCH 30, 2012.

All entries (space permitting) and winning photographs will be on display for public viewing at the nature festival site on April 14th.

The Awards Ceremony will be held at 2:15 pm, after which entrants may pick up their photos. Contest rules and guidelines, entry forms and information on how to submit photographs can be picked up at the Agrilife Extension Office in Cameron at the corner of 1st and Central, Monday-Friday between the hours of 8-noon and 1-5 p.m. or obtained from the El Camino Real website at: <http://txmn.org/elcamino/naturefest/photo-contest/>

Previous year's entries were spectacular so those of us on the festival committee are really looking forward to seeing what entrants have in store for us this year!!

15. Ro Wauer will speak on "Natural Habitat" or "What's So Special About Texas Birds" at Martha's Bloomers on March 10 at 11:00. I am not sure exactly what the title means but I am sure the presentation will be interesting and informative and well worth your time. Ro is a true naturalist! As always the presentation is free but Martha's ask for advanced notice of your intent to be there. Please do so at marthasbloomers.com.

16. Spring Beauty and the Bees - Volunteer pollinator monitoring

Hello Texas naturalists!

This spring, I am enlisting the help of interested volunteers to observe local pollinators of spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica* and *Claytonia caroliniana*). I thought you all might be interested in observing and learning about the pollinators of these native plants! I am especially interested in what pollinators are visiting in Texas, so any help you can offer would be greatly appreciated. This project aims to document changing pollinator populations - by monitoring the insects that visit spring beauty throughout the eastern US, we can determine how pollinator communities change depending on the year, the location, and the season. This information will help us better understand the biology of native pollinators, as well as help us determine the best way to evaluate their value for native plant reproduction. At the same time, you will learn more about the native bees and flies visiting our early spring flora, and spend some time outdoors during the lovely spring weather.

To help, you'll need to locate a patch of spring beauty, *Claytonia virginica* or *Claytonia caroliniana*, which are common in the Eastern US and Southeastern Canada. You'll find information on our website on how to distinguish the plants and pollinators and conduct pollinator observations on your own. We ask for about 2 hours of observations over the course of *Claytonia bloom*, which lasts 2-4 weeks in most areas. As you observe, you'll fill out the provided data sheets, which you will then email or mail to us.

For more information, visit <http://springbeauties.wordpress.com>. To volunteer, please email spring.beauty.pollinators@gmail.com with your name and location. We'll get in touch with you soon with more information.

Thank you very much, Alison Parker

17. RBAS program about Purple Martins to be presented by Jim Anding. March 14th at 6:30 at the BVMNH. (This program has been approved for AT credit.) Rio Brazos Audubon will present a program about Purple Martins. The speaker, Jim Anding, will tell you all you need to know to have these beautiful insect eaters in your own backyard. The program starts at 6:30 and will take place at the Brazos Natural History Museum on Briarcrest in Bryan. It is free and open to the public. For further information please visit the RBAS website:

riobrazosaudubon.org

18. (Note: This is a trip designed for TMNs for leisure, not a sanctioned AT trip... although we might determine that some components provide AT at a later date.) At last, the dates are set: the much-anticipated, purely-for-fun TMN trip to Fort Davis and the Davis Mountains will be May 4-8, 2012.

Disclaimer: I will be your guide and will facilitate the group activities, but this is not an escorted tour where you'll be on a bus or following me around while I wave a flag and speak into a microphone. :) This is a loosely guided tour, where you can choose to participate or not as you wish. My main focus is to get a group of like-minded people introduced to a beautiful region of Texas and to suggest some activities that I think you will enjoy. We will not always eat together, we will not always be at the same place at the same time, but I will provide as much structure as possible. You will be required to provide your own transportation to the various activities but I will give extensive directions, phone numbers, local guides, etc. Side trips are encouraged, and lagging behind to look at a certain plant or take a photo of a bird is expected.

Now that that's out of the way, here are the details!

RSVP: It's important that I know if you're attending so I can alert the venues of the expected numbers of people. Please email me if you're planning to attend, and email me if you cancel.

No fees are planned yet but I might need to request a small fee if we need to reserve a meeting area or pre-purchase any tickets.

DATES: May 4-8, 2012, Driving to Fort Davis May 4th, returning home May 8th, Days in the Fort Davis area - May 5th, 6th and 7th, If you cannot stay the entire time, or want to come early/stay late - that's fine!

ACCOMMODATIONS: Your choice – book on your own! I am not endorsing any property other than those owned by TPWD. I'm merely listing the ones that are close to where I am staying.

Davis Mountains State Park campsites (tent or RV)

http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/findadest/parks/davis_mountains/ 512-389-8900 or online at <http://texas.reserveworld.com/>

Camping at this state park is very comfortable – great facilities and beautiful, cool mountain weather makes sleeping in tents pleasant even in summer. (This is where I'm staying!)

Indian Lodge (inside Davis Mountains State Park)

http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/findadest/parks/indian_lodge/ 512-389-8982

Motel-type accommodations within the State Park. Rooms are basic but comfortable; restaurant onsite. The original lodge was built by the CCC but has been expanded over the years.

Prude Ranch (cabins, bunkhouses, RV sites) <http://www.prude-ranch.com/>

Availability varies; historic family-owned ranch between the State Park and McDonald Observatory. *** If you are interested in getting a group into a bunkhouse please let me know and I'll see what I can help arrange. *** Also offers a dining hall and horseback riding. This is a popular summer camp at the site of the yearly Texas Star Party, Fitness Camp and many school trips.

Sproul Ranch <http://www.sproulranch.com/> Next to Prude Ranch.

In town accommodations – Please see <http://fortdavis.com/accommodations.html>

ITINERARY/ACTIVITIES:

This is a very loose itinerary – it will be firmed up as we determine who is attending.

Friday, May 4th Travel day on your own – ORIENTATION SESSION THIS EVENING, approximately 7-8pm (location TBD), but if you miss it you can come pick up information from my campsite whenever you arrive.

Saturday, May 5th Morning: Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute – tour the botanical gardens or take a guided hike into Modesta Canyon (fee for entrance, extra fee for guided tour/hike)

<http://cdri.org/> The hike is moderately strenuous, but the gardens and mining museum can be easily navigated by most anyone. 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon (approximate end time)

Evening: McDonald Observatory Star Party <http://mcdonaldobservatory.org/> \$12 adults, \$10 seniors Starts approximately 9pm, dress warmly – constellations, nebulae, planets – depends on what's in view! This will be a full moon night so the viewing won't be the most spectacular but it will still be amazing.

Sunday, May 6th L.E. Woods roadside park for birding, hiking in the State Park, visiting the historic fort, taking the “scenic loop” drive, picnicking, shopping & dining in Fort Davis, side trips to Balmorhea, Marfa or Alpine (Museum of the Big Bend at Sul Ross State University) – the possibilities are too numerous to list here, but full info will be available. I plan spend the afternoon & evening on the scenic loop.

Monday, May 7th Davis Mountains Preserve, The Nature Conservancy of Texas

<http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/texas/placesweprotect/davis-mountains-preserve.xml>

We'll have guided access to areas of the preserve that are normally off-limits to the public. We have the option but not a guarantee yet of hiking to the summit of Mt. Livermore. At 8,378' it's one of the highest peaks in Texas. This will require a drive (high clearance vehicles only), and a 6-mile roundtrip hike with a 2,000' elevation gain. This is not required, but if you are interested

in this please let me know as we need to make arrangements with the TNC staff. Another less-strenuous hike is available on their public trail in Madera Canyon. TNC staff will be on-hand to show us their conservation center, talk about their work and explain the preserve's recovery since the wildfires.

Tuesday, May 8th Happy trails – break camp and travel home safely.

MEALS: All meals will be on your own. If you stay at Prude Ranch I believe you can arrange meals there. Fort Davis has a few restaurants and grocery stores and the prices are very reasonable. Most hotel rooms in the area do not have kitchenettes. There is a restaurant at the Indian Lodge inside the state park, and you're welcome to use my campsite kitchen for basic cooking any time you want. We will try to plan at least 1 picnic for the group, probably on Sunday. There will be plenty of time to commune with your fellow TMNers at various meals throughout the trip.

COST: Depends upon where you stay and what you eat. The costs for this trip are minimal other than the gas to get there, of course!

NEXT STEPS: If you decide to attend make your reservations as soon as possible. Rooms are limited at Indian Lodge but there are quite a few lodging choices in town or nearby at Prude Ranch. At the time of writing many campsites are available.

Email me to let me know how many people are attending, if any are children (and their ages) and where you're staying. Non-TMNers are welcome to join us, as long as they can put up with a bunch of nature-nerds with guidebooks and binoculars. □

FINAL NOTES: Children will love the area and many of the activities but keep in mind that some activities may not be appropriate for young children due to the rough terrain. Pets are not allowed unattended in the state park and I recommend you do not bring them. If you have any questions or concerns please email or call me.

CONTACT: Donna Cole donna@donna2112.com or txmasternaturalist@tx.rr.com
214-538-4444 cell

20.

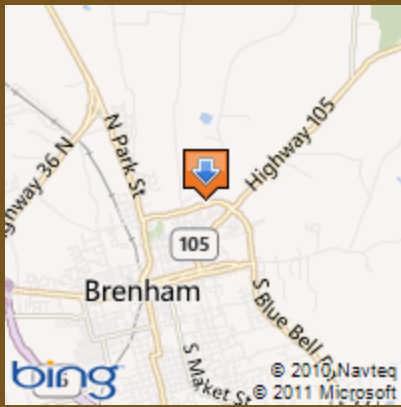


Fourth Annual Beginners Beekeeping School

Where:

Washington County
Fairgrounds, Brenham, Texas
1305 East Blue Bell Road
Brenham, TX 77833

*The Central Texas Beekeepers are hosting a one-day
Beginners Beekeeper School to be held March 24 at the
Washington County Fairgrounds in Brenham, Texas.*



Driving Directions

When:

Saturday March 24, 2012 from
8:45 AM to 5:15 PM CDT

[Add to my calendar](#)

We will have Beginning and Intermediate classes as well as a place to build your equipment and a Vendors Area where you can view and purchase Beekeeping items. There is even a Little Bee School for children ages 3 through 10.

*Our speakers include Dr. Paul Jackson, the Texas Apiary Inspector as well as Chris Doggett, the Editor of the Texas Beekeepers Association **Journal**. Both the Texas Honey Queen and the Texas Honey Princess will also be present.*

The cost of the school includes a catered Bar-B-Q meal with Blue Bell Ice Cream for dessert as well as a school "book" that will have information for all of the classes.

We had more than 170 people attend last year and would like to have you explore the world of Beekeeping with us.

To view more information, click on the "Get more information" tab below or visit our website at www.centraltexasbeekeepers.org. The schedule is available at the bottom of the information page.

To help us with class locations, you are asked to select the sessions that you anticipate attending. Selecting a class does NOT lock you into that schedule. The schedule may be changed slightly to accommodate speakers and class size.

There will be a vendors area and our club will have a limited number of assembled, painted ready-to-go hives available for purchase.

To register or learn more, click one of the choices below.

[Get more information](#)

[Register Now!](#)

[I can't make it](#)

If you have any questions or requests, please do not hesitate to contact us and share your ideas.

We look forward to seeing you on March 24!

Sincerely,

Michael Kelling

Central Texas Beekeepers Association

979-277-0411

Do you remember when your children were little and you read to them? Parents, family members, and children reading together is a lasting gift. To that end, Bryan ISD has launched a project this semester aimed at strengthening not only literacy skills, but family time as well.

Please join us in the 2012 Bryan ISD “Be The One” Literacy Project. It is our goal to provide each Bryan ISD Pre-K through 5th grade student a book to take home to read with family – 20 minutes a day. To accomplish this goal, we need 8,325 Pre-K through 5th grade level books – by March 9.

According to Reading is Fundamental, there is one book for every 300 kids in schools in low-income neighborhoods. Two-thirds of America’s children who live in poverty have no books at home. According to 2011-2012 statistics, 72% of Bryan ISD students are economically disadvantaged, and sadly, we know that books are often viewed as luxury items in the home.

Reading is one of the most important skills in a successful, productive life. Our students and citizens need strong reading skills in almost every aspect of life.

We are asking that, as a valued community partner, you would consider holding a book drive at your workplace, your church, your civic organization or in your neighborhood. Invite everyone to bring 1-2 new or gently used books to donate. Cash donations are also welcome.

Donors will be recognized on the Bryan ISD website and provided publicity in additional outlets.

Bryan ISD will provide personnel to pick up the books from your collection site.

If you have questions or would like a presentation to your group, please contact Mary Walraven, raven@bryanisd.org, 979-209-2881.

Thank you for Being The One to support literacy for all Bryan ISD students.

Memo To: TCE/TPWD Master Naturalist Chapter Advisors and Chapter Leaders

From: Neal Wilkins, Pat Morton, Michelle Haggerty, Sonny Arnold

Subject: Volunteer Screening

After review of Dr. Ed Smith's January 9, 2006 letter regarding Extension's revision of volunteer screening policies and after discussions with a number of County Extension Agents we have concluded that Master Naturalist chapters must comply with the minimum requirement mandating the screening of all volunteers currently working directly with youth or those who anticipate any possibility of working directly with youth in the future.

All procedures for screening are set forth in the Youth Protection Standards guidelines developed through the Texas 4-H program. Angela Burkham is prepared to assist with the accepted screening process for all Master Naturalist chapters so that the process will be uniform across all program areas.

Members who choose not to undergo the screening process must sign the statement: "As part of my duties as a Texas Master Naturalist, I will not work directly with youth or if I later choose to work with youth I understand that a background screening is required". This statement should become a part of the application process and maintained with the records of the chapter.

Prior criminal background checks are acceptable by YPS with documented verification from any one of the following sources: school districts, churches, recognized youth groups or associations, law enforcement, Texas Youth Commission, Department of Defense, Child and Youth Services and/or Family Program, concealed handgun license and licensed day care workers.

Several advisors indicated that they have already begun the requirement that all members be screened and that the local board will continue that policy. These chapters have decided to set a higher standard and we support that decision.

Let us know if you have additional questions or concerns about the screening of volunteers.

cc: Angela Burkham, Extension Program Specialist-Volunteer Development