



The Central Texas Master Naturalist Newsletter June 2017

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Waco Wetlands Dip Netting

- Richard McCarthy

While dip netting for macroinvertebrates at the Waco Wetlands, the Fourth Graders from South Bosque Elementary School found this leech in their nets. The leech was only one of the many macros found. The students also netted Damselfly and Dragonfly Nymphs, Whirligig Beetles, Crayfish, Water Mites, and other fresh water invertebrates.



Top: South Bosque Elementary School Fourth Graders dip netting at the Waco Wetlands.

This was one of three activities that the students participated in. They also took water samples; which they tested for pH, Dissolved Oxygen, Clarity, and Temperature. Results were recorded. Teaching the need for accurate records for scientific observations.

The third group was shown the effects of water on the environment by

Continued on page 6...

Calendar at a Glance

- June 5, hours due.
- June 10, Moth Night
- June 13, Graduation at Temple Public Library 6 p.m.
- See page 14 for more info

Chapter Motto
**Earth Day,
Every Day**



From the President's Pen

I would like to start this note from the *President's Pen* by saying 'Thank You' to Terrie Hahn as she steps down from her duties as the editor of our Tracker Newsletter. Terrie has done a great job in editing, collating and publishing our semimonthly newsletter to keep us all up to date on the latest Chapter news and views, and in highlighting the way that the natural world touches our neighborhoods and our lives every day.

Our training program continues to move ahead at a rapid pace, and we are planning our 2017 Graduation Ceremony for June 13th at the Temple Library. Thanks to the great work of our Training Team for another stellar performance in coordinating and facilitating our training program. I think our mentor program in particular was very successful this year as we welcome thirteen new trainees into our Chapter.

April and May have again been busy months for us with two outdoor service project dates at the Miller Springs Nature Center in support of our Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) Community Outdoor Outreach Program (CO-OP) grant and several visits to local elementary schools to show off our new discovery trunks that were funded by the grant as well. We made contact with over 400 children through our school visits this Spring.

We celebrated our first Earth Day Picnic at the Belton Lakeview Park Overlook Pavilion and although the weather was not especially cooperative, we had a great turnout and a fun time was had by all who attended. In addition we had a very informative trip out to the Gault Archeological Site that many of our new trainees attended and another Spring Burleson Prairie Walk that was a great success as well.

We head into summer with more events already on the calendar to in-

clude Moth Night at Mother Neff State Park on June 10th, the Texas A&M Agrilife Urban 4H Environmental Safety Day at the Bell County Expo Center on June 22nd, the Butterfly Count at Confederate Park in Belton on July 1st and the Ralph Wilson Youth Club hike on the Miller Springs Nature Center on July 20th, not to mention a full slate of recurring monthly CTMN cleanup days and volunteer activities in our neighborhoods and communities. I hope you all have a chance to go out, have fun, and engage in an activity or event that you truly enjoy to promote the mission of the Texas Master Naturalist program this summer. - Rene



Miller Springs Service Date – TPWD CO-OP Grant Outdoor Service Project; and Venable Village Elementary School, Cassie Torti – Bird Song Identification.



Damselflies

- Marilyn Whitworth

Damselflies belong to the same order (Zygoptera) as Dragonflies. Their suborder is Zygostera. They are similar to the dragonfly but are smaller, have slimmer bodies, and most species fold their wings along their body when at rest. They have been around since before the dinosaurs. Some species migrate.

In the nymph life, they live a few weeks to several years. In their adult life, they only live a few weeks. They are carnivorous. They eat other insects such as mosquitoes and gnats. A nymph will molt 10 to 20 times before reaching adulthood. The time between molts is called an instar.

The XERCES Society for Invertebrate Conservation in conjunction with the Migratory Dragonfly Partnership tracks the migration patterns of dragonflies and damselflies. Dragonfly migration occurs on every continent except Antarctica. Damselflies migrate in the spring and fall in conjunction with hibernation.

Damselfly nymphs are one of the macroinvertebrates that my husband and I catch at the Waco wetlands when we present dip netting activities to various school children field trips. Damselfly nymphs are a



© Alberto Ghizzi Panizza/Scient

good indicator of the quality of the water in the wetlands. If they can be found it indicates the water has good quality because damselfly nymphs don't do well in polluted water.

Photo above by Alberto Ghizzi Panizza published in the Daily Mail. Below: photo by John C. Abbot from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Magazine.



© John C. Abbot

Training Class News

Weather Balloon Tracking

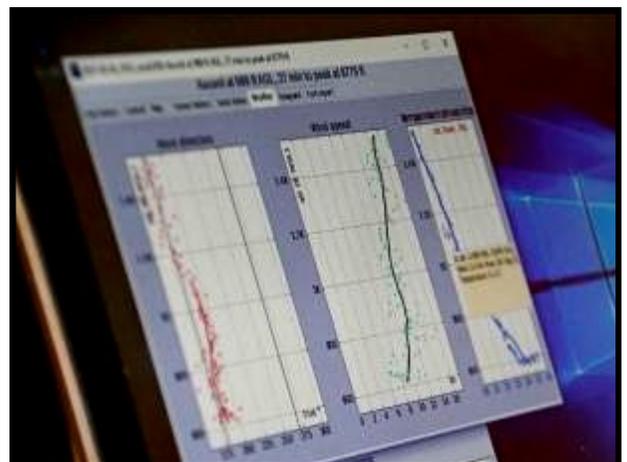
- Zoe Rascoe

During the Weather & Climate class at Blackland Research Center, Dr. Randy LeFevre, former Air Force meteorologist, prepares a weather balloon attached to a styrofoam coffee cup with a computer chip wedged inside. The high tech contraption is controlled and monitored from his laptop. When he's ready, he sends a command to a tiny device that burns through the string attached to the balloon and the coffee cup will fall. The cup is tracked by the laptop and Randy simply follows the signal and recovered the cup a few feet up in a tree at Temple College.

Dr. Randy LeFevre prepares the weather balloon for launch.



Above: Weather balloon released and off it went...a windy day made for a quick trip; Below: Laptop graphs the weather and atmospheric conditions of the weather balloon.



Training Class News

Geology, Mammals, Aquatic Ecology

- Zoe Rascoe



Clockwise: Cassie Torti checks out all the teeth at the Mammals class; Dr. Ray Kozusko, CTMN member in the 2010 class points out the geographical layers at the Miller Springs Nature Center; Vanisse Higginbotham shares a hellgrammite she scooped up in the creek; Mae Foreman finds all sorts of critters living under a rock in the creek; Dr. June Wolfe describes water quality parameters during the Aquatic Ecology class at (in!) Nolan Creek.



Snakes, Snakes, Everywhere!

- Terrie Hahn

I raided Lynn Fleming's Facebook page for these photos. Lynn says these top photos are a "Texas rat snake. Been hanging around for a while. Tried to deter it to no avail. I don't normally like killing snakes, but this one has consumed 4 of my new chicky babies already. Sorry snake. You lose." And below right is another photo from Lynn's page of a Speckled King Snake devouring what looks to be a venomous snake. King Snakes like eating birds, lizards, small mammals, and other snakes including venomous snakes that they are immune to. Kingsnakes are usually docile, but when disturbed, they may hiss, vibrate their tail, and strike. If seized by a predator such as a coyote, the kingsnake can expel a noxious musk. They are usually 3-6 feet and are constrictors. When attacking a rattlesnake, they clamp down on the rattlesnake's jaw and then swallow it alive.



Photos by Lynn Fleming

Waco Wetlands Dip Netting...continued from page 1

using an "ENVIRONScape". This is a model of a watershed with farm, factory, housing development, forest etc. Cocoa powder is scattered throughout to simulate different pollutants, i.e... oil. soil, grass clippings, etc. Water would then be sprayed over the area to represent rain. The result would be the washing of the Cocoa Powder toward and into the stream and pond just as nature would in a real watershed.

Each group would rotate through each activity to gain the variety of knowledge that was offered.

This is one of the educational programs provided to the various school districts throughout the school year which offers plenty of opportunity for volunteers!

Earth Day Festivities

- Zoe Rascoe

On Earth Day 2017, CTMN hosted a BBQ for those who had volunteered at Miller



Springs as part of our TPWD Community Outdoor Outreach Program grant. It was also a debut of new Discovery Trunks funded by the grant. Invitees included not only CTMN members (who also volunteered at the BBQ!) but also volunteers from UMHB, Belton High School, and Belton New Tech High. A big thank you to Robert and Lynn Fleming for hauling in the BBQ machine and cooking up some awesome burgers for those who gathered on the blustery day at the lake.



Clockwise from top left: Lynn instructs on use of Loupe; Ben and John wait for burgers; John and his friend, Cottontail; Lynn Williams and Marilyn Whitworth look over insect trunk material; volunteers enjoy lunch; cooks Lynn and Robert Fleming; former ACoE Ranger and Rehanon try to ID a tiny spider; Lynn Williams demonstrates bird call to family.



Here and There



- Zoe Rascoe

Rehanon Pampell's daughter Seda knows her nature!



'Tis the Season

- Terrie Hahn

Each April, we see a couple of Black Bellied Whistling Ducks land on our house. And this is the first fawn of the season in our yard.



Here and There

CTMN Just Went to the Birds: STEAM Open House at Venable Village Elementary

- Zoe Rascoe and Rene Berkhoudt

Our Chapter was invited to participate in Venable Village Elementary School's annual STEAM Open House at Ft Hood on May 4th. That's



Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math if you weren't sure. A special thank you to Lynn Wil-

liams who came as her alias "Screech", our Ambassador-at-Large, for the entire event and who had developed and prepared the various Master Naturalist activities – which filled an entire classroom. Good thing – there were hundreds of people at the Open House. There were nearly 300 adults and children who passed through the activities we offered which included "Beaks and Eats", Wingspan Challenge (what size bird would you be?), binocular making craft, Bird Call ID, Golfing for Endangered Species (no, really), and Bird Yoga – which is best seen as a video, not a photo. Half of the volunteers were trainees from our 2017 CTMN Training Class – their first foray into volunteer service hours for some. It took a village to run that many activities, so many thanks to the following folks who made it all happen: Lynn Williams, Kathleen Ramey, Charles Sorensen, Christa Venette, Marilyn Whitworth, Richard McCarthy, Kathy Cantu, Cassie Torti, Mary Ann Everett and Rene Berkhoudt.



Photos by Rene and Laurie Sigafosse (Venable Village)

Left: Screech can greet. Above: Make your own binoculars; Beak and Eats, food ends up on the floor just like home; Wing Span Challenge.

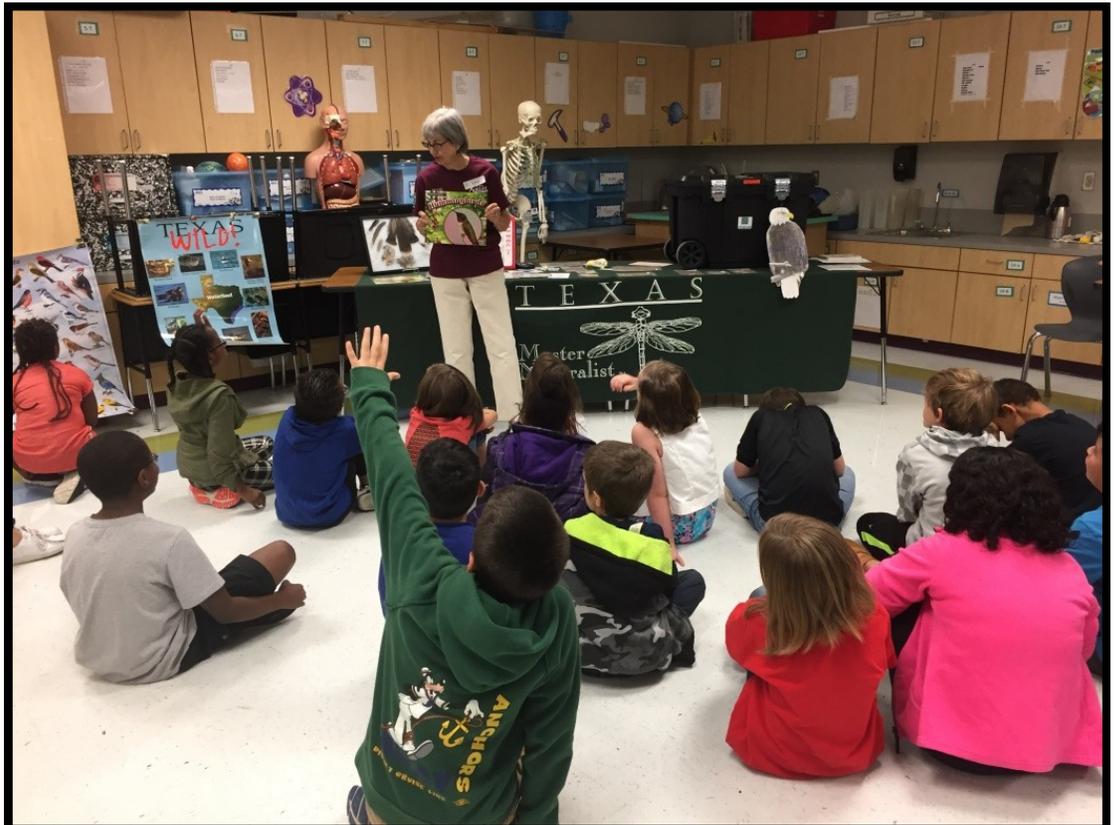
Here and There

- Rene Berkhoudt

Tarver Elementary
School – MaryAnn
Everett w/Golden Eagle
Skull



Cavasos Elementary
School – Shirley Watts
– Bird Discovery Trunk





Central Texas Master Naturalists

Please join us as we honor our 2017
Trainees with an Ice Cream Social

Tuesday, June 13th
6:00-8:00pm

Temple Public Library
100 W. Adams Street
McLane Room—3rd Floor

**Family members and friends of
Trainees are welcome!*

Program by Texas Herps



Discover the night life @ Mother Neff State Park

Moth Night

Mother Neff State Park
1680 TX-236 Highway
Moody, TX 76557

10 June 2017

8:00pm – 10:00pm

National Moth Week is held worldwide celebrating moths. Everyone, everywhere can become a Citizen Scientist and contribute scientific data about moths.



Where? At Mother Neff's headquarters you will find moth displays and use a blacklight. Central Texas Master Naturalists will be on hand to help you identify the critters you are finding under the night sky. You will learn what critters go bump in the night and learn why they are important. If you are feeling adventurous, you might even go on a moth scavenger hunt!

What to Bring? Nothing, but simple curiosity! However, you can bring a flashlight and bug spray to combat the mosquitoes. We will have moth guides and cameras to help you submit your observations.

What to expect? You can actively participate by finding moths and taking notes. The easiest way, is to download the iNaturalist app (www.iNaturalist.org) on your smart phone and create a profile before coming to the event. At the event, you take pictures of moths and upload them to the 'National Moth Week' project on iNaturalist.

There will be plenty of Central Texas Master Naturalists on hand to help you with it all. We will show you how easy it is to become a Citizen Scientist to help the 'real' scientists around the world be at all the places they can't.

Cost? Free. Park entrance fees will be waived for this event. For more information, go to: <https://txmn.org/centraltexas/central-texas-moth-night/>

On the Horizon

- Mary Sharp

JUNE

Mon 5 Enter Hours into VMS

Tue 6 CTMN 2017 Training Class #9. Blackland Research Center. Updated start time: 9:00am - 2pm. Zoe: trascocoe@hotmail.com

Thu 8 (V) Miller Springs Workday 8am - 12pm. Mary Ann: everett.maryann4@gmail.com

Sat 10 (V) Moth Night at Mother Neff State Park. 8pm Rene: rene.berkhoudt@gmail.com. See "More Ideas to Keep You Busy" for additional details on Moth Night. Park entrance fees will be waived for this event.

Tue 13 2017 CTMN Graduation, Temple Library. This is the night of our regular monthly meeting - please note change of location. Rene: rene.berkhoudt@gmail.com

Sat 17 (AT) Project Aquatic Wild Workshop. Lake Waco Wetlands. 9am - 3pm. Aquatic Wild Training, 6 hours Aquatic Wildlife, Habitats and Environmental Issues. Recently expanded to include STEM, Careers and Field Investigations. Engaging, interactive professional development for all educators. Content vetted by Wildlife Agencies and activities created by Educators. Aligned to TEKS, TEA certified CPEs, and Texas Master Naturalist Advanced Training Hours. Workshop and lunch \$35/participant, registration required. Please contact facilitators Diane: txcooneys@aol.com or Janet: j.wallace@mygrande.net

Wed 21 (V) Mother Neff State Park Workday 10am - 12pm. Yvonne: yeele@ymail.com

Thu 22 (V) Bell County Museum Workday 8am - 11am. Lynn: lynn.fleming99@gmail.com

Thu 22 (V) Environmental Safety Day, Bell County Expo Center. 9am - 4pm. VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY! Texas A&M Agrilife Extension is sponsoring Environmental Safety Day and we need your help to staff our station (Station K) and also general volunteers to help staff the event. We anticipate having 250 children aged 9-12 years old who will be bused in to the event. It will be a day of fun and interactive, hands-on learning experiences about safety and our environment. We will be hosting our Snakes and Insects Discovery Trunks and will count towards our environmental education target for our TPWD CO-OP grant. If you are interested in volunteering please contact Rene: rene.berkhoudt@gmail.com

Sat 24 (V) Build a Bee Condo 9am. See "More Ideas to Keep You Busy" for details. Contact Rehanon (979) 224-5507

Thu 29 (V) Nolan Creek Hike & Bike Cleanup. 8am - 11am. Mary Ann: everett.maryann4@gmail.com

JULY

Sat 1 Butterfly Count. Meet at Confederate Park 8am. Bring Butterfly Guide, Binoculars, Water. More Details Coming Soon. Mary Ann: everett.maryann4@gmail.com

Wed 5 Enter Hours into VMS

Continued on next page....

(V) Approved for Volunteer Hours
(AT) Approved for Advanced Training
(MA) Must Apply for approval of hours

On the Horizon...continued

JULY

Tue 11 CTMN PACE Meeting 6pm - 8pm. Belton Church of Christ. Rene: rene.berkhoudt@gmail.com

Thu 13 (V) Miller Springs Workday 8am - 12pm. Mary Ann: everett.maryann4@gmail.com

Wed 19 (V) Mother Neff Workday 10am - 12pm. Yvonne: yeele@ymail.com

Wed 19 (V) Ralph Wilson Youth Club iNaturalist Training. Rene: rene.berkhoudt@gmail.com

Thu 20 (V) Ralph Wilson Youth Club - Miller Springs Nature Hike. Rene: rene.berkhoudt@gmail.com

Thu 27 (V) Bell County Museum Workday. Lynn: lynn.fleming99@gmail.com

Please contact Rene if you have any questions - rene.berkhoudt@gmail.com

MORE IDEAS TO KEEP YOU BUSY...

Blackland NPAT's (Native Prairies Association of Texas) 2nd Annual Prairie Bus Tour of Central Texas Prairies. **Saturday June 3.** 7:00am - 11:00am. Departs Dallas @ 7am from Bath House Cultural Center, 521 E Lawther Dr, Dallas, 75218. Register today - limited availability. Contact Pat Rinn @ NPAT, 512-772-4741 or pat_rinn@texasprairie.org

There will be a Riparian and Stream Ecosystem Workshop on **Thursday, June 8, 2017** in Gatesville that will count as an Advanced Training (AT) Opportunity. You can code this AT opportunity as "AT: TX Riparian & Stream Ecosystem Workshop" in the VMS System. If you are interested in attending this training please RSVP to: naturalresourcestraining.tamu.edu/schedule

Mother Neff State Park Events. 1680 Texas 236 Hwy, Moody

Saturday June 10 Moth Night at Mother Neff 8pm. Central Texas Master Naturalist (CTMN) volunteers are needed to show how easy it is to become a Citizen Scientist and to help the 'real' scientists around the world be at all the places they can't. Help identify the critters under the night sky, help others learn what critters go bump in the night and why they are important. Volunteers can also help with a moth scavenger hunt! If you haven't already, please download the iNaturalist app (www.iNaturalist.org) on your smart phone and create a profile before coming to the event. <https://txmn.org/centraltexas/central-texas-moth-night/> Cost? Free. Park entrance fees will be waived for this event.

Saturday June 24 Build a Bee Condo 9am. Create a bee nesting block for your home or garden. Central Texas Master Naturalists (CTMN) and Mother Neff State Park are hosting a pollinator educational event that will include constructing mason bee houses. The houses, also known as nesting blocks, will be constructed based on recommendation given by the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign. RSVP required: Rehanon (979) 224-5507

Continued on next page....

On the Horizon...continued

Women in the Outdoors. **Saturday June 10**, 7:30am - 5:30pm. Hilliard Ranch, Davilla TX. The Women in the Outdoors Program (WITO) will meet its goals by introducing more women to outdoor activities and training women as outdoor educators. Choose 4 classes from a list of 21, which includes Archery, Bow Fishing, Fly Fishing, Kayaking, Outdoor First Aid, Plant Propagation (taught by Bell County Master Gardeners), Geocaching and many more exciting topics. Sponsored by The National Wild Turkey Federation. Registration required, \$75 includes 4 classes, lunch and 1 year membership in NWTF. Information: www.Facebook.com/witobellcounty or email Monica: sobotkm@yahoo.com

TMN Texas Waters Specialist Training. **Thursday June 22**, 6:30pm - 7:30pm. The next in the series of 4 webinars. No cost and qualifies for 1 hour of Advanced Training. Subject: Instruments of Watershed Change, Speaker: Johnnie Smith and Nikki Dictson, Texas Water Resources Institute. The February and April webinars can be viewed at <http://tpwd.texas.gov/education/water-education/texaswatersprogram/texaswatersspecialist>. Register at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5818565338900607489>. Questions? Email Johnnie.smith@tpwd.texas.gov

Un-Included Club Summer Education & Leadership Retreat **July 29 - August 5**. Temple Texas SPJST Education & Nature Center for middle and high school students. If you'd like to be involved, email Rehanon at RPampell@brc.tamus.edu

18th Annual Texas Master Naturalist Conference. **October 20-22**. Corpus Christi. Info: <http://txmn.org/2017-annual-meeting/>

Note: "More Ideas" are events and activities compiled from many different sources.

I always appreciate emails with event information - so please share!

As always, please validate the information if you are interested. Thank you.

Know of a chapter event and don't see it here?

Does a listed event need a correction?

Do you know of an event that our CTMN'rs would like?

Please send an email to maryrsharp@yahoo.com

(please don't forget the 'r' between mary & sharp)

CHECK US OUT ON FACEBOOK!

<https://www.facebook.com/Central-Texas-Chapter-Texas-Master-Naturalists-116648718373317/timeline/>

Newsletter Mission Statement

"Our mission is to inform and educate Master Naturalist members and the general public about our local environment and resources, and what we, as caretakers, can do to protect them."

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Please send any news of events, articles or photos of what you're doing or what's going on in your yard or area to:

Terrie Hahn at moompie45@hotmail.com

The Central Texas Master Naturalist Chapter:

Holds member meetings the 2nd Tuesday of February, April, June, August, October and December at 6 p.m. at the Belton Church of Christ at 3003 N. Main. Location exceptions are in December and June.

PACE meetings are at the Church location at 6 p.m. the 2nd Tuesday of January, March, May, July, September and November. **THE PUBLIC IS WELCOME AT ALL OF OUR MEETINGS.**

Programs Activities Committees Everything else

The Board of Directors meet the 1st Tuesday of January, March, May, July, September and November at 3 p.m. in the Board Room at the Agrilife Extension Center at 1605 Main in Belton.