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We are a group of trained volunteers who share our appreciation and knowledge of nature with the community through outreach, education

THE IMPORTANCE OF REPORTING TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST (TMN) VOLUNTEER HOURS

I've asked lots of questions during the past months as I prepared to take on this position as your president, and I know you've had some of the same questions. Foremost has been - why are we asked to report our volunteer hours, and why is it so important? At our last board meeting, I asked Margo "Mac" McDowell if she could help us out. She explained how the process worked and why it was important to both of our sponsors. We thought we would pass this information to you since we will be regularly reminding everyone to turn in hours at the end of each month.

Since most of us are somewhat disconnected from how TMNs operate and survive, it's not readily apparent that our recording and reporting of hours is necessary for the health and survival not only of the organization but also our sponsors, Texas Parks and Wildlife (TP&W) and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. The hours our Chapter turns in as part of our Chapter Annual Report are can fairly be compared to an individual's annual health exam, and as critical as the Annual Report of any for-profit business!

Texas A&M AgriLife reports our hours monthly to the state legislature who will use those numbers to determine funding. Do you enjoy AgriLife's provision of a program coordinator, our own office, meeting rooms, copiers, computers, phones, the assistance of county extension agents, storage facilities, and audiovisual equipment? I sure do.

TP&W reports our hours for the federal grant with the US Fish & Wildlife Service that supports our TMN program, and the many other conservation-related efforts the agency and our TMN volunteers implement. The value of our TMN volunteer hours is used as an in-kind match toward these federal grants. Do you enjoy our fellowship with TP&W sponsors, teachers and programs, like dove banding and the Biological Inventory Team (B.I.T.) program? I sure do.

In 2014, our Chapter reported 9,385 volunteer hours of effort, which are valued at \$22.50 per hour. The Coastal Prairie Chapter therefore helped these organizations with \$211,163 in support last year! **Unfortunately, from year to year, one fourth of our membership does not report a single hour.** This deprives the Chapter of information as to its own health, where our time is being spent, and accountability for our efforts, not to mention the loss for TP&W and AgriLife.

We encourage you to report your hours monthly to Margo MacDowell and Reene Spahr, our Membership Chair, on a monthly basis. This will allow them to pace themselves as they log in the hours of our 111 members into a specific database. (And I thought keeping up with my own time was sometimes a challenge?!) This truly is a responsibility that we share as conscientious members of this marvelous organization that we represent.

Thanks to Mac (AgriLife Program Coordinator), Michelle Haggerty (State Program Coordinator) and Lisa Marler (CPTMN Membership Chairman 2013-14) for their input for this article. Hearty thanks as well to Mac, Lisa, and Linda Rippert for the time they spent compiling membership hours for the past several years, and to Reene Spahr and Carrie Sample, who as leaders of our Membership Committee, will be recording, collating, correcting, and in general, making sense of our hours in 2015.

Diane Russell, CPCTMN President

**CPTMN MORNING BREAKFAST & GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 10 A.M. – 12 P.M.**

1. General Welcome (Diane Russell)
2. Fall Training Chairs report on updates, curriculum, etc.
3. Susie Doe for Plant ID curriculum quick update
4. Diane for Herpetology curriculum quick update
5. Margo MacDowell? - stream sampling in Missouri City with Don & Penny Johnson
6. VSP Updates with Michelle Sullivan
 - a. Presentation of Workshops on Wheels (WOWs)
 - b. Fulshear Farmer's Market
 - c. Sign-up Genius



10 Minute BREAK

7. Seabourne Events
 - a. Karl Baumgartner - Overview, grant renewal, improved birding
 - b. Jim Butcher - PHF
 - c. Lynn Trenta - Prairie Demo garden, grow out information
 - d. Barbara Willy - growing out native milkweeds



Distribute Mark Morgenstern's and Barbara's seeds & supplies

Vermilion Flycatcher among Birds Spotted on Bird Hike



Although the weather was dreary, there were 11 participants in the February Bird Hike last week.



Wayne Poorman, the hike organizer, said: “We had a cold and overcast morning for the bird hike, but the nine members and two visitors who braved the elements were treated to 53 species of birds. The highlight was the great performance by the Vermilion Flycatcher, who was busy at work catching bugs from his perch on the wetlands island. Some in the group decided we should name him Vinnie. We look forward to an even better hike in March.”

The photo of the Vermilion Flycatcher was taken by a LDS Volunteer, Tristan Ralston.

CPCTMN Member Captures Hawk Catching Squirrel

Carry Sample sent in these amazing photos of a hawk with his prey.

“[I] Saw this hawk while taking Sadie for a walk. He first was flying low and I could see he had something big in his talons. He finally landed in a neighbor's tree and ate on it while I ran to get my camera. He must have been quite proud because he let me take several pictures before he flew away with his unfinished squirrel for a meal.” *Carrie Sample*



Government Pledges \$3.2 Million to Help Monarch Butterfly



The federal government pledged \$3.2 million on Monday to [help save the monarch butterfly](#), the iconic orange-and-black butterfly that can migrate thousands of miles between the U.S. and Mexico each year. It has experienced a 90 percent decline in population recently. About \$2 million will restore more than 200,000 acres of habitat from California to the Corn Belt, including more than 750 schoolyard habitats and pollinator gardens. The rest will be used to start a conservation fund that will provide grants to farmers and other landowners to conserve habitat. The move by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service comes as it considers whether to classify the [monarch butterfly as a threatened species](#) under the Endangered Species Act, which would afford the butterfly more protection. "We can save the monarch butterfly in North America but only if we act quickly and together," said Service Director Dan Ashe. The [monarch lays its eggs exclusively](#) on the milkweed plant. Conversion of prairies into cropland and the increasing use of pesticide-resistant crops have greatly reduced milkweed, which is also an important food source, particularly in the heartland, according to the petition filed last August by environmental groups.

- [Monarch Butterfly Eyed for Possible Endangered Species Protection](#)
- [How One Gene Gives Monarch Butterflies the Power to Migrate](#)
- [Monarch Butterfly May Take Five Generations to Migrate to US](#)

--- The Associated Press

Wildlife Habitat Federation & Audio of Bob White Quail Calls



Gulf Coast Master Naturalist, Rebecca Thornton, sent this link to a great story on Houston Public Radio on how the [Wildlife Habitat Federation](#) & Jim Willis are creating a prairie habitat corridor in Colorado County for the Bob White Quail.

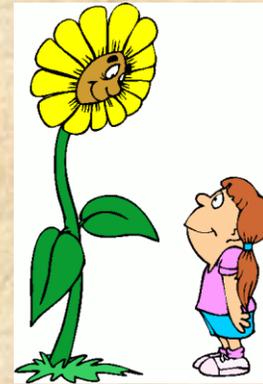
[http://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/news/listening-for-the-call-of-the-quail/ ...](http://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/news/listening-for-the-call-of-the-quail/)

[Read More](#) , including about possible visitation to that area in November.

Seabourne Creek Nature Park the Site of Spring Cleaning



Saturday, January 17th and February 7th, the Prairie Team did a “Spring Cleaning” of the Demo Garden, planted Texas Coneflowers in the Prairie, prepared labels for seeds to be used in the CPTMN Grow-out, and bumped up plants. Prairie Team members participating were: Karl Baumgartner, Jim Butcher, Jimmie Brannon, Than Colvin, Bill Johnson, Linda Lourim, Georgia Messemer, Gary Moore, Kathy Moore, Mark Morgenstern, Glenda Norwood, Carol Pawelek, Angela Pawlak, Linda Rude, Karen Showalter, Sharon Smith, and Lynn Trenta. We thank these volunteers for their continued hard work and care for the prairie and prairie demo garden.



CPCTMN Plant Study Group Begins

Volunteering opportunities are available at Seabourne. To help with the Prairie Demo Garden contact Mark Morgenstern at morgy@consolidated.net or Lynn Trenta at lynn@txtrentas.com. If you want to help with the Butterfly Garden contact Lea Hyman at slhyman1983@yahoo.com. Contact [Bill Johnson](#) if you would like to help with the Bird Sanctuary. For other volunteer opportunities email Karl Baumgartner at kbum@pdq.net.

Susie Doe began the CPCTMN Plant Study Group with a meeting of the group on February 10th at the FB County Conference Room. The 25 members who signed up for the group were: Karl Baumgartner, Nancy Sparrow, Jim Butcher, Margo McDowell, Ed Plant, Georgia Messemer, Vicki Poorman, Wayne Poorman, Doug Simons, Bill Johnson, Scott Stallings Lisa Feighery, Nancy Huffman, Glenda Norwood, Kim Farou, Rudi Grossenbacher, Marilyn Grossenbacher, Jamie Fairchild, Ramona Ridge, Linda Rude, Lynn Trenta, Susan Walther, Rick Adams, Johnny Fife and Patricia Mollere.

This Saturday, February 14th, Susie will be leading the Plant Group on a field trip at Seabourne to give them “hands on” experience with plant identification there in the park.

THANK YOU, Susie, for this much appreciated education and guidance!

LDS Volunteers Plant Trees at Seabourne

Ten members of LDS (Church of Latter Day Saints) volunteer youth group planted trees and understory shrubs donated by Apache Corp at Seabourne Creek Nature Park Saturday 1/30/15. Overseeing the activity were Bill Johnson, Leon Macha, Jimmy Brannon and Jim Butcher, Karl Baumgartner. 50 trees and shrubs were planted in the Woodlands and Prairie area, and around the Wetlands and Seabourne Lake. Andy Farnum had coordinated the ordering of the Apache trees with vendor L & L Nursery, but Andy couldn't attend. CPTMN volunteers participated from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00.

Karl Baumgartner



CPCTMN Outreach Participates in School's TX Cultural Day

CPCTMN members presented various topics to the students from the Holy Rosary Catholic Church School as part of their "Texas Cultural Day" on January 30th in Rosenberg.

The chapter members talked to the student about birds, nature in your backyard, Monarchs, and other nature topics to the students who ranged in age from pre-school to 8th graders.

Thanks to Julie Near, Carrie Sample, Jim Butcher, Diane Russell, Jaime Fairchild, Kim Farou, and Lynn Trenta for participating in this event.

Lynn Trenta, Courier Editor



CPTMN 2015 Board Members

2015 Officers

- President [Diane Russell](#)
- Vice President [Carol Pawelek](#)
- Secretary [Sharon Smith](#)
- Treasurer [Linda Lourim](#)
- Past-President [Jim Butcher](#)

2015 Committee Chairs

- Programs [Georgia Messemer](#)
- Communications/Website [Lynn Trenta](#) and [Susan Walther](#)
- Publicity [Chad Norvell](#)
- Volunteer Service Projects [Michelle Sullivan](#) and [Julie Near](#)
- Membership [Reene Spahr](#) and [Carrie Sample](#)
- Training [Than Colvin](#) , [Lisa Feighery](#) , [Wayne Helbert](#)
- Advanced Training- [Cyd Johnson](#) , [Jimmie Brannon](#)

We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://txmn.org/coastal/>

Dove Banding on List of 2014 CPCTMN Activities—



One important activity that we omitted from the list of activities accomplished by the CPCTMN Chapter for 2014 was Dove Banding.

This is a joint project with the Texas Parks and Wildlife and an important VSP for our chapter. This project is headed by Susie Doe, who does a wonderful job of organizing the banding and the training, getting trapping sites, and recording the results.

Thanks to Susie and all of the volunteers and people who participated in this event.

Check out our Facebook Page at [TXMN Coastal Prairie Chapter Facebook](#)

COASTAL PRAIRIE CHAPTER OF THE TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS

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