



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



## **Animal Tracking with Greg Pleasant**

Lynn Trenta, Courier Editor/Amber Leung, Secretary

*At our regular program meeting, Thursday, August 4<sup>th</sup>, we had a real treat! Greg Pleasant, Region 4 Fire Coordinator and Wildlife Biologist, and Certified Level III Tracker, opened our eyes to the skill of tracking animals. Mr. Pleasant began by asking us to identify some tracks shown on his PowerPoint presentation. After we were mostly stumped by these, he went on to say tracking involves more than just memorizing what each track looks like. Learning the way an animal moves is involved as well as other clues in the environment. Often the track will be stepped-on, with the front footprint being stepped on by the back foot. Sometimes you will notice other clues in the environment such as hair caught on shrubbery, or scat of a certain animal.*

*We were introduced to several animal tracks, including those of the armadillo, opossum, squirrel, coyote, white-tailed deer, cats, racoons, feral hogs, and rabbits, each having their own unique track and habits.*

*Mr. Pleasant stated that documenting your discoveries will aid your learning. Some ways to do this are journaling, photographing, and using plaster casts. He also cautioned against quickly labeling a track. Ask "why is this a coyote?" instead of "is this a coyote?". Also with knowledge and experience one can determine how fast an animal was moving and identify it based on gait.*

*We all enjoyed trying to identify the tracks and were inspired by this interactive talk to get out there and start looking for evidence of the wildlife that surrounds us.*

*Some suggested reading on tracking includes:*

*A Field Guide to Mammal Tracking in North America—James Halfpenny  
Practical Tracking—Lois Liebenberg, Adriaan Louw, and Mark Elbroch  
Tracking and the Art of Seeing---Paul Rezendes  
Mammal Tracks and Signs—Mark Elbroch*

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*Chapter events and nature-related articles, photos, and items of interest to the chapter need to be sent to [Lynn](#) by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. Suggestions for the newsletter are also welcome. Thanks.*

*Lynn Trenta,  
Courier Editor*

***The Thursday, September 1<sup>st</sup> Chapter Program will be “Fisheries and Aquaculture” with Peter Woods, Extension Fisheries Program Specialist for Texas A&M, at the Bud O’Shieles Community Center.***

***Come hear this expert speak at 7 p.m. The meeting will be preceded by a social time and snacks at 6:30 p.m. Around 8:00pm, we will have a short chapter general business meeting. The meeting is free and open to all interested persons.***



**Chapter Outreach** *Diane Russell, Chapter President*

***On July 27, Diane Russell, Kim Farou, and Kim’s daughter, Noa, presented the traveling Monarch show to a large group of senior citizens attending their monthly Gathering Place meeting at Memorial Drive United Methodist Church. The Gathering Place is a ministry for people with varying degrees of memory loss, and has participation of over fifty congregations in Houston. Also included in these efforts is Interfaith Care Partners, a non-profit organization that cares for vulnerable people. For over three hours, the seniors, many of whom live in some degree of isolation, are treated to songs, dancing, entertainment and lunch.***

***Our Monarch enthusiasts have begun doing outreach at these church-sponsored events, and we have been incredibly well-received by the seniors as well as the staff who put on the events. They are such an appreciative audience, and the smiles on their faces and the interest they all show in our presentations reminds us that this is one more reason the Master Naturalists are so important to the community. It is a wonderful thing to be able to show them videos and pictures about the butterfly life cycle, and to give them an opportunity to actually see the eggs, chrysalises, butterflies and caterpillars up close.***



**In Our Own Backyards** Thanks to Everyone for Sending These

Painted Bunting Diane Eismont

*The male Painted Bunting wins my vote for Texas' " Most Colorful Bird." The female, which is green, is seen coming in to land at a water pan on the ground. The female is coming in to land in a water overflow from a cattle tank. We attached a hose to the tank drain to provide water in a low container for birds & smaller animals which runs over & forms a puddle.*

*We usually have a pair each year. They come to our feeders for sunflowers & mixed bird seed, but also eat insects. I've read they like thickets and brush habitat as well as river bottoms.*



**Great Horned Owl and Gray Fox** Bill Archer

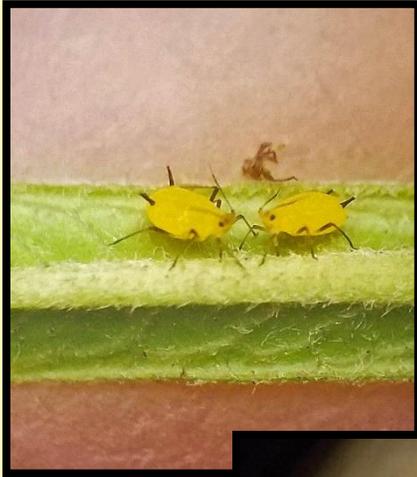
*A horned owl showed up to help with the dove banding. I thought it was attracted by a couple of cardinals who had sneaked into the dove traps and were making a scene.*

*Bill also took this photo of a gray fox in his yard.*



**Aphids and Pupa Up Close** Don Johnson, MN/Master Gardener Entomology

*Group--A Fellow Master Gardener and Entomology Group Member showed Don how to take photos through the lens of a microscope using a smart phone and the top 3 photos are the result.*



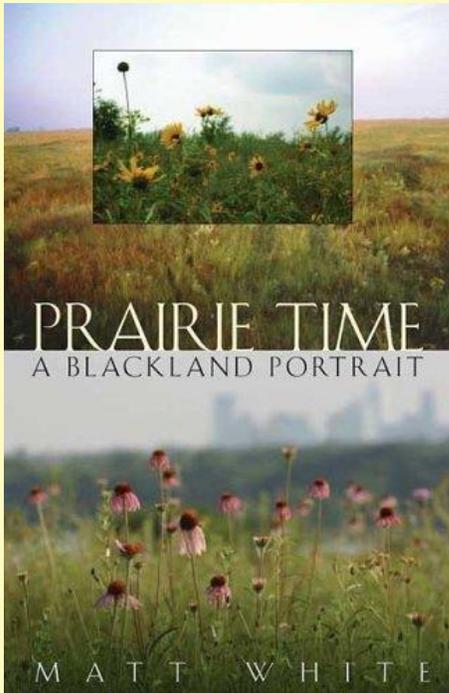
Don's photos of aphids (top 2) and a possible pupa of a syrphid fly

**Larva Up Close** Linda Rippert MN/  
Master Gardener Entomology Group

*Linda Rippert took this photo of a syrphid fly larva with an older camera, a Panasonic DMC-F27. She stated " It has a 12 X optical zoom[and]does really good macros if I can hold still and not make them blurry..... My newer one is either 18X or 27X. ....Have loved every model I ever bought."*



## The Book Corner



### ***Prairie Time: A Blackland Portrait by Matt White***

Review by Charles J. Bicak

Thanks to Karl Baumgartner for recommending this book.

*Like so many other ecoregions of the tallgrass prairie, the Blackland Prairie of Texas has largely been displaced by row-crop production, extensive grazing, and urbanization. Matt White laments this decline yet also sows seeds of hope with a fascinating set of essays that underscores both the passion and knowledge of current landowners as they undertake the challenge of preserving the remaining patches of Blackland Prairie. The daunting nature of this task is closely tied to the title of the book. "Prairie time" refers to eons, literally millions of years, that led to the structure and function of the Blackland Prairie. White's careful research reminds the reader of a time when the prairie ecosystem was dominated by the "big four" tallgrass species: big bluestem, little bluestem, Indiangrass, and switchgrass.*

*White's research conjures up a time of high prairie diversity, stability, and resilience. Prairie time also connotes [End Page 183] fragility. That is, the eons of time that led to the establishment of this remarkable grassland ecosystem can be undone in a few years, months, or even days with the carving of the soil by a plow that leads to the uncoupling of roots from shoots. The subsequent deterioration of the prairie and its interconnectedness is then inevitable. White ponders this irreversible loss alternating between resignation and hope.*

*The book is nicely organized. The first section, "Ingredients," focuses on the key ecological elements of the historic prairie: vegetation, soils, water, fire, and the large herbivores, notably the buffalo. These ingredients are simultaneously resources and stressors on the prairie and are described in the first four chapters. The second section, "Discovering Dream Land," is made up of fifteen chapters, each an interwoven vignette that encompasses the land and its plants, animals, and people.*

*The book displays White's keen knowledge and understanding of the Blackland Prairie. While the work is classic natural history, it also showcases the connections across the sciences and so many other ways of knowing. White is masterful in his integration of science, art, philosophy, and history. He is especially adept at highlighting fundamental tensions in regard to human attitudes toward prairies, and more broadly, the place of our species in nature. He raises questions about the inherent worth of the Blackland Prairie in particular and natural ecosystems in general. He challenges the reader to deeply consider our human valuation of nature.*

*It is clear that White is measurably concerned about the ecological future. It is equally clear that he is both optimist and educator. The book reveals the opportunities we have for conservation and stewardship of the remaining Blackland Prairie system. In the afterword, written in July 2013, White notes the genuine successes in prairie conservation that have occurred in Texas but rightfully counsels that this is a continuing challenge, and that those of us who cherish the prairie must see it as our collective challenge.*

## Emerald Ash Borers Cause Quarantine *Thanks to Carol Schwartz for sending this*

### After Discovery of Emerald Ash Borers, Harrison County is Placed Under Quarantine

On April 29, 2016, four adult emerald ash borer (EAB) (*Agrilus planipennis*) males were discovered in a trap 1.5 miles north of Leigh in Harrison County. Because of the potential for devastating damage to ash trees in the state posed by EAB, the United States Department of Agriculture – Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS) and the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) have placed the entirety of Harrison County under quarantine. This action has been taken to prevent the spread of EAB.

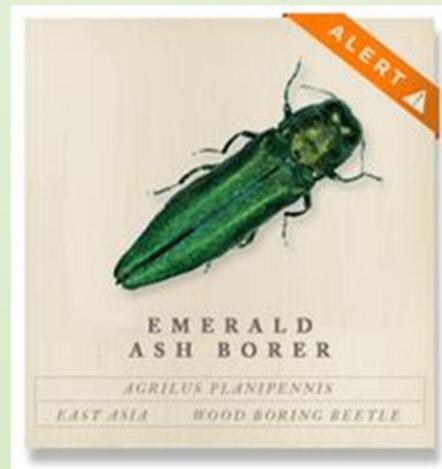
The quarantine under TDA is an emergency temporary quarantine that expires October 27, 2016, unless renewed or replaced by permanent quarantine regulations.

The quarantine means that specific items are prohibited from being transported from Harrison County; specifically, the interstate (APHIS - [7 CFR 301.53-3](#)) and intrastate (TDA - [Texas Agriculture Code, §71.0092](#)) movement of the following:

"(1) The emerald ash borer; firewood of all hardwood (non-coniferous) species; nursery stock, green lumber, and other material living, dead, cut, or fallen, including logs, stumps, roots, branches, and composted and uncomposted chips of the genus *Fraxinus*.



Credit: David Cappaert, Michigan State University



Credit: Pennsylvania DCNR

## Emerald Ash Borers Cause Quarantine (Continued)

*(2) Any other article, product, or means of conveyance not listed in paragraph (1) of this section may be designated as a regulated article if an inspector determines that it presents a risk of spreading emerald ash borer and the inspector notifies the person in possession of the article, product, or means of conveyance that it is subject to this subchapter.*



*A regulated article moved in violation of a requirement or restriction in this subchapter shall be seized and may be destroyed, with all associated costs being the responsibility of the owner of the regulated article pursuant to §71.009 of the Texas Agriculture Code."*



*Note that there are 41 nurseries, including four nursery plant growers, in Harrison County, Texas.*

*Please contact Plant Quality Program Specialist Dr. Robert Crocker*

*([Robert.Crocker@TexasAgriculture.gov](mailto:Robert.Crocker@TexasAgriculture.gov), 512-463-6332), Program Specialist Ms. Allison Olofson ([Allison.Olofson@TexasAgriculture.gov](mailto:Allison.Olofson@TexasAgriculture.gov); 512-463-7884) or Coordinator for Biosecurity and Agriculture Resource Management Dr. Awinash Bhatkar ([Awinash.Bhatkar@TexasAgriculture.gov](mailto:Awinash.Bhatkar@TexasAgriculture.gov); 512-463-5025) if you have any questions or concerns.*

## Seabourne Creek Nature Park

### *Cibolo Nature Center Trip*

*August 8<sup>th</sup>, a small band of master naturalists from our chapter set out to tour Cibolo Nature Center. Karl Baumgartner and Diane Russell, along with Wayne Poorman, are part of a committee which is working towards the establishment of the Seabourne Creek Nature Center. These 2 committee members were joined by chapter members Kim Farou, Jim Butcher and Lynn Trenta.*

*When we arrived at the nature center, we were lucky to talk to environmental research scientist, Donna Taylor, the development and database manager, Sarah Brumpy and also, amazingly enough, co-founder of the nature center, Brent Evans, who authored the book "How to Create and Nurture a Nature Center". We questioned Mr. Evans for quite a while, gleaning as much information as possible.*

*Then Ms. Taylor took us on a tour of the facilities and the nature park, including a prairie, wetlands, and the wonderful Cibolo Creek. The prairie had an amazing amount of switchgrass as seen in the photo with Jim. We were impressed by the casual spaces, both outside and inside. There were many areas for meetings, offices, an auditorium, an outdoor pavilion and a visitor/gift shop.*

*Although it was a 6 hour-round trip to get there, it was well worth it and a good time was had by all.*

*For more information about the Cibolo Nature Center go to: <http://www.cibolo.org>*

Photos by Lynn Trenta



Photos by Kim Farou

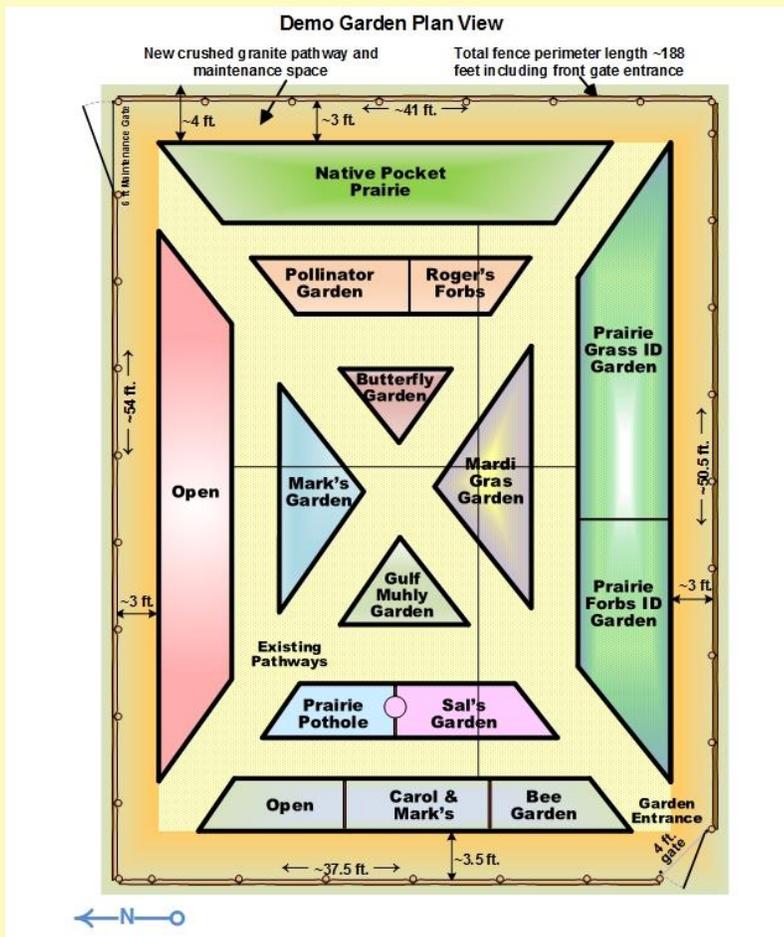


### The Prairie and Feral Hog Fence

The latest news on the feral hog fence topic is that we are building a fence around the SCNP Prairie Demo Garden. Jerry Trenta is the designer of the fence and is heading up the fence project. Below see the fence design and operations.

Thanks to Jerry for providing the estimates and plans that have enabled our chapter to make decisions about the fence and for volunteering to make it a reality. Sal Cardenas, Roger Hathorn, and other chapter members have volunteered to participate in this project. Volunteers are still welcome!

The CPCTMN Board voted to fund the fencing for the demo garden and plans are underway to get started on this necessary project.



The Lighter Side



Thanks to John Donaho for both of these photos



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 Vice President [Sharon Smith](#)  
 Secretary [Amber Leung](#)  
 Treasurer [Doug Simons](#)

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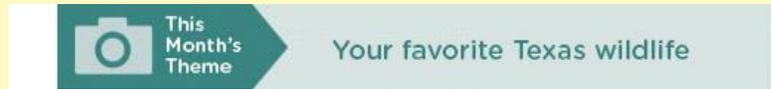
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- State Representative [Carol Schwartz](#)

**We're on the Web!**

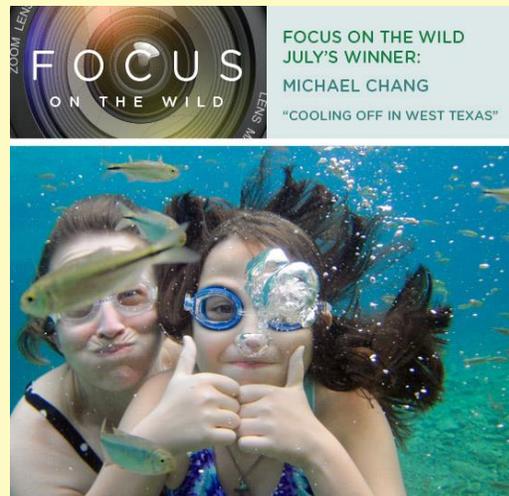
See us at:

<http://txmn.org/coastal>

**Focus on the Wild Photography Contest**



*For August, we have Texas wildlife in our sights. Send us your best image of Texas wildlife for a chance to score a Yeti cooler. To have a chance at winning, be sure your photo fits the theme and is submitted by August 25. Even if you submitted a photo previously, you can still enter this month. [Read the contest rules](#) to find out more.*



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

**To post photos and information, email [John Donaho](#) or [Lynn Trenta](#)**

***Also Share our chapter Facebook entries with your friends on your Facebook Page***

**COASTAL PRAIRIE CHAPTER OF THE TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS**

1402 Band Rd  
 Extension Office  
 Rosenberg, TX 77471—8678  
 Phone: 281-633-7033