

# Coastal Prairie Chapter Courier

June 2022 Volume 10 Issue 6



## Inside This Issue

Spring Class 2022 Graduates All 23 Pledges  
Girl Scouts Learn iNaturalist From Volunteers  
New Roost Rack Built at Seabourne Nature Park

Frank Hunter Photo



*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*



## Vice-President's Message

By Shannon Westveer TMNCPC Vice-President & New Class Director

**Table of Contents:**

- Vice-President's Msg.2
- Membership Minute...3
- New Class Graduates.4
- New Class Survey.....6
- June Program.....7
- VSP.....8
- BBSP Expo.....10
- Scout iNat.....11
- Richmond Fest.....12
- Edible Fest.....13
- HMNS Outreach.....13
- Outreach .....15
- Karl B. Trip.....17
- City Challenge.....18
- SCNP Roosting.....19
- Invasive Plants ....21
- May Bird Hike.....22
- Own Backyard....23
- Lighter Side.....24

**May Outdoors.** *What a whirlwind month May was. As the 5th pandemic wave came and went, Fort Bend and Waller Counties scheduled events as if it had been two years since their last one. (Oh. Right.) Thankfully, the TMN CPC outreach team was right on top of staffing volunteers for nearly all requested – we had 6 within just a week. You know what? Too much outreach is exactly the best problem to have. Hats off to everyone who helped touch more than 500 people with our program’s mission and the coastal prairie message. That’s not just outreach; that’s outstanding.*

**New! AgriLife Advisor.** *How exciting that Brandy Rader at Fort Bend AgriLife Extension has accepted the Chapter Advisor role. We have known and loved her for a very long time and could not have picked a better person for the task. Thank you for offering to serve with us and our mission, Brandy!*

**Newest Members.** *All 23 of the Spring Class became TMN CPC Pledges on May 7, and five of them – a new record – initially certified by that day, too. Diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility continue to be a worthy focus of our TMN State Program, and by the looks of this class, we are meeting those goals. Welcome to all you amazing, talented, and thoughtful people. We look forward to learning from you as you muddy up your boots in the field and in our communities with us.*

**Presidents and potlucks.** *At the May 24 meeting, TMN leadership shared their experiences with starting back up with face-to-face gatherings after two years of digital. Like a clean birdbath and seed feeder, ‘potluck’ and ‘socialize’ were suggested as helpful member attractants to help return to the ways of 2019. Potluck may be out for [Houston Museum of Natural Science in Sugar Land](#) meetings, but like the chickadee and titmouse, we’ve got the socializing part down pat! See y’all June 2 with speaker Susie Doe and the rest of our awesome, chatty, smiling members. (Look for the SignUp by email.)*

**Perk Your Park.** *Thanks to the action of a new grant-writing team which resulted in a Seabourne Arboretum project being selected as one of Niagara Bottling Company’s 10 semi-finalists to receive a \$75,000 grant. Publicity and voting on 3 grant winners will start in the fall; stay tuned. Thank you to John Shepherd (SPR 2022 Class), Cindy Wainikainen (SPR 2021 Class), Keith Winfree (FALL 2021 Class), and all those who helped them prepare the grant!*

**It’s Still Not Summer.** *Is your head spinning yet? In these last few weeks, members have also built roosting racks at SCNP, written even more grant applications, restored habitat at local schools and parks, logged wildlife diversity everywhere with BioBlitzes and iNaturalist, even helped wildlife at home. They fostered brand new conservation relationships and further cemented cherished old ones. Do these guys ever rest? Well, maybe just two. As you are chilling out along the Alaskan coastline, remember, Terri and Greg: you can readily warm back up upon return. See y’all outside, and Happy Summering!*

**Cover**  
*Top photo: New roosting racks built and installed at Seabourne Creek Nature Center.  
 Bottom: TMNCPC Spring Class 2022 graduates*

*Please send articles and photos by the 27<sup>th</sup> of the month to Lynn Trenta, Courier Editor. Thanks!*

# Membership Minute

By Jan and Kevin Kolk, Membership Directors



*Congratulations* to the following members who recently achieved certifications and milestones:

## *Initial Certification*

- Nathaniel Cross Spring 2021
- John Shepherd Spring 2022
- Frank Hunter Spring 2022
- Kerry Padilla Spring 2022
- John Greene Spring 2022
- Dorothy Tran Spring 2022
- Linda Bair Fall 2021
- Charles Borsos Fall 2021

## *2022 Recertification* (33 members recertified)

- Sandra Brown 2019
- Lucy Moyer Spring 2021
- Joyce Tipton Spring 2021
- Elaine Whiteley Spring 2021
- John Cooper 2019
- Marilynne Malone Fall 2020
- Jamie Fairchild 2012
- Mary Parkhouse Fall 2021
- Debbie Wendt 2014
- Pauline Zinn 2017
- Noel Zinn Spring 2020

## *250 Hour Milestone*

- Lucy Moyer Spring 2021
- Joyce Tipton Spring 2021
- Ursula Cooper 2019
- Angela LeDoux 2019
- Sandra Brown 2019

## *1000 Hour Milestone*

- Garrett Engelhardt 2017
- David Goff 2018

## *CPC: By the Numbers*

Match the number with the category.

- |                                     |         |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| 1. Active Members                   | A. 2227 |
| 2. Total VSP in April               | B. 19   |
| 3. Total AT in April                | C. 7565 |
| 4. Initial Certifications this year | D. 250  |
| 5. Recertifications this year       | E. 176  |
| 6. Total 2022 VSP                   | F. 994  |
| 7. Total 2022 AT                    | G. 33   |

See answers on Page 7



## Class of Spring 2022 Graduates!

By Shannon Westveer, TMNCPC Vice-president and New Class Director

*What happens when a square dancer, a doctor, and a geology professor meet during a worldwide pandemic? Answer: A most remarkable Coastal Prairie Chapter training class.*

*Early January, when 24 interns registered to attend the [Spring Course Schedule](#), enthusiasm to learn countered the bad news we'd just read: our county was again COVID risk level RED. In-person gatherings, particularly those indoors, might be pushed to a remote platform like the previous four pandemic-held classes. As mentors got to work hand-delivering course materials safely to each trainee, you wouldn't know there were any worries about it. These were extraordinary people: students, working professionals, retirees, and stay-at-home parents. Their collective cultures, talents, and flexibility would further enrich our chapter and uplift the program through inclusion and diversity. They were ready to get to work and get behind The Mission as TMN CPC volunteers.*

*Recruits engaged in work from the very first day, doing what they love best and logging service hours while doing it. Self-starters don't need to be told what to do; they were already being the change in heart of their communities! A rare few were able to get all three hours requirements met – 40 initial training, 8 advanced training, 40 volunteer service – in time for the final class. These five Pledges – Frank Hunter, John Shepherd, Dorothy Tran, Kerry Padilla, Joe Greene – deserve special recognition: initially certifying for TMN's Coastal Prairie Chapter within just 10 short weeks. Kudos to you all; you've created a new chapter high bar.*

*In addition to working regularly with the Seabourne Creek Nature Park Team, the rest of the class is engaging the public through outreach events with partner organizations and building native 'prairie pockets' or native plant gardens at schools, at home, and within their communities. They are on HOA Boards advising how to coexist with wildlife, sharing with others what they've learned. Others joined Board committees, working from home communicating important and informative chapter work to membership, helping to write grant applications, or providing chapter publicity media for on-line use. We see them attending monthly membership and Board meetings, making their voices heard. This entire class are movers-and-shakers for the State TMN!*

*Success of this and previous training classes is dependent on the many individual contributions from dozens of volunteers and professionals committed to our chapter, the TMN Mission and the State Program's co-sponsors (TPWD, AgriLife Extension) and various local partner organizations. Without your vibrance and energy, knowledge in and dedication to your field of study, or willingness to host a field trip or Zoom class, preparing and training these incredible volunteers would never have happened. The training class heartily thanks you for your service to them.*

*Congratulations Spring Class 2022. You've all certainly earned your pins, and we greatly look forward to serving alongside you!*

*Continued on the next page--*

T E X A S

Master  
Naturalist™



Coastal Prairie Chapter

## Class of Spring 2022 Graduates! *Continued*



*Photo credit: Frank Hunter, taken at Coastal Prairie Conservancy's Indiangrass Preserve Session 7 field trip, March 26, 2022 Joe Garcia, Lisette Dottavio, Partha Ayyanger, Jim Butcher (back, mentor and "Grand Poobah"), John Greene, Emily Essa, Dominic Dottavio, Lauren DeShazo, Kerry Padilla, Donatta Clarke, Shannon Westveer (front, mentor and New Class Director), Savitha Rao, Doug Stewart, Chrissy Pichot, Esmeralda Fisher, Lee Wright, John Shepherd, Dorothy Tran, Jaime González (back, trainer with The Nature Conservancy), Monique Smith, Ted Glover, Dawn Homan, Frank Hunter, and Kelly Vaughan. Not present: Dr. Rajat Bhatt, MD, Joe Chou*



*Last class and graduation May 2022 at the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge. John Rouane and Susie Doe were class teachers. Photos by Mary Parkhouse.*

## Class of Spring 2022 Survey Results

By Peyton Belunek, Spring 2022 Class Representative



*New Class at James B. Harrison Longpoint  
Photo by Kerry Padilla*



*Jim shows new class how to bump up plants at  
the Seabourne prairie area.*

*It was such an honor to represent the Spring 2022 Coastal Prairie Chapter TMN training class to our board of directors as New Class Representative! Our chapter is so much the richer for the addition of these passionate and well-trained new members! On the last day of class, as well as via Slack, a voluntary exit survey was provided to the class and many from the class were open to sharing their feedback on the training! I know many of you will be as excited as I was to see their favorite experiences as well as what they were left eager to see more of! Luckily, a naturalist's education is never complete!*

*The survey revealed that the class's favorite topic covered was botany (a big hat tip to our chapter's own brilliant Susie Doe!), followed by ornithology and entomology. There was a tie for favorite class between entomology and prairie ecology. Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge and Brazos Bend State Park tied for favorite field trip. Trainees listed entomology most often as the topic they would like to see more of in the future - though desire for more field identification training, coastal management, herpetology, and time in the field were also expressed. Almost twice as many trainees had attended a chapter board meeting and a chapter program meeting than had not. Over half of the trainees who completed the survey had already connected with a volunteer opportunity within their specific area of naturalist interest!*

*A massive congratulations to our Vice President and New Class Director Shannon Westveer for a job well done inspiring and stoking the flames of curiosity and passion in another training class! A hearty welcome and congratulations to the spring 2022 training class for the completion of their initial training!*

## Chapter Meeting June 2, 6pm: “Some of My Favorite, Often Overlooked Wildflowers of Seabourne Creek Park” *By Susie Doe, Class of 2008*



*While there are many WOW wildflowers that we are all enamored of, there are many native wildflowers at Seabourne Creek Nature Park that we often overlook because they just aren't as showy or as easy to see at a glance as others. Susie Doe would like to introduce you to a few of her favorite unassuming botanical neighbors.*

*Susie Doe comes from a family of avid gardeners with green thumbs and soon she became enamored of plants. For many years, she was a traditional horticultural-style gardener, but from an early age she had an interest in wildflowers.*

*As a biology major at the University of Texas, Susie did take some Botany courses. Her first taste of wildflower-searching was in the Austin area with a botany-major friend. But, over time, her wildflowering days were set aside for many years as she became involved with the Oklahoma Audubon group. When she moved back to Texas, work and child-rearing were a major focus, but birding was always on the agenda on visits back to her hometown of Galveston.*

*One day, Susie saw an article in the newspaper about the Texas Master Naturalist program and became a member of the 2008 training class. When the chapter became involved in the project at Seabourne, her interest in wildflowers, and not just wildflowers, but grasses, vines, shrubs and trees as well resurfaced with a vengeance – which led to her determination to learn how to identify the plants of Fort Bend County. The journey continues to this day: Susie keeps learning and tries to pass on what she has learned to others!*

*NOTE: Coastal Prairie Chapter programs are free and open to the public and chapter members via Zoom. Advance registration is required. Check back here a couple days before the event for the registration link.*

*TMNCPC members are also invited to attend in-person at the Houston Museum of Natural Science at Sugar Land. Advance registration via SignUp Genius is required.*

*The [Texas Master Naturalist](#) program is sponsored by [Texas Parks and Wildlife Department](#) and [Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service](#).*

*[TMNCPC members in attendance should record their Advanced Training (AT) hours under “AT: Chapter Meeting-Coastal Prairie”, and the VSP hours for the business meeting under “Chapter Business: Chapter Meeting”.]*

**To see previous chapter programs go to the Members' Section on the chapter website.**

*Answer to Membership Quiz:*

1. E
2. A
3. D
4. B
5. G
6. C
7. F



## Volunteer Service Projects Highlights

*VSP Opportunities Listed Last Month by Johanna DeYoung, Membership Director*

*Wow!!! May was like no other month in the past, according to Terri Hurley, TMNCPC President. Why??? With more people vaccinated against COVID and people having had COVID, some "normalcy" has returned to our lives. However, don't get too comfortable. The current incidence of COVID is on the rise and a summer spike is anticipated.*

*When doing TMNCPC outreach it is important to remember that the number of people being reached by volunteers Needs to be recorded. If a volunteer service activity involves interaction with the public, it is considered an outreach event.*

*One form is to be completed for each outreach event: the "Public Outreach Form", which is in the Slack Forms Channel. If, during an outreach, an attendee verbalizes an interest in becoming a Texas Master Naturalist, please Have him/her complete an "Interested in learning more" form and send it to Shannon Westveer at [shannon@coastalprairie.org](mailto:shannon@coastalprairie.org). This form, with instructions included, can also be found in the Forms Channel in Slack.*

*Please welcome VSP's newest Committee member: Joanie Havlick, Fall 2020 Class!*

*As a chapter within the State TMN Program, the TMNCPC assumes and applies the highest risk level within our jurisdiction (Fort Bend, Waller, and Wharton Counties), as well as, within other neighboring counties we serve. Reminder: No more than 20 hours of VSP service outside of Fort Bend, Waller, and Wharton Counties may be counted toward certification or recertification.*

*CURRENT COVID STATUS for all volunteer activities*

*3/21/2022: Fort Bend County went to a Green COVID Risk Level, "Minimal Community Risk". This level involves the following as it applies to the TMNCPC: "Resume normal contact with others unless sick. Resume attending public and private gatherings freely. Resume visiting vulnerable populations while practicing good hygiene and social distancing." The Green risk description follows: "Minimum and controlled level of COVID-19 in Fort Bend County. New chains of transmission are rare."*

*5/21/2021: Texas A & M AgriLife Extension issued the following update:*

*"Virtual meeting platform tools are useful and should remain an important consideration for planning meetings/events and for any indoor or outdoor activities that do occur in-person, masks and social distancing considerations are encouraged. Please note regarding vaccines: Our program and agencies currently have no legal authority to develop policy based on private health information (HIPAA laws) at this time and we don't anticipate the program drafting its own policy or allowances, etc. addressing whether individuals (members or the public) with vaccines can/cannot participate in any TMN activities and where, when and how. Texas Master Naturalist members or members of the public should not be asked about their vaccination status. Chapters may encourage persons in program settings to continuing following CDC guidance. There shall be NO EFFORT (including casual comments made publicly or privately) to DISCOURAGE the use of face coverings or any COVID related safety precaution. Those who wish to wear masks and practice COVID protocols should be respected and their wishes supported."*

### **VSP OPPORTUNITIES**

*Seabourne Volunteer Days has new summer hours!*

*Wednesday mornings 8:00 – 10:00 AM; and 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays, 8:00 – 10:00 AM*

*Come help at Seabourne Creek Nature Park (SCNP), Texas Master Naturalist Coastal Prairie Chapter's signature project! It is a great way to earn VSP hours; learn about butterflies and prairie plants; and enjoy time with fellow Texas Master Naturalists. There are several SCNP areas needing attention:*

- *Prairie Restoration Project*
- *Butterfly Garden*
- *Bird Sanctuaries*
- *Prairie and Habitat Garden*
- *Arboretum Project*

*Contact Information: Jerry Trenta, Seabourne Creek Nature Park Director, (see the Volunteer Roster for email)*

*[VSP hours to be recorded in VMS under the category "SCNP-7 Habitats Public Access: TMN Report Hours"]*

*Continued on the next page-----*

## Volunteer Service Projects Highlights *Continued*

**Houston Museum of Natural Science at Sugar Land (HMNS SL) – Bi-Monthly Outreach (2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays)**

The HMNS SL mandates Volunteer Training. For training and other information, contact Katie Sallean ([katie@coastalprairie.org](mailto:katie@coastalprairie.org)) or Jamie Fairchild.

6/11/2022, 10:30 AM – 3:30 PM: “Backyard Birds” Susan Walther and Mary Parkhouse: 2 more slots to be filled

6/25/2022: 10:30 AM – 3:30 PM: “General Garden Tour – Stump the Naturalist” – 4 volunteer slots to be filled

7/9/2022: 10:30 AM – 3:30 PM: “Healthy Soil Makes Happy Plants” – Shannon Westveer: 3 more slots to be filled

To sign up, go to: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f084dabaa22a4f85-saturday>

HMNS SL COVID-19 Precautions: “Due to Harris County currently being listed as a county with MEDIUM RISK, universal indoor masking is lifted for all guests and staff members. The CDC recommends that if you are unvaccinated or at high risk for severe illness, that you continue to wear a mask around others. Masking is still required when in the lower level of the museum or when participating in Youth Education Programs (like camp or classes.) People may choose to mask up at any time. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask.” [VSP hours in VMS under the category “Houston Museum of Natural Science-Houston/Sugar Land: ]

**Brazos Bend State Park (BBSP) – Tree Planting Opportunity.** BBSP has 80 trees to plant and has requested help from the TMN CPC. The dates of the plantings follow: Tuesday, 5/31/2022, 8:00 AM - “before it gets really hot”, and Wednesday, 6/1/2022, 8:00 AM - “before it gets really hot”. Please sign up ASAP on the Sign Up Genius:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f084dabaa22a4f85-tree> [VSP hours to be recorded in VMS under the category “TPWD Volunteering: TMN Report Hours”]

**Brazos Bend State Park (BBSP): Eco-Explorer, Wildlife and Science in the Park Program**

The BBSP requested the TMN CPC to present a “Predator and Prey” presentation on Thursday, 6/9/2022, from 8:45 – 10:00 AM. Jan Peterson will be heading up the TMN CPC’s efforts for this event and will be presenting the Skulls and Skins Workshop on Wheels (WOW). Lucy Moyer will also be on the scene for this event.

[VSP hours to be recorded in VMS under the category “TPWD Volunteering: TMN Report Hours”]

**TMN Virtual Volunteer Fair – 5/4/2022 and 5/5/2022 – Call for Proposals.** The recordings from the Virtual Volunteer Fair were recorded and uploaded to the TMN website post-event for those who didn’t attend the live presentations & wish to attain VSP hours. To access recordings, go to: <https://txmn.tamu.edu/virtual-volunteer-fair-2022/>.

[VSP hours to be recorded in VMS under the category: “TMN Virtual Volunteer Service Fair: TMN Report Hours”]

**Coastal Prairie Conservancy (CPC), formerly Katy Prairie Conservancy, – Stewardship Saturdays and Workdays.** Check the website calendar for Stewardship Saturday (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month) and CPC Work Days (Tuesdays and Fridays). For more info, contact Debbie at [volunteer@coastalprairieconservancy.org](mailto:volunteer@coastalprairieconservancy.org). Registration: Complete a [Volunteer Application Form](#). [VSP hours to be recorded in VMS under: “Katy Prairie Conservancy: TMN Report Hours”]

**Deer Park Prairie Workdays - 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the Month**

Scheduled workdays for DPP are the 4th Saturday of each month, from 9 a.m. to 12:00 Noon. These “...workdays offer an opportunity to explore and help maintain this special coastal prairie. The boardwalk project continues as well as brush control and work on the native gardens around the house.” Please RSVP to [Della Barbato@TexasPrairie.org](mailto:Della_Barbato@TexasPrairie.org).

Lawther-Deer Park Prairie (DPP), 1222 East Purdue Lane, Deer Park, TX, 77536 [VSP hours to be recorded in VMS under: “Community Nature/Public Access Deer Park Prairie: TMN Report Hours”]

Please continue to check the website calendar and Slack for VSP updates. If there is no existing VSP description fitting a potential VSP opportunity, please request and complete an VSP Proposal Form. In turn, the VSP Committee, Terri Hurley, Charris Powers, and Johanna DeYoung, will review the proposal and determine if it qualifies as a VSP opportunity.

If you are aware of VSP opportunities, have questions about VSP opportunities, or unsure are how to record an VSP opportunity, please contact Johanna DeYoung at [johanna@coastalprairie.org](mailto:johanna@coastalprairie.org).

## Chapter Outreach

### Brazos Bend Expo *By Lauren DeShazo, Class of Spring 2022*



Saturday at the Brazos Bend Expo was so much fun. We had a great turnout and had a wonderful time chatting with the kids about the animals in our Skins and Skulls WOW. Our scat replicas even helped a few people identify what animals had taken up residence in their sheds and yards. Doug Stewart brought out the Dental Formulas paper from our class here at Brazos Bend and I really enjoyed showing visitors how to use it on our replica skulls. We will be getting lots of new visitors at Seaborne and hopefully lots of new members (though many of the people we spoke to were from the Gulf Coast area). As recent graduates of the new class, Dorothy Tran, Kerry Padilla, Doug, and myself, I'm really glad we worked the morning shift together. It was really nice to talk to potential new members about the process we've just completed and what kinds of outreach and volunteer work we do. I was enjoying the expo so much that when Ute Welk, Johanna DeYoung, Joanie Havlick, and Randall Schmidt arrived to take over I stayed to check out the rest of the Expo. There were so many interesting people and booths. The Smokey Bear car, Coast Guard boat, and Sea Center Texas water table exhibit were a hit with the kids. As were the seed balls and live animals, such as Blossom the Opossum, over at the TWRC booth which was being manned by another of our recent alumnus Emily Essa. It was nice to chat with our members doing outreach in other areas, such as Scott Tufts, who had a really nice display of mammals. This is definitely an event to look forward to again next year.



Photographer unknown

## Girl Scouts Learn About iNaturalist *By Terri Hurley, TMNCPC President*



On Saturday, April 30, the park had a great visit by Girl Scout Junior Troop 157157 and their parents. This troop is on the "Think Like A Citizen Scientist" Journey so they were thrilled when I invited them months ago to a tour of the park and to be able to participate in our City Nature Challenge BioBlitz at Seabourne. They made many observations at the park on iNaturalist and we gave them a tour of the Native Demo Garden and the Butterfly Garden. A huge thank you goes out to Cyndi Scott who helped with the entire tour, Lynn Trenta who gave the troop a wonderful tour of the Native Demo Garden, and John Rouane who gave a talk about our prairie restoration efforts there at Seabourne. Lynn suggested that the troop adopt the pocket prairie bed for the "Take Action" project that is a part of their Journey and they were so excited about that! Photos by Cyndi Scott and John Rouane.



## Richmond Tourism Fest

By Susan Walther, TMNCPC Secretary



Debbie Wendt, Andrea "Drea" Morgenstern, and I spent a very enjoyable evening hosting the TMNCPC booth at the Richmond Tourism Fest held at Fort Bend Museum on May 10. It was lightly attended but this gave us the opportunity to have great interaction with each visiting family.

We used the new Bird WOW and had fun having our visitors try to match our bird skull models to photos and explaining to them how each beak shape is specialized to the way in which that bird species hunts and feeds. We sprinkled in Fun Facts about the species, such as woodpeckers having special cushions in the front of their brains to keep them from getting concussions while they drill on trees. (We humans have our cushioning below our brains to protect us while running and jumping.) Some of the kids were amazingly good at identifying the species to each skull.

As the point of the Tourism Fest was to inform folks about local places to visit, we were able to talk quite a bit about Seabourne Creek Nature Park and our chapter's active role in improving the park and its diversity. I think that many of our booth visitors will be making their first visit there soon!

The festival had some great booths alongside us, including Brazos Bend State Park (touch a baby alligator!) and George Ranch (try your hand with a lasso!), as well as free food, free admission to the Fort Bend Museum exhibit and historic Moore House, a door prize raffle, and a DJ playing good music. The Sugar Land Space Cowboys had a popular booth where they handed out free game tickets and Space Cowboys merchandise items.

A highlight of our outreach was when several Black Bellied Whistling Ducks took up residence in the large trees above our booth and entertained the festival attendees with their whistling calls. Debbie sprang into action handing out our loaner binoculars to children and helping them get a closer look at this truly odd-looking duck. It's hard to ask for a better local species to get a child hooked on birding!

Another highlight of the evening was a visit by the Sugar Land Space Cowboy's mascot, Orion. He was awesome at interacting with the visitors and the booths. He met a baby alligator at the BBSP booth and learned all about Birding at our booth. This was a fun outreach event that I recommend we continue to participate in. Even if our outreach signup is full, come on out to this free event to learn more about our community's history and local offerings.



Photographer unknown

# It's All About Sustainability

Edible Earth Fest 2022 May 14, 2022 By Jessica Jubin, Class of 2013



One Missouri City man's passion project has grown into a beautiful display of what sustainable living choices can do for our environment and ourselves. The Edible Arbor Trail is a 2-mile stretch of mature fruit and nut trees planted along the banks of Oyster Creek near the YMCA on Cartwright Road in Missouri City. It's a remarkable demonstration of how one can grow nearly anything in Fort Bend County, and the paved trail can be enjoyed any time.

On Saturday, May 14, the community drove, biked and walked up to celebrate Paul Wierzbicki's original 2010 trail concept through the annual Edible Earth Fest hosted by Missouri City Green and supported by Texas Master Naturalists and others. People enjoyed fresh produce from H-E-B, pollinator plant giveaways, food-themed games, and a golf-cart tour of the trail led by the Wierzbicki family.

A popular stop was the TXMN's Water Conservation Station spearheaded by JudiAnn Carlsson and staffed by Charris Powers, Jessica Jubin, Sandra Brown, Marilyne Malone, Vivian Wang, and Jimmy Kumana. The Coastal Prairie Chapter volunteers had a blast interacting with 81 children and 97 adults learning about rain chains and rain gardens, rain barrels, eco-art and the highlight of the day - Marilyne's entertaining and educational demonstration of the WOW Enviroscape Watershed and conservation training kit. Children flocked to hear her interpretive stories on the water cycle and how water conservation, or a lack of it, affects us all.

To enjoy the trail, park near the YMCA - 4433 Cartwright Road

Link to trail map and seasonal picking guide:

<https://www.missouricitytx.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6818/Edible-Arbor-Trail-Map?bidId=>

Continued on the next page--



JudiAnn and Jessica Jubin with other organizers

Crowd at the fest's Enviroscape Table

Scouts making rain barrel

Photo by Jessica Jubin

Unknown Photographer

**It's All About Sustainability** *Continued*

*Photos by Jessica Jubin*



*Charris Powers and the rain chain pour*



*Kids decorate rain barrel*



*Sandra Brown teaches about water runoff with the EnviroScape.*



**Houston Museum of Natural Science Outreach May 28**

*May 28, Jim and Hilda Jurdi, along with Johann DeYoung reached out to some 82 visitors. Attached photo by John Vindekilde. Many thanks to Hilda and Jim Jurdi for making it happen - Johanna*



## Outreach Booths – A Former Newbie’s Perspective

By Susan Walther, TMNCPC Secretary



*Public outreach is a fundamental part of the Texas Master Naturalist mission statement, as seen in the first paragraph:*

*“The Texas Master Naturalist Program’s mission is to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the State of Texas.”*

*As TMNCPC Class of 2011, I may be approaching “Old Timer” status in the Chapter, but I’ve still considered myself to be an Outreach Newbie. For my first nine years as TMN, I worked full time and rarely had weekends free to participate in outreach events. Then my retirement coincided with the COVID shutdown. So, this Spring, when outreach events finally started up again, I was apprehensive about my qualifications to stand at a booth and talk intelligently to visiting families about our chapter, its mission, and specific outreach topics. I’m an introvert and definitely not a natural teacher, I thought. What if I have nothing of interest to say? What if I don’t know the answers to their questions?*

*Turns out that I was worried for nothing. The key to finding my Outreach Mojo can be summed up by a shoe company’s slogan: Just Do It.*

*Here are some of the things I’ve learned by participating in recent outreach events at the Houston Museum of Natural Science at Sugar Land and the Richmond Tourism Fest.*

- *It helps to introduce yourself.*
  - *Something like “Hi, I’m a volunteer with the Texas Master Naturalists. Our mission is to preserve and improve our local natural areas and resources and educate our community. Today we’re showing some cool information about birds.”*
- *Using a Workshop on Wheels means you’ll never be at a loss for something to say.*
  - *Our WOWs are full of interesting visuals and information on specific topics such as Birds, Butterflies, Bats, Skins and Skulls, and the Enviroscape watershed model. If you are new to the subject, you can look over the notes and information included in the WOW to become an instant mini-expert.*
- *You won’t be alone! You’ll almost always be part of a team of two or more TMNs. It’s a great way to get to know other chapter members, and together you can handle pretty much any outreach situation.*
- *You don’t need to know the answer to every question! In fact, when you are stumped or uncertain, it’s a fantastic way to teach visitors how easy it is to learn on their own via reputable websites and awesome apps like iNaturalist and Merlin Bird ID.*



*Jim Butcher talks to kids at the Fort Bend County Fair*



*Chapter members Ute Welk, Jan Peterson, Debby Wendt and John Rouane at Brazos Bend SP Outreach*



*Chapter member Debby Wendt at the Fort Bend County Fair*

*Continued on the next page--*

## Outreach Booths – A Former Newbie’s Perspective *Continued*

- *Some of the best Teaching Moments happen spontaneously.*
  - *At HMNS-SL, a stroll around the butterfly garden is almost guaranteed to turn up a butterfly, lizard, bee, etc. So go ahead and get excited about things when you find them! Tell your visitors how important the insect is to pollination or the food web. Visiting children will absolutely remember seeing a live bug and will go home excited to explore their own back yards. In the rare case you can’t immediately find wild fauna, you can always chat about the flora, such as how important native plant species are to support the native insects, birds, and mammals.*
- *A few Fun Facts never hurt, especially something a child may find funny.*
  - *Did you know that an average American Robin eats over fourteen feet of worms every day?”*
  - *“Do you know why birds are so good at balancing? Humans have one motion sensor in our inner ears. Birds have two! One in their inner ear like us, and another is in their pelvis!” (“Their butts!”, you may clarify to get a giggle.)*
- *Be flexible. Each family that visits your booth is different – especially the children.*
  - *Some families are only mildly interested in our booth, and that’s OK. Try showing them a couple of your more interesting WOW props or try a Fun Fact. But don’t take it personally if they just smile politely and move on.*
  - *Other families are REALLY into your topic and are excited to explore all the items on your table and chat at length about the WOW topic and more. This is tons of fun. Often you learn things from them, or you can show them things like iNaturalist to take their interest to a new level. And of course, this is an ideal time to show the adults our chapter website <https://txmn.org/coastal/> and suggest they consider taking one of our upcoming training classes!*
  - *Get excited with the kids. Their enthusiasm is so catchy that this part is easy.*
- *Mention local parks where they can do more exploration, along with anything you know about the park that you think they’d find interesting.*
  - *Seabourne Creek Nature Park! Its many habitats and our chapter’s role helping the City of Rosenberg to improve its diversity. You can mention our first-Wednesday Bird Hikes held November through May.*
  - *Cullinan Park; just around the corner from HMNS-SL, a great place for birding and so diverse in plants, insects, and mammals too. <https://cullinanparkconservancy.org/>*
  - *Katy Prairie with its Unplugged Adventures and guided tours. <https://www.coastalprairieconservancy.org/>*

*If you’ve been undecided about trying TMN outreach, I’ll say that if I can do it, you can too! It’s a core part of our TMN mission, and a great way to get VSP hours. So go ahead and sign up for one of the upcoming events and find out for yourself how easy, fun, and fulfilling it can be!*



*Chapter member Diane Russell at talks about butterflies*

## New Class Visit to Karl Baumgartner's Property

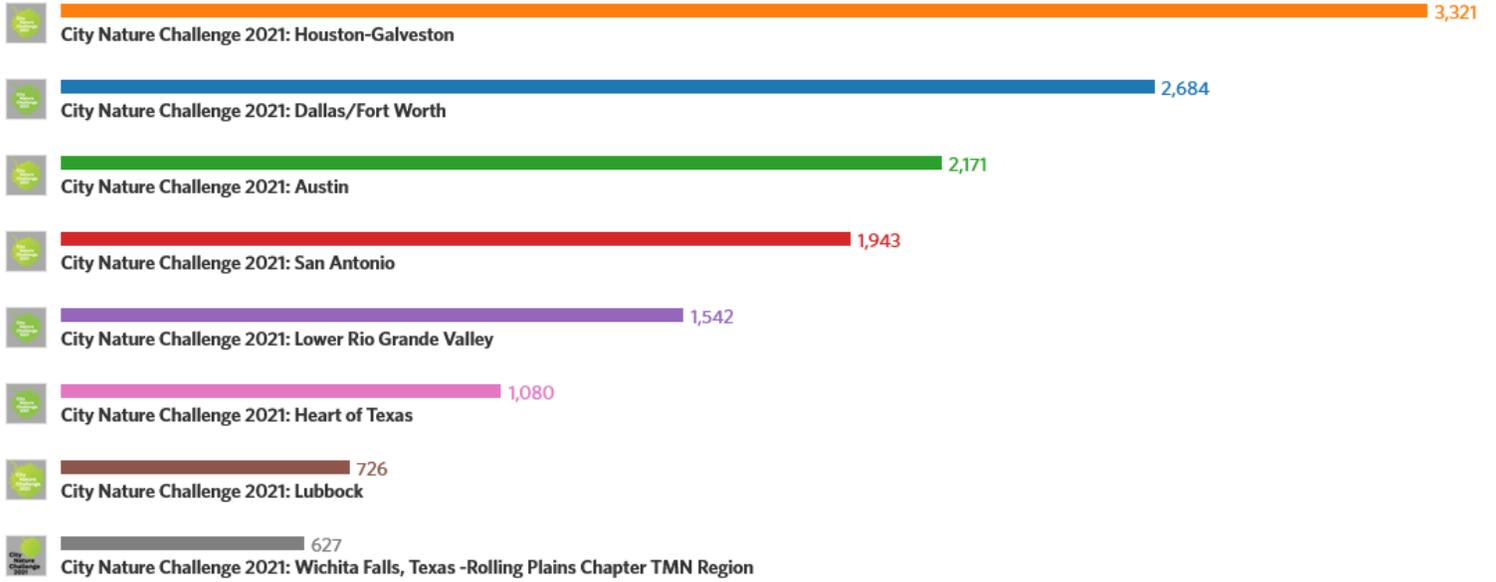
Text and photos by Garrett Engelhardt



On 4-30-2022 several TMN enjoyed a trip to Karl's Lavaca ranch. In attendance were Karl Baumgartner, Jim Butcher, Garrett Engelhardt, Lauren DeShazo, Monique Smith, Philip Ward, Elaine Whiteley, John Cooper, Ursula Cooper, Rajat Bhatt, Partha Ayyanger and John Shepherd. All had a great time exploring the land and checking out the wildflowers. Monique Smith received the blue donut from Jim Butcher. Ursula Cooper spotted the Timber rattlesnake on Karl's back porch. Two members got to catch perch, which we restocked into Karl's new pond. Below are photos from the field trip.



# iNaturalist City Nature Challenge



*Chapter members at Seabourne iNatting  
(l to r) Dorothy Tran, Kerry Padilla, Judi Harrington, and Megan Cromeens*



## The Big Roosting Rack and More

By Jerry Trenta



*The roosting rack construction on the Wetland's large island is complete. The project took over two years of design, material gathering, and planning just to get to the point of construction. It then took three Saturday mornings in almost jungle-like conditions and a dedicated crew of chapter volunteers to complete the construction. It was accomplished using a rope/canoe ferry to move the material, tools, and volunteers over to the island.*

*Phil Ward and Elaine Whitely were the pioneers who first paddled to the island to establish the island end of the ferry. From that landing site a ~50-foot-long tunnel was cut through the very thick underbrush to get to the first building site. This was very tough going as the brush and vines were very thick in that area of the island. Some of the grape vines were over 1-1/2 inches thick. After cutting through to the target area, it was weed wacked down (Elaine) and the task of moving material and tools from the landing site to the building sites was started.*

*Installing the post anchors came next, being driven in with a very heavy post driver by Sal, Don, Bob, and Phil, then the 6 foot posts were installed in the anchors using adhesive (which seemed to get on everyone's hands, tools, clothes), and a bunch of stainless screws. At this point everyone was in agreement that we had had enough for the day and collected our tools and took the ferry ride back to the mainland.*

*The next Saturday we returned to the Island and started installing the support structure on the first rack while driving in the post anchors for the second rack a little further down the shoreline. We managed to get the first support structure up with only a couple of learning errors and started installing cedar poles across the top while installing the posts on the second rack. This was done under the watchful eye of a wetland's pond resident, a ~four-foot-long alligator.*

*On the third and final Saturday morning, one team finished installing the cedar poles on rack one while a second team completed construction on the second rack's support structure and installed the cedar poles across the top. The final task was installing critter baffles on each of the support posts.*

*Many thanks to the 'Islanders': Don Parkhouse, Elaine Whitely, Phil Ward, Bob Naeger, Garrett Engelhardt, Sal Cardenas, Kevin Engelhardt, John Cooper, Janis Leavitt and Jerry Trenta, and to the photographers: Frank Hunter, Kevin Engelhardt, Elaine Whitely, and Lynn Trenta.*

*We will be continuing with the tree watering and with the clearing and planting preparation work on the Wetlands South Shore. We are also prioritizing removal of Brazilian Vervain from the prairie areas and weeding the pots of nursery plants. Please feel free to take a few plants from our nursery. There are Indian blankets that need to be planted now.*



*Kevin Engelhardt, Jerry Trenta, Elaine Whiteley, Phil Ward, Don Parkhouse, Garrett Engelhardt, Bob Naeger, Sal Cardenas  
Not in the photo are John Cooper and Janis Leavitt, who is looking forward to becoming a member. Photo by Lynn Trenta*



# The Big Roosting Rack *Continued*

## Seabourne News



*Don Parkhouse loads material to go to the island. Don, Sal Cardenas and John Cooper transport the material to the deck. Elaine Whitely and Phil Ward set up the canoe pulley system and Elaine cleared the area (below) Photos Lynn Trenta*



*Jerry uses pulley system (above right)  
Sal and Bob Naeger transport lumber to island (left)  
Photos by Kevin Engelhardt*

*Group puts posts in. Pictured are Janis Leavitt,  
Bob, Elaine, Jerry and Sal. Photo Lynn Trenta*



# The Big Roosting Rack *Continued*



*Phil, Bob, Jerry, and Sal put the rack together (above) and the finished rack (right.) Photos by Elaine Whiteley Below photo of both roosting racks by Garrett Engelhardt*



## Invasive Plant Attack



*Jan Kolk, Lauren DeShazo, Judi Harrington, Kerry Padilla, and Nancy Jones help with removal of Brazilian Vervain. Simon Tice and Doug Stewart also have helped with this project. Photo by Lynn Trenta*



## Seabourne News *Continued*



### May Bird Hike Nets 208<sup>th</sup> Species *Photos By Ute Welk*

*The last bird hike of the season resulted in the addition of another species found at Seabourne. It was the purple gallinule. Ute captured a photo of this bird, often found at Brazos Bend SP at wetlands and ponds. Also seen was the painted bunting. Wonderful bird hike and a win for our bird list!*



## In Our Own Backyard and Other Places

### Armadillos *Text and Photos by Diane Eismont*

*We have continued to keep tabs on the excavated den hole under the west side of the barn and documented 13 opossum visits, 14 skunk visits and 19 swamp rabbit visits. I have heard that armadillos dig lots of spare dens and the entrance way is looking well used.*

*Soil texture that is easily dug is a big influence on the number of armadillos in a certain area. As expected, easily dug soils support a greater armadillo population density since food is obtained by probing for insects and other forms of animal life in the ground. Shallow burrows serve as food traps for insects such as termites, ants and scarab beetles (which are destructive to crops and pasture) and other invertebrates, which are 93% of armadillo's food. Carrion is readily eaten for the meat and also for the maggots and fly pupae that live on it.*

*Armadillos need water for drinking, probing for insects and taking mud baths. In our yard, they hang around the bird dripper overflows. Since they have no hair, long periods of freezing weather eliminate armadillos from an area.*

*Young are born in fours, generally in March, fully formed with eyes open. Young are nursed and stay with the Mother until several months old. Armadillos are now common throughout Texas, having expanded north and east in the 19th century.*

*For more info on armadillos consult "The Mammals of TX" by William Davis & David Schmidly (1944)*



# The Lighter Side



The Best Driving School Facebook

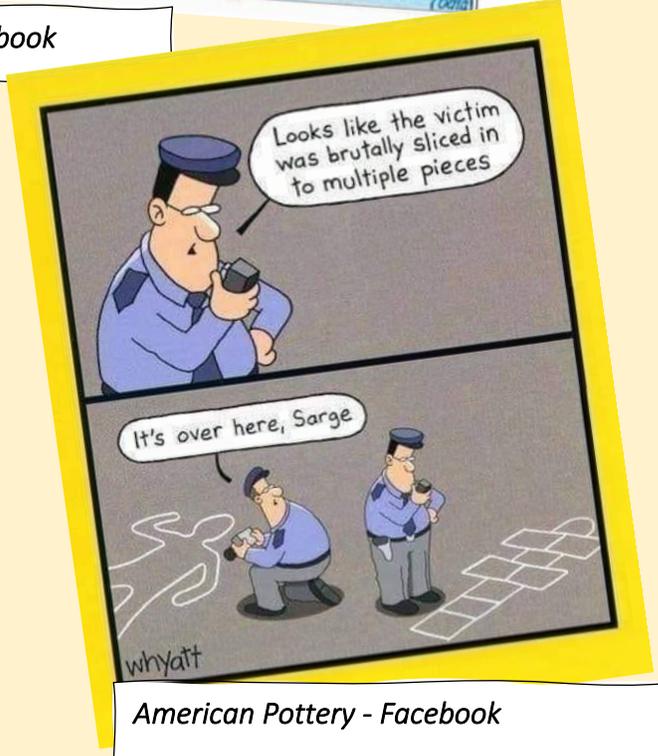


Facebook John Donaho



Why science teachers should not be given playground duty.

The Far Side Facebook



American Pottery - Facebook



"No, it's not water. You seem to be retaining food."

Photo of Seabourne by New Class Member Frank Hunter

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[Katie Sallean](#)  
New Class [Shannon Westveer](#)  
New Class Representative [Peyton Belunek](#)  
State Representative Hoiman Low  
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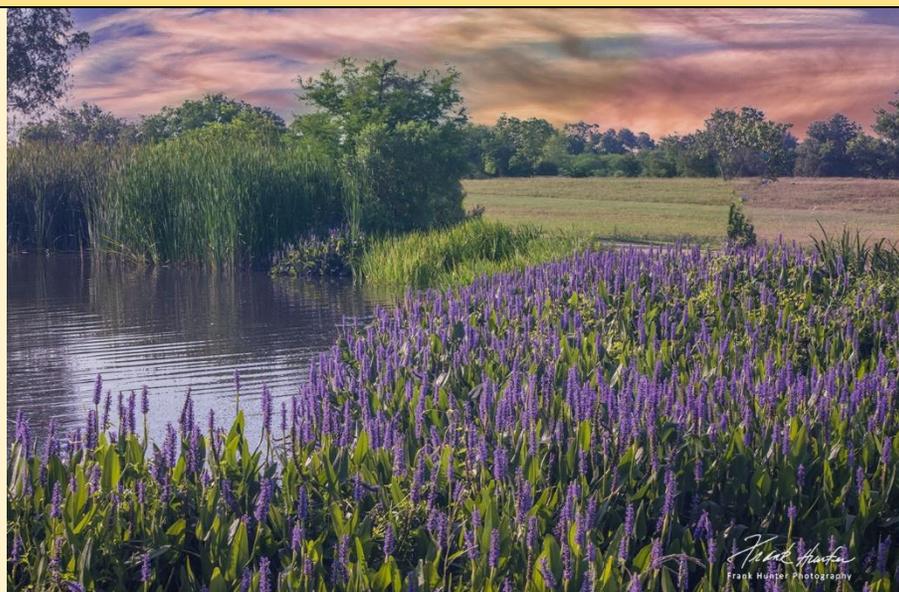
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TPWD Wildlife Biologist [Jon McLeod](#)  
Fort Bend County AgriLife—TBA  
Wharton County AgriLife [Corrie Bowen](#)  
Waller County AgriLife [Candace Moeller](#)

**We are on the Web!**

See us at:

[www.coastalprairie.org](http://www.coastalprairie.org)



**Our Chapter Facebook Page is at**

**[TMN Coastal Prairie Chapter Facebook](#)**

**To post photos and information, email  
[Megan Cromeens](#) or [Judi Harrington](#)**

***Also, share our chapter Facebook entries with your friends  
on your Facebook Page***

***We also have a **Chapter-Only** Facebook Page that allows  
chapter members to post items. You can join by going to the  
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