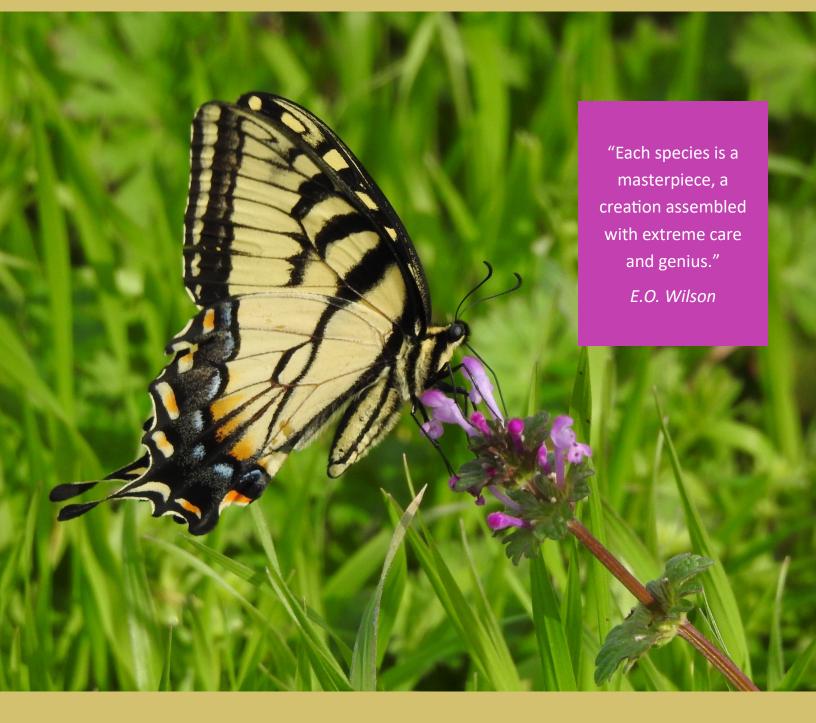
Coastal Prairie Chapter Courier

March 2023 — Volume 11 Issue 3



Inside This Issue Readying Seabourne for Spring, Grant Beginnings Overseeding: Restoration 101 Welcome Spring 2023 Members!



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.

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ON THE COVER

An eastern tiger swallowtail stops to nectar on an introduced weed. Both the butterfly and the photographer know of henbit's fabulous virtues! (Photo by Erik Wolf)

EDITOR TEAM

-Shannon Westveer, March Co-Editor, <u>Shannon@CoastalPrairie.org</u>

Have a great story for next month's issue? Submit by **MARCH 25th** to **Cindy Wainikainen**, April Co-Editor, <u>Cindy@CoastalPrairie.org</u>

President's Message

by Terri Hurley, TMNCPC President



March is all about anticipation of the beautiful weather, blooms, birds, and butterflies of spring. Life is coming back to the natural world and as Master Naturalists we want to be out in it, reveling in the rebirth that is appearing before our eyes. Get ready to spring into action!

Groundbreaking for the Arboretum at Seabourne Park. This month Board members attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the Niagara Perk Your Park grant project at Seabourne. City of Rosenberg and Niagara 'celebrities' were also present. They included City Councilman George Zepeda, City Manager John Maresh, Assistant City Manager Joyce Vasut, Niagara Plant Director Tony Dexter, Niagara HR

Manager Sheryl Robertson, Rosenberg Parks & Rec. Director Cary Lamensky, and others. Now that the project has officially started, the installation can begin! The City will let us know what we can do to help. Thanks to everyone for efforts on the grant application and getting out the vote to win. Keep an eye out for volunteer opportunities in the coming months.



New Seabourne Creek Director needed. Seabourne is our signature project and our financial bread and butter. Jerry Trenta has been our SCNP Director for years and he is asking for and deserves a break! To replace him, we need one new director or two co-directors or even a



team of three to handle coordination of the various projects there. You will be well-supported by committee leaders and teams of exuberant volunteers who will implement the work prescribed.

Standing committee volunteers needed. Megan Cromeens will soon take over for Judi Harrington and will serve as Communications Director. She would like

help with TikTok, social media, press releases, etc. Membership Directors Jan and Kevin Kolk are requesting committee members to manage hours in VMS, find mentors for trainees and monitor the certification processes. A new Outreach Committee will coordinate with VSP Director Johanna DeYoung to manage participation at other organizations' events.

Continued, next page

March Chapter Program: Thursday, March 2, 2023 — 7:00 PM "Often Overlooked Flowers of Seabourne Creek Nature Park" Presented by Susie Doe, TMNCPC

By Jan Peterson, TMNCPC Programs Director



While there are many WOW

wildflowers that we are all enamored of, many native wildflowers that grow at Seabourne Creek Nature Park are often overlooked because they aren't as showy or as easy to see at a glance as others. Susie Doe would like to continue the conversation from June 2022's Chapter Program (see Courier V.10 Issue 6) about a few of her favorite unassuming botanical neighbors. Whether or not you attended her presentation in June of last year, there will be a lot to learn.

Susie Doe came 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 botanymajor friend. But, over time, her wild flowering 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 in 2008. When the chapter became involved in the project at Seabourne, her interest in wildflowers resurfaced with a vengeance which led to her determination in learning how to identify the plants of Fort Bend County. Susie continues to learn and tries to pass on what she has learned to others.

Coastal Prairie Chapter **programs are free** and open to the **public**. March's is being held at the **Rosenberg Civic Center** located at 3825 State Highway 36 South, Rosenberg, Texas. Please plan to **arrive at 6:30 PM** for refreshments and social time; the **1-hour program begins at 7:00 PM**.

The Texas Master

<u>Naturalist</u> program is sponsored by <u>Texas Parks and Wildlife</u> <u>Department</u> and <u>Texas A&M</u> <u>AgriLife Extension Service</u>.

[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."]

Continued from previous page

Welcome, Newest TMNCPC Members! Lauren DeShazo and her devoted team of volunteers have planned a fantastic schedule full of informative speakers and inspiring field trips for the Class of Spring 2023. Our Master Naturalist course will open an entirely new world to enjoy and explore. We look forward to seeing you at meetings and in the field. After all, life's better outside.

See Page 9 to meet our newest movers and shakers!

Membership Minute

By Jan and Kevin Kolk, TMNCPC Membership Co-Directors

Congratulations to our numerous certification and milestone achievers. Way to go!



Jan Peterson — Spring 2021

Aida Pita — Fall 2020

Peyton Belunek — Fall 2021



Ute Welk — Spring 2021



Rebecca Aguilar — Fall 2022

Amado Aguilar — Fall 2022

2023 Recertification

(9 members recertified)

Kevin Kolk — Spring 2020

Jan Kolk — Spring 2020

Kerry Padilla — Spring 2022

Scott Tufts — Fall 2021

Sarah Marshall — 2018

Ute Welk — Spring 2021

Jan Poscovsky — Fall 2022

What do you know about our spring training class? Take this quiz to find out.

- 1. How many trainees are in the Spring 2023 class?
- 2. True or False? A relative of a current TMNCPC member is in this class.
- 3. Members with engineering degrees are numerous in our chapter. What other professions are represented in the spring class? Choose all that apply.
 - Geneticist \Diamond
 - ♦ School psychologist
 - ◊ Teacher
 - ◊ Artist
 - ◊ Marketing VP
 - ◊ Student
- ◊ Sales VP ♦ Finance

◊ CPA

- ◊ Data analyst
- ♦ Nursing

Geologist

♦ Medical Technician

Spouses who serve together, CERT together! Amado and Rebecca Aguilar (Fall 2022 Class) got caught "doing great things" at Seabourne Creek Nature Park. The Grand Poobah's Blue Donut!



Answers, Page 8

Volunteer Service — March Highlights By Johanna DeYoung, TMNCPC Volunteer Director

Facebook—Like us!



Follow <u>TMN Coastal Prairie</u> <u>Chapter Facebook</u> for timely and seasonally relevant content. Learn about Coastal Prairie and engage with your volunteer organization.

<u>MEMBERS ONLY</u> To join the <u>private</u> <u>Facebook Group</u>, send a request and wait for TMNCPC Admin to respond.

Did You Know ...

Household partners and spouses often train together. When they do, involvement in projects and initial certification happens more readily.

This chapter has nearly **30 dynamic duos**! They double individual efforts in support of the TMN mission.

SO ... join together, serve together, and as you train together, share a book and enjoy a tuition discount!

Fall 2023 Class registration opens in the summer. **JOIN US!**

Join Us!

The public is always welcome to serve alongside us in our communities. Get out and meet TMNCPC members in the field! Before arriving to serve, check our website calendar for last minute changes, cancelations, or other information before departing.

https://txmn.org/coastal/events/month/2023-03/

Signature Project Seabourne Creek Nature Park (SCNP), Rosenberg: 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM Wednesdays and 1st and 3rd Saturdays which fall on 3/1, 3/4, 3/8, 3/15, 3/18, 3/22, and 3/29

Signature Project Monthly Bird Hike at SCNP, Rosenberg: 8:00 AM – 10:30 1st Wednesday of the month (October through May, OFF Summers) which falls on <u>TODAY</u>! 3/1

Houston Museum of Natural Science in Sugar Land, 10:30 AM — 3:00 PM 2nd and 4th Saturdays which falls on 3/11 and 3/25

Coastal Prairie Conservancy Indiangrass Preserve, Katy: 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM Tuesdays, Fridays, and 2nd Saturdays of each month which fall on 3/7, 3/10, 3/11, 3/14, 3/17, 3/21, 3/24, 3/28, and 3/31

Houston Audubon's Bird Survey @ Archbishop Joseph A: Fiorenza Park, Houston: 7:30 AM – 12:00 PM 4th Monday which falls on 3/27

Lawther-Deer Park Prairie, Deer Park: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM 4th Saturday of each month which falls on 3/25

TPWD at Ranching and Wildlife Expo, Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo: 10:30 AM — 7:00 PM Outreach Table with Skins and Skulls 3/1, 3/2, 3/3, and 3/4 (see SignUp)

City of Rosenberg FISH-tastic Children's Fishing Tournament: 8:00 AM — 11:00 AM on 3/25 (see SignUp)

Budding Out Plant Sale and Festival, John Fairey Garden: 10:00 AM — 4:00 PM Outreach Table on Water Conservation 3/18

Missouri City Green Edible Earth Fest: 9:00 AM — 12:00 PM Outreach Table on Water Conservation 3/25 (see SignUp)

Seabourne Creek Nature Park By Lynn Trenta, TMNCPC Seabourne Gardens

Seabourne was buzzing in

February, not with bees but with people! The unpredictable weather did not deter chapter members from volunteering at our home park.

Invasive plant volunteers removed aggressive and invasive plants in both the prairie and wetlands area. Fran Wilcox, Shree Nath, Bob Naeger, Randolph Watson, Seabourne Director Jerry Trenta,



and even new class member Rodney Walther braved the weather and the tough vegetation, clearing the wetlands to make the roosting rack and birds more visible to visitors.



The bird observation deck is taking shape; Sal Cardenas and Scott Tufts helped Seabourne Director Jerry Trenta make

good progress on the structure.

n e; e structure

This month, Susie Doe has started a plant identification project in the native plant garden. Several chapter members were in the garden marking plants as basal rosettes, and some made it into pots for further observation as they mature. We all hope to learn to better identify plants at all



stages of growth. Mary Saville, Dorothy Tran, Kerry Padilla, Nancy Jones, and Lynn Trenta were participating.

The butterfly garden picnic tables have been made into works of art with Aida Pita's wonderful paintings.

Propagation and bumping up is taking place in the nursery, with the Grand Poohbah himself, Jim Butcher back in his area! We have several trays of seedlings that have been put into gallon

Continued, next Page



Seabourne Creek Nature Park (Cont'd) By Lynn Trenta, TMNCPC Seabourne Gardens

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pots. Chapter members helping with this were Marilyne Malone, Pam Jones, and Andrea Morgenstern. Nancy Jones and Lynn Trenta had also participated in this at an earlier date. These plants will be available for the chapter and incorporated into the prairie and the wetlands areas.

Sal Cardenas and Scott Tufts have been adding crushed granite to the pathways where needed and along with Jerry Trenta shored up the

hexagonal picnic table with composite decking that is composed of recycled material. No more splinters or sagging seats!

To add to the long list of activities, Lynne Jones with the Fort Bend Beekeepers and her husband came out with five boxes for nesting mason bees, the result of an Eagle Scout project. They helped to install them along the tree line near the



native plant garden. Thanks to Lynne Jones and her husband, Shari Lewis with her son, Sal Cardenas, and Jerry and Lynn Trenta were

there helping with the installation also.

Finally, we began an insect hike at Seabourne with John Few, our AgriLife Agent and entomologist leader. We looked at the critters living inside decaying wood — the decomposers. John



selected several logs for us to investigate. Those attending thar first Thursday were Susie Doe, Kerry Padilla, Susan Walther, Ute Welk, Hoiman Low, Nancy Jones, Ting Kung, Esmeralda Fisher, Margo Johnson and Lynn Trenta. We plan to go out monthly on the 4th Thursday and are going to record our findings on an iNaturalist Project called



Seabourne Insects and other Arthropods. Thanks to Kerry Padilla for creating our newest collection project.

Our most exciting day was the Niagara Perk Your Park Grant groundbreaking ceremony late February. Thanks to Seabourne Director Jerry Trenta and the grant-writing committee — Cindy Wainikainen and Keith Winfree who got the grant process started right.

STAY TUNED for a full story in the next Issue.

With all the TMNCPC members who volunteered in February, Seabourne is doing very well! Many projects are in the wings, so **STAY TUNED** for future SignUps.



Photos by TMNCPC chapter members: Lynn Trenta, Kerry Padilla, Terri Hurley

Spring 2023 Training Class Springs Into Learning By Lauren DeShazo, TMNCPC Spring 2023 Training Director



Above, new class members come in for a closer look at the reptilian and amphibian ambassadors brought to Session 1; to the right, TPWD "Dream Team," Clint Faas and Jon McLeod at Session 2 (Photos by Shannon Westveer)

The Spring 2023 training class is off to an auspicious start. Our 25 trainees embarked on the Master Naturalist journey Saturday, February 18 at AgriLife Extension's "The Range" in Rosenberg. For Session 1, President Terri Hurley introduced them to the chapter. The warm welcome was followed by a Herpetology presentation by Riki Treadway. Riki was a thoughtful and passionate presenter who brought several animal ambassadors for attendees to meet.

The class shared a round of introductions and the Kolks finished with a hands-on VMS introduction, something not done since 2019. Those who brought devices were glad they did—most in the class got their first training class hours logged and approved!

Answers From Membership Quiz, Page <u>4</u>

- 1. 25 (go to the <u>next page</u> for the class roster)
- TRUE. There are two: Rodney Walther is the spouse of Susan Walther (Class of 2011); Jean Watson is the spouse of Randolph (Class of Fall 2022)
- 3. All of them!

Session 2 included a rare in-person introduction to the program by none other than Mary Pearl Meuth followed by a thorough overview of Ecoregions led by Clint Faas.

Feedback from the trainees includes:

- I'm learning exactly the types of things I'm interested in.
- Takeaways include the excellence displayed by the TMN members & TPWD guests, affirming I'm in the right place to learn & do. Very interesting to see Riki the reptile relocator & her approach & methods for teaching interested members of the community, in addition to the content.



With Ecoregions being the favorite topic so far among responders, we're looking forward to continuing to expand their education and engagement within the chapter.

Our mentors have been instrumental in helping the trainees get their footing. Please keep an eye out for our newbies in the field and show them what our Coastal Prairie Chapter is all about.

Spring 2023 Training Class Springs Into Learning (Cont'd) By Lauren DeShazo, TMNCPC Spring 2023 Training Director

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Above, training team and Session 2 hosts Lucy Moyer, Shari Lewis, Susan Walther, Lauren DeShazo (Training Class Director), Ute Welk, and Shannon Westveer (mentor and past TCD) enjoy the "rocket sauce" of both AgriLife Extension co-sponsor and TMN Co-Director Mary Pearl Meuth *and* TPWD co-sponsor Clint Faas being all in the same room in the flesh — not on a screen for once! (Photo by Mary Pearl Meuth)

Below, Riki Treadway shares her ambassadors, her passion and knowledge of herps with trainees and other members (Photo by Shannon Westveer)



Welcome TMN Coastal Prairie Spring Class of 2023!

Cheryl Andrews-Tortorici Leslie Ashmore-Cannavo Paul Brewington Virginia Camerlo Carrie Dolezal Raul Garcia Lisa Hendrix **Shirley Hunter Courtney Kilgard** Naomi Kuo David Mesa Ventura Aki Nomi Ora and Kevin Peters **Rebecca Richards** Lisa Sanders **Cindy Starks** Edward and Grace Sullivan Barry Thompson Joshua Vest Monique Vo **Rodney Walther** Jean Watson James Yi

Overseeding: Prairie Restoration 101 By Randolph Watson, TMNCPC Class of Fall 2022



For Seabourne's

prairie restoration project, Shannon Westveer and I tackled the chore of overseeding several sections of prairie with what seed remained in inventory. I had no idea what I had signed up for; Shannon, on the other hand, knew all about overseeding and jumped at the opportunity. She is passionate about prairie as she says, it's her "jam."

Shannon, like many



Randolph and Shannon mixing the seed for dispersal (Photo by Lynn Trenta)

commercial operation (<u>SeedSource.com</u>), many were handcollected last year by TMNCPC chapter members from different prairie remnants in our area including from Seabourne Creek itself.

Non-native and aggressive woody species like baccharis and huisache had already been removed, and grasses had been mowed to give the

others in our chapter is a self-proclaimed "prairie fairy."

In concept, overseeding is straightforward: disperse native grass and forb seeds onto bare soil where they can fill in open areas. These species chosen all thrive in our coastal prairie soil and climate with no maintenance; mature plants provide food and habitat for the wide variety of birds, insects, mammals, and decomposers that depend on the prairie ecosystem.

In practice, however, overseeding involves a bit more than just throwing seeds onto the ground.

First, the seeds needed to be



acquired from somewhere. While some of the seeds had been purchased in bulk from a trusted

seeds a better chance of making direct contact with the soil.

We were greeted by Jerry at the bump-up station where he presented us with many bags of ready-togo seeds and numerous paper lunch sacks filled with the different types of seeds still in their heads and on stems; these had not yet been prepped and cleaned, so we got straight to work on the tailgate.

The first thing we did was break apart these locally collected pods and seed heads to expose the seeds and mix them together. Some, like ironweed and Texas coneflower, easily crumbled when squeezed between my fingers or rubbed between my hands. Others required more rigorous handling to free the seeds. Dried basketflower was quite generous yielding lots of black seeds that just needed to be dug out of the flower head. Beebalm rewarded me with hints of oregano when crushed, while longspike tridens were silky smooth. Rattlesnake master, in contrast, resisted my efforts and fought back – hard, spiky balls that pricked my fingers. Seed prep, as it turns



Randolph Watson, a man "outstanding in his field" (Photo by Shannon Westveer)

Continued, from previous page



Soil Workshop on Wheels

A tabletop display is the beginnings of a *NEW*! Informational on the Living Soil Ecosystem. It's more than rocks ... soil is ALIVE and needs our conservation efforts.

Microbiology is a deep topic, so Shannon Westveer creator of the Soil WOW—presented an Advanced Training on the subject to interested TMNCPC members and even a few from the public. It was featured at HMNS Sugar Land the following week. Click on the link below for the slide stack:

Importance of Soil (txmn.org)

out, can be done in advance with friends, pizza, and beer. (NOTE TO SELF: Look out for these parties in the future.)

After an hour of prep-work, we were ready to go seed. We loaded up the truck with the seeds and plastic shaker bottles and drove to numerous spots in the nearby prairie. We would fill up our bottles with the seed mix, wander around the wet, grassy areas "like drunk butterflies," and vigorously shake the seeds from our bottles. We kept the locally sourced seeds in a separate, smaller area to better compare germination in that plot against areas of the commercial blend.

I learned to seed heavily in shallow pools of standing water; the seeds would be brought down into the soil once the water is absorbed, already soaked and ready to sprout! I also learned how satisfying it is to stomp those prickly rattlesnake master seed heads into the ground.

For the day, we spent about 3 hours prepping and seeding. We covered a few hundred yards of ground, maybe an acre overall. We had a beautiful day: clear skies, cool temperatures, and a gentle breeze. When we were finished, I asked Shannon why she's passionate about overseeding. "Because it's all about growth and new life, and it's so rewarding to be part of that."

I'm hooked! And I look forward to summer and fall to see the rewards of the labor.

Chapter Hodge Podge Decoupage By Shannon Westveer, TMNCPC *Courier* Co-Editor



Sometimes life comes at you fast! Here's a collection in photographs of many goings-on with TMNCPC membership and highlights from the month of February 2023.

Photo, below: Pre-COVID classmates Shannon Westveer and Sandra Brown (2019) find each other for a hug and a photo **in-person at the chapter program**. So nice to be doing these again after so long.



Susie Doe's "<u>Excellent</u> <u>Plant Terminology</u>-<u>Morphology-ID Class!</u>" got many members **recertified early** with bulk AT hours —5 in January, 4 in February.

Photo, right: Renee Brown, Lynn Trenta, Wen Sherrill, and Chevvy Tang are chatting during break





Charris Powers and Shannon Westveer broke out of outreach in Fort Bend and Waller **Counties** ... and into Wharton! Hesed House's February EarthLab was "Plant For the Babies: Building a Sustaining Butterfly Habitat" presented by Shannon and Charris. *FULL STORY* next issue.



Continued, <u>next page</u>

Got Something Joyful to Share?

Sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words!

Not everyone has time to contribute a long story, but a few words along with a photograph—faces, nature, or *BOTH*!—helps our historical account of what happened each month.

The Coastal Prairie Courier is produced once per month. If you'd like for us to share your experiences with serving the TMN Program in your community, email one of the Co-Editors (See page <u>2</u>, bottom left column).

Chapter Hodge Podge Decoupage (Cont'd) By Shannon Westveer, TMNCPC *Courier* Co-Editor





Several TMNCPC members volunteered to help at Memorial Park Conservancy's **"The Biggest Picnic" on February 11** the grand opening of the land bridge project.

Jaime González of The Nature Conservancy (seen in photo left, with Jan and Kevin Kolk) has helped with hundreds of other people to make this event a huge success. Debby Wendt, CJ McDaniel, and other members also attended. Continued from previous page

Below, many Master Naturalists answered the call for getting a variety of native seeds stuffed into envelopes to be handed out at the event. Amado and Rebecca Aguilar are everywhere it seems!

Members of **TMN Gulf Coast Chapter** helped out too.





Below, Shannon Westveer needs to work on her selfie skills! After sitting in a Fort Bend Green Board Meeting, she haphazardly cuts FBC's Darren McCarthy's head off before sharing with the Seabourne team. Oops! Sorry, Darren. :D



Elected Officers

President	<u>Terri Hurley</u>
Vice President	Susan Walther
Secretary	Joyce Tipton
Treasurer	Pam Jones

Board of Directors

Past-President	Bert Stipelcovich	
Membership J	an and <u>Kevin Kolk</u>	
Programs	Jan Peterson	
Communications Megan Cromeens		
Volunteers	Iohanna DeYoung	
Adv. Training	<u>Kerry Padilla</u>	
New Class Spring	<u>Lauren DeShazo</u>	
New Class Rep.	Rebecca Aguilar	
Info. Tech.	Bert Stipelcovich	
State Rep	<u>Hoiman Low</u>	
Seabourne Creek	Jerry Trenta	

TPWD / AgriLife Chapter Advisors

Prgm. Coordinator	Brandy Rader
TPWD Fort Bend	Jon McLeod
Fort Bend Ag Agent	<u>John Few</u>
Wharton Ag Agent	<u>Corrie Bowen</u>
Waller Ag Agent Ca	ndace Moeller

WEBSITE BLOG is Back UP!

After months of inactivity, TMNCPC welcomes Shannon Westveer to the



Communications Committee as Blogmaster for 2023.

Content will publish every couple of weeks, featuring seasonally relevant Coastal Prairie species, TMNCPC conservation partners, a short video or sound bite, and links to learn more. Be sure to email **SUBSCRIBE** (Home Page, bottom right) to get timely posts delivered straight to your inbox. Catch up on posts so far:

- <u>Mussels: Texas' Biofilters</u> | January
- <u>Coastal Prairie Heritage: Connecting Chapters,</u> <u>Bridging Past with Future</u> and <u>Winter Wildflowers:</u> <u>Don't Mow, Let It Grow!</u> | February

SLACK TIP — Better than Facebook

<u>FOR MEMBERS</u>. Sharing the things you learn while serving and caring about Texas doesn't necessarily have to be TMNrelated. The **#random** channel is for all water-cooler chat, content that is too good not to pass on ... just no politics, please, per the ByLaws.

<u>TIP</u>: Mute channel notifications in preferences and come back and 'read' a channel anytime you can ... like a newspaper. Don't forget to read the comments in reply threads. They're fun!





TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST[™] COASTAL PRAIRIE CHAPTER

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