

# TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST



## CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER Chapter News – February 2008 Editor, Mary Helen Israel

### President's Message, Dave Brandes

You'd think things would slow down a little, but it just doesn't happen. The school tours and education events have cranked back up (Did you remember to call Carl, Carolyn or Bryan?). The Migration Celebration is coming April 11-13, and in between, we have several outreach events that we need help with.

Saturday, March 1, Sea Center Texas is hosting their Annual Nature Day. We'll have a booth set up and will need help with 3 2-hour shifts of 2-3 people each from 10:00-4:00. I'll pass around a sign-up at our February meeting. This is a fun event. Ruby Lewis will be heading up some reptile presentations. You'll want to come whether you are helping or not.

The EnviroFest event will be at the Mall again this year in early April. We'll have a booth there and will be asking you to help. We'll also be at the John Deere/TDECU event just before Migration Celebration, but won't have a formal booth. Justina Dent will be heading up a reptile display.

There's an opportunity to help with wetlands restoration at INEOS to advance their education programs. We'll meet at the education building at 9:00 March 14. You'll want to be there if you have any interest in wetlands. It's a chance to get up close and personal with a wetlands ecosystem. Marissa Sipocz, Wetland Program Manager for the Texas Coastal Watershed Program, will be directing our efforts. Marissa has presented our wetlands intern training module and field trip the last 2 years. I'm sure she will be passing on even more of her knowledge and experience to us. Carl Dodson is coordinating the TMN/COT volunteers for this effort. Give him a call.

Laura Brandes has put together an Intern Training Budget and preliminary schedule for this year. She'll start the training September 3. Laura plans to split the combined wetland/prairie into separate days, making 13 classes available. Two classes will be on Saturdays. With 13 classes available, completing the required 10 should be even easier.

You'll notice we are not listing AT opportunities at neighboring chapters in the newsletter. We have suspended this, since they are available through our web site. Few were taking advantage of the training.

Finally, if you want to attend the state meeting, here's a heads-up. It will return to Mo Ranch in Hunt, TX October 24-26. Mark your calendar. Be safe, have fun, and I'll see you at the February meeting.

February Meeting  
Wednesday, February 13, 2008

- 8:30 a.m. Social time
- 9:00 a.m. Business Meeting
- 9:30 a.m. Advanced Training – Dr. David Rosen will talk with us about prairies. He's a Botanist with USFWS, and for several years has taught our Forest Ecology intern class. Dr. Rosen holds a Ph.D. in Rangeland Ecology & Management from Texas A&M University.

**Reminder from Chapter Hosts,  
Jerry Krampota and Justina Dent**

The following folks signed up to bring refreshments for the February meeting: Al Fedoruk and Sandy Henderson, Phyllis Gerdes and Roy Morgan. If for some reason you have a conflict, please call Jerry Krampota at 281-585-3249 or email at [jkrampota@hotmail.com](mailto:jkrampota@hotmail.com).

**Message from Outreach**

As the "Outreach" person, Laura Brandes plans to emphasize the TMN-COT activities with as many press releases that can be managed. Preferably, these will include a BRIEF description, names of Individuals (from Left to Right) and a Picture. The objective is to get our name out there and improve our visibility within the County.

ANYONE who is in charge of an activity and/or project should send me an email with the description (date, time, place, who's who, activity objective, etc.) A digital picture can be added to make the press release more attractive and interesting. This should become a "habit" for anything and everything that we do.

## Training Chair, Laura Brandes

The 2008 TMN Intern Training Schedule was approved by the Board. It will separate "Prairies" and "Wetlands" as separate classes with a 13th Class offered on a Saturday in October (date to be announced) for "Offshore and Oceans" at Sea Center Texas. This additional session will last for three (3) hours and be "Optional". If we are able to schedule the instructors then this will give the Interns three (3) opportunities to make up missed classes or to use for AT.

The Budget has been approved for fifteen (15) Interns and we are prepared for 20. Filling the class is everyone's responsibility! One-to-one contact attracted the most enrollees followed by the major press release just before the classes started. If you talk to anyone who shows an interest in TMN-COT, please get their name and a contact number (i.e. email address or home phone). Send this information to [ljbrandes@comcast.net](mailto:ljbrandes@comcast.net) for follow up.

## Cactus Moth Update, Barron S. Rector

Presented at the Texas Plant Protection Conference, December 2007

The invasive cactus moth (*Cactoblastis cactorum*) has been expected and predicted to arrive in Texas by 2008. To this point in time, the cactus moth has not been detected or found to occur in Texas. The westward migration of the moth has halted for an indefinite time in the area of Dauphin Island off the coast of Alabama. Currently, surveys for the cactus moth are being conducted in Texas by USDA APHIS PPQ using a new pheromone in wing traps from the Louisiana border to Corpus Christi and in the Rio Grande Valley, and through the use of volunteers in educational programs conducted by Texas AgriLife Extension Service with Texas Master Naturalists and Texas Master Gardeners. Volunteers are using an observational approach known as the sentinel survey to conduct twice a year or monthly surveys of prickly pear plants from Beaumont to San Benito. Information and data acquired from these surveys is being actively stored in national data bases with Mississippi State University and the USDA National Agricultural Pest Information System. The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service continues to work with USDA Agricultural Research Service and the U.S. Department of the Interior's U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to prevent the westward spread of the cactus moth. The most promising control method for halting the migration of the cactus moth has been use of the sterile insect technique (SIT) researched on the barrier islands at Florida and Alabama in 2005-2007.

## Discovery Center Information Kiosk, Neal McLain

The Information Kiosk in the Discovery Center at Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge is now in operation. It's mounted on the northeast corner of the lobby exhibit:



The Kiosk is organized into several "pages". Each page describes some particular subject such as a bird, a plant, or some other information. Users can move from page to page by touching the screen. It's just like navigating a website on the internet, except that you touch the screen instead of clicking a mouse.

The Kiosk is the culmination of the efforts of several Master Naturalists, Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges members, and USFWS personnel. Ed Barrios procured the equipment, and I hooked it together. Once it was all working and tested, Tom Schneider and Torry Tvedt installed it.

Several COT members contributed photos and other information for the Kiosk. Sandy Henderson prepared most of the pages and Torry Tvedt pulled it all together. At the moment, most of the information is about birds, but pages devoted to other species will be added in the future.

So be sure to check it out the next time you visit the Discovery Center!

## **CRADLE OF TEXAS OFFICERS**

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