

TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST



CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER Chapter News – May 2005 Editor, Mary Helen Israel

THE PRES SAYS:

Lots of activity going on. The Conoco/Phillips project is taking off. Phil Huxford is putting together survey teams to start identifying and cataloging plants and trees and such. He is trying to get a first survey by May 31st so that Conoco/Phillips can start putting in permanent markers. Sandra Clark has her first meeting scheduled with the Sweeny ISD Elementary teachers to determine what types of programs they need developed to enforce their lesson plans. Everyone is looking forward to kicking off part of the program at the start of the new school year. If you are interested in either end of the program give Phil or Sandra a call and volunteer.

The BP-Amoco(Innovene) School Program is coming to a close for the year on May 6th. The people at Innovene are happy with the first full year's program and are ready to expand the program and are looking for more participation from us (Come on new training class). The volunteers from COT that participated have enjoyed the program and seem to be looking forward to next year.

I expect we will hear from Varner Hogg in the near future concerning a start date for building the new trail at their site. I know several of you have volunteered to work on it and are looking forward to getting started.

And those are the projects I know about. The ones I don't know about I'm sure need doing too so get out and volunteer for no other reason than enjoying the spring season we are having.

Now on to other things.....

I have appointed Tom Morris to fill the vacancy left when Tommie Holt resigned as Membership Chairman. We regret the resignation but understand the reasons for it. Tommie Holt has served our chapter well and I am sure we all appreciate his efforts. You need to send your volunteer hours and advanced training hours to Tom starting May 1st.

I have called a special board meeting for May 10th at 9:00 am at the Extension Bldg. At this meeting we will discuss the "Hold Harmless" form and the Background Checks required by the State Advisory Board.

TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST – CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, APRIL 13, 2005 MINUTES

Opening: The meeting was called to order by President Carl Dodson at 8:58 a.m. Eighteen were present: six members of the Board (no sponsors), eight committee chairmen, one other committee member, and three other chapter members.

1. President's Report

- A. Shirts:** Various colors, types, and configurations were discussed. Motion by Barbara Burkhardt, second by Al Brushwood to furnish trainees the basic shirt -: short sleeve, green jersey with TMN and COT logo. Epg, Inc. is our new supplier. Other formats and colors may be purchased by members. For the present, shirt orders may be given to the Treasurer, Al Brushwood (979-864-9618). He can get a small discount for quantity orders
- B. Conoco/Phillips (C/P):** C/P has set aside a refuge area, and wants TMN COT to do a survey of what's there, so they can approve markers for an educational trail through the prairie grasses, bottomland, and hardwood areas. The Sweeny ISD will be a prime beneficiary of this project to support the SISD classroom curriculum. Sandra Clarke (COT member) is the contact between the Sweeny ISD and C/P. The site boundaries were discussed, in explaining that the area we would assist with is only a portion of the total site. Phil Huxford volunteered to be chairman of the TMN COT portion of the project and to be our contact with C/P. Barbara Burkhardt moved to accept the project, seconded by John Boettiger. Since COT Chapter serves the entire county of Brazoria, this project west of the Brazos River will help us expand our outreach to an area

where we had little activity before.

Note: Several surveys will have to be done, from season to season, then combined. COT has done this before. The Camp Mohawk survey is a good example. John Thayer has a copy. The first overall survey of the C/P site is due May 31

C. BP-AMOCO Nature Training

Program: The third phase of the training program for 3rd grade students from Angleton will be held April 29 and May 6. Note: see the COT website for all event dates and details (<http://grovesite.com/tamu/TMN>)

2. Vice-President's Report;

Announced that the Sea Center Texas program at Texas Coop Extension counts for one hour of advanced training time, and that the visit to the Sea Center site afterward counts for 1.5 advanced training hours. Also, that the visits to Hudson Woods count as volunteer hours, not Advanced Training hours.

3. Secretary: reminded members that the most recent minutes of either a Board meeting or a Membership meeting appear in the next issue of the COT Newsletter. Also, that changes of address, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses may be called in or e-mailed to him, and he will see that the change is made on the official roster as well as on mailing lists that serve the entire membership – and announced in the next newsletter. A master list of members is also available by request from the

Secretary. Those who don't want their addresses made available to the membership or announced in the newsletter may also make this request to the Secretary. All members e-mail addresses and/or mail addresses must be made available to those committees which send out information, such as the Newsletter editor. Otherwise we will lose touch with you.

4. Treasurer

All Brushwood reported that the balance in the chapter bank account was around \$1100 as of April 13, a recent drop because the curriculum books (25 plus 5 extras) for the next training class had to be bought and paid for right away. Those who want to purchase one for themselves should contact AI (979-864-9618).

5. State Representative

State Representative Barbara Burkhardt gave details on the State Representatives meeting she attended recently.

- One of the principal subjects was the necessity for all members to be screened before they are allowed to work with children. There is a form to be filled out and a fee to be paid. More details will be forthcoming with complete instructions and implications of the screening. All applications must be in by September 1, 2005.
- Everyone in the TMN program has to fill in a new insurance liability form. Timely volunteer hours reports are important because they prove that you were traveling to or from, or attending, some approved activity when the liability occurred.
- South Texas Region MN Fair. The joint planning committee continues to

meet and plan for the program scheduled for July 24, 2005, 9-12 a.m. Our chapter will do the setup in the Brazosport Center for Arts and Sciences, and furnish some of the snacks.

6. Membership

Tommie Holt, Membership chair, reported the recent cumulative total of hours served since the founding of our chapter to be over 22,000. He also announced, with regret, that personal considerations make it necessary for him to resign as the Membership Committee Chair. Much gratitude for and appreciation of his valued work was expressed by members. And Tommie thanked the membership for the satisfaction and pleasure he had experienced in working with the fine group of COT chapter members.

7. Projects Jim Renfro announced that the ALLP (Adult Life and Learning) project at Brazosport Community College functioned well with 18 class room hours plus a field trip. Bird Watching was the subject. Jim recommends that we have an agreement with the college to put on this course at least once a year.

8. Outreach: Outreach Chair Jerry Eppner Contact Jerry at jeppner@houston.rr.com or 979-297-6320. if you can man one of our information tables at an event. The response for recent events has been much appreciated. During April, Cradle of Texas Outreach volunteers manned the COT display at Brazos Bend SP Earth Day and San Bernard NWR Migration Celebration. The BBSP table was shared with members of the recently formed Coastal Prairie

Chapter (Ft. Bend Co.). Earth Day attendance was reported at 3300. We had about 10% of that number come through our tent with about half of those giving our display a good look. Although we did not sign up any potential training candidates, the exposure for TMN and meeting the Coastal Prairie group made the time worthwhile. At the SBNWR Migration Celebration, we had about 100 adults and 90 children look at our display. This resulted in four people expressing an interest in the fall training class. The event attracted about 1000 people total during the two day schedule. Jerry will be asking for volunteers to help update the display board in the near future.

9. Training

Training Chairman Marty Cornell placed with the Secretary an updated copy of his committee's spreadsheet training plan for the rest of the year. It will be updated from day to day as appropriate, and a monthly update attached to the minutes.

10. Historian

- Historian Neal McLain resigned his position, and immediately made clear he would accept the appointment of Chapter Webmaster. He does both jobs now, in that his scrapbooks are all electronic. Several chapters displayed their scrapbooks via laptops at the last TMN annual meeting. Discussion included the possibility that a new position be established to take copies of Neal's electronic scrapbook pages, print them, and maintain a paper version of the Chapter's activities. Neal does not want to be the one doing this. One member suggested that we re-think the role of the Historian. No conclusion was

reached. Lots of appreciation from a grateful Board and Committee Chairmen was expressed to Neal.

- Discussion of the website server centered around whether the TAMU office of TMN would continue to pay Grovesite, make other arrangements with another company, or pull out entirely from helping chapters maintain a website. Carolyn May-Monie recommended that we survey the membership to see how many use the chapter website, and whether they think we should pay to maintain the website.

11. Newsletter

Mary Helen Israel, editor of the newsletter, has set a deadline of May 25 for information to appear in the June newsletter and June 24 to appear in the July newsletter. E-mail her at mhisrael@computron.net or call 979-297-6968.

Whatever

- Carolyn May-Monie announced that there were 43 visitors to the Hudson Woods site, and that four teams of volunteers showed them around. She recommends that this activity be held yearly. She also announced that she has a disk with the Policies and Procedures that was released last year.

- Candace Novak has volunteered to try to contact past members we have lost contact with and to get them involved again.

- It was pointed out that the Gulf Coast Wild Animal Rescue organization has for a long time been on the COT list of partner organizations approved for volunteer hours, but that no Volunteer Project and Activity Request Form has been filled out for

this valuable organization. No time was lost in filling in this omission, with apologies. Approval passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:27 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan L. Kater

Jan L. Kater, Secretary
Texas Master Naturalist
Cradle of Texas Chapter

HIGHLIGHTS OF UPCOMING MONTHLY PROGRAMS:

Wed - MAY 11, 2005 10 am Biological Invasions, by Ann McLain, PhD (COT)

Wed - JUN 8, 2005 10 am Flounders, David Abrego, Facility Manager, Sea Center Texas

Wed - JUL 13, 2005 10 am Sea Turtle Recovery Project, Mike Ray Deputy Director Coastal Fisheries, TPWD

Wed - AUG 10, 2005 10 am 12-Steps to Improve Your Wildlife Photography, by Kathy Adams Clark

Wed - SEP 14, 2005 9 am Earth Sciences, by Wayne McAllister

MONARCH WAYSTATIONS

Submitted by Ramah O’Gorman, TMN
Cradle of Texas Chapter

The Monarch butterfly population has been dwindling since its peak in 1996. In response to this, Dr. Orley “Chip” Taylor, University of Kansas ecology professor and director of Monarch Watch, is initiating a national effort to create 10,000

“monarch waystations” in the next three years. These waystations are Monarch habitats containing milkweed for larval feeding and nectar plants for adult Monarchs. Taylor named the waystations after the stops used by steam engines to pick up water and coal and the Pony Express to pick up food and fresh horses in the 19th century. Monarch waystations provide food for breeding and sustaining migration across the continent. The Monarch population’s future is uncertain for a number of reasons, but the one response we, as naturalists, can help with the most is providing these habitat waystations. The source of wild milkweed and wild nectar plants is being threatened by the loss of farmland due to urban sprawl and changes in farming practices with the introduction of genetically engineered corn and soybean crops resistant to herbicides. With these crops, herbicides are sprayed in early spring, killing virtually all other emerging plants, including milkweed and nectar plants.

As a citizen scientist for the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project (MLMP), I cultivate a milkweed and nectar plant garden in my back yard. This spring my monitoring showed the peak egg-caterpillar-chrysalis time for the spring migration north from Mexico to be April 4-14. During these ten days, I counted, on my 32 milkweed plants, 27 eggs, one first instar caterpillar; 17 second instar caterpillars, 21 third instar caterpillars, 15 fourth instar caterpillars, and 43 fifth instar caterpillars. Now, I marvel at the stunning line of gem-green chrysalis lining the eaves of my house above the milkweed garden. The mystery of metamorphosis goes on

silently for the next 12-14 days and will complete itself as a new generation of orange and black beauties emerges one by one to continue the flight north.

When you buy plants for your summer garden, consider including some milkweed and nectar plants. Monarch Watch is selling Monarch Waystation seed kits for \$16 plus \$5 postage. The kit contains seeds for milkweed and nectar plants. The kit is available at <http://www.monarchwatch.org/ws> or by calling(800)780-9986. These waystations gardens can be officially certified by Monarch Watch.

Plant a Monarch Waystation and enjoy a miracle of nature!

NEXT MEETING
Wednesday, April 13, 2005
Texas Cooperative Extension
Building .

8:30 am - Social hour and snacks.
9:00 am - General Membership Meeting
10:00 am - Monthly Advanced Training Program:
"Biological Invasions"
by Ann McLain, Ph.D.

CRADLE OF TEXAS OFFICERS	
President	Carl Dodson
Vice President/Program	John Boettiger
Secretary	Jan Kater
Treasurer	Al Brushwood
State Representative	Barbara Burkhardt
Past President	Carolyn May-Monie
Training	Marty Cornell
Vol. Service Projects	John Thayer
Membership	Tom Morris
Outreach	Jerry Eppner
Class Host	Durwood/Becky McKinney
Historian	
Resource Library	Jim Renfro
Webmaster	Neal McLain
Newsletter	Mary Helen Israel
Sponsors:	Connie Stolte (TP&W) and Rich Tillman (Extension)