

# TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST



## CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER Chapter News – April 2010 Editor, Mary Helen Israel

### **President's Message, Dave Brandes**

Many, many, things are happening at this time of year --- schools wanting to get their educational field trips in, upcoming outreach events to get our name out into our communities and attract new members, nature celebrations, our Matagorda Island Adventure, kayaking adventures, and our first annual Spring get-together.

#### **Events**

I'd like to go into a little more detail on two of these events. The first is "Migration Celebration 2010". Frankly, if you have not signed up for helping Saturday or Sunday, April 17 or 18, you are missing one of the most exciting times of the year. This is an amazing event helping families get closer to our natural environment. They get excited, we get excited and there is no video game in sight.

For those of you that have not signed up or still have some open time, we really need help staffing our booth. This is especially important because we are expecting many more visitors and thus prospects for membership. This expected increase is the result of a new innovative program titled "Jr. Naturalist Passport". Children will be given a passport to take to various venues to get it stamped. For our booth, they must discover our logo (dragonfly), learn a fact about this insect and write it down in their passport before receiving a stamp. This brings families to us and engages them in conversation. It's up to us to make this an exciting conversation. Please come help us do this.

The second event I'd like to highlight will occur Saturday, May 15. Our county parks department is planning a family day at Camp Mohawk. At this event, families will participate in a dozen activities. TMN-COT will be responsible for Loblolly Loop tour guides, geo-caching demonstrations, pond life activities, reptile interactions, and fish casting (as we do at DEEP, but without the lecture). I'm highlighting this one not only because it will be so much fun for us, but also because this is the same weekend as our Matagorda Island Adventure. This limits our resources. So if you are not on the adventure, please sign up for this fun day (they're providing lunch!).

I'll be passing around sign-up sheets for these and our other upcoming events at our April General Meeting.

## **Environmental Education Programs**

With ConocoPhillips and Sweeny ISD restarting their LEEP (Linville Environmental Education Program) and USFWS considering expanding their program, we are approaching our limits for supplying knowledgeable docents. Our board of directors considers this a burning platform for the future. Somehow we need to develop innovative approaches to lessen the pressure on us. We will soon be commissioning an Environmental Education Committee to address this. The initial charter will be to ease the training burden for developing docents knowledgeable in the sessions we currently offer. Today, some of our modules are well documented and some have almost no documentation, requiring apprenticeship to learn the curriculums and their delivery. Poor documentation of a module's goals and subject material also results in a very wide range of material actually delivered.

An initial committee goal will be to ensure every module has a subject matter owner and that they are all well documented. What this documentation will actually look like has not yet been determined. John Battle has stepped forward to chair this committee and you will soon hear an organization-wide call to arms to help us set objectives and goals to beat down this fire.

## **General Meetings**

Wednesday's meeting is one of those you won't want to miss. Sheree Etie, President of Gulf Coast Wildlife Rescue, will present "Animals in the Environment". In addition, TMN-COT Member Phil Huxford and Master Falconer Steve Hoddy of the EarthQuest will present a *Bird of Prey* show. They will bring some raptors to show and discuss.

Mark your calendar for our May General Meeting. It will be in the Planetarium at the Center for the Arts and Sciences, Clute, TX. There will be a \$3.00 entrance fee. I believe the program will be the one used to train the astronauts. We'll have more details as this gets closer.

!

### **April Meeting Wednesday, April 14, 2010 Intern Training, and Advanced Training**

**8:30 a.m.** - Coffee and Social Time

**9:00 a.m.** - Business Meeting

**9:30 a.m.** – **Part 1:** Animals in the Environment presented by Sheree Etie, Texas permitted wildlife rehabilitator  
**Part 2:** EarthQuest Birds of Prey Show, presented by Steve Hoddy and Phil Huxford

## NEOS 2010-2011 School Year

INEOS docents, here is the schedule for Angleton Schools the next school year. Mark your calendars so you don't miss the great fun!

**Session 1:** Seed Balls, Saltwater Life, Seed Collecting, Wildlife Rehab and Education

**Session 2:** Owl Pellets, Karankawa Indians, Birding, "Oh Deer"

**Session 3:** Microscope Use, Projected Microscope, Pond Life & Reptiles, Water Quality

9/17/2010	Northside	Session 1
9/24/2010	Northside	Session 1
10/8/2010	Southside	Session 1
10/22/2010	Southside	Session 1
11/5/2010	Southside	Session 2
11/12/2010	Westside	Session 1
12/3/2010	Southside	Session 2
2/4/2011	Northside	Session 2
2/11/2011	Northside	Session 2
2/25/2011	Westside	Session 2
3/4/2011	Southside	Session 3
3/25/2011	Southside	Session 3
4/1/2011	Westside	Session 3
5/6/2011	Northside	Session 3
5/13/2011	Northside	Session 3

Don't forget we still have two more Session 3's for this school year, May 7 and 14.

## CEC Houston Environmental News Update--March 31, 2010

**Sea Turtle Season!** The nesting season of the Kemp's Ridley sea turtles is almost here. Weekday patrols will begin on Galveston Island, beaches to the west and Bolivar Peninsula starting April 1. Last year 197 nests were found on the Texas coast in spite of the damage to beaches and dunes caused by Hurricane Ike.

Tourists and residents are reminded to be aware of wide-spaced tracks or nesting turtles. A call should be made immediately to 1-866-TURTLE5 (887-8535), the public information line sponsored by the Sea Turtle Restoration Project (STRP). The nesting turtle should be protected from traffic, pets, children or anyone bothering her. If possible, photographs should be taken from all angles in case a biologist cannot get there until she is ready to re-enter the water.

Anyone with questions can call the Gulf Office of STRP, Carole Allen, at 281-444-6204. You can also visit Sea Turtle Restoration Project ([www.seaturtles.org](http://www.seaturtles.org)) and HEART (Help Endangered Animals-Ridley Turtles) [www.ridleyturtles.org](http://www.ridleyturtles.org). NOAA Fisheries and the US Fish and Wildlife Service in cooperation with the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico have released a long-overdue binational Recovery Plan for the Kemp's Ridley sea turtle that nests only in Texas and Mexico. [See the plan.](#) Public Comments on the Recovery Plan may be made through May 17.

## **Field Trip to Matagorda Island**

► *May 16, 2010 – Only 4 Remaining Openings* ◀

Sunday, May 16, 2010 Matagorda Island Field Trip with biologist, guide and instructor Dr. Wayne McAlister and wife Martha. The registration fee of \$35.00 per person includes transportation to and from Matagorda Island aboard “*The Skimmer*” w/*Capt. Tommy Moore*, and guided wagon & hiking Naturalist Tour/Field Trip of the 6 eco-communities (time dependent) of Matagorda Island including materials & equipment. Field Trip Leaders: Doc & Martha McAlister. If weather or other factors require the trip to be canceled, refunds will be given, minus any unrecoverable expenses incurred.

The 4 remaining openings are available on a first come – first serve basis!!!

Please note that lodging, food and drinks are not included in the fee.

Contact Steve Zilliox for a Registration Form by email at: [SZilliox@sbcglobal.net](mailto:SZilliox@sbcglobal.net)

Respectfully submitted,  
Clyde & Steve Zilliox

## **ConocoPhillips Education Programs**

The LEEP (Linville Environmental Education Program) sponsored by ConocoPhillips has started with Rich Tillman at the helm, or should I say “Rudder”. Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, Sweeney 3<sup>rd</sup> graders attended sessions on “Oh DEER” led by Anna Hay and Gerald Forrest, a Nature Walk with Kirby Rapstein, and Pond Life led by Rich Tillman. It’s great to see these up and running again.

We have one more session scheduled this school year. May 4th we will host Sweeney 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Rich will be asking us for help, so please be ready to do what you can.

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

The following folks signed up to bring refreshments for the April meeting: Joan Simonsen, Joanna Harlan, Elaine Crews and Kathy Speights. 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).

## **Training Report, Laura Brandes**

**Congratulations** to Sheila Williams who just completed her Internship Training and is now a Texas Master Naturalist!!! Sheila will receive her TMN Certificate, T-shirt and name tag at the April meeting.

Another one bites the dust! Intern KATHY SPEIGHTS has just completed her training. She will be given her TMN Certificate, T-shirt and pin at the April general meeting. Kathy is a substitute teacher and when her "students" see her at DEEP they are really excited. Congratulations, Kathy.

**Total Count:** As of April 1, 2010 there are six Interns completing their training of which four have more than 30 hours to their credit. There are six new Interns who have enrolled since January 1st. These six people have an opportunity to earn up to 20 Intern hours by June 1st before the COT goes on "summer hiatus". "Hiatus" is defined as no formal training schedule but plenty of opportunity to earn VT!

**The "Birds"** will be presented by Tom Morris, et al on April 12th (this Monday) at Sea Center Texas. This all-day event will start with a lecture at 9:00 a.m. followed by a field experience at Quintana Neotropical Bird Sanctuary. Bring the usual accoutrements-- brown bag lunch and drink, water, mosquito repellent, sunscreen, binoculars and camera. Dress for the weather.

**ANY** TMNers who want to brush up on their birding knowledge and skills are welcome to participate in this event. If you have had not training during the past two years then please check with John Battle to determine if it qualifies for AT hours.

**ANYONE** who takes pictures at the various TMN events, including Intern Training, should email copies to me for publicity purposes. Don't worry about cropping, color saturation, etc. as that can be handled by the Publicist. Remember, children's faces cannot be shown sufficient enough to identify; people need to be identified from left to right and bottom to top--publication rules to get printed!

HAVE YOU REMEMBERED TO GIVE A FRIEND, RELATIVE OR ACQUAINTANCE ONE OF THE TMN BROCHURES? These will be available at the General Meeting for your distribution. The objective is to get a high number of Intern enrollees for fall, 2010. Since the pilot program began in January, 2009 every Intern has become a TMN and every one of these new TMNs have achieved Certification. Let's keep this ball rolling!!!

### **Sea Center Texas Volunteers Needed, Connie Stolte**

If you enjoy interacting with visitors and teaching school children, consider becoming a volunteer tour guide at Sea Center Texas. SCT volunteers usually work one morning or afternoon each week and assist with hatchery and wetland tours, the touch tank, greeting guests, youth catch and release fishing, wildscape maintenance and gift shop sales. Gift shop and greeter hours do not count towards Texas Master Naturalist volunteer time but all other positions are eligible. If you think you might be interested, please contact Connie Stolte at 979-292-0100 ext 23 or [connie.stolte@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:connie.stolte@tpwd.state.tx.us).

## **Spring Shrimp Spectacular Sunday, April 25th**

Don't forget your reservation and money (\$8.00 per person) is due at the April 14<sup>th</sup> general meeting. Carolyn Schlein will be taking reservations.

### **Attachments**

There are 5 attachments included with the newsletter:

TMN COT MARCH 10, 2010 GENERAL MEETING MINUTES  
April10-Attach-1.pdf

GET READY FOR MIGRATION CELEBRATION!  
April10-Attach-2.pdf

TEXAS JUNIOR DUCK STAMP COMPETITION WINNERS  
April10-Attach-3.pdf

DOW WOODS REPORT  
April10-Attach-4.pdf

THE BIRDS of PREY PROGRAM  
April10-Attach-5.pdf

### **CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER OFFICERS**

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Vice President/Program	Carolyn Schlein
Secretary	Ed Johnson
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Volunteer Service Chair	Gerald Forrest
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