

TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST



CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER Chapter News – December 2009 Editor, Mary Helen Israel

President's Message, Dave Brandes

Hello December. This marks the end of my two years as President of COT. I've thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity and I want to thank all of you for trusting me with our organization. With the help of our board and our members we've expanded our educational outreach, retooled our already great intern program to make it more available to everyone, and our members have put together some fantastic outings. And, even more important, I don't think I broke anything.

Don't forget, our meeting Wednesday starts at 10:00 with a social time followed by our elections. **MARK YOUR CALENDAR!** Why 10:00? Because after we adjourn, it's Hog Wild starting at noon:

TMN Cradle of Texas, 6th Annual Hog Wild Holiday Feast

Wednesday, December 9, 2009, 12:00 pm, after the Chapter Meeting in Angleton
325 Timbercreek Drive, Lake Jackson

Appetizer Medley

Bring a small hors d'oeuvre if you wish – contact Marty for suggestions

Featured Main Course

Cornell's Columbia Woods Smoked
Free Range Hog (*Sus scrofa*)
Burkhardt's Salad
Morgan's Borracho Beans
Fresh Country Bread
Marshall's Fabulous Desert

Featured Beverages

Wines to Be Announced
Spring Water & Soft Drinks

Significant Others are welcome.

\$5 Donation per person suggested.

The positions up for election and the nominating committee recommendations are:

- President: Carl Dodson
- Vice President: Carolyn Schlein
- Secretary: Ed Johnson
- Treasurer: Sandy Henderson. Incumbent
- Training Director: Laura Brandes. Incumbent
- State Rep: Ed Barrios
- Membership Director: Jerry Eppner. Incumbent

We'll accept additional nominations from the floor. If there are none, we'll elect the positions by acclamation.

The weather has not been kind to DEEP this year. We've had to reschedule three sessions. But don't worry; we'll get our day with the kids to treat their nature deficit disorder.

Finally, thank you members and thank you board. Thank you Laura for putting up with this for two years.

Dave

Reminder from Chapter Hosts, Jerry Krampota and Justina Dent

The following folks signed up to bring refreshments for the November meeting: Susan Severance and Barbara Bruyere. If for some reason you have a conflict, please call Jerry Krampota at 281-585-3249 or email at jkrampota@hotmail.com.

December Meeting
Wednesday, December 9, 2009
Intern Training, and Advanced Training
10:00 a.m. – Coffee and Social Time
10:30 a.m. – Business Meeting & Election
of Officers

Talk to - and Become - the Media

Greg Siekaniec
Assistant Director for the Refuge System
U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service



Greg Siekaniec
Credit: USFWS

Reporters can be tough as nails except when they learn about a national wildlife refuge from Friends who love them.

I saw an editorial from the *Shreveport Times* about Red River National Wildlife Refuge in Louisiana: "A short drive through a Bossier City neighborhood will deposit you in the middle of 650 acres of forest, filled with birds, wildlife and native plants. The Red River Wildlife Refuge is more than protected land getting in the way of the Arthur Ray Teague Parkway extension. We often talk about how beautiful northwest Louisiana can be. The refuge tries to preserve that beauty as closely as possible to its original state."

The occasion for the editorial was the refuge's fifth annual celebration of Refuge Week - and the Friends were active participants in rolling out the "green carpet to introduce the treasures of the refuge," as the newspaper said.

There's a straightforward message here:

When Friends talk to the media, we get results. A Friends group brings a special voice - and community credibility - to working with the media. But media are changing. Since January 2008, at least 120 newspapers in the United States have shut down. At the same time, Facebook reaches a whopping 66 million people. The move to electronic media is one reason we have included a short article in this issue about what makes a great Web site.

If you're like me, you're not ready to give up the daily newspaper. But if you're like me, you want to reach as many people - in as many age categories - as we can about national wildlife refuges. Friends not only have credibility to make editorial writers take notice, but you also have the "social media" access that can transform Friends groups into Facebook or Twitter stars. Many Friends organizations already have a Facebook page.

Don't forget about your local daily and weekly newspapers. Don't ignore traditional media. But do join the scores of Refuge Friends groups that have learned about other means of communicating with a generation that grew up when "google" became a verb. Twitter. Become LinkedIn. Put your refuge photos on Flickr. Speak the language of "new media," and talk to a generation whose newspaper experience has always been online. And let me know how it all works out.

The above article was transcribed from the Fall 2009 issue of Friends Forward, a quarterly publication of the National Wildlife Refuge System, USFWS. For further information, see <http://www.fws.gov/refuges/friends/index.html>

Attachments

Attached to the newsletter are the following attachments:

- * December09-Attach-1.pdf - November 18, 2009 General Meeting Minutes
- * December09-Attach-2.pdf - Cultural History: The Rectangular Grid
- * December09-Attach-3.pdf - USFWS Announces 129 Projects in Southwest Region

Cumulative Index of "Cultural History" articles, 2008-09

By Neal McLain

May 2008	Arthur C. Clarke 1917-2008 <i>Obituary of Clark, Kepler's Laws, and the geostationary orbit described by Clarke in 1945.</i>
July 2008	Primary Colors Part 1 <i>The additive primary colors — red, green, and blue — and the mathematical definition of "white."</i>
August 2008	Primary Colors Part 2 <i>The law of additive primaries, the law of subtractive primaries, and the four-color printing process.</i>
September 2008	Primary Colors Part 3 <i>Subtractive primaries in photographic processes.</i>
April 2009	The Mystery Pier <i>The abandoned center-pivot bridge pier in the Brazos, the last extant evidence of the China Street Bridge at Brazoria.</i>
May 2009	The Mighty Live Oak: Witness to Texas History <i>The Live Oak exhibit at the Brazoria County Historical Museum with examples of five historically significant trees.</i>
June 2009	The Old Three Hundred <i>Stephen F. Austin's first Empresario Grant and the ill-fated voyage of The Lively.</i>
July 2009	Austin's First Empresario Grant: Dividing the Land <i>The standard settlers' grant in the first Empresario Grant: "a league and a labor."</i>
August 2009	The Old Three Hundred in Brazoria County <i>The 69 settlers' grants in Brazoria County and the importance of water.</i>
September 2009	Suzzette <i>Original survey plats of Suzzette (now Bastrop Beach) and the impact of erosion and deposition on watercourses.</i>
October 2009	The Columbia Rosenwald School <i>History and renovation of the Rosenwald School in West Columbia.</i>
November 2009	The United States Public Land Survey System <i>Historical origins of the public land surveys in the 30 public lands states.</i>
December 2009	The USPLSS: The Rectangular Grid <i>The rectangular grid of the public land survey, and the origin of "the back forty."</i>

2009 TMN-COT End of Year Reports to the Membership

Submitted by John Boettiger, Vice President & Advance Training Programs

I scheduled the Monthly General Meeting Advanced Training (AT) classes that were scheduled for 2005, 2006, 2008 & 2009

Generally, these “rules” were applied in setting-up the monthly AT for the Cradle-of-Texas Master Naturalist Chapter:

- VP creates an annual Advanced Training AGENDA to meet annual COT Re-Certification with topics applicable to Brazoria County.
- VP assures that Past & Future Advanced Training “hours” are posted by our Chapter Webmaster on the chapter website.
- VP followed-up on Monthly Speakers to assure their attendance and obtain a “summary” that was posted on the COT website (See A, below)
- VP provides for “back-up” speakers (occurred five times during my four years as VP)
- VP managed the personalization of the monthly “Speaker’s Award” --- monogram work performed by Nancy Boettiger (wife of VP)
- VP introduces speakers at the Monthly Meeting and presents the “Speaker’s Award” (a monogram COT-Texas Master Naturalist Bag)
- VP determines the “AT hours” for each presentation and provided this information at the end of each session; and, at the COT website
- VP provides (via written card and/or email) a “Thank You” from our COT Chapter to the monthly AT Speaker(s)
- While the annual “tour of duty” for most Chapter Officers starts and ends at the December General Meeting each year, the VP has been responsible for scheduling the monthly AT for the following January & February general meetings. This allows the new VP the opportunity to put in place their AT agenda for the next twelve month period; e.g., March thru February. This system was initiated by me at the end of my first two terms as VP in December of 2006.
- In each of my four years as VP, our monthly AT programs included sessions lead by our own COT members; examples include:
 - Bird Identification, Bird Banding (two sessions), Feral Hog Damage on NWRs, GPS, Endangered Species in Texas, etc.
- VP was available to stand-in for President (did not occur in 2009)

A Monthly meeting topics were not duplicated (e.g., more than two-years between programs) so as to provide more than adequate AT opportunities for each COT member to Certify and/or Recertify annually.

Submitted by Joan Simonsen, Secretary

- Monthly Board reports were submitted to Board Members and available to Neal McLain to be posted on the COT website
- Monthly General Minutes were e-mailed to the general membership via the COT roster and Neal McLain posted on the COT website
- Monthly General Meeting Notices and General Meeting Minutes were sent to four COT members without e-mail addresses
- COT Minutes were compiled in the COT Secretarial Notebook and on a CD for filing in the COT long term files in the Texas AgriLife Building

Submitted by Sandy Henderson, Treasurer

INTERN CLASS REVENUE/EXPENSES		2009 Actual
Revenue		
	Class fee	880.00
	Manual deposit	515.00
Expenses		
	Manuals, social expenses	1,197.42
	Net Gain (Loss) from Intern Class	\$197.58
NON-CLASS REVENUE/EXPENSES		2009 Actual
Revenue		
	2009 dues paid in 2009	185.00
	2010 dues paid in 2009	425.00
	Whooping Crane Tour Payments	490.00
	Mad Island Trip Payments	2,290.00
	T-shirt reimbursements	589.00
	Donation for talk	50.00
	Reimbursement from SE TMN	313.76
	Reimbursement from Ext. Office for Brochures	242.00
	Interest Income	39.05
	Total revenue	\$4,623.81
Expenses		
	Whooping Crane Tour Invoice	1,365.00
	Mad Island Trip Invoice	791.00
	Mad Island Trip hotel reimbursements	240.00
	Officer badges	42.00
	Drinks and supplies for social events	163.16
	Administrative supplies & registration fees	118.32
	TMN Brochures	521.38
	T-shirt Order Invoice	828.00
	Year-end party	0.00
	Total Expenses	\$4,068.86
	2009 Chapter Profit / (Loss)	\$752.53
	Carry over from 2008	\$5,809.50
	Total Amount in Checking Account as of 11/30/09	\$6,562.03

As we approach the end of the year accounting for membership status and hours volunteered by COT members, it is clear that 2009 has been a good year for the chapter.

Submitted by Jerry Eppner, Membership Director

Key numbers for the year include:

- We are carrying about 140 names on our roster including inactive members. Note: This number will decrease as we purge the rolls of people not completing their training within 15 months of starting the classes.
- As of December 1, 70 members have achieved active status by submitting volunteer hours and/or paying annual dues.
- 51 members have submitted VT and/or AT time during 2009
- 49 of those 51 have either certified or recertified for 2009
- Members have submitted a total of 7921 hours of VT during 2009 bringing our chapter total VT hours since inception to 77,609 hr.
- VT service awards earned during the year include: three 250-hr awards, four 500-hr awards, four 1000-hr awards, one 2500-hr award and one 5000-hr award.

Our intent is to clean up the membership roll by year-end by purging interns that never completed their training within 15 months of starting and cannot use the title of Texas Master Naturalist. We also want to better designate those members who, while having earned the right to use the title Texas Master Naturalist, are inactive as evidenced by their not submitting volunteer time and/or paying annual dues. The end result will be a membership roll that better reflects the chapter membership and activity.

Submitted by Laura Brandes, Training Director

2009 Annual Report on Intern Training Program:

The "pilot" started in January, 2009. The Board's approval in November left little time to organize Instructors, Training Calendar, Reporting Forms, Room/Equipment Reservations and Materials. Therefore, these activities were coincidental with the start of the program in January, 2009. These activities have all been completed including a file that contains abbreviated topic descriptions and class materials used as handouts, a supply of TMN t-shirts and TMN State Curriculums which should assist greatly with time required.

The last thing on my mind was recordkeeping; however, I was able to put the following numbers together:

- A total of twenty-six people enrolled during the year; most of these were in January, February and March.
- Out of these 26, nine completed their Intern Training AND became 2009 Certified TMNs.
- Currently, there are five Interns working to complete their Training.
- The remaining twelve persons are those who decided not to participate (N=4), those who delayed participation until January, 2010 (N=3), and those who have just not responded to numerous emails and phone calls (N=5).

The "Pilot" was tweaked several times this year especially the Timesheets.

There are three timesheets used now--Class/Field hours as scheduled, Class/Field hours as "personal option" pre-approved by Training Director and/or AT Chair, and Certification Hours. These sheets are checked bi-monthly for correct classification of hours along with discussion of any problem(s) that the Intern is encountering.

Class attendance averaged seven Interns up to October. The lesser number being trained and personal schedules have interfered greatly. The monthly AT was coordinated with the Intern requirements for Class hours and, in some cases, the Training Director arranged for a separate time to do the Field work. There has been no participation by Members who want to earn eligible AT hours for their Certification requirements even though the group is kept informed of all Intern activities. The Training Director has asked that the Interns "reserve" their spot for each class that they plan to attend. The "Reptile" class was canceled due to no reservations (a lesson learned) and the "Bird" class was canceled due to problems with the Instructors. At this time, the Training Director is working to "salvage" these two classes by December 18th.

Regarding "Lessons Learned," it is imperative that

- 1) The Training Director maintain consistent contact with each individual Trainee and keep a spreadsheet on Class/Field "reservations" (this takes considerable time but is well worth the effort);
- 2) The Interns get involved at the "get go" with the TMN members and associated activities which almost guarantees that they will become Certified TMNs;
- 3) The Instructors need to be willing to teach in the evening and to arrange a separate date for an appropriate Field Experience; and
- 4) The Training Director needs to do a one-to-one "how to" for each Intern to understand that they are responsible for their training selections and recording hours (i.e. the Training Director is not their "Mother").

The most important lesson learned is that the Training Director is not the "be all, end all" with this Intern Training paradigm. The Members are the best recruitment tool that the TMN-COT has available. There is little time for continuous recruitment; hence, a new TMN brochure was developed but there is no control or program for the Members' recruitment efforts. The person in charge of the Interns cannot be expected to do Public Relations on a consistent basis. They have no time to take pictures, to identify those in the picture, to write an accompanying article and to submit it per each Publication's guidelines along with "schmoozing" a single staff person from each Publication that will give the TMN some assurance of the captioned picture and/or article making it to print. In short, the TMN-COT desperately needs a "Public Relations Director/Chair" to accomplish these tasks.

As 2010 approaches, there are NO new applicants for the Intern Training program; there are five possible "restarts"; and three to "coax" for an application. The Training Director is working on the 2010 portion of the calendar to arrange evening classes and separately scheduled field work. If this is not possible then those working on their Internship may have to request an extension of the allowed fifteen months to complete the program. (Note that several of these individuals have already completed their Certification requirements!)

Submitted by Carolyn Schlein, State Representative

As State Representative I had no meetings to attend except the 2009 Master Naturalist Annual Statewide Meeting and Advanced Training. The meeting was held this past October 23-25 at Mo Ranch in Hunt, Texas. No formal or informal State Representative meeting was held.

I was busy from the moment I arrived until I left the premises. Upon arrival Louis Peltier and I set up our chapter's project entry and the easels for the photo competition. From there it was a dash to advance training (Rainwater Harvesting) which lasted 1 ½ days. Volunteer presentations and more advance training followed. Chapter anniversaries and volunteer awards were celebrated.

The keynote speaker on the closing day was John Davis. He gave a wonderful presentation on "The Importance of the Texas Master Naturalist: A Biologist's Attempt at Valuing the Invaluable". It made you proud to be a part of the Master Naturalist organization.

The highlight for our chapter was winning second place in the project contest and a \$200 award. Our entry, "Nature at the Libraries", is a program led by Ruby Lewis. Way to go Ruby and company!

In conclusion there were more things to do than time or energy allowed. The state meeting is a great venue for hands on advance training, meeting new people and exchanging ideas. It was a great experience.

Submitted by Ruby Lewis, Outreach Chair

TMN-COT had outreach booths at the following events:

- Sea Center Day on Feb. 28
- Migration Celebration on April 18-19
- Volunteer Fair (Lake Jackson) on June 13
- Coastal Expo (Freeport) on July 4-5
- Hummingbird Extravaganza (XHX) on Sept. 5, 12, 19, 26
- Spooktacular Event (Sea Center) on Oct.25
- Heritage Day (Brazos Bend State Park) on Nov. 7

Submitted by Neal McLain, Webmaster

During 2009, I maintained three websites for which I claimed volunteer hours:

- TMN Cradle of Texas [<http://grovesite.com/tamu/tmn>]
- Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges [<http://refugefriends.org/>]
- Migration Celebration [<http://migrationcelebration.org/>]

All facilities related to the TMN-COT website were provided to the chapter at no charge by the Texas A&M University Agriculture Program. All facilities related to the FOBWR and Migration Celebration websites were provided by FOBWR. During 2009, no Cradle of Texas Chapter funds were expended for any of these websites. I do not expect that any funds will be required during 2010.

Much of the material on the TMN-COT website is out-of-date. During 2010, I hope to bring it up to date. Any offers of assistance will be most welcome.

Some members have noticed that I removed the calendar page from the TMN-COT website. I removed it in November 2008 due to lack of interest on the part of relevant committee chairs. I hope to be able to reinstate it in 2010.

During 2009, I also formalized my occasional series of Newsletter articles under the general heading "Cultural History." Although many articles in this series have related to historical events, the series is not intended to be a formal review of history. It is an attempt to connect cultural history with natural history. Cultural history clearly affects natural history: thousands of years of human occupation have dramatically altered the native landscape. But of equal importance, natural history affects cultural history: the cultural face of Brazoria County today is a direct result of such factors as climate, soil conditions, native wildlife (including marine), navigable waterways, natural harbors protected by barrier islands, the Gulf of Mexico, and the presence of extractable resources— notably petroleum, methane, salt, sulfur, and magnesium. And, one might add, the absence of the elements of foremost interest to the earliest European explorers: gold and silver.

CRADLE OF TEXAS OFFICERS

President	David Brandes
Vice President/Program	John Boettiger
Secretary	Joan Simonsen
Treasurer	Sandy Henderson
State Representative	Carolyn Schlein
Past President	Ed Barrios
Membership Director	Jerry Eppner
Training Director	Laura Brandes
Advisory Members, Class of 2007	Sandy Henderson & Carolyn Schlein
Volunteer Service Chair	Ed Barrios
Advanced Training Chair	John Battle
Outreach Chair	Ruby Lewis & Justina Dent
Chapter Host	Jerry Krampota & Justina Dent
Webmaster	Neal McLain
Newsletter Chair	Mary Helen Israel
Sponsors:	Connie Stolte (TP&W) and Rich Tillman (Texas AgriLife Extension Service)

