

**Minutes of the GENERAL MEETING of the  
Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter  
WEDNESDAY April 11, 2012  
AgriLIFE Extension Building, Angleton, Texas**

**Attendance:** 34 Active Members, seven Interns, and six guests:

Warren Pruess, Mucker

John O'Connell, AgriLife Marine Agent

Baron Rector our guest speaker from TAMU

Aaron Tjelmeland, The Nature Conservancy of Texas - Upper Coast Project Director · Texas City

Kirk Feuerbacher, The Nature Conservancy of Texas - Texas Coastal Prairies Director - Victoria

Clifford Carter, The Nature Conservancy of Texas - Ranch Consultant - Victoria

**Start Time:** President Barbara Burkhardt opened the meeting at 8:57 am, welcomed our guests, and thanked members and guests who organized this afternoon's field trip to the Nash Prairie..

**Announcements:**

- Barbara Burkhardt reminded the membership of this Saturday's Master Gardener's plant sale.
- The interns will present their class projects at next month's general membership meeting on May 9th, which will be followed by a luncheon of Chicken-Black Bean Casserole, salads, and desserts.
- Following this luncheon, as arranged by Dave Brandes, there will be a workshop by Heather Biggs of the Galveston Baykeeper on using Google earth to identify and map wetlands. A \$10 donation is requested of the participants.
- Dave also noted that a class on invasive species to include not only plants, but invasive pest reporting as well will be at AgriLife on May 17 from 9:00AM to 4:00PM.
- Jerry Eppner noted that the spring bird migration at Quintana is "heating up"; in two outings he saw over 90 species of birds.

**Membership Chair** Jerry Eppner presented a 2011 recertification pin to Sherry Summers and 2012 recertification pins to Dave Brandes, Mary Holler, and Denis James.

**Training Chair** Ed Johnson reported that intern Gabriella McCrae had to return to her home in Dallas and would be unable to finish her COT training. Gabby intends to find a Dallas area TMN chapter to certify as a Master Naturalist. Ed praised the remaining nine members going through training for their enthusiasm and hard work.

**Migration Celebration 2012**

- Marty Cornell provided one last opportunity for members to pre-purchase tickets to Friday's kickoff dinner.
- Denis Mudderman projected examples of excellent nature photography submitted by members Denis James, Torry Tvedt, and intern Pete Romfh to the MC12 photo contest. Denis M. noted that these and over 200 other submissions will be on display at the kickoff dinner, at the SBNWR on April 21st and 22nd, and the top 100 during the month of June and the Brazosport Art League.
- Marty Cornell thanked members who provided bake goods and/or staffed the Wal-Mart bake sale on March 30th where a record \$720 was earned.

The general meeting was followed by a presentation from Dr. Baron Rector, Associate Professor and Extension Range Specialist, Texas A&M. His title was "Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes -Restoring a Changing Ecosystem". His talk actually commented on the broader ecology of Texas, noting conditions prior to and after European colonization with modern expectations contrasting to natural tendencies. Examples:

- No native plants flower in February.
- 99% of environmental problems are caused by man.
- Blue Bonnets are not native to east Texas.
- There is not one acre of original forest left in Texas. [begs the question of Lost Maples]
- There is not one acre of virgin grassland. [begs the question of the Nash Prairie]
- Burning like that in Bastrop last year occurred every four to five years before European colonization.
- Burning in Brazoria County occurred every one to three years before European colonization.
- Mesquite is native to Texas, noted in 1832 by settlers along the Canadian River; it is not an introduced species.
- Last year's drought was not unusual.
- 15% of water in Texas comes from ex-Texas rivers; 85% of Texas water comes from rain.
- There are only two native food plants in Texas: the pecan and the prickly pear; all other food plants have been introduced.

The general meeting ended shortly before noon, and was followed by field trip to the Nash Prairie Preserve.

Submitted by Marty Cornell, Secretary, Texas Master Naturalist, Cradle of Texas Chapter