

T E X A S

Master Naturalist™
Cross Timbers



CITY NATURE CHALLENGE!!



Table of Contents

President's Pen	1
CTMN Announcements	3
Speakers	5
TMN Tuesdays	6
Member Milestones	7
Story Corner	9
Native-otM	18
Art&Photo Gallery	19
City Nature Challenge Events	20
iNaturalist Obs.-otM	21
Current Events	22
Board Members	27



In this Issue:



Member Milestones

Check out a recap of some photos of our annual certification awards and get yourself motivated for another year of volunteering with the rattlesnake pin!

City Nature Challenge

The City Nature Challenge is a GLOBAL iNaturalist Bioblitz where cities across the world go head-to-head to document and identify as many species and as many observations as possible. TEXAS CITIES are SUPER COMPETITIVE! Mark your calendar!





Half Empty? Half Full!

As a high school biology teacher, I gave many lessons on the environment, the Earth, and on endangered species.

Students grew discouraged, as lessons usually featured human failures—the dodo bird, native flora and fauna of Hawaii, carbon dioxide's role in warming temperatures, the worldwide loss of coral reefs, and so much more. Here in Texas we decry the shrinking numbers of bobwhite quail and ocelots, as their habitats have dwindled in the last several decades.

"Mrs. Hamilton," they asked me, "is there any hope? **Is it all bad news?**"

As a student of the planet and of our often-conflicted species, I've observed many instances in how we humans have dragged ourselves, sometimes kicking and screaming, toward new attitudes and behaviors. "Yes, we can change. Let me give you examples."

--After the end of World War II in 1945, my mother's home country, Germany, was divided into two politically opposing sectors, West and East. The wall built through Berlin, a literal Iron Curtain, was guarded and mined; people who tried to cross to freedom risked death. In 1988, my cousins predicted that the wall would never fall. And yet, it fell in 1989, after a few years of economic and political upheaval in eastern Europe.



Within months, a labor union worker, Lech Walesa, was elected president of Poland and the communist bloc strangling half of Europe crumbled.

--Children and adults of the 1950s and '60s lived in clouds of smoky haze, as cigarette smokers brazenly lit up and inhaled in virtually every public and private space. The air in restaurants, airplanes, even hospitals was murky with cigarette smoke. My high school had a smoking lounge for faculty and one for students! Years passed following the US Surgeon General's 1964 warning about the health dangers of smoking before behaviors and laws changed. Smoking was banned in airplanes in 1988. Texas' 1997 law restricted smoking in many public places, including schools and hospitals, and the cities of Arlington and Fort Worth banned smoking in all enclosed workspaces, including bars and restaurants in 2017. Now, smokers cannot light up anywhere they please, as public sentiment has turned 180° as we nonsmokers now dominate public spaces.

Take heart! Young environmentalists like Greta Thunberg meet world leaders and capture the public's attention. Insurance companies work to mitigate the destruction due to climate change. An entrepreneur and real estate developer, Trammell S. Crow, convenes business leaders and activists at the annual Earth X Conference to grow a sustainable future.

What success stories give you hope? What changes have you seen that you'd have never expected?

By the way, you may have chuckled at the glass-half-full concept. Science students know that the glass is always full, as air molecules take up any space not occupied by water.

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2012/jun/15/happiness-is-being-a-loser-burkeman> (photo)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50013048> (Fall of the Berlin Wall)

CTMN Announcements



In Arlington, we do things right!

SAVE THE DATE on your calendar for Earth Day at **Randol Mill Park** on **Saturday April 20, 2024, 9:00am until 12noon.**

Master Naturalist Volunteer hours opportunities include but are not limited to:

Kick Off Bird Walk through Natural Area at 8:30am, Trail Building, Invasive Plant Removal, Seed Balls, Litter Pick Up, Bluebird Nest Box demonstration, plenty of food and drink, and, of course, Give-A-Ways.

Celebrating
- 25 YEARS -

**CTMN is Celebrating 25
Years: 1999 to 2024!!**

If you know any stories about the chapter, how it got started, newsletter clippings, were a Historian at some point or want to contribute an interview with someone who has been around the chapter a long time, **please** contact Madison Gover at newsletter@ctmn.org, we will try to spread out these special stories throughout 2024 to celebrate. And I need your help!

Ground Nesting Bees

Community Science Project



The **Ground Nesting Bees** Community Science Project needs your help to collect data on native bee populations and nesting sites. Your contributions will help us to better understand the importance of native bees and how to protect them in our local environments.



What to look for:

Many bees nest in large aggregations. Monitor flight activity in the early spring through late summer. Entrances in grass and soil are indicators of bee activity.



We need your help to report nesting aggregations by uploading a photo of a bee entering or exiting its nest to **iNaturalist (GNbee)**. Learn more at GNBee.org



Cornell **CALS**
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences



Cornell **CALS**

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Speakers



[Watch on Youtube](#)

This Month's Speaker

This program showed the progression I have made from the early days of the L830 to the Canon Rebel T6, Nikon D3500 and being behind the lens of a Canon R50; and how I took this medium and ran into the wild. My goal has been to explore nature in it's many realms through the lens and understand the wonders of our world by taking a road less traveled.

I still teach about nature as I have volunteered. I speak from experiences from the trails and from those around me.

Next Month's Speaker

Chapter Meeting at the Botanic Garden and using Zoom - "Oak Wilt" by Kimberlee Peterson, Woodland Ecologist, Texas A&M Forest Service



TMN Tuesdays

On the second Tuesday of each month at 12:00pm Central Standard Time, the TMN State Office offers an hour-long virtual advanced training event – with fantastic new and returning guest speakers.

This Month's Speaker



[View Past #TMNTuesday Presentations Here for Advanced Training Hrs.](#)

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

[Register Here](#)

[Webex Guide](#)

[FAQ](#)

Member Milestones



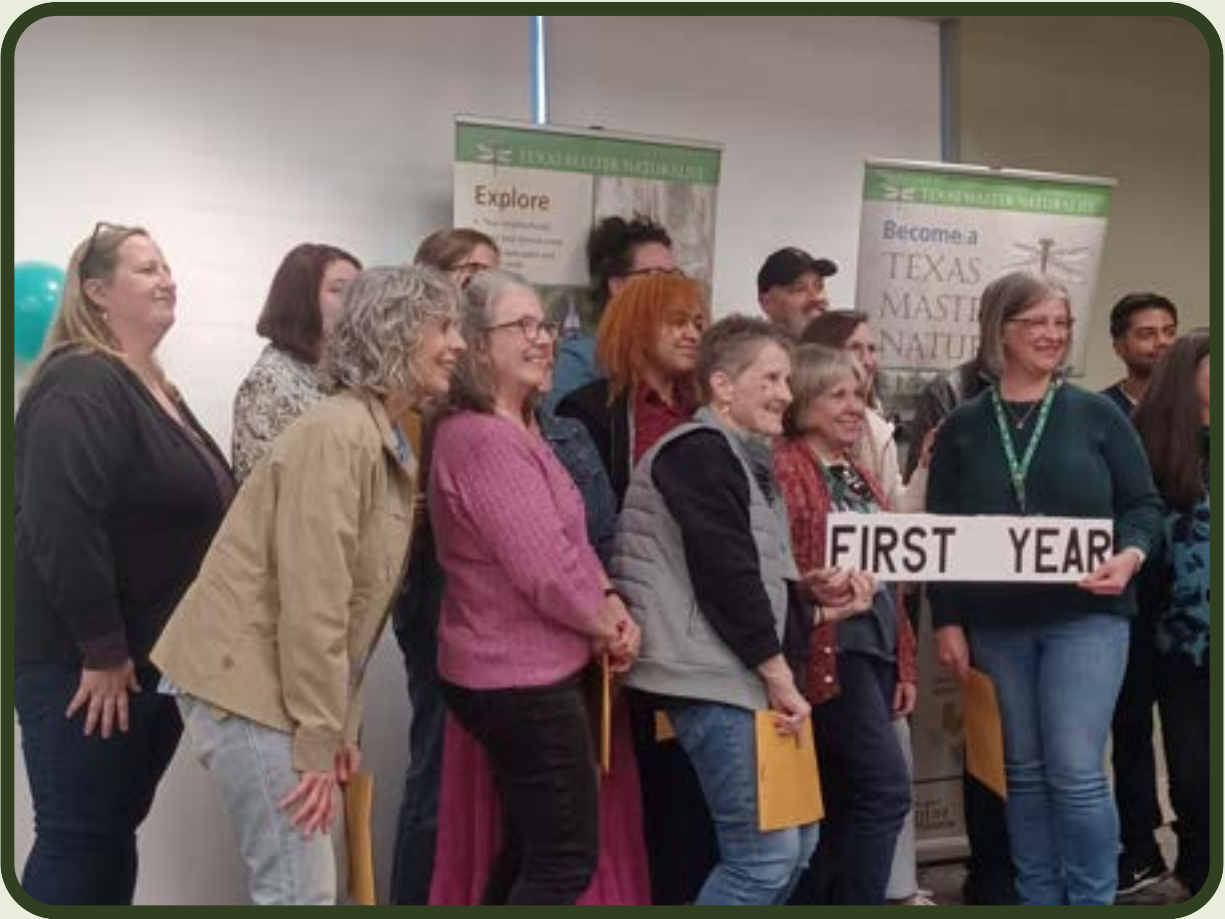
Congratulations to everyone who completed their initial certification and double-certified, or those who recertified and got their Texas Ecoregions pin! Don't forget the upcoming year's certification can get you a 2024 DIAMONDBACK RATTLESNAKE pin!



Photos by Eleanor Pate



continued ->



Photos by Eleanor Pate





Earth Day Facts

by Teddi Zonker

- Earth Day was first celebrated on April 22, 1970.
- It was founded by Senator Gaylord Nelson to raise awareness about environmental issues.
- The first Earth Day drew 20 million Americans to demonstrate for a healthy, sustainable environment.
- It led to the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the passage of the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species Acts.
- Earth Day is now celebrated globally by over 1 billion people in 192 countries as a day of environmental action and advocacy.

What you can do from your own piece of the Earth:

- Reduce, reuse, and recycle household waste.
- Conserve water by fixing leaks and using water-saving appliances.
- Use energy-efficient appliances and LED light bulbs.
- Plant trees and maintain a garden to absorb carbon dioxide.
- Compost organic waste to reduce methane emissions from landfills.
- Choose sustainably sourced food options.
- Use public transportation, carpool, or bike instead of driving alone.
- Support renewable energy sources like solar and wind power.
- Reduce plastic use by opting for reusable bags, bottles, and containers.
- Educate others and advocate for environmental policies and initiatives.



Giant Swallowtail Butterfly by Teddi Zonker



A founding member and local botany expert: Jeff Quayle

Jeff Quayle, who in our March newsletter was referenced along with Molly Hollar, Marian Hiler, and Marsha McLaughlin as founding members of our chapter, shares his experience as a local botanist. Jeff hosts many field trips hosted by NPAT that are also in the Wild DFW book. He will tell you stories about building trails at the FWNCR and many other adventures. A valuable member of our chapter that we celebrate alongside our 25th anniversary.

“In the spring of April 1999, while walking the Lake Mineral Wells State Park Trailway, I discovered a rare plant that ended up being researched by botanists at the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT). After 7 months of research, in December 2000 it was deemed to be a new species previously undescribed to science. It was named in my honor as Quayle’s Ragwort (*Senecio quaylei*). Only known from a 5 mile radius of Lake Mineral Wells and nearby Fort Wolters.

I’m also featured in two articles about my experience with Texas botany in 2023. Here are the links:”

<https://greensourcedfw.org/articles/amateur-botanist-keeps-eye-out-native-plants-north-texas>

<https://texasprairie.org/our-prairie-people-the-self-taught-botanist/>

All the Colors on this Paintbrush

by Eleanor Pate

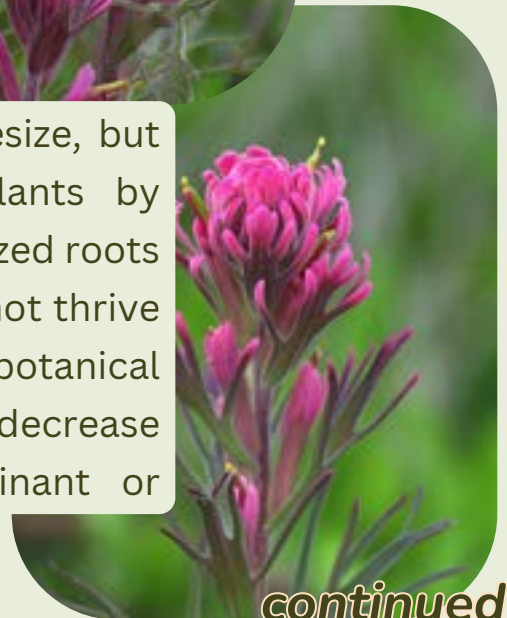
Spring is here, and fields are covered with wildflowers. Among bluebonnets, the most beloved forbes in Texas, you can often see some vibrant patches of red. which produce a great contrast and make the landscape look a bit patriotic with all the colors of the American and Texas flags. I'm talking about Indian painbrush or *Castilleja*. This plant is called that, because it reminds us of a paintbrush with a little paint on the top. Its most common color is red, as stated above, but it can also be a lot of different colors, depending on the species and subspecies.



Genus *Castilleja* is a member of the parasitic family Orobanchaceae, which includes over 200 species, seven of which are native to Texas. The colorful components of *Castilleja* are actually specialized bracts, rather than actual petals, and surround small, modestly-colored flowers.

C. purpurea

Castilleja are hemiparasites that do photosynthesize, but also draw water and nutrients from host plants by penetrating the roots of those plants with specialized roots called haustoria. Because of this, *Castilleja* does not thrive in isolation. Depending on the composition of a botanical community, *Castilleja* can increase or decrease biodiversity by either parasitizing more dominant or secondary plants.



continued ->

Castilleja is often found thriving among stands of lupines, as lupines are nitrogen-fixing and produce a number of toxins that may inhibit herbivory. Castilleja draws these chemicals and nutrients from lupines and does well as a result.



Photos by Eleanor Pate

In the Cross Timbers ecoregion the most common representative of this genus is *Castilleja indivisa* - or Texas Paintbrush. It usually has flaming red bracts, but it can be yellow, pink and white as well. At Trinity Trails I often see yellow and pinkish-peach variations of it, and sometimes one plant has yellow and pink bracts as well.



C. indivisa

Another species of *Castilleja* from Cross Timbers ecoregion is *Castilleja purpurea* or Purple Paintbrush. You can see it at Tandy Hills Natural Area. This spring, I had my first encounter with it there and discovered, that it is not actually purple, but more like a fuchsia color, although the leaves and stem are purple.

Purple paintbrush has yellow and orange variations, which are separate species – lemon paintbrush (*C. citrina*) and orange paintbrush (*C. lindheimeri*). When they all bloom together, it makes a field spectacularly colorful.

Bluebird becomes Fort Worth's Official City Bird

Reported by the [Fort Worth Report](#), children at Fort Worth ISD Elementary Schools were tasked with researching bird species in a campaign to declare an official bird for the city. The voters spoke, and the Eastern Bluebird was declared the winner!

“The eastern bluebird will be proclaimed the official city bird during a May 14 City Council meeting. Online voters chose the bluebird over the barred owl, Carolina chickadee, great egret, red-shouldered hawk and red-bellied woodpecker.” - Haley Samsel, Fort Worth Report



Photo by Zachary Chapman



Goat Bioblitz at the Gardens!

by Eleanor Pate

03/23/2024 Some of the Master Naturalists attended another Bioblitz event "Goats in the garden" in order to help the staff of the gardens with inventories of the species right before the goats would be exposed to the Texas boardwalk.

The goats are expected on April 5. We hope that they will clean the gardens from invasive species such as Privet and also remove some eastern poison ivy, but their grazing could affect other species, native and precious to the visitors. The purpose of this Bioblitz is to evaluate the Biodiversity before and after the goats impact. The next Bioblitz will be conducted **after** the goats in **July 2024**.



Molly Hollar Seed Ball Toss Celebration of Life

Excerpt and Photos taken with permission from
Paul Knudsen (Arlington Now Photography)



“In a two hour ceremony on Sunday, a little bit of Molly Hollar was given back to the Wildscape that bears her name. Molly Hollar passed away earlier this year.



To honor Ms Hollar, in unison, the guests who were touring the site tossed balls of compacted soil which contained native Texas seeds into selected spots to sprout flowers and other plants later on next spring.”



continued ->



continued ->





Native of the Month



Prairie penstemon (*Penstemon cobaea*)

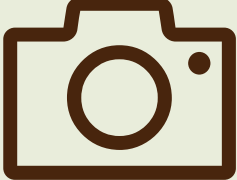
by Madison Gover



Penstemon, *cobaea*, foxgloves, beardtongue, this plant goes by many names. It is a perennial in the figwort family. This plant ranges through the native Cross Timbers and specifically has adapted to the limestone outcrops of the Fort Worth Prairie, as well as loamy soil, rocky or open hillsides. This plant hosts the Dotted Checkerspot butterfly and also attracts hummingbirds and moths. According to the Xerces Society, they have special value to bumblebees.

My Penstemon cobaea transplanted last year from a remnant Fort Worth Prairie being destroyed. A deeper purple color morph is growing a few yards away. Delighted to say the least that it survived transplant, an entire summer of drought and my neglect.





Art & Photography Gallery



Solar
Eclipse 2024



Photos by Zachary Chapman

CITY NATURE CHALLENGE EVENTS



April 26 to April 29, 2024

GLOBAL Event and also competing against other major cities in Texas!

[List of Participating Cities](#)

[About the City Nature Challenge](#)

UPCOMING iNaturalist Bioblitz and Blacklighting Events

Please [bookmark this iNaturalist journal page](#) and message/comment Sam K. - sambiology for more info.

April 26 - 7 PM blacklighting at Mockingbird Nature Park in Midlothian

April 27 - 9 AM at Trinity River Audubon Center

April 27 - 10 AM at Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve in Arlington

April 27 - 10 AM Walsh Ranch Pocket Prairie Bioblitz in Parker County

April 27 - Bioblitz and blacklighting at Frisco Grand Park

April 27 - UNT [Pollinative Prairie](#) 'from Dawn till Dusk'

April 27-28 - Texas Discovery Gardens of Fair Park Mini Bioblitz



iNaturalist Observation of the Month

Each month we will choose an iNaturalist observation made the previous month in Tarrant or Johnson County*. Make an observation on iNaturalist to be in the running for this achievement! Please go to the observation itself to congratulate the user, add your identification, or favorite (star) the observation.

Broad-banded Copperhead (*Agkistrodon laticinctus*)

[hannahwojo](#)



Time: 5:55PM

Date: 03/12/2024

Location: Arlington, TX

DON'T FORGET ABOUT OBSERVING AND IDENTIFYING FOR THE CITY NATURE CHALLENGE!

*Observation copyright settings must not be set to full rights reserved so that the photo can be used for the newsletter.



Current Events

NPSOT Spring Native Plant Sale



Held in conjunction with the:

NPSOT Spring Native Plant and Butterfly Event

North Central Chapter
Native Plant Society of Texas

Saturday, May 4, 2024

River Legacy Park Elm Grove Pavilion

701 NW Green Oaks Blvd. • Arlington, Texas

10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

- **Host Plants for Butterflies**
- **Nectar Plants for Pollinators**
- **Low requirement for water**
- **No need for pesticides or fertilizers**
- **Many Hard to find Species**
- **Native Plants Make Healthy Habitats**

Sale Features

The sale features a large variety of Texas Native Plant species. Grown for our soils and climate including Ground covers, Perennials, Shrubs, Vines and Trees



Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve UPCOMING:

Mini Bio-Blitz & City Nature Challenge

Saturday, April 27, 10am @SCNP

Sponsored by FOSCNP

Led by Michael Smith, CNC can be solo too.

Meet in the parking lot or on your own

Looking for Yucca Moths

Friday, May 10th, 7:00 PM @SCNP

Sponsored by FOSCNP

Led by John and Grace Darling

Meet in the parking lot - BRING FLASHLIGHT OR HEADLAMP!

Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve

5201 Bowman Springs Rd., Arlington, Texas 76017

Community Room

2060 W. Green Oaks Blvd., Arlington, Texas 76013



Jeff Quayle Plant Field Trips

Please text or email reservations for all hikes to Jeff Quayle,
Or register through our sponsor - Fort Worth Chapter of the
Native Prairies Assoc of TX (FW-NPAT) www.texasprairie.org.

*There are other activities available through the FW-NPAT
webpage above.

Jeff's cell: 817-729-0283

Jeff's email: squaylei2000@gmail.com

Please provide your email and cell number when registering, in
case there are any last-minute weather cancellations, changes
or updates to any hikes. Start and end times are estimated. For
any state park hikes, it is recommended you reserve a day pass
through their website or app. www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/

Eight of my hikes are in Amy Martin's Wild DFW!

Gus Engling WMA

Mon., Apr 22nd, 2024

8:45AM – ?

'Small Acreage Demonstration' entrance in the middle of the WMA

***Register by contacting Jeff Quayle.**

Goat Island Preserve

Tuesday, April 23rd

9am – 12pm

*Managed by Dallas County Open Space

2800 Post Oak Rd., Hutchins, TX 75141

Hike #13 in Amy Martin's Wild DFW, page 271

***Register by contacting Jeff Quayle.**

continued ->

Old Zoo Nature Trails @ Lake Cisco

Tuesday, April 30th

9am – 12pm

Eastland County

County Road 112, Cisco, TX 76437

REGISTER HERE

Camp Leroy Shuman BioBlitz

Saturday, May 11th

8:30am – 12pm

Lake Worth, TX

REGISTER HERE

Ray Roberts Lake State Park (Isle du Bois unit)

Tuesday, May 7th

9am – 1pm

100 PW 4137

Pilot Point, TX 76258

Hike #18 in Amy Martin's Wild DFW, page 308

REGISTER HERE

Sid Richardson Tract (prairie remnant at Lake Benbrook)

Tuesday, May 14th

8:30am – 12:30pm

*Managed by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers

8032 Old Granbury Road, Crowley, TX 76036

REGISTER HERE

Rock Creek Ranch Park BioBlitz

Saturday, May 18th

8:30am – 1pm

(City of Fort Worth's newest park acquisition)

REGISTER HERE

Oakmont Park Prairie Tour

Tuesday, May 21st 8:30am – 12:30pm

7000 Bellaire Dr S, Fort Worth, TX 76132

**At the intersection of Bellaire Dr S & Oakmont Blvd, take a left and meet in the large parking lot on the right.

REGISTER HERE

LIGHTS OUT, TEXAS!

#LightsOutTexas
bit.ly/Lights_Out_Texas



Ovenbirds exclaim

“teacher teacher teacher”

Turn off non-essential lights
from 11pm-6am for nocturnal
migrants

Spring migration
March 1 - June 15

Ovenbird/Megumi Williamson/ Audubon Photography Awards



Board Members

CTMN Board Members

- Sharon Hamilton - President
- Mary Beth Lampe - Vice President
 - Bill Collins - Secretary
- Dee Ann McGinnis- Treasurer

For submissions, nominations or announcements, please put the subject line as the newsletter category you are entering for and email to newsletter@ctmn.org

CTMN Chair Members

- Carol Marcotte - Memberships
 - Sharon Hamilton - Outreach
- Melinda Wolfinbarger - Education
- Theresa Thomas - VOL Services and AT Hours
 - Sandy Thornburgh - Hospitality
 - Theresa Thomas - Records
 - Madison Gover - Newsletter
 - Frank Keeney - Webmaster
- Theresa Posani - Class of 2023 Rep.

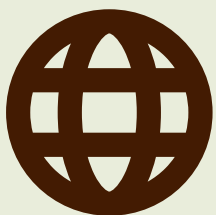


Inclusivity:

Together we can make the newsletter inclusive to the visually impaired. Consider providing a text description of your photos for screen-reader software.



**Cross Timbers
Master Naturalists
Facebook Group**



**Cross Timbers
Master Naturalists
Website**

CTMN Sponsors

- **Rachel Richter**, TPWD, Urban Biologist, Rachel.Richter@tpwd.texas.gov
- **Jacklyn Jones Doyle**, Texas AgriLife, County Extension Agent – Agriculture and Natural Resources, jacklyn.jones@ag.tamu.edu
- **Michael Perez**, Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge michael.perez@fortworthtexas.gov