

# Fall Migration

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### In this Issue:



### **Monarch Migration**

Every fall, millions of butterflies from North America migrate south to the Oyamel Fir forest of the El Rosario butterfly sanctuary in Michoacan. Learn about their journey in a story by Teddi Zonker.

### Fort Worth: The Queen of the Prairies!

Tandy Hills is well known for its stunning views of sunset behind downtown Fort Worth seen across acres of riotous wildflowers in spring. But it's much more than that, it's a habitat of incredible biodiversity with over 2000 (and counting) species documented in iNaturalist. It's also the finest jewel in the crown of the Queen of the Prairies, and it needs our help.



### **Monthly Speaker**

Did you know that Texas is about to have a new state park?! 'About 75 miles west of DFW, you'll enter the Palo Pino Mountains.Just north of the freeway, lies 4,871 acres of former ranch land that is now Palo Pinto Mountains State Park'. Join us for an overview of the park history, park ecology, process before building and current construction status of Texas's newest park!



# **CTMN Announcements**





Registration closes September 30!



# October's Speaker

CTMN Chapter Meeting/Presentation October 21, 7:00 p.m.

**Kate Fisher, Park Interpreter for Palo Pinto Mountains State Park** 

# Creation of a Park: Palo Pinto Mountains

Kate is a native Texan, born and raised in Fort Worth, who has always had a fascination for wildlife and the natural environment. Her fascination became a deep seeded passion, once she pursued her degree in Wildlife Biology from Tarleton State University. During her studies, Kate started her career in parks and recreation working as an intern for the US Army Corps of Engineers at Proctor Lake from 2019-2021. It was here that Kate was introduced to hobbies such as foraging, kayaking, and hiking. Kate joined the Texas State Parks team at Abilene State Park in early 2022 as a Park Operations Trainee, a training program for folks seeking a career in park management. During her time at Abilene, Kate learned what it takes to run a state park, went on her first ever camping trip with her husband, and discovered a love for interpretation.

As of October 2023, Kate is a full time Park Interpreter at Palo Pinto Mountains State Park. The chance to be a part of someone else's discovery of the great outdoors is something that really drives her. Whether she's teaching someone the fascinating history of the land, a weird animal fact, or a new skill, Kate strives to introduce the outdoors to others in the same way that so many did for her, in a way that is memorable, impactful, and welcoming.

# 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 Speakers**





**Title:** Spanish for Naturalists

**Description:** Coast into August with a TMNTuesday focused on sustainability projects initiated by some of our coastal Texas Master Naturalist (TMN) chapters focused on plastic clean-up for a belated celebration of Plastic Free July!



View Past #TMNTuesday
Presentations Here for
Advanced Training Hrs.

¡Español para naturalistas! Join Spanish speaking Texas Parks and Wildlife Department biologists and learn the Spanish names for common trees, plants, flowers, animals, birds, and insects. Prior knowledge of the Spanish language is great, but everyone is welcome as the course is designed to cater to all levels. By the end of the class, students will have gained a newfound confidence to use the names of flora and fauna in Spanish.

Register Here

Webex Guide

<u>FAQ</u>

## Member Milestones

Let's take a moment to help us congratulate members that have recertified in 2024 so far!

They have completed, logged, and had approved 40 volunteer hours and 8 advanced training hours. They will all receive the Diamondback Rattlesnake Pin.

C/O 2007

Sandy Fountain

C/O 2009

**Bill Collins** 

C/O 2021

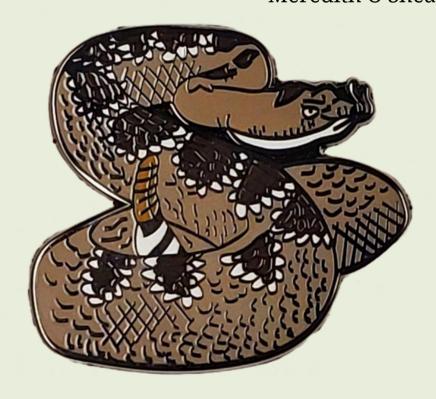
**Annabelle Corboy** 

C/O 2022

Roseann Giambro

C/O 2023

Nicole Nicole-Fylling Meredith O'Shea



# Member Highlight

**Meet CTMN Sanya Lindsey!** 

# What year did you become a master naturalist?

2023. I learned about Texas Master Naturalists when I moved here in 2001, but working irregular and then daytime hours made it hard to attend training. When I found out the classes were offered nights and weekends (field trips), I signed up right away.

### What is your work career?

I work as a Diagnostic Medical Sonographer at a local hospital.

### Where do you like to earn your volunteer hours?

Most of my volunteer hours are with the North Central Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas. I also volunteer as a docent for school field trips at the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge.

# What are your interests outside of naturalist activities?

I very much enjoy being outdoors so I spend time hiking, backpacking, paddling, biking. I also love to travel. I once heard it said that to travel light, collect experiences instead of things. Going, seeing, doing something I've never done before is my favorite activity.



# Story Corner



### Fort Worth: The Queen of the Prairies!

### by Kate Morgan & Suzanne Tuttle

You can find it written on old maps, "Fort Worth, The Queen of the Prairies." Situated on a bluff, surrounded on all sides by limestone-based prairies covered in native grasses and stunning wildflowers, Fort Worth was visible from miles around as the settlers, traders, soldiers, and cattlemen poured in. Among those settlers were Arch Hall and his brother-in-law Roger Tandy. In 1854 they traveled with their families in covered wagons from Kentucky and settled on land 4 miles east of Fort Worth. Roger Tandy established a ranch on that site and that land remained in the Tandy family through generations.

All around the Tandy land Fort Worth continued to grow. People flowed into town, turning ruts to roads and prairies to parcels. Trees were planted, fields fenced, houses and businesses built. The same dynamic was underway across the continent. Settlers fenced their land, hunters drove bison to nearextinction, the government pushed inhabitants onto reservations, and everywhere roads led to new towns and more growth. "Progress" was faster along the main routes west, but it was unstoppable across the entire land. Without the fires set by lightning and the native peoples, the quality of the remaining prairies began to degrade. Woody species and invasive plants took root, shaded out the native prairie plants and disrupted the ecosystems. Without free roaming large herbivores like bison and elk, the plant communities changed and fewer of the niche plants survived. Across much of the central plains, plows destroyed acre after acre of pristine prairie. The one-hundred and seventy million acres of North American prairies that had seemed like an inexhaustible resource for a growing nation was whittled down to a few percent of its original size.





### Prairie Benefits

- o Provide habitat for wildlife species that are increasingly rare
- o Sequester as much carbon as trees and are naturally resilient to fire
- o Filter toxins from air and water
- o Prevent erosion (The Dustbowl was caused by drought and overfarming the prairies)
- o Inspire us, restore our sense of place, and connect us with the natural world around us

In Texas, the prairies were on the same declining scale as farther north. But here we had a little more to lose. A special kind of prairie evolved on the landscape around Fort Worth. Called the Fort Worth Prairie, it sits atop an improbably narrow strip of limestone running from Cooke County near the Red River down through the western two-thirds of Tarrant County and southward to the northwest corner of Hill County on the Bosque River. It underlies parts of only nine north Texas counties. The limestone erodes into pockets that retain rainwater and rock ledges that protrude through the thin soil. The weather is harsh and highly variable and the mix of geology and climate created conditions for many native plants that are endemic to the Fort Worth Prairie, they exist nowhere else! Local favorites like Arkansas Yucca, White Rosinweed and Engelmann's Sage thrive on the rocky barrens while tall grass prairie covers areas where the soil is deeper. One of the few remaining remnants of this incredible prairie ecosystem is right here, on the land that Roger Tandy settled in 1854, now called Tandy Hills. Fort Worth acquired the land in 1960 and it was designated a Natural Area in 1987. Its impact was recently enhanced by the addition of Broadcast Hill to the city's Open Space program. The combined area is more than 200 acres of unplowed Fort Worth Prairie and timbered drainages.

Tandy Hills is well known for its stunning views of sunset behind downtown Fort Worth seen across acres of riotous wildflowers in spring. But it's much more than that, it's a habitat of incredible biodiversity with over 2000 (and counting) species documented in iNaturalist. It's a functioning ecosystem with plants, fungi, insects, birds, mammals and reptiles all intertwined as nature intended. It's a place to learn about and to feel nature, and it's a living connection with our heritage. It's also the finest jewel in the crown of the Queen of the Prairies, and it needs our help.

Like all prairies, Tandy Hills suffers from woody encroachment and invasive species. The trails are steep and erode under heavy traffic. The Native Prairies Association of Texas is partnering with the Friends of Tandy Hills to raise awareness of the maintenance needs and hopefully to encourage a regular Cross Timbers Master Naturalist work day at Tandy Hills. If you are interested in volunteering or would like to learn more, please contact Kate Morgan or Suzanne Tuttle.





Expedition BugShot: The Tricks and Tips I learned from The Indiana

Dunes Learning Center on the topic of Entomology Macro

Photography

## By Zachary Chapman

## Part 2 (Part 1 in August Issue)

For more information on some insects a facial portrait is very appropriate. Sometimes they make for easy viewing. These can also be used as photos for citizen science projects like iNaturalist, but it depends on what kind of photographer you are. For me this is a new way to express my love of insects. Glamor shots can be very useful for storytelling, natural history talks, and they are far more pleasing to convey to others. Insects are met with such adversity this is a softer, more tender approach for those who may be a bit squeamish when it comes to insects as a topic of interest. The soft light also allows for things to be less robotic. I took the image below not thinking about it; this is a good example of what not to do to convey the message on spiders not being

scary.



I have learned to not use head-on lighting this can make things look more intense. This guy looks like he had two odd looking eyes and almost has a photoshop effect that is unintentional. Being intentional is key for all types of photography. I am not big on Anime though I am a big nerd. Yet, soft overhead and diffused light can give the eyes of insects better effects and make them have the Anime like glare which is not jarring. It can also make the shine of exoskeletons soften and you can get more hidden details.



With this kind of photography, you can also get a deeper interpretation of how things work together, live off each other and interact with food and their environment. Do not just let yourself become limited. Find what works for you. Remember the rule of thirds and line up your shot. It never hurts to experiment.

Getting close is key for insects but you have to do a lot of research to how they behave. You never want to take any unnecessary risks. Hornets can be dangerous enough around a nest but when out foraging like this one I shot is not at all a threat as long as you do not do anything to hurt it. Getting insect faces and formal qualities makes your images more appealing to your audience and yet, your documentation gets higher in quality. These are the shots that you want to have published in magazines.

BugShot is a traveling workshop, and it has become another tribe for me. It has allowed me to open my eyes to another world of potential in my quest to becoming a professional photographer.



A Spider I found under a log in the Genus Cicurinidae

There is a lot of gear that you can choose from. Phone photos are getting a bit higher in quality. However, some gear you might want to consider:

- 1.Extension Tubes
- 2.Stackable filters
- 3.Good flash modules
- 4. Diffusion overlays for a flash



A Bald Face Hornet Dolichovespula maculata

- 5.A good macro lens
- 6. Field guides (always, always)
- 7.A journal
- 8.Zerene Stacker, Photoshop, Lightroom, Topaz Labs (other editing software)

These are some of the recommended materials. Just getting a good DSLR or Mirrorless is better to have. You can find a lot on used sites or even factory refurbished items. It depends on how much you want to spend. It can be as simple or as simplistic as you want. It is good to step away from phone photography because it is rather limited and to get these kinds of shots can be a bit daunting. Phones can get lost or damaged unless. I do not like to use mine to take photos due to battery issues and if I wind up needing to make a phone call.

For starters you might want to do some practice phone photography and then work your way up. I began with a Nikon Coolpix L830 and then worked my way up to the current Canon R50. It is all up to you. Just get out there and see where it can lead you.

Rent before you buy and test various equipment. Taste is choice and not everyone has the same views and opinions on gear. I myself find it hard to recommend cameras for some of us who are married to one brand or a certain type of camera. We have certain gear we like and gear we do not like as much or not at all. I am a Canon guy when it comes to the digital photography and for vintage film, I am a Pentax guy.

I cannot tell you much about Sony, Olympus, Minolta, Fujifilm, Kodak, Casio, or any other camera types. I am slightly versed in Nikon. Yet, I love my Canon and that is the poison of my choosing. You will have some photographers that will totally disagree with your choice, but you do you. Self-depredation is not tolerated in photography. We all learn from each other in the end and the goal is to keep improving. There is always room for improvement.



Net winged Beetle - Genus Calopteron

Cropping is another factor that is important. Yet, you do not have to have everything confined into a small space. If you are close enough you may not have to do much cropping. These two images needed no crops or that much. Letting your observations naturally breath in frame can make for more powerful statements. This can show more environmental clues. Depth of field is vital. I shoot with everything in focus in the back with a small F/stop. I keep mine at F/11 and a range of ISO around 3200- 6400 for most things. Each camera and lens are a lot different, and you will find it once you start to really get into it. It becomes intuitive once you become aware of how your equipment works for you can do amazing shots. It is all about knowing your equipment and reading how your camera works in natural lighting and that of the artificial. Also keep in mind of what your white-balance is. DO NOT USE PRE-SETTINGS! Always use AV or Manual these give you all the control to shoot your images.

Pre-settings are a death sentence for masterpieces. I like to use Manual because it helps me keep everything the way I want it to be. It can be tricky at first, but it does help. Getting close is key but you have to have a focal length you like. You are not dealing with inches or feet. You are on the scale of Microns.

You can have Macro Photos which are like most of these were all things are fairly spread out. Then you have Super Macro which is tinier than most things. 2x magnification is baseline for some. It is all up to you how you want to do it. As complicated or as simple as you want it to be. Whatever you feel comfortable with and how your mindset is. Pre-settings will not allow for some close-up images to turn out clearly due to the range you are shooting.



Two-marked Treehopper Complex Enchenopa binotata

BugShot Indiana was an experience of a lifetime. I will never look at insect photography the same way ever again. It has enriched my life not just as a nature photography but as a student of photography and museum studies. I say that taking shots like this will help aid in our diplomacy to bring nature and humanity closer together. Insects are the untouchables in a manner of speaking and not always well received. Having taken this trip to better educate myself I have come back with a profound look on photography; I am taking deeper looks into my own photography and seeing how I can move forward. Communication is everything when it comes to any wildlife.

It is not just for documenting but for storytelling. This is not just for Indiana, not just for the wildlife of Colorado, Arizona, Missouri, Georgia or even Texas. These photography techniques can transform entire nature communities and people who have interest all over the world.

This is the way I connect to the world around me and these ways of photographing do help in bringing a better way of showing people the wonder of insects in a much different way than I had originally thought.

This is the way I connect to the world around me and these ways of photographing do help in bringing a better way of showing people the wonder of insects in a much different way than I had originally thought. We see this all the time in our publications and magazines. These are just some of the photos I am sharing because I think they speak the most volume. This is also a better way of getting what I call Soft Critiques. I do not like having set critiques were you are like "Bug on a Microscope" being judged but these types of images can be brought to better discussion for art and science.

I will never forget this trip for everything I have learned has now been permanently grafted into my photography. This can help you too. It does not matter if you are professional or hobbyist. If you like photography and want to do more with insects, then try some of these helpful tips. I am also glad to give out pointers if needed. Get out there, make new connections, and delight in photography and connect with those around you through the lens.

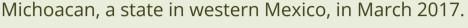


# Migration of the Monarch Butterfly (Mariposa Monarca)

Teddi R. Zonker, CTMN-VP, Monarch Watch Monarch Conservation Specialist

"When you stand in a Monarch sanctuary, your soul is shaken and your life is changed"

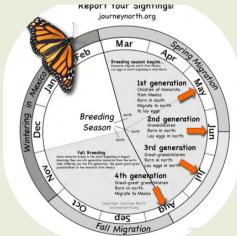
- Carlos Gottfield, Mexican butterfly conservationist. This is <u>exactly</u> what occurred when I reached the Oyamel Fir forest of the El Rosario butterfly sanctuary in





Every fall, millions of butterflies from North America return to the site and cluster in the trees of the forest reserve, coloring the trees completely white and orange. In the spring, the butterflies begin their eight month-long migration that takes them all the way to Eastern Canada and back, during which time four successive generations are born and die. How they find their way back to their overwintering

site remains a mystery.



Photos by Teddi Z

To reach their location is quite a trek for us humans too! Plane, bus, truck, horse, hike and you finally arrive - winded from the elevation, but in awe over what awaits. There is no sound. You might notice a few Monarchs flying about, several on the ground shivering to increase their body temperature and flight muscles for an early morning flight...and then you realize...the entire trunk of the trees are covered in butterflies. The giant clusters of leaves hanging, those are butterflies (hanging from individual leaves). The area is so quiet, when they fly overhead, you can actually hear them pass. When many fly about, it literally sounds like a distant waterfall. The experience is visually, emotionally and audibly stunning.



Soon, in North Texas, we'll spot them. What can you do to help? Be sure to have native nectar plants so they can feed and native milkweed for their eggs/caterpillars. In the DFW area, we should offer Green Milkweed (Asclepias viridis), Antelope Horn Milkweed (Asclepias asperula) and even Butterfly Weed (Asclepias Tuberosa). It is best to avoid Tropical Milkweed (Asclepias curassavica) because it can cause migration disruption. If you do have this variety, it's best to cut it to the ground when the native variety goes dormant.

There are many resources on the migration of the Monarch.

Below I've listed a few key sites, a great documentary and a book (the author follows the migration on bike):

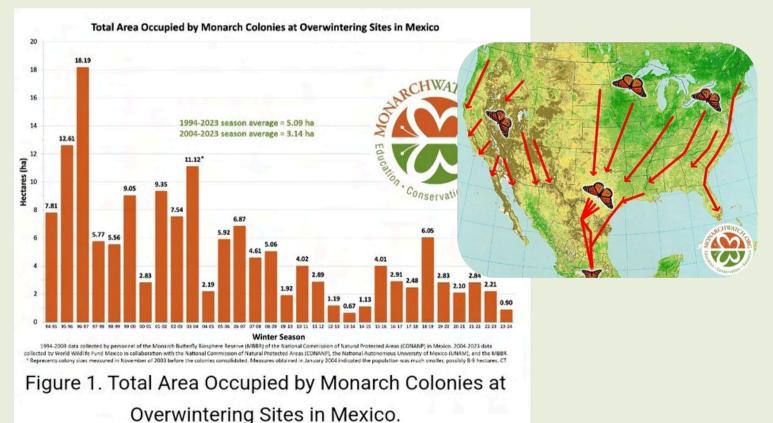
### Resources:

- Monarch Watch (Milkweed, Waystation, tags) monarchwatch.org
- Journey North journeynorth.org
- Monarch Joint Venture monarchjointventure.org
- Flight of the Butterflies, 2012 documentary
- Bicycling with Butterflies, Sara Dykman

Happy planting and much luck to the millions of Monarchs as they come through Texas this fall on their 'journey north'.

"The caterpillar does all the work, but the butterfly gets all the publicity."

-George Carlin



# K

# Native of the Month



# Green Milkweed (Asclepias viridis)

### by Madison Gover



Green milkweed is a native perennial that is native to Texas. The leafs are often wavy and when broken, secrete a milky substance. They bloom from late spring to mid-summer. They are common in pastures and can be found in areas with little competition, such as prairies, roadsides, and ditches.

This plant loves full sun and little water, and is toxic to plants and animals. However, the monarch is resistant to milkweed toxins, and actually sequester the toxin as a caterpillar.

Milkweed is required by monarchs for survival, especially during migration as it is the only plant that their caterpillars can eat from.

Milkweed can be very difficult to start from seed. If you can find a grower of milkweed, it may be easier than starting from scratch. However, Native American Seed recommends a very specific process to stratify and plant the seeds, which you can read about <u>HERE</u>.





# Featured Project

### Fort Worth Zoo Pollinator Garden

by Stesha Pasachnik



The Fort Worth Zoo Pollinator Garden was established in 2019 with support from the Fort Worth Zoo and Partners for Fish & Wildlife. The space was slowly reinvaded with invasive grass and then revamped in 2022 with support from the Fort Worth Zoo and a Native Plant Society of Texas grant. The revised vision for this space is to showcase different ways that people can garden and restore habitat with native plants. The front half of the garden demonstrates a more manicured type of garden while the back half shows a wild prairie restoration. In the Fall of 2022, the wild prairie side of the garden was seeded while the front garden was planted with native plants thanks to the NPSOT grant and plants rescued from the Forest Park NPSOT demonstration garden.



In late 2022, the garden was made a demonstration garden for the Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter. The first volunteer day, 13 January 2023, was a huge success and the joint effort between the Fort Worth Zoo and the North Central Chapter has continued. The garden sits on the east side of the Zoo parking lot and has the potential to educate over 1 million visitors each year on the importance of pollinators and native plants.



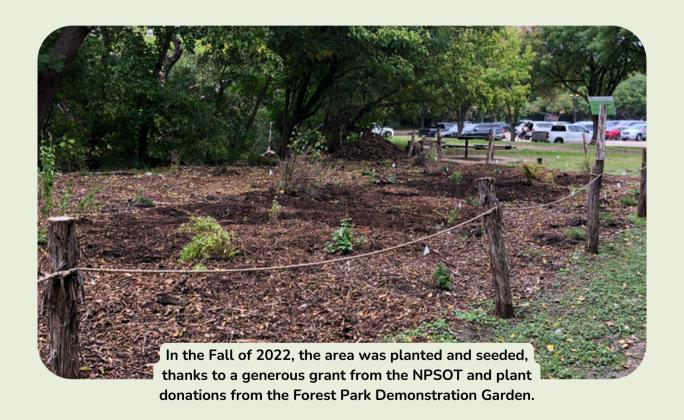
**Goal:** Our goal is to increase the volunteer base on this project that is highly visible to the public. Volunteer hours can be logged in VMS under "NPSOT volunteer activity" with Fort Worth Zoo Pollinator Garden in the description.

Dates and times: Garden volunteer days are typically the 2nd and 4th Friday of the month, starting at 8 or 9 am depending on the weather.

**How do I participate?** A monthly email communicates our plans for the month, if interested, request to be added to the email list by contacting Stesha Pasachnik at <a href="mailto:SAPasachnik@gmail.com">SAPasachnik@gmail.com</a>.

Location: 1989 Colonial Parkway, Fort Worth, TX, 76110.

Once you have entered the Fort Worth Zoo main parking lot go all the way to the right side. You will see the garden area next to the picnic table (the education building and main entrance to the zoo will be to your left when facing the garden.



### 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.

Gulf Frittilary (Dione vanillae)



**Time: 9:10 AM** Date: 9/1/2024

Location: Weatherford.

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



## **Current Events**

### **OCTOBER**

#### **NPAT** event

Soldier Spring Park Hike Tuesday October 1, 9am-1pm Weatherford, Parker County

### **Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve**

A Wild DFW Hike with Amy Martin Saturday, October 5, 10am

#### **NPAT** event

Dynamite & Mill Creek Ranches Tour: Tuesday October 8, 9am-12:30pm Milford, Ellis and Hill Counties

#### **NPAT** event

Cross Timbers Park Bioblitz (using iNaturalist) Saturday October 5, 9am-1pm North Richland Hills, Tarrant County

### **River Legacy Fall Festival**

Saturday, October 5, 10am-4pm River Legacy Park, Arlington

#### **NPAT** event

Dynamite & Mill Creek Ranches Tour Tuesday, October 8, 9am-1230pm Milford, Ellis and Hill County

### **Environmental Science Family Day**

Saturday, October 12, 9am-1pm Fort Worth Botanic Garden

#### **NPAT** event

Fossil Hill Hike and Lunch Saturday October 12, 8:30am-1:30pm Bowie, Montague County

### **NPSOT**

Fall Plant Sale Saturday, October 13, 2pm-4pm Veterans Park Grand Pavilion, White Settlement

#### **NPAT** event

Powelldale Mountains Tour Tuesday October 15, 9am-1pm Lake Whitney, Bosque County

#### **FWNC&R**

Lake Worth Monster Bash Saturday, October 19

#### **NPAT** event

Chalk Mountain Ranch Prairie Tour Saturday October 19, 9am-1pm Walnut Springs, Somervell County

#### **NPAT** event

LBJ National Grasslands Hike: Tuesday October 22, 8:30am-1:30p Decatur, Wise County

#### **NPAT** event

Meridian State Park Tour: Tuesday October 29, 9am-1pm Meridian, Bosque County

### **Prairie Sky/Star Party (sunset)**

Tandy Hills Saturday, October 12, 6:59pm Free, all ages, coolers welcome, no pets, cancelled if cloudy



## **Board Members**

### **CTMN Board Members**

- Mary Beth Lampe President
- Teddi Zonker 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 Membership
- · Sharon Hamilton Past President
- Melinda Wolfinbarger Training
- · Theresa Thomas VMS Admin & Vol. and AT Hours
  - · Sandy Thornburgh Hospitality
    - Theresa Thomas Records
    - Madison Gover Newsletter
  - · Frank Keeney Announcement eblasts

Mary Beth Lampe - 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