

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™
Cross Timbers



June
Issue!



Table of
Contents

- President’s Pen
- CTMN Announcements....
- Speakers.....
- TMN Tuesdays.....
- Member Milestones.....
- Member Highlight.....
- Featured Project.....
- Adventurous Anecdotes.....
- Plant-otM.....
- Continued Education.....
- iNaturalist Obs.-otM.....
- Current Events.....
- Art&Photo Gallery.....
- Board Members.....



In this Issue:



Current Events

If you haven’t had a chance to attend Michael Smith’s series on the Wild Lives of Texas’ Reptiles and Amphibians sponsored by the Friends of Sheri Capehart and Cross Timber Master Naturalists, there is one last class scheduled for June 25th!

Short Stories

Seventy people from twelve different chapters attended the Brazos River Cleanup, May 15th-18th. They pulled out 175 tires and 455 lbs of trash totaling 6,580 lbs of trash removed! There were talks, demos, AT opportunities and nature walks. See p. 12 to learn more about is and see Eli’s amazing drawing on p. 17!

June Speaker

Discover the hidden world of fresh water mussels-vital yet often overlooked animals that keep our waterways healthy and whose conservation is essential for thriving watersheds.



x President's Pen



Pesident

Chelsee Self

Being elected as the 2025 training class representative allowed me to learn about how chapter business is conducted. I read all the chapter documents and mostly listened while attending the monthly board meetings. I quickly decided that being on the board was something that I definitely wanted to do, so when the opportunity came up, I just jumped in. We have an amazing group of volunteers with so much knowledge and love of nature.

Our first area of focus will be on communication. We are looking for a Communication Director. Duties would include overseeing volunteers or committees to handle various aspects of chapter communication including history/archives, newsletter, outreach, publicity, social media and website. If you are interested or have questions, please let me know.

We are creating a list of volunteers who are interested in doing presentations to the public. Please click on the link and complete the form to be added. When opportunities come up for a specific topic, we will know who to reach out to. <https://forms.gle/5LpbZpKuS5maRFZ79>

I am so excited for this opportunity and look forward to working with everyone in the future. Feel free to email me at chelseeself13@gmail.com with suggestions, comments, questions, concerns or complaints.

CTMN Announcements

2026 CTMN Training Schedule



***Training this year is at the FW Zoo ***

6/2/2026	6-8pm	Open House
8/11/2026	6-8pm	Orientation / Volunteer Opportunities
8/18/2026	6-9pm	How to be a Naturalist / Ecology
8/23/2026	9AM-12PM	Class Bio Blitz Using iNat (optional)
8/25/2026	6-7:30PM	Geology
	7:30-9PM	Archeology
9/1/2026	6-7:30pm	Aquatics
	7:30-9pm	Herps
9/5/2026	9AM - 12PM	Canoeing / Herping
	12:30PM - 3PM	Aquatics Field Trip
9/8/2026	6-7:30 PM	Forest Systems
	7:30-9PM	Mammals
9/12/2026	9AM-12PM	Class Bio Blitz Using iNat (optional)
9/22/2026	6PM-8:15PM	Invertebrates
	8:15PM-9PM	Nothing Activity
9/26/2026	9AM - 12PM	Birds / Log Flipping
	12:30PM - 3PM	Forests / Trees
9/29/2026	6-9PM	Urban Systems
10/3/2026	9am-12PM	Prairie Systems (Rock Creek Ranch Park)
10/6/2026	6PM-9PM	Prairie Systems
10/17/2026	8AM-3PM	Urban Systems Field Trip
10/24/2026	9AM-12PM	Land Use (Tandy Hills)



Speakers

June Speaker



**CTMN Chapter Meeting/Presentation –
June 15th - 7:00 pm.**

**Fort Worth Botanic Garden - Rose Room
Guests welcome!**

Timothy Nice Wander Fort Worth Zoo

Freshwater Mussels: Natural Life Support Systems for Our Watersheds

[Zoom Link](#)

Freshwater mussels are one of the most important, yet often overlooked, groups of animals in our waterways. Mr. Nicewander's presentation explores their natural history, historical uses, ecological importance, and the many threats impacting mussel survival. Learn how these fascinating animals help support healthy watersheds and why their conservation matters.

....

Timothy Nicewander earned a B.S. in Environmental Biology from UTA in 2011 and has worked in the Ectotherms Department at the Fort Worth Zoo since then. With 15 years of experience working with aquatics and ectotherms, he has contributed to the care and conservation of numerous species, including Freshwater Mussels, Puerto Rican Crested Toads, and Texas Horned Lizards.

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: Groundwater in Texas: Aquifers, Policy, and Management

Description: This presentation provides an overview of groundwater in Texas, including the major aquifers that supply water across the state and the policies and institutions that guide groundwater management. Topics will include the role of groundwater conservation districts (GCDs), state agencies involved in groundwater planning and regulation, and how Texas approaches groundwater management within the framework of Texas water law. The presentation will also explore current challenges facing groundwater resources and the importance of science-based management in a growing and drought-prone state.

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

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

[Register Here](#)

[Webex Guide](#)

[FAQ](#)

Member Milestones



**Let's take a moment to help us
congratulate members that recertified
recently!**

They have completed, logged, and had
approved 40 volunteer hours and 8
advanced training hours. They will all
receive the Bobcat pin.

C/O 2014

Donna Piercy

C/O 2017

Kate Morgan

C/O 2020

Denise Pederson

C/O 2021

Dana Austin
Peggy Carr
Marcie Delgado
Teresa Landfield
Patsy Miller
Kristine Smathers

C/O 2022

Annamarie Fresta

C/O 2023

Karen Harden
Tina Olivas

C/O 2024

David Haury
Vickie Nelms
Amanda Brinkley

C/O 2025

Lynn Chen
Mike Law
Kim Lufkin
Ruth Mauppin
Josh Parkerson
Chelsee Self

250 Hours (Bronze Dragonfly Pin)

Bob Siglin



500 Hours (Silver Dragonfly Pin)

Wendy Elias

Megan McConnell

Jo Williams



2500 Hours (Polished Silver Dragonfly Pin)

Sandy Fountain



Member Highlight

Meet CTMN Brent Franklin

What year did you become a master naturalist?

I found out about the Master Naturalist program when I went on a Painted Bunting walk and the guy leading the walk had a badge on that said Texas Master Naturalist (Jim Varnum). Later I saw an article about it in the Texas Parks and Wildlife Magazine. I was the class of 2013. Sam K. was in my CTMN class and was using iNaturalist and kept trying to get me to use it but I was a birder and was using eBird. But the more I hung around him, the more I became interested. I now have 40,954 Observations and 4952 Species on iNaturalist!

What sparked your passion for nature and conservation?

I grew up in Abilene and we had some land outside of town. I eventually found a love for birds. The first bird that got me hooked on that was the Snowy Owl. I was told that there was a Snowy Owl in Dallas and I found him. I went into the Army for a time and sort of gave up on that. I have always liked watching documentaries on nature and reading magazines about nature. When I read about the elephants disappearing in Africa, I wanted my two daughters to see them before they disappeared. My mom loved elephants.



Which local natural spot has left a lasting impression on you and why?

It is hard to say, but Tandy Hills left a lasting impression on me once I saw the Purple Paintbrush. Also, Sheri Capehart, originally named Southwest Nature Center. I was there when it opened. It is close to home so it is easy for me to get to.

What unique hobbies or creative pursuits do you enjoy when you're not volunteering with CTMN?

That is a tough question since most of my weekends are out taking pictures and the weekdays are spent uploading and editing them into iNaturalist. My favorite now is dragonflies. They will eat anything. They go through a complete metamorphosis from life in the water to emerging as flying creatures. They have a 90% capture rate on prey. I like helicopters and they can maneuver like a helicopter. I love to teach about them and have done several teachings at surrounding Master Naturalist chapters including our own year before last. I have one coming up at the one in Belton. I have also submitted an abstract to teach at the State Meeting. I haven't heard back on that one yet. I got interested in Moths when we had one of the trainers bring their collection of moths to class and I was particularly interested in the Ebony Jewel Wing. I thought it must be exotic but he said that you could find them around here.

I used to take my daughters to my mom's place in Pecan Plantation, and I would do nothing at night. My daughters want nothing to do with bugs. My wife has learned to tolerate it. She likes to sleep late and so I usually do my outings first thing in the morning, so it doesn't really affect her. It is the trips in the spring that she has learned to live with since I do that on my own. My daughter is moving to England to get her PhD, and I am already looking into what I might be able to find in England.

Brent always heard Sam say to the kids, "You can have a safari in your back yard if you will slow down enough to see it." So Brent says,

"Get out there and notice things!"

Snowy Owl



Photos from Brent's
iNaturalist Observations.
To see more look up
Brentano

Ebony Jewel Wing





Featured Project



When: May 11 - July 6, 2026

Where: This will be done at several locations. Sheri Capehart, FWNCR. Ash Creek Disk Park, Tandy Hills, FWBG. Randol Mill, White Settlement, FWNCR Greer-Island, LMWSP. Bob Jones Nature Park, Chandor Gardens, and several private properties.

Description: Volunteers will be setting up monitors to collect bat sounds to identify what types of bats are in the area. They will be placed strategically so the the bats have a source of water, tree coverage and a grassy area where the insect will be found.

Plant of the Month



White Rosenweed (Silphium, albiflorum)

by Kim Lufkin



Common to see in the Stella Rowan Prairie according to iNat as well as other prairies in the area. It is native to Texas. You should be able to see it in full bloom in June. It is in the family of Asters and attracts butterflies and birds. (Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center).

Photo credit: Bransford, W. D. and Dolphia

www.wildflower.org/gallery/result.php?id_image=11254

Due to its narrow habitat requirements and low population recruitment, it is considered to be a highly conservative species. It fares poorly in areas of suburban development, and faces significant threats in parts of its range.

This flower is endemic to the Dry Chalk Prairies of Central and North Central Texas. A fun fact is that, like the sunflower, it turns to follow the sun. If you want to know a little more about this plant, I found this fun post.

<https://wilconaturejournaling.org/posts/white-robinweed/>





Adventurous Anecdotes



Brazos River Clean up May 15 -18

By Eli Turner



On a weekend in mid-May, I attended the 2026 Brazos River Cleanup at the Little L Ranch in Kopperl, TX! I arrived early on Friday and stayed the entire time, although the event allows for participants to drop in whenever they like. This event is a joint collaboration between the Little L Ranch and the Rio Brazos Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists and is open to all Naturalists (and even their family members!) to attend. It was a free event, although donations were accepted.

Friday was prepping and hanging out - for those camping, we put up our tents/trailers either in the grassy field by the main headquarters (close access to the indoor shower and bathrooms with AC, luxury!) or down by the river launch in a little tree-shaded field. Saturday was the river cleanup—different crews departed at entry points along the river and spent part of the day paddling kayaks and pulling up trash. The main focus was tires - I was told by a fellow naturalist that since there's a fee associated with getting rid of tires, people often just drive up to the river and dump them in! In total, the crews pulled 175 tires and 455 lbs of trash out of the river - that's 6,580 lbs of trash removed! Sunday was a full day of talks, demonstrations, and AT hours with a wide range of topics from wildlife videography to geology to grasshopper identification! Sunday evening we got a tour of the property and Monday morning we did a bird walk and discussed birding tips!

Breakfast, dinner, and snacks were provided all weekend. Camping was amazing, the stars were visible, and the weather was fantastic. The best part of the entire weekend was honestly the ability to meet Texas Master Naturalists (there were over 70 attendees from 12 different Chapters) from all over the state and learn about the types of projects they're working on.

When I got back into town Monday afternoon, I felt so energized! I am definitely going again next year and I encourage others to attend as well!

Other attendees from our chapter were Val and Rica

Who's going next year!

Continued Education

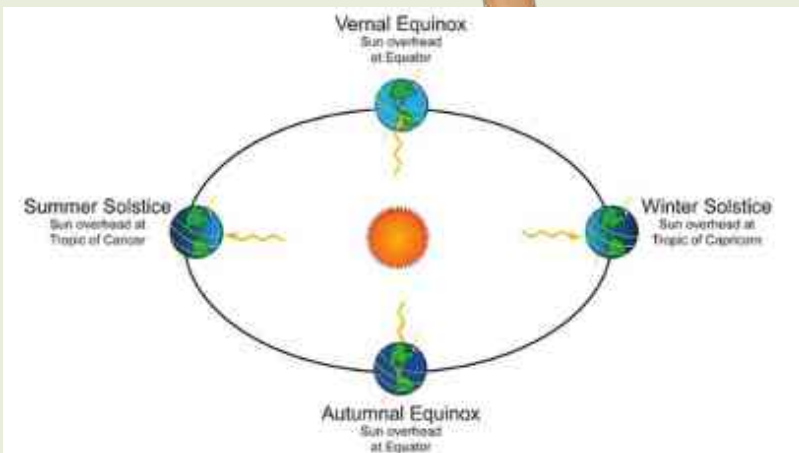


Summer Solstice June 21st in the northern Hemisphere

by Kim Lufkin

June 21st is the summer solstice which is the longest day of the year. Our planet moves in an elliptical pattern around the sun (egg shaped). That means that we are at times closer to the sun and at other times further from the sun. So my question to you is, what time of the year are we closest to the sun? If you said we are closest to the sun in the summer, that would make sense but in actuality, we are furthest from the sun at that time. It is not until winter time that we are closer to the sun.

That begs a further question. If we are closest to the sun in the winter and further from the sun in the summer, then why is it so hot in the summer and cold in the winter? Take a look at the picture below and see if you can figure out the answer to that question.



This has everything to do with the tilt of the earth. In the summer, we are tilted toward the sun so we are getting a more direct hit on the surface from the sun making it more intense. In the winter, we are tilted away from the sun so the energy is less direct covering a greater surface area with the same amount of energy, essentially diluting its intensity so it is cooler.

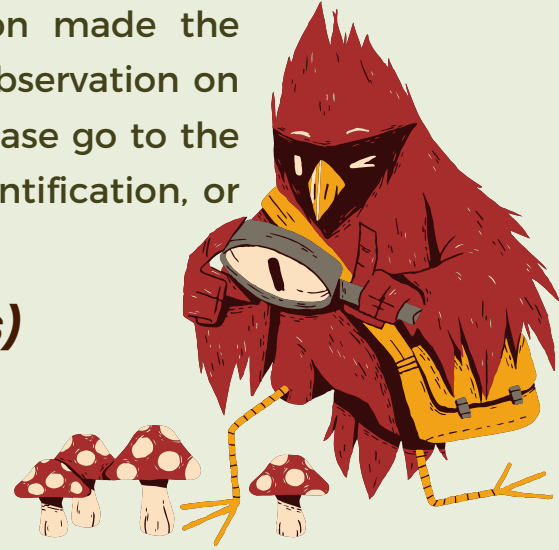
Now this begs another question, if that is true then the summers in Australia should be much hotter than our summers. The reality is that they are about the same. I will leave it to you to figure out why that is.

iNaturalist Observation of the Month

Each month we will choose an iNaturalist observation made the previous month in Tarrant or Parker 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.

Texas Spiny Lizard (*Sceloporus olivaceus*)

Charley



Time: 7:00 am

Date: 6/11/2026

Location: Briarcliff Dr.,
Arlington, TX

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



Current Events



Outreach Volunteer Opportunity



Date: 7-3-26

Time: 10am-4pm



Place: Fort Worth Museum of Science & History

Activity: Teaching Animal Tracks
h USA 250th Birthday @ Fort Worth Museum of Science & History teaching Animal Tracks



Click the link BELOW to sign up for volunteering 📌



<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0545AFAE2FABFDC25-64391252-usa250th>

Bring Items for Chapter Meeting's Not-A-Raffle

Whether you bring an item or not, you can pick an item for a donation.

You decide how much to donate. Donations help pay for our FWBG Room Rental. (Rental is \$50 per meeting)

Books, Magazines, Art, and Plants
are a few of the items brought to the



Not-A-Raffle





TUESDAY, 6/23/2026

6:30 PM - 9 PM

PALACE ARTS CENTER

300 S. MAIN ST., GRAPEVINE, TX

RSVP IS REQUIRED TO RESERVE YOUR SEATS



PANEL DISCUSSION

- **Sam Kleschick**, Urban Biologist, Texas Parks and Wildlife
- **Jake Fainsett**, Education Manager, Trinity River Audubon Center
- **Carol Clark**, Monarch Watch, Conservation Specialist
- **Teddi Zonker**, Vice President, Wild Ones DFW, Native Plants, Natural Landscapes



Sponsored by Friends of Shen Capahat Nature Preserve & Cross Timbers Master Naturalists

The 'Wild Lives of Texas' Reptiles & Amphibians

Michael Smith

Author of *The Wild Lives of Reptiles & Amphibians: A Young Herpetologist's Guide* & co-author of *Herping Texas*

For those with a serious interest in these animals, whether or not you have much experience or background. The content will have some depth without being very technical. Appropriate for nature enthusiasts, Master Naturalists, adults and teens.

This series of presentations focuses on the reptiles and amphibians of north Texas, how they live in the wild, how we can find and recognize them, and how we can protect and conserve them.

Each presentation uses PowerPoint to offer lots of photos, offered via Zoom so that people can join from a variety of locations. Most presentations are 1.5 hours long with some time at the end for questions and answers.

- ★ The presentations are free, and you can register via the [Friends of SCNP Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/friendsofscnp/) (<https://www.facebook.com/friendsofscnp/>) or by emailing scnp@friendsofscnp.org. We encourage you to sign up for the series, but you can selectively attend one or more of them. The Zoom meeting ID is: 839 3035 1943, Passcode: 228064.

- ★ They are scheduled on Thursday evenings at 7:00pm, every other Thursday.

(past session) 4/30 - Part One: Getting Started

We will discuss what these animals are and introduce the topic of herpetology and things like scientific names and community science. We will also try to answer the question, "what good are they?" We'll also cover some essential skills in the field. Skills that can help participants find the animals safely. There are photos of a gopher tortoise, bull snake, and two local waterhous cranes.

(past session) 5/14 - Part Two: Amphibians

We'll start with what makes a species an amphibian, and the frogs, toads, and salamanders that represent this group in the U.S. The presentation offers photos of most of the species encountered in North Texas along with the risks of frogs and toads. We will talk about amphibian extinctions and the threats to their survival.

5/28 - Part Three: Crocodilians and Turtles

These are the oldest reptiles in terms of evolution and paleontology. We will talk about our American alligator and its adaptation for aquatic life and get into the strange but successful mixture of turtles and their shells. There are plenty of photos of most of our North Texas turtle species. We will discuss turtle conservation issues.

6/11 - Part Four: Lizards and Snakes (two hours)

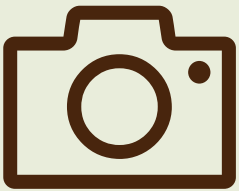
We will talk about the natural history of these species (why do some lizards' tails break off, and how do snakes move and swallow big food items?). Photos will illustrate representative species from each family, including each of our venomous snakes. We also will discuss venomous snake bite. This presentation will be longer than the others.

6/25 - Part Five: Herp Conservation Challenges

These animals are facing some conservation challenges. We will talk about how conservation scientists keep track of various species, how federal and Texas state laws and policies may help protect them, and we'll take a good look at several representative Texas species. We will also take a look at how we, as citizens and naturalists, can help.



Please visit Friends of SCNP at <https://www.friendsofscnp.org> and also the Cross Timbers Master Naturalists at <http://www.ctmn.org/>



Art & Photography Gallery



Brazos River Cleanup



Landscape



Sunset



Landscape



Cactus



Dobsonfly that inspired the drawing.

Eli's drawing of Dobsonfly



Insect on a graph to identify size



Board Members

CTMN Board Members

- Chelsea Self - **President**
- Ruth Mauppin - **Vice President**
 - Bill Collins - **Secretary**
- Sarah Caldwell - **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 Directors

- Annamarie Fresta - **Membership**
- Mary Beth Lampe - **Past President**
 - Erika Swyryn - **Training**
- Theresa Thomas, Hester Swartzner, Sandy Milfeld - **VMS Approvals**
- Roseann Giambro and Eli Turner - **Hospitality**
- Madison Gover (Kim Lufkin stepping in for June - August) - **Newsletter**
- Mary Beth Lampe - **Webmaster**
- Chelsea Self - **Class of 2025 Rep**
- Lisa Gibson (Director), Mike Law, Alice Salazar, Eli Taylor, Annamarie Fresta, Michelle Cyr - **Outreach Committee**

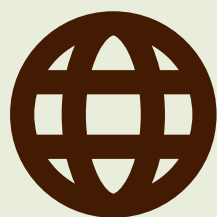


Inclusivity:

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