

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™
Cross TimbersMay Flowers
Issue!

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In this Issue:



CNC Results

Team DFW achieved its strongest City Nature Challenge performance yet, ranking second in Texas with 86,398 observations and showcasing the power of community science across the Dallas-Fort Worth region.

June Speaker

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



Spring Bird Count

Spring Bird Count participants documented 57 species, highlighting the diversity of birds found at the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge. The count brought together volunteers, staff, and community members in support of citizen science and bird conservation.





New Leadership For CTMN

Mary Beth Lampe and Teddi Zonker will step down as president and vice president of CTMN as of June 1, after serving for two years in these positions.

The Chapter Management and Operating Protocols document states that the process to replace officers that step down during the calendar year is for the board to vote on the new officers. In April, the CTMN Board voted for Chelsea Self as president and Ruth Mauppin as vice president.

CTMN is so fortunate to have the new leadership of Chelsea and Ruth to bring new energy and continue the Texas Master Naturalist Program's mission. Please congratulate Chelsea and Ruth on their new roles!



CTMN Announcements



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**



2026 CTMN Training Schedule

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 15, 2026 - 7:00 PM.**

Fort Worth Botanic Garden

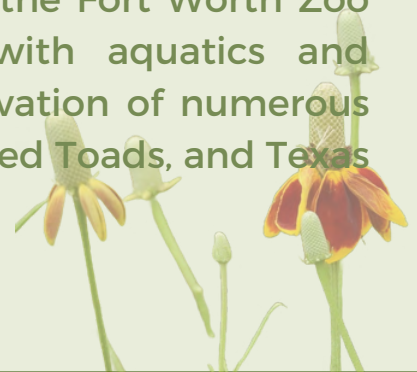
Timothy Nicewander, Fort Worth Zoo

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. This presentation explores their natural history, historical uses, ecological importance, and the many threats impacting their 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.

May Speaker



TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

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

[Register Here](#)

[Webex Guide](#)

[FAQ](#)

Title: Turning Field Work into Funded Projects: Grant Strategies for TMN Chapters

Description: This webinar will help Texas Master Naturalist chapters strengthen their grant writing skills by showing participants how to turn conservation projects into competitive funding proposals. Attendees will learn practical strategies for describing environmental impact, aligning projects with funder priorities, developing measurable outcomes and realistic budgets, and avoiding common grant-writing mistakes. The session is designed for volunteer-led chapters and focuses on tools that can be immediately applied to improve funding success.



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 1998

Marsha McLaughlin
Jeff Quayle

C/O 2000

Hester Schwarzer

C/O 2012

Suzanne Tuttle

C/O 2015

Carol Marcotte

C/O 2017

Kimberlie Sasan
Sandy Thornburgh

C/O 2018

Avon Burton
Wendy Elias



250 Hours (Bronze Dragonfly Pin)

Glory Walker



1000 Hours (Gold Dragonfly Pin)

Teddi Zonker



**More recertifications and awards in the
June newsletter!**



Featured Project



Elmer W. Oliver Nature Park



When: Year-round opportunities available

Where: Oliver Nature Park, Mansfield, TX

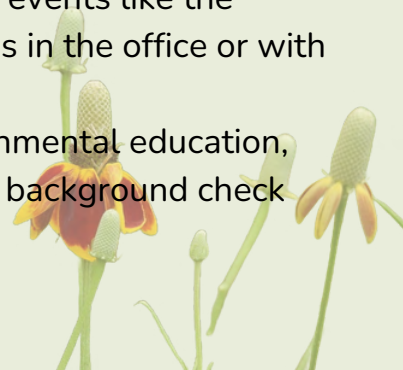
What: Inspire nature appreciation through education, conservation, and community engagement

Oliver Nature Park offers a wide range of volunteer opportunities for nature lovers of all ages and experience levels. Whether you're helping with summer camps, archery lessons, kayak programs, or caring for bird feeders and native gardens, there's a meaningful way for everyone to get involved. Volunteers can assist with educational programs, special events like the Monarch Festival and Stargazing Nights, or lend a hand behind the scenes in the office or with animal care.

This is a great opportunity to give back to the community, support environmental education, and enjoy the outdoors. All volunteers must complete an application and background check before participating.

Learn more and apply: [Description](#)

Questions? Email: olivernaturepark@mansfieldtexas.gov





City Nature Challenge Results

Compiled for the newsletter by Madison Gover using
iNaturalist data

Team DFW did better in this year's CNC than in years
before!

Top 5 Observers:

sam_dragon-moore - 1,964

sambiology - 1,368

charley - 1,171

lynnwchen - 1,166

brentano - 1,125

Top 5 Most Species (User):

sambiology - 1,134

sam_dragon-moore - 1,132

bobbie79 - 794

nathanmayflower - 771

isaaceastland - 713

Top 5 Species (Most Obs):

Kern's Flower Scarab - 56

Firewheel - 48

Pallid-winged Grasshopper - 46

Pinkladies - 42

Antelopehorn Milkweed - 42



DEFW txmn results

1. **NTMN**
2. **CTMN**
3. **BPTMN**
4. **EFMN**
5. **RBMN**
6. **ITMN**

DFW Team results

1. **The Plumicorns**
2. **Nature Stalkers**
3. **Team Twelve Hills**
4. **Bug Lovers**
5. **Mostly Fun-Sized**

Texas results

1. **San Antonio**
2. **Dallas-Fort Worth**
3. **Houston-Galveston**
4. **Austin**
5. **Lower RGV**

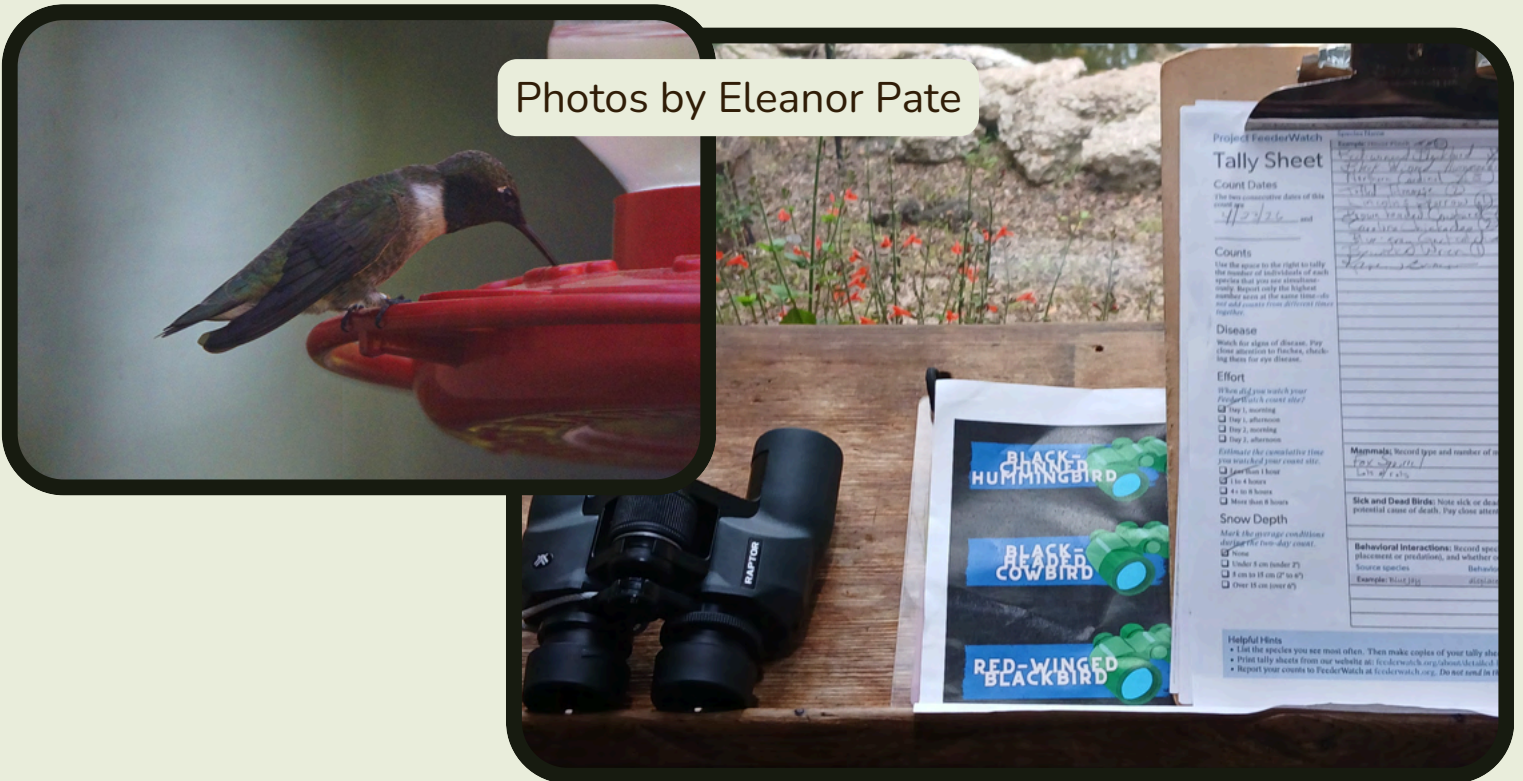
Bird Feeder-Watch 2026

by Eleanor Pate

On the 25th of April, the Feeder Watch-2026, a national wide project running by Cornell Lab of Ornithology, was completed at the Fort Worth Nature Center. CTMN master naturalists Ellie Pate and Karen Brown, along with FWAS members under the leadership of senior scientist Michael Perez for the third year in a row from November through April, were helping to gather the data on feathery guests of the Nature center. The data is supposed to show not only the numbers, but interactions between species and the dynamics of the migration. No bird left uncounted!

The most common visitors of the Nature Center feeders this year were dark-eyed junco, red-shouldered blackbirds, northern cardinals, chipping sparrows, tufted titmice, Carolina chickadees, Carolina and Bewick's wrens and red-bellied woodpeckers.

Photos by Eleanor Pate



Spring Bird Count at the FWNC

by Eleanor Pate

On the 2nd of May the annual Spring Bird count was conducted at the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge. Several groups of volunteers from Fort Worth Audubon Society (FWAS), visitors and staff members counted birds on designated areas. Some CTMN Master Naturalists also took part in this event.

Ellie Pate (class of 2023) was a group leader for Areas 12, 2 and 3. Karen Brown (class of 2023) was also in this group, along with FWAS volunteers. We counted 57 bird species in these areas, including such rare species as Cassin's sparrow, Baltimore oriole and Bell's vireo. Although we were happy to see some not so rare but brilliantly colorful, feathery residents as painted and indigo buntings, northern yellow warblers, blue grosbeaks and summer tanagers.



Photos by Eleanor Pate



Plant of the Month



Indian Blanket (*Gaillardia pulchella*)

by Madison Gover using info from LBJWC



Indian Blanket or Firewheel is an annual or short-lived perennial herb that decorates the roadsides and prairies this time of year. Their coloring can vary by the local genetics in the region, sometimes being more red or more yellow. They can grow up to 1-2 feet tall and bloom throughout May, June, July and August. If rains are plentiful, which fingers crossed they have been this May, you may get to enjoy them longer.

The Indian Blanket reseeds readily and mostly just needs good drainage to succeed. To collect the seeds, allow the flowers to bloom completely and the puffball-like seeds to mature. The seeds will be in little puffballs that can be pulled apart (they can be a little spiky!)

You can mow to reseed or sprinkle around a new area. They are easy to establish but do best in open to lightly shaded spots. They can thrive in various soil types. Properly dried seeds can be refrigerator stored for up to 4 years.

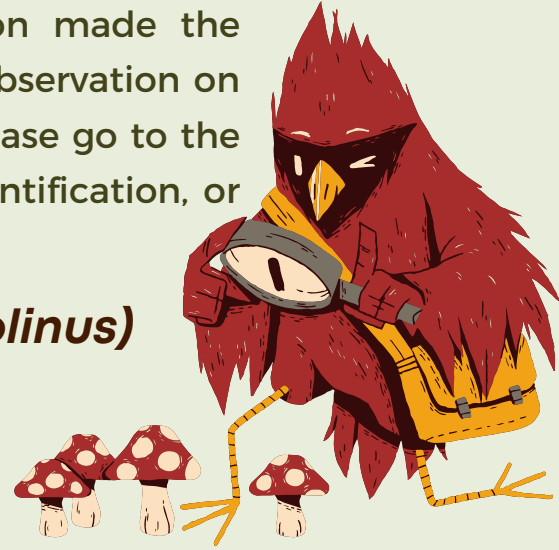


iNaturalist Observation of the Month

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.

Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*)

tkstevens92



Time: 6:02PM

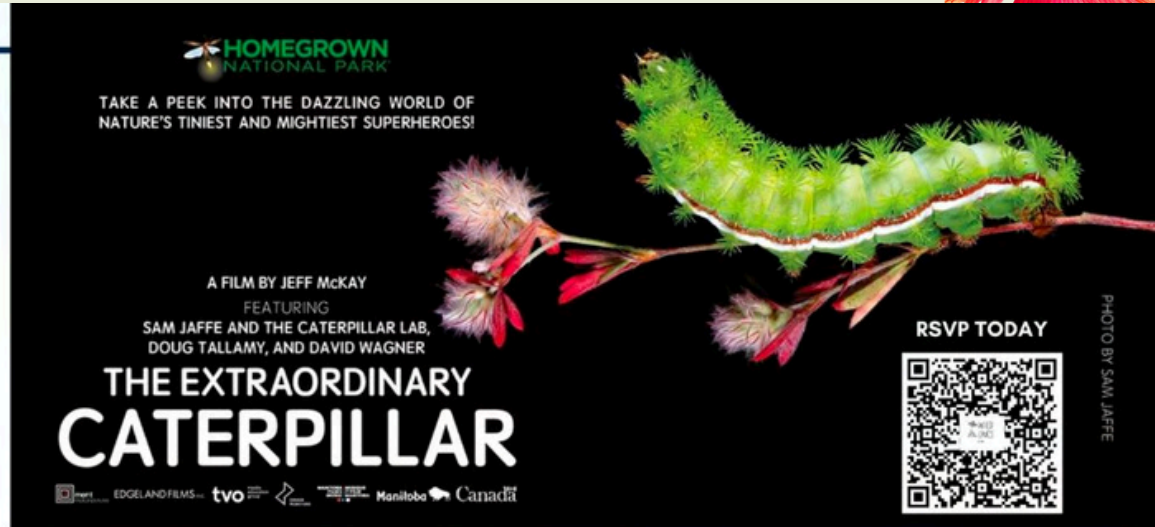
Date: 05/05/2026

Location: Fort Worth, TX



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

Current Events



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



The Molly Hollar
Wildscape

**June First Saturday
Volunteer and
Education Opportunity**

9 - noon Sat Jun 6, 2026

10:30 mini-class

**Maverick Prairies initiative at UTA
by Morgan Chivers and Kayli Nauls**

ZOOM OPTION AVAILABLE

Flying Bird Food Learning About Moths

**JUNE 11
FORT WORTH BOTANIC
GARDEN**

Presented By
Sam Kieschnick
TPWD



Sponsored by Friends of Sheri Capehart 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

(www.facebook.com/FriendsofSCNP/events) or by emailing events@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: 228084.

★ 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 poison ivy, bull nettle, and our local venomous snakes.

(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 calls 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 structure of turtles and their shells. There are plenty of photos of most of our North Texas turtle species. We will discuss turtle conservation issues.

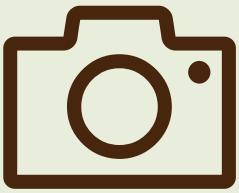
6/11 - Part Four: Lizards and Snakes (two hours)

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 will also discuss venomous snake bite. This presentation will be longer than the others.

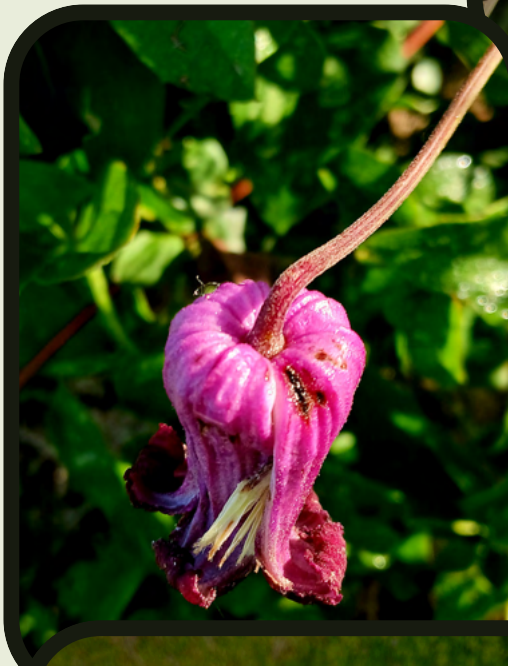
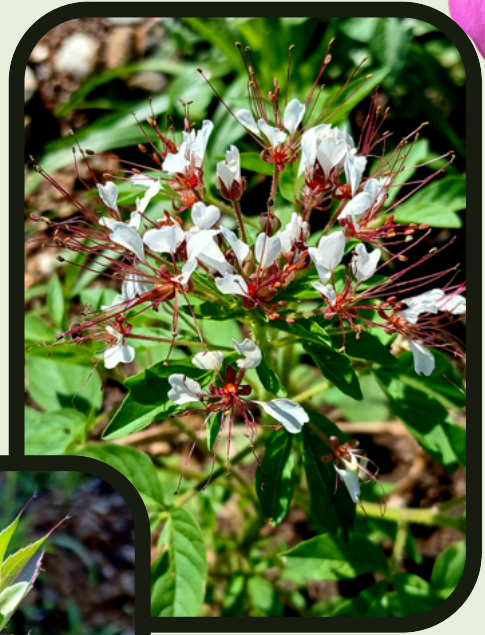
6/25 - Part Five: Herp Conservation Challenges

These animals are facing severe 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.

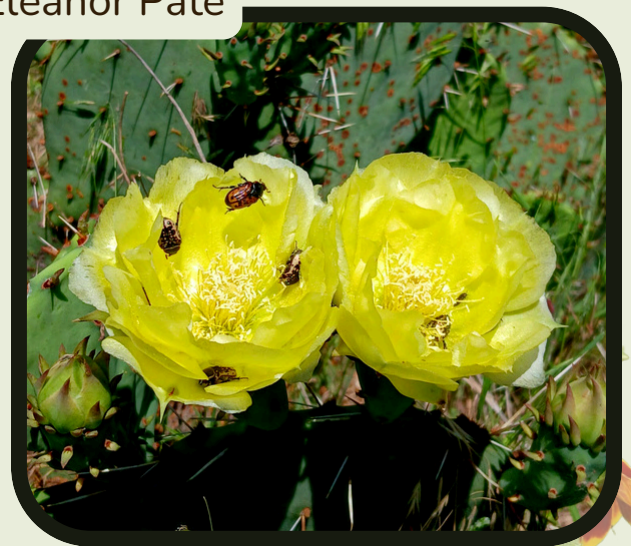
Please visit Friends of SCNP at <https://friendsofscnp.org> and also the Cross Timbers Master Naturalists at <https://txmn.org/crosstimbers/>



Art & Photography Gallery

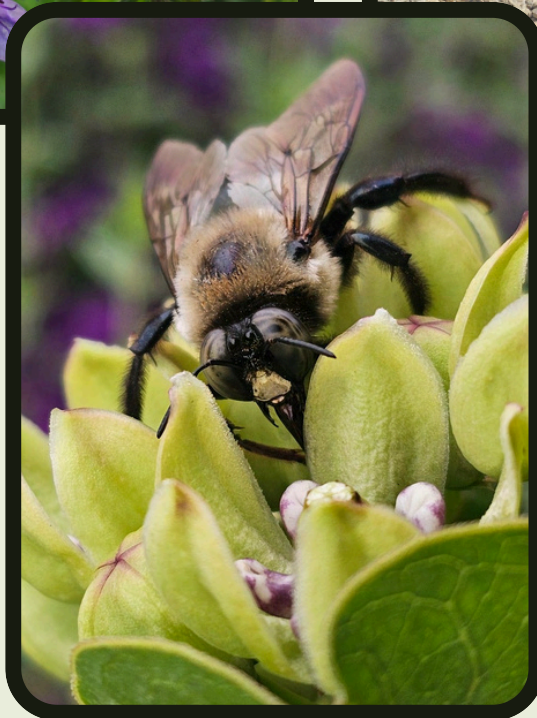


Wildflowers by Eleanor Pate





Photos by Teddi Zonker





Board Members

CTMN Board Members

- Mary Beth Lampe - **President**
- Teddi Zonker - **Vice President**
 - Bill Collins - **Secretary**
 - Sarah Caldwell - **Treasurer**
- Chelsea Self - **Incoming President**
- Ruth Mauppin - **Incoming VP**

CTMN Directors

- Annamarie Fresta - **Membership**
- Sharon Hamilton - **Past President**
 - Erika Swyryn - **Training**
- Theresa Thomas, Hester Swartzner, Sandy Milfeld - **VMS Approvals**
- Roseann Giambro and Eli Turner - **Hospitality**
 - Madison Gover - **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**

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

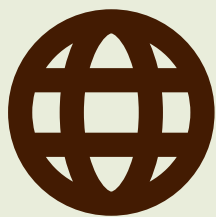


Inclusivity:

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