

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™
Cross TimbersFall
Issue!

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In this Issue:



Nov. Speaker

Join wildlife experts Karin and Roberto Saucedo for an engaging presentation on coyote behavior, safety, and strategies for peaceful coexistence with these vital urban carnivores.

Member Highlights

The 2025 CTMN trainees are thriving, inspired by passionate instructors, engaging field trips, and early volunteer opportunities. Their enthusiasm highlights the program's impact and the strong community it builds.

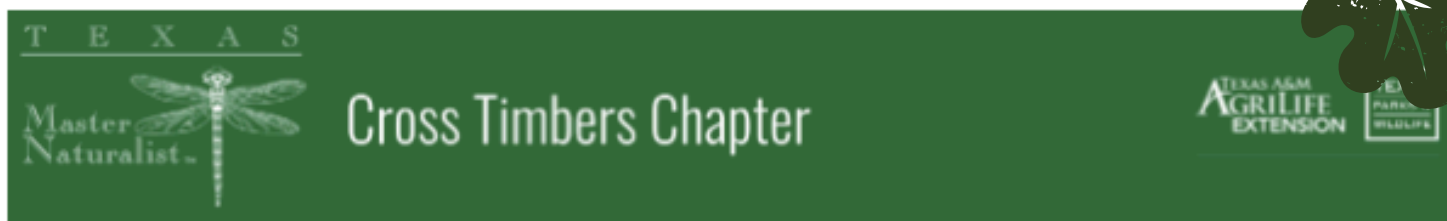


Plant of the Month

Little Bluestem transforms fall prairies into sweeping bronze and red landscapes, providing vital food and habitat for birds, insects, and other wildlife. Even in a season short on blooms, this native grass showcases the quiet beauty and ecological richness of our prairies.



CTMN Announcements



Cross Timbers Holiday Party - Dec 15 at 6:30 pm
Fort Worth Botanic Garden - Rose Room

RSVP by December 8

\$15 Per Person

Guests Welcome

[Register and Pay Here](#)

Catered Dinner with Vegan Option

Trivia Games

Reindeer Games

<https://txmn.org/crosstimbers/>





Speakers

Month Speaker

CTMN Chapter Meeting/Presentation –

November 17, 2025 – 7:00
p.m.

Fort Worth Botanic Garden

Karin & Roberto Saucedo

Coyote Coexistence: Living in Harmony with America's Song Dog



[Zoom Link](#)

Coyotes are highly resilient and social animals that are capable of adapting to a wide range of environments, including the human-dominated landscapes of cities and suburbs. As keystone carnivores, they play an important role in maintaining healthy ecosystems and biodiversity. Learning to coexist with these ecologically valuable and adaptable wild neighbors is key to supporting the flourishing of our multi-species communities.

This presentation will explore the challenges coyotes face in human-dominated landscapes and examine the seasonal behaviors that often lead to increased sightings. Additionally, we'll share practical tips on how to keep people and companion animals safe, while dispelling some of the most common coyote myths. In conclusion, we'll discuss proactive methods we can use to help minimize negative encounters and promote responsible coexistence between community members and coyotes.

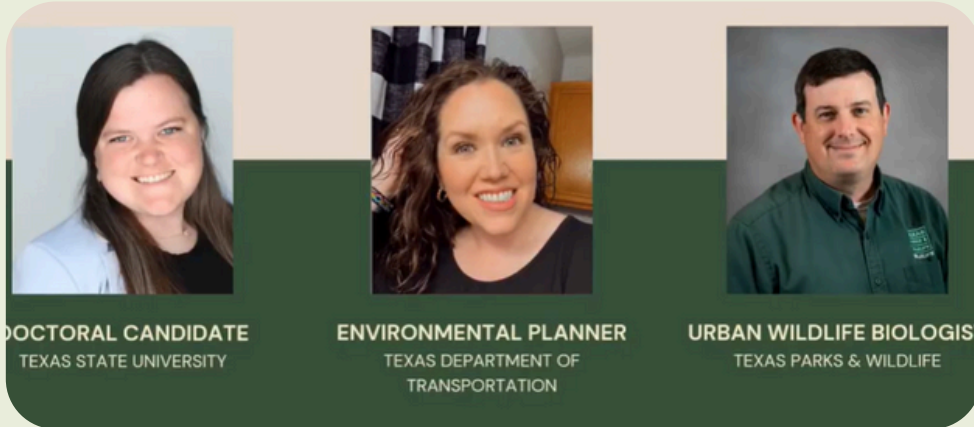
Karin and Roberto Saucedo

Karin is the Texas State Coordinator for Project Coyote. Both Karin and Roberto are published wildlife conservation photographers, Texas Master Naturalists, Advisory Board Members for Texas Native Cats and Founders of Song Dog Watch.

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.

October's Speaker (Go Back and Watch!)



Title: From Passion to Profession: The Unexpected Power of Volunteering with the Texas Master Naturalists

Description: This panel features three Texas Master Naturalists whose volunteer experiences transformed their personal and professional paths in unexpected ways. From launching new careers in conservation to returning to school, their stories highlight how volunteering can exceed expectations and open doors to new opportunities. (Sam Kieschnick, Lauren Young and Jill Zipperer)

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

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

[WATCH ON YOUTUBE](#)

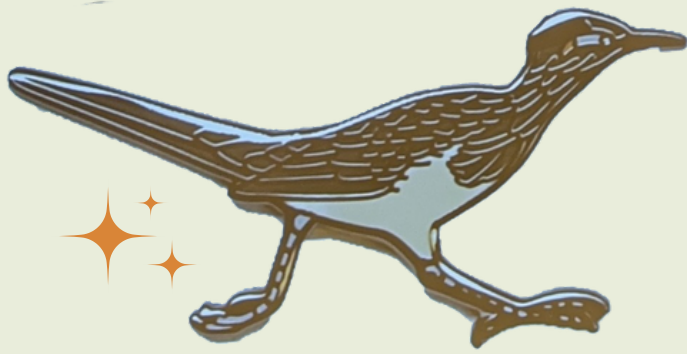
[Register Here](#)

[Webex Guide](#)

[FAQ](#)



Member Milestones



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

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

C/O 2010

Dick Schoech

C/O 2013

Brent Franklin

C/O 2018

David Vestal

C/O 2020

Glory Walker

C/O 2022

Michelle Padilla

C/O 2024

Jennifer Kocher

250 Hours (Bronze Dragonfly Pin)

Sandra Milfeld





Member Milestone Achievements

4000 Hours (Polished Gold w/ Ruby Dragonfly Pin)

Carol Marcotte



Member Highlight

Life of a CTMN Trainee

by Meredith Chacin

Interest in the Cross Timbers Master Naturalist training program remains strong with more than 60 applicants per class for the past several years. It can be pretty competitive for those who apply since there are only 28 spaces available each year. For those who are lucky enough to be selected, there can be a mix of enthusiasm for the opportunity and nerves about not knowing what to expect. However, it doesn't take long for the enthusiasm to win out as they hear passionate experts speak on a wide array of interesting topics and when they begin to venture out on field trips. The 2025 class is well underway now, the final session being November 11, and I had the chance to speak to three trainees, **Terri Taylor**, **Ruth Mauppin**, and **Chelsee Self**, about their experiences so far. Their excitement and positivity reveal the value of the program and how it fuels participants' excitement for conservation and volunteerism.



It's fascinating to hear the different ways that people find out about CTMN and what attracts them to apply. **Terri** was familiar with the Master Gardener program, but it didn't seem like quite the right fit. Her daughter and friend each met Master Naturalists and shared their experiences with Terri. When she read online about the program, she realized she had been a naturalist all her life and just didn't know it!



We have our Vice President Teddi Zonker to thank for **Chelsee's** participation in the program. Teddi introduced Chelsee to iNaturalist, and they went on a guided walk at Tandy Hills and a mothing event with **Sam Kieschnick**. Chelsee was at once fascinated and hooked knowing she had found the right fit for her, combining nature with volunteer opportunities. Ruth actually applied twice to participate in the training class, initially applying after engaging with a Texas Master Naturalist booth at a state park. She was convinced of the need to protect the natural spaces in the sprawling DFW city landscape and persisted in applying a second time.

All three ladies cite the informative class sessions and the people they've met as the highlights of their experience so far. **Chelsee** commented that the amount of detailed information covered in the training was a surprise to her, and she feels more prepared now to speak to people about our local ecosystems and how they relate to our daily lives. **Terri** was also pleasantly surprised at the presenters' great depth of knowledge, expertise, and passion. She has come to realize the diversity of opportunities for service and involvement in this area and commented that most average citizens don't know that many of our most beloved natural areas in DFW depend on dedicated volunteer support. **Ruth** reflected that she was certain she was going to enjoy the training program but has been surprised at just how much she does! She is loving the wide range of topics and the friends she is making. She and other classmates are already sad about the classes and field trips ending.

When asked about a favorite class speaker or field trip, each of the ladies interviewed had a unique response. **Terri** thoroughly enjoyed the aquatics field trip. **Ruth** was blown away by Sam Kieschnick's contagious enthusiasm and also specifically cited enjoying Michael Smith's herpetology class, Charley Amos's presentation on birds, and James Everett's very interesting archaeology session.

Chelsee said that being the first group to participate in electrofishing at the Fort Worth Nature Center was a real highlight for her. She also particularly enjoyed Rusty Branch's geology class in which he emphasized that "everything in the ecosystem starts with the rocks."

As a former mentor myself, I was interested to know if these trainees had benefited from the mentorship program. They all reported having active and communicative mentors. Cheyna Kaspar was called out as an amazing mentor who texts, sends emails about volunteer and advanced training opportunities, and who has been available for any questions. Ruth's mentor is Jenny Kocher, and they have now become friends as well. Because of her positive experience with Jenny, Ruth wants to be a mentor for the next training class. Kudos to our amazing mentors!

One last exciting note about our trainees is that they are already quite busy volunteering! Terri has been volunteering at Chandor Gardens in Weatherford. Chelsee serves as the 2025 class representative and attends CTMN board meetings. She has volunteered at Molly Hollar, the Fort Worth Nature Center, reported precipitation for CoCoRaHs, and participated in bioblitzes – even organizing a bioblitz herself! Ruth is already at 44 volunteer hours and 10 hours advanced training with plans to double certify this year – wow! She's volunteering with Lights Out Fort Worth and at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden. We love to see this kind of early interest in volunteering.

Many thanks to Terri Taylor, Ruth Mauppin, and Chelsee Self for sharing their experiences. We're so glad to have them and the rest of the trainees in the class this year and look forward to welcoming them to the Cross Timbers Master Naturalist chapter.



Featured Project

Glenwood Park Clean-Up



When: October 25th, 8 am -12 pm (and every month)

Where: Glenwood Park, Ft Worth 910 S Riverside Dr, Fort Worth, TX 76104

What: Clean Up the Park (trash bags, gloves, and trash picker-uppers are available)

TCU students, SouthSide Historical Association, and the City of Ft Worth Park and Recreation will work together with local volunteers to clean up the 37-acre park. Vicki Brooks and Gina Alexander co-created the Climate Safe Neighborhood coalition in 2022. This coalition has focused on Glenwood Park since 2022. Coalition volunteers have been from CTMN, SSHA, the Tarrant County Health Department, TCU, local churches, and businesses.



For more info on this monthly trash clean-up, please email vicki.brooks@icloud.com

Date & Event	People Involved	Trash Collected / Work Done
April 2025 Clean-Up	50	1 ton
October 2024 Clean-Up	127	2 tons
April 2024 Clean-Up & Expo	174	2,500 pounds (1.25 tons)
October 2023 Clean-Up	112	5.2 tons
April 2023 Clean-Up	100	3.2 tons
April 2023 BioBlitz	21	survey (no trash)
October 2022 Clean-Up	83	9 tons

🌟 **Quick takeaway:**

- Since 2022, volunteers have removed over **20 tons** of trash.
- Events have engaged **767 participants** in clean-ups and environmental activities.
- Activities include both **trash removal** and **community science (BioBlitz)**.



Bats of the Area Program at Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve

by Robbie Crawford



Around 50 nature enthusiasts gathered at the Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve on September 6 for a fascinating program entitled Bats of the Area & How to Find Them. Kate Rugroden from the Bat World Sanctuary explained how and where bats live and their exceptional importance for agriculture including pollination and pest control.

After the program, visitors headed down the boardwalk to the fishing pier for a demonstration of a listening device that detects nearby bats. We were also treated to a beautiful full moon. It was a fun and educational evening at Sheri Capehart.



Leave the Leaves: A Naturalist's Fall Reminder

by Teddi R. Zonker, CTMN (2023), VP

As autumn arrives in North Texas, many yards are soon buried in fallen leaves. But before you reach for the rake and the trash bags, consider this: those leaves are not litter, they're life!

Under the blanket of leaves, countless native insects overwinter, including fireflies, butterflies, moths, and solitary bees. Leaf litter provides insulation, moisture retention, and shelter for these essential species. When we remove leaves, we're often throwing away next year's pollinators and fall/winter bird food.

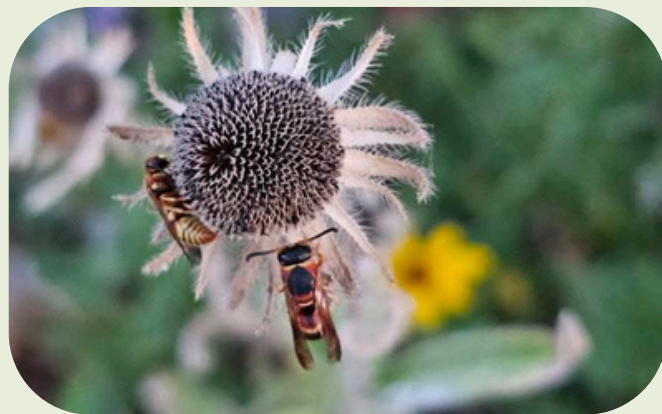
Instead of bagging, try these nature-friendly options:

- *Mulch leaves directly into your lawn to return nutrients to the soil.
- *Rake leaves into garden beds or under shrubs to protect roots and reduce weeds.
- *Start a leaf pile in a corner of your yard as a mini-wildlife refuge.



Letting leaves stay where they fall, or repurposing them wisely, is a small act that supports the ecosystems we love. As Master Naturalists, we can lead by example and help neighbors rethink their fall cleanup routine.

So this season, let's leave the leaves and make room for wild things to thrive.



Plant of the Month



Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)

by Meredith Chacin

This is the time of year when many people just see our native prairies as weedy and lacking in any real beauty. Very little is in bloom right now except for a few straggling sunflowers, a late eryngo or two, and towering poverty weed. I did spy one small bright patch of yellow blossoming Texas Snakeweed on a recent stroll, but the rest is indeed a sea of dried plants. To a naturalist, even the abundant dried seedheads can be a beautiful sight, but what will really catch your attention are the fall colors of the prairie, in particular lots of bronze and rusty red. We have our native Little Bluestem grass to thank for these beautifully colored prairies, especially showy when you come upon a large patch.



Little Bluestem, *Schizachyrium scoparium*, is native to every continental state except California, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington. In the spring and summer, this grass forms clumps with blue-green color near the base, hence its name, and it's able to root up to 5 feet into the ground. It flowers in August to September, and the flowers occur in a cluster called a spike that is 1 to 3 inches long and has a purplish, brownish hue. Then, in the fall, the grass changes to a red-bronze color and provides fluffy white seed heads to the birds as a welcome food source. It grows from 2 to 4 feet in height and each clump can spread from 1.5 to 2 feet wide.



This versatile grass thrives in varying soil types such as sand, loam, clay, and limestone, and it can handle well-drained, moist, and dry conditions. It does not like wet feet, though, and just won't tolerate wetlands or irrigated sites. Little Bluestem grows wild in tall grass prairies and openings in woods, and it can be striking in cultivated mass plantings, as long as it gets sun or part shade and is not in an irrigated spot. This grass reseeds readily and should be planted in areas with some space to spread.

Little Bluestem is a larval host for 9 species of Skipper butterflies and is a source of both nectar and pollen. Many birds rely on its seeds for food in the winter months, among them cardinals, buntings, finches, grosbeaks, sparrows, towhees, mourning doves, and dark-eyed juncos. Along with the other grasses and dried plants on the prairie, it provides habitat for birds, insects, and small mammals throughout the fall and winter. Female bumble bee queens nest at the base of bunch grasses like Little Bluestem where they will be protected until they emerge in the spring.



While it may be true that the prairie is not in its most showy, flowering state this time of year, that doesn't mean there isn't beauty there. So, next time you are visiting your local prairie, be sure to take what this season has to offer in the form of gently swaying native grasses in all the warm colors of fall, among them our beloved Little Bluestem.

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.

Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*)

sam_dragon-moore



Time: 11:34 AM

Date: 11/10/2025

Location: 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

Upcoming

Tue, Nov 18 | 8:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Oliver Park Bird Walk – FWAS

 Elmer Oliver Park, 1650 Matlock Rd., Mansfield, TX 76063

 Leader: Jennifer Cross

 Monthly field trip (3rd Tuesday, Sept–May). Easy 2-mile walk with varied habitats.

Sun, Nov 23 | 8:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Trinity Bird Walk & Count – FWAS & Audubon Texas

 Bellaire Dr. Bridge by Trinity Commons Shopping Center, 3000 S. Hulen St., Fort Worth, TX 76109

 Leaders: Tom Haase & Jean Ferguson

 Casual monthly outing (Sept–May) along the Trinity River – beginner friendly and accessible.

Fri, Dec 5 | 8:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Friday Feathers – FWAS

 Kelley Park, 4195 W. Arkansas Ln., Arlington, TX 76013

 Leader: Chuck Baskin

 First Friday birding group for retirees and Friday regulars. Meet at the dead end of Creekside.

Sat, Dec 13 | 8:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Foster Park Bird Walk – FWAS

 Foster Park, 4398 Trail Lake Dr., Fort Worth, TX 76109

 Leader: Jean Ferguson

 Popular monthly outing (2nd Saturday, Oct–May). Scenic and accessible trails.

Sat, Dec 13 | 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Pollinator Garden Work Day – FWAS

-  Lake Mineral Wells State Park, near the entry gate check-in building
-  Volunteers are encouraged to bring shovels, hand tools, gloves, and buckets.
-  Note: If it's raining, above 100°F, or below 40°F, we will not meet.
-  Open to all ages

Tue, Dec 16 | 8:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Oliver Park Bird Walk – FWAS

-  Elmer Oliver Park, 1650 Matlock Rd., Mansfield, TX 76063
-  Leader: Jennifer Cross
-  Monthly field trip exploring ponds, meadows, and woods on easy trails.

Sat, Dec 20 | All Day

Fort Worth Christmas Bird Count (CBC) – FWAS

-  Various count areas across the Fort Worth region
-  Coordinator: Michael Perez
-  maroonmichael9600@gmail.com |  817-781-7018
-  Help count birds for National Audubon's scientific research.

Fri, Dec 27 | All Day

Village Creek Drying Beds Christmas Bird Count (CBC) – FWAS

-  Village Creek Drying Beds, Green Oaks Blvd., Arlington, TX
-  Coordinator: Gabrielle Saleh
-  gabriellems.cbc@gmail.com
-  Join teams surveying the mid-cities area (Arlington, Bedford, Hurst, Euless).

Sun, Dec 28 | 8:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Trinity Bird Walk & Count – FWAS & Audubon Texas

-  Bellaire Dr. Bridge by Trinity Commons Shopping Center, 3000 S. Hulen St., Fort Worth, TX 76109
-  Leaders: Tom Haase & Jean Ferguson
-  Monthly cooperative count and casual walk – all skill levels welcome.

TPWD - Wildlife Rehabbers of Tarrant County

Name	City	Specialization	Contact Information
Arenson, Thomas	Keller	Birds (including small raptors)	817-991-0630 cell (8am - 8pm) No text messages please.
Godbey, Beverly	Fort Worth	Small mammals	(817) 475-1760 (9am - 8pm)
Hoyt, Lee	North Richland Hills	Small mammals, Texas horned lizards and fawns	(972) 658-0213 (anytime)
Miller-Skaggs, Cynthia	Fort Worth	Small mammals (squirrels, chipmunks, prairie dogs), White-tailed deer fawns, and Birds (ducks, pheasant, raptors)	817-457-4021 6am to 11pm or cynchip@yahoo.com
Moodhe, Sandra	Grapevine	Squirrels	smoodhe77@gmail.com
Moore, Dr. Greg	Southlake	Small mammals (no deer); birds (including raptors)	817-481-2014
Nature's Edge Wildlife & Reptile Rescue	Cleburne	Small mammals, raptors, bats, reptiles, and amphibians	682-463-9453 (anytime) naturesedgewildliferescue@gmail.com
Rader, Gina	Keller	Squirrels only	(817) 475-3177 (prefer text messages)
Singleton, Kay	Fort Worth	Small mammals (specializes in opossums)	(682) 556-2311 or sensiblepet@yahoo.com
Spiritual Wildlife Rescue	Arlington	Small mammals (specializes in bobcat, fox, coyote and cougar), reptiles, and amphibians	(817) 422-6080 (anytime) swrrs@yahoo.com

Did you know you can earn volunteer hours with the [DFW Wildlife Coalition](#)?

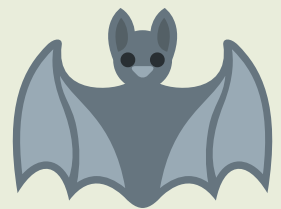
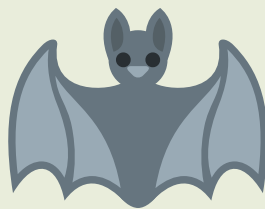
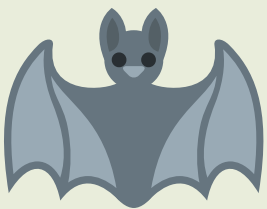
October is Bat Appreciation Month!

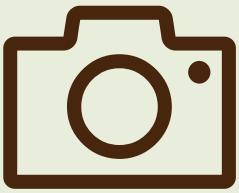
[Click Here](#)
[What To Do](#)
[If You've](#)
[Found A Bat](#)

Bat-Watching Sites of Texas

Texas happens to be the battiest state in the country. It is home to 32 of the 47 species of bats found in the United States.

 texas.gov





Art & Photography Gallery



Photos by Teddi Zonker





Board Members

CTMN Board Members

- Mary Beth Lampe - President
- Teddi Zonker - Vice President
 - Bill Collins - Secretary
- Dee Ann McGinnis- Treasurer

CTMN Directors

- Annamarie Fresta - Membership
- Sharon Hamilton - Past President
 - Erika Swyryn - Training
- Theresa Thomas, Hester Swartzner, Sandy Milfeld – VMS Approvals
- Sandy Thornburgh - Hospitality
 - Madison Gover - Newsletter
- Mary Beth Lampe - Webmaster
- Chelsee Self - Class of 2025 Rep

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

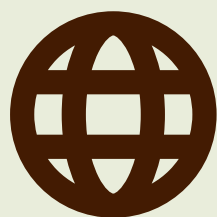


Inclusivity:

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,
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- **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