

October 2009

Volume 10, Number 10

# EFCMN Newsletter

Elm Fork Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists

## EVENTS

### Oct. MEETING

Date: 10/15/2009

Social: 9:00 AM

Meeting: 9:30 AM

Location: AgriLife

Extension Office

### Nov. BOARD MEETING

Time: 9:30 AM

Date: 11/12/2009

Location: Extension Office

Conference Room

Board meetings are open to members.

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### 2009 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### Elected

President: Dave Rowley

Past President: Alex Lieban

Vice President: Jean Chaka

Secretary: Lynne List

Treasurer: George Kragle

2008 Class Rep: Carole Munro

2008 Class Rep: Diane

Kohlhase

#### Appointed Chairs/editor

Training: Sherrill Campbell

Publicity: Wanda Odum

Projects: Dave Ford

Newsletter: Theresa Page

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### ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

Dues are \$25 per year and are due by January 31. After that date, they are \$30.

### NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:

Submission of material for publication is welcomed and encouraged. The deadline is always the second Friday of each month that the newsletter is published. Send information to

[news@efcmn.org](mailto:news@efcmn.org)

## Ray Roberts Lake State Park Project to represent our chapter at the State TMN Conference

**Ray Roberts Project Goes to State:** What a compliment to recommend the Ray Roberts Project for the state competition! The Ray Roberts Project is actually a combination of projects that have come to life over the last few years. One part of the project, the Interpretive Center, was started several years ago. It continues to be an integral part of the relationship between Master Naturalists and State Park personnel, and it is always evolving. Some projects are shorter in duration, like the trash bash early this year. Some are short in duration but will last for years with minimal attention. One of our most popular programs, Kids N Nature, started as a Master Naturalist project as well, and is still growing. Our most recent project, Trails of Denton County/Ray Roberts, is still in the process of creation and modification, but it already has worldwide reach. All of these projects have a common thread, Master Naturalist involvement and commitment. And that is actually the reason I'm writing this note, to thank all of you that have helped send Ray Roberts to state. You are the reason we are headed to the state competition. I wish I could guarantee that we will win, but of course I can't do that. I just want you to know that all your support is greatly appreciated whether or not we win, and that I hope we win for all of you!

**Susan Pohlen, Project Manager**

### EFCMN GENERAL MEETING

**October 15, 2009**

**Social Time: 9:00 AM; Meeting: 9:30 AM**

**AgriLife Extension Office**

Jessica Alderson is our speaker this month. She will discuss Urban Wildlife.

Jessica received her Bachelor of Science degree in wildlife and fisheries sciences from Texas A&M University and she completed her Master of Science degree in August 2008. Her research interests include human dimensions of urban wildlife management. Jessica is currently an Urban Wildlife Biologist with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

## CLEAR CREEK NATURAL HERITAGE CENTER ACTIVITIES

For the 2009 school year, DISD has scheduled fifteen schools to visit Clear Creek to experience science in nature's classroom. We will be setting up a pH testing station, a Wetland's station, and an Enviroscape for the fifth graders, but only the pH station and Wetland's station will be manned by Master Naturalists. At the same time, the fourth graders will be touring with their teachers. And, yes we are always looking for MN volunteers to assist in this nature experience.

Clear Creek was very fortunate this year to have Sara Dee with the Denton County Museums set up a display for the children about tools the early settlers used that predate the electronic age.

The Master Naturalist's annual seniors event "Lunch in the Park" is scheduled on Thursday, October 22 at noon, of course. Dave Rowley will be the MC for this event. This year our speakers will be Sara Dee who will lecture on early settlers and Indians in the Denton area and Ray Roberts Ranger Dennis Brown who will present a lecture on Trees. And yes, volunteers to help with these events are always appreciated.

Not to forget, the City Parks Dept. is presenting "Bat World" on October 17, 2-5 PM at the Education Building at Clear Creek. Contact Dorothy Thetford at [dorothythetford@gmail.com](mailto:dorothythetford@gmail.com) to volunteer.

For information on volunteering at CCNHC, contact:

Jan Thompson, [frickthompson@aol.com](mailto:frickthompson@aol.com)

Cheryl Kesterson, [greenardengal@yahoo.com](mailto:greenardengal@yahoo.com)

## EFCMN Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating committee is recommending the following candidates for the upcoming election on November 19. But, nominations from the floor are always welcome.

President:

Vice President: Rob Roy

Secretary: Marian Kester

Treasurer: Amanda Cowan

Member-at-Large:

The new Member-at-Large position is to be filled by a chapter member nominated from the floor and elected by eligible members at the November 19 general meeting.

Committee chairs are appointed by the Board of Directors, and members are being sought to fill these positions:

Training Chair

Publicity Chair

Projects Coordination Chair

Newsletter editor/chair.

If you are interested in serving as a committee chair, please contact one of the Nominating committee members.

Our 2009 Nominating committee consists of Alex Lieban, Past President and Committee chair, Sherrill Campbell, Cheryl Kesterson, Fritz Poppe and Jan Thompson.

## RAY ROBERTS LAKE STATE PARK ACTIVITIES

**Interpretive Center:** SATURDAYS, 10AM-4PM; SUNDAYS, 11AM-1PM. The center is located across from the Park entrance at the Isle du Bois Unit.

It's hard for me to believe that fall is here. Most people will start to turn their attention to other things as the weather cools off and the holidays draw near. This change in behavior will affect the Interpretive Center schedule, and it will close in December. There are only seven open shifts for the rest of the year, so if you're interested in taking a shift in the Interpretive Center you should contact Susan Pohlen, Ray Roberts Project Coordinator, at [spohlen@verizon.net](mailto:spohlen@verizon.net) or (940) 686-5739.

### Guided Nature Hikes:

*Isle du Bois Unit:* Saturdays, Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, Nov. 7, 3:00 PM, Lost Pine Amphitheater

*Johnson Branch Unit:* Saturdays, Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, Nov. 7, 3:00 PM, Vanishing Prairie Trail

**Guided Night Hikes:** *Isle du Bois Unit:* Oct. 31, 7:00 PM, Lost Pine Trail

*Johnson Branch Unit, Saturdays, Oct. 24 & 31, 7:00 PM, Vanishing Prairie Trail*

### Kids n' Nature Classes:

*Johnson Branch Unit:* Saturday, Oct. 10, 9-11 AM, Park Store Pavilion, *Creatures of the Night*

*Saturday, Oct. 17, 6:00 PM, Park Store Pavilion, Creatures of the Night*

*Saturday, Oct. 31, 1-2 PM, Park Store Pavilion, Halloween Fun*

### Fireside Chat:

*Isle du Bois Unit:* Saturdays, Oct. 10, 24, Nov. 7, 7:00 PM, Lost Pines Amphitheater

*Johnson Branch Unit:* Saturday, Oct. 3, 6:00 PM, Oak Point Amphitheater

**Fall Guided Birding Tour:** Saturday, Oct. 10, 8:00 AM, Elm East Park  
Saturday, Nov. 14, 9:00 PM, Elm East Park

Check out the website: <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us> or contact Cassie Cox at 940-686-2148 or Jan Hodson at 940-637-2294 for more information about any of these events. To **volunteer** to assist with nature hikes and other activities contact EFCMN (Ray Roberts) Project Manager, Susan Pohlen, [spohlen@verizon.net](mailto:spohlen@verizon.net)

## BYLAWS AND OPERATING HANDBOOK REVISIONS APPROVED

Elm Fork Chapter BYLAW Revisions were approved at the September 17, 2009 general meeting. The Chapter Operating Handbook changes, to match the BYLAW revisions, were previously approved by the Board. Copies of revised documents will be available on the Yahoo Group site and at the Chapter website as listed below.

<http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/EFCMN/>  
<http://www.efcmn.org>

Please discard your older versions of these documents. **Dave Rowley, President**

## SEPTEMBER 2009 EFCMN MEMBERS CERTIFYING

### Recertification for 2009

Monique Goodhart  
Susan Kilpatrick  
Andy Krofina  
Carolyn Richard  
Dave Rowley  
C.J. Solberg

### Cumulative Hours

Monique Goodhart (250)  
C.J. Solberg (250)  
Joanne Fellows (1000)  
Janet Gershenfeld (1000)  
Joan Stanley (1000)

## SHOWY NATIVE PLANT FOR FALL—*Carolina Snailseed*

By Marilyn Blanton

When I see the scarlet clusters of Carolina snailseed fruit dangling from a post oak or hackberry tree, mingled with greenbrier or wild grapevine, draped over sumac or twirled around a rural mailbox, it is the perfect picture of fall.

Shiny red berries of Carolina snailseed (*Cocculus Carolinas*) accent the wild tangle of growth along the wood's edge. The showy berries, which are actually drupes, have developed from the small, inconspicuous and whitish-green blooms of late spring and summer. The two-inch wide compound clusters of ¼ inch fruits have turned from apple green to glossy red creating a familiar autumn scene. Although the fruit is poisonous to humans if ingested, it is eaten by a number of both game and nongame birds that often disperse the seeds. Mammals, both small and large, also eat the fruit.

Carolina snailseed, sometimes called red-berry moonseed, is a member of the Menispermaceae or moonseed family. Its native distribution includes much of Texas and runs eastward to Florida and north to Kansas and Virginia. It is found along roadsides, thickets, and in disturbed sites. Carolina snailseed is a fast growing, perennial vine, both deciduous and native, that climbs to twelve feet or more. It is adapted to various soils of both uplands and bottomlands. It is tolerant of full sun but prefers partial shade.

Carolina snailseed's leaves grow alternately, two to four inches wide, and are typically heart-shaped but vary significantly. The leaves have a veined texture with a dark green upper surface and paler lower surface with soft dense hairs. Carolina snailseed is often found growing with greenbrier, which has similar shaped leaves, but the twining Carolina snailseed does not have the thorns or tendrils of greenbrier and its leaves are not as leathery.

Carolina snailseed seeds look like little snails, hence the common name. The hard round seeds are compressed laterally and sculptured with ridges. The vine can be propagated from seeds or woody cuttings. It can become invasive in a landscaped area, but works well in a natural setting. It is pretty as well as being drought, disease and insect tolerant.

Autumn is full of color with the bright yellows of Maximilian sunflower, golden aster, broomweed and goldenrod. Snow on the prairie, frostweed, and boneset add patches of white. American beautyberry, wild morning glory, and eryngo add their shades of purple. The elms, ashes, and bois d'arcs start to yellow and persimmon leaves turn bronze. Virginia creeper leaves blend in colors of pink and burgundy while sumacs flash their brilliant oranges and reds.

But for me, it's the red berries of Carolina snailseed that carry my thoughts back to the carefree autumn days of childhood.

### Texas Native Plant Art Contest

The fourth grade students of McNair Elementary School are participating in the Texas Native Plant Art Contest. The contest is sponsored by the Trinity Forks Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas. The purpose of the contest is to raise awareness and educate students about the importance of native plants in keeping with the intension of the Texas legislature in designating the third week in October as Texas Native Plant Week. The artwork will be displayed at Texas Woman's University during Texas Native Plant Week and later at the Interpretive Center at Lake Ray Roberts State Park.



Photo by Marilyn Blanton

## BENTHIC MONITORING PROJECT ACTIVITIES REPORT

There are many things in the natural world that we do not see, or we tend to ignore for the more obvious. The world of birds, for one, is never really appreciated without a look through binoculars. The benthic world that exists in our streams is just as exotic, and often as beautiful, as that of the birds, but it takes more powerful optics to appreciate its complexities.

Our benthic monitoring crew on a given workday usually includes a nice mix of long term and experienced volunteers as well as new master naturalist class members and interns. Participating at our September workdays were Adelaide Bodnar, John Bodnar, Kay Crowe and Theresa Page who are both long term master naturalists and experienced benthic volunteers; Bill Hammon, Katy Hammon and Betsy Schenk who are long term master naturalists but new to benthic; and Sandy Garrett (2009 class) and Karen Schoeve (2008 class) who are our newbies.

Some of our volunteers only participate in the fieldwork, essentially the collection of benthic organisms from the streams and water quality testing, because they want to be outside enjoying nature. Others prefer spending time in the lab at UNT where they can solve the *great benthic organism identification mystery*, label the specimens, and complete analysis forms that are submitted to the City of Denton as part of its water quality assessment. A few of our volunteers enjoy and participate in all of these activities. Among the many additional benefits one derives from working on the benthic project are the fascinating conversations that are ongoing. The topics range from philosophy to history to remodeling your kitchen, interrupted occasionally by comments such as, "Did you see that raccoon?" or "Look at this beautiful damselfly larva."

The benthic monitoring project gives participants a look at a world seldom seen by most people, and it's also a lot of fun! Come join us at our next workday for a unique experience.

Marilyn Turnage, Project Manager  
[marilynturnage@att.net](mailto:marilynturnage@att.net)

### Cool Shade for Third Grade

We are working with Master Gardeners again this year bagging, tagging and distributing trees for third graders all over Denton County. This is the fifth year Denton County Soil & Water Conservation District has sponsored distributing tree seedlings to third graders in the Lewisville ISD. We will be bagging these seedlings on Wednesday, October 21 at Lucille Del Vecchio's barn; her address is: 7003 Woodridge Drive, Flower Mound, TX 75022.

We need all the folks we can get, especially for the bagging. You can volunteer for just bagging or distributing or both. We will bag and tag all day on October 21. Feel free to come for just the morning, just the afternoon or all day! The trees will be distributed to Lewisville ISD on October 22 and 23. Distributing can be arranged for all day, morning or afternoon as you have available.

This year we are being encouraged to bring food to share, or we can contribute there and order pizza! We have a new Master Gardener project leader, Susan Loos. She can be reached at 972 977-0663 or [looswoman@verizon.net](mailto:looswoman@verizon.net). Betty Mullenweg is the Master Naturalist contact at 940 891-3250 or [bmullenweg@aol.com](mailto:bmullenweg@aol.com)

Please join us – it's lots of fun, you meet lots of fellow Naturalists/Gardeners, and it all goes to Service Hours (project no. P-070412).

## ***The Armchair Master Naturalist: Has the Obesity Epidemic Spread to Hummingbirds?***

I happened to notice a hummingbird buzzing around the lantana early this morning. It was the fattest hummingbird I had ever seen; looked like it had swallowed one of those large marbles we played with as kids.

I decided to check the nectar feeder by the front door because I hadn't really monitored the feeders lately and clearly some stragglers were still coming through. By the time I got to the front door, the bird had already made its way to the feeder. Opening the door startled the bird, and because it was so fat, it lost its balance and fell into the Copper Canyon Daisy below the feeder. I could hear it flapping around and making little hummingbird noises, but it regained its momentum and flew into the trees before my assistance was needed.

Yes, hummingbirds do migrate through our area, but many stay during the summer and make this their breeding grounds. Ruby-throated and Black-chinned Hummingbirds are both known to stay here during the summer. Since we are on the Central Migratory Flyway we have an opportunity to see several other species of hummingbirds, but are most likely to see the Ruby-throated Hummingbird and Black-chinned Hummingbird.

Hummingbirds are beneficial to humans because they eat insects and help pollinate plants. They do not depend on humans for nectar, but it makes life a little easier during breeding season when there are hungry mouths to feed, also during times of severe weather that impacts their natural food sources, and of course during migration when they need to store up plenty of fat for their journey.

The main reason people put out nectar feeders is simply to enjoy these tiny, feathered friends. The birds are very territorial and provide great entertainment as they battle over the feeders. They are also very curious birds that will peer in your windows and fly up to you for close scrutiny when you're outside near their territory. With wings that beat between 50 and 60 times per second for the Ruby-throated, and near 80 times per second for the Black-chinned, there have been plenty of times I thought I might be impaled by a fleeing hummer.

***Susan Pohlen, MN (Class of 2007)***

### **ELM FORK CHAPTER OF MASTER NATURALISTS**

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