

INTERPRETIVE CENTER
RAY ROBERTS LAKE STATE PARK - ISLE DU BOIS UNIT
PROJECT NO: 100909
Elm Fork Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists
Project Manager: Douglas Chadwick

The Elm Fork Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists created the Interpretive Center at the Isle Du Bois Unit of Ray Roberts Lake State Park with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) staff. The Grand Opening was in the fall of 2007. The mission of the Interpretive Center is to introduce the wide variety of local flora and fauna to visitors, and to encourage them to experience the wonders of nature at this beautiful state park.

Housed in a small building adjacent to the visitor entrance at the Isle Du Bois unit of the Park, the Interpretive Center (IC) consists of a secured, climate controlled space containing displays, multi-media resources, program information, park maps, hands-on experiences for children and adults, some small live animals (reptiles, fish, insects), and a small office for TPWD staff. Outside the IC are several demonstration planting areas showing native wildflowers, grasses and plants; bird feeders and houses; a small rock waterfall and nature-scaped pond; and a ¼ mile marked walking trail through the adjacent woods.

The Master Naturalist Volunteers (MNVs) staffing the IC serve as greeters and hosts for visitors; MNVs are knowledgeable in various subjects covered in the Master Naturalist Certification Program and through their continuing education, personal experiences and other training opportunities. MNVs have the opportunity to interact with the children and adults visiting the IC in a relaxed, fun and safe atmosphere. The IC is open March through June and September through November, on Saturdays from 10am to 4pm, and Sundays from 11am to 3pm; two volunteer shifts per day of one MNV per shift are scheduled.

TPWD staff and other supporters of the IC monitor and update the program materials, displays and resources available in the IC; the MNVs are present to assist visitors as they take advantage of the IC. Some MNVs choose to interact actively with visitors, showing them around, answering questions, and helping with the various resources, while some are comfortable simply greeting folks and inviting them to take advantage of the self-guided aspects of the IC.

The IC Project Manager provides and maintains the work schedule at the beginning of each season for the hours of operation, and also contacts each MNV 10-14 days prior to each weekend to confirm their volunteer commitment. Training and orientation are covered at the IC prior to each MNV beginning to volunteer; a sign-in sheet is utilized, and service hours are recorded by each MNV at the AgriLife offices in Denton.

All Elm Fork Chapter Certified Master Naturalists are invited and encouraged to volunteer at the Interpretive Center and share their wealth of 'natural' information with visitors. If you are interested in participating, please contact:

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