



Please remember that the deadline for **Naturalist News** submission is the Wednesday immediately preceding the monthly board meeting. Anything received after that will be held over to the following month (if appropriate).

AT Opportunity in June - Mark your calendar!

The **Blackland Prairie Chapter** has invited us to a presentation, which was going to be done at the Regional Conference. Sally Evans, BPC Education Coordinator, thinks it is good enough that she wanted to invite us. I know some of you are interested in Bees and below is the location information.

Date & Time: 06/21/14 [Saturday] - 9:30 am
 Topic: Every Thing You Needed To Know About Native Bees
 Presenters: Carol Clark [BPC] & Jessica Womack
 Location: Heard Museum, 1 Nature Place, McKinney, TX 75609
 Phone: 214-504-3938

Note: Advanced Training opportunity



Annual National Trails Day, June 7

The City of Denton in conjunction with **Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center** will be hosting our 2nd Annual National Trails Day on Saturday, June 7th! In

addition to several other activities, we are hoping to have a Master Naturalist led birding hike again, if possible. If you are interested in leading this hike or have further questions, please contact Cheryl Kesterson at greengarden-gal@yahoo.com

Thank you for your support and interest
 -Cheryl

Hello TMN friends

I am pleased to announce that the 2014 Texas Master Naturalist Annual meeting and Advanced Training will be held October 24-26, 2014 at Mo Ranch in Hunt, TX.

With this year's meeting, all accommodations will be included in your registration fees-meaning there will be no need to make accommodation arrangements outside of registering for the meeting unless you wanted to stay off site. There will be a variety of accommodation types available when you register. More details will be available once registration opens around late July/early August..

Mark your calendars for October 24-26th, 2014 now!!!

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 Texas Master Naturalist Program Coordinator
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Reporting Hours: At the beginning of each month, Janet Laminack, Denton County horticulturist and one of our EFCMN chapter advisors sends a report about extension activities for the previous month including the events, project activities and community involvement of our Master Naturalist chapter to the district Extension office and the Denton County Commissioners Court. To report fully just what EFCMN members are doing in "our community" your help is needed by reporting your hours sooner.

Please turn in your time sheet(s) for the previous month by the 3rd day of the current month. You can email your time sheet(s) to master.naturalist@dentoncounty.com (if you haven't signed your sheet you can sign it at the meeting) or stop by the Extension office to put your time sheet in Hours Book.

Getting Information to Chapter

Items to website: Martha Peet marthawpeet@gmail.com

Email messages to chapter: Donna Wolfe master.naturalist@dentoncounty.com

Items for newsletter: Wanda Odum wodum10043@reagan.com

Send contact information changes to:

1) Van Elliott velliot-t2105@msn.com; 2) Jan Deatherage jan.deatherage@gmail.com; and 3) Donna Wolfe mas-ter.naturalist@dentoncounty.com; and 4) Rob Roy robt_t_roy@msn.com

Betsy Scheck will present her First Aid course for Master Naturalists in the meeting room of the Carroll Building, on Saturday, August 23 from 9:00 a.m. to noon

Contact her at:

bschenck2@verison.net



State Prairie Conference, May 29-31, Fort Worth, Texas.

For information see:

www.prairiepartner.org/page/2014-sop-conference

For bird enthusiasts from Karen Mangum:

A new bird site from Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Plenty of learning resources and downloads for birding enthusiasts.

From Cornell Lab eNews

March 2014 issue

Get Fascinated by Feathers With New All About Bird Biology Site

Feathers are amazing: they're light, aerodynamic, beautifully patterned, colorful, waterproof, and warm. To help curious minds of all ages learn about these impressive structures, Cornell Lab of Ornithology has just launched an in-depth, immersive website.

It's the first stage of the new All About Bird Biology project, with more to come. Try out All About Feathers including these great elements:

- Self-paced interactive features with custom art and video
- Free PowerPoint downloads of all the illustrations and animations, especially useful for teachers — accompanying reference article that provides quick access to the science a video library featuring 90+ videos that bring bird biology to life



Second, there is a new live BirdCam from Cornell Lab of Ornithology of nesting Texas Barn Owls. <http://www.livestream.com/texasbarnowls>

— What “endangered species” looks like —

“Men still live who, in their youth, remember pigeons; trees still live who, in their youth, were shaken by a living wind. But a few decades hence only the oldest oaks will remember, and at long last only the hills will know.”

--Aldo Leopold, "On a Monument to the Pigeon," 1947

May 16, 2014, is Endangered Species Day. It is an opportunity to learn about the importance of protecting endangered species. Started in 2006 by the United States Congress, Endangered Species Day is for celebrating our nation's wildlife and nature.

A reminder from Bob Ross



First colored drawing of a Passenger Pigeon, in *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands (1729–1747)*. From the collection of Garrie Landry

HIKING THE PRAIRIE



Hiking across the 30-acre open prairie under clear blue skies without gusty wind, and with interesting and inquisitive hikers, provided the perfect setting for City Nature Hike's two hours of delightful communion with nature in April.

It's always interesting to recognize that some wildflowers seem to thrive more in certain years and subsequently may be less productive in other years and, on this hike, it quickly became obvious that this year must be the shining year for Blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium pruinatum*). As we began our Wildflower Hike across the Clear Creek Natural Heritage Preserve Prairie, we found very few show-stoppers in bloom, but the farther we walked, the more assured we became that Blue-eyed grass was the forerunner, even tho the royal blue-colored flowers were nestled low to the ground and in small clumps. The taller height of the native lavender-colored Prairie verbena flowers was easier to locate, blooming about 10 to 12 inches tall, and ran a close second in numbers.

Dorothy Thetford with little friends



Blue-eyed grass



However, we found many rosettes of other native wildflowers setting the stage for a production that should be more plentiful for the June hike. Sharon Barr's excellent pictures of Blue-eyed grass, Prairie verbena, Showy primrose, and Indian paintbrush are shown here.

'Twas the perfect day for a wildflower hike.

Dorothy Thetford (MN Class of 2001)
(for Dave Rowley, Project Chairman)

Prairie verbena



Dorothy



*Marian Kester,
Sharon Barr,
Dorothy
Thetford*

Showy primrose



Indian paintbrush



Features . . .

A Father's Work is Never done!

Photos and story line courtesy Larry Brennan



Baby bluebirds in nest box out on the prairie...

then papa with a meal waiting for momma to leave...



he enters and leaves with the fecal sac...
a little waste management!

*Larry with another fine
feathered friend
Class 2012*



Start checking the utility lines, treetops, and fence lines for Scissor-tail Flycatchers, *Tyrannus forficatus*

The Scissor-tail Flycatcher is an elegant gray bird with soft salmon-pink sides. The males are more intensely colored. Their most striking feature is their very long tails. Not just for show, these tails allow the flycatcher to catch insects. They spread their long tails wide to make abrupt turns or stalls. You will usually see them snatching insects from the air about 30 feet off the ground. Like other flycatchers, they return to their perch after each foraging flight. They supplement their insect diet of mostly crickets, grasshoppers, and beetles with mulberries and hackberries.

Scissor-tailed Flycatchers are comfortable with humans and often breed in towns. Their breeding territory is in the south-central United States and just over the border in Mexico. The pair travel around their territory to choose the nest site, but only the female builds the nest while escorted by the male. She may use many human products, such as string, cloth, paper, carpet fuzz, and even cigarette filters to build the nest. One study of nests in an urban area in Texas found that artificial materials accounted for 30% of the weight of nests.

Members of the Kingbird genus, *Tyrannus*, Scissor-tail Flycatchers are very territorial. In late summer, they gather in large bickering flocks, up to 1,000 birds, to leave the United States to spend the winter in Mexico and Central America. They are known to wander widely during migration.



Male Scissor-tail Flycatcher, *Tyrannus forficatus*



Female Scissor-tail Flycatcher, *Tyrannus forficatus*



Joanne Fellows
Class 2008



Balance our Economy with our Environment

Guest contributor

By Steve Houser

A prosperous and robust economy can coexist with a healthy environment, but to achieve balance requires an informed public and the collective will to change how we grow our communities. Why is the balance important? Growing communities with a mindset geared exclusively to pro-development and pro-business principles can lead to an unhealthy environment. China's current air quality issues prove the point. What good is a strong economy if we have air quality concerns? Citizens are wearing dust masks to go outside, birth rates are negatively affected and driving is being restricted as well as the use of fireworks (Dallas Morning News articles 2-5-13 and 2-10-13). On a positive note, Singapore recently developed 10 principles for living in high-density cities that provides sound guidance such as the goal of drawing nature closer to people.

Few people are involved in how our communities develop or redevelop. They are not aware of the resulting long-term consequences to the health and well being of our children. Education is critical in stimulating the public conscience of future growth and its effects. Our best hope is that the public conscience will ultimately drive us to build responsible and balanced communities.

According to Dr. Richard Jackson, Chair of the Environmental Health Science department at UCLA who provided an excellent presentation on the subject in Arlington recently (2-15-13), the way we build structures and communities is creating health problems which are greatly increasing our health care costs.

According to the North Central Council of Governments, our regional population is expected to double to 12 million people by 2050. Expert planners at Vision North Texas state we are headed for traffic nightmares, poor air quality, increased urban heat island effect (energy demand) and other negative effects if we continue to develop our communities as we have in the past. Vision North Texas is a public, private and academic partnership created to serve as a forum for dialogue and action on these important issues.

Since we all breathe the same air and use the same water and soil, it makes sense to have a shared regional vision that gives equal weight to socioeconomic and ecological goals. These are some of the most important issues of our times. We have a moral obligation to work together to leave the world in a better condition than we found it.

A few years ago, when developers were asked why they were not building more "green" or "sustainable" projects, they responded that they did not know how to build greener or how to make money doing so. They added that their clients were not asking for green projects. Today, better builders know how to build greener and good developers know how to develop more responsibly. Asking for a responsibly developed and constructed product is one of the best things you can do for your children's future. Building greener may cost more short-term, but it is a wise investment that provides cleaner air and water, plus a better quality of life long-term.

The best builders and developers understand the interconnectiveness of all things, and the important role that trees and healthy urban ecosystems play in providing a sustainable urban infrastructure for the future. For those who are observant, the very essence of nature provides sound guidance for reaching urban sustainability.

In the future, increasing numbers of people will want to live where both the economy and environment are vibrant and sustainable. Each community can choose whether to grow smart, or watch people relocate into communities that plan for balanced and responsible growth. We can change tomorrow, but only with an informed and involved public working diligently to find answers for the common good of us all.

To learn more about DFW regional efforts to plan for future sustainability, 10 principles of development excellence, "Greenprinting" and much more, visit the Vision North Texas website: www.visionnorthtexas.org



Information below not a part of Mr. Houser's article — just an interesting observation that urban planning has been around a long time.

The Ideal City by Fra Carnevale, between 1480 and 1484. This extraordinary panel exemplifies Renaissance ideals of urban planning and offers a model of the architecture and sculpture that would be commissioned by a virtuous ruler who cares for the welfare of the citizenry. <http://art.thewalters.org>

oil and tempera on panel



Can you spot the native rabbits?



This mother and baby were rescued after the mother was injured in a brush pile fire, she was successfully rehabilitated and released to the wild.

This time of year our native rabbits nest in brush and burn piles making shallow depressions lined with leaves. Please before you burn take time to check for wildlife first!

Thanks!



Oh, How I Love Her

By Bob Ross



Bob—Class 2013

S am in love with her. She captivates me. She has a mysterious aura about her. She always surprises me. Enough about her for now. I will discuss more about her later.....

Have you ever wondered how the ancient Greeks and Romans must have thought they were in total control ruling each of their Empires? No legions of men or force was so mighty as to overtake them. Perhaps they overestimated themselves. Have you given any thought about just how much we abuse the planet Earth each and every day? Earth is similar to the ole adage of, “Timex watches take a licking, but keep on ticking.” We continually give Earth a licking, but she continues to give us a ride through spatial time. For centuries upon centuries we humans, following in the footsteps of the ancient Greeks and Romans, have waged wars on all continents. It all began with weapons on the scale of spears and has escalated into our neo-modern nuclear age where we could totally eliminate mankind in just a few minutes. Wow! That is pretty heady when you think about it.

Earth can be attacked in many other ways by humans. We have seen the devastation after such tragedies as Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Three-Mile Island and more recently the Fukushima nuclear disaster. With the recent disappearance of a Malaysian Airline plane it became more apparent how our oceans are filled with marine debris. These massive fields of floating marine garbage are in all oceans and continue to grow as they are drawn into the spinning eddies or vortexes.

Earth is always being attacked by natural forces, which sometimes can be good in the long run. Earthquakes, tornadoes, floods and fires can produce disastrous outcomes at the time they happen, yet Earth keeps on giving us a ride through space.

As we continue to watch this earthly drama play out, now is the time for me to introduce my mysterious lady friend who is entering stage right. Her name is Mother Nature. When you watch her act out her role, how can you not be impressed? Like our biological mother, Mother Nature puts up with us. She gives us leeway when we are being smarty pants. She provides us guidance. A perfect example of Mother Nature leading us down the path of correctness is being displayed in Bastrop State Park. After the park’s 2011 devastating fires of the Lost Pine Forest, burning in excess of 32,000 acres, Mother Nature is doing her part to bring life back to the area. Without the massive tree canopy that was there before the fire, sunlight is able to reach the ground, causing new type of growth to take root. Having never been seen in the park, in our lifetime, ferns are taking hold and beginning to grow. The flip side to no tree canopy may be disastrous for the Houston toad. Bastrop State Park is the last stronghold for this amphibian and its habitat drastically needs a canopy. I am giving odds that Mother Nature will step in and solve the problem.

MOTHER NATURE IS DOING HER PART . . .

All of us have accumulated scars over our lifetime. Some are physical. Some are mental. Some are badges of honor while others are tragic. Yes, Earth is wearing many scars of its own, some of them because of natural events and others caused by humans. None of us have the power to shoulder humanities guilt for abusing the planet. As a sole individual or as a collective group, mankind can certainly help Mother Nature restore most of the necessary elements to keep Earth on course. By trying to correct and amend our past and present failures, such as: smog, hole in the Ozone layer, glacier melting, filling our solid waste areas with non-biodegradables or making decisions for our own interests without considering the overall picture can be a daunting task. We can do it though, and then step aside and allow Mother Nature to be in charge.

The next time you are hearing all of the “gloom & doom” about earthly abuses, look at a satellite picture in space showing a perfectly round, blue and white orb in the distance. If that doesn’t motivate you, then nothing will.