

*Feature Star from the Board—Meet Ricardo  
Torres, Board Advisor from Texas Parks and  
Wildlife Department*



**A**s an advisor on the board of directors I help to provide advice and guidance for the Elm Fork Chapter. I try to be a resource that master naturalists can use to get information or learn more about Texas Parks and Wildlife and our natural and cultural resources of Texas. It is my hope that TPWD and the Texas Master Naturalist program can work together to protect our natural and cultural resources and engage the community to care about them.



In my normal duties I work as the park interpretive ranger at the Isle Du Bois unit of Ray Roberts Lake State Park. As the park interpretive ranger I conduct environmental education programs on the park like guided hikes, talks, and workshops, as well as outreach in order to get more Texans outside to appreciate the great outdoors.

## 2016 Class Field Trip to LAERF and LISDOLA

By Jan Deatherage

Tuesday, September 27<sup>th</sup>

8:30 AM

Sunny and 60°

Waiting at the LLELA gate on Jones Street, the line of cars filled both sides of the road. It's likely that many were wondering just what exactly were they in for.

*Outhouses? Really?*

*We're standing most of the day? Are these the right shoes?*

*Will we have to drive on the dam?*

*Where's the coffee?*

Well, actually, this group was prepared, ready, willing and able. Off to LAERF we go.

Research Biologist Lynde Dodd greeted the group and promptly started us off with a tour of the lab and a short introduction to LAERF and what this facility is all about. Continuing on to the greenhouses we saw vats of invasive salvinia, being slowly attacked by weevils. Who knew?

Lynde described the work being done with fellow aquatic biologists in the Chesapeake Bay area to reduce the reproduction of the invasive Water Chestnut. One look at the Darth Vader looking seed pod and we were all thankful the forces of good are prevailing in this war.

Class members were impressed by the efforts being made to control aquatic invasives and the collaboration of LAERF, Army Corp and research biologists with other regions of the US, as well as around the world.

Then, down to the study ponds we trekked. Along the way an enlightening narrative was provided (and enhanced by our Audio Specialist volunteer, Suzanne McDonald, carrying the speaker for Lynde's microphone). There we learned about the various cultures LAERF is propagating to aid in aquatic restoration, as well those on land. It was quite an impressive overview of the research facility and how our tax dollars are hard at work.

Now, on to LISDOLA via caravan through Lewisville to 121 to Fish Hatchery Road (the street name was unfortunately missing on the traffic light signal sign). Lunch was enjoyed in the cool shade. So was the chance to rest our legs.

Suzanne Barnard, Instructor/Site Manager/Environmental Learning Administrator, gave an excellent introduction to LISDOLA and the role of interpretation in the education of LISD students. She was expertly assisted by Ray Kreutzfeld, Beverly Lyttaker and Deb Estes. Deb Estes led a short hike that included the amazing watershed model built by our chapter. Ray Kreutzfeld introduced us to the Fossil Trail and the 2014 Class project. What an unexpected geological journey waiting to be explored in the thick of the woods.

Thanks to our volunteers, there were lots of newly discovered trees, grasses, insects, wildflowers, poison ivy, nettle and, luckily, no chiggers. By 3:00 folks were ready to make the journey back home and contemplate their day and what they learned.



Water Chestnut – the invasive type

Some of the feedback included the following takeaways:

*"The amount of work and collaboration it takes from and among people, organizations and federal agencies to understand how to manage our lakes, rivers and water resources."*

*"I really loved the watershed model. I didn't realize how powerful wetlands were to keeping water clean."*

*"Federal research into invasive water plants using weevils to reduce the plant population. LISDOLA having a hidden gem for use in training students."*

*"I learned about the Bois d' arc tree."*

*"I really enjoyed LISDOLA. It reminds me of a giant SWAT learning area which I think is awesome."*

*"Everything was interesting!!"*

Our 2016 class is an impressive bunch with a wonderful attitude and eagerness to learn and help us all make a positive difference.

PHOTOS: Cindy Maloney and Jan Deatherage

LISDOLA



Sharon Sahm – admiring the abundant Beautyberry



Station 7 – Imagination games inspire young learners



Artifacts Walk—what to look for



Watershed model—Don't pour that in the rain gutter



Balance - Striking a balance for kids of all ages

LAERF



Trekking – Nice morning for a walk to the study ponds



Salvinia – A weevil's work is never done



LAERF Culture Ponds – What's growing in there?



Lynde Dodd – Informative show and tell



Dragonfly spotted along the way!