

ONGOING EDUCATION FOR ELM FORK CHAPTER MEMBERS

Native Landscape Certification Program

Article by Rita Lokie



On Saturday, September 17, 2016 eleven members of the Elm Fork Chapter attended the Level 1 class, Introduction to Native Landscapes, sponsored and instructed by Trinity Forks Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas.

Nadine Beall, Penny Bell, Toni Benjamin, Jonathan Smith, Brenda Maston, Judy Riley, Mary Morrow, Sharon Clark, Faith Fielder, Sherrill Campbell, Sharon Barr and I attended the class.

The Native Landscape Certification Program (NLCP) is a four level certification program developed by the Native Plant Society of Texas that teaches the value of including and preserving native plants in the landscapes. The four classes are:

Level 1: Introduction to Native Landscapes

Level 2: Design and Development with Native Plants

Level 3: Installation and Maintenance of Native Landscapes

Level 4: Advocating for Our Native Plant Community (to be developed)

Participants must complete Level 1 before attending any other level. Levels 2,3, and 4 may be taken in any order.



Clear Creek Helianthus
(sunflower)—Jonathan Reynolds

After introductions the class was divided into 3 groups and assigned to one of the knowledgeable members of the Trinity Forks Chapter. They pointed out native plants growing at Clear Creek so that we could see the plants firsthand. In addition, other knowledgeable members of the Trinity Forks Chapter assisted with valuable information and experience about each plant.

We returned to the classroom and Rodney Barton, the current Trinity Forks NPSOT President, covered the value of including and preserving native plants in landscapes, the difference between sustainable and conventional development, and our Texas vegetation and soil. After lunch Kathy Saucier, a 25

year member of NPSOT and a TPWD certified Wildscape instructor, introduced us to 45 native Texas plants recommended for our landscape and 5 invasive plants to avoid.

I found the class to be professional, informative and interesting. If you want to find out more about the Native Plant Society of Texas or when the classes will be held, you can check their website at www.npsot.org/TrinityForks. The Trinity Forks Chapter meetings are held the fourth Thursday of January-June and September-October 7:00 PM, at the Ann Stuart Science Building, TWU, Denton, Texas

A bit of tidbit for NN from editor

RIVER OTTER *Lutra canadensis* (<http://www.nsr1.ttu.edu/tmot1/lutrcana.htm>)



The slides and apparent playfulness of otters are well-known. The slide, situated on some steep clayey bank, seems to be used chiefly for "recreational" purposes. The otters play "follow the leader" in tobogganing, with front legs folded back, from the top of the slide into the water below.

Otters are notorious wanderers in their chosen habitat and an animal may range over several kilometers of a waterway. For this reason they are never abundant in any locality. They are ordinarily shy, unobtrusive creatures that are seldom seen even though they are active throughout the year.

—Projects on the Move—



"Green Acres is the place to be; farm living is the life for me"

Article and photo from
Becky Bertoni

I first saw Green Acres in January, 2010 on a tour with the Greater Lewisville Newcomers Club (GLNC) Garden Group of the Flower Mound and Green Acres Farm Memorial Park.

Immediately I fell in love with the open land and bluebirds, so different from my neighborhood of houses, concrete, and tiny yards. Our GLNC Garden Group wanted to do something there, on that lovely empty land.

Green Acres Farm Memorial Park is a 13 acre passive park in south Flower Mound. Passive can be a good thing, as in no ball fields or concrete sidewalks, but there aren't any restrooms there either. It is located off Simmons, between 3040 to the north and Murrell Park and Grapevine Lake to the south, at 4400 Hide-A-Way Lane, Flower Mound, 75022.



The land was donated to Flower Mound by Larry Davis after his death, sometime before 2007, in honor of his wife, Agnes Pyne Davis. The Davises had a house, yard, and pool at the back of the property on the hilltop. I've heard Larry's and Agnes's ashes were strewn under two magnolia trees growing there. (Those magnolias have died since, from a summer drought.) The rest of the land was divided: the west half for the horse barn, storage buildings, and horse arena, and the east half for pasture.

The park had several bluebird houses. We clean these out in February, and occasionally monitor for eggs and babies. There are ponds on either side of this park, which attract birds and other wildlife. One evening at twilight I saw a herd of deer by the pond on the west side—the land there is private, but very close to Army Corps of Engineers property at Grapevine Lake. The east side pond is not as constant—it has dried up in some droughts, but it has turtles and there's evidence of past beaver activity, chewed down tree trunks.

In the spring of 2010 the GLNC Garden Group, through Keep Flower Mound Beautiful, adopted Green Acres. We worked on the three iris beds in front of the barn, cleaning them up, tilling a little, and rebuilding the concrete pieces borders around them.

Spring 2011 a few of us attended the Texas Discovery Gardens Butterfly Gardening class, and with the help of Flower Mound Parks and Recreation staff made a 20' by 20' plot for a monarch station, just northwest of the barn. We all had just listened to a speaker on yard art, so we incorporated the top of a horse exerciser for vertical interest, and a place for passion vine to grow. We improved the soil, and mulched. One gardener contacted the University of Kansas Monarch Watch program (<http://monarchwatch.org/waystations/>), and we followed the guidelines for planting nectar and host plants for butterflies. We used plants from the course and others from our home gardens. On August 17, 2011 we were official: # 4842, Butterfly Oasis, and we posted our official Monarch Watch sign.

We have continued to maintain this Monarch Station for a total of six years so far; the plants have changed, and the area has grown out from the original footprint. We thin out plants, weed, add plants, lay newspaper and mulch on the border and in the garden, and water through the summer when necessary.

In the fall of 2013 we added a wildflower area in the pool area at the top of the hill. We tried to kill the bermuda and planted \$50 worth of seeds from Native American Seed, stomping it in. In following springs we have had a pretty good display of mostly Indian blanket in the spring there, and usually it was mowed only once in the fall. We added blue bonnet seeds, with not much to show for it.

Then this year the new mowers did not mow the whole area at the top of the hill, and to our surprise the Indian blanket was all over, outside the pool area, and other wildflowers appeared. There was Johnson grass and dallis grass also. In the summer it was all mowed down again, even the pool area. Perhaps, though, this whole area inside the fence can become a wildflower area with mown paths through it, now that we have seen what it could be like.

What's Next for Green Acres, now a **EFCMN project, #160714?**

Invitation for all interested, including members of the 2016 class, and especially for those who live nearby:

Let's meet on Halloween, Monday Oct 31, 10 am, at Green Acres Farm Memorial Park for a tour and discussion on what Elm Fork Master Naturalists can do for this area. Some ideas:

- regular monitoring of the bluebird boxes with reports to Cornell at <http://nestwatch.org/>
- work on the monarch station—hackberry tree??, any other thoughts, suggestions
- design a wildflower area with paths in the former house-pool-yard area at the top of the hill, with paths, removing Johnson and dallis grass, etc.
- consider what else could be done here: birding walks? nature tours?
- star gazing on new moon nights
- your ideas, thoughts, suggestions welcome!

RSVP to Becky Bertoni:

becky.bertoni@gmail.com, [972-539-3918](tel:972-539-3918)



Monarchs (*Danaus plexippus*) on Frostweed (*Verbesina virginica*)—from Becky Bertoni

Join! Cornell Lab of Ornithology Project Feeder Watch 2016-2017 Starts Soon!

This year Cornell Lab of Ornithology Project Feeder Watch begins on Saturday, November 12th.

Participation in this project is approved for service hours by our Chapter. Project Number **P-080214**.

All you need to do to participate is:

SIGN UP ONLINE at www.feederwatch.org for new participants or to renew. Renewing? Please have your FeederWatch I.D. number handy, you use the same number each year.

-OR-

CALL 1- (800) 843-BIRD (2473) to join by phone. They do accept credit cards.

-OR-

PRINT and MAIL the form on the website to pay by check.

There is a participation fee of \$18 for non-members (\$15 if you are a Cornell Lab member) you pay at the time you join Project Feeder Watch.



New participants be sure to get the kit to receive a Common Feeder Birds poster, the Feeder Watch Handbook and Instructions, full access to the Project FeederWatch website and data entry, *Winter Bird Highlights* (the Feeder Watch annual summary, mailed in the fall) and a subscription to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's *Living Bird News*, a quarterly newsletter with the latest news and discoveries from the Cornell Lab. You can still do all data entry paperless, but the starter kit is very helpful.

When you register, you can choose to enter your hours and observations by paper or go paperless online. You will receive a Project Feeder Watch number you will use to submit data. If you participated last year, you use the same number to register and enter data this year. You will also need to keep track of your count & data logging time and submit it for your service hours on this project.

This is a great project for anyone interested in birds. Lots of links and helpful information online.

If you have temporary health or mobility issues, this is a great project to participate in to get your service hours and retain active member status. Project FeederWatch begins in November and continues through spring into early April.

QUESTIONS? Visit <http://feederwatch.org> or contact me for additional information. Already renewed?

Thank You!

WHEN YOU SIGN UP OR RENEW PLEASE LET ME KNOW YOU HAVE JOINED SO I CAN ADD YOU TO MY PROJECT MEMBERS LIST FOR THE CHAPTER & SEND YOU TIPS, REMINDERS AND BIRDING INFO.

REMEMBER, PROJECT FEEDER WATCH BEGINS IN NOVEMBER, SO THE TIME TO SIGN UP IS NOW!

Join Project FeederWatch Be sure to enter your feeder site(s) on Project FeederWatch

Put up your feeders Count the birds that visit

Send the data to the Cornell scientists

Earn & record service hours!

You can contact me by email at kmangum13@verizon.net Look forward to hearing from you soon!

Karen Mangum, Project Manager

EFCMN Cornell Lab Project Feeder Watch