



Vol. 19 Issue 5

Naturalist News

May 2018

Publication from Texas Master Naturalist, Elm Fork Chapter



Mallard couple at North Lakes Park from Jonathan Reynolds

On the web: www.txmn.org/elmfork

On Facebook: www.facebook.com/TexasMasterNaturalistElmFork/



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Publication from Texas Master Naturalist, Elm Fork Chapter

- See who will provide program for June meeting
- 2017 class finishes their project at Clear Creek
- Check out all the beautiful photos in this issue
- Find upcoming AT and ways to earn VH
- Continual work in current projects around the community



From Jonathan Reynolds

Inside this issue:

<i>Recap April meeting</i>	3
<i>June Meeting</i>	4
<i>Projects Around the community</i>	5
<i>Field Notes in Focus</i>	9
<i>Features</i>	10
<i>Hold that Pose</i>	14
<i>Of Interest</i>	15
<i>Into the Reading Nook</i>	17
<i>NN Contributors</i>	18
<i>Mostly the Last Word</i>	19
<i>Who We Are</i>	20

"It is the mind which creates the world around us, and even though we stand side by side in the same meadow, my eyes will never see what is beheld by yours, my heart will never stir to the emotions with which yours is touched."



From Jonathan Reynolds at North Texas Nature Center



A W A R D S:

Initial certifications: Sharon Miggins (2017); Laurel Oyarce (2017); Andy Shelton (2017)

Re-certifications: Patricia Barry (2017); Adelaide Bodnar (2007); John Bodnar(2007); Judi Elliott (2009); Van Elliott (2009); Jeanne Erickson (1998); John Goetz (2016); Jan Hodson (2002); Debrah Holyfield (2017); Jan LaPine (2007); Jean Mason (2017); Wanda Odum (2005); Carl Patrick (2010); Rob Roy (2005); Clay Thurmond (2016); Alan See (2017); Kathryn Wells (2017); John Williams(2016); Kim Wootten (2017); Allen York (2017)



Photos from Denise Remfert



250 hrs: Tony Benjamin (2013); Cecily Pegues (2015); Denise Thompson (2015)

500 hrs: Sharon Clark (2014)

1000 hrs: Jeanne Erickson (1998)

1500 hrs: Martha Peet (2012)

2500 hrs: Jan Deatherage (2011)

3000 hrs: Scott Kiester (2003)

4000 hrs: wanda odum (2005)

6000 hrs: Jan Hodson (2002)

PROGRAM WAS PRESENTED BY: *Suzanne Tuttle* speaking on Forest Systems of North Central Texas.



From Rita Lokie

**Program May 17, 2018, Meeting
Texas Nature Trackers: Discovering Populations &
Documenting Change for Conservation**

Presentation:

Texas Parks & Wildlife's Texas Nature Trackers (TNT), part of the Wildlife Diversity Program, tracks the status of wild populations of plants and animals throughout the state. This presentation will introduce the Texas Nature Trackers program and how it uses iNaturalist to support the Wildlife Diversity Program's conservation work on Species of Greatest Conservation Need across the state. We'll discuss some TNT projects and data needs and how this framework enables iNaturalist users and bioblitz participants to be active partners in conservation.

Dr. Tania Homayoun
Texas Nature Trackers Biologist
Texas Parks and Wildlife



Short Biographic Sketch:

Dr. Tania Homayoun is a Texas Nature Tracker Biologist with Texas Parks and Wildlife. Through Texas Nature Trackers, she engages naturalists of all interests and ability levels in collecting citizen science and crowd-sourced data on Texas' unique flora and fauna with a particular focus on species of greatest conservation need. Previously, Tania worked for Audubon Texas, with the Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center and later the Conservation Science Team as its Urban Conservation Program Manager where she worked to develop and deliver conservation plans, educational programs/trainings, and activities supporting biodiversity and sustainable communities. Tania holds bachelors degrees in Ecology/Evolution/Conservation Biology and Anthropology from the University of Texas at Austin and a PhD in Conservation Biology from the University of Minnesota, where she studied the impacts of urbanization on landbird communities. She is an avid birder and always has room for one more native plant in her patio garden.

TMN-EFC Members:

At the last meeting held at the SW Courthouse the idea of carpooling was mentioned by one of our members. At first it was considered as another relief for the parking problem at that location. Sounded like a good idea to use another parking lot, like the Kroger on FM 407 in Bartonville and carpool to save space at the county parking lot.



Well, then I thought about how, due to overflow parking, those willing to walk should park out in the street to save room for some of the slower attendees at the Elections Building. Interesting. Carpooling was discussed at the last Board meeting and deemed a good idea worth pursuing.

So, if you add in the increasing price of fuel and the comradery attached, it's a no-brainer. No matter where we meet, whether for a Chapter meeting or a field trip, meeting at a central location and carpooling should be considered. I mean, that's what we do: help reduce the damage to our natural space.

The Elections Building and the Carroll Building are both very close to where I live and work. However, taking several folks with me from the Carroll Building parking lot to the SW Courthouse is definitely doable. We can meet and plan to leave about 8:30 the next time we meet in Flower Mound.

Email me or Adelaide if you are interested in assisting to establish a convenient form of communication to facilitate this endeavor.

Bill Coleman
TMN-EFC Member-at-Large

From Susan Myers

Box Turtle Recovery Project at LLELA

The official groundbreaking ceremony for the new, luxurious box turtle enclosures took place April 24th within the gated community of LLELA.

The first of four resort-style turtle enclosures were built by developers S. Kiester and Co., and they spared no expense to create a safe and comfortable environment for even the most discerning turtle. Solid walls recessed into the ground, a perimeter of hardware cloth around the exterior, and a predator proof top guarantees that each enclosure will be an exclusive community. Amenities such as natural leaf flooring, afternoon shade, a turtle friendly wading

pool and flagstone

caverns will be added at a later date. The best of everything will be right outside their shell.

Volunteers are still needed to complete this master-planned community. If interested, please contact the lead architect, Scott Kiester, at skiester2@gmail.com.



From Elise Spain

DISD School Days at Clear Creek

We have finished the project with second graders for this spring. We are happy that we tried it, happy with the successful results, and also happy that we can now rest for a while!



We had six MN stations set up for school visits in April and early May. **Over 20 days, from 20 schools, we saw 1,785 students and 408 teachers and chaperones, for a total of 2,193 people.** One school opted to hike instead of visiting the stations, and six MNs hiked with them that day. Only one school trip was cancelled—on the very last scheduled day—due to rain.



We received many thanks from the teachers and students as they visited Clear Creek and got glowing remarks from teachers on the follow-up survey. We have also received thanks and congratulations from representatives for DISD, the AgriLife Office, and the City of Denton. We look forward to showing lots of pictures to everyone at the May Chapter meeting, but there are a few things that really stand out from our experience that I want to record here.



Robert McLaughlin at the Owl Station

The scope of the project was large. Before DISD announced our project to all the schools, they needed to believe that we could deliver on what we proposed. We needed a minimum of six volunteers a day for 20 days (and we quickly learned that *more was better*). Could we do that? We did. YOU DID IT!

The collaboration between MN, SWAt, the AgriLife Office, DISD, and the City of Denton was tremendous. In starting to plan the 2017 Class project, we learned about the proven materials and the great combination of MG and MN volunteers in SWAt. The early support of SWAt volunteers told us we were on the right track and we were thrilled when they jumped in to help! The AgriLife Office agreed to print the DISD student materials, which provided significant assistance for the teachers; and we could not have asked for better partners than Rachel Weaver and Sarah Luxton from the City of Denton, whose experience with the program and daily involvement with the field trips helped us through this adventure.

The opportunities for service were broad and that was good. There were hiking and non-hiking duties, and it was a real benefit to everyone that MNs with widely varied talents volunteered to help. Several former teachers were among the MNs who volunteered, and they provided expert role models for us daily in student management, tone of voice, body language, and the technique of getting attention with clap-clap, clap-clap-clap! We learned a lot of good things about each other as well as about the second graders, their teachers, and their parents.



Fran Witte at the Tree Station

The volunteers were outstanding! Over our 20 days at Clear Creek, 38 volunteers – almost evenly split between the 2017 Class and MN Veterans – proved that they were exactly the kind of people you'd expect: committed, knowledgeable, creative, hard-working, patient and flexible, positive and kind. My heart is full of happiness for the way we were able to serve through what on some days felt like a marathon. Everyone who volunteered at Clear Creek saw what a difference we were making. We made the Clear Creek field trip a better experience for more than 2,000 people.

At least one volunteer made a BIG difference. When April 25 came with chilly winds and some showers, we rearranged things a bit to make the day work for Nelson Elementary School. That day now stands out for me as one of the very best days, because they told us they had been rained out for four years in a row, and they were just so happy to be there. It also stands out because Nelson students sent us 88 thank you notes that told us every single activity was someone's *favorite thing*. Even more outstanding, three of the notes were written specifically to John Carpenter. No one else was mentioned by name in the notes; only John, who touched three lives in such a profound way that they memorialized it in words and pictures! I am thrilled that they let us know. I hope this project will continue, and I hope there will be many more thank you notes from students in our EFCTMN future!



John Carpenter in the Clear Creek Artifacts Area

Thank you to everyone who helped. Very special thanks to the dream team who created the stations for this project and for the many hours (days!) they gave to make it such a success: **Toni Benjamin** – Pocket Prairie Station, **Shannon Bushong** – Prairie Art Station, **Claire Kamego** – Pelts and Tracks Station, **Robert McLaughlin** – Amazing Owl Station, **Phyllis Minton** – Plants and Animals Station, **Fran Witte** – Pecan Tree Station, and **Carolyn Trivette** – Volunteer Coordinator.



Jan Thompson, former member of EFCTMN, came in with a Texas Rat Snake she found dead on the side of the road, and it's now on display for all to see! She agreed to a photo with volunteers for the day.

Front row (l-r): Sherrill Carpenter, Claire Kamego Middle row (l-r): Laurel Oyarce, Jan Thompson, Phyllis Minton, Nadine Beall Back row (l-r): Robert McLaughlin, Toni Benjamin



eggs

NestWatch Bluebirds — from Project Manager Sharon Clark

Observations during Nest-Watch activity - monitoring bluebird boxes on my property - so far 2 boxes with Bluebirds nesting.



hatchlings



Nestlings



Almost Fledglings

Texas Native Plant Art Exhibition 2017



The Appreciation Reception for the Texas Native Plant Art Exhibition 2017 was held on April 25 at the Denton ISD Professional Development Center. Almost 400 attended! We had lots of artwork displayed and lots of excited students eager to show their parents their pictures. I would like to thank everyone who has helped with this project through

the school year. We began last fall distributing information booklets to the teachers, picking up the artwork at the schools, judging the artwork and awarding ribbons then starting the traveling displays. The first display site was the Denton Senior Center followed by TWU Blagg-Huey Library, UNT Elm Fork Education Center, AgriLife Building, Emily Fowler Library, South Branch Library, North Branch Library, both of the Good Samaritan Retirement Centers and the Red-bud Festival. The award winning artwork was displayed in the exhibits and as much additional artwork as possible. We had 944 pictured entered from 18 elementary schools. One best of show picture was selected from each school and framed for special recognition at the reception. The art teachers and display site hosts were also recognized at the reception. After the reception all of the artwork is returned to the schools.

Marilyn Blanton, Project Manager

(1-4) Reception Preview of Native Plants Art Contest Reception from Dorothy Thetford



Photos of children are by Marilyn Blanton



FIELD NOTES IN FOCUS



**Eastern Bluebird—from the gallery of
Jonathan Reynolds**

This moth, a Banded sphinx (*Eumorpha fasciatus*), was photographed and identified by **Marilyn Turnage**.

Banded Sphinx



Identification: Upper side is dark pinkish brown. Forewing has a lighter brown band along the costa, and sharp pinkish white bands and streaks. Hindwing has a pink patch on the inner margin and pink along the outer margin.
Wing Span: 3 7/16 - 3 13/16 inches (8.7 - 9.6 cm).

Life History: Adults begin feeding at dark. Caterpillars pupate in shallow chambers in the soil.

Flight: Several flights in Florida throughout the year, several flights in Louisiana from April-November, two flights in coastal South Carolina from May-July and August-October, one brood northward from August-November.

Caterpillar Hosts: Primrose-willow and other plants in the evening primrose family (Onagraceae).

Adult Food: Flower nectar.

Habitat: Tropical, subtropical, humid forests of the SE states.

Range: Northern Argentina north through Central America and Mexico to southern California and southern Arizona; east to Texas, Mississippi, Florida, and South Carolina. Strays north to Missouri, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New York, and Nova Scotia

www.butterfliesandmoths.org/species/Eumorpha-fasciatus

Antelope Horns
 (*Asclepias asperula*) from
 Harriett Powell—
 "Monarch candy"



From Marilyn Turnage

Be Careful What You Recycle



“I like this picture of Marsy in a death pose.”

This baby possum was found in my garage recycle bin last Autumn, and I almost missed seeing her before the recycle was taken to the big pick-up bin for the curb. She (assume it is a girl!) is still around and is getting bigger, and her name is Marsie (the Marsupial). These animals are good to have around, and we definitely don't want to recycle them! When weather gets colder in the Fall, watch for them to find a warm place to spend their days, while they forage at night.



“All's well that ends well.”

My April 14th Saturday morning adventure consisted of relocating a juvenile diamondback water snake from my office closet) to Grapevine Lake. The night of April 13th was so chilly, he/she probably took a wrong turn looking for warmth and shelter, but it's now safe and sound, closer to its natural habitat.

On the other hand, my husband and daughter were unsettled, insisting that I check every nook and cranny in the house for more.

Kathryn Wells, class 2017



**Beware, it's back!!!
Rita Lokie**





Sue's screech owl

Who? Who? Who likes Owls? by Sue Yost, class of 2017

In our area we can see up to 4 species of owls. The tiny Screech Owl is only 8" tall. On the opposite end is the Great Horned Owl that is 21" tall! We also can get the Barred Owl and the Barn Owl. The tiniest owl in the

world is the Elf Owl, which is 5 - 6 inches tall and weighs about 1 ½ ounces. The largest North American owl, in appearance, is the Great Gray Owl, which is up to 32 inches tall.

The Great Horned Owl is not a cavity nester but will re-use an old nest from a crow or hawk. Screech Owls will readily come to a specifically designed Screech Owl box mounted on a pole or a tree. The Barn and Barred Owls also will nest in a manmade large nesting box on a pole or tree.

Owl chicks (or "owlets") usually leave the nest once they can stabilize their own body temperature, which is known as thermoregulation. This takes place for most North American owls at roughly 2 weeks of age. [If "Mom" stays in the entrance hole more frequently that is a sign the owlets have or almost reached that 2 week age and she no longer needs to incubate them to keep them warm.] When an owlet leaves the nest, we usually begin to call the young bird a "brancher". They literally climb up the tree branches to the crown of the tree. Branchers actually leave the nest before they even know how to fly! To protect themselves from predation and other threats, branchers often hide out in branches or low down in trees

Different species of North American owls are doing different things right now. Great Horned Owls are the first to nest starting in December, so their young have fledged by now. Barn, Barred and Screech Owls are currently in various stages of nesting. The different species of owls also lay different numbers of eggs; most North American owls lay between zero and fourteen eggs each nesting season. A major factor in the number of eggs laid per season by an owl is food availability. For example, if there are enough voles running around during one year, a Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*) might lay ten eggs! However, if the voles are wiped out that winter in her area, she may only lay three or four eggs the next year. In extreme cases, where no food is available, a female owl may not lay any eggs at all.



From PastedGraphic

Owls have been known to live to the age of 25 years! However, the average age of most wild owls is thought to be far shorter than that. In general, researchers believe large owls have longer life spans than small owls.



From PastedGraphic

Give a HOOT!

Put up an owl box and invite this natural predator to your habitat!



From Jonathan Reynolds

Dotted Blue-eyed
Grass
(*Sisyrinchium pru-
inosum*) from Dor-
othy Thetford



Lecture Series - Raptors of North Texas

AT Approved

Saturday, May 19th, 10:00am - 12:00pm

Hosted by the Friends of Coppel Nature Park. Erich Neupert, Executive Director of the Black Land Prairie Raptor Center, will return to the Biodiversity Education Center to discuss and demonstrate these great birds. Neupert will present live birds to illustrate the characteristics and exceptional hunting abilities of raptors. Doors must remain shut once the show begins. Don't miss this one-of-a-kind presentation! Free.

O f I n t e r e s t

From Jan Hodson

Creepy Crawlies Summer Camp
This camp is for kids that love bugs!
The week long, half day camp will be spent exploring
Insects, Spiders, Bees, Butterflies and Worms!

Ages 6-11 yrs, June 4th-8th, 9 am-noon, fee \$70. The camp will be held at Trophy Club Park Pavilion, 2885 Trophy Club Drive, Trophy Club TX. The camp is lead by certified Texas Master Naturalists. Each day we will hike the trails in the conservation area to explore.

KTCW
keeptrophyclubwild.org

Register online at KeepTrophyClubWild.org
Questions? call 940-637-2702

T E X A S
Master Naturalist

Growing Up WILD

**NPAT Fort Worth Chapter Meeting
Monday, May 14, 2018 6:30 – 8:00 PM**

AT Approved

The Fort Worth Chapter of Native Prairies Association of Texas will hold their regular meeting on Monday, May 14. The program, "Why Prairies Matter", will be presented by Dr. Ken Steigman, Director of LLELA. Note new location for 2018.

Location: Tarrant County College – South Campus, South Center of Excellence for Energy Technology building (SETC), [5301 Campus Drive, Fort Worth, TX 76119](https://www.tarrantcountytx.gov/locations/south-campus) (Use Parking Lot 6.)

Website: <https://fortworthnpat.wordpress.com/>

CHAPTER FIELD TRIP

From Brenda Wellenreiter

Trinity River Audubon Center 6500 Great Trinity Forest Way

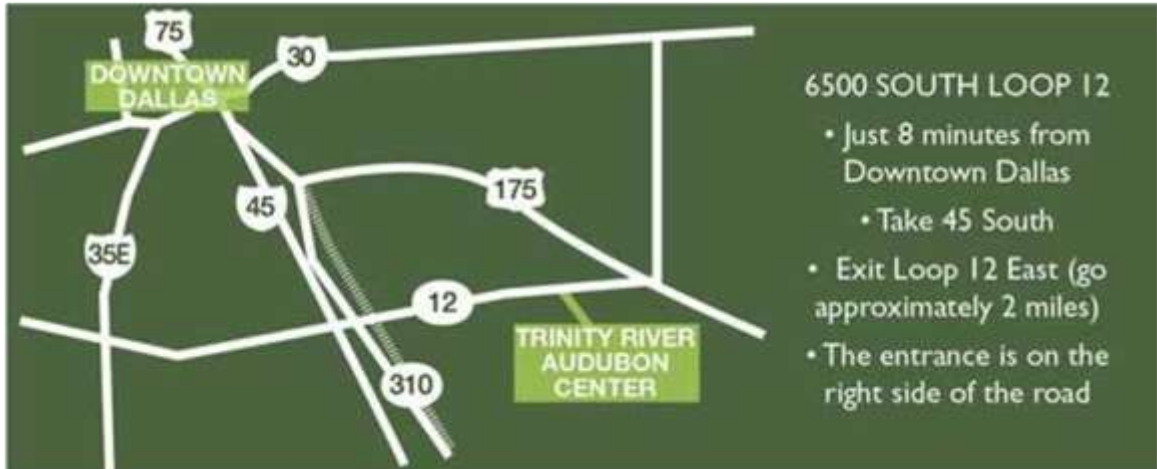
Dallas, TX 75217

JUNE 7, 2018

Meet at Trinity River Audubon Center at 6500 Great Trinity Forest Way, Dallas, TX 75217 on Thursday, June 7 at 11:00am for a one hour guided hike. Bring your lunch and then hike other trails if you wish. The center closes at 4:00pm.

The cost is \$5 per person. The guided hike is a little longer than a mile on a flat surface. There is a nature store onsite that sells some drinks and snacks. There are not many restaurants close.

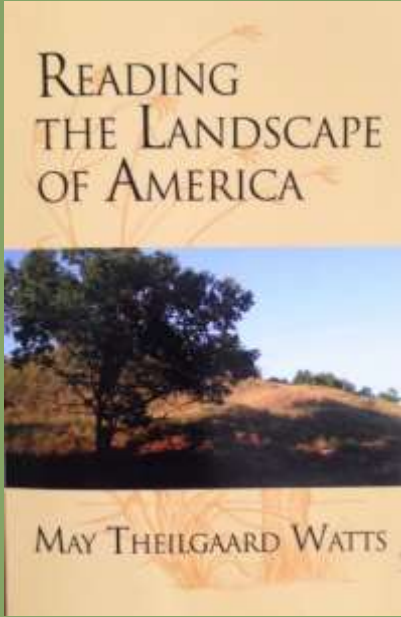
The hike will be limited to 40 members. Please let us know by Monday, May 21 if you plan to attend so that we can arrange for the guides. You may email Brenda Wellenreiter at betchabr@aol.com or call at 214-533-0158. You can also sign up and pay at the May 16 Chapter meeting.



Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)
—from Shari Brand

Spiderwort
(*Tradescantia*) from Dorothy Thetford





Jean Mason had this to say about the book she has just finished:

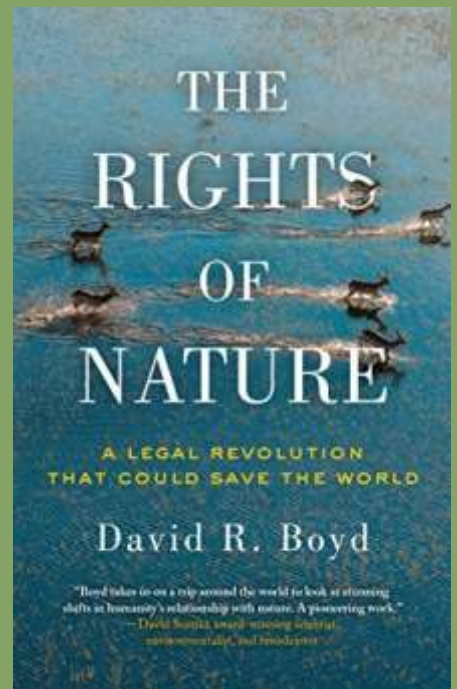
In *Reading the Landscape of America*, May Theilgaard Watts has provided an entertaining and educational book on interpretation. For those who attended the Chapter Meeting with the AT class on interpretation, you may remember hearing that you can interpret anything - even a piece of toast! This book certainly proves that point. From the East Coast, through the Midwest to the Rockies, and into the Southwest, "...we read what is written on the land, finding accounts of the past, predictions of the future, and comments on the present...".

Whether she's investigating a tree line, vegetation, a body of water, or even an old school house, Watts' narrative is easily read and understood. Enjoy!

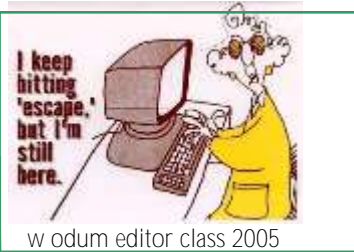
Review from Amazon: "In this natural history classic, the author takes the reader on field trips to landscapes across America, both domesticated and wild. She shows how to read the stories written in the land, interpreting the clues laid down by history, culture, and natural forces. A renowned teacher, writer and conservationist in her native Midwest, Watts studied with Henry Cowles, the pioneering American ecologist. She was the first to explain his theories of plant succession to the general public. Her graceful, witty essays, with charming illustrations by the author, are still relevant and engaging today, as she invites us to see the world around us with fresh eyes." [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Betty Zajac is recommending:
The Rights of Nature
A Legal Revolution That Could Save the World
 By David R. Boyd

"In *The Rights of Nature*, noted environmental lawyer David Boyd tells this remarkable story, which is, at its heart, one of humans as a species finally growing up. Read this book and your world view will be altered forever." [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



Thank you to all who helped this month



w odum editor class 2005

Photo unavailable:
Marilyn Turnage



Dorothy Thetford



Marilyn Blanton class 1998



Judi Elliott class 2009



Rita Lokie class 2013



Betty Zajac class 2003



Susan Myers class 2012



Jean Mason class 2017



Jan Hodson class 2002



Jonathan Reynolds
class 2014



Kathryn Wells class 2017



Denise Remfert class 2015



Brenda Wellenreiter class 2014



Sue Yost class 2017



Shari Brand class 2012



Sharon Clark class 2014



Elise Spain class 2017



Bill Coleman class 2013



Harriett Powell
class 2015



Did you know chalk is made from tiny plankton fossils?



Dear contributors:

If you do not find your article or photo in this issue, it is because the great response of help for this newsletter exceeded available space; but stay tuned, because the June issue will be coming soon!

Thank you to all who contributed to help make up this Naturalist News
....couldn't do it without you!



Texas A&M AgriLIFE Extension
 Joseph A. Carroll Building
 401 W. Hickory Street
 Denton, TX 76201—9026
 940-349-2883

Our mission . . . *”to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers who provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within our community”*

Our vision . . . *“In our community, Elm Fork Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program will be recognized as a primary source of information, education and service to support natural resources and natural areas today and in the future.”*

We’re on the web!
www.txmn.org/elmfork

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- Janet Laminack, Extension Agent
- TPWD—Ricardo Torres

Regular Monthly Chapter Meetings
 Regularly, 9:30 a.m. preceded by a social time at 9:00 a.m. on the third Thursday of each month. Chapter meetings are open to the public.
 Next meeting is May 17, 2018,
 The Chapter meeting on May 17 will be at the Carroll Courts Building, [401 W. Hickory, Denton.](http://www.txmn.org/elmfork)

Board Meetings
 The Board meets each second Thursday of the month at 9:30 a.m. The Board last met May 10, 2018. Next monthly Board meeting is June 14, 2018.
 Monthly Board meetings are open to members.