

# Wood Duck Whistler September 2024

## President's Message by Wanda Rauscher



Seems like a lot longer than a month ago when I addressed the chapter in the newsletter! The class of 2024 is underway with 18 registered students from Gregg, Henderson, Rusk, Smith, Upshur, Wood, and Van Zandt counties with one student traveling from Camp County. I want to extend my thanks to Kay Jenkins, Training Director, and the Training Committee volunteers: Carol Lanthrum, Ann Reynolds, Lindsey Smith, Dawn Bahr, and Mark Edmund. **Note that Dawn Bahr sent a Sign-up Genius to chapter members inviting y'all to help out on class days. There are still volunteer slots available (& some are even on field trip days)!**

Odolympics run September 7-15 this year. This event is hosted by the Dragonfly Society of the Americas, Sociedad de Odonatología Latinoamericana and Odonata Central. This Bioblitz is focused on Odonates- that's dragonflies and damselflies. If you are already a regular observer who uses BugGuide and/or field guides such as Dragonflies of Texas and Damselflies of Texas by Dr. John Abbott to identify species, then please set up an account at Odonata Central: (<https://www.odonatacentral.org/#/>), if you have not already done so, and post your

observations! This site is checklist based like eBird and asks how many of each species you observe at each location you visit. Keeping a tally sheet either the old-fashioned way (pad and pen) or with a list on your phone as you are out observing is essential. Noting geo-coordinates can help too. The goal of the Odolympics is to record as many species of odonates from as many places in the Western Hemisphere as possible to generate a snapshot of odonate distribution. The date has shifted to give us the chance to observe some different species than were seen in June 2021 or August 2023.

If IDs are difficult for you then go ahead and post your observations to iNaturalist first. Photographing a side view and a view top down gives the best chance of getting an identification. After you have your observations at Research Grade then set up an Odonata Central account at this url:

(<https://www.odonatacentral.org/app/#/add/>) and import your observations. You import them into your Odonata Central account by cutting and pasting the URL of the iNaturalist record. This copies location, date, species, and photographs into Odonata Central so they don't need to be entered again. This way you can also create complete checklists (including Observed Only records-i.e. you do not have to have a photograph for every individual seen) and assign records to your stored OC location names. Be sure to specify the Odolympics project during data entry. Time spent on this Bioblitz may be reported in VMS under "Chapter Data Collection Projects".

I really want to see a Stream Bluet (last report in Gregg County was along Grace Creek in Longview 2014). I also want to see a Smoky Rubyspot or maybe a Royal River Cruiser but I will be really happy to add any species I haven't seen before to my list.

**September is a Board Meeting month, open to all members (& guests)!** This quarterly meeting will be held before the chapter meeting on

September 26 at 5:30. Officers and Directors will be asked to report. If anyone has items to add to the agenda get them to me at [tmneastxpres@yahoo.com](mailto:tmneastxpres@yahoo.com) for consideration no later than end of day September 17.

**Our September speaker will be Chris Keiser, Wildlife Biologist for Smith and Wood Counties,** talking to us about “nuisance” animals- how to deal/live with our cohabitating critters.



### Initial Certification

Donna Hamill

### Recertifications

Mark Edmund  
Bonnie Edwards  
Sara Emry-Arthur  
Patricia Gray  
Donna Hamill  
Kay Jenkins  
Carol Lanthrum  
Kari Steph

### Milestone Award

Caryn Vorsas – 250 Hour Service Pin

### Member Spotlight

**Ann Reynolds**

Please welcome to the spotlight this month,  
**Karen Rueb-Hall.**

I was born and raised in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The August before my senior year in high school my family moved to Clear Lake City, Texas. I attended the University of Texas at Austin

where I graduated with a B. S. in Elementary Education and certification in Special Education.



I actually had two careers. While I was in college, I did an apprenticeship in electrolysis which provided me a good income to put myself through college. After I graduated and started teaching special education, I continued to work part time as an electrologist. Eventually I opened my own electrolysis practice and operated it for 18 years. After selling the practice in 2000, I returned to teaching special education and retired in 2014.

In 2018 my husband and I moved to Whitehouse and purchased property/acreage with a nice pond. I wanted to learn more about conservation and developing a more native environment within our space attracting more wildlife and pollinators. I completed the Master Naturalist Program in 2019.

Growing up the oldest of five in the 1950s and 1960s outdoors and nature was our playground. Unfortunately, “lightning bugs” and “horny toads” and many species my siblings and I interacted with are now considered Species of Greatest Conservation Need.

I love learning about most aspects of our natural world but my favorite activities are bird watching and growing native plants. Participating in activities with the Tyler

Audubon and Native Plant Society expands that knowledge.

My favorite volunteer activity is serving as a volunteer hotline operator for the DFW Wildlife hotline. The public calls with questions and concerns about injured or orphaned reptiles, birds and mammals. I provide general information, resources and certified rehabbers to hopefully remedy the callers' situation. I have learned many things about wildlife based on the callers' dilemmas.

My daughter, her husband, and their three- and five-year-old children live next door. Sharing my love for insects, trees, plants and animals with the grandchildren is my favorite natural science experience. We use iNaturalist to help us identify everything we can pick up and photograph.

My advice to a new master naturalist is return to your days of childhood looking at nature with a sense of wonderment, no fear, and curiosity. I try to use my grandchildren as role models and employ their enjoyment of our beautiful natural world as I enjoy my property daily.

## Tyler Nature Center Update

Kay Jenkins



The next workday is **October 5** starting at 8:00 am. Volunteers are welcome to come and go as they can between 8:00 am and noon.

Remember **this is OUR demonstration garden** to show the community that native plants in a landscape can be beautiful and ecologically responsible. We recommend bringing the tools listed below if you have them. There will be extra tools for those who don't have them.

Please RSVP to Kay so she can plan the work around the number of volunteers. Her email is: **kay-jenkins@sbcglobal.net**.

- Gloves, hat, sunscreen and water to drink

- Knee pads, kneeling pad or towel to kneel on
- Shovel, rake, pruners, clippers, loppers, hoe
- 5-gallon bucket

**Garden chores become pleasure when we work together.**





## Dragonflies and Damselflies, Oh My!

Ann Reynolds

Chapter President, Wanda Rauscher, noted the upcoming Odolympics which got me thinking “now where am I going to see dragonflies and damselflies (DDFs)?”. Why, my garden, of course! If you are a home gardener or even just have flowerbeds with blooming plants and maybe a water feature, chances are you seen these creatures at your location.

Chapter member, Lindsey Smith, instructed us that when viewing or photographing these insects to not be worried when they fly off. They are very territorial and return to their perch. I've gotten many a good photo from following Lindsey's instructions.



Eastern Amberwing - male

A folk-lore common name for DDFs is “devil's darning needle” and the rumor was that they were capable of stitching together the lips of wicked children during their sleep. So, weird because both are completely harmless to humans. However, they are wicked hunters of houseflies, and gnats. They will sometimes even eat old, weak, slow beneficials such as honeybees. More importantly, they eat 300 or more mosquitoes per day (just one more reason to not use toxic chemicals in properly managed gardens and landscapes with water features). Their hunting behavior is called “hawking.”

Multicolored dragonflies are strong, fast flyers (up to 35 mph) whereas damselflies are

commonly blue and tend to flit about more daintily. They can also fly long distances. The large surface area of their wings allows them to use minimal amounts of energy as they glide for long periods. At rest, dragonflies' wings are held horizontally and perpendicular to the body, similar to an airplane. Damselflies fold their wings back along their long slender bodies. They can lift more than double their



Common Green Darner and Ebony Jewelwing weight, take off backward, stop, hover, somersault and reverse direction all the while flying full speed.

The large dragonflies and more delicate damselflies are fascinating to watch and provide pest control. Nature doesn't get any better than that.

## August 22 Chapter Meeting

Ann Reynolds

The speaker for our August 22 chapter meeting was Dr. Lori Cavitt who is a licensed rehabilitator. A big thank you to all who



brought supplies for her patients. This is only a small sample.

## So Much We Still Don't Know

Wanda Rauscher

I love the reaction of children learning about pollinators when I tell them we are still finding new species of moths and that we don't yet know the life cycles of many (the host plants for the larvae). Somehow the kids got the idea that everything has already been described and the world is a mostly-known place. Well, even though I know better I had my mind blown by an NPR Science Friday episode that aired last December: fungal taxonomists have been naming about 2000 new species per year for a while now. There are roughly 150,000 species of fungi described but Dr. David Hibbett of Clark University says that mycologists believe that the actual number of fungal species on earth approaches 5 million. You do the math at 2000 new species per year and 4850000 total species yet to describe- we will need 2425 years to name them all if we can! The catch is that many of the new observations are DNA evidence only for which no one has "seen", directly observed a live specimen. So, scientists don't know which might be in symbiotic relationships with other organisms or just why they can't cultivate the organisms. Dr. Hibbett and some of his colleagues are trying to change the rules of nomenclature to allow binomial names (Genus, species) to be assigned based on DNA evidence. Proposals to allow this to happen were discussed at the 12th International Mycological Congress which just concluded August 16. Only one of the proposals made it to the floor and I do not think it passed. Why the resistance? Well quoting the Fungal Nomenclature Bureau, "there is a well-founded concern that a large number of new species based solely on DNA could be published by simply mining sequence repositories and creating phylogenetic trees (without necessarily having appropriate taxon sampling) and diagnoses in a semi-automated process." In other words, the taxonomists could be buried in bad data that would not provide any benefit. There were two symposiums exploring the challenge, "Genomes, Evolution and Classification" and "DNA Sequences as

Type Equivalent – WHERE TO NEXT?". I fear a definitive solution is not yet at hand, but what a wonderful world so full of challenges!

A snapshot of fungal diversity



From:

<https://imafungus.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s43008-020-00033-z/figures/1>

## Book Reviews

Ann Reynolds (not Lance)



A friend recommended the book "The Worst Hard Time" by Timothy Egan to me but I did not read it until after watching Ken Burns' documentary on the Dust Bowl. This book reads



like a novel and a horror story and I couldn't put it down. It is a chapter of American history about the dust storms that terrorized the plains during the depression.

The book follows accounts of a dozen families and their communities as they navigate the greatest environmental disaster that the US has seen (so far). It is heart-breaking reading the interviews of the families trying to carry on through blinding dust blizzards, crop failure, loss of cattle and death of loved ones.

Growing up in Oklahoma, I had heard of the Dust Bowl but didn't understand the true picture of the events, places and the people who lived it. My uncle talked about "walking on the tops of fence posts buried in the dirt" as he hitch-hiked to find a better job. I had aunts that left Oklahoma for California because of the dust bowl and weather. That is all I ever heard from the "old folks."

This man-made environmental disaster unfolded on the nation's Great Plains (Colorado, New Mexico, Nebraska, Kansas, Texas and Oklahoma) where decades of intensive farming and lack of soil conservation had left the region ecologically vulnerable. The long drought in the early and mid-1930s triggered disaster. The winds that sweep across the plains began carrying off its dry, topsoil in huge "dust storms." Dramatic and frightening, these storms turned day into night as they destroyed farms. The hardest hit area—covered parts of Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, and the Texas Panhandle—where hundreds of thousands of people abandoned the land. Some survivors waited out the years of the storms, unemployment, poverty and hunger. It truly is a testament to the resilience of these pioneers.

The biggest storm occurred on April 14, 1935, a date which came to be known as "Black Sunday." It is considered the worst dust storm of the era, and is estimated to have blown away 300 million tons of fertile top soil. Oklahoma was hit the hardest but its force was felt in many

states and the dirt and dust fell to the ground as far away as New York City.



(photo courtesy of the Daily Oklahoman)

President Roosevelt's efforts to help rural Americans pay their mortgages so they wouldn't lose their farms, plant trees to break the fierce winds, teach them new techniques to preserve their soil and conserve their water, were all part of his vision for a fair and just America. FDR's New Deal attacked the crisis on the Great Plains on a number of fronts with the establishment of the Farm Security Administration, the Soil Conservation Service, Taylor Grazing Act, Shelterbelt Project, Civilian Conservation Corps, and Works Progress Administration.

This book is a powerful cautionary tale of the dangers of trifling with mother nature. It is a story of courageous journalists who went to the area and were totally horrified by what they saw. It is a story of perseverance of American families living in holes in the ground and on the verge of starvation. Lastly it is an account of immediate and specific action the government took to try to bring relief.

Read it and let me know what you think.

## Ocellated Tiger Beetles at TNC

Wanda Rauscher



I enjoy watching tiger beetles. I was greeted by a dozen on the walkway to the Tyler Nature Center recently, identified as *Cicindela (Cicindelidia) ocellata rectilatera* or Ocellated Tiger Beetle. Tiger beetles are fast running predatory insects who locate prey by sight. Pursuit is interspersed with stop and look behavior. Adult beetles actually run so fast that not enough light particles (photons) are received by their eyes and so they have to pause to reorient. While they are running, they hold their antennae rigidly forward and just off the ground, allowing them to sense and react to any obstruction while keeping their eyes on their prey. They have sword-like mandibles with which to crush and tear apart their prey. (And no, I do not put my fingers in front of their faces.) This species is found in most of Texas and adults are seen May through November.



<https://www.gbif.org/species/1034941>

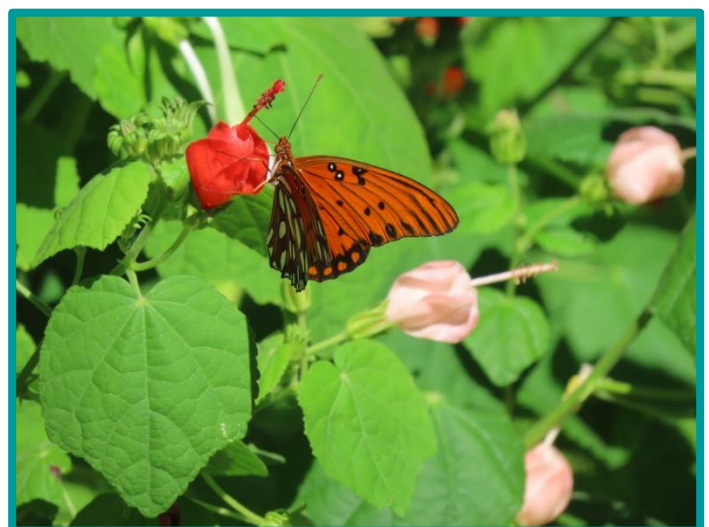
Tiger beetles of one species or another are found worldwide and are sensitive to changing patterns of land use, pesticide application and climate change. Biologists have used tiger beetles as an indicator species, making surveys of local tiger beetle populations to determine how well an ecosystem is supporting other animals and plants.

## Plant of the Month

Ann Reynolds

Looking for a Texas native plant that is easy to grow, does well in the shade and sun, and is drought resistant? Look no further than Turk's Cap (*Malvaviscus arboreus* var *drummondii*). It is a multi-stemmed, semi-woody perennial that blooms from June until first frost. It has brilliant red tubular flowers that attract hummingbirds, butterflies and other insects. It is a food source for wildlife, and serves as the primary host plant for the caterpillars of the Turk's-cap, White Skipper (*Helipetes macaira*). Other birds and wildlife adore the red fruit this plant provides.

It has bright red, pendant, hibiscus-like flowers that never fully open. The petals overlap, somewhat resembling a Turkish turban (hence the name). The variety name of the plant is named for Thomas Drummond, a naturalist from Scotland who traveled throughout Texas.





# **TYLER AUDUBON SOCIETY FIELD TRIP**



**Saturday, August 31st      8 AM**  
**Richland Creek WMA, North Unit**





**Native  
Plant  
Society  
of Texas**

*Lakes and Pines Chapter*  
**PRESENTATION & CHAPTER MEETING**

If you love bats, native plants, and gardening that benefits our local wildlife, join us and bring a friend! Guest Speaker - Missy Singleton will tell us about how we can wildscape for bats, followed by a short meeting.

**Wednesday, September 4th, 2:00-3:30pm**  
**Bob Wells Nursery at Sorelle Farms**  
**975 County Road 2220 in Mineola**

Email us: [Lakes-and-Pines-Chapter@npsot.org](mailto:Lakes-and-Pines-Chapter@npsot.org)

Website: [npsot.org/chapters/lakes-and-pines/](http://npsot.org/chapters/lakes-and-pines/)

Find us:



## “Wildscaping For Bats”



**Missy Singleton**  
**Biologist**

Missy works for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a private lands biologist in the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program where she provides financial and technical assistance to landowners and NGOs.

Before she joined the Service 9 years ago, she worked in the private sector doing environmental compliance for the border fence construction. She has also worked as a state biologist, bat biologist and as a research assistant in academia. Missy resides in Grand Prairie, TX. She is a part of the Fightin’ Texas Aggie class of ’02. In her free time, she enjoys soap making, gardening, camping, traveling & spending time with her husband and two kids.

**NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF TEXAS MISSION STATEMENT:** Promote conservation, research and utilization of native plants and plant habitats of Texas through education, outreach, and example.

# 5th ANNUAL PRAIRIE DAY



**TXGLC**  
TEXAS GRAZING LAND COALITION  
• Growing Partnerships Through Conservation •

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2024

YANTIS, TEXAS

at The Northeast Texas Prairie Classroom  
124 West Oak  
Yantis, Texas 75497  
9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

FAMILY FRIENDLY, FREE OUTDOOR EVENT  
CELEBRATING NATURE AND OUR GRAZING LANDS.

Come and meet Texas Parks & Wildlife, US Fish & Wildlife,  
The Audubon Society, Texas Grazing Lands Coalition, local  
landowners and others.

**GUIDED PRAIRIE WALKS EVERY HOUR.**

Contact Julie Mattox for more information  
sagegeodetic@msn.com  
903.752.1015 + yantisprairie.org





## Hello Caddo Mounds Volunteers!

Thank you for your dedication to Caddo Mounds and its mission.

As the summer winds down, we have several opportunities available. We are also gearing up for Fall and have field trips already lined up.

Volunteering at Caddo Mounds is a great opportunity to learn about things you are interested in. Do you love to garden? Snake Woman's Garden is a great place to learn about gardening. Love indigenous culture and want to know more about Caddo? Working in the museum is the perfect place to volunteer.

### **New Volunteer System for Texas Historical Commission: Please sign up today.**

**THC has instituted a new volunteer system to help volunteer coordinators like me keep up with our volunteers, their hours, and opportunities. I have put the links below. Please follow the links and sign up. Many of you have already done that so there is no need for you to do it again. Thank you for signing up for this new system.**

<https://www.volgistics.com/appform/1636499635> This is the application page.

<https://www.volgistics.com/vicnet/login> We are not using the system yet but when we do, this is where you will sign in.

**Here are the volunteer opportunities that I know about for the next few months. I will send out more dates and times as the summer ends and fall begins.**

#### **Museum:**

Working in the museum and gift shop is a great opportunity to learn about Caddo Mounds. We need volunteers to cover the museum desk on occasion. If you are interested in volunteering a day or two each month, reply to this email and we will get you signed up for training and your first day. The museum front desk is the setting for many fascinating conversations with historians, hobbyists, and history buffs.

#### **Snake Woman's Garden:**

In August, we need a few good volunteers to help Snake Woman's Garden transition from summer harvest to fall garden. Kerry Lemon, our outdoor educator and gardener extraordinaire has a list of tasks that need to be done on a regular basis for the next couple of months. Soon we will have garden workdays in which you can work with experts in the garden and learn.

**Caddo Artist Series** – We need volunteers for September 20th for the Artist Series artist talk by Yonavea Hawkins. Yonavea is an award-winning and nationally renowned artist and scholar. Her artist talk begins at 6 pm and ends at 8 pm. We need volunteers to bring finger foods, help set up the museum classroom and hospitality, and help clean up afterward.  
October 2024:

We have a **field trip** for 80 students and 10 adults on October 17 at 9 am. This is Owen Elementary School, and they will be with us until 1:30. If you are interested in helping with field trips and you have never done a field trip before, please contact me and we can arrange a short training. These field trips



are so much fun and I always learn so much. We need someone to help with the museum, the garden, the grass house and atlatl demonstration.

November:

**Caddo Culture Day** is November 2. If you are available on that day, please let me know. I am working on activities and volunteer assignments in the next few weeks. This is a great opportunity to learn about the Caddo people and culture.

Caddo Artist Series – On November 15th Raven Halfmoon will offer her Caddo Artist Series artist talk. Raven is a nationally renowned artist with work in museums across the country. She will be at Caddo Mounds to speak about her work, her journey as an artist, and her Caddo culture. We need volunteers to bring finger foods, help set up the museum classroom and hospitality, and help clean up afterwards.

As you can see, there are lots of fun opportunities for volunteering at Caddo Mounds. I am always available to answer questions. If you are interested in volunteering for any of these events, please email me and let me know.

Thank you,

Maggie

[Maggie.Leysath@thc.texas.gov](mailto:Maggie.Leysath@thc.texas.gov)



**Maggie Leysath, Ed. D.**

Educator/Interpreter  
Caddo Mounds State Historic Site  
1649 State Hwy. 21 West, Alto, Texas 75925  
Phone: +1 936 858 3218

[visitcaddomounds.com](http://visitcaddomounds.com)



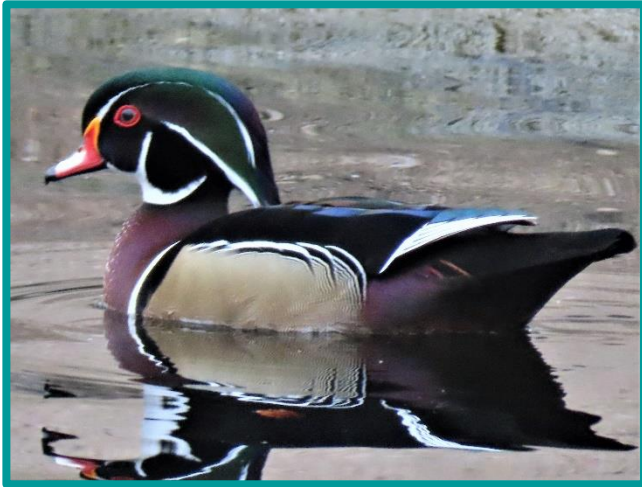


Photo courtesy Ann Reynolds

If you are interested in learning more about the business side of the chapter, all ETCMN members are invited to attend the quarterly chapter Board meetings. You can also access the Board meeting minutes on the chapter website under Members Only section, select Board of Directors and enter the current password.

The Wood Duck Whistler is a monthly publication of East Texas Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program. News, essays, comments, and ideas are welcome. Please email them to Ann Reynolds at ann@etex.net.

Photos for Book Reviews are courtesy of Amazon. Unless otherwise noted, all other photos belong to the author of the article.

### Upcoming Events

**September 7-15**, Odolympics Bioblitz

**September 10, TMN Tuesday, noon – 1:00 pm**, Ernesto Garcia-Ortega, Wildlife Biologist with Texas Parks and Wildlife, and Wendy Anderson, Nature Trackers Biologist with Texas Parks and Wildlife.

**September 20, articles for the chapter newsletter due to Ann Reynolds at: Reynolds.ann1@gmail.com**

**September 26, Chapter Meeting 7:00 pm**, Tyler Nature Center, **Board Meeting at 5:30**, Chris Keiser, Wildlife Biologist for Smith and Wood Counties, talking to us about “nuisance” animals

**October 11-17**, Texas Pollinator Bioblitz

### IN THE COMMUNITY

**NETFO** – 1st Wednesday 6:30 pm, Alethea SS Classroom at Greggton UMC 1101 Pine Tree Road in Longview.

**Tyler Audubon Society**, 2nd Tuesday, 6:30 pm, St. Francis Episcopal Church, Education Room, 3232 Jan Avenue. **“State of Tyler Audubon Society”**

**NPSOT-Tyler** – 2nd Monday, 2:00 pm, TNC

**NPSOT** – Wood County – 1st Wednesday, 2:00 pm Sorrelle Farm, Mineola

**NPSOT** – Longview – 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday 2:00 pm, Longview Arboretum



# WHERE YOU CAN FIND US

You can find East Texas Chapter Master Naturalists here:

<https://txmn.org/etwd/>

<https://www.facebook.com/EastTexasMasterNaturalist/>

<https://www.instagram.com/easttexasmasternaturalist/>



<https://agriflifeextension.tamu.edu/>



<https://tpwd.texas.gov/>

Texas Master Naturalist – East Texas Chapter Monthly Chapter meetings are held the **fourth Thursday of the month at the Tyler Nature Center, 11942 FM 848, Tyler, TX 75707**. Meet and greet 6:45 pm; meeting at 7:00 pm.

Everyone is welcome.

Safety Guidelines from TMN: Safety is our guiding principle. Follow all federal, state and county guidelines for TMN activities. Virtual platforms are useful and should remain an important consideration for planning meetings and events. Masks and social distancing considerations are encouraged. (July 2021)



## ETCMN CHAPTER ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

**\*\*President: 2024-2025** Wanda Rauscher

**\*\*Vice President: 2023-2024** Cindy Smith

**Hospitality Co-Chairs: 2023** Caryn Vorsas, Joe Vorsas; Bonnie Edwards

**\*\*Secretary: 2023-2024** Carol Lanthrum

**Historian/Archivist:** TBD

- **\*\*Treasurer: 2024** Robert Lumpkins

**Immediate Past President: 2022-2023** Paul Wick

### DIRECTORS:

**Advanced Training (AT): Lead** – Karen Rueb-Hall, with Amy Cumbie and Cindy Smith

**Volunteer Service Projects (VSH): Lead** – Dawn Bahr with Lance Homeniuk and Greg Marshall

**Community Education/Outreach:** Lance Homeniuk

**Speakers Bureau:** Greg Marshall

**Diversity and Inclusion:** TBD

**Training Class 2024:** Kay Jenkins

**Membership:** Donna Smith

**Volunteer Management System Director:** Lindsey Smith

### **Communications Support:**

**E-Blast:** Wanda Rauscher

**Newsletter:** Ann Reynolds

**Photography:** Lindsey Smith

**Public Relations:** TBD

**Social Media: Lead** - Greg Marshall, Dawn Bahr and Julie Davis

**Website:** Jessica Coleman

**State Representative:** Wanda Rauscher or appointed alternative

**2023 Class Representatives:** Natalie Curley

### **Chapter Advisors:**

**Clint Perkins – A&M Agrilife Extension Agent-Smith County**

**Boyd Sanders – TPWD Advisor**

**\*\* = Officers & Executive Board Members**

**Revised 4/30/24**