

Wood Duck Whistler November 2024

President's Message by Wanda Rauscher



I am writing this after my return from the annual State TMN Meeting. What an experience! There were technical sessions galore and field events and a whole bunch of people with interests like ours! If you have never been (or even if you have) plan ahead to attend next year's October event in College Station. Here are some of this year's highlights:

- East Texas Chapter TMN won 2nd place in the Outstanding Chapter Project Fair for our Wildscape and Trail Work at the Tyler Nature Center. A \$500 check was presented to the chapter. Here is a link to the YouTube video: [ETCMN Project Fair Wins Second Place!](#) the other submissions.
- The 2025 recertification pin will be the Greater Roadrunner, *Geococcyx californianus*. Tania Homayoun (State Ornithologist) presented information on this bird (and no, beep, beep is not one of its calls). She will talk at the Feb. TMN Tuesday in 2025 on this topic.
- All attendees who have achieved milestone recognition from one meeting date to September of the next year receive additional recognition at the State Meeting

award banquet on Saturday. Our very own Carol Lanthrum was recognized for 250 service hours.

- We have an anniversary to celebrate in 2025! It will be East Texas Chapter's 25th anniversary.
- The Acoustic Bat Monitoring participants met to debrief and make decisions about which monitors to use in this next round. Our project leaders will receive the recording of the meeting if they were unable join live and I have our SD card to return to Sara. In related news Craig Hensley said we can "check out" copies of the Kaleidoscope Pro software a couple of weeks at a time so we do not all have to spend \$400 for the annual software license. The Acoustic Bat Monitoring was awarded an outstanding project recognition by the Alliance of Natural Resource Outreach and Service Programs (ANROSP) at their Sept. conference. Craig expressed his thanks to the large number of chapters that are participating.
- The Texas Master Naturalist program received the Stephen Kellert Award from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. "This award recognizes a distinguished individual, group, or agency effort for outstanding service in advancing connection between humans and the natural world to all peoples."
- HEB presented a large grant (\$50000) to the Texas Master Naturalist program to be used for impactful pollinator projects: "Pollinators for Texas". Michelle Haggerty announced that there will be a webinar on Nov 4 to explain details for how to apply for mini-grants (\$3000). Priority will be given to proposals that are large scale or regionally focused and involve communities. Chapters are allowed to collaborate with neighboring chapters. There will also be priority for projects in HEB served areas.
- The VMS changes are now expected to "go live" in the first quarter 2025. Training directors will be given updates, and additional staff will be available at the help desk to assist with the transition. Very little



change should be seen by members logging hours.

Back to local level, our next gathering will be for the holiday party on Saturday, December 7. This will be a late morning & over lunch & into the early afternoon event. The nominating committee has recommended Rodney Schroeder for vice president and Ann Reynolds for secretary and the chapter will vote at the December 7 gathering. Our Training Director, Kay Jenkins, is investigating a Spring class for 2025 rather than the Fall schedule. I will Eblast further information as such becomes available.

Member Spotlight

Ann Reynolds

Let's welcome Vicki Betts to the Member Spotlight.

Where were you born/raised? I was born at Mother Frances Hospital in 1953 and I've lived in Tyler since 1955.

Where do you live now? Just west of Flint, Texas



Would you care to share with us about your family? I'm single, with no kids but two cats, both rescues.

What is/was your career? Education? I'm a retired academic librarian, starting at Texas Eastern University beginning in the summer of 1977, and retiring from the University of Texas at Tyler in 2017. I have a BA in History and English from East Texas State University and an MLS from North Texas State University.

What are some of your hobbies? Historical research, particularly local history, gardening, and working on my farm.

What do you attribute your love of nature? My family always loved being outside in nature, camping, and feeding backyard birds.

What was it that interested you in the Texas Master Naturalist program? I wanted to learn more about what I could do to support wildlife, both plant and animal, at my farm.

What class were you in? 2019

What has been your favorite volunteer experience? I'm a member of the Wild Bunch—we work on nature trails at parks and at the TP&W Wildlife Center.

Favorite nature activity? Watching wildlife whether in person or by using game cameras.

Describe what would be your perfect, bucket-list natural science encounter or experience. Hike a section of the Appalachian Trail.

Advice for new master naturalists? Find your niche and stick with it.

Tyler Nature Center Wildscape Update

Kay Jenkins

The plants in the Tyler Nature Center wildscape have mostly survived the late summer/early fall drought with supplemental watering on October 6 and October 26. At the time of publication of this newsletter, the plants should have received some welcome rain. Ann Reynolds weeded the wildscape on October 5, 2024 while I was out of town on a field trip with our Fall 2024 trainees. Butterflies and bees were enjoying our fall blooming plants in the wildscape when I watered on the 26th. I was glad to see one monarch butterfly among the usual Gulf fritillaries enjoying the Turk's cap (*Malvaviscus arboreus*). Another pleasant discovery was a green milkweed (*Aesclepias viridis*) plant. We planted a few of them in spring, but I didn't think they had survived.

During our September wildscape workday, Keith Jones found a snake skin. After we all examined it, I suggested that he put it in one of the wildscape beds. So, when I arrived on October 6 to water and found a snake skin lying across the hose, I didn't think anything of it, except I wondered if Keith was playing a prank on me by putting it by the faucet where we had discovered a live water moccasin in 2023. But, then on October 26 when I watered, I discovered two snake skins, the one lying over the hose by the faucet and another one amongst the mealy blue sage, which was close to where Keith found the original snake skin. So, do we have two snakes living in the wildscape or just one that has shed twice?

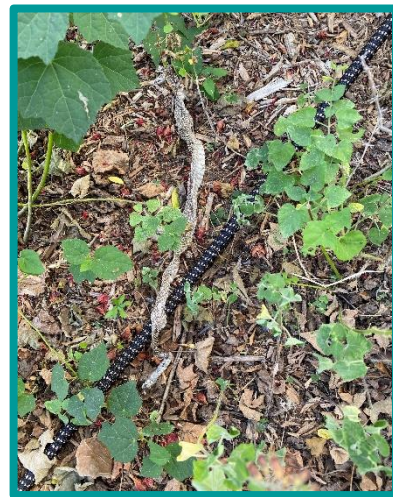
I couldn't resist buying more plants for the wildscape at the SFA Gardens plant sale held in October. **Please join me in planting them and working in the wildscape on the afternoon of November 9, 2024, starting around 1:00 p.m.** We could use some more cypress mulch if any of you would like to bring a bag or two. The mulch will help our insect larvae survive the upcoming winter season.



Green milkweed plant (*Asclepias viridis*)



Gregg's mistflower (*Conoclinium Greggii*)



One of two snake skins found!!

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.

Christmas Bird Counts

Mark Edmund – Longview area

- Longview CBC is Saturday, December 14
- Tenaha-Timpson (Lake Murval) Wednesday, January 1
- Lake O' the Pines (LOP) Saturday, January 4.

Contact Mark Edmund at: maedmund321@gmail.com

Christmas Bird Counts

Jessica Coleman – Tyler area

Tyler, Saturday, December 28
Contact Jessica Coleman at: jcoleman@uttyler.edu

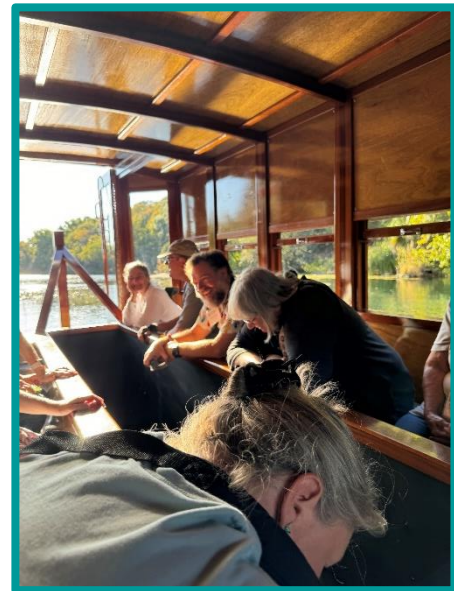
State Meeting - San Marcos

Wanda Rauscher

The State TMN meeting always has an outdoor component. This one had all sorts of field trips but also the opening reception at the Meadow Center at the San Marcos Springs. Texas State University students gave us guided tours on the glass-bottom boats.



There are 2 benches on either side of a central glassed-in trough. You can lean over to see the lake life below and the flowing springs when gliding over them.





Holy Cow! From Dairy to Prairie!

Karen Hulene Bartell, Ph.D.

What do cattle have to do with holistic management? For that matter, what do pollinators have to do with economically profitable ranches? *Read on.*

On October 19, 2024, the East Texas Chapter of Texas Master Naturalist visited the Northeast Texas Prairie Community Classroom (NETXPCC) at 124 West Oak Street, Yantis, Texas 75497.

Julie Mattox and her husband started the non-profit NETXPCC on the 4.5 acres they donated. Their vision was and is to encourage students and community members “to work together to restore the site’s tallgrass prairie remnant with native flowers and forbs for insects, pollinators, birds, and many other species” that historically thrived in this threatened bionetwork.

What motivates Julie Mattox? The tallgrass prairie is one of the world's most unique yet vanishing ecosystems. Less than one percent of Texas’ original 20 million acres remains today.

Originally, tall-growing grasses, such as Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardi*), Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), and Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*) dominated the prairies. However, those native grasses have been replaced with agricultural monocultures. Compounded with unsustainable farming practices, overgrazing, and urban expansion, the tallgrass prairie has virtually vanished. Only remnants remain.

Why should that habitat's disappearance concern ranchers, ecologists, or Texas Master Naturalists? The rich soil of the tallgrass prairie has been depleted, which in turn compromises the sustainability of the fauna that depends on it--both wildlife and livestock.

The land can no longer support the mammals, birds, or insects that once thrived here. The

As we learned later, the springs are flowing at a MUCH lower rate than previous years. Part of this is the prolonged drought in the area but also because of the amounts of water being withdrawn from the aquifer. Ground water in Texas has very little regulation and few checks on withdrawal and aquifers are classified as ground water. We listened to Dr. Jeff Gessas on a Biocultural History of the San Marcos Springs. He had many interesting points but the one that resonated with me is that relationships built with a place are what truly motivates people to preserve a place. And to me that is why Master Naturalists need to do outreach: to help people come to appreciate the places we call home!



Carol Lanthrum and Karen Rueb-Hall - Sunset at Sam Marcos Springs.

bison, jaguar, and ocelot are long gone. Worse, three-quarters of grassland bird species have experienced significant declines in their populations, as have insects such as bees, Monarch butterflies, and other pollinators.

Ranchers who once earned a reasonable living on this land now find ranching unprofitable. Why? The soil has been depleted. For the same reason it can no longer sustain wildlife, the land can no longer support livestock.

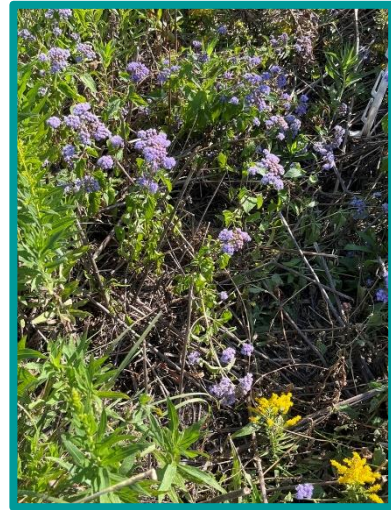
How can the land be rejuvenated? Julie Mattox contends prairie restoration is the answer. Specifically, how? In a nutshell, recreate the prairie's dynamics with today's tools.

- Instead of wildfires, use controlled burns to remove weeds, monocultures, and invasive species.
- Instead of roving herds of buffalo, use rotational grazed cattle to mow, fertilize, and even help sow the grass.

Ironically, cattle--once Julie's nemesis--are now her passion. For a more complete understanding of prairie restoration and conversion of land into pocket prairies, visit the NETXPCC in Yantis, Texas. Better yet, ask Julie Mattox for a tour of the grounds to see the flourishing restoration in progress!



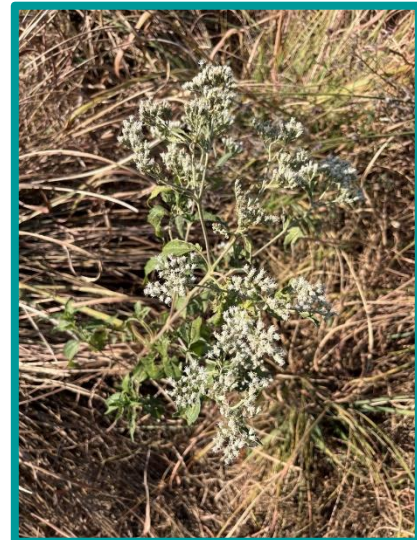
American persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*)



Blue mistflower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*)



Deirochelyine Turtles (Subfamily deirochelyinae)



Late boneset (*Eupatorium serotinum*)



Tall goldenrod (*Solidago altissima*):

Collecting Scientific Botanical (Herbarium) Specimens

Carol Lanthrum

What an interesting workshop from those wonderful folks at BRIT (Botanical Research Institute of Texas). Located in Fort Worth, BRIT was established in 1987 for the herbarium and botanical library collections of Lloyd H. Shinnery from Southern Methodist University, but has subsequently expanded substantially. The Phileology Herbarium is among the ten largest in the United States with more than 1.5 million preserved plant specimens, some dating back to the late 1700s. The herbarium also acquired several other large and small collections and actively adds to the herbarium. You may remember hearing Barney Lipscomb's talk about legacy naturalists, as he has spoken to most of our training classes. Barney is the director of BRIT.

So they still actively collect specimens. Why, you may ask, with so many in storage now.

They still need Voucher Specimens! These are physical specimens that have been collected and preserved for research studies or other activities. Vouchers can be used to verify the identity of the plant at a later date; provide

evidence of flowering, fruiting and seeds; document the distribution, and locality; allow DNA analysis. Current specimens also help researchers examine changes in plant populations over time due to human activities and climate change.

However,

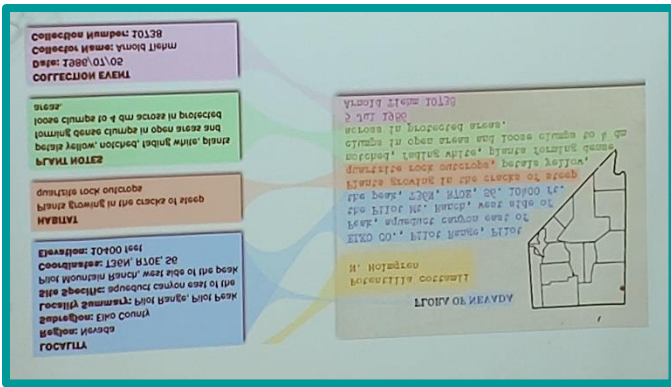
- **Collect with a Purpose:** The voucher specimens should fill in the gaps in botanical knowledge.
- **Collect with Permission:** Do not trespass; obtain permission in writing if at all possible. Also discuss with BRIT (or local herbarium) your plan for collecting specimens so they are prepared to accept them.
- **Collect with Conservation in Mind:** In general, collect no more than 5-10% of the population every 10 years.
- **Now When to Collect and When to Observe:** If the population is very small, take a picture and put it on iNaturalist instead.

The rest of the session we learned how to properly collect a specimen. We went outside the conference center to the edge of a plowed field. You might think the first thing you do is dig up your selected specimen, but no. The first thing to do is:

Collect Good Data!

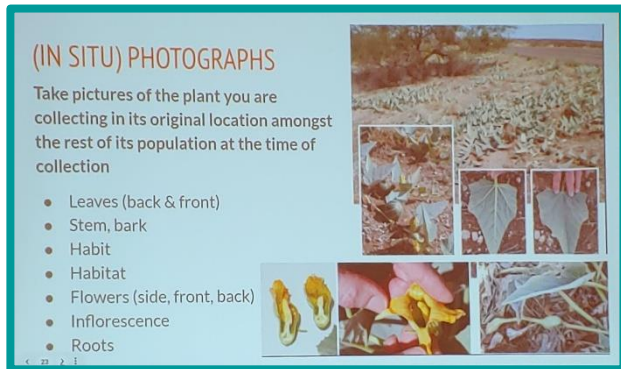
You will need a journal and a plan. If you have never collected before, you will need a numbering scheme. I would use CL1. My initials and sequential numbers – simple. You will need to record in your journal the:

- Date
- Collector(s) name and unique identifier e.g. CL1
- Location. Include state, county always
 - Acceptable: General Location – city, park name, street name, highway, etc



Better: Specific Location – cardinal directions to direct someone to the site

- Best: Geo-coordinates – from Google Earth or GPS unit (3-4 decimal points sufficient)
- Plant Description – Habit including height; abundance, color, scent, associated species, latex/sap/resin if present, elevation if important.
- Digital *in situ* photos - Take photo of plant you are collecting in its original location amongst its neighbors! Leaves, back and front; stem/bark; habit; habitat; flowers, side front bottom; inflorescence; roots. Use your hand or an object like a pen or ruler for sizing.



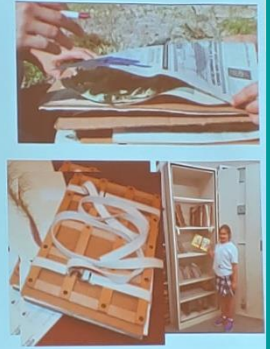
All of this information will go on the specimen tag.

Finally, you are ready to collect your specimen

- Select a representative specimen from the population.
- Dig up the root if possible (n/a for shrubs and trees).

4. Preserve material properly

- Typically pressed and dried within a sheet of newspaper
- Placed within a plant press to flatten it
- Place in a dry place with airflow, and check frequently
- Consider what you want the dried specimen to look like
- Backs and fronts of leaves/flowers
- Sufficient material; size



- Place your specimen between back and front of newspaper, more if the specimen seems 'juicy'.
 - You will have to trim newspaper a couple of inches as herbarium paper is **16.5"L x 11.5"W**



- Arrange specimen to show its features.
 - Stems may have to fold.
 - Small seeds may need to be placed in a packet.
 - Leave room on the right bottom area for the specimen tag.
 - Label the newspaper with the collection number, as a minimum.
 - Put the newspaper between 2 sheets of card board. Use a permanent Sharpie

pen. You can include more information. If you collect a backup specimen, indicate a and b with your collection number.

- Press your specimens.
 - You can use a plant press, or
 - Stack them under a piece of plywood with heavy objects on top.
- Place your specimens in a dry place with airflow and check frequently.
 - A garage is good, but you may need a fan because of East Texas humidity!

Contact the herbarium you are working with when your specimens are dry.

Your work is done! BRIT will do the rest – glue the specimen to archival paper, make a specimen label, digitize the specimen and store it properly.

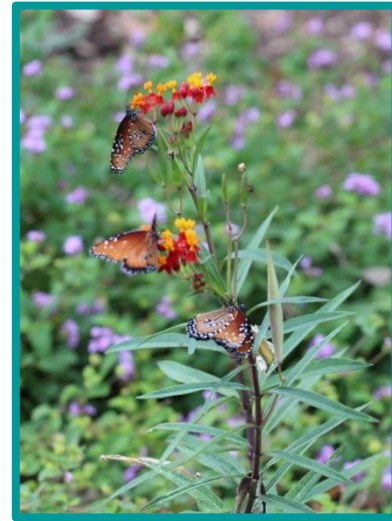
Our chapter could talk to BRIT and include it as part of our plant survey of The Nature Center. Seems like fun to me!

Editor: Me too!

Favorites of the 2024 Pollinator Bioblitz

Wanda Rauscher

On my way home from the State TMN meeting I stopped outside of Waco at the Carleen Bright Arboretum in Woodway, Texas. I have never seen a dozen Queen butterflies at one time before! I counted 24 individuals on the property. There were several monarchs as well and lots of other species. The Groundskeeper was kind enough to show me where to find the full diversity of butterfly species (I told him about the Pollinator Bioblitz).



I saw three new-to-me species: Bordered



Patch, Common Mestra, and Mallow Scrub Hairstreak.

Bordered Patch Butterfly, *Chlosyne lacinia*

The Bordered Patch ranges from Argentina to the mid-latitude midwestern United States. It is a migratory species. This butterfly is considered one of the most variable species in the Western Hemisphere with **six** distinct adult morphs. The range map from iNaturalist is shown below:



Bordered Patch range

https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?subview=map&taxon_id=68240

There is a technical paper from 2023 that makes use of iNaturalist data:

Jamie M. Phelps, Luis Y. Santiago-Rosario, Diego Paredes-Burneo, Kyle E. Harms "A Comprehensive Natural History Review of *Chlosyne lacinia* (Geyer, 1837; Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae): Patterns of Phenotypic Variation and Geographic Distribution," *The Journal of the Lepidopterists' Society*, 77(4), 209-219, (7 December 2023)

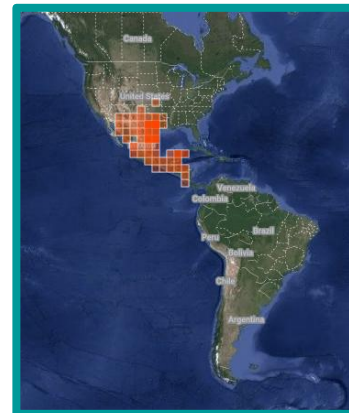
The species was seen in Chandler, Texas (Henderson County) during this year's Pollinator Bioblitz and has been recorded in Mineola once in 2014. Host plants in our area include sunflowers (*Helianthus annuus*) and Indian blanket flowers (*Gaillardia puchella*).

Next up is the Common Mestra- but despite the name not so common in our area.



Common Mestra, *Mestra amymone*

There is one observation from Nov. 2016 at Mineola made by Crystal Mann. This species is found in weedy fields and forest edges. Host plant is noseburn (*Tragia neptifolia*) in the spurge family (Euphorbiaceae) which has nettle-like stinging hairs. I saw my first glimpse of this species at the Meadow Center in San Marcos. Sam Kieschnick told me about experiencing noseburn while trying to get a photograph of this butterfly- not a pleasant experience- red welts on the skin but fading after a few hours.



Common Mestra range

https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?subview=map&taxon_id=148560

And last for my new-to-me butterfly species the Mallow -Scrub-Hairstreak which is not expected in our chapter catchment. There are no observations of this species in iNaturalist for our area but there have been sightings in Grayson County to our northwest

and Caddo Parish to our east so it is not impossible that it may be seen here.



Mallow Scrub-Hairstreak, *Strymon istapa*

Host plants are mallows (Malvaceae). Older reference books list the name as *Strymon columella*. By 1998 *Strymon istapa* was shown to be a separate species.



Mallow Scrub Hairstreak Range

https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?subview=map&taxon_id=132553

I did also see some new-to-me bee species, but I have work to do on identification so more about those at a later date!

Mounds of Mystery

Karen Hulene Bartell, Ph.D.

On October 5, 2024, the East Texas Chapter of Texas Master Naturalist visited the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site, a prehistoric village and ceremonial center, six miles southwest of Alto, Texas--1649 State Hwy. 21 West Alto, TX 75925. In the morning, we heard a presentation by Dr. Paul Buchanan on geology and soils of Texas and another talk by Les Smith on climate and weather.

That afternoon, we viewed an introductory video about the Caddo people and the Caddo Mounds site, then explored the visitor center's informative displays and roughly 200 artifacts of pottery, tools, and weapons. The highlight was a tour of the traditional grass house, mounds, and borrow pit by the knowledgeable Caddo Mounds docents.

The Caddo Mounds State Historic Site marks the southwestern ceremonial center of the Mound Builders of Caddoan origin, who founded a permanent settlement at that location between A.D. 850 and 900. Scholars' closer examination of the excavated material indicates that earlier occupants also inhabited the site: Paleo-Indians (10,000–6,000 B.C.) and Archaic cultures (6,000 B.C.-A.D. 500).

The 93.8-acre site in southern Cherokee County, west of Nacogdoches, offers an interpretive trail through its reconstructed sites of two temple mounds, a burial mound for the elite members of the community, a Caddo dwelling, and several walking paths.

If you're planning to visit the site, begin with the video in the visitor center and examine the informative exhibits. Then, walk the 0.7-mile self-guided, interpretive trail.

If you're up for longer hikes, trek nearly half a mile of the original *Camino Real de los Tejas* National Historic Trail--the King's Road--which runs from Louisiana to Mexico--in all, over a thousand miles. An additional 1.5 miles of

scenic walking trails includes prairie restoration areas, picnic areas, a pond, and a bird blind. Open Tuesday through Sunday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

For more information click [Caddo Mounds State Park](#)

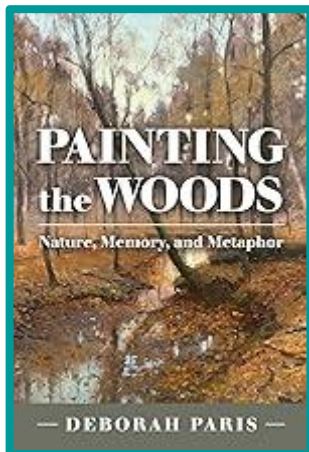
Ask about the Artist Series or Caddo Culture Day, November 2, 2024, 10:00 am-3:00 pm click [Caddo Culture Day](#)

For more information about geology and soils of Texas or climate and weather, see the Texas Master Naturalist Statewide Curriculum, Unit 7, pp 235-284, and Unit 8, pp 285-308.

Book Reviews

Lance Homeniuk

Painting the Woods: Nature, Memory and Metaphor. by Deborah Paris.



Sometimes you CAN judge a book by its cover, and title, and the blurbs! All enticing, but what really prompted me to part with the cash (and pay full price for a change) was the location. About that later, actually lastly.

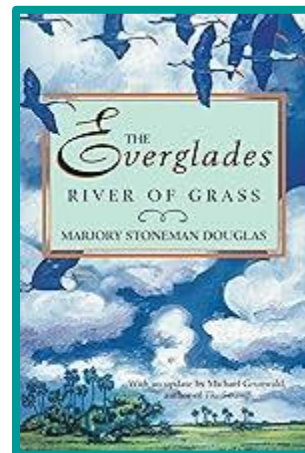
Paris is a landscape artist and art instructor, trained in art techniques and art history, versed in the transcendental naturalism of Emerson & Thoreau, and she is a darn good author too. Searching for a subject to immerse herself in, to observe, by 'pure seeing', meditate, form memories and only then interpret in oils on

canvas she is led to a Nature Conservancy parcel near her home. In each chapter she narrates her journey into the woods and shares the hows, and, more importantly, the whys of the creative process. Along the way the reader is visited by Constable, Ruskin, Thoreau, Annie Dillard, and

It has been forty-five years since I dipped a brush in oil, and left off in frustration; but if I do it again, I will owe the impetus to this story. But even if I don't, I will find my place in the woods and learn its shapes, shadings and motifs as well as it is possible. I Googled Paris and found she has online drawing and painting courses so maybe I will dabble after all.

And where is this magical place? Why, in North East Texas – Lennox Woods, near Clarksville!

The Everglades: River of Grass by Marjory Stoneman Douglas, 1947. Reprinted 2002, Florida Classics Library, Fort Salerno, FL. Paperback, 412 pages

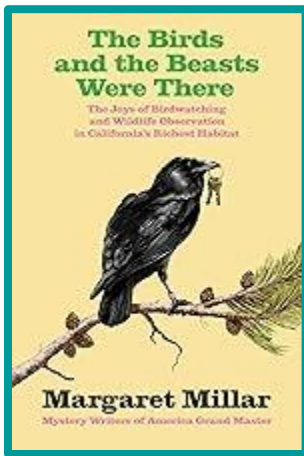


I imagine Ms. Douglas as a sweet but feisty grande dame, able to get anyone to open up to her and take her into their confidences. Exceptions might be made for greedy land developers, clueless politicians and careless polluters and vandals. But she knew a lot about them too, so just maybe they poured their hearts out. After all, no one is portrayed as completely evil, not even Andrew Jackson, the emperor Palpatine of America.

I fell in love with her writing; her voice is enchanting, the narrative flows like her 'river of grass'. It carries multiple stories, permeates the karst stratum and prehistoric inhabitants, bathes the mangroves and the explorers, adventurers, pioneers, and warriors and finally surrounds the peninsula just as the salt water of the gulf stream. She bears comparison to the other writer of Florida – William Bartram.

The original edition ended 1947 on a hopeful note of restoration, responsible government intervention and a new national park. It has been praised as one of the few immediately influential books. The author's afterword, penned 27 years later, is sobering – circumvented laws, powerful anti-nature interests, further ecological damage. The question that goes begging is how have the situations played out since 1974? A restoration program was to be implemented in 2000 but has experienced pushback.

The Birds and Beasts Were There. Margaret Millar, 1991 by Capra Books, Santa Barbara, CA. Paperback, 236.



"The joys of bird watching and wildlife observation in California's richest habitat described by one of America's most skilled storytellers." Mostly birds, mostly on her property at a wide variety of feeders. The author and her husband Ken owned an idyllic place in one of the canyons between the California coastline and Sierras. They gradually became aware of and enthralled by the

native birds the migrants that passed through, along with a few 'accidental' visitors. The fare ranged from native plant seeds and fruits all the way to glazed donuts! The book ends with the Coyote fire of the 1960's and the beginnings of rebirth following.

Strangely enough she even mentions birding in my home town – about 2000 miles from Santa Monica.

Fall Initial Training 2024

Kay Jenkins

The fall training classes continued with four sessions held on September 28, 2024 at the Tyler Nature Center. Chapter member, Curtis Farmer, gave an excellent presentation on urban systems to start the day. Boyd Sanders, assistant superintendent at Martin Creek Lake State Park and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) liaison for our chapter, talked about laws, regulations and ethics. Boyd



Boyd Sanders talks to trainees about laws and regulations.

made what could be considered a dry topic interesting by describing people involved in illegal or unethical incidents that he has experienced and suggesting that we "not be that person"! The day ended with our chapter president, Wanda Rauscher presenting on the topics of ecological concepts and ecosystem



Blaine Carnes shows trainees a common yellowthroat at the John Bunker Sands Wetland Center. Photo by Kelley Pettit

concepts and management. Wanda was able to help us understand the carbon and nitrogen cycles and many other ecological concepts from a mile-high perspective with her fantastic graphics.

The next three Saturdays consisted of field trips. The first, held on October 5, 2024 at the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site (SHS), began with a presentation by Paul Buchanan, Ph.D., professor of geology at Kilgore Junior College and UT Tyler, on geology and soils of Texas. Then chapter member, Leslie Smith, retired pilot, provided a presentation on climate and weather, helping us understand how and when weather events occur. After lunch, we watched a short video introducing us to the prehistoric Caddo Indian village and ceremonial center located on the original El Camino Real de los Tejas that is still used by Caddo Indians for ceremonies today. We were surprised with an excellent guided tour of the site provided by Friends of Caddo Mounds volunteers, Victor Galan and Jeff Williams. Victor is an archeologist and he and Jeff have been involved with the site for many years and offered first-hand knowledge of the work it took to build the current grass hut after a former one was destroyed in a tornado in 2019.

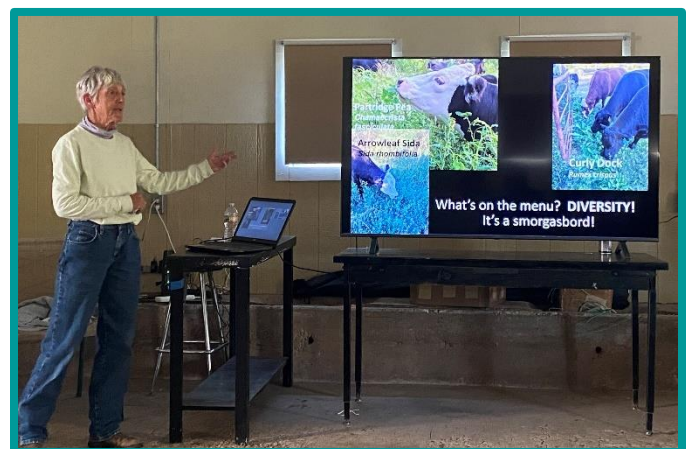
Then on October 12, 2024, we visited the John Bunker Sands Wetland Center for a very informative tour of the site and interactive



2024 trainees on a tour of the John Bunker Sand Wetland Center.

water quality activity provided by the site's education staff. We had the great pleasure of meeting Blaine Carnes, an ornithologist conducting research at the John Bunker Sands Wetland Center and the Trinity River Audubon Center. He told us about his research and showed us a common yellowthroat that he had just trapped in the woods along one of the wetlands. Later chapter members, Mark Edmund and Lindsey Smith helped us identify birds along the boardwalk. Mark brought a spotting scope that made learning the birds enjoyable. We got to see one of the bald eagles that nest on a power transmission pole that was built just for the pair after they tried building a nest a pole with live wires.

Julie Mattox hosted us at the Northeast Prairie



Community Classroom in Yantis for a great presentation about her trials and triumphs converting a 5-acre piece of property that used to be a dairy farm to a native prairie. She took us on a walk on the property and some of us were enthralled by her "gentle cows" as

much as by the native plants growing on the site.

Then Sonnia Hill, amateur botanist extraordinaire, gave a presentation followed



Sonnia Hill shows trainees the plant characteristics of salvias in the Lamiaceae family

by an interactive experience in identifying plant families using plant characteristics visible only with a 10x loupe. I brought a trailing fuzzy bean (*Strophostyles helvola*) plant for us to use in identifying plants in the Fabaceae (pea family). After we dissected the flowers and fruit to look at identifying characteristics, Julie threw the large clump of vine over the fence and her cows quickly devoured it demonstrating that cows do enjoy a diverse plant diet. Julie is convinced that grazing is an important component of maintaining a healthy prairie or woodland understory, something we also learned from Kyle Brunson at Gus Engeling WMA on a previous field trip. Julie's philosophy of land stewardship follows that of Aldo Leopold who said that the five tools of land management are: axe, cow, plow, fire, and gun.

We have one more training class on November 2, 2024 where we will learn about entomology from Allen Smith and volunteers as teachers from Wanda and me. Graduation will be held November 9, 2024.



Bushy bluestem, goldenrod and fall aster blooming at Northeast Prairie Community Classroom site

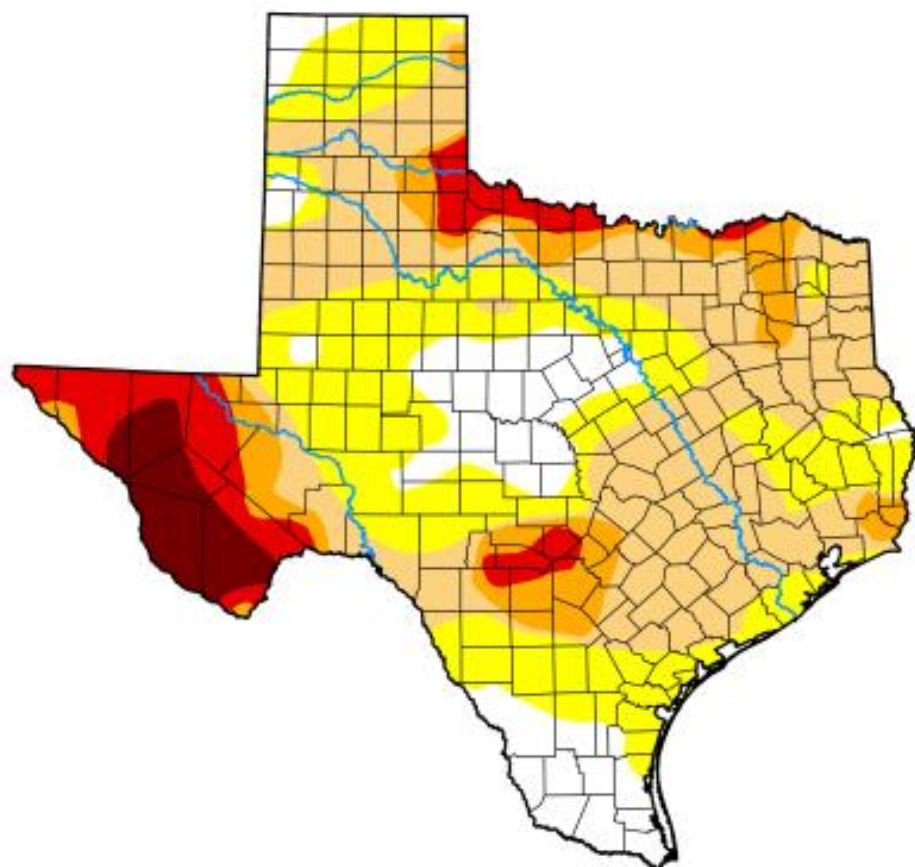
Initial Training Spring 2025

Plans are underway to provide an initial training program next spring, starting at the end of January and ending mid-April. We will share updates with you so you can encourage your friends and colleagues to sign up!



U.S. Drought Monitor Texas

October 15, 2024
(Released Thursday, Oct. 17, 2024)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



Intensity:

- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

Author:

Brian Fuchs
National Drought Mitigation Center



droughtmonitor.unl.edu



Hello Caddo Mounds Volunteers!

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

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.

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



Project FeederWatch

Friday, November 1, is the first day to count birds for FeederWatch's 38th season. Thank you to everyone who has signed up. If you haven't signed up yet, [join today!](#) Remember, you don't need feeders to participate, and you can count for as little time as you want.

1. **Sign up** – [If you have not yet signed up, join today!](#) During the season, it takes a few weeks from when you sign up for print materials to arrive, but you can begin counting right away.
2. **Select your count site** – Choose a portion of your yard that is easy to monitor, preferably an area that is visible from one vantage point. Even if you don't provide feeders, you can still count birds for FeederWatch.
3. **Choose your count days** – Project FeederWatch runs from November 1 through April 30. For each count, select two consecutive days as often as once a week. We recommend that you leave at least five days when you do not count between each of your two-day counts. Counting less often is fine. Even if you only count once all season, your data are valuable.
4. **How to count** – Watch your count site as much or as little as you want during each two-day count. For every species you can identify, record the maximum number of individuals visible simultaneously during your two-day count. *Keep one running tally across both days. This way you won't count the same bird twice.*
5. **What to count** – Count all birds you see in your count site during the day that are attracted to resources that you provide, even if they don't visit feeders, but ignore birds that simply fly over your count site.
6. **Optional additional data** – There are several types of additional information you can record and submit with your bird counts: 1) mammals that you see in your count site, 2) sick birds and bird mortality, 3) behavioral interactions and predation events, 4) management activities that you do at your site, and 5) feelings about things you see during your counts.
7. **Report your counts** – Submit counts through the Your Data section of our website or the FeederWatch mobile app.



Lakes and Pines Chapter

PRESENTATION & CHAPTER MEETING

If you love native plants and gardening that benefits our local wildlife, join us for Missy's presentation on how Pocket Prairies serve as mini ecosystems, supporting local wildlife and promoting biodiversity.



Wednesday, November 6th, 2:00-3:30pm

Bob Wells Nursery at Sorelle Farms

975 County Road 2220 in Mineola

(A short meeting will follow the presentation)



Email us: Lakes-and-Pines-Chapter@npsot.org



**MISSY SINGLETON
BIOLOGIST**

“POCKET PRAIRIES”

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, and 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.



Please join us with your spouse or significant other for our Annual ETCMN Holiday Party and Celebration on Saturday, December 7, 2024, at the Tyler Nature Center Tyler, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Smoked turkey and brisket, and drinks will be provided. Please bring your favorite salad, vegetable side dish or dessert. We typically are heavy on the desserts so would like a variety of healthy sides. Please type up your recipe to post with your contribution. This allows everyone to photograph and make your recipe in the future and also helps those with food allergies.

While out and about look for a fun gift item (\$15.00 range) related to nature for a white elephant gift exchange. This is always the highlight of the party. It could be a cool gadget for outdoors, a nice nature related book, yard art, nick knock made from natural ingredients. The possibilities are endless. Be creative! You want your contribution to be the gift that everyone steals. Make sure to bring a gift for any guest attending. We want everyone to join in the gift exchange.

We will be celebrating all the accomplishments of our chapter as well as voting on our nominees for officers next year and will also accept nominations from the floor with the consent of the nominees.

Please RSVP right away to Caryn Vorsas at carynvorsas@gmail.com. The deadline is Friday, November 29. We need numbers for the food and drink count.



MAPLE TOUR

Wednesday December 04, 2024

Time: 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Location: Rose Garden Center

420 Rose Park Dr. Tyler, Texas 75702

*Tour will begin at the
Heritage Garden Pergola

Experience an exclusive private walking tour of the Japanese Maples and other plants growing in the Tyler Botanical Garden. The tour will be led by Mr. Keith Hansen, Smith County AgriLife Extension Service Horticulturist Emeritus. As a special treat, the Smith County Master Gardeners will be on hand to provide detailed information featuring the maples and other shade loving plants in the shade garden beds.



Cost: \$20.00 dollars per person

- Pre-Registration is non refundable
- Tour is limited to 25 people
- Payment will be invoiced and must be completed by December 03, 2024
- Last day to register is December 02, 2024
- Tour will take place Rain or Shine

To register or for more information, please contact the Smith County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office at 903-590-2980.

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION



The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other classification protected by federal, state, or local law and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.

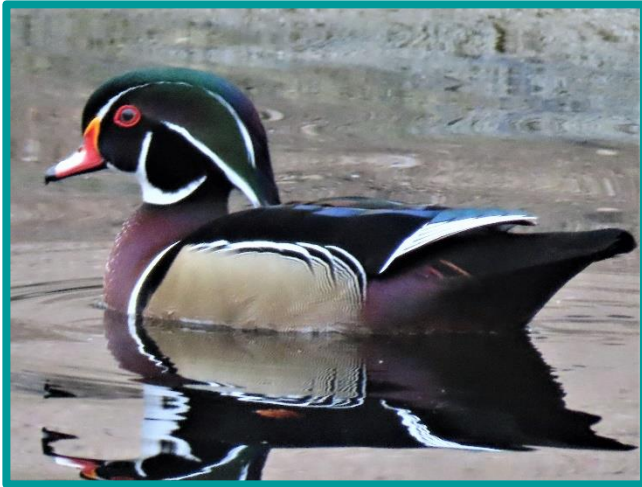



Photo courtesy Ann Reynolds

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

November 9, 1:00 pm, TNC Wildscape Workday

November 12, TMN Tuesday, noon – 1:00 pm, Technical Guidance Projects Showcase

No Chapter Meeting in November!!

December 7, 11:00 am, Chapter meeting and holiday party, TNC

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

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. **November 12, Sparrow Talk, Laura Wilson**

NPSOT-Tyler – Thank you to all Master Naturalists who attended the 2024 NPSOT Tyler meetings. If you would like to join our email list of program events and meeting dates, please send a message to Kimberly Smith, at kimsmithatx@gmail.com. **Please note, our program meetings for 2024 are complete. We look forward to seeing you in January 2025 when our meetings resume.**

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

NPSOT – Longview – 4th 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