

Wood Duck Whistler

July 2023

President's Message by Wanda Rauscher



Storms in the night and suddenly it's summer-humid & hot, hot, hot. I grew up in the southeast part of Texas where the occasional humidity we've experienced in our area lately is a constant summer companion. As at least one of our master naturalists has found from personal experience this summer that hydration is REALLY important. Drink that water before you are thirsty. CDC says 24 ounces of water per hour when active in the heat to avoid heat illness.

Hope you are enjoying our denizens of summer- the scissortail flycatchers, the cicadas, the frogs, the butterflies & moths, the damselflies and dragonflies, and the lightning bugs. I am still working on understanding the species diversity in our area. So how do you know which cricket frog you've heard? Well, there are three species of cricket frogs in the U.S. and one can tell *Acris gryllus* (not in our region- further east and in Florida) from *Acris blanchardi*/*Acris crepitans* but sadly you can't tell *Acris blanchardi* from *Acris crepitans* by the call. The call of *Acris blanchardi*/*Acris crepitans* is described as "like someone hitting two stones together at a slight angle so that they are actually scraping against each

other for a fraction of a second". On the other hand, *Acris gryllus* call is described as "like two stones or marbles striking each other, but this time they are hitting straight on so the contact is shorter in duration". *Acris blanchardi* was once considered a subspecies of *Acris crepitans* until after a genetic study published in 2008. Want to encourage more *Acris blanchardi* in your local pond? A 2018 paper found that having a gravel bank, low sloped shore, and floating mats of vegetation (duckweed and/or algal) increases population size.



Acris blanchardi (taken at Daingerfield State Park)

July 27 will be our evening Summer Social. We will be at the Mineola Nature Preserve Pavilion (& big thanks to Allison Utley for securing our reservation). Watch the Eblast for details.

Look Who is Turning 100 Years Old

Ann Reynolds

The Centennial Celebration of Texas State Parks is in full swing as summer brings more Texans outdoors. To commemorate 100 years, every state park will host at least one special community event during the 2023 Centennial year, along with regular park events all year long.

The Texas Legislature took the final vote to send a constitutional amendment establishing the Centennial Parks Conservation Fund to voters in November. The trust fund would consist of money appropriated to the fund by the legislature; gifts, grants, and donations received for the fund; and investment earnings

on interest earned. The trust fund would be used for the creation and improvement of state parks. The fund will be an essential tool that ensures all Texans have access to state park lands for years to come.

Here is a [link to state park history](#)



Texas Master Naturalist 2023 Annual Meeting – to be held Thursday, October 12th through Sunday, October 15th this year at the southernmost point of the South Texas Plains ecoregion, surrounded by mesquite and prickly pear brush country in McAllen, Texas. The full agenda will post in June. Housing is available now. Go to <https://txmn.tamu.edu/2023-annual-meeting/> to see details.

♥ Happy 25th Anniversary to the Texas Master Naturalist Program! ♥

June 1, 2023 by [administrator](#)

In 2022, Texas Master Naturalists reached over 289,969 youth, adults, and private land owners. This is more than 6.864 million people to date. Service hours in 2022 were valued at \$11.86 million and more than \$146.80 million since the program's inception.

As part of the Texas Master Naturalist program, Master Naturalists have made considerable

impacts over the past 25 years of the program. In 2022 alone, our Texas Master Naturalist Program volunteers conquered service projects, developed conservation partnerships, changed landscapes, and enlightened our communities.

City Nature Challenge Winners

Polly Jones

Trail camera
Night vision goggles
Binoculars
2 Parks passes

Lindsey Smith
Nick Makarenko
Allison Utley
Jim Walker and
Crystal Mann



The Texas Master Naturalist Program's mission is to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the State of Texas.



Initial Certification

Jean Eddins

Recertification

Amy Cumbie
Nicholas Marenko

250 Hours

Amy Cumbie

500 Hours

Mark Edmund
Bob Lumpkins
Becky Whisenant

Tyler Nature Center Update

Ann Reynolds

On June 3rd and 10th, some hearty Naturalists braved the scorching heat and soaking humidity to almost complete the redesign of the Tyler Nature Center's Wildscape. One area is lacking in mulch and some plants will need to be replaced but it is beginning to look really good.



Jean Eddins and Kay Jenkins.
Not pictured are Gail Bean and Ann Reynolds

Celebrating Pollinator Week: Bee Day in the Garden

Gail Bean

East Texas Master Naturalists joined the celebration of Pollinator Week June 24 at Tyler Rose Center. Bee Day in the Garden is designed for children and adults with scheduled activities including Q&A Workshops: Bees 101: What's the Buzz, and Becoming a Beekeeper with East Texas Beekeepers Association as well as art, film, and vendor activities for children outdoors and indoors. Kid's activities outside were promoted by local associations who braved the heat to educate the community about pollinators and their importance to the environment.

At our booth, led by Wanda Rauscher, and manned by Carol Lanthrum, Angela Hudson and Gail Bean, kids of all ages either



participated in a Pollinator Safari where they visited some of the gardens to identify a big bee, a medium bee, a butterfly and an additional pollinator to win bee-related prizes, they made bee and butterfly stamped pollinator papers, or made really cool "button on a string buzzy bee whirlygigs" and decorated them. Pollinator questions and answers were provided, as well as an

informational Pollinator brochure to educate everyone about pollinator facts and numbers in our area and in the state. Master Naturalists chapter brochures were also available. We had many people stop by and test their knowledge of pollinators.

Here are the Pollinator Facts-

Our most important pollinators are bees. There are more than 800 Texas species (about 300 in East Texas). 90% of our bees are solitary (not social). 70% of our native bees are ground nesters and 30% are cavity nesters. Our second most important pollinators are flies, especially the "flower flies" Syrphidae. Other pollinators include butterflies (more than 400 species in Texas), moths (more than 4700 species in Texas), wasps, beetles, and hummingbirds

A New Friend

Denise Gary

Say hello to my little friend! This odd-looking critter is a Macleay's Owlfly (*Ululodes macleayanus*). It caught my eye in my garden, due to the interesting position it takes at rest. The crepuscular insects perch with their



Macleay's Owlfly on Scarlet Catchfly

abdomen perpendicular to the rest of their body during the day, a deception meant to mimic the appearance of a protruding twig. Notice my friend's extremely long, heavily clubbed antennae, which is distinctive to this family of insects and handily separates them from dragonflies and antlions. Like dragonflies, owlflies are zippy, aerial predators, snagging their victims in flight.

The common name of owlfly references the large, divided eyes of the Ascalaphidae family, which enables them to see well in the low light of twilight, when they are most active. Related to beneficial lacewings and antlions, owlflies voraciously consume destructive insect pests, both in larval and adult forms. They are literally our friends, so please let them snooze in peace if you are fortunate to come upon one.

What's up with the Wild Bunch Lately?

Bob Lumpkins

Over the past few months, the Wild Bunch has been "bushwhacking" various trails at the Tyler Nature Center (TNC), clearing out overgrown areas and removing and cutting back dead limbs and plant overgrowth. Like the past trail work done at Faulkner Park, the group anticipates that trail maintenance will be an ongoing project throughout the year.



Vicki Betts enjoying the wildlife while sitting on the new bench.

However, for the latest project, the Wild Bunch has turned its attention toward trail bench restoration at TNC. There are about a dozen benches along the trails at TNC and some of



Paul Bateman and Rodney Schroedere taking a break after finishing a bench redo

them are in marginal condition. If you have walked any of the trails, you have probably seen the damage from exposure to the weather conditions and rot.

Vicki Hoppis, who coordinates activities for the group, has been working with Kailee Bedunah (TNC Summer Intern) to organize and prioritize which benches would be done this go around. TNC provided the materials and the Wild Bunch (Vicki Hoppis, Vicki Betts, Rodney Schroeder, Paul Bateman and Bob Lumpkins) provided the “manpower”. The group removed old and sometimes broken bench pieces from five benches and replaced with freshly cut to size lumber. Overall, the re-builds went well.

The Center has indicated they would like to have additional benches restored in the future as materials become available. To that end, the group anticipates needing additional volunteers for both the bench project and trail maintenance.

If interested in volunteering with the Wild Bunch in the future, contact Vicki Hoppis by TEXT (205-310-0824) and let her know you would like to be

on the invitation list for upcoming projects around Tyler and the TNC.

Member Spotlight

Ann Reynolds

This month's member spotlight features my neighbor, Dawn Bahr.



Where were you born/raised? I was born and raised in Houston, TX. I graduated from Clear Lake High School in 1985 and went to college in Lubbock. After college, I moved to Dallas area and raised our kids in Highland Village, TX.

Where do you live now? Holly Lake Ranch since 1985.

Would you care to share with us about your family? My husband Chuck and I have been married 33 years. We have 2 sons: Conrad is 29 and Matt is 27. No wives and no grandchildren. We have 4 dogs, all rescues, ranging in age from 13 years to 2 years old.

What is/was your career? I have been an RN for 33 years.

Education? I graduated with my BSN in 1989 from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center and got my MSN in Nursing Education from Drexel University in 2014.

What are some of your hobbies? Reading, hiking, and kayaking. I can do just about any type of craft and I love to play any kind of game.

What do you attribute your love of nature? I love wildlife! I was raised around wildlife so I learned to appreciate observing them. When we moved to East Texas, I had more opportunities to observe wildlife and my interests really gravitated towards snake identification because I was afraid of them. My fear has evolved into curiosity and I have become an avid snake identifier.

What was it that interested you in the Texas Master Naturalist program? A friend told me about it somewhere around 2006. I had kids and was working full time and couldn't participate then so I waited until the time was right.

What class were you in? 2020

What has been your favorite volunteer experience? I love hiking and doing iNaturalist.

Favorite nature activity? Hiking and learning about nature journaling.

Resource recommendations – John Muir Laws is the best when it comes to nature journaling. He has an online "convention" every year. Typically, I volunteer to moderate the Zooms but this year I am just attending. <https://johnmuirlaws.com/>

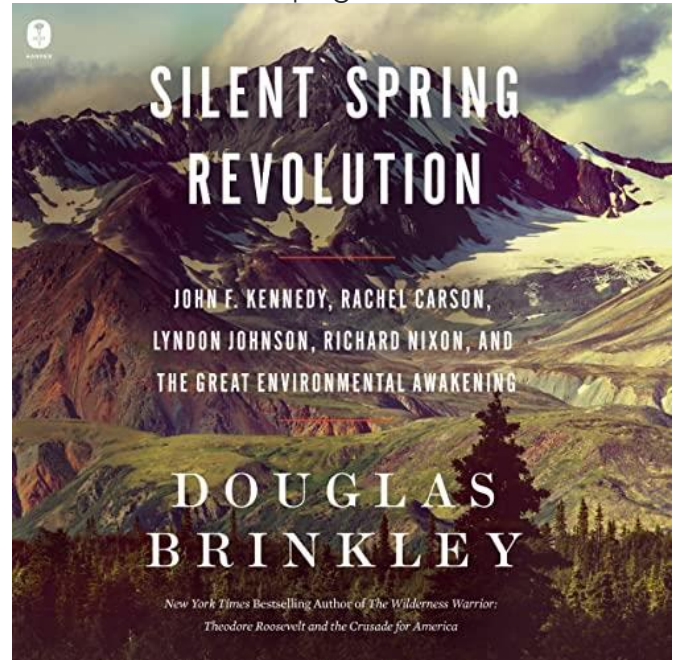
Describe what would be your perfect, bucket-list natural science encounter or experience. To go to all of the national parks and hike at least one trail. I would even settle for visiting all of the Texas Parks.

Advice for new master naturalists? Try everything until you find the thing you are most passionate about. Get to know a lot of people outside your class. Go to the annual meeting, it is so fun!!

Book Reviews

Lance Homeniuk

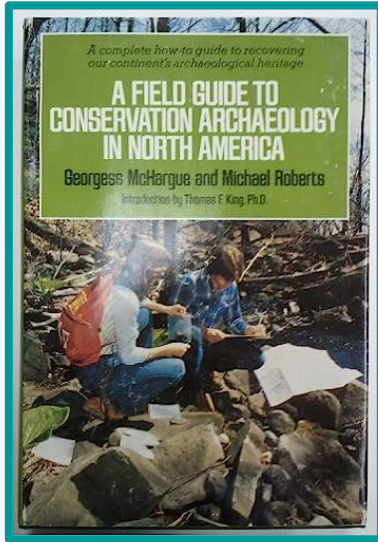
Silent Spring Revolution by Douglas Brinkley. Published 2022 by Harper Collins Publishers, NY, NY. Hardcover, 857 pages.



The subtitle, I think, pretty much says it all: John F. Kennedy, Rachel Carson, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, and the Great Environmental Awakening. Well, almost all of the story. As Paul Harvey would have said, there is the rest of the story. Besides Carson there are many of the other "protoenvironmentalists", as Brinkley calls *them*, in the "third wave", as he calls it. Some are activists, some are politicians, and one is a Supreme Court Justice. There was a lot of environmental law and many parks, refuges and rivers protected during the sixties and seventies. And some of the big movers and shakers are surprising. But I must confess, I began this mighty tome after Christmas and just now finished. Big payoff – my little black book of authors/titles to be on the lookout for expanded by 75 entries (before I made it to the bibliography)!

A Field Guide to Conservation Archeology in North America by Georgess McHargue and Michael Roberts. Published 1977 by J. B.

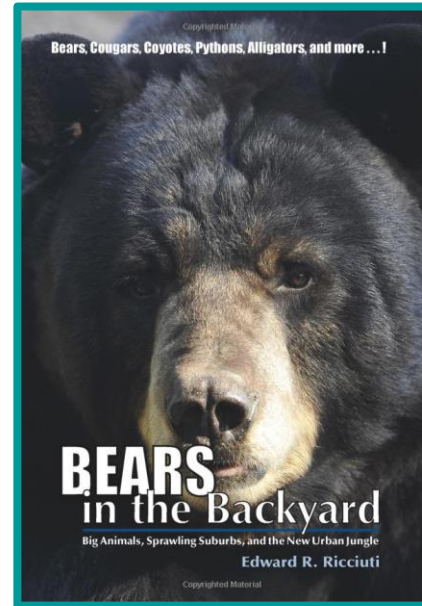
Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, PA.
Hardcover, 319 pages.



If your turn to citizen science features the search for minor and overlooked ancient sites in your own locale, copious note taking and verification, but not to the collection of artifacts yourself, well you may be interested in conservation archeology. This is a handbook that can guide you in its twelve chapters and copious appendices in the support discipline. Not for mere pot-hunters and looters, nor for institutional archeologists with their diggers, technical analysts and long-term projects. The appeal is for discoverers of minor sites lost in the weeds or woods who wish to make incremental contributions to the science, mainly by finding surface traces and documenting the existence (and pinpointing the coordinates) for inclusion in county, state or national databases. The experts might then become aware of the scope of possible dig sites for future research. Think "Indiana Jones life". Tips on volunteering with real archeological projects are given. I wonder if they are still applicable?

BEARS in the Backyard: Big Animals, Sprawling Suburbs, and the New Urban Jungle, by Edward R. Ricciuti. Published 2014 by The Countryman Press, Woodstock, VT. Hardcover, 248 pages.

Guess which large North American animal is the most dangerous? In terms of numbers of human deaths, injuries and disease it is the _____! Really!! (Spoiler alert – I will divulge the scientific name at the end of the article). Also



revealed in this book are predators, mammalian and reptilian; invasive imported serpents; and back from the brink of extirpation survivors. What they have in common is THEIR expanding populations coming into contact with OUR expanding population and their adaptability to habitat change. Do not look for great white sharks, grizzlies or wolves terrorizing vulnerable city dwellers, swimmers and campers. Each chapter provides basic information about a single species or group, anecdotal accounts of contact with humans, and a discussion of causes of problems. It ends with a section of advice – how to avoid contact and what to do if it is unavoidable.

Hammerhead Flatworm: The Stealth Invader

Dale Wade

There are over 800 invasive species, and counting, in Texas. In HB 865 Texas defines invasive species as a species that is not native to an ecosystem and whose introduction to the ecosystem causes or is likely to cause

economic harm, environmental harm, or harm to human health.

We all know many species such as the feral pig (*Sus scrofa*), zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*), and red imported fire ant (*Solenopsis invicta*). Here is a little known invasive now making East Texas its home. Odds are that you have yet to encounter these due to size and habitat. Still, they remain as harmful to our environment as the big boys.

Hammerhead Flatworm (*Bipalium kewense*)

You will most likely uncover this guy while working in the vegetable garden or flower bed. This is where their favorite meal, earthworms, reside. They secrete a chemical, tetrodotoxin, which it uses to deter predators, immobilize prey, and aid in earthworm digestion.

You cannot confuse them with earthworms as they are longer, 8-12 inches, with a noticeable



half-moon shaped head. The body shows 3-5 dorsal stripes with the second and fourth being grey. The head is usually grey-black with an incomplete black neck collar.

If you unearth one, follow these disposal suggestions. First, only pick one up with gloves or a tool, never your bare hands. The chemical secretion is a neurotoxin that irritates the skin. Secondly, put the worm in a plastic sealable bag adding salt and a bit of vinegar. Finally, seal the bag and place in the freezer

overnight. Yep, you want to ensure that it is completely dead before disposal.

Should you find one in the garden, NEVER chop it up as it can reproduce by asexual fragmentation. Each piece can regenerate into another worm within a few weeks. You can try to deter them by incorporating boric acid into your garden. They do not like acidic soils.

If you do find one, take a picture. Send it along with location coordinates to Ashley Morgan-Olvera, M.Sc. (invasives@shsu.edu).

Everson, Bart. Wormy thing (2007). Retrieved 19 June 2023 from: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/editor/1490805634/>. Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0)

Wait. What?

Dale Wade –While a coyote (*Canis latrans*) has a sense of smell 40 times that of a human, a bloodhound has a sense of smell 1.3 times better than the coyote.

Ann Reynolds - Heat is the deadliest weather condition. Tornadoes, hurricanes, and flooding can devastate entire towns at once, but the weather condition that proves deadliest to humans is actually heat. Looking at the numbers from the past 30 years, tornadoes caused an average of 70 deaths a year and flooding an average of 81, but heat caused an average of 130 deaths a year. If you don't have access to air conditioning or sufficient water, excessive heat can be deadly.

Sandy Tibbs – The fossil remains of the largest penguin species on the planet were unearthed in Antarctica. The fossils belonged to a colossal penguin that weigh 250 pounds and was 6' 8" (the same height of LeBron James). It lived approximately 37 million years ago. Because of its size, this species has been called the "Colossus Penguin."

Native Plant of the Month

Meleena Byram

Coral Bean (*Erythrina herbacea*)
Fabaceae (Leguminosae)

Coral bean blooms from May to June, before the leaves appear, with glowing dark red waxy flowers on spikes that can be up to one foot long. Later, thin dark pods about 8 inches long open to expose brilliant red (and poisonous) seeds inside. Its trunk and branches have stout, curved thorns, and the heart-shaped leaves are glossy green. Coral bean is very cold tender, and above 28 degrees F. it will die back to the roots like a perennial, but will return in the spring, often reaching 3 to 5 feet in a season. The roots are hardy as far north as Dallas. In the Rio Grande Valley, it loses its leaves but does not die back and can grow to be a small tree ranging from 6 to 25 feet high. It grows along the U.S. southeast coastal plains and in East Texas in sandy open woods, but can adapt to clay and other soils. A good choice for hot, sunny sites, coral bean is moderately drought tolerant once established, and grows best in well-drained soil. Hummingbirds are attracted to the red, showy flowers.

USDA Hardiness Zone: 7

Source: aggiehort.tamu.edu, Texas Native Plant Database

I think native Coral Bean is a great addition to any East Texas landscape, given its love of heat and drought tolerance. Its red blooms attract hummingbirds, and I'm sure other pollinators. I am looking forward to planting my seedlings I've grown. I enjoy adding native plants to my landscape any chance I get.



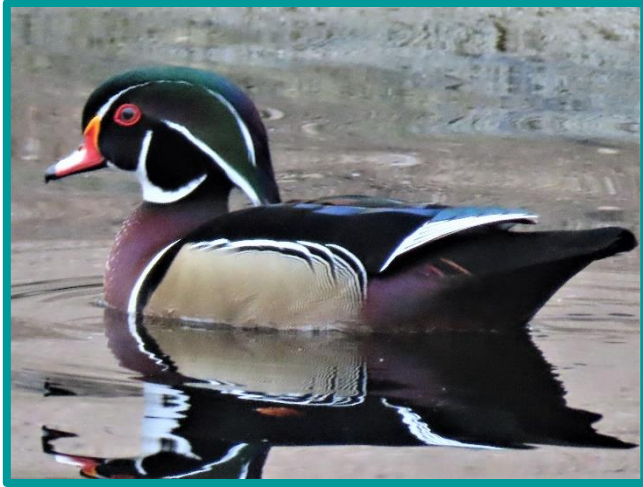


Photo courtesy Ann Reynolds

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

Wildscape Work Day, watch eBlast for evening work.

July 11 – TMN Tuesday noon – General topic: Eclipse

July 20 articles for the chapter newsletter due to Ann Reynolds

July 27 – Chapter Meeting and Summer Evening Social, Mineola Nature Preserve, see eBlast for details.

Sept 2 Caddo Culture Day Celebration, Caddo Mounds State Historic Site

Sept 5-Oct. 31 Master Volunteer Entomology Advanced Training. See eBlast.

November 9-11th Native Plant Society of Texas Fall Symposium, Nacogdoches
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY Adopt-A-Loop

Need members to be Lake Tyler site reporters for three locations: Caldwell Zoo, East Texas Arboretum and Botanical Society, and Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center. Your responsibilities are to visit the site seasonally, complete a site report, upload any wildlife photos to eBird and iNaturalist. If interested, please contact Dale Wade

IN THE COMMUNITY

NETFO – 1st Wednesday 6:30 pm, Alethea SS Classroom at Greggton UMC (1101 Pine Tree Road) in Longview. **(not meeting during summer)**

Tyler Audubon Society, 2nd Tuesday, 6:30 pm St. Francis Episcopal Church, Education Room, 3232 Jan Avenue, Tyler. **(not meeting during summer)**

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://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: 2022-2023** 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: 2022-2023 Phil** Guthrie

Immediate Past President: 2022-2023 Paul Wick

DIRECTORS:

Advanced Training (AT): Lead - Beverly Guthrie 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: Beverly Guthrie

Membership: Wanda Rauscher

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: Dale Wade

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 5/9/23