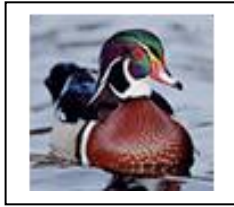


# Wood Duck Whistler



East Texas Chapter Master Naturalists

February 2020 Volume 20, Issue 2



## It's Coming

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It's the month before spring and all through the land it is raining and wet. But if you wait, the sun will shine yet.

The decision is to look up or down, which will it be? You have green peeping up from the ground just bursting with delicate leaves and the promise of spring. Little peeps from the birds above call your attention as

they warn of your presence. Bright males are calling out in practice for the songs to come.

Best make your decision. Soon the season will burst all around you. Though the cold may keep returning for a spell.

Next thing you know the bugs and crawlies will be underfoot and all around. Frankly,

there might be some confused bugs around already while they try to figure out the weather.

So go now. The birds and the greens are waiting. Before long you'll have to avoid being eaten alive. While the bees are just harmless on their busy way.

Don't you just love spring?



Our next monthly chapter meeting will be held on Thursday, February 27<sup>th</sup>. For our meeting we will have information about a number of projects for which volunteer service hours may be earned. Format will be short overviews presented to everyone, followed by an opportunity to ask questions at manned table displays. As an added bonus expect to

see some of this year's hands-on activity additions to recurring project events!

### Coming up:

**Native Plant Society**  
**March 2, 6:30 PM.** The meeting is being held at the Discovery Science Place Annex in downtown Tyler.

## Arbor Day in Tyler 2020 by Lance Homeniuk & Kathy Riffe



Pictured are three presidents of the east Texas Chapter, TMN, posing with Shorty Squirrel at Faulkner Park, Tyler, prior to taking part in tree planting on Saturday, Jan. 25th. L to R: Lance Homeniuk, immediate past president, Shorty Squirrel, Mike Price, past president, Paul Wick, current president. We were only missing Neal Stilley, past president, to make five of a kind.

and the **Tyler** Parks and Recreation Department.

Other Arbor Day events the East Texas Chapter participated in this year were at TJC, Lindale, on Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>, and UT Tyler, on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

Kathy Riffe brought photos from the TJC Lindale Arbor Day on February 8, 2020.

Prior to planting, Daniel Duncum, Texas A&M Forest Service, explained health benefits provided by trees. He is flanked by members of the host organizations.



Other members present, but not pictured were Nan and Paul Bateman of the 2020 class. Trees of several species were planted throughout the park. Loblolly pine, holly, pecan, cypress, and a white oak were put in the ground by the lake. Volunteers came from all backgrounds—gardeners, youth organizations, college students, families with small children, and TMN's, all working under the supervision of Texas Forest Service personnel and hosted by **Tyler** Trees Committee, Keep **Tyler** Beautiful

Some of the volunteers planting one of the 56 trees of various species planted that day around the TJC Lindale campus and nearby park.



Mike Price and a new acquaintance Scott planting a holly tree at the lake in Faulkner Park.



Many of the 220 volunteers that came that day to plant the trees and help the community.



(Top two photos from Lance Homeniuk, bottom Kathy Riffe)

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Vicki Hoppis and new class member Allison Utley. We talked with many of the volunteers and gave information about the importance of trees and about the East Texas Master Naturalist organization.

## The President's Message by Paul Wick

Our East Texas Chapter is off to a great start for 2020. We have our largest class yet with 35 new members, a comfortable classroom at Discovery Science Place, enthusiastic members and many outreach and volunteer service opportunities. It is good to see the vitality of many members who contribute to make our classes and chapter activities run smoothly.

While the wet winter days may dampen some of our outdoor activities, members are still involved in trail maintenance and clean up at several area parks and arbor day plantings to name a few. While I sip my coffee in the morning, I can participate in Feeder Watch where I usually identify over 12 different bird species at my backyard feeder.

But spring is just around the corner. At our next chapter meeting, Wanda

Rauscher has planned a program to showcase many of our volunteer activities. Also, Charlotte Sanders is working on having a bio-blitz for a chapter activity day.

As our chapter is growing, the board has reorganized and expanded our chapter responsibilities with adding new directors and more committees. All of this is to take advantage of our talent base and use the energy of our members effectively.



If you see a place or have an interest that you would like to be involved, let me know.

## February Book Review by Lance Homeniuk

The Wild Marsh Four Seasons at Home in Montana, by Rick Bass, Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt, 2009. Hardback, 6.25" X 8.25" X 1.25", 375 pages. \$26 when new, \$4.20 from ebay.

I had not heard of Rick Bass before but he seems to be a renowned nature writer with 24 titles to his credit. How could I have missed him? I will definitely look for his books in the future. Maybe I will enjoy the next one

more. At first I thought it was just me, so before putting my two cents worth out here for all to see I did some checking online. Amazon gives this book four stars, Goodreads three stars. And the reviews are all over the place. So you may be one of the fans or one of the "wish-I-could-be-a-fan-but" crowd.

Here is my attempt at a balanced argument. First, it's a big book, covering 12 months in 12 chapters of about

30 pages each. The author lives in the remote Yaak Valley of northwest Montana, in the midst of near wilderness most of us only visit on vacation. He is a naturalist, a keen observer, and a thinker. It seems his modus operandi was to daily take his observations and musings on nature to a little cabin studio on his property and churn out whatever came to mind, adding to previous days' narrative without break. If you are "into" (continued next page)



(clip art)



## Book Review by Lance Homeniuk

the stream of consciousness style you might like this. However, he comes back to the same thought, even the same passage over again. And I found the redundancies distracting, and eventually irksome. And it seems to me he tries too hard to be literary, overusing metaphors, similes, analogies, and the thesaurus. Why use one adjective when you can find three? Why write one verb when there are two perfectly good synonyms to add to it? I appreciated the poetic use of prose, but to a point. Then it seemed forced.

In summation, this is a potentially good book, with lots of treats to savor if you are willing to dig them out of the gilded dross. It certainly could have used a second draft or an editor's blue pencil. Or a mentor like Ernest Hemingway: "Rick, you said this already. Twice. In the same chapter. Let it go. And use shorter, less self-consciously flowery verbiage."

Or better yet, maybe Reader's Digest will bring it out as a condensed book. All the good stuff in 160 pages!

Full disclosure: I am on page 131, early May. I have had to discipline myself to read a few pages a day, lest I take it Half Priced Books unfinished (perish the thought!). I wrote the review anyway, afraid if I waited 'til I was done with December I'd have forgotten what came before.

And now for something completely different!

Forest Child by Marni McGee, Illustrated by A. Scott Banfill, published Aladdin Paperbacks, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, NY, NY. 1994.

This is a gorgeously illustrated book: detailed artwork in vibrant colors in a realistic style. The book is quite thin, only 20 or so pages (unnumbered), with hard covers, contrary to the publisher's

name. It is a larger format though – 8 inches by 10 inches, as a good picture book should be.

The story is simple, with a fantasy component. The forest inhabitants, living and nonliving, talk to each other and to a lost little boy. It took me as long to read aloud (to myself, I admit) as I spent studying each picture. I loved the owl's feathers. Each vane of the primaries and fiber of the contours were visible. The fern fronds only lacked sori, but maybe they were there – I didn't use a magnifying glass.

I have been collecting children's books for the Longview Nature Center's reading room and have found many books, of a wide range of quality, and this is my personal favorite. It is a former library book, with stamping inside and a label on the spine, so I will understand if it is not up to snuff for their collection. But it will not lack a home! I searched online and found copies ranging from \$1.09 to \$45.17 (!yikes!).

## Law & Ethics- What Master Naturalists Need to Know

Boyd Sanders is a park interpreter and exhibit coordinator who has been working with the roughly 200,000 visitors a year who flock to Tyler State Park. For the last twelve years he has been leading hikes to teach an appreciation of flora and fauna, demonstrating his skills as one who successfully birds by ear, and introducing visitors to the joys of Dutch oven cooking. Boyd has also assisted the Cypress Basin Chapter Texas Master Naturalists by teaching the unit on Law and Ethics for the last several years.



We've asked Mr. Sanders to help us understand how to be responsible Master Naturalists. If we're leading a hike and a child picks up a blue jay or cardinal feather, do we have to tell them they can't keep it? Eastern bluebirds need to have unsuccessful nests removed during breeding season but does the Migratory Bird Treaty Act mean such nests must be destroyed and not

used in an educational display and how does the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code, Title 5, Chapter 64 apply? How do we get permission to make the occasional spore print to identify mushrooms growing in state parks? For teachers who have inherited display items from predecessors that might need permits, who do they talk to? What mistakes/pitfalls do we need to avoid?

Wanda Rauscher

Be ready for March 26<sup>th</sup>'s ETCMN Chapter meeting.

## Upcoming Class Schedule for Member Info

**2/25/2020**

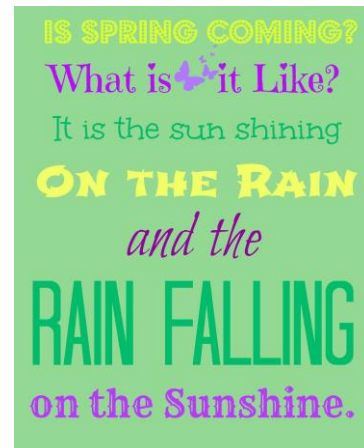
Land Stewardship & Prairie Restoration 3 IT

**3/3/2020**

Aquatic Systems & Mgmt./Ichthyology 3 IT

**3/17/2020**

Mammals 3 IT



**2020 Officers & Committee Chairs**

Paul Wick –President  
Wanda Rauscher – Vice President  
Bob Lumpkins – Secretary  
Phil Guthrie – Treasurer  
Lance Homeniuk – Immediate Past President

Mike Price – Volunteer Service Projects Director  
Beverly Guthrie – Advanced Training Director

Vickie Hoppis – Membership  
Beverly Guthrie – Training Director  
Carl Strange –Volunteer Management System

Jan Barth – Historian/Archivist  
Vacant – Librarian  
Karen Rueb-Hall – Hospitality  
Quita Russell – Hospitality

Lindsey Smith – Communications Dir  
Kathy Riffe – Public Relations  
Dale Wade – Website  
Greg Marshall – Social Media  
Tamara Kratzer - Newsletter Editor

Kevin Herriman - TPWD Advisor  
Clint Perkins – Agrilife Extension Agent-Smith County Advisor

## Monthly Programs

We meet the **Fourth** at 308 N Broadway Bring a friend, invite  
**Thursday** in Tyler. a guest.  
at the Discovery Join us at **6:30 PM** Everyone is  
Science Place for socializing before welcomed.  
Annex Bldg our meeting.

## Directions and Dues

East Texas Chapter  
Master Naturalists  
Meeting Facility:  
**Discovery Science  
Place Annex Bldg  
308 N Broadway Ave  
Tyler, Texas 75702**  
Directions:

Directions:  
On Broadway Ave on the left from the south or right from the north in downtown Tyler. Turn onto Locust and make a right into the parking lot.

Please send \$20.00 individual (\$35.00 couple)  
**Annual Chapter dues**  
to:  
ETCMN Attn: Treasurer  
Box 131184  
Tyler, TX 75713-1184

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*Your news, stories, comments, photos, and ideas are needed. Tell us about where you volunteer and what you're doing.*

**Deadline is the 15th of every month!**

*Please send items to Tamara Kratzer*

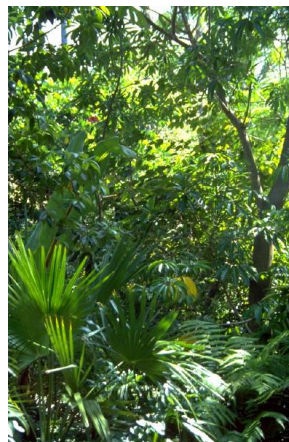
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