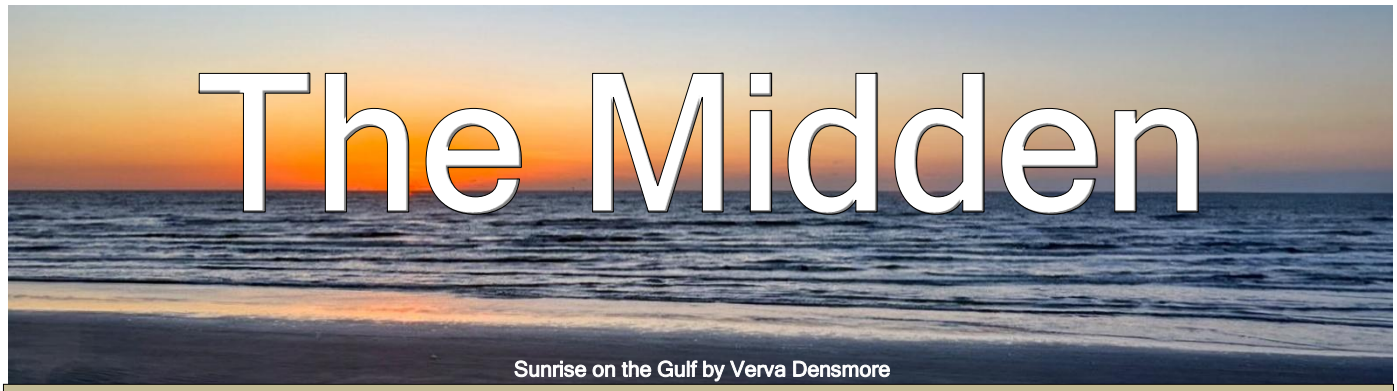
The Midden



Sunrise on the Gulf by Verva Densmore

Galveston Bay Area Chapter - Texas Master Naturalists February 2026

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Next Chapter Meeting

February 5

Discover Texas Sea Grant

By

Brandi Keller
Galveston County Coastal and Marine Resources Extension Agent

At Extension Office* and via Zoom

President's Corner by Mary Dobberstine

Have you ever been asked about the Texas Master Naturalist program by someone who's never heard of it and found yourself struggling to sum it up? With all the places we serve and work we do, I know I have.

As we turn the calendar to 2026 and the 25th anniversary of the Galveston Bay Area Chapter, I've been reflecting on that question – and on the why behind all that we do:

Because Nature Needs Stewards.

For twenty-five years, our chapter has been guided by a simple truth: nature does not protect itself – people do.

Our region is extraordinary. Galveston Bay is one of the most productive estuaries in the nation, surrounded by prairies, wetlands, shorelines, and urban green spaces of remarkable beauty–and real vulnerability.

In his book, *The Gulf: The Making of An American Sea*, historian Jack E. Davis reminds us that the Gulf Coast has repeatedly resisted efforts to be controlled or tamed yet requires our support. The lesson is one of humility: this place demands respect, understanding, and adaptation.

That lesson lies at the heart of the master naturalist mission: 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. We believe that informed people make wiser choices for the land and waters they depend on, healthy habitats are the foundation of resilient ecosystems and stewardship is an action–practiced in the field, the classroom, and the community.

For 25 years, our members have answered that call through hands-on conservation, citizen science, and public education and spent thousands of hours monitoring wildlife, restoring habitat, leading interpretive programs, mentoring new stewards and quietly doing the work that sustains this special place.

Some of that work is highly visible. Much of it is not. All of it matters.

As we celebrate this milestone, we honor those who built the chapter, those carrying the work forward today, and those who will follow - because nature needs stewards–and for 25 years, our chapter has been proud to answer that call.

25TH ANNIVERSARY

See you at the February 5th Chapter Meeting!

Women in Nature: Hallie Daggett by Meade LeBlanc

Imagine living in a log cabin on a mountaintop at 6,400 feet elevation, a strenuous three-mile hike from the nearest dirt road. Supplies and mail are delivered once a week by someone on horseback. Your days are spent alone, scanning the horizon, looking for fires. At the slightest hint of smoke, you leap into action, plot the location on a map, and call the authorities. That's the life of a fire lookout for the U.S. Forest Service. A fire lookout in Massachusetts once said, "There are two types of days in the fire tower . . . days you are so bored that you want to jump out the window, and days that are so hectic that you want to jump out the window." Such was the life that Hallie Daggett chose in 1913 when she was 35 and hired as the Forest Service's first female fire lookout.

Photo courtesy of Forest History Society, Public Domain

Hallie was born in 1878 in Liberty, California, which is now a ghost town. Her father owned the successful Black Bear Mine; he also served as California's lieutenant governor and superintendent of the U.S. Mint in San Francisco. Hallie and her sister Leslie were educated at upscale girls' seminaries in Alameda and San Francisco, raised to be accomplished and refined young women. The girls also spent hours with their brother Ben exploring the land in the rugged Siskiyou Mountains of their childhood home. All three of them learned to ride, hunt, fish and shoot early in life. Hallie was considered especially skilled at trapping and was an expert shot.

In 1913, a position opened for fire lookout at the Eddy Gulch Lookout Station in Klamath National Forest. From that lookout tower, you could see Mt. Shasta to the east at 14,162 feet elevation and the Pacific Ocean to the west. The position was seasonal - starting June 1 and lasting four to seven months, depending on the weather. Hallie's application probably would not have been considered, but for the weakness of the other two applicants - both men. Women had worked for the Forest Service since 1905, but always in clerical positions.

Ranger H. M. McCarthy, the supervisor in charge, was at a loss. He wrote to a colleague that the other two "candidates" were pathetic and could not be considered. He went on to write that the last individual to apply was also "no gentleman." "The novelty of the proposition which has been unloaded upon me, and which I am now endeavoring to pass up to you, may perhaps take your breath away, and I hope your heart is strong enough to stand the shock. It is this: One of the most untiring and enthusiastic applicants which I have for the position is Miss Hallie Morse Daggett, a wide-awake woman of 30 years, who knows and has traversed every trail on the Salmon River watershed and is thoroughly familiar with every foot of the District. She is an ardent advocate of the Forest Service, and seeks the position in evident good faith, and gives her solemn assurance that she will stay with her post faithfully until she is recalled. She is absolutely devoid of the timidity, which is ordinarily associated with her sex as she is not afraid of anything that walks, creeps, or flies. She is a perfect lady in every respect, and her qualifications for the position are vouched for by all who know of her aspirations."

Hallie started work on June 1, 1913. About the move to her mountain lookout, she wrote, "It was quite a swift change in three days, from San Francisco, civilization, and sea level, to a solitary cabin on a still more solitary mountain . . . but in spite of the fact that almost the very first question asked by everyone was 'Isn't it awfully lonesome up there?' I never felt a moment's longing."

Hallie reported around 40 fires in her first year. In these fires fewer than five acres were burned, and she was praised by Ranger McCarthy, who wrote, "…due entirely to the fact that rangers and guards had such prompt warning that suppressive efforts were put forth before the fires could gain an appreciable headway. Had one less faithful been on the Lookout, it might easily have been five thousand. The first woman guardian of the National Forests is one, big, glorious success."

McCarthy later wrote, "Some of the Service men predicted that after a few days of life on the peak she would telephone that she was frightened by the loneliness and the danger, but she was full of pluck and high spirit . . . she grew more and more in love with the work. Even when the telephone wires were broken and when for a long time she was cut off from communication with the world below she did not lose heart. She not only filled the place with all the skill which a trained man could

have shown but she desires to be reappointed when the fire season opens this year."

The first fire female lookout drew the attention of the press. A 1914 article in the *American Forestry* magazine described Hallie's devotion and work: "Few women would care for such a job, fewer still would seek it, and still fewer would be able to stand the strain of the infinite loneliness, or the roar of the violent storms which swept the peak, or the menace of the wild beasts which roam the heavily wooded ridges. Miss Daggett, however, not only eagerly longed for the station but secured it [the lookout job] after considerable exertion and now she declares that she enjoyed the life and was intensely interested in the work she had to do."

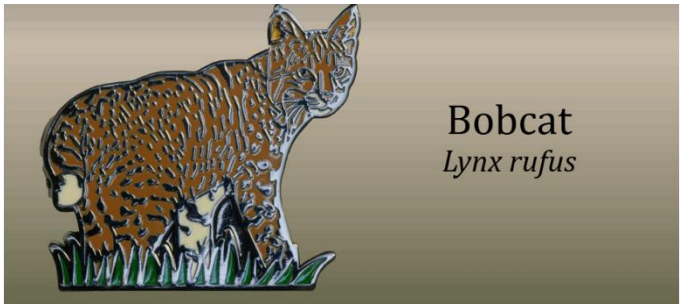
Hallie continued for fourteen more seasons, earning an annual salary of $840 and two days off each month. "With this respite, the work never grows monotonous. My interest is kept up by the feeling of doing something for my country – for the protection and conservation of these great forests is truly a pressing need. To women who love the ballroom and the glitter of city life, this work would never appeal, but to me it is work more than useful – it is a grand and glorious vacation-outing, for the very lifeblood of these great foliated mountains surges through my veins. I like it; I love it! And that's why I'm here."

Hallie retired in 1927 and moved to a home ten miles from Eddy Gulch. In her later years she built a cabin in her hometown of Etna, California. She lived in Etna from 1950 until her death in 1964. That cabin was restored and relocated to Etna City Park and is now an interpretive center with a memorial dedicated to her.

The Eddy Gulch lookout, which was a 14-foot x 12-foot rough-hewn cabin when Hallie lived there, was rebuilt into a small room on elevated steel legs in 1958. That same year, Nancy Culbertson followed in Hallie's footsteps and served as a lookout for 30 years.

2026 Recertification Pin – Texas Bobcat by Sheron Evans

Beginning January 1, when you complete 40 hours of volunteer service and 8 hours of Advanced Training, you will receive the 2026 Recertification Pin. This year's pin represents the Texas Bobcat (*Lynx rufus texensis*), a Texas native and the state's most common wild cat.



Bobcats thrive in many habitats: woodlands, canyons, swamps, and even deserts. They can also utilize agricultural and suburban areas. I have seen one on the edge of my neighborhood, darting into the woods. I have also seen one dead on the side of a road, likely hit by a car. The more natural areas we cover with pavement and houses and the more cars we put on our roads, the more likely that we will come in contact with this beautiful wild cat.

Some interesting facts about bobcats:

- Texas has one of the largest bobcat populations in the U. S. – over 200,000 are found statewide.
- Bobcats are mostly nocturnal, active at night and at dawn or dusk, which is why they are rarely seen even though they are numerous.
- They are larger than housecats, but not by much. An adult bobcat weighs 15-30 pounds and has a length of 3-3 ½ feet.
- Their favorite foods are rabbits, rodents, birds and, occasionally, reptiles.
- Native tribes and early Texans told many stories about bobcats. They described them as clever, stealthy animals and respected their hunting abilities.
- In Texas, bobcats share ecosystems with coyotes but occupy slightly different niches. Bobcats are opportunistic hunters and commonly eat small mammals. Coyotes are omnivorous and will eat fruits, nuts, small mammals and human food scraps.

Bobcats are generally not dangerous to humans. In fact, healthy bobcats avoid people. But if you ever encounter one on the trail, use deterrents like noisemakers, clapping or waving your arms, and shouting to prevent the animal from frequenting areas near people. Keeping wildlife wary of people protects them as well as us.

We will all want to earn this pin as soon as possible! And tell everyone what it represents.

Invasive spotlight: Rats by Madeleine K. Barnes

Rats creating problems in cities and suburbs have been in the news lately. Most likely, they are hanging around the garbage cans, not, as reported, lurking in tall grass. Hopefully, you are not dealing with them, although being aware of these secretive, but common, trouble-making invaders is necessary. Prevent them from accessing your home or buildings and do not feed their growing populations.

Along with 21 species of native rats and mice, two main invasive rats live in Texas. Both invaders arrived with European settlers traveling to this continent. The two species are the Norway rat (*Rattus norvegicus)* and the Roof rat (*Rattus rattus)* both belonging to the order Rodentia of the family Muridae. Physically similar, these two invaders are destructive pests and can have negative effects on the native rodent species.

The larger, full-bodied Norway rat has small ears, coarse fur, sandy to gray body coloration and a yellow to white underside patch, with patches of black or dark coloring on the backside. As adults, they average 12-18 inches in length and can weigh 7-18 ounces.


Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Norway rat populations have become well-established throughout the contiguous 48 states of the U.S. since their introduction in 1775. They live near humans and prefer semi-aquatic environments. They are strong swimmers and may be found in sewers, holes in foundations, basements, sheds, garages or fields and marshy areas. They build nests on the ground with extensive tunnels but are good climbers in trees and buildings and can walk across electric wires to get to other structures.

The Roof rat, named by Linnaeus in 1758, arrived in Europe from tropical Asia by the first century AD and spread to North America on sailing ships by the 1800's. It has several common names including Black, House, and Ship rat. It lives near the ground, in barns and granaries, but frequents attics, rafters and ceiling joists and leaves a dark-colored layer of grease and dirt to mark its trails.

In contrast with the Norway rat, the Roof rat is a medium-sized slender rat with smooth brown fur intermixed with black on its body, and a white, gray, or black underside. With large ears and a long, naked scaly tail longer than its head and body, it averages 13 - 17 inches in length and weighs around 5-9 ounces. Commonly found over most of Texas, especially in towns, it lives in close association with humans.


Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Norway and Roof rats are prolific breeders and have gestation periods of only 21-23 days and produce 7-8 offspring on average per litter. The young are born naked and blind and are very dependent upon parents until after weaning at 3-4 weeks of age. Maturing rapidly, they become reproductive after 5-12 weeks. Their total life expectancy is 3-4 years on average. Both species breed throughout the year, producing up to 90 offspring per year.

Property destruction becomes more frequent as these opportunistic and adaptable rats increase their populations. They primarily feed on vegetation, garbage and crops, but also eat young chickens, eggs - even young pigs and sheep. Both invasive rats are known to carry serious diseases; bubonic plague (transmitted from fleas to humans), endemic typhus fever and rat-bite fever and pose ecological threats to humans, wildlife (especially seabirds), livestock and any nutritive food sources.

Both species are predominately nocturnal, only seen in daylight when their populations are very high. Some findings suggest that the Norway rat is overtaking the Roof rat in population; however, the Roof rat is more common in the southern U.S., preferring warmer climates. It is less climate adaptable which has restricted its range and contributed to the interior states being relatively free from Roof rats. Of these two species of rats, there are three subspecies that have been named; however, Roof rats cannot cross with Norway rats or with any native rodent species.

Early detection is key in preventing rat populations establishing themselves in your household or business area. Prevention includes securing or removing potential food sources, think garbage, compost bins or birdseed. (Plastic bins or buckets are no obstacle!)

Droppings, nesting, or gnawing indicate rat presence. Norway rat droppings are ¾ inches long with rounded ends; Roof rats produce shorter ½ inch long droppings with pointed ends. Control methods include snap and electronic traps in areas along the walls or paths they have made. Bait stations can be used with rodenticide (poison) for eradication; however, these are a risk with small children and can cause secondary kill of pets and other wildlife, so caution is advised. Rats are smart and expert survivors, becoming wary of traps or the same baits being used over time (my own experience).

Both Norway and Roof rats greatly impact the ecosystem; they can outnumber and outcompete other rodents when foraging for food and can readily use our own urban habitat to their benefit and spread.

I hope this has given you a brief description of two more successful invaders that are having a huge impact on our natural resources, our own habitat, our food sources and agriculture. It certainly has made me more aware of how destructive and pervasive invasives can be in the environment. Learn and share the knowledge.

Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network by Kristie Huffman

The largest volunteer weather observation network is the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network (CoCoRaHS), which collected data from 26,500 precipitation measuring stations (a total of 5.6 million daily reports) around the United States, Canada and the Bahamas in 2023.

CoCoRaHS has its origins in a flash flood that swept through Larimer County, Colorado, on 27 July 1997. This flood on Spring Creek swept through a mobile home park in Fort Collins, killing five people. Meteorologist Nolan Doesken, a lecturer at nearby Colorado State University, was shocked by the fact that no weather stations had registered massive rainfall which had triggered the flood, and that, consequently, no warnings had been issued.

The problem was that the rainstorm that fed the flood was extremely localized, dropping 36 cm of rain in an area only a few kilometers wide. Doesken began asking his students and local volunteers to set up precipitation gauges in areas that weren't covered by professionally maintained weather stations, with the first stations being established in 1998. Initially, the aim of this project was to get higher-resolution coverage in the state of Colorado, but it began to expand to other states in 2003 and has since grown to include stations in all 50 states as well as Canada and the Bahamas.

CoCoRaHS volunteers purchase a standard plastic rain gauge (essentially a funnel mounted over a measuring tube) and are provided with educational materials on how to install and monitor the gauge.

On the Chapter Website by Carolyn Miles

If you haven't perused the Chapter website recently, there is much to explore:

- 2025 Treasures of the Bay & Photo Contest Winners https://txmn.org/gbmn/gbac-congratulates-2025-treasures-of-the-bay-and-photo-contest-winners/
- Prior Years' Treasures of the Bay Winners https://txmn.org/gbmn/recognition-2/
- History of the recertification pins https://txmn.org/gbmn/files/2025/01/History-of-the-TMN-Recert-Pins.pdf
- Board of Directors https://txmn.org/gbmn/board-of-directors/
- Pay dues online https://txmn.org/gbmn/pay-your-dues/
- Midden Archives https://txmn.org/gbmn/the-midden/
- Annual Scrapbooks https://txmn.org/gbmn/scrapbooks/

Never Give Up – Making A Difference for Nesting Birds and Habitat

by Maureen Nolan-Wilde

After nearly a decade of persistence, chapter members Lynn and John Wright and Alan and Maureen Wilde helped achieve what seemed impossible: the restoration of critical nesting islands in Galveston Bay that provide vital habitat for American oystercatchers, pelicans, terns, and laughing gulls.

The journey began in 2016 when the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory reported that the lack of suitable nesting and feeding sites had led to a steady decline in the American oystercatcher population. We knew we needed to act and began strategizing solutions, but our initial restoration attempts proved frustrating. We transported shell to the islands by boat and kayak, constructed nesting structures and tried various other approaches, but nature seemed to be winning the battle against erosion.

Rather than admit defeat, we changed our strategy. We had to find another way and influence others to join us in recognizing the need for restoration. In 2017, we enlisted three additional Tiki Island families to participate in the Galveston Bay Foundation's (GBF) oyster garden program. While supporting GBF's oyster cultivation mission, our ultimate goal to place our homegrown oysters on restored nesting islands remained.

A pivotal moment came when John and Alan organized a boat tour of the islands for representatives from various state and federal agencies and GBF to discuss potential restoration solutions. The advocacy paid off and by 2024, the Galveston Bay Foundation was leading a comprehensive restoration project funded by partners including the Deepwater Horizon settlement, the Texas General Land Office and Ducks Unlimited. In 2025, three of the threatened islands were successfully restored.

Most recently, on a weekend in late November 2025, members of the Tiki Island oyster garden community used their boats to transport oysters and GBF staff to one of the restored islands and placed our baby oysters on the newly rebuilt habitat—the very outcome we had envisioned nearly a decade earlier!

This project stands as a testament to the power of persistence, community collaboration, and the willingness to adapt strategies while never losing sight of the goal: protecting vital habitat for the birds that call Galveston Bay home.

Editor's Note:
Oysters on your dinner plate are delicious, but in the wild are a keystone species. They are filter feeders; one single oyster filters 50 gallons of water each day. Oyster reefs provide important hard substrate and habitat for many creatures AND protect shorelines from coastal erosion. In years past, Galveston Bay's oyster reefs were mined for shell and continue to be harvested for human consumption. To rebuild our bay's reefs, over 40 local restaurants have joined the oyster recycling program and return the shell to create a foundation for new reefs. In addition, volunteer help is always needed.

If you have stable access to waterfront property along the Bay from April to November, you can directly support the health of Galveston Bay as an Oyster Gardener. Each spring, GBF trains interested residents to raise young oysters, or *spat*, on recycled shells suspended from their docks or piers. Over the summer, gardeners simply keep an eye on their shells for growth, fouling, and curious predators. By fall, spat are ready to be moved to nearby restoration reefs, where they begin filtering the water and strengthening Bay habitat. All oysters grown through this program are strictly for restoration, not consumption.

GALVESTON BAY FOUNDATION

To receive updates about GBF 2026 Garden Creation Events and how to sign up, reach out to Shannon Batte at sbatte@galvbay.org or 832-536-2265. Tentative dates and locations are:

- Trinity Bay Discover Center, Upper Bay – April 16
- GBF Gessner Center in Kemah – April 25
- Tiki Island – May 28
- Moody Gardens – May 30
- Bayou Vista – TBD

If you don't have waterfront property but want to be part of the Oyster Gardening Program, consider becoming an Oyster Restoration Dedicated Volunteer and joining GBF for oyster gardening and oyster reef monitoring days; applications will open early 2026. The next oyster reef monitoring workday will be at our Sweetwater Preserve on April 21, 2026. Email eoneal@galvbay.org to learn more and get involved.

The 12th State of the Bay Conference, to be held at Moody Gardens Convention Center, will devote half a day to bird habitat restoration issues followed by oyster restoration. These are among other topics pertinent to Galveston Bay. It's time for all friends of Galveston Bay to register: https://gbep.texas.gov/state-of-the-bay-symposium/

AI for Earth – AI for Us? by Jane Downs

AI for Earth is a global initiative launched by Microsoft to put artificial intelligence to work for the planet. The program provides grants, cloud computing tools, and technical support to researchers, nonprofits, and community groups like ours tackling environmental challenges.

Its focus areas are climate, agriculture, biodiversity and water and its goal is helping scientists and conservationists analyze satellite images, monitor species, predict weather and water trends, and manage natural resources more sustainably.

Since its start in 2017, *AI for Earth* has supported hundreds of projects worldwide, from mapping coral reefs and tracking elephants to improving crop yields and detecting deforestation. The goal is simple but powerful: to make cutting-edge technology accessible to those protecting the planet's most vital ecosystems.

Artificial intelligence, once confined to research labs and tech companies, could find new purpose along the Texas Gulf Coast supporting conservation and community science.

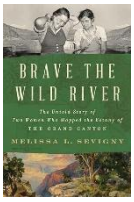
For the volunteers of the Galveston Bay Area Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists, AI could become a valuable ally. The chapter's projects - bat monitoring, sea turtle patrols, monarch tracking, and water-quality testing - produce large amounts of data. AI tools can process that information in seconds, revealing patterns that might take humans weeks to discover.

AI technology can identify bat species from photos or sound recordings, spot pollution trends in rainfall data, and even map shoreline litter along the Galveston Bay. Such insights help volunteers focus their time where it's needed most - restoring habitats, rescuing wildlife, and educating the public.

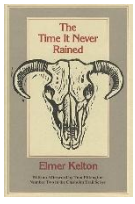
Partnerships with local universities and programs like *AI for Earth* may soon allow our chapter to test small-scale projects such as automated bat-call analysis or coastal debris mapping, thereby combining technology with hands-on stewardship.

While no machine can replace human dedication and the development of AI remains controversial, it may be able to amplify conservation dedication by working side-by-side with people as a supportive partner. Smart tools and passionate people can work together to protect the Galveston Bay area we call home.

Heritage Book Club by TJ Fox



Your Heritage Book Club has just finished a two-month discussion of *Brave the Wild River*, a memorable chronicle about botanists Elzada Clover and Lois Jotter who, in 1938, became the first women to raft the Colorado River system. The expedition began in Utah on the Green River, passed through Cataract and Glen Canyons, and concluded at Lake Mead - a 43-day, 600+ mile journey down the Colorado River system to map the canyon's plants.



In March we will discuss *The Time It Never Rained* by Elmer Kelton. This fictional book is a departure from our usual nonfiction books. A classic book, its main character is West Texas rancher Charlie Flagg, who endures a devastating, multi-year drought from 1950-1957, refusing to compromise his independence or accept federal aid despite immense hardship. The book explores themes of human endurance, dignity, and the struggle to maintain tradition against the harsh realities of nature and changing times, making it a favorite of Kelton's and a significant work in Western literature.

Having lived through the fringe of the drought in Corpus Christi as a teenager, I still remember how it affected almost every aspect of life. At Boy Scout camp located on Lake Corpus Christi, aquatic activities like canoeing and swimming were almost impossible. The local golf course had mud hazards, not water hazards. Every lawn was dead if not close to it. A green lawn brought the "water police" to issue a citation for illegal watering. Our lawn was attacked by what we were told were desert termites. Every blade of grass was covered by a mud coating built by the termites. Inside nothing was left.

The book club reading list is now on the chapter calendar.

Join us on March 2 to participate in a discussion of this book. Remember, read it beforehand and join us at our Zoom discussion to earn AT hours.

February and March Activities

ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Chapter Meeting – Feb. 5; Discover Texas Sea Grant
Presenter: Brandi Keller
6pm Potluck, 6:30pm Meeting, 7pm Speaker
At Extension Office* and via Zoom; 1 hour AT

Diurnal Raptors of the Galveston Bay Area
Tuesday, Feb. 17 at 6pm via Zoom
Presenter: Lynn and John Wright

Ongoing

Heritage Book Club
First Monday of every month via Zoom; 2 hours AT
Contact: TJ Fox, tj.fox39@gmail.com
See Pg. 7 for meeting dates and books.

STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

For a complete list of stewardship activities, see our chapter website, https://txmn.org/gbmn/what-we-do/.

EDUCATION - OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

For a complete list of education - outreach activities, see our chapter website, https://txmn.org/gbmn/what-we-do/.

CHAPTER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Calendar - https://txmn.org/gbmn/gbac-events-calendar/
Includes meetings, AT and volunteer activities

Board - https://txmn.org/gbmn/board-of-directors/
Contact information for the Board of Directors. **Board Meetings** – usually first Tuesday of each month (via Zoom), verify on the calendar

Committees - https://txmn.org/gbmn/board-of-directors/
Contact information for the Committee Chairs

Volunteer Service - https://txmn.org/gbmn/volunteer-service/ Volunteer Opportunities

Advanced Training - https://txmn.org/gbmn/advanced-training/

Midden Archives - https://txmn.org/gbmn/ Go to The Midden on the top menu.

Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/gbactmn

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Sea Grant Texas
Science At Work For Texans
http://TexasSeaGrant.org

Master Naturalist ™

The Midden

The Midden is published bimonthly by the Galveston Bay Area Chapter - Texas Master Naturalists to inform, communicate and educate chapter members and the community about our natural world and serve as an archive of chapter activities. To submit an article or join the team, please contact Diane Humes, treimanhumes@gmail.com.

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4102 B Main (FM 519) Carbide Park
La Marque, TX 77568

The Midden is posted on the GBAC-TMN chapter website: https://txmn.org/gbmn/ two weeks prior to chapter meetings. Archived issues also on chapter website. If you prefer to receive *The Midden* in hard copy and are not currently receiving it, please contact the extension office at 281-534-3413.

Midden Team - Diane Humes, Editor

Peggy Antone	Madeleine K. Barnes
Verva Densmore	Sheron Evans
Rebekah Gano	Meade LeBlanc
Carolyn Miles	Chuck Snyder

The Midden Deadline

for the next issue

February 23

*Extension Office = Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service – Galveston County Office (Carbide Park)

Treasures of the Bay Awards 2025

Each year the Galveston Bay Area Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists presents the “Treasures of the Bay Awards” at the December Chapter Meeting to recognize individuals and organizations for their outstanding service and contributions to natural resource restoration or education. In addition, Advisor Brandi Keller presented two new Advisor's Awards.

Dick Benoit Leadership Award: Awarded for extraordinary service, mentoring, leadership and dedication to our organization.	Stennie Meadours, Gene Fisseler
Julie Massey “Jump for Joy” Award: To recognize those members who shared extraordinary joy and enthusiasm for master naturalist projects with chapter members and / or the public.	Carlos Rios, Jenny Dudley
Sara Snell Education Award: Awarded in recognition of initiatives in education about the Galveston Bay ecosystem.	Denise Correll, Chris Mantooth
Beth Cooper Memorial Service Award: Awarded to a new chapter member (two years or less) in recognition of volunteer service and dedication to the chapter.	Darla Cox, Mary Ross
Corporate Award: Awarded to a corporation or company for leadership and unselfish investment in protecting and improving the Galveston Bay area environment.	Mike Stump: Solid Waste Manager City of Texas City
Chapter Service Award: Awarded to an active Master Naturalist of the Galveston Bay Area Chapter for outstanding work and commitment to the success of our organization.	Meade LeBlanc, Lynn Smith, Patty Trimingham, Cindy Liening
Making a Difference Award: Awarded in recognition of an individual or individuals whose initiatives in preservation, restoration, education and/or enhancement of our natural world have improved and/or enriched the quality of the environment in the Galveston Bay area.	Ann Anderson, Sandy Parker, Chatt Smith, Mason Gilfoil

Advisor’s Educator Superstar Chris Mantooth – In recognition of exemplary educational outreach within the Galveston Bay Area community.

Advisor’s All-Star Team Award – Rosenberg Youth Outreach Team: Sharon Tirpak, Christina Stark, Eowyn Johnson, and Denise Correll

Honoring a team whose spark and teamwork launched a new educational series and expanded learning opportunities in our community.

2026 Elected Officers:

President: Mary Dobberstine, Vice President: Jenny Dudley, Secretary: Lisa Hardcastle, Treasurer: Karen Garvin

Congratulations and Thank You for Everything!