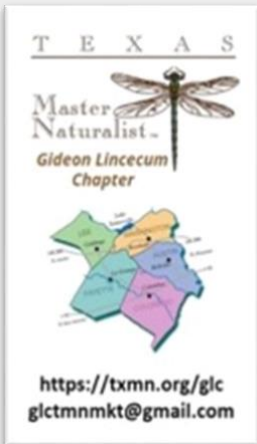


The GLC Tidings

FEBRUARY 2024

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Our Mission

Volunteers dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources through education, outreach, and service in our community.

Newsletter Entry Deadlines

1st day of even Months

Send articles or photos to
glcnwsltr@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATES

Board Meeting – February 23

Chapter Meeting – March 16

From the President



Sheri Wilcox

As I sit down in front of a blank screen to write this message, I have that “kid in a candy store” feeling. No matter which naturalist path you choose to walk, there is something for you to learn or do. So many things, in fact, that I hardly know which to mention first. Look to our website calendar. We are constantly adding new volunteer and advanced training opportunities. Let me tell you about a few that have been on the top of my mind in recent days.

Training – Our Class of 2024 kicked off in January. Nineteen class members with varied interests and backgrounds promise energetic and engaged discussion. Starting the year off with a discussion of land stewardship always brings me back to why I sat in their places back in 2016 and why I am still here in 2024 preaching Aldo Leopold’s message. Connie Shortes and her team have added even more hands-on fun to our training sessions. Class presentations at our chapter meetings were a big hit last year. Look for them again this year beginning with our March meeting.

Texas Water focus group – Every day there is a story in the news about water. Although it may not have seemed so lately, clean water is an increasingly scarce resource. This month we will launch a new focus group within our chapter, the GLC Texas Waters group. See the related story in this newsletter for details and watch your email for the invitation to our organizational meeting on February 20th via WebEx. Bring your ideas about how we as a chapter can contribute through education and volunteer service to the discussion about water.

North American Bat Monitoring Program (NABat) – Texas Master Naturalists have been invited to join an acoustic bat monitoring project designed to address a lack of the data needed to make good conservation decisions for our native bat populations.

From the President (continued)

Citizen scientists like us have a unique opportunity to make a huge impact on this project, which depends largely on private landowners willing to deploy acoustic monitoring devices on their property. See the related story about this project, which gives the details and the commitment needed from us to be a part of this project.

Great Backyard Bird Count – Speaking of citizen science, here is another opportunity to be a part of important research on the abundance and distribution of bird species in our area. Over four days, February 16 – 19, 2024, join with bird fans from around the world to identify, count, and report birds in as little as 15-minute increments. See Lori Buffum’s message on February 3rd for information on how to participate along with ever important instructions on how to record your time in VMS or go to www.birdcount.org. This event is definitely on my calendar.

Whether you are fascinated by archaeology, ornithology, ichthyology, geology, or any of the other ‘ologies’ we teach, the heart of our journey as naturalists is our relationship to the world in which we live. No one says it better than Aldo Leopold in his essay *The Land Ethic*. I end this message with his words, which lead our Class of 2024 website page, “When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.”

Sheri

**THANK YOU FOR
VOLUNTEERING**

State Information



#TMNTuesday [#TMNTuesdays \(tamu.edu/tmntuesdays\)](https://tamu.edu/tmntuesdays)

February 13, 2024 12-1 PM

Speaker: Chip Ruthven, Natural Resource Specialist & Project Leader

Topic: Rattlesnakes

[Register Here](#)



Virtual Volunteer Fair 2024

<https://txmn.tamu.edu/blog/virtual-volunteer-fair-2024/>

Save the date – April 9, 2024, for the Virtual Volunteer Fair. This online fair is an opportunity Master Naturalists to learn about volunteer service projects with partnering conservation organizations that can be done from a distance or virtually.



TMN License Plate - Order YOURS Today!!!

ANYONE can purchase this plate and **\$22 of each \$30 annual plate fee comes directly back to the Texas Master Naturalist Program for continuing our mission.**

The plate is available for purchase on the website:

Personalized plate (\$70): <https://www.myplates.com/design/personalized/passenger/texas-master-naturalist/>

Non-Personalized plate (\$30): <https://www.myplates.com/design/background/passenger/texas-master-naturalist/>

Membership Memo



By Chris Morrison, Membership Director

All your 2023 hours should have been logged by now, and here are the results and a comparison with 2022. Wow! Pat yourself on the back if you were one of those volunteering. If you were not, make the commitment to log at least one volunteer hour this year.

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Volunteer Hours	6,509	5,216
AT Hours	1,489	1,292
Number of members volunteering	84	79

Congratulations to these members who achieved certifications or milestones in the final month of 2023. Pins were presented at the January 20, 2024 meeting.

Initial Certification – Trey Granger (Class of 2022)

Recertification for 2023 – Barbara Boucher, Judy Deaton, Norbert Dittrich, Marvelyn Granger, Annette Holdeman, Matt Holdeman

Thank you to those of you who have paid your 2024 dues. If you haven't yet, please do that ASAP. Our new treasurer, Karen Dean, has sent out reminders.

Contact me if you ever have questions about how to record hours. I'm happy to help.

Chapter Meeting Highlights - January 2024

- Marvelyn Granger gave an informative presentation on carpenter bees she found in a snag
- David Bezanson from The Nature Conservancy presented information on prairie conservation and the new Elder Prairie Preserve in Washington County

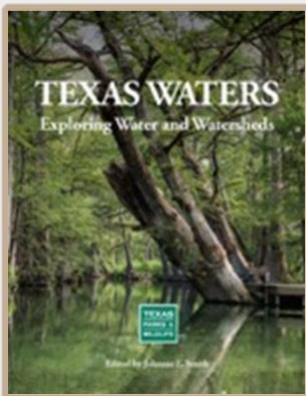


Volunteering Highlights

Texas Waters Group to be Launched

From Sheri Wilcox

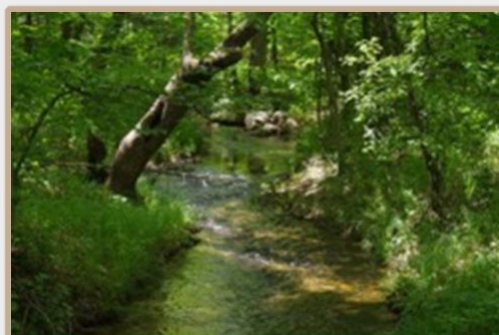
It has been a goal of mine for more than a year to launch (pun fully intended) a group within our chapter to focus on water issues. After this year's drought and last week's torrential rains, I doubt there is anyone who would disagree with the statement that water is and will continue to be a critical environmental issue.



While completing the Texas Waters Specialist curriculum is not a requirement for participation in our GLC Texas Waters group, Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD) has developed an excellent curriculum that can form a starting point for our group. Largely paralleling our TMN mission, the mission of the Texas Waters Specialist program is to “develop a corps of well-informed volunteer specialists who provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of aquatic resources and aquatic habitats within their communities for the state of Texas.” The online curriculum consists of nine chapters covering many water-related topics. Our chapter has approved each chapter for up to one hour of AT credit. Details of the curriculum can be found on the Texas Waters Specialist website at: <https://tpwd.texas.gov/education/water-education/texaswatersprogram/texaswatersspecialist>.

I am envisioning this group as a focus for a variety of projects, some of which are already approved by our chapter and others that will become educational or service projects. We already have chapter members participating in water quality testing through the Lower Colorado River Authority. One goal could be to expand our water quality testing efforts by creating a Texas Stream Team group that would test water quality in other parts of our geographical area. Other members participate in Adopt-a-Highway, which prevents trash from ending up in area waterways. Two of our area creeks have been identified as impaired watersheds by the EPA and are or will be under watershed protection plans. Educational programs on water-related issues could be developed. The opportunities are numerous.

I have scheduled an organizational meeting for February 20, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. via WebEx. Watch for an email with details and instructions on how to participate. Subject to discussion, the current plan is to hold a monthly WebEx meeting on the third Tuesday of each month. I hope that many of you will join with me in diving into a study of our precious, but imperiled, water resources.



Texas Master Naturalists Go “Batty”

From Sheri Wilcox



Texas Master Naturalists (TMN) and Texas Nature Trackers (TNT) are joining forces with the [North American Bat Monitoring Program](#) (NABat) in a continent-wide effort to learn more about one of our most misunderstood mammals – the bat.

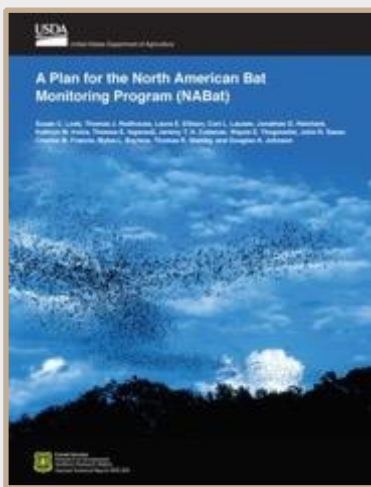
One of the biggest challenges to bat conservation is the lack of data. Good conservation decisions need to be based on good data. NABat aims to collect data by mobilizing the collective energy of researchers, government agencies, and us – citizen scientists. Imagine a map of North America. The map is overlaid by a grid of 10 x 10 kilometer squares, over 6,500 of which overlay the state of Texas. Each of those grids contains one or more acoustic monitors listening for bats. Okay, that’s probably unrealistic. But if at least some of those grids contain an acoustic monitor and those monitors are deployed year after year, think of the amount of knowledge that could be gained. That is the power we hold.

If you are now wondering how you can get your hands on one of these acoustic monitors and start listening for bats, here is how. Each TMN chapter has been given the opportunity to participate in this project. This is how it will work:

1. We need property owners who are willing to deploy a bat acoustic monitor on their property. The monitor is a small box that needs to be mounted in an open area. Monitors will be deployed in each location for 4 nights (put out on Monday and picked up on Friday). Monitors will move from property to property over an 8-week period in the spring and early summer (exact dates to be determined).
2. We need one or more people who would be willing to coordinate this effort with the TNT staff (receive the monitors, create the schedule, collect the monitors at the end of the season).
3. If you are data proficient and would like to get involved in analyzing data, there is a role for that as well, but not every chapter will need someone to analyze their data.

Training will be provided. We can do this. It will be fun and informative. So, what do you do next?

1. Send an email to glctmnpres@gmail.com and say **you want to be our chapter coordinator, or you want to deploy a field monitor** (or both). We need to know that there is enough interest for us to form a team.
2. Fill out the Texas Nature Trackers - Bat Acoustic Monitoring Sign Up form. Yes, there is always a form. Here is the



link to the form: <https://txmn.tamu.edu/tmntuesdays/>. Note: Only one person needs to list public spaces where long-term monitors could go, so you can leave that box blank.

If you missed the TMN Tuesday presentation about this opportunity, the recording is on the state website at <https://txmn.tamu.edu/tmntuesdays/>. There is a lot of interesting information about bats in the recording too. Did you know that there are at least 11 known species of bat that inhabit our five-county chapter area and five of those are species of greatest conservation need (SGCN)? I didn’t, but I do now.

The deadline to submit the TNT- Bat Acoustic Monitoring Sign-Up form is **March 1, 2024**, but don’t wait. Do it now and get ready to go “batty”.



Prescribed Burn for Student Education

From Swee Leng Rapatz

TMN-GLC, Mary Pearl Meuth, the South Central Texas Prescribed Burn Association, TPWD Fire Mangement, property owner, Jim Kolkhorst and Texas A&M students participated in a prescribed burn in preparation for the Student Land, Water, and Wildlife Expedition project, sponsored by The Texas Wildlife Association. The burned area will be used to demonstrate plant succession/regeneration to student participants in a few months.



Adventures & Observations

Only One Sky Farm Winter Walk

From Swee Leng Rapatz

The January chapter meeting AT on Conservation Easements by David Bezanson inspired the owners of Only One Sky Farm, a remnant prairie, to host their first “public” tour for a small group of TMN-GLC members. Jason Singhurst, TPWD Botanist, had identified over 200 native plants in four plant communities. The plant communities surveyed are:

1. Edwards Plateau Streamscour Grassland
2. Texas Upper Coastal Prairie Live Oak-Pecan Woodland
3. Alfisol Coastal Prairie
4. Vertisol Blackland Prairie

We had a wonderful winter morning walk through the prairie accompanied by the owners who shared Only One Sky Farm’s history and their stewardship efforts.



Committee Meeting

Note from John Gardner, Dec 20, 2023:

I took this picture today on Berlin rd. There were about 20 vultures on the side of road. Probably discussing world affairs!

(Editor’s note: a group of vultures resting is called a [committee](#))

Water Rescue I



From Judy Deaton

How many of us know about our tiny childhood playmates the “pill bug” or “Roly-Poly” among many names. A member of the self-explanatory family *Armadillidae*, they are a type of wood louse that can roll up in a ball and are land crustaceans, not insects. There are many types of wood lice. These little guys are native to the Mediterranean area and were brought here in the 19th century. They tickle when you hold them with their 14 legs!

During this recent deluge I walked out on my porch to check on the muggy mess when this caught my eye. How does one go about saving a colony of these little fellows from drowning. They seem to be doing a good job themselves. Let’s hope the rain lets up to give all our small ground dwelling critters a break.

Anyone interested in delving into their world can visit <https://www.atshq.org/what-do-pill-bugs-eat/>

What interesting invaders.



Water Rescue II



From Greg & Carol Gaskamp

We found this critter (most likely a young rat snake) swimming for its life in a water well in the old barnyard of our farmstead. We were able to retrieve it from the well using a long stick. While it didn’t seem so happy to be caught (opening its mouth wide and sensing its movement through the air with its black forked tongue) we released it into a wildflower patch in our backyard.





Cruising Around Africa

From Ann Ray

My cruise circumventing Africa was full of amazing adventures.

I was inspired by a man, who because of pandemic shutdowns, created an urban farm on his island that has been recognized by National Geographic. I was greeted at the southernmost tip of Africa by a blue headed dragon. Swimming with giant turtles in the Atlantic was memorable.

Seeing the way giraffes could be so easily camouflaged in a thicket was surprising.

But of course, meeting the people was my best adventure of all.



This and That

From Jaci Elliott



My preferred reading genres are generally historical fiction, biographies or non-fiction works on science/nature. Imagine finding a book that rolls all of these into one, and whose topic is near enough to those of us in south central Texas, and even closer to those of us who lived a bit nearer to the Texas coast. I found it searching through my library's app Libby under audio books (which I like to quietly listen to in the early hours of the day), but I'll bet the print version has pictures and maps that may appeal to those of us who prefer visuals.



But you don't have to take my word for it; here is a recommendation from Joe Riley, a host at KWBU, the NPR station out of Waco, Texas. He writes:

"Earlier this year my wife and I visited Padre Island National Seashore. We stopped into the Park Service store to buy a hat, and on a nearby shelf was a book, *The Gulf: The Making of an American Sea*. It intrigued me; I bought a hat and the book.

To say I enjoyed it would be an understatement. I have yet to wear the hat, but I could hardly put down the book. It's like a print version of a driveway moment.

The book's author, Jack E. Davis, grew up on the Gulf of Mexico. He is a professor of history and sustainability studies at the University of Florida. *The Gulf* was published in 2017.

Davis takes the reader on an epic journey, through time and place. Quickly moving from the geological formation of the Gulf, to indigenous tribes, to colonizers from Spain and France and England, exploration and exploitation, international politics, wars, and rumors of wars. Then the Americanization of the Gulf – fishing and tourism, development, and industrialization. Big oil. All the chapters are organized around facets of nature – estuaries and beaches, fish and birds, sea currents and weather – often told through stories about and the words of people of the Gulf. His writing is lyrical and compelling and sometimes exhilarating, even unsettling. Davis describes schools of fish so plentiful they jump into boats. He writes of birds journeying every spring to the shores of the Gulf, arriving daily by the tens of millions...

... Throughout the book, Davis contrasts the beauty and power of nature with human efforts to outsmart nature – usually with disastrous consequences – and of the tendency of government and big business (paraphrasing an old quote) to privatize profit and socialize pollution. But Davis is hopeful as he describes the immense ability of nature to return to health given the chance. In 2017, *The Gulf: The Making of an American Sea* was a New York Times Notable Book, and it was on numerous "best of" lists, including The Washington Post, Forbes, and NPR. It won the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for History and the Kirkus Prize for nonfiction."

It's a whole other kind of beach read, but one that is well worth your time!



Entangled Life

From Connie Shortes

I've recently come under the influence of fungi. No, I'm not doing magic mushrooms (but who knows, maybe someday I will). I've simply become fascinated with how mycelial networks function in our soil and am in awe of how huge the fungal kingdom is relative to all other manifestations of materiality in our world. Why do we know so little about it? There's not even a chapter in the TMN textbook devoted to mycology.

This is no criticism of the TMN textbook - there are precious few mycologists in our universities and laboratories. I attended a talk recently by local mycologist Liz Bowman, who is not at a university. She's working in industry. She pointed out that universities are not yet valuing mycologists, and so funding and research grants are not very generous. This has kept fungi out of sight and ignored. Lately, however, more attention is being paid, and interestingly, much of the groundbreaking research into fungi has come from *citizen scientists*!

When I read Merlin Sheldrake's book [How Fungi Make Our Worlds, Change Our Lives, and Shape Our Futures](#), every page revealed some jaw dropping fact about fungi. I consider myself a plant enthusiast, but I learned that plants exist only because of fungi. It was fungi that helped plants to emerge out of water onto soil five hundred million years ago, and fungi served as their roots for tens of million more years, until plants could survive on their own. (Sheldrake, p. 4) Today, the ability of fungal networks to take in information and "make decisions" continues to be crucial to the success of every living plant -- literally at the root of everything. "Fungi are metabolic wizards and can explore, scavenge, and salvage ingeniously, their abilities rivaled only by bacteria." (Sheldrake, p. 5) And you no doubt remember the news about how fungi have been found eating the nuclear waste at the Chernobyl site. And there's this; "DARPA, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, a wing of the US military, is interested in growing barracks out of mycelium that repair themselves when damaged and decompose when their job is done." (Sheldrake, p. 194)

I think more advanced knowledge of fungi will inform our future in significant ways and may end up being crucial to our survival in a climate changing world. I highly recommend Sheldrake's book, and here are some upcoming opportunities to learn more:

Feb 24, 12:30 at Randolph Recreation Center, La Grange

Chris Garza, an ESA Certified Ecologist with a passion for mycology will be speaking to our 2024 class. There will be plenty of room for chapter members at this presentation.

Oct 17, 6:00 on Zoom

Liz Bowman, Fungal and Evolutionary Ecologist and a senior researcher at Hiro Technologies will be presenting in the [2024 NPAT speaker series](#).



2024 Native Plant Association of Texas (NPAT) Speaker Series on Climate Change and Implications for the Fayette Prairie Ecosystem

From Connie Shortes

“How will climate change impact Texas and the native prairie and savanna ecosystems?...The NPAT Fayette Chapter is hosting a year-long series of presentations to explore climate change and the implications for the Fayette Prairie ecosystem.” Topics in the series include climate models; historical context for climate change forecasts; water resources; management practices; projected changes in tallgrass prairies and soil microbial structure; and restoration paradigms in a changing world.

The first of 7 presentations in the series begins Feb 22, 6 pm via Zoom. For more information, see the schedule at <https://texasprairie.org/event/zoom-series-climate-change-and-the-implications-for-the-fayette-prairie-ecosystem/2024-10-17/>



A note from Mary Ann Butler

I surely miss seeing you all. I'm waiting for the day when I can do some active volunteer work again. I had a cardiac valve replacement in July which was a great success, but I had a stroke that has affected my right side. I am at Westminster in Austin receiving therapy. Strokes like this take a long recovery. I have to work hard, and I like that. I can now walk 34 Feet using the double bars and am encouraged by my progress. It took six months to go from not being able to move my toes to “walking”.



Harbinger of Spring!

Texas yellow star (*Lindheimeria texana*) making its appearance in early February...

Posted on GLC Facebook page by Donna Mueller, 2/7/2024

Events Calendar Snapshot

FEBRUARY

Date	Event
13	TMN Tuesday 12-1 pm Texas Agrilife Aquatic Webinars 6-7:30 pm
16-19	Great Backyard Bird Count
16	Backyard Bug Hunt Webinar 10-11 am
20	GLC Water Specialists Meeting 6-7 pm
23	Chapter Board Meeting 9:30-11:30



MARCH

2	Native Plant Society Symposium
5	TMN Tuesday 12-1 pm
8	Washington Co. Wildlife Valuation Workshop 9 am – 3 pm
13	Texas Water Webinar 6:30-7:30 pm
15	Backyard Bug Hunt Webinar 10-11 am
16	GLC Chapter meeting 9:30 am – 12 pm
19	Texas Agrilife Aquatic Webinars 6-7:30 pm GLC Water Specialists Meeting 6-7 pm
23	Independence Texas Historic Homes Tour 10 am – 5 pm

See the [Event Calendar](#) for more details on events and workdays at various project sites

A photograph of a falcon, likely a Red-tailed Hawk, looking directly at the camera. The bird has dark feathers with a lighter, speckled pattern on its chest and neck. A white text box is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Count me in!
[Great Backyard Bird
Count](#)
Feb 16-19, 2024

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Books

- National Wildlife Federation(R): Attracting Birds, Butterflies, and Other Backyard Wildlife, Expanded Second Edition, by David Mizejewski
- Native Host Plants for Texas Butterflies: a Field Guide, by Jim Weber, Lynne Weber, and Roland H. Wauer (There is also one for moths)
- Native Texas Plants: Landscaping Region by Region, by Sally Wasowski and Andy Wasowski
- Wild Edible Plants of Texas: A Pocket Guide to the Identification, Collection, Preparation, & Use of 60 Wild Plants of the Lone Star State, by Charles W. Kane (This includes non-natives)

Online Resources

- Bumble Bee Watch: <https://www.bumblebeewatch.org/>
- Ecoregions of North America: <https://www.epa.gov/eco-research/ecoregions-north-america>
- Ecoregions of Texas: https://tpwd.texas.gov/.../pwd_pl_w7000_1187a/media/1.pdf
- The Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center: <https://www.wildflower.org/>
- Fayette Prairie Chapter – NPAT [Fayette Prairie Chapter – NPAT \(texasprairie.org\)](https://www.texasprairie.org/)
- National Wildlife Federation: <https://www.nwf.org/>
- Native American Seed: <https://www.seedsource.com/Default.asp>
- Native Plants by State: <https://nativebackyards.com/native-plants-by-state/>
- Native Plant Society of Texas: <http://npsot.org/wp/>
- Native Plant Society of Texas - Plant Lists by Region: <https://www.npsot.org/our-work/class-schedule/plant-lists-by-ecoregion/>
- Native Prairies Association of Texas: <https://texasprairie.org/>
- Plants for Birds – Audubon <https://www.audubon.org/plantsforbirds>
- South Central Texas Prescribed Burn Association (SCTPBA) <https://sctpba.org/>
- Texas Butterfly Ranch: <https://texasbutterflyranch.com>
- Texas Invasives: <https://www.texasinvasives.org/>
- Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation: <https://xerces.org/>

Editor's note: The list of 'Helpful Resources' will be migrating to the GLC webpage. If you have any print or online resources to add to the list, please send to glcnwsltr@gmail.com

GLC Tidings Newsletter Index

<https://txmn.org/glc/whats-new/newsletters/>

Find information about articles for newsletter issues from 2018 through the most recent. For each article, the index cites the subject, title, author, and the hyperlink directly to the issue published on the chapter website.

Chapter Resources

Officers for 2023

President – [Sheri Wilcox](#)

Vice President – [Swee Leng Rapatz](#)

Secretary – [Betty Scardino](#)

Treasurer – [Karen Dean](#)

Board Members

Advanced Training Director – [Swee Leng Rapatz](#)

Communications Director – [Lori Buffum](#)

Marketing Director – [Ken English](#)

Membership Director – [Chris Morrison](#)

Training Class Director – [Connie Shortes](#)

Volunteer Service Projects Director – [Jaci Elliott](#)

Education Director – [Karen Gardner](#)

Chapter State Representative – Sheri Wilcox

Immediate Past President – Betsy Palkowsky

Advisor – [Kara Matheney](#) (Washington County Texas AgriLife)

Committees and Contacts

Hospitality Chair – Nita Tiemann

Newsletter Editor – [Carol Gaskamp](#)

Website Editor – Sheri Wilcox

Grants and Donations Chair – open

Volunteer Project Leaders

Adopt-a-Highway – Jaci Elliott

Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR – Susan Vanderworth

Family Science Nights – Lori Buffum

Fayetteville Native Plant Project – Karen Bookout

Indian Creek Nature Area – Ann Ray

LaGrange AgriLife Building Native Plant

Landscape – Cindy Rodibaugh

Monument Hill State Historic Site – Karen Woods

Prescribed Burning – Mark Brown and B.R.

Koehler

Schubert House Pollinator Project – Karen Woods

Stephen F. Austin State Park – B.R. & Charlene

Koehler

Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site –

Julie Itz and David Itz

Winedale Trails and Pollinator Garden – CJ Claverie

and Carey Soderstrom

Sponsor Contact

Each county has its own TPWD Biologist and Texas AgriLife Extension agent. We work closely with these sponsors.

Use the following links to access the main county contacts working with our chapter.

[Austin County](#)

[Colorado County](#)

[Fayette County](#)

[Washington County](#)

[Lee County](#)



- **Our Chapter Website** <http://txmn.org/glc>
- **GLC Facebook Group** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/21969044537/>
- **Volunteer Management System**; log your hours <https://txmn.tamu.edu/chapter-resources/tmn-vms-users>
- **Texas Master Naturalist Program Website** <https://txmn.tamu.edu/>
- **Texas Master Naturalist Listserv**; get notices about activities across the state <mailto:TMN@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU> [LISTSERV - Subscription Management - LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU](#)

Contact Us

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