



Naturalist Notes

President's Note

Dear Gulf Coast Chapter.

2019 is Our chapter's 20th anniversary ! I am so proud of our chapter and all of our hard work.

We (the board) are working on some ideas for anniversary celebrations and will announce as soon as arrangements are in place. Please forward any ideas to me. Do you have a suggestion for a special project ? for a party location ? Send me a note ! We hope to have several throughout the year and I hope we will have a great turnout at all of them !

See you soon,

Julia Trimble, President
 Texas Master Naturalist - Gulf Coast Chapter
julia.trimble@txgcmn.org

Chapter Advisor(s)

Texas Parks & Wildlife:

Kelly Norrid

Gulf Coast Chapter Executive Board of Directors and Appointed Board Directors

President	Julia Trimble	State Rep	Sheryl Mills
Vice President	Rebecca Lloyd	Volunteer Svc	Lisa Morano
Secretary	Carol Oeller	Training	Bonnie Brown
Treasurer	Sheryl Mills	Class Rep	Michelle Broussard
		Membership	Mary Horn
		Adv. Training	Denis Martin
		Communications	Bob Romero
		Past President	Julie Mintzer


Organism of the Month
Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*)

The red maple is a large, deciduous tree native to the eastern part of Texas. It can grow up to 100 feet in height in the wild, with a width of 40-60 feet. Red maples occur infrequently in forests as an understory tree. Its name alludes to the red color of the new leaves in the spring, the stems of leaves, and, depending on the weather, fall leaf color.

Leaves are three to five lobed, depending on variety . Blooms appear in winter and spring on male trees, fruit are pink or red with curved membranes on female trees. It is browsed by deer, and used by squirrels and birds. Cecropia moth (*Hyalophora cecropia*) specifically favors red maple, while other moths lay their eggs on maples generally.

Sources: texastreeplanting.tamu.edu; Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center



Red Maple tree in autumn at Bellaire Nature Center, leaf closeup, Cecropia moth adult

credit Irm Willcockson (left and middle), uramamurthy (iNaturalist)

**Dues are due!**

\$20 Dues for 2019 are due on January 1st and should be paid by February 1st in one of the following ways:

PAYPAL: On our website, www.txgcmn.org, click the Paypal Donate button and follow the prompts. Please note that dues through Paypal will be \$21.00, which covers our Paypal processing fee.

BY MAIL: Please send check or cash to:

GCMN, P.O. BOX 273087, Houston, TX 77277. Please **DO NOT** send to any other address!!

IN PERSON: You may pay in person at one of our monthly meetings

Designing and Stocking an Outreach Booth

Materials

I have purchased (all plastic replicas) skulls for the Mountain Lion, Coyote, Whitetail Deer, Raccoon, Beaver, and Golden Eagle. I purchased (all plastic replicas) a great white shark tooth, Grizzly bear claw, African lion claw, and T. REX tooth.

Rebecca Thornton gave me the discovery box and I have populated it with various plastic animals purchased at Michaels and Whole Earth Provision Co.

I also have silicon molds of animal tracks for about twenty different mammals and birds. I use plaster of Paris to cast the positives of the prints. I will typically cast over 100+ tracks before I staff a booth.

I also have some animal etching plates that reveal an image when rubbed with Crayola over newsprint paper.

I have purchased what is called a "Bucket of Scats" which contain about 15 samples of silicon modeled animal scats.

Booth Setup

I will typically tape the 15 or so rubbing plates to one table (over brown paper) with the cast animal tracks stacked in the middle. The other table holds the skulls and other replicas.



Outreach Booth Setup

Visitor Response

The kids LOVE those rubbing plates. I can barely keep fresh newsprint on them fast enough.

People of all ages find the tracks very interesting. I will give a family the track of their choice under the condition that the child learn about the animal and take it to school and teach their fellow students in a show-and-tell. This really resonates with the parents.

I was a little dubious about how much interest the scats would generate. To my surprise many people find them very interesting. Some of the people will recognize them immediately because they see them around where they live. I was pleasantly surprised about that.

The kids also enjoy reaching into the discovery box and seeing what they pull out.

I try to wow some of the older kids and adults with a little natural history and adaptation facts regarding the skulls that I learned on YouTube.

When I show (all plastic replicas) the Grizzly bear claw, the T Rex tooth or lion claw, it wows them.

I was telling Bob that I feel I am really connecting with the people that visit the booth but I'm not reaching the adults with the TMN message. I was thinking about taking a half sheet of paper and printing a few paragraphs about the animal for which I have plaster tracks on one side and on the other side printing info about our program. I would like to put them in a plastic bag so they can easily take home the track and the info sheet. (NOTE: Outreach committee is working on it.)

T.J. Butler

Materials Sources

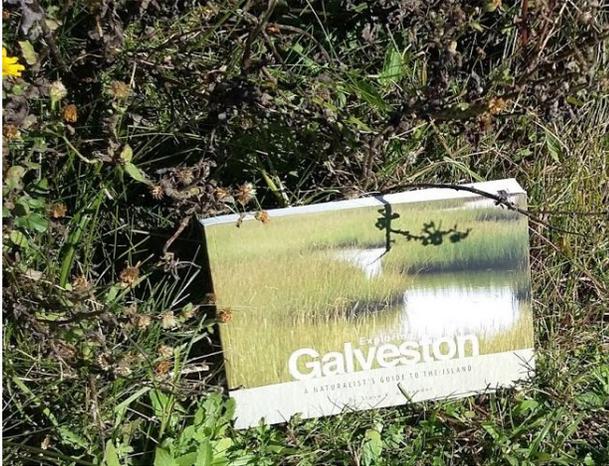
www.nascoeducation.com

www.acornnaturalists.com

www.skullsunlimited.com

**Outreach Committee Accepting New Members**

If you love showing and telling people about something you are passionate about, then the Outreach Committee is for you. We hold very few meetings, usually before chapter meetings. If you are interested, please contact Bob Romero at Bob.Romero@txgcmn.org.



Book Review

Exploring Galveston: A Naturalist's Guide to the Island

Steve K. Alexander and Melissa Weber
2017, Available from Amazon

Love for the natural beauty and bounty of Galveston Island shines through in the 25 stories collected here. One story that resonated with me was 'A long, long walk on the beach', the author's decision to celebrate his 60th birthday with a 60-mile beach walk, in December 2009. Over 4 days,

he walked past houses unprotected from future storms, a mural on the seawall, rebuilt dunes with sand fencing, and a rare meandering river created by rainwater runoff.

Aimed at the general public and especially people unfamiliar with Galveston Island, the book offers naturalists an overview. I especially appreciated the history of how some of the natural areas came to be preserved. Moreover, book proceeds benefit the Texas A&M's Sea Camp Scholarship Fund.



Upcoming Outreach Events

Jones Park NatureFest 2019 on Saturday, March 2, 2019 9 AM – 3:30 PM

Texas Wildlife & Woodland EduExpo on Saturday March 2, 2019 10 AM – 4 PM located at Lone Star College Montgomery

Baytown Nurture Nature Festival on Saturday, April 13, 2019 10 AM to 4 PM at Baytown Nature Center 6213 Bayway Dr Baytown, Tx 77520

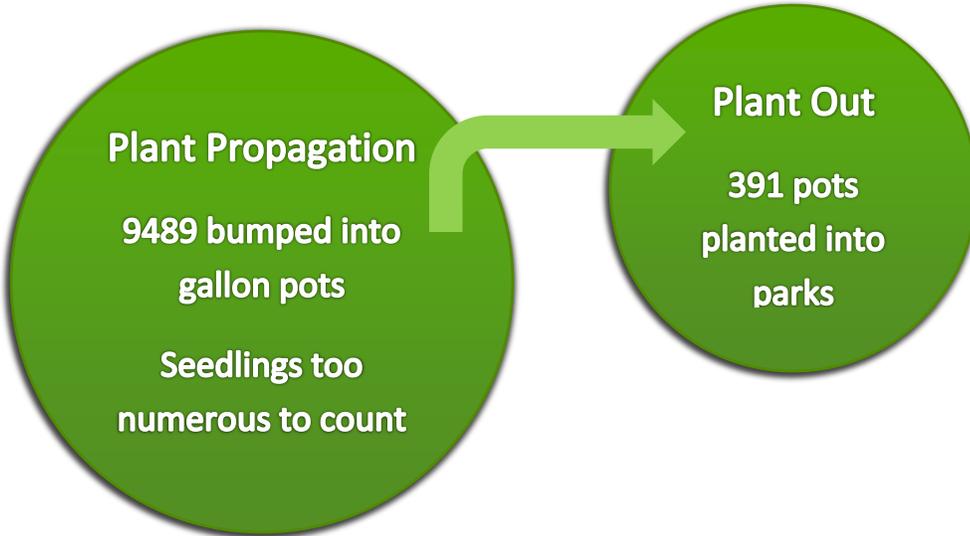
6th annual UH Sustainability Fest on Tuesday April 16, 2019 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM at central campus in Butler Plaza (located in the center of campus)

Unnamed Event, Saturday, April 27, 2019 at Kickerillo-Mischer Preserve

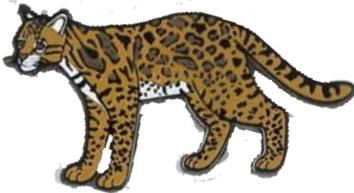
4th Annual Spring Outdoor Celebration on May 4, 2019, 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM in Mont Belvieu

These are great opportunities for current trainees as well as experienced Master Naturalists. For more information or to sign up, contact Bob Romero Bob.Romero@txgcmn.org.

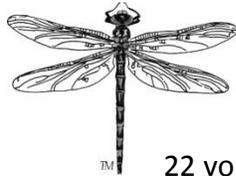
2018 GULF COAST CHAPTER ACCOMPLISHMENTS



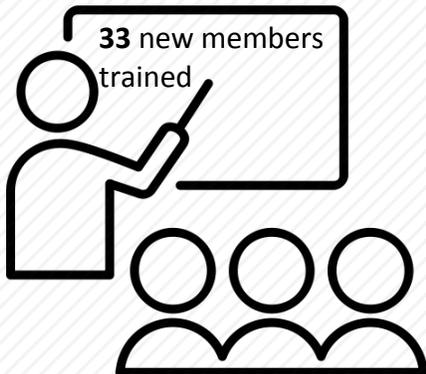
12, 422 volunteer hours logged by 138 Volunteers



138 Active Members
20 1st Certifications
83 Re-Certifications



22 volunteers reached **2, 593** people at 17 booths/events



Milestones

- 16 achieved 250 hrs
- 8 achieved 500 hrs
- 4 achieved 1,000 hrs
- 1 achieved 2,500 hrs
- 1 achieved 4,000 hrs