



Naturalist Notes

President's Note

Hello Gulf Coast Members,

I hope you are all finding ways to stay cool and still enjoy the Summer.

If you are looking for indoor volunteer opportunities, please let me know. The board has some admin volunteer activities that we need done. We welcome the help!

Just a special note regarding wildlife. In the excessive heat that we experience at this time of year, water can be a life saving oasis for our neighborhood wildlife: birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and insects alike. If you have a bird bath, be sure to check it daily, and consider putting out shallow dishes (like plant saucers) of water for ground dwelling animals.

Please keep an eye on your chapter email. We have a lot coming up in preparation of our December / end of year meeting.

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

SHELDON RECEIVES CHECK FOR \$4,000 FROM GCMN



GCMN Melinda Kincaid (Spring 2019) presents Sheldon Park Superintendent Kelley Parker with a \$4,000 donation funded by a grant from LyondellBasell for 2019. Since inception in 2012, \$18,500 has been donated.

Joining in the photo is the Sheldon Prairie Restoration Team comprised of volunteers from Texas Master Naturalist Chapters Gulf Coast, Galveston Bay, and Lower Trinity Basin along with Park volunteers.

Mothing at Deer Park Prairie on a Saturday Night



Synchlora frondaria
credit Katy Emde



Mompha sp.
credit John Schneider

Note from Katy: The *Synchlora frondaria* is one of the moths whose caterpillars decorate themselves with petals that they bite off and stick to their backs. The caterpillar picture was taken some years ago at another prairie site.

Mompha feed on *Onagraceae*, the evening primrose family. There are 45 species in North America. (BugGuide)

In addition to moths, we also saw other night flying insects.



Left - *Prosapia bicincta*, Center - *Cryptocephalus leucomelas*, Right - Owlfly credit John Schneider (left and center) Irm Willcockson (right)



Organism of the Month

Longnose Gar (*Lepisosteus osseus*)

A member of the gar family, the longnose gar is a primitive ray finned fish. Fossils of gar date back to 100 million years ago in North America.

Longnose gar prey mainly on small fish, as well as occasionally insects and small crustaceans. Larger gar also prey on smaller gar.

Longnose gar may live up to 39 years. Females mature sexually at six years, males between three and four years. Females lay up to 27,000 eggs, which are toxic to terrestrial vertebrates, including humans.

Longnose gar was a food source for Native Americans and early colonists.



Longnose gar seen at Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR

credit Irmi Willcockson

Sources:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Longnose_gar



Native Plant Society of Texas - Houston Chapter is Seeking Board Nominations

If you or someone you think you'd like to nominate would like to serve the local chapter of The Native Plant Society of Texas, the chapter is seeking nominations for:

two at-large director positions vice president treasurer

All board positions attend monthly board meetings and Wildscapes Workshops meetings as they are able to do so. If a member can't attend a meeting in person, they can be conferenced in via phone. Meetings center on: the functioning of the chapter, planning and execution of the Wildscapes Workshop and native plant sale, and distribution of revenue raised to worthy native plant related endeavors.

At-large directors are voting members of the board that either have an area they oversee or that help out with special projects as they arise. The role of the vice president is to stand in for the president in his absence and to arrange speakers for chapter meetings. The entire board assists with ideas for speakers. The role of treasurer is maintaining the chapter's ledger of financial operations and writing checks. He/she also prepares a report for the state office. There will be mentoring by the past treasurer.

Time spent in board service counts toward Texas Master Naturalist volunteer hours. If you would like to nominate yourself or someone you know, please e-mail Michael at zenhiker@hotmail.com.

2019 North American Prairie Conference - Continued

Several attendees wrote about their experience at the conference.

The North American Prairie Conference in June of 2019 held here in the Houston metro area was a wealth of information. There were so many topics to choose from which was challenging to make selections of what to attend and learn! Topics ranged from seeding partnerships, prairies as flood mitigation, the importance of microbes, invasive control to field trips that offered a visual experience of research and beneficial land practices. The Oak-Farkleberry Sandyland pine forest impressed me the most. Seeing how the proper use of fire encouraged the regrowth of longleaf pine was amazing. There in east Texas for hundreds of tufts of little green needles popping up through the sandy grounds, fire dependent seedlings. Perhaps one of the most amazing things for me as someone involved in our environment for 20 years was seeing so many people come together from various states. Most attendees knew one another from another environmental field, master naturalist, prairie enthusiast, master gardeners, educators, biologist, horticulturist, arborist, and those that take care of public lands. This networking is what makes the prairie movement grow and vital for sharing knowledge. I sat with as many strangers as I could to glean and satisfy my curiosity about other prairies. The prairie movement is like a small seed growing across the nation creating that beneficial root system. It was more than learning about prairies, it was about hope for improving our local areas and nation. I took notes to remember what I learned and have the memories of the faces I had conversations with. But most of all I have a souvenir to help seal the memories, the little aluminum drinking tumbler and the set of bamboo utensils.

Diane Kerr, Gulf Coast Texas Master Naturalist

Cooperative Greenhouse Addresses Houston's Scarcity of Native Prairie Plants

Speaker: Cindy Ryoo, Memorial Park Conservancy

Memorial Park Conservancy has developed a business model called the Native Grow Out Program to provide a consistent supply of hard-to-source native plants, and is based at MPC's greenhouse. It has two parts: the CO-OP and the HUB. The CO-OP relates to production in the greenhouse, and the HUB is the project portion of the greenhouse. The CO-OP exchange is a system of credits and debits – providing assets (containers, dirt, volunteer hours) generates credits and removing plants costs debits. Greenhouse space is allocated for each species based on a ranking derived from survey estimates of availability, desirability and ease of propagation.

Mary Spolyar

2019 NAPC Volunteer, My Perspective

Having the 25th North American Prairie Conference (NAPC) in Texas after 20 long years was very exciting. My initial participation in the conference came early in the year when I was contacted by Cassidy Johnson, the President of Coastal Prairie Partnership and Co-Sponsor of the NAPC. She asked me if the Clear Lake Chapter of Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT) would be interested in supporting the Conference. Holding the positions of Clear Lake Chapter President and State VP Environmental Liaison, I was in the perfect position to do just that. It was serendipitous that the conference was being held at the same place we hold our Chapter meetings; UHCL, and it was being hosted by EIH, our Sponsor. No surprise, several of the NPSOT Chapters across Texas came together to generously support the Conference. The local Chapters, Clear Lake and Houston, also made additional sizeable financial sponsorships and provided a lot of volunteer hours.

Most, if not all, of the Volunteers were Master Naturalists coming from the Galveston Bay Area, Coastal Prairie, and the Gulf Coast Chapters. It was a joy to experience the teamwork and genuine camaraderie amongst us. The Volunteers were present before the Conference started each day at about 6am and didn't stop until the evening events were cleaned up. Spontaneous requests were always popping up and being dealt with throughout the conference. The number of compliments I heard of how smoothly the Conference ran was encouraging knowing there was extra effort there to keep things moving smoothly for everyone. As one of the Speaker Moderators, we helped to ensure the rotation of speakers and their audiences was timely. It was an extra bonus to have the opportunity to hear some of the featured Speakers gleaned from their insight concerning the prairies. And there were brief moments to enjoy the fellowship with other Volunteers. I'm looking forward to collaborating on other events and opportunities with these enthusiastic Master Naturalists.

Mary Horn



Editor's Note: This issue features several MORE articles on prairies, as a result of the 2019 North American Prairie Conference held in Houston in June.



Message from George Kyame, President, GBAC-TMN Greetings fellow naturalists. On behalf of the Galveston Bay Area Chapter- TMN, I would like to send your Chapter our sincere condolences on the recent loss of member Allen Brymer. We are always saddened by this sort of news. I cannot help but be amazed by the impressive resume of Mr. Brymer. This truly shows the dedication to the time, work, and participation that I have come to recognize as the apex of making a positive change and improvement regarding all of our Master Naturalist endeavors. Mr. Brymer, you are a role model for us all. Thank you.

Allen Brymer Remembrances



Standing: Julie d'Ablaing, Brock Nedland, Shelby Baetz, Marney Wheeler, Barbara Nash, Allen Brymer
Seated: Alisa Kine, Mary Waters, Steve Brennan. Not pictured: Nina Rach, Angilee Carrig, Carrie Mansfield, D.L. Castro, Kimina Jamison.

How often in the past few weeks I have thought or uttered the phrase "Allen says"... Allen had interesting little tips about many things related to environmental issues, and he loved sharing fascinating facts about sometimes obscure native plants. I will miss him when I see his favorite plants in bloom on the prairie. I know I will smile when I catch a glimpse of his zero-gravity chair and remember him sitting in it, enjoying a breeze in the shade, at the end of a work day.

Susie Marten

Earlier this month Houston's environmental community lost one of its most dedicated members. Allen Brymer loved Houston's native landscapes and worked hard to protect and promote native plants throughout the region. He served in some capacity with the Katy Prairie Conservancy, Texas Master Naturalist Program, Houston Native Prairies Association of Texas, Native Plant Society of Texas Houston Chapter, and was an important member of the Arboretum family.

Since 2014 Allen contributed around 600 hours of service to the Arboretum, helping with our children's programs and conservation efforts alike. He was instrumental in coordinating the Arboretum's native grow-out program with Memorial Park Conservancy, an effort which allowed us to grow and plant thousands of native plants for our ongoing restoration work.

Houston Arboretum and Nature Center

Audubon Native's Nursery Open House Sep 8th, 8 am to 12 noon

Edith L. Moore Nature Sanctuary, 440 Wilchester Blvd. Houston TX 77079

more info at:

<https://houstonaudubon.org/programs/calendar.html/event/2019/09/07/natives-nursery-open-house/253128>

As many of you know, we lost a member of our KPC family last month. Allen Brymer died at his home on Wednesday evening, July 3, 2019. He had been ill during the last year but we all had been hoping for a full recovery; sadly this did not occur.

After retiring from BP as a project manager, Allen brought his skills of organization and management to KPC in 2014 as a volunteer at the Indiangrass Preserve. He transitioned to his role as Conservation Stewardship Manager in 2016.

Always watching out for others, he made sure volunteers understood how to use equipment, how to stay hydrated, how to avoid fire ants, and how to make sure one is free of ticks. He loved to shop for items on Amazon that made things easier for the volunteers, and continued to improve and expand KPC's native seed nursery over the years.

Allen was a good listener and a great storyteller. His extensive knowledge and fascinating facts about native plants were an integral part of KPC's Native Plants Program. His good humor and willingness to work with scouts, students, and other groups on conservation projects expanded KPC's restoration efforts and introduced many to the beauty and value of the prairie. Volunteers on Tuesdays and Fridays enjoyed walking the trail with him to see his favorite native plants in bloom and listen to Allen share his expertise.

Allen's obituary and additional details on his memorial service can be found [here](#). All of us at KPC are grateful we had the opportunity to work with him and came to know his fondness for travel and his love of his little chihuahuas. He will be missed.

Mary Anne Piacentini
President and CEO, KPC



Exploration Green Event

Jerry Hamby made a presentation on the trees of Exploration Green for an event sponsored by Momentive Performance Materials on July 13th. He also provided buckets of native saplings for children and adults to pot up and take home. The organizers were pleased, especially with the opportunity to take home a tree or two. Trees for Houston provided the trees.

Sheldon Wetland Restoration Concludes

Effective July, 2019, the Sheldon Wetland Restoration Project completes its long restoration activities and will transition to a maintenance activity. As such, Sheldon Wetland Wednesdays previously shown on our Chapter calendar, has been removed. At some point in the future, TPWD and Texas AgriLife may wish to schedule a recurring wetland maintenance day monthly. And if that occurs, we can show it on our calendar.

The restoration project spanned 15 years and consumed 12,552 volunteer hours from various sources, including multiple Master Naturalist Chapters such as Galveston Bay and Gulf Coast. Much of the project was funded by grants. 400 acres were impacted and now over 20 restored ponds exist that were previously filled in by farming. As this project spanned a long period, the final number of plants restored is still being validated.

The wetlands restoration activities directed by Texas AgriLife and grant funded were primarily managed by Marissa Llosa who many of us may remember from our initial wetland naturalist training and also as our Chapter AgriLife Advisor. Marissa has now moved on, however, AgriLife is continuing restoration projects under the direction of Ecological Restoration Program Coordinator Colleen Ulibarri. Please feel free to contact her to be added to the Weekly Wetland Restoration Newsletter, which includes weekly volunteer activities, type in link: http://eepurl.com/c_bif9

Pintail Marsh Next

The next project starting up is titled Pintail Marsh. The Pintail Marsh project, located in the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge, is a 320-acre native coastal prairie wetland restoration project. Project partners include: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited, Galveston Bay Estuary Program, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, and Texas Master Naturalists. The construction plans are complete and a contractor is on-site, waiting for good weather to begin excavation. Efforts this summer will include coordinating with Anahuac NWR to establish the nursery.

Sheldon Prairie Restoration Continues

Finally, The Sheldon Wetland Project greatly influenced the birth of the Prairie Restoration Project there. That project was conducted concurrently as an unfunded volunteer effort and will continue. Volunteer days are every Tuesday from 8:00 AM until Noon with an important break at 9:30 AM. ALL are welcome. john.egan@txgcmn.org



Water lilies; prairie restoration at Sheldon Lake SP, Map of Pintail Marsh restoration area. credit John Egan