



# INDIAN TRAIL MARKER

May/June 2014

News, events & calendar of the Indian Trail Chapter, Texas Master Naturalists...Serving Ellis and Navarro Counties

701 S. I-35E, Suite 3, Waxahachie, TX 75165 | Office: 972-825-5175 | Visit our website at <http://txmn.org/indiantrail>

## From the Desk of the PRESIDENT

*Eileen Berger, President ITMN*

As I write this, the gentle breeze is blowing through my kitchen window, and the sun is shining in a clear blue sky. Although that sounds like a perfect day, I would rather look out my window and see buckets of rain falling from a cloudy sky. We are seven inches behind our normal rainfall for the first four months of this year, according to David Finrock of Channel 5.

As Master Naturalists, we will need to be proactive in our determination to use less water in our landscapes, and get creative with the water we do use. I have not begun to catch shower water yet, but I am trying to catch the water I let run down the drain before it gets hot enough to wash dishes. It just takes a little longer, and requires me to keep the plastic jug handy. Pray for rain.

## INSIDE *this issue*

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4	Our water Ways
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## Calendar of Events, Projects & Meetings MAY

- 10 Mockingbird Nature Park Wildflower Walk 9:00 a.m., Midlothian
- 11 Peak-of-the-Season Wildflower Walks 1:00 and 3:00; Ash Grove Cement Plant, Midlothian; **RSVP required:** [danawilson59@yahoo.com](mailto:danawilson59@yahoo.com); No AT hrs.
- 13 ITMN Training; 6-9, FUMC, Waxahachie
- 17 Kachina Prairie Workday, 8 to 11am
- 19 Mockingbird Nature Park Workday 9:00 am, Midlothian
- 19 ITMN Chapter Meeting 6-9: The Future of Wildlife Conservation in Texas by Derek Broman, TPWD; FUMC, Waxahachie
- 20 ITMN Training; 6-9, FUMC, Waxahachie
- 23 Kachina Prairie Workday, 8 to 11am
- 27 ITMN Training Graduation; 6-9 pm, FUMC, Waxahachie

## JUNE

- 2 Mockingbird Nature Park Workday 9:00 a.m., Midlothian
- 7 BRIT First Saturday Program: Green Revolution Day 8-1; Farmers Market 8-12
- 14 Mockingbird Nature Park Wildflower Walk, Midlothian
- 14 Children's Activity at Waxahachie Farmer's Mkt.; Contact Don Happ if you can help.
- 16 Mockingbird Nature Park Workday 9:00 a.m., Midlothian
- 16 ITMN Chapter Meeting: 6-9, How Streams and Rivers Flow by Tina Hendon, FUMC, Waxahachie
- 21 Kachina Prairie Workday, 8 to 11am
- 27 Kachina Prairie Workday, 8 to 11am
- 30 Mockingbird Nature Park Workday 9:00 a.m., Midlothian

## JULY

- 5 BRIT First Saturday Program: Dive in at BRIT 8-1; Farmers Market 8-12
- 12 Mockingbird Nature Park Wildflower Walk 9:00 a.m., Midlothian
- 14 Mockingbird Nature Park Workday 9:00 a.m., Midlothian
- 28 Mockingbird Nature Park Workday 9:00 a.m., Midlothian
- 28 ITMN Chapter Meeting 6-9: Digital Plant Press by Ricky Linex, NRCS; FUMC, Waxahachie

# PROJECT VIEWS

*How many ITMN chapter members does it take to build a kiosk? That question was answered recently with the construction of an information kiosk at Mockingbird Nature Park.*



# PROJECT VIEWS

*The chapter was well represented at the Waxahachie Garden Expo. We sold a lot of seed balls so, there should be some pretty happy pollinators around here this year. Linda "Mox" Moxley was in town for a visit so we used this opportunity to present her with an honorary membership in our chapter. The certificate was in French, no less, her new native language.*



# Our Water Ways

by Tina Hendon

Water, a simple compound containing only three atoms, makes up over 70% of the world's surface and about 60% of our bodies. In the environment, water takes the form of solid, liquid, or vapor in its path through the hydrologic cycle. At any given time, only about 0.8% of water on Earth is available as a fresh liquid located in rivers, lakes, or below ground.

As we've seen in recent history, climate and weather patterns can change the distribution and accessibility. Most recently, drought conditions have put water issues at the front and center of our awareness.

In addition to natural threats such as drought, a growing population puts pressure on water supplies across the state. According to the 2012 State Water Plan, the population in Texas is expected to grow from 25.4 million to 46.3 million people by 2060. During this same period, the combined population of Ellis and Navarro counties is projected to increase over 150%, with an increase in water needs of over 160%. Current water supplies are not sufficient to keep pace with the estimated demands.

The quality of our water is also under pressure. Water flowing from municipal and industrial facilities and storm water runoff from the landscape carry pollutants to our streams and lakes. Disturbances of property, filling of rivers and lakes with sediment, and a lack of rainfall can harm our drinking water supplies and the wildlife that depend on these waterways.

Water management is a complex concern, but awareness of how water affects our daily lives can help everyone take part in protecting this precious resource. Here are a few simple things you can do.

**INCREASE AWARENESS.** Studies have shown that behavioral changes often result from increased awareness of a situation. By becoming more aware of the role water plays in your life, the more likely you will play a part in protecting our water resources. Do you know how many gallons of

water your household uses every day? Did you know that storm drains transport water directly to the closest creek and not to a treatment plant? Do you know how many drainage ditches or creeks you cross on the way to work or the grocery store?

**CHANGE BEHAVIOR.** Small changes can add up to big differences and big savings. Did you know that letting your faucet run for five minutes while shaving or brushing your teeth uses up to eight gallons of water a day? Did you know that washing grease down your sink can decrease the life of your septic system and release harmful bacteria to nearby creeks? Did you know that fertilizing your yard just before it rains can kill fish miles downstream?

Photo © Jim West



**GET INVOLVED.** Volunteer organizations whose missions include the protection of water and the environment are popping up everywhere. Visit local Earth Day or similar events to find local opportunities that fit your interests and schedule. Texas AgriLife Extension provides free online and face-to-face educational programs on water conservation, water quality, and water management and irrigation. Agencies such as the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Nature Trackers sponsor local groups to bolster education and outreach efforts, and to collect data for statewide conservation and research programs.

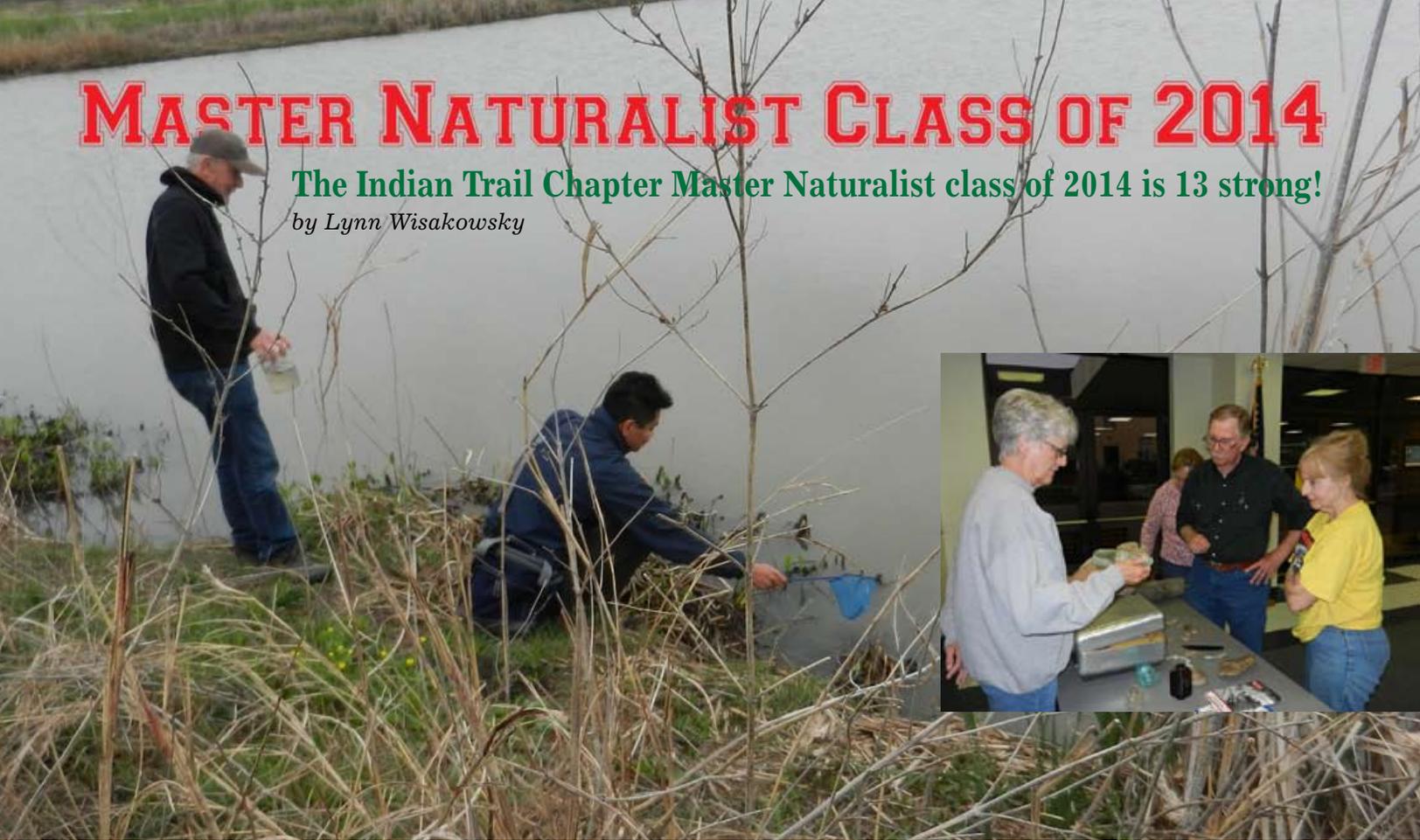


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# MASTER NATURALIST CLASS OF 2014

The Indian Trail Chapter Master Naturalist class of 2014 is 13 strong!

by Lynn Wisakowsky



The annual training is well underway. No one was rattled, except the Western Diamondback, when the training sessions began February 25 with a presentation on herpetology by Roger Sanderson of Texas Discovery Gardens. The adventure continues with weekly presentations taught by recognized experts who provide a broad base of knowledge and create the foundation for future natural resource related volunteer efforts.

The weekly topics include: early Texas naturalists, weather and climate, entomology, geology, archeology, rangeland management, ichthyology, urban systems, mammalogy and all aspects of ecology with an emphasis on our local Texas eco-region. In addition to the weekly presentations, the curriculum includes three field trips to local environmental and nature centers.

These trainees have enthusiastically trekked through Mockingbird Park in Midlothian for a plant and tree identification walk. They collected water quality indicating macro-invertebrates from the water of John Bunker Sands Wetland Center. Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center is next and will provide them with the basics of ornithology, scientific naming and identification of plants and their parts.

This is a diverse group of highly motivated individuals. Many have already participated in volunteer activities with the chapter. These activities include: the L.A.N.D.S Field

Investigation Day in Scurry, the on-going woody evasive removal at Kachina Prairie, seed-ball preparation and manning the booth for the Garden Expo, hosting the outreach table at Ferris Earth Day Celebration and facilitating the Midlothian Kids' Fishing Derby. They have also gotten a great start on their advanced training hours.

Once their 40 hours of volunteer service and 8 hours of advanced training are complete, they will become certified Texas Master Naturalists. The Indian Trail Chapter is fortunate to have these vibrant, dedicated and motivated new members.



# NATURAL reads

Book review by Jean Kastanek

## *In Greg's Garden A Pineywoods Perspective on Gardening, Nature, and Family By Greg Grant*

As an avid reader, I always have a few books ready to read on my Kindle at any one time. I like variety and especially enjoy humorous or inspirational material. I found this and more when I recently read *In Greg's Garden, a Pineywoods Perspective on Gardening, Nature, and Family*.

Greg Grant has written columns for *Texas Gardener* magazine for over a decade. *In Greg's Garden* is a compilation of those columns. I was



'hooked' when I read the following in his Introduction: "Like cornbread, everybody has a different recipe, but as I've matured I've come up with a formula for what I need to be happy each day. If I see or hear a pileated woodpecker, a bluebird or a zebra swallowtail butterfly during the day, I'm good to go. One of them means it's a good day. A second one means

it's a great day. And if I encounter all three in the same day, it's a perfect day. I rarely have bad days."

*In Greg's Garden* includes a wealth of information on plants and gardening, some of it specific to East Texas, but most of it general to North Texas as well. The many topics of Grant's columns over the years include verbenas, plants for Texas summers, heirloom bulbs, roses, plants that make scents, seed saving, and landscaping for birds.

Regardless of the subject matter, Grant injects humor into his columns, evident in some of the titles: 'Confessions of a Plant Rustler', 'White Trash Gardening', 'Polly Wants All the Tea and China', and 'Sweet Potato Pie and Hush My Mouth.' One of my favorites is 'Ban Artificial Intelligence', in which Grant bemoans his town's bans on living plants in cemeteries and live Christmas trees in public buildings. His first response is 'What is wrong with these people?' While he realizes the bans were enacted for fire safety, he wonders why other flammable things weren't banned. Why weren't Christmas lights, newspapers, candles, cigarettes, barbecue grills, and cheap furniture banned? Why do helpless plants get blamed for everything? Does everything have to be dead in cemeteries? He goes on to propose alternative options.

Throughout his book, Grant celebrates the people who instilled in him an appreciation of all living things. He loved gardening from a very early age, due to the influence of his first and fourth-grade teachers, his neighbors who adopted him as their 'yard boy', his grandmothers, and his 'Pappaw.' He's had many jobs, all of them related to plants and gardening. How many people can say, as he does, that "I've loved every job I've ever had and met many wonderful people and plants."

In the March/April 2014 issue of *Texas Gardener*, you can read Grant's latest column, 'My Dog Rosie Lives in a Tree!' The author has also written a book entitled *Texas Fruit and Vegetable Gardening*.

Photo © Jim West



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# NATURAL PROFILE

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## INTRODUCING SARA CORNETT

*Can you give us some general information about yourself?  
Things like: Where were you born? Where do you live now?  
Family history — married, children, pets, etc.? Career info?  
Hobbies?*

I was born in Pine Level, Alabama and moved to Texas as quick as I could in 1977. I married the love of my life in 1978. We had no children together, but I brought seven into the marriage and he brought four. We have five boys and six girls. My love went to be with God in 2011. I have three dogs, three snakes, one hedge hog, two fresh water aquariums and I take care of an aquarium for my 90 year old friend. I worked for MINYARD food stores for thirty years and also had a ceramic business. My hobby is making porcelain dolls and sewing. I love gardening, and any thing nature. With seven children I was always fixing up some kind of animal they drug into the house. I was a Sunday school teacher for over fifty years and that is my real passion: to teach the little ones about Jesus.

*How did you learn about ITMN?*

I had taken Jaden to the only vet around that treats reptiles and he did an excellent job, so when Mr. Smiley needed a Dr. I took him to Dr. Schumacher. Lo and behold, there I met Rebecca. We talked about our love of animals and she told me about growing up wild. "Oh," she said, "there is a class going on now called MASTER NATURALIST I will

call Charlie and see if I can get you in." ...you know the rest of the story.

*What activities are you involved in for ITMN?*

I am addicted. I love the variety of things we get to participate in. I love our garden in Mockingbird Nature Park. I think it was a gift to me when I needed something to fill my empty hours. Thank you Aaron. I also am involved with Dogwood Canyon, Wolf Creek Park Kachina Prairie, John Bunker Sands Wetland Center, L.A.N.D.S., COCORAHS and, as of April, Trinity River Audubon Center.

*What would you like to achieve as a ITMN?*

If I could achieve any one thing it would be to influence the children to have a love for nature and respect the land we have been given to take care of.

*Anything else you would like to add?*

Thank you all for letting me be a part of a wonderful growing family all by the grace of a loving and caring God.



*Sara at around age 2*

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## DCAC EVENTS & TRAINING

**Migration Celebration**, May 10.

We could use a couple more people to help with various activities (crafts, games, crowd wrangling and directing). Ideal time: 11am-3pm.

**Volunteer Training**, May 13 & 14, 6pm-8pm.

If you missed the spring training, this is the make-up date. The next training date will be in Sept. There are a few of you who have not yet attended training. Basic Training (required) is May 13; Specialized Training is May 14.

**Special Habitat Workday**, May 15.

We are SO thankful to Clint Horticulture for donating all the plants we used at Earth Day Texas. However, now we need to do something with them! I would like to get most of these in the ground before the searing summer heat starts to sizzle. Come on out and help plant, Thursday, 9am-12pm.

**Corporate Special Habitat Workday**, June 6.

Deloitte and Touche are coming out with 50 people to help tackle several areas at DCAC. We are so grateful for these large groups as it helps us knock out the big chores. Additional tasks are spreading mulch, spreading decomposed granite, invasive plant removal, maybe a new rock border in the garden.

Friday, 9am-12pm. Lunch will likely be available.

**Summer Camp**, Mon-Fri, June 9-Aug 1.

No education experience necessary! This is a FUN time for kids at Camp Cedar Hill at Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center.

Ages: 6-12.

Thank you for all you do to make DCAC a success!

*Julie Collins, Volunteer Coordinator*  
Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center

# Pink in the Prairie

by Chris Cook

On Friday, March 28th a few of us were clearing trees and brush at Kachina Prairie in Ennis, in the process making huge tangled brush piles for the native residents. In between waiting for branches and trunks to be severed and hauling them to the nearest pile site, I was working on removing basal rosettes of the invasive nodding thistle (*Carduus nutans*). Moving in ever widening concentric circles, I was building up my own little piles of debris, alert to the ground for the next thorny victim.

In my periphery I saw PINK where I knew nothing was blooming. I took a closer look and almost began to laugh at this most unexpected object: a spongy-looking pink phallic fungal structure somewhere between 3-5 inches in height with a white conical tip. Encasing the top 1-1 ½ inch or so of the stalk immediately below the cone was a layer of mucilaginous goo that apparently attracted carrion flies. Aha, it was a stinkhorn fungus, and I only knew this because years ago I had researched one that had appeared in my front yard.

So of course I immediately whipped out my phone and went to the Internet (and to fungi fields guides later) and learned a few details. Stinkhorns are in a group called Ascomycetes or spore sac fungi, as also are the more well-known and eaten morels. Stinkhorns grow from a more ground level, egg-shaped structure (looks like a small white puffball) and are found in gardens, lawns, brushy places and woods. They may have a stinky rotting odor. The phallus is hollow and supposedly edible. The greeny-brownish slime layer contains the spores and is often removed by the insects that are attracted to the disagreeable smell. Since I am no ID expert, this specimen from Kachina Prairie (see photo) could be a sample of one of three *Mutinus* species: *M. caninus* (dog stinkhorn), *M. elegans*, or *M. ravenelii*.

That's the short scoop for the science; now for the opinion and the parting shot! This fungus is a rather novel and quite interesting bit of the world we share. It has a shape maybe eliciting a small embarrassed giggle but then is worth some admiration for its manner of getting the genes passed along.

Come join us on Kachina Prairie workdays–Nature is always full of surprises! You never know when you might meet a fun guy, oops, I mean fungi.

Internet: search stinkhorn fungus

*Mushroomexpert.com*

*Mushrooms and Other Fungi of North America*, Roger Phillips, Firefly Books 2010

*The Field Guide to Mushrooms*, Marie Heerkens, Sterling Publ., 2003



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**Here are some areas that DCAC is looking for some help. Let me know if you have questions. I look forward to hearing from you!**

**Donated items:** Check your closets, drawers, your neighbor's house and before throwing anything away, think "hmm, can DCAC use this?".

**For summer camp:**

-Board games and/or puzzles (appropriate for children ages 6-12)

-Any type of dress up clothing/jewelry for the children to

perform skits (This can include clothing, hats, shoes, boas, scarves, anything children can have fun with)

**And the usual stuff:**

-Toilet paper and paper towel rolls

-Bottle caps, includes drink bottles, water bottles, wine bottles, any little cap you screw on/off a bottle.

-2 Liter plastic bottles

# MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM 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.

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## INDIAN TRAIL CHAPTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Website Support: Sharon Lane .....	<i>Webm@itmnc.com</i>

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## PROJECT CHAIRS

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Box Turtle Survey .....	Carolyn Gritzmaker
Texas Turtle Watch .....	Carolyn Gritzmaker
Mockingbird Nature Park .....	Aaron Gritzmaker
Stream Team .....	Tina Hendon
Kachina Prairie .....	Peggy Bailey
Project Wild .....	Rebecca Schumacher
CoCoRaHS .....	Carolyn Gritzmaker
Wolf Creek Park .....	Sharon Lane

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## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY LIASONS

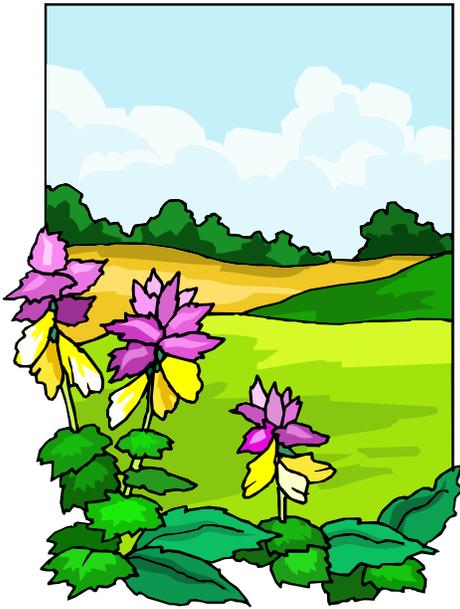
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Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center .....	Rex Reves
Botanical Research Institute of Texas .....	Debbie Pierce
John Bunker Sands Wetland Center .....	Maureen Nitkowski

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The mission of this newsletter is to inform, educate and entertain Indian Trail Master Naturalists and their circle of friends.

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# Wildflower Walk

Members of the Indian Trail Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program will be leading a Wildflower Walk the second Saturday of each month from May through October at

## Mockingbird Nature Park

1361 Onward Road (off Mockingbird Lane), Midlothian, Tx

Our walk starts at 9 am. Join us on this ½ mile stroll along the trails as we identify the wildflowers. The public is invited to attend, and there is no charge. Participants should bring drinking water.

**If the weather is rainy the walk will be canceled.**



Serving Ellis and Navarro Counties  
Visit: <http://txmn.org/indiantrail/>  
Email: [Information@itmnc.com](mailto:Information@itmnc.com)

 Indian Trail Texas Master Naturalist Chapter

5<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNUAL

State



Prairie

# CONFERENCE

May 29-31, 2014 ★ Fort Worth, Texas

PRAIRIES IN A CHANGING WORLD



Stella Rowan Prairie by ScottWinterrowd

## TOPICS

- PRAIRIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE •
- PRAIRIE BIRD CONSERVATION •
- POLLINATOR MANAGEMENT •
- RESTORATION AFTER ENERGY PRODUCTION •
- BISON ECOLOGY •
- PRESCRIBED FIRE COALITIONS •
- PRAIRIE TEACHING •
- FIELD EXPERIENCES •
- SELECTING SEEDS •
- PRAIRIE MAPPING •
- SOCIAL MEDIA

## CONFERENCE AGENDA