



# INDIAN TRAIL MARKER

SUMMER 2022

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

## Collecting Rocks

*attributed to Hazel Hillmer  
courtesy of Christine Cook*

*I think that there will  
never be  
An ignoramus just like me.  
Who roams the hills  
throughout the day  
To pick up rocks  
that do not pay.  
I've been told  
I take the rocks and  
leave the gold.*

*O'er deserts wild and  
mountains blue  
I search for rocks  
Of varied hue.  
A hundred pounds or more  
I pack  
With blistered feet and  
aching back,  
And after this is said  
and done  
I cannot name a single one.*

*I pick up rocks where  
A're I go,  
The reason why  
I do not know.  
For rocks are found  
by fools like me  
Where God intended them  
to be.*

## *From the Desk of the* **PRESIDENT**

### **Greetings Trailblazers!**

WOW! What a busy spring! It has been so much fun to be back in the groove with all our “old” spring activities and some added new ones. We hit the ground running with Mayor’s Walk and then straight into regular Mockingbird Park wildflower walks, EXPO, Bluebonnet Festival, Moth Night, Heritage Farm Day, and Quarry Tour! Thank you to all who helped or participated in any way. These things do not happen by themselves...it takes all of us working together with leadership from the chair people.

We had a great time at the summer social! Our number was small, but we had lots of great food, swimming, boating, and time to visit. I hope this is a tradition we can continue.

There have also been many AT opportunities and workdays, and other activities going on. Many of these are now in person...YAY! You can see lots of exciting events and trainings on the calendar you will find on our website. The public events are on the first calendar you see and on the member page calendar you will find everything just for us.

I look forward to seeing you all very soon!

**Rena Sutphin, President, Indian Trail chapter**



<b>FALL TRAINING STARTS SOON!</b>	
<b>WHEN:</b>	Aug. 30 – Nov. 29 on Tuesdays from 6-9 p.m.
<b>WHERE:</b>	The Cottonwood Venue at 4241 FM 813 Waxahachie
<b>WEBSITE:</b>	<a href="https://txmn.org/indiantrail/about/become-a-master-naturalist/">https://txmn.org/indiantrail/about/become-a-master-naturalist/</a>
Members, we need your help getting the word out!	

### **Indian Trail Master Naturalist Newsletter Team:**

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- Thomas Hollingsworth, Editor..... [thomas@brookwaterwildlife.com](mailto:thomas@brookwaterwildlife.com)
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Monthly meetings are held on the 4th Monday (usually) of each month at 6 p.m., program at 7 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church, Waxahachie. Our office is located in TexasAgrilife at 701 S. I-35E, Suite 3, Waxahachie, TX 75165 | 972-825-5175

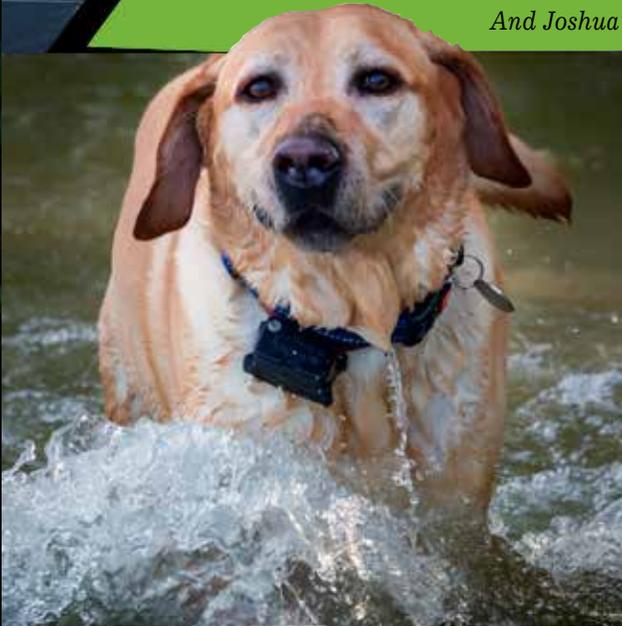
Visit our website at <http://txmn.org/indiantrail>



## 2022 Indian Trail Social At Rena Sutphin's Lakehouse

Hmmm, all smiling at the same time??  
Well, what happens at the lake, stays at the lake.

*And Joshua Fread photographed the whole thing*



# SUCCESS

## at the Waxahachie EXPO!

By Sherry Mossbarger

On 26 March, ITMN had a booth at the Waxahachie EXPO. The theme this year was birds and guests arriving through the front entrance were greeted by Master Naturalists bearing quizzes, handouts, a bird bookmark craft and freebies. One of the handouts included links to sites promoting bird conservation, bird friendly coffee and tips to make your yard a haven for birds. Several people we spoke to were interested in becoming Master Naturalists.

The bird ID quiz was a big hit, engaging adults and children alike. Throughout the event we interacted with 186 adults and 190 children at the adult booth. The photo cards we sold were amazing and raised \$126.00! Thanks again to Jim West, Sue Frary, Joshua Fread and Jack Dunaway for the photos. Extra thanks to all of you who helped out, whether it was manning the booth, setting up, tearing down, cutting out birds, or helping me at the Extension office (that would be you, Charlie). All in all, it was a great way to educate the public while spending time with fellow MN's.



# MEMBER P | R | O | F | I | L | E

## Linda Sanford

*Indian Trail Master Naturalist*

*Interviewed by Debbie Pierce*

**W**hat activities do you enjoy when you're not busy with chapter programs?

Ranching and gardening. The cows and I love to eat. Sundays are for church and family

**H**ow did you become interested in Texas Master Naturalists?

Through volunteer opportunities with Texas Parks and Wildlife and Agri-life Extension. And I love being wherever there is any kind of wildlife.

**W**hat nature/environmental issues interest you the most or that you find the most rewarding?

Any opportunity for learning. Then I can utilize that knowledge to hopefully benefit my natural world. So, that includes most everything!

**A**nd anything you would like to share about yourself that would help us know you better?

I am trying to establish a two-acre native prairie plot. I want to learn the names of the grasses, plants, flowers, pollinators and anything else that comes to visit! However, I have fenced off the cows! Their turn will come in a year or two.



# SHINRIN-YOKU/ FOREST BATHING

The positive effect of trees on people's mental well-being last longer than short-term boosts to happiness.

Dr Qing Li



By Lori Crider

Shrin-yoku is a practice started in Japan in the 1980's to benefit physical and mental health. Shinrin means forest and yoku means bath. It means to bathe in the forest atmosphere and take it in through our senses. Research shows spending time in forest settings can reduce cortisol levels, lower heart rate and blood pressure, and more! Many trees give off organic compounds that support our Natural Killer cells that fight off cancer as part of our immune systems.

Though the official name forest bathing came from the Japanese, the practice has roots in many other cultures throughout history. John Muir wrote, "Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home. Wilderness is a necessity. How much more it is needed today!"

Gary Evans, founder of the Forest Bathing Institute (<https://tfb.institute>) in the United Kingdom (UK) says the purpose of forest bathing is to have mindful time spent under the canopy of trees for health and wellbeing purposes. His sessions involve slowly moving through the forest, touching trees, looking at colors & patterns and breathing deeply.

No time for hours in the forest? No worries! One UK study found that exposure to trees, the sky and

birdsong in cities improved mental wellbeing. The benefits were still evident several hours after the exposure. Even 20 minutes can help but 10 hours a month is even better. Just going to a park, taking off your shoes and feeling the grass will help you unwind. Take it a step further and try Grounding or Earthing to benefit from the earth's magnetic field. Walking barefoot in grass or in a stream is a great way to experience earthing.

There are some good books available on forest bathing and include:

- Dr. Qing Li's *Forest Bathing: How Trees Can Help You Find Health and Happiness*
- Marco Mencagli and Marco Nieri's
  - *The Secret Therapy of Trees*
  - *Harness the Healing Energy of Forest Bathing*
  - *Natural Landscapes*
- Florence Williams' *The Nature Fix: Why Nature Makes Us Happier, Healthier and More Creative*

I hope you will give forest bathing a try. I practice it almost daily and it has made a huge difference in how I feel.

**Perhaps a group outing at Big Cedar Wilderness?**

# Pause for Breath: *Becoming a (Texas) Naturalist*

**“What I actually gained in those three months was not mastery, but rather humility, reverence, immense curiosity, and a soul-stirring call to protect and preserve.”**

*Bee Creek Blog Post by Erin McKool*

## Interview with Erin McKool

**Editor’s Note:** *In February, Erin shared her blog post with Indian Trail members. In that post, Erin conveyed her recent life journey and reflected on her experience in ITMN’s Texas Master Naturalist training as well as her love of the outdoors. As a follow up, Thomas Hollingsworth interviewed Erin for a more in-depth perspective on one of our latest naturalists in the chapter*

**Q:** Your blog covers many interesting topics, such as the Winter Storm 2021, The Hope of Spring, recipes, and life changes as in *A New Beginning*. How did you arrive at this blog and how does it correlate with your Master Naturalist training?

**A:** As for many people, the past few years meant a lot of change for me and my family. When the pandemic hit, we had to shut down my restaurants. Schools, offices, and of course restaurants, among other businesses were all shut down and I was unable to reopen.

We own a ranch in the Maypearl/Italy area. Prior to the pandemic, the ranch was used as a recreational area for get-togethers with friends and family, skeet shooting, and off-road motorcycle riding. But during the pandemic, we decided to spend more time at the ranch on a regular basis. Living at the ranch for more than a weekend became a real discovery for me of all the natural beauty in the greenery, wildflowers, trees, and wildlife. I became acquainted with a huge wild blackberry bush that I didn’t even know about! Although we already were managing the property for wildlife, we started thinking, why not just convert this to a traditional ag property?

We bought cattle, later learned about rotational grazing, then chickens, then fruit trees...it was a beautiful time with lots of rain...a special time that connected us to the land. My mom had mentioned to me a friend she knew in church who was a master naturalist and suggested I check it out. My focus had been more on agricultural and cattle production, but then one day, I called her friend and found out about the naturalist training.

**Q:** Closing down your restaurants must have been difficult, but you shifted gears towards improving a ranch. Is there a connection between working the land and naturalist training?

**A:** The longer the pandemic continued, I didn’t think I was going to reopen my restaurants. It seemed emotionally taxing to consider the risks for my employees and customers, and I decided to sell the real estate. So why not just take a class that would help inform me about the flora and fauna at the ranch? In some ways, the shut in was a blessing to our family: we were healthy and could spread out during the pandemic and thrive. We were outdoors!

Since I had heard about the Texas Master Naturalist course through my mom’s friend, I signed up and cleared my calendar for twelve Tuesday nights and a few Saturday field trips. I wanted to be able to really know our property and know the plants, the grasses, and the trees. We have countless species on our ranch.

**Q:** You wrote one blog post about prescribed fire and using fire to improve rangeland. What special interests do you have in conservation and is there a special experience you had in training that contributed to the transition of your life as a rancher?

**A:** The title of my blog post *Pause For Breath* comes from what I learned in *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold. I had never heard of Aldo Leopold, until our training coordinator, Rena Sutphin assigned the book in our class. In the book, Leopold uses a story about the rings of a large dead tree being cut for timber. During the cutting, he describes the natural surroundings which are unveiled era by era as the tree gets cut through. The chief sawyer would cry out to the team when it was time to “pause for breath,” which Leopold used as literary breaks for each era he described. So now I also take a pause for breath, literally and figuratively, as I work to improve the ranch and soak in the beauty and changes the ranch goes through seasonally.

Water is literally the most precious resource we have and it is becoming more scarce and costly in many regions. It’s the resource we always need most at the ranch. Soon, I’m going to write on that topic.

**Q:** As you think about your experience as a Texas Master Naturalist, what message do you have for others who might seek a transition towards rural life or more time in nature?

**A:** Nature is simply restorative. Spending time appreciating our natural resources is also inspiring.

*continued next oage*

*Breath continued*

Protecting nature, food and water sources is so important to our state, nation, and ultimately, our planet. We need sustainable practices, but we also need practical, long-term solutions that benefit the farmers and ranchers who grow our food. As time goes on, I want to focus more on learning about that. For ranching, seeking assistance from state and federal agencies is one way land owners can receive vital improvement assistance.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NCRS) provide useful tools in terms of planning and in some cases, cost-reimbursements. One example of this is cross fencing, which is important for facilitating rotational grazing, which is a land conservation management practice. We had 2 pastures already cross fenced, now we have 3, and we are working on our 4th. These programs also taught me how to do our first prescribed burn as well as how to conduct proper quail counts. Interestingly, after our ranch's first prescribed burn last fall, a small covey of quail showed up days later, which was really cool! It was so fun seeing how the grass grows intensely green in just weeks after a burn.

The main thing I would love people to know is that

it's never too late to learn something new...we can all pivot and embrace new things and incite new passions. While the loss of my restaurants was painful, I am thankful for where my free time led me: to learning how to perpetuate the beauty of nature and protect it so that it's available for others in the future.

Interestingly, although my mom recommended the Texas Master Naturalist training to me, it initially seemed daunting to her. After I went through the class and she saw how excited I was about it, she decided to sign up for the next class! It's never too late, you're never too old...you can dive in at any level. There is room for everybody in the study of nature...there's a place for everyone.

**Q:** What are your plans with the Bee Creek blog?

**A:** My original plan was to highlight a cookbook and the recipes from my restaurant, START, and I may still do that. But I'm pivoting more toward celebrating nature and agriculture. I'm going to continue the Blog and my next topic will be Water. Maybe my blog could be a way to encourage more people to pay attention to the natural beauty around them, and perhaps even get involved and learn about activities and practices that benefit nature and agriculture in Texas.



## **May 1, 2022 Steve Hill Memorial Ashgrove Quarry Tour**

*By June McDarby and Cheryl Michael*

*With compilations by Thomas Hollingsworth*

At the November 2021 Indian Trail meeting, members proposed an annual memorial quarry walk to honor chapter member Steve Hill, who passed away May 27, 2020.

Steven Douglas Hill, 73, of Waxahachie (originally from Greeneville, Tennessee) served in the US Army from 1964 to 1970, during the Vietnam war. After an honorable discharge, he enrolled at East Tennessee State College where he graduated in 1973. He was a Technical Trainer for Chrysler for twenty-three years,

working in Richmond, Virginia and Auburn Hills, Michigan.

Many members recall that Steve was quiet but very personable. He supported many of the 2019 training classes with his active attendance, sitting at the back table and often chatting with Sue, Chris, and Celia, then helping with activities. He had a warmth about him that made people quickly feel at ease. His overwhelming skill with tools made him an enthusiastic promoter of our Bluebird Nest Box Project, and he built many bluebird nest boxes.

Steve spent at least 2 work parties showing June McDarby & Cheryl Michael how to firmly mount the bluebird nests with baffles correctly in place. They used his tools and work van to get the job done.

*continued*

Steve built the bluebird boxes for Mockingbird Park, mounted them on the poles and maintained them, even though walking, let alone climbing ladders, was difficult for him. He offered to assist with Cheryl's insect box construction, since it was clearly in shambles. He took it home to his workshop and brought it back the following week greatly improved. Steve went with us to Kachina prairie to do maintenance on a Saturday and worked nonstop with his kit of tools that he had assembled and brought with him.

The May 1, 2022 Ashgrove Quarry Tour was organized in Steve's memory and he would have certainly been pleased with the turn out, fun, and excitement of everyone who participated. What made this event particularly special was the participation of Steve's family that included his wife of fifty-two years Ann, daughter Susie Hill Ross and her husband David, and Steve's granddaughter Aubrey Ross. The combination of fun and learning with family and friends on the tour reflects Steve's love for Indian Trail chapter and our outdoor activities.

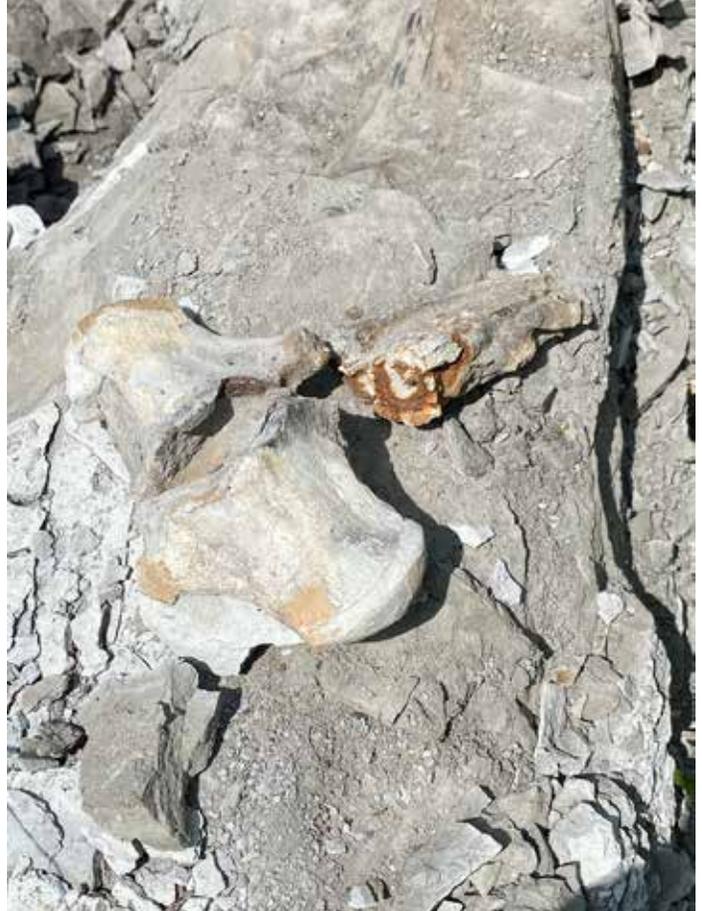
Our tour guide, Francisco Pinto, explained that this quarry in Midlothian, and in fact, a large area of the North Texas region, was very different 100 million years ago. During the Cretaceous Period, most of North Texas, the Western third of the United States, and most of Mexico except for upper elevations was under a shallow sea. The geologic conditions created shale and limestone formations that today support the cement plants surrounding Midlothian. Francisco discussed the importance of quarries and cement to our modern cities and how a balance with nature is needed.

Naturalists appreciate how geology and climate create different soils and conditions that emerge over time to influence local ecosystems, waterways, and above and below ground formations that support local plants and animals. Our regional Blackland Prairies and Oak Woods and Prairies ecoregions evolved millions of years over the lands that remained when the seas retreated to their current shorelines.

The sea boundaries of the Cretaceous period meant most of modern-day North Texas under water. Eons after the shallow sea receded the remnants of ocean plants, animals, and sediment created the conditions we see today. For additional information on the geologic conditions of the Cretaceous, check out the University of Texas Jackson School Museum of Earth History website:

<https://www.jsg.utexas.edu/npl/outreach/why-marine-fossils-around-austin/>

Many of us found shark's teeth and sea shells while exploring recently exposed areas of the quarry. Francisco encouraged exploration in a specific area to search for fossils. Participants were allowed to keep anything they found. Sherry Mossbarger's son Austin, made a major find of some large fossil bones that he worked extensively to excavate. It was the talk of the tour! (PLEASE SEE PHOTO.)



During the tour, our guide drove small groups in an all-terrain vehicle around to see the shale ponds. These ponds formed after deep, surface mining spots were completed. Creeks and surface water run-off over the decades filled the vast holes. Ashgrove has allowed nature to reclaim the area. Amazingly, oak motts, grasses, wildflowers, and many other native plants have taken hold of multiple areas surrounding the ponds through nature's wonderful cycle of succession. Native wildlife has repopulated the environment. The reclaimed shale ponds show how nature has a way of taking back the quarry. It's nice to think of the restoration of life as we pay tribute to Steve.

To further this tribute and recognize Steve, two door prizes at our June 27th ITMN chapter meeting are copies of the very useful Collectors Guide to Fossil Sharks and Rays by Welton and Ferish. We hope fossil enthusiasts enjoy these door prizes!



Barn Swallow dropping by with lunch.



# MR. WEST'S NEIGHBORHOOD

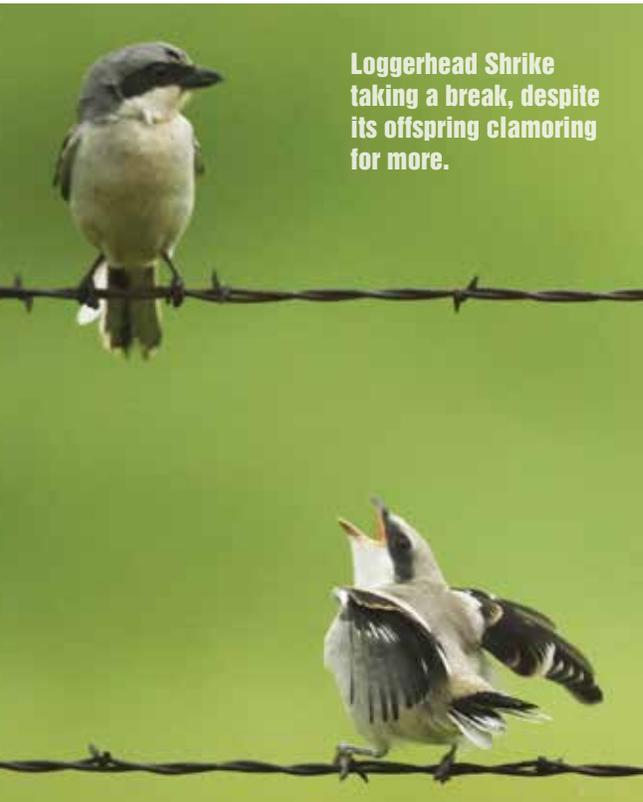
*By Jim West*

SPRING FLING is over and, now it's time to get busy raising the chicks. Busy is quite an understatement as the parents work tirelessly from dawn until dusk and, they do it in this heat. I would have applauded them but, it was too hot.

Skinny Carolina Chickadee feeding its fat chick.



Loggerhead Shrike taking a break, despite its offspring clamoring for more.



Lark Sparrows



**AND, AFTER ALL OF THAT WORK, HE DROPS IT.**

Reviewed by Justice, Liberty, Jubilee and  
Courage Bacon and Charlie Grindstaff

## The Mystery of the Monarchs

By Barb Rosenstock

Published by Alfred A. Knopf May 2022

Normally I would not review a children's book; but this one is soooo special and has such a wonderful connection to Indian Trail Chapter (more about that later). Knowing that my view of books has evolved a lot since I was a child; I asked some wonderful children to help me out.

Fred Urquhart became interested in bugs as a child and collected specimens. After

reading an article about migrating butterflies, he wrote to the professor to ask: "Where do the monarchs go?" The answer was: No one knew.

He had to find out. He studied entomology at university and started tracking monarchs. He caught them and marked their wings with a number, a pattern of dots, sprayed them with oil paint (too messy), tried paper tags (that fell off), and stuck a gummed tag to itself through a tiny hole punched in the wing (a bit better). He was sure everyone was as curious about monarchs as he was...but after tagging for 10 years and never getting many back he still had no idea: Where do the monarchs go?

He married Nora, who loved monarchs too. Together they created a lighter, waterproof tag with instructions where to return the monarch. But knowing they couldn't tag enough monarchs; she wrote a magazine article asking the public to tag monarchs. The response was good, but the most help came from kids and teachers.

The kids and I really liked the map on which the Urquharts drew lines from the tagging spot to the

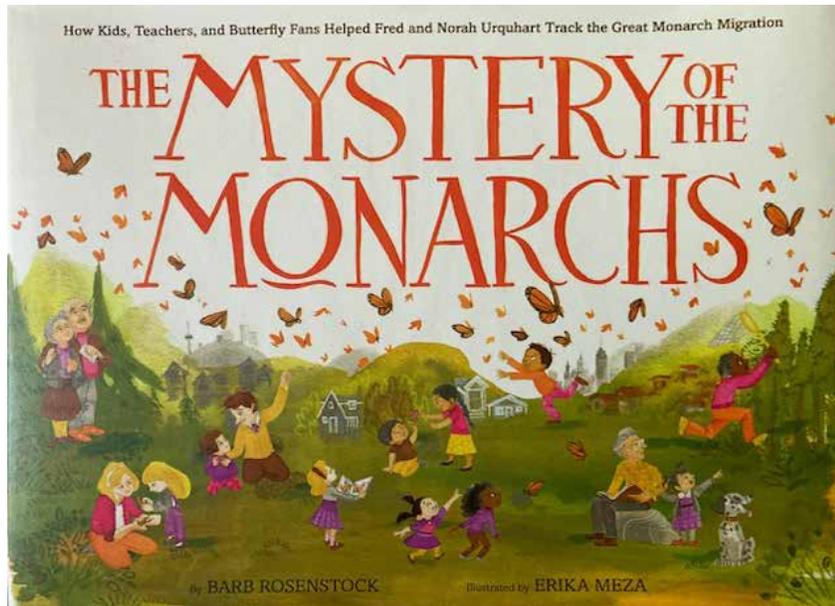
found spot to trace the migrants, but it still didn't answer the question: Where do the monarchs go? We can't list all of the Urquhart's efforts, but a couple living in Mexico in 1975 phoned Fred with their discovery in the mountains of trees covered in monarchs. Almost 50 years after first asking his question, Fred finally had the answer. It took 4,000 amateur scientists, 300,000 tagged monarchs, 3,800 news articles and 40 years of scientific research. The monarchs migrate to 12-14 sites in Mexico, where the people asked: Where do the monarchs come from?

My fellow reviewers liked the book; with one,

"Meh; it was good if you like butterflies." They liked the illustrations and definitely recommend this book. These kids all knew a lot about monarchs (thanks Master Naturalist parents), but learned monarchs live only 2 weeks on their travel north, but 8 months on their migration south and overwinter.

Note from ITMN member Kathleen Mack: "My original photo taken in April of 2020

was posted to Journey North, where the author of the book saw it and asked for permission to use it in her book. I did not get credit for it in the book, but still I am honored that she used it." And we are pleased she chose your picture (below).



Another book review, next page.

# CHIGGERS ON MY MIND

By Maureen Nitkowski, Indian Trail Master Naturalist

As both a gardener and a naturalist, misery comes to me in the form of a mighty mite, namely a Trombiculid commonly called chigger. Until about ten years ago, the mite and I had never been up close and personal, but now we meet annually in my yard/garden as well as in the field. This has led me to research my enemy.

Chiggers are very small arthropods with eight legs like spiders and ticks and live on the soil surface where the adults feed on isopods and eggs of other very small arthropods. It is the larval form of the mite which must feed on skin cells preferably of rodents, birds and reptiles, but we humans can also provide a meal. In order to feed, the larvae pierce the epidermis through to the dermis and inject a digestive enzyme which makes the cells ready for consumption. This process causes the punctured site to swell and itch which has given rise to the idea that the chigger burrows which it does not do. After its meal, the larvae drop off, molt and become nymphs and then adults. Humans are not the best choice for a meal simply because we do not live out of doors which is needed to efficiently continue the life cycle. Perhaps this is a very small consolation to those of us who suffer.

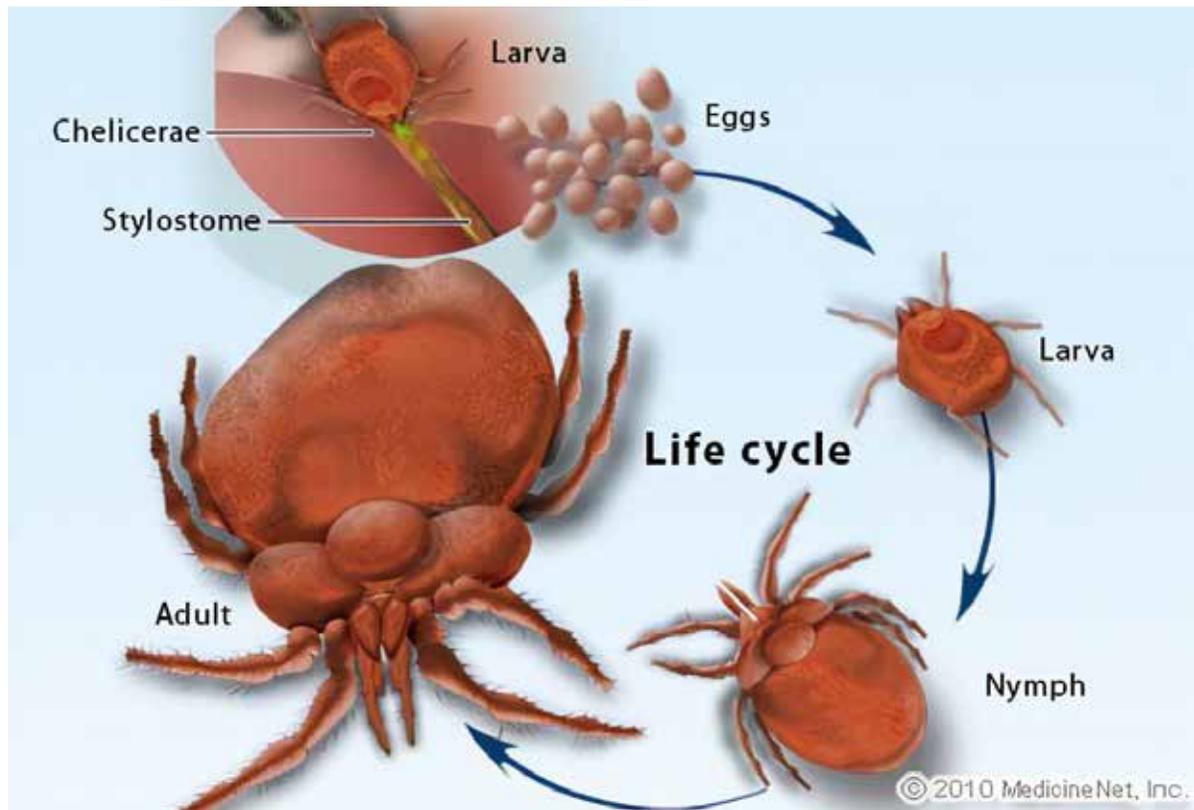
I know my nemesis is virtually invisible (1/100th inch for the larva) and usually found in tall grasses and brush when the weather becomes warm and humid. To prepare for the encounter, it is recommended to wear loose-fitting clothing that has a tight weave, tuck pant legs into socks and apply products containing DEET to exposed skin. Some botanical oils might be effective to some degree if DEET cannot be used. Powdered sulfur applied to long pants and boots can also be helpful. In

lieu of armor plate, treating clothing with permethrin is suggested.

The reason for loose clothing is that the mites tend to feed where clothing binds, such as the beltline and underwear areas. Tender spots where the skin is thin such as behind the knees and under arms are also favored. All of the previously suggested chemicals are repellants rather than miticides, but if anyone comes up with a practical miticide they will have many customers.

In doing my research I have found that chiggers are really bizarre critters. The adult is a predator while the larva is a parasite. The adult has eight legs while the larva has six- like an insect. Lawns and gardens can harbor chiggers as well as grassy/brushy areas, and infestations can be spotty. Reactions to the inflamed stylostome (chigger piercing) vary from redness and itching to pustules which take days to heal and could become infected if scratched. Fortunately, chiggers in this part of the world have not been found to carry diseases to humans.

If you are not scratching or feeling queasy after reading this article, you are indeed a naturalist/gardener. As for me, I will continue to carry on out of doors attired in clothing not meant for a Texas summer and smelling of brimstone.



# MIDLOTHIAN KIDS FISHING DERBY 2022

By Lee Zollinger

Kids, trees, fish, moths, spiders, rocks, and more! This fishing derby and tree giveaway turned out to be a really fun opportunity for Indian Trail to share with an outdoor-loving crowd.

In conjunction with Earth Day recognition, Indian Trail was invited by the City of Midlothian to participate in the Kids Fishing Derby. The event took place on Saturday, April 23 at the Midlothian Community Park fishing pond at 3601 S. 14th Street. Our chapter was well represented by Jefferey Austin, Jessica & Matt Willis and myself (Lee Zollinger). Gina Moore contacted Indian Trail to hand out free trees sourced by our local tree expert, Jake Calvit. This was a really neat crowd that gave us a unique opportunity to reach out to kids and families and

share information about our chapter. All these kids and families were really into the outdoors! That lead very easily to conversations about Indian Trail outdoor activities that are perfect for kids and families. In between picking up the trees that kept blowing over in the brisk spring winds we have been having, we shared information about Moth Night and gave out flyers and bookmarks that stimulated more discussion.

When we reported in to set up at 7:30am, people were already waiting in line to get trees! We gave away about 50 trees and generated interest in a variety of Indian Trail events. Several families planned to go to Moth Night after learning about it and this event was timely for some "Spider Speaker Outreach." We shared information about our upcoming chapter



training topic on spiders. Playing up those two events while handing out trees, really was a good fit for this crowd. Our Indian Trail shirts and name tags helped people recognize us and ask questions.

On a humorous note, one kid really stood out. When talking about spiders and insects, he asked, "What about rocks?" "Why, yes, actually, we have a quarry tour coming up," was our response. He then said, "Do they have fossils?" "Yes, we hope to find fossils." And the twist, "Good, I like to find fossils to sell them and make money." This was followed by, "Do you think they have arrowheads? Fossils are okay, but you get big money for those!" This was like an 8- or 9-year-old! We had fun with that. So, of course, we then gave details on the quarry tour. It's neat how this event created more opportunities for outreach with everyone we met.

This was a great, kid-friendly event. Although the morning was windy and we had to tape down some of the laminated flyers and bookmarks, we were more blown away by the conversations with the public than by the wind. This younger, parent crowd added to the fun and made it very rewarding to talk up all that Indian Trail has to offer kids, families, and anyone who loves the outdoors. For information on derby winners go to:

<https://www.midlothian.tx.us/447/Kids-Fishing-Derby>.

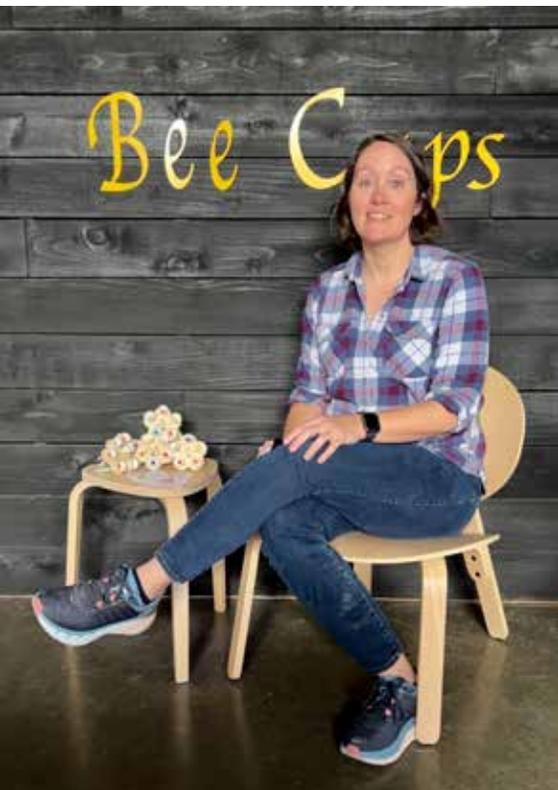


# NATURALART

By the artist in their own words

## JEN ROSE, BEE CUPS

I am an ecological artist who works from my industrial studio in Dallas, TX. In 2021 I left my academic career teaching Ceramics and Design to create ecological art. I aspire to foster new ways for audiences to participate in climate restoration through artworks that attract beneficial animals and insects to



our environment. One very successful project has been “Bee Cups”. Bee Cups are porcelain watering stations for pollinators. Each one is a small cup that holds a teaspoon of water for thirsty bees or butterflies. They are made of brightly



*“I wanted to create something that was truly beneficial. I learned that bees have hooks on their back feet to help them grip so I created texture on the inside of the cup. It’s like a bathmat for bees!” Jen*

colored porcelain and fired to 2200 degrees Fahrenheit. This process traps the colors in the porcelain and eliminates fading from UV light.

Innovation and education are important to me. This year I spent time learning about the vision of insects and how to make objects attractive to them. I wanted to make the bee cups look more like flowers. This led to the creation of a UV-reactive ceramic glaze that can be applied to ceramic objects to mimic the patterns and colors flowers display to attract pollinators. Bee Cups with this glaze look more like a flower to bees and attracts more pollinators.



In March 2022 I filed a patent for Bee Cups and the UV glaze technology. You can learn more about Bee Cups at [www.Bee-Cups.com](http://www.Bee-Cups.com) and see my sculptures at [www.jenroseart.com](http://www.jenroseart.com).

I have a 3000-piece installation, *Bee Cup Oasis* at the Houston Botanic Gardens through the end of July.

*NATURALART will hopefully become a regular feature of our newsletter. If you know of an artist working in any media with a nature oriented focus, let us know.*



# 2022 LINDA “MOX” MOXLEY INDIAN TRAILS MASTER NATURALIST SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

By Denise King

We are proud to announce three recipients of this year’s scholarship awards:

- **Baileigh Shaw** - Frost High School
- **Kenedee Lynch** - Kerens High School
- **Sarah Greeness** - Dawson High School

Madeline Kelly delivered the scholarship to Baileigh Shaw and Stephanie Racine delivered the scholarship to Kenedee Lynch. Sarah Greeness’s high school counselor delivered the scholarship as part of Sarah’s graduation ceremony. They each received a \$1,000 award.

**In Baileigh’s words:** Agriculture has always been a major part of my home and family life. I have been an FFA member since 2016 and served as the Frost FFA Reporter for two years. For my senior year, I was honored to be peer-elected as our chapter President, along with serving as the Blackland District

Vice President 2019-2020

For the last seven years, I have been taught how rations and feed-nutrition can change and define swine conformation. It amazes me that just by what we feed, we can change an animal’s structure drastically and provide a quality product for harvest and future human consumption. I have shown for years now, from our

local county show all the way to major shows across the State of Texas.

I plan to pursue a degree in Agribusiness at west Texas A&M University, and a minor in Marketing. My goal is to one day be an advocate for a feed mill and livestock feed company that will allow me opportunities to meet new people, sell a product that I can stand behind, and promote ethical meat animal agriculture that will help feed a growing population. Coming from a single-parent household, with two

siblings who also plan to pursue a college education, it will be a struggle for my mother to financially support me in my education. I plan to pursue a Master’s degree in Agriculture. I am grateful for this scholarship opportunity.

**In Kenedee’s words:** Every individual possesses a unique perspective and pathway that has delivered them to each and every distinct moment in their life. In preparing for these moments, I am blessed to reflect on my own particular story, which is a wonderful blend of faith, family, and focus.

Growing up as a coach’s kid, I was provided many opportunities to learn to play the sports that I now love: volleyball, basketball, softball and track.

Leadership and communication both play a key role in not only the sport that you’re playing, but also in life as well.

Using those same skills that I had developed in competition, I was inducted into our school’s BETA club and had the honor of being elected our new BETA president. I am also currently serving as our Student Council Executive Vice President. I’ve competed in several different FFA events such as the Leadership and Development competitions and the Career Development events, along with being an FFA officer and serving the roles of Treasurer, Reporter and now the current Vice President of our chapter.

I will be attending Texas A&M University in the Fall while studying Agriculture Economics. This scholarship funding will help me obtain this goal. This scholarship will also help reduce the amount of financial debt that I may possibly have upon graduating from college. I hope to continue my education and pursue a career that will later make me a better person as I begin to open a new chapter in my life.



continued

**In Sarah's words:** More than my small hometown, my family dynamics have had the greatest impact on the person I have become. I come from a family of veterans and my dad has been encouraging me to join the military for as long as I can remember. In an effort to deter him from believing this was the only option, I started working at sixteen to save for college. When Covid hit my mom thought it would be best to proceed with my education through homeschooling. Over the course of that year, my mom



was teaching me at my own pace which made it hard to adjust when I returned to public school.

I want to improve my education and I have worked incredibly hard to get where I am. I was part of the National Junior Honor Society my eighth grade through my sophomore years. I played softball and volleyball my freshman and

sophomore years. The place I work is also a great environment and much more flexible for students needing to leave early to work on homework and scheduling around school-related events.

My ultimate career goal is to become a veterinarian. To achieve this goal, I plan to attend Stephen F. Austin University in Nacogdoches, Texas to obtain a pre-veterinary degree. Upon completion of

this degree, I will be transferring to A&M College Station to get my DMV (Doctor of Veterinary Medicine). My career goal is to work at a small-town clinic. It is only my hope that the work ethic I have gained and the determination I have to achieve my personal and career goals will solidify my position as a worthy candidate of scholarships such as those offered through your program.

Sarah's application came with a letter of recommendation from Terry Dawson, Jr./Sr. High School Principal. In his words, "I believe Sarah is best defined by core values and principles that are aligned with duty, honor, courage, and respect. Sarah is an outstanding student and representative for our campus and school district through various activities, including: softball, volleyball, cheer, and FFA. I am pleased to recommend Sarah as I know she will uphold the values and principles requisite and commensurate to your standards."

For those not familiar with the qualifications, this scholarship is to assist a graduate of any Ellis and Navarro County High School with college expenses. The student must enroll in an accredited college/university and pursue studies in horticulture-related fields. To qualify, the applicant must be a graduating high school senior residing in Ellis or Navarro County attending an ISD high school, charter high school or home school program. The applicant must have an elected academic major in a horticulture-related field that includes, but is not limited to horticulture, agriculture, environmental science, animal science, forestry, botany, biology (e.g. plant genetics, plant physiology), landscape design or entomology. Majors in pre-med, pre-dental, or nursing will not be considered.



**Blue Gray Gnatcatcher**

# Braiding Sweetgrass- Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants

By Robin Wall Kimmerer  
Milkweed Editions, publisher 2013

Book Review by: Maureen Nitkowski, ITMN

Robin Wall Kimmerer is a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, a Distinguished Teaching Professor and a brilliant storyteller. Braiding Sweetgrass brings science, spirit and story together as stated by the author "...a braid of stories meant to heal our relationship with the world."

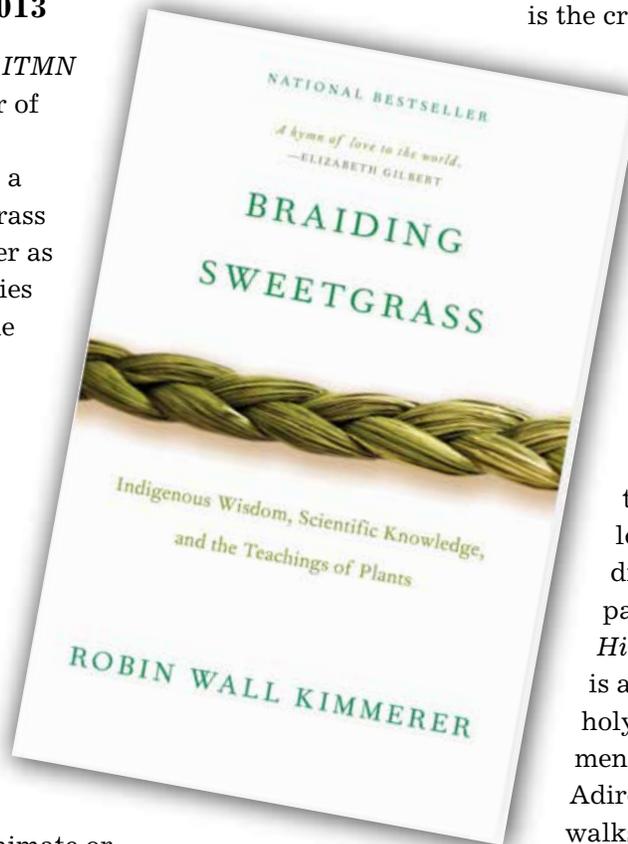
Historically, humans have related to our world from the perspective of either a conqueror, steward or member. Having an adversarial relationship with nature brings us to extinguishing other species seen as dangerous (wolves) or useless (wetlands) and taking with no thought for the future. A steward attempts to manage nature for a variety of goals, both for humans and others. A member of the world respects all other members whether animate or not, realizes a duty not to harvest all, and gives thanks daily for all that is received. Each of these viewpoints is demonstrated in Braiding Sweetgrass with stories of plants, animals, philosophies and reminders of our history.

There are many intriguing concepts in this book besides the three I will list. The Windago is a boogeyman who is always empty, forever taking and never satisfied. Windago seems much like people who seek happiness by accumulating and using beyond any need. Another concept is the Seventh Fire which is the crossroad humankind has

now reached and requires us to choose. The third idea is that as we grieve for the mistreatment of our world, we are growing toward love of this place.

Professor Kimmerer is a botanist and tells us to listen to the plants since they have been here much longer than us. She discusses many plants, particularly sweetgrass, *Hierochloe odorata*, which is also known as fragrant holy grass. One plant she mentioned from the Adirondacks took me back to walks in the woods as a child with my dad; I remember his regard for this tiny plant.

There are 32 chapters and 390 pages in this book where you will find inspiration as well as heartbreak. I strongly recommend you add it to your reading list.



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Dickcissel

A photograph of a Dickcissel bird standing in a field of tall, green grass. The bird is facing right and is in sharp focus against a blurred background of grass. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

# Monarch Watch Tagging Program

By Amanda Weatherly

Do you enjoy seeing monarch butterflies flying around working hard contributing to the pollination of our native plants? Unfortunately, the reality is that over the years research data has shown a decline in the population of this marvelous insect. A current conservation effort being done, is the collection and submission of migration data to Monarch Watch. The collected data is utilized by Monarch Watch in various ways to help determine how successful the spring and fall migrations were. Texas Master Naturalist Indian Trail Chapter, here in Ellis & Navarro Counties, has been involved with the data collection for Monarch Watch since 2019.

Monarch Watch is a nonprofit education, conservation, and research program affiliated with the Kansas Biological Survey & Center for Ecological Research at the University of Kansas. The program strives to provide the public with information about the biology of monarch butterflies, their spectacular migration, and how to use monarchs to further science education in primary and secondary schools. Monarch Watch engages in research on monarch migration biology and monarch population dynamics to better understand how to conserve the monarch migration and promotes the protection of monarch habitats throughout North America.

( <https://monarchwatch.org> )

**HOW** do we collect the migration data for Monarch Watch? First, we connect to our inner child and get a butterfly net. Next, we skip through fields of wildflowers, jump out of our cars on the backroads, or stalk our neighbors butterfly bush seeking out the



sacred monarch butterfly. Then, as gracefully as possible, we swipe and flip the net to hopefully catch the butterfly. Lastly, the butterfly is gracefully removed from the net, after confirmed to be a monarch, all applicable data is collected, the tag is then placed on the butterfly wing, and it is released. It can be very gratifying to catch and tag those tricky, yet beautiful, insects.

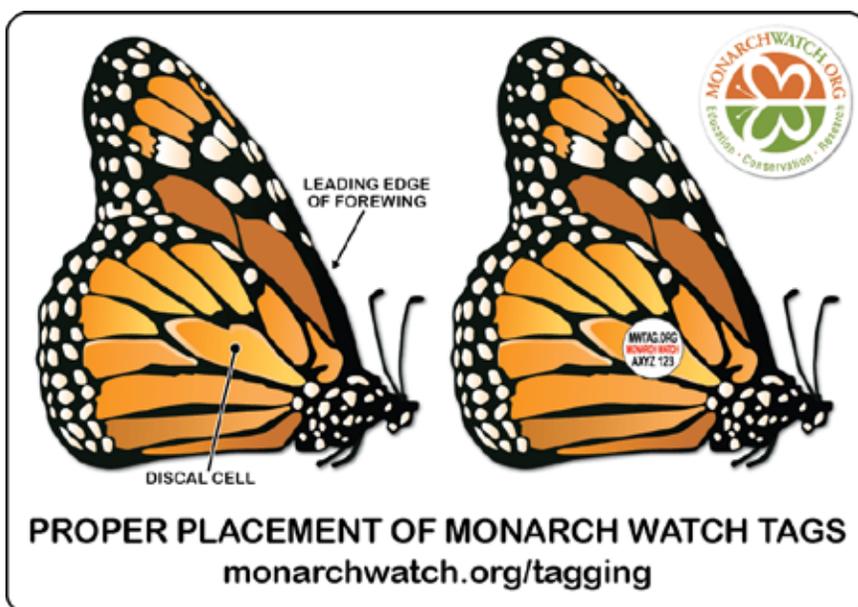
**WHEN** is the data collected for Monarch Watch done? The data collection for Ellis and Navarro Counties usually begins around September 8, with the peak abundance of monarch butterflies being between September 29–October 11 for our area. However, keep in mind that environmental factors can affect the migration times.

Would you like to contribute to this large-scale community science project to help in the conservation of the monarch butterfly? If you are a Texas Master Naturalist Indian Trail Chapter member and would like to actively participate in the Monarch Tagging program this year, please sign up by emailing your name and contact information (name, address, phone number etc.) to [weatherly1123@outlook.com](mailto:weatherly1123@outlook.com) or you may sign up at the July ITMN meeting. An informational booth and sign-up sheet will be set up at the July monthly meeting for your convenience.

The tags will be ordered for the 2022 Fall tagging season on August 1, so please sign-up as soon as possible to ensure that tags will be available for you. If you are not a Master Naturalist and you would like to get involved in this program, or you would like more info on monarch tagging, you may find more detailed information at <https://monarchwatch.org>.

*“Conservation means the wise use of the earth and its resources for the lasting good of men.”*

Gifford Pinchot



# Wildflower Walks at Mockingbird Nature Park



*By Charlie Grindstaff*

April 16 was a beautiful morning with the temperature of 65° and we identified some 40 blooming plants and one rat snake with our 21 guests. Mockingbird was a virtual rainbow of colors, the bluebonnets, Indian paintbrushes, and prairie verbena were spectacular.

May 21 was much warmer at 77° and not having

had much rain our flower count was down to 30 and we had 3 guests and 7 members. Surprise...we still had some bluebonnets blooming and the milkweed was in all stages, not blooming yet, just opened, finished, and with seed pods.

After our June walk, we will skip July and August and resume our wildflower walks on September 17. Hope you can join us!





## LIBRIS OFFERINGS FROM THE ITMN LIBRARY

### North Central Texas Wildflowers Field Guide

By Mary Curry (Courtesy of Jennifer Zarate)

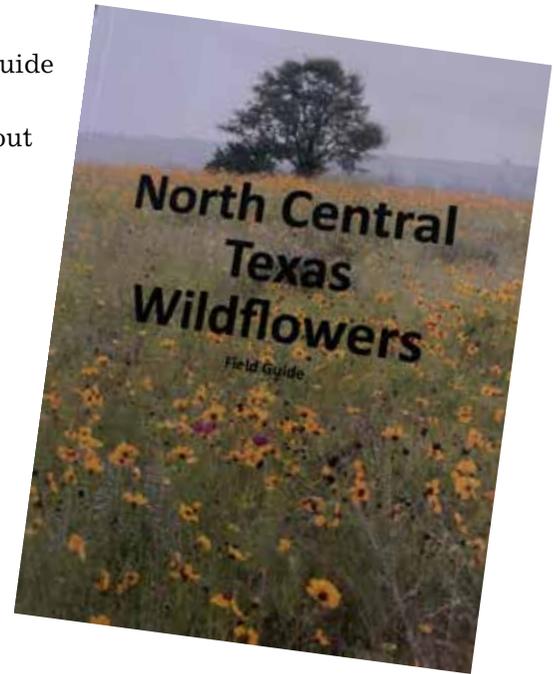
Our ITMN Library was recently gifted a wonderful wildflower field guide for North Texas! You will find color photos, bloom times, scientific names, common names, and size of the plant. The book is nicely laid out and easy to view.

#### QUIZ for the Master Naturalist WHIZ KIDZ...

Can you guess this non-native, biennial specimen?

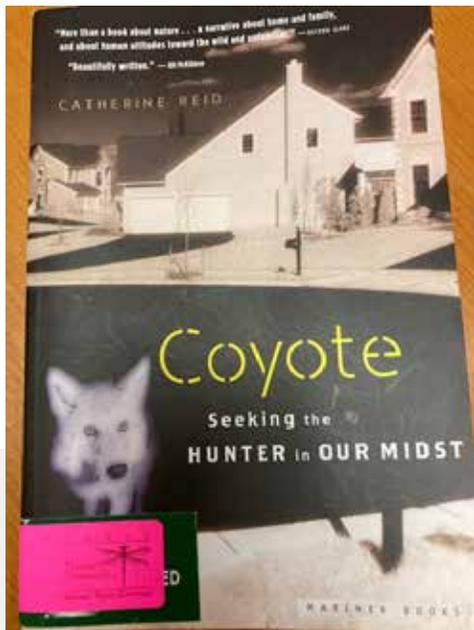
- Blooms May, June, and July
- 1 to 6 ft tall
- Grayish and very soft to the touch
- Basal leaves to 18in. long, reduced upwards, no stipules
- Rosette leaves the longest
- Inflorescence yellow spike, flower about ½ in. across
- Roadsides, pastures, disturbed areas
- Known as cowboy's toilet paper

Find the answer on another page of this newsletter.



### Coyote, Seeking the Hunter in Our Midst,

By Catherine Reid, Courtesy of Charlie Grindstaff



In this memoir, a Lesbian woman moves to an abandoned farm in the Berkshires in Massachusetts after a 25-year absence and hears a coyote yipping and howling the first night there which triggers a desire to see the coyote. Finally, after 154 pages of traipsing in the woods, renovations, gardening, looking up articles about coyotes, musing about wolves and coyotes interbreeding, she finally sees a coyote in the wild. On page 169 (the last page of the book) she gets to play with coyote kits at a zoo.

*Catherine Reid is a naturalist, teacher, editor, and poet. She lives in an old farmhouse in western Massachusetts.*



Scissortail Flycatcher

# Indian Trail Chat Channels on Discord

By Matthew Bacon & Thomas Hollingsworth

We are Trailblazers! Not only are we blazing trails across Ellis and Navarro Counties, in parks, preserves, and other outdoor venues, we are also blazing new trails using the latest technology

We do enjoy connecting with each other, sharing ideas, and identifying plants and animals. Over the past year, connecting with ITMN members got a big lift! We have our own server, e.g. private location, with specific “chat channels” on a web-based social platform called Discord.

No advertisements. Yay! No distractions. Another Yay! No unsolicited, undesirable, noise from any outside group, ad, marketing firm, or unaffiliated individual. A triple Yay!

**USING DISCORD** is fun, easy, and free! There is no obligation to use it and since we do not depend upon it for formal communications like email announcements, Discord is a pleasant, efficient way to network with Indian Trail members and authorized friends of ITMN.

Now then, what in the world are these symbols? Nothing fancy...the following symbols are like a billboard on a digital ranch road with a traffic signal at automated main street (get it?). Well, something like that...here’s what they mean:

This is the QR Code for ITMN’s Discord Location & Chat Channels; if you point your smart phone camera



on this symbol, you can go to our digital location like going to a menu at the restaurant.

Some of us Trailblazers aren’t looking for another opportunity to try our hand at the latest technology. That’s okay! Other Trailblazers love to delve into

software and really get into emerging applications. That’s okay too! What is neat about this tool is that it doesn’t require sophisticated, technical skills to use, yet it has many options for the tech-savvy as well.

So why use it? It works! Simply put... Discord supplements communication between members. You can ask questions, get answers, and share information in ways that don’t bog down your email inbox and don’t smack you with another ring on the phone. There are no additional texts, calls, or emails demanding your attention whether you want it or not. With Discord, you control how and when to engage others based upon what piques your interests...and your partisans are our very own ITMN members and associates. Nobody

else...just us

The benefits? Making quick and easy connection with ITMN members...that has big appeal. There’s no pressure and no external urgency requiring an immediate response to messages. You can jump in for a chat, leave and come back to that topic or another as you see fit. You can share pictures, links, conversation, resources, and other messages about our chapter, events, and nature with another individual in ITMN or with the whole group. And, non-members, who are associated with ITMN and approved to enter the Indian Trail “Chat Channels” have a public area that all can participate in. Members have the public area PLUS a “members only” area

**HOW DO WE USE IT?** Currently we have 35 active users in the Indian Trail Channel on Discord. Each of the current users selected one or more ways to interact:

- 1) Through the web by using an internet browser
- 2) Through a smart phone application
- 3) Through an application downloaded on your laptop, Mac, or desktop

## GET STARTED BY:

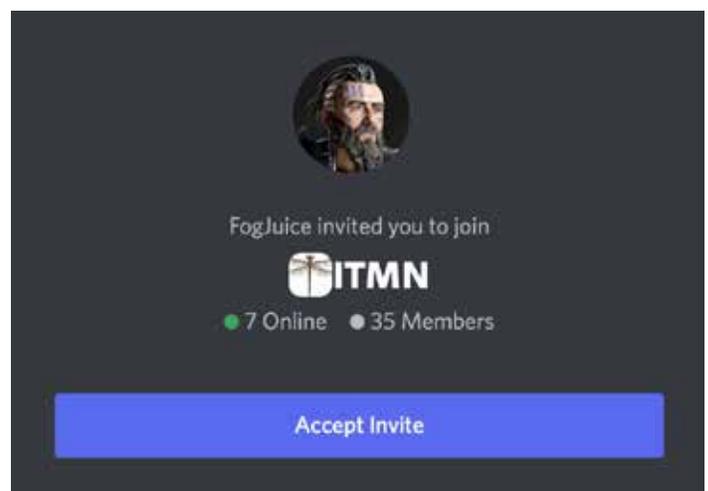
1. Create your account here:

<https://discord.com/register>

2. Go to this link (or use the QR Code to get to the ITMN server:

<https://discord.gg/wypxDBENcW>

3. You get Matt Bacon’s Invite (his profile is FogJuice)- Accept Invite; it looks like this:



Once you get in, Matt will authorize you as an ITMN member as soon as he recognizes your profile. There are lots of ways to use Discord. Thomas Hollingsworth likes to use the application on his I-Phone for a quick and easy view of the latest chats

*continued*

with members.

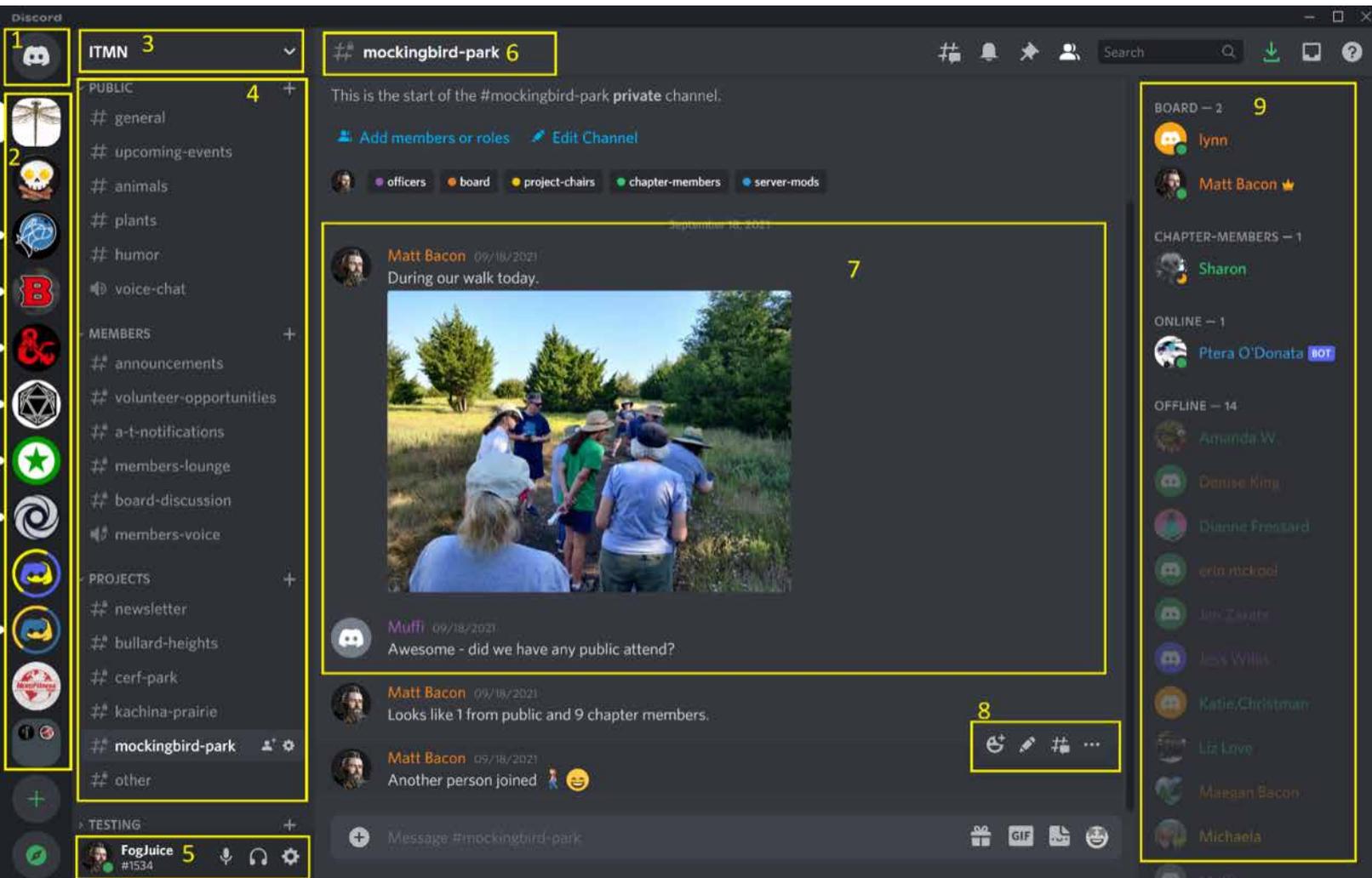
And, don't fret if things seem unfamiliar at first. Explore and you will find it easy to navigate by clicking on one of our channels to see what other members are talking about. This is what it looks like once Matt has authorized you as an ITMN Member: You can also get to Discord on our ITMN web site. It looks like this:

Of course, the actual chat will look different, depending on what channel you click on. However, what you'll find with a "Point and Click" is there are quick and easy ways to chat, ask questions, give information, or share pictures and comments about ITMN activities.

For Step by Step Instructions on Registering for Discord, you use the QR Code or click: <https://txmn.org/indiantrail/files/2022/05/Start-Using-Discord-QRG.pdf>

We (Matt and Thomas and many others) are finding Discord a really good way to supplement our communications with other members. We don't anticipate that everyone in ITMN will participate; but we are confident, if you give it a try, you'll be surprised how easy, fun and helpful it can be.

**Happy trail blazing!**



**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 MASTER NATURALISTS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Rena Sutphin.....renasutphin@yahoo.com

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**For additional information about the Indian Trail Master Naturalist Chapter please visit:**

- **For the Public:**

- Becoming a Master Naturalist:

<https://txmn.org/indiantrail/about/become-a-master-naturalist/>

- General Inquiries: <https://txmn.org/indiantrail/contact-us-2/>

- **For ITMN Members Only:**

- Committee Contacts: <https://txmn.org/indiantrail/board-and-committees/>
- 



**Western Meadowlark.  
Buh bye.**

**Ex Libris Quiz Answer;** Common Mullein or Lamb's ear;  
*Verbascum Thapsus*