

LRMN News

Longleaf Ridge Master Naturalist's Newsletter



TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

TEXAS
PARKS &
WILDLIFE

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Newsletter

Sharon Lamoreaux

June Chapter Meeting



Peter Loos was our guest speaker at our LRMN Chapter meeting for June. Peter is a botanist by love, a horticulturist by trade and a plant taxonomist in his spare time. His professional experiences in various fields of the horticulture industry as well as his Masters degree from SFASU have greatly contributed to his extensive knowledge of Gulf Coast Native Plants and related ecological issues as well as his unyielding promotion of biodiversity throughout our environment. Peter presented a slide show of Texas wild flowers and brought samples of grasses native to our area. Peter was very impressive with his knowledge of plants and their locations across Texas.



"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin" —William Shakespeare



As everyone knows with Master Naturalist's additional training is required when you attend, you get hooked. Beth and I attended and joined the Houston Bat Team. It was a very fulfilling experience. I believe bats are one of the most feared of animal. With all the old wives tales, you can't blame them.

But they are not. Econometrically they are very necessary. The Texas State flying mammal is the Mexican free tailed bat. The males eat about half their weight every night. The females when pregnant eat two thirds of their weight. Figure at Waugh drive bridge in July about two to three hundred thousand bats come out and feed every night. That a lot of bugs.

I hope I didn't sound like I was complaining. I wasn't, just making a statement. There were benefits. One was the invitation by the BCI, Bat Conservation International, to attend the Bracken Cave bat emergence. Very great experience, I'll go over that at the next meeting.

July's Chapter Meeting - Bats by Richard Peters



UPCOMING EVENTS

July—

6th, 13th, 20th—Junior Ranger Days @ Big Thicket for 8-12 yr olds

<https://www.nps.gov/bith/planyourvisit/calendar.htm> for more info

10th—Chapter meeting @ Martin Dies Jr. Park —6pm Richard Peters—Bats

19th—Paddle the Big Thicket call the visitor center at 409-951-6700 to register

21st—Guided paddling tour @ Martin Dies Jr. Park. Registration required

August—

4th—Wildflower walk @ Watson Preserve Leader—Joe Liggio

14th—Chapter meeting @ Martin Dies Jr. Park —6pm

Check: https://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/martin-dies-jr/park_events for more opportunities for service credit

A Note from Laura Clark —

I first visited E.O. Siecke State Forest on July 4, 2017. What I saw made me return five more times during that month alone. The first bloom I noticed that excited me was the Pinewoods Rose Gentian, *Sabatia gentianoides* (1). A few steps beyond that, I was confronted with a sea of *Liatris* species, Blazing Stars (2), filling several acres around young longleaf pines.

During my six visits to Siecke in that one month, I documented 65 species of wildflowers in bloom, and had not ventured more than a quarter of a mile from the parking lot. Siecke is a 1,722 acre forest reserve, the first in the state after the virgin timber was clearcut in the early part of the 20th century. It is managed by the Texas A&M Forest service for wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation and research into sustainable forestry and forest health practices.

Several of the species I encountered during these visits were new to me — Fivelobe St. John's Wort, *Hypericum lobocarpum* (3) ; Low Pinebarren Milkwort, *Polygala ramosa* (4), Featherbells, *Stenanthium gramineum* (5); and Pineland Milkweed, *Asclepias obovate* (6). When I really got excited about this profusion of blooms, though, was after talking to those who worked this forest daily and discovering that none of the flowers had been planted. It's one thing to appreciate walks through man-made botanical gardens, but it's quite another thing to witness the beauty of natural diversity that springs up in a well managed East Texas forest that is designed to imitate the native ecosystem.

Siecke has asked us to help them design signage for nature trails. They want us to interpret their forest from a naturalists' point of view, covering not only botany, but wildlife, history, geology, and anything else we notice. The field trip on September 8th is a chance for us to begin discovering what is there so we can share it through interpretative signs that encourage everyone to appreciate and value our home.



1



2



3



4



5



6

Nature Center training

Four of our members attended the Nature Center training at Martin Dies Jr. State park on June 23rd: Bill Zech, Richard Peters, Beth Large, and Sandy Brent. In this training they learned about the park, the trails, and what there is to do at the Nature Center. The goal with this training is to find volunteers who want to share their interests by eventually giving programs to the park public. This training is the prerequisite to Interpretive training which will instruct on how to build a presentation that will create a positive impact from information of which you are most comfortable.



New volunteer opportunity on the TWPD website for Martin Dies Jr. State Park.

The description reads:

2018 MDJSP - SPECIAL EVENTS

This is a volunteer opportunity to participate in special events being held or hosted at MDJSP. Volunteers could assist with the planning and production of special events for the visiting public.

Contact Person: Charles Hubbard; Contact Phone: (409)384-5231

This opportunity differs from the nature center interpretive tasks offered by Ranger Amy Kocurek. These events are more for entertainment and not educational. For example the Haunted Trail at Halloween that attracted over 1,000 visitors or the July 4th Bike Parade. Crowd control is needed for these events including organizing the visitors, directing traffic, assisting in parking, and helping along the event routes. So sign up on the TPWD web site. When an event is scheduled, Ranger Charles Hubbard will contact you to see if you are available to help.



Lake Rayburn—Lori Horne

Focus on Nature Among the PINES



Gray Catbird—Laura Clark



Dawn at Lamoreaux Hill

Focus on Nature— a new theme each month. Submit your favorite photo. July's theme — **"Red, White and Blue"**