

Texas Master Naturalists ROLLING PLAINS CHAPTER

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 12, No. 3

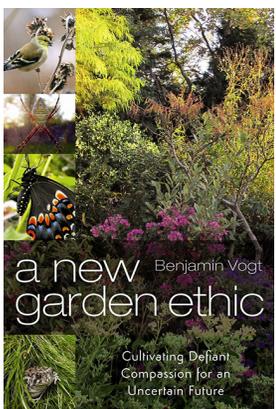
<http://txmn.org/rollingplains>

March 2020

President Report

“If you have never volunteered to work in our booth for the Home and Garden Festival, you should consider it for next year. It is a positive experience. Many people are genuinely interested and grateful for what we are doing!

This year our booth was in an ideal location in the main hallway with our friends: Wild Bird Rescue, Wichita Valley Landscape & Nursery, Lake Arrowhead State Park/ TWP, and Laura Gillis’ Yellow Cat Studio. We recruited several applicants for our classes and a full page of people signed up to be contacted.



Benjamin Vogt, author of *A New Garden Ethic; Cultivating Defiant Compassion for an Uncertain Future*, spoke at the Home and Garden Festival Saturday, and the Friday evening before he spoke at the MSU Texas Art Museum. Many of our chapter members showed up to hear him speak. Not only



was he knowledgeable about the importance of planting rural and urban prairies, but he told cornier jokes than Larry Snyder! I recommend reading his book. I

am thinking deeply and honestly about the native landscape I have built in my yard and how I can improve it for the sake of both humans and the animals who inhabit it. He has truly inspired me to rethink how to show my respect and support of all living things. Defiant compassion!”

—Kay Murphy

South Plains Regional Science Fair Report 2020

by Lynn Seman

Carl Brown and I spent Friday, February 7, at the South Plains Regional Science and Engineering Fair at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, TX talking to talented young scientists about their projects. After traveling on cold, but thankfully dry, non-icy roads, we

watched the moon set and the sun rise as we made our way to Lubbock.

First, we previewed all of the projects that were lined up on both sides of the hallway around the United Spirit Arena. We made a

LOCALS

MARCH 3: Rolling Plains Chapter training meets *in Bolin Science Hall room 209 at Midwestern State University Time: 7:00 PM.*
The program: Weather

MARCH 5: First Training Class Bolin Science Hall MSU room 320 – Members are welcome to attend 7:00pm Come meet the new class!

MARCH 7: Kid Fishing Rodeo Softball complex at Plum Lake from 10:00am to noon. At noon: Clean-up at Plum Lake—bags and grabbers will be provided.

MARCH 10: STEAM Fair at Chillicothe High School- 8:30am to 2:30pm

MARCH 14: Bird walk with Penny Miller at Lake Arrowhead State Park. Meet at the dump station at 8am. Possibly horned lizard survey to follow?

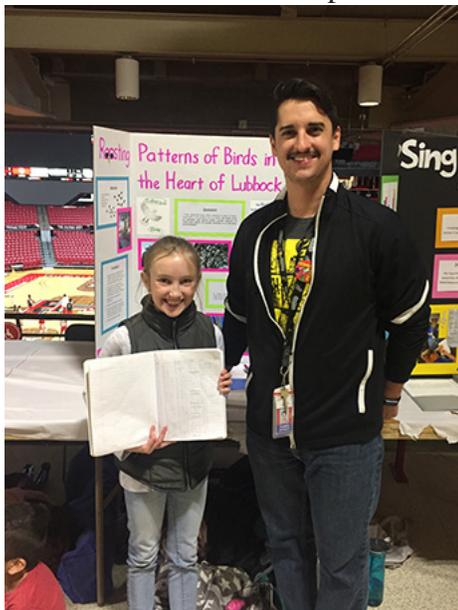
MARCH 18: CoCoRAHS Webinar – 6:30pm

MARCH 26: Kids on the Land Program outside Seymour – 8:00am to 2:00pm – contact Lynn

MARCH 29: March TMN Monthly Nature Hike – Lake Wichita Chat Trail – led by Debra Halter (focus on birds)

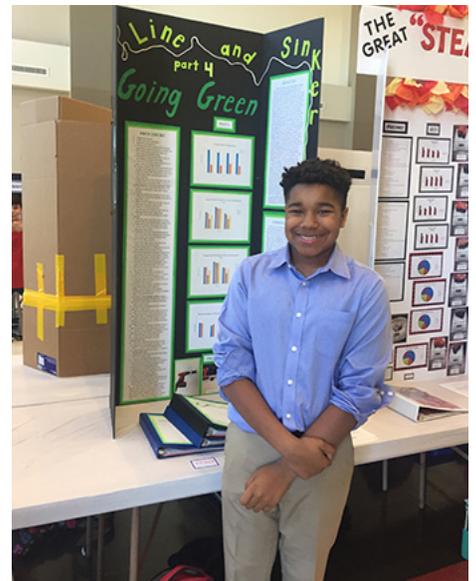
note of all the projects that dealt with what we do; you know, things like playing in the dirt, investigating with plants, testing water, and so on.

We narrowed our list down to a workable 30 projects, which was quite difficult, because there were so many young people willing to talk to us and share what they have learned. After lunch, we whittled our list down even more, to 10 projects and then set out to find our top project winner. We talked to kids who tested water in local playa lakes, tested germination rates in native wildflowers, tested removal techniques for salt cedar, and so many great ideas! The final choice was very difficult. We tried to find a project with a student who was creative, enthusiastic, and who we felt would represent



the curiosity of a naturalist. Our top choice was a young lady in 4th grade from Rush Elementary in Lubbock, Zuda Schwilk. Zuda's project was started after she noticed many birds roosting in the trees in her neighborhood. Not only were they roosting, but they were also leaving sidewalks of "poop" or "guano" behind. She meticulously marked (with GPS coordinates) and identified a list of trees found in her neighborhood. Next, after identifying the trees, she tracked patterns of bird roosting to find out which trees the birds visiting the most. She sealed her winning project, with her naturalist drawings of a white-winged dove and collared dove on her project board! Even though she was probably the youngest student we talked to, she definitely had the makings of a junior master naturalist. She was awarded a certificate of excellence and a copy of the book Letters to a Young Scientist by E.O. Wilson. We hope she will continue her curiosity in biological behavior studies!

Honestly, we were only planning on awarding one student with an award, but could not help giving a second certificate to Cruce Roberts from Christ the King School in Lubbock. This skillful 7th grader had a four-year study involving fishing line in which he titled "Hook, Line, and Sinker – Going Green". With a definite love of



fishing, he designed his project to find out the strength of monofilament, strength of fishing knots, and strength of biodegradable monofilament line to try and reduce the injuries to wildlife caused by careless fishermen. His binder had photos showing the damage of carelessly discarded monofilament line to various birds and mentioned how "he hated to see them get hurt" by this. We were sold on his project with his passion for fishing combined with a genuine care for wildlife. Even though his project was in the physical science category, we were impressed with his message and knowledge of scientific investigation.

After turning in our choices, we headed back home, this time to a full moon rising and a bright winter sun, setting in the west. Can't wait until next year!

Harpoon-Throwing Robot Designed to Hunt Lionfish

In Florida, as in Texas, the invasive lionfish (*Pterois volitans*) is disrupting the marine ecosystem. The only way to control them is to kill them, so divers join lionfish derbies or hunt individually. However, the lionfish can live up to 1000 feet below the surface, putting them out of reach of human hunters. "Florida's answer to this dilemma? A remotely operated vehicle (ROV) that uses a harpoon gun to exterminate its ruffly target," according to an article in Popular Science. "The 'reef sweeper' is designed to snag lionfish lurking well below the water's surface. On land, a trained employee uses a joystick to home in on the target, almost like in a video game."



Unusual Dual Colored Ladybug

Norman and Kim Mason found this unusual ladybug on their back porch.

"It was resting on one of our chairs outside. It was 1/2 red and 1/2 army green and it seemed to be healthy because it took off and flew. We've never seen one with dual color."

Volunteers Needed

We are still looking for someone who would be willing to have a station for the master naturalists at the Circle Trail Tour on April 25.

This would involve setting up a station, manning the station from 9:00am to 1:00pm, and then taking down after event. It could involve several people who could split up the time for this.

If you are interested in being in charge of our table or station, please let us know!

I won't be able to be there so I would like to have someone who could take our board, banner, etc. to set it up. and then talk to people as they come by.

If our chapter sponsors a stop, we need to let them know before March 13th.
—Lynn Seman

Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation

**Upcoming Events
Hackberry Flat Center—2020**

Jan. 4	Duck! Duck! Goose! & Hawks! Tour	1pm-3:30 pm
Feb. 8	In Search of Chicken Hawks & Hoot Owls Tour	9- Noon
April 17	Bird Migration Tours	6 pm – 8 pm
April 18	Bird Migration Tours	9am - Noon & 1pm - 4pm
April 24	Bird Migration Tour	6pm - 8 pm
April 25	Bird Migration Tours	9am - Noon & 1pm - 4pm
May 1	Bird Migration Tour	6pm - 8 pm
May 2	Bird Migration Tours	9am - Noon & 1pm - 4pm
June 6	Breeding Bird Tour	6am – 10am
Aug. 15	Bats of Oklahoma Traveling Exhibit	2pm- 4pm
	Nature At Night Tour	7pm – 11 pm
	Star Party	11 pm- ?
Early October	Monarch Watch	Dates & Times TBA
Nov. 14	Wetland Tour	1pm - 3:30 pm

Tours require reservations. Due to length of tours and transportation, children must be at least 8 years old. There is no fee.

For more information go to: www.wildlifedepartment.com
Friends of Hackberry Flat Facebook
To make a reservation: melynda.hickman@odwc.ok.gov

NATURE JOURNALING WORKSHOP

April 18, 2020

COMANCHE SPRINGS ASTRONOMY CAMPUS

With **June Musick**, Visiting Artist and and **Christena Stephens**, 3RF Biologist

Join us from 8:30 am - 4 pm to learn and to experience Nature Journaling
Materials provided.

Space is limited to 20 people.
Cost: \$75.00 (includes lunch).

To reserve your spot or for more information email: christenas@3rf.org

Sponsored by 3 Rivers Foundation



Texas Waters Specialist Program 2020 Webinar Series

2020 Webinar Series
View live from 6:30-7:30 PM

- 1-14 One Water Conference and Review of SB1 and SB2
- 2-12 Texas Instream Flow Study
- 3-18 CoCoRaHS
- 4-7 Groundwater Conservation Districts
- 5-19 Comptroller Office Natural Resource Programs
- 6-17 Urban Water Cycle and Sustainability in the Swamp
- 7-16 Upper Coast Wetland Ecosystem Project
- 8-13 River Restoration Guidelines

Wildlife Viewing in Texas State Parks

You may see these and other species in their natural habitats when you visit a state park or state natural area. Many plants and animals depend on state parks to stay alive and thrive. With every visit, you help manage and conserve the rich biodiversity of Texas.



Panhandle Plains

Mule Deer

Found mostly in West and Northwest Texas, this hearty, hooved animal will often appear to “hop” on all fours for a quick escape, rather than run. The Mule deer can be seen at *Palo Duro Canyon State Park* and *Caprock Canyons State Park*.



Prairies and Lakes

Bobcat

This shy, nocturnal cat has small tufts on the tips of its ears. The bobcat has adapted to thrive even in landscapes near urban areas. The Bobcat can be seen at *Lake Whitney State Park* and *Dinosaur Valley State Park*.



Black-tailed Prairie Dog



These heavy-bodied, highly social squirrels live in towns divided into wards and coteries. Family members greet each other with bared teeth and “kiss” as a form of recognition. Their vacant burrows may also house owls, ferrets, rabbits, lizards and snakes. The Black-tailed Prairie Dog can be seen at *Abilene State Park* and *Copper Breaks State Park*.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher



This kingbird has a tail that doubles its body length. It perches in the open and flies out to catch insects in midair, also known as “hawking.” The Scissor-tailed Flycatcher can be seen at *McKinney Falls State Park* and *Ray Roberts Lake State Park*.

The Greater Roadrunner is a swift, animated cuckoo that often runs instead of flying, whether chasing down reptiles or fleeing from danger. Its X-shaped footprint helps conceal the direction it is heading. While they are generally solitary birds or are found in pairs, a flock of roadrunners can be called a marathon or race.



The Beaver is a sleek, streamlined swimmer who assures its water supply and establishes its territory by building a dam and home of mud, rocks and wood. The beaver has

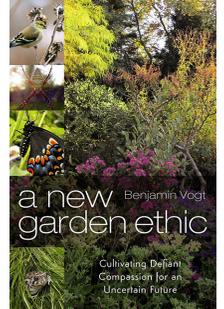
three eyelids, can remain underwater for 15 minutes and their teeth never stop growing.

The red-headed woodpecker is striking at rest and in flight, by showing its colors of red, black and white. The red-headed woodpecker is the only North American woodpecker to store food and cover it with wood or bark. The red-headed woodpecker's nicknames include "jellycoat," "shirt-tail bird," and the "flying checker-board."



RESOURCE CORNER

A New Garden Ethic
by Benjamin Vogt
Paperback: 192 pages
ISBN- 978-0865718555
Price: \$18.67 on Amazon



Our landscapes push aside wildlife and in turn diminish our genetically-programmed love for wildness. How can we get ourselves back into balance through gardens, to speak life's language and learn from other species?

Plenty of books tell home gardeners and professional landscape designers how to garden sustainably, what plants to use, and what resources to explore. Yet few examine why our urban wildlife gardens matter, and not just for ourselves, but for the larger human and animal communities.

Author Benjamin Vogt addresses why we need a new garden ethic, and why we urgently need wildness in our daily lives—lives sequestered in buildings surrounded by monocultures of lawn and concrete that significantly harm our physical and mental health. He examines the psychological issues around climate change and mass extinction as a way to understand how we are short-circuiting our response to global crises, especially by not growing native plants in our gardens. Simply put, environmentalism is not political, it's social justice for all species marginalized today and for those facing extinction tomorrow.

By thinking deeply and honestly about our built landscapes, we can create a compassionate activism that connects us more profoundly to nature and to one another.

**Second Monthly Nature Hike:
Wichita Nature Bluff Trail—Geology**



Next hike will be on March 29, 2:00pm at Lake Wichita Chat Trail. The hike will be led by Debra Halter with a focus on birds.

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