



Rolling Plains Chapter

Texas Master Naturalist

<https://txmn.org/rollingplains>

NEXT CHAPTER MEETING - SEPTEMBER 3rd, 7pm AT MSU BOLIN SCIENCE HALL, ROOM 209

From the desk of the Chapter President

I don't know about you, but this summer has taken a toll on me. It has been so hot that I have found it hard to spend a whole day outside. And when I do get out, I feel like I am in a convection oven with the dial set to broil. About the only time I get out is in the morning before sunrise to take Abby (my dog) for her morning walk and grasshopper hunt. She may not be the best grasshopper hunter, but the insects are so thick out here that all she has to do is walk through the grass and they literally jump into her mouth. (We are both a little surprised when that happens.)

Staying inside has made me crabby and irritable to say the least. Thankfully cooler temperatures are just around the corner and the thunderheads to the south promise rain for some lucky folks. I just have to hold out a little bit longer and fall will be here, and I am so very ready.

I am also ready to get back to our hikes, projects and outings. We have some great projects coming up – the Sikes Lake Cleanup is taking place on Saturday, September 7. This is always a great time to talk to folks and make a real difference in our community. It is amazing how much trash will get picked up at this event. The Chapter has also adopted a flower bed at the entrance of River Bend Nature Center. Kay Murphy will be heading up this project and she will be scheduling some workdays for us sometime soon. Penny Miller has found an opportunity for us to make a special collection of our favorite books at the Wichita Falls Library, so start making your lists!

Please make plans to come to the meeting on September 3rd. We will be presenting certificates to nine of our 2024 Training Class. Four of these nine have completed the class and recorded enough hours for their initial certification as a Texas Master Naturalist and will receive their first dragonfly pin. In addition, two have double certified also earning their 2024 Rattlesnake pins as well! I do hope you will come and celebrate these new trainees and their accomplishments. The Advanced Training program will be "Tree Identification" with Kimberlee Peterson of the Texas A&M Forest Service.

One last thing. Apparently, the heat has baked my brain, I totally forgot about the Scavenger Hunt cards. If you have filled your card out and have your 50 points, please bring it to the September meeting. We will put them all in the drawing for extra Monarch tags which will be passed out at the October meeting. Hope to see you soon!

Chapter Contacts

President, Laura Gillis - gillis.laura5319@gmail.com

Vice President - Tiffany Herring - therring2413@gmail.com

Secretary - Sandy Underwood - sandyleau@gmail.com

Treasurer - Kevin Seager - kevindseager@gmail.com

Past President - Kay Murphy - kay_vince@sbcglobal.net

VMS Admin - Larry Snyder - lastime64@gmail.com

Backup VMS Admin - Lynn Seman - rlynnseman@gmail.com

A proposal for our membership to consider

by Larry Snyder

Nobody likes price increases, but they are a fact of life for everyone and every organization, including your chapter of Texas Master Naturalist.

Our dues structure hasn't changed since the chapter's inception in 2002. For 22 years dues in the chapter have been fifteen dollars for an individual and twenty-five dollars for a couple.

I am going to offer a motion at the September meeting to increase dues. My proposal will be for a dues structure where everyone pays the same amount. My thinking on that is everyone receives the same benefit of being a member of the chapter, regardless of if that's an opportunity to do good or educational opportunities.

My motion for the increase in dues would be from the current structure to a more simplified flat amount of twenty-five dollars (\$ 25.00) per person. That's just over two-dollars (\$ 2.00) a month, surely everyone can afford that.

We are finding that bringing in interesting/different speakers who are willing to provide training are asking for an "honorarium" to defray their expenses of travel. No longer will a paid meal do it for them. One recent speaker received a paid meal and a fifty dollar (\$ 50.00) honorarium that they requested.

Texas Tech has decided that they need twenty-five dollars (\$ 25.00) per visit to Comanche Springs. The board has determined that the chapter will fund one visit per month through the end of the year. The hope is that Tech will find our work out there worthwhile and no longer require a fee. Just FYI, Lynn Seman negotiated this down from their initial requirement of seventy-five (\$ 75.00) per visit. If you're thinking this is ridiculous, I agree.

Prices for office supplies, postage, and other necessary supplies have increased as well. Recently the fee we pay for a table at the Home & Garden Show to recruit new trainees/members increased from \$ 180 to \$ 320. The Kemp Center for the Arts removed our discount. I should add that the funds we bring in for our once a year fundraiser, the sale of Home & Garden Show tickets, have gone down dramatically. We used to sell over 100 per year when we had fewer members than we do now. All this hurts our small organization. And we could do more with just a small increase in dues shared by everyone.

There's discussion taking place of increasing our class fee to one-hundred fifty dollars (\$ 150.00) or more. This might cover honorariums required for training classes and the trainees will receive a Master Naturalist t-shirt and, perhaps, a journal.

My final point is one of numbers. In 2021 we had income over expense of just one-hundred fifty five dollars (\$ 155.00). In 2022 we had a deficit of one-thousand seven-hundred thirty dollars (\$ 1,730.00.) In 2023 we had a deficit of six-hundred eighty-seven dollars (\$ 687.00) (The chapter received an unexpected donation of two-hundred (\$ 200.00) from a member. Without that the deficit would have been eight-hundred eighty-seven dollars (\$ 887.00)

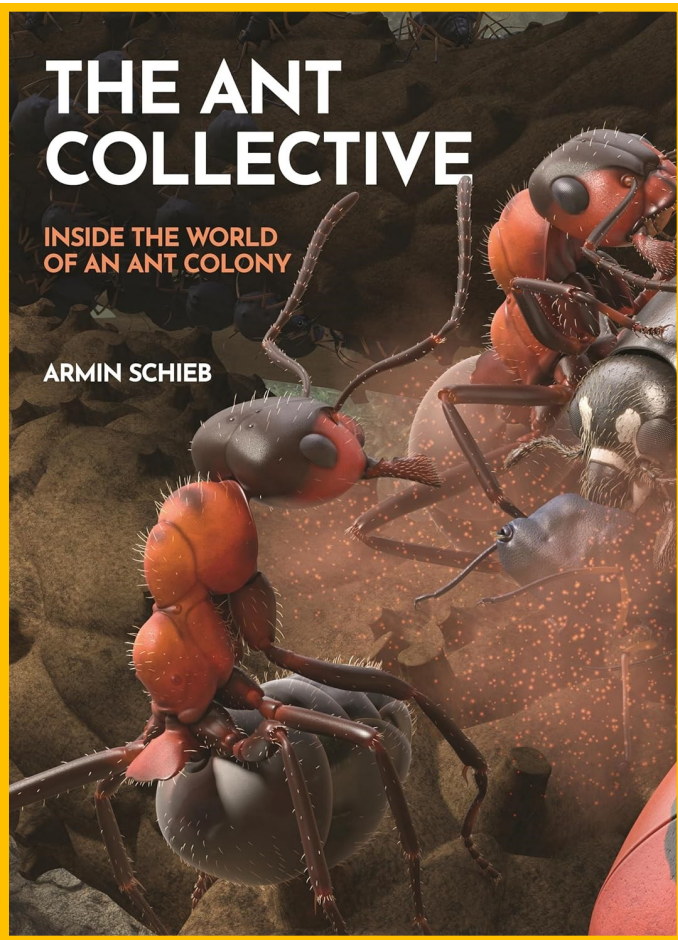
So far for 2024 we have a deficit of one-hundred dollars (\$ 100.00). What the end of year total will be I don't know. I know we have expense for a donation to the Annual Meeting silent auction and the remaining one-hundred dollars (\$ 100.00) for access to Comanche Springs. I know that in 2024 we've received anonymous, non-monetary donations for postage, camera batteries, meals, and etc. in excess of one-hundred seventy-five dollars (\$ 175.00).

I don't want to come away with the idea that we are broke, we're not, you can see that from the financial reports. But I'd submit to you that what is currently taking place is not sustainable.

I presented this to the executive board along with supporting documentation. They have agreed the current status is not sustainable and they support the dues increase. I hope I can get the support of the membership also. If you're adamantly opposed, I'd like your thoughts on why this is unfair. lastime64@gmail.com

The Ant Collective: Inside the World of an Ant Colony

by Armin Schieb



Ants come alive on this fabulously illustrated journey into the heart of a bustling colony

Ants share a vibrant and complex communal life and remarkable abilities to communicate with each other.

The Ant Collective presents the world of ants as you have never seen it before, using hyperrealistic, computer-generated imagery that shows 3D-like views of activities inside and outside a thriving nest of red wood ants.

With chapters on topics ranging from the establishment and construction of the nest to the birth of an ant trail and the relocation of a colony, this one-of-a-kind book brilliantly integrates informative descriptions with the illustrations, drawing on the latest science to reveal the innermost workings of the colony and enabling you to explore the ant collective as if you are there.

- Features a wealth of naturalistic 3D-like illustrations and schematic infographics
- Depicts the anatomy of ants, the architecture of their nests, their interactions with the environment and other animals, and their collective social behavior
- Follows the annual life cycle of the colony
- Provides an incredible up-close look at ant reproduction, defense, foraging, nesting, division of labor, and more
- Packed with information about the biology, ecology, and communication skills of these marvelous insects

"This remarkable scientific study . . . features captivating drawings."—Ron Charles, *Washington Post*

"Beautifully illustrated and easy-to-read."—Marc Bekoff, *Psychology Today*

"Armin Schieb provides us with a detailed examination of the workings of an ant colony, supported by a gallery of computer-generated images that are breathtaking. You will see the intricacies of life in ant society in ways you have never seen before."—David Gascoigne, *Travels with Birds*

"There has never been an ant book anything like *The Ant Collective*. Schieb's illustrations use 3-D enhancement rendering technology in order to bring the ants into incredibly sharp focus, from the tips of their pretarsus to the slope of their tergite. Schieb doesn't merely tell the reader where ants are going . . . he shows it all in such incredible detail that no review reproduction can do justice to the results."—Steve Donoghue, *Open Letters Monthly*

**Have you ever been followed by a Moon Shadow?
Has the Blue Moon ever caught you standing alone?**

Ever seen a Bad Moon Rising?

By now do you feel you'd like to Fly Me to The Moon?

Yes, I am showing my age and I AM a little

MOONSTRUCK

LUNAR RHYTHMS GOVERN PLANTS AND ANIMALS IN THREE

essential ways. First, the moon waxes and wanes across eight phases.

Each of these phases trigger natural events like migration and reproduction.

Second, the gravitational pull between the moon and Earth generates tides, which influence the behavior of coastal flora and fauna.

And third, the light of the moon drives activities of predator and prey species.

The moon is a clock, magnet, and lamp all in one—and its celestial cycles can be critical to the survival of many species on Earth.

CORAL SPAWNING

Millions of Great Barrier Reef coral polyps release sperm and eggs into the Pacific Ocean in a synchronized spawning event set off by water temperatures and a waning full moon between October and December.

CACTUS FLOWER

Night-blooming cereus, a group of cacti, unfurl their delicate white flowers between sunset and dawn syncing their pollinator-attracting bloom to the light of the full moon.

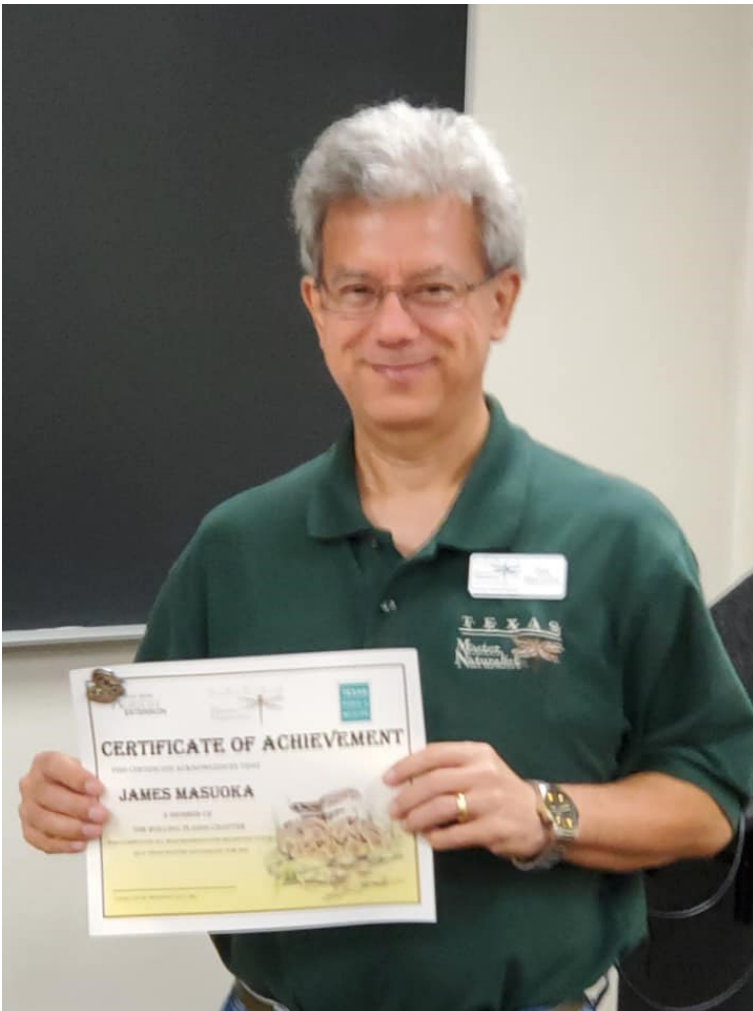
WILDEBEESTS

During the darkest nights of the month in the wet season, wildebeests are less likely to occupy places where run-ins with lions are common. But they become braver as the moon becomes brighter.

Rolling PlainSpotlight

Chapter Happenings

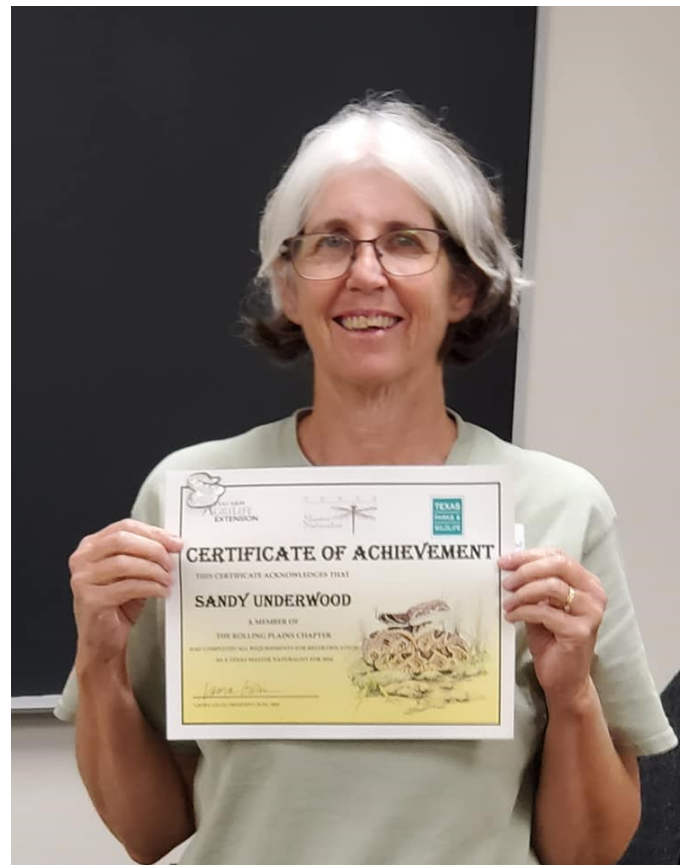
Recertifications



Left: James Masuoka received his recertification certificate.

Below: Sandy Underwood received her 2024 recertification certificate.

(Photo Credit: Debra Halter)



Rolling PlainSpotlight

Chapter Happenings

Naturalists at Work—Photo Credit, Sandy Underwood



Left: Lynn Seman and Chapter Advisor L. Clepper closely monitor the testing of water at Comanche Springs.

Right: Penny Miller and Carl Brown are fishing for water to clarity along the Wichita River.

