

Chapter Contacts

President

Penny Miller
green.wichitafalls@gmail.com

Vice President

Tiffany Herring
therring2413@gmail.com

Secretary

Sandy Underwood
sandyleau@gmail.com

Treasurer

Larry Snyder
lastime64@gmail.com

Past President

Laura Gillis
gillis.laura5319@gmail.com

Education & Outreach

Lynn Seman
rlynnseman@gmail.com

VMS Administrators

Larry Snyder
Lynn Seman

Website Coordinator

Debra Halter
chickadeekees@gmail.com

New Class Representative

Michael Lopez
michael.j.lopez.tx@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor

Laura Gillis
gillis.laura5319@gmail.com

Chapter Advisor

Laura "L" Clepper
Laura.Clepper@tpwd.texas.gov

Chapter email

rollingplainschaptertmn@gmail.com

Chapter Website

<https://txmn.org/rollingplains/>

Find us on Facebook too!

Rolling Plains Chapter

Field Notes

News, Notes and Events

September 2025

From The President

Labor Day weekend is upon us, which means we should start cooling down soon. With cooler weather comes many more opportunities for volunteer activities. Two favorite Fall(ish) activities coming are the Sikes Lake cleanup and monarch tagging. This will be the 20th Sikes Lake cleanup. It doesn't take long since MSU students participate. Monarch Tags will be given out at our meeting on September 2. Laura Gillis and Lynn Seman will be talking about the hows and whys of tagging. We usually have at least one public tagging event, but since the monarchs don't provide a schedule for when they will be coming through, that will be short notice. Our September public hike at Ft. Richardson will be an evening hike, which will be a nice change of pace. We will also be having three big planting events at our pollinator project at the City View school pond in late September and early October. Watch the events calendar you get each week in your email inbox for these and other activities. You are not going to have any problems getting your volunteer time.

This year is the last Texoma Gives event. The chapter is participating this year. We have greatly expanded our water testing program and chemicals are expensive. The more resources we have, the more we can do, whether it's water testing or other projects. Early giving is underway; the actual day of the event is September 4. If you have the ability to give, I hope you will consider the chapter for a donation.

I am once again looking for volunteers to take on certain projects.

- **Monofilament recycling.** We have monofilament recycling containers at

Continued on page 3

Texoma Gives 2025 is
Thursday, September 4!
You can support the
Rolling Plains Chapter
Texas Master Naturalists at
texomagives.org.

Early giving is now open!



7:00 AM – 7:00 PM

MONTHLY MEETING NOTICE

Tuesday, September 2, 2025 • 7:00 PM
MSUTexas: Dillard College of Business, Room 328
Program: Project Feeder Watch,
Monarch Tagging & OE Testing in Monarchs
A Zoom meeting link will be emailed before the meeting.
Request a link at rollingplainschaptertmn@gmail.com

Sikes Lake Cleanup

Saturday, September 6, 2025 • 9:00 am

Sikes Lake is an urban pond smack dab in the middle of Wichita Falls located on the Midwestern State University campus. Many residents of the city use this area for outdoor exercise and enjoyment. MSU has held sailing and fishing classes here in the past. This scenic spot gets more than its share of trash.

Here is where the Rolling Plains Chapter comes in. In 2005, our adviser Mark Howell contacted MSU about conducting a cleanup. It was such a success we decided to make it an annual event the first Saturday after Labor Day. Gradually, MSU students joined our grade school and junior high students to pitch in. In 2015, we had over 2 tons of trash collected by 200 volunteers. Kyle Owens with MSU Facilities Services and his staff have generously given of their time since the first cleanup, supplying bags, collecting and disposing of trash and offering refreshments for our many volunteers. We also appreciate American National Bank and Trust for their continued support for the last 15 years.

Let's keep the tradition going! Join us for the **20th Sikes Lake Cleanup, Saturday, September 6, 2025 starting at 9 a.m.** Chapter members should arrive a little earlier to help pass out bags, gloves and grabbers. Meet on the east side of Sikes Lake. Refreshments will be provided.



Photos from past years helping at the Sikes Lake Cleanup at MSU.



From The President

Continued from page 1

various locations. The task is to periodically empty the containers and send in the fishing line to be recycled. This helps prevent injury and death for wildlife.

- **Adopt-a-Highway.** We do a quarterly roadside cleanup just outside of Lake Arrowhead State Park. This project is mainly selecting a date, ensuring we have appropriate supplies, putting the word out, and reporting back to TXDOT.

We also have a couple of short-term projects you can take part in organizing.

- We will be working with the WFMA on an exhibit opening in Jan. We are in the preliminary planning stages now of coordinating one activity during the exhibition.

- Christmas in the Park, December 6, Lake Arrowhead SP. Ranger L is one of our members and has already secured our campsite. But we need to plan goodie bags and decorations.

AND, September is very close to the end of the year. Now is a good time to think about volunteering as a member of the board. Elections are in December at our holiday party, but we need to announce candidates in November. Talk to any board member to learn more.

- Penny

In The Field



Recent hikes at Copper Breaks and in Wilbarger County

In The Field



Water testing



*Early morning
Quail Study*

September Events

Upcoming Events and Opportunities

Events and opportunities are subject to change at any time.

Due to issues with the website calendar, watch your email for the latest changes and updates.

9/2	7:00 pm	Chapter Meeting <i>Program: Project Feeder Watch, Monarch Tagging and Testing for OE in Monarchs</i> MSU, Dillard College of Business Building, Room 328. Contact rollingplainschaptertmn@gmail.com for the Zoom link.
9/6	9:00 am	Sikes Lake Cleanup - Our 20th Year! Join us at Sikes Lake on the campus of MSU for our annual lake cleanup. Bags, gloves & grabbers will be provided.
9/6	5:30 pm	Monthly Hike: Jack County Join us in Jack County for an evening hike at Fort Richardson State Park, North Unit (Lake Jacksboro area). 134 Trail Way Drive Jacksboro, TX 76458. Park fees will apply.
9/8	8:00 am	Horned Lizard Survey: Copper Breaks State Park, Quanah, TX Contact Lynn Seman for more information
9/9	8:00 am	Horned Lizard Survey: Three Rivers Ranch, Crowell, TX Contact Lynn Seman for more information
9/9	6:00 pm	Approved Webinar: Leaving Our Fall Garden Resources with Doug Tallamy See the Events page on our website for a link.
9/9	12:00 pm	TMN Tuesday Webinar: Annual Meeting Chapter Project Fair See the Events page on our website for a link.
9/11	12:00 pm	Approved Webinar: Bitter Nectar, Toxic Pollen: Pollinators and Plant Chemicals See the Events page on our website for a link.
9/12	9:00 am	Texas Stream Team Water Testing Meet at the boat ramp on Lake Wichita, across from the State Hospital on Kemp Blvd.
9/13	8:00 am	Bird Outing with Penny Miller at Lake Arrowhead State Park. Park fees will apply.
9/19	9:00 am	Texas Stream Team Water Testing at Lake Gordon, Iowa Park
9/29	5:30 pm	Board of Directors Meeting Wilson Office Supply, 8th and Lamar. All members are welcome to attend. Not a public event.

Just for Fun...

Have you ever found a special stick out on the trail? Well now you can share these special sticks with the world at Stick Nation an online community of users on platforms like Instagram, Facebook and TikTok who share

their love for sticks.

Members describe their sticks, give them names and make up stories, turning ordinary sticks into fantastical objects.

The movement encourages people to connect with the outdoors and appreciate nature's simple wonders.

The movement offers a

lighthearted and positive corner of the internet and taps into the elemental, universal human experience of finding a stick and imagining its magical potential.

Read the story on NPR at <https://www.npr.org/2025/01/23/nx-s1-5260230/stick-nation-sticktok>

A Landmark Acquisition

Heath Canyon Ranch—a 671-acre jewel of ecological and recreational value nestled between Big Bend National Park and the Black Gap Wildlife Management Area (WMA)—has been protected through a successful acquisition by The Nature Conservancy in Texas (TNC). Purchased for nearly \$1.2 million with support from multiple foundations, it was subsequently transferred to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) for inclusion in the Black Gap WMA.

Why It Matters

Ecological Significance

The ranch represents a vital conservation corridor, bridging previously disconnected protected areas—including the 10,000-acre Brushy Canyon Preserve—and preserving high-quality desert habitat rich in biodiversity. The land harbors more than 250 plant species, some found nowhere else on Earth.

River Access & Recreation

Spanning 1.2 miles of year-round flowing Rio Grande, Heath Canyon Ranch ensures continued public access to iconic river trips. It serves as the only take-out point for the Boquillas Canyon multi-day trip and provides critical launch access to the remote Lower Canyons of the Rio Grande—Texas's only federally designated Wild and Scenic River segment.

Public Access Realized

Previously restricted due to private ownership, the ranch will now host hiking, wildlife viewing, public hunting, and river access, all governed by a sustainable, low-impact management plan developed jointly by TPWD and the National Park Service (NPS).



Heath Canyon Ranch and its stunning Rio Grande scenery that now stands protected for future generations.

Protecting Heath Canyon Ranch: A Conservation Triumph in West Texas

What Lies Ahead: A Look at the Future

Formal Integration & Management

TPWD will manage Heath Canyon Ranch as part of the Black Gap Wildlife Management Area, collaborating with NPS to implement a long-range plan focused on natural resource conservation, low-impact recreation, habitat protection, and river access management.

Expanding Recreation & Access

New possibilities include guided and self-guided river paddling trips, backcountry hiking, wildlife observation, and regulated public hunting—all balanced against the need to maintain environmental integrity.

Preserving Biodiversity

Conservation measures will aim to safeguard the rare and endemic plant species, along with wildlife that depends on this unique river-edge ecosystem.

Engaging Community & Volunteers

TPWD and TNC may leverage local volunteers, outdoor groups, and educational programs to help steward the land, encourage stewardship, and raise public awareness about the region's ecological value.

Monitoring & Adaptive Management

Ongoing research and monitoring will be essential, tracking ecological health, visitor impacts, river conditions, and biodiversity to ensure adaptive and resilient management.

Final Thoughts

The protection of Heath Canyon Ranch stands as a bold conservation win—a seamless blend of securing habitat, reclaiming public access, and crafting a model for sustainable outdoor recreation. This effort strengthens West Texas's protected landscape, safeguards unique ecosystems, and ensures generations of Texans and visitors can experience the magic of the Rio Grande.