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Chapter Website

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

Find us on Facebook too!

Rolling Plains Chapter

Field Notes

News, Notes and Events

February 2026

From The President

I'm looking out the window today (Jan 26) at a beautiful, sunny, very cold day. I'm glad the storm wasn't as bad as anticipated, but at least, we all had enough warning to prepare.

The board strategic planning meeting on the 24th was via Zoom because of the weather.

I was really happy to see some non-board members attend and contribute. We adopted the new state bylaws and Chapter Operating Handbook. Look for an email, since the chapter needs to vote. Additional information will be in the email.

Just a heads up. The state is merging the Texas Master Naturalist VMS account with the overall Texas Parks and Wildlife VMS account in late Feb. Supposedly, this is only going to impact Larry, our VMS admin. However, the state admits there may be issues during this transition, so if you have problems in that last week, don't panic. Shoot Larry an email. He won't be able to fix it, but he can elevate if the state isn't aware of the issue.

Since it is membership renewal time, I just want to remind you that, although we want to make sure that every member who wants to be certified/recertified can achieve that goal, you do not have to be certified to be a chapter member. If you have a lot going on in your personal life and just don't have the bandwidth to attend everything, no problem. We'll see you when we see you. You're still part of the chapter family.

We're looking forward to a busy year and want to provide you with volunteer and training opportunities you are interested in. Be sure to let your board members know if there is anything we can offer to make your TMN experience better. – Penny



Photo by Sandy Underwood

**DON'T FORGET YOUR 2026 DUES ARE NOW DUE! PLEASE SEE LARRY SNYDER TO PAY.
IF YOU HAVE ALREADY PAID, THANK YOU!**

MONTHLY MEETING NOTICE

Tuesday, February 3 • 7:00 PM

MSUTexas: Bolin Science Hall, Room 221**

****Note New Building & Room Number!****

Program: To Be Announced

A Zoom meeting link will be emailed before the meeting.

Request a link at rollingplainschaptertmn@gmail.com

Home & Garden Festival



The Home & Garden Festival is coming up February 21 & 22 and we will have opportunities to volunteer in the Chapter Booth and for the Arts Council. (Volunteers for the Arts Council will get a free t-shirt.) If you are interested in volunteering for the Arts Council positions, please let a Board member know so they can turn in your name. A sign-up sheet will be available for the Chapter Booth spaces at the February meeting.

We also have a few **Home & Garden Festival tickets** left. This is our only fund raiser so if you would like another ticket or two, please see Larry. Tickets are \$8.00 each – Please have exact change or a check.

2026 Spring Training – Deadline March 4th!

Please help spread the word.... Our next training will begin March 5, 2026 and last through July, 2026. Classes will be on Thursday nights from 7:00 – 9:00 pm, at Midwestern State University's Bolin Science Hall, Room 221, with some Saturday field trips. I

The cost for the training is \$120 and includes all classes/field trips, textbook, and all printed materials.

The application deadline is March 4th, 2026.

Please make checks payable to: Rolling Plains Chapter TMN and mail to Larry Snyder, c/o Rolling Plains Chapter TMN, 1020 Pawhuska Lane, Burkburnett, Texas 76354.

The TMN Training Class Applications must now be filled out online and can be found on the Rolling Plains Chapter website under the "Become a Master Naturalist" tab.

We need a minimum of 10 students for the training.

The first class will be March 5th and we encourage our current members to come to the class, share their experiences and welcome our new trainees.

If you would like to share your TMN experience and get to know some of the new trainees, please consider serving as a mentor. You can get volunteer time and make a new friend or two! If you would like to serve as a mentor, please let one of the Board members know.

Give The Gift of Nature
Gift Certificates now available for the
2026 Training Class
Only \$120

See Terry McKee or Debra Halter
for more details.



Texas Master Naturalist Rolling Plains Chapter Training Class 2026

**APPLY
NOW!**

**Classes run March 5 – July 26,
2026**

Thursday evening 7-9 pm

3 Saturday Field Trips

Cost \$120 (includes textbook)

Topics include:

- Weather/Climate
- Ecology
- Ecological Management
- Geology
- Waterways
- Ornithology
- Botany
- Ichthyology
- Palenontology
- And more



SCAN HERE

Applications available at
txmn.org/rollingplains

- Do you...?
- Like the outdoors, native plants, nature, and wildlife?
- Have a passion for habitat restoration and community outreach?
- Interested in citizen science, hiking, and outdoor activities?
- Love sharing your passion for nature and the outdoors with others?

Then the Texas Master Naturalist Program is for you!

The Rolling Plains Chapter serves Archer, Baylor, Clay, Foard, Hardeman, Jack, Montague, Wichita, Wilbarger, and Young counties.

Last day to join the 2026 Class – March 4th



For more information, contact:
rollingplainschaptertmn@gmail.com

Or visit us at txmn.org/rollingplains

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

Book Review: by Kay Murphy

"How Can I Help? Saving Nature With Your Yard"

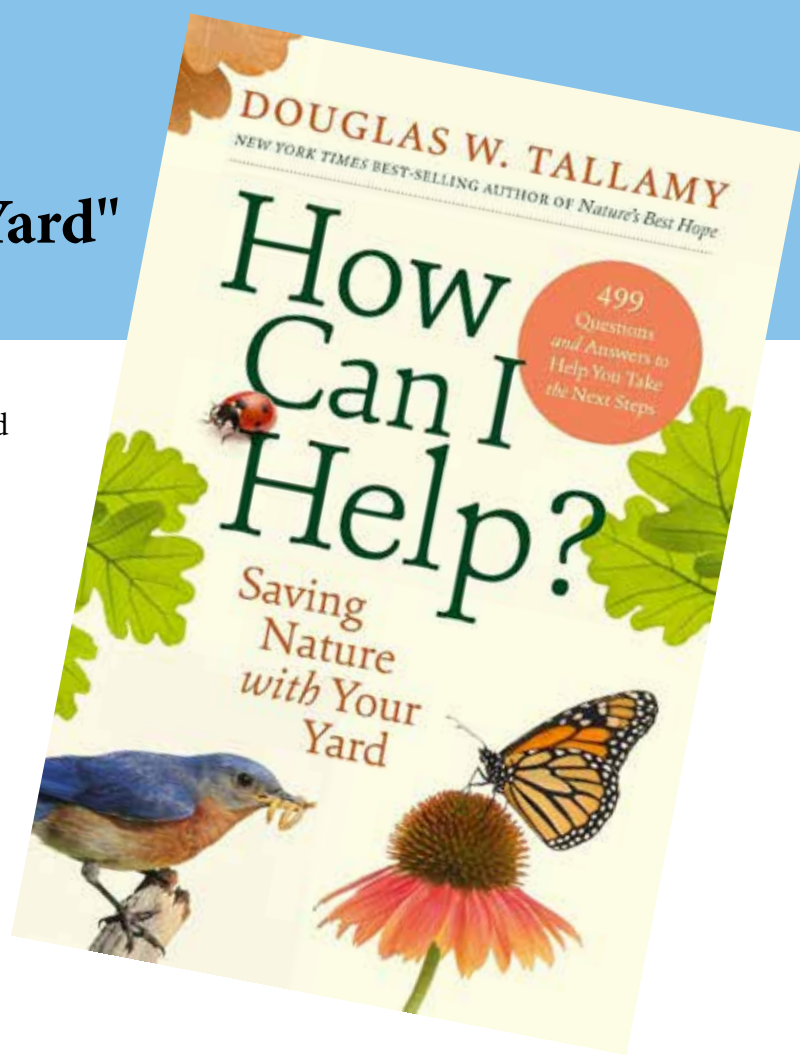
By Douglas W. Tallamy, 2025

This book is formatted as 499 questions commonly asked at his lectures with detailed answers. He organized the questions in ten chapters: Ecology and Evolution, Biodiversity, Native and Non-Native Plants, Oaks, Invasive Species, Pest Control, Conservation and Restoration, Home Landscapes, Supporting Wildlife at Home, and Concluding Questions which were good questions that didn't fit in any of the chapters. The reader can then flip to the chapters that are of interest at that time. Dr. Tallamy's message is loud and clear: only 5% of land in the USA remains as wilderness. Definition: undeveloped and largely free from human interference. Our terrestrial food webs depend on thriving populations of insects, and when these populations are wiped out, we lose biodiversity, ecological stability, food security, and the benefits provided by their ecosystem services.

In 2021 He and Michelle Alfandari started the Homegrown National Park as a non profit to get the message out that the future of conservation will be on private property. The purpose is to enlist the public to transform their yards/land into millions of acres of yards into viable habitats for birds, bees, and other creatures. So instead of feeling overwhelmed by all the doom and gloom regarding the loss of species and the effects of climate change, anyone could do their part to help and create change for the betterment of the earth.

Tallamy discusses in detail what each one of us can do to create the Homegrown National Park here in the USA:

- **Shrink the Lawn.** Reduce the lawn gradually. Create soft landings for caterpillars beneath trees. It is a smart way to reduce lawn and it isn't a shock to neighbors. Use strategic "cues for care". Line the driveways, the sidewalk, and new beds with swaths of manicured lawn. Well-planted areas bordered by mowed turf are readily accepted by neighbors and others because it is intentional design. Don't neglect small spaces. Some pollinator plants do well in containers.
- **Remove Invasive Species** (ornamentals from Asia, privet, bush honeysuckle, nandina, cane) Replace with Native Plants. You don't have to remove non-native ornamentals. He recommends 70% native. Japanese maple, camellias, forsythia are not invasive.



- **Plant Keystone Plants** (native oaks are top on the list of woody producers. Goldenrods, asters, and sunflowers are among the easiest herbaceous plants) Use National Wildlife Federation's Native Plant Finder for this region and The Texas Native Plant Society's list for our region to determine the best natives to plant. Aim for continuous bloom.
- **Be Generous with Your Plantings**
- **Plant for Specialist Pollinators** (Native Bee species are the most important so plant perennial sunflowers *Helianthus*, various goldenrods *Solidago*, native willows *Salix*, asters *Symphyoricichum*, and a diversity of native flowering plants to prevent loss of native bee species.
- **Network with Neighbors.** One approach that has been well received is a sign designating your property as habitat. National Wildlife Federation, Homegrown National Park, and Audubon can provide signs to help explain the ecosystem in your yard that is supporting pollinators, birds, butterflies, and other creatures.
- **Build a Conservation Hardscape.** Use motion sensor lights. Blazing lights at night kill thousands of moths. You can replace bright white lights with yellow lights.

Continued on page 5

- **Create Caterpillar Pupation Sites Under Your Trees.**
- **Do Not Spray pesticides or herbicides.**
Use compost and leaves in beds. Don't fertilize. Fire the mosquito fogger. Use dunk buckets instead.
- **Work with your HOA organizations!!!**

Other books by Douglas W. Tallamy

Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants 2007. "A fascinating study of the trees, shrubs, and vines that feed the insects, birds, and other animals in the suburban garden."

Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard 2019.

How to turn your postage stamp of native soil into conservation corridors that provide wildlife habitats. He introduces the concept of Homegrown National Park.

The Nature of Oaks: The Rich Ecology of Our Most Essential Native Trees 2021 Oaks sustain a crucial and complex web of wildlife above ground but are just as impressive underground, producing enormous root systems that make them champions of carbon sequestration, soil stabilization, and watershed management.

Snow Days



Lynn Seman



Sandy Underwood



Lynn Seman



Lynn Seman



Larry Snyder



The 2026 Great Backyard Bird Count is February 13 – 16. Learn more at birdcount.org

Don't miss
*How To Participate
in the Great Backyard Bird Count*
February 5 & 11
See page 8 for more info

800,000

More than 800,000 people participated in the count in 2025, creating 655,549 Merlin Bird IDs and 387,652 eBird checklists.

15

Joining the count is easy!

Birders count for as little as 15 minutes a day for up to four days.

1998

The Great Backyard Bird Count was started in 1998 by Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, creating the first online citizen science project.

200

Observers from more than 200 countries and subregions participated in 2025, recording more than 8,000 bird species.

100

Interest in the annual bird count keeps growing.

Ten years ago, only about 100 countries participated.

1,377

Birders in Colombia found 1,377 species, more than any other country in 2025.

Share the Love...

With Valentine's Day coming up, these might be useful to some of you who have trouble expressing your feelings to your significant others. (Thanks to Penny Miller for this helpful information on our Facebook page!)

Our love is like a bog.



- built up over time
- resistant to decay
- deeply interesting to just a small number of people

Our love is like a slime mold.



- collaborative
- complex
- at times unnerving to behold

Our love is like limestone.



- layered
- useful for many purposes
- shaped by the friends we met along the way

Our love is like a ring-billed gull.



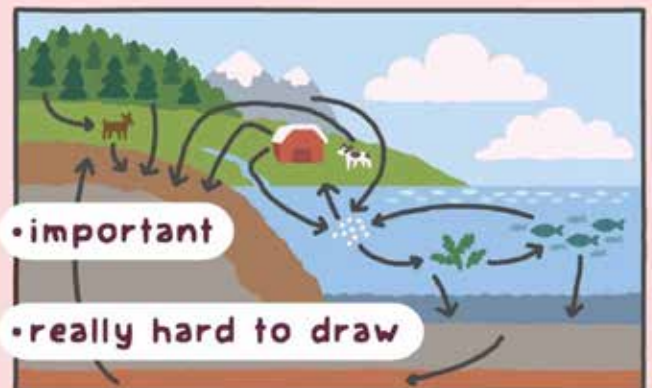
- abundant
- found in North America
- sometimes sustained by french fries

Our love is like a horseshoe crab.



- tough
- timeless
- unrelated to the true crabs

Our love is like the phosphorus cycle.



- important
- really hard to draw

February 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.

		Project Feeder Watch continues! Through 4/30/26
2/3	7:00 pm	Chapter Meeting <i>Program: To Be Announced</i> MSU, Dillard College of Business Building, Room 221 . Contact rollingplainschaptertmn@gmail.com for the Zoom link.
2/5	10:00 am	Bluebirds... Not Blue Birds Presented by Chris & Donna Honkomp Lifelong Learning Center, #2 Eureka Circle, Inside the WF Museum of Art. Fee required. (Repeat of Sip 'N Science at RBNC)
2/5	2:00 pm	How To Participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count Approved webinar. See website calendar for link.
2/7	9:00 am	Storm Spotter Training Approved workshop presented by the City of Wichita Falls Office of Emergency Management, the National Weather Service, the Wichita County Office of Emergency Management, and the Wichita County SKYWARN Call 940-761-6870 for more information and to register.
2/7	10:00 am	Boots On The Plains: Monthly Adventure. A nature outing along the Wichita River. Meet at the Angel of Hope Memorial Garden behind the MPEC. Paved, easy trail. Approx 1 mile with option of longer trail.
2/10	12:00 pm	TMNTuesday webinar: The Bobcat
2/11	2:00 pm	How To Participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count Approved webinar. See website calendar for link.
2/12	12:00 pm	Building A Pollinator Haven At Home: Tips & Lessons Learned Approved webinar. See website calendar for link.
2/13		Great Backyard Bird Count Begins! Through February 16th.
2/13	9:00 am	Texas Stream Team Water Testing Lake Wichita & Lucy Park This event will be held the second Friday of each month, unless noted otherwise.
2/13	6:00 pm	Texas Nature Trackers Bat Project See website calendar for a link to register
2/14	8:00 am	Bird Outing: Lake Arrowhead State Park 2nd Saturday of each month. You must pay Park entry fees.
2/16	9:00 am	Water Testing at Lake Gordon, Iowa Park: Meet at the parking lot just off of the access road near Taco Bell. 3rd Friday of each month.
2/21 & 2/22		HOME & GARDEN FESTIVAL Wichita Falls MPEC. Saturday 9:00 am - 5:00 pm; Sunday 11:00 am - 4:00 pm
2/23	5:30 pm	Board of Director's Meeting: Wilson's Office Supply, 8th & Lamar St
2/24	6:30 pm	The Creek In My Backyard – A Guide to Understanding Stream Regulations In Texas Approved webinar. See website calendar for link.
2/25	5:00 pm	Newsletter deadline. Please send any photos or stories to Laura!