Connemara Meadow Needs Volunteers

Over the past four years, the Connemara Meadow Preserve has been undertaking a variety of Blackland Prairie restoration projects. We need volunteer help on a continual basis and have a variety of ways that help can be delivered.

If you like to volunteer in a group, we will be scheduling work days throughout the winter and early spring. Or, if you like to volunteer with just a few friends or by yourself, we will be glad to work with you to accommodate your schedule.

Beyond the above, at our monthly Open Houses (normally the 4th Sunday of each month), we always welcome volunteers to join us then.

Below are listed two of the most important projects we are focusing on for 2014:

1. At the front of the Meadow, we started a small Blackland Prairie restoration plot. We need dedicated help removing invasive plants and the restoration of more natives and irrigation. In the winter of 2014, we need volunteers to grow native grass in pots for transplanting later in the year. Ideally, we could get a team of two to 10 volunteers to adopt the front plot and work with us over the long term to make it a real showcase while expanding its boundaries.

2. In the area along Rowlett Creek called Pecan Grove, we have hundreds of saplings which have grown up over the past several years. We have divided the Pecan Grove into small sections (about 600 sq. ft. each) and are working through these sections removing most of the saplings, leaving the most desirable in the best possible locations. We need help removing these saplings. We use the saplings we take out to expand our number of rabbit brush piles (an effort to increase the number of cottontail rabbits and other rodents and small birds by providing cover).

Contact Bob Mione 214-534-1900, meadowmanager@connemaraconservancy.org, if you would like to get involved.

The deadline to get information in the March–April Prairie Partner Update is February 20.
Volunteer Hours

More approved activities for volunteering and education, listed by both type and by partner, can be found at http://bptmn.org/info/project-opportunities/.

Blackland Prairie Raptor Center (www.bpraptorcenter.org) Most projects are ongoing.
Brookdale Park, Lucas, TX
Contact Erich Neupert erich.neupert@bpraptorcenter.org, 469-964-9696, for current projects and dates.

Animal care - assist in cage cleaning and feeding of birds of prey
Construction - assist in construction of rehab flight cages and hospital as well as maintaining facilities
Public interaction - engage public in activities to introduce them to raptors on the first Saturday
Prairie rehab - assist in planting and continuing care of prairie
Gardening - prepare and maintain garden area
Trail Guiding - contact Dick Zartler at zartler@verizon.net. Trail guiding happens monthly on the first Saturday of every month. You will lead trail walks after the 11 a.m. bird presentation and after the 1 p.m. presentation. You can expect 60/40 percent children/adults, and groups can run from five to 25 people. We walk a 1/2 mile gravel trail — gently sloped — and talk about native trees, grasses, plants and flowers. Best of all, we train you!

Collin County Adventure Camp (www.collincountyadventurecamp.org)
1180 W. Houston, Anna, TX
Contact Ron Bamberg, rbamberg@gmail.com, 972-832-4791.
The camp has an ongoing need for trail guides to lead nature walks for children and adults. The YMCA requires a background check.

Connemara Meadow (Connemaraconservancy.org)
300 Tatum (Alma & Bethany), Allen, TX
Contact Bob Mione, 214-534-1900, meadowmanager@connemaraconservancy.org

Invasive removal - Requires minimum training on the day of scheduled activity and prior scheduling with Bob. Can be scheduled based on volunteer's availability. Must bring work/garden gloves, insect repellent and appropriate sun protection. Liability waiver signature required.
Meadow Open House - check the Connemara web site (Connemaraconservancy.org) for information.

Heard Museum and Wildlife Sanctuary (www.Heardmuseum.org)
1 Nature Place, McKinney, TX
Contact Wes Morrow, Wesmorrow39@yahoo.com, 832-332-9099

The following are ongoing projects at the Heard:

Native Reptile Care - assisting and spotting for feeding, cage cleaning, etc., twice weekly, Tuesday and Saturday. Includes contact with museum guests and learning about native Texas snakes, including pit vipers.
Native Mammal Care - assisting and spotting for feeding, cage cleaning, etc.
Sanctuary - invasive plant elimination, trail maintenance & construction
Bird Banding - prior birding experience preferred, training required
Outreach
Contact Dave Powell, Powell1217@yahoo.com, to find out more about these two:
Maintain gardens twice monthly - 1st Thurs. & 1st Sat., working with Native Plant Society and master gardeners
Trail Guides - days vary, training required
Send Us Your Volunteer News and Photos

We would like to feature master naturalist volunteer activities in future newsletters. Send a photo with an explanation of your activity to eastbluff@verizon.net.

**Plano Environmental Education Center and Gardens**
4116 West Plano Parkway, Plano, TX

**Volunteer Opportunities:** Volunteers must submit a waiver 3 days prior to volunteering, register at eeoc@plano.gov, or contact Nancy Casillas nancyca@plano.gov

**Sunday, January 5,** 2-5 p.m., at Environmental Education Center (EEC)
- **First Sunday of the month - Nature Explore Family Club**
  - Help facilitate family activities.

**Monday, January 6,** 8:30-11:30 a.m., at Environmental Education Center (EEC)
- **2nd part of Nature Explore Family Club**
  - Help facilitate family activities.

**Sunday, February 2,** 2-5 p.m., at Environmental Education Center (EEC)
- **First Sunday of the month - Nature Explore Family Club**
  - Help facilitate family activities.

**Monday, February 3,** 8:30-11:30 a.m., at Environmental Education Center (EEC)
- **2nd part of Nature Explore Family Club**
  - Help facilitate family activities.

**Sunday, March 2,** 2-5 p.m., at Environmental Education Center (EEC)
- **First Sunday of the month - Nature Explore Family Club**
  - Help facilitate family activities.

**Monday, March 3,** 8:30-11:30 a.m., at Environmental Education Center (EEC)
- **2nd part of Nature Explore Family Club**
  - Help facilitate family activities.
Advanced Training

Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area
201 E. Jones, Street, Lewisville, TX

LLELA is a busy place during the January and February. There are many outdoor activities and opportunities for both advanced training and volunteer hours for Master Naturalists. Here are a few of the activities.

**1870’s Homestead Open House**
**February 15, 12:00 – 3:00 PM**

**Bird Walks**
January 11, 7:30 a.m.
February 8, 7:30 a.m.
March 8, 7:30 a.m.

**Kayak River Trips**
January 18, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
February 15, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

**Nature Walks**
January 11, 10:00 a.m.
February 8, 10:00 a.m.

**Gather at the Campfire**
January 11, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
February 1, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

**Night Hikes**
January 18, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
February 15, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

**Stars on the Prairie**
January 24, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
February 22, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

These activities require a $5.00 gate fee unless you are an annual pass holder and some have a small fee above that. Most of these activities qualify for advanced training hours. To register contact Education Director Lisa Cole at lisacole@unt.edu or 972-219-3930.

You can find past issues of Prairie Partner Update on the BPMN web site at: http://bptmn.org/info/newsletters/
Advanced Training, continued

**Plano Environmental Education Center and Gardens**
4116 West Plano Parkway, Plano, TX

Information, to register for classes, and/or volunteer, go to: [http://livegreeninplan.obsres.com](http://livegreeninplan.obsres.com)

IMPORTANT: if you want to volunteer, go online and create a volunteer profile. You can sign up for volunteer activities . . . or contact Nancy Casillas at nancyca@plano.gov or 972-769-4313 for more information.

**Advanced Training Opportunities:**

- **Thursday, January 16, 7-8 p.m., at Harrington Library, 1501 18th Street**
  
  **Organic Gardening** – Plano Community Gardeners share their experience with soil, water, and insects while producing lush, organic vegetables (FREE workshop - advanced registration online).

- **Thursday, January 30, 7-9 p.m., at Environmental Education Center, 4116 W. Plano Parkway**
  
  **Yard Wise 1 – Creating Healthy Soils** – Learn about Plano soils and how to improve soil fertility through YardWise practices that include composting, grass cycling, and mulching (FREE workshop – advanced registration online).

- **Wednesday, February 5, 10-11 a.m., or 7-8 p.m., at Environmental Education Center at 4116 W. Plano Parkway,**
  
  **Rain Barrels 101** – to pre-order a rain barrel, visit: rainbarrelprogram.org/plano
  
  Rain barrels are a great way to capture rain to use later for watering. Attend a class to learn how to install, use, and maintain a rain barrel or ask questions you may have. (FREE workshop – advanced registration online).

- **Thursday, February 6, 7-9 p.m., at Environmental Education Center, 4116 W. Plano Parkway**
  
  **Yard Wise 2 – Green Landscape Design** – Learn about water saving practices for the landscape, and how to incorporate design principles emphasizing the use of native and adapted plants. (FREE workshop – advanced registration online).

- **Thursday, February 13, 7-9 p.m., at Environmental Education Center, 4116 W. Plano Parkway**
  
  **Yard Wise 3 – Texas Friendly Plants** – Enjoy a colorful tour of the best plant, shrub and tree selections for our area. (FREE workshop – advanced registration online).

**Texas A&M AGRILIFE Research Extension**, [http://dallas.tamu.edu](http://dallas.tamu.edu),
Texas A&M Agrilife
17360 Coit Road, Dallas
Phone: (972) 231-5362

Agrilife offers several classes throughout the year.