

Master  
Naturalist™



Brazos Valley Chapter

the  
**Cyrano**  
newsletter

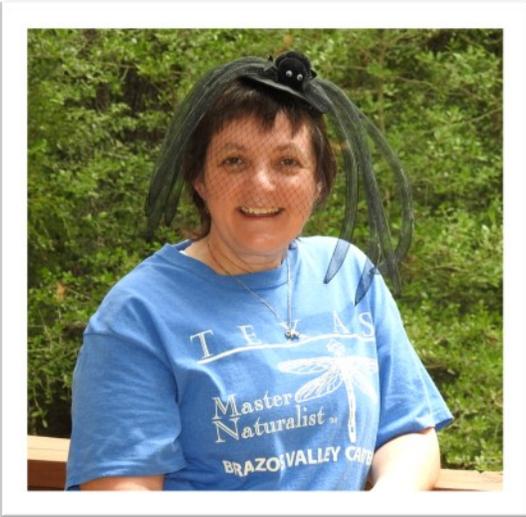


**President's Corner**

By Donell Frank



I don't know about you, but I cannot wait for fall to arrive. My very pathetic flower garden is waiting patiently for me to get out there and add some native pollinator plants. Which I will be able to do **after** I purchase native pollinator plants from our 1<sup>st</sup> Annual 2018 TMN Fall Pollinator Plant sale coming up in October. Members of our chapter along with the public will be able to purchase native pollinator plants to add beauty to their gardens and help sustain pollinators on their long journeys back to their winter homes. Also available for purchase, to the public as well, will be our Save the Monarch t-shirts. Get one (or two) to spread the word about the plight of the Monarch butterflies and help support your local TMN Brazos Valley Chapter. Refer to the articles below for more information on the Native Plant Sale and Monarch butterfly t-shirts.



The next couple of months are going to be crazy busy! When the weather starts to cool down weekend activities and events in the Brazos Valley for September and October start to heat up. Please check the calendar on the TMN website to make sure you don't miss out on any of the numerous activities planned in September (Country Club Lake trash pickup, Stream Team sampling, ENRTA volunteer work day) and October (TMN native pollinator plant sale, Boonville Days, College Station 80<sup>th</sup> birthday party, Stream Team sampling, TMN State Meeting). The list goes on and on so don't miss out. Plenty of opportunities to get your volunteer and advanced training hours as well as have fun, learn something new, make a difference in your community, and hang out with some pretty awesome people.

We would also like to welcome the newly chartered Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT) Post Oak Chapter as a partner to our TMN Brazos Valley Chapter. As a partner this opens up many more volunteer and advanced training opportunities for our members.

I would also like to thank the New Class Training Director, Bruce Neville, and his committee for all their time and hard work arranging the speakers and class field trips/outings for the upcoming 2018 new member training class. I encourage all members to join us at a training class to welcome the new trainees. Every year at the final class of new member training the trainees are asked what class was their favorite. One trainee said after every class she wanted to go back to school and major in the subject that was just taught that evening. That's the same way I felt when I went through new member training in 2014.

To this day I try and attend all the new training classes because I learn something new every time I go.

Speaking of learning something new here's a couple of questions to make you think about your surroundings. As master naturalists we are inclined to be a little more curious about the natural world. Here are some questions that might spark your curiosity as well.

1. How many days until the moon is full?
2. When do the deer rut in your area?



Some may already know the answers to these questions, but others may need to look it up or "Google it". Either way learning more about your natural surroundings is what we as Master Naturalists are all about.

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YOUR 2018 BRAZOS VALLEY CHAPTER BOARD

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# To our Third Quarter Newsletter Monarch Waystation!

Monarch migration is underway. On this page, you will find 'clickable' photos and text with hidden links full of fun facts about monarch butterflies.



## Which is the Imposter?

Monarchs are poisonous to animals that like to eat them such as snakes, lizards or birds. The viceroy has developed to look almost identical to a monarch and therefore enjoys a longer life span since predators are weary of snacking on them. Click on each butterfly to learn more about them!



Ever wanted to raise monarch butterflies? Are you interested in creating a waystation in your backyard or community? Perhaps you'd like to know more about where to find free milkweed for restoration projects or maybe you'd like to grow your own? Click the Monarch Watch.org logo to find out more!



## Want to do more?

[Community/Outreach projects for Texas Master Naturalists or Citizen Scientists](#)

Images, logos and photo credits on this page belong to the organizations they are linked to and are provided here for educational purposes and outreach. Please visit each site for more information.

## Tagging Monarchs.

Does it work? What can we learn? Follow their fall 2018 migration through sightings reported from citizen scientists like yourself. Click on [maps](#) to learn about migration patterns, or click on [tags](#) to learn more about the tagging process.



## Education is Everything!

Certain types of milkweed species in the genus *Asclepias* (some species are more toxic than others) contain cardiac glycosides that can build up in the monarch over time as they consume the plant while they are caterpillars. Predator animals have learned to avoid monarchs and thus allows them a better chance at survival on their journey. Unfortunately, grazing animals and poultry are susceptible to certain levels of the toxins in milkweed as well as toxins found in the caterpillars that are accidentally consumed. This is one of the reasons why milkweed is often mowed in cattle pastures in the fall. How can we educate others about the importance of milkweed for pollinator insects? As Texas Master Naturalists, we can help! Click [here](#) for a great educational flyer to print and share!!

## GALA CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

*From the Texas Master Naturalist State Office*



Over the course of our 20-year history, the Texas Master Naturalist Program has trained over 11,000 passionate individuals who have engaged in over 4 million hours of volunteer service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and areas across the state.

Michelle Haggerty, State Program Coordinator, summarizes the importance of our work, stating, "What makes the work of a Master Naturalist so important is that they are not only individuals who love nature and offer their time, but they are also trained naturalists with specialized knowledge of different ecosystems, species, habitats, and environmental demands. This training and skill is priceless when determining how to best manage natural resources."

To commemorate this significant achievement, and to share our impact with friends and those interested in the work of our program, our Texas Master Naturalist 20th Anniversary Gala will be hosted Thursday, October 25th at the Sheraton Georgetown. The festivities will include a live band, a variety of live and silent auction items, and a celebratory presentation by founding Texas Master Naturalists.

Proceeds from the Gala will benefit the Texas Master Naturalist Endowment Fund. The mission of the Endowment is to further enhance the Texas Master Naturalist program, its chapters and volunteers, now and into the future, creating and improving natural resource education, conservation, and stewardship.

For information about sponsoring the Gala event, donating a silent auction item, donating to the TMN Endowment, or attendance: <https://masternaturalistendowment.org/20th-anniversary-gala/>

### **20 Years of TMN**

This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Statewide Program, two decades of remarkable impact by thousands of Naturalists across the state. Stories from Naturalists young and old can be found via our social media and website. We are so grateful to share the stories of Master Naturalists passionate about the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas in Texas. Learn more at: <https://txmn.org/20th-anniversary/>

### **Annual Meeting Agenda**

Our 2018 Annual Meeting schedule has been posted! With a record-breaking 150+ sessions, this year's conference will be the best yet. Make sure you are following us on Facebook and check "Going" on our event page for this year's Annual Meeting. There you will find links to our agenda, sponsor and contest information, and more: <https://www.facebook.com/TexasMasterNaturalistProgram/>

### **Annual Meeting Get Outside Guide**

In addition to various sessions throughout the weekend, over 30 field sessions around Central Texas will occur during this year's Annual Meeting. Some of these opportunities include chances for volunteer service hours or Advanced Training hours. Check out our "How to Get Outside" Guide and find more general information at this webpage: <https://txmn.org/2018-annual-meeting/>



# ANNOUNCING the 2018 FALL POLLINATOR PLANT SALE

Sponsored by the Texas Master Naturalist Brazos Valley Chapter



**Don't miss out** on your chance to purchase hard to find pollinator plants native to Texas! Native plants are not only beautiful, they help conserve water and provide habitat and food for birds, butterflies, and other wild-life.

Go to our [website](#) to check out what's available; then place your tax-free order between September 17<sup>th</sup> and September 30<sup>th</sup>.

Preordered plants will be available for pick up on October 6th at the Native Plant Demonstration Garden at the BRTC. Additional plants will also be available for purchase on site, but for one day only! So don't miss out on your chance to add some native beauty to your gardens!

## Brazos Valley Texas Master Naturalist

### Native Plant Sale

When: **October 6, 2018**

Time: **9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

Location: Native Plant Demonstration Garden at  
The [Biodiversity Research and Teaching Collections \(BRTC\)](#)

3380 University Dr E, College Station, TX 77845

For questions contact [habitats@txmnbv.org](mailto:habitats@txmnbv.org)

## Tours of the BRTC and Herbarium!

The BRTC and S. M. Tracy Herbarium will also be having open houses the same day as our plant pickup/sale. The BRTC will host guided tours of their research collections. This is a rare opportunity to get a peek behind the scenes of the largest collection of vertebrate specimens in the state of Texas. Guided tours begin every half hour starting at 9:30 with the final tour at 11:30.



**Save the Monarch T-shirts will be available!**





## Congratulations to our newly certified Texas Water Specialists!

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department defines Texas Water Specialists as a corps of well-informed volunteer specialists who provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of aquatic resources and aquatic habitats within their communities for the state of Texas.

To earn a TWS certification, individuals must earn at least 8 hours of advanced training utilizing the Texas Water curriculum and participate in at least one chapter approved volunteer service project to contribute a minimum of 10 hours of volunteer service in the area of water and watersheds.



For more information on the TPWD Texas Water Specialist program, click [here](#).

2016-2017

Andrea Howard

2017-2018

James Balthrop  
Amanda Chau  
John Cupps  
Katharine Cupps  
Justin Finke  
Donell Frank  
Wendi Gibson  
Jackie Girouard  
Ted Preston  
Dana Roese  
Kim Roese  
Kathryn Sneed  
Sue Welfel



Way to go **TEAM DRAGONFLY**

for yet another overall

Best Trash Off Team Award for 2018!

Our TMN Brazos Valley Chapter participates in many trash-pick up events throughout the year. This is a great way to earn volunteer hours as well as helping our urban ecosystems stay healthy. Some of these events may earn hours towards your Water Specialist certification as well. Be sure to check our [webpage](#) for upcoming volunteer opportunities and events.



## Greetings from Lake Somerville!

Sue McBeth Welfel, Advanced Training Director

September is finally here with desired temperatures drop of 10-15 degrees on a cloudy/rainy day. One positive benefit of hurricane season is that it finally breaks the drought to bring much needed rain to replenish our yards, creeks and lakes. And it is nice to water the potted plants with rain water.

The last 3 months at Lake Somerville water levels were down 3 feet or more and reports are that fishing has been good with bass and crappie. Most bass are being caught in shallow water at less than 5 ft around lay downs and submerged brush. Meanwhile, crappie are being caught at 8-10 feet out of brush piles. Best bass fishing times are early morning or late evenings. Mike Moore, my fisherman friend, has also experienced two sightings of an otter on the lake.

We have a small neighborhood blessed with many white tail deer. This years' production was quite prolific with 8 new fawns with 2 sets of twins. It's easy watching in the mornings and evenings as the hoard munches through the yards.

Our birding has been pretty nice with Roseate Spoonbills, White Ibis & White faced ibis, green heron, great blue heron, little blue heron, yellow crown & black capped night herons, Eurasian collared dove, mourning dove, inca dove, ruby-throated hummingbirds, great egret, cattle egret, American black vulture and turkey



vultures, Mississippi kite, red-shouldered hawk, red tailed hawks, red-bellied wood peckers, pileated woodpeckers, downy woodpecker, eastern wood pewee, great crested fly-catcher, eastern kingbirds, blue-jay, American crows, cliff/cave swallows, Carolina chickadees, tufted tit-mouse, Carolina wren, blue-gray gnatcatcher, eastern bluebird, northern mockingbirds, yellow & pine warbler, eastern phoebe, meadow larks, common grackles, boat-tailed grackles, rock pigeon, double crested cormorants, killdeer, pied-billed grebe, wild turkeys, scissor-tail fly-catchers, crested caracara, white-eyed vireo & yellow throated vireo. We are awaiting arrival of flocks of white-wing dove and teal.

Please check out activities at local state parks near you. Enjoy our abundant wildlife and outdoor activities to break up the stress in your life and have some fun outside. Thank you for volunteering!

P.S. I serve as the chapter's Advance Training Director. So, as you find training activities that interest you, pass them along to me at, [AT@txmnbv.org](mailto:AT@txmnbv.org), to share with our members. The criteria standards for Advanced Training opportunities are listed in our operating manual on our website. Take good care!



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## Ideas for Volunteer Opportunities for New Members

Are you a new member looking for fun and interesting ways to volunteer for your chapter and earn your hours? Here are two great online programs that combine field research and data reporting that you can do on your own schedule. These programs allow you to share photos and data, record your sightings, and network with other naturalists in your area. Click on the logos for more information.



## Waco Mammoth National Monument

By Sascha Lodge

Mammoths and camels and saber-toothed cats, oh my! These are some of the fossilized remains that fifteen Master Naturalists (and families) got to see on our June field trip to the Waco Mammoth National Monument. As we walked along a raised platform in a climate-controlled Dig Shelter, we looked down on over 19 Columbian mammoth skeletons.

American alligator, giant tortoise, and the tooth of a juvenile saber-toothed cat have also been uncovered. The mammoth remains were first discovered in 1978. Since then, museum staff, students, and volunteers have continued excavations and worked to preserve the fossils. Many of the fossils excavated before 1990 are currently

discovered, so they have been unable to begin construction. Our guide also taught us how to tell male and female fossilized mammoths apart by looking at the shape of their pelvises. When you stand next to a cast of a mammoth femur, you can really appreciate how immense these animals were.

After a picnic lunch, our group headed down the road to the Mayborn Museum where we got a different view of the Mammoth Site. The Mayborn Museum holds a to-scale replica of a portion of the Mammoth Site, but has built a glass floor only one foot above the fossils. This means that visitors can feel absolutely dwarfed by the size of these mammoths by standing practically in casts of the remains. You can bend down and get an up-close view of the massive fossils and truly appreciate how much has changed over the past 67,000 years...

If you missed out on our field trip, we highly encourage you to make the trip up to Waco on your own. If you take the one-hour tour (part of the \$5 entrance fee), you are eligible for an hour of Master Naturalist Advanced Training.



A life-like painting depicting the resemblance and stature of a Columbian mammoth

These giant animals lived approximately 67,000 years ago and were thought to have died together in a flood. Additional animals including a Western camel, dwarf antelope,

laboratory space at the site. There are plans to build a laboratory, but in each of the four locations where construction has been attempted, additional fossils have been



Mayborn Museum mammoth fossils on display

For more information on the Waco Mammoth National Monument park and tours, please visit: <https://www.nps.gov/waco/index.htm>

Photos by Wendi Gibson



Fossilized remains of a large male mammoth left undisturbed along with other species that met a similar fate in the same area long ago

## Stone City Bluff Field Trip Report

By Bruce Neville

Back by popular demand, Texas Master Naturalist, Brazos Valley Chapter, returned to the Stone City Bluff Formation fossil site on 4 August 2018. About thirty members of TMN-BV and Rio Brazos Audubon prospected for fossils at this very rich deposit. At least 11 children also brought their energy and excitement to the morning. Bruce Neville led the trip and provided such identifications as he was able.



Collecting fossils along the Brazos

Photo by Andrea Howard

The fossil site is a layer of mudstone about 10 feet thick on the west side of the (Big) Brazos River where it is crossed by State Road 21 (so it's actually in Burleson County). It is reached by a relatively easy trail down to the shore that is maintained by fishermen. The fossiliferous stratum extends north (and probably south) from the bridge for as far as any of us wanted to walk. The fossils are exposed continuously as the river bank naturally erodes away and are easily picked from the loose edge of the bank or freshly exposed.

Most of the fossils we were finding were gastropod (snail) shells, but we found a few bivalves (clams), tusk shells, and corals. A few lucky folks even found cuttle horns, crab carapaces, or even shark's teeth! Most were small, the largest just a couple inches long. These fossils are either the remains of the

original organism or a mineralized replacement. There were also some trace fossils, called "ichnofossils." These are signs of an organism, rather than the organism itself, like dinosaur footprints. In our case, it was the burrows of burrowing shrimp that had filled with sediment, hardened, and then left strange, branching "tubes" a foot or more long. I'm still puzzling over a large oval concretion. There were certainly enough fossils to go around, and everyone seemed to go away happy.

The site is named for the Stone City settlement nearby. It's also called the Moseley's Ferry site and the Whiskey Bridge site. Moseley's Ferry operated in the area during the 1860s (1). Mark Sicilio, who was on the trip told us about the liquor stores that clustered on the Burleson side of the bridge ("Whiskey Bridge") back when Brazos County was dry. The Stone City Bluff site is a marine deposit of Eocene age, approximately 35 million years ago, roughly 30 million years after the K-T Event. This formation was first mentioned by Ferdinand Roemer, a German geologist travelling in Texas, in 1848:

"While on a tour to the upper Brazos, I discovered in the neighborhood of the town of Caldwell, strata of a ferruginous sandstone with numerous and well preserved tertiary shells. Crossing afterwards the Brazos not far from this town, I had a still better opportunity to see this formation along the steep banks of the river. It consists of alternating strata of brown ferruginous sandstone and of dark colored plastic clay, both teeming with fossils. Unfortunately, the circumstances did not allow me to make a complete collection of them; the few, however, which I gathered are sufficient to prove that those strata belong to one of the older divisions of the tertiary period. I have good reason to suppose that these same tertiary deposits have a wide range in the eastern part of Texas, though I am unable to give their exact limits." (2)



Continued on next page

The first list of species for the formation was by Francis Moore in 1860:

“There is another bed of lignite on Rabb's creek, near Lagrange, four feet thick ; and one near Sullivan's Bluff, on the Brazos, seven feet thick. The strata inclosing this lignite contain fossils similar to those found at Claiborne, in Alabama. Among these are *conus sauridens*, *cytherea cornis*, *marginella biplicata*, *nucla pulcherima*, *oliva constricta*, *pleurotoma rugosa*, *solarium ornatum*, *turbinolia*



Several species that are easy to find along the Brazos

Photo by Wendi Gibson

*pharetra*, *turritella lineata*, and many other species belonging to the *genera arca*, *cardita*, *fuscus*, *ostrea*, etc. Teeth of fishes are found also, resembling those of the shark, and palates completely covered with small, round teeth, belonging probably, to a species of *lepidotus*. These fossils indicate that the tertiary strata of Texas are connected with those of Mississippi and Alabama.” (3)

Note that the rules of capitalization and such for scientific names had not been thoroughly established by 1860. Of Moore's species, we found *Conus sauridens*, *Turbinolia pharetra*, and shark's teeth.

#### References:

Odintz, Mark. (n.d.). “Stone City, TX.” Handbook of Texas online, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hrs68>.



Roemer, Ferdinand. (1848). Contributions to the geology of Texas. *American journal of science and arts*, 6, 21-28, <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/88506#page/29/mode/1up>.

Moore, Francis. (1860). Geological sketch of Texas. *Almanac of Texas for 1860*, 91-99.



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## News from our State Office

### What Does it Mean to be a Texas Master Naturalist?



#### [Videos are here!](#)

Several weeks ago our state office reached out to each chapter and asked the members to create a video describing what it means to be a Texas Master Naturalist. After lots of hard work (and many volunteer hours transcribing) the videos are in! Click [here](#) to see the videos!

### There's an App for That!

The folks at our state office not only work hard on projects for their community, but they also help to provide outreach, education and enrichment to the members of our Texas chapters as well. Check out this [list](#) of smart phone apps. Now you can take nature with you wherever you go!



### Editor's Note

by Wendi Gibson

[Cyrano@txmnbv.org](mailto:Cyrano@txmnbv.org)

I would personally like to give a big hearty welcome to the members of our 2018 TMN Training Class! Now that fall classes have begun, I'm sure you've discovered that this is no ordinary lecture series!

As I step down from my position as New Training Class Representative for 2017, I would like to pass on a few tips that will help you be successful and have an enjoyable experience as you work your way through the program:

- Be sure to check your email regularly for pertinent information regarding meet-up times for field trips, chapter news and events. Many of your volunteer opportunities will be posted there.
- Don't forget that you can start earning advanced training (AT) and volunteer hours (VT) right now that will go towards your certification in 2019. Come and volunteer with us at one of our upcoming community outreach events and get to know your fellow Texas Master Naturalists!



- For field trips, wear comfortable clothing/shoes that allow for some hiking through dense vegetation at times and don't forget sunscreen and/or bug repellent if you feel you need it.
- Don't forget your camera! It is a good idea to bring a camera to class as well as field trips. Many of the classes are hands on and you'll enjoy having a photo reference for some of the species you'll be learning about this season.

And the most important, if you have ANY questions, just ask a TXMN member! He/she will be more than willing to help guide you in the right direction whether it's a question regarding membership, help identifying a bird or even suggesting a good book for study or field guide reference. Welcome to the Texas Master Naturalist Brazos Valley Chapter!

*"In nature we never see anything isolated, but everything in connection with something else which is before it, beside it, under it and over it."* — Johann Wolfgang von Goethe