



Brazos Valley Chapter

the Cyrano newsletter

President's Corner

by Donnell Frank



Spring into the New Year!

Hold on to your hats Master Naturalists this is going to be an exciting year for our Brazos Valley chapter!

Starting off we would like to welcome the Class of 2017 and we can't forget those members who certified and recertified in 2017 as well. The class of 2016 certified eight members while twenty-seven members from the Classes of 2005 through 2016 were recertified. Five members reached the 250 hours milestone, two members reached the 500 hours milestone and two hard

working members reached the 1000 hours milestone! Congratulations for your hard work and dedication to our chapter!

Committees have already been hard at work gearing up for the new year but there is still plenty of time to sign up for a committee. There are a multitude of committees to choose from and you get volunteer hours when you serve on a committee. Contact any board member and they can steer you in the right direction for committee information.

We have scheduled a Chapter Board Retreat on February 24th from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm at TDI-Brooks International. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend. We have created a survey which asks questions on how we can improve the chapter to meet the needs of its members. Please go to the link below and fill out the Google survey. The results of the survey will be tallied and presented at the retreat. The power is in your hands to let us know what you would like to change or any improvements we can make to keep our members involved. <https://goo.gl/forms/09OsXqoLwklSjrx11>

Like I said, lots of exciting things are being planned for this year. Our Field Trips Program Manager is busy scheduling field trips; the Outreach Director is already preparing for Earth Day, Boonville Days, and other local events for our chapter. Workshops, like Flying WILD and Texas Stream Team training are being scheduled, Texas Stream Team teams are still doing their sampling at our four locations, and we now have the opportunity to become Texas Water Resource Specialists. Last but not least we are currently in the process of becoming one of the only sources of native plants in our area. We are growing native plants from seed, from the Native American Seed Company, in our shiny new greenhouse at the BRTC. So I'm inviting everyone to come to the chapter meetings and log on to the TMN Brazos Valley Chapter website (<https://txmn.org/brazos/>) and find out the what, where and when all these cool opportunities are taking place!

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Have you seen our new 2018 calendar? Dwight Bohlmeyer gathered several photos taken by our very own members and created a glimpse into nature you don't want to miss! Visit <https://txmn.org/brazos/2018-wildlife-calendar/> to get a copy.



YOUR 2018 BRAZOS VALLEY CHAPTER BOARD

President: **DONNELL FRANK**
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Vice-President: **DANA ROESE**
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Secretary: **ANDREA HOWARD**
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Welcome 2017 Graduating Class Members!

Congratulations 2017 Master Naturalist graduating class! Thirteen students recently completed 2017's session of Master Naturalist training.

We wish you the best of luck as you begin your journey towards Texas Master Naturalist certification through participation in volunteer opportunities within our chapter.

Don't forget to submit your hours in the Volunteer Management System portal and to check our website regularly for upcoming volunteer opportunities that you may apply towards your certification.

For questions pertaining to the VMS or re-certification, please contact Betty Vermeire at membership@tmnbv.org.



Photo credit: Andrea Howard



Photo credit: [TXMNBV Photos](#)

Congratulations Milestone Award Recipients!

At our January 2018 meeting, several milestone award recipients were recognized for their hard work and effort volunteering within our organization.

Milestone awards are given as members continue to accumulate hours throughout their lifetime as certified Master Naturalists.

In addition to re-certification pins, special dragonfly pins are given out as members earn 250, 500, 1000, 2500, 4000, 5000 and 10,000 hours volunteering. Remember, it is important that you continue to log your hours even after your yearly requirement for re-certification has been met!

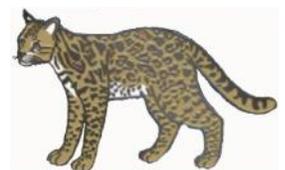
A big THANK YOU goes out to these folks for their continued dedication to our chapter and its mission.



Photo credit: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

2018 Re-certification Pin

This year's recertification pin is the ocelot, *Leopardus pardalis albescens*, which is classified as federally endangered. The only remaining North American ocelots are found in Texas. An estimated 80 to 100 animals are left, most of which are living on the Laguna Atascosa Refuge. For more information on the efforts to preserve this species, please visit <http://friendsoflagunaatascosationalwildliferefuge.org/Ocelots>



New Greenhouse at the BRTC and other Happenings

By Cheryl Lewis

The greenhouse at the Biodiversity and Research Teaching Collections (BRTC) holds great promise for our chapter's mission of Habitat Restoration and Maintenance. First of all, it gives us a place to propagate plants for use in our projects. In addition to the BRTC garden, we also have responsibilities at Gabbard Park and Lick Creek Park in College Station. Hopefully there will be more places where we can create habitats for pollinators and birds—and perhaps others—that will be attractive to people as well. Heather Prestridge, curator of the Wildlife Collections at BRTC, has been very supportive of our efforts and hopes to see classes conducted there to teach the general public about the importance of native plants and how to use them in their home landscapes.

Plants propagated in the greenhouse may also serve to fill the serious gap in native plant availability for residents of our area who will hopefully begin to understand their value and want to use them in their landscapes. While providing this resource to the public we will also raise funds for materials and supplies to continue the process and perhaps fund other projects as well.

We are currently planting seeds from a variety of native plants, focusing on the spring and fall nectar plants promoted on the Lady Bird John Wildflower Center's Power the Migration web page (<https://www.wildflower.org/learn/power-the-migration>).

I would like to thank Michael Stecher who has patiently persisted in the construction of benches for the greenhouse despite delays beyond his control. Thank you, Mike, and everyone who has helped with planting, clearing, greenhouse assembly, and providing supplies. Apologies for not naming you all. We wouldn't be here without you!



Photo credit: Cheryl Lewis

Upcoming 2018 Stream Team Class

Plans are in the works for a 2018 Stream Team certification class. Stream Team allows members to gain field experience using hands-on techniques at a stream site to test both the physical and chemical parameters of water. Members are responsible for testing their stream or waterway monthly and reporting the data. If you would like more information, please visit <http://www.meadowscenter.txstate.edu/Service/TexasStreamTeam/citizenscientists.html>.

Please check the BVTMN website <https://txmn.org/brazos/> for updates on class time and location.



Photo submission by Jackie Girouard

A Glowing Encounter

by Wendi Gibson

During the cooler months of the year, I often find myself doing my evening farm chores in the dark. I don't bother with a flashlight, even without a moon. I've learned to recognize the silhouettes of the nocturnal critters as they appear along wood row and hedges. The rye grass already has a dew clinging to it and the air is brisk and cool. As I finish up and turn to walk back to the house, I notice a small green glow in the grass where I had stepped.

The glow lasts about 60 seconds and then wanes. I am immediately fascinated, and my mind tries to process this. I come up with everything from lost glow-in-the-dark toys to possible residue from midnight alien visitors. I go and get that flashlight! Upon my return, I carefully prod the area again with my foot and watch as a green glow emits from the soil beneath the grass. Using my light, I find the source. It is some type of small

earthworm just a few inches in length.

Oligochaeta is a subclass of animals in the phylum Annelida which includes many types of terrestrial and aquatic worms as well as earthworms. This subclass boasts several types of bioluminescent species of earthworms with *Diplocardia longa* being the most common found in the southern parts of the United States, including Texas. These worms secrete a special coelomic fluid that has a similar chemical makeup to that found in other bioluminescent insects. When the worm is disturbed, it gives off a beautiful blue-green glow.

D. Longa is a very reclusive worm and to stumble across it (quite literally in my case) is a rare treat. In my experience it prefers a moist soil and is often found in the early



spring when the nights are still quite cool. Next time you are out in the dark on a cool night, look for an area with rich soil and a short, thick grass cover. I tend to find them in areas where there is light leaf or dead grass cover no more than an inch deep that shows beginning signs of the natural composting process. If you are lucky enough to find one, put away that flashlight and enjoy the glow!

Reference and photo credit: <http://www.quantum-immortal.net/physics/biolum.php>

The screenshot shows a GIS interface with a map of Texas on the left and a data table on the right. The table lists species for Brazos County, including Amphibians, Birds, and Snails, with columns for DL, Taxon, Name, Chname, USSEA, and SPROT. A detailed description for the Southern Crayfish Frog is visible.

DL	Taxon	Name	Chname	USSEA	SPROT	Description
LE	Amphibians	<i>Ambystoma tigrinum</i>	Houston Toad	LE	E	endemic; sandy sub-estuary; associated with
	Amphibians	<i>Lithobates sylvaticus</i>	Southern Crayfish Frog			The Southern Crayfish Frog is found in the southern part of the state, primarily in the coastal plain and adjacent areas. It is associated with the development of large, shallow, seasonal wetlands.
	Birds	<i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>	Wood Thrush		T	found primarily near
	Birds	<i>Haliaeetus leucorhynchus</i>	Bald Eagle	DL	T	found primarily near
	Snails	<i>Panopaea ovata</i>	Panopaea	DL	T	both subspecies are
	Snails	<i>Panopaea ovata</i>	Panopaea	DL	T	both subspecies are
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Screen capture taken from Texas Parks & Wildlife GIS website <https://tpwd.texas.gov/gis/rtest/>

DID YOU KNOW you can view rare, threatened or endangered species by county? Visit the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department website <https://tpwd.texas.gov/gis/rtest/> for an interactive map with detailed information on species type, classification and habitat information by area. The data is collected by The Wildlife Habitat Assessment Program and can be downloaded to Excel format.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



WATER SPECIALIST TRAINING

Last fall, several members of our chapter completed their advanced training requirement towards their Water Specialist certification. This program was developed by Texas Parks & Wildlife with the intent “to develop 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.”

Enrolled members must complete 8 hours of advanced training (which counts towards Master Naturalist AT as well) and 10 hours of volunteer work related to the Water Specialist program. Annual renewal requires 10 hours of related volunteer work.

Please visit our chapter’s website at <https://txmn.org/brazos/> to learn more about upcoming sessions and opportunities to become certified.

You can find out more about becoming a Texas Water Specialist by visiting <https://tpwd.texas.gov/education/water-education/texaswatersprogram/texaswatersspecialist> or by contacting Katharine Cupps at cuppskcc@gmail.com.



Don’t miss the 2018 Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting in Georgetown! For more information, please visit <https://txmn.org/2018-annual-meeting/>.

COME JOIN TEAM DRAGONFLY FOR THE 2018 TEXAS TRASH-OFF!



KEEP BRAZOS BEAUTIFUL

March 3, 2018
Cleanup 9:00 am -11:00 am
Event wrap up lunch 11:30 at the Brazos Center.

If you would like to join Team Dragonfly, please contact Amanda Chau at treasurer@txmnbv.org

The **Cornell** Lab of Ornithology
Exploring and Conserving Nature

PROJECT FEEDERWATCH

Every November, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology hosts a bird counting program called Project Feederwatch <https://feederwatch.org/>. The project always starts on the second Saturday of November and runs for 21 weeks.

Members who sign up receive a packet and beautiful full color poster of several species of common birds along with instructions for setting up their account to begin recording data.

Master Naturalists can earn volunteer hours while participating in this program. The data collected and entered allows scientists to track the movements of wintering birds as well as obtaining an overview of general bird populations in specific areas of interest.

Project Feederwatch ends on April 13, 2018. There is still time to earn volunteer hours collecting and entering data!

Work Day at the BRTC

Planting is well underway at the new greenhouse at the Biodiversity and Research Teaching Collections building. Stay tuned for more information on our chapter's native plants sale!

There are several work days planned where members can earn volunteer hours helping out in the garden at the BRTC. Keep an eye on our website for upcoming dates and times at <https://txmn.org/brazos/>.

A special thanks goes out to all of our members who share their photos with us on our Facebook page. See more volunteers hard at work at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/361254733982438/about/>



Photo submission by Dwight Bohlmeier

Editor's Note

by Wendi Gibson

Welcome to our new Cyrano newsletter! I hope this issue finds you well and in good spirits despite Mother Nature's desire to keep us on our toes with her ever-changing weather patterns.

But then we wouldn't be here if we didn't enjoy some aspect of it all. We as Master Naturalists, see the world and all of its parts as a carefully designed system that is constantly changing and evolving.

Two years ago I decided that I would like to learn more about what it takes to become a Texas Master Naturalist. I didn't really know what a Master Naturalist was, so I did some research online, looked at a lot of photos, and stalked the Brazos Valley

Chapter's Facebook page for sometime.

I noticed right away that these people were doing things for their community. They were helping each other and helping themselves. They were a humble group that gave back more than they got and they were a persistent but gentle force that shaped the world around them. They knew exactly the part they played in the system of things and they were making it work.

This past fall I decided to stop stalking the group. I decided to join, and recently completed the 2017 Texas Master Naturalist training program. I can't identify every bird and every rock or every tree or plant, but I know more than I did when I started.

I am excited to be a part of this wonderful, volunteer-driven

community. Our chapter has many volunteer opportunities for members such as hands-on field work to administrative duties and everything in between. There is something for everyone. With that in mind, I invite our members to contribute to our quarterly newsletter. Are you a do-it-yourselfer with a project you'd like to share? Perhaps you are a poet? A photographer? Maybe you'd like to share a recent adventure? If you would like to contribute to the upcoming spring/summer issue, please email Cyrano@txmnbv.org. We would love to hear from you!

"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



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Texas Master Naturalist Brazos Valley Chapter website: <https://txmn.org/brazos/>