



We are a group of trained volunteers who share our appreciation and knowledge of nature with the community through outreach, education and conservation/restoration projects

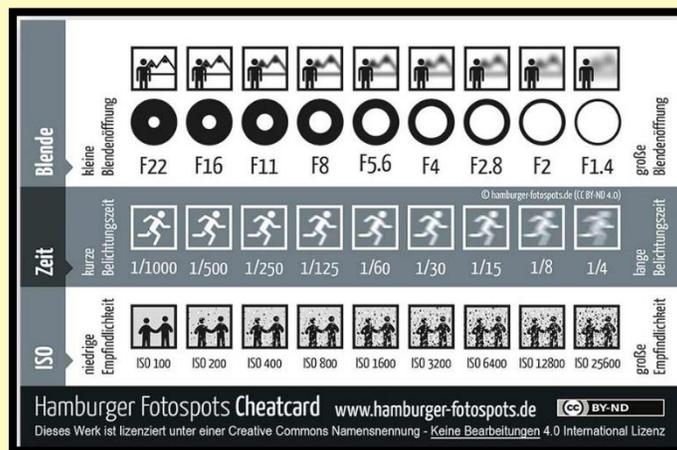
## Photo Workshop at Chapter Program

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Chapter events and nature-related articles, photos, and items of interest to the chapter need to be sent to [Lynn](#) by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. Suggestions for the newsletter are also welcome. Thanks.

Lynn Trenta,  
Courier Editor



On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, our Chapter members were treated to a nature photography workshop presented by Chapter President Amber Leung and Facebook Administrator John Donaho. The topics covered were shutter speed, focal length, and ISO, among others. See above a schematic that is useful to determine what settings to use for the present situation. Both Amber and John presented short PowerPoint Presentations with an overview of the topics. After the presentations, members were invited to photograph the items from nature arranged at the back of the room, where they could receive individual attention and ask questions about Nature photography

## Chapter Program on Endangered Species in April

At our next program, we will hear from Kelly Norrid, TPWD Wildlife Biologist, who will present a program on Texas Horned Lizards, Bobwhite Quail and Louisiana Black Bear on the coastal prairie and how we can work to conserve these species and protect their habitat. The meeting is on April 6 at the Rosenberg Civic Center at our regular times, 6:30 social time and 7:00pm program. We will also have a short chapter meeting following the program which counts as VSP. We hope to see you there!



## The iNaturalist City Nature Challenge Update



*The City Nature Challenge began last year with a competition developed by Citizen Scientists in California between 3 cities in the state. This year, it has been expanded to 16 cities across the U.S. Within Texas the 3 metropolitan areas competing against each other are Dallas, Austin, and Houston. Our chapter may be offering some iNaturalist training opportunities, led by President Amber Leung to help record findings. Also, we are planning on having a fun event during the period April 14-16 where we can be sending in photos of species while participating within our group. Further updates will be sent as the dates are set.*

*The challenge is sponsored in Texas by Texas Parks and Wildlife, Audubon Society and other organizations. For more information go to [City Nature Challenge](#) . This is a fun way to learn about iNaturalist, nature, and earn VSP hours!*

## Texas Master Naturalist Specialty License Plate GoFundMe



*A campaign is being launched in order for Texas Master Naturalists and their friends to obtain an official Texas specialty license plate that will advertise the important volunteer work of the TMN which has 46 chapters (and growing) and more than 9,600 volunteers serving Texas communities.... We are more than halfway to our goal of raising the \$9,000 deposit needed. The GoFundMe page has all the details at <https://www.gofundme.com/TMNlicense...> If every Texas Master Naturalist donated \$1, the goal would be met easily...Please support the work of the Texas Master Naturalists! If \$9000 is exceeded, the additional funds will be invested back into the Texas Master Naturalist Program. Questions? You can contact Mary Pearl Meuth at [mpmeuth@gmail.com](mailto:mpmeuth@gmail.com)*

*Allison Copony, TMN  
Heartwood Chapter*

**Seabourne on TX Birding Trail Map** *Sent in by Carol Schwartz*

*The newest Upper Texas Coast – Great Texas Birding Trail Map is now available from TPWD for \$5.00. It includes our Seabourne Creek Nature Park as one of the new listings. To order call 1.800.792.1112.*



*Photos by Wayne Poorman*

**March Bird Hike at Seabourne**

*The March Bird Hike had 9 guests and 12 members who spotted 46 bird species. About an hour after the bird hike, Amber, Karl, and Jim saw the park’s first spotting of a bald eagle. See below the photos of a red-bellied woodpecker, belted kingfisher and osprey spotted on the bird hike taken by Wayne Poorman and the bald eagle photo taken by Amber Leung. A great birding day!*





## **“Insects in the City” Planting to Nurture Nature**

*Although many gardeners might shudder at the thought of caterpillars in the garden, native caterpillars are rarely serious pests to backyards trees and shrubs, and they provide an essential food source for song birds.*

*We all have more power than we might think. In a world where so many things seem out of control, anyone with a small plot of land, or even an apartment balcony with room for a few potted plants can make a small but significant difference in our environment.*

*What we plant in our gardens can do more than just look pretty. By selecting the right plants we can sustain native pollinators and attract butterflies. We can create habitat for birds and reptiles and other small animals.*

*Imagine a songbird wanting to make a nest in your backyard. Besides a place to weave a nest, a mother bird needs food for her young. By far the most important protein source for song birds (including some species that are principally seed-eaters as adults) are caterpillars. Butterfly and moth caterpillars are normally quite abundant in a natural woodlot or forest, or prairie. But in urban areas where many of the planted trees are exotic species that sustain few native caterpillars, pickings can be scarce for nesting birds.*

*Many people don't know that you can increase the carrying capacity of your backyard for birds by simply taking care to plant native trees and woody shrubs. Dr. Doug Tallamy, University of Delaware, has documented this phenomenon [in his book, \*Bringing Nature Home\*](#). Tallamy also provides a [useful list of woody and herbaceous plant genera and their relative attractiveness to caterpillars](#). Oaks lead the list with over 500 butterfly and moth species that depend on oaks for survival. Even though this list was compiled for the mid-Atlantic states, many of these plant genera do quite well here. The birds will thank you.*

*Besides birds, bees need our help in urban areas too. Loss of habitats, climate change and limited water are contributing to shrinking ranges and declining numbers of many unique and beautiful pollinator species. Case in point, the [rusty patched bumble bee](#) went on the endangered species list this week, the [first bumble bee to be so listed](#).*

*The Horticultural Research Institute maintains a listing of [plants that bees like best](#). This is a great place to start when planning a new garden. The HRI chart is organized by bloom time, which can help you ensure that you have plants blooming throughout the growing season—an important requirement for bees and other beneficial insects. It also lists trees and shrubs that attract few bees, like forsythia, roses, and hydrangea.*

*If you want to do good and feel your power multiplied, consider joining the [million pollinator garden challenge](#) a campaign to register a million public and private gardens and landscapes to support the survival and preservation of pollinators. The Pollinator Partnership even provides [Ecoregion planting guides](#) that you can download and use for even more plant ideas. According to the website, we in north Texas and Oklahoma belong to the [Prairie Parkland \(subtropical\) Province](#) (though I'd just call it “hot and flat”).*

*So let's get out there this summer and change something we can change—our own back yards.*

*The post [Planting to nurture nature](#) appeared first on [Insects in the City](#).*

Trip to Karl's Lavaca Ranch

Saturday, March 25th, a troupe of chapter members carpoled to Karl Baumgartner's Lavaca Property in Jackson County. This property is about 500 acres and includes several ecosystems, including a riparian area, woods, wetlands, and prairie areas.

Karl has been restoring this property through seeding and planting native species. The prairie area is growing little bluestem, switchgrass and other native grasses instead of the invasive species there originally. Native species have been introduced into the wetlands area as well. The pond has had native rushes and sedges installed.

After arriving at the Lavaca Ranch, members were encouraged to identify a list of 20 native plants. Thankfully, Susie Doe, our resident plant expert, was on hand to help with this. Her name was frequently heard with the call of "what's this plant?". We definitely gave her a workout this day.

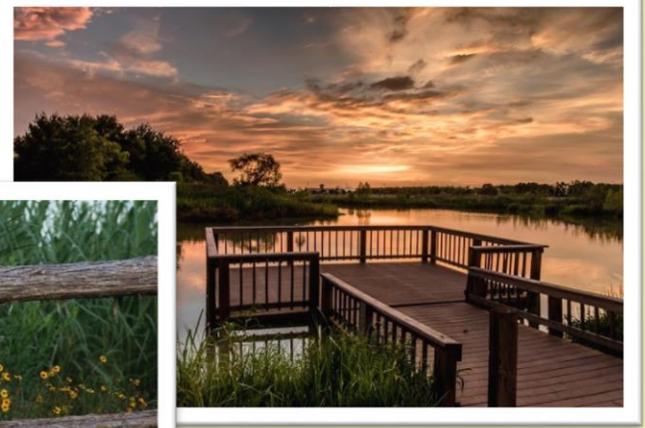
As we safaried across the fields and forests in our sturdy ATVs, we were treated to many butterflies, wildflowers, and a few birds as well. Amber's photos of the wildlife and Roger's photos of Susie and the group can be seen below, as well as Susan Davidson's photo of us altogether.

This was a beautiful day for a fun and educational trip. A good time was had by all. Thank you, Karl!



## Chapter Announcements

### Seabourne Creek Nature Park Projects Needed



*Karl Baumgartner, Seabourne Creek Nature Park Project Manager, would like chapter members to submit ideas for future projects and improvements to the park to him at [kbum@pdq.net](mailto:kbum@pdq.net) Projects already in the works are the wetlands demo garden with a path around it and a tree identification project. Ongoing projects are the butterfly garden, the bird sanctuary, and the prairie restoration project which includes the prairie demo garden, greenhouse, and planting area.*

### VSP Information on VMS

*Don't know what category your VSP belongs in when you go to record your hours in the VMS? Please contact [Michelle Sullivan](#). She will direct you to the right place so that you can get credit for your volunteer activity. Thanks, Michelle!*



## Seabourne Creek Nature Park Happenings

### Rat Snakes Go Home with Chapter Member

*Mark Morgenstern was surprised to find a hitchhiker in his truck recently after returning from a Seabourne Volunteer Day! And then more surprised to find 3 more!*

*They had found a cozy spot to hide!*

*Photos by Mark Morgenstern*



### Butterfly Garden Begins Again

*Linda Rippert and Diane Russell have been whipping the butterfly garden into shape. A huge number of plants are being installed into this treasured garden.*

*Thanks to these ladies, Jim Butcher, Amber Leung, Gloria Scheel, and other chapter volunteers, along with the landscape company employed by Karl Baumgartner who helped with weeding, the irrigation system and the feral hog fence.*



*Photo (left) by John Donoho and Wayne Poorman (right)*

### Prairie Plant Bump-ups Reach 1000 Plants and New Irrigation Installed



*This March our prairie team hit the 1000 bump-up count! This is thanks to head bumper upper, Jim Butcher, head propagator, Mark Morgenstern, and Natalya Crawford, Amber Leung, Roger Hathorn (deputy in charge of everything else) and other volunteers.*

*Also, many thanks to our stalwart chief engineer, Jerry Trenta, who installed a new irrigation system to service our new and expanded bump-up area.*

*Thanks to Karl for his vision, the overall management of the prairie projects and the LDS Volunteer coordination. We will soon be putting these plants in the prairie!*

**Enviroscape is Here!**

**VSP at Fulshear's St. Patrick's Shamrock Shindig**



*Diane Russell, Jim Butcher and Amber Leung were out on March 18<sup>th</sup> sharing our new “Enviroscape” with the families in Fulshear and surrounding communities at the St. Patrick’s Shamrock Shindig in Fulshear.*

*The product information for this model states that “The 3D Interactive EnviroScape Wetlands® allows you to explore with your audience the functions and values of various wetland types. Demonstrate human activities which may negatively affect wetlands and experiment with methods that can help conserve and protect them. Specifically designed to demonstrate wetlands. This teaching model communicates to all ages (children to adults)”.*

**Willow Fork is New Park in Katy**

*Thanks to our outreach volunteers! Photo by Diane Russell*

*There is a new park in Katy! Chapter volunteers Diane Russell, Michelle Sullivan, Cheryl Garcia, and Nancy Huffman will be out at Willow Fork Park with our “Enviroscape”, meeting the public this Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup> from 2-4pm.*

*The website for the park states that it is “located at the northwest corner of 99/Grand Parkway and Cinco Ranch Blvd., north of Cinco Ranch High School. Willow Fork Park, which opened in November 2016, was developed by Will Fork Drainage District in collaboration with Katy ISD. The 32-acre park, which is part of Phase II in the District’s parks master plan, is funded through bond proceeds.*

*The passive-use park provides residents with another high-quality recreational environment. The project improves and transforms 32 acres of flat land into a multipurpose environment with compelling topographical undulations, multipurpose open lawns, trails, a lake, and other recreational features. A series of large rolling hills, some rising as high as 20 feet, create topographical interest and play opportunities throughout the park. Additional park components include boardwalks, a pedestrian bridge, a pavilion with restroom facility, playground, disk golf, solar-powered lighting, rock outcroppings, bio swales, and educational signage. “*

<http://willowforkdrainagedistrict.com/parks/willow-fork-park/>



Photos by Kim Farou

**In Our Own Backyards and Other Places**

Can You Identify These Squirrels? *By Diane Eismont*

*HAVE YOU EVER SEEN THEM LIVING IN THE SAME LOCATION?*

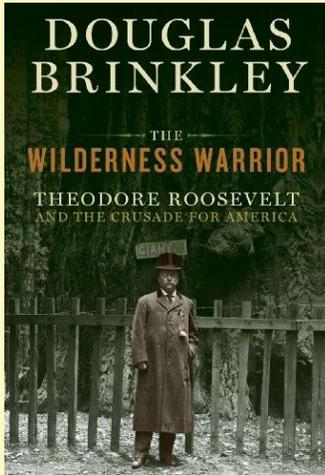
*While both squirrels are found in East Texas, they prefer different habitats. We have always only had Fox Squirrels (with rusty colored underparts) and were very surprised to see Gray Squirrels (with white underparts) appear at our feeders during the Brazos River flooding last June. The high water forced the Gray Squirrels out of the river border areas they prefer, and to which they returned after the water receded.*



Alligator at Brazos (Is this guy or girl laughing?) *By Bob Schwartz*



## Book Corner



Douglas Brinkley  
*The Wilderness Warrior*

*Goodreads.com review*

*In this groundbreaking epic biography, Douglas Brinkley draws on never-before-published materials to examine the life and achievements of our "naturalist president." By setting aside more than 230 million acres of wild America for posterity between 1901 and 1909, Theodore Roosevelt made conservation a universal endeavor. This crusade for the American wilderness was perhaps the greatest U.S. presidential initiative between the Civil War and World War I. Roosevelt's most important legacies led to the creation of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and passage of the Antiquities Act in 1906. His executive orders saved such treasures as Devils Tower, the Grand Canyon, and the Petrified Forest.*

*Tracing the role that nature played in Roosevelt's storied career, Brinkley brilliantly analyzes the influence that the works of John James Audubon and Charles Darwin had on the young man who would become our twenty-sixth president. With descriptive flair, the author illuminates Roosevelt's bird watching in the Adirondacks, wildlife obsession in Yellowstone, hikes in the Blue Ridge Mountains, ranching in the Dakota Territory, hunting in the Big Horn Mountains, and outdoor romps through Idaho and Wyoming. He also profiles Roosevelt's incredible circle of naturalist friends, including the Catskills poet John Burroughs, Boone and Crockett Club cofounder George Bird Grinnell, forestry zealot Gifford Pinchot, buffalo breeder William Hornaday, Sierra Club founder John Muir, U.S. Biological Survey wizard C. Hart Merriam, Oregon Audubon Society founder William L. Finley, and pelican protector Paul Kroegel, among many others. He brings to life hilarious anecdotes of wild-pig hunting in Texas and badger saving in Kansas, wolf catching in Oklahoma and grouse flushing in Iowa. Even the story of the teddy bear gets its definitive treatment.*

*Destined to become a classic, this extraordinary and timeless biography offers a penetrating and colorful look at Roosevelt's naturalist achievements, a legacy now more important than ever. Raising a Paul Revere-like alarm about American wildlife in peril—including buffalo, manatees, antelope, egrets, and elk—Roosevelt saved entire species from probable extinction. As we face the problems of global warming, overpopulation, and sustainable land management, this imposing leader's stout resolution to protect our environment is an inspiration and a contemporary call to arms for us all.*

## Nature center may be cure for 'nature deficit disorder'

By Averil Gleason of the Fort Bend Herald [agleason@fbherald.com](mailto:agleason@fbherald.com)

*The following is an excerpt from a March 29<sup>th</sup> Fort Bend Herald Newspaper Article written by Averil Gleason.*

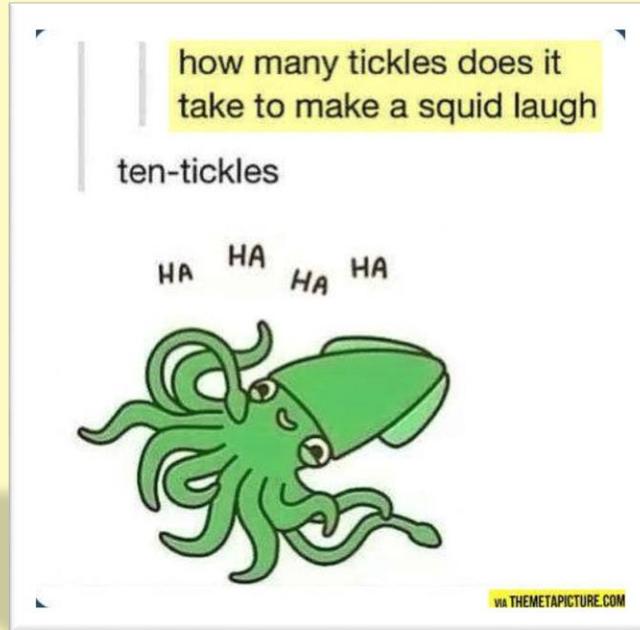
*A nature center may be built at Seabourne Creek Nature park within the next two years. At the Rosenberg City Council workshop on Tuesday, Parks and Recreation Director Dan (Darren) McCarthy shared conceptual plans for a nature center.*

*"One of the things we want to focus on is nature play," McCarthy said. The nature center would include an interactive educational space, office space, a pavilion, deep porches, a classroom, integrated solar roof panels and native plant life. McCarthy shared that he is currently in the fundraising part of the development. "I'm looking for community outreach and donors," he said. The total estimated cost of the nature center is \$2,936,449.*

*"I think this number will go down, but I want to go out and see how much the community will support this," McCarthy added. The nature center is scheduled to be built by 2019. The next step is the engineering design phase, to be funded in fiscal year 2018, according to City Manager John Maresh. "I think our kids have nature deficit disorder, and Rosenberg has all this in our backyard," McCarthy told council. In other business, council members discussed Rosenberg Civic Center rental and facility use policies.*



The Lighter Side



Thanks to John Donaho (from Facebook)



CPTMN 2017 Board Members

2016 Officers

- President [Amber Leung](#)
- Vice President [Debby Wendt](#)
- Secretary [Jamie Fairchild](#)
- Treasurer [Doug Simons](#)

2016 Committee Directors

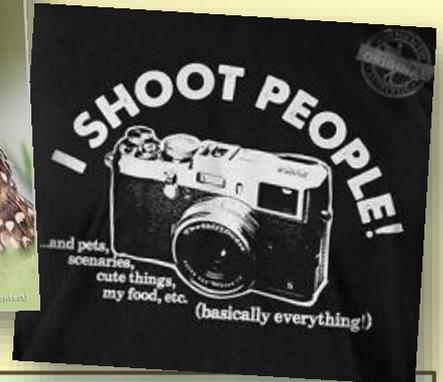
- Past-President [Diane Russell](#)
- Programs [Debby Wendt](#)
- Communication [Lynn Trenta](#)
- Volunteer Service Projects [Margo "Mac" McDowell](#) (interim)
- Membership [Michelle Sullivan](#)
- New Class [C.J. McDaniel](#)
- Advanced Training [Margo Johnson](#)
- Publicity [Teresa Bailey](#)
- New Class Representative--Open
- State Representative [Carol Schwartz](#)

We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://txmn.org/coastal>

High Resolution Photographs Needed!



*Chapter members are needed to take photos of our group in action, as we undertake both Advanced Training and Volunteer Service Projects. We always need photos of natural critters and plants as well, of course.*

*Photos should have good resolution. **Please send your photos as originals, not resized. Originals from a camera that has at least a 4 Megapixel capability should be able to do this.***

*We are going to have an article in the future that provides more details about what size photos are needed for print publications and how to ensure good resolution.*

*Many thanks to all chapter members who have been sending great photos for the website, Facebook and the Courier!! We couldn't function without you.*

**Check out our Facebook Page at [TXMN Coastal Prairie Chapter Facebook](#)**

**To post photos and information, email**

**[John Donaho](#), [Amber Leung](#) or [Lynn Trenta](#)**

**Also, share our chapter Facebook entries with your friends on your**

COASTAL PRAIRIE CHAPTER OF THE TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS

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