



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



President's Message *By Bert Stipelcovich*

Fellow Chapter Members:

Welcome to 2021!

A new year brings fresh energy and a renewed sense of purpose. After last year, we need both. Our counties continue to evaluate the risk of COVID-19 at red, the highest level. However, help is on the way as vaccinations have begun for frontline workers and the most at-risk among us. And with plans to rapidly ramp up vaccine availability, we expect to see the infection rate start to drop significantly in the coming weeks and months.

We have big plans for this year for developing new projects and partnerships; creating new outreach and educational opportunities; continuing to increase and diversify our chapter membership; and bringing back Seabourne Nature Fest. Of course, these goals depend upon regaining our ability to perform outreach, education, and service.

Chapter Leadership for 2021

This year's officers and directors are:

- *President: Bert Stipelcovich*
- *Vice President: Shannon Westveer*
- *Treasurer: Katie Sallean*
- *Secretary: Susan Walther*
- *Advisor: Mac McDowell*
- *Advanced Training: Ramona Ridge*
- *Communications/Publicity: Paula Kolmar*
- *Immediate Past President: Jerry Trenta*
- *Membership: Jan & Kevin Kolk*
- *New Class Director: Shannon Westveer*
- *New Class Representative: Jan & Kevin Kolk*
- *Programs: Gary Moore*
- *Seabourne Creek Nature Park: Jerry Trenta*
- *State Representative: Jean Stipelcovich*
- *Volunteer Service Projects: Johanna DeYoung*

Great thanks to these members for taking on leadership roles in this uncertain time. As president, I am very lucky to have a team of such talented, positive, and hard-working people.

The year that was

Even with serious challenges and unknowns brought by the pandemic, our chapter exceeded all expectations. We adapted and overcame.

Continued on the next page--

Table of Contents:

President's Message.....	1
Membership Minute.....	2
January Program.....	2
December Program.....	3
VSP Opps.....	4
National Wildlife Refuges..	5
Cullinan President.....	8
Seabourne.....	9
Our Own Backyard	15
A Blast from the Past.....	19
Book Corner.....	20
Lighter Side.....	21
Shannon's Video.....	22

Please send chapter events and nature-related articles, photos, and items of interest to the chapter to [Lynn](#) by the 28th of the month.

Suggestions for the newsletter are also welcome. Thanks.

***Lynn Trenta,
Courier Editor***

President’s Message *Continued*

We successfully completed a spring and fall class for the first time in many years. We continued to complete projects and develop plans. We fulfilled our commitments to partner organizations. And, at the Annual Meeting, we prepared and executed so well as content hosts that our chapter was recognized with a first-ever TMN Exemplary Service Award!

The Road Ahead

Hope shines brightly on the horizon. The new year brings great opportunities for us to grow and to fulfill our mission as Texas Master Naturalists. Let’s have some fun!

Continue to stay safe. As always, contact me with any questions, concerns, and suggestions.

All the best, Bert Stipelcovich 713-540-2378

The Membership Minute *By Bob Naeger, TMN Membership Director*

Congratulations to the following members who recently achieved certifications and milestones:

Initial Certification

- ❖ Greg Hurley
- ❖ Isabella Wu



2020 Recertification (66 members recertified so far)

- ❖ Della Barbato
- ❖ Jean Greenhalgh
- ❖ Jeffry Wellman
- ❖ Angela LeDoux



The recertification pin for 2020 is the American Bumble Bee!

All pins that have been earned this year have mailed to the recipients. We will continue to mail pins as they are earned until we are able to resume in-person meetings.

JANUARY 7, 2021: “Helping Texas Landowners Restore Native Habitat for Wildlife” presented by Brian Robert, education coordinator for [Wildlife Habitat Federation](http://www.wildlifehabitatfederation.org).

This will be a Zoom program meeting open to the public. Registration will be required so TMNCPC President Bert Stipelcovich will email a link to chapter members. Visitors can find the link on the website calendar when closer to the meeting. The program begins at 6:00pm and goes to around 7:00pm or 7:30pm. A Coastal Prairie Chapter meeting will follow the meeting.

Learn how the WHF is trying to get land that was once native coastal prairie restored back to its native state.





Mark Morgenstern Talks about Plant Propagation at December Program

By Lynn Trenta, TMNCPC Courier Editor

December 3rd Mark Morgenstern, a chapter member since 2011, gave our Texas Master Naturalist chapter an informative and interesting talk about prairies, prairie plant propagation, and prairie plants. He encouraged us to plant native plants, even if we only have a 36 square foot plot.

Mark is a mainstay of the prairie community in our area. He sells prairie and native plants, raised on his 7-acre plot in Damon, TX, just 4 miles from the FM 762 entrance to Brazos Bend State Park. His property borders this amazing state park. His business, [Morning Star Prairie Plants](#), offers plants that are difficult to find, especially since the pandemic has encouraged people to get outside and begin planting native plants and pocket prairies.

Morgenstern stated that he became interested in prairie plants after hearing Jaime Gonzalez and befriending Katy Emde, another local native plant and prairie mainstay, who had a small nursery business. He also connected with Mark Bolen and Bob Randell with Urban Harvest.

Morgenstern calls Tom Solomon, a volunteer at the TMN Galveston Bay Area Chapter who has accrued over 20,000 TMN volunteer service hours, his "guru". He began learning about propagating prairie plants from Solomon, who propagates prairie plants for many prairie projects in the Houston area.

The prairie plant propagation process begins with seed collection. Morgenstern discussed places to obtain seeds, including native prairies, such as Nash Prairie, along the roadside and railroad right of ways. Seeds should be placed in paper bags and dried. It is best to label the bags with the plant species, the date and location of the seed collection. Local seed collection is preferred as these plants are native to this area and support local wildlife

Green milkweed and other milkweeds have seed pods that can be bagged with small organza bags to catch the seeds when they open from the pods. Morgenstern stated that he can get 50 seeds from one aquatic milkweed plant. Morgenstern recommended using iNaturalist for plant identification and the use of the "compare" feature in iNaturalist for better identifying unknown plants.

A germination medium such as Pro-mix and potting soil should be used when propagating prairie plants Mycorrhizae fungus is contained within Pro-Mix and promotes seed growth. The wood in the potting soil needs to be sifted out. The seeds need to cover the whole seedling pots and not be covered with soil, unless the seeds are large. Mist the pots until the seedlings are a good size.

After the seedlings reach the right size, they are "bumped up" into gallon pots. Morgenstern stated that potting soil should not be using in bumping up, as prairie plants need a heavier soil such as sandy loam. He uses prime mix soil from Living Earth. Morgenstern gets recycled pots and trays from various sources including Joshua's Native Plants and Buchanan's Native Plants in Houston, the Greenhouse Megastore (greenhousemegastore.com), Peaceful Valley, SW Fertilizer and others. When clearing an area for prairie/native plants, Morgenstern recommends the use of herbicide. Other methods he recommended are mowing and solarization with plastic.

Morgenstern recommended several resources to learn about prairie and native plants. This included Sally and Andy Wasowski's Book, "Gardening with Prairie Plants". The wildflower.org website is another resources that he mentioned. He also recommended going to the Rosenberg Library in Galveston. They usually have a book sale in October and have great prices. Thanks to Mark for sharing his expertise on prairie plants with our chapter.. He is our chapter's "guru"! To view the entire presentation, go to <https://www.facebook.com/morningstarprairieplants/videos/868870453869746>.



Photo by Wayne Poorman



Volunteer Service Projects Highlights *By Johanna DeYoung, TMNCPC VSP Director*

In moving into 2021, there is hope for more volunteer opportunities. Perhaps, this will not occur until mid to the latter part of 2021. In the meantime, please note the following:

CURRENT STATUS

New 12/9/2020: Fort Bend County Judge K. P. George announced Fort Bend County moved from an Orange to a Red COVID-19 Alert Status. Fort Bend County is now at its highest alert level: “High Community Risk”. The associated guidance at the Red Level is to “STAY HOME, STAY SAFE”.

Additional guidance includes “Minimize contact with others, whenever possible, and avoid leaving home, except for essential needs.”, and “Avoid all gatherings of any size.”.

This change in status level is due to uncontrolled community spread of SARS-CoV-2. Fort Bend County Judge George noted “We are in a dangerous situation as our case counts soar and ICU beds fill up at unacceptable rates.”



Fort Bend County COVID-19 Community Risk Level Summary

Risk Level	Risk Description	Activity	Guidance
High Community Risk	High potential for exposure to known or suspected sources of COVID-19.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid all gatherings of any size. • Avoid non-essential business and personal travel. • Avoid public transportation where possible. • Practice good hygiene and social distancing. • Cancel social visits to nursing homes, long term care facilities, and hospitals. • Schools and after-school activities for youth close, as directed by educational authorities & advised by local health authorities. 	<p>STAY HOME, STAY SAFE</p> <p>Minimize contact with others, wherever possible, and avoid leaving home, except for essential needs.</p> <p>Practice social distancing and use face coverings.</p>

New 12/22/2020: TMNCPC President Bert Stipelcovich via Slack Announcement outlined the 12/18/2020 Covid-19 AgriLife Extension Agency Guidance: (See the whole document on Slack)

“In summary, TMNs can continue to participate in certain service projects provided we follow all state, county, and program requirements for safety, mask-wearing, and social distancing.

Some examples of allowed service projects at Seabourne Creek Nature Park (SCNP) include:

- *Caring for propagation plants in the greenhouse and bump-up area*
- *Habitat and wildlife management activities in the prairie, demo butterfly garden, bird sanctuary, lake, and wetlands*
- *Trail and infrastructure maintenance work*
- *SCNP projects must follow all AgriLife capacity guidelines. Mask wearing is mandatory, as is social distancing and not sharing tools between households.*

(NB: Members of a household are collectively treated the same as an individual.)

Please continue to coordinate work activities with Jerry Trenta and the area leaders at the park.”

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Volunteer Service Projects Highlights *(Continued)*

10/7/2020: Texas Governor Greg Abbott issued Executive Order No. GA-32 noting "Except as provided below by paragraph No. 5, there is no occupancy limit for outdoor areas, events,..." Paragraph #5 reads: "For any outdoor gathering in excess of 10 people, including rafting, tubing, and related services, other than those set forth above in paragraph Nos. 1, 3, or 4, the gathering is prohibited unless the mayor of the city in which the gathering is held, or the county judge in the case of a gathering in an unincorporated area, approves of the gathering, and such approval can be made subject to certain conditions or restrictions not inconsistent with this executive order."

VSP Opportunities

Seabourne Creek Nature Park (SCNP): Although the scheduled SCNP Volunteer Days, as are other group activities, are on pause, assistance is still needed within SCNP.

- For bump ups, prairie planting, nursery maintenance, and/or trail maintenance, please contact Jerry Trenta, Seabourne Director (713-898-4769/jerrytrenta@txtrentas.com), to make arrangements prior to going to SCNP.
- For demo garden work please contact Lynn Trenta, (832-646-4769/lynn@txtrentas.com), to make arrangements prior to going to SCNP.
- For bird sanctuary work, please contact Bill Johnson, (281-734-3349/rxrelo@aol.com), to make arrangements prior to going to SCNP.
- For butterfly garden work, please contact Katie Sallean, (713-502-5701/katie@coastalprairie.org), to make arrangements prior to going to SCNP.

[VSP hours to be recorded in VMS under the category "SCNP-7 Habitats Public Access: TMN Report Hours"]

Seabourne Gardens Zoom Meeting, 1/13/2021, 1:00 pm: For those interested in the planning and implementation of the SCNP gardens, please contact Lynn, Katie, or Pam.

[VSP hours to be recorded in VMS under the category "SCNP-7 Habitats Public Access: TMN Report Hours"]

Signage Zoom Meeting, date To Be Determined: For those interested, please contact [Pam Jones](#) or [Rick Adams](#).

[VSP hours to be recorded in VMS under the category "SCNP-7 Habitats Public Access: TMN Report Hours"]

VSP Updates

The VSP opportunity, "Monarch Gateway: TMN Report Hours" with its associated description, "Monarch-related issues (growing, finding, etc.)" has been changed to "**Pollinator Habitat**" with its associated description, "Field-based activities that improve and manage pollinator habitat. Developing, maintaining, and/or improving gardens with plants used by pollinators; certifying pollinator gardens with organizations such as Monarch Gateway."

Please continue to check the website calendar, Slack, and the TMNCPC Members Only Facebook page for VSP updates. If there is no existing VSP description fitting a potential VSP opportunity, please request and complete an VSP Proposal Form. In turn, the VSP Committee, Terri Hurley, Lynn Trenta, and Johanna DeYoung, will review the proposal and determine if it qualifies as an VSP opportunity.

If you are aware of VSP opportunities or have questions about VSP opportunities, please contact Johanna DeYoung (832-689-4877/johanna@coastalprairie.com).

National Wildlife Refuges *By Paula Dittrick, TMNCPC Blogmaster*

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service lists [20 national wildlife refuges in Texas](#). Some Texas Master Naturalist Coastal Prairie Chapter members shared their experiences and photography from four refuges for a blog series on the TMNCPC web site during November and December. The series covered Attwater, Anahuac, Brazoria, and San Bernard NWRs.

The Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge is best known for its prairie chicken booming grounds although the refuge hosts many bird species. TMNCPC member Erik Wolf says some of the refuge's appeal for him is that it's only 20-30 minutes from his home.

"The first time I went, I was like "eh"; but the more I go, the more I see and learn. Watching it change through the seasons and seeing the different animals come and go is nice," Wolf said. *"Although I love hiking and being in nature, I really love the auto tour. I can watch the sun come up and enjoy my coffee without having to plan for a hike or a half day trip. Plus, I rarely see anyone out there: peace and quiet."*

TMNCPC member Garrett Engelhardt of Rosenberg also regularly visits Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR, which he calls "One of my favorite places to go."

"I usually go on a weekday and early in the morning at sunrise so I pretty much have the refuge to myself," Engelhardt said. *"What I like about it is I usually see something different every time I go. This year, I got to see lots of prairie chickens."*

Engelhardt has seen a variety of birds along with deer, rabbits, and alligators along with wildflowers when in season.

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Photo by Eric Wolf



Photo by Garrett Engelhardt



National Wildlife Refuges *(Continued)*

Shannon Westveer calls Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge “a wildlife-viewing gem along the Upper Texas Coast. One can expect to see dozens of bird species any month of the year, with October and April reliably double that as seasonal migrants ebb and flow with the tides. Anahuac NWR is both wintering and summering grounds for many wild species.”

Westveer said hot spots include the Visitors Center (Chenier Plain, Lake Anahuac) off Hwy 563 down from I-10, followed by the Skillern Tract, which is a separate unit just past the main refuge entrance. Visitors driving the auto loop at the main refuge “won’t necessarily need to exit the comfort of your car to see all you came to see.”

Anahuac’s main refuge features Willows Trail, which has a convenient boardwalk for a short walk to see flycatchers, sparrows, or some butterflies and dragonflies depending on time of year, Westveer said.

“In November, the arrival of waterfowl in all shapes and sizes are reliable, but the return of snow geese is what many from Houston drive the hour-plus journey to see every Thanksgiving or winter break,” Westveer said. “Usually heard high in the sky calling for groups on the ground, it is quite the spectacle and cacophony to witness firsthand a field painted white with thousands of geese.”

Thousands of snow geese also frequent the 44,414-acre Brazoria NWR in December-January along with puddle ducks and possibly sandhill cranes. The biggest geese numbers cannot always be seen from the 7.5-miles Brazoria NWR auto loop. The refuge borders Christmas Bay and the Intracoastal Waterway.

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Photo by Shannon Westveer



National Wildlife Refuges *(Continued)*

Paula Dittrick loves looking for wintering sparrows at both Brazoria NWR and Attwater NWR. At Brazoria, visitors willing to walk through the grass can spy Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Le Conte's Sparrow, and Vesper Sparrow.

Savannah Sparrows commonly can be seen from a vehicle along the main refuge entrance road. Shrikes sometimes appear along the auto tour although shrikes seemingly are not as common here as in previous decades.

Eastern Meadowlarks frequent the prairie. Salt cedars around a viewing platform and the Otter Slough boardwalk near the visitors' center might yield a glance at a rail or sora along with seasonal migrants.

San Bernard NWR, which is about 12 miles west of Freeport, is part of the Texas Mid-coast National Wildlife Refuge complex, along with Brazoria NWR and Big Boggy. San Bernard NWR straddles Brazoria and Matagorda counties.

Shorebirds are common at San Bernard NWR along with plant diversity. TMNCPC members Lynn Trenta and Margo Johnson both listed San Bernard as among their favorites. Westveer said she and her husband, Scott, "love going there for wintering birds" such as ducks, geese, Sandhill cranes, and sparrows.



Photo by Paula Dittrick



Photo by Robbin Mallett



Chapter Member to Lead Cullinan Park Conservancy

Chapter Communications Director Robbin Mallett, Fall 2019 class, was elected President of the Cullinan Park Conservancy and will assume office in January. Cullinan Park, a 754-acre green oasis in Sugar Land, is blessed with a rich diversity of habitat, plants & wildlife. More than 264 species of birds and 378 plant species have been observed at Cullinan, and TMN Susie Doe maintains and periodically updates the park's extensive plant list.

The Cullinan Park Conservancy is a non-profit formed by citizens committed to enhancing & protecting the park's natural beauty. The Conservancy is focused on implementing the Master Plan, funding capital improvements and bringing our community and nature together. Cullinan was annexed by the City of Sugar Land in 2016 after an Inter-local Agreement was developed between Sugar Land, the City of Houston, Houston Parks Board & Cullinan Park Conservancy. Since then, the Park has experienced a renewal with Phase I improvements including a restroom, new trails, signage and other beautification.

The Conservancy just presented the City with funding to begin Phase II improvements focusing on a trail to open up a new area of the park and additional parking. Cullinan has been a very popular destination during the pandemic and the parking lot is overflowing – especially on weekends.

Robbin says, "I'm looking forward to the time when we can safely gather again so that I can invite everyone out for a special TMN tour of the park. I think we can develop a mutually beneficial partnership between Cullinan and the Coastal Prairie Chapter."

For more information about the park, visit www.cullinanparkconservancy.org or like Cullinan on Facebook.



Robbin and Susan Fortenberry (far right), new TMN from the Spring 2020 Class, with other birders at the Cullinan 2019 Big Sit



I've Got Sunshine on a Winter-y Day

Text and Photos By Shannon Westveer, TMNCPC New Class Director

Winter solstice marks a joyful ending of the year for my family as migratory wildlife reliably return to our property in east Fort Bend County. First in, the 'mew' of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and the 'buzz' of the Blue-gray Gnatcatchers pique our attention. We tick off the rest of the winter crew one by one as they arrive faithfully on queue: Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-rumped and Pine Warblers, Hermit Thrush, American Robin.

By Thanksgiving, Wilson's Warbler – "Tweety" we call him – is the last to arrive. He is our favorite entertainer with aerial antics in the bushes and trees, difficult to miss donning his cheery plumage of sunshine and a little 'black beret.' Couch's Kingbird, another lemon merengue bird, rounds out our list so we can get straight watching them once more ... on the inside where we remain warm and dry.

New this winter is a small pocket prairie garden still adorned with sunflower seed heads, fluffy and spent boneset and mistflower, frozen-back senna trunks, and golden, swaying grass stalks. Forget the Niger seed sock hung out just for them, the American Goldfinches head straight for prairie where there's room and food for everyone.

Here are a few tips to increase joyfulness indoors while giving the birds you love a great yard to return to every winter.

1. Clean wildlife viewing windows.

INSIDE: Heat a quart of water in the microwave, hot enough where your bare hand can still stand it. Pour in a splash of vinegar or squeeze a lemon if you have it, add 2-3 drops of dish soap. In Karate Kid style, 'Wet-on (small rag) Dry-off (cotton hand towel)' method will leave windows clean and streak free without harsh chemicals.

OUTSIDE: Add a cup of vinegar and a short-squeeze of dish soap into a 5-gallon bucket of water (rainwater works!). Using a soft carwash brush on a pole, clean windows well. Squeegee (usually opposite the brush) the excess water before hand-drying with a towel to remove streaks.

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I've Got Sunshine on a Winter-y Day *(Continued)***2. Build a brush pile.**

At the window with the most birdie action, pile sticks collected from around the yard to make an insect habitat (a/k/a/ bird food!) and protective cover for small reptiles and birds.

3. Keep a bird bath ... and keep it fresh.

Take great care to position it in such a way to eliminate their death by window strike should a predator come to call. If you cannot tilt horizontal blinds on the inside, try TPWD's method of using highlighters ([here's the video link!](#)) to break up the reflection instead. Change the water daily, scrubbing it with a brush to prevent algal growth and reduce avian disease transmission.

4. Leave your leaves.

Tree leaves and plant detritus are nature's best mulch, and birds and insects use this to full advantage in the winter. Plenty of insects hide under them providing an abundant food source for insectivores. If you cannot find enough in your own yard, take the bags your neighbors put to the curb as waste

5. Keep it messy!

Nature does not tidy itself in winter, and neither should you. Spent annuals and wintering perennials in your garden provide food (in seed) for birds, over-wintering habitat (hollowed stalks) for bees. Spend your time instead keeping the edges nice, providing an unobstructed walking path for daily reflections.

6. Plant a pocket prairie.

Native grasses and flowers are just what wildlife need to survive and thrive on your property at any time of the year. Give up some of that desert that is turf grass and build a year-round oasis for all your garden friends to enjoy.



Seabourne Sightings and Projects

New Prairie Pathways

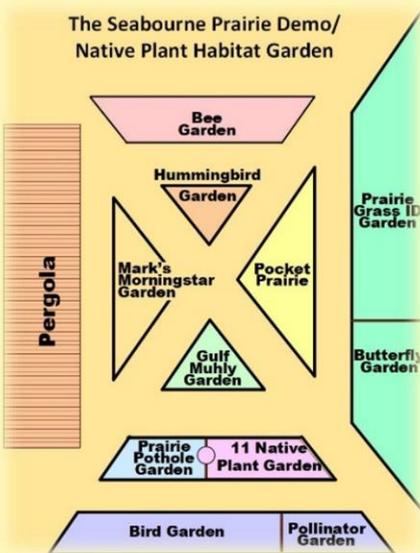
Sal Cardenas has been working with Seabourne Director Jerry Trenta on putting new pathways through the Seabourne Prairie and Garrett Engelhardt has been keeping them mowed.

These pathways allow chapter members and visitors to wander into our prairie area. They extend almost to the edge of the property that was designated as a prairie restoration area.

We haven't begun restoring all of the area, but progress is always being made through the efforts of Seabourne Project Director Jerry Trenta and other chapter volunteers.



Demo Garden Volunteers Create Garden Spreadsheet



The Demo Garden (Prairie and Habitat Demo Garden) Volunteers have created an inventory spreadsheet which catalogs the plants in the garden. It also will provide links to information about the plants. The Excel Spreadsheet can extract information about the whole garden or each individual garden plot.

This spreadsheet will be shared with the chapter in Slack and on the website as updated.

Volunteers Pam Jones, Jan Kolk, and Judi Harrington created and/or modified the spreadsheet. These volunteers and volunteers Marilynne Malone, Amy Phan, and Lynn Trenta are working on entering the data and adding additional information. The spreadsheet also provides information about volunteer opportunities in the form of a task list with the person heading up the task listed.

Bump Up Uptick Update 2020 *By Jim Butcher, Class of 2008*



Photos by Lynn Trenta

Hello nature lovers.

This message comes from the bump up table at Seabourne Creek Nature Park. We are essentially shut down now with our activities at the park. However, 2021 is right around the corner and I would like to share with you some information on our efforts to germinate and bump up plants that are used in prairie recreation at the park. In 2019 our members bumped up 2,920 native plants, despite C.O.V.I.D. we increased the 2020 production by 33% to 4,318.

The S.C.N.P. interpretive center project has been green-lighted as part of the 20 year vision for the park.

There is no better way to learn about native plant propagation than hands on experience. By coming out and assisting with the work, you can have a chance to make your mark on Seabourne Park by providing plants for the center's landscaping.

I can guarantee fresh baked goods and stale jokes to all. Check the upcoming bulletins for availability of volunteer days. I look forward to meeting you then.

*Jim , Also Known As
The Grand Pooh-bah*



Photo by Amy Barta



How to Help Wildlife Overwinter *By Isabell Wu, Spring 2020 Class*

As winter arrives and temperatures drop significantly, the Habitat (Demo) Garden at Seabourne Prairie is leaving the stems, leaves, and seeds of plants in order to give insects and other wildlife a place to shelter during the colder months. Here's how you can help wildlife survive through the winter.

Birds in particular require water and food sources all winter. Help out our feathery friends by providing them with high-fat sunflower seeds, peanuts, niger seeds, and grated suet. Fruit is a favorite of robins, blackbirds, and thrushes. Providing fresh water in birdbaths will help birds keep their feathers clean, and therefore be more waterproof and warmer.

Aquatic creatures will appreciate you keeping the surface of your pond from freezing over by placing a floating ball in to create ripples or melting a hole through the ice using boiling water. Stacking logs and clay tiles near the edge of your pond will help frogs and toads overwinter.

Many insects in Texas are freeze avoidant, meaning they cannot survive their internal bodily fluids being frozen. Be cautious when cultivating plants or mulching as queen bees, butterflies and moths may be hibernating beneath the surface of the ground and at the base of food plants and grasses. Hollow stems are another place insects love to overwinter in, so hold off on cutting herbaceous perennials until springtime. Leave leaf litter and debris to serve as a great habitat for insects and nutrients for the soil once it breaks down.

Building a bug hotel may ensure a high level of pollination in the spring and fall seasons. You can easily build one using hollow bamboo, sticks, pinecones, straw, wood drilled with holes and hollow bricks. Place these materials in a wooden frame and cover with a metal mesh. The best place for an insect hotel is in a protected area shaded from the sun. If you need inspiration for what to put in your hotel, check out the Demo Garden at Seabourne Creek Nature Park. An alternative to building your own is buying one online. A bug hotel shouldn't cost much, and you can buy one for less than \$20.*

Finally, we are asking YOU to document plants and insects using a journal or iNaturalist in the Demo Garden for Seabourne Park. This counts for VSP hours. So, look in the bug hotel and check the remaining plant vegetation and see what you can discover!

Sources

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/oct/28/how-to-help-garden-wildlife-survive-winter>

<https://owlcation.com/stem/how-do-insects-survive-winter>

<https://xerces.org/blog/put-down-those-pruners-pollinators-need-your-garden-garbage>

**Make sure the bee house you buy is 6" deep for the proper size.*



Photos by Lynn Trenta

Volunteers Needed! Seabourne Signage Search

By Jerry Trenta, Seabourne Project Director

We are in the beginning of organizing a signage project at Seabourne and are interested in finding out what other parks in our area are using for signage.

So, if you go to a park and see an interesting sign or signs, please take photos and send to [Pam Jones](#). It is also helpful to note the size and height or other aspects of the sign.

We are also forming a committee, with almost all of the work coming next year, after funding is secured.. You can contact [Rick Adams](#) if you are interested in participating in this fun project!

Thanks for your help! This is a great way to get VSP hours.



Rick Adams



Pam Jones

Seabourne Garden Group being Formed

By Lynn Trenta, TMNCPC Courier Editor & SCNP Prairie and Habit Garden Coordinator



Calling all volunteers interested in butterfly, prairie, native plant and habitat gardening! We are forming a Seabourne Gardening Group to oversee and implement the gardening there at the park. With 2 great gardens to showcase our knowledge and support of the environment, our group has an opportunity to educate visitors to the park about the importance of providing conservation corridors for wildlife. Contact [Lynn](#), [Katie](#) or [Pam](#) if you are interested in being a part of this fun and important group.. Any help in the gardens is greatly appreciated!



VSP hours are available for any work involved with the group.. Researching information for signage and pamphlets for the gardens is one volunteer activity that you can do from home. Work for the group will count as VSP under SCNP 7 Habitats Public Access TMN Report Hours..

Garden volunteers are planning on having a Zoom Meeting on January 13th at 1pm to discuss the gardens at Seabourne. Anyone interested in the gardens is invited! Contact one of the ladies above to receive a link to the meeting if you are interested in participating.

In Our Own Backyards and Other Places

Bobcats Photos and Text by Diane Eismont

What a Surprise to see photos of a Pair of Bobcats on our wildlife camera at a back pasture water station in Daylight! Photos were taken on November 11 at 11:37 A.M.

Bobcats are normally active dusk to dawn and are solitary, territorial creatures - except in breeding season - which this must have been. Gestation is 8-10 weeks.

They are generally 15-40 lbs. - at least twice the size of domestic cats and males are larger than females. You can identify them by the short tail, long legs and black ear tufts. Note the camouflage provided by their fur color and markings. They sleep in a den in the daytime.

They eat rats, mice, rabbits and snakes and are eaten by coyotes, owls and foxes. Their life span is said to be 7 years. They are found statewide in Texas.



In Our Own Backyards and Other Places (Continued)

Chapter Members Present Projects at the 2020 Prairie Stampede

Pocket Prairie Projects by Shannon Westveer

TMN Coastal Prairie Chapter – Shannon Westveer

- May 2019 – June 2020: Suburban backyard pocket prairie restoration (3,000 sq ft)
 - Featured on Quail Valley Garden Club's Home Tour
- June 2020: Suburban front yard demo garden pocket prairie (200 sq ft)
 - September presentation with QVGC 'Building Pocket Prairies in Fort Bend Subdivisions' (PDF)
- May 2020 Back yard 'Firefly Meadow' restoration (1,000 sq ft)
- October 2020, Sponsor: Colony Grant HOA and Eagle Scout pocket prairie project (400 sq ft)



Seabourne Prairie Restoration Project by Lynn Trenta

Seabourne Creek Nature Park Prairie Restoration Project Coastal Prairie Chapter TMN

- It Starts in the Greenhouse
- Bump ups ensue--4300 in 2020



Time for a Prairie Planting-- 3800 plants in 2020

Prairie Planting Results

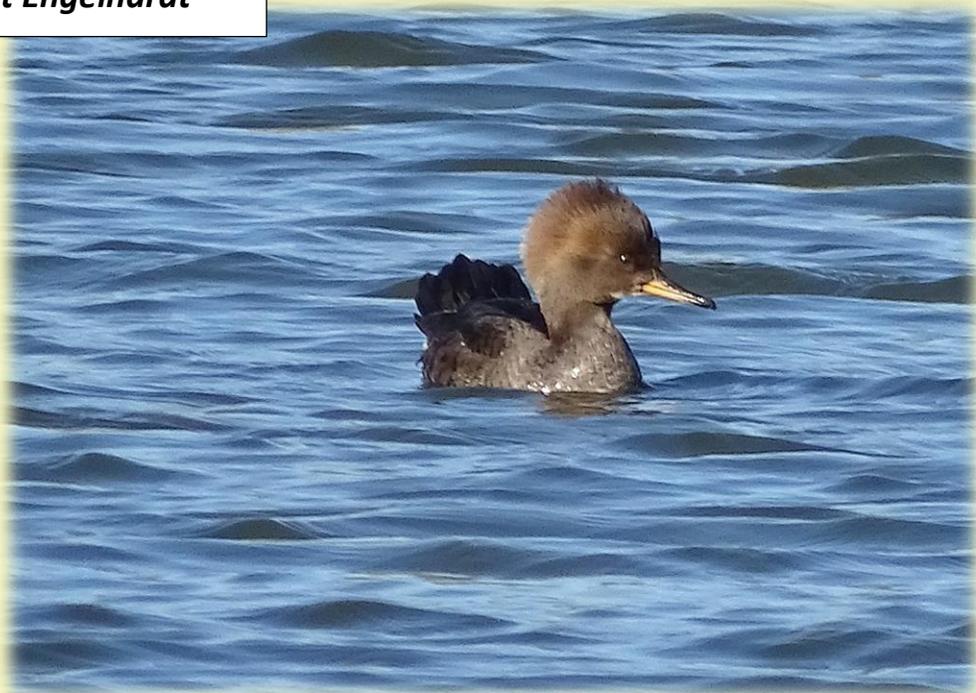


In Our Own Backyards and Other Places *(Continued)*

Hooded Merganser Spotted at Seabourne—New Species for Park?



Photos by Garrett Engelhardt



A Blast From the Past *By Lynn Trenta, TMNCPC Courier Editor*

A field trip to Canyon Lake Gorge in October 2014. Kim Farou is in the front, Gloria Scheel can be seen leaning over and then various other chapter members are in the background. It was a fun trip.



This photo below was taken as our group was dove banding at Susan and Bill Archer's house in June 2013. Susan Archer, Susie Doe, Ramona Ridge, and Johnnie Fife are seen in the photo.

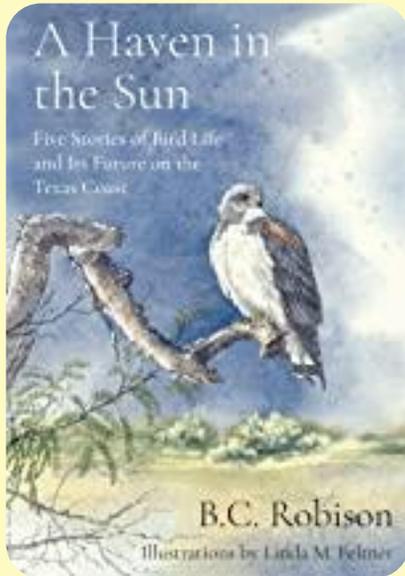


If you have some "old" photos of chapter members please send them in to [Lynn Trenta](#)



This is was taken on a fun field trip to Shangri La Botanical Gardens and Nature Center in Orange, Texas in 2014. Wayne & Vicki Poorman, Carol & Bob Schwartz, Pat Mollere, Jim Butcher, Karl Baumgartner, Jane Schnell, Gloria Scheel, Diane & Bill Russell, Susan & Bill Archer, Georgia Messmer, and Kathy & Gary Moore are in the photo.

The Book Corner *Book Report By Paula Dittrick, TMNCPC Blogmaster*



A Haven in the Sun

B.C. Robison

Former Houston Post writer B.C. Robison wrote *A Haven in the Sun*, in which he tells five stories of bird life and those birds' future on the Texas Coast. Linda M. Felmer illustrated the book, which would be a good addition to the library of any Texas Master Naturalist interested in birds.

One chapter, entitled *Drums of the Prairie*, is devoted to Attwater's Prairie Chicken whose population has declined from "a time of abundance to its status today as one of the world's most endangered animals," wrote Robison.

"At the beginning of the twentieth century, this secretive, social grouse of the Texas coastal prairie pecked and strutted through the grass in vast numbers," Robison writes. "To the early settlers and explorers, the courtship call of the prairie chicken—the mournful warble that floated at daybreak over the damp grass in springtime—was the music of the prairie."

Another chapter tells the challenges across Texas coastal prairies for the White-tailed Hawk, which can often be seen gathering and hunting around a prairie fire.

"The White-Tailed Hawk's sharply defined habitat requirements reveal its intimate bond with the coastal savannah," Robison writes. "Nest sites are usually in trees and shrubs that are no more than 10-12 feet high, have small canopies, and are spaced widely through expanses of short-to-mid-sized-grass."

These hawks eat rats and mice, lizards, frogs, snakes, small birds, and large insects, including grasshoppers. White-tailed Hawks avoid croplands, urban areas, and overgrazed pastures where tree coverage exceeds 40% of the area, Robison said.

"Like many hawk species, the White-tailed Hawk is monogamous, forming pair bonds for life," Robison said. "The bird's prowess in spotting prey in the prairie grass speaks to the fabled power of a hawk's eye."

Other chapters address Whooping Cranes, the Redhead duck, shorebird and songbird migration, the Long-Billed Curlew, and the American Avocet.

The Lighter Side

Boss: How good are you at Power Point?
 Me: I Excel at it
 Boss: Was that a Microsoft Office pun?
 Me: Word

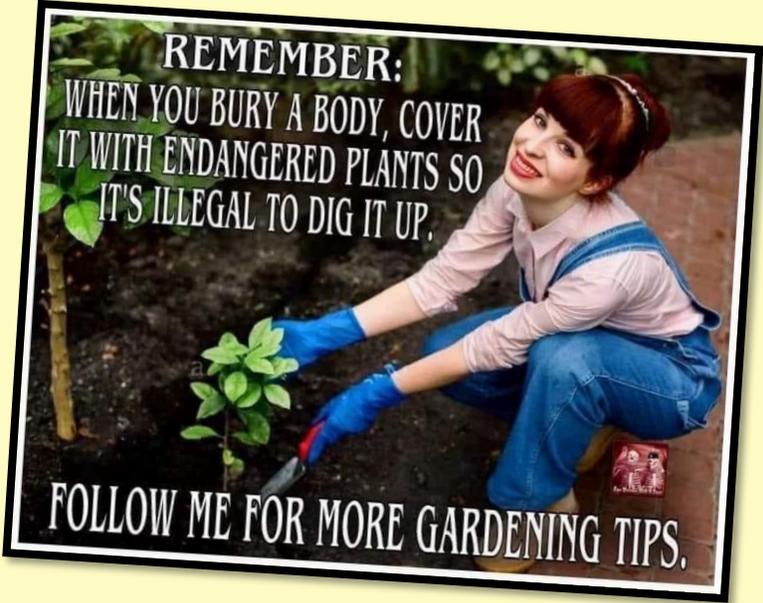
Teacher Lounge Humor-Facebook



Kentuckiana humor--Facebook



Robbin Mallett (Facebook)



Drea Morgenstern-Facebook

John Donaho-Facebook

TMNCPC 2021 Board Members

Shannon's Smartphone Video Tour

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- Vice President [Shannon Westveer](#)
- Secretary [Susan Walther](#)
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- New Class Representative—[Jan and Kevin Kolk](#)
- State Representative [Jean Stipelcovich](#)
- Seabourne [Jerry Trenta](#)

- Advisors
- [Clint Faas](#) Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
- [Stacie Villarreal](#) Waller County AgriLife
- [Margo "Mac" McDowell](#) (Chapter Coordinator)

We are on the Web!

See us at:

www.coastalprairie.org

Check out our TMN Coastal Prairie Chapter YouTube Videos. Here is a link to Shannon Westveer's latest one showing her Smartphone Video Tour . [Shannon's Video](#)

Enjoy!



Our Chapter Facebook Page is at [TXMN Coastal Prairie Chapter Facebook](#)

To post photos and information, email [Robbin Mallett](#)

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

We also have a **Chapter-Only** Facebook Page that allows chapter members to post items. You can join by going to the website below and clicking on "Join". The administrator will allow you access. This is for chapter members only.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1882734648662315/?ref=bookmarks>

Check out & subscribe to our Chapter's new YouTube Channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfBuSOaMAOiFuiDHaiuNqTQ?view_as=subscriber



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Check out our Chapter Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/tmncpc/>

To post photos and information, email [Ramona Ridge](#)