

Coastal Prairie Chapter Courier



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



Table of Contents:

President's Message.....	1
Membership Minute.....	2
Shannon's 1000 hrs.....	2
February Program.....	2
Teresa Bailey.....	3
January Program.....	4
VSP Opps.....	5
Chapter YouTube	7
Chapter in the Media.....	8
State TMN.....	10
Circular Economy.....	12
Our Own Backyard	15
A Blast from the Past.....	19
Book Corner.....	20
Lighter Side.....	21
Chapter Mentoring.....	22

Fellow Chapter Members:

We are off to a great start!

As we move into the second month of the new year, we already see significant momentum building in our chapter's efforts.

Our application for the annual grant from the Rosenberg Economic Development Corporation (RDC) was overwhelmingly approved by the RDC board of directors on January 13. The \$50,000 grant funds our work in the Seabourne Creek Nature Park (SCNP), which includes the annual Seabourne Nature Fest (SNF). Our members volunteer thousands of hours yearly at our signature project, SCNP.

The new Spring Class, which starts on February 16, is nearly full! Shannon Westveer, TMNCPC Vice-President/ New Class Director, has mapped out each class for the entire initial training period with speakers, content, and hosts.

Our new Membership Directors, Jan and Kevin Kolk, along with Shannon, are reinvigorating our chapter mentorship program with mentor training and timely communication. The mentoring program is not only required to comply with TMN state requirements, but it is also crucial to the continued health and growth of our chapter.

Communications Director, Paula Kolmar, and her team continue to build on the great work done by her predecessor, Robbin Mallett. Social media efforts continue to expand as we look for new and more effective channels to spread our message.

"Out of adversity comes opportunity." — Benjamin Franklin

Please send chapter events and nature-related articles, photos, and items of interest to the chapter to [Lynn Trenta](#) by the 28th of the month. Suggestions for the newsletter are also welcome. Thanks.

Lynn Trenta,
Courier Editor

Even as the COVID-19 pandemic imposes restrictions on our activities, we continue to move forward to fulfill our mission. We are one of only 14 chapters state-wide holding a spring class this year. (There are currently 50 TMN chapters). We continue to grow our membership year over year, drawing in members with diverse backgrounds and talents.

We are in the process of expanding our chapter's reach to incorporate Wharton county, in addition to Fort Bend and Waller counties. We have already received board and state approval to move forward.

Buckle up!

I have only touched on some of the exciting new activities we are undertaking. And now there is light at the end of the tunnel. As we continue to grow and fulfill our mission as Texas Master Naturalists, let's have some fun!

Continued on the Next Page--

President's Message *Continued*

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

All the best, Bert Stipelcovich, bert@coastalprairie.org, 713-540-2378

The Membership Minute By Jan and Keven Kolk, TMN Membership Directors

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

Initial Certification

Amy Phan

2020 Recertification (70 members recertified so far)

Kevin Engelhardt

250 Hour Milestone

Jan Kolk

Keven Kolk

500 Hour Milestone

Sarah Marshall

1000 Hour Milestone

Shannon Westveer



All 2020 pins earned have been mailed to the recipients. We will continue to mail pins as they are earned until we are able to resume in-person meetings.

TMNCPC Vice-President/New Class Director Shannon Westveer Hits Milestone!

Shannon Westveer reached her 1000 hour milestone this last month! Hats off to you, Shannon. I'm sure the next 1000 will be just around the corner! Thanks for all that you do for our chapter. We are so lucky to have you as a member. You are continuing to do a fantastic job as New Class Director. The classes are full and we are adding new members as never before. Adding the new mentoring classes is a wonderful way to connect the new class members to our current members and our chapter!



Chapter Program February 4, at 6pm

Bats-*Unsung Heroes of the Night Sky* Presented by Deandra Ramsey

Deandra Ramsey will talk about bats on Feb 4, 2021. This will be a Zoom meeting open to the public. Check back here for the registration link. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Deandra Ramsey is a Bat Champion and Ambassador with the Buffalo Bayou Partnership.



Longtime Chapter Member Passes Away *By Bert Stipelcovich, TMNCPC President*

Sad news to report. Longtime chapter member, Teresa Jo Bailey, passed away peacefully in her sleep Saturday, January 16.

Teresa became a member with the class of 2009 and had remained a member in good standing. As a board member of the Rosenberg Economic Development Corporation (RDC), she was always a good friend and supporter of our chapter.

Her longtime friend and fellow TMN, Karl Baumgartner, will provide more information about her at a future chapter meeting. Teresa worked for Karl for around 40 years at his company in Rosenberg.

The TMNCPC Board approved honoring Teresa with a tree planting at Seabourne. Details will be provided as they become available.

Here is a link to [Teresa's obituary in the Fort Bend Herald](#).

Another article about Teresa can also be found in the Fort Bend Herald at https://www.fbherald.com/camera/remembering-teresa-bailey/article_1fc8518f-f91d-523b-b8fd-00759219e338.html



Bryan Robert Talks About Prairie Restoration at January Program

By Lynn Trenta, TMNCPC Courier Editor



January 7, Bryan Robert of Wildlife Habitat Federation talked to our Texas Master Naturalist chapter about prairie restoration projects and the principles of land restoration for wildlife.

The Wildlife Habitat Federation helps with any size restoration from a pocket prairie to a 14,000 acre site. They seek to increase public awareness and appreciation of restoring land for wildlife.

Robert stated we have less than 10 percent of what we need to have to support wildlife. He mentioned Aldo Leopold, the father of modern wildlife, who wrote about five methods in land restoration: hoof, match, plow, axe and gun. The hoof refers to rotational cattle grazing as a management method. The cattle open up the soil for seeds, but over grazing can be an issue. The match refers to using prescribed burns to decrease woody invasives and reduce the vegetative load. Following a burn, invasive plants can be herbicized more easily. The plow refers to tilling, but no till drilling is preferred so as to not disturb the soil unnecessarily. The axe refers to mechanical removal of invasive plants, including trees. The gun refers to eliminating over population of apex predators through controlled hunting to keep the habitat and ecosystem in balance.

Robert illustrated how burns are planned. Firebreaks are essential and not all of the area should be burned at one time. He demonstrated a checkerboard pattern for burning. Experienced personnel need to be involved in burning and weather conditions need to be considered. There are several organizations that have people who can help.

Robert stated that burns have been documented to increase insect and bird populations as well as biodiversity. He gave us information about different ways to burn properties and answered questions from the Zoom audience.

This was a wonderful talk and enlightened our group about ways to restore and maintain prairies. The Wildlife Habitat Federation is much in demand and is helping to conserve and restore our precious prairies for wildlife habitat.

Their website can be found at <https://www.whf-texas.org/> and their Facebook Page is at <https://www.facebook.com/wildlifehabitatformation/>



Volunteer Service Projects Highlights By Johanna DeYoung, TMNCPC VSP Director



Since 12/9/2020, there have been no COVID-19 updates. Since late 9/2020, there has been a surge of cases within a surge. With the Winter Holidays in our rearview window, the expectation is plateauing of cases within early 2/2021. In the meantime, please note the following:

CURRENT STATUS

For information about TMN's response to Covid-19 go to <https://txmn.tamu.edu/welcome/covid-19-response/>

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."

12/22/2020: TMNCPC President Bert Stipelcovich via Slack Announcement outlined the 12/18/2020 Covid-19 AgriLife Extension Agency Guidance: "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. (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."

VSP OPPORTUNITIES

1. **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) / ltrenta50@gmail.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"]

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Volunteer Service Projects Highlights (Continued)

2. **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"]
3. **Garden Group Meeting February 11, Thursday at 1pm** Anyone interested in participating please email [Lynn Trenta](#), [Katie Sallean](#), or [Pam Jones](#) (See Page 16 of this Courier)
4. **Texas Master Naturalist's Second Virtual Volunteer Fair**: Wednesday, 2/3/2021, 9:00 am – 12:00 noon; and Thursday, 2/4/2021, 9:00 am – 12:00 noon. See notice on page 10 of this Courier Newsletter also.

Each day, there will be a series of 10-minutes sessions highlighting the various projects in need of assistance. For those unable to attend the sessions on the scheduled days, the sessions will be recorded and posted to the TMN website. To view the agenda and catalog (has descriptions of each project) go to [FINAL-Virtual-Volunteer-Fair-February-2021-Catalog-1.pdf \(tamu.edu\)](#)

Please register for each of these two days. You can attend all of the entire session or pick and choose the presentations of interest to you.

[VSP hours to be recorded in VMS under the category: "TMN Virtual Volunteer Service Fair: TMN Report Hours"]

Please use the following links to register for one or both days:

Event: Virtual Volunteer Fair Day 1; Wednesday, 2/3/2021, 9:00 am – 12:00 noon CST

Event Address: [Virtual Volunteer Day 1 Link](#)

Event: Virtual Volunteer Fair Day 2; Thursday, 2/4/2021, 9:00 am – 12:00 noon CST

Event Address: [Virtual Volunteer Fair Day 2 Link](#)

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." When one registers as a Monarch Waystation, you receive a certificate...<https://monarchwatch.org/waystations/>. Per the website, "You may also choose to purchase a metal sign that identifies your monarch habitat as an official Monarch Waystation. This display helps convey this important monarch conservation message to all those who visit your habitat and may encourage them to create their own Monarch Waystation."

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.org).

Chapter Needs Help promoting YouTube videos January 16, 2021 by [pmdittrick](#)

Text by Shannon Westveer, TMNCPC Vice President; photo by Paula Dittrick, TMNCPC blogmaster.



The Texas Master Naturalist Coastal Prairie Chapter needs more subscribers to help promote its videos.

The Texas Master Naturalist Coastal Prairie Chapter created a [YouTube channel](#) several months ago. Now, TMNCPC needs help getting more subscribers.

Viewers have enjoyed several videos by chapter members, including Terri's Backyard Natives Tour by Terri Hurley, current TMNCPC webmaster and immediate past TMNCPC Vice President.

The chapter also created a video project for the state Texas Master Naturalist annual state conference. That video, From Fallow to Fabulous, promotes the history of Seabourne Creek Nature Park's various restoration projects. SCNP is in Rosenberg.

TMNCPC wants to use YouTube.com/coastalprairie/ but lacks the subscriber threshold to do so yet. That's where the chapter needs your help:

- Visit the YouTube [channel](#).
- Click SUBSCRIBE
- Watch TMNCPC's entertainment and education content while you are there, which will boost the statistics on the popularity of the TMNCPC videos.
- Share videos, ask your nature tribe to do the same.

TMNCPC soon plans to add video content highlighting our chapter's work, educating the public on conservation issues, recruiting people for the New Class, feature our monthly program speakers, and more.

Additionally, TMNCPC members having videos with content that fits the YouTube Coastal Prairie Chapter channel are invited to contact Shannon directly.

Let's go digital, Coastal Prairie!



Coastal Prairie Chapter in the Media

Texas Master Naturalists foster appreciation of environment By

Stefan Modrich smodrich@fortbendstar.com Jan 12, 2021 Updated Jan 14, 2021



Shown above is a Texas Master Naturalist Coastal Prairie Training Class led by Shannon Westveer in 2020. Almost all of the classes are virtual due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.



Shown above is a Texas Master Naturalist Coastal Prairie Training Class in September 2019 studying rangeland ecology with Dr. Barron Rector, right, of Texas A&M University at the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge.

Jan Kolk and her husband, Kevin Kolk, were at a crossroads when he retired from Fort Bend ISD in March of last year. She was still teaching at Alief ISD but wanted to find a way for her and her husband to spend more of their free time together doing things they both enjoyed.

So, she spoke with Shannon Westveer, vice president of the Texas Master Naturalists (TMN) Coastal Prairie Chapter, a volunteer organization that partners with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and Texas Parks and Wildlife and which provides a host of virtual and in-person classes on a variety of topics, including botany, ecology, bird-watching and geology. "We've been outside people all our lives," said Jan Kolk, who lives in the northeast part of Fort Bend County. "We've seen some naturalist things, and thought he'd really enjoy taking the classes and learning more and seeing what he could do since he had some free time."

Kolk attended evening and weekend classes until the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, when her teaching course load and her TMN classes shifted online, and she later retired in June of 2020, which she said she had planned well before the pandemic. She said one benefit of the virtual offerings was the chance to learn from experts in a variety of natural science fields from around the state without requiring them to travel outside the Houston area.

"One thing that COVID has taught us all is the best places to be is outside" Westveer said. "COVID has literally reconnected people to their own yards, their outdoor spaces that they've kind of forgotten about because we went about the business of everyday life. But when you're stuck at home and you're not able to go to restaurants, bars, and movies, you go outdoors. And you learn that there's a whole world of nature out there waiting to be seen and engaged in."

To read more of this article go to: https://www.fortbendstar.com/community/texas-master-naturalists-foster-appreciation-of-environment/article_fb9ede26-f96e-5bdc-bd5c-6e7fc3dac16b.html

Darren McCarthy, Rosenberg Parks DirectorBy Averil Gleason agleason@fbherald.com Dec 21, 2020

Darren McCarthy's love for parks knows no bounds. And it's been proven time and time again over the last 13 years. This month, Rosenberg says goodbye to its fearless Parks and Recreation Director Darren McCarthy. McCarthy has accepted a position as the Fort Bend County Parks and Recreation director. His first day is Jan. 2. But before making this major life change, McCarthy couldn't help but share his accomplishments, memories, and favorite projects completed during his tenure in Rosenberg.

"I started with the city on Halloween in 2007," McCarthy recalled. "It's ironic that I started on Halloween because some of the parks were, well, scary. There were things that needed severe updating. Severe safety measures needed to be taken. It was soul crushing." Suffice it to say the parks in Rosenberg would not be in the conditions they are in now without McCarthy's dedication.

"When I first got here, Seabourne Creek was a four-acre lake in the middle of a barren field," he continued. "There was nothing out there. One of the best things the city ever did was back in 2009 when Karl Baumgartner approached the city with an agreement to form the Texas Master Naturalists Coastal Prairie Chapter. That was a great partnership, and Karl and Jim Butcher were the two architects of that plan. Seabourne Creek Nature Park is arguably one of the best parks in Fort Bend County. It went from being a barren field with a pond to, during COVID, one of the most heavily used parks in the county." The 164-acre nature park, located at 3831 SH 36, was acquired by the city of Rosenberg in the early 90s. The Coastal Prairie Chapter has propagated over 4,000 plants this year alone, and about 3,000 have been planted in the prairie restoration area.

"When I was hired, the city had passed a parks bond in 2006 for improvements to playgrounds and restrooms," McCarthy recalled. "It was \$2.5 million. And \$2.5 million sounds like a lot of money, but we quickly found that it really was not a lot for the amount of work we had to do. We had to get real creative real fast. You know, we wouldn't have a road leading to Seabourne Creek or the parking lot at the park without the help of Fort Bend County and the Rosenberg Development Corp." McCarthy reckons there's about \$6 million worth of improvements at the Seabourne Creek Sports Complex. "It was a former cotton field," he revealed. "There was nothing there. Seeing I was a huge part in creating that, it was pretty special."

McCarthy made it very clear that he couldn't have accomplished anything without the help of city staff. "They are the hardest working group of people I've ever been around," he said. "I love the city and I love the residents. It's the best staff I've ever worked with in my entire career."

McCarthy's time in Rosenberg will be memorialized through the parks, playgrounds and sports complex. "My goal and my focus and my passion is parks," McCarthy said. "I'm for parks. People need a way to escape what's going on and parks are there for that. My goal has always been to improve the community I live in. And I can continue that in Fort Bend County. The county just passed a \$38 million parks improvement bond and that's what I'm going to be managing. It's too great of an opportunity to pass up. I'm truly honored the county judge and commissioners recognize my achievements in Rosenberg and I hope they reflect on the county as well."

McCarthy's last day working for the city of Rosenberg was Dec. 31



News from Texas Master Naturalist State

The Virtual Volunteer Fair February 3rd and 4th 9am to noon (see Johanna DeYoung's VSP Article for more information)



The Virtual Volunteer Fair will be an opportunity for our partner conservation organizations to present volunteer service projects that need volunteers from a distance or virtually! Save the Date and plan to join us on February 3rd and 4th, 2021, for this series of project presentations showcasing opportunities from across the state and across the spectrum of natural resource topics. Go to [FINAL-Virtual-Volunteer-Fair-February-2021-Catalog-1.pdf \(tamu.edu\)](https://tamu.edu) to see the Agenda and descriptions of each project.

Please use the following links to register for one or both days:

Event: Virtual Volunteer Fair Day 1; Wednesday, 2/3/2021, 9:00 am – 12:00 noon CST

Event Address: [Virtual Volunteer Day 1 Link](#)

Event: Virtual Volunteer Fair Day 2; Thursday, 2/4/2021, 9:00 am – 12:00 noon CST

Event Address: [Virtual Volunteer Fair Day 2 Link](#)

Texas Master Naturalist Awards



Partnership
Award



TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

Texas Master Naturalists and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension



Program Specialist -
Superior Service
Award

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

Mary Pearl Meuth

News from Texas Master Naturalist State

REGISTER Now for our next #TMNTuesday - February 9th @noon featuring Dr Doug Tallamy!

January 12	May 11	August 10
February 9	June 8	September 14
March 9	July 13	November 9
April 13		December 14



Now that spring is almost here, it's time to start planning for your outdoor space and how you can make a difference for the betterment of native species, healthier ecosystems, and even wildlife corridors—all in your very own backyard! There's no better teacher to get you started than Dr. Doug Tallamy, our February featured speaker for our [#TMNTuesday](#) series! Join us next Tuesday on February 9th from 12pm – 1:30pm Central. *note that his session will extend an extra 30 minutes (at his request!) to allow for time for questions & answers!

Registration is NOW OPEN; the link to reserve your spot can be found below. Every [#TMNTuesday](#) session is open to anyone and everyone, so invite any friends, family, or colleagues who can't miss our featured speaker: Dr. Doug Tallamy.

February's focus is all about "Nature's Best Hope." Particularly, how us humans are nature's best hope by doing something as simple as turning your yard from an ecological desert into a thriving native oasis. Dr. Doug Tallamy will not only provide the information about his experiences, but he'll also discuss practical tools that each of you can implement in your own backyards, whether you're a Texas Master Naturalist or not. Interested in these grass-root approaches to conservation at the local level? Want to help native species by creating wildlife corridors in your own backyard? Then this #TMNTuesday seminar session is for you!

Doug Tallamy is a professor in the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware, where he has authored 103 research publications and has taught insect related courses for 40 years. Chief among his research goals is to better understand the many ways insects interact with plants and how such interactions determine the diversity of animal communities. Doug has received many awards for his work, and his new book 'Nature's Best Hope' is a New York Times Best Seller.

Watching the live or recorded session will count as AT hours for our Master Naturalists—check in with your chapter's VMS Admin on logging the time. Remember that you can view recordings of each session at txmn.tamu.edu/tmntuesdays after the event if you can't make the live viewing.

Have more questions? Find a list of FAQs on our [#TMNTuesday](#) webpage.

Event: #TMNTuesday – February 2021

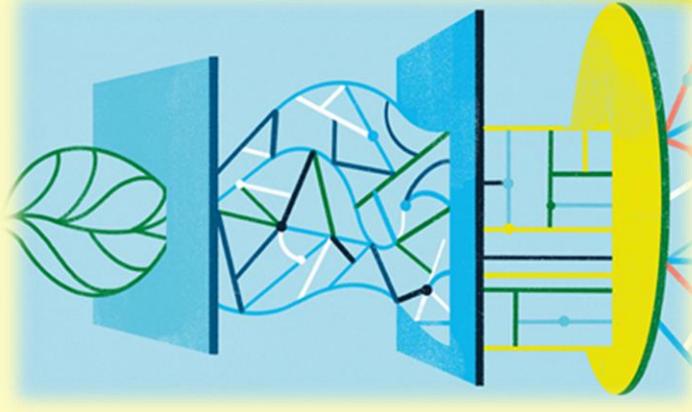
Date and time: Tuesday, February 9, 2021 12:00 pm Central Standard Time (Chicago, GMT-06:00)

Event registration address:

<https://tpwdevents.webex.com/tpwdevents/onstage/g.php?MTID=e92d26940248134733079b43b8328aOca>

By [Elizabeth L. Cline](#) | Dec 23, 2020 Illustrations by Andrea Mongia

Will the Circular Economy Save the Planet?



IN THE SUMMER OF 2019, William McDonough walked onto a stage at a Marriott hotel in Minneapolis wearing what he called the world's first circular pair of jeans. He was speaking at Circularity 19, North America's first major conference dedicated to "turning circular economy concepts into profitable opportunities." In the audience were Fortune 500 CEOs, investors, city managers, and government officials from around the world.

The apparel industry churns out about 5 billion pairs of jeans each year in a resource-intensive process; making a single pair requires at least 800 gallons of water and is responsible for the release of 20 kilograms of CO₂ equivalents (comparable to charging your phone about 2,550 times). Add to that about a third of a cup of chemicals to achieve the colors and distressed look consumers have come to expect.

Unlike standard jeans, McDonough's duds were manufactured as sustainably as possible. The thread, care labels, pockets, and interlinings, normally made of polyester, were 100 percent organic cotton, and all the dyes, stabilizers, and finishes were made from minimally toxic chemicals. But the real breakthrough was the jeans' stretch fiber—a blend of denim and a proprietary elastane that breaks down in soil without releasing any harmful toxins and can be easily recycled. McDonough pulled the denim away from his leg and let it snap back into place. "Twenty years," the lanky, silver-haired architect told the audience with a broad smile. "That's how long it took us to get an elastane that's biocompatible." The result of a collaboration between McDonough's circular economy foundation Fashion for Good and the European fast-fashion chain C&A, the pants were already available to consumers for the reasonable price of \$35.

The fashion industry is notoriously wasteful, consuming roughly 108 million metric tons of nonrenewable resources each year, from pesticides and synthetic dyes to coal and oil. Only about 1 percent of all textiles are recycled into new clothing. The majority—more than two-thirds of textiles—are either incinerated or tossed into landfills.

These problems are hardly unique to the fashion industry: Our entire economy is built on an inefficient and dangerous system of resource extraction. In 2017, the world passed a grim new annual record of 110 billion tons of resources consumed—from gravel and cement to fossil fuels, metal ores, and timber—an 8 percent increase from just two years before. According to the consultancy Circle Economy, a scant 8.6 percent of materials get reused.

To read more of this article go to <https://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/2021-1-january-february/feature/will-circular-economy-save-planet>

A Joyful Year with Coastal Prairie (*read at the 'New Year's virtual Bash'*)

By Shannon Westveer, TMNCPC Vice-President and New Class Director



**When I joined Coastal Prairie barely grasping my rope
Nature's destruction coined 'progress?' ... you folks gave me HOPE**

**First Carol who helped me to certify 'T-M-N'
Then coaxed a 'New Class Director' to confidently begin**

**Robbin, my classmate, whom I'd met chasing birds
With ideas, media, and adverts, She helped me be heard**

**When the official class rollout 2020 was nigh
'Force of Nature!' Jim called me
He kept my chin high**

**Then Dr. Chris died, dooming geology unexpected
It was Margo who stepped in to get Rick and me (and rocks) connected**

**The UUC 7th principle with nature made clear
By Johanna — recruiting 4 interns from there!**

**My incessant VMS inquiries kept Bob on his toes
He and Katie were crucial keeping me in the know**

**Terri spiffed the website, made it easy for others
Added files for me ad hoc, posted schedules ... no druthers**

**It were Susie and Drea who rushed to my aid
Needing speakers post haste for class, saved the day**

**Lynn, Jerry, and Mark sealed my love for the prairie
And for restoring my own pocket, crowned me 'Fellow Fairy!'**

**There are others not mentioned, always having my back
Some of you even reluctantly learned how to Slack (that's you, Mac!)**

**But to you—Bert and Jean—my assigned mentors by plan
It was YOU who helped me be the absolute BEST that I can**

**So, my wish for the New Year is for it to arrive with more glee
And with my CPC family, that's most certain to be!**

Bayou City Birding (From Eric Wolf's Facebook Share)

Would you like to learn about the birds who live along Houston's bayous and in the nearby parks and neighborhoods? And are you a kid or a young-at-heart adult? If yes, the Bayou City Birding Zines (short for mini-magazines), Posters, Flashcards and Cheat Sheets are here for you. And all are free!

Zines and Posters: *Zines and Posters: Each of these miniature field guides features a small group of birds who share something in common. You can use an origami trick to fold the zines into little magazines that you can read at home and take with you when you go outside. (And don't worry – the upside down photos in the zines turn right side up with folding – see the link to directions below). You can also print the zines as mini-posters, with all of the photos right side up. The zines and posters feature birds found within Houston's 610 Loop, with many of the photos taken on the Bayou Greenway trail that borders the White Oak Bayou. Two more zines will be added later this year, with the full set covering 100+ of Houston's most common birds.*

Warbler Flashcards and Cheat Sheets: *Up for a challenge? After learning your basic birds, move on to the warblers, the little jeweled wonders of the bird world. Each set of Warbler Flashcards introduces a different group of warblers found in Houston at one or more points in the year. Cut out the Warbler Flashcards for practice and then use the Warbler Cheat Sheet for quick reminders. In time, you can up your game with the Warbler Song Cheat Sheet, using it with a bird song app and/or CDs to learn to ID warblers "by ear."*

Sparrow Flashcards and Cheat Sheet: *Ready for the next big challenge? Then try your hand at sparrow identification. Although they are often grouped together only as nameless LBJs (Little Brown Jobs), you too can learn to identify many of the sparrows who spend the winter with us. Start with Sparrow Flashcards #2 if you need help with the bird jargon.*

What some more help? Then use one or all three of the free bird apps we recommend. An intro to these apps can be [downloaded here](#).

Sharing? Note that individuals and organizations can download, print and distribute the Bayou City Birding Zines, Posters, Flashcards and Cheat Sheets without restriction, as long as no fee is charged for them. We'd love to hear how you have put the Bayou City Birding resources to use and invite you to join with us in efforts to project and nurture the birds and other wild creatures who live among us. Please look at the other pages of this website to learn more about our work.

Click on the first link to find directions for printing and folding the zines. Click on the next set of links to download the zines and/or posters for printing.

HOW TO PRINT AND FOLD A ZINE

- #1 HERONS & EGRETS [ZINE #1](#) [POSTER #1](#)
- #2 HAWKS & OSPREYS (PERCHING) [ZINE #2](#) [POSTER #2](#)
- #3 HAWKS & OSPREYS (FLIGHT) [ZINE #3](#) [POSTER #3](#)
- #4 NEIGHBORHOOD BIRDS [ZINE #4](#) [POSTER #4](#)
- #5 PIGEONS & DOVES [ZINE #5](#) [POSTER #5](#)

Bayou City Birding (Continued)

- #6 DIVING BIRDS [ZINE #6 POSTER #6](#)
- #7 THE AERIALISTS [ZINE #7 POSTER #7](#)
- #8 WOODPECKERS [ZINE #8 POSTER #8](#)
- #9 FLYCATCHERS & SHRIKES [ZINE #9 POSTER #9](#)
- #10 BLACKBIRDS [ZINE #10 POSTER #10](#)
- #11 WILD DUCKS & COOTS [ZINE #11 POSTER #11](#)
- #12 DOMESTIC GEESE & DUCKS [ZINE #12 POSTER #12](#)
- #13 WINTER WARBLERS & FRIENDS [ZINE #13 POSTER #13](#)
- #14 MIGRATORY WARBLER SAMPLER [ZINE #14 POSTER #14](#)
- #15 SPARROW SAMPLER [ZINE #15 POSTER #15](#)
- #16 A FEW MORE WATERBIRDS [ZINE #16 POSTER #16](#)

INTRODUCTION TO THE WARBLER FLASHCARDS

WARBLER SONG CHEAT SHEET

TWO-SIDED WARBLER CHEAT SHEET

- WARBLER FLASHCARDS #1 [Yellow below with a light tail](#)
- WARBLER FLASHCARDS #2 [Yellow below with a dark tail](#)
- WARBLER FLASHCARDS #3 [Masked marvel warblers](#)
- WARBLER FLASHCARDS #4 [Black-throated warblers](#)
- WARBLER FLASHCARDS #5 [64 box crayon warblers](#)
- WARBLER FLASHCARDS #6 [Undercover warblers](#)
- WARBLER FLASHCARDS #7 [Rare in Houston warblers](#)

TWO-SIDED SPARROW CHEAT SHEET

- SPARROW FLASHCARDS #1 [12 cards](#)
- SPARROW FLASHCARDS #2 [8 cards and info about bird jargon](#)

Note that individuals and organizations can download, print and distribute the Bayou City Birding Zines, Posters, Warbler Cheat Sheet and Warbler Flashcards without restriction, as long as no fee is charged for them. We'd love to hear how you have put the Bayou City Birding resources to use!

The following link was sent to us from the children members of The Bird Watching Club of Arizona. [Making Bird Houses With Unused Material At Home](#).

Maybe this is something you can do with the Junior Bayou City Birders of your household or children's volunteer group.

Looking for the prime birding "Hotspots" in Harris County - [Click Here](#)

[Resources and Zines - White Oak Bayou Association](#)



Seabourne Sightings and Projects

RDC Approves SCNP Grant for 2021! Bert Stipelcovich, TMNCPC President-from Slack

RDC Approves 2021 SCNP Grant! I listened in to the January 13, 2021 Rosenberg Economic Development Corporation (RDC) meeting. They just approved our annual \$50,000 grant for Seabourne Creek Nature Park at 6:07 p.m. Herb Phelan, Vice President of the RDC Board of Directors, made the motion to approve. It sounded like there was only one vote against. Herb is a great friend of our chapter and is very excited about getting our 8-passenger golf cart operational for outreach in the future. RDC Director, Jeremy Heath, is also a great supporter of our work. Chapter leadership will attend next month's meeting to answer questions about our work at SCNP and our role in the proposed Nature Center. Expect more information as things develop. Stay tuned!

Gardening Group Monthly Meeting Thursday, February 11, 1:00pm

Lynn Trenta, Courier Editor and SCNP Prairie and Habitat Garden Coordinator

Come find out what we are doing in the gardens at Seabourne Creek Nature Park and help us plan for the future via Zoom at our monthly Seabourne Garden Group Meeting on February 11, Thursday at 1:00pm! Contact [Lynn](#), [Katie](#) or [Pam](#) to get the link to the meeting.

This is the beginning of a fun and exciting time of year when the gardens begin sprouting new plants and we can see how things are going to shape up. Any help in the gardens is greatly appreciated!

Both the Butterfly Garden and the Prairie and Habitat Garden will have more things to do starting in February. The grasses in the demo garden need to be given a "hair cut" and we can begin to trim back the stems. New plants can be planted if necessary and we can assess what we can do for the spring and summer seasons.

Any ideas or suggestions are welcome! We will talk about gardening, education, signage, and outreach. These are all great ways to get VSP hours and help the chapter.

Come talk with your fellow naturalists and help support our beautiful gardens!

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..



In Our Own Backyards and Other Places

A Rare Avian Visitor Photos and Text by Diane Eismont

Just in case you see this bird visiting your feeders for its favorite black oil sunflowers, it is a female/immature black-headed grosbeak. It is rare here any time of the year. It winters in central Mexico and is occasionally seen along the Rio Grande River and the Coastal Plain. It is a common summer resident in the mountains of the Trans-Pecos.

The black-headed grosbeak closely resembles the rose-breasted grosbeak in structure, form and habits. In fact, it is believed the two species were once one. It was through this resemblance that I was able to turn to the right page in my bird book to identify it - even though I had never seen this species before! I have had rose-breasted grosbeaks visit my feeders in some prior years.

The black-headed grosbeak is important to western orchards and fruit tree gardeners as a quarter of its food is estimated to consist of scale insects, cankerworms, codding moths and flower beetles.



In Our Own Backyards and Other Places (Continued)

Hooded Merganser Spotted at Seabourne in 2011

Carol Schwartz researched the query as to whether the hooded merganser was a new species for Seabourne by looking at the SCNP Bird Checklist, given to her and her husband, Bob Schwartz and Wayne and Vicki Poorman. She found that this bird was spotted at Seabourne Creek Nature Park in 2011.

Certainly, this is a rare sighting for Seabourne and we are glad that Garrett Engelhardt got these wonderful photos of him in our park.



Photo by Garrett Engelhardt

Recent Member Bird Photos

Photos by Eric Wolf

- Vermillion Flycatcher
- Savannah Sparrow



*Photos of Rare Birds
by Robbin Mallett*

- Pin-tailed Whydah
- Painted Redstart
- Male Bullock's Oriole



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

Here is a photo from a bird hike many years ago, in November 2011! Bill Godley was leading it then. You can see Jimmie Brannon, Ted Donaho, Pat Mollere, Diane Russell, Jim Butcher, Robert Whitaker, Bill Godley and Karl Baumgarter there.



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

Here is a photo from spring 2019 taken at Karl Baumgartner's Lavaca County Property. Recognize anyone? I see Garrett, Pradeep, Karl, Kevin, Jim, Bert, Joe, Paula, Ella, Carol, David, Shanyn, Tracey, Debby, Jean, and Lois.



The Book Corner Book Report By Paula Dittrick, TMNCPC Blogmaster



Jennifer Ackerman

Science writer Jennifer Ackerman entertains and educates in her latest two books, both about birds. *The Bird Way* was published last year. Her previous book, *The Genius of Birds*, was a New York Times bestseller.

Both books discuss research advances being made about bird intelligence. *The Bird Way* explores five areas of daily activity for birds: talk, work, play, love, and parenting.

Ackerman talked with researchers who told her that studying bird behavior teaches them to think about birds in new ways. For instance, unusual bird behavior can indicate “ingenious adaptation” to difficult problems or dire environmental conditions.

“The bird way is much more than a unique pattern of brain wiring,” she writes. “It’s flight and egg and feathers and song. It’s the demure plumage of a mountain thornbill and the extravagant tail feathers of an Indian paradise flycatcher, the solo song of a superb lyrebird and the perfectly timed duets of canebrake wrens.”

In *The Genius of Birds*, Ackerman reports her personal observations and emerging scientific findings that she encountered in bird-related travels worldwide, including tropical rainforests of eastern Australia to remote woodlands of northern Japan to the rolling hills of lower Austria.

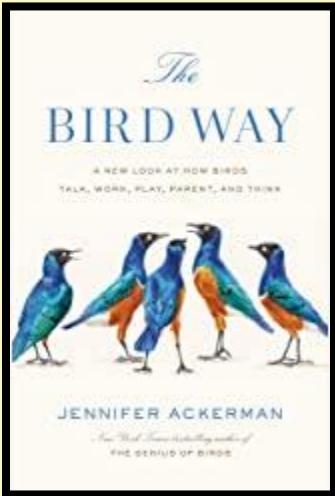
Ackerman describes how a bird biologist attempted to measure intelligence in ravens by trying to disguise himself by using a kimono or a wig and sunglasses or by walking with a limp. “The birds weren’t fooled,” Ackerman notes.

Some magpies recognize their own image in a mirror, demonstrating a self-awareness that humans once believed was a characteristic restricted to humans and a few other sophisticated, social mammals. Experimenters put a red dot on the throats of six magpies. Two magpies tried to scratch the dot off their bodies.

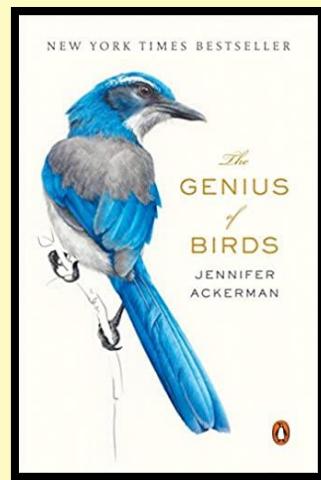
Ackerman also discusses how mockingbirds learn a full repertoire of songs, possibly about 200 in adulthood. “The sheer profusion and precision of a mockingbird’s imitated songs is a marvel,” she said.

She uses the example of a young mockingbird who was observed during 16 minutes of lively singing. A researcher monitoring the bird said the mocker imitated songs of at least 24 other species at an average of 9 per minute.

Ackerman notes that many aspects of bird biology and behavior remain layered with mystery. That mystery along with bird diversity fascinates biologists and birdwatchers alike, she writes.



NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER



The Lighter Side



MY DENTIST SAID
I NEED A CROWN
I WAS LIKE
I KNOW, RIGHT?

JDonaho-Facebook

Possibly the most frightening talent of the brown bear is an uncanny ability to blend seamlessly into the environment in an almost chameleon-like manner, allowing them to easily surprise their unsuspecting prey.



Cinthia Drake (Facebook)

Pinups for Vets -Facebook



TMNCPC 2021 Board Members

2020 Officers

President	Bert Stipelcovich
Vice President	Shannon Westveer
Secretary	Susan Walther
Treasurer	Katie Sallean

2020 Committee Directors

Past-President	Jerry Trenta
Membership	Jan and Kevin Kolk
Programs	Gary Moore
Communication	Paula Kolmar
Volunteer Service Projects	Johanna DeYoung
Advanced Training	Ramona Ridge
New Class	Shannon Westveer
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.orgCOASTAL PRAIRIE CHAPTER OF THE
TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS

1402 Band Rd
Extension Office
Rosenberg, TX 77471—8678
Phone: 281-633-7033

Help Mentor The New Class

By Shannon Westveer, TMNCPC Vice-President
and New Class Director

Come help the incoming class by becoming a mentor and receive training! See class times below

Mentoring 101 - Zoom 2/3 @ 6:00p until 7:00p

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZltcuGupj0qGddYSmZvGizsLObpRSS6lQN3>

Mentoring 101 - Zoom 2/13 @ 1:00p until 2:00p

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0kde6vqzgsHNOK5cM1BgwALSb7ShM8vwkS>

Jan and I will be hosting each; there are two sessions to (hopefully) accommodate everyone's busy schedules. If neither meeting works for someone, they can always contact us directly.

Let me know as soon as possible if there are questions or concerns.
Thanks!

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



Check out our Chapter Instagram

[https://www.instagram.com/tmncpc/](#)

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