

Coastal Prairie Chapter Courier

September 1, 2021 Volume 9, Issue 9



Inside This Issue

New Class is Welcomed

Seabourne Tasks Teams on the Go

Chapter Member Brings Monarchs to Seabourne



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

Table of Contents:

President's Message...	2
Membership Minute....	3
Sept Program.....	4
Pandemic Training.....	4
Volunteer Opps.....	6
Website Updates.....	8
Seed and Growth.....	9
Plastic-free July.....	10
Chapter Outreach.....	12
Arboretum Team.....	14
TX Cons. Alliance.....	15
Summer Gardens.....	16
SCNP Task Teams.....	17
Plant of the Month.....	18
Monarchs at SCNP...19	
Our Own Backyard ..21	
Book Corner.....	22
Lighter Side.....	23
Pollinator BioBlitz....	24

Monarch on milkweed
Photo Susan Walther
TMNCPC Secretary

Please send chapter events and nature-related articles, photos, and items of interest to the chapter to [Lynn Trenta](#) by the 29th of the month. Suggestions for the newsletter are also welcome. Thanks.
Lynn Trenta,
Courier Editor

Fellow Chapter Members:

Cooler weather on the way?

September promises to rescue us from the Texas heat. Promises, promises.

"Go to Heaven for the climate, Hell for the company." – Mark Twain

COVID-19 Status

Since my last message, Fort Bend County's [COVID-19 community risk level](#) increased from yellow (low/moderate) to orange (moderate/significant) on August 3. And it increased again on August 9 from orange to red (high), where we find ourselves today. More detailed information can be found at the [county's pandemic website](#). The high-risk level impacts the allowable activities for our chapter. More information is contained later in this publication.

On August 19, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)) slightly updated its [recommendations for fully vaccinated people](#). The following recommendation remains unchanged:

- "To maximize protection from the Delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area of substantial or high transmission."

According to the [CDC COVID Data Tracker site](#), Fort Bend, Waller, and Wharton counties are listed as areas of high transmission.

The TMN state program's [COVID Safety and Response Guidelines](#) remain unchanged. We will send out updated information as it becomes available.

Chapter Presidents & Advisors meeting update

At the meeting on Monday, August 9. Major items discussed included:

- [Return to service guidelines](#)
 - No changes
 - Continue to follow all federal, state, county and local COVID guidelines/restrictions before conducting TMN Activities.
- [Annual Meeting](#)
 - Moving forward with plan for a hybrid event (in-person and virtual)
 - The state team is struggling to answer individual questions about the event.
 - Direct any questions about the event to me at [713-540-2378](tel:713-540-2378), via email at bert@coastalprairie.org, or in the [#annual-meeting-2021](#) Slack channel.
- [Virtual Volunteer Fair](#)
 - Sessions held on August 31 and September 1
 - Can be viewed later for credit

[Seabourne Nature Fest \(SNF\)](#)

At the board meeting on Wednesday, August 18, we discussed the results of a chapter membership survey about SNF. Based on the results, the board voted unanimously to cancel SNF this year and to begin planning in January for a 2022 event. Other factors included the status of the pandemic, projections, and safety considerations. While disappointing, this was the right thing to do. Continued on the next page-----

President's Message (Continued)

Moving forward

The 2021 Fall Class completed session three on August 31 and is well underway. According to our VP and New Class Director, Shannon Westveer, the new class is very involved in the training and will be great additions to our chapter.

Our partnership with the Houston Museum of Natural Science (HMNS) is currently on hold due to the current COVID risk level.

We are also talking with the Fort Bend County Parks and Recreation about partnering in the development of Daily Park in Simonton.

We continue to grow, adapt, and most importantly — have fun!

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



Membership Minute By Jan and Kevin Kolk, Membership Directors

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

Initial Certification

- Mary Warwick (2020 Fall)
- Kathy Biddle (2021 Spring)
- Linda Mueller (2020 Fall)

2021 Recertification (52 members recertified so far)

- Katie Sallean
- C.J. McDaniel
- Rick Adams
- Kathy Moore
- Noel Zinn



250 Hour Milestone

- Tracey Kolb

Certification/Recertification/Milestone pins will continue to be mailed as they are earned until we are able to resume in-person meetings.

Coastal Prairie Chapter by the numbers:

- 176 - number of active and in-training members (125 last year)
- 9,426 - number of volunteer hours documented this year (12,534 hours in 2020)
- 1,738 - number of advanced training hours earned this year (2,761 hours in 2020)
- 52 - number of members recertified this year (72 last year)

Guess the number!

Rearrange the following numbers to guess the total number of volunteer hours, to date, generated by our chapter members: 0 1 1 5 5 7 **Answer on page 12**

September 2 Chapter Program: "How Fungi Matter"

By Teri MacArthur, The Woodlands Volunteer Coordinator/Water Conservation Specialist



How do fungi and soils interact to create healthy ecosystems? Join Teri MacArthur as she discusses the complex functions that tie all the soil elements of natural systems together. Interactions between organisms can be fascinating when you look closely. You may be surprised to learn about predatory fungi, carbon-storing microscopic mycelium, and poisonous but critical species!

This will be a Zoom presentation. Advance registration is required. Check back here two days before the meeting for the registration link. After registering, you will receive an email with further details.

Chapter Programs can be found on Website-- If you miss a chapter program or would like to watch it again, go to the [website](#) under the Member's Only tab.

Pandemic Training – Paying it Forward to the New Classes

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



Building training classes for TMN's plays an important role in growing a chapter. It requires partnerships, mentoring, teamwork and, with a pandemic, a spirit of adaptability. Like those of 2020 who paved the way with mostly- or all-remote training, the Spring and Fall 2021 Classes are already showing promise. Fall 2021 is now our fourth pandemic training class.

Due to COVID-19, Spring and Fall 2020 graduates joined the New Class (Spring 2021) by volunteering, hosting Zoom classes remotely or working to orchestrate field trips in person. It takes a village, you could say! Ron Masters, Garrett Drage, Linda Mueller, Mary Saville, Aida Pita-Baston, Sherri Lewis, Joanie Havlick, Charris Powers and Janis Hodgson all rose to service, most fulfilling their own initial certification requirement in the process. John Rouane and Katherine Grazer used their past field expertise to both lead and train them; they are our chapter heroes.

Mentoring is an important task required of us by the State Program, usually reserved for chapter veterans already certified. Who better knows how freshly and exactly the feeling of sipping from a firehose with face-to-face restrictions in place? The freshest Spring 2021 graduates, Joyce Tipton and Lucy Moyer, answered the call to service, as did Lucy Randel who stepped up her volunteer hours just so she could initially certify in time to make the list—newbies helping newbies. They all deserve a box of Jim Butcher's famous blue donuts!

Some endured additional training classes required in order to host remote training sessions via Zoom. Debbie Ellis, Naomi Brown, and Nathan Cross are also making their chapter stronger by learning new computer skills in the age of COVID-19, which might be here to stay awhile.

Continued on the next page--

John Rouane (2nd from right) as station leader with Fall Class of 2020-Photo by Hoiman Low



Pandemic Training – Paying it Forward to the New Classes *(Continued)*

As Fort Bend went back to threat level RED, canceling Fall Class in-person field trips outright before classes began, our team already knew what to do. With the help from partners TPWD and Sea Center Texas, along with willing and flexible class hosts, Hoiman Low and Ute Welk (Spring 2021 Class), a fun and engaging remote classroom and virtual field trip came together for Session 2 at a moment's notice.

During a pandemic, many duties have been fulfilled by the previous class, passionate individuals each doing their part in empowering the future corps of State volunteers to be the best they can be under these unique circumstances. That's paying it forward.

Please welcome our Fall Class of 2021!



- Linda Bair
- Barry & Julie Barentine
- Peyton Belunek
- Charles Borsos
- Renee Brown
- Judi Ann Carlsson
- Megan Cromeens
- Trey & Kristi Fleming
- Michelle Flores
- Neil Lisco
- Anita Maddox
- Don & Mary Parkhouse
- Randall Schmidt
- Simon Tice
- Scott Tufts
- Caleb Vargas
- Phil Ward & Elaine Whiteley
- Liz Watkins
- Keith and Robin Winfree



Aida Pita with Spring Class of 2021 member, Jim Jurdi
Photo by Shannon Westveer



Jim Butcher, the Grand Poohbah and Charris Power,
Class of 2020 Photo by Shannon Westveer



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

In August 2021, with the COVID-19 Delta variant continuing to be on the rampage, Fort Bend County moved from a Yellow Status to an Orange Status, and lastly to the current Red COVID-19 Status. In addition to prolonging the pandemic, there are also implications for the TMNCPC and VSP opportunities.

Our guidance in Fort Bend County is to:

“Minimize contact with others whenever possible and avoid leaving home except for essential needs. Avoid all gatherings of any size.” As a chapter within the State TMN Program, the TMNCPC assumes and applies the highest risk level within our jurisdiction (Fort Bend, Waller, and Wharton Counties), as well as, within other neighboring counties we serve.

Reminder: No more than 20 hours of VSP service outside of Fort Bend, Waller, and Wharton Counties may be counted toward certification or recertification.

CURRENT STATUS

New 8/11/2021: 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”. “Minimize contact with others, whenever possible, and avoid leaving home, except for essential needs.”, and “Avoid all gatherings of any size.”

5/21/2021: Texas A & M AgriLife Extension issued the following update:

“The following considerations should direct how the Texas Master Naturalist Program will operate for the foreseeable future.

Considerations for all TMN Activities:

It is very important to know and follow all federal, state, county and local COVID guidelines/restrictions before conducting TMN Activities. Beyond these, please consider the following in planning gatherings:

- 1. Virtual meeting platform tools are useful and should remain an important consideration for planning meetings and events.*
- 2. For any indoor or outdoor activities that do occur in-person, masks and social distancing considerations are encouraged.*

Please note regarding vaccines: Our program and agencies currently have no legal authority to develop policy based on private health information (HIPAA laws) at this time and we don’t anticipate the program drafting its own policy or allowances, etc. addressing whether individuals (members or the public) with vaccines can/cannot participate in any TMN activities and where, when and how.

Texas Master Naturalist members or members of the public should not be asked about their vaccination status.

Chapters may encourage persons in program settings to continue following CDC guidance.

There shall be NO EFFORT (including casual comments made publicly or privately) to DISCOURAGE the use of face coverings or any COVID related safety precaution. Those who wish to wear masks and practice COVID protocols should be respected and their wishes supported.”

3/2/2021: Texas Governor Greg Abbott issued Executive Order No. GA-34 noting changes in COVID-19 restrictions. These changes, which included lifting the mask mandate and opening businesses to 100%, took effect on 3/10/2021. Governor Abbott encouraged the continuation of wearing masks when maintaining a physical distance cannot be maintained.

Continued on the next page---

Volunteer Service Projects Highlights *(Continued)*

VSP OPPORTUNITIES

Seabourne Volunteer Days

Being in the Fort Bend Code Red Status, Jerry Trenta has requested assigned tasks to be carried out individually or within the household group/bubble to progress Seabourne Creek Nature Park (SCNP) projects. **TMN COVID-19 Precautions: "For any indoor or outdoor activities that do occur in-person, masks and social distancing considerations are encouraged."** Fort Bend County COVID-19 Red Precautions: "Minimize contact with others, whenever possible, and avoid leaving home, except for essential needs.", and "Avoid all gatherings of any size." Also, J. Trenta requests all work/assignments be pre-arranged with the project coordinator prior to park arrival.

For bump ups, prairie planting, nursery maintenance, and/or trail maintenance, please contact Jerry Trenta, SCNP Director (713-898-4769/ jerrytrenta@txtrentas.com)•

For demo garden work, please contact Lynn Trenta, (832-646-4769/ ltrenta50@gmail.com)•

For bird sanctuary work, please contact Bill Johnson, (281-734-3349/ rxrelo@aol.com)•

For butterfly garden work, please contact Katie Sallean, (713-502-5701/ katie@coastalprairie.org)

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

Seabourn Garden Group

Zoom meetings and field trips include the education committee meetings (signage is under this), and program meetings that offer information for members. For those interested, please contact [Jan Kolk](#), [Lynn Trenta](#), or [Katie Sallean](#). [VSP hours to be recorded in VMS under the category "SCNP-7 Habitats Public Access: TMN Report Hours"]

Deer Park Prairie

2nd Wednesday and 4th Saturday Workdays: The Native Prairies Association of Texas (NPAT) and its Houston Chapter (HNPAT) welcome visitors to Deer Park Prairie! Visitation is by appointment only or during the scheduled tours or workdays. All visitors must have a printed and signed release waiver in hand: [field trip waiver](#) or [volunteer waiver](#). Please email HNPAT@TexasPrairie.org to schedule a visit. The service efforts will include removing invasives, planting prairie plants from 9:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, at its location: 1222 East Purdue Lane, Deer Park, TX 77536. Fort Bend County Covid precautions for red status are the same for this activity. [VSP hours to be recorded in VMS under the category "Community Nature/Public Access Deer Park Prairie: TMN Report Hours"]

Texas Master Naturalist Virtual Volunteer Fair - August 31, 2021 - September 1, 2021:

"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! Join us on August 31st & September 1st, 2021, from 9:00am – 10:45am each day with a series of 10-minute sessions highlighting projects by a variety of partner conservation agencies and organizations. August 31st will showcase projects from across the state, while September 1st will focus on projects that can be specifically undertaken by chapter members of the Gulf Coast area and/or the Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes Ecoregion. Download the full project catalog here: [Virtual Volunteer Fair – Fall 2021 Full Catalog](#).

Registration is now OPEN to attend our Virtual Volunteer Fair!

Register for either of the days or for both days but registration is day specific so make sure you sign up for the day you want to attend! You can attend any or all project proposal presentations on either of the days – come and go as you please! TMN volunteers will earn Volunteer Service hours for attending all project proposal sessions – please use the "TMN Virtual Volunteer Service air" Statewide Project Opportunity for logging service hours to the nearest ¼ hour of participation. [Register to receive a WebEx Link for each Day](#)

Continued on the next page---

Volunteer Service Projects Highlights *(Continued)*

If you've never used WebEx as a platform at all, the [WebEx 101 Guide](#) linked is a great place to start – plus there are live testing sites on the Cisco WebEx page for any users who want to test their equipment and set up.

Please let us know if you have any additional questions. For questions, you can email:

Judit Green – Texas Parks & Wildlife Department – Judit.Green@tpwd.texas.gov

Michelle Haggerty – Texas Parks & Wildlife Department – Michelle.Haggerty@tpwd.texas.gov

Mary Pearl Meuth – Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service – mpmeuth@tamu.edu/727-366-1144

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

Please continue to check the website calendar and Slack 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, Charris Powers, Lynn Trenta, and Johanna DeYoung, will review the proposal and determine if it qualifies as an VSP opportunity.



Website Updates *By Terri Hurley, TMNCPC Webmaster*

The Coastal Prairie Chapter's website team has been diligently working to make many improvements to the website. Currently we are enhancing the Seabourne Creek Nature Park pages. Each major section of the park will now have its own page, and the new design makes the pages easier to find and navigate.

New and improved photos have been taken of the flora, fauna and hardscaping of several areas of the park. These beautiful photos have been added to the pages in a new tiled arrangement that calls attention to the mission of each area. These photos have been taken by several of our members including Hoiman Low, Greg Hurley, and Robbin Mallet, among many others. Thank you to these great photographers who are still out and about the park taking more of the needed photos.

A new video of Katie Sallean giving a 20 minute tour of the Butterfly Garden has been created. John Vindekilde used all the video footage that we took for the virtual field trip at Seabourne for last year's annual meeting. For the field trip, we could use only about 5 minutes of Katie's complete tour, but now, John has combined all the footage into the full tour. John will be doing the same for all other areas of the park.

You can check out these new changes by clicking here:

<https://txmn.org/coastal/volunteer-projects/signature/seabourne-creek-park/>

(Which reminds me that another update is to streamline these urls!)

Keep an eye out for more changes to the website! If you have experience with WordPress and want to help on the website, contact Terri Hurley at <mailto:terri@coastalprairie.org>



Seeds and Growth *(Photos and text by Jean Stipelcovich)*

A personal essay from Weimar by Jean Stipelcovich, TMNCPC State Representative



Most days I go for a walk. I've been noting where the Antelope Horn milkweeds are growing, which ones have seed pods, and trying to revisit those to catch them opening before the seeds disperse. The collected seeds will be gifted to a friend who has a new pocket prairie in their yard. I am amazed and reassured by all the places I find milkweed growing in the wild. A lot of roadsides and pastures have several varieties of milkweed. I found and collected aquatic milkweed seeds recently. But right now, it's the Antelope Horn that is most abundant and easy to find.

Getting to know wild things is fun. It's not enough to be able to know its name. Just like people, it has a story, a history, and a relationship with its neighbors and environment. Asking the questions, seeking the answers through observation and by study is like making friends. I feel so much affection for the wild things around me and studying them will be an endless pleasure.

Undoubtedly, my dad was my first influencer. I was very young when I learned how to identify thistle. I was about six or seven years old and at that funny age when kids want to help with things like weeding a garden. I was with my dad pulling weeds away from sweet peas that were growing on the chain link fence. Dad stopped me from pulling a prickly little rosette of a weed. He said that's thistle and a tasty weed. We will let it grow and when it gets tall and ready, we will eat it.

Somehow, he knew a lot about edible plants. I don't know if he learned it as a kid or as an adult. I do know that the knowledge of edible plants helped keep him alive when he was a prisoner of war in World War II. Thistle grows abundantly in Europe. Did he learn to eat thistle before the war or did he learn from a fellow prisoner during the war? But I digress.

So back to the thistle growing next to the sweet peas on the fence. Weeks later, I walked into the kitchen and caught dad dressing some cut up stalks with oil, vinegar, salt, and pepper. I asked what he was doing. He said it was the thistle and he asked if I wanted to try it. I think back on that day, and I bet he intended to have it all for himself. It was not much. But there I was, and he shared. It was delicious.

Continued on the next page--

Seeds and Growth *(Continued)*

Sadly, I didn't see him harvest it. I never had a chance to learn how he harvested it or how he cleaned the stalks to make it so edible. I tried to learn from YouTube, and I tried eating various kinds of thistle through the years, but nothing tastes as good as that day eating thistle in the kitchen with my dad.

So, there it began—one of the many seeds about nature that he planted in my brain. The thistle seed he planted has grown through the years. I've learned that thistle is a lot more than just a prickly plant that can be eaten. It has a huge wildlife value as the flowers have copious resources for pollinators, like bees, butterflies, moths, flies, beetles, and ants. Hummingbirds are attracted to the nectar. The seeds are nourishing for birds like goldfinches and sparrows. The soft down of the seeds are used by birds to line nests. Even the prickly leaves are food for butterfly larvae such as the Painted Lady.

I love me some thistle. But I have quit trying to eat it. These days I let the birds and the bees have it, and I simply enjoy the warm and fuzzy childhood memories along with all the new things I learn about thistle well into my adulthood and old age. Thistle is one of my dear friends. We have a history and a relationship that just keeps growing. It will never stop teaching me, and showing me it's beauty, and gifting me with its ever-changing presence, and surprising me with its resilience.



Plastic Free July Results *By Judi Harrington, Class of Fall 2020*

In July of 2021, 14 members of the Texas Master Naturalist Coastal Prairie Chapter participated in the global event known as Plastic Free July. This event inspires individuals, business, and communities to take the challenge to reduce their single-use plastic waste throughout the month to combat the growing problem in our oceans and waterways.

Our chapter members were encouraged to find new ways to do this, from using reusable water bottles to finding new uses for plastic containers.

With the ongoing pandemic, in-person volunteer opportunities have been limited. However, our chapter members were able to contribute to the protection of our natural resources simply by tracking the number of plastics we reduced, reused, and recycled throughout the month. Participating in this challenge is also a great way for our chapter members to engage the public by telling their stories of success, inspiring the community to keep single-use plastics out of our creeks and bayous!

Coastal Prairie members also reported different ways that they met the challenge this month. Volunteers reported many reuse actions, such as saving plastic jars to refill at farmer's markets, reusing kitty litter buckets to pick up trash at SCNP, and even saving plastic packaging for future use! One volunteer even reported keeping butter in a dish as opposed to purchasing the plastic containers. Our CPC members found some creative ways to reduce, reuse, and recycle in July!

Continued on the next page--

Plastic Free July Results *(Continued)*

168 plastic straws were refused, helping to protect great egrets in our local parks



429 plastic bags were kept out of our waterways, keeping our alligators safe in their lakes and bayous

In all, our 14 volunteers had 48lbs of reduced, 20lbs of recycled, and 16lbs of reused plastics. This is the first year our chapter has participated in this event – we hope to see more volunteers participate next year and beat this year’s average! It’s never too later or too early to start, either. And, while the problem of single-use plastic pollution can seem daunting, it’s truly small actions that ripple out into big impacts!

594 single-use water bottles were kept out of the homes of animals like our toads



CPC volunteers kept **84lbs** of single-use plastic out of wildlife habitat in July!

CHAPTER OUTREACH



Southern Colony Park Opening Celebrates and Slithers!

By Margo Johnson, TMNCPC Class of 2015

SSSSNAKE!!! Not the usual last visitor at a Coastal Prairie Chapter outreach event, but the task was ably handled by the two lead volunteers, Jim Butcher and Shannon Westveer.

Southern Colony Community Park celebrated its grand opening on a hot, humid summer Saturday. The intrepid snake handlers were invited to the event by Leslie Smith-Boards, HOA and MUD #131 Board Member, whose organization was instrumental in writing several successful grant applications to fund the dream nature and multi-use park. The top funding (\$1 million+) was provided by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department fostering a natural partnership between the new development, suburban nature, and their local TMN Chapter. Southern Colony is just around the corner from Sienna Plantation off FM 521 on the north-eastern edge of Fort Bend County.

The snake stealthily entered a canvas bag underneath the table, a shady reprieve from the midday sun. Its presence did not escape one sharp-eyed youth gathered with his friends a few feet away. Jim did his best to keep their attention on the colorful flip slides, oblivious to the live "nature" happening right under his feet, but Bryce, the young resident, wasn't going to let that snake go unnoticed.

Audible commotion and finger-pointing alerted Shannon who quickly swooped in from the pollinator habitat across the walkway. She glimpsed the pattern of a broad-banded water snake, a gentle and harmless creature, she assured everyone. While still inside the bag, as convenient a carrier for wildlife as it was for the tent, Shannon marched off Pied Piper style, a curious gaggle of kids following her away from the table, through the other tent exhibits of oblivious adults, and down the detention grade to the wetlands. As the snake safely retreated from the bag to its more suitable habitat, all spectated from a comfortable distance while learning about the importance of sharing their outdoors spaces with wildlife.

The Park has carefully planted a variety of native plants, including Jim's favorite rattlesnake master and Shannon's firewheel. These attracted their share of bumblebees, plushback flies, and tiny furrow bees along with the big, beautiful butterflies they were hoping to attract. The grand opening and dedication welcomed County dignitaries and a steady stream of local homeowners, children, grandparents, to enjoy a summer day together ... outdoors.



Broad-banded water snake-iNaturalist



Jim Butcher, Margo Johnson and Shannon Westveer

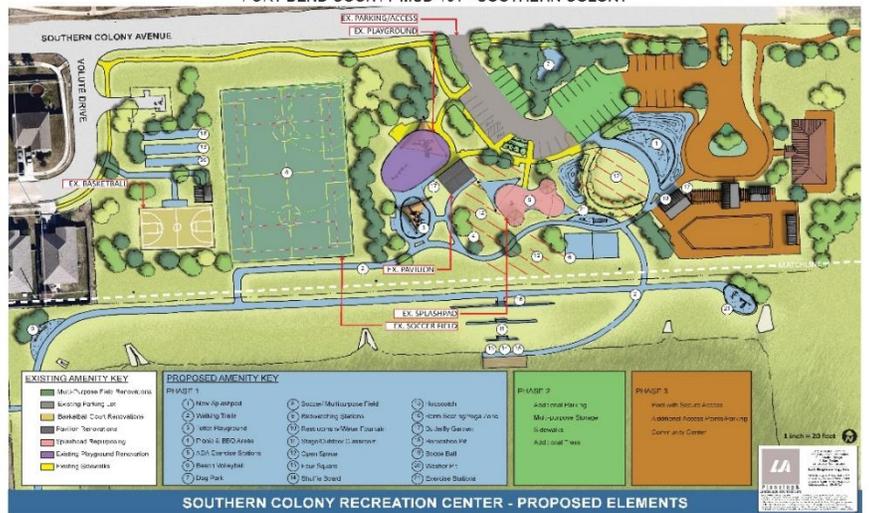
Southern Colony Park Opening Celebrates and Slithers! (Continued)

Our Chapter display table and new shade cover was the first stop for visitors just beyond the board's welcome area and elegant catered buffet luncheon. An orange pandemic threat level swapped the usual "Skins and Skulls Workshop on Wheels (WoW)," a fabulous kid-magnet, in favor of the less "hands-y" display on pollinators. Jim and Shannon rose to the occasion admirably, bringing suitable materials to share with all who visited. The bright flower and insect images on the computer monitor and flip notebook complemented well the live pollinator habitat right across the walkway. Meeting their various two-legged, six-legged—even NO-legged neighbors—could not have been made more enjoyable.

Just as presenter energy was flagging in the afternoon heat, a much-needed rainfall arrived. This didn't discourage the great reggae/jazz musicians in the main covered pavilion, but Shannon and Jim broke camp efficiently before things got too wet. A great time was had by all, and several new interested people were added to our Chapter mailing list and a group of kids got to see one very useful (and lucky) snake treated with care and respect by its neighbors, outreach at its teachable best.



TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE OUTDOOR RECREATION GRANT PROGRAM FORT BEND COUNTY MUD 131 - SOUTHERN COLONY





Seabourne News



Arboretum Team on the Move! *By Terri Hurley, TMNCPC Webmaster*

The old proverb states that the best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago....the second best time is now. Luckily our chapter has been ahead of the game by planting trees at Seabourne for over 13 years. These leaved beauties have greatly enhanced the conversion of Seabourne into a productive and verdant nature park. As part of this tree planting, we have created an Arboretum around Seabourne Lake.

Our goal with the Arboretum is to provide an area where native trees and shrubs are grown for study and display and where visitors can relax in the shade and enjoy the park's natural beauty. Currently we are making a concerted effort to grow and add even more improvements to the Arboretum.

First, we are creating 5-year plan for future growth. This will guide future tree planting and other aspects of the Arboretum. We're looking at upgrading the tags and signage for each tree. Visitors find it more enjoyable when they know what they're looking at. We can also add interpretive signage throughout the Arboretum that will inspire curiosity and build knowledge about plants and wooded landscapes. We are going to make new brochures about the trees (handouts and online) and the birds or insects that use these trees in their lifecycles.

We're also planning on improving the health of the newly planted trees and those already established. A watering team will keep the newly planted trees watered several times a week. As an added bonus, they get to drive the fun eight-person nature cart! We'll keep an eye on the trees' general health to make sure they are thriving in top notch condition. We'll also monitor the surrounding area for encroachment by invasives in the tree lines and forested area (Chinese tallow, Chinese privet, Japanese honeysuckle).

We're also gearing up for the annual Apache grant which provides us with 100 trees in the early spring. We need to decide which trees to order and where to plant them in keeping with the 5-year plan.

As you can see, we need all the help we can get. Current members and new trainees of any experience level are invited to join this committee! Training will be provided in all aspects of this project, so don't worry if you can't tell a native tree from an invasive! Just help us out! Contact Terri Hurley at terri@coastalprairie.org if you are interested in joining in on this great opportunity to be a part of the continued success of SCNP.



*Kristi Fleming, Jim Butcher, Lucy Moyers and Jim Stepp
Photo by Jan Hodgson*

*Cindy Scott and Jamie Fairchild
Photo by Lynn Trenta*

Seabourne News *(Continued)*



Texas Conservation Alliance Helps at Prairie Planting

By Lynn Trenta, Courier Editor

A large group of volunteers from the Texas Conservation Alliance came to Seabourne to help plant prairie plants in our prairie restoration project. They were all ages, shapes, and sizes and made a large dent in our nursery plant overload that we have at the Seabourne native plant nursery.

Several chapter members were on hand to help as well. Jerry Trenta headed up the planting and other chapter members who participated were Kevin and Kathy Biddle, Jim Butcher, Charris Powers, Pradeep Sethi, Lynn Trenta and Shannon Westveer.



Photos by Shannon Westveer



Photos by Lynn Trenta



Seabourne News *(continued)*

Summer Gardens Keep Pace *By Paula Dittrick, TMNCPC Blogmaster*



TMNCPC member Pam Jones created and is installing new plant signs in the demo garden. Photo by Paula Dittrick



The Indian Blanket in the SCNP demo garden has a brand new ID marker thanks to Pam Jones. Photo by Paula Dittrick

It's the peak of hot summer, yet Texas Master Naturalist Coastal Prairie Chapter members are staying busy in the gardens and prairie at Seabourne Creek Nature Park.

TMNCPC member Pam Jones created and is installing new plant markers for the demo garden to replace existing faded markers. The signs are about 2x3 inches. They feature a picture and name of the plant as well as symbols for wildlife that use that plant. Seabourne Director Jerry Trenta had the demo garden plant signs made at a printing shop where he also ordered some other, larger SCNP signs.

Volunteers are working in the Houston Wilderness pollinator area, getting rid of invasive plants and making a pathway into the area. The SCNP Houston Wilderness area was established in October 2019 with a grant from [Houston Wilderness](#), an organization which works with a broad-based alliance of business, environmental, and government interests to protect and promote 10 diverse ecoregions covering more than 13 counties in the vicinity of Houston, Galveston Bay, and the Gulf of Mexico. Ecoregions include coastal prairies, forests, wetlands, and waterways. SCNP's Houston Wilderness Area and prairie remained very wet as of early August after recent heavy rains.

Seabourne Spiders



Photo by Charris Powers



Photos by Lynn Trenta

Seabourne News *(continued)*



Seabourne Forms Task Teams *By Lynn Trenta, TMNCPC Courier Editor*

Although Seabourne volunteer days are now cancelled due to the red Covid status, people are able to work individually at the park. The Seabourne Creek Nature Park team recently formed three task teams that can work independently. The arboretum task team is off and running or maybe I should say driving, as our 8-seater touring cart is being used to water the trees planted in March 2021. See Terri Hurley's article on page 14 for more information on this task team

Paul Dittrick outlined the invasive plant task team on page 16.. A great group of chapter women have stepped up to undertake this challenging and important activity at our park. We will be working in both the Houston Wilderness pollinator area and the prairie restoration project area. Members of this team are Marilyn Culpepper, Paula Dittrick, Judi Harrington, Jan Kolk, Angela LeDoux, Lynn Trenta and Mary Warwick. Thank you ladies!

Another important task team is the nursery, bump-up and seed collecting task team. Jim Butcher, Linda Mueller, and Mary Saville have volunteered to be a part of this team. Mary and Linda weeded pots and organized the plants and now have embarked on collecting and cleaning seeds collected in the prairie demo garden. These seeds will be our future nursery plants. Hats off to you for volunteering to take over this valuable task!



Paula Dittrick, Jan Kolk and Judi Harrington in the Houston Wilderness pollinator area pulling sumpweed (Iva annua). Photo by Lynn Trenta



*Linda Mueller cleans seeds at the prairie demo garden pergola
Photo by Joyce Tipton*



*Mary Saville cleans seeds
Photo by Linda Mueller*

Seabourne News *(continued)*

Plant of the Month *By Jerry Trenta, Seabourne Director*



Yellow Indiangrass *Sorghastrum nutans* Indiangrass
 Family: **Poaceae (Grass)** Perennial Flowers: **Aug - Oct** Seed Collection: **Sep - Oct**



3 to 8 ft.



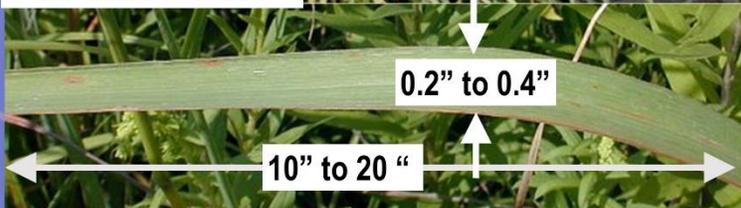
By Matt Lavin

"Rifle-sight" ligule at the base of a leaf



5 mm

By Steve Hurst



0.2" to 0.4"

10" to 20"

Seabourne Creek Park - 2015

Seabourne News *(Continued)*

Chapter Member helps Monarchs Thrive at Seabourne

By Paula Dittrick, TMNCPC Blogmaster



Nancy Jones

Volunteers report seeing more Monarch butterflies flying about Seabourne Creek Nature Park gardens this summer, and that could stem from the efforts of Texas Master Naturalist Coastal Prairie Chapter member Nancy Jones.

"I don't know if you are seeing the ones that I brought," Jones said modestly when asked about the seemingly higher numbers of Monarchs at Seabourne.

Lynn Trenta, Courier newsletter editor, said she is sure the caterpillars that Jones brought to Seabourne did result in many more Monarchs at the demo garden. "We have not had resident Monarchs before," Trenta said.

During 2020, Jones started raising butterflies in mesh habitat enclosures on a utility table set up in her living room. Earlier this year, she made four trips to Seabourne with at least 80 Monarch caterpillars, which she split between the SCNP butterfly garden and the demo garden.

While enjoying monarchs in her backyard last year, Jones realized that wasps were killing caterpillars on the milkweeds. Having heard of other people raising Monarchs, she researched the subject and bought two mesh habitat containers.

This spring, she collected more than 100 eggs on milkweed leaves, which she brought into her house to hatch. She put the leaves and eggs in plastic food containers and checked the eggs daily. As they hatched, she grouped the caterpillars by size as they grew, feeding them milkweed leaves. During the process, she quickly realized that she did not have enough milkweed after the February freeze if all the eggs hatched.

"Monarch caterpillars eat a lot," she noted, adding that she went out to a nursery and bought nine more tropical milkweed plants in pots plus she also had "many very small plants" already growing in her backyard.

Meanwhile, she covered her milkweed with netting she purchased from a fabric store in efforts to prevent monarchs from laying more eggs on her milkweed while she also ordered insect barrier online. She noticed monarchs laid eggs on top of the netting and that those eggs disappeared overnight" Any living being is welcome in my yard, but if it's a choice between a caterpillar and a wasp, the caterpillar is going to come out on top," Jones said of her own gardening practices.

Continued on the next page--



Monarch on swamp milkweed in the prairie demo garden

Photo by Joyce Tipton

Joyce A. Tipton

Seabourne News *(Continued)*

Chapter Member helps Monarchs Thrive at Seabourne *(Continued)*

She remembered Seabourne's butterfly garden hosts swamp milkweed and the demo garden had at least three milkweed plants. "So, I took many of the caterpillars to Seabourne in plastic containers to rehome them on the swamp milkweed," she said.

Jones rotates her milkweed plants between the house and the yard as needed. Caterpillars can eat all the leaves from a milkweed plant. The mesh habitats are big enough to hold a potted milkweed when needed. As caterpillars grow, she moves them from plastic containers in her home to her two mesh habitats. She watches as the Monarch caterpillars reach the chrysalis stage and eventually emerge as butterflies, which she releases into her backyard.

When interviewed on Aug. 25 for the Courier article, she had managed to reduce the number of Monarchs to a manageable number at her home with six being in chrysalis and one caterpillar.

In addition, Jones also had 34 Gulf Fritillaries inside her home with half being caterpillars and half being chrysalis. She has passionflower vines in her yard, which will provide plenty of food for the fritillaries until they complete their metamorphosis.

"The Monarchs are very calm compared with the fritillaries, which are nervous and fly to get away from me," she said. "I can put my finger up to the new Monarch butterfly, and it climbs on."

*Looking ahead, Jones said she is considering buying a microscope so that she can check the Monarchs for *Ophryocystis Elektroscirra* (OE), a parasite that infects Monarch, Queen, and Lesser Wanderer butterflies. OE is a single-celled organism known as a protozoan, a living thing that has many of the same characteristics as animals. OE must live within a host to grow and multiply.*

Jones recently went shopping for rue and some more parsley. She came home with a bonus of a Black Swallowtail on her new parsley plant. She already had seven Swallowtail caterpillars on her existing parsley.

Jones credits much of her success with plants and butterflies to being a Texas Master Naturalist.

"I have learned a lot since becoming a Master Naturalist and working in those two Seabourne gardens," she said. "I have 100 new favorite plants."



Monarch caterpillars and a chrysalis in the prairie demo garden

Photos by Joyce Tipton



A fritillary butterfly on lantana

Photo by Paula Dittrick

In Our Own Backyards and Other Places

Gambusia (Mosquito Fish) *Photos and Text by Diane Eismont*

If you have a pond or water feature as part of your property, you may want to consider adding Gambusia to the water to eat mosquito larvae - not only to prevent painful bites, but also for control of mosquito borne diseases.

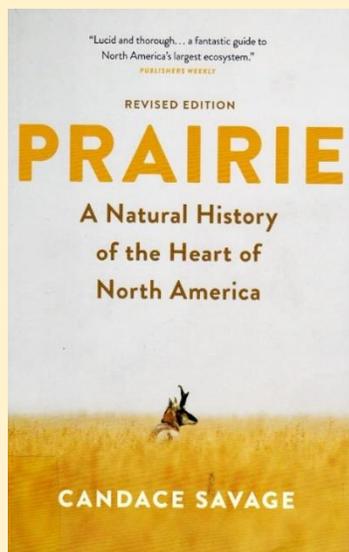
Gambusia are small (one quarter inch to two inches) but can eat several hundred mosquito larvae a day. They are said to have been the most effective non -chemical method of controlling mosquitos over the past 80 years.

Gambusia bear their young live and multiply rapidly - having perhaps 20 live babies at a time. Six to ten are recommended to start. Gambusia are related to guppies and also eat zoo plankton, beetles, May Flies, mites and other invertebrates. I feed some goldfish food. They are eaten by frogs and turtles.

Aquarium stores sell them. I got mine initially from the Brazos River when it flooded our cattle tanks!



The Book Corner *Two Book Reviews by Jim Butcher*



Prairie: A Natural History of the Heart of North America

By Candace Savage

Hello nature lovers, I am sure that when most think of me, bad jokes, bump ups and baked goods come to mind. Please add books to the list as I have just finished one I am sure you will enjoy.

The title is PRAIRIE: A Natural History of the Heart of North America. This is available at the George library and online as 577.44097 Sav 2020. The author is Candace Savage. True to the title, you will be exposed more to the region around Old Man on His Back conservation area in Saskatchewan than to the coastal prairie, but don't worry, as you know it is all connected.

This 266 page book covers all the information you might expect about prairies including flora, fauna, history, soil, multiple maps, and some amusing anecdotes. In covering the bison Savage writes "More recently, during the ferocious winter of 1876, several million bison starved to death along the Brazos River in southern Texas. So many that their humped carcasses reminded one visitor of a field of pumpkins"

She writes of the pronghorn. With its precontact population of 35 million, they evolved to outrun the American lions and dire wolves and as the fastest animal in North America can hit speeds of 60 miles an hour. This species has prairie in its blood.

For anyone that walks around with the word "Prairie" on their name tag I assure you that reading this book will expand your appreciation of the subject. Enjoy !

Jim added to his review "The following book is dedicated to my friend, fellow Master Naturalist and book worm, Pradeep Sethi.

This month I am also reviewing Cosmic Queries by Neil DeGrasse Tyson and James Trefil. 523.1 TYS 2021

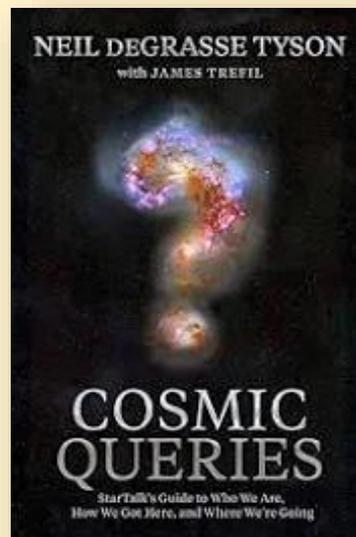
This 289 page book continues where the Carl Sagan series left off with this guide to "who we are," "how we got here," and "where we are going."

This is truly for all of the Space Cadets out there. When I say out there, the number of known galaxies and the distances are amazing.

Starting out, I thought this work may be too technical for me. After all, it was written by an astrophysicist, but this was not the case. Mr. Tyson cogently lays it all out in easy to understand layman terms. He covers neurons, quarks, dark matter, gravity, and tardigrades too.

I thought that someone like Aldo Leopold came up with the phrase "nature abhors a vacuum." It was Aristotle. It perfectly captures terrestrial life, but in space, nature loves a vacuum.

An added bonus are the lovely illustrations. I highly recommend this to all that are fascinated with the natural world and the universe in which we live.



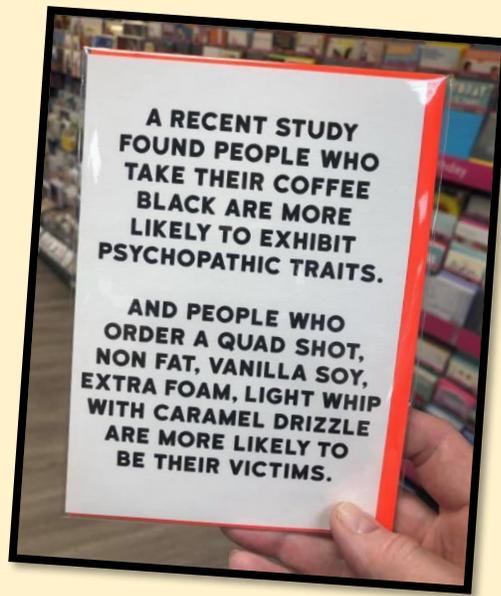
Cosmic Queries

By Neil DeGrasse Tyson and James Trefil

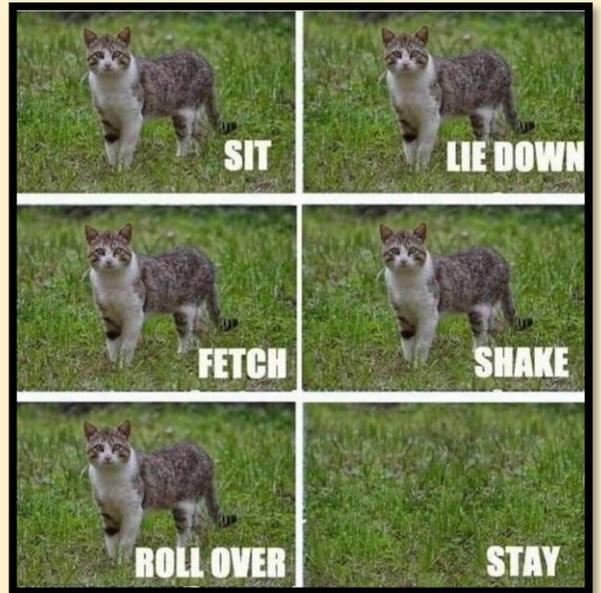
The Lighter Side



From Facebook- Here's Your Sign



Facebook--
Coffee Coffee
Coffee



Facebook—A well-trained Kitty



Sent in by Debbie Wendt



Facebook--The Far Side

Texas Pollinator BioBlitz *As noted in Slack By Lucy Randel*

TMNCPC 2021 Board Members

2021 Officers

President [Bert Stipelcovich](#)
 Vice President [Shannon Westveer](#)
 Secretary [Susan Walther](#)
 Treasurer [Katie Sallean](#)

2021 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

[TPWD](#) Jon McCleod 832-595-8999
 Fort Bend County AgriLife--TBA
[Candace Moeller](#) Waller County AgriLife
[Corrie Bowen](#) Wharton County AgriLife
[Margo "Mac" McDowell](#) (Chapter Coordinator)

We are on the Web!

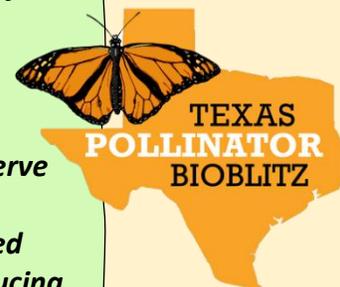
See us at:

www.coastalprairie.org

COASTAL PRAIRIE CHAPTER OF THE TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS

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

A good way to get VSP is to participate from October 1-17 this fall in the Texas Pollinator Blitz, put on by TPWD!



- *Pollinator BioBlitz participants observe and identify pollinators.*
- *All ages and abilities are encouraged to find pollinators and nectar-producing plants, take photos, and share with friends!*
- *Share observations by posting a photo or video to [Instagram](#), [iNaturalist](#), or the Facebook event pages.*
- *Pollinator observation challenges and informative links will be emailed to all [registered](#) participants regularly to add to the fun.*

For more information go to

<https://tpwd.texas.gov/education/bioblitz>

Our Chapter Facebook Page is at

[**TXMN Coastal Prairie Chapter Facebook**](#)

To post photos and information, email

[**Paula Kolmar**](#) or [**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](#)