

Coastal Prairie Chapter Courier

November 2023 — Volume 11 Issue 11



"Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts."

Rachel Carson

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Holy Bat Signals, Batman!

Monarch Steward Certification Program



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.

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ON THE COVER

TMNCPC members at the TMN Annual Meeting in McAllen, Texas

Photo credit: Terri Hurley (with shutter help from Chuck Snyder)

EDITOR TEAM

—**Raji Mahesh**, November Co-Editor,
Raji@coastalprairie.org

*Have a great story for next month's issue? Submit by **November 22nd**.*

—**Shannon Westveer**, December Co-Editor,
Shannon@CoastalPrairie.org

President's Message

by Terri Hurley, TMNCPC President



The 2023 annual meeting was a spectacular event, worthy of the Texas Master Naturalists' 25th anniversary. All attendees thoroughly enjoyed the diverse range of educational programs, field sessions, and social activities. The highlight for many was the eclipse field session held at El Sauz Ranch on Saturday, October 14. Against the backdrop of the ranch's serene landscape, we were treated to a once-in-a-lifetime experience as we witnessed the awe-inspiring annular solar eclipse. This extraordinary event left a lasting impression on all of us, symbolizing the perfect combination of education and natural wonder that made the meeting truly unforgettable.



If you didn't get to go to the 2023 annual meeting, you have to try to go in 2024! The 2024 meeting will be held October 24 – 27 in the inviting town of San Marcos. The new 2024 recertification pin is the Western Diamondback Rattlesnake. Start planning your 40 hours for next year so you too can be a part of the awesome family of certified Texas Master Naturalists.

Board and Committee Members needed for 2024.

Here's a cool opportunity to join in all the fun with our chapter. The end of the year is fast approaching and we're making plans for next year. Looks like we'll have some spots up for grabs on the 2024 Board of Directors. First of all, we are looking for a volunteer to serve as Treasurer. Rest assured that you don't need to be a CPA or have accounting experience to be our Treasurer (knowing how to use Quicken would be a plus though). Our current Treasurer Pam Jones will work closely with you to bring you up to speed. There are also a couple of openings in the non-elected Board of Directors. You can tackle these roles solo or team up with a couple of buddies. Plus, we've got plenty of tasks you can knock out from the comfort of your own home: all you need is a computer and your own schedule.



We'd love to have your skills and talents on the board. It's a great way to make a big contribution to the continued success of our chapter. If you are interested, and I hope you are, please contact anyone on the Executive Committee. If you have any questions, suggestions, or even gripes about anything related to our chapter, please feel free to contact me by email or phone or Slack or text or smoke signals!

November Chapter Program: Thursday, Nov 2, at 7 PM ‘Rewilding Mental Health: Connecting with Nature, Connecting with Ourselves’ featuring Tierra Ortiz-Rodriguez

By Jan Peterson, TMNCPC Programs Director



It goes by many names: ecotherapy, nature therapy, green therapy, forest bathing, shinrin yoku. The common denominator is saying “Yes” to nature for relaxation, restoration, and healing. Richard Louv, author of *The Nature Principle* and *The Last Child in the Woods*, coined the phrase “Nature Deficit Disorder.” Although not a real psychiatric diagnosis, it conveys the real costs of our disconnection from the natural world.



Tierra Ortiz-Rodriguez TMN Class of Fall 2022

Join us for a captivating presentation by **Tierra Ortiz-Rodriguez**, Texas Master Naturalist and Ecotherapist, to explore the many mental health benefits that come from spending time in nature and rewilding our mental health. Because we are nature, connecting with nature is connecting with ourselves, and caring for nature is caring for ourselves!

Tierra is a Texas Master Naturalist with the Coastal Prairie Chapter and a Licensed Professional Counselor in Sugar Land. Tierra was inspired to become a Texas Master Naturalist through her personal love of hiking and backpacking and her professional work as an Ecotherapist and Mindful Outdoor Guide. In her private practice, Tierra’s mission is to help people build a positive mind-body-soul connection for stress recovery and soaring above anxiety, trauma, and chronic pain. As a Texas Master Naturalist, Tierra is grateful to return the gifts of nature through education, outreach, and service. Tierra helps maintain the Bird Viewing Area at Cullinan Park and guides Nature Walks at Cullinan Park and Seabourne Creek Nature Park.

[November’s program](#) is free and open to the public.

It will be held at Bud O’Shieles Community Center, 1330 Band Road, Rosenberg, TX 77471. The **1-hour program begins at 7:00 PM.**

The [Texas Master Naturalist](#) program is sponsored by [Texas Parks and Wildlife Department](#) and [Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service](#).

[TMNCPC members in attendance should record their Advanced Training (AT) hours under “AT: Chapter Meeting-Coastal Prairie” and the VSP hours for the following business meeting under “Chapter Business: Chapter Meeting.”]



Participants at Tierra’s Meditation Walk
at Cullinan Park on October 20th. Photo Credit: Tierra Ortiz-Rodriguez

Membership Minute

By Jan and Kevin Kolk, TMNCPC Membership Co-Directors



Congratulations! to our numerous certification and milestone achievers. *Way to go!*



Initial Certification

Lisa Hendrix — 2023 Spring



2023 Recertification

(86 members recertified)

Gary Moore — 2010

Mark Morgenstern — 2011

Tom Zaal — 2018

James Yi — 2023 Spring

Jean Stipelcovich — 2018

Mary Warwick — 2020 Fall



250 Hour Milestone

John Greene — 2022 Spring

Mary Saville — 2020 Fall



500 Hour Milestone

Fran Wilcox — 2022 Fall



1000 Hour Milestone

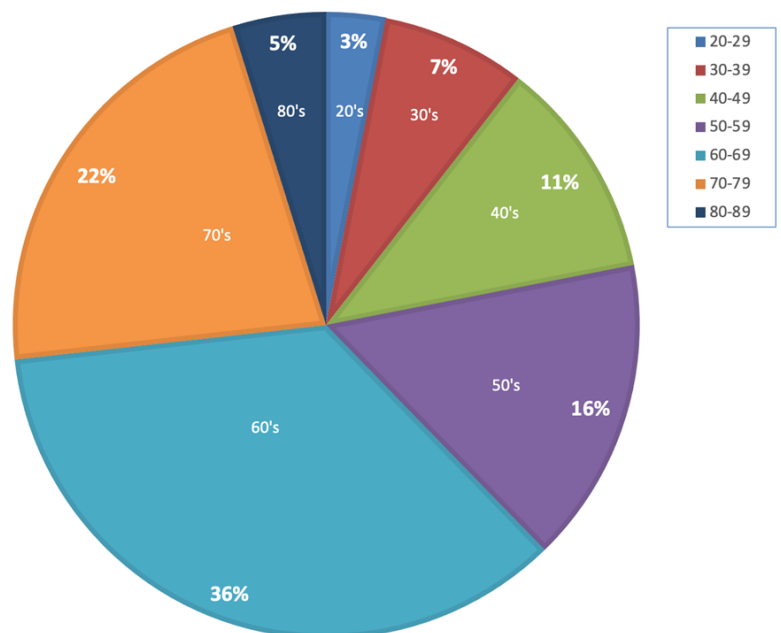
Joyce Tipton — 2021 Spring

Pauline Zinn — 2017

What age is the typical Coastal Prairie member?

The initial thoughts of many are that Texas Master Naturalist volunteers are mainly retired persons. At TMN Coastal Prairie, that is far from the truth. The youngest member is 20 years old while the oldest is 83. Our 228 members span these two age groups! One third of our members are younger than 60. Check out the graph below to see how our chapter breaks down.

2023 AGE RANGES OF TMN COASTAL PRAIRIE CHAPTER



Bird Walks With the Kolks

Mark your calendars for the November 1 bird walk at Seabourne Creek Nature Park.

Participation is open to the public all ages and levels of birders are *welcome!*

[Events for November 2023 \(txmn.org\)](https://txmn.org)



Volunteer Service — November Highlights

By Johanna DeYoung, TMNCPC Volunteer Director



Before arriving to serve, check our website calendar for last minute changes, cancelations, or other information before departing.

<https://txmn.org/coastal/events/month/2023-11/>

Signature Project Seabourne Creek Nature Park (SCNP), Rosenberg:

9:00 AM – 11:00 AM Wednesdays and 1st and 3rd Saturdays which fall on 11/1, 11/4, 11/8, 11/15, 11/18, 11/22, 11/29

Signature Project Monthly Bird Hike at SCNP, Rosenberg: 8:00 AM –

10:30 1st Wednesday of the month which falls on November 1

Public Outreach Houston Museum of Natural Science in Sugar Land:

10:30 AM — 3:00 PM 2nd and 4th Saturdays — 11/11, *not scheduled for 11/25*

November Bird Survey at James B. Harrison Burr Property,

Wharton: 6:45 AM– 11:00 AM Saturday, 11/11

Coastal Prairie Conservancy: “Putting Down Roots”, Katy:

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM, Saturday, 11/11

James B. Harrison Foundation: Birding 101 – Land, Water, &

Wildlife Expeditions: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM, Saturday, 11/11

Coastal Prairie Conservancy Indiangrass Preserve, Katy: 9:00 AM –

1:00 PM Tuesdays, Fridays, and 2nd Saturdays of each month which fall on 11/3, 11/7, 11/10, *not scheduled for 11/11*, 11/14, 11/17, 11/21, 11/24, 11/28

Harris County Precinct 4 Bird Survey at Archbishop Joseph A

Fiorenza Park, Houston: 7.30 AM – 12:00 PM 4th Monday which falls on 11/26

Lawther-Deer Park Prairie, Deer Park: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

4th Saturday of each month which falls on 11/25

JOIN US!

The public is always welcome to serve alongside us in our communities. Get out and meet TMNCPC members in the field!

DID YOU KNOW?

The seed packages have arrived! There is a box placed on the desk in our TMNCPC office with seed packs ready to be shared at TMNCPC outreach events. Please take seed packs with you to outreach events to hand out to the attendees. If/when < 50 packs remain, please contact me so I can replenish the supply.

REMINDER: Impact Data is Important

MEMBERS: There is an online process for completing impact data: outreach interactions with the public. The instructions for VMS (TPWD) and online Google Form (AgriLife Extension) can be found pinned to the **#forms** channel on Slack.

Coastal Prairie Chapter goes to McAllen

Follow Shannon's blog to read about the Annual Meeting at McAllen, Texas.

[Coastal Prairie Chapter Goes To McAllen \(txmn.org\)](https://txmn.org)

Seabourne Nature Day

By Jan Poscovsky, TMNCPC Nature Day Committee Lead



Nature came alive on September 23rd during the inaugural Seabourne Creek Nature Park Nature Day. Organized and run by the dedicated members of the Coastal Prairie Chapter, the event was a delightful blending of educational and engaging activities, captivating both the young and the young at heart.

Children rushed to the facepainting station where volunteers ably led by Lauren DeShazo — including Monica Taylor, Joy Cohen-Blake, and Stan Poscovsky — adorned faces and arms with a variety of stencil designs.



Monica Taylor

Another station buzzing with activity offered a choice between an enchanting scavenger

hunt and an engaging word search challenge. Those who participated and successfully completed the



Lauren DeShazo

tasks were rewarded with telescoping butterfly nets— perfect for use beyond the confines of the Butterfly Garden. Lisa Sanders and Jean Watson, who supervised the games, were pleasantly surprised by the enthusiastic response from the participants.

Chevy Tang and Lisa Hendrix made sure that the packets of native wildflower seeds that had been assembled by Drea Morgenstern were distributed. Lisa also packed basket flower seeds on site that were enthusiastically received by attendees.

The boxed “Butterfly Adventure” raffle, overseen by Kevin Kolk, Cindy Burns and Janis Hodgson, not only captured the attendees’ curiosity but also led to the distribution of 14 kits, clearing out the storage closet in a beneficial manner!



Dorothy Tran

The Chapter’s ever-popular Butterfly WOW was showcased and explained by Ute Welk and Dorothy Tran. They answered questions and watched over the intriguing Monarch egg display.

The picnic tables transformed into hubs of creativity with a flurry of artistic expressions. Under the guidance of Jan Kolk and her skilled team that included Joyce Tipton, Carrie Dolezal and Susan Walther, children and adults alike fashioned butterfly bracelets and



Jean and Bert Stipelcovich, Katie Sallean, Joyce Tipton, and Susan Walther.

Photo credits: Terri Hurley

made origami butterflies. Jean and Bert Stipelcovich instructed participants in the assembly of a butterfly feeder craft and appeared to be having as much fun as the participants.



Katie, Jan and Kayleigh

Katie Sallean, who was the mastermind behind the feeder craft, also led the garden tour team that included Queen Bee,

Continued [next page](#)

Seabourne Nature Day (Cont'd)

By Jan Poscovsky, TMNCPC Nature Day Committee Lead



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Jan Peterson, and Monarch-crowned Kayleigh Minin.

The speaker series, featuring presentations by chapter passionate amateurs Jamie Fairchild, Shannon Westveer, Barry



Barry Thompson



Shannon Westveer

Diane Russell — was a great success. Charris Powers served as the Master of Ceremonies and ensured that speakers had everything they needed.

The setup and tear-down operations were made possible by the diligent efforts of the team led by Bob Naeger and Don Parkhouse, who, along with the rest of the crew, including James Yi, Amado and Rebecca Aguilar, Marilyn Malone, Greg Hurley, Dawn Homan, and Barry Thompson, went above and beyond to ensure the smooth functioning of the event, demonstrating a remarkable spirit of camaraderie and dedication.

The refreshments team, managed by Hoiman Low and ably supported by Linda Bair and Don Parkhouse, ensured that the

volunteers remained well-hydrated and nourished throughout the event. Ute Welk's thoughtful inclusion of a recycle bin further highlighted the Chapter's commitment to environmental sustainability.

Terri and Greg Hurley, alongside Fran Wilcox, expertly manned the Coastal Prairie Chapter table which also served as a warm greeting station for the visitors.



Fran Wilcox and Greg Hurley

Assisted by Jo Cain operating the mule, the team efficiently managed the flow of visitors, diligently tracked the demographics, and ensured ample parking arrangements, contributing to the overall positive experience of the attendees.

While many other volunteers contributed their time and energy throughout the event, it is important to note that those who may not have utilized the Sign-Up Genius platform might not be acknowledged here. However, their contributions and presence were deeply valued and appreciated.



Jan Poscovsky and Diane Russell



Janis Hodgson

Looking ahead, the upcoming Nature Day, scheduled for Saturday, April 6, 2024, from 10 AM to 2 PM, promises to carry forward the essence of the inaugural event, this time with a special focus on the park's bird sanctuary. Jan Poscovsky, the team lead for the Nature Day events, is excited about a notable addition to the April agenda – an Eclipse activity station! Coinciding with the event timing, merely two days before the anticipated total solar eclipse, this educational offering will add another exciting dimension to the next Nature Day at Seabourne Creek Nature Park, "Where Nature Comes Alive."

<https://txmn.org/coastal/seabourne-nature-day-kicks-off/>

An Unfolding, Unbounded Frontier

By Cindy Burns, TMNCPC Class of Fall 2023



A naturalist takes in all that's available in the natural world, including both the experiential and the learned. In her book, *Inside Out: Practices for Going Deeper in Nature*, naturalist Beth Norcross states: "New research tells us what we already know intuitively, we are happier and healthier, more open, and more compassionate in nature. Nature heals, comforts, and teaches. Here we learn about wonder and beauty, sorrow and loss, unity, and wholeness. Our blood pressure goes down. We relax. We are kinder to others, human and non-human."

The naturalist's way of being, the way we walk around in the world, is within a welcoming, evolving relationship with the natural world. Every gentle footfall on the earth, every soft gaze, listening ear, and touch co-nourishes the other, human and non-human alike. My first in-person meet-up with my TMN mentor, Tierra Ortiz-Rodriguez, was at Cullinan Park.

Tierra suggested we hike a portion of the trail system so that we could get to know each other, and she could orient me to the park's layout. During our hike together, I met some interesting park regulars, learned about the relationships between apple snails, lotus plants, and limpkins, and that the park was home to a small grove of black walnut trees.

As always when I am outdoors, my senses became heightened, and I felt a peaceful resonance with my surroundings.

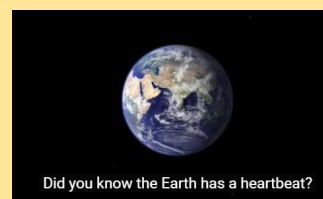
What gives us that certain feeling of "all-is-well" when we are outdoors? I have knowledge of all the usual suspects that contribute to our physical and mental health such as microbes and hormones, the properties and power of the soil, trees and other plant-life, sunshine, fresh air, and of course exercise. I wondered if there might be other research on this subject that may provide more scientific evidence to validate the feeling of ease that we often experience when we are outdoors.

My deep dive online brought up convincing evidence that the positive benefits from being in the great outdoors is via a phenomenon referred to as the Schumann Resonance, a.k.a. the earth's heartbeat. This naturally occurring phenomenon, which is caused by lightning striking the Earth, is captured between the Earth's surface and a boundary about 60 miles up. Each burst creates waves that circle the Earth, increasing in strength and creating a repeating atmospheric heartbeat.

This personal reflection is my way to say "thank-you" to all the good people that have befriended and guided me in my TMN training. It has been my experience that the people I have encountered in nature settings since my training began are either experienced naturalists or those of us who are emerging naturalists. I say this with a grin because of the number of times I have had extraordinary conversations with total strangers in nature settings at our public events. The level of energy and curiosity manifested by our park visitors remind me of the spiritual seekers I have assisted in the past. Our chapter group is like a big, energetic family of prairie builders leading pollinators to blooms. The knowledge that I have gained these past months has enriched my understanding of the natural world and given me a great appreciation for the amazing interdependent relationships between all living things who work together for the good of Mother Earth and all of her inhabitants.

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Check out this [informative video on Schumann Resonance](#)



Did you know the Earth has a heartbeat?

County Fair Bat Outreach, AgTivity Barn

By Debby Wendt, TMNCPC Class of 2014



Our Coastal Prairie Chapter shared the Bat WOW with over 400 4th grade students, teachers and parents from Lamar C.I.S.D. and Fort Bend I.S.D. during the week of October 2-6. We have been participating in this event, organized by the AgriLife Extension Service Fort Bend, for many years. Students are led by Master Gardeners through a series of activities such as cotton ginning, corn shucking, beef cattle, pecans, and many others.

The students arrive by school bus and exit at the Show Arena Pavilion. They make the circuit stopping at each activity for 10-13 minutes. They are good listeners and ask many questions. The Friday school groups cancelled but we shared the Skins and Skulls pelts with the special needs children for a Sensory Walk.

This group always has fun at their Exceptional Rodeo. Also our Skins and Skulls Wow was on exhibit for evenings and weekends from September 29-October 8. Many of our chapter members shared their knowledge with the public at the AgTivity Barn.



TMNCPC members Debby Wendt, Mary Saville, Jan Peterson, Jan and Stan Poscovsky.
Photo credits: Debby Wendt

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Research suggests that the Schumann Resonance positively affects our overall health, improves cognitive functioning, and reduces stress and anxiety. Research also suggests that this electromagnetic wave (frequency of 7.83Hz) can improve the immune system and aid sleep. Is there a more perfect motive to go outdoors?

All the science-behind-the-scenes sources that point toward the origin of my felt sense of calm and peace outdoors do not diminish the awe and wonder that I experience in nature. I propose that scientists are just scratching the surface of exploring this emerging field of study that honors the interdependency of the major four domains on earth: atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, and the biosphere. With the phenomenon of the

Schumann Resonance in mind, the next time you are outdoors, imagine that you are standing within the reverberations of the Earth's heartbeat.

I like to use this simple, grounding-resonance exercise to set the stage for experiencing gratitude and acceptance for all that nature has to share with me in the moment:

"Look up to the sky,
Feel the spaciousness above,
as well as the solid ground below.
Feel nurtured by these beautiful resources."

Credit: Author and Therapist, Bonnie Badenoch

Donuts and Discovery Day at Weston Lakes

By William Hannah, TMN Class of Spring 2023



On October 14 the Keep Weston Lakes Beautiful Committee held our annual Donuts and Discovery Day. This year's event was held in the newly constructed bird sanctuary inside Weston Lakes. The theme this year was Clean Water. We had several events to demonstrate the importance of clean water.

There was a rubber duck race for the children and a demonstration of the impact of trash and plastics in the ocean. Participants were given a rubber duck and encouraged to move it through an unobstructed water way using only a straw and their own breath.



Then they were challenged to move the same duck through a waterway that was obstructed with trash and plastics. Everyone who tried learned quickly that clean and unobstructed water was much preferred by the rubber ducks and those trying to navigate with them.

There was also a demonstration using the Coastal Prairie Chapter's Enviro-Scape to show the impact that common everyday substances have on our local water sheds. We hosted about 25 total folks that came by to see the



Photos credit: William Hannah

enviro-scape and to see firsthand the impact of ground water run-off pollution. Green sparkles were used to represent fertilizer and chocolate sprinkles were a good and more hygienic substitute for dog and cow poop. The kids that came by were encouraged to squirt the landscape with water to replicate rain and they were able to see the pollutants run off into the watershed. They all agreed that clean water is better for swimming and drinking than contaminated water .

To add to the fun there were also donuts. Fresh donuts that were available to all including yours truly. I was able to eat more than one till my wife showed up.

The weather could not have been better, and the bird sanctuary provided a beautiful and peaceful backdrop. Everyone who came by enjoyed themselves and learned something. This was a great event and a great way to show the importance of preserving our water and our environment. I can't wait until next year!



Texas State Parks received the 2023 National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management.

<https://tpwd.texas.gov/newsmedia/releases/?req=20231011a>

FACEBOOK—Like us!

Follow us for timely and seasonally relevant content. Learn about Coastal Prairie and engage with your volunteer organization.

<https://www.facebook.com/TXMNCoastal/>

MEMBERS ONLY To join the [private Facebook Group](#), send a request and wait for TMNCPC Admin to respond.

YouTube

Be sure to follow

[**YOUTUBE @TMNCoastalPrairie**](#)

Holy Bat Signals, Batman! Chapter Members Go “Batty for Cullinan”

By Terri Hurley, TMNCPC President



Our chapter's partner, the Cullinan Park Conservancy, held its annual Picnic for the Park bash on October 20 and five members of our chapter played an important educational role during the event. The theme for the event was “Batty for Cullinan”; not "batty" as in wacky, but "batty" as in the winged, echolocation-savvy creatures of the night - bats! The speaker was Dr. Cullen Gieselman, a conservationist and bat researcher, who talked about the benefits of parks and bats. Through our outreach at the event, we were able to emphasize the importance of preserving and appreciating the magnificent natural world of Texas.



Bat WOW

Our ever-popular Bat Workshop on Wheels (WOW) played an integral part of that theme. Presenters Terri Hurley and Susan Walther regaled their booth's visitors with stories and facts about local bats species. The Mexican free-tailed bat was the star of the display, due to its many superlatives. It's the fastest mammal moving under its own



Susan Walther and Terri Hurley

power at 99 mph. It's also found in the highest concentrations of mammals worldwide at Bracken Cave with 15 – 20 million individuals. Through informative posterboards and interactive activities, attendees had the opportunity to learn about these fascinating nocturnal creatures.

The beauty of avian nature was also reinforced by our chapter members who presented ambassador animals from the Wildlife Center of Texas. Randolph and Jean Watson and Monica Taylor (Fall 2023 trainee) provided a unique opportunity for attendees to get up close and personal with a crested caracara, a Harris' hawk and a screech owl. They presented the stories of their birds to the entire audience and described the center's vital work in rehabilitating and caring for injured or orphaned animals.

Through our chapter's outreach, we were able to spread the word to a very large audience about preserving and admiring the spectacular natural world of the



Volunteers Jean, Monica, and Randolph

Lone Star State. Hopefully this will inspire them to protect the diverse and beautiful wildlife that calls Texas home.



The Bat Squad

Photos by Susan Walther, Robbin Mallett, and others.

Monarch Steward Certification Program

By Peyton Belunek, TMNCPC Class of Fall 2021



Many of you are aware of the awesome Certified Wildlife Habitat program run by the National Wildlife Federation. The signage hangs proudly in many of our gardens and is a visible symbol of the NWF's (and our!)

commitment to our local flora and fauna. Less known, perhaps, is the NWF's Monarch Steward certification program.

Some of you may be thinking that monarchs aren't necessarily your cup of tea. Before we get too far, it is

important however to note that monarchs are the supermodel poster child helping motivate people to create habitat, momentum, and cover story space for thousands of less known and other yet-to-be-widely-adored species at risk! The reach of this program is much greater than the name implies!

The Monarch Steward training program consists of three distinct modules: Introduction to Monarch Conservation; Citizen Science; and Gardening for Monarchs and Other Pollinators. Once you complete all three sections,

you are eligible to be certified as a Monarch Steward through the National Wildlife Federation! Here is a quick breakdown of what is covered over the course of the training.



Learning to distinguish monarchs infected with *Oe* from healthy monarchs

Introduction to Monarch Conservation is a two-day workshop which covers a wide swath of information on the biology, ecology, migration, conservation, and host plants of monarch butterflies. Much information is given on other

pollinators and the ways monarch conservation efforts amplify aid to many other species.

Native species of milkweeds and nectar plants are covered extensively with a strong emphasis on how plantings of these native plant habitats are ideal spaces for insects and all wildlife.

The Citizen Science workshop is the only portion without a virtual counterpart as there is a great deal of hands-on

learning to be done. It is a one-day whirlwind event that is critical to the overall program! Attendees are taught how to tag monarchs, how to test monarchs for *Oe* (*Ophryocystis elektroscirrha* - a protozoan parasite which coevolved alongside monarch butterflies), how to document the presence of monarchs in all life cycle stages on plantings. Much time is spent training and practicing with the data collection sheets for the Monarch Larva Monitoring Program (MLMP), which tracks monarch eggs, larva, and milkweeds across North America. Students are taught how to identify *Oe* on monarch scales under the microscope and how to contribute our collected data to the Monarch Health project.

Participants are taught the importance and impact of crowdsourced data and how to motivate the public to participate. This workshop's focus is on the "boots on the ground" nitty gritty of monarch conservation! You will leave feeling prepared to get out there and make a difference.

Gardening for Monarchs and Other Wildlife with Native Plants is an amazing

Continued [next page](#)



TMN Christine Anastas demonstrates taking a sample from a monarch's abdominal scales to test for *Oe*

Monarch Steward Certification Program (Cont'd)

By Peyton Belunek, TMNCPC Class of Fall 2021



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two-day workshop covering the many native milkweed species and the methods to propagate them. Also covered are the many native plants which provide valuable nectar for monarchs and other plants which provide them shelter along the way. The focus here is on establishing and maintaining wildlife habitat at your home or as projects at local parks, buildings, or community sites.

This workshop also focuses on outreach efforts and skill building as well as campaigns for action. Participants work on developing elevator speeches and fine-tuning talking points for one-on-one conversations as well as oral presentations to groups or city councils and other local government.

Instructors for our region are truly a top-notch all-star lineup of naturalist rock stars! The program is headed by NWF's Dr. Rebeca Quiñonez-Piñón who hails from Mexico City, a stone's throw from the monarchs' overwintering site. She is a forest ecologist who conveys the poetry of the monarchs right along with the science—

knowing that winning people's hearts is as important as their minds on this important issue.

Christine Anastas is a Texas Master Naturalist, a Texas Master Gardener, and a Monarch Steward who teaches native milkweed propagation strategies as

well as many techniques to contribute to citizen science. She has been submitting data on monarchs for many years herself (she used to mail the sheets in long before internet logging was possible!), has attended trainings on monarch citizen science across the country, visited the overwintering site in Mexico many times, and is a passionate teacher who truly inspires and empowers you to try new things! Craig Hensley is

a naturalist figure well known to many in our chapter - the Nature Trackers Biologist for Texas Parks and Wildlife. His knowledge is incredible, and his focus is on meaningful outreach and engaging citizen science.

Craig will put a net in your hand and a

spring in your step waking childhood curiosity and a passion for the science of it all!



Students on a butterfly hike through Zilker Botanical Garden in Austin, Texas



Craig Hensley teaches proper handling of monarch butterflies for tagging or testing. Photos credit Peyton Belunek

Carol Clark is employed as a Monarch Conservation Specialist with Monarch Watch and is a Texas Master Naturalist, amateur botanist, and a long-term member of the Native Plant

Society of Texas. Her passion and enthusiasm fuel her instruction.

Monarchs were my "gateway insect" and played such an important role in my wanting to become a Texas Master Naturalist, so joining this program was a natural fit for me! I imagine it might be for many of you too! I completed the Monarch Steward training this September when the citizen science workshop was finally offered again for the first time since 2019! I took the Introduction to Monarch Conservation workshop in 2022 and the Gardening for Monarchs and Other Pollinators course in spring of this year. I am so grateful for the depth of teaching and encouragement this program offers! It is truly an asset to TMNs across the country! If you decide to do the training, reach out to me - I'd love to meet you at a monarch service event sometime!

Seabourne Creek Nature Park

By Lynn Trenta, TMNCPC Class of 2011



Volunteers at Seabourne have been busier than ever at our signature project! From removing invasive plants to leading a nature hike to pollinator bioblitzing, taking a plant walk or insect hike or gardening in Seabourne's gardens, chapter members are taking on the challenges and joys of exploring and contributing to our wonderful park in Rosenberg.

The directional signs have been installed all over the park, thanks to Sal Cardenas, Tom Zaal, Don Parkhouse, Jim Stepp, John Few, Mike Walsh, and project leader Jerry Trenta. Beautiful job, volunteers!

Extra thanks to Seabourne Co-Director Jerry Trenta for his work on this project which included creating the design, researching companies to manufacture the signs, and leading the installation.



Seen here is the main directional sign at the front of the park and installers John Few, Tom Zaal, Jerry Trenta, and Jim Stepp. Photo credit: Lynn Trenta. (Sal Cardenas not in photo)

Gardeners were busy at the two Seabourne gardens, and they are looking better than ever. Randolph Watson found this garden spider doing what spiders do in the native plant garden.



Photo credit: Randolph Watson



Sunrise at Seabourne. Photo credit: Cindy Burns

A girl scout gold project, supported by chapter president Terri Hurley and Lynn Trenta, began taking



Allison Sobrinho and friends.
Photo credit Terri Hurley

shape in the Houston Wilderness Pollinator area early in the month. The scouts spread 15 pounds of pollinator and coastal prairie seed in the area. Allison Sobrinho will be creating signs and pamphlets as well as doing a presentation for our group and her scout troop about the importance of native plants.

The invasive plant group has been removing the unwanted plants we have there, led by Co-Director Randolph Watson. The invasive plants that they have been targeting are KR bluestem, baccharis, sumpweed, and others. The reason why ragweed is so prolific became apparent when these rhizomes were discovered by the group. Many thanks to this group for undertaking this challenging work!

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Seabourne Creek Nature Park (Cont'd)

By Lynn Trenta, TMNCPC Class of 2011



Continued from [previous Page](#)

The Texas Pollinator Bioblitz day at Seabourne netted quite a few pollinators and pollinator plants. Sari Garfinkle found several new species from the park, among them forage looper moth, lesser cornstalk borer moth, stained-glass moth, a leafhopper belonging to Complex Ponana citrina, Mexican grass-carrying wasp, four-speckled hover fly, rice stink bug, and an amorous pair of tumbling flower beetles (*Mordellistena cervicalis*.) Kudos to our own Ute Welk who finished in the Top 10 on the leaderboard for number of observations for the Annual Texas Pollinator Bioblitz.

| | | |
|---|---------------|-----|
|  | Most Species | |
| 1st | vanwest | 409 |
|  | sunasak | 333 |
|  | jcochran706 | 329 |
|  | cindychrisler | 313 |
|  | sambiology | 312 |
|  | grroschat | 289 |

Screenshot of the leaderboard as on 10/22. Ute's groschat showing in 6th place. Photo credit: Shannon Westveer

Jan Poscovsky, the Seabourne Outreach and Signage Leader, led a nature walk on Sunday, October 22 at 7:30AM and 12 members of the public were treated to a tour of the park. Jan attributes the good turnout by the public to our Facebook ads and bandit signs! Chapter members Stan Poscovsky and Cindy Burns were helping with the tour as well.

Great news for chapter birders! Ute Welk spotted a new bird species for



Photo credit: Ute Welk

Seabourne underneath the fishing pier on the Lake, a Mandarin Duck (*Aix galericulata*). The bird hike for November will be November 1 at 8AM.

The monthly plant walk was led by plant guru Susie Doe on a beautiful morning at the Seabourne Prairie. After the recent rains there were many Traub's rain lilies blooming and several yellow garden orb weavers.

On the monthly insect hike, Pauline Zinn captured photos of an American green crab spider, lined orb weaver, yet-to-be identified caterpillars, Western leaf-footed bug, Northern plushback, obscure bird grasshopper and a spot-sided coreid. The hike was led by our AgriLife advisor, John Few, and Kerry Padilla. Others on the hike were Margo Johnson and Lynn Trenta.



John Few, Pauline Zinn, Margo Johnson, Lynn Trenta and Kerry Padilla. Photo credit: Kerry Padilla

Seabourne Lake was stocked with 9-inch-long channel catfish this month. Although we weren't involved in this stocking, chapter member Garrett Engelhardt reported that we will be stocking the lake this November.

So, if you are looking for a fun activity or to volunteer for a great VSP opportunity, come join us out at Seabourne. Thanks to Co-Director Randolph Watson we will be kept up to date on these VSP opportunities through a weekly Signup Genius or two. We are at the park on Wednesdays and the first and third Saturdays and begin work at 9 AM.

The Lighter Side



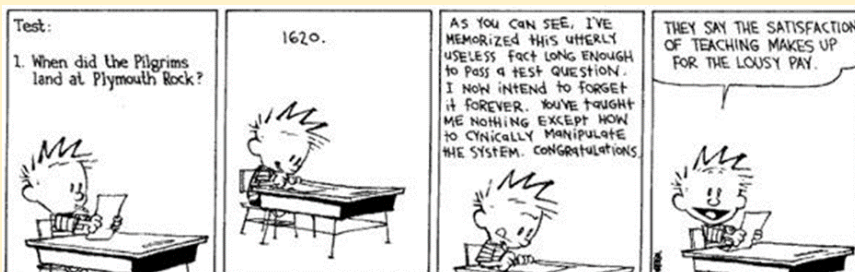
Shared by Jan Poscovsky



Gocomics.com



Charles Schulz



Bill Watterson

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| Vice President | Susan Walther |
| Secretary | Joyce Tipton |
| Treasurer | Pam Jones |

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1402 Band Road
Fort Bend AgriLife Extension Office
Rosenberg, TX 77471-8678

Phone: (832) 225-6936

Visit Us On-line: www.CoastalPrairie.org

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