

Coastal Prairie Chapter **Courier**

December 2023 — Volume 12 Issue 12



"Butterflies are flowers
that fly and all but sing."

Robert Frost



Inside This Issue

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What is HWA at 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.

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ON THE COVER

TMNCPC Secretary, Joyce Tipton, captures a pair of courting Queen butterflies ... and learns about a special body part! You can learn about it too on Page [9](#)

EDITOR

December's issue was crafted by Co-Editor, **Shannon Westveer**

Have a great story for January's issue? Submit by **December 22nd** to:

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President's Message

by Terri Hurley, TMNCPC President



Dear Coastal Prairie Chapter Members,

As I write my final words as your chapter's President, my heart fills with gratitude for the exciting journey we shared over the past two years. Serving you has been an absolute joy, and I'm awed by the passion each of you brings to our mission of preserving Texas' natural resources.

Thinking about our many accomplishments makes me very proud of this chapter. I'd like to highlight just a few of our achievements.

Seabourne Creek Nature Park. We continued to reach remarkable milestones in our efforts at our signature project. Here are just a few of our successes: buildout of new roosting racks and a wetland viewing platform, prairie seeding events, new brochures, new signage, new plant and insect hikes, restarting the monthly nature hikes, winning the Niagara Perk Your Park grant, purchase of the Gator, monthly bird hikes, transplanting 12 large oaks, numerous Girl and Boy Scout projects, and our first ever Nature Day. We also welcomed a new SCNP Co-Director. We won the 2023 Friend of Conservation Award from the Texas Soil & Water Conservation District. This is by no means a complete list!

Chapter Successes. In the past two years we held four training classes and as a result, we now have about 220 members in our chapter. We held in-person meetings for the first time in two years, initially at the Houston Museum of Natural Science in Sugar Land and then at the Rosenberg Civic Center. We also held the first in-person board meeting in almost four years. We readjusted the number of advisors to be more in alignment with our needs. We updated and ratified all our Governing Documents. We reorganized and inventoried our TMN office. We created several new WOWs. Each certified member received one free TMN polo shirt and a TMN certificate signed by the president who was in office when they certified. We gave out several presidential volunteer awards. We set up new approval and expense submittal procedures for the budget.

Outreach & Volunteer Service: With the waning of pandemic restrictions, opportunities for outreach, education and service exploded in the past two years.

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No December Chapter Program ... TMNCPC Holiday Party December 14th @ 6:00 PM

By Jan Peterson, TMNCPC Programs Director



FOR TMNCPC MEMBERS AND SPOUSES!

The Coastal Prairie Chapter Holiday Celebration “potluck” will be on Thursday **December 14, 6:00 PM** at the Rosenberg Civic Center. Please bring a dish to share and a hearty appetite ... and wear your brightest and cheeriest holiday garb!

The evening will start with appetizers and a meet-and-greet until 7:00 PM, giving all members a chance to catch up with old friends and meet our newest chapter members. Following this, we will enjoy the delicious meal offerings prepared by our members.

Along the way, we will take a look back at many of our accomplishments in 2023 and get a glimpse of what we can expect for 2024. We will also elect the new officers for 2024 before the party ends at 9:00 PM.



TMNCPC Board Members from 2022 and 2023, Terri Hurley center

Locate the SignUp Genius in your inbox or check the **#announcements** channel on Slack; RSVP and indicate what you will be bringing.

FOR THE PUBLIC!

We’ve got more great programs in store for 2024! Always check our **Home Page** for the most current information.

TMNCPC Home Page | <https://coastalprairie.org/>

Our programs welcome the public and are always free. 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 VSP hours for the brief business meeting under “Chapter Business: Chapter Meeting.”]



President’s Message

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There are just too many to list here. As a result of our participation in these events and a concerted effort to record our outreach hours in VMS, we experienced an exponential upsurge in our impact numbers.

Stepping away from the presidency, I entrust our future to the capable hands, fresh energy and clever ideas of our new leadership. I am confident that the Coastal Prairie Chapter will not only thrive but continue to blossom in the years to come.

Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to our amazing chapter!

Terri Hurley, TMNCPC President 2022-2023

Membership Minute

By Jan and Kevin Kolk, TMNCPC Membership Co-Directors



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



Initial Certification

Rajeswari Mahesh – 2023 Fall

Monica Taylor – 2023 Fall

Cindy Burns – 2023 Fall

Wanda Roof – 2023 Fall

Jo Cain – 2023 Fall

Aki Nomi – 2023 Spring

Stan Poscovsky – 2023 Fall

Michael Randall – 2023 Fall

Kylee Roberts – 2023 Fall

Bill Hannah – 2023 Fall



500 Hour Milestone

Jan Peterson –
2021 Spring



2023 Recertification

(95 members recertified)

David Goff – 2018

Rick Adams – 2011

Rebecca Richards – 2023 Spring

Monica Taylor – 2023 Fall

Cindy Sparks – 2023 Spring

Jean Greenhalgh – 2014

Naomi Brown – 2021 Spring

Rajeswari Mahesh – 2023 Fall

Sheri Lewis – 2020 Fall



250 Hour Milestone

Don Parkhouse – 2021 Fall

Noel Zinn – 2020 Fall



1000 Hour Milestone

John Cottrell – 2005

Johanna DeYoung – 2019



Congratulations, Fall 2023 Training Class!



Jo Cain — **Certified**

Adrian Leddy

Kylee Roberts — **Certified**

Rebecca Garriss

Carmen Perez

Mary Thorne

Sandra Vazquez

Caroline Kane

Michael Randall — **Certified**

Sari Garfinkle

Cynthia Burns — **Certified**

Michael Walsh

Stacy Kmetz

Emily Wilkinson

Monica Taylor — **DOUBLE Certified**

Stan Poscovsky — **Certified**

Erin Ryan

Napoleon Bonilla

Wanda Roof — **Certified**

Fangming Zhu

Rajeswari Mahesh — **DOUBLE Certified**

William Hannah — **Certified**

Janis Leavitt

Reba Wiles

Zhaohong Zhang

Volunteer Service — December Highlights

By Johanna DeYoung, TMNCPC Volunteer Service 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/2023-12/>

Signature Project Seabourne Creek Nature Park

(SCNP), Rosenberg: 9:00 AM — 11:00 AM
Wednesdays and 1st and 3rd Saturdays which fall on 12/2, 12/6, 12/13, 12/16, 12/20, and 12/27

Signature Project Monthly Bird Hike at SCNP,

Rosenberg: 9:00 AM — 11:00 AM 1st
Wednesday of each month which falls on 12/6

Public Outreach Nature Hike Seabourne Creek Nature Park, Rosenberg:

8:00 AM — 9:00 AM Sunday 12/17

Public Outreach Houston Museum of Natural

Science at Sugar Land:
10:30 AM — 3:30 PM 2nd and 4th Saturdays which falls on 12/9 only as 12/23 has been *canceled* due to the holidays

Seed Collecting, Houston Arboretum and Nature

Center, Houston: 8:30 AM — 11:00 AM
Friday 12/1 ([registration required](#))

Seed Collecting, Nash / Mowotony Prairies, Damon:

9:00 AM — 12:00 PM Monday 12/4
([registration required](#))

Seed Collecting, Gerhart Prairie, Pearland:

8:30 AM — 11:00 AM Friday 12/8
([registration required](#))

Coastal Prairie Conservancy Indiangrass Preserve,

Katy: 9:00 AM — 1:00 PM Tuesdays, Fridays, and 2nd Saturdays of each month which fall on 12/1, 12/5, 12/8, 12/9, 12/12, 12/15, 12/19, 12/22, 12/26, 12/29

Lawther-Deer Park Prairie, Deer Park:

9:00 AM — 12:00 PM 4th Saturday has been moved to the 3rd Saturday for the winter holidays which falls on 12/16

Public Outreach Brazos Bend State Park's Holiday in the Park, Needville: 10:00 AM — 5:00 PM

Saturday 12/9

Brazos Bend Christmas Bird Count at Long Pont

Ranch, Needville: 7:00 AM — 1:00 PM
Saturday 12/16

Fort Bend Christmas Bird Count: All day various

locations Tuesday 12/19

Peach Creek Christmas Bird Count, Wharton: James

B. Harrison Burr Property 7:00 AM — 2:00 PM
Thursday 12/21

Happy Holidays!



Late in October, Sandra Brown, Dorothy Tran, René Ashmore-Cannavo, John Vindekilde, Doug Stewart, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department staff and volunteers, and Johanna DeYoung had a great day together at **George Ranch Frontier Days**. They introduced 368 attendees to 17-month-old live alligator ambassadors, a large stuffed alligator, and the TMNCPC's Skulls and Skins Workshop on Wheels (WOW). The public was delighted to take away TMNCPC seed packet handouts.

Seabourne: A Year in Review

By Randolph Watson, SCNP Co-Director



In this last SCNP article for 2023, I will look back at some of the notable moments of the past year.

Inauspicious Start. In mid-January, our year started poorly when thieves broke into our cart and fuel shed and stole several hundred dollars worth of equipment. Fortunately, no one was injured, the damage was minor, and the stolen materials were replaceable. Chapter members promptly repaired the shed, and Jerry installed two new hi-resolution, motion-triggered security cameras.

Chapter Service Projects.

TMNCPC spearheaded several big projects at SCNP this year. Our highest-profile effort was the Arboretum tree planting project funded by the Niagara Bottling Company's Perk Your Park Grant. This project was a joint effort by TMNCPC and the City of Rosenberg to transform 6 acres of open space into a home for native trees, new granite pathways, and picnic tables nestled under the tree canopies. Chapter members volunteered 576 hours to plant and stake more than 125 trees and help install a new automated irrigation system to water these trees.

We also completed several other notable projects that help visitors appreciate the native Texas flora and fauna found in the park.



Sal and Rodney planting a tree in the Arboretum

Notable projects include:

- Construction of the Wetland Overlook Platform that provides an excellent spot for viewing and photographing the water and wading birds, deer, alligators, and turtles that inhabit the wetland habitat
- Improvements to the water drips in the Bird Viewing Area; these drips and the nearby feeders attract many resident and migratory passerine birds, affording birders and future birders terrific up-close views
- Installation of new signage in the park. The 37 directional signs, seven LOOK! signs, and 24 tree species signs in the Arboretum provide basic information to help visitors find their way around the park and learn more about what they see



New water drip in the bird blind with Bob, Shree, John, Bill, Courtney, and Fran



Park visitor learning about the importance of wetlands from our new LOOK! sign

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Seabourne: A Year in Review (Cont'd)

By Randolph Watson, SCNP Co-Director



Jerry, Jim, Sal, and Randall building a new pergola in the Butterfly Garden



Marilyne, Angela, and Dorothy working in the Nursery area

Continued from [previous page](#)

- Construction of new pergola over the Linda Rippert Education Station in the Butterfly Garden
- Ground-breaking on the new Native Grasses Garden by the Spring and Fall 2023 TMNCPC Classes; this project will be completed early in 2024 (see story Page [12](#))

Of course, our biggest project is the on-going maintenance and enhancement of the natural habitats within the park. Throughout the year, 120 chapter members came out weekly to work in the Butterfly Garden, the Native Plant Garden, the Bird Viewing Area, the Wetland Pond, the

Houston Wilderness Area (see story Page [16](#)), and the Prairie Restoration Area. Because of their efforts, these habitats continue to thrive and attract a wide variety of plant and animal life.

Community Service Efforts.

TMNCPC is not alone in its efforts to maintain the habitats in the park. Environmentally minded groups joined us and contributed their time, muscle, and creativity on several different efforts around the park:



- Boy Scouts (above) led projects to construct a new pergola in the Native Plant Garden (February), plant 225 one-gallon native plants along the south shore of the Wetland Pond (March) and build a 3rd roosting rack in the Wetlands Pond rookery (July)



Birders along Seabourne Creek during the May bird hike

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Seabourne: A Year in Review (Cont'd)

By Randolph Watson, SCNP Co-Director

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- Girl Scouts installed an education hopscotch pad in the Butterfly Garden (August) and overseeded the Houston Wilderness Area (October)
- 15 employees of Fisher Scientific participated in a company volunteer day in May and helped plant several new trees in the Arboretum
- In December, Western EcoSystems Technology will hold an employee volunteer day to clear brush and overgrown invasive trees by Seabourne Lake and in the back areas of the Prairie

Education Outreach. Beyond service projects, we were very busy hosting education outreach events at SCNP. In September, we held our first-ever Nature Day



Volunteer Appreciation Picnic

the year, chapter members led numerous bird hikes, plant walks, insect hikes, and nature walks around the park. The outings provided us with opportunities to engage area residents and raise awareness of our local ecosystem.

Appreciation. In April, the Chapter's Executive Team hosted a picnic in the Native Plant Garden to show their appreciation for everyone's efforts at SCNP. President Terri Hurley



President Terri Hurley with Linda Rippert at her Dedication Ceremony



recruited one of the area's premier outdoor grillers, and 30 chapter members enjoyed a beautiful spring day with good food and camaraderie.

In June, the chapter recognized Linda Rippert for her many years of service with the dedication of the new education station in the Butterfly Garden in her name. This dedication ceremony was well attended by many chapter members, past and present, as well as by several members of the Rippert family.

SCNP leadership team truly appreciates everyone's efforts at the park in 2023. Whether you were there every week or only once, you helped us make the park a better home for our native plants and animals and a terrific learning lab for the residents and guests of Rosenberg. **THANK YOU!**



Jan and Dianne speaking about pollinators at Nature Day in September



What the Heck is a “Hair Pencil?”

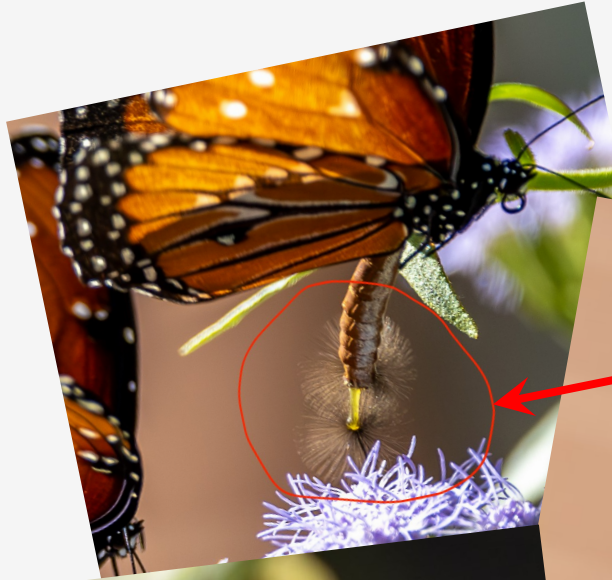
By Joyce Tipton, TMNCPC Secretary



I was in the backyard

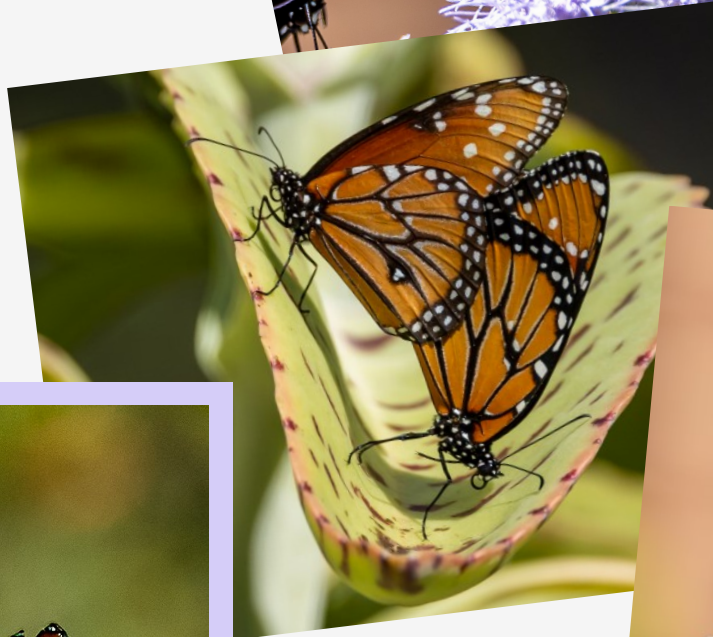
photographing birds and bees on the fall blooms. I observed a pair of Queen butterflies cavorting together and wondered if it was courtship. When I saw them flying with one towing the other, I knew that it was. After uploading the photos to my computer something caught my eye that sent me researching; that's when I learned about **hair pencils!**

They are also called **coremata** which means feather duster in Greek.



Below: Something is happening ...

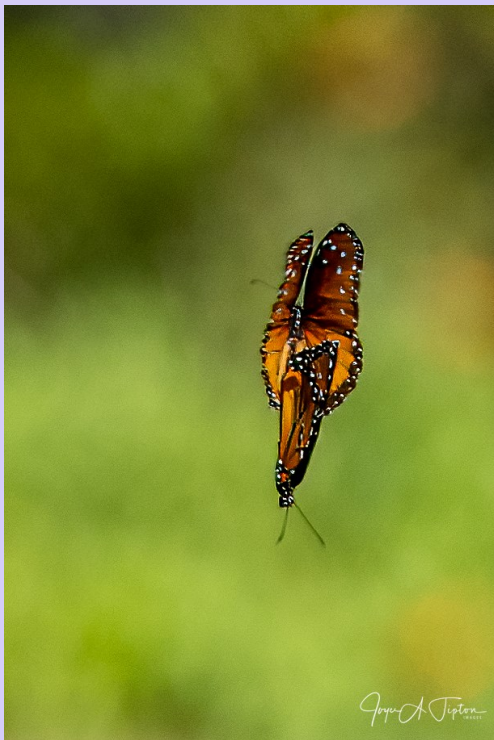
Left: Both hair pencils, fully extended



Above: Connected! Copulation can last over an hour

Left: The couple, locked in flight

Above: Hair pencil fluffing out



Look closely and you will see why. Normally tucked away in the rear abdomen of the male, the two appendages emerge to seduce the female with aphrodisiac pheromones that are dusted onto the female's antennae. It was a cool fact to learn and I was lucky to be there to witness and photograph it.

Book Q&A: *Wild Houston* by Suzanne Simpson

By Rebecca Aguilar, TMNCPC Class of Fall 2022

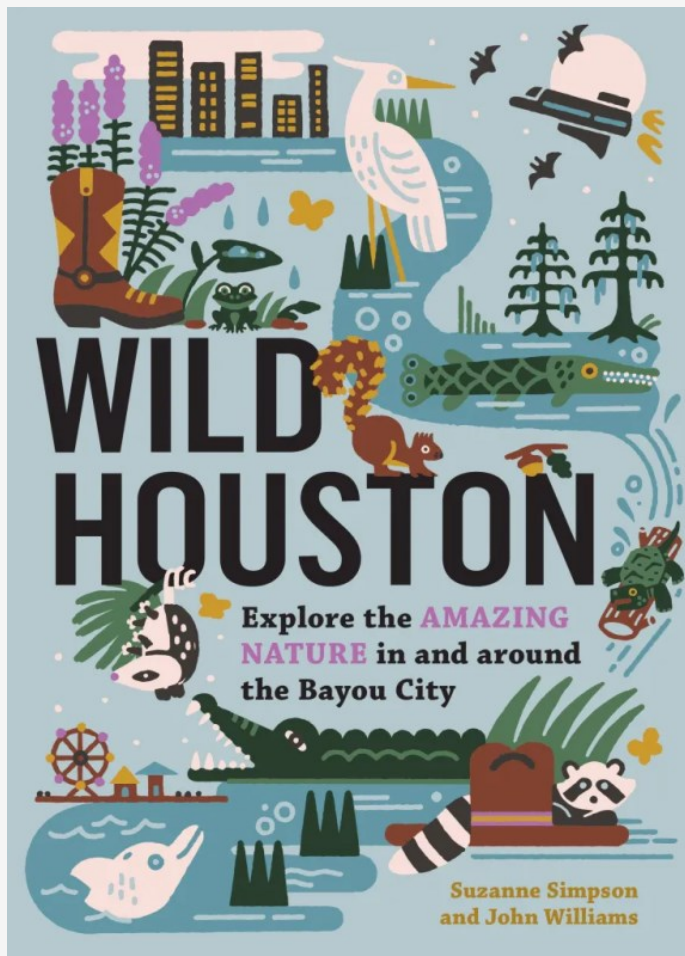


Ecologist **Suzanne Simpson** is a co-author (with John Williams) of *Wild Houston: Explore the Amazing Nature in and around Bayou City*. She is also a Texas Master Naturalist™. For more on Suzanne Simpson, follow her on social media [@wetlandsuzanne](#).

TMNCPC member Rebecca Aguilar interviewed Simpson about writing her informative natural history and field trip guide featuring 101 Bayou City species.

RA: In *Wild Houston*, you write about local bayous and riparian corridors as well as coastal prairie, marshes, woodlands. What kinds of questions did you start with when you began researching the ecoregions of Houston?

SS: I had quite a solid foundation for Houston's ecoregions as it's been an important part of my career as well as a personal passion. I wanted to convey to the reader that Houston's biodiversity is world-class – literally! There are only two recognized biodiversity hotspot cities in the continental United States, and Houston is one of them. This always surprises people because of the misconceptions around what Houston has to offer as a city. The messages I heard growing up were that Houston was a veritable wasteland until the Allen Brothers developed it. I feel like *Wild Houston* explodes that myth through explorations of ecology, geology, and pre-history.



ISBN: 9781643261119

Timber Press 09/26/2023; 352 pages

RA: *Wild Houston* includes a section about backyards that support insects, birds, and other wildlife. How can we engage more people to value biodiversity in lawns and gardens?

SS: I've seen some very entertaining memes recently about how out of touch lawns are with what communities need from us as land stewards. In more traditional media, the work of Douglas Tallamy has been influential in moving the needle about how important our lawns and gardens are in the quest to preserve biodiversity. I believe balance is a key component to calling people in and encouraging the use of native/productive plants

in our personal landscaping. Telling someone they must rip out their entire lawn can be discouraging. Too hard, too extreme, too expensive. Instead, I encourage people to set aside a portion of their yard for native plants. Once someone sees the changes for themselves, they're more likely to increase their native plant garden and become an advocate for the cause.

RA: You write about ecoregion heroes who work/volunteer removing trash from watersheds, planting pocket prairies, or advocating for community health. What obstacles do they face? How do amateurs become an advocate/partner for science?

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Book Q&A: *Wild Houston* by Suzanne Simpson

By Rebecca Aguilar, TMNCPC Class of Fall 2022



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SS: Houston is a multi-use city, with lots of commercial, industrial, and private interests. The best advice I can give is to find shared values within those interests that seemingly diverge from environmental conservation. Small, meaningful conservation wins can be found almost every day when we invest in partnerships outside our traditional community. And we can't do it without so-called "amateurs," who are often the eyes, ears, and boots on the ground. Logging an observation on iNaturalist or writing a letter to your representative about proposed legislation can make a real impact. More and more, nature is getting its rightful seat at the table when leaders make decisions about the future of our city.

RA: You also write about "101 species to know" – insects, birds, fish, reptiles, mammals in their Bayou City habitats. What species are thriving in their habitats and why? What species are threatened and why?

SS: I write about synurbanization in the book, which is a fancy word for species that adapt well to the altered human environment. You can probably think of a few synurbic animals off the top of your head – coyotes, raccoons, opossums. These species are usually (but not always) generalists who have a wide array of acceptable habitats and food sources. Conversely, our specialists tend to suffer when habitat is converted to human uses. An example is the Eastern Black Rail, a federally threatened species that depends on coastal marshes for all phases of its life cycle. Species like the black rail battle several compounding factors: habitat destruction, climate change, and sea level rise. Further inland, our grassland-dependent birds are disappearing as the remaining fragments of the coastal prairie are lost to development or degraded by afforestation. This is why conserving high-quality habitat is so important. Among other reasons, it is much more cost-effective to preserve naturally

functioning wetlands, prairie, and forests than to restore impacted lands.

RA: *Wild Houston* includes a local field trip guide, including one of my favorites – the Eastern Glades at Memorial Park. What is your favorite nature field trip in and around the Bayou City?

SS: It's like picking a favorite child, but I'll bite. My favorite place to go is the Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge. It is a place of extremes. Huge old-growth trees, tons of wildlife, and several unique and rare species greet you from the moment you step onto the trail. I love that it plunges visitors into a wilderness experience. It's also a lesser-known place, so you have the opportunity to disconnect from the daily grind and enjoy some contemplation. Heck, I like it so much, I decided to propose there!

RA: What experiences helped shape your decision to become an ecologist? Your conservation ethic?

SS: While I was interested in wildlife from childhood, I wasn't born into an "outdoor family" like others in my field. I had access to neighborhood green spaces, which were important, and I was influenced by media like *The Crocodile Hunter*, Steve Irwin. But I didn't go camping until I was 23! I mention this as a source of encouragement to others who may feel like they didn't have the traditional conservation experiences in their formative years. What I had in spades was passion, and the pursuit of that passion is what grew my knowledge of the outside world. No one is born knowing everything, but we can develop the tools to grow our own knowledge base and discover what contributions uniquely suit our abilities. As I became more established in pursuing a career in ecology, I realized there was an urgent need to conserve habitat. While land preservation doesn't include formalized wildlife research, it arguably makes the biggest impact on biodiversity conservation. It also incorporates communication and relationship-building, so I am motivated and constantly challenged to spread the conservation gospel.

SCNP Archway Grasses: Project, Particulars, Patience

By Jo Cain, TMNCPC Class of Fall 2023



By Spring Training 2023,

it had been four years since a class project was adopted. The class was given several options, and Native Grasses was chosen.

Lisa Sanders, Class Representative, would be the project lead; her administration and project management background was ideal. Kevin Peters with his specific knowledge of native grass species and Rodney Walther with his project planning and design would be her co-leads. The assignment was to work together to evaluate locations and, finally, to complete a native grasses pocket installation at our signature park, Seabourne Creek.

By July, four zones were outlined to provide a visually appealing native grasses garden which would invite the public into the park at the SCNP Archway; they were labeled A, B, C, and D. The decision was made to install *only* native plants and forbs as a minimum requirement. Additional information



Members at the drawing board

and questions at an on-site analysis helped identify constraints like utilities and resources, and optimize zone selection.

Primary stakeholders were Project team members, SCNP Co-Directors, TMNCPC Board, City of Rosenberg Parks Department, and the core advisory



The "Dirty 15" at the new Seabourne Creek Archway Grasses project site

team. Plant species and sourcing of the plants were all considered. A VSP application was initiated though the timeline could not be firmly established due to the various schedules of a multitude of stakeholders.

It was agreed that site prep could occur late summer, and while plant selection and site design was ongoing, the start date would be dependent upon final site approval.

Conversations began to flow on the new **#proj-scnp-archway-grasses** Slack channel. Because a class project had not been completed in a while, the process of a thorough project evaluation was also initiated. Objectives, timelines, budget, contacts, approvals all took time and multiple meetings which City of Rosenberg (CoR) Parks, various board members, Seabourne directors and classmates.

VSP hours for Archway Grasses were approved late July. By then, Lisa had found the SCNP Master Plan in Rosenberg City Council archives which included the future construction of a 4,000+ square foot Nature Center just to the left of the Archway. This structure has been approved and is waiting for final funding approval, and those plans fully engulfed two of the four zones, limiting our project to zones B or D.

While revised mapping and site design continued, so did conversations on plant recommendations.

Continued, [next Page](#)

SCNP Archway Grasses: Project, Particulars, Patience (Cont'd)

By Jo Cain, TMNCPC Class of Fall 2023



Continued from [previous page](#) Suggestions included plant appearance in all seasons, soil requirements, light or shade delineations, and a growing list of plant and plant source information, and YouTube videos. Cardboard was being collected, wood chips procured for late summer beginnings.

As the Fall Class started in August, it was determined that combining the two classes would be optimal for the project. The lengthy process/evaluation time was much longer than a singular class timeline and allowing additional participation would permit continuity.

The first dual class meeting was set for mid-September, and by that time it appeared that Zone D — the area in the back of the right column — was the only option left (out of the construction zone). When Lisa and Kevin met with CoR Parks Director Cory Lamensky, serendipity struck when Cory offered the area directly across from the already popular Butterfly Garden. It would allow a substantial area of approximately 500 square feet, be almost completely free of construction interference, and would meet all other criteria. The new space would allow the public to view the area from the front and two pathways. By communicating fully with Cory about the limitations of the zones around the columns and the concerns with construction, all the work and patience paid off with the new site offer, which was accepted immediately.

Meantime, TMNCPC Board approved the site mid-October with cardboard prep set for November 8th. Spring and Fall Classes enjoyed an interactive tour about best practices, ecosystems, soils, and a demo in sheet-mulching at Shannon Westveer's pockets.



Members hard at work prepping the future planting area

Fifteen chapter members along with leaders Lisa, Kevin, Rodney and advisor Shannon were present to work laying cardboard, topsoil, compost and mulch, all of which were watered in appropriately. The

installation team included Michael Walsh ("Sledgehammer"), Wanda Roof, Jean Watson, Ora Lee Peters, William Hannah ("Gran PuPu"), Raul Orlando Garcia, Cindy Starks, Barry Thompson, Raji Mahesh, Aki Nomi and Jo Cain. The group was named "Dirty 15" by Lisa.

Jim Butcher (Grand

Poobah) came and presented a blue donut to Raji for her work on the newsletter and told a few jokes. The timing was perfect, with rain due the following week. The season will still provide the heat and rain/moisture to allow the cardboard to decompose, enrich the soil and bring the microbes and fungi into the picture.

Yes, the process was long and tedious and required lots of patience, due diligence, paying attention to the particulars (details), massive input from chapter members, and a willingness to work and persevere.

Due to personnel changes within the City of Rosenberg City Council and the Parks Director, the CPC Board, and the scope of the project, the process of project initiation, and evaluation took longer than originally thought. Leaders Lisa, Kevin, and Rodney demonstrated patience and flexibility, and the project has allowed cohesiveness of both 2023 Spring and Fall classes.

As additional classes become involved, there is a legacy that moves forward. There is still work to be done. Finalization of the design, picking and procurement of plants, and the planting process itself. We should be very thankful that we have chapter members that are enthusiastic about the work we do. *Flow with nature!*

Fall Seeding Brings Spring Flowers

By Monica Taylor, TMNCPC Class of Fall 2023



Cullinan Park held its first native seeding event on the new trails. This event was a partnership between the City of Sugar Land, Cullinan Park Conservancy, and our Coastal Prairie Chapter members. A dream of having Texas natives blooming in the Spring on new trails started back in September. Cullinan Park consulted with Fenglin Du, City of Sugar Land Parks Development Manager, and Coastal Prairie Chapter members to decide which plants would best suit the areas of shade and sun we would be working with. The dream became reality as the seeds were ordered and volunteer recruitment began.

Our first scheduled day to seed was rained out, but we were fortunate to have a beautiful Saturday afternoon on November 18th to have fun and throw out native seeds. Cullinan Park board members Cee Cee Parker and Monica Taylor, TMNCPC Class of Fall 2023, and Fenglin Du welcomed everyone to the event. Fenglin followed with a demonstration (photo below) on how to mix seeds with the provided mulch in the buckets and how to disperse the seeds evenly.



ABOVE: TMNCPC members Joyce Tipton, Monica Taylor, and Lucy Moyer with a young seed disperser volunteer
LEFT: Volunteers mix seeds together in buckets

Volunteers consisted of local middle and high school students, along with a few Fall 2023 training class members, and Coastal Prairie Chapter members Lucy Moyer, Joyce Tipton, Rebecca and Amado Aguilar, and Pauline Zinn.

The newest sidewalk trail in Cullinan Park follows the existing entrance road and is sunny for most of the day. Volunteers used a seed mix in this area that contained Little Bluestem, Side Oats Grama, Prairie Blazingstar, and Purple Top Tridens. Other new trails that were seeded consist of decomposed granite

(DG) and lead from White Lake to the entrance area. These trails are in continuous shade. A seed mix of Virginia Wild Rye, Turks Cap, American Beauty Berry, Lemon Mint, and Bergamot was used here.

THANK YOU to everyone who was part of the preparation process and who came out to throw out seeds. YOU made our event a success!



HMNS Sugar Land Fall Outreach

By Katie Sallean, TMNCPC Class of 2012



Chapter members were in full swing this fall participating in outreach at the Houston Museum of Natural Science at Sugar Land. September outreach brought museum visitors into the world of Hummingbirds. With Doug Stewart as the lead (below), members taught kids and adults alike about the habits of migrating hummingbirds, how we can help

these tiny acrobats, and which hummingbirds we can find in our area.

For October, we brought out our Bat WOW and participated in our regularly scheduled 2nd and 4th Saturday outreach in addition to the museum's Magical Maze event. Kids loved looking at the Mexican-free tailed bat with the magnifying glass and adults enjoyed learning about where they can go with their family to see the bats in person. Kids did a craft that highlighted the fun fact that bats wings are just an adaptation of a mammal's hand/fingers. Our November



outreach led by Chevvy Tang was perfectly timed to introduce visitors to the monarch migration. Kids made origami

butterflies and learned about the flight of monarchs to Mexico.

Chapter members are making such an amazing impact teaching the public about our natural world every month. To date, we've reached nearly 2,000 people this year alone with our outreach at the museum.

We look forward to continued efforts in 2024. Come find us every 2nd and 4th Saturdays!



HMNS-SL Planning for 2024 ... ZOOM

Got ideas for engaging the public next year? Members join us **Thursday, December 7th @ 7:00 PM** in planning for next year's outreach. Look for the SignUp Genius in your inbox or on **#partner-hmns-sl** Slack channel. We'd love your ideas and input!

What is HWA at Seabourne?

By Lynn Trenta, TMNCPC Class of 2011



Maybe some of you have been noticing the initials HWA and might have wondered what that is.

In August 2019, the City of Rosenberg Parks and Recreation Department notified us that the city had obtained a \$3,000 grant from the [Monarch Flyway](#) which was being managed by [Houston Wilderness Association](#) (HWA). The following are statements outlining the purpose of these organizations:

THE TEXAS MONARCH FLYWAY STRATEGY (Texas MFS) is a

statewide effort facilitated by Houston Wilderness to restore, increase and enhance Monarch habitat throughout Texas, a critical link in the Monarch butterfly's journey along the Central Flyway from Canada to Mexico and back every year. The Texas MFS also serves to protect habitat for other pollinators that are crucial to local ecosystems and agriculture.

HOUSTON WILDERNESS works with a broad-based alliance of business, environmental and government interests to protect and promote the 10 diverse ecoregions of the 13+ county area around Houston, Galveston Bay, and the Gulf of Mexico, including coastal prairies, forests, wetlands, and waterways.



The Rosenberg Parks and Recreation Department asked our chapter to use the grant funds in the prairie restoration area. Seabourne Native Plant Garden Coordinator Lynn Trenta set aside a specific area in the prairie for these plants: **Houston Wilderness Pollinator Area**. As this is a mouthful to say, it is shortened to **HWA**.

In preparation for planting these host and nectar plants, an L-shaped section along the fence off the main pathway was designated for the HWA, and the area was mowed and herbicided to remove invasives. We purchased 379 native pollinator plants from the Houston Audubon native plant nursery and 250 milkweeds and native plants from TMNCPC member Mark Morgenstern's Morningstar Prairie Plants.

The Church of Latter Day Saints Elders (young men, photo below), under direction of Seabourne Director Jerry Trenta, installed these plants into the area. Since that time, we have added even more plants and seeded the area as well. We have also removed invasive plants. We recently expanded the area to incorporate more of the prairie.

This year, girl scout Allison Sobrinho notified us that she wished to undertake her gold award by helping in the HWA.



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What is HWA at Seabourne? (Cont'd)

By Lynn Trenta, TMNCPC Class of 2011



Continued from [previous page](#)

She has agreed to create signs and a pamphlet, as well as developing a presentation about the importance of native plants. This October, Allison and her team also distributed 15 pounds of pollinator plant seeds in our newly expanded HWA—see map.

Chapter members Shree Nath and Fran Wilcox are designing pathways into the HWA, with help and guidance from Seabourne Director Randolph Watson

and Lynn Trenta, the original coordinator of the project. These pathways will lead to a covered bench towards the center of the area.

So, look for some changes in the HWA! And many thanks to all of the chapter members who have worked there over the last four years, including Jan Kolk, Pam Jones, Shree Nath, Fran Wilcox, Randolph Watson, Wanda Roof, Nancy Jones, Tracy Kolb, Carol Hawkins, Kevin Peters, Dorothy Tran and others.



BEFORE (2019)



AFTER (2021)

VSP Opportunity: Patio-to-Prairie Native Plant Grow-out

Learn how to propagate a variety of perennial and annual forbs and one grass for 2024 installation in Seabourne Creek restoration areas. There is a focus on milkweeds for HWA — 5 different species. Kits, seeds, species-specific instructions, and soil starter mix are all provided, available for take-home.

Look for the SignUp Genius in your inbox from Co-Director Jerry Trenta or find the message with his instructions pinned to the **#seabourne** Slack channel.

[TMNCPC MEMBERS: VSP hours to be recorded in VMS under: **"SCNP-7 Habitats."** Be sure to note "Patio-to-prairie project" in the description.]

Learn More

<https://houstonwilderness.org/>



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Vice President	Susan Walther
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State Rep	Hoiman Low
Seabourne Creek	Jerry Trenta and Randolph Watson

TPWD / AgriLife Chapter Advisors

Prgm. Coordinator	Brandy Rader
Fort Bend Ag Agent	John Few

yellow-rumped warbler poem



Website Blog

Be sure to email
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timely posts delivered straight to your inbox. Catch up on the most recent posts:

- [Christmas Bird Counts](#) | November



Happy Holidays!

We wish you and yours a safe and joyous time indoors or out during the holidays. See y'all outside!

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