


Coastal Prairie Chapter Courier

Volume 14 Issue 1 – January 2026



It's not what you look at
that matters, it's what
you see.

*Henry David Thoreau
(1817-1862)*

Inside This Issue

Randolph Watson Rockets to 4,000 Hours of Service

The Remote Challenge: Igniting a Volunteer Spark for APCNWR

SPLASh Rabbs Bayou Cleanup Helps More Than Texas Wildlife and Waters



The Texas Master Naturalist Program's mission is to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the State of Texas.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's Message ..	2
January Program: Texas Cats ..	3
2025 Holiday Party	
Photo Scrapbook ..	4
Membership Minute ..	6
January Volunteer Highlights ..	7
Randolph Watson Rockets to	
4,000 Hours of Service ..	8
SPLASh Rabbs Bayou Cleanup Helps	
More Than Texas Wildlife, Waters ..	9
The Remote Challenge: Igniting a	
Volunteer Spark for APCNWR ..	10
Contact Us ..	12

COVER PHOTO

Randolph Watson spies and documents a resting black witch moth (*Ascalapha odorata*) by being extra observant while at Seabourne's Bird Viewing Area

EDITOR TEAM

This issue was crafted by Co-Editor **Shannon Westveer**.

Have a great story for the February issue? Submit by **January 25th** to:

#**submissions-courier** on Slack or Submissions-courier@coastalprairie.org to reach everyone on the Editor Team.

<https://txmn.org/coastal/monthly-coastal-prairie-courier/>



President's Message

Jan Poscovsky, TMNCPC President



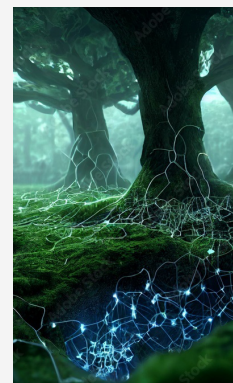
As I step into the role of President, I want to begin by expressing my sincere **gratitude to the 2025 leadership team** that has guided our chapter with dedication, thoughtfulness, and perseverance. Their time, energy, and commitment — often given quietly and behind the scenes — have ensured that our chapter remained strong, welcoming, and impactful. Because of their efforts, we are well positioned to continue serving our community and the natural resources we all care so deeply about.

I am both honored and excited to take on this role, and I do so with a guiding theme for the year ahead: **growing deeper roots**. In nature, deep roots create resilience. They anchor plants through storms, allow them to access nutrients during dry times, and support healthy growth above ground. In much the same way, our chapter thrives when we invest in strong connections: between members; with our community; and with the land and resources we serve.

Growing deeper roots means **strengthening our sense of shared purpose** through our Texas Master Naturalist Program's mission (highlighted above). This mission is both ambitious and deeply practical, and it depends on each of us bringing our skills, curiosity, and passion to the work.

As President, my goal — working closely with our new board — is to help create opportunities for members to connect across experience levels, interests, and committees so that no one feels siloed, and **everyone feels valued**. By collaborating as a board and encouraging mentorship, cross-committee partnerships, and service-focused projects, we can continue to cultivate a chapter culture that is inclusive, supportive, and grounded in learning. Our **outreach, education, and service efforts** are the visible leaves and flowers of our work, but it is our relationships and shared values that form the root system beneath them. By nurturing those roots, we ensure that our chapter remains vibrant, adaptable, and impactful for years to come.

I am grateful for the foundation laid by those who came before us, and I look forward to working alongside all of you as we continue to grow together, grow deeper roots in service to Texas' natural resources and the communities we all call home.



January Chapter Program: Thursday, January 8 @ 7 PM
 “Texas Native Cats: Furry, Fierce, and Fabulous”
 Presented by Nicole Cloutier

Jan Peterson, TMNCPC Programs Director

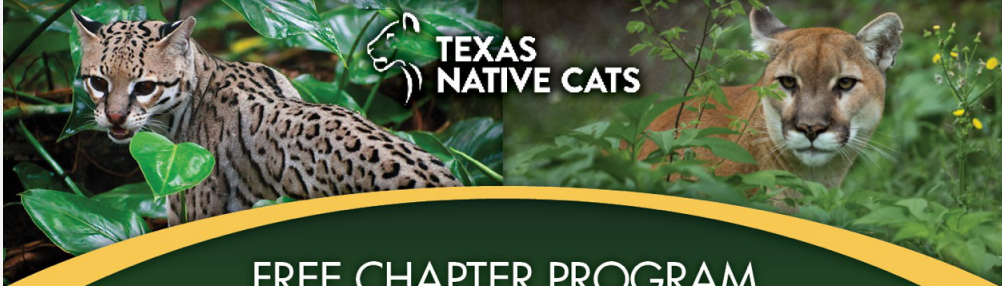


Join us this month for an engaging presentation on native Texas cats, not the domestic kind, but the three magnificent wild felines that call Texas home: mountain lions, bobcats, and the elusive ocelot. We hope to see you there for an evening of learning and appreciation for them!


Our presenter, **Nicole Cloutier**, a dedicated volunteer with [Texas Native Cats](#), will share the story of the organization and offer a fascinating glimpse into the lives, behaviors, and conservation needs of these remarkable animals.



Nicole is a Texas Master Naturalist with the Galveston-Bay Area Chapter. She has been a volunteer with Texas Native Cats since 2022 after seeing [Deep in the Heart](#), a compelling documentary that showcases Texas' iconic landscapes and wildlife. Nicole holds degrees from Texas A&M University (Journalism) and University of Houston-Clear Lake (Biology) and is passionate about wildlife conservation, especially for endangered species including the Texas ocelot. In her free time, she enjoys hiking, reading and traveling.



FREE CHAPTER PROGRAM
TEXAS NATIVE CATS
Thursday, January 8, 2026 @ 7:00pm



“Texas Native Cats: Furry, Fierce, and Fabulous” with Nicole Cloutier
 Texas Master Naturalist, Galveston-Bay Area Chapter & Texas Native Cats Volunteer

Join us for an engaging presentation on native Texas cats—not the domestic kind, but the three magnificent wild felines that call Texas home: mountain lions, bobcats, and the highly elusive ocelot. The only U.S. population of ocelots can be found in the southernmost tip of Texas.

Bud O’Shieles Community Center, 1330 Band Rd., Rosenberg, TX 77471
 A virtual option is available. For more information, visit:
<https://tinyurl.com/fmp6m8cr>

Hosted by: Texas Master Naturalist™ • Coastal Prairie Chapter
www.coastalprairie.org • info@coastalprairie.org • 832-225-6936




Photo Credit: (L) Ronald Plett, (R) Fin & Fur Films, www.texasnativecats.org

Our programs are always **FREE** and **open to the public**. This month’s program will be held at the Bud O’Shieles Community Center, Rosenberg, TX 77471 (short drive across the highway from Rosenberg Civic Center).

Thanks to the TMNCPC information technology team, programs are also **streamed LIVE** remotely via Zoom. The 1-hour program begins at **7:00 PM**. Arrive at 6:00 PM for social time and refreshments.

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.”]

2025 Holiday Party Photo Scrapbook

Shannon Westveer, *Courier* Co-Editor



Naturalist Trivia Bowl

Photos by Cee Cee Parker,
Nathan Heilman, and
Nicole Bride



Centerpiece
Designs
and
Winners



2nd Place

1st Place

2025 Holiday Party Photo Scrapbook (Cont'd)

Shannon Westveer, Courier Co-Editor

View all the [2025 Holiday Party photos](#) at
our Chapter SmugMug.
PSSWD: **dragonfly**



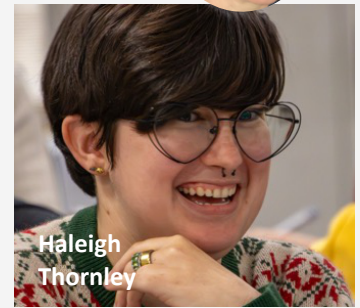
Nathan
Heilman



Hui Fun
Tan



Jodi
Berls Tiffany
Brackin



Haleigh
Thornley



Yum ...

Photos by Cee
Cee Parker,
Nathan
Heilman, and
Nicole Bride



Hoiman
Low Sari
Garfinkle



Missy
Gardo Allen Masood
Murtuza



Largest Gathering Yet



Karen
Bueker Diane
Johnston



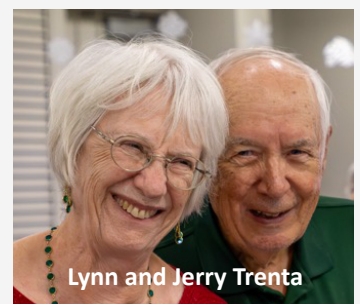
Bill and Margo
Johnson



Nicole
Bride CeeCee
Parker



Dorothy
Tran Chevvy
Tang



Lynn and Jerry Trenta

Membership Minute

Sari Garfinkle, TMNCPC Membership Director



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



Initial Certification

Asli Dural – 2025 Fall

Courtney Houston – 2025 Fall

Barbara Vogt – 2025 Fall

Brenda Wittman – 2025 Spring



250 Hour Milestone

Cindy Colluro – 2025 Spring



500 Hour Milestone

Amy Elliott Miller – 2024 Spring

John Greene – 2022 Spring

Janis Hodgson – 2020 Fall



2025 Recertification

(154 Members Recertified)

Nicole Bride – 2024 Fall

Jim Butcher – 2008

Virginia Camerlo – 2023 Spring

Monte Hambleton – 2024 Spring

Paula Lenhart – 2025 Fall

Amber Leung – 2015

Jesi Malowitz – 2024 Fall

Bayard Nicklow – 2022 Fall

Linda Rude – 2012

Doug Stewart – 2022 Spring

Pete Weston – 2022 Fall

Charlie Winker – 2017



Susan Walther finally gets the Blue Donut at her last meeting as President. THANK YOU, Susan!



MEMBERS: 2026 Dues are Due This Month!

The TMNCPC Treasurer (through Quickbooks) will be sending out the **2026 Membership Dues Invoice** to all active members who input one or more hours in 2025. Look for the invoice to arrive to your **email address of record** in TPWD Samaritan VMS. (Yes, 2025 Members-in-training, you too; this year's dues were covered by tuition.)

Please pay this invoice not later than **January 31**. Contact [Raji Mahesh](#) with any questions.

Volunteer Service — January Highlights

Becky Jones, TMNCPC Volunteer Director



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

[January 2026 TeamUp Calendar](#)

Signature Project Seabourne Creek Nature Park (SCNP), Rosenberg: 8:00 AM - 10:30 AM
Wednesdays and 1st and 3rd Saturdays each month

Signature Project Monthly Bird Hike at SCNP, Rosenberg: 8:00 AM - 10:30 AM 1st
Wednesday of the month

Public Outreach Nature Walk at SCNP, Rosenberg: 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM 3rd Sunday of the month

Public Outreach Insect Hike at SCNP, Rosenberg: 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM 4th Thursday of the month

Public Outreach Houston Museum of Natural Science at Sugar Land: 10:30 AM - 3:30 PM 2nd and 4th Saturdays; **Garden Workday** 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM 3rd Thursday of the month (SignUp Genius required)

Chapter and Board Meeting, via Zoom:

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM 3rd Wednesday of the month (see #announcements channel on Slack for Zoom JOIN link)

NEW!! Attwater Prairie-Chicken National Wildlife Refuge, Eagle Lake: 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM every Friday

NEW!! JB Harrison Burr New Year Bird Count, Wharton: 7:00 AM - 11:30 AM Saturday January 10th ([SignUp Genius required](#))

NEW!! Houston Audubon Christmas Bird Counts, Various Locations: there are a few dates through January 5th remaining; visit <https://houstonaudubon.org/programs/birding/christmas-bird-counts/cbc.html> for details

Coastal Prairie Conservancy Indiangrass Preserve, Katy: 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM Tuesdays, Fridays, and 2nd Saturdays of each month

Willow Fork Pollinator Garden Workday, Katy: 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM every Saturday

Lawther-Deer Park Prairie Workday, Deer Park: 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM 4th Saturday of the month

John Paul Landing Weekly Bird Hike, Houston: 8:30 AM - 11:30 AM every Thursday (January 1st has been CANCELED)

Harris County Precinct 4 Bird Survey Archbishop Joseph A. Fiorenza Park, Houston: 7:30 AM - 12:00 PM 4th Monday of the month

9 Natives Showcase Garden Workday, Houston: 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM 2nd Monday of the month

Willow Waterhole Bird Survey, Houston: 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM 3rd Saturday of the month

Bolivar Flats Ramble, Port Bolivar: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM 1st Saturday of the month

Entergy Natives Nursery Workday, High Island: 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM 2nd Friday of the month



MEMBERS: How Many Hours Can We Serve Outside Our Counties?

In order to achieve initial certification or recertification, **at least 20 (or half) of your VSP hours must be** within our counties of Fort Bend, Waller, or Wharton. All chapter business counts as "in our area."

As a Texas Master Naturalist, each member can serve virtually *unlimited* projects **within the entire State of Texas**. Remember as you serve in another chapter's county, please be respectful of their projects and partnerships. Always **notate that county** in the description of your entry in VMS to distinguish from ours.

Randolph Watson Rockets to 4,000 Hours of Service

Lynn Trenta, TMNCPC Class of 2011



After the chapter held a

meeting about Seabourne Creek Nature Park (SCNP) early 2023, little did we know that it would result in a valuable asset to our signature project: Randolph Watson, Class of Fall 2022, volunteered to be co-director of SCNP with Jerry Trenta.

After many years with Jerry as the sole director at SCNP, our chapter's signature project, the many moving parts and dozens of regular volunteers were growing and expanding; it would only benefit from a strengthened co-leadership.

Today, Randolph participates in several areas of the park, especially the prairie and the arboretum. He communicates at least weekly on Slack about what is being undertaken at the park, and distributes a volunteer SignUp Genius to regularly coordinate volunteers with

activities.

He is a talented photographer, documenting visually what is happening there, journaling progress. He is always friendly and readily available for volunteers who want to discuss their ideas and stewardship needs for their areas at the park.

Seabourne's team leaders depend on Randolph for guidance and support. Jerry Trenta, Co-Director of SCNP, noted, "Randolph has become the heart of the Seabourne Project. The achievements of the Chapter at Seabourne



ABOVE: Randolph steals a selfie with the prairie Team

BELOW: Randolph engages the public with a crested caracara education ambassador | Photo by Monica Taylor



over the last two years have been extraordinary and are directly attributed to Randolph's leadership."

Shree Nath, co-lead of SCNP Pollinator Pocket Prairie stated that Randolph is "dedicated, driven and passionate about the environment." Her co-lead, Fran Wilcox, added "he is very organized and a natural at project management."

Monica Taylor, Class of Spring 2023, has worked with Randolph for several years at Houston SPCA Wildlife Center of Texas. She adds:

"For over a decade, he has helped rehabilitate wildlife and educate the public about peaceful coexistence with wildlife. He works countless hours in building relationships with these wildlife education ambassadors.

"Like most volunteers Randolph cleans, feeds, and provides care for wildlife in need throughout the year and can be found regularly behind the microscope reading sample slides or preparing medications. He has worked with all types of wildlife, his favorite being the raptors, and while he cares for hawks, falcons, and eagles *onsite*, he regularly releases many of them *offsite*.

"When you see Randolph at an event, it's clear that he's passionate about wildlife and helping people learn how to coexist with them. During 2025, he led the team in appearances — more than 65 outreach events."

It is no surprise that Randolph has reached his **4,000 hour service milestone** in record time. Many THANKS, Randolph, and a heartfelt congratulations to you on this spectacular achievement!



Randolph, in the prairie | Photo by Lynn Trenta

Guest Article: SPLASH Rabbs Bayou Cleanup Helps More than Texas Wildlife and Waters

Elizabeth Virgl, American Bird Conservancy



SPLASH teamed up with H-E-B Our Texas Our Future, the Houston Zoo, and TMN Coastal Prairie Chapter members Jo Cosbey and Diane Johnston to host a trash cleanup along Rabbs Bayou in Richmond, Texas on November 15, 2025.

Approximately 28 volunteers removed **312 pounds of trash** from the environment. An additional **45 electronic devices** — 10 pounds worth — were collected as e-waste recycling.

Because of these efforts, we not only prevented trash and electronics from polluting water and soil and affecting our local wildlife. The electronic waste recycling program also raised funds for Houston Zoo's wildlife-saving partner in the Congo Basin of Africa who works directly with endangered gorillas.



All photos by Elizabeth Virgl



 **Houston Zoo**



SPLASH

STOPPING PLASTICS AND LITTER ALONG SHORELINES



American Bird Conservancy

Learn more about how you can get involved:

Houston Zoo

<https://www.houstonzoo.org/save-wildlife/take-action/electronic-device-recycling/>

SPLASH

<https://www.splashtx.org/>

American Bird Conservancy

<https://abcbirds.org>

The Remote Challenge: Igniting a Volunteer Spark for Attwater Prairie-Chicken NWR

Jean Stipelcovich, TMNCPC Class of 2018



Jean Stipelcovich (left) with Team Attwater: Bianca Sicich, Liz, Jodi Berls, Bert Stipelcovich, John Pritchard, Richard Guajardo, Charlie Winker, and Natasha Artushin
| Photo by J. Stipelcovich

Attwater Prairie-Chicken National Wildlife Refuge (APCNWR), located about 60 miles west of Houston near Eagle Lake, Texas, is a critical sanctuary for one of the most endangered birds in North America: Attwater's prairie-chicken. This 10,000+ acre refuge preserves one of the largest remaining tracts of native coastal prairie, providing essential habitat for this ground-dwelling grouse and countless other species. It is further enveloped by privately owned ranches, forming a protective bubble — a true sanctuary of refuge. APCNWR stands as an authentic haven.



Jaide Cooper, Wildlife Refuge Specialist | Photo by Jean Stipelcovich

While the isolation of APCNWR is one of the best things about it, that remoteness has long posed challenges for recruiting volunteers. This leaves the small refuge staff unsupported and struggling to manage habitat restoration, invasive species control, APC monitoring, and public outreach.

Despite its proximity to Houston, an area with millions of potential volunteers, the refuge faces significant challenges in building and sustaining a robust volunteer base. This is because there are many urban conservation opportunities closer to home for volunteers to latch on to.

Even TMN [Gideon Lincecum Chapter](#) (TMNGLC) whose territory embraces APCNWR, counts most members an hour or more in distance. Building a robust volunteer base from their own TMNGLC members is just not a realistic idea; APCNWR is remote for them too.

Recognizing these difficulties, our chapter stepped forward to beat the drum, sound the call for help, and committed to help build a solid volunteer base. The chapter proposed an idea to form a reliable crew drawn from surrounding TMN chapters and beyond. Recruit just a handful from each group, and a committed force could emerge.

Continued [next page](#)



Slack Channel ... Not Just for TMNCPC Members!

Coastal Prairie Chapter Information Technology Team has kindly opened **#team-attwater** channel to those outside our chapter for purposes of collaboration and planning for our *mutual* partner in conservation, APCNWR.

The Remote Challenge: Igniting a Volunteer Spark for Attwater Prairie-Chicken NWR (Cont'd)

Jean Stipelcovich, TMNCPC Class of 2018



Continued from [previous page](#)

After many meetings and emails between U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), APCNWR, Gideon Lincecum Chapter, Friends of Attwater, and Coastal Prairie Chapter, a collaboration was established.

The idea is simple yet effective: a dedicated group of volunteers meets every Friday morning from 8 AM to noon to assist refuge staff with hands-on tasks. Activities include habitat management projects, planting native grasses, and maintaining trails, as well as outreach efforts like leading tours, staffing the Visitor Center, or supporting



Natasha Artushin is getting ready to tend to some invasive species | Photo by Jean Stipelcovich

real-time access to important information, share photos, and more. It has helped form a cohesive and effective group that continues to grow.

This partnership exemplifies how community-driven initiatives can bridge gaps in public land management. By actively recruiting from within and outside its membership, and establishing a fixed weekly workday, the TMN Coastal Prairie Chapter has laid a foundation for a strong volunteer team to grow and expand. Volunteers are needed to ensure the long-term health of the refuge's fragile prairie ecosystem — and the survival of the iconic Attwater's prairie-chicken. Interested



Chapter Holiday Party table centerpiece winner, inspired by the new partnership | Photo by Jan Poscovsky

educational programs. This consistent weekly schedule makes it easier for volunteers to commit, while providing the refuge with predictable support that amplifies the staff's capacity.

A key factor in this multi-group effort has been the creation of a public channel in Slack — Team Attwater ([#team-attwater](#) channel). At no cost to

our chapter, we have been able to invite refuge staff, [Friends of Attwater](#) and TMNGLC members to join for the sharing of information about the volunteer opportunities and news at APCNWR. All groups have

individuals can contact the Coastal Prairie Chapter or the refuge directly to join this rewarding effort and make a tangible difference in Texas conservation.



Cross-pollination of TMN chapters: John Pritchard, TMN Gideon Lincecum Chapter with Bert Stipelcovich, TMN Coastal Prairie Chapter

**TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST™
COASTAL PRAIRIE CHAPTER**