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Vol. 8 No. 2

Cypress Basin Texas Master Naturalist Chapter Newsletter

February 2016

Mission of the Texas Master Naturalist

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.

2016 OFFICERS

Stella Barrow - President

Betty Morgan - Vice President

Kristi Thomas - Secretary

Charles Gillis – Treasurer

Linda Richtsmeier – Membership Chairman

Pat Sawyer and Michael Mathews - Webmasters

Vanessa Adams Neace - Advisor

Doug Weir -Advisor

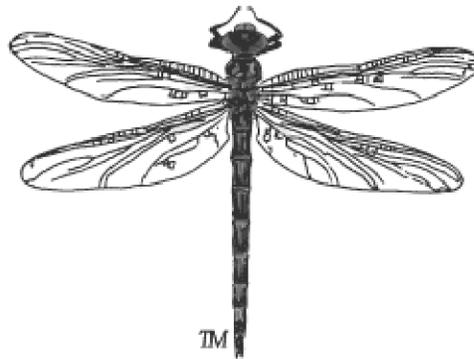
MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

Speaker: Stacy Blomquist - another way to detect Emerald Ash Borer

Monday February 8 6:30 pm

Jefferson Transportation Center 305 E. Austin

Snippets from Stella



February 2016

January's meeting was filled up with lots to do and energy. I will have the results of our polling exercise and I think you'll be surprised at how our projects stacked up.

Plans are well underway for the "Moon Over Caddo" event. The date is set for Saturday, March 19th, 7:00 pm. That date covers three school district spring breaks; Marshall, Jefferson and Karnack. We are planning activities for kids and families and of course, some moon gazing. Cocoa and Moon Pies are on the menu. The location is the refuge. Details to follow, but go ahead and mark your calendar.

The Paddling Regatta team met this month and the date and location are confirmed: Saturday, April 30th at Shady Glade RV Park and Marina. Same location as last year.

We will have a guest speaker from Louisiana regarding the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) project. Stacy Blomquist is a Biological Science Technician with the Forest Service of Louisiana and has some very interesting information on another technique for detecting the EAB.

The 2016 class met on Friday 1/29 and Saturday 1/30 to begin their training. A very excited and diverse group and I think our chapter will be better for having them join us!!

There have been some changes to logging in for VMS. Be on the lookout for emails to explain the changes. Linda also needs you to update your profiles in VMS, so please respond to her emails.

See you February 8th at the Transportation Center at 6:30pm!

SB

**CYPRESS BASIN TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST
MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 11, 2016**

ATTENDING: 28 members – Kristi Thomas, David Skinner, Betty Morgan, Linda Richtsmeier, Michael Mathews, Jill Wright, Karen Williams, Barbara Judkins, Vicki and David Gilliland, Pat and ViAnn Sawyer, Kay Watson, Sandra Hooker, Ted and Stella Barrow, Tom Walker, Susan and Steve Sedberry, Ellen and Floyd Anderson, Charlene Franks, Pam Andrews, Becky Gullette, Herman Hazard, Sue Simmons, Pam Watts, Charles Gillis, Vanessa Neace, (advisor), Libby Horton and Mike Gannon (Collins Academy)

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by President Stella Barrow. Stella welcomed all and announced that the 2016 class has enough to proceed, and welcomed Donna and Keith Shands from Upshur County as attendees from this incoming class.

Karen Williams was acknowledged with a plaque and appreciation for two years of service as Treasurer for the chapter.

PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES: Minutes from prior meeting were unanimously accepted with a motion by Ted, seconded by Barbara.

TREASURER REPORT: Per Charles, balance is \$5,773.82, of which \$3,253.85 is the balance earmarked as Regatta funds. Reimbursements and purchases since November meeting totaled \$1,085.68 and were detailed. Ted motioned to approve, Linda seconded, unanimously approved.

Michael gave a quick update on photography class planned for members, as well as for the photography walk project with a target date of end of April to early May. He advised that there is a newly named discussion topic on www.easttexasnaturalists.com site for Photo Walk, and discussions among members should be taking place there.

Barbara gave an update on moon gazing event from the planning meeting prior; another is set for Sat. 1/16 and again on 2/4, with event date of 3/15 from 5:30 – 8:30 and a rain date of 4/12 at the same times. Members wanting to join in planning activities, food, etc., come to the meetings.

Stella passed around a list of projects to prioritize for 2016, asking members to rank items in accordance with interest and on a scale of 1-10 using the software that was purchased with Collins Academy. Mike Gannon officiated the process and will tally the results.

2016 DUES: Sheets were circulated for update of information, and annual membership dues were collected.

INSTALLATION OF NEW OFFICERS: Michael had set up email voting, and installation of 2016 officers as follows was proposed: President, Stella Barrow, Vice President, Betty Morgan, Secretary, Kristi Thomas, and Treasurer, Charles Gillis. Linda motioned, Carl seconded, with unanimous approval by the group.

RECOGNITION OF APPOINTED POSITIONS: Per Stella, the Chapter Operating Handbook allows to take advantage of newly appointed positions - Membership Director, Linda Richtsmeier, Communications Director, Michael Mathews, and New Class Representative, Jill Wright. These positions were discussed and unanimously approved at the board meeting on 1/5/16.

ANNUAL AWARDS: Betty handed out awards by classes, and Michael and Pat took photos.

GENERAL ITEMS: OLD BUSINESS

Signup sheets were circulated for several ongoing projects, including Earth Day Dallas, 4/22-24th and Paddling Regatta 4/30/16. Need to start working on plans and getting committees together for these events pretty quickly.

Vanessa gave an update on Working Dogs for Conservation. Film crew will be on Lake Texoma 1/19 and 1/20 to make short videos, then coming to Tyler on 1/29 at 10:00. Those wanting to be involved in May at the event on Caddo are encouraged to attend at Tyler Nature Center, and a signup sheet was circulated.

NEW BUSINESS

Stella listed work days at Refuge, announced new class beginning 1/29 details, and noted that Betty will be sending a schedule out for that. Likelihood that speakers this year will be new, so could be opportunities for members to get AT.

The new Advanced Training topic for 2016 as Native Wildflowers was announced, and Betty started the year off with an informative session on *Salvia coccinea*, complete with plants, seeds, web resources, and a lot of good information.

Floyd volunteered for the February AT Native Wildflower topic.

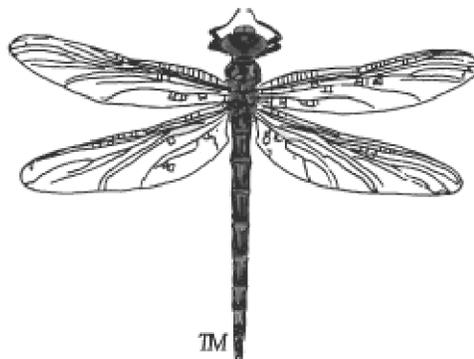
ADJOURNMENT: at 8:20 p.m.

VOLUNTEER HOURS: 1.5 hour

ADVANCED TRAINING: .25 hour

PLUS YOUR TRAVEL:

Submitted by Kristi Thomas, Secretary



SATURDAY WORK DAY

FEBRUARY 13

9:00 a.m.

CADDO LAKE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

TIME TO CLEAN OUT BLUEBIRD BOXES

Tom Walker reminds us that we need to clean out our bluebird boxes now. As a reminder you should complete that task by Valentine's Day. All other bird houses should be cleaned also. Cleaning means using a gloved hand to removed the old nest, bird droppings, and wasp nests from the structures. Avoid breathing the "stuff" removed.



Extended Schedule of Events

February 2, 2016 (Tuesday)

World Wetland Day Community Meeting (Caddo Lake Institute)
Karnack Community Center
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Meeting with a program focusing on the environmental health of the Caddo Lake System.

February 3, 2016 (Wednesday)

Habitat Restoration Project at Duck Pond (John Stephens)
Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge
10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Lunch at Refuge Visitor's Center for volunteers

Wetland habitat improvement at the Duck Pond at CLNWR. Participants should bring dibble bars/shovels and rubber boots. Improved nuttall oaks and pin oak bare root seedlings will be installed around the waterline. Lunch will be provided at the CLNWR Visitors Center. Dress for the weather. Rubber boots of knee length or waders needed.

February 5, 2016 (Friday) – Make Up Date

February 10, 2016 (Wednesday)

Habitat Restoration Project at TPWD Wildlife Management Area (Vanessa Neace)
10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Lunch delivered to site for volunteers

Wetland habitat improvement at the TPWD Wildlife Management Area at Caddo Lake. Participants should bring dibble bars/shovels and rubber boots. Water oak bare root seedlings will be installed either on an island or the mainland. Rubber boots of knee length or waders may be needed. Lunch will be provided at or near the site for volunteers. Dress for the weather.

February 12, 2016 (Friday) – Make Up Date

(continued on the next page)

February 13, 2016 (Saturday)

Habitat Restoration Project at Don Rainey property (Diamond Don Rainey)

10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Lunch delivered to site for volunteers

Wetland habitat improvements on private property. Participants should bring dibble bars/shovels and rubber boots. Chinkapin oak, nuttall oak, cherrybark oak, and pin oak will be installed in multiple areas. Participants should bring dibble bars/shovels and rubber boots. Lunch will be provided volunteers.

February 17, 2016 (Wednesday)

Habitat Restoration Project at Don Rainey property (Diamond Don Rainey)

10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Lunch delivered to site for volunteers

Wetland habitat improvements on private property. Volunteers will seed wildflowers and install bare root seedlings. Participants should dress for the weather. Lunch will be provided volunteers.

February 19, 2016 (Friday) – Make Up Date

February 24, 2016 (Wednesday)

Habitat Restoration Project at Port Jefferson History & Nature Center (City of Jefferson)

10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Lunch provided.

Urban wildscape garden improvements including the thinning and transplanting of native grasses, seeding of native wildflowers such as milkweed, and the pulling of unwanted grasses and winter weeds. Lunch will be provided volunteers.

March 15, 2016 (Tuesday) – Make Up Date

CYPRESS BASIN CHAPTER DIRECTIVES

IF YOU PLAN TO VOLUNTEER FOR ANY OF THE ACTIVITIES ON FEB. 3, 10, 13, 17, AND/OR 24 PLEASE EMAIL LIBBY HORTON IN ADVANCE TO TELL HER THAT YOU WILL BE THERE SO YOU WILL BE INCLUDED IN PLANS AND THE LUNCH COUNT.

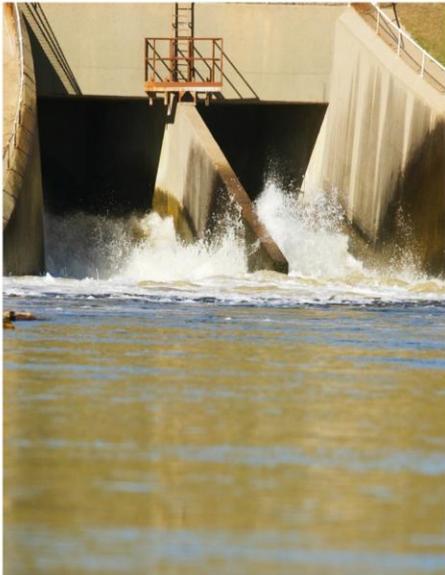
LIBBY HORTON - elizabethhorton.eie56@yahoo.com

The Caddo Lake Institute meeting in Karnack on Feb. 2 will count as Advanced Training.

All other opportunities will count as volunteer service hours.

Water, Water, Everywhere . . . 2016 will be a Great Year!*

by Kristi Mears Thomas *Reprinted from East Texas Naturalist Blog by permission of the author



As we look around us now, it's hard to imagine that not very long ago we were commiserating about the lack of rain and considering hosting community rain dances! Our area lakes have seen some low levels, but Mother Nature more than made up for the long-withheld wet stuff in December. Over a course of just one weekend, we saw that deluge of water hyacinth, many of the parks and launch ramps closed, and pelicans roosting on the last bit of tin on the tops of day use picnic tables!

While it's been beautiful to see the area reservoirs filled to the brim, this double-edged sword is not without consequence....yes, the birds and other wildlife seem to love it, but if you were one of the fortunate folks who live lakeside and had to watch a few weeks back with bated breath as Lake O' the Pines jumped by leaps and bounds, it wasn't such a thrill. Friends and family in the surrounding areas had this predicament, and this trade off is not so nice if it's in YOUR back yard, lapping at YOUR door, or mangling YOUR dock! I'd actually taken some photos on Lake O' the Pines that I wanted to post, but did not because it felt wrong. I know too many people that were either trying to procure sandbags or having to travel alternate routes to get to and from their homes to feel good about doing so.

From data on the Corps of Engineers website, Lake O' the Pines was a high of nearly 242 feet, and is dropping now and at under 240. Current release rate is 3,000 CFS, the maximum, so the Big Cypress Bayou is looking good, too. This is 12 feet above normal winter pool. Lake Wright Patman saw record levels of almost 255 feet, and was a whopping 33 feet above normal!

But now, WOW, we can hope to have the best of both worlds; if our springtime rainfall is miraculously paced, we can enjoy the benefits and enter the hot, dry months of summer with cash in the bank. Of course, we all know how quickly this can change - one impulsive spending spree can wipe your account clean, just as many weeks without rain can put us back with exposed banks and stagnant coves.

So, I propose that we all get out and use this gift that many years we do not have. Enjoy our lakes and rivers! Enjoy those areas that aren't always accessible! Paddle the river while there is flow, get on the lake in areas where it is normally too shallow, do some fishing and watch the birds overhead! Let's all make the most of this gift in 2016 while we have it!

INVASIVE SPECIES ARE IN OUR ENVIRONMENT

Japanese Climbing Fern *Lygodium japonicum* (Thunb. Ex Murr.) Sw.*

by Vanessa Neace *Reprinted from East Texas Naturalist Blog by permission of the author

During this time of year, some of us are eager to see more green in the rather barren east Texas woods of winter. Sometimes the green we see is not as welcome as we might first believe. While there are many pleasant shades of green out there that come from several types of evergreen trees and vines, there is one shade of green that my eye is particularly trained upon: Japanese Climbing Fern.



The Japanese Climbing Fern is native to Asia and tropical Australia. Like many other invasive species, it was introduced here due to its striking appearance and its ease of cultivation in local gardens. After its introduction in the 1930's, it became a very popular garden addition.

Unfortunately, while it may make a particular corner of a garden "pop" with its striking leaves and healthy growth, its escape into our natural habitats can be disastrous. Japanese Climbing Fern can form dense mats, twining and climbing over anything in its way: trees, shrubs, telephone poles, etc. The dense growth shades out native species and reduces diversity in a habitat.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 8: Cypress Basin Chapter Monthly Meeting 6:30 p.m.

February 13: Saturday Work Day at Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge 9 a.m.

February 26-27: Training Weekend for New Class

2016 MEETING DATES

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

*Pot Luck

** Family Social &
Awards

2016 WORK DAYS

January 16
February 13
March 19
April 16
May 14
June 18
July 16
August 13
September 17
October 15
November 19

2016 NEW CLASS TRAINING DATES

January 29 - Collins Academy
January 30 - CLNWR
February 26 - Collins Academy
February 27 - CLNWR
April 1 - Collins Academy
April 2 - CLNWR
May 6 - TBA
May - 7 TBA

Cypress Basin members are encouraged to submit articles for the monthly newsletters. Original articles of interest to members are greatly appreciated. Items for Events and Notices are welcomed. Submissions are due on the first Saturday of each month.

Contact Betty by email @ bgmorgan46@yahoo.com or mail to: 100 Lakeview Circle, Jefferson, TX 75657.