



THE PADDLEFISH

Briefings from Becky

Well hasn't this been an interesting East Texas summer? We didn't start our more extreme heat until just a couple of weeks ago. But now, I'm actually comfortable sitting on the patio as I write these Briefings. Nature continues to amaze. I've really been impressed with the great cloud "art" we've had in this summer's skies. Even though it's hot during the day, mornings and evenings are great for appreciating the beauty around you.

Those who did the Daingerfield State Park and/or Tyler State Park field trips had a great time. These trips were very informative and gave us a chance to visit some beautiful parks. Birds and plants in abundance!!!

Our meeting next Monday, August 9 will be held at the Group Hall at Caddo Lake State Park. The Texas Forest Service will provide an AT program on Prescribed Burning. Please read the article in the newsletter. Also, if you can go early enough to enjoy the park, I urge you to do so. Picnic on the hill or down by Cypress Bayou, walk the trails (there's a short loop as well as longer ones).

Thank you, Susan Sedberry and Caroline Hughes, for the great job you have done and are doing in managing our New Training Class. Getting the presenters together, arranging venues, recruiting, and communicating with new trainees takes a lot of time and patience. Thank you, thank you!

All members can take part in these training programs. Even if you don't need the AT, you can earn VT for participation in these classes because you are contributing your time to develop relationships with the new trainees. AND since our training will be at Lake O' the Pines, you will have some opportunities to experience an area that has some similarities but a great deal of difference from what we can experience at down river.

CLNWR buildings are still closed but we will continue workdays, Blue-bird Buddies, Bird Herd. And we'll be looking ahead at trail hosting at CLNWR. We hope to have some opportunities to help at CLSP as well. Our Adopt-A-Paddling Trail and Adopt-A-Loop folks are working. We're revisiting kiosk signage for the paddling trails to try to get those improved.

You have many opportunities to experience, learn about and care for our beautiful Cypress Basin area this fall. And your board is already beginning to look ahead at what we might do in 2022. We plan to survey the membership this fall. Please let us know what your ideas are.



~Becky Gullette, CBTMN President

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"We travel not to escape life, but for life not to escape us." – Unknown

**Cypress Basin Texas Master Naturalists
Financial Report for
June 1, 2021—June 30, 2021**

Beginning Bank Balance, 06/01/2021			\$ 14,934.00
Add Deposits:			
Annual Dues	50.00		
Cookbook sales	100.00		
New Member	260.00		
Tee Shirts Sales	<u>30.00</u>	+ 440.00	
Less Expenses:			
June meeting-water	7.08		
Memorial-Overdyke	500.00	- <u>507.08</u>	
Ending Balance, 06/30/2021			<u>\$14,866.92</u>
	Flotilla Funds	\$ 7,568.90	
	General Funds	<u>7,298.02</u>	
			<u>\$14,866.92</u>

NOTES:

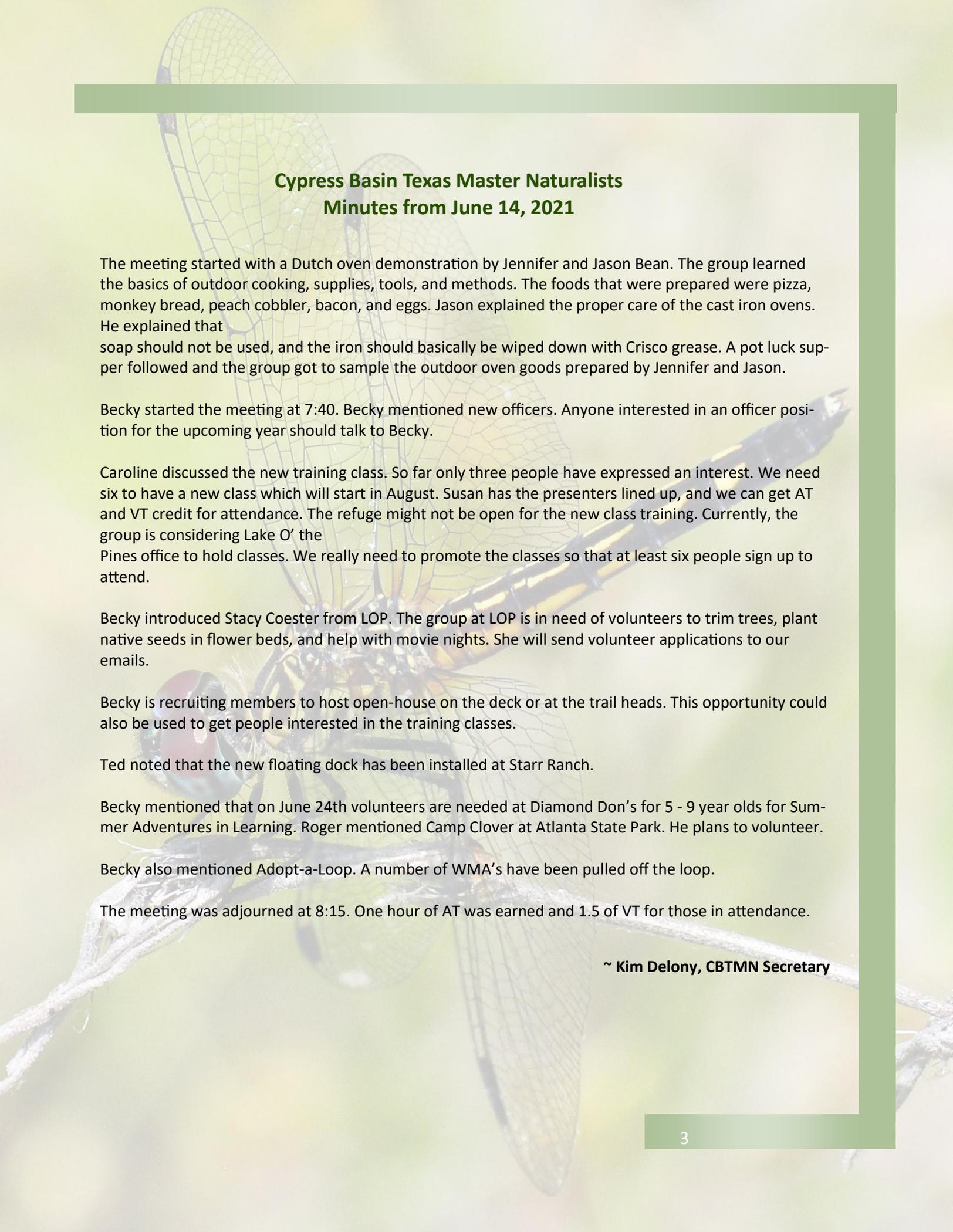
~ Submitted by Charles Gillis, CBTMN Treasurer

**Cypress Basin Texas Master Naturalists
Financial Report for
July 1, 2021—July 31, 2021**

Beginning Bank Balance, 07/01/2021			\$ 14,866.92
Add Deposits:			0.00
Less Expenses:			
Plaques for Library & Bench		- <u>371.99</u>	
Ending Balance, 07/31/2021			<u>\$14,494.93</u>
	Flotilla Funds	\$ 7,568.90	
	General Funds	<u>6,926.03</u>	
			<u>\$14,494.93</u>

NOTES: Our chapter has thus far received \$270.48 from Amazon Smile, an Amazon program that donates a portion of each sale to designated charities. It does not cost the buyer but the buyer must go to Amazon Smile and register **Cypress Basin Texas Master Naturalists** as their intended recipient. If you shop Amazon and do not have a charity selected, please consider selecting our chapter. It does not change the price of the item ordered, you only have to sign up once and you can change charities later if you wish.

~ Submitted by Charles Gillis, CBTMN Treasurer



Cypress Basin Texas Master Naturalists Minutes from June 14, 2021

The meeting started with a Dutch oven demonstration by Jennifer and Jason Bean. The group learned the basics of outdoor cooking, supplies, tools, and methods. The foods that were prepared were pizza, monkey bread, peach cobbler, bacon, and eggs. Jason explained the proper care of the cast iron ovens. He explained that soap should not be used, and the iron should basically be wiped down with Crisco grease. A pot luck supper followed and the group got to sample the outdoor oven goods prepared by Jennifer and Jason.

Becky started the meeting at 7:40. Becky mentioned new officers. Anyone interested in an officer position for the upcoming year should talk to Becky.

Caroline discussed the new training class. So far only three people have expressed an interest. We need six to have a new class which will start in August. Susan has the presenters lined up, and we can get AT and VT credit for attendance. The refuge might not be open for the new class training. Currently, the group is considering Lake O' the Pines office to hold classes. We really need to promote the classes so that at least six people sign up to attend.

Becky introduced Stacy Coester from LOP. The group at LOP is in need of volunteers to trim trees, plant native seeds in flower beds, and help with movie nights. She will send volunteer applications to our emails.

Becky is recruiting members to host open-house on the deck or at the trail heads. This opportunity could also be used to get people interested in the training classes.

Ted noted that the new floating dock has been installed at Starr Ranch.

Becky mentioned that on June 24th volunteers are needed at Diamond Don's for 5 - 9 year olds for Summer Adventures in Learning. Roger mentioned Camp Clover at Atlanta State Park. He plans to volunteer.

Becky also mentioned Adopt-a-Loop. A number of WMA's have been pulled off the loop.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15. One hour of AT was earned and 1.5 of VT for those in attendance.

~ Kim Delony, CBTMN Secretary

Fall 2021 Training Class

The 2021 Training Class is just weeks away from starting! A list of all the dates and presenters is attached. The Refuge is still closed to the public, so our location has moved to the Lake of the Pines Army Corps of Engineers Office, located on the southeast end of the lake. It's about the same drive time as to the Kellyville building where we have our monthly meetings. They have a lovely meeting room behind their office building and with the exception of the first class, all classes will take place there. We have 5 trainees signed up and we would love to see your friendly face there as well, both to meet the new folks and get either some VT or AT, as well as help with the food. Hope to see you there!



~Caroline Hughes and Susan Sedberry, Co-Training Directors

2021 Presenter's Schedule – CBTMN Training Class

Friday, August 20 6-9PM Collins Academy, Jefferson Orientation/Program Overview
Intro to TMN program - Caroline Hughes, Co-Training Director & Becky Gullette, Chapter President
Volunteer Management System and How It Works – Linda Richtsmeier, Chapter VMS Manager
Taxonomy, the Nature of Naming (Unit 10) – Becky Gullette, Chapter President
Ethics and TMN Code of Conduct

Saturday, August 21 8:30-5pm Army Corps of Engineers Office 2669 FM 726, Jefferson 75657
9am-12pm Ecological Regions/Concepts/Ecosystems (Units 4-6) – Penny Wilkerson, TPWD
1-4:30pm Herpetology (Unit 15) – Micha Petty, President, Louisiana Exotic Animal Resource Network
4:30-5pm Training Wrap Up

Friday, September 17 6-9pm Army Corps of Engineers Office
6-8:30pm Mammalogy (Unit 16) - Heidi Bailey, TPWD, Wildlife Biologist
8:30-9pm Trainee Informational Tidbits

Saturday, September 18 8:30am-5pm Army Corps of Engineers Office
9am-12pm Ornithology (Unit 12) – David Brotherton, Birder Extraordinaire and author of *100 Birds of Morris County*
1-4:30 Archaeology (Unit 2) – Todd McMakin, Sr. Archaeologist and owner, StonePointServices, Inc. Tyler, TX
4:30-5pm Training Wrap Up

Friday, October 15 6-9PM Army Corps of Engineers Office
6-8:30pm Water Resources of Texas (Unit 9) – Dr. Roy Darville, Professor ETBU
8:30-9pm Trainee Informational Tidbits

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Saturday, October 16 8:30-5pm Army Corps of Engineers Office

9am-12pm Ichthyology (Unit 14) – Tim Bister and Margaret Stadig, TPWD, Fisheries Div.
1-4:30pm Entomology (Unit 13) – Dr. Tony Bosworth, Ret. Professor Tx. State University
4:30-5pm Training Wrap Up

Friday, November 5 6-9pm Army Corps of Engineers Office

6-8:30pm Forest Ecology and Management (Unit 17) – Ricky Maxey, Army Corps of Engineers, LOP
8:30-9pm – Trainee Informational Tidbits

Saturday, November 6 8:50-5pm Army Corps of Engineers Office

9am-12pm Laws & Ethics/Volunteers as Teachers/Citizen Science (Units 22-24) – Boyd Sanders, TPWD, Tyler State Park
1-4:30 TBD
4:30-5 Training Wrap Up

****Be prepared for some outside field study (closed-toed shoes/comfortable seasonal clothing/layers). We will provide sunscreen and bug repellent when needed. Please bring a sack lunch for Saturdays. We will have coffee and water.**

Please call Susan Sedberry at 972.890.3620 or Caroline Hughes at 903.821.4264 with any questions.

“Live in the sunshine. Swim in the sea. Drink in the wild air.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson



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“On my walks, if I hear a bird I don’t recognize, I just open the app, hit record and it identifies it quickly with a picture as well. For folks that aren’t experienced birders this is great.”

Prescribed Burning Explained

When Texans see a pillar of smoke rising out of a forest or state park, our gut instinct is always the same: wildfire. However, that isn't always the case.

Prescribed burning has become one of the most efficient and effective tools for land management in the state of Texas, and some of the state's leading experts in wildland fire management—from Texas A&M Forest Service to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department—can't emphasize its merits enough.

"Prescribed burning helps reduce fuel loading," explained Connor Murnane, a district forester with the Texas A&M Forest Service. "We see fuel as a woody, shrubby or herbaceous species that can easily burn."

Eliminating some of this excess "fuel" reduces the risk and severity of potential wildfires. If there's not enough brush or grass on the ground for a fire to feed on, it won't get as hot or as big, and it's less likely for the flames to reach the canopy of more established trees. It can also help slow down a raging wildfire, giving Texas A&M Forest Service and local firefighters a better shot at containment.



It feels counter-intuitive to light a fire in dry, burnable conditions, and many Texans believe that humans should simply "get out of the way" and let nature run its course, but the result would mean disbanding fire suppression all together. Since fire suppression has been integral to the establishment and upkeep of communities across Texas, one of the main issues facing wildland fire management is the build-up of fuels from about a hundred years of unnatural fire suppression.

"For a long time, we excluded fire," said Chris Schenck, the State Fire Program Leader for the wildlife division of Texas Parks and Wildlife. "At the turn of the 20th century, we looked at fighting fires as almost the moral equivalent of war."

In fact, one of the earliest laws in Texas prohibited the burning of grass. People didn't realize that fire is a natural part of the Texas landscape. Before Texas was fully settled, lightning would strike in the heart of an eastern pine forest—or on the grassy plains of the Panhandle—and spark a fire to sweep across the land, purging it of invasive species, diseases and unwanted undergrowth. It was an essential element that helped uphold the natural balance.

"Native Americans recognized the importance of fire in their environment," said Murnane. "They would often intentionally light fires to create a better habitat for hunting or browsing of wildlife species."

East Texas is what Murnane calls a "fire-dependent ecosystem," and the wall of understory brush – namely yaupon, sweetgum, Chinese tallow and other invasive species – is unnatural. Because of the lack of fire sup-

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pression by humans, east Texas used to look more like a pine meadow or savannah, with beautiful open spaces filled with green grasses and wildflowers between the trees. And while that kind of environment is visually pleasing and aesthetic to us, it's also attractive to wildlife.

“One of the immediate positive results of any prescribed fire is forage production and habitat improvement,” said Schenck. “Better feed means better care and capacity for the land, and therefore greater diversity of species, both wild and domestic.”

Wildlife depends on open space and healthy plant life for foraging – including grasses, fruits, seeds and other vegetation – and out of the ashes of a prescribed fire rises healthy new plants. The trick, it seems, is to avoid fully incinerating the brush.

“Depending on the fire’s intensity, the ash produced following a burn can be full of valuable nutrients,” said Mike Lloyd, a Wildland Fire Manager with Texas State Parks.



Prescribed burning breaks down the chemical composition of organic matter, recycling nutrients back into the soil. According to [THIS STUDY](#) by Leonard F. DeBano, some of those nutrients are “volatilized” or lost, but most are made more readily available to plants and native organisms. The fire acts as a mineralizing agent, making nutrients immediately accessible, instead of being gradually recycled over the span of years, or even decades, via decomposition.

Even for us, fire (heat) can make an otherwise inedible substance not only palatable, but more nutritious. Cooking anything too long, however, can leave it charred, vaporizing its nutrients. In the case of forest management, the most endangered element is nitrogen. If a wildfire burns off too much nitrogen, it can adversely affect a wildland ecosystem for decades.

This is one of the many reasons that prescribed burning is so crucial—to prevent wildfires from burning forests past the point of rehabilitation—but it is also a key reason why prescribed burning is so highly regulated, and so carefully conducted. For Texas A&M Forest Service, very specific conditions are required to conduct a prescribed burn.

“It’s extremely weather dependent,” said Murnane. “The winds, the direction of your winds, your mixing heights, what your fuel moisture is at, all sorts of different things, and all of this comes back to the prescribed burn plans that we’re required to write.”

Once a burn plan is in place – which can be written and approved by Texas A&M Forest Service up to six months in advance – foresters look for an ideal weather window to conduct their burn. These usually occur between November and March, during the dormant season. Then it has to be a clear-skies day to help with smoke dispersal, and the winds have to be no less than 5 mph, but no greater than 15 mph. If the winds are too strong it could blow the fire out of control and start an uncontained wildfire, but if the winds are too weak, the fire won’t disperse well and parts of the forest could overheat, burning the roots of trees.

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Prescribed Burning Explained Cont.

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That's why at the W.G. Jones State Forest prescribed burning requires a lot of preparation, and a lot of boots on the ground.

"We get several firefighters dragging drip torches, and several more on type-6 engines that are 'holding' so we don't have a spread or a spot fire," said Murnane. "Then we've got several bulldozers on standby, just in case."

While Texas A&M Forest Service has the resources and capacity to take all of these precautions, not many landowners do. That's why Murnane recommends any landowner interested in conducting a prescribed burn reach out to their local TFS forester or Parks and Wildlife Biologist. According to Murnane, they would be happy to visit the property and give their recommendations. They also have local connections with certified burn vendors that can provide prescribed burning services.



Schenck of Texas Parks and Wildlife even encourages landowners interested in learning how to conduct their own prescribed burns to reach out to their local forester or TPWD Regional Fire Coordinator.

"Because Texas is 95% privately owned, one of our roles is to provide landowners with technical guidance, and the development of a burn plan," said Schenck. "Then we help them implement it. We teach them how to use their prescribed fire tools, how to pre-

pare their land and how to implement that fire."

Schenck was a federal wildland firefighter for years, but he still sees a need for prescribed burns across the state. This is, in part, because he's witnessed the benefits of prescribed burning firsthand: from the clearing and rejuvenation of Wildlife Management Areas, to the survival of forests and structures during the catastrophic wildfires of 2011. In Bastrop, Schenck and Lloyd recall how areas that had received a prescribed burn the year before survived virtually unscathed.

"Believe it or not, prescribed burning saved a lot of the structures in those parks because we had burned the year prior," said Lloyd. "At the Bastrop state park, I wonder if those cabins would've made it if we hadn't implemented a prescribed burn around them the year before."

A survey conducted by the Coalition of Prescribed Fire Councils (CPFC) and Texas A&M Forest Service found that over 325,000 acres of land in Texas were successfully treated with prescribed burns in 2019. That number is down from the year prior, but even 2018's record amount is shy of where Texas A&M Forest Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife would like it to be.

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“For Texas to get enough prescribed fires safely on the landscape, it’s going to take a lot of people,” said Schenck. “But if you’re going to light ‘em, you’ve got to know how to fight ‘em.”

Fortunately, Texas A&M Forest Service does both. They also provide ample resources to help landowners conduct their own prescribed fires – from grants and cost-shares to help subsidize the price of a prescribed burn vendor, to courses and trainings on how to become qualified to conduct prescribed burns yourself. But the most important element, for both Texas A&M Forest Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife, is educating the public.

If you’re a home or landowner interested in conducting a prescribed burn on your property, visit the [PRESCRIBED BURNS](#) page of the Texas A&M Forest Service website. There’s also this [INTERACTIVE MAP](#) to help you determine your eligibility for a Prescribed Fire Grant, with additional information on how to apply [HERE](#).



This article is reprinted from the Texas Forestry Association March/April 2021 issue of “Texas Forestry” with approval of the Texas Forestry Association. The author is Dr. Brian Oswald, Professor of Forestry, Stephen F. Austin University.

“Keep your face to the sunshine and you will never see the shadows.” — *Helen Keller*

Texas Master Naturalist

2021 Annual Meeting

Agenda & Registration Prices

	In-Person - \$325	Virtual - \$100
Thursday 10/21	11:00am-2:00pm - Chapter Leadership Luncheon Afternoon Field Sessions Social Dinner	
Friday 10/22	Morning Field Sessions 8:00am - 5:30pm - Technical Sessions 12:30-1:30pm - Welcome & Keynote Address 7:00pm - 8:30pm - Wonders of North Texas Nature Keynote Address	
Saturday 10/23	All Day Field Sessions 8:30am - 5:00pm - Technical Sessions 12:00-1:00pm - TMN Science Fair Winners Presentation 6:30pm - 8:00pm - Awards Reception	
Sunday 10/24	8:00am - 9:00am - Contest Awards & 2022 Certification Pin Announcement *Lodging not included	



Texas Master Naturalist 2021 Annual Meeting

October 21st-24th

Registration is now open!

this year’s meeting as a **HYBRID Event** – both online and in-person at the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport Marriott in Irving, Texas. The event will be held the weekend of **Thursday October 21st through Sunday the 24th, 2021** with plenty of activities throughout the event! Join us for a long weekend of greenspace adventures in the hideaways of our largest urban area in Texas.

<https://txmn.tamu.edu/2021-annual-meeting/>

Meetings, Training & Volunteer Opportunities

OFFICERS:

Becky Gulette
President

Susan Sedberry
Vice President

Kim Delony
Secretary

Charles Gillis
Treasurer

Caroline Hughes
Susan Sedberry
Training Co-Directors

TBD
Class Rep.

Linda Richtsmeier
Membership Director

Vanessa Adams
Neace
Advisor

Doug Weir
Advisor

Please note: Where field trips or trainings occur on a regular workday, this does not mean there will be no workday at all. Some may choose to do the workday instead of the special activity. We may group up to do trail work, etc. on a different day. **** All events are pending the lifting of COVID-19**

Join the Bird Herd!



Volunteers needed to maintain the bird blinds at the Refuge . Please contact Kim Deloney.

Join Bluebird Buddies



Volunteers to help maintain the bluebird houses and counts. Please contact Mike Woodruff

#TMNTuesdays



This upcoming #TMNTuesday event will be **Tuesday, August 10th, #TMNTuesday- Fire in the Pines: The Past, Present, and Future of Fire in Bastrop State Park**

We will discuss the fire dependent ecosystem in the park including the conditions that led to the historic wildfire of 2011 and its effects on that ecosystem. We will look at the restoration techniques currently being applied and what best management practices will keep fire a healthy part of the landscape. Participants will be empowered to manage and advocate for resilient habitats.

Go to <https://txmn.tamu.edu/tmntuesdays/#august> to register.

2021 Meeting Dates

Sep 13
Oct 11
Nov 8
Dec 13

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

COMING SOON! Mark your calendars.



Texas Master Naturalist
2021 Annual Meeting
October 21st-24th

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