

El Camino Real Texas Master Naturalist

Minutes for September 14, 2023

All Saints Episcopal Church, 5:30 pm

- I. Welcome
 - a. Potluck Dinner, 5:30 pm, featuring alligator jerky.
 - b. Speaker: Eric Neubauer gave a preview of his presentation at the upcoming annual meeting, on identifying wolf spiders in the wild. He shared his techniques for photographing and identifying his favorite group of arachnids.
- II. Chapter Meeting Notes from Carolyn Henderson, President:
 - a. We need a group photo of our chapter. Members stayed after the meeting to be in the photo. See attached.
 - b. The "Animal Tracks" program training has been postponed due to illness. Please contact Donna Lewis or Joyce Conner. This volunteer opportunity is to show disabled adults about animal tracks and will be lots of fun. The event will be in October or November.
 - c. There will be a Wildscape Workday on Saturday, September 16, starting at 10am. We are preparing for a presentation to the local Master Gardener group. The presentation will be on Wednesday, September 20 at 10am. Thanks to the organizing committee of Jackie Thornton, Connie Anderle, Ann Collins, and Linda Jo Conn.
 - d. A Walk the Rancheria Grande event will take place on Saturday, October 14. The free event is coordinated with the Cameron Steak, Stein and Wine festival and is open to 30 attendees. Members of our chapter who are not attending the Annual Meeting are encouraged to come help out with the event, which is being run by Mike Conner, Joyce Conner, and John Pruett. It is not necessary to climb the mountain to volunteer and help out.
 - e. The class on identifying Texas grasses with Dr. Dale Kruse will begin on Tuesday, September 19. Note that the agenda had a different date.
 - f. The October Chapter Meeting will be held on Thursday, October 19, since the regular schedule conflicts with the Annual Meeting. Members will present highlights of sessions and field trips they attended.
 - g. We are looking for nominations for President and Vice President of the chapter. Please contact Donna Lewis or Alan Rudd if you have nominations.
 - h. Thanks to Connie Anderle for donating a karaoke machine we can use as a PA for our speakers. We will next purchase a lapel microphone, which Patricia Coombs has graciously offered to pay for.
- III. Board and Department Reports
 - a. Liz Lewis, Vice President: she is taking suggestions for speakers for next year. She already has some volunteers!
 - b. Mike Conner, Treasurer: We have around \$5,000 in the treasury. Now is the time to start paying \$30 dues for next year. Mike prefers to receive a photo of the back and front of

your check, which you can email him or send via postal mail. 512-740-8702 or mike@conner.net

- c. Sue Ann Kendall, Secretary: Approval of August minutes (thank you to the substitute secretary) – Kim Summers moved to approve, and Dorothy Mayer seconded. The motion passed. Sue Ann also encouraged members and friends of the chapter to contribute to our blog, which is read by over 500 subscribers as well as blog visitors. You don't need to write a novel; just observe life around you and share it!
 - d. Lisa Milewski, Membership: Linda Burgess and Don Travis were recertified.
 - e. Don Travis/Michelle Lopez, Communications: Michelle is making business cards for us to share at events and with people we meet.
 - f. Pamela Neeley, AT Certification: No report.
 - g. Donna Lewis, Project Coordinator: not present.
 - h. Alan Rudd, Student Training: Alan has been thinking through suggestions he received for training dates and times going forward. He is inclined to start the next class in January 2025. The idea is to get back into alternating with Master Gardener training.
 - i. Linda Jo Conn, State Representative and iNaturalist Coordinator: The WOW award was a beautiful leopard frog photographed by Debra Sorenson (attached). Linda Jo re-introduced the idea of "Feed the Frog," a donation jar where people unable to contribute food can donate toward meal supplies for our potlucks. She also thanked our chapter for being friendly to each other and welcoming of new people.
- IV. Old Business
- a. Linda Jo Conn reported that the people developing solar farms north of Cameron and near Thorndale have been claiming that our chapter and TPWD have been consulting with them on their projects. Other than one visit, we have NOT been helping out, so please clarify this if it comes up.
- V. New Business
- a. Carolyn Henderson shared that a science group with the US Geological Survey wants people to collect dead monarch butterflies and send them in to them. They are investigating what has been killing the butterflies. The newspaper article she shared is attached.
- VI. Adjourn
- a. Presentation 1.5 hours AT
 - b. Meeting .5 hours VT at a chapter meeting
 - c. 1 hour hospitality for those who brought food

Minutes submitted by Sue Ann Kendall, Chapter Secretary 9/15/2023





Southern Leopard Frog

Lithobates sphenoccephalus

The “Highly Unofficial”

ECR WOW! iNaturalist.org

Observation of the Month Award for

August 2023

Awarded to

Debra Sorenson

<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/179770919>

Kansas looking for Texas butterflies

Texas residents are being asked to mail in deceased butterflies, moths and skippers to help U.S. Geological Survey scientists establish a Lepidoptera Research Collection (LRC).

The pilot study for this citizen science invitation includes Texas, Alabama, Georgia, Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma.

These specimens will help USGS scientists identify contaminants and environmental factors which may be contributing to the decline of insect

populations. Citizen participation will ensure enough specimens throughout the nation are available to answer research questions.

The deadline is Nov. 1.

"There are some questions that can't effectively be answered without help from a lot of people. It's what makes citizen science so special and valuable," said Julie Dietze, USGS scientist-in-charge of the effort. "Collections like this one are important because they have the potential

to provide scientists now, and 20 years from now, access to specimens.

Without the specimens it will be far more difficult to answer questions related to contaminants and environmental health."

Citizens can mail their specimens to:

USGS LRC
1217 Biltmore Drive
Lawrence, KS 66049

Based on the response and number of specimens received

so far, the collection efforts may continue beyond November into 2024.

Insects must already be dead when collected and larger than two inches.

They cannot be an endangered or threatened under state law.

All insects should be placed in a resealable plastic bag and can be damaged. Do not freeze, and ship within three days.

