

The EFCTMN Newsletter

May , 2007

Vol 8, No.5

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May Meeting at the Extension Office 9:30AM, 5/17/07:

Our own Dr. Betsy Schenck will be giving a talk on the medical challenges EFCMNS may face in the field. Here's her bio:

Dr. Betsy Schenck opened The Family Practice in 1979 but sold it in 1984 to work in emergency medicine. She worked for the Denton Regional Emergency Department from 1991 until her retirement in 2005. In 2006, she came out of retirement to work at UNT's health center where she now works 2-3 days a week. Dr. Schenck is a member of the EFCMN class of 2006.

June Meeting at the Extension Office 9:30 AM, 6/21/07:

Professor Pete Gunter will be speaking on "Environmental Ethics." Here's his bio:

Professor Pete A.Y. Gunter is past president of the Big Thicket Association (1972-74), chairman of the Big Thicket Coordinating Committee (1974-82) and present chairman of the Texas Conservation Alliance (formerly the Texas Committee on Natural Resources). Among his books are The Big Thicket (Jenkins, 1972; University of North Texas Press, 1993) and Texas Land Ethics (University of Texas Press, 1997, with Max Oelschlaeger). He has also published numerous books, articles and reviews relating to philosophy and to environmental concerns. He has been a professor of philosophy at the University of North Texas for 38 years.

Thank You to Angler Education

Participants: Thanks to everyone's effort we had a successful event on Saturday, 4/21. I had one of our troop leaders do a

head count at 10:30 and we had 76 kids and 28 adults. I have on paper 60 kids that went through our class and even a couple of adults. Although, I know that a few didn't get their paper work turned in.

The lack of our handouts from Austin didn't stop my volunteers, they pulled together and came up with stuff to give out. (Thank you Katy, Jan, and Betty). "All" of my volunteers did a awesome job and I would willingly be happy to work along side of any of you at any time. I am looking forward to our next event to do just that.

During our event, everyone I talked with said they were having fun and getting lots of new information. Several adults made comments about our event being very educational and a great experience to share with their families.

I received some great advice from more experienced angler educators and plan on using it on our next event. It was wonderful to meet most of you for the first time in person rather than through email or phone. I look forward to our next event to see you all again.

Thank you again for all your help.

Sincerely,
Tammie Hahn

Thanks to Delay Middle School Event

Participants: I owe each of you heartfelt thanks for your help with the DeLay Middle School group today. Despite a very late start, threatening rain clouds, and the large number of children, I could find nothing but competent, calm (yet enthused) volunteer teachers everywhere I walked. All of you worked so hard in preparation for this event. The DeLay teachers were happy, and most of the children seemed engaged and interested. That is certainly something in itself, as 7th grade can be a very challenging age. Several of the students came to me after the program and thanked me for the opportunity to come to LLELA

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today, and I will pass those thanks on to you all. Teacher comments were positive as well, and I will look for a more detailed evaluation from them within a week or so. I already know some things I'll change for next time, but I want their thoughts (and yours!) as well.

I have records of each person's volunteer hours here at the office (on terribly old-fashioned index cards until I get a database up and running). If you need me to report your volunteer time to the Master Naturalists for you, let me know. I'll be happy to do so.

This kind of program wouldn't be possible at LLELA without your help. I appreciate each of you for all you did. Thanks, and congratulations on a program well-conducted!

With much gratitude,

Lisa Cole
Education Coordinator
Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area
1801 N. Mill St., Suite A
Lewisville, TX 75057
972-219-3930
lisacole@unt.edu
www.ias.unt.edu/llela

Hear Ye Hear Ye....

You MUST see one of the few remaining virgin prairies found within Denton, and more specifically, located on the NORTH side of EAST University Drive and Ruddell Street intersection.

The current attraction is blueish-purple spiderwort (*Tradescantia ohioensis*). It is in full bloom during mid-day (10 a.m to 2-3 p.m.), and covers about 3 acres. MAGNIFICENT beyond words. The best display I've ever seen on this property, and I've photographed (w/permission) from this property for about 10 years. Please oh please take a minute to drive by and soak in the beauty before it gets mowed. (Remember, mid-day; you will not find

open blooms after 3-ish).

You'll get the best view by driving westbound on University Drive, between Redwood and Glenwood. There is a (neglected) beige-colored brick house up on the hill, and the best blooms are located to the east & front of house.

Spiderworts enjoy prairie life, but will tolerate part shade; however, these love the full sun and the slope of well-drained sandy soil. Don't miss this year's display on E. Univ. Dr.. You may want to change the Texas state flower from bluebonnet to spiderwort after witnessing this scene!!!!

hugs, Dorothy Thetford

Help the Wild Turtle: 4/24 LLELA event:

You may recall Diana Orr Leggett (our bunny and wildlife rescue friend.) This story below was sent to me from Wild Rescue regarding the harvesting of many species of turtles and other wildlife species in Texas. You may have seen stories on the local TV news recently about the decreasing populations of turtles in Texas. Here is an opportunity as individuals to contribute your voice to Austin. Click on the link below for public comments and under the heading on the TPWD page " Proposed Regulation Changes" click on Commercial Nongame Regulations. Here you will find the "white paper" including all the species affected by the proposed regulation change. This same link allows you to comment via e-mail, below is the snail mail address too.

Please remember this is individual comment, as Master Naturalist is a non-political group, do not use the organization name or represent any comments as other than your own personal view.

Highlights of E-mail From Wild Rescue

Many of us turtle and herp lovers are very excited about this proposal to Texas Parks and wildlife recently described in the Star Telegram article <http://www.star-telegram.com/226/story/58741.html>

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But please, let's not forget, that we are not fully there yet. Please, review and act to protect our Texas turtles.

"The TPW Commission will consider final adoption of the new rules at its May 24 meeting. If adopted May 24, the new rules would take effect in early summer, 20 days after they are published in the Texas Register."

The TPWD website now has the proposed whitelist and says the following About public comments:

"Comments on the proposed rules may be made via the TPWD website or to Robert Macdonald by email at robert.macdonald@tpwd.state.tx.us or by regular mail to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, TX 78744. For specific questions concerning the proposed regulations, anyone may contact Matt Wagner by email at matt.wagner@tpwd.state.tx.us or by regular mail at the address above.."

The rest of the News Release here: <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/newsmedia/releases/?req=20070409d>
The link for public comments here: http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/business/feedback/public_comment/

The best thing to support those new rules would be to attend the meeting in Austin May 24, 2007. However writing letters are the next best thing says Michael Smith (BTPT.org) "Writing letters (snail mail may count more than emails) would be very helpful. If you've written before, think of this as the extra effort that will make your previous letter pay off. Submitted by Karen Mangum."

Reimbursements: Please check with our Treasurer, LeeAnn Jernigan before expending any costs on behalf of the organization. LeeAnn has to ensure that there is money budgeted for any item

before she can reimburse it. The Native Prairies Association of Texas (NPAT) works with landowners to protect native Texas prairies in perpetuity via conservation easements <http://www.texasprairie.org/terms/protect.html>, which can have significant tax benefits.

Service Hour Opportunities (SH)

Bird Festival: To my fellow nature lovers -

I am planning to do a "Flying Wild" Bird Festival for 60+ Junior Girl Scouts and their leaders on International Bird Migration Day (May 12). The program is patterned after "Project Wild" and will be set up as a wide game with students moving to different stations to do their activities. More helpers are needed, but do not need to be bird experts. Of course, I would greatly appreciate those, too. We will have binoculars and could use some folks with bird identification skills. The event will be held at Camp Whispering Cedars (in Southwest Dallas) from 10 am until 2 pm - so helpers would be needed from about 9 until 2:30 or so. Please contact me ASAP if you need more information, can help or to suggest others who might be interested in this project.
Thank you -
Katy Hammon
254-739-2124
bkhammon@sbcglobal.net

City Nature Hikes (SH): I've been asked by the City of Denton Recreational Leader to conduct Nature Hikes at Clear Creek park Jan-May. I've chaired a committee of MN members for our docent-training sessions (w/qualified trainers), and, those members who have participated in the training sessions have received AT hours.

The City Nature Hikes are advertised in the City of Denton PLAY magazine, and are scheduled on Saturdays from 1:00-3:00 p.m. on March 31, April 28, and May 19. For more information, call Tracy, Denton Parks & Recreation, at 940-349-8285. Hikes are open to the public. Cost: \$3. Invite a

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friend.

MN members-at-large are welcomed to join our Nature Hike docents on any/all of the above dates by wearing your MN name tags, but will receive SH credit (vs. AT hours). If there are questions, call me @ 940-382-9344 or email @ <dthetford@mailstation.com>. Dorothy Thetford
Chair, City Nature Hikes

WorkDays at Clear Creek SH Location:
Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center Collins St. parking lot .

Work Days: May 2, 19, 30, 2007.

Confirm work dates with Jan Thompson before coming to the worksite. Jan Thompson Cell - 972-757-5715
Email frickthompson@aol.com

Newsletter Articles (SH): You can receive service hour credit for the time it takes you to research and write articles for the EFCMN newsletter. Articles must pertain to Chapter interests and cannot be political in nature. Furthermore, copyrighted materials cannot be used without the original author's written permission. Send submissions to Theresa Kavi at TLKavi@earthlink.net.

Volunteer for the DFW Wildlife Rescue hotline (SH)! Answer hotline calls from the comfort of your own home. Commit to as little as two hours per week. This is the most convenient, rewarding volunteer work you'll ever do. Hotline volunteers help to reunite juvenile animals with their parents by providing simple instructions to callers who have found a baby bird, squirrel, raccoon or cottontail rabbit. For callers who have found an animal that is injured or orphaned, hotline volunteers connect them with wildlife rehabilitators who can give the animal immediate care. **Call 972-234-WILD today.**

Project List (SH): There is a project list online at our webpage www.efcmn.org. Just about any of these projects can probably use your help. Please get in touch with the contact person listed on the list if you would like to help out.

Note: Standard service hours are available at any time at the Fort Worth Nature Center, BRIT, LLELA and at LISDOLA. It is highly recommended that you contact these sites and let them know you want to help out before you go there. Please see the Fort Worth Nature Center's calendar at www.fwnaturecenter.org , & BRIT's website at www.BRIT.org for details about their service opportunities. You can also contact Rica Potenz at 972-874-7514 about service opportunities available on an ongoing basis at Lewisville Independent School District Outdoor Learning Area (LISDOLA).

Advanced Training Opportunities (AT):

A Cool Season Grasses (AT)workshop will be offered by John Snowden on May 15th, 2007 from 9 - 4PM. The first half of the workshop will be located at John Snowden's in south Arlington. The second half will be located at the Fort Worth Nature Center. There will be a \$10 charge.

For more information and to reserve a spot, please contact Jan Hodson at janhodson@ntin.net.

Dinosaur Valley State Park Birding Trip (AT)

Saturday, May 19, 2007 @ 7:30am Dinosaur Valley State Park "In Search of the Golden-cheeked Warbler" Bird Hike & Plant Hike

Join Cross Timbers Urban Forestry Council on a bird hike in search of a glimpse of the endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler at Dinosaur Valley State Park. Don't miss your chance to see a very special bird that breeds

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nowhere else in the world besides central Texas. Golden-cheeked Warblers are neotropical migrant birds who are listed as federally endangered species. They winter in southern Mexico down to Honduras and spend the spring and summer (their breeding season) in central Texas. Their range reaches up into north central Texas. Cost of the excursion is \$10. Plus there is a \$5 entrance fee into the park - payable at the gate. **Please RSVP with Michelle Villafranca (ecoexcursion@ctufo.org) no later than Friday, May 11. Excursion limited to 10 people.**

For those of you who like to camp out & backpack, some CTUFC members will be camping out Friday & Saturday nights. If you would like to join us, please contact Michelle so she can give you more details.

Michelle Villafranca
Forester, City of Fort Worth
4200 S. Freeway, Suite 2200
Fort Worth, Texas 76115
Ph: 817.871.5729
Fax: 817.871.5724
<http://www.fortworthgov.org/pacs/fwpcsd/forestry/index.htm>

Ray Roberts Lake Guided Nature Hikes, Isle du Bois Unit, Bluestem Grove Camping Area

Saturdays, 3pm: April 7, April 21
Saturdays, 4pm: May 5, May 12, May 19, May 26
Please call 940-686-2080 or email don.whited@tpwd.state.tx.us for more information.

Earthkind Online Modules (AT): If you are short on advanced training hours, we now have a way for you to earn 4 hours of AT from the comfort of your own home. Go to <http://earthkind.tamu.edu/EKOnLineModules.html>, complete all three Earthkind modules online ("Roses" is not available) and pass the quiz at the end of each of the 3 available sections. Once the 3 quizzes are passed, please print out the certificates of completion to attach to your service record

when you go to record your 4 hours. If you are already getting credit for these modules as a Master Gardener, you may not also get credit for the same modules as a Master Naturalist.

Ongoing bird talks at the LBJ grasslands count as AT. Please contact Mary Curry at mary@lookingout.net for more info.

Activities of Interest: May qualify for AT

Organic in the City is from 6-9pm the 2nd Tuesday of every month in the Grand Hall and on the Veranda at Texas Discovery Gardens. We will be offering organic and local food and beverages.
Admission is \$10.00 for TDG members
Admission is \$15.00 for non-members.
www.texasdiscoverygardens.org

Ray Roberts Lake Stargazing Parties (dusk - 11pm), Isle du Bois Unit

Saturdays: Apr. 21, May 12, June 16, and Aug. 4

Please call 940-686-2080 or email don.whited@tpwd.state.tx.us for more information.

Birding on the Greenbelt, Elm Fork Park (just east of dam on FM 455)

Saturdays, 7-9am, June 9, July 14, August 11
Please call 940-686-2080 or email don.whited@tpwd.state.tx.us for more information.

Did You Know? The Endangered Neches River & Butterflies!

Neches River declared endangered:

American Rivers Announces Top Ten Most Endangered Rivers of 2007—including one in Texas

Each year, American Rivers solicits nominations from thousands of

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river groups, environmental organizations, outdoor clubs, local governments, and taxpayer watchdogs for the America's Most Endangered Rivers report. The report highlights the rivers facing the most uncertain futures rather than those suffering from the worst chronic problems. The report presents alternatives to proposals that would damage rivers, identifies those who make the crucial decisions, and points out opportunities for the public to take action on behalf of each listed river.

Read more:

Go here to see a video about the biologically diverse Neches River:

http://www.americanrivers.org/site/PageServer?pagename=AR7_MER2007_Neches

And here's a short history and description of the area:

http://www.eastexcanoes.com/big_thicket_river_trips.html

Melissa C. Miller

President

Native Plant Society of Texas

The Top Ten North Texas Butterfly Nectar Plants according to Texas Discovery Gardens include:

1. Lantana (*Lantana sp.*) Feeds many species of butterflies
2. Verbena (*Verbena sp.*) Many species
3. Palm-Leaf Eupatorium (Eupatorium greggii or wild geranium, *E. coelestinum*) Feeds many species.
4. Frostweed (*Verbesina virginica*) Feeds many species.
5. Butterfly Bush (Buddleia sp) Butterflies; Skippers, Swallowtails.
6. Fall Asters (*Asters spp.*) Many species
7. Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) Many species.
8. Showy Sedum (*Sedum spectabile*) Feeds small to medium size butterflies.
9. Pentas (*Pentas lanceolata*) Many species
10. Zinnia (*Zinnia sp.*) Many species

Butterfly Habitat Instruction Packets: Can be purchased from Texas Discovery Gardens for \$25. Packets include detailed info about more than 70 nectar and host plants recommended for planting in the North Central Texas area plus gardening tips. Proceeds help fund educational programs for school children. Call 214-428-7476 to order. www.texasdiscoverygardens.org

Butterfly Plant Sale: At Texas Discovery Gardens: Saturday, June 2: 10 AM - 2PM
3601 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, Dallas, TX
Free Parking. For more info call 214-428-7476.

The Armchair Master Naturalist by Theresa Kavi:

"Butterfiles of North America" by Jim Brock & Ken Kaufman : A great butterfly identification guide.

"Butterfly Gardening for the South by Geyata Ajilvsgi": A great butterfly gardening book.

PBS Tall Grass Prairie Documentary entitled "America's Lost Landscape The Tallgrass Prairie " available for purchase on website.
<http://www.lostlandscapefilm.com/lostland/>

If you know of any good books, movies, webpages or art exhibits that feature nature, email me at TLKavi@earthlink.net and I will try to pass on your suggestions to our fellow members.

Spotlight on: Prairie Phlox & Snakes!

**"Wildflowers-of-Texas"
by Dorothy Brown Thetford**

Common name: Prairie Phlox
Botanical name: Phlox pilosa ssp. pilosa

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Family: Polemoniaceae

What lures you to a wildflower? Is it the fact that it is wild and unpredictable? Or, its color can vary from soil to soil, or, that it survives through heat and drought with no extra attention? Maybe it's the surprise tactic of surfacing and blooming two or three years after seed-planting!

Could it be that it attracts pollinators that keep our world turning? How about its cleverness of knowing where it belongs and growing naturally regardless of man's intervention. Or, providing its own future seedbank to counter mankind's premature mowing?

Are you lured to a wildflower because of its natural beauty, original design, and fleeting blooming season that nurtures your instinct to protect?

Yes to all of the above, and yet there is still another luring tactic: fragrance. Don't let the season pass without checking phlox for its unique fragrance.

The fragrant season of prairie phlox (*Phlox pilosa* ssp. *pilosa*) is April - May. You don't even have to bend, squat, or pick the prairie phlox to take a whiff; the whiff comes to you as you approach the flower. It is intensely fragrant, very pleasing, and almost intoxicating. In fact, it's difficult to walk away from a colony of phlox in bloom.

This wildflower colonizes by an underground branching of roots, in addition to its natural process of producing seeds. With this type of root system, the colony becomes a tightly-knit, closely-spaced assemblage of plants ranging from 6 to 18 inches tall with each having one to several erect, unbranched stems.

Leaves are mostly opposite, lanceolately-shaped, and average 2 1/2 inches long by 1/4 inch wide with surfaces varying from glabrous (lacking hairs) to pubescent (covered with hairs).

The tubular-shaped, five-petaled flower is approximately one inch diameter and

blooms individually or in cymes. Colors range from purple-pink to lavender-blue and when phlox is found in large colonies appears as a mirage. This perennial, blooming alongside coreopsis or winecups in a sunny prairie, or in a lightly shaded personal garden, is extremely attractive.

However, even though all of the above attributes apply to this native wildflower, its fragrance remains the primary lure!
* * *

Dorothy, Elm Fork Chapter of Texas Master Naturalist Class 2001, and Gold Dragonfly Recipient 2003, is past president of Trinity Forks Chapter of NPSOT. Her "Wildflowers-of-Texas" photo greeting cards are available locally at Denton's Cupboard Natural Foods & Cafe.

Goodness Gracious...Great Snakes Alive?? By Cheryl Kesterson.

My grandmother, who had the daunting task of raising her large brood of ten children without the help of the father, often used fear to control her chaotic household. She would never raise a hand to her loved ones, but she surely could ignite their imaginations with the threat of "Tall Betsy." "Tall Betsy," who supposedly lived in their attic, became her "whip" for control -- an imaginary monster she created to scare her little ones into submission. Mother and her siblings often recount the many times when nightfall would find them hiding under the covers from this *never before seen except in the imaginary monster which they were sure would come down and do whatever monsters of the night tend to do in children's overactive and fearful minds*. Childish fear has melted into fond memories shared at family gatherings. However, fear in a naive and unknowing mind is very frightening, often obscuring reality.

In Char Miller's talk at the *UNT Literary Symposium of Writers, Painters, and Photographers of Nature*, Char expressed how fear of nature creates an inability or unwillingness by people to conserve and

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protect the natural world. Unfortunately, in this age people are readily able to distance themselves from nature, a distancing that perpetuates fear and often dictates public reaction and attitudes about conservation issues. Often, it dictates behavior -- sometimes with desired effect, other times with the negative, as when rational judgment becomes superceded by irrational responses. This fear, which lives in the realm of the scary, slippery slope of the unknown, showed itself recently. In this case, the monster in the attic came in the form of the slithery kind.

Irrational fear was brought home recently by The Denton Record Chronicle and Channel 8 News. It seems that living right next to the waters' edge of South Lakes Park was a nest of snakes! Good Gracious! ***There were real live snakes in our very own docile city, living and multiplying in the park!*** Heavens! "Tall Betsy" has left the attic and taken up residence right in full view for all to see! Why, these snakes must be cottonmouths since they are near water. They would surely wreak death and destruction on our good city! So fearsome were these snakes that it took complete annihilation, not just relocation, by the local law enforcement to get rid of the scourge. The good citizens could now breathe a sigh of relief and continue on their unknowledgeable way as the fearful had now been erased from the face of the earth.

Hysterics aside, if one took the time to read through the entire article in the DRC, he or she would have found that snake expert, Dr. Jonathan Campbell of the University of Texas at Arlington who specializes in the study of reptiles and amphibians, doubted that these snakes were actually of a poisonous kind, but rather among the many non-poisonous water varieties which are numerous in North Texas. He said that he would be "absolutely amazed" if the snakes were water moccasins.

"This time of year it's possible you might find a mating pair here and there, but

you're not going to find a large concentration of them," Dr. Campbell was quoted to say in the newspaper article. He also speculated in the article that they were nonpoisonous water snakes, which are far more abundant in North Texas and commonly misidentified as cottonmouths and they could have easily been captured safely and moved to another location.

Forget the fact that water snakes are actually beneficial to natural habitat, helping to keep nature in balance. Forget the fact that the park, in an attempt to bring nature closer to human habitation for all to enjoy and learn from, had that very action take place under their noses. Forget the fact that most snakes aren't aggressive and only attack when threatened -- poisonous or not. The consequence of this fear was annihilation of a helpful predator. Well, fear's over... everything's back to normal. We don't need to learn about nature anyway, just look at it from a distance. Get too close, and, who knows, "Tall Betsy" might jump out and grab us!

Final Notes:

Submit photos or newsletter articles to Theresa Kavi, Newsletter Editor at News@EFCMN.org. Our webpage address is www.EFCMN.org. A list of our organization's officers, mission, current projects, and forms can be found on this webpage. Meetings held at the Denton County Extension Meeting Room, 306 N. Loop 288, Denton, TX. Unless otherwise notified.