

April 2008

Volume 9, Number 4

EFCMN Newsletter

Elm Fork Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists

EVENTS

APRIL MEETING

Social Time: 9:00 AM

Meeting: 9:30 AM

Date: 4/17/2008

Location: Extension
Office Conference Room

MAY BOARD MEETING

Time: 9:30 AM

Date: 5/8/2008

Location: Extension Office
Conference Room
Board meetings are open
to members.

2008 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Elected

President: Alex Lieban

Past President: Dave Rowley

Vice President: Lee Ann
Jernigan

Secretary: Lynne List

Treasurer: George Kragle

2007 Class Rep: Christana
Coleman

2007 Class Rep: Andrea
Krofina

Appointed Chairs/editor

Training: Sherrill Campbell

Publicity: Cheryl Kesterson

Projects: Dave Ford

Newsletter: Theresa Page

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

Dues are \$15 per year and
are due by January 31. A \$5
late fee is added after that
date.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:

Submission of material for
publication is welcomed and
encouraged. The deadline is
always the second Friday of
each month that the
newsletter is published.

PROJECTS IN THE NEWS

BEAVER CREEK RANCH RESTORATION PROJECT By Katy Hammon

Over twenty years ago, I took my youngest daughter's troop on a nature hike in a wooded area of a Girl Scout Camp in East Texas to see a hillside acid bog filled with carnivorous plants. Their excitement in seeing the plants that fed on insects and watching as several rice rats scurried among the pitcher plants led us to return to the bog several times. It was one of their favorite camp activities.

This bog is located on Beaver Creek Ranch. The Ranch consists of about 1500 acres of rolling sand hills located in Anderson County – specifically in a woodland, forest, and grassland mosaic area within the Post Oak Savannah Ecoregion of East Texas between the Trinity and Neches Rivers.

My interest in the bog and need for my own nature project led to the discovery of several papers and theses written on scientific studies conducted by college biology students on the flora and fauna of Beaver Creek Ranch (beginning in 1969). These papers confirmed my memories from 1984-1994 of the area and sparked the desire to do something to save the plants, if possible, and try to reverse the gradual changes that I had observed since 1994.

As time passed, the bog lost many of the carnivorous plants as the amount of water from the natural springs decreased (due to the drought conditions) and as sweet gum, red maple and wax myrtle sprouts grew taller and larger. The trees used up the water and also blocked the sun from the tiny plants. I became very concerned, as it seemed to me that the bog itself was dying.

My concern for the bog plants led me to approach Jason Singhurst, TPWD rare plant community ecologist, at EXPO 2005 to obtain advice on how to begin to conserve the biological diversity of this unique environment. I had nothing to offer but my enthusiasm and the willingness to work. Mr. Singhurst has been a great mentor and a very willing worker – giving several days of manual labor and much of his expertise in plant and wildlife diversity management to this project.

Together with 17 other volunteers we have cleared three of the eight bogs that we have found on the property (a total of ~300 hours of sweaty, hard

ONGOING SERVICE HOUR OPPORTUNITIES

Newsletter Articles (SH): You can receive credit for researching and writing articles for the EFCMN Newsletter. Articles must pertain to Chapter interests and cannot be political in nature. Copyrighted materials may not be included without permission of the author. Send submissions to Theresa Page, EFCMN Editor, at theresapage3@mac.com

EFCMN Publicity (SH): If you have Master Naturalist activities or projects that are open to the public, please help publicize EFCMN by writing an article for publication in the Denton Connection magazine. Master Naturalist articles may be submitted for publication by contacting Wanda Odum at: WOdum10043@aol.com

EFCMN Projects (SH): A list of projects can be found online at our website: www.efcmn.org Please consider volunteering for one or more projects to help your community, enjoy activities with like-minded people, and earn service hour credit. Contact the manager for a given project to volunteer. (For those members who have difficulty with physically demanding tasks or with working outdoors, the chapter offers service opportunities such as data entry and copying. Contact LeeAnn Jernigan at texasgirl@pwhome.com for information.)

Other Organizations Offering Service Hour Opportunities: Service hours are available at any time with Fort Worth Nature Center (FWNC), www.fwnaturecenter.org Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT), www.BRIT.org Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area (LLELA), www.ias.unt.edu/leela and Lewisville Independent School District Outdoor Learning Area (LISDOLA) spurgers@lisd.net

work— removing trees, shrubs, and vines) to allow water to again flow from the springs and sunlight to reach the bog plants. Early in March 2008 we checked on the bogs and found several of the bog plants were again visible along with some plants that are “bog specific” that we had not seen prior to this. But feral hogs were also discovering the small streams that are appearing as the springs are beginning their flow. Now we are

laying hog wire over the plants and pinning it down with tent stakes in an effort to keep the hogs out of the plants. We will also begin to use more desperate (lethal) methods to discourage the use of the bogs by the hogs.

APRIL EFCMN SPEAKER (AT) SONNY ARNOLD

Sonny Arnold is the Assistant State Coordinator for the Texas Master Naturalist program. In 2002 he retired from Texas Cooperative Extension following a 30-year career as county extension agent and county extension director. Arnold served as County Extension Agent-Agriculture in Houston, Trinity, Polk and Nacogdoches Counties prior to his transfer to Dallas County in 1990.

As Dallas County Extension Director he assisted with the organization of the North Texas Master Naturalist chapter in 1998. The chapter was the second chapter to organize in Texas and several Dallas volunteers assisted with the organization of the Texas Master Naturalist program. He is a graduate of Texas A&M University and resides in Brazos County.

Our May EFCMN feature speaker will be Joanne Fellows. Her topic is Butterflies, and she will address Anatomy, Attraction and Identification.

What's in the future for this project? Current plans include: clearing more bogs, grooming those already cleared, removing the destructive hog population, applying for grant monies to fund prescribed burning of the upland savannah and bogs, and intense study of botany. Then we will move on to the fauna of Beaver Creek Ranch (think beaver and alligators along with many, many others). e



Photos by Kathy Saucier (left) and Lon Turnbull (right)

OPERATION NICE! Plant of the Season By Kathy Saucier

Description: Spiderwort, *Tradescantia* species, is a genus of over 60 New World species that range from southern Canada to northern Argentina. In North Texas, both (*T. occidentalis*) and (*T. ohioensis*) Spiderwort species are found. Spiderwort grows individually at first and establishes clumps. It grows one to two feet tall with long, blade-like leaves. Spiderwort may go dormant in the winter and over our long dry summers.

Flowers: Spiderwort blooms prolifically in the spring and sometimes in the fall with flowers that range from white, pink or purple to bright blue. Flowers have three petals and six yellow anthers. Spiderwort blooms early in the morning. During the afternoon, the flowers usually close up in the heat, but on cool and cloudy days, they may remain open all day. Each flower lasts for only one day, but each spiderwort has many flowers, assuring a long display in the garden bed.

Planting sites: Spiderwort can be planted in full sun to partial or dappled shade. It grows well in most types of soil, from acid to alkaline, from dry to damp. If not given supplemental water, Spiderwort will go dormant during North Texas summers. When flowering is finished, Spiderwort may be cut to the ground. When the fall rains begin, Spiderwort will sprout new foliage and may re-bloom.

Watering Instructions: Spiderwort should be watered well immediately after planting and then every other week during the first growing season if there is no rain. After the first growing season, Spiderwort should survive with existing rainfall because it is drought tolerant.

Comments: Although spiderwort goes dormant in the summer, the foliage sprouts out in fall and stays green through our mild winters when almost everything else is dormant. Native Spiderwort is a welcome addition to garden beds. There are many named cultivars available at your local nursery.

Look for the NICE! Plant of the Season signs and information sheets on your next visit to a participating North Texas nursery. Thank you for using native plants in your landscapes.

Trinity Forks Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas Meetings are the 4th Thursday in Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Sep & Oct, TWU's ACT building 6:30 pm, 2nd floor.

Educator Training Workshop
Lon Morris College, 201 Pewitt Bldg.
800 College Ave., Jacksonville, TX 75766
9am—4pm, Saturday, May 10, 2008

The Leopold Education Project is an innovative, interdisciplinary conservation ethics curriculum targeted for grades 6-12. Using Aldo Leopold's method of observation and journaling, LEP increases student awareness of the land, informs them of responsible choices for the planet, while teaching important social, collaborative and critical thinking skills.

Linda Allen, Contact/Facilitator
 903-589-4036
lallen@lonmorris.edu

"The problem, then, is how to bring about a striving for harmony with land among a people many of whom have forgotten there is any such thing as land, among whom education and culture have become almost synonymous with landlessness.

This is the problem of conservation education."

—Aldo Leopold

RAY ROBERTS LAKE STATE PARK ACTIVITIES

Interpretative Center: Hours are Fridays, 3-8 PM, Saturdays, 10 AM-4 PM, and Sundays, 11 AM-3 PM, March 1-July 6. The center is located across from the Park entrance at the Isle du Bois Unit.

Stargazing Parties (AT): Learn more about the night sky. The fun begins at dusk and lasts until 11:00 PM on Saturday, May 3. This event is being held at the Isle du Bois Unit.

Guided Nature Hikes (AT or S*): Isle du Bois Unit, Bluestem Grove Camping Area, Saturdays, 3 PM, April 26; Saturdays, 4 PM, May 3, May 10, May 17, May 24 and May 31. Johnson Branch Unit, Dogwood Camping Area, Saturday, 3 PM, April 26; Saturdays, 1 PM, May 3, May 10, May 17, May 24 and May 31.

Kids n' Nature Outdoor Classroom (AT or S*): *April 26, 10-12 AM.* At the Interpretative Center. Learn about Texas Fish, the anatomy of fish, different species, and habitat requirements. Make a fish print to take home. *May 3, 10 AM – 12 noon.* Learn about Texas Butterflies and Moths, their life cycle, host and nectar plants. Walk with us on Lost Pines trail to look for butterflies. Make a coffee filter butterfly to take home.

Contact Don Whited for more information about any of these events at 940-686-2148. To volunteer to assist with nature hikes and other activities, you may also contact EFCMN (Ray Roberts) Project Manager, Jan Hodson, at janhodson@ntin.net

**First time volunteers/attendees may count it as advanced training; for trained volunteers, it counts as service.*

ACTIVITIES AT THE FORT WORTH NATURE CENTER (AT)

Dragonflies and Damselflies: Saturday, May 17, 1-3 PM. In the past we learned about two groups of flyers that are found at the Nature Center. This month, we are going to add two more groups of flyers, dragonflies and damselflies. These amazing creatures cruise around the Nature Center; whether it be at the Boardwalk or along other trails. They mystify us with their acrobatic capabilities. Join us at the Hardwicke as we take an overview of our local species and then venture out to the Prairie and Boardwalk looking for these fast-flying insects. \$5 (with paid admission), MEMBERS FREE.

Directions: From Loop I-820 W, exit Hwy 199 (Jacksboro Highway) and go west 4 miles. Exit Confederate Park Rd. to the right and stay on service road. At the stop sign, turn right into the Nature Center entrance. Stop by the gatehouse to pay entrance fee and obtain a day pass and a trail map. For more information call (817) 237-1111.

LEELA ACTIVITIES (AT)

Kayak down the Elm Fork with KayakPower.com: Third Saturday of each month. Whether you've got lots of river time under your belt or have never set foot in a kayak, you're welcome here! Kayak Power will provide equipment and instruction followed by a six-mile trip down the Elm Fork to a shuttle vehicle. Contact info@kayakpower.com or 214-562-0769 for information. **Reservation required.** This is a great opportunity to observe wildlife along the river.

Monthly Bird Walks: Bird watchers of all skill levels are welcome to join our master birders as they guide visitors to birding locations at LLELA. Some of the best spots are not normally available to the public, outside of a scheduled tour. Ages 10 and up. There is a \$2 program fee for the bird walk, in addition to the regular gate fee (\$3/person). **Reservations are required;** call 972-219-7980.

[PROJECT MANAGER TRAINING WORKSHOP]

By Cheryl Kesterson

WOOO-HOOOOO!!! Now I know more than I did before! That is, I know more about how to be a project manager than I did before.

I, along with several other Master Naturalists from our chapter, attended the 'Turn Your Ideas into a Project' workshop, presented by Dave Ford and Dave Rowley. The Friday, March 14th, presentation earned those attending 3 hours of AT credit but, foremost, it helped to clarify attendees' understanding of what constitutes a project and how to put their own ideas into focus in a way in which EFCMN members, Agri-Life of Denton County, and the state leaders for MN, can have a clear understanding of the work, volunteer time, and expertise given to their project. Dave Ford presented a slide show on how he organized his 'Mammal Studies and Public Education at LLELA' project. Dave Rowley gave an overview of what is needed for reporting purposes to the state. In case you didn't know, project reports along with other stats from our membership provide vital information to the State of Texas for funding purposes to our program.

There is no right or wrong way to make a report, and they are easy to do. Other members are interested in knowing about your efforts, so a clear and concise presentation benefits everyone. If you are thinking of doing a project, there are several completed projects in the Resource Room at your disposal to guide you in making your decisions and the best ways to get started. Please take the time to go over some of them before embarking on your own project. You can also ask Dave Ford, Dave Rowley, or other members who have turned in project manager reports for their help and suggestions. Like I said, the information given on these reports are of utmost interest to our membership and the state. e

Adelaide Bodnar (2007 class) on a benthic project. Photograph by Robert Judy, Jr.



COOL SEASON GRASS WORKSHOP

Elm Fork Chapter is pleased to co-host a cool season grass workshop with John Snowden, owner of Bluestem Nursery, 4101 Curry Road in Arlington. This workshop includes a morning lecture and nursery tour followed by an afternoon field trip to key locations to identify and observe native grasses in their habitats from their inflorescence and vegetative characteristics.

Tuesday, May 20, 2008 (Rain date: Thursday, May 22, 2008), 10:00 AM-5:00 PM. Begin at Bluestem Nursery in Arlington and finish the day at Fort Worth Nature Center. A \$10 non-refundable fee for snacks, materials and Fort Worth Nature Center Gate Fee is due at registration. **Pre-registration is required and space is limited to 15 participants.**

Snacks and water are provided, but you will need to bring a sack lunch. Please wear clothing and shoes suitable for walking through tall grasses. Other items you may want to bring are a folding chair, loupe, insect repellent, sunscreen, and a hat. Participants are expected to attend the full day to receive the approved 6 hours of advanced training credit for the workshop. A certificate of completion will be provided at the end of the day. John Snowden is generously giving of his time to provide us with this opportunity. Don't miss it!

For information and registration, contact Jan Hodson (940) 637-2702 or janhodson@ntin.net

MISSION STATEMENT**ELM FORK CHAPTER OF
TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS**

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. The Texas Master Naturalist program is jointly sponsored at the state level by the Texas Cooperative Extension and Texas Parks & Wildlife.

THE ARMCHAIR MASTER NATURALIST (Fun & Education)

Wild Wonderings Blog (<http://www.wildwonderings.blogspot.com>)

was created within the Texas AgriLife Extension Service's Wildlife and Fisheries Extension Unit to provide landowners, land managers, and conservation enthusiasts with relevant, research-based information for land, water and wildlife conservation. Currently, we have 20 postings by 7 authors, with topics ranging from 4-H to feral hogs. We have already documented 299 unique visits, 1,091 pages viewed, averaging 3:18 min per visit from visitors of 19 countries, 25 states, and 68 Texas cities. We hope that you will find Wild Wonderings useful and informative.

Jim Cathey, Ph.D, CWB
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