

October 2010

Vol 11, Number 10

EFCMN Newsletter

EVENTS

OCTOBER MEETING

Date: 10/21/10

Social: 9:00 a.m.

Meeting: 9:30 a.m.

Location: Texas AgriLife Extension
Meeting Room

NOVEMBER BOARD MEETING

Date: 11/11/10

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Location: Extension

Office Conference Room

Board meetings are open to members

2010 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Elected

President: George Kragle

Past President: Dave Rowley

Vice President: Rob Roy

Secretary: Marian Kester

Treasurer: Amanda Cowan

2009 Class Rep: Doug Chadwick

Member-at-Large: Susan Pohlen

Appointed Chairs/Other

Training: Shirley Holland

Publicity: Wanda Odum

Projects: Susan Pohlen

Communications: Monica Chaffin

Webmaster: Sharon Barr

Editor: Rob Roy (Interim)

October EFCMN Meeting

"Murderous Plants and Poisonous Herbs"

Beautiful but poisonous plants are often used as garden ornamentals, potted plants, even florist flowers, yet most people are unaware of the dangers posed by toxins derived from them. Our speaker, Barney Lipscomb, will take us on an enchanting journey through the cultural, historical, and mythological aspects of poisonous plants.

Mr. Lipscomb is the Leonhardt Chair of Texas Botany, at the Botanical Research Institute of Texas in Fort Worth. He earned a B. S. degree in biology from Cameron University in Oklahoma and a M.S. degree in botany from the University of Arkansas.

He is a co-author of the "Illustrated Flora of North Central Texas" and also a co-author of a three-volume flora, the "Illustrated Flora of East Texas,"

In 2010 he received the American Society of Plant Taxonomists' Peter Raven Award for exceptional outreach activities.

Last Month

At the September 16th Master Naturalist meeting **Dr. Pete Gunter** of UNT spoke to us about the Big Thicket in southeast Texas and what a biologically diverse treasure it is.

Also at the meeting the **2010 Denton County 4-H Senior Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Program (WHEP) Team** presented the Byron D. Wright Memorial Traveling Trophy to Horticulture Agent Janet Laminack.

The team also presented a short presentation showing some of the things they did along the road to their ultimate national achievements as a team and individually. They put in many hours of study, practice, and accomplishment.



Pictured from left to right; Coach Susan Kilpatrick, Team Member Sam Hatch, Horticulture Agent Janet Laminack, Team Member Elizabeth Raabe and Team Member Shelby Kilpatrick.

Not pictured; Assistant Coach Diana Hatch and Team Member Karina Bickert.

Down the Road



Upcoming Chapter-wide Events

Mark your calendars and plan on attending the following chapter-wide events. You don't want to miss them.

November 4th - Special Field Trip
Let's get a "herd" of EFCMNs together and mosey over to the **Heard Natural Science Museum & Wildlife Sanctuary** in McKinney. More details will be provided later but it will include a tour of the main building, indoor exhibits, and the outdoor animals of the world exhibit in the morning. Then we will have a picnic lunch (BYOF&D) and then everyone can go on a nature trail of their choice if they would like. **AT hours can be earned!**

November 18th - "Amphibians and Reptiles" will be the subject of Steve Campbell, Aquatic Education Specialist, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Election of EFC Officers for 2011

Officers for the 2011 year will be elected during the **November 18, 2010** general meeting of the chapter.

In accordance with Article V, D. 2. a. of the Bylaws of the Elm Fork Chapter of Texas Master Naturalist, Inc., the nominating committee has voted to nominate the following members to the slate of officers for 2011.

President – George Kragle
Vice President – Rob Roy
Secretary – Marian Kester
Treasurer – Kay Crowe

Members may make other nominations for any of these positions from the floor prior to the election at the November meeting.

The chapter members present also will nominate one or more persons and then elect one to fill the Member-at-Large position on the board.

Nominating committee members:

Dave Rowley – chair
Jean Chaka
Sherrill Campbell
Jan Thompson

2010 Class

We have a full class of 24 people! Please welcome them. They live in a variety of places in several different counties. Following are their names.

Polly Carter
Linda Cornelius
Janice Cundiff
Deborah Estes
Carol Fegan
Kathryn Hardage
Kathy Harden
Cindy Harris
Clayton Jones
Randy Kimball
Diane Kougianos
Leslie Kregel
Mellany Lamb
Brad Leitch
Karen Mazzei
Paula McCormick
Kim McKibben
John Charles Miller
Rachel Nichols
Zachary Owens
Carl Patrick
Duane Reeves
Cindy Schlaht
Louise Wyss

On October 5th they had completed five sessions and will be past the halfway mark by the October general meeting.

Upcoming Service Opportunities

Ray Roberts Interpretive Center

There are only a few shifts remaining open at the Interpretive Center for the rest of this year. We really need several Master Naturalists that are not planning to attend the annual conference to pick up the shifts on the weekend of Oct 23/24. Right now all of those shifts are open except for 1-3 on Sunday, Oct 24th. The only other shifts currently open for the rest of the year are on the last weekend of November. We broke a record this year of having interns step up to take shifts at the Interpretive Center! I hope it will be a rewarding experience for you and that you will return often along with the many other Master Naturalists that keep the Interpretive Center open - thank you all!

If you would like to know more about the Interpretive Center or would like to schedule a shift, please contact me at (940) 686-5739 or by email: spholen@verizon.net. Thank you. Susan Pohlen

Fall 2010 City Nature Hike Schedule

One more hike is scheduled and members are encouraged to participate and help.

Saturday, Nov 13, at Clear Creek, 1-3 p.m. ('Down in the Quarry' with Don Morrison and Dave Ford.)

For more information, contact Dorothy Thetford at dorothythetford@ymail.com

Volunteer at LLELA

There are many opportunities to volunteer at LLELA where you can use your knowledge and training. What is your MN passion? You might find an area at LLELA where you can really use it. Following are some categories or service areas and examples of what is available. The list is not all encompassing. Contact Van Elliott for more information and/or to volunteer. Reach him at 972-539-4350 or email at yelliott2105@msn.com.

- Outdoor Education
 - Lead nature hikes with students
- Nature Walks
 - Lead nature hikes for the general public
- Birding Hikes
- Bird Banding
- Prairie and Wetland Restoration
 - Help in plant nursery
- Trail Building and Maintenance
 - Maintain existing trails
 - Help cut new trails
- Angler Education
- Nest Box maintenance
 - Assist maintaining bluebird, warbler, wood duck, and other nesting boxes
- 1870's Homestead
 - Give tours of LLELA's log house & homestead area
 - Help with maintenance
- Bison Herd

Upcoming Advance Training Opportunities

Water Matters

"A Conference on Water in North Texas"
Learn where our water comes from; how it is managed; how much we need and how much we have; who gets it; and how we can leave enough for everything else.

Saturday, October 23, 2010 in the University of North Texas Environmental Sciences Building, 1704 W. Mulberry. Plenty of parking at West Hickory and Avenue C. (Where we had our July meeting.)

It is free and open to the public. It's jointly hosted by the League of Women Voters of Denton and the Elm Fork Education Center.

The program times and topics are as follows.

9:00 – 10:00 a.m. – Water: Central to Life
10:00 – 11:00 a.m. – The North Texas Water Supply System and Its Cost
11:00 – noon - The Importance of Water Reuse
1:30 – 2:30 p.m. – Using Constructed Wetlands to Treat Wastewater
2:30 – 3:30 p.m. – In-stream Flows for Environmental Health

Major Milestones Reached

The following members were announced during the September meeting as having reached a major milestone as a Master Naturalist. **Congratulations to each one!**

2,000 service hours

Dave Ford

1,500 service hours

Katy Jo Hammon

Cheryl Kesterson

1,000 service hours

Karen Schoeve

500 service hours

Owen Richards

250 service hours

Richard Johnson

Certified in 2010

Congratulations to the following members who were announced during the September meeting as having certified as a Master Naturalist for 2010.

Sharon Barr
Karolina Blaha-Black
Adelaide Bodnar
John Bodnar
Monica Chaffin
Jean Chaka
Kay Crowe
Judy Guthrie
Jan Hodson
Shirley Holland
Cheryl Kesterson
Bonnie Kline
Diane Kohlhase
Peggy LaPoint
Betty Mullenweg
Renee Province
Dorothy Thetford
Diane Wetherbee

One member, **Risa Bender**, recertified for 2009.

Two members of the 2009 class completed the hours needed for initial certification.

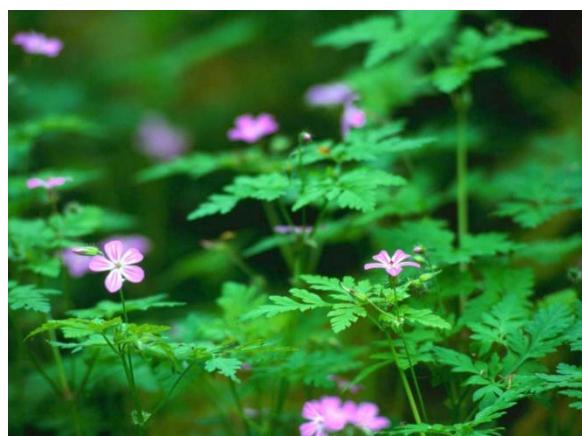
Diana Block
LaNae Colchin

News from the State Office

Due to a new funding source, the Texas Master Naturalist Program is required to report our volunteer service hours to their agencies **each quarter**. Our Elm Fork Chapter reported the following hours for the **third quarter** of this year.

Jul	857.0
Aug	900.0
Sep	<u>1,011.5</u>
Q3	2,768.5
Plus	
Q1	3,763.5
Q2	<u>4,258.5</u>
Total	<u>10,790.5</u>

We still have several members who are slow in reporting their volunteer time. So if you are one of those folks, please get caught up and stay current. Also, **everyone please sign each sheet of yours** in the book. This is another new state requirement to substantiate the hours the chapter reports.



Back Table

Look for project, AT, and other handouts on one of the tables in back of the meeting room. Some of the items this month include the following:

Info for our trip to the Heard Natural Science Museum & Wildlife Sanctuary on 11/4/2010.

BRIT flyer

Articles/Items for the Newsletter

We are looking for articles and items for future editions of the EFCMN Newsletter. If you have an article or item you would like published, please email it to EFCNews99@msn.com.



Project Highlight

National Public Lands Day Event a Big Success at LLELA

Over 125 volunteers, many of them Texas Master Naturalists from the Elm Fork Chapter, took part in Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area's National Public Lands Day event held Saturday, Sept. 18. Volunteers braved the heat and humidity to plant more than 1,000 native grass plugs in one of LLELA's prairie restoration areas, including big bluestem, little bluestem, Indian grass and eastern gamma grass. Participants volunteered approximately 420 hours that morning.

Dr. Ken Steigman, LLELA's director, Richard Freiheit, restoration manager, and Lisa Cole, education coordinator, expressed their appreciation to the volunteers who turned out to support National Public Lands Day at LLELA. They consider it an overwhelming success, and they look forward to doing it again next year. Many of the Master Naturalist volunteers acted as work team supervisors for the planting, assisting other volunteers, who ranged from Boy and Girl Scouts to TWU and Brookhaven students to REI and Best Buy employees. With the assistance of the Master Naturalists, over 100 people now have a better appreciation for a native habitat – our prairies – that would cease to exist without their efforts.

Sponsor organizations and volunteer groups represented include: **Elm Fork Chapter Texas Master Naturalists**, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, REI, Wal-Mart

Neighborhood Market, Honest Tea, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Best Buy, Texas Women's University, Lewisville High School, Brookhaven College, EPA, and Fort Worth Fly Fishermen. Among the Master Naturalist volunteers were: **John and Adelaide Bodnar, Van Elliott, Diane Wetherbee, Dave Ford, Hilton Dickerson, Richard Johnson, Owen Richards**, and even two of our newest interns, **Zachary Owens and Carl Patrick**. There may have been a couple more MN volunteers that we missed noting, but know that LLELA appreciates all your hard work.

Reported by Diane Wetherbee



City Nature Hike at Cross Timbers Park

On a warm September morning our little band of hikers met by the pond at Cross Timbers Park. The hike was planned as part of the city hikes project sponsored by the city and led by Master Naturalists. Project manager, Dorothy Thetford and Tracy Durmick of City of Denton, gathered our group to welcome us and get us started.

Marilyn Blanton, former Cross Timbers Park project manager explained the history of the park and how it was developed. Dave Rowley told us about his experiences as project manager to plant native aquatic plants in the pond.

As we circled the pond we saw little circles appear and fade away on the water's surface. Dragonflies darted about. Tall marshmallow with large circular white blooms tinged with crimson centers lined one end of the pond. Willows and pickerelweed were growing at the other end.

Birds were heard in the trees and American robins ran along the trail in front of us before taking flight. Poison ivy was pointed out and hikers were shown how to distinguish it from the Virginia

creeper that was just barely beginning to show its fall color.

At the park's entrance sign, standing under a canopy of post oaks, Cheryl Kesterson told us about the cross timbers. Along the trail we noticed the lichens and Joe Baines related the story of "Alice" algae and "Freddie" fungus taking a "lichen" to each other.

We stopped along the edge of the pocket prairie to admire the yellow flowers of bitterweed, partridge pea and goldenrod. Despite the heat and humidity from the recent rain there were signs of the season changing. The tall inflorescence of purpletop or greasegrass were beginning to show purple.

Back on the trail in the woods, the frostweed was blooming, and drying seeds dangled from the arching stems of inland sea oats. The possumhaw hollies were dotted with green berries smudged with color that will gradually turn a beautiful red. Mexican plums, the results of last spring's lacy white blooms, were scattered under the trees.

Marian Kester and Sharon Barr helped keep our group together and answered questions as we made our way along. We spotted pretty fungi and looked for berries on the coralberry. We warned hikers to avoid stinging nettle and bull nettle while inviting them to touch other plants. On the eroding bank of Fletcher's Branch, we saw the pretty light pink bell-shaped flowers of sprawling prairie agalinnis.

We looked at the differences in the leaves of American elm and cedar elm, as well as post oak, blackjack oak and red oak. We identified trees as we passed by

hackberry, ash, hickory, redbud, chittamwood, locust and bois d'arc. We also noted the spread of invasive non-native privet and the problems it causes.

There were no signs of springtime flowers like Missouri violets and spring beauty. The blooms of winecups in the pocket prairie were only a memory but winecup leaves, that go dormant in the heat of summer, were starting to reappear. The green leaves of summer will start to change as cooler autumn days arrive. The red oaks will flash burgundy and red while the post oak leaves will simply turn brown and fall along with their acorns. The leaves will provide protection and cover as they slowly decay and the acorns will be an important food source for wildlife. During the winter the park will be defined by leafless trees waiting for spring. Whatever the season, each turn in the trail offers a reason to return.

Reported by Marilyn Blanton



City Nature Hike at Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center

When's the last time you've been on a Mosquito Hike? Yeah, mosquito.

What??? That's hard to believe!!! Don't pass up your next opportunity; you'll find it exhilarating, for sure. Our City Nature Hike (CNH) committee went on one recently and experienced a full-fledged, maximum bodily workout without getting on a treadmill or lifting any weights. You can't believe how much fun we had.

Actually, it was an unplanned torture to 7 young boys (ages 14-17), 3 staff members, and 1 Caseworker from the Denton County Probation Department. Here's the scoop. Tracy Durmick, our City Outdoor Nature Coordinator, with a small grant from Walmart, created a new series of activities for youth on probation. These activities were planned to provide outdoor activities while providing a service to the community. She named the plan: "Clear Creek Natural Guard" and invited our City Nature Hikes Committee to orchestrate the first venture.

On Thursday, Sept. 16, five of us volunteered to hike the Denton County teens after school, 3:45 to 5:45. We were probably more anxious than they, having no clue of how many would arrive, behavioral expectations, or interest involvement. Well, to our pleasant surprise, 7 young boys jumped out of the County van, each with haircuts only 1/4" long, matching shirts and pants, and lots of fun personalities.

We gave our intros, a quick spiel about Clear Creek Park, encouraged insect repellent, and down the Wetlands Trail we went, carrying our animal-track kits

and their trash-pick-up bags. We discussed native plants, ID'd golden aster, goldenrod, eryngo, buffalo bur, cochinell insects that provide color for dye, erosion, and more wildflowers until which time we began looking for animal tracks in the trail. The previous rains provided us with perfect conditions and excellent track indentations. Once we began finding tracks, we stopped about every 20 yards as someone selected the track he wanted to capture, applied plaster-of-paris, and left it to dry while we continued hiking.

By the time we reached the bridge onto Rookery Trail, wham-mo, we were royally welcomed by the hosts of the area. We were in Mosquitoville, USA. We stopped to talk about the native Mexican plum tree and seeds in our trail, but spent most of our time swatting and slapping each other's backs killing mosquitoes. We stopped to talk about spiders and webs, but spent more of our time swatting and slapping. We stopped to talk about mushrooms, but spent more time swatting. Did we stop to discuss lichen? Oh yes, but Joe made that discussion very brief. When we arrived at the dam entrance, our trail disappeared underneath a layer of trees, limbs, sticks and debris from the previous downhill flow of rapid rains and, thus, we decided to back-track through our attentive, hungry hosts.

Our return hike allowed us time to unveil each animal track mold with pride. It was true teamwork as we all hovered over the hike-mate and swatted mosquitoes so that he could concentrate on retrieving his souvenir. Pictures were taken of each teen gleefully exposing his prize mold, hopefully, as a memento of this fun event.

By the time we returned to the parking lot, the guests were thrilled to be on higher ground that was free of mosquitoes, and joyous with excitement. So were we.

Kudos, thank-yous' and farewells among our young, courteous, polite, mannerly visitors left all of us with grateful feelings for an experience well worth the time.

*Reported by Dorothy Thetford
Chair, City Nature Hikes Committee
MN Project: 080313*



Courtesy photo: © Dorothy Thetford

"Wildflowers-of-Texas"
Dorothy Brown Thetford

Common name: Maximilian sunflower
Scientific name: *Helianthus maximiliana*
Family: Asteraceae

While viewing our North Central Texas prairies and roadsides filled with yellow Soft golden-aster (*Chrysopsis pilosa*), yellow Golden aster (*Heterotheca subaxillaris*), yellow Partridge pea (*Chamaecrista fasciculata*), yellow Greeneyes (*Berlandiera betonicifolia*), yellow Hairy sunflower (*Helianthus*

hirsutus), yellow Willow-leaf sunflower (*H. salicifolius*), yellow Saw-leaf daisy (*Grindelia papposa*), yellow Texas broomweed (*Gutierrezia texana*), yellow Common sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*), yellow Goldenrod (*Solidago sp.*), yellow Golden crownbeard (*Verbesina encelioides*), yellow Broom whitlow wort (*Paronychia virginica*), yellow Buffalo bur (*Solanum rostratum*), and yellow Bitterweed (*Helenium amarum*), there is a very noticeable theme involved. Did I mention the color 'yellow'? Yes, and they're all in bloom during our Fall wildflower season.

However, when the Maximilian sunflower (*Helianthus maximiliana*) bursts into bloom, attention is temporarily diverted to this spectacular event. A colony of this single or multi-stemmed plant, towering 4 to 7 feet tall, is an exception to the norm.

Three to four-inch flower stalks (petiole, pedicel, or peduncle) at each leaf axis may be closely or sparsely arranged along the upper stem. And with a terminal flower blooming on each stalk, the top of each stout, woody stem turns into a vertical bouquet.

The flowers, composed of 25-35 yellow ray flowers encircling a center of yellow disk flowers, appear to burst into bloom all at the same time, providing an overwhelming explosion of vibrant yellow. But, in reality, the flowers bloom from the top downward, allowing the upper two feet of blooms to be grande and showy at the beginning of their blooming cycle.

Leaves, when mature, are 4 to 10 inches long, 1 inch wide, alternate, narrowly elliptic, sickle-shaped, clasping, folded

lengthwise, and are rough textured. Given the height of this stately sunflower and the lack of rain during late summer, the lower leaves oftentimes begin dying before the flowers bloom.

Being an important food source for livestock and deer explains the disappearance of this perennial from pasture land. However, ungrazed prairies, fencerows, and unmowed roadsides are in full bloom in our area from late September through mid October.

Maximilian sunflower is one of our most abundant and widespread sunflowers in Texas. The disk flower is fertile and produces a mature achene (1-seeded fruit) and could easily be added to a wildlife management plan, a nativescape landscape, a butterfly garden flowerbed or, if ample space provided, the centerpiece Monarch butterfly-attraction for an Outdoor Learning Center (OLC) school garden.

Enjoy all of the yellows of the season, but enjoy this one to the max!

Courtesy photo: © Dorothy Thetford



Dorothy, a certified Master Naturalist, past president of Trinity Forks Chapter of NPSOT and Upper Clear Creek Wildlife Mgmt. Assoc., enjoys photographing native plants in addition to leading Denton's Parks & Rec City Nature Hikes. She also gives prairie hikes and classroom programs to Denton ISD elementary schools. Her "Wildflowers-of-Texas" photo greeting cards are available locally at Cupboard Natural Foods & Cafe.