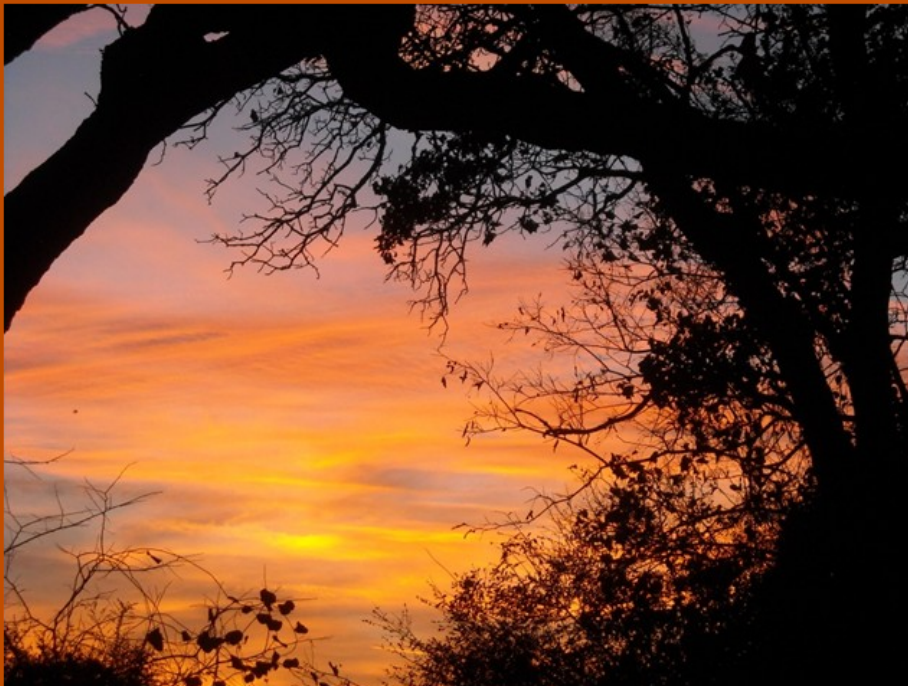


NATURALIST NEWS



Photo—Dorothy Thetford, class of 2001

*A beautiful sunset that was mistaken for a dawn
~ Claude Debussy*

We're on the web
www.txmn.org/elmfork

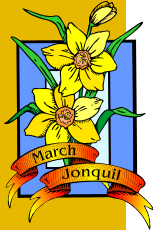
- * See upcoming events
- * Check resources
- * Read articles
- * Watch videos

Visit Facebook page

NATURALIST NEWS –TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST, ELM FORK CHAPTER

MARCH 2014

VOLUME 15, ISSUE 3



Our vision. . .in our community, Elm Fork Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program will be recognized as a primary source of information, education and service to support natural resources and natural areas today and in the future.



SNAKES ALIVE

Sharon Barr



Our state park interpreter at Ray Roberts Lake State Park, Kelly Lauderdale, invited me to do a couple snake talks at the Isle du Bois Interpretive Center with my two pet snakes. I always take them with me when I volunteer at the Interpretive Center, so Kelly thought it would be nice to advertise a scheduled snake talk or “Snakes Alive” as Kelly called it.

Corey and Chloe sure brought the people out. The first Saturday, which was a gorgeous spring-like day, we had an estimated 80 visitors and last Saturday, when the weather was not so good, we had another estimated 40 visitors. People seem curious about snakes, especially when they are friendly snakes they can pet and handle.

Curious minds may be wondering, how did a woman like me get into snakes? When my middle son was 18 years old and had some money in his pocket he purchased Corey, the first snake. Growing up with boys my entire life (3 younger brothers and 3 sons) I have learned to tolerate a lot of boyish shenanigans and not let the boys know something bothers me or they would have taunted me endlessly.

My son is now 40 years old; married, divorced and came back home with his pets – the cat and the snake. Guess who feeds and cleans up for the cat and snake. Fortunately, the snake is low maintenance. He only eats 1 or 2 frozen mice about every two weeks. I purchase the mice at the local pet stores (they can be bought in bulk online), thaw one out and warm it in a bowl of warm water before feeding it to Corey. My son used to feed live mice, but we have learned that live mice can bite and injure the snake and that many pet owners are now feeding their snakes frozen rodents.

Corey has been in the family now for 22 years. Who knew that a snake would live this long? I sure didn't. I have read that they can live 22-25 years in captivity, so that means Corey's days are numbered.

— Peaked your interest? Cont'd on page 12 —

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- ◆ Ice damage to trees —tips
- ◆ Things coming up—speakers for chapter meetings
- ◆ Check out the nest —Field note in focus
- ◆ Crazyness on the move!

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Things to come...

From Peg La Point

March 20, 2014

Regular Meeting: Saving Northern Bobwhite Quail—Kelly Reyna

Dr. Kelly Reyna is Assistant Professor of Biology at UNT and Executive Director of *UNT Quail*. He earned his Master's Degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences from Texas A&M and his Ph.D. in Biology and Developmental Physiology from UNT.

Dr. Reyna's research interests are in the broad areas of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, with much of his work dedicated to the ecology, genetics, physiology, and population dynamics of northern bobwhite quail, prairie chickens, and other game birds. He is presently working on quail and prairie chicken population dynamics and game bird re-introduction techniques.



UNT Quail is an innovative game bird laboratory focused on America's greatest game bird, the Northern Bobwhite. *UNT Quail* fosters sustainable quail populations through innovative research, conservation and education. The organization works with partners to create large corridors of habitat with sustainable populations of quail and other wildlife. The North Texas Quail Corridor is one of the largest quail conservation efforts in the state of Texas.

The mission of *UNT Quail* is to implement adaptive solutions to identify and eliminate quail threats; create wildlife corridors that expand and conserve usable quail habitat; re-introduce wild quail in decimated populations; influence policy decisions that put more quail on the ground; and teach younger generations to be stewards of the land, wildlife, and environment.

April 17, 2014

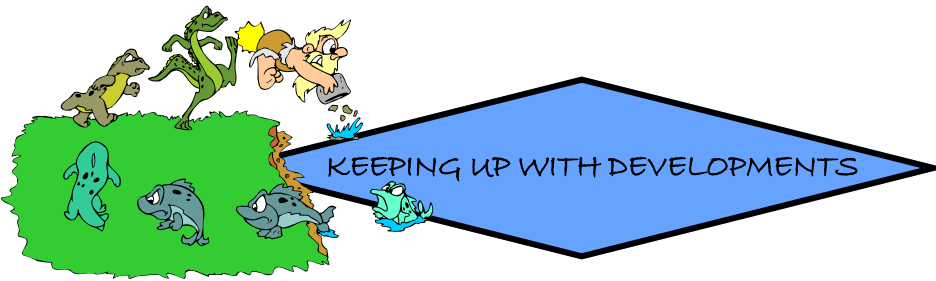
Regular Meeting: New Research at Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT)



Yellow cactus-public domain

Will McClatchey and **Karen Hall** will present a program on new research being conducted at the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT) in Fort Worth.

Specifically, they will outline a survey of plant diversity and natural community composition across a range of sites in parts of Tarrant, Denton, Wise, and Parker counties with the focus on mapping plant community distributions across the geologies found within the Trinity Clear Fork watershed. They hope to engage the Elm Fork Chapter in a discussion of how we could help them continue to develop work with native plants.



Please remember that the deadline for **Naturalist News** submission is the Wednesday immediately preceding the monthly board meeting. Anything received after that will be held over to the following month (if appropriate).

OOPS!

Alex Lieban has requested that a correction be published for the inadvertent misidentification in his **Field Notes in Focus** photograph in February Naturalist News. It should have been labeled **“Black vultures”** rather than **“Turkey vultures”**.

From Karen Mangum

Link to the **Texas Water Report** from the state of Texas Comptroller’s office for those interested in water issues:

<http://www.window.state.tx.us/specialrpt/water/>

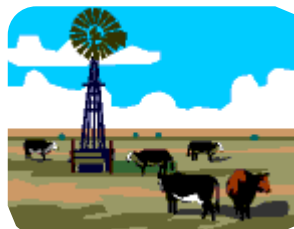
Hello TMN friends

I am pleased to announce that the 2014 Texas Master Naturalist Annual meeting and Advanced Training will be held October 24-26, 2014 at Mo Ranch in Hunt, TX.

With this year’s meeting, all accommodations will be included in your registration fees-meaning there will be no need to make accommodation arrangements outside of registering for the meeting unless you wanted to stay off site. There will be a variety of accommodation types available when you register. More details will be available once registration opens around late July/early August..

Mark your calendars for October 24-26th, 2014 now!!!

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C: 979-587-2627
TMN website: <http://txmn.org>



Prairie, Lakes and Timbers Regional Conference

2014. Please use the link below to access the registration site. Each registrant should receive a confirmation email once the registration process is complete. If there are any questions or concerns, please contact Debbie Daniel at danieldebra@hotmail.com.

Prairies, Lakes & Timbers



Registration site link: <http://www.rsvpbook.com/PLTC>

State Prairie Conference, May 29-31, Fort Worth, Texas.

For information see: www.prairiepartner.org/page/2014-sop-conference

Service Opportunity

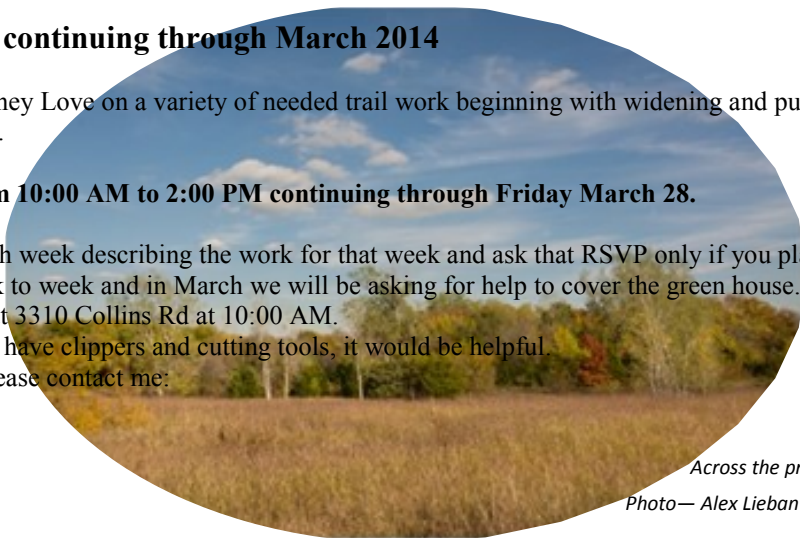
Clear Creek work days continuing through March 2014

We will be working with Rodney Love on a variety of needed trail work beginning with widening and putting the finishing touches on the Bois d'arc trail.

Work days are Fridays, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM continuing through Friday March 28.

We will send out an email each week describing the work for that week and ask that RSVP only if you plan to come. The work will vary from week to week and in March we will be asking for help to cover the green house. We will meet at the building at 3310 Collins Rd at 10:00 AM. Tools are available, but if you have clippers and cutting tools, it would be helpful. For questions and RSVP's, please contact me:

Dave Rowley
d.rowley1@verizon.net
940-565-9332

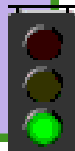


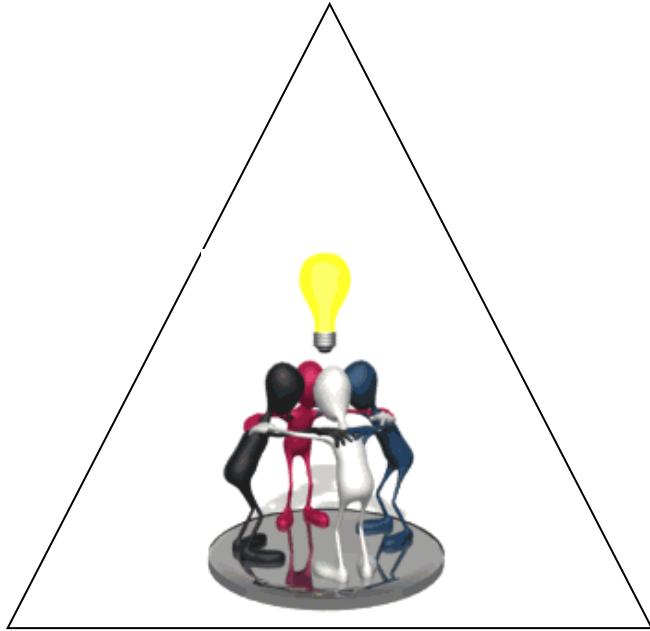
*Across the prairie
Photo— Alex Lieban*



Ever wanted to identify a chapter member whose name you've heard but not know what that person looks like? **Jan Deatherage**, our vice-president, is planning a chapter pictorial directory. She needs your help! Please send your favorite photo of yourself preferably while engaged in a Master Naturalist activity:

Jan@efctmn.org





Dallas Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas

On March 17, 2014, at 7 pm: Dr. Gary O. Dick on work conducted in the Trinity River wetlands.

Research Ecologist Dr. Gary O. Dick from the Lewisville Aquatic Ecosystem Research Facility (LAERF) will talk about work conducted in the Trinity River wetlands. Plantings in this ecosystem restoration project, which reduces flood risk for the city of Dallas, began in 2005 and are continuing today. The wetlands host increasingly diverse populations of wildlife that are able to withstand the impact of periodic flood events.

Dallas Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas monthly meeting, 7 pm on Monday, March 17, 2014, at the upstairs 'Guadalupe Peak' meeting room of the Dallas REI store at 4515 LBJ Fwy, Farmers Branch (635 and Welch Rd).

What are your ideas on how to improve the Naturalist News so that it better meets the needs of the Chapter?

Call or email Wanda Odum, wodum10043@reagan.com

Dear Master Naturalists:

As you may know there is an Interpretive Center at the Isle du Bois Unit at Ray Roberts state park. The Elm Fork Master Naturalists staff the Center on Saturdays from 10:00 to 4:00 and Sundays from 12:00 to 4:00 during the fall and spring months. We work with the park interpreter Kellie Lauderdale. The duties are just mainly keeping it open for visitors and describing the trails and wildlife at the park. Not a hard job but enjoyable just to be at the park. You would be surprised at the number of people that have never been to a state park before.

We have a dedicated list of volunteers for the spring but we need some more help. Without us the park would not be able to afford to keep it open.

This counts as service hours and any training counts as advanced training hours.

If you would like to help we could set up a brief training or if there is enough interest Kelly Lauderdale at the park would be willing to do some more detailed training about the park. I learned a lot about the park doing that even though I have been going there since it opened.

Thanks in advance. Just email me if you are interested. You don't have to pay the entrance fee to volunteer at the center.

Chuck Thetford
cthetford@twu.edu

Worthwhile video "How Wolves Change Rivers"

<http://www.filmsforaction.org/watch/how-wolves-change-rivers/>
#.Uv5mafuhhlE.facebook



clipart

LISDOLA Highlights



Beverly Lyttaker, Hilton Dickerson, Deb Estes & Jan Deatherage at Enviroscope



Deb Estes, Suzanne Barnard, Hilton Dickerson, Jan Deatherage & Susan Myers in planning meeting.

The Lewisville Independent School District Outdoor Learning Area (LISDOLA) is a 70 acre outdoor learning area that backs up to LLELA and LAERF. It serves the kids of the Lewisville ISD, and it is a wonderful place for the kids to experience nature. It is a beautiful, peaceful area located on the east side of Lewisville. It consists of hiking trails with interactive activities to help engage the kids in the outdoors. Our chapter has been actively working to improve the site in order to give the school kids the best possible exposure to nature and their environment. Most recently, the small group of Master Naturalists volunteers from our chapter have constructed a large, permanent, outdoor enviroscope. It is a wonderful tool that educates the children on watersheds.

There is still much to be done at LISDOLA, and volunteers can do anything from trail maintenance, plant identification, working with the school children, and much, much more. There is also a wetland area that needs restoration. Deborah Estes is the Project Manager, and would love your help.



Van Elliott in Spider's Web



Hilton Dickerson, Deb Estes, Susan Myers, Jan Deatherage & Beverly Lyttaker at Spider's Web exhibit.

Never Assume

By Bob Ross

I had spent the week working in San Antonio. Business-wise it had been a good week, but a tiring week. It was Friday afternoon, and I was more than ready to get back home for the weekend. As soon as I had my car packed I was on my way up Interstate 35.

It was 1978 and unfortunately my dad had died a couple of years earlier. He was buried in an old cemetery in Hill County, between Hillsboro and Waco. The cemetery is on a rise in a meadow and was established in 1870. An entire section of the cemetery is filled with veterans of the U. S. Civil War. As early as I could remember as a child we would pass the cemetery each time we would go visit my maternal grandparents. Rarely did we pass the cemetery that my dad didn't say, "Well, there's Boot Hill." For those of us who are old enough to remember, Boot Hill was the legendary cemetery of the western television series, *Guns, Smokes, and Dynamite*. Many gun-slingers who dueled with the local Marshall, Matt Dillon, ended up there. No one had a greater moral compass than Marshall Dillon. No one served better beer than Miss Kitty, owner of The Long Branch Saloon. No one was a more loyal sidekick than Chester. And, the local sawbones was an elderly gentleman whose moniker was Doc.

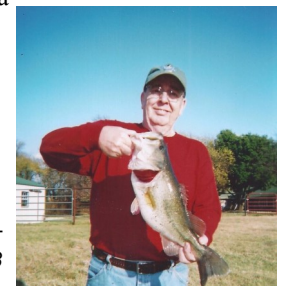
Heading up I-35 I exited and drove toward the cemetery. As one nears the cemetery one has to leave the paved farm to market road and continue on a dirt road to the entrance of the cemetery. As I was driving around the last curve on the dirt road I was startled and surprised. Flying up out of the wooded ditch on my right side were four wild turkeys. They flew directly over the hood of my car and lit in the wooded area on the left side of my car fleeing for their safety. I stopped my car and just watched them as they ran through the woods. Suddenly, my life passed before me and I began trying to remember the last time I had seen, or heard, wild turkeys in this general area. The answer was never. Never assume you know all the wildlife in a certain area.

On another topic, never assume everyone in your midst is on the same page with you. An example was when I taught junior high and high school social studies. Once, I was standing before eighth graders and was lecturing about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. I was asking the class about this piece of history and realized their eyes were beginning to dim and glaze. Somewhat irritated that they were not into history and they were failing to raise their hands to answer my questions, I

said, "Come on guys! You act as though this is the first time you have ever heard any of this." With a hesitant manner one of the little stars in the class stood and said, "We were only two years old when this happened." She was correct. I was the bonehead who assumed they were old enough to be able to say such things as, "I remember where I was when JFK was killed."

And lastly, classmates and I from the 2013 EFC Training Class had an urban wildlife biologist as a presenter. He told us about a project he had worked on with the city council members of Irving, Texas. It had been brought to the attention of the council that down in "the bottoms" on the south side of Irving there were signs of feral hogs. The hogs were doing their usual antics of rooting and pretty much tearing up the countryside. The biologist asked the local animal control folks just how many hogs they thought were causing the problem. They told him there could be as many as ten to twelve hogs. The project members devised a plan to snare and relocate the feral hogs as a remedy. Traps were set and within a few days they had captured in excess of three hundred feral hogs. Again, never assume you have a handle on just exactly what is happening with fauna and flora in a particular area.

Nature is a dynamic, not static, phenomenon. Nature is ever changing. As master naturalists we all have watched humans take over a landscape, eradicate the trees and soil, decimate the wildlife habitat, and begin building objects in the name of progress. Later, after the humans have moved on to another area, nature begins to reclaim the landscape. The reclamation process begins immediately. We, as master naturalists, should never assume we can't do anything to reclaim a habitat, reclaim a prairie, or reclaim a near-extinct species. Master naturalists should never assume they are only one individual, flailing in the wind, attempting to balance the powers of nature. Master naturalists are members of a group of people who GET IT! A group, whose collective efforts make the World a little better place in which to live. Thank you for being a Texas Master Naturalist.



Bob Ross —
Class of 2013

Red-tailed Hawk, *Buteo jamaicensis*

From Joanne Fellows
— class of 2008



Ron and I went on an adventure to see a new wetland trail. Greeting us was a pair of Red-tailed Hawks. They flew in together and scanned the wetland meadow below. Took a long look at us then headed back to the woodland edge. Red-tailed Hawks are one of the buteos.

Here is a quick set of identification markers for the three groups of hawks:

1. Buteos have broad round wings and short wide tails. They soar without flapping.
2. Accipiters have broad round wings with a long tail. They fly with a flap-flap-glide pattern
3. Falcons have sharply pointed wings.