

NATURALIST NEWS

**Bobwhite Quail—
*Sharon Barr***



*“In order to see birds it is necessary to become a part of the silence.”
— Robert Lynd*

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NATURALIST NEWS –TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST, ELM FORK CHAPTER

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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.



Wound Up for Round Up

It was 3:00 pm on Wednesday the 20th of August, the Wednesday before Thursday, the day of Round Up. The Resource Room was buzzing with activity. Project Managers were collecting their materials and volunteers were loading up cars with all the components for a great Show and Tell. This year's event was held at Trinity Presbyterian Church, which proved to be an excellent venue for the Elm Fork Chapter's Big Show of who we are and what we do.



By 4:00 pm, the church parking lot was getting an unusual amount of cars for Wednesday afternoon. We were lucky to have the extra time to set up, prepare the room, and check the audio and visual technology that makes our meetings more effective in a large group setting.

And a large group was what we had. On Thursday morning, after an extra couple of hours of setting up, food arranged in the kitchen, last minute displays going up, and MORE TABLES being put out, the crowd began to filter in. From the special visitor nametags, to the greeters, to our friendly members, visitors were made to feel welcome and engaged in the Master Naturalist environment.



We had a full room. There were 26 visitors and 52 members that attended. There were 14 project displays. A contagious enthusiasm filled the room and our guests were getting an exceptional overview of the TXMN program.

Jan kicked off the official presentation with flair. Jan Hodson presented certification to our newest Junior Master Naturalist, a very shy and precious Emogene Grace Dalton. Cheryl Ellis did a fine job of explaining the nuts and bolts of the training program. Our advisors, Janet Lamina and Kelly Lauderdale brought an air of gravitas to the program. Claire Kamego and Diane Kolhase provided some comic relief. There was a healthy quantity of Q and A and then it was time for lunch.



Jan Hodson with Emogene Grace

Food is an area in which we most certainly excel. From healthy to decadent, we had it all covered. The assortment was diverse as the people who enjoyed it. All in all it was a terrific meeting and opportunity to make a lasting, good impression.

Thank you to all who participated and for the effort and energy that went into this very special event.

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- ◆ Opportunity to learn about Indian Marker Trees and bobcats
- ◆ Interesting projects updates
- ◆ Announcements about upcoming activities

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Roundup recap</i>	2
<i>Upcoming programs</i>	3
<i>Project activities</i>	4
<i>Articles</i>	7
<i>Announcements</i>	10
<i>Field notes in focus</i>	15
<i>Last word</i>	16
<i>Who we are</i>	17



Article & photos courtesy Jan Deatherage

Meeting—September 18

Steve Houser and LeeAnn Weaver (Jernigan) will present the program on **Indian Marker Trees**.

For more information see August 2014 Naturalist News



This Cherokee Marker Tree exhibits the typical slight bend low on the trunk (near the ground) and a second sharp bend upward. Photo courtesy of the Mountain Stewards.

October 16 Presentation by Derek Broman: *Texas Parks and Wildlife Bobcat Study*



This presentation will address the ongoing research efforts of DFW Urban Bobcat Project as well as provide information on the identification, behavior, and ecology of bobcats.

Bobcats (*Lynx rufus*) are located throughout all of Texas and are the most widespread wild feline in North America. These secretive carnivores are also becoming quite common in urban areas, including the DFW



Metroplex. While much is known about bobcats in the rural areas of Texas, very little is known about their behavior and ecology in urban environments. It is quite difficult to make many assumptions about urban bobcats because very little research has been done on urban bobcats in North America and what research has been done may not apply to the urban areas of Texas.

What do bobcats eat? Where do they live? How many of them are there in the DFW Metroplex? These are fundamental questions that need addressed for the proper conservation of that animal, especially as the Metroplex population continues to grow. To address these conservation needs an urban bobcat study has been created by researchers from Texas Parks and Wildlife, Utah State University, the National Wildlife Research Center of the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Wildlife Service program, and Texas Christian University.

Derek Broman is an Urban Wildlife Biologist in the DFW Metroplex and an advisor for the Cross Timbers Master Naturalist Chapter. Has been with TPWD since January 2013 and is originally from rural Iowa. He has worked with numerous wildlife species throughout the Midwest, but was in New England for 3 years before coming to Texas. While there, he studied bobcats for his Master's Degree in Wildlife Ecology from the University of New Hampshire and then studied black bears with the State of Connecticut. His offices are in Cedar Hill State Park, but he works throughout the DFW Metroplex.

Article & photos provided by Derek Broman and Peg La Point

FOCUS on PROJECTS

Back To School – Texas Our Heritage Project

Joanne Fellows

Project Managers: Janet Gershenfeld and Joan Stanley



Main TOH Project Board

Heritage Elementary School had a major renovation this summer. It included a new roof, air conditioners, Wi-Fi and fresh paint. All classrooms were emptied. As much as possible of the Texas Our Heritage Project was taken down and packed away to keep safe. Opening day of school, the team was back and reinstalling the project. Delighted children and teachers walked past with big smiles, ohhhs, ahhhs and 'thank you for what you do' comments. It was two days of fun work to restore all the information in the halls, cases and garden.

Texas Our Heritage was originally a teaching garden designed to demonstrate the 10 Ecological Zones of Texas. It is a miniature version of the many habitats of Texas. The next time there is a workday at Heritage Elementary TOH garden; it will be your chance to see and participate in a prairie restoration, wetlands replanting, or invasive species reme-

diation on a few square feet not acres. Existing member or intern, you are welcome to help keep these sample ecologies of Texas looking their best and teaching the lessons of best practices.

A few years ago, as technology entered the education process, the garden was enabled with augmented reality and an interactive Master Naturalist display created inside the school. It is located in the hall that looks out at the teaching garden. Heritage teachers have integrated lesson plans across all grades. The success of the Texas Our Heritage project led to a grant that purchased an additional 25 iPads for students. This expansion of the project opens opportunities for members and interns who like to connect education, nature and technology. Interested? Just contact Ron Fellows.



Ron Fellows installing fresh ecological zone signs

Here are a few before and after shots:



Displays and Reading Corner



Zone and Endangered Species Displays



Augmented Reality Maps of Texas



Historic Indians of Texas

Elm Fork Education Center

From Bob Ross

On September 3rd, Elm Fork Education Center (EFEC) held its Volunteer Orientation meeting for the upcoming 2014-2015 school year. Presenters were Brian Wheeler and Marti Lathrop. The meeting was well-attended by EFC certified members and participants in the 2014 training class. The Elm Fork Education Center is located on the UNT campus in the Environmental Education, Science, and Technology (EESAT) building.

EFEC provides a curriculum and learning experience for area public and private students who arrive at the EESAT for a knowledgeable and fun-filled day field trip. Students are kept busy learning in the classroom, outdoor learning area, Eagle Exhibit Hall, Sky Theater, and Crow Creek locations.

Volunteers at EFEC are referred to as Guides who direct each classroom of students, known as expeditions. This year, expeditions are named after new scientists and researchers. The new names are: Louis Walter Alvarez, physicist and inventor; Sylvia Earle, marine biologist, explorer and author; Susan Hendrickson, fossil hunter, marine archeologist, adventurer, and explorer; Lonnie G. Johnson, inventor and engineer; and E.O. Wilson, biologist, researcher, theorist, naturalist and author.

Volunteering at Elm Fork Education Center is an approved project at Elm Fork Chapter. The project manager is Peg LaPoint.

If you want to learn more about the Elm Fork Education Center, go to their website: www.efec.unt.edu.

Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Project

From Bob Ross

On September 6th, Rob Roy lead a team of EFC certified master naturalists and a participant of the 2014 training class on a wildlife habitat evaluation project.

Rob had been contacted by the owners, three siblings, to present them with a wildlife habitat evaluation report on 40 acres in southwest Denton County. The three siblings, each owning a third of the tract, inherited the property that has been in the family since 1948.

Once the team had arrived on the property, Rob instructed everyone to spread out and begin walking while writing down everything they saw, such as: plants, trees, flowers, animals, animal tracks, or scat. Also, everyone observed how the tract was laid out with trees, clearings, and water resources.

After walking the property, Rob asked everyone to send him everything that had been written down and any photographs that had been taken. Rob explained to the owners that he would take all the information and process it into one report to be given to them.

Wildlife Habitat Management is on the Elm Fork Chapter approved project list. For information, contact Rob Roy, project manager.



One of the owners with Rob Roy