

Leaves of Winter by Diane Humes

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President's Message by Maureen Nolan-Wilde, President 2014

"Why is being a Master Naturalist important to you?" was one of the questions that we posed to members while preparing for our end of year celebration. To me, one of the answers we received rang so true: "It is one of the most fun and rewarding experiences you could ever imagine. To be able to interact with so many like-minded, interesting, educated, and caring people is truly a gift."

The year 2013 is over and what a year it was for us! Once again, the direct volunteer hours posted by our chapter in 2013 (32,655) have exceeded the former high posted in 2012. Another way to look at this accomplishment is to see what those hours were worth in dollars to the state and to our community - \$737,023.

As we move into 2014, the Advanced Training team has already hosted two training sessions, with more planned throughout the year. Our new training class starts on February 20th and the energy and excitement is already being felt. Opportunities to mentor or be part of this class (food/assistance) are available.

Our chapter is maturing and we see a shift this year in some of the leadership positions. It is the goal of the new board to continue the work of those who led in the past and continue the winning formula of fun, food and friendship. Looking forward to a great 2014!

Next Chapter Meeting

February 6th

GBAC-TMN Outreach:
From the Biosphere

By

Stennie Meadours

At Carbide Park



Prairie Ponderings: Seed Balls, A Restoration Tool by Dick Benoit

One of the techniques used for prairie restoration in our area is the use of seed balls. These are spheres about the size of a marble that are red clay balls that contain seeds and soil. This method was used about 50 years ago by Masanobu Fukuoka, who is considered the founder of Natural Farming. He has applied this methodology in arid and marginal agricultural areas.

This is a cheap, low maintenance method of re-vegetation that requires no water, other than natural rainfall. We have used this method in our area since 2005, and have placed thousands of seed balls in most of our areas of prairie and wetland restorations.

The clay used is the red clay powder used in pottery making, usually commercially available in 50-pound bags. The potting soil also comes in commercial 50-pound bags. Seeds are collected locally or available in a number of mixes; we usually use coastal prairie mix. It is recommended that seeds used be collected within a fifty-mile radius of the planting site.

We mix 5 quarts of clay, 3 quarts of potting soil, and 1 quart of seed in a 10 gallon bucket until uniformly mixed, then add 1 quart of water slowly and stir slowly until reaching a consistency of cookie dough. When mixed, we then make snowball size balls and place them on aluminum pans to be reshaped by hand into marble-size seed balls, which are then placed into cardboard containers to dry overnight. Clean up usually involves a bucket outside to have the makers of the seed balls remove most of the clay from their hands.

This activity is well suited for doing with students. Usually, with the contents listed above, it will take a group of 20 about 45 minutes to make 2,500 seed balls. These seed balls dry within 24 hours and are ready to drop on the surface of bare ground about one foot apart. Wait until an adequate amount of rainfall dissolves the clay and presto, plant growth. Experience has shown, the bigger the seed ball, the more water needed to dissolve the clay, so marble size is best. So, get your hands dirty and help restore our native prairies and wetlands.



Wetland Wanderings by Diane Humes

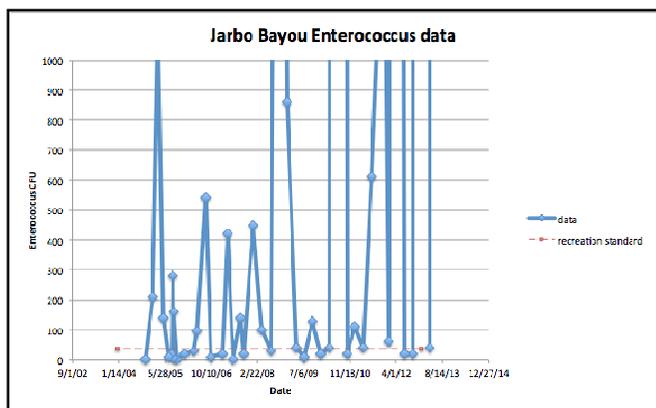
Let's think about clean water. All living things require water and most do better when the water is clean - that is, uncontaminated by chemicals, bacteria - any substances that might make life difficult. The U.S. Clean Water Act became law in 1972 to protect citizens (people), by mandated enforcement of strict drinking water standards. U.S. drinking water is among the safest in the world, but U.S. waterways are not as clean as they could be, despite many years of effort and much progress.

In the Houston-Galveston area, most waterways are considered impaired for bacteria by the TCEQ and EPA, meaning that the water is frequently higher than it should be in amounts of either *E. coli* or *Enterococcus* and does not meet standards for contact recreation. The bacterial standards are goals; desired limits are indicators of

potential for illness and possible human-caused contamination. Our streams and bayous are not necessarily unsafe, when reasonable precautions are observed - wash your hands, etc.

Root causes of the contamination are various, but most commonly thought to include: waste water treatment plant discharges of nutrients and bacteria, sanitary sewer overflows, collection system failures, malfunctioning septic systems, excessive fertilization and runoff - urban, agricultural and stormwater. The Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) convened the Bacterial Implementation Group (BIG) task force to study bacterial pollution in local waterways, search for solutions and solicit stakeholder cooperation to solve the problem.

The BIG, as it is called, formulated a plan for reducing bacterial loadings in 72 area stream segments. Each segment has a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) - a budget for pollution required by the Clean Water Act and EPA and a list of all waterways not meeting or expected to meet water quality standards - more acronyms than NASA! Two more segments are under study, both tributaries of Clear Lake, and are expected to be incorporated within the BIG. These are Armand and Jarbo Bayous.



Both bayous - why should we be different? - have registered elevated bacteria levels; Jarbo Bayou has recorded 6 incidents of *Enterococcus* levels greater than 1000 CFUs (colony forming units) per 100 ml of water

since 2004. (The *Enterococcus* standard - used in tidal waters - is 36 CFU.) Several GBAC members monitor these waters monthly and are helping expand our knowledge of the problem. Each bayou has a TMDL committee; all stakeholders, those who live, work and play, in the watershed are welcome to attend meetings to help formulate a plan (I-Plan) - maybe not so much fun as planting in the mud, but also stewardship. Please see the H-GAC website, <http://www.h-gac.com>, for meeting locations and times and learn the issues for your watershed.

These are complex issues, important to all of us, to ensure clean water for our environment. Real solutions may involve expensive overhauls of sewage treatment infrastructure, municipal systems and private septic tanks. I formerly lived near Boston, MA with an aging septic system; if it had failed, I would have been required to modernize my system, to the tune of > \$20,000 - not my idea of a good time. Old septic and municipal systems are quite common in the H-GAC area. If 1000 failing systems need replacement, is it better to convert the whole neighborhood to a municipal system or fix all the old septic tanks? Would people pay the increased taxes? How do we pay to update the municipal system? Can picking up after our pets solve the issue? What about boater waste? Do people really pour grease down the drain? What about more people moving in? Are we all part of the solution or the problem?

Heritage Book Study by Madeleine K. Barnes

If you want to know more about owls in general and barn owls in particular, and enjoy a really compelling and heart-warming book, this is the one for you. Wesley the Owl was the January Heritage Book selection. Would you sign up to take on the long term (19 years) total care of an animal if it meant that it altered your life? The author, Stacey O'Brien, took on this responsibility as a Caltech research assistant, and in the process learned more than bird behavior. She took a four-day old barn owl into her home, her life, and her heart. In developing this relationship, she learned the "way of the owl", discovering intelligence, communication, sensitivity, and the devotion it takes to be a lifetime owl mate. Her story is buttressed by lessons on owl folklore, temperament ("playful and inquisitive"), skills, and the brain structure that gives them some amazing abilities, like spotting a mouse "under three feet of snow by homing in on just the heartbeat." The book chronicles Wesley's development and the growing bond of understanding and emotion between owl and human. While Wesley was a wild owl, he could not be released into the wild as his injury could not be rehabilitated to the point of independent survival.

Conceived as a research opportunity, the results exceeded the clinical focus providing new insight and understanding into Barn owls and owl behavior.



If you would like to see Wesley, go to the following site and arrow down to the photo of Stacey with Wesley and click on the play button. It is truly amazing!

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/wesley-the-owl-stacey-obrien/1102339364?ean=9781416551775>

www.wesleytheowl.com

Come join with us for with reading and discussion of the following 2014 Heritage Book Study selections:

Matagorda Island by Wayne H. McAlister and Martha K. McAlister - First 5 chapters read by the February 3rd, 2014 meeting

An Unreasonable Woman by Ann Wilson - For April 7th & May 5th

The Ripple Effect by Alex Prudhomme - For June 2nd & July 7th

Sierra Club by Tom Turner - August 4th

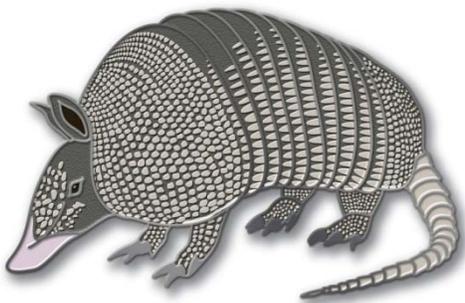
Tales of Old Time Texas by J. Frank Dobie - September 8th & Oct 6th

Anthill by O.E. Wilson - November 3rd & December 1st

If you have read any naturalist books that you would like to suggest for the book study, please send your suggestions to me at dwbmkb@aol.com for consideration.

Nine-Banded Armadillo by Diane Humes

Texas Master Naturalists will jump through hoops to get the newest re-certification pin! Especially since the 2014 pin will be the Nine-banded armadillo - proclaimed the Small Mammal of Texas. Yes, armadillos are mammals, with bony plates on their backsides; but more natural history later.



The armadillo pin will actually be the 14th pin available to a master naturalist; some lucky and diligent chapter members may have them all! The initial certification pin is, of course, a dragonfly, the Cyrano darter. Then, in order, beginning in 2002 with the Post oak, re-cert pins were: Lindheimer daisy (2003), Green tree frog (2004), Belted kingfisher (2005), Texas sage (2006), Fairy shrimp (2007), Prickly pear cactus (2008), Blind salamander (2009), Wood duck (2010), Texas horned lizard (2011), Mexican free-tailed bat (2012), and Monarch butterfly (2013). Want more information to share when someone admires your pins? Look no further than *The Midden* archives: "What Should a Texas MN Know", 2/2010, "Horny Toads", 4/2011, and "Milkweeds and Monarchs", 6/2011, and "What Should a Texas Master Naturalist Know - 2012", 2/2012, www.gbamasternaturalist.org.

Back to natural history - what makes the Nine-banded armadillo interesting enough to qualify for the TMN 2014 pin? It's not even a Texas native, although, in armadillo years, it has been in Texas probably 25 generations. Armadillos were noted only in south Texas by Vernon Bailey in the 1905 Biological Survey, but live in all regions of the state now except extreme arid West Texas, even extending as far north as Nebraska. They "got here as quick as they could" and spread rapidly, most likely along river courses.

Armadillos (order Cingulata), sloths and anteaters (order Pilosa) are closely related, and collectively belong to an ancient mammalian group called xenarthrans - "strange jointed ones". The "strange joint" refers to extra contacts in the lumbar vertebrae which strengthen their lower backs and hips for digging. Xenarthrans evolved and live in South America; the earliest fossils are from 60 million years ago. This fascinating group has its own fan club and website - check it out: <http://xenarthrans.org>.

Armadillos, the least specialized xenarthrans, have 21 living species, including the Screaming hairy armadillo and Pink fairy armadillo, but one - the Nine-banded armadillo, *Dasyus novemcinctus* - decided to move to Texas.



The map on page 4 displays the current (*circa* 2009-2010) range (shaded red), and predicted future range (shaded pink) of the nine-banded armadillo in the USA

Nine-banded armadillos, mostly solitary and nocturnal, the size of house cats, with heavy curving claws on their toes, are diggers, burrowing most prodigiously, especially in loose soil, often considered pests by farmers and suburbanites. Burrows are extensive, about 8 inches wide, 7 feet deep, and 25 feet long with multiple entrances/exits. In times of danger, armadillos use the closest exit for escape. A single animal may have 12 burrows on its range. Armadillos cannot regulate their body temperature well or hibernate, so use their burrows for protection against extreme cold or heat. Most other armadillo species are threatened, to some extent, by hunting and/or habitat loss, but *Dasypus novemcinctus* will probably only be slowed in his northward advance by freezing temperatures.

Nine-banded armadillos have bony armor connected by flexible bands of skin covering their backs, sides, heads, outside leg surfaces, and tails - bony rings on their long rat-like tails. Their bellies and inner legs are covered by tough skin and coarse hair. This armor provides protection from predators, surely, but also from abrasion, considering their digging habits. Their body armor makes them heavy, but they can swim; they gulp air to fill their stomach and intestines and do a quite credible doggy-paddle, keeping their snouts above water. Or, they can sink and "walk" on the bottom of a riverbed, if it is not too deep, holding their breath for up to six minutes.

Adults live 8 - 12 years; males and females do not differ noticeably; they mate in the summer - about July. The one fertilized egg undergoes a diapause before implantation in November; young are born in March. Interestingly, the Nine-banded armadillo zygote splits into four identical embryos. After birth, the quadruplets remain in the burrow, living off their mother's milk for about 3 months, then learn to forage with her, before leaving completely in about a year. Males do not care for the young.

This interesting xenarthran has poor eyesight, but keen hearing and sense of smell. When they are not foraging, armadillos shuffle along fairly slowly, stopping occasionally to sniff the air for signs of danger. Despite their excellent hearing, they may ignore sounds in their environment. But, when startled, their reflex is to jump straight up in the air 3 to 4 feet, which often puts them on a collision course with an automobile undercarriage.

So, it is easier to believe that they die of fright than that they are "born dead by the side of the road."

As if this weren't interesting enough, armadillos and humans are the only mammals that are susceptible to leprosy - which means that, although it is highly unlikely, you can contract the disease from contact with armadillos. They have been invaluable for medical research about this disease. They have unspecialized teeth which completely lack enamel and wear down very easily.

Armadillos will eat about anything they can find on the ground or by digging, but most of their diet consists of insects and other invertebrates. Nearly half their diet is larval and adult beetles, plus ants and termites. And, the most amazing thing of all: they are the only North American predators of fire ants! We should wear our pins with great pride, just for that.

In 1995, elementary school children voted for the State Mammal of Texas, producing a tie between the Longhorn and Nine-banded armadillo. The compromise: there should be a state SMALL mammal and a state LARGE mammal, to which was later added the state FLYING mammal (Mexican free-tailed bat). In the words of the proclamation:

WHEREAS, The other candidate for designation as Official State Mammal, the armadillo, is a hardy, pioneering creature that chose to begin migrating here at about the time that Texas became a state; and

WHEREAS, The armadillo possesses many remarkable and unique traits, some of which parallel the attributes that distinguish a true Texan, such as a deep respect and need for the land, the ability to change and adapt, and a fierce undying love for freedom; and

WHEREAS, As proud and indomitable as the state from which they hail, both the longhorn and the armadillo will serve as fitting symbols of Texas' unique heritage...So, that is why we have an armadillo pin - can a longhorn be far behind?



2013 Treasures of the Bay Award Winners

Nonprofit Award

NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service
Dr. Roger Zimmerman
Rhonda O'Toole

Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary
Shelly DuPuy

Chapter Service Award

Ellen Hufft
Lydia Rottmann
Sandy Rubin

Advanced Training Team	
Shirley Foster, Chair	
Madeleine Barnes	Vic Madamba
Louise Bell	Mel Measeles
Frank Budny	Rita Smith
Verva Densmore	Chuck Snyder
Emmeline Dodd	Nelda Tuthill
Ellen Gerloff	Nathan Veatch
Diane Humes	Mary Vogas

Making a Difference Award

Thomas Betros
Bobette Brasfield
Larry Brasfield
Scott Buckel
Root Choyce
Carolyn Miles
Emily Morris
Chatt Smith

Chuck Buddenhagen Memorial Education Award

Sheila Brown
Rowena McDermid
Wendy Reistle

Sammy Ray Researcher Award

Dr. Cindy Howard

2013 Year-End Meeting Highlights by Diane Humes

December 5, 2013 was the date of the chapter Awards and Recognition Celebration - the annual banquet and gathering to honor chapter members and friends, reflect on the past year's accomplishments, elect new officers,

and enjoy food, fun, and friendship. We gathered at Carbide Park - Wayne Johnson - for a splendid potluck dinner with barbecue provided by the chapter; many thanks to Tawy and Cliff Muehe for arranging and

transporting the BBQ! Desserts, salads and sides were delicious, as usual, and nobody was known to leave hungry or dissatisfied.

The 2013 training class members decorated our tables with living plants and mementoes of chapter activities. The result was beautiful; who could have guessed that we were so busy? During dinner we were treated to a multi-media extravaganza produced by our own Maureen Nolan-Wilde, Alan Wilde and Chuck Snyder.

Nineteen members of the 2013 class who received Master Naturalist certification and 111 members who

became re-certified for 2013 were recognized. Twelve members received recognition for 250 hours volunteer service, eleven for 500 hours, six for 1000 hours, three for 2500 hours, and one each for 5000 and 10,000 volunteer service hours. Congratulations to one and all!

The outgoing Board was recognized and new Board elected. Congratulations and job well done to all who helped with this lovely evening and many thanks to all who so cheerfully served in so many capacities. Keep up the good work. See you on the prairie, in the mud, at meetings, in the classroom, on the beach sharing food and good times.

Texas Master Naturalists Honor Tom Solomon by Julie Massey

The following article was published in the Houston Chronicle on January 2, 2014.

Tom Solomon, a volunteer at the Galveston Bay Area Chapter - Texas Master Naturalist, was recently recognized for completing 10,000 hours of volunteer service, which is equal to five years of full-time work.

Solomon, who lives in the Bay Area, joins Dick Benoit, another member of the Galveston Bay Area Chapter - TMN, in surpassing this level of service, according to a press release from the chapter. Only one other TMN volunteer in the state has reached the 10,000-hour pinnacle.

The Galveston Bay Area Chapter - TMN provides educational, outreach and conservation services designed to improve the management of the area's natural resources.

For more information, visit www.txmn.org.



Waterfowl ID Advanced Training by Madeleine K. Barnes

Do you know how to identify the ducks found in our area? On Saturday, November 16th, 2013, a group of 25 GBAC master naturalists met at the Texas City Prairie Preserve (TCPP) to learn about Waterfowl Identification. Aaron Tjelmeland, Manager of TCPP, conducted the workshop covering ducks, geese, the American Coot, Common Gallinule, Common Loon, and two species of Grebe. The presentation began with identifying the parts of a duck, feathering, cheek, eye ring, and nail (thicker part of the bill) coloring and characteristics for each species. The ducks are classified into two categories: dabbling or puddle ducks and diving ducks. One interesting fact is that all ducks will dive below the water as a defensive

maneuver to evade danger and predators. Fourteen species of dabbling ducks, eight species of diving ducks, and five species of geese were presented in detail. Two websites were referenced for waterfowl bird data:

www.worldbirds.org

www.ebird.org

Of the four flyways for birds in the U.S., Texas is located in the central flyway for identification and data collection. After lunch time, there was an onsite field opportunity for the group to apply the information learned by observing and identifying waterfowl. A special thanks to those who provided the coffee and delicious breakfast food items.

Guppies from Julie

Guppies from Julie

The year 2014 is off and running! Master Naturalists are digging, planting, testing water, exploring and getting ready for the Spring Class!

You can help to make the spring class a huge success. Plan to be a training class volunteer - mentor a new class member, bring potluck or breakfast goodies, introduce speakers, set up equipment and much more.

You'll have fun meeting the new class members, learning and volunteering!

The Spring 2014 Class begins on Thursday, February 20, 2014 at Armand Bayou Nature Center! Volunteer now by contacting Sara Snell at 281-309-0276 or snellsw@verizon.net.

Thank you, Rita Smith!

We have all enjoyed Food, Fun and Friendship as Master Naturalists! Rita Smith has been a big part of making that happen by always supplying coffee for our events south of Dickinson Bayou! Rita is going to take a much deserved break from her coffee detail.

Rita, thank you so much for making sure we had java for ATs, class and special events! Rita shared her duty with Nelda Tuthill. Nelda will continue to cover our area north of Dickinson Bayou!

Many thanks, ladies!



The Midden

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For comments on this issue or to suggest content for future issues, please contact **Diane Humes** by e-mail at treimanhumes@earthlink.net.

Midden Editorial Team

Steve Alexander
Diane Humes
Madeleine Barnes
Carolyn Miles
Chuck Snyder

Comm. Team Chair
Editor

The Midden Deadline for the next issue

March 1st

If you have Advanced Training or Volunteer Opportunities, please submit information to Cindy Howard, howardc@uhcl.edu.

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability, or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Court of Texas cooperating.

February and March Activities

ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Chapter Meeting - February 6th

Presenter: Stennie Meadours
6:30 Social, 7:00 Presentation, 8:00 business meeting
AgriLife Extension Office 1 Hour AT

Early People of Texas - February 26th

1-3 pm 2 hours AT
Location: Extension Office
Presenters - TJ Fox and Mike Wehrman
Register with Emmeline Dodd txdodd@aol.com

Raptor Workshop - March 3rd

2-4 pm 2 hours AT
Location: Extension Office
Presenters - Dick Benoit
Register with Emmeline Dodd txdodd@aol.com

Big Thicket Bus Trip - March 25th

All Day 3.5 hours AT
Location: Big Thicket National Preserve
Presenters - National Park Service
Register with Emmeline Dodd txdodd@aol.com

Ongoing

Galveston Island State Park
10 am at the Welcome Center
Every Saturday (resumes in March)- Beach Explorations
Every Sunday (resumes in March)- Bay Explorations
Tours 1 to 1 ½ hours long. Bring water and family.

Heritage Book Study Group

First Monday of every month. AgriLife Extension Office
10am-Noon 2 hours AT
Contact: Elsie Smith (409)945-4731
We are currently reading *Matagorda Island* by Wayne & Martha McAlister

STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Ongoing Activities:

Tuesdays -

- Sheldon Lakes State Park, Contact: Tom Solomon crandtr@sbcglobal.net
- Texas City Prairie Preserve, Contact: Jim Duron wishkad@yahoo.com
- Environmental Institute of Houston at UHCL, Contact : Wendy Reistle reistle@uhcl.edu

Wednesdays - Wetland Restoration Team, Contact:

Marissa Sipocz m-sipocz@tamu.edu

Thursdays -

- Horseshoe Marsh Prairie, third Thursday of each month, 9 - Noon. Contact: Tom Solomon crandtr@sbcglobal.net

- San Jacinto State Park, Contact: Tom Solomon crandtr@sbcglobal.net

Fridays - Prairie Friday, ABNC, 8:30 - 11:30am, Contact: Dick Benoit RBenoitTEX@aol.com

EDUCATION - OUTREACH VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Bay & Island Adventures - Volunteers teach six in-class hands-on modules on a once a month basis in Dickinson and Galveston Schools. Presenters and helpers are needed for eleven 4th and 5th grade classes. Contact: Sara Snell snellsw@verizon.net.

Education and Outreach Committee - Lots of work to do and we can use your help developing a speakers bureau; responding to requests for exhibit booths, fieldtrip guides and presenters, planning Camp Wild and Treasures of the Bay; and developing a library of education-outreach materials. Contact Stennie Meadors Stenmead@aol.com

Partner and Associate Programs - Many organizations sponsor guided walks and education programs or need volunteers to staff their nature centers. Go to www.gbamasternaturalist.org click on "Volunteer Opportunities," then click on "Partners, Sponsors and Associates" for the list, then click on their website for information and contact.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Board Meetings - Third Wednesday of the month
2-4 pm at the Extension Office

Committee Meetings

Communication - Every other month
9-Noon at Extension office
Advanced Training - Third Monday of the month
10-Noon at Extension office
Education/Outreach - Meets as needed. None currently scheduled.
Stewardship - Meets quarterly. Next meeting to be determined
Training Class - Volunteer Training
February 11th, 11am - 1 pm (lunch served)
TCPP

Spring Training Class Schedule:
Thursdays from February 20th to May 15th (except no session on March 13th).
Various locations.

2014 Chapter Board by Maureen Nolan-Wilde

Sara Snell - Past President

Sara was a member of the Spring 2004 class and has been involved with the chapter serving in various positions. She spends her stewardship time at Texas City Prairie Preserve, conducts school field trips at both the prairie and GISP, coordinates the training class volunteers and does whatever else that might come up and where help is needed.

Maureen Nolan-Wilde - President

Maureen was a member of the 2011 class. Her main stewardship efforts have been on Galveston Island where she is a beach/bay exploration guide at GISP, turtle tour guide with her partner Carlos Rios at NOAA, turtle patrol member, education outreach committee member and served as Vice-President in 2013.

Cindy Howard - Vice President

Cindy was in the 2012 training class, and was the class alternate, but became class rep when Cip became board secretary. For her MN adventures she is working with the FoGISP group on bay and beach walks and field trips for school groups at GISP. Currently, Cindy is working with the Education Outreach Committee and assisting with the upcoming Training Class. A little side note on Cindy: she leads trips down the Amazon for UHCL - including one in July 2014 for MN's!

Cipriano Romero - Secretary

Cip was a member of the Spring Class of 2012 and served as his class representative until accepting the nomination as Secretary of the Board. He also participates in the Beach/Bay explorations and helped with the Dolphin Challenge Ocean Science Bowl.

Ellen Gerloff - Treasurer

Ellen was a member of the 2005 Spring Training Class and has been active in prairies, wetlands, and rain gardens. She is a member of the Advanced Training Team. Every year Ellen works with the Feather Fest registration and is a counselor at Camp Wild and a mentor for new class members. Most people recognize her as the "head greeter", as she coordinates the volunteer greeters for all the new training classes.

Jim Duron - Membership

Jim was a member of the 2008 class and also served as his class representative. Jim is quite active with prairie restoration efforts all across the Bay. He serves as the lead on prairie restoration activities at Texas City Prairie Preserve.

Chuck Snyder - Class Training Director

Chuck was a member of the Spring Class of 2003 and served as one of the class's representatives on the Board. Later, he became an editor of *The Midden*.

Recently, Chuck has participated in the installation and maintenance of demonstration rain gardens at ABNC and in League City and Deer Park. He also serves on the Advanced Training Committee, Communications Team and Digital Photography Corps.

Jo Monday - Volunteer Services Director

Jo was a member of the Spring Class of 2013. Her volunteer efforts include leading GISP Beach/Bay Explorations and volunteering in the Nature Learning Center at GISP, Baytown Center, Turtle Patrol, and Camp Wild. She is also a member of the Education Outreach committee and has represented the chapter at various community events.

Ange Busceme and Rhonda Marshall - 2013 Class Representatives

Ange was a master gardener in Jefferson County before beginning her lifelong dream of living at the beach. Her commitments to Bolivar Peninsula include turtle patrol, water monitoring and prairie/wetland restoration. She volunteers across the bay when she can and helps with Houston Audubon projects in High Island. She has been enamored with monarch butterflies since childhood.

Rhonda was a member of the Turtle Patrol team on Bolivar and served as a volunteer at the Nature Learning Center at GISP. She is involved in planting activities at Houston Audubon Sanctuaries and at GISP, helped staff the HA desk at Boy Scout Woods during spring migration, volunteered for workdays at the rain gardens at EIH/Armand Bayou, and helped with the recent Holiday Hike at EIH. She and husband, Dennis Peterson, also coordinate with Margaret Pickell and her team at Wildlife Center of Texas in rescuing and transporting sick/injured birds on Bolivar Peninsula.



Left to right: Ange, Jim, Jo, Rhonda, Cindy, Ellen, Chuck, Maureen, Sara, Cip and Tawy.