



*Magnolia grandiflora* by Diane Holmes

**Table of Contents**

Prairie Ponderings	2
Wetland Wanderings	3
Hawk Watching, Migration	3
The Big Thicket	5
Heritage Book Study - Review	6
GBAC Library	7
Good Side of Seaweed	7
Estuarine Smorgasbord	8
Beach/Bay Play Day	9
Root Choyce - Everyday Hero	10
David Bulliner - GBF Eco-Hero	10
Guppies from Julie	11

**President's Corner** by Maureen Nolan-Wilde, President 2014

Feather Fest, Ocean Discovery Day, field trips, Beach and Bay Day, sea turtle patrols, hawk watch, prairie and beach restoration, and Junior Naturalist were just some of the events for which we have volunteered or taken leadership roles this spring. At the same time, we are balancing the training and graduation of a new class. Coming in June, we'll have Camp Wild, with the continuation of efforts at Sheldon Lake, Armand Bayou, Texas City Prairie Preserve and Galveston Island State Park.

Congratulations to our new community members. According to Jim's latest membership directory, we have crossed the 200 GBAC-TMN threshold.

It's time to take a breath and celebrate our accomplishments. Our efforts have made a difference and are not only appreciated by the organizations that sponsor events, but also by other participants. It is always great to get a thank you; however, when these participants ask to learn more about the TMN program and how they can participate, then you know we've made a difference.

At times, it's easy for life to get a little out of balance due to the sheer abundance of volunteer opportunities. When I shared this thought with a trusted TMN friend, she reminded me to make sure I take the time to enjoy what I do and only do what I really enjoy. We can't do it all, even if we'd like to try.

Nature is calling; find an activity that really makes you smile and then go out and do it.

**Next Chapter Meeting**

June 5<sup>th</sup>

Geology 101 - Earth History for the non-Geologist

By

Rick Becker  
Micropaleontologist

**At Carbide Park**



Photo by Chuck Snyder

## Prairie Ponderings by Marybeth Arnold

### *Why I Walk on the Prairie*

*Another day.....down, dragging*

*No! Today I go to the prairie. Today.....*

*I'll listen to the wind.*

*I'll see crested caracaras.*

*I'll watch for hawks and harriers.*

*I'll gather seeds. Is it Harvest time?*

*I'll see the last of the Attwater's doing their mating dance.*

*I'll hear monk parrots.*

*I'll curse the deep rooted sedge.*

*I'll see wobbled-legged newborn calves bawling for their mommas.*

*I'll watch the "amber waves of grain".*

*I'll wrack my brain for the name of that grass or spartina.*

*I'll hike on irregular grounds in areas that should be home to snakes and snails and fiddler crabs, tripping*

*but not falling (at least most of the time).*

*I'll wear my boots...my multicolored mud boots.*

*I'll wear my boots in mud, gumbo mud, the worst kind of mud.*

*I'll drop my blood pressure 20 points just standing there.*

*I'll laugh...with joy and relief that it is still here.*

*I'll pray that my great grandchildren will have the blessing to be here too.*

## Wetland Wanderings: If You Build It They Will Come by Diane Humes

Back in the summer of 2009, the Wetland Restoration Team planted a series of ponds for the Buffalo Bayou Partnership at Buffalo Bend Park, a park so new that we were the first to set boots upon it after the bulldozers. Buffalo Bend Park is perched upon a bluff overlooking Buffalo Bayou; the neighborhood is very industrial and this space injects an oasis of green habitat and collects the site's runoff, slowing its journey to the bayou.



Photo by Steve Upperman

The Wetland Restoration Team often likes to begin planting with the deep-water species, then work our way toward shore with progressively shallower species, and end with edge species. Prevents trampling the babies.

So, picture a barren landscape - three ponds filled with bayou water in a muddy, gooey field with no shred of vegetation. The Powdery thalia, *Thalia dealbata*, and *Canna glauca* looked like sticks poking out of the water - perfect perches for the dragonflies which immediately descended to investigate, landed and found it good. Clearly, they soon mated and laid their eggs, because within two weeks we had larvae hatching and "our" ponds were filled with "our" dragonflies! If you build it, they will come, indeed.

The Wetland Restoration Team has helped restore wetlands throughout the Houston area - along Sims, Brays, and Dickinson Bayous, at San Jacinto State Park and, currently, Sheldon Lake State Park. All the projects are designed to restore wetland habitat as it might have been before streams were channelized, fields leveled, drained, plowed, and planted to crops, and urbanization.

Wetland habitat is incredibly productive, serving as a nursery, migratory bird stopover, and home to myriad creatures. All living things require water and species that depend on wetlands have declined in number as the wetlands have disappeared. The Team seeks to reverse that trend in our own backyard by restoring the wetlands "one plant at a time". You, too, could become part of restoring the land - must be willing to get muddy!

Besides the ongoing work at Sheldon Lake State Park, stormwater wetland restoration opportunities will begin this summer with plant collection for Exploration Green in Clear Lake, Pearland Nature Center, and Kost Pond stormwater detention basin in Alvin. To learn more about any of these projects, don't hesitate to contact: Diane Humes, [treimanhumes@earthlink.net](mailto:treimanhumes@earthlink.net), or contact directly: Marissa Sipocz, [m-sipocz@tamu.edu](mailto:m-sipocz@tamu.edu), for Sheldon Lake SP prairie potholes and Mary C. Edwards, [mcedwards@tamu.edu](mailto:mcedwards@tamu.edu), for stormwater wetlands.

## Hawk Watching, Migration, and Just Watching by Diane Humes

Our 2014 Hawk Watch, founded and organized by Dick Benoit, has come to a close; the birds are already nesting in the North Woods and will return in the fall to be seen best at Smith Point, on the east side of Galveston Bay. This year's hawk lovers were: John and Lynn Wright, Bob and Sarah Patterson, Ken and Dorothy Russell, Beth Frohme, Cindy Leining, Cip Romero, Jim Frantz, Royce Pendergast, Diane Humes, and Dick

Benoit. We wish the birds well and look forward to next year's observations.

When did all this counting begin? In 1972, birdwatchers noted the complete absence of peregrine falcons. The cause turned out to be use of DDT that had seriously disrupted their reproductive abilities - as well as with bald eagles (our national bird!), brown pelicans, and others.

Watchers began counting to be able to record progress and the count continues, as we monitor bird populations in the face of the many challenges for bird species in today's world.



Photo by Diane Humes

Sitting in my chair at Sylvan Beach and Little Cedar Bayou Park in the early days of March and April, gave me a feeling of kinship with the island coastwatchers, those patient and dedicated individuals who helped change the outcome of World War II in the South Pacific by observing enemy aircraft, ships, and details of troop movements and reporting back to base, often risking their lives and safety to do so. Watching for hawks requires the same dedication, patience, and observational acumen - with far less risk, of course.

In the case of our Hawk Watch sites in La Porte, TX, although many species migrate north in the spring (some of us DO like to see the pretty birds, too!), the hawk watchers concentrate on counting the fiercer varieties of bird, those that are mainly brown, black, and gray. Watchers scan the skies looking for larger birds - the kind that form huge kettles, boiling up into the air on thermals. Sometimes they are nearly invisible specks, soaring and gliding - these birds seldom flap their wings - they are in a hurry to get to their destinations and disappear quickly at altitude. By contrast, the resident hawks, "the locals", soar about in much more leisurely fashion.

The most abundant species at the hawk watch is the Broad-winged Hawk, *Buteo platypterus*, because this species is one of the few hawks that forms flocks for migration. Broad-winged Hawks are small, stocky, secretive buteos of the North American forests in which they nest during the summer. They winter in Central and South America in various forest habitats, seemingly less restricted in their preferences than in the nesting season. Except during migration, spring and fall, they are not very social. Forming huge flocks for migration, at the peaks of fall and spring migration, they may be seen in tremendous numbers.

The best place in the world to see Broad-winged Hawks during migration is Vera Cruz, Mexico. Due to its geography, the birds are squeezed between mountains and the sea into a narrow flight path, where counts of Broad-wings flying during migration have recorded up to 1.7 million birds - probably the total population.

Broad-wings migrate up to 400 km per day or about 250 miles, and may spend 40 days flying each spring and fall. From La Porte to Vera Cruz is nearly 1000 miles; if conditions are perfect, Broad-wings could get here in about 4 days. As with other raptors, they do not like to fly over water, so hug the coastline or move further inland, soaring upward on and gliding between warm thermals.

When conditions are "right", which they finally were in the seventh week of the Hawk Watch, watchers counted over 12,000 birds - mostly Broad-wings! For those who witnessed the sight of thousands of birds streaming northward, it was exciting and made up for the slow days in early spring when we were tempted to count the airplanes, helicopters, dragonflies, and butterflies - or anything else that moved, à la coastwatchers!



During those meditative early days of spring, I wondered whether any records existed of those coastwatchers; did they count albatrosses, perhaps, when there were no enemy planes or warships about? Turns out the first coast watching network was set up around Australia right after World War I, then expanded to include New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, code-named Ferdinand, after "Ferdinand the Bull", who did not fight, but sat under a tree and just smelled the flowers. In other words, coastwatchers were supposed to observe circumspectly and unobtrusively, attracting no attention, and not fight.

One of these watchers, Peter Child, related that he observed birds during the course of the war; *"The nature of my work generally necessitated living on each island for periods of several days and thus allowed opportunity for studying the bird-life and visiting (usually by canoe) many remote islets and breeding places which were not inhabited by the native people and which the casual visitor never reaches. These are, of course, the real undisturbed bird sanctuaries of the Colony, where the avifauna is at its best and least afraid of man."*

A second coastwatching network, the Cape Expedition, was set up by New Zealand in 1940 to monitor enemy activities in the islands between New Zealand and Antarctica. Watchers were also charged with monitoring weather and wildlife. Although no enemy ships were ever sighted, the weather and wildlife reports proved extremely valuable. Thus was established the first weather station in that area, baseline studies of albatross and dotterel populations; during the last years of WW II,

surveyors, geologists, naturalists, as well as meteorologists completed a survey of all island groups, for which today we are extremely grateful.

So, hats off to all watchers everywhere! If you couldn't watch hawks this year, try again in 2015. Observations, and recording them, are the first steps to discovery. Charles Darwin, probably one of the most patient and best observers of all time, said, *"I have been speculating last night what makes a man a discoverer of undiscovered things; and a most perplexing problem it is. Many men who are very clever - much cleverer than the discoverers - never originate anything. As far as I can conjecture, the art consists in habitually searching for the causes and meaning of everything which occurs. This implies sharp observations, and requires as much knowledge as possible of the subject investigated."* Charles Darwin in a 15 Dec 1871 letter to his son Horace.

## The Big Thicket by Frank Budny

On a beautiful morning in late March, 43 Master Naturalists and friends gathered near Kemah to board a chartered bus traveling to the Big Thicket National Preserve. The bus ride was pleasant. Once we passed the Houston city limits, we traveled through some pretty countryside on the way to our destination. The travel time was further spent by watching several videos providing an introduction to the history and natural environment of the Big Thicket.



Photo by Helle Brown

The Big Thicket is possibly the most biologically diverse area in the world. A convergence of ecosystems occurred here during the last Ice Age bringing species from very different habitats together in a relatively small area. Ten distinct ecosystems have been identified in the Big Thicket. Species from the coastal plains, eastern

forests, and central plains share space with species indicative of swamps and bayous. The Preserve contains more than 200 species of trees and shrubs and it's been estimated to have at least one thousand flowering plants, including 20 orchids and 4 of the 5 carnivorous plants found in North America. About 200 species of birds live in or migrate through the Thicket, as well as about 20 mammals and 50 species of reptiles. The Big Thicket Region refers to an area of about 3,500,000 acres in Southeast Texas. The Big Thicket National Preserve, which was established on October 11, 1974 to protect its rich diversity, consists of 15 units covering over 108,000 acres of this region. On December 15, 1981, the Preserve was designated an International Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), further emphasizing its biological importance.

When we arrived at the Big Thicket Visitors Center, we were greeted by Park Ranger Mary Kay Manning and volunteer assistant, Sherry Gibson. After a short stop at the Visitor Center, we proceeded to the Kirby Trail. This trail provides an excellent introduction to the Big Thicket. We split into two groups and walked in different directions around this 1.7 mile loop trail.

The trail traverses several ecosystems starting in the slope forest of pine and oak trees. It winds through acidic baygalls, floodplains, and cypress sloughs, each with its representative vegetation. There was much to



see and we stopped often as our guides pointed out different plants and organisms and talked about the history and cultural and economic importance of the area. After all, we are Master Naturalists and you can't hurry through a place like this.

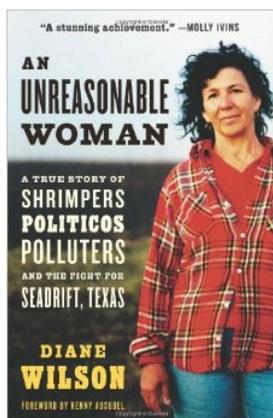
After eating lunch at the picnic area by the trailhead, we proceeded to our next stop, the Watson Rare Plant Preserve. This site is not part of the National Preserve; it was purchased by Geraldine Watson, a plant ecologist and park ranger to preserve it from development. The site exhibits most of the Big Thicket plant communities and native plants. The highlight of this visit was the numerous pitcher plants and sundews that bloom in the early spring. We were too early for the orchids that are prominent here later in the spring.

Thanks to our two guides, we received a wonderful introduction to the Big Thicket. Many of us were left with the desire to see more of this fascinating place.

Some people have asked about borrowing the DVD videos that were shown on the bus to Big Thicket. These DVDs are available for checkout from the Master Naturalist library at the Agrilife Extension Office. Whether or not you attended this trip, the videos are worth viewing.

## Heritage Book Study - Review of *An Unreasonable Woman* by Madeleine K. Barnes

The book study concluded reading *An Unreasonable Woman* by Diane Wilson on May 5<sup>th</sup>. Would a reasonable woman take on the company that provided the economic support for the entire community? How would that happen and what fallout would ensue? In 1989, the shrimping in Lavaca Bay was so poor, Wilson, a fifth-generation shrimper, was running a fish house.



Lavaca Bay is home to one of the nation's largest underwater mercury superfund sites, a toxic pile left by Alcoa. One day, a shrimper with three different kinds of cancer brought Wilson a small clipping from The Associated Press saying that Calhoun County was No. 1 in the nation for toxic waste disposal. Wilson had lived in Seadrift all her life and never heard anything about it -- never read it in the paper, never heard it on TV. What she did next is

what defines her as "an unreasonable woman".

Specifically, Wilson took on Formosa Plastics, a Taiwanese chemical company then building an enormous PVC (polyvinyl chloride) facility near Seadrift. Polyvinyl chloride can cause liver, stomach and brain cancer. Formosa Plastics insisted the plant was "the jewel of the Texas Gulf Coast," and would put out "zero toxic emissions" into the community. The economic development crowd was overjoyed, and Texas

government at all levels scrambled to offer tax abatements to this lovely new enterprise. In some ways it's disheartening to see how difficult it is to get a corporation to change its behavior, and how impotent our own government has become at regulating worker safety and environmental protection.

But this author, through her book, poses a question that perhaps all of us need to think more about. Is it "reasonable" to remain silent and passive when your way of life and things that you cherish are being destroyed by corporations? If you love to read real intrigue with Texas flair, then this is an inspiring one for you. I won't tell you the ending, as it is worth the journey.

Our next reading selection is *The Ripple Effect: The Fate of Freshwater in the Twenty-First Century* by Alex Prud'homme. The reading assignment is the first half of the book through page 200 for our next meeting on June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00 a.m.

Ever think about reading some of the previous book study selections? The list is available online on the GBAC website. Just go to the website and look at the list to the left of the page and click on "Information Resources". Then look on that page at the list again on the left side and at the bottom is the link for the Heritage Book Study Book List. We will be adding the current year's selections and a description of the goals for the book study group as part of GBAC's AT. Hope to see you at our next meeting, but if you can't join us - you can read what we are discussing and stay informed.

## GBAC Book & Video Library by Madeleine K. Barnes



Here is some good news; the chapter now has a lending library of naturalist books and videos available to our membership. This has been a dream of one of our long-time members, Elsie Smith, and now it is a reality. It brings to mind the quote, "I love it when a plan comes together". The library is located at the AgriLife Extension building in the volunteer office. GBAC has a dedicated bookcase, courtesy of Julie Massey. Many of the recently added books are from the Heritage Book Study group. Perhaps you have some books or videos that you would like to share with other master naturalists. New donations are greatly appreciated and can be placed on the designated shelf for cataloging before they are added to the shelves and available for your reading/viewing pleasure. A check out log is currently being developed; however, a temporary sign out sheet is available and is located in a binder on one of the shelves. In keeping with the TMN goals to educate/inform others - first we need to be informed ourselves. Check it out (pun intended here) and be a master naturalist bookworm.

## The Good Side of Seaweed by Steve Alexander

Like clockwork, seaweed begins to blanket Texas beaches, including our own, in the spring.

Texas seaweed, commonly called gulfweed, has a more peculiar-sounding scientific name: *Sargassum*. Buoyed by numerous pea-sized sacs filled with air, this variety of brown algae floats in waters of the Gulf of Mexico under the influence of winds and currents. And when conditions are right, substantial amounts drift shoreward and eventually strand at the waterline.

At times, the mass of accumulating seaweed can be overwhelming, creating 2-foot-high mounds stretching for miles along the shoreline.

It's an unwelcome sight for beachgoers, who naturally prefer to walk on bare sand, rather than climb the prickly, irregular piles covering the beach. Even worse, as the piles begin to decay, they give off an offensive smell while baking in the sun.

Understandably, this ugly, stinky mess isn't why visitors delight in coming to the beach. Their simple demand: clean it up.

In an effort to keep beach visitors happy, tourist-sustained towns like our own send out manpower and heavy equipment to haul it away. Regular cleanups continue throughout the tourist season, even when only scattered clumps wash ashore.



Last year, seaweed washed onto Galveston beaches in unusually hefty amounts over an equally unusual period of time. Ordinarily, seaweed lands during April and May. But last year it began lining the shore in March and kept accumulating into June.

So we may only be weeks away from glimpsing the first wave of gulfweed floating onto our beaches.

But hold that collective groan. Fact is, seaweed has a good side, ecologically speaking. It provides benefits both at sea and on shore.

At home in the Sargasso Sea and while adrift in the Gulf of Mexico, gulfweed provides a home for a community of animals similar in color and shape to the weed. These include fish, shrimp, crabs, nudibranchs, snails, worms, sea anemones, hydroids and bryozoans. And as it floats at the surface, it not only provides food and refuge for a variety of young fish, but it also is the habitat of young sea turtles.



Photo by Steve Alexander

At sea, large rafts of gulfweed, with its heap of animals, attract a variety of large predatory game fish, a tidbit well-known among seasoned offshore fishermen seeking a trophy catch.

As it washes ashore, lingering at the water's edge are laughing gulls, ring-billed gulls, sanderlings, ruddy turnstones, and willets, all waiting patiently to pick up the tiny shrimp and other resident animals dislodged from the seaweed as waves roll it across the sand.

Ghost crabs, whose burrows are typically found near the dunes, dig holes just above the water's edge among masses of stranded seaweed, a tactic that provides them easy access to a bountiful food source as it decays.

Winds and waves eventually move Sargassum further up the beach, where it traps sand and attracts small invertebrates like beach fleas and flies, which in turn make a nice meal for small shorebirds. If left alone, some weed eventually migrates upward to the dunes, adding a source of nutrients that feed the growth of dune plants.

On the west end of the island, at places like Galveston Island State Park, seaweed is left on the beach to do as it will. Eventually, it's incorporated into beach sand and dunes, making these beaches up to twice as wide as those to the east and west.

One thing's for sure: It's coming. Masses of seaweed will soon cover our beaches again. But this time, maybe you'll focus less on the bad and remember the good.

(Previously published by Galveston County Daily News)

## Estuarine Smorgasbord – A Taste of Texas by Chuck Snyder

Back by popular demand, on May 3rd Dr. Steve Alexander, TAMUG Lecturer and GBAC Master Naturalist, presented "Estuarine Smorgasbord", a fascinating discussion of the food producers and consumers that make up the energy flow in Galveston Bay. A lively classroom discussion was followed by a two-hour field trip to Galveston Island State Park's Lake Como, a natural laboratory for the plants, animals and processes that make up this important estuary.

Steve uses a different approach from the classic food pyramid with which we're all familiar. Instead, he uses an energy flow diagram to depict the various components of the estuary's food system, separating the plant and animal life into producers and consumers. The consumers are then further subdivided into primary, secondary, and tertiary types.

Estuarine primary producers in the salt marsh are the marsh grasses and a variety of algae that thrive in the salt-flats. These plant types can withstand being covered



Photo by Chuck Snyder

with water for periods of time, but also need direct exposure to the sun and air for effective photosynthesis.



Photo by Chuck Snyder

In the water, sea grasses and phytoplankton are the primary producers, and in the sediments, sea grass, benthic algae, and plant detritus abound.

Estuarine consumers make up a long and more complicated list. Salt marsh species include primary consumers, such as salt marsh periwinkles, fiddler crabs, and ribbed mussels, and secondary consumers such as blue crabs, birds (white ibis, willet, and clapper rail) and

mammals (raccoon). In the nearshore bay, primary consumers include oysters, anchovies, razor clams, shrimp, sheepshead minnows and killifish. Secondary consumers include blue crabs, wading birds, and fish (redfish, speckled trout, and flounder). Some fish species, such as the black drum, act as tertiary consumers. Steve explained how fish anatomy gives important clues to the feeding habits and position in the energy consumption chain.

The field trip consisted of two interwoven segments. The first involved the identification of plant species that are indicators of a salt marsh. In approximately an acre of salt marsh and salt-flats adjacent to Lake Como, Steve found more than half the common flowering plants associated with Texas bay shorelines. Recognizing that his class was interested in taking photos of the plants, he used a novel and effective approach to facilitate that activity; Steve held a specimen in place on a miniature dry erase board onto which he had written the name of the plant. In the remaining time, Steve's able assistants (Nathan Veatch and Frank Budny) waded into the shallows to get samples of the sediments and deposited organic matter. Steve then identified the producers and consumers for the group.

It's no surprise that this course is in high demand. Thank you, Steve, for imparting so much information so effectively in a short course!

## Beach and Bay Play Day by Maureen Nolan-Wilde

On March 29, the Friends of Galveston Island State (FoGISP) hosted its first annual Beach and Bay Play Day. The event was designed to showcase the Park and the diversity of activities that can be enjoyed there.

The day was an overwhelming success, with over 500 participants experiencing the Park and its many treasures. Key to this success was the active involvement of 60 GBAC-TMN volunteers who led or participated in activities and overall logistics. Everywhere you looked there were Master Naturalists registering visitors, leading beach/bay/interpretive walks, kayaking and angling, manning crab and Nature Learning Center activities, taking pictures and handling logistics.

Your enthusiasm, knowledge and service were critical in making this day memorable for visitors. To paraphrase

one of the kids who participated, "this day rocked" - and it rocked because of you!!!



Photo by Trudy LeDoux

# HAPPY SUMMER!

## Root Choyce - Everyday Hero of Galveston County by Maureen Nolan-Wilde



Congratulations go out to Root Choyce, GBAC-TMN- Class of 2011, who was selected as an Everyday Hero of Galveston County by the Galveston County Newspaper.

Root's nomination was submitted by Norma Rubin (TMN) and Julie Ann Brown (GINTC) and highlighted Root's volunteer work for over 13 different programs in the Galveston County region.

Her volunteer efforts include crewing on the Elissa (including playing the part of a pirate), leading turtle tours at NOAA, beach and bay walks at GISP, beach restoration, delivering meals on wheels (on her bike), teach CPR and First Aid and working on Feather Fest. Since her 2011 certification, she has dedicated almost 2,000 hours to GBAC-TMN activities.

In the article for the Profiles Magazine where she was profiled, Root was quoted: "For me, it's not like I volunteer as an altruistic thing, it's all so much fun to do."

Congratulations Root, you make us all proud.

## David Bulliner - GBF Eco-Hero Volunteer Award by Diane Humes

An article in the Spring 2014 issue of the Galveston Bay Foundation Gazette announced the award of Eco-Hero Volunteer given to our chapter's David Bulliner for his contributions to the betterment of the Gulf of Mexico through his work as GBF Bacteria Lab Assistant, certified Texas Stream Team Water Quality Monitor, and involvement with Galveston Bay Area Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists, among many other things. David is the first recipient of this award, given by GBF in partnership with the Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System Regional Association (GCOOS).

Way to go, David!

David received his Eco-Hero Volunteer award on January 16, 2014 at Bravos for the Bay, a celebration for Galveston Bay Foundation volunteers, from GBF's Water Quality Team. Said Chris Simoniello, GCOOS Education and Outreach Coordinator, "GCOOS is committed to

enhancing the health and economic sustainability of the Gulf, and volunteer efforts like David's exemplify the power of individuals..."

Thank you, David, for contributing information for the benefit of all who live, work, and play in Galveston Bay!



Photo courtesy of Galveston Bay Foundation



## Guppies from Julie

The 2014 training class is complete and its members are busy volunteering and making a difference for our local natural resources.

Many thanks to the amazing people who helped conduct the class! The energetic and enthusiastic Training Class Team included Sara Snell, Verva Densmore, Cindy Howard and Beverly Williams. Details are a big part of making the training class a great experience for the newbies. Many of you helped make the training class terrific. You may have served as a mentor, provided goodies, helped with coffee or served as a greeter! All of these roles made our new Master Naturalists feel a part of our chapter.

Special thanks go to Chuck Snyder for his help with the nitty gritty details this year. Chuck took the lead to make sure technology worked for every class and things ran smoothly for our speakers. Thank you, Chuck!

The 2015 class planning is underway. If you would like to help in planning the class, please contact me or Sara Snell. Also, please share your ideas and suggestions for the next class.

Many thanks for a great 2014 Training Class. See you in the field.



## 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.

## *The Midden*

Published by Galveston Bay Area Chapter - Texas Master Naturalists.

Texas AgriLife Extension Service  
4102 B Main (FM 519) Carbide Park  
La Marque, Texas 77568

For comments on this issue or to suggest content for future issues, please contact Diane Humes by e-mail at [treimanhumes@earthlink.net](mailto:treimanhumes@earthlink.net).

### Midden Editorial Team

Steve Alexander  
Diane Humes  
Carolyn Miles  
Chuck Snyder

Comm. Team Chair  
Editor  
Madeleine K. Barnes

## *The Midden Deadline* for the next issue

### June 30<sup>th</sup>

If you have Advanced Training or Volunteer Opportunities, please submit information to Cindy Howard, [howardc@uhcl.edu](mailto:howardc@uhcl.edu)

## June and July Activities

### ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

**Chapter Meeting - June 5<sup>th</sup>**  
Geology 101 - Earth History for the non-Geologist  
Presenter: Rick Becker, Micropaleontologist  
6:30 Social, 7:00 Presentation, 8:00 business meeting  
AgriLife Extension Office 1 Hour AT

No AT scheduled.

Volunteer at your favorite summer camp!  
(How about Camp Wild?)

### Ongoing

Galveston Island State Park  
10 am at the Welcome Center  
Every Saturday- Beach Explorations  
Every Sunday- 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: *The Ripple Effect* by Alex Prud'homme

### STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

#### Ongoing Activities:

##### Tuesdays -

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

Wednesdays - Wetland Restoration Team, Contact:  
Marissa Sipocz [m-sipocz@tamu.edu](mailto:m-sipocz@tamu.edu)

##### Thursdays -

- Horseshoe Marsh Prairie, third Thursday of each month, 9 - Noon. Contact: Tom Solomon [crandtr@sbcglobal.net](mailto:crandtr@sbcglobal.net)
- San Jacinto State Park, Contact: Tom Solomon [crandtr@sbcglobal.net](mailto:crandtr@sbcglobal.net)

Fridays - Prairie Friday, ABNC, 8:30 - 11:30am, Contact:  
Dick Benoit [RBenoitTEX@aol.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:Stenmead@aol.com)

Partner and Associate Programs - Many organizations sponsor guided walks and education programs or need volunteers to man their nature center. Go to [www.gbamasternaturalist.org](http://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** - June 3<sup>rd</sup>, July 1<sup>st</sup>  
2-4 at the Extension Office

#### Committee Meetings

Communication - July 1<sup>st</sup>  
9-Noon at Extension office  
Advanced Training - June 16<sup>th</sup>  
10-Noon at Extension office  
Education/Outreach - Meets as needed. None currently scheduled.  
Stewardship - Meets quarterly. Next meeting to be determined.

