

The Midden

Photo by Diane Humes

Galveston Bay Area Chapter - Texas Master Naturalists

February 2018

Table of Contents

Wetland Wanderings	2
Prairie Ponderings	3
Beach Patrol	4
Heritage Book Study - Review	4
Ocelot: Little Texas Cat	5
Treasures of the Bay Award Recipients 2017	6
Map Out a New Year of Travel Adventures	7
Let's talk about Raptors	9
Guppies From Julie	10
2018 Board of Directors	10
Activities & Training	11

President's Corner by George Kyame, President 2018

Greetings fellow naturalists!

I do hope you all had a happy, healthy, and rejuvenating 2018 New Year's celebration. And what a wintry entrance to the New Year we have had here. Hope your flora fared better than my bananas!

I am still excited about the excellent 2017 that our chapter had. Here are some (mostly complete) numbers for your general information and Galveston Bay Area Chapter pride. As of December 31st, we collectively have submitted over 42,150 volunteer service hours which is a new record for the chapter! Also reported are over 3,840 advanced training hours. And lastly, I would like to share our Education Outreach numbers. With more than 2,450 volunteer hours, over 18,500 people have been enlightened by our programs, over half of whom were children. Our numbers are even more amazing when you figure the time lost to Hurricane Harvey. Congratulations to everyone for their hard work and participation!

In other chapter news, the Texas Master Naturalist program will be celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. In honor of this, we and other chapters will be submitting Chapter histories, stories, and even some video interviews! As wonderful as this sounds, a lot of work is required, but our team is on it. On a side note, our own chapter turns 17 this year! That's the 'shell' anniversary. Ha ha beach teams!

And finally, our Spring training class has been organized and will commence on February 15th. Welcome future Master Naturalists! See you soon in the classroom and at all of our outdoor learning adventures.

Ciao for now,

George J. Kyame



Next Chapter Meeting

February 1st

TX Plan for the TX Coast

By

Jim Blackburn
Co-director of the Severe
Storm Prediction,
Education and Evacuation
from Disaster (SSPEED)
Center at Rice University

At
Extension Office

Wetland Wanderings: Those Doggone Cattails by Lana Berkowitz

Ah, the cattail (*Typha latifolia*) dilemma. Cattails provide wildlife habitat, shelter for birds, food, and cover for fish, and help with erosion control. They are great until the plants get a chokehold on an area by spreading and spreading and spreading.

That's when the scenic wonder of a cattail marsh with towering leaves and distinct sausage-shaped spikes becomes less wonderful.

Managing dense cattail stands is an issue for wetlands throughout the country. Control methods include cutting, hand-pulling, dredging and applying chemical herbicides.

Sheldon Lake State Park & Environmental Learning Center has joined the fight. In July a helicopter was called in for combat spraying around the ponds along the road into the park.

"The park used an aerial application of Clearcast, a relatively selective herbicide that generally will not affect most desirable plant species", Kelley said.



The Sheldon sections being treated were historically tall-grass prairie mixed with shallow emergent wetlands that had been destroyed due to many years of farming. Since 2003, park staff has worked with Texas Agrilife, Ducks Unlimited, and Texas Master Naturalists to restore the landscape.

For Sheldon and most parks, it is a diversity issue. "Even though it is a native species, cattail often spread vigorously and outcompete most of the desired vegetation," said Kelley Morris, Sheldon Lake SP superintendent.

The cattails also are blocking visitors' view of the prairie and the open waters. "I grew up around the lakes of east Texas, so for me, I want to see as much open water as possible," Kelley said.



Photo by Lana Berkowitz

"Restoration is not a one-and-done process", Kelley notes. "There will be monitoring and follow-up removal efforts."

In November the Wetland Restoration Team hand-cut cattails below the water surface as another control method. "I'm curious to see what effects that removal method has." Kelley said. "It'd be great if two or three times a year we could cut the cattails and try to reduce their numbers. Fingers crossed that the cutting was successful in depriving the roots of their food source and we will see a reduction in numbers this next year."

Hurricane Harvey threw another wildcard into the mix with 35 inches of rain in August. Rebuilding continues in the park's flood-damaged buildings. "The prairie and wetlands were blanketed with water stretching from park boundary to park boundary," Kelley said. "I'm curious to see what impact we see as the area dries out and what seeds spread as the water moved across the park."

The aerial eradication seems to have had an effect, but the rangers know it will be an ongoing battle.

"Anytime you are doing a removal of an invasive or nuisance species you have to identify what your definition of success or rate of eradication is going to be," Kelley said. "In comparison to other areas in the park that had cattails established but were not treated, the treated areas did seem to take to the herbicide and are dying out.

"I think the true test however, will be to monitor them over this next year and see what their survival rate is."

Prairie Ponderings: Frost Flowers - Winter Has Arrived by Diane Humes

On our coastal tallgrass prairie, it often happens that a cold front blows through with frigid air, quickly dropping air temperatures below freezing. Rain may soak the soil, but we rarely have frozen ground. Resist the temptation to stay warm and dry; by donning your boots and coat and heading for the prairie, you might get lucky and find "frost flowers."

Frost flowers are fantastic ribbons of ice, forming on plant stems, usually low to the ground. These strange and wonderful ice shapes are ephemeral – they most likely will disappear in the midmorning sun. So, you can't dawdle in your quest.

Not all plants exhibit this phenomenon. Be on the lookout for *Verbesina virginiana*, commonly called frostweed or white crownbeard. Frostweed is a species belonging to the Asteraceae family with asters and other composites commonly found on our prairies and known to form frost flowers. It is also a great butterfly plant. You might try to grow it in your habitat garden and see the frost flowers more often!



Photo by Jeff McMillan, USDA Plants Database

Other members of the Asteraceae, several species of *Pluchea*, commonly called fleabane, also exhibit frost flowers, as do common dittany, *Cunila origanoides* (Lamiaceae or Mint Family), and several species of *Helianthemum* (Cistaceae or Rock-Rose Family). These plants are perennials and herbaceous; their roots systems remain active in the winter until the ground freezes.

So, what is happening here? On nights, when the dew point (or we could call it the frost point) is below freezing and the air temperature falls to the dew point, frost forms on surfaces. When supercooled water or sap in a plant penetrates through a tiny opening in the stem – perhaps a stomate – and touches a frost ice crystal, the sap/water freezes to the frost.



Photo by P.P. Connor, National Weather Service

As water continues to flow up and out of the stem, ice forms and pushes out of the stem. It has long been noted that there is far more ice formed than can possibly come just from the stem; therefore, soil moisture must be rising through the plant. This process of "ice segregation" can continue producing frost flowers until the air temperature warms to above freezing or the soil moisture is depleted, as long as the stem remains intact.

The beautiful ice crystals have been called ice ribbons, ice flowers, ice fringes, ice fingers, ice filaments, ice leaves, frost ribbons, frost freaks, frost beards, frost castles, frost flowers, crystallofolia, rabbit ice, and rabbit butter.

For more information about these phenomena see: <http://my.ilstu.edu/~jrcarter/ice/>
<http://w3.biosci.utexas.edu/prc/VEVI3/crystallofolia.html>.

We have had our first taste of winter weather and there may be more where that came from. Don't be a fair-weather prairie person – there is magic out there on the coldest morning!

Beach Patrol: Transecting Islands in Galveston Bay by M & A Wilde

The Nesting Island Clean-up by Kayak (NICK) team has taken on another task after Audubon TERN asked NICK to create transects on islands leased in the Galveston Bay area.

For us the first questions that came to mind were:

- What the heck is a transect?
- Why are they needed?
- How do we create a transect? It was great to have engineers on the team - there was no shortage of suggestions!
- What happens next?



So why are we doing it? Audubon TERN has been asked by other agencies to identify plant communities that are able to support populations of nesting birds in the Galveston Bay area. Thus, when the nesting islands that are currently eroding away (hastened by events like Harvey and Ike) are finally restored - or new habitat is created - conservationists can introduce plants they know will be able to survive and, just as important, will be used by the birds.

How we are doing it? After planning each transect - basically an imaginary line across a particular island - using Google Earth, we travel to the island by kayak or boat. Team members mark the beginning and end of each transect using a hand-held GPS. We then identify and mark areas along the transect where the plant community changes. We lay a one meter square of plastic pipe - a quadrat - on the ground at each of these locations, creating a series of data collection squares. We then photograph and record the percent cover of the various plants we see within each quadrat, also noting information such as the presence of fire ants or any other hazards to plants and birds. The information we collect is entered into a database to serve as a baseline.

By the end of 2017, we had established 21 transects on three islands, with a total of 111 quadrats. We even had time to clean up plastic pollution we found on these islands. In January, we plan to work on two more islands including North Deer, which will host the area's largest population of brown pelicans when nesting season begins in February.

This has been a fun and educational experience for the NICK team. Most of us have never been involved in this type of work before and had to supplement our Master Naturalist wardrobe with items such as snake chaps, waders and so much more.

What is next? During nesting season, we'll be using kayaks and boats to identify which birds use a particular plant community for nesting. To complete the picture for restoration efforts, we'll also need to determine the ideal elevation for each plant community and the substrate on which it can grow.

We always are looking for volunteers, so if you'd like to experience nature by water - up close and personal - please join the NICK team. Contact Maureen or Alan. Wilde.

Heritage Book Study - Review of *The Life History of a Texas Birdwatcher: Connie Hagar of Rockport* by Madeleine K. Barnes

She was called the "Birdwoman of Rockport" sometime after moving to the small town in 1935 to be as close as possible to the abundance of bird species on the Gulf Coast. Reporter Karen Harden McCracken used the 35 years of birding calendars kept as daily journals and interviews with Connie herself to write the biography of Martha Conger (Neblett) Hagar, one of our inspiring Texas naturalists. What could a diminutive lady in early twentieth century Texas do that caused ornithology

experts and bird lovers from across the country to flock to that area?

What Connie Hagar did that was so amazing is, without formal training in the field of ornithology, she became an expert though diligence, patience and motivation. She reminds us as master naturalists, that we can grow in our knowledge and use our



enthusiasm to make a difference for the things that we care about. She kept detailed records of her birding observations for more than 35 years and submitted these both in newspaper articles for the public and to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for recordkeeping. Sometimes these observations were contested by various East Coast authorities, but she did not let their reluctance to accept her identification deter her and she presented evidence that led to their acceptance and respect for its accuracy.

Let's keep in mind that Connie Hagar, a genteel lady in that time period, accomplished her daily birding while wearing fashionable dresses and driving the backroads alone except for a canine companion most of the time. She did all of this while dealing with vision and other health issues, but she never gave up her love for the birds and their welfare. She sounds like a real Texas character, doesn't she? *Life* (magazine) even pictured

her in a tribute to the country's premier amateur naturalists.

I don't want to divulge everything from the book, but I do want to encourage you to find time to read it. It is easy to get caught up in such a wonderful story about someone else like yourself who made a difference.

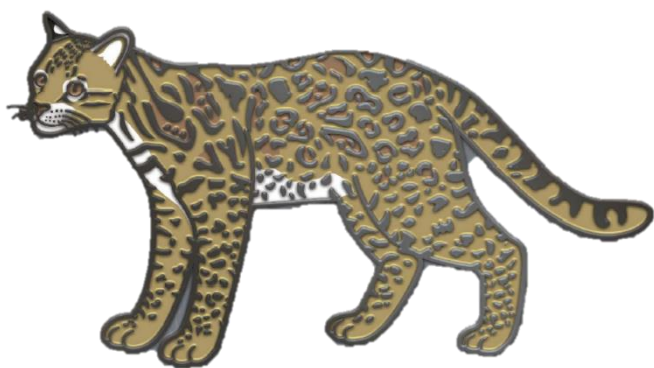


Our reading selection for the next two months is *The Soil Will Save Us* by Kristin Ohlson. We will meet on February 5, 2018 to discuss pages 1-117 and on March 5, 2018 we will discuss the second half, pages 118-234. We welcome your participation each month for two hours on the first Monday of the month starting at 10am at the Agrilife Extension office. We look forward to seeing you and let us know if you have read any good naturalist books lately! Happy trails!

Ocelot: Little Texas Cat by Diane Humes

About twice the size of your average house cat, ocelots live in forest and thorn scrub habitats from northern Argentina to the southwestern U.S. With total population estimates of >40,000 individuals in the wild, mostly in the Amazon basin, ocelots are considered a species of Least Concern. However, ocelots have suffered from habitat loss, hunting, and the pet trade throughout their range and are protected in every country in which they live.

The ocelot species, *Leopardus pardalis*, is divided into 10 subspecies, one of which, *Leopardus pardalis albescens*, is a Texas resident and the subject of our 2018 Texas Master Naturalist re-certification pin!



One hundred years ago, these exquisitely beautiful cats ranged widely across Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas. Now, they cling to life in two small populations in South Texas, probably between 50 - 80 individuals, total. Less than 1% (is this a familiar phrase?) of their former habitat remains intact. Except for about 50,000 acres of

scrubland in two separate counties, the remainder of the Rio Grande Valley has become rangeland or cropland for vegetables, cotton, and citrus.

The first ocelot group lives on private land (30,000 acres) in Willacy County and very little factual information is known about it. The second makes its home in Cameron County at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge (20,000 acres), under the watchful eyes of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It seems to be stable, but is too small to remain viable into the future.

The two ocelot populations are separated from each other by 30 miles of cultivated land (no cover), roads (get run over by a vehicle), and other human influences (you name it); there is no possibility of connection. Each is also 90 miles distant from any likely recruitment from ocelot populations in Tamaulipas, Mexico, with or without the presence of a border wall - an issue for species living along the border. The small sizes of these groups can only lead to genetic problems for them in the near future. The ocelot in Texas is in very serious danger of extinction.

Ocelots are most closely related to margay cats, which are smaller and arboreal, often called "tree ocelots". Ocelots usually hunt on the ground, using their keen sight and hearing to hunt armadillos, opossums, rabbits, rodents, iguanas, fish, and frogs. Largely nocturnal and crepuscular animals, ocelots remain active 12-14 hours per day, unlike my cats! They can become prey for jaguars, anacondas, and harpy eagles - at least in the Amazon. Like jaguars, ocelots are good swimmers.

Solitary and territorial, ocelots do not migrate. Males have larger territories than females, often overlapping those of several females. Females produce litters of 2-3 darkly colored kittens. In northern locations females enter dens in the autumn. In Texas, a female may use 2-3 dens, while this does not occur in the tropics. Ocelots can purr. Although some rich and famous people have kept them as pets, they are very wild animals.

Ocelots have rounded ears and brown eyes. Naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton, trying to describe the patterning of an ocelot, said it was "the most wonderful tangle of stripes, bars, chains, spots, dots and smudges...which look as though they were put on as the animal ran by".

What can a Texas Master Naturalist do to help? Visit Laguna Atascosa NWR and learn more - see for yourself. In any case, it sounds like a great trip. The wildlife refuge is home to 417 bird, 45 mammal, 44 reptile, 130 butterfly, and 450 plant species; check it out and see if you can



catch a glimpse of an ocelot - a vanishingly rare occurrence. If you want to help the species, support the friends of the refuge, but, maybe best of all, you will soon be wearing your 2018 ocelot pin, so lose no opportunity to talk about this amazing and threatened animal.

Treasures of the Bay Award Recipients 2017 by Chuck Snyder

Each year our chapter recognizes outstanding service and contributions to natural resource restoration and education efforts with the "Treasures of the Bay Awards."

Three special new awards were created for 2017 honoring individuals making key contributions to our chapter:

- Dick Benoit Leadership Award: Awarded for extraordinary service, mentoring, leadership and dedication to our organization.
- Beth Cooper Memorial Service Award: Awarded to a new Chapter member (2 years or less) in recognition of their volunteer service and dedication to the chapter.
- Sara Snell Education Award: Awarded in recognition of initiatives in education about the Galveston Bay ecosystem.

Here are the 2017 recipients who were recognized at the December chapter meeting.

Dick Benoit Leadership Award - Nathan Veatch
Beth Cooper Service Award - Tim Long
Sara Snell Education Award - Stennie Meadours

Chapter Service Awards
Chris Anastas
Cindy Liening
Sandy Parker

Making a Difference Awards
Rick Becker
Josh Henderson
Jo Monday
Maureen Nolan-Wilde
Alan Wilde
Aunt Grace Team

Corporate Award
ExxonMobil Volunteer Involvement Program
Shell Employee Volunteer Program
Texas Instruments Foundation Matching Gifts Pgm.

Congratulations

Map Out a New Year of Travel Adventures by Lana Berkowitz

Let's go. We don't want to miss any places as we continue the quest to visit all the state parks, preserves, refuges, historic sites and natural areas in Texas, so we sought advice from our favorite trip advisors: Master Naturalists.

Several chapter reps responded to our email requests asking them to recommend must-see sites in their chapters' areas that should be on our itineraries. There's bound to be some place on this list to spark your wanderlust.

Government Canyon State Natural Area

In San Antonio there are many choices, but I would like to recommend Government Canyon State Natural Area. This natural area has hiking trails of all different levels, walk-in camping, and lots of opportunities for birding. On the Joe Johnston Route, hike past 110-million-year-old dinosaur tracks (the only known tracks on public land in Bexar County) and a prehistoric midden on your way to the Zizelmann House built in the 1800s. Or for great views, hike the Far Reaches Trail to the Chula Vista and Sotol Overlooks. - Martha Cray, Alamo Area chapter

Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve

The 227-acre preserve is part of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve system and is owned by Travis County and St. Edwards University. It offers grassland views and wooded trails within Austin city limits. It is definitely worth seeing in the spring when the waterfall is flowing. It is habitat for the Golden-cheeked Warbler and a good example of a healthy Hill Country habitat. - Heather Valey, Balcones Canyonlands chapter

Hornsby Bend

There are so many places to hike around Central Texas, but I'll go with our world famous birding spot. Open dawn to dusk, you can view birds around the ponds or hike the three-plus miles of Colorado River shoreline, looking for birds, dragonflies, and butterflies. - Mark Wilson, Capital Area chapter

Mother Neff State Park

We were using the Miller Springs Nature Center in Belton for many of our youth projects, but the nature center closed in August. We have moved some of our activities to Mother Neff State Park in Moody but we are not the only TMN chapter to use that location. Hiking is the premiere attraction at the park. The Rock Tower represents the signature structure of the park. The Civilian Conservation Corps built the water tower in the 1930s and added a spiral staircase to the design to provide yet another high vantage point in the park. - Rene C. Berkhoudt, Central Texas chapter.

Caddo Mounds State Historic Site

In addition to seeing the mounds themselves, visitors can enter a rebuilt and authentic Caddo house and marvel at the building techniques used by our ancestors. Don't miss the new museum with displays depicting life among the Caddo Indians in days gone by. There is an excellent gift shop. Caddo is a great place to get in touch with history and archeology in a family-friendly atmosphere. - Beverly Guthrie, East Texas chapter

Stephen F. Austin State Park

The six miles of trails are suitable for hiking and biking and you must visit the scenic overlook. There are a number of camping areas, screened shelters and pavilions. Visitors should also take note of the stately Cottonwood trees; some are over six feet in circumference. They are located in the western part of the bottomland portion of the trail system. For those interested in the geographical effects a river can have on land, see the abrasion, sediment deposits, and carving the mighty Brazos has done over the years. Visitors can access the riverbanks for excellent cat fishing when the current is right. No fishing license required! - Betsy Palkowsky, Gideon Lincecum chapter

Westcave Outdoor Learning Center

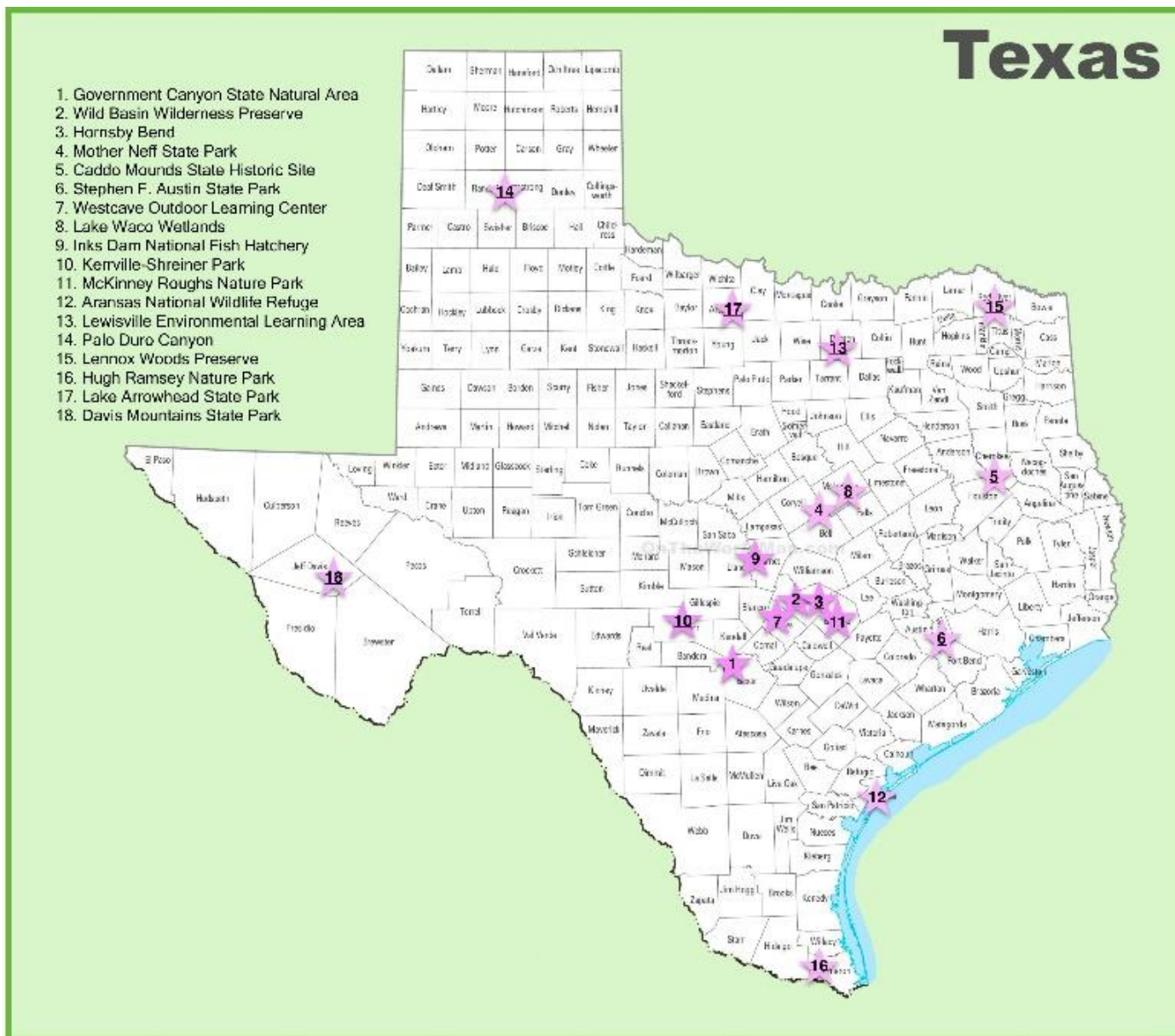
Westcave is a nature preserve of 76 acres. The Uplands is a short self-guided hiking trail, but the main attraction is the Canyon Tour. This is a guided hike that takes groups along the savanna trail then down 125 steps to the small slot canyon to a grotto with a small waterfall and the small cave. The grotto is a wonderful lush and amazing place. Westcave attracts visitors from around the world. It is often a surprise for Austin locals who never knew it was there. - Beverly Gordon, Hays County chapter

Lake Waco Wetlands

The wetlands serve as a wildlife habitat for over 186 bird species plus numerous reptiles, amphibians, and mammals of the Central Texas area. Additionally, the wetlands help filter about 11 million gallons of the North Bosque River water daily before it flows into Lake Waco, the sole source of drinking water for Waco. - Nora Schell, Heart of Texas chapter

Inks Dam National Fish Hatchery

Five hiking trails, a bird blind, native plant gardens, picnic tables, some of the oldest exposed rock in the Llano Uplift and a designated Monarch Way Station; does that sound like a fish hatchery to you? Come see for yourself. Admission is free. Private tours can be arranged on weekends. -Becky Breazeale, Highland Lakes chapter.



Kerrville-Shreiner Park

The park’s butterfly garden, maintained by chapter volunteers, is a Monarch Larva Monitoring Project site that’s especially beautiful when bluebonnets bloom in the spring. Lost Maples State Natural Area, great fall color when the leaves turn, is also lovely for hikes (both casual and steep) year-around. And Enchanted Rock State Natural Area: There’s a bit of a climb to the top of this 325-foot high granite dome, but you’re rewarded by beautiful views of the Hill Country when you get there. - Lenore Langsdorf, Hill Country chapter

McKinney Roughs Nature Park

This is one of four nature parks belonging to Lower Colorado River Authority. Its 1,100 acres contain elements of three ecoregions: Blackland Prairie, Post Oak Savanna and Piney Woods. Situated on the

Colorado River, the park features excellent old-growth riparian habitat and 14 miles of connected trails. Kayak trips, animal demonstrations, star parties, and nature hikes, can be arranged. – Larry Gfeller, Lost Pines chapter

Aransas National Wildlife Refuge

There is great birding, and the refuge is the southern host to migrant whooping cranes. I enjoy the Rail Trail. Visitors can visit all the trails off the main park road and a variety of nature habitats and experiences in a nice day trip. – Larry Henneke, Mid-Coast chapter

Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area

We have several great places to visit in the Dallas area. However, there are three that stand out in my mind as definitely worth a visit: John Bunker Sands Wetland

Center, Cedar Ridge Preserve and Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area, a personal favorite. You can visit prairies, wetlands, bottomland hardwood forest, and walk along the river - all in one trip! I always see something interesting when I go to Lewisville Lake. Last time I saw a kestrel and dinner plate-sized fungi growing on the remains of an old cottonwood tree. – Laura Preston, North Texas chapter

Palo Duro Canyon

The Panhandle chapter has in its backyard Palo Duro Canyon State Park, the "Grand Canyon of Texas." This hidden jewel opens up from the flat plains of the Panhandle and drops 500 feet to reveal a geologic wonder full of beautiful colors. It is a paradise for photographers seeking wildlife, wildflowers, and rock formations, including the Lighthouse. – Bernice Blasingame, Panhandle chapter

Lennox Woods Preserve

Lennox Woods in Red River County is the only old-growth forest in northeast Texas. The 1.5-mile trail loop takes hikers along an old wagon road before descending through a pine and hardwood forest to a tributary of Pecan Bayou. – J.W. Smith Jr., Red River chapter

Hugh Ramsey Nature Park

The RGV chapter offers several state parks, national wildlife refuges, and regional parks to choose from when visiting the southern tip of Texas, but the local favorite is the Hugh Ramsey Nature Park. It is also known, along

with the Harlingen Thicket property, as the Arroyo Colorado World Birding Center. Native vegetation has been planted over a former landfill specially to attract native birds. Paths lead to the Arroyo Colorado, passing numerous gardens and ponds, with photo blinds and benches along the way. There is no charge to enjoy this park, which also offers a paved parking lot, restrooms, and a covered pavilion with picnic tables. – Tami Bulow, Rio Grande Valley chapter

Lake Arrowhead State Park

This is our go-to spot. Lots of room to bird watch, nature watch, hike, bike, kayak, and fish. Check out the Onion Creek Trail for a five-mile hike or the quarter-mile kid-friendly hike along Dragonfly Trail. LASP is the only state park in Texas to feature a prairie dog town within the park. – Terry McKee, Rolling Plains chapter

Davis Mountains State Park

One of my favorite Texas destinations is Davis Mountains State Park's Indian Lodge. A visit in winter may provide photo ops of ice sculptures or snow in the Texas mountains. Plan a birding hike in the Limpia Canyon Primitive Area. If you have a four-wheel drive vehicle, visit Big Bend Ranch State Park, one of best-kept secrets in Texas. There you will find waterfalls, grand canyons, and the Solitario, a geologic wonder. – Doug Gray, Tierra Grande chapter

Happy trails, indeed! What are we waiting for?

Let's talk about Raptors by Lynn Wright

If you are interested in seeing hawks, the Sylvan Beach Spring Hawk Watch is the volunteer opportunity for you.

This is the 23rd year of the hawk watch at Sylvan Beach in La Porte. Dick Benoit began the hawk watch in 1996. Over the past 22 years, the average number of hawks counted over the course of the spring migration is over 18,000. That is a lot of raptors. Last year hawk watchers saw over 3,700 Mississippi Kites and a myriad of other raptors - Broad-winged Hawks, Swainson's Hawks, Swallow-tailed Kites, Bald Eagles, Cooper's Hawks, Osprey, Peregrine Falcons, Sharp-shinned Hawks, Turkey Vultures, Crested Caracaras, Northern Harriers, Red-tailed Hawks, and Black Vultures.

Hawk Watch volunteers count one day a week from March through April usually from 9 or 10 am to 12 or 1 pm. We have 7 hawk watch teams, one for every day of the week.

If you are interested in joining a hawk watch team, email Lynn Wright at lynn-wright@comcast.net. You do not

need any prior experience, just an interest in learning about hawks and a pair of binoculars.

Hawk watch hours are the best volunteer hours EVER. Come to Sylvan Beach, sit next to the bay, drink coffee, and watch for raptors. It doesn't get any better than that.



Photo by John Wright

Guppies from Julie

What a Party!

I hope you had the pleasure of joining us for the 2017 End of Year Celebration at Walter Hall Park in League City last December. What a night!

The 2017 class put on a great show! Beautiful papier-mâché decorations, lights, door prizes, poinsettias, and pine cone bird feeders for everyone made the night fun.

All of this in addition to being the FIRST Class to certify the same year as their training class. Whoop! What a team.

We had *Treasures of the Bay Awards* with three new awards honoring Dick Benoit, Beth Cooper, and Sara Snell! Congratulations to all of the Treasure award winners!

Also, the new Gulf Guardian award video premiered for the first time in Texas at the celebration. The first prize award in the Civic-Non-Profit category was for your project, Master Naturalists Confronting Plastic Pollution.

Check out the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksNUhzVybiY&feature=youtu.be>

Fun in 2018

2018 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 2018 Class begins on Thursday, February 15, 2018, at Armand Bayou Nature Center. Volunteer now by contacting Sara Snell at 281-309-0276 or snellsw@verizon.net.

Educators' Workshop planned for June 2018

This summer we will host the *2018 Treasures of the Bay Educators Workshop* for teachers. This mini-Master Naturalist course will be held June 19-22, 2018. Twenty-two educators will have the opportunity to learn about local natural resources - Master Naturalist style - fun, hands-on, and get wet! Educators can earn 24 hours of CPUs. If you know a teacher who might be interested or you would like to volunteer, please have them contact Julie at 281-309-5063 or julie.massey@ag.tamu.edu. Many thanks!

2018 Board of Directors

2018 Board of Directors	
Elected	
President	George Kyame
Vice President	Tim Long
Treasurer	Lynn Wright
Secretary	Patty Trimmingham

Appointed	
Volunteer Service	Jo Monday
Advanced Training	Ellen Gerloff
Membership	Jim Duron
Training Class Rep.	Janet Mason
Training Class Rep.	Andrea Stromeyer
Sponsor	Julie Massey

The full chapter organization chart and a list of the committee chairs can be found at <http://txmn.org/gbmn/board-of-directors/>.

The Midden

Published bimonthly by the Galveston Bay Area Chapter - Texas Master Naturalists. The purpose of *The Midden* is to inform, communicate and educate chapter members and the community. If you have an article that contributes this purpose or want to join the team, please contact Diane Humes, treimanhumes@gmail.com.

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

The Midden is posted on the GBAC-TMN chapter website: www.gbamasternaturalist.org two weeks prior to chapter meetings. Archived issues also on chapter website. If you prefer to receive *The Midden* in hard copy and are not currently receiving it, please contact: Julie Massey, julie.massey@ag.tamu.edu.

Midden Team

Madeleine K. Barnes	Linda Welzenbach Fries
Lana Berkowitz	Carolyn Miles
Verva Densmore	Chuck Snyder
Diane Humes, Managing Editor	

The Midden Deadline for the next issue

March 5

If you have Advanced Training or Volunteer Opportunities, please submit information to Tim Long, tikbloke@yahoo.com

February and March Activities

ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Chapter Meeting - February 1; Texas Plan for the Texas Coast; Presenter - Jim Blackburn
6:30 Social, 7:00 Meeting, 7:30 Speaker
Extension Office; 1 AT hour

How to Grow Native Milkweed - Saturday, Feb. 24
1-3pm; 2 hours AT
Location: Extension Office
Presenters - Barbara Keller-Willy
Register: 281-534-3413 or galvcountymgs@gmail.com

Diurnal Raptors of the Gulf Coast - Monday, Feb. 26
1-4pm; 3 hours AT; Limit 50
Location: Extension Office
Presenters - John and Lynn Wright
Register with Emmeline Dodd txdodd@aol.com

Gems of the Sea - Thursday, March 15
9:30am-Noon; 2.5 hours AT; Limit 22, register early.
Location: Extension Office
Presenters - Sara Snell
Register with Emmeline Dodd txdodd@aol.com

Ongoing

Galveston Island State Park
10am 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) 392-7003
See Pg. 4 for meeting dates and books.

STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Ongoing Activities:

Mondays - Galveston Island State Park, Contact: Chatt Smith chattsmith@gmail.com

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 Llosa mllosa@tamu.edu

Thursdays -

- Stormwater Wetland Team, every Thursday, 9am - Noon. Contact: Mary Carol Edwards mary.edwards@agnet.tamu.edu
- San Jacinto State Park, Contact: Jim Duron wishkad@yahoo.com

Fridays - Prairie Friday, ABNC, 8:30 - 11:30am, Contact: Chatt Smith chattsmith@gmail.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 Sara Snell snellsw@verizon.net

Partner and Associate Programs - Many organizations sponsor guided walks and education programs or need volunteers to staff their nature center. Go to <http://txmn.org/gbmn/partners/> for the list, then click on the link to the organization's website.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

(At Extension Office monthly unless specified)

Board Meetings - First Tuesday, 2-4pm

Committee Meetings

Advanced Training - Third Monday, 10-Noon
Education/Outreach - Third Tuesday, 10 to 11:30am
Stewardship - Meets quarterly
Communication - March 6, Tuesday, 2-4:30pm;
Location TBD



TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

