TEXAS Master Naturalist™ Gideon Lincecum Chapter

The GLC Tidings

From the President – *Cindy Hobbs*

We are now taking applicants for the 2018 training class. We are limiting our class to 22 so everyone has the best training experience, especially during field trips. If you have friends or family interested, it's a first-come first-served world, the first 22 paid will lock in the class, all others will be added to our waitlist. You will notice newspaper advertisements for our class in the upcoming months.

The Texas Master Naturalists Annual Meeting approaches (Oct. 20-22 2017). This year it's in Corpus Christi, at the Omni Hotel. This is a great opportunity to meet other like-minded individuals and acquire many hours of Advanced Training. I have attended 3 or 4 of these and always learn something new or take away a great idea.

A First-Timer scholarship is given by the state for one chapter member who attends the Annual Meeting for the first time. Ginny Welch, Class of 2017, is our GLC recipient. Register now, folks because some of the most popular sessions fill up early. See you there. We are still looking for a couple more volunteers to fully staff the AgriLife Store at the Annual Meeting. Cindy Hobbs and Chris Morrison will be the folks in charge and need helpers. The state will provide 2 free rooms with 2 beds in each room for that Thurs, Fri and Sat nights to accommodate store "staff". All attendees can earn volunteer hours by working an hour or two at the store when you are able. If interested, please contact me directly cndy_hobbs@yahoo.com or (979) 338-9374.

As the heat of summer fades (WHEN??), the chapter gets more active. There are many upcoming advanced training and volunteer activities on our website txmn.org/glc so check out the event schedule and stay informed to get involved.

September Chapter Meeting & Program

Our September chapter meeting and Advanced Training program will be on Saturday, Sept. 16, 2017 at the Meadows Foundation Conference Center at Winedale. The meeting starts at 9:00 a.m. and the program at 10:30. This is free and open to the public. Our AT program is ***"All About Ants",*** presented by **Elizabeth "Wizzie" Brown**, an Extension Program Specialist-IPM (Integrated Pest Management) with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service out of Travis/Williamson Counties.

The IPM program provides "timely information on insects and related creatures. You will learn biology, integrated pest management and fun facts." Wizzie received her BS and MS in entomology and has been with the Extension Service since 2002. She has taught and conducted many meetings with clientele for pest management, and she has published numerous articles and newsletters. She seems to 'know her stuff' when it comes to those crazy creatures we often discuss and sometimes curse! Come learn more about recent discoveries in the world of ants!

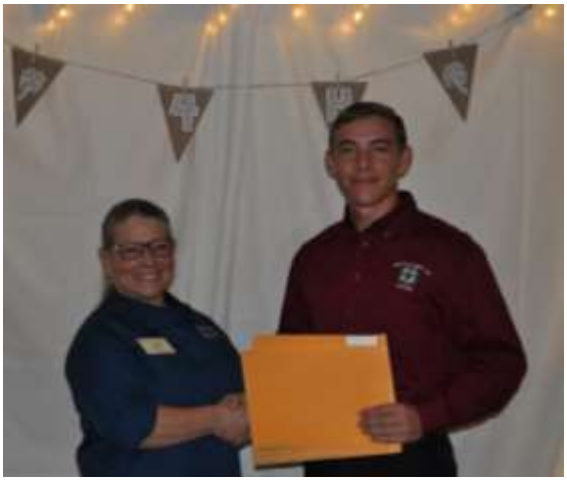
August is Scholarship Month – by Donna Mueller

Thank you to the local county chapter representatives for being part of the Scholarship Committee and thanks to others who attended the banquets to help with outreach. Thank You from the bottom of my heart. Your teamwork makes scholarships happen and provides major highlights in these young peoples' lives.

GLC County Representatives are:

Austin County rep team leader: Linda Esco (no qualifying scholarship winners)
Colorado County rep team leader: Mary Ann Peach
Fayette County rep team leader: Donna Zapalac Mueller
Lee County rep team leader: Debra Namken (no qualifying scholarship winners)
Washington County rep team leader: Dr. Jim Wilson

Also a BIG THANK YOU to AgriLife agent, Kara Matheney, our GLC-TMN Advisor Angel. Kara is the glue that holds us together…at times spread so thin, I don't know how she does her multitasking job.



Donna Zapalac Mueller presented the $500 scholarship to Reagan Kuck, Fayette County 4-H. Reagan was one of only two awarded the highest honor at the banquet, The Gold Star Award. Reagan met all the criteria for the TMN-GLC Scholarship Award. He is a very well-rounded hard worker and a born leader and volunteer. His academic, civic and humanitarian projects are on-going and truly amazing accomplishments for one so young. Reagan was on the National 4-H Shooting & Rifle team, bringing back awards & honors to make Texas 4-H proud.

Judy Deaton and Jim Wilson presented the $500 scholarship to Emily Seeker, Washington County 4-H.

Mary Ann Peach presented the $500 scholarship to Kimberly Kunz, Colorado County 4-H.

Lessons learned about sensitive Post Oak Trees - *by Betsy Palkowsky*

Our landscaping work two and half years ago at 'Twenty Acre Woods' is really starting to look wonderful. Unfortunately, we learned a very hard lesson because of our efforts. Post Oak trees do not like to be disturbed. We have lost two very large and several small trees due to our landscape changes.

Based on a bit of research, I agree with the forestry service and some of the local arborists, post oaks have arguably the most sensitive roots of all native Central Texas tree species. It is important to note that <u>any</u> root disturbance at all can lead to a fast and most often irreversible decline. One chapter member told me he experienced post oaks suffering after driving over the roots with an ATV when the ground was wet. When the post oak roots are disturbed the trees may quickly yellow, slowly defoliate and eventually die. At other times, trees can take 2-6 years to show the damage done, depending on the extent of the root damage.

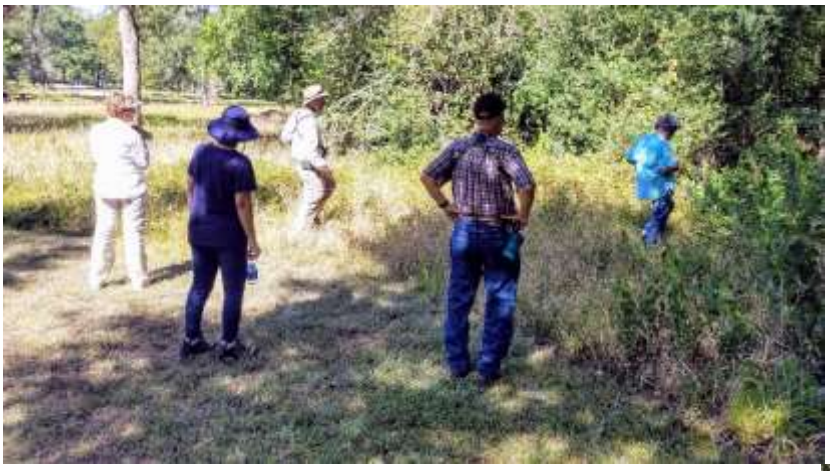
We noticed that too much water can also impact the trees. Who would have thought we had too much water? Unfortunately, the good fortune of having a wet spring and very full pond the past few years has led to the death of a few more very old post oaks. That and changing water flow away from the house and through trees resulted in killing a few more. As if that weren't enough, Daniel Lewis of Texas Parks and Wildlife, identified a number of our post oaks having Hypoxylon canker. Hypoxylon canker is a fungal pathogen that is moving through central Texas. Although this disease seems to affect mostly weakened trees, the past droughts have exacerbated the problem by stressing post oaks everywhere, and now it is commonly found throughout the area.

The fungus is transmitted by beetles and airborne spores from tree to tree, not by the roots. Currently no cure for this disease. The only preventive measure is to help the trees by invigorating them by watering them during drought conditions, and removing broken and damaged limbs from uninfected trees to help prevent/reduce avenues for infection. Removing infected trees is also not considered effective due to the nature of the fungal spores in infected areas. With post oaks, once the fungus has infected a tree, eventually it kills the tree or large parts of the tree, and the bark falls off, exposing the brown fungal spores. If you touch the exposed wood at this point, you can see the brown very fine spores cloud up into the air. If the tree is not completely dead at this point, it soon will be.

The lesson learned is: post oaks like to live in stable savannahs or forests adjacent to grasslands without competition or disturbances. Thus, we have more work to do to keep the remaining post oaks on our property happy. My husband asked Daniel what we else we could do to aside from clearing out yaupons and cedars and he said, "We can always plant acorns."

Chasing Butterflies – by Tom Shaughnessy

On July 29 Chapter members spent a warm Saturday morning and afternoon participating in the North American Butterfly Association annual survey at Stephen F. Austin State Park, San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site and the river bottoms East of FM 1458 across from the original historic site. Afterwards Charlene and BR Koehler invited us to their Koehler Prairie to have a look-see. Although out of the official survey circle by just a bit they were still able to highlight a Pearl Crescent, another highlight for the day. This survey takes place annually and is part of the Brazos Valley Count "Circle". The other part of the count takes place in the Katy Prairie region. At the end of the day the leaders and participants are invited to join up at Repka's Diner near Pattison to compile the survey findings. Led by NABA member (and TMN) David Henderson, our group counted a few dozen individuals and 17 species. The highlight for the day were several Turks Cap White Skippers at the State Park.



These data gathered nationally are increasingly used by scientists to study butterfly population trends and to answer questions about butterfly biology. The NABA Names Committee, consisting of many of the top butterfly taxonomists in the world, evaluates new published data regarding butterfly taxonomy and, if warranted, makes changes to the NABA Checklist and English Names of North American Butterflies, which is published by NABA. This is why these counts are so valuable to our natural community.

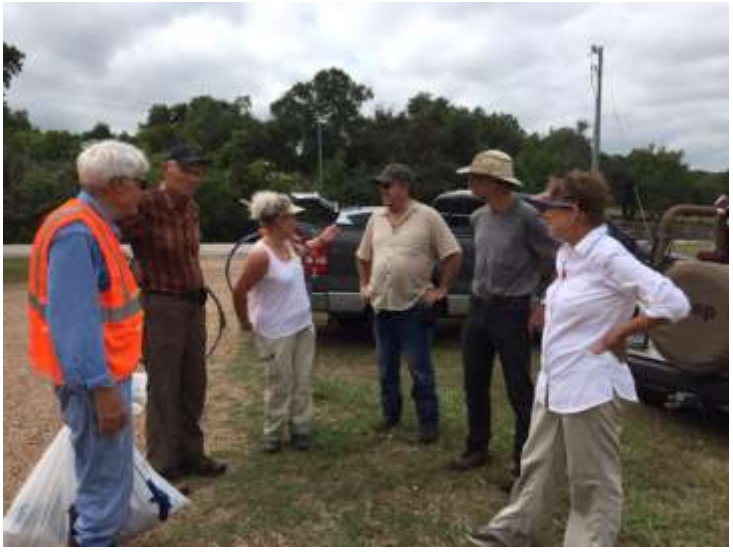
The participants were myself, BR & Charlene Koehler, Dottie Schoenberg and Linda Esco. David Henderson is a high school AP science and biology teacher and member of the TMN Heartwood Chapter. His love for nature, his enthusiasm and his teaching methods added a new dimension to the event. We all left with a higher knowledge about some of the local butterflies and their habitats, particularly the plant community. Comparatively speaking this year's count was lower than average most likely due to the lack of rain recently.

TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST™
18th Annual Meeting
OCTOBER 20-22, 2017
OMNI CORPUS CHRISTI HOTEL

Register now!!!

https://txmn.org/2017-annual-meeting/

A Hot Time on the Ol' Highway – by David Butler



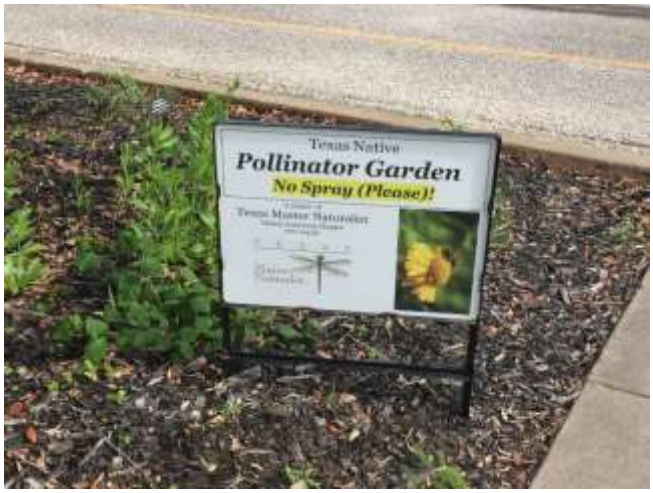
The Adopt-A-Highway group met August 9 to clean up our portion of the roadsides of Highway 159 between Reutersville and La Grange. Ten members participated. Charlie Winker, Dottie Schoeneberg, Ann Ray, Patrick McClaugherty, Cindy Rodibaugh , Betsy Palkowsky, Mary Ann and Ron Peach and Mary Ann and David Butler worked hard in quite hot weather to pick up a total of 16 bags of trash. Just as David was putting the bags of trash around one of the signs near Reutersville for later pickup a TXDOT truck drove by, stopped, and two workers helped throw the bags in their truck for disposal. They were very appreciative of our work on the highway.

Our next Adopt-A-Highway clean up will be Wednesday October 4. We hope for cooler weather then!

Can you ID this creature? – by Lori Buffum

This googly-eyed creature appeared in our backyard (just outside Bellville) on Monday Aug. 21 at approximately 1:13 pm. What is it? The answer can be found later in this newsletter.

Washington on the Brazos – by Karen Ginnard



The Monarch/Pollinator gardens at Washington on the Brazos have suffered from lack of water due to another maintenance issue with the well. Although the beds are in need of maintenance, the summer heat has prevented the recent scheduling of a work day. The park staff have been watering as much as possible, but admit that it's difficult to keep up. We are assessing whether the park is viable as a project, given the ongoing maintenance issues with the well.

Having said that, the park staff is wonderful and would really like to continue the project. Allen and I would like to continue to manage, but with our adoption of two boys last November, we're having difficulty finding time to really focus on the pollinator beds. While I think we can catch up as the weather gets cooler, I would love to know whether anyone else might have a passion for taking on the park project as lead, assuming of course that the well issues get resolved. If you can help, please contact me at kginnard56@gmail.com .

Cicada Roles in The Environment - by Dave Redden

Most of us have wondered at one time or another how various creatures and plants fit into the web of life. Things like KR Bluestem, sandburs, and fire ants make you wonder if they are really necessary to anybody. Then there are creatures like the cicada that I hardly ever consider until it's summer and I think they are there just to make me forget about the ringing I have in my ears all the rest of the time. But recently there was an interesting report from somewhere that cicadas make up a large part of the diet of copperheads. Based on the number of copperheads I have, I think they must be doing a great job of feeding the reptiles. Then I found there was another use for cicadas.

A few nights ago, Jan (wife) was closing down for the night and went to turn off the light inside the back door. There was a large bug flying around the light, the way moths will circle a light at night. She opened the door and tried to get it to go out by using the "shoo" command, which almost always works on wild animals, but this time it did not. So, she turned off the inside light and turned on the outside light, thinking it would find its way out. Unfortunately, the outside lights are yellow bug-free lights. She ramped it up a bit by grabbing a magazine and swatting at the suspected moth. This must have upset the creature, because it then met the force with three swift stings that felt like a hornet, I am told. Time to give up and just go to bed.

The next morning we found the body of the creature that she thought was a moth. It was not. It looked like a red hornet on steroids with a nearly three-inch wingspan and body parts almost the size of a pinky finger. The stinger looked like something out of a child's nightmare about bees. Thank goodness for internet search engines. Within minutes I located insect ID sites and selected the TAMU Field Guide to Texas Insects (http://texasinsects.tamu.edu) . Great, now all I had to do was figure out what Order the insect was in. Not having a clue, I started reading the descriptions and found the group with bees, wasps, and ants is the Hymenoptera order. That ought to be a good place to start.

I went down through the list looking for something with a really mean and vicious sounding name. I found one that led me to a bug that has a tail like a scorpion and was about the size of my creature, but that was not it. Then a few more names down was the "cicada killer," *Sphecius speciosu.* When I clicked on the link, there was my bug!

I also learned about the life cycle. Like many insects, they only live a year. They eat, reproduce and die. Only the females sting, so mine was a female. She uses the stinger to paralyze cicadas and take them back to her nests, which are usually tunnels in sandy soil. There she deposits eggs on the cicada and seals it up for breakfast for the emerging larvae. Adult cicada killers feed on pollen, so they are pollinators as well as killers. Everyone has a role in the web. Sometimes the roles are just not obvious.

Mark your calendars for Chapter Meetings (and AT programs):

Third Saturday of January, March, May, July, September, November

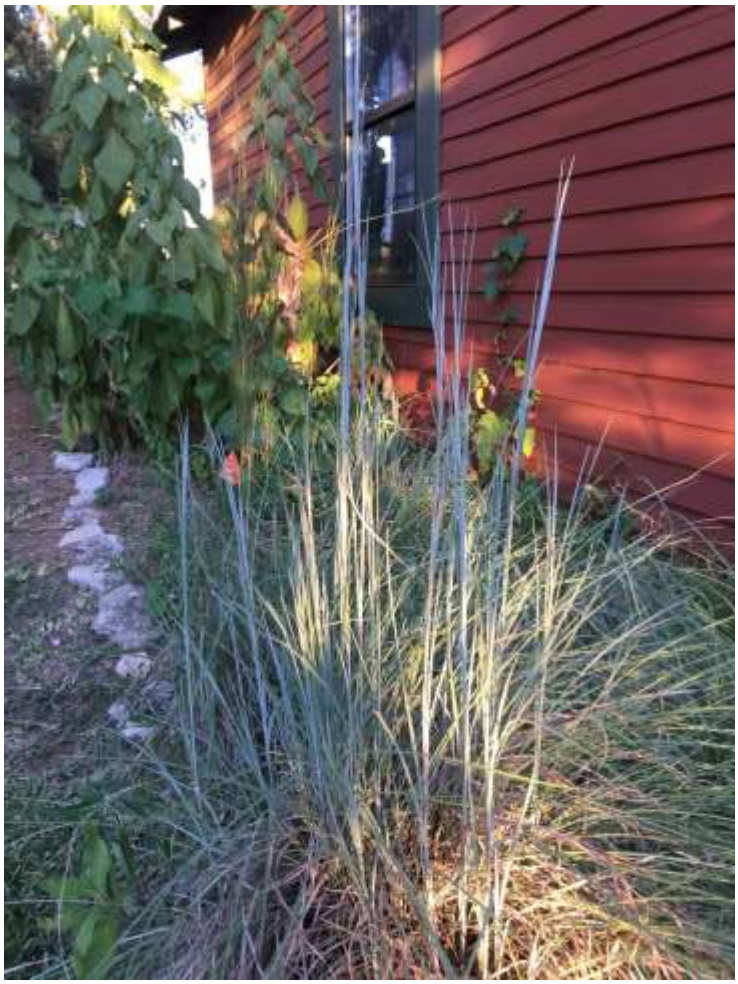
Native Prairie Grasses Blooming Now - by Charlotte von Rosenberg

Our native bunchgrasses bloom and set seed in the warm season and—yes, we are there. Sideoats Grama, the state grass of Texas, is appearing along country roadways now. It's a shorter grass than the Big Four (Big Bluestem, Little Bluestem, Switchgrass and Indiangrass). Its blooms are colorful including red, yellow and purple. Leaves are fine and flowing.

Blue-green Switchgrass can be identified now by its open seedhead, similar to (heaven forbid) Johnsongrass.

Little bluestem is unmistakable by its iridescent color and upright structure.

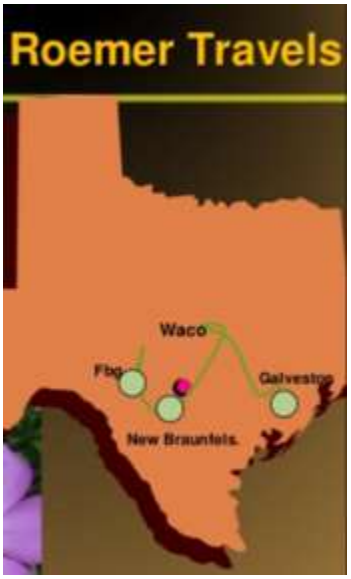
A Prairie Stomp is planned for early to mid- September. Bert and Wilda Pecore, GLC chapter members and 2015 Texas Land Steward Award winners, will host us at their property in Fayette County. The Pecores practice rotational grazing to manage their native and restored prairies. We will see several grass species in bloom. Please watch our website at www.txmn.org and your googlegroups email for exact dates and times. See you on the prairie!



Overview of an Early Texas Naturalist – by Cindy Hobbs

Did you know there is a Top Ten List for Early Texas Naturalists? Of course, our chapter's namesake is one of the ten.

Peter Custis was in Texas in 1806; his specialty was botany and zoology. In 1828, **Jean Louise Berlandier** arrived in Texas with interests in botany, zoology, and anthropology. In 1833, **Thomas Drummond** made his appearance in Texas studying botany, ornithology/entomology. Three years later in 1836, **Ferdinand Lindheimer,** a botanist arrives followed a year later by **Charles Wright,** another botanist. Ten years pass before **Ferdinand Roemer** arrives in Texas; his interests are in geology and botany. **Gideon Lincecum** arrives in Texas in 1848 and it's 1856 before naturalist **Julien Reverchon** arrives. Ten years later **Gustaf Belfrage** makes his way to Texas with an interest in entomology. Finally in 1874 **Jacob Boll** arrives; his interests are in geology and entomology.



We've heard much about Gideon Lincecum (and you can read about him on our chapter website); now let's meet another. Ferdinand Roemer (1818-1891) the **"Father of Texas Geology"** was born in Germany to an educated family with scientific interests. At age 24 he received a PhD in Geology. At 26 (1845), he was commissioned by Adelsverein to perform a geological study of the Fisher-Miller land grant. (Prince Solms had heard of the San Saba silver mines). So, in 1845 he traveled to Texas and collected different specimens around Houston and Galveston for seven weeks. In 1846 he befriended Lindheimer and spent some time collecting around the New Braunfels area. In 1847 he collected around Fredericksburg and accompanied Meuse Bach on his treaty expedition with the Comanches. His journals stretched from Galveston to Glen Rose, from San Antonio to Fredericksburg and on to San Saba, an area of 20,000 square miles.

In May 1847 he returned to Germany and wrote a well-received paper detailing the geology of Texas. He wrote "Texas", a firsthand account of his travels.

He was a man of great insight and cosmopolitan perspective. His accounts of his travels, German immigrant life and Comanche culture were fascinating. His reports are considered the first scientifically trained assessment of Texas geology, hence his title, "Father of Texas Geology".

Creature ID – by Lori Buffum

In preparation for viewing the eclipse, I made us a pinhole projector and got out my colander and propped the nice bright white back of a poster against my tilted patio table. But, my engineer husband was the hero of the hour because he used our binoculars (big lenses toward the sun) to focus the eclipsed sun onto the poster. My snapshots of the images made quite a "zoo" of binocular creatures. THANKS, Jim!!! Now, let's all mark our calendars for April 2024 when Texas will be in the path of totality for the next Solar Eclipse.

Chapter Resources Keep You Informed, On Track, and In Touch

Texas Master Naturalist Website http://txmn.org/ - the state website

Gideon Lincecum Chapter Website http://txmn.org/glc - visit often for event listings and more; no login required

TMN – GLC Facebook Group https://www.facebook.com/groups/21969044537/ - find us on Facebook and ask to join

Online Volunteer Management System: Go to the state website to log your volunteer and advanced training hours: http://txmn.org/tmn-vms-users/.

The GLC Tidings newsletter is published 6 times a year. Submit articles and photos to Editor Lori Buffum.