

June 2011 Newsletter

From Your President

Hi All,

On March 30-31, 2011, I attended a New Chapter Coordinators Training Workshop provided by our state sponsors, Texas Parks and Wildlife and Texas AgriLife, at the Kerr Wildlife Management Area.



I received a notebook almost as big as our class training notebooks and wondered, how are we going to get through it in 1 ½ days? We did. Michelle Haggerty and Sonny Arnold began with an overview of the TMN program and then walked us through the process of getting a new chapter started. As I perused the designated chapter divisions, I noted contributions from many different levels of our sponsor organizations and various chapter members. I was impressed with the difference in the knowledge base and volunteer contributions of these entries.

This workshop gave me better insight into the expanded effect we can have on our communities through changed attitudes and practices toward the management of natural resources.

How do you, as a Gideon Lincecum chapter member, measure the success of your MN chapter? I'd like to hear from you.

Cindy Rodibaugh

Class of 2011 May Graduation

On May 2, the Gideon Lincecum Chapter welcomed 14 new members. This class had a hectic last week with two field trips in addition to their regular Monday evening class. The field trips took them from Charlotte van Rosenberg's prairie north of Brenham to Oak Thicket Park near Fayetteville. They learned about grasses and trees during this daylong adventure. The training and field trips form the foundation for becoming a Master Naturalist. One class member's enthusiasm became a mission to bring more outdoor nature activities to her children. Read more about Margaret Lamar's outdoor project for the Brenham Independent School District below.



2011 Graduation Class

Graduation night was festive with table decorations by Carol Corliss, Luann Yarnold and Janet Jarrell. Healthy was the unofficial theme for the buffet spread as members brought a variety of salads to accompany the pork loin prepared by the chapter. Approximately 40 members greeted and welcomed the 2011 class. A special thanks to members of the training committee, Mary Jones, Wes Davenport, Toni and John Platt, Billie and Allen Burns, Janet Jarrell, and Carol Daniels for planning and implementing a successful training class.

Invaders of Texas Workshop

Mike Murphy with the U.S. Forest Service and Blake Eikenhorst, owner of Frontier Land and Wildlife Management, brought their expertise in invasive plants to our chapter at the Invaders of Texas Workshop on March 26. They explained how invasive species compete with native species and eventually diminish the soil.



Murphy and Eikenhorst presenting invasive species

Workshop participants were able to look at a large variety of invasive species including grasses, forbs, vines and trees. Approximately 25 people participated in the workshop including several from the 2011 Training Class. Perhaps one of the bigger disappointments was that some of our “pretty” plants, such as the Chinaberry tree, are on the list of invasive species. Murphy and Eikenhorst pointed out several times that just because an ornamental looks good doesn’t mean that it’s harmless to the native ecosystem. Following lunch workshop participants were invited to join Murphy and Eikenhorst for a walk around Winedale. During the tour the participants practiced their visual identification of invasive plants and observed firsthand the effect of invasive species on the soil. A special thanks to Judith Deaton for organizing this workshop.

April Outreach Activities

April is always a busy month in our communities as outdoor events are sponsored by different groups and organizations.



Charlotte von Rosenberg displaying native grasses

The Gideon Lincecum chapter was invited to participate in two of these events, the Burton Cotton Gin Festival and the Open House at the Antique Rose Emporium. Both of these events occurred on April 16.

Judith Deaton, Charlotte von Rosenberg and Larry Hilgers set up the booth and exhibits at the Burton Cotton Gin Festival. The exhibits included native grasses, animal bones and pelts, bluebird

boxes, and oak leaf identification. Visitors to the booth learned about the restoration of native grasses and how to install bluebird houses. In addition, visitors were encouraged to take a stroll along the nature trail at Indian Creek.

The focus at the Antique Rose Emporium was rainwater harvesting and building bird feeders. Visitors were offered the opportunity to assemble a simple bird feeder kit provided by Carol Montgomery or a use a plastic water bottle and a wooden skewer. They also enjoyed the interactive model that illustrated rainfall on different ground surfaces demonstrating runoff and groundwater. For the children, there was a display of different animal scat. Finally, there was a very timely display on how to minimize the effects of wild fires around the house by using “firewise” landscaping ideas. A special thanks to Cindy Rodibaugh, Carol Daniels, Cheryl Karr, and Marilyn Eppler for setting up the booth.



Cheryl Karr showing how rain is absorbed in different soils

Meet Margaret Lamar — Learn About the New Project at the Brenham ISD Outdoor Learning Center

Margaret Lamar (Class of 2011) is enthusiastic about children and outdoor learning. She enrolled in the Spring 2011 class to expand her knowledge of environmental education and learn more about managing her own family property, Tooth Acres (yes, that’s right – Margaret’s dad was a dentist). Margaret is an independent curriculum designer which allows her to join her passion for education with her love of nature. One of her favorite hobbies is taking children on nature hikes around the family’s 147-acre tract. Margaret lives with her family in a turn-of-the century farmhouse near Greenvine. Renovating the farmhouse and polka dancing are some of her other hobbies.

At the March meeting of the Gideon Lincecum Chapter, Margaret presented a request for funding to support an outdoor learning activity at the Brenham Outdoor Learning Center. The chapter approved the expenditure of \$2,000 to support a 900 square foot vegetable garden. Now, before you say “What does that have to do with being a naturalist?”, let’s talk about what children learn about nature from watching a garden grow. The 1st graders participating in this program are studying soil, plant life cycles, climate, ecosystems, the relationship between insects and plants, water cycles and so much more than just vegetables. Most recently, they observed firsthand what a difference rain can make in the growth of plants. The chapter’s gift is providing the funds to create 7 raised beds, and next Fall, each first grade class will have their own eco-system to watch.



Margaret Lamar in the garden at the Outdoor Learning Center

Volunteers from the chapter are always welcome. Volunteer activities are performed at the Brenham Outdoor Learning Center at 1000 West Blue Bell Road. They include helping the children in the garden either planting or observing nature. Margaret would also welcome help in planning projects for the children or special events, such as giving a talk about the role of insects in the life of a plant. Volunteers with an interest in developing outdoor lessons on bugs or birds would be especially welcome. If you have an interest, contact Margaret at gretalamar@gmail.com or 512-695-6491.

Summer Assignment

Learn what’s living on your property!

Create your own top 10 list of

- trees
- mammals
- birds
- grasses
- insects

Journal. Photograph. Investigate.

Become a regional expert by studying your own backyard!

Next Chapter Meeting

Saturday, May 21, 9-11am
Native Prairie Remnants
Program follows at noon
Bring a friend!