

Gideon Lincecum Chapter Texas Master Naturalist™ NEWS



April, May 2014

From the President:

We have had another successful training class. I can't thank the training committee enough and Cindy Rodibaugh in particular, for leaving the chapter in great shape entering into 2014. The new Vice President, Karen Mahoney-Woods, stepped right into the fray and arranged a great Bee Program in January and a Water Program in March. Invasives and Cats are the topics for May's advanced training and we are working on a program about Dove Banding for later in the year. If you have an interest in something that would interest you as an advanced training class, please let myself or the vice president know, we are always looking for interesting topics.

We are currently working on a calendar for the website. Instead of receiving numerous emails monthly detailing upcoming advanced training and volunteer opportunities, members will be able to access the website and see all the activities for the month on the website calendar. We are not there yet, but once we have figured it all out, the Chapter will be notified that it's available.

There have been numerous changes in committee chairs this year. The most pressing is the loss of our recruiting chair. I really want to enlist the help of the entire chapter in advertising our program and with you and distribute them. Whether we have a class in 2015 is dependent on the entire Chapter.

The chair for the newsletter is also looking for a replacement. If you have a little time and good computer skills please consider taking over the newsletter.



A Volunteer, according to Webster's definition is, "a person who voluntarily offers him/herself for a service or undertaking." The benefits are many, to name a few: volunteering helps make new friends and contacts, increases your social and relationship skills, increases self-confidence, is known to combat depression and helps you stay physically healthy. The TMN mission is, "To develop a corps of well-educated "Master Volunteers" to provide education, outreach and service dedicated towards the beneficial management of natural resources within their communities for the State of Texas". Consider taking the lead on one of our many committees - it is not as difficult as you might imagine. Unfortunately, the same people have been leads for several years now and we need replacements if the chapter is going to continue to be successful. Get involved, it helps you, it helps us, it helps the community.



Cindy Hobbs

[Become a Gideon Lincecum Invader](#)

Contributed by Judy Deaton

The Chapter will be holding our second Gideon Lincecum Invaders Workshop at Winedale on Saturday, [May 17th](#). It will be an all-day training session from about [9am](#) to about [3](#) or [4pm](#). In March of 2011, we trained 15 members. It was a very informative day and everyone left with a good knowledge of our local problems with invasive species. We certainly don't want to be planting them in our gardens! Once trained, we should be good citizen scientists (pull off the road and get out the smart phone!) and help with this mammoth undertaking. It is best to carry a smart phone to enable you to input your findings on the spot and there is a new app from www.texasinvasives.org to make that very easy. We should all know how to identify and report invasive species and to know the plants that need to be removed in our projects at Monument Hill and Festival Hill. The workshop is open to the public and to all other organizations. Pass around the word as it is good AT experience. The last workshop was very successful and you may have seen this photo of the lab work before. If you want to attend please reply to Judy Deaton. judithdeaton@gmail.com.



[A Look Back at The 2014 Training Class](#)

Contributed by Cindy Rodibaugh

The first training class for the 2014 GLC-TMN Training Class turned out to be a challenging wet commute to a very cool room without running water! What more fitting environment for the study of Geology---“the scientific study of the origin, history, and structure of the earth.” “From rocks comes soil and if not for soil, life on earth would probably not exist.” I especially appreciated Dr. Mathewson’s exhibits of rocks, which covered three tables.

Jim Willis followed Dr. Mathewson informing the class of his program that coordinates landowners in rehabilitating land man has taken advantage of while creating room for wildlife.

The classroom environments improved and the caliber of learning experience remained high.

With only 3 weeks until graduation, the class members continue to show enthusiasm and fortitude. They have traveled from Brenham (Geology and Aquatic Ecology), to Stephen F. Austin State Park (Forest Ecology), to Attwater Prairie Refuge (Ornithology), to Winedale (Ecology Concepts, Entomology, Plants), and to La Grange (Weather and Climate). They have met Kara Matheney and Philip Shackelford, as well as other excellent informative resource folks. They continue to ask great questions and are participating in GLC-TMN chapter volunteer projects.

As a coordinator for GLC-TMN training, it has been a rewarding challenge and a wonderful source of



encouragement to work with the members of this class. The entire GLC-TMN chapter membership was invited Monday, April 7 to Winedale to meet and welcome these folks into our “educated corps of volunteers”.

Ponderings of a TMN Trainee

Contributed by Lori Buffum (now a Graduate)

January 2014, with my registration confirmed and my calendar marked with class dates, I looked forward eagerly to the start of the Texas Master Naturalist course. I wanted an outlet to talk about my experiences with the course and a new chapter in life so I relaunched and refurbished a blog I had started 5 years ago. Visit my blog at <http://prettysoon.wordpress.com/> .

Now, we are almost finished with the course and I’m so sad. The course has far exceeded my expectations and has set me soundly on the path to lifelong learning and to becoming an active member of the “corps” of volunteer naturalists helping to protect our environment.

Thanks to the 2” binder containing the full curriculum, handouts from presenters, copious notes in a spiral notebook, photographs, and memories, I have lots to review and study and research. Every presenter was absolutely top notch, passionate, inspiring, and informative. All the field trips made the relative subjects come alive. I think the “blue skies and fresh pits” out at TAMU was my favorite – who knew soil could be so fascinating?

Each class date had a topic so we could study our chapter in advance but those single words can’t begin to convey the excitement of exploring each subject in the capable hands of an expert. Wow – we’ve come full circle – starting with an intense and fascinating short course in Geology (with rock samples) and ending with a Soils class (and a chance to make mud pies) followed by that field trip I mentioned out to the soil pits being studied by the university. In between: “wildlife deserts” being reclaimed for quail habitat; the nature of weather and climate and putting the drought of 2011 in perspective; aquatic

ecosystems from watersheds to microorganisms in a pond; learning about forests and trees and the woody

Biomass, then taking a tree ID walk in the winter woods at Stephen F. Austin State Park; ecology and how humans impact the land and what we can do about that; entomology –the study of bugs – focusing on the honey bee followed by a discussion of GMOs , pest threats to our food supply, and the threat of invasives like “crazy ants”; ornithology – an excellent short course in birds followed by a presentation on the efforts to save the Attwater Prairie Chicken from extinction – putting it all in context at the APC Wildlife Refuge; our focus on plants really got to the root of the matter of vegetative regions, who uses various plants, how they got their names, and how to identify the various categories from grasses to sedges, to forbs,



to woody plants; rangeland ecology – our job is now management and restoration; mammals from taxonomy (naming, grouping, subdividing) to tracks (with pelts and skulls and tracks to touch and examine); and the final class in Soils on the TAMU campus.



[Photo – Dr. Christine Morgan, Texas A&M University, soil pit]

One more field trip will cap off the course: seeing the native prairie at Quebe farm and the springtime perspective should be glorious. Thank you, Gideon Lincecum Chapter, for a wonderful course. I’m eager to continue learning as I work with my fellow classmates and chapter members on the projects in our 5-county “neighborhood”.

The Grand Saga of the Monarch Butterfly Or - Another Pondering from Lori Buffum

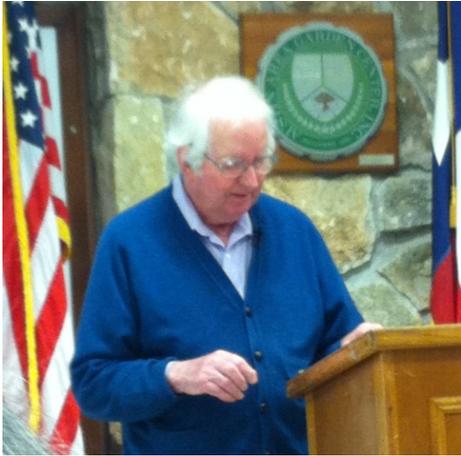
Several of the TMN class members went to Austin at the end of March to hear a lecture on the Monarch Butterfly sponsored by the Austin Butterfly Forum – what a rare and wonderful opportunity to learn from Lincoln Brower one of the world’s foremost experts and ardent enthusiasts of this fascinating insect.

Lori Buffum stands in front of a poster of the 1976 issue of NG which depicts Catalina Aguado amongst the Monarchs in their winter habitat deep in the high altitude forests in Mexico. After years and years of puzzlement in the scientific community trying to figure out where the Monarchs go, Catalina and her husband FOUND them in 1975 in the mountain community where she grew up. Catalina was at the lecture too and was able to pinpoint on an aerial photo exactly where the original colony was discovered.



For more than half a century Professor Brower has been investigating the biology of the monarch butterfly. Many of the widely known facts about monarchs which are presented in biology classes and nature documentaries have come out of his research on the monarch butterflies' chemical defense against predators and the ecological chemistry of the butterflies' interactions with their milkweed hostplants.

In 1977 Professor Brower made his first visit to the monarch butterflies' winter retreats, in the high mountains of central Mexico. Captivated by the extraordinary phenomenon of hundreds of millions of butterflies aggregating in the rugged fir forests, he began to explore new questions about the butterflies' migration and overwintering physiology, and these questions have taken him back to the overwintering sites on more than fifty expeditions. During his first expedition he also realized that the phenomenal migration and overwintering biology was threatened by logging in the winter roost areas, and he began conservation work with WWF-Mexico, government agencies in Mexico, the U.S. and Canada, and numerous colleagues, work that continues today.



In his lecture, copiously illustrated with photographs ranging from electron micrographs to satellite images, Professor Brower presented a first-person account of his field expeditions and lab explorations, and described the conservation issues that threaten the butterflies' unique migration and wintering biology.

Those of us lucky enough to attend are still glowing about it, just ask Lori Buffum, Betty and Gary Pior or Bette and Jerry Gips.

[Update on the Greenhouse](#)

Contributed by Charlotte Von Rosenberg

For the third year, the Prairie Committee planted native grass and forb seeds at Brenham High School greenhouse. Seeds are ones collected by our committee and Chapter members. By March 24, germination of grass seeds was going strong, with forbs a bit slower. Pictured are Carol Hale and Susan Scanio at planting date, March 1. The protected greenhouse environment including timed automatic mister allows a high germination rate. Germination took longer this year, maybe due to colder weather. Remember several nights in the 20's? We plan to offer seedling plants for sale again this year at the Cotton Gin Festival April 26. We will keep some plants for display on Ag Day, May 7 when middle school students will visit the high school campus including the greenhouse and Rainwater Harvesting System. Grasses planted are Little Bluestem (LBS), Big Bluestem (BBS), Switchgrass, Sideoats Grama, Indiangrass, Inland Sea Oats, Canada Rye, Purple Top. Forbs are Illinois Bundle, Gayfeather, White prairie clover, Milkweed, Partridge Pea, Foxglove, Frostweed and Ironweed.



[Quebe Prairie Update](#)

Contributed by Charlotte von Rosenberg

On February 15, 2014 the native prairie remnant was mowed at about 8 inches high. Rains in early March were soaked up by the deep soil. As of today, March 30, the first wildflowers have shown up; foxglove's waxy green leaves, more downy paintbrush than ever before and prairie hyacinth. On a more sinister note, death camas has made it's yearly appearance and is worth Googling.



Bluebonnet and paintbrush, not so much . . .yet. Grasses, being warm season plants, are slow to wake up in the spring. But when the sun gets hot grasses get going and bloom – yes bloom – with flowers – in late summer. We collect seeds in the fall. And the cycle continues on. The Quebe Prairie Field Trip was Saturday April 5 at 9 AM.

[Identify This Flower?](#)

Contributed by Carol Montgomery



Carol Montgomery found this while mowing her property. Could it be an Albino vetch? Or something else? Dave Redden has an idea. Let's see what you think.

Send your informed guesses to Carol Paulson at cspaulson@hughes.net and I'll publish them next time. No prize for the winner, just a silly grin on your face that says "I'm right!"

Some Pest Control Hints ala Allstate Insurance

Contributed by Cindy Rodibaugh

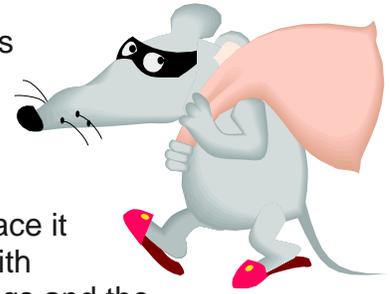
Did you know that mice turn up their noses at peppermint? Or that ants and roaches hate Tex-Mex? Some easy tricks and common household ingredients can help keep nature's nuisances at bay, without harming kids, pets or other wildlife.

Be a Menace to Mice

- Peppermint has been an anti-mouse strategy for centuries. Some swear the strong smell keeps mice from being able to find food. Soak cottonballs in pure peppermint oil (found in health food stores) and place in small cups near their entry points. Planting peppermint in your yard may help too.

Nature's Houdini: A house mouse can squeeze through a hole the diameter of a dime.

- No cat? Borrow some cat hair from a friend or a groomer, and place it around holes. Better yet, block those holes altogether. Stuff them with copper mesh, which won't rust like steel wool. Cover larger openings and the space behind air vents with hardware cloth that has a mesh size less than a quarter-inch.



Keep Ants Far Away

- Ants depend on their scent trail: Wipe it out with undiluted white vinegar.
- They also avoid cayenne pepper. Other pests, including cockroaches and squirrels, avoid it too. Ants can't digest cornmeal, but they don't know that. Put piles of it near a problem anthill, and ants will eat it and slowly starve. This solution takes some time, but it's safe for kids and pets.

Banish Biting Bugs

Mosquitoes track you by the carbon dioxide you exhale. Mask it with citronella. Lemongrass (not the citronella plant) is the source of this oil. Plant this lovely ornamental around your patio or in portable pots.



- Bedbugs don't like extremes. Chill a room at 32°F or below for several days to stop these pests cold. And wash and dry bedding at the hottest settings for at least 15 minutes. You can also set the legs of your bed in plastic cups filled with a little mineral oil, to keep bugs from climbing up.

- Many insects go toward the light. But bugs avoid yellow bug lights—use them near doorways, driveways and sidewalks. Place mercury vapor or incandescent lights around the perimeter of the property to lure insects away.

[Committee Chairs Share GLC's Volunteer Opportunities with the Class of 2014](#)

Contributed by Carol Paulson



On March 24, the various volunteer committee chairs shared the opportunities available for volunteer hours with the 2014 class. Among those presenting were David and Marianne Butler, chair of the Adopt a Highway committee, Carol Paulson, chair of the BES Outdoor Learning Committee, Charlotte Von Rosenberg, chair of the Native Prairie Project, and Karen Woods, chair of the Monument Hill Project. Also giving presentations were Dave Redden, regarding Proscribed Burns and Wes Davenport who answered many questions regarding how to conserve water on your own property.

[Krause Garden is Planted](#)

Contributed by Carol Paulson

On March 19, we planted the final gardens for the spring at Krause Elementary. These were the new beds built by GLC TMN volunteers on February 15.

Brenham Elementary and Alton Elementary started their gardens the first week of March, but Krause was postponed due to our "ice day". All six first grade classes were involved and, with a lot of enthusiasm and some help from our Master Naturalist volunteers, managed to get a lot of seeds into the ground. With help from the teachers at all 3 schools, the gardens are growing at a rapid and very crowded pace. On April 10, with a wonderful contribution of native grasses from Charlotte Von Rosenberg, we planted our native plant demonstration bed at Krause.



In other news, the BISD School District will host an event on April 25 to introduce parents and the general public to what's going on in the Outdoor Gardens. The event will be held at Brenham Elementary School but will include Alton and Krause. Come see some of the demonstrations our Master Naturalists will be giving, Dave Redden on bluebirds, Cheryl Karr will show off her scat samples and Royceanna Kendall will demonstrate composting making (with worms!).

And, we still need volunteers to work with children on Outdoor Education at Lake Somerville on April 29, May 9 and May 14.



CALENDAR FOR THE NEXT MONTH OR 2?

Make sure you mark all of these on your calendar. Each opportunity here will increase your knowledge as a Master Naturalist. (The camaraderie is a big bonus too!) These are in date order:

April 16, 2014 – Attwater Chicken Prairie Refuge, needs assistance clearing out invasives, seed collection, and herbarium work. This is an on-going project. Contact Butch Young, (979) 251-9178.

April 17, 2014 – Indian Creek Workday in preparation for the Cotton Gin Festival. Meet at Burton Café for breakfast at 8am – work starts at 9am. Bring gloves, rakes, mosquito repellent and water. For details, contact Carol Montgomery at carmont@industryinet.com

April 24-25, 2014 – Stephen F. Austin State Park, they need volunteers for another Junior High field trip, 9:30am to 1:30pm. Contact Tom Shaughnessy, at (713) 703-7145.

April 25, 2014 – Brenham Elementary School, 5:30pm to 7:00pm, Family Night. Point of contact is Carol Paulson, (979) 251-9384.

April 25, 2014 – Monument Hill Park, 8:30am to 11:30, remove invasives, contact Karen Woods/Mahoney (281) 682-2810

April 26, 2014 – Cotton Gin Festival, Burton, TX. Set up begins at 8:00am TMN-GLC will man a table there for the entire day. If you can man the table or help set up contact Judy Deaton (713) 545-3401, or Carol Montgomery at carmont@industryinet.com

April 29, 2014 – Outdoor Education for 5th grade at Lake Somerville, Nails Creek Unit. 8:30am – 2pm carolpaulson@hughes.net

May 9, 2014 – Outdoor Education for 3rd grade at Lake Somerville, Nails Creek Unit. 8:30am – 2pm carolpaulson@hughes.net

May 14, 2014 – Outdoor Education for 3rd grade at Lake Somerville, Nails Creek Unit. 8:30am – 2pm carolpaulson@hughes.net

Some of our Recent Activities

A rare and beautiful sight

Look who I saw at our mailbox kiosk just outside of Bellville on March 21 at about noon - a Cecropia moth (I looked her up on the TAMU website). That wingspan is about 5 inches. The Cecropia Moth (*Hyalophora cecropia*) is North America's largest native moth. It is a member of the Saturniidae family, or giant silk moths. As I read a little more about it, I probably should have said "him" because of the extra fuzzy antennae. I hope he found the mate he was seeking.

-- From Lori Buffum



A cold day on the Quebe Prairie



Learning about the Outdoors