

Gideon Lincecum Chapter Texas Master Naturalist™ NEWS



June, July 2014

From the President:

Spring is gone and the heat of summer is upon us. It is time to begin thinking about next year's class. We need volunteers for the training committee. I would love to see some of the new students take up this challenge as their training is fresh in their minds. Please consider being a member of our training committee, last year's committee will be available to assist you. If at all interested please contact me or anyone on last year's committee. We are still in need of a recruiting chair - if our attempts at informal recruiting don't pan out, we may not have a class in 2015. Please, if you are attending a venue this summer take some flyers with you and put them out on a table, pass them out, and talk about us, and our mission.

EQUIPMENT LIQUIDATION:



We have two pieces of equipment that we need to liquidate, two Stihl MS 250-16 inch chainsaws that were bought for the chapter a few years ago with a grant from IBM. Dave Redden has been storing them and we are ready to liquidate them. Because they have been stored and rarely used they may need a tune-up to make them run. Each saw comes with a carrying case and an extra 16-inch chain, plus the original owners manuals. The current cost of these units is \$359 MSRP, plus the case and extra chain. We are offering them for sale to our members. If interested send me an email with the price you are willing to pay and we will sell it to whoever makes the highest offer on them. The minimum starting price is \$100.00, my email is condy_hobbs@yahoo.com. You must respond with your bid by June 20, 2014.

As the heat closes in our volunteer activities usually slow down for the summer months. We do have a few on-going, year round, activities: check out the webpage for a volunteer activity near you. Attwater Prairie Chicken Refuge (Butch Young) and Monument Hill (Karen Mahoney- Woods) are two that operate year round. Dates and times are sent via email.

Karen Mahoney-Woods is working on an advanced training program for the July, August timeframe, I will send out the information as soon as we have nailed something down. What topics would you like to see for advanced training? We are always open to suggestions and ideas for our advanced training topics.

Thanks to Judy Deaton for arranging a great invasives advanced training program in May. I was unable to attend (was in Jamaica, mon), but I'm told a lot of good information was put out and the training was well attended. Plant identification, including invasives is something I still struggle with.

Cindy Hobbs



[*Invasives Workshop Creates New Citizen Scientists*](#)

Contributed by Judy Deaton

Non-native plants can be very beautiful and so many of us have grown up familiar with them that they seem as natural as the sunrise. Mimosa, Wax leaf ligustrum, English ivy, and Japanese honeysuckle have been among favorite garden plants for many decades. With the advent of texasinvasives.org, an initiative that has the support of so many of governmental and state agencies, as well as the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, awareness of the impact of introduced species is growing.

On May 17th the Gideon Lincecum Chapter held its second workshop (2011 and 2014) to prepare members, the public and those from other Chapters and organizations to become citizen scientists who discover, identify and report the incidence of non-native species in Texas to help with management of those that are or can become invasive.

Our appreciation should go to the representative of the Texas Forest Service, Mike Murphrey, and his wife, Heidi, who came all the way from Lufkin to present the workshop for us and collected many specimens to show us on the way. They also brought with them a plethora of informative handouts and booklets, some that can be found on the website, that we eagerly squirreled away in our clipboards for reference.



I would like to encourage our new Invaders to brave the chiggers and forage in their local landscapes. It is surprising where you will find them growing. I made an hour's trip to Millican to find a MacCartney rose specimen only to find one very locally - only one - in a hedgerow hiding behind a native Mustang grape. I didn't think they grew in our area due to soil type; what a surprise.

At Festival Hill we are making good inroads with removing, primarily, Chinaberry trees and ligustrums from their woods. The same must be true of Monument Hill. It is nice to have many more trained members who can help with accurate identification of non-natives on these projects.

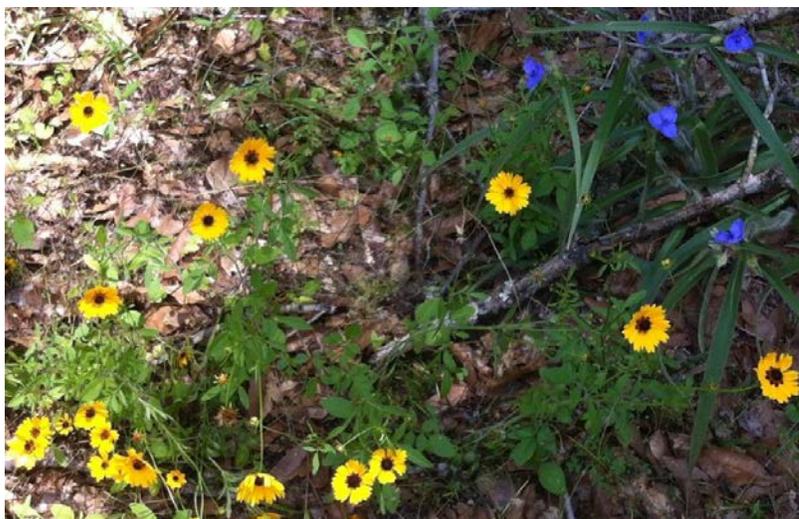
We all had a really good time, except we sweltered a bit on our field trip, but everyone that braved the long day left with certificates and a feeling of accomplishment at becoming Gideon Lincecum Invaders.

Coreopsis & Coneflower, Lichen & Ladybugs – Sharing Nature with Children

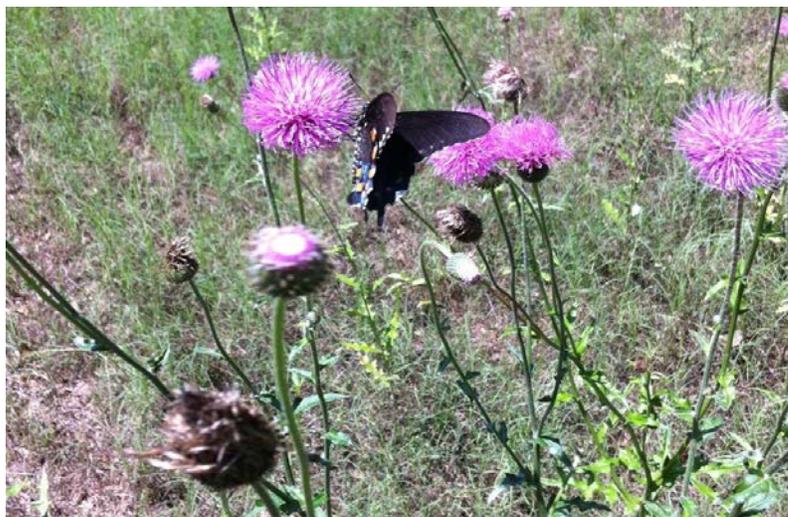
Contributed by Lori Buffum

After several weather-related reschedulings, we finally had a date with the Brenham ISD 3rd graders out at Nails Creek State Park (Lake Somerville). Under the direction of Natalie James (BISD Outdoor Education coordinator) and Joy Nutt (Texas Parks & Wildlife Outdoor Education Ranger), I partnered with fellow Master Naturalists LeAnn Bennett (one day) and Dave Redden (the other day) to help with the Wildflower Scavenger Hunt activity. Earlier in the year, I had worked with Natalie and a whole crew of volunteers, coordinated by Carol Paulson, to help 1st graders plant their vegetable gardens at their schools so that had planted the seed (I guess that's a pun intended) that one of my favorite service areas as a Master Naturalist would be working with kids.

So, I had signed up to help on the “park” days figuring I would be a good soldier and help in any way the coordinators needed me. When I arrived that first day, I was asked if I would be the co-leader of the Wildflower Hunt, along with LeAnn Bennet. We were given cards (for the kids) printed front & back with pictures and names of flowers we were likely to see and directed to the sloping meadow near the lake where we had 40



minutes with each group of kids as they rotated between the 4 stations. Thank goodness for LeAnn's experience with this activity from last year and her wonderful rapport with the kids. It wasn't long before the contagious enthusiasm of the kids caught on and we were discovering all sorts of treasures out there in nature. Coreopsis was a fun word for the kids to say and we found lots of those little beauties along with the Coneflowers whose distinctive upraised center helped us all learn how to begin to distinguish one



flower from another. We found ladybugs and counted their spots and learned a little about lichen that was growing on the rocks and on the trees. We spotted egrets in the nearby marshland and watched the scissor-tail flycatcher in pursuit of a meal. We posed a challenge to the kids to find the Texas Vervain (another word they enjoyed) and another challenge to find something that “didn't belong” (trash). As a final treat for the senses, we did about a minute of complete silence so they could hear the sounds of nature (and the train, and the trucks working in another part of

the park, along with the bird song, the breeze in the trees, and some crickets in the grasses). By the end of

the day, I had learned a lot about flower ID but more importantly, I learned that being spontaneous and sharing your own passion for the natural surroundings reaps the biggest rewards in terms of smiles from the kids and their delight at discovering the prickly thistle hosting a bee, or the sensitive briar that curls up at a gentle touch, or the single gaillardia flower that no one else had noticed.

Working with Dave on the next park day was another delight for the kids and for me. He had them eagerly counting petals, learning about ball moss in the oak trees, and following a “safe” trail through the tall grasses to the outer reaches of the meadow where there were wonderful patches of bee balm (and how do you suppose that flower got its name?).

What a gift for the kids AND for the volunteers to share this time outdoors. Let me conclude with a short personal story. I was working on Saturday at a huge rummage sale benefiting the animal shelter in Bellville. While I was helping a family tally their “treasures” this little boy kept looking at me with a puzzled expression on his face and finally he smiled and came over and tugged on my apron to get my attention. He said, “aren’t you the flower lady from the park?”. “Yes, and wasn’t that a great day!” I said. “I really had a good time looking for flowers,” he said, beaming. I asked him if he remembered his favorite and he promptly said “Coreopsis!” We parted after hugs and he then helped translate for his family members who were paying for their items.



p.s. When I was browsing the sale for my own little stash of treasures, I came across a little book that I got for 25 cents: *Sharing Nature with Children* by Joseph Cornell. Published in 1979, this little classic is even more relevant today and there is an associated website: www.SharingNature.com .

Come join us in the “park” next time around.

[Adopt-a-Highway Cleans Up](#)

Contributed by Dave Butler



An energetic group of GL-TMN members gathered together on April 11 to clean up our portion of HWY 159 for our Adopt-a-Highway project. It was quick work as not much trash had been discarded since our clean up on February 13. Eleven bags of trash were collected compared to almost 40 bags in February. TDOT had requested that we participate in the TDOT Trash Off Day activity held then. We will have two more days of work during this year.

GLC TMNs at The Burton Cotton Gin Festival

Contributed by Cindy Rodibaugh



The weather was perfect. Our booth showcased what Gideon Lincecum Texas Master Naturalists are all about—from Native prairie grasses to how to identify Invasive Plant species to water harvesting to bluebird habitats and more.

In spite of cold weather soon after planting seeds collected in 2013 in the green house at Brenham High School, the Prairie committee succeeded in getting several native plant species propagated and available for sale.



Our location next to the Cotton Gin gave us a front row seat for the start up of “Big Bertha” and the cotton bail she produced.

Beyond the tractor pull track, behind us, the nature walk, which GLC members developed and have maintained along the Indian Creek, provided a shady respite to stretch the legs and listen to the bubbling creek.

Throughout the day we talked to visitors about a variety of topics of interest to Master Naturalists

and collected \$120 for the plants we sold to help them get started on their native plant beds or pocket prairies.

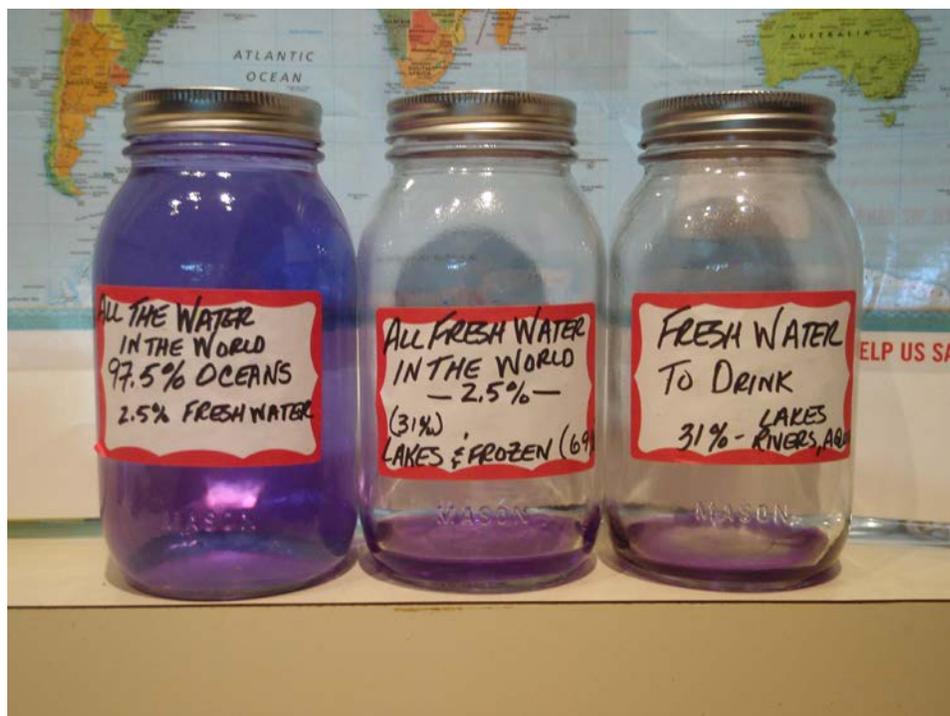
Thanks to all who volunteered at our Cotton Gin Festival Booth and helped make it a very successful expression of GLC-TMN.

[“AG Days” News](#)

Contributed by Cindy Rodibaugh

On May 6th and May 7th several GLC-TMN helped educate 4th and 5th graders in La Grange at the AG Safety Day and in Brenham at the Brenham High School green house for the Washington County AG Day.

Without the aide of a rainfall simulator, Donna Mueller put together a presentation that illustrated to the students the importance of our precious natural resource---water.



Outside the greenhouse in Brenham, with the aide of a world map and a map of Texas, Donna explains water resources. Fresh water available to drink is a very tiny fraction of all the water on the earth.



Alongside Donna, David Redden explains a rainwater harvesting system



Inside the greenhouse, LeAnn Bennett and Charlotte von Rosenberg emphasize the importance of native plants to recharging stored water underground.

LeAnn holds a root of a native plant that provides a pathway for water to travel down. Did you know the roots of some natives like Yellow Indian grass and



Switch grass can be 8 feet long?

[Volunteering with L.A.N.D.S.](#)

Contributed by LuAnn & Lefty Yarnold

We dissected deer plucks with 8th graders at Brenham Jr High to learn the functions of the trachea, esophagus, heart and lung. The students found how air flows through the trachea to the lungs and how food travels through the esophagus to the stomach. In studying the heart, we helped students trace how blood flowed in and out the various chambers of a deer's heart.

We also performed a necropsy on a bobwhite



quail with 7th graders Brenham Jr High in order to understand the internal and external adaptations of birds compared to humans and other organisms. In assisting students, they were able to find the uropygial gland which contains fluid for weatherproofing feathers. Also, students examined the first stomach proventriculus or "chemical" stomach and the second stomach gizzard or "mechanical" stomach. One quail weighed heavier than others and on the inside of the bird we discovered "orange" balls which turned out to be eggs in various stages of formation.(See the picture

of balls in pan - those are from one quail with eggs 1st day, 2nd day, etc. formation)

Out on the Prairie

Contributed by Cindy Rodibaugh

It has been my privilege to sojourn out on the Attwater Prairie with like-minded companions on varied missions; looking for specimens for the Herbarium; removing yaupon (I was selected to be the “designated sprayer” of the stumps and promptly got my feet tangled up and fell into the area I was supposed to spray☹.); and collecting seeds. Each time I go, I’m able to strengthen my familiarity with plant identification—not so much the names but the ‘favorable’ (native) and the ‘out-of-favor’ (the invasive☹!)

Here are some of the examples I’ve seen”



Eastern Gama

The
McCartney
Rose blossom
is very pretty.



Native Milkweed



Dove Banding Program

Contributed by Madeline Johnson

On June 7, Shaun Oldenburger, TPWD Migratory Shore and Upland Bird Program Leader, described the state dove banding program to a group of interested master naturalists. The state of Texas is banding mourning and white wing doves as part of a national science program to better understand the behavior and biology of these birds. The Gideon Lincecum Chapter will be joining other master naturalist chapters who have been banding doves for several years. Based on the participation at the June 7 meeting, there

will probably be two groups: Fayette and Washington County. Stephanie Damron, Washington County's TPWD biologist, will be contacting interested volunteers in the next month for hands-on training. Mourning doves are banded between July 1 and August 15. Contact Madeline Johnson, GLC Chapter member, (madeline@industryinet.com) if you are interested in more information.

Wildlife Habitat

Contributed by Cindy Hobbs

Throughout Texas many landowners manage their properties to attract different species of animals, whether it's mammals, birds or reptiles. This wildlife exists because they have the resources they need to survive, they have habitat, unique to their species. They are all part of a much larger food chain that includes thousands of species of wildlife.



Perhaps the most important aspect of habitat conservation is what you (as an individual) can do to conserve or enhance habitats for native species. Your backyard can be habitat for many native and migrating birds with a little effort.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has established guidelines to assist you in providing habitat for native and migrating birds:

1. Grow native plants and trees that provide fruits and seeds.
2. Wood lots with fallen limbs and leaves, dead plant material and other wood debris harbor insects that birds need. Leave dead plant material on the land if you are able.
3. Seek alternatives to chemical pesticides. Use biological controls (bugs), for unwanted insects and vegetation.
4. Reduce bird predation by keeping cats indoors. I have seen this first hand, last summer a neighbor's cat killed 3 nesting birds in my yard. Don't put table scraps out in your yard which attracts predators like raccoons.
5. Invite your neighbors to join your backyard efforts.

Additionally wildlife needs food like seeds, berries and nectars. Seeds come from trees such as acorns, grasses like little bluestem. Texas barberry is a bird favorite. Planting natives provide migrating species with the food they expect to find and at the right time of year. Native plants will attract wildlife to your yard more quickly than exotics which most wildlife doesn't recognize. For example, if it's butterflies you want to attract, nectar plants such as salvias, sages, trumpet honeysuckle, cross vine, verbenas, cosmos and zinnias will entice them.

Shelter is critical, it can be high in an oak tree (cardinals and jays), or low thick cedar brush for mockingbirds and cedar waxwings. Butterflies and lizards will shelter in dry stacked stone. A brush pile can be shelter to small birds, lizards and small mammals. A dead tree with cavities or a snag is a palatial estate to small birds, such as wrens or titmice. Owls and woodpeckers will also move into a dead tree or snag.

Water is probably the most important element needed in Central Texas. A permanent water fixture is ideal, but less costly and labor intensive ways to provide water are available. Birds are attracted to the sound of moving water, a soda bottle hung over a birdbath, with a small hole in its cap that drips water will bring in all the bathers. Hummingbirds love to fly through mist, so a mister will bring them to your yard.

And lastly, wildlife needs a place to rear their young. Most of the elements that provide shelter will also provide a place for nesting. You may want to add birdhouses or nesting ledges, the placement of these is important, not all birds will nest at the same height or in the same space. This is a broad overview, for more detailed information an excellent reference is Texas Wildscapes, you may also want to check out the Texas Parks and Wildlife website for more information on the species you are trying to attract.

[From the Desk of Michelle Haggerty](#)

I have some VERY significant staffing updates to share with you regarding our Texas Master Naturalist team! Please read on for more information about the following:



- **Welcome Mary Pearl Meuth as our TMN Assistant Program Coordinator for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension!!!**
- **Cullen Hanks named the new Texas Nature Trackers Biologist under the TMN Program**
- **Mark Klym moves to our TPWD offices in Bastrop**
- **Jennifer Mandel-Buratti Joins our TMN Program Team this summer as a Social Media & Internet Marketing Specialist**
- **Lisa Marler joins our TMN Program as a Contract Worker this summer preparing our TMN Program Grant Report**
- **Brad James, Cheryl Foster and Dale Hughling become members of our team to implement a new on-line reporting system for the Texas Master Naturalist Program**

Editor' Note: To learn more about these people and their new roles and qualifications, go to the e-mail you received from Michelle on May 30, 2014 to TMN@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU



[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:

Saturday, July 19, 2014 – Winedale – Chapter Meeting at 8:00AM

Saturday, July 19, 2014 – Winedale – Plant Identification Program

Details to follow



Please turn in your Volunteer and AT hours to Carol Daniels at glcmembershipcommittee@hotmail.com
Good News!! On-line reporting coming in the next month or so!

Some of our Recent Activities

At L.A.N.D.S. Day



Burton Cotton Gin Festival



Wildflower I.D Outdoor Classroom