



# The GLC Tidings

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## Our Mission

Volunteers dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources through education, outreach and service in our community.

2020-2021 Officers  
 President, Betsy Palkowsky  
 Vice President, Mark Brown  
 Secretary, Linda Esco  
 Treasurer, Pam Green

## From the President – Betsy Palkowsky

I hope y'all are doing as well as I am, spending the mornings outside while it's cool and afternoons inside doing this, that and the other things on my long to-do list. It's amazing how quickly the days fly by. It's only four months until Christmas and I haven't started my shopping yet! Hopefully, we can still meet in person for another wonderful Volunteer Appreciation gathering in early December.

Yes, I said in person. See the chapter meeting invite below. We are currently able to meet in person provided the venue isn't over 50% capacity and there are no more than 50 people attending the event. Mask wearing is required per the governor's current mandates.

I want to thank all of you for your willingness to find volunteer opportunities despite the challenges we've faced this year. Many of you have found new things to do while our usual activities continue to be limited. I would love to hear if any of you can translate what you've been doing into new educational projects for chapter members or others in our community (online or in person). Let me know, even if you aren't sure how to go about it. I'm sure we can figure something out to extend what you have learned to teaching others (one of the core tenets of the organization).

**September Chapter Meeting and AT:** You are invited to attend the **Saturday, September 19, 2020** Chapter Meeting.

**Time:** 9:30 – 10:30am

**Location:** Cat Springs Agricultural Society, 13035 Hall Rd, Cat Springs, TX 78933

The chapter meeting will not be available online. As always, the meeting minutes will be available on our website. Wearing a mask inside is required and it is required outside if you are less than 6 feet away from other folks. Advanced Training and a field trip will follow the meeting after a short break.

## Chapter Updates & Reminders

### September Advanced Training Overview Cont'd:



- Doug Jobs of the Coastal Prairie: Native Seed Project, will talk about the Native Seed Initiative and in particular two projects he is leading in the reclamation and restoration of native grass seeds. In particular, Doug will talk about the native grass project located at Jim Willis' (president, Wildlife Habitat Federation) place in Cat Springs. Mark Brown and others have been talking with Doug to see how we can assist with his efforts at this project.
- Brian Robert, Wildlife Habitat Federation, will talk about what the Wildlife Habitat Federation is and how they might help you with your own restoration projects.
- Immediately following the AT presentation attendees have an opportunity to visit the native grass plot located at Jim Willis' in Cat Springs (directions will be provided prior departure to Jim's)

\*The venue has a capacity of over 300 people so there is plenty of room for folks to spread out and keep their distance from each other.

### UPDATES & REMINDERS

#### 2020 [Annual Meeting](#)

This year's annual meeting is going virtual for the very low cost of \$55.00 for all sessions. It's a bargain I hope you don't pass up.

#### October 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>, 2020

#### [Registration Now Open](#)

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**Spread the Word:** Applications are now open for the Gideon Lindecum Chapter Training Class that begins in January 2021. Since class size is limited to 25 students, early application is encouraged. To apply online, go directly to [Apply for Training Class](#).

**Pay Your Dues Now:** Annual dues for chapter membership are \$20.00 per person, due by January 1. Go to <https://txmn.org/glc/members-section/>.



## MEMBER PROFILE: JON WATKINS

**About Me:** Born in Oklahoma and moved to Texas at age eight. Raised with two brothers and two sisters in southwest Houston and later in Cypress. I am married to the woman of my dreams and I have four children (all grown) and four grandchildren. After a two year search beginning in 2010, my wife and I located a piece of the Post Oak Savannah just northeast of Brenham that would become “Fortiter”, our family retreat. We converted the property to wildlife management use in 2016 and have just completed our fifth year of habitat improvement. It is amazing to observe the changes as our overgrazed pastures become transitional wild meadows. I am a member of the Texas Bluebird Society, the Washington County Wildlife Society and a graduate of the TMN-GLC class of 2018.

**Favorite thing about being a Texas Master Naturalist:** Being involved with youth programs; Brenham ISD Outdoor Classroom, Field Investigation Days, Ag Safety Days, TPWD Youth Firearm Safety and so forth. I believe that we must give our young folks lots of opportunities to learn about nature and experience the outdoors. When they come to love it then they may also desire to become good stewards of wild places and wild things.

**Favorite critter:** Bobcat. We have one that is a frequent subject of our trail camera photos.

**Favorite place(s) in Texas:** Had to make it plural because I am fascinated with many places having historical significance during the period of the Texas Revolution. I appreciate the opportunity to pay tribute to the courage of the early Texas settlers and patriots and to honor their commitment to liberty.

**Favorite big trips:** The secluded woods and waters of Ontario, Canada (July-September); Scotland



### MEMBER PROFILE: JACI ELLIOTT

**About Me:** As a newly retired music educator from the Houston area, I am happy to be sharing time on our Schulenburg farm now with my husband Doug, who is a retired high school science teacher. We raise trees, plumeria and stag horn ferns and provide habitat for several songbirds, deer, armadillos, a good sized snapping turtle and some large snakes. My interests include: hiking, camping, paddling (canoe or kayak), cycling, running, swimming, reading (historical fiction, biographies, travel and nature), writing (poetry, travelogues and songs) and working on my guitar and piano chops.

**Favorite thing about being a Texas Master Naturalist:** Furthering my understanding of the natural world and meeting wonderfully knowledgeable and gracious folks in the organization who help me to do just that.

**Favorite critter:** Our wintering visitor, the sandhill crane (and no, I don't regard them as "ribeyes of the skies" as am happily vegan!)

**Favorite place in Texas:** (and this is hard to limit to just one) is probably Guadalupe Mountains National Park.

**Favorite big trips:** (ah, can be plural, here...) Sisters trips to Hawaii, the Boundary Waters and Yosemite, and family trips to Alaska, Maine and Mexico.

## Scholarship Program Update, by Donna Zapalac Mueller



In July 2020, the Gideon Lincecum chapter awarded \$1,000 scholarships to four high school seniors from Austin, Colorado, Fayette, and Washington counties. These outstanding 4H and FFA participants were selected after undergoing a rigorous application and interview process. The scholarships will be put to good use as they start their college educations in the Fall. Join us in congratulating these leaders of our future: John Owen – Austin County, Zane Wanjura – Colorado County, Bethany Janner – Washington County, and Julie Korenek – Fayette County,

The chapter was honored to present the scholarships at a “virtual” award ceremony on July 16 as part of the Chapter Meeting. All four students were able to attend and talk to us online and that video can be viewed on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejT0Tf4ryiA>. You can also learn more about each student by viewing the presentation: [2020 Gideon Lincecum Chapter Scholarship Recipients](#). Thanks to Donna Zapalac Mueller, Chapter Scholarships Chair, and Kara Matheney, Texas AgriLife Advisor for all their work to make the scholarships happen during this very challenging time.

## A Gathering of Kites, by Lori Buffum



On an unusually cool morning last Sunday near Bellville, as we set the table for breakfast on our patio, I glanced up to the bare branches of a big old oak tree that stands near the edge of our surrounding forest. There is often a bird perched up there where it has a view over the forest, meadows, and small pond on our property. We've seen vultures, bluebirds, hawks, crows, and more up there. This morning it was our "resident" Mississippi Kite, who is usually with us every year in Spring and Summer. So I got out my camera and started snapping pictures. But then I saw 2, got my binoculars and saw 4. Walked out to the edge of the pond where I could get a less obstructed view of the tree and saw 7. Then I counted 8 and continued to take photos. When I looked at my pictures, my final count came to 9.

So my lucky timing captured the Kites as they gathered in preparation for migration and our property was a convenient fast food rest stop. They are not all gone yet because I did see one this morning but seeing that many together is probably a once-in-a-lifetime experience for me and I was awestruck.

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) is a common breeding resident in our area from April to September but in the Fall, flocks gather for their migration to wintering grounds in southern South America. Their favored food is insects often caught and eaten in flight. So they like the trees for nesting and roosting and the open grassland and pond for hunting. Keep an eye out for more gatherings of Kites (and hawks too) as the migration season proceeds.





**Logging AT hours for webinars-** Because of the Covid restrictions, all of our AT suddenly became webinars, and you have been able to put everything under the AT:Webinars opportunity title. It's time to go back to how it would be logged if it were an in-person presentation. If you attend a webinar for AT, please **log it under the AT opportunity for the sponsoring organization**. You should put "webinar" in your description, along with the topic and presenter. See "VMS for the Chapter Member" for explanations of each of the AT opportunity titles. As always, email me if you are unsure which Opportunity Title to pick.

### **Focus on Federal Category "Field Research (Including Surveys and Citizen Science)" Projects:**

1. **Texas Nature Trackers (TNT)** is part of TPWD's Wildlife Diversity Program, with a number of projects under its 'umbrella' that track the status of wild populations of plants and animals throughout Texas. Participating in one or more of the projects contributes to TPWD's research and conservation efforts. You log your findings using iNaturalist. There is even a Camera Trap Loan Program that allows you to record hours for scouting, deploying, monitoring, and uploading the data to the appropriate TNT project. There are currently 12 different projects, including Herps of Texas, Mammals of Texas, Birds of Texas, Bees & Wasps of Texas, Texas Milkweeds for Monarchs, and Terrestrial Mollusks of Texas. See the TNT website for more information, including information about these and the other six projects, plus how to record what you find. [https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/wildlife\\_diversity/texas\\_nature\\_trackers/](https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/wildlife_diversity/texas_nature_trackers/)
2. **The "Citizen Science (Other)" opportunity title** – The information you are gathering or analyzing must be for the purpose of a scientific research project. It can't be for incidental observations you are making on your own property. In a few cases, hours that we have been approving under our Citizen Science GLC opportunity may not qualify in

the future because they are not tied to a formal/official survey. When you record your hours, you must put A. the **name of the project** (such as Global Big Day Bird Count, Texas Invasive Species Bioblitz, iNaturalist City Nature Challenge, Great Backyard Bird Count, TX-OK Pollinator Project, etc.), B. the **project sponsor** (such as North American Butterfly Assn., Cornell Labs, Texas Nature Trackers, etc.) and C. the **location** from which you were documenting observations.

3. **Out of GLC Area Field Research** hours need the same documentation as Citizen Science (Other) plus a description of what you did.
4. **CoCoRaHS, Colorado River Watch, Invaders of Texas, Nest Watch, Feeder Watch** – These named GLC opportunities have their own opportunity title that you should use when recording hours. Please list the **location** from which you were documenting observations, and a very brief **statement of what you did**. (Such as: Counted birds that visited my backyard feeders; Monitored and reported bluebird nesting activity at Kendall Ranch, Brenham; Measure and record rainfall amounts at station TX-WA-27 (or my home, or my ranch near Fayetteville); Tested river water at \_\_\_\_).

Thanks to all of you for continuing your volunteering and learning during this time of social distancing and limited contact. Remember that every volunteer hour you log, even for Administrative Work, produces over \$23.00 for TPWD in federal grants. Every AT hour means you are better able to provide education, outreach, and service for the beneficial management of natural resources in Texas.

## Wildlife Observations, by Donna Muller

A majestic Bald Eagle captured at our Colorado River Ranch and a Wild Turkey Gobbler—Rio Grande species (*Meleagris gallopavo*) strutting his stuff.



## Getting to Know our Scorpions, by Ellen Morris



We seemed to transition from a surprisingly snaky spring in 2020, to a summer full of scorpions. Striped bark scorpions... and indoors, no less. I felt lucky that I spotted the first one, hiding in the bedroom corner one evening on our disturbingly scorpion-colored carpet, putting me ever so slightly on notice.

When I catch them, I can't help but hold up the glass and inspect them closely. They're so small really, around 2 1/2 inches. They often play possum at first, flattening themselves, staying very still. Why do they make the hair stand up on my neck? How and why do they end up inside? I googled scorpions and learned that they're actually active all year in Texas. The more I found in the house, the less I was fascinated... instead, I started to suspect I had a situation on my hands. I laid sticky traps across the bathroom thresholds, covered our drains, sprinkled diatomaceous earth. I inspected vegetation around our house trying to decide what I needed to cut, thin, or remove. My son sent me the best tool, a little black light scorpion-spotting flashlight. With it, I do house checks; also, it's interesting to go out into the yard and watch them, glowing brilliantly as they pursue their nighttime routines. They're very very on-the-go. I decided I need to better understand these omnipresent arthropods.

**What:** *Centruroides vittatus* (Scorpiones: Buthidae). In several Texas A&M and Agrilife articles online, entomologist Wizzie Brown explains the behavior and anatomy of the striped bark scorpion, the species commonly found in our area. Scorpions are arthropods in the family arachnida, along with spiders, ticks and mites. They thrive in our hot dry weather. They're nocturnal, have flattened bodies, and can be found under rocks, logs, bricks and boards, waiting for or in search of prey. "This behavior helps them manage temperature and water balance, which are important functions for survival in dry habitats," Brown says. The scorpions' two front pincers are called pedipalps, used to hold prey when they eat. They have two body regions, small chelicerae mouthparts, and four pairs of legs. The stinger on their long tail, which is a venom gland called the telson, can paralyze their prey or be used for defense, and sometimes in the mating ritual. They have two eyes on the top of their head and usually two to five pairs of eyes along the head's front corner, according to Brown. Their sight actually isn't all that good, so they primarily use their sense of touch and hearing to navigate and detect prey.

**Why and Where:** Scorpions seek a hospitable environment. They're cranny lovers, exploring crevices to their natural conclusion, which sometimes leads inside our homes. I read that certain microhabitats are preferred depending on whether the scorpion seeks refuge, forage, or is feeding. Often they're not actually in pursuit of water, despite lore. Striped bark scorpions like dead vegetation, climbing trees and finding warm (or cool) comfy places like attic spaces-places with plenty of their preferred food: spiders, flies, moth caterpillars and insects like small roaches and crickets. Scorpions are predacious. And in the hottest weather, scorpions like to escape the attic heat by heading into cooler spots indoors. Our spots. Several online Texas A&M and Agrilife articles explain ways to try to exclude scorpions from your home and list pesticide treatments.

**How and When:** Females mate once or twice a year during warmer months, late spring through fall. One day in my garden, I was fortunate that my dog alerted me to a pair of scorpions in the limestone, engaged in a mating ritual. The pair grasped each other's pedipalps, maneuvering around in a way that really looked like dancing. It's hard to tell whether it's consensual since it also looks a lot like a fight. It can be difficult to tell males and females apart. Males tend to be thinner and faster with a longer tail, and the female is perhaps bigger bodied, slightly more stout. An Oxford Academic Journal article details a number of fascinating differences between male and female striped bark scorpions, including venom strength, likelihood of stinging, and reasons to sting. The female I was watching was easy to identify because she was carrying her brood of young scorpions on her back. Cool cool cool.

More about How: During the mating ritual, the male guides the female, trying to direct her over the spot on the ground where he has deposited his spermatophore during the dance. As she passes over it, picking it up, she can then save the sperm for most of a year until she uses it to fertilize her eggs. The gestation period is approximately 8 months, and she gives birth to live offspring. Scorpions produce fewer young than many arthropods, on average about 30 in a brood, but then they nurture them with tender care, unless they're distressed, in which case they can become aggressive and sometimes eat the young. After birth, the pale, vulnerable babies crawl up onto their mother's back and stay there for about two weeks until their exoskeleton hardens and they first molt. Then they climb down and become independent. Scorpions molt about 5 more times, until maturity. They develop fairly slowly, but have long lives compared to spiders and other insects, about 3-8 years, or longer.

The Upside: Scorpions have benefits. They do their part to keep many insect populations in check. They're a food source themselves for a number of animals. They can pollinate our plants. They create plant and animal refuse that contributes to decomposition, providing nutrients in our soil. So now, I'm conflicted, since, personally, I greet every spotted whiptail lizard I see with "Go get busy eating some scorpions!" ...But, maybe just eat the ones that hang out around the house. Also, I should have learned by now to always wear shoes on Texas summer nights.

## Winedale Project, by Jan Hughes



At this time of extreme heat and pandemic struggles, trying to write something for the newsletter makes me feel worn out. But as I sit here at my desk watching birds at their bath and feeder I can't help but feel thankful at the same time.

Any of you that are familiar with our 2 projects at Winedale (The Pollinator Garden and The Gideon Lincecum Nature Trail) may know that the University of Texas Briscoe Center is in charge of the property. Technically, Winedale is officially closed for the many activities and learning opportunities.

We were able to keep TMN's efforts going by letting them know we would adhere to any safety measures. We wanted to keep our ongoing projects moving forward as nature doesn't recognize the problems that humans may have caused. A number of dedicated individuals helped us plant approx. 300 milkweed plants this spring AND continue to work on the beautiful Pollinator Garden and Nature Trail, just to make sure once everything opens back up, there is a place to enjoy a "Walk in Nature".

Our major problems this year, besides COVID19, were the feral hogs. I have attached a photo of some of the destruction they have caused. Overall, we are thankful for everyone who takes the time to join us, help us all learn, and continue to support such a beautiful place.

A special thank you goes out to Charlie Winker and Patrick Dunne for their recorded observance of the beauty we have around us. They have been walking the area within Winedale and are keeping an excel spreadsheet of the different wildlife, birds, grasses and forbs they see. We can share this info at your request.

Let me know if any of you are interested in turning this data into an educational tool that can be used by others so that they can learn what they might see while visiting Winedale.

## Schubert House Project Update, by Karen Woods

Again, the disruption of COVID-19 was not going to paralyze our upkeep on the Schubert House Pollinator Garden – We ARE a dedicated group! As reported before, we safely worked late February, early May and then on August 21.

This is a hearty and strong garden, for sure - the garden is in great shape, considering the stress of drought and weeks of daily 100° temperatures. The lantana is scraggly looking, but the salvias, shrimp plant, plumbagoes, etc. are hanging in there. Our past TLC on the pomegranate trees has paid off – they have produced a lot more fruit than ever before. We observed a hummingbird feeding on a split pomegranate, and a large praying mantis observed us doing our work. Regrettably, both were too quick for us to get photos.

A big thanks to our Schubert House vets Jan Hughes and Nita Tiemann for their expertise and TLC. We quickly dug/pulled weeds and the persistent vine (after having to ‘go nuclear’ a few days before with Remedy - Ugh). It’s still too hot to prune trees and shrubs, so we’ll do that next time. It is always great to catch-up with each other and learn new things as we work. We will set another work day in the near future to do pruning and maybe fall planting. Again, we will make sure we work COVID-19 safely! Please call Karen Woods (281.682.2810) and/or Cindy Hobbs (979.338.9374) if you would like to be on the special Schubert House call list, or if you have any questions or suggestions.



## Stephen F. Austin Park, by Tom Shaughnessy

SFA State Park proudly displaying the “A Master Naturalist Project” signage!



## Washington-on-the-Brazos, by Julie Itz

The July and August Workdays at Washington-on-the-Brazos were affected by rain; the scheduled July 25 Workday was cancelled. Instead Julie and David Itz worked in the pollinator garden in the afternoon of August 1 after being delayed by early morning thunderstorms. We found the garden full of flowers and doing well. Many of the blooms were past their prime and the plants were beginning to set their seeds.



Maxmilian Sunflower



Indian Blanket



Purple Coneflower



Texas Wisteria



Black-eyed Susan



Indian Blanket.



Green Antelopehorn



Butterfly Milkweed

Some of the milkweed plants that we've planted seem to be surviving, and the Green antelope and the Butterfly milkweeds were blooming. In addition to the plants, we also noticed butterfly and fly activity. This year we haven't seen many butterflies, so it was good to see a Gulf fritillary and a Cloudless sulphur while we were working.



Condyllostylus



Gulf Fritillary



Cloudless Sulphur

Our next Workday on August 22 had a forecast predicting rain after 12 noon, however the rain started soon after Sheri Wilcox and Julie & David Itz arrived - a light sprinkle which never let up. We were entirely soaked, but it did make the weed pulling easier! As usual, the dominant color in the garden in August is yellow! The Maxmilian sunflowers and the Partridge pea were bright, but if you look closely, there are other colors in the

garden, too. We also continued to collect seeds, planning to offer them next March to visitors to the GLC booth at the 2021 Texas Independence Day Celebration at Washington on the Brazos.

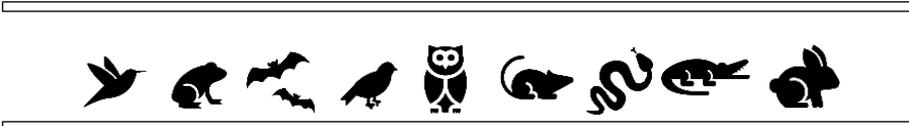
The next photos show the exuberant display from the Maxmilian sunflowers and Partridge peas that visitors see as they walk from the parking lot to the Visitor Center. And the less boisterous colors of the Lantana, Mistflower, Rock rose, Turkscap, Beautyberry and milkweeds. Can you spot our two signs designating the pollinator garden as a project of the Texas Master Naturalists - Gideon Lincecum Chapter?



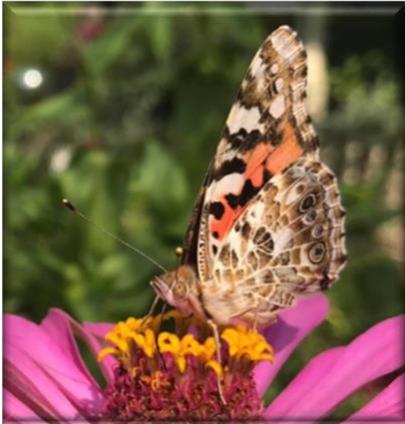
If you are looking for a place to volunteer, we would welcome having you join us. We meet once a month from 9-11 am at the GLC pollinator garden in the Visitor Center parking lot at Washington-on-the Brazos State Historic Site. It's a good way to learn more about the native plants in the garden as you watch the plants cycle through the year.

### Five Gratitudes and "Saditudes" during the Pandemic, by Lori Buffum

1. Watching the bumblebees forage in my garden, but missing "Cubs in Nature"
2. Being home on just the right morning to see a gathering of Mississippi Kites, but missing "Outdoor Education at Lake Somerville"
3. Photographing the wildflowers as the seasons change on morning walks, but missing "Field Days at Long Star Ranch"
4. Learning to identify butterflies and dragonflies, spiders and toads, big birds and little birds, but missing hugs from my fellow master naturalists.
5. Embracing the power of technology to bring people together, to learn new skills, to practice citizen science, to share life experiences, to see people's smiles, but missing the connections and learning and sharing that happen when people are physically together.



## A few favorite photos from my Zinnia Garden, by Lori Buffum



Painted Lady



Gulf Fritillary



American Bumblebee

## CoCoRaHS Rain Gauge Crown Bird Guard, by Buford Koehler



Many of our TMN-GLC members collect and enter rain data daily into the CoCoRaHS database. I have been doing this for about eight years using the standard 4" CoCoRaHS rain gauge. Often, a Mockingbird, our Texas State Bird, will sit on and poop in my CoCoRaHS rain gauge funnel plugging my gauge. As shown in the photo, I made a rain gauge crown bird guard to prevent this problem. I made the crown guard from 2" X 4" galvanized, welded grid fence wire. The inner diameter of the crown is slightly larger than the gauge funnel so it slips off easily when the gauge is emptied. I bent the spike wires of the crown outward slightly, but not horizontal to prevent the bird from perching. I have not noticed that the crown bird guard interferes with my rain catchment or readings. I got the idea from the fence post predator guards when volunteering out at the Attwater Prairie Chicken Refuge.

**The GLC Tidings is published 6 times a year  
Submit articles and photos to Editor Jamie Lee Manning ([glcnwsltr@gmail.com](mailto:glcnwsltr@gmail.com))**