



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

The year is just about over and it's time to give thanks to all of you for your dedication to the Texas Master Naturalist™ Program. A lot of volunteering and advanced training has been recorded by so many of you even though in person gatherings were limited. In normal years we have a Volunteer Appreciation Feast in December. Unfortunately, we won't be able to have our gathering this year. However, we will do something special at the November chapter meeting.

I hope you can join us as we celebrate the many things we've accomplished throughout the year.



Special thanks go to Sheri Wilcox and Dr. Cheryl Metz for putting together the wonderful video "A River Runs Through It – Geology of the Coastal Prairie". If you haven't seen this amazing presentation here's the link: <https://youtu.be/35Ntk-Vpq2E>.

Chapter Meeting November and AT

When: Saturday, November 21st 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m

Where: Camp Kubena, 2001 Walbeck Road-Ledbetter, TX 8946

- Standard agenda format with the addition of Volunteer Appreciation
- Masks are required inside, tables will be arranged to give everyone plenty of space
- I will set up a WebEx meeting for those that don't want to join in person. Details will be sent prior to the meeting



Taylor Abshier, a biologist with Ducks Unlimited Inc., will present information regarding the Texas Prairie Wetland Project, waterfowl life cycle, various waterfowl, wetlands, and wetland management for wintering waterfowl. Taylor's presentation will be followed by a short field trip to the ponds at the camp.

CHAPTER UPDATE REMINDERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

2021 Annual Dues

Thank you to the many members that have already paid their 2021 annual dues. Our annual 2021 Chapter dues are payable **before December 31, 2020**. If you have not already done so, please send your dues payment using our online option or by sending a check

- Go to our chapter website members page, <https://txmn.org/glc/members-section/> scroll down a bit and use the DUES form
- Send a check payable to TMN-GLC sent to: TMN-GLC Treasurer, 1305 East Blue Bell Road, Suite 104, Brenham, TX 77833

Applications Open for 2021 Training Class

Tell all your friends, neighbors and relatives we are accepting applications for our 2021 class. I'm sure it's going to be as exciting as this year's class. I hope we get as many enthusiastic and dedicated trainees as we did this Spring. Apply online,

<https://txmn.org/glc/becoming-a-master-naturalist/>

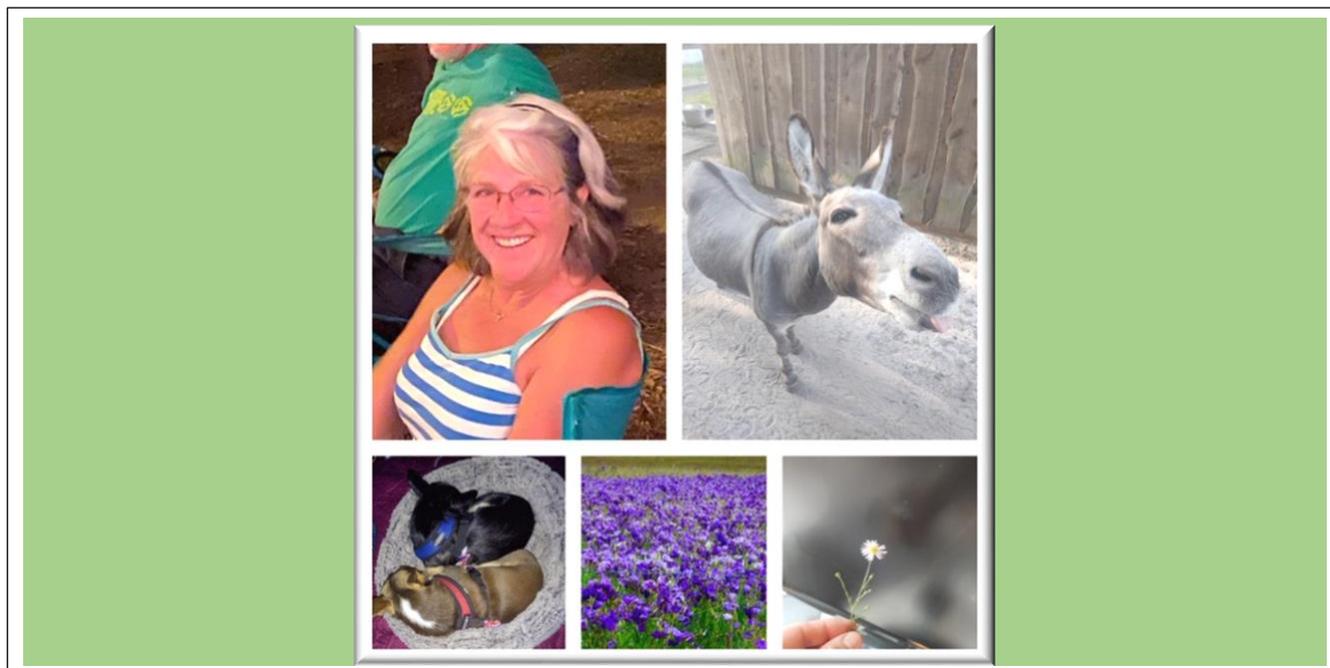


<https://txmn.tamu.edu/welcome/covid-19-response/>



<https://txmn.tamu.edu/chapter-resources/tmn-vms-users/>

MEMBER PROFILE: JAN HUGHES



About Me:

My name is Jan Hughes. I'm originally from a rural town in Michigan but moved to Texas right after high school graduation. I am married, have 3 siblings all in Texas, 2 donkey's, 3 dogs and 1 cat. I love animals and nature. I guess after spending 44 years in the big city of Houston, it was time to get back to my roots. I wish my mom and dad could see me living my dream in the country. I like to walk, ride bikes, do yoga, and read. I'm a member of 2 book clubs. One has been in existence for 23 years. I do want to give a shout out at the folks from the Houston Arboretum where I volunteered prior to moving out to Round Top. They were as awesome as y'all!

Favorite thing about being a Texas Master Naturalist:

Meeting and working with all the good people that have similar interests. I feel fortunate to have found this group, thanks to Betsy Palkowsky who recruited me almost 3 years ago.

Favorite critter:

I love so many different critters, it's hard to decide on one, so I'll give you my top 5. Roadrunner, Possum, Armadillo (but not in my garden) Grey Fox and Jack Rabbits. I can do without coyotes, feral hogs and poisonous snakes.

Favorite place in Texas:

My front porch or out by the pond when it is full. (Please rain!)

Favorite big trips:

I love travelling to Scotland, it reminds me of Michigan. I would still like to hike the Camino de Santiago, but I don't know if my knee will let me.

MEMBER PROFILE: KAREN MAHONEY-WOODS



About Me:

Hi! I'm Karen Mahoney-Woods, and I am proud to be a Texas Master Naturalist! My family was an ardent camping clan, committed to camping and doing some kind of outing at least 2 times a month. Annual drives through the Desert Southwest and Deep South to visit family imprinted me to be in awe of our planet and its inspiring diversity – both geologically and culturally.

Favorite thing about being a Texas Master Naturalist:

Nowhere else could I have learned so much about the incredible diversity of our state; and nowhere else could I have met so many fine, diverse and dedicated people doing wonderful outreach to special places and people, especially children. My life is better for it. I have a keener appreciation for sites in which I can de-stress and re-charge during tough times, and I so enjoy working with like-minded new-found friends as we do good things for public lands and its people.

Favorite place in Texas:

Big Bend has to be on top of the list. The majesty of the vast landscape and mountains is so awesome. And at times it seems there is no life-activity going on, because it can seem so stark and barren. But when I stop, shut-down the brain clutter, and listen--there is so much. From the beautiful cactus bloom growing out of a bleached, scorching rock with a bee nestling it for nectar and pollen, to the night sky full of diamond-like sparkles. All in perfect balance, as long as we two-leggeded's let it!

Favorite big trips:

My all-time favorite big trip is driving through Spain several years ago. If you have any such opportunity – seize it – you won't regret it! That country has so much soul, not to mention beauty! I will never forget driving from Toledo toward Sevilla, and my husband Glen sounding like a broken record: "Incredible...Unbelievable!"

Defending Giant Ragweed, by Betsy Palkowsky



Last year we cleared the high side of our berm at the recommendation of NRCS. In hindsight, we should have been a bit more judicious instead of clearing all of the trees. Instead of trees I now have a huge crop of Giant Ragweed, smartweed and a number of other riparian plants. My first thoughts were: “Great! Now I have to figure how to get rid of these huge plants (can grow to 14 feet in moist areas!) since they are taking over and some people I know are allergic to them.”

I learned from the past that not every plant out there (e.g. smartweed) is a bad thing. In fact, *Ambrosia trifida* of the sunflower family actually has some redeeming values.

Wildlife Benefits: Giant Ragweed seeds are loved by dove, quail, songbirds and turkeys. Livestock will heavily browse ragweed when available. Deer and antelope will eat the young parts of the plant in the spring or summer. Songbirds use the plant for protection against predators as well as from the sun during hot summer months. The shade provided by the plants also helps the soil from drying out and

provides a good habitat for other plant seedlings. Ragweed is annual an plant and is mostly gone after setting seed in the fall. When the plants are gone the seedlings have a chance to grow. I suspect I will see cedar elm, dewberry and poison ivy vines and other plants in the spring.

Medicinal Benefit: Native American Indians used many parts of “Great” ragweed for food and for medicine. The high protein found in the seeds was a supplement to the Indian’s diet.

There is evidence that some Indians actually cultivated the plant. The **Iroquois** used a compound of ragweed as an antidiarrheal medication and for blood medicine. The **Cherokee** rubbed leaves on their skin to treat insect bites and hives (e.g. to treat reactions to poison ivy). They also used the leaves for other skin infections, pneumonia and fevers. Early pharmacists also used the Giant Ragweed plant for medicinal purposes.



Other Benefits: Giant ragweed is a beneficial plant for riparian areas. The taproot of Ragweed helps reduce soil compaction by letting water infiltrate to the roots and catching leaves and soil during heavy runoff thus reducing erosion. Once the plant and the roots die off the plant serves as mulch, building better soil compared to constantly mowed areas.

Ragweed is an early successor. It will colonize an area that has been recently mistreated by human action. I can attest to this since I half of my berm is now covered in it. It grows fast enough to out compete Johnson grass. However, since this is an early plant in the forest, it will eventually be replaced by other plants as they grow and begin to out compete it. Yes, that could take years and lots of patience not to rip it out.

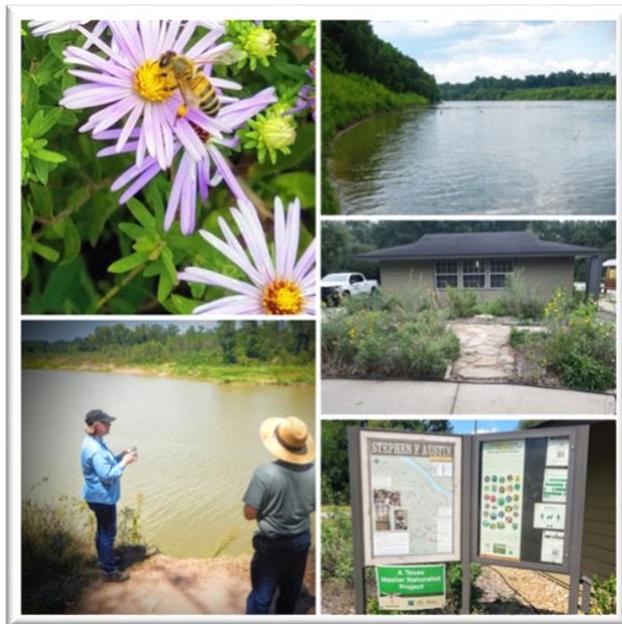
Managing Giant Ragweed: Here are a few things you can do to manage Giant ragweed while maintaining some of the benefits:

- You can thin it out giving native plants more room or seed native grasses and wildflowers in a thinned-out area. This is what I plan on doing in early spring. Hopefully, thinning out will allow the Canadian rye and Illinois Bundle Flower that was there to come back
- You can trim it to three feet retaining the shading benefits of the plant
- You can bend the plant over after it has started flowering or cut at the base which will prevent resprouting and reduce seed production. Use the cut plant for mulch

I am getting better at letting nature do its thing. I know the land will regrow the trees and other plants that were cleared out. I will just have to be patient and watch how things change over the years

Resources: **Range Plants of North Central Texas** written by Ricky J. Linex
Native America Medicinal Plants written by Daniel E. Moerman
The Watershed Protection Program – austintexas.gov
www.naturalmedicinalherbs.net

Stephen F. Austin State Park Update, by Tom Shaughnessy



- Did you know that Stephen F. Austin State Park is part of the official UTC (Upper Texas Coast) Birding Trail? Yup, Site #102 and part of The Katy Prairie Loop and considered an eBird “Hotspot”!
- Did you know that Stephen F. Austin State Park is in the middle of a large capital improvement project? Yup, some things, like upgraded wastewater treatment plant equipment may go unnoticed. Others like brand new restroom buildings/facilities and a refurbished nature center will be welcomed by visitors and volunteers alike
- Did you know that Stephen F. Austin State Park has an agreement with the Texas Historical Commission that helps protect the park’s cultural resources relating to the settlement of the San Felipe de Austin colony?

Chapter volunteers at the Stephen F. Austin State Park have made great progress this year in improving the Native Wildscape Pollinator Interpretive Garden located outside the Park Headquarters building. What once was a neglected pond feature has evolved into a display of native habitat and a nectar & pollen source for pollinators. 2020 was the first year that the native perennials re-appeared on their own! Previous year's activities were spent bed prepping, planting and seeding in anticipation of the beds one day taking care of themselves such as they do in their native habitat.

For the 2nd year in a row the project received a financial grant from The Native Plant Society of Texas and a grant in the form of plants that included 50 native milkweed sprigs from Project Monarch Watch. Monarch Watch researches species that perform well in our area. The 2 species provided were *Asclepias asperula* (Antelope horn) and *Asclepias viridis* (Green milkweed). The exciting part is that we were able to add to the previous year's plantings. The consensus amongst other Project Monarch Watch grant recipients is that a 25% survival rate is above average.

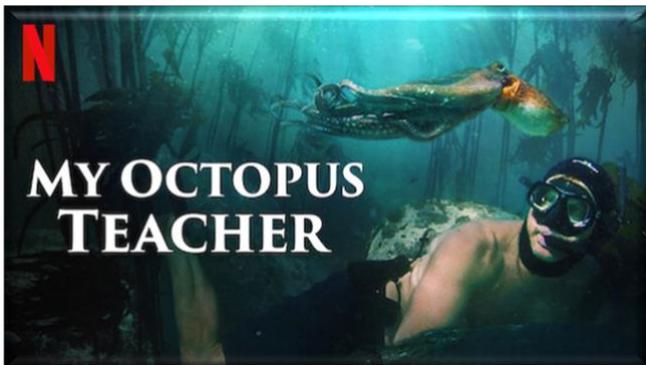
The Gideon Lindecum Chapter also donated an outdoor metal infographic display sign for the project identifying and describing the most visible species and laminated field guides for visitors to use while observing the native plants. The full color signage is mounted inside the information kiosk alongside the Wildscape.

Speaking of Stephen F. Austin State Park, if geology is of interest to you, remember to check out our chapter's "Geology of the Lower Brazos River Virtual Field Trip" shown at the State Meeting in October. A segment of the trip will take place on the banks of the Brazos in Stephen F. Austin State Park. The chapter is excited about this opportunity to contribute to the state meeting and grateful for member Sheri Wilcox for leading the trip. Keep an eye out on the chapter calendar and the emails of notification of SFA SP work days. Work days typically are held on Thursday mornings. Contact Project Director Tom Shaughnessy at greenh2o@gmail.com for additional information.

Documentary Recommendations, by Jamie Lee Manning

I recommend two recently released Netflix nature themed documentaries. "My Octopus Teacher", follows Craig Foster, who spent a year diving — without oxygen or a wetsuit — into the frigid sea near Cape Town, South Africa observing and learning from an octopus. A moving and inspirational viewing for any nature lover.

And David Attenborough's film, "Life on Our Planet", is a "witness statement", in which Attenborough shares first-hand his concern for the current state of the planet due to humanity's impact on nature and his hopes for the future.



Phenology at Winedale 2, by Charles Winker

In the May newsletter, I introduced the concept of phenology and suggested the weekly checklist as means of self-teaching while conducting one sort of phenological study. With cold weather finally upon us and most of our native flowers long since wilted, I thought I'd review the year (to date) in wildflowers at Winedale Historical Center near Round Top. As of last week, only 26 species were still in bloom, compared with a weekly peak of 65 species in late May, out of a total of 200 seen during the year, of which 80% are natives. The accompanying table (Figure 1) shows 86 of the more notable native species. One thing that's immediately apparent is the value of frequent visits - many species were seen for only a few weeks, and some only one or two weeks (each week being represented by a single visit).

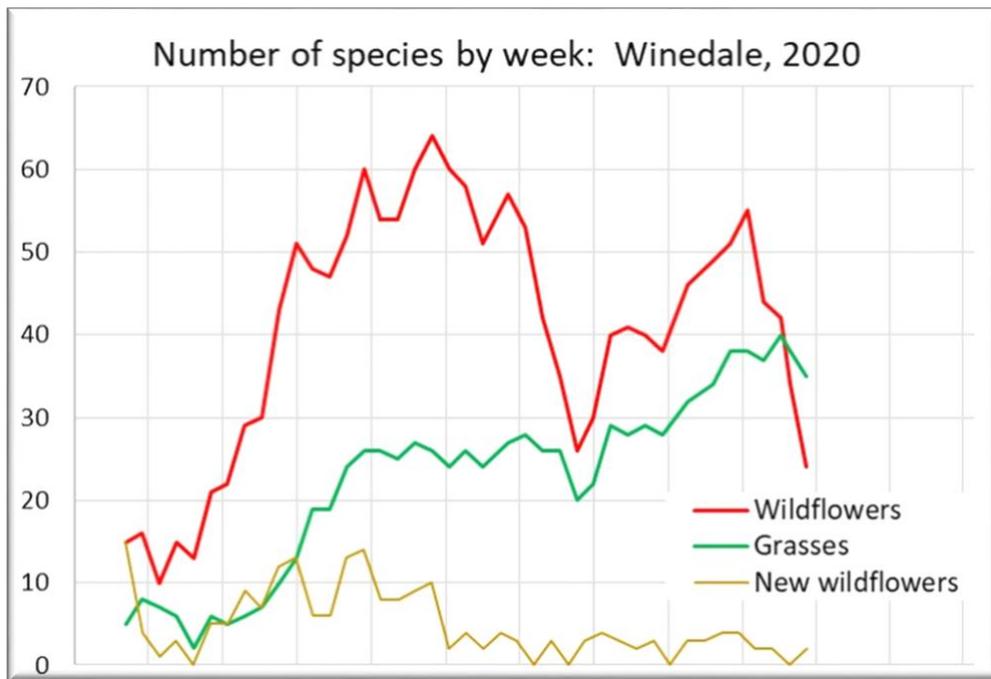
Many people consider March and April to be peak wildflower season in our part of Texas, and that's probably true for the showiest and most abundant blooms. In terms of diversity, however, the peak is a bit later, more like late April through June (Figure 2). The species count plunges in July, then rises to a secondary peak in late September to early October, before crashing in late October through November. Grasses, on the other hand, maintain a nearly constant species count through the summer months, then rise to their primary peak in October. This is due largely to the drought- and heat-tolerance of the "warm-season" C4 grasses. These grasses can even persist into a warm winter like we had last season. I'll have more to say on that subject in a future newsletter.

So what's next? One purpose of this study is to prepare seasonal checklists as a handout for visitors to Winedale to aid them in field identification, to invite them to contribute their own observations, and to encourage them to visit at different times of year. I also intend to write a short report containing the full tables with an explanation of methodology, along with a map of survey routes. The second purpose is to establish a baseline against which future surveys can be compared, in order to document long-term changes in species content, diversity, and seasonality. A third purpose is to encourage other "wannabe" field botanists to get out in the field, make systematic observations, and invite feedback from experts through iNaturalist.

Any experienced field biologist could certainly make a more accurate and complete list than I have done, but people like that are in short supply. The plant conservation cause currently suffers from "plant blindness," as people with an interest in nature typically gravitate toward animals (Wandersee and Schlusser, 2001; McKim and Halpin, 2019). The best way to promote plant awareness is to become more aware ourselves, and there's no need to wait for the next class or field trip.

REFERENCES: McKim, S., and Halpin, C., 2019, 'Plant blindness' is obscuring the extinction crisis for non-animal species: The Conversation, June 5, 2019. (<https://theconversation.com/plant-blindness-is-obscuring-the-extinction-crisis-for-non-animal-species-118208>)

Wandersee, J. H., and Schussler, E.E., 2001, Toward a Theory of Plant Blindness: Plant Science Bulletin, vol. 47, no. 1, p. 2-8. (<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Toward-a-theory-of-plant-blindness-Wandersee-Schussler/423bb49b16b5a6726e906ebda55273b968199d31>)



Fayette County AgriLife Building Landscape, by Cindy Rodibaugh

As I loaded my gardening tools and garbage containers into my car, the dawn was breaking. The sky is overcast with dark ominous clouds. My two donkeys are standing along the driveway near the gate at the end of my driveway as if they are waiting for me to open the gate for them. Thankfully, I am able to still them in their tracks by moving the car past them and banging the gate before unlatching it and was able to secure the gate behind me before they realized they had missed their opportunity to escape.

The time is 7:15 am and I'm supposed to be at the La Grange AgriLife Building at 8:00 am to meet volunteers. It looks like rain to the north as I travel on FM 609. We need the rain, but I wonder if we'll be able to get our work done. Only a few sparse sprinkles of rain hit the windshield and I feel like the clouds are taunting me.

Lori is waiting for me. She takes out her tools and immediately goes to work trimming the gangly Turk's Cap under the yaupon.



Mary Ann and Nita get to work removing the weeds that have found a home in the front and center of the bed. Mary Ann is very careful to protect the milkweed that has survived near the feather grass. The Esperanza in the middle of the bed has grown up and out and is entertaining many bees. I wanted to trim it, but I deferred to Nita's wisdom— "don't cut it while it's blooming." It was full of blooms and very pretty.

Nita was able to catch a Bumble Bee getting into one of the flowers. I tried to catch one of the smaller bees, but they were moving too fast for me. Because most of the plants have grown, the landscape bed has filled in nicely. Lori was able to trim some of the Lantana that had crept around behind and into the Esperanza and the Beauty Berry.

Jaci worked diligently and succeeded in reducing the Hackberry root that found its way through the ground cloth at the base of a light pole and stretched to the front of the bed supporting a small bush between the base of the safety parking pole and the concrete curb. The Frog Fruit played host to a lot of Morning Glory, which was difficult to remove without tearing up some of the Frog Fruit, but I am confident the Frog Fruit will recover.

Thankfully the White Mistflower beneath the Texas Redbud is blooming and has not exceeded its boundary onto the sidewalk. The Salvia beside it has recovered from its scraggly showing last month and is also blooming. The Yellow Indian Grass to the rear is looking very good. The plants seem to appreciate the cooler weather and I look forward each month to trying to identify the different species of wildlife that are attracted to the bed. On various workdays we've seen toads or frogs, a small snake, bees, dragonflies, several different spiders and snails. The clouds seemed to float away, and it turned out to be perfect weather to work outside. I want to thank Lori Hessel, Mary Ann Butler, Nita Tiemann, and Jaci Elliott for their work.



2020 Annual Conference Reflection, by Chris Morrison

I loved the virtual format much more than I expected to. Of course, I missed the person-to-person interaction, but the selection of sessions was outstanding. I can watch each and every one as many times as I want for six months. My favorites are hard to pick, but I enjoyed our chapter's Brazos River geology session, seeing the park enhanced by our neighboring chapter, all the keynote speakers, publishing e-books, Ricky Linex's Native Landscaping, iNaturalist 101, Moths as "Bird Food with Wings", and Megan Clayton on Drones. I look forward to watching several more that I couldn't get to. Annual Meeting is such a special time. I hope many more of our members will attend next year.

Membership Memo, by Chris Morrison



Annual Meeting recorded presentations – If you were registered for the virtual TMN Annual Meeting, you may watch any of the great presentations that were recorded. You access them through the Online Event Guide or the meeting app by going to that session in the schedule and clicking on the recording there. The recordings will be available for the next 6 months (until April, 2021).

To receive AT credit for any of the sessions, record the hours under “AT: TMN State Meeting Advanced Training.” List them under the date you watched them. If that date is in 2021, your hours will count for that year. Remember that you have 45 days *from the date you watched them* to enter them into VMS for credit.

Removing opportunities from your VMS dropdown – Is your list of opportunities getting very long? Did you know that you can remove one or more opportunities from that list if you know you will probably never use it? Here’s how.

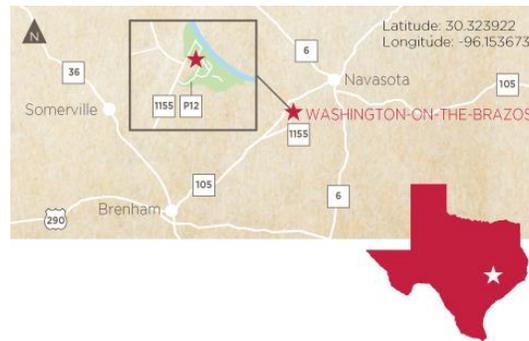
1. Log on to VMS
2. On your Dashboard, choose the “My Placements” icon
3. You’ll see a stack of boxes with explanations of each of the projects you have been approved to work on or get AT for. At the bottom of each explanation is “Click here for details or to remove yourself.”
4. When you see one you don’t want on your list, click on that sentence.
5. You’ll see another screen with additional details and also a big red “Remove Me” button. Click on that button. You’ll be asked to confirm that you do want to be removed, click yes, and it’ll tell you that you are removed.

The next time you put in hours, that opportunity won’t be in your dropdown list. If you decide later that you want something back in your list, we can add you.

Dues – Please pay your 2021 dues by December 31 - \$20 per person. PayPal is the simplest, but checks are fine, too. Go to our website www.txmn.org/glc. Click on the Members’ Area TAB, not the drop down. At the bottom of the screen is the information you need and the PayPal button.

As always, thank you for all your volunteer hours. Please log everything. Remember that each volunteer hour is worth over \$23 in federal grants.

Washington on the Brazos Workday, by Julie and David Itz



WoB Workday 9/26/20

We had seven volunteers, Sheri Wilcox, Jon Watkins, Belinda & Jim Weatherly, and Julie & David Itz at the September Workday. With more volunteers, we were able to make great progress in the garden, cutting back many of the Maxmilian sunflowers, weeding and general cleanup of the GLC pollinator garden. It had been 5 weeks since the last Workday and the garden was really ready for some TLC!

Usually at our September Workday, we find the garden awash with yellow flowers, so we were surprised to see the Maxmilian sunflowers and Partridge peas were mostly finished blooming. The sunflowers seem taller than those seen in fields and they began blooming in June, so we wonder if the irrigation at Washington-on-the-Brazos affects them – making them taller and early bloomers.

We cut back most of the sunflowers that fallen over. Next year we'll plan to cut them back a bit in July to encourage them to bush out and not grow so tall. We found a couple of milkweeds blooming that had been planted last spring. The Gayfeather, Texas wisteria, Blue mistflower, Greggs mistflower, Mealy blue sage and Camphor daisy were blooming. Brown-eyed Susans were popping up again and beginning to bloom. The Lantana has jumped across the sidewalk, and we find that it is hybridized, perhaps from the lantana from the Visitors Center flowerbed across the driveway. Keeping a native lantana in our pollinator garden may be a "fight" we can't win!

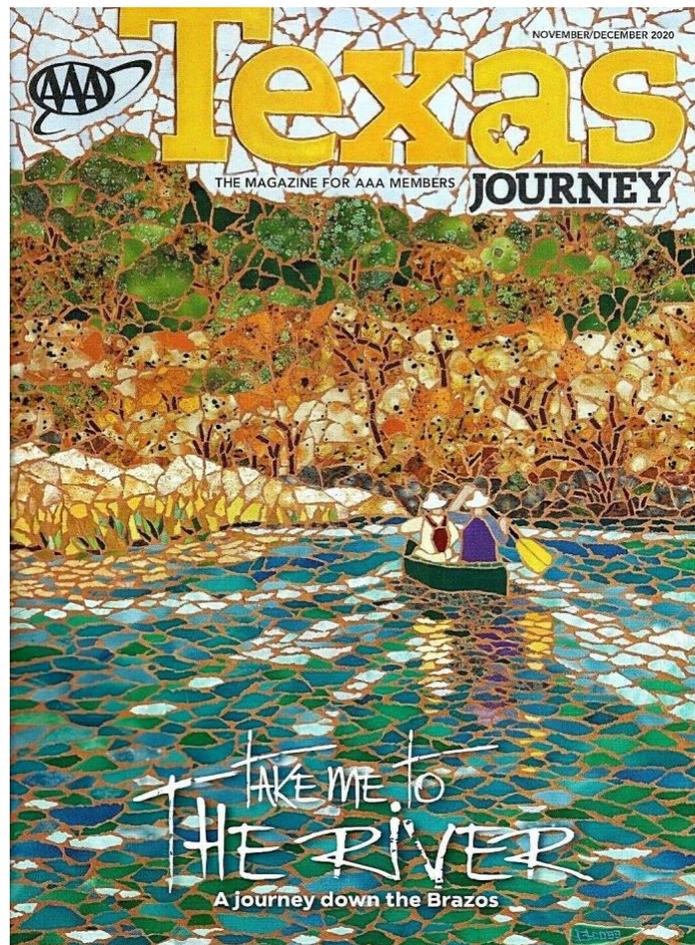
WoB Workday 10/24/20

We had great weather for working in the garden today! The four volunteers: Ellen Morris, Sheri Wilcox and Julie & David continued to work on cleaning out dead growth, weeding and the general maintenance we do each month to keep the GLC garden looking good for park visitors. The pollinator garden looks like fall has arrived and not many flowers are still blooming. The flowers still blooming were: Boneset, Mistflowers, Standing cypress, Brown-eyed Susan, Gayfeather, May night salvia, Mealy blue sage and Turkscap. The Frostweed has spread into the Turkscap and its flowers were beginning to set seeds. We agreed that we need to try to contain the Frostweed a bit after it dies back this winter. Newly sprouting plants included the Basketflower and Bluebonnets.

We collected seeds where possible and plan to share with other GLC projects and also offer seed packs at the GLC booth at the 2021 Texas Independence Day Celebration at WoB.

We spotted a Gulf Fritillary on the Winecap and a caterpillar. There's always something to learn or explore in the GLC pollinator garden at WoB. Come join us at one of our workdays!

Take Me To The River, by Jaci Elliott



My son recently sent me an interesting article on paddling the upper Brazos River, ala in the waders of John Graves, the author of “Goodbye to a River” (the book sited in the Brazos River bluff geological virtual field trip just developed/presented by some of our chapter members).

The article is entitled **“Take me to The River: A Journey down the Brazos”** in the November/December issue of the AAA magazine Texas Journey.

I know we have some avid paddlers in our group—I’m hoping to do more this next year with both our canoe and my kayak—and I think you would appreciate reading this article. On our return trip from Wisconsin, Doug and I stopped along the Current River in the Ozarks area in Missouri and did a ten-mile paddling trip. As a part of the National Scenic Waterways system, it is also another wonderful river trip recommendation. And, as Graves himself said about traveling by canoe: “They don’t storm the natural world or ride over it, but drift in upon it as part of its own silence.”

Autumn Observation, by Lori Buffum

As the season changes, giving us cool (even chilly) nights and warm sunny afternoons (my idea of perfect), I watch the zinnia garden begin to fade. But, wow, the last several weeks have been a butterfly bonanza. I've added several new ones to my butterfly "lifelists" and have posted them to iNaturalist and shared my photos on the Facebook group: *Butterfly Enthusiasts of Southeast Texas*. To name a few: Monarch, Gulf Fritillary, Eastern Giant Swallowtail, Long-tailed Skipper, Clouded Skipper, Grass Skipper, Pipevine Swallowtail, Ceraunus Blue (lower right), Cloudless Sulphur, White-striped Longtail (lower left), Painted Lady (top right), Little Yellow, Southern Dogface, and Fiery Skipper (top left). Along with the butterflies, an abundance of bumblebees also LOVE the zinnias. I'll be sorry to see them go.



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