

Good Water Ripples

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Volume 7 Number 3
 June/July 2018

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Garey Park Grand Opening June 9, 2018



Garey Park held its Grand Opening, Saturday, June 9th. Mr. Jack Garey and his wife, Doris were present for the ribbon cutting as were other members of the family.

Many Good Water members attended the event. Good Water also had a booth with information about the future wildlife blind.



Charles Grimes: “Fabulous to see folks from all of the organizations and positions throughout the City that had a hand it making this happen. From Mr. Garey himself (and family!) all the way to the parks employees, parks board members and community volunteers. It took a "village" to make this happen. And then...to watch the constant wave of families flow in to the new park to explore and then get excited and pumped up about the new resource they have. And the kids....Wow!”

Linda Lippe: “It was a memorable celebration marked by the welcoming words of Mr Garey and the wonderful support of so many Garey family members in attendance.”

April Rohlich: “I was happy to be there with Garey family members as they expressed deep emotion seeing this dream come true. The kid in me loved the life sized cement horse, giant snake and water park.”

“In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life,—no disgrace, no calamity, (leaving me my eyes,) which nature cannot repair.” — Ralph Waldo Emerson

UPCOMING EVENTS

6/6/18	NPAT
6/14/18	NPSOT
6/21/18	Travis Audubon
6/25/18	Austin Butterfly Forum
6/28/18	GWMN
7/12/18	NPSOT
7/19/18	Travis Audubon
7/23/18	Austin Butterfly Forum
7/26/18	GWMN

Check the website for additional events including volunteer and training opportunities. The events are too numerous to post here.

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2018 City Nature Challenge

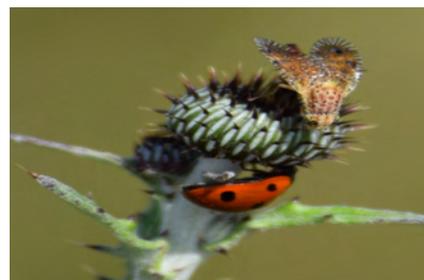
Mike Farley: I had been planning for the challenge several weeks in advance. I picked the best locations that provide opportunities for the most species observations. I spend two to three hours max at any one location before needing to refuel, rest, and hydrate. Of the chosen places, I laid out waypoints of known plants or animal species that are typically always there on the routes I walk. If something did not happen to be there, (wrong season, etc.), something else would take its place. Along the way there are always lots of peripheral observations to record.

I planned to utilize my trail cam in certain locations that have proven fruitful. The first location at Meadow Lake Park around 8:30 pm, hours before the official start time I was placing my trail cam at an exit point on a feeder stream that leads into the lake. This lake, in my experience has the most beaver activity, but also could get various waterfowl and certainly raccoons. As I am planting the cam, not more than 20 feet away in the darkness, I could see a beaver swimming by. As soon as it saw me, it splashed the water with its tail as a warning. This always sounds like a giant rock being thrown in the water. I made three attempts at different locations with the trail cam during the challenge with nothing really useable recorded. Just after midnight in my backyard, the real challenge begins as my moth lights had been calling all local insects with spectral catnip so to speak.



Black Assassin by Mike Farley

Whenever you record something new to your eyes and your mind, it makes for a very satisfying experience. This is what drives me to constantly observe. My favorite such observation for the challenge came on the first day at Berry Springs when I recorded a species of **Fruit Fly** on an unopened Texas Thistle bloom. The species was *Paracantha culta*.



Paracantha culta by Mike Farley

Of course there were many other great observations along the way including a couple new species for the county; **Black Assassin**, *Apiomerus longispinus*, and a nice moth, **Beautiful Sparganothis**, *Sparganothis pulcherrimana*

April Rohlich: My Texas pride swelled as three of our cities made the top ten in the 2018 City Nature Challenge. I recorded 55 observed taxa and a mere 25 research-grade observations id'd to species or lower. I mostly just poked around my back yard and nearby. I have found this process with iNaturalist to be a handy learning tool and a great place to stash my nature photos for reference.



Viceroy by Todd McCann

Todd McCann: I submitted 16 photos taken at 3 sites. My original photo plans were changed at the last minute due to work issues Friday. As I left the house a bird was on the porch blocking my way, but the Carolina Wren sat for a photo. I went to the Great Hills Neighborhood Park I had visited several years ago knowing I would find something. I did 14 useable photos. My favorite observation was also the one that would be the least I expected to find. I knew of a small pond. I did not expect to see a rather large Snapping Turtle in it. Unlike other turtles I have been photographing this one cooperated. As a second favorite observation I have been trying at McNeil to get a Grackle catching a bat. I got one of a

grackle eating a bat. Several of the people watching the bat told me about it. Tell the other members to grab a camera (including smart Phones and tablets) go out the door. Look and snap you would be surprised at what you will see.

2018 City Nature Challenge (continued)



Texas Spiny Lizard by Amy Flinn

Amy Flinn: I believe the Hays County Birdathon was part of the Greater Austin Nature Challenge. Mike and I were ostensibly bird watching, but I document everything - birds, trees, insects, wildflowers, and whatever else that I can snag a photo of. There were many "firsts" for us on this trip. For the purposes of iNaturalist, our most exciting observations were porcupines. We observed two up in the trees. Before that the only porcupines I have seen were in a zoo or dead on the road. Our bird watching started in Charro Ranch - a municipal park in Dripping Springs - and then on a friend's property.

Larry Swift: I noticed many wildflowers were displaying outside the gym where I was working out. Following the workout, I went out to document as many as I could for the City Nature Challenge. I ended up with 33 observations representing 26 taxa. My favorite observation was the Scarlet Pimpernel. I didn't know it was a plant though it has long been a favorite movie.

Scott Quigley: I made 117 observations. I think 2 or 3 were probably repeat species. Unfortunately, I never expected to see a gray fox cross the trail about 20 ft in front of me as soon as I left the parking lot, so I didn't get that observation. I went to Russell Park last Saturday with several objectives; learn how to use iNaturalist, participate in the City Nature Challenge, and earn a few volunteer hours. My plan was to hike a portion of the San Gabriel River Trail and photograph with my iPhone every new plant I encountered. I thought I'd upload the data to iNaturalist when I got home. However, I had LTE service the whole time, and most of the observations uploaded in the field. I offered no comments or identifications; simply took pictures and "shared" them with iNaturalist. I was totally amazed when people started identifying my observations less than 30 minutes after I started. Evidently there are some naturalists out there with way too much free time. Now that I know how it works, I plan to use iNaturalist frequently.

Bob Waring: It was bad luck for me that this challenge took place on the same weekend as the Georgetown Poppy Fest as we get a lot of out of town visitors that weekend. I told my friends that I would be taking pictures of any plants and animals that I could find. My goal was to submit one photo of as many species as I could find. My friends helped by pointing out insects and would watch them and call over to me to get the picture. My favorite observation was the gray fox who appeared to pose for me. Most of my observations were at or near my house. Next year for this challenge I plan to take some hikes and carry a better camera with me.

Mary Ann Melton: I started my observations after the Poppy Fest. I went to San Gabriel Park and the base of the Dam at Lake Georgetown Sunday evening. I put up insect lights when I got home. On Monday morning I documented the birds at my feeders. In the afternoon, I visited Old Settler's Park. Then I went all over my 5 acres documenting every plant and bug I could find.



Cyrtolobus tuberosus
by Mary Ann Melton

Global Ranking	City	Observations	Species	People
3	Dallas/Fort Worth	32,758	2927	811
6	Houston	21,784	2801	694
10	Austin	17,348	2092	616
15	Rio Grande Valley	8699	1478	194
30	San Antonio	3523	885	172
53	Amarillo	638	218	26

Tripod, the Three Legged Deer by Tom Cantwell

Photos by Tom Cantwell



The story of Tripod, our three-legged neighborhood deer, and how the Texas Master Naturalist program helped expand my understanding.

I became involved in the Master Naturalist program because I am getting close to retirement age and sought purpose to my life after my retirement in a few years (or decades □). I wish I had done the training many years earlier! I was very encouraged by all the classmates I had. Many were younger and enthusiastic, which was a real blessing. It was hard to maintain the schedule, but well worth the expenditure in time and effort. The Texas Master Naturalist program reminds me of an old truism – the more I learn, the less I know. I think differently due to the program. I realize how little I know about the environment around me. And how much I have to learn.

Tripod's story -

Our neighborhood has been the host to a 3-legged deer for many years (well before I took the Texas Master Naturalist course). I

am not sure she is still alive in mid-2018, but she has been known to pop up unexpectedly. In my city-slicker, urban-raised sensibilities, I thought of this deer as a fighter and a heroine – think Bambi. She did have many babies, so was prolific (in my untrained eyes) despite the lack of a front leg. Maybe, she is that strong. But, I anthropomorphized those human characteristics of bravery and sacrifice without thinking about the underlying scientific reasons why she may have lived for so long. Fortunately, I took the training from the Good Water Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists (Thank you for the wonderful work they do for the community!)

Texas Master Naturalist program -

The Texas Master Naturalist program taught me there could be a more likely explanation. There are few natural predators for deer other than humans. Humans have affected the ecosystem so much that deer, even weak and damaged deer, may be able to survive and thrive. Tripod is likely no heroine. Just lucky.

This realization has led me to the inevitable conclusion that, in our current environment, deer hunting is required. I don't hunt. I have a .22 rifle I fired decades ago. Not sure I could shoot a deer, except if I really needed the food. But, the data says we should hunt in order to cull the herd and keep the deer population manageable. That view – where science and our environment meet, and decisions are based on data (some of which citizen scientists such as Master Naturalists provide) – is what I most enjoy about the Master Naturalist program.



Into the Darkness—Friesenhahn Cave Adventure By Amy Flinn

Photos by Amy Flinn and Todd McCann

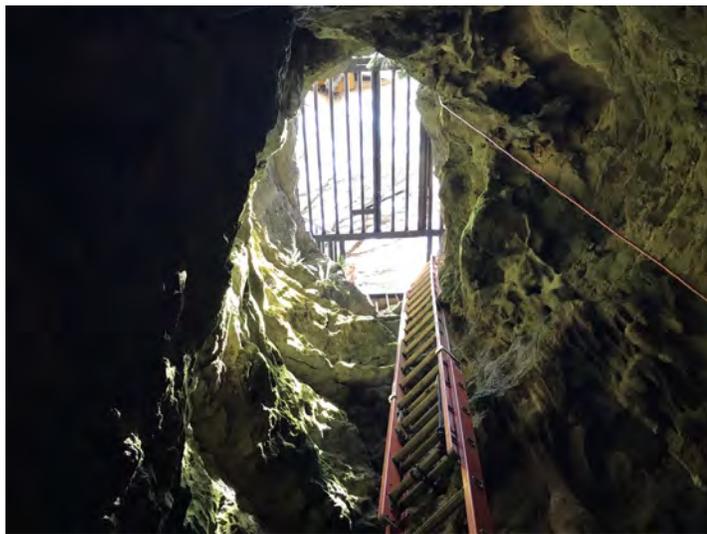


Second only to the La Brea Tar Pits as a source for Pleistocene fossils, the Friesenhahn Cave in northern Bexar County is owned (and managed) by Concordia University. Dr. Laurence Meissner has for some years led digs and tours at the site and agreed to lead an advanced training opportunity for members of the Good Water Chapter on May 19, 2018.

Following a short safety lecture, Dr. Meissner and thirteen Good Water members and guests donned hard hats and braved the thirty-foot (okay 28 foot, but who's counting?) ladder to enter the cave.

Dr. Meissner shared the history of the

cave including early exploration and digs, recent mapping of the cave, and future plans. Meissner and the digs he has participated in have been limited to the tailings of previous digs. Fossils can be observed lodged in crevasses and embedded in the walls. These and more



discoveries are waiting for another day – and someone with a question, a plan, and financing.

Few living creatures were observed – only a few harvestmen, salamanders, and wide-eyed naturalists.

One at a time the adventurers climbed out of the cave for additional explanation and examination of fossils found on digs over the years.

For more information about the cave and personal perspective:

<https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/rqf01>

<https://www.concordia.edu/academics/school-of-natural-and-applied-sciences/friesenhahn-cave/>

<http://www.jsge.utexas.edu/npl/outreach/glen-evans-the-compleat-naturalist/paleontology/friesenhahn-cave/>

<http://walkinthepark-padimus.blogspot.com/2018/05/down-ladder-into-darkness.html>

Chew on This! By Mike Farley

Photo by Mike Farley



On Christmas Eve of 2017, my trail cam observed more than 1200 images into early Christmas morning hours. The location was an area in the Mill pond of Berry Springs, where aquatic vegetation had stopped growing due to the repeated activity of coming and going movement. I had suspected this was beaver activity, and later confirmed by the wealth of images. The images are often less than desirable quality, but they do provide a window into one night's behavioral activity.

In a couple of those images, a pair of beaver could be seen preening each other. This led me to ponder if this was the beginnings of a family as they engaged in last minute preparations for the coming winter. I knew in spring time we would learn the answer to this question. Would we see kits following close behind their loving parents?

The beaver were very industrious in constructing their bank lodge over the following month, with the final application of mud to close up the holes. They take the mud from the bottom of the pond and carry it with their hands under their chin.

During the early months of 2018 there was little trace evidence other than chewed aquatic vegetation that frequently litters the mill pond edges.

I began to pay closer attention to beaver activity elsewhere within the county. Documenting chews and lodges at many other locations, but also determining the preferred materials used and what appears to be the best tasting for preferred diet. Either in the form of complete bark stripped small limbs, or repeated chewing of regrowth stumps. They seem to try most any available material especially the safest that is close to the water. They are most vulnerable on land. If aquatic vegetation is not available in their habitat they are forced to trek distances for forage or take down larger nearby trees.

Such was the case at Silverado Springs Park in Cedar Park where I observed city workers using heavy backhoe equipment to clear beaver obstruction to a concrete spillway at the spring fed pond. There I documented a 10 inch diameter Black Willow, felled and stripped of limbs. Another larger willow was hour glassed half way through. A large bank lodge was present in the tall grasses by the spillway.

Of the chews I have observed locally, Black Willow and Green Ash appear to be top favorites for taste. Cedar Elm is also well liked. Surprisingly, at Lake Creek in Round Rock, Ligustrum had been repeatedly sampled with ample other material available. The proximity to water's edge may be preferable to distant land material. Other materials sampled include; Chinese Tallow at Jester Farms Park in Round Rock. Ashe juniper and Wild grapevine were utilized in Champion Park, Cedar Park.

In the weeks following the City Nature Challenge, I planted my trail camera at a known trail used by the beaver to access Berry Creek. After four days and nights, in a well-hidden area of the path, the cam recorded hundreds of images of all manner of critters. Of particular interest were a couple images of beaver moving from the creek toward the Mill pond. The lead beaver, presumably the mother, was followed closely by a single small kit! A few minutes later a much larger beaver followed in the same direction. The kit was protected both front and rear as they made their way back to the Mill pond. This path cuts across the southwest bank of the pond and can easily be seen up close.

The beaver kit is just more than one month old and will remain in the parents care for two years. I will of course, attempt to capture more images of the family.

Junior Master Naturalist Graduation



2018-2019 Junior Master Naturalist Registration is open!

Register Online: <https://txmn.org/goodwater/junior-master-naturalist-registration/>

Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting Silent Auction



The annual meeting is fast approaching. One of the events we are preparing is the Silent Auction, and for that, we need donations! The more items our members donate, the more money our chapter makes.

Here are a few suggestions. Please don't feel limited to just these items. There are many more items than what we have listed. The only requirement is that they be nature related. This is a very broad category.

Here are some examples:

Nature items

Books- field guides, naturalist books, birds, insects, mammals, history

Items you make: ceramics, pottery, quilts, knitted items, crocheted items

Birding items: binoculars, bird feeder, bird seed, coasters

Educational items- books about nature for kids, kids binoculars, kits to make items,

Pictures- birds, scenery, insects, etc

Jewelry

Items for baskets: local honey, tea, coffee, seeds, mugs, plants

Statues, sculptures or other art of insects, snakes, trees, etc.

Painted rocks

Yard art, solar yard art

Wind chimes

Kitchen items with nature theme

Children's nature items

If you have any questions or items that you aren't sure work you can call or email me and I will help you. I can also pick up any items that you have or you can bring them to our Chapter meetings.

Nancy Phillips, Chair Silent Auction Committee



Garey Park Grand Opening



For information about the Good Water Chapter
<http://txmn.org/goodwater> or goodwatermn2@gmail.com