

Good Water Ripples

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For information contact: <http://txmn.org/goodwater> or goodwatermn2@gmail.com

Lori Franz, Editor • Holly Zeiner, Layout/Design



2019 Fall Training Class Set to Begin in September

By Mary Ann Melton



Good Water Master Naturalist Fall Training Class will begin Tuesday September 3 through December 17, 2019. The class meets on Tuesdays from 6:00-9:30 p.m. Some classes and field trips are on Saturdays. Cost is \$150 and includes the comprehensive Texas Master Naturalist Program manual as well as a one-year membership to the Good Water Chapter. For couples who plan to share the manual, there is a discount for the second student. Follow this link for online registration: <https://txmn.org/goodwater/Training-class-online-application/>

Texas Master Naturalists are people who still like to play in the dirt and are willing to get their feet wet and their hands dirty. We are a volunteer organiza-

tion and we have many opportunities to serve.

Good Water Master Naturalists volunteer at many parks in Williamson County, provide nature education to children and adults in many different settings, and participate in many Citizen Science projects such as Texas Stream Team Monitoring, Cornell's eBird, and iNaturalist. To become a Master Naturalist, one takes a training class of over 40 hours of expert training about almost every aspect of the natural world – soils, backyard habitats, prairies, rangeland management, forest ecology, birds, mammals, fish, insects, botany, climate, geology and archaeology. To complete the certification process, each volunteer completes 40 hours of service and an additional eight hours of

training. To maintain their certification each year, volunteers are encouraged to take their knowledge and volunteer for 40 hours and take eight hours of additional training.

Bill Neville, from the 2018 Fall Training class, says, "After my Master Naturalist training, my senses seem to have been re-calibrated. I see nature in a different way. My eyes and ears now seem to be tuned in to new sights and sounds that I wasn't aware of prior to training."

Visit the Good Water Website for more information about the Good Water Chapter: <http://txmn.org/goodwater>

Mark your Calendar

- 8/7 *Berry Springs Pond Clean-up*
- 8/8 *Native Plant Society**
- 8/12 *Master Gardener**
- 8/22 *Master Naturalists**
- 8/26 *Austin Butterfly Forum**
- 9/9 *Master Gardener**
- 9/12 *Native Plant Society**
- 9/23 *Austin Butterfly Forum**
- 9/26 *Master Naturalists**
- 9/27 *Berry Springs United Way of Caring*
- 9/28 *River Ranch Workday*

**Indicates Chapter Meeting*

Garey Park Bluebird Monitoring

By Marcia Wutke, Susan Hickman and Kate Knight

This spring 15 bluebird boxes were installed at Garey Park and a small group of naturalists were trained to monitor and record data for use by Cornell.

A trio of naturalists have been faithfully monitoring the bluebirds in Garey Park and are completely charmed by the presence of blue eggs, naked young, and feathered young. They even got to be surprised by a beautiful titmouse and her babies taking over a box. A bigger surprise was one particular box that seemed to only attract wasps. A sound smearing of soap seemed to help just a little, but it is said that Ivory soap works very well.

Kate, Susie and Marcia have not been too discouraged by cold, heat and rain though the chiggers were a threat until mowing was done to clear out the weeds in the pathway. You will often find them checking the windows in the beautiful bird blind that is said to be the nicest one many seasoned birders have ever seen. If you have not visited this beautiful park look for the big parking lot past the house and walk through the gate toward the river to witness birds, bees, and butterflies in the huge meadow. 🐦



Bluebird monitoring at Garey Park with Marcia, Susan and Kate. Nest cycle from eggs to babies!

Earth Wonders Junior Master Naturalists 2019-2020

Juvenile Justice Center Training Room, 200 Wilco Way

Time: Classroom Session 6:00-7:30 p.m. • Field Trips on Saturdays

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

Cost: \$25.00 Registration Fee; 4-H Registration \$25.00

- September 5 - Worms and Earth Critters
- September 19 - Soils
- October 3 - Caves
- October 17 - Prairies and Native Grasses
- November 7 - Trees (AgriLife Extension meeting room)
- December 5 - Astronomy (Paul Lennous astrophotography)
- January 9 - Paleontology
- January 18 - Paleontology Field Trip
- February 6 - Archaeology
- February 20 - Geology
- March 5 - Aquifers
- March 12 - Invasives
- April 2 - Wildflowers
- April 18 - Wildflower Field Trip at Booty's Crossing
- May 7 - Odonates: Dragonflies and Damselflies
- May 16 - Odonate Field Trip
- Service Project - to be determined

The Magic of Timberlake Biological Research Station

By Mike Farley

On July 12, less than three weeks after the City Nature Challenge, I found myself among a small group of like-minded enthusiastic iNaturalist supporters in a place that I will not soon forget. In fact, I can't wait to go back!

Timberlake Biological Research Station is a 790 acre property that was part of a \$5 million dollar gift to Tarleton State University by Dr. Lamar Johanson and Marilyn Timberlake Johanson. The land had been in Marilyn's family since 1902 and is still used as farm and ranchland today. Situated in a horseshoe bend of the Colorado River of Mills County, the property has both bottomland and uplands. Hay, wheat, and cattle are still produced there. When I arrived at the campsite, Marilyn was on a riding lawnmower clearing the space for us campers. Tarleton had built a brand new bunkhouse and bathroom facilities complete with hot showers. Our group was the first to use these wonderful facilities!

The purpose of the visit was a Bioblitz weekend organized by Dr. Russell Pfau who heads the Biological Sciences Lab at Tarleton. Essentially, with three and one-

half days observing the property at leisure I thoroughly enjoyed myself and especially visiting with Dr. Pfau and others, some of whom I had met before and many new. There were 24 of us in total, with six remaining on the final morning.



Timberlake Biological Bioblitz Team.

Of the first things noticeable upon arrival, is the very squeaky windmill, clearly in need of lubrication. Over time, this would become part of the



Rare Pink Star Moth

charm of Timberlake, and even missed on days without wind. No less bothersome were the frequent cattle blocking the road, with no concern about moving out of the way. Both Jackrabbits and Roadrunners seem to delight in leading the chase along the 15 mph top speed roads. I had one experience with a Roadrunner that I will always remember. My car was parked high on an overlook in the uplands. I was observing for nature as always, and I saw this Roadrunner approach my car, eventually standing directly in front of it. Over the

course of 20 to 30 minutes I probably shot a hundred images of it. I've never managed a single shot in Williamson County. At one point the Roadrunner was only 30 feet away standing on a rock, preening and posing for me. I even heard its trill call which I was able to mimic and it responded! The call was very much like the sound of an air impact tool being used with not much air passing through it. There wasn't any "beep-beep," or sign of any Acme equipment nearby! The moment felt spiritual, or at least magical.

For me, the overall experience was amazing. The wildflowers and butterflies were extreme. The night observing at six different moth light setups was my favorite. It produced a very rare Pink Star Moth as well as an Orange Shadowdragon Dragonfly.



Roadrunner

On Sunday afternoon 15 of us gathered for a group photo taken by Dr. Pfau. Prior to the weekend the iNaturalist numbers for Mills Co. were 400 observations with 200 species. In the weeks that followed as we all uploaded our haul, those numbers changed to more than 5,900 observations and more than 1,200 species.

If there is a Fall Bioblitz follow-up at Timberlake, you can bet I will be packing up my tent. After not having camped in about 18 years, it fit like a glove! All magical, no illusion...🐉

Nature Tracking

By Judy Grimes

Recently, along with many members of our chapter, I attended an advanced training on Texas Nature Trackers Camera Trap Program. We had the opportunity to be trained and learn from Tania Homayoun from Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD), and get hands on experience using cameras for the purpose of capturing wildlife.

Not only was it fun, but we also learned a lot about this unique opportunity for our Good Water Chapter.

Tania Homayoun, a Texas Nature Tracker Biologist with TPWD spearheaded a workshop for our chapter on "Camera Trapping for Science." This half day workshop focused on Texas Parks and Wildlife's goal to help contribute data for science efforts.

Homayoun is a conservation biologist who is passionate about connecting people with nature. Her experience is in environmental/conservation outreach and education program development, along with years of GIS experience in analysis, mapping and communication, citizen science and scientific monitoring program development. Homayoun, along with Richard Heilbrun, are our Texas Parks and Wildlife contacts for camera trapping.

After a brief history lesson on camera use for wildlife viewing, we delved into conservation and research uses. These

include biological inventory, game trails and feeder visitation surveys, along with estimating deer population, nest monitoring, behavioral studies, species inter-

needs citizen scientist data and as Master Naturalists, we can contribute important information about the world we share with animals. We can hope that by being providers of much needed data, that scientists can do the research necessary and together we impact conservation efforts, perhaps reversing trends and contribute to positive outcomes for a variety of species.

Through this advanced training and efforts of Project Leader, Mike Farley, our Good Water Chapter will become part of the Texas Nature Trackers Camera Trap Loan Program. Soon, game camera kits will become available for checking out for chapter projects.

Be sure to watch for future articles on this exciting project opportunity as it unfolds. 🐾



GWMN members attend a Texas Nature Tracker training by TPWD.

actions, impact to wildlife and wildlife mortality. Another reason that trail cameras are an important tool is the ability to monitor Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), which are threatened or endangered species that may or may not have sufficient data.

The Texas Natural Diversity Database

**August GWMN Meeting
August 22, 2019**

Chris Murray, Steward

**Topic:
"Travis Audubon Society and
Baker Sanctuary"**

<https://travisaudubon.org/sanctuaries/baker-sanctuary>

Bird Banding Along the Tank Trails

By Amy Flinn

Twice a year employees of the Natural and Cultural Resources Management Branch (part of U.S. Army Installation Management Command), Directorate of Public Works (hereafter NCRMB), welcome a group of "civilians" to the training area at Fort Hood to participate in a bird banding event. "It's a kind of show-and-tell for citizen scientists.*

This would be a decidedly different Fort Hood experience for Mike (assigned there in 1974 and retired in 2015) and me. We already knew a good deal about the terrain and wildlife living there, but this would be our first time to experience bird banding as well as an opportunity to observe one or both of the two songbirds (Black-capped Vireo and Golden-cheeked Warbler) that had made Fort Hood a name among those in the birding community from the mid-1980s to the present day.

On July 2, after a welcome and briefing, Dr. David Cimprich** and his team of biologists and volunteers worked between the tables of measuring equipment and the mist nets that were set up nearby. They shared information on the history and functioning of the nets as well as the examination, weighing, measurement, and banding of the birds. We lucky few, about 30 individuals from area birding and wildlife organizations, divided into groups to check the nets, watch the scientists at work, ask questions, and release

the newly-banded birds.

On this day the team documented: White-eyed Vireos, a Titmouse, a Northern Cardinal, a Painted Bunting, a Carolina Wren, a Bewick's Wren, a Summer Tanager, a couple of Blue-grey Gnatcatchers, and more Black-capped



Birdbanding event at Fort Hood training area.



Vireos than any other bird (I stopped taking photos after the fourth or fifth individual).

Some people may not be aware that the Black-capped Vireo was delisted (removed from the list of endangered species) only last year. It is one of the success stories***

of private-public conservation partnerships and Fort Hood was a major player in those efforts. In fact, Fort Hood has a history of commitment to balancing the needs of wildlife (and the protection of threatened and endangered species) with the military missions of the post.

Of course, the devil is in the details and we were privy to many seemingly small details - additional measures to avoid stressing the birds. Nets are checked on a regular (and short) schedule so none stay in the net long. The recorded calls used to attract the birds are changed frequently; specific "holds" are used. And the entire process from capture to release is efficient and professional.

The next show-and-tell opportunity is expected for mid-March 2020.

[A special thanks to Dr. David Cimprich and his team; Scott Summers, Environmental Protection Specialist; and Gil Eckrich.]

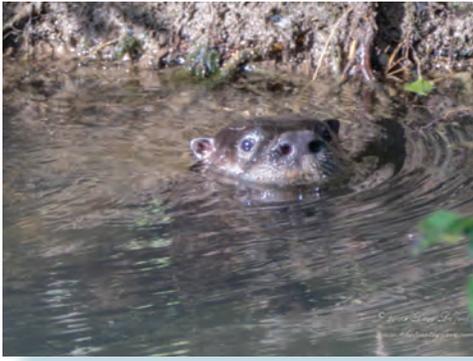
NOTES:

* http://www.forthoodsentinel.com/editorial/fort-hood-protecting-endangered-bird-species-while-training-to-protect/article_ce73149a-7aa7-11e6-bd81-37d09689081e.html

**Dr. Cimprich is one of only two people in Texas certified as a banding trainer by the North American Banding Council and is the "go to" expert on the Black-capped Vireo. He is a soft-spoken man and we watched him work with each bird careful to insure that we "observers" understood each step.

***<https://tpwd.texas.gov/newsmedia/releases/?req=20180413b>

FOR MORE PHOTOS AND INFORMATION: <https://walkinthepark-padimus.blogspot.com/2019/07/a-band-of-birders-go-bird-banding.html> 🐦



Berry Springs River Otter by Dave DeVore. Wow! Yet another reason to visit Berry Springs!



Fall Webworms

By Wizzie Brown

Webworms can be found on a variety of trees and are most well-known for the webbing they create on the tips of branches.

Webworms are caterpillars, or larvae, of a moth. Caterpillars cause damage by feeding on foliage contained inside their protective webbing.

There are two-to-four generations of webworms that occur each year. The first generation appears April-May and the last generation occurs in the late fall. The last generation is the most damaging, which provides these creatures with the name fall webworm. Webworm larvae are about an inch long when fully grown. They are pale green to yellow with tufts of long hairs projecting from their



body. While these are fuzzy caterpillars, they do not sting. Most people notice webbing that webworms create on the

tips of branches. Webworms feed within the webbing and use it as protection from predators. When the caterpillars run out of foliage to feed on, they expand the web to encompass new leaves.

To manage webworms, the size and accessibility of the tree needs to be considered. Egg masses can be pruned from trees before they hatch in early spring. Egg masses are on the underside of leaves and are covered with hairs. Small webs

can also be pruned from the tree as they begin forming in the spring. Larger webs can be knocked out of the tree or opened with a stick or jet of water which allows predators inside the web to feed on caterpillars. Do NOT use fire to burn the web from trees! This causes more damage to the tree than if the caterpillars continued to feed.

Insecticides are available for webworm management. Look for active ingredients such as *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki* (specifically targets caterpillars), spinosad, azadirachtin, or pyrethrins. Webs need to be opened before pesticide treatment so that pesticide gets inside the web where caterpillars are located. Webbing will remain in trees even after caterpillars are dead and needs to be removed by you or a strong weather event.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com 🐦

A Virtual Hike at Berry Springs Park

By Amy Flinn (aided by Michael Finn and Zelda the Wonder Dog)

Some of you may have seen it – an emailed request for a hike with some Cub Scouts. Seven to 10 Cubs Scouts and their parents wanted to hike at Berry Springs Park and Preserve on Saturday. The den is working on a NOVA Award. They needed to take a hike and interview someone who works in conservation. Some discussion of invasive species was also requested.



Eastern Bluebird

Then we went home to prepare for a “real” hike and, as the weather forecast continued to deteriorate, a “virtual” hike.** Then opted for a room provided by the Georgetown Public Library.

The Cub Scouts and parents*** arrived and we hiked the

trails of Berry Springs via electrons -- observing nature, discussing the projects Good Water Master Naturalists carry out in

the park, and learning to identify invasive species for an hour and a half.

At the end of the hike the scouts pledged to leave snakes alone (in line with Leave No Trace Principles). They were each awarded one glow-in-the-dark snake to acknowledge their pledge.

Maybe it worked because these were second graders. Maybe it worked because it was a small group.



Watercress

It sounded pretty easy. And then the weather decided not to cooperate.

I may not know what the Cub Scout motto is, but the Girl Scout* motto is “Be prepared.”



Western Rat Snake

The 1947 handbook explained the motto thus: “A Girl Scout is ready to help out wherever she is needed. Willingness to serve is not enough; you must know how to do the job well, even in an emergency.” (Emphasis mine)

To “be prepared” we made a recognition trip to Berry Springs Friday to see what was shaking in the park. It’s definitely spring in the park. We found and photographed plants, birds, reptiles, insects, arachnids, mammals, and invasive species. Mike saw his first Summer Tanager. Zelda discovered a Western Rat Snake. The Northern Mockingbirds and Eastern Bluebirds showed off for photos.

Maybe it worked because we all really wanted it to – the kids were engaged and engaging. The parents were eager and several added iNaturalist to their phone apps.



Western Rat Snake

As past “real” hikes informed this “virtual” hike, this hike will impact our future hikes at Berry Springs and elsewhere. We are ready to go.****

For more on the hike: <https://walkinthepark-padimus.blogspot.com/2019/04/with-cub-scouts-at-berry-springs-park.html>

NOTES:

*Girl Scout Troop 22, Sinton, Texas was my home for many, many years.

**PowerPoint presentation – 55 slides and some frog/toad audio (next time there will be bird calls too).

***Five Cubs, 6 parents, and one master naturalist participated.

****Zelda prefers real hikes because she isn’t allowed in the library.



Monument Hill and Kreische Brewery State Historical Sites - Part of the Texas State Parks System

By Jennifer Gustafson

The bluff where Monument Hill and Kreische Brewery are located is claimed by some to be the most scenic spot in Central Texas. The high bluff above the Colorado River provides a great panoramic view. The park is home to a colony of Texas Alligator Lizards which is unique for the area. In addition to its beauty, the trails have good portions of shade trees and provide various terrains for hiking and picnic tables overlooking the Colorado River. Entry to the park is free, however donations are welcomed.

Activities in the park include:

Hiking - Kreische Woods Nature Loop - a 1/3-mile loop that provides photos and information about vegetation located along the trail. 1.5 miles of various trails throughout the park allows views of the Colorado River, the Kreische house, the Kreische Brewery and the Tomb and Monument.

Geocaching - Four Geocaches are in the park. Check www.geocaching.com for coordinates.

Birding - a list of birds common to the area is in the Activities Guide to Natural

Experience on the website or at the Park Headquarters.

Museum - Located inside the Park Headquarters about 1,500 square feet of artifacts and information. They offer a 15 minute video about the Brewery and the Monument.

Picnicking - Picnic tables with shade trees near the high bluff overlooking the Colorado River.

Free Guided Tours of the Kreische House, Kreische Brewery, Monument Hill and Historic Site last about one hour - call ahead for dates, times and reservations.

Hours of Operation: Open daily from 8:00am - 5:00pm (Closed Christmas Day)

Special Events Hosted at Monument Hill (Check website for exact dates)
Texas Heroes Day in September
Trail of Lights in December
Easter Sunrise Service
First Day Hike on January 1

Address: 414 State Loop 92
La Grange, TX 78945
Phone: 979-968-5658

Website: <http://tpwd.texas.gov/>
Activity Guide to Natural Experience:
https://tpwd.texas.gov/publications/pwd-pubs/media/pwd_bk_p4505_0048aa.pdf

For more information about
the Good Water Chapter
contact us at:

<http://txmn.org/goodwater>
or
goodwatermn2@gmail.com

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION



UPSTREAM / DOWNSTREAM

• *Webinar: Birding Opportunities on Texas Lands with The Nature Conservancy*
Williamson Audubon Group
August 12, 7:00-9:00 p.m.
https://www.meetup.com/WilliamsonAudubonGroup/events/263368125/?rv=ea1_v2&_xtd=gatlbfWFpbF9jbGlja9oAJGN-IMzgOYjRjLTFkMWU+NDE4OC1hMjBmLTA2MWEwZDBkYjBhOA

• *Devils River: A multi-disciplinary approach to saving one of the last great wild rivers in Texas* with Sarah Robertson, Aquatic Biologist, River Studies Program, TPWD Webinar
August 20th 6:30- 7:30 pm CST - <https://attendeegotowebinar.com/register/3197461572816569858>