



Naturalist Notes

President’s Note

Welcome to 2020, everyone! I hope this finds everyone well and recovering from the busy holiday season. As we all begin accruing volunteer and advance training hours, remember the 45-day rule. Congratulations to all of those that finished up their re-certifications in December. We look forward to recognizing your achievements at the awards presentation at the April chapter meeting.

Additionally, here is the slate of board members for 2020:

- President – Rebecca Lloyd
- Vice President – Shannon Morrison
- Secretary – Carol Oeller
- Treasurer & State Representative – Sheryl Mills
- Chapter Advisor (TPWD) – Kelly Norrid
- Membership Director – Mary Horn
- Volunteer Services – Lisa Morano
- Training Officer – Michelle Broussard
- New Class Representative – Bonnie Brown
- Advanced Training Director – Denis Martin
- Communications Director – Cassie Moore
- Immediate Past President – Julia Trimble

Congratulations to you all and I look forward to working with everyone in the coming year.

Best regards,

Rebecca Lloyd, President
Gulf Coast Chapter



Silent Auction Items for State Meeting

Our chapter is running the silent auction. Do you have a business or know someone with a business that would be willing to donate an item to the auction? Are you creative and want to make something for the auction? Do you know someone that has a unique art or craft that would be of interest to the bidders? Do you have a good 'theme basket' in mind?

Finally, would you like to help out with contacting various organizations to request donations?

Contact Rebecca Lloyd with your suggestions/offers of help.

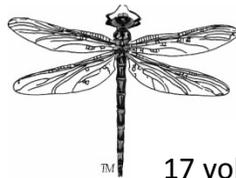
2019 GULF COAST CHAPTER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Plant Propagation
8177 bumped into
gallon pots during
23 events

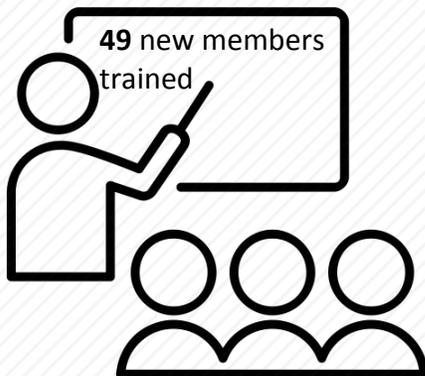
**Over 16, 475 Volunteer Hours
Logged by Volunteers**



133 - Active Members
21 - 1st Certifications
91 - Re-Certifications



17 volunteers reached **over 3,000**
people at 20 booths/events



Milestones Recognized in 2019

12 achieved 250 hrs
13 achieved 500 hrs
3 achieved 1,000 hrs



Steve Brennan Remembrance



Standing: Julie d'Ablaing, Brock Nedland, Shelby Baetz, Marney Wheeler, Barbara Nash, Allen Brymer
 Seated: Alisa Kine, Mary Waters, Steve Brennan. Not pictured: Nina Rach, Angilee Carrig, Carrie Mansfield, D.L. Castro, Kimina Jamison.

Thanks for reaching out. I didn't know him super well but did interact with him on several occasions. I found him to be very enthusiastic, someone who was committed and hardworking, and someone with a vision for a cleaner, greener world. He was a gifted storyteller as well. His spirit will be missed.

Jaime Gonzalez

It is with great sadness that the family of Stephen James Brennan announces his passing at the age of 63 years.

Steve will be lovingly remembered by his many friends and large family, including his brothers, David, Mark and his wife Connie, and Jim and his wife Michelle, his sons, Rick and Shaun, and his daughters-in-law, Kate and Sara. Steve will also be fondly remembered by his four beloved grandchildren, Rhea, Townes, Sage and River. Steve was predeceased by his parents James Bernard Brennan and Joan Patricia Mims Brennan.

A funeral service in memory of Steve was held on Friday, January 10, 2020, at 3:00 p.m. at the historic Christ Church Cathedral, Houston on 1117 Texas Avenue in beautiful downtown Houston, Texas, with Rev. Art Callaham officiating. An on-site reception followed the funeral service.

Those who so desire may make memorial donations in memory of Steve Brennan to the Native Plant Society of Texas - a nature loving non profit organization he supported. To make a donation in his honor, please follow the link, and be sure to earmark your contribution for education, if you can, a cause that was close to his heart.

In loving memory, rest in peace Stephen James Brennan.

A fine Irish gentleman...

Steve's son Rick

Steve Brennan was a member of my training class (Fall 2015) and he will be remembered for many things, but for those of us who had the great good fortune to be in class with him, he will always be known as the man who made amazing food. We started the class taking turns bringing food, but once Steve got started, the rest of us just stepped back; he cooked soups and stews and such amazing meals that they became another highlight of our training program.

Steve was a very enthusiastic canoeist and he had a passion for issues surrounding water quality. He and I shared a love for Buffalo Bayou Park. His particular interest was in a little-known part of the Park known as the Tapley Tributary. It was named for the architect Charles Tapley who was instrumental in preventing Buffalo Bayou from being concretized and who developed the plans for Tranquility Park.

The Tapley Tributary is a small shaded waterway in the northeast part of the Park. Steve fell in love with this bit of nature when he took his grandson on outings in the Park. They had mad adventures together in the Tapley Tributary and I admit, I have never seen that part of the Park the same way again.

Steve was a generous and good-hearted naturalist who could regale you with fascinating stories of his exploits on the water. He will be remembered with great affection by the Naturalist community.

Alisa Kline



SKY OF THE MONTH



In honor of the new book “A Cloud A Day”, by Gavin Pretor-Pinney, I’d like to include a picture of the sky every month. Feel free to send me pictures you’ve taken.

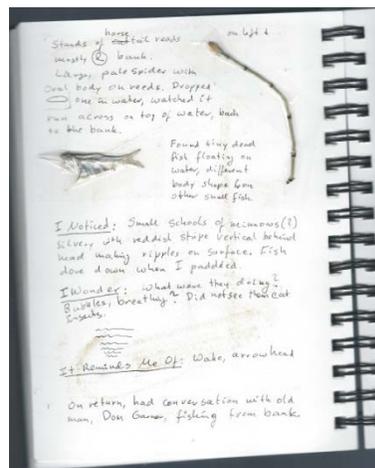
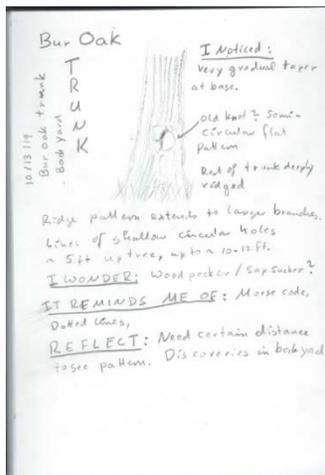
Clouds can make visible the otherwise invisible movement of air and changes in temperature within the atmosphere.

This picture of a front moving through was taken in Houston Jan 14th, 2019. I call it “Sky:Divided”.

Experiences of a Nature Journaling Novice

I started my first nature journal in April 2019. Not quite sure how it began, just that it seemed like an obsession I HAD to indulge. After 8 months and 66 entries, this is some of what I learned:

- **Journaling can engage me completely.** Whether laying on a dock at the Houston Arboretum looking at small insects through a magnifying lens, sitting in the backyard sketching the trunk of our bur oak, or writing a poem about an early cold front, I can get completely engrossed.
- **Journaling helps me pay attention.** John Muir Laws, one of the people in the nature journaling field I discovered, defines love as “sustained, compassionate attention”. When I choose something to journal about, I really pay attention to the subject. We’ve lived in our house for 20 years, yet I had never noticed the series of round holes in the bur oak trunk! They are easier to see in certain light, still, that’s no excuse.
- **Journaling changes my perspective.** Sketching a leaf with holes led me to look for other holey leaves. Trying to figure out what may be causing the holes led to a conversation with a fellow naturalist which in turn encouraged me to think of multiple possible causes for the variety of holes I saw.
- **It’s not about the length of the entry, it’s about journaling regularly.** I frequently follow Laws’ suggestion for including responses to “I Notice, I Wonder, It Reminds Me of, Reflect”, along with location and weather, in a journal entry. But, if I’m using my journal to record some event, I may just include basic information. Sometimes I just want to practice drawing a sea shell, again. Journaling at least once a week keeps me in practice and refreshes me.
- **Although “art” is good to include, being an “artist” is not necessary.** Yes, there are examples of amazing nature journal entries that took an artist many hours to complete. I’m not proficient in any medium, and don’t want to spend hours on a single entry. Drawing and painting for me are a way to pay closer attention to shapes, colors, and relationships in nature. Labeled diagrams are both quicker to create, and provide room for other ways of describing nature, such as words and/or numbers.
- **Looking back at entries revisits pleasant memories.** Several of my journal entries are about kayaking different waters around Houston. I love looking back at photographs, poems, drawings, mud and bits of plants I included in the entries.



Left - Journal entry about our bur oak; Middle - Pg 2 of an entry about a kayaking trip on Chocolate Bayou. Note the piece of horsetail and the dead fish; Right - Back cover with various dried plants and Monarch wing attached using packing tape. (The Monarch was dead when I found it.)

Tools

Journal: I use a 6 x 8 in spiral bound journal with multi-media paper. The size is small enough to fit in my backpacks, yet large enough to work in. The spiral binding lets it lie flat when I work in it, and allows for addition of thin objects such as dried leaves, or watercolors done on watercolor paper.

Media: Pencils, art gum eraser, water color pencils, water brush, pens with water-insoluble ink, photographs, colored pencils.

Other tools: White school glue, clear packing tape ruler, magnifying lens, small pill type container, small zip lock bag, hand sanitizer, reading glasses.

A length of the clear packing tape is wrapped around the pill container, from which it can be unwrapped and still be sticky. Both pill container and zip lock bag can be used for collecting small objects in locations where collecting is permitted.

Try It For Yourself

If you want to deepen your connection with nature, give journaling a try in 2020. I'd love to hear how it goes.



Organism of the Month

Ball Moss (*Tillandsia recurvate*)

Ball moss is an epiphyte in the bromeliad family. It is frequently found on dead inner branches of live oaks. According to most biologists, it does not seem to contribute to tree decline.

Ball moss fixes nitrogen from the air and eventually returns it to the soil. It harbors small insects that birds feed on. And small birds may even use it as nighttime cover to roost.

If you want to control ball moss, a combination of picking, pruning, and spraying is best. Picking means the (careful) manual removal of the plants. Pruning involves getting rid of the branches on which it is found. Spraying with chemicals will kill the ball moss, but not actually remove it from the tree.



credit Becca Phillips

Source: <https://npsot.org/wp/story/2009/19/>;
<https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/BallMoss/>