



The Heartwood Herald

The Heartwood Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Newsletter

Mid June 2019

VOLUNTEER VOICES

Volunteering is the cornerstone of the Texas Master Naturalist program. Each month, the volunteer experience of a member or intern will be featured. This month, a current Texas Master Naturalist intern for 2019 shares her enthusiasm with helping out at the Mercer Botanic Gardens Herbarium.



Anita Tiller ('05) and Kimberly Kidwell ('19)

Who: Kimberly Kidwell, Texas Master Naturalist Intern for 2019

Where: I began volunteering at the Mercer Botanic Gardens Herbarium this past April, and I immediately knew that this was a good volunteer fit for me. When I decided to become involved with the Texas Master Naturalist program, I knew that I wanted to learn more about botany, and since I also enjoy doing research, helping out at the Herbarium by entering plant specimen data into the Mercer Botanic Gardens Database seemed like a logical volunteer choice. Presently, Mercer has over 50,000 plant specimens on site, most of which were acquired on loan from Spring Branch ISD and previously curated by Dr. Larry E. Brown, who has created quite a legacy in regard to this impressive plant specimen collection. In order to enter all of the specimens from this collection into the database, The Mercer Herbarium has an extremely dedicated group of volunteers and interns working on the initiative.

What do you like most about your volunteer position? I have only been volunteering at the Herbarium for a short time, so I am sure that I will discover many more things that I enjoy about this position as I gain more experience. Currently, I never cease to marvel at the excellent condition of each specimen since many of them are quite old. In fact, I was lucky enough to come across a specimen from 1894 as I was entering plant specimens from the Rosacea family. When I first noticed the specimen's date, I was amazed that someone pressed this specimen 125 years ago, and here it was sitting right in front of me in such good condition. I also always take the time to read the descriptions of where the plant specimen was found. Some of the verbiage is succinct and some is lengthy, and I particularly enjoy reading the lengthy ones. However, above all, I am having a wonderful time getting to know the staff at the Herbarium. Anita Tiller, Suzanne Chapman, and Linda Costanzo are a wealth of information in regard to botany, horticulture, and environmental science. Needless to say, it is a delight being around people with such extensive knowledge and passion for plants and the environment. I look forward to continuing to volunteer at the Mercer Herbarium and having the opportunity to see plant specimens that are nothing short of treasures.

Are you interested in learning more or volunteering at the Mercer Herbarium?

For information on any available volunteer opportunities at the Mercer Herbarium, contact Suzanne Chapman (Schapman@hcp4.net) or Linda ('18) (lcostanzo@hcp4.net).

President's Message

Looking for a few good naturalists ...



We're halfway through with our year. Can you believe it?

This year is our 15th anniversary, so we want to celebrate. I'm looking for volunteers to help plan a celebration. Do you want a picnic, a cook-out, a fancy dress occasion? Bring me your ideas!

I'm also looking to build a committee of people with ideas for fundraising. We'd like to create a sustaining fund to help send members to the annual meeting. There's so much to be learned there, so many classes and wonderful opportunities to hear from other chapters across the state.

We would also like to help fund interns who work with our partners. We see these young people carrying the banner for conservation and becoming very active in our chapter. These opportunities are excellent ways to create lasting impacts in our area.

Though these may sound like lots of work, I believe that several hands make for a lighter load. There are those who will assume someone else will do it and won't volunteer. And there are those who aren't sure they have what it takes to volunteer for this. I need all of you. Tell me when you volunteer that you'll be the hands to someone else's brainchild. That's perfectly alright. We need lots of hands, and together we will make great things happen!

Carolyn Langlinais ('14)

ADVANCED TRAINING SHOULD BE PRE-APPROVED

Advanced Training (AT) qualifies for credit if it furthers the Texas Master Naturalist mission statement:

To develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the State of Texas.

To obtain approval of advanced training credit, please send the following information via email to Heartwoodat@gmail.com at least 24 hours before the training is to start:

1. Title of Training
2. Name of Trainer
3. Description of Training
4. Length of Training

FIRST ANNUAL REGIONAL TRAINING A SUCCESS!

Stay tuned for photos and speaker summaries in next month's newsletter!

TEXAS WATER SPECIALIST PROGRAM

In 2016, Texas Parks and Wildlife introduced a new certification program for people interested in volunteering for projects related to the aquatic ecosystems in our state. The certification – Texas Waters Specialist – is open to Texas Master Naturalists (TMN) as well as others interested in water-related issues.

Ten Heartwood members certified as Texas Water Specialists in 2016. In 2017, an additional fourteen members certified with nine of the ten from 2016 re-certifying. Unlike the TMN program, which tracks hours for certification from January 1 to December 31, the TWS program tracks hours from September 1 to August 31 of the next year. An additional three Heartwood members are set to be certified and twelve to re-certify by that August 31st deadline this year. There is still time for some of you to get the remaining hours required!

The mission of the program is “to develop a corps of well-informed volunteer specialists who provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of aquatic resources and aquatic habitats within their communities for the state of Texas.”

Requirements for certification are incredibly easy. For initial certification, all you need is eight hours of water-related AT as follows:

- Attend Texas Waters events, sessions, and field trips at the Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting. You can get half of that AT by attending the Texas Waters Day training at the Texas Master Naturalists Annual Meeting, usually held the first day of the meeting, Friday morning.
- Attend Texas Waters webinars. If you missed any of the webinars, you can still use them to earn AT by forming a small interactive study group and watch the recorded webinars (below) with discussion.
- Small group interactive study (Use the chapters in the curriculum and the "Questions to Consider" to guide your study and discussion.
- Other approved Texas Waters learning activities such as Texas Stream Team and CoCoRaHS training (Limit four hours)

Pre-approved chapter AT may also be used on occasion; however, the program is still developing and the requirements for what can be approved gets slightly more stringent each year. For that reason, and because four of the eight hours MUST come from either the Texas Waters Day presentations, webinars, or discussions based on the curriculum, it is best not to rely on chapter Advanced Training.

Note: The eight hours of AT for water certification can also be applied towards your Texas Master Naturalist re-certification. All AT should be recorded as “AT: TX Waters Certification Training.” Information about water certification can be found at

<https://tpwd.texas.gov/education/water-education/texaswatersprogram/texaswatersspecialist>

Once certified as a water specialist, re-certification the following years is achieved by volunteering ten hours in pre-approved water-related projects. Heartwood has several projects that could serve as an outlet for these hours—Friends of Lake Livingston, the Aquatic Science classes held by the Woodlands Township, and serving in a public outreach booth with water conservation theme or teaching a class on water-related topics. Also, time served as a Texas Stream Team Volunteer or collecting data for CoCoRaHS is approved. Volunteers may also get credit for serving on a watershed protection plan partnership. No additional AT is required to re-certify and those ten hours of volunteer time also count towards TMN re-cert. To record volunteer service for this certification, check the box near the bottom of the VMS form, “This activity qualifies for the following specialization: Texas Waters Specialist.”

TPWD administrators check VMS for hours recorded for certification in August. If you qualify, they will contact you directly to invite you to the Texas Waters Day event at the TMN Annual Meeting. And they will send your certification and initial certification pin to Heartwood to be distributed at a chapter meeting. They generally do not do anything to recognize re-certs, but Heartwood has made a point of recognizing our own TWS re-certifications with a unique pin.

The Heartwood Board is presently searching for a chapter liaison for this program. The liaison will be the chapter contact for the TPWD coordinator for the program, will ensure that all qualified water-related AT and volunteer service projects are communicated in the newsletter and bulletin, will answer questions related to the program, will work with the VMS Administrator to track hours recorded toward certification, and will contact and encourage members who are close to certification or re-certification to complete their hours. If you have any questions about this role or the program please contact Jennifer Seale ('14) at jaseale1@cs.com. Please contact Carolyn Langlains ('14) at heartwoodpres@gmail.com if you would like to serve as Heartwood's chapter liaison.



MONTHLY MEETING ADVANCED TRAINING RECAP June 5, 2019

“Life on Earth Depends on Natural Darkness: Save the Night.”

Steve Goldberg, International Dark-Sky Association (sgoldberg124@comcast.net, 713-385-4072), and Debbie Moran (softlighthouston.com) demonstrated through photos and modeling how shaded, warm-colored LED light more effectively lights an area at night. Light color is measured in CCT or "correlated color temperature." It is listed in degrees Kelvin, but has nothing to do with the temperature of the bulb. Rather, CCT Kelvin is the temperature of iron when it emits a certain color glow. Light at lower degrees Kelvin appears warmer and less blue. White 4000K LED light has a strong blue spike in its spectrum and is similar to sunlight at 4800K. Night creatures need the darkness of the night to hunt, forage, and procreate; and plant life cycles are tied to the amount of sunlight they are exposed to.

Blue shades of light prevent the body from making melatonin disrupting the sleep cycle. To diminish the impact of blue light, put aside phones, iPads, tablets, and computers an hour before bedtime. Newer devices can shift the screen to a yellower color at night. Check your device settings for a night display function. Shade bright white floodlights to prevent blinding glare and select lighting fixtures labeled “Dark Sky.”



Examples of how artificial light disrupts the natural growing cycle of soybeans (left) and trees (right).



How to Booths!”

Heartwood Secretary and booth event coordinator Adrienne Paquette ('16) showed members a standup display and the contents of one of the plastic trunks that are stored at the Heartwood Chapter office in the Jones State Forest Classroom building. Adrienne has provisioned several trunks with display items, flyers, and giveaways by topic — birds, pollinators, and water — for use at Texas Master Naturalist Booths. Booths at nature or green festivals and expos present opportunities to expand our membership and public awareness of our volunteer work. Contact Adrienne (heartwoodsec@gmail.com) if you would like to man a booth!



NATURE JOURNAL CHALLENGE

By Terrilyn MacArthur ('01)

So, did you find an interesting place in June to study nature? Did you spend some time imagining its natural history? Tell me about what you imagined for the place. I would love to hear your story!

For July, will you be traveling nearby? While out moving around in the region, watch for summer favorites to observe. Going west, keep your eyes open for some of the thousands of young whitetail deer. Yes, they are hard to see if you're whizzing by on a freeway, even if you notice a herd of adults in an open space. But in forests and prairies where you walk or hike, watch carefully. Especially in tall grass you can, literally, walk up on a tiny fawn patiently waiting for its mother to return from foraging. I find another interesting thing to see is all the herds of males that congregate during summer. The animosity and fighting of the previous fall mating season seems forgotten as they spend time together, feeding and growing this year's antlers.

Will you be heading to the coast for your summer getaway? Make time to stop and observe the salt marshes where life is teeming now. So many baby and young sea creatures can be seen! It means, though, that an abundance of the birds and other critters that feed on them are also present. You may find "skimmers" working in the shallows of the nearby Gulf, flying back and forth scooping up the myriad of tiny organisms floating and swimming near the water's surface. Take along a good field guide to sea birds! When it comes to observing bird behavior, however, always remember the old birdwatcher's axiom: "when the bird and the book disagree, always believe the bird!"

If you are keeping a journal, you will have begun creating your own guide to the seasons for our area. Over time you will, no doubt, more easily see the things that repeat season to season. It helps me to use those underlying phenomenon to more clearly recognize what is going on that maybe I missed before, or is a new lesson to learn about nature.

If you are willing to share some of the things you write in your journal, send them to me. I would love to know what you are thinking as you observe nature: texasnaturelover@earthlink.net. Until next time . . .



A NATURALIST PROFILE

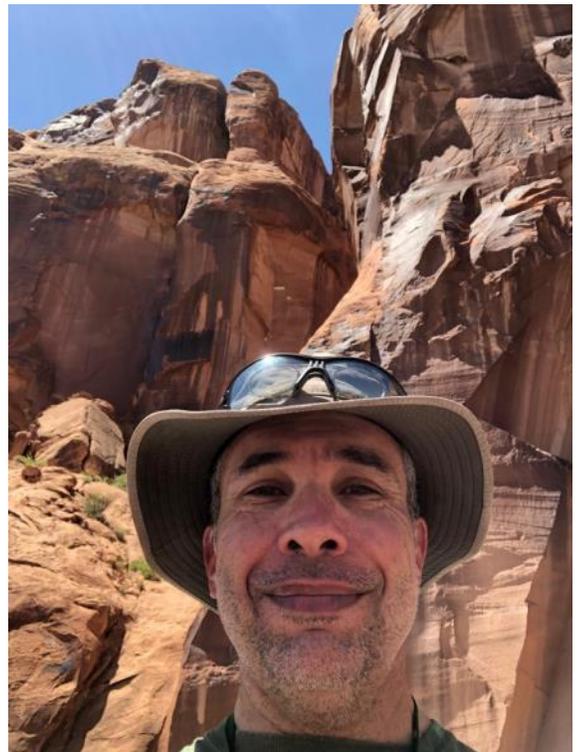
Some of our members and interns have extensive background and/or training in a discipline. Those featured in this newsletter have generously agreed to be “go-to” resource people. This month, we introduce to you Aram Derewetzky (Intern ‘19), field of expertise: geology.

Aram earned his PhD in geology from Washington State University. His thesis paper focused on the stratigraphy, sedimentology, and paleontology of carbonate strata from the early carboniferous of Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, and Utah. Aram was a professor at Central Washington University and WSU for two years before getting a job in industry. Aram then worked for Exxon, ExxonMobil, Hess, and finally Repsol for the past 21 years. He has worked in most of the oil bearing basins in the world, including nearly four years in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Aram currently focuses on stratigraphy and sedimentology, studying the way the layers of the Earth’s crust were deposited, what the layers are made of, and the interaction of those layers with the dynamic movements of the crust caused by plate tectonics. Aram participated in the discovery or development of several oil fields in West Texas, the Gulf of Mexico, Eastern Canada, and Southeast Asia, including one of the largest gas fields in the world, the Natural D-Alpha field off the east coast of Sumatra.

Aram still loves to teach, “So, what is geology? The word geology comes from the Greek words Geos-earth and Logia-study of, meaning the study of the Earth.” Aram thinks of geology as the smorgasbord of the sciences. All other sciences can be practiced within the confines of geology. For instance, geophysics is a sub-discipline of geology and looks at a number of physical aspects of the earth, such as magnetism and acoustics. The study of earthquakes is primarily the study of the acoustic properties of the Earth’s various layers. The dynamics of stream ecosystems, including variations in habitat and water quality are closely linked to aspects of geology.

Aram has offered to write a question and answer column for the newsletter. If you have a question touching on geology, e.g., why are certain plants only found in certain areas? Why are opossums the only marsupial mammals native to the Americas? You may email Aram at Heartwoodnewsletter@gmail.com or contact Aram directly at derewetzky@gmail.com). We’ll publish the most interesting questions here!



MORE RESOURCES

BOOK REVIEWS

The Gulf: The Making of an American Sea by Jack E. Davis.

This story of America's gulf reminds me of James Michener's panoramic historical sagas: beginning with the great sea's "birth" to its uncertain future after being battered by oil spills, dead zones, overfishing and destruction of estuarial nurseries. — Glenna Sloan (Intern '19)

WEB RESOURCES

Beabetterguide.com Free tips on sharing your passion with others.

Darksky.org Website dedicated to the effects of artificial night lights.

Softlighthouston.com Website dedicated to converting Houston's lighting from white to soft light.

REPORT SIGHTINGS OF SPECIAL WILDLIFE



BoxTurtles: <http://www.gctts.org/BTPT/wild-sighting.html>



Red-Cockaded Woodpecker: Report band colors seen with a photo of the woodpecker, if possible, to Donna Work, (dwork@tfs.tamu.edu).

Please send your ideas and/or article, puzzles/quiz challenges, photos for this newsletter to Heartwoodnewsletter@gmail.com.

Plan for Future Events

Next month's meeting will be on Wednesday, July 10, 2019, at HARC (Houston Advanced Research Center), 8801 Gosling Rd, Spring, TX 77381 at 6:00 p.m. (potluck snacks/dinner from 5:30 p.m.) Please note that this is NOT the first Wednesday of the month!

Advanced training: Easy Area Snake ID

Description: A picture may be worth 1000 words, but a live specimen is worth 1000 pictures! Using photos and live specimens, this presentation discusses some of the misconceptions regarding identification of the common venomous and harmless snakes of Harris County and surrounding areas, and teaches participants easy and accurate identification methods to differentiate between our local venomous and harmless species.

Presenter: Mike Howlett, Special Projects Coordinator, Harris County Precinct 4
mhowlett@hcp4.net, 281-353-8100 Main | 713-274-4194 Direct

Mike is a Superintendent with the Harris County Precinct 4 Parks Department, where he has worked for the past 25 years. His first 15 years were spent as a Naturalist at Jesse Jones Park in Humble, where he was a staunch supporter of the need for snakes in the ecosystem. He has also been involved with numerous herpetological and environmental organizations, including the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists (ASIH), the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles (SSAR), the International Carnivorous Plant Society (ICPS), and the East Texas Herpetological Society, where he served as Chairman of Education and President for a time.

Your Board of Directors meets the last Monday of every month (or Tuesday, if Monday is a holiday) at 6:00 p.m. at the Jones Forest Classroom. Members and the public are invited to attend.

Deadline to complete eight hours AT for water certification and 10 hours water-related volunteer time for recertification is **August 31, 2019**.

20th Texas Master Naturalist Program Annual Meeting this year's event, taking place in Rockwall, Texas, will run from Friday, **October 18th through Sunday, October 20th**. The event will be held at the Hilton Dallas/Rockwall Lakefront Hotel on the shores of Lake Ray Hubbard just east of Dallas. Check the State website for information after August 1, 2019, for registration and block hotel reservations: <https://txmn.org/2019-annual-meeting/>

- Sponsorship Requests: The Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting typically draws in around 500-550 attendees. Additional information can be found here: <https://txmn.org/files/2019/03/Sponsors-for-2019-TMN-Annual-Meeting.pdf>
- Vendor Requests to sponsor a booth at the Annual Meeting: <https://txmn.org/files/2019/04/Vendor-Info-and-Application-Form-2019-FINAL.pdf>
- Contest in Video: **Deadline September 30th**. "The goal of the Annual Video Contest is to share experiences, projects and the stories of our Chapters through video thereby increasing our chapters' and program marketing."
- Contests in Photo, Art, and Media: **Deadline October 18th**, first day of the meeting.