



The Heartwood Herald

The Heartwood Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Newsletter

July 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 Texas Master Naturalist shares her enthusiasm with volunteering at Kleb Woods.



Fred Collins and Susan Beckemeir

Who: Susan Beckemeir, Texas Master Naturalist 2014

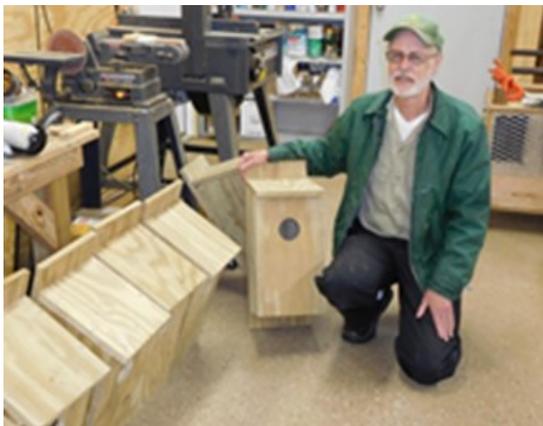
Where: Tucked in the northwest corner of Harris County is a county park officially known as the Kleb Woods Nature Preserve, Nature Center, and Historic Farm. The property was originally a farm purchased by German immigrants. The last owner, Elmer Kleb, didn't care much for farming, but he did like trees and nature. He planted numerous trees so that the area, which had been prairie then cultivated land, became a mixed forest. Elmer had no children and hoped to leave the property to the Audubon Society, but there was a little issue of back taxes that had to be settled.

With help from Texas Parks and Wildlife and the Audubon Society, Harris County purchased the property, the taxes were settled, and Elmer was told he could stay there for the rest of his life. Upon his death, the county began developing the property into a park. The park reflects the duality of the history of the place--part farm, part woodland. The original farm house is there, but the rest of the area is woodlands.

What do you like most about your volunteer position? My husband Mark and I first became involved at Kleb Woods in 2014 when Heartwood member John Stacy asked at a chapter meeting for volunteers to help him lead nature walks at the annual Kleb Woods Hummingbird Festival. We were recently certified naturalists and were looking for volunteer opportunities. As soon as John took us for a walk around the park, we knew we had found our spot. Mark's hobby is woodworking and there was a nice workshop for him to use. I had recently retired from the Cy-Fair ISD Science Resource Center where one of my duties had been designing science exhibits that were displayed in cabinets at the various elementary schools throughout the district. I was drawn to the "Young Naturalist" room in the nature center, a hands-on room filled with books, games and artifacts. We did help John with the nature walks that year and have every year

since, but it was just the beginning of our association with Kleb Woods.

There are several different work crews that volunteer at Kleb Woods under the direction of park manager Fred Collins. Fred is a visionary who constantly comes up with new ideas to improve the park. It isn't unusual for him to come across some oddity and think entirely outside the box to come up with a way to use it. The strangest project he has given me was making an "art project" from the bones of a dead armadillo. If you go into the "Young Naturalist" room, you'll see a poster of a map of Texas. The outline is made of armadillo scutes, the spine is in the general area of the Davis Mountains, and the skull is in the Panhandle. Fred is incredibly knowledgeable about the plants and animals in the area and if he doesn't know the answer to your questions, he probably knows somebody who does.



Mark is part of the carpentry crew that makes benches for the Naturalist room from split tree trunks and over 100 kits for nesting boxes that were assembled by visiting students. Mark and another volunteer built a catchment system that collects rain water from the nature center roof. Some of his projects haven't qualified as TMN hours because they involve the heritage part of the park. They have been interesting and challenging such as the model of the Eli Whitney cotton gin that he built and demonstrates at the annual "Diggin' Old Stuff" heritage festival.

Heartwood members Ursula Kyle and Richard Kyle have worked with John Stacy and others on maintaining the trails that wander through the woods. They also do their best to do away with Chinese Tallow and other invasive and aggressive plants. There is a gardening crew that plants and maintains a vegetable garden next to the old farmhouse. Most of their time is spent maintaining the hummingbird and pollinator gardens that flank the nature center.

Every Wednesday morning starting at 8:30 in the morning (8:00 in the hot summer months) a group of birders, usually led by a staff member, goes on an observation walk at Kleb Woods. The participants keep track of the variety and number of birds they see and report the totals to the eBird app. This activity also qualifies for citizen science hours.

Maybe the best thing about Kleb Woods, at least for my husband and me, is its location. Nearly every other volunteer activity takes place in the eastern part of our district. We live in the far southwest corner of Montgomery County near Magnolia. It is nice for us not to need to drive an hour before we begin working. We would love to have you join us, to volunteer, or just look around since Kleb Woods is a "hidden treasure."

Are you interested in learning more or volunteering at Kleb Woods? For information on volunteer opportunities at Kleb Woods, contact Megan Ahlgren (klebwoods@pct3.hctx.net or call (281) 357-5324).

1st Annual Heartwood Advanced Training Day

Many, many thanks and congratulations to the Heartwood Chapter for their inaugural Regional AT day on June 1, 2019. It was so well organized, fun, educational, and filled with passion and enthusiasm. There were six sessions, which included leading interpretive hikes, developing the Spring Creek Greenway, plant biology and learning to “key” plants, mini stream team training, and protecting the endangered Red-cockaded woodpecker. The AT day brought booths from several organizations, a beautiful garden at the Montgomery Ag Extension, a great lunch, a colorful T-shirt and amazing camaraderie... Wow! Great job Allison Copony and the Heartwood Chapter volunteers.

Lori Buffum, TMN/Gideon Lincecum Chapter

Note: There were 76 TMN who registered for the AT Day with 72 (90%) in attendance. Six different chapters registered for the event including East Texas, Gideon Lincecum, Gulf Coast, Heartwood, Highland Lakes, and Lower Trinity Basin. Those giving presentations included Adrienne Paquette who presented Intro to Interpretive Walks, Kris Linberk who spoke about Spring Creek Greenway, Anita Tiller who provided information on Botany and Plant Taxonomy, Teri McArthur who presented Stream Team Training, and Donna Work who presented information on the Red-cockaded Woodpecker. Evaluations from the event had many positive comments. TMN from outside the Heartwood Chapter expressed hopes for another AT day in 2020 with plans to attend. A short bio and summary of each speaker’s talk is shown below.



Adrienne Paquette, B.S. Animal Science, M.S. Environmental Management and Sustainability, TMN 2016, L.A.N.D.S. Educator, Texas Wildlife Association since 2015 (heartwoodsec@gmail.com). Go-to person for wildlife rehab, nature walks, and public outreach.

Interpretative walks are about sharing your passion and sparking an interest and curiosity in others. Make the walk personal and meaningful—what is your theme and message? Use stories and games to engage the participants; e.g., bird bingo and camouflage a trail. You are responsible for the comfort and safety of the participants, get to know their names and engage disruptive guests to get their positive attention. Pay attention to the weather and time of day when scheduling a walk; e.g., not 2:00 p.m. in July. Get participants actively engaged in nature, rather than showcasing nature like it is a museum. Adrienne engaged the attendees in a virtual interpretative walk—what would you say to the group upon seeing:



Test yourself. Then see Adrienne’s suggestions posted in her PowerPoint at <https://txmn.org/heartwood/media-powerpoints-slide-shows-etc/>.



Kris Linberk, B.S. Environmental Science; TMN 2017; Naturalist Coordinator and Director for Trails as Parks, Harris County Precinct 4 Parks Department (klinberk@hcp4.net); Heartwood Volunteer Services Projects Director (Heartwood_vsp@gmail.com). Go-to person for trail planning and leading/crafting nature walks and talks.

The vision of creating a vast nature trail and park that would also serve as a riparian buffer zone protecting Spring Creek from encroaching development was initiated by four key players who worked to preserve the creek that forms a meandering dividing line between Harris and Montgomery counties.

From the Harris County side, Jon Lindsay, who served as county judge from 1975 to 1995, his administrative assistant, Judy Overby Bell, and Jerry Eversole, who served as a county commissioner for more than two decades, teamed up with then-Montgomery County Commissioner Ed Chance to begin the work on preserving what is now known as the Spring Creek Greenway.

Now 40 miles long, and stretching from Spring Creek Park in Tomball to the San Jacinto River at Highway 59/69, the greenway trail and adjoining parkland is one of the longest urban forested, contiguous riparian zones in the United States.

A 16-mile stretch of the greenway — between Jesse H. Jones and Dennis Johnston Parks — is paved and handicap accessible.

Created through conservation easements granted to the Bayou Land Conservancy, land donations and land purchases, the greenway is maintained by employees and volunteers of Harris and Montgomery counties, including a number of Heartwood members.



Anita Tiller, B.S. Biology with an Environmental Science Certificate; M.S. in Botany; lifelong naturalist and Heartwood TMN; botanist and conservation manager for Mercer Botanic Gardens, Harris County Precinct 4, since 2000 (atiller@hcp4.net). Go-to person for botany.

After a brief review of the history of Mercer Botanic Gardens and intro to botany, Anita Tiller gave participants specimens of pine boughs with pine cones, leafy red bud tree twigs, Asian lilies, and quarter sections of sunflowers. Each specimen was examined using a “loupe” (magnifying lens) and a dissecting kit. Flowers were gently pulled apart so that the parts of the flower could be identified. Participants then stepped through a botanical key to determine plant group, genus and species. Did you know that a sunflower is actually hundreds of flowers in one?



Teri MacArthur, Environmental educator for more than 10 years, Certified Project Learning Tree facilitator, Certified Leopold Education Facilitator, Certified Texas Stream Team Monitor since 2004, Certified Stream Team Trainer since 2006, member of the Texas Mycological Society since 1980; Texas Master Naturalist since 2001, Founding Member of the Heartwood Chapter, Water Conservation Specialist for The Woodlands Township (texasnaturelover@earthlink.net or 281.381.3281). Go-to person for mushrooms and water.

Participants were guided in conducting the five chemical reactions necessary to determine the oxygen level in water samples and discussed conditions that could cause variances such as water temperature when tested. Increased public awareness that dog poop is the primary source of bacteria pollution in our urban waterways has reduced bacteria counts, but more must be done! Contact Teri if you can help monitor the water quality of a stream or creek near you.



Donna Work, B.S. Wildlife Science; Certified Project Learning Tree Facilitator; Certified Project WILD Facilitator; Texas A&M Forestry Service since 1990, currently working with the Water Resources Project, Forest Stewardship Program, and with the endangered species red-cockaded woodpecker (dwork@tfs.tamu.edu). Go-to person for water, forestry and the red-cockaded woodpecker.

Donna's handout about the red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) is posted on the Heartwood website <https://txmn.org/heartwood/red-cockaded-woodpecker-slideshow-by-donna-work/>. The RCW is the only known woodpecker that nests in live pine trees. The RCW depends on resin ooze to protect its nest from its major predator, the rat snake. The RCW family groups consist of a breeding pair and one or more helpers, but each family member carves out his or her own living cavity. Eggs are laid in the male's home and the male sits on the eggs at night. Each family requires about 70 acres of forest living space.

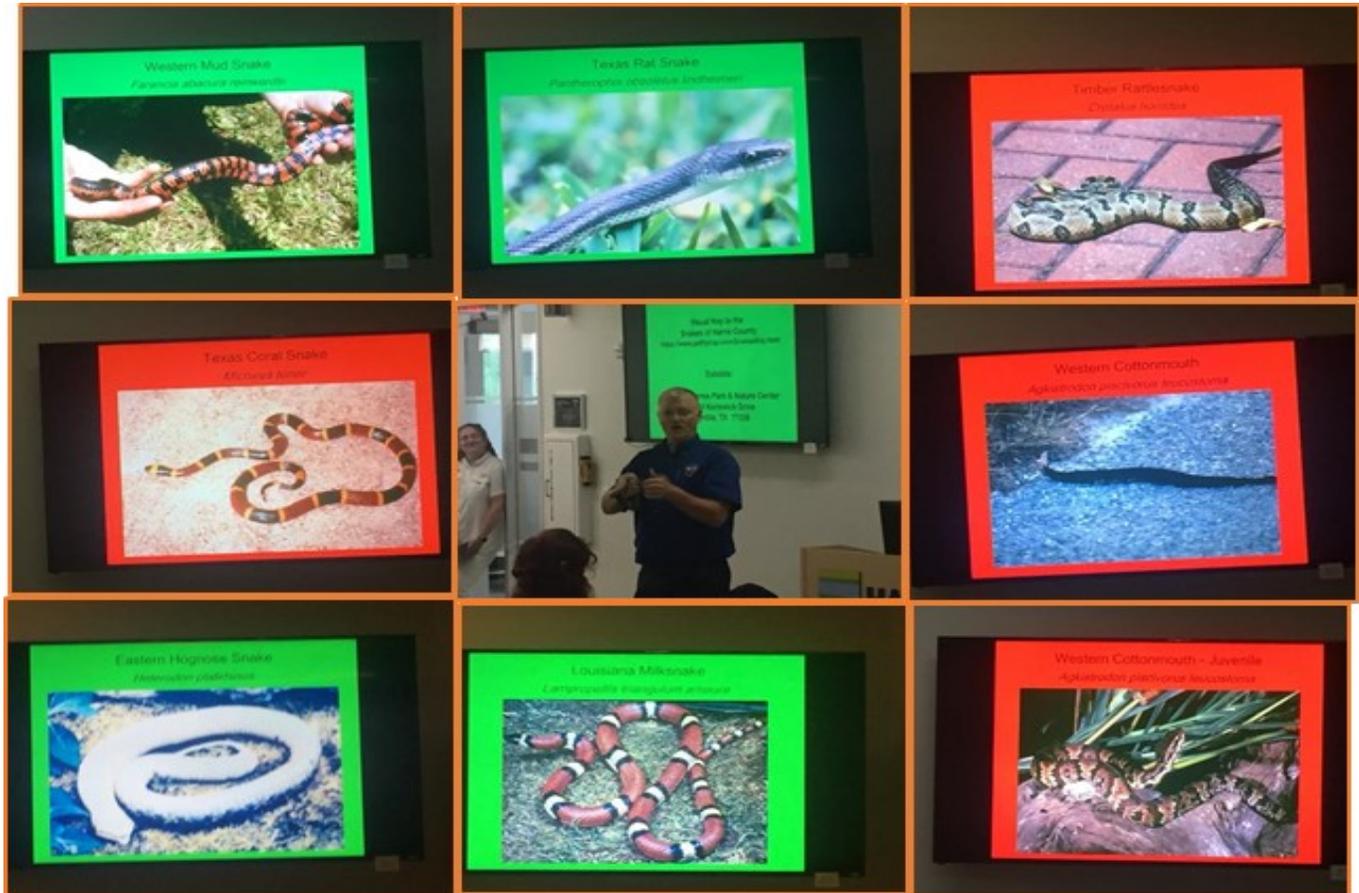


These are three different kinds of woodpeckers. Test your identification skills, then see Part 1, page 2 of Donna's handout:

MONTHLY MEETING ADVANCED TRAINING RECAP

July 10, 2019: Alright...Let's Talk Snakes!

Presenter: Mike Howlett, Special Projects Coordinator, Harris County Precinct 4 (Retiring July 2019)



On Wednesday night, Mike Howlett, our guest speaker, reviewed some of the misconceptions regarding identification of the common venomous and harmless snakes of Harris County and surrounding areas and taught easy and accurate identification methods to differentiate between our local venomous and harmless species. He also shared some “myth-conceptions” such as the idea that venomous snakes always have diamond shaped heads (**not true!**) or always have pits on the side of their heads (**not true!**). He covered the “3 C venomous snakes” in our area and how to identify them.

- Southern Copperhead Look for the Hershey’s kisses (or Hershey’s “hisses”)
- Western Cottonmouth..... Look for the raccoon or Zorro mask
- Texas Coral snake Look for the “yellow-red-yellow-black-yellow-red-yellow- black” coloration, or every other color is yellow, and diurnal/crepuscular behavior (active day and dawn/dusk)

Mike also shared photos and identification traits of other common non-venomous snakes in the area such as **ribbon snakes** (have stripes down their bodies), **Eastern Hognose snakes** (have a nose like a pig snout and may behave like a cobra when threatened), and the **Texas Rat snake** (longest snake in our area, best climber, and best natural rodent control in our area). Mike shared some of the first aid methods to remember in case you are bitten by a venomous snake; however, he strongly advised us to go to the nearest emergency room ASAP. Mike finished off by sharing live examples of some of the snakes he described in his presentation. Remember, the best snake is a LIVE snake!



Group Names of Wildlife Found in Texas

Draw a line to match the wildlife species with the appropriate group name.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Feral Hog | a bale or a nest |
| 2. Bald Eagle | a sloth or a sleuth |
| 3. Armadillo | a bask |
| 4. Red-Cockaded Woodpecker | a cast |
| 5. Bluegill | a convocation |
| 6. Blue Crab | a school |
| 7. Black Bear | a sounder |
| 8. Green Anole | a roll |
| 9. American Alligator | a descent |
| 10. Red-eared Slider | a lounge |



President's Message

Carolyn Langlinais ('14)

Dear Members and Interns,

Discussions are underway for our anniversary celebration in November. We'd love to have a slideshow of photos taken through the years. If you have photos you'd like to share, please send copies to heartwoodpres@gmail.com. If you have print photos that you'd like to lend to me, plan to bring them to our next chapter meeting in August at Dennis Johnston Park's Big Stone Lodge.

There are so many wonderful opportunities coming up in the next few months. We will of course still be planting our milkweed for the big Township events. Please set aside some time on Wednesday mornings to come out and see the milkweed growing at Nature's Way Resources. It's cool under the trees and there are picnic tables to sit and plant and visit.

The TMN annual meeting is gearing up. It's a wonderful way to earn advanced training hours, meet fellow master naturalists, and become inspired by what's going on in other chapters. Members from Heartwood who will be presenting (and representing) this year include Scott Ball, Scooter Langley, Adrienne Paquette, Lisa Tuck, and me. Visit the state website to learn more about competitions that take place at the meeting. Scrapbooking, newsletters, photography, videography are some of the competition categories. Represent!

Take a moment to sign up for the state Texas Master Naturalist ListServ at <https://listserv.tamu.edu/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=TMN&A=1>. There's a wealth of information they share with us through this communication tool.

I'm so proud of the 2019 intern class. They have such a passion for volunteering and aren't the least bit shy about rolling up their sleeves and getting things done! Their graduation is July 20th at Jones Forest. Come out to meet and mingle, lunch and learn, and share some words of wisdom about your favorite place to volunteer. Contact Teri M. heartwoodtraining@gmail.com) to let her know you're coming so there's enough victuals to go around!

"Hurt No Living Thing"

By: Christina Rosetti

Hurt no living thing; Ladybird, nor butterfly,
Nor moth with dusty wing,
Nor cricket chirping cheerily,
Nor grasshopper so light of leap,
Nor dancing gnat, nor beetle fat,
Nor harmless worms that creep.



NATURE JOURNAL CHALLENGE

By Terrilyn MacArthur

Wow, it got hot fast this year! So for August, how about finding a cool, shady spot of your choice and while you sip something cold, relax and drift back in time to when some other person may have found respite from the heat in this spot. Say, a thousand years ago...

The shallow seas had receded, leaving rich soil that was now covered with, primarily, grasses. Tall grasses, short grasses, some with useful seeds, some that could be woven into useful items you and your family needed as you move around this vast sea of grasses hunting and gathering.

Yes, over time other kinds of vegetation had begun appearing and, in another few hundred years, the trees and larger shrubs would begin to take over to replace the grass in places. But for now, the grass is cool beneath you, the sky is blue with beautiful white, puffy clouds.

Now, write a bit in your journal. If you had to live off the land as in those days, what would be your resources now? What exists that might be useful for a nomadic lifestyle today? It's another exercise in using your imagination. If you nap for a few minutes during this warm weather outing, it's okay.

If you care to share anything you have written in your journal with me, or with the other chapter members, please send it to me: texasnaturelover@earthlink.net

Until next month...

JONES STATE FOREST IN THE NEWS

S.B. 345 was passed during the 2019 Legislative Session. It provides protection for W.G. Jones State Forest, comprised of 1,722 acres in Montgomery County, except for expansion of FM1488 by the Dept. of Transportation. It takes effect in September of 2019. To read the bill, follow this link:

<https://capitol.texas.gov/BillLookup/Text.aspx?LegSess=86R&Bill=SB345>

MORE RESOURCES

BOOK REVIEWS

The Food Explorer: The True Adventures of the Globe-Trotting Botanist Who Transformed What America Eats, by Daniel Stone.

The story of David Fairchild and his “plant immigrants,” Meyer lemons, and Marlatt’s Quarantine Act. <https://www.fairchildgarden.org/>

WEB RESOURCES

www.pollinator.org

<https://www.treemusketeers.net/birdwatching-guide>

<https://www.facebook.com/AirPotatoPatrol> -> Air Potato Patrol, a Citizen Science Project in Florida

www.texasbrigades.org -> The mission of the Texas Brigades is to “educate and empower youths with leadership skills and knowledge in wildlife, fisheries, and land stewardship to become conservation ambassadors for a sustained natural resource legacy.”

www.nature.org

WORLD CELEBRATION DATES

International Tiger Day - July 29

World Ranger Day - International Ranger Federation - July 31

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_environmental_dates

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This newsletter was produced by the collaborative efforts of Nicholas Barbara, Carol Carothers, Aram Derewetsky, Sarah Freeman, Carolyn Langlinais, John Marshall, Gail McConnell, and Terri Stinn.

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

PLAN FOR FUTURE EVENTS

Look for the Monday Heartwood Bulletin for in-depth volunteer and advanced training announcements.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

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.

Next month's chapter meeting will be on **Wednesday, August 7, 2019**, at **Big Stone Lodge, Dennis Johnston Park**, 709 Riley Fuzzel Road, Spring, TX 77373 from **6 to 8 p.m.** (networking/refreshments at 5:30 p.m.). The meeting will be hosted by Mercer Botanic Gardens and the Heartwood Chapter.

Advanced training: Mercer Botanic Gardens' Student Research & Education Symposium

Description: Mercer Botanic Gardens partners with colleges, universities, and high schools to find motivated students who wish to conduct botanical research, engage garden visitors through programming, and explore natural mosquito abatement methods at their facilities. Mercer's interns are generously provided by the Harris County Precinct 4 Intern Program and Mercer's Herbarium Research internships through funding from the Native Plant Society of Texas, Houston Chapter, in honor of Dr. Larry Brown, Heartwood Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists, Center for Plant Conservation rare plant research funds, and other donations to The Mercer Society.

Students and interns will present projects featuring education, interpretation, and research of Mercer's globally diverse botanical collections, research and documentation of the SBSC Herbarium collection of more than 50,000 plant specimens and over 2,300 botanical illustrations, and propagation work for Mercer's greenhouse collections and mosquito abatement research.

Presenters:

Education/Volunteer Interns

Julia Chamon; University of Houston; Volunteer Intern

Emilio Ordoñez; University of Houston; Education Intern

Mercer Botanical Center Herbarium

Jamie Lehnen; University of Houston

Maria Yañez; Texas Tech

Abhishek Choudhury; The Woodlands College Park High School

Amelia Gonzalez; Sam Houston State (Heartwood Chapter Intern 2019)

Katerine Morris; Lone Star College (Heartwood Chapter Member 2018)

Horticultural Interns, Mercer Botanic Gardens

Sarah G. Brecher; Texas A&M University

Nicholas Brockett; James Madison High School

Alan Torres; Texas A&M University

HCP4 Mosquito Biocontrol Initiative Interns

Darya Pineda McCreary; Biotech Institute Lonestar College

Jessica Mauch; Biotech Institute Lonestar College

Spring Creek Greenway Nature Trail Grand Re-opening
Saturday, August 3, 2019, 10 a.m. — 2 p.m.

Water Certification

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

Hummingbird Festivals:

September 14-----Kleb Woods Nature Center
September 14 and 21-----Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, Lake Jackson
September 19-22-----Rockport/Fulton

20th Texas Master Naturalist Program Annual Meeting

Rockwall, Texas; October 18-20

Texas Master Naturalist



20th Annual Meeting

- Registration and Hotel Reservations at the Hilton Dallas/Rockwall Lakefront Hotel. Check the State website for information after August 1, 2019,

<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:** Deadline is September 27, 2019,

<https://txmn.org/files/2019/04/Vendor-Info-and-Application-Form-2019-FINAL.pdf>

- **Video Contest:** Deadline is September 30th.

- **Contests in Photo, Art, and Media:** Deadline is October 18th, the first day of the meeting.