

THE HEARTWOOD HERALD



The Heartwood Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Newsletter

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, Carson Stokes, Heartwood Chapter Vice President, who was recognized at the last Chapter meeting for his 500 service hours, writes:

I have always had a strong curiosity and deep love for nature; as a Boy Scout, I earned every merit badge related to animals, plants, nature, and conservation; and in college, I majored in biology. Volunteering as a Master Naturalist has provided me a platform for learning and passing on my knowledge for the benefit of nature. Many of my volunteer hours are spent at Mercer Botanical Garden with the native plant group. This group propagates native plants for sale several times a year and makes presentations about the importance of re-establishing native plants in our landscaping to encourage our endangered wildlife like the Monarch butterfly.



I also spend many hours volunteering with the Bayou Land Conservancy and have learned about options for protecting wildlife habitats such as conservation easements. Through this group, I have also learned about strategies for enhancing the quality and quantity of our surface water, including along waterways experiencing high residential development like Lake Creek. It is a fulfilling experience to give presentations to different groups about this information and to see landowners and our government officials make better choices for conserving our water resources.

I am grateful for the knowledge, training, and camaraderie with like-minded individuals provided by the Master Naturalist volunteer programs. I especially wish to thank Teri MacArthur for introducing me to the TMN intern program; Anita Tiller and her staff as well as the Mercer Native Plants volunteers for increasing my knowledge and passion for Texas native plants; and John Stacy for introducing me to the Bayou Land Conservancy and their efforts to protect our riparian and wetlands habitats. I look forward to expanding my knowledge, helping new members find their passion, and providing support for TMN's goals.

During March, April and May, The Woodlands Township Environmental Service Department conducted Aquatic Field Studies with fourth and fifth grade students from area schools. A total of 19 Texas Master Naturalist volunteers spent 328.5 hours assisting 1198 students and 152 adults to gain a better understanding of aquatic ecosystems through multiple activities on the grounds of the Bear Branch Recreation Center. Thank you to all who helped out with this fun opportunity to share knowledge about the importance of protecting our waterways with these future leaders!

More opportunities to volunteer with student groups will be coming up this fall. If you are interested, contact Teri MacArthur at tmacarthur@thewoodlandstowship-tx.gov or call (281) 210-3928.



Glenna Sloan, Carol Caruthers, Kathie Herrick, Dick Herrick and Carolyn Langlinais tackled the invasive air potato vine in Grogan's Mill village. A 55 gallon bag was almost completely filled, but it was hard to stop even as the day warmed up as there were more everywhere we looked. The plant can grow 8 inches a day, climbing to the tops of trees, and has a tendency to take over native plants. Aerial tubers (bulbils) form in the leaf axils and drop to the ground, sprouting new plants. The team removed the plants by digging them up, root tubers and all. *Dioscorea bulbifera* is native to Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa and a member of the yam family. By Glenna Sloan and Carolyn Langlinais

Texas Master Naturalists also assisted with this year's insect trapping. NO (0, nada, zilch, nil) Southern Pine Beetles (SPB) were trapped in Texas during the 2019 trapping season. This bodes well for us heading into summer as NO SPB activity is expected. Clerid beetle (SPB predator) numbers were also very low. By John Warner, Allen Smith TPWL

CALL FOR ASSISTANCE

Mentors for 2019 Intern Class

If you have an area of expertise or chosen area of study as a Master Naturalist--birder, botanist, entomologist, forester, geologist, outdoor adventurer, wetlander, wildlife biologist--please volunteer to mentor a 2019 intern. Being a mentor is being a friend, albeit a more experienced friend, in nature studies. Share your common interests; resources such as training seminars, websites, books, and great finds on nature walks; take hikes or work on volunteer projects. Interested? Please contact Carson Stokes (heartwoodvp@gmail.com) or Melissa Shewbert (heartwoodmembers@gmail.com).

May 1, 2019

Adrienne Paquette, Heartwood Secretary, Texas Wildlife Association educator, and Friends of Texas Wildlife volunteer, brought Artemis the owl to the Heartwood monthly meeting. Adrienne presented an hour of advanced training on what to do when encountering an injured wild animal and interesting animal facts, such as:



--We have opossums in Texas, not possums, which live in Australia. Opossum mothers have a pouch and nurture for 2-3 months exactly the number of babies as the mother has teats (usually 13). Opossum babies do not suckle, the teat drips milk into their mouths. Opossums are great animals to have as they eat as many as 5,000 ticks a month and can eat venomous snakes, rodents, and cockroaches. Plus, they are immune to Lyme disease, and due to their low body temperature are unlikely to carry rabies.

--As we begin to see fawns, do not kidnap them unless they have been left in the same place for 2-3 days or if you know the mother has died. Mother deer do keep a watch out for their babies and will come back to feed and move them in the evening. Fawns do not have a scent, but humans do, so by touching it you could be putting it in danger by allowing predators to more easily find it.

--Owls fly silently due to their feather structure and long wingspan. This, along with their excellent eyesight and hearing, allows them to hunt efficiently at night. Remember, one needs to be state or federally permitted to house wild animals. If you find an injured or orphaned animal, go to www.ftwl.org/node/21 for information on what to do next. Do not give the animal food or water except on direction of a rehabber at Friends of Texas Wildlife or Texas Parks and Wildlife, <https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/rehab/list/>.

40 DAYS TO ENTER ADVANCED TRAINING AND VOLUNTEER HOURS

Hours not entered AND approved within 45 days of the event are lost! Please remember to enter your hours for advanced training and volunteering no later than 40 days after you participate. It can take up to 5 days for those hours to be approved. Don't put off entering your hours until it's too late!

Next month's meeting will be on Wednesday, June 5, 2019, at AgriLife Conroe, 9020 Airport Rd, Conroe, TX 77303 (Master Gardner's facility near the regional airport) at 6:00 p.m. Social starts at 5:30pm. We are required by the AgriLife staff to refrain from bringing any cilantro or shellfish into the building due to staff allergies.

Advanced training to be presented:

Topic 1: "Life on Earth Depends on Natural Darkness: Save the Night."

Effects of light/lighting on humans and animals when bringing "daytime" to the night, and what we humans can do to minimize the impact.

Presenter: Steve Goldberg, International Dark-Sky Association, sgoldberg124@comcast.net, 713-385-4072. Steve, now retired from the computer industry, has been interested in astronomy since first "finding and seeing" Saturn as a child. After taking an astronomy course in college, he was given a key to the telescope on top of the science building in New Orleans. He is past president of the Pontchartrain Astronomy Society in New Orleans and the Houston Astronomical Society. Steve and his wife Amelia have organized 2 solar eclipse trips to Mexico and Peru, the annual Astronomy Day in 1980, and other specialized astronomical events. By watching the night sky, Steve has learned about the causes of light pollution and the types of lights that adversely affect nature and the sky.

Topic 2: "How to Booths!"

A discussion of possible topics and activities for public event booths using materials provided by the Heartwood Chapter.

Presenter: Adrienne Paquette. adriennepaq@gmail.com. Adrienne Paquette has a B.S. in Animal Science from Texas A&M and a Master's in Ecology from St Edwards University/Universite Catholique de l'Ouest. In 2014, Adrienne did an internship with the education department at Fossil Rim Wildlife Center in Glen Rose, and has been a wildlife educator for the Texas Wildlife Association since 2015. She is also the Secretary of the Texas Master Naturalists' Heartwood Chapter.

2019 RECERTIFICATION PINS ON BACK ORDER

The following members have recertified for 2019: Scott Ball, Susan Beckemeier, Barbra Edwards, Mari Hanley, Peter Jenson, Robert Johnson, Stanley Krauhs, Richard Kyle, Ursula Kyle, Carolyn Langlinais, Teri McArthur, Debbie McMullen, Claire Moore, Sharon Newsom, Cynthia Rubens, Jay Rubens, Jennifer Seale, Melissa Shewbert, John Stacy, Carson Stokes, Lisa Tuck, Krien VerBerkmoes, Larry Walker, Hugh Wedgeworth, Diane Wedgeworth, Kathleen Ynanez.

The 2019 recertification pin is the golden cheeked warbler. Unfortunately, the pins are on back order "until further notice." They will be distributed as soon as they are received.

NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR THE BOARD

The Heartwood Board Members now have official email addresses. Please use the following addresses for master naturalist business:

President	Carolyn Langlinais	Heartwood pres@gmail.com
Vice President	Carson Stokes	Heartwoodvp@gmail.com
Secretary	Adrienne Paquette	Heartwoodsec@gmail.com
Treasurer	Andre Houser	Heartwoodtreas@gmail.com
State Chapter Rep	Scott Ball	henryball415@gmail.com
Bd Member at Large	Anita Tiller	anitatiller@aol.com
Past President	Krien Verberkmoes	krienvb3@live.com
Membership	Melissa Shewbert	Heartwoodmembers@gmail.com
New Class Director	Teri MacArthur	Heartwoodtraining@gmail.com
Communications	vacant	Heartwoodmncomm@gmail.com
Advanced Training	Allison Capony	Heartwoodat@gmail.com
Volunteer Svc Projects	Kris Linberk	Heartwoodvsp@gmail.com
Programming	Lisa Tuck	Heartwoodprog@gmail.com
New Class Rep	Sarah Freeman	sarahfreeman38@gmail.com
TPWD Advisor	Diana Foss	diana.foss@tpwd.texas.gov
AgriLife Advisor	Brandon Gregson	brandon.gregson@ag.tamu.edu
TX Forest Service Adv.	John Warner	john.warner@tfs.tamu.edu

Gail McConnell will chair the Newsletter Committee. Please email ideas and newsletter items to Heartwoodnewsletter@gmail.com. Gwen Lanning has volunteered to edit the weekly Heartwood Bulletin.

Sarah Freeman is the new class (2019) representative. Sarah moved to The Woodlands from Aberdeen, Scotland in 2018. Since moving to The Woodlands, she has enjoyed learning about the local wildlife, especially all snakes. She currently is working at The Woodlands Township Environmental Services Department as a Mosquito Surveillance Technician, a fascinating outdoors job that she loves! Sarah has already completed the Master Naturalist advanced training and volunteer hour requirements with the help of her new found love of Aquatics Science, particularly macroinvertebrates.

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.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This month has seen growth in some of our committees, most notably the newsletter committee. Gail McConnell, Carol Carothers, Terri Stinn, and Glenna Sloan are busy creating a vehicle to increase our sense of community. Gwen Lanning will be taking over the weekly Bulletin that announces the volunteer and advanced training opportunities. Thank you all for taking on this responsibility! Many thanks to Wendy Serra for kicking off this effort in January! If you would like to be on the newsletter committee or contribute items for the newsletter, please email Heartwoodnewsletter@gmail.com.

Special recognition goes to Linda Costanzo and Larry Walker for fulfilling their roles as new class representatives for 2018. The position has been passed to Sarah Freeman for 2019. She will be responsible for attending board meetings and bringing the unique voice of the intern class to those meetings. Thank you for agreeing to serve, Sarah!

As part of our long range plans, the board is interested in generating funds to create scholarships and grants to send members to the annual meeting or for specific certifications that would allow the participant to in turn train our members. To further this goal, we are looking for people who have a fundraising or grant writing background to give us some direction. We are looking for volunteers to also serve on this committee in a support role. If you'd like to help, please contact me at heartwood-pres@gmail.com.

The Heartwood office in the Jones State Forest Education Building is getting a makeover. A "new" cabinet and desk have been added and walls are being painted. We are looking for gently used bookshelves to complete the renovation, preferably in a light color or that can be painted. Please let me know if you have any to donate to the cause.

The summer months are upon us and can be brutal. If you are scheduled to work outside, bring plenty of water, wear sunscreen and sunglasses and a hat. Take extra care to protect our most important asset, you!

Carolyn Langlinais

NATURE JOURNAL CHALLENGE

By Terrilyn MacArthur

So, are you keeping a nature journal, or simply making field notes? Let's distinguish:

- Both contain observations.
- Both should contain some level of identification about the organism you have observed.
- Both should have date, time, and location noted, along with other relative information such as weather conditions.

Field notes, however, would be as precise as possible in describing the location, surroundings (perhaps the soil or substrate?), size, color and any/all elements that would characterize it when making a final identification, or pinning down your original guess about its identification.

A journal, on the other hand, would contain some of the same points translated into the thoughts and feelings you had while spending time with the observed organism in its home in nature. This is where you express the impact that being in nature and closely observing something had on your thinking. I often catch myself writing a verse of poetry or some other silly entry when I write in one of my journals. Remember, your journal is only for you, unless you choose to share it with a fellow nature lover.

In April, did you find a tree or plant with heart shaped leaves? My favorite is *Cercis canadensis*, the Eastern redbud tree. Did you notice the way the smaller limbs grow in that zig-zag shape? And how about a spider web? I found a nice funnel web at the base of a tree. The opening was large, as was the web. Hmmm.

For JUNE, let's try using our imaginations! Find a spot--one you know well, or one you've never visited before, or . . . you choose. Get comfortable, relax your mind and try to stop being only inside yourself. Open yourself to the thought that you are connected to this place. As you search out as much detail as possible with your eyes, imagine what this place has experienced. Why did that limb break on the tree? How did that hole in the ground come to be next to the dead log? What animals would find this spot to be a good habitat?

Build a context for this place and write down its history. As you imagine it was. It's a great way to practice using your imagination, and it helps you open your mind to explore possibilities in everything you see. Here's a poem from my nature journal:

Nature Explorations

What can you learn on a walk in the woods?
A thousand and one things, and all of them good!
How animals live and how trees help us breathe.
The reason snakes slither. Who's that on your sleeve?
Can plants make you itch? Where do bees make their nest?
And where do the birds go when they want to rest?
Come for a walk, conversation will follow.
If you think that it's fun, let's repeat it tomorrow!
...or one day soon.

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. Unless you tell me "no publication," the best pages received will be published in this newsletter.

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 Hank Van Joslin (2019), field of interest: herpetology.

As the son of a USMC Colonel, Hank and his family lived on the west and east coasts of the United States and in several Latin American countries. Hank started to collect and keep reptiles and amphibians at a very young age; from desert tortoises in California to Rhinoceros Iguanas in the Dominican Republic. He was able to experience the greatest diversity of herps by just stepping out the back door of their home while living in Quarry Heights, the Canal Zone in Panama.

While in college, Hank kept a four-foot rat snake, “Leroy,” loose in his room. In the summers, Leroy would travel with Hank to the Dominican Republic where Hank would be seen riding his motorcycle with the snake wrapped around his neck. Hank’s initial plans were to become a Herpetologist; however, when he discovered that the job market for this field was very limited, he opted for degrees in business/finance and kept herps as a hobby.

Today, Hank keeps a small collection of about 80 milk snakes and king snakes at a facility where he is breeding them for specific colors and patterns. Regarding reptiles and amphibians, he shares that his mission is to educate the young and old about these fascinating creatures so that there is not an automatic fear and negativity towards them. In 2018, with the support of two major herpetological societies, Hank formed RACER Reptile and Amphibian Certification Education Resources, to create educational materials written in layman’s terms for schools, organizations, and the general public. He found the wealth of these educational materials in Micha Petty’s “A Primer on Reptiles & Amphibians” and helped get this important resource published. The goal is to have a copy of this book on the shelf in every school and public library across the country:

<https://encouragex.com/life-event/Reptiles-and-Amphibians>.



Hank is frequently invited to speak about Herps to elementary school children, scouts, and other groups and recently shared, “What’s really interesting is that when speaking with a group of inquisitive children, the questions go beyond herps and relate to other aspects of nature, conservation, ecology, etc., which I have limited knowledge of. Therefore, when I found out about the Texas Master Naturalist program, I knew it was just what I needed to complete the circle of knowledge and be able to help others better interpret the information and the beauty of all of nature and promote our responsibility for maintaining that which was here long before us and belongs here always. I hope that through the stories, information, and my love for Reptiles and Amphibians that I can help others become more conscious of that which we seem to take for granted.”

BOOK REVIEWS

H is for Hawk by Helen Macdonald is a fascinating true story of the author's experience with raising and working with a goshawk for falconry. Her relationship with her hawk illustrates how our relationship with nature pulls us in two directions: a desire to be closer with nature and wildlife, and the struggle to maintain its wildness. Review by Adrienne Paquette.

A Primer on Reptiles & Amphibians: A Collection of Educational Nature Bulletins by Micha Petty. This is 178-page book with individual one sheet lessons and handouts in easy to understand layman's terms. It is probably the greatest resource available today for school-age children and hobbyists. Review by Hank Van Joslin.

WEB RESOURCES

Pollinators: texaspollinatorspowwow.org

Reptiles: <https://encouragex.com/life-event/Reptiles-and-Amphibians>

PLAN FOR FUTURE EVENTS

The 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 hosted at the Hilton Dallas/Rockwall Lakefront Hotel on the shores of Lake Ray Hubbard just east of Dallas. Check the State website for information and after August 1, 2019, for registration and lodging reservations: <https://txmn.org/2019-annual-meeting/>

- Sponsorship Requests: The Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting typically draws in around 500-550 attendees, including not only TMN volunteers, but also partnering organizations, the public and those who want to learn more about our program's impact! Sponsorships are noted throughout the meeting with printed banners, flyers, agendas and on rolling screens throughout the space; sponsors have the opportunity to reserve a table during our Annual Meeting awards dinner with signage showing their support for the statewide program. Additional information about sponsoring the event and perks included with each sponsorship level can be found here:

<https://txmn.org/files/2019/03/Sponsors-for-2019-TMN-Annual-Meeting.pdf>

- Vendor Requests to sponsor your own booth at the Annual Meeting:
<https://txmn.org/files/2019/04/Vendor-Info-and-Application-Form-2019-FINAL.pdf>
- Contests: Photo, Art, Media, and Video (entry deadlines to be announced)

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